

**Great Chesterford
Parish Council**

**Uttlesford District
Council**

**Great & Little Chesterford
Neighbourhood Plan**

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

16 May 2021

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 Great & Little Chesterford 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 Great & Little Chesterford 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 Great & Little Chesterford 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 16 May 2021. 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/chesterfordsnp>. 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 Great & Little Chesterford 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 Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan. This opinion, see **Appendix 1** to this report, was made available to the statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) for comment starting on 1 April 2021.

Consultation responses were received from the three statutory bodies i.e., Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The conclusions of the three statutory bodies are summarised below, and their detailed comments are included in **Appendix 2**.

- **Historic England:** The Screening Report concludes that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment, and that an SEA is not required. We note that the plan does propose to 'allocate' three sites for development but note also from the Regulation 14 version of the plan that two of these already benefit from planning permission, and therefore would not need to be subjected to further assessment to establish the principle of development. The third site, identified as POLICY GLCNP/9.1 - Land opposite Rectory Barns (Chest 12), is not near any listed buildings, scheduled monuments, nor is within a conservation area. We therefore consider it will not result in Significant Effects.

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 report's conclusions that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment **is not required**.

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

• **Natural England: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening:**

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.

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.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening: Natural England agrees with the report's conclusions that the Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to result in a significant effect on any European Site, either alone or in combination and therefore no further assessment work would be required.

• **Environment Agency:** Thank you for consulting us on The Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan SEA screening report. We have reviewed the submitted report and can confirm that we do not disagree with the conclusion reached within the report.

Allocated sites

The Neighbourhood plan has two allocated sites; however, one site already has planning permission and the other is currently seeking planning permission and therefore will have been reviewed independently through the development management process.

We trust the above is useful.

Based on the preliminary screening opinion prepared by Uttlesford in March 2021 and having considered the consultation responses from the statutory environmental bodies, Uttlesford District Council determines that the Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Council also determines that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to result in significant effects on any European site.

Appendix 1: Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan SEA/HRA Screening Report

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations
Assessment Screening Report for the Great and Little
Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan

31 March 2021

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Introduction

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 Great and Little Chesterford 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 Great and Little Chesterford 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 Great and Little Chesterford

- 1.9 The neighbourhood plan area is made up of two parishes: the parish of Great Chesterford and the parish of Little Chesterford. These parishes are located in the northern extent of Uttlesford district. The northern boundary of Great Chesterford parish abuts the southern boundary of South Cambridgeshire District. The centre of Cambridge is about 15 kilometres north to the village of Great Chesterford. Saffron Walden is located about 6 kilometres south of Great Chesterford Village.
- 1.10 Great Chesterford is one of Uttlesford's larger villages and is designated as a key rural settlement in the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005. It is located about 1.6 km south of junction 9A of the motorway M11. The B1383 runs through the village of Great Chesterford from north to south and further south this road runs along the western extent of the village of Little Chesterford. The Walden Road which provides the primary route from the A11/M11 to Saffron Walden runs along the eastern extent of both Great Chesterford and Little Chesterford villages. There is a railway station located in the south western part of the Great Chesterford village from which there is a direct service to London.
- 1.11 Great Chesterford is an ancient settlement and there have been many archaeological finds dating back to the bronze age in the land around the village. Today, the village can be characterised into three distinct areas: a historic core designated as a conservation area by Uttlesford District, an area of 20th century development to the north east of the conservation area and an area south west of the river and its flood plain, alongside the B1383 and the railway line.
- 1.12 Little Chesterford is a small rural village in the countryside south of Great Chesterford. It has no status in the settlement hierarchy in the 2005 Local Plan and has no defined settlement boundary referred to as a development limit in the 2005 Local Plan. However, there is a large science park located within Little Chesterford parish away from Little Chesterford village on the eastern side of the Walden Road and accessed off the Little Chesterford village/Chesterford Research Park roundabout on the Walden Road. The 2005 Local Plan includes a Chesterford Park designation which protects the employment site and designates it for future expansion.
- 1.13 Both villages are set within attractive and open undulating countryside. The rolling landscape is extensive with wide views. Both villages benefit from a strong rural character despite the proximity of the plan area to the national road, rail and airport infrastructure.
- 1.14 As at the 2011 Census there were 714 dwellings in the plan area. Since 2011, there has been considerable housing growth in the parish with the completion of an additional 170 homes up to 31 March 2019.

The Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood plan area can be seen in Figure 1.

Introduction to the Neighbourhood Plan

1.15 The Great and Little Chesterford NP covers the period 2019 – 2033 and has the following vision:

“By 2033, Great and Little Chesterford will have each grown organically and proportionally and continue to be attractive places to live for those seeking a sense of community and place, retaining their separate and distinctive characteristics and identities.

Great and Little Chesterford recognise and accept ongoing change and will continue to support change that retains our shared resources, rural feel and inclusive, welcoming community.”

1.16 The vision is underpinned by the following seven objectives:

1. To ensure that Great and Little Chesterford continue to grow at an organic and sustainable rate, supporting viable and diverse communities
2. To retain and protect the individuality and distinctive characteristics of the three main settlements (villages of Great Chesterford, Little Chesterford and the hamlet of Springwell) within the rural setting of the River Cam Valley
3. To protect the important views and distinct settlement patterns
4. To protect and enhance the site and setting of important sites and wildlife habitats
5. To promote safe and sustainable transport by promoting pedestrian use of railway station, safe pedestrian access to village services and between villages, road safety for all in village streets and promoting and enhancing cycling routes south to Saffron Walden and north towards Cambridge
6. To promote, enhance and maintain the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and to promote and enhance lifelong learning in the villages
7. To promote the preservation of employment areas for employment use

1.17 To help realise the seven objectives listed above there will be development management type planning policies in the NP arranged under the topics set out in the table below. Information on the emerging planning policies is currently available in draft format in the attached draft Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan document.

1.18 In addition there will be a number of residential site allocations in the plan. This intention is also in the public domain as set out at <https://www.lovegreatchesterford.com/nhpoverview>. The Great & Little Chesterford NP group have undertaken a site assessment process and have undertaken targeted engagement with landowners and Uttlesford District Council on this. The site assessment methodology is available to view at [NP Housing Site assessment](#). It is being undertaken in two stages. The first stage assessment has been used to eliminate unsustainable sites the second stage assessment involves assessing potential sites against the NP vision and objectives as a way of identifying preferred sites for selection.

1.19 Any sites selected for the NP will be subject to detailed site-specific policies which will contain site specific criteria to ensure mitigation of adverse impacts and implementation of potential positive effects.

