



Department for Environment and Community Services

Date: 25 September 2024
Our Ref: PNP Screening Opinion
Enquiries to:
Section: Spatial Planning Policy
E-mail: neighbourhoodplanning@southglos.gov.uk

Dear Cllr Rick Dunning,

Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Development Plan – SEA Determination

To assist in the production of the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Development Plan, South Gloucestershire Council undertook a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion. An SEA Screening Opinion, once consulted on with statutory consultees, is intended to determine whether or not the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) would require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

SEA Screening Opinion – South Gloucestershire Council

A pre-submission version of the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Development Plan, received in May 2024 by South Gloucestershire Council was used to consider the likely environmental effects of the NDP against the criteria set out in Schedule I of the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The consideration of likely effects against the Schedule I criteria are available to view in **Appendix 1**.

Following analysis of likely significant effects, South Gloucestershire Council considered that the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Development Plan was unlikely to have any significant effects on the environment. The initial opinion was that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Development Plan was not required.

As required by Regulation 9(2) (a) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the screening opinion was sent to Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency in order to arrive at a determination in consultation with the statutory consultees. The screening opinion was shared with the statutory consultees on the 09th September 2024 and is available to view at **Appendix 1**.

SEA Screening Opinion – Statutory Consultees

All three statutory consultees agreed with South Gloucestershire Councils screening opinion, that the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Development Plan was unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects and therefore would not require Strategic Environmental Assessment. The response of Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency can be viewed in **Appendix 2**.

Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Opinion – Natural England

Natural England utilised the information within the analysis of likely significant effects found in the screening report attached at **Appendix 1** to also determine that the Pucklechurch NDP would be unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects on European Designated Sites and can therefore be screened out from any requirement for further assessment under the Habitat Regulations. This determination is also available at **Appendix 2**.

Determination

Following the response of the statutory bodies, who agreed with South Gloucestershire Council that the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Development Plan is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects which would require Strategic Environmental Assessment, or have significant effects on European Designated Sites that would require consideration under the Habitats Directive, it has been determined that no further SEA is required. This determination has been arrived at in agreement with relevant statutory consultees.

For the purpose of demonstrating that the NDP is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment; as required by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015), **Appendix 1**, supported by **Appendix 2** of this document could be considered to form the statement of reasons.

Yours sincerely

Danny Dixon

Senior Planning Policy Officer

Strategic Planning Policy & Specialist Advice Team

neighbourhoodplanning@southglos.gov.uk

Department for Environment and Community Services | PO Box 1954 | Bristol | BS37 0DD

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Appendix 1 – SEA Screening Opinion

Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Opinion

July 2024

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Purpose of Screening Opinion

The screening opinion has two purposes:

- Firstly, to determine whether the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Development Plan (PNDP) is likely to have significant environmental effects and require strategic environmental assessment (SEA).
- Secondly, to determine whether the plan has potential negative or uncertain effects on Natura 2000 sites of relevance, which would require further consideration under the Habitat Regulations.

This screening opinion has been produced by South Gloucestershire Council, in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and Habitat Regulation 2010.

As required by Regulation 9(2)(b) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, and Habitats Regulation (2010), the screening opinion is now being sent to the statutory consultation bodies with a five week period allowed for response, in order for the Council to arrive at a determination, in consultation with the statutory consultees.

Assessing Likely Effects

A draft of the PNDP, received by the council in May 2024 has been utilised to consider the likely environmental effects, and effects on Natura 2000 sites of relevance. This version of the Neighbourhood Plan has been supplied alongside this screening opinion.

The criteria in Schedule I (of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) have been utilised to assess the Plan and produce this screening opinion, to assist consideration of likely effects and make a robust determination.

In considering likely effects, baseline data and findings within the Sustainability Appraisals of the Core Strategy (2013), Policies Sites and Places Plan (2017) have been utilised, where they relate to the Pucklechurch area. The Habitat Regulations screening opinion has been informed by the conclusions of the Core Strategy Habitat Regulation Assessment (2011) and Screening Determination of the Policies, Sites and Places Plan.

