

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 Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Development Plan

19 DECEMBER 2022

SUMMARY

Following consultation with the statutory bodies, South Oxfordshire District Council (the 'Council') determines that Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Development Plan (Burcot and Clifton Hampden 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 pre-submission Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Development Plan (Burcot and Clifton Hampden 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. 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 Burcot and Clifton Hampden 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 significant effects on the environment, which can be found in Appendix 3.
8. These two assessments feed into Table 1 and the SEA screening opinion.

BURCOT AND CLIFTON HAMPDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

9. The Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP contains the following vision and objectives:

Vision

‘Our vision is for a single, thriving, sustainable parish formed of two distinct villages, each with its own particular identity and character, with shared facilities and amenities’.

Objectives

‘The key objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- To build a long-term sustainable community
- To sustain and improve local services, business and amenities
- To protect and enhance the natural environment and green spaces
- To honour the historic character of the parish, its villages, and its setting
- To reduce the impact of traffic and improve the network of footpaths and cycle paths within the parish and to neighbouring villages’.

Policies

BCH1 - School Improvements
BCH2 - Community Facilities
BCH3 - Design Principles in Burcot
BCH4 - Design Principles in Clifton Hampden
BCH5 - Assets of Community Value
BCH6 - Green Infrastructure
BCH7 - Local Landscape Character

10. The Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP does not allocate any sites for housing. However, it contains policies encouraging improvements or extensions to school and public buildings as follows:

11. Policies BCH1 and BCH2 support proposals 'to improve or extend' both Clifton Hampden Primary School and the Village Hall. Policy BCH2 also supports proposals to 'improve or extend or replace the pavilion and ancillary buildings at the Clifton Hampden Recreation Ground'.
12. Policy BCH2 also encourages 'proposals to deliver new cemetery space or additional off-street car parking spaces to serve the village amenities', under the proviso that 'they are consistent with other relevant policies of the development plan'. It also supports 'proposals to reorganise or to relocate existing allotments plots'.
13. (Please note that a separate Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) is proposed in parallel to the Neighbourhood Plan. The proposals in this, that are not policies in the NDP, will be separately considered via an Environmental Impact Assessment (provision of a new surgery building, 17 new homes, improved parking, new burial ground, a new allotments site and an extension to and improvements to the Village Hall)).
14. Policies in the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP aim to support sustainable appropriate development in the neighbourhood area, that will not adversely impact on the rural nature of the village. Retaining the character and appearance of the village and sustaining and enhancing the significance and character of the Clifton Hampden Conservation Area are particularly important.
15. Overall, we note that the plan places great emphasis on conserving the character, appearance and landscape of the area.
16. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

17. The screening opinion was sent to Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England on 17 November 2022 for a four-week consultation period. The responses in full are presented in Appendix 4.
18. Natural England did not provide comments on this SEA Screening.
19. The Environment Agency did not provide comments on this SEA Screening.
20. Historic England confirmed their agreement, that the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP does not need a SEA.

CONCLUSION

21. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council, the following determination has been reached.

22. The Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.
23. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 1 & 3, the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.
24. The Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

Authorised by: Adriana Partridge, Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations

Signed: 

