# Soho Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2040

# Strategic Environment Assessment Screening Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report February 2020

Prepared by Westminster City Council for Soho Neighbourhood Forum



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## 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Legislative background

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union obligations, including under the Habitats Directive and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.

The Habitats Directive is transposed into English law under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, and seeks to avoid negative impacts on European protected sites.

The SEA Directive has been transposed into English law by the Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (hereafter referred to as the SEA Regulations), and seeks to make sure that the environmental implications of a plan or programme are taken into account.

#### 1.2. HRA requirements for neighbourhood plans

The purpose of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is to identify whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The first step of the appropriate assessment process is a screening assessment, which' purpose is to screen out if any significant effect is likely for any European site, based on objective information. Where there is a risk of a significant effect on a European site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, then there will be a requirement to progress to an Appropriate Assessment.

#### 1.3. SEA requirements for neighbourhood plans

Draft neighbourhood plan proposals are required to be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, which is commonly referred to as a "screening" exercise. If likely significant environmental effects are identified, a Strategic Environmental Assessment will be required in accordance with the SEA regulations.

The National Planning Practice Guidance provides examples of when a strategic environmental assessment may be required:

- 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.

If the requirement for a Habitat Regulations Assessment is identified, then a plan will normally also require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

# 2. Summary of the neighbourhood plan

Name of the neighbourhood	Soho Neighbourhood Plan <sup>1</sup>
plan	Sono Neighbourhood Flant
Geographic coverage of the plan	The Soho Neighbourhood Area covers an area in the south east of Westminster, which includes Oxford Street as its northern boundary, the properties east of Regent Street as its western boundary, Westminster's boundary with Camden to the east along Charing Cross Road, and Shaftesbury Avenue to the south.
	London Underground stations Piccadilly Circus and Tottenham Court Road mark the southern and north-eastern extents of the area.
Vision of the plan	The vision of the plan is as follows:
	'The Soho Neighbourhood Area is and will continue to be a unique and important part of London with a rich and vibrant heritage. This Plan will support sustainable development, which reinforces Soho's reputation for creativity, diversity and tolerance. These characteristics are demonstrated in many ways, for example: through the range of businesses, from sole trader to multiples and household names; through its varied and strong residential communities and through its diverse cultural and entertainment offer. The Plan will protect this diverse mix and also enable growth, which sustainably enhances what is already a complexly developed area.'
Key issues/objectives	The plan identifies 8 objectives:
	<ol> <li>To preserve, enhance, and promote the heritage and culture of Soho to keep is underlying spirit.</li> <li>To support and enhance the range and diversity of businesses in Soho particularly the creative industries and other business clusters by ensuring that there continues to be a continuing supply of flexibly sized accommodation.</li> <li>To support investment which respects the nature of the conservation area, generally retaining its character and human scale.</li> <li>To support the continued local of live music venues in the area and ensure good management in all forms of entertainment, leisure and cultural activity which minimises any adverse impacts on residents and other users.</li> <li>To recognise the demand for and to support growth in the residential community by seeking to ensure that the housing required by WCC is located within Soho wherever possible with an appropriately sized mix of units and to enhance the attractiveness of the area for residents by reducing nuisance, noise, crime and anti-social behaviour.</li> <li>To promote sustainable development, improve air quality, increase green infrastructure and improve the public realm.</li> <li>To support a modal shift towards walking and cycling, promote car free living and freight consolidation to help reduce traffic and congestion.</li> <li>To reduce the amounts waste left on the street by encouraging better facilities for recycling and waste management within premises and supporting the increased provision of dedicated food waste recycling.</li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup> Draft plan available at: <a href="http://planforsoho.org">http://planforsoho.org</a>

#### Summary of policies

The plan includes 31 policies set out in 5 sections, which are summarised below:

#### Section 1: Culture and Heritage

Policy 1: Development Proposals in the Soho Conservation Area encourages development proposals that protect, respect and enhance the character. It seeks to protect and enhance public rear yards, courts, back streets and mews.

Policy 2: Proposals for Tall Buildings seeks to prevent adverse impacts on townscape of three named open spaces, heritage assets and designated strategic views.

Policy 3: Maintaining Local Character seeks to reflect prevailing character, building heights and townscape of individual development sites and the surrounding area.