In addition to this information the most current and available data for certain environmental issues were considered as the basis for the screening opinion.

Flood Risk

A number of studies have taken place to determine the extent and vulnerability of flood risk in and around Pucklechurch. The primary studies of relevance in this screening opinion were:

- Environment Agency National Flood Zone data;
- South Gloucestershire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (February 2021); and

- South Gloucestershire Council Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (December 2011).

The PNDP does not make any allocations within the plan for development, however does seek to influence development design and quality through specific development management policies. The primary purpose of the SFRA2 therefore was to inform the second part of the Exception Test for the Neighbourhood Planning process, ensuring that any potential new development would be in areas with least flood risk and safe for its lifetime (taking account of the vulnerability of its users), not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall. As no development allocations are proposed, the focus has been on the SFRA Level 1.

Heritage and material assets

The South Gloucestershire Historic Environmental Records contains regularly maintained and updated information on:

- Conservation Area boundaries;
- Article 4 directions;
- Registered Parks and Gardens both nationally and locally designated; Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and
- Listed Buildings.

The record also has information on undesignated assets, such as known archaeology and non-designated above heritage ground assets.

Nature Conservation

The screening opinion has also taken account of the nature conservation assets within and adjacent to the plan area including:

- International designations; Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar Sites;
- National Designations; Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and
- Local Sites of Nature Conservation Interest.

This has been supplemented by confidential data on protected species, habitats and related information held by South Gloucestershire Council.

Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan Screening Opinion

The consideration of likely environmental effects, against the criteria in Schedule I, is set out in Appendix 1 of this screening opinion.

From the analysis of likely effects South Gloucestershire Council considers policies to support a wide range of issues within the PNDP, are:

1. Unlikely to have any significant environmental effects. Therefore Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Development Plan is **not required**.

2. It has also determined that no significant negative or uncertain effects on the Severn Estuary SPA/SAC/ Ramsar site arise as a result of this Neighbourhood Plan and no other European protected sites are impacted. Therefore the PNDP can be **screened out** from further consideration under the Habitat Regulations.

Please can you provide support or objection on this initial screening opinion, so a determination on the need for full SEA can be given.

<p>SEA DIRECTIVE CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS</p>	<p>RESPONSE IN RELATION TO: PUCKLECHURCH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN</p>
<p>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>	<p>The Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Development Plan (PNDP) would, if made, form part of the statutory Development Plan for South Gloucestershire, (henceforth 'the Local Plan'). It therefore would contribute to the framework for future development consents of projects within the boundary of the PNDP.</p> <p>The plan sits within a wider framework, set by the South Gloucestershire Local Plan (Core Strategy 2013 and the Policies, Sites and Places Plan 2017) and the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>However, the framework set by this plan is for localised projects and activities, with limited effects and resource implications. The plan does not seek to allocate sites for development and instead seeks to add a further level of local detail to policies already set out within the South Gloucestershire Development Plan.</p>
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in the hierarchy.</p>	<p>The PNDP adds local level detail to assist in determining planning applications within the plan area, in this case the parish of Pucklechurch. The PNDP will become a material consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission.</p> <p>The policies within the PNDP are considered to be in general conformity with the wider framework and strategic direction set by the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy and Policies Sites and Places (PSP) Plan.</p> <p>This allows Neighbourhood Plans in the district to review and consider approaches to small scale growth, infill development and amendments to settlement boundaries. The PNDP does not look to identify or allocate specific sites for local housing need.</p> <p>The PNDP does seek to influence planning applications through the adoption of development management policies which are considered to add a further level of detail over and above that already adopted in the South Gloucestershire Development Plan, and therefore, policies that have already been appropriately assed through the Sustainability Appraisal.</p> <p>The wider framework and strategic direction set by the Core Strategy and PSP Plan documents have each been subject to Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment in their own rights.</p>

