

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 Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

08 JULY 2022

SUMMARY

Following consultation with the statutory bodies, South Oxfordshire District Council (the 'Council') determines that Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Review 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 Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Review requires 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. The SEA screening process is concerned with whether a neighbourhood plan is likely to have a significant environmental effect. Within this context, wider considerations of the draft neighbourhood plan's potential conformity with the Basic Conditions are not considered and as a consequence, the council is required to consider the proposals in the plan as they are, not as they may be modified (if necessary) to meet the Basic Conditions.
4. 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 Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review against each criterion to ascertain whether a SEA is required.
4. Also part of the screening process is the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening, which can be found in Appendix 2, and the assessment of likely significance effects on the environment, which can be found in Appendix 3.
5. These two assessments feed into Table 1 and the SEA screening opinion.

BRIGHTWELL CUM SOTWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW

6. The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review will contain changes to the following policies in the made plan:
7. **Policy BCS1: Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Village Boundary** – (These modifications remove some confusion in how this policy and Policy BCS10 on Local Gaps and BCS11 on Key Views and landscape character operate together.
8. **Policy BCS10: Local Gaps** – (These modifications remove some confusion in how this policy and Policy BCS1 on the Village Boundary operate together. They also improve the precision of the policy wording.
9. **Policy BCS11: Landscape Character and the Villages** - including addition of protected Key Views- (The modifications add a small number of specific key views.
10. **Policy BCS13: The Green Heart** - (These modifications seek to ensure that the now identified Key Views are protected.)
11. **Policy BCS9: Local Green Spaces** - including addition of two new Local Green Spaces- (The two new spaces would have been designated in the Made Plan had the development schemes of which they are part of had been implemented. Their designation does not undermine the spatial principles of the Made Plan as its housing supply strategy for the plan period is unaltered and no new housing sites are required for allocation).
12. **Policy BCS14: Local Nature Recovery** - (These modifications reflect the advent of the principles of local nature recovery alongside biodiversity net gain in the Environment Act 2021)
13. **Policy BCS17: Renewable Energy** - (These modifications extend the scope of support of the policy to other forms of renewable energy

generation that may be suitable to this location, as well as a solar array, and seeks to ensure that the now identified Key Views are protected.)

14. **Policy BCS18: Community Facilities** - (This replacement policy improves the clarity of the policy by bringing the buildings and land to which it applies into the policy itself and showing them on the Policies Map. It also reflects the adoption of Policy CF1 in the Local Plan and changes to the Use Class Order (notably new Class E). Rather than attempt to modify the existing wording, it is replaced with entirely new wording.)
15. The document further outlines the addition of the following policies:
 - **Policy BCS5: House Types and Tenures**
 - **Policy BCS6: Building Performance**
 - **Policy BCS7: Design Code**
 - **Policy BCS8: Assets of Local Heritage Value**
 - **Policy BCS12: Dark Skies**
 - **Policy BCS15: Natural Flood Management**
16. The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP was adopted as part of the district council's development plan on 12 October 2017. The plan was tested against the now superseded Core Strategy and Saved policies from the Local Plan. The plan was supported by a Sustainability Appraisal Report which included a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
 - The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review proposes to update 8 of the existing policies, as well as introduce 6 new policies. The NDP vision remains the same and the objectives remain largely unchanged. The spatial principles of the Made Plan in regards to the housing supply strategy for the plan period is unaltered and no new housing sites are proposed to be allocated. The settlement boundary also remains unchanged. The most significant updates to the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review include the inclusion of a design code and 6 new policies covering the following: House Types and Tenures, Building Performance, Design Code, Assets of Local Heritage Value, Dark Skies, Natural Flood Management .
17. Whilst other modifications are being proposed to some the existing policy wording, these are not considered to substantially change their nature.
18. The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review will continue to plan positively, with a wide range of policies covering for example: design, conservation and heritage, renewable energy, Local Green Spaces, landscape character, dark skies, flood management, community facilities and important views.
19. Policies in the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review will continue to support sustainable appropriate development in the neighbourhood area, which

will not adversely impact on the rural nature of the parish. Catering for growth in a manner which respects Brightwell cum Sotwell's setting in the rural landscape.

