



EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Screening Report

Draft Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan

**Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitats Regulation
Assessment**

November 2023

(as updated January 2024 post consultation)

On behalf of Cheveley Parish Council in relation to the Draft Cheveley Neighbourhood
Plan

Date of assessment:	27th November 2023
Date/ version of neighbourhood development plan to which Screening Report applies:	Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Consultation Version September 2023

Contents

Overview	1
1. Introduction	3
2. Strategic Planning Context	6
3. Summary of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan (September 2023 version)	9
4. Summary of the Environmental Characteristics of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan Area	14
5. Development Opportunities within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area	20
6. Determination of likely significant environment effects - SEA	21
7. Determination of likely significant effects on European Sites - HRA	28
8. Screening Outcome	33
Appendix 1 SEA assessment criteria	34
Appendix 2 Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes	35
Appendix 3: SEA process for Neighbourhood Planning	36
Appendix 4: Consultation with Statutory Agencies	38

Overview

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to which this Screening Report applies:

Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan

Version/ date of NDP to which this Screening Report applies:

Pre-Submission Draft Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan, September 2023

Neighbourhood area to which the NDP applies:

Cheveley Neighbourhood Area. This draft NDP applies to the entirety of the Neighbourhood Area.

List of Maps

Map 1: Boundary of the designated Cheveley Neighbourhood Area	9
---	---

List of Figures

Figure 1: General Health of residents at 2021 Census	14
Figure 2: Age profile of residents at 2021 Census	15
Figure 3: Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard buffers for Cheveley parish	17
Figure 4: Assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment	23
Figure 5: Application of the SEA Directive to Draft Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan.....	26

List of Tables

Table 1: CNP Policies	11
-----------------------------	----

Acronyms

ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
CNP	Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan
CWS	County Wildlife Site
ECDC	East Cambridgeshire District Council
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EU	European Union
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NCA	National Character Area
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SIP	Site Improvement Plan
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

1. Introduction

- 1.1. To be 'made', a Neighbourhood Plan must meet certain Basic Conditions. These include that the making of the plan "*does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.*" One of these obligations relates to Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'.
- 1.2. This is often referred to as the **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** Directive. The SEA Directive seeks to provide a high level of protection of the environment by integrating environmental considerations into the process of preparing plans and programmes. The SEA Directive is transposed into English law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (the 'SEA Regulations') and it is these regulations that the plan will need to be compatible with.
- 1.3. The UK left the EU on 31st January 2020. Under the UK-EU withdrawal agreement, a transition period ended on 31st December 2020, during which time all EU law continued to apply to the UK. During the transition period the UK needed to continue following domestic law that implements EU law, or directly applicable EU law that is given effect through the EUWA 2018. Beyond the transition period, the SEA Regulations will continue to apply as before unless and until new legislation is introduced.
- 1.4. A key stage in the neighbourhood planning process is determining whether SEA is required. The process for deciding whether SEA is necessary is referred to as 'screening'.
- 1.5. SEA is a process with specific documents that are consulted on and considered through the decision-making process. Failure to adhere to the process and generate the required documents may increase the risk of legal challenge to the adoption of that plan.
- 1.6. The SEA Regulations set out a series of sequential steps that must be undertaken as part of any SEA. Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC details the criteria for determining whether plans are likely to have significant environmental effects. These criteria are outlined in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.7. The (former) Department of the Environment produced a flow chart diagram¹ which sets out the process for screening a planning document to ascertain whether a full SEA is required. The flow chart diagram is provided in **Appendix 2**.
- 1.8. More recently, the national Planning Practice Guide reflects the SEA Regulations in a six-stage flowchart process for undertaking SEA for a Neighbourhood Plan (see **Appendix 3**).
- 1.9. These various pieces of law and guidance have been used to help prepare this report. Section 6 provides firstly, a screening assessment of the Draft Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan (September 2023), against the assessment criteria in **Appendix 1** to identify the significance of effects which may arise as a result of the plan's implementation.
- 1.10. Secondly, it applies the SEA Directive to the Draft Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan, as per the flow chart in **Appendix 2**, to determine if a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
- 1.11. To decide whether a SEA is required, the East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) needs to consider the following sorts of issues:
 - How the policies in the NDP might affect the environment, community or economy;
 - Whether the policies are likely to adversely affect a "sensitive area", such as a European Site (Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar) or a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve (NNR) etc.;
 - Whether the policies propose a higher level of development than what is set out in the existing development plan and that has been assessed by the SEA or Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of that Plan;
 - Whether the implementation of the policies is likely to lead to new development;

¹ Department of the Environment, A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2005)

- Whether the cumulative impact of the policies taken together may give rise to a significant effect.
- 1.12. Not every Neighbourhood Plan will need SEA. However, when a parish council submits a plan proposal to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) it is mandatory to provide, either:
- a statement of reasons as to why SEA was not required; or
 - if SEA is required, an Environmental Report (a key output of the SEA process).
- 1.13. As a rule of thumb, SEA is more likely to be necessary if both of the following two elements apply:
- a Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites for development (for housing, employment etc.); **and**
 - the neighbourhood area contains sensitive environmental assets (e.g., SSSI or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) that may be affected by the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.14. In light of these two considerations, it is very unlikely that a Neighbourhood Plan would require SEA if the plan were not allocating land for development (which isn't already allocated or with consent). This is because allocating land for development is more likely to generate physical changes which lead to significant effects.
- 1.15. However, this Screening Report is not just about SEA. Another element of the Basic Conditions relates to Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, often referred to as the **Habitats Directive**. Under the Habitats Regulations which implement the Directive, an assessment referred to as 'an appropriate assessment' must be undertaken if the plan in question is likely to have a significant effect on a European protected wildlife site. European sites refer to the UK network of protected areas covering the most valuable and threatened species and habitats.
- 1.16. A decision by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) (*People Over Wind & Sweetman vs. Coillte Teoranta*) in April 2018 has had a significant impact on the HRA process for both Neighbourhood Plans and Local Plans. In short, the ECJ ruled that to determine whether it is necessary to carry out a full HRA of the implications of a plan, it is not appropriate to take account of mitigation measures at the screening stage. Rather, consideration of mitigation will need to occur at the full Appropriate Assessment stage.
- 1.17. Following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (EU), decisions by the ECJ are no longer legally binding but may continue to be relevant².
- 1.18. A consequence of the ECJ's decision is that mitigation measures set out in a plan cannot be used at the screening stage to conclude there will be 'no likely significant effects' on European Sites. Therefore, if a Neighbourhood Plan includes measures to counter the plan's effects on European Sites these should, in effect, be ignored at the screening stage.
- 1.19. Previously, plan-making in the UK has followed case law as set out in *Application of Hart District Council; vs. Secretary of the State for Communities and Local Government* in 2008, which concluded that: '*anything which encourages the proponents of plans and projects to incorporate mitigation measures at the earliest possible stage in the evolution of their plan or project is surely to be encouraged*'.
- 1.20. The Government has acknowledged that the ECJ's ruling has caused uncertainty in preparing Neighbourhood Plans and could result in more plans requiring a full SEA or HRA. In December 2018, The Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018³ came into force, amending the Basic Conditions and allowing affected NDPs and Orders to proceed.

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/16/section/6/enacted>

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/1307/contents/made>

- 1.21. For the avoidance of doubt, this screening report has been undertaken in accordance with the ECJ's ruling, insofar that the effects of any mitigation measures set out in the policies of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) (September 2023) have not been considered.
- 1.22. The SEA Directive requires that if an eligible plan or programme requires an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive, then that plan, or programme will also require an SEA. It is therefore advisable to check whether an assessment under the Habitats Regulations is required by undertaking HRA screening at the same time as screening for SEA. That is what has been done in this document.
- 1.23. Returning to the purpose of this document, there are three recommended steps in the initial screening process:
1. Prepare a screening report (THIS DOCUMENT);
 2. Request a screening opinion from the consultation bodies in light of this report (CONSULTATION RESPONSE RECEIVED NOW ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT); and
 3. Considering their responses, determine whether the plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment (and therefore require SEA) (SEE SEPARATE STATEMENT).
- 1.24. Whilst it is not prescribed, in most instances the LPA, which is ECDC in this case, will undertake SEA screening for a Neighbourhood Plan. This is because the LPA will ultimately be responsible for ensuring that the SEA requirements have been met prior to the Neighbourhood Plan being made. **It is confirmed that ECDC prepared this Screening Report.**
- 1.25. The Neighbourhood Plan should be screened as soon as there is sufficient information available to consider whether the proposed content of the plan or its likely intent (e.g., will it allocate development sites or not?) are likely to lead to significant effects to effectively inform the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.26. The purpose of this report, therefore, is to undertake a screening exercise to determine whether the Pre-Submission Draft Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan (September 2023) (subsequently referred to as the 'CNP') requires a full SEA and / or HRA. The screening exercise will therefore support the CNP in satisfying the Basic Conditions and can be submitted as part of the evidence base which will accompany the plan. Cheveley Parish Council is the Qualifying Body for the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area (which is coterminous with the parish boundary). Only Cheveley Parish Council has the legal right to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.27. Please note that this draft screening report uses the term 'European Site' when referring collectively to SPAs, SACs, and Ramsar sites. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also expects candidate SACs, potential SPAs and Ramsar sites to be included within the assessment.
- 1.28. For the purposes of SEA, the statutory bodies are executive non-departmental public bodies with responsibilities for managing the environment on government's behalf, namely:
- Environment Agency
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
- 1.29. The statutory bodies were requested towards the end of 2023 to review and make representations during consultation on a draft version of the screening report. Their responses have been added Appendix 4.

