

# 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 Chilton Neighbourhood Development Plan

**01 DECEMBER 2020**

## **SUMMARY**

Following consultation with statutory bodies, Vale of White Horse District Council (the 'Council') determines that Chilton 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 Chilton Neighbourhood Development Plan (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 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 Chilton NDP against each criterion to ascertain whether a SEA is required.

4. Part of the screening process also includes the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening, which can be found in Appendix 2. The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening concluded that the Chilton 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 Chilton NDP is not required.
5. Appendix 3 considers whether the plan is likely to have likely significant effects on the environment.
6. These two assessments feed into Table 1 and the SEA screening opinion.
7. The council's screening opinion concluded that the implementation of the Chilton NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment and therefore would not require an SEA.

## **CHILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

8. The Chilton NDP will contain the following vision, objectives:

### *Vision*

The vision is for Chilton to be a small, primarily residential village, within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty safeguarding its historic downland character whilst promoting sustainable development, and improving local facilities to meet the needs of its residents throughout their lives.

### *Objectives*

1. Consistent with the VWHDC Local Plan and the character and history of Chilton, to inform the siting of any new housing, and the preferred styles and mix of residential development.
2. To maintain and develop infrastructure, including the control and reduction of flooding from wastewater, rainwater and a high water table.
3. To maintain, and improve, recreational facilities for children, families and young people.
4. To encourage the development of infrastructure and activities supporting those in the community of advancing years and a range of abilities.
5. To maintain and improve public transport links to nearby town centres.
6. To maintain and enhance community facilities for all ages.
7. To protect and encourage green spaces within the Plan Area for recreational use and furthering the natural aesthetics and ecology of our environment.

8. To preserve and promote accessibility to the surrounding Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ('AONB').
  9. To promote sustainable enterprise consistent with the character and history of Chilton in its setting as a small primarily residential rural village.
  10. To be a responsible 'good neighbour' to adjacent parishes and the Harwell Campus.
9. Chilton is defined as a smaller village in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan. It is not a location where strategic development sites are proposed and has not been allocated any specific housing requirements or development sites.
  10. The Chilton Neighbourhood plan is not allocating any development, i.e. it does not specify sites for development. Instead the Chilton NDP policies will be designed to ensure that any future development is of appropriate size and design 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 natural environment during the development process and to ensure that proposals support biodiversity gain and avoid light pollution especially on the AONB. Policies will be formulated to meet all the above objectives which were arrived at through consultation with the residents.
  11. Overall, we note that the plan does not allocate any sites for development and places great emphasis on conserving the character and design of the area.
  12. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Chilton NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

## **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

13. The Screening Opinion was sent to Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England on 14th July 2020 for a four week consultation period. The responses in full are in Appendix 4.
14. Historic England confirmed their agreement with the Council that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects on the historic environment and therefore the Chilton Neighbourhood Plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
15. Natural England noted that there are designated sites or protected landscapes within the impacts zone of the Neighbourhood Plan area, however, the Plan does not allocate any additional sites for development. Therefore, Natural England agree with the Initial Screening Opinion and consider that the plan does not require an SEA or Appropriate Assessment.

16. The Environment Agency did not have any comments.

## **CONCLUSION**

17. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council and the responses from the statutory consultees, the following determination has been reached.

18. The Chilton NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Chilton Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.

19. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 1 & 3, the Chilton NDP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.

