

Chalfont St Peter Neighbourhood Plan

SA / SEA screening

1. The Purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 1.1. Chalfont St Peter Parish Council is producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan to help guide development within the parish boundary. The Neighbourhood Plan is intended to be used as part of the suite of documents that are used to determine planning applications within the parish boundary. The Neighbourhood Plan is being produced to be in accordance with the Chiltern District Council Core Strategy (adopted in November 2011) and is consistent with the forthcoming Delivery Development Plan Document (DDPD).
- 1.2. The purpose of this document is to assess the impact the adoption and implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan will have on sustainable development principles and to screen for the requirement for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.3. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is required for all Development Planning Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2008 and must incorporate the requirements of the SEA Directive. The Planning Act allows planning documents to be produced without undertaking SA/SEA as long as they screen for the need as it is produced. The screening should assess whether there are any significant environmental impacts that require a full SA/SEA as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan being made. This process ensures that any impacts that have not been covered in the SA of higher level policies are picked up before the Neighbourhood Plan is made.
- 1.4. This screening has been undertaken using the standard assessment methodology of SA/SEA and has been prepared adhering to the guidelines outlined in "Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents; Guidance for Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities" (ODPM, 2005).
- 1.5. The impact of the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be at a local level and, while it will help to deliver wider district objectives, it is unlikely that any significant sustainability impacts will arise that have not already been assessed during the preparation of the Core Strategy.

2. Overview of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the parish of Chalfont St Peter. The Plan sets out a vision for the future of the Village and wider area of the Parish. This vision is supported by a set of objectives that will help to deliver the vision over time. The vision and objectives have led to a series of development policies which relate to the following topics:

- the Village Centre;
- housing;
- open space;

- leisure, community and health;
- mobile phone masts; and
- parish wide issues.

3. Sustainability Objectives and Assessment of Relevance / Impact

- 3.1. As part of the preparation of the Core Strategy an SA/SEA Scoping report was prepared by Chiltern District Council which developed a sustainability framework of 18 sustainability objectives. We have used these objectives to help test areas where there may be a conflict between the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan and environmental considerations.
- 3.2. The Core Strategy sustainability framework reflects issues under the categories of social, environmental and economic impact. In order to screen for the need for SEA and SA the relevance and impact of each objective to the Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed below:

	Objective	Relevance / impact
1	To provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not specifically elaborate on housing policy in relation to the allocation of land for housing. The Plan elaborates on design and quality and also on the size and mix of new housing. The Plan would therefore have a positive impact on this objective.
2	The creation of safer places to live & work and to reduce anti-social behavior.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not specifically address this objective, however the principles of good design are embedded throughout the document. Good design principles can contribute to reducing anti-social behaviour and the creation of safer places, thus having a positive influence on this objective.
3	To improve accessibility to essential services & facilities to provide opportunities to obtain good access to high quality health, education, recreation & other community facilities & services.	The Neighbourhood Plan contains policies which aim to support local community, sports and health facilities to be able to stay within the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan would therefore have a positive influence on this objective.
4	Improve & maintain health & well-being of the population & reduce inequalities in health.	By encouraging and supporting existing sport, health and recreational facilities to stay within the parish the Neighbourhood Plan will have a positive effect on this objective.
5	To encourage the use and integration of sustainable methods of transport, to reduce negative effects on the environment.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not specifically address transport issues within the parish and therefore does not impact on this objective.

6	To provide for sustainable levels of water use & supply & management.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not expand upon any policies which relate to the water use, supply and management. All policies within the Plan are within conformity with higher level policy and as such the Plan would have a neutral effect on this objective.
7	To maintain & enhance biodiversity.	The Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies that involve the protection of existing open spaces. The area of Chalfont St Peter that has the most potential in terms of biodiversity is the Misbourne Valley and the Neighbourhood Plan contains a policy that specifically relates to the protection of this area thus having a positive effect on this objective.
8	To protect & enhance the landscape and townscape character of Chiltern & in particular, those areas of designated importance.	Maintaining the positive character of the townscape and landscape of the parish is a key aim of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Plan contains a number of policies that relate to this, as such it will have a positive effect on this objective.
9	To conserve & where appropriate enhance the historic environment.	The Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of buildings that are of heritage value in addition to those that are already listed, and seeks their protection and/or enhancement. Therefore the Plan's effect will be positive on this objective.
10	To reduce contributions to climate change through: a) Sustainable building practices b) Maximising the potential for renewable energy & energy conservation	Within the housing section of the Plan there are policies that relate to improving the energy efficiency of new housing, therefore having a positive impact on this objective.
11	To minimise the risk of flooding from fluvial and surface water sources, in relation to both new & existing development.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not expand upon higher level policy in relation to drainage and flooding and as such its impact has already been assessed as part of the Core Strategy SA/SEA.
12	Minimise waste & then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting or energy recovery.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not contain policies that relate to reuse and recycling of waste and as such will have a neutral impact on this objective.
13	To conserve soil resources & quality.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any policies that relate to soil resources and quality and as such will have a neutral impact on this objective.