2. Strategic Planning Context

- 2.1. The Basic Conditions require a Neighbourhood Plan to be in *general conformity* with the strategic policies contained in the development plan (primarily, the Local Plan) for the area. Through its strategic policies, the Local Plan effectively defines the parameters within which a Neighbourhood Plan may operate.
- 2.2. Throughout their preparation, Local Plans are subject to SEA (generally incorporated through a Sustainability Appraisal (SA)) and HRA. Where a Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan, it is likely that many of the environmental effects of the plan will have already been considered through the Local Plan-making process.
- 2.3. National policy states that evidence should be proportionate and should not repeat policy assessment already undertaken. It is therefore relevant to consider the strategic policy context for the purpose of avoiding duplication and to identify environmental effects not already considered and addressed through the Local Plan-making process.

Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023)

- 2.4. The current East Cambridgeshire Local Plan is the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023), which defines strategic (and more locally specific) policies for the area. The Local Plan was adopted by the Council on 21 April 2015, with some small changes to it adopted by the Council on 19 October 2023. It is therefore referred to as the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023).
- 2.5. In April 2020 the Council determined that its Local Plan 2015 required revision, but only partially and only in respect of its strategic housing policy, GROWTH1, and some of its supporting text. The rest of the Local Plan was considered to not, at that time, to need updating.
- 2.6. At the time at which the CNP is to be examined, the Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023) will remain the adopted Local Plan.
- 2.7. The Local Plan directs the majority of growth to the main settlements (Ely, Littleport and Soham). Growth in villages such as Cheveley is fairly limited. The Local Plan describes Cheveley as “*a pretty linear village located four miles south-east of Newmarket.*”. It goes on to state that Cheveley has a good range of local services, including a church, post office, village store, public house, primary school, community room (within the school) and recreation ground. The Local Plan expects Cheveley to grow at a slow rate over the plan period, “*with new housing being built on suitable ‘infill’ sites within the village*”.
- 2.8. The Local Plan identifies two housing allocations to deliver an estimated 20 dwellings (CHV1 Rear of Star and Garter Lane and CHV2 Between 199-209 High Street). According to the most recent East Cambridgeshire Five Year Land Supply Report, published August 2022, site CHV2 was under construction and nearing completion. In addition, the Local Plan defines a Development Envelope within which growth is in principle, generally acceptable. During its preparation, the Local Plan was subject to SA and HRA.

Withdrawn Local Plan 2018

- 2.9. It is also worth noting that, prior to the preparation of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023), ECDC had embarked on a full update of its Local Plan. In February 2018, ECDC submitted for examination the updated Local Plan along with a supporting evidence base. Examination of the Local Plan commenced in June 2018. However, in February 2019, ECDC withdrew the draft Local Plan, so it never reached the final adoption stage.
- 2.10. At the point of withdrawal, the draft Local Plan was at an advanced stage of its preparation and had been subject to a full SA incorporating SEA, and a full HRA. The withdrawn Local Plan proposed a similar growth strategy to the adopted Local Plan, focussing growth principally in the market towns, albeit with an increased role for large and medium villages in the rural area. Specifically, for Cheveley, the submitted (but subsequently withdrawn) Local

Plan proposed two allocations for housing development within Cheveley village, including 15 dwellings at land between 199 and 209 High Street, which was already under construction, and a new site allocation for approximately 10 dwellings at Brook Stud, High Street.

- 2.11. The SA prepared for the submitted (but subsequently withdrawn) Local Plan incorporated the requirements of SEA. Throughout the stages of plan preparation, the SA influenced policy formulation and the allocation of development sites.
- 2.12. A range of sites were appraised in Cheveley. The proposed sites and overall level of growth were considered to provide a sustainable approach to growth in Cheveley.
- 2.13. In June 2018, ECDC published a HRA report⁴ which accompanied the now withdrawn submitted Local Plan 2018. The purpose of the HRA report was to set out the method, findings and conclusions of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Stage 1 Screening and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment) of the submitted East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, which was carried out by ECDC, in consultation with Natural England. ECDC has retained the HRA (dated June 2018) as it provides evidence and guidance on issues relating to European Sites which the Council believes remains relevant to applicants, decision-makers and to the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. It remains published on the Council's website⁵.
- 2.14. The HRA complied with the recent judgement of the Court of Justice for the European Union of 12th April 2018, as described in section 1 of this report. Through the Local Plan examination, Natural England confirmed the HRA was legally compliant.
- 2.15. The following European sites were scoped into that HRA for consideration:
- Fenland SAC (including Wicken Fen, Woodwalton Fen and Chippenham Fen Ramsars)
 - Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar
 - Devil's Dyke SAC
 - Breckland SAC/SPA
- 2.16. The potential likely significant effects identified as a result of the submitted (but subsequently withdrawn) Local Plan 2018 were:
- Habitat damage and/or loss
 - Disturbance from urbanisation effects
 - Disturbance from increased recreational pressure
 - Reduced air quality as a result of increased vehicle journeys
 - Water quality changes from water consumption and abstraction
 - Reduced water quality from pollution due to increased demand for waste-water treatment
- 2.17. Cheveley village is in the east of East Cambridgeshire district, approximately 4km from the Devil's Dyke SAC. The HRA identifies that due to the proximity of proposed site allocations (at Cheveley village) to Devil's Dyke, there is potential for disturbance from recreational pressure in-combination with other residential allocations and in-combination with housing development in the neighbouring district of Forest Heath.
- 2.18. The HRA also identifies that the priority habitat type of Devil's Dyke SAC is sensitive to atmospheric pollution.
- 2.19. The HRA report concluded that, provided certain recommendations were incorporated into the Local Plan, it is possible to conclude that the (now withdrawn) submitted East

4

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/HRA%20Appropriate%20Assessment%20Post%20Submission%20Local%20Plan%20-%20published%2015.6.18.pdf>

5

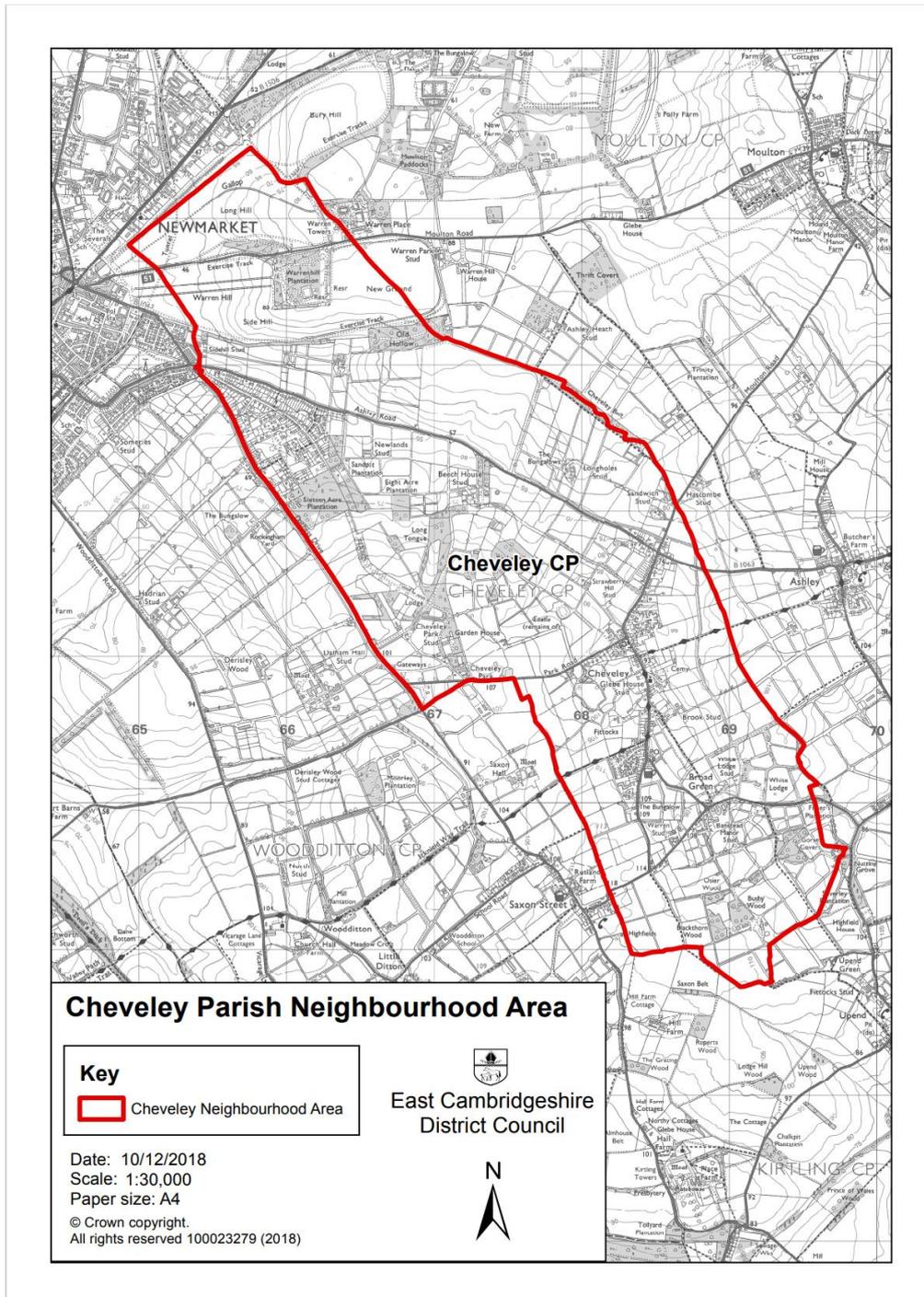
<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/HRA%20Appropriate%20Assessment%20Post%20Submission%20Local%20Plan%20-%20published%2015.6.18.pdf>

Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 was compliant with the Habitats Regulations and will not result in likely significant effects on any of the European Sites identified, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

3. Summary of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan (September 2023 version)

- 3.1. The subject of this screening report is the *Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Consultation Version September 2023* (CNP), which was published by the Parish Council for consultation in September and October 2023.
- 3.2. The CNP has been prepared by Cheveley Parish Council, the ‘qualifying body’ for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. The Cheveley Neighbourhood Area was formally designated by CDC on 10 December 2018. The designated area is shown in **Map 1** below.

