

**Wiltshire Council**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment**

**Screening determination for the Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan**

**May 2016**

## **Contents**

	<b>Page</b>
1. Introduction	3
2. Legislative requirements	3
3. The Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan	5
4. SEA Screening assessment	10
5. SEA Screening decision	14
 Appendix A – Request for comments on screening determination from statutory consultation bodies	
 Appendix B - Consultation responses from statutory consultation bodies	

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document provides a screening determination of the need to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan. Wiltshire Council, as the 'Responsible Authority'<sup>1</sup> under the SEA Regulations<sup>2</sup>, is responsible for undertaking this screening process of the neighbourhood plan; it will determine if the Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, and hence whether SEA is required.
- 1.2 This process has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>3</sup>, 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 projects<sup>4</sup> (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 area<sup>5</sup> at local level (Regulation 5, para. (6)(a); or*  
b) *plans which are a minor modification<sup>6</sup> to a plan or programme (Regulation 5, para. (6)(b)*

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<sup>1</sup> 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').

<sup>2</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

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

<sup>4</sup> 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).

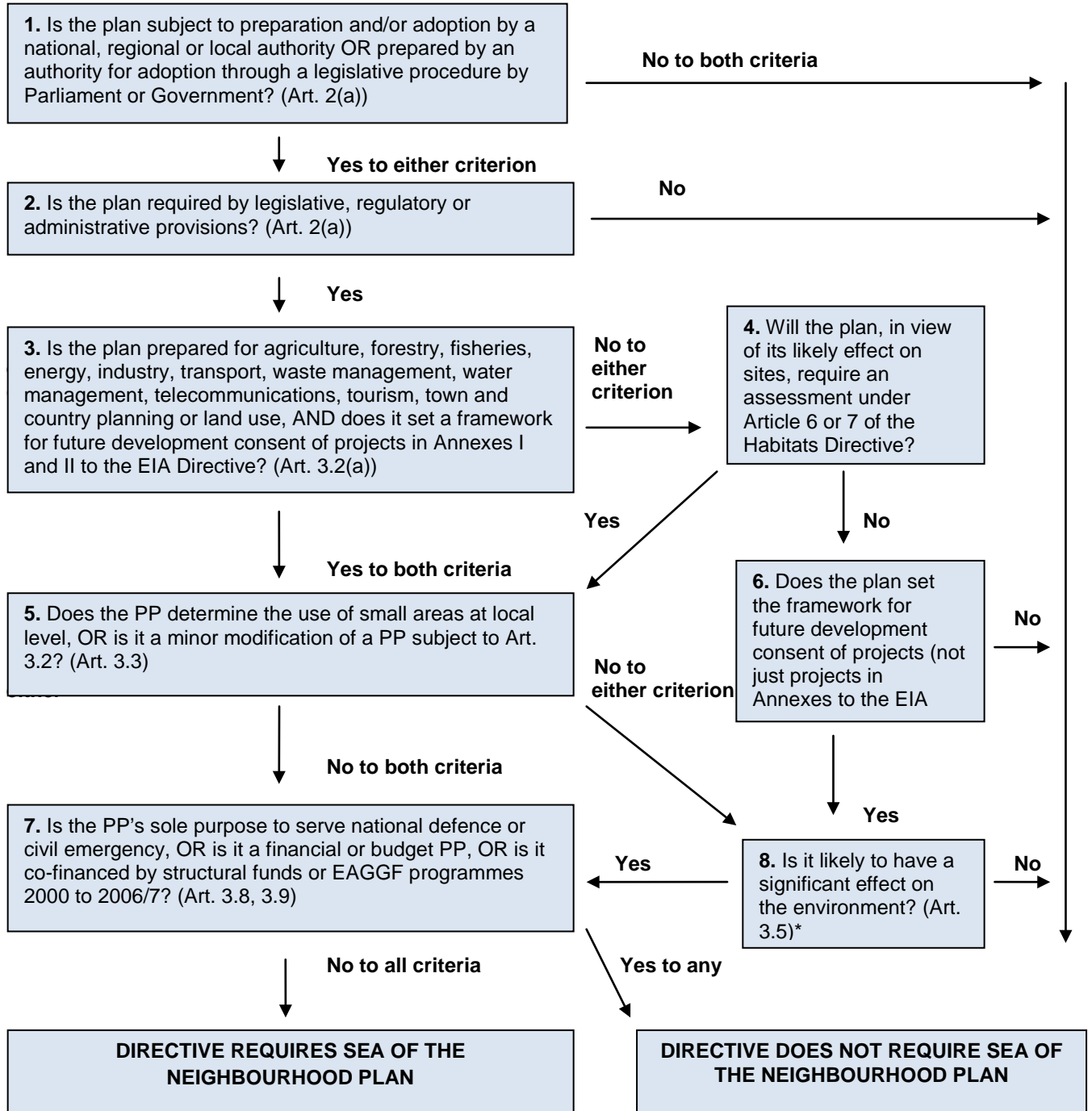
<sup>5</sup> European Commission guidance states that **plans which determine the use of small areas at local level** might include "a building plan which, for a particular, limited area, outlines details of how buildings must be constructed, determining, for example, their height, width or design"