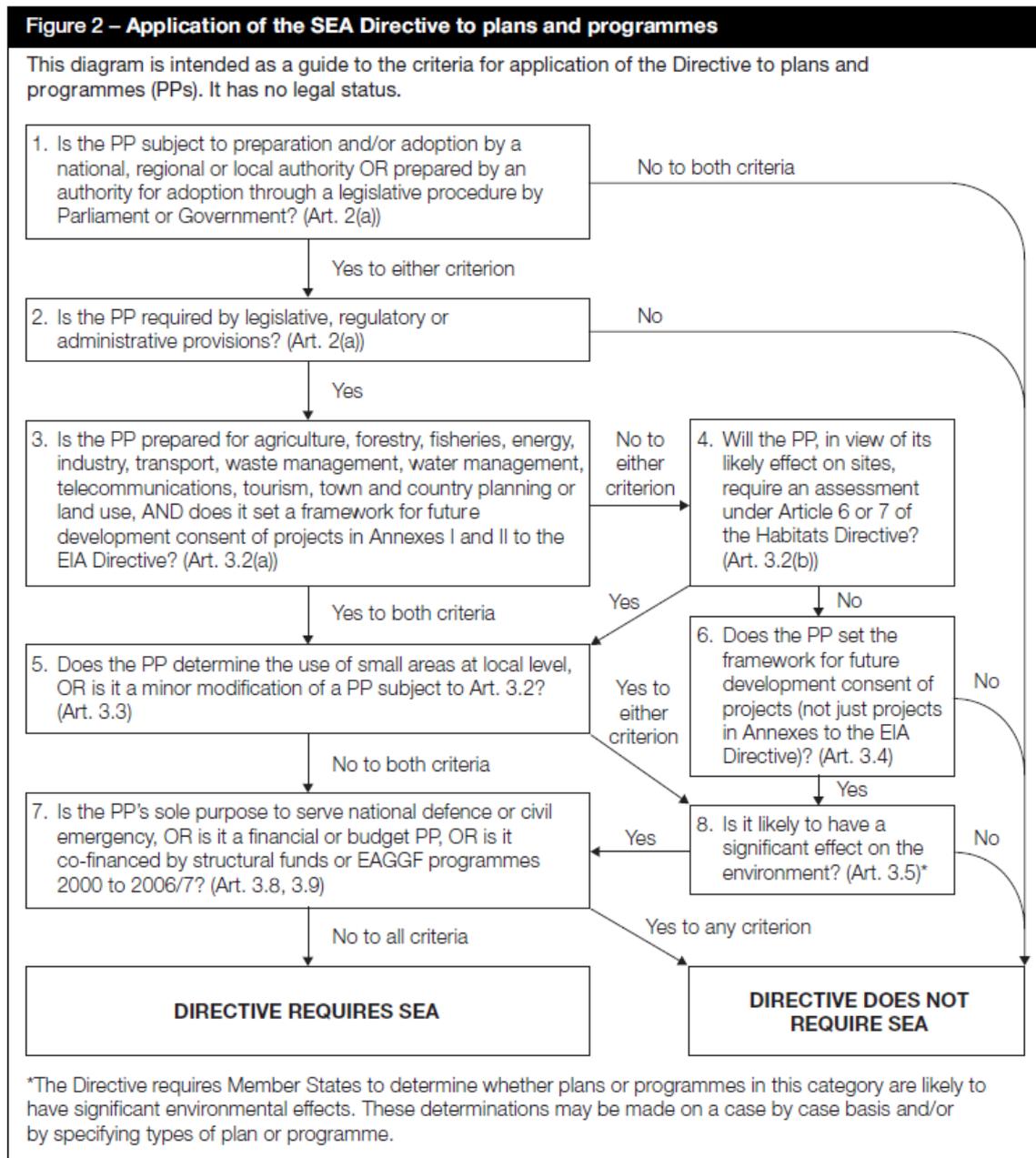
20. The Chilton NDP does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

Authorised by:                     Ricardo Rios                      
On behalf of Head of Planning

Signed: *R. Rios*

Date: 01/12/2020

## 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
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 Chilton NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to the Chilton 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 Chilton 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 Chilton NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Chilton 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 Chilton 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 Chilton 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 Chilton 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 Chilton 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 Little Wittenham SAC (South Oxfordshire), Hartslock Wood SAC (South Oxfordshire) and Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC (West Berkshire). The Chilton NDP has the following relationships with these areas:

- Cothill Fen SAC (Approx. 13km)
- Little Wittenham SAC (Approx. 9km)
- Hackpen Hill SAC (Approx. 11km)
- Hartslock Wood SAC (Approx. 14km)
- Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC (Approx 15km)

### Cothill Fen SAC (Approx. 13km)

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. 11km)

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.

#### Hartslock Wood SAC (Approx. 14km)

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

#### Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC (Approx 15km)

14. The site is particularly important as it has a significant concentration of areas supporting a threatened species of snail - the Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*. This species inhabits permanently wet habitats, particularly riverside fen, sedge beds and swamps. Parts of the SAC are former watermeadows managed by extensive cattle grazing

but most areas are fringing, riverside or ditch-side vegetation which receives little management intervention.

15. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impact of water pollution and hydrological changes, as well as a change in land management and inappropriate water levels.
16. As required under Regulation 106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the qualifying body (Chilton 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.
17. 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 Chilton NDP area and the closest is approximately 9km from the boundary of the NDP area. Therefore, the Chilton 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.
18. 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 Chilton Neighbourhood Plan. As the Chilton 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 Chilton NDP is not likely to give rise to significant in combination effects.

