# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Oving Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the Regulation 14 version of the Oving Neighbourhood Plan

Oving Parish Council

September 2024

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## Quality Information

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## Table of Contents

Non-Technical Summary ..... i

1. Introduction ..... 1
Background ..... 1
SEA screening for the Neighbourhood Plan ..... 2
SEA explained ..... 3
Structure of this Environmental Report ..... 4

2. Local Plan context and vision for the Neighbourhood Plan ..... 5

3. What is the scope of the SEA? ..... 8
Summary of SEA scoping ..... 8
Key sustainability issues ..... 12
Biodiversity and Geodiversity ..... 12
Climate Change (including Flood Risk) ..... 13
Landscape and Villagescape ..... 14
Historic Environment ..... 15
Air, Land, Soil, and Water Resources ..... 15
Community Wellbeing (including Transportation) ..... 16
SEA Framework ..... 17

4. Consideration of reasonable alternatives through the SEA ..... 19
Introduction ..... 19
Defining reasonable alternatives ..... 19
Options for managing the impacts of any speculative applications for new development ..... 20
Establish design criteria for new development areas ..... 20
Safeguard the integrity of landscape gaps ..... 21
Limit building heights in sensitive locations ..... 22
Preferred approach for the Neighbourhood Plan ..... 23
ONP policies ..... 24

5. Appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan ..... 25
Introduction ..... 25
Approach to the appraisal ..... 25
Biodiversity and Geodiversity ..... 25
Community Wellbeing (including Transportation) ..... 26
Conclusions at this current stage ..... 28

6. What are the next steps? ..... 29
Plan finalisation ..... 29
Monitoring ..... 29

# Non-Technical Summary

## What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Oving Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as "the ONP"). This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to help avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

## What is the Oving Neighbourhood Plan?

The ONP has been prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

## Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Regulation 14 version of the ONP, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (February 2023), which included information about the neighbourhood area's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe, and evaluate the likely significant effects of the ONP and alternatives.
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the ONP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes.
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues for the area.
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the ONP has been assessed.
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the ONP.
- The likely significant effects of the ONP.
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the ONP.
- The next steps for the ONP and accompanying SEA process.

# Consideration of reasonable alternatives for the Oving Neighbourhood Plan?

## Defining reasonable alternatives

The SEA Regulations highlight that the Environmental Report 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. For SEA for Neighbourhood Plans, 'reasonable alternatives' are typically considered for alternative approaches to locating development in a neighbourhood area.

As discussed within **Chapter 2** of this Environmental Report, Oving is located within the 'rest of the plan area' in the settlement hierarchy set out within the Submission Local Plan (see Policy S2). Parishes within the 'rest of the plan area' comprise small villages, hamlets, scattered development and countryside with very few options for development (i.e., few to no available site options). Within the 'rest of the plan area', development will be *"restricted to that which requires a countryside location or meets an essential local rural local need or supports rural diversification in accordance with Policy NE10"*.

In light of the above, the ONP does not allocate land for development. Therefore, reasonable alternative approaches for the level and distibution of growth have not been explored through the SEA. These elements were considered for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the proposed Submission Local Plan[1].

However, Oving Parish Council recognises that speculative applications for development may come forward during the plan period which have the potential to deliver benefits that should be secured through the design, layout and uses of each site. In this respect, the ONP's planning policies seeks to shape development more broadly in the neighbourhood area without allocating specific sites.

## Options for managing the impacts of any speculative applications for new development

The SEA has considered the relative sustainability merits associated with the following options with respect to managing the impacts of any speculative applications for new development which may come forward during the plan period. The options have been developed to reflect key policy approaches considered by plan makers to date during the preparation of the draft ONP. Specifically, whether to:

- Establish design criteria for new development areas:
  - **Option A:** Encourage developers to consider locally specific design guidance to ensure that community knowledge and aspirations are reflected within new development areas.
  - **Option B:** Do not encourage developers to consider locally specific design guidance, relying solely on the requirements in the Submission Local Plan for new development areas.

[1] AECOM (January 2023): 'Sustainability Appraisal for the proposed Submission Local Plan', accessible here

- Safeguard the integrity of landscape gaps:
  - **Option A:** Rely on existing policy provisions within the Submission Local Plan to protect the distinct identities of settlements within (and adjoining) the neighbourhood area.
  - **Option B:** Define 'landscape gaps' to prevent the visual coalescence of settlements within (and adjoining) the neighbourhood area.
- Limit building heights in sensitive locations:
  - **Option A:** Take a policy approach which limits building heights within sensitive locations.
  - **Option B:** Do not take a policy approach which limits building heights within sensitive locations.

An outline of selecting the alternatives dealt with is provided within **Chapter 4** of this Environmental Report. This is followed by a commentary of the likely significant effects associated with the two themes which have been 'scoped in' to the SEA process.

## Preferred approach for the Neighbourhood Plan

The preferred policy approaches for the ONP approach are outlined below, and further discussed as part of the plan appraisal presented in **Chapter 5** of this Environmental Report.

### Establish design criteria for new development areas

The preferred approach for the ONP is to proceed with Option A and prepare locally-specific design guidance to inform any new development areas which come forward during the plan period[2]. This will ensure community preferences are taken into consideration, with development more likely to be supported when local aspirations and knowledge has been applied.

Further information is presented in Policy OV10 within the draft ONP.

### Safeguard the integrity of landscape gaps

The preferred approach for the ONP is to proceed with Option B and identify landscape gaps. The location of the gaps has been informed by a Landscape Gap Assessment[3] and seek to prevent the visual coalescence of the following settlements within (and adjoining) the neighbourhood area. Specifically:

- Shopwyke and Oving
- Tangmere and Shopwyke
- Tangmere and Oving
- Bersted and Chichester
- Runcton and Bersted; and
- Bersted and Oving.

Further information is presented in Policy OV7 within the draft ONP.

[2] AECOM (2022): 'Oving Neighbourhood Plan: Design Guidelines and Codes', accessible here
[3] Hankinson Duckett Associates (March 2023): Oving West Sussex Landscape Gap Assessment (draft)

### Limit building heights in sensitive locations

The preferred approach for the ONP is to proceed with Option B and encourage a limitation of building heights within the neighbourhood area. It is anticipated that the limitation of building heights will be considered on a site-by-site basis (i.e., when any speculative development proposals come forward), following an understanding of the contribution that the site makes to the local landscape character and the setting and significance of the historic environment. The SEA recommends that any speculative proposals are accompanied by a proportionate heritage assessment at the planning application stage to determine the potential impacts of the proposal to the historic environment.

Further information is presented in Policy OV13 within the draft ONP.

# Appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan

The Regulation 14 version of the ONP presents 14 planning policies for guiding development in the neighbourhood area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering.

**Chapter 5** within the main body of the Environmental Report presents the findings of the appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the ONP. Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the Environmental Report presents the findings of the assessment as a commentary of effects under the SEA themes.

A summary of the appraisal findings is presented below.

**Significant positive effects** are predicted with regard to the community wellbeing (and transportation) SEA theme. This is because the plan supports (in principle) the delivery of affordable housing and a village shop and/or community hub; protects existing employment sites, local green space and landscape and heritage amenity (e.g. key views); and seeks to deliver improvements to the local active and sustainable travel network.

**No significant effects** are considered like under the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme as the draft ONP does not allocate any sites for development. As the policy framework supports the protection of, and improvement to, land with known biodiversity value and the delivery of BNG, overall, the draft ONP is considered likely to lead to **minor positive effects**.

The ONP has a strong focus on ensuring sustainable and high-quality design through any new development areas which may come forward during the plan period (i.e., via speculative applications). The in-combination effects of the policy framework will lead to long-term positive effects for the neighbourhood area, important in the local context given the potential cumulative impacts of the large-scale development proposals coming forward within the wider plan area (including via the strategic allocations within the Submission Local Plan).

# Next steps

## Plan finalisation

Following Regulation 14 consultation, responses will be considered in finalising the ONP and SEA for submission. Following submission, the ONP and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the ONP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the ONP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Chichester District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the ONP, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the ONP will become part of the Development Plan for Chichester, covering the defined neighbourhood area.

## Monitoring

The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the ONP will be undertaken by Chichester District Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the ONP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Chichester District Council.

