

Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment

Screening Report

August 2025

Updated October 2025 (to incorporate the consultation responses from the statutory bodies)

1. Introduction

1.1 This screening report has been prepared to determine whether the Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Development Plan should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation 2004 (SEA Regulations).

2. Legislative Background

2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC. This was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations.

2.2 This report will also screen to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). A HRA is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites) as a result of the implementation of a plan/project. As a general 'rule of thumb' it is identified that sites with pathways of 10-15km of the plan/project boundary should be included with a HRA.

2.3 This report focuses on screening for SEA and HRA, and considers criteria for establishing whether a full assessment is needed.

3. SEA Screening Opinion

3.1 The assessment has been made by Rugby Borough Council as to whether the Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have any significant environmental effects. This assessment has been undertaken bearing in mind the following context:

- The neighbourhood plan has been developed to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan together with the NPPF
- The Local Plan was subject to a Sustainability Appraisal that sets the framework for growth and development within the borough until 2031.

Table 1: Application of the SEA Directive

Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004	No/Yes	Reason
<p>Regulation 2(1)</p> <p>Is the PP (plan or programme) 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))</p>	Yes	<p>If the final Neighbourhood Plan is successful at referendum and is subsequently 'made' by the Local Planning Authority it will become part of the Development Plan with similar status to the Local Plan.</p>
<p>Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))</p>	Yes	<p>Communities have a right to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, but are not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative purposes to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Once 'made' the Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan would form part of the statutory development plan and would be used when making decisions on planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area. Therefore, it is considered necessary to answer the following questions to determine further if an SEA is required.</p>
<p>Regulation 5(2)</p> <p>Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries,</p>	Yes	<p>The Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan is prepared for town and country planning and land use. The plan sets out a framework for some aspects of future</p>

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))		<p>development in the Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>Once 'made' the Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan would form part of the statutory development plan and would be used when making decisions on planning applications which may include development which falls under Annex I and II of the EIA directive.</p>
<p>Regulation 5(3)</p> <p>Will the PP, in view of the likely effect on sites, require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?</p> <p>(Article 3.2(b))</p>	No	<p>There are no Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas in close proximity to the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>The Cave's Inn Pits SSSI is located approximately 50 metres northeast of the neighbourhood area, within the county of Leicestershire. The entirety of the Neighbourhood Area lays within the Impact Risk Zones for this SSSI, however, there are no site allocation proposals in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
<p>Regulation 5(6)</p> <p>Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art.3.3)</p>	Yes	<p>Once 'made' the Neighbourhood Plan would form part of the statutory development plan and be used when making decisions on planning applications in the defined area.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any development allocations, but does seek to guide the design of development and to enable residents to exercise greater influence over future development proposals. In particular, it seeks to maintain the area's village identity amid large scale developments at Coton Park, the eastern parts of which lay within the Neighbourhood Area.</p>
Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of	Yes	The Neighbourhood Plan, once 'made', forms part of the statutory development plan and will be used to determine

projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)		planning applications within the designated Neighbourhood Area. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan will set the framework for future developments.
Reg 9 Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment, taking into account the views of the consultation bodies and the criteria set out at Schedule 1 of the Regulations? (Art. 3.5)	No	<p>See table 2 below for further detail.</p> <p>Summary of statutory consultee responses (see appendix 1 for response in full).</p> <p>The Environment Agency stated: Based on the information submitted, and as the plan does not propose any new site allocations, we agree with these conclusions [of the Screening Opinion] and, in consideration of matters within our remit, agree that the NDP is considered unlikely to have significant environmental impacts and/or significant effects on European designated sites.</p> <p>Historic England stated: For the purposes of consultations on SEA Screening Opinions, Historic England confines its advice to the question, “Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?” in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage.</p> <p>Our comments are based on the information supplied with the screening request. On the basis of the information supplied and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of the ‘SEA’ Directive], Historic England concurs with your view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.</p> <p>Regarding HRA Historic England does not disagree with your conclusions but</p>

		<p>would defer to the opinions of the other statutory consultees.</p> <p>Natural England stated: It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that: significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and, significant effects on Habitats sites, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.</p>
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3.2 The following assessment in table 2 provides further detail on the response to criteria 7 in table one. The assessment considers the likelihood that the Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan would have significant effects on the environment.

