

# **Screening Report as to whether Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) are required for the Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This screening report is designed to help determine whether or not the Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001 / 42 / EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.2 It also seeks to help determine whether the plan is likely to have a significant effect on an International Site of Nature Conservation Importance, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and therefore whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required. Screening for Habitats Regulations Assessment has been separated from the consideration of Strategic Environmental Assessment in this report. Please see Appendix A to this report for a Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary of what the Stedham with Iping NDP proposes to achieve; a summary of relevant environmental information; and an initial assessment of the potential for significant environmental effects.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The basis for SEA and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is the European Directive 2001 / 42 / EC which was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations.
- 2.2 Whether a NDP requires a strategic environmental assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft plan. A SEA may be required, for example where:
  - A neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development;
  - The neighbourhood plan area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan; and
  - 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 for the area.
- 2.3 When deciding on whether the proposals are likely to have significant effects, the local authority will consult with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. Where the local planning authority determines that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment) it should prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination.

## **3. What the Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Plan proposed**

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) covers the whole of the Parish of Stedham with Iping, a rural Parish situated within the South Downs National Park and in the District of Chichester and County of West Sussex. The Parish includes the villages of Stedham and Iping and three hamlets of Tote Hill, Minsted and Ingrams Green and a number of dispersed farmsteads. A map showing the designated Neighbourhood Area can be found at the end of this report; Map 1 – Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Designated Area.
- 3.2 The NDP looks ahead to 2033 to coincide with the plan period of the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) and sets a vision for the future of the Parish and a number of objectives to deliver this vision.

- 3.3 The responses from the early engagement with the community on the NDP indicated a clear desire to protect the heritage, rural character, relationship with the River Rother and tributaries together with a clear separation from Midhurst and the A272. There is also the aim to ensure all development results in an attractive built and natural environment and to promote inclusive community facilities and recreational facilities.
- 3.4 In the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP), Stedham is included in the list of settlements for which the principle of development will be supported within a defined settlement boundary in Policy SD25 of the SDLP. Following consultation on the Pre-Submission NDP with South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) the decision was made to support the SDLP allocation for the Stedham Sawmills site.
- 3.5 Previously the Stedham Sawmills site and Land west of West Lodge were allocated in the Pre-Submission NDP. These allocations are no longer being taken forward in the Submission NDP as a result of the decision to support the SDLP allocation for the Stedham Sawmills site. It is proposed the allocation of this site in the SDLP will meet the housing and employment needs for Stedham with Iping in the NDP plan period.
- 3.6 The NDP also includes a policy that allows, some small scale development (3 houses or less) outside the settlement boundary. Alongside this, the NDP contains a number of policies covering a range of topics that seek to ensure that development proposals do not cause harm to, and where possible, enhance the landscape character and the local environment of Stedham with Iping Parish.
- 3.7 The Natural Environment Chapter seeks to protect and enhance Iping Common SSSI, Dark Skies and Tranquility. Local Green Spaces of value to the community are protected.
- 3.8 The Heritage Chapter seeks to protect a range of Parish Heritage Assets, traditional barns, sunken Lanes and historic walls.

#### **4. What are the key environmental designations and issues present in the Neighbourhood Area?**

- 4.1 A key determinant of whether effects of a plan or proposal are likely to be significant is the sensitivity of the asset that could be affected. In this context, the more environmentally sensitive a location is, there is more likelihood that potential environmental effects from a plan will be significant.
- 4.2 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides guidance on this topic by giving a list of sites and areas which should be deemed as 'sensitive areas' for the purposes of environmental assessment. These comprise:
- Natura 2000 sites – including International Environmental Designations such as Special Protection Areas (SPA's) and Special Areas of Conservation SAC's);
  - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
  - National Parks;
  - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
  - World Heritage Sites; and
  - Scheduled Monuments.

##### **Within Parish**

- 4.3 Within the Parish are Iping Common SSSI and Iping Common Local Nature Reserve. These designations are shown on Map 3 – SSSI and LNR Sites at the end of this report.
- 4.4 Iping Common SSSI was designated in 1986 and includes Trotton, Iping and Stedham Commons as well as Fitzhall Heath. It is one of the richest examples of heathland remaining in West Sussex and is of particular interest for its invertebrate fauna which includes several rare

spiders. The site is of county importance as a breeding site for heathland birds, and is the only site in Sussex for an uncommon species of grass.

