

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report

January 2022

1. Introduction

1.1. This screening report fulfils two functions:

- It is the determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC for the proposed Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- It is also intended to determine whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and regulation 62 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

1.2. As set out in [NPPG](#) it is only in exceptional circumstances that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be necessary when producing a Supplementary Planning Document due to the potential for significant environmental effects being limited by the nature of the document providing support for the statutorily produced development plan.

The Purpose of Strategic Environment Assessment

1.3. The purpose of SEA is to secure a high level of protection for the environment and to integrate environmental considerations into the preparation of plans to promote sustainable development. To establish whether a SEA is required a screening assessment is undertaken which considers the SPD against a series of criteria set out in the SEA Directive.

1.4. If the Landscape and Townscape SPD could have significant environmental effects, it may require a SEA where for example:

- Where natural or heritage assets may be affected by the proposals in the SPD
- The SPD may have significant effects that have not already been considered through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan
- Where the cumulative impact of requirements of the SPD when assessed together may give rise to a likely significant environmental effect.

1.5. The formal criteria for assessing the likely significance of effects are set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations and are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Criteria for determining likely significance of effects on the environment from Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to
 - 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,
 - the degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
 - the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
 - environmental problems relevant to the plan,
 - the relevance of the plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g., plans and programmes linked to waste-management or waste protection).

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

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.6. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) may also be required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) where the requirements of the SPD may give rise to significant effects on internationally designated wildlife sites, and they have not been considered as part of the assessment of development plans that the SPD supplements. Internationally designated wildlife sites are defined as any site of wildlife interest designated as a Special Protection Area under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC, amended in 2009 to 2009/147/EC) or as a Special Area of Conservation designated under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). In addition, sites designated under the Ramsar Convention (Iran 1971 as amended 1992) are also considered.

- 1.7. The process to establish whether a HRA is necessary starts with a screening exercise to determine whether any internationally designated sites might be exposed to likely significant effects as a result of implementation of the Landscape and Townscape SPD and therefore whether further stages of the HRA process are required.

2. The Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document

- 2.1. The Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document will cover the whole of Huntingdonshire and will supplement policies within the adopted development plan. It expands upon and updates the guidance provided within the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD adopted in 2007.
- 2.2. The current adopted development plan is made up of:
- The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (adopted May 2019), which sets the spatial vision, objectives and strategic directions of growth to 2036;
 - The 'made' neighbourhood plans for Buckden, Bury, Godmanchester, Houghton & Wyton, Huntingdon and St Neots;
 - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted July 2021)
- 2.3. The SPD is divided into seventeen chapters:
- **Chapter 1 - Introduction** – provides background information on the purpose, policy context and rationale for the revised SPD. It sets out key definitions such as landscape and townscape character.
 - **Chapter 2 – Understanding Character** – sets out the methodology undertaken for the revised SPD, the questions to consider for settlement scale and site-specific character assessments. It details the various heritage assets found across Huntingdonshire and details a series of building types commonly found across the district and used within the assessments.
 - **Chapter 3 – Landscape Character Area Assessments** – provides an assessment of each of the nine identified landscape character areas across Huntingdonshire. Each character area includes contextual information, the parishes that fall within them, key characteristics and designations as well as a looking forward section and development proposal should principles.
 - **Chapter 4 – Settlement based Landscape and Townscape Character Area Analysis** – this introduces the 14 settlements that have been assessed in detail within this SPD (four Spatial Planning Areas covering the market towns and ten Key Service Centres covering some of Huntingdonshire's larger villages).
 - **Chapter 5 – Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area** – this consist of three sub sections, an assessment of the Huntingdon townscape, the Brampton townscape and finally for the Godmanchester townscape. The chapter assess the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of these settlements, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character area how the development must respond to its locality.
 - **Chapter 6 – St Neots Spatial Planning Area** – this consists of two sub sections, an assessment of the St Neots townscape and for the Little Paxton townscape. The chapter assess the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of these settlements, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character area how the development must respond to its locality.
 - **Chapter 7 – St Ives Spatial Planning Area** – this chapter assesses the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of St Ives, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character

area how the development must respond to its locality.

