

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Screening Opinion**

**East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan
(Pre-Regulation 14)**

February 2022

Prepared by Wealden District Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report is designed to determine whether the draft East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan (NP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC (“The SEA Directive”)¹ and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (The “SEA Regulations”)².
- 1.2 A neighbourhood plan may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to comply with the SEA Directive where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. It is the Council’s responsibility to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects taking account of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, and in consultation with the Environmental Agency, Historic England and Natural England.
- 1.3 In order to determine whether a proposed neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment it is ‘screened’ at an early stage once the plan remit and objectives have been formulated. This report assesses the first draft of the East Hoathly with Halland NP (pre-regulation 14 stage).
- 1.4 If, after the screening assessment and consultation with the statutory bodies, the responsible authority determines that the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, then a full Environmental Assessment will be required. Conversely, if it is determined through screening and consultation with the statutory bodies that the neighbourhood plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, then the neighbourhood planning group need not concern itself with subsequent stages of the SEA process.
- 1.5 The Council advises neighbourhood plan groups to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal to assess the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan against social, environmental and economic factors. This is good practice and can provide evidence for how the neighbourhood plan meets the requirement to promote sustainable development.

¹ [European Directive 2001/42/EC](#)

² [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)

2. Overview of the East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The East Hoathly with Halland NP is at an early stage of production and has yet to go out to Regulation 14 consultation. The plan covers East Hoathly with Halland Parish, which contains large areas of Ancient Woodland and a network of hedgerows. A considerable number of ponds, ditches and streams are present within the Parish which feed into the River Cuckmere to the south and River Uck to the north. In heritage terms, East Hoathly with Halland has 34 listed buildings, a Conservation Area (East Hoathly), a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Moat Wood) and a larger number of non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.2 There are no Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites, Sites of Scientific Interest or National Nature Reserves within the neighbourhood area. Park Corner Heath SSSI is located adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area to the south in Laughton Parish. There is a Local Wildlife Site, Croom Cottage Meadow within the neighbourhood area located to the north of London Road. The Neighbourhood Plan proposes for this to be designated as a Local Green Space in Policy 8.
- 2.3 The Plan sets out a vision, objectives and policies covering a plan period to 2040. The Plan **does not allocate sites for development**. The Plan sets out a vision statement:

“Our Vision is that in 2040, East Hoathly with Halland will remain a thriving caring community that has met its changing needs and which caters for the health and wellbeing of its residents of all ages. It will be less car dependent with more residents working in the parish. It will have preserved the distinctive character that has evolved over eight centuries of history. It will have ensured the protection of its Heritage assets, Conservation Area and Green Spaces. It will have accommodated small scale housing developments to meet the needs of local people and supported a Community Land Trust (CLT) to provide low cost rented homes. It will have improved the balance of housing stock available and ensured that new homes are sympathetic to the distinctive nature of the Parish. It will have sought to enhance its sustainability by supporting remaining businesses, improving accessibility and supporting improvements to utilities and services.”

- 2.4 The plan’s objectives are:

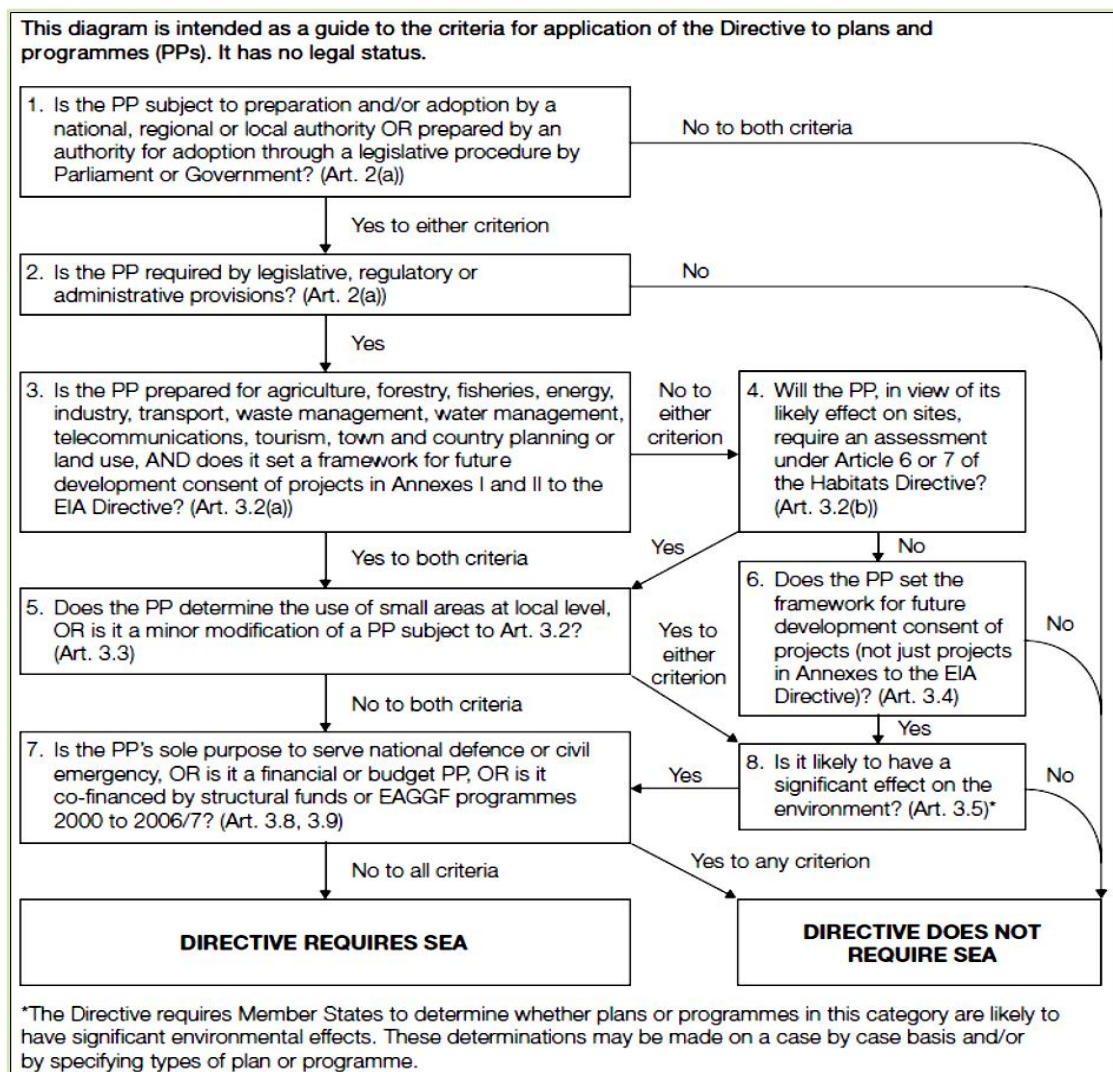
1. *To deliver development that meets Parish housing needs and is proportionate to the size of the community and its facilities. To*

- improve the balance of housing stock to provide smaller accommodation and retirement dwellings;*
- 2. To support the establishment of a CLT to build Low Rent homes for local working people;*
 - 3. To provide design guidance to ensure that future developments are sympathetic with the character of the Parish;*
 - 4. To support development that only uses sustainable transport;*
 - 5. To support development of zero net emission rated housing;*
 - 6. To protect the integrity of existing Listed Buildings and the Scheduled Ancient Monument in the Parish and identify additional buildings suitable for protection;*
 - 7. To protect and enhance the Conservation Area;*
 - 8. To identify potential Assets of Community Value and seek to get them protected;*
 - 9. To protect and enhance the existing Ancient Woodland in the Parish and identify other important woodland and individual trees that require protection;*
 - 10. To protect and enhance ponds and other waterways in the Parish as habitats and to protect their role in the drainage system;*
 - 11. To identify Local Green Spaces to be designated within the Parish;*
 - 12. To improve the facilities for Leisure and Recreation in the Parish and in particular to improve the drainage of the East Hoathly War Memorial Sports Ground;*
 - 13. To deliver a community Local Green Space and play area in Halland;*
 - 14. To support local employers, farmers and agricultural businesses in the Parish;*
 - 15. To improve the potential for Tourism in the Parish;*
 - 16. To protect and enhance all the Parish Footpaths and Bridleway;*
 - 17. To encourage the re-establishment of effective evening and Sunday bus services for East Hoathly;*
 - 18. To support the improvement of Mobile and Broadband services for domestic and business users and encourage the growth of people using Broadband to work from home.*

3. SEA Screening Assessment

3.1 The screening assessment for the SEA is undertaken in two parts and will firstly assess whether the East Hoathly with Halland NP requires an SEA as per the detailed guidance contained within 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' that is shown in Figure 1 that follows below³. The second element of the assessment will consider whether the East Hoathly with Halland NP is likely, in its current form, to have a significant effect on the environment, using the criteria drawn from Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. Figure 1 below is a guide as to how the criteria for the application of the Directive should be assessed.