Date: 19 December 2022

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

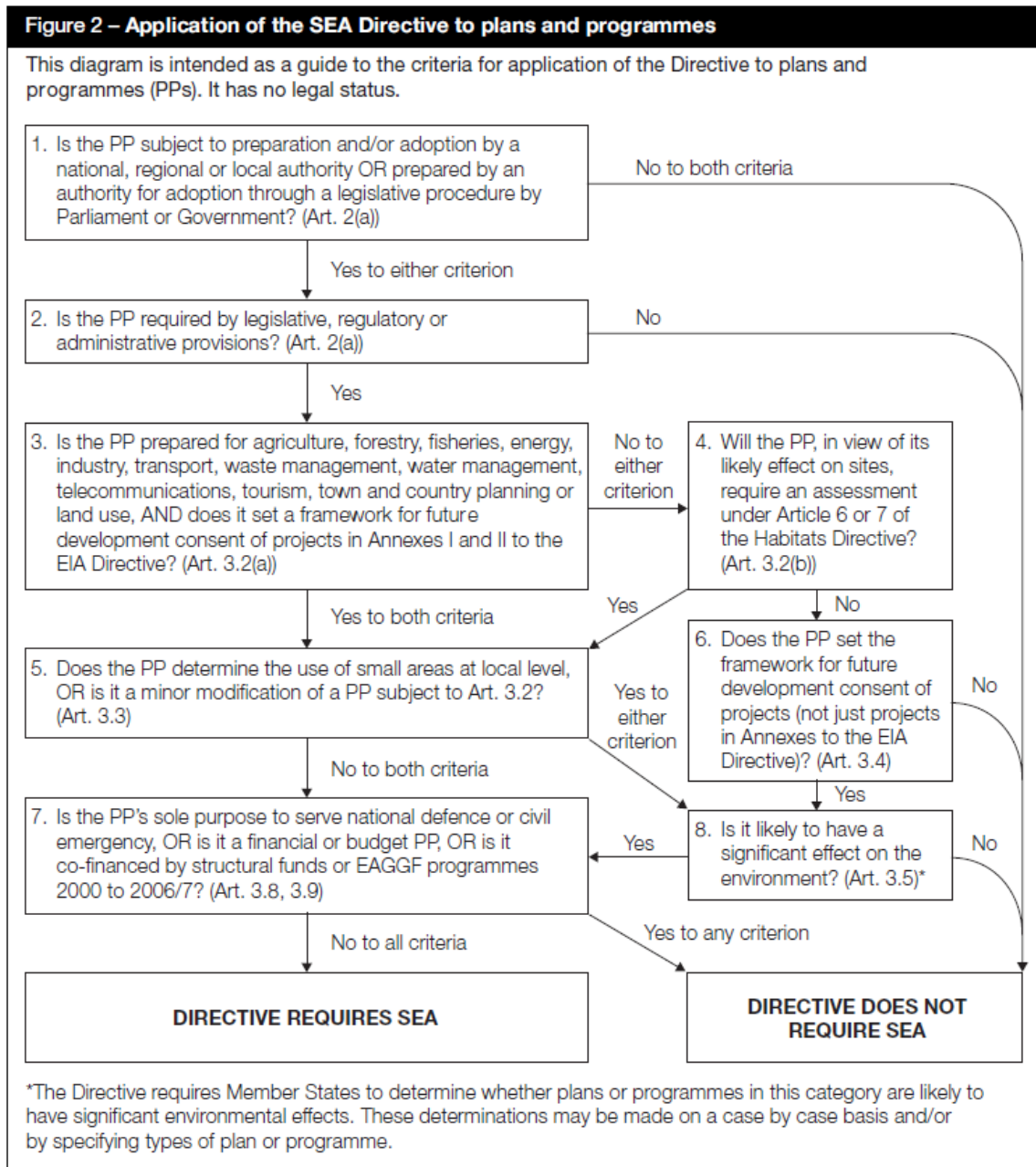


Table 1: Application of SEA Directive as shown in Appendix 1

Stage	Y/N	Explanation
<p>1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))</p>	<p>Y</p>	<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 Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP Steering Group, a working group who report to the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Parish Council (as the “relevant body”) and will be “made” by South Oxfordshire District Council as the local authority. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is subject to the following regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 • The Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 • The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
<p>2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Whilst the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will, if “made”, form part of the Development Plan for the District. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.</p>

<p>3. Is the Neighbourhood Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II (see Appendix 2) to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The Burcot and Clifton Hampden 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.</p> <p>[Please note, the NDO and its proposals, separate from the NDP and its policies, will be assessed via an EIA].</p>
<p>4. Will the Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP in Appendix 2.</p>
<p>5. Does the Neighbourhood Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP will determine the use of sites/small areas at a local level.</p>
<p>6. Does the Neighbourhood Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>When made, the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP will include a series of policies to guide development within the village. This will inform the determination of planning applications providing a framework for future development consent of projects.</p>
<p>7. Is the Neighbourhood Plan's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>N/A</p>

8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	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.
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Appendix 2 - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Burcot and Clifton Hampden 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 importance¹, 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 plan² (the higher level plan for town and country planning and land use). This Screening Assessment uses the Habitats Regulations Assessment of South Oxfordshire District Council’s Local Plan³ as its basis for assessment. From this, the Local Authority will determine whether the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Development Plan is likely to result in significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites either alone or in combination with other plans and policies and, therefore, whether an ‘Appropriate Assessment’ is required.

