

**Saffron Walden
Town Council**

**Uttlesford District
Council**

Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Screening Determination Statement (under
Regulation 9 and 11 of the Environmental
Assessment of Plans and Programmes 2004)**

March 2020

Executive Summary

This statement provides the determination (under Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations)) that the draft Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. This statement also includes the reasons for this determination (in line with Regulation 11 of the SEA Regulations).

In addition this statement determines that the making of the draft Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant effects on any European sites and consequently the plan does not require Habitat Regulation Assessment.

This determination statement is also intended to demonstrate that the Saffron Walden 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
- Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

This determination has been made on 5 March 2020. Within 28 days of this determination, Uttlesford District Council will publish this determination statement in accordance with its regulatory requirements (as per Regulation 11 of the SEA Regulations). The statutory consultees will be sent a copy of this statement and copy of the statement will be available for inspection at the Council's website at <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/saffronwaldennp>. It will also be available on request at: Uttlesford District Council, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4ER.

If you require any further information, then please contact Demetria Macdonald by email at dmacdonald@uttlesford.gov.uk.

Determination Statement (including reasons for the determination)

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) preliminary Screening Opinion was prepared by Uttlesford District Council for the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan. This opinion, see Appendix 1 to this report, was made available to the statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency) for comment starting on 4 February 2020.

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. We note the plan intends to allocate sites for development, but concur that they are unlikely to result in any significant effects in the context of the SEA process.

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.

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 our advice, on the basis 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.

Natural England concurs with the conclusions of the HRA screening report.

- **Environment Agency:** Thank you for your consultation dated 04 February 2020. We have reviewed the SEA/HRA Screening Report for the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan, as submitted, and do not disagree with the conclusions detailed in the report.

Following consideration of the sites allocated by the plan we conclude that the recommendations of the report are suitable.

Appendix 1: Saffron Walden SEA/HRA Screening Report

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats
Regulations Assessment Screening Report for the
Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan

January 2020

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1. Introduction

1.1 There are two purposes to this screening report:

SEA Screening

1.2 The purpose of this document is to help determine whether or not the draft Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (NP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

1.3 Uttlesford District Council (UDC) is required to consult the statutory bodies, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England prior to reaching a screening determination and will use this report as a basis for this consultation.

HRA Screening

1.4 The purpose of this document is also to ascertain whether the making of the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan would breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This is a required basic condition of neighbourhood plans as laid out in Schedule 2 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended.

1.5 Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC reads:

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

1.6 In practice Article 6(3) requires a two-stage process.

a) initially seeing if the draft plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with others plans or projects); and if likely significant effects cannot be ruled out

b) subjecting the neighbourhood plan to appropriate assessment where the purpose of the appropriate assessment is to ascertain the implications of the neighbourhood plan on the European site in view of the conservation objectives of the European site.

- 1.7 Where an appropriate assessment is required, the plan can only proceed to adoption if it is found the plan will have no adverse effects on the integrity of the European site. At the appropriate assessment stage (if that stage is needed) account may be taken of proposed mitigation measures but not prior to this.

Status of this Screening Report

- 1.8 The views reached in this SEA/HRA screening report are preliminary views prior to consulting with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.

Introduction to Saffron Walden

- 1.9 The Civil Parish of Saffron Walden is located in the northern part of Uttlesford district. Cambridge is about 10 miles north of the northern extent of the parish and Stansted Airport about 8 miles south of the southern extent of the parish.
- 1.10 Saffron Walden is the larger of two market towns in the District of Uttlesford and functions as the district's administrative and commercial centre. It is a visually attractive historic market town, with much of its medieval character still preserved. Set within a valley (The Slade Valley), the surrounding open countryside and varied topography contribute greatly to the setting of its historic buildings (e.g. St Mary's Church) and historic centre as a whole.
- 1.11 The town is surrounded by open countryside to the north of the town and by historic parkland (Audley End House and Gardens) to the west. The hamlet of Little Walden is located in the north of the parish.
- 1.12 The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood plan area can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Area



Introduction to the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.13 The Saffron Walden NP covers the period 2019 – 2034 and has the following vision:

Saffron Walden will retain its unique identity as a visually beautiful market town with its rich heritage, a large number of listed buildings and a number of historic green spaces within the town and across the parish. It will be a settlement of the highest environmental sustainability due to provision for pedestrians and cyclists, continued reduction in carbon emissions, encouragement of recycling and use of green energy. Movement within the town will be safe and easy and journeys by car will be minimised. Economic activity will develop so that as many residents as possible will be able to earn their livings in the town. The traditional long-established links with the artistic community will be maintained and its proximity to Cambridge will enable it to become a popular tourist destination. The existence of many local interest groups, combined with activities organised by residents demonstrates a high level of civic pride. Little Walden will maintain its separate identity and integrity as a rural village served by Saffron Walden.

The vision is underpinned by the following five objectives:

1. Saffron Walden will be an economically active and self-sustaining town, offering equal opportunities to all.
 2. Saffron Walden's residents will be able to live as healthily as possible.
 3. Saffron Walden will be an environmentally sustainable town.
 4. Saffron Walden's heritage assets, high quality landscape and conservation areas will be protected or enhanced.
 5. Saffron Walden will retain its market-town feel and community spirit.
- 1.4 There are a total of 32 planning policies in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. They are summarised briefly in the table below:

Table 1: An overview of the planning policies in the Saffron Walden NP	
NP policy	What does this policy do
Theme – Future Housing Need	
SW1 – Spatial Strategy	<p>The policy establishes where growth will happen during the plan period.</p> <p>The policy allocates three sites for development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A site referred to as SAF 3 for 10 dwellings subject to detailed requirements in Policy SW1 and Policy SW3 in the Neighbourhood Plan; - A site referred to as SAF 4 for 12 dwellings sub-

Table 1: An overview of the planning policies in the Saffron Walden NP	
NP policy	What does this policy do
	<p>ject to detailed requirements in Policy SW1; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A site referred to as Land North of Shire Hill which is supported for 100 dwellings subject to detailed requirements including, notably the provision of a link road between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road. The intention appears to be for the development to come forward as set out in an outline planning consent UTT/17/2832/OP on the site (the reference to planning application in the current policy wording is considered to be an error). <p>The policy states that the only development that will be supported outside the development limits will be community led development or development brought forward by a Community Land Trust.</p>
SW2 – Protection of Views	This policy requires proposals to demonstrate that they will not have a detrimental impact on the rural setting of the town by removing or diminishing the views over the town.
SW3 – Land at Viceroy Coaches, to rear of 10 to 12 Bridge Street	This is a site allocation policy for 10 dwellings subject to criteria.
SW4 – Housing Mix on New Developments	This policy requires housing proposals to include specific mix of sizes.
SW5 – Affordable Housing	This policy requires 40% of all residential schemes of 11 units or more to comprise affordable housing.
SW6 – Housing Density	A policy requiring residential densities to reflect site context. Indicative levels provided in the policy.
Theme Town Layout and Design	
SW7 – Design	A design policy to apply to all types of development.
SW8 – Parking on New Developments	A policy requiring the achievement of on street parking levels to meet the guidelines set out in Essex County Council's Parking Standards.
SW9 – Energy Efficient and Sustainable Design	A policy requiring specific sustainable design and construction standards to be met from new development.
SW10 – Accessible and	A policy specifying what is required from residential