- 1.20 The Great & Little Chesterford NP will be allocating sites to deliver limited growth in the plan area amounting to no more than 100 new residential homes during the plan period 2019 to 2033. This is based on the intention stated on the Great & Little Chesterford NP website that the NP will support a growth of 10%. A current estimate of dwellings as of 31 March 2019 is 884 dwellings and 10% growth would equate to 88 dwellings.
- 1.21 The site assessment process will steer development towards the most sustainable sites adjacent to the currently development limits in Great Chesterford and possible, subject to the identification of sustainable sites, adjacent to the settlement of Little Chesterford. The NP will not be identifying sites for growth within the hamlet of Springwell.
- 1.22 The Great & Little Chesterford NP is underpinned by a comprehensive set of evidence base documents including:
- The Great and Little Chesterford Landscape Character Assessment undertaken by Hankinson Duckett Associates in 2017
 - The Great Chesterford and Little Chesterford NP Historic Environment Assessment undertaken by Place Services in 2016
 - The Great Chesterford Conservation Area Character Appraisal undertaken by Uttlesford District Council in 2007
- 1.23 This will ensure the site assessment process is robust and leads to a selection of sites in the most sustainable locations.
- 1.24 Of great importance is the current policy context in which the NP sits. In the adopted 2005 Local plan, Great Chesterford is defined (see Policy S3) as a key rural settlement. Paragraph 2.2.3 of the Local Plan describes key rural settlements as being located on main transport networks as well as there being local employment opportunities. There is a protected employment area in Great Chesterford by the railway station. Uttlesford District Council currently has no five-year land supply and the current Local Plan (adopted 2005) is out of date in terms of delivering housing numbers since the 2005 plan delivers housing up to the year 2011.
- 1.25 Whilst the Local Plan is out of date and increasingly so as time passes, the spatial strategy which recognises the role of certain settlements such as Great Chesterford, remains a cornerstone of the distribution of development throughout the districts. In other words, small and medium development proposals on sustainable sites within or adjacent to the Great Chesterford development limits are likely to be permitted when considered against the policies in the NPPF. To reiterate this point, a site currently being considered as a potential site allocation in the Great & Little Chesterford NP 'Land to south west of London Road' is subject of an application for outline planning permission for 76 homes. This was approved by the Planning Committee at Uttlesford District Council on 19 February 2020 and is now subject to S106 agreement.
- 1.26 Should further development proposals be consented in the NP area ahead of the NP being made, it is likely the amount of growth being allocated through the NP will be considerably less than 100 units (as those sites would be treated as housing commitments rather than site allocations). However, depending on what is consented during the interim period it is also possible that the overall net level of growth being delivered in the plan area 2019 to 2033 will exceed 100 units (through the NP site allocations and the schemes consented in the interim). This is not a desired outcome or intention of the NP project and the overall additional effect of the additional NP site allocations will be modest.

Table 1: An indicative overview of the emerging development management policies in the Great and Little Chesterford NP

Overall Spatial Strategy

Policy GCLCNP/1 – Overall Spatial Strategy

This policy ensures that growth is limited to and proportionate to the scale of the villages by extending Development Limits to include the built environment and permissioned development of 76 dwellings. The Spatial Strategy aims to protect and enhance the intrinsic character, rural nature and beauty of the countryside. This strategy also aims to protect and enhance the historic and natural assets within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Likely to define gaps between the settlements which are to be kept open. The purpose of this is to protect the character and rural setting of the gaps but also to prevent coalescence between the Great Chesterford, Little Chesterford and Springwell.

Settlement Pattern and Separation

Policy GCLCNP/2 – Settlement Pattern and Separation

A policy managing the type of build form that can come forward within the settlements (nucleated in Great Chesterford and linear in Little Chesterford). No development in Springwell.

This policy aims to prevent the coalescence of the three main settlements so as to retain and protect their rural setting within the Cam Valley and also protect important views and the distinct settlement pattern.

Getting Around

Policy GCLCNP/3 – Getting Around

This policy aims to promote safe and sustainable transport by promoting and enhancing cycle routes and pedestrian routes

A policy or group of policies which will focus on:

- requiring development to prioritise pedestrian and other non-motorised vehicular connectivity
- seeking infrastructure improvements to allow better connectivity from areas near to Great Chesterford railway station to the Great Chesterford village.
- seeking improvements (through financial contributions and planning) to other types of transport infrastructure for example the proposed Saffron Walden cycle way.

Landscape Character and Locally Important Views

Policy GCLCNP/4 – Landscape Character and Locally Important Views

This policy aims to protect important landscape characteristics by encouraging proposed development to have regard to landscape capacity and development. The policy also aims to retain and protect the identified 42 Locally important views.

Table 1: An indicative overview of the emerging development management policies in the Great and Little Chesterford NP

Identifies Locally Important Views for the purpose of preventing development proposals that would have a significant detrimental impact on an important view by way of their scale, height, use of materials or lighting.

Requires development proposals to take full account of landscape sensitivities and landscape value in the consideration of development proposals.

Historic Environment

Policy GCLCNP/5 – Historic Environment

This policy expects all development proposals to have particular regard to the heritage assets both designated and non-designated.

Valued Community Spaces

Policy GCLCNP/6 – Valued Community Spaces

A policy identifying and protecting valued community facilities

Local Green Spaces

Policy GCLCNP/7 – Local Green Spaces

A policy identifying and protecting open spaces through Local Green Space designation and/or other.

Employment

Policy GCLCNP/8 – Employment

This policy protects employment land and safeguards Chesterford Research Park for new research and ancillary uses.

Housing

Policy GCLCNP/9 – Housing

The policy supports growth that is proportionate to the roles of the villages to achieve sustainable villages.

Policy GCLCNP/9.1 – Land opposite Rectory Farm Barns (Chest 12)

A total of 10 dwellings is proposed for this site with conditions including the continuation of the linear built form as well as provision of electric vehicle charging points. Green screening is required to be retained and enhanced on this site.

Policy GCLCNP/9.2 – Land North of Bartholomew Close (Chest 23)

This site is proposed for 13 dwellings and the conditions provide for access, provision of electric vehicle charging points and protection/enhancement through the protection of green features, design and materials. of views n

Policy GCLCNP/9.3 – Land South West of London Road (Chest 9)

Table 1: An indicative overview of the emerging development management policies in the Great and Little Chesterford NP

The site has Outline Planning Permission for 76 house and promotes the provision of pedestrian and cycle access. Transition from rural to landscape in the south to the village in the north is carefully managed through density and provision of green space adjacent to the woodland beyond the site boundary.

