

West Berkshire District Council
Tilehurst Neighbourhood Development Plan

**Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment
Screening Report**

Post Consultation Version

29 November 2022

Contents

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report	3
Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report	14
Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment - Conclusions of West Berkshire District Council	17
Consultation	19
Conclusions following consultation with the statutory bodies	21
Appendices	22
Appendix 1 Responses from Historic England and Natural England	23-23

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report of the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Development Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out whether or not the contents of the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.2. The purpose of the Tilehurst NDP is to provide planning policies to guide development in the designated Tilehurst Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.3. SEA is required for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. A SEA aims to protect the environment at a high level, and ensures the environment is considered during the preparation and adoption of plans. This promotes sustainable development.
- 1.4. Not all neighbourhood plans will require a SEA to be carried out. To decide if a SEA is required, a screening exercise is used to look at the proposals in a neighbourhood plan, and see if a significant effect is likely.
- 1.5. This document also assesses whether a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) to consider potential impacts on sites of European importance for Nature Conservation is necessary. The HRA screening is set out on page 11.
- 1.6. The legislative background set out below outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise. A screening assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Tilehurst NDP and the need for a full SEA has been undertaken.

2. Legislative background

- 2.1. European Directive 2001/42/EC, transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004¹ (or SEA Regulations), requires a SEA to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that would have a significant environmental effect. The Regulations require that this is determined by a screening process, which should use a specified set of criteria (set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations). The results of this process must be set out in a SEA Screening Statement which must be publically available.
- 2.2. In accordance with Regulation 9 of the Regulations, Tilehurst Parish Council (as the qualifying body) asked West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) as the responsible authority, to screen the emerging Tilehurst NDP to determine whether an environmental report is required due to significant environmental effects. In making this determination, WBDC have had regard to Schedule 1 of the Regulations.
- 2.3. In line with the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance, the Plan's potential scope has been assessed against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the 2004 Environmental Assessment Regulations.

¹ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/contents/made>.

- 2.4. SEA can be required in some limited situations where a sustainability appraisal is not needed. Neighbourhood planning is one of these situations. Sustainability Appraisals (SAs) may incorporate the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, which implement the requirements of the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.
- 2.5. A Sustainability Appraisal ensures that potential environmental effects are given full consideration alongside social and economic issues and it is good practice to do one to understand how a plan is to deliver sustainable development. However, NPPF Planning Practice Guidance states that there is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal as set out in Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It is down to the qualifying body to demonstrate whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This is the purpose of the SEA Screening Report.

3. Background to the emerging Tilehurst NDP

- 3.1. West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of Tilehurst Parish in May 2015. The Parish and Plan boundaries are the same and that is shown below in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Tilehurst Neighbourhood Area



- 3.2. The NDP will sit alongside, and complement the West Berkshire Local Plan which covers the period 2006 to 2026. The Local Plan comprises of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan Document² (adopted July 2012), the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD)³ (adopted May 2017), and the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-1996 (Saved Policies 2006) as amended in July 2012 and May 2017⁴.
- 3.3. In the adopted Core Strategy, the village of Tilehurst is identified as an Urban Area within the district settlement hierarchy meaning that, along with the other Urban Areas, it has a wide range of services and the focus for the majority of development. It borders Reading in the east and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the west overlooking the Thames Valley with the woods and farmlands of the Sulham Escarpment.
- 3.4. As aforementioned, the Tilehurst NDP will supplement policies within the West Berkshire Local Plan. The Core Strategy and HSA DPD were both subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and SEA. The SA/SEA for the West Berkshire Core Strategy was produced in order to ensure that sustainability issues were considered throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy. The SA/SEA was an iterative process which identified the likely significant effects of the Core Strategy and the extent to which its implementation would achieve social, environmental and economic objectives.
- 3.5. The SA/SEA was published at key stages of the Core Strategy process and updated as necessary. Each of the stages was assessed against the 11 SA framework objectives and the 29 sub objectives to determine the predicted economic, environmental and social effects of the Core Strategy on the District. At each stage, the findings of the SA/SEA were used to inform the formulation of policies, thereby improving the sustainability of the Core Strategy in the process. The process of the SA/SEA means that the overall spatial strategy and the housing distribution strategy of the Core Strategy have been tested.
- 3.6. The SA/SEA for the HSA DPD considered reasonable alternatives for the scope of the HSA DPD, and for each of the sites and policies included within the DPD. The SA/SEA clearly demonstrates the progression of the preferred strategy from the regulation 18 stage through to the submission stage. The social, economic and environmental dimensions were therefore taken into account throughout the preparation of the DPD to ensure sustainable development.
- 3.7. In order to realise the vision for Tilehurst and meet the objectives, the draft Tilehurst NDP proposes 15 policies grouped under the following themes:

Spatial Strategy/Housing

- Policy H1: Housing Development Principles
- Policy H2: Affordable Homes
- Policy H3: Domestic Energy & Sustainability

Environment and Landscape

² West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan Document:
<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/corestrategy>.

³ Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2006-2026): <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/hsa>.

⁴ West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007):
<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/article/28783>.

- Policy PE1: Wildlife
- Policy PE2: Wildlife Corridors and Habitat-Rich Wildlife Areas
- Policy PE3: Conserving biodiversity and Local Wildlife Sites and Protecting Habitats and Ancient Woodland
- Policy H6: Refuse Storage
- Policy H10: Flood Risk Assessment
- Policy I4.1: To maintain, and, where possible, improve green spaces and green routes and to designate a number as 'Local Green Spaces'
- Policy I4.2: Conserving and Enhancing the North Wessex Downs AONB

Getting around the Parish

- Policy H4: Parking – Internal & external
- Policy H5: Electric Vehicle Charging Point
- Policy H9: Pedestrian & Cycle Access

Community and Social

- Policy H8: Outdoor Amenity Space

Infrastructure

- Policy H7: Street Lighting

3.8. No site allocations are proposed in the NDP.

3.9. Section 4 below provides a summary of the policies proposed in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. It also considers the potential for environmental effects to occur as a result of these policies. It is based on the emerging draft (Tilehurst NP August 2022, 4 Pre-Submission Screening Draft) of the NDP as at August 2022.

4. The SEA screening process

4.1. Producing the Tilehurst NDP requires the Council to look at whether a SEA is required; this is known as the screening process. The screening is based on the criteria set out in Annex II of European Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, and considers the likely significant environmental effects as a result of the NDP.

5. SEA determination and reasons for determination

5.1. The Council has assessed the Tilehurst NDP against the criteria set out within Annex II of European Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the Regulations (as summarised in Table 5.1).

Overview of the plan area

5.2. Tilehurst lies on the edge of Reading and is located in the eastern part of West Berkshire district. Holybrook lies to the south of the parish, Sulham to the west and Purley on Thames is to the north of the parish. The Parish also borders Reading to the east and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the west.

5.3. It covers an area of about 2.43 square miles (6.29 square kilometres) and has a population of 14,683 (2001 Census). The NDP states that the Parish has no single centre at its heart. Other areas of Tilehurst include Kentwood, Norcot in the east, Churchend in the south, and Little Heath in the west.

- 5.4. There are various constraints to development in Tilehurst. The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) washes over the western area of the parish. There are many listed buildings, one SSSI to the far south west of the Parish at Pincents Lane called Pincents Kiln, several Local Wildlife Sites, areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland. There is no fluvial flooding in the Parish, however there are some areas at risk of surface water flooding.

Screening analysis

Spatial strategy

- 5.5. The draft NDP includes a policy (Policy H1 Housing) that guides the location of any new development. The policy seeks to locate development within the settlement boundary, and substantial weight is given to development proposals on previously developed land within the existing settlement boundary.
- 5.6. It is assumed that in referring to the settlement boundary the draft NDP is referring to the West Berkshire Local Plan definition of a settlement boundary. This is because it is not clear in the draft NDP.
- 5.7. The Policy takes a restrictive approach to development outside of any settlement boundary or on greenfield sites.
- 5.8. No housing allocations are proposed in the NDP.

Housing type and mix

- 5.9. The draft NDP includes a policy (Policy H1 Housing) in relation to housing type and mix in support of 'starter' homes and development which should consider the need for all sectors of the community including disabled and elderly residents
- 5.10. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in minor improvements in the local area.

Character, design and heritage

- 5.11. There is a policy in the draft NDP (Policy H8 Outdoor Amenity Space) which seeks to include private outdoor amenity space or a shared amenity area, including balconies for flats, where appropriate which should be commensurate with the size, type and character of the area and of appropriate quality while having regard to topography, shadowing and privacy.
- 5.12. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in minor improvements in the local area.