- **Chapter 8 – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area** - this chapter assesses the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of Ramsey and Bury, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character area how the development must respond to its locality.
- **Chapter 9 – Buckden Key Service Centre** – this chapter assesses the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of Buckden, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character area how the development must respond to its locality.
- **Chapter 10 – Fenstanton Key Service Centre** - this chapter assesses the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of Fenstanton, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character area how the development must respond to its locality.
- **Chapter 11 – Kimbolton Key Service Centre** - this chapter assesses the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of Kimbolton, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character area how the development must respond to its locality.
- **Chapter 12 – Sawtry Key Service Centre** - this chapter assesses the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of Sawtry, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character area how the development must respond to its locality.
- **Chapter 13 – Somersham Key Service Centre** - this chapter assesses the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of Somersham, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character area how the development must respond to its locality.
- **Chapter 14 – Warboys Key Service Centre** - this chapter assesses the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of Warboys, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character area how the development must respond to its locality.
- **Chapter 15 – Yaxley Key Service Centre** – this chapter assesses the natural, built and cultural influences that have shaped the features of Yaxley, breaking the settlement into character areas. For each area, a series of development proposals should principles for each character area how the development must respond to its locality.
- **Chapter 16 – Appendix 1** – this sets out a detailed methodology to support parish councils and local community groups in producing their own localised landscape and townscape assessment, primarily when preparing a neighbourhood plan, however it can also be used by a wider range of people and for a wider range of purposes.
- **Chapter 20 - Glossary** – provides an explanation some of the key terms used in the SPD.

2.4. The SPD is also accompanied by an [interactive map](#). The map enables residents, agents and planning officers to better navigate and access the information and apply the guidance within the SPD. It can also be utilised by neighbourhood planning groups as part of their data collection for their neighbourhood plan.

2.5. The draft SPD was subject to public consultation from 15 October until 10 December 2021.

3. SEA Screening Assessment

3.1. Table 1 below shows the assessment of whether the Landscape and Townscape SPD will require a full SEA.

SEA Directive Criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programme Regulations 2004	Summary of significant effects (negative and positive)
The characteristics of the Landscape and Townscape SPD having regard to:	
(1a) 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 SPD will not set a new framework for projects and will not allocate resources. It offers guidance to supplement the policies within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.</p> <p>The SPD will be a significant piece of landscape and townscape guidance for all new development across the district and will be an important planning aid to assist the determination of planning applications and to inform planning consultations. It will complement existing guidance found in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017) and Conservation Area Character Statements. The SPD also provides a methodology for parish councils and neighbourhood plan groups to undertake a localised landscape and townscape assessment for their area. The methodology can be adapted to the nature and scale of the assessment in mind.</p>
(1b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	Not applicable. The SPD is in conformity with national planning policy and guidance, and the adopted development plan. The SPD supports the policies within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
(1c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The SPD clarifies and adds detail to the process of ensuring that appropriate mitigation is taken when considering a wide range of environmental impacts arising from development. Sustainable development is an inherent theme that runs through the whole document but more specifically the SPD will promote sustainable development through reflecting local character and vernacular including natural factors such as green space, parks and any wildlife sites located within or on the edge of settlements. It does not provide environment policy in its own right but will support the implementation of the environmental policies adopted within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. Overall, it therefore contributes positively to the integration of environmental considerations.
(1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	Although the SPD seeks to address environmental problems, this is provided in the context of promoting and facilitating well designed development in support of the planning policies contained within the development plan. This is not the only or main source of guidance on such problems (for example, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide and Conservation Area character statements).
(1e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the	Applicable in part. The SPD is relevant in part in that the document seeks to provide advice and guidance on issues including the

SEA Directive Criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programme Regulations 2004	Summary of significant effects (negative and positive)
implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	provision of sustainable drainage systems and renewable energy integration. It is only likely to have a positive effect and is not the only or main source of guidance on such issues (the Huntingdonshire Design Guide provides more detailed guidance).

