

# **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 West Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**06 AUGUST 2018**

## **SUMMARY**

Following consultation with the statutory bodies, Vale of White Horse District Council (the 'Council') determines that West Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan (the 'Plan') does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. In June 2018, an SEA screening opinion was used to determine whether or not the contents of the emerging West Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan (the 'Plan') 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. An 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 and is made available to the public.

## **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.

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3. Table 1 in Appendix 1 sets out the criteria from the Practical Guide, along with an assessment of the Plan against each criterion to ascertain whether a SEA is required.
4. Also part of the screening process is the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening, which can be found in Appendix 2, and the assessment of likely significance effects on the environment, which can be found in Appendix 3.
5. These two assessments feed into Table 1 and the SEA screening statement.

## WEST HANNEY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### STATUTORY CONSULTEES

6. The Screening Opinion was sent to Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England on 5 June 2018 for a four-week consultation period. The responses in full are at Appendix 4.
7. Historic England considers the plan area to be a sensitive historic environment. As the Plan does not propose allocating sites for development, the possibility of significant effects on the historic environment arising from the Plan will be reduced substantially.
8. Natural England agree with the initial screening opinion that the Plan does not require an SEA.
9. The Environment Agency were unable to comment on the screening opinion.

### CONCLUSION

10. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council, the following determination has been reached.
11. The Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Plan is not required.
12. Based on the screening assessment and feedback from the relevant statutory consultees, the council has determined that the Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment.
13. It is therefore concluded that the Plan does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