Figure 1: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes



³ See page 13 of '[A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)' (2005) and Figure 2 – Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes for the original diagram.

- 3.2 The process in Figure 1 has been undertaken in terms of the East Hoathly with Halland NP and the findings can be viewed in Table 1. This establishes whether this NP would require an SEA. The questions in Table 1 are drawn from the diagram above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

Table 1: Establishing the need for the SEA

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
1. Is the PP (plan or programme) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a)).	Yes	The NP has been prepared by East Hoathly Parish Council under the provision of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism act 2011 and the associated Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012 as amended. Go to Stage 2
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	The East Hoathly with Halland NP is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). However, once 'made' the East Hoathly with Halland NP would form part of the statutory development plan, and will be used when making decisions on planning applications within the designated NP area. Therefore, it is considered necessary to establish whether there is a need for an SEA. Go to Stage 3
3. Is the PP 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	Yes	The East Hoathly with Halland NP is being prepared for both town and country planning and land use and therefore meets the first part of this question. The NPD contains a general framework for all future development consent, which could include projects that would be listed in Annex II of the EIA Directive .

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))		Go to Stage 5
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))	Not applicable.	
5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Yes	The East Hoathly with Halland NP does not allocate land for a specific purpose but does show preference for the type and form of development at local level. Go to Stage 8
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Not applicable	
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art. 3.8, 3.9)	Not applicable	
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	No	This question is considered within the screening assessment itself that follows in Table 2 below.

3.3 Table 2 below sets out the Councils assessment on the likely environmental effects of the draft East Hoathly with Halland NP with reference to the criteria specified in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.

Table 2: Determining the likely significance of effects

SEA Directive criteria	Wealden District Council assessment	Likely significant environmental effect?
Characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan, having regard to:		

<p>(a) the degree to which the plan 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 NP would, if 'made', form part of the statutory Development Plan and as such does contribute to the framework for future development consent of projects.</p> <p>However, the neighbourhood plan must sit within a wider policy framework having regard to National Policy while also being in general conformity with the strategic policies of the District's Development Plan.</p> <p>The NP does not seek to allocate sites for development. It instead provides policies to help guide development by providing certain criteria in relation to design and community, commercial, tourism and communication infrastructure uses. In general terms the framework of policies seeks to guide projects which are local in nature.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>(b) the degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy</p>	<p>The NP must have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Council's Development Plan.</p> <p>The NP may have a limited degree of influence over the formation of other documents and policies. However, the extent of impact is unlikely to be significant in this regard given the Plan's position within the policy hierarchy and its limited geographic scope.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>(c) the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental</p>	<p>The NP does not allocate sites for development. The criteria based policies and local</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</p>	<p>designations are designed to promote sustainable development in line with the requirement that all neighbourhood plans contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It will be advised for the NP to be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal.</p>	
<p>(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan</p>	<p>The East Hoathly with Halland NP area does not contain Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar Sites, SSSIs, LNRs or NNRs. However, part of the parish is located within the hydrological catchment area of the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels.</p> <p>The area does contain ancient woodland and a Local Wildlife Site but this designation is unlikely to be affected by the policies in the plan.</p> <p>The NP does not allocate sites for development. It does however designate 20 Local Green Spaces.</p> <p>The NP includes policies to help protect the natural environment, protect dark skies and to encourage sustainable resource efficient developments</p> <p>There are some policies that provide support for community, commercial, tourism and communications infrastructure uses subject to various criteria but if such development were to come forward it will be assessed in relation to any environmental issues as part of the planning application process. It is not possible to assess this now as</p>	<p>No</p>

