

**Wiltshire Council**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment - Screening determination for  
the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan**

**June 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 Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway 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).

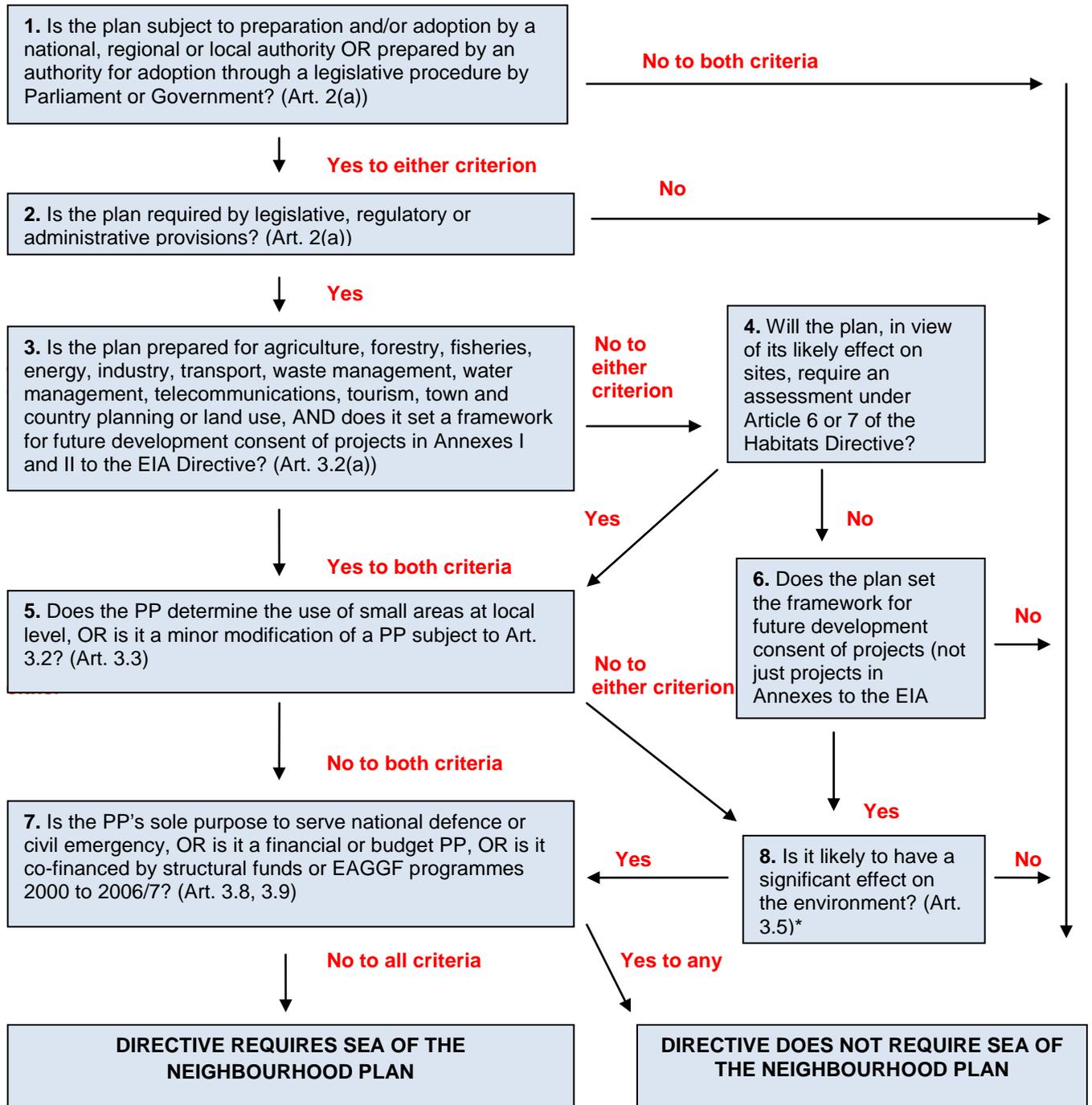
<sup>5</sup> European Commission guidance suggests that **plans which determine the use of small areas at local level** might include "a building plan which, for a particular, limited area, outlines details of how buildings must be constructed, determining, for example, their height, width or design"

