

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 Garsington Neighbourhood Development Plan

23 JANUARY 2023

SUMMARY

Following consultation with the statutory bodies, South Oxfordshire District Council (the 'Council') determines that Garsington 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 Garsington 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 Garsington NDP 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.

GARSINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

6. The Garsington NDP will contain the following policies:

Policies:

- *Policy GARS1: Community Assets*
 - o The policy seeks to identify two types of community assets and protect and promote these facilities and spaces.
- *Policy GARS2: Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways*
 - o The policy seeks to ensure that safe pedestrian/cycle access to the village centre in an intrinsic consideration in any new development.
- *Policy GARS4: Important Views*
 - o This policy identifies a number of views within the Parish that are considered to be essential to framing its distinct rural character.
- *Policy GARS: Local Gaps*
 - o This policy identifies the gap between the village and Oxford to its northwest.
- *Policy GARS6: Housing Mix*
 - o This policy is intended to encourage proposals that recognise the need for smaller dwellings and needs of younger people, young families and those of an ageing population.
- *Policy GARS7: New Housing*
 - o This policy responds to local and national policy providing for limited amounts of new housing through infilling in the Green Belt.
- *Policy GARS8: Design Guidance*
 - o This policy establishes the goals for achieving a high quality standard of design in the parish that reflects its distinct character and location.
- *Policy GARS9: Biodiversity*
 - o This policy seeks to protect biodiversity assets in the parish and ensure proposals enhance the biodiversity of the land in the parish.

7. The Garsington NDP will contain policies to protect the distinct nature of the village. The Garsington NDP is not seeking to allocate any sites for development and the suite of policies developed focus on how the neighbourhood plan can add locally specific detail to the development plan.

8. The policies will support sustainable development in the village that will not adversely impact on the rural Green Belt nature of the village. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Garsington NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

9. The screening opinion was sent to Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England on 2 December 2022 for a six-week consultation period. The responses in full are presented in Appendix 4.
10. The Environment Agency did not provide comments on this SEA Screening.
11. Historic England confirmed their agreement, that the Garsington NDP does not need a SEA.
12. Natural England did not provide comments on this SEA Screening.

CONCLUSION

13. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council, the following determination has been reached.
14. The Garsington NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Garsington Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.
15. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 1 & 3, the Garsington NDP is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
16. The Garsington NDP does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

Authorised by: Adriana Partridge, Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations

Signed: 

Date: 23 January 2023

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
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))	Y	<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 Garsington NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to the Garsington 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
2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	<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 Garsington 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.
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 Garsington NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Garsington 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 Garsington NDP 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 Garsington 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.

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 Garsington 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 Garsington 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 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 Garsington and have been taken into consideration:

Oxford Meadow SAC – approximately 7km

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.

Little Wittenham SAC – approximately 7km

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.

Cothill Fen SAC – approximately 9km

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.

Aston Rowant SAC – approximately 13km

13. 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.
14. 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 15km

15. 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.
16. 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.

ASSESSMENT

17. As required under Regulation 106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the qualifying body (Garsington 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:

18. 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.

19. 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). Two 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.
- Chiltern Beechwoods SAC: stag beetle.

20. 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 do 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.

21. The HRA (March 2019) produced alongside the Local Plan 2035 states that where stag beetle is a qualifying feature of a site, the individuals may travel outside of the SAC boundary, although it is unlikely that they will travel far – it is generally only the male stag beetle that flies during the summer months, and the female beetle rarely flies. The preferred

habitat for stag beetles is old, established woodland, and the larvae feed on rotting tree matter. As the beetle larvae take years to develop, they can be vulnerable to tree clearance and the 'tidying up' of wood in parks and especially gardens. Research suggests that 2 km 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. Chilterns Beechwoods SAC is a composite of nine SSSIs.

22. Bisham Woods SSSI, which is the part of the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC that supports the qualifying stag beetle population, is greater than 2 km from the District boundary and 15 km from the NDP area. Therefore potential loss of or damage to off-site habitats associated with Chilterns Beechwoods SAC can be screened out of further assessment.

