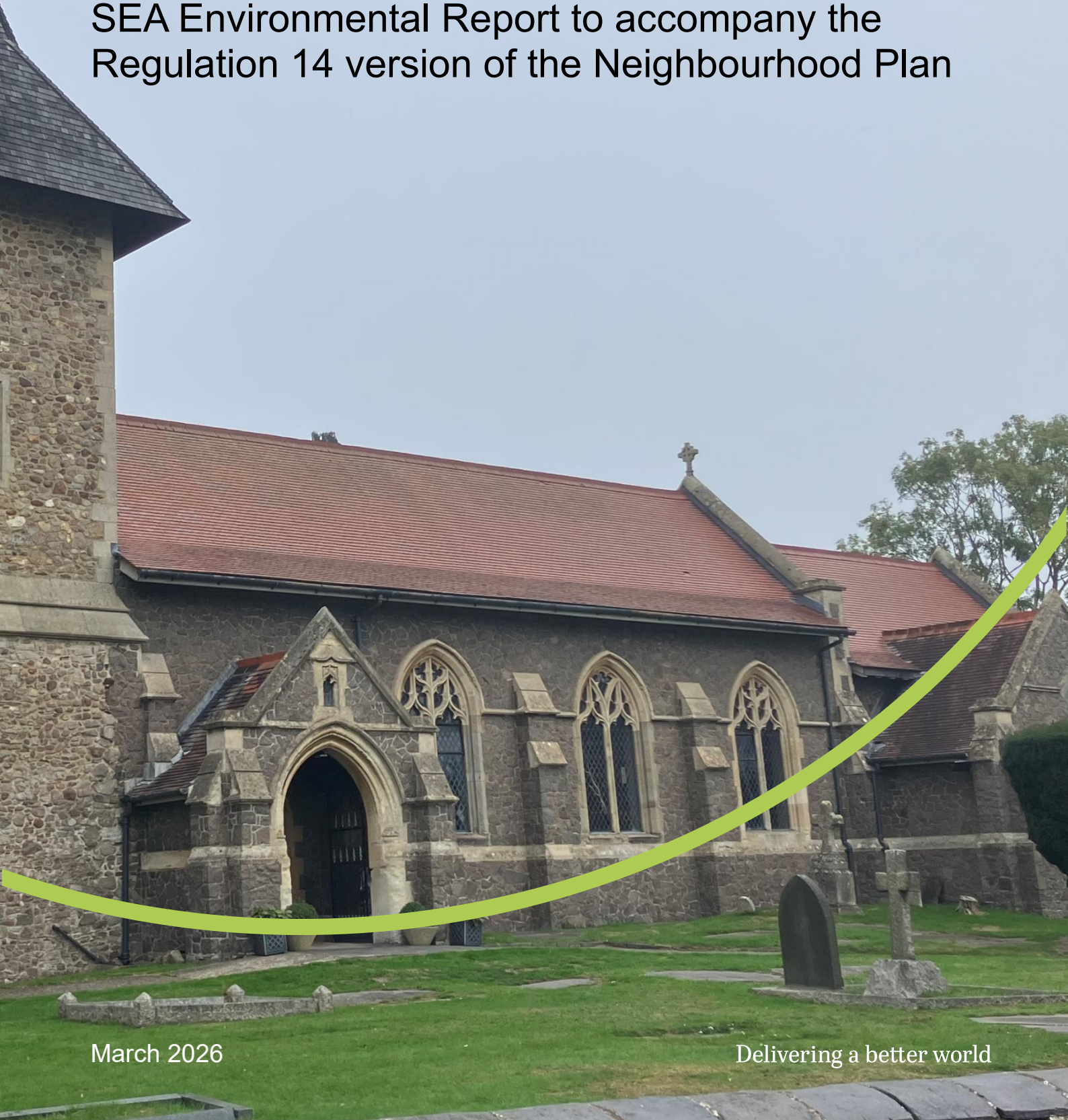


Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan

SEA Environmental Report to accompany the
Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan



Quality information

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Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

The Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as “the NVNP”) is being prepared under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and in the context of the Development Plan of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. Once ‘made’, the NVNP will carry material weight in the determination of planning applications as part of the Hinckley and Bosworth Development Plan.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the NVNP. This process is required by the SEA Regulations.¹

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to help avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Regulation 14 version of the NVNP is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (September 2025), which included information about the neighbourhood area’s environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe, and evaluate the likely significant effects of the NVNP and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

This Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the NVNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes.
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues for the area.
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the NVNP has been assessed.
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the NVNP.
- The likely significant effects of the NVNP.
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the NVNP.
- The next steps for the NVNP and accompanying SEA process.

¹ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

The scope of the SEA

The scope of the SEA is reflected in a list of themes, objectives, and assessment questions, which, taken together indicate the parameters of the SEA and provide a methodological ‘framework’ for assessment. A summary SEA Framework is presented here, and a full SEA Framework which includes assessment questions is provided within the SEA Scoping Report and **Table 3-2** of the Environmental Report.

SEA theme	SEA objective
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change.
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.
Historic environment	Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.
Land, soil and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape.
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

Consideration of reasonable alternatives for the Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan

Establishing reasonable alternatives

The Environmental Report identifies and includes an assessment of the reasonable alternative approaches to addressing key issues that are intrinsic to the NVNP.

The housing strategy for Newbold Verdon is set within the wider strategic context established by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. The borough-wide housing requirement, set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Distribution Paper Update 2024, identifies a need for 711 dwellings per year across the borough to 2045. A population-based apportionment suggests a requirement of approximately 412 dwellings for Newbold Verdon over the neighbourhood plan period. However, monitoring data indicates that approximately 583 dwellings have already been completed or committed since 2024, meaning there is no identified residual housing requirement for the neighbourhood area.

The NVNP allocates Land South of Bosworth Lane (LPR207) for around 200 dwellings. The site is identified in the emerging Hinckley and Bosworth Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and benefits from extant outline planning permission for up to 200 dwellings (ref. 25/00515/OUT). The site also has strong community support for allocation in the neighbourhood plan.

In considering reasonable alternatives, it was concluded that a higher growth strategy involving the allocation of additional housing sites would not be reasonable. While higher growth could provide additional housing choice and flexibility, there is no evidence of unmet housing need to justify further allocations, and the proposed approach has been discussed and agreed with the Borough Council.

The only potential spatial alternative identified was a 'do nothing' approach. This would result in continued reliance on national and local planning policy and could risk delaying or undermining the delivery of housing on the community-preferred site should the emerging Local Plan not progress the allocation. As such, the 'do nothing' approach was not considered to represent a reasonable alternative.

It was concluded that there were no reasonable alternatives to the proposed site allocation, level of growth, or wider policy approach within the NVNP that required assessment through the SEA process.

Appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan

The Regulation 14 version of the NVNP includes 29 planning policies for guiding development in the neighbourhood area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering.

The NVNP has been appraised against each of the environmental objectives in the SEA Framework. In undertaking the appraisal, each of the policies of the NVNP has been considered individually and collectively and the effects of the Plan are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.²

Overall, neutral effects are predicted across each SEA objectives, with the exception of positive effects for 'Biodiversity and geodiversity', 'Community wellbeing' and 'Transportation' objectives.

