

Ms Imogen Whitaker (Clerk)  
Boxgrove Parish Council

If calling please ask for: Andrew Frost  
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Our ref:

Your ref:

11 April 2016

Dear Ms Whitaker,

## **Boxgrove 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 the issue of whether or not there is a need for environmental assessment of the pre submission version of the Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan, 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 as proposed 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 Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan is required** due to there being a likely significant environmental effect as a result of the proposals in the plan. This view is supported by comments received from Historic England 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 Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan will need to have a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment for it to be 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 Boxgrove 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
<b>The characteristics of plans and programmes</b>	
<p>(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>	<p>The Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan would, if adopted, form part of the Statutory Development Plan and as such will establish the development management framework for Boxgrove village and surrounding environs.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is prepared for town and country planning and land use and sets out a framework for future development in Boxgrove parish. The nature of the Neighbourhood Plan includes policies for housing, employment, leisure and community.</p>
<p>(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is the lowest tier in the planning hierarchy and must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, the strategic policies of the development plan and European Directives.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is not intended to influence other plans or programmes.</p>
<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>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan aims to provide sustainable development but makes limited provision for its integration with the environment.</p> <p>Policy SD1 – The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development sets out that planning applications that accord with the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will be supported unless material considerations dictate otherwise.</p> <p>Policy SA1 sets out the allocation of 25 dwellings. The Policy includes a number of criteria that such development should meet. This includes: providing a high-quality living environment in keeping with the character of the surrounding area and its setting in the landscape; the proposals should respect and where possible enhance the character of the surrounding area.</p>

(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	As drafted there is concern over the likely significant environmental effects of the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular this is in relation to the impact of the proposals on the historic environment including heritage assets of acknowledged importance.
(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>This Neighbourhood Plan has no relevance to the implementation of Community legislation.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is a land-use plan and sets the framework for future development consents within the Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected,</b>	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	<p>The impact of the proposals for development in the Boxgrove NP is not anticipated to produce any significant effects on Air Quality, Biodiversity, Flora, Fauna, Material Assets, Population, Health, Soils, Climate Change and Water in the Boxgrove Parish.</p> <p>The proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the historic environment and heritage assets, in particular the setting of the conservation areas and listed buildings in close proximity.</p> <p>In addition, the proposals would be likely to have a significant impact on the landscape setting of the South Downs National Park (SDNP).</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	The proposals are in keeping with the objectives of the Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014-2029 in so far as they relate to the provision of housing. However, they are likely to have a significant impact on the historic environment contrary to Local Plan policies. It is not envisaged that there would be a cumulative effect in relation to this aspect.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	The effects of the proposals are generally contained within Boxgrove Parish.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	Boxgrove does not currently have any AQMAs but there are three in Chichester City. It is not thought that the Neighbourhood

	Plan will increase risks to human health.
<p>(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</p>	<p>Boxgrove is the largest settlement in the Parish lying between the main A27 east/west route and the A285 to Petworth. To the south of the A27, Tangmere lies close by.</p> <p>The proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the historic environment and heritage assets, in particular the setting of the conservation areas and listed buildings in close proximity.</p>
<p>(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</p> <p>(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</p> <p>(iii) intensive land-use; and</p>	<p>The main settlement of Boxgrove is situated outside the South Downs National Park, as is the smaller area of Halnaker.</p> <p>Much of the land in Boxgrove parish located to the north west of the A285, lies within the boundary of the South Downs National Park (SDNP).</p> <p>There are two conservation areas and 47 listed building entries, including the grade I ruins of the Monastic buildings of Boxgrove Priory, the ruins of Old Halnaker House and the Priory Church of St Mary and St Blaize. The parish also contains six scheduled monuments and part of the Registered Historic Park and Garden of Goodwood Park. It is, therefore, a sensitive historic environment.</p> <p>Policy EH1 makes reference to the need to protect hedgerows and trees.</p> <p>Policy EH6 addresses the impact of development on landscape character and important views and requires any development to maintain the local character of the landscape and not cause any loss or diminution of important views.</p> <p>However, there is no recognition of the historic environment, the significance of its contribution to the area or any policies requiring development to avoid impact on heritage assets. This is a serious omission. It is clear from the evidence that this has not formed a central thread of the Neighbourhood Plan work when considering future development.</p>

(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

The main settlement of Boxgrove is situated outside the SDNP, as is the smaller area of Halnaker.

