



**Dymock Neighbourhood Development Plan (DNDP)
2023-2026:
Consultation Draft October 2023**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) &
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
Screening Report**

October 2023 & Updated December 2023

enfusion



Dymock Neighbourhood Development Plan (DNBP) 2023-2026: Consultation Draft (October 2023) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report

<i>date:</i>	<i>October 2023 v1 draft December 2023 v2 final</i>	
<i>prepared for:</i>	<i>Forest of Dean District Council</i>	
<i>prepared by:</i>	<i>Barbara Carroll</i>	<i>Enfusion</i>
<i>quality assurance:</i>	<i>Barbara Carroll</i>	<i>Enfusion</i>

enfusion
environmental planning and management for sustainability



The Train Shed
1 Ancliff Square, Avoncliff
Bradford on Avon BA15 2HD
www.enfusion.co.uk

CONTENTS

		Page
1	Introduction	
	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Sustainability Appraisal (SA); Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	1
	The Forest of Dean Local Plan 2026	2
	This SEA & HRA Screening Report	2
2	Legislative Requirements & Guidance; Method	
	Legislative Requirements	3
	Guidance on SA/SEA & HRA/AA	5
	Method	6
3	The Dymock Neighbourhood Development Plan (DNDP) (Consultation Draft, October 2023)	
	Context	7
	Dymock Neighbourhood Development Plan 2026 (Draft 2023)	8
4	SEA Screening Assessment	
	SEA Screening Assessment	12
5	SEA Screening Decision	
	SEA Screening Decision	17
6	Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening	
	European Designated Sites for Nature Conservation	18
	Screening of NDP Policies	
7	Statutory Consultation & Overall Conclusion	
	Statutory Consultation & Overall Conclusion	25
	Tables & Figures	
2.1	Flow Diagram for Determining if a Plan is likely to have Significant Environmental Effects	
3.1	Boundary for the Area Designation of Dymock Neighbourhood Area	
4.1	SEA Screening Assessment of Dymock Neighbourhood Plan	
6.1	Screening of DNDP Policies for Likely Significant Effects (LSEs)	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); Sustainability Appraisal (SA) & Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)¹ is a systematic process used during the preparation of plans and policies and it aims to provide a high level of protection for the environment; it contributes to the integration of environmental considerations in plan preparation with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process that similarly investigates plans and policies, including consideration of socio-economic factors in the same way as environmental factors and to the same level of detail. SA incorporating SEA is a mandatory requirement for Local Plans in accordance with planning legislation² and paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework (revised July 2021 & updated September 2023)³. Government advises⁴ that an integrated approach is taken so that the SA process incorporates the requirements for SEA – and to the same level of detail.
- 1.3 There is no statutory requirement⁵ for Neighbourhood Plans to be subject to SA. However, a qualifying body (in this case, Dymock Parish Council) must demonstrate how its plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development. In some limited circumstances, where a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a SEA. This is determined through a SEA screening process. It is the responsibility of the local planning authority (in this case, Forest of Dean District Council) to ensure that all the regulations appropriate to the nature and scope of a neighbourhood plan submitted to it have been met.
- 1.4 Plan-makers are also required to consider whether a Habitats Regulations⁶ Assessment (HRA)/Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required. The aim of the HRA process is to assess the potential effects arising from a plan against the nature conservation objectives of any site designated for its nature conservation importance. The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) indicate that the making of an NDP is not likely to have a significant effect on a designated nature conservation site. However, a CJEU Judgment (People over Wind, 2018)⁷ clarified that when making screening decisions on whether an appropriate assessment is required, competent authorities cannot take into account any mitigation measures - such as

¹ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made>

² Section 19(5) of the 2004 Act and Regulation 22(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

⁶ The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made>

⁷ <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=200970&doclang=EN>

policies in a higher-level strategic plan. Mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a plan can only be taken into account as part of an appropriate assessment itself⁸.

- 1.5 The two processes SA/SEA and HRA can inform each other; and summary HRA findings are incorporated into SA/SEA. The Forest of Dean District Council (FDDC) has commissioned independent SA, SEA, HRA specialists Enfusion Ltd to undertake the SEA and HRA screening.

The Forest of Dean Local Plan (FDLP) 2026

- 1.6 The Forest of Dean District Council (FDDC) has prepared a Local Plan⁹ (comprising the Core Strategy adopted 2016 and the Allocations Plan adopted 2018) to guide future development in the Local Authority area during the period up to 2026. In accordance with legislative and policy requirements¹⁰, the Council must carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of its Local Plan. The SA/SEA and HRA of the Local Plan was undertaken alongside the preparation of the plan documents with SA/SEA and HRA Reports published as evidence to support at each stage of plan-making. FDDC has commenced the review¹¹ of its Local Plan 2021-2041 (including SA/SEA of emerging elements of the plan) and the publication version is currently anticipated in spring 2025.
- 1.7 A neighbourhood plan attains the same legal status as the Local Plan once it has been agreed at a referendum and is adopted or "made" (brought into legal force) by the local planning authority. At this point it becomes part of the statutory development plan. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise¹².

This SEA & HRA Screening Report

- 1.8 This document provides a screening determination of the need to carry out an SEA and an HRA of the Dymock Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023-2026 (DNDP Consultation draft October 2023). The Forest of Dean District Council, as the "Responsible Authority"¹³ under the SEA Regulations, and the "Competent Authority"¹⁴ under the HRA Regulations, is responsible for ensuring that this screening process meets with regulatory requirements. The SEA and HRA screening have been undertaken on behalf of the District Council. This Screening Report was sent to the environmental consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England & Natural England) for the statutory 5 weeks consultation period finishing 30 November 2023.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment>

⁹ [Our current Local Plan - Forest of Dean District Council](#)

¹⁰ Town & Country Planning Regulations (2011, 2012); National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012, revised 2018, updated 2019, revised 2021 & updated 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

¹¹ <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/developing-our-new-local-plan/>

¹² PCPA 2004 section 38(6)

¹³ The organisation that adopts ("makes") the neighbourhood plan

¹⁴ The organisation that ensures that the plan will not have any likely significant effects on the integrity of the designated nature conservation sites

