

## ***Goodworth Clatford Parish Council***

Planning and Building Services  
TVBC  
Beech Hurst  
Andover  
SP10 3AJ

8<sup>th</sup> January 2018

For the attention of Graham Smith, Planning Policy Manager

Dear Mr Smith,

**Goodworth Clatford NDP  
Request for screening opinion on requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

As you know, Goodworth Clatford Parish Council is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). We have reached the point of having an emerging Plan document, and have recently engaged professional planning support to review the draft policies. We hope to move to the Regulation 14 consultation stage as soon as possible, and by March this year.

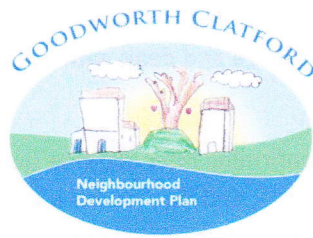
We are aware of the need to consider the implications for environmental assessment and have read your helpful guidance note of December 2016.

In line with that guidance, we are now writing to request a screening opinion on the need for SEA and HRA. We enclose a briefing note, prepared by our consultant, which aims to provide sufficient information for you and others to consider whether our NDP is likely to have significant environmental effects.

Please do not hesitate to contact us you need any further information at this stage. You are welcome to contact our consultant direct (his details are at the end of the briefing note); please copy us in to any correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Wheadon  
Clerk to the Council



**Request for screening opinion on need for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment: briefing note**

January 2018

Dr DJ Nicholson

DJN Planning Ltd for Goodworth Clatford Parish Council

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This note has been prepared to accompany a request by Goodworth Clatford Parish Council to Test Valley Borough Council for a screening opinion as to whether the proposed Goodworth Clatford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is likely to have significant environmental effects, and so require Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.2 The request is made pursuant to Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.<sup>1</sup> This requires the consideration of specified criteria, listed in Schedule 1 to the Regulations. The Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature, and the Environment Agency should also be consulted (the consultation bodies).
- 1.3 The Parish Council is also seeking an opinion from the Borough Council as to whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the NDP will be required.<sup>2</sup> HRA identifies whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site of nature conservation importance, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- 1.4 Guidance on these matters has been produced for NDP groups by the Borough Council.<sup>3</sup> It recommends that groups should request a screening opinion from the Borough Council at the earliest stage of plan preparation. Such a request should be accompanied by a report that includes a summary of what the plan is likely to propose (e.g. types of policies and the broad quantum and approximate locations of any potential development) and any features of the Area which may be affected. This briefing note has been prepared to provide this information.
- 1.5 By way of background, Planning Practice Guidance indicates that SEA may be required where the NDP allocates sites for development, the Neighbourhood Area contains sensitive natural

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<sup>1</sup> SI 2004 No. 1633.

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 SI 2010 No. 490.

<sup>3</sup> Test Valley Borough Council, Neighbourhood Development Plans, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Guidance, December 2016

or heritage assets that may be affected by proposals in the plan, or it is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.<sup>4</sup>

1.6 When the NDP is submitted, it will need to include a statement confirming *inter alia* that the Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations, and that its making is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The provisions for both SEA and HRA stem from European Directives, and the Borough Council's screening opinion as to whether the NDP requires SEA or HRA is the first step in satisfying the above requirement. If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an Environmental Report will need to be prepared and submitted with the proposed NDP. Where it is determined that an NDP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared and submitted with the proposed NDP.

1.7 This note provides:

- A summary of the relevant environmental features in the Goodworth Clatford Neighbourhood Area (section 2);
- A summary of what the Goodworth Clatford NDP is likely to propose (section 3); and
- An initial assessment of the potential for significant environmental effects, against the Schedule 1 criteria (section 4).

