

# **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 Steventon Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**30 JUNE 2020**

## **SUMMARY**

Following consultation with statutory bodies Vale of White Horse District Council (the 'Council') determines that Steventon 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 Steventon 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**

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Table 1 in Appendix 1 sets out the criteria from the Practical Guide, along with an assessment of the Steventon NDP against each criterion to ascertain whether a SEA is required.

7. Also part of the screening process is the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening, which can be found in Appendix 2. The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening concluded that the Steventon 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 Steventon NDP is not required.
8. Appendix 3 considers whether the plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment.
9. These two assessments feed into Table 1 and the SEA screening statement.
10. The council's screening opinion concluded that the implementation of the Steventon NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment and therefore will not require a SEA.

## **STEVENTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

11. The Steventon NDP will contain the following vision, objectives:

### *Vision*

**Our vision** is to protect and enhance the rural identity and heritage of Steventon, whilst ensuring its future sustainability through community engagement. Our plan seeks to protect and preserve the open spaces and natural environment, with timely and distinguishing policies structured to meet the local needs.

The long history of development of Steventon has created a village with distinctive rural characteristics. This evolution is evident in the unusual layout with a tree lined listed causeway, heritage buildings, a unique railway history, conservation areas and a network of waterways. We have a wealth of mature trees throughout the village, including a well-established copse used as a community asset and forest school. There are expanses of well-maintained village greens and allotment open space, with sweeping vistas, of countryside and farmland, to the south, west and north.

### *Objectives*

- To ensure that the form, design and scale of any new development is of a quality to preserve or enhance Steventon's distinctive local character.
- To maintain a rural and woodland perimeter to the built area of the village and to ensure that new development does not unduly detract from the appearance of the perimeter.
- To ensure that new development provides homes of a type, size and tenure that meet local needs and provides a high level of social cohesion

- To ensure that new development is designed to have a positive impact on the wellbeing of residents through appropriate interior and exterior spaces.
- To ensure that new developments are well connected to village amenities and designed to look and feel an integral part of the village
- To reduce car use within the village by ensuring that new developments have convenient and safe provision for walking and cycling which connects to existing networks
- To ensure that new development provides appropriate provision for off-road parking.
- To ensure that any new development does not have an adverse effect on road safety
- To ensure any new development addresses environmental sustainability through building design and infrastructure which conserves energy, water resources and materials and minimises soil, water, air, noise and light pollution
- To increase resilience to flooding by ensuring adequate drainage and sewage capacity for all new developments
- To protect the views within the village and to the surrounding fields and woodland
- To protect and improve green infrastructure such as public open spaces, footpaths, verges and sports and recreation facilities. To preserve as far as possible existing trees and hedgerows and to ensure the planting of new trees and hedgerows to increase habitat and promote biodiversity
- To protect important local green spaces as defined in NPPF 2019, para.100.
- To support the provision of additional services and recreation facilities which would enhance the social and economic vitality of the Parish.

12. Steventon is defined as a larger village in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan.

13. The Steventon Neighbourhood plan is not allocating any development, i.e. it does not specify sites for development. Instead the SNP policies will be designed to guide the size and design of future development, to reflect the existing character of the village, and to meet the specific housing needs and aspirations of current and future residents. The policies also seek to protect as much as possible of the existing green infrastructure and to ensure that further green infrastructure is added. Policies will be formulated to meet all the above objectives which were arrived at through consultation with the residents.

14. Overall, we note that the plan does not allocate any sites for development and places great emphasis on conserving the character and appearance of the area.

15. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Steventon NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

## **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

16. The Screening Opinion was sent to Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England on 24 March 2020 for a four week consultation period. The responses are in full in Appendix 4.
17. Historic England confirmed they agree that the plan should not merit completion of a SEA due to any likely significant effects within their areas of interest.
18. Natural England agree with the Initial Screening Opinion and consider that the plan does not require a SEA or Appropriate Assessment.
19. The Environment Agency did not make any relevant comments.

## **CONCLUSION**

20. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council, the following determination has been reached.
21. The Steventon NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Steventon Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.
22. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 1 & 3, the Steventon NDP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.
23. The Steventon NDP does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.
24. See Appendix 4 for the statutory bodies' responses.

