

Deddington Neighbourhood Development Plan

Submission Version - October 2018

Screening Statement on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

1. THE NEED FOR A SEA

1.1 To meet the 'basic conditions' which are specified by law a Neighbourhood Development Plan must be compatible with EU obligations.

1.2 Regulation 15 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) specifies the documents that must be included when a qualifying body submits a plan proposal to the local planning authority. Under regulation 15(1)(e)(i) this includes an environmental report prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the SEA Regulations (see paragraph 1.3 below). Under regulation 15(1)(e)(ii) it includes, "*where it has been determined under regulation 9(1) of those Regulations that the plan proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of the reasons for the determination*".

1.3 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is European Directive 2001/42/EC which requires an assessment to be made of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. The SEA Directive has been transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations). Detailed guidance on these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005).

1.4 Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) and regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) require that an appropriate assessment of plans and programmes is carried out with regard to the conservation objectives of European Sites (Natura 2000 sites) and that other plans and projects identify any significant effect that is likely for any European Site. In the context of neighbourhood planning, a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required where a Neighbourhood Plan is deemed likely to result in significant negative effects occurring on protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites) as a result of the Plan's implementation.

1.5 As part of the independent examination of the Deddington Neighbourhood Plan, the independent examiner will test whether the making of the Plan is compatible with European Union obligations, including the SEA Directive.

1.6 Government advice in Paragraphs 27 and 28 of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes clear that "*Draft Neighbourhood Plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects*" through a screening process set out in regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations.

Housing
 Environment
 Community
 Movement and Transport
 Business and Economy

2.2 When the Deddington Neighbourhood Development Plan is 'made' it will become part of the statutory development plan in Cherwell District and planning applications falling within the Deddington Neighbourhood Area will be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3. SEA SCREENING CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE

3.1 National Planning Practice Guidance contains specific assistance on sustainability appraisal/SEA requirements for neighbourhood plans. Paragraph 001 Reference ID: 11-026-20140306 of the NPPG confirms that there is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a full sustainability appraisal.

3.2 The Deddington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group prepared a draft SEA screening opinion of its draft Submission Neighbourhood Plan - May 2018 document, having provided information to Cherwell District Council (CDC) officers and received feedback, and using a template provided by CDC. This process enabled a draft determination to be made as to whether the neighbourhood plan would be likely to give rise to significant environmental effects and require a SEA.

3.3 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, the three statutory environmental assessment consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) were consulted on the draft screening report along with the draft Submission Deddington Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying documents.

3.4 Historic England opined that the DNP would not be likely to cause any significant effects on the historic environment and does not need to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment. Natural England said they agreed with the assessment that the DNP does not require a SEA. The Environment Agency did not provide any comments. The responses of these bodies are set out in Appendix 2.

3.5 The criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment are listed in Schedule 1 to the SEA Regulations and are to be taken into account as provided by regulations (9)(2)(a), 9(3) and 10(4)(a). They relate to two main areas, namely:

(1) The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, 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;

- (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
 - (c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
 - (d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
 - (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).
- (2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:
- (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
 - (b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
 - (c) the transboundary nature of the effects;
 - (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);
 - (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
 - (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
 - (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

3.6 A screening assessment has been undertaken using the criteria in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. This assessment is set out in Appendix 1.

3.7 The Deddington Neighbourhood Development Plan is required to have appropriate regard to national planning policy, principally the National Planning Policy Framework published on 27 March 2012 (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance.

While the NPPF has been superseded by the Revised National Planning Policy Framework published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 24 July 2018, under the transitional arrangements set out in paragraph 214 of the Revised Framework, the previous NPPF will continue to apply

for the purpose of examining neighbourhood plans where those plans are submitted on or before 24 January 2019.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The submission Deddington Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development within the Deddington Neighbourhood Area.

4.2 The Deddington Neighbourhood Area does not contain a European Site for nature conservation and the nearest designated European Site is Oxford Meadows SAC (Special Area of Conservation), some 15 miles (24 km.) from the Plan area. There is one SSSI adjacent to the south-east boundary of the designated area (Bestmoor SSSI), which is not considered to be adversely affected by any DNP policy. The Neighbourhood Plan will therefore not impact on the integrity of a European Site, and for the purposes of the EU Habitats Directive and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, it is concluded that a Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required.

