

North Norfolk District Council

# **Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for Consultation**

Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft July 2022  
(Regulation 14)

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Screening Report is designed to determine whether or not the content of the emerging Wells-Next-The -Sea Neighbourhood Plan (Wells neighborhood plan) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. **The screening is carried out on the Pre-Submission Draft, version dated July 2022.** To avoid any doubt, this does not affect the Council's obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan/SEA process which may subsequently arise if there are changes to the plan's content that could have an adverse effect upon the environment.
- 1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation of plans and programmes prior to their final adoption. SEA is a tool used internationally to improve the environmental performance of plans so that they can better contribute to sustainable development.
- 1.3 Establishing whether a Neighbourhood Plan takes into account SEA is an important legal requirement. The Independent Examiner subsequently appointed to consider the Neighbourhood Plan will check that it meets the 'Basic Conditions' set out in the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>1</sup>. One of the Basic Conditions is whether the Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with European obligations. This includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. This directive is transposed into UK law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004)<sup>2</sup>. A Neighbourhood Plan must be compatible with European Union obligations, as incorporated into UK law, in order to be legally compliant.
- 1.4 In meeting these obligations, the national PPG sets out that an initial screening stage is required to establish whether a Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. As the "responsible body" this report sets out North Norfolk District Council's conclusions in respect the emerging policy areas of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.5 The screening report will seek the views of the statutory consultees<sup>3</sup> and their comments will inform the final screening report.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made>

<sup>3</sup> Historic England, Natural England & Environment Agency

## 2 Legislative Background

- 2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessment legislation is European Union Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>4</sup> which requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that could have a significant environmental effect. This was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, commonly referred to as the SEA Regulations<sup>5</sup>. The Government published ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ (ODPM 2005)<sup>6</sup>, which provides more detailed guidance on how an SEA should be carried out.
- 2.2 In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9(1)), the Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. This process is commonly referred to as a “screening” assessment. Where the Council determines that SEA is not required, then the Council must, under Regulation 9(3), prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination. Where it is determined that proposals in a Neighbourhood Plan are likely to have significant environmental effects, the Neighbourhood Plan may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft Neighbourhood Plan proposals should then be assessed to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant Environmental effects as prescribed in regulation 12 (2)& (3) of the above legislation.
- 2.3 In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Wells Town Council (the qualifying body) has requested North Norfolk District Council (NNDC), as the responsible authority, to consider whether an environmental assessment of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan is required due to significant environmental effects.
- 2.4 Whether a Neighbourhood Plan requires an SEA, and if so, the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan. The national PPG<sup>7</sup> suggests that an SEA may be required, 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; and
  - 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.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/contents/made>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal> para 013 Ref ID: 11-013-20140306

- 2.5 It remains the responsibility of the Local planning authority to ensure that all the regulations appropriate to the nature and scope of a [Neighbourhood Plan](#) proposal submitted to it have been met in order for the proposal to progress. However it remains the qualifying body's responsibility to make every effort to ensure the resultant draft neighborhood plan that it submits to the local planning authority:
- Meets each of the basic conditions;
  - Has been prepared in accordance with the correct process and all those required to be consulted have been;
  - Is accompanied by all the required documents<sup>8</sup>
- 2.6 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations, which implements the requirements of the SEA Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Sustainability Appraisals ensure that the potential environmental effects are given full consideration together with social and economic issues. The Government has stated that a Sustainability Appraisal is not legally required for Neighbourhood Plans, but has said that it must be demonstrated how the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in the area. It is down to the qualifying body to demonstrate how its Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development. It is considered best practice to incorporate requirements of the SEA Directive into a SA.
- 2.7 The Council has an adopted Local Plan which includes a Core Strategy, 2008, Site Allocations, 2011. Adopted supplementary planning documents covering landscape character, sensitivity to renewable energy and design are also published and provide further guidance. As such the accompanying SA is in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The strategies and policies were tested against the sustainability objectives (and accompanying questions) as published in the final SA.
- 2.8 As part of the emerging new single Local Plan the Council published its' final Sustainability Appraisal in January 2022. The Council considers it appropriate to adopt the established SA framework used in the existing and emerging development plans for the area to undertake this screening exercise and SA of the emerging plan. Furthermore, in January 2022 the Council published the final Habitats Regulations Assessment to accompany the Regulation 19 Pre submission consultation on the Draft Local Plan. The Draft Local plan is timetabled for submission March 2023.

