

# **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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**09 DECEMBER 2025**

## **SUMMARY**

Following consultation with the statutory bodies, Vale of White Horse District Council (the 'Council') determines that the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2011/42/EC (the Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).
2. Any land use plan or programme 'which sets the framework for future development consent of projects' must be screened according to a set of criteria from Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These criteria include exceptions for plans 'which determine the use of a small area at local level' or which only propose 'minor modifications to a plan', if it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
3. The initial screening opinion was subject to consultation with Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England, along with Oxfordshire County Council. The results of the screening process are detailed in this Screening Statement.

## **THE SCREENING PROCESS**

4. Using the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations, a Screening Opinion determines whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects.
5. The extract from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' in Appendix 1 provides a flow diagram to demonstrate the SEA screening process.

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

## **THE KINGSTON BAGPUIZE WITH SOUTHMOOR NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

9. The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP will contain the following vision and policies:

### Vision

*'It is 2031, and the KBS Neighbourhood Development Plan has contributed to realising the Vision and Objectives that KBS residents formulated back in 2025:*

- *The village is thriving, weaving its links with the past as it builds for the future. This has been achieved by a carefully managed housing policy.*
- *Shopping, education, health, sports and leisure, entertainment, social and cultural opportunities have been improved, enhancing the wellbeing of the community.*
- *There is safe and suitable access throughout the village for all users.*
- *Green spaces are easily accessible and schemes to enliven the biodiversity and landscape are being put in place where possible.*
- *KBS is empowered by a vibrant and diverse economy, from micro, small and start-up businesses to medium and large enterprises, sustainable commerce and employment opportunities.*
- *The village proudly protects its natural and constructed heritage. Important views of local landmarks and timeless landscapes in and around the village have been preserved.*
- *Robust 'Dark Skies' policies are in place to reduce light pollution, benefiting the physical and mental wellbeing of KBS residents and wildlife.*

*Our vision for the future of KBS is for a thriving, connected community with ample space and services to nurture this generation, the next – and those to come. We envisage sustainable growth that keeps pace with updated*

*amenities and infrastructure; that keeps faith with the essential village heritage, rural character and community life that make KBS unique.'*

### Policies

- Policy 1.1. Development Guidelines for the Conservation Area
- Policy 1.2. Maintenance of Historic Buildings Specifically for Energy Efficiency
- Policy 1.3. Protection of Listed Buildings Outside the Conservation Area
- Policy 1.4. Recognition of Local Heritage Assets
- Policy 2.1. Justification for a Settlement Boundary
- Policy 2.2. Village Facilities
- Policy 2.3. Employment Opportunities
- Policy 2.4. Healthcare and Education Within the Community
- Policy 2.5. Maintaining Existing Village Facilities
- Policy 3.1. No Large-Scale Development
- Policy 3.2. Affordable and Social Housing
- Policy 3.3. Infill Development
- Policy 3.4. No Backland Development
- Policy 3.5. Sustainable Development
- Policy 4.1. Connectivity
- Policy 4.2. Green Spaces
- Policy 4.3. Biodiversity Enhancement
- Policy 4.4. Landscape Integration
- Policy 4.5. Sustainability
- Policy 4.6. Dark Skies
- Policy 4.7. Community Engagement
- Policy 5.1. Active Travel Infrastructure
- Policy 5.2. Safe School Routes
- Policy 5.3. Inclusive Access Design
- Policy 5.4. Rural Accessibility Improvements
- Policy 5.5. Traffic Calming Measures
- Policy 5.6. Pedestrian Priority
- Policy 5.7. Public Transport Infrastructure
- Policy 5.8. Mobility Hub Development
- Policy 5.9. Green Transport Routes
- Policy 5.10. Pollution Reduction
- Policy 5.11. Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
- Policy 5.12. Sustainable Travel Incentives

10. The SEA screening process is concerned with whether a neighbourhood plan is likely to have a significant environmental effect. Within this context, wider considerations of the draft neighbourhood plan's potential conformity with the Basic Conditions are not considered and as a consequence, the council is required to consider the proposals in the plan

as they are, not as they may be modified (if necessary) to meet the Basic Conditions.