4.3 It is therefore considered that the submission Deddington Neighbourhood Development Plan is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects, and on this basis, a SEA would not be required.

APPENDIX 1 - SEA SCREENING

SEA Directive Criteria Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004	Summary of significant effects Scope and influence of the document	Is the Plan likely to have a significant environmental effect? Yes/No
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1. Characteristics of the neighbourhood plan having particular regard to:

<p>(a) The degree to which the Plan sets out a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size or operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p>	<p>If the DNP is brought into legal force it will become part of the statutory development plan in Cherwell District.</p> <p>The DNP is prepared for land use purposes and covers the Deddington Neighbourhood Area. The Plan does not allocate land for development.</p> <p>Policy Villages 1: <i>Village Categorisation</i> of the final adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031, Part 1 (Cherwell Local Plan) classifies 24 larger villages, including Deddington, as Category A villages, which are considered suitable for minor development (typically, but not exclusively, less than 10 dwellings), infilling and conversions within the built-up limits of these settlements. Clifton and Hempton are classified as Category B 'satellite' villages, also considered suitable for minor development, infilling and conversions within the built-up limits of these settlements.</p> <p>Under Policy Villages 2: <i>Distributing Growth across the Rural Areas</i> of the Cherwell Local Plan, the 24 Category A villages are collectively required to accommodate an additional 750 homes on sites of 10 or more dwellings during the period 2014-2031. Sites in the Category A villages are to be identified through the preparation of Local Plan Part 2, the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans where applicable and the determination of applications for planning permission.</p> <p>According to the Annual Monitoring Report 2017, 86 homes (out of the original 750) remained to be allocated (on sites of 10 or more) amongst the Category A villages as at 31 March 2017.</p>	<p>No</p>
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	<p>The DNP accounts for the growth anticipated in the Cherwell Local Plan although CDC has not provided any housing need figure specifically for Deddington. Policy DED - HOU1(a) supports the delivery of approximately 50 new dwellings in Deddington during the Plan period on developments of 10 or more dwellings to assist in the implementation of the Cherwell Local Plan. Policy DED - HOU1(b) provides for a site size limit of 20.</p> <p>Unplanned 'windfall' development is to be achieved through conversions, infilling and small-scale developments of fewer than 10 dwellings on sites within the built-up limits of Clifton, Deddington and Hempton, or immediately adjacent to the built-up limits of Deddington.</p> <p>By Policy DED - HOU2(a), new residential development within the Deddington Conservation Area or within its setting is to be limited to (i) conversions, (ii) infilling, (iii) small-scale developments of fewer than 10 dwellings or (iv) redevelopment of previously developed land or buildings.</p> <p>Under Policy DED - HOU2(b), proposals for residential development on land adjoining or beyond the built-up limits of Deddington would not be supported if this would extend into adjacent countryside in an intrusive way.</p> <p>The DNP adopts a parish-specific site criteria approach. There are eleven criteria set out in Policy DED - HOU2(f).</p> <p>The foregoing policies accordingly are consistent with Policy Villages 1 and Policy Villages 2 of the Cherwell Local Plan.</p> <p>There are provisions for the protection of the Deddington Conservation Area in Policy DED - HOU4(b) concerning housing design and village character, while Policy DED - ENV1 is intended to ensure that new development respects the need to conserve and enhance the historic environment of the Parish and the setting and significance of its heritage assets. See also criterion no. (2) in Policy DED - HOU4(f).</p> <p>Policy DED - COM6(b) designates the Satin Lane Allotments in Deddington and the new Deddington Grange estate public realm as Local Green Space. This is informed by paragraphs 76-78 of the previous National Planning Policy Framework published on 27 March 2012 and Policies ESD 13 and ESD 17 of the Cherwell Local Plan.</p>	
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	The type of projects and activities which the DNP contemplates are at parish level with limited resource implications.	
(b) The degree to which the Plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	<p>The DNP takes into account the strategic policies, and the planned growth identified, in the Cherwell Local Plan and corresponding sustainability appraisals, and the Saved Policies of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996. It does not influence the strategic policies of the development plan but provides detailed guidance on heritage and character assessment, and managing design and other aspects of development, within the Deddington Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The DNP must have regard to national policies and guidance and must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in force in order to meet the 'basic conditions'. The DNP may have some influence on the preparation of future non-strategic planning policies. However, both will need to be in general conformity with adopted strategic Local Plan policies which have been the subject of SEA/SA.</p>	No
(c) The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	<p>The DNP proposes policies to address local issues identified in the Plan's baseline evidence, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - small-scale housing development which respects local character; - development within the Deddington Conservation Area or its setting should not cause harm to its special interest, character or appearance; - exemplary standards of design and use of appropriate materials to reinforce local distinctiveness; - conserve and enhance the historic environment, including its heritage assets; - protect and enhance open spaces, the open rural landscape, green infrastructure and biodiversity; - ensure a safe, healthy and cohesive community; - more walking and cycling and less reliance on the private motor car; 	No