LEGISLATIVE BASIS

3. Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive provides that:

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

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

“105 – (1) Where a land use plan –

¹ Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for other species, and for habitats.

² The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (December 2020).

³ South Oxfordshire Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (March 2019)

(a) *Is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*

(b) *Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site,*

The plan-making authority for that plan must, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

(2) *The plan-making authority must for the purposes of the assessment consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representations made by that body within such reasonable time as the authority specifies.*

(3) *The plan-making authority must also, if it considers it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if it does so, it must take such steps of that purpose as it considers appropriate.*

(4) *In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 107, the plan-making authority must give effect to the land use plan only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site or the European offshore marine site (as the case may be).*

(5) *A plan-making authority must provide such information as the appropriate authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the discharge by the appropriate authority of its obligations under this Chapter:*

(6) *This regulation does not apply in relation to a site which is –*

(a) *A European site by reason of regulation 8 (1)(c), or*

(b) *A European offshore marine site by reason of regulation 18(c) of the Offshore Marine Conservation Regulations (site protected in accordance with Article 5(4) of the Habitats Directive).*

106- (1) *A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment under regulation 105 or to enable it to determine whether that assessment is required.*

(2) *In this regulation, “qualifying body” means a parish council, or an organisation or body designated as a neighbourhood forum, authorised for the purposes of a neighbourhood development plan to act in relation to a neighbourhood area as a result of section 61F of the TCPA 1990 (authorisation to act in relation to neighbourhood areas) (159) as applied by section 38C of the 2004 Planning Act (supplementary provisions)(160).*

(3) Where the competent authority decides to revoke or modify a neighbourhood development plan after it has been made, it must for that purpose make an appropriate assessment of the implications for any European site likely to be significantly affected in view of that site's conservation objectives; and regulation 105 and paragraph (1) apply with the appropriate modifications in relation to such revocation or modification.

(4) This regulation applies in relation to England only."

EUROPEAN SITES

4. The HRA of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan used a screening distance of 17km to identify European sites which could be affected by development from the plan. This distance has been subject to consultation with Natural England and reflects the average travel to work distance in the district. As such, the same distance has been applied in this HRA screening.
5. The following European sites lie wholly or partly within 17km of Burcot and Clifton Hampden and have been taken into consideration:

Little Wittenham SAC – Approximately 2km (South Oxfordshire District Council)

6. 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.
7. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of public access and disturbance, and invasive fish species upon great crested newt. With regard to the types of development that may be brought forward in the Local Plan, visitor disturbance could impact the site.

Cothill Fen SAC – Approximately 8km (Vale of White Horse District Council)

8. Cothill Fen is designated as a SAC for its calcium-rich, spring fed fens and alder woodlands on floodplains.
9. 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 waterflooded fens.

Oxford Meadows SAC – approximately 11km (Oxford City)

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

Aston Rowant SAC – Approximately 15km (South Oxfordshire District Council)

11. Aston Rowant is classified as SAC because it supports one of the largest remaining populations of juniper in lowland Britain. It is selected as an example of juniper formations on the chalk in the south-east of England. At this site juniper is present as part of a mixed scrub community but also occurs as isolated bushes in chalk grassland. In common with most lowland populations of juniper, successful reproduction and survival of new generations of bushes is extremely rare and conservation is currently dependent upon significant levels of management intervention. The low level of reproductive success is the main threat to the feature at this site. Aston Rowant also supports *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests although this is not a primary reason for classification as SAC.
12. The main pressures and threats to this site include an unsustainable on-site population, changes in species distribution, disease of juniper as well as the impacts of air pollution and the risks of atmospheric nitrogen deposition upon juniper. Additionally, conflicting conservation objectives threaten beech.

