

Mr T Colling
Chair Neighbourhood Plan Steering
Group
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Our ref:

Your ref:

14 October 2014

Dear Mr Colling

Loxwood Neighbourhood Development Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Opinion Screening Determination under Regulation 9 and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

This letter addresses whether an environmental assessment of the Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan is required and as such whether it meets one of the basic conditions that a neighbourhood plan must meet in order to proceed to referendum: that it does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

On the basis of the contents of the neighbourhood plan that was the subject of a previous referendum and subsequent consultation with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with Regulation 9(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the following determination can be made.

The screening determination is that **an environmental assessment of the Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan is not required** due there being no adverse comments from the Statutory Consultees and for the reasons set out in the Criteria and response of screening which are attached as part of this letter.

As such it is the opinion of Chichester District Council that the Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan is in accordance with the provisions of the European Directive 2001/42/EC as incorporated into UK law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

This decision has been based on the information provided. If the contents of the Plan are revised and/or there is a material change in the environmental characteristics in the locality (e.g. any additional nature conservation or other environmental designations), then the comments contained in this decision would need to be reconsidered in order to take account of the changes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Andrew Frost'.

Andrew Frost
Head of Planning Services

Screening Report for the Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan

Criteria and response of screening

| Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of Regulations) | Relevance in context of this screening report |
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| The characteristics of plans and programmes | |
| (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 and operating conditions or by allocating resources; | <p>The Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan (NP) would, if adopted, form part of the Statutory Development Plan and as such will establish the development control framework for Loxwood village and surrounding environs.</p> <p>The NP is prepared for town and country planning and land use and sets out a framework for future development in Loxwood parish. The nature of the NP includes housing, open space, infrastructure and employment.</p> |
| (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy; | <p>The NP is the lowest tier in the planning hierarchy and must conform to plans in the upper tiers rather than influence them. In this case the NP must conform to plans including the Chichester Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and European Directives.</p> |
| (c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development; | <p>The NP has relevance in this section; there are opportunities for integrating environmental considerations within Loxwood.</p> <p>Policy 2 of the NP demonstrates willingness to incorporate sustainable development into all aspects of development.</p> <p>Policy 6 is devoted to designating Local Green Spaces (LGS) and Policy 9 and 10 detail that new development should be in character with the local building and countryside surroundings and use local resources to do so.</p> <p>Policy 17 ensures that all new developments or building extensions should conform to a minimum of Level 4 (from 2013 to 2016) and Level 5 (from 2016) in the Code of Sustainable Homes.</p> |

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| <p>(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and</p> | <p>Key issues taken from the Scoping Report of Chichester Local Plan and derived from the Loxwood NP which are relevant to the plan include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing. Due to a growing population, Loxwood requires an increase in housing of sustainable and affordable design by a minimum of 60 homes. 2. Environment. Chichester district has many national and some European designated sites. Loxwood has none but wishes to increase their protected areas of community and biological importance as Local Green Space in accordance with paragraph 77-78 of the NPPF. 3. Local economy. Whilst providing housing, a number of small shops will help to support the growing population. 4. An enriched and active community. Protection of recreational space for parish residents will be provided as part of the designation of Local Green Space. |
| <p>(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).</p> | <p>The NP is a land-use plan and sets the framework for future development consents within the Loxwood NP area.</p> <p>The NP sets policies which planning applications within the Loxwood NP area must adhere to.</p> |
| <p>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected</p> | |
| <p>(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;</p> | <p>No significant effects are anticipated on Biodiversity, Population, Human Health, Flora, Fauna, Soil, Air, Climatic Factors, Material Assets, Cultural Heritage and Landscape in Loxwood Parish.</p> <p>Although the proposed residential sites are not located within flood zones 2 and 3, due to the anticipated nature of an increase of demand to the sewage network and close proximity to the Wey and Arun Canal of the Farm Close Site, monitoring will be essential</p> |

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| | to ensure that sewage levels are kept safe at all times. |
| (b) the cumulative nature of the effects; | Housing proposals are in keeping with the aspiration of the Chichester Local Plan and the proposals of the NP. No cumulative effects are expected as a result. |
| (c) the transboundary nature of the effects; | All effects of the NP are considered to be entirely local and the majority will fall within the settlement boundary of Loxwood village. |
| (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents); | Southern Water has identified waste water management capacity issues in the area; new housing will need to demonstrate that capacity is not exacerbated to avoid the risk of environmental impacts on water quality and biodiversity. As acknowledged in section 18.8.5 of the Loxwood NP, <i>“any large-scale new connection to the existing system will need to be justified by a rigorous analysis. Where there is insufficient capacity in the local network, a connection should be made at the nearest point of adequate capacity as advised by Southern Water.”</i> |
| (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected); | Loxwood is a small village in the rural district of Chichester. It is the largest village located within the Loxwood Parish and is linked with B2133 that acts as commuter route to the A281 and A272. Due to minimal employment opportunities within Loxwood Parish, residents out commute. The indirect spatial extent of the plan may extend beyond the immediate area of the plan but due to the small population, significant effects are not projected |
| (f) 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; and | (i) Loxwood does not have a significant historic environment that is likely to be harmed by adoption of the NP and proposed development. It is not a tourist area but benefits from the Wey and Arun Canal in the south of the parish, which may bring infrequent visitors along this historic route. (ii) Policy 8 concerns environmental quality and seeks to ensure waste water treatment will not exceed environmental quality for |

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| | <p>water.</p> <p>(iii) The Loxwood NP has areas of moderate to low agricultural productivity with areas of grade 3 and grade 4 all situated within the parish (Figure 1.4) The location of housing in Loxwood NP is concentrated within the village itself.</p> |
| <p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p> | <p>The land surrounding Loxwood does not have any nationally important landscape designations such as AONB. No land is allocated as greenbelt and small-scale developments are unlikely to disrupt the integrity of the landscape value in this rural area.</p> <p>Additionally, the agricultural grade of land surrounding Loxwood and within its parish is of grade 3 and 4 classifications. Development on this land will reduce agricultural land in the parish, which will be reversible but is unlikely to cause a significant adverse effect reduction in agricultural activity, especially when considering the small-scale nature of the proposed development areas in the NP.</p> <p>There are no designated sites of local, national or European importance located within the NP area. However the NP wishes to designate Local Green Spaces to protect areas of community and biological importance.</p> |