

07 October 2015

c/o Julie Aguilar  
Petworth Neighbourhood Planning Clerk  
Email: [julie.aguilar@btinternet.com](mailto:julie.aguilar@btinternet.com)

Dear Julie and Douglas,

I am writing in response to Petworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's request for a screening opinion to assess whether the Petworth Neighbourhood Development Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

When adopted, Neighbourhood Development Plans plans will be used by the local planning authority to determine planning applications for the Neighbourhood Areas that they cover. As the parish falls within the South Downs National Park, the policies for the NDP, once adopted, will form the planning policy for that part of the National Park in the Parish of Petworth.

The EU's SEA Directive requires those making plans that could impact on the environment to consider whether they are likely to have a significant effect or not. Such a requirement can be screened out if it is felt, based on the information available, that the NDP would not have a likely significant environmental affect. In order to assess the likely significance of the plan on the environment, the scope of the plan has been appraised against Annex II of the directive which identifies criteria for determining significance.

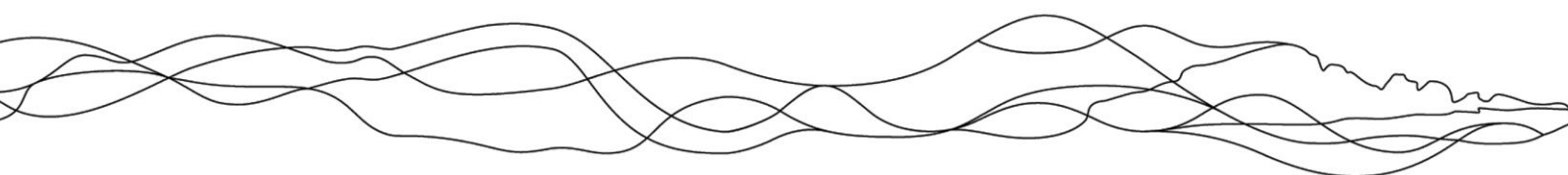
The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has based its screening opinion on the understanding that the Town Council will prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan that:

- will have policies consistent with national policy;
- will have policies consistent with existing and emerging local plan policies;
- will allocate around 150 homes in and around the village; and
- will base policies on the evidence it has gained from documents such as the Petworth Neighbourhood Plan, Baseline Report.

The SDNPA recommends that Petworth will need to undertake an SEA and that this should be undertaken in the form of a Sustainability Appraisal, particularly given the range of socio-economic issues that have been highlighted in responses to questions 7 and 8 of the request form.

In determining the appropriate locations of new development considerations will need to include:

- The effects upon the bat populations of the Ebernoe and Mens SACs including their commuting / foraging routes for which we have recent data (see attached map as an example);



- The effects upon landscape character to which the project team is directed to the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-advice/landscape/> particularly Appendices NI and M that highlight Landscape Management/Development Considerations for the area; and
- The effect of any proposed development on the settings of the listed buildings and the Conservation Area.

### **Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)**

Given the close proximity to Ebernoe SAC, Mens SAC and to Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC the effects of development will need to be considered in relation to conservation features and overall integrity of these sites under the Habitats Directive. In this respect, the attention of the project team is drawn to policy SD13 in the Preferred Options Local Plan. Providing that the conservation features of the European sites form an integral component to the development of the NDP, it is considered that the requirement to assess the proposed development sites under the HRA Directive can be incorporated into the HRA of the SDNP Local Plan in spring next year.

SDNPA will be happy to consider a scope for the SEA / SA as and when it has been compiled.

The SDNPA will notify Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency regarding these decisions.

Yours Sincerely

Sarah

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