



Runnymede Borough Council Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Screening Statement and Determination under Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Screening Statement and Determination under Regulations 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

15 May 2024

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Introduction

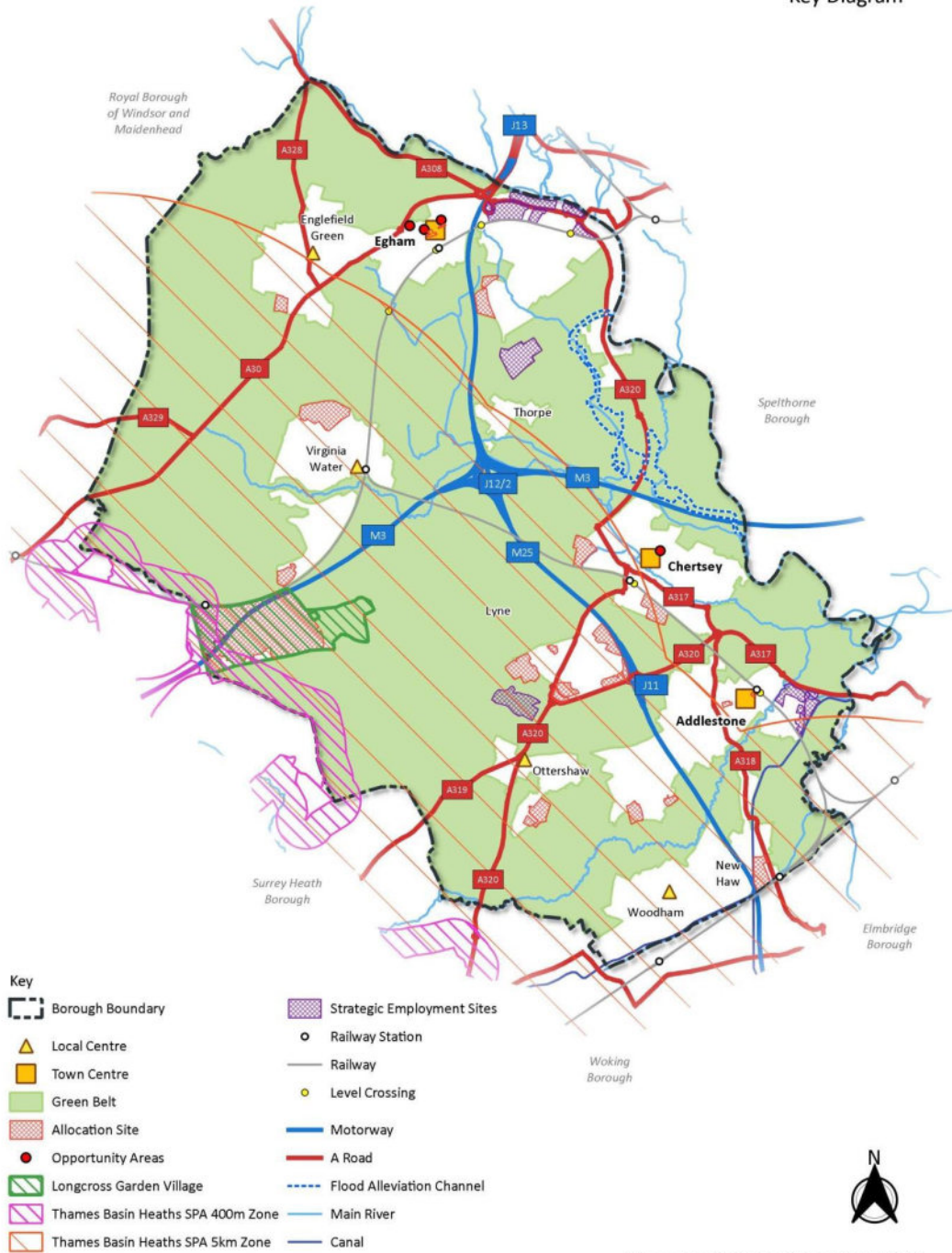
- 1.1. This Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening determination has been undertaken by Runnymede Borough Council in their duty to determine whether the Runnymede Borough Council Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) requires SEA or HRA. This screening assessment is based on the draft SPD dated April 2024.
- 1.2. Regulation 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 requires authorities to determine whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required for certain plans, policies or programmes. This statement also sets out the Council's determination as to whether Appropriate Assessment is required under Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017.
- 1.3. Under the requirements of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive)) and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), specific types of plans that set the framework for the future development consent of projects or which require Appropriate Assessment must be subject to an environmental assessment.
- 1.4. There are exceptions to this requirement for plans that determine the use of a small area at a local level and for minor modifications if it has been determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
- 1.5. In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9 (1)), the Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. In accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017, the Council is the competent authority for determining if a plan requires Appropriate Assessment.

