



Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Determination Statement

June 2022

Executive Summary

This statement sets out the reasons for the determination that the draft Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment. In addition, this statement determines that the making of the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

This determination statement is intended to demonstrate that the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with certain European Union obligations as required by the basic conditions, namely:

- Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment; and
- Article 6(3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Thriplow Parish Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council will publish this determination statement in accordance with the regulatory requirements.



Determination Statement

This statement has been produced to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan will, when examined, comply with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) in particular Regulation 32 and Regulation 15(1)e(ii) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

A neighbourhood plan is required to meet a number of basic conditions (which are set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), one of which being it must not breach and must be otherwise compatible with EU and Human Rights obligations. This requires neighbourhood plans to fully consider the requirements of the SEA regulations¹ which transpose the EU's SEA Directive² into law and which requires those making plans that could impact on the environment to consider whether they are likely to have a significant effect or not.

Regulation 32 in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out an additional basic condition to those set out in primary legislation. Regulation 32 states: "The making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (d)) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (e)) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion was prepared by Place Services on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) for the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan. (See Appendix 1).

SCDC has consulted the statutory consultees (Historic England/Natural England/Environment Agency) on the Screening Report prepared by Essex Place Services and asked for their views on whether a SEA is required.

Consultation responses were received from the three statutory consultees. Their conclusions are summarised below, and their detailed comments are included in Appendix 2.

Historic England:

Historic England's advice is confined to the question, "Is it (the neighbourhood plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?" and comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion.

Historic England notes that there is a range of designated historic

¹ Known fully as The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

² Known fully as Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

environment assets within the plan area and that the plan proposes allocation of one site (the Grain Store Allocation). Given the potential for significant effects (both positive and negative) upon the historic environment, and noting the report's conclusions, Historic England recommends that the historic environment considerations are screened in to the Strategic Environmental Assessment, in order to inform the development of the neighbourhood plan's policies regarding the potential for avoiding and minimising any harm that could be caused by the development or associated infrastructure. The SEA should be supported by a proportionate heritage impact assessment.

Historic England also advise that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. (25 May 2022)

Natural England:

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

They 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.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond the SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek their views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third-party appeal against any screening decision that may be made. (6 June 2022)

Environment Agency:

Agree with all conclusions reached in the screening report. (05 May 2022)

Overall conclusions

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development consent. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

The Plan allocates land for development purposes outside the existing development framework established within the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. Furthermore, the adopted Local Plan does not allocate the site in the first instance and does not provide a housing requirement for the Plan area. The Local Plan sets an indicative maximum limit of 15 dwellings for proposals within Group Villages. This

yield is surpassed by the Neighbourhood Plan's allocation.

Although the Local Plan adopts a flexible approach to proposals on previously developed land, which the Neighbourhood Plan allocation is, it is considered that the procedure of exploring 'reasonable alternatives' within the context of the SEA Directive should be followed in order to meet the basic condition regarding compatibility with certain Obligations (basic condition 'f').

The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan can therefore be **screened in** for its requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

The HRA screening report identified that, without mitigation, further consideration was required at the Appropriate Assessment stage to determine whether the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, would adversely affect the integrity of Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC as a result of impacts on protected species outside the protected sites potential impact pathway, i.e. this HRA recommended that Policies supporting development should be assessed further due to insufficient information regarding mitigation measures for significant impacts on hedgerows or any severance of Barbastelle bat flightlines from the Plan alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.

In applying the HRA Stage 2 (the integrity test at the AA stage), based on the parish being within the 10km sustenance or wider conservation area for Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC, mitigation needs to be embedded in the Plan in relation to impacts on protected species outside of the protected sites from the Neighbourhood Plan alone. Therefore, this HRA has recommended that the policy text is altered for Policies THP 6, THP 11, THP 14, THP15 and THP 16. Alternatively, a separate policy relating to 'mitigating the impact of development on Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC' could be provided within an updated draft of the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan.

Embedded mitigation measures for projects (planning applications) will need to be considered in project level HRA/AA reports assessed by SCDC and secured by a condition attached to any planning consent. Therefore, there will be no need for further assessment for this Neighbourhood Plan.

Subject to the above recommendations being incorporated this HRA Screening Report including Appropriate Assessment, indicates that, with mitigation embedded, the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Regulations 2017 (as amended) is therefore **screened out**.

Appendix 1: Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening for Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan

As part of the process of making a Neighbourhood Plan, Thriplow Parish Council has requested a screening opinion to see whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. Such a requirement can be screened in if it is felt, based on the information available, that the Neighbourhood Plan would have a likely significant environmental affect.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion was prepared by Place Services on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council for the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan.

Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report and Appropriate Assessment (AA)

May 2022





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1. Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of this Report

This screening report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the Thriplow Neighbourhood 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. A SEA is required if the Neighbourhood Plan is deemed to have a likely significant effect on the environment.

This report will also screen to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). An HRA screening report is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected Habitats (European) Sites as a result of the implementation of a plan or project.

1.2 The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan will set out planning policies for the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area. Once formally adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan carries the same legal weight as Local Development Plans adopted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in this case South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The Vision for the Plan is set out to address these areas of need. The Vision states,

‘Thriplow and Heathfield will grow sustainably to meet the regional planning policy goals whilst remaining a ‘living’ community providing a high quality of life and social cohesion for residents of all ages across the whole parish, respecting its rural roots and enhancing the natural environment.’

Additionally, a number of Planning Objectives are devised for the Neighbourhood Plan. These are:

- Objective 1: Objective 1: The character and quality of environment in Heathfield will be protected and improved.
- Objective 2: The existing village character of Thriplow village will be protected and enhanced.
- Objective 3: New development will be sensitive to our rural environment and reflect our rural roots.
- Objective 4: Recognise and protect accordingly all valued open spaces in the parish.
- Objective 5: Protect and increase biodiversity in the parish.
- Objective 6: We will continue to be a living community, which sustains the primary school, shop and facilities.

- Objective 7: There will be limited small scale additional housing development focused in Thriplow near to existing shops and services.
- Objective 8: All development to use sustainable building materials and consider energy efficiency.
- Objective 9: Plan for improved outdoor recreational facilities in the parish.
- Objective 10: A safer less congested parish.
- Objective 12: The quality and quantity of our rural footpath network and interconnectivity with neighbouring settlements will be improved.
- Objective 13: There will be more cohesion between the two communities of Thriplow and Heathfield.

1.3 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan sets out the planning policies and land allocations to guide the future development of the District up to 2031. It includes policies on a wide range of topics such as housing, employment, services and facilities, and the natural environment.

1.3.1 Content regarding the Neighbourhood Plan area within the Local Plan

1.3.1.1 The Settlement Hierarchy and Principle of Development

The Local Plan identifies Thriplow as a 'Group Village' within Policy S/10 and Heathfield (partly within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary) as an 'Infill Village'. As stated within the Local Plan's supporting text to this policy,

'Group villages are generally less sustainable locations for new development than Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres, having fewer services and facilities allowing only some of the basic day-to-day requirements of their residents to be met without the need to travel outside the village. All Group Villages have at least a primary school and limited development will help maintain remaining services and facilities and provide for affordable housing to meet local needs. Development will not be permitted on sites capable of accommodating scheme sizes significantly larger than 8 or exceptionally 15 dwellings in Group villages.'

Infill Villages are generally amongst the smallest in South Cambridgeshire. The Local Plan states of Infill Villages,

'These villages have a poor range of services and facilities and it is often necessary for local residents to travel outside the village for most of their daily needs. These villages generally lack any food shops, have no primary school and may not have a permanent post office or a village hall or meeting place. Development on any scale would be unsustainable in these villages, as it is will generate a disproportionate number of additional journeys outside the village. Development will not be permitted on sites capable of accommodating scheme sizes significantly larger than 2 or exceptionally 8 dwellings in Infill Villages.'

There are no Local Plan allocations for development within the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan boundary, however the Local Plan does not seek to restrict any allocations being proposed within Neighbourhood Plans.

Policy S/7 of the Local Plan covers policy regarding 'Development Frameworks'. Development Frameworks define where policies for the built-up areas of settlements give way to policies for the countryside. The Policy supports development within such frameworks (including that in Thriplow), and includes further information on proposals outside development frameworks for Neighbourhood Plans, stating that,

'(2) Outside development frameworks, only allocations within Neighbourhood Plans that have come into force and development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside or where supported by other policies in this plan will be permitted.'

1.3.1.2 Local Green Space sites

The Local Plan identifies Local Green Space sites, which are those of particular importance to local communities which, once designated, can prevent new development other than in very special circumstances. Local communities and parish councils in the district have helped the Council to identify the sites that are demonstrably special to their local community. A LGS must hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. The green area must be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves. It must be local in character and not be an extensive tract of land. These sites can protect land outside of a development framework.

The Local Plan identifies three Local Green Space sites within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary, namely the Village Green, the Cricket Pitch, and the Recreation Ground, all within Thriplow. Local Plan Policy NH/12 sets out that Local Green Space will be protected from development that would adversely impact on the character and particular local significance placed on such green areas which make them valued by their local community. Inappropriate development, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, would not be approved except in very special circumstances and in discussion with the local community.

The following map, taken from the Local Plan, shows the location of the Local Green Space sites in Thriplow. For a key to the maps, visit the [Local Plan Policies Map on the South Cambridgeshire District Council website](#).

