

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 Cumnor Neighbourhood Development Plan

28 OCTOBER 2019

SUMMARY

Following consultation with statutory bodies, Vale of White Horse District Council (the 'Council') determines that the Cumnor Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (Cumnor 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 Cumnor Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (Cumnor NDP) 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 initial screening opinion was subject to consultation with Historic England, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Oxfordshire County Council. 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 Cumnor NDP against each criterion to ascertain whether a SEA is required.
7. Also, part of the screening process is the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening, which can be found in Appendix 2, and the assessment of likely significant effects on the environment, which can be found in Appendix 3.
8. These two assessments feed into Table 1 and the SEA screening opinion.

THE EMERGING CUMNOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The neighbourhood plan area

9. The NP area covers all of Cumnor Parish. The Parish and NP boundaries are the same and are shown on Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: The neighbourhood plan area

10. The Cumnor NDP will contain the following aims and objectives:

Aim

To protect and enhance the green and blue spaces within Cumnor Parish

Objectives

- i. conserve and enhance local green spaces, SSSIs and nature reserves
- ii. protect and enhance the biodiversity of green and blue spaces and local wildlife sites by increasing habitats and wildlife corridors
- iii. protects and conserves the Green Belt within the Parish
- iv. preserve historically important landscape and views
- v. maintain and enhance the extensive network of public footpaths

Aim

To support opportunities for local employment within the Parish

Objective

- i. encourage the reuse of brownfield sites for employment generating uses on a scale appropriate for the location and where this will enhance the character and amenity of the immediate surroundings

Aim

To ensure that our infrastructure supports the needs of new and existing residents of Cumnor Parish

Objective

- i. ensures new development does not exacerbate, and where possible, mitigates current problems (including groundwater flooding and drainage, air quality, noise)
- ii. to maintain and enhance Parish assets such as village halls, public houses, community centres, sport and recreation facilities
- iii. to support the improved connectivity of the Parish through a comprehensive network of cycling and walking routes
- iv. to ensure the continued existence of shops, restaurants/cafes, public houses and independent specialist businesses
- v. to support improved broadband provision to all residents in the Parish
- vi. to encourage the provision and use of public transport within the Parish

Aim

To maintain and enhance the character of Cumnor Parish

Objectives

- i. respect the existing character of the Parish and its existing settlements. Any development should enhance this character.
- ii. to support initiatives that preserve our historic environment e.g. listed buildings, buildings of local interest, paleogeographic sites and archaeologically important sites

Aim

To provide a well-balanced mix of housing to meet identified needs of Cumnor Parish

Objectives

- i. to provide a mix of housing types, including smaller houses with gardens and/or flats, for singles, couples and older residents wishing to downsize
- ii. to provide appropriately sized, affordable homes
- iii. to integrate new housing into the Parish that maintains and enhances the existing character of our area

Policies

Policy LGS2: Development Affecting Local Green Space

Policy DBC1: Spatial Characteristics

Policy DBC2: Sustainable Design

Policy DBC3: Design Cumnor Village Historic Core

Policy DBC4: Design in the Rural Setting of Cumnor

Policy DBC5: Design for Lower Density Areas

Policy DBC6: Infill in the Green Belt

Policy DBC7: Conserving and enhancing non-designated heritage assets

Policy RNE1: Rural Setting and Natural Environment

Policy RNE2: Flood Risk

Policy RNE3: Air Quality, Noise and Light Pollution

Policy RNE4: Archaeology

Policy RNE5: Important Views

Policy RES1: New Residential Development

Policy RES2: Residential Mix and Standards

Policy RES3: Care Homes and Residential Institutions

Policy RES4: Local Heritage

Policy EBC1: Business, Employment and Community Facilities

Policy EBC2: Community, Sports and Recreation Facilities

Policy EBC3: Farmoor Reservoir

Policy EBC4: River Environment and Access

Policy TI1: Infrastructure Priorities

Policy TI2: Sustainable Transport

Policy TI3: Cycle Routes

Policy TI4: Footpaths and Bridleways

Policy TI5: Digital Connectivity

11. The Cumnor NDP will contain policies to maintain the character of the village and to specify design criteria for new development.
12. Policies in the Cumnor 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. The plan does not allocate any sites for housing.
13. 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.
14. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Cumnor NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