Background to the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD

- 1.6. The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) makes provision for local authorities to prepare and adopt Local Development Documents which can include Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). However, an SPD does not form part of the Development Plan for an area as set out in Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) but it is a material consideration in taking planning decisions.
- 1.7. An SPD is required to be consulted on and adopted by the Council and once implemented sets out additional planning guidance that supports and/or expands upon the policies of a Local Plan.
- 1.8. The proposed Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD covers all of the area within the jurisdiction of Runnymede Borough Council and contains the urban areas of Addlestone, Chertsey, Englefield Green, Egham, Ottershaw, Woodham & New Haw and Virginia Water. Interspersed between the urban areas is designated Green Belt holding numerous wooded copses, golf courses and businesses as well as small pockets of development, agriculture and equestrian uses. The M25 and M3 motorways bisect the Borough north-south and east-west respectively and effectively cut the Borough into four quarters. There are six rail stations in Runnymede Borough offering direct services to London Waterloo, Reading & Woking. A plan of the designated area is shown in Plan 1-1.

Plan 1-1: Map of Runnymede Borough

Runnymede Borough Key Diagram



Borough area, Basingstoke Canal, Langham Pond, Thorpe Haymeadow, Thorpe no.1 Gravel Pit and Windsor Forest.

- 1.10. Unit 2 of the Basingstoke Canal SSSI lies to the south of the Borough and is in an unfavourable, no change status which does not meet the PSA target of 95% in favourable or unfavourable recovering status. Status reasons are extent of habitat, lack of plant diversity and poor water quality.
- 1.11. Langham Pond SSSI is formed of 3 units. 100% of the SSSI is in a favourable or unfavourable recovering status, meeting the PSA target. The Thorpe Haymeadow SSSI is formed of one unit in a favourable condition, which also meets the PSA Target.
- 1.12. The Thorpe no.1 Gravel Pit SSSI is formed of one unit and is in a favourable condition status meeting the PSA target. The SSSI also forms part of the wider South West London Water Bodies Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar, an internationally designated site for nature conservation importance.
- 1.13. The Windsor Forest SSSI is formed of 22 units with units 10, 11 and 16 within or partly within Runnymede. The SSSI is in 100% favourable condition status and meets the PSA target of 95%. The SSSI also forms part of the Windsor Forest & Great Park Special Area of Conservation (SAC) another internationally designated site for nature conservation importance.
- 1.14. Other internationally designated sites, whilst not within the Borough but within 5km include, the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC.
- 1.15. The Borough also lies within 12km of the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC, 12.2km from Burnham Beeches SAC, 13km of the Richmond Park and Wimbledon Common SACs, 20km from the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, 23km from the Wealden Heaths Phase I SPA and its component parts (including Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and Thursley & Ockley Bog Ramsar) and 30km from the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA.
- 1.16. There are also over 30 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) in the Borough as well as two Local Nature Reserves at Chertsey Meads and Riverside Walk in Virginia Water. The Borough lies within the River Wey and Tributaries catchment and there are large areas of the Borough, including within its urban areas which lie within flood risk zones 2 and 3 including functional floodplain.
- 1.17. From a heritage perspective, the Borough contains numerous statutorily listed or locally listed buildings and structures most notably the Grade I Royal Holloway College building in Englefield Green. There are 6 Conservation Areas in the borough as well as 6 scheduled ancient monuments, 48 areas of high archaeological potential and four historic parks and gardens.
- 1.18. The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD does not form part of the Development Plan for the area and does not allocate any sites for development or propose policies for the use of land but is a material consideration in decision making. The 2030 Local Plan which is the document which allocates sites and contains policies concerning land use has been the subject of Sustainability Appraisal (including the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment) as well as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- 1.19. The Energy SPD advises upon the application of the energy hierarchy, which major schemes are required to do when preparing proposals for new development; and non-major schemes are encouraged to do. The SPD also sets out detailed guidance on the content of Energy Statements to demonstrate that energy-related policy

requirements of the 2030 Local Plan have been comprehensively considered; and how new development can achieve best practice net zero carbon standards where applicants wish to go beyond minimum requirements set by the Local Plan.