Hartslock Wood SAC – Approximately 16km (South Oxfordshire District Council)

13. This site hosts the priority habitat type "orchid rich sites". The steep slopes of this site on the chalk of the Chilterns comprise a mosaic of chalk grassland, chalk scrub and broadleaved woodland. The chalk grassland mostly consists of a mosaic of shorter-turf NVC type CG2 *Festuca ovina*–*Avenula pratensis* grassland and taller CG3 *Bromus erectus* grassland. The site supports one of only three UK populations of monkey orchid *Orchis simia*, a nationally rare Red Data Book species. The bulk of this site lies on a steep slope above the River Thames. Recent storms and landslips have resulted in a diverse age structure for the yew population. Open patches show a rich flora including local species such as southern wood-rush *Luzula forsteri*, wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus* and narrow-lipped helleborine *Epipactis leptochila*.
14. The main threat to this site is air pollution and the risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition upon the dry grasslands and yew-dominated woodland. With regard to the types of development that may be brought forward in the Local Plan, air pollution could impact the site.

Chilterns Beechwoods SAC – Approximately 16km (South Oxfordshire District Council and Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire)

15. The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC comprises nine separate sites scattered across the Chilterns. There are three features of interest: semi-natural grasslands and scrubland on chalk; *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech woodland (for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the UK and lies in the centre of the habitat's UK range); and Stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence. The rare coralroot *Cardamine bulbifera* is found in these woods.
16. The main pressures and threats to this site include the impacts of forestry and woodland management, disease, deer and the invasive species of grey squirrel upon beech. Additionally, the changes in species distribution of stag beetle as well as the impact of public access and disturbance upon stag beetle. Air pollution and the impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition also threaten the dry grasslands, beech and stag beetle.

ASSESSMENT

17. As required under Regulation 106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the qualifying body (Burcot and Clifton Hampden Parish Council) provided the required information to enable South Oxfordshire District Council to determine whether the assessment under Regulation 105 is required. Consideration has been given to the potential for the development proposed by the Neighbourhood Plan to result in significant effects associated with:

Physical loss of/damage to habitat:

18. Any development resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan will be located within the neighbourhood area.
19. 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.
20. 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). Two 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).**

21. The HRA (March 2019) produced alongside the Local Plan 2035 states that great crested newts will travel away from their breeding ponds, during the terrestrial phase of their lifecycle, but not large distance. 500 metres is considered an appropriate buffer distance inside which great crested newts might be found, from their breeding location. 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. Research has found that great crested newts at Little Wittenham SAC migrate within woodland and 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 offsite habitats associated with Little Wittenham SAC can be screened out of further assessment.

- **Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (stag beetle)**

22. The HRA (March 2019) produced alongside the Local Plan 2035 states that 'where stag beetle is a qualifying feature of a site, the individuals may travel outside of the SAC boundary, although it is unlikely that they will travel far – it is generally only the male stag beetle that flies during the summer months, and the female beetle rarely flies. The preferred habitat for stag beetles is old, established woodland, and the larvae feed on rotting tree matter. As the beetle larvae take years to develop, they can be vulnerable to tree clearance and the 'tidying up' of wood in parks and especially gardens. Research suggests that 2km may be an appropriate buffer inside which sites could be functionally connected, as this is the distance that males travel to females during the breeding season'. The SAC is 16km from the NDP area, therefore, potential loss of or damage to offsite habitats associated with Chilterns Beechwood SAC can be screened out of further assessment.

Non-physical disturbance e.g noise/vibration or light pollution

23. The most recent HRA of the emerging South Oxford Local Plan (March 2019) states: 'Using a precautionary approach, we have assumed that the effect of noise, vibration and light are most likely to be significant if development takes place within 500 metres of a European site with qualifying features sensitive to these disturbances, or known off-site breeding, foraging or roosting areas.'

24. None of the European sites are within 500 metres of the designated neighbourhood area. Therefore, effects in relation to noise, vibration and light pollution can be screened out of further assessment.

Air pollution

25. Air pollution is most likely to affect European sites where plant, soil and water habitats are the qualifying features, 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 (N) availability that can then affect plant health, productivity and species composition. In terms of vehicle traffic, nitrogen oxides (NO_x, i.e. NO and NO₂) are considered to be the key pollutants. Deposition of nitrogen compounds may lead to both soil and freshwater acidification, and NO_x can cause eutrophication of soils and water.

