



PLAN-IT X
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING SERVICES

Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement

July 2020

**PLANIT-X TOWN AND COUNTRY
PLANNING SERVICES LTD**

21 New Road
Burton Lazars
Melton Mowbray
Leicestershire. LE14 2UU

t: 01664 568819
e: info@planit-x.co.uk
w: www.planit-x.co.uk

Registered company no 07387991 | Registered office address: Unit F Whiteacres Whetstone Leicester LE8 6ZG



Contents

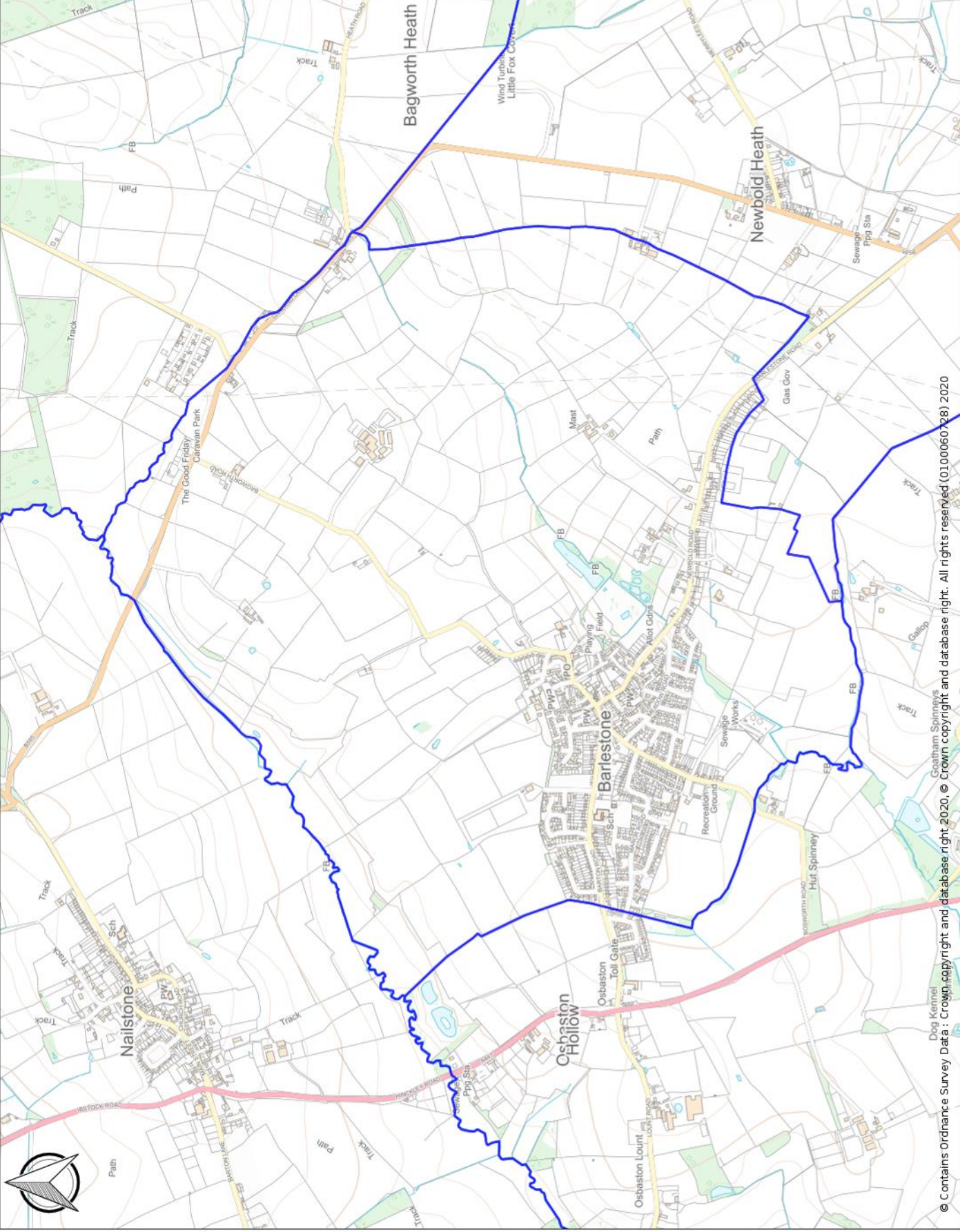
1. Introduction	1
2. Details of the Neighbourhood Plan	3
Title of the plan:	3
Name of Qualifying Body and Local Planning Authority:	3
Barlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan contact point:	3
Location and spatial extent of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan:	3
Timeframe of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan:	3
Main aims of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan:	4
Relationship with the Local Plan:	4
Will the Barlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan propose allocations? And if so, will these be over and above those likely to be included in the Local Plan?	5
What are the key environmental assets (including 'sensitive areas') near the Barlestone Neighbourhood Area?	5
'Sensitive areas'	5
Other key environmental assets	11
3. Legislative Background	13
4. Criteria for Assessing the Effects of Neighbourhood Plans (the 'plan')	15
5. Assessment	16
6. Summary of screening determination	21
Habitats Regulation Assessment	21
Conclusion	21
7. Appendix 1: Assessment of potential environmental effects	23
Appendix 2: Annex I and Annex II Projects, EIA Directive	33
Annex I Projects, EIA Directive	33
Annex II Projects, EIA Directive	34
Appendix 3: Responses from the Environmental Consultation Bodies	36

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has commissioned Planit-X Town and Country Planning Services to prepare this Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan (Draft Pre-Submission, April 2020).
- 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 Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan. The Screening Statement has been the subject of consultation with 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).
- 1.4 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 a SEA process must be carried out.
- 1.5 This Screening Statement therefore provides a screening opinion as to whether the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant environment effects, and as such requires a SEA process.

