



Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Screening Determination
October 2018

Strategic Environmental Assessment: Screening Determination

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1. Introduction

1.1. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation of plans and programmes prior to their final adoption. SEA is a tool used internationally to improve the environmental performance of plans so that they can better contribute to sustainable development.

1.2. Establishing whether a Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to a SEA is an important legal requirement. The Independent Examiner appointed to consider the Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) will check that it meets the 'Basic Conditions' set out in national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹. One of the Basic Conditions is whether the SNP is compatible with European Union obligations.

1.3. This screening report is designed to determine whether or not the contents of the SNP require a SEA in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and the associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004)².

1.4. The legislative background set out in section 2 outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise.

1.5. The policies of the SNP are set out in section 3.

1.6. To assess whether an SEA is required, a screening process must be undertaken based on a standard set of criteria. This must be subject to consultation three statutory consultees of the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The results of the screening process must be detailed in a Screening Report, available to the public.

1.7. This assessment has been undertaken by officers from the Natural Environment Team at Norfolk County Council under the terms of the Service Level Agreement between Capita/Breckland District Council and Norfolk County Council.

¹ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/the-basic-conditions-that-a-draft-neighbourhood-plan-or-order-must-meet-if-it-is-to-proceed-to-referendum/>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made>

2. Legislative Background

2.1. The basis for SEA legislation is European Union Directive 2001/42/EC³ which requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that would have a significant environmental effect. This was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, commonly referred to as the SEA Regulations.

2.2. In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9(1)), Breckland Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. Where the Council determines that SEA is not required, then the Council must, under Regulation 9(3), prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination.

2.3. In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Swaffham Parish Council (the qualifying body) has requested Breckland Council, as the responsible authority, to consider whether an environmental assessment of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan is required due to significant environmental effects.

2.4. Whether a neighbourhood plan requires an SEA, and if so, the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft neighbourhood plan (see PPG Paragraph 046). The PPG suggests that SEA may be required, for example, 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; and
- 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 (LP).

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>

3. Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan

3.1. SNP is at the pre-submission consultation stage (Reg.14). The information provided for the SEA Screening Opinion Request, identifies that:

Parts of the western and southern sections of the parish form the northern-most sections of the extensive Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA). In this location the SPA boundary is contiguous with the nationally-designated Breckland Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In terms of other environmental assets the parish does not encompass any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Park, Special Area of Conservation, or Ramsar Site. This information is summarised in the table below.

Environmental assets	Designation	Details
Internationally designated sites	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	None in the parish. The nearest component units of the Breckland SAC are >5km to the south of the southern boundary of the parish.
	Special Protection Areas (SPA)	The northern-most sections of the extensive Breckland SPA are located within the Parish. The designated areas are plantations on the former heathland of Swaffham Heath and Cockley Cley Heath. The SPA extends southwards in to the adjoining parishes of Beachamwell, Cockley Cley and North Pickenham. The sites are designated to support populations of the forest-nesting birds, Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i> and Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> .
	Ramsar wetlands	None
Nationally-designated sites	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	The areas within the parish that are designated as SPA are contiguous with the Breckland Forest SSSI.
	Registered Ancient Woodland	None within the parish and none within vicinity.
Local sites	County Wildlife Sites (CWS)	There are 4 CWS within the parish. Two are located at the Swaffham Golf Course (CWS 932 and CWS 933) and two are associated with the disused railway line west of the town (CWS 887 and CWS 888).
	Geodiversity Sites	None
	Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)	None
Common land	Registered Common Land	None in the parish
	Registered Village Green	None

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	Public Footpaths, bridleways and Restricted byways	Swaffham is well served by a relatively extensive network of PRoW, extending from the town in to the wider countryside.
	Norfolk Trails	The Peddars Way, part of the North Norfolk Coast and Peddars Way National Trail, is alongside the eastern boundary of the parish using the Restricted Byways Swaffham RB53 and RB54.

