

Laura Guy

From: HNL Sustainable Places <HNLsustainablePlaces@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: Wednesday, 18 May 2022 13:52
To: Laura Guy
Subject: [External] RE: SEA Screening consultation - Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan
Attachments: HNL NP advice note.pdf

Dear Laura,

Thank you for consulting us on the Neighbourhood Plan consultation for Walkern.

We have had to prioritise our limited resource and focus on strategic plans where the environmental risks and opportunities are highest. We attach our advice note which sets out our substantive response to Neighbourhood Plan consultations including Strategic Environmental Assessment screening and scoping.

We recognise that Neighbourhood Plans provide a unique opportunity to deliver enhancements to the natural environment at the local level. This advice note sets out the key environmental issues, within our remit, which should be considered. It also references sources of data you can use to check environmental features.

We hope this is helpful as you prepare evidence and the Neighbourhood Plan itself.

If you have any feedback, please let us know.

Kind regards,

Isabel Smith

Planning Advisor, Hertfordshire & North London Sustainable Places

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

Tel: 02077142206

HNLsustainablePlaces@environment-agency.gov.uk

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



Does Your Proposal Have Environmental Issues or Opportunities? Speak To Us Early!

If you're planning a new development, we want to work with you to make the process as smooth as possible. We offer a bespoke advice service where you will be assigned a project manager who will be a single point of contact for you at the EA, giving you detailed specialist advice. This early engagement can significantly reduce uncertainty and delays to your project. More information can be found on our website [here](#).

From: Laura Guy
Sent: 10 May 2022 12:34
Subject: SEA Screening consultation - Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Consultee,

I am writing to invite you to comment on the Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan.

The Plan was first adopted in 2018. This revision 2021 - 2033 reflects the changes in policy at national level and physical changes in the Plan area. Local circumstances have also changed, including the construction of the Froghall Lane development. This revised version of the Neighbourhood Plan will ensure the policies contained within it make it clear where development is acceptable, what it should look like and what should be protected. The Plan includes additional Local Green Space designations, a Tree Charter and new policies on:

- Non-designated heritage assets
- archaeology
- trees and hedges,
- additional protected recreational open spaces
- updated guidance on design and infill developments.

It contains no new housing site allocation or other specific development proposals. As you are aware, the Council is required to provide a screening opinion to the qualifying body on whether the proposed neighbourhood plan modifications will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This is a requirement as set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

I would therefore welcome your views on the Neighbourhood Plan in order to assist the Council to determine whether an SEA is necessary. The qualifying body has produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report (attached) which includes an assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment. This has concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore a SEA is not required. The draft pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan Revision is also attached.

Please could you provide a response by the latest date of **Tuesday 14th June 2022**.

If you have any queries or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards
Laura



Laura Guy
Principal Planning Officer
East Herts District Council
01992 531553
Sign up to our weekly
newsletter - [Network](#)



The information in this E-Mail is intended for the named recipients only. It may contain privileged and confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient you must not copy, distribute or take any action or place reliance on it. If you have received this E-Mail in error, please notify the sender immediately by using the E-Mail address and then delete the message. The views expressed in this message are personal and not necessarily those of East Herts

District Council.

Please be aware that E-Mails sent to or received from East Herts District Council may be intercepted and read by the Council. Interception will only occur to ensure compliance with Council policies or procedures or regulatory obligations, to prevent or deter crime, or for the purpose of essential maintenance or support of the E-Mail system.

All requests for information will be processed in accordance with the relevant legislation. Our Privacy Policy has been updated to reflect changes to data protection legislation and can be viewed at <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/dataprotection>

Disclaimer

The information contained in this communication from the sender is confidential. It is intended solely for use by the recipient and others authorized to receive it. If you are not the recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution or taking action in relation of the contents of this information is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful.

This email has been scanned for viruses and malware, and may have been automatically archived by **Mimecast Ltd**, an innovator in Software as a Service (SaaS) for business. Providing a **safer** and **more useful** place for your human generated data. Specializing in; Security, archiving and compliance. To find out more [Click Here](#).

