

Screening Statement on the determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC for the Chinnor Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

06 SEPTEMBER 2019

SUMMARY

Following consultation with statutory bodies, South Oxfordshire District Council (the 'Council') determines that the Chinnor Neighbourhood Development Plan Review (Chinnor NDP) does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

INTRODUCTION

1. An initial screening opinion was used to determine whether or not the contents of the emerging Chinnor Neighbourhood Development Plan Review (Chinnor NDP) required a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC (the Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).
2. Any land use plan or programme 'which sets the framework for future development consent of projects' must be screened according to a set of criteria from Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These criteria include exceptions for plans 'which determine the use of a small area at local level' or which only propose 'minor modifications to a plan', if it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
3. This initial screening opinion was subject to consultation with Historic England, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Oxfordshire County Council. The results of the screening process are detailed in this Screening Statement.

THE SCREENING PROCESS

1. Using the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations, a Screening Opinion determines whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects.
2. The extract from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' in Appendix 1 provides a flow diagram to demonstrate the SEA screening process.

3. Table 1 in Appendix 1 sets out the criteria from the Practical Guide, along with an assessment of the Chinnor NDP against each criterion to ascertain whether a SEA is required.
4. Part of the screening process also includes the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening, which can be found in Appendix 2. The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening concluded that the Chinnor NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Chinnor NDP is not required.
5. Appendix 3 considers whether the plan is likely to have likely significant effects on the environment.
6. These two assessments feed into Table 1 and the SEA screening statement.
7. The council's screening opinion concluded that the implementation of the Chinnor NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment and therefore would not require an SEA.

CHINNOR NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

8. The review of the Chinnor NDP has been undertaken to identify housing allocations that were not previously allocated in the adopted 2017 Chinnor NDP.
9. The NDP is proposing to allocate five sites, delivering a total of 428 dwellings. All of the proposed site allocations have extant planning permission and they vary between delivering 120 units and 61 units.
10. The site assessment process identified that five sites should be allocated for housing in the reviewed Chinnor NDP. These sites include:
 - Chi7 – Land west of Mill Lane Community Primary School – 78 dwellings;
 - Chi21 – Land south of Greenwood Avenue (2) – 140 dwellings;
 - Chi1 – Land east of Crowell Road – 120 dwellings;
 - Chi20 – Land south of Greenwood Avenue – 80 dwellings; and
 - Chi13 – Land north of Lower Icknield Way (4) – 89 dwellings.
11. When this screening opinion was undertaken all of these sites had extant planning permission, whether that be permission granted through outline applications, reserved matters, full applications, or appeal.

12. The Chinnor NDP is proposing a development boundary which is drawn around the village of Chinnor, which is classed as a larger village in the council's settlement hierarchy. The proposed development boundary includes existing buildings and their curtilage as well as proposed site allocations and sites with extant planning permission for residential development. The proposed boundary excludes adjacent farmland and buildings which are located further into the countryside.
13. Careful consideration of the proposed boundary in relation to how South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012 guides the location and scale of development indicates that the proposed boundary may represent a more restrictive approach. Policy CSS1 in the Core Strategy sets out the overall strategy for the district, distinguishing between settlements and countryside. The strategy supports appropriate development in larger villages like Chinnor. It also sets out that outside of the towns and villages development will need to relate to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment. The points from the strategy relating to Chinnor include:
 - 'iii) supporting and enhancing the larger villages of Berinsfield, Benson, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote as local service centres;*
 - v) outside the towns and villages, and other major development sites any changes will need to relate to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment.'*
14. Policy CRS1 in the Core Strategy supports site allocations and does not restrict the size of infill development in larger villages. The policy sets out that housing will be allowed that contributes to the present and future economic, environmental and social sustainability of the villages.
15. Paragraph 13.10 of the Core Strategy 2012 defines infill development as:
 - 'Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.'*
16. The proposed boundary may be more restrictive because it potentially excludes opportunities for infill development on the edge of the settlement and focuses new (infill) development within the built up area, where there are, listed buildings, a Conservation Area, and potential archaeological remains. The proposed boundary could result in the plan directing new development to sites that could potentially have significant effects on the historic environment.
17. However, there are existing policies in place in the development plan that provide the necessary mechanisms to ensure the proposed boundary will not give rise to likely significant effects on the historic environment. These policies include:

- Policy CSEN3 Historic Environment (Core Strategy 2012);
- Policy CSQ3 Design (Core Strategy 2012);
- Policy CON1 (Local Plan 2011);
- Policy CON2 (Local Plan 2011);
- Policy CON3 (Local Plan 2011);
- Policy CON4 (Local Plan 2011);
- Policy CON5 (Local Plan 2011);
- Policy CON6 (Local Plan 2011);
- Policy CON7 (Local Plan 2011);
- Policy CON11 (Local Plan 2011);
- Policy CON12 (Local Plan 2011);
- Policy CON13 (Local Plan 2011); and
- Policy CON14 (Local Plan 2011).

18. These policies set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The draft Chinnor NDP proposes to carry forward policies similar to the ones in the adopted NDP (policies CH C1 Design, CH C2 Conservation Areas, CH C3 Heritage Assets), that will ensure the proposed boundary will not give rise to likely significant effects.

19. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Chinnor NDP Review would not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

20. The Screening Opinion was sent to Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Oxfordshire County Council on 8th April 2019 for a four week consultation period. The responses in full are in Appendix 4.

21. Historic England agree with the Council's view that the Chinnor NDP would not lead to significant effects on the historic environment and therefore the Chinnor NDP does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

22. Natural England agree with the Initial Screening Opinion and consider that the plan does not require an SEA or Appropriate Assessment.
23. The Environment Agency did not provide a response to the Screening Opinion.

CONCLUSION

24. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council and the responses from the statutory consultees the following determination has been reached.
25. The Chinnor NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects; therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Chinnor NDP is not required.
26. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 3, the Chinnor NDP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.
27. The Chinnor NDP does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

Appendix 1 – Extract from ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ (DCLG) (2005)