The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental consideration in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development

The PNDP demonstrates the neighbourhood vision through local level policy. Specific policies in relation to the environment focus on:

- PUCKLE 1 – Protection of Facilities of importance to the local community
- PUCKLE 2 – Requirements for additional Local Community Facilities
- PUCKLE 6 – Good Design and Development Form in Pucklechurch Parish
- PUCKLE 7 – Environmental Performance of Buildings
- PUCKLE 8 – Reusing Employment Premises and Sites
- PUCKLE 9 – Promotion of Live/Work Units
- PUCKLE 10 – Support for Home Offices and Extensions
- PUCKLE 13 – Leisure walking routes
- PUCKLE 14 – Local Green Space
- PUCKLE 15 – Active Travel Routes

These policies are considered to maintain and add local direction to the overarching policy approaches set out in South Gloucestershire's adopted development plan.

Policy PUCKLE 1 and PUCKLE 2 seek to build upon the existing local access to community infrastructure and supports a local approach to Core Strategy policy CS23 Community Infrastructure and Cultural Activity. PUCKLE 1 also builds upon Policies, Sites and Places Plan Policy PSP44 Open Space, Sport and Recreation by outlining the approach to development on sites which currently have active community facilities. Policy PUCKLE 1 identifies existing facilities that should be protected and enhanced whilst PUCKLE 2 identifies how development that comes forward could contribute to the expansion of community facilities in the local area. The protection, enhancement and provision of these facilities encouraged by these policies promotes sustainable development by ensuring the local community have access to facilities in their local area, reducing the need for unsustainable travel patterns.

Policy PUCKLE 6 and PUCKLE 7 expand on the criteria set out in CS1 High Quality Design to encourage development in the neighbourhood plan area to have a high environmental performance and quality of design. PUCKLE 6 is also supported by a series of Design Codes and Character Areas and which add a further detailed layer to existing policy that can be applied to the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan area. PUCKLE 6 also seeks to build further detail on top of Policies, sites and Places Plan Policy PSP1 Local Distinctiveness. The combination of these policies and design codes could achieve higher quality built form which will perform better in environmental terms. This

	<p>will have the potential to deliver more sustainable built form within the neighbourhood plan area.</p> <p>Policies PUCKLE 8, PUCKLE 9 and PUCKLE 10 seek, in various way, to promote smaller scale employment and retail spaces to be either maintained or new provision created. These policies indirectly support the objectives of Core Strategy Policy CS8 Improving Accessibility. This is primarily through the provision of work spaces in a variety of different forms within the neighbourhood plan area. It is considered that this encourages sustainable development by reducing the need to travel by providing local accessible spaces to work and this in turn encourage new sustainable patterns of travel and opens up opportunities for local people to travel in alternative ways to the private car where previously access to spaces would require longer travel distances into main employment hubs such as Bristol where private car travel would likely be a much more attractive option given the longer distances involved.</p> <p>It is considered that PNDP policy is aimed at improving the sustainability of development, quality of life and consideration of sustainability issues within the PNDP area. The polices contained within the plan add further detail to policies adopted in South Gloucestershire’s Local Development Plan which have already been assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal process.</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme</p>	<p>The PNDP area contains some areas of Flood Zone 3 and 2 the majority of which lies along the northern edge of the M4 and south of Westerleigh Road with a second smaller area runs along the eastern edge of the plan area at Marsh Farm and Churchmead Farm within the Feltham Brook.</p> <p>The PNDP does not intend to allocate sites and does not include any policies that would impact areas of flood risk which is a likely reflection of the minimal areas covered by higher flood risk zones.</p> <p>The PNDP area contains a number of designated heritage assets, with a focus around the Pucklechurch Conservation Area which includes a concentration of nationally and locally listed heritage assets. The Siston Conservation Area although mostly outside of the neighbourhood area does have a small portion of its boundary to the south within the neighbourhood plan area. There is also a strong relationship the Dyrham Conservation Area and Dyrham National Park to the east of Pucklechurch although this also sits outside of the plan area. The Round Burrow on Shortwood Hill as well as the Brandy Bottom Colliery are Scheduled Ancient Monuments located within the plan area.</p>

