

Wiltshire Council

**Strategic Environmental Assessment - Screening determination for the
Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan**

December 2015

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document provides a screening determination of the need to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2. Wiltshire Council, as the 'Responsible Authority'¹ under the SEA Regulations², is responsible for undertaking this screening process of the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan. It will determine if the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, and hence whether SEA is required.
- 1.3. This process has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC³, often known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, which has been transposed into English law by the SEA Regulations.

2. Legislative requirements

- 2.1. The Localism Act 2011 requires neighbourhood plans to comply with EU legislation. The screening procedure outlined in this report meets the requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations, as introduced in Section 1 of this document.
- 2.2. Regulation 5 of the SEA Regulations requires an environmental assessment of plans which:
 1. *Are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use (Regulation 5, para. (2)(a), and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC (EIA Directive) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (Regulation 5, para. (2)(b);*
 2. *In view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (Regulation 5, para. (3);*
 3. *Set the framework for future development consent of projects⁴ (Regulation 5, para. (4)(b);*
 4. *Are determined to be likely to have significant environmental effects as determined under regulation 9(1) (Regulation 5, para. (4)(c).*

An environmental assessment need not be carried out for:

- a) *Plans which determine the use of a small area⁵ at local level (Regulation 5, para. (6)(a); or*
- b) *Plans which are a minor modification⁶ to a plan or programme (Regulation 5, para. (6)(b)*

¹ The organisation which adopts the neighbourhood plan (this is described in Wiltshire Council's guide *Neighbourhood planning – a guide for Wiltshire's parish and town councils* (June 2012) as 'makes the plan').

² The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

³ European Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment"

⁴ European Commission guidance states that plans and programmes which **set the framework for future development consent of projects** would normally contain 'criteria or conditions which guide the way a consenting authority decides an application for development consent'. **Development consent** is defined in the EIA Directive as "the decision of the competent authority or authorities which entitled the developer to proceed with the project" (Article 1(2) of the EIA Directive).

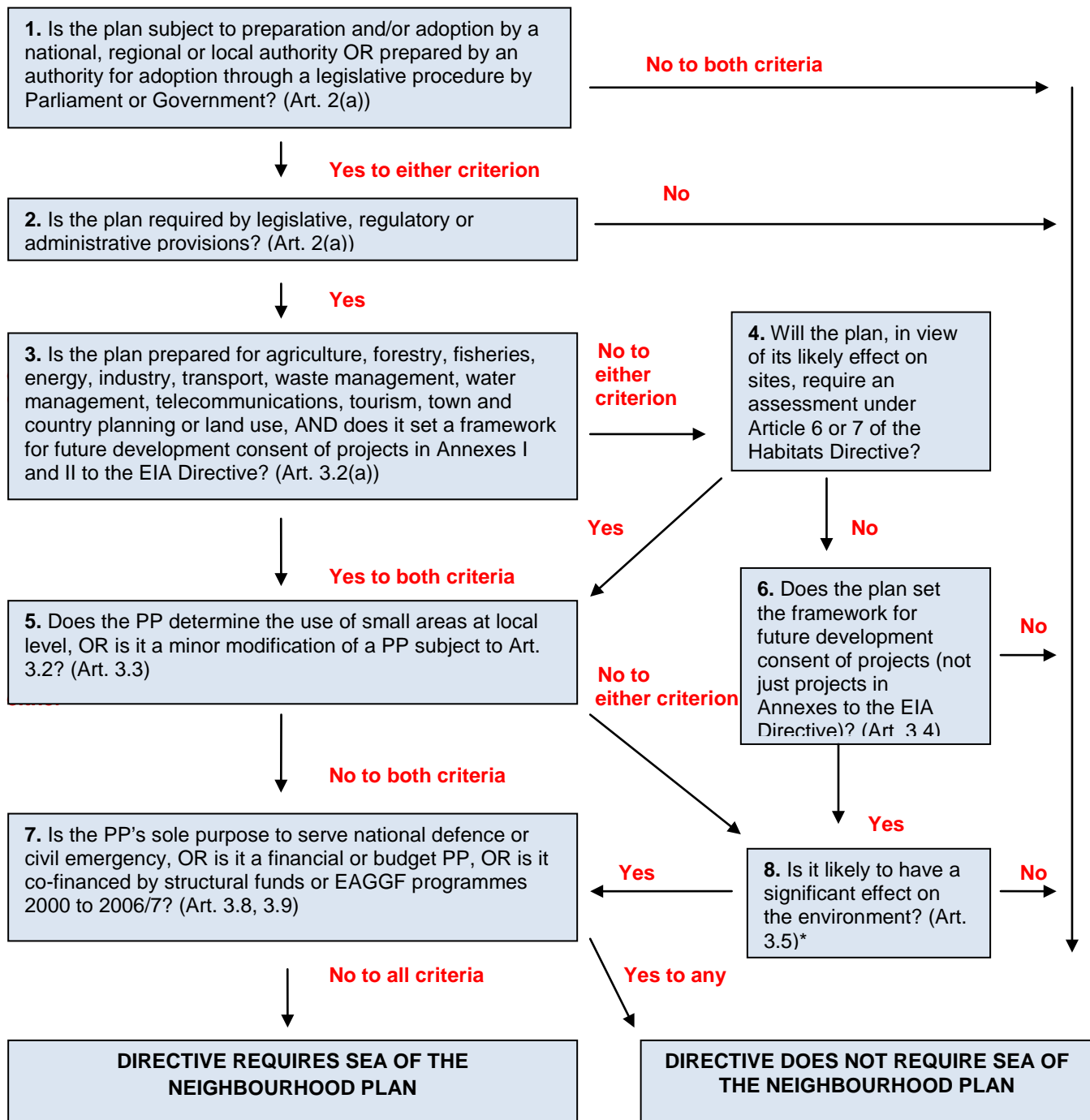
⁵ European Commission guidance suggests that **plans which determine the use of small areas at local level** might include "a building plan which, for a particular, limited area, outlines details of how buildings must be constructed, determining, for example, their height, width or design"