<sup>6</sup> **'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 diagram<sup>7</sup> 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.

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

### **3. The Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan**

#### **Background**

- 3.1 Cricklade Town Council is currently preparing a neighbourhood plan under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, and associated regulations.
- 3.2 Cricklade is designated as a Local Service Centre in the Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Area in the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy. The level of development at Local Service Centres will be closely linked to their current and future role of providing for a significant rural hinterland. This will consist of less development than that at the Principal Settlements and Market Towns. Developments at Local Service Centres, in accordance with the Settlement Strategy, should provide for local employment opportunities, improved communities facilities and/or affordable housing provision. This will safeguard the role of these settlements and support the more rural communities of Wiltshire.
- 3.3 A draft of a neighbourhood plan was produced in March 2016 and it builds on the adopted town plan<sup>8</sup> prepared by the town council.
- 3.4 Further information on the neighbourhood plan can be found on the Cricklade neighbourhood plan website<sup>9</sup> and the draft plan attached to this screening opinion consultation document.

#### **Steering Group**

- 3.5 The neighbourhood plan process was started in 2013 and has been undertaken in parallel with the production of Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy. The development of the neighbourhood plan has been led by Cricklade Town Council, as the 'qualifying body', but work has been undertaken by a specifically tasked Working Group, comprising Town Council Members and staff, and individuals representing interests around the town. Information about the process of plan preparation has been available at all times on the Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan website, which is linked to the Town Council website.
- 3.6 Planning officers from Wiltshire Council have advised and supported the steering group since 2013 on the development of the plan.