	<p>Further details of these are contained below (see section relating to the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected).</p> <p>The PNDP area is not in close proximity to site of international importance such as the Severn Estuary (SPA, SAC and Ramsar site) however does have a number of local nature conservation importance. Further details of these are contained below (see section relating to the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected).</p> <p>The plan aims to provide a further level of detail to policies currently in place in South Gloucestershire's Local Development Plan. The Core Strategy and Policies, Sites and Place Plan have already been assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal process. It is not considered that significant effects will arise from the further detailed policies set out within the PNDP.</p>
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).	The plan is not considered to create any effects of significance.
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	The plan is not considered to create any effects of significance.
The cumulative nature of the effects	The plan is not considered to create any effects of significance.
The trans boundary nature of the effects	The plan seeks to increase the self-sufficiency of Pucklechurch with policies that encourage the protection and enhancement of existing community facilities and new provision as well as increase the availability of small scale work units. Policy PUCKLE 13 Leisure Walking routes and PUCKLE 16 Active Travel Routes also seeks to protect and enhance routes across the plan area including towards Bristol. It is considered that these policies will have a trans boundary impact, particularly on commuter patterns. The effect is considered to be a positive effect reducing the reliance of the community in Pucklechurch on services and facilities outside of the parish boundary including jobs located in the East Fringe and Bristol.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g due to accidents)	The plan area does include areas of Flood Zone 3 and 2 as well as identified areas for potential surface water flooding. The PNDP does not intend to allocate sites for development. It is therefore considered that the plan does not increase the risk and dependant on applications coming forward may even support the

	<p>reduction of risk through the encouragement of high-quality design.</p> <p>With reference to the existing evidence base compiled and localised nature of allocations and associated minimal effects, there is not considered to be a need for further more detailed SEA in respect of flood risk issues.</p> <p>The plan does not seek to allocate sites for development however policies within the plan seek to reduce the risk to human health through development management policies. Policies will have an impact over the life of the plan by encouraging active lifestyles, enhancing green infrastructure and supporting a reduction in private car journeys.</p> <p>The level of risk (or reduction to) is reliant on the level of growth within the PNDP area as many of these policies are directly linked to development within the parish. The PNDP itself makes no development allocations and so is not considered to create any effects of significance.</p>
<p>The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</p>	<p>The PNDP relates to Pucklechurch Parish, a specific and contained area within South Gloucestershire. The parish area covers 790 hectares and has a population of 3,200 people at the time of the 2021 census.</p> <p>Although the PNDP area covers the entire parish, the plan does not propose any development allocations within the plan and instead the policies aim to set out more detailed development management proposals than that already set out in the adopted South Gloucestershire Development Plan documents which have already been subject to sustainability appraisal. Supporting this is a Design Code which will also seek to ensure higher quality design where new developments do come forward.</p> <p>Therefore, it is considered that effects arising from policy are considered to have very localised effects e.g. on immediately adjacent buildings or building users or localised areas within Pucklechurch Parish.</p> <p>The magnitude and spatial extent of any potential effects are also not considered to be of significance to warrant Strategic Environmental Assessment.</p>
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</p>	<p><u>Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Opinion</u></p> <p>The Pucklechurch neighbourhood plan area over 15km from the Severn Estuary European protected site (Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and RAMSAR site) at its closest point. There are no other European protected sites affected. There are several SNCIs located within the plan area</p>

