

Strategic Environmental Assessment

LONG COMPTON
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Screening Document
November 2013

Prepared by Stratford-on-Avon District Council

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This screening report has been prepared to determine whether the Long Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan (LCNDP) should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.2. A SEA is required for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. This particularly relates to plans which designate sites for development.
- 1.3. The purpose of SEA is to provide a high level of protection to the environment and to integrate considerations of the environment into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- 1.4. The SEA process sets out criteria for assessing the significance of the impact of a plan on the environment. For example, if a plan proposes a housing development, it may have an impact on the wildlife of the area or have an impact on the landscape. If a significant effect is possible, the assessment requires the consideration of options and for the evaluation of potential effects on the environment.
- 1.5. To ascertain if SEA is required, a 'screening' exercise is undertaken which looks at the proposals in a Neighbourhood Plan to see if a significant effect is likely. The criteria for this screening are set out in the relevant legislation (Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule I of Regulations as set out in Table 2 of this report).
- 1.6. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a process which looks at the potential impact of proposals within a plan on internationally designated wildlife sites. For the purposes of HRA, internationally designated wildlife sites are Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar wetland sites.
- 1.7. The initial stage of the HRA process involves consideration of the reasons for designation and the conservation objectives of each internationally designated wildlife site within a reasonable distance of the Neighbourhood Plan Area and the potential impact of the proposals within the Plan on these sites.
- 1.8. This report details the assessment of the LCNDP against the need for an SEA or HRA to be produced to accompany the Plan.
- 1.9. This report has been sent to the three statutory consultees of the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England to elicit their views on its contents. The results of this consultation and a screening determination will be issued indicating the outcome of the screening stage.

2. European Directives

- 2.1. The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessment legislation is the European Directive 2001/42/EC. It is transposed into English law by the

Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or the SEA Regulations. The Government has published detailed guidance on the SEA regulations in 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM, 2005).

- 2.2. Under the requirements of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), specific types of plans that set the framework for the future development consent projects, must be subject to an environmental assessment.
- 2.3. The 2008 Planning Act requires that plan making bodies to comply with the SEA Directive by screening the plan's potential effects on the environment.

3. Long Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan (LCNDP)

- 3.1. The Parish Council's website¹ explains that the Neighbourhood Plan was initiated following the enactment of the Government's Localism Act 2012. The Act sets out a series of measures to shift power away from central government towards local communities. A key component of the Localism Act is neighbourhood planning; as a new tier of planning policy which enables local people to have a greater say about future development in their communities.
- 3.2. The Neighbourhood planning process for Long Compton began in early 2012, following the creation of a steering group and the plan has been informed by numerous consultation events with the local community.
- 3.3. The consultation findings have been used to develop the vision, objectives and policies of the draft plan.
- 3.4. After pre-submission consultation on the draft plan, any responses will be taken into account and used to develop the 'submission' draft of the LCNDP. This version of the plan will be subject to inspection by an independent examiner. If the examiner approves of the NDP, it will be subject to a local referendum. If 50% or more of people voting in the referendum support the plan, the NDP will be adopted by the District Council as part of its development plan.

Size

- 3.5. The neighbourhood plan area of Long Compton includes the village of Long Compton and outlying properties. The settlement has been designated as a category 3 local service village within the settlement hierarchy of the District Council's emerging Core Strategy. The estimated total population for the parish of Long Compton is 764 (ONS 2011). There are some 404 dwellings situated in the plan area.
- 3.6. The neighbourhood plan area for Long Compton covers the administrative boundary of Long Compton Parish.

Location

- 3.7. Long Compton is a small village that is situated at the southern tip of Warwickshire, in the north-eastern part of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CAONB). The village lies in a valley through which is traversed by the Nethercote Brook.

¹ <http://www.longcompton-pc.gov.uk/longcompton-4144.cfm>

- 3.8. The village is popular with visitors as it provides easy access into the countryside which is a designated CAONB.
- 3.9. The purpose of the CAONB designation is to conserve and enhance the high value scenic natural beauty of the landscape.
- 3.10. The village and its environs are also classified as a highly sensitive historic landscape. Long Compton has 37 listed buildings, include a Grade I listed Church and lych-gate. There are also remnants of ridge and furrow in the area, together with an ancient schedule monument, the Roll Wright Stones.
- 3.11. There are issues with the village's infrastructure. The high volume of traffic on the A3400 which passes through the village impacts negatively on pedestrian safety, vibration in properties adjacent to the road, and the general environment of the village.
- 3.12. Public transport is very limited and the Long Compton Parish Council 'Public Transport Survey' (2011) revealed that a high car dependency in the settlement. The limited bus service places Long Compton in the bottom 6% in the UK for transport deprivation.

