

## Sherston Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening (FINAL)

### 1. Screening Methodology

Each element of the plan<sup>1</sup> has been categorised against the screening criteria developed on behalf of, and endorsed by Natural England<sup>2</sup>. This approach is advised to help provide a clear audit trail for the assessment of local planning documents (which may be applied to neighbourhood plans), and if necessary identify the need for the policies to be removed / amended or new policies added to be certain that the plan will not have adverse effects upon European sites.

The criteria used were as follows:

- Category A1: The policy will not itself lead to development e.g. because it relates to design or other qualitative criteria for development;
- Category A2: The policy is intended to protect the natural environment;
- Category A3: The policy is intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment;
- Category A4: The policy would positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas;
- Category A5: The policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Sites and associated sensitive areas.
- Category B – no significant effect;
- Category C – likely significant effect alone; and
- Category D – Likely significant effects in combination.

The effect of each policy has been considered both individually, and in combination. The effects of the whole plan have also been considered in combination with the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy, the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy (2006-26), remaining elements of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan (2006), the emerging South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites and Places Plan, and the emerging Cotswold District Council Local Plan (2011 – 31).

### 2. Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA

Wiltshire Core strategy HRA screened in the following potential effects of development in the Sherston Community Area, upon the Natura 2000 network<sup>3</sup>:

#### *Recreation*

- Clattinger Farm SAC

#### *Hydrology / Hydrogeology*

- Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
- Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
- Pewsey Downs SAC
- Clattinger Farm SAC

---

<sup>1</sup> Sherston Neighbourhood Plan 2006-2026

<sup>2</sup> DTP Publications: The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook.

<http://www.dtapublications.co.uk/handbook/>

<sup>3</sup> Wiltshire Core Strategy: Assessment under the Habitats Regulations, Appendix A. (March 2013)

- River Avon SAC

*Nitrogen Deposition*

- Porton Down SPA
- Southampton Water SPA
- Clattinger Farm SAC
- River Avon SAC
- Rodborough Common SAC
- Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC

Policies within the emerging Sherston Neighbourhood Plan have been screened against each of the above potential impacts, for each Natura 2000 site.

3. Sherston Neighbourhood Plan

The Sherston Neighbourhood Plan includes policies to address the following policy objectives:

1. The Plan will support the provision of facilities considered important for a vibrant community
2. The Plan will ensure that all future development in the village [respects the local environment, is of a high quality design and protects areas worthy of retention]
3. The Plan will facilitate opportunities for new and existing businesses and social enterprise that benefit the community and support the delivery of advanced fibre connectivity to all parts of the village
4. The Plan will seek to provide for the housing needs of the community
5. The Plan will seek to provide for the existing and future leisure, recreational, sporting, community and social needs of the village
6. The Plan will facilitate measures for managing traffic in and around the village
7. The Plan will encourage the sympathetic management of the countryside surrounding the village so as to retain and/or enhance its high quality, improve biodiversity and provide other longer term benefits to the local community
8. The Plan will encourage a move towards a low carbon economy which includes local food production and the generation of renewable energy

All parts of the plan have been screened for potential impacts upon the Natura 2000 network, as set out in Section 4.

4. Initial Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment of the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan

a. Screening assessment of individual policies

A / B (Green) – Screened out

C / D (Red) – Screened in

Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
<p><b>Policy 1</b> - Proposals involving the loss of the following community services, facilities or business premises shown on Proposals Maps 1A and 1B will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the site/ building is no longer viable for an alternative community/business use. Preference will be given to retaining the existing use in the first instance, then for an alternative community or business use. Where this is not possible, a mixed use, which still retains a substantial portion of the community facility/service or business use, will be supported. Redevelopment for non-community service/ facility or business use will only be permitted as a last resort and where all other options have been exhausted. In order for such proposals to be supported, a comprehensive marketing plan will need to be undertaken and the details submitted with any planning application. Only where it can be demonstrated that all preferable options have been exhausted will a change of use to a non-community use be considered. This marketing plan will, at the very minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. be undertaken for at least six months</li> <li>ii. be as open and as flexible as possible with respect to alternative community use</li> <li>iii. establish appropriate prices, reflecting local market value, for the sale or lease of the site or building, which reflect the current or new community use, condition of the premises and the location of the site</li> <li>iv. demonstrate the marketing has taken into account the hierarchy of preferred uses stated above</li> <li>v. clearly record all the marketing undertaken and details of respondents, in a manner capable of verification</li> <li>vi. provide details of any advertisements including date of publication and</li> </ul>	A3	<p>The policy is intended to conserve the built or historic environment and will not lead directly to an increase in density or area of the built environment except as a last resort. It is considered that re-use, re-design or even redevelopment of the individual sites listed would be sufficiently distant from any features associated with any European site, such that no likely significant effect would occur.</p>

Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
<p>periods of advertisement</p> <p>vii. offer the lease of the site without restrictive rent review and tenancy conditions, or other restrictions which would prejudice the reuse as a community facility</p> <p>viii. demonstrate contact with previously interested parties, whose interest may have been discouraged by onerous conditions previously set out.</p> <p>Facilities/premises to be protected:</p> <p>I. The Old School (shops and offices)</p> <p>J. Tucks</p> <p>K. The Tolsey Surgery</p> <p>L. Apples and Pears</p> <p>M. The Wine Shop</p> <p>N. Stretchline premises</p> <p>O. Pinkney Park Business Units</p> <p>A. Village Hall</p> <p>B. Scout Hut</p> <p>C. British School Rooms</p> <p>D. The Methodist Chapel</p> <p>E. Carpenter's Arms PH</p> <p>F. The Rattlebone PH</p> <p>G. The Angel (restaurant and offices)</p> <p>H. Grays Garage P. B &amp; W Equine Vets at Willesley</p>		
<p><b>Policy 2</b> - Development will not be permitted if it erodes the distinctive character or integrity of any of the areas shown on Proposals Map 6 identified as being of local significance. These include:</p> <p>1. Village Hall field 4. Avon river valleys</p> <p>2. Recreation Ground 5. Earthworks at Manor Farm</p> <p>3. The Allotments 6. Grove Wood</p>	A3	
<p><b>Policy 3</b> - New development should demonstrate how it will contribute to and be compatible with local fibre or internet connectivity. This could be through a 'Connectivity Statement' provided with relevant planning applications. Such statements could consider such aspects as; the intended land use and the anticipated connectivity requirements of the development, known nearby data networks and their anticipated speed</p>	A1	

Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
<p>(fixed copper, 3G, 4G, fibre, satellite, microwave, etc), realistic assessments of connection potential or contribution to any such networks. This policy aims to see new development connect to the internet with a minimum symmetrical speed of 25Mbps and with realistic future proof upgrades available. Where no internet provider is available, as a minimum and subject to NPPF 173, suitable ducting that can accept fibre should be provided either to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the public highway; or</li> <li>• a community led local access network; or</li> <li>• another location that can be justified through the connectivity statement.</li> </ul> <p>Where possible and desirable, additional ducting should be provided that also contributes to a local access network for the wider community. Costs associated with additional works can be considered alongside affordable housing, or any other contributions in a viability assessment, submitted to the Council. Major infrastructure development must provide ducting that is available for community owned local access or strategic fibre deployment.</p>		
<p>Policy 4 - Site 1 West of Knockdown Road Approximately 3.3 ha of land situated off Sopworth Lane, as identified on Proposals Map 7, is proposed for a mixed use development to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient land for the erection of a new enhanced GP surgery with associated parking and space for related mobile services.</li> <li>• Sufficient land to allow for the future expansion of the existing Sherston C of E Primary School and staff parking together with a site suitable for the erection of a new pre-school facility with associated parking.</li> <li>• Up to 45 dwellings to serve diverse residential needs of which 40% would be affordable housing (as required by Core Strategy Policy 43).</li> <li>• Strategic landscaping and open space to retain and reinforce existing hedgerows, and to establish new areas of substantial planting and landscaping so as to mitigate the impact of the proposed development on the AONB.</li> </ul> <p>Development will be subject to the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Surface water management that can achieve less than current greenfield rates of run-off and decreases flood risks.</li> </ol>	A1	The policy will not itself lead to development since it is concerned with design and qualitative criteria for development. The site is sufficiently far from any receptors associated with any European sites, such that no likely significant effects will occur as a result of implementing the policy.

Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
<p>2. The provision of footpath links to both the proposed new surgery site and the western edge of the existing primary school as well as to the existing Parish playing fields to the north.</p> <p>3. A design and layout that protects and preserves the character of the settlement and is consistent with the surrounding AONB.</p> <p>All aspects of development will take place in accordance with a Masterplan for the site which is to be approved by the Council prior to the submission of a detailed planning application.</p>		
<p><b>Policy 5</b> - Mixed Use development is proposed on <b>Site 2</b> (the Vicarage Site), as identified on Proposals Map 8, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land for use as additional burial space.</li> <li>• About 3 dwellings (including new vicarage).</li> </ul> <p>Development will be subject to the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The provision of a footpath link to the existing adjoining churchyard from the proposed new burial area.</li> <li>2. A design and layout that protects and preserves the character and setting of the adjoining Grade 1 listed church.</li> </ol>	B	The allocation site is sufficiently distant from the European site such that no likely significant effects on its features are likely to occur.
<p><b>Policy 6</b> – Housing development is proposed on <b>Site 3</b> (Green Lane/Sandpits Lane junction), as identified on Proposals Map 9, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land for about 4 houses.</li> </ul> <p>Development will be subject to the following requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A design and layout that protects and preserves the character of the settlement and is consistent with the adjoining Conservation Area and surrounding AONB.</li> </ul>	B	The allocation site is sufficiently distant from the European site such that no likely significant effects on its features are likely to occur.
<p><b>Policy 7</b> - Support will be given to the upgrading or replacement of the existing sheltered accommodation on Anthony Close by a purpose-built care or close care facility.</p>	B	The allocation site is sufficiently distant from the European site such that no likely significant effects on its features are likely to occur.
<p><b>Policy 8</b> - In line with “Places for Walking” support will be given to the enhancement of inclusive access and crossings between the proposed new GP surgery on Site 1, The Sherston Primary School and the Post Office/Stores on the high street as well as key residential areas so as to encourage non-vehicular access to these facilities.</p>	A1	
<p><b>Policy 9</b> - Planning permission will not be granted for development that would result in the loss of open-air sports facilities where there is a need for the facility to be retained in its current location, or the open area provides</p>	A3/B	

Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
<p>an important green space for local residents. Where this is not the case, planning permission will only be granted where there is no need at all for the facility for the purposes of open space, sport or recreation, or where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. there is a need for the development; and</li> <li>b. there are no alternative non-greenfield sites; and</li> <li>c. the facility can be replaced by either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. providing an equivalent or improved replacement facility; or</li> <li>ii. upgrading an existing facility.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<p><b>Policy 10 - Site 4</b> (adjoining the Football Field) will be safeguarded for the future expansion of the existing sports facilities. See Proposals Map 10.</p>		
<p><b>Policy 11</b> - Support will be given to the erection of new/replacement changing rooms and related sports facilities on the Football Field.</p>		

Impacts have been screened out for the reasons provided in the Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA (see Section 2)

Given the location, scale and nature of the proposals, no likely significant effects as a result of the plan have been identified.

- b. Assessment of all elements of the plan 'in combination'
  - The draft policies would not have any in combination effects
- c. Assessment of the effects of the plan as a whole, in combination with other plans / projects
  - The plan would not have any in combination effects with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted / emerging South Gloucestershire plans, or the emerging Cotswold District Local Plan

5. Conclusion

The policies largely provide qualitative criteria for development focused on protecting the local environment and guiding the design of new housing, and would therefore have no likely significant effects upon the Natura 2000 network. While a number of draft policies (No.4,5 & 6) do allocate a small number of sites for development, these are considered highly unlikely to result in any likely significant effects upon the Natura 2000 network due to the location, scale and nature of the proposals and the distance from the N2K site .

It can therefore be concluded that the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan would have no likely significant effects upon the Natura 2000 network alone or in combination, and no appropriate assessment is considered necessary by Wiltshire Council as competent authority.