

Appendix 4



Strategic Environmental Assessment

Screening Statement on the determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC for the Steventon Neighbourhood Development Plan

30 JUNE 2020

SUMMARY

Following consultation with statutory bodies Vale of White Horse District Council (the 'Council') determines that Steventon Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

INTRODUCTION

1. An initial screening opinion was used to determine whether or not the contents of the emerging Steventon Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2011/42/EC (the Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).
2. Any land use plan or programme 'which sets the framework for future development consent of projects' must be screened according to a set of criteria from Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These criteria include exceptions for plans 'which determine the use of a small area at local level' or which only propose 'minor modifications to a plan', if it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
3. The initial screening opinion was subject to consultation with Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. The results of the screening process are detailed in this Screening Statement.

THE SCREENING PROCESS

4. Using the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations, a Screening Opinion determines whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects.
5. The extract from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' in Appendix 1 provides a flow diagram to demonstrate the SEA screening process.
6. Table 1 in Appendix 1 sets out the criteria from the Practical Guide, along with an assessment of the Steventon NDP against each criterion to ascertain whether a SEA is required.
7. Also part of the screening process is the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening, which can be found in Appendix 2. The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening concluded that the Steventon NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, therefore an Appropriate Assessment for the Steventon NDP is not required.
8. Appendix 3 considers whether the plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment.
9. These two assessments feed into Table 1 and the SEA screening statement.
10. The council's screening opinion concluded that the implementation of the Steventon NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment and therefore will not require a SEA.

STEVENTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

11 The Steventon NDP will contain the following vision, objectives:

Vision

Our vision is to protect and enhance the rural identity and heritage of Steventon, whilst ensuring its future sustainability through community engagement. Our plan seeks to protect and preserve the open spaces and natural environment, with timely and distinguishing policies structured to meet the local needs.

The long history of development of Steventon has created a village with distinctive rural characteristics. This evolution is evident in the unusual layout with a tree lined listed causeway, heritage buildings, a unique railway history, conservation areas and a network of waterways. We have a wealth of mature trees throughout the village, including a well-established copse used as a community asset and forest school. There are expanses of well-maintained village greens and allotment open space, with sweeping vistas, of countryside and farmland, to the south, west and north.

Objectives

- To ensure that the form, design and scale of any new development is of a quality to preserve or enhance Steventon's distinctive local character.

- To maintain a rural and woodland perimeter to the built area of the village and to ensure that new development does not unduly detract from the appearance of the perimeter.
- To ensure that new development provides homes of a type, size and tenure that meet local needs and provides a high level of social cohesion
- To ensure that new development is designed to have a positive impact on the wellbeing of residents through appropriate interior and exterior spaces.
- To ensure that new developments are well connected to village amenities and designed to look and feel an integral part of the village
- To reduce car use within the village by ensuring that new developments have convenient and safe provision for walking and cycling which connects to existing networks
- To ensure that new development provides appropriate provision for off- road parking.
- To ensure that any new development does not have an adverse effect on road safety
- To ensure any new development addresses environmental sustainability through building design and infrastructure which conserves energy, water resources and materials and minimises soil, water, air, noise and light pollution
- To increase resilience to flooding by ensuring adequate drainage and sewage capacity for all new developments
- To protect the views within the village and to the surrounding fields and woodland
- To protect and improve green infrastructure such as public open spaces, footpaths, verges and sports and recreation facilities. To preserve as far as possible existing trees and hedgerows and to ensure the planting of new trees and hedgerows to increase habitat and promote biodiversity
- To protect important local green spaces as defined in NPPF 2019, para.100.
- To support the provision of additional services and recreation facilities which would enhance the social and economic vitality of the Parish.

12.Steventon is defined as a larger village in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan.

13.The Steventon Neighbourhood plan is not allocating any development, i.e. it does not specify sites for development. Instead the SNP policies will be designed to guide the size and design of future development, to reflect the existing character of the village, and to meet the specific housing needs and aspirations of current and future residents. The policies also seek to protect as much as possible of the existing green infrastructure and to ensure that further green infrastructure is added. Policies will be formulated to meet all the above objectives which were arrived at through consultation with the residents.

14.Overall, we note that the plan does not allocate any sites for development and places great emphasis on conserving the character and appearance of the area.

15. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Steventon NDP would not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

16. The Screening Opinion was sent to Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England on 24 March 2020 for a four week consultation period. The responses are in full in Appendix 4.

17. Historic England confirmed they agree that the plan should not merit completion of a SEA due to any likely significant effects within their areas of interest.

18. Natural England agree with the Initial Screening Opinion and consider that the plan does not require a SEA or Appropriate Assessment.

19. The Environment Agency did not make any relevant comments.

CONCLUSION

20. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council, the following determination has been reached.

21. The Steventon NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Steventon Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.

22. Based on the assessment presented in Appendices 1 & 3, the Steventon NDP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.

23. The Steventon NDP does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

24. See Appendix 4 for the statutory bodies' responses.

Authorised by: Ricardo Rios

On behalf of Head of Planning

Signed:

Date: 30 June 2020