11. There is no requirement for any settlement within the parish to deliver housing or employment land through the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2 or the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041. The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan is not seeking to allocate any sites for development; however, it does seek to introduce a settlement boundary. We have therefore considered whether focusing new development within the settlement boundary (through infill), could result in the plan directing new development to sites that could potentially have significant effects on the landscape and historic environment including listed buildings and archaeological remains.
12. Careful consideration of the proposed boundary in relation to how the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 guides the location and scale of development (mainly through Core Policies 1 and 4) indicates that the proposed boundary merely add detail and aid the interpretation of existing policies.
13. Overall, we note that the plan does not allocate any sites for development and places great emphasis on conserving the character and appearance of the area.


## **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

14. The screening undertaken was sent to Natural England, The Environment Agency, Historic England and Oxfordshire County Council on 6 November 2025 for a four-week consultation period. The responses in full are presented in Appendix 4.
15. The Environment Agency did not provide comments on this SEA and HRA Screening.
16. Historic England did not provide comments on this SEA and HRA Screening.
17. Natural England confirmed their agreement that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan and also agreed that the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan does not require further HRA assessment. They did not have any specific comments on the draft Neighbourhood Plan.
18. Oxfordshire County Council confirmed that they have no comments on the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP SEA and HRA Screening Opinion.

## **CONCLUSION**

19. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council, the following determination has been reached.
20. The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.
21. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 1 & 3, the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
22. The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

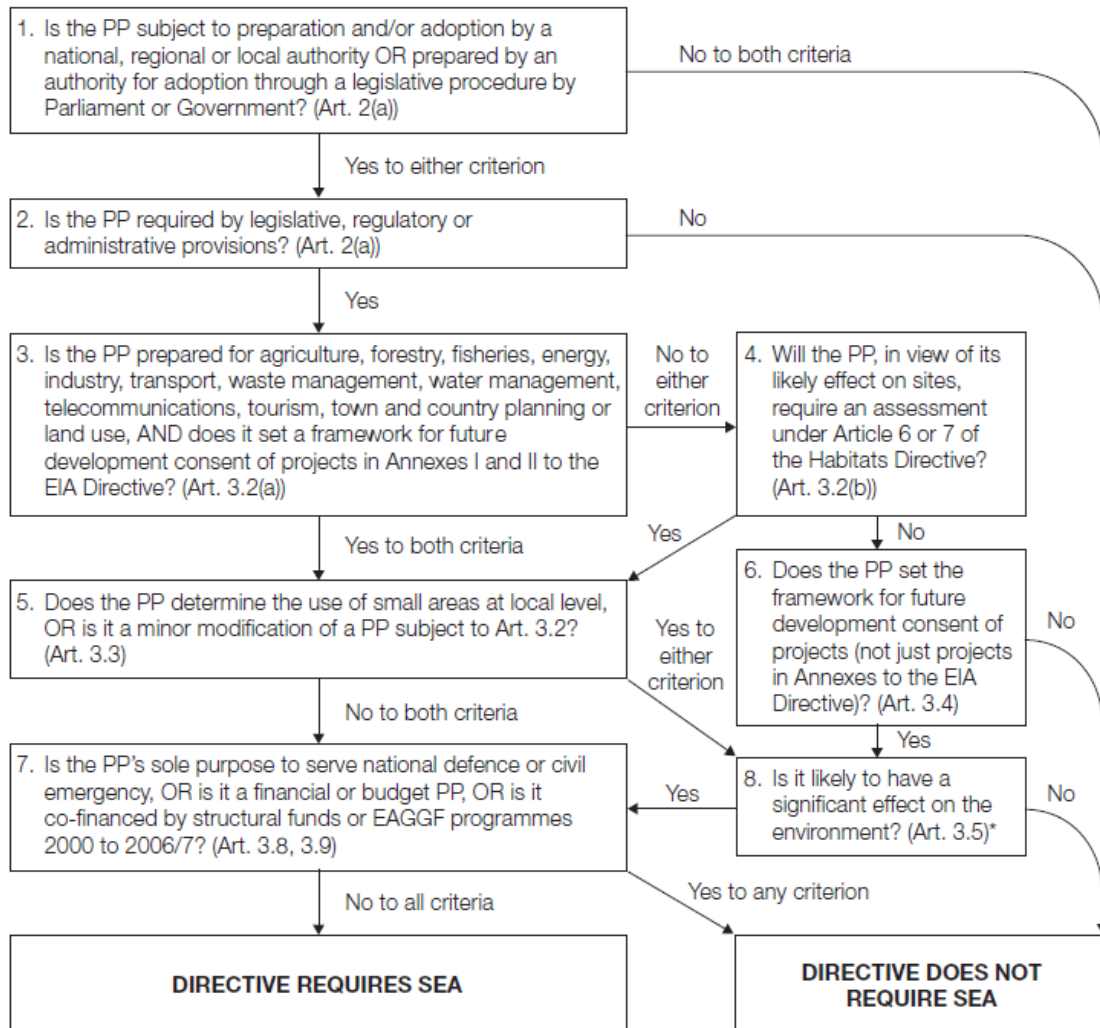
**Authorised by: Tim Oruye – Head of Policy and Programmes**

