



West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Determination Statement

May 2021

Executive Summary

This statement sets out the reasons for the determination that the draft West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. In addition, this statement determines that the making of the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

This determination statement is intended to demonstrate that the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan 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
- 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).

West Wickham Parish Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council will publish this determination statement in accordance with the regulatory requirements.

Determination Statement

This statement has been produced to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan will, when examined, comply with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) in particular Regulation 32 and Regulation 15(1)e(ii) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

A neighbourhood plan is required to meet a number of basic conditions (which are set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), one of which being it must not breach and must be otherwise compatible with EU and Human Rights obligations. This requires neighbourhood plans to fully consider the requirements of the SEA regulations¹ which transpose the EU's SEA Directive² into law and which requires those making plans that could impact on the environment to consider whether they are likely to have a significant effect or not.

Regulation 32 in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out an additional basic condition to those set out in primary legislation. Regulation 32 states: "The making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (d)) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (e)) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion was prepared by Place Services on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) for the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan. (See Appendix 1).

SCDC has consulted the statutory consultees (Historic England/Natural England/Environment Agency) on the Screening Report prepared by Essex Place Services and asked for their views on whether a SEA is required.

Consultation responses were received from the three statutory consultees. Their conclusions are summarised below, and their detailed comments are included in Appendix 2.

- Historic England: The Screening Report indicates that the Council considers that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. Historic England notes that the plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development.

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 concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. (10 May 2021)

¹ Known fully as The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

² Known fully as 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.

- Natural England: It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as their strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan. (29 April 2021)
- Environment Agency: Due to resource pressures they are no longer able to provide Local Planning Authorities with comprehensive bespoke advice on screening opinions. (5 May 2021)

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development consent. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and does not include any content that could give rise to significant negative effects on the environment, or any social or economic tenets of sustainability.

The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan can therefore be **screened out** for its requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

The HRA screening report indicates that the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have likely significant effects on any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. Natural England agreed that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan. The requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Regulations 2017 (as amended) is therefore **screened out**.

Appendix 1: Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening for West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan

As part of the process of making a Neighbourhood Plan, West Wickham Parish Council has requested a screening opinion to see whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. Such a requirement can be screened out if it is felt, based on the information available, that the Neighbourhood Plan would not have a likely significant environmental affect.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion was prepared by Place Services on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council for the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan.

West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan
Strategic Environmental Assessment(SEA) &
Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening
Report





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1. Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of this Report

This screening report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-Submission Draft) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/ EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations. A SEA is required if the Neighbourhood Plan is deemed to have a likely significant effect on the environment.

This report will also screen to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). An HRA screening report is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected Habitats (European) Sites as a result of the implementation of a plan or project.

1.2 The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan will set out planning policies for the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area. Once formally adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan carries the same legal weight as Local Development Plans adopted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in this case South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan gives the community direct power to develop a shared vision for the Parish of West Wickham and shape its development and growth. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the best characteristics of the Parish that make it special and address the challenges we face in sustaining a diverse and thriving community. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a need such a plan in order to:

1. Ensure that future development enhances specific aspects of the local character of the Parish.
2. Identify the specific natural habitats in our Parish that should be protected in order to maintain and enhance biodiversity.
3. Help redress the imbalance in our current housing stock to allow younger people to remain in the Parish.

The Vision for the Plan is set out to address these areas of need. The Vision states,

‘Our Neighbourhood Plan has at its core the ambition to enhance the lives of current and future residents by protecting the rural character of the Parish of West Wickham, the balance of built, agricultural and natural landscapes, its diverse wildlife and its tranquillity.’

Additionally, a number of Planning Objectives are devised for the Neighbourhood Plan. These are:

- Objective 1: Protect the valued characteristics of West Wickham through locally targeted policies that protect and enhance the Natural and Historic environment of the Parish.
- Objective 2: Sustain a diverse and thriving community with policies that support and facilitate improvements in the provision of community facilities and which deliver a housing mix that meets the needs of local people. This means providing smaller dwellings for the young and old who wish to remain in the Parish.

1.3 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan sets out the planning policies and land allocations to guide the future development of the District up to 2031. It includes policies on a wide range of topics such as housing, employment, services and facilities, and the natural environment.

1.3.1 Content regarding the Neighbourhood Plan area within the Local Plan

1.3.1.1 The Settlement Hierarchy and Principle of Development

The Local Plan identifies West Wickham (and Streetly End, within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary) as 'Infill Villages' within Policy S/11. Infill Villages are generally amongst the smallest in South Cambridgeshire. As stated within the Local Plan's supporting text to this policy,

'These villages have a poor range of services and facilities and it is often necessary for local residents to travel outside the village for most of their daily needs. These villages generally lack any food shops, have no primary school and may not have a permanent post office or a village hall or meeting place. Development on any scale would be unsustainable in these villages, as it will generate a disproportionate number of additional journeys outside the village. Development will not be permitted on sites capable of accommodating scheme sizes significantly larger than 2 or exceptionally 8 dwellings in Infill Villages.'

There are no Local Plan allocations for development within the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan boundary, however the Local Plan does not seek to restrict any allocations being proposed within Neighbourhood Plans.

Policy S/7 of the Local Plan covers policy regarding 'Development Frameworks'. Development Frameworks define where policies for the built-up areas of settlements give way to policies for the countryside. The Policy supports development within such frameworks (including two such areas in West Wickham and one in Streetly End), and includes further information on proposals outside development frameworks for Neighbourhood Plans, stating that,

'(2) Outside development frameworks, only allocations within Neighbourhood Plans that have come into force and development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside or where supported by other policies in this plan will be permitted.'

1.3.1.2 Protected Village Amenity Areas

The Local Plan designates sites within village frameworks for the purpose of safeguarding areas of undeveloped land which are important to retain. Some of the PVAAs may have important functions for the village such as allotments, recreation grounds and playing fields whilst others have an important amenity role in providing a setting for buildings or offer tranquil areas where there is minimum activity. Not all PVAAs have public access as some undeveloped areas which are important may be private gardens. They also vary from those which are very open to visual penetration to those which may be enclosed or semi-enclosed.

The Local Plan identifies two Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAAs) within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary in Streetly End. Local Plan Policy NH/11 sets out that development would not be permitted within or adjacent to PVAAs if development would have an adverse impact on the character, amenity, tranquillity or function of the village.

The following map, taken from the Local Plan, shows the location of the Local Green Space site and the three PVAAs in Streetly End. For a key to the maps, visit the [Local Plan Policies Map on the South Cambridgeshire District Council website](#).

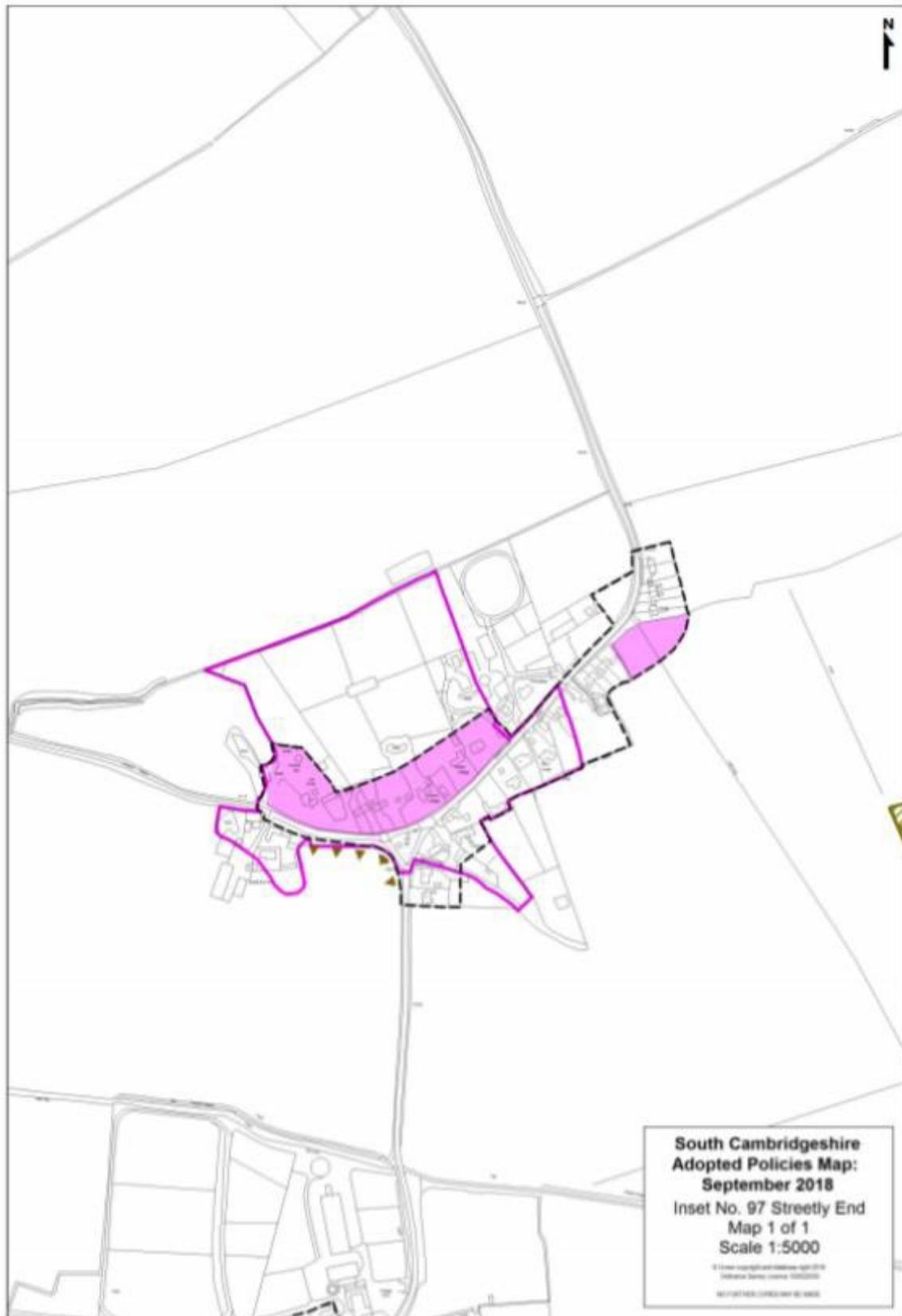


Figure 1:

Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAAs) within Streetly End

Source: South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2018

2. Legislative Background

2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

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 states that,

‘Environmental assessment is an important tool for integrating environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(10) All plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors and which set a framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment(7), and all plans and programmes which have been determined to require assessment pursuant to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna(8), are likely to have significant effects on the environment, and should as a rule be made subject to systematic environmental assessment. When they determine the use of small areas at local level or are minor modifications to the above plans or programmes, they should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(11) Other plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects may not have significant effects on the environment in all cases and should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have such effects.’

The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan may influence frameworks for future development or become used ancillary to those plans and programmes that do set such a framework, and as such it has been determined that the principle of the Neighbourhood Plan should be screened for the necessary application of the SEA Directive.

The Report from the Commission to The Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions states, on the application and effectiveness of the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Directive 2001/42/EC), that

‘the following Plan & Programme (P&P), and modifications to them, are covered when prepared and/or adopted by an authority and required pursuant to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions:

- P&P prepared for certain sectors and which set the framework for future development consent in respect of projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment-EIA-Directive.

- P&P requiring an assessment under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).
- P&P setting the framework for development consent in respect of projects (not limited to those listed in the EIA Directive; see above) and determined by "screening" as being likely to have significant environmental effects.'

This report represents this screening process in regard to the content and influence of the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan.

2.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site (also referred to as Habitats Sites in the National Planning Policy Framework), in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

HRA screening is the initial assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of Habitats sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites.

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to accompany the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake an HRA.

In line with the Court judgement (CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats Site.

3. SEA Screening

3.1 When is SEA Required?

Planning Practice Guidance – Strategic environmental assessment requirements for neighbourhood plans (Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 11-026-20140306) states that,

‘In some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a “screening” assessment and the requirements are set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of those Regulations.

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

To decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan’s preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies.

Each consultation body will be able to advise on particular topics relevant to its specific area of expertise and responsibility, and the specific information that it holds.

Where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared. A copy of the statement must be submitted with the neighbourhood plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner.’

Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive set out the circumstances in which a SEA is required. Table 1 sets out the assessment of whether the principle of the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan will require a full SEA.

Table 1: Exploring whether the Principle of the Plan would warrant SEA

Question 1: Is the Plan 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?

Yes - The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for adoption through legislative procedure.

Question 2: Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provision? (Typical characteristics of "administrative provisions" are that they are publicly available, prepared in a formal way, probably involving consultation with interested parties. The administrative provision must have sufficient formality such that it counts as a "provision" and it must also use language that plainly requires rather than just encourages a Plan to be prepared.)

Yes - The Neighbourhood Plan would be considered as falling within the category of an 'administrative provision'.

Question 3: Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive?

Yes to both criteria - The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.

Question 4: Will the Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?

The Neighbourhood Plan's likely effect on sites and requirement for an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive is explored in Section 4 of this Report.

Question 5: Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a Plan likely to require assessment under the Habitats Directive?

Yes to one of the criteria - the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

Question 6: Does the Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in the Annexes of the EIA Directive)?

Yes - the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.

Question 7: Is the Plans sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial or budget Plan, or is it co -financed by structural funds or European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) programmes 2000 to 2006/7?

The Neighbourhood Plan does not serve a purpose related to national defence or civil emergency, a financial or budget Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan is not co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7.

Question 8: Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?

Likely significant effects are explored in more detail in Section 3.3 of this Screening Report. The 'conclusions' section of the Report outlines whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA or not due in regard to its effects on the environment.

The following section looks at the criteria for assessing the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan and the identified effects of the Neighbourhood Plan in line with the criteria. Crucially, it will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on the environment.

3.2 Criteria for Assessing the Effects of the Neighbourhood Plan

Criteria for determining the likely significant effects on the environment, referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below.

Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

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),

Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

- 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.

3.3 Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan

The following assessment will consider the likelihood of the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan (at the time of writing) to have significant effects on the environment. The table below will explore the likelihood of effects on the following required themes, as included within Annex I of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC):

- Biodiversity;
- Population;
- Human health;
- Fauna;
- Flora;
- Soil;
- Water;
- Air;
- Climatic factors;
- Material assets;
- Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage;
- Landscape; and
- The interrelationship between the above factors.