## APPENDIX E SEA SCREENING REPORT

### Decision

Agreed

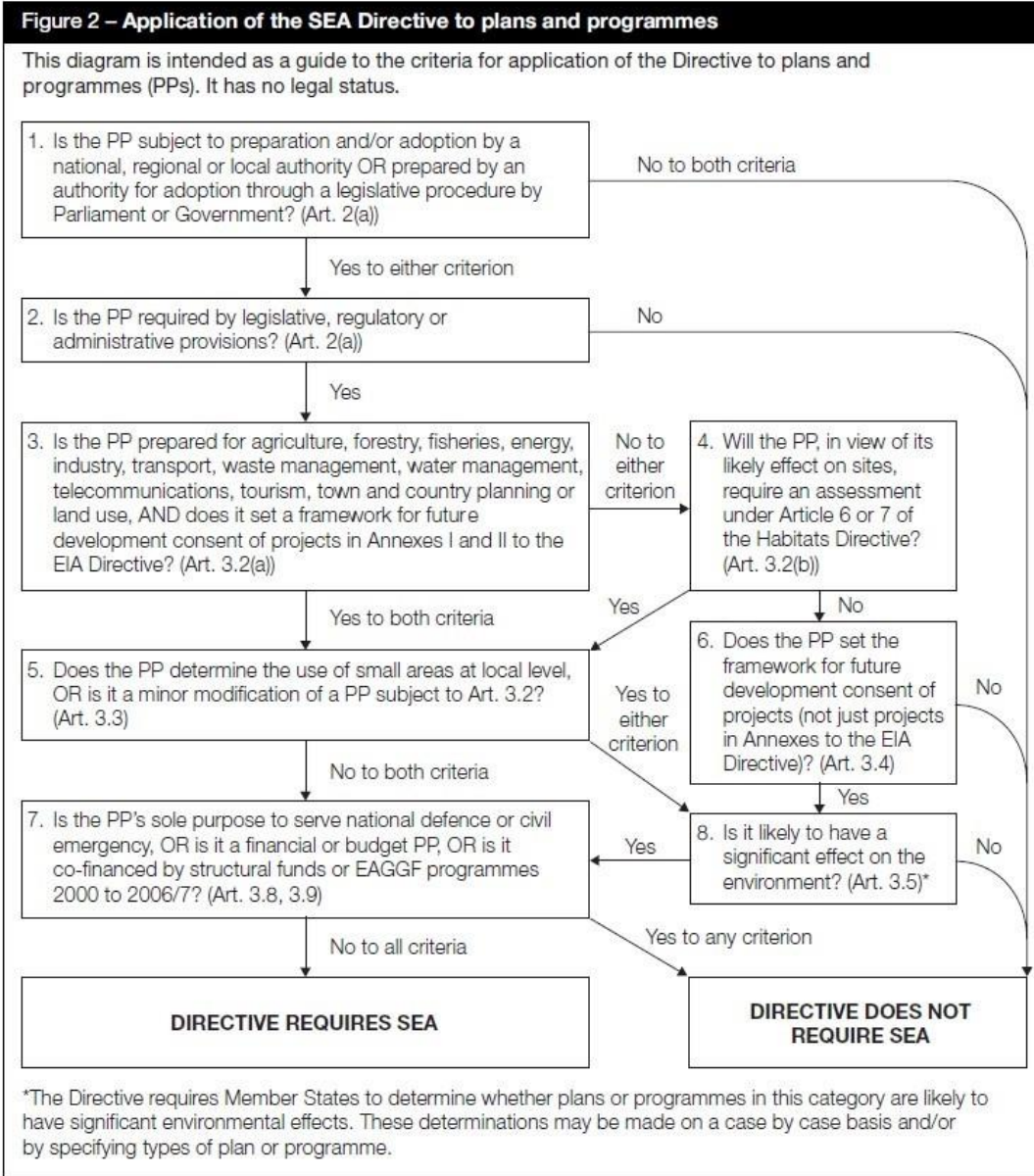
Date: 6 August 2018

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "H. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot at the end.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Proper Officer of the Council  
Duly Authorised in that behalf

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

# APPENDIX E SEA SCREENING REPORT



**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 West Hanney NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to the West Hanney Parish Council (as the “relevant body”) and will be “made” by South Oxfordshire District Council as the local authority. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is subject to the following regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>
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	N	<p>The West Hanney NDP is prepared for town and country planning and land use and will set out a framework for future development in West Hanney, including the development of residential uses. <i>However, these projects are not of the scale referred to in Article 4(2) of the EIA Directive – listed at Annex II of the directive.</i></p>

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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))		
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 West Hanney NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the West Hanney 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 West Hanney NDP will not determine the use of sites/small areas for development at a local level through site allocations, however one of the objectives identified is to maintain the gap between East and West Hanney.
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 West Hanney 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. It will not allocate sites for specific development.
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	No likely significant effects upon the environment have been identified. See assessment of the likely significance of effects on the environment in Appendix 3.

## **Appendix 2 - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the West Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Local Authority is the “competent authority” under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, 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 emerging Local Plan as its basis for assessment. From this, the Local Authority will determine whether the West Hanney 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.”

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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> The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (December 2012) and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (January 2006).



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### ASSESSMENT

4. There are no Natura 2000 sites or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs SPAs) within 5km[1] of the West Hanney Village. In addition, the draft plan documents and the SEA questionnaire confirm that the plan will not make any site allocations. Therefore, it is considered that The West Hanney NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on European sites either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

### CONCLUSION

5. The West Hanney NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the West Hanney 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:	Is there a likely significant positive or negative effect?	
<p>(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;</p>	<p>The West Hanney 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 (2011)/ the Adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1.</p> <p>An objective of the NDP is to establish policies to guide development/redevelopment within the parish for example policies that influence design and conserving the Conservation Area and listed buildings. These will be of a small scale and the plan does not seek to allocate sites for development.</p>	<p>No likely significant positive or negative effect.</p>
<p>(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;</p>	<p>A Neighbourhood Development Plan must be in conformity with the Local Plan for the District. It does not influence other plans.</p>	<p>No likely significant positive or negative effect.</p>
<p>(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to</p>	<p>National policy requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread through plan-making, including the West Hanney NDP. A basic condition of the West Hanney NDP is to contribute to the</p>	<p>No likely significant positive or negative effect.</p>

