



Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Development Plan Screening Statement

Buckinghamshire Council

April 2020



1.0 Introduction and summary of conclusions

1. The Town and Country Plan Act 1990 (Schedule 4(b) as amended) sets out the basic conditions tests that must be satisfied before a Neighbourhood Development Plan can be put to referendum. These include that:
 - The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
 - The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
2. This in turn requires compliance with the relevant EU Directives considered in this report (and the related statutory processes in domestic legislation). These are principally the
 - [The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#) (SEA)
 - [The Habitats Directive](#) (HRA)
3. Buckinghamshire Council is legally required to determine whether the Neighbourhood Development Plan will require SEA (Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004). This screening report also considers whether this requirement is likely to be triggered by the Neighbourhood Plan.
4. In summary, the screening assessment set out in this report concludes that neither SEA nor HRA is required for the Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Plan. This draft Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate additional sites, or an increased quantum of development, over and above the adopted Wycombe District Local Plan. Neither does it seek to reduce the quantum of planned public open space. On the contrary, in some respects it seeks to increase this provision.
5. SA is not formally required for neighbourhood planning, but this may be the most appropriate process for the Parish to demonstrate how the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

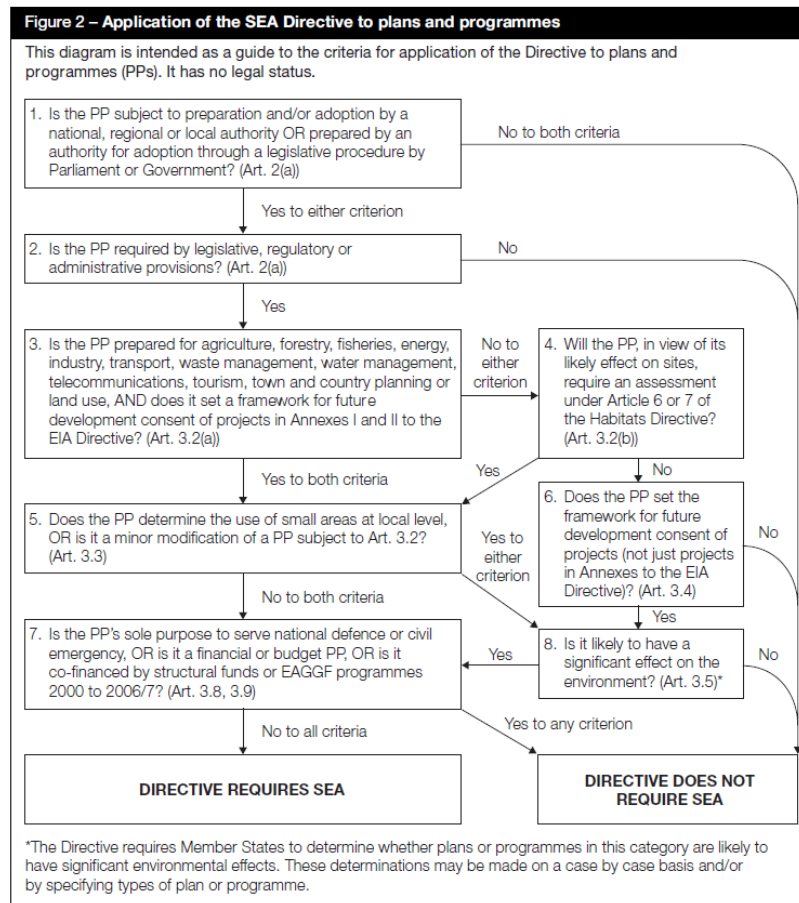
2.0 Legislative background and approach

6. The legislation pertaining to Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal is [European Directive 2001/42/EC](#). This was transposed into English law by the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#), commonly referred to as the SEA Regulations. The Government published '[A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)' (ODPM 2005), which provides more detailed guidance on how an SEA should be carried out. Under this Directive, Neighbourhood Plans may require SEA but this will depend on the content of each Neighbourhood Plan. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

ensures that the environmental implications of decisions are taken into account before any such decisions are made.

