



**Strategic Environmental Assessment
Screening Determination Statement**

for

Northill Neighbourhood Plan 2017 - 2031

November 2017

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Determination Statement for Northill Neighbourhood Plan

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Executive summary

This statement sets out the reasons for the Council's determination that the Northill 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 Northill 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 Northill Parish Council in demonstrating that the Northill 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 17th November 2017. 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/neighbourhoodplanning/consultations.aspx>. It will also be available on request at: Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ.

If you require any further information, then please contact Monika Marczevska by email to monika.marczevska@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Determination Statement for Northhill Neighbourhood Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Northhill 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 Northhill NP will require SEA. However, if it is concluded that an SEA is required, Northhill 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 Northhill NP will cover the whole area within the administrative boundaries of the Parish. The purpose of the Northhill 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 Northhill 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 Northhill 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 Northhill NP does not require a full SEA with further recommendations is provided in Section 6.

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2. Legislative Background

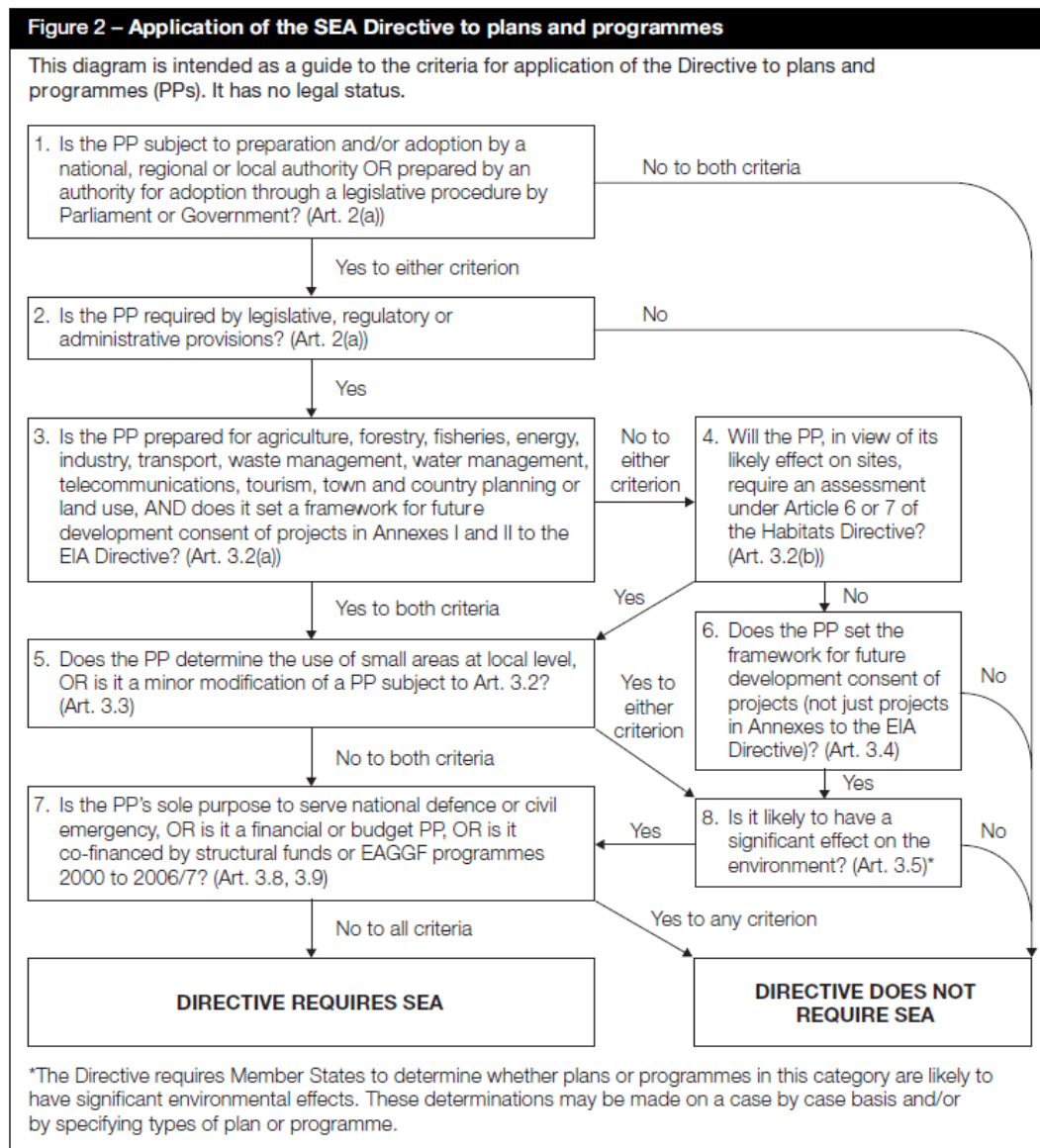
- 2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC and was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government 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 Northill 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 Northill Parish Council and the statutory consultation bodies. This determination has been made on 17th November 2017 and the Council will publish it within 28 days of this determination.

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4. Summary of Northill Neighbourhood Plan

4.1 Northill NP covers the administrative boundaries of Northill Parish Council.

Northill is a rural parish of some 1680 hectares and includes the village settlements of Northill, Ickwell and Upper Caldecote and the smaller hamlets Budna, Hatch, Lower Caldecote Thorncote Green and Bells Brook which abuts the town boundary of Biggleswade. The parish has a long history and each of its main settlements has evolved with their own distinctive character and heritage.

4.2 The Northill 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
- Water Management
- Local Greenspace
- Conserving and improving the environment
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Heritage
- Generating and conserving energy
- Business Opportunities

4.3 The Plan identifies sites the community would like to see developed for new housing and infrastructure delivery.

4.4 The Housing policies seek to identify Rural Exception sites for developments that deliver the type of housing identified as needed in the Housing Needs Survey by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (2015). It also includes policies on residential infill and back-land development. The Plan is focused on setting development management policies to guide future development design and to minimise any adverse and deliver positive effects on the environment and local community.

4.5 Water Management policies aim to reduce flood risk and protect existing flood attenuation areas.

4.6 Local Greenspace policies aim to identify and designate areas of Local Greenspace.

4.7 Policies set out under 'Caring for our natural environment' aim to identify and designate areas of Local Greenspace and support development which

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conserves or improves the environment. Policies also look to provide protection of ancient woodlands and natural habitats together with improving the green infrastructure.

4.8 Community Health and Wellbeing policies are looking to provide additional outdoor play, leisure facilities (including walking, cycling and riding routes), allotments and community growing spaces as well as a catering outlet.

4.9 Heritage policies aim to protect listed building and buildings, structure or sites with historic worth whilst supporting their restoration and enhancement.

4.10 Generating and Conserving Energy policies look to support community energy schemes as long as they are sensitive to their local environment and promote low carbon development

4.11 Business policies take a positive approach to support sustainable business growth and support small scale developments (less than 150 sq.m. of existing and new businesses where there is no adverse impact on the environment or existing infrastructure including local highways. Policies also support improvements to broadband for both new and existing properties.

4.12 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 Northill 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	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 Northill 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 and The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012. GO TO STAGE 2
2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	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. GO TO STAGE 3
3. Is the NP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set framework for future development consent of	Y&N	The NP is being prepared for town and country planning and land use as it identifies preferred sites for residential, community and business development, but it does not set a framework for future development consent for projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive.