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<p>promoting sustainable development;</p>	<p>achievement of sustainable development. Within this wider context the West Hanney NDP itself is unlikely to have significant positive or negative effects. It is noted that a number of the NDP objectives do relate to the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To protect the historical heritage and retain the agricultural and rural character of the village.</li> <li>-To provide the basis for future housing developments in the village.</li> <li>-To cater for residents' needs and infrastructure.</li> <li>-To seek to improve the quality of life, retain and enhance the sense of community and vitality associated with the village.</li> </ul>	
<p>(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and</p>	<p>West Hanney contains the following environmental designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation area</li> <li>• Listed buildings</li> <li>• Local Wildlife site</li> </ul> <p>The following SSSI's and SAC's are found within approx. 10km of the village of West Hanney:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frilford Heath, Ponds and Fens SSSI approx. 5km</li> <li>• Barrow Farm Fen SSSI approx. 5km</li> <li>• Appleton Lower Common SSSI approx. 6km</li> </ul>	<p>No likely significant positive or negative effect.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cothill Fen SSSI approx. 7.5km</li><li>• Cothill Fen SAC approx. 7.5km</li><li>• Shellingford Crossroads Quarry SSSI approx. 10km</li><li>• Hackpen, Warren and Gramp's Hill Downs SSSI approx. 10km</li><li>• Hackpen Hill SAC approx. 10km</li><li>• Chimney Meadows SSSI approx. 10km</li></ul> <p>The parish has some small water courses, including Chilbury Brook which the group have identified that floods, however it is considered that given the West Hanney NDP is not proposing to allocate any sites for residential development it is unlikely to cause a significant positive or negative effects to Chilbury Brook.</p> <p>There are also a number of BAP priority Habitats within the parish area. Whilst these are not referred to in the SEA directive or EIA regulations, they should be a consideration in plan making. BAP priority habitats are those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP).</p> <p>The plan seeks to conserve the village, its character and setting. National planning policies require the protection of the above the designations and therefore in order to meet basic conditions the NDP will be required to protect these</p>	
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	<p>Furthermore the Neighbourhood Plan does not include any site allocations for development and therefore is not considered likely to significantly effect these designations.</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 West Hanney NDP has been judged not to have an impact on Community legislation as there are no allocated sites proposed. It is considered that the plan with the absence of allocations is unlikely to have significant positive or negative effects on community legislation such as waste management or water protection.</p>	<p>No likely significant positive or negative effect.</p>
<p><b>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b></p>		
<p>(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects</p>	<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 Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have modest but enduring positive environmental effects by seeking the preservation of green space and open countryside between East and West Hanney.</p> <p>The West Hanney NDP therefore offers an opportunity to enhance the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the area through the proposals being considered. It is clear that a main effect on the parish is the impact of householder and small scale infill development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or listed buildings and their settings. The effects of this are not likely to be reversible as they relate to development, however they will be of a local scale and the plan aims to ensure development conserves and enhances the NDP area through the plan objective to</p>	<p>No likely significant positive or negative effect</p>

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	develop detailed design policies, therefore it is considered not likely to have a significant positive or negative effect.	
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	There are no site allocations being proposed in the plan and it is likely to have policies that would influence design, help conserve the Conservation Area and listed buildings and protecting the gap between West Hanney and East Hanney. Due to the scope and coverage of the plan it is considered not to create any likely significant cumulative effects.	No likely significant positive or negative effect.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	The effects of the Plan are unlikely to have transboundary <sup>3</sup> impacts.	No likely significant positive or negative effect.
(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.	No likely significant positive or negative effect.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The West Hanney NDP relates to the parish of West Hanney. The plan does not propose any site allocations the nature and scale of the development influenced by the neighbourhood plan is small and localised, therefore it is considered the plan would not have any likely significant effects.	No likely significant positive or negative effect.
(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 landuse; and	<p>The special natural characteristics of West Hanney are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation area</li> <li>• Listed buildings</li> <li>• Local Wildlife site</li> </ul> <p>The following SSSI's and SAC's are found within approx. 10km of the village of West Hanney:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">□ Frilford Heath, Ponds and Fens SSSI approx. 5km</p>	No likely significant positive or negative effect.