7. Not all plans and programmes require SEA. The government guidance '[A practical guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)' sets out the following approach to be taken in determining whether SEA is required:

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



8. Boxes 1 and 2 refer to Article 2(a) of the Directive. This confines the scope of the Directive to certain plans and programmes as defined. If a plan is within scope of the Directive the remaining questions determine whether SEA is in fact required.
9. All Neighbourhood Development Plans fall within the general scope of Article 2(a). Whether or not a specific NDP requires SEA under Article 3 should therefore be determined with reference to boxes 3 to 8.
10. Article 3(2) makes SEA a mandatory requirement for:
 - a) Plans which are prepared for town and country planning or land use **and** which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive; or

- b) Plans which have been determined to require an assessment under the Habitats Directive.
11. SEA can also be required if in the judgement of the Local Planning Authority the NP breaches any other of the contingent tests in Article 3 – most commonly whether a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
 12. In general terms, only Neighbourhood Plans containing additional land allocations for development that are not included in the local authority's plan, are likely to require SEA. Neighbourhood Plans which do not contain such allocations (or simply reflect allocations already identified as part of a local authority plan) are less likely to require SEA.
 13. The Government considers that Sustainability Appraisal is not needed for Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs), but has said that it must be demonstrated how the NDP contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in the area, as part of the Basic Conditions. The advantage of undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal is that it can demonstrate the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan on social, economic and environmental factors and therefore demonstrate to an examiner that the Plan that has been prepared contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Finally, it is considered best practice to incorporate requirements of the SEA Directive into an SA wherever possible, so a voluntary SA is strongly encouraged if SEA is required.
 14. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) ensures that any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European site is subject to an appropriate assessment in accordance with [The Habitats Directive](#). Under this Directive, Neighbourhood Plans may require HRA but this will again depend on the content of each Neighbourhood Plan.
 15. The Habitats Directive requires that any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European site must be subject to an appropriate assessment. The procedural implications of the [Habitats Directive](#) for neighbourhood planning are addressed in Schedule 2 of the [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#) (as amended). The most recent amendments to the *Regulations* were enacted in the [Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning \(Various Amendments\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2018](#) in response to the ECJ judgement in *People Over Wind & Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta*.
 16. The same general expectation (that no further assessment is likely to be required) applies to HRA as for SEA, although additional consideration is likely to be required if either:
 - The Parish or Neighbourhood Area itself contains a protected habitat subject to the directive, or;
 - As with the adopted Wycombe District Local Plan, an appropriate assessment under the directive was required for the strategic policies in the area *and* the Neighbourhood Plan includes proposals which have the potential to adversely

impact these habitats and species in a way which was not foreseen in the existing assessment. This could be for example if NP policies proposed:

- A greater quantum of development than in the Local Plan
- A lesser quantum of public open space
- New allocations for high traffic generating uses

3.0 Screening process

17. The screening opinion assessment is undertaken in three parts: the first part will assess whether the plan requires SEA (as per the flow chart which follows); the second part of the assessment will consider whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, using criteria drawn from [Schedule 1 of the EU SEA Directive](#) and the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (see section 5); the third and final section appraises the likelihood of an appropriate assessment being required under the HRA regime.
18. The three statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England) will be consulted to determine whether they agree with the conclusion of this screening opinion, in establishing whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA and whether it may have a 'significant environmental effect'.
19. The table in Section 5 below sets out the reasoning for whether the Neighbourhood Plan will require a full SEA. The questions in the table are drawn from the diagram above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

Screening Summary

Summary of the Neighbourhood Plan

Details of the Neighbourhood Plan	
Name of plan	Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Plan
Geographic coverage of plan	Wooburn and Bourne End Parish
Key topics/ scope of plan	Additional development principles for Wycombe District Local Plan allocations (Slate Meadow and Bourne End) Designation of local green spaces Policies on coalescence, design, local character, parking, heritage, electric vehicle charging points, dropped kerbs, safeguarding community facilities.
Key issues	Coalescence of the settlements of Wooburn Green, Wooburn Town and Bourne End Local character, design and heritage Parking and transport infrastructure Protection and enhancement of green /open spaces

Summary of screening opinion

Local Authority details	
Officer preparing screening opinion	Charlotte Morris, Principal Planning Policy Officer
Date of assessment	April 2020
Reason for conclusion	This draft Neighbourhood Development Plan does not seek to allocate additional sites, or an increased quantum of development, over and above the adopted Wycombe District Local Plan. Neither does it seek to reduce the quantum of planned public open space. There are no European protected sites within the Parish itself. Therefore SEA is not required.