- 1.20. The aim of the new Energy SPD is to be clear in the Council's expectations in respect of reducing energy use associated with new development, and how, after buildings have been made as energy efficient as possible in the first instance, any remaining energy needs can be supplied efficiently, and through the use of low carbon and/or renewable technologies. The SPD will help ensure that new development proposals are designed to reduce their carbon footprint to help meet national net zero targets.
- 1.21. The new Energy SPD builds upon the policies set out in the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan (notably, parts of Policy SD7: Sustainable Design and the entirety of Policy SD8: Renewable & Low Carbon Energy) to encourage energy-efficient, low carbon development, and thus deliver on one of its objectives to: "increase resilience to climate change, including flood risk, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote water efficiency and the use of renewable and low carbon energy". As such, it is a fundamental part of the planning policy 'toolkit'.
- 1.22. The guidance describes how new developments can be designed to 'be lean' through optimising orientation, built form and thermal efficiency measures; how developments can be designed to 'be clean' by supplying heat efficiently – identifying potential heat network focus areas across the Borough; and to 'be green' by describing the range of low carbon and renewable technologies available for use in new development.
- 1.23. The Energy SPD which has been drafted for public consultation sets out in detail the energy and carbon emission reduction requirements associated with new residential development, and non-residential development including new employment, commercial, leisure and other uses. The guidance also draws upon Runnymede's newly adopted Net Zero Carbon Toolkit, and encourages new development proposals to work towards net zero carbon homes and buildings in operation, going beyond the minimum requirements of the 2030 Local Plan.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.24 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated Regulations (as amended), requires a local authority to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for their Local Plan documents. This considers the social and economic impacts of a plan as well as the environmental impacts. SPDs are not Local Plan documents and therefore a Sustainability Appraisal is not required.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) – Screening

- 1.25 The need to undertake an Appropriate Assessment as part of an HRA is set out within the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and transposed into British Law by Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Appropriate Assessment stage of HRA is only required should the preliminary screening assessment not be able to rule out likely significant effects.
- 1.26 The European Habitats Directive requires that any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European site must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. The Habitats Directive states that any plan or project not connected to or necessary for a site's management, but likely to have significant effects thereon shall be subject to appropriate assessment. There are four distinct stages in HRA namely: -

Step 1: Screening – Identification of likely impacts on a European site either alone or in combination with other plans/projects and consideration of whether these are significant. Following the decision of the ECJ in the People Over Wind & Sweetman v. Coillite Teoranta (C-323/17) case, avoidance and/or mitigation measures cannot be taken into account at the screening stage and it is purely an exercise to determine if possible pathways for effect exist and whether these can be ruled out taking account of the precautionary principle. It is the opinion of this HRA screening assessment and in light of the Planning Practice Guidance Note on Appropriate Assessment that adopted policies of the current development plan cannot be taken into account at this stage of HRA where they are proposing mitigation for European Sites. Similarly, any HRA undertaken for other development plan documents which have not been through Examination in Public (EiP) and found sound should only be given limited weight. However, it is considered that greater weight can be attributed to screening undertaken in HRAs which support development plan documents found sound at examination. In this respect, this screening assessment takes account of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan HRA where it indicates that effects can be screened out in the absence of avoidance/mitigation.

Step 2: Appropriate Assessment – consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European Site whether alone or in combination with other plans or projects with respect to the sites structure, function and conservation objectives. Where there are significant effects, step 2 should consider potential avoidance and/or mitigation measures.

Step 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions – Assessing alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the plan/project which avoids impact, if after Step 2 significant effect cannot be ruled out even with avoidance or mitigation measures; and

Step 4: Assessment of Compensatory Measures – Identification of compensatory measures should impact not be avoided and no alternative solutions exist and an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) deems that a project should proceed.

- 1.27 Should step 1 reveal that significant effects are likely, or effect cannot be discounted because of uncertainty, then it is necessary to move onto step 2: Appropriate Assessment. If step 2 cannot rule out significant effect even with avoidance and/or mitigation, then the process moves onto step 3 and finally step 4 if no alternative solutions arise.

Step 1 - Screening

- 1.28 There are four stages to consider in a screening exercise: -

Stage 1: Determining whether the plan/project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site;

Stage 2: Describing the plan/project and description of other plan/projects that have the potential for in-combination impacts;

Stage 3: Identifying potential effects on the European site(s); and

Stage 4: Assessing the significance of any effects.

Stage 1

- 1.29 It can be determined that the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site.

Stage 2

- 1.30 Information about the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD can be found in paragraphs 1.18 to 1.23 of this screening assessment. Table 1-1 lists those other plans and projects, which may have in-combination impacts.

Table 1-1: Other Key Plans/Projects

<p>Plan/ Project</p>	<p>National Planning Policy Framework (2023): High level national planning policy covering topics such as housing, economy, employment, retail as well as biodiversity, flood risk and heritage.</p> <p>South East Plan 2009: Saved Policy NRM6 sets out protection for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.</p> <p>London Plan 2021: Contains planning policies for the development of land across the wider London area including housing and employment allocations with a target of 66,000 new homes per annum, including affordable homes.</p> <p>Runnymede 2030 Local Plan: Sets policies for the consideration of development and the spatial strategy for the Borough including provision of 7,920 dwellings over the Plan period and allocations for residential, employment and retail development.</p> <p>Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan 2021: Sets policies for development proposals which come forward within the Thorpe Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Plan 2024: Sets policies for development proposals which come forward within the Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>Other Local Authority Local Plans within 10km or adjoining sites identified in paras 1.8 to 1.15: Housing target for areas around European sites set out in Table 1-2.</p> <p>Large Scale Projects within 10km or adjoining European Sites: Large scale projects within 10km are subsumed in the consideration of ‘Other Local Authority Local Plans’ above.</p> <p>Thames Basin Heaths Joint Delivery Framework 2009: Sets out the agreed Framework regarding the approach and standards for avoiding significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.</p> <p>Environment Agency, Thames River Basin District Management Plan (2022): Sets out actions to improve water quality. Future partnership priority actions for 2022-2027 include fish passage projects on the Wey and Addlestone and Hale Bourne; and investment supporting landowners to improve the water environment.</p> <p>Environment Agency, Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009): Aim is to promote more sustainable approaches to managing flood risk. Will be delivered through a combination of different approaches.</p> <p>Environment Agency, River Wey Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (2019): identifies the Wey having restricted ‘Water available for licensing’.</p> <p>Thames Water Revised Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024: To ensure that there is sufficient water available to meet anticipated demands, under various weather conditions, whilst protecting the environment.</p>
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Table 1-2: List of Local Authority Housing Targets within 10km of European Sites

