Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Wisborough Green Parish Council

November 2026

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Quality information

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Non-Technical Summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as "the WGNP"). This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to help avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

What is the Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan?

The WGNP has been prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Regulation 14 version of the WGNP, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (September 2026), which included information about the neighbourhood area's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe, and evaluate the likely significant effects of the WGNP and alternatives.
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the WGNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes.
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues for the area.
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the WGNP has been assessed.
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the WGNP.
- The likely significant effects of the WGNP.
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the WGNP.
- The next steps for the WGNP and accompanying SEA process.

Consideration of reasonable alternatives

Chapter 4 within the main body of the Environmental Report presents information on reasonable alternative approaches to addressing key issues that are of central importance to the WGNP. Principally, the consideration of how to meet housing needs within the neighbourhood area (i.e., the 'preferred spatial strategy' for the WGNP).

To support the choice of a development strategy for the WGNP, the SEA process has assessed three spatial strategy options as reasonable alternatives. These spatial strategy options comprise packages of the sites identified above, with a view to delivering the residual housing requirement of **68 homes** for the neighbourhood area. The options are as follows:

- **Option 1:** Delivery of new housing through allocations at WG25-1, WG25-6, WG25-7, WG25-8, and WG25-14.
- **Option 2:** Delivery of new housing through an allocation at WG25-13.
- **Option 3:** Delivery of new housing through allocations at WG25-1, WG25-14, and a reduced allocation at WG25-13.

It is acknowledged that theoretically there are several potential combinations which could be applied to the options. The combinations which have been tested seek to avoid an under-delivery or over-delivery of homes, i.e., from applying lower growth or higher growth across all of the variable components, whilst also reflecting the key choices for plan makers tasked with selecting the preferred approach at this stage of plan making.

The SEA has appraised the relative sustainability merits associated with these three options with a view to informing the plan making process. Detailed appraisal findings are presented in **Table 4-1** through to **Table 4-9** within the main body of the Environmental Report. A summary of the appraisal findings is provided below, including the overall ranking of the options against each SEA theme and the identification of likely significant effects in Table NTS1.

The residual housing requirement of **68 homes** is to be met through the combination of sites proposed through **Option 1**. The preferred approach has been informed by the various surveys and evidence base documents prepared to support the WGNP (to date), responses from community consultation events, and the SEA findings. In addition to residential allocations, the WGNP also supports opportunities to retain and enhance community infrastructure and support local employment opportunities through the redevelopment and safeguarding of existing employment sites at Newpound and Wharf Farm.

Table NTS1: Overall rankings and identification of likely significant effects

SEA Theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Air Quality	Option Rank	**=1**	**=1**	**=1**
	Significant effects?	No	No	No
Biodiversity	Option Rank	**2**	**=1**	**=1**
	Significant effects?	No	No	No
Climate Change Adaptation	Option Rank	3	2	**1**
	Significant effects?	**Yes - mixed**	No	No
Climate Change Mitigation	Option Rank	**=1**	**=1**	**=1**
	Significant effects?	No	No	No
Community Wellbeing	Option Rank	**1**	3	2
	Significant effects?	**Yes - positive**	**Yes - mixed**	**Yes - mixed**
Historic Environment	Option Rank	3	**1**	2
	Significant effects?	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - negative**
Landscape	Option Rank	**1**	3	2
	Significant effects?	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - negative**
Natural Resources (Soil and Water)	Option Rank	1	3	2
	Significant effects?	**Yes - mixed**	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - mixed**
Transportation	Option Rank	**1**	=2	=2
	Significant effects?	No	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - negative**

Appraising the Regulation 14 version of the WGNP

For each SEA theme scoped in to the assessment, 'significant' effects of the policy framework within the Regulation 14 version of the WGNP on the baseline are predicated and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations. For example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' have been described within the appraisal, as appropriate.

Detailed appraisal findings are presented in **Chapter 5** in the main body of this Environmental Report. A summary of the appraisal findings is presented below.

Long-term significant positive effects are expected in relation to the community wellbeing SEA theme, through the delivery of housing to meet local needs in full (including on-site affordable housing), improved pedestrian access and safety along Kirdford Road, the designation of Local Green Spaces and Local Open Spaces and the safeguarding of existing community assets.

Minor positive effects are considered most likely in relation to the biodiversity and transportation SEA theme. This reflects the HRA conclusion of no adverse effects on European sites, the avoidance of the more sensitive parts of the allocations along the River Kird and additional policy measures which seek to protect and enhance green infrastructure and dark skies. For transport, this reflects three of the allocations taking access directly from the A272, which reduces traffic on congested local lanes, growth spread across several smaller sites, and the delivery of the Kirdford Road footway.

Neutral effects are considered most likely in relation to the natural resources (soil and water) and climate change adaptation SEA themes. For natural resources, this reflects the balance between the loss of greenfield land and the re-use of previously developed land, the avoidance of best and most versatile agricultural land, and policy measures which protect water quality. For climate change adaptation, whilst there are existing surface water and drainage issues within the village and development will increase impermeable surfaces, Policies SSR9 and SSR11 restrict development to parts of the sites outside the areas at risk of flooding along the River Kird. This is supported by the wider policy framework, which directs growth away from flood-prone areas and requires multifunctional SuDS.

Mixed effects are anticipated for the landscape and historic environment SEA themes. Whilst all housing allocations lie within an area of high landscape sensitivity, the preferred approach largely avoids development within the Local Green Gaps, and the policy framework seeks to protect and enhance landscape character through sensitive design. While it is recognised that the primary focus of the policy framework is to protect the integrity of the historic environment rather than delivering significant enhancements, the absence of detailed design measures listed within the site-specific policies has the potential to lead to adverse effects on the historic environment.

No significant effects are predicted in relation to the air quality and climate change mitigation SEA themes, although some minor negative effects are anticipated. These primarily reflect the increase in private vehicle use and new development in a rural village with limited public transport, which has the potential to increase emissions. The WGNP's policy framework will help to limit these effects,

although it is acknowledged that the viability of delivering additional public transport services is outside of the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan to address.

In light of the appraisal findings, **the Regulation 14 version of the SEA Environmental Report puts forward the following recommendations** for consideration by plan makers to inform policy development:

- Whilst Policy ENR1 requires green infrastructure to form the primary design framework of new development, the policy could be strengthened by indicating a preference for achieving biodiversity net gains on-site and, where this is not possible, encouraging developers to identify key local areas, such as the River Kird corridor, that could benefit from off-site enhancement measures. Linked to this, development proposals could be expected to provide a proportionate green infrastructure assessment detailing how local wildlife and habitats will be protected and enhanced during the construction and operational phases of development, and how net gains will be delivered.
- Given the heritage sensitivities associated with the spatial strategy, the site-specific policies could be strengthened by requiring development proposals to undertake a proportionate heritage assessment to provide further detail about the significance of any heritage assets and areas within or within the setting of the site, informing any mitigation or enhancement measures. Additionally, as a condition attached to any planning approval for each site, an archaeological clerk-of-works could be expected to be on site during the construction phases of development to ensure that any non-designated heritage assets are appropriately preserved and recorded in line with the best practice guidance.
- Given the pressure on the existing road network, Policy EDR3 could require proposals for the redevelopment of employment sites at Wharf Farm and Newpound that are expected to generate additional traffic, including HGV movements, to be accompanied by a travel plan, to help reduce traffic impacts and support sustainable travel.

Next steps

Following Regulation 14 consultation, responses will be considered in finalising the WGNP and SEA for submission. Following submission, the WGNP and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the WGNP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plans for Chichester and the South Downs National Park.

If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the WGNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Chichester District Council (as the lead authority). If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the WGNP, then it will be ‘made’. Once ‘made’, the WGNP will become part of the Local Plans for Chichester and the South Downs National Park, covering the defined neighbourhood area of Wisborough Green Parish.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment in support of Wisborough Green Parish Council's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

1.1.2 The Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan (the 'WGNP') is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

1.1.3 The WGNP is being prepared in the context of the Chichester Local Plan (2021-2039) which was adopted in August 2025. The Local Plan provides the broad policy framework and a long-term strategy to manage development, protect the environment, deliver infrastructure, and promote sustainable communities within Chichester District. Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for Chichester, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Chichester, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

1.1.4 It is currently anticipated that the WGNP will be submitted to Chichester District Council early 2027. Key information relating to the WGNP is presented in **Table 1-1**.

Table 1-1: Key facts relating to the WGNP

Name of Responsible Authority	Wisborough Green Parish Council
Title of Plan	Wisborough Council Neighbourhood Plan (the 'WGNP')
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	The WGNP is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the adopted Chichester Local Plan (2021-2039). The WGNP will be used to guide development within the neighbourhood area.
Timescale	2021 - 2039
Area covered by the plan	The neighbourhood area covers the parish of Wisborough Green, in Chichester District.
Summary of content	The WGNP will set out a vision, strategy, and range of policies for the neighbourhood area
Plan contact point	clerk@wisboroughgreen-pc.gov.uk

1.2 SEA screening for the Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan

1.2.1 SEA is a mechanism for assessing the likely significant environmental effects of plan and programmes before they are adopted. In England, SEA is required under the Environmental Assessment of Plan and Programmes (England) Regulations 2004 ('the SEA Regulations')[1], which transposes into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. It ensures that environmental considerations are integrated into plan-making at an early stage and that the potential environmental consequences of different policy options are examined.

1.2.2 A Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, Neighbourhood Plans are more likely to be screened in as requiring an SEA if both the following apply:

1. the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared within a neighbourhood area with significant environmental constraints, such as, for example European and nationally designated sites for biodiversity, protected landscapes, or large concentrations of heritage assets; and

2. the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate sites for development[2].

1.2.3 As both conditions apply for the WGNP, a full SEA process is being undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).

1.3 SEA Explained

1.3.1 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the WGNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

1.3.2 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:

i. When deciding on '*the scope and level of detail of the information*' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues.

ii. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e., the draft WGNP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

1.3.3 This 'Environmental Report' is concerned with item 'ii' above.

[1] DLUHC (February 2022): Chief Planner's Newsletter, February 2022 'Strategic Environmental Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans: Timely and effective screening' accessible here.
[2] UK Government (2004) 'The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004' can be accessed here.

1.4 Structure of this Environmental Report

1.4.1 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the WGNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed below with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. The questions in **Table 1-2** are addressed in Chapters 2-6 within this Environmental Report.

Table 1-2: Questions that Must be Answered by the SEA Environmental Report to Meet the Regulatory[3] Requirements

Questions		In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include…[4]
What's the scope of the SEA?	What is the plan seeking to achieve?	An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan.
	What is the sustainability 'context'?	Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. The relevant environmental protection **objectives**, established at international or national level. Any existing environmental **problems** which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
	What is the sustainability 'baseline'?	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Any existing environmental **problems** which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
	What are the key issues and objectives?	Key **problems**/**issues** and **objectives** that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment.
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?		Outline reasons for selecting the **alternatives** dealt with. The likely significant effects associated with **alternatives**. Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of **alternatives** appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?		The likely significant effects associated with **the Regulation 14 version of the plan**. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing **the Regulation 14 version of the plan**.
What happens next?		The next steps for the plan making / SEA process.

[3] Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004
[4] NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

2. Local Plan Context and Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

2.1 Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan

2.1.1 The Plan is being prepared in the context of the Chichester Local Plan (2021-2039) which was adopted in August 2025. The Local Plan provides the broad policy framework and a long-term strategy to manage development, protect the environment, deliver infrastructure, and promote sustainable communities within Chichester District.

2.1.2 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for Chichester, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Chichester, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

2.1.3 As the southern section of the neighbourhood area is within the South Downs National Park, the WGNP should also be in general compliance with the new South Downs Local Plan (2024-2042)[5]. The new South Downs Local Plan is at a relatively advanced stage of plan making and is scheduled to be submitted for examination in public (EiP) before the end of 2026. However, it is acknowledged that new development through the WGNP is likely to come forward within or in proximity to the village (i.e., outside of the National Park boundary).

2.2 Vision, Aims, and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

2.2.1 The vision for the WGNP captures the community's views and aspirations for the neighbourhood area as expressed through the neighbourhood planning process. It forms the basis on which the neighbourhood objectives and proposed policies have been formulated.

2.2.2 The vision is as follows:

'*Wisborough Green will continue to be a traditional rural Parish that welcomes positive change, sustainable growth and progress, whilst conserving and enhancing the special qualities that create this small but thriving community within its unique, historical, and precious environment, for current and future generations to enjoy'*.

2.2.3 The vision is accompanied by 10 objectives:

- Promote appropriate developments, activities and facilities that actively contribute to the special qualities of Wisborough Green and the wellbeing of the community.

[5] South Downs National Park Authority (2026): 'A new South Downs National Park', accessible here.

- Accommodate sustainable housing development on the allocated sites in accordance with the Chichester Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Ensure that all new housing and/or extension reflects the established Sussex vernacular of the Parish in terms of density, building styles and materials, respecting existing Listed and other heritage buildings and features.
- Ensure that such open market development reflects local housing needs providing multi-use housing appropriate for all age groups, and that affordable housing is prioritised for people with defined local connection to Wisborough Green.
- Encourage the provision of new open and green spaces for sporting and general social/recreational use by the community.
- Define a new Settlement Boundary and identify sites where appropriate development will be accommodated.
- Encourage sustainable design that promotes awareness of energy conservation and efficiency in mitigation of climate change.
- Protect and conserve the special qualities of the South Downs National Park.
- Encourage the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.
- Protect and enhance the natural environment, both habitats and landscapes.

3. What is the Scope of the SEA?

3.1 Summary of SEA scoping

3.1.1 The SEA Regulations require that: 'When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies'.

3.1.2 In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England.[6] This scoping report was been released to these three statutory consultees, and Chichester District Council, for a period of five weeks between 10th September 2026 and 15th October 2026.

3.1.3 The purpose of scoping was to outline the 'scope' of the SEA through setting out the following information:

- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and local plans and strategies relevant to the WGNP;
- Baseline data against which the WGNP can be assessed;
- The key sustainability issues for the WGNP; and
- An 'SEA Framework' of objectives against which the WGNP can be assessed.

3.1.4 The full SEA Scoping Report is available on the Neighbourhood Plan website and accompanies the evidence base for the WGNP.

3.1.5 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they were addressed, have been summarised below in **Table 3-1**.

