



**Strategic Environmental Assessment
Screening Determination Statement
for
Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2035**

September 2018

**Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report
for Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan**

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Executive Summary

This statement sets out the reasons for the Council's determination that the Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan proposal is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. In addition, this statement determines that the Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan proposal is unlikely to result in significant effects on any European sites and consequently the plan does not require Habitat Regulation Assessment.

This determination statement is intended to support Eaton Bray parish Council in demonstrating that the Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan proposal is compatible with certain European Union obligations as required by the basic conditions, namely:

- Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment; and
- Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

This determination has been made on 27th September 2018. Within 28 days of this determination, the Council will publish a statement, setting out its decision. Central Bedfordshire Council will publicise this determination statement in accordance with its regulatory requirements.

A copy of the statement will be available for inspection at the Council website at: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning/policy/neighbourhood-planning/consultations.aspx>

It will also be available on request at:

Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ

If you require further information, the please contact Tom Price via email at: tom.price@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Eaton Bray Parish Council has requested a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening opinion of its Neighbourhood Plan (NP). Central Bedfordshire Council is legally required to determine whether the Eaton Bray NP will require SEA. However, if it is concluded that an SEA is required, Eaton Bray Parish Council, supported by its Steering Group, are responsible for its production and it must form part of the material that is consulted on when the consultation stages are reached.
- 1.2 The Eaton Bray NP will cover the whole area within the administrative boundaries of the Parish. The purpose of the Eaton Bray NP is to establish planning policies for the development and use of land within the area.
- 1.3 This screening report is used to determine whether or not the content of the Eaton Bray NP requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These require an SEA to be undertaken for:
 - i. Plans which are prepared for town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive; or
 - ii. Plans which have been determined to require an assessment under the Habitats Directive.
- 1.4 However, plans which determine 'the use of a small area at local level' or which only propose 'minor modification to a plan' might be exempt if they are unlikely to have significant environmental effects. NPs containing land allocations for development that are not included in the local authority's plan, are more likely to require SEA. NPs which do not contain allocations or reflect allocations already identified as part of a local authority plan are less likely to require SEA. The main determining factor as to whether SEA is required on a NP is if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
- 1.5 Section 2 of this report outlines the regulations that set the need for this screening exercise. Process and criteria of the assessment are set out in Section 3.
- 1.6 A brief summary of the Eaton Bray NP is provided in Section 4.
- 1.7 The screening assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the NP is set out in Section 5 and the justification for the determination that the Eaton Bray NP does not require a full SEA with further recommendations is provided in Section 6.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan

2. Legislative Background

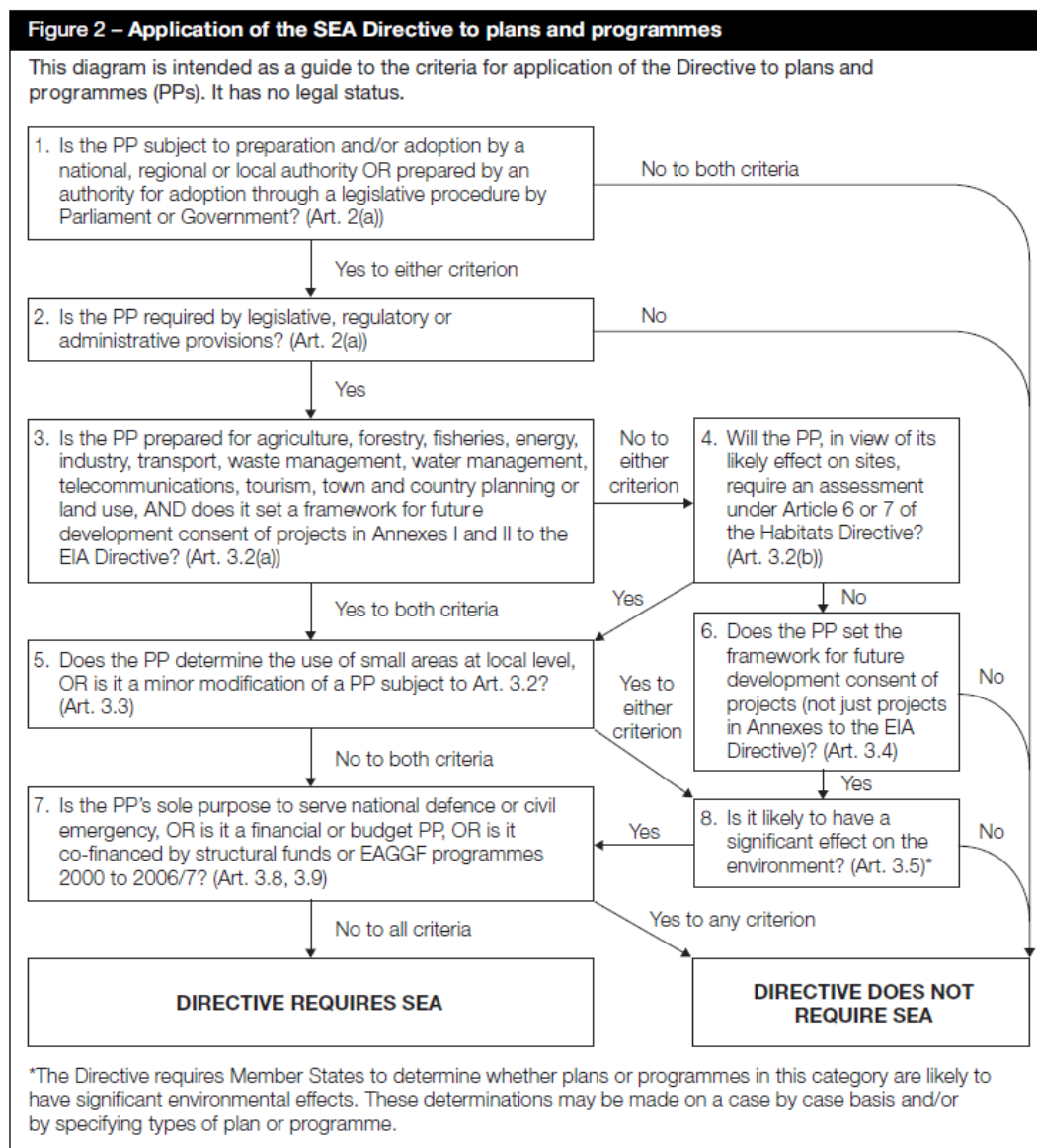
- 2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC and was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005)
- 2.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is prepared for spatial plans. It is considered best practice to incorporate requirements of the SEA Directive into an SA.
- 2.3 The Government has stated that SAs are not needed for NP's, but it must be demonstrated how the NP contributes to achievement of sustainable development in the area.
- 2.4 The Localism Act 2011 requires NP's to not breach, and be otherwise compatible with EU and Human Rights obligations. Ambitious and complex NP's may trigger the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Habitat Directive, and may need to undertake SEA and Appropriate Assessment depending on the scale and the impact of the plan proposals.
- 2.5 Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 refers to the Habitat Directive. The Directive requires that any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on European sites must be subject to an appropriate assessment. Paragraphs 2-5 of Schedule 2 amend the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 so that its provisions apply to Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs) and NPs. The Regulations state that NPs are not likely to have significant effect on a site designated at European level for its biodiversity, however, this needs to be ascertained through Habitat Regulations Assessment's screening process.
- 2.6 This report focuses on screening for both HRA and SEA and the criteria for establishing whether a full assessment is needed.

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3. Screening assessment process

3.1 The screening opinion assessment is undertaken in two parts: the first part will assess whether the plan falls into a category of plans requiring SEA; and the second part of the assessment will consider whether the NP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, using criteria drawn from Schedule 1 of the EU SEA Directive and the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

3.2 The government guidance 'A practical guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive sets out the following approach to be taken in determining whether SEA is required, see flowchart below.



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3.4 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below:

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to
 - 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,
 - the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
 - the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
 - environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
 - the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to
 - the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
 - the cumulative nature of the effects,
 - the transboundary nature of the effects,
 - the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
 - the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
 - the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
 - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
 - intensive land-use,
 - the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

Source: Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

3.5 The three statutory consultation bodies (English Heritage, Environment Agency and Natural England) were consulted to determine whether they agree with the findings and conclusions of this screening opinion, in establishing whether the Eaton Bray NP requires SEA and whether it may have a significant environmental effect.