<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 Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan**

#### **Background**

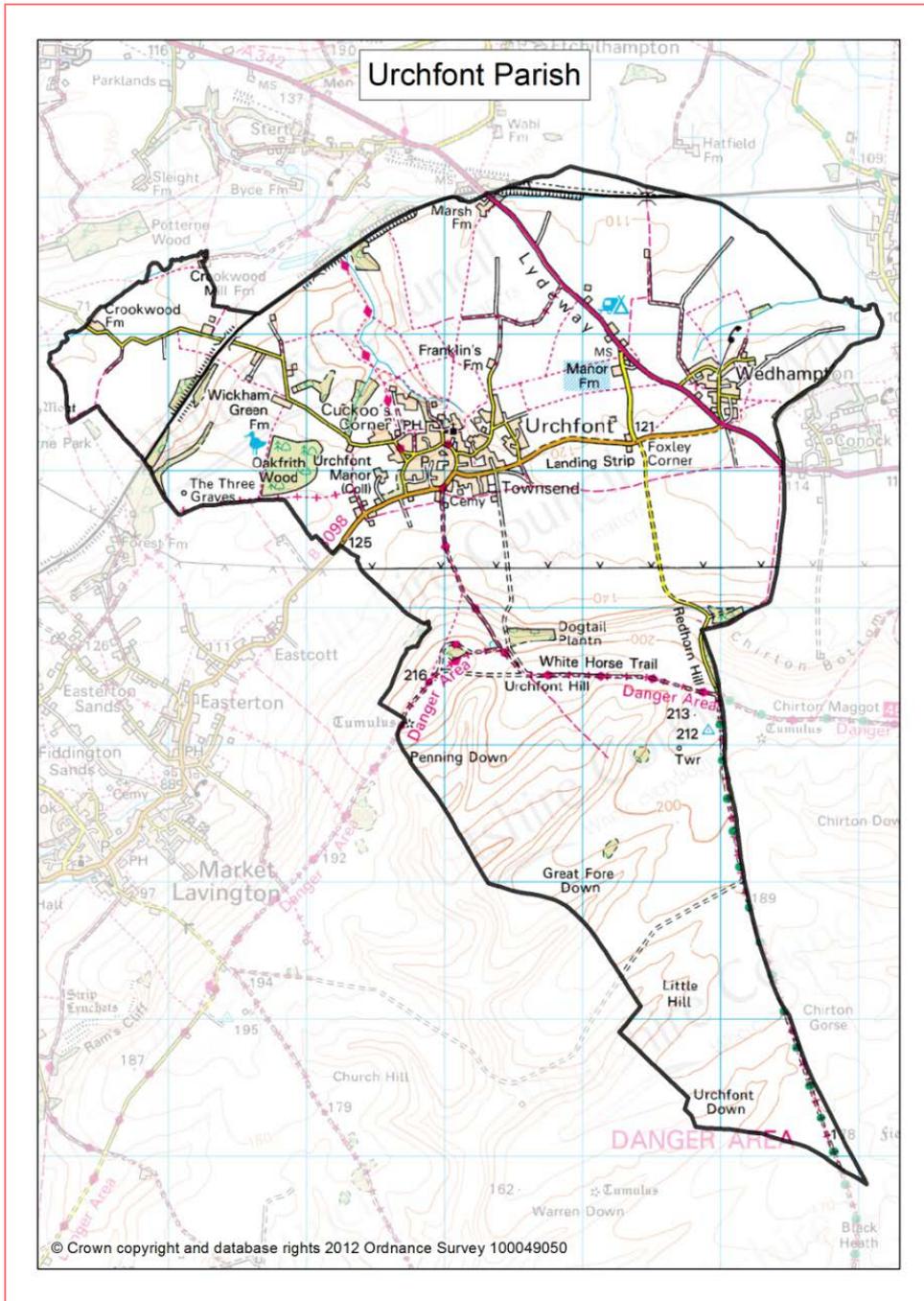
- 3.1 The parish of Urchfont are currently preparing a neighbourhood plan under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, and associated Regulations.
- 3.2 The village of Urchfont is designated as a 'Large Village' in the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and as such, a limited level of development is supported to help retain the vitality of the community. At 'Large Villages', settlement boundaries are retained and development is expected to predominantly take the form of small housing and employment sites. However, relaxation of settlement boundaries is permitted through the neighbourhood plan process in order to identify new developable land to help meet local needs.
- 3.3 The parish of Urchfont contains the small settlements of Wedhampton and Lydeaway which are within the open countryside. The parish falls within the Community Area of Devizes which is also the main market town. Urchfont is the main focus for future development within the parish and it lies outside of any international or national landscape, biodiversity or heritage designations. The parish does contain part of an area associated with the Salisbury Plain which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA), approximately 2km from the settlement boundary, south of the B3098. A small area in the north east area of the Parish, north of the A342 Devizes/Upavon road, lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) but no development is planned within the AONB or within its setting.
- 3.4 Further information on the background to the neighbourhood plan, including notes of all steering group meetings since February 2011 and public consultation events undertaken, can be found on the parish website at [http://www.urchfont-pc.gov.uk/Urchfont\\_Wedhampton\\_and\\_Lydeaway\\_Neighbourhood\\_Plan.aspx](http://www.urchfont-pc.gov.uk/Urchfont_Wedhampton_and_Lydeaway_Neighbourhood_Plan.aspx)