Table 3-1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

Consultation Response	How the Response was Considered and Addressed
Historic England	
We recommend that the Neighbourhood Plan is supported by an appropriate evidence base and includes policies that respond to the specific historic environment issues and opportunities within Wisborough Green. We also suggest that the evidence base prepared for the previous Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed and updated, where necessary.	The historic environment evidence base for the WGNP has informed the assessment of options in Chapter 4 and the appraisal of the draft plan in Section 5.9.
In addition to the themes identified in the Scoping Report, consideration could be given to matters such as archaeology, heritage at risk, tourism, and the contribution of the historic environment to local character and sense of place.	Archaeology is considered in Section 5.9.6. The contribution of the historic environment to local character and sense of place is considered under the historic environment SEA theme.

[6] In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because 'by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme'.

Consultation Response	How the Response was Considered and Addressed
Without duplicating national or local planning policies relating to the historic environment, the Neighbourhood Plan may wish to consider policy approaches relating to: • The conservation and enhancement of designated and non-designated heritage assets. • The identification and protection of locally important heritage assets, including consideration of locally specific heritage issues and opportunities, informed by a review of the assets identified in the Wisborough Green Village Design Statement (2018). • The protection and enhancement of the settings of heritage assets where these contribute to significance. • The protection of important views that contribute to the significance and appreciation of the historic environment. • The protection of important historic green spaces. Design policies, design guides and design codes that promote high-quality development informed by local character and historic context, drawing on evidence such as Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plan. In this respect, the Parish Council's Village Design Statement (2018) may benefit from review and updating to ensure it remains current and effective. • The sensitive reuse, adaptation and retrofit of historic buildings. • Flood risk management and climate adaptation measures that respond positively to heritage significance and historic character. • Renewable energy policies informed by an appropriate understanding of the historic environment and potential impacts on heritage significance.	Section 5.9 sets out how the WGNP policy framework that relates to the historic environment and the requirement for all allocations to meet the Village Design Statement. The SEA recommends that the site specific policies require a proportionate heritage impact assessment at the planning application stage which identifies the heritage significance of the assets and areas likely to be impacted by the scheme, and directly informing mitigation and enhancement measures.
Site allocation policies informed by proportionate Heritage Impact Assessments where heritage considerations are relevant.	As per comment above.
Table 2.7 identifies a range of relevant historic environment documents and guidance. We recommend that it is expanded to include the following Historic England publications: • Historic England Advice Note 7: Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage (3rd ed., 15 May 2026) • Historic England Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency (18 February 2026).	The evidence sources, whilst not explicitly referenced within the SEA Scoping Report, have been a useful source of reference during the subsequent stages of the SEA process. Consideration is given to the extent to which the policy framework in the WGNP supports energy efficiency through design, and how local heritage can be conserved and enhanced. This is explored through Chapter 4 and 5 in this Environmental Report.
We recommend that the following sources of evidence are considered as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, alongside any historic environment evidence prepared for the previous Neighbourhood Plan: • Heritage Impact Assessments for any proposed site allocations. • Landscape Character Assessment. • Historic Landscape Characterisation studies.	The SEA has been informed by the available baseline evidence and applied proportionately through the appraisal findings. Potential impacts on the historic environment resulting from policies and proposals within the WGNP are explored in Chapter 4 and 5 of this Environmental Report.

Consultation Response	How the Response was Considered and Addressed
• Renewable Energy Studies or equivalent evidence. • Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. • Local List criteria and supporting assessment of non-designated heritage assets, as identified in the Townscape Appraisal Map within the Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2017).	
We generally support the proposed SEA objective and assessment questions relating to the historic environment, including the emphasis on conserving and enhancing heritage assets and their settings, and promoting greater understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment.	Noted.
However, we recommend the inclusion of the following additional assessment question to reflect the wider contribution that the historic environment can make to sustainable development objectives: *Will the plan help support the positive use of the historic environment in a way that contributes to the achievement of wider social, environmental and economic objectives?* This would help ensure that the assessment considers not only the potential effects of the Plan on heritage assets, but also the positive role that the historic environment can play in delivering broader sustainability outcomes.	The recommended assessment question has been added to the SEA Framework which is presented in Table 3.2.
To assist our consideration of the Plan's potential impacts on the historic environment, we would welcome the opportunity to review any proposed site allocations and site-specific designations at an appropriate stage in plan preparation. Where site allocations are proposed, it would be helpful to identify those sites most likely to affect heritage significance, in order that our advice can be targeted effectively and provided at an early stage.	Noted. The SEA recommends that consultation with Historic England is sought at this stage in order to ensure that heritage sensitivities are appropriately considered and reflected through the design of new development areas.
Environment Agency	
We are pleased to see that the proposed SEA Framework includes assessment questions relating to climate change adaptation (including flood risk), climate change mitigation and natural resources (soil and water). Therefore, we have no additional suggestions to make.	Noted.
Natural England	
Natural England has no specific comments to make on the scope of this neighbourhood plan's SEA.	Noted.
Chichester District Council	
Overall, the SEA Scoping Report document is well laid out, clear and comprehensive. However, there are a few comments that CDC would make at this stage as follows. The comments identified below are intended to provide assistance and help as the process moves forward.	Noted.
Paragraph 1.2.2 - here and throughout the document the SEA scoping report document needs checking in terms of when the word 'district' or 'plan area' is most appropriate; these are different areas for CDC and therefore the two terms are not directly interchangeable and a wording check for use moving forward would be welcomed.	Noted.

Consultation Response	How the Response was Considered and Addressed
Page 5: Links with other plans, programmes and strategies Table 21. the adopted South Downs National Park Local Plan appears to be missing from this list.	The SEA acknowledges the relationship between the WGNP and the South Downs National Park Local Plan, noting that new development areas (i.e., the aspects of plan making likely to lead to significant environmental effects) are not proposed within the National Park boundary.
Page 13: key issues for the neighbourhood area (and SEA) Section 3.2 does not appear to make reference to the issue relating to air quality and The Men SAC. It may be helpful to consider text and Policy NE7 of the adopted Chichester Local Plan that sets out the issue in more detail.	The WGNP is accompanied by a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) which further considers the potential impacts from WGNP policies and European sites.
Page 25: Next Steps Paragraph 5.2.2 – it is noted that Chichester District Council (CDC) has been consulted but not the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). Wisborough Green parish includes land lying within the SDNPA and the neighbourhood plan is a joint local planning authority neighbourhood plan, albeit that CDC is the lead authority.	The statutory requirements for SEA Scoping have been met. SDNPA will have an opportunity to comment on the SEA (and wider evidence base documents accompanying the WGNP) at Regulation 14 consultation.

3.1.6 The key sustainability issues and SEA Framework are presented below and have been reviewed and enhanced where appropriate to reflect the comments received at the SEA scoping stage.

Key sustainability issues

Air Quality

- There are no designated Air Quality Management Areas in the neighbourhood area. However, vehicle emissions remain a major source of pollution in Chichester District and are generally worse in larger towns and villages. Whilst the neighbourhood area is not likely to experience comparable level of growth as larger towns and villages during the plan period, all areas are sensitive to growth in terms of associated pressures on air quality.
- Future development may temporarily increase air pollution through construction and traffic-related emissions, but also presents opportunities to embed sustainable transport, active travel, and low-emission technologies into planning and infrastructure.
- The cumulative impact of strategic scale growth in the wider area (e.g., at Billinghurst and Adversane) may also increase traffic flow through the village (primarily the A272 and B2133).

Biodiversity

- New development may affect the integrity of The Mens SAC/SSSI, particularly if located within SSSI Impact Risk Zones or SAC ‘buffer zones’ for development types likely to come forward during the plan period, indicating a need for consultation with Natural England.

- Development could impact locally important sites including ancient woodland, the Wisborough Green Pastures, and priority habitats, which provide and accessible green spaces for communities and positively contribute to the natural environment.
- The neighbourhood area contains a variety of priority habitats and wildlife corridors. These habitats can support protected and notable species. Development may lead to habitat loss and fragmentation, weakening ecological networks and reduced species movement.
- The neighbourhood area presents an opportunity to deliver and coordinate biodiversity net gain through development location, design and management. This includes creating new habitats, improving connectivity, restoring degraded areas, and strengthening green and blue infrastructure networks to support ecological resilience and climate adaptation.

Climate Change Adaptation

- Fluvial and surface water flood risks are prevalent within the neighbourhood area. It is anticipated that climate change will increase the variability of weather and the frequency of extreme weather events. Particular local issues include:
    - Unmapped flooding pints of underground springs that arise in winter in Newpound Lane, Kirdford Road and Durbans Road.
    - Surface water flooding at all access points on roads into Wisborough Green, with the village cut off on occasions.
- The impacts of climate change have the potential to affect the health and wellbeing of residents in the neighbourhood area. It will be important for the Plan to combat inequalities and health risks associated with climate change in the planning and design of new development.

Climate Change Mitigation

- Chichester District Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019, resolving to support local authorities (and, by extension, neighbourhood groups) to help tackle climate change through plan-making where possible.
- Emissions from transport are a primary contributor to carbon emissions within the neighbourhood area, highlighting the need for spatial planning and infrastructure upgrades to reduce car dependency and increase active travel uptake.
- Opportunities to influence per capita emissions by encouraging integrated and connected development has the potential to reduce the need to travel and supports travel by more sustainable modes.
- The nearest mains gas supply is in Billingshurst. Without this connection, many in the village are reliant upon electricity, not only for cooking, but also heating. The electricity supply to the village has created difficulties for many, with fluctuations and short-term power cuts being experienced. Supporting opportunities to improve energy resilience and efficiency within the neighbourhood area (i.e., from alternative renewable sources, such as solar and heat pumps) are key considerations for plan making.

Community Wellbeing

- Loxwood, Kirdford, and Wisborough Green are described as *"service villages"* in Policy S2 Settlement Hierarchy in the Local Plan. A service village is considered to have a range of local services and facilities such as, but not exclusively, a school, village shop, a medical centre, public transport facilities and recreational facilities. The existing services, facilities, and amenities within the neighbourhood area support community vitality and the quality of life of residents, with the availability and longer-term viability of community assets essential for continued growth.
- Housing affordability and the availability of sustainable and appropriate dwellings for residents are key concerns for the local community.
- Population growth may increase demand for healthcare, housing, education, and community facilities, requiring coordinated infrastructure planning. Pressure on the existing primary school is a particular concern. Growth of residents aged 65+ is also likely to place increased strain on healthcare, social care, dementia services, and age-friendly infrastructure.
- The neighbourhood area has a number of strong green and blue infrastructure assets that can contribute towards the physical and mental wellbeing of residents. This includes local woodlands, waterways, green spaces, and open areas.
- Rural areas across Chichester District, including the neighbourhood area, experience inequalities in terms of public transport connectivity, affordability of housing, and accessibility to services and facilities.
- The neighbourhood area is primarily a rural environment reliant on traditional rural economies such as farming, forestry, and fishing industries. However, the neighbourhood area also has some small-scale industry other than farming, which includes retail businesses, a light industrial area at Newpound, self-catering holiday accommodation, and Fishers Farm Park tourist attraction.

Historic Environment

- The neighbourhood area has a range of designated and non-designated assets and areas, including 95 Listed Buildings, one Scheduled Monument, and nearly 30 unlisted buildings which have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal Map in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal as being positive buildings of townscape merit. These must be protected from inappropriate development that could damage their character, setting, and heritage significance. In particular, the historical aspect and prominence of the village church and the Wisborough Green Conservation Area (where 46 Listed Building are located).
- Development should impact positively upon and seek opportunities to enhance public understanding of heritage and archaeological assets within the neighbourhood area.
- Climate change poses a growing threat to heritage assets through flooding, erosion, material decay, and waterlogging.

Landscape

- Contributing to the evidence base for the Chichester Local Plan, the Landscape Capacity Study (LCS) considers the sensitivity and capacity of areas in terms of their potential to accommodate new development. There are areas of land surrounding Wisborough Green village which have a 'medium' to 'high' sensitivity to development and a 'low' capacity for change.
- Tranquillity and dark skies are vulnerable to light pollution and visual intrusion, with proposals affecting primarily rural locations (such as the neighbourhood area) potentially eroding these qualities. Careful design will be required to avoid fragmentation or loss of characteristics that contribute to the local character of rural environments.
- There are a range of landscape features present within the neighbourhood area which contribute to the character and quality of the landscape, detailed within the 14-character area appraisals. These features should be safeguarded where possible.
- Climate change may alter landscape patterns and increase the risk of drought or flooding, particularly affecting habitat networks which contribute to the special qualities of both local character and protected landscapes (e.g., the setting of the South Downs National Park).
- The expansion of the village has the potential to threaten open spaces and local green gaps, which may adversely impact local distinctiveness and sense of place. This requires careful spatial planning to limit adverse impacts on the landscape. Local factors include the visual character of the village (e.g., important local views and vistas) and the approach to the village from the surrounding areas including footpaths, bridleways and green lanes.

Natural Resources (Soil and Water)

- Development within the open countryside could result in the permanent loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. This could impact food production, landscape characteristics and soil quality.
- Redevelopment of brownfield sites offers opportunities to reduce urban sprawl, utilise existing infrastructure, and support regeneration. It is acknowledged that opportunities for brownfield development are limited across the neighbourhood area due to the availability of sites.
- Population growth and village expansion may increase demand for waste processing infrastructure. The capacity of existing facilities (e.g., the Newpound Lane sewerage system) may potentially need to be expanded to meet future needs, while ensuring that any new facilities do not adversely affect nearby communities or the environment.
- Climate change may increase the risk of soil erosion, drought, and flooding, affecting soil structure, moisture levels, and agricultural productivity, especially in areas containing best and most versatile agricultural land.
- With regards to water resources, Wisborough Green is surrounded by a variety of wetland - rivers, tributaries, a section of canal, ponds, springs and water meadows. A significant proportion of water bodies across the country do not

achieve good status, with most classified as moderate, poor or bad. Future development should ensure that no further deterioration occurs and should contribute to achieving good status as required by the Water Framework Directive. Locally, this is most likely to be achieved through incorporating natural drainage solutions and expanding natural features and permeable materials through the design of new development areas, reducing run-off into nearby water resources.

- Increased housing and associated infrastructure could lead to higher water consumption and wastewater generation, which may place additional pressures on water treatment facilities and local watercourses. Whilst this is primarily outside of the remit of the Plan to address, opportunities to support resource efficiency and circular economy principles through the design of new development areas should be encouraged.