Screening Assessment

Assessment 1: Establishing the need for SEA

Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an	Y	The preparation and adoption of the NDP is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The NDP will be prepared by the Parish Council (as the 'qualifying body') and will be 'made' by Buckinghamshire Council as the local authority. The preparation of

Stage	Y/N	Reason
authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))		NDPs is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and 2015 (as amended) and The Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012. GO TO STAGE 2
2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	In considering box 2 (Is the plan 'required'), a specific and wider definition of 'required' is applied in line with the rulings of the CJEU, helpfully summarised by Justice Dove in Friends of the Earth Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities And Local Government [2019] EWHC 518 (Admin) (06 March 2019) . The essential definition (quoted by J Dove in his paragraph 13) is set out in the CJEU ruling on <i>Inter-environment Bruxelles ASBL & Others v Region De Bruxelles-Capitale</i> : "31 It follows that plans and programmes whose adoption is regulated by national legislative or regulatory provisions, which determine the competent authorities for adopting them and the procedure for preparing them, must be regarded as "required"." All Neighbourhood Plans therefore fall within the general scope of Article 2(a). GO TO STAGE 3
3. Is the NP 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 to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	Y	The NP is being prepared for town and country planning and land use as it proposes to designate sites for environmental protection and set policy to regulate future land uses. As such, the NP contains a framework for future development consent of urban development projects (listed as 10(b) in Annex II of the EIA Directive). GO TO STAGE 5
4. Will the NP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	N	The NP area does not itself include any protected habitats and it does not include any proposals that go beyond the adopted Wycombe District Local Plan. There are no European protected sites shown on Magic Maps within the Parish itself. The closest sites beyond the Parish are Fern House Gravel Pit

Stage	Y/N	Reason
		SSSI, Cock Marsh SSSI, Littleworth Common SSSI, and Burnham Beeches SAC and SSSI.
5. Does the NP Determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a plan or programme subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Y	The NDP is expected to determine the use of small sites at a local level AND it will be no more than a minor modification of the Local Plan. GO TO STAGE 8
6. Does the NP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)		NOT APPLICABLE
7. Is the NP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget plan or programme, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)		NOT APPLICABLE
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	See Assessment 2: Likely significant effects on the environment.

Assessment 2: Likely significant effects on the environment (Stage 8)

SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of plans and Programmes Regulations 2004	Buckinghamshire Council assessment	Likely significant environmental effect?
Characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan, having regard to:		
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other	The NDP does not allocate additional sites for development (the site policies relate to sites in the Wycombe District Local Plan). In addition it sets out policies to protect	N

activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>against backland development and to promote quality design, as well as protect against the loss of open spaces and green spaces.</p> <p>The NDP will, if 'made' by Buckinghamshire Council, form part of the statutory Development Plan. As such, it will contribute to the framework for the development consent of projects.</p>	
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	<p>The NDP is at the bottom of the hierarchy of development plans and will not directly influence other plans and programmes (within scope of the SEA directive).</p> <p>It is designed to influence development consents and local projects.</p>	N
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	<p>The NDP is expected to work to protect and enhance the natural environment of the area, and seek to integrate environmental considerations. Due to the scale and nature of the policies in the plan, it is considered that a full Sustainability Appraisal is not required. It is expected that the plan itself however will set out how environmental considerations have informed the policies proposed.</p>	N
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>The preparation of the NDP will need to consider the impact of proposals on designated sites, wider biodiversity, flood risk and heritage assets. As no site allocation is proposed this is not considered to lead to likely significant effects.</p>	N
(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).	<p>The NDP is not directly relevant to the implementation of European legislation, though it may need to take the impact of the Water Framework Directive into account.</p>	N

SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1.2 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	Buckinghamshire Council assessment	Likely significant environmental effect?
<p>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to a to g below.</p> <p>Statement of key environmental effects of this Neighbourhood Plan:</p> <p>The environmental effects of the NDP will be mainly in terms of the character and form of new development allocated by the Wycombe District Local Plan, or arising as windfall development in the existing built-up areas. There is a particular focus on improving parking and traffic conditions for local residents, improving accessibility to the railway station by foot and bike, improving public open space, and reinforcing local distinctiveness. All of these have the potential to deliver a material and positive impact on the environment, but not at a level that would be recognised as significant in the context of the EU Directives.</p> <p>Note: The environmental impacts of the Wycome District Local Plan have previously been considered in the SA/SEA of the plan (and the HRA appropriate assessment, which was updated to reflect People vs the Wind). Whilst the policies in the draft NDP need to be considered cumulatively with the Local Plan they do not obviously create any additional environmental impacts over and above the new Local Plan.</p>		
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	This is not applicable	N
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects of the plan	This is not applicable.	N
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	There are no transboundary effects of the NDP with other European states.	N
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	There are unlikely to be risks to human health or the environment as a result of the NDP.	N
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The NDP covers Wooburn and Bourne End parish which has a population of 10172 people and an area of 809 hectares.	N
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (i) special natural	The policies in the plan are unlikely to significantly affect the area's natural characteristics or cultural heritage. The area includes contrasting urban and rural	N

characteristics or cultural heritage	character, including some green spaces and heritage assets such as listed buildings which are protected by the District's development plan.	
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values	The NDP is not expected to exceed environmental limits.	N
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (iii) intensive land use	Policies in the plan on design and backland development are expected to prevent intensive land use.	N
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	The area adjoins the AONB. As no site allocation is proposed in the plan the plan will not have an impact on the AONB.	N
Assessment under Stage 8	The Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Development Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.	

4.0 Consultation

20. In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) were consulted on this opinion, and their responses recorded in the appendix.

5.0 Screening conclusion

21. As a result of the Screening Assessment, it is concluded that there is no potential for significant environmental effects to arise as a result of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan. As such, the Neighbourhood Plan does not require a full SEA to be undertaken. It is important to remember that this screening opinion is a 'snapshot in time' and that if the issues addressed in the Neighbourhood Development Plan should change then a new screening process will need to be undertaken to determine whether an SEA will be required.

Appendix

Natural England Response

From: Sweet-Escott, Eleanor <Eleanor.Sweet-Escott@naturalengland.org.uk>
Sent: 07 July 2020 09:45
To: Aude Pantel
Cc: Charlotte Morris
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] NE consultation response - Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Development Plan - SEA Screening Opinion

Dear Aude,

Thanks for your email. I have spoken to my senior colleague Marc Turner on this screening consultation. Things have moved on since the 2018 People over Wind judgement, with the publishing of Chiltern and South Bucks' Local Plan evidence relating to recreation disturbance at Burnham Beeches SAC. However as you point out, we do agree with the conclusion of no Likely Significant Effect from the Wycombe Local Plan at Burnham Beeches. As the Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating any additional houses, we are satisfied that we can amend our consultation response to agree with the conclusion that a HRA will not be required.

Please accept this as our amended consultation response to this Screening.

Kind Regards,

Eleanor Sweet-Escott | Sustainable Development
Natural England

From: Aude Pantel [mailto:Aude.Pantel@buckinghamshire.gov.uk]
Sent: 01 July 2020 16:10
To: Sweet-Escott, Eleanor <Eleanor.Sweet-Escott@naturalengland.org.uk>
Cc: Charlotte Morris <Charlotte.Morris@buckinghamshire.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] NE consultation response - Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Development Plan - SEA Screening Opinion

Dear Eleanor

Thank you for your response to the Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Plan SEA screening opinion, and for sharing the report from Footprint Ecology.

My colleague Charlotte has asked me to respond to the points you make.

You said in your response essentially the following:

- 1) "In our review of the Wooburn & Bourne End Neighbourhood Plan SEA screening we are in agreement with the assessment that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA."
- 2) "However, we disagree with the conclusion that a HRA will not be required."