## Habitat Regulations

- 2.9 Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012<sup>9</sup> refers to the Habitats Directive. The Regulations require Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening to be undertaken (by the qualifying Body) to identify if a Neighbourhood Plan would have a significant impact on nature conservation sites that are of European

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<sup>8</sup> PPG Paragraph: 031 Reference ID: 11-031-20150209

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/pdfs/ukxi\\_20120637\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/pdfs/ukxi_20120637_en.pdf)

importance, also referred to as Natura 2000 sites. Article 6 (3) of the EU habitats Directive<sup>10</sup> and Regulation 61 of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010<sup>11</sup> (as amended) requires that an Appropriate Assessment is carried out on any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European Site.

2.10 European Sites are defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2010, and consist of candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, as defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species. These are also reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF, which also refers to Ramsar sites, which are listed in accordance with the international Ramsar Convention. The NPPF requires decision makers to apply the same protection and process to Ramsar sites as that set out in legislation for European sites<sup>12</sup>.

2.11 To fulfil the legal requirements to identify if likely significant effects will occur on European sites through the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan group should request a separate HRA Screening Assessment from the competent authority followed by a screening determination. North Norfolk District Council is the competent authority, (LPA) for the purpose of determining if further assessment of the implications for European sites is required. Details of the internationally designated sites need to be assessed to see if there is the potential for the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan to have an impact on the sites. The Regulations state<sup>13</sup> that any assessment should be in view of the sites conservation. Any such affect needs to be ascertained and this can be done at the time the screening opinion is being sought.

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<sup>10</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/490/contents/made>

<sup>12</sup> NPPF para 118

<sup>13</sup> Regulation 102A (3) Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

### 3 Wells-Next-The -Sea Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan for Wells was subject to a Regulation 14 consultation during July 2022 and is in the final stages of preparation. This assessment is undertaken on the July 2022 Regulation 14 version at the request of the qualifying body (the Town Council).

3.2 The Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area (NPA) contains the following designated European sites and nature conservation sites:

- The North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation;
- The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation;
- The North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area;
- The North Norfolk Coast Marine, Special Protection Area;
- The Greater Wash Marine Special protection Area.
- Component Sites of Scientific Special Interest: North Norfolk Coast SSSI

3.3 The District contains a number of European sites within 10Km of Wells where the growth proposed in the neighbourhood plan is to be facilitated.

**Table 1** European sites within 10 km

Designation	Name
<b>SAC</b>	North Norfolk Coast
<b>SPA</b>	North Norfolk Coast
<b>SAC (Marine Components)</b>	The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC
<b>SPA (Marine Components)</b>	Greater Wash SPA
<b>Ramsar Sites</b>	North Norfolk Coast
<b>SSSI</b>	Cockthorpe Common, Stiffkey
	Morston Cliff
	North Norfolk Coast
	Stiffkey Valley
	Warham Camp
	Wells Chalk Pit
	Wiveton Downs



The WNPA contains the following heritage assets:

- Heritage Coast;
- Wells-next-the-Sea Conservation Area – designated 6<sup>th</sup> June 1974;
- 183 listed buildings. Generally, these are concentrated along High Street, Staithe Street and The Buttlands, the historic core of the town. The buildings mainly comprise a mix of domestic and commercial properties;
- There are no Scheduled Monuments in the parish of Wells;
- There are no locally listed buildings in the parish of Wells.

3.4 The WNPA includes land within Flood Risk Zone 1, 2, 3a & 3b. A number of policies provide a supportive framework for types of development within Flood Zones 2 and 3a.

3.5 The WNP through policy WSP12 seeks to identify and protect a number of locally selected buildings that have been identified through the neighbourhood planning process as non-designated heritage assets.

3.6 The WNP July 2022 version comprises of 18 policies grouped into six themes covering: Housing & Design, Employment & Retail, Infrastructure & Access, the Environment, Sustainability & climate change, and site-specific Policies.