Transport

- There is a high reliance on private vehicles within the neighbourhood area, and more broadly across rural environments in the district, reflecting limited availability, frequency and coverage of alternative transportation (primarily comprising a community-run minibus). The impact of strategic scale growth in the wider area (e.g., at Billinghurst and Adversane) may also increase traffic flow through the village (primarily the A272).
- There are existing congestion and traffic issues along the local road network, particularly along School Road, Newpound Lane, Kirdford Road, and Durbans Road. Contributing factors include roadside parking during school drop-off, sporting events around The Green, narrowness and pinch points, blind corners, sunken lanes, and a limited number of pavements. Additionally, throughout the centre of the village and on the estates, the speed limit is 30 mph which is often exceeded.
- Local road networks are vulnerable to climate change impacts, including flooding, overheating and infrastructure degradation (e.g., potholes, subsidence, and general erosion).
- Opportunities to expand active travel networks across the neighbourhood area, particularly between new development areas and the village centre, should be encouraged. This will help to facilitate opportunities for walking, wheeling, and cycling.

SEA Framework

3.1.7 The SEA Framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard ‘tests’. Each proposal within the current version (i.e., the Regulation 14 version) of the WGNP will be assessed consistently using the framework.

Table 3-2: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions

SEA theme	SEA objective(s)	Assessment questions (will the Plan help to…)
Air Quality	Support improvements to air	… minimise traffic congestion and encourage active travel and public

SEA theme	SEA objective(s)	Assessment questions (will the Plan help to…)
	quality and reduce exposure to air pollution.	transport use to reduce key pollutant emissions, particularly nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)? …support reduction in air pollution for key pollutants, including carbon dioxide emissions from road transport by 2030, contributing to net-zero ambitions? …ensure that new development, particularly housing, incorporates design considerations which minimise exposure to poor air quality?
Biodiversity	Maintain, create and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity habitats and networks within and surrounding the neighbourhood area, protect species diversity, and deliver net gains.	…avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on internationally and nationally designated sites and their integrity? …improve the condition of designated sites with indicators showing progress towards favourable condition in SSSIs? … contribute towards the Environmental Improvement Plan's target of protecting 30 per cent of the UK's land by 2030 to restore nature and promote species abundance? …protect and enhance locally important sites? …contribute towards Local Nature Recovery Networks and delivering net gains for nature, including via supporting connected and resilient green and blue infrastructure networks through habitat creation and restoration. …prevent habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation, maintaining or improving connectivity through wildlife corridors and ecological networks? …promote biodiversity net gain by encouraging habitat creation, restoration, and enhancement in development proposals? …support the conservation of priority habitats and protected species?

SEA theme	SEA objective(s)	Assessment questions (will the Plan help to…)
Climate Change Adaptation	Increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flood risk, extreme weather events, and natural hazards.	…avoid or reduce flood risk from fluvial, reservoir, groundwater and surface water sources, particularly in vulnerable areas? …incorporate natural drainage solutions, permeable materials, and water management systems to improve resilience to flood risks? …help reduce overheating and surface water flooding by protecting and expanding green infrastructure, expanding permeable surface cover and increasing tree cover (e.g. via urban greening / native planting)? …increase resilience to drought by supporting water efficiency, water reuse, and sustainable water management?
Climate Change Mitigation	Mitigate climate change by supporting the transition to net zero emissions, increasing efficiency and reducing energy use.	…ensure new developments achieve high energy efficiency with monitored performance? … reduce greenhouse gas emissions to accelerate to net zero and work to prepare the natural environment for the effects of climate change? …expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support the shift to electric vehicles? …consider the potential for local renewable energy generation? …promote sustainable transport options that reduce transport emissions?
Community Wellbeing	Support the delivery of a range of housing types and tenures to meet local needs, with a focus on affordability. Promote and protect health, wellbeing, and safety by enhancing green infrastructure and	…increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing for all residents, including lower-income and vulnerable groups? …deliver a balanced housing mix that meets the needs of different household types? …support the delivery of housing in locations with good access to services, facilities and sustainable transport modes?

SEA theme	SEA objective(s)	Assessment questions (will the Plan help to…)
	creating safe and sustainable communities.	…ensure housing growth is supported by adequate infrastructure, services, and community facilities?
	Support a productive, diverse and resilient economy that provides opportunities for all.	… increase the availability of accessible, inclusive, and interconnected green and blue open spaces for nature for everyone within a 15-minute walk from home?
		…reduce health, crime and living environment inequalities, particularly in the most deprived areas?
		…support physical and mental health outcomes across different population groups?
		…enable flexible working through digital infrastructure and facilitating adaptable workspaces through design?
		…ensure sufficient and appropriate employment land is available to meet current and future business needs?
Historic Environment	Conserve and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and areas (and their setting) within the neighbourhood area.	…safeguard designated and non-designated heritage assets form harm or inappropriate development?
		…improve the condition, diversity, and character of the neighbourhood area's historic environment and heritage features?
		…respect and enhance the character, setting, and integrity of conservation areas and historic viewpoints?
		…address climate change risks to heritage through sustainable conservation and adaption measures?
		…promote public access, understanding and enjoyment of the neighbourhood area's historic environment?
		…support the positive use of the historic environment in a way that contributes to the achievement of wider social, environmental and economic objectives?
Landscape	Protect and enhance the	…improve the condition, diversity and character of the local landscape and

SEA theme	SEA objective(s)	Assessment questions (will the Plan help to…)
	character and quality of the landscape and public realm, including the setting of protected landscapes.	villagescape, safeguarding distinctiveness and sense of place? …respect the special qualities and sensitivities of both the rural and built environments within the neighbourhood area (and their interrelationships)? …preserve tranquillity and dark night skies, avoiding significant increases in noise or light pollution? …integrate and promote green infrastructure, including tree planting, parks and natural corridors to support biodiversity, recreation, and climate resilience? …create opportunities to enhance the quality of the public realm?
Natural Resources (Soil and Water)	Protect soil and mineral resources, promote efficient land use and manage waste effectively. Protect and enhance water quality and resources, supporting the application of nature-based solutions and reducing pollution risks.	…safeguard best and most versatile agricultural land from unnecessary loss or degradation, prioritising development on brownfield or lower-quality land where possible? …minimise waste generated during development, supporting circular economy through waste management and ‘design for life’ principles and promoting the sustainable use/production of natural resources? …safeguard mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding/ Consultation Areas, ensuring that non-mineral development does not prevent future extraction? …facilitate improvements to the ecological status of local water bodies, supporting the achievement of ‘good’ status as required by the Water Framework Directive? …minimise pollution risks from nitrate vulnerable zones, urban runoff, construction, and wastewater discharge? …reduce water consumption through incorporation of water-efficient technologies such as rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling?

SEA theme	SEA objective(s)	Assessment questions (will the Plan help to…)
Transport	Encourage a modal shift to sustainable and active transport use.	…reduce reliance on private car use and encourage modal shift to public and active transport modes (e.g., walking, wheeling and cycling)?
	Improve accessibility to essential services and facilities within the neighbourhood area.	…integrate climate resilience measures to protect key transport infrastructure from flooding, heat damage, and other extreme weather impacts?
		…establish opportunities to reduce congestion and traffic through the village centre?
		…minimise road safety risks by reducing reliance on private car travel and supporting active travel uptake?

4. Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives Through the SEA

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include:

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.

4.1.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, how the SEA process to date has informed the consideration of different approaches for meeting housing needs within the neighbourhood area.

4.2 Defining Reasonable Alternatives

4.2.1 Whilst work on the WGNP has been underway for some time, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of work to date, but rather to explain work undertaken to develop and appraise reasonable alternatives.

4.2.2 In the context of the above, this chapter of the Environmental Report presents information on reasonable alternative approaches to addressing key issues that are of central importance to the WGNP. Principally, the consideration of how to meet housing needs within the neighbourhood area (i.e., the 'preferred spatial strategy' for the WGNP).

Housing Numbers to Deliver Through the Neighbourhood Plan

4.2.3 Wisborough Green is classified as a *"service village"* in Policy S2 Settlement Hierarchy in the Local Plan. A service village is considered to have a range of local services and facilities such as, but not exclusively, a school, village shop, a medical centre, public transport facilities and recreational facilities.

4.2.4 Wisborough Green has been allocated a housing requirement of 75 homes by the end of the Local Plan period (2039), in addition to the 68 homes allocated in the original Neighbourhood Plan. To date, 51 of the original 68 homes have been built and a further 6 are committed (57 total). The residual 11 homes were originally planned for delivery at 'Clark's Yard', but this site has since been withdrawn**.**

4.2.5 As the Clark's Yard site, allocated for 11 dwellings in the made Neighbourhood Plan, has been withdrawn, a replacement site is required, increasing the overall housing requirement to 86 dwellings. Recent planning permissions, Barnfield Shaw and Tanglewood Nursery, provide 18 dwellings towards this number, leaving a residual housing requirement of **68 homes** to be delivered via neighbourhood plan site allocations.

Consideration of Potential Site Options

4.2.6 The site selection process began by identifying a pool of potential sites which were identified through the Chichester Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) and the Wisborough Green 'Call for Sites'. In total, 22 potential sites were identified for assessment.

4.2.7 Each site was visited and assessed by the Neighbourhood Group. The assessment methodology and criteria were reviewed by Chichester District Council and an independent planning consultant to ensure they were compliant with the NPPF, Local Plan policy, current legislation and best practice. Sites were assessed against a range of criteria, including site access, accessibility by non-car modes, impact on village character and designated open spaces, Local Green Gaps, landscape, heritage, biodiversity, and flooding, drainage and water sources. Following this, each site was given an overall RAG (red, amber, green) rating which can be viewed here.

4.2.8 The assessment concluded that 15 sites were not currently suitable, available or achievable, either because they presented significant constraints for which no effective mitigation was identified, or because they had been withdrawn by the landowner. These sites were not considered to comply with the relevant criteria of the NPPF (2024), the adopted Chichester Local Plan (2025) or the made Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan (2016).

4.2.9 The remaining seven site options were concluded as being potentially suitable, available, and achievable (either in full or in part) for a neighbourhood plan allocation. These sites have formed the basis for the consideration of reasonable alternatives through the SEA. With respect to the sites; 'Sweephurst Farm Shed' (WG25-11) and 'Wharf Farm' (WG25-21) were excluded on the following grounds:

- Sweephurst Farm Shed ((WG25-11): The main reasons for non-support from the community were issues concerning highway access and the size of the site. Following a local consultation event the neighbourhood group were also advised of a covenant relating to the current shed on the site which restricts future use. This limited the viability of the site for a residential allocation.
- Wharf Farm (WG25-21): This site has been put forward for commercial uses rather than residential uses and has been allocated within the WGNP to support and strengthen the local economy.

4.2.10 Although Sweephurst Field (WG25-13) was rated 'red' through the site assessment RAG process, following engagement with the site promoter the Parish Council confirmed that an outline planning application for up to 60 homes on the site is expected to come forward. The site has therefore been taken forward as reasonable alternative for consideration by plan makers (and the SEA). The sites are listed below in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1: Sites Informing the Selection of Reasonable Alternatives

Site ref	Name of Site	Indicative Capacity
WG25-1	Ansells Yard, Kirdford Road	26
WG25-6	Tanyards, Petworth Road	12
WG25-7	Land South of A272, Petworth Road	15
WG25-8	Paddock Farm, Petworth Road	10
WG25-13	Sweephurst Field	60
WG25-14	Winterfold Garden, Durbans Road	5

Spatial Strategy Options to Consider Through the SEA

4.2.11 To support the choice of a development strategy for the WGNP, the SEA process has assessed three spatial strategy options as reasonable alternatives. These spatial strategy options comprise packages of the sites identified above, with a view to delivering the residual housing requirement of **68 homes** for the neighbourhood area.

4.2.12 It is acknowledged that theoretically there are several potential combinations which could be applied to the options. The combinations which have been tested seek to avoid an under-delivery or over-delivery of homes, i.e., from applying lower growth or higher growth across all of the variable components, whilst also reflecting the key choices for plan makers tasked with selecting the preferred approach at this stage of plan making.

4.2.13 The options are as follows:

- **Option 1:** Delivery of new housing through allocations at WG25-1, WG25-6, WG25-7, WG25-8, and WG25-14.
- **Option 2:** Delivery of new housing through an allocation at WG25-13.
- **Option 3:** Delivery of new housing through allocations at WG25-1, WG25-14, and a reduced allocation at WG25-13.

4.2.14 The SEA has appraised the relative sustainability merits associated with these three options with a view to informing the plan making process.

4.2.15 A fourth option was also considered, allocating all six of the potential site options (WG25-1, WG25-6, WG25-7, WG25-8, WG25-13 and WG25-14). Whilst this option would take a proactive, longer-term approach to site identification, anticipating potential future housing needs in light of Chichester District Council's forthcoming review of the Local Plan, it would deliver up to approximately 128 homes. This level of growth would likely place considerable pressure on local services and infrastructure without interventions, including school places and the sewerage network, which is already identified as being under strain. It would also run contrary to community feedback through the original Neighbourhood Plan, which expressed a preference for incremental rather than large-scale development. On balance, this option was therefore not considered to be a reasonable alternative, and it has not been tested in detail through the SEA.

4.2.16 **Figure 4-1** overleaf visually presents the options tested through the SEA.

