



Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Development Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement of Reasons November 2016

This statement has been produced to comply with Regulation 15(1) e (ii) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

A neighbourhood plan is required to meet a number of basic conditions, one of which being it must not breach and be otherwise compatible with EU and Human Rights obligations. This requires neighbourhood plans to fully consider the requirements of the SEA regulations which transpose the EU's SEA Directive into law and which requires those making plans that could impact on the environment to consider whether they are likely to have a significant effect or not.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion was prepared by Wyre Forest District Council for the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan (see Appendix 1). The statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency) were consulted on 15th November 2016.

Consultation responses were received from the three statutory consultees, their conclusions are listed below with additional comments in Appendix 2:

- Historic England concur with the conclusion that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is currently not required
- Natural England notes and concurs with the screening outcome i.e. that no SEA is required with regard to Natural England's interests.
- Environment Agency - we advise that based on the Screening Report Submitted, and in consideration of the matters within our remit, the Neighbourhood Plan is considered unlikely to have significant environmental impacts.
We would only make substantive further comments on the plan if you were seeking to allocate sites in flood zone 3 and 2 (the latter being used as the 1% climate change extent).

The Assessment concluded that the neighbourhood plan was not likely to have significant environmental effects and consequently that a strategic environmental assessment was not required.

This view has been based on:

- 1) The very modest scale of development outlined in the Plan.
- 2) No proposed allocated sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion

1.1 - Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Process

The need for environmental assessment of plans and programmes is set out in the EU Directive 2001/42/EC, this was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or SEA Regulations. The Localism Act 2011 requires Neighbourhood Plans to comply with EU legislation and it is the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority, Wyre Forest District Council, to undertake the screening process to determine whether the Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.

The SEA process aims to ensure that likely significant sustainability and environmental effects arising from the Neighbourhood Plan are identified, assessed, mitigated, communicated and monitored, and there be opportunities for public involvement.

The main determining factor as to whether SEA is required on your Neighbourhood Plan is if your Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

1.2 – Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan

Churchill and Blakedown are two neighbouring villages in North Worcestershire.

The Plan sets out policies and approaches which establish a framework for the future development of the villages of Churchill and Blakedown. The Plan aims to support organic growth in the villages, whilst aiming to ensure that development is relevant to the needs of local residents and helps retain the look and feel of a rural settlement.

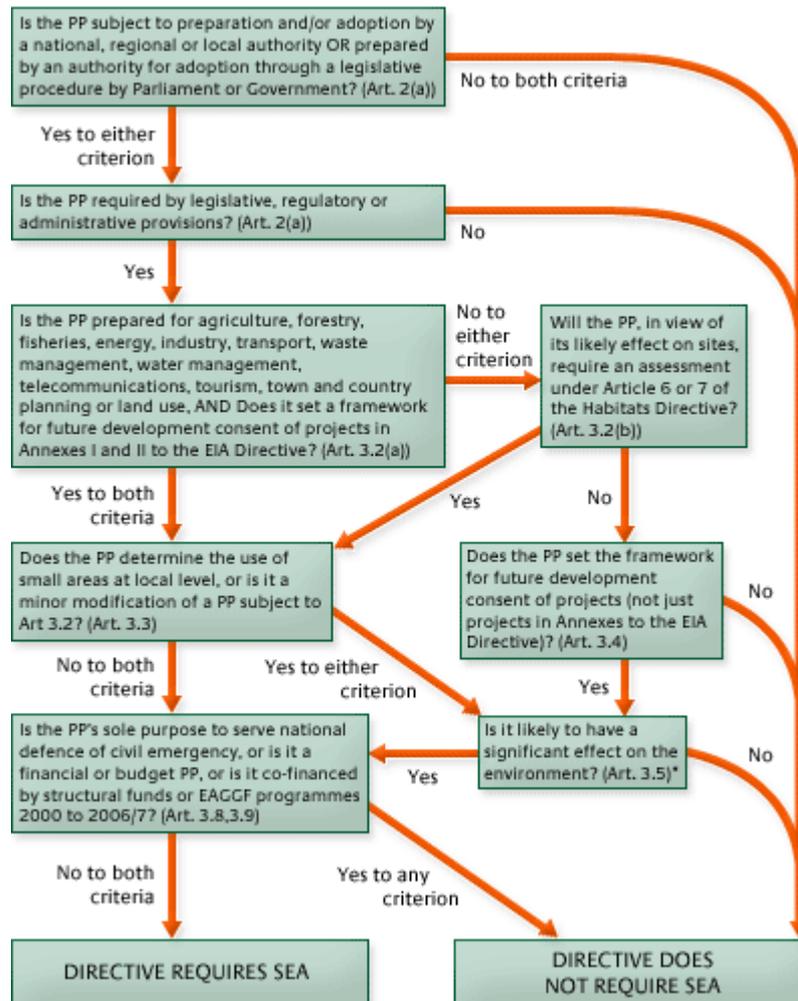
A total of 18 draft policies form the Neighbourhood Plan which focus on issues such as housing, employment, services and transport. This report provides a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion undertaken in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

