

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 Culham Neighbourhood Development Plan

13 JANUARY 2022

SUMMARY

Following consultation with statutory bodies, South Oxfordshire District Council (the 'Council') determines that the Culham Neighbourhood Development Plan (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 Culham Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2011/42/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. The initial screening opinion was subject to consultation with Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. 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 Culham 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 Culham 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 Culham 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 opinion.
7. The council's screening opinion concluded that the implementation of the Culham NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment and therefore would not require an SEA.

CULHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

8. The Culham Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) will contain the following objectives and policies:

Objectives:

- a. *To manage the incremental growth of the village through sensitive infill and to protect the surrounding countryside from harmful development.*
- b. *To conserve the special heritage character of the village and its landscape setting.*
- c. *To protect and improve the ecological value and connectivity of the green infrastructure assets of the village and wider parish.*
- d. *To sustain community facilities and services that are essential to community life.*

Policies:

- *Policy CUL1 – Community Facilities*
- *Policy CUL2 – Culham Conservation Area*
- *Policy CUL3 – Design Codes*
- *Policy CUL4 – Local Heritage Assets*
- *Policy CUL5 – Nature Recovery*
- *Policy CUL6 – Dark Skies*
- *Policy CUL7 – Mitigating Climate Change*

9. The Culham NDP will contain policies to protect the character of the village, through protecting the conservation area, design policies and identifying local heritage assets.
10. The plan does not allocate any sites for housing and supports infill and the redevelopment of previously developed land, in accordance with the district's adopted Local Plan 2035.

11. The strategic site STRAT9: Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre is within the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, the Neighbourhood Plan policies do not seek to directly address the Local Plan strategic site allocation, the neighbourhood plan focuses instead on the existing village of Culham.
12. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Culham NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment.
13. The relationship between the Culham NDP and the Local Plan strategic allocation will be monitored throughout the neighbourhood plan preparation and significant changes may require the SEA screening opinion to be reviewed.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

14. The Screening Opinion was sent to Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England on 9 November 2021 for a four week consultation period. The responses in full are in Appendix 4.
15. Natural England and Historic England agree with the Initial Screening Opinion and consider that the plan does not require an SEA or Appropriate Assessment.
16. The Environment Agency did not respond.

CONCLUSION

17. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council and the responses from the statutory consultees, the following determination has been reached.
18. The Culham NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Culham Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.
19. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 1 & 3, the Culham NDP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.
20. The Culham NDP does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

Authorised by: Harry Barrington-Mountford

Signed:



Date: 13/01/2022

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

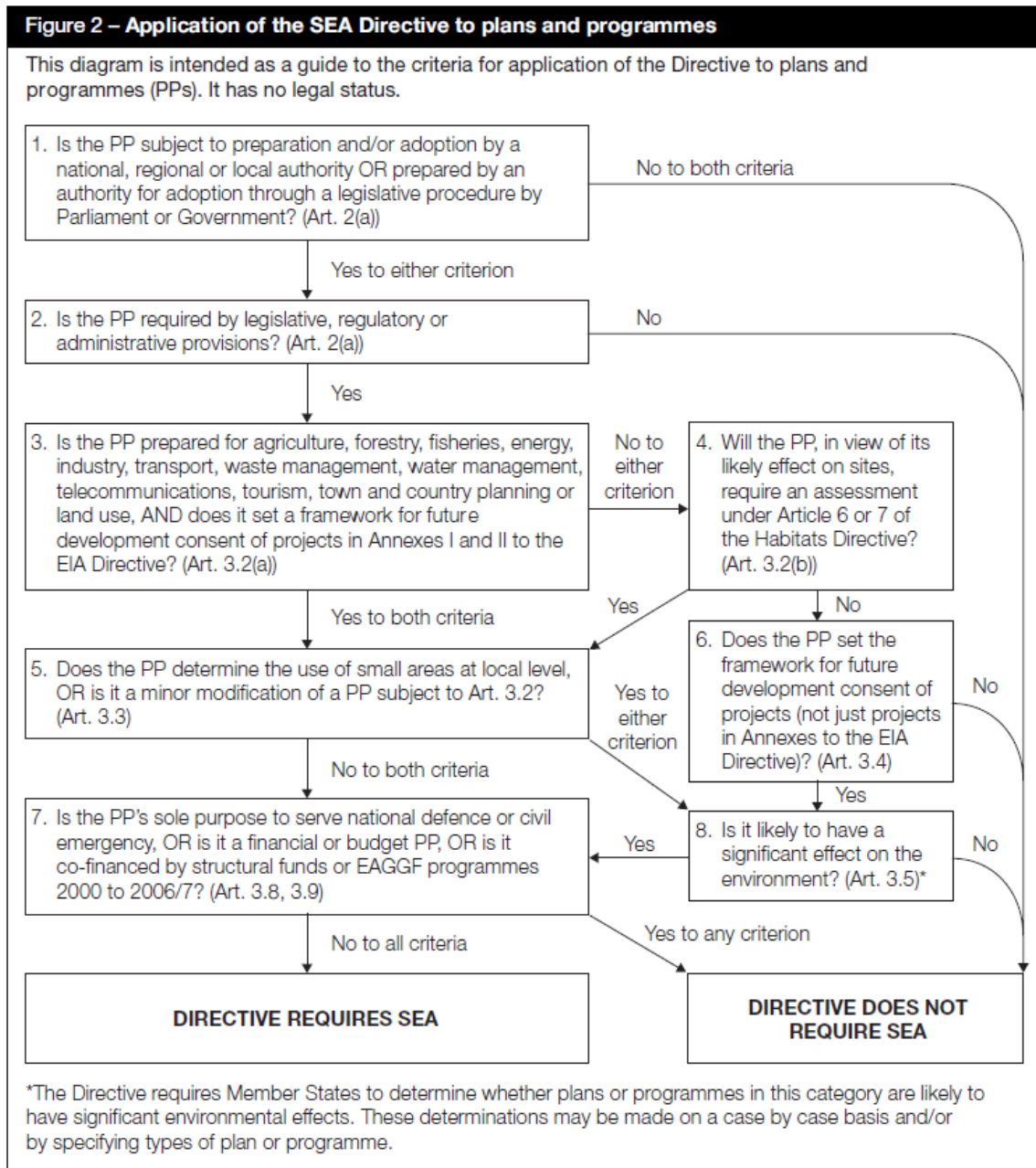


Table 1: Application of SEA Directive as shown in Appendix 1

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 Culham NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to the Culham Parish Council (as the “relevant body”) and will be “made” by South Oxfordshire 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) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) 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 Culham NDP is prepared for town and country planning and land use and will not set out a framework for future development of projects that would require an EIA.</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 Culham NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Culham 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 Culham 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 Culham NDP will include a series of policies to guide development within the village. 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	The plan is not likely to have significant effects on the environment. See assessment of the likely significance of effects on the environment in Appendix 3.

Appendix 2 - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Culham 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 of South Oxfordshire District Council’s emerging Local Plan³ as its basis for assessment. From this, the Local Authority will determine whether the Culham 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:

“105.—(1) Where a land use plan—

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

² The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (December 2020)

³ South Oxfordshire Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (March 2019)

- (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."

EUROPEAN SITES

5. The HRA of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 used a screening distance of 17km to identify European sites which could be affected by development from the plan. This distance has been subject to consultation with Natural England and reflects the average travel to work distance in the district. As such, the same distance has been applied in this HRA Screening.
6. The following European sites lie wholly or partly within 17km of Culham and have been taken into consideration:
 1. Oxford Meadow SAC – approximately 13km (Oxford City)
7. Oxford Meadow is designated as a SAC for its lowland hay meadows and creeping marshworts.
8. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of hydrological changes and the invasive species of *Crassula* upon creeping marshwort.
 2. Little Wittenham SAC – approximately 7km (South Oxfordshire District Council)
9. One of the best-studied great crested newt sites in the UK, Little Wittenham comprises two main ponds set in a predominantly woodland context (broadleaved and conifer woodland is present). There are also areas of grassland, with sheep grazing and arable bordering the woodland to the south and west. The River Thames is just to the north of the site, and a hill fort to the south. Large numbers of great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* have been recorded in the two main ponds, and research has revealed that they range several hundred metres into the woodland blocks.

10. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of public access and disturbance, and invasive fish species upon great crested newt. With regard to the types of development that may be brought forward in the Local Plan, visitor disturbance could impact the site.

3. Cothill Fen SAC – approximately 7km (Vale of White Horse District Council)

11. Cothill Fen is designated as a SAC for its calcium-rich, spring fed fens and alder woodlands on floodplains.

12. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impact of water pollution and hydrological changes, as well as air pollution and the impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition upon the calcium-rich water-fed fens.

ASSESSMENT

13. As required under Regulation 106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the qualifying body (Culham Parish Council) provided the required information to enable South Oxfordshire District Council to determine whether the assessment under Regulation 105 is required. Consideration has been given to the potential for the development proposed by the neighbourhood plan to result in significant effects associated with:

Physical loss of/damage to habitat:

14. Any development resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan will be located within the neighbourhood area. There are no European sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area, therefore loss of habitat from within the boundaries of a European site can be ruled out in relation to all sites.

15. Loss of habitat from outside of the boundaries of a European site could still affect the integrity of that site if it occurs in an area used by the qualifying species of the site (e.g. for off-site breeding, foraging or roosting). One of the European sites included in this assessment have mobile species amongst their qualifying features that could travel outside of the site to make use of other areas of habitat:

- Long Wittenham SAC; great crested newt.

16. The HRA (March 2019) produced alongside the Local Plan 2035 states that great crested newts will travel away from their breeding ponds, during the terrestrial phase of their lifecycle, but not large distance. 500 metres is considered an appropriate buffer distance inside which great crested newts might be found, from their breeding location. The site listing for Little Wittenham SAC states that great crested newts have been found to range several hundred metres into the site's woodland

blocks. Research has found that great crested newts at Little Wittenham SAC migrate within woodland and not over-winter in the arable farmland. All of the woodland within 500 metres of the ponds at Little Wittenham SAC is within the SAC boundary. Therefore potential loss of or damage to off-site habitats associated with Little Wittenham SAC can be screened out of further assessment.

Non-physical disturbance e.g. noise/vibration or light pollution:

17. The most recent HRA of the emerging South Oxford Local Plan (March 2019) states:

'Using a precautionary approach, we have assumed that the effect of noise, vibration and light are most likely to be significant if development takes place within 500 metres of a European site with qualifying features sensitive to these disturbances, or known off-site breeding, foraging or roosting areas.'
18. None of the European sites are within 500 metres of the designated neighbourhood area. Therefore, effects in relation to noise, vibration and light pollution can be screened out of further assessment.

Air pollution:

19. Air pollution is most likely to effect European sites where plant, soil and water habitats are the qualifying feature, but some qualifying animal species may also be affected, either directly or indirectly, by any deterioration in habitat as a result of air pollution. Deposition of pollutants to the ground and vegetation can alter the characteristics of the soil, affecting the pH and nitrogen availability that can then affect plant health, productivity and species composition.
20. Based on the Highways Agency Design for Road and Bridges (DMRB) Manual Volume 11, Section 3, Part 120 (which was produced to provide advice regarding the design, assessment and operation of trunk roads (including motorways)), it is assumed that air pollution from roads is unlikely to be significant beyond 200m from the road itself.
21. The European site within 17km of Culham that is within 200m of strategic roads is the Oxford Meadow SAC (A34, M40). As highlighted above Culham is approximately 13km from the Oxford Meadow SAC.
22. The HRA sets out how SODC commissioned Atkins to model the effects of the Local Plan on traffic flows within the District. The modelling resulted in the HRA concluding that the South Oxfordshire Local Plan will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of Oxford Meadow SAC as a result of air pollution, either alone or in-combination with other plans. In reaching this conclusion the HRA (March 2019) highlights show previous work undertaken demonstrates that a substantial amount of additional traffic could be accommodated on the A40 without adverse impacts to the integrity of the SAC, including growth from other local

authorities. Given the modest scale of the proposed development in the NDP, distance between the Oxford Meadow SAC and Culham, the potential impact associated with Oxford Meadow SAC can be screened out of further assessment.

23. Therefore, given the modest scale of proposed development in the Culham Neighbourhood Plan and the distance of the SACs from the proposed development, effects in relation to air quality can be screened out and do not need to be considered further.

