

Weldon Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement

July 2024

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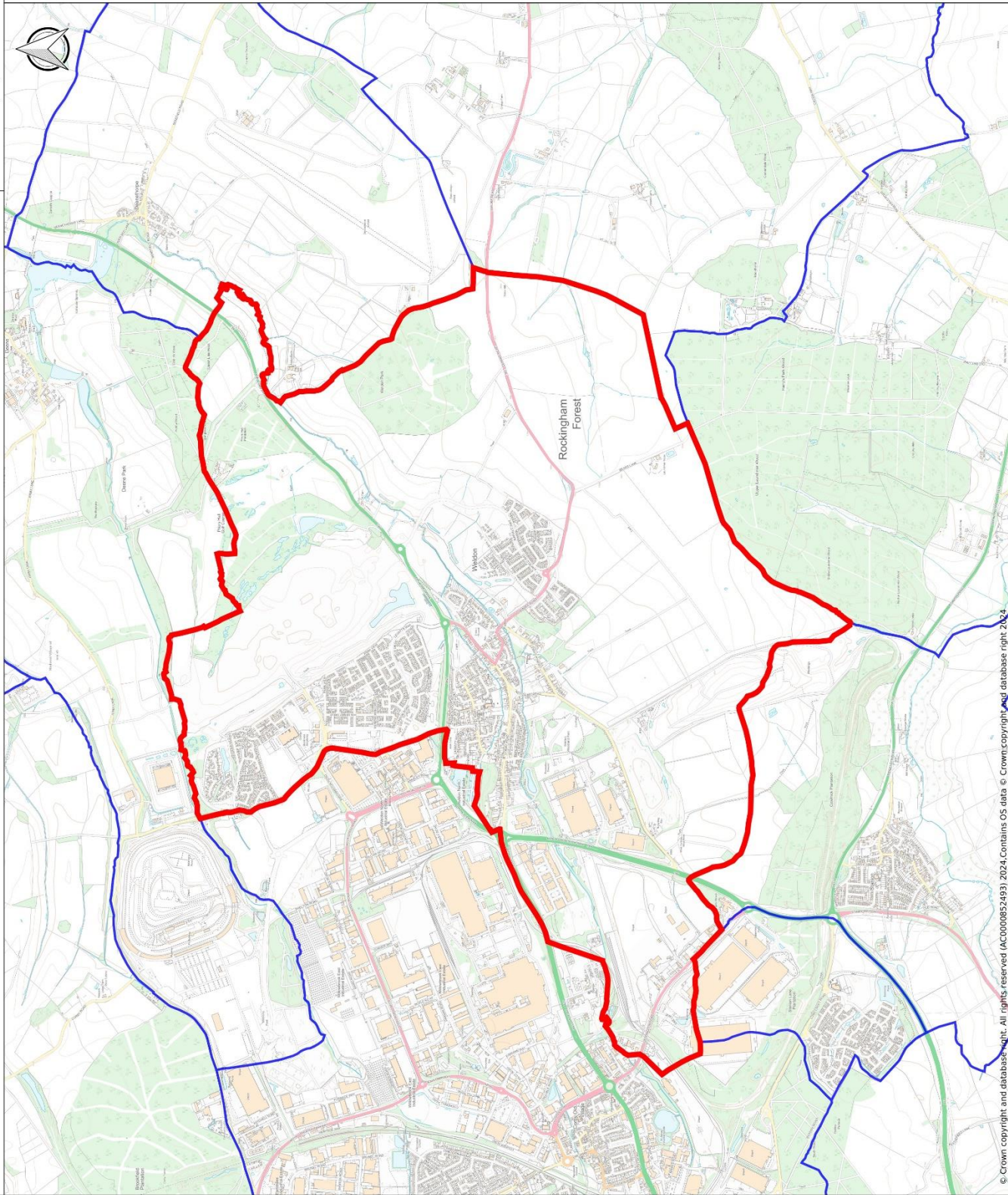
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement has been prepared on behalf of Weldon Parish Council by Planit-X Town and Country Planning Services in relation to the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan (Draft Pre-Submission May 2024) (1st Draft (Regulation 14) Consultation).
- 1.2 The purpose of the Screening Statement is to set out a screening opinion in relation to whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is required to accompany the development of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan. The Screening Statement is to be provided to the statutory consultation bodies for SEA (Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England) for their opinion.
- 1.3 SEA is a systematic process undertaken to evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of plans. The requirement for SEA in England was introduced in 2004 through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation 2004 ('The SEA Regulations'), which transposed the European SEA Directive (2001/42/EC).¹
- 1.4 One of the 'Basic Conditions' that a neighbourhood plan is tested against is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union obligations, including obligations under the SEA Directive. Neighbourhood plans only require SEA where they are likely to lead to significant environmental effects. To decide whether a proposed Neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it should be screened against the criteria set out in Annex 2 of the SEA Directive. Where it is determined that the Neighbourhood plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require SEA), a statement of reasons for this determination should be prepared and published for consultation with the statutory consultation bodies (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England). Where a Neighbourhood plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment an SEA process must be carried out.
- 1.5 This Screening Statement therefore provides a screening opinion as to whether or not the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant environment effects, and as such requires a SEA process.

¹ 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, which previously implemented the requirements of the SEA Directive in England, will continue to apply as before unless and until new legislation is introduced.



2. Details of the Neighbourhood Plan

Title of the plan:

- 2.1 Weldon Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2031.

Name of Qualifying Body and Local Planning Authority:

- 2.2 The qualifying body preparing the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is Weldon Parish Council. The Local Planning Authority is North Northamptonshire Council.
- 2.3 From 1 April 2021, North Northamptonshire Council became the single unitary council responsible for providing a range of public services to residents and businesses in the areas of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough. It has replaced Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council, Kettering Borough Council and the Borough Council of Wellingborough, and now delivers all the services which were previously provided by these councils.

Weldon Parish Neighbourhood Plan contact point:

Email: scweldonpc@gmail.com

Location and spatial extent of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan:

- 2.4 The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan covers the Weldon Neighbourhood Area, comprising the parish of Weldon which is located within North Northamptonshire. It is a large rural parish immediately to the east of Corby, with a population of 6,800 and 2,600 homes (2021 Census).
- 2.5 The Prior Hall Park and Weldon Park developments, located within the Parish, have resulted in significant housing growth and a range of services and facilities, including play areas, schools and community centre. For planning purposes these two areas are located within the Corby Urban Area.
- 2.6 The old village of Weldon is distinct from these developments and has a good range of services including pubs, cricket club, village store and post office, village hall and a village green.
- 2.7 The Parish is located within the Rockingham Forest Landscape Area. Local employment is provided in the form of a working farm and industrial units.

Timeframe of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan:

2.8 2024 to 2031.

Main aims of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan:

2.9 The following vision statement has been prepared for the Plan and makes it clear what the Plan is aiming to achieve:

Weldon Parish is a geographically large parish with deep historical roots.