3.6 This document is a final Screening Determination Statement which is being issued to Eaton Bray Parish Council and the statutory bodies. This determination has been made on 19th September 2018 and the Council will publish it within 28 days of this determination.

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4. Summary of Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan

4.1 Eaton Bray NP covers the administrative boundaries of Eaton Bray Parish Council. Eaton Bray is a rural parish of 1,170 dwellings (2015). The parish has a long history and has evolved with its own distinctive character and heritage.

4.2 Eaton Bray draft NP covers a range of land use and environmental issues that relate to the Parish. These are addressed through a number of policies to guide development in the Parish. The policies cover the following areas:

- Housing Mix
- Traffic
- Local Greenspace
- Conserving and improving the environment
- Community Facilities
- Conserving local character and heritage
- Business Opportunities

4.3 The Housing Mix policy aims to require a majority of new homes to be 2 or 3 bedroom type and to require a majority of the affordable homes requirement to be provided as Starter homes.

4.4 The Traffic policies seek to identify specific roads in the village to which development proposals must have regard in applying policies which mitigate against the effects of traffic on the local road network.

4.5 Local Green Space policies aim to designate land that meets the qualifying criteria for the purpose of requiring very special circumstances. The Local Gaps policy intends to designate three areas of land to the north, south-west and south-east of the village to prevent its visual coalescence with neighbouring villages whilst the Orchards policy aims to protect the remaining land in orchard use and encourage the provision of a new orchard.

4.6 Conservation and improving the environment policies aim to identify, protect and improve the rights of way network and to protect against loss of biodiversity and require biodiversity gain with reference to specific local species/habitats.

4.7 Policies set out under 'Community Facilities' aim to identify buildings and ancillary land to which Central Bedfordshire Councils Policy HQ2 (Provision for Social and Community Infrastructure) will apply. Policies also intend to

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allow for the change of use of Holman's Field from public open space to education use, provided it is solely for the purpose of relocating school sports pitches to enable the expansion of the school. Private land is also to be allocated to extend the existing adjoining cemetery.

- 4.8 Heritage policies are looking to identify non-designated local heritage assets and to identify the specific character of the Area of Special Character known as Moor End. They also intend to allow for a review of the Conservation Area to identify and provide specific design guidance for schemes within the setting.
- 4.9 The Light Pollution policy aims to minimise external lighting in development schemes.
- 4.10 Local Shops and Business policies identify land in established employment and retail uses to which policies can be applied.
- 4.11 The Plan is to be delivered over a long period of time and therefore the Parish proposes to monitor the implementation of the Plan.

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5 Assessment

5.1 The first part of the assessment is to establish the need for the SEA. The table below shows the assessment determining whether the Eaton Bray NP falls into a category of plans requiring SEA.

Stage	Y/N	Reasons
1. Is the NP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	<p>The preparation and adoption of the NP is allowed under Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared by Eaton Bray Parish Council (as the 'relevant body') and will be 'made' by the Central Bedfordshire Council as the local authority. The preparation of NPs is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012; The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012; The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015; The Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016; The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.</p> <p>GO TO STAGE 2</p>
2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	<p>Whilst the NP is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will, if 'made', form part of Local Plan for the unitary area. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have a significant effect on environment and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.</p> <p>GO TO STAGE 3</p>
3. Is the NP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport,	N	<p>The NP is being prepared for town and country planning and land use and it sits within a wider framework, set by the National Planning Policy Framework</p>

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Stage	Y/N	Reasons
waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))		and the strategic policies within South Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004). The NP will set out a framework for future development in Eaton Bray, however these projects are not of scale referred to in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive. GO TO STAGE 4
4. Will the NP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	N	There are no Natura 2000 sites within close proximity of the NP boundaries. The NP is not looking to allocate new land for residential or employment use and therefore is unlikely to have significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites. Please see the HRA screening opinion in Annex 1 GO TO STAGE 6
5. Does the NP 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)	N	Due to the overriding protection of the Green Belt the Eaton Bray NP will not determine the use of sites/small areas at a local level for residential or employment use. The NP is identifying small areas for use as: an extension to cemetery, relocation of school's playing fields to allow school extension on the old playing fields, and an extension to existing orchard. GO TO STAGE 6
6. Does the NP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Y	The NP will set the framework for future development of projects not included in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive. The NP will include a series of policies to guide development within the parish but will not allocate site for specific development.