Site	Local Plan Area	Housing Target
Thames Basin Heaths SPA*		
	Waverley Borough	11,210
	Guildford Borough	10,678
	Woking Borough	4,964
	Surrey Heath Borough	3,240
	Runnymede Borough	7,920
	Elmbridge Borough	3,375
	Bracknell Forest Borough	10,438
	Windsor & Maidenhead	14,240
	Wokingham Borough	13,230
	Rushmoor Borough	8,884
	Hart District	7,614
Total		95,793
Windsor Forest & Great Park SAC		
	Runnymede Borough	7,920
	Woking Borough	4,964
	Surrey Heath Borough	3,240
	Spelthorne Borough	3,320
	Elmbridge Borough	3,375
	Windsor & Maidenhead Borough	14,240
	Bracknell Forest Borough	10,438
	Slough Borough	6,250
	South Bucks District	2,800
	LB Hillingdon	6,375
	LB Hounslow	13,040
Total		75,962
South West London Water Bodies SPA & Ramsar		
	Runnymede Borough	7,920
	Elmbridge Borough	3,375
	Spelthorne Borough	3,320
	Epsom & Ewell Borough	3,620
	Mole Valley District	3,760
	Windsor & Maidenhead Borough	14,240
	Slough Borough	6,250
	Bracknell Forest Borough	10,438
	South Bucks District	2,800
	LB Hillingdon	6,375
	LB Hounslow	13,040
	LB Ealing	14,000
	LB Kingston	5,625
	LB Richmond	3,150
Total		97,913

* Also includes the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC

Stage 3

- 1.31 Information regarding the European site(s) screened and the likely effects that may arise due to implementation of the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD can be found in Tables 1-3 to 1-6 and 1-7. All other European Sites were screened out of this

assessment at an early stage as it was considered that their distance from the Borough area meant that there is no pathway or mechanism which would give rise to significant effect either alone or in combination. In this respect regard has been had to the 2030 Local Plan HRA specifically paragraphs 2.1-2.2 and Table 1 of the HRA of Main Modifications (December 2019).

Table 1-3: Details of Thames Basin Heaths SPA and Potential Effects Thereon

European site:	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).
Site description:	The Thames Basin Heaths SPA was proposed in October 2000, and full SPA status was approved on 9 March 2005. It covers an area of some 8,274 ha, consisting of 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) scattered from Surrey, to Berkshire in the north, through to Hampshire in the west. The habitat consists of both dry and wet heathland, mire, oak, birch acid woodland, gorse scrub and acid grassland with areas of rotational conifer plantation.
Relevant international nature conservation features:	Thames Basin Heaths SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: During the breeding season: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>: 7.8% of the breeding population in Great Britain (count mean, 1998-1999); - Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>: 9.9% of the breeding population in Great Britain (count as at 1997); - Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>: 27.8% of the breeding population in Great Britain (count as at 1999).
Environmental conditions which support the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate management • Management of disturbance during breeding season (March to July) • Minimal air pollution • Absence or control of urbanisation effects, such as fires and introduction of invasive non-native species • Maintenance of appropriate water levels • Maintenance of water quality
Potential Effects arising from the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (see Table 1-7)

Table 1-4: Details of Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC and Potential Effects Thereon

International site:	Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Site description:	The Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC covers an area of some 5,154 ha with areas of wet and dry heathland, valley bogs, broad-leaved and coniferous woodland, permanent grassland and open water.
Relevant international nature conservation features:	The Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation is designated for three Annex I habitats. The qualifying Annex 1 habitats are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath - Dry heaths - Depressions on peat substrates
Environmental Conditions which Support the Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate management; • Managed recreational pressure; • Minimal air pollution; • Absence or control of urbanisation effects such as fires and introduction of invasive non-native species; • Maintenance of appropriate water levels; • Maintenance of water quality.
Potential Effects arising from the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (see Table 1-7)

Table 1-5: Details of Windsor Forest & Great Park SAC and Potential Effects Thereon

