



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

# Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan

## Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Determination Statement

March 2020

## Executive Summary

This statement sets out the reasons for the determination that the draft Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. In addition this statement determines that the making of the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

This determination statement is intended to demonstrate that the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with certain European Union obligations as required by the basic conditions, namely:

- Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment; and
- Article 6(3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).

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

## Determination Statement

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

A neighbourhood plan is required to meet a number of basic conditions (which are set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), one of which being it must not breach and must be otherwise compatible with EU and Human Rights obligations. This requires neighbourhood plans to fully consider the requirements of the SEA regulations<sup>1</sup> which transpose the EU's SEA Directive<sup>2</sup> into law and which requires those making plans that could impact on the environment to consider whether they are likely to have a significant effect or not.

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

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

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

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

- **Historic England:**

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

On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set

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<sup>1</sup> Known fully as The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

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. (28 February 2020)

- **Natural England:**  
Natural England (NE) is satisfied with the conclusions of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report (February 2020) that the Plan is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects including impacts to European sites and can be screened out for the need for SEA and further HRA. NE note that the Plan does not allocate sites for development. NE support the inclusion of policies to promote sustainable development including sustainable travel and access and protection and enhancement of green infrastructure and biodiversity including the Cam Washes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). (24 February 2020)
- **Environment Agency:**  
Due to resource pressures we are no longer able to provide you with comprehensive bespoke advice on Neighbourhood Plans. (19 February 2020)

The SEA screening assessment considered that the Neighbourhood Plan would not have a significant effect on the environment in so far as the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development consent. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

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

The assessment concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan was not likely to have significant environmental effects and consequently that a strategic environmental assessment was not required.

The HRA screening indicated that the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have likely significant effects on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Based on the screening opinion and having considered the consultation responses from the statutory environmental bodies, Waterbeach Parish Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council determine that the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a strategic environmental assessment. The Councils also determine that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to result in significant effects on any European site.



# Waterbeach Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 to 2031

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report – February 2020**







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# Introduction

## 1.1 The Purpose of this Report

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This screening report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 to 2031 requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/ EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations. A SEA is required if the Neighbourhood Development Plan is deemed to have a likely significant effect on the environment.

This report will also screen to determine whether the Neighbourhood Development Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). An HRA screening report is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected Habitats (European) Sites as a result of the implementation of a plan/project.

## 1.2 The Waterbeach Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 to 2031

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

The Neighbourhood Development Plan states that the primary purpose of a Neighbourhood Development Plan is related to the use and development of land within the Parish and its role in determining planning applications within the Plan Area. The Plan's Vision is as follows:

“Our Neighbourhood Area will continue to be a great place to live and work by ensuring that the identity and character of the existing communities within the Parish are respected and protected. The plan will ensure that any new development in the Neighbourhood Area will provide sustainable infrastructure. It will ensure the improvement of the overall quality of life of every resident. New development should not be overbearing or overwhelming and should complement the rural vistas and existing Fen Edge landscape.”

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



Theme	Objective
A Sustainable Community	1. Create a mixed, balanced and diverse community where people can realise sustainable work-life patterns
Transport	2. A safe, attractive and accessible cycle and footpath network providing good connections within the village, from home to workplace and key services
Transport	3. There should be good provision for mobility impaired people
Transport	4. There should be effective management of traffic impacts so that pedestrian safety is maintained, the quality of the residential environment is protected, and rat running and congestion in the village are minimised
Public Rights of Way	5. The public rights of way network (including bridleways) in the plan area will be protected and enhanced
Village Heart	6. Amenities along village High Street to thrive and continue to provide essential services to the local community
Jobs	7. Develop a balanced economy with a variety of jobs at a scale appropriate to the size of Waterbeach
Design, Conservation, Heritage and Green Infrastructure	8. Retain the distinctive rural character of existing settlements
Green Infrastructure	9a. Increase access to informal and formal green space
Green Infrastructure	9b. Maintain and increase biodiversity
Housing	10. Enable local residents and workers to access appropriate local housing provision

## 1.3 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

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

### 1.3.1 Content regarding the Neighbourhood Development Plan area within the Local Plan

#### 1.3.1.1 The Settlement Hierarchy and Principle of Development

The Local Plan identifies Waterbeach as a 'Minor Rural Centre' within Policy S/9. Minor



Rural Centres are generally less sustainable locations for new development than 'Rural Centres' however are identified as more sustainable than 'Group Villages' and 'Infill Villages' in the strategy for the rural area as they often perform a role in terms of providing services and facilities for a small rural hinterland. The Local Plan states that,

'Within Minor Rural Centres there is scope in principle for larger scale windfall development within the village framework. This would allow larger villages with a reasonable level of services to provide services and facilities for surrounding smaller villages to achieve more development. However, the overall scale of development should be restricted in recognition of their more limited services compared to Rural Centres. A maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings is used as a guideline figure to indicate the upper limit of housing development likely to be suitable. Development will not be permitted on sites capable of accommodating scheme sizes significantly larger than 30 dwellings in Minor Rural Centres.'

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

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

### 1.3.1.2 Waterbeach New Town

The Local Plan allocates land for development purposes within the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Development Plan area. The allocation of Waterbeach New Town is identified as 'strategic' to the delivery of homes and jobs within the context of the Local Plan and South Cambridgeshire District.

The former Waterbeach Barracks and land to the east and north is allocated for the creation of a sustainable new town. It provides the opportunity to reuse an extensive area of previously developed land to meet the housing and employment needs of the Cambridge area. Development will take place over the Local Plan period (to 2031) and beyond.

Policy SS/6: Waterbeach New Town sets out that the new town will be of approximately 8,000 to 9,000 dwellings with associated uses appropriate to the new settlements including employment provision of a quantum, type and mix to meet the needs of the settlements. The Policy adds that a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be prepared for the new town, and the SPD was prepared and adopted in February 2019. Appendix 3 of this Report reiterates this Policy in its entirety.

The reasoned justification for Policy SS/6 sets out a number of benefits of the new town that can be expected for existing residents of Waterbeach village. The Local Plan states that,



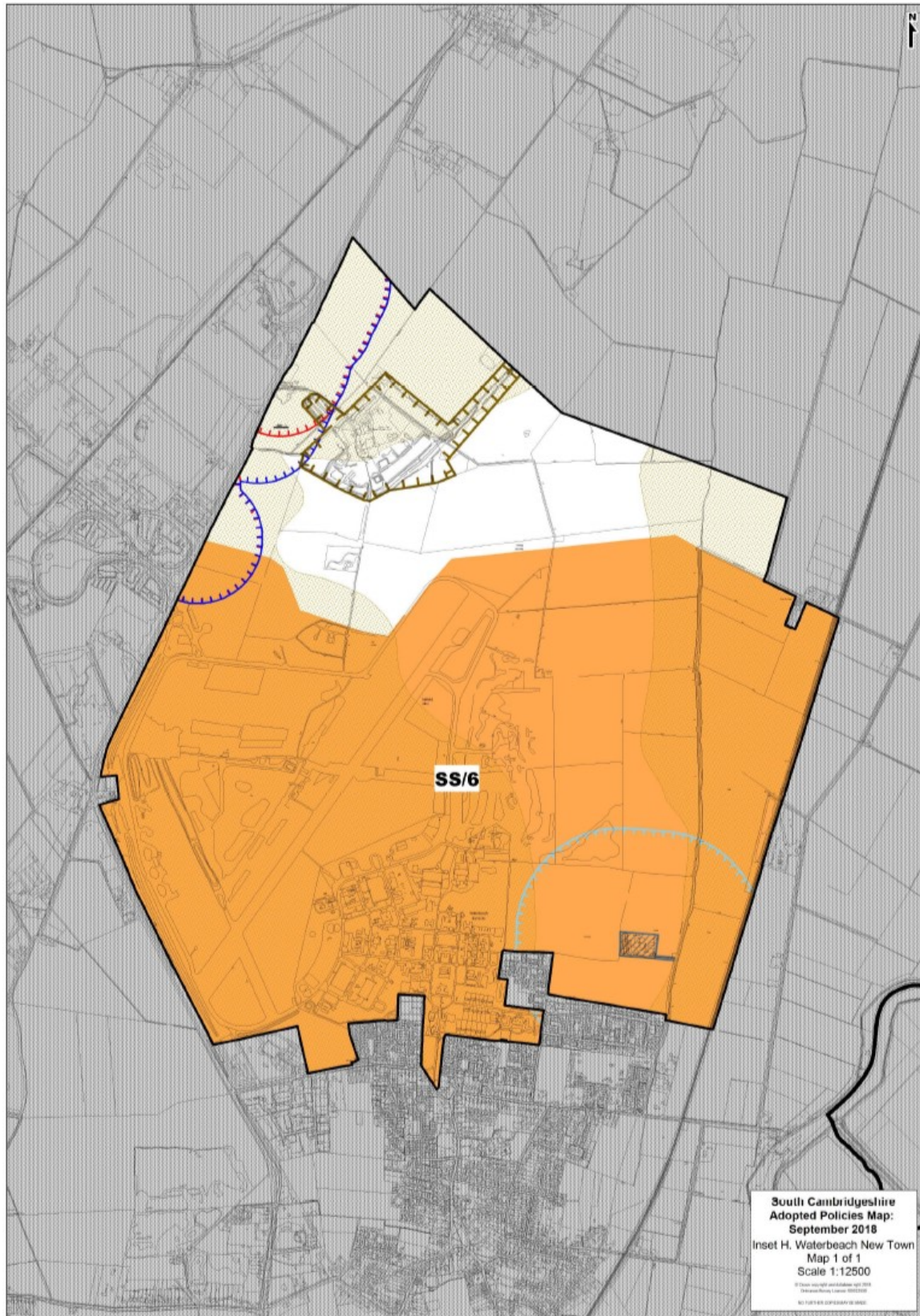
'Delivery of large areas of green infrastructure will also enable the enhancement of biodiversity within the town, whilst providing a network of open spaces for new and existing communities. Maintaining the identity of Waterbeach village as a village close to the new town is also necessary. The nature of the transition between Waterbeach village and the new town will be addressed through the SPD.

'A fundamental requirement for this site is that it will be highly accessible and permeable to all its residents on foot, by cycle and public transport, to support sustainable transport, recreation and health. The site offers particular opportunities to deliver public transport improvements, including the relocation of Waterbeach railway station to a location where it will also be convenient for people living in Waterbeach village making rail travel highly attractive.'

The following map, taken from the Local Plan, shows the location and boundary of the proposed Waterbeach New Town. For a key to the map, visit the [Local Plan Policies Map on the South Cambridgeshire District Council website.](#)



**Figure 1: Map of the Proposed Waterbeach New Town**



Source: South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2018



### 1.3.1.3 Local Green Space Sites

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduces a new designation of Local Green Space, to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to a local community. The NPPF outlines that such designations should only be identified where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance (for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife); and where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. The Local Plan identifies 'Village Green, Waterbeach' as a Local Green Space site (reference NH/12-079), and also 'The Gault, Waterbeach' (reference NH/12-080) with protection under Policy NH/12: Local Green Space. This Policy states,

'Local Green Space identified on the Policies Map will be protected from development that would adversely impact on the character and particular local significance placed on such green areas which make them valued by their local community. Inappropriate development, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, would not be approved except in very special circumstances and in discussion with the local community.'

### 1.3.1.4 Established Employment Areas

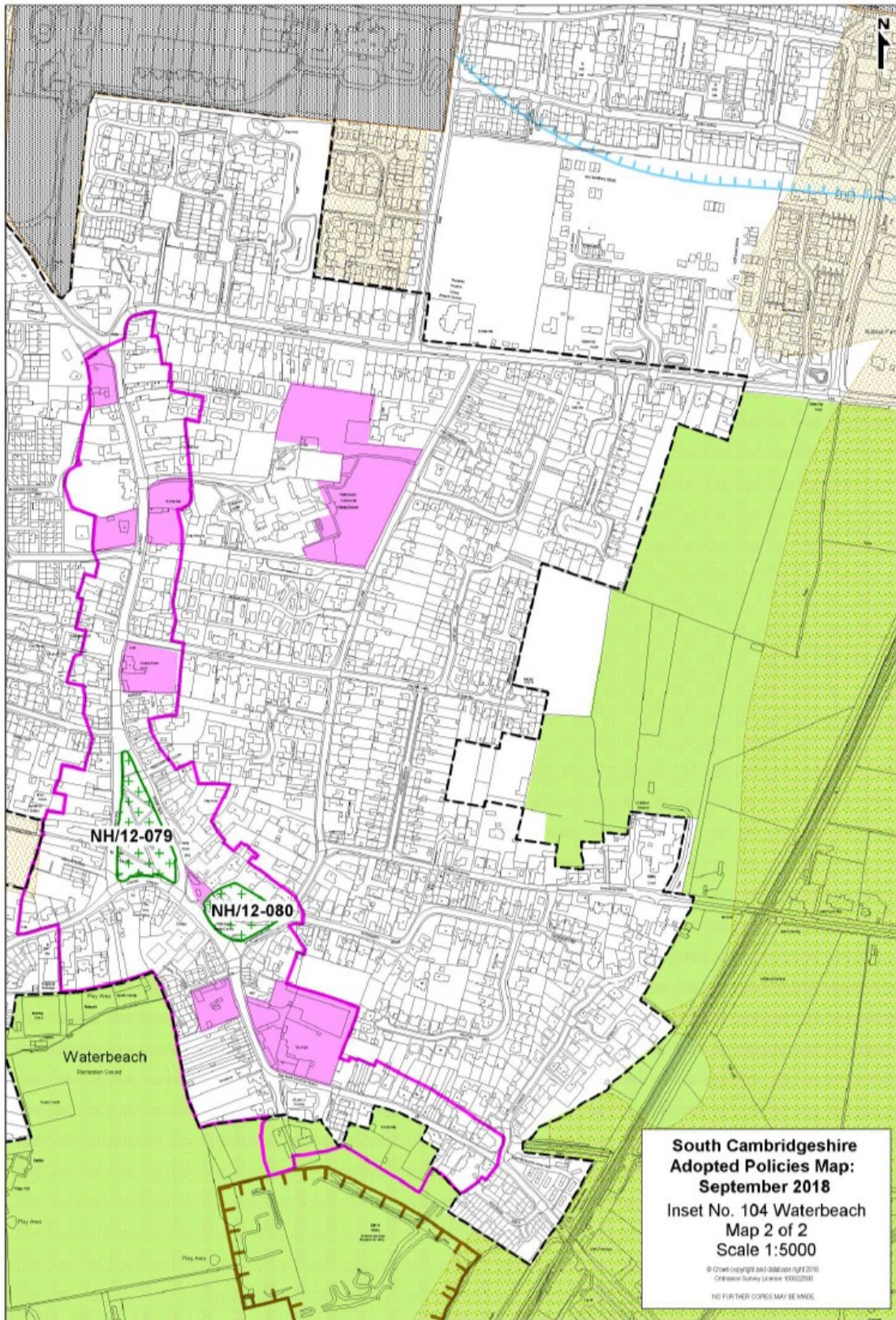
The Local Plan also identifies an 'established employment area' within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area, at Convent Drive / Pembroke Avenue. This site is detached from the Development Framework for Waterbeach to the north west.

The redevelopment of existing buildings and appropriate development for employment use will be permitted at the 'Convent Drive / Pembroke Avenue site' in accordance with Policy E/15: Establish Employment Areas within the Local Plan. This Policy provides a context for considering planning applications on these sites, to support their role and function as employment sites. Within these areas, appropriate development and redevelopment will be permitted, subject to consideration of land supply across the district, and other policy concerns. This will enable more efficient use of the sites, and allow them to be adapted for the needs of existing and future users.

The following maps, taken from the Local Plan, show firstly the location of Local Green Space sites and lastly the Convent Drive / Pembroke Avenue established employment area. For a key to the maps, visit the [Local Plan Policies Map on the South Cambridgeshire District Council website.](#)



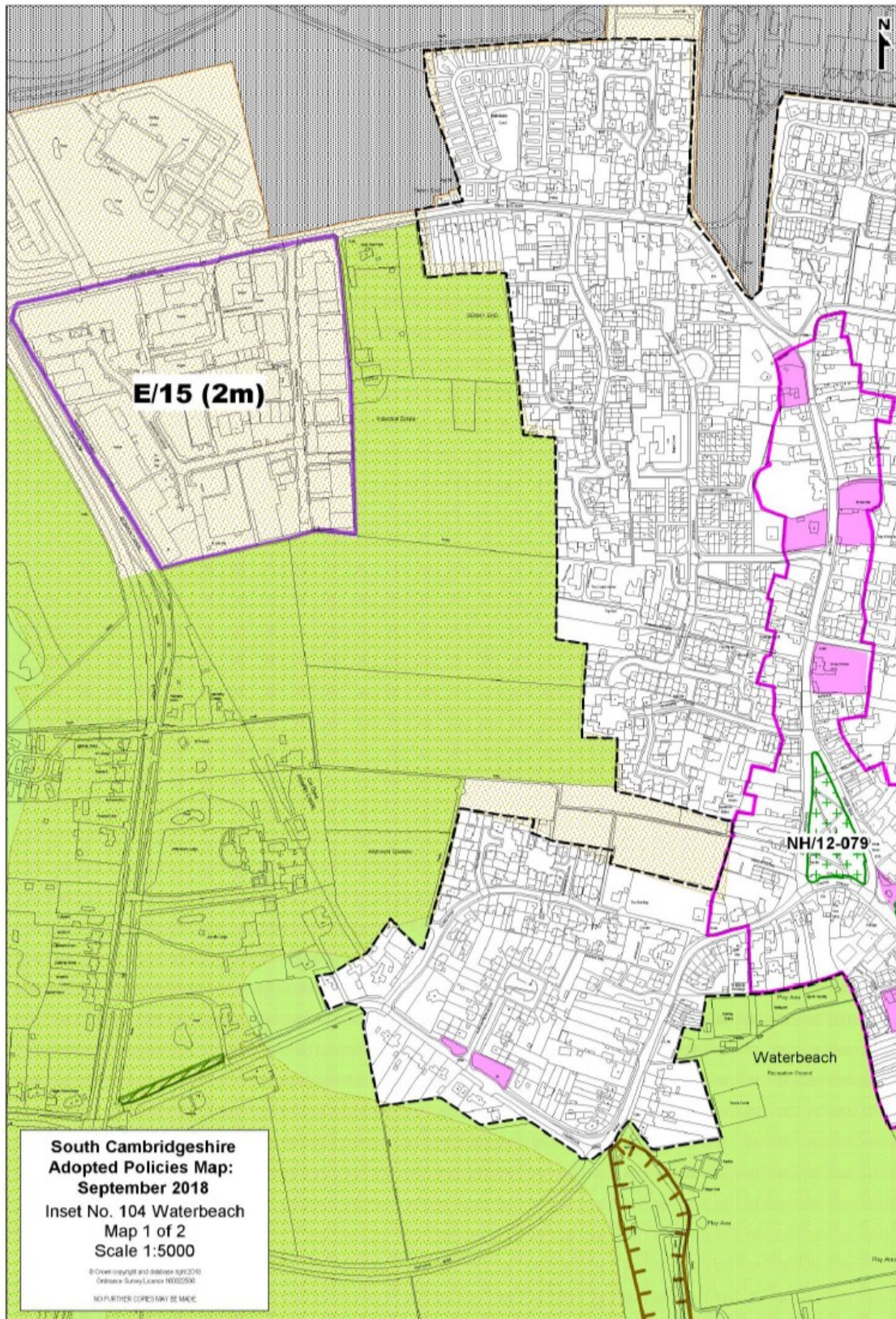
**Figure 2: Map of Local Green Space sites in Waterbeach**



Source: South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2018



**Figure 3: Map of the Established Employment Area in Waterbeach**



Source: South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2018





# Legislative Background

## 2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

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Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment states that,

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

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

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

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

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

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

- P&P prepared for certain sectors and which set the framework for future development consent in respect of projects under the



Environmental Impact Assessment-EIA-Directive.

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

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

## 2.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

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

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

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to accompany the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Development Plan which is being produced by Waterbeach Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

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

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



# SEA Screening

## 3.1 When is SEA Required?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

**Question 1: Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Question 7: Is the Plans sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial or budget Plan, or is it co -financed by structural funds or**



### **European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) programmes 2000 to 2006/7?**

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

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

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

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



## 3.2 Criteria for Assessing the Effects of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

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

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

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to

- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the transboundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
  - \* special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
  - \* exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
  - \* intensive land-use,
  - \* the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.



### 3.3 Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Development Plan

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

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

**Table 2: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on the Environment**

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
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	The Plan sets out relevant policies which will be used to determine proposals for development within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area once adopted. The Plan does not include any allocations for development; instead housing needs will be met through the 'strategic' development of a new town as identified for allocation within Policy SS/6 of the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. Policy WH22 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, entitled 'Allocation of Affordable Housing at Waterbeach New Town' seeks



<p><b>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)</b></p>	<p><b>Likelihood and summary of significant effects</b></p>
<p>conditions or by allocating resources.</p>	<p>to ensure that people with a strong local connection to Waterbeach parish whose needs are not met by the open market will be allocated a proportion of affordable homes being delivered at Waterbeach New Town. Paragraph 6.20.1 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan states that ‘it is accepted that such a policy approach... presents a conflict with district priorities to allocate S106 affordable housing on a needs basis district wide. However, securing an element of the affordable housing units to be for those with a connection to Waterbeach parish is considered essential to facilitating a cohesive community in the parish and to achieving key principles set out in (Local Plan) Policy SS/6.’</p> <p>The extent to which there is conflict between Policy WH22 and District level policies within the Local Plan and the Waterbeach New Town Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) regarding affordable housing at the new town, once delivered, will be considered between the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority in finalising the Neighbourhood Development Plan, or otherwise through the independent examination of the Plan.</p> <p>In order to reach a determination within this report as to the degree to which the Neighbourhood Development Plan sets a framework for projects, it is considered that the allocation and operating conditions of the Waterbeach New Town within Policy SS/6 of the adopted Local Plan can be considered ‘strategic’ in nature in line with its inclusion as an allocation within the Local Plan and the scale of the allocation. A Neighbourhood Development Plan must demonstrate conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and once brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies only in the Local Plan for that Neighbourhood Development Plan area. That considered, the degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects through allocating resources is considered relatively low.</p>
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Development Plan provides policies for the Plan area, relevant to a local level only. The Neighbourhood Development Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and its policies are in general conformity to that of the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, with the exception of the affordable housing parameters set out in Policy WH22 - Allocation of Affordable Housing at Waterbeach New Town. The</p>





<p><b>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)</b></p>	<p><b>Likelihood and summary of significant effects</b></p>
<p>including those in a hierarchy.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Plan, when/if ‘made’, will have weight in all planning decisions within the Plan area, however it should be acknowledged that issues identified as ‘strategic’ within the Local Plan will have priority over any of the Neighbourhood Development plan policies. The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes is therefore relatively low in the context of the Plan area.</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>Neighbourhood Development Plans are required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Neighbourhood Development Plan policies seek to ensure environmental considerations are taken into account. The Plan includes policies related (directly / indirectly) to ensuring environmental considerations will be integrated into any forthcoming development within the Plan area. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WDCH14 – Development and Landscape Quality</li> <li>● WDCH15 – Important edge of settlement sites on the eastern edge of Waterbeach village</li> <li>● WDCH19 – Sites of value to biodiversity in the parish</li> </ul> <p>Irrespective of the adequacy of the above policies, adopted Local Plan policies apply within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area, which have been subject to thorough assessment within the local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. This ensures that environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, will be considered for all development proposals within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area.</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Development Plan reflects a small area and the Plan’s policy content seeks to address environmental issues. The policy content of the adopted Local Plan will additionally apply to any proposals within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area as well as the Waterbeach New Town SPD in regard to the boundary of that site. Local Plan policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) within the context of the Local Plan and the Waterbeach New Town SPD has been ‘screened out’ for the need of an additional, separate SA. The Plan and this Screening Report identify the following potential (direct / indirect) environmental</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>problems or sources of potential problems relevant to the Neighbourhood Development Plan area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Plan area contains part of the Cam Washes SSSI to the east. Additionally, the Upware South Pit and Upware Bridge Pit North SSSIs lies close to the Plan area boundary to the north east as well as the Upware North Pit SSSI.</li> <li>• The Plan area is also approximately 1km west of the edge of the Wicken Fen Ramsar site and Fenland Special Area of Conservation (SAC); both designations for wildlife conservation of international importance. Wicken Fen is also a National Nature Reserve (NNR).</li> <li>• The Plan area is within various SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs). Development proposals within IRZs are required to be consulted on with Natural England, should they be of a type or size that could warrant negative effects on the relevant SSSI.</li> <li>• A number of Priority Habitats (from the Priority Habitat Inventory<sup>3</sup>) are scattered throughout the Plan area, with some adjacent to the existing development framework boundary. These include deciduous woodland, traditional orchard, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, conifer woodland and young tree woodland.</li> <li>• The Plan area contains four Scheduled Monuments:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Romano-British Settlement at Chittering;</li> <li>- Denny Abbey;</li> <li>- Waterbeach Abbey (site of); and</li> <li>- Car Dyke.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There are approximately 26 Listed Buildings within the Plan area; the majority of these are associated with the Waterbeach Conservation Area at the southern end of the village.</li> <li>• Of these Listed Buildings, there exists the Grade I listed Denny Abbey Refectory, associated with the Scheduled</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> a spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>Monument and located within the 'SPD area' identified for the Waterbeach New Town. This Listed Building, and the Scheduled Monument, are located to the north of and are separated from the area identified for built development within the Waterbeach New Town allocation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large areas of the Neighbourhood Development Plan area are located within Flood Risk Zones 3 and 2 exist within the Plan area associated with the River Can to the east of the development framework boundary. It should be noted however that significant areas of land within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area benefit from flood defences along this stretch of the River.</li> <li>• The non-developed areas of the Plan area consist of various graded soils. Grade 1 Agricultural Land ('excellent') and Grade 2 ('very good') form the majority of the Plan area, aside from that area comprising the Waterbeach New Town allocation, which is brownfield land. Grade 1 soil represents the best and most versatile soil within the wider District context and also the country.</li> <li>• Grade 3 Agricultural Land ('good to moderate') represents the worst agricultural land in the Plan area, and small pockets of this exist to the immediate north of the Waterbeach New Town allocation and to the north east of the existing village development framework extending northwards.</li> <li>• Open land to the south, east and west of the village of Waterbeach are located within the Cambridge Green Belt.</li> <li>• The land to the east and north of the site is heavily influenced by the landscape of the River Cam which flows around 400m to the east. It is a landscape described as 'Planned Peat Fen' (East of England Landscape Framework), consisting of a flat, low lying and sparsely populated landscape characterised by dark peaty soils. A grid like pattern of large arable fields bounded by drainage ditches is identified as a common feature.</li> </ul>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Plan area is located within both the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands National Character Area (NCA) and The Fens NCA.</li> <li>• The Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands NCA is a broad, gently undulating, lowland plateau dissected by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east. Tranquility within the NCA has declined, affected by visual intrusion, noise and light pollution from agriculture, settlement expansion and improvements in road infrastructure.</li> <li>• The Fens NCA is a distinctive, historic and human influenced wetland landscape notable for its large-scale, flat, open landscape with extensive vistas to level horizons. The level, open topography shapes the impression of huge skies which convey a strong sense of place and tranquility.</li> <li>• The western boundary of the Plan area experiences noise quality issues associated with the A10 at between 55-75+ decibels in the day, although no areas of such noise quality are within the existing development framework of the village.</li> <li>• To the east of development framework and running along the eastern boundary of the Plan area, noise quality issues are also experienced due to the presence of the railway line, at 55-70 decibels in the day. Such noise can be experienced within the easternmost parts of the village's development framework.</li> <li>• The Plan area contains areas of land which are identified as Minerals Safeguarding Areas for sand and gravel within the Adopted Cambridgeshire County Council Minerals Core Strategy (2011).</li> </ul>
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and</p>	<p>The content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not in conflict with those relevant planning documents within the wider district and county area related to waste management or water protection.</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</p> <p>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Biodiversity</li> </ul>	<p>The following impacts have been identified within this Screening Assessment:</p> <p>The Plan includes Policy WB19 – Sites of value to biodiversity in the parish, which seeks to protect and enhance existing biodiversity assets in the Plan area.</p> <p>Although the Plan area lies within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of the Wicken Fen Ramsar site and Fenland Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the HRA Screening element of this Report concludes that there would be no likely significant effects resulting from the Plan alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. This is due to the Plan not introducing any new residential or employment development proposals which would result in any direct impacts.</p> <p>The Plan area is also within the IRZs of numerous SSSIs within the Plan area or otherwise in close proximity. The implications of this are that all new non-Plan-led housing developments within the Plan area will require an assessment of recreational pressure on relevant SSSIs and measures to mitigate adverse impacts e.g. alternative open space provision (as espoused by Natural England).</p> <p>Consultation with Natural England is considered a development management issue (in so far as consultation is required at that stage), and relevant policies exist within the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.</p> <p>In consideration of all of the above, effects on biodiversity resulting from the Plan can therefore be ruled out at the time of writing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population</li> </ul>	<p>It is considered that there would be no significant effects on population resulting from the Neighbourhood Development Plan. This is due to the small scale of the Plan area.</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health</li> </ul>	<p>Although issues surrounding noise exist at the Plan area's eastern and western boundaries, due to the presence of the railway and A20 respectively, the Plan seeks to improve connectivity within and around Waterbeach. Additionally, no new development is proposed within the Plan that could be perceived as adding to existing noise issues through increased traffic movements.</p> <p>There are no other significant effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Development Plan regarding human health that would warrant a strategic assessment through SEA. The Plan includes policies for the protection of open spaces and the enhancement of Green Infrastructure that contribute to healthy lifestyles.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fauna</li> </ul>	<p>There are no direct impacts resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan on fauna that are considered significant at the Plan level. The Plan seeks the protection and enhancement of biodiversity at key sites and does not propose any development that could lead to any deterioration of habitats. It is possible that any number of speculative developments could be forthcoming within the Plan area that could have negative impacts on protected species, however these cannot be considered strategically significant to the extent that Strategic Environmental Assessment would be warranted. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case 'project level' basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA's adopted Local Plan.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flora</li> </ul>	<p>Numerous and various areas of Priority Habitat exist within the Plan Area. The Plan includes Policy WB19 – Sites of value to biodiversity in the parish, which seeks to protect and enhance existing biodiversity assets in the Plan area. The Policy indicates that any development proposals which impact upon a list of sites must contribute to, rather than detract from, their biodiversity value. These sites are identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Floodplain grazing marsh south of St John's Church, to the east along Station Road, along the River Cam and at Denny Abbey</li> </ul>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Areas of deciduous woodland in the parish including south west adjacent to the A10 and in the south east behind Saberton Close and at Waterbeach Barracks</li> <li>- Site of Special Scientific Interest in the north east of the parish which is the southern extent of the Cam Washes.</li> <li>- County Wildlife Site along Denny End Road</li> <li>- Cow Hollow Wood</li> </ul> <p>In addition to this Policy's protection and enhancement of flora, South Cambridgeshire Local Plan policies apply. As a result, no effects are expected to result from the Neighbourhood Development Plan regarding flora.</p>
- Soil	<p>The Plan area contains Grade 1 ('excellent') Agricultural Land (ALC) / soil quality which represents the best and most versatile agricultural land within the wider District. The Plan does not propose any development within this or any greenfield land within the Plan area. There are no identified negative implications surrounding soil quality as a result of the Plan.</p>
- Water	<p>The Plan area is not within a groundwater Source Protection Zone. The Neighbourhood Development Plan also does not allocate land for any development purposes that could give rise to ground water pollutants (e.g. give rise to hazardous substances such as pesticides, oils, petrol and diesel, solvents, arsenic, mercury or chromium VI; or non-hazardous substances such as ammonia or nitrates). Pollution control policies at the LPA level apply within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area to ensure that no negative effects on water quality should be experienced within Waterbeach.</p> <p>The HRA element of this Report concludes that although water quality is a major issue of concern for the Wicken Fen Ramsar site, and thereby Fenland SAC, the Plan does not contain any policies or proposals that would give rise to any deterioration of water quality.</p>
- Air	<p>There are no identified air quality issues within the Plan area. Although consultation with Natural England is required for any development that could cause air pollution (regarding</p>





Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>- Climatic factors</p> <p>- Material assets</p>	<p>industrial/agricultural development) in association with the IRZs of SSSIs in the eastern parts of the Plan area, consultation would be required at the planning application stage and is not considered a matter would warrant SEA, as a strategic process, to be undertaken.</p> <p>No policies exist within the Plan that address flood risk issues, although it should be acknowledged that existing adopted Local Plan policies regarding flood risk apply in the Plan area.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan area contains a relatively large area of Flood Risk Zones 3 associated with the River Cam to the east of the development framework. The Plan area is largely protected by flood defences however, and no development has been identified as proposed within the Plan that would lead to any incompatibilities in any such areas. It is therefore considered that SEA would not be required and any speculative development coming forward within Waterbeach in the Plan period can be considered at the planning application stage.</p> <p>The Plan area contains land within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) for sand and gravel within the County Council's adopted Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (Proposals Map C) (2011). The Plan does not include any policies that conflict with the MSA or include any site allocations.</p> <p>Regarding other material assets, the content of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not considered to have any significant effects due to the extent / size of the Plan area. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA's adopted Local Plan.</p>
<p>- Cultural heritage</p>	<p>The Plan area contains multiple Scheduled Monuments and numerous Listed Buildings, as well as the Waterbeach Conservation Area. The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes that could have any negative effect on any of these assets but does include some proposals for improved connectivity that may</p>





Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>- Landscape</p>	<p>have effects on heritage that would need further exploration at the appropriate stage.</p> <p>The Plan has been influenced by a Waterbeach Heritage and Character Assessment, which identifies and defines character areas in the Plan area. This has led to the formulation of three key policies regarding heritage that will apply to all proposals in the plan area over the Plan period. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy WHCD13 – Waterbeach Design Principles</li> <li>- Policy WDCH 14 – Development and Landscape Quality</li> <li>- Policy WDCH 15 – Important edge of settlement sites on the eastern edge of Waterbeach village</li> </ul> <p>Irrespective of the robustness of these policies in ensuring the protection and enhancement of heritage assets, policy also exists at the LPA level which additionally applies in the Plan area. The effects on heritage are, as a result, considered a development management issue in the context of the Plan and its content. There are not considered to be any elements of the Plan that would give rise to significant effects on the historic environment at the strategic level that would require the full application of the SEA Directive.</p> <p>The Plan area is within a sensitive landscape, both in regards to the protection objectives of the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands National Character Area (NCA), The Fens NCA and also the Cambridge Green Belt in the south. Nevertheless, the Plan does not allocate land for development purposes and includes three policies relevant to landscape character and its preservation (policies WHCD13, WHCD14 and WHCD15).</p> <p>In light of the Plan’s policy stance regarding landscape character, and in consideration also of the requirements of development proposals in accordance with the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, there are no significant strategic landscape effects identified within this Report that would warrant the requirement for the application of the SEA Directive and the formulation of a SEA Environmental Report.</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
The cumulative nature of the effects.	In line with the above considerations that explore the possible individual effects of the Plan's content, no significant effects have been highlighted as possible that could lead to any cumulative impact. Furthermore, the Plan's content is not considered to have any environmental conflicts with the established principle of development at Waterbeach New Town.
The trans boundary nature of the effects.	The adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan can be seen to support the protection and improvement of conditions relevant to those sustainability factors listed within the SEA Directive. The Neighbourhood Development Plan is not in conflict with these wider thematic policies. The HRA Screening element of this Report, which explores in-combination effects with other relevant plans and projects, also identifies no in-combination effects regarding Habitats (European) Sites.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	It is considered that there is no risk to human health or the environment as a result of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. This is in consideration of the above screening requirements related to sustainability themes. The Neighbourhood Plan is primarily focused on connectivity and local character and is unlikely to give rise to any accidents that can be considered to have a significant risk to human health or the environment.
The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The Neighbourhood Development Plan relates to the local level only. No allocations are included within the Plan and the magnitude and spatial extent of the Plan's content is unlikely to be significant in a wider District context. Effects are not expected to be realised over a wide geographic area.
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- special natural</li> </ul>	As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood development Plan has not been assessed as having any possible negative effect associated with environmental themes.



<p><b>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)</b></p>	<p><b>Likelihood and summary of significant effects</b></p>
<p>characteristics or cultural heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- exceeded environmental quality standards</li> <li>- intensive land use</li> </ul> <p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Development Plan has not been assessed as having any significant effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>



# HRA Screening

## 4.1 Habitat Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

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

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

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

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

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan which is being produced by Waterbeach Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The area covered by the Plan is shown in Appendix 1.

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

This section of this Report aims to:

- Identify the Habitats sites within 20km of Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan area.

- Summarise the reasons for designation and Conservation Objectives for each site to be considered in this assessment.

- Screen the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan for its potential to impact upon a Habitats site.

- Assess the potential for in combination effects from other projects and plans in the area.

- Identify if there are any outstanding issues that need further investigation.



## 4.2 Recent Court Judgements and their consideration in this Report

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

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

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

### 4.2.2 CJEU Holohan C- 461/17

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

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

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

## 4.3 Habitats (European) Sites

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Habitats Sites is the term used in the NPPF (2019) to describe any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species



Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations. European sites are the centrepiece of EU nature and biodiversity policy. It is an EU wide network of nature protection areas. They form an EU wide network of nature protection areas. The aim of the network is to assure 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. The Habitats Directive similarly requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) are also considered as part of the Natura 2000 network. This is because all SPAs and SACs are comprised of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all Ramsar sites in England are SSSIs. Together, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites are considered as Habitats Sites in England (NPPF, 2019).

#### 4.3.1 Explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites

##### Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within EU countries. Example: Ouse Washes is internationally important for wintering waterfowl. Legislation: EU Birds Directive.

##### Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

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

##### Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)

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

#### 4.3.2 Habitats Sites to be considered

There are eight Habitats sites which lie within 20 km of Waterbeach parish. These are listed in Table 3 and shown on the map in Appendix 2.



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

<b>SPA</b>
Ouse Washes, Breckland
<b>SAC</b>
Ouse Washes, Fenland, Eversden and Wimpole Woods
<b>Ramsar</b>
Ouse Washes, Wicken Fen, Chippenham Fen

The parish of Waterbeach lies outside the evidenced 10km Zone of Influence (ZOI) for Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC and the 5km IRZ for Ouse Washes SPA, SAC and Ramsar as identified on the [MAGIC website](#). It is also outside the 5km buffer for Breckland SPA & SAC. However, the Waterbeach parish boundary is only approximately 1km distance from Wicken Fen so within the 5km IRZ for this SAC & Ramsar site for consultation with Natural England.

Wicken Fen Ramsar site and Fenland SAC (Wicken Fen is a component of this SAC) are therefore the only Habitats sites within scope for this HRA screening report. There are therefore two Habitats Sites within scope of this HRA screening.

## 4.4 Method and Approach

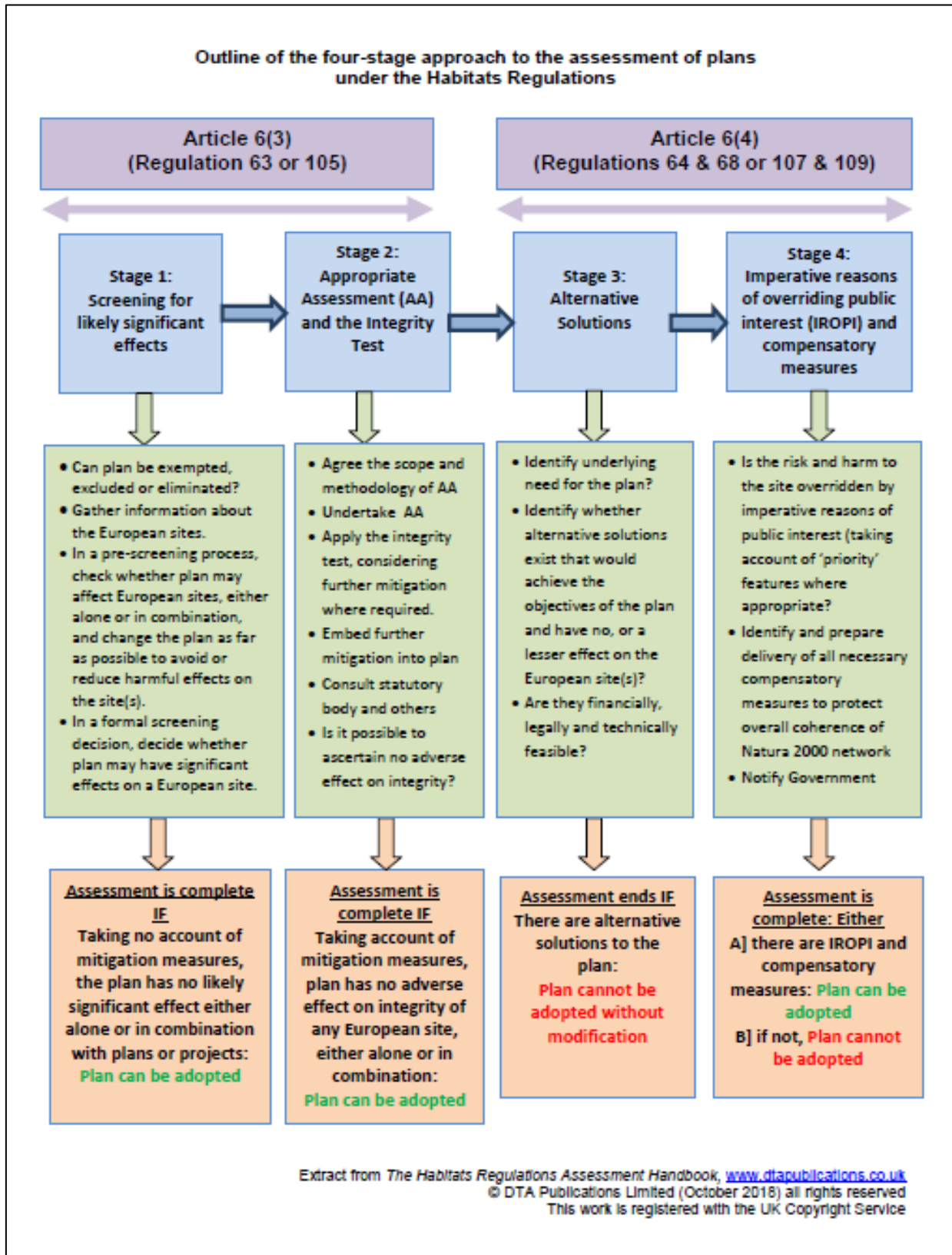
The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate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

This document relates only to Stage 1 of the HRA process as set out in Figure 1 below.





**Figure 4: Outline of the Four Stage Approach to the Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Regulations (taken from the DTA handbook).**







#### 4.4.1 Stage 1: HRA Screening

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

**Table 4: Screening categorisation**

##### **Category A: No negative effect**

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

##### **Category B: No Likely Significant Effect**

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

##### **Category C: Likely Significant Effect**

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

#### 4.4.2 Potential impacts of Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan on Habitats Sites

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

- Land take by developments;
- Impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying interest species within the Habitats site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for an identified species.
- Increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;
- Changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas;
- Changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial developments, quarries and waste management facilities.



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

**Table 5: Assessment of potential impacts**

Nature of potential impact	How the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Development Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site?	Why these effects are not considered significant?
Land take by development	Waterbeach parish is outside the boundaries of the Habitats Sites within scope of this HRA.	N/A
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	Waterbeach parish lies within the 5km Impact Risk Zone for Wicken Fen Ramsar site which is a component of Fenland SAC.	There are no site allocations for development proposed by the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Development Plan so there is no pathway for impacts on water quality or quantity.
Recreational pressure and disturbance	There is public access to Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC.	Waterbeach parish is 17km from Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC so beyond the distance that Natural England consider, in the absence of evidence that visitors are likely to travel to these sites for recreation.  The site is carefully managed by the landowners to avoid impacts from recreational pressure and disturbance
Water quantity and quality	Although water quality is a issue of concern for Wicken Fen Ramsar site (and thereby Fenland SAC) and Waterbeach lies inside the Impact Risk Zone, it is considered that there is no pathway for any water quality impacts.	N/A.
Changes in pollution levels	Although Waterbeach is inside the IRZ of the wetland SSSI and within scope of this HRA, it	N/A



Nature of potential impact	How the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Development Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site?	Why these effects are not considered significant?
	is considered that there is no pathway for pollution impacts.	

## 4.5 Results from HRA Screening of Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies

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

**Table 4: Assessment of potential impacts**

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
Policy WT1 – Improving Connectivity between Waterbeach village and key destinations	<p>1. Development coming forward as part of the Waterbeach New Town will be required to make provision for:</p> <p>a) a direct, safe and high-quality segregated pedestrian and cycle route providing access for residents in Waterbeach village to shops and services provided at Waterbeach New Town and the planned relocated train station;</p> <p>b) a footpath from the built-up area of the proposed Waterbeach New Town to Denny End Abbey along the causeway;</p> <p>c) a direct, safe and high-quality pedestrian and cycle link from Waterbeach Village to Cambridge Research Park</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>2. All proposals in the plan area, will be required, where applicable and proportionate to the proposed scheme, to contribute, (through Section 106 agreements, section 278 agreements and or direct investment) to other required improvements in the cycle and pedestrian infrastructure to provide better connections from Waterbeach village to places of employment and other destinations including:</p> <p>a) Improved cycle infrastructure provision along Station Road to facilitate a safer cycle route out of the village towards the River Cam</p>		
Policy WT2 – Pedestrian and Cycle route from Waterbeach Village train station to relocated Train Station	<p>1. The route shown on Map 6.2 is safeguarded for the provision of a cycle route and separate pedestrian route (suitable for use by mobility scooters and pushchairs) linking Station Road with the relocated train station. Proposals which prejudice the delivery of this route will be resisted.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy WT3 – A walkable village and walkable neighbourhoods	<p>1. All new development proposals should contribute towards creating a more walkable neighbourhood through provision of safe, convenient and high-quality internal footpaths, provision of direct connections into neighbouring areas and utilising opportunities to improve connectivity across the wider neighbourhood by creating new links.</p> <p>2. Development proposals which result in decreased pedestrian connectivity between residential</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>areas and shops and services (including the school) or which fail to utilise opportunities to provide new connections will not be supported.</p>		
<p>Policy WT4 - Creating and maintaining sustainable access routes to Waterbeach Village primary school</p>	<p>1. The area around Way Lane, Bannold Road and High Street – as indicated on Map 6.3 - is designated as a priority walking to school route. Development proposals which implement pedestrian priority measures or cyclist priority measures and result in improved sustainable access to school will be supported</p> <p>2. Proposals in the plan area which lead to increases in vehicular movements along these routes without pedestrian and cyclist prioritisation measures will be resisted.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy WT5 - Creating and maintaining sustainable access routes to Waterbeach New Town schools</p>	<p>1. Proposals which help to create and maintain pedestrian and cycle priority routes to and from schools and discourage drop-off and pick-up by car outside schools proposed in Waterbeach New Town, will be supported.</p> <p>2. To assist this school entrances should not be located beside through roads. Additionally, the spatial framework of the new town should be arranged such that children can avoid having to cross primary and secondary roads to attend school. Designs should minimise conflict between children on their way to school and vehicles as much as possible.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
<p>Policy WT6 – Improving road safety in Waterbeach village</p>	<p>1. All development proposals in the plan area will be assessed for their impact on road safety. Where proposals are likely to impact adversely on road safety including the existing safety hotspots listed below (indicated in Map 6.4), they will be expected to mitigate their impact by providing or contributing towards road safety measures.</p> <p>Location - Denny End Road/High Street/ Bannold Road junction / Safety Issue - An exceptionally wide junction preventing safe crossing. One strategy would be to cross the High Street/Denny End Road at this location but blind corners along High Street / Bannold Road prohibits this. Cyclists turning right from High Street into Bannold Road at risk also due to blind bends</p> <p>Location – Greenside outside the One Stop store / Safety issue - This is a focus for village centre based pedestrian activity for all residents (including secondary school children walking across the Green to access the bus stop/shop). Vehicles travelling at inappropriate speeds, together with parked cars make this a hazardous area for all users particularly during the rush hour.</p> <p>Location - Area outside Village Stores (post office) / Safety Issue - An extremely narrow pavement not wide enough for prams or mobility scooters next to fast moving traffic travelling along Chapel Street.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>





Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>Location - Station Road / Safety Issue - Narrow pavements along Station Road, together with busy pedestrian traffic (walking to train station) during rush hour sometimes lead to pedestrians stepping out into moving traffic.</p> <p>Location - High Street outside the Primary School / Safety Issue - A busy area outside the school at school drop off and pick up times. The morning drop off coincides with high volumes of through traffic using the village as a cut through off the A10 travelling south to access Cambridge or the A14.</p> <p>Location - Chapel Street / Greenside junction (east) / Safety Issue - Junction is very wide presenting difficulties for crossing pedestrians, bicycles and other users navigating traffic.</p> <p>Location - Chapel Street / Greenside junction (west) / Safety Issue - Junction (close to village centre bus stop) is very wide presenting difficulties for pedestrians, cyclists and other users to cross navigating traffic.</p> <p>Location - St Andrew's Hill, Way Lane, Station Road and Rosemary Road junction / Safety Issue - A very wide junction at Station Road/St Andrew's Hill presenting difficulties for pedestrians to cross safely. Cyclists exiting St Andrew's Hill onto Station Road are also presented with difficulties. Parked cars (documented on site as commuter parking) along St</p>		



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>Andrew's Hill presents further safety issues at this junction.</p> <p>Location - Way Lane / Safety Issue            - The path is narrow or discontinuous in places and difficult to cross with a pram. Heavy pedestrian use at school drop off and pick up times.</p> <p>2. Proposals which will have an unacceptable impact on road safety will be refused.</p> <p>3. Proposals which lead to an overall improvement in road safety in the village will be welcomed.</p>		
Policy WT7 – An accessible village and town	<p>1. Development coming forward as part of the Waterbeach New Town will be required to make provision for disabled users travelling to and from work as part of any proposal to relocate the train station. Provision should include:</p> <p>a) designated blue badge parking spaces (available to disabled users who have been granted a blue badge) at the relocated train station and outside principal shops and services</p> <p>b) securing a bus shuttle service suitable for access via mobility scooter and served by stops at accessible locations</p> <p>2. All proposals in the plan area, will be required, where applicable and proportionate to the proposed scheme, to contribute, (through Section 106 agreements, section 278 agreements and or direct investment) to other required improvements in the transport</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	infrastructure suitable for those with mobility impairments.		
Policy WT8 – Managing and mitigating adverse impacts of increased traffic movements on residential amenity	<p>1. Major and significant development proposals in the plan area which are likely to trigger increased traffic movements will be supported by a transport assessment which predicts the level and impact of increased traffic movements.</p> <p>2. In cases where noticeable increases in traffic movements at Denny End Road, Greenside and Station Road are predicted, proposals will be expected to incorporate measures which will mitigate adverse impacts (for example through noise, dust, air quality or visual impacts) on residential amenity. This could be through the contribution towards or implementation of appropriate mitigation measures which could include street scene enhancement such as pavement widening, street scene planting, provision of crossing points, narrowing of junctions (to allow for safer pedestrian movement) or contributions towards appropriate boundary treatment to existing properties.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy WT9 – Protecting and enhancing the provision and quality of the Waterbeach Public Rights of Way (PROW) network	<p>1. The Public Rights of Way network shown on map 6.5 will be protected or enhanced.</p> <p>2. Proposals which include new public rights of way, including bridleways in suitable locations, will be viewed favourably and where opportunities arise to create new links into the existing PROW</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>network, proposals will be expected to do so.</p> <p>3. Development proposals which adversely impact on the amenity value of the PROW network either through interruption to the network or through proposals which impact adversely on the enjoyment of the network (e.g. impacting on the visual amenity, wildlife value or open setting of a PROW) will not be supported.</p>		
<p>Policy WVH10 – Maintaining and enhancing a vibrant Village Heart</p>	<p>1. Development proposals within the defined Village Heart (as defined on Map 6.7) will be supported where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) existing town centre uses (shops, services, community facilities) are retained at ground floor level;</li> <li>b) existing shop fronts which contribute to the character and appearance of the village are maintained or enhanced;</li> <li>c) proposed development will otherwise not undermine the function of the village heart as a hub for village shops, services and community facilities; and</li> <li>d) parking provision serving existing shops are either maintained or improved</li> </ul> <p>2. New village centre uses where proposals will support the vitality of the village heart and diversify and enhance the range of shops, services and community facilities will be encouraged and supported where access arrangements for deliveries and off-street parking can</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>be satisfactorily provided without any significant negative impact on surrounding residential or village centre amenity.</p>		
<p>Policy WVH 11 – Public Realm Improvements in the Village Heart</p>	<p>1. Development proposals which will contribute towards the following street scene improvements will be supported:</p> <p>a) Reconfiguration of current Village Stores site along Chapel Street – see Area 2 on Map 6.8, to incorporate a wider and more accessible entrance and a safer and more accessible pedestrian environment allowing for safe access and safer crossing point.</p> <p>b) Reconfiguration of land outside the current takeaway on Chapel Street/Greenside – see Area 3 on Map 6.6 to incorporate high quality soft landscaping, pavement resurfacing and maximise opportunities for formal bicycle parking</p> <p>c) Reconfiguration of land outside the current White Horse Pub on Greenside – see Area 4 on map to incorporate high quality soft landscaping, pavement resurfacing and maximise opportunities for formal bicycle parking</p> <p>d) Soft landscaping improvements to the northern part of village green – see Area 5 on the map)</p> <p>e) Improving access for passengers embarking buses at the bus stop</p> <p>f) Preventing through traffic using the road to the east of the village green (resident access only)</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>g) Re-development of Nice's garage in accordance with the aspirations of improving the village heart</p> <p>2. The area outside the White Horse PH covering the road and the eastern edge of the green is also identified as an opportunity for resurfacing allowing for level pedestrian crossing from this part of the village hub to the green.</p> <p>3. Developments which will lead to increases in traffic movements through the village heart should contribute towards traffic mitigation and public realm improvements.</p>		
<p>Policy WE 12 – Denny End Industrial Estate and Cambridge Innovation Park.</p>	<p>1. Development proposals for new employment uses at Denny End Industrial Estate and Cambridge Innovation Park will be supported. The following considerations apply:</p> <p>a) A need to maintain a high-quality frontage to Denny End Road</p> <p>b) Maintaining or improving residential amenity to neighbouring properties</p> <p>c) Utilising opportunities to improve street scene within the site itself.</p> <p>d) Improved non-vehicular access to the site</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy WHCD13 – Waterbeach Design Principles</p>	<p>Development proposals in the plan area will be supported where a design-led approach has informed the scheme's layout, design, choice of building materials and densities.</p> <p>All proposals will be expected to contribute in a positive way to existing built environment and landscape character as described in</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>





Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>the Waterbeach Heritage and Character Assessment, the Waterbeach Design Principles document, and accord, where applicable, with the Local Plan and with the design principles set out in Schedule 1 supporting this policy.</p>		
<p>Policy WDCH 14 – Development and Landscape Quality</p>	<p>Development shall be supported where it respects and retains or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape in which it is located. In this regard, proposals will be supported where they accord with the Working with the Landscape Principles provided in Schedule 2.</p> <p>Beyond the settlement edge (including, once developed, the newly defined edge at Waterbeach New Town), the distinctive sense of remoteness and isolation experienced in our fen edge landscape shall be respected and the long distance, uninterrupted views across the flat fenland landscape especially from the River Cam shall be protected or enhanced.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy WDCH 15 – Important edge of settlement sites on the eastern edge of Waterbeach village</p>	<p>To be supported, development proposals must maintain or enhance the contribution the edge of settlement sites (shown on Maps 6.7 and 6.8) make to the rural setting of Waterbeach and the openness of the countryside.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy WGI 16 – Protected Village Amenity</p>	<p>The green spaces as shown on Map 6.9, and referred to as Green Space at entrance to Barracks and</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
Area at Green Space at main entrance to the Barracks off Denny End Road	Park Crescent, are designated as a protected village amenity area where development will not be supported within or adjacent to this area if it would have an adverse impact on the character, amenity (for example through noise and light pollution), tranquillity or function of Waterbeach village.		
Policy WGI 17 – Protected Open space in Waterbeach Parish	<p>The following publicly accessible open spaces are identified as important open spaces in the parish and shown on Map 6.10 are protected from development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allotments off Glebe Road</li> <li>• Allotments off Burgess Drove</li> <li>• Camlocks</li> <li>• Waterbeach Recreation Ground</li> <li>• Green spaces within Park Crescent</li> </ul> <p>Exceptions may apply where the purpose of a development proposal will be to improve overall provision in the quality or quantity of an open space.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy WGI 18 – Development and Green Infrastructure	<p>Where new open space/wildlife/green corridors are being provided as part of new development, they should, as far as is possible, be designed to link well with wider green infrastructure in the parish. New parks, informal open spaces and play facilities should be located and designed with a view to them functioning as focal points in the neighbourhood.</p> <p>To be accepted as an acceptable form of public open space provision,</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>the space must offer useable recreational space. Drainage basins will not be accepted as a contribution towards public open space.</p>		
<p>Policy WGI 19 – Sites of Value to Biodiversity</p>	<p>The sites listed below and identified on Map 6.11 are valued highly by the community for their contribution to supporting biodiversity in the parish and are to be protected. Any development proposals which impacts upon them must contribute to, rather than detract from, their biodiversity value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Floodplain grazing marsh south of St John’s Church, to the east along Station Road, along the River Cam and at Denny Abbey</li> <li>- Areas of deciduous woodland in the parish including south west adjacent to the A10 and in the south east behind Saberton Close and at Waterbeach Barracks</li> <li>- Site of Special Scientific Interest in the north east of the parish which is the southern extent of the Cam Washes.</li> <li>- County Wildlife Site along Denny End Road</li> <li>- Cow Hollow Wood</li> </ul>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy WH 20 – Housing Mix</p>	<p>To be supported, the mix of dwelling sizes on residential schemes in the parish must be informed by the latest available evidence on both district and Waterbeach specific housing needs.</p> <p>Unless, up to date information indicates different local housing</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>needs, residential development proposals coming forward as part of the Waterbeach New Town should meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an appropriate proportion of the housing mix is targeted towards meeting the different needs in Waterbeach parish;</li> <li>• where 40% of the market housing to comprises 1 or 2 bedroom homes and a majority of the affordable housing properties to comprise 1 or 2 bedroom homes and</li> <li>• provision to be made for self and custom-built homes. Reference should be made to the Council Right to Build waiting list and local CLT expressions of interest.</li> </ul> <p>Other residential development proposals in the parish will be expected to deliver at least 40% of the units as 1 or 2 bedroom homes with the exception of schemes of 3 or less where appropriate housing mix is better informed by site context.</p>		
<p>Policy WH 21 – Rural Exception Site Affordable Housing in Waterbeach Parish</p>	<p>Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites adjoining the Waterbeach Village development framework boundary will be supported provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the number, size, design, mix and tenure of affordable homes are confined to, and appropriate to, meeting identified local needs;</li> <li>• for green belt locations, that no alternative sites exist that would</li> </ul>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>have less impact on Green Belt purposes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that the affordable homes are secured in perpetuity;</li> <li>• the proposed development contributes positively to existing character of the village in terms of design, layout, materials, landscaping and biodiversity; and</li> <li>• the scheme provides for pavements and direct walking routes into neighbouring settlements.</li> </ul>		
<p>Policy WH 22 – Allocation of Affordable Housing at Waterbeach New Town</p>	<p>To be supported, residential development proposals at Waterbeach New Town must make a meaningful contribution towards meeting affordable housing needs in Waterbeach parish.</p> <p>This means that people with a strong local connection to Waterbeach parish (through residence, employment or close family) whose needs are not met by the open market will be allocated (be first to be offered the tenancy or shared ownership of the home) a proportion of affordable homes being delivered at Waterbeach New Town as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of the Affordable Rent units within the first 5 years of the build out;</li> <li>• 25% of the Low Cost Home Ownership homes within the first 5 year of the build out.</li> </ul> <p>If, after the first five years of build out, the Waterbeach affordable housing needs, are not yet</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>satisfactorily addressed, a local connection criteria should continue to be applied to a proportion of the affordable homes until it is.</p> <p>A proposal comprising a different percentage (to that set out in this policy) of affordable homes to be tied to a local connection criteria will be supported where this is justified through provision of up to date evidence on anticipated housing completion figures and affordable housing needs in the parish.</p>		
Policy WH 23 – Waterbeach Mobile Park Homes	<p>Planning applications involving development at existing Waterbeach Mobile Park Homes will be supported where residential amenity is maintained or improved. Proposals leading to loss of mobile park homes at these sites will not be supported unless the development is necessary in order to maintain the quality of provision at the existing site.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

#### 4.5.1 Recommendations

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

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

#### 4.6 Other Plans and Projects: In-combination Effects

There are three relevant Plan level HRAs that have been carried out by South Cambridgeshire District Council or other organisations and none have been found to have a





likely significant effect on the Habitats sites within scope of this assessment.