Figure 1: Local Green Space sites within Thriplow



Source: South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2018

2. Legislative Background

2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment states that,

‘Environmental assessment is an important tool for integrating environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(10) All plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors and which set a framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment(7), and all plans and programmes which have been determined to require assessment pursuant to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna(8), are likely to have significant effects on the environment, and should as a rule be made subject to systematic environmental assessment. When they determine the use of small areas at local level or are minor modifications to the above plans or programmes, they should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(11) Other plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects may not have significant effects on the environment in all cases and should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have such effects.’

The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan may influence frameworks for future development or become used ancillary to those plans and programmes that do set such a framework, and as such it has been determined that the principle of the Neighbourhood Plan should be screened for the necessary application of the SEA Directive.

The Report from the Commission to The Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions states, on the application and effectiveness of the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Directive 2001/42/EC), that

‘the following Plan & Programme (P&P), and modifications to them, are covered when prepared and/or adopted by an authority and required pursuant to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions:

- P&P prepared for certain sectors and which set the framework for future development consent in respect of projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment-EIA-Directive.

- P&P requiring an assessment under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).
- P&P setting the framework for development consent in respect of projects (not limited to those listed in the EIA Directive; see above) and determined by "screening" as being likely to have significant environmental effects.'

This report represents this screening process in regard to the content and influence of the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan.

2.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site (also referred to as Habitats Sites in the National Planning Policy Framework), in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

HRA screening is the initial assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of Habitats sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites.

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to accompany the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with certain obligations, which includes the need to undertake an HRA.

In line with the Court judgement (CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats Site.

3. SEA Screening

3.1 When is SEA Required?

Planning Practice Guidance – Strategic environmental assessment requirements for neighbourhood plans (Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 11-026-20140306) states that,

‘In some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a “screening” assessment and the requirements are set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of those Regulations.

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).

To decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan’s preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies.

Each consultation body will be able to advise on particular topics relevant to its specific area of expertise and responsibility, and the specific information that it holds.

Where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared. A copy of the statement must be submitted with the neighbourhood plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner.’

Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive set out the circumstances in which a SEA is required. Table 1 sets out the assessment of whether the principle of the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan will require a full SEA.

Table 1: Exploring whether the Principle of the Plan would warrant SEA

Question 1: Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?

Yes - The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for adoption through legislative procedure.

Question 2: Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provision? (Typical characteristics of "administrative provisions" are that they are publicly available, prepared in a formal way, probably involving consultation with interested parties. The administrative provision must have sufficient formality such that it counts as a "provision" and it must also use language that plainly requires rather than just encourages a Plan to be prepared.)

Yes - The Neighbourhood Plan would be considered as falling within the category of an 'administrative provision'.

Question 3: Is the 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?

Yes to both criteria - The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.

Question 4: Will the Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?

The Neighbourhood Plan's likely effect on sites and requirement for an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive is explored in Section 4 of this Report.

Question 5: Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a Plan likely to require assessment under the Habitats Directive?

Yes to one of the criteria - the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

Question 6: Does the Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in the Annexes of the EIA Directive)?

Yes - the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.

Question 7: Is the Plans sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial or budget Plan, or is it co -financed by structural funds or European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) programmes 2000 to 2006/7?

The Neighbourhood Plan does not serve a purpose related to national defence or civil emergency, a financial or budget Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan is not co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7.

Question 8: Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?

Likely significant effects are explored in more detail in Section 3.3 of this Screening Report. The 'conclusions' section of the Report outlines whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA or not due in regard to its effects on the environment.

The following section looks at the criteria for assessing the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan and the identified effects of the Neighbourhood Plan in line with the criteria. Crucially, it will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on the environment.

3.2 Criteria for Assessing the Effects of the Neighbourhood Plan

Criteria for determining the likely significant effects on the environment, referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below.

Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant 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 transboundary 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),

Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

- 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.

3.3 Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan

The following assessment will consider the likelihood of the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan (at the time of writing) to have significant effects on the environment. The table below will explore the likelihood of effects on the following required themes, as included within Annex I of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC):

- Biodiversity;
- Population;
- Human health;
- Fauna;
- Flora;
- Soil;
- Water;
- Air;
- Climatic factors;
- Material assets;
- Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage;
- Landscape; and
- The interrelationship between the above factors.

Table 2: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on the Environment

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>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.</p>	<p>The Plan sets out relevant policies which will be used to determine proposals for development within the Neighbourhood Plan area once adopted. The Plan includes a single allocation for development for 24 homes, which is not identified within the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. The Local Plan was adopted prior to the NPPF requirement that housing requirements be set for designated neighbourhood plan areas. The allocated site is outside but adjacent to the development framework yet is previously development land and not within the Green Belt.</p> <p>A Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and once brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies only in the Local Plan for that Neighbourhood Plan area. The principle of development is established for Group Villages, however Local Plan Policy S/10 (Group Villages) sets out a dwelling yield limit (exceptionally 15 dwellings) that the Neighbourhood Plan allocation exceeds. Policy S/7 (Development Frameworks) sets out that outside development frameworks, only allocations within Neighbourhood Plans that have come into force will be permitted. Nevertheless, the Local Plan states that within settlements, policies in the plan generally support development and redevelopment of previously developed land subject to a range of policies which seek to ensure the development is sustainable.</p> <p>Irrespective of the Neighbourhood Plan policies' compliance with those of the Local Plan, which will be considered between the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority in finalising the Neighbourhood Plan and through the independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that the degree to which the Neighbourhood Plan sets a framework for development (by allocating resources) is high. This is due to the Neighbourhood Plan allocating land for development above the yield set out for a Group Village within the Local Plan.</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan provides policies for the Plan area, relevant to a local level only. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for development purposes that is not identified within the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and at a higher yield than identified as indicatively suitable for a Group Village (without accounting for any flexibility surrounding previously developed land). The Neighbourhood Plan, when/if 'made', will have weight in all planning decisions within the Plan area. The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes is therefore high in the context of the Plan area.</p>
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Plans are required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to ensure environmental considerations are taken into account. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies related (directly / indirectly) to ensuring environmental considerations will be integrated into any forthcoming development within the Plan area. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy THP 2 – Heathfield Enhancement Strategy • Policy THP 4 – Protecting and Enhancing Village Character in Thriplow • Policy THP 8 – Thriplow Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone • Policy THP 9 – Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain through Development Proposals • Policy THP 10 – Protecting and Enhancing Parish Waterways Feeding the Hoffer Brook • Policy THP 15 – Grain store Site Allocation <p>Irrespective of the adequacy of the above policies, adopted Local Plan policies apply within the Neighbourhood Plan area, which have been subject to thorough assessment within the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. This ensures that environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, will be considered for all development</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Environmental problems relevant to the plan area	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan reflects a small area and the Plan’s policy content seeks to address environmental issues. The policy content of the adopted Local Plan will additionally apply to any proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Local Plan policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) within the context of the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan and this Screening Report identify the following potential (direct / indirect) environmental problems or sources of potential problems relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan area contains three Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs): the Thriplow Meadows SSSI, the Thriplow Peat Holes SSSI, and the Whittlesford-Thriplow Hummocky Fields SSSI. • Approximately 8% of this latter SSSI is in an ‘unfavourable – declining’ condition. • The Plan area is therefore within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZs) of these SSSIs. Development proposals within IRZs are required to be consulted on with Natural England, should they be of a type or size that could warrant negative effects on the relevant SSSI. The allocated site of the Grain Store for 24 dwellings does not meet this requirement however. • A number of Priority Habitats (from the Priority Habitat Inventory¹) are scattered throughout the Plan area, with some adjacent to the existing Thriplow development framework boundary. These include coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, purple moor grass and rush pasture, deciduous woodland and traditional orchards. • There are 38 Listed Buildings within the Plan area; the majority of these are associated with the

¹ a spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>Thriplow Conservation Area forming the historic core of the village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of these Listed Buildings there exists the Grade II* listed: Parish Church of St George; Manor Farmhouse; The Manor House; Bassetts; and Thriplow Bury. • The ‘Roman settlements of Chronicle Hills’ Scheduled Monument lies outside but adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area to the east. • The southern and eastern parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area are within various Source Protection Zones (SPZs). SPZs are defined around large and public potable groundwater abstraction sites. The purpose of SPZs is to provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality through constraining the proximity of an activity that may impact upon a drinking water abstraction. Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, there lie areas of Zone I (Inner Protection Zone), Zone II (Outer Protection Zone) and Zone III (Total Catchment). • A small amount of land within Flood Risk Zones 3 and 2 exists within the Neighbourhood Plan area, to the north of Thriplow village. This is associated with a brook associated with the Cam Valley river system. • The non-developed areas of the Plan area consist of Grade 2 (‘very good’) soils. The Neighbourhood Plan area does not contain any Grade 1 (‘excellent’) soil, which represents the best and most versatile soil within the wider District context and also the country. • The Plan area is located within the East Anglian Chalk National Character Area (NCA). • The East Anglian Chalk NCA is characterised as a visually simple and uninterrupted landscape of smooth, rolling chalkland hills with large regular fields enclosed by low hawthorn hedges, with few trees, straight roads and expansive views to the

