BLETCHINGDON, HAMPTON GAY AND HAMPTON POYLE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025-2042

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion

Prepared by: Cherwell District Council

July 2026

As part of the independent examination of a neighbourhood plan, the examiner must consider whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions set out in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). One of the Basic Conditions is that the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, relevant legal obligations. This includes compliance with environmental assessment requirements, including those arising from the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The purpose of this report is to determine whether the Regulation 16 Bletchingdon, Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Neighbourhood Plan) requires:

- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), including Appropriate Assessment, and/or
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

1. The Neighbourhood Development Plan

1.1 The Bletchingdon, Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle Neighbourhood Development Plan covers the parished areas of Bletchingdon and Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle and establishes planning policies for the period 2025 to 2042.

1.2 The Plan has been prepared in the context of the emerging Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (CLPR 2042). It does not allocate land for development and does not propose any growth beyond that already planned through the strategic planning framework.

1.3 Regulation 16 Final Submission Bletchingdon with Hampton Gay and Poyle Neighbourhood Development Plan includes policies to guide development within the two parishes of Bletchingdon and Hampton Gay and Poyle boundaries to 2042. The policies seek to respond to those local issues identified in the plan's baseline evidence and follow four principal themes:

- Sustainable Development;
- Character and Design;
- Nature and Climate; and

- Facilities and Infrastructure.

1.4 The objectives of the Plan include:

- Supporting sustainable development;
- Conserving and enhancing local character and heritage assets;
- Protecting valued landscapes and important views;
- Protecting local green spaces;
- Enhancing biodiversity and supporting nature recovery;
- Supporting biodiversity net gain; and
- Safeguarding and enhancing green infrastructure.

1.5 The Plan accounts for growth identified through the emerging Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (CLPR42) but does not introduce additional housing allocations or employment allocations.

1.6 Neighbourhood Plan Policy SD1 supports limited infill development within settlement boundaries, whilst Policy SD2 supports delivery of strategic growth identified through Policy RUR1 and Allocation RUR H1 of the emerging CLPR 2042.

1.7 When the plan is made, it will become part of the statutory development plan in Cherwell District and planning applications falling within the parish areas will be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Need for HRA screening

2.1 This screening considers whether the Bletchingdon with Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle Neighbourhood Development Plan requires Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

2.2 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 201, as amended ("the Habitats Regulations"), require plans and programmes to be assessed where they may have a likely significant effect on a site forming part of the National Site Network, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

2.3 National Site Network sites include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs); and
- Ramsar sites (as a matter of Government policy and guidance).

2.4 Under the Habitats Regulations, where a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a National Site Network site and is not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of the site, the competent authority must undertake an Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site's conservation objectives.

2.5 As the competent authority, Cherwell District Council is therefore required to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant effects on any National Site Network site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

2.6 In preparing this screening opinion, CDC has:

- Considered the potential for likely significant effects on National Site Network sites;
- Considered the findings of the Habitats Regulations Assessment undertaken for the emerging Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042; and
- Consulted Natural England, as the statutory nature conservation body.

2.7 Natural England HRA consultation response is attached to **Appendix 2**.

2.8 In summary:

- Natural England – Natural England advised that the proposal is unlikely to have significant effects on any statutory nature conservation sites, designated landscapes, or Habitats Sites, whether considered individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

2.9 The response received from Natural England has been taken into account in reaching the Council's screening determination.

HRA screening

2.10 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared within the framework established by the emerging Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (CLPR42).

2.11 A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken to support the CLPR 2042. The Local Plan HRA considered potential effects on the following National Site Network sites:

- Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and
- Cothill Fen SAC.

2.12 The Local Plan HRA included consideration of Policy RUR1, which establishes a housing requirement of 50 dwellings for Bletchingdon, Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle, together with Allocation RUR H1 (Land West of Springwell Hill), which is proposed to deliver approximately 44 of those dwellings.

2.13 Potential impact pathways identified through the Local Plan HRA included:

- Recreational pressure;
- Air quality;
- Water resources;
- Water quality and hydrological change.

2.14 These matters were considered in through the Appropriate Assessment stage of the Local Plan HRA.

2.15 The CLPR 2042 HRA concluded that the Local Plan would not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of Oxford Meadows SAC, Cothill Fen SAC or any other National Site Network site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

HRA assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan

2.16 There are no SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

2.17 The nearest National Site Network site is Oxford Meadows SAC, located approximately 4 km from the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

2.18 The Neighbourhood Plan:

- does not allocate sites for development;
- does not increase housing growth beyond that assessed through the CLPR 2042;
- supports growth already assessed through the Local Plan process;
- contains predominantly criteria-based policies; and
- includes policies which seek to protect and enhance biodiversity, green infrastructure and the natural environment.