# 1. Introduction

## Background

1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment in support of Oving Parish Council's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 The Oving Neighbourhood Plan (the 'ONP') is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

1.3 The ONP is being prepared in the context of the emerging Chichester Local Plan. In May 2024, Chichester District Council submitted the Chichester Local Plan 2021-2039 (the 'Submission Local Plan') to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination on behalf of the Secretary of State.

1.4 It is currently anticipated that the ONP will be submitted to Chichester District Council later in 2025. Key information relating to the ONP is presented in **Table 1.1**.

### Table 1.1 Key facts relating to the ONP

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of Responsible Authority | Oving Parish Council |
| Title of Plan | Oving Neighbourhood Plan ('the ONP') |
| Subject | Neighbourhood planning |
| Purpose | The ONP is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the emerging Chichester Local Plan 2021-2039, which was submitted for examination in May 2024.<br><br>The ONP will be used to guide development within the neighbourhood area. |
| Timescale | To 2039 |
| Area covered by the plan | The neighbourhood area covers the civil parish of Oving in Chichester (West Sussex) – see **Figure 1.1** below. |
| Summary of content | The ONP will set out a vision, strategy, and range of policies for the neighbourhood area. |
| Plan contact point | S.Q. - Neighbourhood Group representative<br><br>Email: cllr.quigley@ovingcommunity.org.uk |

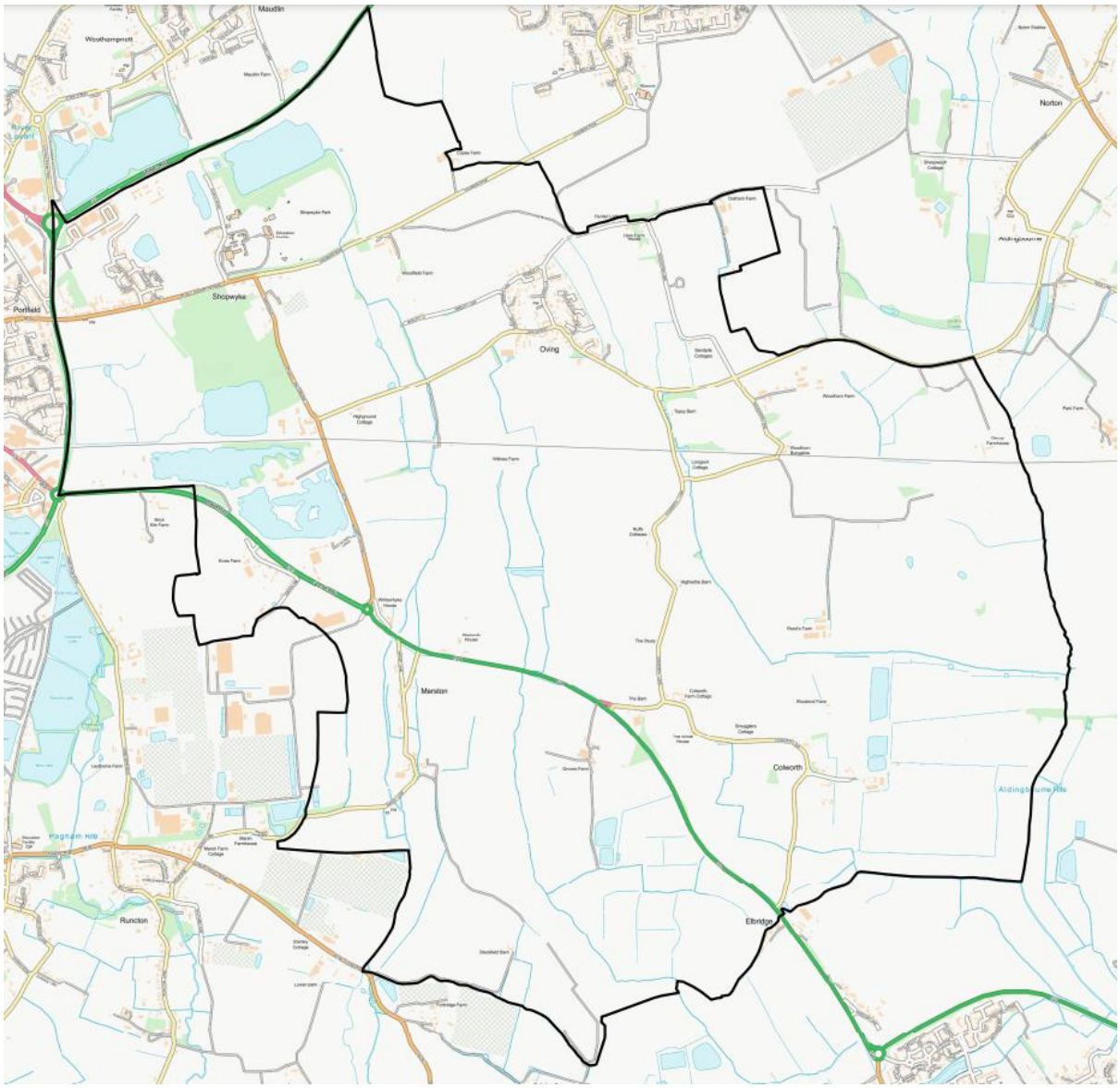



**Figure 1.1: Neighbourhood area boundary**

# SEA screening for the Neighbourhood Plan

1.5 A Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, Neighbourhood Plans are more likely to be screened in as requiring an SEA if both the following apply:

1) the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared within a neighbourhood area with significant environmental constraints, such as, for example, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or large concentrations of heritage assets; and

2) the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate sites for development. [4]

1.6 As the Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate sites for housing or employment uses (i.e., the elements of neighbourhood plan making which are most likely to have significant environmental effects), it could be concluded that a full SEA process is not required to accompany the development of the Oving

[4] DLUHC (February 2022): Chief Planner's Newsletter, February 2022 "Strategic Environmental Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans: Timely and effective screening" accessible here

Neighbourhood Plan. However, correspondence between Oving Parish Council and Chichester District Council (dated December 2022) concludes:

"Neighbourhood Plans must meet certain Basic Conditions, including the requirement that the making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations. To ensure compliance with this and other relevant legislation, Chichester District Council will need, in due course, to issue a formal screening opinion in relation to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and a determination letter in regard to SEA.

"However, as the neighbourhood plan is moving in advance of the Chichester Local Plan Review, and through consultation with Natural England earlier this year, it is not yet clear what Natural England's position is with regard to HRA. They have commented that:

*"Without more information about the nature of the policies, it makes it difficult to advise. It would be best to wait until the Neighbourhood Plan is submitted for consultation to Natural England at Regulation 14 to offer informed advice."*

"It therefore remains unclear if your neighbourhood plan will need mitigation in order to fulfil the terms of the HRA and in that respect an Appropriate Assessment will be required to be undertaken by Chichester District Council. Consequently, and in order to advise of a precautionary approach, without definitive Natural England advice to the contrary, it is therefore advised that SEA work will be required from the start of your neighbourhood plan process. However, as we have discussed, this position may change once Natural England has provided more detailed commentary at the Regulation 14 stage."

1.7 In light of this outcome, a precautionary and proportionate SEA process is being undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).

1.8 Oving Parish Council have since decided to align the ONP with the emerging Chichester Local Plan period. As the emerging ONP will be in alignment with the emerging Chichester Local Plan Review (and will not be 'made' until after the emerging Local Plan is adopted), the recommendations and mitigation measures identified within the HRA for the emerging Chichester Local Plan Review will apply to any speculative applications which come forward within the neighbourhood area during the emerging plan period.

1.9 Whilst there is a case for the ONP to be rescreened, the SEA process has been continued to support the evidence base for the emerging ONP.

# SEA explained

1.10 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the ONP seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

1.11 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:

i. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues.

ii. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e., the draft ONP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

1.12 This 'Environmental Report' is concerned with item 'ii' above.

# Structure of this Environmental Report

1.13 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the ONP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed below with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as set out in **Table 1.2** below.

