

Strategic Environmental Assessment  
and Habitats Regulations Assessment  
Screening Report:  
Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan  
September 2023

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**Maps:**

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Ordnance Survey HDC 100022322

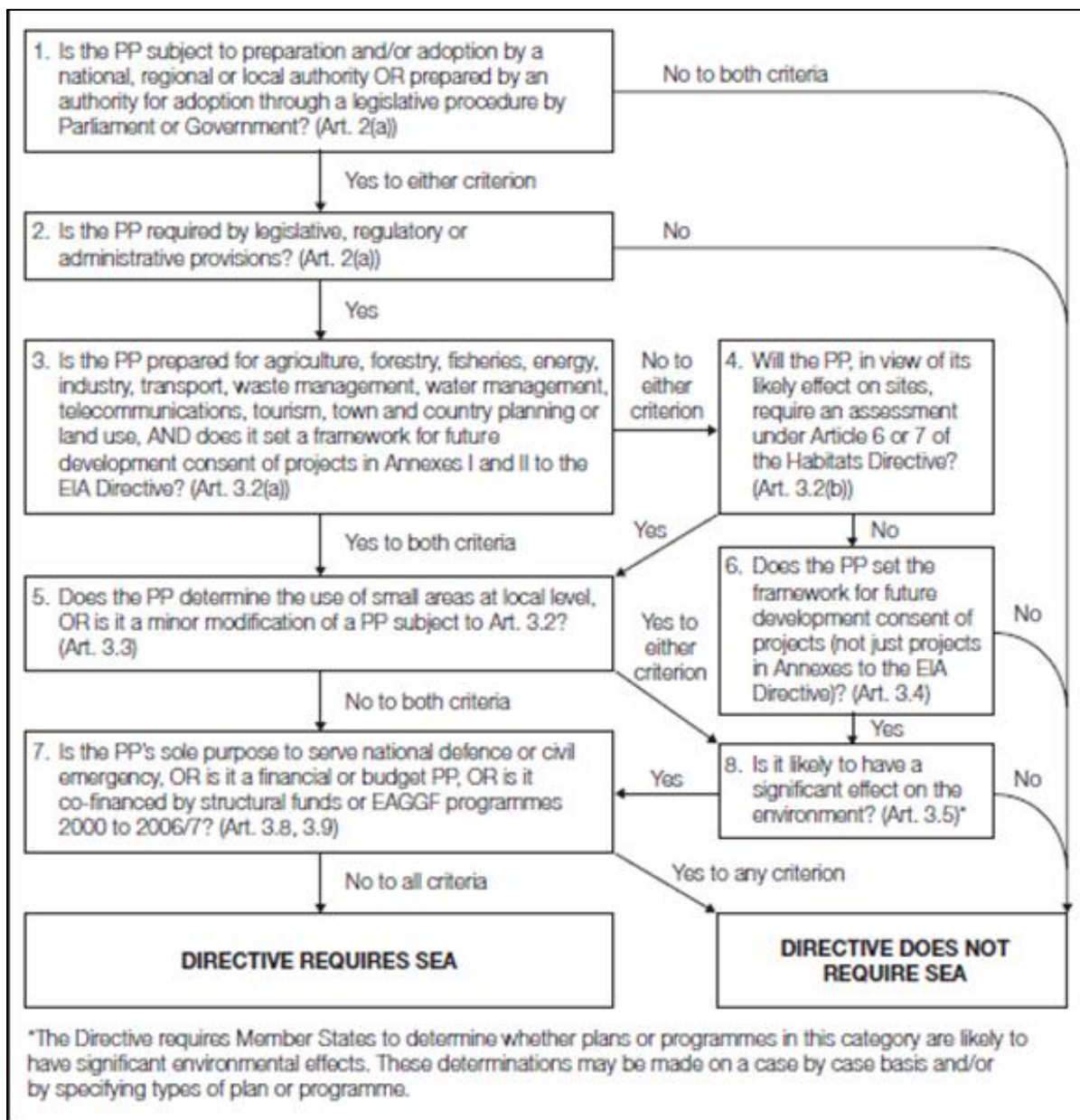
## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This screening report is designed to establish whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004<sup>1</sup>. It is also intended to determine whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and regulation 62 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). To meet the basic conditions the Neighbourhood Plan must be prepared in a manner which is compatible with European Union obligations (under retained EU law).
- 1.2. The purpose of SEA is to secure a high level of protection for the environment and to integrate environmental considerations into the preparation of plans to promote sustainable development. To establish whether a SEA is required a screening assessment is undertaken which considers the proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan against a series of criteria set out in the SEA Directive. Figure 1 overleaf sets out the screening process and how the Neighbourhood Plan is assessed against the criteria.
- 1.3. Where the Neighbourhood Plan could have significant environmental effects it may require a SEA where for example:
- The Neighbourhood Plan allocates a higher level of development than is already identified in the development plan
  - Where 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 effects that have not already been considered through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan
  - Where the cumulative impact of the policies and proposals when assessed together may give rise to a likely significant environmental effect.