Map 1: Boundary of the designated Cheveley Neighbourhood Area



- 3.3. The purpose of this document is to screen the CNP. The CNP and supporting information are available to view and download from Cheveley Parish Council's website⁶. Where necessary, please refer to the CNP alongside this screening report.
- 3.4. The CNP sets out the following vision for the Neighbourhood Area:
- In 2035, Cheveley Parish will be an attractive and desirable place to live, with varied thriving sustainable communities. All our residents will feel valued and connected. Our heritage features, countryside and access to open space will be retained and enhanced. Our community facilities will be protected to ensure that these valuable assets continue to support our communities.*
- 3.5. The CNP sets out the following objectives:
- Objective 1. Ensure that new housing responds to the identified local needs of the Parish in terms of size, type and tenure.
 - Objective 2. Enable opportunities for the provision of affordable housing that meets the needs of those with a connection to Cheveley Parish.
 - Objective 3. New housing proposals should be designed to reflect the local characteristics and different qualities of Newmarket Fringe and Cheveley Village.
 - Objective 4. Enable the various equine related industries which are prevalent in the parish to prosper and thrive.
 - Objective 5. Ensure that the scale of new development can be supported by local infrastructure and services.
 - Objective 6. Protect and improve the existing range of community services and facilities.
 - Objective 7. Improve road safety and reduce the impact of traffic passing through the parish.
 - Objective 8. Protect important views and links to the wider countryside.
 - Objective 9. Protect important green spaces both those designated as local green spaces and other non-designated spaces which contribute to the character of the area.
 - Objective 10. Protect and enhance Cheveley Parish's rights of way.
 - Objective 11. Ensure new development is appropriate to the historic character of Cheveley Village.
 - Objective 12. Protect and enhance the heritage assets within the Parish.
- 3.6. To deliver the vision and objectives, the CNP proposes 16 policies, which are summarised in **Table 1**. Note that the table provides a summary of the policies intent, not the actual policy wording.

⁶ Available at: <https://www.cheveley-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>

Table 1: CNP Policies

Policy	Summary
Policy CHEV 1 - Development Strategy	<p>The policy updates the Development Envelope around Cheveley village and Newmarket Fringe, reflecting recent planning consents and completed developments.</p> <p>This policy focuses new development within the defined Development Envelopes of both Cheveley village and Newmarket Fringe.</p>
Policy CHEV 2 - Housing Mix	<p>The policy requires housing developments to contribute to meeting existing and future identified housing needs of the village and to provide a mix of housing types and sizes.</p>
Policy CHEV 3 - Affordable Housing mix	<p>This policy sets out the affordable housing mix to be provided on major development (10 or more homes) schemes.</p>
Policy CHEV 4 - Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites	<p>This policy supports the provision of small-scale affordable housing schemes outside of the settlement boundary (development envelope), where housing would not normally be permitted, where there is a proven local need.</p> <p>The policy requires proposals to take into consideration other policies within the CNP, in terms of any impact on character and appearance, residential amenity and highway safety.</p>
Policy CHEV 5 - Equine Related Activities outside the Development Envelope	<p>The policy sets out design considerations in relation to equine related activities, whether domestic or commercial, outside of the Development Envelope.</p>
Policy CHEV 6 - Infrastructure and Community Facilities	<p>The policy seeks to protect existing community services and facilities and to support the provision and enhancement of such services and facilities.</p>
Policy CHEV 7 - Design Considerations	<p>The policy seeks the provision of high quality, safe and sustainable development.</p> <p>The policy requires proposals to demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Cheveley Design Guidance and Codes and the Development Design Checklist.</p> <p>The policy supports proposals that exhibit outstanding or innovative design where this is appropriate for the context of the site and its surroundings.</p>

Policy CHEV 8 - Dark skies	The policy aims to protect dark skies. The policy requires outdoor lighting to minimise light pollution, adverse effects on wildlife and reduce energy consumption.
Policy CHEV 9 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage	The policy requires proposals to set out how on-site drainage and water resources will be managed. The policy supports the use of above-ground open Sustainable Drainage Systems as appropriate, recognising the potential for multiple benefits.
Policy CHEV 10 - Sustainable Building Practices	The policy sets out requirements in relation to energy consumption and requires development proposals to demonstrate how they incorporate current sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures.
Policy CHEV 11 - Heritage Assets	The policy seeks to conserve and enhance the Parishes' designated heritage assets. Where a proposal could harm a heritage asset, the policy requires clear justification through the submission of a heritage statement.
Policy CHEV 12 - Buildings and Features of Local Heritage Significance	The CNP identifies local heritage assets and buildings and features of local significance. Four buildings/features of local significance are identified on the Policies Map.
Policy CHEV 13 - Conserving and Enhancing Internationally Designated Sites	This policy stipulates that the highest level of protection will be afforded to international sites designated for their nature conservation importance. Development will only be permitted where the local planning authority is satisfied that any necessary avoidance and / or mitigation measures are included to ensure there are no adverse effects on integrity either alone or in-combination.
Policy CHEV 14 - Biodiversity Net Gain	The policy encourages development proposals to deliver a measurable net gain in biodiversity, which is now established in law via the Environment Act 2021.
Policy CHEV 15 - Local Green Space	The policy designates 5 Local Green Spaces, as identified on the Policies Map and states development in Local Green Spaces will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts.
Policy CHEV 16 - Locally Important Views	Important views from public vantage points are identified on the Policies Map. The policy requires proposals for new buildings outside the Development Envelope to be

	accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, or other appropriate and proportionate evidence.
--	---

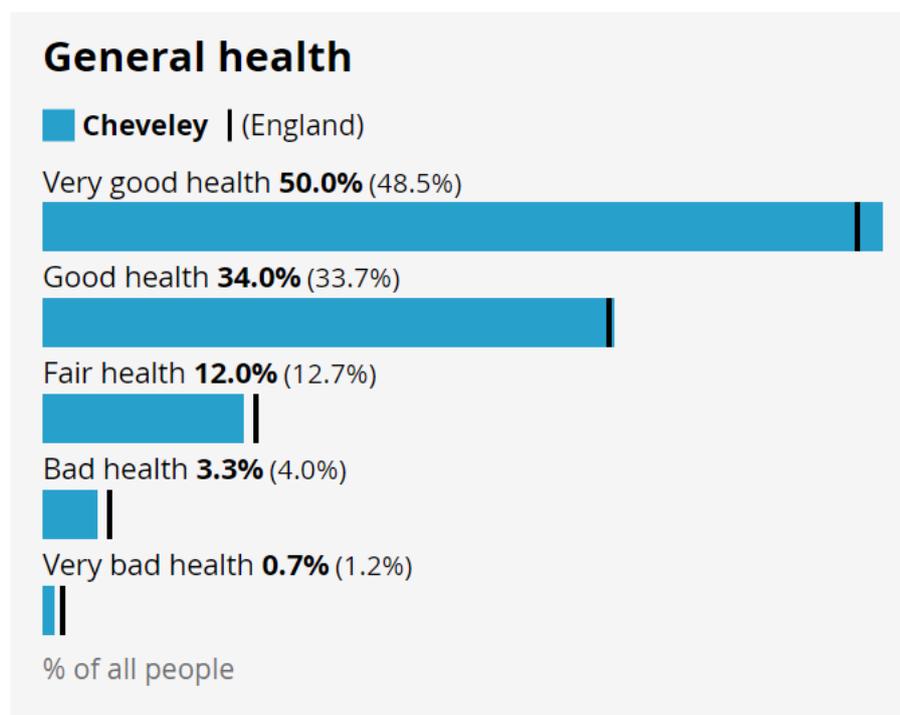
4. Summary of the Environmental Characteristics of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 4.1. To determine the likely significant effects of the CNP on the environment, it is important to consider the characteristics of the area likely to be affected and the key areas of sensitivity. Enough information needs to be included in the screening report to allow the consultation bodies to take a view on the likely significant effects of implementing the plan. For the purposes of screening, it is appropriate to undertake a systematic review of these issues.
- 4.2. The following paragraphs provide a high-level contextual overview of environmental issues and key areas of sensitivity in and around the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area. A range of sources of information have been used to gather this information, including Office for National Statistics, DEFRA Magic Maps, Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps for Planning, and the CNP's own evidence base.

Population and human health

- 4.3. The total population of Cheveley parish at the time of the 2021 Census⁷ was 1,900 people. 51.1% of the total population were female and 48.9% were male, similar to the average for England.
- 4.4. Life expectancy at birth in East Cambridgeshire is above the England average for both males and females⁸. The % of the total population described their health as 'very good' and 34% as 'good'. These figures are above the average for England. 13.8% of the total population were classed as disabled under the Equality Act. This figure is below the England average of 17.3%.

Figure 1: General Health of residents at 2021 Census

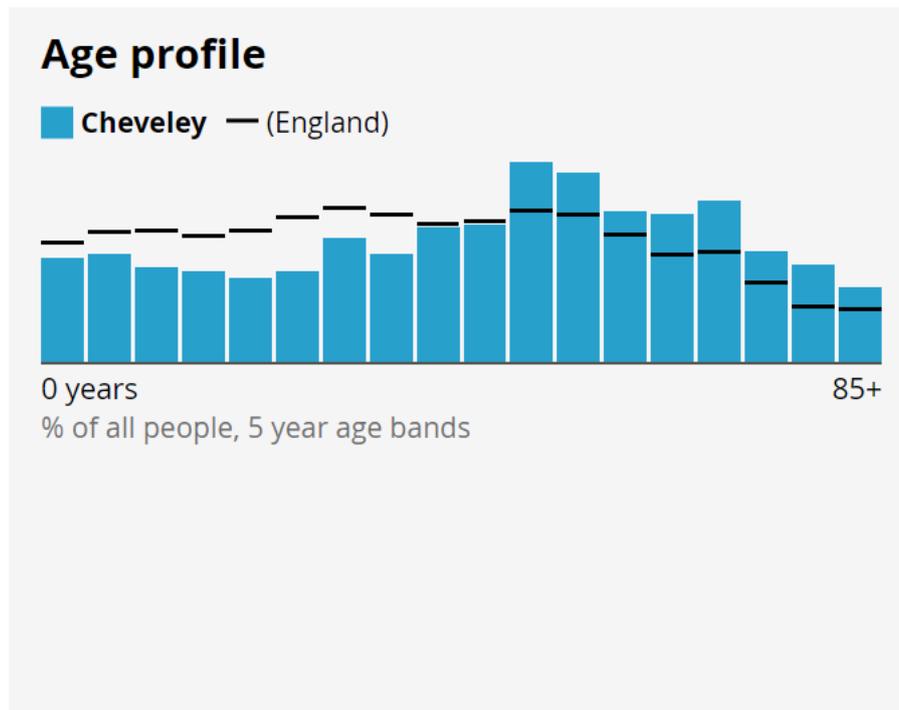


⁷ Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

⁸ Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, access online at <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles>

4.5. The age profile for Cheveley parish reveals that there is a higher proportion of the parish population aged 50 and above than the England average. This can be seen clearly in **Figure 2** below. Conversely, there is a lower proportion of the parish population in the age bands below aged 50 than the England average.

Figure 2: Age profile of residents at 2021 Census



Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

4.6. The 2021 Census recorded a total of 880 households (rounded to the nearest 10). 44% of households were owned outright (above the England average). There are a higher proportion of 4 or more bedroom households compared to the England average. The proportion of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom households are below the England average.

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

Internationally Designated Sites

4.7. There are no European Sites within the boundary of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area. The following European Sites lie within 30km of Cheveley Neighbourhood Area⁹:

- Chippenham Fen Ramsar
- Wicken Fen Ramsar
- Rex Graham Reserve SAC
- Devils Dyke SAC
- Fenland SAC
- Breckland SAC, SPA

⁹ [Click here](#) to view European Sites within 30km of Cheveley Neighbourhood Area

- 4.8. There are no Proposed Ramsar sites, Possible Special Areas of Conservation, or Potential Special Protection Areas in proximity of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area.

National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- 4.9. There are no NNRs within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.10. There are no SSSIs within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area. Part of the Newmarket Heath SSSI is situated close to the northern boundary of the Neighbourhood Area and Devil's Dyke SSSI is located within 6km as the crow flies.
- 4.11. The SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Newmarket Heath SSSI extends across the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area¹⁰. The condition of Newmarket Heath SSSI is recorded as 60% 'favourable' and 40% 'unfavourable recovering'. Newmarket Heath is particularly sensitive to adverse effects from recreational pressure. Note 1 of the IRZ states that new housing development will require an assessment of recreational pressure on relevant SSSIs and measures to mitigate adverse impacts, e.g., alternative open space provision.

Locally Designated Sites

- 4.12. There are no Local Nature Reserves within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.13. There are 2 County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) located within or adjacent to the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area:
- Cheveley Park Stud Veteran Trees; and
 - Warren Hill And Adjacent Areas
- 4.14. CWSs are defined areas, identified and selected locally for their nature conservation value based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species within a national, regional and importantly a local context. CWS are areas of land important for their wildlife and can be found on public and private land. They vary in shape, size and may encompass a variety of different habitat types. The habitats and species present are often because of past management and many sites provide a refuge for rare or threatened plants and animals.

Ancient Woodland

- 4.15. There are no areas of ancient and semi natural woodland or ancient replanted woodland within or adjacent to Cheveley Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.16. The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory¹¹ maps the oldest and most important trees in the UK. It is a live database where records are provided by members of the public and verified by the Woodland Trust. Within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area, there is a cluster of ancient and veteran trees in and around Broad Green.

Priority Habitats

- 4.17. Priority Habitats are those which have been deemed to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity, being listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, and with

¹⁰ [Click here](#) to view SSSIs and IRZs in relation to the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area

¹¹ <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

maintenance and restoration of these habitats being promoted through agri-environment schemes.

- 4.18. Areas of priority habitat within Cheveley Neighbourhood Area have been recorded and mapped by Natural England and include areas of deciduous woodland, traditional orchard, woodpasture and parkland and lowland meadow. They can be viewed in Appendix 4 of the CNP and on DEFRA's Magic Map.

Landscape

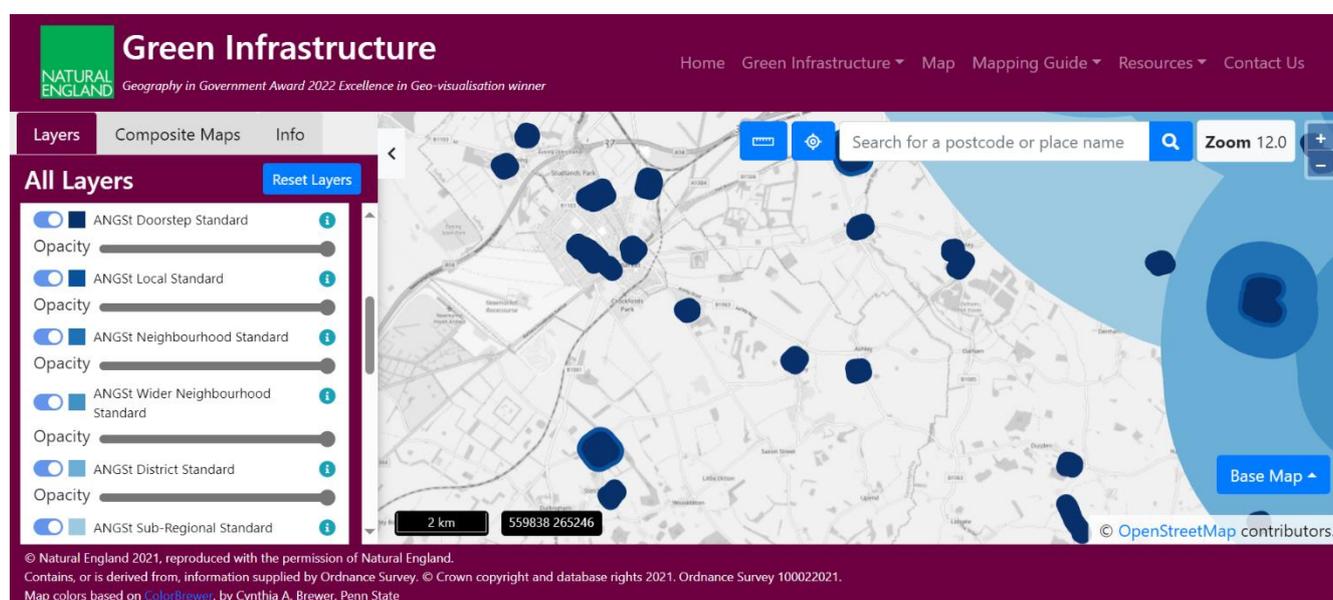
National Character Areas (NCAs)

- 4.19. Cheveley Neighbourhood Area predominantly falls within the East Anglian Chalk NCA.¹² The vast majority of the landscape within this character area is open countryside, under cereal production. Around Newmarket, horse racing and stud farms have a strong influence, which the NCA Profile suggests “have bought a manicured appearance to the landscape”.
- 4.20. A small part of the southern tip of the Neighbourhood Area falls within the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA.¹³

Green Infrastructure

- 4.21. Natural England's Green Infrastructure Map is a useful source of evidence to help understand green infrastructure provision. The mapping shows very few residents within Cheveley Neighbourhood Area have access to a natural greenspace close to home. Small parts of the Neighbourhood Area meet the Doorstep Standard of provision (a greenspace of at least 0.5ha within 200m of home) in Cheveley and south of Centre Drive, as shown in **Figure 3** below.

Figure 3: Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard buffers for Cheveley parish



¹² [87. East Anglian Chalk National Character Area Profile](#)

¹³ [86. South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area Profile](#)

Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage

- 4.22. There is one Conservation Area within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area: Cheveley Village Conservation Area, which covers the central part of Cheveley village¹⁴ and which represents an important concentration of historic features within the Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.23. There are 33 listed buildings within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area (1 Grade I and 32 Grade II).¹⁵ They are mainly concentrated within the village centre, with a further, smaller concentration to the west of Cheveley village to the north of Park Road.
- 4.24. There is one Scheduled Monument within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area: Cheveley Castle, 350m north west of Old Hall Farm.¹⁶
- 4.25. There are no Registered Parks and Gardens in the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.26. There are no historic buildings or sites that are at risk of loss through neglect, decay or development, or vulnerable to becoming so, according to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register 2023¹⁷.

Soil, Air and Water

- 4.27. The Soilscape (England) dataset is based on the National Soil Map of England and Wales (NATMAPvector). There are three main soil types in the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area according to the national soil map¹⁸:
- Shallow lime-rich soils over chalk or limestone
 - Freely draining slightly acid but base rich soils
 - Lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage
- 4.28. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. The ALC data does not distinguish between grades 3a and 3b (instead simply referring to Grade 3). More detailed assessment would be required to identify subgrades 3a and 3b. Most land within the Neighbourhood Area has been classed as Grade 2 and Grade 3. Land north of the B1063 has been classed as Non-Agricultural and Urban.
- 4.29. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are designated because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives. At the time of preparing this report, there were no AQMAs within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area. Indeed, there are no AQMAs within East Cambridgeshire district¹⁹.
- 4.30. The Environment Agency has assessed water company areas and determined whether they are either in 'not serious or in 'serious' water stress.²⁰ Water stress applies both to the natural environment and to public water supplies. Both will be affected by climate change. The Cheveley Neighbourhood Area falls within the Anglian Water company area, which has been classified as seriously water stressed.

