

# **SOMPTING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2015-2031**

## **BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT**

**Published by Sompting Parish Council under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)**

**June 2016**

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Sompting Parish Council ("the Parish Council") to accompany its submission to the local planning authority, Adur District Council ("the District Council"), of the Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan ("the Neighbourhood Plan") under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations").

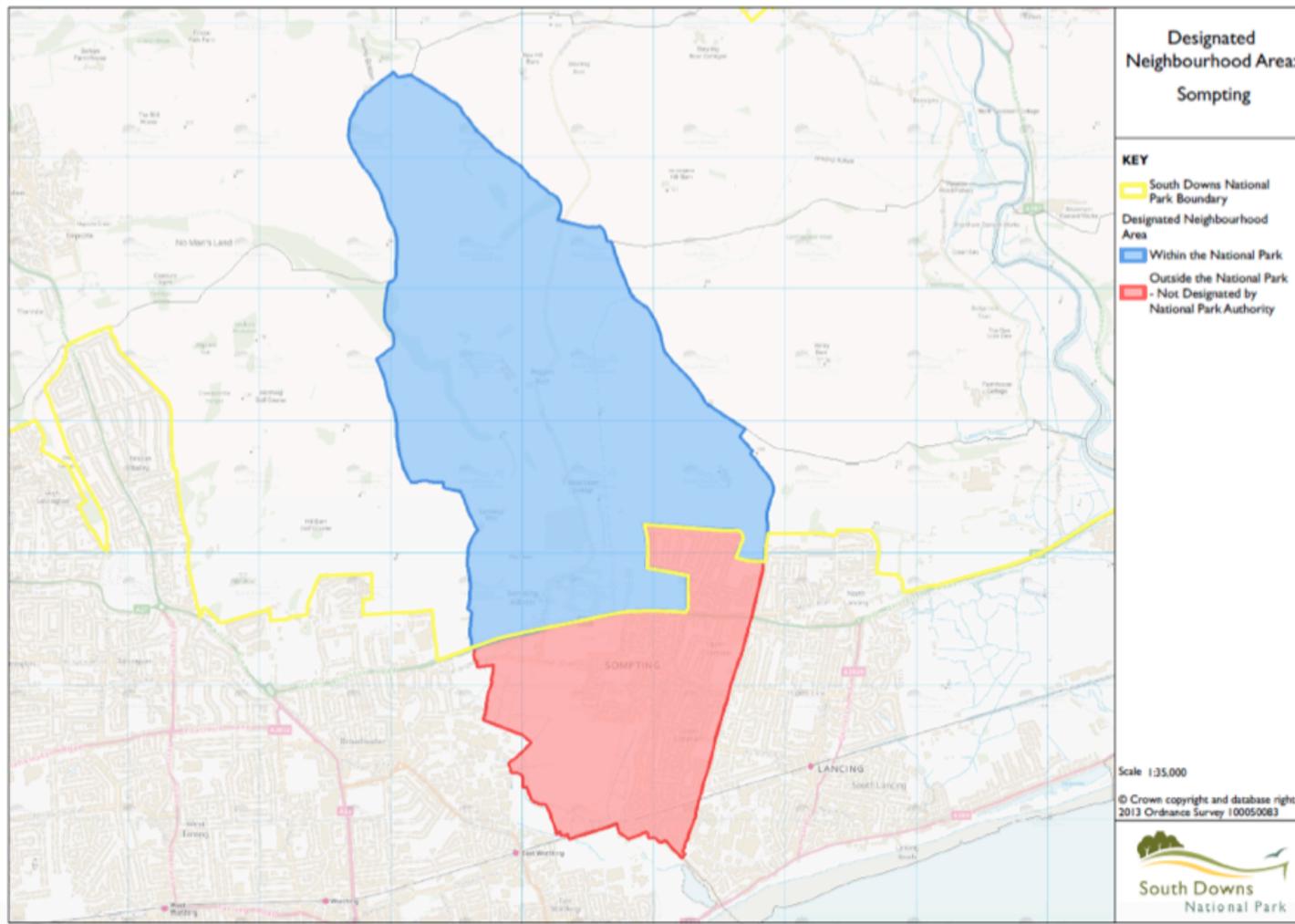
1.2 The Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan (SPNP) has been prepared by the Parish Council, a qualifying body, for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the Parish of Sompting, as designated by Adur District Council (ADC) and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) in December 2012.

