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Chief Executive

Town Hall  
Bexhill-on-Sea  
East Sussex TN39 3JX

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021

Peasmarsh NP SEA  
Rother District Council

By Email Only

Dear Mike,

### **SEA Screening Opinion for Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Plan**

Thank you for your request for a SEA screening opinion, together with supporting documents. Rother District Council, as the responsible authority, must determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.

RDC has consulted with the statutory environmental bodies (SEBs) – Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England as part of this process and passed them the Parish Council's submitted material. The EA have responded that they "*are unable to provide bespoke comments but hope to again when resources allow*". Natural England have also provided a fairly generic response. Historic England are of the view that SEA is required but this opinion may change as more information on the nature of the Plan becomes available. All 3 responses are attached.

In light of these replies, as well as our own interpretation of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, I would advise as follows on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment, that the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) is likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore a SEA should be undertaken. I have set out the reasoning below in relation to the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as contained in Schedule 1 of the above Regulations:

- a) The PNP will form part of the 'development plan' and thereby exert a direct and substantial influence over development proposals coming forward in the plan period.



- b) The PNP has a key role in integrating social, economic and environmental considerations in meeting its obligation to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- c) The PNP needs to consider a number of nationally or locally important environmental factors, notably:
  - i) The area is wholly within the High Weald AONB, which enjoys the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
  - ii) There are many key features of the AONB within the Parish, including historic field boundaries, historic routeways, etc.
  - iii) There are significant heritage constraints, including a number of listed buildings, unlisted buildings of architectural interest, and archaeological notification areas. There are potential direct impacts where sites contain, or lie within these assets, as well as indirect impacts through development in the setting of assets.
  - iv) The Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Areas flank the settlement to the north and south, as do priority habitats of deciduous woodland and also ancient woodland.

Please note that RDC has already produced a Sustainability Appraisal in 2018 for the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan, available [here](#). It appraises strategic policies including the development strategy and environmental policies, some of which will apply to Peasmarsch.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Regards,



Julia Edwards

Senior Planning Officer  
Directorate of Climate Change and Place  
Rother District Council