Chichester District Council

Mrs Louise Davies
Parish Clerk to Wisborough Green Parish Council
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Our ref:

Your ref:

26 January 2015

Dear Mrs Davies,

Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Development Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Opinion Screening Determination under Regulation 9 and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

This letter addresses whether an environmental assessment of the Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan is required and as such whether it meets one of the basic conditions that a neighbourhood plan must meet in order to proceed to referendum: that it does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

On the basis of the contents of the neighbourhood plan that is now the subject of a pre-submission consultation and subsequent consultation with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with Regulation 9(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the following determination can be made.

The screening determination is that **an environmental assessment of the Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan is not required** due there being no adverse comments from the Statutory Bodies and for the reasons set out in the Criteria and response of screening which are attached as part of this letter.

As such it is the opinion of Chichester District Council that the Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan is in accordance with the provisions of the European Directive 2001/42/EC as incorporated into UK law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

This decision has been based on the information provided. If the contents of the Plan are revised and/or there is a material change in the environmental characteristics in the locality (e.g. any additional nature conservation or other environmental designations), then the comments contained in this decision would need to be reconsidered in order to take account of the changes.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Frost
Head of Planning Services

Screening Report for the Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan
Criteria and response of screening

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of Regulations)	**Relevance in context of this screening report**
The characteristics of 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 Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan (NP) would, if adopted, form part of the Statutory Development Plan and as such will establish the development management framework for Wisborough Green village and surrounding environs. The NP is prepared for town and country planning and land use and sets out a framework for future development in Wisborough Green parish. The nature of the NP includes housing, economic, environmental and infrastructure policies.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The NP is the lowest tier in the planning hierarchy and must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, the strategic polices of the development plan and European Directives.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	Policy OA1 of the NP seeks overall to allocate sites for 60 houses (through Policies SS1, SS2, SS3 and SS4). Policy OA6 seeks to ensure that any development is in keeping with the landscape character and settlements of the South Downs National Park. In addition, Policy OA7 seeks to ensure that development on land adjacent to the SDNP does not detract from the enjoyment of the SDNP's special qualities. Policy E4 seeks to conserve and enhance the heritage environment by recognising, respecting and enhancing local distinctiveness, the character of the area, landscape and heritage assets.

	Policy IN3 requires any development to provide safe pedestrian access within the development site and connection to the current pedestrian network to access village facilities.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	There are no environmental problems relevant to this plan.
(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).	This NP has no relevance to the implementation of Community legislation. The NP is a land-use plan and sets the framework for future development consents within the Wisborough Green NP area.
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected,	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The impact of the proposals for development in the Wisborough Green NP is not anticipated to produce any significant effects on Air Quality, Biodiversity, Flora, Fauna, Landscape, Material Assets, Cultural Heritage, Population, Health, Soils, Climate Change and Water in the Wisborough Green parish.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	The proposals are in keeping with the aspirations of the Chichester Local Plan. No cumulative effects are expected as a result.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	The majority of the effects within Wisborough Green parish will be localised, however due to the nationally important natural and historic assets, effects on these features may occur beyond the area of the parish.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	Wisborough Green does not currently have any AQMAs. The NP may increase traffic levels but not to an extent that is anticipated to cause significant effects on human health.

(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	Wisborough Green is the largest settlement in the parish. It is linked to the wider road and rail networks via the A272 providing access to larger surrounding settlements. There are minimal employment opportunities within Wisborough Green and residents largely out commute. The indirect spatial extent of the plan may extend beyond the immediate area of the plan but are not anticipated to cause significant effects.
(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	Policies in the NP aim to conserve and enhance the natural and heritage environment. Development proposals will be required to take account of these policies and maintain the individual identity of the settlements in the parish.
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	Policy OA6 seeks to ensure that any development is in keeping with the landscape character and settlements of the South Downs National Park. In addition, Policy OA7 seeks to ensure that development on land adjacent to the SDNP does not detract from the enjoyment of the SDNP's special qualities.

Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan
Summary of Statutory Consultations – Strategic Environmental Assessment

Statutory Consultee	Summary of Comments
English Heritage – Reply - 8 December 2014	A copy of an early Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan indicates which sites are likely to be allocated in the Plan, including Glebe Field, Glebe Way. It is indicated that this is likely to be allocated for approximately 10 dwellings. In English Heritage's (EH) letter of 22nd October it was explained that this site abuts the Conservation Area and is within the setting of the Grade I listed Church of St Peter ad Vincula. The site may also have archaeological interest given its location. The view was that the potential development of this site could have a significant (historic) environmental impact in terms of the impact on the significance of the Church, unless of an appropriate form and low density and EH therefore maintained the view that an SEA was required. However, on 26th November the parish advised EH that it was now proposed that the Glebe Field would be allocated for three dwellings on the eastern side, away from the Church, and revised text was sent to EH which included an "artistic impression" of the possible layout and a revised Policy SS4. The revised Policy indicates that development on the Glebe Field should be to the east of the Field with the land between the housing and the Church to be an area of open space (although it still states that the Glebe Field will be allocated for six dwellings and the Vicarage site for three or four, which has been confirmed is an error). In EH's view such an approach would avoid any significant environmental impacts from the development in Glebe Field on the significance of the Church. As regards the potential redevelopment of the Vicarage site, EH would like to see a reference to having regard to the significance and sensitivity of the listed Church (perhaps through retaining all or at least some of the existing significant vegetation in the NW corner of the site) in the fourth clause (relating to the redevelopment of the Vicarage site). Subject to that, EH do not consider that the redevelopment of the Vicarage site would be likely to have a significant impact on the significance of the Church. Accordingly, with that proviso, it is now EH's opinion that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is **not** needed for the

	Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan. This view is based on the latest information EH has been provided with, and EH reserve the right to revise this opinion should Policy SS4 itself be revised from the draft indicated.
Environment Agency – reply - 3 September 2014	The River Kird, and its associated flood plain, is located to the South and West of Wisborough Green. The scale of development proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan would not have significant environmental effects and as such would not require an SEA in relation to the issues in our remit. However, we would like to see any Neighbourhood Plan site allocations be located in accordance with the flood risk Sequential Test and seek to ensure no adverse impact on the quality of the watercourse.
Natural England – reply - 26 September 2014	Assuming that Wisborough Green will be the focus of development, then the prospect of direct impact on designated assets is limited. The western edge of the settlement is some 600m from the National Park; so any potential for significant effect on the setting of the designated landscape should be evident in the comments of the Park Authority on the LP and NP. The Ebernoe SAC, some 5.5km west of the settlement, is important for bats (inter alia). Whilst the development at Wisborough Green is unlikely to have a significant impact the wellbeing of the bat population, this will depend on design that retains key natural features on which the bats may rely. These matters can be addressed at the detailed design stage.