4.5 Iping and Stedham Commons Local Nature Reserve (LNR) comprises all the common land south of the A272, which is in the SSSI apart from Fitzhall Heath. It also includes some small areas of common land north of the A272, but west of Iping Lane. Apart from some areas of Trotton Common both the LNR and SSSI are wholly in the parish.

4.6 The land in the LNR and in the SSSI is under the management of Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT).

**In the vicinity of the Parish**

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

4.7 Near to the Parish are Woolbeding and Pound Commons SSSI and Fyning Moor SSSI.

Natural 2000 sites

4.8 There are no Natura 2000 sites with the Parish. Singleton and Cocking Tunnels Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located 4.8km from the settlement of Stedham. Ebernoe Common SAC is located 8.5km from the village. Stedham Village is also 5.5km from Rook Cliff SAC and 9km from Duncton to Bignor Common Escarpment SAC.

National Park

4.9 The Parish of Stedham with Iping is wholly located within the South Downs National Park.

Heritage

4.10 There are a number of heritage designations in the Parish and within the vicinity. The location of designated heritage assets within the NDP boundary is shown on Map 5- Heritage attached at the end of this report. There are 35 Grade II listed buildings in Stedham with Iping and 14 Scheduled Monuments in the Parish. There are two Conservation Areas in the parish, one in Stedham village and the other in Iping. The Conservation Areas are focused on the historic core around the church.

Flooding

4.11 The Parish has localised flooding issues and the NDP seeks to mitigate the effects which heavy rainfall can have on dwellings, particularly those adjacent to the River Rother. The location of Flood Zones within the NDP boundary is shown on Map 4- Flood Risk attached at the end of this report.

**5. Potential for significant environmental effects**

5.1 This section assesses the emerging NDP against each of the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment, as defined in Schedule I to the 2004 Regulations.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment of the Stedham with Iping NDP</b>	<b>Significant environmental effect?</b>
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:		
(a). The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size	The Stedham with Iping NDP contains a vision, objectives and series of policies that cover a range of themes that are important to the community.  The policies in the NDP focus on seeking to protect and enhance the existing rural and built character of the parish.	No

Criteria	Assessment of the Stedham with Iping NDP	Significant environmental effect?
and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	The NDP will provide a basis for decision-making in relation to development proposals in the Parish. Once the NDP has passed Referendum and is 'Made' it will become part of the Development Plan and will be used by the SDNPA and Chichester District Council as the Local Planning Authorities, to determine applications for planning permission. The NDP will also seek to guide any bids from the Parish for funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy through the identification of suitable community projects or aspirations.	
(b). The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The NDP, once passed Referendum and when 'Made', will form part of the formal Development Plan along with the Chichester Local Plan 1999, the emerging SDLP and the Waste and Minerals Plan for the area. Planning applications will need to be in determined in accordance with the policies set out in the NDP.	No
(c). The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	The NDP seeks to promote sustainable development and includes policies to protect and enhance environmental and heritage features within the Parish. It will address local issues and add locally distinctive detail to the policies in the Chichester Local Plan 1999 and the emerging SDLP policies and those in the NPPF.	No
(d). Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	<p>The Parish has localised flooding issues and the plan seeks to mitigate the effects which heavy rainfall can have on dwellings, particularly those adjacent to the River Rother.</p> <p>The A272 is a source of noise pollution and also air pollution in those areas closest to it.</p> <p>The NDP seeks to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to ensure that new housing development is not located close to the A272.</p>	No

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment of the Stedham with Iping NDP</b>	<b>Significant environmental effect?</b>
(e). The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The NDP contains policies to protect and enhance the natural and built environment, including biodiversity and heritage assets and to also minimise light pollution. It also seeks to promote the well-being of the community.	No
<b>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
(a). The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The NDP contains policies that focus on the protection and enhancement of the existing character of the village and surrounding countryside.  The overall effect of the NDP, given its focus on environmental protection and enhancement, is therefore expected to be positive.	No
(b). The cumulative nature of the effects;	The NDP does not propose any new development over and above the SDLP allocation at the Stedham Mills site. The South Downs Local Plan has been subject to its own Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. Any cumulative or in combination effects of proposed development in nearby settlements have been assessed in these documents.  The NDP seeks to conserve and enhance important local environmental designations and heritage features in the Neighbourhood Area.	No
(c). The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	There are considered to be no risks to human health arising from the NDP. The NDP will seek to improve pedestrian safety and reduce the impacts of pollution in the Neighbourhood Area.	No