15. The Screening Opinion was sent to Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England and the Oxfordshire County Council on 26 September 2019 for a four week consultation period. The responses are in full in Appendix 3.
16. Historic England agree with the Council's view that the Cumnor NDP would not lead to significant effects on the historic environment and therefore the Cumnor NDP does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
17. The Environment Agency agree with the Council's SEA screening assessment because the Cumnor NDP has no potential significant environmental effects.
18. Natural England agree that the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites which Natural England has a statutory duty to protect, therefore, no SEA or Appropriate Assessment is required.
19. The Oxfordshire County Council agree with the Initial Screening Opinion and consider that the Cumnor NDP does not require a SEA.

CONCLUSION

20. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council, the following determination has been reached.
21. The Cumnor 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 Cumnor Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.

22. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 1 and 3, the Cumnor NDP is not likely to have any significant effects on the environment.
23. The Cumnor NDP does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Authorised by: Ricardo Rios
On behalf of Head of Planning

Signed: 

Date: 24/01/2020

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

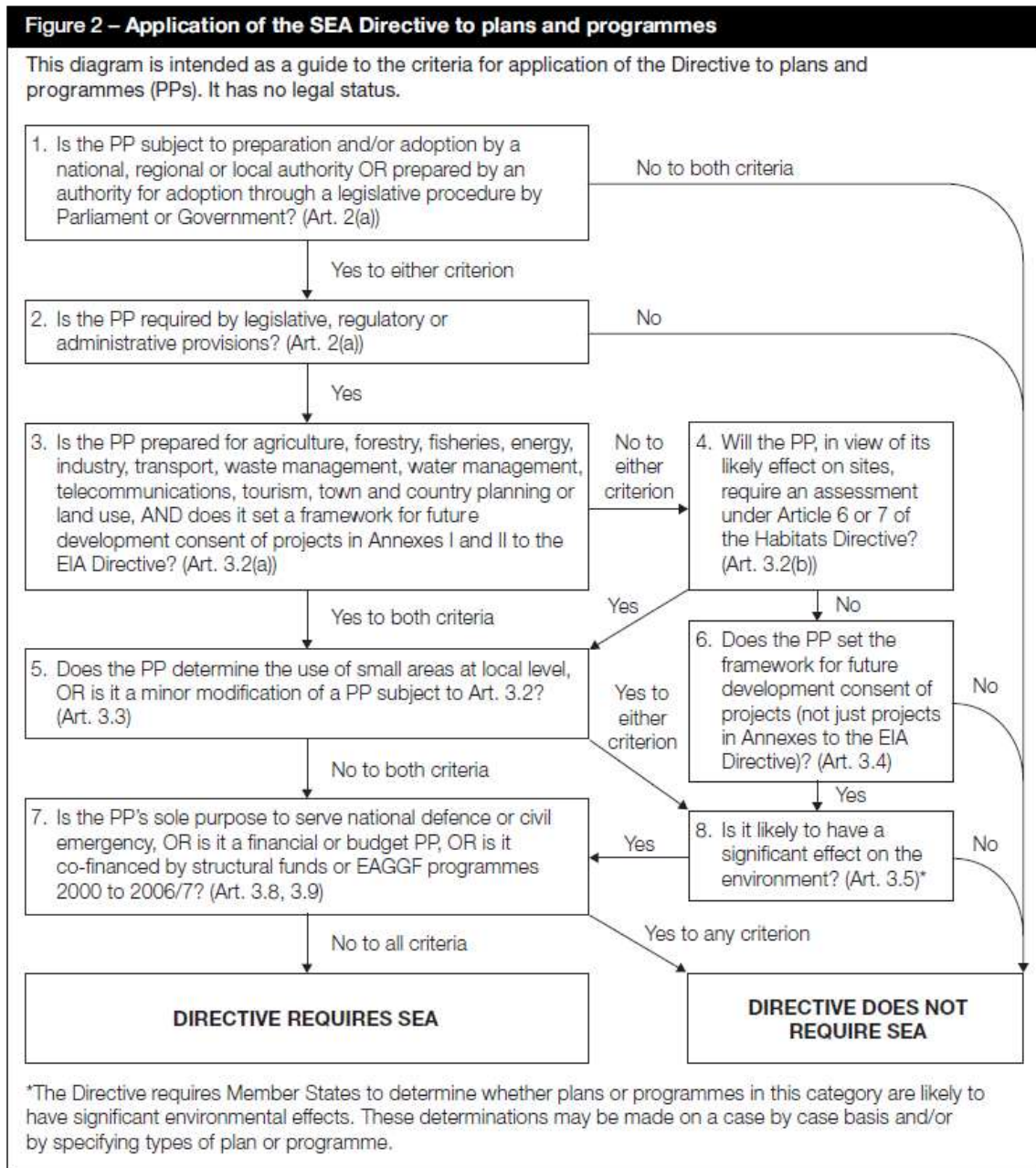


Table 1: Application of SEA Directive as shown in Appendix 1

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

Stage	Y/N	Explanation
<p>1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))</p>	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 Cumnor NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to Cumnor 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"> • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 • The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
<p>2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))</p>	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 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 Cumnor NDP is prepared for town and country planning and land use and will set out a framework for future development in Cumnor, including the development of residential uses. These projects are not of the scale referred to in Article 4(2) of the EIA Directive – listed at Annex II of the directive.
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 Cumnor NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Cumnor 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 Cumnor NDP will determine the use of sites/small areas at a local level. However, this will be to designate areas of Local Green Space. There will be no site allocations.
