

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the submission version of the
Neighbourhood Plan

Great Staughton Parish Council

November 2024

Quality information

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Table of Contents

SEA Summary Note	i
Non-Technical Summary	x
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Local Plan Context and Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan.....	5
3. What is the scope of the SEA?	7
Summary of SEA scoping.....	7
Key sustainability issues	10
SEA Framework	14
4. Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives Through the SEA.....	17
Defining Reasonable Alternatives	17
Housing Numbers to Deliver Through the GSNP	17
Consideration of Potential Site Options.....	17
Assessment of shortlisted sites through the SEA.....	19
SEA site assessment findings	24
Summary of Appraisal Findings.....	40
Developing the preferred approach.....	41
5. Appraisal of the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan	43
Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan Policies	43
Approach to the Appraisal	44
Biodiversity.....	44
Climate Change (Including Flood Risk).....	45
Community Wellbeing and Transport	47
Historic Environment.....	49
Landscape.....	50
Conclusions at this current stage	51
6. What are the next steps?	54
Appendix A : Context Review and Baseline	56

SEA Summary Note

Overview of plan making / SEA work to date

Key deliverables

Documents produced as part of the SEA process to date includes:

- The SEA Scoping Report (January 2024), which contained information about the neighbourhood area's environment and community.
- The SEA Environmental Report (June 2024), which identified, described and evaluated the likely effects of the Neighbourhood Plan and alternatives.

Purpose of this document

Regulation 14 consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan was completed between September and November 2023. Whilst Huntingdonshire District Council concluded that an SEA was not required (within their SEA Screening Opinion), Historic England requested SEA given the potential for likely significant effects to the historic environment associated with the policies and proposals within the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA Regulations outline that the Environmental Report should accompany the pre-submission version of the plan (as consulted on). On this basis, the Neighbourhood Group completed an additional consultation on the SEA Environmental Report between June and July 2024. The Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan was available to view alongside the additional consultation on the SEA. The Neighbourhood Plan has since been updated to reflect the responses received at Regulation 14 consultation and the responses received on the SEA consultation.

This Environmental Report accompanies the submission version of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan and considers the implications of the revisions to the Neighbourhood Plan for the SEA findings previously presented in the Regulation 14 version of the Environmental Report. This includes relating to the potential for any likely significant effects that may arise as part of the revisions.

The SEA Environmental Report which was prepared for the Regulation 14 version of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan has been revisited to reflect the revisions made to the Neighbourhood Plan policies. The updated document is presented below. Where appropriate, the SEA findings have been updated to reflect the revisions to the Neighbourhood Plan policies (as discussed below). A proportionate approach has been undertaken to reflect the scope of the revisions.

Appraising the updates to the Neighbourhood Plan

Methodology

The updates to the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan have been screened for likely significant effects. The purpose of this screening exercise is to establish whether the proposed updates are likely to lead to significant effects in relation to the findings previously presented in the Regulation 14 version of the Environmental Report, which should then be appraised in more detail.

The focus of the screening is on the proposed updates to the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan; however, explicit consideration is also given to the effects of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan as updated (i.e., the cumulative effects of the updates and the rest of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan as submitted).

Findings of the screening exercise

The table below presents the findings of the screening of the updates to the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan.

Update (Policy ref)	Focus (changes in relation to...)	Screening in?	Rationale
G SNP1	A change of wording from “small windfall” to “windfall”.	No	The revision does not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the policy.
G SNP2	A change of wording from “Within the Built-Up Area Boundary, minor development proposals and the two allocations for a GP / NHS healthcare facility at Brook Farm and housing at The Green...” to “Within the Built-Up Area Boundary, infill development for up to 2 dwellings, windfall development appropriate to the scale of the village, a GP / NHS healthcare facility at Brook Farm and housing at The Green...”.	No	The addition of infill development for up to two homes provides specific detail on what is meant by ‘minor development’, as stipulated in the Regulation 14 policy. The update does not constitute a change in the overall aim and focus of this policy.
G SNP2	A change of wording from “Development proposals outside of the Built-Up Area Boundary will only be supported where there is material evidence of a local community need, a need that would be met by the proposal; or where the proposal complies with requirements of other national or local policies”	No	The revisions do not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the policy.