International site:	Windsor Forest & Great Park SAC
Site description:	The Windsor Forest & Great Park SAC covers an area of some 1,680 ha with Atlantic acidophilus beech forests with Ilex and sometimes Taxus. It is one of four outstanding locations in the UK for oak woods on sandy plains and is one of only three areas in the UK for Limoniscus violaceus (violet click beetle).
Relevant international nature conservation features:	Annex I habitat of oak woods on sandy plain which is the primary reason for designation with Atlantic beech forests.
Environmental Conditions which Support the Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of trees through forestry management • Urbanisation • Managed recreational pressure • Air Quality

Potential Effects arising from the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (see Table 1-7)
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Table 1-6: Details of South West London Water Bodies SPA & Ramsar and Potential Effects Thereon

International site:	South West London Water Bodies SPA & Ramsar
Site description:	The South West London Water Bodies SPA & Ramsar covers an area of some 825 ha and is formed from 7 former gravel pits and reservoirs which support overwintering populations of protected bird species.
Relevant international nature conservation features:	Supports overwintering populations of:- Gadwall Shoveler
Environmental Conditions which Support the Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed recreational pressure • Water quality • Water abstraction
Potential Effects arising from the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (see Table 1-7)

Stage 4

1.32 The consideration of potential effects is set out in Table 1-7.

Table 1-7: Assessment of Potential Effects

Indirect effect from recreational disturbance and urbanisation.	<p>The likely effects of recreational disturbance have been summarised in the Underhill-Day study for Natural England and RSPB (2005); this provides a review of the urban effects on lowland heaths and their wildlife. The main issues relating to the conservation objectives and the integrity of the SPAs and SAC's effected by recreational disturbance and urbanisation as a whole are: fragmentation, disturbance, fires, cats, dogs (as a result of nest disturbance and enrichment), prevention of management, off-roading, vandalism and trampling.</p> <p>Natural England has advised that recreational pressure, as a result of increased residential development within 5km of the</p>
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	<p>Thames Basin Heaths SPA & Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC (or sites of 50 or more dwellings within 7km), is having a significant adverse impact on the Annex I bird species. Woodlark and Nightjar are ground nesting and Dartford Warblers nest close to the ground. They are therefore sensitive to disturbance, particularly from dogs, but also from walkers, and cyclists etc. They are, in addition, vulnerable to other effects of urbanisation, in particular predation by cats.</p> <p>Joint work involving Natural England and the authorities affected by the SPA/SAC have agreed a mechanism to avoid impacts to the SPA/SAC from recreational activities in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management & Monitoring (SAMM) and from the impacts of urbanisation by not allowing any net additional dwellings within 400m of the SPA.</p> <p>In terms of the Windsor Forest & Great Park SAC the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan HRA states that forestry management and recreational impacts has the potential for loss of trees and damage to trees from burning (arson).</p> <p>For the South West London Water Bodies SPA & Ramsar threats arise through unmanaged recreational activities such as use of motorboats and fishing.</p> <p>The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD advises upon energy efficiency and carbon emissions reduction standards for new development. The SPD does not in itself, allocate or safeguard any land for development that could give rise to increased recreation or urbanisation impacts.</p> <p>As such, there are no pathways for effect for impacts either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects and it is considered that the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD would not give rise to likely significant effects on any of the European Sites in terms of recreation or urbanisation, such that an Appropriate Assessment is required.</p>
Atmospheric Pollution	<p>The Runnymede 2030 Local Plan HRA concludes no likely significant effect as a result of atmospheric pollution in combination with other plans and projects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC or the Windsor Forest & Great Park SAC, given the findings of the Council's air quality evidence.</p> <p>The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD advises upon energy efficiency and carbon emissions reduction standards for new development. The SPD does not in itself, allocate or safeguard any land for development that could give rise to increased recreation or urbanisation impacts.</p>

	<p>The SPD promotes a transition away from non-renewable energy sources – primarily from fossil fuels such as natural gas – to renewable energy sources by switching to solar power for example. This could deliver a consequential improvement/positive impact on local air quality.</p> <p>Overall, the SPD by itself or in-combination with other plans and projects is unlikely to give rise to significant effects on any of the European Sites in terms of air quality, such that an Appropriate Assessment is required.</p>
Water Quality & Resource	<p>The Runnymede 2030 Local Plan HRA concludes no likely significant effects to European sites as a result of water quality or abstraction.</p> <p>The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD advises upon energy efficiency and carbon emissions reduction standards for new development. The SPD does not in itself, allocate or safeguard any land for development that could give rise to increased recreation or urbanisation impacts.</p> <p>The SPD, either by itself or in-combination with other plans and projects is unlikely to give rise to significant effects on any of the European Sites in terms of water quality, such that an Appropriate Assessment is required.</p>

- 1.33 It is the conclusion of this updated HRA that following a screening assessment it can be ascertained, in light of the information available at the time of assessment and even in the absence of avoidance and mitigation measures that the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD **will not** give rise to significant effects on European Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans and/or projects. Given the findings of the screening assessment it is considered that a full appropriate assessment is not required.