⁶ **'Minor modifications'** should be considered in the context of the plan or programme which is being modified and of the likelihood of their having significant environmental effects. A modification may be of such small order that it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

unless it has been determined under regulation 9(1) that the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.

2.3 The diagram⁷ below shows the SEA Directive's field of application:

Application of the SEA Directive to neighbourhood plans



* Plans falling in this category (No.8) will be screened by Wiltshire Council to determine if they are likely to have significant environmental effects. This determination will be made on a case by case basis for neighbourhood plans coming forward in Wiltshire.

NB This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to neighbourhood plans. It has no legal status.

⁷ Taken from *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive* (ODPM, 2005)

3. The Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan

Background

- 3.1. The parish of Bremhill are currently preparing a neighbourhood plan under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.
- 3.2. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan seeks to identify non strategic development to support the viability and vitality of community facilities in Bremhill. It will also enable a locally distinctive framework to be developed to complement that provided within the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Steering Group

- 3.3. In January 2013 the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up to prepare the plan. The Group includes a cross section of community representatives that meet regularly to develop the draft plan.
- 3.4. Planning officers from Wiltshire Council have been informal members of the steering group and continue to act as 'Link officers' in providing support and advice.

Neighbourhood Area designation

- 3.5. The designation of the Bremhill Neighbourhood Area was approved on 30th April 2014.
- 3.6. Wiltshire Council publicised the Bremhill Neighbourhood Area application for consultation which started on Monday 9th December 2013 and closed at 5pm on Wednesday 4th February 2014. No negative representations were received.
- 3.7. Wiltshire Council agrees that the proposed Bremhill Neighbourhood Area (illustrated in Figure 1) is coherent, consistent and appropriate in planning terms.
- 3.8. The Bremhill Neighbourhood Area application and designation documents are available to view online at: http://consult.wiltshire.gov.uk/portal/spatial_planning/np/bremhill_npdesig