Whilst we acknowledge the significant changes that will follow the building-out of the Strategic Development site within the Neighbourhood Area, our vision seeks to ensure the retention of the rural character and green spaces of the remainder of the Neighbourhood Area through incorporating small-scale expansion in conjunction with the existing settlements of Weldon village. Future housing provision should be in keeping with the village character and should include a mix of housing to cater for young people, older people and those with disabilities, including affordable homes to allow younger families to live in the parish and to contribute to its development. Public transport provision, a wider range of employment opportunities, adequate broadband speeds to encourage home working, and a managed traffic system are part of the vision for the future.

We wish to see the strategic developments protect the open spaces that form a strong element of the master plan, and for the design guide to be followed in each distinctive area.

The vision is for strengthening further a healthy community spirit and for future development to enable the overall rural identity of the parish to be retained and to ensure connectivity within and between settlements.

In 2031 Weldon parish will have retained its existing character, friendliness and sense of community that parishioners are so proud of. Outside the strategic site it will remain a unique rural settlement with distinct areas of separation from other local villages and towns, enjoying open views of the countryside and increased access to areas of natural beauty.

2.10 To achieve the vision the Plan will:

- Ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations.
- Require the strategic developments to follow their design guides and promote good design across the Parish.
- Encourage the right types of development that meets local needs, including the needs of people with disabilities.
- Protect important community facilities that are special to the community and encourage new facilities that meet the needs of a growing population.
- Facilitate appropriate employment opportunities.

- Enable the community to have good access to the surrounding open countryside and green spaces.
- Ensure that car parking is sufficient for the development.
- Work to improve connectivity between the settlements within the Parish.
- Safeguard open spaces that are important to the community and/or wildlife.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle connections within the Neighbourhood Area and into the surrounding areas.

Relationship with the Local Plan:

- 2.11 The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the North Northamptonshire Development Plan. For the purposes of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan, the relevant parts are the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (Adopted July 2016) and the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby 2011-2031 (Adopted September 2021).
- 2.12 The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was adopted in July 2016. It is the overall strategic plan for North Northamptonshire setting out the spatial strategy. Corby is a focus for growth.
- 2.13 The Part 2 Local Plan for Corby develops in more detail the strategy outlined in the JCS and identifies sites for uses such as housing, employment and open space. It also contains development management policies which will be used to assess planning applications over the plan period. The Part 2 Local Plan for Corby defines the Settlement Boundary around the old village of Weldon.
- 2.14 A parallel process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was undertaken alongside the plan-making process for these two documents.
- 2.15 Work has started on the North Northamptonshire Local Plan Review, to take into account changes since 2016 and extend the plan period to 2041. The Plan will cover both strategic and non-strategic matters. An initial consultation on its scope and issues was undertaken in March 2022. The Local Plan is due to be sent to the Secretary State for examination in 2024 and its adoption is anticipated for 2026.

Will the Weldon Parish Neighbourhood Plan propose allocations? And if so, will these be over and above those likely to be included in the Local Plan?

- 2.16 The Joint Core Strategy identifies a hierarchy of settlements, based on their sustainability, for the purposes of determining the distribution of

housing across North Northamptonshire. Corby is identified as a Growth Town and the focus for the majority of growth. Weldon villages is a rural area. For planning purposes Priors Hall Park and Weldon Park, comprising the North East Corby Sustainable Urban Extension, are located within the Corby Urban Area.

- 2.17 The Part 2 Local Plan for Corby confirms that there is an oversupply of housing in the rural parishes. The significant development that has taken place on the strategic sites (Priors Hall Park and Weldon Park) are acknowledged. There is therefore no specific housing requirement identified for Weldon.
- 2.18 A rural housing needs survey conducted in October 2017 identified 40 new homes needed in the Parish (26 of which to be in the form of affordable rent or ownership). This target however has been exceeded as a result of the development at Priors Hall Park.
- 2.19 Therefore, there are no proposed housing allocations in the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan.

What are the key environmental assets (including 'sensitive areas') near the Weldon Neighbourhood Area?

'Sensitive areas'

- 2.20 A key determinant of whether effects are likely to be significant is the sensitivity of the asset affected. In this context, the more environmentally sensitive a location, the more likely it is that potential environmental effects from a plan will be significant.
- 2.21 National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on this topic through providing a list of sites and areas which should be deemed as 'sensitive areas' for the purposes of environmental assessment. These comprise:
- Natura 2000 site;
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
 - National Parks;
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - World Heritage Sites; and
 - Scheduled Monuments.
- 2.22 In the context of the categories of 'sensitive areas' described by the Planning Practice Guidance, the following sites and areas exist within or near the Neighbourhood Area.

Natura 2000 sites

Within the Neighbourhood Area:

- 2.23 There are no Special Protection Areas or Special Areas of Conservation present within the Neighbourhood Area.

Within 10km of the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.24 The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) is located approximately 9.4km to the south east of the Parish Neighbourhood Area. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area/Ramsar site was formally classified by the UK government in 2011. It covers 1,358 hectares across four local authority areas. It is a composite site comprising 20 separate blocks of land and water fragmented by roads and other features and located adjacent and / or close to urban areas.
- 2.25 The SPA is legally protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitat Regulations) for several reasons. Specifically, it is a wetland of International Importance used regularly by more than 20,000 water birds and by 2.3% of the UK Golden Plover population. Key threats to the SPA are recreational disturbance to water birds, and poorly designed or located development.
- 2.26 All SPA's are also notified as SSSIs, being sites that are of specific biological or geological features.
- 2.27 There are no Special Areas of Conservation present within 10km of the Neighbourhood Area. The nearest SAC is the Orton Pit SAC 20km to the east of the Neighbourhood Area.

SSSIs

Within the Neighbourhood Area

Cowthick Quarry

- 2.28 A site of national importance for its geology. Cowthick exposes the best and most instructive sections of their kind in the Middle Jurassic rocks of the Midlands. Its section consists of the Northamptonshire Ironstone, Grantham Formation and Lincolnshire Limestone. Comprises two units. One unit is within the Neighbourhood Area. The other unit is immediately adjacent to the southern boundary.
- 2.29 Condition: No identified threat.

Weldon Park

- 2.30 One of the largest intact ancient woodlands in the county to have survived unaffected by post-war clearance or plantation forestry. The site is composed entirely of semi-natural vegetation developed on Boulder clay with ash-maple and hazel-ash canopy types of the Rockingham Forest area well represented. The wood has a rich flora for its size, an

uncommon vegetation variant on the wettest soils of the south-east quarter, and unspoiled, old grassland in the rides of great botanical interest.

- 2.31 Condition: Unfavourable - Recovering

Within 5km of Neighbourhood Area

Banhaw, Spring and Blackthorns Woods

- 2.32 Banhaw, Spring and Blackthorns Woods consist of three neighbouring blocks of semi-natural broadleaved woodland which together form one of the largest remnants of the ancient Royal Forest of Rockingham. The vegetation conforms to the wet ash-maple woodland type with a coppice and standards structure, overlying calcareous clay soils. Condition: Favourable

- 2.33 900m to the east of the Neighbourhood Area.