#### **Steering Group**

- 3.5 In 2011, the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up to prepare the plan and this is led by the parish council (as the Qualifying Body). The steering group includes a cross section of community representatives that meet regularly to develop the draft plan.
- 3.6 A planning officer from Wiltshire Council has been an informal member of the steering group since 2013 and will continue to act as 'link officer' in providing support and advice.

#### **Neighbourhood area designation**

- 3.7 Wiltshire Council publicised the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Area application for consultation from 4th March 2013 to 17th April 2013. Having considered the feedback received through the consultation, Wiltshire Council recommended that the proposed Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan Area is coherent, consistent and appropriate in planning terms. The designation of the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Area was therefore approved on 28th May 2013.
- 3.8 The Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Area application and designation documents are available to view online at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning/nppreviousconsultations.htm>



**Map showing the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway neighbourhood area**

### **Initial proposals**

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

**Vision:** Urchfont should be a place where.....

- Our vibrant community spirit is fostered, protected and enhanced
- The visual qualities and rural character of the villages and their surrounding countryside are cherished and protected
- Local people have access to a home they can afford
- Change is managed in a sustainable way

### **Objectives:**

- Protect the visual qualities, heritage and character of the villages
- Protect the open countryside, biodiversity and valued green space
- Protect and enhance community facilities and services
- Improve local infrastructure, including highways
- Improve the degraded areas of the villages
- Develop sufficient land for small scale market housing and affordable housing to meet local need
- Develop a Design statement to inform new development, alterations and extensions

3.10 A number of policies are currently being proposed for the Plan which are listed below. The main detail of these policies is attached separately to this statement.

### **Policies:**

- Protecting the landscape
- Protection of biodiversity sites and features
- Local Green Space and Green Infrastructure
- Protection of local heritage
- Protecting existing employment facilities and land
- Establishment or expansion of small scale employment enterprises
- Farm Diversification
- Managed housing growth of up to 36 dwellings on 7 sites
- Housing mix and form of development
- Affordable housing
- Car parking for new developments
- Phasing of housing development
- Design of new development
- Transport improvements
- Improvements to utilities and services
- Protecting community facilities

3.11 The seven proposed housing site allocations to deliver up to 36 new dwellings to 2026 are highlighted on the map on the following page.