¹⁴ [Map of Cheveley Village Conservation Area](#)

¹⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

¹⁶ [Click here](#) to view on DEFRA's Magic Map

¹⁷ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2023-registers/ee-har-register2023/>

¹⁸ [Click here](#) to view on DEFRA's Magic Map

¹⁹ <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/maps/>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification>

- 4.31. The Cheveley Neighbourhood Area does not have a main watercourse running through it. However, according to the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning,²¹ there are areas of fluvial flood risk (i.e. flood risk zones 2 and 3) within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area. These flood risk areas are largely confined to the vicinity of the B1063 Ashley Road, which has a ditch running alongside it. The majority of the Neighbourhood Area, including Cheveley village, is in flood risk zone 1. The Neighbourhood Area is not at risk of flooding from reservoirs, however there are some parts at risk of surface water flooding.
- 4.32. Source Protection Zones for groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs used for public drinking water supply have been designated by the Environment Agency. These zones show the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area. Generally, the closer the activity, the greater the risk. Three main zones (inner, outer and total catchment) have been applied to groundwater sources with a fourth zone of special interest occasionally applied. An Inner zone (Zone 1) is defined as the 50 day travel time from any point below the water table to the source. This zone has a minimum radius of 50 metres.
- 4.33. Most of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Areas falls within SPZ2. Two small areas in the north of the Neighbourhood Area fall within SPZ1.²²

Climatic factors

- 4.34. Greenhouse gas emissions in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are high. The Combined Authority estimate that emissions are 25% higher per person than the UK average.²³ In Autumn 2019 ECDC declared a climate emergency and is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4.35. Car ownership is high in the Neighbourhood Area, with only 8.3% of all households recorded in the 2021 Census with no cars or vans in the household compared to an England average of 23.5%. This is reflected in the method of travel to workplace recorded through the Census, where 53.7% of all people aged 16 years and over in employment travelled to work by driving a car or van. This is above the England average of 44.5%.
- 4.36. The UK climate is changing. A report into the kinds of impacts that are likely to be felt in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough²⁴ found that the region is at high risk from a changing climate. Risks include: flooding, high summer temperatures, water shortages, and damage to the natural carbon stores in the deep peat of the Fens.

Materials assets

- 4.37. The SEA Directive does not define what is meant by 'material assets' and it can be interpreted in several ways. This screening report takes material assets to include a range of social, physical and environmental infrastructure, such as schools, health facilities, roads, railways, bus services, wastewater treatment works, flood defences etc. Impacts on materials assets are likely to relate to several other SEA topics.
- 4.38. Provision of community services and facilities is considered to be generally good in the Neighbourhood Area (draft CNP, para 8.1). They include: a local shop, church, parish hall, primary school, public house and recreation ground. An occasional bus service operates to Newmarket (draft CNP, para 2.3).

²¹ <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

²² [Click here](#) to view on DEFRA's Magic Map

²³ Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate (2021) Fairness, nature and communities: addressing climate change in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

²⁴ CZ (2021), Aines, E.D., Simpson, C., Munro-Faure, A., Shuckburgh, E., Preliminary report on climate risk in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region, 2020-2099, Cambridge Zero, University of Cambridge

5. Development Opportunities within the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area

- 5.1. The following policies, taken from **Table 1** above, provide the main opportunities for new development within the Neighbourhood Area: Policy CHEV 1 Development Strategy; Policy CHEV 4 Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites; Policy CHEV 5 Equine Related Activities outside the Development Envelope; Policy CHEV 6 Infrastructure and Community Facilities. Each are taken in turn:
- 5.2. Draft Policy CHEV 1 Development Strategy is a criteria-based policy which focuses new development within the Development Envelopes of Cheveley and Newmarket Fringe. The principle of a Development Envelope is already established through the Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). The extent of the Development Envelope has been updated through the CNP to take account of development that has taken place since the Local Plan was adopted and any outstanding planning permissions adjoining the Development Envelope that have yet to be built. It is not likely that a significantly different scale or type of development will occur as a consequence of Policy CHEV1 compared with the baseline of the existing development plan.
- 5.3. Draft Policy CHEV 4 Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites supports proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes, including entry level homes for purchase (as defined by paragraph 78 of the NPPF) on rural exception sites outside the settlement boundary, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, which meets certain conditions outlined in the policy. This policy aligns with adopted Local Plan policy HOU4.
- 5.4. Draft Policy CHEV 5 Equine Related Activities outside the Development Envelope supports proposals for equestrian development outside of the Development Envelope provided certain conditions are met as set out in the policy. At para 7.5, the supporting text states that draft Policy CHEV5 provides further considerations to policy EMP5 in the adopted Local Plan which will ensure that proposals have due regard to local characteristics. Any proposals for equine related activities would be subject to compliance with the Local Plan and other local development documents, as appropriate, which, of course, includes wider generic development plan policies relating to, for example, biodiversity and heritage.
- 5.5. Draft Policy CHEV 6 Infrastructure and Community Facilities supports proposals for the provision and enhancement of community facilities and services, where they are in locations accessible on foot within or near the settlement boundary, contribute to the quality of village life and improve the sustainability of the village. As per draft Policy CHEV5, any proposals for new or enhanced community facilities and services would be subject to compliance with the Local Plan and other local development documents, as appropriate, which, of course, includes wider generic development plan policies relating to, for example, biodiversity and heritage.
- 5.6. In conclusion, the development opportunities provided by the proposed CNP reflect, and do not significantly exceed (or decrease), those considered by the current 'made' policies in the adopted Local Plan 2015 (as amended) (or submitted but subsequently withdrawn Local Plan 2018). Therefore, over the plan period, the proposed CNP is not expected to deliver additional growth of any form beyond that which is already identified in the current development plan and assessed, and found acceptable, via previous SEA / HRA assessments.

6. Determination of likely significant environment effects - SEA

6.1. Once data on environmental issues and sensitivities has been gathered, it is then possible to determine whether there would be any likely significant effects (positive or negative) on the environment. The 'responsible authority' in the case of SEA must determine whether a plan or programme, in this case the CNP, is likely to have a significant environmental effect with reference to specified criteria. The following section sets out an assessment of the CNP against these criteria, considering the area characteristics outlined in **Section 4** above.

6.2. When the Plan is read as a whole, and tested against the SEA themes (as set out in Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive), the following conclusions are drawn:

Population and human health:

6.3. Overall, the CNP is not likely to have a significant negative impact on population and human health, given the relatively small population that the plan applies to and as no new sites are specifically allocated for development within the plan. Through its various policy measures, it is likely that the needs of the population, and standards of human health, will be maintained and potentially enhanced. For example, the protection and enhancement of community facilities and services via draft Policy Chev 6 Infrastructure and Community Facilities will provide opportunities for residents to partake in activities to support their physical and mental health and wellbeing. However, these effects are not likely to be 'significant' for the purposes of SEA.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna:

6.4. Overall, the potential for significant negative impacts on biodiversity, flora and fauna to arise from the implementation of the plan are unlikely as the CNP does not allocate new sites for development, and other opportunities for development are relatively limited and broadly aligned with the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2015 as amended 2023).

6.5. It is expected that the CNP will help to protect and enhance biodiversity, flora and fauna in the Neighbourhood Area through the various policy measures it employs, particularly draft5 policies CHEV 13 Conserving and Enhancing Internationally Designated Sites and CHEV 14 Biodiversity Net Gain. Through the protection and enhancement of existing green spaces, the CNP could have positive impact in reducing recreational pressure on SSSIs and CWSs within and in proximity of the Neighbourhood Area.

Landscape:

6.6. There are no nationally designated landscapes within the Neighbourhood Area. The CNP does not allocate new sites for development and therefore, with the policies in the existing development plan and this proposed plan, it is considered unlikely that the CNP would result in a significant impact on the local landscape. Draft policy CHEV 15 designates areas of Local Green Space, which should contribute positively to the character and setting of the Neighbourhood Area. Draft policy CHEV 16 Locally Important Views seeks to protect views highly valued by the local community and requires new buildings outside of the Development Envelope to be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. These policy measures should help to avoid any significant adverse effects on landscape features.

Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage:

6.7. As highlighted in paragraphs 4.22 to 4.26, the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area has a rich heritage with many assets of national significance, which have been afforded statutory designations. Cheveley village has a Conservation Area. There are also several buildings which do not satisfy the criteria for listing at a national level but are locally important.

6.8. The CNP does not allocate any new land or sites for development. Whilst opportunities for infill and windfall exist within the Development Envelope, considering the heritage related policies in the development plan, and this proposed plan (draft policies CHEV 11 Heritage

Assets and CHEV 12 Buildings and Features of Local Heritage Significance), it is considered unlikely that any future development that may come forward within the Neighbourhood Area would adversely impact on any heritage assets or their settings.

Soil, air or water:

- 6.9. There are currently no 'significant' air quality issues in the neighbourhood area. Most of the neighbourhood area falls within Flood Risk Zone 1, with areas in Flood Risk 3 confined to the vicinity of the B1063 Ashley Road. Therefore, fluvial flood risk is relatively low. Furthermore, the CNP does not include any specific site allocations for development and therefore is not anticipated to have any direct implications. Overall, it is unlikely that significant effects on soil, air or water would arise as a result of implementation of the CNP.

Climate Factors:

- 6.10. Climatic factors involve the consideration of a plan or programme in relation to climate change. Climate change adaptation and mitigation are closely interrelated and are closely linked to other environmental issues.
- 6.11. Maintaining and enhancing local services and facilities through draft policy CHEV 6 Infrastructure and Community Facilities may have a positive effect on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport by reducing the need to travel as well as length of journeys. Draft policy CHEV 7 Design Considerations is supported by Design Guidance and Codes which cover environmental and energy efficiency matters, including building fabric, flood mitigation and energy efficient features. This is likely to have a positive effect on this SEA issue.
- 6.12. Overall, it is considered unlikely that implementing the policies in the CNP would give rise to significant effects on climatic factors.

