

11 March 2016

Alan Redpath,
East Meon Neighbourhood Development Plan

Dear Alan,

I am writing in response to your request for a screening opinion to assess whether the East Meon Neighbourhood Development Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

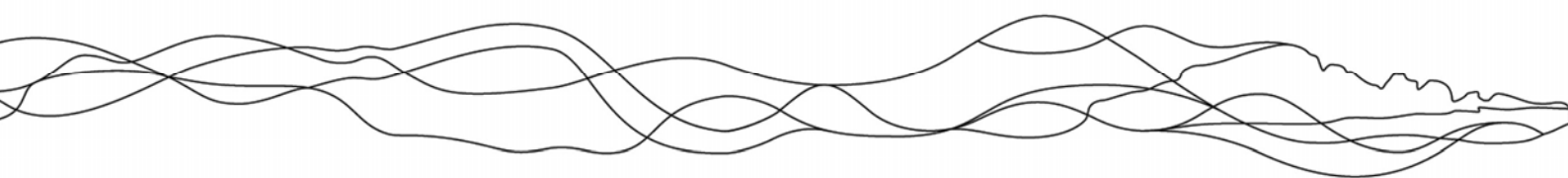
When adopted, Neighbourhood Development Plans will be used by the local planning authority to determine planning applications for the Neighbourhood Areas that they cover. As the parish falls within the South Downs National Park, the policies for the NDP, once adopted, will form the planning policy for that part of the National Park in the Parish of East Meon.

The EU's SEA Directive requires those making plans that could impact on the environment to consider whether they are likely to have a significant effect or not. Such a requirement can be screened out if it is felt, based on the information available, that the NDP would not have a likely significant environmental effect. In order to assess the likely significance of the plan on the environment, the scope of the plan has been appraised against Annex II of the directive which identifies criteria for determining significance.

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has based its screening opinion on the understanding that the Parish Council will prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan that:

- will have policies consistent with national policy;
- will have policies consistent with existing and emerging local plan policies;
- will seek to allocate housing sites to facilitate development for up to 15 dwellings;

The SDNPA has considered a number of key environmental constraints located in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Area and the potential environmental effects on these areas that may arise as a result of the NDP. It is considered that the East Meon NDP should be screened out as requiring an SEA process. Whilst the parish has some distinctive landscapes, it is considered that the allocation of sites through the NDP in and around the village, will not have a significant effect on these. Given that the South Downs Local Plan will provide a range of policies for protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment, and the requirement for the NDP to be in conformity with these policies, the likelihood of significant effects taking place through the East Meon NDP is diminished.



The SDNPA has compiled this response following consultation with Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency. Please see the attached response received from Historic England.

While, at this point, the NDP has been screened out as requiring SEA, it is still incumbent upon the NDP Project Team to meet the 'Basic Condition' relating to sustainable development. This is in order to satisfy the provisions of paragraph 72 of the National Planning Practice Guidance (set out below).

This basic condition is consistent with the planning principle that all plan-making and decision-taking should help to achieve sustainable development. A qualifying body must demonstrate how its plan or Order will contribute to improvements in environmental, economic and social conditions or that consideration has been given to how any potential adverse effects arising from the proposals may be prevented, reduced or offset (referred to as mitigation measures).

This screening decision does not prevent the NDP Project Team from undertaking an SEA of their NDP, should they wish to do so and should not be viewed as in any way prejudicing such a decision.

Yours Sincerely

Amy

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