- The SNP proposes to include policies relating to the location of sustainable development, but does not propose to specifically allocate land for development.
- The NP supports the principle of a north-south relief road. Policy TRA1 specifically states support although no location for such a road is suggested nor allocated, and no delivery method is proposed.
- Aside from the support for a relief road in TRA1, the policies within the plan are not likely to lead to any major new development or infrastructure, nor are they likely to have any significant adverse effects on any SEA topic.

3.2. The SNP will not allocate land in and above that identified within the Breckland Site Specific Policies and Proposals document.

The SNP policies (Reg.14) to be considered in the SEA Screening Opinion are:

HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
HBE1: Location of development
<p>Development should be distributed to the east and west of the town, rather than the north or south, avoiding further ribbon development, and ensuring the town centre remains easily accessible from all parts of the town.</p> <p>Any new development should take account of the potential for a north/south relief road (see TRA2).</p>
HBE2: Mixed housing
<p>In any new development there will be provision of mixed type and tenure of housing, located to ensure enclaves do not occur.</p> <p>The mix of housing should, where appropriate, include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Family housing. ii. Starter homes, including one-bedroom properties. iii. Affordable housing, including social rented. iv. Life-time homes, adaptable to the changing needs of its occupants. v. Housing for older people (supported housing, bungalows, smaller properties for downsizing). vi. Opportunities for self-build within planning guidelines. <p>The emerging Breckland Local Plan (HOU07) States that 25 per cent of qualifying developments should be affordable housing. For Swaffham A greater percentage of affordable housing is encouraged.</p>
HBE3: Well-designed developments
<p>All new development must be well-designed, reinforcing local distinctiveness and not adversely impacting on the appearance of the town. All design should have regard to local context and seek to enhance the character and quality of Swaffham.</p> <p>All new development should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Respect the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings, reinforcing local development patterns, form, scale, massing and character of adjacent properties (including building setbacks and arrangements of front gardens, walls, railings or hedges) where this provides a positive contribution (see Appendix B Character Appraisal). ii. Be of a density that is consistent and compatible with the existing prevailing density in the immediate area. iii. Have high regard for the Conservation Area and the setting of listed buildings in the parish (see HBE4). iv. Have soft well---landscaped boundary edges where adjacent to open countryside (in line with HOU06 of the emerging Breckland Local Plan). v. Integrate with the established neighbourhood, in terms of connectivity (footpaths and cycle ways), community infrastructure and design. vi. Include energy efficient measures, innovative technologies and sustainable low carbon construction. <p>Innovative and sensitive contemporary design is encouraged.</p>
HBE4: Attractive town centre and Conservation Area
<p>Development proposals that respond positively to creating an attractive public realm, local townscape and enhance the town centre’s aesthetic qualities and Conservation Area will be supported.</p> <p>This should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. High quality materials, paving and landscaping, which reflect the local character, or are of

innovative and sensitive contemporary design.

ii. Coordinated streetscape design, including signage, lighting, railings, litterbins, seating, bus shelters, bollards and cycle racks.

iii. Pedestrian movements that follow natural desire lines.

iv. Development that reflects and celebrates the Georgian heritage.

HBE5: Non-designated heritage assets

Development that results in the loss of, or any harm to, the character, setting, accessibility or appearance, general quality or to amenity value of non-designated heritage assets should not be permitted.