This message has been sent using TLS 1.2 Information in this message may be confidential and may be legally privileged. If you have received this message by mistake, please notify the sender immediately, delete it and do not copy it to anyone else. We have checked this email and its attachments for viruses. But you should still check any attachment before opening it. We may have to make this message and any reply to it public if asked to under the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act or for litigation. Email messages and attachments sent to or from any Environment Agency address may also be accessed by someone other than the sender or recipient, for business purposes.

Hertfordshire and North London Neighbourhood Plan Advice Note

Updated: June 2021

Neighbourhood Plans provide a unique opportunity to deliver enhancements to the natural environment at the local level. This document sets out the key environmental issues, within our remit, which should be considered.

We have had to prioritise our limited resource and focus on strategic plans where the environmental risks and opportunities are highest. This advice note sets out our substantive response to Neighbourhood Plan consultations including Strategic Environmental Assessment screening and scoping.

Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/consider-environment-neighbourhood-plans/>

Drawing up a neighbourhood plan is a fantastic opportunity to build community resilience to climate change and make the local natural environment better. Opportunities include:

- New green spaces and improvements to public space through new development. This could include planting trees, creating rainwater gardens or enhancing local waterways for water quality and biodiversity.
- Recognising the value of certain environmental features within a plan area, e.g. a floodplain, wetland habitat or rivers. Identify these features and outline how you intend to protect them and improve them.
- Helping a community to manage and adapt to the risk of flooding and climate change by incorporating natural features and green space to manage and store water, and supporting the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).
- Promoting energy and water efficiency measures for new builds. These measures will reduce the cost of construction for developers and help to reduce utility bills for future occupiers. This will also help reduce unsustainable water consumption and carbon emissions.

We also recommend your Plan takes account of relevant Local Planning Authority's policies, plans and strategies including Local Planning Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, flood risk strategies (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-current-schemes-and-strategies>), and the Thames River Basin Management Plan (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/289937/geth0910bswa-e-e.pdf) as appropriate.

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

The information below explains the key issues we would consider in reviewing your Plan. We aim to reduce flood risk, while protecting and enhancing the water environment.

Infrastructure Delivery

We recommend that environmental infrastructure, including habitat enhancements, water storage areas, and green space, is taken into account if the Plan looks to fund local infrastructure.

Flood risk

Development must be safe and should not increase the risk of flooding.

Neighbourhood Plans should conform to national and local policies on flood risk:

If a Neighbourhood Plan is proposing sites for development please check whether there are any areas of Flood Zones 2 or 3 within the proposed site allocations. You can view a site's flood zone on the Flood Map for Planning on our website: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

If the proposed allocation is located within Flood Zone 2 or 3 you should consult the Flood Risk and Coastal Change pages of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG):

<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change/>.

Here you can determine whether the flood risk vulnerability of the proposed development and the flood zone are compatible. In accordance with national planning policy the Sequential Test should be undertaken to ensure development is directed to the areas of lowest flood risk taking into account climate change. This should be informed by the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning and the Local Planning Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), if they have one. We recommend you contact the Local Planning Authority to discuss this requirement further.

If the Neighbourhood Plan proposes development in flood risk areas, the Strategic Environmental Assessment should include baseline information about the flood risks, and include it as a key sustainability issue and as an objective.

We would have concerns if development is allocated in this high risk flood zone without the Sequential Test being undertaken. It is important that your Plan also considers whether the flood risk issues associated with these sites can be safely managed to ensure development can come forward.

We can provide any flooding information which we have available – such as predicted flood levels and historical flood data. Please note that there may be a charge for this information. Please contact our Customers and Engagement Team at HNLenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk for further details. In addition to the above you should also check with the Local Planning Authority's Neighbourhood Planning team with regards to other sources of flooding (such as surface water, groundwater, sewers and historic flooding) as detailed in their Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), now has responsibility for local flood risk management and may hold flooding information that is not identified on our Flood Map.

Climate Change Allowances

The Local Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should indicate the extent of flood zones with likely climate change. On 19 February 2016, we published new guidance for planners and developers on how to use climate change allowances: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

Flood Defences

Areas of your Neighbourhood Plan area, or proposed sites, may be given protection by a flood defence/alleviation scheme. Where this is the case the Plan should acknowledge this and identify the level of protection provided (including any climate change allowance). It should be noted that flood defences are intended to protect existing properties and are not to facilitate new development in areas that would otherwise be impacted by flooding. Any assessment of development behind flood defences should consider the impacts of a breach or overtopping. Where it is determined that new development should be behind a flood defence financial contributions may be sought to maintain or improve the structure.