20. There are no changes proposed to the settlement boundary. The settlement boundary adds detail to Policies H1 and H16 of the Local Plan and does not represent a more or less restrictive approach.
21. Overall, we note that the plan review does not allocate any new sites for development, it carries over the existing allocations, the settlement boundary remains unchanged and the plan continues to place great emphasis on conserving the character and appearance of the area.
22. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review would not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

23. The screening opinion was sent to Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England on 5 April 2022 for a four-week consultation period. The responses in full are presented in Appendix 4.
24. The Environment Agency did not provide comments on this SEA Screening.
25. Historic England confirmed their agreement, that the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review does not require an SEA.
26. Natural England confirmed their agreement, that the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review does not require an SEA.

CONCLUSION

27. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council, the following determination has been reached.
28. The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Development Plan Review is not required.
29. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 1 & 3, the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.
30. The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review therefore does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

Authorised by: Harry Barrington-Mountford
Head of Policy and Programmes

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harry BM', written in a cursive style.

Date: 08/07/2022

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

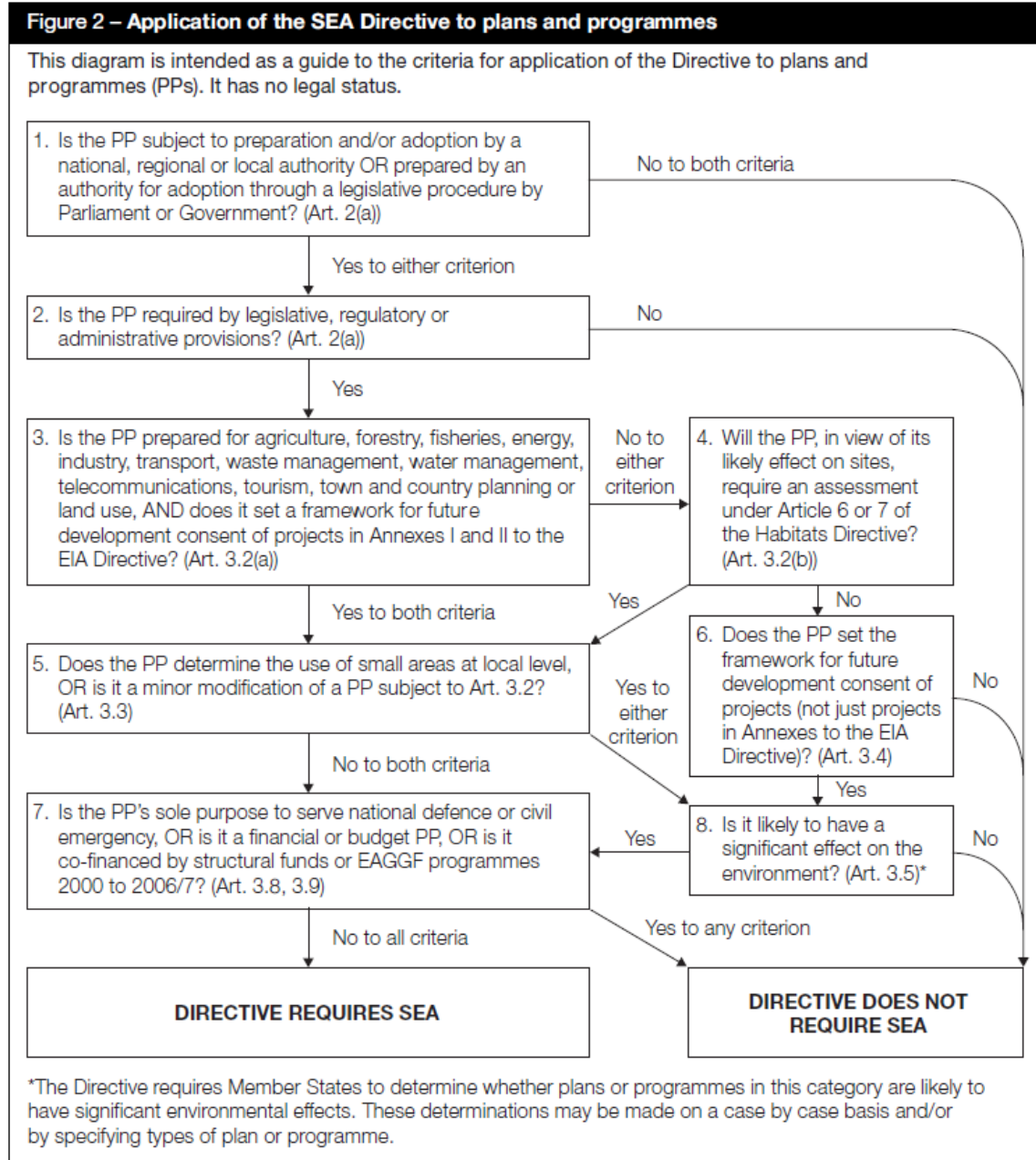


Table 1: Application of SEA Directive as shown in Appendix 1

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 Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to the Brightwell cum Sotwell 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) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
<p>2. Is the Neighbourhood Plan 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>