- 2.34 Condition: Unfavourable - Recovering

Bulwick Meadows

- 2.35 Two adjacent meadows occupying the valley side and flood plain of the Willow Brook. Water draining from the Lower Lincolnshire Limestone emerges as seepage areas where it meets the more impervious Lower Estuarine Series deposits. This, together with the high water table of the valley floor alluvium has given rise to a complex mosaic of marshy grassland communities.

- 2.36 Condition: Unfavourable - Recovering

- 2.37 2.9km to the north of the Neighbourhood Area.

Geddington Chase

- 2.38 Geddington Chase is the third largest extant ancient woodland in Northamptonshire and was formerly part of the Royal Forest of Rockingham. This SSSI defines the biggest discrete block of remaining semi-natural broadleaved woodland. The site is a good example of the wet ash-maple woods, a type which has significantly declined. The ground flora is diverse and the whole complex supports a wide range of common birds and insects. Comprises 1 unit.

- 2.39 Condition: Unfavourable – recovering.

- 2.40 2.9km to the south- west of the Neighbourhood Area.

Glaphorn Cow Pasture

- 2.41 Glaphorn Cow Pasture is an area of dense blackthorn scrub and ash-maple woodland which supports the largest colony of the black hairstreak butterfly *Strymonidia pruni* in Northamptonshire, and is one of the most important sites for this species in Britain.

2.42 Condition: Unfavourable - recovering

2.43 4.5km to the west of the Neighbourhood Area.

Sudborough Green Lodge Meadows

2.44 Two adjacent hay meadows on gently undulating boulder clay, the larger of which is agriculturally unimproved with extensive medieval ridge and furrow. The sward mostly comprises a characteristic example of the crested dog's-tail-common knapweed-lady's bedstraw sub-community. In discrete areas an uncommon upright brome *Bromus erectus* occurs. The smaller meadow is of a semi-improved but herb-rich character and is managed similarly.

2.45 Condition: Favourable – No identified condition threat

2.46 4.6km to the south east of the Neighbourhood Area.

National Parks

Within the Neighbourhood Area

2.47 None.

Near the Neighbourhood Area

2.48 None – the closest National Park is the Peak District National Park (located approximately 93km to the north west of the Parish).

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Within the Neighbourhood Area

2.49 None.

Near the Neighbourhood Area

2.50 None- the closest is the Chilterns AONB (located 57km to the south of the Parish).

World Heritage Sites

Within the Neighbourhood Area

2.51 None.

Near the Neighbourhood Area

2.52 None- the closest site is the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (located approximately 72km to the north west of the Parish).

Scheduled Monuments

Within the Neighbourhood Area

Little Weldon Roman Villa

2.53 Excavations have resulted in the discovery of a villa and outbuildings along with mosaics and a roman bath.

Roundhouse or lock-up

2.54 This building was probably built in the 1700s and was used as the village lock up, before a national system of policing was introduced.

Near the Neighbourhood Area

Kirby Hall

- 2.55 The monument includes the standing remains (both ruined and roofed) of Kirby Hall, begun in 1570, the buried remains of associated service buildings and the earthwork and buried remains of the formal gardens, laid out in the 17th Century. Also included are the surviving earthworks and buried remains of the village of Kirby, a small settlement established in the late Anglo-Saxon period and fully abandoned by the early 17th Century.
- 2.56 Distance from Neighbourhood Area – 485m to the north of the Neighbourhood Area boundary.

Roman Road in Hazel Wood

- 2.57 The first roads in Britain were built by the Roman legions, which had their own surveyors, engineers and the equipment they needed for this type of construction work. The availability of local materials dictated the details of road construction, but the basic principles were always the same. The road took the form of an embankment, raised above the level of the surrounding land, with drainage ditches on either side. It would be built up in a series of layers, comprising a foundation of large rocks, followed by smaller stones, gravel and sand laid down in successive layers and rammed into place.
- 2.58 Distance from Neighbourhood Area – 2.0km to the west of the Neighbourhood Area boundary.

Iron Age Enclosure

- 2.59 This iron age enclosure is located on the parish boundaries of Harringworth and Bulwick.
- 2.60 Distance from Neighbourhood Area – 3.2km to the north of the Neighbourhood Area boundary.

Benefield Castle

- 2.61 The monument includes the earthwork and buried remains of Benefield Castle, a medieval ringwork castle believed to have been constructed in the mid-12th century. It is recorded in documentary sources of the 13th century but went out of use before 1315. The castle is thought to have originated as a defended manor which was superseded in the late medieval period by a manor house adjacent to the north east. All modern fences, gates, bridges and garden buildings are excluded from the scheduling although the ground beneath these features is included.
- 2.62 Distance from the Neighbourhood Area – 3.4km to the east of the Neighbourhood Area boundary.

Rockingham Castle, shrunken medieval village, moat and warrens

- 2.63 Rockingham Castle was built by William the Conqueror shortly after the Norman invasion, and remained an important royal castle used by successive kings throughout the medieval period. By the 13th century the castle was one of the seven main royal residences in the country.
- 2.64 The site has a diversity of very well preserved and well maintained earthworks including those of the motte and baileys of the castle, warrens, moats, and the associated settlement. These features combine to present an exceptional and largely undisturbed medieval landscape of important historical value and with considerable archaeological potential.
- 2.65 Distance from the Neighbourhood Area – 3.8km to the north west of the Neighbourhood Area boundary.

Moated site 1km south west of Rockingham Castle

- 2.66 The moated site located to the south west of Rockingham Castle survives well. Its relationship with the enlargement of the deer park in 1485 is well documented and it forms an integral part of the medieval landscape of the Rockingham estate. The moated island will preserve information relating to both the construction of the building which existed there and its subsequent conversion for use as a hunting lodge. The site also provides evidence illustrating the social context of hunting during the late medieval period.
- 2.67 Distance from the Neighbourhood Area – 4.2km to the west of the Neighbourhood Area boundary.

Upper Lyveden moated site

- 2.68 Upper Lyveden moat lies in an unusual position on a hillside and illustrates the wide range of variation in the topographical setting of monuments of this type. The site is well preserved and largely undisturbed with partially waterlogged ditches and therefore has both archaeological and environmental potential.
- 2.69 Distance from the Neighbourhood Area – 4.2km to the south east of the Neighbourhood Area boundary.

Lyveden New Building and garden

- 2.70 Lyveden New Bield dates from the late 1500s, and consists of a Garden Lodge (Scheduled Monuments grade 1 listed in 1987) and a Moated Garden (grade 1 listed – Register of Historic Parks and Gardens). The property was built and developed under the instructions of Sir Thomas Tresham. Both the building and the garden were still under construction when, in 1605, Sir Thomas died and work on the project ceased.
- 2.71 Distance from the Neighbourhood Area – 4.7km to the south east of the Neighbourhood Area boundary.