Nature

- 3.13. The LCNDP is a land use plan, prepared for town and country planning and land use and sets out a framework for future development within the Long Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan area. The LCNDP is a lower tier of the planning hierarchy, and it must conform with upper tier plans such as the Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Local Plan and national policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) but also have regard to the policies set out in the Council's emerging Core Strategy.
- 3.14. At this stage of the LCNDP Plan making process, the plan includes draft policies which include the following:
 - Housing – To meet the economic, social and environmental needs of the village through sustainable, organic growth, meeting local demand without breaking down existing structures.
 - Environment – To protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment.
 - Infrastructure – To ensure that as Long Compton grows, proper account is taken in considering any development of existing resource limitations, in particular sewerage, foul water systems and land drainage run off schemes, but also power, broadband and road traffic congestion.
 - Employment- To encourage opportunities for the development of local employment.

4. Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

- 4.1. The process for determining whether or not a SEA is required is described as screening. In order to screen, it is necessary to determine whether a plan would have significant environmental effects by using the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations. A determination can not be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted, comprising English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

- 4.2. The plan makers must publish a statement with the decision within 28 days of the determination of the screening. If it is determined that a SEA is not required, the statement should include the reasons for this decision.

5. The Screening Process

- 5.1. The Localism Act requires Neighbourhood Plans to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. Stratford-on-Avon District Council is currently preparing the Submission Version of its Core Strategy. The LCNDP must be in general conformity with this document.
- 5.2. The Core Strategy was subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. This integrated the SEA Directive's requirements to assess the plan for significant effects on the environment, and provided mitigation measures recommendations, where relevant.
- 5.3. **Figure 1** shows a flow diagram prepared by ODPM (2005), setting out the sequential approach to the application of the SEA process to plans and programmes. This is used to screen the LCNDP.

Figure1: shows the Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes (ODPM 2005)