**Table 1.2 Questions that must be answered by the SEA Environmental Report to meet the regulatory requirements[5]**

| Environmental Report question | | In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include…[6] |
|---|---|---|
| What's the scope of the SEA? | What is the plan seeking to achieve? | An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan. |
| | What is the sustainability 'context'? | Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.<br>The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level.<br>Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance. |
| | What is the sustainability 'baseline'? | The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan.<br>The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.<br>Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance. |
| | What are the key issues and objectives? | Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment. |
| What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point? | | Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with.<br>The likely significant effects associated with alternatives.<br>Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan. |
| What are the assessment findings at this stage? | | The likely significant effects associated with the Regulation 14 version of the plan.<br>The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the Regulation 14 version of the plan. |
| What happens next? | | The next steps for the plan making / SEA process. |

[5] Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004
[6] NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

# 2. Local Plan context and vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

## Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan

2.1 In May 2024, Chichester District Council (CDC) submitted the Chichester Local Plan (2021-2039)[7] to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination on behalf of the Secretary of State. The Submission Local Plan provides the broad policy framework and a long-term strategy to manage development, protect the environment, deliver infrastructure, and promote sustainable communities within Chichester District until 2039.

2.2 Oving is located within the 'rest of the plan area' in the settlement hierarchy set out within the Submission Local Plan (see Policy S2). Parishes within the 'rest of the plan area' comprise small villages, hamlets, scattered development and countryside with very few options for development (i.e., few to no available site options). Within the 'rest of the plan area', development will be *"restricted to that which requires a countryside location or meets an essential local rural local need or supports rural diversification in accordance with Policy NE10"*.

2.3 A significant proportion of new housing within the southern section of Chichester District (i.e., where the neighbourhood area is located) is to be delivered through twelve strategic allocations (see Policy H2). The strategic sites (including sites which have been carried forward from the Adopted Local Plan) are expected to be brought forward through a master planning approach, delivering a wide range of uses in addition to housing (including funding for the A27 upgrades, and maintaining strategic landscape gaps and wildlife corridors between settlements).

2.4 The neighbourhood area partly overlaps with strategic allocation 'A7 – Land at Shopwyke' which has consent for 585 dwellings under application 15/03720/OUT. The neighbourhood area is also within relative proximity to strategic allocations in Westhampnett and Tangmere ('A8 – Land East of Chichester', 'A9 – Land at Westhampnett / North East Chichester' and 'A14 – 'Tangmere Strategic Development Location'), which collectively are likely to deliver in the region of 2,500 new homes[8]. It is recognised that with the exception of the development at Tangmere, strategic allocations A7, A8 and A9 are now largely built out and/or under construction.

2.5 Whilst the ONP will not be allocating any sites, it is recognised that there is potential for speculative development proposals to come forward within the neighbourhood area during the plan period.

## Vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

2.6 The vision for the ONP captures the community's views and aspirations for the neighbourhood area as expressed through the neighbourhood planning process. It forms the basis on which the neighbourhood objectives and proposed policies have been formulated.

[7] Chichester District Council (2024): 'The Local Plan examination – submission documents and evidence base' accessible here
[8] It is recognised that strategic allocation A9 and A14 have been carried forward from the adopted Local Plan.

2.7 The vision is as follows:

*"In the period of the emerging local plan, Oving parish will be a resilient, thriving, well-knit community. It will be an agreeable place to live for adults and children, families, people in work, the retired and elderly. It will have a separate and distinct identity with a clear gap with other settlements and no annexation to Chichester.*

*Its character and fragile beauty will be preserved from excessive development. Its historic assets and its high-quality farmland will be safeguarded.*

*Its infrastructure will include access to schooling, medical facilities, adult social care and local retail. It will be sustainable with good public transport, efficient and safe road traffic management and a network of cycle paths and footpaths providing access to all parts of the parish and Chichester.*

*There will be protected green open space, trees and verges with wild flowers. Its housing will include a mix of market and affordable housing, developer and self-built, with good size individual or communal gardens.*

*It will have a strong rural economy based on farming, horticulture, services and other types of business, supported by gigabit broadband and a multi-use business hub. It will have the ambition to create higher value jobs in for example technology to match expensive new housing.*

*It will play its part in seeking to combat climate change: in housing design using renewable energy, low emissions, air/ ground source heat pumps, in private transport using electrically and other non-fossil fuel powered vehicles, in community behaviour e.g. single use plastic, and waste recycling. By these and other means it will progress to a carbon neutral parish.*

*Oving parish will work with neighbouring parishes to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes."*

2.8 The vision is accompanied by the following objectives:

### Housing

- Example: Proposals for new housing must deliver a range of house types, sizes and tenures. Developers should demonstrate how the proposal will meet local needs. Housing will be required to meet or exceed the energy efficiency standards set out by central government or Chichester District Council.

### Environment and heritage

- Example: New development should not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and wherever possible, reduce overall flood risk.
- Example: Local heritage, landscape, buildings and history to be respected.
- The unique setting of the Oving Conservation Area is to be preserved and development proposals that would negatively impact on its setting will be refused.
- Any designated wildlife corridors that pass through the parish linking the South Downs National Park to the SSSI of both Pagham and Chichester Harbours will be protected and enhanced where possible. Development

that would lead to increased pressure on these corridors from recreational use will be refused.

### Employment and enterprise

- Example: Development proposals to upgrade or extend existing employment sites or start new business ventures e.g. in light engineering and technology, and small companies attracting young people, will be supported provided that the impact on the amenities of surrounding properties, landscape and wildlife heritage is acceptable and subject to the other policies in the plan.

### Leisure and community

- Example: Proposals for establishment of new medical facilities or access by bus to improved existing facilities e.g. at Tangmere, will be supported within the parish settlement boundary subject to the other policies in the plan.
- Example: Community facilities that support the social integration of major new developments will be supported.
- Example: Depending on population size, provision of walk-to local shop/ café will be supported.

### Getting about

- Example: Support will be given to proposals that improve and extend the existing footpath and cycle path network subject to compliance with other development plan policies. The loss of existing footpaths and cycle paths will be resisted. Access to Chichester by cycle and electric bike should be supported.
- The extension of bus services will be supported to enable a genuine alternative to private car use for the mostly rural nature of the parish. The significant housing proposals will be expected to facilitate this extension or re-routed bus routes via an initial funding scheme to be incorporated into S106 or equivalent negotiations.

### Climate change

- Example. Proposals for energy-generating infrastructure using renewable or low carbon energy sources to serve individual properties or groups of properties will be supported.
- Mitigation of the impact of climate change such as effective ditch maintenance and improvement as well as increased shading through tree planting will be supported.

# 3. What is the scope of the SEA?

## Summary of SEA scoping

3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: 'When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies'.

3.2 In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England. These authorities were consulted on the scope of the SEA, as well as Chichester District Council, between 3rd February 2023 and 10th March 2023.

3.3 The purpose of scoping was to outline the 'scope' of the SEA through setting out the following information:

- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and local plans and strategies relevant to the ONP.
- Baseline data against which the ONP can be assessed.
- The key sustainability issues for the ONP; and
- An 'SEA Framework' of objectives against which the ONP can be assessed.

3.4 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they were addressed, have been summarised below.

**Table 3.1 Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report**

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| **Environment Agency**<br>*Sustainable Places Technical Specialist*<br>Received: 10th March 2023 | |
| Flood Risk<br>Your Neighbourhood Plan should conform to national and local policies on flood risk:<br>• National Planning Policy Framework – para.155<br>*"Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing risk elsewhere."*<br>• Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014 - 2029 - Policy 42<br>*"… Flood and erosion risk will be taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at current or future risk, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk…"*<br>If your Neighbourhood Plan is proposing sites for development check whether there are any areas of Flood Zones 2 or 3 within the proposed site allocations. | Comment noted. The draft ONP does not include any site allocations. The discussion on the preferred approach for the ONP is presented in Chapter 4 of this Environmental Report. |
| Natural Flood Management<br>The EA and Lead Local Flood Authorities are seeking to work in partnerships to deliver more natural flood management measures to | Comment noted. |

