



Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Screening

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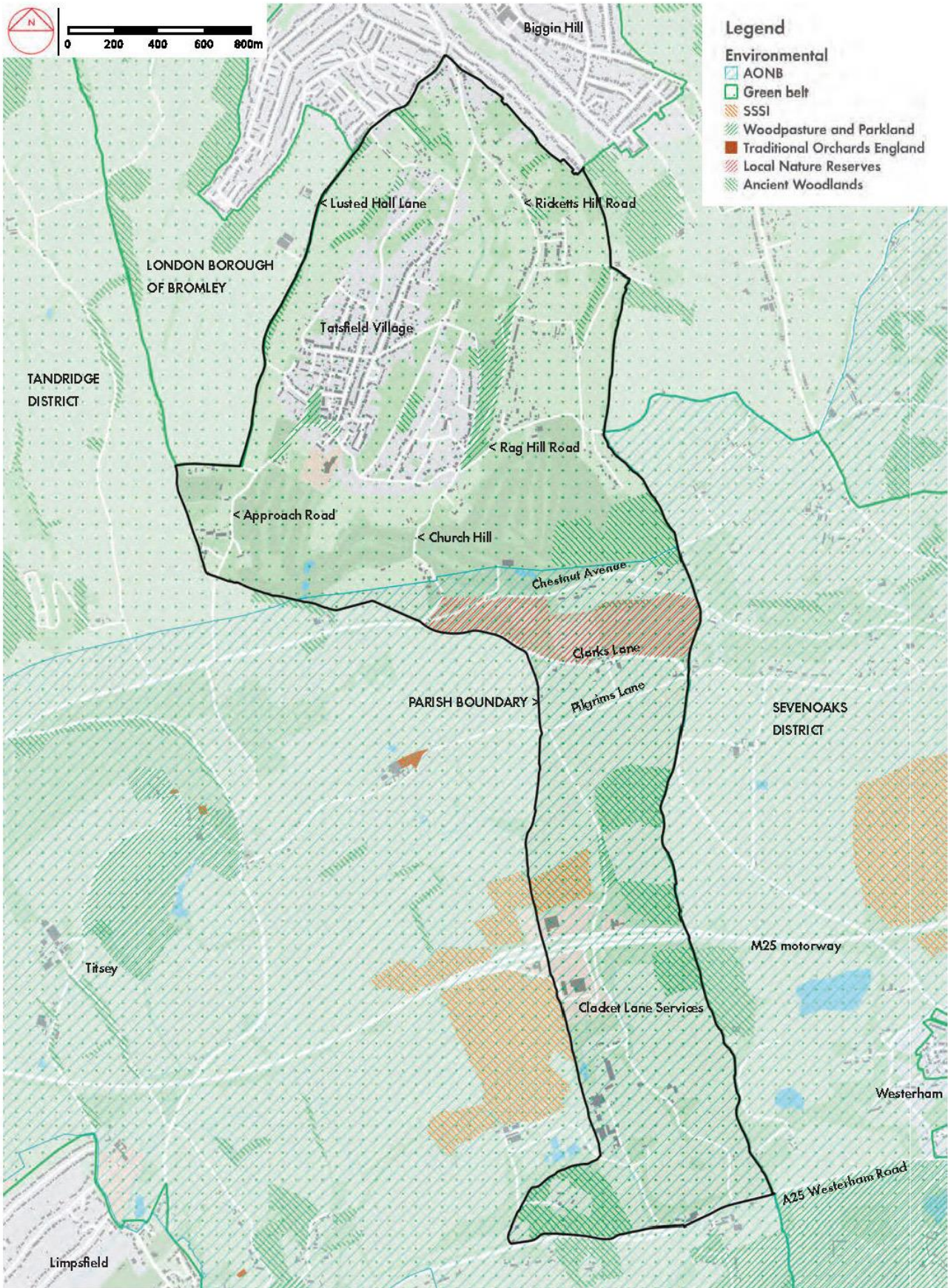
Habitat Regulations Screening

Update: November 2023

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Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan area designated as a "Neighbourhood Area" by Tandridge District Council on 6th June 2017



The parish of Tatsfield

1. The purpose of this document

1.1 This document has been prepared to screen the Neighbourhood Plan and to determine whether a full S.E.A. and / or H.R.A. is required.

2. Introduction

2.1 This statement has been prepared by Tatsfield Parish Council to accompany its submission of the Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan to the local planning authority, Tandridge District Council of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council, a qualifying body, for the Neighbourhood Area, which coincides with the boundary of the parish of Tatsfield, and which was designated by the District Council on 06 June 2017. <https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Planning-and-building/Planning-strategies-and-policies/Neighbourhood-Plans>

2.3 The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area. They do not relate to 'excluded development', as defined by the Regulations. The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 2018 - 2033, which corresponds with the end of the plan period of the emerging Tandridge District Local Plan.

3. What is a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Habitat Regulations Assessment?

3.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) looks at the positive and negative environmental issues that a Neighbourhood Plan might have on local environmental assets. All Plans which may have a significant effect on designated European Sites are required to undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

4. When is an SEA required?

4.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan may be required if:

- A Habitat Regulations Assessment is required
- The Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites for development (that haven't been appraised as part of the Local Plan)

- The Neighbourhood Plan area contains sensitive environmental assets that may be affected by proposed policies.