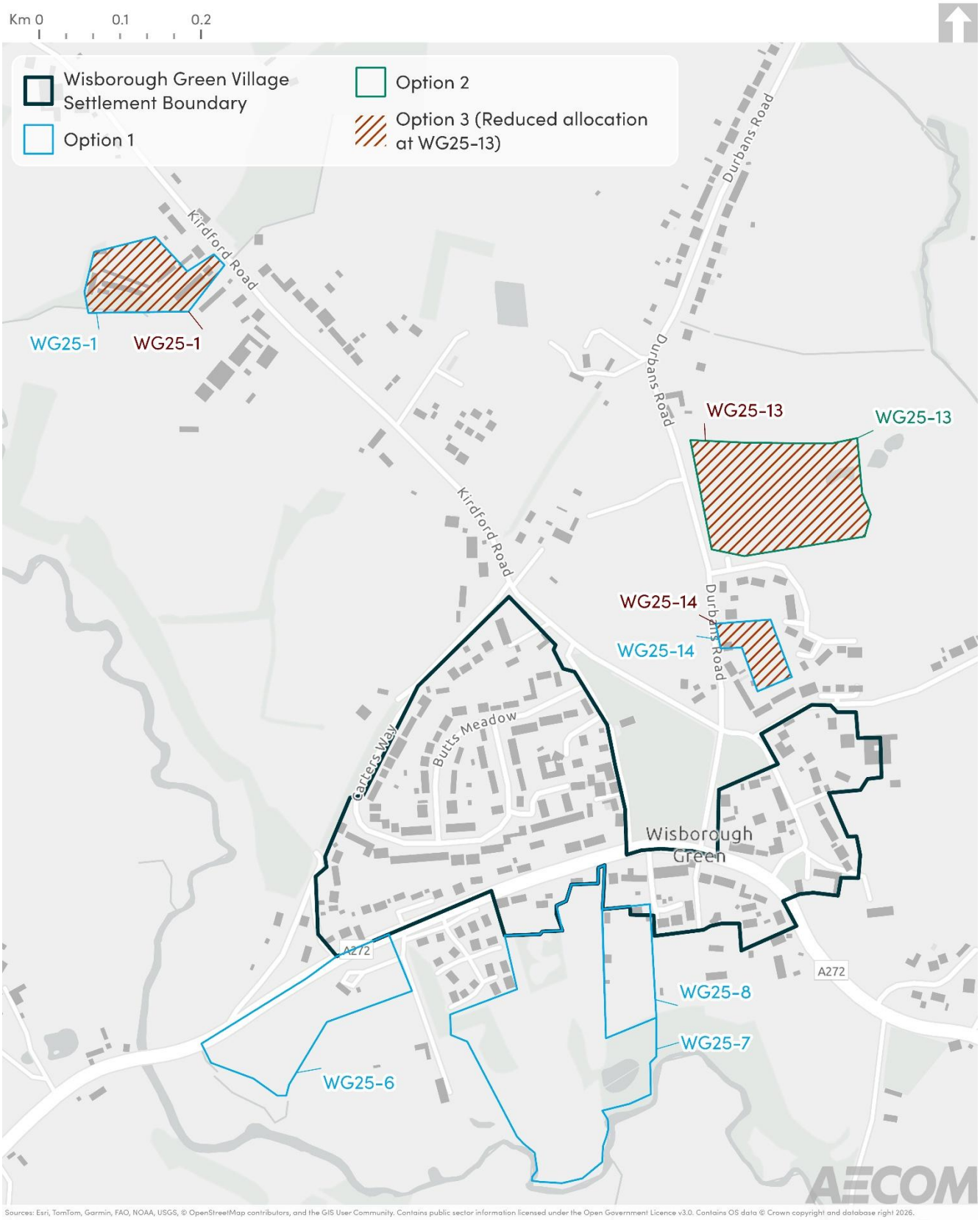


Figure 4-1: Options Considered as Reasonable Alternatives Through the SEA

Appraisal Findings

4.2.17 Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the appraisal has been presented through nine SEA Themes, as follows:

- Air Quality
- Biodiversity;
- Climate Change Adaptation;
- Climate Change Mitigation;
- Community Wellbeing;
- Historic Environment;
- Landscape;
- Natural Resources (Soil and Water)
- Transportation.

4.2.18 The appraisal considers the relative sustainability merits of the spatial strategy options. To support the findings, the options have been ranked by their sustainability performance against each theme. This gives the reader an indication of the relative performance of the three options. Alongside the ranking, a conclusion is reached for each option under each SEA theme on the likelihood of significant effects, with reasons. Each option is identified as likely to lead to positive, negative, mixed or no significant effects. It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the relative performance of the three options in relation to each theme considered.

4.2.19 The appraisal has been informed by the baseline information, context review, and key sustainability issues identified at the SEA scoping stage. **Table 4-1** to **Table 4-9** below present the appraisal findings. A summary of the appraisal findings (including the overall rankings and identification of likely significant effects) is provided in **Table 4-10**.

Table 4-1: Appraisal Findings (Air Quality)

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

There are no designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the neighbourhood area. However, vehicle emissions remain a major source of air pollution within Chichester District. Whilst air quality issues are generally more pronounced in larger towns and villages, all areas are sensitive to the pressures on air quality associated with new growth.

The neighbourhood area has limited access to public transport. New residents are therefore likely to be reliant on private vehicles to access goods and services in larger settlements beyond the village. Growth through any option is therefore

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

anticipated to lead to an increase in private vehicle usage and associated emissions.

Development close to Wisborough Green village centre, where most local services and facilities are found, can help to limit vehicle emissions by enabling residents to make local trips on foot. All three options include land within a five-minute walk of the village centre. However, one of the potential sites within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-1) lies partially outside the ten-minute walking isochrone and currently has no pavement along Kirdford Road, which is likely to discourage walking and increase reliance on private vehicles for local trips. In this respect, Options 1 and 3 perform less favourably than Option 2, as all the growth at this site would be within close proximity to the village centre. Despite this, the difference between the options is not considered to be significant in the context of air pollution, given that most longer trips are likely to be undertaken by car due to the limited public transport available within the neighbourhood area.

Growth through all three options also has the potential to contribute to cumulative effects on air quality alongside strategic-scale growth in the wider area. This growth is likely to increase traffic flows through the village, primarily along the A272 and B2133. Given that all options would deliver a similar scale of growth, their contribution to these cumulative effects is likely to be similar. This is not anticipated to be significant in the context of wider traffic flows along these routes.

All options also have the potential to generate short-term, localised increases in air pollution during construction, such as dust and emissions from construction traffic. These would be similar across all options.

Table 4-2: Appraisal Findings (Biodiversity)

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been completed for the WGNP, given the proximity of the neighbourhood area to several European designated sites that contain habitats and species listed in the annexes of both the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). Whilst none of the potential sites considered through the options directly overlap with a European designated site, in light of the sensitivities within the wider neighbourhood area, at this stage it is not possible to distinguish between the options in terms of their potential to indirectly impact the integrity of European designated sites. The potential impacts on European designated sites associated with the proposed site allocations is discussed within Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report.

Regarding national designations, there is one SSSI, The Mens, located within the neighbourhood area, to the south west of Wisborough Green village. This designation contains features protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). The potential site allocations considered through all options fall within SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs). However, the IRZ thresholds for residential development differ across the neighbourhood area. Site WG25-1 (Options 1 and 3) falls within an IRZ that does not require consultation with Natural

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

England for residential development. All remaining sites fall within an IRZ that requires consultation for any residential development of 100 or more units outside existing settlements/urban areas. On this basis, none of the options are anticipated to adversely affect the integrity of nationally designated sites, and all options perform similarly in this respect.

With regard to locally designated sites for biodiversity conservation (i.e. without statutory protection) and important habitats, the neighbourhood area contains important habitat sites (including Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat and Ancient Woodland). The local ecological constraints associated with each site are as follows:

- WG25-1 (Options 1 and 3): Does not contain or adjoin any mapped priority habitat.
- WG25-6 (Option 1): Does not contain any mapped priority habitat but adjoins an area of priority habitat to the south.
- WG25-7 (Option 1): The southern section of the site overlaps with an area of priority habitat. This is the only site considered through the options that contains priority habitat.
- WG25-8 (Option 1): Does not contain any mapped priority habitat but adjoins the area of priority habitat.
- WG25-13 (Options 2 and 3): Does not contain or adjoin any mapped priority habitat. However, a number of ponds lie immediately to the east of the site.
- WG25-14 (Options 1 and 3): Does not contain or adjoin any mapped priority habitat.

Proposals for larger sites have the potential to be designed to incorporate green infrastructure enhancements at a scale which can positively contribute to local networks, linking areas together and positively contributing to biodiversity objectives. In this context, Options 2 and 3 are perhaps more likely to enhance ecological networks through new development areas, providing proposals are designed to deliver measurable, proportionate, and appropriate biodiversity net gains (BNG) in line with national and local policy.

Table 4-3: Appraisal Findings (Climate Change Adaptation)

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

New development has the potential to increase flood risk by changing surface and groundwater flows, overloading existing drainage and wastewater networks, and increasing the number of residents exposed to existing areas of flood risk.

In relation to fluvial flood risk, all of the sites within Options 2 and 3 (WG25-1, WG25-13 and WG25-14), as well as WG25-8 within Option 1, lie within Flood Zone 1, meaning fluvial flood risk is unlikely to comprise a significant constraint to development through either Option. Comparatively, the southern sections of WG25-6 and WG25-7 within Option 1 extend down towards the River Kird and fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Therefore, in regard to fluvial flood risk, Options 2 and 3 perform equally and are more favourable than Option 1, which is the only option

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

to include land within Flood Zones 2 and 3. That said, the level of growth likely to come forward at WG25-6 and WG25-7 may enable development to be contained within the less sensitive, northern parts of the sites, away from the areas at risk of flooding. It is also considered that the provisions of the NPPF and local policy, including the sequential and exception tests, will help guide development away from these areas.

Regarding surface water flood risk, flooding is known to affect all access roads into Wisborough Green, at times cutting the village off, and development on greenfield land has the potential to exacerbate this by increasing impermeable surfaces. Option 1 includes sites at highest surface water risk, along the River Kird at WG25-6 and WG25-7, although it is recognised that these areas primarily overlap with the fluvial flood risk zones previously discussed. Introducing new areas of hardstanding as a result of development may increase surface water runoff and pose localised flood risks to adjacent land. Despite this, the application of suitable drainage infrastructure should effectively manage and reduce runoff across all sites, which could in turn lead to flood betterment opportunities. Site WG25-1 and WG25-6 contain sections of previously developed land, where development at the site may provide such a betterment opportunity and lower flood risk compared to the baseline by introducing sustainable drainage. In contrast, Option 2 would concentrate development on a single greenfield site (WG25-13) with more limited, though still present flood risk. Furthermore, the site assessment notes that drainage to the brook could increase flooding downstream at Moonsbrook. On balance Option 3 is considered to perform most favourably with regard to surface water flood risk, as it avoids the areas at high risk along the River Kird corridor, includes brownfield land at WG25-1 where redevelopment offers potential for flood betterment and would develop a smaller area of greenfield land at WG25-13 than Option 2.

Table 4-4: Appraisal Findings (Climate Change Mitigation)

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

In response to the UK Government's commitment to tackling the climate crisis, Chichester District Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019, and the council is committed to making the authority net-zero carbon by 2030. In the context of this, it will be important for the WGNP to encourage proposals which seek to mitigate climate change.

Development close to Wisborough Green village centre, where most local services and facilities are found, can help to limit vehicle emissions by enabling residents to make local trips on foot. All three options include land within a five-minute walk of the village centre. However, the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-1) lies partially outside the ten-minute walking isochrone and currently has no pavement along Kirdford Road, which is more likely to discourage walking and increase reliance on private vehicles for local trips. In this respect, Options 1 and 3 perform less favourably than Option 2, which would focus growth at a site approximately half within the five-minute walking isochrone and wholly within the ten-minute isochrone. Despite this, the difference between the options is not considered to be significant in the context of climate change mitigation, given that most longer trips are likely to

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

be undertaken by car due to the limited public transport available within the neighbourhood area.

All three options would deliver a broadly similar scale of growth, although Option 2 would fall marginally short of the identified housing requirement. As such, each option is anticipated to lead to a similar increase in absolute carbon emissions, associated with domestic energy use and additional vehicle movements.

The neighbourhood area is not connected to the mains gas network, and residents are reliant on electricity for heating as well as cooking. The local electricity supply is also subject to fluctuations and short-term power cuts. Growth through any option would increase demand on this supply, and in this respect the options perform similarly.

The Neighbourhood Group's site assessment evidence highlights that all sites offer some potential to accommodate rooftop solar, although this varies between sites. Solar panels on the sites within Option 1 to the south of the A272 (WG25-7 and WG25-8) would not be visible from the village or church, and those on the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-1) would be unobtrusive, as the site is set back. In contrast, solar panels on the site within Options 2 and 3 (WG25-13) would be visible from the church, and proximity to the Conservation Area may limit solar potential on the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-14). Option 1 is therefore considered to perform marginally more favourably with regard to renewable energy generation, as a greater number of its sites offer unconstrained potential to integrate renewable energy generation into new development, which would contribute towards reducing total greenhouse gas emissions within the neighbourhood area. Nonetheless, it is recognised that the viability of solar infrastructure will also likely depend on a variety of other factors (e.g., types of homes built, orientation), which are uncertain at this stage of plan making in the absence of detailed design proposals for the sites.

Table 4-5: Appraisal Findings (Community Wellbeing)

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

Wisborough Green is identified as a 'service village' in Policy S2 (Settlement Hierarchy) of the Chichester Local Plan, with a range of local services and facilities that support community vitality and residents' quality of life. Housing affordability and the availability of appropriate dwellings are key concerns for the local community. Population growth is also likely to increase demand for local infrastructure, with pressure on the existing primary school and an ageing demographic of particular concern.

All three options perform favourably for accessibility to local services and facilities in Wisborough Green, with each option including land within a five-minute walk of the village centre. However, the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-1) lies partially outside the ten-minute walking isochrone and currently has poor pedestrian access, with no pavement along Kirdford Road. This could limit pedestrian access to village services for new residents at this location. As this site represents one of the larger allocations within Option 1, this could affect a considerable proportion of new

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

residents. In this respect, Options 1 and 3 perform less favourably than Option 2, which would focus growth at a site in close proximity to the village centre.

Proposals for larger sites have the potential to generate developer contributions which could provide additional (or expand the existing) services and facilities offered within the neighbourhood area, positively contributing to community vitality and wellbeing. Development of larger sites also increases the viability of providing housing of an appropriate type and tenure (including affordable housing) to meet local needs. As such, Site WG25-13 (Option 2 and 3) has the greatest potential to deliver wider benefits for the community in this respect, although it would result in the complete or partial loss of a Local Green Gap. In contrast Option 1 would spread growth across five smaller sites, some of these sites, such as WG25-14 within Options 1 and 3, are of a scale which may limit the on-site delivery of affordable housing.

In terms of the overall housing supply, Options 1 and 3 would both meet the residual housing requirement of 68 homes in full. Option 2 would deliver up to 60 homes at a single site (WG25-13). This would fall short of the requirement of 68 with the anticipated shortfall expected to come forward via windfall sites or speculative applications during the plan period.

The benefits to wellbeing and mental health resulting from close contact with the natural environment are well-documented. In this regard, the land surrounding Wisborough Green village is predominantly rural; therefore, there is a good supply of local woodland and rivers near all of the considered sites, many of which can be accessed by the local public footpath network. The site within Options 2 and 3 (WG25-13) is adjacent to the existing Songhurst Meadow and offers potential to provide additional public open space linking through to this existing space, improving the interconnectedness of local green spaces. Development of the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-14) would result in the loss of private open space, which is noted as a characteristic of the village, although this space is not publicly accessible.

With regard to the local economy, the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-1) is currently in light industrial and storage use. Development would therefore result in the loss of existing employment land under both options. However, this use is in decline due to deteriorating buildings, and minimal loss of employment is anticipated. No other sites under consideration are in employment use.