Table 1: An overview of the planning policies in the Saffron Walden NP	
NP policy	What does this policy do
Adaptable Homes	schemes to ensure increased accessibility.
Theme – Commercial Uses	
SW11 – Town Centre Uses	A policy applicable to change of use applications and new build applications within the primary and secondary frontages of the Saffron Walden shopping parades
SW12 – Convenience Stores in Residential Areas	This policy allows the provision of retail units outside the town centre within residential areas (to serve those residential areas) so long as the proposal will not undermine the viability or vitality of the town centre.
SW13 – 17 Market Hill & 29 – 32 Church Street	A policy specific tailored for applications affecting this historic building in the town centre.
SW14 – Shopfront Design	A policy setting out the circumstances where changes to shop fronts will be supported.
SW15 – Development of 56 High Street	A policy resisting the development of 56 High Street until a replacement scout hut is constructed and opened elsewhere.
SW16 – Regeneration of George Street	A policy supporting schemes which regenerate George Street in the town centre
SW17 – Development of New and Existing Commercial Spaces	A policy supporting following types of commercial development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replacement/refurbishment of existing industrial units - Farm diversification involving small scale business where additional employment will be provided - Conversion of residential accommodation into visitor accommodation provided adequate parking is provided.
Theme – Connectivity	
SW18 – High Quality Communications Infrastructure	A policy requiring all new homes and commercial premises to have superfast fibre connectivity (Full Fibre to the Premises/Home) or equivalent or better successor.
Theme - Ecology	
SW19 – Ecological Requirements for All New	This policy requires all new development to include 50%

Table 1: An overview of the planning policies in the Saffron Walden NP	
NP policy	What does this policy do
Domestic and Commercial Developments	of the surface to be vegetated.
Theme - Transport Infrastructure	
SW20 – Promoting Walking and Cycling	A policy requiring all schemes to be designed so as to maximise opportunities for walking and cycling.
SW21 – Travel Planning	A policy applicable to proposals where Travel Plans are required. The policy requires Travel Plans to include provision for sustainable travel initiatives.
SW22 – Improving Provision for Public Transport	A policy requiring proposals to provide a meaningful contribution towards public transport initiatives.
SW23 – Vehicular Transport	A policy establishing restrictions on growth to the east of Saffron Walden’s Town Development Limits, on the basis that this would lead to unacceptable traffic impacts (including HGV movements) in the Saffron Walden Town Centre and Air Quality Management Area.
Theme – Sport, Recreation and Environment	
SW24 – Allotments	A policy requiring contributions towards the provision of new allotments as new development comes forward.
SW25 – Playing Fields and Sports Halls	An aspirational policy stating what new facilities would be welcomed. The policy also seeks contributions towards such provision.
SW26 – Community Halls and Centres	A policy setting out the circumstances when new community hall provision will be required of new development.
SW27 – Open Space for Informal Recreation	A policy setting out open space provision requirements as part of new proposals. The policy also seeks to designate some existing open spaces as Local Green Spaces.
SW28 – Public Rights of Way	A policy seeking the protection or enhancement of public rights of way when new development comes forward.
SW29 – Land of Value to the Natural Environment	This policy identifies land as having specific environmental value and designates the space as Local Green Space

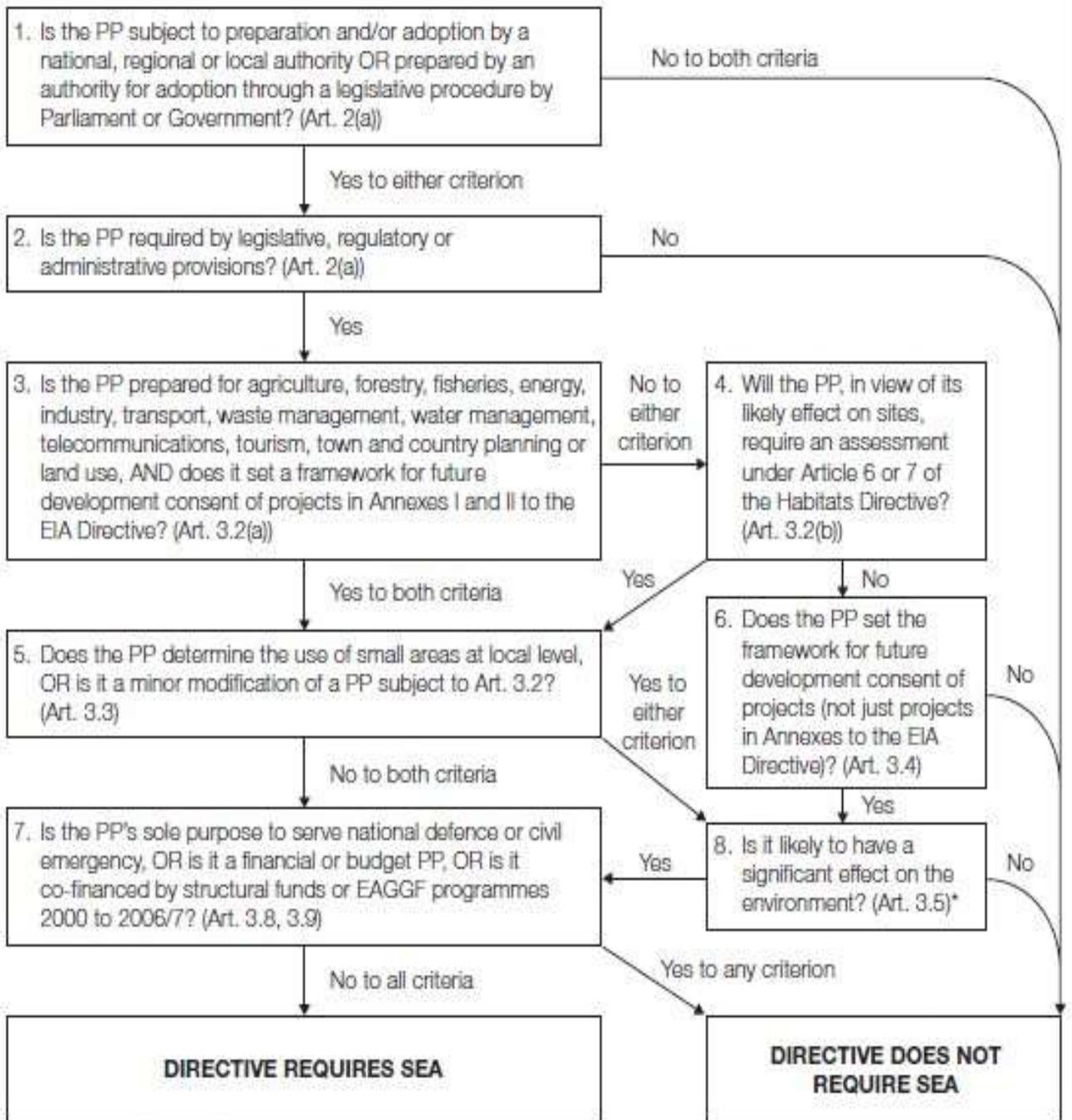
Table 1: An overview of the planning policies in the Saffron Walden NP	
NP policy	What does this policy do
Theme – Arts and Cultural Facilities	
SW30 – Arts and Cultural Facilities	An aspirational policy supporting provision of new public art and a community cinema and arts centre.
Theme - Education	
SW31 – Education	A policy supporting development which delivers new early years subject to need being there. The policy also supports the expansion of existing secondary school provision as well as provision of sixth form facility. This policy is non-specific with regards to site.
Theme - Healthcare	
SW32 – Healthcare	The policy supports the provision of a new healthcare facility subject to locational criteria including being accessible by public transport and car. The policy supports the provision as part of the existing community hospital site.

