

Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement of Reasons

This statement has been produced to comply with Regulation 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

A neighbourhood plan is required to meet a number of basic conditions, one of which being it must not breach and be otherwise compatible with EU and Human Rights obligations. This requires neighbourhood plans to fully consider the requirements of the SEA regulations¹ which transpose the EU's SEA directive² into law and which requires those making plans that could impact on the environment to consider whether they are likely to have a significant effect or not.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report for the draft Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan was submitted in January 2016 to North Dorset District Council, the 'responsible authority', to determine whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.

The District Council considers that the process followed to produce the Screening Report complies with Regulation 9(2)(a) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, thereby taking into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 of the Regulations. On 18th January 2016 this Assessment was made available to the statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and Environment Agency), as is required under Regulation 9(2)(b).

The Screening Report finds that the draft Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and consequently that a strategic environmental assessment is not required.

The initial view of North Dorset District Council was that an SEA would be unlikely to be required in respect of the effect of the plan on the environment and, in light of the final responses from the statutory consultation bodies (see Appendix) the District Council is now satisfied that an SEA is not required in this instance.

The District Council therefore now agrees with the conclusion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report that there are unlikely to be significant adverse environmental effects resulting from the draft Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan. North Dorset District Council therefore considers that the draft Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA for the following reasons:

¹ Known fully as The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

² Known fully as Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

- The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan does not propose to allocate further housing or employment development or amend the settlement boundary defined in the Local Plan.
- Any likely effects (including cumulative effects) of proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan are unlikely to be significant on the local environment. Any impact is likely to be local in its impact, within the parish.
- Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency are satisfied that an SEA is not required.

NOTE: The statement is based on the information provided. If the contents of the plan are revised and/or there is a material change in the environmental characteristics in the locality (e.g. the designation of any additional nature conservation or other environmental sites), then the comments contained in this statement would need to be reconsidered in order to take account of the changes.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Schedule 2, paragraph 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 sets out the prescribed basic condition that the making of a neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

The Gillingham Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report for the draft Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan identifies European sites within a 10 km search area. The District Council has consulted Natural England as to the requirement for a habitats regulation assessment.

Natural England's response is:

In advising your authority on the requirements relating to Habitats Regulations Assessment, and to assist you in screening for the likelihood of significant effects, based on the information provided, Natural England offers the following advice:

- *the proposal is not necessary for the management of the European site*
- *that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European site, and can therefore be screened out from any requirement for further assessment*

APPENDIX

SEA Statutory Consultation Bodies Responses

1. Natural England – email dated 25/01/2016 & 09/05/2016
2. Environment Agency – letter dated 04/02/2016
3. Historic England – email dated 29/02/2016

Sean Brown

From: Stobart, John (NE) [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 May 2016 09:16
To: Nicola Laszlo
Subject: RE: SEA screening - Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Nicola

Apologies for the delay in getting back to you.

In advising your authority on the requirements relating to Habitats Regulations Assessment, and to assist you in screening for the likelihood of significant effects, based on the information provided, Natural England offers the following advice:

- the proposal is not necessary for the management of the European site
- that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European site, and can therefore be screened out from any requirement for further assessment

Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

John Stobart
Planning and Conservation Lead Advisor
Natural England
[REDACTED]

Please note that my working days are now Monday to Thursday

www.gov.uk/natural-england

We are here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

Natural England is accredited to the Cabinet Office Customer Service Excellence Standard

From: Nicola Laszlo [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 April 2016 15:33
To: Stobart, John (NE); Jo Witherden
Subject: RE: SEA screening - Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan

Hi John

The Gillingham SEA & HRA Screening Report scoped 10km and identifies a SAC within 5km, and specifically asked for advice from Natural England as to whether the plan will require a separate Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Would you just be able to clarify your thoughts on this to us.

Many thanks,

Nicola

Nicola Laszlo BA (Hons), MPlan, MRTPI

Senior Planning Policy Officer

Dorset Councils Partnership

North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council

www.dorsetforyou.com/contactus

twitter.com/dorsetforyou

facebook.com/dorsetforyou

From: Stobart, John (NE) [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 January 2016 17:49
To: Jo Witherden; Nicola Laszlo
Subject: RE: SEA screening - Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan

Jo
Many thanks for forwarding the draft SEA screening - Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.

I can confirm that based on the screening report we have no concerns and on this basis would not seek an SEA for the plan.