The following list identifies assets that are locally important in terms of their architectural, historical or cultural significance (as shown on figure 10 and 11):

1. Railway complex
2. Green Britain Centre
3. Shambles
4. 19c Magazine
5. Ash Close
6. WW2 military defence
7. Campingland
8. The Antinghams
9. Corbel on Poundstretcher's
10. St Guthlac's chapel site
11. Baptist church cemetery
12. Town Pit (Richmond Plain)
13. Jubilee Cottage Hospital
14. Cemetery chapel
15. Crescent, White Cross Road
16. The Pightle
17. Silver Drift
18. Plowright Place
19. Maltings behind Market Place east
20. Settlement Stone
21. Brewery Cottages and maltings, Cley Road
22. Tollhouse, Shoemaker's Lane and Watton Road
23. The Paddocks Saxon cemetery site
24. Drill Hall
25. Milestones/posts

HBE6: Entrances and gateways to Swaffham

New development located at the town entrances must enhance the visual approach or gateway to Swaffham, for example through the provision of

i. Hard or soft landscaping measures.

ii. Signage.

iii. Tree, shrub and flower planting (with a preference for native species).

iv. Hedgerows.

v. Buildings in character with Swaffham.

All public realm proposals should enhance the overall appearance and public use of the space.

Approaches should maintain visual connections with the countryside and The Brecks.

Development that could have an adverse impact on The Brecks landscape will not be supported.

HBE7: Community safety

All new residential development must create a safe environment, taking account of best practice

in designing out crime. New developments should have:

- i. Good natural surveillance.
- ii. Active frontages (street frontages where there is an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floors of buildings).
- iii. Access routes through developments.
- iv. Buildings that face onto the public realm.
- v. Open spaces/play areas. Development proposals will be expected to meet the requirements of 'Secured by Design' unless they can demonstrate that an alternative approach would not compromise community safety.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

TRA1: Traffic volume

Measures will be supported to reduce traffic volume through Swaffham Town Centre and the associated air pollution. New residential or business development should not significantly contribute to an increase in traffic volume within the town centre.

All new developments should produce a statement or assessment, that:

- i. Quantifies the level of traffic movements they are likely to generate.
- ii. Includes measures to mitigate any negative impacts of congestion, road safety, parking, pollution and Heavy Goods Vehicles.
- iii. Demonstrates how sustainable transport options will be encouraged, for example electric car charging points, car sharing and new public transport provision.

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the delivery of an appropriate future north/south relief road for Swaffham.

TRA2: Traffic flow

Initiatives to facilitate better flow of traffic through and around Swaffham Market Place will be supported, for example through the provision of new one-way or two-way traffic schemes, new roundabouts and further improvements to signage.

New routes should connect well into existing routes and movement patterns. The design of new public transport infrastructure, such as bus pull-ins and laybys, should be an integral part of the street layout to prevent congestion and improve the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

TRA3: Walking and cycling

New residential development must incorporate opportunities for walking and cycling. New footpaths and cycle ways should connect to town services, existing routes and the surrounding area, including the Swaefas Way and Peddars Way. New footpaths and cycle ways should form part of a coherent network (see figure 12) and aim to encourage alternatives to use of private cars.

Footpaths and cycle ways should, where possible, always be visible and separate from roads. The design of new development must incorporate safe access to and from the site by pedestrians and cyclists, for example, through crossing points.

TRA4: Private parking

All new development, including individual dwellings, should provide sufficient parking for the intended use, so as not to create road obstructions or highway safety problems, and to ensure safety for pedestrians, whilst seeking to minimise the visual impact of the car. Parking should be discreet, accessible, and appropriate to the character of the proposed development.

Provision should be made for

- i. Sufficient private car parking spaces per dwelling on residential developments.
- ii. Some on-street parking for visitors and deliveries on residential developments.
- iii. Electric car charging points.

iv. Bicycle, motorcycle and scooter parking.

TRA5: Public parking

Public parking outside the town centre is supported, for longer stay and commuter use, to release car parking in the town centre for other uses. The provision of electric car charging points will be supported.

ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

ENV1: Air pollution

To address the issue of poor air quality the following should be given high priority:

- i. New community facilities and amenities should be located away from areas of poor air quality.
- ii. All developments should have significant tree planting, with a maintenance plan.
- iii. All major developments should demonstrate how they will contribute to improving poor air quality.