#### **Neighbourhood area designation**

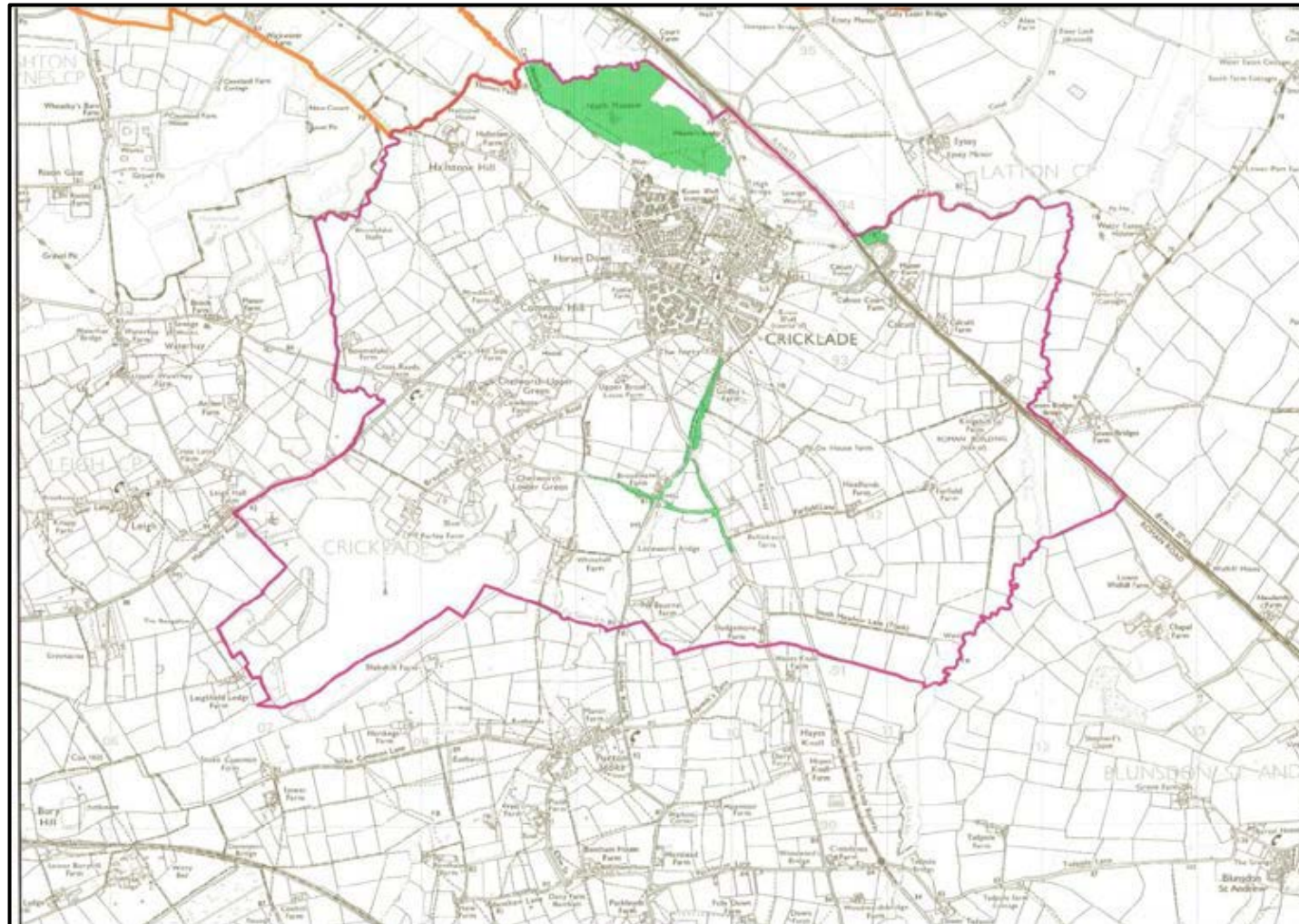
- 3.7 The application for designation as a Neighbourhood Area was publicised from Wednesday 12 December 2012 until 5pm Friday 25 January 2013. Having considered the feedback received through the consultation, Wiltshire Council recommended that the proposed Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan Area is coherent, consistent and appropriate in planning terms. The designation of the Cricklade Neighbourhood Area was approved on 28 February 2013.
- 3.8 The Cricklade Neighbourhood Area application and designation documents are available to view online at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/nppreviousconsultations.htm>

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.cricklade-tc.gov.uk/Final\\_CrickladeTownPlan.Oct\\_2012.pdf](http://www.cricklade-tc.gov.uk/Final_CrickladeTownPlan.Oct_2012.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://crickladenp.org.uk/>

Map showing the designated Cricklade neighbourhood area



## **Neighbourhood plan draft vision and objectives**

3.9 A vision and objectives for the neighbourhood plan have been proposed as follows:

**Vision:** The agreed vision for Cricklade is of a town that should:

In 2026 Cricklade, the first town on the Thames and the Southern Gateway to the Cotswolds will have:

- Retained its heritage, unique character and pleasant appearance
- A strong community that is proud to live in Cricklade
- A vibrant and viable High Street
- Great community facilities and community spirit
- Good open spaces and surrounding countryside

Objectives are grouped into the four key topics of the plan:-

### **Business (B)**

- The retail offering within the town will be retained and where possible enhanced
- To provide for and enhance existing facilities and support initiatives to attract and retain visitors and tourists to the town
- The town will continue its service centre role to meet the needs and interests of residents and visitors from surrounding villages
- Cricklade will aspire to preserve and generate employment opportunities with a focus on small businesses
- The existing employment footprint should be retained to provide a mix of opportunities including hi-tech industries

### **Transport and Traffic (TT)**

- HGV's should be encouraged to avoid passing through Cricklade
- The road network should be improved to accommodate the extra traffic generated by any new development
- The provision of public car parking should seek to protect the town centre
- The provision of and improvements to be made to walking and cycle routes

### **Look and Feel (LAF)**

- The conservation area and historic buildings and assets should continue to be protected by being identified as public assets
- Existing parks, play areas, playing fields and open spaces should be retained and enhanced
- Preserve and enhance the Sustrans 45 national cycleway and the Thames Path National Trail
- Additional open space areas provided, particularly for equipped play areas, allotments and cemetery space
- All community buildings to be protected and enhanced

## Housing (H)

- Land for housing should be prioritised to meet local needs and in particular those of the young and elderly
- The design and scale of any new housing in Cricklade should be in keeping with the character of the town
- New housing developments should incorporate provision of surrounding open space
- New housing should be within walking distance of the town centre and also be linked to walking and cycle routes into and around the town to create a more sustainable environment and provide healthier life style options
- Any new development should not adversely affect drainage and flooding
- The rural buffer between Cricklade and Swindon must be protected and the gateways and approaches to the town should be enhanced

The document will plan for the residual dwelling requirement for the community area (approximately 60 dwellings as per Wiltshire Council's Housing Land Supply Statement 2015). The plan is also supportive of additional employment development.

### Draft Plan policies

- 3.10 A number of policies are currently being proposed which are detailed further in the draft Plan attached to this report. These policies are as follows:

B1: Retail Area  
B2: New SME businesses  
B3: New car parking in the town centre  
B4: The Chelworth Commercial Area  
B5: Police Station  
TT1: Transport and new residential developments  
TT2: Traffic and new development  
TT3: Traffic Safety  
TT4: HGV Traffic  
LAF1: Development proposals and heritage assets  
LAF2: Change of use/redevelopment of Registered Assets of Community Value and Community Facilities  
LAF3: New Public Open Space  
LAF4: Protection of Public Open Space  
LAF5: Local Green Spaces  
LAF6: Sustrans Cycleway 45 and Thames Path  
LAF7: Allotments  
H1: Settlement Boundary and New Housing Proposals  
H2: Design of New Housing  
H3: Separation of Cricklade and Swindon  
H4: Affordable Housing  
H5: Housing and Local Connection  
H6: Housing Mix  
H7: Housing for the Elderly  
H8: Residential Car Parking  
H9: New Housing and Drainage  
H10: Flood Risk  
H11: Nursing Home Provision  
Site allocations



- 3.11 The Draft Plan aims to provide the framework for re-developing the Police Station and, exceptionally, for a nursing home in combination with housing development within or adjacent to the settlement boundary. The plan furthermore supports proposals for change of use or conversions within the Chelworth Commercial Area. However no concrete site allocations are proposed.