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

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

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

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Waterbeach New Town SPD HRA screening report (2018)	“The overall conclusion of this screening assessment is that the draft Waterbeach New Town SPD is unlikely to have any significant effects on the Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites identified alone or in combination with other plans or projects.”	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Habitat Regulations Assessment: Chapter 20 of South Cambs Local Plan SA Scoping Report (June 2012) and including the Draft Final Sustainability Report (2014) and Sustainability Appraisal Addendum (2015)	“The Local Plan for the district was subject to an HRA screening and found to have no likely significant impact on a Natura site or a Ramsar site.”	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.



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



Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
		Action Plan – Preferred Options Draft - is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. It is therefore concluded that there is no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an Appropriate Assessment.”	
South Cambridgeshire District Council	No HRA screening report is available for S/2075/18/OL	N/A	N/A

## References

- Waterbeach Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 to 2031 (28<sup>th</sup> November 2019)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (September 2018)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (adopted July 2009)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan HRA (May 2007)
- Cambridge East Area Action Plan HRA (May 2007)
- Northstowe Area Action Plan HRA (April 2007)
- North West Cambridge Area Action Plan HRA (August 2007)
- Natural England Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England Website
- Tydesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, (January 2020) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited



## Conclusions

### 5.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

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

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

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

### 5.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

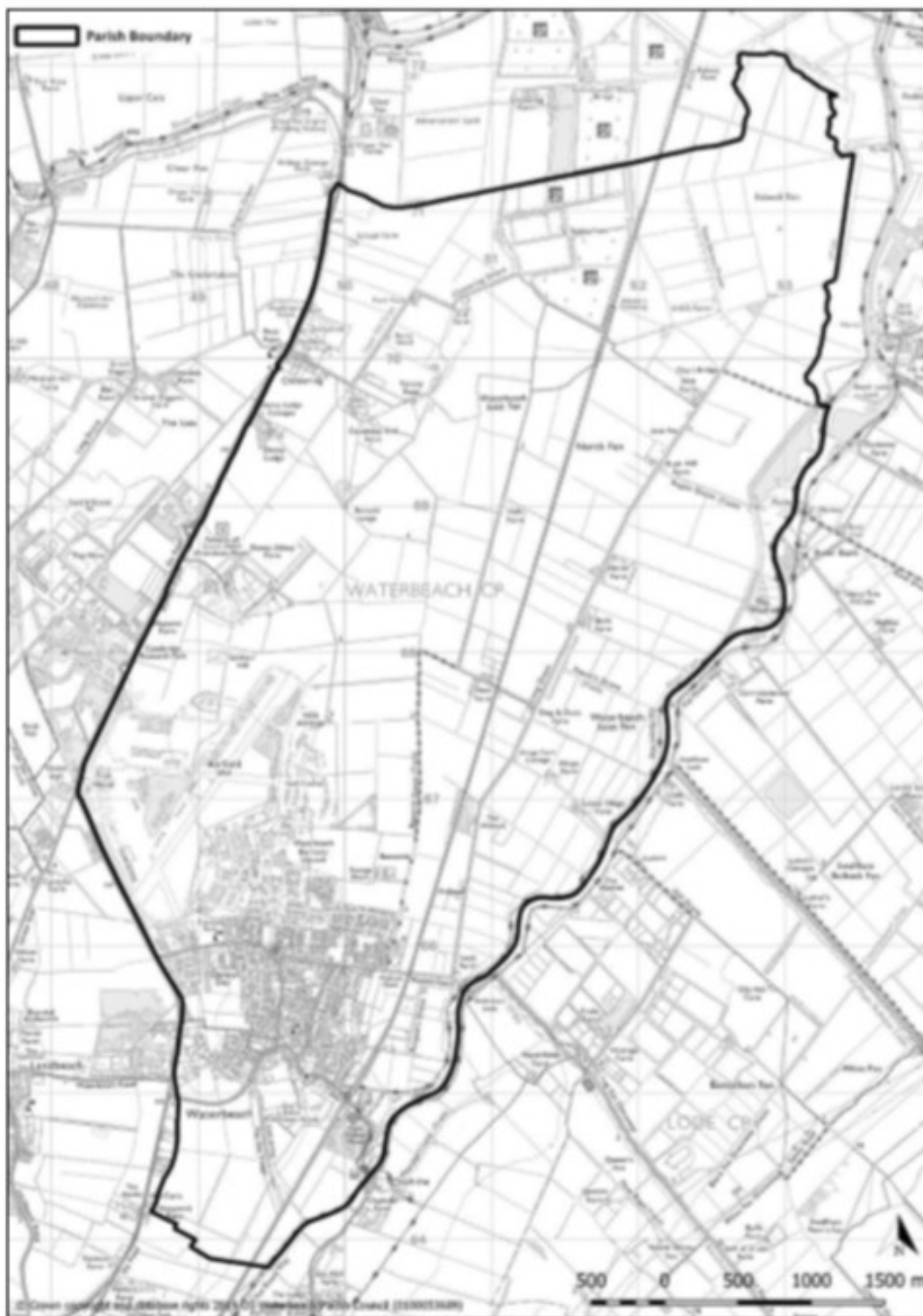
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Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA screening report indicates that the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have likely significant effects on any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.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

# Appendix 1

## The Waterbeach Neighbourhood Development Plan area

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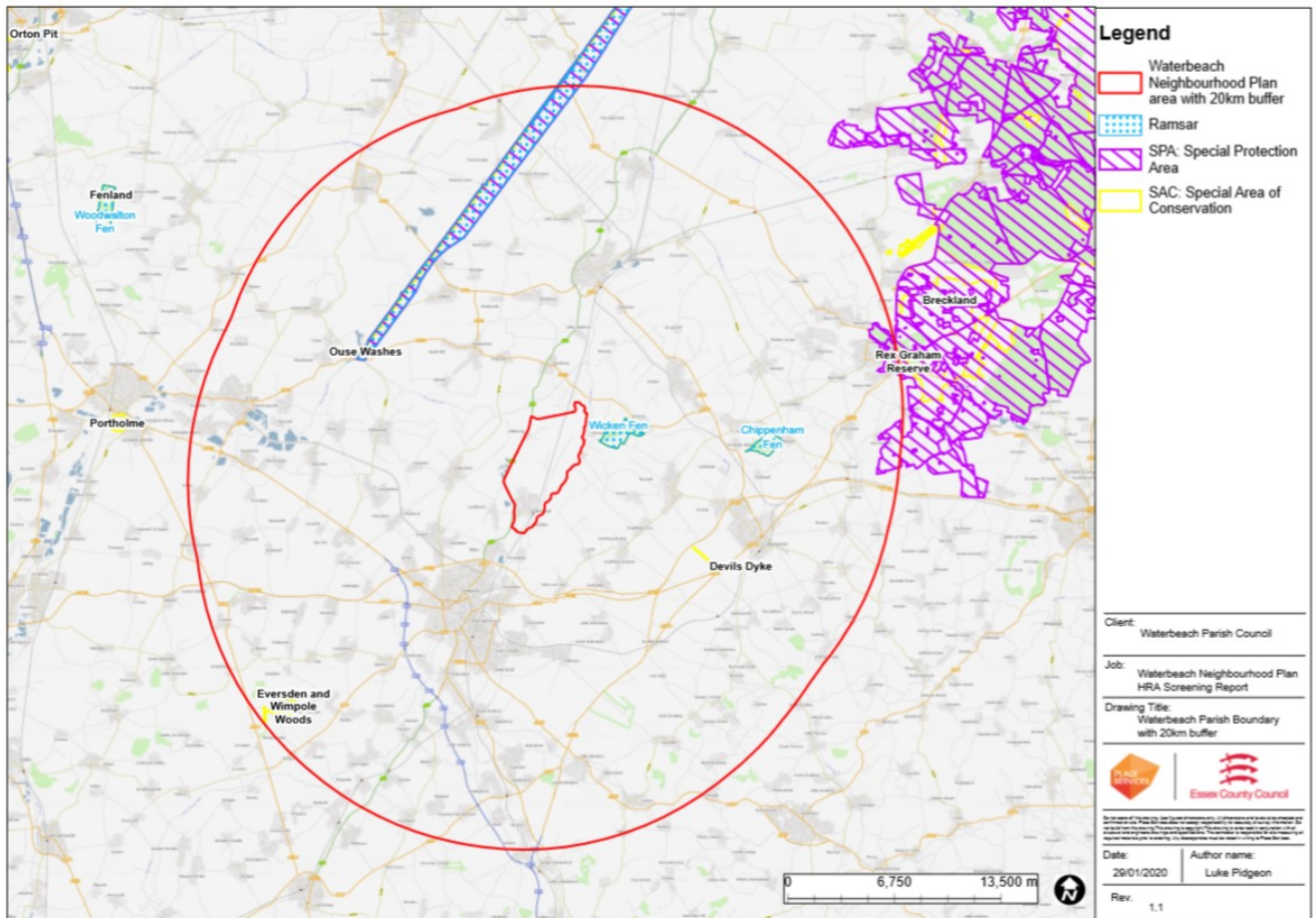


Source: South Cambridgeshire District Council, 2015



# Appendix 2

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



Source: Place Services, 2020





## Appendix 3

### Local Plan Policy SS/6: Waterbeach New Town

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#### Policy SS/6: Waterbeach New Town

1. A new town of approximately 8,000 to 9,000 dwellings and associated uses is proposed on the former Waterbeach Barracks and land to the east and north as shown on the Policies Map. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be prepared for the new town as addressed at subsection 17 of this policy. The final number of dwellings will be determined through a design-led approach and spatial framework diagram included in the SPD having regard to:
  - a. The quantum, location and distribution of development in the town; and
  - b. Maintaining an appropriate setting for Denny Abbey listed building and scheduled monument.
2. The new town will be a sustainable and vibrant new community that is inclusive and diverse with its own distinctive local identity which is founded on best practice urban design principles, drawing on the traditions of fen-edge market towns, which encourages the high quality traditions and innovation that are characteristic of the Cambridge Sub-Region.
3. It will be developed to maintain the identity of Waterbeach as a village close to the new town. Appropriate integration should be secured by the provision of suitable links to enable the residents of Waterbeach village to have convenient access to the services and facilities in the new town but with limited and controlled opportunities for direct road access from the wider new town to Waterbeach with emphasis on connections by public transport, cycle and on foot.
4. It will deliver an example of excellence in sustainable development and healthier living, which will make a significant contribution to the long term development needs of the Cambridge area. It will deliver high quality public transport links to Cambridge, including a relocated railway station, to enable a high modal share of travel by means other than the car.