2.19 No new development quantum or additional impact pathways are introduced beyond those already assessed through the Local Plan HRA.

HRA Screening Conclusion

2.20 The Bletchingdon, Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle Neighbourhood Development Plan does not allocate land for development and does not propose growth beyond that already assessed through the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042. Policy SD2 supports delivery of strategic growth identified through Local Plan Policy RUR1 and Allocation RUR H1 but does not increase the scale of development assessed through the Local Plan process. The Neighbourhood Plan is therefore not considered likely to introduce any additional impact pathways or significant effects on National Site Network sites beyond those already assessed through the strategic HRA.

2.21 Accordingly, Cherwell District Council concludes that the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on any National Site Network site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, and an Appropriate Assessment is not required under Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

3 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

3.1 This screening report has been prepared to determine whether the Bletchingdon with Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle Neighbourhood Development Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

3.2 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ("the SEA Regulations"), as amended, require an environmental assessment to be undertaken for certain plans and programmes that are likely to have significant environmental effects. The SEA Regulations originally transposed the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment into domestic legislation and continue to have effect in England.

3.3 As part of the independent examination of a neighbourhood plan, the examiner must consider whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions set out in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). This includes consideration of whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with retained environmental assessment requirements, including those established through the SEA Regulations.

3.4 Bletchingdon, Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle Parish Councils have requested a SEA screening opinion of its neighbourhood plan and has worked with Cherwell District Council to provide information which would enable District Council officers to determine whether the draft neighbourhood plan will give rise to significant environmental effects and require an SEA.

SEA Screening

3.5 The criteria for determining the significance of effects are listed in Schedule 1 Regulations (9 (2) (a) and 10 (4)(a) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. They relate to 2 main areas:

- the scope and influence of the document and
- the type of impact and area likely to be affected

3.6 The screening assessment has been undertaken using the criteria in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and it is contained in **Appendix 1** of this screening opinion.

SEA assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan

3.7 The Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

3.8 The Neighbourhood Development Plan does not allocate land for development and does not introduce growth beyond that already assessed through the emerging CLPR 2042. The Neighbourhood Development Plan policies are primarily criteria-based and seek to:

- protect and enhance biodiversity;
- conserve heritage assets and local character;
- safeguard local landscapes and green spaces;
- support sustainable drainage and flood risk management;
- enhance green infrastructure; and
- promote sustainable development.

3.9 The environmental effects associated with strategic growth in the area have been considered through the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment prepared for the CLPR 2042.

3.10 The Neighbourhood Area contains and adjoins environmental and heritage assets including:

- Weston Fen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Shipton-on-Cherwell and Whitehill Farm Quarries SSSI;
- Local Wildlife Sites;
- Conservation Areas; and
- Listed Buildings and other designated heritage assets.
- Ancient Woodland parcels some of which are also Local Wildlife Sites.

3.11 The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development which could adversely affect these assets. Rather, it contains policies intended to conserve and enhance the environmental quality of the area.

3.12 Having regard to the characteristics of the Plan and the characteristics of the likely effects, it is considered that the Plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects.

3.13 The Plan accounts for growth identified through the emerging Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (CLPR42) but does not introduce additional housing allocations or employment allocations. This screening opinion reflects the relevant findings of the Local Plan SA/SEA in relation to **Policy RUR H1**, which are: enhancements for biodiversity in the form of hedgerow, woodland, scrub and grassland creation, habitat pile creation, as well as the continued monitoring and management of these habitats; and opportunity to reinforce hedgerow and tree planting to the sites northern and western boundaries to ensure an appropriate visual relationship with the wider rural context.

3.14 The SA/SEA accompanying the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 does not identify Policy RUR H1 as being subject to significant fluvial flood risk constraints. The allocation is expected to be delivered in accordance with Policies CSD 7 and CSD 8 of the CLPR 2042 relating to flood risk management and sustainable drainage. The evidence indicates that surface water drainage can be addressed through a comprehensive SuDS strategy, and the SA/SEA does not identify flooding as a principal constraint affecting the site. Policy RUR H1 reflects on para 20 that the application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network.