#### **4. SEA Screening assessment**

- 4.1 Wiltshire Council, as the 'Responsible Authority', considers that the Cricklade 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 and it is a plan that sets the framework for future development consent of projects generally (Regulation 5, para. 4); and
- c)** 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 Cricklade 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 include two sets of characteristics for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. These relate to: i) the characteristics of the Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan and ii) the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the Cricklade 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 transboundary nature of the effects;
- (d)** the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);
- (e)** the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- (f)** the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—

- (i)** special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
- (ii)** exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
- (iii)** intensive land-use; and

**(g)** the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

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

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regs.)	Significant environmental effects likely?	Justification and evidence
<b>1. The characteristics of plans , having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
(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	<p>The neighbourhood plan mentions Cricklade Police Station as a site which would benefit from redevelopment. The plan also supports proposals for a nursing home in connection with affordable housing provision. However, the Plan does not allocate sites for future development.</p> <p>Additional development may come forward incrementally through infill development or small scale housing proposals within, or exceptionally outside current settlement where this is proposed in connection with a nursing home. No sites have been allocated in the draft plan.</p> <p>It is considered that development proposals are unlikely to have significant environmental effects.</p> <p>The town's setting and the presence of heritage assets such as the conservation area is explicitly noted in the plan. Furthermore, one of the plan's objectives is to retain the town's heritage, unique character and pleasant appearance. Although not explicitly allocated the police station redevelopment will require a careful approach to planning for future development in the context of the conservation area. However draft policies LAF1, LAF4 and H2 explicitly make reference to protecting and enhancing local heritage features and buildings and open space.</p>
(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 parish level. It does not strongly influence strategic plans higher up in a hierarchy, although any potential future review of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the development of the Housing Site Allocations DPD will need to give consideration to the Plan's proposals and vice versa.
(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 seeks to promote the objectives of sustainable development. However, it is not specifically relevant as a plan for integrating environmental considerations. Any development proposed will be in accordance with environmental protection policies of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan	No	Parts of the parish are covered by flood zones 2 and 3 alongside the River Thames and its tributaries. However Flood Zone 3 falls outside the settlement boundary and there is only a small part of Cricklade that falls within the boundary and Flood Zone 2, namely the area around Stockham Close, North Wall and Hallsfield. As the plan does not propose site allocations or development outside the boundary it is unlikely that flood risk becomes an issue. The plan does, exceptionally, allow for the delivery of a nursing home in connection with a housing scheme outside the boundary and the policy could benefit from reference to flood risk areas that should be avoided.

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regs.)	Significant environmental effects likely?	Justification and evidence
		<p>The plan's draft Policy H10 furthermore incorporates requirements for development of one or more dwellings to demonstrate they will not increase the risk of flooding to any surrounding sites or areas.</p> <p>Incremental development proposals which come forward within the boundary during the plan period may have the potential to affect the town centre Conservation Area and individual heritage assets. However draft policies LAF1, LAF4 and H2 explicitly make reference to protecting and enhancing local heritage features and buildings and open space.</p> <p>North Meadows SAC is a European site which lies to the north of the town outside the settlement boundary. As no sites are allocated in this sector which would bring development closer to the site there is no evidence that the draft plan would impact on the objectives and protected species for this site.</p> <p>Blakehill Nature Reserve at the western side of Cricklade parish, near Chelworth, is located in proximity to the various business units that have incrementally arisen in this area. The plan's business policies however make it clear that extensions to the area will not be permitted until an alternative route for HGV traffic is able to bypass the town; and change of use and conversion of existing units within the footprint of the area will only be supported where they reduce traffic and HGV impacts. It is unlikely that this would lead to significant effects on the Reserve.</p>
(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.
<b>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	No	<p>Parts of the parish are covered by flood zones 2 and 3 alongside the River Thames and its tributaries. However Flood Zone 3 falls outside the settlement boundary and there is only a small part of Cricklade that falls within the boundary and Flood Zone 2, namely the area around Stockham Close, North Wall and Hallsfield. As the plan does not propose site allocations or development outside the boundary it is unlikely that flood risk becomes an issue. The plan does, exceptionally, allow for the delivery of a nursing home in connection with a housing scheme outside the boundary and the policy and/or supporting text should endeavour to steer development toward flood zone 1 in line with the sequential test in the NPPF.</p> <p>The plan's draft Policy H10 furthermore incorporates requirements for development of one or more</p>

