

Runnymede Community Infrastructure Levy

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

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

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

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

February 2020

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 Community Infrastructure Levy requires SEA or HRA. This screening assessment is based on the draft CIL Charging Schedule dated December 2019.
- 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 Borough 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 Borough 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 Borough Council is the competent authority for determining if a plan requires Appropriate Assessment.

Background to the Runnymede Community Infrastructure Levy

- 1.6. The Planning Act 2008 (as amended) makes provision for local authorities to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) through a CIL Charging Schedule. Whilst a CIL Charging Schedule is an adopted planning document it 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). As such, a CIL Charging Schedule is not a material consideration in taking planning decisions but is simply a financial tool by which local authorities can raise funds towards infrastructure.
- 1.7. A CIL Charging Schedule is required to be consulted on and adopted by the Borough Council and once implemented sets out the charges that will apply to development within the Borough on a £s per sqm basis. The funds raised can be spent on a range of infrastructure projects across the Borough (or across Borough boundaries for strategic projects) as defined by the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). In introducing a CIL charge the Borough will need to scale back S106 agreements as the primary tool to raise infrastructure funding from development.
- 1.8. The proposed Runnymede CIL 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



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- 1.9. There are numerous areas of woodland/copses designated as ancient/semi-natural or ancient replanted woodland which are also identified as priority habitat as well as swathes of woodpasture and parkland which is a national Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) designation. Priority habitat designations also include areas of lowland meadows, lowland heathland, and lowland fens. There are five SSSIs located in the 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 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 are 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 Okley Bog Ramsar) and 30km from the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA.
- 1.16. There are also over 30 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNICIs) 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 CIL draft Charging Schedule dated December 2019 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. 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).

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.19 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. CIL Charging Schedules are not Local Plan documents and therefore a Sustainability Appraisal is not required.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) – Screening

- 1.20 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.
- 1.21 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.

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.

- 1.22 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

1.23 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

1.24 It can be determined that the Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site.

Stage 2

1.25 Information about the Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule can be found in paragraphs 1.6 to 1.18 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

Plan/ Project	<p>National Planning Policy Framework (2019): 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 2016: Contains planning policies for the development of land across the wider London area including housing and employment allocations with a target of 42,000 new homes per annum.</p> <p>Runnymede 2030 Local Plan (Submission): 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>Runnymede Local Plan Second Alteration (2001): The current adopted Local Plan setting out policies for the use of land in the Runnymede area. All policies in the 2001 Plan will be replaced on adoption of the 2030 Local Plan.</p> <p>Other Local Authority Local Plans within 10km or adjoining sites identified in paras 1.8 to 1.12: 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 (2015): Sets out actions to improve water quality. Future aims for the River Wey include implementing Lower Wey Oxbow Restoration Project to enhance and restore the main Wey river channel and Wey Diffuse Advice Project throughout the catchment.</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>Environment Agency, Water Resources Strategy: Regional Action Plan for Thames Region (2009): Key priorities for Thames region include ensuring sufficient water resources are available, making water available in over-abstracted catchments and reducing demand.</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	11,139
	Windsor & Maidenhead	14,260
	Wokingham Borough	13,230
	Rushmoor Borough	8,884
	Hart District	6,208
Total		95,108
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	14,260
	Bracknell Forest Borough	11,139
	Slough Borough	6,250
	South Bucks District	2,800
	LB Hillingdon	6,375
	LB Hounslow	13,040
Total		76,683
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	14,260
	Slough Borough	6,250
	Bracknell Forest Borough	11,139
	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		98,634

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

Stage 3

- 1.26 Information regarding the European site(s) screened and the likely effects that may arise due to implementation of a CIL Charging Schedule 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.

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 CIL Charging Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (see Table 1-7)

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

International site:	Wealden Heaths Phase I & II SPAs
Site description:	The Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC incorporating the Thursley & Ockley Bogs Ramsar 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 Thursley and Ockley Bog Ramsar site qualifies under two of the nine Ramsar criteria.
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 CIL Charging Schedule	<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 <i>Limoniscus violaceus</i> (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 CIL Charging Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (see Table 1-7)

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 CIL Charging Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (see Table 1-7)