		National Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 051 Reference ID: 41-051-20150209) sets out that draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This assessment should be undertaken in accordance with the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 .
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))	N	The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review 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.
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))	N	The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP in Appendix 2.
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)	Y	The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review will determine the use of sites/small areas at a local level.
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)	Y	When made, the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review 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.

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, 3.9)	N	N/A
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 Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

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 Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Development Plan Review 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 Local Plan 2035 (December 2020)

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

“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."

EUROPEAN SITES

5. The HRA of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 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 Brightwell cum Sotwell and have been taken into consideration:
 1. Little Wittenham SAC – Approximately 1km
 2. Hartslock Wood SAC – Approximately 11km
 3. Aston Rowant SAC – Approximately 14.3km
 4. Chilterns Beechwoods – Approximately 17km
 5. Oxford Meadows SAC – Approximately 17km
 6. Cothill Fen SAC – Approximately 13.8km

Little Wittenham SAC – Approximately 1km (South Oxfordshire District Council)

7. 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.

8. 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.

Hartslock Wood SAC – Approximately 11km (South Oxfordshire District Council)

9. This site hosts the priority habitat type "orchid rich sites". The steep slopes of this site on the chalk of the Chilterns comprise a mosaic of chalk grassland, chalk scrub and broadleaved woodland. The chalk grassland mostly consists of a mosaic of shorter-turf NVC type CG2 *Festuca ovina*–*Avenula pratensis* grassland and taller CG3 *Bromus erectus* grassland. The site supports one of only three UK populations of monkey orchid *Orchis simia*, a nationally rare Red Data Book species. The bulk of this site lies on a steep slope above the River Thames. Recent storms and landslips have resulted in a diverse age structure for the yew population. Open patches show a rich flora including local species such as southern wood-rush *Luzula forsteri*, wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus* and narrow-lipped helleborine *Epipactis leptochila*.
10. The main threat to this site is air pollution and the risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition upon the dry grasslands and yew-dominated woodland. With regard to the types of development that may be brought forward in the Local Plan, air pollution could impact the site.

Aston Rowant SAC – Approximately 14.3km (South Oxfordshire District Council)

11. 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.
12. 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.

Chiltern Beechwood SAC – Approximately 17km (South Oxfordshire District Council and Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire)

13. 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.
14. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of forestry and woodland management, disease, deer and the invasive species of grey squirrel upon beech. Additionally, the changes in species distribution of stag beetle as well as the impact of public access and disturbance upon stag beetle. Air pollution and the impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition also threaten the dry grasslands, beech and stag beetle.

Oxford Meadows SAC – Approximately 17km (Oxford City)

15. Oxford Meadows is one of two SACs that represent lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*) in the Thames Valley. It includes vegetation communities that are perhaps unique in the world in reflecting the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting on lowland hay meadows. The site has benefited from the survival of traditional management, which has been undertaken for several centuries, and so exhibits good conservation of structure and function. The site is selected because Port Meadow is the larger of only two known sites in the UK for creeping marshwort *Apium repens*.
16. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of hydrological changes and the invasive species of *Crassula* upon creeping marshwort. With regard to the types of development that may be brought forward in the Local Plan, water quantity changes could impact the site.

Cothill Fen SAC – Approximately 13.8km (Vale of White Horse)

17. Cothill Fen is an exceptionally important site with an outstanding range of nationally rare habitats which support a large number of rare invertebrates and plants. The habitats consist of calcareous fen, calcareous grassland, woodland and scrub of varying degrees of wetness. The habitat supports over 330 species of vascular plant and over 120 nationally scarce or rare invertebrates, including the nationally rare Southern Damselfly (*Coenagrion mercuriale*).
18. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of water pollution and hydrological changes, as well as air pollution and the

impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition upon the calcium-rich spring water-fed fens. With regard to the types of development that may be brought forward in the Local Plan, air pollution, and water quality and quantity could impact the site.