Community Projects

Community projects that are not within the purview of planning are listed in the Plan.
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2. Legislative Background to SEA

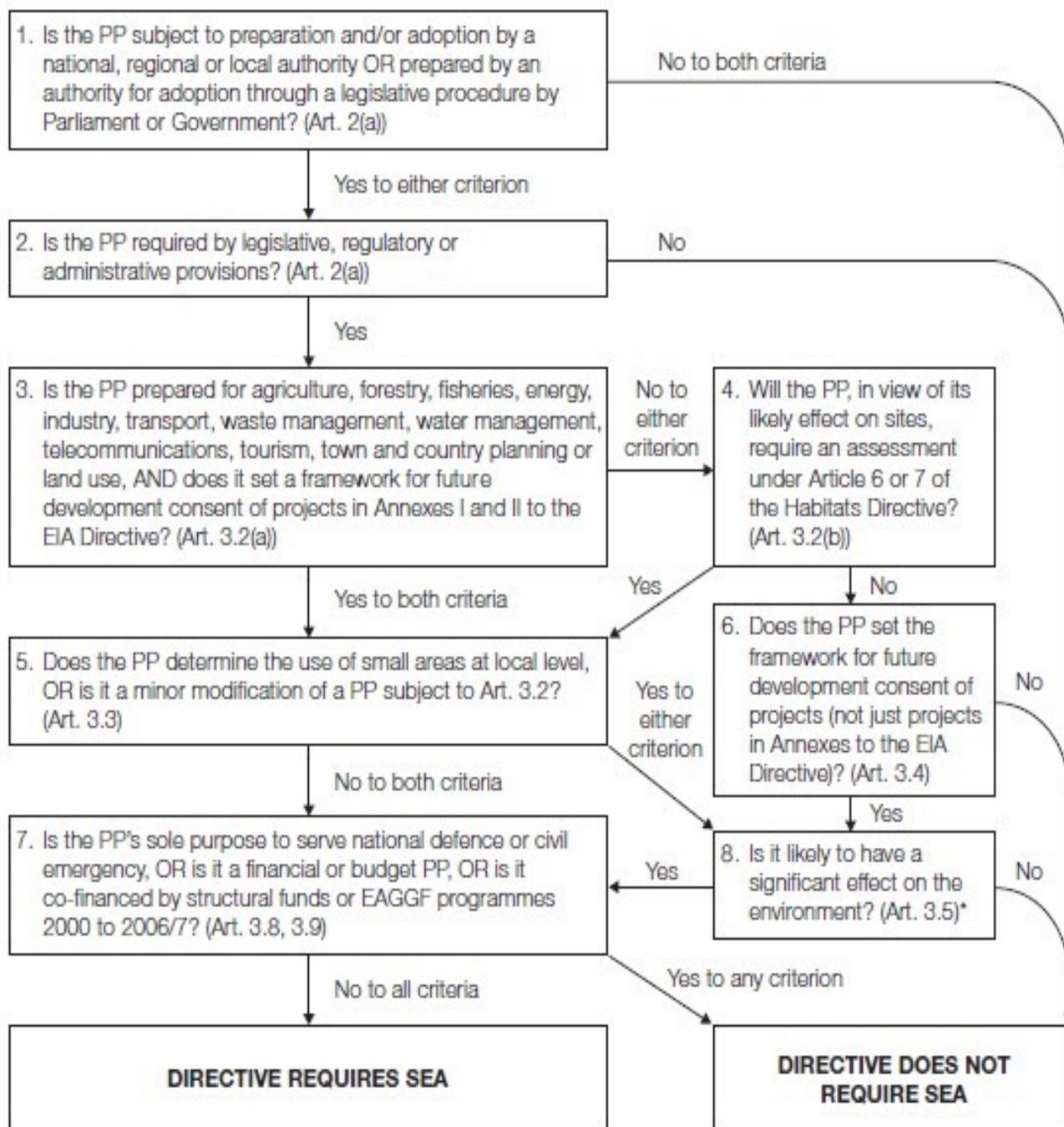
- 2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC which was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, often referred to as the “SEA Regulations”. Detailed guidance of these regulations can be 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 Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 2: Assessing how the SEA legislation applies to the Great & Little Chesterford 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 the Great & Little Chesterford NP steering group which has been appointed by Great Chesterford Parish Council (as the qualifying body), in agreement with Little Chesterford Parish Council 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,	Yes to both	Go to question 5	The Neighbourhood Plan does not set the framework for

Table 2: Assessing how the SEA legislation applies to the Great & Little Chesterford NP

Stage	Response	Outcome	Comment
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))	No to either	Go to question 4	future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive (see Appendix 2 for list).
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.	
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 parishes of Great and Little Chesterford.
	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	

Table 2: Assessing how the SEA legislation applies to the Great & Little Chesterford NP			
Stage	Response	Outcome	Comment
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 Great and Little Chesterford 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 Great & Little Chesterford 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 Great & Little Chesterford 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. The NP will include a range of development management type policies including the following:

Overall Spatial Strategy

Policy GCLCNP/1 – Overall Spatial Strategy

Settlement Pattern and Separation

Policy GCLCNP/2 - Settlement Pattern and Separation

This policy seeks to protect key gaps between the settlements of Great Chesterford, Little Chesterford and the hamlet of Springwell. The gaps are to be kept open and free from development apart from Neighbourhood Plan site allocations, development for agriculture, horticulture, outdoor recreation and other uses that need to be in the countryside. Chesterford Research Park is excluded from development in the key gaps.

Getting Around

Policy GCLCNP/3 - Getting Around

This policy seeks to promote safe and sustainable transport through promotion of pedestrian and cycle routes south to Saffron Walden and north to towards Cambridge. This policy seeks to promote sustainable transport.

Landscape Character and Locally Important Views

Policy GCLCNP/4 - Landscape Character and Locally Important Views

This policy identifies 42 locally important views that are to be protected, maintained or enhanced where appropriate. Development will only be supported if it has regard to the landscape sensitivity and landscape value attributed to the landscape character area.

Historic Environment

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

Policy GCLCNP/5 - Historic Environment

This policy protects the Great & Little Chesterford historic environment that is of local and national importance. There are 69 listed building in Great Chesterford and 14 Listed Buildings in Little Chesterford. Great Chesterford has 273 Non -Designated Assets on the Historic Record and 70 in Little Chesterford. This policy protects the historic assets and views of both villages.

Valued Community Spaces

Policy GCLCNP/6 - Valued Community Spaces

This policy maintains and protects community spaces that contribute to the well-being and quality of life for the residents. The spaces include recreational facilities, Community services, local services, Educational facilities and community routes.