The appraisal does identify some negative effects associated with the proposed site allocation; however, the effects are not considered significant as they can likely be mitigated through sensitive design, sustainable drainage, and the wider safeguards provided through neighbourhood, local and national planning policy. Furthermore, as the principle of development has already been established for the proposed site allocation through an extant outline planning permission, many of the identified negative effects largely form part of the existing baseline.

² Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

The NVNP performs particularly well under the ‘Community wellbeing’ objective by aligning housing provision with local needs and supporting housing choice and affordability. Policies on housing mix, affordable housing and tenure-blind design, alongside measures to support employment, active lifestyles, green spaces and community facilities, are also expected to deliver positive effects.

A summary of the appraisal findings is presented below and the detailed findings of the appraisal is presented in Chapter 5 of the Environmental Report.

Summary of overall effects for each SEA Topic

SEA Topic	Overall Effects
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Minor positive effect
Climate change	Neutral effects
Community wellbeing	Moderate positive effect
Historic environment	Neutral effect
Land, soil, and water resources	Neutral effect
Landscape	Neutral effect
Transportation	Minor positive effect

Recommendations

The following recommendation were identified and considered to enhance the positive effects of the draft NVNP:

- The effectiveness of Policy CF4 is currently undermined as the Plan does not identify the specific Assets of Community Value to which the policy will apply. To strengthen the policy and provide clarity for decision-making, the Plan should designate the Assets of Community Value. This would improve the policy’s effectiveness in safeguarding valued community facilities and spaces, thereby strengthening positive effects on the ‘Community wellbeing’ objective by helping to maintain access to important local services and facilities.
- Policy H1 could be improved by including site specific mitigation and enhancement for the proposed site allocation to help guide the detailed planning stage.

Next steps

The SEA Environmental Report accompanies the NVNP for Regulation 14 consultation.

Following the close of Regulation 14 consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Steering Group, and the NVNP and Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated and final version of the SEA Environmental Report will then accompany the NVNP for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.

At Independent Examination, the NVNP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.

If the Independent Examination is favourable, the NVNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the NVNP, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the NVNP will become part of the Development Plan for the neighbourhood area.

Monitoring

The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in the Environmental Report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

It is anticipated that the monitoring of effects of the NVNP will be undertaken by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the NVNP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as “the NVNP”). The neighbourhood area is shown in the figure overleaf.
- 1.2 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the NVNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan’s contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.3 The NVNP is being prepared under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and in the context of the Development Plan of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC). Once ‘made’ the NVNP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications, as part of the Hinckley and Bosworth Development Plan.
- 1.4 HBBC designated the whole of Newbold Verdon parish as a neighbourhood area in June 2016. Since, the NVNP Steering Group gathered evidence and engaged extensively with the community and stakeholders, including a Regulation 14 consultation in 2018.
- 1.5 Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that a Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a ‘screening’ process.
- 1.6 An initial SEA screening in 2018 confirmed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was required, leading to preparation of a Scoping Report and Environmental Report in 2019. However, when the plan was submitted for examination in 2020, the examiner found it did not meet the basic conditions, as the SEA process had been completed too late to properly inform the plan. The plan was subsequently withdrawn in May 2020.
- 1.7 Following withdrawal, further evidence gathering and engagement has taken place to reassess local issues, site options and housing needs. Due to the substantial changes made to the neighbourhood plan and the initiation of a new plan-making process following its withdrawal, HBBC carried out a new SEA screening exercise in August 2025. A Scoping Report with a revised SEA framework was published for consultation in September 2025.



Figure 1-1: Newbold Verdon neighbourhood area

SEA explained

1.8 The SEA process is required to be undertaken in-line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:

- i. When deciding on ‘the scope and level of detail of the information’ which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
- ii. A report (the ‘Environmental Report’) is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e. the draft NVNP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses ‘likely significant effects’ that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.³ The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.

1.9 This ‘Environmental Report’ is concerned with item ‘ii’ above.

Structure of this Environmental Report

1.10 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the NVNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed in **Table 1-1** below with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

Table 1-1: Questions that must be answered by the SEA Environmental Report to meet the regulatory requirements⁴

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ⁵
What's the plan seeking to achieve?	An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan.
What's the scope of the SEA?	Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. The relevant environmental protection objectives , established at international or national level. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.

³ Regulation 12(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

⁴ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

⁵ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

Environmental Report question In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include...⁵

What is the sustainability 'baseline'?

The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan.
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.
Any existing environmental **problems** which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.

What are the key issues and objectives?

Key **problems/issues** and **objectives** that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment.

What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?

Outline reasons for selecting the **alternatives** dealt with.
The likely significant effects associated with **alternatives**.
Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of **alternatives** appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.

What are the assessment findings at this stage?

The likely significant effects associated with **the submission version of the plan**.
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing **the submission version of the plan**.

What happens next?

The next steps for the plan making / SEA process.

2. Local Plan context and vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The neighbourhood plan area lies within Hinckley and Bosworth and the adopted Local Plan relevant to the area consists of the Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy (adopted December 2009) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (adopted July 2016). The Local Plan identifies Newbold Verdon as a 'key rural centre' which will be the focus for improvements to employment, services, facilities and public transport provision. The Local Plan sets out a minimum housing requirement of 110 new homes for the neighbourhood area over the plan period (5.5 per annum).
- 2.2 HBBC are at an early stage of preparing a new Local Plan to cover the period 2024 - 2045. HBBC consulted on a Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan in October and November 2025. The Draft Local Plan identifies two sites for allocation in Newbold Verdon, which together provide for approximately 335 dwellings.⁶
- 2.3 The new Local Plan will be informed by the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Distribution Paper Update 2024, which identifies a borough-wide requirement of 711 dwellings per annum to 2045.⁷ When apportioned by Newbold Verdon's 2.75% share of the borough population, this equates to an annual requirement of approximately 19.6 dwellings, or around 412 dwellings over the neighbourhood plan period (2024-2045).
- 2.4 The Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the development plan for Hinckley and Bosworth, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way, the Local Plan is intended to set the overall strategic direction for development in the borough, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

Vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.5 The NVNP vision reflects community aspirations for the neighbourhood area and forms the basis on which the neighbourhood objectives and proposed policies have been formulated. The vision is as follows:

"In 2045 Newbold Verdon will have retained its existing character, friendliness and sense of community that parishioners are so proud of. It will remain a unique rural community with distinct areas of separation from other local villages and towns enjoying open views of the countryside and increased access to areas of natural beauty."

- 2.6 The vision is supported by several objectives which are set out in the Regulation 14 version of the NVNP.

⁶ Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (2025) [Regulation 18 draft Local Plan](#)

⁷ ICENI (2025) [Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Distribution Paper Update 2024](#)

3. What is the scope of the SEA

Summary of SEA scoping

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”*.
- 3.2 In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England.⁸ These authorities were consulted on the scope of the SEA in September and October 2025.
- 3.3 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out the following information:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and local plans and strategies relevant to the NVNP.
 - Baseline data against which the NVNP can be assessed.
 - The key sustainability issues for the NVNP; and
 - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the NVNP can be assessed.
- 3.4 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they have been considered and addressed (where appropriate), have been summarised in **Table 3-1** below.

Table 3-1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
Historic England	
<i>Historic Environment Planning Adviser (letter dated 15th September 2025)</i>	
Historic England have no substantive concerns as to the contents of the document and consider the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues and the proposed SEA framework to be well thought out and fit for purpose.	Comments noted.
Please ensure that the local authority Conservation Officer and Archaeological Advisor have been consulted. We recommend that local authority archaeology and conservation expertise should be used in relation to all heritage assets for the site allocations proposed and considered.	

⁸ These consultation bodies were selected *“by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effect of implementing plans and programmes”* (SEA Directive, Article 6(3)).

Natural England

Consultations Team Officer (letter dated 21st October 2025)

Natural England has no specific comments to make on the scope of this neighbourhood plan's SEA. However, we refer you to the advice in the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.	Comment noted and the advice in the attached annex has informed the SEA and the NVNP.
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Environment Agency

EMD Customers and Engagement Team (email dated 3rd December 2025)

According to our records, the Environment Agency has no land ownership within the Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan boundary, therefore we have no comments to make.	Comment noted.
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Key sustainability issues

- 3.5 Drawing on the review of the policy context and baseline information, the SEA Scoping Report was able to identify a range of sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of SEA.
- 3.6 The scoping process allowed for some sustainability topics to be 'scoped out'; as it was considered the Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on certain factors. The statutory consultees have not raised any concerns regarding the scoping out of any sustainability topics.
- 3.7 The key sustainability issues and the scoping outcomes are set out below.

Air quality

- 3.8 There are no AQMAs within proximity to the neighbourhood area, and air quality is considered to be good across Hinckley and Bosworth. As such, development through the NVNP is not anticipated to significantly impact upon air quality within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area.

SCOPED OUT

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 3.9 The neighbourhood area does not have any international or national biodiversity or geodiversity designations within its boundaries, and whilst the Botcheston Bog SSSI lies nearby to the east, the IPZs intersecting Newbold Verdon are not linked to development that is likely to come forward through the NVNP. The neighbourhood area includes several BAP Priority Habitats. As such, development through the NVNP has the potential to impact upon the biodiversity and geodiversity offering of the neighbourhood area.

- 3.10 Though limited, the NVNP could take advantage of the Network Expansion Zone to encourage biodiversity net gain improvements. This will likely contribute to achieving an appropriate level of biodiversity net gain in the neighbourhood area in line with UK Government policy.

SCOPED IN

Climate change and flood risk

- 3.11 The NVNP is seeking to allocate land for new development. As such, it is likely CO₂ emissions originating from the neighbourhood area will increase. It will be important for new development to adopt best building practises to limit the increase in emissions, such as using sustainable materials, and incorporating renewable energy infrastructure.
- 3.12 CO₂ emissions associated with the transport sector remain higher than other sectors in Hinckley and Bosworth. This highlights the importance of accessible development and the delivery of sustainable transportation infrastructure. Whilst it is acknowledged that reducing emissions linked to transport is largely the responsibility of the local transport authority, the NVNP could seek to address transport emissions locally through locating new development in sustainable locations and by strengthening active and sustainable travel routes and reducing the need to travel outside of the neighbourhood area. This would likely help to reduce the number of private vehicles on the local road network in the neighbourhood area. Therefore, Climate Change has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA.
- 3.13 The built-up areas of the neighbourhood area do not include any areas at risk of fluvial flooding. However, there are some areas at low to high risk of surface water flooding scattered across the neighbourhood area including within Newbold Verdon village. The likely scale and distribution of growth and the protection afforded through national and local planning policy should help minimise potential flood risk and help secure mitigation. Therefore, Flood risk has been **SCOPED OUT** of the SEA.

Community wellbeing

- 3.14 Newbold Verdon includes an area with moderate levels of deprivation including communities amongst the 50% most deprived in England in North Newbold Verdon. North Newbold Verdon is most deprived for income, education, skills, and training. Bringing forward new housing will likely contribute to reducing deprivation linked to housing; however, this is also likely to add pressures to the limited local services and facilities.
- 3.15 The NVNP presents an opportunity to continue the safeguarding and enhancement of community facilities (where appropriate) and could allow for additional community facilities and infrastructure to be introduced and protected.

SCOPED IN

Historic environment

- 3.16 There are several designated heritage features that contribute to the historic character of the neighbourhood area. This includes the Newbold Verdon conservation area, a scheduled monument, and 11 listed buildings. As such, the neighbourhood area is considered to have a sensitive historic environment which has potential to be impacted upon through development. Given this, development that is proposed in close proximity to any of the listed buildings, scheduled monument, or the conservation area, will need to consider how it could impact upon the intrinsic qualities of the asset and its setting – and the contribution of the feature to the wider historic environment.
- 3.17 It will be important for the NVNP to consider the Newbold Verdon Conservation Area Character Appraisal document. This will help to encourage development to reflect the special architectural and historic character and appearance of the area. However, it is noted that details provided may be outdated.
- 3.18 It is recognised that the NVNP presents an opportunity to increase the understanding of and access to historical assets, especially in regard to the 47 local heritage assets identified through the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record.

SCOPED IN

Land, soil, and water resources

- 3.19 Allocating land for development could influence changes to land, soil and water resources. The NVNP is unlikely to encourage the scale of development which will result in a significant loss of agricultural land resources. Nevertheless, the plan should aim to protect higher quality agricultural land, and such principles will need to be addressed through the site assessment process.
- 3.20 Given the overlap of the neighbourhood area with three different water body catchment areas, it is possible development could impact upon water quality. This is a concern, given that two of the water body catchment areas have a poor ecological status. The NVNP could help to mitigate this by encouraging development to include measures that ensure water pollution does not occur throughout the different development and operational phases.

SCOPED IN

Landscape

- 3.21 The neighbourhood area sits within a diverse landscape, including across two NCAs and a local character type area. As such, development will need to be considerate of the varying landscape features and sensitivities. The NVNP has the potential to positively contribute to landscape amenity through encouraging development to integrate with the various national and local landscape character areas. This will help maintain the unique landscape value of the neighbourhood area.

SCOPED IN

Transportation

- 3.22 As the NVNP is seeking to allocate sites for development, there will be an inevitable change in the current transportation baseline. Given the limited provision of sustainable transport options and services within the neighbourhood area, it is likely that development would increase the use of private vehicles on the local road network. Private vehicles are also likely to be relied upon for easier and more convenient access to nearby settlements. This could contribute to congestion and emission levels in the neighbourhood area.
- 3.23 The NVNP can help to mitigate this increase by encouraging development to come forward in areas with access to public transport services and encouraging development within proximity to active travel opportunities, including pavement and the PRow network, to encourage an uptake in walking and cycling for access to services and facilities within Newbold Verdon.

SCOPED IN

SEA Framework

3.24 The SEA framework has been established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise. The framework consists of a set of headline objectives and supporting assessment questions, which has been used consistently to appraise the environmental effects of the draft Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan (and reasonable alternatives).

