



Screening Report for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Puriton Neighbourhood Plan

June 2023

Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	<p>Screening Report for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Puriton, Downend and Dunball Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>This Screening Report is based on the content of the draft 'Puriton, Downend and Dunball Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2032 Submission version' dated February 2023.</p>

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
4 May 2023	A Reading	V1	First Draft
29 June 2023	A Reading	V2	Revision and Finalisation following consultation with environmental bodies.

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This Screening Report considers the potential need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be undertaken during the preparation of the Puriton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The relevant legislation is outlined in Section 2 and interpretation is explored in more specific detail in Section 4. Section 3 outlines the purpose and content of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 1.3 It is possible that Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (which incorporated SEA) of the previously adopted Local Plan has been a sufficient examination of environmental effects, but this judgement can only be made through consideration of specific tests set out in the regulations. The findings are set out in Section 4: Table 1, with the conclusion set out below.

SEA Screening Opinion

- 1.4 The Council considers that the Puriton NDP is not a “plan or programme” of a type described at Regulation 5(2), 5(3) or 5(4) of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. It therefore does not require SEA.

[The reasons are as set out in Table 1 and Appendix A (the Regulation 9(1) Determination)]

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Puriton Neighbourhood Plan group is currently producing the Puriton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), which will supplement the recently adopted Sedgemoor Local Plan (2011 – 2032) and form part of the local development plan when finalised. As part of the production of a NDP the District Council is required to advise and assist the “qualifying body”, including in ensuring that the NDP does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, retained European Union obligations.
- 2.2 This screening report is designed to determine whether or not the contents of the Puriton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC (“SEA Directive”) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (“SEA Regulations”).
- 2.3 Neighbourhood Plans are required, under the European Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora (the “Habitats Directive”) and associated Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (“Habitat Regulations”), to be subject to Appropriate Assessment where they are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. Consultation with Natural England as part of regulation 14 consultation confirms that there are no nationally or internationally designated sites within the plan area. The plan area also falls outside the zone where nutrients generated as a result of new development can have an adverse impact on the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site. Furthermore, the only site identified for development in the Neighbourhood Plan also benefits from an outline permission (42/20/00014) which was considered would not have significant adverse impacts on designated sites. It is therefore considered that the Neighbourhood Plan does not need to undergo further HRA screening.
- 2.4 The SEA Regulations require an environmental assessment to be carried out during the preparation of all “plans and programmes” that are deemed to have significant environmental effects. The parameters for determining if a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects are set out in the Regulations. In this report, Section 3 outlines the nature of the Neighbourhood Plan and Section 4 considers the need for SEA.
- 2.5 An NDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan [i.e. the adopted Sedgemoor Local Plan] but can make provision for additional development. It is important to recognise that the Local Plan was subject of Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) and HRA, but in some instances subsequent planning applications could still need project level Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). If the NDP does not:
 - propose development of a scale not anticipated in the Local Plan; nor
 - propose development which could affect a sensitive environmentthere is potential for the higher-level SA and HRA to have been sufficient.

3 Outline of the purpose and content of plan

- 3.1 The particular purpose of the Puriton NDP is to shape development in the parish of Puriton, under the powers introduced through the Localism Act 2011.
- 3.2 The Parish of Puriton is located to the north east of Bridgwater, on the western end of the Polden Hills. The Parish covers the village of Puriton, hamlet of Downend and industrial area and wharf at Dunball. The adopted Sedgemoor Local Plan identifies Puriton village as a Tier 2 settlement, as such the focus will be on:
- Delivering housing and employment growth appropriate to the settlement's scale and character;
 - Retention of existing and provision of new key local services/facilities and retention of existing employment opportunities;
 - Delivery of dwellings on existing committed sites with planning permission (approximately 170 dwellings across all 6 tier 2 settlements);
 - Maximising development opportunities within the existing settlement through appropriate infill and redevelopment opportunities;
 - New strategic allocation(s) in sustainable locations outside but well related to settlement boundaries (minimum of 570 dwellings across all 6 tier 2 settlements), to be identified through a subsequent site allocation Development Plan Document or Neighbourhood Plans; and
 - Releasing small scale self-build and custom build schemes well related to settlement boundaries that meet demand.
- 3.3 Collectively, and in accordance with the Local Plan, the six settlements in Tier 2 of the settlement hierarchy are expected to accommodate 816 new homes between 2011 and 2032. The Puriton NDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Sedgemoor Local Plan 2011 – 2032. Policy S2 and T2a identify a minimum of 100 dwellings to come forward outside but well related to the settlement boundary over the plan period.
- 3.4 In terms of new development Puriton NDP allocates land south of Woolavington Road for around 120 dwellings, consistent with levels of growth identified in Local Plan policy Tier 2a. This site already benefits from outline planning permission, previously granted under reference 42/20/00014.
- 3.5 The draft submission NDP proposes 21 localised policies, grouped under the following themes:

Housing

- H1: Location of New Housing Development
- H2: Housing Mix
- H3: Affordable Housing
- H4: Meeting Local Affordable Housing Needs (Local Lettings)
- H5: Land South of Woolavington Road

Highways, Transport and Accessibility

- HTA1: Improving Transport, Accessibility and Connectivity
- HTA2: Public Access Around the Parish

Local Facilities and Amenities

- LFA1: Protecting Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets
- LFA2: Maintaining and Enhancing Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets
- LFA3: Safeguarding Land Adjacent to Puriton Primary School

Employment

- E1: Redevelopment of the Former Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) / Gravity Site (Outwith the Local Development Order)
- E2: Maximising the Benefits from the Development of the Former Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) / Gravity Site (Outwith the Local Development Order)
- E3: Supporting Low Carbon Principles at the Former Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) / Gravity Site (Outwith the Local Development Order)
- E4: Small Scale Employment Opportunities to Support the Local Economy
- E5: Protecting and Enhancing Existing Employment Areas
- E6: Live-Work Units

Built and Natural Environment

- BNE1: High-Quality and Sustainable Design
- BNE2: Flood Risk
- BNE3: Locally Valued Landscapes (and Views)
- BNE4: Locally Valued Areas of Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Habitat
- BNE5: Local Green Space

- 3.6 Any policies / proposals relating to these matters will be of localised effect. The policies are designed to realise the overall vision of the plan by focussing on achieving the following objectives:

Housing

- Meet the housing needs required in the Sedgemoor Local Plan through allocations and policies which deliver well located sites with a range of house sizes.
- Respond positively to locally identified need and demand, with the priority to deliver smaller, less expensive properties for sale, affordable housing to rent, and housing for older residents.
- Ensure new development provides high quality outdoor living space and dwellings are “future proofed”, to exceed current sustainable development and accessibility standards where possible and feasible.

Highways, Transport and Accessibility

- To manage and control the impact of traffic through the location of future developments as well as by the appropriate use of speed restrictions, traffic

calming, footpaths, cyclepaths, encouraging public and community transport and additional car parking with improved lighting and security.

Local Facilities and Amenities

- To maintain, protect, enhance and expand the range of community services, amenities, civic open spaces and facilities in Puriton Parish to meet the needs of all sections of the community.

Employment

- To ensure that the redevelopment of the former ROF site does not give rise to any adverse impact upon the amenity of nearby residents or to the character, appearance and setting of the village.
- To capitalise upon the economic and sustainable development benefits that will arise from the regeneration of the former ROF site for the benefit of the local community.
- To help enable the provision of enhanced and additional employment space to support local small and start-up businesses and help young people to access local employment opportunities.

Built and Natural Environment

- To maintain the high quality of the natural and built environments of Puriton Parish, and to protect its well-preserved heritage.

4 SEA Considerations

Consideration of the possible need for Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 4.1 National Planning Practice Guidance [Paragraph: 046, Reference ID: 11-046-20150209] states that: *“Whether a neighbourhood plan proposal requires a strategic environmental assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed. 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.”*
- 4.2 The SEA Directive requires SEA to be carried out for specified types of plan or programme (as specified in Regulation 5(2), 5(3) and 5(4)):
- a plan which is prepared for ... town and country planning or land use, and sets the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC ... [i.e. the EIA Directive], or
 - a plan which, in view of the likely effect on sites, has been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive [i.e. effects on Natura 2000 sites]
 - a plan which sets the framework for future development consent of projects; and is the subject of a determination under regulation 9(1) or a direction under regulation 10(3) that it is likely to have significant environmental effects
- 4.3 The first of the above parameters (from Regulation 5(2)) would not normally implicate a NDP because unless the NDP is allocating land for EIA development, it is the NPPF and Sedgemoor Local Plan which “sets the framework for future development consents” of EIA development. There are also “local level” and “minor modification” exemptions, as explained below.
- 4.4 The third parameter (from Regulation 5(4)), requires consideration of “does the plan set the framework for future development consent of projects?” - in this case (unlike the first parameter) this is not limited to EIA development.
- 4.5 For earlier NDP screening reports this Council was of the opinion that the supplementary nature of a NDP is such that it does not “set the framework”. However, amendments (SI 2015/20) to the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 suggest that all NDP’s should be regarded as having the potential to “set the framework”. The amendment set a requirement that when they are submitted for examination all Neighbourhood Development Plans must be accompanied by either:

- i. an environmental report prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004(1); or
- ii. where it has been determined under regulation 9(1) of those Regulations that the plan proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination.

4.6 Therefore, it is necessary for each Neighbourhood Development Plan to be subject to further consideration of whether it is “likely to have significant environmental effects” - the “determination under regulation 9(1)” – regardless of whether the Plan is allocating development sites or not. This further consideration requires assessment of the Plan against the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to the Regulations. These same criteria are also utilised in assessing “local level” and “minor modification” exemptions that may apply in respect of plans initially caught under Regulation 5(2) or Regulation 5(3).

4.7 The SEA Regulations require SEA for plans which:

- a. “determine the use of small areas at a local level” or which are
- b. “minor modifications” to plans,

only when these are determined to be likely to cause significant environmental effects (Reg 5(6)). Therefore, even if a NDP were considered to “set the framework”, these exceptions to SEA may well apply, but Reg 9 sets out the determination procedure - this would require the Council to:

- a. take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to the Regulations; and
- b. consult the consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England).

4.8 The Council’s screening decision on whether SEA is required needs to consider all these various possibilities. This is achieved through a step-by-step review using Table 1 (below) - this looks at the “Regulation 5 questions”. Part A3 is informed by the results of the assessment against the Regulation 9 / Schedule 1 criteria. The completed Regulation 9/Schedule 1 criteria table forms the “Statement of Reasons” and is provided at Appendix A. Consideration of the Regulation 9/Schedule 1 criteria has been further informed by reference to the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and other relevant evidence reports such as those submitted in support of recent planning applications (where the information has been accepted as accurate by the relevant consultation body).

4.9 A formal conclusion in the form of a “Screening Opinion” is set out after Table 1.

Table 1 - Establishing if the Puriton NDP is a “plan or programme” of a type which requires SEA under the provisions of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Part A – The “Regulation 5” questions	
A1	<p>Is the plan of a description set out in Regulation 5(2)?, i.e.:</p> <p>(a) prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, and</p> <p>(b) sets the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC(a).</p> <p>- and if “yes”, does the Regulation 5(6) exemption potentially apply? [i.e. for (a) a plan which determines the use of a small area at local level; or (b) for a minor modification to a plan].</p> <p><u>Response</u></p> <p>NO</p> <p>This NDP is prepared in relation to town and country planning, but does not “set the framework for future development consent for EIA development” because:</p> <p>(i) it doesn’t specifically relate to EIA development. The development site allocated in the plan already has planning permission and was not required to be subject to EIA; and</p> <p>(ii) the policy framework is set at a higher level (Local Plan/NPPF).</p>
A2	<p>Is the plan of a description set out in Regulation 5(3)?, i.e.:</p> <p>A plan which, in view of the likely effect on sites, has been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>- and if “yes”, does the Regulation 5(6) exemption potentially apply? [i.e. for (a) a plan that determines the use of a small area at local level; or (b) for a minor modification to a plan].</p> <p><u>Response</u></p> <p>No</p>

	<p>There are no nationally or internationally designated sites within the plan area or within its vicinity. The plan area falls outside the zone where nutrients generated as a result of new development can have the potential to have an adverse impact on the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site.</p>
A3	<p>Is the plan of a description set out in Regulation 5(4)? i.e.:</p> <p>(a) sets the framework for future development consent of projects; <u>and</u></p> <p>(b) is the subject of a determination under regulation 9(1) or a direction under regulation 10(3) that it is likely to have significant environmental effects</p> <p><u>Response</u></p> <p>NO</p> <p>In respect of element (a) of this test, the policy framework is primarily set at a higher level (Local Plan / NPPF) and the NDP only adds detail to a small area at a local level; and a determination under Regulation 9(1) concludes that the plan is <u>not</u> likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore element (b) of the test is negative.</p> <p>The Determination under Regulation 9(1) (The “Statement of Reasons”) is set out at Appendix A.</p>

SEA Screening Opinion

- 4.11 The Council considers that the Puriton NDP is not a “plan or programme” of a type described at Regulation 5(2), 5(3) or 5(4) of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and therefore does not require SEA. The reasons are as set out in Table 1 and Appendix A.
- 4.12 The Determination under Regulation 9(1) incorporating the formal “Statement of Reasons” under Regulation 9(3) has been prepared as a separate document – reproduced here at Appendix A. In accordance with Regulation 11(1) and (2) copies of the Determination and Statement of Reasons will be sent to each consultation body and made available at the Council’s principal office and on the Council’s website.

Appendix A Reg 9(1) Determination

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Somerset Council

SEA Screening Opinion / Determination under Regulation 9(1) as to whether the Puriton Neighbourhood Development Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.

Puriton Neighbourhood Planning Group is currently producing the Puriton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) which will supplement (and partially supersede) the adopted Sedgemoor Local Plan and form part of the local development plan when finalised. As part of the production of a NDP the Council is required to advise and assist the “qualifying body”, including in ensuring that the NDP does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union obligations.

This includes deciding whether the NDP requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC (“SEA Directive”) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (“SEA Regulations”).

Insofar as the Puriton NDP can be regarded as a “plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consent of projects” it is potentially caught by SEA Regulations 5(4) [which could require an environmental assessment to be carried out].

Therefore, the Council needs to determine (under the provisions of Regulation 9) whether or not the Puriton NDP is “likely to have significant environmental effects”.

Regulation 9(2) requires that before making such a determination, the Council shall:

- a. take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to these Regulations; and
- b. consult the consultation bodies [Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England].

Regulation 9(3) requires that if the Council’s conclusion is that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), it shall prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination.

Determination under SEA Regulation 9(1)

Having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, and consultation with Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England the District Council has made a determination under Regulation 9 that the Puriton Neighbourhood Development Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment).

Statement of Reasons

The District Council has had regard to:

1. the characteristics of the plan, and
2. the characteristics of the potential effects and of the area potentially affected

- including all of the particular matters under each of these headings as set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.

A response to each of the individual criteria is set out below in tabular form. This was shared in draft form with the consultation bodies and has been agreed by them [see Appendix B].

This review of the individual criteria indicates that potential effects are limited / localised / negligible / totally absent and therefore the conclusion is that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to —

a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;

Very limited degree - the Puriton NDP is a localised (parish level) refinement of the framework set by the development plan (Local Plan) for Sedgemoor District. It adds only local detail to the strategic policies set by the Local Plan.

b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;

None - the Puriton NDP is at the lowest level of the plan-making hierarchy.

c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;

Minor and localised relevance - it is a “basic condition” of any NDP that it should “contribute to the achievement of sustainable development” but there is no requirement for NDPs to be subject to sustainability appraisal.

The plan includes objectives and policies that seek to support sustainable development principles in relation to housing, employment, infrastructure, transport and the natural and built environment.

d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;

The Puriton NDP is neither

(a) primarily responding to, nor

(b) heavily constrained by significant environmental problems.

A review of potential environmental constraints and other relevant evidence base reveals the following. Key considerations are mapped in Appendix C.

- the northern and western parts of the parish fall within areas of medium or high flood risk (EA flood map for planning zones 2 and 3). The majority of the village of Puriton falls within Flood Zone 1 (low risk).
- The Parish falls within both the Polden Hills and Levels and Moors Landscape Character Areas.
- In terms of wider landscape context Puriton village is the most western village on the Polden Hills ridge. The parish is however not in close proximity to either the Mendip Hills or Quantock Hills AONBs.
- The village is well connected to a network of public footpaths providing access to Bridgwater and the wider countryside.
- There are no conservations areas within the parish. There are however a number of listed buildings in the historic core of Puriton village.
- There is one scheduled monument located within the parish, located in Downend.
- There are two areas of high archaeological potential, covering parts of Puriton village and Downend.
- There are 24 Tree Preservation Orders within the Parish, located mainly in Puriton village and Downend.
- the Agricultural Land Classification for the parish is principally ‘Grade 3’.
- The areas ranks within the top 30% least deprived neighbourhoods, according to IMD2019.
- The western edge of the parish (Dunball) falls approximately 0.5km from the Severn Estuary Ramsar site. There are no European designations or national designations (e.g. SSSI’s) that fall within the parish.
- Regarding nutrient pollution, the parish falls outside the surface water catchment for the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar. All sewerage treatment works that serve the parish also discharge downstream of this catchment.
- There are number of areas of BAP priority habitat identified in the parish, included wooded areas on the southern boundary of the parish.