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 Cumnor NDP will include a series of policies to guide development within the village, but will not allocate sites for specific development. 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 Cumnor 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 Vale of White Horse District Council’s emerging Local Plan ([June 2018](#)) as its basis for assessment. From this, the Local Authority will determine whether the Cumnor 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.”

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 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (December 2016) and the Saved policies from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011.

“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 of 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 revocation or modification.

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

ASSESSMENT

4. The HRA ([June 2018](#)) of the Vale of White Horse District Council's emerging Local Plan advises it is important to determine the various ways in which land use plans can impact on European sites by following the pathways along which development can be connected with European sites. In terms of recreation pressure a figure of 5km is used. There are two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 5km of the Cumnor Neighbourhood Development Plan boundary; Cothill Fen SAC and Oxford Meadows SAC.

Cothill Fen SAC

5. Cothill Fen supports outstanding examples of nationally rare calcareous fen and moss-rich mire communities together with associated wetland habitats. It is one of a number of nationally important sites where the vegetation of the area over the past ten millennia can be interpreted from peat samples. Cothill Fen exhibits succession from open water to fen, scrub and carr, together with an adjacent area of ancient woodland. Plant distribution varies in conjunction with differences in water table, canopy cover, peat depth, soils and historical factors such as peat cutting and attempts at drainage. Over 330 vascular plants have been recorded, including species which are uncommon in southern England, together with many uncommon invertebrates. The site is designated as a SAC for its calcium-rich, spring-water-fed fens and alder woodland on floodplains
6. The Site Improvement Plan for Cothill Fen indicates that hydrological changes, water pollution and air pollution are threats requiring investigation. With regard to the types of development that may be brought forward in the Local Plan, air quality, recreational pressure and hydrology could impact the site.

Oxford Meadows SAC

7. Port Meadow is a classic site for studying the effects of grazing on plant communities. The site consists of a series of neutral grasslands

situated in the Thames floodplain. Despite the generally low species-diversity of Port Meadow compared with adjoining hay fields a total of 178 flowering plants have been recorded. These include the Red Data Book species creeping marshwort *Apium repens*, for which Port Meadow is now one of only two sites in Britain.