SEA Directive Criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004	Summary of significant effects (negative and positive)
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to:	
<p>(2a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.</p> <p>(2b) the cumulative nature of the effects.</p>	<p>The anticipated effects on the sustainability and integration of future development are expected to be positive and enduring with no negative effects. The SPD will provide detailed guidance to encourage well designed development that reflects local character and incorporates the localised influences of its surrounding natural and built context. A series of development proposal principles are identified to implement this and are tailored to each character area identified.</p> <p>The cumulative nature of the effects will be the delivery of well-designed development that is well integrated, reflects local character and conserves heritage assets with the aim of creating sustainable and resilient communities which will endure.</p>
(2c) the transboundary nature of the effects.	The SPD covers the entire district of Huntingdonshire. Any trans-boundary effects are likely to be limited to localised areas where development is permitted near the boundary with neighbouring local planning authorities. Any such effects are likely to be positive.
(2d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents).	Although the SPD provides guidance and advice on issues that could represent risks to human health or the environment, it seeks to reduce risks and is not the only or main source of guidance on such issues. Risks cannot be ruled out through the construction process of any development.
(2e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The SPD is applicable to Huntingdonshire and would affect a population of approximately 180,000 (ONS Population Estimates 2020) and relates to proposed new developments within a geographical area of approximately 910km ² . Effects are likely to be concentrated in urban areas such as the main towns and large villages (which were subject to detailed assessment in the SPD), although the landscape guidance is applicable to all forms of development across the whole district. The SPD also provides a methodology for parish councils and neighbourhood plan groups to

SEA Directive Criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004	Summary of significant effects (negative and positive)
	undertake a localised landscape and townscape assessment for their area. The methodology can be adapted to the nature and scale of the assessment in mind.
<p>(2f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and 	<p>There are a range of special natural characteristics in Huntingdonshire including sites of special scientific Interest, county wildlife sites and local nature reserves, and heritage assets, including, scheduled monuments, areas of archaeological significance, conservation areas and listed buildings. These are largely protected, conserved and enhanced by adopted planning policies, national policy and other legislative or consent regimes. The SPD is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on these areas as it is intended to raise design quality and includes guidance for development proposals to reduce their impact on designated areas/structures. It also provides details on the relevant sources of guidance to consult if any of these characteristics might be affected by proposed development. It is considered that the SPD will not adversely affect the value and vulnerability of the district. If anything, new development should incrementally improve and enhance the quality and sustainability of the district as a whole.</p>
<p>(2g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or protection status.</p>	<p>There is a range of internationally designated sites in Huntingdonshire including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites as well as national designations, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and local designations including county wildlife sites and local nature reserves. These are protected, conserved and enhanced by adopted development plan policies as well as national and international legislative and consent regimes for important sites. Development plans have been subject to the Habitat Regulations Assessment screening process and, where necessary, appropriate assessment. The SPD is unlikely to have an impact on these areas; however, this is assessed in the next section.</p>

4. HRA Screening Assessment

The Need for an Assessment

- 4.1. The Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced to provide guidance on landscape and townscape considerations to conserve, reinforce and where possible enhance the natural and built environments across Huntingdonshire. It provides practical guidance on how such considerations should be embedded throughout the design and development process to create truly sustainable and integrated development reflecting Huntingdonshire's varied and distinctive characteristics.
- 4.2. The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and Habitats Regulations 2017 require a screening assessment to be carried out for the SPD in order to determine any likely significant effects that it might have on the integrity of internationally designated nature conservation sites. These are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites. The sites in Huntingdonshire are set out in Appendix A.

Baseline Data Gathering

- 4.3. Information on the sites and features of the SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites was taken from the screening reports produced for the Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. The Local Plan was subject to a full Sustainability Assessment integrated with the Strategic Environmental Assessment as well as Habitats Regulations Assessment (May 2017 with an Addendum in November 2017). The HRA report concluded that the Local Plan will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any European site.
- 4.4. A variety of plans and programmes have been reviewed for the 'in combination' part of the assessment. These relate to plans produced at the county level as well as local plans and supporting documents. Details of the plans and programmes considered can be found in Appendix B.