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| complement and support traditionally engineered flood defences where appropriate. Natural flood management (NFM) is the alteration, restoration or use of landscape features to reduce flood risk.<br>NFM is therefore about working with natural processes in whole catchments and has the potential to help us manage and reduce flood risk in a more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable way. It can hopefully lead to sustainable, resilient catchments that benefit people, nature and the economy.<br>We can use a wide range of techniques to reduce flood risk by storing water (by using and maintaining the capacity of, ponds, ditches, embanked reservoirs, channels or land), increasing soil infiltration (through better soil and crop management), slowing flows (by increasing resistance to its flow, for example, by planting floodplain or riverside woods) and reducing water flow connectivity (by interrupting surface flows of water, for example, by water storage or planting buffer strips of grass or trees). Larger scale works that also help reduce flood risk to communities downstream may include re-meandering rivers and reconnecting them to their floodplain.<br>There may be opportunities through your neighbourhood plan where development could seek to deliver and indeed benefit from natural flood management measures.<br>More information is available here. | As the ONP does not allocate sites, the 'climate change (including flood risk)' SEA theme was scoped out of the SEA process. This was given that the policies and proposals within the ONP would not likely lead to significant effects.<br><br>Nevertheless, the ONP has a strong focus on retaining and enhancing green and blue infrastructure networks within the neighbourhood area, which will have indirect benefits for alleviating flood risk issues. |
| Water Management<br>In February 2011, the Government signalled its belief that more locally focussed decision making, and action should sit at the heart of improvements to the water environment. This is widely known as the catchment-based approach and has been adopted to deliver requirements under the Water Framework Directive. It seeks to:<br>• deliver positive and sustained outcomes for the water environment by promoting a better understanding of the environment at a local level; and<br>• to encourage local collaboration and more transparent decision-making when both planning and delivering activities to improve the water environment.<br>Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to deliver multi-functional benefits through linking development with enhancements to the environment.<br>Chichester District Council lies within the South East River Basin Management Plan area. This area is subdivided into catchments. The relevant catchment for your District is the Arun and Western Streams catchment. A Catchment Partnership has been established for each of these to direct and coordinate relevant activities and projects within the catchment through the production of a Catchment Management Plan. The Catchment Partnerships are supported by a broad range of organisations and individuals representing a whole host of interests.<br>The following websites provides information that should be of use in developing your Neighbourhood Plan: click here and here. | Comment noted. Policies within Chichester District Council's Submission Local Plan (which was submitted in May 2024 for Independent Examination) outlines water management measures associated with the new development areas expected to come forward during the plan period.<br><br>The ONP is not allocating sites for development but has outlined several measures to protect and enhance the environment. This is discussed within Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report. |
| Wastewater Treatment<br>Chichester City, Fishbourne, Donnington and Apuldram Neighbourhood Plan areas fall within the drainage catchment of the Apuldram Wastewater Treatment Works. There are concerns regarding the impact of the storm overflow from the treatment works on the water quality in Chichester Harbour. We would recommend that you check with Chichester District Council that any allocation is | Comment noted. The ONP does not include any site allocations. |

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| in line with their Surface Water and Foul Drainage Supplementary Planning Document 2016. | |
| Infrastructure Delivery<br>We would recommend that environmental infrastructure, including habitat enhancements, water storage areas, and green space, is taken into account when looking to fund and deliver local infrastructure, including from any CIL funds that you receive. | Comment noted. It is anticipated that any CIL funds received from speculative approvals within the neighbourhood area during the plan period will be prioritised accordingly to address key local issues, priorities and objectives. |
| **Historic England**<br>*Historic Environment Planning Advisor*<br>Received: 8th March 2023 | |
| We are content that the Scoping Report for the Oving NDP adequately covers the issues that may arise in respect of the potential effects of proposed development sites on heritage assets. We note at paragraph 2.13 of the Scoping Report the historic environment theme has been scoped out of the SEA process. | Comment noted. |
| **Natural England**<br>*Consultations Team*<br>Received: 8th March 2023 | |
| Natural England has no specific comments to make on the Oving Neighbourhood Plan SEA Scoping. | Comment noted. |
| **Chichester District Council**<br>*Principal Planning Policy Officer*<br>Received: 6th March 2023 | |
| Page 2: para 1.3 – line 3: the correct title of the new Local Plan is the Chichester Local Plan 2021-2039: Proposed Submission (Regulation 19). The link needs to be updated to the relevant page and updated in footnote 4 (Regulatory requirements: Chichester District Council) | Comment noted.<br><br>The link to the Submission Local Plan has been provided, and the local policy context updated as appropriate to reflect the latest position (see Chapter 2 within this Environmental Report). |
| Para 1.5, line 2 – for clarity this should refer to the southern section of the Chichester plan area.<br>Further clarity is required here as there may be some confusion in relation to the reference to 15 strategic allocations and some of the text is misleading. The Site Allocations DPD is the daughter document of the adopted Local Plan and identifies sites required to meet that delivery over the plan period of 2014 to 2029. The new emerging Local Plan looks at a new plan period for 2021 to 2039 and a subsequent Site Allocations DPD will follow on from any adoption of this new Local Plan. At this stage the emerging Local Plan, currently at regulation 19 consultation until 17 March 2023, includes a proposed strategic site at Land East of Chichester within Oving parish. If retained, following the Examination of the Local Plan, then the site would be master planned. However, the last sentence refers to other policies that are not being delivered as a result of the strategic sites per se but are policies in their own right in the | An updated local policy context section has been provided within Chapter 2 of this Environmental Report. |

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| emerging plan, for example landscape gaps and wildlife corridors. This text should therefore be amended to more accurately reflect the context of the neighbourhood plan work. | |
| Para 1.6 – it should be made clear that these are strategic allocations that originated in the adopted Local Plan, albeit they are carried forward into the new Local Plan, and, with the exception of Land West of Tangmere, are now largely built out and/or under construction.<br>It is also noted there is no reference made here to potential windfall development within the parish. Again, it might be helpful to refer to this here as the parish is not intending to identify specific allocations for housing but will have the potential for windfall sites to come forward. | Comment noted. The recommended clarity has been provided within an updated policy context section within this Environmental Report (see Chapter 2). |
| Para 1.8 – reference is made in this paragraph to the emerging Local Plan. However, as things stand the draft neighbourhood plan (NP) is being prepared and tested against strategic policies in the adopted and not the emerging plan. The ability of the NP to shape development during this new plan period will therefore depend on the timing of when policies are 'made' in the NP and the evolution and timing of any new adopted Local Plan policies. Where any conflict then arises, the most up to date policy position will prevail. | Since the completion of SEA Scoping, the Parish Council have decided to align the emerging ONP with the Submission Local Plan. The ONP is expected to be 'made' after the emerging Local Plan has been adopted. |
| Page 5: - para 2.3, second bullet point – line 1 should read '…the proposed Pagham to Westhampnett Strategic Wildlife Corridor in the new emerging Local Plan… | Comment noted. |
| Para 2.4 – line 1 delete repeat of word 'that'. | Comment noted. |
| Page 6: scoping out climate change (including flood risk) theme is questioned. It is accepted the draft NP is not allocating sites; however, flood risk is a key consideration for the CDC plan area and it would be worth AECOM examining the most recent SFRA work published in relation to the emerging new Local Plan as the most up to date position on this issue prior to any final decision on scoping this issue out. Climate change & the natural environment: Chichester District Council<br>It is considered that an assessment criterion or two on flooding and adaptation would be beneficial add value to the Plan making process. | As the ONP does not allocate sites, the 'climate change (including flood risk)' SEA theme was scoped out of the SEA process. This was given that the policies and proposals within the ONP would not likely lead to significant effects.<br><br>Nevertheless, the ONP has a strong focus on retaining and enhancing green and blue infrastructure networks within the neighbourhood area, which will have indirect benefits for alleviating flood risk issues. This is considered within the appraisal of the ONP policies presented in Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report. |
| Page 9: 5th bullet point – this makes reference to the growing population of Shopwhyke hamlet, but is this referring more to the strategic site build out at Shopwhyke Lakes which generally relates more to an extension of Chichester? | Comment noted. |
| Page 10: the Biodiversity assessment criteria provide a useful but fairly standard list of assessment questions. There are few designated sites or priority habitats in the area so it would be | Potential impacts to biodiversity associated with the policies and proposals in |