Local Green Spaces

Policy GCLCNP/7 - Local Green Spaces

This policy identifies and designates 17 Local Green Spaces that are of particular significance to the local community for their beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife.

Employment

Policy GCLCNP/8 – Employment

This policy aims to protect the existing seven key employment sites as well as promoting employment within the area. Development proposals will be supported for Chesterford Research Park for new research and uses ancillary uses. Initiatives through contributions will be sought to minimise traffic or mitigate impacts of traffic on the villages resulting from employment uses.

Housing

Policy GCLCNP/9 - Housing

A policy affecting the quantum of development to allow for sufficient growth to maintain healthy and sustainable communities over the plan period. The intended rate of growth will also facilitate organic growth of the villages whilst maintaining and promoting balanced and vibrant communities.

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

Policy GLCNP/9.1 – Land opposite Rectory Farm Barns (Chest 12)

This policy sets the quantum of development at 10 dwellings. A condition requiring the built form to continue the linear form along Old Walden allows for a seamless merging of existing and new development. The proposed development requires provision of footpaths, cycleways and provision of electric charging points. The visual settlement edges and views along the Walden Road and from the Cam Valley will be retained and enhanced by green screening.

Policy GLCNP/9.2 - Land North of Bartholomew Close (Chest 13)

This policy sets the quantum of development at 13 dwellings. Access to the development is provided for via Bartholomew Close whilst pedestrian and cycle access is provided for via Stanley Road. Views to/from the adjoining Conservation Area will be protected/enhanced through protection of green features, design and materials.

Policy GLCNP/9.3 - Land South West of London Road (Chest 9)

This policy sets the quantum of development at 76 dwellings in alignment with granted outline planning permission UTT/19/0573/OP. An archaeological impact assessment is required with mitigation measures to conserve and enhance heritage assets. Nearby listed buildings and Heritage Assets of Little Bordeaux Scheduled Monument are to be conserved. Transition from the rural landscape to the south to the village landscape in the north will be facilitated by increasing the density of buildings from south to north. The southern end of the site will include green space adjacent to the woodland beyond the site boundary.

In conclusion, there will be residential site allocations to up to 100 new homes 2019 to 2033.¹ On the basis of there currently being an estimated 884 homes in the plan area (714 as at 2011 Census plus 170 additional dwellings delivered 2011 to March 2019). The focus of these sites will be adjacent to the built-up area in Great Chesterford village away from the most sensitive areas in terms of heritage and landscape value. Depending on the suitability of available sites there may be very small site allocations (less than 10 units) adjacent to current built up area in Little Chesterford village.

Of great importance is the current policy context in which the NP sits. In the adopted 2005 Local plan, Great Chesterford is defined (see Policy S3) as a key rural settlement. The Local Plan is out of date and there is no five-year land supply. Whilst the Local Plan is out of date and

¹

See also paragraph 1.35

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

	<p>increasingly so as time passes, the spatial strategy which recognises the role of certain settlements such as Great Chesterford, remains a cornerstone of the distribution of development throughout the districts. In other words, small and medium development proposals on sustainable sites within or adjacent to the Great Chesterford development limits are likely to be permitted when considered against the policies in the NPPF. To reiterate this point, a site currently being considered as a potential site allocation in the Great & Little Chesterford NP ‘Land to south west of London Road’ is subject of an application for outline planning permission for 76 homes. This was approved by the Planning Committee at Uttlesford District Council on 19 February 2020 and is now subject to S106 agreement.</p> <p>To conclude, whilst the Great & Little Chesterford NP will be influencing the location of new developments in the plan area, the quantity of development that it is planning for will come forward without the Great & Little Chesterford NP through the current development management process. This limits the degree to which the Great & Little Chesterford NP itself is the mechanism through which new development is planned. At the same time, it highlights the importance of the Great & Little Chesterford NP as a mechanism for ensuring a plan-lead system is reinstated. This is important for the purpose of planning for infrastructure that is required alongside new development.</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. Whilst it does not influence other lower level plans the community will expect the district to take into account the Neighbourhood Plan in the drafting of the new Local Plan. The plan will form part of the development plan, however strategic policies of the District Council’s and the site allocations made in the Local Plan take priority.</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 Great & Little Chesterford 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. The plan will promote sustainable development through policies requiring the protection of existing and new open space, policy requirements for community facilities, site allocations, protection of employment sites and protection of biodiversity.</p>
<p>environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme</p>	
	<p>Environmental issues relevant to the Great & Little Chesterford NP area are set out below theme by theme:</p>

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

Biodiversity:

European sites: 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 approximately 16.5km away from the north western edge of Great Chesterford Parish and towards the north west. Other European sites include Devil’s Dyke Special Area of Conservation which is approximately 17 km from the northern edge of Great Chesterford parish and to the north east. Wicken Fen SAC and Ramsar site is over 23 km to the north from the northern edge of Great Chesterford parish.

SSSIs and NNRs: There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Local Nature reserves in the plan area. Just outside the plan area on the north eastern edge there is the Hildersham Wood SSSI (located in Hildersham Parish).

Local Wildlife Sites: There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites in the NP area. These have been identified as part of an Uttlesford-wide review of sites undertaken in 2007 (see Selected Local Wildlife Site Review prepared by Essex Ecological Services Ltd in 2007, and available to view at www.uttlesford.gov.uk) The identified sites in the NP area include a) Great Chesterford Road Verge, located on Newmarket Road on a section along the settlement edge between Jackson’s Lane at the northern end and just south of the High Street b) Little Chesterford Road Verges. These are three sections of road verge c) Emmanuel Wood in Little Chesterford Parish.

Population: No identified issues: According to the Census 2011, there were 1,494 usual residents in Great Chesterford parish and 215 usual residents in Little Chesterford parish 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 in Great Chesterford parish is 40.4 years and the median age is 42 years. The average (mean) age of residents in Little Chesterford parish is 41.3 years and the median age is 44 years.

In Great Chesterford parish there were 627 household spaces. Of these, 599 (95.5%) had at least one usual resident and 28 (4.5%) had no usual residents. In Little Chesterford parish there were 87 household spaces. Of these, 80 (92%) had at least one usual resident and 7 (8%) had no usual residents.

Flora: A variety is recorded on www.magic.gov.uk .

In Great Chesterford parish there is an area of ancient woodland to east called Burton Wood, five further areas of deciduous woodland in the rural area and two within the built-up area of Great Chesterford village (an area to the western side of Newmarket Road opposite the Crown Public House and an area behind South Street and Manor Lane following the path of the River Cam). Magic mapping also records an area of orchard land part of the Mill off the B184 on the approach into Great Chesterford from the north.