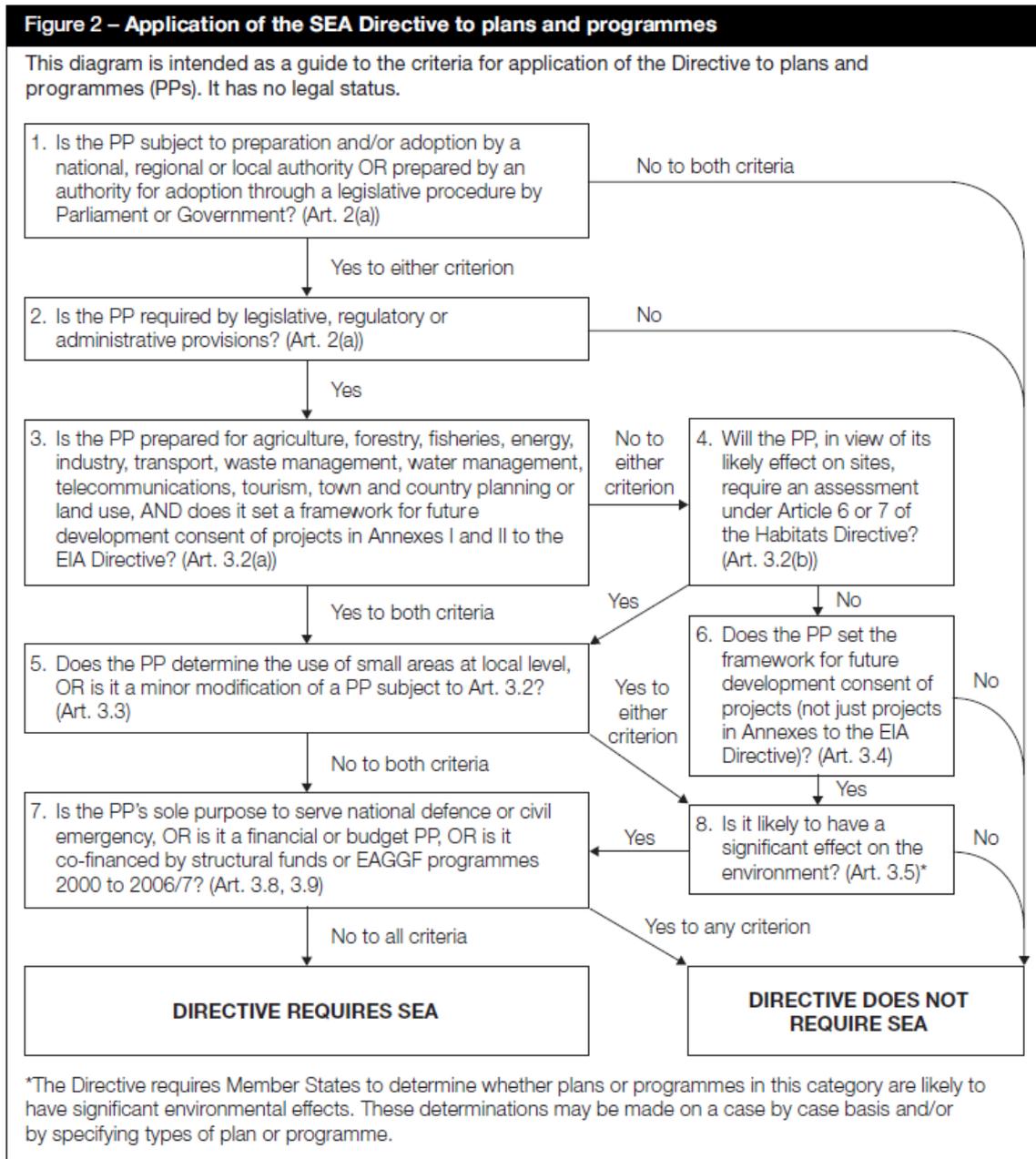


Table 1: Application of SEA Directive as shown in Appendix 1

[Note to author – most of these boxes contain standard text –greyed out. Those where specific details need to be included are Qs 3,4,5 & 8]

Stage	Y/N	Explanation
<p>1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan 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? (Art. 2(a))</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The preparation of and adoption of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by the Chinnor NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to the Chinnor Parish Council (as the “relevant body”) and will be “made” by South Oxfordshire District Council as the local authority. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is subject to the following regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 • The Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 • The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) (Amendments) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendments) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendments) Regulations 2017
<p>2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Whilst the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will, if “made”, form part of the Development Plan for the District. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.</p>

<p>3. Is the Neighbourhood Plan 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 (see Appendix 2) to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The Chinnor NDP is prepared for town and country planning and land use and will set out a framework for future development in Chinnor, including the development of residential/retail/employment* uses. <i>However, these projects are not of the scale referred to in Article 4(2) of the EIA Directive – listed at Annex II of the directive.</i></p>
<p>4. Will the Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The Chinnor NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Chinnor NDP in Appendix 2.</p>
<p>5. Does the Neighbourhood Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The Chinnor NDP will determine the use of sites/small areas at a local level.</p>
<p>6. Does the Neighbourhood Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>When made, the Chinnor NDP will include a series of policies to guide development within the village (and will allocate sites for specific development*). This will inform the determination of planning applications providing a framework for future development consent of projects.</p>
<p>7. Is the Neighbourhood Plan's sole purpose to serve the 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? (Art 3.8,</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>N/A</p>

3.9)		
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	No likely significant effects upon the environment have been identified. See assessment of the likely significance of effects on the environment in Appendix 3.