	there are no site specific locations or details available,	
(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).	The NP will not affect the implementation of environmental legislation. The Habitats Regulations screening concludes that the NP will not result in a 'likely significant effect' on any SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites.	No
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	The NP plan period runs until 2040. The plan does not allocate sites for development but will set policies to help shape and guide development over that period and development that comes forward in the NP area will be assessed as part of the normal planning application process against these policies. It is unlikely that there will be significant environmental effects as a result of the policies and criteria in themselves.	No
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects of the plan	The scope of the policies proposed within the NP are local in nature. There are some policies that provide support for community, commercial, tourism and communications infrastructure uses subject to various criteria. However, the scale, location, type and form of development is not known and will therefore be assessed as part of the normal planning application process should development come forward. The policies and criteria in themselves will not result in a significant cumulative environmental effect.	No
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	There are not expected to be any trans-boundary effects on	No

	other parishes, local authority areas or wider.	
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	There are no significant risks to human health or the environment. A number of policies seek to improve human health by ensuring safe pedestrian and cycling access, promoting active travel, reducing out commuting and supporting additional leisure facilities.	No
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The NP covers an area of 15.11km with a population of 1,686 at the last census in 2011. The Plan therefore covers a relatively small geographic area with a modest population. The plan is not allocating sites for development and the effects of the plan are likely to be largely limited to the neighbourhood area.	No
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; • Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; and • intensive land-use 	<p>The NP contains one conservation area (East Hoathly), 34 Grade II or Grade II* listed buildings, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Moat Wood) and a large number of non-designated heritage assets. The NP provides policies to protect and enhance the Conservation Area and the wider historic environment. There is a Local Wildlife Site, Croom Cottage Meadow within the neighbourhood area located to the north of London Road. The Neighbourhood Plan proposes for this to be designated as a Local Green Space in Policy 8.</p> <p>The NP does not allocate sites. It is not expected that criteria based policies in themselves will lead to an exceedance of environmental quality standards or limit values. Any development</p>	No

	<p>that does come forward will be considered through the normal planning application process.</p> <p>The NP through design policies seeks to restrict intensive land use by ensuring that new developments are in proportion and reflect the form of existing development in the Parish.</p>	
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	The HRA screening assessment has not identified any likely significant environmental effects on any national, community or international protected sites. The neighbourhood area is located outside of High Weald AONB and has no other nationally or internally important landscape designations.	No
Conclusion	The East Hoathly with Halland NP is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment and as such an SEA is not required.	

4. SEA Screening Conclusion

- 4.1 As a result of the assessment at Section 3, it is considered by Wealden District Council that an SEA will not be required for the East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.2 This report was sent to the three statutory bodies for comment (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England). Each body agreed with the Council's conclusion that the East Hoathly with Halland NDP is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and a SEA is therefore not required. Full responses from the statutory consultees are provided at Appendix 1.
- 4.3 This screening opinion is considered to be a 'snapshot in time' and if the scope and/or policies contained within the East Hoathly with Halland NP should change, then a new screening process will need to be undertaken to determine whether an SEA would be required at that time.

APPENDIX 1: Statutory Consultee Responses

Date: 10 January 2022
Our ref: 377032
Your ref: East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan



[REDACTED]
Wealden District Council

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

BY EMAIL ONLY
[REDACTED]

T 0300 060 3900

Dear [REDACTED]

East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan – Pre-submission Regulation 14 - SEA & HRA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 07 December 2021.

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.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 December 2021 13:42
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan - Consultation on draft SEA Screening (pre - regulation 14)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the draft screening statement for SEA of the East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood plan.

Based on the information provided I'm happy to confirm Historic England's agreement that SEA would not be merited on grounds within our areas of interest. We do, as ever, reserve the right to request a review of this decision should the scope of the plan change to include site allocations or policies that limit areas for development or promote change of use, or design that would generate significant effects for heritage assets or the wider historic environment.

I would be happy to answer any queries with regard to these comments

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2021 13:10
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: SEA Screening East Hoathly with Halland NP

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

To [REDACTED]

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the draft East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan draft SEA screening.

When considering issues within our remit we would agree with your conclusion that the East Hoathly with Halland NP is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment and as such does not require SEA.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]
Sustainable Places
Solent and South Downs