It is also recognised that community feedback through the original Neighbourhood Plan expressed a preference for incremental development rather than large-scale development. The delivery of up to 60 homes at a single site through Option 2 has been raised as excessive and difficult for the village to absorb. Option 3 would reduce the scale of development at this site, with the remaining growth spread across smaller sites that have been supported through community engagement. Comparatively, Option 1 would disperse growth across five sites, which is most consistent with the type of growth favoured by the community.

Table 4-6: Appraisal Findings (Historic Environment)

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

The neighbourhood area contains a range of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including 95 Listed Buildings, one Scheduled Monument, and nearly 30 unlisted buildings identified as positive buildings of townscape merit in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal[7]. The Wisborough Green Conservation Area contains 46 of the Listed Buildings, and the historical aspect and prominence of the village church are of particular importance.

In terms of designated heritage assets, Option 1 would deliver growth at four sites with heritage sensitivities. Part of the site within Option 1 to the south of the A272 (WG25-7), lies within the Conservation Area. The adjacent Option 1 site (WG25-8) lies on the Conservation Area boundary. Both sites would be accessed via a track between two Grade II Listed Buildings (Albion House and Coed Afal), and both lie to the rear of Listed Buildings fronting the A272. A further Option 1 site (WG25-6) lies to the north of the Grade II Listed Old Tanyard Farmhouse. However, the farmhouse is screened by trees and is not visible from the site, so impacts on its setting are likely to be limited. The site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-14) lies on the Conservation Area boundary and shares a boundary with two Grade II Listed Buildings, including the village public house. Development at this location has the potential to be visible from within the Conservation Area.

The site within Options 2 and 3 (WG25-13) is in close proximity to Grade II listed buildings, and lies alongside the Conservation Area boundary on Durbans Road. Development has the potential to affect the setting of these assets. This potential is greatest under Option 2, which would develop the whole site. Option 3 would reduce development at this location, but would also include WG25-14, adjacent to the Conservation Area and two Listed Buildings.

With regard to non-designated assets, the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-14) shares a boundary with two buildings identified as positive buildings of townscape merit in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal[8].

Overall, based on the findings of the appraisal above, all three options are likely to lead to significant negative effects on the historic environment in the absence of mitigation and enhancement measures throughout the design of new development. Reflecting this, consultation with Historic England is encouraged to ensure that development proposals implement sensitive design which respects and enhances the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets and areas.

Table 4-7: Appraisal Findings (Landscape)

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

None of the options are within the South Downs National Park and given the distance between the sites and the National Park boundary, growth through any option is not anticipated to significantly affect its setting. On this basis, the key

[7] Chichester District Council (2010) '*Wisborough Green Character Appraisal & Management Proposals*' can be accessed via this link.
[8] Ibid.

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

differences between the sustainability performance of the options is the local landscape sensitivities of the potential sites.

The Chichester Landscape Capacity Study (2019) identifies the land surrounding Wisborough Green as having a high landscape sensitivity and low capacity for development[9], which could not be accommodated without significant adverse effects on landscape character. The study considers development south of the A272 and outside the settlement boundary unlikely to be accommodated and warns against the loss of strategic rural gaps. In the context of the Landscape Capacity Study, growth through any option has the potential to affect the rural character and setting of the village.

The site within Options 2 and 3 (WG25-13) lies wholly within a Local Green Gap, separating the village core from radial development along Durbans Road. Development would infill this land, resulting in coalescence of the built area and the loss of a strategic rural gap. This effect would be greatest under Option 2, which would develop the whole site. Option 3 would retain a greater proportion of the gap, though it would still result in its partial loss. Option 1 would largely avoid development in Local Green Gaps, although the lower western section of WG25-6 falls within a newly defined gap. Furthermore, three sites under Option 1 are to the south of the A272 (WG25-6, WG25-7 and WG25-8), where the Landscape Capacity Study considers development unlikely to be accommodated. Nonetheless, as this position is consistent across all options and is the baseline condition for the village as a whole, this limits the significance of potential effects under Option 1.

With respect to visual setting and village character, development of the site within Options 2 and 3 (WG25-13) would affect the rural approach to the village along Durbans Road, including open views and potentially the view of the church spire. Within Option 1, WG25-6 would be partially visible on the approach from Petworth along the A272. Whilst WG25-7 and WG25-8 are largely screened from public view, they extend towards the River Kird, which forms part of the rural setting of the village and the Conservation Area. Comparatively, the sites within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-1 and WG25-14) are well contained by existing development.

Option 1 would direct growth to a greater number of smaller sites, which could help to maintain the size, form and identity of the village. This is also in conformity with previous Neighbourhood Plan consultations which had identified a preference for development being spread over smaller sites.

The Landscape Capacity Study identifies dark skies as prevailing across the landscape both to the north and south of the village. Development through any option would therefore introduce additional built form and light pollution into a sensitive rural landscape, and the options are considered to perform similarly in this respect.

With regard to the public realm, the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-1) comprises deteriorating light industrial and storage buildings, and redevelopment for housing offers the potential to deliver positive effects if a landscape led scheme could be

[9] Chichester District Council (2019) '*Chichester Landscape Capacity Study*' can be accessed via this link.

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

delivered in line with design guidance. Conversely, development of the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-14) would result in the loss of a private open space that is characteristic of the village, although this space is not publicly accessible.

Table 4-8: Appraisal Findings (Natural resources (Soil and Water))

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

Regarding the location of the best and most versatile land, a detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) assessment has not been undertaken within the neighbourhood area. The predictive Agricultural Land Classification provided by DEFRA indicates that none of the sites are underlain by best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a). The site within Options 2 and 3 (WG25-13) and the Option 1 sites to the south of the A272 (WG25-6, WG25-7 and WG25-8) are predominantly Grade 3b ('moderate') or classified as urban. The sites within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-1 and WG25-14) are predominantly classified as urban. Growth through any option is therefore unlikely to result in the loss of best and most versatile land, although the predictive dataset does not replace site-specific surveys.

Whilst none of the sites under consideration are listed on Chichester's Brownfield Register[10], satellite imagery can give an indication as to whether the site has previously been developed. Analysis has shown that two of the sites contain brownfield land (WG25-1 and WG25-6). All remaining sites are greenfield. In this regard, as Options 1 and 3 make use of more previously developed land, these options perform slightly more favourably than Option 2 in this respect through encouraging the most efficient use of land at these locations.

Wastewater capacity also differs between the options. The site assessments identify existing foul water drainage issues associated with the site within Options 2 and 3 (WG25-13) and note that foul water disposal at the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-14) would require careful consideration. No foul water issues are identified for the remaining sites. As Option 2 would concentrate all growth at WG25-13, it has the greatest potential to place additional pressure on wastewater infrastructure with known capacity issues.

Wisborough Green is surrounded by a variety of water resources, including rivers, unnamed streams and ponds. There is potential for impacts to water quality from run-off at the Option 1 sites to the south of the A272 (WG25-6, WG25-7 and WG25-8), given that these sites slope towards the River Kird. Similarly, the site within Options 2 and 3 (WG25-13) contains natural and man-made ponds, with surface water from development likely to drain to the brook towards Moonsbrook. The plan should ensure that a buffer of at least 8m is maintained between any proposed development and any watercourse, in line with Chichester Local Plan Policy NE16 (Water Management and Water Quality), in order to maintain access, protect biodiversity and avoid impacts to natural flood defence infrastructure. With regard to WG25-6 and WG25-7, the level of growth likely to come forward may enable development to be contained within the northern parts of the sites, in proximity to

[10] Chichester District Council (2025) '*Brownfield Land Register*' can be accessed via this link.

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

the existing village. It is anticipated that this would allow such a buffer to be maintained from the River Kird.

All three options would deliver a broadly similar scale of growth. They are therefore likely to lead to a similar increase in water consumption and in waste generated during construction and occupation.

Table 4-9: Appraisal Findings (Transportation)

Discussion of Potential Effects and Relative Merits of Options

There is a high reliance on private vehicles within the neighbourhood area, reflecting the limited availability, frequency and coverage of public transport, which primarily comprises a community-run minibus. Growth through any option is therefore likely to increase car use, with new residents reliant on private vehicles for most journeys outside of the village.

Given that Wisborough Green experiences existing congestion issues along School Road, Newpound Lane, Kirdford Road and Durbans Road, sites which are more suitably placed to support walking to local services and facilities, and which avoid directing additional traffic onto these roads, are better performing in relation to this SEA theme. As all of the sites are within walking distance of the village centre, all three options perform relatively favourably with respect to accessibility to local services and facilities.

Regarding site access by car, Option 2 would concentrate all growth at WG25-13 with access from Durbans Road, which the site assessment notes is likely to increase traffic through the village centre and along narrow lanes. Option 3 would similarly direct all of its growth onto roads with known congestion issues, with WG25-13 and WG25-14 accessed from Durbans Road and WG25-1 from Kirdford Road. Comparatively, three of the five sites within Option 1 (WG25-6, WG25-7 and WG25-8) would take access directly from the A272, reducing the proportion of traffic directed onto congested local lanes, although the shared access to WG25-7 and WG25-8 between two Listed Buildings may constrain the capacity of these sites given the volume of traffic movements onto the A272.

Summary of Appraisal Findings

4.2.20 The table below summarises the rankings of the options with regards to their relative sustainability performance in relation to each SEA Theme.

Table 4-10: Overall rankings and likely significant effects

SEA Theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Air Quality	Option Rank	**=1**	**=1**	**=1**
	Significant effects?	No	No	No
Biodiversity	Option Rank	**2**	**=1**	**=1**
	Significant effects?	No	No	No
Climate Change Adaptation	Option Rank	3	2	**1**
	Significant effects?	**Yes - mixed**	No	No
Climate Change Mitigation	Option Rank	**=1**	**=1**	**=1**
	Significant effects?	No	No	No
Community Wellbeing	Option Rank	**1**	3	2
	Significant effects?	**Yes - positive**	**Yes - mixed**	**Yes - mixed**
Historic Environment	Option Rank	3	**1**	2
	Significant effects?	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - negative**
Landscape	Option Rank	**1**	3	2
	Significant effects?	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - negative**
Natural Resources (Soil and Water)	Option Rank	1	3	2
	Significant effects?	**Yes - mixed**	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - mixed**
Transportation	Option Rank	**1**	=2	=2
	Significant effects?	No	**Yes - negative**	**Yes - negative**

4.2.21 In conclusion, all three options perform similarly in relation to the air quality SEA theme. Option 2 is better placed in terms of proximity to the village centre, given that the site within Options 1 and 3 (WG25-1) lies partially outside the ten-minute walking isochrone with no pavement along Kirdford Road. However, this difference is not considered to be significant in the context of air quality, as growth through any option is likely to increase

private vehicle usage for journeys outside of the village given the limited public transport available within the neighbourhood area. As such, no option is considered to perform more favourably than another, and no significant effects are predicted given the modest growth proposed under each of the options. Any effects on air quality would be minor, long-term and indirect, arising from increased vehicle movements, with the potential for cumulative effects alongside strategic growth at Billingshurst and Adversane, as well as short-term, temporary effects during construction

4.2.22 In conclusion, the sites within all three options fall within at least one SSSI IRZ related to the type of development being proposed. Site WG25-1 (Options 1 and 3) falls within an IRZ that does not require consultation with Natural England for residential development. All remaining sites fall within an IRZ that requires consultation for any residential development of 100 or more units outside existing settlements/urban areas. On this basis, none of the options are anticipated to adversely affect the integrity of nationally designated sites, and all options perform similarly in this respect. The key differentiating factor between the options is their proximity to priority habitats. Options 2 and 3 are therefore ranked jointly as the most favourable options. In addition, larger sites such as WG25-13 (Options 2 and 3) offer greater scope to incorporate green infrastructure enhancements at a scale which can positively contribute to local networks, linking areas together and positively contributing to biodiversity objectives. Cumulative effects are possible under Option 1, given that the three sites along the River Kird overlap or adjoin priority habitat.

4.2.23 Potential impacts relating to climate change adaptation are largely dependent on the extent to which adaptation measures are incorporated into the design of new development areas. Whilst the sites within Option 2 and 3 are all located within Flood Zone 1, Option 1 includes land within Flood Zones 2 and 3, as well as areas at high risk of surface water flooding along the River Kird. Option 1 therefore performs least favourably. However, Option 1 also includes brownfield land at WG25-1 and WG25-6, where redevelopment could introduce more permeable surfaces and sustainable drainage through design, reducing surface water flood risk compared to the existing baseline. Significant mixed effects are therefore considered likely under Option 1. Option 3 performs marginally more favourable than Option 2, given that it includes brownfield land at WG25-1, where redevelopment offers potential for flood betterment, and would see a smaller area of greenfield land developed at WG25-13. Effects under Option 1 would be long-term and potentially permanent, both direct, through exposing new residents to flood risk, and indirect, through increased run-off affecting surrounding land. Under Options 2 and 3, indirect effects downstream at Moonsbrook are also possible.

4.2.24 Potential impacts relating to climate change mitigation are largely dependent on the extent to which new development reduces greenhouse gas emissions and integrates renewable energy generation. With regards to significant effects, it is invariably difficult to draw strong conclusions. On the one hand, climate change mitigation is a global issue (such that local actions may only have a limited effect); however, on the other hand, there is a need for a level of ambition in line with national and local commitments. In terms of transport-related emissions, there are some marginal differences between

the options with regard to the walking distance of sites from services and facilities; for example, Option 2 is slightly better located in relation to the village centre, as site WG25-1 under Options 1 and 3 lies partially outside the ten-minute walking isochrone. However, all of the sites are broadly close to the village centre, and these differences are not considered significant. The key consideration is that the existing public transport baseline is limited, meaning that future residents are likely to remain reliant on private vehicles for journeys outside of the parish under all of the options. Improving the accessibility and connectivity of Wisborough Green village to wider locations by public transport will require interventions outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan, and such improvements would support a wider shift towards more sustainable modes of transport and, in turn, limit emissions. Whilst Option 1 has some minor advantages, in that a greater number of its sites are less constrained with regard to the integration of solar and delivery of the site would contribute towards the Kirdford Road footway, these benefits are not considered sufficient to differentiate the options. Overall, the options are considered to perform equally in relation to climate change mitigation. Effects would be long-term and indirect, arising from transport and domestic energy emissions, and cumulative at the district scale. Renewable energy generation integrated within new development would represent a long-term, direct positive effect under all options.