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regs.)	Significant environmental effects likely?	Justification and evidence
		<p>dwelling to demonstrate they will not increase the risk of flooding to any surrounding sites or areas.</p> <p>Incremental development proposals which come forward within the boundary during the plan period may have the potential to affect the town centre Conservation Area and individual heritage assets. However draft policies LAF1, LAF4 and H2 explicitly make reference to protecting and enhancing local heritage features and buildings and open space. Usefully they could include reference to the town's scheduled ancient monuments such as the town banks for example (see attached map).</p> <p>North Meadows SSSI is a European site which lies to the north of the town outside the settlement boundary. As no sites are allocated in this sector which would bring development closer to the site there is no evidence that the draft plan would impact on the objectives and protected species for this site. However the plan does currently include a draft policy which could allow exceptionally for a nursing home to be provided in conjunction with housing adjacent to the settlement boundary. The plan should acknowledge the European site at North Meadows SAC as an important ecological site in the parish, and that development coming forward outside the boundary of the town on an exceptional basis should avoid adverse effects on this site.</p> <p>Blakehill Nature Reserve at the western side of Cricklade parish, near Chelworth, is located in proximity to the various business units that have incrementally arisen in this area. The plan's business policies however make it clear that extensions to the area will not be permitted until an alternative route for HGV traffic is able to bypass the town; and change of use and conversion of existing units within the footprint of the area will only be supported where they reduce traffic and HGV impacts. It is unlikely that this would lead to significant effects on the Reserve.</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	The scale of potential development identified is in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy housing requirements. The Core Strategy has been subject to SEA. No development site allocations are proposed in the Plan and therefore the Plan itself will not increase the likelihood of cumulative effects on SAC environmental assets in the area that have not already been considered in the Core Strategy SEA.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	No	No significant transboundary effects with other EU countries are likely from the proposals.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No	No significant environmental effects are considered likely to risk human health or the environment. The neighbourhood plan is not proposing any development site allocations.

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regs.)	Significant environmental effects likely?	Justification and evidence
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	No	The neighbourhood plan covers just the parish of Cricklade with a population of approximately 4227 <sup>10</sup> . The geographical size of developments permissible through the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects which should be investigated through an SEA assessment because the Plan is not promoting more development than is currently required by the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
(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;	No	It is acknowledged that the draft Plan prioritises development of infill and small scale development in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy. While careful consideration must be given to the effects on the Conservation Area and listed buildings within the town there is adequate protection provided through draft policies of both the Plan and Wiltshire Core Strategy to avoid or mitigate effects through, for example, redevelopment proposals for the police station. No development site allocations are made in the Plan and therefore the location of any future development should be in accordance with the Core Strategy or brought forward through the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations DPD.
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	No	<p>With regards European Natura 2000 designations, an HRA screening assessment will be carried out by Wiltshire Council prior to the formal consultation on the plan by the town council under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). This will establish if the plan is likely to have impacts on North Meadows SACSAC or any other sites.</p> <p>This screening report will need to be updated to reflect those findings.</p> <p>Some effects may occur with regards to the Cricklade Conservation Area and individual listed buildings and or scheduled ancient monuments but as it is unclear if and where infill development will come forward. A potential police station re-development will require careful consideration of heritage assets in the town centre and some further work with the council's conservation officer may be required to ascertain this.</p>

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<sup>10</sup> 2011 Census

## 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 Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan is not likely 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 draft neighbourhood plan does not propose to allocate land for development. Housing is to come forward through development within the settlement boundary where Core Policy 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy expresses a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The plan does encourage the redevelopment of the police station but the scale of the proposal is likely to be constrained to the actual building and its immediate environs and therefore unlikely to warrant an SEA assessment. However the steering group should work closely with the council's conservation officer to ascertain if specific policies should be included to avoid or mitigate any potential effects on heritage assets such as the conservation area, scheduled ancient monuments in the town, and the listed buildings on the High Street. It may be necessary to undertake a high level assessment of potential effects from the police station redevelopment, in line with published guidance from Historic England. Further advice from Historic England would be welcome.