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment of the Stedham with Iping NDP</b>	<b>Significant environmental effect?</b>
(d). The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The NDP will cover the Parish boundary. This extends to 1,081 hectares. The Parish has an estimated population of 2114. The NDP has a local focus and as a result the overall environmental effects of the Plan will be relatively limited in magnitude and spatial extent.	No
(e). The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:  (i). Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;  (ii). Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or  (iii). Intensive land-use.	(i). There are a number of special natural characteristics and cultural heritage features that are located in and within the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Area. These are set out in detail in section 4 of this report.  The NDP will have an overall positive impact on heritage assets as it seeks to conserve and enhance local heritage and designates a number of parish heritage assets.  (ii). The NDP will not result in any environmental quality standards to be exceeded or limit value.  (iii). No intensive land use is proposed in the NDP.	No
(f). The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	Stedham with Iping Parish lies within the South Downs National Park. The NDP contains a number of policies that seek to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.  The NDP does not propose to allocate housing sites and is therefore unlikely to have any significant effect on International sites at Singleton and Cocking Tunnels, Ebernoe Common, Rock Cliff and Duncton to Bignor Common Escarpment SAC's.	No

## 6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The overall conclusion from the above table is that the Submission Stedham with Iping NDP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and therefore does not require SEA.

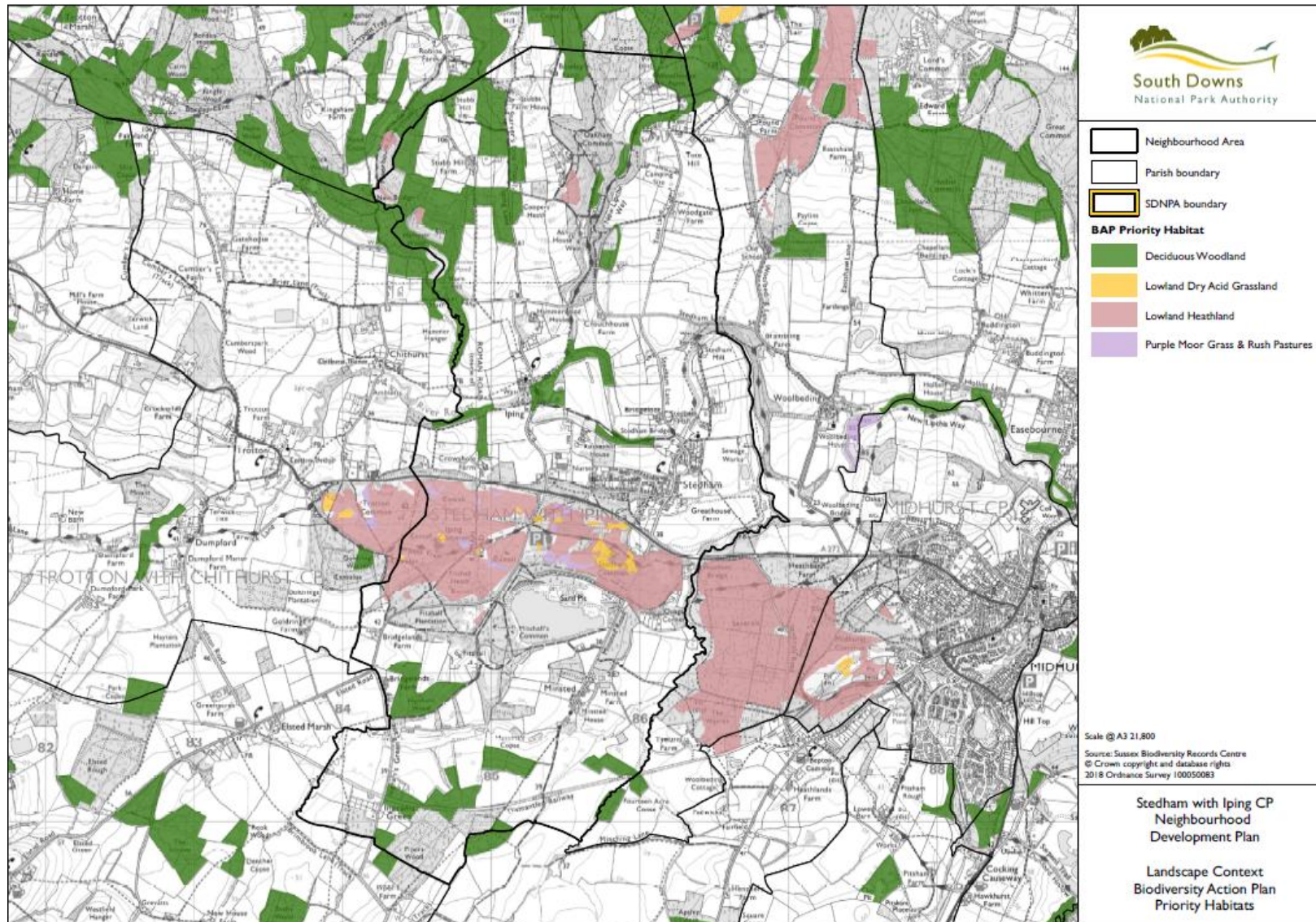
6.2 In respect of HRA, the nearest International designations are Singleton and Cocking Tunnels and Rock Cliff SAC's which are approximately 4.8km and 5.5km respectively away from the village of Stedham. As the NDP does not propose to allocate any sites, there is unlikely to be any significant environmental effects on these areas in terms of increased visitor pressure or pollution arising from additional traffic.