Appendix 2 - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Chinnor Neighbourhood Development Plan

INTRODUCTION

1. The Local Authority is the “competent authority” under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and needs to ensure that Neighbourhood Plans have been assessed through the Habitats Regulations process. This looks at the potential for significant impacts on nature conservation sites that are of European importance¹, also referred to as Natura 2000.
2. This Screening Assessment relates to a Neighbourhood Development Plan that will be in general conformity with the strategic policies within the development plan² (the higher level plan for town and country planning and land use). This Screening Assessment uses the Habitats Regulations Assessment dated March 2019 (link to [Habitats Regulations Assessment](#)) of South Oxfordshire District Council’s emerging Local Plan as its basis for assessment. From this, the Local Authority will determine whether the Chinnor Neighbourhood Development Plan is likely to result in significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites either alone or in combination with other plans and policies and, therefore, whether an ‘Appropriate Assessment’ is required.

LEGISLATIVE BASIS

3. Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive provides that

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

4. Regulations 105-106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 state:

¹ Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for other species, and for habitats.

² The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (December 2012) and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (January 2006).

“105.-(1) Where a land use plan-

- (a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*
 - (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, the plan-making authority for that plan must, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site’s conservation objectives.*
- (2) The plan-making authority must for the purposes of the assessment consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representations made by that body within such reasonable time as the authority specifies.*
- (3) The plan-making authority must also, if it considers it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if it does so, it must take such steps for that purpose as it considers appropriate.*
- (4) In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 107, the plan-making authority must give effect to the land use plan only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site or the European offshore marine site (as the case may be).*
- (5) A plan-making authority must provide such information as the appropriate authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the discharge by the appropriate authority of its obligations under this Chapter.*

(6) This regulation does not apply in relation to a site which is—

- (a) a European site by reason of regulation 8(1)(c), or*
- (b) a European offshore marine site by reason of regulation 18(c) of the Offshore Marine Conservation Regulations (site protected in accordance with Article 5(4) of the Habitats Directive).*

106.—(1) A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment under regulation 105 or to enable it to determine whether that assessment is required.

(2) In this regulation, “qualifying body” means a parish council, or an organisation or body designated as a neighbourhood forum, authorised for the purposes of a neighbourhood development plan to act in relation to a neighbourhood area as a result of section 61F of the TCPA 1990 (authorisation to act in relation to neighbourhood areas)(159), as

applied by section 38C of the 2004 Planning Act (supplementary provisions)(160).

(3) Where the competent authority decides to revoke or modify a neighbourhood development plan after it has been made, it must for that purpose make an appropriate assessment of the implications for any European site likely to be significantly affected in view of that site's conservation objectives; and regulation 105 and paragraph (1) apply with the appropriate modifications in relation to such a revocation or modification.

(4) This regulation applies in relation to England only.

ASSESSMENT

5. The HRA of the emerging new South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 used a screening distance of 17km to identify European sites which could be affected by development from the plans. This distance has been subject to consultation with Natural England and reflects the average travel to work distance in the district.
6. There are two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 17km of the Chinnor Neighbourhood Development Plan. These are as follows:
 - Chilterns Beechwoods SAC – approximately 0km from the NDP boundary; and
 - Aston Rowant SAC – approximately 3km from the NDP boundary.

Chilterns Beachwood SAC

7. The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC comprises nine separate sites scattered across the Chilterns. There are three features of interest: semi-natural grasslands and scrubland on chalk; Asperulo-Fagetum beech woodland (for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the UK and lies in the centre of the habitat's UK range); and Stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence. The rare coralroot *Cardamine bulbifera* is found in these woods.
8. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impact of forestry and woodland management, disease, deer and the invasive species of grey squirrel upon beech. Additionally, the changes in species distribution of stag beetles as well as the impact of public access and disturbance upon stag beetle. Air pollution and the impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition also threaten and dry grasslands, beech and stag beetle. With regard to the types of development that may be brought forward in the Local Plan, air pollution and visitor disturbance could impact the site.

9. Individual stag beetles may travel outside of the SAC boundary, although it is unlikely that they will travel far – it is generally only the male stag beetles that flies during the summer months, and the females beetles rarely flies. Research suggests that 2km may be an appropriate buffer inside which sites could be functionally connected, as this is the distance that males travel to females during the breeding season.