3.7 The designated Neighbourhood Plan Area covers the whole parish.

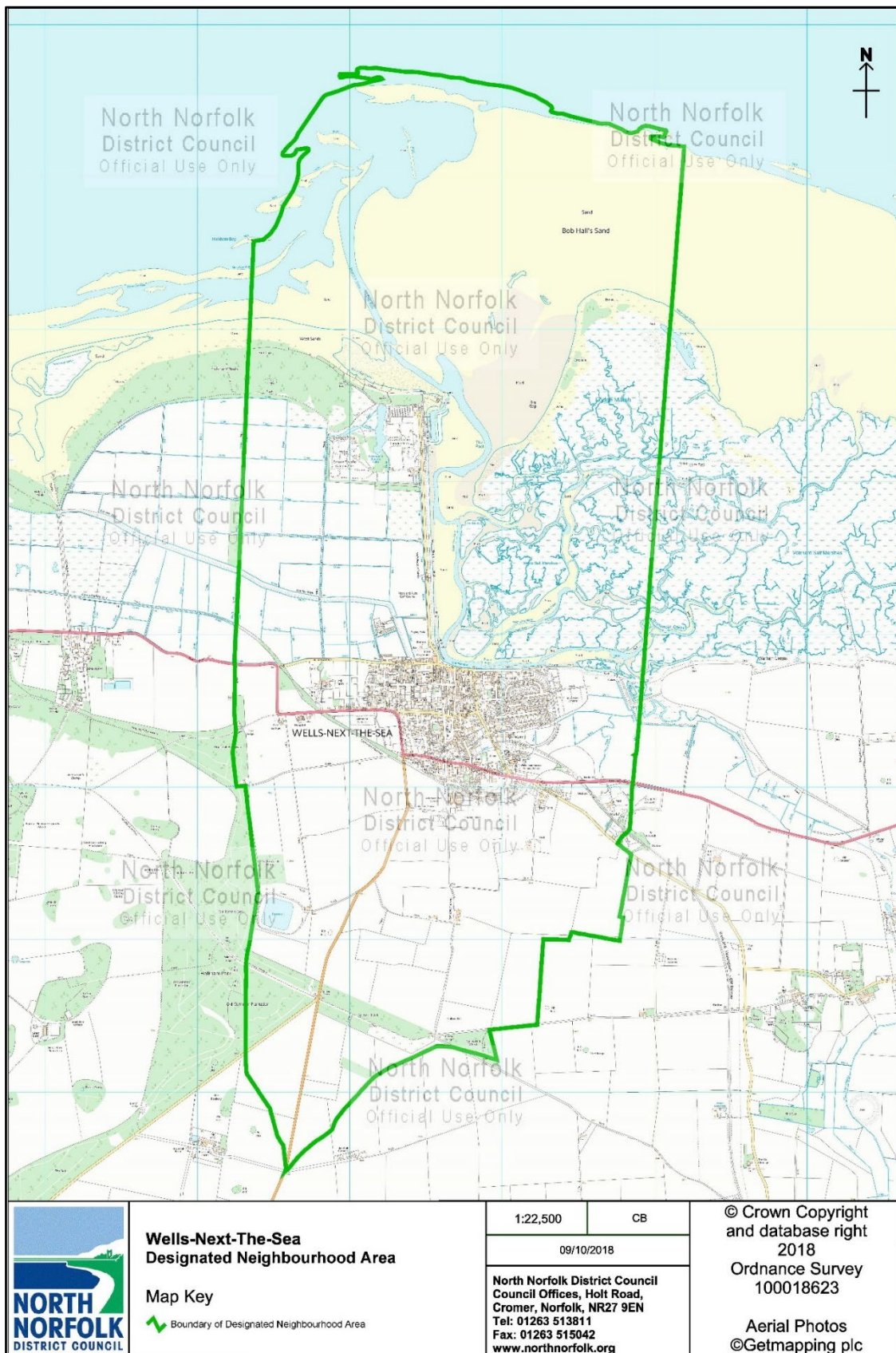
4.1 The Plans objectives as set out in the emerging plan (July 2022) are:

- To provide housing for local people and seek to meet the existing and future needs of those who live and work in the town, for the elderly and those wishing to move to the area, to retain a balance between young and old, working and retired;
- To encourage the creation of a range of employment opportunities in the town to maintain a strong, responsive economy, consistent with the character of the town;
- To ensure that the provision of local services (domestic, health, education, transport, and leisure) meets the needs of all sections of the community and visitors;
- To protect and enhance the character of the area as a living and working town and visitor destination, set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and wildlife sensitivity;
- To ensure that all planning decisions address the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels and to require the use of environmentally sustainable materials in new developments.

3.8 The Neighbourhood Plan proposes one site allocation, identifies three regeneration sites and seeks to designate a number of Local Green Spaces along with in-principle support for the expansion of non-quantified carparking. The Plan includes in-principle policies which are designed to support sustainable development covering employment, the Harbour Area and an identified Beech Area and seeks to preserve and enhance the character of the town, specific landscape views and the historical environment along with an array of general policies covering the wider environmental factors such as

flooding, Sustainable Drainage requirements, infill development, housing mix and retail. The Plan does not seek to set a specific housing requirement.

**Figure 1 – Wells-Next -The Sea Neighbourhood Plan Area**



## 4 SEA Screening

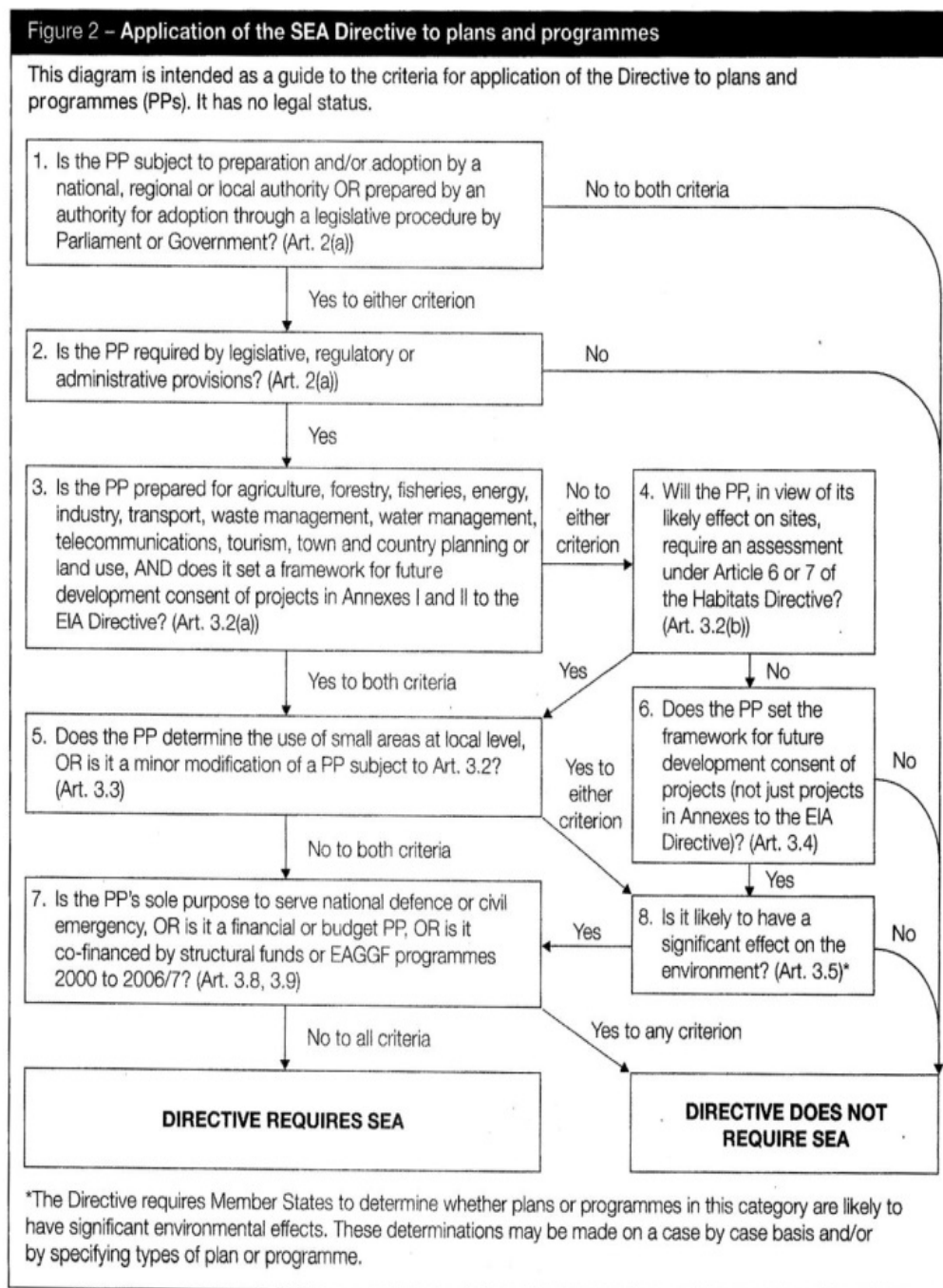
- 4.1 The process for determining whether or not an SEA is required is called screening. The SEA screening is a two stage interrelated process. The first part considers the Neighbourhood Plan against the SEA assessment flow chart set out in the national guidance “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive”<sup>14</sup>, (Paragraph 2.18, Figure 2, ODPM, 2005). The second part of the assessment is required in order to answer specific questions contained in the above, specifically question 8 and considers whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, using criteria drawn from the EU SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004<sup>15</sup>.
- 4.2 The regulations state that before making a determination the three statutory consultation bodies, The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England, must be consulted.
- 4.3 The process taken follows the application of the SEA Directive as set out in Figure 2 of ‘A practical guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ followed by application of the criteria determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC (Annex 11) and Schedule 1 of the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004:

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made>

Figure 2: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes



[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf) paragraph 2.18

Table 2: Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects

**Table 2: Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects.**

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to

- 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).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the trans-boundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
  - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
  - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
  - intensive land-use,
  - the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

Source: Annex 11 of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004:

## 5 Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan

### 5.1 Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes.

STAGE	Y/N	REASON
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The preparation and adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The NP is being prepared by the town council (as the “relevant body”) and will be “made” by North Norfolk District Council as the local authority subject an independent examination and community referendum. The preparation of NP’s is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012, and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.
2. Is the Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? ( Art.2(a))	Y	Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is not a requirement of the Town and Country Planning Act as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will be “made” and eventually form part of the Development Plan for the District. These are directed by legislative processes and it is important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.
3. Is the Neighbourhood Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	Y/N	<p>A Neighbourhood Plan can include these policy areas and could provide, at a Neighbourhood Area level, the framework for development that would fall within Annex II of the EIA Directive. Developments that fall within Annex I are ‘excluded’ development for Neighbourhood Plans (as set out in the Localism Act 2011 and Section 61(k) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as subsequently amended).</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared to set out a framework for town and country planning and “land use” within the parish of Wells. Its role is to complement the higher order strategic Framework that already exists for land use planning across the District.</p> <p>The strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan of the North Norfolk District Council. The Neighbourhood Plan process requires alignment to be in general conformity with these, the assessment of which is part of the iterative process</p>