4.2.25 Overall, the options have their own benefits and drawbacks in relation to the Community Wellbeing SEA theme. Focussing on the differentiators, Option 2 is most favourably located for access to services and facilities in the village centre. Its single larger allocation at WG25-13 also has the greatest potential to deliver developer contributions, affordable housing and new open space linked to Songhurst Meadow. However, it would fall short of the identified housing requirement, would result in the loss of a Local Green Gap and would concentrate a larger amount of growth at a single location, which the community has raised concerns about. Option 1 would meet the housing requirement through a dispersed pattern of growth most consistent with community preferences, but includes WG25-1 which has poor pedestrian access to the village centre, and smaller sites which may limit the delivery of affordable housing. Nonetheless, Option 1 is considered the most favourable option, as it would meet the housing requirement in full whilst allocating smaller sites supported through community engagement and would retain the Local Green Gap that overlaps with WG25-13. Positive effects through housing delivery would be long-term, direct and permanent. Increased pressure on local infrastructure, particularly the primary school, represents an indirect and cumulative effect under all options.

4.2.26 Overall, all three options have the potential to have significant negative effects on the historic environment. Option 1 is considered to perform least favourably, as it would deliver growth at four sites with heritage sensitivities, including land within the Conservation Area at WG25-7. Cumulative effects on the setting of the Conservation Area are also possible given the number of sites involved. Option 1 and 3 include WG25-14, which shares a boundary with two Grade II Listed Buildings and two positive buildings of townscape merit on the edge of the Conservation Area, so significant negative effects are also considered likely. Option 2 and 3 have the potential to affect the setting of nearby Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area

through development of WG25-13. Effects on the setting of designated heritage assets would be long-term, direct and permanent. Reflecting the above, consultation with Historic England is encouraged to ensure that development proposals seek to implement sensitive design which respects and enhances the setting of nationally designated heritage assets.

4.2.27 For the Landscape SEA theme, significant negative effects are considered likely for all three options. Option 1 is ranked most favourably, as it would largely avoid development within a Local Green Gap, redevelop brownfield land and direct growth towards a number of smaller sites, helping to maintain the size, form and identity of the village. However, three of its sites lie south of the A272, where the Chichester Landscape Capacity Study considers development unlikely to be accommodated. Option 3 is considered to be more favourable than Option 2 as it would retain a greater portion of the Local Green Gap at WG25-13, with the remaining growth directed to sites that are well contained by existing development or comprise brownfield land. Option 2 would perform least favourably as it would result in the greatest loss of the Local Green Gap, coalescence of the built environment and harm the rural approach to the village along Durbans Road. All three options are located in sub areas identified in the Landscape Capacity Study as having high landscape sensitivity and low capacity for development. Effects would be long-term, direct and irreversible, particularly through the loss of the Local Green Gap under Options 2 and 3. Cumulative effects on the setting of the village are possible under Option 1, given the dispersal of growth across five sites.

4.2.28 Option 1 performs most favourably in relation to the Natural Resources SEA theme, as it would make use of previously developed land at WG25-1 and partially avoids known foul water drainage issues at WG25-13 and WG25-14. Option 3 is considered to be more favourable than Option 2 given that it includes brownfield land and would place less pressure on existing water infrastructure at WG25-13 and WG25-14. None of the options are anticipated to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. The loss of greenfield land would be a long-term, direct and permanent significant negative effect under all options.

4.2.29 Finally, in relation to the Transportation SEA theme, the assessment concludes that Option 1 performs the most favourably of the options as it contains allocations along the A272 which would help to reduce the pressure on narrow, local roads within the village. By distributing growth across several smaller sites across the village, it could also reduce impacts on local traffic. The delivery of all or a large percentage of new homes in one location within the village has the potential to exacerbate traffic impacts along Durbans Road, which is already noted to have congestion issues. This has the potential for significant negative effects under the transport SEA theme. Effects would be long-term and indirect through increased traffic on the local road network, with cumulative effects alongside strategic growth in the wider area.

4.3 Developing the preferred approach

Choice of sites taken forward for the purposes of the WGNP

4.3.1 The residual housing requirement of **68 homes** is to be met through the combination of sites proposed through Option 1. The preferred approach has been informed by the various surveys and evidence base documents prepared to support the WGNP (to date), responses from community consultation events, and the SEA findings. In addition to residential allocations, the WGNP also supports opportunities to retain and enhance community infrastructure and support local employment opportunities through the redevelopment and safeguarding of existing employment sites at Newpound and Wharf Farm.

4.3.2 The Neighbourhood Group provide the following rationale:

"Consultations undertaken for both the extant Neighbourhood Plan and its review have consistently demonstrated a village preference for the redevelopment of brownfield or previously used sites over greenfield land, alongside smaller-scale developments of up to 25 dwellings that can be more readily integrated into the village. Development within the village over recent years has demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach. These considerations and best land use have therefore informed the rationale for the inclusion of sites within the Plan.

*"**WG25-14: Winterfold Garden – For 5 dwellings:** This site has received support during previous consultations. Shortly before the most recent consultation event in February 2026, the land promoter advised that the proposed housing provision had been reduced to 5 dwellings. Although the site was not among the preferred options at this consultation, the primarily concerns being parking and traffic impacts on Durbans Road, it is understood that a planning application is currently being prepared and it is possible that the site will come forward prior to the Neighbourhood Plan adoption. Given its small scale, discrete infill nature and sustainable location in close walking distance to the village centre, the site is considered to be consistent with the relevant policies of the Chichester Local Plan.*

*"**WG25-1: Ansells Yard – For 26 dwellings**: The land promoter confirmed that a small area of land adjoining the existing house and fronting the road will be incorporated into the scheme, increasing the total number to 26 dwellings. The business units have been in decline for many years; a marketing report has been submitted, which satisfies the marketing requirements set out in the Chichester Local Plan Appendix C and supports the removal of the existing business units. Use of this brownfield / greenfield site at this location, within walking distance to the village centre, is considered best used for residential dwellings. The promoter has committed to provide a connecting footway along Kirdford Road for existing and new residents which is a significant community gain. Village support was received to promote Wharf Farm on the A272, on the outskirts of the village, as an alternative for further business use.*

*"**WG25-8: Paddock Farm up to 10 and WG25-7: Land South of A272 for up to 15**. Although in different ownership, these two sites are being promoted together. A highways assessment has confirmed the shared*

access, so these sites are best considered as a single development scheme of up to 25 dwellings. This approach would enable the shared constraints, including flooding, highways and environmental impacts, to be addressed comprehensively, while limiting the extent of expansion. The sites are located to the south of the village, adjoining both the Settlement Boundary and the Conservation Area, in a discrete location which limits visual impact upon the village. Expansion is limited by the flood zone and development of the top section fits within the village form. Pedestrian access to the village is convenient and safe.

*"**WG25-6: Tanyards Up to 12**: The site was promoted for 25 dwellings at the February 2026 consultation and received support albeit for a reduced level of development in response to concerns regarding landscape impact, flooding, access and the character of the village. The site is adjacent to the newly defined Settlement Boundary. The lower section is susceptible to flooding and falls within the newly defined Local Green Gap. Having regard to consultation comments, a provision of 12 dwellings was considered appropriate, providing a balance with development to the north of the A272 while minimising impacts on the wider vista and the character of the village approach."*

5. Appraisal of the Regulation 14 Version of the Neighbourhood Plan

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the Regulation 14 version of the WGNP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version (i.e., the Regulation 14 version) of the WGNP under the nine SEA theme headings;
- Consideration of potential cumulative effects; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage.

5.2 Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Table 5-1: Policies in the Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan

Policy Reference	Policy Name
Overarching Policies	
Policy OAR1	Development Allocation
Policy OAR2	Spatial Strategy
Policy OAR3	Settlement Boundary
Policy OAR4	Small-Scale Housing Sites
Policy OAR5	Local Green Gaps
Policy OAR6	Development in the Plan Area that lies within the SDNP
Policy OAR7	Land Adjoining the SDNP
Policy CLP	The Rural Area
Policy OAR8	Flood Risk
Environmental Policies	
Policy ENR1	Green Infrastructure
Policy ENR2	Landscape Character and Open Views
Policy CLP	Biodiversity
Policy ENR3	Conserving and Enhancing the Heritage Environment
Policy ENR4	Designated Heritage Assets
Policy ENR5	Local Green Space
Policy ENR6	Local Open Space
Community Development Policies	
Policy CDR1	Retention of Assets of Community Value

Policy Reference	Policy Name
Housing Policies	
Policy CLP	Housing Need
Policy CLP	Agricultural Occupancy Conditions
Design Standards Policies	
Policy CLP	Housing Density
Policy DSR1	Vernacular for New Developments
Policy CLP	Housing Extensions - Style and Vernacular
Policy DSR2	Parking Provision and Standards
Economic Development Policies	
Policy EDR1	Development of New and Existing Business
Policy EDR2	Encourage and Support Home Working
Policy EDR3	Site Specific Policy - Commercial Areas - Newpound & Wharf Farm
Infrastructure Policies	
Policy CLP	Waste Water Management
Policy INR1	Pedestrian Access and Footway Provision
Policy INR2	Street Lighting and Dark Night Skies
Policy CLP	Communications Connectivity
WGNP Site-Specific Policies	
Policy SS2	Greenways Nursery (now called Greenways Park), Kirdford Road
Policy SSR5	Stable Field (now called Barnfield Shaw)
Policy SSR6	Tanglewood, Kirdford Road
Policy SSR7	Winterfold Garden, Durbans Road
Policy SSR8	Ansells Yard, Kirdford Road
Policy SSR9	Land South of A272
Policy SSR10	Paddock Farm Field, south of A272
Policy SSR11	Tanyards, Petworth Road

5.3 Approach to the Appraisal

5.3.1 For each theme, ‘significant’ effects of the Regulation 14 version of the WGNP on the baseline are predicated and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. For example, the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects as far as possible. These effect ‘characteristics’ will be described within the assessment, as appropriate.

5.3.2 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the WGNP. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects to ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict 'significant effects', but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.

5.3.3 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. For example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

5.4 Air quality

Commentary on the preferred approach and site-specific policies

5.4.1 The appraisal of Option 1 (the preferred approach) concluded that it would not lead to significant effects on air quality, given the modest scale of growth proposed and the absence of Air Quality Management Areas within the neighbourhood area, although minor negative effects were anticipated due to an increase in private vehicle use.

5.4.2 The key consideration for the preferred approach with respect to the air quality SEA theme was that WG25-1 (Policy SSR8) lies partially outside the ten-minute walking isochrone and has no existing pavement along Kirdford Road, which could increase reliance on private vehicles for trips. This has been addressed through Policy INR1, which requires the delivery of a new footway along Kirdford Road, linking the allocations at Policies SSR5, SSR6 and SSR8 with the village centre. This will provide safe pedestrian access to local services and facilities and support walking for local trips.

Commentary on the wider policy framework

5.4.3 The provision of 68 homes will increase the number of private vehicles in the plan area. With limited public transport and high existing car ownership, most new households are likely to rely on private vehicles for trips outside of the parish, increasing emissions linked to vehicle usage. Despite this, emissions from private vehicle usage are expected to decline overall as the vehicle fleet electrifies, in line with national and local policy. The WGNP proactively supports this transition through Policy DSR2, which requires operational electric vehicle (EV) charging to be integrated into new development. Furthermore, Policies EDR2 and EDR3 support home working and local employment, which can reduce transport emissions linked to commuting.

5.4.4 The A272 passes The Mens SAC, where the Chichester Local Plan identifies traffic-related ammonia as a risk to site integrity (Local Plan Policy NE7). Three allocations within the WGNP take access directly off the A272: SSR9, SSR10 and SSR11. The Kirdford Road sites (SSR5, SSR6, SSR8) also feed onto the A272. Impacts to European designated sites are further considered

in the biodiversity appraisal in Section 5.5 below. In addition, Policy EDR3 supports further commercial redevelopment at Wharf Farm on the A272, which has the potential to increase HGV movements within the parish. Together, these could increase traffic-related emissions affecting the SAC.

5.4.5 Car dependency within the parish is already high. In conjunction with Policy DSR2 which sets parking standards slightly above levels that are advised by West Sussex County Council. Whilst this reflects the poor public transport links within the parish, where a degree of car dependence is unavoidable, it may reinforce car reliance. Despite this, the parking standards will help to limit / avoid on-street parking and ensure that all new developments incorporate off-street parking into the design of the scheme. This could indirectly benefit air quality by reducing congestion and concentrations of emissions at peak times of the day.

5.4.6 The WGNP also contains policies which will support an increase in green infrastructure provision across the neighbourhood area, which can act as a natural absorber of airborne pollutants. Policy ENR1 requires development to retain existing trees, woodland and hedgerows, and to deliver measurable enhancements to green infrastructure, such as native tree and hedgerow planting and hedgerow restoration, alongside biodiversity net gain in line with Local Plan Policy NE5. Policy DSR1 also requires development to be enhanced by landscaping, with existing trees and hedges preserved wherever possible and Policy OAR5 expects proposals within the Local Green Gaps to include enhancement through planting. Whilst the contribution of these measures to local air quality is likely to be modest, they will help to offset a small proportion of the emissions associated with new development, as well as delivering wider benefits for biodiversity, landscape and climate change mitigation.

5.4.7 Overall, no significant effects are anticipated in relation to air quality. Whilst new development is likely to lead to an increase in private vehicle use, the Kirdford Road footway (Policy INR1), the location of the allocations within walking distance of the village centre, and the plan's support for green infrastructure and EV charging will help to limit emissions. Minor negative effects are therefore considered most likely, although these are not likely to be significant for the neighbourhood area given the absence of any designated AQMAs. There is potential for cumulative effects alongside strategic growth in the wider area.

5.5 Biodiversity

Commentary on the preferred approach and site-specific policies

5.5.1 The appraisal of Option 1 (the preferred approach) concluded that it could lead to mixed effects on biodiversity, although these are not expected to be significant. This is primarily a result of the cumulative effect of development in proximity to the River Kird and its associated habitats.

5.5.2 Given the proximity of the neighbourhood area to European designated sites for biodiversity, a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) has been completed for the WGNP (September 2026). The HRA was undertaken in two stages: Screening, and Appropriate Assessment. The HRA screening exercise has concluded that the WGNP has the potential to result in Likely

Significant Effects (LSEs) on four European sites alone and/or in combination with other plans and projects. This is due to the allocated sites in Policies SS2, SSR5, SSR6, SSR7, SSR8, SSR9, SSR10 and SSR11 and Policies OAR1 and EDR3 due to the potential for loss of functionally linked land, recreational pressure, air quality, water quality and changes water quantity, level and flow including water abstraction. Therefore, under Regulation 105 of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it was necessary for these nine policies in the WGNP to be taken forward to Appropriate Assessment.