3.12 At this stage it is considered that the emerging neighbourhood plan broadly conforms with higher level policy (the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)). The Core Strategy sets out the strategic objectives for the Devizes Community Area, focussing on key issues and a delivery strategy setting out how much development is intended to happen, where, when, and by what means it will be delivered. Urchfont, designated as a 'large village' within the Devizes community area is expected to deliver a modest level of development within the plan period to 2026 to meet local need and the proposals to deliver an additional 36 dwellings is considered appropriate for a settlement of Urchfont's size.



**Proposed neighbourhood plan housing development sites (approximate) in Urchfont village**

**Site 3** – Land east of Crooks Lane (12 dwellings)  
**Site 7** – Land opposite sawmills (1 dwelling)  
**Site 16** – Garden at Cuckoos Corner (1 dwelling)

**Site 5** – Land at Uphill (7 dwellings)  
**Site 8** – Peppercombe (4 dwellings)

**Site 6** – Land opposite the Baishe (1 dwelling)  
**Site 9** – Hales Farm (12 dwellings)

## **4. SEA Screening assessment**

4.1 Wiltshire Council, as the 'Responsible Authority', consider that the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway 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 Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway 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 Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan and ii) the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway 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 Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway 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	The neighbourhood plan is proposing a modest level of development in line with the requirements of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy which has been subject to an SEA assessment. No other development types are allocated in the Plan.
(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 will need to give consideration to the Plan's proposals.
(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 a plan for integrating environmental considerations. It is proposed to contain policies for the protection of the historic, built and natural environment 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	There are no specific environmental problems relevant to this plan.
(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	The neighbourhood plan contains policies to protect the built, natural and cultural environment and there is added protection through the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and NPPF. Any environmental effects of the modest amount of development proposed are not considered to be significant but likely to be localised, short-term and capable of mitigation. The Plan will seek to protect and enhance existing biodiversity and landscape features and the Conservation areas within the parish will continue to be protected.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	No cumulative effects are considered to be significant with the proposals.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	No	No transboundary effects with other EU countries are likely from the proposals.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to	No	No significant environmental effects are considered likely to risk human health or the environment.

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regs.)	Significant environmental effects likely?	Justification and evidence
accidents)		
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	No	The magnitude of any effects is likely to be low and the spatial extent of effects is likely to be limited to Urchfont village where a limited number of development sites are proposed. No development is proposed in other settlements of the parish. The neighbourhood plan covers a small rural parish with an area of approximately 1928ha and a population of approximately 1075 residents (ONS census 2011). Significant effects due to the geographic size of the area and population size are not considered likely.
(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	The parish of Urchfont is rural in nature. A small part of the parish, north of the A342, is within the North Wessex Downs AONB. This is classed as open countryside in the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and the neighbourhood plan proposals no development in this part of the parish (which includes Wedhampton). To the south of the parish lies Salisbury Plain and SPA/SAC designations – this again is classed as open countryside and the Plan does not propose development in this area. The modest amount of development proposed in Urchfont is unlikely to significantly affect these designations. It is considered that the proposals put forward will not significantly affect the special natural characteristics or cultural heritage of the area, or lead to an exceedence of environmental quality standards. There are also no proposals that will lead to an intensification of land-use in the area.
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	No	As above. There are unlikely to be significant effects on the North Wessex Downs AONB or SPA/SAC designations on Salisbury Plain. Urchfont is the focus for new housing development for up to 36 new dwellings which is in accordance with the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and which has already been subject to SA/SEA. Development at Urchfont is not within the AONB or likely to significantly affect its setting. The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA concluded for the Devizes community area that housing numbers are unlikely to contribute towards any likely significant effect on the integrity of any SAC or SPA and that mitigation measures identified during Appropriate Assessment dated March 2013 Appendix D are still relevant.