Other key environmental assets

- 2.72 Other designated environmental assets located within the Neighbourhood Area (i.e. those which are not defined as 'sensitive areas' as defined by the Planning Practice Guidance) include as follows:

Historic Park and Gardens

- 2.73 Deene Park (Grade II) is partly sited within the northern edge of the Parish. The entirety of this designated site comprises 16th century gardens and park and an associated country house of a later date.
- 2.74 Outside of the Parish Kirby Hall (Grade II*) is 440m to the north, Boughton House (Grade I) is 1.8km to the south and Rockingham Castle (Grade II*) to the west.

Battlefields

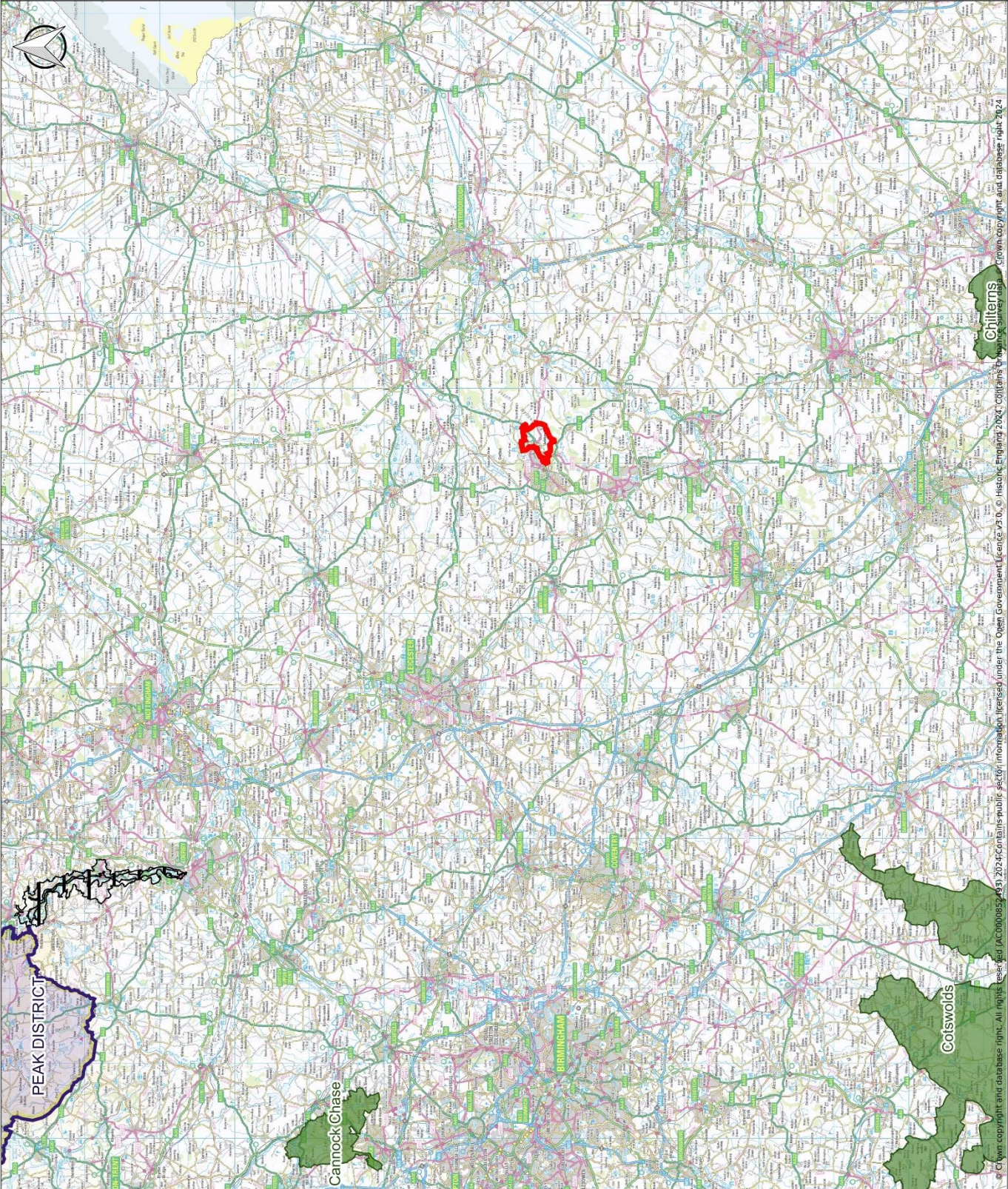
- 2.75 There are no Battlefields within the Neighbourhood Area. The nearest is the Battle of Naseby Field 1645, 22.1km to the south west of the Neighbourhood Area.

Conservation Areas

- 2.76 There is one Conservation Area within Weldon Parish. Weldon Conservation Area was designated by Corby Borough Council in 1988 and subsequently updated in 2009.

Listed Buildings

- 2.77 There are 53 Listed Buildings in the Parish listed by Historic England for their special architectural or historic interest. They include the Church of St. Mary, a Grade I Listed Building, Haunt Hill House (Grade II*) and the Manor House (Grade II*). The remaining are Grade II.



National Parks



PEAK DISTRICT

Cannock Chase

BIRMINGHAM

COLESHILL

Chilterns



National Landscapes (England)