The SEA Screening Process

- 1.34 The process for determining whether or not an SEA is required is called ‘screening’. For some types of plan or programme SEA is mandatory and includes the following:
- Plans which are prepared for town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive; or
 - Plans which have been determined to require an assessment under the Habitats Directive (this has already been screened out as set out in paragraphs 1.28 to 1.33 of this screening assessment).
- 1.35 However, the main determining factor when considering whether a plan or programme requires SEA is whether it will have significant environmental effects.
- 1.36 Within 28 days of making its determination, the determining authority must publish a statement, such as this one, setting out its decision. If it is determined that an SEA is

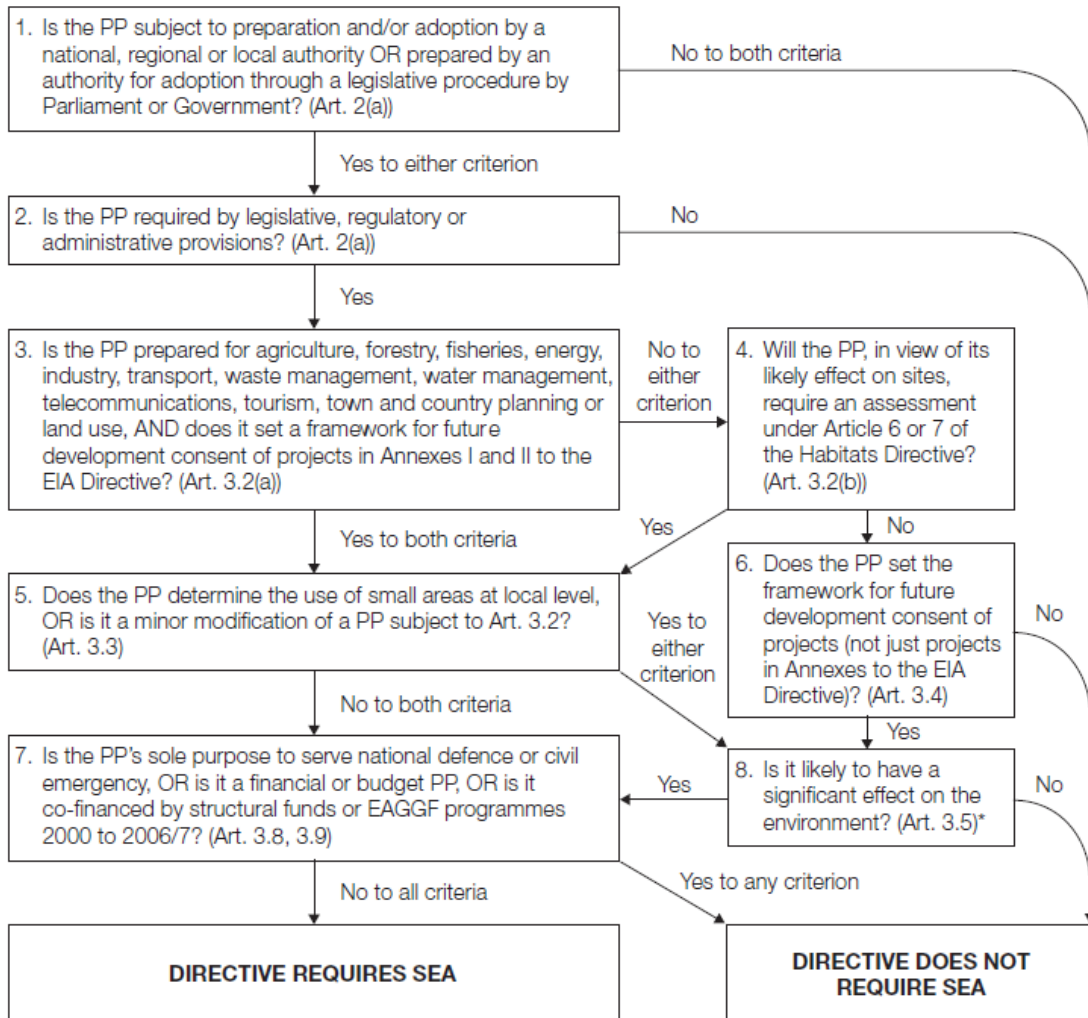
not required, the statement must include the reasons for this. This statement is being published alongside the draft Energy SPD consultation material.

- 1.37 This Screening Report sets out the Council's determination under Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 on whether or not SEA is required for the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD. The Council has consulted with the three statutory consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England) in accordance with the Regulations. Natural England and the Environment Agency had no comments to make, and Historic England responded to confirm that they agree with the report's conclusions. The response received from Historic England is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.38 The determination is based on a two-step approach, the first of which is to assess the plan against the flowchart as set out in government guidance *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*¹. The flow chart is shown in Figure 1.