ENV2: Climate change

All developments must be designed to anticipate climate change. They should be capable of being upgraded and adapted to minimise resources used in both their construction and operation, and to cut down on pollution, whilst also being sensitive to the historic environment. Support will be given to buildings that have cost effective and efficient passive solar gain, solar PV panels, use grey water where possible and have electric car charging points. The layout and massing of development should take account of local climatic conditions, including daylight and sunlight, wind, temperature and frost pockets. Renewable energy developments, including wind and solar options, will be supported, where they do not adversely impact on the landscape character.

ENV3: Localised flooding areas

All development should take advantage of modern drainage methods to prevent and where necessary alleviate localised flooding. Future development must not cause or contribute to new flooding or drainage issues or exacerbate existing issues, or cause water pollution. Existing Identified localised flooding areas include (figure 14), but are not limited to:

1. Crossroads of New Sporle Road and Sporle Road.
2. Longfields.
3. Mill Lane.
4. Norwich Road, east of Captains Close.
5. West Acre Road.

Sustainable drainage systems associated with any planned development should appear natural and be able to be colonised by the local fauna and flora whilst still maintaining their design purpose. Such systems must not be used as, or contribute to, the requirements for public open space or play areas.

ENV4: Important local views and vistas

Any development within the following views and vistas that does not adversely impact upon the landscape or character of the area will be supported:

1. The view of the townscape of Swaffham from the approach to Swaffham from the east, along the Norwich Road.
2. The view from the A47 coming from the west, towards the town centre.
3. The view of the church and townscape from the Sporle Road, where it crosses the by-pass.
4. The vista of the Market Place from the south along London Street.
5. The vista down Mangate Street towards Manor House.
6. Looking west from Southlands estate.

To connect to the countryside, views and vistas along streets and/or open spaces to the surrounding Brecks landscape should be maintained and created within new development where

there are opportunities to do so.

ENV5: Dark skies

All street lighting and the lighting of residential dwellings or businesses should be environmentally efficient, sympathetic in design (for example, down lighting) and limited where adjacent to the countryside.

ENV6: Designated Local Green Space

In addition to those listed in the Breckland Local Plan (Campingland, Orford Road playing field, Football Club, Cricket Club, Rugby Club, cemeteries and burial ground, Haspalls Road recreation ground), the following areas are designated as Local Green Space for special protection (as shown in figure 17):

1. The Antinghams.
2. Heathlands.
3. Merryweather play area.
4. Oaklands play area.
5. Community orchard, Tumbler Hill allotments.
6. Admiral Wilson Way.
7. Manor House grounds.
8. Railway line for access.
9. Magazine field allotments.
10. Four Acres field allotments.
11. Shouldham Lane allotments.
12. Tumbler Hill allotments.
13. Myers playing field.
14. Swaffham CE VC Infant School playing field.
15. Swaffham CE Junior Academy playing field.
16. The Nicholas Hamond Academy playing field.
17. Sacred Heart School and pre-school playing field.
18. Shepherd's Fold.

Development that results in the loss of Local Green Space or that results in any harm to their character, setting, accessibility or appearance, general quality or to amenity value will only be permitted if the community would find equivalent benefit from provision of a suitable replacement. The exception will be the expansion of school premises.

BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

BUS1: Green credentials

Business development that has an environmental focus will be particularly encouraged:

- i. Those that sell or manufacture environmental products and services.
- ii. Those that have a low carbon footprint (see ENV3), for example they seek to reduce their water and energy consumption and minimise waste output.

New heavy or polluting businesses will be discouraged.

BUS2: New businesses

To meet the needs of the local population with a range of business sizes and types in the town, the following new business units are encouraged:

- i. Home-based and live-work units.
- ii. Start up/incubator units.
- iii. Office facilities.
- iv. Training facilities.

All new businesses need to demonstrate how their size and design respects the immediate surroundings, are appropriate to the character of Swaffham, and do not add to the issues of

traffic volume, pollution and congestion (see TRA1).