Policy 4: Mixed Use Developments seeks to provide a mix of occupiers and apply the 'agent of change' principle as set out in the new London Plan.

Policy 5: Shopfronts and Ground Floor Frontages seeks to avoid uniformity in shopfront design and encourage colour and variety.

#### Section 2: Commercial Activity

Policy 6: Premises for Small Businesses seeks to ensure suitable SME space is provided in commercial and mixed-use development.

Policy 7: New Office Developments seeks to provide flexible office accommodation to support a range of business users and avoid large floorplate single-occupier developments.

Policy 8: Creating Active Ground Floor Uses in New Commercial Developments seeks to create active uses at ground floor level, avoiding under-used space.

Policy 9: Providing Public Art to Reflect Local Culture and Heritage seeks to ensure that, where public art is required, it reflects the culture and heritage of Soho and wherever possible is created using Soho-based creatives.

Policy 10: Providing Accommodation for the Creative Industries seeks to ensure that lettable space in commercial and mixed-use developments is designed to offer a variety of sizes of workspace for the creative industries.

Policy 11: Private Members' Clubs resists the loss of existing facilities and encourages new ones where appropriate.

#### Section 3: Entertainment and Night-time Economy

Policy 12: Live Music Venues seeks to protect existing D2 live music venues and encourages new facilities where they are acceptable in terms of amenity impact.

Policy 13: Food and Beverage Developments to Protect Existing Residential Amenity seeks to ensure that proposals for A1 cafes, A3, A4, A5 and D2 uses which are in direct physical proximity to residential fully apply the 'agent of change' principle and do not have adverse impacts on residential amenity.

Policy 14: Provision of Public Toilets supports development proposals that incorporate public toilet provision.

#### Section 4: Housing

Policy 15: Provision of Affordable Housing seeks to define the 'vicinity of development' as being within the Soho Neighbourhood Area. This would be applied where developers cannot provide affordable housing on-site.

Policy 16: Car Free Residential Development seeks car-free development and to restrict the right of occupiers to apply for onstreet parking permits.

Policy 17: Residential Space Standards seeks to focus residential development on one- and two-bedroom units, not to exceed 138sq m in size.

Policy 18: Maintaining Residential Amenity During Construction Works seeks to protect amenity during the construction phase and requires Construction Management Plans to address residential amenity issues.

Policy 19: Delivery and Servicing Plans for New Development requires major developments to submit a Delivery and Servicing Plan addressing amenity and environmental issues.

Section 5: Sustainable Development and the Environment Policy 20: Improving Air Quality seeks to maximise improvements to air quality through design solutions.

Policy 21: Reducing Energy seeks design solutions that conserve heat and energy, reduce carbon emissions and avoid energy waste.

Policy 22: Refurbishment and Retrofitting of Existing Buildings requires major developments to have considered refurbishment and retrofitting of buildings before considering redevelopment. Retrofitting measures are strongly supported.

Policy 23: Delivery Consolidation Points requires any development proposals at two named sites to have considered the potential for adaptation and reuse for all or part of the buildings as microconsolidation centres.

Policy 24: New Pocket Parks encourages roof gardens provided they have a robust management plan considering amenity issues.

Policy 25: Sustainable Green Infrastructure on Buildings requires development proposals to provide the highest feasible level of greening to buildings and curtilage.

Policy 26: Improving Public Open Space encourages proposals that will contribute to the improvement and greening of two named locations.

Policy 27: Pedestrian Movement in Development Proposals requires all development proposals to be designed to facilitate pedestrian movement and gives a series of suggested design measures.

Policy 28: Securing New Pedestrian Routes encourages public access improvements through new development.

Policy 29: Property Numbering and Wayfinding Signage requires facades and entrances to clearly display a street number to improve wayfinding.

Policy 30: Cycle Parking encourages new development to provide on-street cycle stands.

Policy 31: Waste and Recycling Facilities in New Developments requires development to provide separate waste and recycling facilities within the boundary of the development. Major developments should also provide additional facilities for designated neighbouring users within a 100-metre radius. Development including the provision of food and drink must provide sufficient space to store food waste as a separate recycling category.