1.3 Diagram below shows the instances in which plans and programmes require a full SEA to be undertaken.

The Strategic Environment Assessment Directive

Criteria for Application to Plans and Programmes

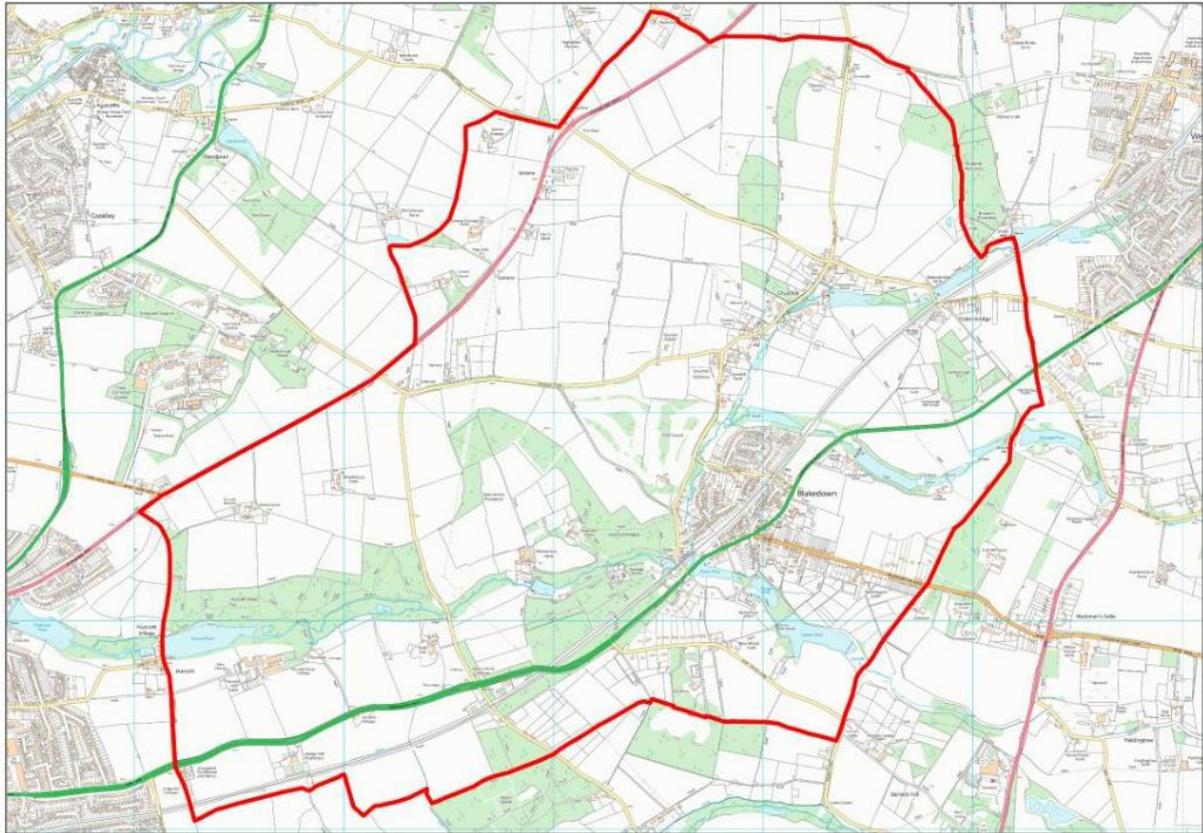
This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

