



Eye Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Determination

(Regulation 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and
Programmes Regulations 2004)

January 2019

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EYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION

1. Introduction

This assessment relates to the Eye Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 Pre-Submission Draft dated 8th November 2018.

In some circumstances a neighbourhood plan could have significant environmental effects and may fall within the scope of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and require a strategic environmental assessment.

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the Plan is compatible with European Union obligations. Whether a neighbourhood plan requires a strategic environmental assessment and the level of detail needed will depend on what is proposed in the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the characteristics of the local area.

The Plan includes the following vision statements about the town that people want to see in the future:

- An attractive town: using the historic core to attract visitors and setting high standards to ensure new development is in keeping with the existing.
- A walkable town: development concentrated within walking distance of facilities, with great cycling facilities too – cutting congestion and improving the air we breathe.
- A connected town: linking up the whole town, including old and new and housing, employment and services.
- An enterprising town: focused on small businesses in the town centre and larger firms, especially those specializing in innovative clean technology and food production, on the former Airfield.
- A green town: integrated into its countryside and with community projects to encourage green energy and conservation.
- A living town: growing in size to cope with new needs through new development providing sufficient low-cost homes.
- An evolving town: changing gradually to meet new needs, locally and regionally, but with planned change when things need to alter

This Plan provides for around 683 dwellings to be developed in the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2018 and 2036. The Plan includes the allocation of the following sites for 10 or more new homes:

- a. Land south of Eye Airfield – around 280 dwellings
- b. Eye Health Centre and Hartismere Health and Care – around 43 dwellings
- c. Chicken Factory, Yaxley Road – around 72 dwellings
- d. Paddock House, Church Street – around 12 dwellings
- e. Land north of Victoria Mill Allotments – around 34 dwellings
- f. Victoria Mill Allotments – around 72 dwellings

In addition a reserve site is identified for around 174 dwellings south of Eye Airfield.

Part of the Chicken Factory site at Yaxley Road is also allocated for retail uses and car parking.

A SEA/HRA Screening Report for the Plan has been prepared by Essex Place Services on behalf of Mid Suffolk District Council and Eye Town Council. This can be viewed at:

www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/EyeNP

The statutory consultees were consulted in December 2018 and their responses are attached. (See Appendix 1).

Section 2 sets out the legislative background. Section 3 sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. Section 4 summarises the assessment and Section 5 sets out the conclusions based on the screening assessment and the responses of the statutory consultees. The determination is set out in Section 6.

2. Legislative Background

European Union Directive 2001/42/EC requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that would have a significant environmental effect. The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) require that this is determined by a screening process, which should use a specified set of criteria (set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations). The results of this process must be set out in a SEA Screening Statement, which must be publicly available.

In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Eye Town Council (the qualifying body) requested Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) as the responsible authority, to determine whether an environmental report on the emerging Eye Neighbourhood Plan is required due to significant environmental effects. In making this determination, MSDC should have regard to Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

Pre-Submission Consultation (Regulation 14 stage) was carried out in November and December 2018. In line with the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance, the plan's potential scope should be assessed at an early stage against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. As indicated above MSDC therefore commissioned Essex Place Services to prepare a screening report to assess whether a SEA would be required.

A SEA can be required in some limited situations where a sustainability appraisal is not needed. Neighbourhood Planning is one of these situations. Sustainability Appraisals (SAs) may incorporate the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, which implement the requirements of the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

A Sustainability Appraisal ensures that potential environmental effects are given full consideration alongside social and economic issues and it is good practice to do one to understand how a plan is to deliver sustainable development. However, NPPF Planning

Practice Guidance states that there is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to undertake a sustainability appraisal as set out in section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It is down to the qualifying body to demonstrate whether its plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This is the purpose of the SEA Screening Report.