Regards

John Stobart
Planning and Conservation Lead Advisor
Natural England
[REDACTED]

Please note that my working days are now Monday to Thursday

www.gov.uk/natural-england

We are here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

Natural England is accredited to the Cabinet Office Customer Service Excellence Standard

From: Jo Witherden [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 January 2016 12:25
To: 'Nicola Laszlo'
Cc: Michael Holm; Stuart, David; Stobart, John (NE)
Subject: SEA screening - Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Nicola

Gillingham Town Council have asked me to help with the request for the SEA screening of their neighbourhood plan. I have therefore prepared the attached (which is similar to the approach taken for the Shillingstone SEA screening that you may be familiar with) to help in this respect. This also asks for Natural England's consideration as to whether an appropriate assessment is necessary (pg 15).

Previously the District Council used my (non statutory) report to send to the statutory consultees, to help them determine whether the Plan may have significant environmental impacts which therefore would justify the preparation of a scoping report under the terms of the SEA Directives and regulations.

The neighbourhood plan is still in its drafting stage although it is reasonably advance as it is hoped a pre-submission consultation draft can be agreed by the Town Council at their meeting in February. As such the

scope of the plan as outlined in the attached screening report is relatively accurate and as you will see on pg4 of the report, it does not seek to allocate land for housing or employment, nor does it propose any changes to the settlement boundary. Instead it focuses more on the issues of local importance, in terms of local character and community infrastructure, as well as providing further guidance on the development that will take place. If there are any matters that raise uncertainties in terms of environmental impact, please let me know as I should be in a position to provide more detail that may assist in coming to a more informed decision.

I am aware that your team is short staffed at the current time, so I have taken the initiative of copying this email to the statutory consultees to try to limit any unnecessary delays as I recognise you may be juggling with other priorities. I would therefore like to make clear to those consultees that the attached is not something that has been agreed with by the District Council. If you are happy for the statutory consultees to respond on this basis, please let them know.

I would of course be grateful for any observations either you or the statutory consultees may wish either in terms of the environmental impacts, or the plan's scope.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please drop me a line. I would be grateful if we could have a steer on the likely outcome in the next few weeks.

Warm regards,

Jo

DorsetPlanningConsultant

Jo Witherden BSc(Hons) DipTP DipUD MRTPI



www.dorsetplanningconsultant.co.uk

Or you can [check out my blog](#) or [follow me on facebook](#)

This message (including any attachments) is confidential and is intended for the addressee only. If you have received this message in error please notify us. The material in it may be subject to copyright protection, and any unauthorised use, review, disclosure or copying of the information is prohibited.

This email and any attachments is intended for the named recipient only. If you have received it in error you have no authority to use, disclose, store or copy any of its contents and you should destroy it and inform the sender. Whilst this email and associated attachments will have been checked for known viruses whilst within the Natural England systems, we can accept no responsibility once it has left our systems. Communications on Natural England systems may be monitored and/or recorded to secure the effective operation of the system and for other lawful purposes.

Get the latest from Dorset councils on roads, planning, waste, libraries, schools, jobs and more sent direct to your email inbox for free - www.dorsetforyou.com/e-news

We value your feedback. To help us improve services, please complete a short survey by [Clicking Here](#)

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com>

Email: customerservices@north-dorset.gov.uk

Main line: 01258 454111

Main fax: 01258 480179

North Dorset District Council, Nordon, Salisbury Road, Blandford Forum, DT11 7LL

Think before you print.

The views expressed above are personal unless stated otherwise. NDDC is not liable for any consequences of accessing this electronic transmission.

Ms Nicola Laszlo
North Dorset District Council
Nordon Salisbury Road
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT11 7LL

Our ref: WX/2006/000033/OR-
09/IS1-L01
Your ref: Gillingham NP
Date: 04 February 2016

Dear Ms Laszlo

Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan – Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Screening Report

We have received a copy of the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening report from Dorset Planning Consultant on the 18 January 2016 and we can offer the following advice.

In regards the Findings (Page14) we are satisfied the statement that the proposed plan is unlikely to require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

The principles of the plan would appear to accord with your Local Plan, but we have the following comments on the document.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets

Whilst we would agree that there are no national or international conservation designations in the plan area (page 9), there are protected species such as water voles and otters present.

Therefore, there are opportunities within the plan to improve the local environment for these protected species to deliver a positive impact. As Gillingham has several river running through it this would principally be within the green spaces which are floodplain and it river enhancements,

Flood Risk

Whilst the local plan has identified the strategic housing delivery areas these include the floodplain as ancillary green space. This approach is supported by us, and ties in with the above comments.

Please note that there may also be other sources of flooding (e.g. surface water) that need to be considered within the local plan, as it may offer an opportunity to address these local issues. Please consider our flood map for surface water in discussion with

Environment Agency
Rivers House, Sunrise Business Park, Higher Shaftesbury Road, Blandford, Dorset, DT11 8ST.
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Cont/d..

the Local Authority drainage engineer in regards to this matter.