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

23. The most recent HRA of the 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.'

24. None of the European sites are within 500 metres of the designated area. Therefore, effects in relation to noise, vibration and light pollution can be screened out of further assessment.

Air pollution:

25. 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. In terms of vehicle traffic, nitrogen oxides (NO_x, i.e. NO and NO₂) are considered to be the key pollutants. Deposition of nitrogen compounds may lead to both soil and freshwater acidification, and NO_x can cause eutrophication of soils and water.
26. 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.
27. The European sites within 17km of Garsington that are within 200m of strategic roads are:

1. **Aston Rowant SAC (M40)** – as highlighted above Garsington is approximately 13km from the Aston Rowant SAC.
 2. **Oxford Meadow SAC (A34, M40)** - as highlighted above Garsington is approximately 7km from the Oxford Meadow SAC.
28. 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 potential for likely significant effects in relation to air pollution in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan can be screened out for all sites, except Aston Rowant SAC and Oxford Meadows SAC. Given the modest scale of the proposed development in the NDP, distance between the SACs and Garsington, the potential impact associated with the SACs can be screened out of further assessment.
3. **Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (A404, A4010)** – as highlighted above Garsington is approximately 15km from the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC.
29. The HRA explains that no traffic data were available for the roads adjacent to Burnham Beeches SAC, Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and Windsor Forest & Great Park SAC, as they are located too far outside of the Atkins model network to be reasonably or reliably predicted. Although these locations lie within the initial screening radius of 17 km, the actual distance which would need to be travelled to reach these locations by car from the plan area exceeds this distance for most routes. It can therefore reasonably be expected that the contribution of growth within the Local Plan area to traffic flows at these locations would be de minimis, and as such they are screened out from any further assessment.
30. Therefore, given the modest scale of proposed development in the Garsington Neighbourhood Plan and distance from the NDP area to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (15km), effects in relation to air quality can be screened out and do not need to be considered further.

Increased recreation pressure; and

31. The most recent HRA of the 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.’*
32. The HRA of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 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.

33. Garsington 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.
34. The increased visitor levels which are likely to occur as a result of the modest increase in population in Garsington may result in increased pressure on the habitats on the reserve as a whole. However, due to restricted access to the areas where newts are primarily found, the increased visitor numbers will be concentrated onto other habitats on the reserve. These habitats are not related to the primary reasons for the selection of the SAC.
35. Great crested newts are not believed to be particularly sensitive to human disturbance provided their breeding ponds are not affected and their primary terrestrial habitat and hibernacula are not adversely affected. Provided controls on access to the most sensitive areas are maintained (i.e. ponds and hibernacula are not disturbed) there is no reason to believe that there would be any significant effect on the integrity of the site or the primary reason for the selection of the site.
36. The NDP does not allocate any housing sites and the proposals in the plan, whilst they may create capacity for some additional use, would be of a limited, minor impact; 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.
37. The HRA of the Local Plan identifies that at the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, public access / disturbance is only identified in relation to the stag beetle population. The portion of the SAC that supports the stag beetle population (Bisham Woods SSSI) is greater than 7km from the District boundary, and therefore is considered unlikely to result in likely significant effects from development within South Oxfordshire, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.
38. 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

39. 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 Garsington 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.
40. 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.
41. The Garsington NDP does not allocate any sites. The scale of development proposed in the Garsington Neighbourhood Plan is limited; therefore, likely significant effects in relation to water quality and quantity can be screened out and does not need to be considered further.

In combination effects

42. 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 Garsington 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 41 of this assessment has considered how the development proposed in the Garsington Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. Given the modest scale of development proposed and having regard to conclusions of paragraphs 5 to 41, it is considered that the development proposed in the Garsington Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to give rise to significant in combination effects.