Increased recreation pressure; and

24. The most recent HRA of the emerging South Oxford Local Plan (March 2019) states:

'Natural England's Site Improvement Plans record the threats and pressures relevant to each European site. Public access or disturbance are not identified as current threats or pressures at the following sites, despite their lying close to large settlements: Aston Rowant SAC, Hartslock Wood SAC, Cothill Fen SAC, and Oxford Meadow SAC.'

25. The HRA of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 sets out that the potential for effects depends upon the scale of development proposed and the features for which the site is designated. However, as a conservative estimate, it is assumed that any development within 7 km of a sensitive site could have impacts due to recreation. Where site specific information indicates that development beyond 7 km could produce recreation impacts, this will be taken into account; for example at Little Wittenham SAC, where development in the eastern fringes of the Vale of White Horse District could be relevant.
26. Culham is approximately 7km from Little Wittenham SAC, which is part of a larger site managed by the Earth Trust as a nature reserve. The areas which are most important to the population of great crested newts (GCN) have restricted access which is designed to prevent conflicts between the visiting public, the newts and their habitat. However, the Plan does not allocate any sites for development or promote additional development beyond what is supported in the adopted Development Plan.
27. Therefore, likely significant effects in relation to visitor pressure and the impact of recreation can be ruled out and do not need to be considered further.

Changes to hydrological regimes

28. European sites at which aquatic or wetland environments support qualifying features have the potential to be affected by changes in water quantity or quality. The European sites close to Culham are:

- Cothill Fen SAC: has calcium rich springwater-fed fens that have been identified as sensitive to water pollution and hydrological changes.
 - Oxford Meadow SAC: lowland hay meadow, identified as sensitive to hydrological changes.
 - Little Wittenham SAC: its ponds support great crested newts, but changes to water quality or quantity have not been identified as an issue at this site – the site has therefore been screened out.
29. The types of development that have the potential to affect water quality / quantity or flow regimes at sensitive European sites are residential or employment development that would involve significant increase in demand for water supply and treatment, and infrastructure development that requires significant excavation in proximity to watercourses or groundwater.
30. The Plan does not allocate any sites for development or promote additional development beyond what is supported in the adopted Development Plan.

In combination effects

31. The Council has considered the HRA of the Local Plan 2035 (March 2019) in respect of the potential in combination effects of the proposals in the Culham Neighbourhood Plan. As the South Oxfordshire Local Plan covers the period from 2011 to 2035, the quantum of development proposed in the Local Plan includes some completed and committed development (Committed development includes sites under construction, with planning permission, made neighbourhood plan allocations and allocations carried forward from the Local Plan 2011 and Core Strategy). The policies that enabled those developments to be permitted have already been subject to HRA as part of the Core Strategy, Local Plan 2011 or as part of the HRA for the relevant NDP. Paragraph 5 to 30 of this assessment has considered how the development proposed in the Culham Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. Given that the Plan does not propose new development and having regard to conclusions of paragraphs 5 to 30, it is considered that the Culham Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to give rise to significant in combination effects.

CONCLUSION

32. The Culham 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 Culham NDP is not required.

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

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 Culham 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 and the strategic policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (2020).
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	A Neighbourhood Development Plan must be in conformity with the Local Plan for the District. It does not influence other plans. The Culham Neighbourhood Plan 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;	<p>National policy requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread through plan-making, including the Culham NDP. A basic condition of the Culham NDP is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Within this wider context the Culham NDP itself is likely to have some positive effects. It is noted that the Culham NDP objectives do relate to the three pillars of sustainable development, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. To protect the character of the village.</i> <i>b. To protect Culham's natural environment through policies on nature recovery, dark skies and climate change mitigation.</i> <i>c. To set out desirable enhancements to the village's community facilities.</i> <p>However, given the nature and scale of the proposals in the plan, the effects are not likely to be significant.</p>
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The environmental impacts of the proposals within the Culham NDP are not likely to be significant as the plan does not allocate sites.