# 3. HRA Screening

# 3.1. Potential impacts on European sites from proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan

There are no European sites in Westminster. For this assessment four Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and two Special Protection Areas outside of the borough have been identified for consideration in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive. These are:

- Wimbledon Common SAC
- Richmond Park SAC
- Epping Forest SAC
- Essex Estuaries SAC
- Thames Estuary and Marshes Special Protection Area and Ramsar
- Lee Valley Special Protection Area and Ramsar

Epping Forest SAC is located 11km from the plan area, and the Thames Estuary Marshes SPA and Ramsar site is located 37km from the plan area. These two sites are considered to be too far from the plan area to be given further consideration.

Westminster City Council has conducted a screening exercise for the whole of Westminster as part of the revision of its City Plan which concludes<sup>2</sup>:

'No likely significant impacts on Wimbledon Common SAC and Lee Valley Special Protection Area and Ramsar have been identified, as Westminster is outside of the core recreational catchment of these sites. No likely significant impacts on Richmond Park SAC have been identified as development in Westminster is unlikely to impact on habitats on the site.

Overall, no likely significant impacts on any European sites have been identified, either alone or in combination. Therefore, no amendments to the City Plan are required and it will not be necessary to progress to the Appropriate Assessment stage.'

The Soho Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any proposals that impose a potential impact pathway to any European sites. The area is outside of the recreational catchment of the sites identified above and its is unlikely that any policies, plans or projects in the plan will result in an impact on traffic movement to or from any of these sites. The conclusions of the screening for the City Plan 2019-2040 therefore also apply to the proposals in the Soho Neighbourhood Plan.

In terms of further 'in combination' effects, consideration needs to be given to the future arrival of Crossrail at Tottenham Court Road and the transformation of the Oxford Street District. These projects will improve the accessibility of the area from across London and the wider South East, and improve the public realm and movement in the area. Due to the scale and nature of the proposals in the Soho Neighbourhood Plan, it is unlikely that any proposals in the plan result in any significant effects to European sites in combination with these projects.

#### 3.2. Screening outcome

It is concluded that no full HRA needs to be undertaken as there are no likely effects on European sites. This is consistent with the outcomes of the HRA screening for the Westminster City Plan 2019-2040 and the draft new London Plan.

The views of Natural England will be sought in January 2020.

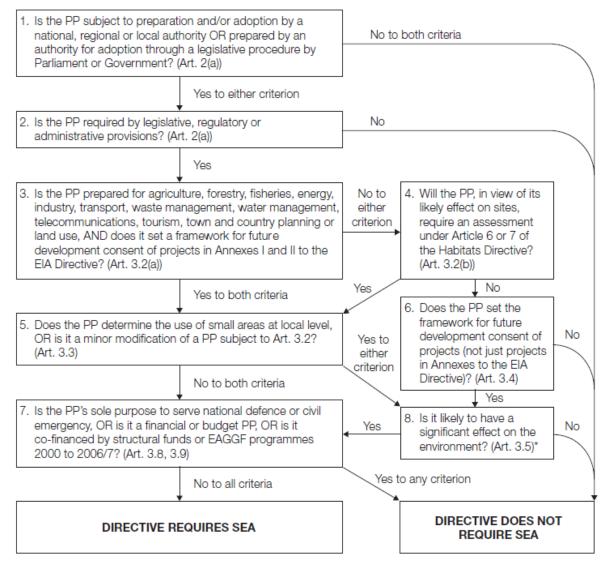
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> HRA Screening Report, Westminster City Council (June 2019)

# 4. SEA Screening

## 4.1. Establishing the need for SEA

Practical guidance on the application of the SEA Directive published in 2005 by the predecessor of the Ministry of Housing, Communities, & Local Government sets out a flow chart to establish the need for SEA. This flow chart is duplicated below, after which the need for SEA for the Soho Neighbourhood Plan is established.

Figure 1 SEA flowchart



<sup>\*</sup>The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

Table 1 Establishing the need for SEA

Assessment criteria	Assessment	
Is the Plan 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 or government? (Art 2(a))	The Plan is being prepared by the Soho Neighbourhood Forum under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and will be "made" by Westminster City Council under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.	Yes
Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art 2(a))	There is no requirement to produce a neighbourhood plan, however, they are subject to formal procedures and regulations laid down by Government.	Yes
Is the Plan 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? (Art. 3.2(a))	The Soho Neighbourhood Plan is prepared for town and country planning purposes, but does not explicitly set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I or II of the EIA Directive.	No
Will the Plan in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?	The Soho Neighbourhood Plan could potentially have an impact on European protected sites protected by the Habitats Directive.	Yes
Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local level OR is it a minor modification of a Plan subject to Art 3.2? (Art 3.3)	The Soho Neighbourhood Plan seeks to direct and shape future uses, building upon the City Plan and will provide a framework for future development consent of projects in the area.	Yes
Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)	See the results of table 2 'Determining the likely significant effects'	No

# 4.2. Determining the likely significant effects

The likely significant environmental effects of a neighbourhood plan depend on the contents of the plan. The criteria for assessing any likely significant effects on the environment are specified in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.