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Stage	Y/N	Reasons
		GO TO STAGE 8
7. Is the NP's sole purpose to serve national defence or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art. 3.8 & Art. 3.9)		NOT APPLICABLE
8. Is the NP likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	See assessment 2: Likely significant effects on the environment. DIRECTIVE DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA

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5.2 The next step in the screening assessment is to establish whether the Eaton Bray NP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The criteria for determining the likely significance of effects are drawn from the Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC.

Criteria for determining the likely significant effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Summary of significant effects	Likely to have significant environmental effects Y/N
1. Characteristics of the Plan, having regard to:		
a) 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.	The NP will contribute to the framework for considering future development by setting a series of policies to guide the development within the parish, but will not allocate sites for residential or employment development. The NP's development management policies look to address a number of local issues, such as mix of housing; protecting and enhancing natural, historic and heritage assets, local community facilities and the character of Eaton Bray. However, NP sits within wider framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the South Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004) and must comply with that framework.	N
b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The NP must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and policies within the South Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004). The NP is unlikely to significantly influence other plans and programmes, but may have a limited degree of influence over the formation of future strategic policies of Central Bedfordshire's new Local Plan.	N
c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with	The Plan includes design policies to protect and enhance the character and both natural and historic setting of Eaton Bray; and to ensure that the development meets needs of the current and future generations living in the parish. All potential	N

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Criteria for determining the likely significant effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Summary of significant effects	Likely to have significant environmental effects Y/N
a view to promoting sustainable development	development will need to comply with Central Bedfordshire Council planning policies and be in conformity with NPPF that ensures delivery of sustainable development. Given the scope of the NP, it is considered that the Plan integrates environmental considerations and promotes sustainable development.	
d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan.	The NP includes policies that seek to alleviate local issues such as housing need, traffic problems, expansion of community spaces, protection of the parish character, protection and enhancement of and ensure that both natural and historic environment within the parish.	N
e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection or renewable energy generation)	The NP sits within the wider framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and South Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004) and is not directly relevant to the implementation of European legislation.	N
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
a) Probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	The NP is likely to have modest, but positive environmental effects resulting from policies that protect and enhance local character, natural and historic environment of the parish. The effect related to the development are not likely to be	N

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Criteria for determining the likely significant effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Summary of significant effects	Likely to have significant environmental effects Y/N
	reversible but will be of a local scale and unlikely to be significant on designated sites, or natural and historic environment.	
b) The cumulative nature of the effects	Likely cumulative effects of the NP with other Plans in the hierarchy are likely to be positive in their nature; particularly for environmental factors such as biodiversity, human health and archaeological and historical material assets of Eaton Bray as the Plan proposes protection and enhancement of local environment and the historical character of the Parish. However given the localised nature of the Plan, the effects are unlikely to be significant.	N
c) The trans boundary nature of the effects	Given the localised nature of the Neighbourhood Plan there are not expected to be any significant trans-boundary effects.	N
d) The risk to human health or environment (e.g. due to accidents)	The NP is unlikely to pose significant risks to human health or the environment.	N
e) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	Part of the parish area is designated as the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGVL). The NP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the AONB as the plan's policies aim to conserve and enhance the character of the area.	N
f) The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population	The NP covers the area of Eaton Bray Parish and is not looking to allocate sites for residential and employment development. The potential effects on environment are likely to be small and localised.	N

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Criteria for determining the likely significant effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Summary of significant effects	Likely to have significant environmental effects Y/N
likely to be affected)		
<p>g) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage • Exceeded environmental quality standards • Intensive land use 	<p>Within the Parish and close proximity to its boundaries there is a number of designations, such as AONB, AGVL; County Wildlife Sites; Local Nature Reserves; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; Local Geological Sites Conservation Areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments as shown on the attached constraint map. The Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on these sites as it is not allocating sites for new residential or employment use; and its policies aim to ensure that any development proposed conserves and enhances these designations. In addition, any development within the parish must comply with the wider framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and South Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004) that ensure that any development doesn't have significant adverse effects on environment.</p> <p>The NP is not expected to exceed environmental quality standards or limit values.</p> <p>The NP does not propose development likely to result in intensive land use.</p>	N