Predicting and assessing effects on a European Site

- 4.5. When carrying out the assessment the following issues were considered:
 - Scope of the guidance included in the SPD
 - Character of requirements set out in the SPD that could have environmental effects
 - Sensitivities associated with the European sites
 - Whether or not there are sufficient safeguards for European sites
 - The likely effects of requirements set out in the SPD on the integrity of European sites
 - The likelihood that further HRA (and associated Appropriate Assessment) would be necessary at the planning application stage.

Scope of the guidance included in the SPD

- 4.6. The SPD aims to provide advice to support policies in the adopted development plan for Huntingdonshire. It provides advice and guidance only and is in conformity with current national and local planning policy. It does not include any policies or site allocations.

- 4.7. The SPD provides guidance and advice on a range of environmental, social and economic issues related to several different environmental issues within the wider aims of promoting well designed development. It aims to assist in determining planning applications, inform planning consultations and to help interpret national policy and guidance and relevant local planning policies. More detail on the SPD is contained above in section 2.

Sensitivities associated with the European Sites

- 4.8. The HRA undertaken for the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (May 2017) identified seven impact pathways could give rise to significant effects on internationally designated sites:
- Development on or adjacent to the site destroying part or all of the site, or changing the ecological functioning of the site (e.g., disrupting water flows or migration routes)
 - Increased public recreation, causing disturbance to birds, damage to vegetation, increased littering/ fly tipping or leading to management compromises (e.g., grazing being restricted)
 - Air pollution, air-borne pollutants
 - Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions (this option was chosen because it includes both drought and flooding)
 - Invasive non-native species
 - Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources) and
 - Reduction in water quality, from increased discharges of sewage and surface water drainage, or from pollution incidents, either during or after construction.
- 4.9. The impact pathways need to be considered when looking at how requirements of the SPD may affect internationally designated sites. The SPD highlights some issues in connection with these pathways and requires developers to consider such issues when drawing up development proposal. However, the SPD provides guidance within the context of the range of national policies and legislation and supplementing development plan policies and other local documents that provide more detailed guidance and have specific requirements in relation to environmental effects.

Whether or not there are sufficient safeguards for European sites

- 4.12. It is understood that effects to biodiversity could take place during the construction of particular elements of development such as SuDs, new buildings and alterations to existing properties where they are appropriate and respond to the opportunities in the area. Cumulative effects may also impact on biodiversity across a wide area arising from other development/ activities and the requirements of other plans and programmes. However, the SPD recognises the biodiversity benefits that well designed development can have; the SPD includes detailed content on ecology that reinforces national and local policy.
- 4.10. The current development plan for Huntingdonshire is made up of a number of documents. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 was subject to a full Sustainability Assessment integrated with the Strategic Environmental Assessment as well as Habitats Regulations Assessment (May 2017 with an Addendum in November 2017). The HRA report concluded that the Local Plan will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any European site. The 'made' neighbourhood plans were also screened for SEA and HRA. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan undertook a SEA and HRA assessment.

- 4.13. In order to ascertain that development proposals addressing environmental issues such as flood risk or biodiversity will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of an internationally designated site a Habitats Regulations Assessment may need to be carried out for individual proposals as they come forward.