Please contact us if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

MR MICHAEL HOLM
Planning Advisor - Sustainable Places



cc Dorset Planning Consultant

Sean Brown

From: Stuart, David [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 February 2016 14:54
To: Jo Witherden; Nicola Laszlo
Cc: Michael Holm; John Stobart; Kevin Morris
Subject: RE: SEA screening - Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Jo

Based on the information provided I can confirm that we have no objection to the view that an SEA will not be required (I could find no draft plan or details on likely content anywhere on line). In terms of the Screening Report itself the list of Heritage Assets on p9 should include the conservation area (which is accurately identified as being At Risk on p12).

The fact that the conservation area is At Risk is why we are taking a particular interest in this neighbourhood plan and encouraging the Gillingham community to see how it might be able to address those issues responsible for its current status. We have had meetings already and a further meeting is arranged for next week at which Kevin Morris and I expect to discuss with local representatives the emerging enhancement strategy. The community has also prepared a conservation area appraisal which we hope to have sight of too.

It is therefore pleasing to see that the scope of the neighbourhood plan is likely to include referencing the Heritage Enhancement Plan. One of the aspects of the town centre which I remember highlighting as something with potential for enhancement is the route from the railway station to the High Street where improved legibility and connectivity could be achieved. While public realm and signage improvement would no doubt be of value there may also be potential for development to reinforce a sense of identity and enclosure, possibly with some existing negative buildings being replaced.

If the community does feel that these do exist as opportunities and should be highlighted in the neighbourhood plan then their provision could conceivably be interpreted as allocated sites and the SEA screening outcome would therefore need to be reviewed.

Kind regards

David

David Stuart | Historic Places Adviser South West
[REDACTED]

Historic England | 29 Queen Square | Bristol | BS1 4ND

We have launched four new, paid-for Enhanced Advisory Services, providing enhancements to our existing free planning and listing services. For more information on the new Enhanced Advisory Services as well as our free services go to our website: HistoricEngland.org.uk/EAS

From: Jo Witherden [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 January 2016 12:25
To: 'Nicola Laszlo'

Cc: Michael Holm; Stuart, David; John Stobart
Subject: SEA screening - Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Nicola

Gillingham Town Council have asked me to help with the request for the SEA screening of their neighbourhood plan. I have therefore prepared the attached (which is similar to the approach taken for the Shillingstone SEA screening that you may be familiar with) to help in this respect. This also asks for Natural England's consideration as to whether an appropriate assessment is necessary (pg 15).

Previously the District Council used my (non statutory) report to send to the statutory consultees, to help them determine whether the Plan may have significant environmental impacts which therefore would justify the preparation of a scoping report under the terms of the SEA Directives and regulations.

The neighbourhood plan is still in its drafting stage although it is reasonably advance as it is hoped a pre-submission consultation draft can be agreed by the Town Council at their meeting in February. As such the scope of the plan as outlined in the attached screening report is relatively accurate and as you will see on pg4 of the report, it does not seek to allocate land for housing or employment, nor does it propose any changes to the settlement boundary. Instead it focuses more on the issues of local importance, in terms of local character and community infrastructure, as well as providing further guidance on the development that will take place. If there are any matters that raise uncertainties in terms of environmental impact, please let me know as I should be in a position to provide more detail that may assist in coming to a more informed decision.

I am aware that your team is short staffed at the current time, so I have taken the initiative of copying this email to the statutory consultees to try to limit any unnecessary delays as I recognise you may be juggling with other priorities. I would therefore like to make clear to those consultees that the attached is not something that has been agreed with by the District Council. If you are happy for the statutory consultees to respond on this basis, please let them know.

I would of course be grateful for any observations either you or the statutory consultees may wish either in terms of the environmental impacts, or the plan's scope.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please drop me a line. I would be grateful if we could have a steer on the likely outcome in the next few weeks.

Warm regards,

Jo

DorsetPlanningConsultant

Jo Witherden BSc(Hons) DipTP DipUD MRTPI

[Redacted contact information]

www.dorsetplanningconsultant.co.uk
Or you can [check out my blog](#) or [follow me on facebook](#)

This message (including any attachments) is confidential and is intended for the addressee only. If you have received this message in error please notify us. The material in it may be subject to copyright protection, and any unauthorised use, review, disclosure or copying of the information is prohibited.

We are the public body that looks after England's historic environment. We champion historic places, helping people to understand, value and care for them, now and for the future.

Sign up to our enewsletter to keep up to date with our latest news, advice and listings.

HistoricEngland.org.uk

Twitter: [@HistoricEngland](https://twitter.com/HistoricEngland)

This e-mail (and any attachments) is confidential and may contain personal views which are not the views of Historic England unless specifically stated. If you have received it in error, please delete it from your system and notify the sender immediately. Do not use, copy or disclose the information in any way nor act in reliance on it. Any information sent to Historic England may become publicly available.