

Motcombe Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Determination Statement

6 March 2018

This statement has been produced to comply with Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

The Regulations implement European Directive 2001/42/EC. This requires that the effect on the environment of certain plans and programmes should be assessed, including plans prepared for town and country planning or land use. An exception is made for plans that determine the use of a small area at a local level if it has been determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report for the Motcombe Neighbourhood Plan was submitted in November 2017 (see Appendix A). The report was accompanied by contaminated land advice from NDDC, flooding advice provided by DCC, and a heritage assessment produced by local consultant Kevin Morris Heritage Planning.

The Screening Report takes into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Its draft findings were: *“The plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment, and the proposed screening opinion (draft) concludes that the SEA Directive does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment for the Motcombe Neighbourhood Plan.”*

On 7 December 2017 the Screening Report was made available to the statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and Environment Agency). The District Council received responses from all of the statutory consultation bodies by 19 January 2018 (see Appendices B, C and D).

In assessing whether an SEA is required, NDDC considers the following to be a summary of the key issues:

1. Proposals for growth in the Neighbourhood Plan as indicated by the draft vision and objectives will be of a limited scale, in line with Motcombe’s position as a ‘Larger Village’ in the Spatial Strategy set out in the Local Plan Part 1 (adopted January 2016). The Screening Report states: *“Initial appraisal of housing need based on a pro-rata estimate of the rural settlements target suggests that the ‘fair share’ of housing for Motcombe for 2011–2031 would be about 56 dwellings, or 65 dwellings if the uplift from the 2015 SHMA is factored into the calculations.”*
2. Policy 2 (‘Core Spatial Strategy’) of LPP1 states: *“Stalbridge and the eighteen larger villages have been identified as the focus for growth to meet the local needs outside of the four main towns.”* Policy 6 (‘Housing Distribution’) of LPP1 states: *“At least 825*

dwellings will be provided in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) during the period 2011–2031.” LPP1 does not disaggregate the 825 dwelling figure. However, the scale of growth being considered at Motcombe (56–65 dwellings) appears to be within the realms envisaged by LPP1. Over a 20-year timeframe, this equates to approximately 3 dwellings a year and would be in-line with Motcombe’s role as a focus for growth to meet local needs.

3. The Screening Report identifies a comprehensive range of spatial constraints. These include landscape, bio- and geo-diversity assets, heritage assets, agricultural land value, pollution risks, minerals and waste proposals, and flood risk and water quality.
4. In order to avoid either causing harm to existing assets, or placing occupants of new development at unnecessary risk, the Screening Report considers all potential development sites against the spatial constraints. It advised that in order to meet the neighbourhood plan objectives and avoid environmental harm, the list of potential development sites would be limited to the following (SHLAA reference number in brackets):
 - Site 1 – Land opposite Church Farm (2-41-0528) – Note, this was reduced in size to exclude the area to the rear and east of Barcroft / Woodside.
 - Site 2 – Church Farm Barns (2-41-0398)
 - Site 4 – Beside Shire Meadows, Motcombe Road (2-41-0408)
 - Site 13 – Shorts Green Farm, The Street (2-41-0407)
 - Site 18 – Elm Hill (SE), Knapp Hill (2-41-0004 and 2-41-0011)
 - Site 20/21 – Elm Hill (SW), west of Highfields (2-41-0439 and 2-41-0441)
 - Site 24 – Rear of Stainers Mead (2-41-0435)
 - Site 25 – The Nursery, The Street (2-41-0006)
5. The Environment Agency responded to say that they agreed with the conclusion that the plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment (see Appendix B).
6. Natural England pointed out that Site 4 is within 500m of Fishy Mead SNCI, which is not reflected in the information provided within the SEA screening report. That aside, they concluded *“the allocations in the neighbourhood plan do not pose significant concern for Natural England in terms of their impact on the environment,”* and *“there are unlikely to be significant environment effects from the proposed plan.”* (see Appendix C).
7. Historic England stated in their response that they found the information supplied to be “most helpful”, and on that basis only raised concerns over Site 1. Notwithstanding the fact that the size of Site 1 was reduced in order to reduce its potential impact, Historic England stated: *“we are not sure there is enough information to be able to conclude that an SEA is not required”*, and concluded: *“it seems difficult to arrive at an acceptable scenario capable of avoiding the need for SEA if only on a default basis.”* (See Appendix D.)
8. The Motcombe Neighbourhood Plan Group were made aware of the responses from the consultation bodies, and in particular the concerns raised by Historic England with respect to site 1. As a result, the Group resolved that they would exclude Site 1 as a potential development site (email to NDDC dated 26 Feb 2018).
9. A full consideration of the proposed plan against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations is set out on pages 18 to 20 of the Screening Report (Appendix A).

Having considered the contents of the Screening Report, the responses from the consultation bodies, and taking into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to the regulations, **North Dorset District Council has determined that an SEA of the**

Motcombe Neighbourhood Plan is not required providing site 1 continues to be excluded from further consideration as a potential development site.

NOTE: The statement is 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. the designation of any additional nature conservation or other environmental sites), then the comments contained in this statement would need to be reconsidered in order to take account of the changes.

APPENDICES

A. Motcombe Neighbourhood Plan – Screening Report (November 2017)

SEA Statutory Consultation Bodies Responses

B. Natural England – email dated 17/01/2018

C. Environment Agency – letter dated 19/01/2018

D. Historic England – email dated 19/01/2018