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>north. The Chalk produces water that is naturally mineral rich, sediment free and of a stable temperature and as such supports specialised chalk stream ecology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The East Anglian Chalk landscape was historically sparsely populated due to a shortage of wood and water. This is evident by the location of settlements within the Lowland Chalklands where there is a water source, such as springs at Fowlmere and Thriplow and settlements in the east along the course of the river valleys. • Regionally, the Neighbourhood Plan area is in a landscape classified by Natural England as both Lowland Village Chalklands and Lowland Village Farmlands. These areas are defined as having a high density of settlement, intensive agriculture and major transport infrastructure contribute to an often busy, rural landscape (Lowland Village Farmlands), and a low lying, but gently rolling arable landscape dissected by small streams that have a distinctive pattern of nucleated villages and patchwork of woodlands and shelterbelts (Lowland Village Chalklands).
<p>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>	<p>The content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not in conflict with those relevant planning documents within the wider district and county area related to waste management or water protection.</p>
<p>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects on the following</p>	<p>The following impacts have been identified within this Screening Assessment:</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
factors:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity 	<p>The Plan includes policies THP 8 – Thriplow Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone and THP 9 – Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain through Development Proposals. These policies set out priorities for biodiversity improvements in the parish and that development proposals within the ‘network enhancement zone 2’ will be expected to demonstrate how available opportunities have been taken to deliver additional green infrastructure that enhances existing sites of special scientific interest and the wildlife that depends on them. Furthermore, Policy THP 9 states that where necessary to protect and enhance biodiversity in the parish, to mitigate the impact of the proposed development (including the activities of the occupants), and where directly, fairly or reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, contributions towards these initiatives will be sought.</p> <p>The Plan area includes three SSSIs, and is within the IRZs of these. Any planning application corresponding to the plan’s allocation of the Grain Store would not require consultation with Natural England however as such consultation is only identified as required for proposals over a 100 dwelling yield.</p> <p>The HRA element of this Screening Report identifies that the Plan area lies within the draft 10km Zone of Impact (Zol) of the Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC. The HRA Screening stage identified that, without mitigation, further consideration was required at the Appropriate Assessment stage to determine whether the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, would adversely affect the integrity of Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC as a result of impacts on protected species outside the protected sites potential impact pathway, i.e. this HRA recommended that Policies supporting development should be assessed further due to insufficient information regarding mitigation measures for significant impacts on hedgerows or any severance of Barbastelle bat flightlines from the Plan alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. The subsequent Appropriate Assessment</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>undertaken within this Report (Section 5), suggests that the Plan’s policy text is amended to ensure that mitigation requirements are embedded. Should this be embedded, likely significant effects on Habitats sites can be ruled out.</p> <p>In consideration of all of the above, and based on the assumption that the Appropriate Assessment’s recommendations will be embedded into the Neighbourhood Plan, effects on biodiversity that would require the full application of the SEA Directive (a SEA Environmental Report) can be screened out.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population 	<p>It is considered that there would be no significant effects on population resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan. This is due to the small scale of the Plan area.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health 	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies THP 3 – Community Facilities, THP 7 – Heathfield Local Green Spaces, THP 8 – Thriplow Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone, and THP 13 – Protecting and Improving the Rural Footpath Network and Sustainable Connections to Neighbouring Settlements. These all seek to protect and enhance health and wellbeing in the Plan area.</p> <p>There are no significant effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan regarding human health that would warrant a strategic assessment through SEA. The Plan includes policies for the protection of open spaces and the enhancement of Green Infrastructure that contribute to healthy lifestyles.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fauna 	<p>There are no direct impacts resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan on fauna that are considered significant at the Plan level. The Plan seeks the protection and enhancement of biodiversity at key sites and does not propose any development that could lead to the direct deterioration of habitats. This is due to the location of the Grain Store allocation in relation to existing priority habitats and policy</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>criteria that ensures that ecological surveys are submitted alongside any planning application.</p> <p>Possible effects on fauna (outside those associated with Habitats Sites) cannot be considered strategically significant to the extent that Strategic Environmental Assessment would be warranted. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case ‘project level’ basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA’s adopted Local Plan.</p> <p>As identified within the HRA element of this Report, the Plan area is within 20km of the Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC which is designated for the presence of protected species. Based on the assumption that the Appropriate Assessment’s recommendations will be embedded into the Neighbourhood Plan, effects on fauna that would require the full application of the SEA Directive (a SEA Environmental Report) can also be screened out.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flora 	<p>Numerous and various areas of Priority Habitat exist within the Plan Area. The Plan seeks to protect and enhance existing biodiversity assets in the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>In addition to the Plan’s policies that seek the protection and enhancement of flora, the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan policies apply. As a result, no effects are expected to result from the Neighbourhood Plan regarding flora.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil 	<p>The non-developed areas of the Neighbourhood Plan area consist of Grade 2 (‘very good’) soil. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for development purposes on previously developed land and no other policies would see the loss of any greenfield land within the Neighbourhood Plan area. There are no identified negative implications surrounding soil quality as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water 	<p>The Plan area is within a groundwater Source Protection Zone (Zones I, II and III). The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes within these zones. The Plan allocates land for residential development, however this land use is not considered possible to give rise to ground water pollutants (e.g. give rise to hazardous substances such as pesticides, oils, petrol and diesel, solvents, arsenic, mercury or chromium VI; or non-hazardous substances such as ammonia or nitrates). Pollution control policies at the LPA level apply within the Neighbourhood Plan area to ensure that no negative effects on water quality should be experienced within the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>The HRA element of this Report concludes that the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the Impact Risk Zones for water sensitive Habitat sites and there are none within the scope of this assessment. No likely significant effects are expected so changes in water quantity and quality have been screened out when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air 	<p>There are no identified air quality issues within the Plan area. Although consultation with Natural England is required for any development that could cause air pollution (regarding industrial/agricultural development) in association with the IRZs of SSSIs in parts of the Plan area, no such land uses are proposed within the Plan. If speculative development does come forward within the Plan period, consultation would be required at the planning application stage and is not considered a matter would warrant SEA, as a strategic process, to be undertaken.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climatic factors 	<p>No policies exist within the Plan that address flood risk issues, although it should be acknowledged that existing adopted Local Plan policies regarding flood risk apply in the Plan area.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan area contains a relatively small area of Flood Risk Zone 3 to north east of Thriplow village and the</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>however no development allocations are proposed within the Plan that would lead to any incompatibilities in any such areas. It is therefore considered that SEA would not be required regarding matters of flood risk and any speculative development coming forward within the Neighbourhood Plan area in the Plan period can be considered at the planning application stage.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material assets 	<p>The Plan area contains land within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) for sand and gravel within the County Council’s adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Proposals Map) (2021). These correspond to areas within the southern part of the Plan area and to the east of the village of Thriplow. Additionally, around Heathfield there is a Water Recycling Area (WRA) Consultation Area, and to the south of the Plan area there are two Consultation Areas related to a Minerals Allocation Area (MAA) / Minerals Development Area (MDA) / Waste Management Area (WMA) / Transport Infrastructure Area (TIA).</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any development within these areas that could be considered in conflict with the adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021).</p> <p>Regarding other material assets, the content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not considered to have any significant effects due to the extent / size of the Plan area. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA’s adopted Local Plan.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural heritage 	<p>The Plan area contains numerous Listed Buildings, as well a Conservation Area associated with the Thriplow built up area. The Plan allocates land for development purposes that is in relatively close proximity to a listed building (the Grade II Listed ‘The Lodge’, to the south east). In addition, Policy THP 16 Rectory Farm supports the sensitive redevelopment / restoration of Rectory Farm Tithe Barn (a Grade II listed</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>building in disrepair) subject to the significance of the heritage assets being conserved or enhanced in line national policy. This is not considered an ‘allocation’ within the Plan.</p> <p>Irrespective of whether an inappropriate scheme at the Grain Store could have an effect on the setting of a listed building, or the effectiveness of Policy THP 16, the Plan includes Policy THP 4 – Protecting and Enhancing Village Character in Thriplow. This policy outlines that development proposals must ensure the significance of heritage assets and their setting (including listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets and the conservation area itself) are conserved or enhanced as a result of new development.</p> <p>Policy regarding the protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment also exists at the LPA level which additionally applies in the Plan area. The effects on heritage are, as a result, considered a development management issue in the context of the Plan and its content. There are not considered to be any elements of the Plan that would give rise to significant effects on the historic environment at the strategic level that would require the full application of the SEA Directive.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape 	<p>The Plan area is within a sensitive landscape, in regard to the protection objectives of the East Anglian Chalk National Character Area (NCA). The Plan area contains numerous features synonymous with this NCA. The Plan allocates previously developed land for development purposes and includes policies relevant to landscape character and its preservation.</p> <p>In light of the Plan’s policy stance regarding landscape character and in consideration also of the requirements of development proposals in accordance with the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, there are no significant strategic landscape effects identified within this Report that would warrant the requirement for the application of the SEA Directive and the formulation of a SEA Environmental Report.</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
The cumulative nature of the effects.	In line with the above considerations that explore the possible individual effects of the Plan’s content, the potential for significant effects on Habitats Sites have been highlighted. These may lead to cumulative impacts with proposals outside the Plan area.
The trans boundary nature of the effects.	The adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan can be seen to support the protection and improvement of conditions relevant to those sustainability factors listed within the SEA Directive. The Neighbourhood Plan is not in conflict with these wider thematic policies. The HRA Screening element of this Report, which explores in-combination effects with other relevant plans and projects, also identifies no in-combination effects regarding Habitats (European) Sites.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	It is considered that there is no risk to human health or the environment as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is in consideration of the above screening requirements related to sustainability themes. The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to give rise to any accidents that can be considered to have a significant risk to human health or the environment.
The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The Neighbourhood Plan relates to the local level only. An allocation for residential development is included within the Plan yet the magnitude and spatial extent of the Plan’s content is unlikely to be significant in a wider District context. Effects are not expected to be realised over a wide geographic area in isolation.
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special natural characteristics 	As highlighted above in the screening of the Neighbourhood Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has not been assessed as having negative effects associated with environmental themes. Nevertheless, the Neighbourhood Plan’s allocation of the Grain Store site in the first instance requires the full application of the SEA Directive, and the possibility of effects should be more thoroughly assessed

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>or cultural heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exceeded environmental quality standards • intensive land use 	<p>through that process.</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has not been assessed as having any significant effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>

4. HRA Screening

4.1 Habitat Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

This section forms a plan level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) as required by Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any Habitats site, in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

The first stage of HRA is the screening assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of Habitats (European) sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. Habitats (European) sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites and Habitats sites in the NPPF.