**Authorised by:**     Ricardo Rios      
On behalf of Head of Planning

**Signed:** 

**Date: 30 June 2020**



**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 Steventon NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to the Steventon Parish Council (as the “relevant body”) and will be “made” by Vale of White Horse District Council as the local authority. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is subject to the following regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012</li> <li>• The Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012</li> <li>• The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015</li> <li>• The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) (Amendment) Regulations 2016</li> <li>• The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2016</li> <li>• The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2017</li> </ul>
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: 027 Reference ID: 11-027-20150209) 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 <a href="#">regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004</a> .
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 Steventon 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 Steventon NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Steventon 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 Steventon 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 Steventon 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 Steventon 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 importance<sup>1</sup>, 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 plan<sup>2</sup> (the higher level plan for town and country planning and land use). This Screening Assessment uses the Habitats Regulations Assessment of Vale of White Horse District Council’s Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (LPP2)<sup>3</sup> as its basis for assessment. From this, the Local Authority will determine whether the Steventon 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—*

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

<sup>2</sup> Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (December 2016) and Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (October 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Vale of White Horse LPP2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (February 2018 Update)

- (a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*
- (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, the plan-making authority for that plan must, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.*
- (2) The plan-making authority must for the purposes of the assessment consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representations made by that body within such reasonable time as the authority specifies.*
- (3) The plan-making authority must also, if it considers it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if it does so, it must take such steps for that purpose as it considers appropriate.*
- (4) In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 107, the plan-making authority must give effect to the land use plan only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site or the European offshore marine site (as the case may be).*
- (5) A plan-making authority must provide such information as the appropriate authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the discharge by the appropriate authority of its obligations under this Chapter.*
- (6) This regulation does not apply in relation to a site which is—*
- (a) a European site by reason of regulation 8(1)(c), or*
- (b) a European offshore marine site by reason of regulation 18(c) of the Offshore Marine Conservation Regulations (site protected in accordance with Article 5(4) of the Habitats Directive).*

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

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

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

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

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

## **ASSESSMENT**

5. There are two European sites with the Vale of White Horse District – Cothill Fen SAC and Hackpen Hill SAC. European sites also lie in adjoining districts and those with potential for longer range and indirect effects include Oxford Meadows SAC (Oxford City) and Little Wittenham SAC (South Oxfordshire). The Steventon NDP has the following relationships with these areas:

- Cothill Fen SAC (Approx. 6km)
- Little Wittenham SAC (Approx. 9km)
- Hackpen Hill SAC (Approx. 10km)
- Oxford Meadows SAC (Approx. 15km)

### Cothill Fen SAC (Approx. 6km)

6. Cothill Fen is designated as a SAC for its calcium-rich, spring fed fens and alder woodlands on floodplains.
7. 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.

### Little Whittenham SAC (Approx. 9km)

8. 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.

9. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impact of public access and disturbance, and invasive fish species upon great crested newt.

#### Hackpen Hill SAC (Approx. 10km)

10. Hackpen Hill has slopes with a wide variety of aspect and gradient. Most of the grassland is dominated by red fescue *Festuca rubra*, but this is replaced by upright brome *Bromus erectus* on some middle and lower slopes. The herb flora includes horseshoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*, common rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*, dwarf thistle *Cirsium acaule*, autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea* and frog orchid *Coeloglossum viride*. An enclosed, ungrazed strip on Hackpen Down contains hawthorns and elder scrub, interspersed with upright brome grassland and herbs including sainfoin *Onobrychis viciifolia* and basil thyme *Acinos arvensis*.
11. The key environmental conditions that support the features of European interest are appropriate management, minimal air pollution, and absence of direct fertilisation.

#### Oxford Meadow SAC (Approx. 15km)

12. Oxford Meadow is designated as a SAC for its lowland hay meadows and creeping marshworts.
13. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of hydrological changes and the invasive species of *Crassula* upon creeping marshworts.
14. As required under Regulation 106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the qualifying body (Steventon Parish Council) provided the required information to enable Vale of White Horse 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.
15. The Plan does not allocate any sites for development or promote additional development beyond what is supported in the adopted Development Plan. None of the SACs are located within the Steventon NDP area and the closest is approximately 6km from the boundary of the NDP area. Therefore, the Steventon NDP is unlikely to have

significant effects on Natura 200, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, taking the above into account.

