

# **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 Shellingford Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**18 DECEMBER 2025**

## **SUMMARY**

Following consultation with statutory bodies, Vale of White Horse District Council (the 'Council') determines that the Shellingford 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 Shellingford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC (the Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).
2. Any land use plan or programme 'which sets the framework for future development consent of projects' must be screened according to a set of criteria from Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These criteria include exceptions for plans 'which determine the use of a small area at local level' or which only propose 'minor modifications to a plan', if it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
3. The initial screening opinion was subject to consultation with Historic England, the Environment Agency, Natural England and 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 Shellingford 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 SHELLINGFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

9. The Shellingford NDP will contain the following objectives and policies:

### **Objectives for the Natural Environment:**

1. Protection of the tranquil rural environment and dark night skies.
2. Maintain the important views to the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and into/out of the conservation area.
3. To designate a number of Local Green Spaces.
4. To enhance important areas of woodland, including protection of ancient woodland.
5. To promote new habitat creation and biodiversity opportunities.

### **Objectives for the Built Environment:**

1. To ensure that new development supports the needs of the community.
2. To ensure that new development is of sustainable, high quality design, using appropriate and energy efficiency materials and of a character which is parish specific. To be covered by a parish specific character appraisal and design code (Appendix A) which includes housing, agricultural buildings/conversions and businesses. A key focus is upon maintaining the rural estate character.
3. To investigate traffic and parking issues (community aspiration) and recommend any appropriate mitigation measures relating to new development.
4. To ensure that new development does not cause flooding problems and that the watercourses in the parish are adequately addressed in development proposals.
5. To protect and enhance community assets and facilities and to enable appropriate commercial rural development.
6. To ensure that the significance of the conservation area and listed buildings within the parish are maintained and enhanced where possible.

### **Policies**

Policy SN1: Landscape Character and Settlement Identity

Policy SN2: Green and Blue Infrastructure, Landscaping and Planting

Policy SN3: Local Green Spaces

Policy SN4: Important Views  
Policy SN5: Biodiversity  
Policy SN6: Dark Night Skies  
Policy SB1: Historic Environment  
Policy SB2: Design Principles  
Policy SB3: Infill and Redevelopment  
Policy SB4: Dwelling Extensions  
Policy SB5: Community and Local Economy  
Policy SB6: Accessibility, Road Safety and Sustainable Transport  
Policy SB7: Infrastructure, Community Facilities and Aspirations

10. The Shellingford NDP is not seeking to allocate any sites for development and places great emphasis on conserving the character and appearance of the area. The Shellingford NDP will contain a comprehensive range of policies to maintain the character, culture and heritage of the NDP area, as well as specifying design criteria for development.
11. Policies in the Shellingford NDP aim to support sustainable development in the NDP area that will not adversely impact on its character.
12. 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.
13. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Shellingford NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

## **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

14. The screening opinion was sent to Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England on 18 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 Screening.
16. Historic England confirmed their agreement, that the Shellingford NDP does not need a SEA.
17. Natural England confirmed their agreement that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan and also agreed that the Shellingford NDP does not require further HRA assessment. .
18. Oxfordshire County Council confirmed that they have no comments on the Shellingford 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 Shellingford NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Shellingford Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.
21. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 1 & 3, the Shellingford NDP is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
22. The Shellingford NDP does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