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is shown in Appendix 1.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Neighbourhood Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Neighbourhood Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with certain obligations, which includes the need to undertake HRA.

This section of this Report aims to:

- Identify the Habitats sites within 20km of Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Summarise the reasons for designation and Conservation Objectives for each site to be considered in this assessment.
- Screen the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan for its potential to impact upon a Habitats site.
- Assess the potential for in combination effects from other projects and plans in the area.
- Identify if there are any outstanding issues that need further investigation.

On 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) held a referendum and voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the Prime Minister triggered Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union, which commenced a period of negotiations regarding the UK's exit from the EU. On 26 June 2018 The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 received Royal Assent and work to prepare the UK statute book for Brexit has begun. The European

Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 will make sure that UK laws continue to operate following the UK's exit. There is no immediate change to legislation or policy affecting national infrastructure. Relevant EU Directives have been transposed into UK law and those are unchanged until amended by Parliament. Therefore, the requirements for HRA under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) remain in place.

4.2 Court Judgements and their consideration in this Report

4.2.1 CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17

As previously mentioned, in line with the Court judgement (CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats site.

This HRA Screening Report does not therefore consider mitigation measures within the assessment of Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2.2 CJEU Holohan C- 461/17

This Court judgement now imposes more detailed requirements on the competent authority at Appropriate Assessment stage:

1. [...] an 'Appropriate Assessment' must, on the one hand, catalogue the entirety of habitat types and species for which a site is protected, and, on the other, identify and examine both the implications of the proposed project for the species present on that site, and for which that site has not been listed, and the implications for habitat types and species to be found outside the boundaries of that site, provided that those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site.
2. [...] the competent authority is permitted to grant to a plan or project consent which leaves the developer free to determine subsequently certain parameters relating to the construction phase, such as the location of the construction compound and haul routes, only if that authority is certain that the development consent granted establishes conditions that are strict enough to guarantee that those parameters will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.
3. [...] where the competent authority rejects the findings in a scientific expert opinion recommending that additional information be obtained, the 'Appropriate Assessment' must include an explicit and detailed statement of reasons capable of dispelling all reasonable scientific doubt concerning the effects of the work envisaged on the site concerned.

Within this Stage 1 HRA Screening report, the assessment determines the requirement whether or not a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is needed for the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan.

4.3 Habitats (European) Sites

Habitats sites is the term used in the (revised) NPPF (2021) to describe any site which would be included within the definition at Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) for the purpose of those regulations. These now form part of the UK national network of sites for nature protection. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of UK's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

All Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated for other species, and for Habitats. Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) are also part of the National Network of sites. This is because all SPAs and SACs are comprised of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all Ramsar sites in England are SSSIs. Together, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites make up the Habitats sites in England. The following offers a description and explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites.

4.3.1 Explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.

Example: Ouse Washes is internationally important for wintering waterfowl. Legislation: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

SACs are areas designated to protect habitat types that are in danger of disappearance, have a small natural range, or are highly characteristic of the region; and to protect species that are endangered, vulnerable, rare, or endemic. Example: woodland habitat of Eversden and Wimpole Woods for the population of Barbastelle bats. Legislation: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)

Ramsar Sites are designated to protect the biological and physical features of wetlands, especially for waterfowl habitats. For example, Wicken Fen is an outstanding remnant of East Anglian peat fens and supports one species of British Red Data Book plant fen violet *Viola persicifolia* which survives at only two other sites in Britain. Ramsar sites often overlap with SACs and SPAs and UK planning policy determines that they should be accorded the same importance when developments are proposed. Legislation: Ramsar Convention (1971) – Wetlands of International Importance and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

4.3.2 Habitats Sites to be considered

There is only one Habitats site, Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC, which lies within 20 km of the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area. This is shown in Table 3 and in Appendix 2.

Table 3: Habitats Sites within 20km to be considered in this assessment

SPA
N/A
SAC
Eversden and Wimpole Woods
Ramsar
N/A

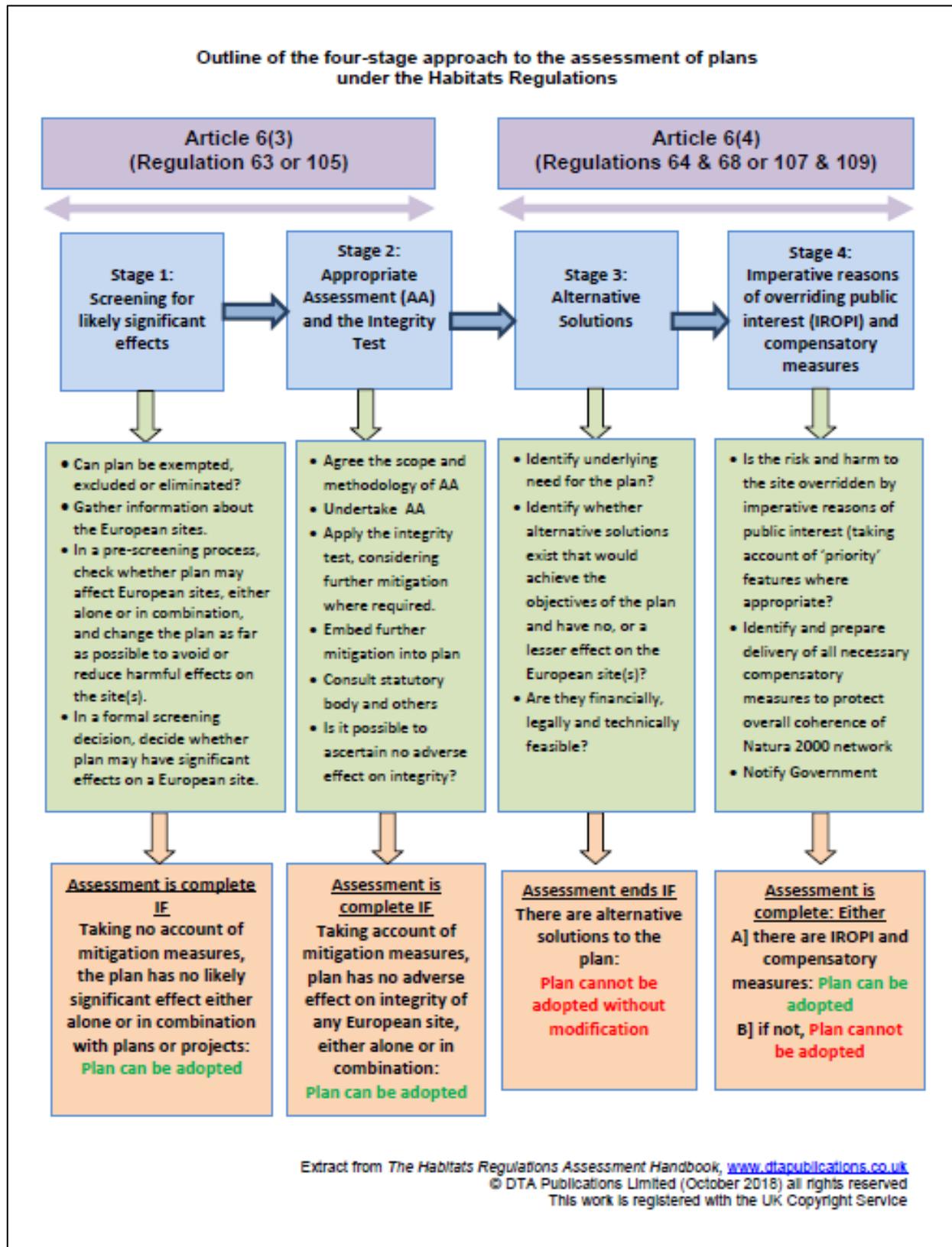
The Impact Risk Zone for the underpinning SSSI for Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC was interrogated on MAGIC map. Thriplow parish lies outside the 5 km Impact Risk Zone for this SAC. However, Thriplow parish lies within the 10 km sustenance or wider conservation area for the Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC, designated for its population of Barbastelle bats (Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document, February 2022). All significant impacts or severance to flightlines must be assessed within this area as these could, without mitigation, result in adverse effect on integrity of this Habitats site.