Taken from *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive* (ODPM, 2005)

1.4 Map below shows the boundary of the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Area which is subject to the SEA screening opinion process. The designation area is the Parish of Churchill and Blakedown which includes the two villages and the rural areas surrounding them.



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1.4 Churchill and Blakedown Draft Policies

A total of 18 policies are proposed in the Churchill and Blakedown Draft Neighbourhood Plan; they are summarised below.

Policy	Summary of Effects
<p>Traffic and Transport Policy CB1 – Traffic Management.</p>	<p>New development will be permitted subject to criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable and safe access • Mitigation measures for additional traffic. • Parking/access not detrimental to surrounding areas. • No detrimental impact on pedestrian/cycleway network.

Policy	Summary of Effects
<p>Traffic and Transport Policy CB2 – Transport Improvements.</p>	<p>Funding including developer contributions will be sought towards projects in the Parish to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway improvements and safety provision. • Traffic calming measures. • Improved public transport and improvements to footways. • Commuter parking
<p>Heritage and the Environment Policy CB3 – Protecting Heritage Assets.</p>	<p>All new development within the conservation area and/or within the setting of listed buildings will be expected to preserve and enhance the heritage asset in accordance with Wyre Forest District adopted policy SAL.UP6. Development that has a detrimental impact on any heritage asset or identified open space and views within the conservation area which are not outweighed by the benefit of the scheme as a whole will not be allowed.</p>
<p>Heritage and the Environment Policy CB4 – Local Heritage and Archaeology.</p>	<p>New development must take into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • surface and sub-surface archaeology; • Heritage assets should be protected and enhanced. • There should be regard to heritage asset’s historical and architectural interest, • Setting and the loss of Locally Listed buildings will be resisted.
<p>Heritage and the Environment Policy CB5 – General Design Principles.</p>	<p>Criteria for all new development within the Parish which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring no negative impact on the surrounding environment particularly the SSSI. • Is suitable in terms of design and appearance with surroundings and street scene. • Does not have a detrimental effect on existing transport and road infrastructure. • Does not have a detrimental effect on the character of the village.
<p>Heritage and the Environment Policy CB6 – protecting and enhancing local landscape character and views.</p>	<p>Development proposals will be required to incorporate landscape design principle to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No development encroaching or

Policy	Summary of Effects
	<p>having a detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the green wedge between Blakedown and Hagley,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving and enhancing the character of the village and surrounding area, • Local habitats and wildlife corridors should be preserved and enhanced, • Landscaping will be required to use traditional and locally appropriate species to support and enhance biodiversity, • Native tree and hedge species should be used, • important local landscape features should be, whenever possible conserved and views protected.
<p>Heritage and the Environment Policy CB7 – Protection of local green spaces.</p>	<p>Protection of the openness, visual amenity and pedestrian routes of existing green spaces within the Parish.</p>
<p>Heritage and the Environment Policy CB8 – Water Management and surface run-off.</p>	<p>All new development should aim to ensure that there are no negative impacts on the surrounding environment, particularly the SSSI. Also ways in which new development should be designed for management of water, flow routes, water attenuation and sustainable design.</p>
<p>Heritage and the Environment Policy CB9 – Connectivity.</p>	<p>Proposals will be supported for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enhancement and improvement of existing footpath/cycleway/bridleway networks. • Proposals for improved linkages and accessibility within the Parish and beyond. • New proposals should include enhancements to maximise accessibility and support local biodiversity.
<p>Community Policy CB10 – Protection of local community facilities.</p>	<p>Presumption in favour of the protection of existing community facilities with proposed reuse of existing local community facilities for health, education and community uses.</p>
<p>Community Policy CB11 – New and enhancement of existing, local community facilities.</p>	<p>Proposals for new community facilities or improvements to existing community facilities will be supported subject to:</p>