ASSESSMENT

19. As required under Regulation 106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the qualifying body (Brightwell cum Sotwell 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;
- Non-physical disturbance e.g. noise/vibration or light pollution;
- Air pollution
- Increased recreation pressure; and
- Changes to hydrological regimes

20. The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP adopted in 2017 was supported by a Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Determination³. The HRA screening determination considered whether the plan could have a significant effect on the integrity of important wildlife sites, either alone or in combination with other plans. The HRA screening assessed the Neighbourhood Plan as it proposed to allocate a total of 67 homes. The HRA screening assessed the likely significant effects on the European sites within 17km of Brightwell cum Sotwell. It concluded that the Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan would not give rise to likely significant effects on European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, and an Appropriate Assessment was therefore not required.

21. In addition the South Oxfordshire Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (March 2019) in paragraph 5.73 considered the Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan 2017 and the provision of 67 new houses over the plan period of 2016-2032 that the neighbourhood plan was making. The March 2019 HRA concluded that The Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have

³ [Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Determination \(March 2017\)](#)

significant effects on European sites either alone or in combination with other plans and policies. The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review is not seeking to increase the provision of housing and therefore, the in-combination effects of the proposed growth in Brightwell cum Sotwell has been considered.

22. The Plan does not allocate any additional sites for development or promote additional development beyond what is supported in the adopted Development Plan.

CONCLUSION

23. The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review 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 Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review 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 Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review would, if adopted, replace the made Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP 2017 and 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.
(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 Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review 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 Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review. A basic condition of the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	<p>The environmental impact of the proposals within the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review is likely to be minimal due to the scale of development proposed.</p> <p>The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP area contains the following environmental designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Archaeological constraints - Conservation Areas - District wildlife sites - Listed buildings - Great Crest Newts - Local heritage assets - Ancient Woodland - BAP priority habitats - Flood Zones - Protected species buffer - Tree Preservation Orders

There are the following SACs within 17km of the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP area: These are as follows:

- Little Wittenham SAC – approx. 1km
- Hartslock Wood SAC – approx. 11km
- Aston Rowant SAC – approx. 14.3km

- Chilterns Beechwoods – Approximately 17km

- Oxford Meadows SAC – Approximately 17km

- Cothill Fen SAC – approx. 13.8km

There are also the following SSSI's located within the following distance of Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP area:

- Little Wittenham SSSI – approx. 1km

The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review proposes to update 8 of the existing policies, as well as introduce 6 new policies. The NDP vision remains the same and the objectives remain largely unchanged. The spatial principles of the Made Plan in regards to the housing supply strategy for the plan period is unaltered and no new housing sites are proposed to be allocated . The settlement boundary is also remaining the same. The most significant updates to the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review include the inclusion of a design code and 6 new policies covering the following: House Types and Tenures, Building Performance, Design Code, Assets of Local Heritage Value, Dark Skies and Natural Flood Management.

Whilst other modifications are being proposed to some the existing policy wording, these are not likely to be substantial.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any development that is likely to harm these designations as the plan seeks to conserve the village, its character and setting. The policies in

	the Neighbourhood Plan will require these designations to be protected and therefore there would not be likely significant effects to the environment.
(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).	The proposed development in the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review has been judged not to have an impact on Community legislation.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	<p>The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP is likely to have modest but enduring positive environmental effects. The effects are not likely to be reversible as they relate to development. However, they will be of a local scale through limited infill sites within the village boundary.</p> <p>The effects will be of a local scale and the principles guiding development in the NDP include protecting and enhancing the setting in the rural landscape, promoting overall sustainability, supporting and enhancing the village centre, and protecting the character of the NDP designed area.</p> <p>The spatial principles of the Made Plan in regards to the housing supply strategy for the plan period is unaltered and no new housing sites are proposed.</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	It is intended that the positive 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.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	The effects of the Plan are unlikely to have transboundary ⁴ impacts.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for	The policies in the plan are unlikely to present risks to human health or the environment.

⁴ Transboundary effects are understood to be in other Member States.