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| beneficial to have more focus on protected species, Section 41 priority species and tree and hedges would be more locally appropriate | the draft ONP are considered and appraised in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report. |
| Page 14: Map A.2 Ecological designations<br>The map incorrectly shows both the preferred approach and the summer 2021 consultation versions of the proposed strategic wildlife corridors. I have attached the correct version which currently forms part of the emerging Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation.<br>In addition, the chosen hatching covers up the lakes which is unfortunate although it is acknowledged these can be seen on the other maps.<br>Although map of the proposed strategic wildlife corridors is included there is no reference made to them in the assessment criteria, just connectivity in general. It is acknowledged that as things stand the draft NP is an advance of the new LP, but would it be more realistic to make locally specific reference in the assessment criteria to this proposal? | As the ONP is not allocating sites for development, the policies and proposals within the plan are not likely to significantly impact the integrity of the strategic wildlife corridors. The draft ONP has a strong focus on protecting and enhancing ecological networks where possible. This is considered within the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' appraisal presented in Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report. |
| Page 21: Map A.7 Community wellbeing<br>Question what certain green space identification is referring to; for example, one area seems to relate to HELAA site HOV0005a which is Drayton Manor Former landfill site and part of a wider area proposed as a strategic allocation (Policy A8 Land East of Chichester) in the new emerging Proposed Submission Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation document. A smaller site south of the railway line appears to relate to HELAA site HOV0010 which is Springfield Park and has planning permission for employment use. | Comment noted. The draft ONP includes the details of the local green spaces. |
| Page 23: Appendix B Policy Context Review<br>Update list to include the new emerging Proposed Submission Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation document, published February 2023. | Comment noted. The planning policy context section (see Chapter 2 of this report) has been updated. |

3.5 The key sustainability issues and SEA Framework are presented below.

# Key sustainability issues

## Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- There are no internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity within the neighbourhood area. However, the neighbourhood area is within proximity to the Singleton and Cocking Tunnels Special Area of Conservation, Pagham Harbour Ramsar Site and Special Protection Area (SPA), and Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar (and SPA).
- Locally important sites within the neighbourhood area include the proposed Pagham to Westhampnett Strategic Wildlife Corridor in the new emerging Local Plan and Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats (primarily isolated areas of ancient woodland, deciduous woodland, and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh).
- A key focus of the Neighbourhood Plan is to protect mature trees, hedgerows, and wooded verges.

3.6 Of key relevance here is that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be brought forward ahead of the emerging Chichester Local Plan Review (and ahead of any strategic mitigation measures as part of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process undertaken for the emerging Local Plan Review)[9]. With further reference to Chichester District Council's engagement with Oving Parish Council (presented in Chapter 1 of the SEA Scoping Report), **the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme has been scoped in to the SEA process**.

### Climate Change (including Flood Risk)

- Chichester District Council has declared a climate change emergency, resolving to support local authorities (and, by extension, neighbourhood groups) to help tackle climate change through plan-making where possible.
- The transport sector continues to be a key challenge in terms of reducing emissions within the neighbourhood area (and in the district as a whole).
- Opportunities to influence per capita emissions by encouraging integrated and connected development has the potential to reduce the need to travel and supports travel by more sustainable modes.
- The parish is situated in a coastal plain that in places is subject to flooding, including areas of land in Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3. The neighbourhood area is also at risk of varying levels of surface water flooding. Surface water run-off from development can exacerbate the risk of flooding by increasing the run-off from land to water courses.
- Opportunities to enhance the resilience of the both the neighbourhood area, and its residents, to the effects of climate change should be sought. This can include adaptation strategies, green infrastructure enhancement, flood defences, and support for increased renewable energy sources.

3.7 The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development. As such the Neighbourhood Plan will not lead to increases in greenhouse gas emissions from a significant increase in the built footprint of the parish. Neighbourhood Plan policies also encourage proposals to incorporate sustainable and low carbon measures through design.

3.8 In terms of emissions from transport, the objectives and policies of the plan seek to encourage sustainable transport use and support opportunities for active travel (i.e., walking and cycling, and strengthening the links between the village and neighbouring communities). This will help limit potential increases in greenhouse gas emissions from transport that may arise as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.9 Whilst it is considered that statutory requirements will help ensure that flood risk is addressed through new development proposals, the Neighbourhood Plan encourages planning applications to incorporate green infrastructure and appropriate drainage within the design of new development areas (amongst other considerations). When combined with the lack of allocations to be proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan, significant impacts on flood risk are not anticipated as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan.

[9] It is recognised that since the completion of SEA scoping, the Parish Council have decided to align the emerging ONP with the emerging Local Plan period.

3.10 Effects in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation are therefore unlikely to be significant with regard to the SEA Regulations and their requirements. **The climate change (including flood risk) theme has been scoped out of the SEA process**.

### Landscape and Villagescape

- Contributing to the evidence base for the emerging Chichester Local Plan, the Landscape Capacity Study (LCS) considers the sensitivity and capacity of areas in terms of their potential to accommodate new development. There are areas of land surrounding Oving village which have a 'medium' to 'high' sensitivity to development and a 'low' capacity for change.
- There are a range of landscape features present within the neighbourhood area which contribute to the character and quality of the landscape (including trees with Tree Preservation Order designations). These features should be protected and enhanced where possible.
- The landscape within the neighbourhood area is characterised by large open arable fields with straight drainage ditch systems, and a low density of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. New development has the potential to lead to incremental change in landscape and villagescape character.
- Many parts of the parish enjoy views of Chichester cathedral and the South Downs National Park. New development has the potential to lead to incremental change in visual amenity. In this respect, the height and bulk of development, either individually or cumulatively, should not damage the character or appearance of the surrounding countryside.
- The relationship between the hamlets and villages and the open countryside is an important part of the character and special qualities of the neighbourhood area. The coalescence of settlements is a key concern within the southern section of the district (including with respect to the key locations within the neighbourhood area: the villages of Oving and Merston, and the hamlets of Drayton, Colworth, Woodhorn and Shopwyke).

3.11 There are no National Parks or National Landscapes present in the neighbourhood area. Crucially, the Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate sites for housing or employment land. Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan have a close focus on protecting and enhancing landscape and villagescape character and quality, and on implementing high quality design (including through the preparation of Design Guidelines and Codes).

3.12 The Neighbourhood Plan also has a strong focus on retaining the separation and identity of Oving village and the surrounding countryside, with a view to preventing the coalescence of settlements through new development areas. Sites which could potentially benefit from a local green space designation have also been identified, alongside protecting and enhancing green infrastructure and important views and vistas within the neighbourhood area.

3.13 As such, any effects are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Regulations and their requirements. **The landscape and villagescape theme has been scoped out of the SEA process**.

## Historic Environment

- With a variety of designated heritage assets within and surrounding the neighbourhood area, including one Grade I listed building, one Grade II* listed building, 24 Grade II listed buildings, and Oving Conservation Area, the Oving Neighbourhood Plan should encourage opportunities to protect and enhance the historic environment.
- The Neighbourhood Plan also identifies 21 non-designated Local Heritage Assets as included in the Local Heritage Asset List.
- The Oving Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to develop the existing evidence base in relation to the historic environment. It also poses an opportunity to further heritage understanding in the neighbourhood area through exploring the heritage assets in the area.
- It will be important to ensure that future development avoids/ minimises impacts upon the historic environment and maximises opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure, to the indirect benefit of heritage settings.
- The design of new strategic-scale developments needs to be in sympathy with the rural and historical character of the parish.

3.14 The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate sites for housing or employment uses. In addition, Neighbourhood Plan policies have a close focus on protecting and enhancing historic villagescape character and the setting of the historic environment, and on implementing high quality design (including through the preparation of Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan).

3.15 As such, any effects are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Regulations and their requirements. **The historic environment theme has been scoped out of the SEA process**.

## Air, Land, Soil, and Water Resources

- There are no Air Quality Management Areas within the neighbourhood area. The latest Annual Status Report (ASR) notes that the road network within the district is vulnerable to air pollution issues associated with congestion. The ASR also notes that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Chichester City was adopted in January 2021 and the Council is working with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and neighbouring district and borough councils to develop feasibility designs for some of the priority LCWIP schemes across the County, including a focus on active travel.
- Designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area are potentially sensitive to air pollution issues. The effects of the Neighbourhood Plan in relation to these concerns will be explored in the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA theme.
- The provisional Agricultural Land Classification data indicates the neighbourhood area is underlain by areas of best and most versatile land.
- Water resources include Shopwyke Lakes, Chichester Flood Relief Canal, and drainage ditches along field margins. Plan making should consider how local decisions affect water quality and water supply, such as water

accessibility issues, and ensure that appropriate drainage infrastructure is in place to accommodate new development areas.