2. Legislative Background to SEA

- 2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC which was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, often referred to as the “*SEA Regulations*”. Detailed guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive” (ODPM 2005) available to view at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>
- 2.2 The Government publication “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive” (ODPM 2005) includes a useful table intended as a guide to the circumstances where the SEA directive applies to plans and programmes. This is reproduced below:

Figure 2 – Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



*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.

2.3 The table below uses the diagram above to help determine whether or not the SEA directive applies to the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 2: Assessing how the SEA legislation applies to the Saffron Walden NP			
Stage	Response	Outcome	Comment
1. Is the NP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	Go to question 2	The preparation and adoption of the NP is allowed under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The NP is being prepared by Saffron Walden Town Council (as the "relevant body") and will be "made" by Uttlesford District Council as the local authority. The preparation of NPs is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and The Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012
2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	Go to question 3	Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will, if "made", form part of the statutory Development Plan for the District.
	No	NO SEA required	
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 (see Appendix 2) to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	Yes to both	Go to question 5	The Neighbourhood Plan does not set the framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive (see Appendix 2 for list).
	No to either	Go to question 4	
4. Will the NP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	Yes	Go to question 5	See separate assessment in section 6 of this report.
	No	Go to question 6.	

Table 2: Assessing how the SEA legislation applies to the Saffron Walden NP			
Stage	Response	Outcome	Comment
5. Does the NP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Yes to either	Go to question 8	The Neighbourhood Plan applies to the civil parish of Saffron Walden
	No to both	Go to question 7.	
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)	Yes	Go to question 8	The Neighbourhood Plan is to be used for determining future planning applications.
	No	Does not require SEA	
7. Is the NP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	Yes to any criteria	Does not require SEA	Not applicable
	No to all criteria	Requires SEA	
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)	Yes	Requires SEA	Likely significant effects are explored in more detail in section 3 of this report.
	No	Does not require SEA	

2.4 The table above tells us that an environmental assessment of the Saffron Walden Plan is only required if it is 'screened in' following an assessment of likely significant effects on the environment.

3. Criteria for determining likely significance of effects on the environment

- 3.1 When determining whether a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has a likely significant effect on the environment, the SEA Regulations require that the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations be considered. These are the criteria “for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment”. These criteria are split into two categories: those relating to the characteristics of the plan and those relating to the characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected. These are set out below.

Plan characteristics

- 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 [European] Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

Characteristics of the effects and the plan area

- 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 (for example, 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

- 3.2 In order to identify any likely significant environmental effects, Table 3 below considers the characteristics of the Saffron Walden NP and Table 4 considers the characteristics of the effects and the plan area likely to be affected.

Table 3: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects – Plan Characteristics

- **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 Saffron Walden NP would, if adopted (“made”), form part of the Statutory Development Plan and as such will contribute to the Framework for future development consent of projects. However, the plan will sit within the wider framework set by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the strategic policies of the Uttlesford District Council Local Plan (2005) and the emerging Local Plan 2011 -2033. The Saffron Walden NP includes the following policies:

Future Housing need

- SW1 Spatial Strategy
- SW2 Protection of Views
- SW3 Land at Viceroy Coaches, to rear of 10 to 12 Bridge Street
- SW4 Housing mix on new developments
- SW5 Affordable housing
- SW6 Housing density

Policy SW1 allocates three sites for development:

- A site referred to as SAF 3 for 10 dwellings
- Subject to further detailed requirements set out in both Policy SW1 and in Policy SW3 in the Neighbourhood Plan. These criteria include requirement regarding building materials and provision of a development brief.
- A site referred to as SAF4 for 12 dwellings subject to criteria. It is a brownfield site located within the town. Constraints include 2 listed buildings on the site frontage.
- A site referred to Land at Shire Hill which is supported for 100 dwellings. The site is a greenfield site to the east of the town outside the town’s development limits. The site specific criteria includes a requirement that development must be implemented in accordance with a master plan and design guidance approved by the Neighbourhood Plan and Uttlesford District Council (criteria j) and requires that this master plan make provision for the delivery of a link road between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road (see criteria k). The supporting text states that without the link road capable of taking considerable volumes of traffic including buses and HGVs, development at this site would be unacceptable. The intention appears to be for the development to come forward as set out in an outline planning consent UTT/17/2832/OP on the site.

Policy SW1 states that Land at Shire Hill ‘as described in planning application UTT/17/2832/OP’ is a SWNP allocation and proposals for up to 100 dwellings will be supported subject to complying with other NP policies and listed site specific requirements. Whilst the principle of development has been accepted through an outline consent, the inclusion of allocations will influence during the plan period what could come forward on the

Table 3: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects – Plan Characteristics

site either as part of a revised outline planning application or as the detailed planning application.

The Local Plan is currently at examination and the timetable for its adoption is currently uncertain. If the Saffron Walden NP progresses swiftly, it is possible the SW NP policies (and allocations SAF 3 for 10 dwellings and SAF 4 for 12 dwellings) will direct development ahead of the Local Plan.

Town Layout and Design.

- SW7 Design
- SW8 Parking on new development
- SW9 Energy efficient and sustainable design
- SW10 Accessible and adaptable homes

All the policies under this theme relates to the detail of development when it comes forward in terms of impact on on-street parking, energy efficient and sustainable design and internal layout of residential units.

Commercial Premises

- SW11 Town Centre Uses
- SW12 Convenience Stores in Residential Neighbourhoods
- SW13 17 Market Hill
- SW14 Shopfront Design
- SW15 Development of 56 High Street
- SW16 Regeneration of George Street
- SW17 Development of new and existing commercial space

Policy SW11 will influence the determination of change of use applications in the town centre. Policy SW12 may lead to more local retail units away from the town centre but serving local neighbourhoods. Policy SW13 is specific to one existing town centre site. Policy SW15 relates to existing employment uses, farm uses or residential. Policy SW16 supports in principle town centre regeneration in some sections of George Street but it is not an allocation and is not specific about scale of schemes being sought. Policy SW17 applies specifically to an existing building used for community uses that is also identified as an opportunity for retail led regeneration but the policy does not state what uses are being sought on this.