<p>example, due to accidents);</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 Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review relates to the parish of Brightwell cum Sotwell. The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review is not proposing any new development, therefore the potential for environmental effects is likely to be small and localised.</p>
<p>(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>	<p>The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP area contains the following special natural characteristics and cultural heritage elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Archaeological constraints - Conservation Areas - District wildlife sites - Listed buildings - Great Crest Newts - Local heritage assets - Ancient Woodland - BAP priority habitats - Flood Zones - Protected species buffer - Tree Preservation Orders - <p>There are the following SACs within 17km of the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP area: These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little Wittenham SAC – approx. 1km - Hartslock Wood SAC – approx. 11km - Aston Rowant SAC – approx. 14.3km - Chilterns Beechwoods – Approximately 17km - Oxford Meadows SAC – Approximately 17km - Cothill Fen SAC – approx. 13.8km <p>There are also the following SSSI located within the following distance of Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little Wittenham SSSI – approx. 1km

The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review offers an opportunity to enhance the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the area through the proposals being considered. It is clear that the aspects of the plan that are most likely to effect the special natural characteristics and cultural heritage are the carried forward site allocations, householder development and development within the built up area. These forms of development may impact on the integrity of protected sites and the character and appearance of listed buildings, their setting, the conservation areas, and the AONB setting.

The SACs and SSSI are located outside the NDP designated area. Little Wittenham SAC is the closest SAC to the designated neighbourhood area, approximately 1km from the neighbourhood plan boundary. SSSI is the closest SSSI to the neighbourhood area, is the Long Wittenham SSSI which is approximately 1km from the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP area.

The above designations are outside of the built-up areas of the villages. The principles guiding development in the NDP includes catering growth in a manner that respects Brightwell cum Sotwell's setting in the rural landscape and given the spatial principles of the Made Plan in regards to the housing supply strategy for the plan period is unaltered and no new housing sites are proposed for allocation and that the settlement boundary is also remaining the same, they are therefore not considered to cause likely significant effects.

The HRA Screening Assessment in appendix 2 concluded that: The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review 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 Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Development Plan Review is not required.

The main vulnerability of the parish is the impact of householder and small scale

	<p>developments within the village boundary on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, listed buildings and archaeological sites.</p> <p>The objectives of the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review set out how the plan will cater for growth in a manner which conserves and enhances heritage within the neighbourhood area. The plan is considered to have a neutral effect on cultural heritage because there is no indication given in the objectives that the plan would go beyond national and local policy and therefore, it is considered that the effects of the proposals in the plan are not likely to be significant.</p> <p>Environmental quality standards or limit values are not considered likely to be significantly affected by the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review.</p> <p>In light of the modifications proposed in the Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP Review, the plan is not likely to cause significant effects in relation to intensive land use.</p>
<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>The Brightwell cum Sotwell NDP designation area is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which is recognised to contain some of the finest landscapes in England. Overall, we note that the plan does not allocate any new sites for development, it carries over the existing allocations, and continues to place great emphasis on conserving the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it is considered that the effects predicted are not likely to be significant.</p>

Appendix 4 – Statutory Consultee Responses

HISTORIC ENGLAND



Dear Rosalynn,

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore, we welcome this opportunity to review the Screening Report for this plan. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion.

The Screening Report indicates that the Council considers that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We note that the plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development.

On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan) where we consider that, despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

Please do contact me, either via email or the number below, if you have any queries.



Historic England, Brooklands, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BU
Telephone 01223 58 2749 HistoricEngland.org.uk

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Best wishes,

Isaac Smith

Business Officer

NATURAL ENGLAND

Dear Cheryl

Application ref: Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan- SEA/HRA Screening Opinion

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment/Habitats Regulation 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 and therefore a SEA/HRA is not required.

The lack of comment from Natural England does not imply that there are no impacts on the natural environment, but only that the application is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes. It is for the local planning authority to determine whether or not this application is consistent with national and local policies on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may be able to provide information and advice on the environmental value of this site and the impacts of the proposal to assist the decision making process. We advise LPAs to obtain specialist ecological or other environmental advice when determining the environmental impacts of development.

We recommend referring to our SSSI Impact Risk Zones (available on [Magic](#) and as a downloadable [dataset](#)) prior to consultation with Natural England. Further guidance on when to consult Natural England on planning and development proposals is available on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-planning-authorities-get-environmental-advice>

Yours faithfully

Laura Elphick- Sustainable Development Lead Adviser
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