

George Pavey

From: James, Edward [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 April 2021 11:08
To: Maya Cullen
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [External] RE: WATTON-AT-STONE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Request

Dear Ms Cullen,

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 Watton at Stone 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 proposes to allocate two sites for residential development, to the north-west of the village on sites either side of the River Beane. Review of the Screening Report, which we considered to be comprehensive and informative, as well as a desk-top study of the site locations and their relationship to designated heritage assets, leads us to the same conclusion.

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.

Kind regards

Edward

Edward James
Historic Places Adviser - East of England
Historic England



Historic England

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Historic England

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George Pavey

From: HNL Sustainable Places [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 April 2021 17:29
To: Maya Cullen
Cc: Development Management - Planning
Subject: [External] RE: WATTON-AT-STONE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Request

Dear Maya,

Thank you for consulting us on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening report for the Watton At Stone Neighbourhood Plan.

We are a statutory consultee in the SEA process and aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment. Based on our review of the environmental constraints affecting your neighbourhood plan area and for which we are a statutory consultee, we think there are potential significant environmental effects that relate to the neighbourhood plan area.

We have identified that the neighbourhood plan area will be affected by the following environmental constraints:

1. Flood Risk

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes site allocations within areas of flood zone 2, 3 and 3b within the neighbourhood plan area, specifically Policy WAS3 and Policy WAS4. We note that the current East Herts Level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has not been updated since 2017, and so the allocations brought forward as part of this Neighbourhood Plan may not have been appropriately assessed with the most recent climate change allowances.

Policy WAS3 is of particular concern as the proposed footbridge is within flood zone 3b. As such, it does not at present comply with national or local policy - in particular East Herts Local Plan policies (specifically Policy WAT1 Flood Risk Management and Policy WAT3 Water Quality and the Water Environment), National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 163 or the Flood Risk and Coastal Change section of the Planning Practice Guidance. Until we see a detailed flood model for the site, or the allocation underpinned by a Level 2 SFRA, the impacts remain unknown.

2. Main River Water Quality

The River Beane (ID GB106038033310) runs through the neighbourhood plan area. This watercourse is currently failing to reach good ecological status/potential under the Water Framework Directive (currently classified as having poor status). Developments within or adjacent to this watercourse should not cause further deterioration and should seek to improve the water quality based on the recommendations of the Thames River Basin Management Plan. An assessment of the potential impacts of the neighbourhood plan on this watercourse under WFD should be included within the SEA/SA appraisal. Further information on the current status of this watercourse can be found on [Catchment Data Explorer](#).

3. Source Protection Zones/Aquifers

The plan includes areas which are located on Source Protection Zones and Aquifers. These should be considered within the plan if growth or development is proposed here. The relevance of the designation and the potential implication upon development proposals should be considered with reference to our Groundwater Protection guidance [here](#).

For your information, together with Natural England, English Heritage 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 [here](#).

I hope this is helpful.

Kind regards,

Becki

Becki Ingram

Planning Advisor, Hertfordshire & North London Sustainable Places

Environment Agency | Alchemy, Bessemer Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL7 1HE



Pronouns: she/her ([why is this here?](#))



Date: 15 April 2021
Our ref: 346737

FAO Maya Cullen

East Hertfordshire District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY



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CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Ms Cullen

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan – Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening request

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 15 March 2021

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening request

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

Neighbourhood Plan

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

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

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

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

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

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

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

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Yours sincerely
Dawn Kinrade
Consultations Team