<p>Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; Intensive land uses.</p> <p>And;</p> <p>The effects on areas or landscapes, which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>and immediately adjacent. There are RIGs located within the plan area.</p> <p>This screening opinion has considered the potential for likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan on the Severn Estuary European protected site.</p> <p>An initial assessment was undertaken to identify whether any components of the Neighbourhood Plan have the potential to result in likely significant effects on the Severn Estuary European site (with reference to the criteria set out in The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook^[1]). As the Plan does not allocate any sites for new development, and instead adds detail to development management policies already in place in other Plans as well as the distance between the plan area and the site being over 15km. On this basis, this assessment concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to result in significant effects as the policies included are either general aspirational statements and/or they set out criteria relating to any development proposed to be delivered through/ by other plans.</p> <p>Furthermore, it is considered that some of the Plan's policies will actively support the protection of ecological assets in the medium to long term, particularly through the protection and enhancement of existing community facilities reducing the need for the community to seek leisure activities elsewhere as well as policies that will encourage modal shift toward more sustainable modes.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that more detailed consideration through either Strategic Environmental Assessment or Appropriate Assessment, under the Habitat Regulations, is not warranted.</p> <p><u>Heritage considerations</u></p> <p>The PNDP area contains a number of designated heritage assets, with a focus around the Pucklechurch Conservation Area which includes a concentration of nationally and locally listed heritage assets. The Siston Conservation Area although mostly outside of the neighbourhood area does have a small portion of its boundary to the south within the neighbourhood plan area. There is also a strong relationship the Dyrham Conservation Area and Dyrham National Park to the east of Pucklechurch although this also sits outside of the plan area. The Round</p>
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^[1] The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, DTA Publications, available from <http://www.dtapublications.co.uk/>

Burrow on Shortwood Hill as well as the Brandy Bottom Colliery are Scheduled Ancient Monuments located within the plan area.

The plan does not propose any site allocations and so the impact on heritage assets is considered to be limited. The plan does seek to protect and enhance the existing character of the parish mainly through Policy PUCKLE 6 Good Design and Development Form in Pucklechurch Parish supported by a series of Design Codes and Character Areas and these seek to reinforce and add further detail to the adopted Core Strategy and Policies, Sites and Places Plan policies CS9 Managing the Environment and Heritage and PSP17 Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment. These policies include.

The adopted Policy Framework within Core Strategy and PSP Plan, along with the PNDP will ensure any applications will be sited and designed to mitigate potential for effects, on the setting of listed buildings in Pucklechurch.

The plan, through its policies, is considered to create a further level of detail and positive approach to the consideration of heritage and cultural assets of value and vulnerability within the plan area.

It is not considered that the plan creates the potential for significant negative effects on historic, cultural or material assets that would warrant SEA.

Appendix 2 – SEA Screening Opinion Responses from Statutory Consultees

Correspondence from Historic England

Dear Danny

Thank you for your consultation on the SEA Screening Opinion of the emerging Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan.

Rohan Torkildsen has passed this consultation to me as I handle all Neighbourhood Planning matters relating to South Gloucestershire.

This is our first engagement in this Plan preparation process and we welcome the opportunity provided by sight of the emerging draft to identify and share any issues or matters of interest. Experience has shown that such situations are mainly generated when a Plan proposes to allocate sites for development.

Having considered the current draft Plan I can confirm that there are no specific matters associated with it upon which we would wish to comment at this stage. Unless the policies change significantly as the Plan evolves it is also unlikely that we would wish to comment at subsequent stages in its preparation and consultation, other than perhaps to commend the community generally, and particularly on its inclusion of design codes.

In terms of the SEA Screening itself, only policy Puckle 2 which sets out aspirations for Local Community Facilities has prompted more detailed consideration. While these are specific in defining the nature of the individual facilities identified the policy is not specific in defining either their location and/or their quantum. We therefore feel that consideration of necessary heritage (and other) matters can comfortably take place as part of any subsequent planning application process, and that this will be capable of ensuring that proposals are consistent with overarching national and local planning policy for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

On this basis we do not feel that the policy - and by extension the Plan itself - is likely to generate significant environmental effects, and therefore raise no objection to the view that a full SEA is not required.

