

SEDLESCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT
SCOPING REPORT FOR THE
SEDLESCOMBE
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SNDP)**



**Should be read in conjunction with the State of the
Parish Report for Sedlescombe November 2013**

ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL'S OPINION

The Sedlescombe "State of the Parish Report 2013"¹ mentions that *"The local planning authority may require the SNP to be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the EU Directive 2001/42. This requires that the plan assesses the environmental impacts of its policies and proposals during its preparation against a series of sustainability objectives. The advice of Rother District Council will be sought with regard to the need for an appropriate assessment through a request for screening opinion."*

On 28/11/13, Rother District Council's opinion was received by the Parish Council as follows:

"In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Development Plan (SNDP) is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, hence, that a SEA should be undertaken."

Rother's reasons are as follows:

- The SNDP will set a framework for future development over a 15 year period across Sedlescombe Parish, especially by the allocation (and non-allocation) of sites.
- The SNDP will form part of the 'development plan' and thereby exert a direct and substantial influence over development proposals coming forward in the period.
- The SNDP has a key role in integrating social, economic and environmental considerations in meeting its obligation to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

- The SNDP needs to consider a number of nationally or locally important environmental factors, notably:
 - The area is wholly within the High Weald AONB, which enjoys the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
 - There are many key features of the AONB within the Parish.
 - There is a swathe of land along the course of the River Brede and its tributaries within Flood Zone 2, including the southern fringes of the village.
 - The Brede Valley, is also a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, as is the Powdermill Reservoir, Brede High Woods & Hurst Wood Complex in the north-east of the Parish.
 - There is a significant coverage of Ancient Woodland across the Parish.
 - There are a range of Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats, notably different types of woodland (which overlaps the Ancient Woodland).
 - There is a Groundwater Source Protection Zone bordering the village to the south-east.
 - The historic core of the village is a Conservation Area, with many Listed Buildings, as well as being an Archaeologically Sensitive Area.

¹ Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the State of the Parish Report November 2013 (author: Sedlescombe Parish Council)

POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THE SNDP AS DETAILED BY ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL

- Subject to the location of the development, the probability of effects is in some respects high (eg AONB), while in some cases, where environmental issues bear upon the village and its immediate environs, it could be moderate/high and in other respects is likely to be low, having regard to the relatively limited scale required.
- The duration of any impacts will be long-lived by virtue of the “life” of new building.
- There is the potential for the cumulative effects to be more significant than from individual developments, again subject to the location of development.
- Trans-boundary effects may arise, but are expected to be minimal.
- Risks to Human health are negligible, while relevant agencies will have the ability to advise in respect of specific proposals.
- The amount of land directly affected by likely development will be a relatively low proportion of the area of the Parish (1,264 hectares).
- A number of the environmental qualities are vulnerable to new development, to varying degrees.
- The AONB is not only a national designation but is especially sensitive to new development, hence, the effects could be significant subject to location, etc.

IN SUMMARY: Whilst it is acknowledged that neither the area of the Plan nor the scale of development envisaged are large scale, taking into account the context and the range of potential effects, and applying the precautionary principle, it is considered that an SEA of the SNDP is required.

Signed *D Marlow*

Planning Strategy and Environment
Manager of Rother District Council
28/11/13



SEDLSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL PROPOSALS

In conjunction with the preparation of the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Development Plan, Sedlescombe Parish Council intends to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment and to use the relevant environmental objectives of the Rother Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of July 2013 as the framework for its assessment:

- **Improve efficiency in land use and encourage the prudent use of natural resources (Rother SA Objective 9)**
- **Reduce road congestion and pollution levels and ensure air quality continues to improve by increasing travel choice and reducing car usage (Rother SA Objective 10)**
- **Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (Rother SA Objective 11)**
- **Minimise the risk of flooding and resulting detriment to people and property (Rother SA Objective 12)**
- **Maintain, improve and manage water resources in a sustainable way (Rother SA Objective 13)**
- **Conserve and enhance biodiversity by protecting both designated and non-designated but locally important species and habitats (SA Objective 14)**
- **Protect and enhance the high quality natural and built environment (Rother SA Objective 15)**



During the preparation of the draft (ie “pre-submission”) version of the SNDP, Sedlescombe Parish Council will identify relevant measures for each of the above objectives as part of the draft Strategic Environmental Assessment that will accompany the SNDP.

CONSULTATION WITH STATUTORY CONSULTATION BODIES

This Scoping Report will be sent to the following Statutory Bodies for their consideration:

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Alan Byrne
Historic Areas & Planning Adviser
English Heritage South East
Eastgate Court
195-205 High Street
Guildford
GU1 3EH

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Jennifer Wilson
Planning Liaison Technical Specialist (KSL – Kent)
Orchard House
Endeavour Park
London Road
Addington
West Malling
ME19 5SH

NATURAL ENGLAND

Environmental Planning Lead Advisor
Natural England
3rd Floor
Guildbourne House
Chatsworth Road
Worthing
BN11 1LD

Natural England
Consultation Service
Hornbeam House
Electra Way, Crewe Business Park
Crew
CW1 6GJ

Five weeks (excluding Christmas 2013 and New Year 2014) will be allocated for receipt of comments on the proposed nature of the SEA.

PLEASE SEND COMMENTS by 13/01/14 TO:

Mrs Pauline J Raymond
Clerk, Sedlescombe Parish Council
Woodland Cottage
Chapel Hill
Sedlescombe, BATTLE
TN33 0QX
sedlescombe@freezone.co.uk

2 December 2013