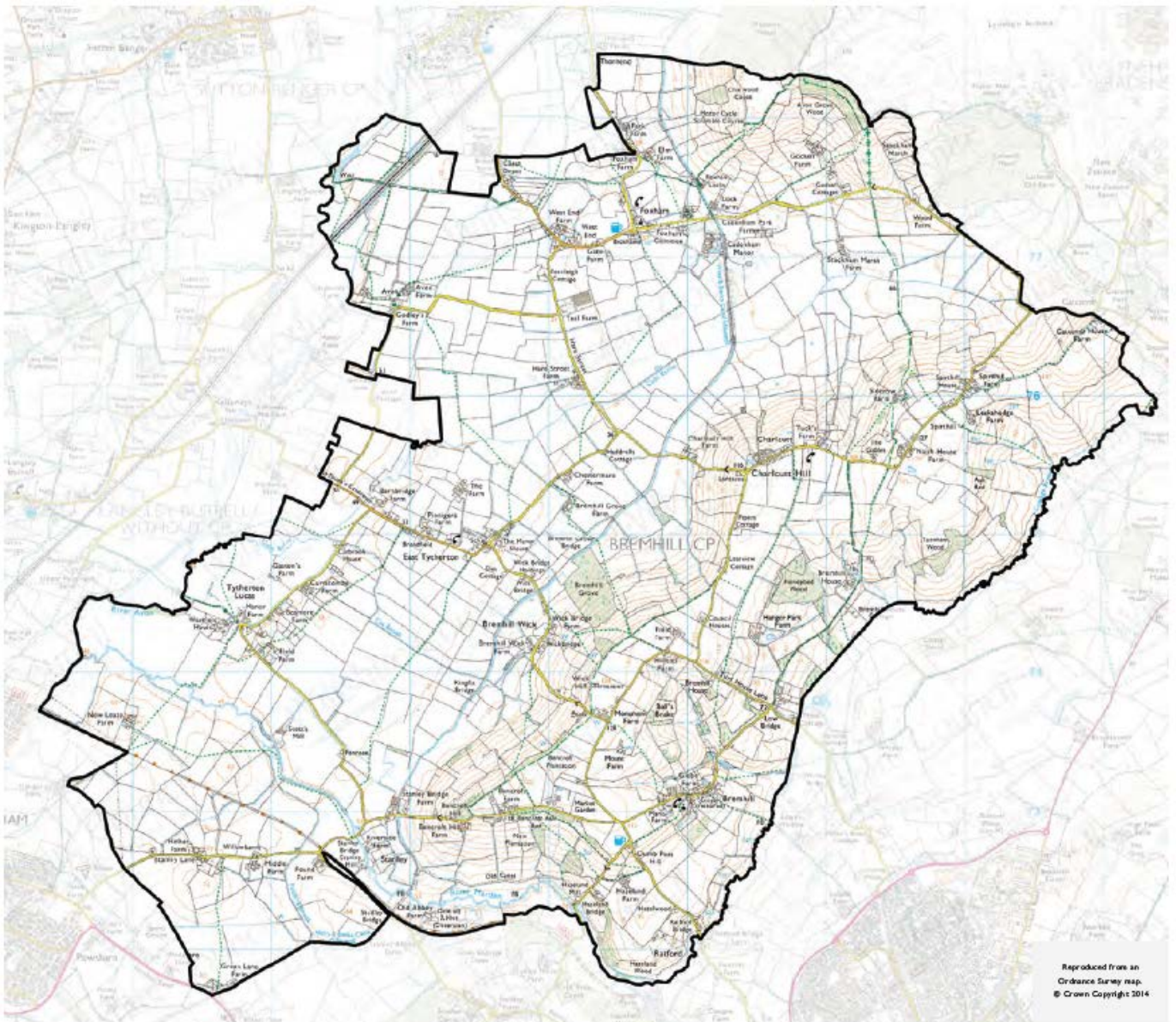


Figure 1 – Map of the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Source: http://consult.wiltshire.gov.uk/portal/spatial_planning/np/bremhill_npdesig

Draft Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan (October 2015)

- 3.9. The latest version of the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan (and supporting documents) is available to view online at: <http://bremhillparish.org/index.php/parish-council/neighbourhood-plan>
- 3.10. The development of the Neighbourhood Plan has been driven by extensive community engagement, as outlined in the draft plan and consultation statement. The parish council intend to submit their neighbourhood plan and supporting documents to Wiltshire Council for local authority consultation and then examination.
- 3.11. The draft Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan comprises a Vision Statement which is made up of 7 parts:

- a) **A Viable Community-** To maintain the character of Bremhill Parish as a place with a sense of community and history. Aim to enhance local employment opportunities especially for small start-up businesses and provide the community with better facilities and services.
- b) **Appreciate our Green Environment-** To conserve the rural character of Bremhill Parish and preserve the green areas within and surrounding the small villages.
- c) **Easier to get around-** To improve access to our countryside for walkers, cyclists and horse riders by improving the network of footpaths and bridleways.
- d) **An attractive Parish-** To ensure any new development should be of a small scale and reflect the types of buildings already in the Parish. Maximum use should be made of brownfield (including agricultural buildings) and infill development rather than Greenfield development.
- e) **A Cultural Centre-** To enable cultural, heritage and tourism opportunities for the Parish to build on a vibrant community life.
- f) **Wellbeing and Leisure-** To ensure that there are adequate green space and recreational facilities for both young and old and to secure and improve community facilities that contribute to healthy living.
- g) **Responsible attitudes to energy-** To encourage the responsible use and siting of renewable energy whilst preserving the rural character and beauty of Bremhill Parish.

3.12. The plan also identifies seven key themes/objectives:

1. Housing:

- The Plan will provide for up to 30 dwellings to meet local needs. It will do this through:
- Permitting small-scale infill sites and conversions within the Parish.
- Supporting the redevelopment of some brownfield sites to mixed uses.
- Making sure that developments include a mix of housing suited to local needs.

2. The economy and jobs:

The Plan will help business support existing and new jobs by:

- making sure that existing employment sites are kept for employment use wherever possible and appropriate.
- supporting new business premises in suitable locations.
- ensure implementation of fast broadband to support businesses, home working and domestic use.
- encouraging appropriate and sustainable rural tourism activities.