After consideration of potential impact pathways, on a precautionary principle, it is concluded that Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC should be assessed for any likely significant effects resulting from the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan. This Habitat site is therefore included within scope for this HRA screening and any mitigation considered necessary would need to be secured at application stage in line with policies in the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan as well as the project level HRA Appropriate Assessment as the competent authority for planning decisions.

4.4 Method and Approach

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the ‘basic conditions’ set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA screening report; this is necessary to ensure the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Habitats (European) site or a Habitats (European) offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This document relates only to Stage 1 of the HRA process as set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 2: Outline of the Four Stage Approach to the Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Regulations (taken from the DTA handbook).



4.4.1 Stage 1: HRA Screening

The screening stage identifies if any significant effects are likely because any policies or projects will have an impact on a Habitats site. Table 4 identifies the different categories assigned to each policy in the plan: Category A identifies those policies or projects that are considered to have No Negative Effect. Category B identifies those policies or projects that will have No Likely Significant Effect. Category C identifies those policies or projects that might have Likely Significant Effect upon a Habitats site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Section 4.5 considers each policy or projects and the results of the screening exercise recorded.

Each of the policies in the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan has been screened to identify whether they would have any effect on a Habitats site and allocated to a category as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Screening categorisation

<p>Category A: No negative effect</p> <p>Policies or projects that will not be likely to have any negative effect on a Habitats site.</p>
<p>Category B: No Likely Significant Effect</p> <p>Policies or projects that could have an effect but would not be likely to have a <i>significant</i> negative effect on a Habitats site alone or in combination. This conclusion could only be reached if the effects, even in combination and taking the precautionary principle into account, are considered trivial.</p>
<p>Category C: Likely Significant Effect</p> <p>Policies or projects which are predicted to have a likely significant effect on a Habitats site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects and require revision or further assessment (Appropriate Assessment).</p>

4.4.2 Potential impacts of Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan on Habitats Sites

There are a wide range of potential impacts on Habitats Sites that could arise from development plans. These can be summarised as -

- Land take by development;
- Impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying interest species within the Habitats site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for

an identified species.

- Increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;
- Changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for waste water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas;
- Changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial developments, quarries and waste management facilities.

In line with the SA Scoping Report for South Cambridgeshire’s Local Plan, each policy will be assessed against the criteria in the table below.

Table 4: Assessment of potential impacts on Habitats Sites

Nature of potential impact	How the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site	Why these effects are not considered significant
Land take by development	The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area is outside the boundaries of the Habitats sites within scope of this HRA screening.	No likely significant effects are expected, as no development will be allocated on designated land. It is therefore, considered that impacts from land take by development can be screened out when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 5 km IRZ for Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC. However, the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for development which lies within the wider conservation area for this SAC and could result in significant impacts or severance of flightlines for Barbastelle bats.	To avoid potential impacts on protected species outside of the protected site, the Plan will need additional policy text to embed mitigation into any development within the parish. It is therefore considered that this impact pathway may result in likely significant effects upon Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC from the Neighbourhood

Nature of potential impact	How the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site	Why these effects are not considered significant
		Plan. Therefore, impacts on protected species outside the protected sites from the Neighbourhood Plan (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) on the Habitats sites needs to be screened in for further assessment.
Recreational pressure and disturbance	The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 5km IRZ for Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC.	Although the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for development, the parish lies outside the recreational pressure Impact Risk Zone (Natural England, July 2019) so impacts from recreation arising from the NP are screened out when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
Water quantity and quality	The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the impact risk zones for water sensitive habitat sites and there are none within the scope of this assessment.	No likely significant effects are expected so changes in water quantity and quality have been screened out when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
Changes in pollution levels	The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the impact risk zones for pollution levels for sensitive habitat sites and there are none within the scope of this assessment.	No likely significant effects are expected, as no development will be allocated on land within 200 metres of Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC. Changes in air pollution have been screened out when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans.

4.5 Results from HRA Screening of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Each of the policies in the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan was screened in turn to identify whether they would have any impact on a Habitats site and the result of this exercise is recorded in Table 5.