Table 2: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on the Environment

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|--|---|
| <p>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> | <p>The Plan sets out relevant policies which will be used to determine proposals for development within the Neighbourhood Plan area once adopted. The Plan does not include any allocations for development and neither are any included within the Plan area from the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan states that, 'The housing requirement figure for the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area (provided by SCDC in December 2020) is the delivery of 3 additional homes during the plan period 2018 to 2031.'</p> <p>A Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and once brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies only in the Local Plan for that Neighbourhood Plan area. Meeting housing needs is proposed through a criteria-based policy approach, in conformity to Local Plan policies S/7 (Development Frameworks) and S/11 (Infill Villages), with a focus on house size and type. The degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects through allocating resources is therefore considered low.</p> <p>The extent to which any conflicts exist between the Neighbourhood Plan and District level policies within the Local Plan will be considered between the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority in finalising the Neighbourhood Plan, or otherwise through the independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan.</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 provides policies for the Plan area, relevant to a local level only. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and its policies are considered to be in general conformity to that of the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan, when/if 'made', will have weight in all planning decisions within the Plan area, however it should be acknowledged that issues identified as 'strategic' within the</p> |

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|---|--|
| <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>Local Plan will have priority over any of the Neighbourhood Plan policies. The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes is therefore low in the context of the Plan area.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans are required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to ensure environmental considerations are taken into account. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies related (directly / indirectly) to ensuring environmental considerations will be integrated into any forthcoming development within the Plan area. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWK/3: Heritage assets; • WWK/6: Dark landscape; and • WWK/7: Protecting and Enhancing the Natural ENvironment <p>Irrespective of the adequacy of the above policies, adopted Local Plan policies apply within the Neighbourhood Plan area, which have been subject to thorough assessment within the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. This ensures that environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, will be considered for all development proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> |
| <p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan area</p> | <p>The Neighbourhood Plan reflects a small area and the Plan's policy content seeks to address environmental issues. The policy content of the adopted Local Plan will additionally apply to any proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Local Plan policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) within the context of the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan and this Screening Report identify the following potential (direct / indirect) environmental problems or sources of potential problems relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan area is within various SSSI Impact Risk |

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|--|---|
| | <p>Zones (IRZs). Development proposals within IRZs are required to be consulted on with Natural England, should they be of a type or size that could warrant negative effects on the relevant SSSI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan area contains part of the Over and Lawn Woods SSSI to the east, which is in an ‘unfavourable recovering’ condition; as a result, all planning applications in the IRZ require consultation with Natural England. • Additionally the Balsham Wood SSSI borders the Neighbourhood Plan boundary to the west. • A number of Priority Habitats (from the Priority Habitat Inventory¹) are scattered throughout the Plan area, with some adjacent to the existing West Wickham development framework boundary. These include deciduous woodland, broad leaved woodland, young trees woodland, and traditional orchard. • The Plan area contains Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland at Rands Wood, Leys Wood, Over Wood, Cadge Wood, Hare Wood and also areas of ancient replanted woodland at Hare Wood. • Of these, Hare Wood, Leys Wood and Cadge Wood are also designated as County Wildlife Sites. • The Plan area contains a Scheduled Monuments, namely a ‘moated site at Yen Hall Farm’. • There are approximately 30 Listed Buildings within the Plan area; the majority of these are associated with the West Wickham Conservation Area and the Streetly End Conservation Area forming the historic cores of the two villages. • Of these Listed Buildings there exists the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary in the West Wickham Conservation Area. |

¹ a spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is within various Source Protection Zones (SPZs). SPZs are defined around large and public potable groundwater abstraction sites. The purpose of SPZs is to provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality through constraining the proximity of an activity that may impact upon a drinking water abstraction. Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, there lie areas of Zone I (Inner Protection Zone), Zone II (Outer Protection Zone) and Zone III (Total Catchment). • Land within Flood Risk Zones 3 and 2 exist within the Neighbourhood Plan area, to the south west of West Wickham village and to the west / north west of Streetly End. These are associated with tributaries of the Cam Valley river system. • The non-developed areas of the Plan area consist of Grade 2 ('very good') soils. The Neighbourhood Plan area does not contain any Grade 1 ('excellent') soil, which represents the best and most versatile soil within the wider District context and also the country. • The Plan area is located within the East Anglian Chalk National Character Area (NCA). • The East Anglian Chalk NCA is characterised as a visually simple and uninterrupted landscape of smooth, rolling chalkland hills with large regular fields enclosed by low hawthorn hedges, with few trees, straight roads and expansive views to the north. The Chalk produces water that is naturally mineral rich, sediment free and of a stable temperature and as such supports specialised chalk stream ecology. A series of important nature reserves are located along the springline at the base of the chalk scarp, notably at Chippenham, Fulbourn and Fowlmere. • Medieval moated sites, park lands and nucleated villages are distinctive features of medieval settlement on the Chalk, many of which are |

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|--|--|
| | <p>preserved in the grounds of later country estates, and many are also Scheduled Monuments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regionally, West Wickham is in a landscape classified by Natural England as Wooded Village Farmlands. This is defined as a gently rolling elevated landscape with ancient woodland blocks and is an open landscape with long distance views. |
| <p>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).</p> | <p>The content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not in conflict with those relevant planning documents within the wider district and county area related to waste management or water protection.</p> |
| <p>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects on the following factors:</p> | <p>The following impacts have been identified within this Screening Assessment:</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity | <p>The Plan includes Policy WWK/7: Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment, which sets out that any development proposals which cause loss or harm to them will not be permitted unless the need for and benefits of the development demonstrably and substantially outweigh any adverse impacts and where replacement habitats are provided as part of the proposal. Additionally, development proposals will be expected to retain features of existing biodiversity value and contribute to the parish and wider district's strategic green infrastructure.</p> <p>The Plan area lies outside the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of the Chippenham Fen Ramsar site, the Wicken Fen Ramsar site and the Fenland Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The</p> |

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|--|---|
| | <p>HRA Screening element of this Report concludes that there would be no likely significant effects resulting from the Plan alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. This is due to the Plan not introducing any new residential or employment development proposals which would result in any direct impacts.</p> <p>The Plan area is within the IRZs of numerous SSSIs within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan boundary. The implications of this are that the majority of planning applications within the Plan area will require consultation with Natural England outside the development frameworks of West Wickham and Streetly End, with the exception of householder applications. Within the development framework areas however, only those housing development proposals of over 100 dwellings would require such consultation as per the stipulations of the IRZ in those areas. Consultation with Natural England is considered a development management issue (in so far as consultation is required at that stage), and relevant policies exist within the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.</p> <p>In consideration of all of the above, effects on biodiversity resulting from the Plan can therefore be ruled out.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population | <p>It is considered that there would be no significant effects on population resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan. This is due to the small scale of the Plan area.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health | <p>The Neighbourhood Plan includes Policy WWK/4 – Local Green Spaces and Protected Village Amenity Areas, which designates areas important for health and well-being, such as allotments, playing fields and recreation areas. The Policy states that development on these sites will not be acceptable other than in very special circumstances in line with national policy.</p> <p>There are no other significant effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan regarding human health that would warrant a strategic assessment through SEA. The Plan</p> |