Update (Policy ref)	Focus (changes in relation to...)	Screening in?	Rationale
	<p>to</p> <p>“Development proposals outside of the Built-Up Area Boundary will only be supported where there is material evidence of a local community need that would be met by the proposal; or where the proposal complies with requirements of other national or local policies or sites that are allocated as part of a strategic policy in the Adopted Local Plan”.</p>		
G SNP2	<p>A change of wording from “All development should demonstrate that there is, or will be, sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all the necessary requirements arising from the development”</p> <p>to</p> <p>“Development Proposals will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that there is, or will be, sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all the necessary requirements arising from the development”.</p>	No	The revisions do not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the policy.
G SNP3	<p>The criteria have been updated (slightly reworded), and two additional points have been added: “Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment and mitigation strategy, demonstrating that all flood risk, both on the site and elsewhere, can be managed safely over the lifetime of the development, considering the impact of climate change to the satisfaction of the</p>	No	<p>The revisions do not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the G SNP and the policy.</p> <p>Whilst the updated policy provisions would have positive effects for the ‘climate change (including flood risk)’ SEA theme, this would not change the</p>

Update (Policy ref)	Focus (changes in relation to...)	Screening in?	Rationale
	<p>Environment Agency, Local Lead Flood Authority and the District Council”</p> <p>and</p> <p>“Safeguard the amenity of residential occupiers by ensuring a satisfactory distance between new dwellings and the sewage pumping station in consultation with Anglian Water”.</p>		<p>overall conclusions of the assessment findings.</p>
G SNP4	<p>Slight rewording and more detail provided for existing criteria, and additional criteria have been added.</p> <p>Updated criteria - “provide a site-specific flood risk assessment and mitigation strategy, demonstrating that the surface water flow path across the site is maintained and all flood risk, both on the site and elsewhere, can be managed safely over the lifetime of the development, considering the impact of climate change to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, Local Lead Flood Authority and the District Council”.</p> <p>Additional criteria: “Finished floor levels of all dwellings must be at least 300mm above existing ground levels unless demonstrated in the flood mitigation strategy that such measures are not required”.</p> <p>Additional criteria: “safeguard a suitable access for the maintenance of foul drainage infrastructure”.</p>	No	<p>The revisions do not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the G SNP and the policy.</p> <p>Whilst the updated policy provisions would have positive effects for the ‘climate change (including flood risk)’ and ‘historic environment’ SEA themes, this would not change the overall conclusions of the assessment findings.</p>

Update (Policy ref)	Focus (changes in relation to...)	Screening in?	Rationale
	Additional criteria: “provide an archaeological evaluation secured by condition on any planning consent”.		
GSNP8	Change of wording from “Development on this site will not be acceptable unless consistent with national policy for Green Belts and where it would support the use of the site as a Recreation Ground” to “Development proposals on this site will not be supported unless they are consistent with national policy for Green Belts and where it would support the use of the site as a Recreation Ground.”	No	The revisions do not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the policy.
GSNP11	Slight rewording to the policy. An additional site of valued wildlife and biodiversity value added, and one of the sites has had a name change (but no changes to the boundaries). A section has been removed and replaced with the following: “As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals (except householder applications) must provide clear and robust evidence setting a BNG implementation and management strategy securing the BNG for a period of 10 years from the commencement of the development”.	No	The revisions do not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the policy. Whilst the updated policy provisions would have positive effects for the ‘biodiversity’ SEA theme, this would not change the overall conclusions of the assessment findings.