Author:

Date: 17/05/2020



Parish



2. Details of the Neighbourhood Plan

Title of the plan:

- 2.1 Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan.

Name of Qualifying Body and Local Planning Authority:

- 2.2 The qualifying body preparing the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is Barlestone Parish Council. The Local Planning Authority is Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

Barlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan contact point:

Cathie Watkins

Chairperson of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

34 Chapel Street

Barlestone

Warwickshire

CV13 0EB

Email: barlestoneparishndp@gmail.com

Tel: 01455 292957

Location and spatial extent of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan:

- 2.3 The Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan covers the Barlestone Neighbourhood Area, comprising the parish of Barlestone in Leicestershire, to the west of Leicester (Page 2).
- 2.4 It is a small rural area, comprising the village of Barlestone and surrounding farmland. The 2011 Census recorded a parish population of 2,481 with most residents residing in the village of Barlestone and the remainder residing in approximately 25 rural based properties. Large areas of the outlying parish are rural farmlands with a mix of arable and dairy farming activities.
- 2.5 The village centres on a small number of older properties mainly on New Street, Main Street, Bagworth Road, Church Road and Chapel Street. Community and local facilities in the parish include churches, a convenience store, food outlets, public houses, local shops and businesses, primary school, churches, football club and community centre.

Timeframe of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan:

- 2.6 To 2036.

Main aims of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan:

2.7 The vision of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan for 2036 is as follows:

Our vision for Barlestone Parish is that by 2036 it will remain an attractive and sustainable place for people to live and work, while keeping its character as a rural village. In order to achieve this:

- *The special open spaces and heritage assets of our parish will be protected,*
- *Housing developments will be sympathetic to the character of the village, will have minimal environmental impact and will cater for the full range of local housing needs,*
- *Community amenities will be both preserved and enhanced, and*
- *Recreational activities promoted to enhance the well-being of Barlestone residents.*

The Neighbourhood Plan, guided by the views of residents and stakeholders, seeks to ensure that the Parish in 2031:

- a) *remains a valued and safe place to live and work*
- b) *continues to thrive in each of the distinct communities within it*
- c) *will evolve and expand whilst retaining its sense of community*
- d) *provides well-being through a healthy, creative, equitable and sustainable life, and*
- e) *makes a positive local contribution to enhancing the environment and improving sustainability.*

Relationship with the Local Plan:

2.8 The Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan. For the purposes of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan, the relevant parts of the Local Plan 2006-2026 (formerly LDF) are the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD.

2.9 The Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy was adopted in December 2009 and is the Strategic Part 1 Local Plan. It provides the vision and spatial strategy for the borough and identifies development requirements for its main urban area which includes the settlement of Barlestone. Barlestone is identified as a Key Rural Centre Stand Alone and is recognised as a settlement that provides localised provision of facilities for those living within Barlestone as well as those within the rural villages and hamlets surrounding this centre. The Core Strategy identifies a minimum housing requirement of 40 new homes for the village of Barlestone over the period 2006-2026.

2.10 The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD was adopted in 2016 and identifies sites for uses such as housing, employment,

retail, open space and community facilities that will deliver the aims, vision and objectives of the Core Strategy. It also contains development management policies which will be used to assess planning applications over the plan period. This document identifies that the residual minimum housing requirement for Barlestone, as of 1 September 2015 has been met and as such no sites are required to be allocated for residential development in Barlestone.

- 2.11 A parallel process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was undertaken alongside the plan-making process for these two documents.

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

- 2.12 Given the importance of having an up-to-date local plan, the Borough Council is currently in the process of reviewing its local plan documents, including the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD. This Local Plan review included a consultation undertaken in early 2018 and the housing section of this consultation was supported by a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) to assess future housing needs for the period 2011 -2036. Based on information by the Borough Council, the gross housing requirement for the whole district for the period 2016-2036 is 9,460 (473 dwellings per annum). The pro-rata figure for the parish is 59 units over the same period.
- 2.13 The number of dwellings built or with a current planning consent in Barlestone granted since the 1st April 2017 is 11 units. Against the minimum requirement of 59 units, the outstanding target is to provide 48 additional dwellings in the parish before 2036.
- 2.14 The Neighbourhood Plan makes provision for a total of three housing site allocations (Policy H2) to provide for a minimum of an additional 57 new dwellings with a buffer against the minimum target of 48 dwellings. Any further additional housing would be met through Policy H4: Windfall Site Development. This allows for small residential development proposals within the Settlement Boundary.

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

'Sensitive areas'

- 2.15 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.

2.16 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 sites;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- National Parks;
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- World Heritage Sites; and
- Scheduled Monuments.

2.17 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:

2.18 No Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are present within the Neighbourhood Area.

Within 10km of the Neighbourhood Area

2.19 The River Mease Special Area of Conservation is located approximately 8.5km to the north-west of the Neighbourhood Area boundary.

2.20 The River Mease and the lower part of Gilwiskaw Brook are designated as a SAC. They were designated because the River Mease represents one of the best examples of an unspoilt meandering lowland river which supports characteristic habitats and species and supports populations of spined loach and bullhead, two notable species of native freshwater fish that have a restricted distribution in England. The rivers also support populations of white-clawed crayfish, otter and a range of river plants such as water crow-foot.