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Stage	Y/N	Reasons
projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))		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	The NP is looking to allocate small sites for residential development up to 40 dwellings. There are no Natura 2000 sites within close proximity of the NP boundaries. The proposed development by this plan is modest in size and therefore unlikely to have significant effect on any Natura 2000 sites. align="right"> 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)		NOT APPLICABLE
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. align="right"> 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 Northhill 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
1a 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 allocating sites for residential development and designate 11 Local Green Spaces. The size of the proposed development is modest in size: up to 40 dwellings. Therefore impacts are likely to be localised in their nature and unlikely to cause significant negative effects on the environment. The NP's development management policies look to address a number of local issues, such as delivery of affordable housing; alleviating flooding and drainage issues; protecting and enhancing natural, historic and heritage assets, local community facilities and the character of Northhill. However, it sits within wider framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the North Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPDs (2009) and all of the NP's policies must be compliant with that wider framework that ensures that environment is adequately protected. Overall, the NP sets framework for projects that are localised in nature and have limited resource implications.	N
1b The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes	The NP must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and policies within the North Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPDs (2009).	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
including those in a hierarchy	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.	
1c The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	The NP is looking to allocate sites for residential development of up to 40 dwellings and designate 11 Local Green Spaces. The Plan includes design policies to protect and enhance the character and both natural and historic setting of Northill; and sustainability policies to ensure that the development meets needs of current and future generations living in the parish. All potential development will need to comply with Central Bedfordshire Council planning policies and be in conformity with NPPF that ensure delivery of sustainable development. Given the scope of the NP, it is considered that the Plan integrates environmental considerations and promotes sustainable development.	N
1d Environmental problems relevant to the plan.	The NP includes policies that seek to alleviate local issues such as flooding and drainage, delivery of fast broadband, and ensure that both natural and historic environment within the parish is protected and enhanced. The Plan proposes designation of 11 Local Green Spaces designations and sets policies that aim at increasing opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding; providing allotments and community growing spaces; additional outdoor play and leisure facilities to ensure health and wellbeing of local population.	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
1e 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 North Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPDs (2009) and is not directly relevant to the implementation of European legislation.	N
2a Probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	The NP is likely to have short-term effects resulting from activity associated with construction of new dwellings and improvements to local infrastructure such as drainage and construction of cycleways and footways. There may also be longer-term effects relevant to changes in land use but they are likely to be localised in their nature and not significantly negative for environmental factors.	N
2b 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 Northill 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
2c 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

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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
2d 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. Indeed, the Plan is likely to improve human health and the environment through protection of local green spaces and seeking improvements to countryside access and recreational facilities as well as provision of new homes and community facilities.	N
2e The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	There are no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) located within or adjacent to the Plan area.	N
2f The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The NP covers the area of Northhill Parish and is looking to allocate sites for residential development up to 40 dwellings. The plan is likely to affect a population of approximately 920 of the current households plus up to 40 that the Parish is looking to have built over the life of the Plan.	N
2g The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage 	Within the Parish and close proximity to its boundaries there is a number of designations, such as Historic Park and Gardens (1); County Wildlife Sites (14); Local Nature Reserves (1); Sites of Special Scientific Interest (1); Conservation Areas (5); Local Geological Sites (2) as shown on the attached constraint map. Development proposed by the Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on these sites due to its modest size and localise nature. In addition the proposed development must comply with the wider framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and North Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and	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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeded environmental quality standards • Intensive land use 	<p>Development Management Policies DPDs (2009) that ensure that any development doesn't have 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>	

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6 Screening and Consultation 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 Northhill NP. As such, Northhill 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, Northhill NP does not require an Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken.
- 6.3 The Council consulted on its findings with three statutory consultation bodies: the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The consultation period was 5 weeks; from 14th September to 25th August 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 appendix.
- 6.5 Following the screening process and consultation the Council determines that **Northhill NP does not require a full SEA or HRA to be undertaken.**
- 6.6 Northhill Parish Council must take into account comments received from Historic England on potential development sites in preparation of the final Plan.
- 6.7 Although SEA is not required, Northhill 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 a 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 Northill 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 Northill NP area. The location of these sites is shown in the map below.

Table: Natura 200 sites within 50km of CBC boundary.

Natura 2000 sites	Designation	Distance from CBC Boundary (km)	Distance from Northill NP boundary (km)
Chiltern Beechwoods	SAC	2	12
Eversden and Wimpole Woods	SAC	7.5	44
Chippenham Fen	Ramsar	42	79
Wicken Fen	Ramsar	35	72
Woodwalton Fen	Ramsar	29.5	62
Ouse Washes	SPA / SAC / Ramsar	43	79
Portholme	SAC	16	50
Fenland	SAC	29.5	
Upper Nene Gravel Pits	SPA / Ramsar	25	40

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).