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|--|---|
| | includes policies for the protection of open spaces and the enhancement of Green Infrastructure (Policy WWK/7) that contribute to healthy lifestyles. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fauna | <p>There are no direct impacts resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan on fauna that are considered significant at the Plan level. The Plan seeks the protection and enhancement of biodiversity at key sites and does not propose any development that could lead to any deterioration of habitats. It is possible that any number of speculative developments could be forthcoming within the Plan area that could have negative impacts on protected species, however these cannot be considered strategically significant to the extent that Strategic Environmental Assessment would be warranted. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case 'project level' basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA's adopted Local Plan.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flora | <p>Numerous and various areas of Priority Habitat exist within the Plan Area. The Plan includes Policy WWK/7 – Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment, which seeks to protect and enhance existing biodiversity assets in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This Policy seeks to ensure that development proposals provide a net gain in biodiversity through for example the creation of new natural habitats appropriate for important wildlife, the planting of additional trees and hedgerows, and restoring and enhancing existing biodiversity networks supporting the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategic area. In addition to this Policy's protection and enhancement of flora, South Cambridgeshire Local Plan policies apply. As a result, no effects are expected to result from the Neighbourhood Plan regarding flora.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil | <p>The non-developed areas of the Neighbourhood Plan area consist of Grade 2 ('very good') soil. The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any development within this or any</p> |

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|--|--|
| | <p>greenfield land within the Neighbourhood Plan area. There are no identified negative implications surrounding soil quality as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water | <p>The Plan area is within a groundwater Source Protection Zone (Zones I, II and III). The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for any development purposes that could give rise to ground water pollutants (e.g. give rise to hazardous substances such as pesticides, oils, petrol and diesel, solvents, arsenic, mercury or chromium VI; or non-hazardous substances such as ammonia or nitrates). Pollution control policies at the LPA level apply within the Neighbourhood Plan area to ensure that no negative effects on water quality should be experienced within the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>The HRA element of this Report concludes that although water quality is a major issue of concern for the Wicken Fen Ramsar site, and thereby Fenland SAC, the Plan does not contain any policies or proposals that would give rise to any deterioration of water quality given that the Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the Impact Risk Zone for this Ramsar site.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air | <p>There are no identified air quality issues within the Plan area. Although consultation with Natural England is required for any development that could cause air pollution (regarding industrial/agricultural development) in association with the IRZs of SSSIs in parts of the Plan area, consultation would be required at the planning application stage and is not considered a matter would warrant SEA, as a strategic process, to be undertaken.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climatic factors | <p>No policies exist within the Plan that address flood risk issues, although it should be acknowledged that existing adopted Local Plan policies regarding flood risk apply in the Plan area.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan area contains a relatively small area</p> |

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|--|--|
| | <p>of Flood Risk Zone 3 to south west of West Wickham village and the east / north east of Streetly End however no development allocations are proposed within the Plan that would lead to any incompatibilities in any such areas. It is therefore considered that SEA would not be required and any speculative development coming forward within the Neighbourhood Plan area in the Plan period can be considered at the planning application stage.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material assets | <p>The Plan area does not contain any land within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) within the County Council's adopted Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (Proposals Map C) (2011). The Plan therefore does not have any conflict with the MSA.</p> <p>Regarding other material assets, the content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not considered to have any significant effects due to the extent / size of the Plan area. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA's adopted Local Plan.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural heritage | <p>The Plan area contains a Scheduled Monument and numerous Listed Buildings, as well as Conservation Areas associated with the West Wickham and Streetly End built up areas. The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes that could have any negative effect on any of these assets.</p> <p>The Plan includes policies that directly or indirectly regard heritage and the historic environment that will apply to all proposals in the plan area over the Plan period. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy WWK/3 – Heritage assets; • Policy WWK/1 – Settlement patterns and identity; and • Policy WWK/2 – Built environment characteristics |

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|--|---|
| | <p>Irrespective of the robustness of these policies in ensuring the protection and enhancement of heritage assets, policy also exists at the LPA level which additionally applies in the Plan area. The effects on heritage are, as a result, considered a development management issue in the context of the Plan and its content. There are not considered to be any elements of the Plan that would give rise to significant effects on the historic environment at the strategic level that would require the full application of the SEA Directive.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape | <p>The Plan area is within a sensitive landscape, in regard to the protection objectives of the East Anglian Chalk National Character Area (NCA). The Plan area contains numerous features synonymous with this NCA. Nevertheless, the Plan does not allocate land for development purposes and includes policies relevant to landscape character and its preservation.</p> <p>In light of the Plan's policy stance regarding landscape character (Policies WWK/1 and WWK/3) and in consideration also of the requirements of development proposals in accordance with the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, there are no significant strategic landscape effects identified within this Report that would warrant the requirement for the application of the SEA Directive and the formulation of a SEA Environmental Report.</p> |
| <p>The cumulative nature of the effects.</p> | <p>In line with the above considerations that explore the possible individual effects of the Plan's content, no significant effects have been highlighted as possible that could lead to any cumulative impact.</p> |
| <p>The trans boundary nature of the effects.</p> | <p>The adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan can be seen to support the protection and improvement of conditions relevant to those sustainability factors listed within the SEA Directive. The Neighbourhood Plan is not in conflict with these wider thematic policies. The HRA Screening element of this Report, which explores in-combination effects with other relevant plans and projects, also identifies no in-combination</p> |

| Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive) | Likelihood and summary of significant effects |
|---|---|
| <p>The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).</p> | <p>effects regarding Habitats (European) Sites.</p> <p>It is considered that there is no risk to human health or the environment as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is in consideration of the above screening requirements related to sustainability themes. The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to give rise to any accidents that can be considered to have a significant risk to human health or the environment.</p> |
| <p>The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</p> | <p>The Neighbourhood Plan relates to the local level only. No allocations are included within the Plan and the magnitude and spatial extent of the Plan's content is unlikely to be significant in a wider District context. Effects are not expected to be realised over a wide geographic area.</p> |
| <p>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>As highlighted above in the screening of the Neighbourhood Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has not been assessed as having any possible negative effect associated with environmental themes.</p> |
| <p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection</p> | <p>As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has not been assessed as having any significant effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or</p> |

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status.

international protection status.

4. HRA Screening

4.1 Habitat Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

This section forms a plan level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) as required by Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any Habitats Site, in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

The first stage of HRA is the screening assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of Habitats (European) sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. Habitats (European) sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites and Habitats sites in the NPPF.

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is shown in Appendix 1.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Neighbourhood Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Neighbourhood Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake HRA.

This section of this Report aims to:

- Identify the Habitats sites within 20km of West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Summarise the reasons for designation and Conservation Objectives for each site to be considered in this assessment.
- Screen the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan for its potential to impact upon a Habitats site.
- Assess the potential for in combination effects from other projects and plans in the area.
- Identify if there are any outstanding issues that need further investigation.

On 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) held a referendum and voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the Prime Minister triggered Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union, which commenced a period of negotiations regarding the UK's exit from the EU. On 26 June 2018 The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 received Royal Assent and work to prepare the UK statute book for Brexit has begun. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 will make sure that UK laws continue to operate following the UK's exit. There is no immediate change to legislation or policy affecting national

infrastructure. Relevant EU Directives have been transposed into UK law and those are unchanged until amended by Parliament. Therefore the requirements for HRA under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) remain in place.

4.2 Court Judgements and their consideration in this Report

4.2.1 CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17

As previously mentioned, in line with the Court judgement (CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats Site.