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

In Little Chesterford parish there is an area of grassland classified as floodplain grazing marsh between the B1383 and the River Cam or Granta. There is an area of ancient woodland in the south eastern part called Emmanuel Wood. There are sixteen further areas of deciduous woodland recorded on magic.gov.uk in the rural area of Little Chesterford in addition to two areas near to the village itself including a wood directly to the north of the settlement boundary and west to Walden Road and an area behind St Mary the Virgin (off the High Street) and abutting the River Cam. There is one recorded area of orchard land as part of Bordeaux Farm.

Fauna: A variety is recorded on www.magic.gov.uk

In Great Chesterford parish the following is recorded: corn bunting, lapwing, grey partridge, snipe, stone curlew, tree sparrow, turtle dove, yellow wagtail.

In Little Chesterford parish the following is recorded:

Soil: The vast majority of agricultural land is classified as Grade 2 (very good).

Water: The main rivers in the NP are River Cam or Granta. Great Chesterford village lies in the valley of the River Cam. There are areas of fluvial flood risk in the Great Chesterford parish and these follow the extent of the waterway including predominantly undeveloped areas of land in the built-up area of Great Chesterford. In addition, there is a fluvial flood risk area (a tributary off the River Cam) that follows a fluvial route east of the River Cam just north of the Great Chesterford settlement and across the Newmarket Road, covers the area of the Recreation Ground and continues east along the back gardens of the northern most properties along Hyll Close, across the B184 and continues in a north easterly direction. Surface water flood risk follows the similar routes of the River Cam and the tributary which cross from the River Cam eastwards across the northern boundary of the Great Chesterford Village. Surface water flood risk is high along this route.

Little Chesterford Parish: Again, there are areas of fluvial flood risk in the Little Chesterford parish which follows the path of the River Cam. Little Chesterford village is only impacted to a limited extent since the River Cam flows north south to the west of the majority of the properties. There are areas of surface water flood risk in the village however including along the High Street and behind the High Street at the western end.

Climatic factors: no noted issues.

Cultural heritage:

The built cultural heritage is significant in the plan area. Both parishes are sites of ancient settlements. There is evidence of habitation through archaeological finds dating from the Neolithic period, the bronze age and the roman period. Key heritage assets in Great Chesterford parish include two scheduled monuments (the Roman Fort at Great Chesterford and the Romano-Celtic temple 400 m south of Dell's Farm) and about

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

70 listed buildings (as noted in the Great Chesterford Conservation Character Area Appraisal). A large part of Great Chesterford village is designated as a conservation area within which about 66 of the listed buildings are located (again as noted in the Great Chesterford Conservation Character Area Appraisal). One of the buildings is Grade 1 listed Church of All Saints.

In Little Chesterford village there are eleven listed buildings including one Grade 1 listed building, the Manor and one Grade 2* listed building the Church of St. Mary the Virgin. There are a further three listed buildings in Springwell, a hamlet south to Little Chesterford on the B184.

In addition to the statutory listed heritage assets, UDC maintains a schedule of locally important buildings too. This identifies a further 24 locally important buildings (including 2 walls) in Great Chesterford. UDC have prepared Conservation Area Appraisal for the Great Chesterford Conservation Area. This includes a management plans for conserving or enhancing the heritage assets.

Landscape: At the national scale, Great and Little Chesterford Parishes lie on the southern edge of National Character Area 87: 'East Anglian Chalk', very close to the northern boundary of NCA 86: 'South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland'.

Essex County-wide Landscape Character Assessment places the neighbourhood plan area, primarily within the Cam Valley (C1), with the eastern edge of the Parishes lying within the North Essex Farmlands (B2).

The Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (commissioned jointly with Braintree District Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Chelmsford Borough Council, Maldon District Council and Uttlesford District Council in 2006) places the plan area in the Cam Valley Landscape Character Area.

The Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan Group commissioned a Landscape Assessment in 2017. The document records landscape value and landscape sensitivity in the plan area and concludes which areas could have capacity to absorb development without adverse impacts to overall landscape quality. The report divides the plan area into 18 different local landscape character areas. Of these 5 are predominantly built-up areas, 7 have either low or negligible landscape capacity, a further four have medium, medium low or medium high landscape capacity and only 1 area has high landscape capacity.

UDC have published a Historic Settlement Character Assessments for Great Chesterford. This identifies sensitive landscape areas on the Great Chesterford settlement edge.

Material Assets:

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

	<p>Public Rights of Way: Many public rights of way routes run through the plan area. This includes the 5.5km of the historic Icknield Way Trail which crosses Great Chesterford parish, between Great Chesterford Common and Junction 9 of the M11.</p> <p>In Great Chesterford there is a railway station and a protected employment area.</p>
<p>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>	
	<p>There are no known conflicts between the Great & Little Chesterford 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 Great & Little Chesterford NP
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><u>Biodiversity, fauna and flora:</u></p> <p>The NP site allocations will have an impact on ecology on the sites where development is proposed. The sites allocations will be on small or medium sites and the overall number of dwellings is expected to be less than 100. The site allocations will be steered to areas in and around Great Chesterford on land that is least sensitive in landscape and heritage terms. There are no identified sites of significant importance in and around the edge of Great Chesterford. Local Plan Policy ENV7 – ‘The Protection of the Natural Environment (designated sites)’ and Local Plan Policy ENV8 – ‘Other Landscape Elements of Importance for Nature Conservation’ (the latter identifies the importance of non-designated habitats such as hedgerows, linear tree belts, larger semi natural or ancient woodlands).</p> <p>No likely significant environmental effects therefore identified as a result of the draft Great & Little Chesterford NP.</p> <p><u>Population and Human Health:</u></p> <p>The NP is focused on reinstating a plan led approach to planning the plan area. The vision and objectives are very much focused on improving wellbeing in the plan area.</p> <p>No likely significant environmental effects therefore identified.</p> <p><u>Soil:</u></p> <p>The built-up area of the Great & Little Chesterford is surrounded by good quality agricultural land. The NP site allocations may involve the loss of such land. The sites allocations will be on small or medium sites and overall number of dwellings is expected to be less than 100. Of key importance is that development pressure is currently high and there is likely to be loss of agricultural land on sites without the NP being in place. Small and medium development proposals on sustainable sites within or adjacent to the Great Chesterford development limits are likely to be permitted when considered against the policies in the NPPF. To reiterate this point, a site currently being considered as a potential site allocation in the Great & Little Chesterford NP ‘Land to south west of London Road’ is subject of an application for outline planning permission for 76 homes. This was approved by the Planning Committee at Uttlesford District Council on 19 February 2020 and is now subject to S106 agreement.</p>

Table 4: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects: Effects and areas characteristics from the Great & Little Chesterford NP

No likely significant environmental effects therefore identified as a result of the draft Great & Little Chesterford NP.