¹ A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Process (2005) ODPM. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

Figure 1:

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

1.39 The second step is to consider whether the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD will have significant environmental effects when considered against the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations. The findings of step 1 and step 2 are shown in Tables 1-9 and 1-10.

Table 1-9: SEA Screening Step 1

Stage in Flowchart	Y/N	Reason
<p>1. Is the plan/programme subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by parliament or Government? (Article 2(a))</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The provision to prepare and adopt a Local Development Document is given by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD will be prepared and adopted by Runnymede Borough Council. The preparation and adoption procedure is set out in the Town & Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2012. Whilst not forming part of the Development Plan the SPD will be a material consideration in planning decisions. Move to Stage 2</p>
<p>2. Is the plan/programme required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>There is no mandatory requirement to prepare or adopt Supplementary Planning Documents and if adopted it will not form part of the Development Plan for Runnymede. As answer is No, flowchart identifies end to screening process, but move to Stage 3 for completeness.</p>
<p>3. Is the plan/programme prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Article 3.2(a))</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>Whilst the plan is prepared for town & country planning, the SPD does not set the framework for future development consents for projects in Annex I or II to the EIA Directive. Move to Stage 4.</p>
<p>4. Will the plan/programme, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The HRA screening undertaken in paragraphs 1.28 to 1.33 of this assessment has determined that</p>

Stage in Flowchart	Y/N	Reason
Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Article 3.2(b))		Appropriate Assessment is not required. Move to Stage 6.
5. Does the plan/programme determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Article 3.3)	N/A	The SPD will not form part of the Runnymede Development Plan and does not therefore determine the use of small areas at a local (or any) level. The plan is not a minor modification of an existing plan. Move to Stage 6
6. Does the plan/programme set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Article 3.4)	N	The SPD does not allocate any land or sites for development or set a framework for future development consents. As answer is No, flowchart identifies end to screening process, but move to Stage 8 for completeness.
7. Is the plan/programme's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Article 3.8, 3.9)	N	The sole purpose of the SPD is not to serve national defence or civil emergency. It is also not a budget plan or programme.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Article 3.5)	N	Effects on the environment and whether these are significant are considered in Table 1-10. No Significant Effects identified in Table 1-10, so determine that SEA is not required.

Table 1-10: SEA Screening Step 2

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)		Response	
Characteristics of the plan or programme			Significant Effect?
(a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	<p>The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD does not set out policies against which development proposals in the Runnymede area will be considered, although it will be a material consideration in decision making.</p> <p>The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD provides detailed guidance on the application of the energy hierarchy for major development proposals, and encourages non-major proposals to do the same, in order to implement Policy SD8 of the 2030 Local Plan more effectively and ensure new development mitigates the impacts of climate change in line with Local Plan objectives.</p> <p>The SPD will be applied as guidance rather than policy and as such it does not set a distinct framework for projects or other activities.</p>		N
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	<p>The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD does not influence other plans or programmes but is itself influenced by other plans (i.e. the Runnymede Local Plan and the NPPF). It does not influence any plans in a hierarchy.</p>		N
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	<p>The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD advises upon the energy performance and carbon emissions reduction requirements to be considered when preparing proposals for new development. The SPD also sets out detailed guidance on applying the energy hierarchy, to ensure that new development is lean (i.e. energy efficient), clean (i.e. energy is supplied cleanly) and green (i.e. energy needs of new development are met through the use of low carbon and renewable technologies on-site).</p> <p>Implementing the Local Plan energy-related requirements more effectively will make an important contribution towards delivering sustainable development, in accordance with</p>		N

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response	
	<p>the strategy set out in the Runnymede Local Plan.</p> <p>However, as the SPD does not allocate any land for development its impact to the integration of environmental considerations could not in itself, be regarded as significant.</p>	
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	<p>Environmental problems include potential recreational or urbanising impacts, atmospheric pollution and water resources to European sites. Paragraphs 1.28 to 1.33 of this assessment set out the effects of the SPD on European sites and has determined no significant effects, whilst noting that applying the energy hierarchy effectively may accelerate local transition towards greater use of low carbon and/or renewable technologies over time, which could help deliver a consequential improvement/positive impact on local air quality.</p>	N
(e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community (EU) legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	<p>The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD is considered to have limited relevance to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment.</p>	N
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected		
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	<p>The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD advises upon the energy performance and carbon emissions reduction standards set out in Local Plan policy. The SPD contains detailed guidance on application of the energy hierarchy to ensure new development is designed more sustainably to mitigate climate change impacts. It does not however allocate any land or sites for development or go beyond the requirements of the 2030 Local Plan. Therefore the probability of any effect is low. Duration of any effects would likely be long term (beyond</p>	N