This HRA Screening Report does not therefore consider mitigation measures within the assessment of Likely Significant Effects resulting from the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2.2 CJEU Holohan C- 461/17

This Court judgement now imposes more detailed requirements on the competent authority at Appropriate Assessment stage:

1. [...] an 'Appropriate Assessment' must, on the one hand, catalogue the entirety of habitat types and species for which a site is protected, and, on the other, identify and examine both the implications of the proposed project for the species present on that site, and for which that site has not been listed, and the implications for habitat types and species to be found outside the boundaries of that site, provided that those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site.
2. [...] the competent authority is permitted to grant to a plan or project consent which leaves the developer free to determine subsequently certain parameters relating to the construction phase, such as the location of the construction compound and haul routes, only if that authority is certain that the development consent granted establishes conditions that are strict enough to guarantee that those parameters will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.
3. [...] where the competent authority rejects the findings in a scientific expert opinion recommending that additional information be obtained, the 'Appropriate Assessment' must include an explicit and detailed statement of reasons capable of dispelling all reasonable scientific doubt concerning the effects of the work envisaged on the site concerned.

Within this HRA Screening report, the assessment determines the requirement whether an Appropriate Assessment is needed for the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan.

4.3 Habitats (European) Sites

Habitats Sites is the term used in the NPPF (2019) to describe any site which would be included within the definition at Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) for the purpose of those regulations. These now form part of the UK national network of sites for nature protection. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of UK's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

All Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are comprised of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all Ramsar sites in England are SSSIs. Together, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites are considered as Habitats Sites in England (NPPF, 2019).

4.3.1 Explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within EU countries. Example: Ouse Washes is internationally important for wintering waterfowl. Legislation: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

SACs are areas designated to protect habitat types that are in danger of disappearance, have a small natural range, or are highly characteristic of the region; and to protect species that are endangered, vulnerable, rare, or endemic. Example: woodland habitat of Eversden and Wimpole Woods for the population of Barbastelle bats. Legislation: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)

Ramsar Sites are designated to protect the biological and physical features of wetlands, especially for waterfowl habitats. For example, Wicken Fen is an outstanding remnant of East Anglian peat fens and supports one species of British Red Data Book plant fen violet *Viola persicifolia* which survives at only two other sites in Britain. Ramsar sites often overlap with SACs and SPAs and UK planning policy determines that they should be accorded the same importance when developments are proposed. Legislation: Ramsar Convention (1971) – Wetlands of International Importance and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

4.3.2 Habitats Sites to be considered

There are five Habitats sites which lie within 20 km of the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area. These are listed in Table 3 and shown on the map in Appendix 2.

Table 3: Habitats Sites within 20km to be considered in this assessment

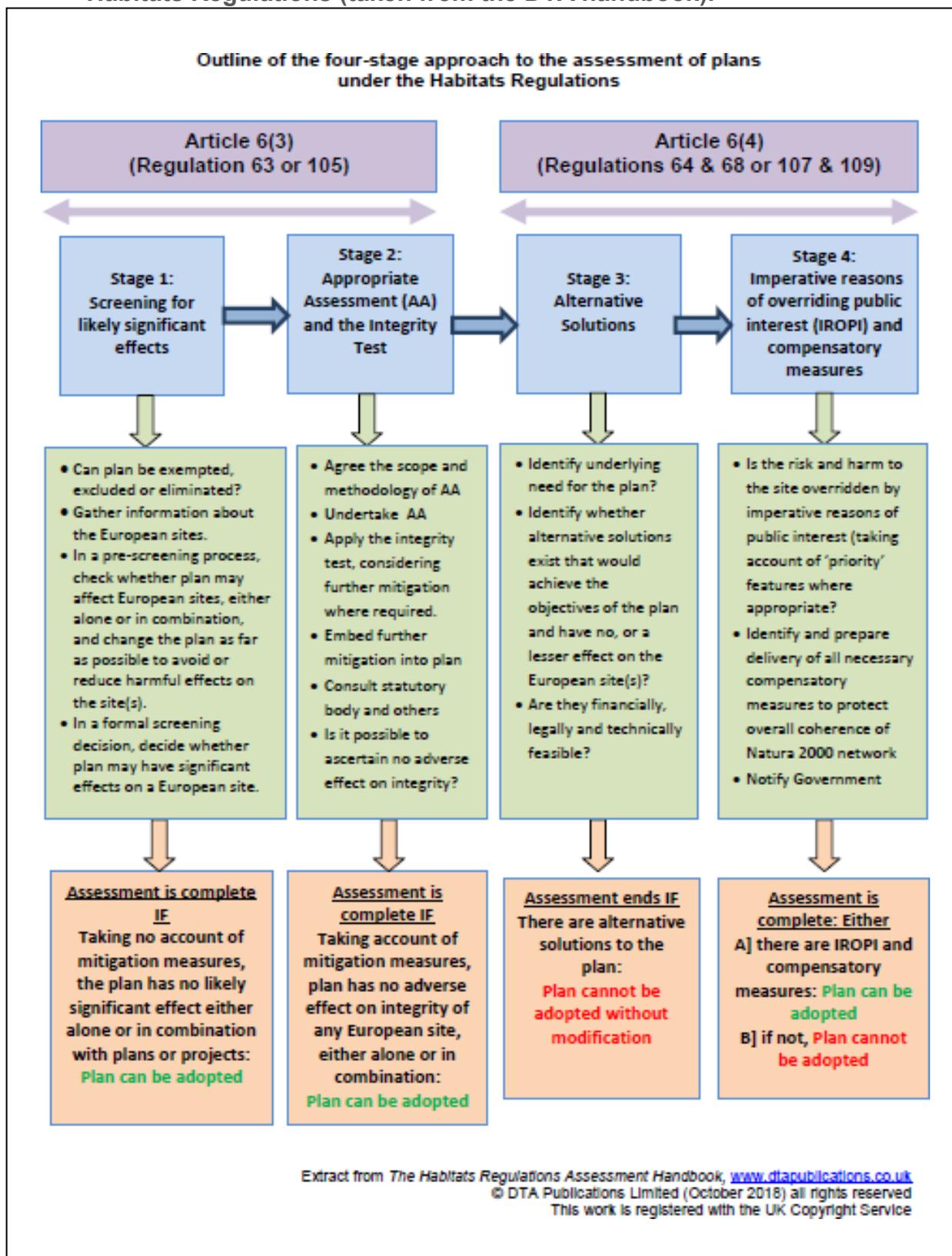
| |
|----------------------------|
| SPA |
| N/A |
| SAC |
| Fenland, Devils Dyke |
| Ramsar |
| Wicken Fen, Chippenham Fen |

Fenland SAC is comprised of three fenlands and overlaps with Wicken Fen Ramsar and Chippenham Fen Ramsar. The Impact Risk Zones for the underpinning SSSIs for the aforementioned Habitats sites were interrogated on MAGIC map. The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 5km IRZ for Devils Dyke, Wicken Fen and Chippenham Fen Ramsar sites Fenland SAC.

4.4 Method and Approach

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA screening report; this is necessary to ensure the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Habitats (European) site or a Habitats (European) offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This document relates only to Stage 1 of the HRA process as set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 2: Outline of the Four Stage Approach to the Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Regulations (taken from the DTA handbook).



4.4.1 Stage 1: HRA Screening

The screening stage identifies if any significant effects are likely because any policies or projects will have an impact on a Habitats Site. Table 4 identifies the different categories assigned to each policy in the plan: Category A identifies those policies or projects that are considered to have No Negative Effect. Category B identifies those policies or projects that will have No Likely Significant Effect. Category C identifies those policies or projects that might have Likely Significant Effect upon a Habitats Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Section 4.5 considers each policy or projects and the results of the screening exercise recorded.

