

Your ref: |
Our ref: 6.12
Please ask for:
Direct dial no:
Date: 24/01/17



Ros Day
Crowhurst Parish Council |

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director of Business Operations

Town Hall
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex TN39 3JX

Dear Ms Day,

SEA Screening Opinion For Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for your request for an SEA screening opinion, together with supporting information documents. Rother District Council (as the responsible authority) must determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.

The government's planning practice guidance states that a Neighbourhood Plan may require an SEA where a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development, or the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan.

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, an SEA should be undertaken for the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan (CNP). I have set out the reasoning below in relation to the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects, as contained in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

1. The CNP will allocate sites and form part of the 'development plan' and thereby exert a direct and substantial influence over development proposals coming forward in the period.
2. The characteristics of the area covered by the CNP (as set out in Schedule 1(2) of the regulations).
3. The CNP needs to consider important environmental factors, notably the area is wholly within the High Weald AONB, which enjoys the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty, as well as the proximity of heritage assets, flood risk areas, a ground water source protection zone, a site of special scientific interest (SSSI) and other environmental assets.

You are advised that Rother District Council has produced a 'Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report' that is considered applicable to the SEA process of Neighbourhood Plans produced within the District. It can be found on our web-site here:

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=26382&p=0>

Particular reference should be made to the 'Sustainability Appraisal Framework' (Task A4) which contains decision-aiding questions to help inform the SEA process. As the Scoping Report states, this framework *'is also considered relevant and applicable to Neighbourhood Plans produced within the District'*. In relation to the SEA process for Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that the following objectives from the Sustainability Appraisal Framework should be screened in for SEA purposes:

- 7: Improve accessibility to services and facilities for all ages across the District
- 9: Improve efficiency in land use and encourage the prudent use of natural resources
- 10: Reduce road congestion and pollution levels and ensure air quality continues to improve by increasing travel choice and reducing car usage
- 11: Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases



- 12: Minimise the risk of flooding and resulting detriment to people and property
- 13: Maintain, improve and manage water resources in a sustainable way
- 14: Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity
- 15: Protect and enhance the high quality natural and built environment

Note the published framework sets out the relevant links from these Objectives to the SEA Directive Topics. While these objectives are most relevant to this particular Neighbourhood Plan in terms of potential significant environmental effects (and hence screened in), you may wish to also consider the other SA/SEA objectives in the Framework for the purposes of assessing the overall sustainability of proposed policies.

If there are any queries, we would be happy to advise further.

I trust this information is useful.

Yours sincerely,

David Marlow
Planning Policy Manager |