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response	
	2030) given the expected lifespans of developments constructed. Effects are expected to be generally positive and given national legislation to meet net zero targets, are unlikely to be reversed. On the whole, effects are not considered to be significant.	
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD advises upon the energy performance and carbon emissions reduction standards set out in Local Plan policy. The SPD contains detailed guidance on application of the energy hierarchy to ensure new development is designed more sustainably to mitigate climate change impacts. It does not however allocate any land or sites for development or go beyond the requirements of the 2030 Local Plan.</p> <p>In combination with the assessed impacts of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and the mitigation measures set out therein, it is considered that the cumulative effects of the SPD remain low and not significant.</p>	N
(c) The transboundary nature of the effects	Given the scope of the SPD it is considered that no transboundary effects will arise.	N
(d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	None.	N
(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD will cover the whole of the geographic area of Runnymede in Surrey. The area covered is 78km ² with a population of around 88,100. Given the nature of the SPD it is considered that effects will not be significant.	N
(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii) Exceeded environmental quality	<p>Given the nature of the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD:</p> <p>i) The area covered by the SPD contains 5 SSSIs with the majority in a favourable condition status which meets the PSA target of 95% in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition status. The Basingstoke</p>	N

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response
<p>standards or limit values; iii) Intensive land-use.</p>	<p>Canal SSSI is in an unfavourable no change status which does not meet the PSA target. The Runnymede area contains numerous statutorily or locally listed buildings and structures as well as conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments and areas of high archaeological potential. The area is a mixture of urban and Green Belt and contains features such as green spaces, wooded copses and golf courses. However, the SPD does not in itself allocate any land for development and therefore significant effects on natural characteristics and cultural heritage are unlikely.</p> <p>ii) There are two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the Runnymede area, along the entire length of the M25 which runs through the Borough and the other in Addlestone at the High Street and Station Road junction. Air quality objectives were achieved across the Borough in 2022 including in the two AQMAs². The Environment Agency has identified the Wey catchment as having restricted water available for licensing.</p> <p>The greater uptake of low carbon and renewable energy technologies guided by the SPD may help accelerate local transition towards greater use of renewable, clean sources of energy and help to deliver a consequential improvement/positive impact on local air quality.</p> <p>However, the SPD does not in itself allocate any land for development and therefore significant effects on air quality and water availability/quality are unlikely.</p> <p>iii) Intensive land use occurs in the urban areas (built development), but the SPD does not in itself, allocate any land development. As such significant effects are unlikely.</p>

² Runnymede 2023 Air Quality Annual Status Report (2023) RBC, Available at: <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/airquality>

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response	
(g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status.	The effects on European Sites for Nature Conservation are dealt with in (d) above. There are no landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status in the Runnymede area.	N
Conclusion	The Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects and as such an SEA is not required.	

- 1.40 On the basis of the screening process it is determined that the Runnymede Borough Council Energy SPD does not require a SEA under the SEA Directive and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004). This is because: -
- The SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects given that it does not allocate sites for development; and
 - The content of the SPD when taken as a whole and in combination with policies in the emerging 2030 Local Plan will not give rise to significant effects.
- 1.41 This determination was made on the 15th May 2024.
- 1.42 The determination shall be brought to the attention of the public through the public consultation on the draft Energy SPD, which will take place within 28 days of making the determination (in accordance with Regulation 11 of the SEA Regulations). Copies of this document (which includes the determination and statement of reasons) can be viewed on the Council's consultations website at: [Consultations and surveys – Runnymede Borough Council](#).
- 1.43 Hard copies can be inspected at the following locations, with details of library opening times on Surrey County Council's website at www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries:
- the Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone KT15 2AF from 8.30am-5pm Monday to Thursdays, and 8.30am-4.30pm on Fridays
 - Addlestone Library (if required outside of Civic Office hours), Runnymede Civic Centre (address as above)
 - Chertsey Library, Guildford Street, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 3BE
 - Egham Library, High Street, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9EA
 - New Haw Community Library, The Broadway, New Haw, Surrey KT15 3HA
 - Virginia Water Community Library, 6 Station Parade, Virginia Water GU25 4AB.

Appendix A: Responses from the Statutory Consultees



Historic England

Planning Policy
Runnymede Borough Council

Our ref: PL00795631
Your ref:

Telephone 020 7973 3700
Email e-seast@historicengland.org.uk

By email only to PlanningPolicy@runnymede.gov.uk

Date 15 May 2024

Dear Sir or Madam

Runnymede Borough Council – Energy & Carbon Supplementary Planning Document
Strategic Environmental Appraisal Screening Opinion

Thank you for your email dated 10 April 2024 consulting Historic England on your intention of carrying out a SEA for the above plan.

In light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, our view is that a SEA is not required in this instance, for the reasons set out in paragraph 1.40 of the Screening Statement (Runnymede BC, April 2024).

Yours sincerely

Alan Byrne
Historic Environment Planning Adviser