CONCLUSION

1. The Garsington 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 Garsington 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 Garsington 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.
(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 Garsington 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;	National policy requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread through plan-making, including the Garsington NDP. A basic condition of the Garsington Hampden NDP 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 Garsington NDP is unlikely to be significant due to the scale of development proposed.</p> <p>The Garsington NDP area contains the following environmental designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BAP priority habitats - Protected species buffer - Tree Preservation Orders - Flood Zones 2 and 3 <p>There are the following SACs within 17km of the Garsington NDP. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little Wittenham SAC – 7km - Oxford Meadow SAC – 7km - Cothill Fen SAC – 9km - Aston Rowant SAC – 13km - Chiltern Beechwood SAC – 15km

	<p>There are also the following SSSI's located within the following distances of the Garsington NDP area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill SSSI – 1.3km - Littleworth Brick Pitt SSSI – 1.6km - Leyehill Quarry SSSI – 3km - Holton Wood SSSI – 3.5km - Waterperry Wood SSSI – 5km - Staznton Great Wood SSSI – 5km - Iffley Meadows SSSI – 3.5km - Littlemore Railway Cutting SSSI – 3km - Lye Valley SSSI – 2km - Rock Edge SSSI – 3km - Magdalen Quarry SSSI – 3.5km - Magdalen Grove SSSI – 5km - New Marston Meadows SSSI – 5km <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. Therefore, the effects are not likely to be significant.</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 Garsington 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 Garsington 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. 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. No development is proposed near sensitive locations that would cause likely significant effects.</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	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.
(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 Garsington NDP relates to the parish of Garsington. The parish is focused around the smaller village of Garsington, which is washed over by Green Belt. The Garsington NDP does not seek to allocate development sites and therefore the magnitude and spatial extent of the plan is likely to be limited.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area 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 Garsington 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 Garsington NDP. These are as follows:</p>

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little Wittenham SAC – 7km - Oxford Meadow SAC – 7km - Cothill Fen SAC – 9km - Aston Rowant SAC – 13km - Chiltern Beechwood SAC – 15km <p>There are also the following SSSI’s located within the following distances of the Garsington NDP area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill SSSI – 1.3km - Littleworth Brick Pitt SSSI – 1.6km - Leyehill Quarry SSSI – 3km - Holton Wood SSSI – 3.5km - Waterperry Wood SSSI – 5km - Staznton Great Wood SSSI – 5km - Iffley Meadows SSSI – 3.5km - Littlemore Railway Cutting SSSI – 3km - Lye Valley SSSI – 2km - Rock Edge SSSI – 3km - Magdalen Quarry SSSI – 3.5km - Magdalen Grove SSSI – 5km - New Marston Meadows SSSI – 5km <p>The Garsington NDP offers an opportunity to enhance the natural environment of the area through the policy proposals being considered.</p> <p>The Plan seeks to influence infill and redevelopment within the 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>
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	There are no areas or landscapes with recognised national, Community or international protection status affected by the neighbourhood plan.

Appendix 4 – Statutory Consultee Responses

HISTORIC ENGLAND

By email only to: planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk

Our ref: PL00791821

Your ref: Garsington Neighbourhood Plan SEA

Main: 020 7973 3700

e-seast@historicengland.org.uk

louise.dandy@historicengland.org.uk

Date: 23/01/2023

Dear Sir or Madam

Garsington Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion

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. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Garsington Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied.

There are a number of designated heritage assets within the area; the information supplied however indicates that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We also 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, via email if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely
Louise

Louise Dandy
Historic Places Adviser

NATURAL ENGLAND

Application ref: Draft SEA and HRA Screening Opinion for Garsington Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Our ref: 415159

Thank you for consulting Natural England on the draft SEA and HRA Screening Opinion for Garsington Neighbourhood Development Plan. We have no comments to make on this application.

Natural England has not assessed this application for impacts on protected species. Natural England has published [Standing Advice](#) which you can use to assess impacts on protected species or you may wish to consult your own ecology services for advice.

Natural England and the Forestry Commission have also published standing advice on [ancient woodland and veteran trees](#) which you can use to assess any impacts on ancient woodland.

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
Thames Solent Team
Natural England

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