Table 3-2: The NVNP SEA Framework

SEA theme	SEA objective	Supporting assessment questions
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the integrity of the designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity located within proximity to the neighbourhood area? • Protect and enhance priority habitats, associated habitats, species, and the ecological networks connecting them? • Achieve biodiversity net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green and blue infrastructure networks? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? • Support and promote access to and interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made and reduce the need to travel? • Promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport, and electric vehicle infrastructure? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources, or reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Sustainably manage water run-off, and reduce runoff where possible? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the neighbourhood area? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Supporting assessment questions
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people’s needs, particularly the needs of an ageing population? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements, including improved access to open space? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?
Historic environment	Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the special interest of Newbold Verdon Conservation Area and its setting, and implement the management plan where appropriate? • Conserve and enhance buildings, structures and features of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings? • Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key features of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Leicestershire HER? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the neighbourhood area?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Supporting assessment questions
Land, soil and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land wherever possible? • Avoid the loss of BMV agricultural land? • Promote sustainable management of soils via a soils resource management plan? • Avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of, or hindering of access to mineral resources? • Support the minimisation, reuse, and recycling of waste? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside proposed development? • Protect waterbodies from pollution?
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and / or enhance local landscape character and quality of place, including the local landscape character types and areas identified within the Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character? • Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place? • Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to townscape or rural setting, including trees and hedgerows?
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the objectives within the Leicestershire Core Transport Plan to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes? • Encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Improve local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles to access workplaces outside of the neighbourhood area? • Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change? • Improve road safety and reduce pollution from vehicles?

4. Consideration of reasonable alternatives through the SEA

Introduction

4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include:

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.

4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, how the SEA process to date has informed the consideration of different approaches for key elements of the NVNP.

Overview of plan making / SEA work undertaken

- 4.3 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council formally designated the whole of Newbold Verdon parish as a neighbourhood area in June 2016. Since, the NVNP Steering Group have gathered a range of evidence and conducted extensive engagement with local communities and key stakeholders to identify the issues and opportunities to be addressed through the neighbourhood plan. This includes a Regulation 14 (pre-submission) consultation between May and July 2018.
- 4.4 A screening exercise undertaken by HBBC in August 2018 determined that an SEA is required. The initial stage of the SEA process involved the preparation of a Scoping Report, which was issued for consultation in April 2019. Subsequently, the SEA Environmental Report was prepared, incorporating an assessment of reasonable alternatives and an appraisal of the draft neighbourhood plan. This report was prepared in September 2019 and subject to public consultation during November and December 2019.
- 4.5 The neighbourhood plan was submitted for examination in January 2020. The examiner concluded that the basic conditions had not been satisfied, as it could not be demonstrated that the preparation of the neighbourhood plan was adequately informed or influenced by the SEA process, which was undertaken subsequent to the Regulation 14 (pre-submission) consultation.
- 4.6 The neighbourhood plan was withdrawn in May 2020. Since, the NVNP Steering Group has gathered additional evidence and undertaken further engagement to explore the issues and opportunities to be addressed through the neighbourhood plan, including consideration of site allocation options and strategies to meet identified housing needs.
- 4.7 Given the scale of changes to the neighbourhood plan since the previous screening, and the commencement of a new plan-making process following the withdrawal of the plan, a new SEA screening exercise was undertaken by HBBC in August 2025. This exercise concluded that the preparation of the neighbourhood plan requires an SEA.

- 4.8 A Scoping Report with a revised SEA framework was published for consultation in September 2025. Subsequently, AECOM worked alongside the NVNP Steering Group to identify any reasonable alternatives, to ensure that the SEA helps to inform the approaches and policies within the draft neighbourhood plan. A thorough exercise to identify potential reasonable alternatives concluded that there are no alternatives.
- 4.9 The subsequent stage involved the preparation of an Environmental Report, which included an appraisal of the Regulation 14 (pre-submission) version of the NVNP. This SEA Environmental Report accompanies the Regulation 14 version of the NVNP, and its findings have informed and influenced the development of the draft plan.

Establishing reasonable alternatives

- 4.10 A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of ‘reasonable alternatives’ for the NVNP. The SEA Regulations⁹ are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the Environmental Report should present an appraisal of the ‘*plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan*’.
- 4.11 The SEA Environmental Report prepared in September 2019 included an assessment of reasonable alternatives for potential site allocations. This assessment examined 11 different site options and was used to inform the earlier iteration of the neighbourhood plan, which was subsequently withdrawn from examination in May 2020.
- 4.12 This section outlines how the SEA process has influenced and informed the development of the proposed development strategy for the current NVNP.

Housing growth strategy and site allocation

- 4.13 The NVNP proposes the allocation of Land South of Bosworth Lane (LPR207) for around 200 dwellings. The site is identified for allocation in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan¹⁰ and has extant outline planning permission for up to 200 dwellings (ref. 25/00515/OUT).
- 4.14 Overall housing numbers (targets) are primarily the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. The Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Distribution Paper Update 2024¹¹ identifies an annual housing requirement of 711 dwellings across the borough to 2045. Based on Newbold Verdon’s proportion of the borough’s population (2.75%), a population-based apportionment indicates an annual housing requirement of approximately 19.6 dwellings. Over the neighbourhood plan period (2024-2045), this equates to a total housing requirement of around 412 dwellings.

⁹ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

¹⁰ HBBC (2025) [Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan](#)

¹¹ ICENI (2025) [Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Distribution Paper Update 2024](#)

- 4.15 HBBC monitoring data indicates that between 2024 and March 2025 there were at least 248 housing completions and commitments in Newbold Verdon.¹² In addition, two major planning commitments were recorded in 2025/26 (as of January 2026): Land off Brascote Lane for 135 dwellings (ref. 24/01158/OUT) and Land south of Bosworth Lane for 200 dwellings (ref. 25/00515/OUT). Taken together, this represents approximately 583 completions and commitments since 2024. On this basis, Newbold Verdon is not considered to have an unmet housing need.
- 4.16 An alternative to pursue a higher growth strategy by allocating additional housing through the NVNP is not considered reasonable. While a higher growth strategy could offer greater choice and flexibility in housing delivery, there is no evidence to justify higher levels of housing growth. The proposed allocation of the housing site in the NVNP has been discussed and agreed with HBBC. A higher growth strategy is therefore deemed unreasonable.
- 4.17 In considering potential alternative spatial options for housing allocation, the SEA (in consultation with the NVNP Steering Group) considered that the only potential alternative to the proposed site allocation would be a 'do nothing' approach. The proposed site allocation would support housing delivery on a site that benefits from strong community support for allocation in the neighbourhood plan. Given the absence of any identified residual housing need for Newbold Verdon, and the clear community preference for the proposed site over other options within the neighbourhood area, it is considered that there is no meaningful spatial strategy alternatives to the site proposed for allocation in the draft NVNP.
- 4.18 A 'do nothing' approach would, in effect, result in the continued application of national and local planning policy to the proposed site allocation. Given that the emerging Local Plan remains at an early stage of preparation, there is a risk that, should the proposed site allocation not be carried forward through the Local Plan process, this approach would fail to facilitate the delivery of housing on the community-preferred site and the progression of an existing planning commitment with outline permission towards completion. Therefore, a 'do nothing' approach was not determined to be a reasonable alternative which needed appraising.
- 4.19 Taking the above into account, it was concluded that there were no reasonable alternatives to the site allocations and the level of growth proposed through the NVNP at this stage.
- 4.20 While significant effects in relation to the SEA objectives are most likely to arise from the spatial strategy of the NVNP, wider policy issues were also examined to evaluate their potential to generate significant effects and to identify any reasonable alternatives. No alternative policy options have been identified for assessment as reasonable alternatives.

¹²Based on approximate calculations obtained from HBBC and Newbold Verdon Steering Group.

5. Appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

5.1 This chapter presents an appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the NVNP under the SEA topic headings, reflecting the established assessment framework (see **Chapter 3**).

Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan policies

5.2 The NVNP contains 29 policies, listed in **Table 5-1** below.

Table 5-1: The NVNP policies

Policy Reference	Policy Name
Policy H1	Residential allocation
Policy H2	Settlement boundary
Policy H3	Windfall sites
Policy H4	Housing mix
Policy H5	Affordable housing provision
Policy H6	Design
Policy ENV1	Local green spaces
Policy ENV2	Sites of historic environment significance
Policy ENV3	Sites and features of natural environment significance
Policy ENV4	Ridge and furrow
Policy ENV5	Important open spaces for sport, recreation and amenity
Policy ENV6	Biodiversity and wildlife corridors
Policy ENV7	Landscape character areas
Policy ENV8	Safeguarding important views
Policy ENV9	Footpaths and bridleways
Policy ENV10	Renewable energy generation infrastructure
Policy CF1	Health and wellbeing
Policy CF2	Education
Policy CF3	Community amenities
Policy CF4	Assets of community value
Policy T1	Travel requirements for new development
Policy T2	Traffic management
Policy T3	Cycle and pedestrian routes

Policy T4	Public car park
Policy E1	Support for existing employment opportunities
Policy E2	Support for new employment opportunities
Policy E3	Working from home
Policy E4	Re-use of agricultural and commercial buildings
Policy E5	Broadband infrastructure

Approach to this appraisal

- 5.3 The assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3-2**) as a methodological framework.
- 5.4 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the policies under consideration and understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario) that is inevitably limited. Given uncertainties there is a need to make assumptions, e.g., in relation to plan implementation and aspects of the baseline that might be impacted. Assumptions are made cautiously and explained within the text (with the aim of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and conciseness). In many instances, it is not possible to predict 'significant effects', but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.
- 5.5 It is also important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.¹³ For example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e. the potential for the NVNP to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes, and projects. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 5.6 There are no internationally designated sites within or in close proximity to the neighbourhood area and there are no nationally designated sites within the neighbourhood boundary. However, the area does include areas of priority habitat including areas of deciduous woodland with a small number of lowland meadows. There is potential for development to cause harm to priority habitats and other ecologically important habitats through habitat loss and fragmentation, disturbance from human activity, recreation pressure and pollution.

¹³ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

- 5.7 The NVNP contains a range of policies that place a strong emphasis on the protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the neighbourhood area. Policy ENV6 requires development proposals to safeguard locally important habitats and species, including the protection and enhancement of wildlife corridors and habitat networks, the avoidance of landscape fragmentation, and the maintenance of ecological permeability. Policy ENV3 further identifies ecologically important sites, requires the adverse effects of development to be balanced against the significance of the species, habitats or features present, and for proposals to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. Policy ENV10 also supports renewable energy development where it avoids adverse effects on biodiversity and delivers a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. The net gain approach aligns with the 10% net biodiversity gain mandatory requirement for all qualifying schemes in the Environment Act 2021¹⁴ and thus represents no material deviation from the baseline. Collectively, these policies should help conserve and enhance the ecological value of existing habitats and support the creation of suitable and high-quality habitats, contributing to a resilient and biodiverse ecosystem.
- 5.8 Policies ENV1 and ENV5 designate Local Green Spaces and protect open spaces from loss or harm in the neighbourhood area. This will benefit biodiversity as some green spaces provide a habitat for wildlife or form part of important corridors for ecological connectivity. This should protect and support improvements to existing ecologically important habitats in the neighbourhood area and support ecological connectivity between habitats within the build-up area and to the countryside.
- 5.9 The proposed site allocation does not overlap with any designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites and is not known to contain priority habitats. The site is primarily comprised of improved agricultural grassland, bounded by trees and planting including some mature trees and established hedgerow with some potential to support species such as nesting birds. While development would result in the loss of agricultural grassland, the application of mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements should allow for the creation of new high-quality habitats on site. There is also potential to enhance and reinforce the eastern and western boundaries, which function as important ecological corridors linking the built area with the surrounding countryside.
- 5.10 The NVNP sets out measures that prioritise the protection of habitats and species, safeguard ecological connectivity, and require the delivery of biodiversity net gain in line with national legislation. Although development has the potential to affect locally important habitats through loss, fragmentation or disturbance, the combined safeguards provided by neighbourhood, local and national planning policy are likely to avoid or mitigate adverse effects and achieve localised ecological enhancements. Overall, a **minor positive effect** is predicted.

¹⁴ [Environment Act \(2021\)](#)

Climate change

- 5.11 In the context of a declared climate emergency, the NVNP can provide planning support for the transition to a low carbon future and increased resilience to future climatic changes.
- 5.12 In terms of climate change mitigation, the proposed housing will increase greenhouse gas emissions linked to the construction phase, an increase in the built footprint of Newbold Verdon, local population growth and additional traffic flows. However, improvements to construction phase mitigation, energy efficiency and the adoption of new technologies (including increase in electric car usage), should help mitigate these effects to an extent.
- 5.13 Policies which seek to protect, enhance and integrate into development pedestrian and cycle routes (Policies ENV9 and T3), are likely to support a shift away from private car use towards more sustainable modes of travel. This is reinforced by Policy T1, which requires residential developments of five or more dwellings to provide new occupants with a travel pack and a six-month bus pass. Together, these measures are expected to promote more sustainable travel choices and help reduce transport-related emissions within the neighbourhood area. However, the limited availability of local employment and services, together with infrequent bus provision in Newbold Verdon, is likely to mean that reliance on private car use remains prevalent.
- 5.14 Policies which seek to protect existing and support new businesses and employment opportunities locally including home working and improvements in broadband infrastructure (Policies E3 and E5), should also reduce the need to travel and reliance on less sustainable transport modes. This should indirectly help support climate change mitigation, although the effects are likely to be minor and not significant.
- 5.15 Policy ENV10 supports new renewable energy schemes and is therefore likely to encourage the decarbonisation of local energy generation. However, the effects are not predicted to be significant, as the policy limits development to a single solar array or up to two small-scale wind turbines, which would typically support small to medium scale generation suited to address the energy needs of a specific use or community energy schemes rather than wider-scale decarbonisation or large energy generation projects. Therefore, potential positive effects are likely to be localised.
- 5.16 The policy framework seeks to limit operational greenhouse gas emissions through support for renewable energy generation and by encouraging sustainable travel choices. While some increase in emissions is likely as a result of the proposed site allocation, this is associated with necessary housing delivery, and the site benefits from existing outline planning permission, meaning the principle of development and its potential effects are considered to form part of the baseline. Overall, no significant departure from baseline conditions is anticipated, with many measures for climate change mitigation and resilience being primarily driven at the regional and national level. On this basis, broadly **neutral effects** are concluded in relation to climate change mitigation.

5.17 In relation to flood risk, the proposed site allocation lies outside of fluvial flood risk, with only small areas subject to surface water flooding. The protection afforded in national and local planning policy should help secure adequate mitigation to safeguard against potential exacerbated flood risk from development. As such, no significant effects are considered likely, and broadly **neutral effects** are concluded with no anticipated significant deviations from the baseline.