On the whole this group of policies may lead to increased commercial activity within the existing built up area in Saffron Walden Town Centre.

Connectivity

- Policy SW18 High quality communications infrastructure

A policy not influencing the quantum or location of development but requiring what telecommunications infrastructure should come forward at the

Table 3: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects – Plan Characteristics

same time.

Ecology

- SW19 Ecological requirements for all new domestic and commercial developments.

A policy not influencing the quantum or location of development but requiring certain criteria to be met as part of any proposal.

Transport Infrastructure

- SW20 Promoting walking and cycling.
- SW21 Travel Planning
- SW22 Improving the provision of public transport.
- SW23 Vehicular Transport.

SW20 is a policy not influencing the quantum or location of development but requiring certain criteria to be met as a part of any proposal. SW21 relates specifically to travel plans. SW22 seeks developer contributions as part of any proposal towards public transport infrastructure improvements. Policy SW23 does influence the location of new development as it restricts development proposals to the east of the town (beyond the Town’s development limits) by stating they can only be supported subject to transport impacts in the town centre meeting specific criteria.

Sports, Recreation and Environment

- SW24 Allotments
- SW25 Playing fields and sports halls
- SW26 Community halls and centres
- SW27 Open space for informal recreation
- SW28 Public Rights of Way
- SW29 Land of environmental value

Policies SW24 and SW25 and SW29 give protections to specific types of open space. Policies SW25, SW26 and SW27 also require or encourage certain types of open space and community facilities to come forward (non-site specific) as part of new development.

Arts and Cultural Facilities

- SW30 Arts and cultural facilities.

A policy not influencing the quantum or location of development but an aspirational policy seeking new arts and cultural facilities.

Education

- SW31 Education

A policy not influencing the quantum or location of development but a policy supporting development which delivers new early years provision subject to need being there. The policy also supports the expansion of existing secondary school provision as well as provision of sixth form facility. This policy is non-specific with regards to site.

Table 3: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects – Plan Characteristics

	<p>Healthcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW32 Healthcare <p>A policy not influencing the quantum or location of development but the policy supports the provision of a new healthcare facility subject to locational criteria including being accessible by public transport and car. The policy supports the provision as part of the existing community hospital site.</p>
<p>• the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy</p>	
	<p>A Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development Plan for the District and it does not influence other plans.</p>
<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>National policy requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread through the plan-making including the Saffron Walden NP. Before the NP can be made it will need to be tested against the basic conditions. This includes a requirement to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development.</p>
<p>• environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme</p>	
	<p>Environmental issues relevant to the Saffron Walden NP are set out below theme by theme:</p> <p>Biodiversity:</p> <p><u>European sites:</u> As shown on Figure 2 there are no European sites within or close to the NP area. The closest European site is the Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC which is 22.7 km away to the north west. Another European Sites i.e. Lee Valley SPA to the south west is over 27.4 km away from the Saffron Walden NP boundary.</p> <p><u>SSSIs and NNRs:</u> There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the plan area. Just outside the plan area on the eastern edge there is the Hales and Shadwell Woods SSSI (split in two different sites in the parish of Ashdon and Nunn Wood SSSI also in Ashdon parish.</p> <p>Further beyond the NP boundary to the south there are further SSSIs including Debden Water SSSI, Quendon Wood SSSI and Elsenham Woods. Beyond this, just over 14 km away from the southern boundary of the NP area is the Hatfield Forest SSI and Nature Reserve. The Hatfield Forest SSSI zone of influence has recently been updated by Natural England following updated visitor survey work undertaken in 2018. The zone of influence has been increased to 14.6km which falls into the rural area of the Saffron Walden plan area. The Saffron Walden NP does not propose any development within this zone of influence.</p> <p>The plan area has a variety of flora and fauna as set out below.</p>

Table 3: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects – Plan Characteristics

Population: No identified issues: According to the Census 2011, there were 15,504 usual residents in the plan area as at Census day 2011. Of these, 98.6% lived in households and 1.4% lived in communal establishments. The average (mean) age of residents was 41 years.

In total there were 6,764 household spaces. Of these, 6,510 (96.2%) had at least one usual resident and 254 (3.8%) had no usual residents.

Human health: There is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which covers the majority of Saffron Walden town centre. On health grounds and on grounds of seeking to protect the historic fabric of the town, the plan is concerned with managing the impact of new development (through additional traffic generation) on the AQMA.

Flora: A variety is recorded on www.magic.gov.uk includes areas of ancient woodland and semi-natural woodland, ancient replanted woodland, deciduous woodland, a few traditional orchards and a significant area at Audley End of Wood-pasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat.

Fauna: A variety is recorded on www.magic.gov.uk including birds species lapwing, yellow wagtail, turtle dove, tree sparrow, grey partridge, corn bunting and bats.

Soil: No noted issues.

Water The main rivers in the NP are River Cam and the Slade, a tributary of the River Cam. There are areas of fluvial flood risk in the plan area and these follow the extent of the waterways including an area of land within the built up area of Saffron Walden where Swan Meadow Car Park is located but it also runs along the historic town centre around Hill Street.

As recorded on www.magic.gov.uk the Neighbourhood Plan Area falls under 3 Source Protection Zones (SPZ) merged (England). The majority of Saffron Walden Parish falls under Zone III – Total Catchment Zone. But an area in the south (southern end of Saffron Walden falls within Zone II – Outer Protection zone and a smaller area within Zone 1 – Inner Protection Zone.

As recorded on www.magic.gov.uk, the whole of the NP plan area falls within Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) 2017 –Surface Waters and Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) 2017 – Groundwaters.

The whole neighbourhood Area is classified as a Countryside Stewardship Water Quality Medium Priority.(www.magic.gov.uk)

Air

The centre of Saffron Walden has been designated an Air Quality Management area. The AQMA was designated in May 2012 and includes major road junctions, based on the annual mean for nitrogen dioxide not being met at the Debden Road/London Road junction and the Thaxted Road/East Street junction. The area is centred on Elm Grove off Hill Street and map of the area is available to view here:

Table 3: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects – Plan Characteristics

https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/890/Map-of-AQMA-2012/pdf/Saffron_Walden_AQMA_map-1_pdfa.pdf?m=636988923867200000

The NP includes policy SW23 Vehicular Transport which seeks to take a restrictive approach to further proposals beyond the town development limits in the east on the basis that such development would trigger additional movements through Saffron Walden Town Centre.

Climatic factors

The plan is concerned with regards the environmental impact of new buildings and transport movements. This is reflected in the transport policies as well as policy SW9 (Energy Efficient and Environmentally Sensitive Design).