## **CONCLUSION**

19. The Chilton 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 Chilton 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 Chilton 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 Chilton 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 Chilton NDP. A basic condition of the Chilton 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 maintain and develop infrastructure, including the control and reduction of flooding from wastewater, rainwater and a high water table. - To maintain and improve public transport links to nearby town centres. - To protect and encourage green spaces within the Plan Area for recreational use and furthering the natural aesthetics and ecology of our environment

	<p>- To preserve and promote accessibility to the surrounding Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ('AONB')</p> <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 Chilton 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 Chilton 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 Chilton NDP will contain policies to maintain the character of the village and to specify design criteria for new houses.</p> <p>The Chilton NDP area contains the following environmental designations:</p> <p><i>North Wessex Downs AONB</i>  <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>Aston Upton Downs SSSI – 4km</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</p>

	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 Chilton NDP has been judged not to have an impact on Community legislation.
<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 Chilton 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 and the natural environment/biodiversity. 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 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 of providing residential development 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 <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.

<sup>3</sup> 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 Chilton NDP relates to the parish of Chilton. 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.</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 Chilton NDP area contains the following special natural characteristics and cultural elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listed buildings</li> <li>- Archaeological constraints</li> <li>- TPOs</li> </ul> <p>The Chilton 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 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 character of the area through a design policy, 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>The Chilton NDP area is entirely covered by the North Wessex Downs AONB, which is recognised to contain a distinctive character, natural beauty and some of the finest landscapes in England. The scale of proposed development is modest and the importance of the AONB is recognised in the vision, objectives and policies of the NDP.</p> <p>The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019 identifies that housing developments should only be permitted to meet appropriate local needs. This should be within existing settlements, preferably on suitable previously developed sites. Good</p>

	<p>design and siting of all new developments in the North Wessex Downs is essential. They should reflect the local landscape character and architecture and make use of local materials.</p> <p>The NDP is not allocating any sites for development and there are not likely to be significant effects on the AONB.</p>
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## APPENDIX 4 – STATUTORY CONSULTEE RESPONSES

### HISTORIC ENGLAND

**From:** Lloyd Sweet, Robert <Robert.LloydSweet@HistoricEngland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 11 August 2020 09:09  
**To:** Planning Policy Vale  
**Cc:** Blackmore, Hannah  
**Subject:** Re: Chilton Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion - please reply by 11 August

Dear Dorottya

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the draft **screening** statement for SEA of the Chilton Neighbourhood Plan.

Based on the information provided in the screening opinion I am happy to confirm that Historic England agree that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects within areas of interest to our organisation.

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

Yours sincerely

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: 11 August 2020  
Our ref: 322231



Vale of White Horse District Council  
**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Customer Services  
Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Dorottya Faludi

## **Planning Consultation:** Chilton Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 14/07/2020.

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.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

In our review of the Chilton Neighbourhood Plan SEA screening we note that;

- there are designated sites or protected landscapes within the impacts zones of the Neighbourhood Plan area, however, the Plan does not allocate any additional sites for development.

As a result we agree with the assessment that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA.

However, we would like to draw your attention to the requirement to conserve biodiversity and provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy (Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and section 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework). Please ensure that any development policy in your plan includes wording to ensure "all development results in a biodiversity net gain for the parish".

The recently produced [Neighbourhood Plan for Benson](#), in South Oxfordshire provides an excellent example. We are of the opinion that the policy wording around the Environment, Green Space and Biodiversity is exemplar. We would recommend you considering this document, when reviewing yours.

### Further Recommendations

Natural England would also like to highlight that removal of green space in favour of development may have serious impacts on biodiversity and connected habitat and therefore species ability to adapt to climate change. We recommend that the final local plan include:

- Policies around connected Green Infrastructure (GI) within the parish. Elements of GI such as open green space, wild green space, allotments, and green walls and roofs can all be used to create connected habitats suitable for species adaptation to climate change. Green infrastructure also provides multiple benefits for people including recreation, health and well-

being, access to nature, opportunities for food growing, and resilience to climate change. Annex A provides examples of Green Infrastructure;

- Policies around Biodiversity Net Gain should propose the use of a biodiversity measure for development proposals. Examples of calculation methods are included in Annex A;

Annex A provides information on the natural environment and issues and opportunities for your Neighbourhood planning.

Yours sincerely

Mike Barry  
Lead Adviser  
Sustainable Development  
Thames Team

## THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

**From:** Planning\_THM <Planning\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 16 July 2020 11:50  
**To:** Planning Policy Vale  
**Subject:** RE: Chilton Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion - please reply by 11 August

Dear Dorottya,

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the SEA and HRA screening opinion for the Chilton 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://wearchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT\\_6524\\_7da381.pdf](http://wearchive.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)



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