16. The Council has considered the HRA of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (October 2019) in respect of the potential in combination effects of the proposals in the Steventon Neighbourhood Plan. As the Steventon NDP is not proposing any additional development beyond that already considered in Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 or Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2, we consider that the Steventon NDP is not likely to give rise to significant in combination effects.
17. Appendix 2 of this assessment has considered how the development proposed in the Steventon Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. Given the plan does not propose any allocations and having regard to the conclusions of Appendix 2, it is considered that the development proposed in the Steventon Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to give rise to significant in combination effects.

## **CONCLUSION**

18. The Steventon 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 Steventon NDP is not required.

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

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

1. Characteristics of the Plan, having regard to:	
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	The Steventon NDP would, if adopted, form part of the Statutory Development Plan and as such does contribute to the framework for future development consent of projects. However, the Plan will sit within the wider framework set by the National Planning Policy Framework, the strategic policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (December 2016) and the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (October 2019).
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	A Neighbourhood Development Plan must have regard to national policy and be in conformity with the Local Plan for the District. It does not influence other plans.  The Steventon 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 Steventon NDP. A basic condition of the Steventon NDP is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.  It is noted that a number of the NDP objectives do relate to the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view of promoting sustainable development. These include: - To ensure that the form, design and scale of any new development is of a quality to preserve or enhance Steventon’s distinctive local character. - To maintain a rural and woodland perimeter to the built area of the village and to ensure that new development does not unduly detract from the appearance of the perimeter.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To reduce car use within the village by ensuring that new developments have convenient and safe provision for walking and cycling which connects to existing networks.</li> <li>- To ensure any new development addresses environmental sustainability through building design and infrastructure which conserves energy, water resources and materials and minimises soil, water, air, noise and light pollution.</li> <li>- To increase resilience to flooding by ensuring adequate drainage and sewage capacity for all new developments.</li> <li>- To protect the views within the village and to the surrounding fields and woodland.</li> <li>- To protect and improve green infrastructure such as public open spaces, footpaths, verges and sports and recreation facilities.</li> </ul> <p>To preserve as far as possible existing trees and hedgerows and to ensure the planting of new trees and hedgerows to increase habitat and promote biodiversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To protect important local green spaces as defined in NPPF 2019, para.100.</li> </ul> <p>In order to meet the basic conditions the plan will have to integrate environmental considerations in particular with a view to promote sustainable development.</p>
<p>(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and</p>	<p>The environmental impact of the proposals within the Steventon NDP is likely to be minimal as the plan does not allocate any sites for development or support additional development beyond what is supported in the Development Plan. Policies in the Steventon NDP will aim to support sustainable development in the village that will not adversely impact on the rural nature of the village. Retaining the character and appearance of the village is particularly important.</p> <p>The Steventon NDP will contain policies to maintain the character of the village and to specify design criteria for new houses.</p> <p>Policies in the Steventon NDP will aim to support sustainable development in the village. Retaining the distinctive character</p>

	<p>and appearance of the villages is particularly important. The plan does not allocate any sites for housing and seeks to maintain the rural and woodland perimeter of the built area of the village.</p> <p>The Steventon NDP contains the following environmental designations:</p> <p><i>Flood Zones</i>  <i>BAP priority habitats</i>  <i>TPOs</i></p> <p>There are also the following designations outside the NDP area (the distances are approximate and measured from the NDP area):</p> <p><i>Frilford Heath Ponds and Fens SSSI – 3.5km</i>  <i>Barrow Farm Fens SSSI – 4km</i>  <i>Culham Brake SSSI 0 4.5km</i>  <i>Cothill Fen SAC – 6km</i>  <i>Little Wittenham SAC – 9km</i>  <i>Hackpen Hill SAC – 10km</i>  <i>Oxford Meadow SAC – 15km</i></p> <p>Given the NDP is not allocating sites; the small amount of potential infill sites within the village and their relationship to the designations within the NDP area we are of the opinion 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.</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 Steventon NDP has been judged not to have an impact on Community legislation.</p>