Stage 4

1.27 The consideration of potential effects are 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 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</p>
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	<p>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 CIL Charging Schedule does not allocate any land or sites for net additional dwellings or other types of development that could give rise to increased recreational or urbanisation impacts. The charging schedule does not form part of the Borough's Development Plan and is purely a financial tool to raise funding from development toward supporting infrastructure. The CIL charge will not be used to raise funds towards mitigation for European sites as other mechanisms will be used to secure this (Section 106 agreements).</p> <p>As such, there are no pathways for effect for impacts either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. Therefore it is considered, at the time of undertaking this assessment and even in the absence of avoidance and/or mitigation measures which cannot be taken into account at the screening stage of HRA (including any adopted policies in the Local Plan Part 1 or emerging policies in the 2030 Local Plan) that the Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule will not give rise to likely significant effects on any of the European Sites in terms of recreation or urbanisation.</p> <p>In this respect an Appropriate Assessment is not required.</p>
Atmospheric Pollution	The Runnymede 2030 Local Plan HRA concludes no likely significant effect as a result of atmospheric

	<p>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 CIL Charging Schedule does not allocate any land or sites for net additional dwellings or other types of development that could give rise to air quality impacts. The charging schedule does not form part of the Borough's Development Plan and is purely a financial tool to raise funding from development toward supporting infrastructure. The CIL charge will not be used to raise funds towards mitigation for European sites as other mechanisms will be used to secure this (Section 106 agreements).</p> <p>As such, there are no pathways for effect for impacts either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. Therefore it is considered, at the time of undertaking this assessment and even in the absence of avoidance and/or mitigation measures which cannot be taken into account at the screening stage of HRA (including any adopted policies in the Local Plan Part 1 or emerging 2030 Local Plan) that the Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule will not give rise to likely significant effects on any of the European Sites in terms of air quality.</p> <p>In this respect an Appropriate Assessment is not 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 CIL Charging Schedule does not allocate any land or sites for net additional dwellings or other types of development that could give rise to water quality or resource impacts. The charging schedule does not form part of the Borough's Development Plan and is purely a financial tool to raise funding from development toward supporting infrastructure. The CIL charge may fund supporting infrastructure for flood defences and drainage projects, however it will not propose, allocate or otherwise safeguard projects but is merely a tool to raise funds towards such projects.</p> <p>As such, there are no pathways for effect for impacts either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. Therefore it is considered, at the time of undertaking this assessment and even in the absence</p>

	<p>of avoidance and/or mitigation measures which cannot be taken into account at the screening stage of HRA (including any adopted policies in the Local Plan Part 1 or emerging 2030 Local Plan) that the Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule will not give rise to likely significant effects on any of the European Sites in terms of water quality or resource.</p> <p>In this respect an Appropriate Assessment is not required.</p>
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1.28 It is the conclusion of this 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 CIL Charging Schedule **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

1.29 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 1.20 to 1.28 of this screening assessment).

1.30 However, the main determining factor when considering whether a plan or programme requires SEA is whether it will have significant environmental effects.

1.31 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.

1.32 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 CIL Charging Schedule. The Borough Council must consult with the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England) and take their views into account before issuing a final determination. The responses received from the three statutory bodies on a draft screening assessment dated December 2019 and how the Council has taken these into account in this final screening determination are set out in Table 1.8.

Table 1-8

Statutory Body	Response	Comment & Action
<p>Environment Agency</p>	<p>Agree with screening assessment that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule will not have a significant effect on the environment.</p> <p>Agree with the statement; “The CIL charge may fund supporting infrastructure for flood defences and drainage projects,... or mitigation for European sites... however it will not propose, allocate or otherwise safeguard projects but is merely a tool to raise funds towards such projects. As such, there are no pathways for effect for impacts either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.</p> <p>Agree that the SEA for the Local Plan covers the assessment of the related projects sufficiently.</p> <p>Provision of SANGs is a mitigation measure for increased housing and infrastructure around European sites, it is not avoidance. Please review this document and ensure SANGs are referred to as mitigation measures not avoidance. Mitigation measures are not considered at the screening stage and as</p>	<p>Noted – no action required</p> <p>Noted – no action required</p> <p>Noted – no action required.</p> <p>Noted – However the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Framework, which is an agreed framework between all local authorities affected by the TBH SPA and Natural England describe SANG as ‘avoidance’. Further, the point of SANG is that it avoids impact at source. As such the screening assessment will continue</p>