2.21 All SCA's are also notified as SSSI's, being sites that are of specific biological or geological features.

Beyond 10km of the Neighbourhood Area

2.22 Ensor's Pool Special Area of Conservation is located approximately 17.4km to the south-west of the Neighbourhood Area boundary. This lowland site in Central England represents and qualifies as a SAC as it holds a large

population of white-clawed crayfish in standing water. This waterbody is isolated from river systems and is a good example of a 'refuge' site.

- 2.23 The nearest SPA is at Rutland Water and is approximately 44km east of the Neighbourhood Area.

SSSIs

Within the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.24 No Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are present within the Neighbourhood Area.

Within 5km of Neighbourhood Area

Newton Burgoland Marshes

- 2.25 This site comprises three units and includes some of the best remaining examples of neutral alluvial grassland and marsh in Leicestershire and is representative of such habitats in Central and Eastern England.

- 2.26 Condition: Two units are favourable, and the other units is unfavourable – recovering.

- 2.27 4.1km to the north-west of the Neighbourhood Area.

Botcheston Bog

- 2.28 This site comprises two units and contains one of the best remaining areas of marshy grassland in Leicestershire and is representative of grazed marsh communities on peaty soils. The marsh is supported and supplemented by an adjacent area of wet grassland and by several watercourses which flow through and around the site.

- 2.29 Condition: One unit is favourable, and the other unit is unfavourable and recovering.

- 2.30 4.2km to the east of the Neighbourhood Area.

Cliffe Hill Quarry

- 2.31 This site provides excellent exposures of the contact between the southern type dirorite and the volcanic and sedimentary rocks of the Precambrian Charnian Maplewell Series.

- 2.32 Condition: Favourable

- 2.33 4.9km to the north-east of the Neighbourhood Area.

National Parks

Within the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.34 None.

Near the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.35 None- the closest National Park is the Peak District National Park (located approximately 48km from the Parish).

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Within the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.36 None.

Near the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.37 None- the closest AONB is the Cannock Chase AONB (located 36km from the Parish).

World Heritage Sites

Within the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.38 None.

Near the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.39 None- the closest site is the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (located approximately 30km to the north of the Parish).

Scheduled Monuments

Within the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.40 No Scheduled Monuments are present within the Neighbourhood Area.

Near the Neighbourhood Area

Moated site south of the Hall, Newbold Verdon

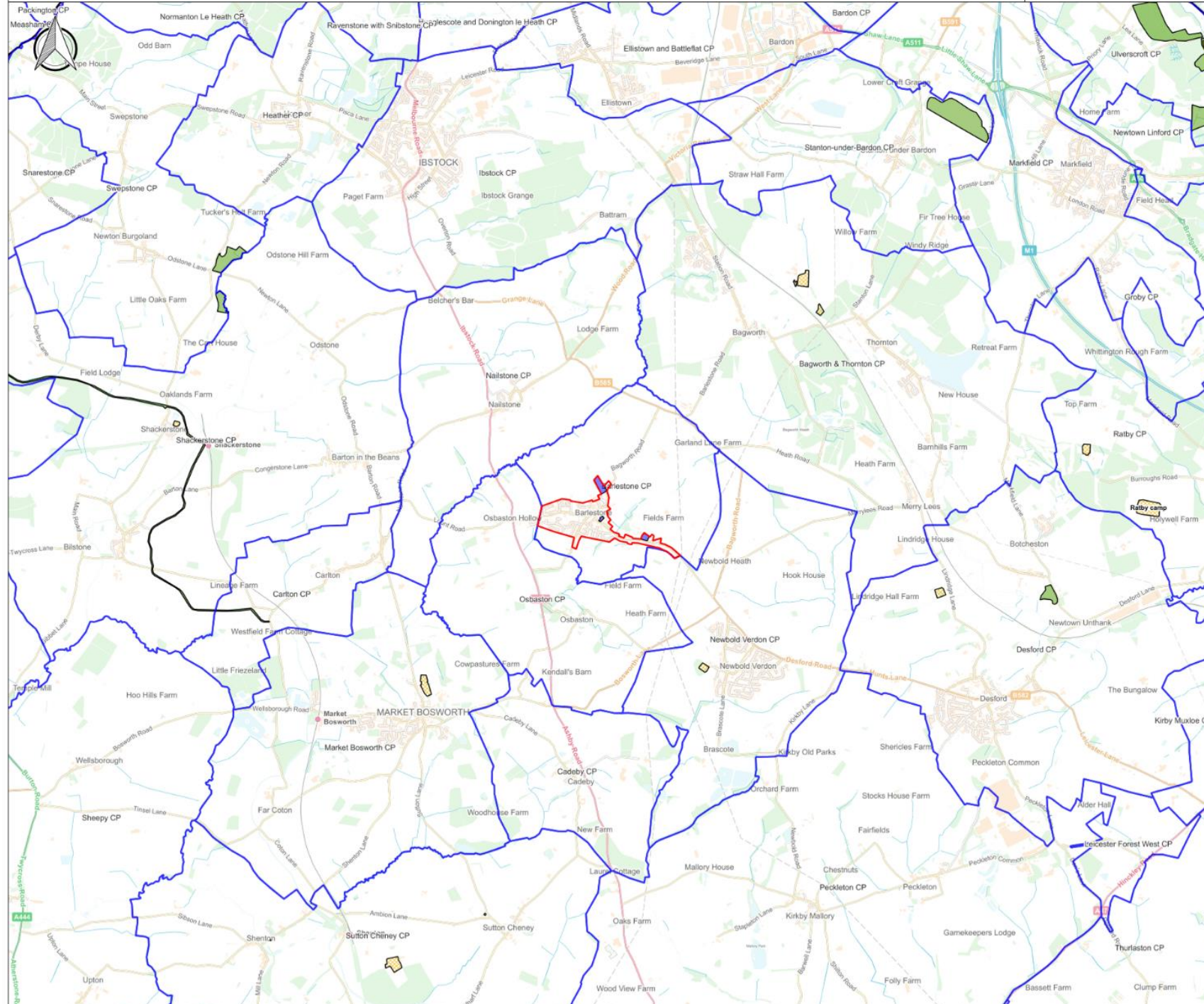
- 2.41 It survives in good condition despite the infilling of one arm of the moat and encloses a square island.