Table 4: Screening categorisation

Category A: No negative effect

Policies or projects that will not be likely to have any negative effect on a Habitats site.

Category B: No Likely Significant Effect

Policies or projects that could have an effect but would not be likely to have a *significant* negative effect on a Habitats site alone or in combination. This conclusion could only be reached if the effects, even in combination and taking the precautionary principle into account, are considered trivial.

Category C: Likely Significant Effect

Policies or projects which are predicted to have a likely significant effect on a Habitats Site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

4.4.2 Potential impacts of West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan on Habitats Sites

There are a wide range of potential impacts on Habitats Sites that could arise from development plans. These can be summarised as -

- Land take by development;
- Impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying interest species within the Habitats site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for an identified species.
- Increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;

- Changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for waste water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas;
- Changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial developments, quarries and waste management facilities.

In line with the SA Scoping Report for South Cambridgeshire’s Local Plan, each policy will be assessed against the criteria in the table below.

Table 4: Assessment of potential impacts on Habitats Sites

| Nature of potential impact | How the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site | Why these effects are not considered significant |
|---|--|--|
| Land take by development | The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area is outside the boundaries of the Habitats Sites within scope of this HRA. | N/A |
| Impact on protected species outside the protected sites | The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 5km IRZ for Wicken Fen and Chippenham Fen Ramsar sites, the Fenland SAC and Devils Dyke SAC. | The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for development and therefore impacts on protected species outside of the sites is screened out . |
| Recreational pressure and disturbance | The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 5km IRZ for Wicken Fen and Chippenham Fen Ramsar sites, the Fenland SAC and Devils Dyke SAC | There is currently no formal Zone of Influence identified for Wicken Fen within which recreational impacts are considered. Further investigation is underway. However, the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for |

| Nature of potential impact | How the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site | Why these effects are not considered significant |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| | | development and therefore impacts from recreation arising from the NP are screened out . |
| Water quantity and quality | Although water quality is an issue of concern for Wicken Fen Ramsar site (and thereby Fenland SAC), West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 5km Impact Risk Zone, and it is considered that there is no pathway for water quantity or quality impacts. Additionally, there is no substantial hydrological connection between the plan area and the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for development. | N/A |
| Changes in pollution levels | The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 5km IRZ for Wicken Fen and Chippenham Fen Ramsar sites, the Fenland SAC and Devils Dyke SAC. The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for development. | N/A |

4.5 Results from HRA Screening of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Each of the policies in the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan was screened to identify whether they would have any impact on a Habitats Site.

Table 5: Assessment of potential impacts from the Plan policies

| Policy Number | Policy Wording | Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites? | Recommendations |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <p>WWK/1: Settlement patterns and identity</p> | <p>To be supported, development proposals must recognise, maintain and where possible enhance existing landscape and settlement character in West Wickham parish:</p> <p>Specifically, development proposals shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) respect and retain the historic linear settlement patterns; b) maintain the visual and physical separation which currently exists between the main village and the hamlet of Streetly End and between the hamlet of Streetly End and Horseheath; c) conserve or enhance the setting of the historic village gateways as shown on the Policies Map; and d) not adversely impact on views into and out of the settlement, towards local landmarks (including heritage assets) and across the wider countryside where these views are locally distinctive or key contributors to sense of place. <p>Important Countryside Frontages (see Policy WWK/5) will be protected from development where this would result in undermining a strong connection between settlement and the surrounding</p> | <p>No, Category A</p> | <p>No specific recommendations</p> |

| Policy Number | Policy Wording | Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites? | Recommendations |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | rural area. | | |
| WWK/2: Built environment characteristics | The local built environment characteristics, as described in the West Wickham Character Assessment 2018, of building lines, density, height and building materials should be reflected in any new development. High quality design and suitable materials will be expected. Trees, walls and hedges which contribute to the street scene should be retained and enhanced. | No, Category A | No specific recommendations |
| WWK/3: Heritage assets | Development should respect, sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets including their settings. This includes designated assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings and the scheduled ancient monument at Yen Hall; non-designated assets such as 19th and 20th century street furniture, former public buildings, the war memorial and WWII aircraft hangars as well as historic landscape features such as the churchyard, the registered village green in Burton End, the Roman Road (Wool Street) and archaeological remains. | No, Category A | No specific recommendations |
| WWK/4: Local Green Spaces | Land in front of Maypole Croft (Figure 19) and land around the Village Hall (Figure 20) are designated as Local Green | No, Category A | No specific recommendations |

| Policy Number | Policy Wording | Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites? | Recommendations |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------|
| | Spaces. Development on these sites will not be acceptable other than in very special circumstances in line with national policy. | | |
| WWK/5: Important Countryside Frontages | The area shown on Figure 21 is identified as an Important Countryside Frontage and the area shown in Figure 24 is retained as an Important Countryside Frontage, where land has a strong countryside character because it penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing a significant connection between the street scene and the surrounding rural area, or where it provides an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of the development framework. Planning permission will be refused if it compromises these purposes. | No, Category A | No specific recommendations |
| WWK/6: Dark landscape | Proposals will be permitted provided that the lighting proposed is: the minimum appropriate for its purpose; is designed such that lighting is directed downwards to avoid spill up into the sky or out of the site (for example with a beam angle below 70 degrees); and that no significant adverse effects individually or cumulatively will result to the character of the area, the residential amenity of local residents, the safety of vehicle users and pedestrians or the diurnal/seasonal rhythms of the | No, Category A | No specific recommendations |

| Policy Number | Policy Wording | Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites? | Recommendations |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------|
| | <p>Parish's biodiversity assets.</p> <p>Proposals where external lighting is required should include a full lighting scheme that provides information about layout and beam orientation, a schedule of the light equipment proposed including luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and lumen unit levels.</p> | | |
| <p>WWK/7: Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment</p> | <p>Development proposals will be expected to retain features of existing biodiversity value including the following which are locally valued and contribute to the parish and wider district's strategic green infrastructure.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Roman Road 2. The disused chalkpit 3. Wide, floristically diverse roadside verges 4. Ponds 5. Species rich and/or ancient hedgerows 6. Notable trees and important copses <p>Any development proposals which cause loss or harm to them will not be permitted unless the need for and benefits of the development demonstrably and substantially outweigh any adverse impacts and</p> | <p>No, Category A</p> | <p>No specific recommendations</p> |

| Policy Number | Policy Wording | Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites? | Recommendations |
|---|---|--|------------------------------------|
| | <p>where replacement habitats are provided as part of the proposal.</p> <p>Development should provide a net gain in biodiversity through for example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The creation of new natural habitats appropriate for important wildlife species. 2. The planting of additional trees and hedgerows. 3. Restoring and enhancing existing biodiversity networks supporting the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategic area. | | |
| <p>WWK/8: Access to the countryside</p> | <p>The existing network of public rights of way, footpaths and bridleways will be retained and enhancements to this network will be encouraged. Proposals which will impact adversely on the public enjoyment of rights of way will not normally be supported. Proposals which are located in areas where there is an opportunity to link two or more public rights of way or enhance existing rights of way will be expected to do so where appropriate.</p> | <p>No, Category A</p> | <p>No specific recommendations</p> |
| <p>WWK/9: Smaller properties</p> | <p>Residential development proposals on suitable sites which help address the current low stock of two bedroom homes in the parish</p> | <p>No, Category A</p> | <p>No specific recommendations</p> |

