

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 Shrivenham Neighbourhood Development Plan

19 JULY 2019

SUMMARY

Following consultation with statutory bodies, the Vale of White Horse (VoWH) District Council determines that Shrivenham Neighbourhood Plan (Shrivenham 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 Shrivenham NDP required an 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.

Background

4. One of the basic conditions that a neighbourhood plan must be tested against is whether the making of the NP is compatible with European Union obligations, including requirements under the SEA Directive. The aim of the SEA Directive is:

*"to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that an environmental assessment is carried out of **certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment**"*

5. In order to decide whether a proposed NP is likely to have significant environmental effects, and hence requires SEA, it should be 'screened' at an early stage, i.e. once the plan's remit and objectives have been formulated.
6. Screening is 'Stage A' in Government's six stage approach to SEA for NPs. If it is determined, through screening, that SEA is not required, then plan-makers need not concern themselves with subsequent stages of the SEA process.¹

Who is responsible for screening?

7. The SEA Regulations, which transpose the SEA Directive into law, state that a screening determination should be reached by the "responsible authority". In this case, the responsible authority is VoWH District Council.
8. The responsible authority must reach a determination in consultation with the statutory consultation bodies designated under the SEA Regulations, which are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.

Screening Process

9. Screening essentially involves giving consideration to the anticipated scope of the plan in question, and the nature of environmental issues (including opportunities for enhancement) locally, before coming to a conclusion on the potential for a cause-effect relationship, i.e. the likelihood of the plan leading to 'significant effects on the environment'.
10. Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations lists a series of criteria that should be taken into account when establishing the potential for the plan to result in significant effects. Furthermore, Schedule 2 lists a series of broad environmental issues that should be considered. The criteria/issues listed in the Regulations are helpful in that they provide a methodological basis for screening.
11. Finally, it is important to note that guidance on NP SEA Screening is provided within the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The guidance is brief but the following advice is helpful¹:

"Whether a neighbourhood plan proposal requires a strategic environmental assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed. A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:

- *A neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development*

¹ CLG (2015), Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local plan

12. 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 Shrivensham 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 Shrivensham NDP is not required.

THE EMERGING SHRIVENSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The neighbourhood plan area

13. The NP area covers all of Shrivensham Parish. The Parish and NP boundaries are the same and that is shown on Figure 1 below.