Community wellbeing

5.18 At the strategic level, the borough-wide housing requirement is 711 dwellings per annum to 2045. When apportioned by Newbold Verdon's population share (2.75%), this equates to an indicative requirement of around 412 dwellings over the neighbourhood plan period. As the estimate number of housing completions and commitments exceed this figure (583 dwellings), Newbold Verdon is not considered to have an unmet housing need.¹⁵ This need is partially met through the proposed site allocation, and therefore allocating the site for housing would help safeguard housing delivery on the community-preferred site and the progression of an existing outline planning permission towards completion.

5.19 The scale and location of growth is likely to support around 80 affordable homes, new green space and the potential provision of new community and sports facilities. Affordable housing at this scale would make a meaningful contribution to improving housing choice and affordability in the local area. In addition, the HBBC allocation policy,¹⁶ which prioritises affordable rented homes for local people before the wider borough, should further strengthen local access to affordable housing. This is predicted to derive positive effects, but as the proposed site allocation has extant planning permission, these effects are not considered to be significant.

5.20 In relation to housing mix, Policy H4 requires all housing development to include a mix of dwellings which accords with 'the latest assessment of identified local needs in Newbold Verdon', as set out in the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) or any subsequent replacement document. The policy also specifies that the largest proportion of new homes should be two-bedroom dwellings suitable for older people and those with specific needs, reflecting the dwelling size mix identified in the HNA to address local housing needs in Newbold Verdon.¹⁷ This should support the delivery of housing that better reflects the needs of local people and contributes to widening housing choice.

¹⁵ Based on approximate calculations obtained from HBBC and Newbold Verdon Steering Group.

¹⁶ HBBC (2025) [Housing Allocations Policy 2018 \(updated July 2025\)](#)

¹⁷ AECOM (2022) [Newbold Verdon Housing Needs Assessment](#)

- 5.21 Policy H5 requires major housing developments to provide a minimum of 40% affordable housing, consistent with the requirement in the Local Plan. The policy further specifies an affordable housing mix of 60% affordable rented housing and 40% affordable home ownership, and the provision of First Homes at a 40% discount. This aligns with the recommended affordable housing mix set out in the HNA, and is likely to improve access to housing for low-income households while addressing local affordable housing needs in the long term. The policy also requires affordable housing units to be ‘visually indistinguishable from the equivalent market housing on the site’. Tenure-blind development should allow all residents to experience the development as an inclusive neighbourhood and help foster community cohesion.
- 5.22 The NVNP also includes measures to support local employment and economic resilience. Policy E1 establishes a ‘strong presumption’ against the loss of employment uses and sets out stringent measures to safeguard existing employment premises and land. Policy E2 supports new employment development in the countryside which is ‘appropriate to a countryside location’ and small scale leisure and tourism-related development, providing that there are no substantial effects on residential amenity. This should support economic diversification and the provision of new community and recreational facilities. In addition, Policy E3 supports the partial conversion of dwellings for home working where no adverse amenity effects arise, and Policy E5 promotes the provision of superfast broadband to ensure communities are well connected. Collectively, these policies are likely to deliver long-term positive effects by supporting sustainable communities through enhanced employment opportunities and improved access to services and facilities.
- 5.23 The NVNP includes a range of measures to support Newbold Verdon as a healthy, active and thriving place to live through the promotion of active travel, the protection of green infrastructure and the safeguarding of community services and facilities. Policies T1, T3 and ENV9 encourage walking and cycling by protecting the existing footpath and bridleway network and by supporting the provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes and travel packs for new residents, helping to promote healthier and more active lifestyles. Policies ENV1 and ENV5 designate Local Green Spaces and protect open spaces from loss or harm, thereby safeguarding important areas for leisure, recreation and sport. Policies CF3 and CF4 further contribute to community wellbeing by seeking to protect community buildings and assets of community value, resisting their loss or significant adverse effects unless equivalent or improved provision is secured. However, the effectiveness of Policy CF4 is uncertain given that the Plan does not identify the specific assets to be designated. Collectively, these policies help to maintain access to important community facilities, green spaces and movement networks, supporting social interaction, active lifestyles and the long-term community wellbeing.

- 5.24 Healthy communities are also encouraged by policies which seek to protect residential amenity. Policies CF1, CF2 and H3 support infill development and the provision or expansion of community facilities, including education and healthcare, where proposals do not result in unacceptable impacts on neighbouring residents through loss of privacy, visual intrusion, noise, traffic or inadequate parking. Similarly, Policies E2, E3 and E4 support employment development, home working, and the re-use of agricultural and commercial buildings, provided that adverse effects such as excessive noise, light pollution, traffic generation, flooding or other forms of disturbance to nearby residential properties are avoided. Policy ENV10 further supports renewable energy schemes where these do not give rise to harmful effects on health and wellbeing, residential amenity, or recreational routes and spaces. Collectively, these policies seek to balance growth and diversification with the protection of living conditions and amenity, thereby contributing positively to the long-term health and wellbeing of residents.
- 5.25 Overall, the NVNP performs well under the community wellbeing objective. The Plan seeks to ensure housing provision aligns with local needs, supporting local housing choice and affordability, and safeguards housing delivery on a site with extant planning permission. Policies requiring an appropriate housing mix, a high proportion of affordable housing, and tenure-blind design should help address the needs of older people, low-income households and first-time buyers, while supporting social inclusion. Wider plan policies promote economic resilience through safeguarding employment uses and land, supporting home working and improving digital connectivity, alongside measures to promote active lifestyles, the protection of green spaces, and retention of community facilities. Collectively, these provisions are expected to deliver a **moderate positive effect** for community wellbeing, by supporting healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

Historic environment

- 5.26 The neighbourhood area contains a rich historic environment, reflected in the range of features nationally designated and locally recognised for their heritage interest. This is supported by policies that place a strong emphasis on the conservation and protection of local heritage. Policy ENV2 identifies sites with archaeological and heritage features and requires the significance of these features to be weighed against the public benefits of any development that may result in harm or loss. Policy E4 further supports the re-use of agricultural and rural commercial buildings, provided that proposals avoid adverse effects on archaeological interest and the architectural or historic features of the buildings.