Aston Rowant SAC

10. Aston Rowant is classified as SAC because it supports one of the largest remaining populations of juniper in lowland Britain. It is selected as an example of juniper formations on the chalk in the south east of England. At this site juniper is present as part of a mixed scrub community but also occurs as isolated bushes in chalk grassland. In common with most lowland populations of juniper, successful reproduction and survival of new generations of bushes is extremely rare and conservation is currently dependent upon significant levels of management intervention. The low level of reproductive success is the main threat to the feature at this site. Aston Rowant also supports Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests although this is not a primary reason for classification as SAC.
11. The main pressures and threats to this site include an unsustainable on-site population, changes in species distribution, disease of juniper as well as the impacts of air pollution and the risks of atmospheric nitrogen deposition upon juniper. Additionally, conflicting conservation objectives threaten beech. With regard to the types of development that may be brought forward in the Local Plan, air pollution could impact the site.

SAC Conclusions

12. Both of the above SAC designations are outside of the built-up area of Chinnor. None of the designations are located within the NDP designated area. The closest, one of the Chilterns Beechwood SAC sites, has its boundary along part of the western boundary of the NDP area.
13. The NDP is not proposing any new homes that do not already have planning permission. As such, the Chinnor NDP does not result in any additional 'new' homes. Therefore, despite housing sites being within proximity to the Chilterns Beechwood SAC, in the council's opinion, the Chinnor NDP does not require an Appropriate Assessment as consent has already been granted for the housing allocations.

CONCLUSION

14. The Chinnor NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects; therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Chinnor NDP is not required.

Appendix 3 - Assessment of the likely significance of effects on the environment

[Note to author – most of these boxes contain standard text (greyed out). Those where specific details need to be included are Qs 1a,c,d, 2a,b,e,f and g]

1. Characteristics of the Plan, having regard to:	
(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 Chinnor NDP would, if adopted, form part of the Statutory Development Plan and as such does contribute to the framework for future development consent of projects. However, the Plan will sit within the wider framework set by the National Planning Policy Framework, the strategic policies of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (2012) and Local Plan 2011 (2006); and the emerging Local Plan 2034. Proposed site allocations are of a small scale and are not of the scale referred to in Article 4(2) of the EIA Directive – listed at Annex II of the directive.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	A Neighbourhood Development Plan must have regard to national policy and be in conformity with the Local Plan for the District. It does not influence other plans. It should also take account of the emerging planning policy. The Chinnor NDP is unlikely to influence other Plans or Programmes within the Statutory Development Plan.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	National policy requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread through plan-making, including the Chinnor NDP. A basic condition of the Chinnor NDP is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Within this wider context the Chinnor NDP itself is unlikely to have a significant positive or negative effect.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	Chinnor contains the following environmental designations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeological constraints • BAP priority habitats • Local wildlife site • Flood zones • Proposed local wildlife sites

- Protected species buffer

There are two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 17km of Kidmore End Neighbourhood Development Plan. These are as follows:

- Chilterns Beechwood SAC; and
- Aston Rowant SAC.

The SACs are located outside the built-up area of Chinnor. The closest SAC runs along the west boundary of the NDP area. The NDP is not proposing any additional new development within the NDP area above what has already been granted planning permission.

There are also a number of BAP priority Habitats within the parish area. Whilst these are not referred to in the SEA directive or EIA regulations, they should be a consideration in plan making and taken into consideration when allocating sites. BAP priority habitats are those that were identified as being most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). The proposed allocations have extant planning permission and therefore it is considered there would not be any likely significant impact.

On the basis that all the allocations have extant planning permissions the amount and location of the development proposed in the Chinnor NDP is known. The site assessment considered the suitability, availability and achievability of the sites. The site assessment recommended that 5 sites are allocated for development:

- Chi7 – Land west of Mill Lane Community Primary School – 78 dwellings;
- Chi21 – Land south of Greenwood Avenue (2) – 140 dwellings;
- Chi1 – Land east of Crowell Road – 120 dwellings;
- Chi20 – Land south of Greenwood Avenue – 80 dwellings; and
- Chi13 – Land north of Lower Icknield Way (4) – 89 dwellings.