## **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 Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway 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 proposals are considered to be in general conformity with the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy which has been subject to SEA and HRA assessments.

**2.** The neighbourhood plan is not proposing additional development over and above that described in Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 12 (Devizes Community Area strategy), although it does propose new housing site allocations. Additional policies proposed for the neighbourhood plan, in addition to safeguards enshrined within the Core Strategy and NPPF will ensure the continued protection and enhancement of local biodiversity, landscape and heritage features. Also, development of any allocated sites will be subject to the usual planning application process which includes consultation with statutory consultees.

**3.** The neighbourhood plan includes 'Local Green Spaces' which define the areas where development will not be permitted within the settlement boundary. These Local Green Spaces are locally (and nationally in the case of SSSIs) important and cherished natural spaces that will be protected through the Plan.

**4.** The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA concluded that, for the Devizes community area, housing numbers are unlikely to contribute towards any likely significant effect on the integrity of any SAC or SPA and that mitigation measures identified during Appropriate Assessment of the Core Strategy are still relevant. This includes the Salisbury Plain SAC and SPA which are the sites most likely to be affected by development at Urchfont.

5.4 This screening decision has been sent to Natural England, Environment Agency and English Heritage for their opinions with a request to respond by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

## **6. Statutory consultee response to screening decision**

6.1 Natural England, Environment Agency and English Heritage (now Historic England), as statutory consultation bodies under Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations, were consulted on this SEA screening determination between 19th March 2015 and 1st May 2015. All three bodies agreed with the screening determination of Wiltshire Council that the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan is not likely 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 statutory 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] Sent: Thu 19/03/2015 16:11  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc:  
Subject: Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan - SEA screening decision

[REDACTED]

We are advising the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway neighbourhood plan steering group, in the Devizes community area of Wiltshire, on the production of their neighbourhood plan and we have produced an SEA screening decision which I have attached.

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 unlikely to have significant environmental effects. A modest amount of housing development is proposed in the village of Urchfont, which is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy which was adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015. The Core Strategy has previously been subject to SEA and the HRA assessment concluded that housing numbers are unlikely to contribute towards any likely significant effect on the integrity of any SAC or SPA and that mitigation measures identified during Appropriate Assessment of the Core Strategy are still relevant.

I have also attached details of a number of policies that the steering group are proposing. These relate to: built environment, natural environment, employment and business, housing and resilient communities. These have not been finalised as yet but give an idea of their intentions. The location of seven proposed housing sites to deliver up to 36 new dwellings is shown on page 8 of the screening decision. The proposals seek to protect and enhance the environmental, built and cultural heritage of the parish whilst proposing modest development which is in accordance with Core Policy 12 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Please see the screening statement attached which gives more detailed reasons for the plan, in our opinion, not requiring an SEA. Please could you provide a response with any comments by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015.

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

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc:  
Subject: Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan - SEA screening decision

Sent: Thu 19/03/2015 16:12

[REDACTED]

We are advising the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway neighbourhood plan steering group, in the Devizes community area of Wiltshire, on the production of their neighbourhood plan and we have produced an SEA screening decision which I have attached.

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 unlikely to have significant environmental effects. A modest amount of housing development is proposed in the village of Urchfont, which is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy which was adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015. The Core Strategy has previously been subject to SEA and the HRA assessment concluded that housing numbers are unlikely to contribute towards any likely significant effect on the integrity of any SAC or SPA and that mitigation measures identified during Appropriate Assessment of the Core Strategy are still relevant.