Kind regards

David

David Stuart | Historic Places Adviser

I now work only 2 days a week, usually Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Historic England | South West

1st Floor Fermentation North | Finzels Reach | Hawkins Lane | Bristol | BS1 6WQ

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<https://historicengland.org.uk/southwest>



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From: Danny Dixon <Danny.Dixon@southglos.gov.uk>

Sent: 09 August 2024 11:24

To: South West Casework <SouthWestCasework@HistoricEngland.org.uk>

Cc: Policy consultation <Policy.consultation@southglos.gov.uk>; Danny Dixon <Danny.Dixon@southglos.gov.uk>

Subject: Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan: SEA Screening Opinion

Dear Rohan,

South Gloucestershire Council has undertaken a Strategic Environmental Assessment screening exercise for an emerging draft of the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan. The plan has not yet reached the formal regulation 14 consultation stage while the Steering Group wait for determination from the Screening Opinion.

This is intended to assist determination, in consultation with you as a statutory body, whether or not the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) would require a Strategic Environmental Assessment and assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

Please find attached the Screening Opinion and emerging draft of the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan.

If you have any questions on the Screening Opinion or Neighbourhood Plan please do contact the Local Plan team. Please can we have comments on the screening opinion no later than the **13 September 2024**.

Kind regards,

Danny Dixon

Strategic Planning Policy & Specialist Advice Team

policy.consultation@southglos.gov.uk

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Correspondence from Natural England

Date: 25 September 2024
Our ref: 484892
Your ref: Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan - SEA/HRA Screening
Consultation



Mr Danny Dixon
South Gloucestershire Council
Danny.Dixon@southglos.gov.uk

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Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
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CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Dixon

Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 09 August 2024 which was received by Natural England on 09 August 2024

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 sites¹, 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.

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".

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

Chloe Lancaster
Consultations Team

Dear Sir/Madam,

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This is intended to assist determination, in consultation with you as a statutory body, whether or not the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) would require a Strategic Environmental Assessment and assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

Please find attached the Screening Opinion and emerging draft of the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan.

If you have any questions on the Screening Opinion or Neighbourhood Plan please do contact the Local Plan team. Please can we have comments on the screening opinion no later than the **13 September 2024**.

Kind regards,

Danny Dixon

Senior Planning Policy Officer

Strategic Planning Policy & Specialist Advice Team

Email: Danny.Dixon@southglos.gov.uk

Phone: 01454 868 896

Correspondence from the Environment Agency



Mr Danny Dixon
South Gloucestershire Council
Planning Policy
PO Box 299 Hanham Road
BRISTOL
BS15 0DR

Our ref: WX/2015/128246/SE-
03/SC1-L01
Your ref:

Date: 13 September 2024

Dear Mr Dixon

Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the Strategic Environmental Assessment screening report for the Pucklechurch neighbourhood plan.

We do not consider there to be potential significant environmental effects associated with the plan, based on a review of environmental constraints for which we are a statutory consultee.

Your Lead Local Flood Authority's Surface Water Management Plan will indicate if there are any critical drainage areas from local sources of flood risk (e.g. surface water, groundwater and sewerage) which coincide with the neighbourhood plan area.

We encourage you to seek ways in which your neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment at the earliest stages. Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environmental into your plan. This is available at:

<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/consider-environment-neighbourhood-plans/>

Yours sincerely

Mr Harry Hembery
Sustainable Places - Planning Advisor

Direct dial 02030 252016
Direct e-mail wx.sp@environment-agency.gov.uk

Environment Agency
Rivers House East Quay, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 4YS.
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency
End

Dear Alex,

South Gloucestershire Council has undertaken a Strategic Environmental Assessment screening exercise for an emerging draft of the Pucklechurch Neighbourhood Plan. The plan has not yet reached the formal regulation 14 consultation stage while the Steering Group wait for determination from the Screening Opinion.

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Kind regards,

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