Thames Estuary 2100 (Tidal Defences)

In line with requirements set out in the Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100) plan, developments in this location will need to demonstrate how the flood defence could be raised in the future to meet the demands of climate change.

No activities on site should preclude access to the flood defence from maintenance or prevent the future raising of flood defences. In some cases we hold technical drawings of flood defence structures which may be of use. To request these you should contact our Customers and Engagement Team at hnlquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Ecology and Water Management

Proximity to watercourse/ Ecology

Main rivers can be viewed on the Environment Agency's map:

<https://environment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=17cd53dfc524433980cc333726a56386>

The neighbourhood plan should draw upon evidence of designated or non-designated sites of nature conservation sites of international, national or local importance, and seek to ensure these sites are safeguarded and there is no degradation to these sites. The mitigation hierarchy of avoid mitigate and compensate should be followed to ensure this.

In accordance with national policy, any development proposal should avoid significant harm to biodiversity and seek to protect and enhance it; delivering **biodiversity net gain**. The forthcoming Environment Bill will mandate when enacted the demonstration of a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain using the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 (or subsequent version), even where development proposals do not result in biodiversity loss. The Neighbourhood Plan could identify opportunities to incorporate requirements for achieving biodiversity and wider environmental net gains.

The provision of green infrastructure, particularly along rivers, can bring about benefits for people and wildlife. Creating networks of green space and habitats can also ensure wildlife are able to migrate and move across sites more easily enabling recovery and resilience of different wildlife species. The Neighbourhood Plan could play a role in helping to preserve, safeguard and establish green buffer zones along rivers by including policies or design guidance for their area. Even where buffer zones do not currently exist it is becoming more vital that we create them not just for the benefit of biodiversity but to reduce flood risk and increase our resilience to climate change.

This is a key way in which we can carry out our legal duty to further and promote the ecological and landscape value of rivers and land associated with them. In urban areas, in particular, rivers have often been degraded by past development, and we expect that any new development should go some way to redress the balance.

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to promote river restoration and enhancements helping us all to achieve the targets to improve waterbodies as part of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). There should be no deterioration in water quality and development should bring about improvements to the ecological status of any water body. Local WFD catchment data for the rivers in your area can be obtained from: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/RiverBasinDistrict/>. We have identified WFD action measures for specific locations or whole reaches of watercourse (e.g. river bank restoration, improving fish passage, etc) and can be obtained from hnlenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk on request.

Objectives to achieve WFD improvements across all sectors are outlined in the Thames River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) (<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=River+Basin+Management+Plans>).

An assessment of the potential impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan on watercourses under WFD should be included within the SEA/SA appraisal, making use of the datasets available above.

Groundwater Quality

Development must not cause pollution to the water environment.

Aquifers and Source Protection Zones

Some of your local area, and specific potential site allocations, may be located upon or within aquifers and Source Protection Zones (link below). SPZ 1 is especially sensitive. You might consider these within your Plan and when allocating sites. The relevance of the designation and the potential implication upon development proposals should be seen with reference to our Groundwater Protection guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

To see if a proposed development is located within a Source Protection Zone, please use our online map:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/groundwater-source-protection-zones-spzs>

Land Contamination

You must consider land contamination when preparing your plan. Managing it during development is key to addressing past contamination and preventing further impacts during development.

You can establish if a site may be contaminated in several ways. Your Local Authority may hold a register of sites it knows to be contaminated. A list of potentially contaminated sites can be accessed on the following link:

<https://www.clare.co.uk/useful-government-legislation-and-guidance-by-country/76-key-documents/198-doe-industry-profiles>

We recommend you contact your Local Authority's Environmental Health team who may hold records on known/potential land contamination. Please note our primary concern is with regards to water quality. Your Local Authority's Environmental Health team will advise you on issues related to human health.