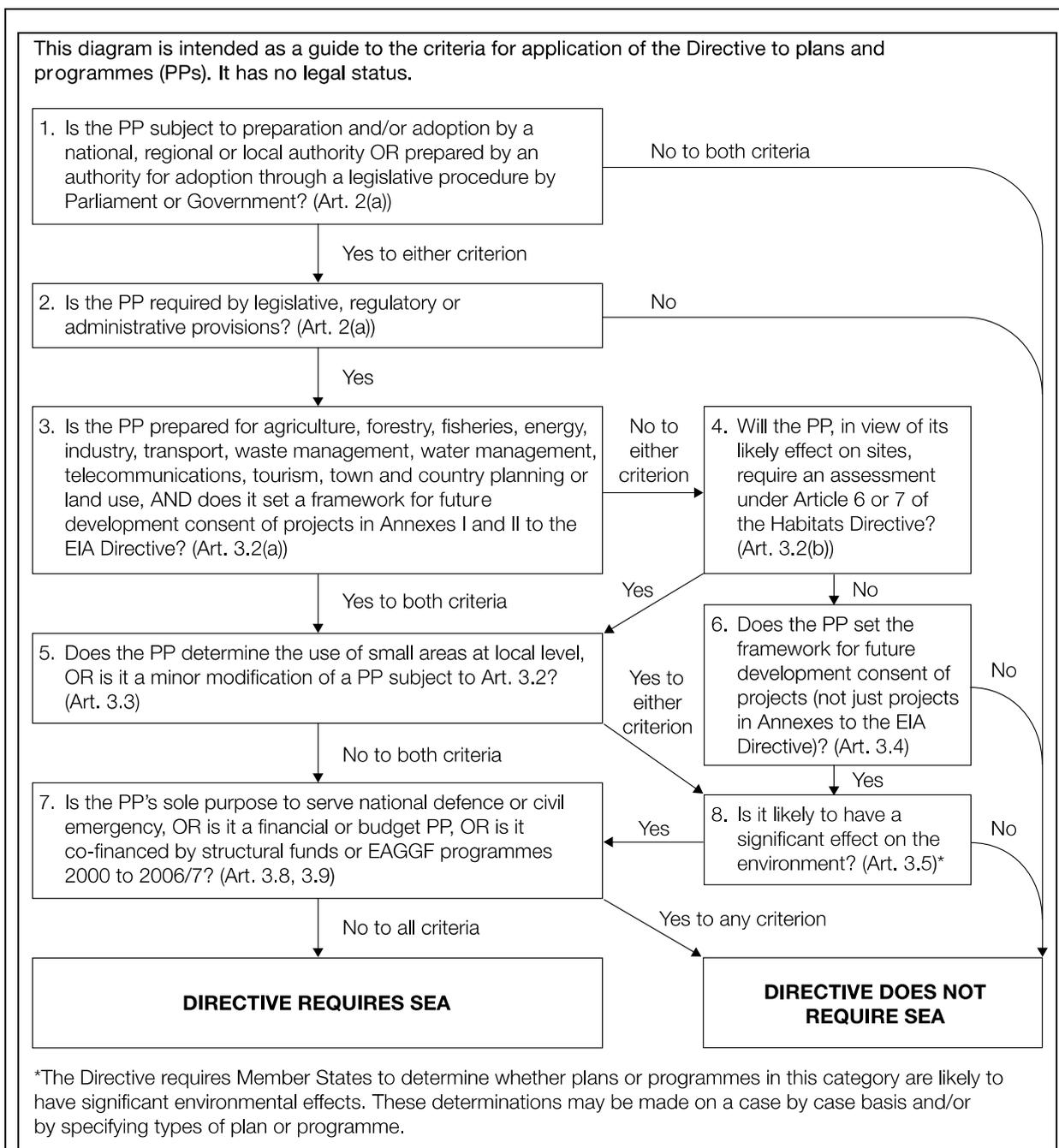


Table.1 shows the stages involved to establish whether a SEA is required.

Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the pp (plan or programme) subject to preparation and /or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament of Government? (Art.2 (a))	Y	The plan comprises a NDP, which is prepared by a qualifying body under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The NDP will be adopted by Stratford District Council if it is successful at referendum, receiving 50% or more of affirmative votes.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? Art.2 (a)	N	The Localism Act 2012 enables communities to prepare a NDP. However, it is not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. On successful adoption by the District Council, it will form part of the development plan for the area, and as such, it should continue to be screened under the SEA Directive.
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning and land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consents of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2 (a))	Y	The LCNDP is a land use plan and sets the framework for future development consents within plan area. It is unlikely that plan would contain development projects contained in Annex I. However, it may be possible that the NDP could contain infrastructure projects, listed in Annex II of the Directive 97/11/EC, such as urban development, which is subject to a EIA if they considered to have significant effects on the environment.
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	N	HRA screening was undertaken for the Stratford-on-Avon District Council Core Strategy and has been screened out of further assessment. Therefore the NDP is unlikely to require a HRA.
5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art 3.3)	Y	The NDP identifies 4 small scale sites for a total of 19 new dwellings and encourages small scale rural employment.
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consents of projects (not just projects in the annexes of the European Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Y	The NDP set out policies for development within the plan area.
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve	N	The NDP has other purposes.

the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it co-financed by structural funds of EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)		
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)		A NDP could potentially have an effect on the environment. However, whether it is significant depends upon the proposals within the NDP. This requires individual assessment. See Section 6, below.

6. Determination of significant effects

6.1 The criteria from Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) may be used to determine whether the plan would result in likely significant effects. Question 8 with the ODPM guidance (see Table.1) refers to whether the NDP would have a significant effect on the environment.

Table 1.2 below discusses the likely effects of the LCNDP.

Criteria (from Annex I of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response
Characteristics of the plans and programmes	
(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.	The LCNDP will establish the development control framework for the parish of Long Compton. The LCNDP is prepared for town and country planning and land use and sets out a framework for future development for settlements in Long Compton Neighbourhood Plan area. The nature of the plan includes housing, protection of open space, infrastructure and employment development. However it is unlikely that the projects would fall under 10 a) of Annex II of the EIA Directive.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The NDP is the lower tier of the planning hierarchy and must conform with plans in the upper tiers rather than influence them. In this case, the LCNDP must conform with the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan and the NPPF.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	The LCNDP has relevance in this section. There are opportunities for integrating environmental considerations with the Long Compton Neighbourhood Plan area. Its vision statement includes consideration of the <i>'characteristic green fingers' (agricultural land) which give strong impression of that</i>

	<i>the countryside is integral to the village ...they also provide practical role, giving easy access to walks in the countryside; views back to the surrounding hills and vales; and a habitat for wildlife.</i>
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>Key issues taken from the Stratford-on-Avon District Council Scoping Report and SA of the Intended Proposed Submission Core Strategy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The impact of traffic and noise in Long Compton village from A3400 which runs between Oxford and Stratford-upon-Avon. 2. Surface water and sewer flooding is a significant concern in Long Compton, and climate change is likely to increase this risk, resulting from heavier and more intense periods of rain fall during future winters. 3. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity landscape, including tranquillity and dark skies and skylines. 4. The effects on AONB and the historic environment from inappropriate and poor quality design and layout of housing and employment. Long Compton NDP area is situated in the AONB and comprises a number of listed buildings, Grade I church and lych-gate.
(e) relevance of the plan or programme to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	<p>The LCNDP is a land-use plan and sets the framework for future development consents in the Long Compton Neighbourhood Plan Area.</p> <p>The LCNDP sets out policies which planning applications with Long Compton NDP area must adhere to.</p>
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected	
(a) probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development in the neighbourhood plan area is likely to lead to some increased traffic generation given the small-scale level of development proposed in the plan. Any effect is not likely to be reversible and would constitute a long-term effect. 2. Any effects on biodiversity are likely to be long-term and irreversible. However, this is dependent upon locations for development and the LCNDP is looking to promote previously used sites for development. 3. The historic environment is an important receptor. There is a Conservation Area within the NDP area within which are a number of