**Signed:**   
**Date:** 9 December 2025

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

**Figure 2 – Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes**

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



\*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

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

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Y/N</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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: 051 Reference ID: 41-051-20150209) 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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP will include a series of policies to guide development within the parish. 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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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. An updated HRA has been produced during the preparation of the emerging Joint Local Plan. Where relevant, findings from this report have been identified in the analysis of significant impacts.

#### 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> 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)

4. Regulations 105-106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 state:

*“105.—(1) Where a land use plan—*

- (a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*
  - (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site,*  
*the plan-making authority for that plan must, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site’s conservation objectives.*
- (2) The plan-making authority must for the purposes of the assessment consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representations made by that body within such reasonable time as the authority specifies.*
- (3) The plan-making authority must also, if it considers it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if it does so, it must take such steps 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."*

## **EUROPEAN SITES**

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

- Cothill Fen SAC (Approx. 4.5km)
- Oxford Meadows SAC (Approx. 10.5km)
- Hackpen Hill SAC (Approx. 10.5km)
- Little Wittenham SAC (Approx. 15.5km)
- River Lambourne SAC (Approx 17km)

### Cothill Fen SAC – Approximately 4.5km (Vale of White Horse District Council)

6. Cothill Fen is designated as a SAC for its calcium-rich, spring fed fens and alder woodlands on floodplains. Cothill Fen is an exceptionally important site with an outstanding range of nationally rare habitats which support a large number of rare invertebrates and plants. The habitats consist of calcareous fen, calcareous grassland, woodland and scrub of varying degrees of wetness. The habitat supports over 330 species of vascular plant and over 120 nationally scarce or rare 13 invertebrates, including the nationally rare Southern Damselfly (*Coenagrion mercuriale*).
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 waterfed fens.

Oxford Meadow SAC – approximately 10.5km (Oxford City Council)

8. Oxford Meadow is designated as a SAC for its lowland hay meadows and creeping marshworts.
9. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of hydrological changes and the invasive species of *Crassula* upon creeping marshworts.

Hackpen Hill SAC – approximately 10.5km (Vale of White Horse District Council)

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.

Little Wittenham SAC – approximately 15.5km (South Oxfordshire District Council)

12. 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.
13. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of public access and disturbance, and invasive fish species upon great crested newt.

River Lambourn SAC – approximately 17km (West Berkshire Council)

14. The River Lambourn SAC is a site of approximately 27 hectares located wholly within West Berkshire and consists of the River Lambourn water body. The Lambourn supports Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) populations inhabiting chalk streams in central southern England. Good

water quality, coarse sediments and extensive beds of submerged plants provide an excellent habitat for the species. The presence of Brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) is also a qualifying feature of the site.

15. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of hydrological changes, pollution to groundwater and invasive non-native species.

## **ASSESSMENT**

16. As required under Regulation 106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the qualifying body (Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council) provided the required information to enable Vale of White Horse District Council to determine whether the assessment under Regulation 105 is required.

17. 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;
- Atmospheric Pollution;
- Recreational Disturbance; and
- Water Quality and Quantity.

### Physical loss of/damage to habitat:

18. Any development resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan will be located within the neighbourhood area. There are no European sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area, therefore loss of habitat from within the boundaries of a European site can be ruled out in relation to all sites.
19. Loss of habitat from outside of the boundaries of a European site could still affect the integrity of that site if it occurs in an area used by the qualifying species of the site (e.g. for off-site breeding, foraging or roosting). One of the European sites included in this assessment have mobile species amongst their qualifying features that could travel outside of the site to make use of other areas of habitat:
  - Little Wittenham SAC; great crested newt.