26. Based on the Highways Agency Design for Road and Bridges (DMRB) Manual Volume 11, Section 3, Part 1 (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.
27. The European sites (3) within 17km of Burcot and Clifton Hampden that are within 200m of strategic roads are:
 1. **Oxford Meadow SAC (A34, M40)** - as highlighted above, Burcot and Clifton Hampden are approximately 11km from the Oxford Meadow SAC.
 2. **Aston Rowant SAC (M40)** - as highlighted above, Burcot and Clifton Hampden are approximately 15km from the Aston Rowant SAC.
28. The South Oxfordshire HRA sets out how SODC commissioned Atkins to model the effects of the Local Plan on traffic flows within the District. The modelling resulted in the HRA concluding that the potential for likely significant effects in relation to air pollution in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan can be screened out for all sites, except Aston Rowant SAC and Oxford Meadows SAC. Given the modest scale of the supported proposals in the NDP and the distance between the SACs and Burcot and Clifton Hampden (11km and 15km), the potential impact associated with the SACs can be screened out of further assessment.
 3. **Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (A404, A4010)** - as highlighted above, Burcot and Clifton Hampden are approximately 16km from the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC
29. The HRA explains that 'no traffic data was available for the roads adjacent to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, as it is located too far outside of the Atkins model network to be reasonably or reliably predicted'. Although this location is situated within the initial screening radius of 17 km, the actual distance which would need to be travelled to reach these locations by car from the plan area exceeds this distance for most routes. It can therefore reasonably be expected that the contribution of growth within the Local Plan area to traffic flows at these locations would be de minimis, and as such they are screened out from any further assessment.

30. Accordingly, given the modest scale of proposed development in the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Plan and the distance from the NDP area to the Chilterns Beechwood SAC (16km), effects in relation to air quality can be screened out.

Increased recreational pressure

31. The most recent HRA of the emerging South Oxford Local Plan (March 2019) states: '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.'⁴

32. The HRA of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 sets out that the potential for effects depends upon the scale of development proposed and the features for which the site is designated. However, as a conservative estimate, it is assumed that any development within 7 km of a sensitive site could have impacts due to recreation. Where site specific information indicates that development beyond 7 km could produce recreation impacts, this will be taken into account; for example, at Little Wittenham SAC, where development in the eastern fringes of the Vale of White Horse District could be relevant.

33. Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP area is approximately 2km from Little Wittenham SAC, which is part of a larger site managed by the Earth Trust as a nature reserve. 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. The NDP does not allocate any housing sites; and the majority of NDP proposals are encouraging redevelopment of existing facilities 3km from the SAC. The remaining proposals (new facilities serving the existing community), though they may create capacity for some additional use, would be of a limited, minor impact; therefore, likely significant effects in relation to visitor pressure and the impact of recreation can be ruled out and do not need to be considered further.

Changes to hydrological regimes

34. European sites at which aquatic or wetland environments support qualifying features have the potential to be affected by changes in water quantity or quality. The European sites close to Burcot and

⁴ South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 Habitats Regulation Assessment (March 2019), available from https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=1670533189&CODE=0CB90C6B9ECD6BE1C0A4B61F9C07CAB4

Clifton Hampden with aquatic or wetland habitats, or those identified as sensitive to changes in water quality or quantity, are:

- **Cothill Fen SAC (8km):** has calcium rich springwater-fed fens that have been identified as sensitive to water pollution and hydrological changes.
- **Oxford Meadows SAC (11km):** lowland hay meadow, identified as sensitive to hydrological changes.
- **Little Wittenham SAC (2km):** its ponds support great crested newts, but changes to water quality or quantity have not been identified as an issue at this site – the site has therefore been screened out.

35. The types of development that have the potential to affect water quality / quantity or flow regimes at sensitive European sites are residential or employment development that would involve significant increase in demand for water supply and treatment, and infrastructure development that requires significant excavation in proximity to watercourses or groundwater.

36. The NDP does not allocate any residential sites. The majority of proposals in the NDP are redeveloping existing public facilities with remaining proposals of very limited, minor impact, serving local use; therefore, likely significant effects in relation to potential to affect water quality / quantity or flow regimes at sensitive European sites can be screened out.

In combination effects

37. The Council has considered the HRA of the Local Plan 2035 (March 2019) in respect of the potential in combination effects of the proposals in the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Plan. As the South Oxfordshire Local Plan covers the period from 2011 to 2035, the quantum of development proposed in the Local Plan includes some completed and committed development (committed development includes sites under construction, with planning permission, made neighbourhood plan allocations and allocations carried forward from the Local Plan 2011 and Core Strategy). The policies that enabled those developments to be permitted have already been subject to HRA as part of the local plan process or as part of the HRA for the relevant NDP. Paragraphs 4 to 36 of this assessment have considered how the development proposed in the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.

