

Summary of Issues Raised and Responses to the Otford VDS2

Name of Respondent	Organisation	Summary of Comment	Response	Amendment
Response: #368198	*	Most disappointed that the only reference to cycling comes under the leisure and recreation category section 1.5. It does deserve consideration also as transport especially as a proposal for safe cycle facilities between Otford and Sevenoaks from part of the Districts Cycle Strategy.	<p>Whilst it is recognised that cycling is mainly referred to in the landscape character and open spaces section, it does highlight the fact that the local community considers that on-road cycling is dangerous and also states that the Parish Council supports all opportunities to extend or promote safe cycle routes within the Parish.</p> <p>It is therefore the officer's view that the VDS meets the aims of the respondent. It should also be noted that the VDS can only control issues with the Parish and this proposal would partly cover issues outside the area covered by the VDS. In addition there is not a separate section in the VDS for transport to discuss this issue as requested. The Parish did not consider that it was necessary to have a separate transport section.</p>	None
Carla Jackson	Natural England	<p>Otford Village Design Statement - Sevenoaks District Council.</p> <p>1. Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 27 November 2014, which was received by Natural England on 27 November 2014. Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural</p>	<p>1. These are standard comments. The Parish Council have also taken into account Catherine Tonge's comments below which are more specific comments.</p>	1. None.

		<p>environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development. Natural England welcomes design guidelines that respect, and where possible, enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding natural and built environment; use natural resources more sustainably; and bring benefits for the local community, for example through green space provision and access to and contact with nature. The following is offered as general advice which we would expect to have been considered in the preparation of a Town or Village Design Statement;</p> <p><u>Landscape</u></p> <p>2. To preserve the wider landscape character of area, the Town or Village Design Statement should recognise and give appropriate consideration to the impact of the design statement on protected landscapes such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), if the town or village is within or adjacent to one.</p> <p>Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) provide a context for looking at possible changes and for seeking to ensure that the countryside character is protected and enhanced. Local area LCAs and those for protected landscapes (where applicable), should be cross-referenced as they are a useful tool to ensure that the Village Design Statement makes a positive contribution in terms of design, form and location, to the character and functions of the landscape, and avoids any unacceptable impacts. Following the principles of LCA at a local scale helps to capture the significant features, style and patterns of settlement and setting within the</p>	<p>2. The VDS recognises the importance of the protected AONB landscape and states that the existing pattern and features of the landscape will be maintained. It also makes clear the community supports the need to conserve and enhance the AONB. The Parish Council also consider that they have identified the parts of the Landscape Character they wish to protect and enhance and therefore there is no need to use the LCA tool.</p>	<p>2. VDS now identifies the land covered by AONB.</p>
--	--	--	---	--

		<p>landscape and key views in and around the village. National Park and AONB Management Plans can also provide useful information for design statements within or adjoining protected landscapes.</p> <p>Natural England is revising the suite of 159 National Character Area (NCA) profiles to make environmental evidence and information easily available to a wider audience. NCA profiles are guidance documents which include a description of the key ecosystem services provided in each character area and how these benefit people, wildlife and the economy. They identify potential opportunities for positive environmental change and provide the best available information and evidence as a context for local decision making and action.</p> <p>The revised and current NCA profiles are available on the NCA pages of our website for you to refer to. The complete series of revised profiles will be published by April 2014.</p> <p><u>Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Design</u></p> <p>3. Green infrastructure is a term used to refer to the living network of green spaces, water and other environmental features in both urban and rural areas. It is often used in an urban context to cover the benefits including space for recreation, access to nature, flood storage and urban cooling to support climate change mitigation, food production, wildlife habitats and health & well-being improvements provided by trees, rights of way, parks, gardens, road verges, allotments, cemeteries, woodlands, rivers and wetlands.</p>	<p>3. The VDS identifies green areas within the village that are important and also in particular seeks to protect and identify important public rights of way. Within the design principles there are clear aims to protect land that contributes to the open space and public footpaths.</p>	<p>3. None.</p>
--	--	---	--	-----------------