- 2.42 Distance from Neighbourhood Area – 1.2km from the parish boundary

Moat with fishponds at Bagworth

- 2.43 The moat at Bagworth is an unusual example of a manorial site with exceptionally well-documented evidence of the manor and the associated fishponds. The water management complex and the moat survive in good condition and evidence for various stages of building and repair of the medieval house will be preserved in the moat's interior.

- 2.44 Distance from the Neighbourhood Area – 2.1km from the parish boundary



Settlement Boundary



Residential Site Allocations



Parish



Scheduled Monuments



World Heritage Sites



Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)



National Parks



Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

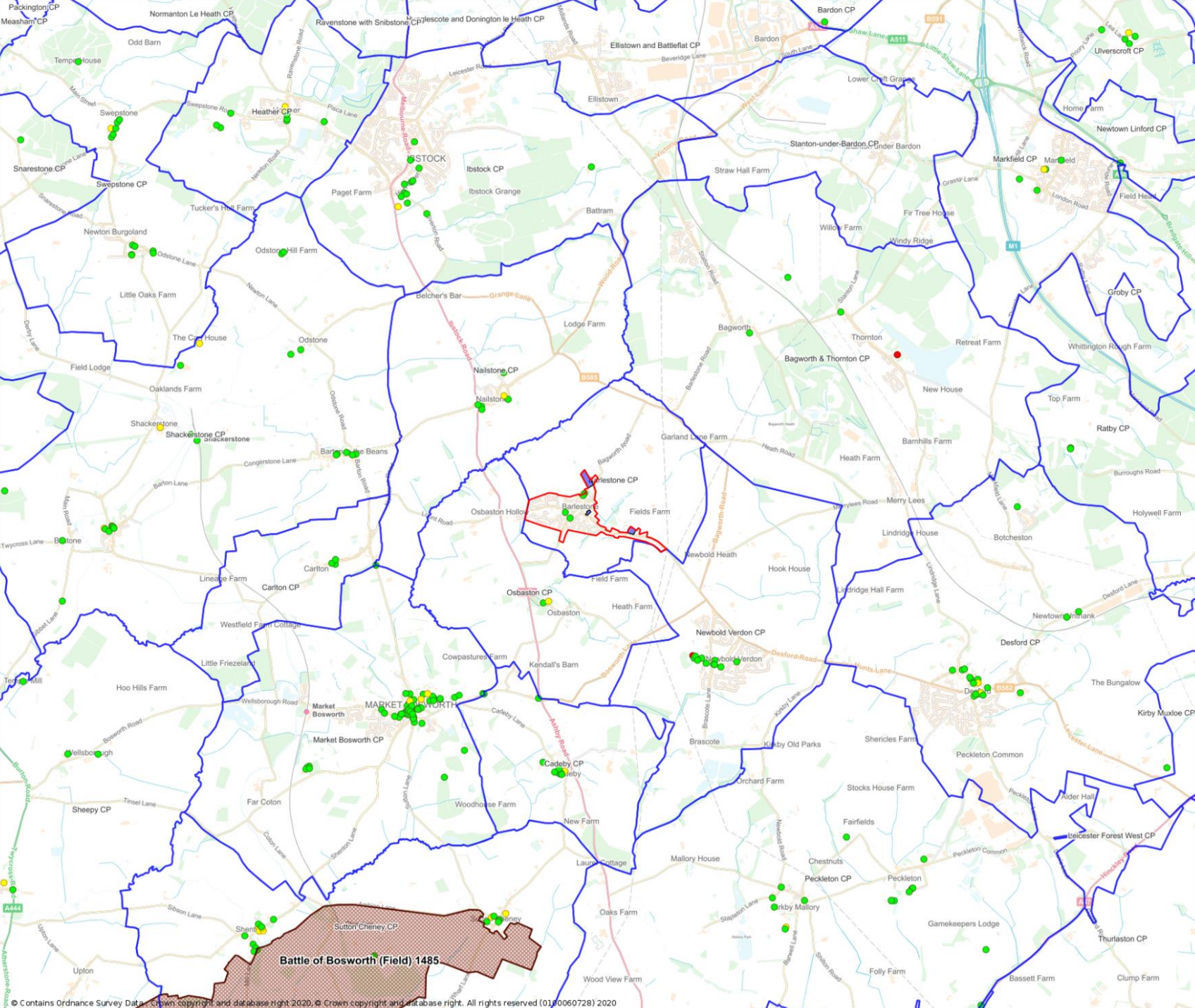
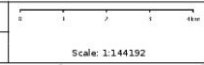


Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)



Special Protection Areas





Settlement Boundary



Residential Site Allocations



Parish



Battlefields



Listed Buildings



Parks and Gardens



Battle of Bosworth (Field) 1485

Roman foundations East of Barton Road, Market Bosworth

2.45 Records indicate that this site was possibly that of a Romano-British villa and that Iron Age artefacts have also been identified.