Material assets:

- 6.13. The SEA Directive does not define what is meant by 'material assets' and it can be interpreted in a number of ways. This screening report takes material assets to include a range of social, physical and environmental infrastructure, such as schools, health facilities, roads, railways, bus services, wastewater treatment works, flood defences, etc. Impacts on materials assets are likely to relate to several other SEA topics. It is considered unlikely that that implementation of the CNP would have significant effects on material assets.
- 6.14. Following review, and in conclusion, it is considered **unlikely** that implementation of the CNP will result in significant environmental effects. The main reason for this conclusion is that the CNP is not proposing any new additional site allocations or any other policies which are likely lead to new additional significant growth opportunities. In addition, implementation of all other policies or proposal within the draft CNP is not considered likely to result in any significant environmental effects, especially when compared with the baseline position of the Plan not proceeding.
- 6.15. **Figure 4** provides assessment of the CNP to identify likely significant effects on the environment. The first column uses the SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004 (as set out in **Appendix 1**).

Figure 4: Assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment

The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to —	Assessment of the CNP (September 2023)	Likely significant environmental effect
(a) 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 CNP would, if adopted, form part of the Statutory Development Plan and contribute to the framework for future development projects. However, the CNP would only apply to a very limited geographical area (the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area) where a limited number of proposals are anticipated over the plan period; and, of those proposals, such proposals are already anticipated and tested via existing plans and programmes (such as the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023)). The CNP Plan does not seek to allocate land for development.	None
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The CNP would not influence other plans and programmes to a significant degree due to the locally specific nature of the policies contained within the plan. The CNP is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). The CNP has been prepared having regard to national planning policies and guidance.	None
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	It is a Basic Condition that a Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The proposed CNP includes several policies which promote environmental considerations and promote opportunities for sustainable development. However, the scale of development identified is not expected to exceed that which has been identified and assessed through the preparation of existing plans and programmes.	None
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	There are no specific environmental problems relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan that have not been identified and assessed through the higher-level Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023), the withdrawn Local Plan 2018 and accompanying SA/SEA.	None
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The CNP is not relevant to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment.	None

Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to—	Assessment of the CNP (September 2023)	Likely significant environmental effect
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	<p>The effects of the implementation of the CNP are expected to be minimal in terms of probability, duration and frequency.</p> <p>This has been tested through the SA/SEA of the Local Plan 2015 (as amended) and the withdrawn Local Plan 2018.</p> <p>The draft CNP does not allocate sites for development. The effects of the implementation of the CNP are therefore uncertain to a certain extent, as they will depend on windfall sites that may come forward. However, such windfall sites are expected to be limited to small scale, infill development, and therefore the effects are not likely to be significant and are expected to be minimal. It is likely that some policies may result in positive effects by helping to preserve and enhance the environmental features within the Neighbourhood Area.</p>	None
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	<p>The cumulative effects of development sites identified by the CNP have been considered through the Local Plan process, namely the SA and HRA.</p> <p>The cumulative effects of implementing the CNP, both between the policies within the CNP and with other plans and programmes, are expected to be very limited in nature and scale, as the plan does not identify a quantum of growth, nor allocate specific land or sites for development.</p>	None
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	The CNP is not expected to give rise to any transboundary effects.	None
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	The CNP is not expected to pose any risks to human health or the environment: the effects of policies within the CNP may, if any, enhance these elements.	None
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	<p>The population of Cheveley parish at the time of the 2021 Census was 1,900 people.</p> <p>The Cheveley Neighbourhood Area is coterminous with Cheveley civil parish, which includes the village of Cheveley, the hamlet of Broad Green, and surrounding countryside which is principally in agricultural use. The extent of any effects of the implementation of the CNP are expected to be limited to the immediate local area, the extent of which is, therefore, spatially small and covering a small population.</p>	None

<p>(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—</p> <p>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</p> <p>(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</p> <p>(iii) intensive land-use; and</p>	<p>The scale of growth proposed by the CNP reflects that proposed by the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2015 as amended). The effects of this growth upon the environment have therefore been assessed through the HRA and Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan, and other supporting evidence base documents.</p> <p>The key natural and cultural heritage characteristics of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area are provided in section 4 above. As highlighted in section 6, it is considered unlikely that the CNP would adversely impact the special natural characteristics or cultural heritage of the Neighbourhood Area. The draft CNP is not expected to exceed environmental quality standards or lead to intensive land use.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>There are no protected areas or landscapes within the Neighbourhood Area of a national or international protection status. Therefore, the CNP is unlikely to result in any significant adverse effects.</p>	<p>None</p>

6.16. **Figure 5** applies the advice prepared by the (former) Department of Environment to ascertain whether a full SEA is required for a plan or programme. Please note that as the questions have been answered using the flow diagram, some of the questions may not be applicable because of previous answers: where this is the case, the response is stated as N/A ('not applicable').

Figure 5: Application of the SEA Directive to Draft Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan

Criteria	Response: Yes/ No/ Not applicable	Details
1. Is the NDP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?	Yes	The preparation and adoption of the CNP is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. Whilst the CNP has been prepared by Cheveley Parish Council it will be adopted by ECDC as the local authority. GO TO STAGE 2
2. Is the NDP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions?	Yes	Whilst the production of a Neighbourhood Plan is not a requirement and is optional, it will, if made, form part of the Development Plan for the ECDC area. It is therefore important that this screening process considers the potential effects. GO TO STAGE 3
3. Is the NDP 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 – Town & Country Planning / land use; No - EIA Directive Annex I & II	The CNP is being prepared for town and country planning and land use. It does not set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive. GO TO STAGE 4.
4. Will the NDP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?	No	See Section 7 above. The CNP will not require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? GO TO STAGE 6
5. Does the NDP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of an NDP subject to Art. 3.2?	N/A	
6. Does the NDP set the framework for future development consent of	Yes	Alongside the East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan, once 'made' the CNP will set the

Criteria	Response: Yes/ No/ Not applicable	Details
projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)?		framework for development consents in the neighbourhood area. GO TO STAGE 8
7. Is the NDP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7?	N/A	
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?	No	The extent to which implementation of the CNP will result in likely significant environmental effects is assessed in section 6 and Figure 4 of this screening report. The assessment identifies that no likely significant environmental effects are expected to arise through implementation of the CNP. GO TO CONCLUSION
Conclusion: SEA not required		

7. Determination of likely significant effects on European Sites - HRA

- 7.1. East Cambridgeshire's latest Habitats Regulation Assessment (June 2018) report²⁵ accompanied the submitted, but now withdrawn, Local Plan 2018. The purpose of the HRA report was to set out the method, findings and conclusions of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Stage 1 Screening and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment) of the now withdrawn East Cambridgeshire Local Plan. The HRA was carried out by ECDC, as the competent authority, in consultation with Natural England.
- 7.2. Despite the Local Plan 2018 having been withdrawn, this HRA continues to be considered relevant and appropriate in the context of this HRA screening assessment since it relies on more up to date evidence than the HRA which supported the Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023), such as evidence pertaining to European sites, the current context of recent growth, other authorities' plans and strategies, and the views of stakeholders such as the statutory environmental bodies.
- 7.3. The HRA complies with the judgement of the Court of Justice for the European Union of 12th April 2018. Through the Local Plan examination process, Natural England confirmed the HRA is legally compliant.
- 7.4. The following European Sites, within and outside East Cambridgeshire's administrative boundary, were scoped into the HRA for consideration:
- Fenland SAC (including Wicken Fen, Woodwalton Fen and Chippenham Fen Ramsars)
 - Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar
 - Devil's Dyke SAC
 - Breckland SAC/SPA
- 7.5. As discussed in paragraph 4.7 above, within Cheveley parish (and consequently the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area), there are no European Sites.
- 7.6. The HRA was prepared to assess the effects of the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018. The withdrawn Local Plan proposed higher growth levels than the current adopted Local Plan 2015 (as amended). The potential likely significant effects on designated sites arising from the withdrawn Local Plan were:
- Habitat damage and/or loss
 - Disturbance from urbanisation effects
 - Disturbance from increased recreational pressure
 - Reduced air quality as a result of increased vehicle journeys
 - Water quality changes from water consumption and abstraction
 - Reduced water quality from pollution due to increased demand for waste-water treatment
- 7.7. A summary of the scoped in European sites is as follows:
- Fenland SAC - Wicken Fen**
- 7.8. The centre of Cheveley Neighbourhood Area is located approximately 15.7km as the crow flies from the centre of Wicken Fen. The HRA identified the following pressures and threats which could arise were the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 implemented:
- *Increased recreational pressure:* The site lies within the East Cambridgeshire area and Natural England have advised that the qualifying features of the site are under threat from increased visitor pressure. The screening assessment identified the potential for likely significant effects due to residential site allocations being within 8km of the site boundary

²⁵ See

<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/HRA%20Appropriate%20Assessment%20Post%20Submission%20Local%20Plan%20-%20published%2015.6.18.pdf>

of the Ramsar. These could be significant in-combination, i.e. total recreation pressure from multiple residential developments within and beyond the study area.

- *Water quality:* The features of this site are sensitive to water quality changes. Water quality is important for floodplain fen, which is dependent on an adequate supply of nutrients being maintained to support aquatic habitats and the range of species associated with them.
- *Water quantity:* The features of this site are water resource sensitive.

7.9. Whilst growth is a potential threat to the Fenland SAC – Wicken Fen, the CNP does not make site allocations and provides only limited opportunities for new development. This approach reflects the growth strategy of the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 (the subject of the HRA), and the current adopted Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). Therefore, likely significant effects on the integrity of the Wicken Fen SAC are not expected to arise from implementation of the CNP.