Findings of assessment and conclusions

- 4.14. The assessment has indicated that the SPD, in isolation, is not likely to affect the integrity of internationally designated sites. Although the SPD contains advice and guidance in connection with a range of environmental issues that should be considered as part of the process of producing well designed developments none of this advice or guidance provides the sole requirements in relation to any environmental issue where an adverse effect might arise.
- 4.15. In combination with requirements for SEA and Habitats Regulations screening for development plan and other plans and programmes as well as the potential for individual development proposal to be assessed it is considered that there are adequate safeguards in place for internationally designated sites.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1. This report contains the assessments of the need for the Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment as required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)) and Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment as required by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)).
- 5.2. The assessment for both of these has been undertaken based on the proposals set out in the final draft version of the SPD and within the strategic framework established in the adopted development plan, specifically the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019). The final draft SPD was consulted upon between 15 October and 10 December 2021. Following the close of the consultation amendments were made to the SPD in response to the representations received. These changes are not considered to be significant so do not change the outcome of this assessment.
- 5.3. In relation to the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken, the assessment set out in section 3 concludes that the SPD will not have significant effects on the environment. Therefore, a full assessment is not required.
- 5.4. In relation to the requirement for Habitats Regulations Assessment to be undertaken, the screening assessment set out in section 4 concludes that the SPD will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any internationally designated sites either on its own or in combination with any other plans. Therefore, an appropriate assessment is not required.

Appendix A - Internationally Designated Sites

Three European sites are within or partly within Huntingdonshire and a further 5 are within 15km. Additionally the Wash is linked by waterways downstream:

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	Ramsar Sites
Portholme		
Fenland		Woodwalton Fen
Ouse Washes	Ouse Washes	Ouse Washes
Orton Pits		
Nene Washes	Nene Washes	Nene Washes
Eversden and Wimpole Woods		
Barnack Hills and Holes		
	The Wash	The Wash

Portholme SAC is within Huntingdonshire, close to the town of Huntingdon. It is designated as a SAC for its lowland hay meadows. It is the largest surviving traditionally managed meadow in the UK, with 91ha of alluvial flood meadow (7% of the total UK resource). There has been a long history of favourable management and very little of the site has suffered from agricultural improvement, and so it demonstrates good conservation of structure and function. It also supports a small population of fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*.

Ouse Washes SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar. The SAC was designated for its spined loach *Cobitis taenia* populations within the River Ouse catchment. The Counter Drain, with its clear water and abundant macrophytes, is particularly important, and a healthy population of spined loach is known to occur. The SAC only covers the Counter Drain and not adjacent land designated as SPA and Ramsar. The SPA is a functional washland, with extensive winter flooding and traditional forms of agricultural management, including grazing and mowing of permanent grassland and rotational ditch clearance. It supports a great number of breeding and wintering wetland birds. The Ramsar site supports nationally and internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl and nationally important numbers of breeding waterfowl. It is also of note for the large area of unimproved neutral grassland communities which it holds, and for the richness of the aquatic flora within the associated watercourses.

Fenland SAC falls partly within Huntingdonshire continuing to the north east. The SAC and Ramsar site is made up of three component Sites of Special Scientific Interest, which are Woodwalton Fen SSSI, Chippenham Fen SSSI and Wicken Fen SSSI. The part of Fenland SAC within Huntingdonshire is Woodwalton Fen SSSI. Fenland SAC contains one of the most extensive examples of the tall herb-rich East Anglian fen-meadow. All parts of the SAC hold large areas of calcareous fens, with a long and well-documented history of regular management.

Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site occupies a similar area to Woodwalton Fen SSSI. The site is within an area that is one of the remaining parts of East Anglia which has not been drained.

The fen is near natural and has developed where peat-digging took place in the 19th century. The site has several types of open fen and swamp communities. The site supports fen violet *Viola persicifolia* and fen wood-rush *Luzula pallidula* and a large number of wetland invertebrates including 20 British Red Data Book species. Aquatic beetles, flies and moths are particularly well represented.

Orton Pits SAC are lakes that filled old brick clay workings near Peterborough. The Qualifying Features for this SAC are: the Annex I habitat 3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters and benthic vegetation of *Char* spp.; Calcium -rich nutrient poor lakes, lochs and pools; and the Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*. Like any lakes of this type they will be vulnerable to any pollution but they are isolated from watercourses stemming from Huntingdonshire. There is very little public access.