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<sup>1</sup> The existing body of environmental regulation is retained under EU law.

**Figure 1: Application of criteria of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes**



1.4. The formal criteria for assessing the likely significance of effects are set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations and are shown in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Criteria for determining likely significance of effects on the environment from Schedule 1 of the Regulations**

1. The characteristics of neighbourhood plans, having regard, in particular, to
  - the degree to which the plan 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 influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
  - the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
  - environmental problems relevant to the plan,
  - the relevance of the plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or waste 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 trans boundary nature of the effects,
  - the risks to human health of 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.

- 1.5. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) may also be required under Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan where the policies and proposals of the plan may give rise to significant effects on internationally designated wildlife sites. These are defined as any site of wildlife interest designated as a Special Protection Area under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) or as a Special Area of Conservation designated under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). In addition, sites designated under the Ramsar Convention (Iran 1971 as amended 1992) are also considered. Generally, sites within 15kms of the Neighbourhood Plan boundary should be included within a HRA.
- 1.6. The process to establish whether a HRA is necessary starts with a screening exercise to determine whether any internationally designated sites might be exposed to likely significant effects as a result of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore whether further stages of the HRA process are required.

## 2. Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1. The Great Staughton Neighbourhood Area was designated on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021 covering the whole of the parish area. Great Staughton Parish Council, as the qualifying body for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has delegated the responsibility for its production to the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan Group. A map of the designated neighbourhood area is shown below.

**Figure 3: Great Staughton Neighbourhood Area**



- 2.2. The parish of Great Staughton is located in the west of the district. Great Staughton is a small village in Huntingdonshire to the south of the A14 and west of the A1. Great Staughton lies approximately 11 miles (18 km) south-west of Huntingdon and

6 miles (10 km) north-west of St Neots. The 2021 Census identified a resident population of 840.

2.3. The Neighbourhood Plan sets the following vision for Great Staughton:

*‘To value, protect and enhance the rural and historical character and community spirit of Great Staughton, ensuring that future development retains the green spaces and vistas, but also provides a sustainable community with appropriate facilities for its residents.’*

2.4. To underpin the vision, the Neighbourhood Plan identifies 9 strategy objectives addressing the key issues facing Great Staughton, these have been grouped into the following categories:



<b>Growth and the future</b>
To support growth in line with Great Staughton’s Indicative housing requirement
To ensure any additional housing provision meets the needs of local people within the NP Area
<b>Village Character</b>
To preserve and enhance the village characteristics of Great Staughton that are considered distinctive and make it special
To protect and enhance the historic character of Great Staughton
To protect and enhance the setting of Great Staughton’s settlements together with its valued green and blue spaces.
<b>Climate Change</b>
To ensure that Great Staughton is resilient against the future impacts of Climate Change
To manage development coming forward in the parish which will exacerbate existing flood risk and to take any opportunities to reduce existing flood risk
<b>Transport and connections</b>
To improve transport connections and accessibility around parish for all non-motorised users including those with disabilities
<b>Local Facilities, Services and Business</b>
To support provision of a new NHS facility and to facilitate the provision of appropriate commercial and retail activities. .