Fenland SAC – Chippenham Fen

7.10. The centre of Cheveley Neighbourhood Area is located approximately 9km as the crow flies from the centre of Chippenham Fen. The HRA identified the following pressures and threats which could arise were the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 implemented:

- *Increased recreational pressure:* This European Site lies within the East Cambridgeshire area and Natural England have advised that the qualifying features of the site are under threat from increased visitor pressure. The screening assessment identified the potential for likely significant effects due to residential site allocations being within 8km of the site boundary of the Ramsar. These could be significant in-combination, i.e. total recreation pressure from multiple residential developments within and beyond the study area.
- *Urbanisation:* An employment allocation in Fordham is less than 400m from the site boundary of Chippenham Fen. The site's features are therefore potentially exposed to increased urbanisation pressure.
- *Water quality:* The features of this site are sensitive to water quality changes, particularly high nutrient water reaching the fen from a mixture of groundwater, rainwater and run-off.
- *Water quantity:* The features of this site are water resource sensitive, with concerns water does not seep into site compartments between ditches to the extent it once did.

7.11. Whilst growth is a potential threat to the Fenland SAC – Chippenham Fen, the CNP does not make site allocations within 8km of this European Site and provides only limited opportunities for new development. This approach reflects the growth strategy of the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 (the subject of the HRA), and the current adopted Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). Therefore, likely significant effects on the integrity of the Chippenham Fen SAC are not expected to arise from implementation of the CNP.

Fenland SAC - Woodwalton Fen

7.12. The centre of Cheveley Neighbourhood Area is located approximately 51km as the crow flies from the centre of Woodwalton Fen.

7.13. Woodwalton Fen was screened in for consideration prior to Stage 1 Screening, however the screening assessment did not identify any potential impact pathways between this site and the proposals in the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018. On this basis, Woodwalton Fen was ruled out of further consideration in the HRA.

Ouse Washes

7.14. The centre of Cheveley Neighbourhood Area is located approximately 31.7km as the crow flies from the Ouse Washes.

7.15. The HRA identified the following pressures and threats which could arise were the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 implemented:

- *Physical damage/ loss of habitat:* Some site allocations within the Local Plan fall within the 'Goose and Swan Functional IRZ' for this site, recently prepared by Natural England. Land within this zone is considered to be potentially functionally linked to the

Ouse Washes and therefore there is the potential for likely significant effects on the integrity of the European Site.

- *Increased recreational pressure:* This European Site lies within the East Cambridgeshire area and Natural England have advised that the qualifying features of the site are under threat from increased visitor pressure. The screening assessment identified the potential for likely significant effects due to residential site allocations in the Plan being within 8km of the site boundary of the SPA. These could be significant in-combination, i.e. total recreation pressure from multiple residential developments within and beyond the study area.
- *Water quality:* The features of this site are sensitive to water quality changes, particularly inappropriate levels of nutrients from diffuse pollution in combination with inappropriate water levels.
- *Water quantity:* The features of this site are water resource sensitive and are particularly vulnerable to increased flooding.

7.16. The HRA identifies that land beyond the boundary of the Ouse Washes may also provide important functional habitat for qualifying bird species. The HRA provides advice on development proposals on greenfield sites that fall within the Goose and Swan Functional Land IRZ to ensure there are no adverse effects on the qualifying species of the Ouse Washes. No part of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Area is located inside the Goose & Swan Functional Land IRZ.

7.17. Whilst growth is a potential threat to the Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar, the CNP does not make any new site allocations within 8km of this European Site and provides only limited opportunities for new development. This approach reflects the growth strategy of the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 (the subject of the HRA), and the current adopted Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). Therefore, likely significant effects on the integrity of the Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar are not expected to arise from implementation of the CNP.

Devil's Dyke

7.18. The Devil's Dyke runs from Reach village and extends to Woodditton. The full extent of the Devil's Dyke is over 11km long, with varying SAC and SSSI designations. The centre of Cheveley Neighbourhood Area is approximately 6.4km away as the crow flies from the nearest part of Devil's Dyke.

7.19. The HRA provides the following summary of threats and pressures to Devil's Dyke SAC, relating to habitat damage or loss, and recreational pressure:

"This species rich calcareous grassland is vulnerable to vegetation succession by rank grasses and requires active management by grazing. It is also vulnerable to increased recreational pressure. Habitat degradation is occurring, particularly through trampling of vegetation and soil enrichment from dog excrement. Antisocial behaviour such as littering, fires and other activities is damaging vegetation. Dogs off leads also pose a risk to the continuance of the essential long term management of the site through livestock grazing. The site is also potentially at risk from atmospheric nitrogen deposition, although the site improvement plan states this requires further investigation." (p16, Habitats Regulations Assessment 2018)

7.20. In addition, the HRA identifies that air pollution is a key issue for Devil's Dyke, since it lies within 200m of the A14 and A1304. Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP) for Devil's Dyke states: *"nitrogen deposition exceeds the site-relevant critical load for ecosystem protection and hence there is a risk of harmful effects, but the sensitive features are currently considered to be in favourable condition on the site. This requires further investigation"*.

7.21. According to the SIP, Devil's Dyke SAC does not support any notified species that are sensitive to changes to water quality and/or quantity and does not list this impact as a priority pressure or threat.

7.22. In summary, potential pressures or threats to the Devil's Dyke SAC are:

- *Increased recreational pressure:* This European Site lies within the East Cambridgeshire area and Natural England have advised that the qualifying features of the site are under threat from increased visitor pressure. The screening assessment identified the potential for likely significant effects due to residential site allocations being within 8km of the site boundary of the SAC. These could be significant in-combination, i.e. total recreation pressure from multiple residential developments within and beyond the study area.
- *Reduced air quality:* The interest features of the SAC are sensitive to atmospheric pollutants and Devil's Dyke lies within 200m of the A14 and A1304, which may be used by new residents of site allocations in the settlements of: Bottisham, Burrough Green/Burrough End, Dullingham, Swaffham Bulbeck, Swaffham Prior to access services and facilities in Newmarket. There is therefore potential for likely significant effects.

7.23. Whilst growth is a potential threat to the Devil's Dyke SAC, the CNP does not make new site allocations within 8km this European Site and provides only limited opportunities for new development. This approach reflects the growth strategy of the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 (the subject of the HRA), and the current adopted Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). Therefore, likely significant effects on the integrity of the Devil's Dyke SAC are not expected to arise from implementation of the CNP.

Breckland SAC/SPA

7.24. The centre of Cheveley Neighbourhood Area is located approximately 10.7km from the nearest part of Breckland SAC/SPA. The HRA identified the following potential pressures and threats which could arise were the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 implemented:

- *Physical damage/ loss of habitat* Site allocation KEN.M1 within the Local Plan falls within the IRZ for Breckland Farmland SSSI, a component of Breckland SPA. Land within this zone is considered to be potentially functionally linked to Breckland and therefore there is the potential for likely significant effects on the integrity of the European Site.
- *Increased recreational pressure:* Whilst the site is outside of the East Cambridgeshire area, a mixed use site allocation at Kennett (KEN.M1) is approximately 2km from Breckland Farmland SSSI, a component of Breckland SPA and falls within the IRZ for this SSSI. The Breckland Farm SSSI has interest features that are potentially sensitive to increased recreational pressure. The screening assessment identified the potential for likely significant effects due to residential site allocations in the Plan being within 8km of the site boundary of the SPA. These could be significant in-combination, i.e. total recreation pressure from multiple residential developments within and beyond the study area.
- *Urbanisation:* Whilst urbanisation is recognised in the SIP for Breckland SPA/SAC as a priority issue, there is no development proposed in the Local Plan within 400m of the site boundary. The Local Plan will therefore have no effect via this pathway.

7.25. Whilst growth is a potential threat to the Breckland SPA/SAC, the CNP does not make new site allocations and provides only limited opportunities for new development. This approach reflects the growth strategy of the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 (the subject of the HRA), and the current adopted Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). Therefore, likely significant effects on the integrity of the Breckland SPA/SAC are not expected to arise from implementation of the CNP.

Potential for likely significant effects

7.26. The HRA prepared for the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 concluded that:

...after taking into account the above mitigation measures and consideration of other plans, that there will be no likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on the Ouse Washes SAC/SPA or Fenland SAC, resulting from water quality or quantity changes through the implementation of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

7.27. Natural England confirmed the HRA followed accepted methodology, was in line with relevant legislation and guidance, and agreed with the conclusion of the HRA.

- 7.28. The CNP's growth strategy reflects that of the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018 and the current adopted Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). The CNP does not make new site allocations and provides only limited opportunities for new development. The effects arising from planned development on the integrity of European sites have been previously tested through the HRA of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

HRA Screening: Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan, September 2023

- 7.29. Having regard to the nature of the policies in the CNP and vulnerabilities of European Sites, this HRA screening considers that the CNP is not likely to have a significant effect on any European Site, either alone or in combination, with other plans and projects.

8. Screening Outcome

- 8.1. The CNP does not allocate any land or sites for development. The effects of any potential growth have been considered previously through the submitted but now withdrawn East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and supporting evidence base, including the Sustainability Appraisal (which incorporated SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment, and the adopted East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). For the purposes of SEA screening, this evidence base is considered appropriate and relevant.
- 8.2. To take an alternative approach, such as preparing evidence bespoke to the CNP would be disproportionate and result in unnecessary duplication. This would be contrary to national planning policy.
- 8.3. Several CNP policies are particularly environmentally conscientious and address environmental issues positively by seeking to improve the quality of new development to reduce its impacts on the environment. However, for the purposes of SEA, these effects are not considered 'significant'.
- 8.4. Based on the findings of the screening assessment in section 6 and subject to consultation with Statutory Agencies, ECDC is of the view that the implementation of the CNP will not result in likely significant environmental effects. **As such, a full SEA is not required for the Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan (September 2023).**
- 8.5. The assessment in section 7 also considers the effects of the CNP in respect of European sites. The assessment determines that implementation of the CNP is not expected to result in likely significant effects on European sites. **As such, a full HRA is not required for the Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan (September 2023).**
- 8.6. If the objectives, aims and/or policies covered by the CNP should change significantly during the plan-making process, this screening process will be reviewed.