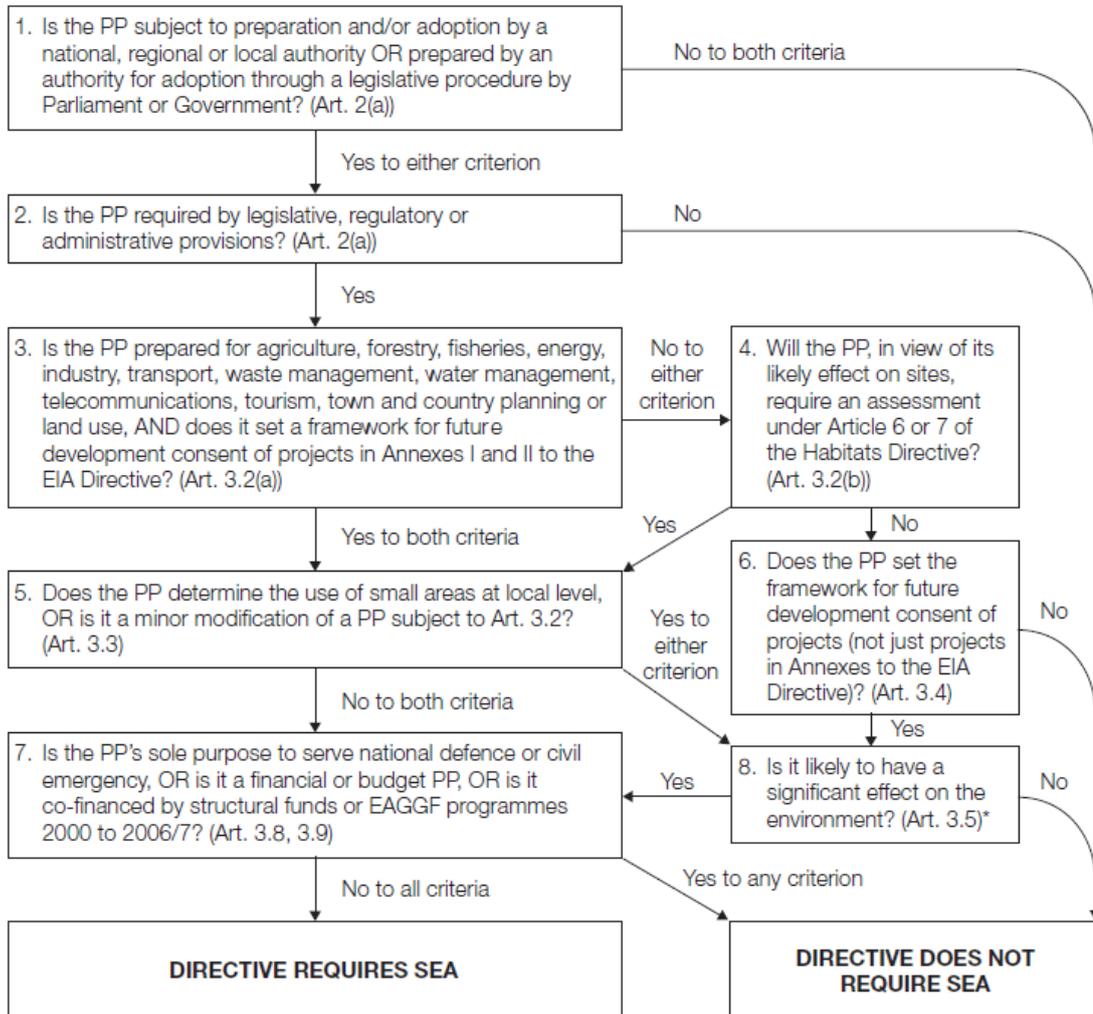
	such, discussion of the use of mitigation in an SEA screening is inappropriate (People Over Wind & Sweetman v. Coillite Teoranta (C-323/17) case). Please review the document and limit the references to mitigation in the text and Table 1-10.	to refer to SANG as avoidance. In terms of referring to the Sweetman case the assessment is simply pointing out that neither avoidance or mitigation can be considered at the <u>HRA</u> screening stage. Any references to mitigation which imply it has been taken into account will be removed.
Historic England	In light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, our view is that SEAs are not required in this instance for the reason set out in paragraph 1.35 of the respective screening reports.	Noted – no further action required.
Natural England	Natural England agree with the conclusions of the Council's screening report that this schedule will not have a likely significant effect on the environment, including European designated sites, and therefore does not require an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations or a full SEA.	Noted – no further action required.

1.33 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.