2. Development is unlikely to occur outside the settlement framework for Cricklade. However the plan does currently include a draft policy which could allow exceptionally for a nursing home to be provided in conjunction with housing adjacent to the settlement boundary. While the plan does acknowledge the flood risk at Cricklade it should in supporting text guide development to areas within Flood Zone 1 in the first instance in line with the sequential test. The plan should furthermore acknowledge the European site at North Meadows SACSAC as an important ecological site in the parish, and that development coming forward outside the boundary of the town on an exceptional basis should avoid adverse effects on this site.

3. The plan supports conversions or change of use within the footprint of the commercial area at Chelworth. The plan does not support extensions to the area unless a HGV route around the town can be identified and realised something which from an officer perspective is very unlikely to happen during the plan period up to 2026. For this reason there are no significant effects expected in conjunction with this area, for example on the nearby Blakehill Nature Reserve.

5.4 Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England were consulted on this determination between 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Their comments on the determination are presented in Appendix B.

## Appendix A – Request for comments on screening determination from statutory consultation bodies

From:  
To:  
Cc:  
Subject:

Sent: Mon 21/03/2016 16:35

[Redacted]

We are advising the Cricklade neighbourhood plan steering group on the production of their neighbourhood plan and we have produced an SEA screening decision which I have attached. I also attach an outline of what they are proposing to include in their Plan as well as a map showing heritage assets in and around the town and a list of all Listed Buildings.

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 is not likely to have significant environmental effects. The reasons for this decision are outlined in the attached report and are based on the fact that the steering group are not proposing to allocate any sites for development in the Plan – any future development is expected to come forward within the existing settlement boundary of Cricklade and in accordance with existing policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Please could you provide any comments you may wish to make by 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016. If you need any further information regarding this please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]



From:  
To:  
Cc:  
Subject:

Sent: Mon 21/03/2016 16:38

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are advising the Cricklade neighbourhood plan steering group on the production of their neighbourhood plan and we have produced an SEA screening decision which I have attached. I also attach an outline of what they are proposing to include in their 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 is not likely to have significant environmental effects. The reasons for this decision are outlined in the attached report and are based on the fact that the steering group are not proposing to allocate any sites for development in the Plan – any future development is expected to come forward within the existing settlement boundary of Cricklade and in accordance with existing policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Please could you provide any comments you may wish to make by 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016. If you need any further information regarding this please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

From:  
To:  
Cc:  
Subject:

Sent: Mon 21/03/2016 16:41

Dear [REDACTED]

We are advising the Cricklade neighbourhood plan steering group on the production of their neighbourhood plan and we have produced an SEA screening decision which I have attached. I also attach an outline of what they are proposing to include in their 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 is not likely to have significant environmental effects. The reasons for this decision are outlined in the attached report and are based on the fact that the steering group are not proposing to allocate any sites for development in the Plan – any future development is expected to come forward within the existing settlement boundary of Cricklade and in accordance with existing policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Please could you provide any comments you may wish to make by 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016. If you need any further information regarding this please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

## Appendix B - Consultation responses from statutory consultation bodies

### Historic England comments

**From:** [REDACTED]

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Cricklade neighbourhood plan - SEA screening determination

**Date:** 27 April 2016 13:17:11

**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

[image002.png](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

*Many thanks for your consultation on the Cricklade NP SEA Screening Determination. This is our first involvement in the preparation of this Plan so we are pleased to have the opportunity through this consultation to become more familiar with the scope of the exercise and its objectives.*

*We are very pleased to see how much value the community places on its historic environment and the extent to which a detailed understanding of its character has positively informed both the agenda and policies of the Plan, especially as far as the preservation and enhancement of the area are concerned. We are also pleased to note the degree of referencing of the historic environment within the Screening Report. This helps enormously in forming an understanding of relevant heritage issues and considerations and how they have been assessed in the determination of the Report's outcome. Our congratulations to all concerned.*