1.3 The policies described in the SPNP relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area. The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2031 and it does not contain policies relating to excluded development in accordance with the Regulations.

1.4 The Statement addresses each of the four 'basic conditions' required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act.

1.5 The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan,
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area),
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.



*PLAN A: The Designated Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area*

*Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan: Basic Conditions Statement June 2016*

## **2. Background**

2.1 ADC and the SDNP designated the SPNP area on 17 December 2012. The preparation of the neighbourhood plan commenced soon after, having particular regard to the proposed West Sompting strategic allocation in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan 2015 – 2031 (PSALP) for 480 new homes to the west of Sompting. This allocation forms a core part of the proposed spatial strategy of the new Local Plan. The main aim of Sompting Parish Council, the qualifying body for preparing the SPNP, has been to ensure that this allocation is successfully integrated in a positive and sustainable manner with the rest of the village of Sompting, and articulated in the Sompting Parish vision.

2.2 The Parish Council formed a Steering Group comprising parish councillors and members of the local community and it was delegated authority to make day-to-day decisions on the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Parish Council approved the publication of:

- the State of the Parish report in October 2013
- the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan in May 2015
- the Submission Neighbourhood Plan in June 2016

2.3 The Parish Council has worked with officers of the District Council during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The positioning of the SPNP in respect of the emerging development plan, which proposes to establish a clear policy framework for neighbourhood plans, has been the subject of an ongoing, positive liaison between the Parish and District Council and the outcome is described in more detail in Section 5 below.

2.4 The SPNP contains a small number of land use policies (in Section 4) that are defined on the Policies Map as being geographically specific and non-statutory proposals (in Section 5) that are included for its completeness. For the most part, the plan has deliberately avoided containing policies that may duplicate the saved and emerging development policies that are, and will be, material considerations in determining future planning applications.

2.5 In making a clear distinction between land use planning policies and non-statutory proposals relevant to land use planning, the SPNP allows for the examination to focus on the requirement of the policies to meet the Basic Conditions but also allows the local community to see the Plan in the round. In any event, the non-statutory proposals will each have a land use effect at some later point but cannot do so as part of the SPNP as they fall outside its scope.

### **3. Conformity with National Planning Policy**

3.1 The SPNP has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is mindful of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.

3.2 In overall terms, there are four NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the SPNP has directly responded:

#### Para 16

3.3 The Parish Council believes the SPNP is planning positively to support the strategic development needs of the District by supporting and refining major proposals in the new Local Plan for housing and employment and the design of development including new green infrastructure.

#### Para 183

3.4 The Parish Council believes the SPNP establishes a clear vision for the parish that reflects the view of the majority of the local community that future change must value, protect and promote the unique character of the area and successfully integrate new development so it does not undermine local character, particularly that of Sompting Village. The SPNP has sought to translate this vision into planning policies to shape development and subsequent planning applications for the strategic allocation and other applications elsewhere in the village as part of the development plan.

#### Para 184

3.5 The Parish Council believes the SPNP, as is highlighted below, is in general conformity with all the relevant policies of the saved Adur Local Plan. Although it contains a series of other policies relating to valued community assets in the village, the main role of the SPNP is to bridge the policy space between the emerging Adur Local Plan (ALP) and the West Sompting strategic allocation. This may not have been a purpose the Localism Act or the NPPF would have anticipated for neighbourhood plans but it is especially well suited to this context.

