

Non-Technical Summary (NTS)

This is the NTS of the Environmental Report

1. This is the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Environmental Report (ER) documenting the process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Winterbournes Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). The NTS describes the SEA process, how the SEA of the WNP was carried out, summarises the findings of the SEA, how the SEA has influenced plan-making, outlines the consultation and next steps.

The Wiltshire Core Strategy & Local Plan Review

2. The overarching development plan document for the Wiltshire area is the Core Strategy adopted in 2015. The Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (WHSAP) was submitted for independent examination in July 2018. The Plan is at the Proposed Changes stage and it does not include any proposed housing sites within the Winterbournes Parish/Neighbourhood Plan area that is classified as a Large Village in the Core Strategy as part of Core Policy CP1. The Wiltshire Local Plan Review will recast the Core Strategy as the Wiltshire Local Plan and identify land for development for the period to 2026.

The Winterbournes Neighbourhood Plan (WNP)

3. The Winterbournes Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) area covers the whole of the parish administrative area and was designated by Wiltshire Council on 9 December 2015. Wiltshire Council is the responsible authority for the WNP in accordance with the SEA Regulations. The Winterbournes Parish Council is the qualifying body, as defined by the Localism Act (2011), and responsible for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.
4. The Draft WNP comprises a Vision and then five further chapters, as follows:
 - Landscape & Countryside with Objectives and Policy 1
 - Housing with Objectives and Policies 2-7
 - Community Facilities & Services with Objectives
 - Recreation & Open Spaces with Policy 8
 - Infrastructure & Transport with Objectives and Policy 9

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

5. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a European Union (EU) requirement that seeks to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to promoting sustainable development by integrating environmental considerations into the process of preparing certain plans and programmes. For testing Local Plans, SEA should be

addressed as an integral part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process. SA and SEA are tools to inform plan-making and are used to assess the likely effects of a plan when judged against reasonable alternatives.

6. It is only in limited circumstances that a SEA may be required when producing a NP – if it is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been assessed during the preparation of the Local Plan. The Core Strategy and the Housing Site Allocations Plan (WHSAP) have been tested through SA/SEA; the Local Plan Review is at an early stage and not been tested through SA/SEA. Therefore, the draft WNP has been tested by SEA – but with a pragmatic approach building upon the SA/SEA already undertaken for the new Local Plan.

Environmental Characteristics of the WNP Area

7. **Biodiversity:** The River Bourne runs through the Winterbournes NP area and is part of the European designated River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This is also designated as a SSSI and there are important habitats for woodlands, fens and grazing marsh. Undesignated biodiversity features in the Plan area include hedgerows, woodland and the wide footpath network throughout the Parish.
8. **Communities, Accessibility, Human Health:** The area is considered to have a strong sense of community that is relatively well served by community services and facilities. Accessibility is supported through a network of public rights of way; also bus routes to nearby towns and the city of Salisbury. Traffic congestion and parking is an issue, particularly by the primary school. Affordability of housing is an issue for the communities – with concomitant effects for human health.
9. **Water, Air, Climatic Factors:** The area is characterised by the River Bourne with associated wetlands and flooding.
10. **Cultural Heritage & Landscape:** The Winterbournes includes a designated Conservation Area; and a rich cultural and heritage environment. The local landscape character is influenced by the river corridor and associated chalk downland areas.

Key Environmental Issues, Problems and Opportunities

11. These may be summarised as follows:
 - Habitat loss and modification
 - Adaptation and mitigation for climate change effects
 - Preservation and enhancement of the rich cultural and heritage environment
 - Preserving the quality of the landscape whilst meeting development needs
 - Opportunities for enhancement of green infrastructure network

- In line with national trends, there will be a higher proportion of older age groups by 2036
- Lack of good housing stock and affordability especially in the rural areas
- In line with national trends, need to encourage a healthier lifestyle
- Rural isolation
- Scope to increase sustainable transport

How has the Draft WNP been assessed?