2.0 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS & GUIDANCE; METHOD

Legislative Requirements

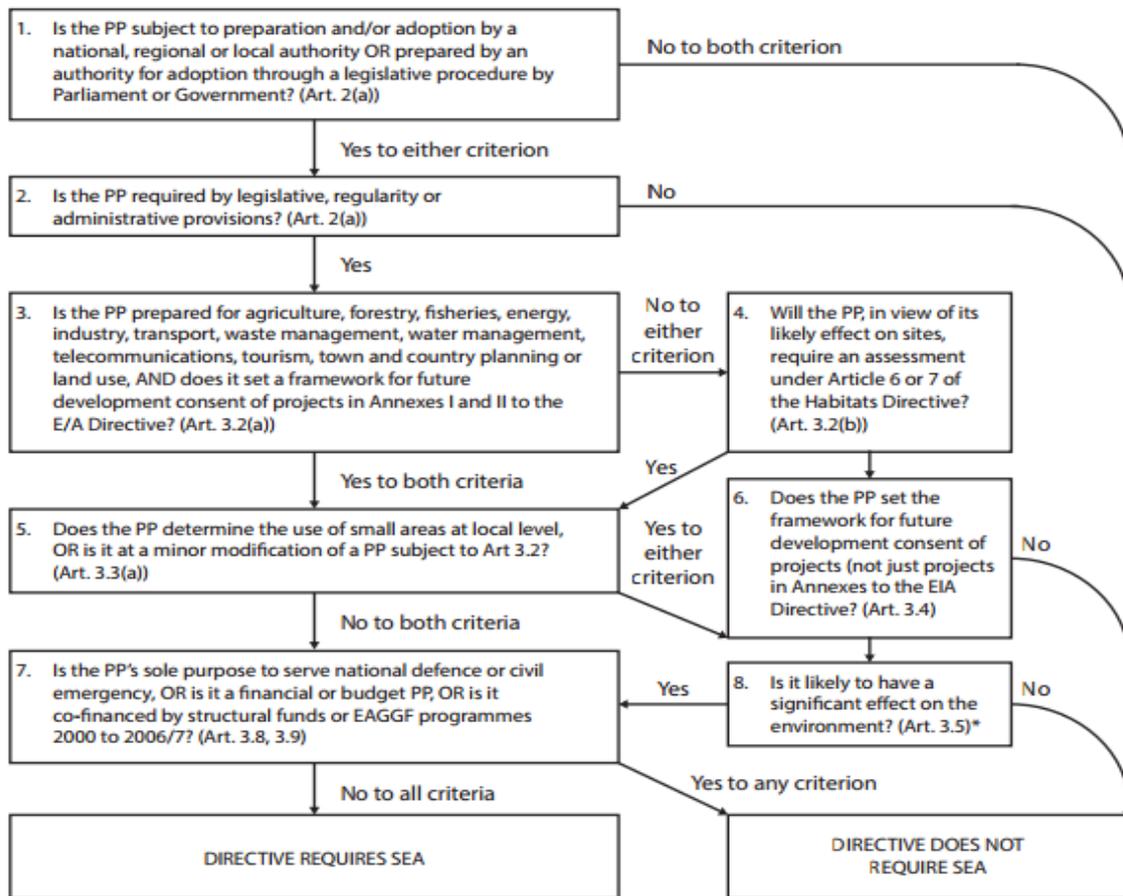
- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires neighbourhood plans to comply with EU legislation. Regulation 5 of the SEA Regulations requires an environmental assessment of plans which:
1. *are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use (Regulation 5, para. (2)(a), and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC (EIA Directive) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (Regulation 5, para. (2)(b)*
 2. *in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (Regulation 5, para. (3)*
 3. *set the framework for future development consent of projects¹⁵ (Regulation 5, para. (4)(b)*
 4. *are determined to be likely to have significant environmental effects as determined under regulation 9(1) (Regulation 5, para. (4)(c)*
- 2.2 An environmental assessment need not be carried out for:
- a) *plans which determine the use of a small area¹⁶ at local level (Regulation 5, para. (6)(a); or*
 - b) *plans which are a minor modification¹⁷ to a plan or programme (Regulation 5, para. (6)(b) unless it has been determined under regulation 9(1) that the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.*
- 2.3 UK Government guidance provides a flow diagram with questions/criteria for the SEA Directive and its application to the plan-making process as follows:

¹⁵ European Commission guidance states that plans and programmes which *set the framework for future development consent of projects* would normally contain 'criteria or conditions which guide the way a consenting authority decides an application for development consent'. *Development consent* is defined in the EIA Directive as "the decision of the competent authority or authorities which entitled the developer to proceed with the project" (Article 1(2) of the EIA Directive).

¹⁶ European Commission guidance suggests that *plans which determine the use of small areas at local level* might include "a building plan which, for a particular, limited area, outlines details of how buildings must be constructed, determining, for example, their height, width or design"

¹⁷ '*Minor modifications*' should be considered in the context of the plan or programme which is being modified and of the likelihood of their having significant environmental effects. A modification may be of such small order that it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

Figure 2.1: Flow Diagram¹⁸ for Determining if a Plan is likely to have Significant Environmental Effects



Note: The figure is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans & programmes (PPs); it does not have legal status. Where a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) must be carried out and an Environmental Report (ER) prepared.

2.4 There is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan (NP)¹⁹ to have a Sustainability Appraisal as set out in section 19 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Government advises that in some limited circumstances, where a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. In order to decide whether a draft NP might have significant environmental effects, it must be screened at an early stage according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations. This includes a requirement to consult with the SEA consultation bodies (in England - Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England); each body can advise on particular topics relevant to its specific area of expertise and responsibility.

¹⁸ Based on ODPM 2005 - 'A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive' 2005

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

Guidance on SA/SEA & HRA

- 2.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) have advised that a Neighbourhood Plan:
- would need SEA “...in limited circumstances...”
 - should be screened early
 - screening should consult with the consultation bodies
 - if ‘screened out’, should have a ‘statement of reasons’ prepared
- 2.6 Whether a Neighbourhood Plan proposal requires a SEA, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed. An SEA 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.
- 2.7 Government planning guidance further advises that before deciding whether significant environmental effects are likely, the local planning authority should take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1²⁰ to the SEA Regulations (2004) and consult the statutory environmental consultation bodies. Schedule 1 sets out the criteria for determining likely significant effects on the environment taking into account the characteristics of plans and the characteristics of the effects and the area likely to be affected. The qualifying body (in this case, FDDC for the Dymock Parish Council) is required to provide the following – to demonstrate that the basic condition²¹ in the planning legislation has been met:
- “a statement of reasons for a determination... that the proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects; or
 - An environmental report”
- 2.8 Planning practice guidance²² also provides advice on HRA screening and the subsequent appropriate assessment stage of the process for neighbourhood planning. An appropriate assessment for a more strategic plan, such as the Local Plan, can consider the impacts on sites and confirm the suitability or likely success of mitigation measures for associated non-strategic policies and projects. An individual assessment of non-strategic policies and projects may not be necessary in some limited cases where the strategic appropriate

²⁰ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/schedule/1/made>

²¹ A Neighbourhood Plan should not breach, and must be compatible with, European Union obligations in order for it to be legally compliant.

²² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment>

assessment is sufficiently robust. This needs to contain conclusions capable of removing all reasonable scientific doubt on the impacts of non-strategic policies, such as in neighbourhood plans.

Method

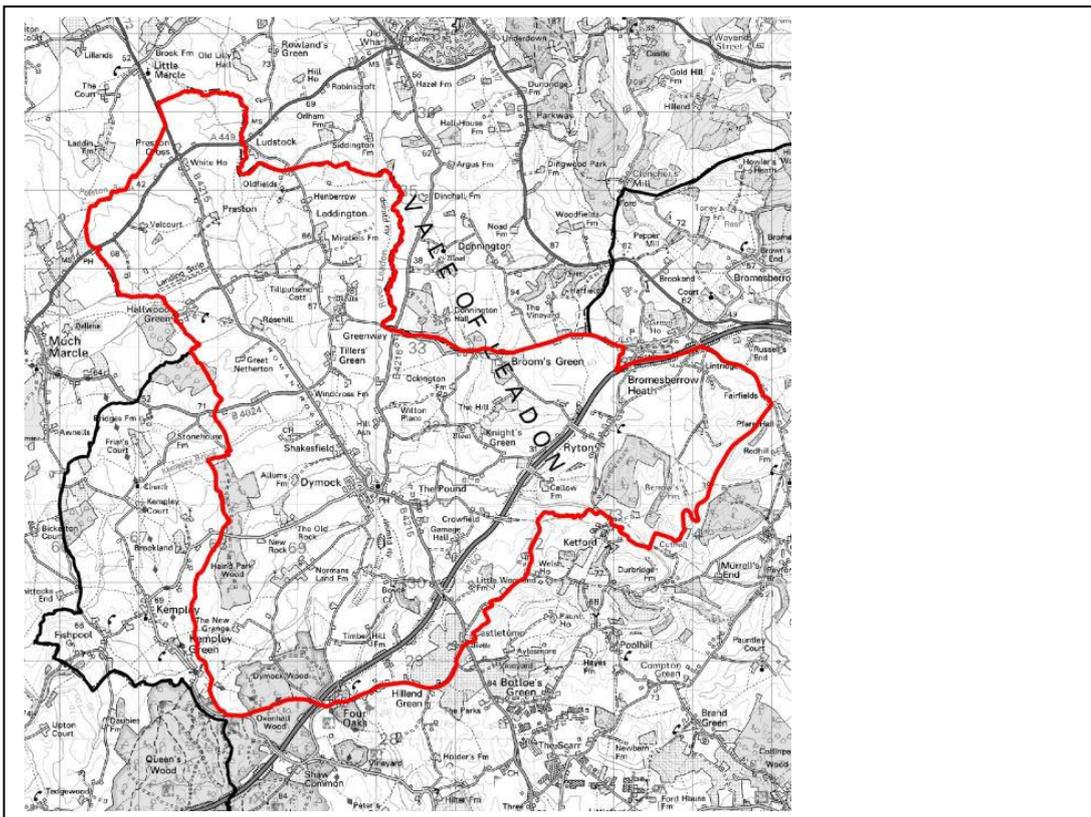
- 2.9 In order to be able to decide whether a SEA will be required, it is necessary to know about the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan, and in particular, as follows:
- how they might affect the environment, community, or economy
 - whether they propose a higher level of development than is already identified in FDLP planning policies
 - whether any of the proposals are likely to affect a “sensitive area”, such as a Site of special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or designated European Site for nature conservation (Special Area of Conservation SAC, Special Protection Area SPA)
 - whether implementation of policies in the plan might lead to new development in the future
 - whether the cumulative impact of the policies and proposals when assessed together may give rise to a likely significant effect, for example, several relatively small housing proposals may have cumulative significant effects on a nearby important wildlife habitat
- 2.10 Available information from Defra MAGIC maps, Environment Agency flood risk maps, the Council's evidence base for the FDDC Local Plan, and the evidence base for the DNDP, together with professional judgment, was used to identify the sensitivity of the Dymock area environment and whether significant effects are likely that have not been previously assessed through SA, such that an SEA would be required, and whether an HRA/Appropriate Assessment is necessary.

3.0 THE DYMOCK NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (DNDP) 2023-2026 (Consultation Draft October 2023)

Context

- 3.1 The Dymock Parish Council (DPC)²³ is the qualifying body designated for the purpose of preparing the DNDP. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is preparing the DNDP on behalf of the DPC, and it is comprised of Parish Councillors and local residents. The Steering Group has sought the views of the wider community through the process of preparing the draft DNDP with public community consultation events, surveys (business, community & housing needs) and the creation of the NDP website²⁴ with process progress and a document library reporting the minutes of meetings, formal updates for the DPC, the evidence base, and details of all engagement/consultations.
- 3.2 Dymock Parish was formally designated²⁵ as a Neighbourhood Area by the Forest of Dean District Council²⁶ on 15 June 2018 and the boundary is shown in the figure following:

Figure 3.1: Boundary²⁷ for the Area Designation of the Dymock NDP Area



²³ <https://dymockparishcouncil.org.uk/>

²⁴ <https://www.dymock-ndp.org/>

²⁵ Localism Act 2011

²⁶ <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-plans-in-development/>

²⁷ As shown in the DNDP Designation by FDDC <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-plans-in-development/>

- 3.3 The DNDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the Forest of Dean Local Plan 2026²⁸. The FDLP identifies Dymock as a small village such that generally there is very limited opportunity for new housing and employment – as set out in CSP 16. Small villages with some services may be suitable for small affordable housing developments. The Site Allocations Plan (SAP, adopted June 2018) does not include any site allocations for Dymock. The SAP noted that there had been a recent development at Western Way for the restoration of the canal, incorporating a village car park, children's play area along with 14 affordable and 6 open market homes.
- 3.4 This Report sets out the screening assessments and decisions to demonstrate that due processes have been followed in line with regulatory requirements.