Commercial Economy and employment

- 5.13. No employment allocations are proposed.

Infrastructure

- 5.14. The draft NDP includes a policy (H7 Street Lighting) in the draft plan which seeks to reduce street lighting in new development and use low-level street lighting in new

developments to ensure safety, security for pedestrians and reduce higher level light pollution.

- 5.15. It is considered unlikely that this policy will result in any adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

Getting around the Parish

- 5.16. The draft NDP includes two policies (Policy I4.2 Conserving and Enhancing the North Wessex Downs AONB and Policy H4 Parking – Internal & External) which seek to protect areas identified as ‘dark skies’ and to ensure that reasonable provisions are made for car parking for visitors and the disabled, and provision for the appropriate storage of cycles and motorcycles.

- 5.17. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in minor improvements in the local area.

Community and social

- 5.18. There are two policies in the draft NDP (Policy I4.2 Conserving and Enhancing the North Wessex Downs AONB and Policy H9 Pedestrian and Cycle Access) which seek to make provision for more direct, safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle access to local community facilities, shops, medical facilities and the adjacent countryside through new development. This is to encourage walking, cycling and social interaction and to contribute to the well-being of the local community.

- 5.19. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

Environment and landscape

- 5.20. There are several policies in the draft NDP which seek to protect and enhance the environment.

- 5.21. Policy H3 (Pedestrian Access) seeks to maintain and enhance footpaths, and where practical, extend and link into a network of footpaths.

- 5.22. Policy H6 (Refuse Storage) seeks to provide discreet and off-street storage facilities for refuse bins and containers.

- 5.23. Policy H10 (Flood Risk Assessment) seeks to minimise the impact of flood risk.

- 5.24. Policy I4.1 seeks to maintain and improve green spaces and green routes, and to designate a number of areas as ‘Local Green Spaces’.

- 5.25. Policy I4.2 seeks to conserve and enhance the existing landscape and scenic beauty, protect its dark skies and tranquillity, contribute to opportunities for quiet enjoyment and recreation and social, economic and environmental well-being to the local community.

- 5.26. Policies PE1, PE2 and PE3 seek to enhance a wildlife friendly environment, to protect and augment wildlife corridors and restrict against the loss or deterioration of protected habitats including ancient woodlands and Priority Habitats.

- 5.27. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in some improvements to the local environment.
- 5.28. The Council has assessed the Tilehurst NDP against the criteria set out within Schedule 1 of the Regulations (as summarised in Table 5.1 below).

Table 5.1: Assessment of likely significant effects (screening)

Criterion Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
<i>1. Characteristics of plans or programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</i>	
(a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>The NDP, if made part of the development plan, will become part of the development plan for Tilehurst. It will not set a framework for other plans or policies outside of the Tilehurst NDP area (see Figure 3.1 on page 3 above). Its policies will be used by the district council to make development management decisions within the parish of Tilehurst.</p> <p>Overall it is considered there would be no significant effect.</p>
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	<p>The NDP does not influence other plans or programmes in the area; instead it would supplement other parts of the development plan. The NDP will form part of the Development Plan for the District and will only apply to the designated Neighbourhood Area, the parish of Tilehurst. Neighbourhood Plans by their nature are locally driven and focused, providing detailed guidance to local development.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	<p>The draft NDP seeks to promote sustainable development that can be considered to be in conformity with the NPPF. This is a 'basic condition'/requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan making process.</p> <p>The draft policies set out sustainability considerations for all new developments, protection and enhancement of the environment and habitats, maintenance and enhancement of footpaths and cycle paths, renewable energy proposals, energy saving installations, water efficiency systems and electric vehicle charging points.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect, and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in minor improvements to the local environment.</p>
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>The North Wessex Downs AONB washes over the western area of the parish. There are many listed buildings, one SSSI (Sulham and Tidmarsh Woods and Meadows), several Local Wildlife Sites, areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland.</p>