Table 5: Assessment of potential impacts from the Plan policies

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
<p>Policy THP 1 – Improving the character and quality of Heathfield</p>	<p>All residential development schemes will be expected to achieve high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and building.</p> <p>Existing challenges relating to design, landscaping and layout at the Heathfield estate will not be accepted as an excuse for poor standards of design in any future development. New development proposals will not be supported if they adversely impact on the locally important views identified on Policy Map 7. All proposals will be expected to maintain or enhance the amenity value of the public rights of way network.</p> <p>All development proposals which come forward in Heathfield or which otherwise impact on the residential areas in Heathfield will be expected to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area and the way it</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>functions. Expectations will be commensurate with the scale of the proposed development.</p> <p>Where applicable, improvements will be sought through S106 contributions towards measures identified in the Heathfield Enhancement Strategy.</p>		
<p>Policy THP 2 – Heathfield Enhancement Strategy</p>	<p>Environmental, landscape and public realm improvements at Heathfield is strongly encouraged. They should be implemented as part of any development proposal which impacts on the estate.</p> <p>Where necessary to deliver sustainable development and where directly, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, off-site contributions will be secured to achieve improvements set out in the Heathfield Enhancement Strategy</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy THP 3 – New community facilities in Heathfield</p>	<p>Development proposals for a new community meeting space or community facility to serve the Heathfield community including a shop or sports facility will be strongly supported.</p> <p>The provision of community meeting space facilities will be particularly welcomed as part of development proposals coming forward on the Duxford Business</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	Park site (as shown on Map 10).		
Policy THP 4 – Protecting and Enhancing Village Character in Thriplow	<p>All residential development schemes will be expected to achieve high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and building.</p> <p>To be supported, all development proposals in Thriplow village must contribute positively to the existing characteristics including the tapestry of rural spaces that exists between the Thriplow village built environment. This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - careful and well thought-through landscaping as part of any new development proposal that ensures the scheme sits comfortably within its existing site context, blends into the existing wider rural setting and is not visually intrusive from the highway or other public places (including public rights of way); - built form and layout (including densities, scale and mass) is appropriate given the existing site context as well as the built form and layout on neighbouring sites; - retaining a close relationship between the 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>built form and the surrounding open space and countryside (for example by allowing views of surrounding open space and countryside to penetrate through a scheme); and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensuring the significance of heritage assets and their setting (including listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets and the conservation area itself) are conserved or enhanced as a result of new development. <p>Development proposals which adversely impact the key views identified on Map 12 will not be supported. All proposals will be expected to maintain or enhance the amenity value of the public rights of way network.</p>		
<p>Policy THP 5 – Important Countryside Frontage in Thriplow</p>	<p>The frontages shown on Policy Map 12 are designated as Important Countryside Frontages as defined in the 2018 Local Plan. Planning permission will be refused where a development proposal compromises any of the following purposes of the frontages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing a significant connection between the street scene 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>and the surrounding rural area; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of the development framework. 		
<p>Policy THP 6 – The Rural Economy</p>	<p>Development proposals which support existing agricultural and other land-based rural businesses in the parish will be permitted subject to the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being of a scale appropriate to its rural location - Not damaging the residential environment or have an unacceptable impact on the roads in the parish - Not adversely impacting rural character and tranquillity in the parish through inappropriate urbanisation, noise or light pollution; - Maintaining or enhancing the local character and distinctiveness of the landscape in the parish; and otherwise - Complying with green belt policies set out in national policy and the Local Plan 	<p>Yes, Category C</p>	<p>Recommendation to amend policy text to require mitigation for significant impacts on hedgerows or any severance of bat flightlines.</p> <p>Additional text:</p> <p>‘Avoid significant impact on hedgerows or any severance of bat flight lines to protect foraging and commuting habitat for Barbastelle bats which could belong to the population protected by Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.’</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
<p>Policy THP 7 – Heathfield Local Green spaces</p>	<p>The following sites as shown on Policy Map 14 are designated as Local Green Spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heathfield recreation area - Kingsway play space - Whitehall Gardens Amenity Area - Play space at Ringstone <p>Development on these sites will not be acceptable other than in very special circumstances in line with national policy, or where it will enhance the function of the space (e.g. play or gym equipment on the recreation areas) without compromising the primary function of the space as a Local Green Space.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy THP 8 – Thriplow green infrastructure enhancement zone.</p>	<p>Development proposals coming forward within the network enhancement zone 2 (shown on Map 15) or any updated version of this will be expected to demonstrate how available opportunities have been taken to deliver additional green infrastructure that enhances existing sites of special scientific interest and the wildlife that depends on them.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy THP 9 – Delivering</p>	<p>When delivering biodiversity net gain as part of meeting the Local</p>	<p>No,</p>	<p>No specific</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
biodiversity net gain through development proposals	<p>Plan policy requirements set out in Policy NH/4: Biodiversity, the following priorities for biodiversity improvements in the parish should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Opportunities to provide added protection, restore and enhance the existing ecological networks in the parish as shown on Policy Map 17; b) Planting trees or new woodland following the Right Tree, Right Place principles. c) Creating or enhancing biodiverse green space in the locations which will ideally provide habitat in close proximity to existing sites and increase or enhance existing ecological networks in the parish; d) Creating new ponds or other water features which will help build on existing networks; and e) Planting hedgerows where appropriate <p>Where necessary to protect and enhance biodiversity in the parish, to mitigate the impact of the proposed development (including the activities of the occupants), and where directly, fairly or</p>	Category A	recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, contributions towards these initiatives will be sought.</p>		
<p>Policy THP 10 – Protecting and enhancing parish waterways feeding the Hoffer Brook</p>	<p>To be supported, development proposals must demonstrate that neither the Hoffer Brook nor the parish waterways feeding into the Hoffer Brook will be harmed as a result of run-off from the proposed development.</p> <p>All proposals will be expected to incorporate sustainable drainage measures as a way of both managing surface water flood risk and protecting water quality in the parish.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy THP 11 – Rural exception sites in Thriplow</p>	<p>Proposals for small scale affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites for people with a Thriplow parish connection on the edge of Thriplow village are supported provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the proposed development, by virtue of their size, scale and type, will not exceed the identified local needs for affordable housing; ii. the types of dwellings proposed meet the needs identified in Thriplow parish as identified in an up to 	<p>Yes, Category C</p>	<p>Recommendation to amend policy text to require mitigation for significant impacts on hedgerows or any severance of bat flightlines.</p> <p>Additional text:</p> <p>‘Avoid significant impact on hedgerows or any severance of bat flight lines to protect foraging and commuting habitat for Barbastelle bats</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>date housing needs survey;</p> <p>iii. the homes are located within easy access to Thriplow village centre,</p> <p>iv. the affordable housing is provided in perpetuity; and</p> <p>v. no significant harm would be caused to the character of the village, its setting or the countryside.</p>		<p>which could belong to the population protected by Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.'</p>
<p>Policy THP 12 – Improving parking provision and improving road safety in Thriplow and Heathfield</p>	<p>In order to maintain pedestrian safety on the village roads, all new development proposals will be expected to incorporate adequate off-street parking provision on site.</p> <p>Opportunities will also be sought from new development proposals to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve existing pavements serving the development to make them more accessible for all users. - Alleviate existing congestion and on street parking issues particularly relating to the Thriplow primary school and in the parking hotspots in Heathfield (see Map 8). <p>Where necessary to achieve a</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>good quality and accessible walking and cycling environment to meet the needs of the users of the development and where directly,</p> <p>fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, contributions towards the initiatives identified above will be sought.</p>		
<p>Policy THP 13 – Protecting and improving the rural footpath network and sustainable connections to neighbouring settlements.</p>	<p>All new development will be expected to protect the existing rural footpath network in the parish (see Maps 18 and 19).</p> <p>Where necessary to make a development proposal acceptable and where directly and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, contributions towards improvements (as set out in this plan) to the network of rural routes for non-motorised users will be sought.</p> <p>Where a development proposal comes forward which presents an opportunity – see Maps 20 and 21 - (e.g by way of its location) for improving the existing footpath and cycling routes, such opportunities should be taken.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy THP 14 – Development proposals resulting in better</p>	<p>Development proposals which will facilitate opportunities for the Heathfield and Thriplow communities to come together will, in principle, be strongly supported.</p>	<p>Yes, Category C</p>	<p>Recommendation to amend policy text to require mitigation for significant impacts on</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
<p>integration between the Heathfield and Thriplow communities.</p>	<p>This includes improved sustainable travel routes as well as the provision of a community meeting space or outdoor recreation area to serve both communities.</p> <p>Development proposals which lead to additional severance, for example through adversely impacting the sustainable travel routes between the two communities will not be supported.</p>		<p>hedgerows or any severance of bat flightlines.</p> <p>Additional text:</p> <p>‘Avoid significant impact on hedgerows or any severance of bat flight lines to protect foraging and commuting habitat for Barbastelle bats which could belong to the population protected by Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.’</p>
<p>Policy THP 15 – Grain store site allocation</p>	<p>The site shown on Policy Map 23 is allocated for residential development for approximately 24 homes. The following site-specific considerations and requirements will apply:</p> <p>Housing:</p> <p>a) People with a strong local connection to Thriplow parish, as defined in the glossary, whose needs are not met by the open market will be given priority of allocation (be first to be offered the tenancy or ownership of the home) of the affordable housing (including First Homes) provided on this site.</p>	<p>Yes, Category C</p>	<p>Recommendation to amend policy text to require mitigation for significant impacts on hedgerows or any severance of bat flightlines.</p> <p>New text in Biodiversity clause:</p> <p>‘i) avoid significant impact on hedgerows or any severance of bat flight lines to protect foraging and commuting habitat</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>Land uses:</p> <p>b) The vehicle repair shop is retained on site with mitigation (such as provision of a landscaped buffer) designed in to secure a high level of residential amenity.</p> <p>Vehicular Access:</p> <p>c) The scheme must demonstrate safe highway access, and preferably off Fowlmere Road, that meets the satisfaction of local Highway Authority. This may include provision of traffic calming measures along Fowlmere Road.</p> <p>Connectivity and permeability:</p> <p>d) Incorporation of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes on site providing access links to and from both Lodge Road and Fowlmere Road</p> <p>e) Pedestrian footways to be provided along Lodge Road and Fowlmere Road, together with a pedestrian crossing where the two meet in order to facilitate a safe pedestrian route to existing pavement infrastructure along Fowlmere Road and allow for safe walking routes to village services.</p> <p>Landscaping:</p> <p>f) Retain existing boundary vegetation</p>		<p>for Barbastelle bats which could belong to the population protected by Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.'</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>g) Ensure the new development is integrated well in its wider landscape setting at this settlement edge location through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. providing a landscaped buffer of a native tree belt along the western boundary of the site which ensures the maintenance of a soft vegetated edge to the village edge b. incorporating a boundary hedge using native species along the eastern edge to maintain the rural and vegetated character of Lodge Road. <p>f) Conserve and enhance the setting of the Conservation Area through provision of improved vegetated buffers (native hedge species) along Lodge Road</p> <p>Design:</p> <p>g) The proposal must be the result of a design-led process which acknowledges the sensitivities and opportunities for improvement with respect to this village gateway location abutting both the countryside and the Thriplow conservation area.</p> <p>h) Use of high quality and sustainable building materials Scheme must be designed to facilitate low carbon living for future</p>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>occupiers through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reducing the need for energy through site layout, orientation and building fabric. 2. Incorporation of low carbon heating solutions and 3. Incorporation of renewable energy technology as appropriate <p>Biodiversity:</p> <p>i) Submission of an Ecological Study that establishes either</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. That there would be no negative impact on flora and fauna; or if any negative impacts are identified, establishes that b. These negative impacts are suitably mitigated against; and c. The scheme as a whole will deliver a net gain in biodiversity 		
<p>Policy THP 16 – Rectory Farm</p>	<p>Development proposal involving the sensitive redevelopment / restoration of Rectory Farm Tithe Barn will be supported subject to the significance of the heritage asset being conserved or enhanced in line national policy.</p>	<p>Yes, Category C</p>	<p>Recommendation to amend policy text to require mitigation for significant impacts on hedgerows and severance of bat</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
			flightlines. Additional text: ‘Avoid significant impact on hedgerows or any severance of bat flight lines to protect foraging and commuting habitat for Barbastelle bats which could belong to the population protected by Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.’

4.5.1 Recommendations and HRA Screening Conclusion

There is a single Habitats site within scope of this HRA screening i.e. Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC.

This is a single potential impact pathway – impacts on protected species outside the protected sites e.g. Barbastelle bats. As this pathway triggers further assessment, consideration of effects in combination with other plans or projects will be included within Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

There are several policies (THP 6, THP 11, THP 14, THP 15 and THP 16) in the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan which have been assigned to ‘Category C’ as it is not possible to rule out any Likely Significant Effect on Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC from the Plan when considered alone. Therefore, policy text amendments have been recommended to ensure that impacts upon the Habitats site are considered within the Neighbourhood Plan HRA Screening. As a result, these need to be assessed at Stage 2 (Appropriate Assessment) where the in-combination effects from other plans and projects will also be considered.

Further Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is therefore required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan may only be made after having ascertained that it will not result in adverse effect on integrity of the Habitats site within scope of this assessment in accordance with the basic conditions. This second stage is required to be an iterative process, as measures can be incorporated in order to be able to ascertain that there is no adverse effect on the integrity, before re-screening and making a final assessment.

5. Appropriate Assessment and Considering the Integrity Test

5.1 Introduction to Appropriate Assessment

The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan is, without mitigation, predicted to result in Likely Significant Effect from the Plan alone. This includes one potential impact pathway: impacts on protected species outside protected sites.

The second stage of HRA is to undertake an 'Appropriate Assessment' of the implications of the Plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and establish whether there may be an Adverse Effect on Integrity (AEOI) of any Habitats sites in view of their Conservation Objectives. The process undertaken for the Appropriate Assessment is set out in this Chapter.

The Appropriate Assessment should be undertaken by the competent authority and should assess all aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan which can by themselves, or in combination with other plans and projects, affect the sites' Conservation Objectives. The assessment must consider the implications for each qualifying feature of each potentially affected Habitats site. Key vulnerabilities are set out in Appendix III and the Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) were used to obtain this information. Site Improvement Plans have been developed for each Habitats site in England as part of the 'Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS)'. The Site Improvement Plans provide a high-level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the designation features of the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features.