Cultural heritage:

The built cultural heritage is significant in the plan area. Key heritage assets include the Grade 1 listed Audley End House, the medieval town centre itself, and the Castle which was built in late 11th/early 12th Century. In total there are five scheduled monuments, 10 Grade I listed buildings, many Grade II listed buildings and a number of Grade II* listed buildings (the Saffron Walden Conservation Area Character Appraisal last updated in January 2018 records 25 Grade II* listed buildings). This historic core of Saffron Walden town centre is designated as a conservation area as is a section of Audley End. There are two registered historic parks and gardens in the plan area. These are Bridge End Gardens in the north west part of Saffron Walden registered as a Grade II historic park and garden by Historic England and Audley End which is registered as a Grade I historic park and garden.

UDC maintains a schedule of listed buildings at risk and has identified six within the NP area.

In addition to the statutory listed heritage assets, UDC maintains a schedule of locally important buildings too. UDC have prepared Conservation Area Appraisal for each of the two conservation areas and each of these contain management plans for conserving or enhancing the heritage assets.

The NP is concerned with regards the impact of traffic movements on the historic centre and the historic buildings. Policy SW7 Design requires the preparation of a Heritage Statement to accompany proposals coming forward in the Conservation Areas.

Landscape:

The study area falls mainly within National Character Area (NCA) 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland (Natural England, 2014) and partially in NCA 87 East Anglian Chalk (Natural England, 2014).

As noted in the Saffron Walden Heritage and Character Assessment (2018), “At a local level, the study area falls mostly within the A1 Cam River Valley landscape character area (LCA) with a part to the east within the B1 Ashdon Farmland Plateau LCA, and with a part to the south within the

Table 3: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects – Plan Characteristics	
	<p>B7 Debden Farmland Plateau as defined within the Landscape Character of Uttlesford District (Chris Blandford Associates (2006). Landscape Character of Uttlesford District. Uttlesford: Uttlesford District Council (p269-340).”</p> <p>UDC have published a Historic Settlement Character Assessments for Saffron Walden. This identifies sensitive landscape areas on the Saffron Walden settlement edge. One of the five objectives of the NP is to protect or enhance the high quality landscape in the plan area. Applicable NP planning policies are SW2 which seeks to protect key important views. SW7 Design which seeks to ensure new buildings are designed so as to conserve or enhance landscape character.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of [European] Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).
	<p>There are no conflicts between the Saffron Walden NP and statutory plans linked to waste, water etc.</p>

3.3 Table 4 below focuses on any identified effects and the characteristics of the plan area.

Table 4: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects: Effects and areas characteristics from the Saffron Walden NP	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects 	<p>The following likely impacts of the draft plan have been identified theme by theme:</p> <p>Biodiversity</p> <p>NP policy SW3 – Land at Viceroy Coaches, to rear of 10 to 12 Bridge Street, is an allocation on a site already proposed for allocation in the emerging Local Plan. The site is a brownfield site located in the north west part of Saffron Walden. The site is bounded to the north by a public house, by residential properties in the east, by Bridge Street in the west and Bridge End Gardens to the east. Bridge End Gardens is a registered park and garden.</p> <p>Impacts on the biodiversity of Bridge End Gardens through development on this site has been considered as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) of the emerging Local Plan. In this report, published by AECOM in December 2018, this site has the reference number 13SAF15. The report records no impacts with regards to biodiversity as a result of this proposal (see Table IVC: Site options appraisal findings starting on page 308 of the report). No Likely Significant Effects (LSE).</p> <p>NP Policy SW1 includes an allocation of land at Shire Hill for 100 dwellings as set out in the planning application for UTT/17/2832/OP. This site is a greenfield site of approximately 7.05 hectares of land comprising Grade 2 (very good) agricultural land. The principle for development at this site has been established since the approval of consent granted by Uttlesford District Council Planning Committee on 19 December 2018 subject to the signing of a S106 agreement which is still in the process of being negotiated. UDC have issued an EIA screening opinion for this proposal. This screening opinion found that the site is a Schedule 2 type of development (meaning an EIA assessment is not automatically required (as per a Schedule 1 type of development) but only required where the impacts of scheme are identified as having likely significant effects. The EIA screening report concludes however that the proposal would not be likely to have a significant effect on the environment both in isolation and cumulative combination of other committed development. In terms of biodiversity impacts, the EIA screening report finds <i>“There are recognised sensitive areas of the site and of the proposed development. There would be possible wildlife habitats as a result of trees and hedges on site’s margins, the changing ground levels. The associated intensification as a result of the proposed development is likely to have impact in terms of noise and disturbance, possible litter/pollution.</i></p> <p><i>As part of any application submission a Tree survey, arboriculture implication assessment and method statement, also a visual impact assessment has to be undertaken and submitted.</i></p> <p><i>An Ecological Phase 1 Assessment would need to be submitted as part of any planning application submission. This would need to identify whether there are any nesting birds within the existing trees, also possible amphibians and/or reptile species within grassland, margins and standing water, also roosting bats and nesting birds etc. This should identify any further surveys and mitigations measures that need to be undertaken. This has</i></p>

Table 4: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects: Effects and areas characteristics from the Saffron Walden NP

been submitted as part of the application and would need to be assessed as part of the determination of the application process.”

The planning officer’s report (published December 2018) finds that: *“The submitted Ecological Appraisal (Aspect Ecology, September 2017) includes sufficient information to assess the impacts of development on Priority habitats and species. However to make the development acceptable, it will require submission of details for compensation at Reserved Matters stage so a condition is recommended. The officer’s report later finds that, In terms of ecology an Ecological Appraisal has been submitted as part of the application. This highlighted that the site is dominated by habitats of negligible to low ecological value, and those of greater value would be sought to be retained and off-set any losses in conjunction with a landscaping scheme. There is the potential for roosting and foraging/commuting bats, Badgers, Brown Hare and birds. Mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise the risk of harm to the protected species with compensation measures. This would be in the form of the provision of bat and bird boxes, increasing permeability for mammals such as hedgehogs. This would also be achieved through the creation of habitats through the new planting, provision of wildflowers and wetland features within the development. Mitigation measures during the construction period have been proposed in the form of landscape protection, updated surveys, retention of dark corridors and badger safeguards, the timing of the works and site clearance. Due to this no harm to biodiversity is considered and no objection has been raised by Natural England and ECC Ecology has raised no objection subject to conditions.”*

Conclusion: Information on the biodiversity value of the land affected by the site allocation Land at Shire Hill is available through existing material (Ecology Phase 1 assessment) provided as part of the planning application for UTT/17/2832/OP. This demonstrates there is existing biodiversity value which is likely to be impacted upon through the proposed development. The identified impacts of the existing consented scheme are found to be through noise, disturbance and possible litter/pollution.

The effects through this NP policy are however not found to be significant and effects will be managed through the application of existing planning policies and administration of the development management process. In this existing consented scheme, this includes a requirement for submission of details for compensation at reserved matters stage and through implementation of mitigation measures including landscaping, provision of bird and bat boxes, measures which increase permeability for mammals such as hedgehogs, creation of new habitats through planting, provision of wildflowers and wetland features.