20. The site listing for Little Wittenham SAC states that great crested newts have been found to range several hundred metres into the site's woodland blocks. Research has found that great crested newts at Little Wittenham SAC migrate within woodland and do not over-winter in the arable farmland. All of the woodland within 500 metres of the ponds at Little Wittenham SAC is within the SAC boundary. Therefore potential loss of or damage to off-site habitats associated with Little Wittenham SAC can be screened out of further assessment.

#### Atmospheric pollution;

21. Air pollution is most likely to affect European sites where plant, soil and water habitats are the qualifying feature, but some qualifying animal species may also be affected, either directly or indirectly, by any deterioration in habitat as a result of air pollution. Deposition of pollutants to the ground and vegetation can alter the characteristics of the soil, affecting the pH and nitrogen availability that can then affect plant health, productivity and species composition.
22. Based on the Highways Agency Design for Road and Bridges (DMRB) Manual Volume 11, Section 3, Part 120 (which was produced to provide advice regarding the design, assessment and operation of trunk roads (including motorways)), it is assumed that air pollution from roads is unlikely to be significant beyond 200m from the road itself.
23. The European sites that are within 200m of strategic roads are Oxford Meadows SAC (A34 and A40) and Cothill Fen SAC (Honeybottom Lane and Besselsleigh Road).
24. Air quality is listed as a threat to Cothill Fen SAC. The Vale of White Horse HRA (2018) stated:

*“The main routes for vehicular traffic will not be the country lanes around Cothill Fen but the major roads (e.g. A34) to the east that provide commuter links. There is an expectation that significant increases in vehicular movements within 200m of Cothill Fen SAC are unlikely, and it is therefore considered unlikely that any air quality impact on Cothill Fen will arise.”*
25. Air pollution is not listed as a threat to Oxford Meadows SAC in the Vale of White Horse HRA (2018), and it was considered that the mitigation and monitoring approaches identified are sufficient to ensure there will not be adverse effects on Oxford Meadows SAC, within the context of the forecast improving trend. But the qualifying habitats (lowland hay meadows and creeping marshwort) are sensitive to changes in air quality.
26. The submission Joint Local Plan HRA (2024) is still awaiting additional work in regards to air quality before significant effects can be ruled out at Cothill Fen SAC and Oxford Meadows SAC. However, given the modest scale of proposed development in the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan and distance of the SACs from neighbourhood area, the NDP will not add in combination effects, therefore significant effects on the SACs in relation to air quality can be screened out and do not need to be considered further.

#### Recreation disturbance; and

27. The HRA of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan (June 2018) stated:

*“Natural England’s Site Improvement Plans record the threats and pressures relevant to each European site. Public access or disturbance are not identified as current threats or pressures at the following sites, despite their lying close to large settlements: Aston Rowant SAC, Hartslock Wood SAC, Cothill Fen SAC, and Oxford Meadow SAC.”*

28. It should be emphasised that many European sites are National Nature Reserves (e.g. Cothill Fen) or nature reserves managed by wildlife trusts or nature conservation charities, at which access is encouraged and resources are available to ensure that recreational use is managed appropriately

29. In relation to Oxford Meadows SAC the Vale of White Horse Local Plan HRA (2018) advised:

*“A survey undertaken during October 2011 by Oxford City Council to inform the Oxford Sites and Housing DPD identified that over 80% of visitors to the Oxford Meadows SAC live within 5km of the site.”*

30. The Vale of White Horse HRA screened out significant effects on Oxford Meadows SAC due to recreational pressure.

31. The JLP HRA Appropriate Assessment (Dec 2024) clarified that the Cothill Fen SAC is:

*“not generally promoted for public access and is unlikely to attract visitors from a long distance. Development very close to the site could generate visitors (e.g. dog walkers from within c.1km away), but as the site is very wet, visitors naturally follow the boardwalk paths. The site is mainly considered to be sensitive to changes in groundwater or hydrology, not recreation.”*

32. As the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP is approximately 4.5km from the SAC, it is considered that recreational disturbance effects can be screened out.

33. Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor is approximately 15.5km from Little Wittenham SAC, which is part of a larger site managed by the Earth Trust as a nature reserve. The Earth Trust restricts access to the most sensitive areas of the SAC by maintaining a signed network of paths and a pond viewing area, within the woodland. The areas which are most important to the population of great crested newts (GCN) have restricted access which is designed to prevent conflicts between the visiting public, the newts and their habitat.

34. Great crested newts are not believed to be particularly sensitive to human disturbance provided their breeding ponds are not affected and their primary terrestrial habitat and hibernacula are not adversely



affected. Provided controls on access to the most sensitive areas are maintained (i.e. ponds and hibernacula are not disturbed) there is no reason to believe that there would be any significant effect on the integrity of the site or the primary reason for the selection of the site.

35. The JLP HRA (2024) states that the latest Natural England condition assessment of the great crested newt features (22/07/2010) still recorded 'favourable' status. Given the low sensitivity of the great crested newt population to recreational disturbance, the visitor management measures in place, and that the NDP does not allocate any housing sites, likely significant effects alone and in combination are screened out.

#### Water Quality and Quantity.

36. European sites at which aquatic or wetland environments support qualifying features have the potential to be affected by changes in water quantity or quality. New development can alter the quality of the water environment through direct contamination to those locations which are hydrologically connected to a development site but also through changes in the demand for wastewater treatment.
37. Water quantity also plays a critical role in the health and biodiversity of river catchments, including water levels (depth and volumetric flow) and velocity in the river, and water table levels in the floodplain. These properties in turn influence rates of siltation and erosion, dissolved oxygen, and pollutant and nutrient concentrations. Low flow rates affect food availability for riparian fauna, may limit migration and dispersal, and can alter the structure, composition and condition of vegetation communities. New homes require the development of new infrastructure, including the provision of fresh water supply. Increases in water demand can impact upon those locations where water is abstracted
38. The European sites which identify a hydrological risk are:
  - Cothill Fen SAC: Cothill Fen SAC owes its existence to unusual hydrological conditions arising from changes in the underlying geology (Natural England, 2016b). The site has calcium-rich springwater fed fens which are sensitive to water pollution and hydrological changes (Natural England, 2014b). The 2018 HRA concluded that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of Cothill Fen SAC. The Council commissioned a Lowlands Fens study in 2024 (Morris et al.) to identify sites supporting this habitat types and to identify spatial risk zones around each site where hydrological impacts of development in these zones could result in adverse effects to the site's fen habitat. As these zones fall outside of the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Area, it is considered that likely significant effects to the Cothill Fen SAC can be screened out.

- Oxford Meadows SAC: the site is sensitive to hydrological changes. The site runs alongside the River Thames. A survey undertaken in August 2014 indicated that the population of creeping marshwort in Port Meadow has significantly declined in size. It is considered that this change may be associated directly or indirectly with hydrological changes possibly deeper, more prolonged and frequent flood episodes. The Oxford Meadows SACO also notes that creeping marshwort populations are critically dependent on surface and groundwater supply, and that maintaining the quality and quantity of water supply is very important, especially at certain times of year. Poor water quality and inadequate quantities of water can adversely affect the structure and function of this habitat type (Natural England, 2019e). Although the 2024 Water Cycle Study report confirms there could be shortfalls in water supply in the Districts, the majority of the Districts are supplied by groundwater sources in the chalk aquifers which run along the southern extent of both. Therefore, whilst abstractions may increase to meet increased demand, these abstractions are considered too distant (and downstream) to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC flow regime. Furthermore other options to increase water supply and improve water quality all lie downstream of the Oxford Meadows SAC and therefore likely significant water quality effects to the Oxford Meadows SAC can be ruled out.
- River Lambourn SAC: the sites are sensitive to hydrological changes and water quality. The River Lambourn is also affected by Natural England's 2022 advice on nutrient impacts on habitats sites. The 2018 HRA scoped out the River Lambourn SAC from the HRA as it was deemed that no actual pathway existed connecting it to development in Vale of White Horse. The 2024 JLP HRA considered impacts, but concluded likely significant effects to the River Lambourn SAC are screened out. Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor is approx. 17km from the SAC and does not fall within the catchment and therefore, likely significant effects to the River Lambourn SAC are screened out.