38. Burcot and Clifton Hampden have simultaneously produced a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) and its proposals⁵, separate from the NDP and its policies, was assessed via an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) screening. The EIA screening opinion concluded that having regard to the characteristics of the development, all issues are considered to be of local significance only and can be examined through the normal planning process.
39. With regard to the conclusions of paragraphs 4 to 36, it is considered that the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Plan, taking into account other relevant plans and projects, is not likely to give rise to significant in-combination effects.

CONCLUSION

40. The Burcot and Clifton Hampden 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 Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP is not required.

⁵ The NDO proposals are 'a new surgery building, 17 new homes, improved parking, new burial ground, a new allotments site and an extension to and improvements to the Village Hall' (taken from page 29 of the Burcot and Clifton Neighbourhood Plan (pre-submission draft), available at <https://neighbourhoodplan.cliftonhampden.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Draft-Neighbourhood-Plan.pdf>).

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 Burcot and Clifton Hampden 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 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	An NDP must be in conformity with the Local Plan for the District. It does not influence other plans. The Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP 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 Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP. A basic condition of the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	<p>The environmental impact of the proposals within the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP is unlikely to be significant due to the minor and localised scale of proposals. Policies in the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP aim to support sustainable development in the village that will not adversely impact the rural nature of the village.</p> <p>Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP contains the following environmental designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAP Priority Areas • Flood Zones • Great Crested Newt distribution • Local Wildlife Sites • Protected Species Buffer • Tree Preservation Orders

	<p>There are also 5 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 17km of the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Wittenham SAC - approx. 2km • Cothill Fen SAC - approx. 8km • Oxford Meadows SAC - approx. 11km • Aston Rowant SAC - approx. 15km • Hartslock Woods SAC - approx. 16km <p>There are also the following SSSI's located within the following distances of Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Development Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Wittenham SSSI – approx. 2km • Culham Brake SSSI – approx. 2km <p>The plan encourages improvement or extension of both Clifton Hampden Primary School and the Village Hall and also supports proposals to improve, extend or replace the pavilion and ancillary buildings at the Recreation Ground. It encourages 'proposals to deliver new cemetery space or additional off street car parking spaces to serve the village amenities', under the proviso that 'they are consistent with other relevant policies of the development plan' and supports 'proposals to reorganise or to relocate existing allotment plots'.</p> <p>Because the above proposals relate to extensions or replacements of existing public buildings that already serve the villages and local area, or small-scale new facility proposals of limited impact, we are of the opinion the Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any development that is likely to harm these designations and there would not be likely significant effects to the environment, as the plan seeks to conserve the village, its character and setting.</p>
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for	The proposed development in the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP has been judged not to have an impact on Community legislation.

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;	<p>The Burcot and Clifton Hampden 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 plan proposes protecting important areas of open and green space, key views and enhancing existing public buildings as well as expanding facilities such as cemetery space and potentially relocating existing allotments. These will have positive cumulative benefits for the area. 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 Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and designated heritage assets to sustain and enhance their significance and setting. No development is proposed near sensitive locations that would cause likely significant effects. Given the scale of what is proposed, the effects are not likely to be significant.</p> <p>The plan is also likely to have positive minor social effects through the protection of the green infrastructure network.</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	It is intended that the positive social effects, through a sustainable suite of policies, will have positive cumulative benefits for the area. However, given the nature and scale of the proposals in the plan, these are not likely to be significant.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	The effects of the plan are unlikely to have transboundary ⁶ 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 Clifton Hampden which is washed over by Green Belt. The NDP proposals ensure that effects

⁶ Transboundary effects are understood to be in other Member States.