Your plan may include areas which are located on aquifers and Source Protection Zones. These areas represent the most sensitive and highest risk in terms of potential pollution to protected groundwater supplies, some of which are used for drinking water. These should be considered within your plan if growth or development is proposed here. Further information can be accessed on the following links:

Guiding principles for the Land Contamination

<https://www.clare.co.uk/useful-government-legislation-and-guidance-by-country/192-guiding-principles-for-land-contamination-gplc>

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

Approach to Groundwater Protection:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692989/Environment-Agency-approach-to-groundwater-protection.pdf

Water supply and foul drainage

When allocating sites in your Plan, you will need to consider if the water supply and foul drainage infrastructure can accommodate the development. Your local water company can provide further information about water supply and sewerage capacity. Our '[Water Stressed Areas – final classification](#)' 2013 explains that our area is seriously water stressed. This is particularly significant as population numbers rise and there are increased impacts from climate change on water resource availability and reliability. The Neighbourhood Plan should consider what further measures could help the local area achieve water sustainability that are not already in the Local Plan, water efficiency standards and measures including the retrofitting of existing buildings.

Surface water drainage

The inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) should always be a consideration within any development to reduce the risk of surface water flooding on and off site. The Lead Local Flood Authority, is the main contact for SUDS issues. However, we have interest in SUDS from a groundwater protection perspective and improving water quality.

The collection and dispersal of clean surface water to ground to recharge aquifer units and prevent localised drainage or surface systems flooding in heavy rainfall is encouraged. However, dispersal into the ground through soakaways or other infiltration systems requires a site-specific investigation and risk assessment. Generally, we would accept roof drainage going to soakaway (or other systems), but other surface drainage may need to go through treatment systems or to foul main, for instance vehicle parking. Infiltrating water has the potential to cause mobilisation of contaminants present in shallow soil/made ground which could ultimately cause pollution of underlying groundwater resources. Where contamination is known or suspected, remedial or other mitigating measures will likely be required so that it can be demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to Controlled Waters.

We advise applicants to follow our guidance – Groundwater Protection. This is a report that highlights the importance of groundwater and encourages industry and other organisations to act responsibly and improve their practices. This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

The design of the drainage systems should be in line with G1, G9, G12 and G13 position statements: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-position-statements>

Please note

This document is a response to a Neighbourhood Plan consultation and does not represent our final view in relation to any future planning application made in relation to any site. You should seek your own expert advice in relation to technical matters relevant to your neighbourhood plan before submission.

If you have any questions please contact the Hertfordshire and North London Sustainable Places team: HNL Sustainable Places@environment-agency.gov.uk

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

Laura Guy

From: James, Edward <Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk>
Sent: Thursday, 09 June 2022 16:31
To: Laura Guy
Subject: [External] RE: SEA Screening consultation - Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Laura,

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 revised Walkern 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 considers that in relation to potential impacts on the historic environment 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

Direct Line: 01223 582 746

Mobile: 07833 718 273



Historic England

Brooklands | 24 Brooklands Avenue | Cambridge | CB2 8BU

www.historicengland.org.uk

Twitter: @HE_EoE

Are you an organisation that has used or considered using our Enhanced Advisory Services (EAS)?

Click the following link: [SmartSurvey](#) to take part in a short 10 minute review of our services if you'd like to have your say.

We'd welcome your views.



Historic England

Work with us to champion heritage and improve lives. Read our Future Strategy and get involved at historicengland.org.uk/strategy.

Follow us: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) Sign up to our [newsletter](#)

This e-mail (and any attachments) is confidential and may contain personal views which are not the views of Historic England unless specifically stated. If you have received it in error, please delete it from your system and notify the sender immediately. Do not use, copy or disclose the information in any way nor act in reliance on it. Any information sent to Historic England may become publicly available. We respect your privacy and the use of your information. Please read our full [privacy policy](#) for more information.

From: Laura Guy

Sent: 10 May 2022 12:34

To: Undisclosed; recipients:

Subject: SEA Screening consultation - Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan

THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL: do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and were expecting the content to be sent to you

Dear Consultee,

I am writing to invite you to comment on the Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan.

The Plan was first adopted in 2018. This revision 2021 - 2033 reflects the changes in policy at national level and physical changes in the Plan area. Local circumstances have also changed, including the construction of the Froghall Lane development. This revised version of the Neighbourhood Plan will ensure the policies contained within it make it clear where development is acceptable, what it should look like and what should be protected. The Plan includes additional Local Green Space designations, a Tree Charter and new policies on:

- Non-designated heritage assets
- archaeology
- trees and hedges,
- additional protected recreational open spaces
- updated guidance on design and infill developments.