Much of the land in Boxgrove parish located to the north west of the A285, lies within the boundary of the SDNP.

Policy EH1 makes reference to the need to protect hedgerows and trees. Policy EH6 addresses the impact of development on landscape character and important views and requires any development to maintain the local character of the landscape and not cause any loss or diminution of important views.

However, within the Neighbourhood Plan there appears to be little overall recognition of the landscape value of the SDNPA or its contribution to the character and appearance of the overall parish. Equally there appears little consideration given to the setting of the SDNP.

**Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan  
Summary of Statutory Consultations – Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

Statutory Consultee	Summary of Comments
<b>Historic England</b>	
<p>Historic England (HE) – Reply 29 February 2016</p>	<p>Boxgrove parish has two conservation areas and 47 listed building entries, including the grade I ruins of the Monastic buildings of Boxgrove Priory, the ruins of Old Halnaker House and the Priory Church of St Mary and St Blaize. The parish also contains six scheduled monuments and part of the Registered Historic Park and Garden of Goodwood Park. It is, therefore, a sensitive historic environment.</p> <p>The Plan proposes to allocate one site for development. According to records, there are no designated heritage assets on this site, but it does lie in a potentially sensitive position between the Halnaker and Boxgrove Conservation Areas (CA). Neither CA Area Character Appraisal identifies this site as particularly important to the setting of either or both conservation areas, nor identifies particularly significant views across it, but the Appraisal for Halnaker CA does consider the views out of the conservation area to the south to be of note.</p> <p>Further detailed assessment to be undertaken to determine the likely degree and significance of any impact on the special interest of these two conservation areas that would arise from the development of this proposed site.</p> <p>Important to consider the potential for non-scheduled archaeological remains, particularly in an area as archaeologically sensitive as Boxgrove. The Historic Environment Record and James Kenny should be consulted on the proposed site at an early stage.</p> <p><b>If</b> it is determined that the development of this site would be unlikely to affect the special interest of the conservation areas or significant non-scheduled archaeological remains, or that if it did, the site was removed from the Plan or adequate safeguards were incorporated within the allocation policy, we would be likely to consider that the Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to have any significant effects on the historic environment, and that an SEA was not required.</p> <p>Before we can give a more definitive answer therefore, we would need to know whether or not the potential effect on the conservation areas and on any non-scheduled archaeological remains have been considered and, if so, what the results of that consideration are. Unless and until these further assessments have been undertaken we have to be of the view that a SEA <b>is</b> required for the Neighbourhood Plan. We would be happy to review this opinion in the light of further information.</p>

	<p>Even if a formal SEA is not eventually believed to be necessary, we would nevertheless suggest that the Plan is subject to a form of sustainability appraisal to assess the potential site allocation against a set of agreed criteria and to assess and monitor the Plan's policies and proposals against a set of agreed objectives.</p>
<b>Environment Agency</b>	
<p>Environment Agency – reply – 17 February 2016</p>	<p>Recognise that allocations are proposed through this plan but have no concerns regarding these proposals.</p> <p>Consider that the scale of development proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan would not have a significant environmental effect and as such would not require an SEA in relation to the issues in the Environment Agency's remit.</p>
<b>Natural England</b>	
<p>Natural England – reply – 1 March 2016</p>	<p>Do not consider that this Plan is likely to have significant negative impacts and have no comments at this stage.</p>