**MAP I: STEDHAM WITH IPING NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGNATED AREA**

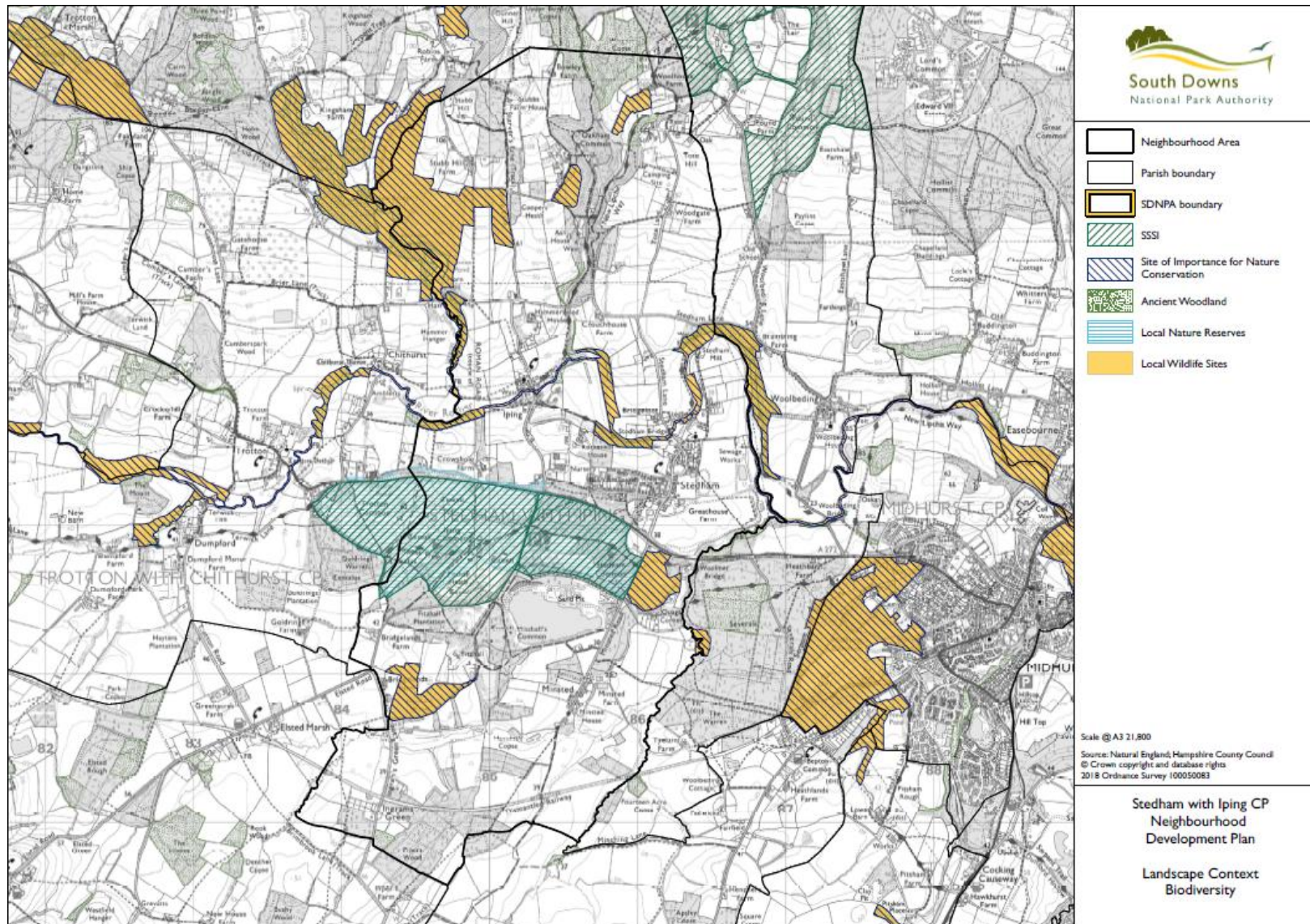




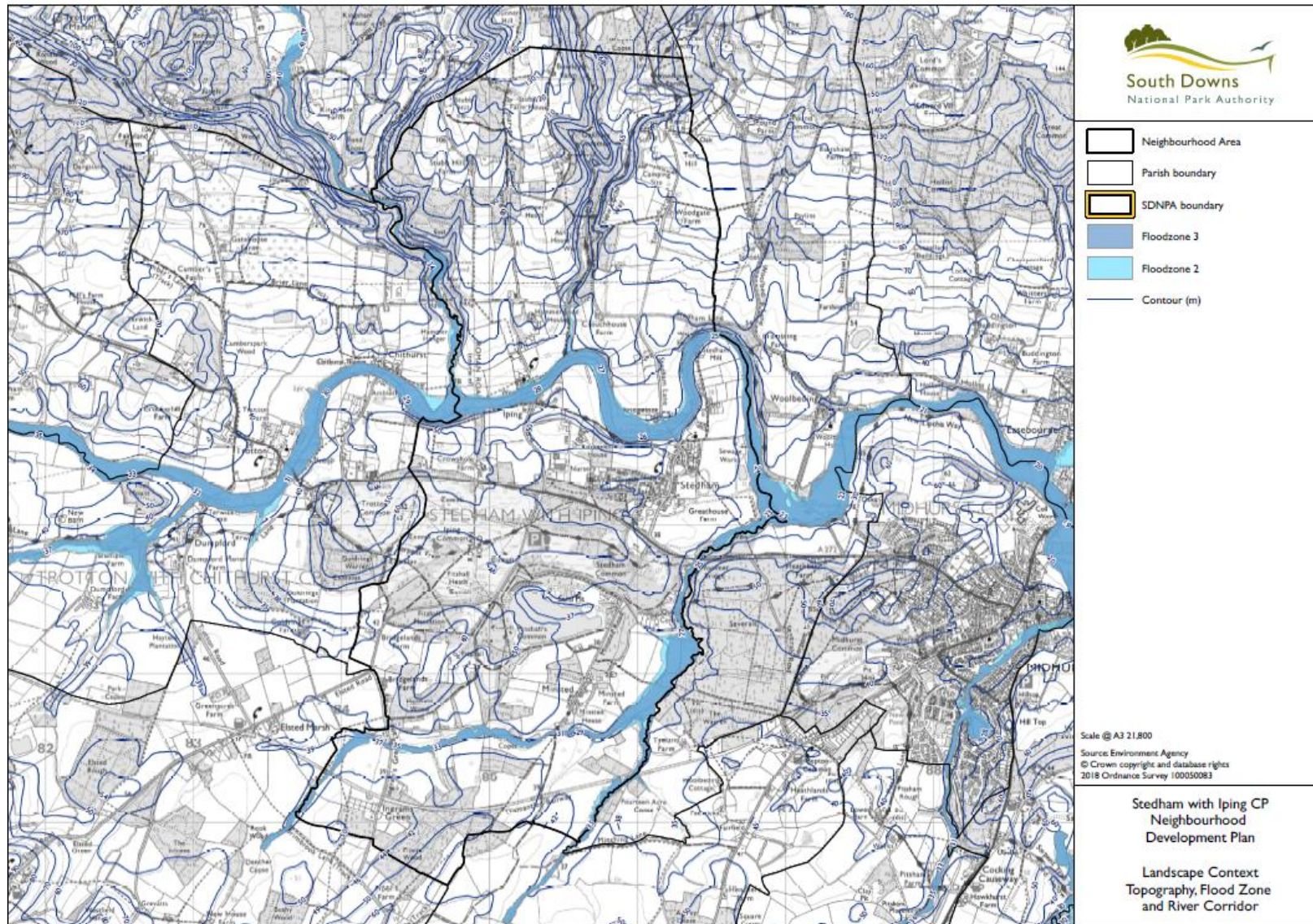
## MAP 2: BAP PRIORITY HABITATS



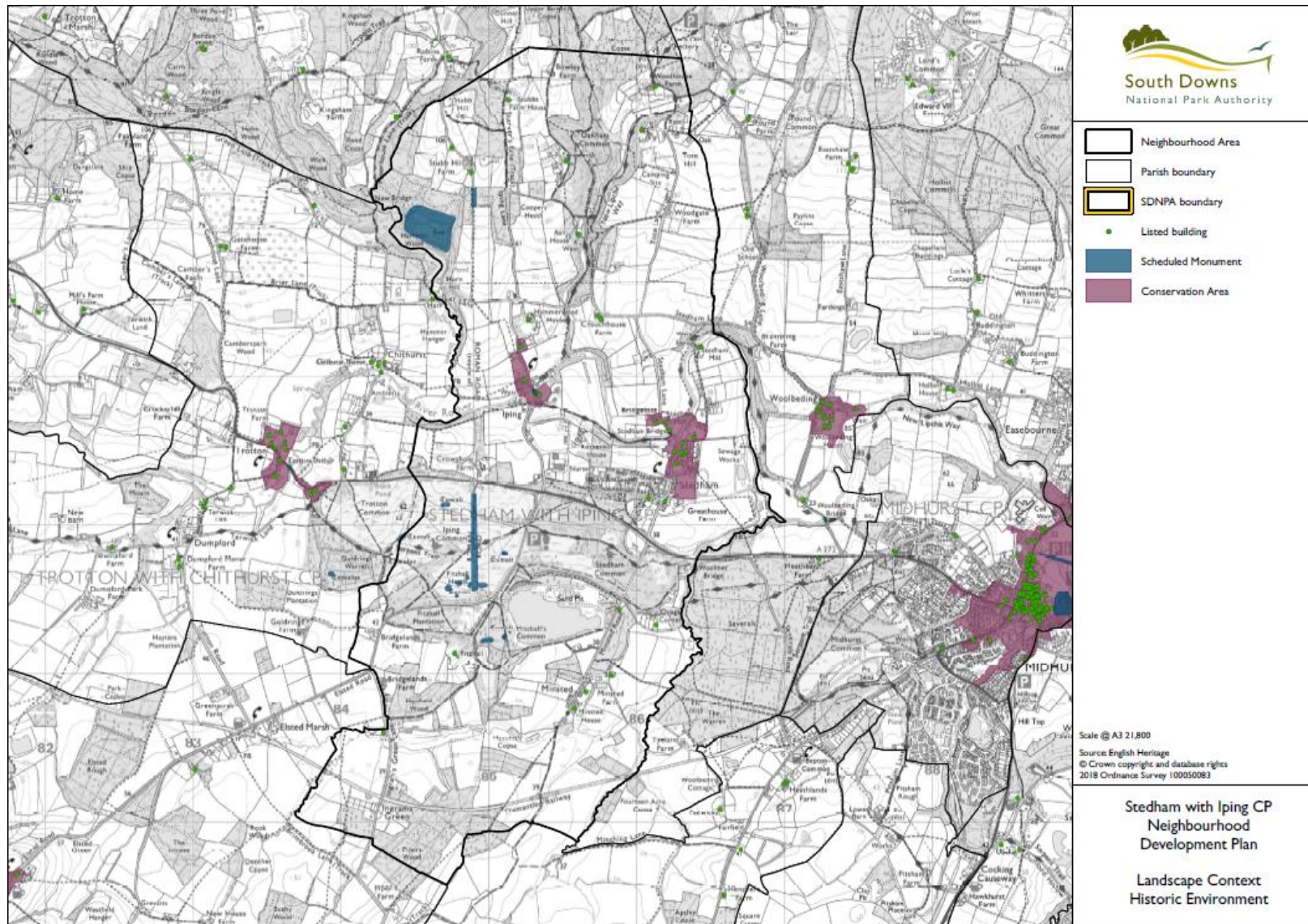
### MAP 3: SSSI AND LNR SITES



# MAP 4: FLOOD RISK



# MAP 5: HERITAGE



**APPENDIX A**



**Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement  
Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Development Plan**

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September 2018

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this screening statement is to provide a screening opinion as to whether there might be any potential likely significant effects on internationally important wildlife sites (also known as European sites) that may be affected by the Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), and therefore whether further Habitats Regulations Assessment work is required.

### Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

- 1.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the requirement for any plan or project to assess the potential implications for European sites. The need for HRA is set out within the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EC which is transposed into British Law<sup>1</sup>. Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive provides that:

*“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”*