The policy in the draft NP will apply to the current application when it gets to reserved matters stage as well as to other applications applicable to this site. The policy includes a requirement for an appropriate ecology survey. The policy will sit alongside other adopted Local Plan policies including Policy GEN7 Nature Conservation in the 2005 adopted Local Plan. This policy provides the requirement for mitigation or compensation measures to be secured by planning obligation or conditions where potential impacts of development on nature conservation are considered.

No likely significant effects.

Table 4: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects: Effects and areas characteristics from the Saffron Walden NP

Population

The Neighbourhood Plan works within the context of the emerging Local Plan. No LSE resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan.

Human Health

As noted above, poor air quality in Saffron Walden Town Centre may have impacts on residents and visitors to the town. The NP itself seeks to manage the impact that transport movements have on air quality through Policy SW23 Vehicular Transport. However, no additional impacts on health identified through the NP policies. Policy SW31 – Healthcare is an aspirational policy which supports the provision of a new health care facility being provided in an appropriate location.

The draft site allocation Land at Shire Hill is likely to impact the Saffron Walden Air Quality Management Area. The officer’s report into the outline planning application *UTT/17/2832/OP* states at paragraph 9.6.12 *The potential for adverse impact on the AQMA is too great to approve this proposal without road network and other mitigation measures. Should other considerations make a recommendation for approval for the proposal likely, consent should also be considered for the proposal under UTT/18/0824/OP to allow the delivery of a road between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road linking at the boundary of the two proposal sites, and constructed to Essex Highway specification. An analysis of the cumulative impact on air quality has been carried out, the findings of which will be provided under separate documentation, and concludes that routeing of traffic through the link would offer some air quality benefits to the AQMA. No other effective traffic management measures are realistic, and whilst measures to encourage use of low emission vehicles and promote non car travel must be provided, these alone will not be sufficient to reduce the risk to adverse impact on air quality to an acceptable level.*

In light of the air quality implications on the Saffron Walden Air Quality Management Area resulting from the planning application at Land at Shire Hill, the officer’s report includes the recommendation of a conditional approval subject to S106 legal obligation and joint approval of UTT/18/0824/OP.

It follows therefore that any allocation of this site in the NP should also require the parallel delivery of the link road as set out in UTT/18/0824/OP if the intention of the SW NP is to avoid further exacerbation of air quality in Saffron Walden Town Centre. Policy SW1 includes this requirement where it states in criteria k) “The master plan needs to make provision for the delivery of a link road between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road”

Fauna & Flora

Policy SW19 – Ecological requirements for all new domestic and commercial developments seeks development to impact positively on the natural environment. This could lead to minor positive effects on fauna and flora in the plan area. The site allocation for land at Shire Hill will lead to some adverse impacts but this can be mitigated for at planning consent stage. No LSE

Soil

No identified effects from the NP.

Water

Table 4: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects: Effects and areas characteristics from the Saffron Walden NP

No likely significant effects arising from the NP policies.

Air

See comments above relating to the impact of draft site allocation for land at Shire Hill on Human Health (impacts are air quality related). There could be negative impacts if the development comes forward on this site without mitigation measures including the proposal for a link road (which is subject to planning application UTT/18/0824/OP).

No likely significant effects arising from the NP policies although there could be some minor positive impacts if the NP policies succeed in steering development in a direction so as to reduce traffic movements through the town centre.

The NP seeks to address existing air quality issues (which are caused primarily through traffic movements through the town centre) by not supporting development which would lead to additional movements through the town centre and air quality management area through policy SW23 – Vehicular Transport.

Climatic Factors

Fluvial Flood Risk: Impacts on the fluvial flood risk as part of the Policy SAF 3 Land at Viceroy Gardens has been considered as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) of the emerging Local Plan. In this report, published by AECOM in December 2018, this site has the reference number 13SAF15. The report records negative impacts due to the fluvial flood risk at this site.

The site falls within an area of very low flood risk (***Very low risk** means that each year this area has a chance of flooding of less than 0.1%. This takes into account the effect of any flood defences in the area. These defences reduce but do not completely stop the chance of flooding as they can be overtopped, or fail*) from fluvial flooding, However, the area adjacent to the north falls within a low flood risk area and medium flood risk area.

Impacts on fluvial flood risk as a result of development of this site will need to be assessed at the planning application stage. Applicants will be required to do this to comply with national and local planning policy.

Site allocation for land at Shire Hill (proposed for allocation in Policy SW1 – Spatial Strategy): this land is in fluvial flood risk zone 1.

No likely significant effects arising from the NP policies.

Surface Water Flood Risk:

Impacts on the surface flood risk as part of the Policy SAF 3 Land at Viceroy Gardens has been considered as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) of the emerging Local Plan. In this report, published by AECOM in December 2018, this site has

Table 4: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects: Effects and areas characteristics from the Saffron Walden NP

the reference number 13SAF15. The report records negative impacts due to the surface flood risk at this site.

The site falls within an area of very low flood risk (**Very low risk** means that each year this area has a chance of flooding of less than 0.1%. This takes into account the effect of any flood defences in the area. These defences reduce but do not completely stop the chance of flooding as they can be overtopped, or fail.) from fluvial flooding, However, the area adjacent to the north falls within a low flood risk area and medium flood risk area.

Impacts on surface flood risk as a result of development of this site will need to be assessed at the planning application stage. Applicants will be required to do this to comply with national and local planning policy.

Site allocation for land at Shire Hill (proposed for allocation in Policy SW1 – Spatial Strategy): development of this greenfield site will lead to increased area of impermeable surface. The officer’s report for the application reports in paragraph 11.109 *As a result of the proposed development there would be an increased impermeable area. An indicative drainage plan has been submitted as part of the application, which considers flood routing, with overland flood routes identified on the proposed drainage strategy. As part of the drainage strategy Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) have been incorporated to provide sufficient source control and storage to avoid flooding within the site during all storms up to and including 1 in 100 year storm plus 40% allowance for climate change.* The Policy SW1 – Spatial Strategy does not make reference to requirements for surface water drainage but these requirements are provided as result of considering Local Plan policies in combination with NPPF.

No likely significant effects arising from the NP policies.

Material Assets

No likely significant effects arising from the NP policies.

Cultural Heritage

The plan area is very rich in cultural heritage. The Impacts on the heritage as part of the Policy SAF 3 Land at Viceroy Gardens has been considered as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) of the emerging Local Plan. In this report, published by AECOM in December 2018, this site has the reference number 13SAF15. The report records negative impacts due to heritage considerations at this site.

The report notes specifically the following: *“site allocation SAF3 is located within Saffron Walden Conservation Area 1 and adjacent to Bridge End Gardens Registered Park and Gardens, and site allocation SAF7 is located just north east of Bridge End Gardens Registered Park and Garden also. These two sites will develop the areas north and south of Bridge End Gardens with the potential for cumulative negative effects on its setting. Additionally, site allocation SAF4 is located just outside of Saffron Walden Conservation Area 1. Any proposal for these sites should take any Conservation Area Appraisals into account and be sensitively designed.”*

The Local Plan policy SAF 3, in recognition of the sensitivity of the site in the Conservation area states that development should not have an adverse impact on Conservation Areas and not impact on the listed building of 12 Bridge Street. It does not mention the sensitivity of Bridge End Garden itself.