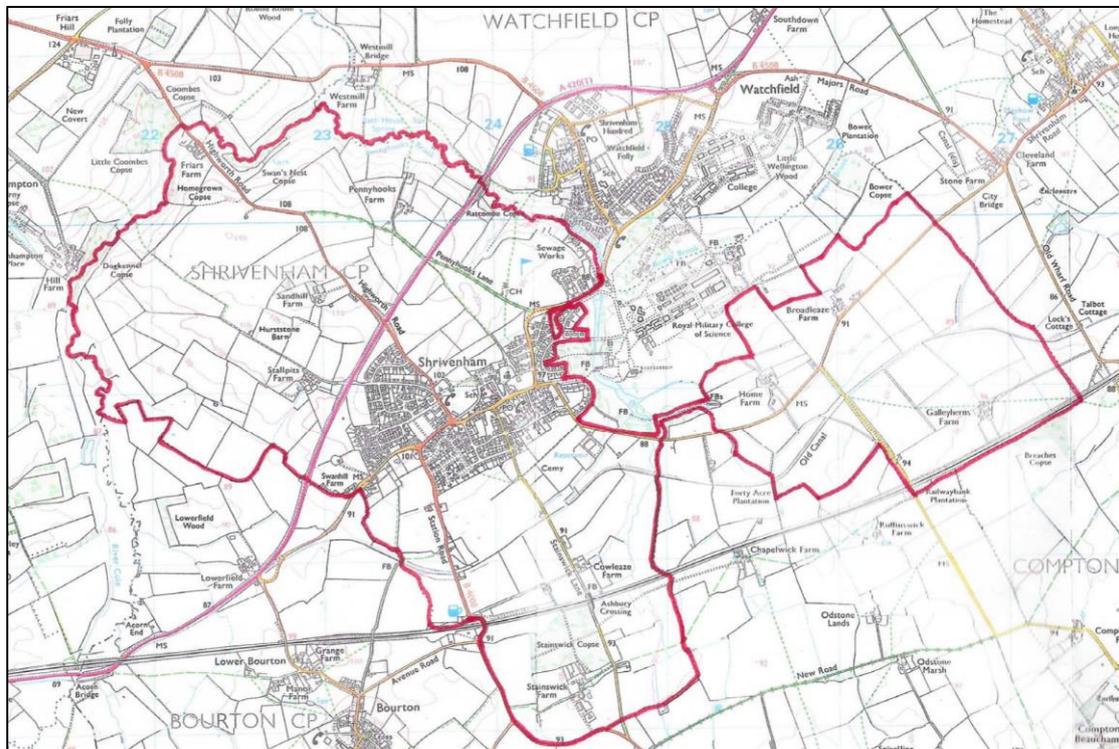


Figure 1: The neighbourhood plan area

The VoWH Local Plan and Shrivenham

14. The Shrivenham NP will sit alongside, and complement the VoWH Local Plan 2031: Part 1 (Part 1 plan), which was adopted in December 2016. Land is allocated for a strategic housing site under Local Plan Part 1 policy CP4 (site 18).
15. The Local Plan 2031: Part 2 (Part 2 plan) has been the subject of recent consultation on the Main Modifications to the Plan, ending on 1st April 2019. There are no site allocations proposed for Shrivenham.
16. The village of Shrivenham is identified as a Larger Village in the Settlement Hierarchy described in Local Plan Part 1 policy CP3.

The Shrivenham Neighbourhood Plan

17. The latest version of the emerging NP that has been seen and commented upon by VoWH officers is a September 2018 Pre-submission draft.
18. It is understood from a review of that draft NP, that there is no intention to allocate sites for development. The NP will add detail to existing Part 1 plan policies, which have been subject to SA.

The Neighbourhood Plan Vision, Objectives and Emerging Policy Intentions

19. **The vision** for Shrivenham, taken from the pre-submission document dated September 2018 is:

“Shrivenham will maintain its character as a unique rural village community” In 2031 Shrivenham will be a discrete thriving community situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within the Great Western Community Forest. Shrivenham village centre will be a modern service-centre providing a range of retail services and health care, welfare and support services for the increased village population. An extended Memorial Hall will provide an all-year-round focus for recreation and social activity for all ages and the local sport facilities will be fully supported by residents at all stages of life. The Church of England Primary School will have been re-sited to the north of the village and the old school site will have been developed sympathetically to cater for the elderly and/or people with special needs. Shrivenham will be a safe place to live and work. Roads and pavements will be fit for purpose and traffic calming will prevent speeding on village roads. Dedicated cycle routes will enable recreational as well as commuter cycling and extended paths and walks will cater for all ages wishing to enjoy the village. We will continue to protect and respect the cherished green space around our village as well as wildlife habitats. Within the new housing

developments we will have ensured appropriate landscaping and tree planting as well as architectural styles in keeping with the current village. The aging population will have access to suitable properties for downsizing and children who were born and brought up here will be able to afford to settle and raise their families locally”

The following original **objectives** are copied from the same document:

Strategic objectives	
SDS1	To avoid the coalescence of Shrivenham with Watchfield and other neighbouring settlements and to preserve the countryside setting of the village.
SDS2	To produce a coherent overall strategy for the sustainable development of Shrivenham over the plan period.
SDS3	To deliver development and other changes that conserve and enhance the sustainability of Shrivenham in a balanced approach to social, economic, and environmental factors.
Housing objectives	
SH1	To deliver a mix of new housing which will rebalance the housing stock and better meet future local needs for starter homes and down-sizing.
SH2	To support brownfield and infill development providing that it does not have an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area.
SH3	To seek viable means whereby families with meaningful local connections to this area can be given some preferential access to new housing – particularly social and affordable housing.
SH4	To actively discourage 'buy to let' of new properties.
Design objectives	
SD1	To ensure that new housing and development is designed and built to a high quality and respects the existing character of Shrivenham.
Village centre objectives	
SVC1	To protect and support the vitality and viability of our village centre, based on its diverse mix of residential, retail and public services.
SVC2	To ensure the village centre is accessible to all users with particular reference to buses, the disabled and delivery vehicles and to reorganise parking provision in the High Street.
Economic and employment objectives	
SEE1	To encourage increased local employment and business opportunities..
SEE2	To continue to support improvements in the provision of high-speed broadband and communications infrastructure to facilitate home working.
Community, Social & Health objectives	
SCSH1	To retain and enhance existing local community services and facilities, ensuring that public services (including medical, educational, public transport, utilities and amenities) can support growth from new housing.
SCSH2	To secure land for and encourage the provision of identified shortfalls in healthy recreational facilities for all age groups, and particularly for older children and adults.
SCSH3	To support the development of a new primary school within the village on the identified site and to encourage redevelopment of the old school site to meet the needs of the aging population.
Movement, Road Safety and Parking Objectives	
SMRSP1	To ensure provision of bus services and other means of access to local secondary schools in order to offer parents a choice.
SMRSP2	To retain the bus service and its stops, on its existing route 66.
SMRSP3	To undertake a programme of general traffic calming and management especially for the High Street and all roads accessing the village.
SMRSP4	To ensure that all new developments bring locally appropriate car parking and cycling provision:.
SMRSP5	To reorganise and increase car and cycle parking provision generally and particularly in the High Street.

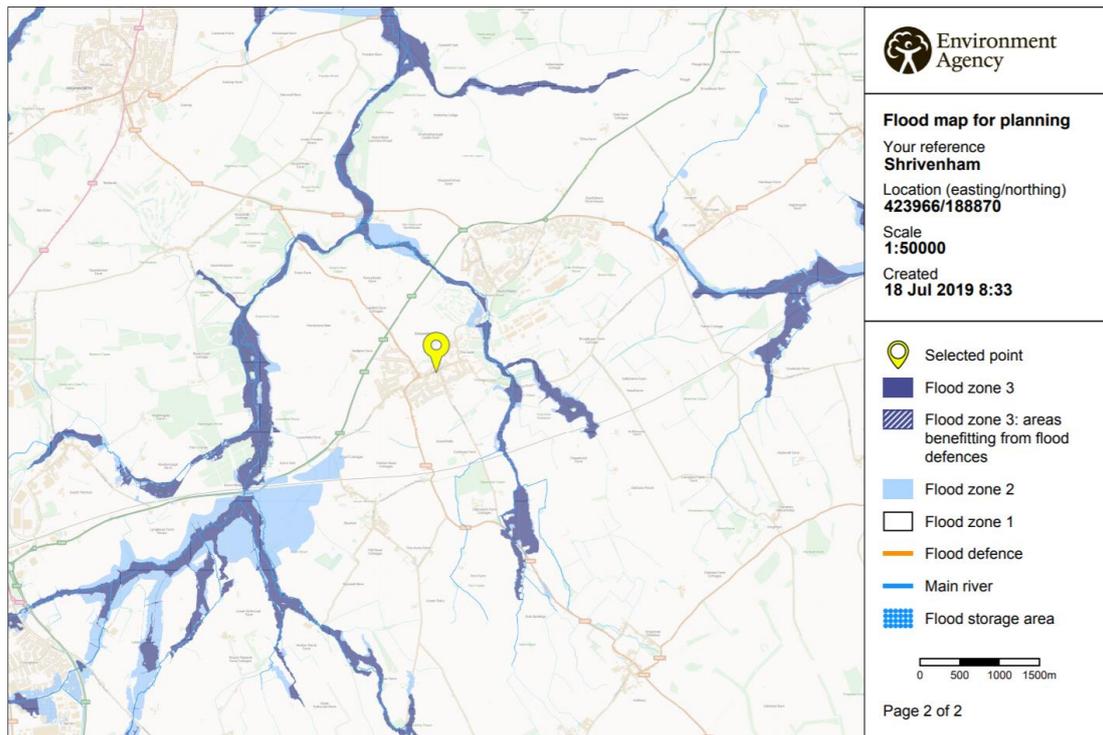
Environmental objectives	
SE1	To conserve and enhance the neighbourhood area's countryside and open spaces, in particular those areas of natural beauty, sensitive ecology and landscape designation.
SE2	To maintain and enhance the rural character of the village by encouraging the integration of soft landscaping in new developments.
SE3	To conserve and enhance the environment, ecosystem and biodiversity, ensuring that new development protects biodiversity - including habitats; appropriate wildlife - including great crested newts, and access corridors.
Heritage objective	
SH1	To conserve and enhance the historic environment in relation to buildings, landscapes and places of local cultural value.
Delivery objectives	
SD1	To encourage potential developers to work with the community of Shrivenham, via its Parish Council, in preparing their proposals.
SD2	To encourage potential developers to work with the community of Shrivenham, via its Parish Council, in delivering their proposals.
SD2	To ensure that all financial contributions received by Shrivenham Parish Council from developments (S106 and/or CIL) are used on projects and initiatives that meet the identified needs.