3. Green and open spaces:

The Plan will make sure that:

- existing areas of green space within the Parish are protected and their biodiversity maintained and improved.
- Potential areas of local green space and rural buffers are identified within the constraints of Wiltshire Council policy on protection of local green spaces.
- Connect existing footpaths and bridleways by the creation of new rights of way.
- Monitor the restoration and re-opening of the Wilts and Berks canal.

3. The local landscape and wildlife:

- The Plan will encourage sympathetic management of the countryside and natural environment within the Parish to enhance the quality of the landscape, improve wildlife habitat and conservation.

4. Management of Water Courses and Flood Mitigation:

The Plan will encourage new ways of reducing:

- flood risk and water pollution by sustainable management including tree planting throughout

the Parish (especially the major watercourses of Rivers Avon and Marden, Cade Burna, Fishers Brook and Cowage Brook) by:

- keeping open spaces which are used as flood management areas free from inappropriate development.
- making sure that development minimises the impact on water quality.
- Identifying and acting on the risk of pollution.

5. Traffic management and accessibility:

The Plan will support new ways of managing the traffic in and around the Parish in partnership with Wiltshire Council and the Police by:

- supporting local and strategic traffic management which reduces HGV/LGV vehicles through the Parish in order to minimise their adverse impact.
- ensuring horse riders, cyclists, walkers and drivers can safely coexist on Parish roads.
- Supporting speed watch initiatives including traffic signage
- Identifying road areas which require maintenance

6. Community well-being:

The Plan will protect existing community facilities and services considered important for a vibrant community and support the development of new ones which benefit local people and visitors by encouraging:

- developments or uses associated with a positive visitor experience.
- the protection of existing community buildings, services and events.
- a new village hall for East Tytherton.

7. Sustainability and climate change:

The Plan will encourage moves towards a low-carbon economy which includes local food production, high standards of energy conservation and the use of renewable energy through:

- the application of higher energy standards in new houses.
- supporting small scale proposals for solar energy.
- encouraging the use of land within the Parish to support food production.

3.13. From these objectives, the plan takes forward draft planning policies which relate to:

- Historic setting
- Landscape Character and Ecology
- Housing Development and Homes for Local People
- Local Economy (local businesses and the rural economic sections)
- Local Greenspace
- Transport and Infrastructure

3.14. The draft policies proposed can be summarised as:

- **History**

Preserve, maintain and, where possible, enhance local character by responding to the value of the historic environment for community pride and well-being, visitor attraction and for the enjoyment of future generations of parishioners.

- **Landscape Setting**

The landscape setting of Bremhill Parish is not simply about views, it reflects a rural sense of identity and values. Where traditional settlement form meets the landscape in river corridors, green field wedges and upland slopes of the north eastern escarpment, these areas should be kept free of new development to protect the relationship between built form and landscape. The exception being

development for individual buildings and homes, derelict agricultural buildings and low density housing of up to 10 homes. The plan supplements CP51 and CH4 by proposing to designate Local Green Space of 25 hectares (see map page 49) south of the River Marden to provide landscape context, a wildlife preservation corridor and landscape amenity, linking with the proposed River Avon County Park referenced in Chippenham CH4. This will also protect the amenity of the National Cycle Route and frequently used rights of way and supports the context of the 'Marden Valley Conservation Project' to maintain a green corridor between Calne and Chippenham.

- **Local Green Space**

Two designated areas are proposed as Local Green Space under the NPPF which provides for special protection for the wildlife, the landscape and to maintain peace and tranquility for recreation, including cyclists, walkers, equestrian riders and anglers.

- **Wildlife**

Our wildlife is in decline and needs conservation measures to stabilise it and take long term action to provide a better habitat and environment. The landscape resources, namely woodlands, hedgerows, ponds, lakes, streams, ditches, verges, geological and landscape features should be preserved and/or sensitively enhanced by future developments. The NP policy will help protect our wildflowers and grasslands and identify ways to expand and connect these vital habitats throughout the Parish by maintaining, extending and linking fragmented areas of species-rich calcareous, neutral grassland largely on the hills and escarpment slopes plus flood meadows in the river valleys where they can enhance biodiversity and help to reduce soil erosion, nutrient run-off and increase resilience to climate change. The NP will support retention of hedgerows to maintain the local landscape character and to foster linear habitat networks for pollinators, bats, farmland birds and indigenous species of wild animals.