12. The SEA Framework of Objectives for testing the WNP is the same as the SA/SEA Framework that will be used to test the emerging elements of the new Local Plan; as follows:

SA Objective (WLPR); SEA Objective (WNP) <i>(SEA Topic in italics)</i>
1. Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features and avoid irreversible losses <i>(biodiversity, flora, fauna)</i>
2. Ensure efficient and effective use of land and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings <i>(soil, material assets)</i>
3. Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner <i>(water)</i>
4. Improve air quality and minimise all sources of environmental pollution <i>(air, climatic factors)</i>
5a. Minimise our impacts on climate change – through reducing greenhouse gas emissions <i>(air, climatic factors, human health)</i> 5b. and reduce our vulnerability to future climate change effects <i>(air, climatic factors, human health)</i>
6. Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment. <i>(cultural heritage)</i>
7. Conserve and enhance the character and quality of rural and urban landscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place <i>(landscape)</i>
8. Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures. <i>(population & human health)</i>
9. Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive and communities with better services and facilities <i>(population & human health, material assets)</i>
10. Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices <i>(health, material assets, climatic factors)</i>
11. Encourage a vibrant and diversified economy and provide for long-term sustainable economic growth <i>(population & human health)</i>
12. Ensure adequate provision of high quality employment land and diverse employment opportunities to meet the needs of local businesses and a changing workforce <i>(population & human health)</i>

13. The WNP was assessed against SEA Objectives grouped in themes, using baseline information and professional judgment, and the likely significant effects recorded. The SEA considered the nature of the likely environmental effects (including positive/negative, duration (short, medium or long term), permanent/ temporary, secondary, cumulative and synergistic) and according to categories of significance – major/minor, positive/negative, neutral, and uncertain. The SEA made suggestions for mitigating significant negative effects, where possible, and possibilities for enhancement, where relevant.

What reasonable alternatives have been considered & addressed?

14. In consideration of the purpose, objectives and sphere of influence of the WNP and its place in the Local Plan and SA/SEA hierarchies, there were no other reasonable alternatives possible that required testing through the SEA process. In the absence of the Local Plan and the WNP, there would be no development guidance or management to resolve help environmental issues/problems or promote environmental opportunities.

What are the likely significant effects of the Draft WNP?

15. Overall, the SEA found positive effects for SEA objectives for biodiversity, communities, housing and human health, and sustainable transport through enhancing the network. Residual effects on other objectives were found to be neutral; any new development will result in the loss of the soil resource with negative effects.

How could negative effects be mitigated? Were there any difficulties encountered?

16. Potential negative effects will be mitigated by Policies in the WNP and development management Policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. There were no significant technical difficulties encountered during the preparation of this SEA and any data gaps or uncertainties about the effectiveness of mitigation measures were recorded.

How has the SEA influenced the Draft WNP?

17. The SEA made one suggestion – that the WNP could make more explicit requirements for new development to contribute to and link into the green infrastructure network – and this was progressed, confirming the positive effects indicated.

Monitoring Proposals

18. The WNP will require monitoring. The other Wiltshire Local Plan Documents and the SA/SEA will be monitored as part of the Council's comprehensive Monitoring Report, as required by Government. No additional proposed

monitoring that might be required as part of the SEA process was indicated from the findings of the SEA.

Consultation & Next Steps

19. The Draft WNP will be placed on public consultation in the spring of 2019. This SEA Report was also placed on the Winterbournes NP website for 5 weeks statutory consultation in line with the SEA Regulations. Comments on the draft WNP and the SEA will be taken into account in the preparation of the final WNP for submission to Wiltshire Council who will check the WNP for legal soundness and then appoint an independent examiner. Following examination, the referendum vote, and upon adoption of the WNP, there will be an Environmental Adoption Statement published in line with the SEA Regulations.

Any comments on this SEA Report should be sent to:

<http://www.winterbourneparishcouncil.com/planning/winterbournes-neighbourhood-plan.php>