Businesses that add to the range of tourist or visitor attractions or facilities, adding a positive visitor experience for Swaffham, will be supported.

BUS3: Shops in new development areas

Convenience shops are encouraged where they serve the day-to-day needs of residents in new development areas.

BUS4: Town centre retail

In order to keep Swaffham town centre viable and attractive for local residents and visitors, a mix of retail opportunities will be encouraged, in particular more class A1 (shops and retail outlets), A2 (professional services) and A3 (food and drink).

Where it can be demonstrated that a town centre premises is no longer required for retail use, first preference will be for a leisure or community re-use on the ground floor.

BUS5: Attractive town centre

Business development proposals that respond positively to maintaining an attractive local townscape for residents, other businesses and visitors, and that enhance the town's aesthetic qualities will be supported.

In particular visual enhancements to the following will be considered:

- i. Reducing the visual impact of car parking within the town centre.
- ii. Enhancements to the Market Place and Buttercross.

BUS6: Telecommunications

In accordance with policy INFO1 of the emerging Breckland Local Plan, new business development should have fast internet connections. Improvements to internet and mobile phone coverage will be supported.

COMMUNITY AND SERVICES

COM1: Sports and leisure facilities

The provision of new and improved sports and leisure facilities are encouraged within Swaffham, in particular, but not exclusively the following:

- i. An improved or new indoor sports and leisure centre.
- ii. A swimming pool.
- iii. An additional recreation ground.
- iv. New all weather sports pitches.
- v. New walking and cycling opportunities (see TRA3).
- vi. Cinema and theatre capacity.

New sports and leisure facilities should be located within reasonable distance (see paragraph 38 of NPPF) of main link roads, cycle and footpaths and public transport, as well as providing sufficient parking.

COM2: Informal meeting places, play spaces and parks

Swaffham seeks to have larger play areas or parks, as well as pocket play areas throughout new developments. Where a sustainable drainage option is to be used on a development site, this must not form part of the overall contribution.

All informal meeting places, play spaces and parks should

- i. Contain equipment for a range of age groups.
- ii. Be accessible and/or in a central location within any new development.
- iii. Have good natural surveillance.
- iv. Have provision for waste disposal.
- v. Have a management plan in place for maintenance.

As well as play spaces and parks, social spaces for stopping and sitting should be planned into developments.

COM3: Community buildings

New community buildings are encouraged to enable an increase in the number of activities able to be delivered, in particular, but not exclusively, for youth groups. Improvements to current community buildings will be supported where appropriate.

Proposals that would result in any loss of community amenities will not be supported unless:

- i. It can be demonstrated that the facilities are no longer needed or viable;
- ii. It can be demonstrated that suitable alternative provision exists; or
- iii. Suitable alternative provision will be delivered by new development.

COM4: Health care and social care

Further provision of facilities for doctors, dentists and social care is supported. Any new facility should have adequate car parking and be easily accessible on foot or by public transport.

COM5: School and preschool provision

Where required, the expansion of existing school properties will be supported. Planning applications for facilities that seek to address a shortfall in preschool provision will be supported.

4. SEA Screening

4.1. The process for determining whether or not an SEA is required is called screening. In order to screen, it is necessary to determine if a plan will have significant environmental effects using the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule I of the SEA Regulations. A determination cannot be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted: The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.

4.2. Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out in Table 1 below:

Figure 1: Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects.