- **Housing**

The Bremhill Parish Neighbourhood Plan Policy on housing reflects the strong desire to see the character of villages and hamlets retained. The NP supports the results of the Parish Survey which indicated that additional housing is required for the next 15 years with 82% requesting up to a maximum of 30 homes. The Plan policy will provide where possible the provision of low cost homes for the young, and for rural workers to allow them to live and work in the Parish. It supports farmers wanting to convert redundant farm buildings into residential buildings for their farm workers to help lessen out-commuting and/ or to provide tourism accommodation where practical. Any conversion of a redundant farm building which is in close proximity to a listed building, and is planned for residential use must be constructed using materials reflecting the construction of the listed building and in sympathy with the wider landscape setting. The Plan supports the building of a new village hall for East Tytherton. Our NP promotes sustainable homes, where new homes will be built to a minimum of level 3, and from 2016 to level 4. The rural economy is a major factor in the prosperity of the Parish, and therefore the NP will encourage small business start-ups and working from a home office.

- **Sustainable Business Development**

Bremhill Neighbourhood plan will support sustainable growth in business developments appropriate to the rural nature of the Parish. This will include the expansion and diversification of (but not limited to) agricultural enterprises, workshops, bed and breakfast facilities, holiday cottages, rural tourism, arts and crafts consistent with the overall strategic objectives and policy requirements of this Neighbourhood

Plan. A minimum throughout the Parish of 2mb Broadband and beyond is essential for the business development policy of the NP.

- **Roads**

Working with Wiltshire Council the Parish Council will work towards the implementation of HGV/ LGV signage warning of narrow roads, low bridges and speed restrictions are clearly visible and liaise with Wiltshire Council to carry out necessary works such as pot hole repairs. Bremhill Parish is a beautiful rural environment, with diversity of animal, insect and plant life which attracts significant numbers of equestrians, cyclists and walkers into the Parish during most days of the working week and extensively at weekends. Therefore, the Parish Council, on behalf of the Parish, will: Take every possible action to minimise risk of death or injury to people, animals and drivers passing through or living in the Parish by supporting neighbourhood speed watch. Apply the three E's recommended by the Association of Chief Police Officers namely Education, Engineering and Enforcement.

Education: Production of hard copies for distribution or via Parish communication, reproduce the BHS (British Horse Society) leaflets for riders and motorists on road safety.

Communicate with the two cycling clubs about the need to be considerate and careful when approaching or passing horses. Educate our children about the dangers of traffic and encourage cycling proficiency training. Engineering: At all approaches to the Parish the Parish Council or Wiltshire Council will work towards funding the construction of white gates and the application of red tarmac and signage to improve awareness of speed, pedestrians and riders. To work towards the provision of speed signs and that they are visible and correctly maintained. By cooperation with land owners establish a considerably enlarged network of paths and bridleways that are regularly maintained. Keep contact with 'Clarence' and the highways representative on the PC for upkeep of road network. Enforcement: Establishing, across the rest of the Parish, the Speed watch initiative which has been successful in East Tytherton. Help recruit at least six volunteers for each village. The initiative to be co-ordinated by the Parish Council. Maintain pressure on Wiltshire Council for a speed review and reduction to 30 mph through each of the four villages and hamlets. Regularly request Police Speed enforcement at peak times on main roads in each village.

- **Cycle**

Maintain and expand a linked bridleway and pathway system to provide safe and enjoyable walking and horse riding in the Parish. Work with Sustrans and Wiltshire Council to maintain and enhance National Cycle routes and our country lanes used by recreational and club cyclists. Liaise with angling clubs to promote the Rivers Avon and Marden as excellent fishing venues. Support our three village halls, including redevelopment of East Tytherton Village Hall. Encourage arts and crafts, gardening and other recreational activities in the Parish.

- **Renewable Energy**

Opportunities should be sought to facilitate carbon reduction in the home and with business practice by imparting information through the Parish Newsletter, Parish notice boards and the Parish website. Proposals for standalone renewable energy will be supported strictly subject to the impact on landscape and setting, visual amenity, biodiversity, historic environment and, in particular, impact on residential amenity.

- 3.15. Planning Officers at Wiltshire Council have been engaged with the neighbourhood plan throughout the plan making process. At this stage it is considered that the Bremhill Draft Neighbourhood Plan (and draft planning policies) broadly conforms with higher level policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy. The Wiltshire Core

Strategy sets out the strategic objectives for Wiltshire, focusing on the key issues and a delivery strategy for achieving these objectives, setting out how much development is intended to happen, where, when and by what means it will be delivered.

- 3.16. The adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy identifies Bremhill as a Small Village as it has limited resources and facilities. The draft Neighbourhood Plan proposals are consistent with the Core Strategy.