	<p>- promote economic vitality.</p> <p>The policies are intended to protect and/or enhance the natural and historic environment and address specific local issues.</p> <p>The Plan ensures that any matters relating to the natural and historic environment are carefully managed and considered in future decisions. There are no significant effects (individually or cumulatively) on the special characteristics of the Deddington Conservation Area, scheduled monuments, 'listed' buildings or locally listed buildings.</p> <p>The DNP does not allocate land for development and it is geographically restricted to the Deddington Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>There are no proposals which would harm NERC Act S41 habitats (previously BAP priority habitats) within or outside the Deddington Neighbourhood Area. The DNP policies complement policies in the Cherwell Local Plan (e.g. Policies ESD 10, ESD 13, ESD 15 and ESD 17) rather than address new environmental considerations.</p>	
<p>(d) Environmental problems relevant to the Plan.</p>	<p>The policies in the DNP have been informed by (amongst other sources):</p> <p>Cherwell District Landscape Assessment, November 1995 CDC Countryside Design Summary SPG, June 1998 Deddington Conservation Area Appraisal, CDC, April 2012 CDC 'Category A' Villages Analysis, including maps in Appendix C (e.g. ecological and heritage designations), March 2016 Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)</p> <p>The landscape and wildlife habitats in the Deddington Neighbourhood Area are described in Section 3.3 of the DNP.</p> <p>The Steering Group has not identified any major environmental matters. There are, however, policies in the DNP addressing:</p> <p>- protection and enhancement of the natural environment, including key views, green infrastructure and biodiversity (Policy DED - ENV2);</p>	<p>No</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sensitivity of settlement boundaries and sympathetic estate landscaping (Policies DED - HOU4(d) and (g)); - light pollution (Policy DED - ENV4); - walking and cycling (Policies DED - MOV4 and DED - MOV5); - home working to reduce commuting (Policy DED - BUS2). <p>There are no policies which would harm the character of the landscape of the Deddington Neighbourhood Area.</p>	
(e) The relevance of the Plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example plans and programmes related to waste management or water protection).	These are not directly relevant to the DNP, although the Plan has been prepared in consultation with relevant organisations which would have to take such legislation into account in the preparation of their own plans and programmes.	No

2. Characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected having particular regard to:

(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	<p>The DNP accounts for the growth anticipated in the Cherwell Local Plan (see box 1(a) above) and does not specifically allocate land for development.</p> <p>Policy DED - COM6(b) designates the Satin Lane Allotments in Deddington and the new Deddington Grange estate public realm as Local Green Space.</p> <p>Policy BSC 10 of the Cherwell Local Plan seeks to ensure that sufficient quantity and quality of, and convenient access to, open space, sport and recreation provision is secured. Policy BSC 12 encourages the provision of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities. The strategic policies in the Cherwell Local Plan have been the subject of Sustainability Appraisal incorporating SEA.</p>	No
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects of the Plan.	The policies in the DNP are expected to help the implementation at the local level of environmental policies in the Cherwell Local Plan, in particular the following:	No