| Policy Number | Policy Wording | Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites? | Recommendations |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| | <p>are strongly encouraged.</p> <p>To be supported, all residential development proposals must demonstrate (through reference to the most up to date evidence on parish housing stock and local needs) how the dwelling size, type and mix is appropriate to local site-specific circumstances, prioritising wherever possible the delivery of smaller homes over larger homes.</p> | | |
| <p>WWK/10: Brownfield sites</p> | <p>Larger residential development schemes coming forward under the exceptional circumstances set out in Policy S/11 of the Local Plan (more than 2 and up to 8 dwellings on brownfield sites) will only be supported where the identified positive overall benefit to the village includes the delivery of smaller affordable homes or other types of dwelling identified as a priority for West Wickham in an up to date assessment of parish-specific housing needs.</p> | <p>No, Category A</p> | <p>No specific recommendations</p> |
| <p>WWK/11: The Village Hall Site</p> | <p>Development associated with the expansion and/or enhancement of Village Hall facilities on or adjacent to the existing Village Hall will be supported subject to:</p> <p>a) The quantity and quality of the open recreation space being retained, re-provided or enhanced.</p> <p>b) Provision of onsite car parking in</p> | <p>No, Category A</p> | <p>No specific recommendations</p> |

| Policy Number | Policy Wording | Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites? | Recommendations |
|---------------|----------------|--|-----------------|
|---------------|----------------|--|-----------------|

line with Local Plan Policy TI/3: Parking Provision to meet the additional needs generated by the development.

4.5.1 Recommendations

There are no specific recommendations to deliver for the policies in this draft Neighbourhood Plan as they have all been assigned to Category A. There is therefore no need to amend the policy text as they are not predicted to have a Likely Significant Effect on any Habitats site.

The in-combination effects from other plans and projects are considered in the following Section.

4.6 Other Plans and Projects: In-combination Effects

The plans and projects listed below and their HRAs have been carried out by South Cambridgeshire District Council or other organisations and none have been found to have a likely significant effect on the Habitats sites within scope of this assessment.

The Water Cycle Strategy (WCS) for Major Growth Sites in and Around Cambridge is not in itself a relevant plan or project under the Habitats Regulations but was prepared to support the delivery of the existing development strategy. Whilst it does not provide an assessment of new proposals for the Local Plan, its findings are relevant to support the assessment of this plan. It focused on issues related to the water supply, surface drainage and wastewater sewerage associated with potential development sites, and also concluded no likely significant effects, and that protected sites could be screened out of further assessment.

In the context of this HRA, the other relevant plans to be considered (i.e. those that have also triggered a requirement for HRA) are listed below in combination with West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan HRA.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|

Table 6: Other plans or projects considered for in combination effects

| Statutory Body | Title of HRA or Project | Findings of HRA or Project | Potential for in combination effects |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| South Cambridgeshire District Council | Northstowe Area Action Plan HRA (April 2007) | “It can be objectively concluded that the Northstowe Area Action Plan is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. There is therefore no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an Appropriate Assessment.” | It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted. |
| South Cambridgeshire District Council | Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan HRA (May 2007) | “This AAP was subject to an HRA and found not to impact on a Natura site or a Ramsar site.” | It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted. |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>South Cambridgeshire District Council</p> | <p>Cambridge East Area Action Plan HRA (May 2007)</p> | <p>“It can be objectively concluded that the Cambridge East Area Action Plan is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. There is therefore no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an</p> | <p>It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.</p> |
|--|---|---|---|

| Statutory Body | Title of HRA or Project | Findings of HRA or Project | Potential for in combination effects |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | Appropriate Assessment.” | |
| South Cambridgeshire District Council | North West Cambridge Area Action Plan HRA (August 2007) | “It has been objectively concluded that the North West Cambridge Area Action Plan – Preferred Options Draft - is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. It is therefore concluded that there is no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an Appropriate Assessment.” | It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted. |
| South Cambridgeshire District Council | Habitat Regulations Assessment: Chapter 20 of South Cambs Local Plan SA Scoping Report (June 2012) and including the Draft Final Sustainability Report (2014) and Sustainability Appraisal Addendum (2015) | “The Local Plan for the district was subject to an HRA screening and found to have no likely significant impact on a Natura site or a Ramsar site.” | It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted. |
| South Cambridgeshire District Council | Waterbeach New Town SPD HRA screening report (2018) | “The overall conclusion of this screening assessment is that | It is considered that in combination likely significant effects |

| Statutory Body | Title of HRA or Project | Findings of HRA or Project | Potential for in combination effects |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| | | the draft Waterbeach New Town SPD is unlikely to have any significant effects on the Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites identified alone or in combination with other plans or projects.” | are not predicted. |
| South Cambridgeshire District Council | Bourn Airfield New Village SPD SEA / HRA Screening Report (June 2019) | “The HRA element of this Screening Report indicates that the draft Bourn Airfield New Village SPD is not predicted to have likely significant effects on Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.” | It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted. |
| South Cambridgeshire District Council | Greater Cambridge Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Issues and Options Scoping Report (Dec 2019) | “This Scoping document has been produced to provide guidance and parameters for developing the GCLP in the context of European sites and as a reference point for stakeholders wishing to comment on the document.” | N/A |

| Statutory Body | Title of HRA or Project | Findings of HRA or Project | Potential for in combination effects |
|--|--|---|---|
| South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council | North East Cambridge Area Action Plan HRA Report (July 2020) | RE: Air Quality, Water Quality, Water Quantity, and Recreation - "In accordance with the precautionary principle, a conclusion of no AEoI cannot be reached." | It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted as all West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan policies have been assigned to Category A. |

However, the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for development so there is no pathway for in-combination effects.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development consent. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and does not include any content that could give rise to significant negative effects on the environment, or any social or economic tenets of sustainability.

The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan can therefore be **screened out** for its requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