<b>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is generally likely to influence development for a period of 15 years from its adoption, which is in line with national guidance. The Steventon 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.</p> <p>The plan proposes to protect local green spaces, important views and existing facilities. This will have positive cumulative benefits for the area. However, given the scale of what is proposed the positive effect is not likely to be significant.</p> <p>The plan is also likely to have modest positive social effects through the provision of residential development through infill and the protection of local green space.</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	It is intended that the positive social effects associated with residential infill development will have positive cumulative benefits for the area. However, this is not likely to be significant.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	The effects of the Plan are unlikely to have transboundary <sup>3</sup> 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 Steventon NDP relates to the parish of Steventon. The NDP is not allocating any sites for development and therefore as it will not promote any development that is above and beyond what is already supported in the Development Plan and therefore the potential for environmental effects is also likely to be small and localised.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:	The Steventon NDP area contains the following special natural characteristics and cultural elements:
(i) special natural characteristics or cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listed buildings</li> <li>- Conservation Area</li> <li>- Archaeological constraints</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Transboundary effects are understood to be in other Member States.

<p>heritage;  (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or  (iii) intensive land-use; and</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">- TPOs</p> <p>The Steveton NDP offers an opportunity to enhance the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the area through the proposals being considered.</p> <p>The main vulnerability of the parish is the impact of householder and small scale developments within the village boundaries on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, listed buildings and archaeological sites. However, given the limited amount of potential infill sites and their relationship to the designated areas and that the plan aims to ensure development conserves and enhances the Conservation Area through detailed design policies it is considered there would not be likely significant effects to the environment.</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>

## APPENDIX 4 – STATUTORY COLSULTEE RESPONSES

### HISTORIC ENGLAND

**From:** Lloyd Sweet, Robert <Robert.LloydSweet@HistoricEngland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 24 April 2020 13:53  
**To:** Faludi, Dorottya  
**Subject:** Fw: Steventon Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion - reply by 24 April

Dear Dorottya

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the draft screening opinion for the Steventon Neighbourhood plan.

I am happy to confirm our agreement that the plan should not merit completion of SEA due to any likely significant effects within areas of interest to Historic England.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lloyd-Sweet

Robert Lloyd-Sweet | Historic Places Adviser | South East England | Historic England  
Cannon Bridge House | 25 Dowgate Hill | London | EC4R 2YA

# NATURAL ENGLAND

Date: 20 April 2020  
Our ref: 312811  
Your ref: Steventon Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening Opinion



Dorottya.Faludi@southandvale.gov.uk

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Hornbeam House  
Crew e Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crew e  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Dorottya,

## **Steventon Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening Opinion**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 24 March 2020 which was received by Natural England on the same day.

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

### **Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment**

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

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

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

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

Based on the information provided, we note that there are no designated sites or protected landscapes within the NDP area, and the plan doesn't allocate any sites for development and therefore are satisfied with the screening conclusion that SEA is not required.

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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Micklem  
Lead Adviser Sustainable Development  
Thames Solent Team

## THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

**From:** Planning\_THM <Planning\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 26 March 2020 07:59  
**To:** Planning Policy Vale  
**Subject:** RE: Steventon Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion - reply by 24 April

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the draft SEA and HRA Screening Opinion for the Steventon Neighbourhood Plan.

We regret that at present, the Thames Area Sustainable Places team is unable to review this consultation. This is due to resourcing issues within the team, a high development management workload and an increasing volume of neighbourhood planning consultations. We have had to prioritise our limited resource, and must focus on influencing plans where the environmental risks and opportunities are highest. For the purposes of neighbourhood planning, we have assessed those authorities who have "up to date" local plans (plans adopted since 2012, or which have been confirmed as being compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework) as being of lower risk. At this time, therefore, we are unable to make any detailed input on neighbourhood plans being prepared within this local authority area.

However, together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission, we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT\\_6524\\_7da381.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf)

Thames Sustainable Places Team  
**Environment Agency** | Red Kite House, Wallingford, OX10 8BD

[Planning\\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Speak to us early about environmental issues and opportunities - We can provide a free pre-application advice note or for more detailed advice / meetings / reviews we can provide a project manager to coordinate specialist advice / meetings which costs £100 per hour plus 20% VAT. For more information email us at [planning\\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Creating a better place  
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