	<p>DED - HOU1: Sustainable housing growth DED - HOU2: Housing location DED - HOU4: Housing design and village character DED - ENV1: Protection and enhancement of the historic environment of the Parish DED - ENV2: Protection and enhancement of the natural environment of the Parish DED - ENV4: Impact of street lighting DED - COM6: Open spaces, sport and recreation DED - MOV4: Non-car movement DED - MOV5: Public rights of way DED - BUS2: Home working</p> <p>The above DNP policies will provide cumulative support to Cherwell Local Plan policies: SLE 4, BSC 10, ESD 1, ESD 2, ESD 3, ESD 8, ESD 10, ESD 13, ESD 15, ESD 17, Villages 1 and Villages 2. These policies have been the subject of Sustainability Appraisal incorporating SEA which considered cumulative impacts.</p>	
(c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects of the Plan.	The Deddington Neighbourhood Area is coextensive with the civil parish of Deddington. The DNP will have no known significant effect on other parishes or on Districts outside Cherwell.	No
(d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accident).	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to address locally identified issues and respond to the growth planned in the Cherwell Local Plan. There are no known risks to human health or the environment as a result of the Plan.</p> <p>The main aims of the DNP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protection and enhancement of the historic and natural environment; - better play, recreation and sports facilities; - promoting public wellbeing and healthier life choices; - protection for open spaces; 	No

	<p>- good permeability and changed patterns of movement encouraging more walking and cycling and less reliance on the private motor car;</p> <p>- home working to reduce commuting.</p>	
(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographic area and size of the population likely to be affected) by the Plan.	The Deddington Neighbourhood Area is the same as the civil parish of Deddington. It includes Deddington and the smaller villages of Clifton and Hempton. The population of the Parish according to the 2011 Census was 2,146.	No
(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the Plan due to: - Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage - Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values - Intensive land use.	<p>The DNP identifies:</p> <p>(a) special natural characteristics such as local habitats (Section 3.3; Appendix C, Part I) and key views (Policy DED - ENV2(b));</p> <p>(b) the Deddington Conservation Area (Section 3.4(b));</p> <p>(c) heritage assets: two scheduled monuments (including the site of Deddington Castle), 115 'listed' buildings and 14 locally listed buildings, listed in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively to the Deddington Conservation Area Appraisal 2012. (Section 3.4(a); Appendix C, Part II.)</p> <p>The following policies seek to protect and/or enhance the vulnerable aspects of the foregoing:</p> <p>DED - HOU2: Housing location DED - HOU4: Housing design and village character DED - ENV1: Protection and enhancement of the historic environment of the Parish DED - ENV2: Protection and enhancement of the natural environment of the Parish DED - COM6: Open spaces, sport and recreation DED - MOV5: Public rights of way</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not specifically allocate land for development and accounts for the growth already identified in the Cherwell Local Plan (see box 1(a) above). Accordingly, the DNP is unlikely to result in intensive land use or exceed environmental quality standards or limit values.</p>	No

<p>(g) The effects of the Plan on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, Community or international protected status.</p>	<p>The Deddington Neighbourhood Area does not contain a European Site for nature conservation.</p> <p>A Habitats Regulations Assessment was carried out at various stages of the preparation of the Cherwell Local Plan pursuant to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The conclusion of this assessment was that none of the policies or proposals contained in the Submission Cherwell Local Plan incorporating Proposed Modifications (August 2014) would be likely to lead to significant effects on the most valued nature conservation sites.</p> <p>The nearest designated European Site is Oxford Meadows SAC, some 15 miles (24 km.) from the Plan area.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan will therefore not impact on the integrity of a European Site for the purposes of the EU Habitats Directive (taking account of the case of <i>People Over Wind, Peter Sweetman v. Coillte Teoranta</i> before the Court of Justice of the European Union) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.</p> <p>There are no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty affected by the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>No</p>
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APPENDIX 2 - RESPONSES FROM STATUTORY CONSULTEES

A. Response from Historic England



Mr David French

Vice-Chairman

Deddington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Our ref: HD/P5352/

Your ref:

Telephone 01483 252040

Fax

20th June 2018

Dear Mr French,

Deddington Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your e-mail of 23rd May seeking the views of Historic England on your SEA Screening Opinion for the Deddington Neighbourhood Plan.