Criterion Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
	<p>The draft Tilehurst NDP seeks to minimise existing environmental problems in the area. The plan does not propose development and seeks not to give rise to environmental problems.</p> <p>There is a question though whether the policy I4.2 Conserving and Enhancing The North Wessex Downs AONB, complies with national policy on AONB's and may weaken them.</p> <p>Overall it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in improvements to the local environment.</p>
(e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (eg. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	<p>Strategies relating to waste disposal or water protection, and other community legislation on the environment, are dealt with in higher tier plans which have already been tested in full. The NDP will not impact on Community legislation on the environment.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
<p><i>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected [by the plan or programme], having regard, in particular, to:</i></p>	
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>The NDP will provide a context and framework to guide future development within the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Area and will supplement adopted planning policy.</p> <p>It includes policies that seek to protect and improve the environment, and to minimise the effects of development on its immediate surroundings and ensure development is delivered to high levels of sustainability.</p> <p>No significant effects are envisaged due to the scope and duration of the NDP.</p>
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>As above.</p> <p>Generally no significant effects are envisaged.</p>
(c) The transboundary* nature of the effects * <i>Transboundary effects are understood to be in other Member States</i>	<p>Effects will be local with limited effects on neighbouring areas. No transboundary effects are expected.</p> <p>The NDP will supplement adopted policy and is not envisaged, in itself, to have a significant effect.</p>
(e) The risks to human health or the environment (eg. due to accidents)	<p>No risks to human health have been identified as a result of the proposed policies in the NDP. Policies relating to environmental nuisance, pollution control and noise pollution are included in higher tier planning documents.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
(f) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size)	<p>The designated Neighbourhood Area is about 6.3 square kilometres in size, and covers 0.9% of West</p>

Criterion Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
<p>of the population likely to be affected)</p>	<p>Berkshire District. At the last census in 2011, the population of Tilehurst was 14,683.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans cover small geographical areas and their policies must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. As such they contain non-strategic development plan policies to address specific local issues. (NPPF paragraph 29).</p> <p>The NDP will provide a context and framework to guide future sustainable development in the area. The majority of effects would be focused within Tilehurst Parish.</p> <p>Overall there are likely to be no significant effects.</p>
<p>(g) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special natural characteristics or cultural heritage • exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values • intensive land-use <p>And</p> <p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status</p>	<p>The built and natural environmental designations within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area, along with the proposed NDP policies to protect these are considered below.</p> <p>Tilehurst Parish has the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Grade II Listed Buildings, and one Grade I Listed Building • 7 Local Wildlife Sites • Biodiversity Opportunity Area • Areas of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland • Tree Preservation Orders • North Wessex Downs AONB • 1 SSSI to the far south west of the Parish at Pincents Lane called Pincents Kiln <p>Within the NDP area there are no known:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SACs • SPAs • Nutrient Neutrality Zone falls within the Parish • Conservation Areas • Scheduled Monuments • World or National Heritage Sites; • Registered Historic Parks and Gardens; • Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites or Local Geological Sites <p>Within the NDP area there are no:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International conservation designations (or adjacent to it), outside of those listed above; <p>There is a question though whether the policy I4.2 Conserving and Enhancing The North Wessex Downs AONB, complies with national policy on AONB's and may weaken them.</p>

Criterion Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
	It is not considered that the NDP is likely to have any significant effects on local heritage assets or nature conservation interests and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in minor improvements to the local environment. As such, an SEA of the plan is unlikely to be necessary.

- 5.29. Based on these findings, the Council's initial conclusion is that a SEA of the Tilehurst NDP is not necessary under the SEA Directive and Regulations because it has been demonstrated that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects as a result of the NDP.

6. Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Report

- 6.1. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required to determine if a neighbourhood plan would have a significant impact upon the integrity of nature conservation sites of international importance, ie. Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Special Protection Areas (SPA). The principal aim of this part of the document is to ‘screen’ the potential of the Tilehurst NDP for its likely effect, either alone or in combination, on these sites.
- 6.2. This was a requirement under EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, and has been transposed into British law by Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010⁵. The Directive states that any plan or project not connected or necessary to a sites management, but likely to have significant effects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. An Appropriate Assessment determines the impact that plans and projects would have on internationally important nature conservation sites.
- 6.3. Within West Berkshire there are three SACs (River Lambourn, Kennet and Lambourn floodplain and Kennet Valley Alderwoods), and no Ramsar sites or SPAs. None of these sites fall within the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Area.
- 6.4. An Appropriate Assessment of all Core Strategy policies has been undertaken to ensure that either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, the policies do not adversely affect any of the SACs or the buffer area for the Thames Basin Heath SPA.
- 6.5. In addition, a HRA screening was undertaken on the HSA DPD and this concluded that an Appropriate Assessment was not required because the allocations and policies would not result in impacts and effects divergent to those assessed in the Core Strategy. The screening also concluded that there would be no negative effects on nature conservation sites of international importance.
- 6.6. The Neighbourhood Area is not in any close proximity to the SPAs or the Thames Basin Heaths SPA buffer area. The Tilehurst NDP is therefore considered unlikely to have significant effects on nature conservation sites of international importance (alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Tilehurst NDP is not considered necessary.