8. Wolvercote Meadows, bordering the River Thames consists of unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland that continues to be managed traditionally for hay and pasture and support a rich flora. Pixey and Yarnton Meads are unimproved floodplain meadows on alluvium over calcareous gravel on the first terrace bordering the River Thames and are internationally renowned. They are amongst the best remaining examples of neutral grassland in lowland England. Cassington Meadows are a cluster of neutral hay meadows and fen, which are surviving remnants of semi-natural vegetation in an area now characterised by intensive arable farming and gravel extraction.
9. Oxford Meadows SAC is adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of Vale of White Horse district. The site is designated as a SAC for its lowland hay meadows and creeping marshwort
10. The Site Improvement Plan for Oxford Meadows indicates hydrological changes and invasive species are threats requiring investigation. With regard to the types of development that may be brought forward in the Local Plan recreational pressure, air quality and water quality could impact the site.
11. As required under Regulation 106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the qualifying body (Cumnor 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.
12. Since the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not allocate or otherwise designate sites for any development purposes, or promote additional development beyond what is supported in the adopted Development Plan, and there are no measures to mitigate any development arising as a result of the proposals in the neighbourhood plan that might otherwise mask significant effects, an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

CONCLUSION

13. The Cumnor 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 Cumnor 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 Cumnor 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 (NPPF), the strategic policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (adopted December 2016), the saved policies from the Local Plan 2011 and the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 2.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	A Neighbourhood Development Plan must have regard to national policy and be in conformity with the Local Plan for the District. It does not influence other plans. It should also take account of the emerging planning policy. The Cumnor NDP is unlikely to influence other Plans or Programmes within the Statutory Development Plan.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	National policy requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread through plan-making, including the Cumnor NDP. A basic condition of the Cumnor NDP is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Within this wider context the Cumnor NDP itself is unlikely to have a significant positive or negative effect.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	<p>The environmental impact of the proposals within the Cumnor 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 Cumnor 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 Cumnor NDP will contain policies to maintain the local character and</p>

distinctiveness of the village and to specify design criteria for new development.

The Cumnor NDP also includes a policy to ensure flood risk (including groundwater) and drainage are appropriately considered in development proposals. The policy is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment for Cumnor Parish.

The Cumnor NDP contains the following designations:

Oxford Green Belt
Conservation area
Listed buildings
Flood Zones
Archaeological constraints
Ancient Woodland
BAP priority habitats
Scheduled Monuments

There are 2 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within approx. 5km of the Cumnor Neighbourhood Development Plan.

- Cothill Fen SAC approx. 4km
- Oxford Meadows SAC approx. 5km

There are also several SSSIs within 10km of the Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan area:

- Hurst Hill SSSI approx. 1.1km
- Wytham Woods SSSI approx. 2.5km
- Cothill Fen SSSI approx. 2.8km
- Appleton Lower Common SSSI approx. 4.5km
- Dry Sandford Pit SSSI approx. 4.5km
- Frilford Heath, Ponds and Fen SSSI approx. 4.5km
- Pixey and Yarnton Meads SSSI approx. 5.7km
- Iffley Meadows SSSI approx. 6km
- Barrow Farm Fen SSSI approx. 6.6km
- Culham Brake SSSI approx. 9km
- Sidling's Copse and College Pond SSSI approx. 9.8km
- Woodeaton Wood SSSI approx. 10.3km

	Given the NDP is not allocating sites 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.
(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 Cumnor NDP has been judged not to have an impact on Community legislation. The Plan includes a policy relating to Farmoor Reservoir to ensure its continued ecological and recreational function is not prejudiced.
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 Cumnor 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 and appropriate scale through limited infill development within the built up area.</p> <p>The plan proposes protecting open spaces, the Oxford Green Belt, local green spaces and the historic character. This will have positive cumulative benefits for the area. However, given the scale of what is proposed the positive effects are not likely to be significant.</p> <p>The plan is also likely to have positive social effects through the provision of residential development through infill.</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	It is intended that the positive social effects of providing residential development through infill will have positive cumulative benefits for the area.
(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.