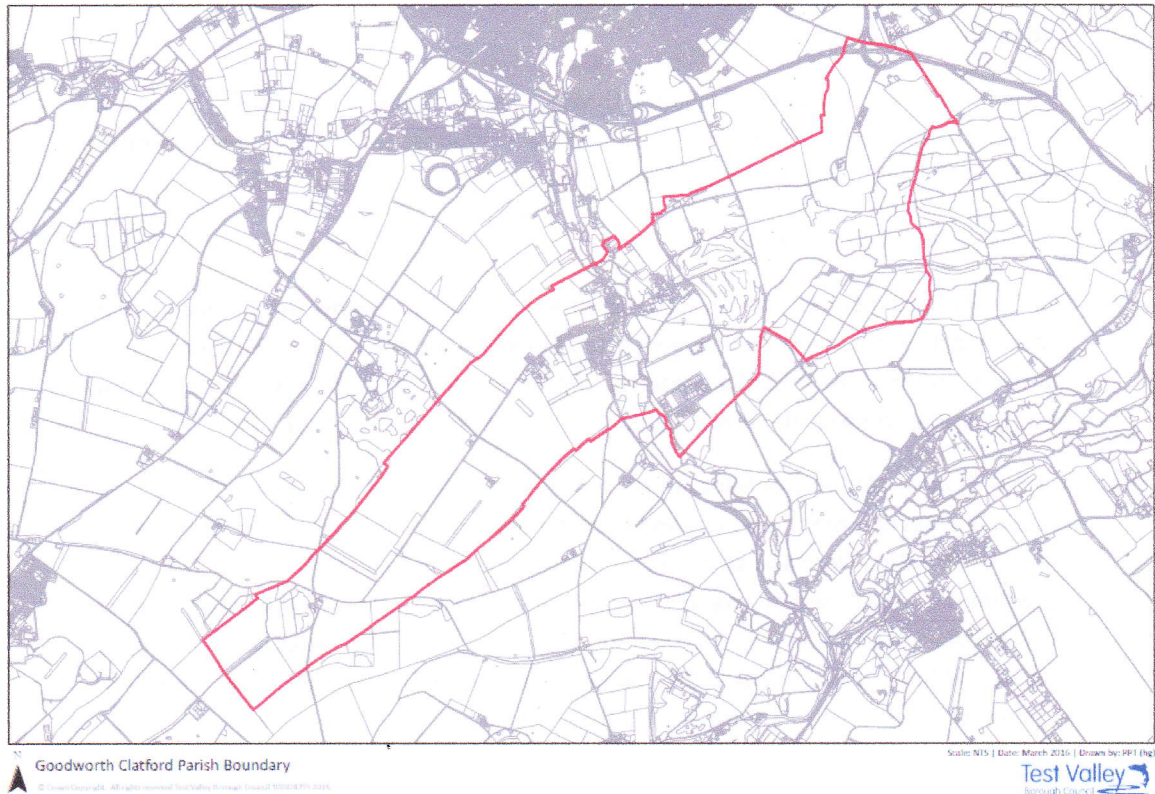
1.8 For the avoidance of doubt, this note does not constitute a draft of a formal screening determination, but is rather intended to confirm the overall parameters of the proposed NDP and relevant environmental considerations to enable an informed screening opinion on the need for SEA and HRA to be provided.

## 2. Environmental features in the Goodworth Clatford Neighbourhood Area

2.1 The Neighbourhood Area is shown at Figure 1. It lies to the south of Andover and principally comprises open countryside and woodland, bisected by the valley of the River Anton flowing north-south. The settlement of Goodworth Clatford sits astride the River Anton at a bridging point. The village has generally retained its historic linear form, reflecting the landform of the river valley. More modern development extends up the valley sides, mainly to the west.