3. **Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC**

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

<p>1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the degree to which the plan or programme 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 or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection). <p>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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

4. **Assessment**

A full assessment of the likely effects of the Plan is set out in the Screening Report dated December 2018 prepared by Essex Place Services which can be viewed at:

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Eye-NP-SEA-HRA-Screening-Report-Final.pdf>

In the light of the assessment the Screening Report concludes that:

- The Plan allocates sites for development in advance of the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan and therefore could give rise to a significant effect on the environment that would warrant the application of the SEA Directive, in the form of a SEA Environmental Report. The Local Plan is not yet at a stage to identify a quantum of development or sites for development within the Neighbourhood Plan area. As such, the degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects is high.
- In regard to significant effects, the Plan's allocations have not been informed by any evidence as to the suitability of proposals or the significance of any potential harm to the historic environment. As a result, significant effects on cultural heritage / the historic environment cannot be ruled out.
- The Plan allocates land for development purposes and therefore cumulative effects have not been formally identified and assessed to date. It is possible that cumulative effects could be forthcoming that would warrant the full assessment of alternative approaches. As such, the cumulative impacts of the Plan's allocations cannot be ruled out at this stage and should be identified through the application of the SEA Directive in the form of a SEA Environmental Report

5. Conclusion

In the light of the conclusions set out in the assessment in section 4 above the report by Essex Place Services has therefore **screened in** the content of the Eye Neighbourhood Plan to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with Directive 2001/42/EC

Consultation on the Screening Report was carried out with Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.

All three bodies agreed with the conclusion of the Screening Report.

The consultation responses are attached at Appendix 1.

6. Determination

In the light of the Screening Report for Consultation prepared by Essex Place Services and the consultation with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency it is determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Eye Neighbourhood Plan **is required** in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Date: 17 January 2019
Our ref: 268127



Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Sir/Madam

EYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – SEA/HRA SCREENING REPORT

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 18 December 2018.

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

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

We concur with the results of the HRA screening.

Neighbourhood Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours faithfully

Dawn Kinrade
Consultations Team



Mr Paul Munson
Babergh District Council
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Our Ref: AE/2018/123683/01-L01
Your ref: EYE/NP/SEA&HRA

Date: 18 January 2019

Dear Mr Munson

EYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SEA/HRA SCREENING REPORT CONSULTATION

EYE TOWN COUNCIL, C/O VOLUNTEER CENTRE, 20 BROAD STREET, EYE, IP23 7AF

Thank you for your consultation dated 18 December 2018. We have reviewed the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report for the Eye Neighbourhood Plan, as submitted, and agree with the conclusions and recommendations of the report.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

The report highlights that the policies in the Draft Plan at the time of writing allocate sites for built development, and combined with the significant number of environmental constraints found within the parish, as shown in our data maps and discussed in greater detail throughout the report, it is considered that the cumulative effects of development in the parish have not been formally identified. We agree that there is potential risk of significant effects arising from the plan, which should be explored further, as recommended in the report, through a full SEA Environmental Report.

We therefore consider the Eye Neighbourhood Plan should be screened in for its requirement of the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

We agree with the screening report that the HRA be screened out of its requirement for Eye Neighbourhood Plan.

We trust that this advice is useful.

Yours sincerely

Mr Ed Abigail
Planning Advisor

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www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Mr Paul Munson
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Direct Dial: [REDACTED]
Our ref: PL00527242

18 January 2019

Dear Mr Munson

Thank you for your email of 18 December 2018 regarding the above consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore we welcome this opportunity to review this Screening Report. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Eye Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion.

The supporting information (screening report) supplied with the consultation indicates that within the plan area there is a range of designated historic environment assets. There is also likely to be other features of local historic, architectural or archaeological value, and consideration should also be given to the wider historic landscape. The documentation indicates that the Eye Neighbourhood Plan proposes to allocate a number of sites for housing/other use, including a site within the conservation area and adjacent to highly significant listed buildings. As a consequence it is possible that there may be significant effects on the historic environment. The screening report indicates that these allocations have not been informed by sufficient supporting information as to their suitability, particularly with regard to the potential for harm to the historic environment.

Given the possibility for significant effects (both positive and negative) upon the historic environment, Historic England hence concurs with the Screening Report's conclusions that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will be required.

I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence dated 18 December 2018. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SA/SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance) where we consider that, despite the SA/SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Yours sincerely,

Edward James
Historic Places Advisor, East of England



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