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

20. The information below is taken from 'Magic Maps' the Government's GIS-based constraint mapping service. It forms an overview of the main features of the environment in Shrivenham, or nearby, that relate to the draft NP.

Flooding

21. Shrivenham Parish contains areas of flood zone 2 and 3, mostly to the north of the village of Shrivenham. They are shown below in Figure 2. The areas liable to flooding do not significantly impact on the main areas of the NP or the NP objectives.



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Figure 2 - Flood zones in Shrevenham, Environment Agency

Historic Environment

22. There are no historically sensitive areas as identified in the EIA Regulations located within the parish. There are approximately 32 listed buildings within the centre of Shrevenham and others within the rural hinterland and these have been highlighted through plan preparation as being necessary to be considered. Shrevenham also has a Conservation Area, shown on Figure 3 below.



Figure 3– Shrevenham Conservation Area, Vale of White Horse District Council

Natural Environment

23. Habitats, biodiversity, fauna and flora are all important parts of our natural environment and it is important for NDPs to consider these – particularly:

- Sensitive areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- Natura 2000 sites (SACs and SPAs)
- species that are protected by law
- national and local designations (BAP priority habitats, Local Wildlife sites).

24. The following key sites are found within approximately 10km of the village of Shrivenham:

- Tuckmill Meadows SSSI approx. 870m
- The Coombes Hinton Parva SSSI 5.6km
- White Horse Hill SSSI approx. 5.7km
- Fernham Meadows SSSI approx. 5.8km
- Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits approx. 7.3km
- Ashdown Park approx. 8km
- Parkfarm Down approx. 8km
- Coate Water SSSI approx. 8.5km

25. There are also BAP priority habitats within the parish area. These are not referred to in the SEA directive or EIA regulations. However, they should be considered in plan making. BAP priority habitats were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP).