	<p>The NDP is proposing growth in line with the extant planning permissions in the NDP area. No 'new' housing above what has been granted planning permission is allocated in the Chinnor NDP.</p>
<p>(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</p>	<p>The proposed development in the Chinnor NDP has been judged not to have a likely significant impact on Community legislation.</p>
<p>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</p>	
<p>(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;</p>	<p>The Chinnor NDP is generally likely to influence development for a period of 15 years from its adoption, which is in line with national guidance. The Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have modest but enduring positive environmental effects. The effects are not likely to be reversible as they relate to development.</p> <p>The main effect on the parish will be the impact of the allocated sites, however all the allocated sites have extant planning permissions.</p> <p>Other forms of developments that might occur include householder and small scale infill development, these could impact on the character and appearance on the conservation areas, listed buildings, their settings and the AONB.</p> <p>The effects of this are not likely to be reversible as they relate to development. However, this is a review of the Chinnor Neighbourhood Plan to enable housing allocations to be incorporated into the plan, which have extant planning permissions.</p> <p>Aside from the proposed housing allocations, which already have extant planning permission, the effects will be of a local scale and the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will reinforce the protection offered to Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and the AONB. No additional</p>

	development is proposed near sensitive locations that would cause likely significant effects.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	It is intended that the positive effects of providing residential development will have positive cumulative benefits for the area. However, as the sites already have extant planning permission. The affects of the proposals from the plan are not likely to be significant.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	The effects of the Plan are unlikely to have transboundary ³ impacts.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	The policies in the plan are unlikely to present risks to human health or the environment.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The NDP relates to the parish of Chinnor, which includes the village of Chinnor and the communities of Emmington, Henton, Wainhill, Chinnor Hill and Chinnor. The allocations focus around the edge of Chinnor. The NDP is not allocating any sites or development that do not already have planning permission, therefore it won't be promoting any 'new' development beyond what has already been granted planning permission. Therefore, the plan is not likely to give rise to significant effects.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and	<p>The Chinnor NDP offers an opportunity to enhance the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the area through the proposals being considered.</p> <p>The main vulnerability of the parish is the impact of the proposed housing allocations. However, these housing allocations have already obtained planning permission.</p> <p>Chinnor NDP contains the following Special Natural Characteristics and Cultural Heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listed building • Conservation Areas • Chilterns AONB

³ Transboundary effects are understood to be in other Member States.

- Archaeological Constraints
- Ancient woodland
- Local wildlife sites

Allocation Chi01 has a small portion of the site overlapping with an archaeological constraints area, however this site has extant planning permission and construction work has started. All the other allocations are not located within any of these areas, therefore it is unlikely to result in significant effects on the nearby Special Natural Characteristics and Cultural Heritage.

The Chinnor NDP is proposing a development boundary that could put pressure on the conservation area and listed buildings in Chinnor. However, the impact is not likely to become significant because of the proposed policies in the NDP (CH C1 Design, CH C2 Conservation Areas, and CH C3 Heritage Assets) and existing policies in the Local Development Plan (CSEN3 Historic Environment, CSQ Design, CON1, CON2, CON3, CON4, CON5, CON6, CON7, CON11, CON12, CON13, CON14), will ensure the protection of the heritage assets.

There are two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 17km of the built up area of Chinnor. These are as follows:

- Chilterns Beechwood SAC;
- Aston Rowant SAC;

More detail on each Special Area of Conservation features, objectives, pressures, and threats related to development can be found in Appendix 1 of South Oxfordshire Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (December 2018), and in appendix 2 of this report.

We have already set out Appendix 2 that the Chinnor NDP is unlikely to have significant

effects on Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment of the Chinnor Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.

There are also the following significant areas of designation within 5km of Chinnor NDP:

- Chinnor Hill SSSI – within NDP area;
- Chinnor Chalk Pitt SSSI – within NDP area;
- Aston Rowant SSSI borders NDP area;
- Shirburn SSSI - 5km from NDP area;
- Wornsley Chalk Banks SSSI – 5km from NDP area;
- Lodge Hill SSSI – 2km from NDP area; and
- Bradenham Woods, park Wood and Coppice SSSI – 5km from NDP area.