3.16 As the Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for development, Neighbourhood Plan policies are not likely to lead to the loss of significant areas of productive agricultural land in the parish. Significant impacts on water quality, air quality, and material assets are also not likely to be significant given the lack of allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan. **The air, land, soil, and water resources theme has been scoped out of the SEA process.**

### Community Wellbeing (including Transportation)

- The village of Oving is lacking in community facilities and is a relative distance from Chichester City. The existing services, facilities, and amenities within the neighbourhood area (whilst limited) supports community vitality and the quality of life of residents, with the availability of community assets essential for continued growth.
- The neighbourhood area's principal green space is the recreation ground on the east side of Oving village. Opportunities to protect and enhance green infrastructure networks within the neighbourhood area (including the identification of local green spaces) is a key objective within the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The parish's economy is predominantly farming and salad-based horticulture using polytunnels. In some places farm buildings have been converted into business units hosting small to medium enterprises (SME) and a range of services including a veterinary surgery. As the requirements of the working population continue to change, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is likely to be a requirement for adaptable dwellings which can accommodate more flexible working practices.
- Housing affordability and the availability of appropriate dwellings for residents are key concerns for the local community.
- The strategic site build out at Shopwyke Lakes in the next few years will more than double the population of the parish. The result is creating two parishes within a parish, the new and the old, with little physical and communal connectivity between them. However, it is noted that this strategic site generally relates more to an extension of Chichester.
- The neighbourhood area is bound to the north and west by the A27 trunk road, and the A259 to the south. The road network, consisting in many places of narrow winding lanes with narrow if any verges, is quite inadequate to cope with the increasing amount of traffic, cars, vans, and lorries, and is poorly maintained. There is increasing risk to residents whose houses have no frontage. Access from the parish to arterial roads is slow and unsafe.
- Oving village itself has fewer links to the city (via public transport options) in comparison to other settlements along the Eastern Corridor (i.e., Westhampnett and Tangmere). Public transport options are limited to infrequent bus services, and access to the railway stations at Chichester and Barnham is poor.
- The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium and (potentially) longer term. New

development proposals should seek to connect and where possible extend Public Rights of Way networks to maximise opportunities for active travel.

3.17 The Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies which have an explicit focus on improving the quality of life of residents, including improving the public realm, accessibility to services and facilities, and green infrastructure enhancements. Whilst the benefits which arise for residents from a well-designed Neighbourhood Plan have the potential to be wide-ranging, **in recognition of the key issues presented above the community wellbeing (including transportation) theme has been scoped in to the SEA process.**

## SEA Framework

3.18 The SEA themes where effects have the most potential to be significantly impacted by policies and proposals within the ONP relate to 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' and 'Community Wellbeing (including Transportation)'. Whilst some limited environmental effects have the potential to take place as a result of the ONP with respect to the remaining SEA themes considered at SEA scoping, these are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Regulations and their requirements (and given the scope of the plan).

3.19 The proposed SEA objectives, established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise, are brought together to create one framework, the SEA Framework, and are presented in **Table 3.2** below.

3.20 The SEA Framework provides a methodology and consistent approach for the appraisal of the emerging ONP. The proposed SEA Framework will be used to appraise the options and proposals emerging for the draft plan, and findings will be fed back to the neighbourhood group to inform plan development.

### Table 3.2 SEA Framework

| SEA theme | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the proposal help to…) |
|---|---|---|
| Biodiversity and Geodiversity | Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area. | • Avoid or, if not possible, minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, including protected species, Section 41 priority species, and trees and hedges, and provide net gains where possible?<br>• Support the integrity of the designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity located within proximity to the neighbourhood area?<br>• Protect and enhance priority habitats, semi-natural habitats, species, and the ecological networks connecting them?<br>• Achieve biodiversity net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green and blue infrastructure networks?<br>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?<br>• Support and promote access to and interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity? |

| SEA theme | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the proposal help to…) |
|---|---|---|
| Community Wellbeing (including Transportation) | Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility and connectivity, reducing deprivation, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities. | • Support the delivery of high-quality and sustainable design through new residential development areas (including with respect to a mix of housing types and tenures, and affordability)?<br>• Improve the availability and accessibility of key local services and facilities?<br>• Improve and extend green and blue infrastructure networks within the neighbourhood area?<br>• Improve community access and connectivity to green and blue infrastructure networks?<br>• Avoid impacts on the quality and extent of existing areas of open space/recreational assets?<br>• Maintain and enhance the quality of life of existing residents and all sectors of the community?<br>• Encourage a shift to more sustainable and active forms of travel and enable public transport infrastructure enhancements? |

# 4. Consideration of reasonable alternatives through the SEA

## Introduction

4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include…

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.

4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, the following sections describe how the SEA process to date has informed the consideration of different approaches for key elements of the ONP.

## Defining reasonable alternatives

4.3 The SEA Regulations highlight that the Environmental Report 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. For SEA for Neighbourhood Plans, 'reasonable alternatives' are typically considered for alternative approaches to locating development in a neighbourhood area.

4.4 As discussed within **Chapter 2** of this Environmental Report, Oving is located within the 'rest of the plan area' in the settlement hierarchy set out within the Submission Local Plan (see Policy S2). Parishes within the 'rest of the plan area' comprise small villages, hamlets, scattered development and countryside with very few options for development (i.e., few to no available site options). Within the 'rest of the plan area', development will be *"restricted to that which requires a countryside location or meets an essential local rural local need or supports rural diversification in accordance with Policy NE10"*.

4.5 In light of the above, the ONP does not allocate land for development. Therefore, reasonable alternative approaches for the level and distibution of growth have not been explored through the SEA. These elements were considered for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the proposed Submission Local Plan[10].

4.6 However, Oving Parish Council recognises that speculative applications for development may come forward during the plan period which have the potential to deliver benefits that should be secured through the design, layout and uses of each site. In this respect, the ONP's planning policies seeks to shape development more broadly in the neighbourhood area without allocating specific sites.

[10] AECOM (January 2023): 'Sustainability Appraisal for the proposed Submission Local Plan', accessible here

# Options for managing the impacts of any speculative applications for new development

4.7 The SEA has considered the relative sustainability merits associated with the following options with respect to managing the impacts of any speculative applications for new development which may come forward during the plan period. The options have been developed to reflect key policy approaches considered by plan makers to date during the preparation of the draft ONP. Specifically, whether to:

- Establish design criteria for new development areas
- Safeguard the integrity of landscape gaps, and
- Limit building heights in sensitive locations.

4.8 The options are established below and include a commentary of likely significant effects associated with the two themes which have been 'scoped in' to the SEA process.

### Establish design criteria for new development areas

4.9 As discussed above, the ONP does not allocate land for development. Nonetheless, it is recognised that the scale of development to be brought forward via the strategic allocations within the Submission Local Plan (approximately 2,500 homes within proximity to the neighbourhood area) has the potential to significantly impact upon the local community and the natural and built environment.

4.10 Whilst the policy requirements within the Submission Local Plan include a range of criteria relating to the delivering of high-quality and sustainable design within the design of new development areas, the relative sustainability merits of preparing additional locally-specific design guidance has been explored. Specifically, the design guidance would seek to ensure that local community knowledge and aspirations are reflected in shaping any speculative approvals for new development within the neighbourhood area. The guidance would accompany and seek to compliment the policy requirements set out in the Submission Local Plan.

4.11 The following options have been considered through the SEA:

- **Option A:** Encourage developers to consider locally specific design guidance to ensure that community knowledge and aspirations are reflected within new development areas.
- **Option B:** Do not encourage developers to consider locally specific design guidance, relying solely on the requirements in the Submission Local Plan for new development areas.

**Commentary of effects**

4.12 Whilst additional design guidance is likely to perform positively for the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA theme, there is an element of uncertainty as to whether the implementation of the guidance would have significant impacts in relation to the theme. This is given that the guidance might not necessarily go above and beyond the provisions within the Submission Local

Plan (which, in their current form, have a strong focus on delivering high-quality and sustainable design), and given the national requirement to deliver a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain within new development areas.