In order to identify potential in combination effects, other plans and projects which may affect the Habitats sites need to be identified. This should involve an 'Appropriate Assessment' of the implications of the Neighbourhood Plan, in relation to predicted disturbance in combination with other plans or projects, in order to establish whether there may be an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of any Habitats sites in view of their Conservation Objectives.

This stage is to undertake objective scientific assessment of the implications of the Neighbourhood Plan on the Qualifying Features of the listed Habitats sites using the best scientific knowledge in the field. It should apply the best available techniques and methods to assess the extent of the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan on the integrity of the Habitat sites. The description of the site's integrity and the impact assessment should be based on the best possible indicators specific to the qualifying features of Habitat sites within scope of this assessment, which can also be useful in monitoring the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan's implementation.

The Appropriate Assessment needs to assess all aspects of the Plan which can by themselves, or in combination with other plans and projects, affect the Conservation Objectives of one or more Habitats site. The assessment must consider the implications for each qualifying feature of each potentially affected Habitats site. The focus of the appropriate assessment is therefore on the species and / or the habitats for which the Habitats site is designated.

The best scientific knowledge should be used when carrying out the Appropriate Assessment in order to enable the competent authority to conclude with certainty beyond scientific doubt that there will be no Adverse Effect on the Integrity of any Habitats site.

It is important that the Appropriate Assessment provides a better understanding of potential effects and can therefore assist in the identification of mitigation measures where possible to avoid, reduce or cancel significant effects on Habitats sites which could be applied when undertaking the 'integrity test'. All mitigation measures built into the Plan can be taken into account. The Appropriate Assessment is an iterative process, re-assessing changes and new or different mitigation measures before making its final conclusion. It must be clear which mitigation measures are being relied upon in order to meet the integrity test.

The integrity test must apply the precautionary principle. However, plan assessments are less precise than project assessments, and so it is important for the assessment process to eliminate the prospect of adverse effects integrity insofar as it is possible, given the level of specificity of this Neighbourhood Plan.

Natural England should be formally consulted on this document.

5.2 Approach and Methodology of the Appropriate Assessment

The potential Likely Significant Effects considered at Stage 1 HRA Screening stage are now carried forward for consideration at Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment. The policies and their potential to have adverse effects on any Habitats site through a variety of impact pathways are now considered in more detail, for example habitat loss or deterioration, disturbance, direct and indirect effects; extent of the effects (habitat area, species numbers or areas of occurrence); importance and magnitude (e.g. considering the affected area or population in relation to the total area and population size).

Key vulnerabilities of each Habitats site using the relevant Site Improvement Plans are assessed. Site Improvement Plans have been developed for each Habitats site in England as part of the 'Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS)' but they do not include Ramsar sites. Each Site Improvement Plan provides a high-level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the Natura 2000 features on the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features.

Additional information is also provided for each site on the Designated Sites website and this information has been interrogated.

5.2.1 Use of Mitigation Measures

All mitigation measures built into the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan can now be taken into account at Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

At this stage, other policies of the Plan can be considered in order to mitigate some of the predicted Likely Significant Effects which have been identified. This stage is an iterative process as avoidance and reduction measures can be incorporated in order to be able to avoid the potential impacts identified in the Appropriate Assessment or reduce them to a

level where they will no longer adversely affect the site's integrity.

Where residual effects are identified, monitoring will be required as part of the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan.

5.2.2 Applying the Integrity Test

Following the Appropriate Assessment and the consideration of all mitigation measures, the competent authority needs to make a judgement on whether any of the policies will have an Adverse Effect on Integrity on any Habitats site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. This test incorporates the precautionary principle.

5.2.3 Embedding Mitigation

South Cambridgeshire District Council, as the competent authority, should consider the manner in which the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan is to be implemented and any mitigation measures which could be relied upon when deciding whether it would have an Adverse Effect on Integrity, including when and how they can be embedded into the Neighbourhood Plan.

After considering mitigation, the integrity test should be re-applied to check if the proposed mitigation is now sufficient to avoid adverse effects on integrity of the Habitats sites within scope for the impact pathways identified. Where there may still be adverse effects on the ecological integrity of Habitats sites, in view of the sites' conservation objectives, additional mitigation measures should be considered.

5.3 Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment for the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan

5.3.1 Consideration of the Plan Alone

There is a single impact pathway to consider from the Plan alone of impacts on protected species outside of protected sites.

5.3.2 Mitigation measures

Further measures are required in order to conclude that the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan will not lead to AEOI alone, mitigation measures are necessary and these need to be embedded in the Neighbourhood Plan to avoid impacts from the following pathway:

- Impacts on protected species outside of protected site (Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC).

Considering the potential impact from the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan alone, this impact pathway is considered below with mitigation recommended.

5.3.3 Impacts on protected species outside of protected site

The draft Bat Protocol for Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC (Biodiversity Issue B9) in the Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD identifies that any development within 10km will be screened for impacts on the SAC, with particular reference to the severance of bat flight lines. Reference to the need to avoid significant impacts and any severance of Barbastelle bat flightlines for any development in Thriplow parish is considered necessary to for the Neighbourhood Plan to meet Local Plan policy requirements (NH/5) and legal duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Appropriate levels of survey, assessment and mitigation measures need to be provided in support for any development supported by the Neighbourhood Plan as it could have an impact on the population of Barbastelle bats within and around the Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.

As the parish lies within the 10km sustenance or wider conservation area for Eversden and Wimpole woods SAC, policies TH 6, THP 11, THP 14, THP 15 and THP 16 (or a separate policy to be added to the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan) will need to embed the requirements of the Biodiversity SPD into the Plan to avoid any adverse effect on integrity of this Habitats site, from the Plan alone.

As a result, it is recommended that the following policy text should be embedded within policy THP 15:

- New text in Biodiversity clause i):

‘avoid significant impact on hedgerows or any severance of bat flight lines to protect foraging and commuting habitat for Barbastelle bats which could belong to the population protected by Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.’

In addition, it is recommended that the policy text for THP 6, THP 11, THP 14 and THP 16 is amended, to require mitigation for significant impacts on hedgerows or any severance of bat flightlines. This amendment should read:

- Additional text:

‘Avoid significant impact on hedgerows or any severance of bat flight lines to protect foraging and commuting habitat for Barbastelle bats which could belong to the population protected by Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.’

5.3.4 Re-applying the integrity test

It is therefore recommended that the policies identified are amended to embed mitigation to avoid adverse effect on integrity on Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC from the Plan alone.

With these mitigation measures secured and implemented through policy text amendments embedded in the Plan policies, the Council can conclude it will avoid adverse effect on integrity as a result of disturbance and water quality impacts from the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan when considered alone.

5.4 Other Plans and Projects: In-combination Effects

The plans and projects listed in the table below (and their HRAs) have been carried out by South Cambridgeshire District Council or other organisations and none have been found to have a likely significant effect on the Habitats sites within scope of this assessment.

The Water Cycle Strategy (WCS) for Major Growth Sites in and Around Cambridge is not in itself a relevant plan or project under the Habitats Regulations but was prepared to support the delivery of the existing development strategy. Whilst it does not provide an assessment of new proposals for the Local Plan, its findings are relevant to support the assessment of this plan. It focused on issues related to the water supply, surface drainage and wastewater sewerage associated with potential development sites, and also concluded no likely significant effects, and that protected sites could be screened out of further assessment.

In the context of this HRA, the other relevant plans to be considered (i.e. those that have also triggered a requirement for HRA) are listed below in combination with Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan HRA.

Table 6: Other plans or projects considered for in combination effects

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Northstowe Area Action Plan HRA (April 2007)	“It can be objectively concluded that the Northstowe Area Action Plan is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. There is therefore no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an Appropriate Assessment.”	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan HRA (May 2007)	“This AAP was subject to an HRA and found not to impact on a Natura site or a Ramsar	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
		site.”	
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Cambridge East Area Action Plan HRA (May 2007)	“It can be objectively concluded that the Cambridge East Area Action Plan is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. There is therefore no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an Appropriate Assessment.”	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
South Cambridgeshire District Council	North West Cambridge Area Action Plan HRA (August 2007)	“It has been objectively concluded that the North West Cambridge Area Action Plan – Preferred Options Draft - is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. It is therefore concluded that there is no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an Appropriate Assessment.”	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
South	Habitat Regulations	“The Local Plan for	It is considered

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
Cambridgeshire District Council	Assessment: Chapter 20 of South Cambs Local Plan SA Scoping Report (June 2012) and including the Draft Final Sustainability Report (2014) and Sustainability Appraisal Addendum (2015)	the district was subject to an HRA screening and found to have no likely significant impact on a Natura site or a Ramsar site.”	that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Waterbeach New Town SPD HRA screening report (2018)	“The overall conclusion of this screening assessment is that the draft Waterbeach New Town SPD is unlikely to have any significant effects on the Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites identified alone or in combination with other plans or projects.”	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Bourn Airfield New Village SPD SEA / HRA Screening Report (June 2019)	“The HRA element of this Screening Report indicates that the draft Bourn Airfield New Village SPD is not predicted to have likely significant effects on Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans and	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
		projects.”	
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Greater Cambridge Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Issues and Options Scoping Report (Dec 2019)	“This Scoping document has been produced to provide guidance and parameters for developing the GCLP in the context of European sites and as a reference point for stakeholders wishing to comment on the document.”	N/A
South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council	North East Cambridge Area Action Plan HRA Report (July 2020)	RE: Air Quality, Water Quality, Water Quantity, and Recreation - “In accordance with the precautionary principle, a conclusion of no AEoI cannot be reached.”	It is considered that with mitigation secured in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
Greater Cambridge	Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document SEA and HRA screening report v2 (December 2021)	“The Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document is not predicted to have likely significant negative effects on any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.”	N/A

With mitigation measures embedded to avoid impacts from the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan alone, there are no predicted additional impacts in combination with other plans and projects. Any necessary mitigation required by project level HRAs will be secured at the planning application stage.