#### Para 185

3.6 The SPNP avoids duplicating development plan policies by focusing on policies that translate the general requirements of the development plan into a Sompting Parish context. This includes a policy which seeks to shape the masterplan of the proposed strategic allocation at West Sompting and to refine development management issues for the Parish on matters such as design, and the Housing and Estate Design Guide has been produced for this purpose. Once 'made', the SPNP should be easily considered alongside the development plan and any other material considerations in determining planning applications.

3.7 Set out in Table A below, is a brief summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The particular paragraphs referred to in the table are those considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.

**Table A: Neighbourhood Plan & NPPF Conformity Summary**

| No. | Policy Title                  | NPPF Ref.                            | Commentary  |
|-----|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1   | A Spatial Plan for the Parish | 15, 110, 115                         | <p>This policy establishes the spatial strategy for directing future development proposals in the parish of which it is positive. The policy reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development and will guide how the ALP strategic allocation will be delivered over the plan period, and is consistent with the §15 of the NPPF.</p> <p>The SPNP maintains the proposed settlement boundary including land proposed for residential development in Policy 6 of the emerging ALP. The boundary maintains the Local Green Gap between Sompting and East Worthing to minimise any adverse effects on the local environment and local character consistent with §110 and to prevent coalescence between Sompting and East Worthing. The policy also seeks to conserve the the landscape and scenic beauty of the South Downs National Park in conformity with §115.</p>         |
| 2   | West Sompting                 | 16, 35, 38, 47, 50, 61, 70, 114, 173 | <p>This policy accords with that envisaged by the NPPF §16 in encouraging neighbourhood plans to support the strategic development needs of the district.</p> <p>The policy also responds to the NPPF (§50) in respect of the proposed range and location of housing types and affordable provision. It further conforms with the NPPF (§58) in acknowledging the importance of place making, to create an appropriate mix of uses and in responding to the character of the surrounding areas (§61)</p> <p>This policy proposes a movement framework network to improve the access through the allocation and around the village and promotes sustainable transport modes. This is consistent with the NPPF (§35). By making provision for complementary facilities and services, like the community building and shop the policy also conforms to the principles of the NPPF (§38).</p> |

|   |                                    |                 |  |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
|   |                                    |                 | <p>The NPPF (§47) ensures that the need for market and affordable housing has been assessed to inform the policy and that it is consistent with the policies in the ALP on market and affordable housing. The Policy is in line with the NPPF (§70) in respect of planning positively to extend a cultural facility and to improve the facility in a sustainable manner. The layout and improved access to sports and recreation facilities proposed in this policy conforms to the NPPF (para. 73).</p> <p>This policy is consistent with §114 in planning positively to create the Green Infrastructure Network. It is also consistent with the NPPF (§173) as it ensures that the allocation for development is viable and deliverable and accords with Adur Local Plan in terms of principles.</p> |
| 3 | Design                             | 58, 126         | This policy accords with the NPPF (§58 and 126) in requiring the design of development proposals to reflect the local character of Sompting and especially of the significance of its designated heritage assets, i.e. the Conservation Area and listed buildings.   |
| 4 | Sompting Local Centre              | 28, 38, 50, 114 | This policy is taking a positive approach to supporting the various retail facilities in Sompting and in promoting a mix of temporary uses for vacant premises. The policy is therefore in line with the NPPF (§28 and 38).  |
| 5 | Local Green Spaces and Open Spaces | 76,77           | This policy proposes a number of local green spaces. In each case, the green spaces are an integral part of the Parish and regarded as special to the local community, to be protected from development in line with § 76 and § 77. It similarly proposes to safeguard areas of open space designated by ADC.  |
| 6 | Rural Businesses                   | 20, 28          | This policy conforms to Para. 20 of the NPPF as it proposes to support the economic well being and is consistent with §28 in supporting rural investment in the Parish.  |
| 7 | Broadband                          | 43              | This policy encourages the expansion of the superfast broadband infrastructure to serve the whole Neighbourhood Area, and accords with §43 of the NPPF.  |