- 5.27 The NVNP seeks to conserve and enhance townscape character which should positively contribute to the historic areas of the village and the setting of heritage assets. Policy H6 requires development to achieve a high quality of design, layout and materiality that responds to local character and accords with the design guide and codes. Policy H3 supports small-scale development within the settlement boundary where important natural boundaries are retained or enhanced and where garden space is not reduced in a way that would harm local character. Policy ENV8 protects important views including key views towards the conservation area and of listed buildings from the south of Newbold Verdon. Collectively, these policies should positively contribute to protecting the character and improving the interpretation of the built and historic environment of the parish.
- 5.28 The character and heritage of Newbold Verdon is intertwined with its historic importance as a centre for agriculture. This is evident through ridge and furrow features across land parcels to the south of the village. Policy ENV4 identifies sites with surviving features and designates them as non-designated heritage assets and requires any harm arising from a development proposal to be 'balanced against its significance as a heritage asset'. This broadly aligns with national and local planning policy, but the identification and safeguarding of these historic earthworks will afford them additional protection.
- 5.29 Green and open spaces within Newbold Verdon make a positive contribution to the setting of heritage assets and to the historic character of the built environment. Policies ENV1 and ENV5 seek to safeguard a number of such spaces that are integral to the character and setting of heritage assets, including listed buildings and the conservation area, and that contribute to Newbold Verdon's townscape and rural character. In particular, this includes St James' Churchyard and Cemetery, which is intrinsic to the setting of the Grade II listed church and the conservation area.
- 5.30 The proposed site allocation does not include any designated heritage assets, but it is considered to fall within the setting of several nearby designated assets, including the Newbold Verdon Conservation Area, the Grade I listed Newbold Verdon Hall and associated Grade II listed structures, the Grade II listed Church of St James, and a Scheduled Moated Site. While the site is considered to make a limited contribution to the significance of these assets, largely through its function as greenfield land within their wider rural context. Residential development would introduce built form into what is currently perceived as part of the asset's open or semi-rural surroundings. This change would reduce the rural character of the setting and development is therefore likely to result in some degree of harm to the setting of these heritage assets. While this harm would be permanent, its magnitude is likely to be reduced through sensitive design and layout, informed by the safeguards set out in the NVNP, the Local Plan and national planning policy. It is also important to acknowledge that the site has an existing planning permission and would be expected to come forward in the absence of the neighbourhood plan.

5.31 The NVNP policies take a proactive approach in conserving heritage assets, townscape character, historic landscapes and their settings, with requirements for high-quality design, and the protection of important views, green spaces and non-designated heritage assets. While the proposed site allocation may cause some permanent harm to the rural setting of nearby heritage assets, the adverse effects can likely be mostly mitigated through sensitive design and layout and thus avoid substantial harm on the significance of the designated heritage assets (and the site has extant planning permission). Overall, a **neutral effect** is predicted.

Land, soil, and water resources

5.32 With the exception of land to the east of Newbold Verdon and the proposed site allocation, a detailed classification has not been undertaken for the neighbourhood area. Therefore, there is a need to rely on the 'Provisional Agricultural Land Classification' (ALC) national dataset. The ALC data indicates that the neighbourhood area is predominantly underlain with Grades 2 and 3 land. The land immediately surrounding the village is most susceptible to potential loss through future development.

5.33 A detailed classification of the proposed site allocation identifies the southern part of the site as Grade 2 agricultural land (approximately 3 ha), with the remainder site area classified as Grade 3a (approximately 6.1 ha).¹⁸ Development of the site allocation would result in the loss of around 9.1 ha of agricultural land, which is likely to derive some negative effects. However, given the relatively limited scale of loss and the fact that the principle of development has already been established through an extant outline planning permission, these effects are not considered to be significant.

5.34 The scale of housing proposed is unlikely to have any significant impacts at the catchment level to cause pressure on water resources. There is potential for development to result in pollution in surface water run-off which could adversely affect water quality. However, such potential effects can likely be mitigated through sustainable urban drainage and somewhat balanced from potential improvements to water quality from the change of use of the site allocations and thus removal of agriculture related pollutants in run-off.

5.35 The Local Plan affords protection to agricultural land resources by defining a tightly drawn settlement boundary around the built area of Newbold Verdon. The NVNP proposes a revised, but similarly tight settlement boundary to accommodate the proposed site allocation and recent development. Maintaining this approach is likely to support the preservation and retention of agricultural land resources surrounding the village. Although positive effects are limited because in the absence of the neighbourhood plan, some protection is afforded by the Local Plan. In this context, Policy E2 requires employment development to be located within the settlement boundary or within existing buildings or previously developed land outside it, which should further reduce the risk of countryside encroachment and loss of agricultural land to development.

¹⁸ Land Research Associates (2024) [Agricultural quality of land north-west of Newbold Verdon](#)

5.36 Overall, the NVNP is expected to have a **neutral effect** on land, soil and water resources. While the proposed site allocation would result in the loss of some Grade 2 and 3a agricultural land, this is not considered significant given its scale and the established principle of development on the site. Potential impacts on water resources and quality are unlikely to be significant and can be mitigated through sustainable drainage measures, while the maintenance of a tightly defined settlement boundary should help limit further loss of agricultural land and protect surrounding countryside.

Landscape

5.37 Although the neighbourhood area does not fall within or in proximity to statutory national landscape designations, it overlaps with two National Character Areas and lies within the Newbold and Desford Rolling Farmland (LCA D) local landscape character area. The landscape in the neighbourhood area is characterised by gently rolling land that rises to the north, comprising predominantly arable farmland with limited tree cover. The NVNP provides a more detailed characterisation of the local landscape to that prepared at the local authority level, and Policy ENV7 seeks to safeguard its distinctive qualities by ensuring that development in the open countryside respects and maintains the individual characteristics of the six landscape character areas identified within the NVNP. Policy ENV8 further protects key views across the landscape and Policy ENV10 seeks to ensure that renewable energy development does not have adverse impacts on identified important views.

5.38 Policy H2 defines a settlement boundary for Newbold Verdon. Policy E2 further restricts employment development to the settlement boundary with some exceptions including uses appropriate for a countryside location, and for development to be sited within existing building clusters, on brownfield sites or be of a scale and size in-keeping with rural character. This should afford additional protection to the countryside which should help preserve existing village character and the openness of the surrounding landscape. However, the effects are not significant, as the adopted Local Plan sets out a settlement boundary for Newbold Village and affords protection to the open countryside.

5.39 The protection of local landscape character is further reinforced through policies that directly and indirectly seek to conserve and enhance the sensitivity and appearance of the area. Policy H6 requires development to demonstrate a high standard of design, layout and materiality that contributes positively to local character and responds appropriately to the design guide and codes. In addition, Policy H3 supports development within the settlement boundary where it retains or enhances important natural features, including hedgerows, trees and streams, which contribute to landscape and townscape character, and where adequate garden space is maintained.

5.40 The intrinsic qualities of the local landscape are afforded a level of protection through the NVNP policies which recognise the importance of green and open spaces. Policy ENV1 designates three sites as local green space and seeks to restrict development 'other than in very special circumstances'. Policies ENV2 and ENV3 identifies and protects sites of archaeological, heritage and ecological importance. These sites include important landscape features, such as historically significant elements, trees, hedgerows, and field patterns. These features are intrinsic to the character of the local landscape.

- 5.41 Policies aimed at protecting landscape character from new infrastructure development are also likely to have positive effects. Policy ENV10 limits the scale of renewable energy generation infrastructure supported within the neighbourhood area and requires schemes to not have adverse impacts on 'identified views or on the sensitivity and character of the landscape'. This should help minimise adverse effects on the landscape character arising from schemes such as solar photovoltaic panels or wind turbines. In this context, Policy E5 requires broadband infrastructure to be 'sympathetically located and designed to integrate into the landscape and not be located in or near to open landscapes'.
- 5.42 The proposed site allocation includes key characteristics of LCA D, including intact field boundary hedgerows, limited tree cover and a small copse to the south. The site benefits from boundary trees and hedgerows that offer a degree of visual containment and definition, although its character is somewhat influenced by recent urban development to the north-east, which has extended the Newbold Verdon urban area northwards within the confinement of Bosworth Lane and Barlestone Road. While Bosworth Lane would also provide containment to development on the site allocation, development would likely represent a less sympathetic extension of the urban area beyond the strong natural boundaries to the east and south. Although new planting could help reinforce a settlement edge along the western boundary, development is likely to result in moderate adverse effects on local landscape character. However, given the established principle of development on the site, these effects are not considered significant.
- 5.43 It is considered that the NVNP provides a good policy framework for the protection and enhancement of the local landscape character, largely aligning with and reinforcing the protection afforded through existing Local Plan and national planning policy. Development at the proposed site allocation is likely to derive negative effects on landscape character, but the policy framework should support opportunities for mitigation. Furthermore, in the context of the principle of development being established on the site from the extant outline planning permission, the negative effects mostly form part of the current baseline and are not considered significant. Overall, a **neutral effect** is predicted.