In light of this review, there are no identified insignificant and combinable effects that are likely to arise from other plans or projects. In light of the above conclusions, no further in-combination assessment is required.

With mitigation embedded, the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC in combination with other plans and projects.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development consent. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

The Plan allocates land for development purposes outside the existing development framework established within the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. Furthermore, the adopted Local Plan does not allocate the site in the first instance and does not provide a housing requirement for the Plan area. The Local Plan sets an indicative maximum limit of 15 dwellings for proposals within Group Villages. This yield is surpassed by the Neighbourhood Plan's allocation.

Although the Local Plan adopts a flexible approach to proposals on previously developed land, which the Neighbourhood Plan allocation is, it is considered that the procedure of exploring 'reasonable alternatives' within the context of the SEA Directive should be followed in order to meet the basic condition regarding compatibility with certain Obligations (basic condition 'f').

The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan can therefore be screened in for its requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

6.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

This Habitat Regulations Assessment, including Appropriate Assessment, considers the impacts arising from the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan.

The HRA Screening stage identified that, without mitigation, further consideration was required at the Appropriate Assessment stage to determine whether the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, would adversely affect the integrity of Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC as a result of impacts on protected species outside the protected sites potential impact pathway, i.e. this HRA recommended that Policies supporting development should be assessed further due to insufficient information regarding mitigation measures for significant impacts on hedgerows or any severance of Barbastelle bat flightlines from the Plan alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.

In applying the HRA Stage 2 (the integrity test at the AA stage), based on the parish being within the 10km sustenance or wider conservation area for Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC, mitigation needs to be embedded in the Plan in relation to impacts on protected species outside of the protected sites from the Neighbourhood Plan alone. Therefore, this HRA has recommended that the policy text is altered for Policies THP 6, THP 11, THP 14, THP15 and THP 16. Alternatively, a separate policy relating to 'mitigating the impact of

development on Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC' could be provided within an updated draft of the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan.

Embedded mitigation measures for projects (planning applications) will need to be considered in project level HRA/AA reports assessed by South Cambridgeshire District Council and secured by a condition attached to any planning consent. Therefore, there will be no need for further assessment for this Neighbourhood Plan.

Subject to the above recommendations being incorporated and Natural England's review, this HRA Screening Report including Appropriate Assessment Appropriate, indicates that, with mitigation embedded, the Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Regulations 2017 (as amended) is therefore screened out.

7. References

- Bourn Airfield New Village SPD SEA / HRA Screening Report (June 2019)
- Cambridge East Area Action Plan HRA (May 2007)
- Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (February 2022)
- Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD SEA & HRA screening report (v2 December 2021)
- Greater Cambridge Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Issues and Options Scoping Report (Dec 2019)
- Natural England Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England Website
- North East Cambridge Area Action Plan HRA Report (July 2020)
- North West Cambridge Area Action Plan HRA (August 2007)
- Northstowe Area Action Plan HRA (April 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (adopted July 2009)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (September 2018)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan HRA (May 2007)
- Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan (March 2022)
- Tydlesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, (April 2022) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited
- Waterbeach New Town SPD HRA screening report (2018)

Appendix 1

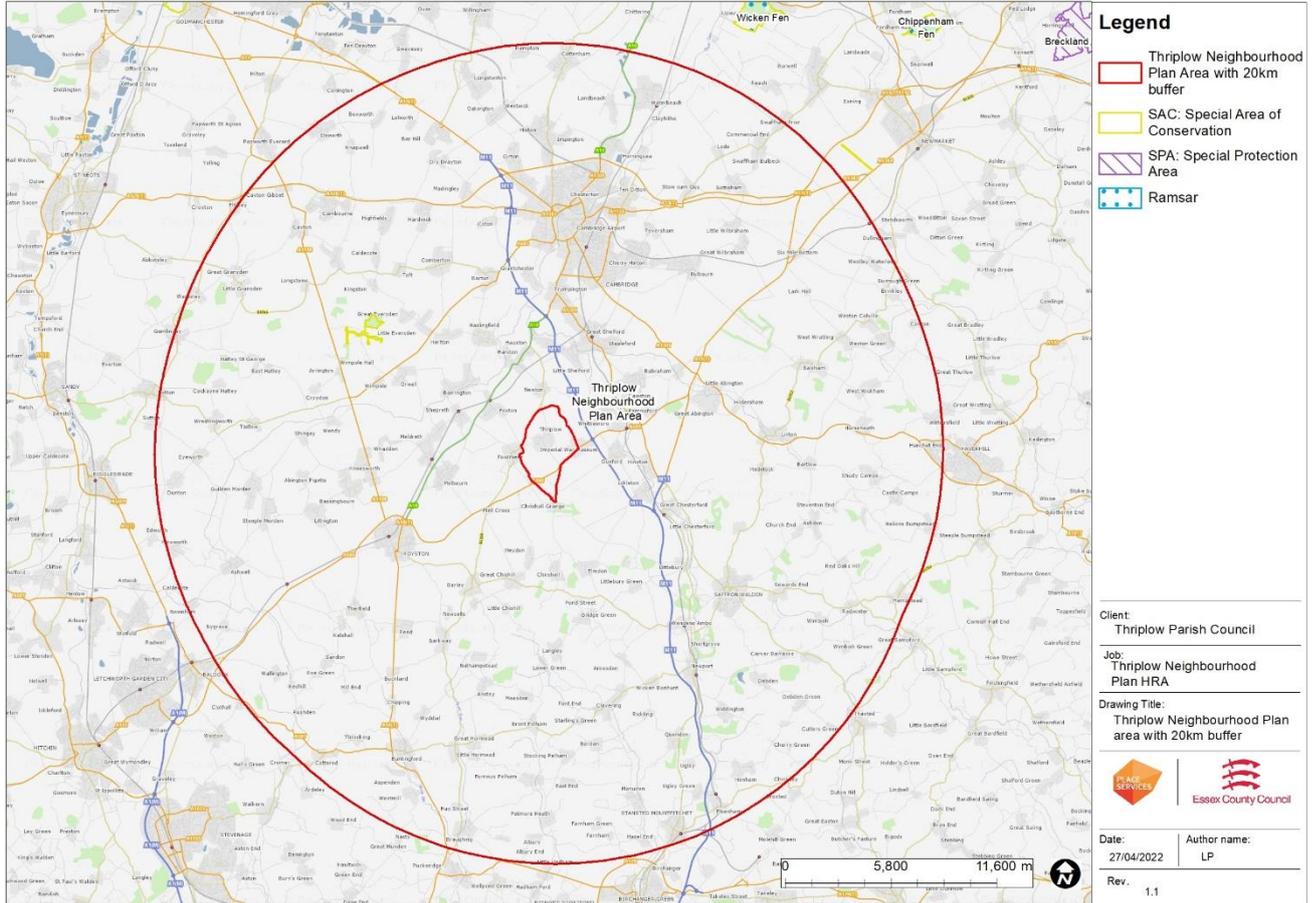
The Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan area



Source: Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan

Appendix 2

The Plan Area and Locations of the Habitats sites within 20 km



Source: Place Services, 2022



Place Services

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Essex County Council

Appendix 2: Consultation Responses from the Statutory Environmental Bodies

Historic England

25 May 2022

Thank you for your email 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 request for a Screening Opinion. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the 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 and draft neighbourhood plan) 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 Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan proposes to allocate one site for 24 new homes.

The Site (known as the Grain Store Allocation) is located to the west of the village centre, on land that is presently occupied by agricultural buildings. It is located on the immediate boundary of the conservation area, as extended in 1992 as well as in the vicinity of the Lodge and 30 Lower Street (both listed grade II). Other nearby designated heritage assets include the Thriplow Bury (grade II*). Although there are currently structures on the site, their replacement with residential buildings will change the character of the approach to the village and this has the potential, if not designed in a sensitive way, to have a negative effect on the conservation area's immediate setting and the setting of the listed buildings. It should be noted that the effects may be positive however, depending on the design approach adopted.

Given the potential for significant effects (both positive and negative) upon the historic environment, and noting the report's conclusions, Historic England recommends that the historic environment considerations are screened in to the Strategic Environmental Assessment, in order to inform the development of the neighbourhood plan's policies regarding the potential for avoiding and minimising any harm that could be caused by the development or associated infrastructure. The SEA should be supported by a proportionate heritage impact assessment.

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 below. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance) where we consider that, despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Kind regards,

Edward James- Historic Places Adviser, East of England

Natural England

6 June 2022

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 04 May 2022 which was received by Natural England on 04 May 2022.

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

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

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

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

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

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

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

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

Yours faithfully
Julian Clarke
Consultations Team

Environment Agency

05 May 2022

We agree with the conclusions that have been reached.

Kind regards

Neville Benn- Sustainable Places, East Anglia Area (West)