#### **4. Contribution to Sustainable Development**

4.1 Through its Screening Opinion on the SPNP dated the 6 May 2015, the District Council confirmed (see Appendix) that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was not required as its policies have been framed within the context of the emerging Adur Local Plan, which itself had been subject to a full Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment. However, the SPNP can clearly demonstrate that it has taken account of the need to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

4.2 The strategic objectives of the SPNP comprise a balance of social, economic and environmental goals. The local community desires that the best aspects of the village – its character and the quality of the local environment, its village shops, and community facilities – are supported and enhanced in the coming years through effective development management. The key spatial policy which includes a policy setting out key development and design principles for the 480 home scheme at West Sompting that is set to be allocated through the Adur Local Plan and thematic policies - e.g. in relation to housing design - that will form part of the suite of development management policies to be taken into account by ADC/SDNP when determining future planning applications.

4.3 The chosen policies are therefore intended to accurately translate these objectives into viable and effective development management policies and deliverable infrastructure proposals. Collectively, the policies demonstrate that the SPNP will have positive social effects in addition to positive economic and environmental benefits. Indeed, every policy will deliver a positive social and none will have a negative impact.

4.4 This outcome may be inevitable for Neighbourhood Plans prepared in similar planning policy circumstances. If local communities are to back proposals in this type of location, to the extent they will turn out to vote at a referendum, then there may have to be clear and realisable social benefits they can accrue. But this will rarely be at an environmental or economic cost as local communities will resist such impacts and they will not be in conformity with either the NPPF or development plan.

4.5 The sustainability attributes of each policy are summarised in Table B below.

**Table B: Neighbourhood Plan & Sustainable Development Summary**

| No. | Policy Title                  | Soc. | Eco. | Env. | Commentary  |
|-----|-------------------------------|------|------|------|---|
| 1   | A Spatial Plan for the Parish | *    | *    | *    | In focusing future development within the emerging ALP settlement boundaries, the policy achieves a positive environmental impact and a positive social and economic impact through the provision of new housing and community facilities within the settlement boundary.   |
| 2   | West Sompting                 | *    | *    | *    | <p>The core sustainability credentials of this strategic allocation in the emerging ALP have been validated by its SA/SEA. The additional provision made for incorporating the new green infrastructure and movement network will deliver a range of social benefits (footpaths, recreation areas etc.) and will make an important contribution to delivering overall positive environmental impacts for Sompting.</p> <p>The policy provides for a mixed use scheme including a community facility and retail uses It also requires the retention of some open space for local community benefit. It will therefore have positive social, economic and environmental benefits.</p> |
| 3   | Design                        | *    | 0    | *    | In requiring good design standards to be achieved by development, the policy should deliver a social and environmental benefit by enhancing the distinctive character of the village.   |

|   |                                    |   |   |   |   |
|---|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Sompting Local Centre              | * | * | 0 | The policy seeks to protect the four shopping frontages from unsuitable development that may undermine their vitality and viability. The frontages provide valuable services within walking distance of many households and will have social and economic benefits  |
| 5 | Local Green Spaces and Open Spaces | * | 0 | * | The policy protects from development six green spaces that are much valued by the local community plus a further three open spaces. It therefore has significant social and environmental benefits whilst having neutral economic impacts.  |
| 6 | Rural Businesses                   | * | * | * | The policy promotes economic development for economic and social benefits but which requires a countryside location but caveats that support in principle by requiring proposals to be consistent with the policies of the Adur and SDNP development plans to ensure a positive environmental impact in line with the purposes of the National Park |
| 7 | Broadband                          | * | * | 0 | The policy supports proposals for improved access to the broadband network to secure economic and social benefits for local residents and businesses and through the requirement for above ground installations (requiring planning consent) to reflect the character area the environmental effect is considered to be neutral.                    |

Key: \* positive 0 neutral - negative

## 5. General Conformity with the Development Plan

5.1 At this stage the current development plan for the area is/remains the saved policies of the adopted 1996 Adur Local Plan. The current status of the development plan and the timing of its replacement during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, has therefore made judging this matter challenging. The 1996 Local Plan could not have anticipated the existence of the Localism Act over a decade later and so made no provision for translating generic planning policy into a distinct parish-based plan.