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

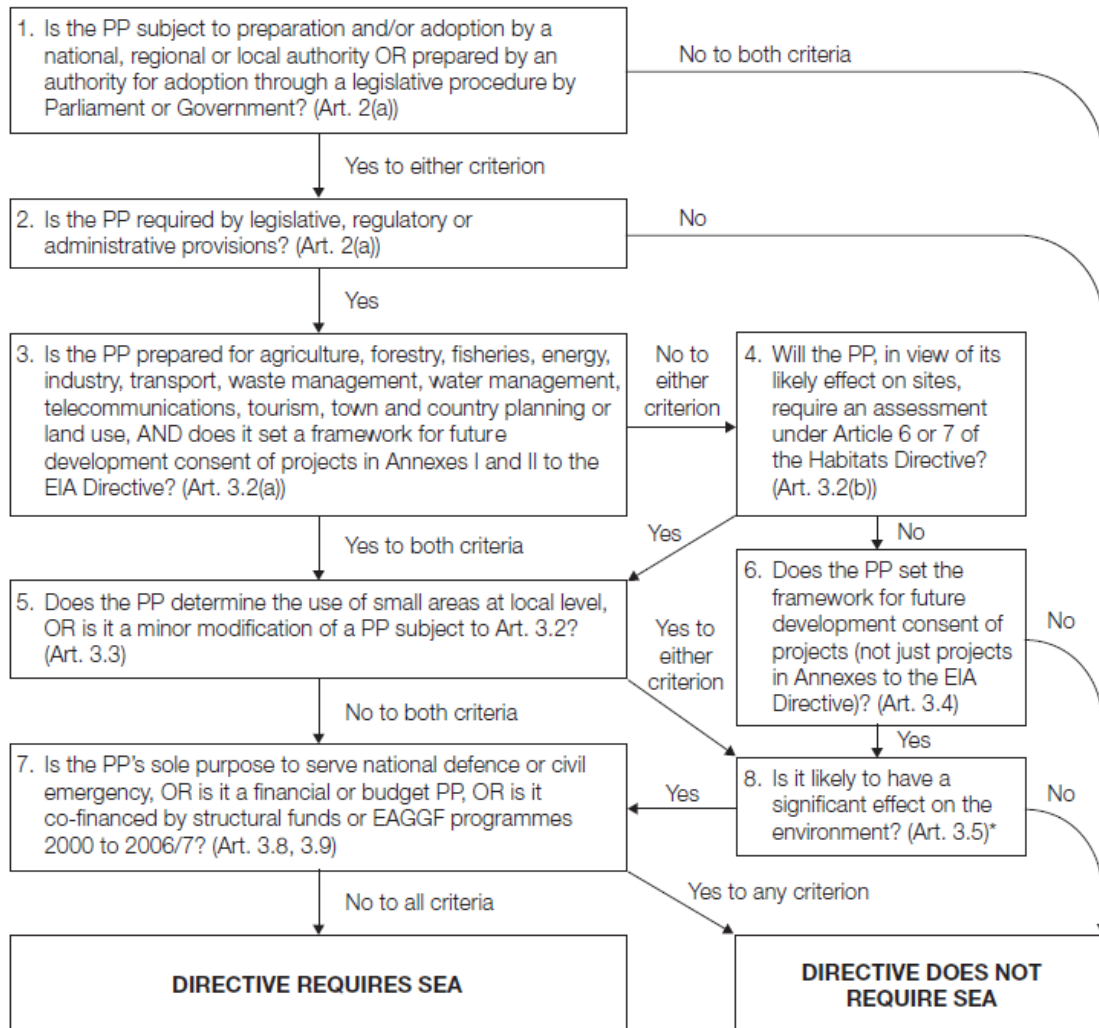
**Signed:** 

**Date:** 23 December /12/2025

## 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**

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 Shellingford NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to the Shellingford Neighbourhood Forum (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 Shellingford 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 Shellingford NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Shellingford 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 Shellingford 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 Shellingford NDP will include a series of policies to guide development within the NDP area. 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 Shellingford 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 Shellingford 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.”*

---

<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 (June 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 the River Lambourn SAC (West Berkshire). Shellingford NDP has the following relationships with these areas:

- Cothill Fen SAC (Approx. 13km)
- Hackpen Hill SAC (Approx. 8.6km)
- River Lambourn SAC (Approx 13.4km)

### Cothill Fen SAC – Approximately 13km (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.

Hackpen Hill SAC – approximately 8.6km (Vale of White Horse District Council)

8. 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*.
9. The key environmental conditions that support the features of European interest are appropriate management, minimal air pollution, and absence of direct fertilisation.