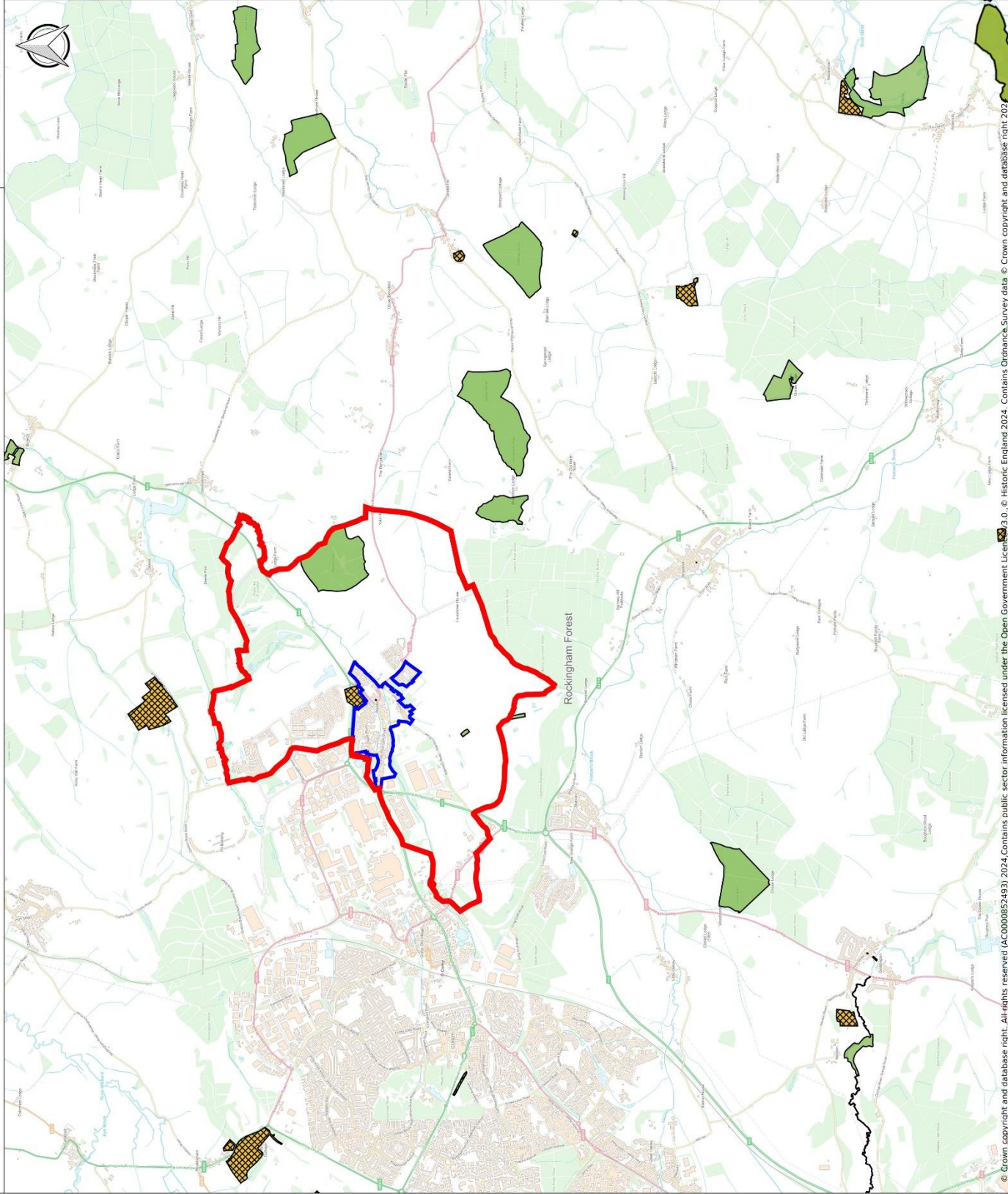


World Heritage Sites

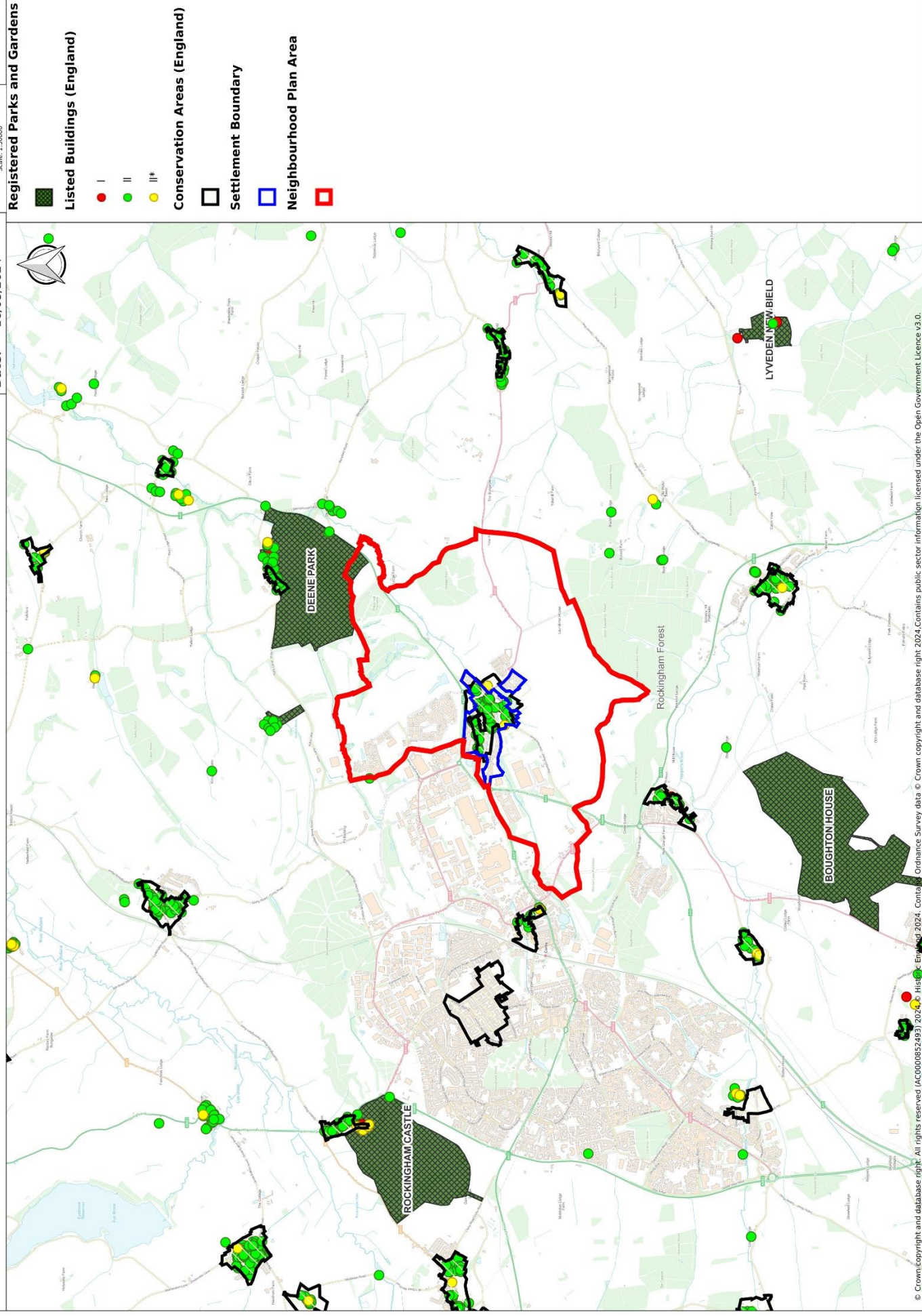


Neighbourhood Plan Area





- Special Protection Areas**
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Scheduled Monuments
 - Settlement Boundary
 - Neighbourhood Plan Area



3. Legislative Background

- 3.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC which was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005).
- 3.2 Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 makes provision in relation to the Habitats Directive. The Directive requires that any plan or project, likely to have a significant effect on a European site, must be subject to an appropriate assessment. To achieve this, paragraph 1 prescribes a basic condition that the making of a neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site. Paragraphs 2 to 5 of the Schedule amend the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 so as to apply its provisions to neighbourhood development orders and neighbourhood plans. In particular, paragraph 4 inserts new regulation 78A which provides that a neighbourhood development order may not grant planning permission for development which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site.
- 3.3 Schedule 3 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 makes provision in relation to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive. The Directive requires that EIA development must be subject to a development consent process. To enable this, Schedule 3 prescribes a basic condition that applies where development which is the subject of a proposal for a neighbourhood development order is of a type caught by the EIA Directive, and applies the relevant provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011(3) ("the EIA Regulations") with appropriate modifications (regulation 33 and paragraphs 1 to 4 and 6 of Schedule 3). Paragraphs 5 and 7 to 13 of Schedule 3 correct errors in the EIA Regulations.
- 3.4 It may be appropriate, and in some cases a requirement, that the statutory environmental bodies of Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England be consulted, for example, a draft neighbourhood plan proposal must be assessed to determine whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects.
- 3.5 There is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a sustainability appraisal as set out in section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However, a qualifying body must

demonstrate how its plan or order will contribute to achieving sustainable development.