5.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared against the background of the 1996 plan. However, taking account of the advanced stage of the emerging Adur Local Plan it has been necessary to take particular account of these emerging policies, not least in respect of Policy 6 of the PSALP which establishes West Sompting as a strategic development location in the District to deliver approximately 480 new homes. Given the advanced stage of the emerging Adur Local Plan the table below has therefore only made reference to its emerging policies. The supporting text in the Submission SPNP makes reference to the most relevant saved policies of the 1996 Local Plan.

| <b>Table C: Neighbourhood Plan &amp; Development Plan Conformity Summary</b> |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>No.</b>   | <b>Policy Title &amp; PSALP Policy No's</b>                       | <b>Commentary</b>  |
| 1  | A Spatial Plan for the Parish<br><br>Policies 2, 3, 6, 10, 13, 14 | This policy acknowledges the spatial strategy for Sompting and the amendment to the Sompting BUAB to accommodate the release of greenfield land to ensure a supply of suitable land for development as set out in Policy 2 of the PSALP. It acknowledges the constraints on development imposed by the significant landscape and heritage sensitivity of Sompting and directs development in a way which is consistent with Policy 10. The new built up area boundary allows for the delivery of additional residential development in Sompting and will contribute to the overall supply of homes in the plan period required by Policy 3. Beyond the Settlement Boundary, the policy requires proposals to accord with Policies 13 and 14 in controlling development in the countryside and protecting the local green gap between Sompting and East Worthing. |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 2 | West Sompting<br><br>Policies 6, 13, 14,<br>17, 21, 29, 30 | <p>This policy serves to inform West Sompting strategic allocation Policy 6 of the PSALP by providing development and design principles applying to different design zones which respond to the different contextual conditions of the strategic allocation in line with Policy 15 and also frame the landscape/green infrastructure strategy as anticipated by para 2.72 of the PSALP.</p> <p>The policy is also consistent with a number of PSALP Development Management Policies particularly policy 29 in that it seeks to shape the new development to improve connectivity and encourages the use of sustainable modes of travel through its movement and green infrastructure network. It also seeks to improve accessibility to key services and facilities and it is consistent with Policy 21 in terms of housing mix, policy 30 in terms of delivery of community infrastructure and setting out the likely priorities for community and other infrastructure needed to support an allocation of this scale.</p> <p>It also responds to Policies 13, 14 and 17 of the PSALP by acknowledging the importance of maintaining and enhancing the character of the surroundings, responding positively to the open countryside adjoining the site and the setting of the South Downs National Park and to the Sompting Village Conservation Area and Listed Building heritage assets.</p> |
| 3 | Design<br><br>Policy 15                                    | The policy accords with the PSALP Policy 15 to deliver quality design solutions and the need to respond positively to the provisions of the Sompting Housing and Estate Design Guide, requiring development proposals to respect and enhance the character of Sompting.   |
| 4 | Sompting Local Centre<br><br>Policy 28                     | This policy supports the continuing patronage and protection of the local shopping parades to ensure residents have ready access to basic range of small shops and services. It is consistent with the intentions of Policy 28 in designating local shopping parades to safeguard ground floor retail uses provided they are viable and to provide positive support for temporary alternative uses where there is a vacancy. Although the extension of permitted development rights may result in some development not requiring a planning application, this policy may be used to inform decisions on notices for prior approval and if those rights are rescinded during the plan period.  |
| 5 | Local Green Spaces and Open Spaces<br>Policies 31 & 33     | The policy accords with the provisions of the emerging development plan policies to plan for a green infrastructure (Policy 31) and to resist the loss of existing open spaces within the Parish consistent with PSALP Policy 33  |