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

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrow Farm Fen SSSI approx. 5km</li> <li>• Appleton Lower Common SSSI approx. 6km</li> <li>• Cothill Fen SSSI approx. 7.5km</li> <li>• Cothill Fen SAC approx. 7.5km</li> <li>• Shellingford Crossroads Quarry SSSI approx. 10km</li> <li>• Hackpen, Warren and Gramp's Hill Downs SSSI approx. 10km</li> <li>• Hackpen Hill SAC approx. 10km</li> <li>• Chimney Meadows SSSI approx. 10km</li> </ul> <p>The parish has some small water courses, including Chilbury Brook which the group have identified that floods, however it is considered that given the West Hanney NDP is not proposing to allocate any sites for residential development it is unlikely to cause a significant positive or negative effects to Chilbury Brook.</p> <p>There are also a number of BAP priority Habitats within the parish area. Whilst these are not referred to in the SEA directive or EIA regulations, they should be a consideration in plan making. BAP priority habitats are those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP).</p> <p>The plan seeks to conserve the</p>	
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	<p>village, its character and setting. National planning policies require the protection of the above the designations and therefore in order to meet basic conditions the NDP will be required to protect these. Furthermore the Neighbourhood Plan does not include any site allocations for development and therefore is not considered likely to significantly effect these designations.</p> <p>The West Hanney NDP offers an opportunity to enhance the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the area through the proposals being considered. It is clear that a main vulnerability of the parish is the impact of householder and small scale infill development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or listed buildings and their settings. The plan aims to ensure development conserves and enhances these through the plan objective to develop detailed design policies.</p> <p>The vision and objectives of the plan state that it will seek to protect the rural character of the parish.</p> <p>The neighbourhood plan is considered to have a neutral effect on cultural heritage because there is no indication given in the vision and objectives that the plan would go beyond national and local policy and therefore it is considered not to have a likely significant effect.</p> <p>Given the nature and scope of the NDP environmental quality standards or limit values are not considered to be likely significantly effected.</p>	
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	There are no site allocations proposed and therefore given the nature and scope of the plan it is considered there would be no likely significant effects in relation to intensive land use.	
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	There are no areas or landscapes with recognised national, Community or international protection status affected by the neighbourhood plan.	No likely significant positive or negative effect.

## Appendix 4 – Statutory Consultee Responses

Natural England:

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Date: 03 July 2018  
Our ref: 248753



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

T 0300 060 3900

Vale of White Horse District Council

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Sir or Madam

### **Planning Consultation: West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan SEA consultation**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

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 West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan SEA screening we note that:

- There are no designated sites or protected landscapes within the impact zones of the Neighbourhood Plan area,
- The draft Neighbourhood Plan has not yet been prepared,
- The initial screening opinion states that "no allocations are proposed by the plan" and there is "no intention to allocate sites for development".

Based on the initial screening opinion provided, we agree with the assessment that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA. However, should the Neighbourhood Plan decide to allocate a significant number of new developments, this SEA screening may need to be reviewed.

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. The Plan has recently received the go ahead at referendum, and 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:

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- 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 that recognise existing priority habitats (see Annex A) in terms of the biodiversity value of the area with the potential to enhance them through Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 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

Milena Petrovic  
Adviser  
Sustainable Development  
Thames Team

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Historic England:

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Mr Sam Townley  
Enquiries Officer (Neighbourhood Planning)  
South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse District  
Councils  
135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park  
Milton, Abingdon  
Oxfordshire, OX14 4SB.

Our ref: HD/P5354/01  
Your ref:  
Telephone 01483 252040  
Fax

29<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Dear Mr Townley,

### **West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion**

Thank you for your e-mail of 5<sup>th</sup> June seeking the views of Historic England on your Authority's SEA Screening Opinion for the West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan.

The parish contains 25 listed buildings, a conservation area and potentially a number of locally important heritage assets. It is, therefore, a sensitive historic environment which may be affected by any development promoted or allowed for by the Neighbourhood Plan.

We understand that it is not intended that the Plan will allocate any sites for housing or other development. If that is the case, then the possibility of significant effects on the historic environment arising from the Plan will be reduced substantially. However, other policies may allow development e.g. the definition of a settlement boundary which may set a principle for development in places where there would not otherwise be one.

Therefore, based on the information currently available, we are content that the Plan need not be subject to SEA, but we may wish to review this opinion when we see the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

We hope these comments are helpful. Please contact me if you have any queries.

Thank you again for consulting Historic England.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Small".

Martin Small  
Principal Adviser, Historic Environment Planning  
E-mail: [martin.small@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:martin.small@historicengland.org.uk)



Historic England, Eastgate Court, 195-205 High Street, Guildford GU1 3EH  
Telephone 01483 25 2020 [HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)  
Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.  
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



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Environment Agency:

**Townley, Sam**

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**From:** Planning\_THM <Planning\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 06 June 2018 09:35  
**To:** Townley, Sam  
**Subject:** RE: West Hanney neighbourhood plan SEA screening opinion

Dear Mr Townley,

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion.

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 £84 per hour. For more information email us at [planning\\_thm@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:planning_thm@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Creating a better place  
for people and wildlife