Table 4: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects: Effects and areas characteristics from the Saffron Walden NP

	<p>NP policy SAF 3 however is specifically concerned with regards the impact of the allocated site on Bridge End Gardens and requires in criteria c) the following <i>The retention or replacement in sympathetic materials of the brick walls of the existing buildings to a height of 2.4m between the site and Bridge End Garden</i>; and in criteria d) it requires <i>The retention and protection of mature trees and hedging within Bridge End Garden</i>.</p> <p>No likely significant effects arising from the NP policies.</p> <p>Landscape</p> <p>The landscape in and around Saffron Walden is a key contributor to its quality as a place. This is recognised in studies such as the Historic Settlement Character Assessment for Saffron Walden published by UDC in 2007.</p> <p>NP Policy SW1 includes an allocation of greenfield land for 100 houses on greenfield land in line with planning application UTT/17/2832/OP. This application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal Report dated September 2017 which reports “<i>overall the magnitude of the effect of the landscape character is considered to be moderate</i>”. The NP therefore will have some adverse impacts on landscape character.</p> <p>No likely significant effects have however been identified through the NP policies.</p> <p>To conclude no potential adverse impacts (e.g. landscape) have been identified as a result of the NP. There could be a range of minor positive impacts.</p>
<p>• the cumulative nature of the effects</p>	
	<p>Potential adverse impacts relating to air quality, landscape and traffic have been identified through the NP policy SW1 which includes an allocation for 100 dwellings on greenfield land to the east of the Town’s development limits. This site allocation policy includes a series of site-specific criteria which will ensure these impacts are managed. In particular the policy includes a requirement for the delivery of a link road to manage the otherwise unacceptable traffic and associated air quality impacts on the town centre. The cumulative impacts of the adverse impacts resulting from this site allocation are not considered to be significant subject to the policy being supported by required mitigation measures to accompany any development proposal.</p>
<p>• the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)</p>	
	<p>If the site allocation for land at Shire Hill comes forward without appropriate mitigation measures (including the delivery of a link road between Radwinter Road and Thaxted Road which is subject to its own planning application there is a risk that there will be an increased risk to human health and air quality in the Saffron Walden Air Quality Management Area.) However, the policy as currently drafted includes site specific criteria which addresses this concern.</p>
<p>• the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)</p>	
	<p>The population of the parish is currently around 2,939. The NP shapes future development and identifies 2 locations for residential development which are also earmarked for development in the emerging Local Plan. In addition, the NP includes an allocation for 100 homes at land at Shire Hill where the principle for development has already been accepted through the granting of a planning application. The overall extent of development is in line with the growth that would occur in the parish without the NP being in place.</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 	

Table 4: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects: Effects and areas characteristics from the Saffron Walden NP	
– exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values intensive land-use	
–	Air quality is a concern in the plan area as is the impact of poor air quality on the built heritage and health. Notwithstanding this, the plan seeks to steer development so as not to exacerbate air quality further.
• the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	
•	The NP has been assessed as not having any significant effects on landscape which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.

4. SEA Conclusions

- 4.1 The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development.
- 4.2 The NP includes three site allocations which themselves will direct development to specific locations. If the NP is adopted ahead of the Local Plan, these three site allocation will have a stronger influence on the location of new development.
- 4.3 The assessment in Section 3 demonstrates that no adverse impacts are predicted as a result of the draft policies in the NP, other than the Policy SW1 which includes a site allocation for 100 dwellings on greenfield land to the east of the town's development limits. This part of the policy is identified as having possible adverse impacts on air quality, biodiversity, human health and landscape.
- 4.4 However, the principle of consent has been established through the granting of outline planning permission at this site (UTT/17/2832/OP) which reduces the extent to which the impacts are directly associated with the site allocation included in Policy SW1. Notwithstanding this, a site allocation will apply during the duration of the plan period and would be applicable to any planning application for development at this site. The policy therefore includes a series of site specific criteria focused on addressing air quality, biodiversity, human health and landscape impacts. Of key importance the policy includes a requirement that development must be implemented in accordance with a master plan and design guidance approved by the Neighbourhood Plan and Uttlesford District Council (criteria j) and requires that this master plan make provision for the delivery of a link road between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road (see criteria k).
- 4.5 UDC have issued an EIA screening opinion for this proposal (UTT/17/2832/OP). This screening opinion found that the site is a Schedule 2 type of development (meaning an EIA assessment is not automatically required (as per a Schedule 1 type of development) but only required where the impacts of scheme are identified as having likely significant effects. The EIA screening report concludes however the proposal would not be likely to have a significant effect on the environment both in isolation and cumulative combination of other committed development.
- 4.6 Subject to the wording of NP policy SW1 not weakening the conditions attached to the principle of consent established at land at Shire Hill, no likely significant effects have been identified as a result of the draft NP.

5. Legislative Background to HRA

- 5.1 The application of Habitats Regulation Assessment to land use plans is a requirement of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations); the UK's transposition of European Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (widely referred as to the Habitats Directive). Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that any plan (or project) which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site (also known as a Natura 2000 site), but would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to an 'appropriate assessment' of its implications for the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The plan-making body shall agree to the plan only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned.
- 5.2 European sites provide ecological infrastructure for the protection of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats of exceptional importance within the European Union. These sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), designated under European Union Directive 2009/147/EC *on the conservation of wild birds* (the Birds Directive). The government also expects authorities to treat Ramsar sites, designated under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance, UNESCO 1971, as if they are European sites.

6. HRA Screening for the Saffron Walden NP

6.1 This section of the report:

- Considers whether there are any European sites which could potentially be affected by the Saffron Walden NP.

6.2 Natura 2000 Sites

Natura 2000 is central to the EU nature and biodiversity policy and forms an EU wide network of nature protection areas. The aim of the network is to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

The sites are designated under the European Union (EU) Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) and the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora).