Policy	Summary of Effects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siting, • Accessibility, • Traffic impact, • Parking • No adverse effects on residential amenity.
Community Policy CB12 – Supporting Development of Communications Infrastructure.	Support for high speed broadband infrastructure.
Community Policy CB13 – Developer Contribution and Community Infrastructure Levy.	Contributions will be required for improved community facilities and infrastructure in the parish.
Community Policy CB14 – Village Centre.	Criteria for change of use from retail to other uses within the village centre.
Business and the Economy Policy CB15 – Supporting existing local employment.	Existing sources of local employment will be protected, criteria for redevelopment or change of use of existing employment premises.
Business and the Economy Policy CB16 – New Local Employment Opportunities.	New local employment opportunities will be encouraged subject to criteria's to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No detrimental impact on residential or community amenity. • No loss of open space or green infrastructure. • No negative impact on surrounding environment particularly SSSI. • Impact on traffic and proximity to highways. New employment in existing countryside settlements and farmsteads will be submitted subject to criteria.
Housing Policy CB17 – Scale and Type of New Residential Development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for small scale affordable/market residential development within the settlement boundary. • Larger redevelopment opportunities will be subject to relevant policies. • Proposals for rural exception sites outside the settlement boundary to be permitted in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework, Wyre Forest District Council policies and agreement with the Parish Council.

Policy	Summary of Effects
Housing Policy CB18 – Ensuring an appropriate range of tenures, types and sizes of houses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for smaller houses for affordable rented/shared ownership and private market bungalows as these are needed within the Parish. • Mix of type, tenure and size on sites. • Integration of affordable and market housing on sites where possible.

SEA Screening

2.1 European Directive 2001/42/EC requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that would have significant environmental effect.

Table below provides the screening determination of the need to carry out a full Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan. The statutory consultees consisting of Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency will be consulted to ask for their comments.

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004: Schedule 1 – Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likely to have significant environmental effects	Summary of significant events
The characteristics of the Plan having regard to:		
1a) the degree to which the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	NO	Policies in the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan are generally in-line with adopted policies in Wyre Forest Core Strategy (2010) and Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013).

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likely to have significant environmental effects	Summary of significant events
1b) the degree to which the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	NO	Policies in the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan are generally in-line with adopted policies in Wyre Forest Core Strategy (2010) and Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013). The neighbourhood plan is produced by the local community to influence development at the local parish level. It does not strongly influence strategic plans higher up in a hierarchy, although the ongoing development of the Local Plan will need to give consideration to the Plan's proposals.
1c) the relevance of the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	NO	The policies in the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan are not considered likely to have a significant environmental impact on the integration of environmental considerations. Any development proposed will be in accordance with environmental protection policies of the adopted Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
1d) environmental problems relevant to the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan;	NO	It is considered that the policies in Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan will not have a negative effect on the Churchill Conservation Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest Local Wildlife Sites, and