Nene Washes SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar site. The Qualifying Feature for the SAC is the Spined Loach. The Qualifying Features for the SPA are a suite of wetland bird species. The Nene Washes are just to the north of Huntingdonshire. Some of the streams and waterways of Huntingdonshire flow into the Nene via the Middle Level.

Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC is in South Cambridgeshire to the southeast of St Neots. This site has been designated as a SAC due to the presence of a colony of Barbastelle bats *Barbastella barbastellus*. The woods comprise a mixture of ancient coppice woodland in the Eversden woods and high forest woods likely to be of more recent origin in the Wimpole Woods. The bat colony is present at Wimpole Woods, where the trees are used as a summer maternity roost. Most of the roost sites are within tree crevices. The bats also use the site as a foraging area and some of the woodland is used as a flight path when bats forage outside the site. The Barbastelle bat is one of the UK's rarest mammals. There is public access to the woods.

Barnack Hills and Holes SAC is an area of grassland on old quarry workings immediately adjacent to the village of Barnack, north of Peterborough. The Qualifying Feature for the is the Annex I habitat 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates *Festuco-Brometalia* (important orchid sites). Barnack has the largest population of the *Orchis anthropophora* (L.) All. (Man Orchid) in the UK. The proximity of the site to the village makes it vulnerable to visitor pressures and possibly airborne pollutants.

The Wash SPA/ Ramsar site is considered because, although it is more than 15km from Huntingdonshire, it is downstream of the district for both the River Great Ouse and the River Nene. The channels and mud/ sandbanks between them shift over time and this is partly related to the volume of water coming down the rivers. These flows are predominantly linked to the weather but the impacts of urban areas on flows can be noticeable.

Appendix B - Relevant planning policy documents for consideration of combined effects

Cambridgeshire County Council

Relevant Plan	Brief overview and outline of policy	Comments
<p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021).</p>	<p>The Minerals and Waste Local Plan sets the framework for all minerals and waste developments until 2036. It sets out policies to guide mineral and waste management development and will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure a steady supply of minerals (construction materials e.g., sand and gravel) to supply the growth that is planned for the area • enable us to have new modern waste management facilities, to manage our waste in a much better way than landfill <p>It will be used by developers when putting forward proposals and by councils when considering planning applications.</p> <p>The Local Plan makes strategic allocations for long-term mineral and waste management development at Block Fen/Langwood Fen near Mepal. Designations such as Mineral Safeguarding Areas are also made within the Local Plan and shown on the Policies Map. This will ensure, for example, that consultation takes place between the County Council as Mineral Planning Authority and district/city councils when development is proposed on mineral bearing land. The aim is to avoid the county's finite mineral resource being unknowingly or unnecessarily sterilised.</p>	<p>The SPD does not specifically support this plan. The SPD will provide additional guidance for minerals and waste development proposals where they may impact on the landscape, but this is considered to be very limited. As such it is not likely to cause any significant effects in combination.</p>

Huntingdonshire District Council

Relevant Plan	Brief overview and outline of policy	Comments
Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019)	The Local Plan to 2036 sets out the spatial distribution and strategy towards development within the district up to 2036. It allocates sites to meet the objectively assessed needs of the district and provides detailed strategic and non-strategic policies to deliver the vision and objectives of the Plan of supporting a diverse, thriving economy; providing sufficient infrastructure to support healthy communities; meeting the needs of a changing population; and working with our climate and landscape.	The SPD supports this plan. The plan was subject to full appropriate assessment and detailed SEA and sustainability appraisal. As such it is not likely to cause any significant effects in combination.
Made Neighbourhood Plans of Buckden (2021), Bury (2021), Godmanchester (2017), Houghton & Wyton (2018), Huntingdon (2019) and St Neots (2016)	These made neighbourhood plans are in conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and consistent with national policy. They set out a more localised approach towards development for their respective areas.	The SPD does not directly support these neighbourhood plans, but the guidance provided within the SPD assists in meeting common aims towards the landscape and townscape of neighbourhood plan policies. As such it is not likely to cause any significant effects in combination.
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD (2007)	This SPD provides guidance on the landscape features and considerations for the district and an assessment of the townscape characteristics of the market towns of Huntingdonshire.	This document will be superseded by the revised Landscape and Townscape SPD, once adopted.
Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017)	This SPD provides detailed design guidance to shape development proposals to provide sustainable, high quality, accessible and integrated design across the district.	The SPD complements the guidance within the Design Guide.
Huntingdonshire Conservation Character Assessments	These documents provide detailed assessment of the history, features and character of Huntingdonshire's conservation areas.	The SPD complements the guidance within the various Conservation Area Character Statements.
Huntingdonshire Wind Energy Developments SPD (2014)	The SPD was produced to help with the process of determining planning applications for wind turbines development.	The SPD identifies the opportunities of sensitively integrating renewable energy options within development proposals and existing urban areas. It does not identify