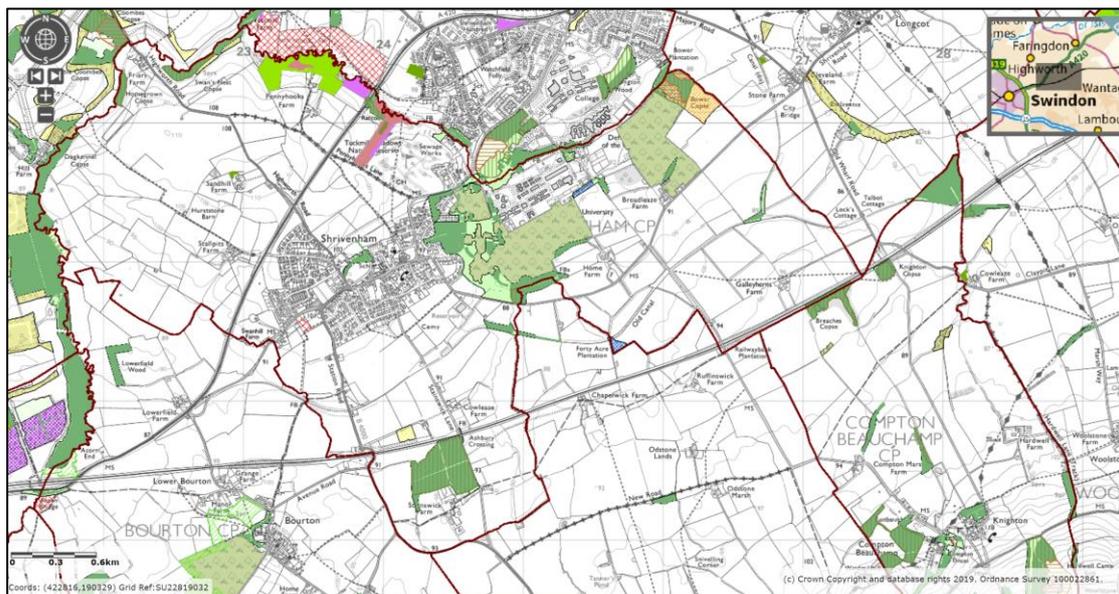




Figure 4 – BAP Priority Habitat and Statutorily Protected Sites in Shrivenham, Magic Maps

SCREENING ANALYSIS

26. A screening analysis is presented below, having reviewed the vision, objectives, draft policies and SEA screening questionnaire and having fed back comments on various drafts of the emerging Shrivenham Neighbourhood Plan to the parish council.
27. There are no site allocations for development proposed in the emerging Shrivenham Neighbourhood Plan. Small sites are likely to be designated for Local Green Spaces and Settlement Gap, the former of which must meet criteria set out in the NPPF at paragraph 100.
28. To be made part of the development plan for the district, neighbourhood plans must be in 'general conformity' with the strategic policies of the local plan. Therefore, it is anticipated that any development in the Shrivenham neighbourhood area will come forward in accordance with the strategy and policies of the adopted Local Plan 2031: Part 1. And in the future, in accordance with the Local Plan 2031: Part 2, which contains strategic policies but is yet to be adopted. Both of these documents have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal, the details of which can be found on the Vale of White Horse District Council website.
29. The Shrivenham neighbourhood area contains a range of environmental sensitivities and designations that should be considered during plan preparation. These have been highlighted and considered earlier in the report. Any development proposals in Shrivenham should consider the impact on such sensitivities and designations.
30. There are no Natura 2000 sites (SACs, SPAs) within a 5 km radius of Shrivenham village, but there is a SSSI within 870m of the centre of Shrivenham: Tuckmill Meadows SSSI.
31. Any proposals within the NP must come forward in accordance with the local plan, which has itself been subject to Sustainability Appraisal. It

is important to recall the advice on the Government's Planning Practice Guidance website:

“Whether a neighbourhood plan proposal requires a strategic environmental assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed. A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, 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 is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local plan”*

32. None of these scenarios is considered applicable in this case.
33. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Shrivenham NDP would not result in likely significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Consultation Responses

34. The Screening Opinion was sent to Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England on 23 May 2019 for a four week consultation period. The responses are in full in Appendix 3.
35. Historic England agree with the Council's view that the Shrivenham NDP would not lead to significant effects on the historic Environment and therefore the Shrivenham NDP does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
36. The Environment Agency did not respond.
37. Natural England agree with the Initial Screening Opinion and consider that the plan does not require a SEA or Appropriate Assessment.