2.46 Distance from Neighbourhood Area – 2.4km from the parish boundary

Moated site 440m south-west of Lindridge Fields Farm

2.47 The monument includes the earthwork and buried remains of a moated site. This double moated site survives well and is a good example of this class of monument, despite some infilling.

2.48 Distance from Neighbourhood Area – 2.9km from the parish boundary

Motte and associated earthworks at Shackerstone

2.49 The motte at Shackerstone, together with a fishpond, survive in good condition and, apart from some small-scale excavation, the mound is essentially undisturbed and has considerable potential for the survival of archaeological evidence. It was later incorporated into a formal garden, some earthworks of which are included in the scheduling.

2.50 Distance from Neighbourhood Area – 4.3km from the parish boundary

Old Hays Moated Site and associated manorial earthworks, Ratby

2.51 Old Hays is a well-preserved example of a Leicestershire moated enclosure which is unusual for the depth of the surrounding moat. The significance of the site is greatly increased by the range of historical documentation relating to the manorial complex and its association with Leicester Abbey.

2.52 Distance from Neighbourhood Area – 4.6km from the parish boundary

Other key environmental assets

2.53 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

2.54 There are no Historic Parks or Gardens in Barlestone Parish. The closest is Bradgate Park, a Grade II Historic Park and Garden, 8.6km north-east of the Neighbourhood Area.

Battle of Bosworth (Field) 1485

2.55 There is no Battlefield within the parish of Barlestone. However, the Battle of Bosworth (Field) 1485 registered battlefield site is located 4.4km to the south of the neighbourhood area. It is registered due to its historical importance, topographic integrity, archaeological potential, and technological significance.

Conservation Areas

2.56 There are no Conservation Areas present within the Neighbourhood Area.

Listed buildings

2.57 There are four buildings and structures in Barlestone Parish listed by Historic England for their special architectural or historic interest. They include the Grade II Listed Buildings of The Manor House (Bosworth Road), The White House (Barton Road), the Church Farmhouse (Washpit Lane) and the Church of St Giles (Church Road).

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 undertaken for the Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy 2006-2026 in 2010 and the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2006-2026 in 2014 and 2016.

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 below:

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).

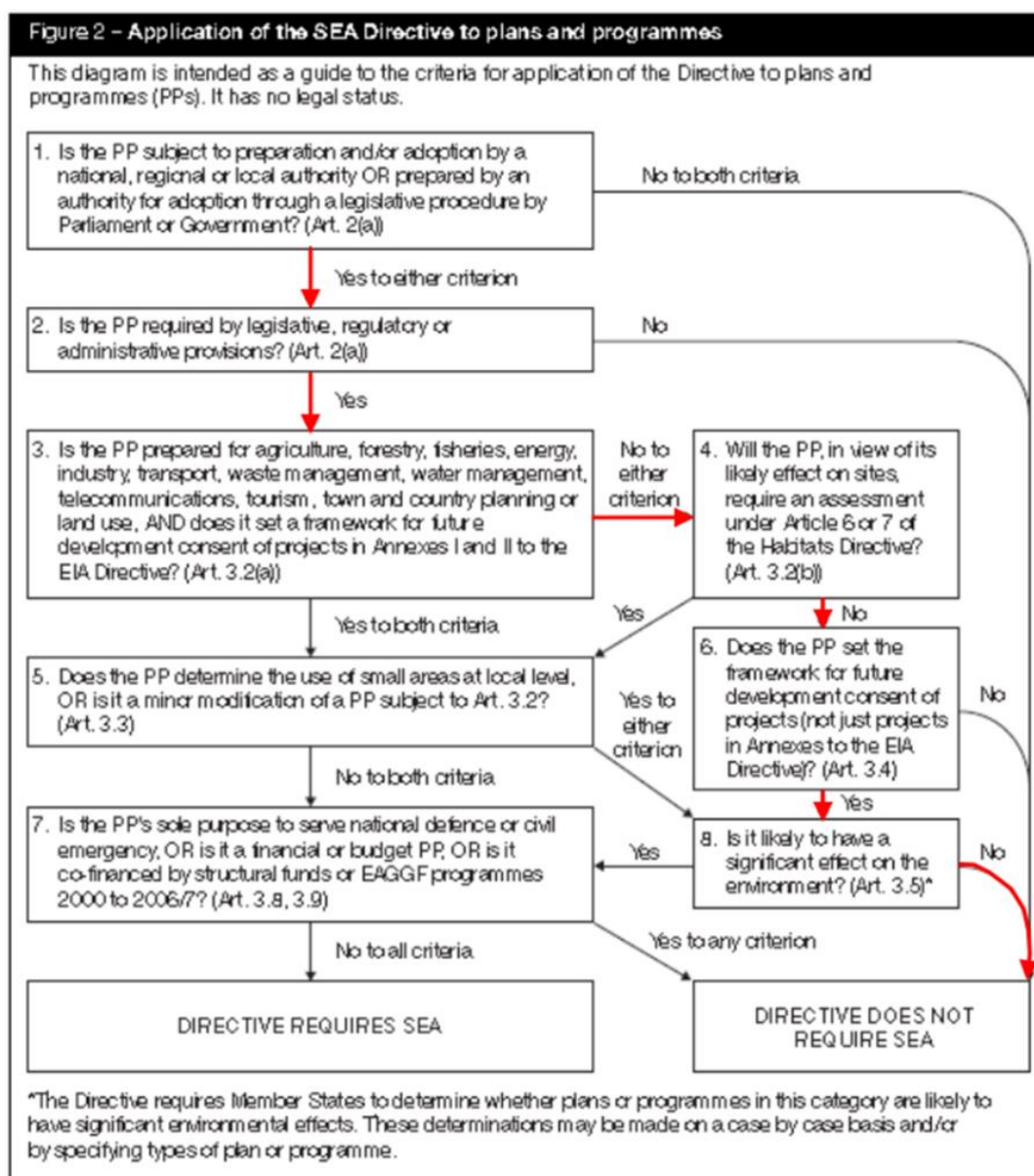
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to - the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects, - the cumulative nature of the effects, - the trans boundary nature of the effects, - the risks to human health or the environment (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.