5.5.3 The findings of the Appropriate Assessment concluded that the WGNP will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of any Habitats sites (The Mens SAC, Ebernoe Common SAC, Arun Valley SPA/SAC/Ramsar and Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC), either alone or in combination, in relation to atmospheric pollution, recreational pressure, loss of functionally linked land, water quantity, level and flow, or water quality. The HRA accompanies the evidence base for the WGNP as published at Regulation 14 consultation.

5.5.4 All proposed site allocations fall within at least one SSSI IRZ related to the type of development being proposed. Site WG25-1 (Policy SSR 8) falls within an IRZ that does not require consultation with Natural England for residential development. All remaining sites fall within an IRZ that requires consultation for any residential development of 100 or more units outside existing settlements/urban areas. On this basis, none of the allocations are anticipated to adversely affect the integrity of nationally designated sites, and no significant adverse effects are predicted.

5.5.5 With regard to the site specific policies within the WGNP, SSR9 and SSR11 restrict development to the parts of each site outside the areas susceptible to flooding. These areas correspond with mapped priority habitat areas, which will help to avoid direct habitat loss in these areas. The presence of watercourses and associated habitats may also provide an opportunity to enhance the ecological value of these sites in line with national policy, which would represent a minor positive effect of development at these locations. In addition, Policy SS2 requires a scheme of landscaping at Greenways Nursery that makes specific provision for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, along with the retention of the existing hedge and tree screen along the site's north-west and south-east boundaries.

Commentary on the wider policy framework

5.5.6 Policy ENR1 (Green Infrastructure) supports the creation of a connected green infrastructure network, including native tree and hedgerow planting, hedgerow restoration, wetland creation and multifunctional SuDS, and requires green infrastructure to form the primary design framework of new development rather than residual space. This will support habitat connectivity across the neighbourhood area and contribute towards biodiversity net gain requirements set at the national level. Where avoidance is not possible, harm must be minimised and mitigated, with biodiversity net gain provided in line with Local Plan Policy NE5.

5.5.7 Of particular relevance given the proximity of the neighbourhood area to The Mens SAC and Ebernoe Common SAC, Policy ENR1 requires development that may affect bat habitat or commuting routes to retain existing dark

corridors, minimise artificial lighting, avoid severing established flight lines, and provide appropriate habitat buffers. This is reinforced by Policy INR2 (Street Lighting and Dark Night Skies), which resists street lighting, sets strict limits on external lighting, and requires lighting schemes to minimise biodiversity impacts and safeguard key habitats, particularly woodlands.

5.5.8 Further protection is provided through Policy DSR1, which requires existing trees to be preserved wherever possible and resists development resulting in the loss of ancient woodland or aged and veteran trees. Policies OAR2 and OAR4 require development not to impact unacceptably on biodiversity, and windfall development to maintain or enhance biodiversity. Policy OAR5 protects the Local Green Gaps and supports community uses such as wildlife trails within them, and Policies ENR5 and ENR6 designate Local Green Spaces and Local Open Spaces, protecting these areas from inappropriate development.

5.5.9 Overall, no significant effects are predicted for biodiversity, given the focus of the WGNP policies on mitigating potential effects associated with the sites and protecting existing ecological assets, rather than delivering significant enhancements. The HRA has concluded no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites, and the stipulations within site-specific policies alongside the wider framework are considered likely to lead to minor positive effects on biodiversity.

5.6 Climate Change Adaptation

Commentary on the preferred approach and site-specific policies

5.6.1 The appraisal of Option 1 (the preferred approach) concluded that it would have significant mixed effects on climate change adaptation, as the southern sections of WG25-6 (Policy SSR11) and WG25-7 (Policy SSR9) extend towards the River Kird and fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3, as well as areas at risk of surface water flooding. However, Option 1 also includes brownfield land at WG25-1 (Policy SSR8) and WG25-6 (Policy SSR11), where redevelopment could introduce more permeable surfaces and sustainable drainage through design, reducing surface water flood risk compared to the existing baseline.

5.6.2 These effects have been addressed through policies SSR9 and SSR11, which restrict development to the parts of each site outside the areas susceptible to flooding (i.e., providing a ‘buffer’). This will avoid exposing new residents to flood risk at these locations. The provisions of the wider policy framework (and local and national policy) will also help to address the flood risk concerns associated with the site allocations.

Commentary on the wider policy framework

5.6.3 Fluvial flood risk in the parish is concentrated along the River Kird and Moons Brook, and the village is also affected by surface water flooding, a high water table and an overloaded sewer network. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and severity of these events over the plan period and the development of greenfield land across the allocations will increase impermeable surfaces, adding to surface water run-off and placing further

pressure on drainage infrastructure that the plan describes as already inadequate.

5.6.4 Policies OAR8 and ENR1 build upon higher-level policy and guidance to direct growth away from flood-prone areas and require the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems to manage flood risk. Specifically, Policy ENR1 requires surface water management in new development to use multifunctional sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) designed to deliver flood attenuation as well as water quality benefits.

5.6.5 Overall, neutral effects are predicted in relation to climate change adaptation. Although there are existing surface water and drainage issues within the village, and development on greenfield land will increase the extent of impermeable surfaces, Policies SSR9 and SSR11 seek to avoid development within areas at risk of flooding along the River Kird. This is supported by the wider policy framework, which directs growth away from flood-prone areas and requires multifunctional SuDS. Local Plan Policy NE16 also requires an 8m buffer from watercourses. Taken together, these provisions are considered likely to offset any additional impacts on climate change adaptation in the plan area.

5.7 Climate change Mitigation

Commentary on the preferred approach and site-specific policies

5.7.1 The appraisal of Option 1 (the preferred approach) concluded that it would not lead to significant effects on climate change mitigation, and it was ranked equally with Options 2 and 3. Whilst there are some marginal differences between the options in terms of walking distance to services and facilities, all of the sites are broadly close to the village centre. The key consideration is the limited public transport baseline, which means residents are likely to remain reliant on private vehicles for journeys outside the parish under all options. A greater number of Option 1's sites offer unconstrained potential for rooftop solar, and a large section of the Kirdford Road footway would be delivered in conjunction with WG25-1, but these benefits were not considered sufficient to differentiate the options. Growth under any option would increase absolute emissions from domestic energy use and vehicle movements.

5.7.2 Site-specific policies do not require the integration of renewable energy into new development, so the implementation of solar at these sites is not guaranteed. However, Policy INR1 requires a new footway along Kirdford Road, linking the allocations at Policies SSR5, SSR6 and SSR8 with the village centre and supporting walking for local trips.

Commentary on the wider policy framework

5.7.3 In response to the UK Governments commitment to tackling the climate crisis, Chichester District Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019, resolving to support local authorities (and, by extension, neighbourhood groups) to help tackle climate change through plan-making where possible. As such, the WGNP encourages design features that help the area to mitigate and adapt to climate change and increase the resilience of the neighbourhood area and its community.

5.7.4 Emissions from transport are a primary contributor to carbon emissions within the neighbourhood area. By facilitating better use of active transport options (e.g. walking), the neighbourhood area can reduce its carbon footprint. One way to do this is by ensuring that new development is connected to the exiting footpath network. Policies OAR1 and OAR2 direct all new housing to sites within a 10-minute walk of the village centre, with the exception of WG25-1, which is partially outside of the 10-minute isochrone. Despite this, regular access to public transport remains limited, necessitating the use of cars for longer journeys.

5.7.5 Other policies within the WGNP also help to limit emissions. Policy DSR2 requires EV charging facilities to be installed in all new developments, and policies EDR2 and EDR3 support home working and local employment, which can reduce transport emissions linked to commuting. Policy ENR1 also supports native tree and hedgerow planting and the retention of existing trees and woodland, which will make a small contribution to carbon sequestration.

5.7.6 Whilst Policy DSR1 supports contemporary and innovative materials and design where they do not detract from the historic context, which could accommodate low-carbon design, it does not require it. Energy efficiency is expected to be driven by the NPPF, which expects development to use design approaches that conserve energy and gives substantial weight to the benefits of improving energy efficiency and using renewable and low carbon energy, including heat pumps and solar panels.

5.7.7 Overall, no significant effects are anticipated in relation to climate change mitigation. Whilst new development will increase absolute emissions, the locations of the allocations within walking distance of the village centre, the Kirdford Road footway and the requirement for EV charging will help to limit transport emissions.

5.8 Community Wellbeing

Commentary on the preferred approach and site-specific policies

5.8.1 The appraisal of Option 1 (the preferred approach) concluded that it would have significant positive effects on community wellbeing, as it would meet the residual housing requirement of 68 homes in full through a dispersed pattern of growth consistent with community preferences, although WG25-1 (Policy SSR8) has poor pedestrian access to the village centre and the smaller sites may limit opportunities for affordable housing delivery. The site allocations are as follows:

- Winterfold Garden, Durbans Road (Policy SSR7) – 5 dwellings
- Ansells Yard, Kirdford Road (Policy SSR8) – 26 dwellings
- Land South of A272 (Policy SSR9) - 15 dwellings
- Paddock Farm Field (Policy SSR10) – 10 dwellings
- Tanyards, Petworth Road (Policy SSR11) – 12 dwellings

5.8.2 The choice of these sites has been informed by various surveys and evidence base documents prepared to support the WGNP, responses from community consultation events, and the SEA findings. This is further discussed in Chapter 4 of the Environmental Report.

5.8.3 Winterfold Garden (Policy SSR7), Land South of A272 (Policy SSR9) and Paddock Farm Field (Policy SSR10) are within a five-minute walk of the village centre. The pedestrian access issue identified at Ansells Yard has been addressed through Policy INR1, which requires a new footway along Kirdford Road linking site allocations under Policies SSR5, SSR6 and SSR8 with the village centre. With further regard to affordable housing, four of the new allocations (Policies SSR8, SSR9, SSR10 and SSR11) are of a scale (ten dwellings or more) that will require on-site affordable housing provision under Local Plan Policy H4.

Commentary on the wider policy framework

5.8.4 More broadly with regard to housing provision, Policy OAR4 supports opportunities for small scale windfall developments provided they avoid overdeveloping the plot, harming heritage assets, or losing valuable trees or hedges and are well integrated into the village without harming neighbours' amenity. The plan evidences a need for smaller homes: 73% of the parish's housing has three or more bedrooms, and residents aged 20 to 30 make up only 8% of the population. It relies on Local Plan Policy H5 for housing mix rather than setting its own requirement.

5.8.5 The WGNP also contains several policies that have a strong emphasis on delivering public realm improvements. Green infrastructure provides space for recreation and relaxation; spending time in these types of outdoor spaces is evidenced to improve people's health and wellbeing. Policies ENR5 and ENR6 designate three Local Green Spaces (the Village Green, Songhurst Meadow and Stable Field) and three Local Open Spaces (the allotments, the Scout Hut site and the school playing field).

5.8.6 Further supporting residents' quality of life, a key aspect of the WGNP is to safeguard existing community services and facilities. Key Policies in this respect include Policies CDR1 and OAR5, which seek to protect community assets including the village shop, three pubs and the Pavilion and protect Local Green Gaps and support community uses such as sports and wildlife trails within these areas respectively.

5.8.7 The WGNP also seeks to support the vitality of the local economy. Policy EDR1 supports new and expanding businesses, retains existing commercial capacity wherever possible, and resists the change of use of viable brownfield employment sites. Policy EDR2 supports the provision of home working, and Policy EDR3 supports commercial redevelopment at Newpound and Wharf Farm where it offers opportunities for business and employment.

5.8.8 Overall, long-term significant positive effects are anticipated in relation to community wellbeing, through the delivery of housing to meet local needs in full (including on-site affordable housing at four site allocations), improved pedestrian access and safety along Kirdford Road, the designation of three

Local Green Spaces and three Local Open Spaces, and the safeguarding of existing community and employment assets.

5.9 Historic Environment

Commentary on the preferred approach and site-specific policies

5.9.1 The appraisal of Option 1 (the preferred approach) concluded that it would have significant negative effects on the historic environment, as four of its sites have heritage sensitivities relating to the Conservation Area and nearby Listed Buildings. Due to the heritage sensitivities within the village, all of the options tested were concluded to have significant negative effects on the historic environment.

5.9.2 Part of WG25-7 (Policy SSR9) lies within the Conservation Area, and WG25-8 (Policy SSR10) lies on its boundary. Both sites would be accessed via a track between two Grade II Listed Buildings (Albion House and Coed Afal). WG25-6 (Policy SSR11) lies to the north of the Grade II Listed Old Tanyard Farmhouse, although this is screened by trees. WG25-14 (Policy SSR7) lies on the Conservation Area boundary and shares a boundary with two Grade II Listed Buildings, including the village public house, and two positive buildings of townscape merit.

5.9.3 Policy SSR7 responds directly to the site's close proximity to the Conservation Area, requiring high quality and sensitively designed properties of no more than two storeys, with pitched roofs. All of the new site allocation policies (Policies SSR7 to SSR11) also require development to meet the requirements of the Wisborough Green Village Design Statement. However, Policies SSR9, SSR10 and SSR11 do not make specific reference to the heritage sensitivities of these sites, including the access to Policies SSR9 and SSR10 between two Grade II Listed Buildings. Given the heritage sensitives associated with several of the proposed site allocations, the WGNP could be enhanced by ensuring that all applications for residential development should be accompanied by a proportionate Heritage Impact Assessment which considers the sensitivities and significance of the heritage assets and areas which could be impacted by the scheme, and directly inform the identification of mitigation and enhancement measures. However, the wider policy framework, together with higher-level policy, is considered likely to positively contribute towards the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Commentary on the wider policy framework

5.9.4 Consideration of the neighbourhood area's historic environment is reflected by WGNP policies which focus on the conservation and enhancement of both designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. Policy ENR3 requires development to conserve and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings, including views towards the South Downs.

5.9.5 Policy ENR4 requires development proposals affecting a Local Heritage Asset to take its significance into account, and to demonstrate that the scale of any harm to, or loss of, the asset is justified. Policy DSR1 requires all new housing to reflect the character and historic context of the parish, using

materials that complement the local vernacular and limiting building heights to two storeys, and requires development in the Conservation Area or adjacent to Listed Buildings to conserve and enhance their setting, form and character. These provisions will ensure that design is in keeping with Wisborough Green's character, in accordance with the Wisborough Green Village Design Statement

5.9.6 The plan notes that the Historic Environment Record holds few archaeological records for the village itself, but that the parish contains Mesolithic and Neolithic flint-working sites and a legacy of medieval glass and iron working. Policy ENR3 requires development to conserve and enhance sites and areas of archaeological potential or importance and their setting.