	<p>The Culham NDP area contains the following environmental designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BAP priority habitats - Great crested newt distribution - Protected species buffer - Tree Preservation Orders - Flood Zones 2 and 3 <p>There are the following SACs within 17km of the Culham NDP. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little Wittenham SAC – 7km - Oxford Meadow SAC – 13km - Cothill Fen SAC – 7km <p>There are also the following SSSI's located within the following distances of the Culham NDP area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culham Brake SSSI- Within NDP area - Barrow Farm Fen SSSI- 5km - Little Wittenham SSSI- 7km - Frilford Heath, Ponds and Fens SSSI- 7km - Dry Sandford Pit SSSI- 6km - Cothill Fen SSSI- 7km - Sugworth SSSI- 6km <p>Given the NDP is not allocating sites, the amount of potential infill sites within the village and their relationship to the designations within the NDP area the proposals in the plan are unlikely to harm these designations. The plan's objectives seek to conserve the village, its character and setting.</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 Culham NDP has been judged not to have an 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 Culham 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 influence will be on developments such as householder and small scale infill development, these could impact on the character and appearance on the conservation areas, listed buildings, their settings and the Green Belt.</p> <p>The Plan does not allocate sites for development. It seeks to influence infill and redevelopment within the existing village in line with policies in the existing development plan.</p> <p>The effects will be of a local scale and the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will add detail to existing development plan policies offering protection to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. No development is proposed near sensitive locations that would cause likely significant effects.</p>
<p>(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;</p>	<p>It is intended that the positive social effects of supporting sustainable development will have positive cumulative effects for the area. However, given the nature and scale of the proposals in the plan these are not likely to be significant.</p>
<p>(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;</p>	<p>The effects of the Plan are unlikely to have transboundary³ impacts.</p>
<p>(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);</p>	<p>The policies in the plan are unlikely to present risks to human health or the environment.</p>
<p>(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</p>	<p>The Culham NDP relates to the parish of Culham. The parish is focused around the smaller village of Culham, which is washed over by Green Belt. The Culham NDP does not seek to allocate development sites and therefore the magnitude and spatial extent of the plan is likely to be limited.</p>

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

<p>(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and 	<p>The Culham NDP area contains the following special natural characteristics and cultural heritage elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listed buildings - Local heritage assets - Archaeological constraints - Registered Parks and Gardens - Ancient woodland - TPOs <p>There are the following SACs within 17km of the Culham NDP. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little Wittenham SAC – 7km - Oxford Meadow SAC – 13km - Cothill Fen SAC – 7km <p>There are also the following SSSI’s located within the following distances of the Culham NDP area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culham Brake SSSI- Within NDP area - Barrow Farm Fen SSSI- 5km - Little Wittenham SSSI- 7km - Frilford Heath, Ponds and Fens SSSI- 7km - Dry Sandford Pit SSSI- 6km - Cothill Fen SSSI- 7km - Sugworth SSSI- 6km <p>The plan seeks to influence infill and redevelopment within the existing village in line with policies in the existing development plan. Any effects will be of a local scale and not likely to be significant. The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will add detail to existing development plan policies offering protection to special features.</p>
<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>There are no areas or landscapes with recognised national, Community or international protection status affected by the neighbourhood plan.</p>

<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>There are no areas or landscapes with recognised national, Community or international protection status affected by the neighbourhood plan.</p>
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APPENDIX 4 – STATUTORY CONSULTEE RESPONSES

NATURAL ENGLAND

Date: 01 December 2021
Our ref: 373598
Your ref: Culham Neighbourhood Plan – SEA / HRA Screening



Mr Ben Duffy
Planning Policy Officer (Neighbourhood)
Policy and Programmes
Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Council

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BY EMAIL ONLY – Ben.Duffy@southandvale.gov.uk

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Duffy

Culham Neighbourhood Plan – SEA / HRA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your consultation request on the above dated and received by Natural England on 9th November 2021.

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

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.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

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 new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Sharon Jenkins
Operations Delivery
Consultations Team
Natural England

HISTORIC ENGLAND

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the draft screening opinion for the Culham Neighbourhood Plan.

Based on the policies listed in the screening opinion as intended for inclusion in the plan and their likely effect I am happy to confirm that in Historic England's opinion and within our areas of interest, the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects that would merit Strategic Environmental Assessment.

We reserve the right to request a review of this opinion should the plan change significantly in scope at a later stage of planning.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lloyd-Sweet

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