- 3.6 This report focuses on screening for SEA and the criteria for establishing whether a full assessment is needed considering the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment undertaken for the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 and the Sustainability Appraisal Report (July 2019) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (June 2019) undertaken of the Corby Part 2 Local Plan.

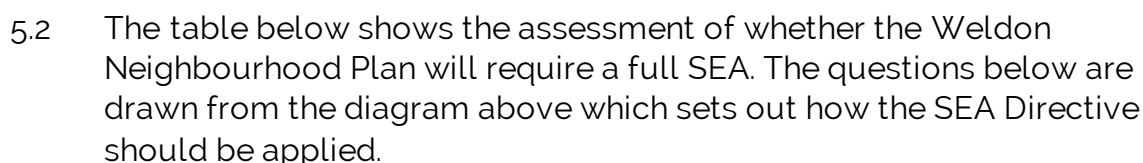
4. Criteria for Assessing the Effects of Neighbourhood Plans (the 'plan')

4.1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below²:

- 1. The characteristics of neighbourhood plans ("plan"), having regard, in particular, to - the degree to which the plan 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 influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy, - the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, - environmental problems relevant to the plan, - the relevance of the plan for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).
- 2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to - the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects, - the cumulative nature of the effects, - the trans boundary nature of the effects, - the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents), - the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected), - the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, - intensive land-use, - the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

² Source: Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

5.1 This diagram shows the Directive's field of application in the form of a diagram. The original diagram is from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Objective'. The red arrows indicate the process route for the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Assessment.



Stage	Yes/No	Reason
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	The preparation of and adoption of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is allowed under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared by Weldon Parish Council (as the 'relevant body') and will be 'made' by North Northamptonshire Council as the local authority. The preparation of neighbourhood plans is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and The Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012.
2. Is the Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	Whilst the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will if 'made', form part of the Development Plan for the area. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.
3. Is the Neighbourhood Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II (see	No	Whilst the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan covers a range of land use issues, it does not set the framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive (see Appendix 2 for list). Instead, the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is a non-strategic scale document, focused solely upon the Parish of Weldon.

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
Appendix 2) to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))		
4. Will the Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (Art 3.2(b))	No	<p>The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a substantial effect on the Natura 2000 network of protected sites.</p> <p>The nearest SPA is the Upper Nene Valley Gravel pits and is located 9.4km to the south east of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The closet SAC is Orton Pit 20km to the east.</p> <p>In 2013, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (Likely Significant Effects) exercise was undertaken of the North Northamptonshire JCS. A further Habitats Regulation Assessment was prepared in January 2015 to accompany the JCS public consultation. This concluded that mechanisms to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA had been incorporated into the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and the planning application determination process. The JCS Inspector's report indicates that the HRA was satisfactory and taking into account advice from relevant consultees, notably Natural England, the Inspector concluded that the JCS was sound and consistent with Government policy.</p> <p>The Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby concluded that as the borough of Corby and all allocated sites are located more than 9km from the SPA/Ramsar Site, it is possible to conclude that no likely significant effects will arise from the Corby Local Plan Part 2, alone or in in</p>

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
		<p>combination with other plans and projects.</p> <p>In view of the distance between the Weldon Underwood Neighbourhood Area, and the SPA and SAC, as well as considering the scope of the proposals within the draft Weldon Neighbourhood Plan, further stages in the HRA process are not required (including further screening or Appropriate Assessment). The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a substantial impact on the Natura 2000 network of protected sites.</p>
5. Does the Neighbourhood Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Yes	Determination of small sites at local level only.
6. Does the Neighbourhood Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Yes	The Neighbourhood Plan is to be used for determining future planning applications.
7. Is the Neighbourhood Plan'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 EAFF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	No	No
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	No	Appendix 1 presents the environmental effects which have the potential to arise as a result of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Summary of screening determination

- 6.1 This determination has considered whether the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant environmental effects as defined by Directive 2001/42/EC, the 'SEA Directive' and the transposing regulations. In particular, the review has considered several sensitive areas located in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Area and the potential environmental effects on these areas that may arise as a result of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.2 Environmental effects have the potential to take place as a result of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan, including in relation to the majority of the SEA 'topics'.
- 6.3 This SEA screening opinion provides the necessary analysis relating to the potential for negative effects on 'Sensitive Areas' and other key environmental assets, including nearby SPAs, SSSIs, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Gardens, Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. With respect to these designations, it is considered that these are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive. The significance of potential effects will be limited by key aims of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan and these are in turn reflected by the policy approaches proposed by the latest version of the plan.
- 6.4 It is therefore recommended that the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan should not be subject to a full SEA.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

- 6.5 A separate Habitat Regulations Screening Report has been undertaken and it is concluded that a full Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment of the current Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is not required, as it is unlikely to have a significant effect on any designated sites.

Conclusion

- 6.6 This screening opinion has been prepared to fulfil the statutory SEA requirements, as set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The environmental consultation bodies – Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency have been consulted during the preparation of this Screening Statement. Their responses are summarised below:
- Historic England – For the purposes of consultation on SEA Screening Opinions, Historic England confines its advice to the question, "Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?" in respect of our area of concern, cultural

heritage. Our comments are based on the information supplied with the screening request. Historic England concurs with the view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for a SEA is made.

- Natural England – On the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, significant effects on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely. 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.
- Environment Agency - Whilst there are a number of environmental constraints associated with the Plan Area (Main River of the Environment Agency, flood zone), we nevertheless do not disagree with the conclusion that a SEA is not required.

A full copy of the responses received are attached as Appendix 3.

- 6.7 For the above reasons, it is considered that the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is not subject to the requirements of Directive 2001/ 42/ EC, the 'SEA Directive' and accompanying regulations.

Appendix 1: Assessment of potential environmental effects

The following table presents the environmental effects which have the potential to arise because of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan. This is accompanied by a commentary on whether these effects are likely to be significant. The environmental effects have been grouped by the SEA 'topics' suggested by Annex I(f) of the SEA Directive.