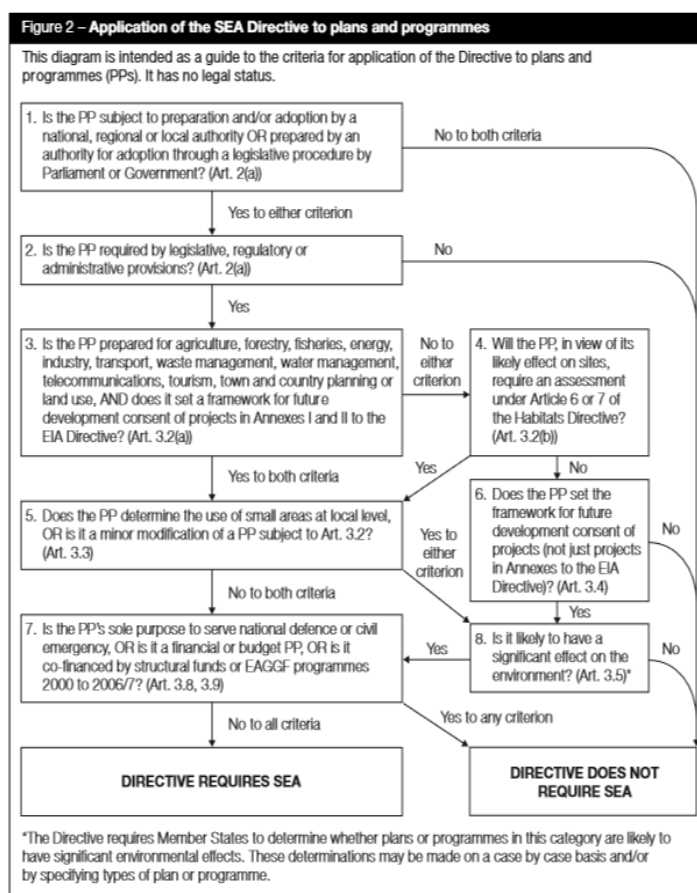
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to
 - the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
 - the degree to which 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 trans-boundary nature of the effects,
 - the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
 - the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
 - the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
 - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
 - intensive land-use,
 - the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

Source: Annex 11 of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

5. Assessment

5.1. The SEA screening is a two stage process. The first part considers the Neighbourhood Plan against the SEA assessment criteria set out in the national guidance, 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive'⁴. The second part of the assessment considers whether the NP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, using criteria drawn from Schedule 1 of the EU SEA Directive and the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004⁵.

5.2. The process shown has been undertaken and the findings can be viewed in the figure below and in Table 1 which follows. This sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.



(Source: Annex 11 of SEA Directive)

4

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf

⁵ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/pdfs/uksi_20041633_en.pdf

Table 1: Application of the SEA Directive to the Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan

Assessment 1: Establishing the need for SEA

STAGE	Y/N	REASON
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The preparation and adoption of the NP is permitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The NP is being prepared by Swaffham Parish Councils (as the “relevant bodies”) and will be “made” (adopted) by Breckland Council as the Local Authority, subject an independent examination and community referendum. The preparation of the NP is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and, the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art.2(a))	N	Whilst the NP is not a requirement of the Town and Country Planning Act, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will be “made” and eventually form part of the Development Plan for the District. These are directed by legislative processes and it is important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.
3. Is the NP 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? (Art 3.2(a))	Y	<p>A NP can include these policy areas and could provide, at a Neighbourhood Area level, the framework for development that would fall within Annex II of the EIA Directive. Developments that fall within Annex I are ‘excluded’ development for NPs (as set out in Section 61(k) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).</p> <p>The NP is prepared to set out a framework for town and country planning and land use within the parish of Swaffham. The strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging LP of the Breckland Council. The NP seeks to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of these plans.</p> <p>The NP does not anticipate being the tool to manage development of the scale and nature envisaged by Annex I and Annex II of the EIA Directive.</p>
4. Will the NP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development	Y	<p>The NP could potentially have impacts on sites covered by the Habitats Regulations.</p> <p>A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report</p>