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph: 046 Reference ID: 11-046-20150209



**Figure 1: Goodworth Clatford Neighbourhood Area**

2.2 In summary, the principal environmental features to be considered are:

- Goodworth Clatford Conservation Area, comprising the historic core of the village on the river valley floor.
- 25 listed buildings, all grade II except for the grade I St. Peter's Church, concentrated in and around the Conservation Area.
- Flood Zones 2 and 3 associated with the corridor of the River Anton.
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation:
  - Clatford Oakcuts (mixed deciduous woodland)
  - Harewood Forest (mixed deciduous woodland)
  - River Anton and water meadows. The River Anton is a tributary of the River Test, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (3 km downstream).
- Habitats recorded on Natural England's Magic Map:<sup>5</sup>
  - Ancient, semi-natural and replanted woodland at Harewood Forest and Clatford Oakcuts
  - Floodplain grazing marsh and woodland in the River Anton corridor.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

**3. Summary of the proposed NDP**

3.1 The emerging NDP has been developed through a programme of community consultation, including a questionnaire survey which achieved a response rate of 88%, demonstrating significant community interest in the plan process.

3.2 The Plan's draft vision is as follows:

"Our vision is to maintain the rural character and identity of Goodworth Clatford Parish, preserving its heritage assets including listed buildings and the Conservation Area so that it continues to thrive as a visually attractive, independent settlement, set in unspoilt, tranquil and accessible countryside, providing an excellent quality of life for all."

3.3 The NDP's draft planning policies are presently being finalised. They will seek to promote sustainable development, and will add local detail to those in the adopted Test Valley Local Plan (TVLP), with a clear and strong focus on preserving and enhancing the nature of the Neighbourhood Area whilst promoting appropriate and sensitive growth which respects and takes account of its distinctive and special character. The draft policies cover a range of natural and built environment and community matters, and are available on request if required to inform the screening assessment.

3.4 Strategic policy COM2 in the TVLP identifies Goodworth Clatford as one of a number of "rural villages" in the settlement hierarchy, and provides in Table 7 that the associated scale of housing and economic development will comprise:

- Windfalls
- Rural Affordable Housing sites
- Replacement dwellings
- Community-led Development
- Small business uses
- Re-use of Buildings.

3.5 The TVLP provides a settlement boundary for Goodworth Clatford village (Inset Map 21). Outside the settlement boundary, policy COM2 provides that development is to be restricted to a number of specific circumstances. This is in line with national planning policy to protect the countryside and promote sustainable development in rural areas.

3.6 The NDP endorses this approach. The NDP as drafted does not include any site allocations, and does not propose or anticipate any rural exception affordable housing under Local Plan policy COM8 or community-led development under Local Plan policy COM9.

3.7 New development over the NDP plan period to 2029 will therefore be generally limited to small windfall sites within the village settlement boundary, where these can be brought forward within TVLP policies E1 and E9 (these policies address high quality development and heritage assets respectively).

3.8 Since 2011, 14 new dwellings have been granted planning permission within the village. There is no indication that this rate of organic development will increase in the period up to 2029,

bearing in mind the Local Plan policies in place since January 2016 and the emerging policies of the NDP. It can reasonably be taken as an indication of the modest scale of residential development likely to arise in the remainder of the plan period.

3.9 It is not expected that the NDP will include proposals for development in excess of that already considered through the Local Plan process and its environmental assessments.

**4. Potential for significant environmental effects**

4.1 This section assesses the emerging NDP against each of the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment, as defined in Schedule 1 to the 2004 Regulations. The assessments given in Table 1 below are offered as a starting point for consideration by the consultation bodies and the Borough Council as the responsible authority.

Criteria	Assessment of the Goodworth Clatford NDP	Significant environmental effect?
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;	The Goodworth Clatford NDP will include policies against which development proposals in the Neighbourhood Area will be considered, in conjunction with policies in the TVLP and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The policies will be criteria-based and focus on seeking the protection and enhancement of the existing character of the village and the surrounding countryside. They will not propose new development in addition to or in contradiction to the TVLP. They will provide a basis for decision-making in relation to proposals, rather than setting a framework for projects or allocating resources.	N
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The NDP will, when made, form part of the formal Development Plan. There are no plans or programmes that need to be in conformity with it. The NDP will therefore not significantly influence other plans and programmes.	N