	<p>listed buildings. Any adverse effects are likely to be irreversible, meaning historic assets will require protecting through sensitive and appropriate design and location of new development.</p> <p>4. The areas of open space, allotments, recreation ground and other green areas in the NDP area are examples of Green Infrastructure (GI) and are vital to the health and wellbeing of residents as well as providing a stronghold for biodiversity in the area. These features provide an opportunity for improvement in the long-term.</p> <p>5. Climate change predictions forecast that the frequency, probability and duration of flood events are likely to increase in the long term. Climate change is an important receptor to consider. A water course runs through the village of Long Compton and as such, some flood risk is likely in certain parts of the village.</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	Given the scale of development proposed within the LCNDP, the cumulative effects of the proposals are unlikely to be significant on the local environment.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	The effects are localised in nature and unlikely to have a significant impact on neighbouring areas.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	The LCNDP may generate additional traffic; however it is unlikely to cause a health risk to the local population, to the degree to which it would require a SEA or EIA to avoid and mitigate the effects.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The LCNDP is concerned with development within the neighbourhood area. Given the scale of development proposed within the NDP, the potential for wide-reaching environmental impacts are likely to be limited and minimal.
<p>(f) the value and vulnerability of the areas likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</p> <p>(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</p> <p>(iii) intensive land use</p>	<p>(i) There is a Conservation Area and a number of listed buildings located within the NDP area. The area surrounding the village is generally farmland. Given the limited scale of development proposed, any effects would be unlikely to have a significant impact on natural characteristics or cultural heritage.</p> <p>(ii) There is no AQMA in place in the plan area. Given to the quantum of development proposed over the plan period, it is unlikely to exceed any environmental quality standard</p>

	or limit values. (iii) Not Applicable
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status	The NDP area lies within the northern edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Nature Beauty.

7. Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 7.1 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the assessment required for any plan or project to assess the potential implications for European wildlife sites. The HRA therefore looks at whether the implementation of the plan or project would harm the habitats or species for which European wildlife sites are designated. European wildlife sites are:
- Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
- 7.2 In addition to SPAs and SACs sites Ramsar sites are designated under the Ramsar Convention (Iran 1971 as amended by the Paris Protocol 1992). Although they are not covered by the Habitats regulations, as a matter of Government policy, Ramsar sites should be treated in the same way as European wildlife sites. European wildlife sites and Ramsar sites are collectively known as internationally designated wildlife sites.
- 7.3 The legislation sets out a process to assess the potential implications of a plan on internationally designated sites. The first stage of this process is a “screening” exercise where the details of nearby internationally designated sites are assessed to see if there is the potential for the implementation of the Plan to have an impact on the site.
- 7.4 Under Criteria 6 of the assessment in Figure 2.2, it was concluded that a NDP may have an impact on internationally designated wildlife sites and that a case by case assessment was required. For the purposes of the “screening” assessment the potential impact of the Neighbourhood Development Plan on sites within 20km of the Neighbourhood Plan area are assessed.
- 7.5 There are no European wildlife or Ramsar sites within the NDP area or within 20km of the NDP area.

8. Screening Outcome and reasons for determination

- 8.1 The LCNDP will conform to the strategic influence of the Stratford-on-Avon District Council’s Core Strategy. The NDP will influence the location of housing and employment and its design in the plan area for the period of the plan. These factors can have significant environmental determinants.
- 8.2 This screening report has explored the potential effects of the proposed LCNDP with a view to determining the likely requirement for an environmental assessment under the SEA directive. Results of the screening process indicate that there is uncertainty associated with the size, nature and location of likely proposals in the LCNDP.

SEA Assessment

- 8.3 On the basis of the SEA Screening Assessment set out in Table 2 above, it is concluded that the LCNDP will not have significant effects in relation to any of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, and therefore does not need to be subject to a SEA report.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 8.4 There are no internationally designated wildlife sites within the Neighbourhood Area or within 20km of it. The LCNDP will not, therefore, have an adverse effect on the integrity of internationally designated sites either on its own or in combination with other plans and does not need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment.