

Environment Agency Consultation on Neighbourhood Plans, including Strategic Environmental Assessments

The Environment Agency is currently being consulted on a large number of Neighbourhood Plans across Sussex and Hampshire. In order to manage this work and ensure that we both manage environmental risk and discharge our responsibilities as a consultation body we have made some changes to our ways of working.

These changes include a request to Horsham District Council to apply standing advice in relation to Scoping consultations under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. Please note that in agreeing to apply this standing advice we are satisfied that you have discharged the legal requirement to consult the Environment Agency.

Our specific ways of working are detailed below:

Pre-submission Consultation (led by Parish Council/Neighbourhood Forum)

We have produced a Neighbourhood Plan Checklist for your local area. We will provide this to Neighbourhood Plan groups when consulted at the early stages of Plan production.

Submission Consultation (led by the Local Planning Authority)

Where consulted we will provide you with comments on the Submission Plan consultation. We will provide bespoke comments in areas with specific environmental concerns.

Strategic Environmental Assessment - Scoping

Where a scoping opinion for an SEA of a Neighbourhood Plan is sought the following standard paragraph will apply:

The Environment Agency is a statutory consultee for Strategic Environmental Assessments and provides advice to Local Planning Authorities on the scope and findings of the SEA. We recommend an objective is included to protect and enhance the environment. Indicators should relate to the environmental constraints in your local area. This may include flood risk, water quality, and biodiversity.

We also recommend your SEA takes account of relevant policies, plans and strategies including your local Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, flood risk strategies and the South East River Basin Management Plan.

Please refer to the Neighbourhood Plan Checklist for your area for more details.