5.9.7 Overall, mixed significant effects are considered likely in relation to the historic environment. While it is recognised that the primary focus of the policy framework is to protect the integrity of the historic environment rather than delivering significant enhancements, the absence of detailed design measures listed within the site specific policies has the potential to lead to adverse effects on the historic environment.

5.10 Natural Resources (Soil and Water)

Commentary on the preferred approach and site-specific policies

5.10.1 The appraisal of Option 1 (the preferred approach) concluded that it would have significant mixed effects on land, soil and water resources, performing most favourably of the options, owing to the re-use of previously developed land at WG25-1 and WG25-6 (Policies SSR8 and SSR11) and none of the sites being underlain by best and most versatile agricultural land. However, the loss of greenfield land and the potential for run-off to affect the River Kird were also noted.

5.10.2 None of the sites proposed by the WGNP are underlain by best and most versatile agricultural land, with sites predominantly Grade 3b or classified as urban. The allocations also make use of previously developed land at WG25-1 (Policy SSR8) and WG25-6 (Policy SSR11), supporting the efficient re-use of land in the neighbourhood area. The remaining sites (Policies SSR5, SSR9 and SSR10) comprise greenfield land, and their development would result in the permanent loss of Grade 3b agricultural land, which cannot be mitigated.

5.10.3 The assessment also identified potential for run-off to affect water quality at the sites south of the A272 (Policies SSR9, SSR10 and SSR11), which slope towards the River Kird. The stipulations within Policies SSR9 and SSR11 restricting development to the parts of each site outside the areas at risk of flooding, alongside Local Plan Policy NE16, which requires new development to be set back at least 8m from fluvial watercourses, will help to limit the risk of run-off affecting water quality.

Commentary on the wider policy framework

5.10.4 The WGNP also has a strong focus on protecting the open countryside from inappropriate development. Policy OAR3 restricts development outside the Settlement Boundary, while Policies OAR5, OAR6, OAR7, ENR2 and DSR1

protect the Local Green Gaps, the South Downs National Park and its setting and landscape character. Policy OAR4 also ensures that windfall development does not result in the overdevelopment of plots. Whilst these policies do not specifically address land and soil resources, they will indirectly help to protect them. With regard to previously developed land, Policy EDR3 requires commercial redevelopment at Newpound and Wharf Farm to be contained within the current site area.

5.10.5 Concerning the protection of water resources, Policy ENR1 requires surface water management in new development to use multifunctional SuDS designed to deliver water quality benefits as well as flood attenuation. This applies to all the site allocations and will indirectly contribute to water quality improvements by limiting suspended solids and pollutants entering watercourses from surface water run-off. Policy ENR1 also requires the retention of existing ponds, streams, ditches and wetlands, and supports the enhancement of watercourses.

5.10.6 Overall, no significant effects are considered likely in relation to land, soil and water resources. The WGNP demonstrates a proactive approach towards balancing development needs with the protection of soil and water resources. None of the allocations would result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, and the plan seeks to allocate previously developed land (where possible), where redevelopment offers the potential for flood betterment in line with Local Plan Policy NE16. Whilst development at several allocations would result in the permanent loss of greenfield land, the requirement for multifunctional SuDS and the restrictions within Policies SSR9 and SSR11 will help to limit these effects. Neutral effects are therefore considered likely.

5.11 Landscape

Commentary on the preferred approach and site-specific policies

5.11.1 The appraisal of Option 1 (the preferred approach) concluded that it would have significant negative effects on landscape, as all sites lie within an area of high landscape sensitivity and low capacity for development, and three lie south of the A272, although it performed most favourably of the options as it largely avoids development within the Local Green Gaps.

5.11.2 Land surrounding Wisborough Green is identified in the Chichester Landscape Capacity Study (2019) as having high landscape sensitivity and low capacity for development. In particular, it considers development south of the A272 unlikely to be accommodated, and three of the allocations (Policies SSR9, SSR10 and SSR11) lie within this area. However, allocations under the WGNP would largely avoid development within the Local Green Gaps, redevelop brownfield land and direct growth towards a number of smaller sites, helping to maintain the size, form and identity of the village. Within the allocations, Policies SSR9 and SSR11 restrict development to the less sensitive parts of each site, keeping built form away from the River Kird corridor and Policy SSR7 limits building heights to two storeys. This will help to safeguard the surrounding landscape and ensure that development is sensitive to the relationship between the natural and built environment.

Commentary on the wider policy framework

5.11.3 A section of the Parish to the south west lies within the South Downs National Park. As such, any development within the parish should have regard to the most recent South Downs Management Plan and avoid adverse effects on the special character and features of the National Park and its setting. The parish's sensitive landscape is closely reflected through the WGNP policies, which have a strong focus on the conservation and enhancement of landscape character and visual amenity, alongside the need to maintain settlement identity and avoid encroachment of the countryside.

5.11.4 For example, Policies OAR6 and OAR7 require development to conserve the special qualities of the National Park, including its tranquillity, dark skies and views into and out of it. Policy ENR2 requires development to maintain local landscape character and not to cause unacceptable loss of significant open views. Additionally, Policy DSR1 requires new development to reflect the local vernacular set out in the Wisborough Green Village Design Statement, adopted by Chichester District Council in 2018, helping to protect and enhance landscape and villagescape character.

5.11.5 Additional positive effects are anticipated through Policy OAR5 which only supports development within the Local Green Gaps in exceptional circumstances. Proposals must retain the openness that separates the village centre from the outlying radial development, be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment and a mitigation plan, and retain important trees and hedgerows. Policies ENR5 and ENR6 designate three Local Green Spaces and three Local Open Spaces. The designation of these spaces will protect these areas from inappropriate development, ensuring their continued use for recreation, community activities and enjoyment of the natural environment. Additionally, many of the sites contribute to the identity and environmental quality of the Parish.

5.11.6 Policy ENR1 supports native tree and hedgerow planting and hedgerow restoration, and requires green infrastructure to form the primary design framework of new development rather than residual space. Policy INR1 requires the Kirdford Road footway to be surfaced in keeping with the rural setting, with consideration of root protection zones. Finally, Policy INR2 (Street Lighting and Dark Night Skies) resists street lighting and sets strict limits on external lighting, protecting the tranquillity and rural character of the parish and the setting of the National Park after dark.

5.11.7 It is recognised that several WGNP policies support new development that could lead to adverse effects on the landscape. Stipulations within these policies, alongside national and local policy provisions should help support the integrity of the landscape to accommodate new development areas. For example, Policy OAR4 only supports windfall development within the Settlement Boundary where it avoids overdeveloping the plot and losing valuable trees and hedges. Policy EDR1 requires business development to avoid harm to landscape character and to conserve the local distinctiveness of the village Character Areas, and Policy EDR3 limits commercial redevelopment at Newpound and Wharf Farm to the existing site area and building heights.

5.11.8 Overall, mixed effects are expected in relation to the landscape SEA theme. On one hand, all allocations lie in an area identified by the Landscape Capacity Study as having high landscape sensitivity and low capacity for development. On the other hand, the WGNP is likely to deliver positive effects through policy provisions which seek to protect and enhance local landscape character via the inclusion of high-quality and sensitive design measures.

5.12 Transportation

Commentary on the preferred approach and site-specific policies

5.12.1 The appraisal of Option 1 (the preferred approach) concluded that it would not lead to significant effects on transportation, performing most favourably of the options as three of its sites take access directly from the A272, reducing traffic on congested local lanes, although minor negative effects were anticipated due to an increase in private vehicle movements.

5.12.2 Spreading growth across several smaller sites was also considered likely to limit a concentration of traffic impacts in any one part of the village, with the A272 accesses reducing traffic on congested local lanes such as School Road, Newpound Lane, Kirdford Road and Durbans Road. However, the shared access to WG25-7 and WG25-8 (Policies SSR9 and SSR10) between two Listed Buildings may constrain the capacity of these sites, and WG25-1 (Policy SSR8) has no pavement along Kirdford Road, which may increase reliance on private vehicles for residents at this site.

5.12.3 Potential issues have been addressed through the site-specific policies. Policies SSR8 and INR1 require the delivery of a footway along Kirdford Road, linking Ansells Yard and the other Kirdford Road allocations with the village centre. Policy SSR7 requires vehicular access to Winterfold Garden from a single point on Durbans Road, with visibility splays that account for roadside parking associated with the nearby public house, and Policy SS2 requires visibility splays at Greenways Nursery. Policies SSR7 to SSR11 also require on-site parking to be provided in accordance with Policy DSR2 without adding materially to existing parking stress or congestion, and the retention of off-street parking where its loss would adversely affect highway safety or the free flow of traffic. The site-specific policies do not set specific requirements for the shared access to Policies SSR9 and SSR10. However, these considerations will be expected to be addressed through a Design and Access Statement.

Commentary on the wider policy framework

5.12.4 All allocations, aside from WG25-1, are wholly within a ten-minute walk of the village centre, which may support walking for local trips, particularly once the Kirdford Road footway (Policy INR1) is delivered. Despite this, the lack of regular or easily accessible public transport means reliance on private vehicles for trips outside the parish is likely to remain high.

5.12.5 Policies EDR1, EDR2 and EDR3 support the retention and growth of existing businesses and home working, which may reduce the need for some local residents to travel for work. Policy EDR1 also requires that business development does not lead to an unacceptable impact on the local highway

network or traffic in the village, and Policy EDR3 requires commercial redevelopment to provide off-street parking for staff and visitors. However, it is noted that most working residents travel outside of the immediate area for employment, so commuting is likely to remain largely car based.

5.12.6 Policy DSR2 sets off-street parking minimums marginally above West Sussex County Council guidance, plus visitor parking at one space per two dwellings. This provision should help to prevent new development adding to on-street congestion and pavement parking. However, it also accommodates car use rather than encouraging alternatives.

5.12.7 Overall, minor positive effects are anticipated in relation to the transportation SEA theme. Whilst new development is likely to result in additional private vehicles on the local road network, the WGNP takes a considered approach to limiting these effects, with three allocations taking access directly from the A272, growth dispersed across the village, and the delivery of the Kirdford Road footway. However, the lack of public transport means that reliance on private vehicles for trips outside the parish will remain high.

5.13 Conclusions at this current stage

5.13.1 **Long-term significant positive effects are expected in relation to the community wellbeing SEA theme**, through the delivery of housing to meet local needs in full (including on-site affordable housing), improved pedestrian access and safety along Kirdford Road, the designation of Local Green Spaces and Local Open Spaces and the safeguarding of existing community assets.

5.13.2 **Minor positive effects are considered most likely in relation to the biodiversity and transportation SEA theme**. This reflects the HRA conclusion of no adverse effects on European sites, the avoidance of the more sensitive parts of the allocations along the River Kird and additional policy measures which seek to protect and enhance green infrastructure and dark skies. For transport, this reflects three of the allocations taking access directly from the A272, which reduces traffic on congested local lanes, growth spread across several smaller sites, and the delivery of the Kirdford Road footway.

5.13.3 **Neutral effects are considered most likely in relation to the natural resources (soil and water) and climate change adaptation SEA themes**. For natural resources, this reflects the balance between the loss of greenfield land and the re-use of previously developed land, the avoidance of best and most versatile agricultural land, and policy measures which protect water quality. For climate change adaptation, whilst there are existing surface water and drainage issues within the village and development will increase impermeable surfaces, Policies SSR9 and SSR11 restrict development to parts of the sites outside the areas at risk of flooding along the River Kird. This is supported by the wider policy framework, which directs growth away from flood-prone areas and requires multifunctional SuDS.

5.13.4 **Mixed effects are anticipated for the landscape and historic environment SEA themes**. Whilst all housing allocations lie within an area of high landscape sensitivity, the preferred approach largely avoids

development within the Local Green Gaps, and the policy framework seeks to protect and enhance landscape character through sensitive design. While it is recognised that the primary focus of the policy framework is to protect the integrity of the historic environment rather than delivering significant enhancements, the absence of detailed design measures listed within the site-specific policies has the potential to lead to adverse effects on the historic environment.

5.13.5 **No significant effects are predicted in relation to the air quality and climate change mitigation SEA themes**, although some minor negative effects are anticipated. These primarily reflect the increase in private vehicle use and new development in a rural village with limited public transport, which has the potential to increase emissions. The WGNP's policy framework will help to limit these effects, although it is acknowledged that the viability of delivering additional public transport services is outside of the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan to address.

5.13.6 The Regulation 14 version of the SEA Environmental Report puts forward the following recommendations for consideration by plan makers to inform policy development:

- Whilst Policy ENR1 requires green infrastructure to form the primary design framework of new development, the policy could be strengthened by indicating a preference for achieving biodiversity net gains on-site and, where this is not possible, encouraging developers to identify key local areas, such as the River Kird corridor, that could benefit from off-site enhancement measures. Linked to this, development proposals could be expected to provide a proportionate green infrastructure assessment detailing how local wildlife and habitats will be protected and enhanced during the construction and operational phases of development, and how net gains will be delivered.

- Given the heritage sensitivities associated with the spatial strategy, the site-specific policies could be strengthened by requiring development proposals to undertake a proportionate heritage assessment to provide further detail about the significance of any heritage assets and areas within or within the setting of the site, informing any mitigation or enhancement measures. Additionally, as a condition attached to any planning approval for each site, an archaeological clerk-of-works could be expected to be on site during the construction phases of development to ensure that any non-designated heritage assets are appropriately preserved and recorded in line with the best practice guidance.

- Given the pressure on the existing road network, Policy EDR3 could require proposals for the redevelopment of employment sites at Wharf Farm and Newpound that are expected to generate additional traffic, including HGV movements, to be accompanied by a travel plan, to help reduce traffic impacts and support sustainable travel.

6. What are the Next Steps?

6.1 Plan Finalisation

6.1.1 Following Regulation 14 consultation, responses will be considered in finalising the WGNP and SEA for submission. Following submission, the WGNP and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the WGNP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plans for Chichester and the South Downs National Park.

6.1.2 If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the WGNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Chichester District Council (as the lead authority). If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the WGNP, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the WGNP will become part of the Local Plans for Chichester and the South Downs National Park, covering the defined neighbourhood area of Wisborough Green Parish.

6.2 Monitoring

6.2.1 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

6.2.2 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the WGNP will be undertaken by Chichester District Council (as the lead authority) as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant effects are considered likely in the implementation of the WGNP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Chichester District Council.