Map: Location of Natura 2000 sites attached separately

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Northhill NP identifies its preferences for five residential sites to deliver housing and community needs of the parish, but as all of these sites are located within Green Belt, the Plan is unable to allocate them.

The development the NP is promoting is limited in numbers and the area it covers and therefore it is likely to have only localised impact on the environment and habitats. Most of the European sites are considerable distance from the identified European Sites and unlikely to be affected by the small scale development proposed in this NP. Only one site, the Chiltern Beechwood SAC, is in reasonably 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.

Northhill Parish has two open spaces and is looking to designate two more local green spaces to provide recreational facilities for local community. These spaces are most likely to be used by local residents on a daily basis, and therefore it is highly unlikely that the proposed development would increase recreational pressure on the Chiltern Beechwood site to such a level as to cause significant impact.

In regard to air quality, the proposed residential development has negligible effect on atmospheric pollution that could adversely impact the Chiltern Beechwood site.

Northhill NP sits within the wider framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the South Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004) that ensure that residential development does not cause harm to the environment or habitats.

The size and nature of the development proposed by this NP is unlikely to significantly add to impacts arising from other local land use such as those set out in 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 Northhill 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, Northhill NP does not require an Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken.**

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Appendix: Consultation Responses

226054-NE response.pdf - Adobe Reader

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Date: 17 October 2017
Our ref: 226054

NATURAL ENGLAND

Siobhan Vincent
Siobhan.vincent@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

BY EMAIL ONLY

Hombeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ
T 0300 060 3900

Dear Ms Vincent

Northhill NP Screening Opinion

Thank you for your consultation on the above which was received by Natural England on 14 September 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

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:

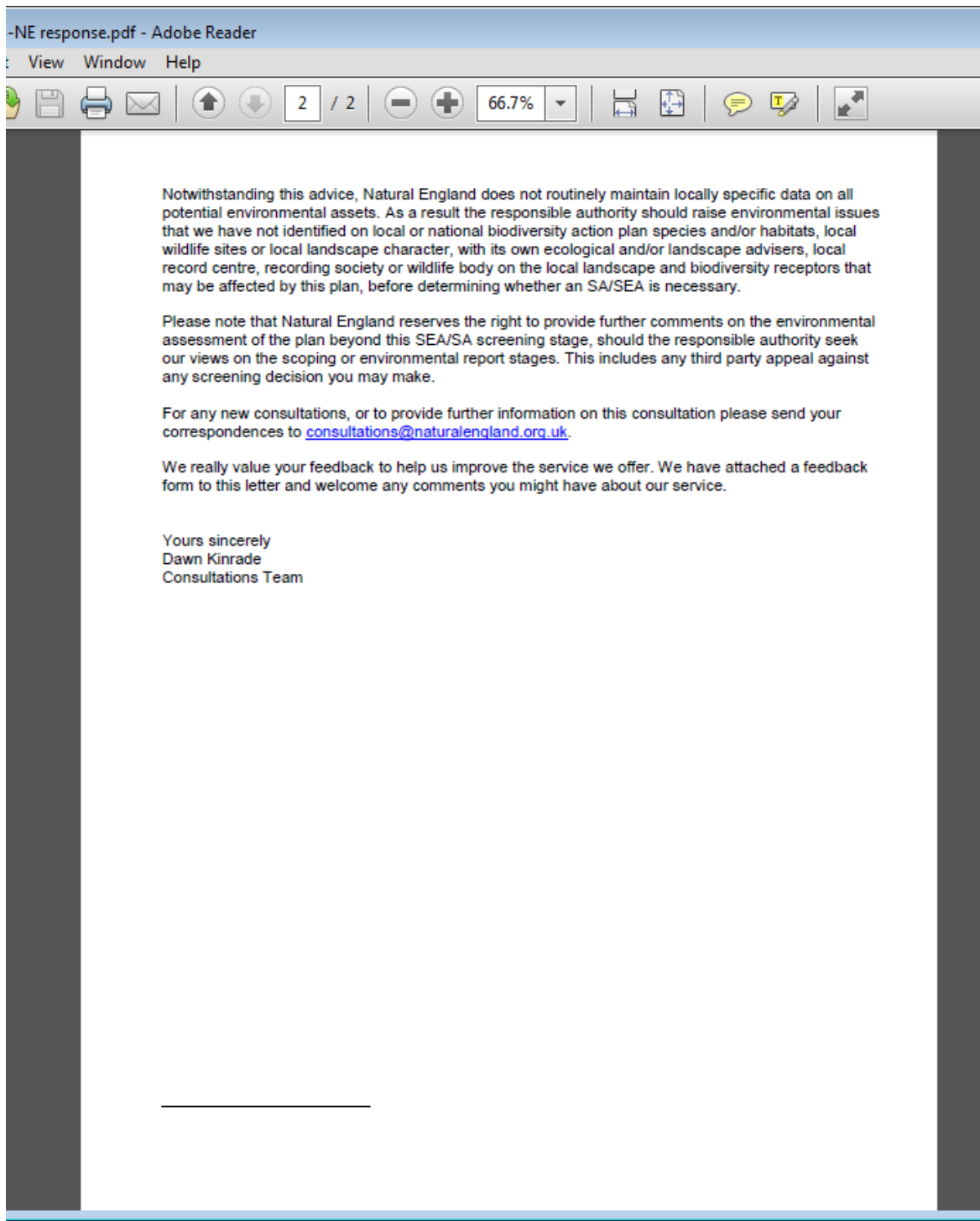
- *a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- *the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- *the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through 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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The screenshot shows an email client window titled "Historic England advice on case PL00173422 - Message (Plain Text)". The window has a ribbon menu with tabs for "File", "Message", and "Nuance PDF". The "Message" tab is active, showing various actions like "Delete", "Reply", "Forward", "Move", "Mark Unread", "Categorize", "Follow Up", "Translate", "Zoom", "Save Attachments", "Copy Message Attachments", and "Copy Attachments".