4. SEA Screening assessment

- 4.1. Wiltshire Council, as the 'Responsible Authority', consider that the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan falls within the scope of the SEA Regulations on the basis that it is a plan that:
- a) is subject to preparation or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level (Regulation 2);
 - b) is prepared for town and country planning or land use (Regulation 5, para. 2)
 - c) is a plan that sets the framework for future development consent of projects generally (Regulation 5, para. 4); and
 - d) will apply to a wider area other than a small area at local level and is not a minor modification to an existing plan or programme (Regulation 5, para. 6).
- 4.2. A determination under Regulation 9 is therefore required as to whether the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- 4.3. The screening requirements set out in Regulation 9 and Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations includes two sets of characteristics for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. These relate to i) the characteristics of the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan and ii) the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan. In making a determination, Wiltshire Council will take into account the criteria specified in Schedule I of the Regulations as follows:

1. The characteristics of the plans and programmes, having regard in particular to:

- a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
- b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
- c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
- d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
- e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

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

- a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
- c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects;
- d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);

- e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—
 - (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
 - (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
 - (iii) intensive land-use; and
- g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

The screening assessment of the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan is set out below:

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regs.)	Significant environmental effects likely?	Justification and evidence
1. The characteristics of plans , having regard, in particular, to:		
(a) the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	No	The neighbourhood plan promotes development on Brownfield sites which is in accordance with the NPPF and Wiltshire Core Strategy. The Plan indicates that any future development must be informed by, and be sensitive to local landscape and character therefore minimising the visual impact on the existing rural landscape.
(b) the degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	No	The neighbourhood plan is produced by the local community to influence development at the local level. It does not influence Strategic plans higher up in the hierarchy.
(c) the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No	The neighbourhood plan is a land-use plan that promotes sustainable development; it is not specifically a plan for integrating environmental considerations but does contain policies for the protection of the historic, built and natural environment. Refer, in particular, to sections 'History of Bremhill Parish' (Pages 7-15), 'Landscape character and setting' (Pages 16-39), 'Our environment/Wildlife' (Pages 42-57), 'Section 3B' (Pages 58-71) and 'Renewable Energy' (Pages 103-104).
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan	No	No significant environmental problems are noted for this parish, other than potential flooding issues due to drainage systems which could be mitigated. The Plan identifies the key action themes on page 4 'Executive Summary' with the relevant environmental action themes including; protection of green space between Parish villages, retain historical and landscape character of villages and hamlets, protect wildlife habitats and identifying/ acting on flooding and pollution. This protection and enhancement will be achieved not only through policies of the Plan but also policies within the Core Strategy and NPPF.
(e) the relevance of the plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	No	The neighbourhood plan is not relevant as a plan for implementing community legislation.
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	No	Any environmental effects are not considered to be significant judging by the proposals in the neighbourhood plan. Any effects of the limited amount of development proposed is likely to be localised. The majority of the proposed sites are not Listed buildings and do not have any policy restrictions on them therefore development at these locations would not be detrimental.

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regs.)	Significant environmental effects likely?	Justification and evidence
		<p>Proposed Sites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Former Hatts Coaches Depot – 10 dwellings 2. Elm Farm (Grade II Listed) – 1 dwelling 3. Stockham Marsh Farm – 1 or 2 dwellings 4. Bremhill House Barn – 1 dwelling 5. Wick Hill Bridge Farm (Grade II Listed) – 2 dwellings 6. Pinegars Farm – 2 dwellings <p>Refer to the Neighbourhood Plan Paragraphs 3.23 and 3.24 which acknowledge the Development Site Identification and capacity of specified sites.</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	<p>No cumulative effects considered to be significant from the limited development proposals outlined in the neighbourhood plan. In terms of the Housing considerations identified within the Plan, refer to Paragraph 3.24 of the plan which directly address highlights specific brownfield sites which aims to maintain and enhance the character of the village rather than development detracting from the area. For infrastructure, section 3.3 'Transport – Getting around', deals with assessing potential impacts of proposals on traffic and highlights the existing problems and issues which arise in the area with regards to road maintenance and bus services etc (see page 83). This policy aims to avoid cumulative effects arising.</p>
(c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects	No	<p>No trans-boundary effects with other EU countries are likely from the limited development proposals outlined in the neighbourhood plan.</p>
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No	<p>No environmental effects are considered likely to risk human health or the environment. The neighbourhood plan seeks to protect and enhance the natural and built environment by proposing that local factors such as topography and landscape character are all taken into consideration.</p>
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	No	<p>Significant effects due to the geographic size of the area and population size are not considered likely due to the size of the Parish. Bremhill Parish has a population size of roughly 942 and represents the hamlets of Bremhill Wick, Tytherton Lucas, East Tytherton, Foxham, Charlcutt, Spirithill, Stanley and West End.</p>
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to— (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;	No	<p>Section 1 of the plan 'Bremhill Parish History' identifies, in detail, all of the historical monuments, settlements and listed buildings within the local area. This section of the plan aims to conserve each of these features, emphasising their historical value to the community also.</p>

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regs.)	Significant environmental effects likely?	Justification and evidence
(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use;		The Historical Policy identified in Paragraph 1.15 of the plan states that, "Preserve, maintain and where possible, enhance local character by responding to the value of the historic environment for community pride and well-being, visitor attraction and for the enjoyment of future generations of parishioners."
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	No	The adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy has been subject to SEA and HRA and this neighbourhood plan does not propose a level of development over and above what is contained in the Core Strategy. The HRA screening report relating to Bremhill NP is being carried out and will be available in early January 2016.