4.13 However, it is recognised that the preparation of locally-specific design guidance for the ONP (proposed through Option A) will provide an extra level of detail and certainty, helping to ensure local aspirations are taken into consideration through the design of any speculative applications which may come forward during the plan period. This is likely to have significant positive effects for the Community Wellbeing (including Transportation) SEA theme.

### Safeguard the integrity of landscape gaps

4.14 As identified within the ONP, one of the main outcomes of community consultation to date was the importance of retaining the separate identity of settlements across the neighbourhood area. This is reflected through Policy NE3 within the Submission Local Plan, which seeks to "*prevent coalescence of built-up areas… and ensure the integrity of predominantly open and undeveloped land between settlements is not undermined".*

4.15 With a view to ensuring that the distinct identities of the settlements within (and in proximity to) the neighbourhood area are preserved, the relative sustainability merits of identifying 'landscape gaps' within the ONP has been explored. The purpose of the landscape gaps would be to prevent the visual coalescence of settlements within and adjoining the neighbourhood area.

4.16 The following options have been considered through the SEA:

- **Option A:** Rely on existing policy provisions within the Submission Local Plan to protect the distinct identities of settlements within (and adjoining) the neighbourhood area.
- **Option B:** Define 'landscape gaps' to prevent the visual coalescence of settlements within (and adjoining) the neighbourhood area.

**Commentary of effects**

4.17 With respect to Option A, it is useful to recognise that policies and approaches within the Submission Local Plan provide an existing level of protection to settlement character and identity for communities across Chichester District. This includes (but is not limited to):

- A strategy to deliver strategic wildlife corridors to provide connectivity and passageways for wildlife through the landscape, which are likely to indirectly maintain the separation of settlements.
- Policies for open space provision and biodiversity net gains, which will likely positively contribute to local distinctiveness through protecting and enhancing the natural environment through new development areas.

4.18 As such, taking an approach which relies upon local policy provisions to maintain settlement identity and distinctiveness (i.e., as proposed through Option A) is considered positive.

4.19 As the implementation of landscape gaps through Option B is heavily focused on preventing the visual coalescence of settlements rather than securing natural environmental benefits, potential impacts with respect to the Biodiversity

and Geodiversity SEA theme are uncertain. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that the protection of open areas through implementing landscape gaps has the potential to have positive impacts with respect to this theme, including in relation to safeguarding natural features of the landscape (i.e., trees and hedgerows) which contribute to ecological networks and wildlife corridors.

4.20 With respect to Option B, the identification of landscape gaps is likely to protect locations within the neighbourhood area where new development has the greatest potential to erode local distinctiveness and visual separation. This is likely to have positive impacts in relation to the Community Wellbeing (including Transportation) SEA theme by safeguarding settlement identity and character. This is particularly important given the potential cumulative and in-combination effects of the strategic allocations within the Submission Local Plan which have the potential to erode the 'sense of place' of nearby settlements in the absence of sensitive design.

### Limit building heights in sensitive locations

4.21 The neighbourhood area is predominantly free from taller buildings (i.e., those above three storeys). This has helped to maintain local landscape character and the setting and significance of the historic environment, including (but not limited to) in terms of visual amenity, framing nearby listed buildings, and providing views to key locations within the Oving Conservation Area and across the landscape to the north of the A259.

4.22 The following options have been considered through the SEA:

- **Option A:** Take a policy approach which limits building heights within sensitive locations.
- **Option B:** Do not take a policy approach which limits building heights within sensitive locations.

**Commentary of effects**

4.23 No significant effects are anticipated for Biodiversity and Geodiversity SEA theme, as incremental changes in building height alone is not likely to adversely impact the integrity of designated sites. Impacts to Biodiversity and Geodiversity associated with any speculative applications which come forward during the plan period will be influenced by the design and location of new development areas and the extent to which they integrate and enhance ecological networks and wildlife corridors.

4.24 In terms of the Community Wellbeing (including Transportation) SEA theme, limiting building heights through Option A is more likely to support social inclusion as residents will feel more connected to their surrounding environment. Option A is also less likely to negatively impact the surrounding environment for existing residents, maintaining the existing character of the neighbourhood area and ensuring that new development areas respect the existing form and layout of the existing village. Taller buildings also have a greater potential to negatively impact existing residents' surrounding environment, including blocking out light, leading to minor significant negative effects. Comparatively, Option B has the potential to deliver more homes in the most accessible locations in the neighbourhood area (i.e., by encouraging higher density development at locations in proximity to existing services and

facilities, employment opportunities and public transport options within the village). However, this is not considered to be significant in the local context, given that higher density development within the village setting would be contrary to existing development patterns and would significantly contrast from the existing settlement pattern and form.

# Preferred approach for the Neighbourhood Plan

4.25 It is important to acknowledge that the ONP does not allocate sites for new development. However, Oving Parish Council recognises that speculative applications for development may come forward during the plan period which have the potential to deliver benefits that should be secured through the design, layout and uses of each site. On this basis, the ONP's planning policies seeks to shape development more broadly in the neighbourhood area without allocating specific sites. In this context, the preferred policy approaches for the ONP approach are outlined below, and further discussed as part of the plan appraisal presented in **Chapter 5** of this Environmental Report.

### Establish design criteria for new development areas

4.26 The preferred approach for the ONP is to proceed with Option A and prepare locally-specific design guidance to inform any new development areas which come forward during the plan period[11]. This will ensure community preferences are taken into consideration, with development more likely to be supported when local aspirations and knowledge has been applied.

4.27 Further information is presented in Policy OV10 within the draft ONP.

### Safeguard the integrity of landscape gaps

4.28 The preferred approach for the ONP is to proceed with Option B and identify landscape gaps. The location of the gaps has been informed by a Landscape Gap Assessment[12] and seek to prevent the visual coalescence of the following settlements within (and adjoining) the neighbourhood area. Specifically:

- Shopwyke and Oving
- Tangmere and Shopwyke
- Tangmere and Oving
- Bersted and Chichester
- Runcton and Bersted; and
- Bersted and Oving.

4.29 Further information is presented in Policy OV7 within the draft ONP.

### Limit building heights in sensitive locations

4.30 The preferred approach for the ONP is to proceed with Option B and encourage a limitation of building heights within the neighbourhood area. It is anticipated that the limitation of building heights will be considered on a site-by-site basis (i.e., when any speculative development proposals come forward), following an

[11] AECOM (2022): 'Oving Neighbourhood Plan: Design Guidelines and Codes', accessible here
[12] Hankinson Duckett Associates (March 2023): Oving West Sussex Landscape Gap Assessment (draft)

understanding of the contribution that the site makes to the local landscape character and the setting and significance of the historic environment. The SEA recommends that any speculative proposals are accompanied by a proportionate heritage assessment at the planning application stage to determine the potential impacts of the proposal to the historic environment.

4.31 Further information is presented in Policy OV13 within the draft ONP.

# ONP policies

4.32 To support the implementation of the vision statement for the ONP, the Regulation 14 version of the ONP puts forward 14 policies to guide new development within the neighbourhood area.

4.33 Policies were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering and are listed below in **Table 4.1.**

### Table 4.1 Policies in the draft ONP

| Policy reference | Policy name |
|---|---|
| OV1 | Employment |
| OV2 | New Local Services |
| OV3 | Community Facilities |
| OV4 | Green Infrastructure Network |
| OV5 | Local Green Spaces |
| OV6 | Grade 1 & 2 Agricultural Land |
| OV7 | Valued Landscapes |
| OV8 | Dark Skies |
| OV9 | Active and Sustainable Travel Network |
| OV10 | High Quality Design |
| OV11 | Oving Conservation Area |
| OV12 | Local Heritage Assets |
| OV13 | Tall Buildings and the Skyline in Oving |
| OV14 | Affordable Housing and Community-Led Housing Development |

# 5. Appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan

## Introduction

5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the Regulation 14 version of the ONP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version (i.e., the Regulation 14 version) of the ONP under the two SEA theme headings; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage.

## Approach to the appraisal

5.2 For each theme, 'significant' effects of the Regulation 14 version of the ONP on the baseline are predicated and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. For example, the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' will be described within the assessment, as appropriate.

5.3 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the ONP. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects to ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict 'significant effects', but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.