#### The Site:

5. The built area of the settlement will be contained within the Major Development Site, and the location of major land uses and design of the northern edge of the new town will ensure an appropriate relationship with Denny Abbey listed building and scheduled monument;
6. The new town will establish an appropriate relationship and interaction with Waterbeach village, and the Cambridge Research Park;



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7. All built development will be provided within the Major Development Site shown on the Policies Map. Land outside the Major Development Site can provide other associated uses and mitigation including drainage, habitat compensation and informal open space.

The Phasing and Delivery of a Mix of Land Uses:

8. The new town will provide a range of uses appropriate to a new town, including:
- a. Residential development of a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing, to achieve a balanced and inclusive community;
  - b. Employment provision of a quantum, type and mix to meet the needs of the town and provide access to local jobs, and support the continued development of the economy of the Cambridge area to be established through an Economic Development Strategy prepared in partnership with the local authority and key stakeholders;
  - c. Shops, services, leisure and other town centre uses\* of an appropriate scale for a town whilst avoiding significant impacts on vitality and viability of surrounding centres, and not competing with Cambridge as the sub regional centre;
  - d. A town centre supported by local centres, to ensure services and facilities are easily accessible to residents;
  - e. Community services and facilities, including health and both primary and secondary school education;
  - f. Open space, sports and leisure facilities;
  - g. Appropriate provision for and design of waste / recycling management facilities.

Measures to Address Landscape, Townscape and Setting of Heritage Assets in the Surrounding Area, and Deliver a High Quality New Development:

9. The new town will:
- a. Establish and follow design principles to deliver a high quality development responding to local character, but also with its own identity;
  - b. Provide strategic landscaping within and beyond the Major Development Site to deliver high quality environs and:
    - i. provide an appropriate screening of the town in views from Denny Abbey in order to protect the historic significance of the Abbey, and
    - ii. maintain the village character of Waterbeach;
  - c. Conserve and enhance the significance of Denny Abbey Grade I listed building and scheduled monument, including the contribution made by its setting, the extent and nature of separation from the Major Development Site and formal open spaces, and protection of key views including to and from the Abbey;



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- d. Include assessment, conservation and enhancement of other heritage assets as appropriate to their significance, including non-designated assets such as Car Dyke World War II structures, raised causeways, and the Soldiers Hill Earthworks.
- e. Incorporate necessary mitigation to sensitive receptor boundaries, with regard to noise and odour, including from the A10, proposed railway station, recreational activities and the Waterbeach Waste Management Park to ensure no significant adverse impact on quality of life / amenity and health using separation distances or acoustic earth bunding rather than physical barriers if appropriate and where practicable;

\*Main town centre uses as defined in the NPPF (2012): Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

- f. Ensure there is no significant adverse impact on local air quality and or mitigate as necessary with a Low Emissions Scheme.

Delivery of a Significant Network of Green Infrastructure:

10. The new town will:

- a. Provide a high degree of connectivity to existing corridors and networks;
- b. Include areas accessible to the public as well as areas with more restricted access with the aim of enhancing biodiversity;
- c. Provide and retain woods, hedges, and water features which would contribute to the character and amenity of the town and help preserve and enhance the setting of Denny Abbey, managed to enhance their ecological value;
- d. Consider the multifunctional value of spaces, e.g. amenity, landscape, biodiversity, recreation and drainage;
- e. Carry out a full programme of ecological survey and monitoring, to guide a Biodiversity Management plan to provide appropriate mitigation and enhancement.

Creation of a comprehensive movement network:

11. The new town will be founded on a comprehensive movement network for the whole town, that connects key locations including the town centre and relocated railway station to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel, and includes:

- a. Significant improvements in Public Transport, including:
  - i. Provision of a relocated Waterbeach station with appropriate access arrangements by all modes to serve the village and the new town;



## Policy SS/6: Waterbeach New Town

- ii. Provision of a Park and Ride site on the A10 to intercept traffic from the north of Waterbeach, served by a new segregated Bus link to Cambridge;
- b. Measures to Promote Cycling and Walking, from the start of the development including:
  - i. Provision of a network of attractive, direct, safe and convenient walking and cycling routes linking homes to public transport and the main areas of activity such as the town centre, schools and employment areas;
  - ii. Provision of direct, segregated high quality pedestrian and cycle links to north Cambridge, surrounding villages and nearby existing facilities such as the Cambridge Research Park;
  - iii. A Smarter Choices package including residential, school and workplace travel planning.
- c. Highway Improvements, including:
  - i. Primary road access from the A10;
  - ii. Additional capacity to meet the forecast road traffic generation of the new town, particularly on the A10 and at the junction with the A14;
  - iii. Measures to mitigate the traffic impact of the new town on surrounding villages including Waterbeach, Landbeach, Horningsea, Fen Ditton and Milton;
  - iv. A review of the access arrangements to Denny Abbey and the Farmland Museum.

### Sustainable Design and construction:

12. The new town will incorporate and deliver opportunities to exceed sustainable design and construction standards established by the Local Plan. These measures could include combined heat and power provided from the adjacent Waterbeach Waste Management Park.

### Infrastructure Requirements:

13. The new town will:
- a. Ensure the delivery of improvement to any existing infrastructure which will be relied upon by the new town as well as the provision, management and maintenance of new infrastructure, services and facilities to meet the needs of the town.
  - b. Make appropriate arrangements for Foul Drainage and Sewage Disposal.
  - c. Ensure the provision, management and on-going maintenance of sustainable surface water drainage measures to control the risk of flooding on site and which will reduce the risk of flooding to areas downstream or upstream of the development.



## Policy SS/6: Waterbeach New Town

### Community Development:

14. Measures will be required to assist the development of a new community, such as through community development workers.

### Site Preparation:

15. Developers will be required to:
  - a. Undertake site wide investigation and assessment of land contamination and other issues resulting from former land uses, including military use, to ensure the land is suitable for the proposed end use and is not presenting a risk to the environment;
  - b. Ensure that all ordnance is removed from the site in ways that ensure the development can take place without unacceptable risk to workers and neighbours including major disruption to the wider public off site.

### Phasing and Delivery:

16. The delivery of the new town, including any individual phases, must:
  - a. Be in accordance with the spatial framework diagram set out in the Supplementary Planning Document to ensure a comprehensive development of the site as a whole that will not prejudice the creation of a fully functioning and successful new town.
  - b. Be informed by appropriate strategies, assessments and evidence reports.
  - c. Plan for essential services, facilities and infrastructure to be provided in a comprehensive manner, anticipating future needs, and establishing suitable mechanisms to deliver the infrastructure in a timely and efficient way to achieve the successful delivery of the new town, including the needs of individual phases, and the requirements on developers.
  - d. Make satisfactory arrangements to ensure appropriate engagement and consultation with local people and stakeholders.

### Supplementary Planning Document:

17. The SPD to be prepared for the Strategic Site shown on the Policies Map will provide further guidance and detail on the implementation of Policy SS/6. The SPD will include:
  - a. An overarching, high level vision for the new town.
  - b. Consideration of relevant context including key constraints and opportunities.
  - c. The broad location of the components of the new town which are essential to support comprehensive and seamless development. A spatial framework diagram will be included that ensures the creation of a sustainable, legible and distinctive new settlement.



### Policy SS/6: Waterbeach New Town

- d. The location, nature and extent of any formal open space to be provided outside of the Major Development Site.
- e. Broadly how the development is to be phased, including the delivery of key infrastructure.







## **Place Services**

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**February 2020**



## Appendix 2: Consultation Responses from the Statutory Environmental Bodies

### Historic England

**28 February 2020**

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 Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion.

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

On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

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

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

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence dated 11 February 2020. 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.

Edward James  
Historic Places Advisor, East of England

## Natural England

24 February 2020

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 11 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.

### **SEA and HRA Screening Report**

Natural England is satisfied with the conclusions of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report (February 2020) that the Plan is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects including impacts to European sites and can be screened out for the need for SEA and further HRA. We note that the Plan does not allocate sites for development. We support the inclusion of policies to promote sustainable development including sustainable travel and access and protection and enhancement of green infrastructure and biodiversity including the Cam Washes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

### **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.

Yours sincerely

Dawn Kinrade  
Consultations Team

## Environment Agency

19 February 2020

Thank you for your consultation.

### **Environment Agency position - Screening Opinions.**

Due to resource pressures we are no longer able to provide you with comprehensive bespoke advice on Neighbourhood Plans.

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

### **Note to applicant.**

Key environmental issues associated with this proposal/site will include floodrisk, adequate upfront provision of surface and foul water drainage infrastructure, investigation and remediation of any contaminated land, protection of controlled waters, investigation of any historic landfills in the vicinity, and full details of pollution prevention measures.

Please note that the views expressed in this letter by the Environment Agency does not represent our final view in relation to any future planning application made in regarding this site. We reserve the right to change our position in relation to any such application.

Yours faithfully

Mr. T.G. Waddams  
Planning Liaison