#### In combination effects

39. 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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan. The scale of development proposed within the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan is modest. None of the SACs are located within the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP area and the closest is approximately 4.5km from the boundary of the NDP area. Therefore, the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, taking the above into account.

## **CONCLUSION**

40. The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP is not required.

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

1. Characteristics of the Plan, having regard to:	
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	A Neighbourhood Development Plan must be in conformity with the Local Plan for the District. It does not influence other plans. The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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. A basic condition of the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The plan includes a focus on sustainable growth, in particular looking to instal Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into new development, create a viable green infrastructure network, and promote sustainable low-carbon travel options. There is a policy specifically relating to sustainable design, as well as one relating to sustainable green infrastructure. In addition, there are policies on biodiversity, landscape integration, and dark skies. There is also a strong focus on protecting and promoting the heritage and cultural assets and feel of the area. This focus combined with the relevant policies will help to provide development which meets the needs of residents now and in the future.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The environmental impact of the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP is likely to be minimal due to the modest scale of the development proposed.

	<p>The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP area contains the following environmental designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ancient Woodland</li> <li>- Archaeological constraints</li> <li>- BAP priority habitats</li> <li>- Conservation Areas</li> <li>- Flood Zones – Zone 2 and 3</li> <li>- Listed building structures</li> <li>- Local Wildlife sites</li> <li>- Protected species buffer</li> <li>- Tree Preservation Order</li> </ul> <p>There are the following SACs within 20km of the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP Area. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cothill Fen SAC (Approx. 4.5km)</li> <li>- Oxford Meadows SAC (Approx. 10.5km)</li> <li>- Hackpen Hill SAC (Approx. 10.5km)</li> <li>- Little Wittenham SAC (Approx. 15.5km)</li> <li>- River Lambourne SAC (Approx 17km)</li> </ul> <p>There are also the following SSSI's located within 10km of the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lamb and Flag Quarry SSSI (200m)</li> <li>- Appleton Lower Common SSSI (Approx 2km)</li> <li>- Frilford Heath, Ponds and Fens SSSI (Approx. 2km)</li> <li>- Langley's Lane Meadow SSSI (Approx. 3km)</li> <li>- Chimney Meadows SSSI (Approx. 3.5km)</li> <li>- Cothill Fen SSSI (Approx. 4.5km)</li> <li>- Buckland Warren SSSI (Approx. 5km)</li> <li>- Barrow Farm Fen SSSI (Approx. 5km)</li> <li>- Dry Sandford Pit SSSI (Approx 5.5km)</li> <li>- Shellingford Crossroads Quarry SSSI (Approx. 6km)</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stanton Harcourt SSSI (Approx. 7km)</li> <li>- Cumnor SSSI (Approx. 7km)</li> <li>- Hurst Hill SSSI (Approx. 8.5km)</li> <li>- Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI (Approx. 9km)</li> <li>- Wytham Woods SSSI (Approx. 9.5km)</li> <li>- Culham Brake SSSI (Approx. 9.5km)</li> <li>- Wytham Ditches and Flushes SSSI (Approx. 10km)</li> <li>- Fernham Meadows SSSI (Approx. 10km)</li> <li>- Ducklington Mead SSSI (Approx. 10km)</li> </ul> <p>Given the modest scale of proposed development in the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan and their relationship to the designations within the NDP area, the proposals in the plan are unlikely to harm these designations. Therefore, the effects are not likely to be significant.</p> <p>The above designations are located outside of the built-up areas of the settlements. The closest SAC is located approximately 4,5km from the NDP designated boundary. The NDP includes policies intended to ensure development occurs within or adjoining the existing built form.</p> <p>Considering the small level of growth that the NDP proposes to deliver, the predicted effects associated with this scale of development are not considered to be significant. The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and the adopted development plan will require these designations to be protected and within this context it is considered the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP would not give rise to significant effects.</p>
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and	The proposed development in the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP has been judged not to have an impact on Community legislation.

programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	
<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 Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have modest but enduring positive environmental effects by seeking the preservation of the surrounding countryside, heritage, landscape, designated green spaces, biodiversity and ecosystems. The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP therefore offers an opportunity to enhance the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the area through the proposals being considered.</p> <p>It is clear that a main effect on the parish will be the impact of householder developments and small-scale infill development on the natural environment, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and designated heritage assets. The effects of this are not likely to be reversible as they relate to development.</p> <p>The effects will be of a local scale and the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan add detail to existing development plan policies offering protection to identified natural and heritage assets to sustain and enhance their significance and setting. Given the scale of what is proposed, the effects are not likely to be significant.</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.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size	The NDP relates to the parish of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor. The potential for

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

of the population likely to be affected);	environmental effects is likely to be small and localised.
<p>(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</p> <p>(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</p> <p>(iii) intensive land-use; and</p>	<p>The environmental impact of the proposals within the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP is likely to be minimal due to the scale of the development proposed.</p> <p>The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor 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 the aspects of the plan that are most likely to affect the special natural characteristics and cultural heritage are householder development and small scale infill development. These forms of development may impact on the integrity of the natural environment, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and designated heritage assets.</p> <p>Given the small scale of the proposed residential development and the inclusion of a number of heritage policies within the Neighbourhood Plan which address the protection of heritage assets, the proposals in the plan are not considered to create significant effects.</p> <p>The SACs and SSSI are located outside the NDP designated area. Cothill Fen SAC is the closest SAC to the designated neighbourhood area, approximately 4.5km from the neighbourhood plan boundary. Lamb and Flag Quarry SSSI is the closest SSSI to the neighbourhood area, approximately 200m from NDP area boundary and 1km from the built up area of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor.</p> <p>The majority of the above designations are outside of the built-up area of the village. The vision of the NDP mentions the aim to preserve the rural character in and around the parish. Furthermore, the proposed level of growth is very modest and the predicted effects associated to this scale of</p>



	<p>development are not considered to be significant.</p> <p>The HRA Screening Assessment in appendix 2 concluded that: The Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects therefore, an Appropriate Assessment of the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.</p> <p>The objectives of the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP set out how the plan will honour the historic and rural character of the parish and its setting, as well as maintain and enhance the natural environment and green spaces. The plan is considered to have a neutral effect on cultural heritage because there is no indication given in the plan and appendices that the plan would go beyond national and local policy and therefore, it is considered that the effects of the proposals in the plan are not likely to be significant.</p> <p>Environmental quality standards or limit values are not considered likely to be significantly affected by the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP.</p> <p>In light of the minor proposals in the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor NDP, the plan is also not likely to cause significant effects in relation to intensive land use.</p>
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	<p>There are no areas or landscapes with recognised national, Community or international protection status affected by the neighbourhood plan.</p>

## Appendix 4 – Statutory Consultee Responses

### OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**From:** [REDACTED] - Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of [PlanningInOxfordshire](#)  
**To:** [Planning Policy S&V](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan SEA/HRA Screening Opinion - Please Respond by 4/12  
**Date:** 06 November 2025 14:36:10

**\*\*EXTERNAL\*\***

Good Afternoon,

Many thanks for sending this over. OCC has no comments on this.

[REDACTED]

**Strategic Planner**

Strategic Planning

Place Shaping Services

Oxfordshire County Council

Email: [REDACTED]@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Mob: [REDACTED]

**Please Note: Thursday is my Non-Working Day**

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Planning Policy S&V <planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 06 November 2025 12:58  
**To:** 'planning\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk' <planning\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>; 'e-seast@HistoricEngland.org.uk' <e-seast@HistoricEngland.org.uk>; Natural England <consultations@naturalengland.org.uk>; PlanningInOxfordshire <PlanningInOxfordshire@Oxfordshire.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan SEA/HRA Screening Opinion - Please Respond by 4/12

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon,

I am writing on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council to seek your views on the attached draft SEA and HRA Screening Opinion for the Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan. The conclusion of this report is that no further SEA or HRA work is required.

# NATURAL ENGLAND

Date: 03 December 2025  
Our ref: 532872  
Your ref: Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan



South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse District Councils

BY EMAIL ONLY  
[planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk)

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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear [REDACTED]

## Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Neighbourhood Plan - SEA/HRA Screening Opinion Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 06 November 2025.

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 (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites<sup>1</sup>, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- 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.

<sup>1</sup> Habitats sites are those referred to in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

  
Consultations Team