My response to 1) is that **if** an HRA is required - and from your response this would be a full Appropriate Assessment due to the People Over Wind judgement, then the requirement for a SEA is engaged: this I believe is set out at Regulation 5 (3) of the SEA Regulations.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/contents/made>

I am not aware that this would not apply to a neighbourhood plan (as opposed to a local plan); but do correct me if I've missed another piece of legislation that says so.

In relation to whether or not a HRA is required (2) :

- You recognise that the local plan HRA (which included Appropriate Assessment) was adequate.
- Your letter says that an AA should be undertaken because of People over Wind. I would add the following points for context
 - o Whilst the review of the local plan HRA in 2018 was a direct result of the People over Wind case law saying that mitigation measures could not be taken into account when screening out significant effects, the local plan appropriate assessment has been undertaken, and those mitigation measures have been integrated as a result of that AA to the local plan allocation policies.
 - o The neighbourhood plan is not proposing to allocate any new site for development. As such it is in practice difficult to see how the NDP would create additional risks of a significant effect on a habitats site. I can imagine that a screening exercise might show that?

In light of the above, could you please let us know if your advice still stands both in terms of HRA and SEA, or is to be amended?

I am happy to discuss this matter over the phone in the first instance if it is more suitable.

Kind regards

Aude Pantel MRTPI

Planning Policy Officer

Planning, Growth and Sustainability Directorate

Buckinghamshire Council

01494421538

aude.pantel@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Wycombe Area Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. HP11 1BB

From: Sweet-Escott, Eleanor [<mailto:Eleanor.Sweet-Escott@naturalengland.org.uk>]

Sent: 13 May 2020 11:28

To: Charlotte Morris <Charlotte.Morris@buckinghamshire.gov.uk>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] NE consultation response - Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Development Plan - SEA Screening Opinion

[Please note this has been sent from an **external source** - treat with caution and **do not open attachments** / use links until you are sure this is a trusted communication see intranet/IT for advice.]

Dear Charlotte Morris,

Please find attached Natural England's consultation response to:

Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Development Plan - SEA Screening Opinion

Do let me know if you have any questions.

Kind Regards,

Eleanor Sweet-Escott | Lead Adviser

Sustainable Development | Thames Solent Team

Natural England

<https://www.gov.uk/natural-england>

All Natural England offices and our Mail Hub are currently closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic – please send any documents to me by email not post – see the latest news on Covid-19 at <http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.



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Date: 13 May 2020
Our ref: 315466



Wooburn and Bourne End Parish Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Charlotte Morris,

Planning Consultation: Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Development Plan - SEA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 27 April 2020.

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 Wooburn & Bourne End Neighbourhood Plan SEA screening we are in agreement with the assessment that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA. However, we disagree with the conclusion that a HRA will not be required.

Since the adoption of the Wycombe Local Plan, new evidence has come to light as part of the evidence base for the emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan, of the impact of recreation disturbance on Burnham Beeches SAC. Natural England recognises that new housing within 5.6km of the internationally designated Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation (SAC) can be expected to result in an increase in recreation pressure. This evidence base can be found [here](#).

Natural England is happy with the route that Wycombe have gone down in their Appropriate Assessment for their Local Plan, in the provision of open space as mitigation for the increased recreation associated with new houses in the Wooburn and Bourne End parishes. However, as these mitigation measures are being used as 'SAC mitigation', a Habitats Regulations Assessment and Appropriate Assessment will need to be conducted – due to the People over Wind 2018 Judgement.

Due to the material change in circumstances from the new recreation evidence, we would advise the Neighbourhood Plan to include a Burnham Beeches SAC specific policy, to outline the specific measures that will be needed to be undertaken as mitigation, and to provide *additionality* in terms of biodiversity net gain. This could be to the Country Park and to the areas of on-site open space within the developments.

In addition, 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. 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 neighbourhood 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,

Eleanor Sweet-Escott
Lead Adviser
Sustainable Development
Thames Solent Team

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

Natural Environment Information Sources

The [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)¹ 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 [here](#)².

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)³. 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 [here](#)⁴.

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 [Magic](#)⁵ website and also from the [LandIS website](#)⁶, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural Environment Issues to Consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#)⁷ sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](#)⁸ 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.