5.4 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. For example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e., the potential for the ONP to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes, and projects. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

## Biodiversity and Geodiversity

5.5 As the draft ONP does not allocate any sites to deliver housing it is less likely to lead to direct impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. However, importantly the plan still considers biodiversity as windfall and/or infill development could come forward (via speculative applications), which has the potential to impact areas of biodiversity value locally. Whilst the neighbourhood area does not contain any internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity, it is in proximity to several. In addition, it contains several small areas of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats, including deciduous woodland, traditional orchard and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. It is important that these habitats and the ecological network that link them are protected from future development.

5.6 The draft ONP designates, and provides protection to, a green infrastructure network through Policy OV4. This includes land with known biodiversity value, including defined wildlife corridors, priority habitats, water vole networks, bat and barn owl habitats, woodlands, significant hedgerows and lines of trees, streams and other water bodies. The policy states that development proposals that lie within or adjoining the network are required, where relevant, to have full regard to creating, maintaining and improving the network, including delivering a net gain to general biodiversity value and wildlife connectivity.

5.7 The draft ONP illustrates those parts of the network that are known or likely to have biodiversity value either as habitat areas; as hedgerows or lines of trees; or as streams and rivers. Policy OV4 outlines that when calculating biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements using DEFRA's latest metric, development proposals located within or adjoining that part of the network should anticipate achieving at least a medium distinctiveness multiplier score.

5.8 Policy OV4 also highlights that biodiversity should be provided on-site within the neighbourhood area where possible. Off-site measures will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that, after following the mitigation hierarchy, all reasonable opportunities to achieve measurable net gains on-site have been exhausted or where greater gains can be delivered off-site through maximising local place making and nature improvement opportunities.

5.9 The draft ONP defines, and provides protection to, six landscape gaps through Policy OV7 for the purpose of preventing the visual coalescence of settlements within and adjoining the neighbourhood area. However, this will also benefit biodiversity by retaining ecological networks in the neighbourhood area.

5.10 More broadly, Policy OV1 (Employment) supports development proposals relating to existing employment sites where it can be demonstrated that any harmful impacts on the environment and wildlife are clearly outweighed by the economic benefits in line with the designated status of the asset.

5.11 Overall, **no significant effects** are considered like under the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme as the draft ONP does not allocate any sites for development. As the policy framework supports the protection of, and improvement to, land with known biodiversity value and the delivery of BNG, the draft ONP is considered likely to lead to **minor positive effects**.

# Community Wellbeing (including Transportation)

5.12 Whilst the draft ONP does not contain any specific site allocations, affordable housing provision is addressed through Policy OV14. In this respect the draft ONP supports the delivery of affordable housing through infill and/or windfall development, which should help retain young people who might otherwise be priced out of the village.

5.13 Proposals for the development of a village shop and/or community hub are supported through Policy OV2 (New Local Services). This is providing that, amongst other factors, the land is within or adjoining the built-up area of village; safe highway, pedestrian and cycle access is provided; and the amenity of neighbouring properties is protected through appropriate screening. In addition, the draft ONP identifies eleven community facilities in the neighbourhood area which will be protected from development proposals that do not improve these facilities. This policy also supports proposals to change

the use of part of a community facility that is surplus to requirements to provide a village shop and/or community hub in line with Policy OV2.

5.14 The local economy is considered through Policy OV1 (Employment) of the draft ONP, which supports development proposals that enhance the operational effectiveness, efficiency and appearance of existing employment sites and facilities, or redevelopment of existing employment sites to provide modern commercial premises and flexible workspace. This is providing that any harmful impacts on residential development and public amenities are avoided or minimised. In this respect, the policy supports community wellbeing by protecting both existing employment sites and public amenities.

5.15 The draft ONP designates, and provides protection to, six areas as local green space through Policy OV5. Similarly, the draft plan designates, and provides protection to, a green infrastructure network through Policy OV4. This policy states that development proposals that lie within or adjoining the network are required, where relevant, to have full regard to creating, maintaining and improving the network and should deliver public open space and play provisions. This will support community wellbeing by ensuring that residents have access to public open space and the green infrastructure network, which will likely lead to improvements to the physical and mental health of residents.

5.16 The draft ONP defines, and provides protection to, six landscape gaps through Policy OV7 for the purpose of preventing the visual coalescence of settlements within and adjoining the neighbourhood area. The draft ONP also identifies, and provides protection to, important views including views of Chichester Cathedral; views to and from South Downs National Park; areas of landscape; and the juxtaposition of the village edge and surrounding countryside. In addition, Policy OV13 seeks to protect Oving's skyline by ensuring that tall building proposals do not undermine the landscape character or heritage of the neighbourhood area. These policies will contribute to community wellbeing by preserving the amenity value and 'sense of place' of the neighbourhood area.

5.17 Also, of relevance to the community's enjoyment of the natural environment, Policy OV8 (Dark Skies) is in place to ensure that all development proposals are designed to minimise the occurrence of light pollution.

5.18 With regard to transportation, the draft ONP identifies an active and sustainable travel network through Policy OV9, which outlines that development proposals on land that lies within or adjacent to the network should retain, and where practicable, enhance the functionality of the network. The policy also highlights that bus shelters need to be designed to comply with their setting. This will also support community wellbeing by encouraging active travel, which will likely contribute to the physical and mental health of residents.

5.19 High quality design is encouraged through Policy OV10 of the draft ONP, which sets out that all development proposals should adhere to the provisions of the Oving Design Code as relevant to their nature, scale and location. The policy also gives due regard to health and wellbeing, highlighting that all major development schemes with a residential component should submit a 'Building for a Healthy Life' design assessment.

5.20 Oving Conservation Area is protected through Policy OV11, which outlines that development proposals should preserve and enhance the special architectural and historic significance of the conservation are and its setting. In addition, all

proposals must have full regard to the significant features identified as positive characteristics of the conservation area and its immediate setting as defined in the Oving Conservation Area Appraisal and the Oving Design Code. Adding to the above, Policy OV12 identifies, and provides protection to, 21 local heritage assets in the neighbourhood area. This will allow residents to continue to enjoy heritage assets in the neighbourhood area, as well as their setting.

5.21 More broadly, grade 1 and 2 agricultural land is protected from development proposals through Policy OV6, expect where proposals are for the purpose of delivering a policy compliant scheme for either a new local service or an active travel network improvement. This will ensure that there are no barriers to the delivery of these amenities which will be beneficial to the local community.

5.22 Overall, the draft ONP is predicted to lead to **significant positive effects** with regard to the community wellbeing (and transportation) SEA theme. This is because the plan supports (in principle) the delivery of affordable housing and a village shop and/or community hub; protects existing employment sites, local green space and landscape and heritage amenity (e.g. key views); and seeks to deliver improvements to the local active and sustainable travel network.

# Conclusions at this current stage

5.23 **Significant positive effects** are predicted with regard to the community wellbeing (and transportation) SEA theme. This is because the plan supports (in principle) the delivery of affordable housing and a village shop and/or community hub; protects existing employment sites, local green space and landscape and heritage amenity (e.g. key views); and seeks to deliver improvements to the local active and sustainable travel network.

5.24 **No significant effects** are considered like under the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme as the draft ONP does not allocate any sites for development. As the policy framework supports the protection of, and improvement to, land with known biodiversity value and the delivery of BNG, overall, the draft ONP is considered likely to lead to **minor positive effects**.

5.25 The ONP has a strong focus on ensuring sustainable and high-quality design through any new development areas which may come forward during the plan period (i.e., via speculative applications). The in-combination effects of the policy framework will lead to long-term positive effects for the neighbourhood area, important in the local context given the potential cumulative impacts of the large-scale development proposals coming forward within the wider plan area (including via the strategic allocations within the Submission Local Plan).

# 6. What are the next steps?

## Plan finalisation

6.1 Following Regulation 14 consultation, responses will be considered in finalising the ONP and SEA for submission. Following submission, the ONP and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the ONP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

6.2 If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the ONP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Chichester District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the ONP, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the ONP will become part of the Development Plan for Chichester, covering the defined neighbourhood area.

## Monitoring

6.3 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

6.4 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the ONP will be undertaken by Chichester District Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant effects are considered likely in the implementation of the ONP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Chichester District Council.