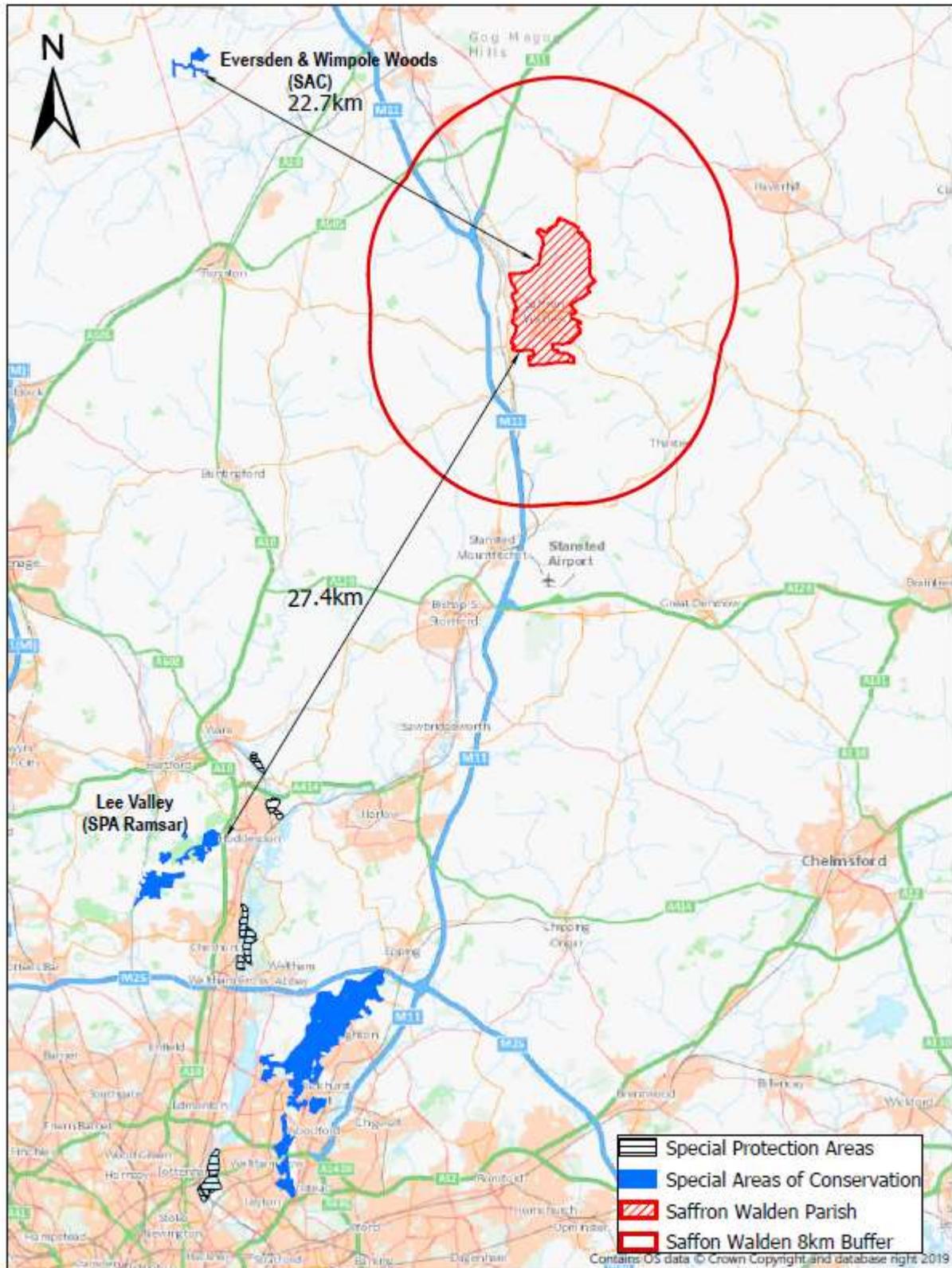
The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. Similarly, the Habitats Directive requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance) are also part of the Natura 2000 network. SPAs and SACs comprise Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all Ramsar sites in England are SSSIs. The Natura Network in England comprises SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites.

6.2.1 European Sites to be considered

As shown on Figure 2 below, there are no European sites which lie within or close to the Saffron Walden area. The closest European site is the Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC which is over 22.7 km away to the north-west. Another European Site i.e. Lee Valley SPA to the south west is 27.4 km away from the Saffron Walden NP boundary.

Both these sites are considered to be too far away to be subject to any impacts from the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 2 : Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan 8km Buffer Zone



7. Conclusions

7.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development.

The NP includes three site allocations which themselves will direct development to specific locations. If the NP is adopted ahead of the Local Plan, these three site allocation will have a stronger influence on the location of new development.

One of the site allocations (Land at Shire Hill) is for 100 dwellings. Whilst the principle of development has however already been established via the granting of permission for 100 homes at this site the NP site allocation will have implications for other planning applications coming forward on this site (in the event the site is not built out according to the existing consent) for the duration of the plan period. There are a range of adverse impacts identified in connection with this site allocation but these have not been identified as significant. Subject to the wording of NP policy SW1 not weakening the conditions attached to the principle of consent established at land at Shire Hill, no likely significant effects have been identified as a result of the draft NP.

This is a preliminary view reached prior to consulting the statutory consultees: Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency

7.2 HRA Screening

The Neighbourhood Plan HRA Screening Assessment concludes that there are no European sites which need to be assessed for likely significant effects as a result of the Saffron Walden NP.

Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA screening report indicates that the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have likely significant effects on any European site, either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects.

This is a preliminary view reached prior to consulting the statutory consultee: Natural England.

Appendix 2: Consultation Responses from the Statutory Environmental Bodies

NATURAL ENGLAND

Date: 05 March 2020
Our ref: 308018



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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Ms Macdonald,

Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Screening Opinion for SEA and HRA

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 04 February 2020.

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.

Natural England concurs with the conclusions of the HRA screening report.

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.

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 sincerely

Alice Watson

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



Ms Chloe Fiddey - Planning and Projects
Development Officer

Our ref: AE/2020/124957/01-L01
Your ref: SEA Screening

Saffron Walden Town Council
11 Emson Close
Saffron Walden
CB10 1HL

Date: 03 March 2020

Dear Ms Fiddey

THE SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: SEA/HRA SCREENING CONSULTATION.

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL, 11 EMSON CLOSE, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX, CB10 1HL

Thank you for your consultation dated 04 February 2020. We have reviewed the SEA/HRA Screening Report for the Saffron Walden Neighborhood Plan, as submitted, and do not disagree with the conclusions detailed in the report.

Our considerations, at this stage, reflect the depth and level of detail to which the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan demonstrates future growth within the parish over the plan period. We note the comments regarding the site allocations and that one of these sites already benefits from planning permission. Following consideration of the sites allocated by the plan we conclude that the recommendations of the report are suitable.

Yours sincerely

Mr Mark Macdonald
Planning Advisor

Direct dial [REDACTED]

Direct e-mail [REDACTED]

Environment Agency Cobham Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 9JD. Customer services line: 03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency
End

HISTORIC ENGLAND



Ms Demetria Macdonald
582746

Direct Dial: 01223

Uttlesford District Council

Council Offices
PL00684078

Our ref:

London Road

Saffron Walden

Essex

CB11 4ER
2020

28 February

Dear Ms Macdonald

RE: Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on 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 Saffron Walden 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 the plan intends to allocate sites for development, but concur that they are unlikely to result in significant effects in the context of the SEA process.

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']



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Telephone 01223 582749
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.



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.

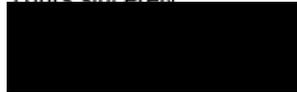
I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence dated XXXX. 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.

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

Yours sincerely



Edward James
Historic Places Advisor, East of England
Edward. [redacted]

cc:



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