- 1.3 The first stage of the HRA process involves an assessment or screening of whether the plan is likely to have a significant effect on one or more European sites either alone or in combination. This can include consideration of avoidance measures. The objective is to ‘screen out’ those plans and projects (or site allocations/policies) that can, without detailed appraisal, be said to be unlikely to result in significant adverse effects upon European sites.
- 1.4 If screening determines that there is the potential for likely significant effects, further HRA work would be required in the form of an Appropriate Assessment which considers the impact on the integrity of the European site in more detail.

### Screening methodology

- 1.5 The methodology for the likely significant effects screening is to be undertaken in two parts:
- Impact pathway screening – the NDP is reviewed to identify potential impact pathways arising from the proposals in the NDP on European sites.
  - Likely significant effects screening – Where potential impact pathways are identified, these are considered further to determine if the NDP alone, or in combination with other relevant plans or projects, is likely to result in significant effects.

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<sup>1</sup> The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

- I.6 The recent Sweetman II / People Over Wind European Court of Justice ruling has determined that, contrary to earlier UK court judgements, mitigation measures should not be taken into account in assessing likely significant effects. Mitigation should instead only be taken into account at the ‘appropriate assessment’ stage. Appropriate assessment is not a technical term; it simply means ‘an assessment that is appropriate’ for the plan or project in question. This screening is a screening for likely significant effects, and therefore, in accordance with the judgement, does not take into account any potential mitigation.
- I.7 The information used for this screening statement has been gathered from the HRA for the Submitted South Downs Local Plan (SDLP), which was submitted for examination in April 2018, and as such, this screening report should be read in conjunction with it. The SDLP identifies a quantum of development for the village of Stedham and allocates the Stedham Sawmill site through policy SD92 to meet this figure. The HRA of the Local Plan assessed the quantum of the development proposed for Stedham, and the allocation at Stedham Sawmill.
- I.8 This screening report has regard to the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites. It also makes reference to other plans and projects (the emerging SDLP and other Local Plans/Core Strategies as appropriate).

