

**Southwell Neighbourhood Plan Review – Consultation Edition
June 2023 (Regulation 14 Stage)**

**Strategic Environment Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Screening Report**



November 2023

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes requires an environmental assessment to be made of certain plans or programmes. The objective of SEA, as defined in the Government's guidance on strategic environmental assessment, is 'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans....with a view to promoting sustainable development' (Article 1). The SEA Directive has been transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.2 Planning Practice Guidance - Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal: Sustainability appraisal requirements for neighbourhood plans (2014) states that 'in some limited circumstances, where a Neighbourhood Plan could have significant environmental effects, it may fall within the scope of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and so require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.'

2.0 Screening Process

- 2.1 The existing Southwell Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in May 2016, and the need monitor the Neighbourhood Plan's effectiveness and keep it under review was outlined in the document. With the intention that Southwell Town Council (the 'Qualifying Body') would consider undertaking a partial review of the Neighbourhood Plan in 5 – 6 years (around 2020) and then a full review [beginning] no later than 2025. Since Autumn 2020 work on its review has been going, and the 'Consultation Edition June 2023' screened here was published as part of the Regulation 14 stage of the process.
- 2.2 Newark & Sherwood District Council, as the relevant Local Planning Authority (LPA), has provided the following opinion on whether the proposed amended Southwell Neighbourhood Plan will require a SEA. Whether a Neighbourhood plan requires a SEA, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.0 Screening

Table 1: Establishing the Need for SEA

Environmental Regulations Paragraph	SEA Requirement	Comments
2	Is the Plan: (a) Subject to the preparation or adoption by an Authority at national, regional or local level or; (b) Prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government; and, in either case, (c) Required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions?	Yes, the Plan is subject to preparation and adoption at the local level. There are legislative and regulatory provisions in place for Neighbourhood Plans.

5(2)	Is the plan (a) prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, and does it (b) sets the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC(9)?	Yes, the Plan is prepared for town and country planning purposes and contributes towards the setting of the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC (urban development projects) within the Neighbourhood Area.
4(c)	Is the plan or programme likely to have significant environmental effects?	No. The amendments and proposed new content to the Plan are likely to have positive environmental effects through a variety of policies that promote the achievement of sustainable development. The plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects
6	Does the plan (a) determine the use of a small area at local level; or (b) is a minor modification to a plan or programme of the description set out in either of those paragraphs?	a) Yes, the Plan determines the use of a small area of land at local level. (b) The Plan once 'made' would in effect be a minor modification to the Newark & Sherwood Local Development Framework.
5(3)	Has it been determined that the plan requires an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?	No (see HRA screening opinion).
<p>The Local Planning Authority has concluded that the proposed Amended Southwell Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects and consequently a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required. The criteria specified in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 has been taken into account in reaching this conclusion. Under regulation 9(2)(b) the consultation bodies must be consulted on this conclusion prior to the Local Planning Authority making a formal determination.</p>		

4.0 Significance of effects on the environment

- 4.1 To decide whether a draft Neighbourhood Plan might have significant environmental effects, its potential scope should be assessed against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or Annex II of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC.
- 4.2 When deciding on whether the proposals are likely to have significant environmental effects, the Local Planning Authority should consult the statutory consultation bodies. Where the Local Planning Authority determines that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), it should prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination. Where a statement of reasons is provided in respect of a Neighbourhood Plan a copy of the statement should be provided to the Qualifying Body in order

that the statement can be made available to the independent examiner; for example, by including it in the basic conditions statement.

- 4.3 Where a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment a Strategic Environmental Assessment must be carried out. The following table explores the potential scope of the proposed Amended Southwell Neighbourhood Plan against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Table 2: Schedule 1 Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects on the Environment

SEA Requirement	Comments
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to -	
(a) 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>The Plan would, if ‘made’, form part of the Statutory Development Plan and as such would contribute towards the framework for future development consent of projects within the Neighbourhood Area. The plan sits within the wider framework set by the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Amended Core Strategy DPD (2019) and the adopted Allocations & Development Management DPD (2013).</p> <p>This framework will have some impacts on the environment, noticeably through the support for development in the area via a number of policies and site allocations carried over from the adopted Development Plan. However it is deemed that these impacts will not be significant due to their small, localised nature, and in respect of the site allocations these having already been subject to SEA as part of the adopted Development Plan. Other policies within this framework, as well as policies at the local and national level also work to ensure these impacts are mitigated to ensure the continued sustainability of the area.</p>
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	<p>The Plan will form part of the Development Plan, and the amended content needs to be in general conformity with its adopted strategic policies. No additional site allocations beyond those existing within the Development Plan are proposed. The Plan therefore compliments over plans and programmes – rather than directly influencing them.</p>
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	<p>The Plan will promote sustainable development – and sets out a vision for its achievement through Policy SD1 – ‘Delivering Sustainable Development’. This is supplemented by specific content across various policies- addressing environmental matters, design and heritage, transport and access, community facilities and open space, housing and employment and inclusion of site</p>

	allocations.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	Southwell and its setting has a rich historic environment. The Conservation Area covers much of the core of the town centred on the Minster and the historic prebendal properties. The Town suffered a significant flash flooding event in 2013. The policies of the Plan aim to ensure that new development protects the historic character of the town and encourages development which will not increase the risk of flooding.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	This Plan has no relevance to the implementation of Community legislation.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to -	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	Effects are likely beyond the proposed plan period (2023-31). There is a high probability of positive effects as once 'made' the Plan will form part of the Development Plan and be used to determine planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area. The effects are not likely to be reversible as they relate to development. However they will be of a local scale.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	The cumulative effect of this Plan and the rest of the Development Plan will result in positive effects.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	There will be minimal transboundary effects; as the Plan covers the Neighbourhood Area. It is likely that the effects of the Plan will be related to this area.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	The Plan poses no risk to human health.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The Plan relates to the Neighbourhood Area, which has a population of 7,558, It is likely that the modest effects of the plan will be related to this area.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to - (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and	<p>The Plan is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the value and vulnerability of the area in relation to its natural and cultural heritage. If anything it will provide greater support to and enhance the setting and identify of the area by supporting the enhancement of its existing environmental and community assets.</p> <p>The policies of the Plan aim to ensure that new development protects the historic character of the town and encourages development which will not increase the risk of flooding.</p> <p>The Plan does not provide specific policies in</p>

	relation to intensive land uses.
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	There are no areas or landscapes with recognised national, Community or international protection status.

5.0 Screening outcome

- 5.1 The proposed Amended Southwell Neighbourhood Plan will determine the use of a small area at local level and is effectively a minor modification to the District-wide Development Plan for Newark & Sherwood. The Plan carries over existing site allocations from the adopted Development Plan (inclusive of the existing 'made' Neighbourhood Plan), which have already been subject to SEA as part of their original allocation in 2013. The plan proposes a minor amendment to the settlement boundary, and whilst this may indirectly facilitate the subsequent development of this land it is not considered likely to have significant effects. Taken together the content of the Plan will result in positive, long term effects. However, none of these effects will be significant. Therefore, the LPA has concluded that the proposed Amended Southwell Neighbourhood Plan will not require an assessment of the significant environmental effects of the plan under the SEA Directive and Environmental Assessment Regulations based on the content of the 'Consultation Edition June 2023' Amended Southwell Neighbourhood Plan.