Table 2: Likelihood of significant effects on the environment (Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004)

Characteristics of the Plan	Summary of Effects
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	<p>Once 'made' the Neighbourhood Plan will set out the framework which will be used to determine proposals for development within the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any development allocations. It seeks to guide change within the parish of Newton and Biggin, to protect and enhance its character. It aims to ensure that future developments are sensitive to the distinctive historic environment of the Neighbourhood Area, which has been highlighted as a key priority for residents at consultation.</p> <p>There is a desire to maintain Newton's distinctiveness from the urban extension at Coton Park, parts of which fall within the Neighbourhood Area. The adopted Local Plan contains allocations</p>

	<p>for 800 dwellings and 7.5 ha employment land at Coton Park East.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan identifies areas where development of larger-scale renewable energy generation infrastructure would be supported, subject to conditions set out in the plan (ENV 12), but does seek to allocate any land for this purpose.</p>
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan must be (and is considered to be) in general conformity with the strategic policies of the currently adopted Rugby Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. All proposals within the Neighbourhood Area would need to demonstrate compliance with the policies of all three policy documents once the Neighbourhood Plan is made.</p>
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p>The draft Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan seeks to guide development within the neighbourhood area and sets out specific design policies and advice for the parish of Newton and Biggin. It does not propose any site allocations but does include policies and community actions to make Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Area a more sustainable place with regard to social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development.</p> <p>Section 6 (Natural, Historical and Social Environment) of the draft plan most specifically addresses environmental considerations. It sets out approaches for allowing appropriate development within the neighbourhood area, while ensuring the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, avoiding damage to scenic views and landscapes, and maintaining and improving resilience to flooding and climate change. It also identifies areas most suitable for renewable energy generation. The plan also acknowledges two SSSI sites which are not within the neighbourhood area but are in close proximity to the area, or have impact risk zones within the area (see pages 25-26).</p>

	<p>Policies in this section address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local green space designations • Important open spaces • Sites and features of natural environment significance • Biodiversity across the neighbourhood area • Sites of historical environment significance • Ridge and furrow • Important views • Footpaths, bridleways and cycleways • Flood risk resilience and climate change • Renewable energy generation infrastructure <p>Section 7 (Sustainability) incorporates a range of policy topics which broadly contribute to the sustainability of the Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Area including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community facilities and amenities • Business and employment • Working from home • Reuse of agricultural and commercial buildings • Broadband infrastructure • Transport and traffic
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.</p>	<p>The existing Rugby Borough Local Plan makes allocations for 800 dwellings and 7.5 ha of employment land at Coton Park East (DS3.1 & DS4.1), most of which lays within the Neighbourhood Area. To date, only 191 dwellings have been delivered on part of the site which has permission for 225 dwellings. It is understood that the landowner now wishes to develop the remainder of the site solely for employment purposes, and accordingly, a new employment allocation (site 64) has been proposed in the Preferred Options (Reg 18) Local Plan. Furthermore, the Preferred Options (Reg 18) Local Plan proposes allocations for 240 dwellings (site 59) and a secondary school off Newton Manor Lane, in the southwest of the Neighbourhood Area.</p>

	<p>These allocations, should they be retained in a new adopted Local Plan, could bring significant changes to the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate further development sites, but does include policies designed to maintain a distinct identity for the Newton and Biggin area and ensure that any future development is sensitive to the needs of local residents and the natural environment.</p> <p>The key environmental issues from the Rugby Borough Local Plan which are relevant to this plan include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protection and enhancement of biodiversity; 2. The effects of development on the historic environment; 3. The effects of development on the wider landscape; 4. Traffic generation and air quality . <p>The Local Plan contains policies to tackle these issues. The Neighbourhood Plan adds additional support to this.</p>
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of assimilated law on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</p>	<p>The Local Plan has regard to assimilated law on the environment and the Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan is considered to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.</p>

Table 3: Likelihood of significant effects on the environment part 2 (Schedule 2, Paragraph 1&2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004)

	Traffic	Flooding	Biodiversity	Historic Environment	Landscape	Agricultural Land
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.	<p>The draft Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any site allocations, though it is supportive of small scale development proposals for infill and redevelopment where these meet certain criteria (Policy H2). This is in line with the Local Plan.</p> <p>Policy CF1 seeks to ensure that any new community facilities are suitably located</p>	<p>The draft Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any site allocations.</p> <p>Policy ENV11 addresses flood resilience and climate change.</p> <p>Other policies relating to new developments, such as E3 and ENV12, note the need to ensure there is no increase in flood risk or loss of flood resilience.</p>	<p>The draft Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any site allocations.</p> <p>Policy ENV4 seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity across the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>Other policies relating to new developments, such as ENV3 and ENV12, explicitly note the need to prevent damage to biodiversity and ensure minimum</p>	<p>The draft Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of small scale development proposals for infill and redevelopment where these meet certain criteria. It does not propose any site allocations.</p> <p>Policy ENV5 identifies and seeks to protect sites of at least local historical environment significance, whilst policy ENV7 identifies and seeks to</p>	<p>The draft Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any site allocations. It is supportive of small scale development proposals for infill and redevelopment where these meet certain criteria. This is in line with the Local Plan (Policy GP2).</p> <p>Policy ENV8 identifies eight important views which maintain the setting and character of the area. The plan</p>	<p>The draft Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any site allocations. Therefore, there are unlikely to be notable effects on agricultural land.</p> <p>Policy G1 considers development for the purposes of agriculture, including farm diversification and other land-based rural businesses, to be appropriate development within the countryside.</p>