The email content is as follows:

Extra line breaks in this message were removed.

From: Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk Sent: Mon 30/10/2017 16:44
To: Siobhan Vincent
Cc: Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk; Sally Chapman
Subject: Historic England advice on case PL00173422

Message | PDF | HERef_PL00173422_L301009.doc (88 KB)

Dear Siobhan,

I am writing in relation to the following:

SEA/SA/IIA: Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Sustainability Appraisal/ Integrated Impact Assessment SEA of Northhill Neighbourhood Plan, 2017-2031 [Case Ref. PL00173422; HE File Ref. ; Your Reference.]

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the Northhill Neighbourhood Plan and the requirement for an SEA. I have now had a chance to review the documentation and the additional information kindly sent to me by your colleague Sally Chapman (cc'd in). Please find our response to the consultation attached. Please do get in touch if you have any queries.

Yours Sincerely

Edward James
Historic Places Advisor, East of England
E-mail: Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk
Direct Dial: 01223 582746

We help people understand, enjoy and value the historic environment, and protect it for the future. Historic England is a public body, and we champion everyone's heritage, across England.

Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk

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RE: 170915/nw09 FW: Northhill NP Screening Opinion - Message (HTML)

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From: Benn, Neville A <neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk>
To: Siobhan Vincent
Cc:
Subject: RE: 170915/nw09 FW: Northhill NP Screening Opinion

Sent: Mon 18/09/2017 07:59


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

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From: Siobhan Vincent [<mailto:Siobhan.Vincent@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>]
Sent: 14 September 2017 14:16
To: Enquiries, Unit <enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Northhill NP Screening Opinion

From: Siobhan Vincent
Sent: 14 September 2017 14:12
To: 'eastplanningpolicy'; 'neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk'; 'consultations@naturalengland.org.uk'
Cc: Siobhan Vincent
Subject: Northhill NP Screening Opinion

Benn, Neville A