<p>of the population likely to be affected);</p>	<p>on the rural character and visual amenity of the Green Belt is minimised and acknowledge that development in the Green Belt can only occur meeting very special circumstances and as exceptions. The potential for environmental effects is also likely to be small and localised.</p>
<p>(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>	<p>The Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP area contains the following special natural characteristics and cultural heritage elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeological Constraints • Conservation Area • Listed Buildings • Local Heritage Assets • Registered Park and Garden • Scheduled Ancient Monument • Tree Preservation Orders <p>There are also the following SSSI's located within the following distances of Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Development Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Wittenham SSSI – approx. 2km • Culham Brake SSSI – approx. 2km <p>There are also 5 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 17km of the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Wittenham SAC - approx. 2km • Cothill Fen SAC - approx. 8km • Oxford Meadows SAC - approx. 11km • Aston Rowant SAC - approx. 15km • Hartslock Woods SAC - approx. 16km <p>The Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP offers an opportunity to enhance the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the area through the proposals being considered.</p> <p>The SACs and SSSI are located outside the NDP designated area. Little Wittenham SAC is the closest SAC to the designated</p>

neighbourhood area, approximately 2km from the neighbourhood plan boundary. Little Wittenham SSSI is the closest SSSI to the neighbourhood area, approximately 2km from the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP area.

The above designations are also outside of the built-up areas of the villages. The principles guiding development in the NDP include respecting Burcot and Clifton Hampden's setting in the rural landscape and its close association with the River Thames. Taking into consideration the proposals in the plan, they are therefore not considered to cause likely significant effects to special natural characteristics or cultural heritage.

The HRA Screening Assessment in Appendix 2 concluded that: the Burcot and Clifton Hampden 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 Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.

The main vulnerability of the parish is the impact of householder and small scale developments within the built up area on the character and appearance of the listed buildings, Conservation Area, archaeological sites and Green Belt. However, limited infill development is already supported in the development plan. Therefore, it is considered that this would not give rise to likely significant environmental effects.

The objectives of the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP set out how the plan will honour the historic character of the parish, its villages, and its setting, as well as protect 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 objectives that the plan would go beyond national and local policy and therefore, it is

	<p>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 Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP.</p> <p>In light of the minor proposals in the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP, the plan is not likely to cause significant effects in relation to intensive land use.</p>
<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>There are no areas or landscapes with recognised national, Community or international protection status affected by the neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>The NDP policies also protect the ‘culturally and historically important local landscape character of the parish, and in particular the waterscape of the River Thames corridor’.</p> <p>In light of the minor proposals in the Burcot and Clifton Hampden NDP, the plan is not likely to cause significant effects on landscapes with recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>

Appendix 4 – Statutory Consultee Responses

HISTORIC ENGLAND

By email only to: planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk

Our ref: PL00791728

Your ref: Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Plan SEA

Main: 020 7973 3700

e-seast@historicengland.org.uk

louise.dandy@historicengland.org.uk

Date: 30/11/2022

Dear Sir or Madam

Burcot and Clifton Hampden 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 Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied.

The information supplied however indicates that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment.

On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made. I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

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 SEA 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, despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

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 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.

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

Yours sincerely
Louise

Louise Dandy
Historic Places Adviser

NATURAL ENGLAND

Application ref: Draft SEA and HRA Screening Opinion for the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Plan.

Our ref: 413743

Thank you for consulting Natural England on the draft SEA and HRA Screening Opinion for the Burcot and Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Plan. We have no comments to make on this application.

Natural England has not assessed this application for impacts on protected species. Natural England has published [Standing Advice](#) which you can use to assess impacts on protected species or you may wish to consult your own ecology services for advice.

Natural England and the Forestry Commission have also published standing advice on [ancient woodland and veteran trees](#) which you can use to assess any impacts on ancient woodland.

The lack of comment from Natural England does not imply that there are no impacts on the natural environment, but only that the application is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes. It is for the local planning authority to determine whether or not this application is consistent with national and local policies on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may be able to provide information and advice on the environmental value of this site and the impacts of the proposal to assist the decision making process. We advise LPAs to obtain specialist ecological or other environmental advice when determining the environmental impacts of development.

We recommend referring to our SSSI Impact Risk Zones (available on [Magic](#) and as a downloadable [dataset](#)) prior to consultation with Natural England. Further guidance on when to consult Natural England on planning and development proposals is available on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-planning-authorities-get-environmental-advice>

Yours faithfully

Laura Elphick- Sustainable Development Lead Adviser
Thames Solent Team
Natural England

Red Kite House
Howbery Park
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OX10 8BD