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6 Screening Outcome

- 6.1 The screening assessment undertaken in Section 5 concludes that, it is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the Eaton Bray NP. As such, Eaton Bray NP does not require a full SEA to be undertaken.
- 6.2 An assessment of likely effects of the NP on sites that require assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive has been undertaken as part of the SEA screening (see stage 4 above). It concludes that as the NP's effects are likely to be localised in their nature and are unlikely to result in significant effect on Nature 2000 sites that are located a considerable distance from the Parish boundaries. As such, Eaton Bray NP does not require an Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken.
- 6.3 The Council consulted on its findings with three statutory consultation bodies; Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The consultation period was 5 weeks from 20th November to 29th December 2017.
- 6.4 The Council received responses from all three statutory consultees that agreed with the above Council findings. The received consultation responses can be found in the appendices.
- 6.5 Following the screening process and consultation the Council determines that **Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan does not require a full SEA or HRA to be undertaken.**
- 6.6 Although SEA is not required, Eaton Bray Parish Council may wish to consider voluntarily undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) that covers all three aspects of sustainable development; environmental, social and economic. The advantage of undertaking an SA is that it can assess the impact of the NP on environmental, social and economic factors and therefore demonstrate to an examiner how sustainable development has been considered in the preparation of the Plan and that the Plan as prepared is the most sustainable compared with any reasonable alternatives.

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Annex I: HRA screening

Whilst there are no European sites within Eaton Bray NP area, it is recognised that distance in itself is not a definitive guide to the likelihood or severity of an impact as factors such as the prevailing wind direction, river flow direction, and groundwater flow direction will all have a bearing on the relative distance at which an impact can occur. This means that a plan directing development some distance away from a European site could still have effects on the site and, therefore, needs to be considered as part of the screening process.

Table below lists nine European sites that have been identified in HRA undertaken by the Central Bedfordshire Council in 2014 as those that might be affected by the development within Central Bedfordshire Area and therefore development in the Eaton Bray NP area. The location of these sites is shown in the map below.

Table: Natura 2000 sites within 50km of CBC boundary.