Transportation

- 5.44 It is noted that in the neighbourhood area at busy times, movement, parking, and pinch point congestion are a continuing challenge. Limited on-street parking associated with Newbold Verdon Primary School exacerbates congestion issues along Dragon Lane and nearby streets. Accessing the B585 Bagworth Road from Merrylees Road at Newbold Heath is challenging during busy periods due to high traffic volumes, restricted sightlines from on-street parking, and excessive vehicle speeds entering the hamlet. Pedestrian movement due to inadequate pavements and crossings is a challenge at points throughout the parish.
- 5.45 In the absence of strategic transport interventions, growth in Newbold Verdon is likely to exacerbate these issues, and continued high reliance on the private vehicle is considered likely to prevail over the neighbourhood plan period.

- 5.46 The NVNP proposes the allocation of approximately 200 additional homes to the north-west of Newbold Verdon. Development at this scale and location is likely to increase demand on the existing highway network, including Bosworth Lane (B585) and nearby junctions that already experience congestion, particularly during peak periods. While new development may help support enhancements to pedestrian infrastructure and the viability of bus services, reliance on the private car is expected to remain high for both existing and future residents due to the limited range of local employment opportunities and services. As a result, the proposed growth is likely to contribute to increased congestion on the local road network.
- 5.47 Active travel is supported by policies which support enhancements to pedestrian and cycle connectivity and infrastructure provision. In particular, Policy T3 requires development proposals to demonstrate how new development will incorporate and improve pedestrian and cycle routes to other facilities and amenities in Newbold Verdon. The policy further requires development of 3 or more houses to include pavements that directly link into existing pedestrian infrastructure in the village. This should facilitate and encourage walking, recreation and active travel.
- 5.48 The NVNP seeks to reduce the need for travel. This aim is supported by Policy E2, which encourages employment development within Newbold Verdon, provided it does not give rise to unacceptable levels of traffic. Policies E3 and E5 further contribute to this aim by facilitating home-working through supporting change of use of existing or new small-scale buildings for home-working purposes, and by promoting improved access to high-speed broadband. Supporting employment growth and enabling home-working is expected to reduce the need and frequency for residents to travel outside Newbold Verdon. In addition, the provision of high-speed broadband and suitable workspace has the potential to support the diversification of the predominantly rural economy of the parish.
- 5.49 The NVNP seeks to promote public transport use by requiring that residents of new developments comprising five or more homes are provided with travel packs, including a free six-month bus travel pass. Whilst this may encourage a shift in travel behaviour, the reliance on private vehicles is likely to remain high given limited public transport services in Newbold Verdon.
- 5.50 The NVNP seeks to address car parking and associated traffic issues in Newbold Verdon, which should help reduce congestion and enhance accessibility. Policy T4 supports the provision of a new car park in the village. Policies CF1, CF2 and E4 support the provision of new and expansion of existing medical, educational, community, agricultural, and commercial facilities, where these do not generate unacceptable levels of traffic and include adequate parking. Policy T2 supports traffic management proposals along the B582 and B585, which could facilitate traffic calming and reduce the adverse impacts of traffic on mobility and amenity. Whilst these policies are positive in principle, they do not deviate substantially from national and local planning policy and thus their impact on the baseline is predicted to be limited.

5.51 While policies within the NVNP promote active travel, public transport use, local employment and home working, these measures are unlikely to significantly offset increased traffic demand from growth given the limited availability of services, employment opportunities and public transport provision within Newbold Verdon. As a result, reliance on the private car is expected to remain high and congestion pressures may increase, particularly at existing pinch points. However, with the site allocation having extant planning permission, the adverse effects on the local highway network are considered to form part of the baseline. The NVNP also includes measures to improve pedestrian connectivity, manage parking and support traffic management, which may help to mitigate some localised effects. Therefore, a **minor positive effect** is predicted, but this is not considered to be significant.

Conclusions

5.52 **Table 5-2** summarises the overall effects of the draft NVNP policies for each SEA topic. It is important to differentiate between significant effects, which are predicted to lead to changes in the baseline position, and those effects that are broadly positive or negative, but are less likely to lead to substantial changes.

5.53 Overall, neutral effects are predicted across each SEA objectives, with the exception of positive effects for ‘Biodiversity and geodiversity’, ‘Community wellbeing’ and ‘Transportation’ objectives.

5.54 The appraisal does identify some negative effects associated with the proposed site allocation; however, the effects are not considered significant as they can likely be mitigated through sensitive design, sustainable drainage, and the wider safeguards provided through neighbourhood, local and national planning policy. Furthermore, as the principle of development is already established through an extant outline planning permission, the identified negative effects largely form part of the existing baseline.

5.55 The NVNP performs particularly well under the ‘Community wellbeing’ objective by aligning housing provision with local needs and supporting housing choice and affordability. Policies on housing mix, affordable housing and tenure-blind design, alongside measures to support employment, active lifestyles, green spaces and community facilities, are also expected to deliver positive effects.

Table 5-2: Summary of overall effects for each SEA Topic.

SEA Topic	Overall Effects
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Minor positive effect
Climate change	Neutral effects
Community wellbeing	Moderate positive effect
Historic environment	Neutral effect
Land, soil, and water resources	Neutral effect
Landscape	Neutral effect
Transportation	Minor positive effect

Recommendations

5.56 The following recommendation were identified and considered to enhance the positive effects of the draft NVNP:

- The effectiveness of Policy CF4 is currently uncertain as the Plan does not identify the specific Assets of Community Value to which the policy will apply. To strengthen the policy and provide clarity for decision-making, the Plan should designate the Assets of Community Value. This would improve the policy's effectiveness in safeguarding valued community facilities and spaces, thereby strengthening positive effects on the 'Community wellbeing' objective by helping to maintain access to important local services and facilities.
- Policy H1 could be improved by including site specific mitigation and enhancement for the proposed site allocation to help guide the detailed planning stage.

6. What are the next steps?

Plan finalisation

- 6.1 This SEA Environmental Report accompanies the NVNP for Regulation 14 consultation.
- 6.2 Following the close of Regulation 14 consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Steering Group, and the NVNP and Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated and final version of the SEA Environmental Report will then accompany the NVNP for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.
- 6.3 At Independent Examination, the NVNP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.
- 6.4 If the Independent Examination is favourable, the NVNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the NVNP, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the NVNP will become part of the Development Plan for the neighbourhood area and replace the current Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan.

Monitoring

- 6.5 The SEA Regulations¹⁹ require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.
- 6.6 It is anticipated that the monitoring of effects of the NVNP will be undertaken by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the NVNP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

¹⁹ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Appendix A - SEA Scoping Report

See separate SEA Scoping Report document.