The table below sets out these criteria, along with a consideration of the likely impact of the neighbourhood plan against each of the criteria.

Table 2 Determining the likely significant effects

SEA Regulations Criteria	Comments	Likely Significant Effects?
1. The characteristics of the neighbourhood plan, having regard, in particular, to:		
1a) The degree to which the neighbourhood plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	Once 'made', the Soho Neighbourhood Plan will set out a framework with which to manage development and change in the area including: - Conserving and enhancing heritage assets - Protecting and encouraging small commercial units - Providing new housing, including affordable housing - Providing additional green and open spaces by transforming the public realm	No

	- The sustainable movement of people and goods in the area, including through freight micro- consolidation.	
	However, the Soho Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any development sites in the plan. All the projects outlined above are of a local scale and link in with wider initiatives.	
1b) The degree to which the neighbourhood plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The Soho Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the development plan for the City of Westminster and will – together with the City Plan and London Plan – be used to determine planning applications. The Soho Neighbourhood Plan is required to be in general conformity with the City Plan. The plan area is affected by the Oxford Street District Place Plan. The public realm aspirations of the plan broadly align with the ambitions for the wider area as set out in the Oxford Street District Place Plan but will need further co-ordination for their implementation.	No
1c) The relevance of the neighbourhood plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	Achieving sustainable development is at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework and is one of the basic conditions that Neighbourhood Plans must meet. The Soho Neighbourhood Plan seeks to improve the local environment and policies encourage sustainable development, particularly relating to transport and waste.	No
1d) Environmental problems relevant to the neighbourhood plan	The area is not within Flood Risk Zone 3. The whole area is deficient in play space and parts of the area are deficient in open space and wildlife. Air quality is poor along main roads. Oxford Street in the north and Regent Street to the west are identified by the Mayor as Air Quality Focus Areas. The plan's ambitions to create new green and open spaces, high standards of sustainable design, and ambition to enhance sustainable travel seek to address these environmental problems.	No
1e) The relevance of the neighbourhood plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The Soho Neighbourhood Plan has to be in general conformity with Westminster's City Plan, which already is in conformity with such legislation. The Soho Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any proposals of relevance for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment.	No
particular, to:	ects and of the area likely to be affected, havir	ng regard, in
2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Improvements to the quality and function of the public realm and the high-quality sustainable design that the plan is seeking to achieve will be long term and permanent, but are dependent on wider initiatives including the delivery of the Westminster City Plan, the opening of Crossrail at Tottenham Court Road and investment in the Oxford Street District.	No
2b) The cumulative nature of the effects	The Soho Neighbourhood Plan will together with the Westminster City Plan and London Plan form part of the development plan for the area. The Westminster City Plan is being revised and includes many similar aspirations to the neighbourhood plan. The public realm aspirations of the Soho	No

	Neighbourhood Plan broadly align with the Oxford Street District Place Plan but further co-ordination in the implementation stages will be required. Any cumulative effects of these plans and policies and the proposals in the Soho Neighbourhood Plan are unlikely to have any further significant effects on the local environment.	
2c) The transboundary nature of the effects	The effects of the Soho Neighbourhood Plan will be limited to the neighbourhood planning area, although alignment with further public realm aspirations in the wider Oxford Street District will be necessary.	No
2d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	The Soho Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a positive or neutral effect on human health as the risk of accidents is likely to decrease due to changes to movement patterns resulting from the plan's policies.	No
2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	There are approximately 3,500-4,500 people living Soho (approximation based on GLA Population Projections). Although the area has strong geographical links with neighbouring areas including Fitzrovia, Covent Garden, Chinatown and Mayfair, proposals in the Soho Neighbourhood Plan are not considered to affect areas beyond the neighbourhood planning area.	No
2f) 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	There are no significant natural assets in the area. Most of the area is a designated conservation area, with various listed buildings. The plan seeks to maximise environmental standards, whilst recognising the challenges around historic buildings. The plan also seeks to protect heritage assets and important architectural features.	No
2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	The area is covered by the Great Estates Archaeological Priority Area. Three protected vistas identified in the Mayor's London View Management Framework cover the area. Proposals in the plan are not expected to significantly impact on these areas and designations.	No