Criteria	Assessment of the Goodworth Clatford NDP	Significant environmental effect?
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	The NDP will seek to promote sustainable development and include policies to protect and enhance environmental and heritage assets and features. It will have a positive effect on the natural and built environment, adding local detail to TVLP policies and those in the NPPF. Any development proposed will be in accordance with the environmental protection policies of the TVLP and the NPPF, which seek to achieve sustainable development.	N
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The Goodworth Clatford village sewerage system is subject to surcharge and there is potential for pollution impacts on the River Anton, a locally-designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). A programme of investment by Southern Water is underway to address this issue. The NDP will include a policy to protect and improve water quality and quantity in local watercourses, helping to enable the Lower River Anton to achieve 'good' ecological status by 2027, in line with the environmental objectives of the South East River Basin Management Plan <sup>6</sup> and the Water Framework Directive.	N
(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).	The NDP will contain policies to protect and enhance the natural and built environment, including biodiversity and water quality. As such it will aid in the implementation of EU legislation on the environment dealing with biodiversity and water quality.	N
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;	The NDP will contain policies whose main focus is the protection and enhancement of the existing character of the village and surrounding countryside. It will not allocate sites for development. The overall effect of the NDP, given its focus on environmental protection and enhancement, is expected to be positive.	N

<sup>6</sup> Environment Agency, South East River Basin Management Plan 2015.

Criteria	Assessment of the Goodworth Clatford NDP	Significant environmental effect?
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	The NDP will add local detail and give effect to the NPPF and the TVLP in respect of existing environmental designations/features in the Neighbourhood Area such as the Conservation Area, SINCs and landscape character areas. Reflecting this alignment of plans and policies, any cumulative effects arising from the operation of the NDP with respect to the built and natural environment of the Neighbourhood are expected to be positive.	N
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	The NDP will not have any transboundary effects.	N
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	There are considered to be no risks to human health.	N
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The NDP will cover the administrative area of Goodworth Clatford Parish Council. This extends to 1,141 hectares and has an estimated 2016 population of 752. The Area represents 1.8% of that of Test Valley Borough. The NDP has a restricted local focus and as a result the overall environmental effects of the Plan, which are themselves expected to be positive, will be relatively limited in magnitude and spatial extent.	N
(f) 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; and	(i) relevant characteristics include areas of open countryside and associated features such as agricultural land, woodland, trees, hedgerows and watercourses, notably the River Anton corridor and wetland habitats; a Conservation Area, and 25 listed buildings. The NDP will include policies to protect and enhance these characteristics and assets as relevant; (ii) The Lower River Anton does not meet 'good' ecological status within the Environment Agency's South East River Basin Management Plan 2015. The NDP will include a policy to protect and improve water quality and quantity in local watercourses, helping to secure the Management Plan's objective for the Lower River Anton to achieve 'good' ecological status by 2027. (iii) None identified.	N



Criteria	Assessment of the Goodworth Clatford NDP	Significant environmental effect?
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	As considered above and to be addressed in HRA screening for likely significant effects on European sites. The NDP will contain policies which are likely to have a positive effect on the natural and built environment generally.	N

**Table 1: Consideration of Goodworth Clatford NDP against Schedule 1 criteria**

- 4.2 The overall conclusion from Table 1 is that the proposed Goodworth Clatford NDP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and therefore does not require SEA. It is recommended that a determination to this effect is considered.
- 4.3 In respect of HRA, a screening opinion is required to determine whether the Goodworth Clatford NDP is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. If so, an “appropriate assessment” will be required under Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.<sup>7</sup>
- 4.4 It is noted that there are no European sites within the Neighbourhood Area. The nearest is the Porton Down Special Protection Area which is 6.4 km to the west. Consideration should be given in the screening opinion to any implications for European sites downstream of the Neighbourhood Area, to allow for any relevant hydrological links via the River Anton.

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<sup>7</sup> SI 2010 No. 490