STAGE	Y/N	REASON
		The Neighbourhood Plan does not anticipate being the tool to manage development of the scale and nature envisaged by Annex I and Annex II of the EIA Directive.
4. Will the Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the habitats Directive?(Art.3.2(b))	Y	<p>A Neighbourhood Plan could potentially have impacts on sites covered by the Habitats Directive. A number of European sites span the Neighbourhood Plan Area, including the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, The North Norfolk Coast SAC, and the North Norfolk Coast SPA, North Norfolk Coast Ramsar site and North Norfolk Coast SSSI.</p> <p>A screening assessment for a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) has been prepared separately. This has been sent to the required statutory bodies including Natural England separately. The screening assessment is of the opinion that an HRA will be required.</p> <p>The WNPA Includes a number of sensitive European sites and the emerging Neighbourhood Plan includes policies that seek to bring forward residential, tourism, Local Green Space and employment development and one specifically identified housing allocation as well as policies that seek carparking and others that are generally supportive of development in identified areas in and adjacent to the European sites. In the main the supportive policies allow for in-principle growth but do not necessarily stipulate any quantum or location of growth from which to assess impacts. The NP has not undergone examination and the HRA screening opinion is out to consultation with the statutory bodies. It is therefore, appropriate and precautionary at this stage to conclude that there remains a possibility that an assessment may be required at this stage. Given this ambiguity both question 5 and 6 of the flowchart are enacted.</p>
5 Does the Neighbourhood Plans determine the use of small areas at local level, Or is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art 3.2? ( Art3.3)	Y	A Neighbourhood Plan can determine the use of small areas at a local level. The Neighbourhood Plan for Wells proposes one site allocation, three regeneration sites and includes designations for local Green space as wells as identifying important views, and contains polices that cover a specific Beech Area and a specific Harbour Area.
6. Does the Neighbourhood Plan set the framework for future development consent of Projects (not just projects in	Y	Once “made” a Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used by North Norfolk District Council in the determination of planning applications. The intention is that the Neighbourhood Plan will provide a land use policy framework for future development at a local level and be used together with the

STAGE	Y/N	REASON
Annexes to the EIA Directive)? ( Art 3.4)		adopted higher order Plan form part of the Development Plan for the neighbourhood plan area.
7 Is the PP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	N	
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment	Y	From the application of criteria for determining the likely significant effects below it is considered that the neighborhood Plan has the potential to cause environmental effects and may have a significant effect on the environment depending on the final proposals within.

## 5.2 SEA Screening Stage 2: SEA Directive Article 3(5) Annex II – Application of Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects of a Neighbourhood Plan

Criteria in Annex 11 of the SEA Directive	Response	Is there a significant effect?
(1) Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:		
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 strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Development Plan and the emerging Local Plan of North Norfolk District Council. Growth set by the Local plan is expected to be delivered through the Local Plan site allocations. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to deliver further growth through a specific allocation and three regeneration sites and sets permissive policies supporting further unquantified growth in relation to affordable housing, carparking and in two further site-specific policies covering a specific Beech Area and Harbour Area.	Potential
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted alongside the higher order Local Plan and form part of the District's Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will expand upon and provide for additional growth in addition to that set out in the Local Plan. In its present draft form, a	Potential



	number of general conflicts have been identified between the Plans which will need to be resolved.	
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	The parish includes environmentally sensitive sites including but not limited to a number of internationally & nationally important sites such as those classified as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. A number of policies provide a supportive framework for types of development within Flood Zones 2 and 3a while others promote permissive growth in defined areas that are also in and or adjacent to the conservation area and identified environmental designations. The Strategic policies of the wider Local Plan have been subject to sustainability appraisal and HRA and are in place to ensure that sustainable development is achieved, however the Np includes additional levels of growth and further local refinement of policies. The specific locations or type for much of this additional growth are not identified and the levels not quantified.	unknown
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;	The NPA includes a number of environmentally sensitive designations in close proximity. The town includes a conservation area and a number of designated heritage assets. The WNP seeks to identify further locally important heritage assets	Yes
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).	The implementation of community legislation is unlikely to be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan.	No
(2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects;	The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to bring forward growth through permissive policies which could lead to the intensification of environmentally sensitive areas which could not be reversed.	Potentially
The cumulative nature of the effects;	The NP includes a specific site allocation and comprises of 18 policies grouped into six themes covering: Housing & Design, Employment & Retail, Infrastructure & Access, the Environment, Sustainability & climate change, and site-specific Policies. The Plan also identifies three regeneration sites and includes designations for local	Yes