|   |                                  |   |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| 6 | Rural Businesses<br>SDNP PO SD20 | This policy supports the rural economy by supporting businesses within the South Downs National park and are consistent with the objectives of Policy SD20 of the preferred Option SDNP Local Plan. And while the PSALP is silent in this respect as it excludes the SDNP, the policy is in line with the adopted policies AC8 and AC9 of the 1996 ALP. |
| 7 | Broadband                        | This policy encourages the expansion of the superfast broadband infrastructure to serve the whole Neighbourhood Area consistent with Policy 38 of the PSALP whilst ensuring the impact of notifiable above ground installations minimise their impact on character of the Parish.   |

## 6. Compatibility with EU Legislation

6.1 A screening opinion was issued by ADC on 6 May 2015 (see Appendix) confirming that a SEA was not required in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42 on strategic environmental assessment, as it would not contain policies that may have significant environmental effects.

6.2 The Neighbourhood Plan Area does not fall within any European designated nature sites. However, a screening opinion was requested at an early stage of the SPNP process to ensure that no Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), Natural England confirmed this to be the case (see Section 5 of the Screening Opinion) as confirmed by the District Council.

6.3 The Neighbourhood Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act.

## **Sompting Neighbourhood Plan: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion**

**6 May 2015**

### **1. Introduction**

Sompting Parish Council is working with the local community to produce a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for the Sompting area. The Parish Council have requested that the Council provide a SEA Screening Opinion on the emerging Sompting NP. A Screening Opinion was previously provided on 11 August 2014 which recommended that an SEA of the Sompting NP be undertaken. This decision was based primarily on the fact that the NP at that time included a criteria based policy for employment development at a waste transfer site off Halewick Lane within the South Downs National Park. However, this policy has since been removed from the NP and it is considered that a new Screening Opinion should be provided in light of this fact.

### **2. Background**

One of the basic conditions that a NP is tested against is whether the making of the NP is compatible with European Union obligations, including obligations under the SEA Directive. The SEA Directive seeks a high level of protection for the environment through the integration of environmental considerations into the process of preparing certain plans and programmes. The aim of the Directive is *“to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”*

The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2015 require that a qualifying body must submit to a local planning authority with a proposal for a neighbourhood plan either an environmental report

prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or a statement of reasons why an environmental assessment is not required.

To decide whether a proposed NP is likely to have significant environmental effects, it should be screened at an early stage against the criteria set out in Annex 2 of the Directive. Where it is determined that the NP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require SEA), a statement of reasons for this determination must be prepared and published for consultation with the statutory consultation bodies (Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage (now Historic England)). Where a NP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, an SEA process must be carried out and an Environmental Report prepared / published for consultation alongside the draft plan (which, for NPs, is the 'pre-submission' version of the plan).

The SEA Regulations state that a screening opinion should be reached by 'the responsible authority'. In this case there are two responsible authorities - Adur District Council (ADC) and the South Downs National Park (SDNP). It is these authorities that will eventually 'make' the NP part of their respective Local Development Frameworks

### **3. The emerging Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

The Parish of Sompting is situated between Lancing and Worthing in West Sussex. Roughly a third of the Parish is situated south of the A27 coastal road. This part of the Parish comprises a built up area of modern housing to the east, the historic village of Sompting (designated as a Conservation Area) and open countryside that forms a green gap between Lancing and Worthing. The majority of the northern two thirds falls within the South Downs National Park.

The whole of the Parish has been designated a Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of preparing the NP. The Parish Council began the process of preparing a plan in 2011, in order to take the opportunity presented by the Localism Act to positively plan for the future of the parish and its surrounding countryside. It is also being developed in response to the emerging Adur Local Plan, which proposes to allocate land for a 480 home scheme at 'West Sompting'.

The Sompting NP would, if made (adopted) form part of the Statutory Development Plan and as such will establish a number of development management principles for Sompting Parish. The NP is the lowest tier in the planning hierarchy and must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, policies of the development plan and European Directives.