	<p>for village residents to walk or cycle.</p> <p>Policy T1 seeks to minimise any increase in vehicular traffic from new development.</p>		<p>biodiversity net gain.</p> <p>Any planning application on this site would also now be subject to a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain requirement.</p>	<p>protect areas of ridge and furrow as non-designated heritage assets.</p>	<p>does not support development proposals which would have an adverse impact on these views.</p> <p>Policy ENV12 supports small scale renewable energy generation infrastructure, but a condition of the policy is the minimisation and mitigation of landscape impact.</p>	<p>Whilst Policy ENV12 supports small scale renewable energy generation infrastructure, this support is restricted to limited specified areas (as shown in Figure 16). Furthermore, the policy specifies that in the case of large solar PV arrays, proposals should include assessments of agricultural land quality.</p>
<p>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.</p>	<p>Any planning proposal would have to comply with transport policies at National and Local level. The Highways Authority would</p>	<p>Any planning application would have to comply with National and Local Policy on flooding which would minimise the probability of</p>	<p>Any proposal would have to meet the statutory requirement for a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain, and comply with biodiversity</p>	<p>Any proposal which impacts a Listed Building or Scheduled Monument would be subject to National Policies on the historic environment,</p>	<p>Any proposal which has an impact on the wider landscape would be subject to National and Local policies as well as policies within this</p>	<p>Any proposal would have to have regard to National policy on agricultural land. Therefore the potential for negative impacts is low.</p>

	be consulted on this. Therefore, the probability of significant effects would be very low.	unacceptable impacts.	policies at national and local level. Under these requirements and policies there is scope for positive impacts.	including the Neighbourhood Plan policies identified above.	Neighbourhood Plan. As such the potential for negative impacts is very low.	
The cumulative nature of the effects.	Any impacts of additional traffic would be an addition to that which already passes through the Neighbourhood Area.	Additional development in a flood zone would have a negative cumulative effect on flooding.	Impacts on one species could impact further species.	Any detracting or deterioration of important historic features could lead to further deterioration in future.	If the quality of the relationship between the village and the wider landscape deteriorates this could lead to further deterioration in future.	Loss of farmland could lead to increased intensity of farming on remaining agricultural land which may deviate from sustainable farming practices.
The trans boundary nature of the effects.	Air pollution from traffic may have a trans boundary effect.	Flooding would generally be localised.	These would generally be localised.	These would be localised.	This could have an impact on the wider landscape.	These would be localised.
The risks to human health or the	Potential for a decrease in air quality, increase in noise and	Potential for impacts to human health	Very little risk to human health. Potential impacts on individual	Very little risk to human health. Risk to the quality of the	Very little risk to human health. Risk to the relationship	Very little risk to human health. Some risk to flora and fauna

environment (e.g. due to accidents).	potential for car accidents.	and damage to habitats.	plants and animals, their habitats and the wider ecosystem.	historic environment and deterioration of the character of the parish.	between Newton and the wider landscape.	that benefit from the agricultural land.
The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	These would be very localised impacts.	Localised impacts.	Localised impacts.	Localised impacts.	Impacts could be perceived to extend beyond the Neighbourhood Area.	In general impacts would be local but could feed into a larger scale picture if good quality agricultural land is also being lost elsewhere.
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage - exceeded environmental quality standards - intensive land use	<p>There are two SSSIs located outside the neighbourhood area within reasonably close proximity. Cave's Inn Pits SSSI is c. 50 metres from the area boundary, while Stanford Park SSSI is c. 4.5 km from the area boundary. The entirety of the neighbourhood area is within the Impact Risk Zones of the former. These SSSIs are identified on pages 25-26 of the draft plan.</p> <p>The area contains three Listed Buildings and 19 further sites and features of historical environment significance according to Historic England and/or Warwickshire Historic Environment Record.</p> <p>The draft neighbourhood plan does not include any site allocations, therefore the impacts of development are not likely to significantly exceed those considered through the adopted local plan process.</p>					

<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>See above regarding SSSIs with impact zones extending into parts of the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>There are no Special Protection Areas in or close to the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>There are no Special Areas of Conservation in or close to the neighbourhood area.</p>
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4. Assessment for HRA

- 4.1 Ensors Pool Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the River Mease SAC are not considered to sit within 15km of the Neighbourhood Area, and there are no Special Protection Areas in or close to the neighbourhood area.
- 4.2 The Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any development allocations but rather seeks to guide development within the settlement boundary, with a view to protect the distinctive character of the area in light of potential larger scale developments at Coton Park East, as allocated by the adopted Local Plan.
- 4.3 Development within settlement boundaries is supported within the strategy of adopted local plan. It is not considered that there would be any detrimental impacts on Ensors Pool or the River Mease arising from the Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.4 The Rugby Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 was subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment Stage 1 Screening Report. A full HRA was not deemed necessary.