### **The Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Development Plan**

- I.9 The Stedham with Iping NDP Regulation 14 Pre-Submission consultation took place in April and May 2018. The NDP group has now prepared a Regulation 16 Submission version of the plan. The Stedham with Iping NDP includes general policies to guide development and also designates Local Green Spaces.
- I.10 The Regulation 14 Pre-submission NDP included a quantum of development for the settlement of Stedham that matched the quantum proposed in the SDLP, however the NDP group proposed to allocate that figure differently to the SDLP. The NDP proposed two allocations. The first was the same site as in the South Downs Local Plan (Stedham Sawmill) but proposed a smaller scale of development on the site. The second site was Land west of West Lodge, Rotherhill on the western edge of the village.
- I.11 In the preparation of the Regulation 16 Submission NDP, the NDP group informed South Downs National Park Authority that it would no longer be progressing the two allocations proposed in the Regulation 14 Pre-submission NDP. The Regulation 16 Submission NDP does not now include requirements for a quantum of development and therefore will not include any site allocations. The Regulation 16 Submission NDP supports the Stedham Sawmills allocation in the SDLP and includes a policy (SINDP7) which sets some further locally specific requirements for the site.
- I.12 When adopted, NDPs 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, alongside the strategic policies and the site allocation in the SDLP, in the Parish of Stedham with Iping.

### **Relevant European sites**

I.13 The European sites relevant to this NDP are:

- Singleton & Cocking Tunnels Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Ebernoe Common SAC
- Rook Clift SAC
- Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC



## 2. Part 1: Impact pathway screening

2.1 Table 1 below sets out the screening of the Stedham with Iping NDP, identifying if potential impact pathways are present. Where no impact pathways are identified, impacts on that particular European site can be screened out because there is no mechanism for an adverse effect on designated sites.

**Table 1: Impact pathway screening**

<b>Relevant designated site (distance from site)</b>	<b>Impact pathways</b>
Singleton & Cocking Tunnels SAC (4.8km)	Potential impact pathway present. Loss of supporting habitat – Bats. In the zone.
Ebernoe Common SAC (8.5km)	Potential impact pathway present. Any development that has the potential to impact greenfield sites or existing mature vegetation lines and/or river bank corridors has potential to impact upon the commuting and foraging routes of bats for which the site is designated.
Rook Clift SAC (5.5km)	None. Due to the distances involved, that the NDP does not allocate specific sites for development, and the small scale of any windfall development which may come forward that is compliant with the various policies in the plan are such that the NDP will not result in a material change in recreational activity at the site. It is also noted that the Natural England Site Improvement Plan for Rook Clift SAC does not identify recreational pressure as a site vulnerability.
Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC (9km)	None. Due to the significant distances involved, that the NDP does not allocate specific sites for development, and the small scale of any windfall development which may come forward that is compliant with the various policies in the plan are such that the NDP will not result in a material change in recreational activity at the site.

## 3. Part 2: Likely significant effects screening

3.1 Table 1 above has identified potential impact pathways for the Singleton & Cocking Tunnels SAC and Ebernoe Common SAC; a fuller screening is therefore required as set out in Table 2 below.

3.2 Table 2 below draws together the conclusions and includes references to the relevant parts of the South Downs Local Plan Submission HRA Report, and additional commentary regarding the Stedham with Iping NDP.

**Table 2: Likely significant effects screening**

<b>Impact Pathway and relevant designated site (distance from site)</b>	<b>Likely significant effects</b>
<p>Impact Pathway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of supporting habitat for bats</li> </ul> <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singleton &amp; Cocking Tunnels SAC (4.8km)</li> <li>• Ebernoe Common SAC (8.5km)</li> </ul>	<p>The development allocation for the settlement of Stedham, Stedham Sawmill, is proposed through the South Downs Local Plan and not the NDP. Policy SINDP7 of the Stedham and Iping NDP supports the allocation of the Stedham Sawmill site in the South Downs Local Plan and provides some additional locally specific criteria.</p> <p>The allocation was assessed and its conclusions set out in the HRA Report for the Submission South Downs Local Plan. The Stedham Sawmill allocation can be screened out due to distances involved and the nature of the site is such that it does not contain foraging habitat or commuting routes which would be significant for the internationally designated sites.</p> <p>The additional criteria set out in policy SINDP7 are of a nature that they are not likely to result in significant effects on the sites.</p> <p>The Stedham with Iping NDP includes other policies which allow for certain types of development, for example policy SINDP8 which sets criteria for unallocated residential development. The scale and nature of development that is likely to come forward that is compliant with the various policies in the plan and the strategic policies of the South Downs Local Plan is such that there are not likely to be significant effects and the specific implication of the precise location of proposed new development would be addressed via a project-level HRA screening of the planning application.</p>

## 4. Conclusion

4.1 Is the potential scale or magnitude of any effect likely to be significant?

- a) Alone? **No**
- b) In combination with other plans or projects? **No**

4.2 It is the conclusion of this screening statement that there are not considered to be likely significant effects on Singleton and Cocking SAC or the Ebernoe Common Special Area of Conservation arising from the Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood

Development Plan. Therefore the Stedham with Iping NDP does not require progression to the next stage of Habitats Regulations Assessment.