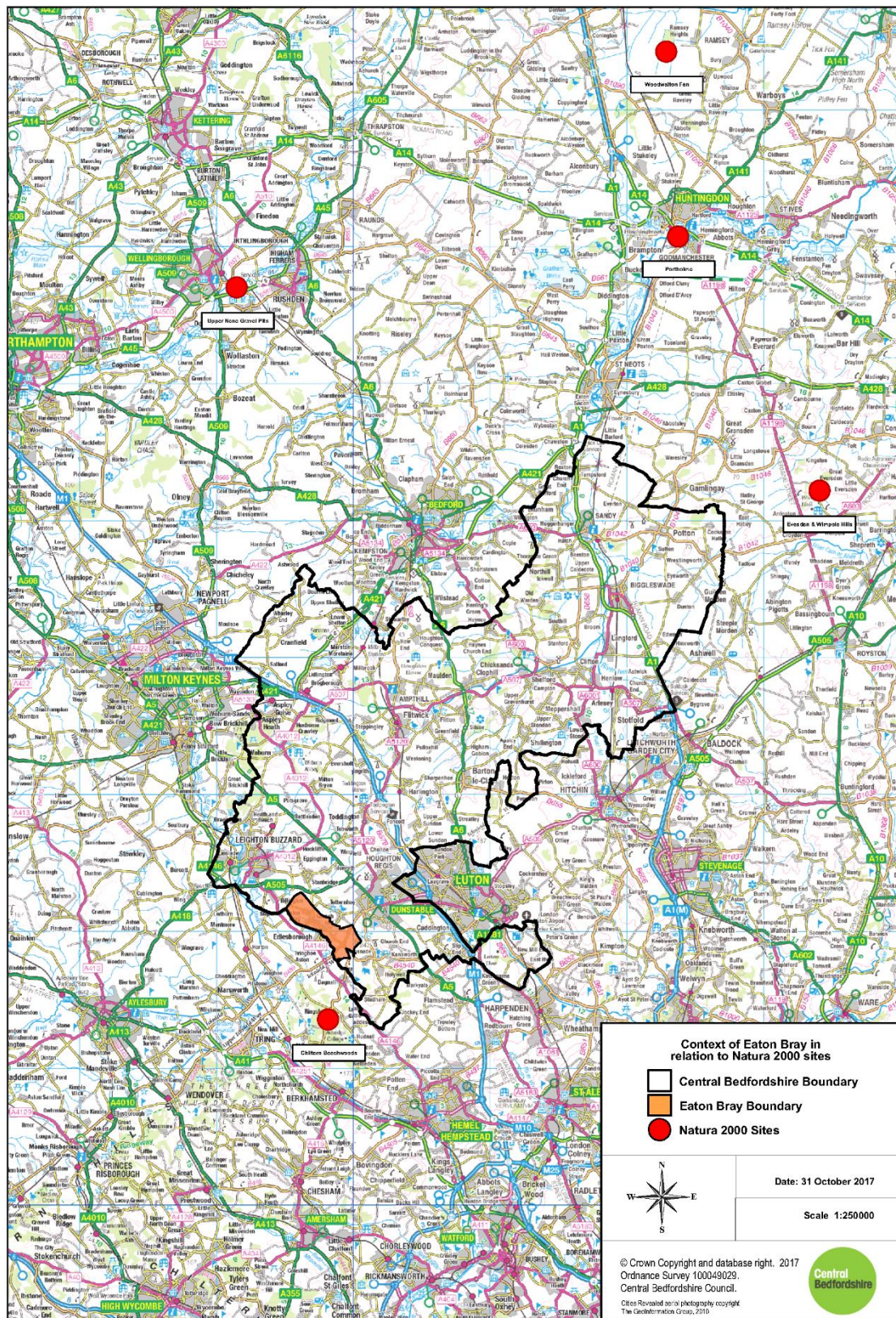
Natura 2000 sites	Designation	Distance from CBC Boundary (km)	Distance from Eaton Bray NP boundary (km)
Chiltern Beechwoods	SAC	2	4.5
Eversden and Wimpole Woods	SAC	7.5	46.5
Chippenham Fen	Ramsar	42	81
Wicken Fen	Ramsar	35	74.4
Woodwalton Fen	Ramsar	29.5	68
Ouse Washes	SPA / SAC / Ramsar	43	83.5
Portholme	SAC	16	55.5
Fenland	SAC	29.5	68
Upper Nene Gravel Pits	SPA / Ramsar	25	44.5

The screening assessment undertaken by the Central Bedfordshire Council in 2014, based on consideration of the qualifying interests; conservation objectives; condition status; key environmental conditions; and vulnerabilities for each of the sites identified the following specific threats to European sites in the vicinity of Central Bedfordshire:

- Recreational impacts;
- Air quality; and
- Water quality/quantity (including increased run-off causing flooding).

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Map: Location of Natura 2000 sites in relation to Central Bedfordshire & Eaton Bray



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Most of the European sites are considerable distance from the Plan boundaries and only the Chiltern Beechwood SAC is in a close proximity to the NP area. This site was found to be vulnerable to impacts arising from recreational use of the site and air pollution.

Eaton Bray NP is not looking to allocate sites for residential or commercial development and therefore it is unlikely that the Plan would increase air pollution or recreational pressure on the Chiltern Beechwood site to such a level as to cause significant impact.

Eaton Bray NP sits within the wider framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the South Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004). Policies within this framework ensure that any development that may come forward within the Parish does not cause harm to the environment or habitats.

The Eaton Bray NP does not allocate sites for residential or commercial development and therefore is unlikely to significantly add to impacts arising from other local land use such as those set out in the South Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004), the emerging Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2015-2035), North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-2031) and Dacorum Borough Council Core Strategy (2006-2031). All these plans undertake HRA assessment and take into account impacts of small development that are delivered in addition to allocated sites (windfall development). Impacts of these Plans were reviewed in the HRA screening undertaken by the Central Bedfordshire Council in 2014 and this review determined that these plans are unlikely to compromise integrity of the European sites including Chiltern Beechwood SAC site. The NP is therefore unlikely to have an impact on the integrity of the sites either alone or in-combination with other Plans.