River Lambourn SAC – approximately 13.4km (West Berkshire Council)

10. 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.
11. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of hydrological changes, pollution to groundwater and invasive non-native species.

**ASSESSMENT**

12. As required under Regulation 106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the qualifying body (Shellingford Neighbourhood Forum) 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:
  - Atmospheric Pollution;
  - Recreational Pressure; and
  - Water Quality and Quantity.

Atmospheric pollution;

13. 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.
14. 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.
15. The European site that is within 200m of a strategic road is Cothill Fen SAC (Honeybottom Lane and Besselsleigh Road).
16. 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.”
17. 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 that there are no allocations proposed in the Shellingford Neighbourhood Plan, 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 pressure:

18. 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.”
23. 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.

19. 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.” As the closest part of the NDP area is approximately 13km from Cothill Fen SAC it is considered that recreational disturbance effects can be screened out.

#### Water Quality and Quantity

24. 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 and also through changes in the demand for wastewater treatment.
20. 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.
21. 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 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. The catchment stretches northwards from the SAC and given Shellingford is at least 13km south of the SAC, it is

considered that likely significant effects to the Cothill Fen SAC can be screened 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. Shellingford is approx. 13.4km 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

22. The Council has considered the HRA of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (October 2019) in respect of the potential combination effects of the proposals in the Shellingford Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan does not allocate any sites for development or promote additional development beyond what is supported in the adopted Development Plan. None of the SACs are located within the Shellingford NDP area and the closest is approximately 8.6km from the boundary of the NDP area. Therefore, the Shellingford NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, taking the above into account.

#### **CONCLUSION**

23. The Shellingford 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 Shellingford 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 Shellingford 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, and the strategic policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (Part 1 and Part 2).
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	A Neighbourhood Development Plan must be in conformity with the Local Plan for the District. It does not influence other plans. The Shellingford Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to influence other Plans or Programmes within the statutory Development Plan.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	National policy requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread through plan-making, including the Shellingford NDP. Shellingford has to ensure it meets a basic condition to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Within this wider context, the Shellingford NDP itself is unlikely to have a significant positive or negative effect. The plan includes a focus on sustainable growth, there are policies aimed at development conserving and enhancing areas within and outside the built up areas. 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.



<p>(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and</p>	<p>The environmental impact of the proposals within the Shellingford NDP is likely to be minimal as the plan does not allocate any sites for development or support additional development beyond what is supported in the Development Plan. Policies in the Shellingford NDP will aim to support sustainable development in the NDP area. Retaining and improving the character, heritage and appearance of the area is particularly important.</p> <p>The Shellingford NDP area contains the following environmental designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>- Ancient Woodland</li> </ul> <p>There are the following SACs within 17km of the Shellingford NDP (the distances are measured from the edge of the neighbourhood area). These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cothill Fen SAC (Approx. 13km)</li> <li>- Hackpen Hill SAC (Approx. 8.68km)</li> <li>- River Lambourn SAC (Approx. 13.4km)</li> </ul> <p>There is also the following SSSI located within the following distances of the Shellingford NDP area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Crossroads Quarry SSSI (Approx. 1km)</li> <li>-Wickesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI (Approx. 2.5km)</li> <li>-Fernham Meadows SSSI (Approx. 3.68km)</li> <li>-Buckland Warren SSSI (Approx. 2.5km)</li> <li>-Grafton Lock Meadow SSSI (Approx. 6.9km)</li> <li>-Lamb and Quarry SSSI (Approx. 6.4km)</li> <li>-Chimney Meadows SSSI (Approx. 6.25km)</li> </ul> <p>Given the NDP is not allocating sites, the amount of potential infill sites within the NDP</p>
--	---