Having regard to the above considerations and the non-strategic policies in the draft plan, the plan is considered to be neither primarily responding to or be heavily constrained by significant environmental problems.
<p>e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</p> <p>Not directly relevant to implementation of EC environmental legislation. [The plan does not contain policies linked to waste management or water protection.]</p>
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to —
<p>a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;</p> <p>The Plan seeks to add detail to strategic policies within the Sedgemoor Local Plan. Any adverse effects from the higher-level policies have already been considered in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Sedgemoor Local Plan. Therefore, no significant environmental effects are anticipated.</p>
<p>b) the cumulative nature of the effects;</p> <p>None (No reason to anticipate the limited minor / negligible effects being significant cumulatively)</p>
<p>c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects;</p> <p>None</p>
<p>d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);</p> <p>None</p>
<p>e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</p> <p>The effects referenced at 2a are small scale and localised, and no significant effect on population is identified.</p> <p>[The Neighbourhood Plan affects the parish of Puriton, which is approximately 678 Hectares in area. The 2021 census recorded a population of 2,300 usual residents]</p>
<p>f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—</p> <p>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</p>

(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or

(iii) intensive land-use;

No effect on valuable / vulnerable areas is predicted (see 1d).

g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

No effect on nationally / internationally protected sites.

Appendix B - Consultation

Consultation sent to environmental bodies on 9th May 2023.

Hello,

Puriton Parish Council are currently in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for their area. As part of this process Somerset Council have undertaken SEA screening of the draft submission plan that the Neighbourhood Planning Group have prepared and intend to submit.

In accordance with the requirement of the SEA Regulations 2004 that councils must consult the "consultation bodies" before making a determination under Regulation 9 whether or not a plan is "likely to have significant environmental effects". Please see the attached draft which I hope is self-explanatory. I have also attach the submission draft of the Puriton Neighbourhood Plan for information.

If you have any comments, suggestions for or objections to the SEA Screening Opinion or Determination/Statement of reasons please respond to andrew.reading@somerset.gov.uk within 5 weeks of this email (13th June 2023), although comments sooner than this would be much appreciated.

Kind regards

Andrew Reading
Principal Planning Officer - Policy
Somerset Council
Tel: 01278 435284
Email: andrew.reading@somerset.gov.uk

Response from Historic England received 23rd May 2023

Dear Andrew

Thank you for your consultation on the SEA Screening for the emerging Puriton Neighbourhood Plan.

In our response to the earlier Regulation 14 consultation (copied to you then and attached again here for information) we highlighted concern over the evidence base associated with policy H5 and the allocation of land in Woolavington Road for development. The absence of evidence did not allow for the demonstration that the site as proposed could be developed without causing harm to heritage assets.

Such evidence, when available, would assist in the determination of whether the policy was consistent with overarching national and local policy for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. And whether or not additionally a full SEA would or would not be required.

We note from the version of the Plan provided as part of this consultation that it states that an outline planning consent for 120 dwellings was granted for the site in May 2022, though this was not clear in the previous Regulation 14 consultation.

On that basis we are happy to regard that consent as an adequate evidence base for policy H5 and its substantiation.

As a consequence I can confirm that we have no objection to the view that a full SEA is not required.

Kind regards

David

David Stuart | Historic Places Adviser

Response from Natural England received 7th June 2023

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

We therefore agree with the conclusion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report that a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Puriton Neighbourhood Plan would not be required.

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](#).

Response from the Environment Agency received 28th June 2023

Dear Andy

Thank you for your email. Please accept our apologies for the delay in response.

Based on the information available, the Environment Agency considers the draft submission plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Mark

Mark Willitts

Planning Specialist, Sustainable Places Team – Wessex Area

Environment Agency - Rivers House, East Quay, Bridgwater TA6 4YS

Appendix C – Constraints