⁵ Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/pdfs/uksi_20100490_en.pdf

7. SEA and HRA – Conclusions of West Berkshire District Council

- 7.1. Based on the findings in Sections A and B, WBDC's initial conclusion is that a SEA of the Tilehurst NDP is not required under the SEA Directive and Regulations because it has been demonstrated that there will be no significant environmental effects as a result of the NDP.
- 7.2. It is also WBDC's initial conclusion that a HRA is not required because there are no internationally designated sites within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area.
- 7.3. Nonetheless, a final determination could not be made until the three statutory bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency, and Natural England) commented on this SEA Screening Report. This SEA Screening Report was subject to a five week period that ran from **Wednesday 19 October 2022 to 5pm on Wednesday 23 November 2022**.
- 7.4. Responses from Historic England and Natural England were received by 23 November 2022. No response was received from the Environment Agency.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The consultation responses from Historic England and Natural England to the SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report are detailed below and are also included in Appendix 1. No response was received from the Environment Agency:

Table 8.1: Responses from the statutory bodies

Consultation body	Comments	Action
Environment Agency	No response.	No further action necessary
Historic England	<p>Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government’s adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, “Is it (the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?”. Our comments are based on the information supplied.</p> <p>There are a number of designated heritage assets within the area; the information supplied however indicates that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We also note that the plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development.</p> <p>On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of ‘SEA’ Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.</p> <p>The views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.</p> <p>I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.</p> <p>We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan) where we consider that,</p>	No further action necessary

Consultation body	Comments	Action
	<p>despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.</p> <p>Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.</p>	
Natural England	<p>Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment</p> <p>It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.</p> <p>We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.</p> <p>We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.</p>	No further action necessary

Consultation body	Comments	Action
	<p>Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.</p> <p>Habitats Regulation Screening</p> <p>Natural England agrees with the report's conclusions that the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to result in a significant effect on any European Site, either alone or in combination and therefore no further assessment work would be required.</p>	

9. Conclusions following consultation with the statutory bodies

- 9.1 On the basis of the screening process detailed in this report, it is the Council's opinion that the NDP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and as such does not require an SEA under EU Directive 2001/42/EC and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), or a Habitats Regulations Assessment under EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 9.2. This determination has been made on 29 November 2022.

Appendix 1 Responses from Historic England and Natural England



Historic England

By email only to: umrah.mahadik1@westberks.gov.uk

Our ref: PL00791523

Your ref: Tilehurst Neighbourhood Plan SEA

Main: 020 7973 3700

e-seast@historicengland.org.uk

louise.dandy@historicengland.org.uk

Date: 29/11/2022

Dear Sir or Madam

Tilehurst Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied.

There are a number of designated heritage assets within the area; the information supplied however indicates that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We also note that the plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development.

On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.



Historic England, 4th Floor, The Atrium, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA

Telephone 020 7973 3700 HistoricEngland.org.uk

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.





Historic England

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan) where we consider that, despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

Please do contact me, via email if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Louise Dandy
Historic Places Adviser



Historic England, 4th Floor, The Atrium, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA
Telephone 020 7973 3700 HistoricEngland.org.uk

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Date: 23 November 2022
Our ref: 410527
Your ref: Tilehurst Neighbourhood Plan



Ms U Mahadik
West Berkshire Council

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

BY EMAIL ONLY

planningpolicy@westberks.gov.uk

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Ms Mahadik

Tilehurst Neighbourhood Plan – Review SEA & HRA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 19 October 2022.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

Natural England agrees with the report's conclusions that the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to result in a significant effect on any European Site, either alone or in combination and therefore no further assessment work would be required.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team