	<p>Green space as well as identifying important views, a Beech Area and a specific Harbour Area were general permissive policies are seeking to support an unqualified level of growth in areas in and in close proximity to the European sites. A number of policies provide a supportive framework for types of development within Flood Zones 2 and 3a while others seek to set design and heritage principles and minimize pollution.</p> <p>The growth is in addition to that set out in the Local Plan and coupled with the site allocation and potential for further levels of growth not quantified and the propensity to encourage more tourism and footfall through the permissive approach proposed for the expansion of carparking and the qualified support for the development in the identified Beach and Harbour Areas, it is considered there is the potential for impact on a number of environmental assets. It is considered that the Plan could have a significant impact on the environment.</p>	
The trans-boundary nature of the effects;	The Neighbourhood Plan policy areas outlined provide supplementary policy areas on a local scale. European sites are broader than the NPA and as such there is the potential for impacts beyond the NPA. Given the nature of the NP and the lack of quantified levels of growth proposed and the wider connectivity to European sites it is considered that there is the potential for wider effects.	Potential
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);	The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to produce any significant effects in relation to this criteria	No
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The Neighbourhood Plan covers the parish of Wells. The 2020 midyear estimates estimate the usual resident population of as 7,164. This is in comparison to the estimated population of 107,000 of North Norfolk and an area of 96,333 hectares. The small spatial extent and the magnitude of the population affected are not considered significant for the purpose of the SEA.	No
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:  i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;	i) The Plan Area contains a number of listed buildings and contains the Wells Conservation Area. The Neighbourhood Plan by virtue of the “basic conditions” will however need to be in general conformity to the existing Development Plan, and emerging Local Plan which contains detailed policies on the Historic Environment across the District to	i) No

<p>ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</p> <p>iii) Intensive land use</p>	<p>ensure that they are not vulnerable to significant impacts from development.</p> <p>ii) The Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to result in exceedance of environmental quality standards and limits, such as those relating to air, water, soil quality and potentially recreational impacts.</p> <p>iii) The Neighbourhood Plan supports additional temporary carparks at locations which provide easy access to main routes, the town centre and beach area. Policy WNS9 specifically provides support for the use of Beach Road Pitch and Putt site for seasonal carparking. The car park is located in Flood zone 2 and 3a and adjacent to designated European sites and County wildlife site. Policy WSN 17 and 18 seek to promote appropriate growth in the Beech identified Area and The Harbour Area.</p>	<p>ii) Potential</p> <p>iii) Potential</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>The Plan Area includes listings which reflect the cultural and heritage value of the area such as listed buildings and conservation area. The proposed site allocation is on an area of land currently designated as "Open land Area". Policy WSP9 which supports further use of Beach Road seasonal carpark and WSN17 and WSN18 which support growth of the identified Beach Area and Harbour Area. These areas are adjacent and or overlap with the environmental designations.(Es)</p>	<p>Yes</p>

### Habitat Regulations

5.3 The Neighbourhood Area (NPA) contains a number of European sites:

5.4 A HRA screening has been carried out on the emerging WNP and is currently out for consultation with the statutory bodies. The interim conclusion is that it is considered that **there is the potential for likely adverse effects upon the integrity of the European sites. As such it is recommended that the emerging neighbourhood plan commission a full HRA.**

5.5 The screening is subject to consultation with the statutory bodies

## 6 Screening Outcome

- 6.1 As a result of the assessment in section 5, although a number of factors remain unknown it is considered that the neighborhood Plan has the potential to cause environmental effects and may have a significant effect on the environment depending on the final proposals within. The criteria for undertaking such an assessment are drawn from the SEA Directive as set out above in table 2. As such it is considered under the Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and programmes Regulations 2004, that the emerging draft Wells -Next -The -Sea neighbourhood as July 2022 does require an SEA to be undertaken.
- 6.2 The outcome of this screening report will be subject to review by the statutory bodies, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency as well as North Norfolk District Council. The screening report and subsequent screening opinion may also need to be reviewed if significant changes are made to the neighbourhood plan following this review or any other evidence that informs a significant change to the Plan prior to Submission Stage, (Regulation 16)

### Next Stages

- 6.3 A Habitats Regulations Assessment may be required and a HRA screening report is being produced to inform that process. The HRA screening report will also provide input into the final SEA determination report.
- 6.4 A Screening Determination report on whether the Wells neighbourhood plan does or does not require an SEA will be issued following receipt of advice from the statutory consultation bodies on this report and the HRA screening.

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