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/>

Landscape

Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes through the planning system. Your plan 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 [here](#)⁹), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)¹⁰. 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 [here](#)¹¹) or protected species. Natural England has produced advice [here](#)¹² 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 175 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 170 states the requirement for *"minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity"*. 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.

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=0ahUKEwj7vcbI0aDQAhVMDcAKHb8IDEUQFggsMAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fconsult.welhat.gov.uk%2Ffile%2F4184236&usq=AFQjCNFkbJJQ_UN0044Qe6rmiLffxckg

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 para 170. 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 this](#)¹⁶).
- 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).

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/>

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.

From: Planning_THM <Planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: 07 May 2020 13:32
To: Charlotte Morris
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Wooburn and Bourne End NDP Screening Opinion

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Charlotte

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on your screening opinion for the Wooburn and Bourne End 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

Kind regards

Michelle Kidd - Planning Advisor
Area Sustainable Places Team
The Environment Agency

Address: Red Kite House, Howbery Park, Wallingford, OX10 8BD.
Tel: 02030259712
Email: planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk
Web: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Speak to us early about environmental issues and opportunities - We can provide a free pre-application advice note or for more detailed advice / meetings / reviews we can provide a project manager

to coordinate specialist advice / meetings which costs £100 per hour (plus VAT). For more information email us at planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk



Creating a better place
for people and wildlife



From: Charlotte Morris [mailto:Charlotte.Morris@buckinghamshire.gov.uk]

Sent: 27 April 2020 10:56

To: SM-NE-Consultations (NE) <consultations@naturalengland.org.uk>; 'e-seast@historicEngland.org.uk' <e-seast@historicEngland.org.uk>; Planning_THM <Planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>

Cc: 'Edward.Winter@HistoricEngland.org.uk' <Edward.Winter@HistoricEngland.org.uk>; Sweet-Escott, Eleanor <Eleanor.Sweet-Escott@naturalengland.org.uk>

Subject: Wooburn and Bourne End NDP Screening Opinion

Dear Statutory Consultee,

The Neighbourhood Area for the parish of Wooburn and Bourne End has been approved by Buckinghamshire Council, and the Parish Council are progressing with preparing their plan. Accordingly we have set out an SEA screening opinion for the plan (attached for your comment). The plan does not allocate development, the opinion concludes that SEA is not required and that HRA is also not required.

Please find the Screening Opinion attached.

I would be grateful if you could respond within 3 weeks.

Kind regards

Charlotte Morris

Principal Planning Policy Officer

Planning Growth and Sustainability

Buckinghamshire Council

Part-time working hours Monday and Wednesday mornings

Extension x3064

Charlotte.Morris@Buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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From: Lloyd Sweet, Robert <Robert.LloydSweet@HistoricEngland.org.uk>
Sent: 18 May 2020 12:16
To: Charlotte Morris
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Wooburn and Bourne End NDP Screening Opinion

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Ms. Morris

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the draft screening opinion for the Woodburn and Bourne End neighbourhood plan.

I am happy to confirm that Historic England agree that, within areas of interest to Historic England, we considered it unlikely that there would be likely significant environmental effects that would merit subjecting the neighbourhood plan to an SEA.

We retain the right to review this opinion should the plan change significantly in scope at a later stage of development.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lloyd-Sweet

Robert Lloyd-Sweet | Historic Places Adviser | South East England | Historic England
Cannon Bridge House | 25 Dowgate Hill | London | EC4R 2YA
Mobile: 07825 907288

From: Charlotte Morris [mailto:Charlotte.Morris@buckinghamshire.gov.uk]
Sent: 27 April 2020 10:56
To: 'consultations@naturalengland.org.uk'; South East ePlanning; 'Planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk'
Cc: Winter, Edward; 'Eleanor.Sweet-Escott@naturalengland.org.uk'
Subject: Wooburn and Bourne End NDP Screening Opinion

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Please find the Screening Opinion attached.

I would be grateful if you could respond within 3 weeks.

Kind regards

Charlotte Morris

Principal Planning Policy Officer
Planning Growth and Sustainability
Buckinghamshire Council

Part-time working hours Monday and Wednesday mornings
Extension x3064

Charlotte.Morris@Buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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