The draft Dymock NDP 2023-2026 (October 2023)²⁹

- 3.5 Dymock is a large rural parish in the north-west of Gloucestershire. It is situated in the valley of the River Leadon between the market towns of Ledbury and Newent. The principal village in the Neighbourhood Area is Dymock which lies 4 miles north-west of Newent and 5 miles south of Ledbury; there are several outlying settlements. Gloucester is the principal city some 13 miles to the south-east of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.6 The population in the Neighbourhood Area was 1,293 (2021 Census) with households identified as 65.8% single family; 28.1% one person; and 6.1% other household types. Over half the population (57%) has lived in the Area for 15 years or more; the population split was 50.2% male and 49.8% female. The range of age groups within the population indicates that services and facilities are mostly required for those approaching retirement and in retirement; also, a need for teenagers since there is currently little for them to enjoy.
- 3.7 The settlement pattern is generally in the form of dispersed farmsteads. Many retain the distinctive orchards and timber clad or half-timbered barns that were once more widespread. The 2021 Census identified 496 dwellings that are permanently occupied and 14 dwellings that were second homes. Of these 510 dwellings, the majority were owner-occupied, detached dwellings. The economy is diverse and farming remains at the core. However, many people commute out of the village for work. Tourism has become an important part of the local economy and including with popular walking routes such as those established by the Windcross Paths Group³⁰.
- 3.8 There are two highways running within the Neighbourhood Area – the B4215 and the B4216. The boundary of the NDP Area has very good access to the A449 linking to Ross on Wye and Ledbury. The M50 crosses the eastern part of the Area from north-east to south-west. The Gloucester-Hereford canal ran through Dymock. In the late 19th century the canal land was used for the

²⁸ <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/our-current-local-plan/>

²⁹ <https://www.dymock-ndp.org/>

³⁰ <https://www.windcrosspaths.org.uk/>

Gloucester-Newent railway with a station in Dymock; the line was closed in 1964. The nearest railway station now is at Ledbury. There are numerous footpaths/rights of way throughout the Area giving access to for local use and to the open green spaces, and including alongside the Kempley Brook. The Daffodil Way is a circular walk through fields around Dymock and Kempley, attracting visitors particularly in the spring.

- 3.9 Social life today still revolves around the church and the village pub which became the first community run pub in England in 1997. Village halls remain an important part of village life with a range of activities for locals. In the Neighbourhood Area there are three places of worship, St Mary's Church, Western Way Chapel and St John the Baptist Church. The local primary school (Ann Cam School) caters for children in the Neighbourhood Area and beyond. The Beauchamp Arms is located in the centre of Dymock and there are many other pubs with a 5 mile radius³¹. There are Health Centres located within about 5 miles radius; there is one residential care centre within Dymock for assisted living. The nearest dentists are at Ledbury and Newent. The Area has a shop and a garage; it also includes the Dymock Grange Golf Club and the Dymock Cricket Club. The Vell Mill Nature Reserve is a popular location for recreation and tourism, including walking.
- 3.10 The Neighbourhood Area falls within the Landscape Character of 'unwooded vale'. The landscape is typically rural and dominated by a diverse mix of pastures, orchards and arable fields. Woodlands extend into the south and west of the Neighbourhood Area: Dymock Wood/Park Wood extends into the southern tip of the Area and is designated variously as Ancient Woodland with Priority Habitats of Deciduous Woodland and Traditional Orchards; Allums Grove/Haind Park Wood is located within the Area, abutting the western boundary and is similarly designated for Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitat of Deciduous Woodlands³². Despite the decline in orchards, the Dymock area still contains a high number of orchard trees with local varieties, and including numerous patches designated as Priority Habitat for Traditional Orchard.
- 3.11 The woodlands are important for sessile oak, together with a mixture of tree species and providing important wildlife habitats and species. Dymock Wood has been designated as a Forest Reproductive Material seed stand owing to the high quality of sessile streams and ponds support particular assemblages of plants, such as sedges and rushes, and associated invertebrates; in places, fallen branches cause streams to overflow creating wet woodland. Dymock Woods is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its woodlands that are recorded as being in unfavourable/recovering condition³³. Just outside (about 50m) the west of the Area boundary (and

³¹ <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/>

³² <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap/>

³³ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteFeatureCondition.aspx?SiteCode=S1003827&SiteName=Dymock%20Woods%20SSSI>

within the SSSI impact zone) is the small Kempley Daffodil Meadow SSSI, cited as in favourable condition³⁴.

- 3.12 The River Leadon is a tributary of the River Severn and flows through the Neighbourhood Area. It is augmented by the brooks of Preston, Kempley and other small tributary streams. The river is populated by otters, brown trout, chub, eel, dace, roach, lamprey and bream. Agricultural is the main source of pollution. There are two recurring flooding sites within the Neighbourhood Area – B4215 crossing Kempley Brook to north of village; and Dymock village near to Still House. There are areas of flood risk (Zones 2 & 3)³⁵ that follow the route of the river through the Area.
- 3.13 Dymock was mentioned in the Doomsday book and has a range of heritage assets. The eastern part of Dymock village is designated as a Conservation Area by FDDC³⁶ reflecting its local importance. The Neighbourhood Area has 77 designated heritage assets, mostly Grade II dwellings, and three scheduled ancient monuments – reflecting the national importance of its historic environment. The potential for archaeological deposits in Dymock is high in consideration of its history stretching back to the first century AD and with a significant Romano-British settlement in the area.
- 3.14 During 1911-1914, the Dymock Poets gave the area a new kind of prominence. Their love of the local landscape and the inspiration they drew from it is reflected in their poetry and they were part of an important movement which changed how poetry was written. Dymock is also the origin of the Dymock Red Apple and Pear, Dymock Red Plum, and Stinking Bishop cheese.
- 3.15 The DNDP was prepared in accordance with the adopted FDDC Local Plan. It is stated that the NDP will be reviewed to remain in general accord with the new Local Plan. It is likely that the new Local Plan will retain an approach similar to the current approach for parishes and villages such as Dymock (subject to any further changes in the NPPF). When the new Local Plan is adopted, the DNDP will be updated and the life extended to 2041.
- 3.16 The overall Vision for the DNDP is that:

“Dymock parish will strive to be a friendly and vibrant community for all age groups. The parish will encourage change in order that the future needs of the community shall be met whilst preserving and enhancing the beauty of the area, its environment and its history. Appropriate development will complement the existing character of the area so as to provide a safe, enjoyable and inclusive environment for residents of all ages.”