4.2 The individual aspects that need considering are:

- Biodiversity - Are there any impacts on any local wildlife sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and any European Sites?
- Landscape - Are there any impacts your plan will have on the landscape character of the local area?
- Air and Climate - How will your plan affect air quality and climate change? Consider how people will travel within and out of the Neighbourhood Area. Are there enough footpaths, cycle ways or connection to public transport services?
- Water - Will water quality or quantity be adversely affected or improved by your plan? Flood alleviation schemes and storage of water for irrigation can help the regeneration of rivers/streams. Incorporating sustainable drainage systems in new developments could help existing developments in the area.
- Soil - Do you have any erosion concerns?
- Population - What are the demographics of your area and does your plan cater for all?
- Human Health - Do you have good access to health facilities (indoor or outdoor)?
- Heritage - Are there impacts your plan will have on local heritage, considering historic growth patterns and listed or locally important buildings?
- Material Assets - This includes a wide range of social, environmental and economic assets, e.g. Transport, waste and minerals, water, energy, industry, shops, library, post office.

5. When is an HRA required?

There is a network of protected sites across Europe, which includes Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and RAMSAR sites. These are designated for their flora, fauna or birds under the Habitats Directive or the Birds Directive, respectively. Collectively these are known as European Sites.

All Neighbourhood Plans which may have a significant effect on designated European Sites are required to undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). These assess the effect on the flora and fauna that are listed as the reason for the designation. Neighbourhood Plans may only proceed to examination where it has been ascertained that there are no 'Likely Significant Effects'. HRAs will usually only be required when the Plan designates sites for development.

An initial HRA screening will normally be carried out once a draft plan has been drawn up. If the initial HRA screening identifies that there are European Sites in the proximity in which the Plan may have significant effects upon, then a full Habitat Regulations Assessment will be required.

6. Does the Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan require an SEA or HRA?

6.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Request and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Request were issued to Tandridge District Council on 19th March 2020.

6.2 The HRA Screening Response received from Tandridge District Council in April 2020 concluded:

This report has considered the impact that the Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan could have on the Ashdown Forest SAC/SPA and the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC as part of Stage 1: Screening of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). In doing so it has taken into consideration the nature of the sites and the reasons for their respective designations, whilst also having regard to the precautionary principle and the in-combination effect with other plans.

At this stage, based on the precautionary principle, it can be determined that the Neighbourhood Plan would not have any likely significant effects on the International Habitats Sites, in combination with other plans and programmes. The factors which can be screened out are:

Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA

- *Risk of increase air pollution at the Ashdown Forest.*
- *Risk of increase in recreational disturbance at the Ashdown Forest SPA, affecting the ground nesting birds.*

Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC

- *Risk of increase in air pollution;*
- *Risk of increase in recreational disturbance, affecting the chalk grassland; and*
- *Risk of increase in water pollution*

As such, at this stage and based on current assumptions regarding development levels and location, it is not necessary to proceed to the next stage of the HRA process, Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment.

However, the District Council reserves the right to review the need for Appropriate Assessment as the Neighbourhood Plan's exact intentions regarding type, scale and location of development becomes clearer; and also in light of any emerging technical evidence.

6.3 Following delays due to the Covid pandemic, Tatsfield Parish Council T were back in email consultation with Tandridge District Council during 2021 to conclude whether an SEA would potentially be required. On 2nd November 2021, the following advice was received from them:

'Regarding your question about SEA, the draft NP we have was sent to us in September 2020, and that was the document on which we provided extensive comments. While it still had gaps and areas to be refined when evidence was available, the most significant area (from the point of view of SEA) was that the Housing chapter had policies in it about site allocations, though it did not identify the allocations or the size of them.

So if you asked us to assess whether this version required an SEA I would have to say "yes", because the draft implies the allocation of an unknown amount and distribution of housing.

As I understand it, you now have moved away from the idea of allocating sites, which means that an SEA is far less likely to be needed. So I suggest that you carry out a thorough review and update of the draft before you send it to TDC for an assessment of whether a SEA is necessary. This is likely to save you unnecessary work, and as you say, the draft plan needs updating anyway.'

6.4 Following further drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan and the decision not to allocate sites for housing, a further Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Request was issued to Tandridge District Council on 4th February 2022 with the plan having now reached a draft almost ready for Regulation 14 consultation.

6.5 The SEA Screening Response received from Tandridge District Council in March 2022 concluded:

This report represents the Strategic Environmental Assessment 'Screening Assessment' for Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan. It represents the view of Tandridge District Council. Strategic Environmental Assessment is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental effects of a plan before it is made.

*Tandridge District Council's conclusion, **based on consideration of the nature and extent of environmental assets combined with the absence of site allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan, is that there are likely to be no significant effects and therefore an SEA is not necessary.***

The statutory consultees (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England) have been consulted on the initial screening opinion and have not raised any issues which would lead to a different conclusion.

6.6 Following the Screening Responses received from Tandridge District Council in April 2020 we concluded that **an HRA is not required** and in March 2022 we concluded that **an SEA is not required** for the Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) SCREENING FOR TATSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN PREPARED BY TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR TATSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

See link below

<https://e-voice.org.uk/tatsfieldneighbourhoodplan/assets/documents/tdc-report>

Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan Habitat Regulations Assessment Stage 1: Screening Tandridge District
Council - April 2022

See link below

<https://e-voice.org.uk/tatsfieldneighbourhoodplan/assets/documents/hab-regs>