Screening Outcome

This HRA screening process has considered the potential significant effects arising from the development proposed by the Eaton Bray NP, both independently and in combination with other plans or strategies published to date, and concluded that the NP is highly unlikely to affect the European sites identified in this report. **As such, Eaton Bray NP does not require an Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken.**

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Appendix: Consultation Responses



Benn, Neville A <neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk>

Siobhan Vincent

RE: REF: 171121/BC04 -

NP Screening consultation

- Bedfordshire

Dear Siobhan

We agree with the conclusions of your Authority.

Kind regards

Neville Benn

Principal Planning Advisor
Sustainable Places
East Anglia Area (West)

Environment Agency, Bromholme Lane, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE28 4NE

Internal: 51906

External: 0203 0251906

neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk



Does Your Proposal Have Environmental Issues or Opportunities? Speak To Us Early!

If you're planning a new development, we want to work with you to make the process as smooth as possible. We offer a bespoke advice service where you will be assigned a project manager who be a single point of co
This early engagement can significantly reduce uncertainty and delays to your project. More information can be found on our website [here](#).

From: Siobhan Vincent [<mailto:Siobhan.Vincent@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>]

Sent: 20 November 2017 11:24

To: Enquiries, Unit <enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk>; Historic England <Eastplanningpolicy@HistoricEngland.org.uk>; Natural England <Consultations@naturalengland.org.uk>

Subject: REF: 171121/BC04 - NP Screening consultation

Dear All

Please find attached the Screening opinion for Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan made by Central Bedfordshire Council. I'd be grateful if you could review the report and let me have your opinion by 29th December 2017.

Kind Regards

Siobhan Vincent

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan

Date: 27 November 2017
Our ref: 231866



Siobhan Vincent
Central Bedfordshire Council
siobhan.vincent@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 8GU

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms Vincent

Strategic Environmental Assessment for Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated the 20 November 2017 which was received by Natural England on 20 November 2017.

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 and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests are concerned (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 SEA Directive is contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance¹. 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 significant 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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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 consultations@naturalengland.org.uk. 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.

Yours sincerely

Alice Watson
Consultations Team

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan



Historic England

EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

Ms Siobhan Vincent
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Bedfordshire
SG17 5TQ

Direct Dial: 01223 582746

Our ref: PL00228609

21 December 2017

Dear Ms Vincent

Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Consultation

Thank you for your email of 20 November 2017 regarding the Eaton Bray SEA Screening consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore we welcome this opportunity to review the Eaton Bray Neighbourhood Plan Screening Report. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Neighbourhood Plan and policies therein) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion produced by Central Bedfordshire Council.

The Screening Report indicates that the Council considers that "it is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the Eaton Bray NP", and it will not therefore affect any 'special natural characteristics or cultural heritage' in the area. We note that there is no intention to allocate sites for residential or other development within the Neighbourhood Plan.

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 'SEA' Directive], Historic England therefore concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The views of the other three statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you



24 BROOKLANDS AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 8BU

Telephone 01223 582749
HistoricEngland.org.uk



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with your letter dated 20 November. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SA/SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or from later versions of the neighbourhood plan) where we consider that, despite the SA/SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of Central Bedfordshire Council are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the HER; how the policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

Further information and guidance on how heritage can best be incorporated into Neighbourhood Plans has been produced and recently updated by Historic England. This guidance signposts a number of other documents which your community might find useful in helping to identify what it is about your area which makes it distinctive, and how you might go about ensuring that the character of the area is retained. This can be found here: <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/>.

Please do contact me if you have any queries about the above, or any other questions about how best to incorporate the historic environment in the neighbourhood plan.

Yours sincerely,

Edward James
Historic Places Advisor, East of England
Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk



24 BROOKLANDS AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 8BU

Telephone 01223 582740
HistoricEngland.org.uk



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