³⁴

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteFeatureCondition.aspx?SiteCode=S1002340&SiteName=Kempley%20Daffodil%20Meadow%20SSSI>

³⁵ <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

³⁶ <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/i0khi0o3/dymock-conservation-area.pdf>

3.17 The DNDP contains eight strategic aims for Dymock based on the main issues identified by residents. Each strategic aim has a corresponding set of objectives, supplemented with a policy framework to guide the development necessary to deliver it. The aims, objectives, and NDP Policies relate to topics, set out as follows:

- Housing Mix and Need – Policies HM1; HM2 (a, b & c)
- Built Environment – Policies BE1, BE2, BE3, BE4
- Sustainability – Policy SU1 Promoting Sustainability
- Community Infrastructure – Policies C1, C2
- Natural Environment – Policies NE1 NE2, NE3, NE4
- Transport and Travel – Policy TT1, TT2
- Economy – Policies E1-E5
- Tourism – Policy TM1

3.18 The DNDP is supported by Appendices A-O that provide details on consultation and the evidence base.

4.0 SEA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 It is considered that the Dymock Neighbourhood Development Plan (DNDP) 2026 is within the scope of the SEA Regulations since it is a plan that:
- is subject to preparation or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level (Regulation 2)
 - is prepared for town and country planning or land use and it is a plan that sets the framework for future development consent of projects generally (Regulation 5, para. 4)
 - will apply to a wider area other than a small area at local level and is not a minor modification to an existing plan or programme (Regulation 5, para. 6).

A determination under Regulation 9 is therefore required as to whether DNDP 2031 is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

- 4.2 The screening requirements set out in Regulation 9 and Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations include two sets of characteristics for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment:
- the characteristics of the plan itself and
 - the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the plan

Therefore, this screening assessment is structured in the following table according to the criteria specified in Schedule 1 of the Regulations:

Table 4.1: Screening Assessment of the draft DNDP 2023-2026 (Regulation 14 Consultation Draft October 2023)

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regulations)	Are significant environmental effects likely? Yes/ No	
	Justification and evidence	
1.The characteristics of plans, having regard, in particular, to:		
(a) the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating	No	The NDP does not set a programme or framework for large scale projects. The plan is consistent with the district Local Plan (which was subject to SA/SEA during its preparation) and therefore, does not set an additional framework. The NDP does not propose allocation of sites for development projects.

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regulations)	Are significant environmental effects likely? Yes/ No	
	Justification and evidence	
conditions or by allocating resources		
(b) the degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	No	The NDP is prepared by the local community to influence development at the parish level. It does not strongly influence strategic plans higher up in the spatial planning hierarchy, although the District Council does need to consider the proposals in the NDP during preparation of the Local Plan. The NDP is considered to be supportive and interpretive rather than instructive in its influence.
(c) the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No	The NP is a spatial/land-use plan that seeks to promote the objectives of sustainable development and it is developed within the framework for sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. The NDP provides supporting local policies in regard to housing, built environment, sustainability, community infrastructure, natural environment, transport & travel, economy and tourism. It is not specifically relevant as a plan for integrating environmental considerations. Any development proposed must be in accordance with the environmental protection policies in the adopted FDLP and the NPPF.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan	No	There are no specific significant environmental problems relevant to this plan that have not been identified and assessed through the higher-level Local Plan and its accompanying SA/SEA. The plan seeks to protect and enhance the local environment with regard to rural landscape and historic distinctiveness, and flora/fauna & biodiversity; it seeks to address localised issues for flooding through the Parish.
(e) the relevance of the plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	No	The NP is not relevant as a plan for implementing community legislation.
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	No	This has been tested through SA/SEA at the Local Plan level & with strong mitigation measures through LP policies, the SA/SEA concluded that there will be no significant residual negative environmental effects. The DNDP does not propose allocation of sites for development projects. The potential for effects from the NDP is restricted by the small-scale nature of proposals and overall policy

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regulations)	Are significant environmental effects likely? Yes/ No	
	Justification and evidence	
		requirements through both the DNDP & the Forest of Dean Local Plan.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	As above in 2(a) – the DNDP does not contribute additionally to the factors already identified as part of the development plan.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	No	No significant transboundary effects are likely from the proposals.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No	No significant negative environmental effects are considered likely to risk human health or the environment.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	No	The DNDP does not propose allocation of sites for development projects. The geographical size of the plan area is small, and the size of the population is relatively small. Therefore, no likely significant environmental effects.
(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;	No	As above. No likely significant negative effects on locally important characteristics – the DNDP does not propose allocation of sites for development projects; it seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment. There are no special natural characteristics or cultural heritage aspects that are particularly vulnerable or sensitive & that have not been taken into account during preparation of the FD Local Plan. FDLP Policy CSP1 Design & Environmental Protection provides overarching guidance for new development. The DNDP is not within any area that has exceeded environmental quality standards, for example, it is not within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). ³⁷ FDLP CSP.1 provides overarching guidance for new development with environmental protection, including pollution. DNDP Policies provide further detailed guidance – DNDP NE4 Dark Skies protects people & wildlife from external light pollution. Parts of the River Leadon are within Flood Risk Zone 3 ³⁸ & there are 2 known areas for local flooding. FDLP Policy CSP.1 provides guidance implementing national requirements for managing flood risk; also, FDLP CSP.2 Climate Change. DNDP Policy NE1 provides detailed local guidance with regard to managing flood risk. The limited spatial extent and small-scale of the plan indicates limited intensification of land use. Overall, no significantly vulnerable areas.