14	To improve the efficiency of land use through the re-use of existing buildings & previously developed land.	Whilst there are areas of previously developed land within the Chalfont St Peter parish boundary the Neighbourhood Plan does not specifically contain policies that relate to allocating that land. The Plan will therefore have a neutral effect on this objective.
15	To achieve a broad balance between housing, population & employment whilst encouraging economic growth and competitiveness.	The Neighbourhood Plan contains policies that relate to both housing and the economy of the village centre and the wider parish area. These have been considered within the framework of the Core Strategy and as such a balance has been met. The Neighbourhood Plan would therefore have a positive impact on this objective.
16	To encourage a diverse economy which is focused on higher value added, lower impact activities.	The Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies that relate to the Village Centre. These policies aim to maintain the attractiveness of the Village Centre and ensure that it remains a place that people want to visit and shop. As such the Neighbourhood Plan would have a positive impact on this objective.
17	To develop & maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness of the District.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not contain policies that relate to provision of education and work skills and as such would have a neutral impact on this objective.
18	To ensure high & stable levels of employment so everyone can benefit from the economic growth of the region.	Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not contain policies which relate specifically to employment, it does contain a number of policies that could indirectly have a positive influence on employment in the parish. Policies such as those that relate to the Village Centre aim to maintain the Village Centre as a vibrant and attractive place, thus helping to maintain its economic viability.

4. Screening assessment against the SEA criteria

4.1. The above assessment identifies that the Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have any environmental impacts that would trigger the requirement for an SEA. In order to assess formally whether the Neighbourhood Plan will have any significant environmental effects it has also been assessed using the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. The criteria are set out in the table below and the response to each point is set out next to it.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment	Likely to have significant environmental effects? (Yes/No)	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
1(a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	No	The Neighbourhood Plan does not specify the location, nature or size of land allocations within Chalfont St Peter Parish area but it will supplement and expand upon existing policies for the area. The Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the framework of policy documents that will be used to determine planning applications in the future.
1(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	The Neighbourhood Plan will be in conformity with higher level policies at both the national and local levels. In particular the Neighbourhood Plan will conform with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Chilterns District Core Strategy.
1(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	Yes, positive	The Neighbourhood Plan will help to promote sustainable development in a number of ways. The Plan has a number of policies which relate to character and design which aim to ensure that the positive character of the existing buildings and landscapes is maintained and enhanced, and that new development will be energy efficient. The Planning Act 2008, and national planning policy all recognise that good, inclusive design is a key component of sustainable development.
1(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	Yes, positive	A number of key environmental issues are identified in the Core Strategy that are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan. These are:

		<p>Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality in the two chalk rivers that are located in the District (Chess and Misbourne) is generally good. • Groundwater and surface water are vulnerable to pollution and over abstraction. • There is pressure on water resources and a high level of water usage per head. • Parts of Chiltern District are vulnerable to flooding from surface water. <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House prices are high compared to average earnings. • There is a shortage of affordable housing and lack of smaller 1 and 2 bedroom homes and affordable family houses. • There is an ageing population; people are living longer and many wish to stay in their own homes. <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a declining labour supply and a shortage of key workers. • The District has high levels of out-commuting to higher paid jobs outside the District. • There is a limited supply of new employment land and employment premises. <p>The Neighbourhood Plan addresses these issues through a variety of policies.</p>
<p>1(e) 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)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is not relevant to the implementation of community legislation on the environment.</p>

2. The characteristics of the effects and area		
2(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects And	No	There will be no negative or irreversible effects of implementing the Neighbourhood Plan that have been identified. The aim of the Plan is to help shape and guide future development in the Chalfont St Peter Parish.
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects		The cumulative nature of the effects will be that over time the Neighbourhood Plan should help to improve the quality of new development in the parish whilst at the same time protecting or enhancing the special characteristics of the built environment and landscape.
2(c) The transboundary nature of the effects	No	The Neighbourhood Plan refers specifically to the Chalfont St Peter parish area. The plan is unlikely to have any significant impacts outside of the parish boundary.
2(d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	No	There will be no increased risk to human health or the environment from the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.
2 (e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of population likely to be affected)	No	The Neighbourhood Plan will cover the parish of Chalfont St Peter, the village has a population of approximately 13,000 according to latest census data. The spatial extent of effects that the Neighbourhood Plan are likely to be restricted to the parish boundary.
2(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values Intensive land-use The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national,	No	The Neighbourhood Plan will play a supporting role in protecting and enhancing the special characteristics and cultural heritage of the Borough. This will happen through a number of policies within the Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan contains policies which encourage the use of good design and achieving high environmental standards. The Neighbourhood Plan will not have an effect on the intensity of land use

<p>community or international protection status.</p>		<p>as the Plan does not allocate land uses and stipulates that development must accord with higher level policies in the Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan will play a supporting role in the protection of areas or sites that have a recognised national or international protection status. The plan also provides a level of protection at community level by identifying a number of open spaces that have been identified by the community as being of value to them.</p>
--	--	---

5. Screening outcome / conclusion

- 5.1. As a result of the above assessment it is unlikely that there will be any significant negative impacts arising from the Neighbourhood Plan on economic, social and environmental matters that were not covered in the appraisal of the higher level Core Strategy document.
- 5.2. The Neighbourhood Plan has also been appraised against the criteria contained within Annex II of the SEA Regulations and no significant effects have been identified. Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan does not trigger the need for a full SA/SEA.