5.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

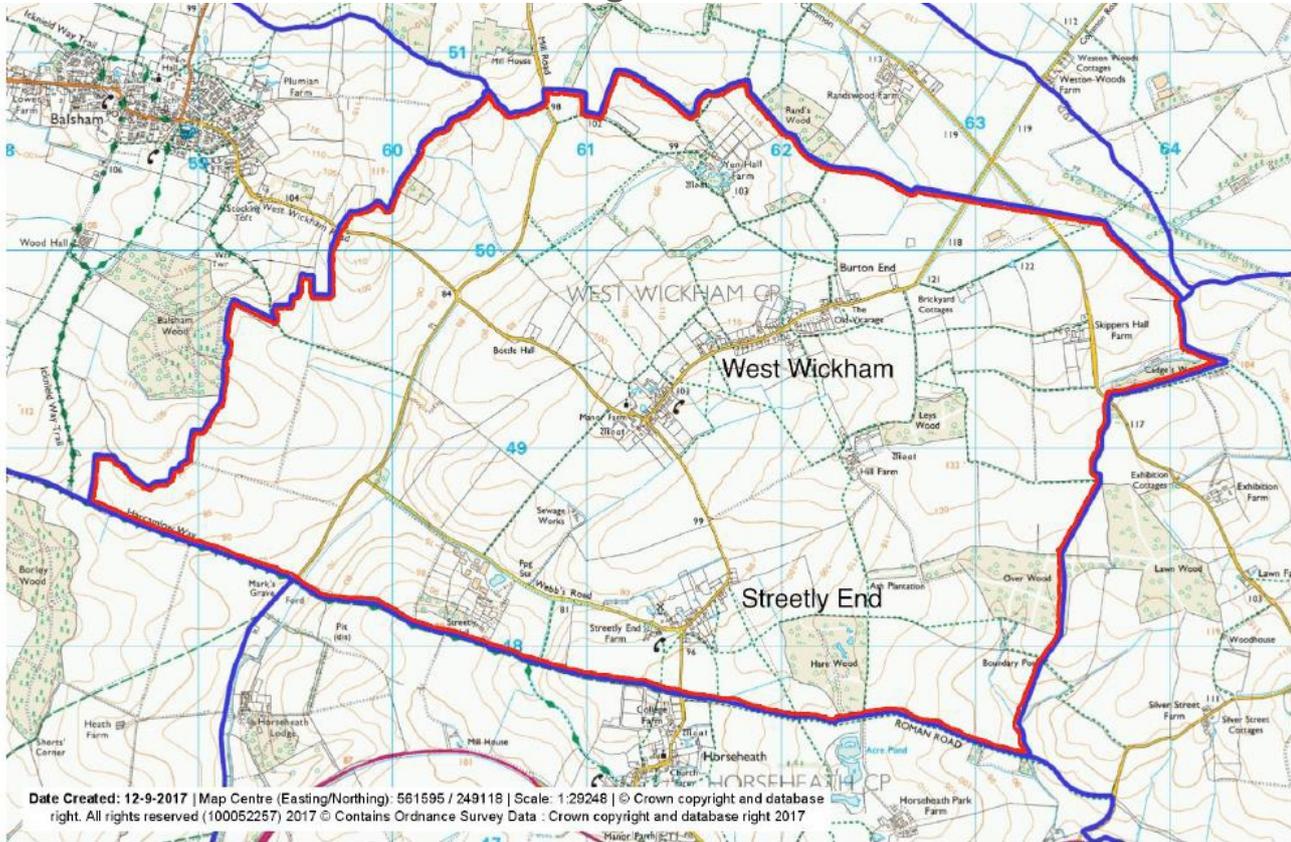
Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA screening report indicates that the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have likely significant effects on any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Regulations 2017 (as amended) is therefore **screened out**.

References

- Northstowe Area Action Plan HRA (April 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan HRA (May 2007)
- Cambridge East Area Action Plan HRA (May 2007)
- North West Cambridge Area Action Plan HRA (August 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (adopted July 2009)
- Bourn Airfield New Village SPD SEA / HRA Screening Report (June 2019)
- Waterbeach New Town SPD HRA screening report (2018)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (September 2018)
- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Issues and Options Scoping Report (Dec 2019)
- North East Cambridge Area Action Plan HRA Report (July 2020)
- West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-Submission Draft, 2021)
- [Natural England Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England Website](#)
- Tydlesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, (January 2020) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited

Appendix 1

The West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan area

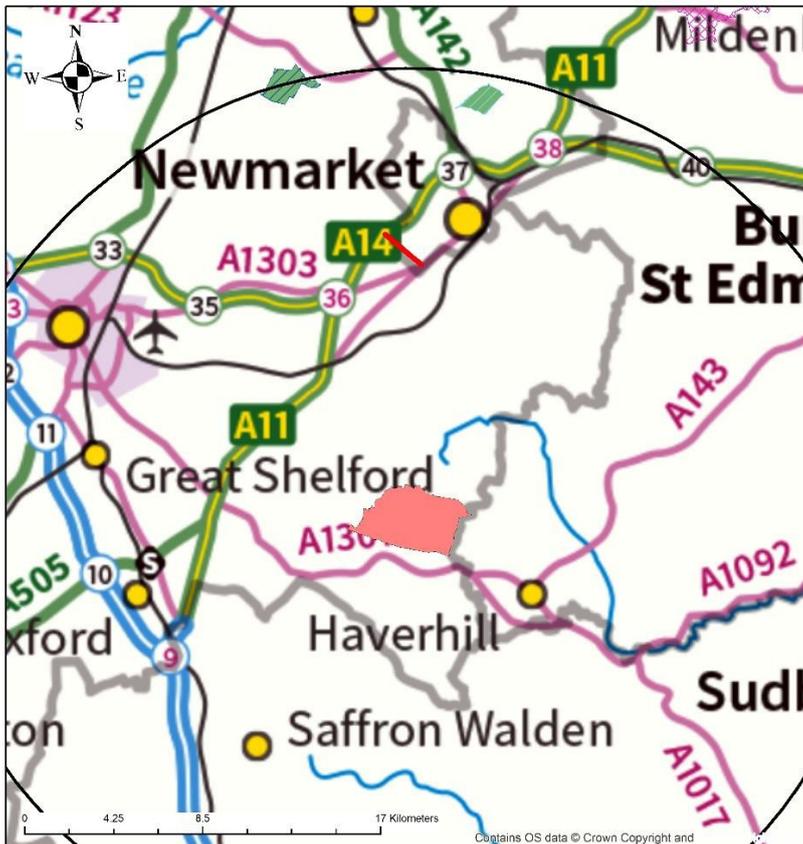


Source: West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-Submission Draft)

Appendix 2

The Plan Area and Locations of the Habitats sites within 20 km

Source: Place Services, 2021



Legend

- 20km
- Chippenham Fen Ramsar
- Wicken Fen Ramsar
- Devils Dyke SAC
- Fenland SAC
- West Wickham
- Special Area of Conservation outside 20km

Client: South Cambs District Council

Project:
West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2031
Pre-Submission Draft-
SEA and HRA Screening Report



Date: 21/04/21

Author: Zara Hanshaw



Appendix 2: Consultation Responses from the Statutory Environmental Bodies

Historic England

10 May 2021

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this 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 Screening Report for this plan. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion.

The Screening Report indicates that the Council considers that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We note that the plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development.

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 concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

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

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities 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 Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, 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.

Yours sincerely
Edward James – Historic Places Advisor, East of England

Natural England

29 April 2021

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 26 April 2021 which was received by Natural England on 26 April 2021.

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

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

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance. 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.

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.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

Natural England agrees with the report's conclusions that the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to result in a significant effect on any European Site, either alone or in combination and therefore no further assessment work would be required.

Other advice

New development could have an adverse impact on nearby sites such as Roman Road and Fleam Dyke SSSIs. The notified grassland plant communities of these nationally important sites are at risk from the effects of recreational pressure. The Cambridgeshire Recreational Pressure SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) is available to view at www.magic.defra.org.uk. The Plan should consider identifying deliverable opportunities for the creation or enhancement of biodiversity-rich public open space and for the implementation and management of this to be funded (at least in part) through new development. Secured through relevant Plan policies this could help new development to demonstrate no adverse impact on the SSSIs. Plan policy should also ensure that any new development will not have any adverse effect on Balsham and Over and Lawn Woods SSSIs. 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.

Yours sincerely

Jacqui Salt
Consultations Team

Environment Agency

5 May 2021

Thank you for your consultation.

Environment Agency position.

Due to resource pressures we are no longer able to provide you with bespoke advice on all neighbourhood plans and screening opinions. If there is a specific issue which you require expert advice on before issuing the screening opinion then please contact us with details and we will endeavour to assist you.

I attach a copy of the Agency's 'Planning Application Guidance' (*PAG*) document for the applicant's assistance.

Yours faithfully

Mr. T.G. Waddams
Planning Liaison