5. SEA Screening decision

5.1 Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations requires that the responsible authority shall determine whether or not a plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. The responsible authority shall —

- (a) take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to these Regulations; and
- (b) consult the consultation bodies.

5.2 Where the responsible authority determines that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), it shall prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination.

5.3 Wiltshire Council considers that the proposed Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and accordingly does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. This decision is made for the following key reasons:

1. The neighbourhood plan is produced by the local community to influence development at the local level. It is in broad conformity with the provisions of the WCS and national planning guidance.
2. The neighbourhood plan produced by the Steering Group takes into consideration all historic assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings. The proposals have been made based around preserving these assets whilst not causing detrimental harm to the area. Appendix H of the plan highlights and assesses the potential risks of development on listed buildings.
3. The neighbourhood plan is not proposing additional development over and above what is described in the adopted Core Strategy document or Housing Sites DPD. The Core Strategy states that development outside of the defined limits of development will only be supported if they arise through community-led planning, such as neighbourhood plans, and accord with the Core Strategy.
4. The neighbourhood plan aims to preserve the landscape context and wildlife corridor whilst averting the potential coalescence of Chippenham Town and conservation village of Tytherton Lucas.

6. Statutory consultee response to screening decision

6.1 Natural England, Environment Agency and English Heritage, as statutory consultation bodies under Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations, were consulted on this SEA screening determination between 5 January 2016 and 12 February 2016. All three bodies agree with the screening determination of Wiltshire Council that the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and therefore an SEA is not required.

6.2 Wiltshire Council's request for a response to this screening determination from the three statutory consultation bodies is presented in Appendix A. The responses received from the three consultation bodies, agreeing with the screening determination, is presented in Appendix B.

Appendix A: Request for consultation response on screening determination from statutory consultation bodies

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Bremhill SEA screening
Date: 22 December 2015 17:34:43
Attachments: [Bremhill-Parish-Neighbourhood-Plan-October-2015-Consultation-Version.pdf](#)
Dear [REDACTED]

We are advising the Bremhill neighbourhood plan steering group on their neighbourhood plan and we have made an SEA screening decision on the plan. Wiltshire Council, as 'responsible authority' under the SEA Regulations, must issue a statement of its reasons for the determination and consult the designated consultation bodies. Our opinion is that an SEA is not required because the plan would be unlikely to have significant environmental effects. It is also, in our opinion, in general conformity with the Wiltshire Core Strategy which has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

I have attached a draft of their plan and the SEA screening decision.

Please see the screening statement attached which gives our reasons for the plan not requiring an SEA. Please could you provide a response with any comments by **Friday 12th February 2016**.

If you need any further information regarding this please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

Spatial Planning Officer
Economic Development & Planning
Wiltshire Council

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Bremhill SEA Screening
Date: 22 December 2015 17:34:38
Attachments: [SEA Screening decision - Bremhill NP.pdf](#)
Dear [REDACTED]

We are advising the Bremhill neighbourhood plan steering group on their neighbourhood plan and we have made an SEA screening decision on the plan. Wiltshire Council, as 'responsible authority' under the SEA Regulations, must issue a statement of its reasons for the determination and consult the designated consultation bodies. Our opinion is that an SEA is not required because the plan would be unlikely to have significant environmental effects. It is also, in our opinion, in general conformity with the Wiltshire Core Strategy which has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

I have attached the SEA screening decision and the Draft plan exceeds limits of the emails so you can find this at: <http://bremhillparish.org/index.php/parish-council/neighbourhood-plan>. The neighbourhood plan seeks to strongly protect and enhance its environmental, built and cultural heritage whilst proposing limited development on small housing sites which is in accordance with Core Policy 10 (Chippenham Community Area Strategy) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Please see the screening statement attached which gives our reasons for the plan not requiring an SEA. Please could you provide a response with any comments by **Friday 12th February 2016**.

If you need any further information regarding this please do not hesitate to contact me.
Kind regards,

[Redacted]

Spatial Planning Officer
Economic Development & Planning
Wiltshire Council

Tel: [Redacted]

Email: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 05 January 2016 10:12

To: [Redacted]

Subject: Bremhill SEA

Dear [Redacted]

We are advising the Bremhill neighbourhood plan steering group on their neighbourhood plan and we have made an SEA screening decision on the plan. Wiltshire Council, as 'responsible authority' under the SEA Regulations, must issue a statement of its reasons for the determination and consult the designated consultation bodies. Our opinion is that an SEA is not required because the plan would be unlikely to have significant environmental effects. It is also, in our opinion, in general conformity with the Wiltshire Core Strategy which has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

I have attached the SEA screening decision and the draft plan can be found:
<http://bremhillparish.org/index.php/parish-council/neighbourhood-plan> .