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
Biodiversity, flora and fauna (Including biodiversity habitats and species, biodiversity sites, areas of geological interest)	Y	Without mitigation and enhancement measures, the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to lead to effects on biodiversity, including through loss of habitat, disturbance, effects on ecological connections and indirect effects such as from impacts on water quality and quantity.	<p>There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPA) present within the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment concluded that any policies and developments outlined within the Core Strategy, potential non-strategic sites or sites that have submitted a planning application, but has not yet been granted will not lead to an adverse effect on the integrity of Rutland Water SPA, SAC, Ramsar site, Barnack Hills and Holes SAC, Nene Washes SPA/SAC/Ramsar site or Orton Pit SAC either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.</p> <p>The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) is located to the south east of the Parish Neighbourhood Area. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area/Ramsar site was formally classified by the UK government in 2011. The nearest block is approximately 9.4km from the Weldon Underwood Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>Given the distance between the Neighbourhood Area and the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, and the likely scale of future development in the</p>

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
			<p>Neighbourhood Area, the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan Draft Habitat Regulations Screening Report has concluded that a full Habitat Regulations Assessment is not required and the Neighbourhood Plan will have no effects on Integrity of the above-mentioned designated sites.</p> <p>All SPA's are also notified as SSSIs, being sites that are of specific biological or geological features.</p> <p>In relation to biodiversity there are two SSSIs located within the Neighbourhood Area, namely Cowthick Quarry and Weldon Park. There are also a number of SSSIs within close proximity to the Neighbourhood Area. The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan area consequently lies within the Impact Risk Zones for some of these SSSIs. Certain types of development within the zones require consultation with Natural England depending on the specific zone that the proposal is located.</p> <p>The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any allocations for development, nor does it propose any development of the type that would require consultation with Natural England.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy that seeks to protect site of natural environment significance, including SSSIs and a further policy focused on protecting biodiversity and habitat connectivity. Both policies seek to reduce the likelihood of significant effects on these 'sensitive areas' as well as the delivery of biodiversity net gain.</p>

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
			Due to the distance of the above identified nature conservation areas from the Neighbourhood Area, it is considered that effects on biodiversity are not deemed to be significant if the current policy approach proposed in the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan is taken forward.
Population (Including residents' quality of life, accessibility to services and facilities, deprivation and similar)	Y	As indicated by the current policy approaches proposed for the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan, the Plan has the potential to have a range of benefits for the quality of life of residents and for accessibility to services, facilities and opportunities. It seeks to prevent the loss of local services and facilities and supports new or improved facilities, makes provision for the protection of Local Green Space and important open space, facilitates pedestrian and cycle links and protects the existing network of footpaths	Whilst the benefits for residents of Weldon Parish from a well-designed neighbourhood plan have the potential to be wide-ranging, these are not deemed to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive.

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		<p>and bridleways, and supports home working. Policies also seek to prevent light pollution, protect residential amenity and minimise traffic generation and movement through the Parish.</p> <p>The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan will help deliver a mix of housing types, including the provision of smaller homes, homes suitable for older people and specialist care accommodation.</p>	
Human Health (Incorporating residents' health and wellbeing)	Y	As indicated by the current policy approaches proposed for the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan, the Plan has the potential to have a range of benefits for residents' health and wellbeing through promoting healthier	Whilst the health and wellbeing benefits for residents of the Neighbourhood Area from a well-designed neighbourhood plan have the potential to be wide-ranging, these are not deemed to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive. Likely effects from noise quality are also not deemed to be significant.

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		lifestyles and supporting accessibility to services and facilities. Policies support the protection of local green spaces and important open space, improve and enhance the parish's networks of footpaths and cycleways, and support the provision of new community facilities, including health care provision.	
Soil (Including agricultural land, soil erosion, soil quality)	Y	<p>It is uncertain whether any future development will be sited on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, as recent detailed agricultural land classification has not taken place.</p> <p>The Plan maintains the currently defined settlement boundary and seeks to limit and carefully manage</p>	Due to the relatively limited area of land likely to be developed through the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan, effects on the soils resource are unlikely to be significant.

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		development in the countryside.	
Water (Including water quality and availability)	Y	<p>The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to lead to a very small-scale increase in water demand in the Neighbourhood Area through supporting the delivery of limited new housing provision.</p> <p>New development should also take full account of flood risk in accordance with national and local planning policies, as well as sustainable building design, including construction techniques to meet high standards for water efficiency and sustainable drainage systems.</p>	Potential effects on water availability will be limited by the relatively small-scale of proposals likely to be facilitated by the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan. Effects unlikely to be significant.
Air (Including air quality)	Y	Whilst new development in the Neighbourhood Area	No existing air quality issues exist in the Neighbourhood Area and there are no Air Quality Management Areas within the Neighbourhood Area. Any effects on air

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		<p>may lead to increased traffic flows and congestion, this is unlikely to lead to marked effects on air quality.</p> <p>The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan supports only limited development, the protection and enhancement of cycle and pedestrian links as well as the protection of local services. Policy also supports improvements in air quality and reliance on less sustainable forms of transport.</p>	quality are not deemed to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive.
Climatic Factors (Including relating to climate change mitigation (limiting greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (adapting to the anticipated effects of climate change, including flood risk).	Y	In terms of climate change mitigation, the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan actively seeks to locate new housing development within the defined settlement boundary. This will help limit potential	Due to the small scale, local scope of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan, the nature and magnitude of effects directly arising as a result of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive.

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		<p>increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>Policy seeks measures to assist meet the challenges of climate change through the incorporation of sustainable design and construction techniques, and the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems in order to minimise vulnerability to flooding and climate change.</p>	
Material Assets (Including minerals resources, waste considerations)	Y	The Weldon Neighbourhood Plan may lead to small increases in the Neighbourhood Area's waste management requirements through supporting the delivery of limited new housing.	Potential increases in waste as a direct result of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan will be managed through statutory requirements regarding waste management. Due to their limited magnitude, effects are therefore unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive.

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		No mineral sites or resources, or waste sites are likely to be affected or undermined as a result of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan.	
Cultural Heritage (Including historic environment, cultural heritage, historic settings)	Y	Development undertaken in accordance with the policies of the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to have effects on the fabric and setting of historic environment assets.	<p>There are 2 Scheduled Monuments in the Neighbourhood Area as well a number within relatively close proximity to the parish boundary. The Historic Park/Garden of Deene Park encroaches slightly into the Neighbourhood. There are 2 further Historic Park/Garden within relatively close proximity to the parish boundary. There are also 53 Listed Buildings in the Neighbourhood Area as well as the Conservation Area.</p> <p>There is the statutory protection of these designations that will run alongside the neighbourhood plan policy and local plan policy, which seeks to ensure that new development reflects the distinctive and traditional character of the village and its heritage assets. The Neighbourhood Plan also does not propose any further housing allocations.</p> <p>Therefore, effects are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA directive.</p>
Landscape (Including landscape and townscape quality)	Y	Direct effects from the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan on landscape and	In terms of landscape quality, no 'sensitive areas' as defined by the NPPG are present in the Neighbourhood Area.