Water:

No likely significant environmental effects therefore identified as a result of the draft Great & Little Chesterford NP.

Air and climatic factors:

No likely significant environmental effects therefore identified as a result of the draft Great & Little Chesterford NP.

Surface and Fluvial Water Flood Risk:

There are areas of surface and fluvial water flood risk in the plan area. Flood risk will be taken into account in the site assessment process as required by the NPPF and the Local Plan.

No likely significant effects.

Material Assets:

No known impacts resulting from the NP.

Cultural Heritage:

The plan area is very rich in cultural heritage. The need to conserve or enhance heritage assets will be fully taken into account in the site assessment process. The site allocations will be on small or medium sites and overall number of dwellings is expected to be less than 100. Conserving and enhancing the historic heritage is a key thrust of the NP as seen in the draft objective:

‘To retain and protect the individuality and distinctive characteristics of the three main settlements (villages of Great Chesterford, Little Chesterford and the hamlet of Springwell)’ and indicate policies (available on the website) which currently read:

- Define settlement separation gaps to prevent coalescence between Great Chesterford, Little Chesterford, Springwell and any future settlements.
- Development must not materially affect defined locally important views, e.g. along the Cam valley, into Little Chesterford historic centre from the bridge etc.

Table 4: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects: Effects and areas characteristics from the Great & Little Chesterford NP

- Development must follow existing development patterns – linear in Little Chesterford and nucleated in Great Chesterford. Backfill will not be supported in Little Chesterford. Development in Springwell will not be supported as this is not a sustainable location.
- Protect and enhance the site and setting of important historic sites and wildlife habitats

No likely significant environmental effects subject to robust and evidence led site assessment process which has been undertaken.

Landscape:

Landscape quality and sensitivity is a key consideration in the Great & Little Chesterford NP. It is expected to be fully taken into account in the site assessment process. The site allocations will be on small or medium sites and overall number of dwellings is expected to be less than 100. Protecting landscape quality is a key thrust of the NP as seen in the draft objective:

‘To retain and protect the individuality and distinctive characteristics of the three main settlements (villages of Great Chesterford, Little Chesterford and the hamlet of Springwell)’ and indicate policy (available on the website) which currently read:

- Define settlement separation gaps to prevent coalescence between Great Chesterford, Little Chesterford, Springwell and any future settlements.
- Development must not materially affect defined locally important views, e.g. along the Cam valley, into Little Chesterford historic centre from the bridge etc.
- Development must follow existing development patterns – linear in Little Chesterford and nucleated in Great Chesterford. Backfill will not be supported in Little Chesterford. Development in Springwell will not be supported as this is not a sustainable location.
- Protect and enhance the site and setting of important historic sites and wildlife habitats

No likely significant environmental effects subject to robust and evidence led site assessment process which has been undertaken.

the cumulative nature of the effects

The development management policies in the draft NP are focused on enhancing wellbeing and the environment. These are anticipated to have a number of minor positive impacts. There may be some negative impacts resulting from some of the site allocations, but these are not expected to be

Table 4: Criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects: Effects and areas characteristics from the Great & Little Chesterford NP	
	significant when looked at collectively (the cumulative impacts of all the site allocations). This is due to the modest level of growth being proposed against a backdrop of intense development pressure and due to the robust site assessment process undertaken.
the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	
	No likely significant environmental effects
the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	
	The development being proposed through the neighbourhood plan is modest. Currently anticipated to be less than 100 dwellings during the plan period 2019 to 2033.
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 plan area is sensitive in terms of historic and landscape value. However, protecting this value is a key thrust of the plan.
the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	
	The landscape is recognised locally as of high quality and sensitive in some areas to development (as referenced in the Landscape Character Assessment 2017 undertaken specifically for this plan). The effects are not likely to be significant due to the modest level of growth expected and the undertaking of a robust site assessment process.

4. SEA Conclusions

- 4.1 The Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development.
- 4.2 The NP includes site allocations which themselves will direct development to specific locations. It is likely the NP will be adopted ahead of the Local Plan. The NP will therefore have an important influence on the location of new development in the plan area.
- 4.3 The plan area is sensitive in terms of heritage assets and landscape sensitivities. These are well documented and evidenced based through the:
- The Great and Little Chesterford Landscape Character Assessment undertaken by Hankinson Duckett Associates in 2017
 - The Great Chesterford and Little Chesterford NP Historic Environment Assessment undertaken by Place Services in 2016
 - The Great Chesterford Conservation Area Character Appraisal undertaken by Uttlesford District Council in 2007
- 4.4 The draft NP includes a community shared vision, seven objectives and several development management type policies which are focused on enhancing well-being in the plan area protecting and enhancing village and rural characteristics and delivering infrastructure improvements. To reflect the environmental sensitivities in the plan area a key thrust of the plan is focused on protecting historic assets and landscape quality. The NP is likely to include a number of site allocations adjacent to the existing built-up boundary in Great Chesterford. The NP group have announced that they are seeking to deliver no more than 10% growth in dwellings in the plan period 2011 to 2033. This assessment has assumed the plan will include site allocations for no more than 100 dwellings.
- 4.5 The context within which this NP is being prepared is important. Whilst the Local Plan is out of date and increasingly so as time passes, the spatial strategy which recognises the role of certain settlements such as Great Chesterford, remains a cornerstone of the distribution of development throughout the districts. In other words, small and medium development proposals on sustainable sites within or adjacent to the Great Chesterford development limits are likely to be permitted when considered against the policies in the NPPF. To reiterate this point, a site currently being considered as a potential site allocation in the Great & Little Chesterford NP 'Land to south west of London Road' is subject of an application for outline planning permission for 76 homes. This was approved by the Planning Committee at Uttlesford District Council on 19 February 2020 and is now subject to S106 agreement.
- 4.6 Should further development proposals be consented in the NP area ahead of the NP being made, it is likely the amount of growth being allocated through the NP will be considerably less than 100 units (as those sites would be treated as housing commitments rather than site allocations). However, depending on what is consented during the interim period it is also possible that the overall net level of growth being delivered in the plan area 2019 to 2033 will exceed 100 units (through the NP site allocations and the schemes consented in the interim). This is not a desired outcome or intention of the NP project and the overall additional effect of the additional NP site allocations will be modest.