2.5. To deliver these, the Neighbourhood Plan contains policies relating to:

- Spatial strategy and housing and community facility delivery
- Definition of a built-up area
- Landscape and townscape characteristics
- Local green spaces
- Designated and non-designated heritage assets
- Biodiversity and wildlife habitats
- Sustainable construction, energy and water efficiency and renewable energy
- Flood risk

- Pedestrian and cycle accessibility, road safety and parking
- Local services and facilities

2.6. The neighbourhood plan proposed two site allocations:

1. 0.71 hectares to the south of 29 The Green for approximately 20 dwellings	
	<p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>This is a greenfield site located along the B661. The site had previously been identified through the Local Plan to 2036 where in the HELAA (2017) it was considered to be potentially suitable for residential development. Following that it was a proposed allocation in the submission Local Plan but was later removed as the tier of Local Service Centres that it fell within was removed.</p>
2. NHS Health Care Facility at Brook Farmyard	
	<p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>The site is previously developed land with an existing dwelling and agricultural structures on site located along The Highway. It adjoins a conservation area and there are several listed buildings within the vicinity. The draft Neighbourhood Plan proposes a GP/NHS health facility on the site with the potential for some residential development to help boost viability.</p>

### 3. SEA Screening Assessment

3.1. Table 1 below shows the assessment of whether the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan will require a full SEA.

**Table 1: Assessment of requirement for SEA**



Stage	Question Path	Yes/No	Assessment
<b>1.</b> Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Article 2(a))	If 'No' to both SEA is not required If 'Yes' to either go to Question 2	Yes	Great Staughton Parish Council is the qualifying body preparing the Neighbourhood Plan under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. Subject to successful examination and referendum it will be 'made' by Huntingdonshire District Council.
<b>2.</b> Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))	If 'No' SEA is not required If 'Yes' go to Question 3	Yes	Preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is optional; there is no absolute legislative, regulatory or administrative requirement to do so. However, once 'made' the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan would form part of the statutory development plan and be used in determining planning applications, so it is considered necessary to answer the remaining questions to determine further if an SEA is required.
<b>3.</b> 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? (Article 3.2(a))	If 'No' to either go to Question 4 If 'Yes' to both go to Question 5	Yes  No	The Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan is prepared to set out a framework for town and country planning and the future development of a number of land uses within the parishes, although it does not anticipate managing development of the scale and nature envisaged by Annex I and Annex II.
<b>4.</b> Will the Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Article 3.2(b))	If 'No' go to Question 6 If 'Yes' go to Question 5	No	See screening assessment for HRA in Section 4.

<b>5.</b> Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Article 3.2? (Article 3.3)	If 'No' to both go to Question 7 If 'Yes' to either go to Question 8	N/A	
<b>6.</b> Does the Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Article 3.4)	If 'No' SEA is not required If 'Yes' go to Question 8	Yes	The Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan contains policies against which planning applications within the neighbourhood area will be considered.
<b>7.</b> Is the Plan's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget plan or programme, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Article 3.8, 3.9)	If 'No' to all SEA is required If 'Yes' to any SEA is not required	N/A	
<b>8.</b> Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Article 3.5)*	If 'No' SEA is not required If 'Yes' go to Question 7	No	Two sites are being put forward for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. One is for approximately 20 new homes, the other an NHS/community facility. Both sites are located adjoining or within the main village area. Fluvial flood risk is not a constraint on either site, however, there is some risk from surface water flooding. Additionally, Brook Farm adjoins a conservation area and in close proximity to listed buildings.  In addition to these sites, the Neighbourhood Plan also supports minor scale infill residential development within the built up area of the village.

\*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

- 3.2. Under criterion 8 of Table 1 it is necessary to undertake an assessment of the likelihood of the Neighbourhood Plan having a significant effect on the environment

based on the criteria set out in Figure 2 (preceding). Table 2 below sets out this assessment.

**Table 2: Assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment**

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
<b>The characteristics of the plan, having regard to:</b>	
<p>The degree to which the plan 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 Neighbourhood Plan does allocate two sites for development in the parish:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 0.71 hectares to the south of 29 The Green is allocated for the development for approximately 20 dwellings</li> <li>2. NHS Health Care Facility at Brook Farmyard</li> </ol> <p>In addition to these, the Neighbourhood Plan supports minor scale residential properties within the identified built up area of Great Staughton, identifies a local green space, seeks to protect local services and facilities, supports improved pedestrian and cycle routes and seeks to conserve and where possible enhance the landscape and townscape characteristics of the parish.</p>
<p>The degree to which the Plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.</p>	<p>The Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan does reflect and support the strategic policies of the Local Plan to 2036. It should not significantly influence other plans and programmes but may have a limited degree of influence over adjoining neighbourhood plans if they come forward.</p>
<p>The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p>The Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan is expected to protect and enhance the natural environment and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development within the neighbourhood area. Its policies will have a positive impact on local environmental assets and places valued by local people. The likelihood of significant negative effects on the environment is therefore, minimised.</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the Plan.</p>	<p>There is some risk of fluvial flooding around Great Staughton attributed to its location near to the river Kym. No development is allocated in these affected areas.</p>