Conclusion

38. As a result of the screening undertaken by the council and the responses from the statutory consultees the following determination has been reached.
39. The Shrivenham NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Shrivenham NDP is not required, see Appendix 2 for the HRA Screening Opinion.

40. The Shrivenham NDP does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.
41. See Appendix 3 for the statutory bodies' responses.

Appendix 1: Application of SEA Directive

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 Shrivenham NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to the Shrivenham 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 (referendums) Regulations 2012 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 • The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
<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>

<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 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))</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The Shrivenham NDP is prepared for town and country planning and land use and will set out a framework for future development in Shrivenham, including the development of residential uses. These projects are unlikely to be of the scale referred to in Article 4(2) of the EIA Directive – listed at Annex II of the directive.</p>
<p>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))</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The Shrivenham NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Shrivenham NDP in Appendix 2.</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The Shrivenham NDP will determine the use of sites/small areas at a local level. However this will be to designate areas of Local Green Space and a Settlement Gap. There will be no site allocations.</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>When made, the Shrivenham 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.</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>N/A</p>

8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	There is no potential for likely significant effects upon the environment based on the emerging Shrivenham Neighbourhood Plan, SEA questionnaire and other material highlighted during consultation with the Parish Council.
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Appendix 2 - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Statement for the Shrivenham 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 importance², 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 plan³ (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 Shrivenham 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 –

² Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for other species, and for habitats.

³ 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.

(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

5. There are no Natura 2000 sites within 5km of the Shrivenham Neighbourhood Development Plan boundary. Furthermore, since the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not allocate or otherwise designate sites for any development purposes in the draft 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.
6. As required under Regulation 106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the qualifying body (Shrivenham 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.

CONCLUSION

The Shrivenham 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 Shrivenham NDP is not required.

Appendix 3 – Statutory Consultee Responses

HISTORIC ENGLAND

From: Lloyd Sweet, Robert
Sent: 25 June 2019 15:26
To: Planning Policy Vale
Subject: Re: Shrivensham Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening Opinion - reply by 25/06/2019

To whom it may concern:

I'm happy to confirm that given the anticipated scope of the neighbourhood plan and its proposed policies, we agree that SEA should not be required for this neighbourhood plan with regard to likely significant environmental effects within areas of interest to Historic England .

We would of course request a review of this opinion should the plan change significantly in scope.

Kind regards

Robert Lloyd-Sweet

Robert Lloyd-Sweet | Historic Places Adviser | South East England | Historic England
Historic England, 4th Floor Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA

NATURAL ENGLAND

Date: 25 June 2019
Our ref: 283750
Your ref: Shrivenham Neighbourhood Plan – SEA and HRA screening



Robyn.Tobutt@southandvale.gov.uk
Vale of White Horse District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Robyn,

Shrivenham Neighbourhood Plan – SEA and HRA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 23 May 2019 which was received by Natural England on the same day.

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment

In our review of the Shrivenham Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA Screenings we note that:

- The plan does not allocate any sites for development
- There is only one designated site within the neighbourhood plan area (Tuckmill Meadows SSSI)

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. Land north of Shrivenham is allocated for strategic housing under Local Plan Part 1 policy CP4 (site 18); this site borders Tuckmill Meadows SSSI but any significant effects on this designated site will already have been dealt with through the Local Plan SA. Given no development is being proposed in the Shrivenham Neighbourhood Plan, we are in agreement with the council that no SEA or Appropriate Assessment is required.

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

are likely to be affected.

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

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

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact me on 02080 267824. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Milena Petrovic
Adviser
Sustainable Development
Thames Team