<p>under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art.3.2(b))</p>		<p>(2013) and the Assessment of the Breckland LP at Preferred Directions stage (2015) were carried out as part of the Local Plan's preparation.</p> <p>A further HRA screening on the SNP has also taken place. This has found that <i>"there are likely to be no significant negative effects on the European Designated Sites resulting from the Policies detailed within the SNP. Therefore, based on the submitted draft, a full Appropriate Assessment (Habitat Regulations Assessment) is not required"</i>.</p>
<p>5. Does the NP determine the use of small areas at local level, or is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art 3.2? (Art3.3)</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>A NP can determine the use of small areas at a local level. The NP proposes to include policies relating to the location of sustainable development, but does not propose to specifically allocate land for development.</p>
<p>6. Does the NP set the framework for future development consent of Projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Once 'made', a NP forms part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used in the determination of planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area. Therefore, it sets the framework for future developments at a local level.</p>
<p>7. Is the NP sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it financial or budget PP, or is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art.3.8,3.9)</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The NP does not deal with these categories.</p>
<p>8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The NP seeks general conformity with the "adopted" Core Strategy and regard to the emerging LP. The NP proposes to include policies relating to the location of sustainable development, but does not propose to specifically allocate land for development. The parish has some areas that are internationally-designated and nationally-designated sites within its boundaries. However it is considered that the plan would not have a significant effect on heritage assets, landscape, biodiversity interests or areas of flood risk.</p>

5.3 The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England were consulted on the requirement for SEA for the NP. The responses received are attached in Appendix 1.

SEA Screening Stage 2: SEA Directive Article 3(5) Annex II – Application of Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects of a Neighbourhood Plan

5.4 Table 2 below sets out the assessment against the Strategic Environmental Assessment criteria for the NP. This is to determine whether the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan will have a significant effect on the environment. This criteria against which the screening is carried out are taken directly from Annex II of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (also known as the SEA Directive), as required by Article 3(4).

Table 2: SEA Screening Stage 2 - Assessment of the Likelihood of Significant Effects on the Environment

Criteria in Annex 11 of the SEA Directive	Response	Is there a significant effect?
(1) Characteristics of the plan 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 strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging LP. The NP seeks to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of these plans.	No
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy;	Once the NP will be “made”, along with the strategic LP, will form part of the District’s Development Plan. The NP will expand upon some of the emerging LP policies, providing further details for the local designated area.	No
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	Any development that comes forward through the NP will be subject to strategic environmental policies of the Core Strategy and the LP, when ‘made’. These policies have been subject to sustainability appraisal, and are in place to ensure that sustainable development is achieved.	No
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;	There are not considered to be any significant environmental problems which are specific to the area, above and beyond those considered and addressed in the LP. The NP may include policies which provide additional environmental protection.	No

values iii) Intensive land use	relating to air, water, and soil quality. iii) The NP is unlikely to bring forward development of an extent that would result in a significant intensification of Local land Use.	No
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The NP Area does not include any landscape designations. The environmental effects on areas of biodiversity designations have been considered through the emerging LP.	No

6. Conclusion

6.1. The assessment shown above identifies that, based on the information available to date, there are unlikely to be any significant environmental effects from the implementation of the proposals in the emerging SNP.

6.2. The Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England have responded to the Screening Opinion request and their responses are contained in Appendix 1. Their responses are based on the environmental information provided by Norfolk County Council.

6.3. Having reviewed the criteria, Breckland Council has concluded that the emerging SNP is not likely to have any significant environmental effect and accordingly will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The main reasons for this conclusion are:

- The SNP does not allocate any sites for development.
- The SNP area has some sensitive environmental assets as parts of the Breckland SPA/SSSI are within the parish. However they are distant to the proposed development areas and will not be affected by the policies and proposals in the neighbourhood plan. Potential impacts on the Breckland SPA have previously been considered as part of the Breckland Local Plan.
- The SNP does not allocate sites for development that have not already been appraised through the sustainability appraisal of the Breckland Local Plan
- The proposed policies in the SNP seek to avoid or minimise environmental effects when determining development proposals, and are unlikely to result in any additional environmental impacts.