The proposed allocations already benefit from planning permission and are located away from the SSSI's, therefore it is unlikely to result in significant effects on the nearby SSSI's.

There are also a number of BAP priority Habitats within the parish area. Whilst these are not referred to in the SEA directive or EIA regulations, they should be a consideration in plan making and taken into consideration when allocating sites. BAP priority habitats are those that were identified as being most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). The proposed site allocations are not located on any BAP habitats and therefore the proposals in the NDP do not give rise to significant adverse environmental effects.

It is clear that the aspects of the plan that are most likely to affect the special natural characteristics and cultural heritage are the site allocations. Chinnor already has an adopted NDP, with the purpose of this review to include

	<p>residential allocations. However, given that all the allocations in the Chinnor NDP relate to sites which have already obtained permission, the proposals in the plan are not considered to create likely significant effects.</p> <p>The majority of the above designations are outside of the built-up area of the village (except the conservation areas and listed buildings). All of the proposed allocations adjoin the built up edge of the Chinnor and all are located outside of the Chilterns AONB.</p> <p>There are sensitivities regarding cultural heritage within the Chinnor NDP area, with two conservation areas and a number of listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments spread around the parish. There is currently not an adopted Conservation Area Appraisal or management plan for the Conservation Areas within Chinnor parish, and therefore detailed information on the risks and vulnerability of the Conservation Area or listed buildings and their setting is not readily available. However, the sites that have been allocated through the site assessment already have planning permission, and therefore the cultural heritages have been considered in detail through the planning application process. In addition, the impact of the proposed development boundary is not likely to be significant as the proposed policies in the NDP (CH C1 Design, CH C2 Conservation Areas, and CH C3 Heritage Assets) and existing Local Development Plan (CSEN3 Historic Environment, CSQ Design, CON1, CON2, CON3, CON4, CON5, CON6, CON7, CON11, CON12, CON13, CON14), will ensure the protection of the cultural heritage in Chinnor.</p>
<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>The area covered by the Chinnor NDP includes part of the Chilterns AONB, recognised to contain some of the finest landscapes in England. The allocations identified fall outside the part of the parish covered by the AONB. On this basis, the proposals in the plan are not likely to give rise to significant effects.</p>

APPENDIX 4 – RESPONSES FROM STATUTORY CONSULTEES

NATURAL ENGLAND

Date: 02 May 2019
Our ref: 279292
Your ref: Chinnor Neighbourhood Plan – SEA and HRA Screening Opinion



Robyn.Tobutt@southandvale.gov.uk

BY EMAIL ONLY

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Crewe
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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Robyn,

Chinnor Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 08 April 2019 which was received by Natural England on the same day.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

Based on the information provided, whilst there are a number of sensitive natural assets within or near the NDP area, including Aston Rowant SAC, Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, a number of SSSIs and the Chilterns AONB we can confirm that since all the sites allocated within the NDP already have planning permission, any significant effects on these sensitive areas will already have been dealt with through either the Local Plan HRA and SA or the individual planning applications. As a result, we agree that the Chinnor Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA or Appropriate Assessment.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Rebecca Micklem on 020822 57686. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Micklem
Lead Adviser Sustainable Development
Thames Team

HISTORIC ENGLAND

Dear Robyn

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the draft Screening opinion for SEA of the Reviewed Chinnor Neighbourhood Plan. I am happy to confirm that Historic England do not feel there are likely significant environmental effects arising from the plan, or reasonable alternatives (in particular, not defining a settlement boundary) within areas of interest to Historic England. As such, we are happy to agree that SEA should not be required as part of the plan-making process in this case. We do reserve the right to request a review of this opinion should the plan change in scope at a later stage of its development.

These comments are without prejudice to comment we may wish to make on individual planning applications.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lloyd-Sweet

Robert Lloyd-Sweet
Historic Places Advisor (South East England)
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Historic England

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