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

<p>(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</p>	<p>The NDP relates to the parish of Cumnor. 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, the potential for environmental effects is also 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 Cumnor 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 built-up area on the character and appearance of the listed buildings, the conservation area and archaeological sites. However, given the limited amount of potential infill sites and their relationship to the designated areas, maximising opportunities to support development on brownfield land in the plan and as the plan's aim is to ensure development conserves and enhances the character of the area through detailed design policies, it is considered there would not be likely significant effects to the environment.</p> <p>The Plan also includes policies to maximise opportunities for walking and cycling and sustainable public transport options.</p>
<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>The Cumnor NDP area is entirely covered by the Oxford Green Belt. The plan aims to support limited infill development in the Green Belt consistent with local policy, provided it is of an appropriate scale.</p> <p>The scale of development proposed is modest and given the objectives of the plan the effects are not likely to be significant.</p>

APPENDIX 4 – STATUTORY CONSULTEE RESPONSES

HISTORIC ENGLAND

From: Lloyd Sweet, Robert <Robert.LloydSweet@HistoricEngland.org.uk>
Sent: 22 October 2019 16:17
To: Planning Policy Vale
Cc: Blackmore, Hannah
Subject: Fw: Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion - reply by 25/10/2019

Dear Dorottya. Thank you for consulting Historic England on the draft Screening opinion for SEA of the Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan.

Given the limited scope for developments out within the plan we are happy to confirm our agreement with the Council's view that SEA should not be required of this plan.

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

Many thanks

Robert Lloyd-Sweet

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

NATURAL ENGLAND

Date: 10 October 2019
Our ref: 296081



planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

BY EMAIL ONLY

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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Dorottya Faludi,

Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Opinion for the Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 26 September 2019 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

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

Neighbourhood Plan

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

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

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

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

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an 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 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 Lauren Schofield on 020802 61443. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Lauren Schofield
Adviser
Sustainable Development
Thames Team

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

creating a better place



Planning Policy Team
Vale Of White Horse Council
Environmental Services Directorate
Vale of White Horse District Council 135
Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Abingdon
OX14 4SB

Our ref: WA/2006/000281/SE-16/SC1-L01

Your ref: CumnorNP

Date: 22 October 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

SA/SEA Screening – Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for consulting us on the draft SEA screening report.

Based on a review of environmental constraints for which we are a statutory consultee, there are areas of fluvial flood risk, areas of land contamination with the potential to affect groundwater, and protected habitat and species within your neighbourhood plan area. However, as you are not proposing to allocate sites other than infill development within the urban footprint, we do not consider there to be potential significant environmental effects relating to these environmental constraints. We **agree** with your SEA screening assessment.

We have noted that the policy RNE2: Flood Risk does not mention assessing the impacts of climate change. We would recommend the addition of a sentence to say that development proposals must be located and designed to take account of flood risk both now and in the future and that an assessment of climate change impacts must be included. This is in line with paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Please note the Environment Agency no longer comments on surface water flooding issues. This is now covered by Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA). Your LLFA's Surface Water Management Plan will indicate if there are any critical drainage areas from local sources of flood risk (e.g. surface water, groundwater and sewerage) which coincide with the neighbourhood plan area. This document should be reviewed as part of completing the neighbourhood plan.

For your information we have published joint advice with Natural England, English Heritage and the Forestry Commission 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

Cont/d..

Yours sincerely

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

From: Hughes, Lynette - Communities <Lynette.Hughes@Oxfordshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 October 2019 21:27
To: Planning Policy Vale
Subject: RE: Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion - reply by 25/10/2019

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Planning Policy

We have noted that in this case the draft assessment is that no SEA is required. There are no proposed allocations.

I have received comments from our Minerals & Waste Planning Team. They note that the neighbourhood plan area includes a minerals safeguarded area and so policy M8 of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan is relevant.

Best regards

Lynette Hughes

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