

Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Screening Report

November 2018

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to determine whether or not the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) through a process known as SEA screening.

The SEA screening was consulted upon between 26th September and 24th October 2018 with the statutory consultation bodies, which include Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency, in accordance with regulation 9(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004). The responses are presented in Appendix A.

This document presents the final SEA screening report following the consultation. It provides an outline of the emerging Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan and environmental characteristics of the plan area, explains the legislative background to SEA screening, before providing an account of the SEA screening exercise for the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan.

This report meets the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment and the Environmental Assessment of Plan and Programmes Regulations (2004).

2. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND TO STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

European Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment ('SEA Directive') introduces the need to undertake a strategic environmental assessment ('SEA') during the development of some plans and programmes. The main purpose of SEA, according to Article 1 of the SEA Directive, is:

“to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development”.

The SEA Directive is transcribed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which establishes the requirement to undertake a sustainability appraisal ('SA') for some documents used for planning purposes. The SA process incorporates the requirement for SEA, but typically has a broader scope and considers the social and economic issues in addition to the environmental effects.

The requirement to undertake an SA of supplementary planning documents (SPD) was removed by the Planning Act 2008. However, the need to establish whether the planning document requires an SEA, through the SEA Directive, remains.

Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive explain which plans and programmes require SEA. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance suggests that an SPD will only require an SEA “in exceptional circumstances...if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already have been assessed during the preparation of the Local Plan”.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 amends the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 to provide clarification on the SEA related documents which must be submitted alongside neighbourhood planning proposals. Regulation 2(4) of the amendment regulations 2015 adds to the list of documents that a neighbourhood planning group must submit to a local planning authority with a proposal for a neighbourhood plan, which is presented in regulation 6 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The additional document which must be submitted is either an environmental report, should an SEA be required, or a statement of reasons why an environmental assessment is not required.

3. THE CHARMOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHARMOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

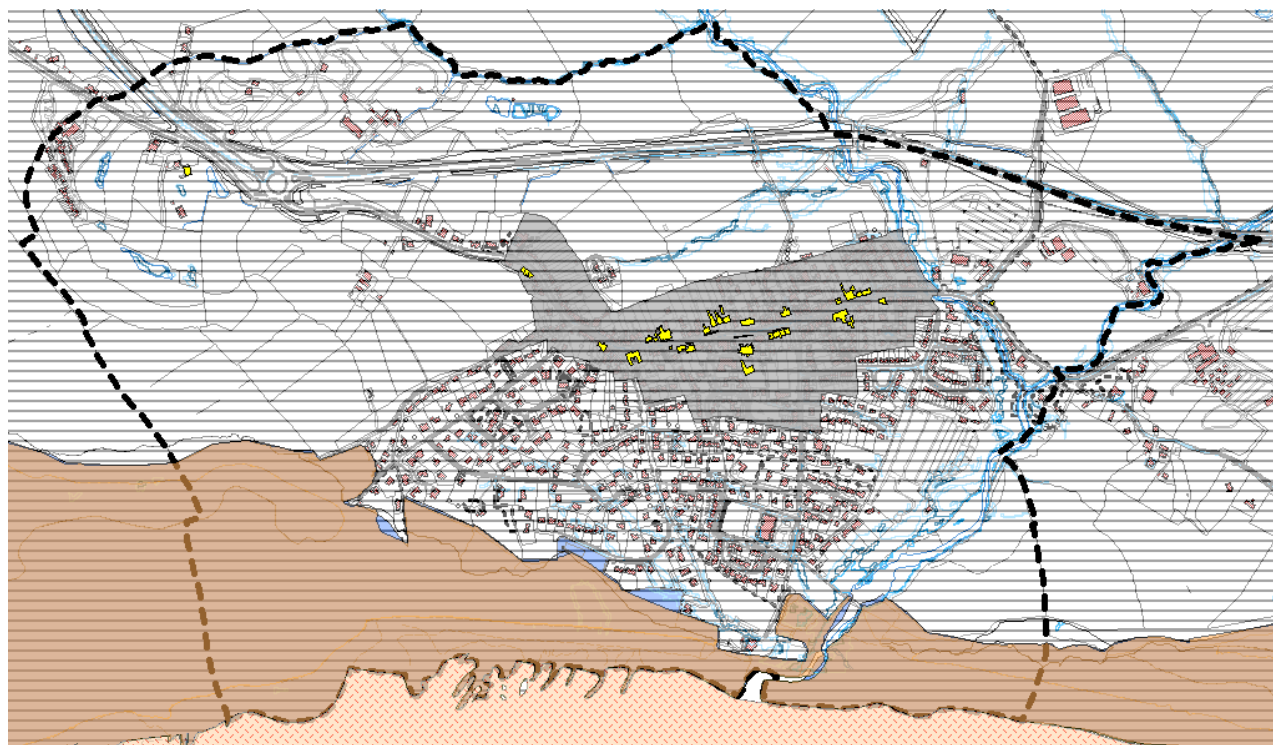
The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan occupies an area of approximately 2km² (200ha) and comprises the village of Charmouth and a section of coastline which forms the southern plan boundary.

The coastal village of Charmouth sits at the mouth of the River Char, which passes along the eastern side of Charmouth, and according to the 2011 Census has a population of approximately 1,352 residents¹.

The census also indicates that there were approximately 933 residential properties within Charmouth and its surroundings, the majority of which are owner occupied (72.4%).

The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area and surrounding areas include a number of environmental designations, some of which are of international importance, indicating the importance and sensitivity of the plan area from an environmental perspective (Figure 3.1).







Figure 3.1: Environmental designations within the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area



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¹ According to the 2011 census

Legend

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Conservation Area |
|  | World Heritage Site and Site of Special Scientific Interest |
|  | AONB |
|  | Site of Nature Conservation Interest |
|  | Special Area of Conservation, Site of Special Scientific Interest and World Heritage Site |
|  | Listed Buildings |

The wildlife designations within the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area include the Sidmouth to West Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and West Dorset Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which occupy the coastal section of the plan area. The undercliffs which offer a range of habitats and support a number of rare plants and animals and the areas adjoining the coastline include large areas of herb rich grassland of a type now very restricted in occurrence. In addition to their ecological importance, the cliffs are internationally important geological sites, particularly famous for its fossil reptiles.

The areas to the north of the plan area include Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) which are areas of local rather than national or international wildlife importance (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: The Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) to the north of the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area

| Name of SNCI | Distance from NP area | Area | Description |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------|--|
| Hogchester Farm | 470m to the north | 1.7ha | A mosaic of habitats with wet grassland, mire, dry grassland & birch |
| Hole Common | 860m to the northwest | 26.6ha | An area of plantation woodland with a varied flora. |
| Catherston Brook | 280m to the north | 1.35ha | A river corridor with an abundance of wild daffodil |
| Catherston Coppice | 455m to the northeast | 3.5ha | An area of deciduous woodland with a good flora |

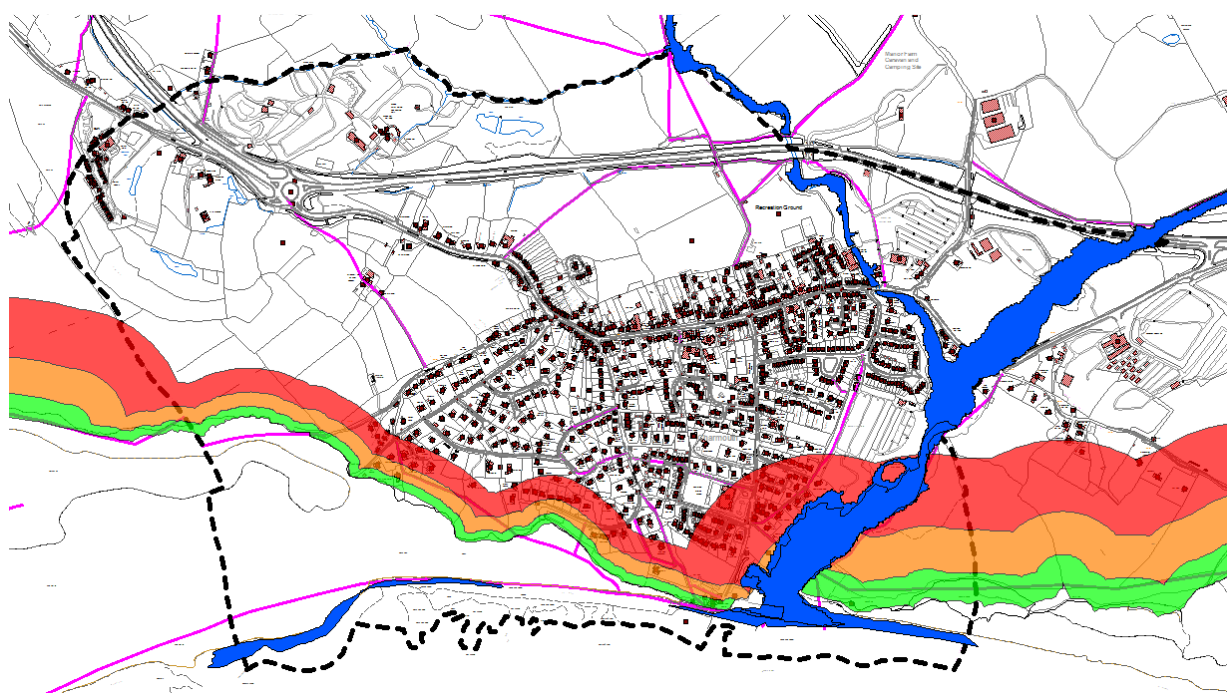
The coastal areas of the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan are within the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site. This recognises the worldwide importance of the coastline within the plan area in terms of its outstanding geological and geomorphological value.

Charmouth is within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, reflecting the particularly high quality of the landscape in this area.

The northern area of Charmouth includes the Charmouth Conservation Area. In addition there are approximately 33 Listed Buildings, 32 of which are Grade II Listed Buildings, and the Queens Armes Hotel is a Grade II* Listed Building.

In addition to the environmental designations, the plan area includes areas of land instability towards the south of the plan area, and a high risk flood zone on the eastern side of the plan area (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Areas of flood risk and land instability within the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area



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Legend

| | |
|--|--|
| | Potential cliff top recession 20yrs (5 percent probability) |
| | Potential cliff top recession 50yrs (5 percent probability) |
| | Potential cliff top recession 100yrs (5 percent probability) |
| | High Risk Flood Zone |

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARMOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan has the following vision statement:

- to further enhance Charmouth as a friendly, vibrant community;

- to protect its unique qualities, including its natural beauty, local history and Jurassic coastline;
- to maintain its ability to be self-sustaining by supporting retail units, local businesses and amenities in the village;
- to keep its village feel but encourage a small affordable housing development, particularly for families;
- to continue to attract tourists and visitors and offer good facilities but avoid being over-commercial; and
- to meet the everyday needs of our residents

The policy objectives of the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

- to protect the area's unique qualities, including its natural beauty, local history and Jurassic coastline;
- to retain the range of shops, services and facilities that help the village be self-sustaining, without becoming over-commercialised; and
- to bring forward one or two small-scale schemes for affordable housing, that will meet the needs of local residents.

SCOPE OF THE CHARMOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan is at an early stage of development, with evidence currently being collected to facilitate the development of the plan.

Whilst specific details of the contents of the plan are not known at this stage, early indications are that the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan will not allocate sites for development. Instead, the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan will pursue policies that support a small development of affordable/social rent housing specifically aimed for young families/young people.

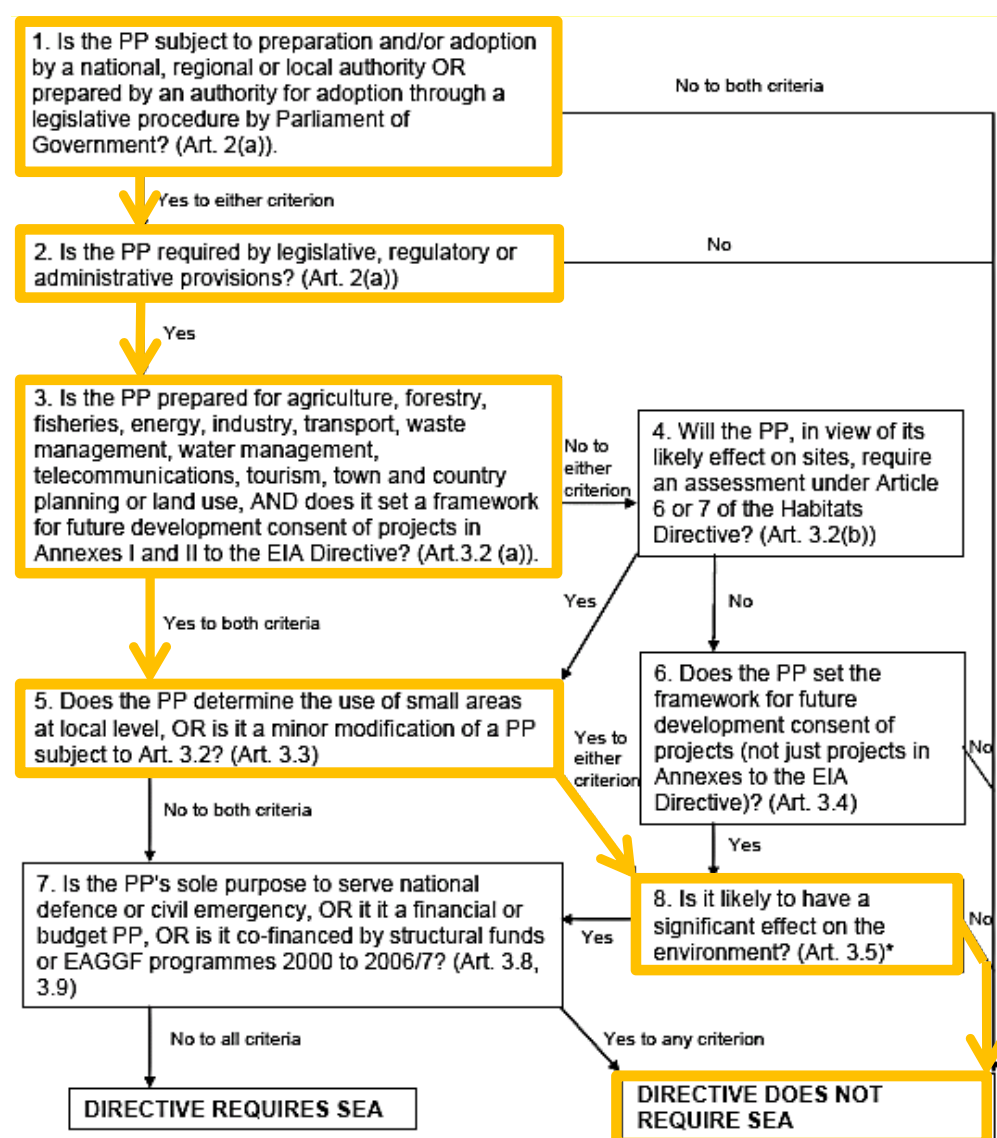
4. SEA SCREENING OF THE CHARMOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

This Chapter provides an account of the SEA screening exercise for the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan.

Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive provide the legislative framework for defining the types of plan and programme that require SEA.

The SEA screening process is summarised in diagrammatic form in the flowchart shown in Figure 4.1². The screening for the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan is highlighted in orange and justification for the decisions made at each stage in the SEA screening process is given in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.1: A diagram summarising the SEA screening process with the SEA screening for the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan outlined in orange.



² Diagram taken from the Government guidance on the Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations titled 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive', published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005

Figure 4.2: a summary of the justification made for the decisions during the SEA screening for the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan.

| Question in SEA screening flow chart (Figure 4.1) | Response |
|---|--|
| 1. Is the PP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament of Government? | YES The intention is for the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted by West Dorset District Council, a local authority, through a legislative procedure. |
| 2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? | YES The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan would be a Statutory document, prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended. |
| 3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? | YES The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan is a document prepared for town and country planning purposes, and may indicate where future development which falls under Annex II of the EIA Directive which includes urban development projects under paragraph 10(b). |
| 5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? | YES The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan determines the use of small areas at a local level. |
| 8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment (Article 3.5)? | NO Justification for this decision is given later in this chapter. |

IS THE CHARMOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN LIKELY TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

The final question in the SEA screening process presented in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 for the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan was question 8: Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?

In asking this question, the SEA Directive refers to Article 3.5, which states that the relevant criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive shall be taken into account when determining whether there are likely to be significant effects. Therefore, the criteria in Article 3.5 have been taken into consideration when determining whether the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA, as presented in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: The assessment of the likely significance of effects of the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan (Taken from Annex II of the SEA Directive)

| Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive | Response | Is there a significant effect? |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| (1) Characteristics of the plan 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. | The framework for development projects within the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area is set by the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan ('Local Plan'), which provides the overarching policy for the location, size and nature of development projects in this area. The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan builds upon this framework by providing further details of the development projects within this area. | No |
| b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy. | The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted alongside its parent document, the Local Plan. It will expand upon the existing policies in the Local Plan and provide supplementary information on a local scale rather than influencing the Local Plan. | No |
| c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development. | Any development which comes forward in Charmouth will be subject to the environmental considerations of the Local Plan in addition to the neighbourhood plan, the aim of which is to achieve sustainable development. | No |
| d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme. | The environmental problems within the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area are not considered exclusive to the area, and are similar to those considered and addressed in the Local Plan. The environmental problems for the Charmouth neighbourhood plan include flooding, land instability, and the impacts of new development upon the landscape, wildlife, areas of geological interest and heritage assets. | No |

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (e.g plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection). | The implementation of community legislation is unlikely to be significantly compromised by the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan. | No |
| (2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: | | |
| a) The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects. | It is anticipated that the plan period will run until 2031. Whilst some effects of the plan may be irreversible, it is not considered probable that the plan will have significant effect since it is looking to bring forward one or two small scale affordable housing schemes which ensuring that the environment is protected. | No |
| b) The cumulative nature of the effects. | <p>The coastal town of Lyme Regis is located approximately 2km to the west of the plan area. The Local Plan allocates land for approximately 90 homes in Lyme Regis over the period until 2031, a limited amount of development in reflection of the planning constraints in this area.</p> <p>The Upper Marshwood Vale Neighbourhood Plan area and Bridport Neighbourhood Plan area are located approximately 3.4km to the northeast and 4.3km to the east of the plan area, respectively. The Bridport Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for additional development. The Upper Marshwood Neighbourhood Plan is at an early stage of development and there is no clear indication of its content.</p> <p>Since the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan will not allocate land for development, and the development proposed in the surrounding areas is not extensive in scale, it is considered unlikely that cumulative effects will result from the development.</p> | No |
| c) The transboundary nature of the effects. | The transboundary impacts, beyond the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area, are unlikely | No |

| | | |
|---|--|----|
| | to be significant in light of the nature and scale of the proposals. | |
| d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g due to accidents). | The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to introduce significant risks to human health and the environment, for example due to accidents, in light of the scale and type the development. | No |
| e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected). | The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area occupies approximately 2km ² and holds a population of approximately 1,352 people according to the 2011 census. The spatial extent of the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area and the magnitude of the population affected are not considered of a significant scale for the purposes of SEA. | No |
| f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage | <p>The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area and its surroundings contain environmental designations which reflect its special natural characteristics and rich cultural heritage.</p> <p>The special natural characteristics of the plan area include the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an area of national importance for landscape which occupies the entire plan area. The Dorset AONB designation may be vulnerable to new development, which has the potential to compromise the special qualities of this designation.</p> <p>Other special natural characteristics within the plan area include European and national wildlife designations, which are sites of great ecological importance in addition to being internationally important geological sites. The Sidmouth to West Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and West Dorset Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) occupy the coastal areas on the southern boundary of the neighbourhood plan area. These sites may be vulnerable to new development.</p> <p>The areas surrounding the neighbourhood plan area also include Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) which are of local importance to wildlife and are therefore less sensitive than the national wildlife designations. These sites are unlikely to be vulnerable to due to their distance from the plan area and the small scale development which the neighbourhood plan</p> | No |

| | | | |
|------|--|---|----|
| | | <p>intends to bring forward.</p> <p>The cultural heritage within the plan area include the Charmouth Conservation Area and approximately 33 Listed Buildings (including the Grade II* listed Queens Armes Hotel). These heritage assets of national importance may be vulnerable to new development, both directly and through impacts upon their setting.</p> <p>In addition, the coastal areas of the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan are within the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site. This recognises the worldwide value of the coastline within the plan area in terms of its outstanding geological and geomorphological value.</p> | |
| ii) | Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values | The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in the exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as those relating to air, water and soil quality, due to the nature and scale of the development. | No |
| iii) | Intensive land-use | The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to bring forward development of an extent which would result in a significant intensification of land use in light of the scale of development. | No |
| g) | The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status. | <p>The environmental designations within the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area and it's surrounding areas of national, community or international protection status include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; • World Heritage Site; • Special Area of Conservation; • Site of Special Scientific Interest; • Conservation Area; and • Listed Buildings (Grade II and II*). <p>The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan area is within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in recognition of the national importance for landscape of this area. The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan will not allocate land for development and includes the following policy objective: "to protect the area's unique qualities, including its natural beauty...". In addition, policy ENV1(i) of the Local Plan will prevent development which results in harm to the character of the</p> | No |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <p>Dorset AONB.</p> <p>The Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site is unlikely to be affected by the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan, since the plan will not allocate land for development and includes the following policy objective: “to protect its unique qualities, including its natural beauty, local history and jurassic coastline”. Furthermore, the plan will be in general conformity with policy ENV 1 of the Local Plan, which prevents significant harm to the world heritage site.</p> <p>The plan area includes a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant impacts upon these wildlife designations, since these wildlife designation are characterised by cliffs in coastal areas which are unlikely to be affected by the small scale development within Charmouth which may be encouraged through the neighbourhood plan. Furthermore, the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan will be in general conformity with policy ENV 2 of the Local Plan, which prevents significant harm to wildlife designations.</p> <p>The cultural and heritage designations within the plan area include 33 Listed Buildings, which includes a Grade II* listed buildings and a Conservation Area in Charmouth. The neighbourhood plan will have the following policy objective: “to protect is unique qualities, including its natural beauty, local history...”. Furthermore, the neighbourhood plan will only look to bring forward one of two small scale affordable housing schemes, and will not allocate land for development. Therefore, it is considered that the amount of development which is likely to come forward through the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan will not result in significant impacts upon heritage features.</p> | |
|--|--|--|

5. CONCLUSION

The SEA screening exercise explained in this report concludes that the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental impacts, largely due to the plan not allocating land for additional housing and the environmental protection provided by the existing policy in the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan.

The consultation bodies, which comprise Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency, were consulted on the SEA screening report in accordance with regulation 9(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004).

The statutory consultees concurred with the findings of this SEA screening report (see Appendix A). Therefore, in conclusion, an SEA will not be required for the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan.

APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Oliver Rendle

From: Holm, Michael <michael.holm@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 October 2018 17:05
To: Oliver Rendle
Subject: RE: Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report: Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Oliver


I was hoping to come back with a more detailed response, but I have won't have time.
I have reviewed the document and agree with the conclusions that SEA is not required for this plan.
Yours sincerely



MICHAEL HOLM
Planning Advisor - Sustainable Places

Planning Advisor for Dorset and South Somerset

Direct Dial: 02030 259358
Internal: 59358
Email: michael.holm@environment-agency.gov.uk

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From: Oliver Rendle [mailto:ORendle@dorset.gov.uk]
Sent: 26 September 2018 10:48
To: 'consultations@naturalengland.org.uk' <consultations@naturalengland.org.uk>; 'Matt.Low@naturalengland.org.uk' <Matt.Low@naturalengland.org.uk>; 'southwestcasework@historicengland.org.uk' <southwestcasework@historicengland.org.uk>; Holm, Michael <michael.holm@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Cc: Nick Cardnell <NCardnell@dorset.gov.uk>
Subject: Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report: Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan

Dear All,

I am writing to consult you on the attached Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening report for the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan (attached), in accordance with Article 3.6 of European Directive 2001/42/EC.

Please can you respond by Wednesday 24th October 2018 to allow for your responses to be taken into account and a decision to be made regarding the need for SEA.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this,

Best wishes,

Oliver Rendle

Oliver Rendle

From: Stuart, David <David.Stuart@HistoricEngland.org.uk>
Sent: 25 October 2018 10:28
To: Oliver Rendle
Cc: Nick Cardnell
Subject: Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report: Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Oliver

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

We note that a version of the Plan is not available as part of this consultation and having looked at the Plan website it appears that one is not available there either. We are therefore dependent on the Report supplied for our sole briefing on and understanding of the content of the Plan.

The main issue for consideration is that it is stated that the community apparently does not propose for the Plan to allocate sites for development. We assume this will include all types of development – ie employment as well as housing. On this basis, we have no objection to the conclusion that an SEA will not be required.

At the same time we would recommend monitoring of the preparation of the Plan, to help verify an initial SEA Screening decision and in case emerging contents suggest that a review may be necessary at some point.

Generally, we would prefer it if more evidence could be available to support such exercises at the time of consultation with us. This would help us better understand the basis upon which SEA Screening Reports have been prepared and allow us to engage in our own assessment of the extent to which significant environmental effects upon the historic environment might be likely. This in turn would help us to better advise your authority on its decision.

Kind regards

David

David Stuart | Historic Places Adviser South West
Direct Line: 0117 975 0680 | Mobile: 0797 924 0316

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Oliver Rendle

From: Greaves, Emily (NE) <Emily.Greaves@naturalengland.org.uk>
Sent: 24 October 2018 13:03
To: Oliver Rendle
Subject: FAO Olly Rendle; 259733 SEA Screening opinion - Charmouth NP

Good afternoon Oliver,
Our reference: 259733
Proposal: Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening opinion
Location: Charmouth

Thank-you for your consultation regarding the SEA Screening Report for Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan. Having reviewed the report, Natural England agrees with the conclusion that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to result in a likely significant effect on the designated wildlife sites and does not require an Strategic Environmental Assessment.

If you have any queries relating to this advice, please contact me on the number below.

Kind regards,
Emily

Emily Greaves
Sustainable Development Adviser
Area 13 - Dorset, Hampshire & IoW
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