³⁷ <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/>

³⁸ <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regulations)	Are significant environmental effects likely? Yes/ No	
	Justification and evidence	
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	No	<p>The DNNDP area does not include (nor nearby) any sites/areas designated for their international or national significance with regard to Landscape (such as AONB).</p> <p>The DNNDP area does include sites/areas designated for their national significance with regard to the Cultural/Historic environment. There are 3 Scheduled Monuments³⁹; there are 77 designated heritage assets, mostly Grade II Listed Buildings⁴⁰. FDLP Policy CSP1 provides overarching guidance on the historic environment. DNNDP Policies BE2 & BE3 provide further detailed guidance on locally important heritage assets (including non-designated).</p> <p>FoDDC has designated Dymock as a Conservation Area (CA)⁴¹ on account of its special architectural character or historic interest, thus indicating its local importance. FDLP Policy CSP.4 includes guidance for new development with special regard to Conservation Areas. DNNDP Policy BE1 provides further guidance on preserving & enhancing the CA. DNPA Policy BE4 provides further guidance for design principles, including reinforcing local distinctiveness.</p> <p>The DNNDP area does not include sites/areas designated for their international significance with regard to the Biodiversity. However there are internationally protected sites within 20-25km distance⁴² of the Neighbourhood Area. The internationally protected habitats of the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites (Special Area of Conservation SAC) are located to the south, the nearest site approximately 12 km and others scattered towards Lydney with the largest site over 28 km away. The River Wye SAC is located some 8.5 km to the west. The Walmore Common Special Protection Area SPA/Ramsar site is located approximately 16.5 km to the south-east of the Parish. The Wye Valley Woodlands SAC is some 20 km to the south-west. The Severn Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar is located over 25 km to the south. Most are also nationally protected SSSIs. (Distances measured to nearest boundary edge using Magic graphics). The HRA screening process determined that the DNNDP does not itself promote areas, locations, or quanta of development; it sets out policies for evaluating the acceptability of proposals. Therefore, the DNNDP's policies were screened out & there was no requirement identified for appropriate assessment. Overall, it is considered that the plan, the FDLP and the NPPF provide sufficient protection for these internationally designated sites.</p>

³⁹ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>

⁴⁰ Appendix E draft DNNDP National Heritage List (October 2023); also, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

⁴¹ <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/i0khi0o3/dymock-conservation-area.pdf>

⁴² Measured from centre of Dymock village to nearest edge of site boundary using Magic Application <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>

Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regulations)	Are significant environmental effects likely? Yes/ No
Justification and evidence	
	<p>The DNDP area does include nationally designated biodiversity – with areas designated as Ancient Woodland, and Priority Habitats for Deciduous Woodland & Traditional Orchards.</p> <p>Nationally protected species known to be found in the Dymock Parish area include Lesser Horseshoe & Long-Eared Bats – with roosts & feeding areas found. Also, the Noble Chafer, a rare metallic green beetle found in traditional orchards; and the small wild daffodil (<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i>) – that has special local significance.</p> <p>On the edge of the Neighbourhood Area, Kefford Banks Nature Reserve is important for wildlife & contributes towards conserving the daffodils.</p> <p>FDCS Policy CSP.1 provides some guidance for protected sites & CSP.2 includes specific guidance for enhancing biodiversity & supporting green infrastructure corridors & networks. DNDP Policy NE3 updates the CS Policies & provides further details on requirements from new development including identification of areas where biodiversity net gain should be delivered. This provides very strong policy guidance to avoid damage & deliver enhancement.</p> <p>Taking into account the limited spatial extent and small-scale of the plan, with no sites allocated for new development, and taking into account the policies that provide mitigation & guidance, likely effects will be Not Significant.</p>

5.0 SEA SCREENING DECISION

- 5.1 Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations requires that the responsible authority shall determine whether or not a plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. The responsible authority shall:
- (a) take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to these Regulations, and
 - (b) consult the consultation bodies
- 5.2 Where the responsible authority determines 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.
- 5.3 It is considered that the draft Dymock Neighbourhood Development Plan (DNDP 2023 to 2026, October 2023) is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and thus does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This decision is made for the following key reasons:
- The geographical extent of the DNDP is limited and the policies are small-scale such that effects will not be significant
 - Most DNDP policies aim to restrict the extent of development as well as protecting environmental factors
 - The DNDP does not propose any areas, sites, or quanta for development; its policies aim to evaluate and enhance the acceptability of proposals
 - The DNDP is generally supportive and interpretive; the DNDP in combination with the FDLP contains environmental protection, mitigation, and enhancement requirements
 - Likely significant effects have been previously assessed through SA incorporating SEA of the FDLP and therefore, further SEA of the DNDP is not required.
 - There will not be any adverse effects on the integrity of European/international sites designated for nature conservation due to the limited size and extent of any likely development in Dymock and the distance from and/or absence of identified environmental pathways to any designated sites. There is no requirement identified for appropriate assessment.

6.0 HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA) SCREENING

European/Internationally Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

6.1 The DNDP does influence decision-makers on the outcome of applications for project consents, and it does contain policies that could affect one or more European/international sites designated for nature conservation. Therefore, it does need to be subject to HRA. It is considered that there are six⁴³ European/internationally designated sites⁴⁴ for nature conservation that the draft DNDP needs to be screened for Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) and any requirement for subsequent appropriate assessment (AA), as follows:

- The River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located some 7.5km to the west of the Neighbourhood Area
- The Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC – the nearest site is located approximately 12 km to the south of the Neighbourhood Area and others scattered in a southerly direction to the main site some 28km distance
- The Walmore Common Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site is located approximately 16.5 km to the south of the Neighbourhood Area
- The Severn Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar is located over 25 km to the south of the Neighbourhood Area
- The Wye Valley Woodlands SAC is located approximately 20 km to the south-west of the Neighbourhood Area
- The Cotswold Beechwoods SAC located over 25 km to the south-east of the Neighbourhood Area and beyond the Gloucester conurbation

The characteristics, key vulnerabilities, and conservation objectives of the designated sites are summarised⁴⁵, as follows:

6.2 **River Wye SAC:** This large river is a geologically mixed catchment with a largely unmodified river channel. It includes some excellent gorges and significant areas of associated woodland. The Wye has a range of nutrient conditions and generally good water quality for fish, supporting healthy populations of bullheads and lampreys; it also contains high quality spawning

⁴³ The Bredon Hill SAC is over 25 km to the north-east & the Dixon Wood SAC is over 25 km to the east - qualifying feature for both is only the Violet Click Beetle & therefore, both SACs considered beyond the scope of this HRA screening

⁴⁴ Distances measured using Magic Map (Defra) application <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> from centre Dymock village to nearest edge of SAC/SPA boundary

⁴⁵ Data from JNCC <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/special-areas-of-conservation-overview/> and Natural England <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/>

grounds and juvenile habitat for Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*. It holds a dense and well established otter *Lutra lutra* population. The tributaries are the main haven for white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*. The qualifying habitats are transition mires & quaking bogs; and the watercourses with floating vegetation and extensive *Ranunculus* beds. The qualifying species include Shads, Salmon, Lampreys, Otter, Bullhead, and White-Clawed Crayfish. Conservation Objectives aim to ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored, and that the site contributes to achieving favourable conservation status of its qualifying features.