<p>The relevance of the Plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</p>	<p>The considerations of such plans and European legislation were taken into account in the production of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.</p>
<p><b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b></p>	
<p>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.</p>	<p>Policies within the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan facilitate new development, so some environmental change will occur. However, the objectives and policies are generally intended to ensure new development meets local needs and is sustainable. The frequency of effects is expected to be low. The duration and reversibility of effects arising from built development are long term and poor.</p>
<p>The cumulative nature of the effects of the Plan.</p>	<p>The cumulative effects of the policies and proposals of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan are unlikely to be significant on the local environment, many elements are intended to help protect it.</p>
<p>The trans-boundary nature of the effects of the Plan.</p>	<p>The plan identifies an aspiration for enhanced pedestrian and cycle accessibility within the village and to neighbouring communities which may impact upon adjoining neighbourhood plans if they come forward.</p>
<p>The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)</p>	<p>Improved cycleway and walking connectivity may offer opportunities to improve human health arising from the policies or proposals of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan. The conservation and enhancement of the landscape, villagescape and nature sites within the neighbourhood plan area in addition to improved connectivity via walking and cycling modes will improve human health and the natural environment as well as support the local economy.</p>
<p>The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) by the Plan.</p>	<p>The Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan applies to a parish with a resident population of 840 in the 2021 Census.</p>
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the Plan due to:</p>	<p>Great Staughton has two conservation areas, with 48 listed buildings and six sites of archaeological significance. The Neighbourhood</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</li> <li>• Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</li> <li>• Intensive land use</li> <li>• The effects of the Plan on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status.</li> </ul>	<p>Plan has several heritage, biodiversity, conservation and landscape policies intended to shape development so that they reflect local character and design and preserve important landscape views and increase biodiversity.</p> <p>Within the neighbourhood area there is a Cambridgeshire Wildlife Site (Agdengreen Wood, Moor Road Marshy Fields) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (Perry Woods). The Plan supports biodiversity net gain and the establishment or enhancement of access to the countryside for residents to enjoy.</p> <p>The Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan is intended to enhance the natural and cultural assets of the area and provide greater opportunities for people to enjoy them. This is balanced with allocating two sites for development that seek to meet identified local needs in terms of affordable housing and a community/healthcare facility.</p>
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population of fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*. Portholme SAC occupies a similar area to Portholme Site of Special Scientific Interest.

- 4.5 The **Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar** is situated to the west of Huntingdonshire District in Northamptonshire. The SPA is designated primarily for its wintering bird importance, and in particular for the large number of golden plover using the site in winter. Golden plover is a species sensitive to disturbance by walkers, especially dog walkers, and a decline in bird numbers has been linked to increasing recreational use of the site.
- 4.6 The criteria for determining if an individual policy, or a combination of policies, would have a likely significant effect, and require assessment, are based on the characteristics of the relevant European site and the objectives set by Natural England. The main factors to consider are:
- Development on or adjacent to the European site destroying part or all of the site, or changing the ecological functioning of the site (e.g. disrupting water flows or migration routes)
  - Increased public recreation, causing disturbance to birds, damage to vegetation, increased littering / flytipping or leading to management compromises (e.g. grazing being restricted).
  - Reduction in water levels or flow, from increased water demand in the District requiring greater water abstraction
  - Reduction of water quality, from increased discharges of sewage and surface water drainage, or from pollution incidents, either during, or after, construction
- 4.7 The implications of the policies and proposals of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan have been assessed against each of the internationally designated sites within 15kms to establish the likelihood of a significant effect on the features which justified their designation. The outcomes are set out in Tables 3 – 4 below.

