

## **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **REPORT UNDER DELEGATED POWERS OF HEAD OF PLANNING**

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#### **Title:**

**SEA SCREENING OPINION FOR CRANLEIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**[Wards Affected: Cranleigh]**

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#### **Summary and purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the issuing of a formal Screening Opinion to Cranleigh Parish Council on whether the Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan is required to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

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#### **How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:**

The Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan, as part of the development plan, will have an important role in supporting and delivering Corporate Priorities, including protecting the environment and delivering affordable housing.

#### **Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### **Legal Implications:**

It is the responsibility of the local planning authority to ensure that all the regulations appropriate to the neighbourhood plan submitted to it have been met in order for the proposal to progress. The LPA must decide whether the neighbourhood plan is compatible with EU obligations (including obligations under the SEA Directive).

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#### **Background on SEA**

1. In order to decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan's preparation according to the requirements set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
2. Where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) must be carried out and an environmental report prepared. Conversely, where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require SEA), a statement of reasons for the determination must be prepared.

#### **Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan**

3. Cranleigh Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan covering the whole of the parish. The neighbourhood area for the plan was approved on 16 July 2013.

4. On 20 August 2015, the Parish Council requested an SEA screening opinion. The Borough Council subsequently appointed AECOM to produce a Screening Opinion Report for the plan. The draft report received on 16 January 2016 concluded that there is evidence to suggest the potential for significant effects to arise as a result of the plan and that SEA should be applied as a tool to ensure that this is the case.
5. The draft report was sent to the three environmental bodies for their view on 25 January 2016. All three bodies concurred with AECOM's conclusions. AECOM have reviewed the responses and have stated that no changes are needed to their report.
6. On the basis of this, it is therefore considered that a screening opinion can be issued to Cranleigh Parish Council stating that SEA is required to be undertaken for the Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan. This is attached as Appendix 1.

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### **Recommendation**

That following expert advice from AECOM and comments from the Environmental bodies, it is recommended that a Screening Opinion be issued to Cranleigh Parish Council stating that SEA is required to be undertaken for the Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan.

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### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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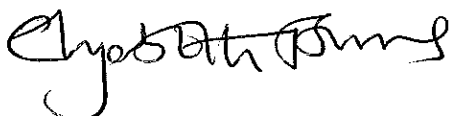
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### **ACTION AUTHORISED**



Elizabeth Sims, Head of Planning, under paragraph 90 of the Scheme of Delegation

Date:

19/4/16