According to the National Heritage List for England, the parish contains 115 listed buildings and two scheduled monuments. There is also a conservation area and potentially a number of locally important heritage assets. It is, therefore, a very sensitive historic environment which may be affected by any development promoted or allowed for by the Neighbourhood Plan.

We note that the Plan does not allocate any specific sites for housing or other development. However, Policy DED - HOU1 allows for the development of up to 50 dwellings during the Plan period, without directing that development to specific sites or containing any indicators as to which sites might be acceptable for development. Potentially, therefore, this policy could allow development that would have a significant effect or effects on the historic environment.

However, the Plan explains that "*Parish-specific site criteria providing guidance to decision-makers in the application of the Neighbourhood Plan policies to ensure that*

future development in the Parish is sustainable and consistent with the Neighbourhood Plan consultations are set out in Policy DED - HOU2(f)".

Clause (f) of Policy DED - HOU2 states that "*All planning applications for residential development will be assessed against the criteria set out below*", but does not make it clear whether or not these criteria need to be satisfied. The implication is that they should, but as drafted we consider that the policy fails to satisfy the requirement of the National Planning Practice Guidance that "*A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications*". Accordingly, whilst we welcome, in principle, criterion (ii) of Policy DED - HOU2, we consider that it is too ambiguous to provide adequate protection for heritage assets.

In addition, criterion a), whilst clearly intended to protect the conservation area, allows developments of up to nine dwellings within the Area. Such a scale of development could adversely affect the special interest, character and appearance of the area (presumably the four development scenarios identified in the criterion are alternatives i.e. a development proposal would not have to satisfy all four to accord with the criterion ?) We therefore consider that Policy DED - HOU2 fails to provide adequate protection for the conservation area.

We believe that the potential consequence of these weaknesses of Policy DED - HOU2 is that, despite the best intentions of those drafting the Plan, development that would have significant effects on the historic environment of the Plan area could be allowed in accordance with both Policies DED - HOU1 and DED - HOU2.

However, criterion (b) (i) Policy DED-HOU4 provides additional protection for the special interest, character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Policy DED-ENV1 provides additional protection for both the Conservation Area and other heritage assets. We consider these to be clearer and more robust.

Applied collectively, therefore, as they should, we consider that the policies of the Draft Submission Local Plan provide sufficient protection for the historic environment of the Plan area and that, therefore, development in accordance with Policy DED - HOU1 or other policies of the Plan would not be likely to cause any significant effects on the historic environment.

Accordingly, we consider that the Plan does not need to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

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

Thank you again for consulting Historic England.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature redacted]

Martin Small

Principal Adviser, Historic Environment Planning

(Bucks, Oxon, Berks, Hampshire, IoW, South Downs and New Forest NPs and Chichester)

E-mail: martin.small@historicengland.org.uk

B. Response from Natural England

Date: 26 June 2018
Our ref: 248155

**NATURAL
ENGLAND**

Deddington Neighbourhood Plan Steering
Group

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

BY EMAIL ONLY

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir or Madam,

Planning Consultation: Deddington Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 23rd May 2018.

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

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

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

- there are no designated sites or protected landscapes within the impacts zones of the Neighbourhood Plan area and there are only 50 additional dwellings proposed with no site allocations (along with 85 dwellings already being built at Deddington Grange).

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

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

The recently produced Neighbourhood Plan for Benson, in South Oxfordshire provides an excellent example. Although the Plan has not been to referendum yet, we are of the opinion that the policy wording around the Environment, Green Space and Biodiversity is exemplar. We would recommend you considering this document, when reviewing yours.

Further Recommendations

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

- Policies around connected Green Infrastructure (GI) within the parish. Elements of GI such as open green space, wild green space, allotments, and green walls and roofs can all be used to create connected habitats suitable for species adaptation to climate change. Green infrastructure also provides multiple benefits for people including recreation, health and well-being, access to nature, opportunities for food growing, and resilience to climate change. Annex A provides examples of Green Infrastructure;
- Policies around Biodiversity Net Gain should propose the use of a biodiversity measure for development proposals. Examples of calculation methods are included in Annex A;

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

Yours sincerely

Milena Petrovic
Adviser
Sustainable Development
Thames Team

Annex A - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

Natural Environment Information Sources

The Magic¹ website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available here².