5. Screening Outcomes

- 5.1 As a result of the assessment in section 3, it is unlikely that there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the emerging proposals to be contained within the Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Plan. As a result, **it is concluded that an SEA is not necessary.**
- 5.2 As a result of the assessment outlined in section 4, **it is concluded that a HRA is not necessary.**

Appendix 1 – Statutory Consultee Responses

FAO Laurence Goodchild
Rugby Borough Council
Planning Policy
own Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21
2RR

Our ref: SV/2023/111853/SE-
03/SC1-L01
Your ref:
Date: 1 October 2025

Dear Laurence

**Newton and Biggin Neighbourhood Development Plan – Draft Strategic
Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
Screening Opinion Consultation**

Thank you for consulting us on the above SEA/HRA screening opinion or the Neighborhood Development Plan (NDP). We have reviewed the submitted documentation and offer the following comments for your consideration at this time.

Flood Risk: We note that the River Avon (main river) runs along the Southern border of the plan boundary, and two ordinary watercourses** which are also present within the plan boundary. Based on our indicative Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea) we note these watercourses have associated Flood Zones 3 and 2 (the high and medium risk zones respectively) within the plan area.

It should be noted that the Flood Map provides an indication of 'fluvial' flood risk only. You are advised to discuss matters relating to surface water (pluvial) flooding with the drainage team at Wychavon District Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

We would not, in the absence of any specific site allocations proposed within the NDP, offer any bespoke comment at this time but note reference to the development site at Coton Park East allocated within the Local Plan.

However, please note that other potential development areas may be at flood risk given the presence of 'ordinary watercourses' which may be un-modelled if the scale and nature of the stream and receiving catchment is less than 3km².

Water Catchment Quality: It is noted that Newton and Biggin falls within the wider Avon Warwickshire Management Catchment, and then into a sub-catchment area of the Avon Rural Rivers and Lakes Operational Catchment. This consists of the Avon-CaycotonYelvertoft Brook to confluence River Sowe Water Body which is considered as having a 'moderate ecological status'. The aim is to achieve 'good' status by 2027.

SEA/HRA Screening Opinion: To assist your Council's determination of the SEA and HRA Screening Opinion (dated August 2025), we note the conclusions achieved from the assessment of the NDP that it is unlikely to cause significant environmental effects and has been developed to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the

adopted local plan. The report also concludes that the Plan area is not in close proximity of European designated sites.

Based on the information submitted, and as the plan does not propose any new site allocations, we agree with these conclusions and, in consideration of matters within our remit, agree that the NDP is considered unlikely to have significant environmental impacts and/or significant effects on European designated sites.

Furthermore, we do not offer detailed bespoke advice on policy but advise you ensure conformity with the local plan and refer to guidance within our area neighbourhood plan “pro-forma guidance”, I have attached an updated version for your consideration.

Notwithstanding the above, it is important that these plans offer robust confirmation that development is not impacted by flooding and that there is sufficient wastewater infrastructure in place to accommodate growth.

I trust the above is of assistance at this time.

Yours faithfully

Miss. Fiona Flower
Planning Officer

Direct e-mail westmidsplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk



Historic England

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Our ref: PL00799757

9 September 2025

Dear Mr Goodchild

NEWTON AND BIGGIN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SEA & HRA SCREENING OPINION CONSULTATION

Thank you for your consultation and the invitation to comment on the SEA Screening Document for the above Neighbourhood Plan.

For the purposes of consultations on SEA Screening Opinions, Historic England confines its advice to the question, "Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?" in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage.

Our comments are based on the information supplied with the screening request. On the basis of the information supplied and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of the 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with your view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

Regarding HRA Historic England does not disagree with your conclusions but would defer to the opinions of the other statutory consultees.

The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for a SEA is made. If a decision is made to undertake a SEA, please note that Historic England has published guidance on Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Historic Environment that is relevant to both local and neighbourhood planning and available at: [<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/)

I trust the above comments will be of help in taking forward the Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours sincerely,



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Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any Information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.



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Date: 29 September 2025
Our ref: 524526
Your ref: Newton & Biggin Neighbourhood Plan



Mr Laurence Goodchild
Rugby Borough Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Goodchild

Newton & Biggin Neighbourhood Plan - SEA/HRA Screening Opinion Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 27 August 2025.

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 (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- **significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,**
- **significant effects on Habitats sites¹, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.**

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- 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.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected

¹ Habitats sites are those referred to in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend 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.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team