- 1.34 The second step is to consider whether the Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule 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
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))	Y	The provision to prepare and adopt a CIL Charging Schedule is given by the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). The CIL Charging Schedule will be prepared and adopted by Runnymede Borough Council. The preparation and adoption procedure is set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Stage in Flowchart	Y/N	Reason
		The CIL charging schedule is however not a plan or programme and preparation of a CIL charging schedule is not mandatory. Move to Stage 2
2. Is the plan/programme required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))	N	There is no mandatory requirement to prepare or adopt a CIL Charging Schedule 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.
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))	N	The CIL Charging Schedule is not a plan or programme and does not set the framework for future development consents for projects in Annex I or II to the EIA Directive. The Charging Schedule will be a financial tool to raise fund towards supporting infrastructure and does not form part of the Runnymede Development Plan. Move to Stage 4.
4. Will the plan/programme, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Article 3.2(b))	N	The HRA screening undertaken in paragraphs 1.20 to 1.28 of this assessment has determined that 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 CIL Charging Schedule 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

Stage in Flowchart	Y/N	Reason
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	<p>The Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule does not allocate any land or sites for development or sets a framework for future development consents.</p> <p>As answer is No, flowchart identifies end to screening process, but move to Stage 8 for completeness.</p>
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)	Y	<p>The Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule is considered to be a financial tool to raise funds towards supporting infrastructure but is not itself a plan or program.</p>
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Article 3.5)	N	<p>Effects on the environment and whether these are significant are considered in Table 1-10.</p> <p>No Significant Effects identified in Table 1-10, so determine that SEA is not required.</p>

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.	The Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule does not set out policies against which development proposals in the Runnymede area will be considered. As such, the Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule does not have the potential to set the framework for decision making on individual projects or other activities.		N
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule does not influence other plans or programmes and as it is not part of the Runnymede Development Plan. It therefore does not influence any plans in a hierarchy.		N
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule does not form part of the Runnymede Development Plan and has no relevance for the integration of environmental considerations. The Charging Schedule may promote sustainable development through raising funds towards supporting infrastructure, but does not in itself propose, allocate or otherwise safeguard any infrastructure projects.		N
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	Environmental problems include potential recreational or urbanising impacts, atmospheric pollution and water resources to European sites. Paragraphs 1.20 to 1.28 of this assessment sets out the effects of the Charging Schedule on European sites and has determined no significant effects.		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	The Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule is not relevant to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment. The Charging Schedule may allow implementation through raising funds towards supporting infrastructure, but does not in itself propose, allocate or otherwise safeguard any infrastructure projects.		N

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response	
waste management or water protection).		
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected		
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	The Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule does not allocate any land or sites for development or infrastructure projects. The Charging Schedule does not form part of the Runnymede Development Plan and as such the Charging Schedule gives no probability for effects given that it is merely a financial tool to raise funds towards supporting infrastructure.	N
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	The Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule does not allocate any land or sites for development or infrastructure projects. The Charging Schedule does not form part of the Runnymede Development Plan and as such the Charging Schedule will not give rise to cumulative effects.	N
(c) The transboundary nature of the effects	Given the geographic scope of the Charging Schedule, 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 CIL Charging Schedule will cover the whole of the geographic area of Runnymede in Surrey. The area covered is 78km ² with a population of around 83,448. Given the nature of the Charging Schedule as a financial tool to raise funds towards supporting infrastructure it is considered that there are no pathways for effect.	N
(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:	Given the nature of the CIL Charging Schedule: i) The area covered by the Charging Schedule contains 5 SSSIs with the majority in a favourable condition status which meets	N

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response
<p>i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</p> <p>ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;</p> <p>iii) Intensive land-use.</p>	<p>the PSA target of 95% in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition status. The Basingstoke Canal SSSI is in an unfavourable no change status which does not meet the PSA target.</p> <p>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 CIL Charging Schedule does not allocate any land for development or set development targets and does not form part of the Runnymede Development Plan. As such, no effects will arise to natural characteristics or cultural heritage.</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 standards are exceeded at 5 air quality monitoring sites in the Runnymede area². The Environment Agency has identified the Wey catchment as having restricted water available for licensing. However, the CIL Charging Schedule does not allocate any land for development or set development targets and does not form part of the Runnymede Development Plan. As such, no effects will arise to exceeded environmental quality standards.</p> <p>iii) Intensive land use occurs in the urban areas (built development), but the CIL Charging Schedule does not allocate any land or sites for development and as such there is no pathway for significant effects.</p>

² Runnymede 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report (2017) 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 CIL Charging Schedule is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects and as such an SEA is not required.	

1.35 On the basis of the Screening process it is determined that the Runnymede CIL Charging Schedule does not require an SEA under the SEA Directive and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004). This is because: -

- The Charging Schedule is not a plan or programme but is merely a financial tool to raise funds towards supporting infrastructure; and
- The Charging Schedule does not form part of the Runnymede Development Plan.

1.36 This final assessment was made on the 17 February 2020.