- 4.7 The additional impact the Great & Little Chesterford NP is likely to make in terms of quantity of development in the plan against this current context is therefore very modest. The Great & Little Chesterford NP will once adopted succeed to reinstate a plan-led process to the plan area.
- 4.8 Subject to the undertaking of a robust and evidence led site assessment process, this assessment therefore identifies no likely significant effects resulting from this NP. Given the site assessment process is informed by up-to-date evidence on cultural and landscape assets and given that the site assessment process is being undertaken in a transparent way with open engagement with stakeholders, there is no reason to believe the site assessment process will not be robust and evidence led.

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 Great and Little Chesterford NP

- 6.1 This section of the report considers whether there are any European sites which could potentially be affected by the Great and Little Chesterford NP.

Natura 2000 Sites

- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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).
- 6.4 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.

European Sites to be considered

- 6.5 As shown on Figure 2 below, there are no European sites which lie within or close to the Great & Little Chesterford NP area. The closest European sites are the Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC which is about 16.5 km away to the north west and Devil's Dyke SAC which is about 17 km to the north east.

Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

- 6.6 The Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC is a 66.48 hectares of broad-leaved deciduous woodland. The woodland has been designated a SAC because a colony of barbastelle bats (scientific name is *Barbastella barbastellus*) is associated with the woodland. *Barbastella* are listed as a protected European species in Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC.
- 6.7 The formal description of the site (referred to as citation) when the site was designated at SAC in 2005 is copied below:

Site Description: *The site comprises a mixture of ancient coppice woodland (Eversden Wood) and high forest woods likely to be of more recent origin (Wimpole Woods). A colony of barbastelle bats *Barbastella barbastellus* is associated with the trees in Wimpole Woods. These trees are used as a summer maternity roost where the female bats gather to give birth and rear their young. Most of the roost sites are within tree crevices. The bats also use the site as a foraging area. Some of the woodland is also used as a flight path when bats forage outside the site.*

Qualifying species: *The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex I*

- *Barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus**

Source: English Nature, EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Everson and Wimpole Woods 2005

6.8 The Conservation Objectives for the European site is:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- *The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species*
- *The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species*
- *The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely*
- *The populations of qualifying species, and,*
- *The distribution of qualifying species within the site.*

Source: Natural England European Site Conservation Objectives for Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation Site code: UK0030331

6.9 In 2018, Natural England issued supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features at Eversden and Wimpole Woods (see: European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site code: UK0030331) This includes a set of nine targets specifically written for this site. Two of these targets refer to the need for management measures outside the actual site. These are:

- *Maintain the management measures (either within and/or outside the site boundary as appropriate) which are necessary to maintain the structure, functions and supporting processes associated with Barbastelle and/or its supporting habitats.*
- *Maintain core areas of feeding habitat outside of the SAC boundary that are critical to Barbastelle bats during their breeding period*

6.10 There is however no indication given in the supplementary advice that this has implications for sites as far away as 17.5km. Furthermore, the advice indicates that some of the bats have been recorded to travel as far as 11km to forage at night and states elsewhere that barbastelle bats may forage up to 5-7kms from their maternity roosts.

6.11 To conclude, the Chesterford NP area is considered to be outside the zone of influence for the Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC and there is no need to consider this further as far as the HRA process is concerned.

Devil's Dyke SAC

6.12 The Devil's Dyke Special Area of Conservation is an 11km linear earthen barrier in east Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. It has been designated as a SAC due to the habitat of semi-natural habitat of dry grassland which is listed in Annex 1 to the European Directive (92/43/EEC).

6.13 The formal description of the site (referred to as citation) when the site was designated in 2005 as a SAC is copied below:

Site description: *The Devil's Dyke holds an extensive area of species-rich chalk grassland of a type characteristic to chalklands of south, central and eastern England. The Dyke is an ancient linear earthwork comprising a deep ditch and high bank. It was originally colonised by plants from adjacent grassland (much of which is now arable) and remains as one of the few areas still supporting these vegetation communities. The species-rich grassland is dominated by upright brome *Bromopsis erecta* and a range of typical chalk herbs are present including salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* and rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*. Some uncommon plants such as purple milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus*, bastard toadflax *Thesium humifusum* and the pasque flower *Pulsatilla vulgaris* are also present. It is the only known UK semi-natural dry grassland site for lizard orchid *Himantoglossum hircinum*.*

Qualifying habitats: *The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:*

- *Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (FestucoBrometalia) (important orchid sites). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites).*

Source: English Nature EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

6.14 The Conservation Objectives for the European site is:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- *The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats*
- *The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and*
- *The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely*

Source: Natural England 2018, European Site Conservation Objectives for Devil's Dyke Special Area of Conservation Site Code: UK0030037

6.17 In 2019, Natural England published supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features (see Natural England 2019: European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Devil's Dyke Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site Code: UK0030037). This specifies a further 13 site specific targets, three of which refer to the need to address areas outside the extent of the SAC as follows.