Appendix 1 SEA assessment criteria

Article 3, Scope

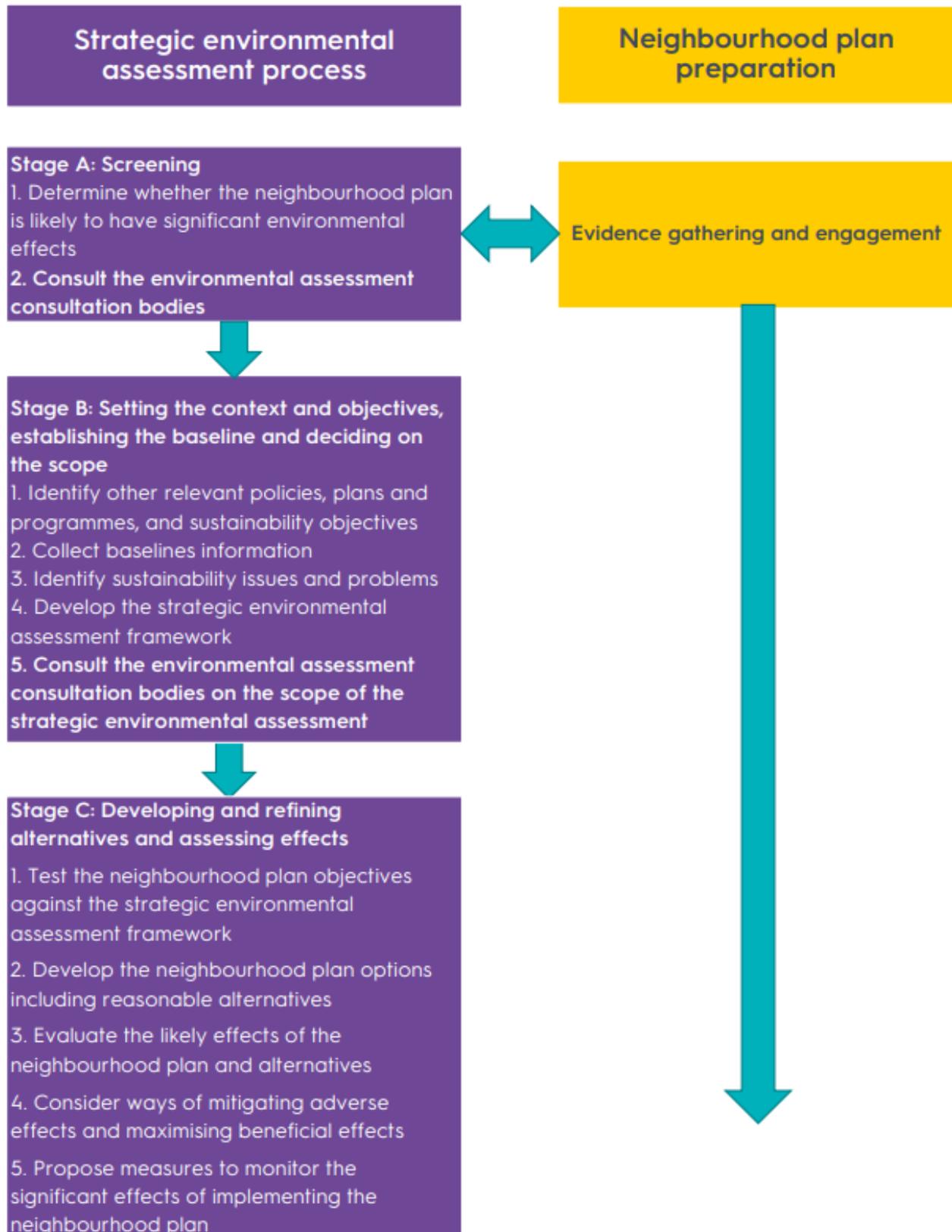
5. Member States shall determine whether plans or programmes referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 are likely to have significant environmental effects either through case-by-case examination or by specifying types of plans and programmes or by combining both approaches. For this purpose Member States shall in all cases take into account relevant criteria set out in Annex II, in order to ensure that plans and programmes with likely significant effects on the environment are covered by this Directive.

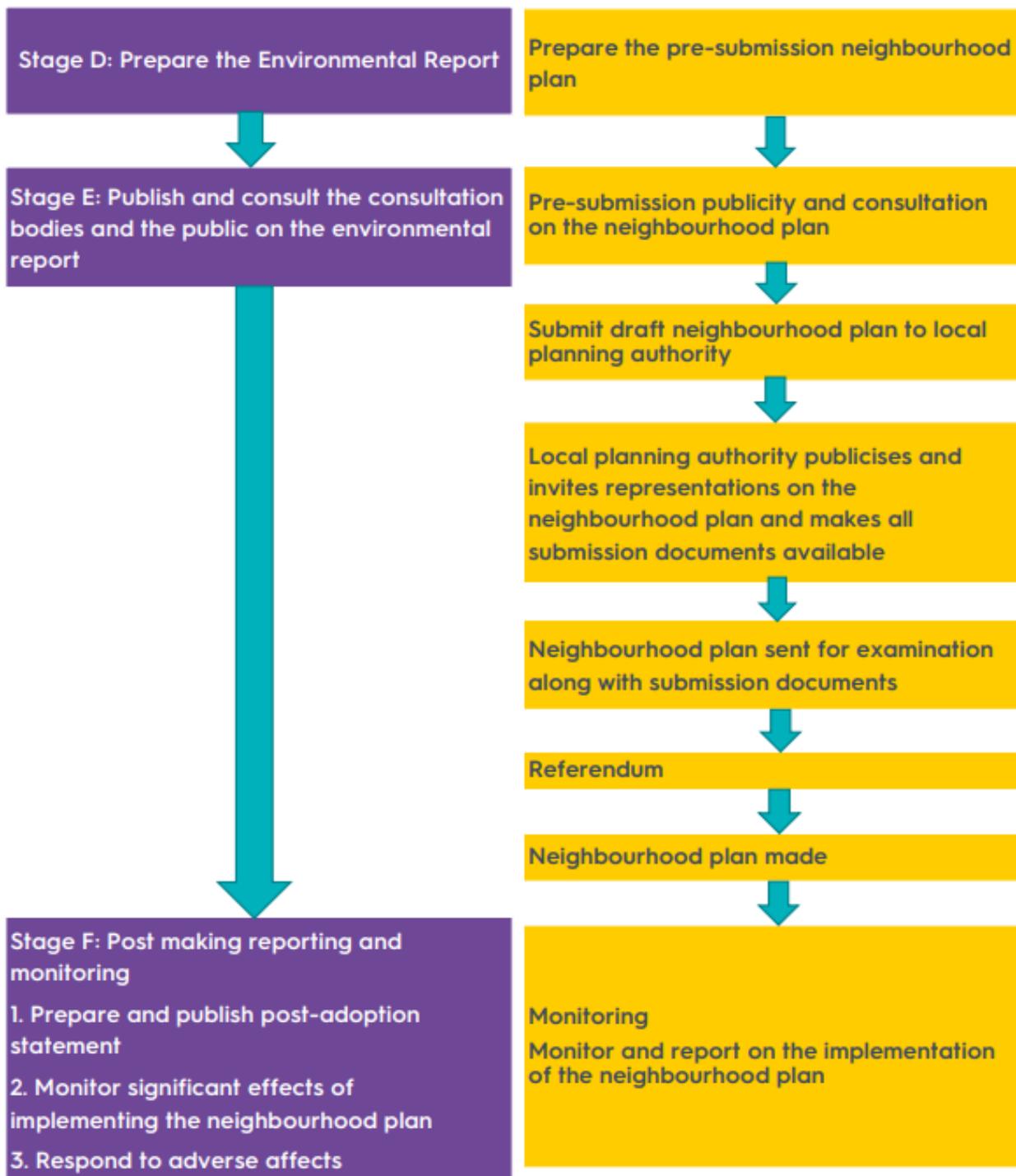
Annex II Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5)

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.

Appendix 3: SEA process for Neighbourhood Planning

(source: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#Strategic-environmental-assessment-process>)





Appendix 4: Consultation with Statutory Agencies

On 30 November 2023, the statutory agencies (Natural England; Historic England and the Environment Agency) were formally consulted on this Screening Report, and were asked to set out any representations by 4 January 2024.

Two responses received within the allotted time, with the third (by EA) received after the deadline but included as follows:

Natural England (20 December 2024):

Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan - SEA / HRA Screening Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 30 November 2023.

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

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

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

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites, either alone or in combination, are unlikely. (Habitats sites are those referred to in the National Planning Policy Framework (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites")

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

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the Planning Practice Guidance.

This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

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

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's standing advice on protected species.

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

Natural England/Forestry Commission standing advice.

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

HRA screening considers that the Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on any European Site, either alone or in combination, with other plans and projects and Natural England concurs.

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

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely
Sally Wintle
Consultations Team

Historic England (7 December 2024)

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore we welcome this opportunity to review the Screening Report for this plan. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Cheveley 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. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice

on later stages of the SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan) where we consider that, despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

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

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

Ross McGivern (he/him)
Historic Places Adviser

Environment Agency 9 January 2024

Thank you for consulting us on the SEA Screening for Cheveley.

Following on from our comments, dated 25 October 2023, we have no detailed comments to make in relation to your plan at this stage. This is because there are no allocated sites within the plan, and therefore we have had to focus our detailed engagement to those areas where the environmental risks are greatest.

As mentioned in our previous response, we aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment. The Neighbourhood plan area contains portions of Flood Zone 3 (FZ3) principally along Ashley Road. The area also contains areas of Source Protection Zones (SPZ) 1, 2 and 3. However, since there are no new allocated sites, we won't be providing specific comments on these environmental constraints, however, any future developments should address these in their planning applications.

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

The Local Authority will be able to advise if there are areas at risk from surface water flood risk (including groundwater and sewerage flood risk) in your neighbourhood plan area. The Surface Water Management Plan will contain recommendations and actions about how such sites can help reduce the risk of flooding. This may be useful when developing policies or guidance for particular sites and sustainable drainage measures can complement other objectives such as enhancing green spaces.