	area 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.
(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).	Development through infill and redevelopment in Shellingford NDP has been judged not to have an impact on Community legislation.
<b>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	<p>The Shellingford NDP is likely to have modest but enduring positive environmental effects. The effects are not likely to be reversible, as they relate to development. However, the proposals are minor and will be of a local scale.</p> <p>The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan add detail to existing development plan policies offering protection to the natural environment, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings to sustain and enhance their significance and setting. This will have positive cumulative benefits for the area. However given the scale of what is proposed the positive effect is not likely to be significant.</p> <p>The plan is also likely to have positive social effects through the provision of residential development through infill (as supported by the development plan as a whole) and the protection of local green spaces and biodiversity generally.</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	It is intended that the positive social effects of providing infill and redevelopment 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>4</sup> impacts.

<sup>4</sup> Transboundary effects are understood to be in other Member States.

(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 of the population likely to be affected);	The Shellingford NDP relates to the parish meeting of Shellingford. The NDP is not allocating any sites for development, and therefore as it will not promote any development that is above and beyond what is already supported in the Development Plan, the potential for environmental effects is also likely to be small and localised.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and	<p>The Shellingford NDP offers an opportunity to enhance the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the area through the proposals being considered.</p> <p>The main vulnerability of the area is the impact of householder and small scale developments on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, listed buildings and archaeological sites. However, given that the plan aims to ensure development conserves and enhances the Conservation Area through detailed design policies, whilst actively seeking to improve the cultural and heritage offering through heritage trails and a focus on the sense of place, it is considered there would not be likely significant effects to the environment</p> <p>The HRA Screening Assessment in Appendix 2 concluded that the Shellingford NDP 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 Shellingford NDP is not required.</p> <p>Environmental quality standards or limit values are not considered likely to be significantly affected by the Shellingford NDP.</p> <p>In light of the proposals in the Shellingford 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.	There are no areas or landscapes with recognised national, Community or international protection status affected by the neighbourhood plan.
--	---

## Appendix 4 – Statutory Consultee Responses

### OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**From:** [REDACTED] - Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of PlanningInOxfordshire  
**To:** [Planning Policy S&V](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Shellingford Neighbourhood Plan SEA/HRA Screening Opinion - Please Respond by 16/12  
**Date:** 18 November 2025 14:34:48

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

Thank you for sending this over. Oxfordshire County Council has no comments on this screening opinion.

Many thanks,

[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**

Pronouns: [REDACTED]

---

**From:** Planning Policy S&V <planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 18 November 2025 10:29  
**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]; [REDACTED]@southandvale.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Shellingford Neighbourhood Plan SEA/HRA Screening Opinion - Please Respond by 16/12

**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 morning,

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 Shellingford Neighbourhood Plan. The conclusion of this report is that no further SEA or HRA work is required.

We would be grateful if you could please review this opinion and provide responses by 5pm on Tuesday 16 December, even if you have no comments.

Kind regards,

# HISTORIC ENGLAND



Historic England

By email only to: [REDACTED]@southandvale.gov.uk

Our ref: PL00800502  
Your ref: Shellingford Neighbourhood Plan SEA

Main: 020 7973 3700  
[e-seast@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:e-seast@historicengland.org.uk)  
[REDACTED]@historicengland.org.uk

Date: 17/12/2025

Dear Sir or Madam

## Shellingford Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied.

It is noted that the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development.

Given the unlikely significant effects upon the historic environment/heritage assets, Historic England concurs with the Local Authority and hence considers that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to



Historic England, 4th Floor, The Atrium, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA  
Telephone 020 7973 3700 [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.





Historic England

minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the NP process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan) where we consider that these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Please do contact me, via email if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Historic Places Advis



Historic England, 4th Floor, The Atrium, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA

Telephone 020 7973 3700 [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.



# NATURAL ENGLAND

Date: 15 December 2025  
Our ref: 533692  
Your ref: Shellingford 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]

## Shellingford Neighbourhood Plan - SEA/HRA Screening Opinion Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 18 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.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected

<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".



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