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found here³. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found here⁴.

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**, the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the Magic⁵ website and also from the LandIS website⁶, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural Environment Issues to Consider

The National Planning Policy Framework⁷ sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Planning Practice Guidance⁸ sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

Landscape

Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes through the planning system. Your plans may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed here⁹), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Ancient woodland¹⁰. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Priority and protected species and habitat

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed here¹¹) or protected species. Natural England has produced advice here¹² to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land, further information including links to the open mosaic habitats inventory can be found here.

Ancient woodland and veteran trees-link to standing advice

You should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and veteran trees in line with paragraph 118 of the NPPF. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland Inventory which can help identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forest Commission have produced standing advice for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and veteran trees. It should be taken into account by planning authorities when determining relevant planning applications. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on ancient woodland/veteran trees where they form part of a SSSI or in exceptional circumstances

Biodiversity net gain

Under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Local Planning Authorities are required to conserve biodiversity. The NPPF section 109 states "*the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity wherever possible*". . Suitable methods for calculating biodiversity net gain can include the Defra biodiversity offsetting metric¹³ and the environment bank biodiversity impact calculator¹⁴. Natural England would expect a policy within the Neighbourhood Plan to include wording to ensure that net biodiversity gain is achieved.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should

seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework section 112. For more information, see our publication *Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land*¹⁵.

Green Infrastructure, Improving Your Natural Environment.

Inclusion of Green Infrastructure (GI) in to development plans can provide multifunctional benefits to the area. These can include opportunities for recreation, health and wellbeing and access to nature as well as providing connected habitats for wildlife.

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment through inclusion of GI. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained, connected, enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development. Examples might include:

- Providing a new footpath with landscaping through the new development to link into existing rights of way or other green spaces.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow or creating new ones.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Considering how lighting can be best managed to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof or walls to new or existing buildings.

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see Planning Practice Guidance on this¹⁶).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition or clearing away an eyesore).

Green Roofs

Natural England is supportive of the inclusion of living roofs in all appropriate development. Research indicates that the benefits of green roofs include reducing run-off and thereby the risk of surface water flooding; reducing the requirement for heating and air-conditioning; and providing habitat for wildlife.

We would advise your council that some living roofs, such as sedum matting, can have limited biodiversity value in terms of the range of species that grow on them and habitats they provide. Natural England would encourage you to consider the use of bespoke solutions based on the needs of the wildlife specific to the site and adjacent area. I would refer you to <http://livingroofs.org/> for a range of innovative solutions.

¹ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

² <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

³ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

⁵ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

⁶ <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁸ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

⁹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

¹¹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-offsetting#guidance-for-offset-providers-developers-and-local-authorities-in-the-pilot-areas> Note; the 'Guidance for developers' and 'Guidance for offset providers' documents provide a calculation method.

¹⁴ <http://www.environmentbank.com/impact-calculator.php> , and

http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0ahUKEwj7vcbl0aDQAhVMDcAKHb8IDEUQFggSMAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fconsult.welhat.gov.uk%2Ffile%2F4184236&usg=AFQjCNFfkbJIJQ_UN0044Qe6rmiLffxckg

¹⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>

¹⁶ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

C. Response from the Environment Agency

Subject:RE: Deddington Neighbourhood Plan: Screening Statement

Date:Thu, 24 May 2018 15:24:05 +0000

From:Planning_THM <Planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>

To:dj.french

Dear Mr French

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on your SEA screening opinion for the Deddington neighbourhood plan.

We regret that at present, the Thames Area Sustainable Places team is unable to review this consultation. This is due to resourcing issues within the team, a high development management workload and an increasing volume of neighbourhood planning consultations. We have had to prioritise our limited resource, and must focus on influencing plans where the environmental risks and opportunities are highest. For the purposes of neighbourhood planning, we have assessed those authorities who have “up to date” local plans (plans adopted since 2012, or which have been confirmed as being compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework) as being of lower risk. At this time, therefore, we are unable to make any detailed input on neighbourhood plans being prepared within this local authority area.

However, together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission, we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf

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