Relevant Plan	Brief overview and outline of policy	Comments
		areas for wind farm development and is clear that if any were to come forward that landscape considerations are a priority. As such it is not likely to cause any significant effects in combination.
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)	This SPD provides guidance that applies all Cambridgeshire authorities providing a consistent approach to flooding and drainage matters in determining planning applications. It also provides detailed guidance on undertaking the sequential test and incorporating sustainable drainage measures.	As such it is not likely to cause any significant effects in combination.
Huntingdonshire Developer Contributions SPD (2011) and updated costs (2019/2020)	This SPD was produced to support the process of setting out how infrastructure requirements will be sought through planning obligations (currently CIL and Section 106s).	As such it is not likely to cause any significant effects in combination.

Other plans and programmes

Relevant Plan	Brief overview and outline of policy	Comments
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Biodiversity Action Plans	This is made up of a number of Biodiversity Action Plans relating to Habitats and Species. They contain objectives for improving the sustainability of priority habitats and species in farmland, grassland, wetlands, woodlands, and cities, towns and villages and contain broad targets for creating or expanding new habitat.	There are likely to be some positive beneficial effects in combination.
Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature': A Vision for the Natural Future of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough in 2050 (2019)	The target is to double the area of rich wildlife habitats and green space in Cambridgeshire from 8.5% to 17% by 2050.	There are likely to be some positive beneficial effects in combination.
Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)	The provision of green infrastructure is identified as a key priority for the successful implementation of sustainable growth.	There are likely to be some positive beneficial effects in combination.

Relevant Plan	Brief overview and outline of policy	Comments
Great Fen Masterplan (2010)	The Masterplan contains detailed advice on preferred proposals within the area that balance tourism and nature conservation requirements.	There are likely to be some positive beneficial effects in combination.

Appendix C - Consultation Responses

All statutory bodies (Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England) were consulted on the draft SPD and on the draft screening report. Responses were received from Historic England and Natural England (see below).

Historic England response



Ms Natalie Elworthy
Huntingdonshire District Council
Development Services
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon, Cambs
PE29 3TN

Direct Dial: 01223 582775

Our ref: PL00760622

14 December 2021

Dear Ms Elworthy

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion

Thank you for consulting Historic England about the above Screening Opinion.

In terms of our area of interest, given the nature of the SPD, we would concur with your assessment that the document is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects and will simply provide additional guidance on existing Policies contained within a Adopted Development Plan Document which has already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal/SEA. As a result, we would endorse the Authority's conclusions that it is not necessary to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment of this particular SPD.

The views of the other three statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

We make no comment on the HRA screening as it is outside of our remit.

If you have any queries about this matter or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Mack
Historic Environment Planning Adviser, Planning Group

Natural England response

Dear Natalie Elworthy,

Our Ref: 376897

Huntingdonshire Local Plan - Revised Draft Landscape and Townscape SPD

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.

Natural England agrees with the conclusions of the SEA & HRA Screening Report for the Revised Draft Landscape and Townscape SPD.

Should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment, then in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, please consult Natural England again.

Yours sincerely,

Dominic Rogers
Consultations Team
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Hornbeam House, Electra Way
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