Please see the screening statement attached which gives our reasons for the plan not requiring an SEA. Please could you provide a response with any comments by **Friday 12th February 2016**.

If you need any further information regarding this please do not hesitate to contact me.
Kind regards,

[Redacted]

Web: www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Appendix B Consultation responses from statutory consultation bodies

(a) Natural England

Date: 5th January 2016.

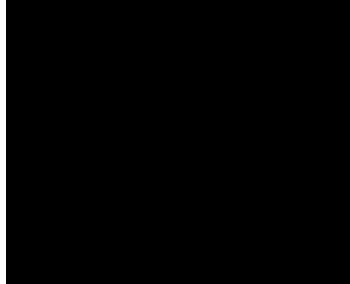
Our ref: 175279.

Your ref: Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan SEA.

[Screening Letter Template](#)

██████████

BY EMAIL ONLY



Dear ██████████

Screening consultation: Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan SEA.

Location: Bremhill, Wiltshire.

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 5th January 2016, which was received by Natural England on the same date.

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.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans in light of the SEA Directive is contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance¹. The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan. We know the Wiltshire Core Strategy has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals/allocations contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect. On the north east side of your Plan the following site is in close proximity and should be added to the Wildlife section of your document.

Bencroft Hill Meadows

http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation/citation_photo/1003244.pdf

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body

on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Andrew Burns. on 03000601341.. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk. We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Sustainable Development Team

(b) Historic England

[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Bremhill SEA Screening

Date: 09 February 2016 14:11:14

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your consultation on the SEA Screening for the Bremhill neighbourhood plan. This is our first involvement with this project and so we have not had an opportunity to advise the community on how it might wish to accommodate heritage and the built environment in its Plan before now. We have therefore taken the opportunity to familiarise ourselves with the October 2015 draft Plan, upon which we have been consulted separately by the community.

The area is very rich in heritage assets – our records indicate that it contains 1 Grade I, 4 Grade II* and 87 Grade II Listed Buildings, 2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and 3 Conservation Areas. This richness, and the value which the community places on it, is well reflected in the Plan which goes into impressive detail in defining the area's distinctive historic character and the qualities which it wishes to see preserved and enhanced. However, this appears less well developed in policy terms with only a generic policy (section 1.15) and one on landscape setting (section 2.20) devoted to this theme. It is generally difficult to divine what the policies in the Plan are specifically advocating and we would encourage some tightening up in their definitions to make them clearer and sound. This is particularly relevant in the housing section as while sites have been identified for such development the policy does not refer to them specifically (section 3.25). If the intention is that these sites are meant to be indicative only then we would conclude that the Plan has no site allocations and can comfortably concur with the view that an SEA is not required. If they are intended to be allocations then this should be made more explicit in policy definition. Section 3.24 explains the sites being considered and along with Appendix H sets out the criteria and issues which have been used to inform their selection. This exercise usefully picks up on where heritage assets are involved and includes conservation areas as well as listed buildings – a point not picked up in 2(a) of the SEA Screening Assessment table.

The referencing of the sites is qualified, suggesting for the majority that new housing may be the product of converting existing buildings. On this basis impact on relevant heritage assets is deemed benign and in some cases positive. This does presume that the buildings in question are capable of residential conversion but it is possible that their heritage interest precludes the level of intervention implicit in residential conversion. Or that their poor quality

or condition is such that retention is not feasible or desirable and a new replacement dwelling would need to be contemplated. In this latter scenario the impact of a new purpose-designed dwelling on the setting and significance of nearby heritage assets could be much greater. Wick Hill Bridge Farm (Grade II Listed) where it is proposed to convert a barn to three properties (p68) is a useful illustration of this latter point.

In conclusion, as the Plan is drafted we have no objection to the opinion that an SEA will not be required. But depending on how the policies may evolve to become more absolute in site allocation terms we consider that this may trigger the need for an SEA and would therefore encourage a review of the Screening outcome at that time.

Kind regards

[Redacted signature block]

(C) Environment Agency

[Redacted]
Wiltshire Council
Planning Policy
County Hall Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JD

Our ref: WX/2009/110257/OR-38/IS1-L01
Your ref: Bremhill NP
Date: 05 February 2016

Dear [Redacted]

BREMILL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – SEA SCREENING DECISION

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the above SEA screening opinion.

We have no objection to your decision that no SEA is necessary for the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature block]

[Redacted signature block]