**Table 3: Likely significant effects on Portholme**

<b>Site name</b>	<b>Portholme SAC</b>
Distance to neighbourhood area	8.6 km
Reasons for designation	Lowland hay meadow
Vulnerability <sup>2</sup>	This alluvial flood meadow has had a long history of favourable management and demonstrates good conservation of structure and function. Traditionally the site is cut for hay followed by aftermath grazing in late summer and autumn. Part of the site is subject to a Countryside Stewardship agreement aimed at maintaining the alluvial flood meadow. The Environment Agency has produced a Water Level Management plan
Impact as a result of the plan	The neighbourhood plan area is located to the southwest of Portholme SAC beyond the A14 and A1. Scale of growth envisaged is unlikely to result in significant air or water quality impacts or any other impacts on the SAC.
Significance of risk	Insignificant
Cumulative impacts with other plans	Impacts from the Local Plan to 2036 have been assessed separately and appropriate changes or mitigation put in place.

**Table 4: Any other affected site**

<b>Site name</b>	<b>Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar</b>
Distance to neighbourhood area	14.9 km
Reasons for designation	The SPA is designated primarily for its wintering bird importance, and in particular for the large number of golden plover using the site in winter.
Vulnerability	The site is at particular risk from increasing recreational disturbance. Golden plover is a species sensitive to disturbance by walkers, especially dog walkers, and a decline in bird numbers has been linked to increasing recreational use of the site.
Impact as a result of the plan	The neighbourhood plan area is located to the west of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar site. Scale of growth envisaged is unlikely to result in significant air or water quality impacts or any other impacts on the SPA/ Ramsar.
Significance of risk	Insignificant
Cumulative impacts with other plans	Impacts from the Local Plan to 2036 have been assessed separately and appropriate changes or mitigation put in place. North Northamptonshire have produced a Supplementary Planning Document called the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA SPD which

<sup>2</sup> Data summarised from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Natura 2000 data forms



	supplements policies within the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, adopted June 2008 and West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1), adopted December 2014.
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## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This report contains the assessments of the need for the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment as required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and Habitats Regulation Assessment as required by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- 5.2 The assessment for both of these has been undertaken based on the policies and proposals set out in Great Staughton (pre submission draft Neighbourhood Plan dated 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 – version 3.4) Neighbourhood Plan and within the strategic framework established in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019).
- 5.3 In relation to the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken, the assessment set out in section 3 concludes that as the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan will not have significant effects on the environment. Therefore, an assessment is not required.
- 5.4 In relation to the requirement for Habitats Regulations Assessment to be undertaken, the assessment set out in section 4 concludes that as the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any internationally designated sites either on its own or in combination with any other plans. Therefore, an assessment is not required.
- 5.5 Responses to the consultation did not agree with the conclusions of the screening report. Historic England consider that due to the potential impact of the allocation at Brook Farmyard on designated heritage assets that an SEA would be appropriate. The Environment Agency highlighted the surface water risk on the proposed allocation at land south of 29 The Green. Natural England considered that significant impacts on the environment and habitats were unlikely but expressed that views of local wildlife organisations should also be sought in determining if an SEA/HRA was required.
- 5.6 Therefore, taking into consideration the specialist advice from Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England, an SEA should be undertaken, however it is unlikely that an HRA would be required.

## Appendix 1: Consultation Responses

The responses from the three statutory bodies of Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency are included below.

### Environment Agency response dated 4 September 2023



Planning Policy  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
Planning Policy  
Pathfinder House St. Marys Street  
Huntingdon  
Cambridgeshire  
PE29 3TN

**Our ref:** AE/2023/128659/01-L01  
**Your ref:** Great Staughton NHP SEA  
**Date:** 01 September 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

#### **GREAT STAUGHTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SEA SCREENING OPINION**

Thank you for consulting us on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening report for the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan. We are a statutory consultee in the SEA process and aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment. Based on our review of the draft plan, we think there are potential significant environmental effects that relate to the Neighbourhood Plan area.

We have identified below those environmental constraints within our remit that will affect the neighbourhood plan area.

#### **Flood Risk**

We find that there are areas of fluvial flood risk and watercourses within the neighbourhood plan area. In particular, we note that the boundary does extend into areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 of the designated main River Kym.

We have reviewed the draft neighbourhood plan and have identified the proposed allocation at Land to the South of 29 The Green is located in an area of flood risk.

The Flood Map for Surface Water indicates that this site contains a significant surface water flow path. Allocating this site is contrary to the draft objectives policies within the neighbourhood plan.