- 6.3 **Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC:** Deciduous woodland, villages, roads and industrial areas – the site is composed of buildings in everyday use used by bats for breeding and a series of mines used by bats for hibernation. Within the roost the bats are vulnerable to disturbance at critical times, structural alteration, and changes in ventilation. The bats also depend on features outside the designated sites including intermediate roost, foraging grounds, and hedgerows/tree belts that the bats use as commuting routes. Impacts on these features can also affect the integrity of the designated site.
- 6.4 The primary reason for selection of the site is the presence of Annex II species Lesser Horseshoe Bat (LHB) *Rhinolophus hipposideros* and Greater Horseshoe Bat (GHB) *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*. This complex of sites on the border of England and Wales contains the greatest concentration 26% of the UK population of LHB and was selected due to the exceptional breeding population. The GHB population represents about 6% of the UK population. Conservation Objectives aim to avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained. This relates to both roosting and foraging habitat – condition, security, access, and disturbance.
- 6.5 **Walmore Common Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar:** A low-lying basin in the Severn Vale adjacent to the River Severn, that is subject to extensive winter flooding and high, artificially maintained water levels in summer. The site supports a range of unimproved and improved wet grasslands overlying a large area of peat and is of botanical and ornithological importance. There is also a large network of ditches that has an important hydrological function as well as supporting a diverse community of flora and fauna. The Common is part of a wider important refuge and feeding area for wildfowl. The site qualifies by supporting internationally important numbers of Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*. Conservation Objectives aim to prevent deterioration of the habitats and significant disturbance of the qualifying features.
- 6.6 **Severn Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar:** A large estuary with extensive intertidal mudflats and sandflats, rocky platforms and islands. Salt marsh fringes the coast backed by ditches and occasional brackish ditches. The seabed is rock and gravel with subtidal sandbanks. The estuary's classic funnel shape, unique in the UK, is a factor causing the Severn to have the second- highest tidal range in the world. Qualifying features: The Severn Estuary SAC hosts the following habitats: estuaries, mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater

at low tide, Atlantic salt meadows (*GlaucoPuccinellietalia maritima*), sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time, and reefs. The site also supports sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*), river lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) and twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*). The Severn Estuary SPA supports overwintering Bewick's swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*); on passage ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) and overwintering curlew (*Numenius arquata*), dunlin (*Calidris alpina alpina*), pintail (*Anas acuta*), redshank (*Tringa tetanus*), and shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*). It also regularly supports at least 20,000 waterfowl.

- 6.7 The three key activities that may cause the greatest impact on the designated features within this site include paddle sports, powered flying and 'other' (dog walking). There is recent growing awareness of the potential for recreational pressures to impact on the Severn Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar site, particularly on the bird populations for which the SPA and Ramsar site are designated and including with regard to functionally linked habitat. The River Severn is functionally linked to the designated site of the estuary and it is over 15 km to the south of Dymock, with the estuary itself over 25 km to the south. Dymock is within the Wye catchment and thus, there are no likely functionally linked environmental pathways.
- 6.8 **Wye Valley Woodlands SAC:** Predominantly broad-leaved deciduous woodland (87%) and a significant proportion of the SAC is already positively managed by a group of woodland/environmental organisations, including Natural England. Annex I habitats that are the primary reason for selection of this site are Beech forests Asperulo-Fagetum, considered to be one of the best areas in the UK. Such a variety of woodland types is rare within the UK. In places lime *Tilia* sp., elm *Ulmus* sp. and oak *Quercus* sp. share dominance with the beech. Structurally the woods include old coppice, pollards and high forest types. *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines.
- 6.9 The woods of the lower Wye Valley on the border of south Wales and England form one of the most important areas for woodland conservation in the UK. A wide range of ecological variation is associated with slope, aspect and landform. The woodland occurs here as a mosaic with other types, including beech *Fagus sylvatica* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* stands. Uncommon trees, including large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos* and rare whitebeams such as *Sorbus porrigentiformis* and *S. rupicola* are found here, as well as locally uncommon herbs, including wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*, stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*. Also, *Taxus baccata* woods and the Wye Valley is representative of yew *Taxus baccata* woods in the south-west of the habitat's range. Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*: for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.
- 6.10 The Conservation Objectives for this site are, subject to natural change, to maintain Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland habitats and geological features in favourable condition (or restored to favourable condition if features are judged to be unfavourable). In particular, to maintain the

Broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland habitat in favourable condition; and to maintain the hibernating population of Horseshoe Bats in favourable condition.

- 6.11 **Cotswold Beechwoods SAC:** The Cotswold Beechwoods represent the most westerly extensive blocks of *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests in the UK. The woods are floristically richer than the Chilterns, and rare plants include red helleborine *Cephalanthera rubra*, stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*, narrow-lipped helleborine *Epipactis leptochila* and wood barley *Hordeolum europaeus*. There is a rich mollusc fauna. The woods are structurally varied, including blocks of high forest and some areas of remnant beech coppice. The Annex I habitats that are the primary reason for selection of this site are *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests.
- 6.12 Key threats to the Cotswold Beechwood SAC for recreational pressures and air pollution from traffic were identified during studies associated with the preparation of new development plans with significant housing growth for Gloucester, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, Cotswold, and Stroud. A collaborative approach was required to address adverse impacts – alone and in-combination. A long-term Strategy (2022)⁴⁶ for mitigating LSEs has been developed and agreed. The Strategy applies to a zone of influence of 15.4 km from the SAC. Dymock in the Forest of Dean DC area is beyond this identified zone of influence – the centre of the Parish area is over 25 km measured directly from the nearest boundary of the SAC.