		<p>Green infrastructure is also relevant in a rural context, where it might additionally refer to the use of farmland, woodland, wetlands or other natural features to provide services such as flood protection, carbon storage or water purification. Green infrastructure maintains critical ecological links between town and country. The Design Statement could usefully promote high quality and multifunctional green infrastructure. Green Infrastructure by Design provides an introduction to delivering green infrastructure at the micro and neighbourhood scale through features such as street trees, green facades and green roofs, where consistent with the local character. These features can be extremely important in increasing ecological connectivity between green spaces, particularly when footpaths and green corridors are not feasible.</p> <p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <p>4. The Design Statement should have recognised and referenced designated wildlife sites¹ and other biodiversity assets in the immediate area, such as protected species, ecological networks, habitats and green spaces. Design guidelines should respect, and where possible, enhance the town or village's local and neighbouring biodiversity resources. The Town and Country Planning Association has produced a practical and design orientated Biodiversity by Design guide to achieving high levels of biodiversity in developments, which may be of use. When preparing the Design Statement, your local Wildlife Trust and local environmental record centre should have been consulted, and local and national Biodiversity Action Plans should be referenced where relevant.</p>	<p>4. The Parish Council have spoken to the relevant bodies. The report will be amended to show more reference to biodiversity.</p>	<p>4. In paragraph 1.2 the protection of the biodiversity in the down land area is now mentioned as well as the SSSI.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Opportunity Area next to the Vestry Trading Estate is now recognised in paragraph 7.2.</p>
--	--	--	---	--

		<p><u>Community Engagement</u></p> <p>5. As an organisation, we are committed to involving the community in our work, ensuring that local people and the organisations that support them are consulted at the earliest possible stage. We are keen to see this principle adopted as part of the village design statement formulation process so that local people have a chance to contribute to the development of the statements from the outset. We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.</p>	5. Noted	5. Noted
Jennifer Wilson	Environment Agency	<p><u>Oxford Village Design Statement</u></p> <p>Thank you for consulting us on the above. Overall we have no major concerns with the details within this document. We would however, recommend a minor change to the following text for clarification purposes.</p> <p>8.5 The Darent In 2013 the Government finally agreed that the benefit to the river outweighed the cost of adapting abstraction practices and agreed that there should be a significant reduction in abstraction at Eynsford, Lullingstone and Shoreham. It is hoped this will have a positive effect upon flow along the whole course of the river.</p>	Change proposed regarding the Darent was agreed.	Amendment was included in paragraph 8.5.
Barbara Barnes	Highways Agency	<p>The Highways Agency (HA) is an executive agency of the Department for Transport (DfT). We are responsible for operating, maintaining and improving England's strategic road network (SRN) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport. The</p>	No changes required.	No amendments made.

		HA will be concerned with proposals that have the potential to impact the safe and efficient operation of the SRN and in this case the M25. The Highways Agency offers no comment with regard to the Otford Village Statement.		
Catherine Tonge	Natural England	<p>Thank you for giving Natural England the opportunity to comment on Otford's Village Design statement. My brief comments are as follows:</p> <p>1. We welcome the commitment to protecting Biodiversity and landscape character, particularly the recognition of the importance of green spaces (such as gardens) within the village boundary and use of hedgerows as wildlife corridors. Specific reference to the Otford to Shoreham Downs SSSI by name may help clarify the location to the reader.</p> <p>2. We note that Kent Downs AONB has been among early contributors to this document and support their input. The NPPF states that "Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty" (NPPF para 115). Therefore, as much of Otford Village falls within the AONB, it may be worth briefly defining this boundary somewhere in the main document (even if just referencing the map in Appendix 3) and making loose reference to the AONB Management Plan.</p> <p>Due to the current pressure of consultations on land-use plans, I have not been able to spend the time I would have wished reviewing and commenting on your Neighbourhood Plan. Nevertheless, I hope you find these comments helpful.</p>	<p>1. Agreed that the location should be clarified.</p> <p>2. Agreed the AONB Map should be referenced.</p>	<p>1. The following was added: <i>"Protecting the biodiversity of the whole downland area is also reflected in the designation of the Otford to Shoreham Downs as an area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Otford Community have indicated a clear commitment to its protection"</i>.</p> <p>2. AONB boundary map is now referenced and mention is now made to the AONB Management Plan.</p>