6.4. This report is based on the Regulation 14 version of the SNP. Should the contents of the plan subsequently differ from this version, there may be a requirement to revisit this Screening Opinion.

6.5. A copy of this report will be available for inspection at Breckland Council Offices, Elizabeth House, Wolpole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1EE.

APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1: Responses from Statutory Consultees

Date: 28 September 2018
Our ref: 258893



Breckland Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/Madam

SWAFFHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – SCREENING FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 18 September 2018.

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

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

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans in light of the SEA Directive is contained within the [National Planning Practice 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.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours faithfully
Dawn Kinrade
Consultations Team



EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

Ms Susan Heinrich
Breckland Council
Elizabeth House
Walpole Lake
Dereham
Norfolk
NR19 1EE

Direct Dial: 01223 582746

Our ref: PL00483683

5 October 2018

Dear Ms Heinrich

RE: Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening

Thank you for your email of 24 September 2018 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 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 Swaffham 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 Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We note that the plan does not propose to allocate 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.

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



24 BROOKLANDS AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 8BU

Telephone 01223 552749
HistoricEngland.org.uk



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



EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

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 dated 24 September 2018. 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.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. James".

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



24 BROOKLANDS AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 8BU

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From: Mugova, Elizabeth [mailto:elizabeth.mugova@environment-agency.gov.uk] On Behalf Of Anglian Central, Planning_Liaison
Sent: 12 October 2018 16:41
To: Heinrich, Susan
Subject: RE: Request for SEA screening of the Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Susan

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the SEA Screening of the Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan.

We have previously reviewed the Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan - Pre-Submission draft; our comments are attached for information.

Due to resource pressures we are no longer able to provide local authorities with bespoke advice on screening opinions where an area is regarded to have low environmental risks. If there is a specific issue that you require our expert advice on before issuing the screening opinion then please contact us with details and we will endeavour to assist you. We remain a statutory consultee for scoping opinions so please continue to submit these for our review and comments.

We hope that this information is of assistance to you. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully
Elizabeth

Elizabeth Mugova

Sustainable Places
East Anglia Area (West)

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

Phone: 020 8474 5242

Direct Dial: 020 3025 5999

Email: planning.brampton@environment-agency.gov.uk



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

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

Please note – Our hourly charge is now £100 per hour plus VAT from 1st April 2018.

N.B. Attachment to this email was the following email:

From: Anglian Central, Planning_Liaison [mailto:planning.brampton@environment-agency.gov.uk]
Sent: 25 July 2018 12:46
To: Administrator | Swaffham Town Council
Cc: Anglian Central, Planning_Liaison

Subject: RE: FOR INFORMATION & ACTION: Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan: pre-submission consultation

Dear Hannah Duggan

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on your pre-submission draft Neighbourhood Plan. We are a statutory consultee in the planning process providing advice to Local Authorities and developers on pre-application enquiries, planning applications, appeals and strategic plans. We aim to reduce flood risk, while protecting and enhancing the water environment. We have had to focus our detailed engagement on those areas where the environmental risks are greatest.

Based on the environmental constraints within the area, we therefore have no detailed comments to make in relation to your Plan at this stage. However together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf

Below is a link to our developers guidance entitled 'Building a better environment' this sets out our role in development and how we can help.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/289894/LIT_2745_c8ed3d.pdf

Also attached is a copy of our local Planning Guidance document which contains basic information and links to the type of environmental issues we expect to be considered for development proposals.

Kind regards,

Emily Davies

Sustainable Places - Senior Planning Advisor
East Anglia Area (West)
Working days Monday – Thursday

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

Phone: 02084745242

Email: planning.brampton@environment-agency.gov.uk



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Our hourly charge is £100 per hour (plus 20% VAT) from 1st April 2018.

N.B Also attached to this email titled was EA East Anglia Planning Guide PDF 03.05.18 – was a guide on pre-application guide on planning applications.