Screening of NDP Policies

- 6.13 The DNDP policies were investigated as to whether they could potentially result in likely significant effects (LSEs) on the integrity of an European designated nature conservation site either alone or in combination with other plans and policies. Assessment was made considering the likely implications/outcomes that might arise from implementation of the DNDP policies and having regard to the conservation objectives for the European sites and the precautionary principle. It is appreciated that the plan is at the draft Regulation 14 stage and may be subject to further revision after consultation. However, it is understood that the overall policy objectives and content are not expected to substantially change.
- 6.14 The screening of the DNDP Policies for LSEs is set out in the table 6.1, as follows:

Table 6.1: Screening of DNDP Policies for LSEs

DNDP Policies	Screening Assessment Commentary	Screened In/out
Housing Mix & Need		
HM1 Housing to Meet Local Needs	New homes will be supported where they contribute to local needs & meet certain requirements for type, size & location, including high quality design and	Out

⁴⁶ For Stroud DC, Cheltenham BC, Cotswold DC, Gloucester CC, Stroud DC, Tewkesbury DC – Liley D & Panter C 2022. Cotswold Beechwoods SAC Recreation Mitigation Strategy. Report by Footprint Ecology.

	affordable housing. The Policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	
HM2 New Housing outside the Settlement Boundary	New homes will be supported where they contribute to local needs & meet certain requirements for type, size & location, including exceptional quality design. The Policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
HM2a Rural Workers; HM2b Rural Exception; HM2c Re-Use of Buildings	New homes will be supported for essential need, small-scale (up to 25 dwellings), and re-use of buildings for homes – all subject to meeting other policies & strong requirements to limit any environmental effects. The Policies do not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
Built Environment		
BE1 Preservation & Enhancement of Dymock CA	New development is required to protect the visual, historic or architectural character & setting of the Conservation Area – a small defined area in Dymock village.	Out
BE2 Protecting Archaeological Sites	New development is required to protect sites of archaeological interest & settings.	Out
BE3 Local Heritage Assets & Non-designated Assets	New development is required to protect & conserve the historic environment. The policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
BE4 Building Design for New Buildings & Extensions	Policy supports new and re-developments that present high-quality design, enhance local distinctiveness & meet with requirements for limiting environmental effects. The policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
Sustainability		
SU1 Promoting Sustainability	The policy promotes renewable energy; energy efficiency; water efficiency; and encourages sustainable living.	Out
Community Infrastructure		
C1 Local Community Facilities	Policy supports protection of existing & new provision of community facilities that meet requirements regarding character, identified need, amenity, and car parking. It does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
C2 Green Space	Policy aims to protect identified Green Spaces; it does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out

Natural Environment		
NE1 Managing Flood Risk	Applications for new development at known flooding areas will not be supported. All new development must be set back 8m from watercourses & have no adverse effects on water environment/resources.	Out
NE2 Protecting & Enhancing the Local Landscape Character	New development must protect, conserve and where possible enhance the local landscape character. The policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
NE3 Biodiversity	All new development should demonstrate how it will deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity. The policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
NE4 Dark Skies	Policy seeks to minimise light pollution; it does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
Transport & Travel		
TE1 Improving Road Safety	New development must demonstrate no adverse impact on road safety.	Out
TE1 Sustainable Transport & Travel	The Policy does not support new development that would exacerbate existing transport issues; it supports new development that has adequate car parking, provides walking & cycling links, & protects PROWs.	Out
Economy		
E1 Local Employment Development	New local employment development is supported where it meets certain requirements such as size, location & accessibility. The policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
E2 Agricultural & Industrial Development	New agricultural & industrial development should demonstrate that it meets certain requirements, including associated with accessibility, amenity, drainage, landscape, & PROWs. The policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
E3 Protecting Existing Local Employment	Proposals for change of use or redevelopment will only be supported under certain circumstances associated with identified need, or resolution of any environmental problems. The policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out

E4 Live-Work Units	New dwellings or extensions that facilitate homeworking will be supported where they meet certain requirements associated with accessibility, nuisance & amenity. The policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
E5 Telecommunications & Broadband	New & improved infrastructure will be supported provided it meets with certain requirements that seek to minimise any adverse effects. The policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out
TM1 Rural & Farm Tourism Development	Policy supports proposals for tourism & rural enterprise appropriate to scale, nature & location with requirements for accessibility, highway safety & parking, amenity (noise, odour, light, agriculture, biodiversity, landscaping). The policy does not promote areas, locations, or quanta of development.	Out

- 6.15 In consideration of the small geographical area of the DNDP, its distance from European sites outside the Dymock Neighbourhood Area boundary, and that the DNDP does not allocate sites for new development, this HRA screening considers that the DNDP is not likely to have significant effects on European/internationally designated sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
- 6.16 The DNDP does not allocate any sites or quanta for development such that increases in human population are limited with concomitant limits to potential effects on protected sites. Thus, potential effects on bat roosts and foraging habitats that may be associated with the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC are limited due to the small-scale and limited new development supported by the plan. Potential increases in recreational activities associated with the River Wye SAC, the Severn SPA/SAC/Ramsar and the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC are unlikely due to distance and small scale, and are not significant. Dymock is located beyond the zone of influence for potential recreational effects on the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC.
- 6.17 The DNDP contains policies for assessing the acceptability of proposed development. There will not be any adverse effects on the integrity of designated sites due to the limited size and extent of any likely development in Dymock NDP area and the distance from and/or absence of identified environmental pathways to any sites. The HRA of the Local Plan remains valid and there is no new material and relevant information associated with Dymock that should be considered.

7.0 STATUTORY SCREENING CONSULTATION & OVERALL CONCLUSION

Conclusion & Statutory Screening Consultation

- 7.1 It is considered that the draft Dymock Neighbourhood Development Plan (DNDP to 2026, October 2023) is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and thus does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 7.2 HRA screening considers that the DNDP is not likely to have significant effects on European/internationally designated sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
- 7.3 This Screening Report was sent to the environmental bodies (Environment Agency EA, Historic England HE, and Natural England NE) for the formal five weeks consultation (finishing 30 November 2023) in order to demonstrate that due processes have been undertaken to screen the draft Dymock Neighbourhood Development Plan 2026 (October 2023) with regard to HRA and SEA. The Environment Agency advised that in consideration of the matters within their remit, the NDP is considered unlikely to have significant environmental impacts. Historic England advised that they have no objection to the view that a full SEA is not required.
- 7.5 Natural England advised that the proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any SAC, SPA, Ramsar wetlands or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs or Ramsar wetlands. As the relevant environmental body with regard to the Habitats Regulations Assessment, this response confirms the screening opinion reached by the Council – that the DNDP is not likely to have significant effects on European/internationally designated sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
- 7.6 Natural England further advised that the proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any SSSI, Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), National Park, Area of Outstanding Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined. Thus, NE concur with the Council's opinion regarding effects on nationally important areas.
- 7.7 NE further advised that they do not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species; nor do they routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. Therefore, NE recommended that *“advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.”*

- 7.8 The SEA screening took into account locally available information on environmental assets, including evidence for the preparation of the NDP. The Council still considers that, taking into account the limited spatial extent and small-scale of the plan, with no sites allocated for new development, and taking into account the policies that provide mitigation and guidance, likely effects will be Not Significant and that an SEA is not required.