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likely to have significant environmental effects	Summary of significant events
		BAP priority habitats areas. Mitigation measures are provided to limit any significant negative effects on the special natural and cultural heritage characteristics defined by the Conservation Area, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Sites and BAP priority habitats.
1e) the relevance of the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection;	NO	The Neighbourhood Plan is not relevant as a plan for implementing EC legislation.
The characteristics of the effects and the area likely to be affected, having regard in particular to:		
2a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan;	NO	The Plan does not allocate any land for development. It is considered that the policies in Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan will not have a negative effect on the Churchill Conservation Area, Local Wildlife Sites, and BAP priority habitats areas. Mitigation measures are provided by the Policies in the Wyre Forest District Core Strategy and Wyre Forest District Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likely to have significant environmental effects	Summary of significant events
2b) the cumulative nature of the effect of Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan;	NO	The Policies will have a cumulative effect to strengthen the mitigation measures provided.
2c) the transboundary nature of the effects of the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan;	NO	The environmental policies in the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan are not considered to have any significant transboundary effects with other EU countries
2d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents) due to Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan;	NO	It is considered that the policies in Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan will not have significant risks to human health or the environment.
2e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	NO	It is considered that the policies in Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan will not have any significant environmental impact on the population within the parishes of Churchill and Blakedown or beyond the neighbourhood area.
2f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to— (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use;	NO	Policies CB3, CB4, CB6, CB7 in the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan aim to preserve and enhance assets and therefore are likely to have a positive effect. This provides mitigation measures to limit any significant negative effects on the special natural and cultural heritage characteristics defined by the Conservation Area SSSI, Local Wildlife Sites and BAP priority habitats.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likely to have significant environmental effects	Summary of significant events
2g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	NO	It is considered that the policies in Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan will not have a negative effect on areas of landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status. This provides mitigation measures to limit any significant negative effects on the special natural and cultural heritage characteristics defined by the Conservation Area, SSSI, LWS and BAP priority habitats.

2.2 SEA Screening Opinion

The policies of the Churchill and Blakedown submission Neighbourhood Plan support policies of Wyre Forest District Core Strategy (2010) and Wyre Forest District Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan.

The assessment shown in the table above identifies that Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have any significant negative environmental effects. The scale of the development proposed is very small and Policies are in place to protect the sensitive receptor of the SSSI from negative effects. Therefore, a SEA is not required.

Appendix 2 Consultation responses.

Historic England

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SEA CONSULTATION.

Thank you for the above consultation.

For the purposes of consultations on SEA, Historic England confines its advice to the question, “Is the Plan or proposal likely to have a significant effect on the environment?” in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage. Our comments are based on the information supplied by yourselves in your consultation to us.

On the basis of the information supplied, including that set out in the draft plan, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of ‘SEA’ Directive], Historic England concur with the conclusion that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is currently not required.

The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for a SEA is made. If a decision is made to undertake a SEA, please note that Historic England has published guidance on Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Historic Environment that is relevant to both local and neighbourhood planning and available at:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/strategic-environment-assessment-sustainability-appraisal-historic-environment/>

I hope this advice is helpful.

Environment Agency

Dear Madam

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening for Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for referring the above consultation on the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan.

I note we commented on the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report and the publication version of the Plan on 8 March and 23 May 2016, respectively.

The European Union directive 200142/EC requires a SEA to be undertaken for certain types of plans and programmes that would have 'significant' environmental effect(s). Furthermore paragraph: 046 in the Flood Risk and Coastal Change section of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (Reference ID: 11-046-20150209) states "*a strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:*

- *a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development*
- *the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan*
- *the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan*".

To assist your Council's determination of the SEA Screening opinion, we advise that based on the Screening Report Submitted, and in consideration of the matters within our remit, the Neighbourhood Plan is considered unlikely to have significant environmental impacts.

We would only make substantive further comments on the plan if you were seeking to allocate sites in flood zone 3 and 2 (the latter being used as the 1% climate change extent).

Natural England

Planning consultation: Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Development Plan ; Strategic

Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion (revised).

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 16/11/2016.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Strategic Environmental Assessment – Screening.

We welcome the production of this SEA Screening report. Natural England notes and concurs with the screening outcome i.e. that no SEA is required with regard to Natural England's interests.

Further guidance on deciding whether the proposals are likely to have significant environmental effects and the requirements for consulting Natural England on SEA are set out in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#).

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.