A sequential test will need to be carried out to confirm this allocation is appropriate. If this site comes forward, then the design will have to ensure that the flood risk can be managed safely, without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Environment Agency  
Iceni House Cobham Road, Ipswich, IP3 9JD.  
Customer services line: 03708 506 506  
[www.gov.uk/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/environment-agency)  
Cont/d..

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There may be measures the Parish Council could take/support to reduce flooding in the area, i.e., Natural Flood Management measures.

Huntingdonshire district council are currently undertaking their Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and may be able to advise on how to bring forward a sustainable allocation in the parish.

### **Water Resources**

Being in one of the driest areas of the country, our environment has come under significant pressure from potable water demand. New developments should make a significant contribution towards reducing water demand and mitigate against the risk of deterioration to our rivers, groundwater and habitats from groundwater abstraction. We recommend you check the capacity of available water supplies with the water company, in line with the emerging 2024 Water Resources Management Plan which is due to be published in 2023. The Local Planning Authorities Water Cycle Study and Local Plan may indicate constraints in water supply and provide recommendations for phasing of development to tie in with new alternative strategic supplies.

New development should as a minimum meet the highest levels of water efficiency standards, as per the policies in the adopted Local Plan. In most cases development will be expected to achieve 110 litres per person per day as set out in the [Building Regulations &c. \(Amendment\) Regulations 2015](#). However, a higher standard of water efficiency (e.g. 85 l/p/d) should be considered, looking at all options including rainwater harvesting and greywater systems. Using the water efficiency calculator in [Part G of the Building Regulations](#) enables you to calculate the devices and fittings required to ensure a home is built to the right specifications to meet the 110 l/p/d requirement. We recommend all new non-residential development of 1000sqm gross floor area or more should meet the [BREEAM](#) 'excellent' standards for water consumption.

Developments that require their own abstraction where it will exceed 20 cubic metres per day from a surface water source (river, stream) or from underground strata (via borehole or well) will require an abstraction licence under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991. There is no guarantee that a licence will be granted as this is dependent on available water resources and existing protected rights. The relevant abstraction licencing strategy for your area provides information on water availability and licencing policy at [Abstraction licencing strategies \(CAMS process\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

### **Local Environment**

We encourage you to seek ways in which your neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment. For your information, together with Natural England, Historic England and Forestry Commission we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: [How to consider the environment in Neighbourhood plans - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)

We trust this advice is useful.

Yours faithfully

Cont/d..

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**Mr Alasdair Hain-Cole**  
**Planning Officer**

Direct dial 02030 255475

Direct e-mail [planning.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:planning.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Historic England's response dated 1 September 2023

RE: Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan Screening Request



Flag for follow up.



Fletcher, Will <Will.Fletcher@HistoricEngland.org.uk>  
To: Natalie Elworthy



Fri 01/09/2023 19:25

Dear Natalie

Thank you for your email regarding the above consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is considered at all stages of the local planning process. We welcome the opportunity to review this request for a Screening Opinion. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the 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 supporting information (screening report and draft neighbourhood plan) supplied with the consultation indicates that within the plan area there is a range of designated and non-designated historic environment assets. There is also likely to be other features of local historic, architectural or archaeological value, and consideration should also be given to the wider historic landscape, notably the former medieval landscape features (such as the ridge and furrow) that are prominent throughout the parish. The documentation indicates that the Neighbourhood Plan proposes to allocate at least 2 sites for housing and other uses.

Given the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) upon the historic environment, Historic England hence considers that a Strategic Environmental Assessment would be appropriate.

We would be pleased if you could send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

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.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence below. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SA/SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance) where we consider that, despite the SA/SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Please do contact me, either via email or the numbers below, if you have any queries.

Kind regards  
Will Fletcher



**Dr Will Fletcher FSA**  
**Development Advice Team Leader: East Region**  
Tel: 01223 582710  
Mob: 07836 239089

Historic England | Brooklands | 24 Brooklands Avenue | Cambridge | CB2 8BU  
[www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)



Historic England

## Natural England's response dated 24 August 2023

Date: 24 August 2023  
Our ref: 444044  
Your ref: Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan



Ms Natalie Elworthy  
Huntingdonshire District Council

Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

### BY EMAIL ONLY

[Natalie.Elworthy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Natalie.Elworthy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

Dear Ms Elworthy

### Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 28 July 2023.

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

### Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

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

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites<sup>1</sup>, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

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

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

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

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

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

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

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

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

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

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle  
Consultations Team