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		townscape character have the potential to take place.	<p>Overall the Weldon Neighbourhood Plan's focus on protecting and enhancing the landscape/townscape of the Neighbourhood Area and protecting key features of importance for the historic environment will deliver positive effects on landscape and townscape quality and facilitate enhancements.</p> <p>Therefore, potential effects on townscape quality is unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive.</p>

Appendix 2: Annex I and Annex II Projects, EIA Directive

Annex I Projects, EIA Directive

All projects listed in Annex I are considered as having significant effects on the environment and require an Environmental Impact Assessment. The listed projects are summarised as follows:

1. Crude oil refineries, coal or shale gasification liquefaction installations
2. Thermal power stations, nuclear power stations, other nuclear reactors etc
3. Installations for the processing, reprocessing, final disposal or storage of irradiated nuclear fuel, or the production or enrichment of nuclear fuel
4. Integrated works for the initial smelting of cast-iron and steel, and the production of non-ferrous crude metals from ore
5. Installations for the extraction, processing and transforming of asbestos
6. Integrated chemical installations for the industrial scale manufacture of basic organic and inorganic fertilisers, plant health products and biocides, pharmaceuticals, and explosives
7. Construction of long-distance railway lines. Airports with a basic runway length run of 2,100 metres or more. Construction of motorways and express roads. New roads of four or more lanes and roads which have been improved so as to convert two lanes or fewer to four lanes or more, where such road would be 10 kilometres or more in continuous length
8. Inland waterways and ports for inland-waterway traffic, trading ports and piers
9. Waste disposal installations for the incineration or chemical treatment of hazardous waste
10. Waste disposal installations for the incineration or chemical treatment of non-hazardous waste
11. Groundwater abstraction or artificial groundwater recharge schemes
12. Water transfer schemes between river basins
13. Wastewater treatment plants
14. Commercial extraction of petroleum and natural gas
15. Dams and water storage installations
16. Gas, oil or chemical pipelines and pipelines used for the transport of carbon dioxide for geological storage

Annex II Projects, EIA Directive

For the projects listed in Annex II the national authorities have to decide whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is needed. The projects listed in Annex II are in general those not included in Annex I but also other types such as urban development projects and flood-relief works. The listed projects are summarised as follows:

1. Agriculture, silviculture* and aquaculture Restructuring of rural land holdings; use of uncultivated land or seminatural areas for intensive agriculture; water management projects for agriculture; initial afforestation* and deforestation* for the purpose of conversion to a different land use; intensive livestock installations (projects not included in Annex I); intensive fish farming; reclamation of land from the sea.
2. Extractive industry Quarries, open-cast mining, peat extraction (projects not included in Annex I); underground mining; dredging; deep drilling; surface installations for coal, gas, ore and shale extraction.
3. Energy industry Installations for production of electricity, steam and hot water and for carrying gas, steam and hot water, and transmission of electricity by overhead cables* (projects not included in Annex I); surface storage of natural gas and fossil fuels; underground storage of combustible gases; briquetting of coal and lignite; installations for processing and storage of radioactive waste (unless included in Annex I); hydroelectric and wind power installations.
4. Production and processing of metals Installations for the production of pig iron or steel; processing of ferrous metals; ferrous metal foundries; installations for smelting metals and surface treatment of metals and plastic materials; assembly and manufacture of motor vehicles and motor-vehicle engines; shipyards; installations for construction and repair of aircraft; manufacture of railway equipment; swaging by explosives; and installations for the roasting and sintering of metallic ores.
5. Metal industry Coke ovens; installations for the manufacture of glass, cement, asbestos and asbestos products (projects not covered by Annex I); smelting mineral substances; manufacture of ceramic products by burning.
6. Chemical industry (projects not included in Annex I) Treatment of intermediate products and production of chemicals; production of pesticides, pharmaceuticals, paint, varnishes, elastomers and peroxides; storage facilities for petroleum, petrochemical products and chemical products.
7. Food industry Manufacture of oils, fats, dairy products, confectionery, syrup, industrial starch; packing and canning; brewing and malting; sugar, fish-meal and fish-oil factories; and installations for the slaughter of animals.
8. Textile, leather, wood and paper industries Industrial plants for paper and board production (projects not included in Annex I); pre-treatment plants; tanning plants; cellulose-processing and production installations.
9. Rubber industry Manufacture and treatment of elastomer-based products.
10. Infrastructure projects (not included in Annex I) Industrial estates; urban development projects (including shopping centres and car parks); railways and transshipment facilities; airfields, roads, harbours, ports, inland-waterways; dams and water storage facilities; tramways, elevated and underground passenger railways etc.; oil and gas pipe-lines; long-distance aqueducts; coastal and sea defence works; groundwater abstraction and artificial groundwater recharge schemes; water transfer schemes between river basins; motorway service areas.

11. Other projects Permanent motor racing and test tracks; waste disposal projects and waste water treatment plants (projects not included in Annex I); sludge disposal sites; storage of scrap iron (including scrap vehicles); test benches for engines etc.; installations for the manufacture of artificial mineral fibres and the recovery or destruction of explosives; knackers' yards.
12. Tourism and leisure Ski-runs, ski-lifts, cable cars etc.; marinas; holiday villages and hotel complexes outside urban areas; permanent camp sites and caravan sites; theme parks and golf courses.
13. Any change or extension of projects listed in Annex I or Annex II, already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed, which may have adverse environmental effects Projects in Annex I, undertaken exclusively or mainly for the development and testing of new methods or products and not used for more than two years.

Note Some of the types of projects listed above are covered by Annex II and the Regulations only if they meet certain threshold levels or other criteria. * A project which is included in Annex II of the Directive but excluded from Schedule 2 of the Regulations (SI 1999/293).

Appendix 3: Responses from the Environmental Consultation Bodies



Historic England

Planit-X Town and Country Planning Services
Ltd

Direct Dial:

Our ref: PL00796118

20 June 2024

Dear Ms Gibson

WELDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SEA & HRA SCREENING OPINION CONSULTATION

Thank you for your consultation and the invitation to comment on the SEA Screening Document for the above Neighbourhood Plan.

For the purposes of consultations on SEA Screening Opinions, Historic England confines its advice to the question, "Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?" in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage.

Our comments are based on the information supplied with the screening request. 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 the 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with your view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

Regarding HRA Historic England does not disagree with your conclusions but would defer to the opinions of the other statutory consultees.

The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for a SEA is made. If a decision is made to undertake a SEA, please note that Historic England has published guidance on Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Historic Environment that is relevant to both local and neighbourhood planning and available at: <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

I trust the above comments will be of help in taking forward the Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours sincerely,



THE FOUNDRY 82 GRANVILLE STREET BIRMINGHAM B1 2LH

Telephone 0121 625 6888
[HistoricEngland.org.uk](https://www.historicengland.org.uk)

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



Historic England

Historic Places Adviser

@HistoricEngland.org.uk

Date: 24 June 2024
Our ref: 476667
Your ref: Weldon Neighbourhood Plan



Planit-X Town and Country Planning Services Ltd

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

BY EMAIL ONLY

info@planit-x.co.uk

T 0300 060 3900

Dear [REDACTED]

Weldon Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 20 May 2024.

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 sites¹, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

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

¹ 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".

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.

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


Consultations Team

From: [REDACTED]@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 09:54
To: [REDACTED]@planit-x.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Weldon Neighbourhood Plan

Hello [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email.

I apologise for the delay in replying.

Whilst there are a number of environmental constraints associated with the Plan Area (Main River of the Environment Agency, flood zone), we nevertheless do not disagree with the conclusion that a SEA is not required.

Regards
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Planning Specialist, Sustainable Places Team
Environment Agency | Trentside Offices, Scarrington Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2
5BR

[REDACTED]



Please note as part of my commitment to reducing my climate impact I may not send a "Thank you" email.' [Carbon saving of not sending thank you emails](#)