*The main issue when assessing any Plan is whether site allocation policies are proposed. We note that no specific sites are allocated but that Policy H1 proposes a minimum of 60 dwellings within the settlement boundary which could reasonably be interpreted as a defined area in allocation terms. While policies such as LAF1, LAF4 and H2 may provide safeguards to protect the heritage interests of the area the Plan presumably still needs to be able to demonstrate that at least 60 dwellings are deliverable - ie there is sufficient capacity - without causing harm.*

*It is not clear whether previous SHLAA activity has already provided evidence to demonstrate this point but if evidence does not exist will the Plan inadvertently include a hostage to fortune quantum of development to be delivered whose (potentially harmful) impacts will only become apparent when subsequent individual proposals come forward? Alternatively, if there is uncertainty that a minimum of 60 dwellings can be delivered without causing harm to heritage assets does this suggest that significant effects could well be likely and that an SEA is therefore required after all.*

*We are conscious that your authority has expended extensive time and effort in evaluating the emerging Plan and relevant heritage considerations in coming to the view that an SEA is not required. We are therefore not advising that we do not believe that sufficient evidence exists to substantiate that view but would ask your authority to reassure itself that the Plan as drafted, or with subsequent policy amendments as necessary, would not result in the scenario as outlined above.*

*Kind regards*

[Redacted signature block]

Natural England comments

Date: 25 April 2016

Our ref: 181806

Your ref: N/A

██████████  
Senior Planning Officer

Wiltshire Council

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear ██████████

**Draft Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Decision**

*Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 09/03/2016. 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 they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.*

*Natural England does not have the resources to get involved in all neighbourhood plans and will prioritise our detailed engagement to those plans that may impact on internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites, and/or require Strategic Environmental Assessment or screening for Habitats Regulations Assessment. We must be consulted on draft Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders where proposals are likely to affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest or 20 hectares or more of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. We must also be consulted on Strategic Environmental Assessments, Habitats Regulations Assessment screening and Environmental Impact Assessments, where these are required. Your local planning authority will be able to advise you further on environmental requirements.*

***Natural England agrees with the conclusions of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening decision and does not consider that this plan poses any likely significant risk to internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites. In particular, we welcome the stated objective to ensure that the North Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will not be adversely impacted by any future development within the area.***

*Given that an increase in housing and commercial development – even at the modest scale identified in the Plan – is likely to add, albeit marginally, to recreational pressure on the North Meadows SAC, Natural England would welcome any proposals to manage the adjoining land in a way that will support the meadow, such as ‘MG4’ hay meadow restoration.*

*Please note that Natural England is preparing an Acquisition Proposal for the field to the South-East of North Meadow (Grid Ref: SU100 941), which is currently for sale and which acts as an important buffer between the town and the nature reserve. It is not part of the SSSI and is considered to be highly suitable for restoration. If required, the Senior Reserves Manager for North Meadow can be contacted on 01452 813982 to discuss our vision for the site and management options for the adjoining land.*

### **Support available for Neighbourhood Plans**

*Natural England, together with the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Forestry Commission has published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans and development proposals. This is available at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084648/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/lit\\_6524\\_7da381.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084648/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/lit_6524_7da381.pdf)*

*Local environmental record centres hold a range of information on the natural environment. A list of local records centre is available at: <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php> . We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us. For clarification of any points in this letter, please contact [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: [REDACTED]*

*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*



Environment Agency comments

██████████ Sustainability Appraisal  
Officer  
Wiltshire Council  
Planning Policy  
County Hall Bythesea Road  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 8JD

**Our ref:** WX/2009/110257/OR-42/IS1-L01

**Your ref:** Cricklade NP

**Date:** 26 April 2016

Dear ██████████

**Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan – SEA screening decision**

*Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the above document. I apologise for my delay in responding.*

*We have no objection to your screening decision.*

*Yours sincerely*

██████████  
██  
██  
██