It contains no new housing site allocation or other specific development proposals. As you are aware, the Council is required to provide a screening opinion to the qualifying body on whether the proposed neighbourhood plan modifications will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This is a requirement as set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

I would therefore welcome your views on the Neighbourhood Plan in order to assist the Council to determine whether an SEA is necessary. The qualifying body has produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report (attached) which includes an assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment. This has concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore a SEA is not required. The draft pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan Revision is also attached.

Please could you provide a response by the latest date of **Tuesday 14th June 2022**.

If you have any queries or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards
Laura



Laura Guy
Principal Planning Officer
East Herts District Council
01992 531553
Sign up to our weekly
newsletter - [Network](#)



The information in this E-Mail is intended for the named recipients only. It may contain privileged and confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient you must not copy, distribute or take any action or place reliance on it. If you have received this E-Mail in error, please notify the sender immediately by using the E-Mail address and then delete the message. The views expressed in this message are personal and not necessarily those of East Herts District Council.

Please be aware that E-Mails sent to or received from East Herts District Council may be intercepted and read by the Council. Interception will only occur to ensure compliance with Council policies or procedures or regulatory obligations, to prevent or deter crime, or for the purpose of essential maintenance or support of the E-Mail system.

All requests for information will be processed in accordance with the relevant legislation. Our Privacy Policy has been updated to reflect changes to data protection legislation and can be viewed at <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/dataprotection>

Disclaimer

The information contained in this communication from the sender is confidential. It is intended solely for use by the recipient and others authorized to receive it. If you are not the recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution or taking action in relation of the contents of this information is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful.

This email has been scanned for viruses and malware, and may have been automatically archived by **Mimecast Ltd**,

an innovator in Software as a Service (SaaS) for business. Providing a **safer** and **more useful** place for your human generated data. Specializing in; Security, archiving and compliance. To find out more [Click Here](#).

Laura Guy

From: SM-NE-Consultations (NE) <consultations@naturalengland.org.uk>
Sent: Monday, 16 May 2022 11:11
To: Laura Guy
Subject: [External] FAO Ms Laura Guy REF: Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening
Attachments: 391694 Natural England Response Letter Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening.pdf

Planning Ref: Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening
Our Ref: 391694

Dear Ms Guy

Thank you for your consultation request regarding the SEA Screening report for the revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan.

Please find attached Natural England's response to this request.

Regards

Sharon Jenkins
Operations Delivery
Consultation Team
Natural England
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

Tel: 0300 060 3900
Fax: 0300 060 1544

www.gov.uk/natural-england

<mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk>

We are here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

Natural England offers two chargeable services - the Discretionary Advice Service, which provides pre-application and post-consent advice on planning/licensing proposals to developers and consultants, and the Pre-submission Screening Service for European Protected Species mitigation licence applications. These services help applicants take appropriate account of environmental considerations at an early stage of project development, reduce uncertainty, the risk of delay and added cost at a later stage, whilst securing good results for the natural environment.

For further information on the Discretionary Advice Service see [here](#)
For further information on the Pre-submission Screening Service see [here](#)

Thriving Nature
for people and planet



consultations@naturalengland.org.uk | www.gov.uk/natural-england

This message has been sent using TLS 1.2 This email and any attachments is intended for the named recipient only. If you have received it in error you have no authority to use, disclose, store or copy any of its contents and you should destroy it and inform the sender. Whilst this email and associated attachments will have been checked for known viruses whilst within the Natural England systems, we can accept no responsibility once it has left our systems. Communications on Natural England systems may be monitored and/or recorded to secure the effective operation of the system and for other lawful purposes.

Date: 16 May 2022
Our ref: 391694
Your ref: Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan – SEA Screening



Ms Laura Guy
Principal Planning Officer
East Herts District Council

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

BY EMAIL ONLY - Laura.Guy@eastherts.gov.uk

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Ms Guy

Revised Walkern Neighbourhood Plan – SEA Screening

Thank you for your consultation request on the above dated and received by Natural England on 10th May 2022.

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

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

Natural England agrees with your conclusion that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

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

Yours sincerely

[Click here to type your name.](#)