### 4.3. Screening outcome

Having reviewed the Soho Neighbourhood Plan against the requirements in the SEA Directive, it is concluded that the Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and accordingly should not be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

#### 4.4. Next steps

The screening determination is subject to consultation with the statutory consultation bodies. The consultation bodies are specified in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and are as follows:

- Historic England;
- Environment Agency; and
- Natural England.

Consultation responses from the consultation bodies will be included in Annex 1.

# 5. Conclusion

## 5.1. Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

The HRA screening assessment concludes that there are no likely significant effects in respect of European sites. Further stages of Appropriate Assessment are therefore not required.

### 5.2. Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

The SEA screening assessment concludes that the Soho Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. The Soho Neighbourhood Plan therefore does not need to be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The outcomes of these screening exercises are subject to the views of Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.

# Annex 1 Consultation responses



Ms Mollà Bolta Policy, Performance and Communications Westminster City Council 64, Victoria Street London SW1E 6QP Our ref: PL00604526

By email: neighbourhoodplanning@westminster.gov.uk

6th February 2020

Dear Ms Mollà Bolta

Soho Neighbourhood Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report (December 2019) consultation

Historic England is the Government's advisor on all matters relating to the historic environment and a statutory consultee on a broad range of applications including the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of plans. Accordingly, we have reviewed your document in the light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with particular regard to the NPPF's core planning principle that heritage assets be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. Having done this Historic England is pleased to offer the following advice.

On the basis of the information provided, namely that the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate new sites and does not contain policies that are likely to have significant environmental effects, we agree with the City Council's conclusion that SEA would not be required. Please note that this advice is based on the information that has been provided to us and does not affect our obligation to advise on, and potentially object to any specific development proposal which may subsequently arise from this Neighbourhood Plan, and which may have adverse effects on the environment.

Yours sincerely,

Ohm

David English

Development Advice Team Leader E-mail: david.english@HistoricEngland.org.uk

Direct Dial: 020 7973 3747



Stonewall

Date: 13 January 2020

Our ref: 304743

Your ref: SEA & HRA on draft Soho Neighbourhood Plan

Ms M Mollà Bolta Policy (Planning) Officer Policy, Performance and Communications Westminster City Council 17th Floor 64 Victoria Street London SW1E 6QP

#### BY EMAIL ONLY

neighbourhoodplanning@westminster.gov.uk mmbolta@westminster.gov.uk



#### SEA & HRA on draft Soho Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2020.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

#### Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

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

#### **Neighbourhood Plan**

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the <u>National Planning Practice Guidance</u>. The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance 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 may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of <u>significant</u> populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.



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T 0300 060 3900

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to <a href="mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk">consultations@naturalengland.org.uk</a>

Yours sincerely

Sharon Jenkins Operations Delivery Consultations Team Natural England



Thu 09/01/2020 16:48

#### HNL Sustainable Places < HNLSustainablePlaces@environment-agency.gov.uk>

RE: SEA&HRA on draft Soho Neighbourhood Plan

To Neighbourhood, Planning: WCC

#### Dear Marina.

Thank you for consulting us on the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report for the draft Soho Neighbourhood Plan.

Based on a review of environmental constraints for which we are a statutory consultee, there are no areas of fluvial flood risk or watercourses within the neighbourhood plan area. Therefore we do not consider there to be potential significant environmental effects relating to these environmental constraints or other environmental sensitivities of interest to us.

Your Surface Water Management Plan will indicate if there are any critical drainage areas from local sources of flood risk (e.g. surface water, groundwater and sewerage) which coincide with the neighbourhood plan area.

We encourage the neighbourhood forum to use the plan to improve the local environment. For your information, together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint guidance or neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at:

https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/consider-environment-neighbourhood-plans/

Kind regards,

#### **Demitry Lyons**

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