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

5. Assessment

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 Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Assessment.

5.2 The table below shows the assessment of whether the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan will require a full SEA. The questions below are drawn from the diagram above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.



Stage	Yes/No	Reason
<p>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))</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The preparation of and adoption of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is allowed under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared by Barlestone Parish Council (as the 'relevant body') and will be 'made' by Hinckley and Bosworth 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.</p>
<p>2. Is the Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Whilst the Barlestone 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 Parish. 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.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Whilst the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan covers a range of land use issues and allocations, 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 Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is a non-strategic scale document, focused solely upon the Parish of Barlestone.</p>

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
(see Appendix 2) to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))		
<p>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))</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a substantial effect on the Natura 2000 network of protected sites.</p> <p>The two nearest SACs are the River Mease Catchment to the north west of the Parish and Ensors Pools to the south west of the Parish. The River Mease catchment is located 8.5 kilometres away from within the Barlestone Neighbourhood Area and the Ensor Pools are 17.4 kilometres from the Neighbourhood Area. There are no SPAs within 10km of the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The Hinckley and Bosworth Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 2017 confirms there is no physical connection between the Borough and The Ensor's Pool SAC. From this we consider that activities within the Borough – and indeed the Barlestone Neighbourhood Area - would not have implications for this site.</p> <p>Part of the River Mease (not the part defined as a European site (SAC)) passes through the Borough coming in from Snarestone over the border of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, flowing shortly after towards Swebstone. In addition, three tributaries of the river flow down towards and through Norton juxta Twycross, ending to the east, west and north of Norton juxta Twycross. As a result, given the physical connection to the River Mease SAC, provided by its flow through the Borough and via these tributaries, it might be conceivable that some areas of the Borough could have an impact on this site despite the actual</p>

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
		<p>designation being outside the Borough.</p> <p>However, no part of the River Mease or its tributaries as described above flow through the Barlestone Neighbourhood Area. The tributaries as described above are located roughly 9 kilometres away from the closest part of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Area boundary. In view of this as well as considering the scope of proposals within the draft Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan, the Borough Council considers that further stages in the HRA process are not required (including further screening, or Appropriate Assessment) and that the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is not considered to have any impact on the Natura 2000 network of protected sites.</p>
<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)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Determination of small sites at local level only.</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is to be used for determining future planning applications</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No further comments</p>

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
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 Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Summary of screening determination

- 6.1 This determination has considered whether the Barlestone 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 Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.2 Environmental effects have the potential to take place as a result of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan, including in relation to the majority of the SEA 'topics'. This SEA screening opinion provides the necessary analysis relating to the potential for negative effects on the nearby SAC, SSSIs, Scheduled Monuments 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 Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan and these are in turn reflected by the policy approaches proposed by the latest version of the plan.
- 6.3 It is therefore recommended that the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan should not be subject to a full SEA.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

- 6.4 It is the opinion of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council that a full Habitats Regulations Appropriate Assessment of the current Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is not required, as it is unlikely to have a significant effect on any designated sites.

Conclusion

- 6.5 **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.**
- 6.6 **The environmental consultation bodies Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency have been consulted during the preparation of this Screening Assessment. Their responses are summarised below:**
- **Historic England – Advice is confined to the question, “Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?” in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage. Comments are based on the information supplied with the screening request. Historic England is of the view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental**

Assessment is not likely to be 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 – 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. Having considered the Screening Statement we can confirm that it is considered unlikely that any significant environmental effects will result from the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.**
- **Environment Agency – No comments received.**

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

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

7. Appendix 1: Assessment of potential environmental effects

The following table presents the environmental effects which have the potential to arise because of the Barlestone 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 Barlestone 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. As concluded in Section 5 of the above assessment, the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan would not have implications for The River Mease SAC or Ensors Pool SAC. As such the contents of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is not considered to have an impact on the Natura 2000 network of protected sites.</p> <p>In relation to biodiversity, there are no SSSIs present within the Neighbourhood Area. There are however three SSSIs within 5km of the Neighbourhood Area, these being Newton Burgoland Marshes (4.1km), Botcheston Bog (4.2km), and Cliffe Hill Quarry (4.9km).</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan Area does lie within their outer SSSI Impact Risk Zone Zones. Certain development within the 'zones' require consultation with Natural England, depending on the specific zone that the proposal is located. Developments within these outer 'zones' that require consultation include airport, helipads and other aviation proposals, pig and poultry units, general combustion processes and the discharge of certain levels of water per day. The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose development of this nature within</p>



SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
			<p>these zones and therefore consultation with Natural England is not required with respect to these matters.</p> <p>It is recognised that the Neighbourhood Plan includes an overarching biodiversity policy that seeks to safeguard all significant habitats and species, and where possible create new habitats for wildlife. This policy seeks to reduce the likelihood of significant effects on these 'sensitive areas'.</p> <p>Due to the distance of the above identified SSSIs 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 Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan is taken forward.</p>
<p>Population (Including residents' quality of life, accessibility to services and facilities, deprivation and similar)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>As indicated by the current policy approaches proposed for the Barlestone 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.</p>	<p>Whilst the benefits for residents of Barlestone 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.</p>

SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		<p>It seeks to prevent the loss of community services and facilities, as well as support the provision of new or improved community facilities, accessible for pedestrians and taking into account the needs of people with disabilities.</p> <p>Improvements to the footpath network is also supported.</p> <p>The Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan will also support the delivery of affordable housing and help deliver a range of housing to meet local need, including the provision of smaller unit dwellings.</p>	
<p>Human Health (Incorporating residents' health and wellbeing)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>As indicated by the current policy approaches proposed for the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan,</p>	<p>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.</p>



SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		<p>the Plan has the potential to have a range of benefits for residents' health and wellbeing through promoting healthier lifestyles and supporting accessibility to services and facilities.</p> <p>Policies include those that support the enhancement and creation of footpaths and cycleways to access key village services, the protection of local green spaces and other important open spaces, the protection of residential amenity, opportunities for homeworking, and the protection, enhancement and the provision of new community facilities.</p>	
<p>Soil (Including agricultural land, soil erosion, soil quality)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>It is uncertain whether proposed development areas will be sited on</p>	<p>Due to the relatively limited area of land likely to be developed through the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan,</p>



SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		<p>land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, as recent detailed agricultural land classification has not taken place.</p> <p>The Plan proposes to update the settlement boundary to take into account recent housing consents and the proposed housing allocations. Policy also seeks to limit development outside of the proposed Settlement Boundary.</p>	<p>effects on the soils resource are unlikely to be significant.</p>
<p>Water (Including water quality and availability)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The Barlestone 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 a new housing provision.</p>	<p>Potential effects on water availability will be limited by the relatively small-scale of proposals likely to be facilitated by the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan. Effects unlikely to be significant.</p>



SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		Policy supports the implementation of sustainable drainage systems to minimise vulnerability to flooding and poor drainage. Development should also incorporate sustainable design and construction to meet high standards for water efficiency.	
Air (Including air quality)	Y	Whilst new development in the Neighbourhood Area may lead to increased traffic flows and congestion, this is unlikely to lead to marked effects on air quality. In addition, the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan includes policy which seeks to minimise additional traffic generation and movement through the village, facilitates the use of electric vehicles	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 quality 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?
		and supports the creation of footpaths and cycleways, which may help limit adverse impacts on air quality.	
<p>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))</p>	Y	<p>In terms of climate change mitigation, the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan actively seeks to locate new housing development within the proposed settlement boundary where local services and facilities are located. This will help limit potential increases in greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Policy encourages the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems which will help meet the challenges of climate change. Proposals will also need to demonstrate resilience to future</p>	<p>Due to the small scale, local scope of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan, the nature and magnitude of effects directly arising as a result of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive.</p>



SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		<p>climate-change driven flood risk. In terms of climate change adaptation, statutory requirements (including the requirements of the NPPF) will ensure that flood risk is addressed through new development proposals.</p> <p>New homes will also be expected to incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques including the use of renewable and low carbon technology.</p> <p>The plan also seeks to facilitate the use of electric vehicles with opportunities for new development to accommodate charging points.</p>	
<p>Material Assets (Including minerals resources, waste considerations)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan may lead to small increases in the</p>	<p>Potential increases in waste as a direct result of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan will be managed through statutory requirements regarding waste management. Due to their limited magnitude, effects are</p>



SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
		<p>Neighbourhood Area's waste management requirements through supporting the delivery of new housing.</p> <p>No mineral sites or resources, or waste sites are likely to be affected or undermined as a result of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>therefore unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage (Including historic environment, cultural heritage, historic settings)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Development undertaken in accordance with the policies of the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to have effects on the fabric and setting of historic environment assets.</p>	<p>There are no scheduled monuments (a 'sensitive area' as defined by the Planning Practice Guidance) located within the Neighbourhood Area. The nearest scheduled monument is 1.2km from the parish boundary, and is unlikely to be directly affected by the proposed housing allocations due to its relative distance.</p> <p>There are no Conservation Areas within the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>In terms of the listed buildings present in the parish, the proposed allocations are unlikely to adversely affect the setting of these features of cultural heritage importance, due to the siting of the proposed allocations in relation to these assets.</p>