A State of the Parish report has been prepared, the aim of which is to “summarise the evidence base and the context within which the Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared [and hence] provide the local community with a starting point from which to embark on formulating the Neighbourhood Plan.” Key issues for the local area are identified, drawing on questionnaire responses and other sources of evidence.

This SEA Screening Opinion is based on the Draft Pre Submission Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031(January 2015). This version of the NP was provided to Adur District Council by Sompting Parish Council but had not, at that time, been made available for public consultation. Amongst other things, this document contains the following draft policies:

- The Vision and Objectives of the Plan;
- Key spatial policies including a policy setting out key development and design principles for the 480 home scheme at West Sompting that is set to be allocated through the Adur Local Plan; and
- A number of thematic policies - e.g. in relation to housing design - that will form part of the suite of development management policies to be taken into account by ADC/SDNP when determining future planning applications.

#### **4. SEA Screening - Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected**

*Effects of a policy establishing development and design principles for West Sompting*

The West Sompting site (allocated within the emerging Adur Local Plan) lies directly to the south of the A27, i.e. outside but directly adjacent to the SDNP. It is unlikely that the policy approach taken in the emerging NP would lead to significant effects on the SDNP, given that the site boundary and overall density of development on the site will be determined through the emerging Adur Local Plan. The NP proposes what is likely to be slightly higher density development (Design Zone 4) adjacent to the National Park but it is not considered that an SEA is required to address this issue.

Of course, a policy setting out development and design principles for a 480 home scheme at West Sompting could also lead to environmental effects besides those associated with the SDNP. For example, there could be impacts to ‘biodiversity’, ‘air quality’ or ‘human health’ (all of which are issues that are mentioned within Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive). However, effects are not likely to be ‘significant’ to the extent that they would trigger the need for SEA and there is nothing in the policy to suggest that impacts on biodiversity, air quality or human health would be any more significant as a result of this NP policy than

the emerging Adur Local Plan policy (which has already been assessed under SEA). Additionally, the emerging Local Plan includes a number of policies which require impacts on biodiversity, air quality and human health to be mitigated where they cannot be avoided. Any effects could be appropriately addressed (i.e. avoided or mitigated) at the planning application stage.

#### *Effects associated with thematic policies*

It is unlikely that any of the thematic policies would, in isolation, lead to significant effects on the SDNP. Nor is there the potential for significant effects on any other aspect of the environmental baseline. This statement is made in light of the fact that the Parish is associated with other sensitivities aside from the SDNP. For example:

- Areas of countryside outside of the SDNP boundary form an important 'green gap' between Lancing and Worthing and also contribute to the green infrastructure network;
- An element of the Cissbury Ring Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – which is associated with chalk grassland habitats – falls within the north-western extent of the Parish (i.e. that part of the Parish that is furthest away from the built-up area);
- Large portions of the Parish, north of the A27, are in the Entry Level and High Level Stewardship Schemes;
- The Parish contains a number of listed buildings and structures; and
- Sompting Village Conservation Area which lies outside of the Built Up Area, and within the countryside has the enclosed character of an historic village with listed buildings, small scale fields and orchards.

It might be that there is some potential for thematic policies to impact (in particular on the sensitive landscape of the SDNP) when considered 'in-combination', and/or when considered in combination with a policy on West Sompting. However, there is little certainty in this respect.

### **5. Consultation with the environmental assessment bodies and the South Downs National Park**

Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England and the South Downs National Park Authority have all confirmed that, on the basis of the Draft Pre-Submission Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan, they do not consider an SEA to be required. Natural England have also confirmed that a Habitat Regulations Assessment is not required.

## **6. Conclusions (Screening Opinion)**

For the reasons set out above, and taking into account the views of the environmental assessment bodies as well as the South Downs National Park Authority, it is Adur District Council's opinion that an SEA is not required for the Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan. This opinion is based on the contents of the Draft Pre-Submission Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031 (January 2015).

Ben Daines  
Senior Planning Policy Officer  
Adur and Worthing Councils