3.15 The detailed assessment against the Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations criteria is contained in **Appendix 1**.

SEA Screening Conclusion

3.16 Having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), Cherwell District Council concludes that the Bletchingdon, Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle Neighbourhood Development Plan is not likely to result in significant environmental effects. It is considered that and Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

4. Consultation

4.1 CDC consulted the statutory consultation bodies and CDC's ecologist.

4.2 In summary:

- Natural England – significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and significant effects on Habitat sites, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.
- Historic England – an SEA is not required in this instance for the reason set out in paragraph 4.3 of the Screening Statement (Cherwell DC, July 2026).
- The Environment Agency – No response has been received from Environment Agency at 18/09/2026.
- CDC ecologist – The neighbourhood plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the National Site network and HRA is not required. The SEA screening noted that, while there are records of protected species and several small ancient woodland and Local Wildlife Site parcels within the parish, no significant populations were identified, and it recommends explaining how the Neighbourhood Plan will protect these irreplaceable habitats and avoid adverse impacts.

4.3 The responses received from these bodies have been taken into account in reaching the Council's screening determination. Schedule 1 was reviewed following the recommendations of CDC's ecologist.

4.4 The full consultation responses are attached to Appendix 2 and CDC's Ecologist to Appendix 3.

5. Screening Determination

5.1 Cherwell District Council has screened the Regulation 16 Bletchingdon, Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle Neighbourhood Development Plan against the requirements of:

- The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended); and
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

5.2 Having considered:

- the content and purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan;
- the Schedule 1 SEA criteria;
- the findings of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 Sustainability Appraisal;
- the findings of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 Habitats Regulations Assessment; and
- the responses received from the statutory consultation bodies and CDC's ecologist;

5.3 Cherwell District Council concludes that:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment, SEA is not required.
- Habitats Regulations Assessment, Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Officers preparing screening determination

Liam Andrews
Senior Planning Policy Officer
Cherwell District Council
Date: 27 July 2026

Trinidad Galindo
Senior Planning Policy Officer
Cherwell District Council
Date: 17 September 2026

Approved by
Maria Dopazo
Principal Planning Policy Officer
Cherwell District Council
Date: 21 September 2026

Appendix 1. SEA screening

Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programs Regulations 2004	Summary of significant effects Scope and influence of the documents	Is the Plan likely to have a significant environmental effect? Y/N
1. Characteristics of the neighbourhood plan having particular regard to		
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.	If the plan is brought into legal force, it will become part of the statutory development plan in Cherwell District. The neighbourhood plan is prepared for land use purposes and covers the Bletchingdon and Hampton Gay and Poyle area. It accounts for the growth anticipated in the Cherwell Local Plan but does not allocate land for development. Policy SD1 supports infilling within settlement boundaries and policy SD2 supports the housing allocation in the Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2042. The type of projects and or activities which the neighbourhood plan may set will be at parish level with limited resource implications.	N
b. The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The neighbourhood plan accounts for planned growth identified in the Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2042, its policies and Sustainability Appraisal. The policies in the neighbourhood plan need to be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and in general conformity with the emerging Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042. The plan accounts for growth already tested by the District Council's overarching Sustainability Appraisal. It does not introduce new growth. The degree of influence on future strategic policies will be limited.	N
c. The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The neighbourhood plan proposes policies to address local issues identified in the plan's baseline evidence. The policies cover four main themes: • Sustainable development • Character and design • Nature and climate • Facilities and infrastructure The policies are intended to protect and or enhance the natural and historic environment and address specific local issues. The neighbourhood plan does not allocate land for development.	N

Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programs Regulations 2004	Summary of significant effects Scope and influence of the documents	Is the Plan likely to have a significant environmental effect? Y/N
	The neighbourhood plan policies complement policies in the emerging Cherwell Local Plan. This is evidenced within appendix 1-8 of the July 2026 Submission Documents.	
d. Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	The baseline evidence identifies localised environmental matters, including surface water flooding risks along the B4027 near Heathfield and river flooding risks near Hampton Poyle. The plan actively responds to these matters through criteria policies, such as Policy SD4 (Flooding), which restricts surface water runoff discharge rates, and Policy CE1, which mandates 10-metre habitat buffers along watercourses. Appendix 8 identifies small-scale community infrastructure projects, such as a layby on Station Road and all-weather footpaths, which possess negligible environmental consequences. There are no baseline environmental problems within the area that would be exacerbated by the plan.	N
e. The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of retained EU law on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	These are not directly relevant to the neighbourhood plan although the plan has been prepared in consultation with relevant organisations which would have to take into account of such legislation in the preparation of their own plans or programmes. The plan does not contain strategic policies relating to waste management or large-scale industrial water infrastructure. However, where relevant to local planning, Policy SD4 and Policy CE1 explicitly align with the principles of water resource protection by requiring sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to protect local watercourses in accordance with water framework standards. The plan's policies support rather than conflict with environmental regulations.	N
2. Characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected having particular regard to		
a. The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	The neighbourhood plan accounts for the growth anticipated in the emerging Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 but does not allocate land for development. Policies SD1 manages local windfall infill and small-scale extensions in conformity with Policy SP1 of the emerging Cherwell plan and Policy	N

Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programs Regulations 2004	Summary of significant effects Scope and influence of the documents	Is the Plan likely to have a significant environmental effect? Y/N
	SD2 supports of the housing allocation targets set out under Policy RUR H1 of the emerging Cherwell plan. The neighbourhood policies are in conformity with the framework environmentally assessed at the higher tier, and do not allocate any separate or additional development land. It is considered highly unlikely that any negative, irreversible environmental effects will occur.	
b. The cumulative nature of the effects.	The policies in the neighbourhood plan are expected to help the implementation at the local level of environmental policies in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan. By adding measures such as design codes, native planting requirements, and protection for wildlife corridors—the cumulative effect of the plan is intended to be positive and protective at the neighbourhood planning level.	N
c. The transboundary nature of the effects (note this is very unlikely to be applicable in the context of a Neighbourhood Plan).	The geographic scope of the plan is strictly confined to the designated administrative boundaries of Bletchingdon and Hampton Gay & Poyle. Due to the criteria-based nature of the text and the total absence of large-scale physical land allocations, there are no pathways for transboundary environmental effects on adjacent parishes or neighbouring districts.	N
d. The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents).	The neighbourhood plan policies seek to address locally identified issues without further development growth than that in the emerging Cherwell Local Plan. There are no known risks to human health or the environment as a result of the plan. Objectives of the plan include to preserve and enhance existing green spaces, and to protect community facilities and services from unnecessary loss and encourage proposals to sustain and improve their viability. This is likely to improve human health.	N
e. The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The Neighbourhood Development Plan covers the parished areas of Bletchingdon and Hampton Gay and Poyle. Bletchingdon parish has an area of 10.75km2, and a current population of 1,100 (ONS: 2021). The parish of Hampton Gay and Poyle has an area of 6.11km2 with a population of 170 (ONS:	N

Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programs Regulations 2004	Summary of significant effects Scope and influence of the documents	Is the Plan likely to have a significant environmental effect? Y/N
	2021). Given this limited geographical area and modest total population, the magnitude of any policy effects is considered localised and minor.	
f. The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: • special nature characteristics or cultural heritage • exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values • of intensive land-use.	The designated area has assets of environmental and cultural value, including multiple designated Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), and Conservation Areas covering parts of both parishes, and national statutory designations including the Weston Fen SSSI on the eastern boundary and the adjoining Shipton-on-Cherwell Quarry SSSI. The plan addresses these designations. Policies CD1 and CD2 enforce compliance with the local Character Assessment and Design Code to protect heritage assets and key views. Policies CE1 through CE6 uses findings from the Bletchingdon Conservation Plan and TVERC reports to actively protect biodiversity assets, native flora, and veteran trees, while Policy CE1 mandates protective 10-metre buffers along local watercourses to shield sensitive fen and wetland habitats. Because the plan completely avoids site allocations, it will not stimulate intensive land use or trigger breaches in environmental quality limits. The Bletchingdon Conservation Plan (Appendix 6) identifies and suggests ways on how protect local wildlife resources and ways in which they may be maintained or improved. These can be seen within policies CE1, CE2, CE3, CE4, CE5, CE6. The Neighbourhood Area contains areas of Ancient Woodland, which are irreplaceable habitats. The neighbourhood plan includes policies to protect and enhance biodiversity, habitats and green infrastructure (policies CE1 to CE6). The Bletchingdon and Hampton Gay and Poyle Character Assessment (Appendix 3) and the Bletchingdon and Hampton Gay and Poyle Design Code (Appendix 5) and seeks to ensure future development is sympathetic and	N

Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programs Regulations 2004	Summary of significant effects Scope and influence of the documents	Is the Plan likely to have a significant environmental effect? Y/N
	complementary to local character and design. This can be seen within Policy CD1. The neighbourhood plan does not specifically allocate land for development (and therefore the additional consultations suggested by Natural England are not currently required for the specific purposes of this Screening Statement). It accounts for the growth already identified in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and it is unlikely to result in intensive land use or exceed environmental quality standards or limit values.	
g. the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	The parished areas of Bletchingdon and Hampton Gay and Poyle are located more than 4 km away from European designated habitats for the purposes of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. There are no National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) affected by the neighbourhood plan. While the parishes contain or adjoin national statutory sites—specifically Weston Fen SSSI, Shipton-on-Cherwell Quarry SSSI —the plan doesn't contain site allocations. Through criteria-based policies like Policy SD4 on surface water and Policy CE1 on watercourse buffers, the plan introduces local measures to manage environmental impacts. These provisions ensure align with the protection of conservation sites	N

Name of officer producing the screening opinion	Liam Andrews Senior Planning Policy Officer Cherwell District Council	Trinidad Galindo Senior Planning Policy Officer Cherwell District Council
Date of assessment	27/07/2026	17/09/2026
Person requesting Screening Opinion	Duncan Ledger (Bletchingdon Parish Council)	
Conclusion of assessment	Is an SEA required? No Is an HRA, Appropriate Assessment required? No	
Name of officer approving the Screening Opinion	Maria Dopazo Principle Planning Policy Officer Cherwell District Council	
Date of approval	21/09/2026	

Appendix 2: Statutory Consultee Responses

Historic England

Historic England

Planning Policy Cherwell District Council 39 Castle Quay Banbury OX16 5FD	Our ref: Your ref:	PL00802538
	Telephone Email	020 7973 3700 e-seast@historicengland.org.uk
By email only to planning.policy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	Date	6 August 2026

Dear Sir or Madam

Bletchingdon, Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle Neighbourhood Development Plan - Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion

Thank you for your email dated 31 July 2026 consulting Historic England on your intention of carrying out an SEA for the above plan,

In light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, our view is that an SEA is not required in this instance for the reason set out in paragraph 4.3 of the Screening Statement (Cherwell DC, July 2026).

Yours sincerely

[redacted]
Historic Environment Planning Adviser

: England, 4th Floor, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA
ne 020 7973 3700 | historicengland.org.uk

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Natural England

Date: 12 August 2026
Our ref: 555096
Your ref: Bletchingdon, Hampton Gay & Polye Neighbourhood Plan

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

T 0300 060 3900

Mr Liam Andrews
Cherwell District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY
[redacted]

Dear Mr Andrews

Bletchingdon, Hampton Gay & Polye Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Opinion Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 31 July 2026.

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 (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- **significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,**
- **significant effects on Habitats sites[1], either alone or in combination, are unlikely.**

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the Planning Practice Guidance. This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- 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.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected

[1] Habitats sites are those referred to in the National Planning Policy Framework (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's standing advice on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission standing advice.

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

[redacted]
Consultations Team

Environment Agency

Screening opinion sent to the Environment Agency on 31st of July 2026. No response received at 18 September 2026.

Appendix 3: CDC ecologist

Sent: 17 September 2026 14:17
To: Maria Dopazo [redacted]
Subject: RE: Bletchingdon and Hampton Poyle NP

Maria

I support paragraph 2.1. The neighbourhood plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the National Site network and an HRA is not required.

With regard to the requirement for an SEA:
There are multiple records of protected species however no significant recorded populations. The parish areas contain ten small Ancient woodland parcels some of which are also Local Wildlife Sites. Their small size makes them less resilient and more vulnerable to impacts. The ancient woodland is not mentioned in the summary of significant effects assessment table, and you may wish to include how the neighbourhood plan addresses these irreplaceable habitats and how the proposals in the NP will not cause impacts - in Section f for completeness.

The neighbourhood plan is not allocating any land for development, making proposals which would impact natural assets or that would cause a significant environmental effect therefore I would consider that the requirement to produce a SEA is not triggered.

Kind regards
Charlotte

[redacted]
Senior Ecologist MIEnvSc
Tel: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]
Place and Regeneration
Cherwell District Council
www.cherwell.gov.uk