I have also attached details of a number of policies that the steering group are proposing. These relate to: built environment, natural environment, employment and business, housing and resilient communities. These have not been finalised as yet but give an idea of their intentions. The location of seven proposed housing sites to deliver up to 36 new dwellings is shown on page 8 of the screening decision. The proposals seek to protect and enhance the environmental, built and cultural heritage of the parish whilst proposing modest development which is in accordance with Core Policy 12 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Please see the screening statement attached which gives more detailed reasons for the plan, in our opinion, not requiring an SEA. Please could you provide a response with any comments by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015.

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

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thu 19/03/2015 16:14

To: [REDACTED]

Cc:

Subject: Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan - SEA screening decision

[REDACTED]

We are advising the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway neighbourhood plan steering group, in the Devizes community area of Wiltshire, on the production of their neighbourhood plan and we have produced an SEA screening decision which I have attached.

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 unlikely to have significant environmental effects. A modest amount of housing development is proposed in the village of Urchfont, which is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy which was adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015. The Core Strategy has previously been subject to SEA and the HRA assessment concluded that housing numbers are unlikely to contribute towards any likely significant effect on the integrity of any SAC or SPA and that mitigation measures identified during Appropriate Assessment of the Core Strategy are still relevant.

I have also attached details of a number of policies that the steering group are proposing. These relate to: built environment, natural environment, employment and business, housing and resilient communities. These have not been finalised as yet but give an idea of their intentions. The location of seven proposed housing sites to deliver up to 36 new dwellings is shown on page 8 of the screening decision. The proposals seek to protect and enhance the environmental, built and cultural heritage of the parish whilst proposing modest development which is in accordance with Core Policy 12 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Please see the screening statement attached which gives more detailed reasons for the plan, in our opinion, not requiring an SEA. Please could you provide a response with any comments by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015.

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

[REDACTED]

**Appendix B – Consultation responses from statutory consultation bodies**

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

**Our ref:** WX/2009/110257/OR-  
27/IS1-L01  
**Your ref:** Urchfont NP  
**Date:** 21 April 2015

Dear [Redacted]

**URCHFONRT, WEDHAMPTON & LYDEWAY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – SEA SCREENING DECISION**

Thank you for your email consultation on the above document, dated 19 March 2015.

We concur with your conclusions that the Plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as summarized in section 5.3 of the screening determination document.

We have no further comments.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

From: [REDACTED] Sent: Tue 14/04/2015 11:37  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc:  
Subject: RE: Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan - SEA screening decision. NE ref: 148679

[REDACTED] can confirm that Natural England concurs with your conclusion that the plan does not require a SEA. However, we note that one of the proposed sites (Site 8) adjoins and overlaps with land noted as being a County Wildlife Site, and this will need to be factored into the plan making process. Naturally we shall be advising on this when formally consulted on the plan itself.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] Sent: Thu 30/04/2015 16:29  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc:  
Subject: Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan - SEA screening decision

Dear [REDACTED]

Many thanks for your consultation.

I can confirm that we have no objection to the conclusion that an SEA will not be required for the Plan. At the same time I do have one or two comments.

The level of proposed housing development is modest and mostly located around the fringe of the village so I can appreciate why this conclusion resulted from your appraisal of the emerging Plan proposals. These allocations may, individually and cumulatively, have little or no impact on heritage assets or on the strategic setting of the village and based on what we can discern from what you have provided us we are happy with the conclusion on that presumed basis.

At the same time the Screening Report doesn't identify by location or name any heritage assets at all but we assume that those which exist and are relevant have been assessed in terms of the potential for impact on their significance by the allocation of the sites in principle. It is also not clear how the community has determined that the larger sites in particular can accommodate the levels of housing suggested while remaining consistent with not only the NPPF and Core Strategy but also the emerging Plan's own policy objectives for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment (the latter of which are impressive and pleasing to see). No doubt this exercise has taken place and you are familiar with it and can vouch for its robustness.

I don't expect further information in response to these comments; they are intended merely to help gently reiterate that assertions do need to be supported by evidence!

[REDACTED]