SEA Topic	Likely effect? Y/N	Description of effect	Effect likely to be significant in the context of SEA?
			<p>The nearest Listed Building to any of the allocations is the Church Farmhouse, and is sited approximately 65m from the allocation at Land to the North of Bagworth Road. However given their juxtaposition and the adjacent existing residential development, there is unlikely to be an adverse impact on this heritage feature.</p> <p>There is also the statutory protection of conservation areas and listed buildings that will run alongside any local plan policy.</p> <p>Therefore, effects are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive.</p>
<p>Landscape (Including landscape and townscape quality)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Direct effects from the Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan on landscape and townscape character have the potential to take place.</p>	<p>In terms of landscape quality, no 'sensitive areas' as defined by the NPPG are present in the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>Overall the Barlestone 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 landscape character and townscape quality are 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); sludgedisposal 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



Ms Alison Gibson
Planit-X Town and Country Planning Services Ltd

05 June 2020

Dear Ms Gibson

BARLESTONE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – SEA SCREENING REQUEST

Thank you for your consultation of 4 June 2020 and the request for a Screening Opinion in respect of the Barlestone 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 ‘SEA’ Directive], Historic England is of the view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not likely to be 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. 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://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

Should it be concluded that, overall, a SEA will be required for the Plan, Historic England would be pleased to discuss the scope of the assessment in relation to the historic environment in due course.

I hope that this information is of use to you at this time. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Clive Fletcher
Principle Advisor for Historic Places
Clive.Fletcher@HistoricEngland.org.uk



Historic England, 8th Floor, The Axis, 10 Holliday Street, Birmingham B1 1TG
Telephone 0121 625 6870 HistoricEngland.org.uk
Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Date: 10 June 2020
Our ref: 318720
Your ref: None



Alison Gibson
<mailto:Alison@planit-x.co.uk>

BY EMAIL ONLY

Customer Services
Hombeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Ms Gibson

Planning consultation: Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan – SEA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above document dated 04 May 2020 which was received by Natural England on 04 May 2020

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

We have considered '*Barlestone Neighbourhood Plan Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement*' (June 2020). We can confirm that it is considered unlikely that any significant environmental effects will result from the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Natural England would like to advise you that we formed part of a partnership that has produced a planning toolkit aimed at supporting neighbourhood planning groups developing neighbourhood plans which shape development and land use change in their community. The guide includes: opportunities to enhance the environment and how this can be achieved in plan-making; important issues to consider, including legislative requirements; where to find out more; good practice and real life examples and a checklist to use when developing a Neighbourhood Plan. The '*Neighbourhood Planning for the Environment*' toolkit is available [here](#).

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Sandra Close on 020 8026 0676. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Page 1 of 4



Natural England is accredited to the Cabinet Office Service Excellence Standard

**Planning Adviser
Area Delivery Team
East Midlands Area**



Annex - Generic advice on natural environment impacts and opportunities

Biodiversity duty

Your planning authority has a duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their decision making. Conserving biodiversity can also include restoration or enhancement to a population or habitat. Further information is available here.

Protected Species

Natural England has produced standing advice¹ to help planning authorities understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

Local sites and priority habitats and species

The impacts of proposed development on any local wildlife or geodiversity sites should be considered, in line with paragraphs 171 and 174 of the NPPF and any relevant development plan policy. There may also be opportunities to enhance local sites and improve their connectivity. Natural England does not hold locally specific information on local sites and recommends further information is obtained from appropriate bodies such as the local records centre, wildlife trust, geo-conservation groups or recording societies.

Priority habitats and Species are of particular importance for nature conservation and included in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Most priority habitats will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. The list of priority habitats and species can be found here². Natural England does not routinely hold species data, such data should be collected when impacts on priority habitats or species are considered likely. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land, further information including links to the open mosaic habitats inventory can be found here.

Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees

the impacts of proposed development on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees should be considered in line with paragraph 175 of the NPPF. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland Inventory which can help identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have produced standing advice for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees. It should be taken into account by planning authorities when determining relevant planning applications

Landscape

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF highlights the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes through the planning system. Proposed developments may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider whether any local landscape features or characteristics (such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls) could be incorporated into any proposed development in order to respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness, in line with any local landscape character assessments. Where the impacts of development are likely to be significant, a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment should be provided with the proposal to inform decision making. We refer you to the Landscape Institute Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for further guidance.

Access and Recreation

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

² <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

Natural England encourages any proposal to incorporate measures to help improve people's access to the natural environment. Measures such as reinstating existing footpaths together with the creation of new footpaths and bridleways should be considered. Links to other green networks and, where appropriate, urban fringe areas should also be explored to help promote the creation of wider green infrastructure. Relevant aspects of local authority green infrastructure strategies should be delivered where appropriate.

Environmental enhancement

Development provides opportunities to secure net gains for biodiversity and wider environmental gains, as outlined in the NPPF (paragraphs 8, 72, 102, 118, 170, 171, 174 and 175). The application of the mitigation hierarchy as set out in paragraph 175 of the NPPF is a useful tool. It advises to firstly consider what existing environmental features on and around the site can be retained or enhanced or what new features could be incorporated into the development proposal. Where onsite measures are not possible, off site measures can be considered. Opportunities for enhancement might include:

- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Designing lighting to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

Proposed development can also contribute to the wider environment and help implement elements of any Landscape, Green Infrastructure or Biodiversity Strategy in place in your area. For example:

- Links to existing greenspace and/or opportunities to enhance and improve access.
- Identifying opportunities for new greenspace and managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips)
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network or using the opportunity of new development to extend the network to create missing links.

Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition or clearing away an eyesore).