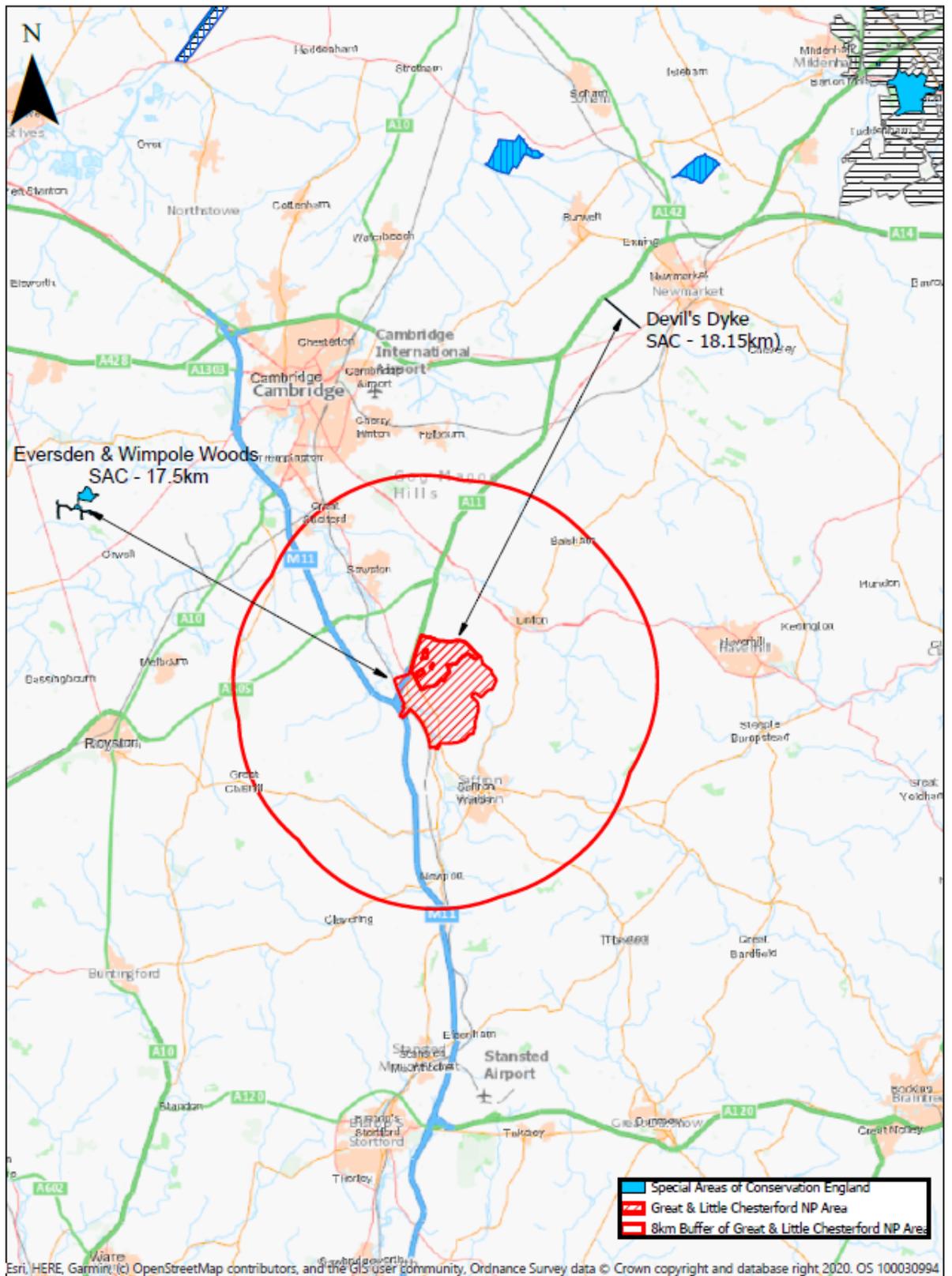
- *Maintain the extent, quality and spatial configuration of land or habitat surrounding or adjacent to the site which is known to support the feature*
- *Maintain the overall extent, quality and function of any supporting features within the local landscape which provide a critical functional connection with the site*
- *Maintain the management measures (either within and/or outside the site boundary as appropriate) which are necessary to maintain the structure, functions and supporting processes associated with the feature.*

6.18 However, there is no evidence or suggestion provided in the supplementary advice that this would affect land as far as 17 km away.

6.19 To conclude, the Chesterford NP area is considered to be outside the zone of influence for the Devil's Dyke SAC and there is no need to consider this further as far as the HRA process is

concerned.

Figure 2: Great & Little Chesterford NP Showing European Sites and 8km Buffer Zone



7. SEA and HRA Conclusions

7.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 7.1.1 The Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development.
- 7.1.2 The NP includes site allocations which themselves will direct development to specific locations. It is likely the NP will be adopted ahead of the Local Plan. The NP will therefore have an important influence on the location of new development in the plan area.
- 7.1.3 The additional impact the Great & Little Chesterford NP is likely to make in terms of quantity of development in the plan against the current context is however very modest. This is because the Local Plan is currently out of date. This means, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this regard, the 2005 Local Plan spatial strategy which recognises the role of certain settlements such as Great Chesterford, remains a cornerstone of the distribution of development throughout the districts. The implication of this is that small and medium development proposals on sustainable sites within or adjacent to the Great Chesterford development limits are likely to be permitted when considered against the policies in the NPPF. To reiterate this point, a site currently being considered as a potential site allocation in the Great & Little Chesterford NP 'Land to south west of London Road' is subject of an application for outline planning permission for 76 homes. This was approved by the Planning Committee at Uttlesford District Council on 19 February 2020 and is now subject to S106 agreement. Planning decisions in the plan area are The Great & Little Chesterford NP will once adopted succeed to reinstate a plan-led process to the plan area.
- 7.1.4 Subject to the undertaking of a robust and evidence led site assessment process, this assessment therefore identifies no likely significant effects resulting from this NP. Given the site assessment process is informed by up-to-date evidence on cultural and landscape assets and given that the site assessment process is being undertaken in a transparent way with open engagement with stakeholders, there is no reason to believe the site assessment process will not be robust and evidence led.
- 7.1.5 This is a preliminary view reached prior to consulting the statutory consultees: Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency

7.2 HRA Screening

- 7.2.1 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 Great & Little Chesterford NP.
- 7.2.2 Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA screening report indicates that the Great & Little Chesterford 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.
- 7.2.3 This is a preliminary view reached prior to consulting the statutory consultee: Natural England.

Appendix 2: Consultation Responses from Statutory Environmental Bodies

HISTORIC ENGLAND RESPONSE

Dear Demetria,

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore, we welcome this opportunity to review the Screening Report for this plan. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Great and Little Chesterford 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 concludes that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment, and that an SEA is not required. We note that the plan does propose to 'allocate' three sites for development but note also from the Regulation 14 version of the plan that two of these already benefit from planning permission, and therefore would not need to be subjected to further assessment to establish the principle of development. The third site, identified as POLICY GLCNP/9.1 - Land opposite Rectory Barns (Chest 12), is not near any listed buildings, scheduled monuments, nor is within a conservation area. We therefore consider it will not result in Significant Effects.

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 report's conclusions that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment **is not required**.

The views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

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

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

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

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

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Historic Places Adviser - East of England

Historic England

NATURAL ENGLAND RESPONSE

Date: 16 April 2021
Our ref: 348668
Your ref: The Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan




Uttlesford District Council
dmacdonald@uttlesford.gov.uk

Hornbeam House
Crew e Business Park
Electra Way
Crew e
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms Macdonald,

Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan Screening Opinion for SEA and HRA

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 31 March 2021 which was received by Natural England on 31 March 2021

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

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

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

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

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

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.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Consultations Team

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



[REDACTED]
Uttlesford District Council
Council Offices
London Road
Saffron Walden
Essex

Our ref: AE/2021/126076/01-L01
Your ref: SEA Screening
Date: 12 May 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

THE GREAT AND LITTLE CHESTERFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SEA SCREENING GREAT AND LITTLE CHESTERFORD

Thank you for consulting us on The Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan SEA screening report. We have reviewed the submitted report and can confirm that we do not disagree with the conclusion reached within the report.

Allocated sites

The Neighbourhood plan has two allocated sites, however one site already has planning permission and the other is currently seeking planning permission and therefore will have been reviewed independently through the development management process.

We trust the above is useful.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Planning Advisor

Direct e-mail planning.ipswich@environment-agency.gov.uk