Update (Policy ref)	Focus (changes in relation to...)	Screening in?	Rationale
G SNP12	Minor rewording of some sections. A section has been removed and replaced with “Proposals that incorporate latest best practice in energy conservation will be supported where such measures are an integral element of the design of the buildings and minimise any impacts on the buildings or their surroundings”.	No	<p>The revisions do not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the G SNP and the policy.</p> <p>Whilst the updated policy provisions would have positive effects for the ‘climate change (including flood risk)’ SEA theme, this would not change the overall conclusions of the assessment findings.</p>
G SNP15	<p>Slight rewording from “For minor proposals, applicants will be expected to provide, through proportionate information, details of its surface water drainage proposals”</p> <p>to</p> <p>“For other proposals other than major development, applicants will be expected to provide, through proportionate information, details of its surface water drainage proposals”. Policy contents have also been reordered.</p>	No	<p>The revisions do not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the policy.</p>
G SNP16	Renamed policy from ‘Walkable Neighbourhoods’ to ‘Walkable and Cycle Neighbourhoods’. The policy is updated to reflect this by adding reference to new cycle path connections and cycle links. Additionally, the policy has been reworded slightly from to read “Where a development generates additional movement of residents, workers, shoppers),	No	<p>The revisions do not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the policy.</p> <p>Whilst the updated policy provisions would have positive effects for the ‘community wellbeing and transportation’ SEA theme, this would not change the overall</p>

Update (Policy ref)	Focus (changes in relation to...)	Screening in?	Rationale
	and where fair and reasonably related to the proposed development, it should take every available opportunity, to...".		conclusions of the assessment findings.
GSNP17	A slight change of wording from "All highways work in or in the vicinity of the Great Staughton Conservation Areas must be sensitively designed and seek to conserve or enhance the significance of individual heritage assets as well as the Conservation Areas" to "All highways work in or in the vicinity of the Great Staughton Conservation Areas, required to mitigate the impact of a development, must be sensitively designed and seek to conserve or enhance the significance of individual heritage assets as well as the Conservation Areas".	No	The revisions do not constitute any significant changes to the overall aim and focus of the policy. Whilst the updated policy provisions would have positive effects for the 'historic environment' SEA theme, this would not change the overall conclusions of the assessment findings.

Screening conclusions

The SEA Regulations require the SEA process to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan and alternatives.

The screening of the updates has concluded that **the submission version of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan would not have any additional significant effects to those presented in the SEA Environmental Report on the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan.**

In light of the above, in association with the requirements of the SEA Regulations, further detailed assessment work is not required to explore the implications of the updates to the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan.

Summary of the preferred approach for the Neighbourhood Plan

The GSNP supports an approach which seeks to deliver sustainable development which is sensitive to the environmental constraints within the neighbourhood area, and which is intended to meet specific housing requirements or other community objectives. On this basis, the GSNP takes forward the following two sites as Neighbourhood Plan allocations:

- Site NP1 'Brook Farmyard, The Highway' (see Policy GSNP3)
- Site NP4 'Land south of 29 The Green, Great Staughton' (see Policy GSNP4)

The preferred approach for the Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by the various surveys and evidence base documents prepared to support the Neighbourhood Plan (to date), responses from community consultation events, and the SEA findings. Further details on the preferred approach are presented in the Non-Technical Summary and the main body of the Environmental Report (presented below).

The Great Staughton Parish Council state the following:

“The Parish Council concluded that the site at Brook Farm is the only site that offered the potential for a new GP Surgery / NHS health facility albeit there are a number of constraints that need to be addressed to ensure that the development is brought forward in a way which conserves and enhances the nearby heritage and landscape assets.

“The Parish Council also considered the site to the south of 29 The Green to sit within the built-up part of the settlement more appropriately, particularly given the more recent Community Land Trust Housing at Jewell Close and have significantly less impact upon the surrounding countryside than other proposals put forward.

“Therefore, the two allocations to meet the needs of the Parish are proposed at Brook Farm, The Highway as part of a wider development which will bring forward a new GP Surgery and NHS health facility and a further housing allocation at to the south of 29 The Green.”

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Non-Technical Summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as ‘the GSNP’). This process is required by the SEA Regulations. Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties.

The purpose of the assessment is to help avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the GSNP and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the GSNP and the quality of life of residents.

What is the GSNP?

The GSNP has been prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Purpose of this SEA Environmental Report

This Environmental Report is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (published December 2023), which included information about the neighbourhood area’s environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe, and evaluate the likely significant effects of the GSNP and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the GSNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans, and programmes.
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues for the area.
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the GSNP has been assessed.
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the GSNP.
- The likely significant effects of the GSNP.
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the GSNP; and
- The next steps for the GSNP and accompanying SEA process.

Consideration of reasonable alternatives for the GSNP

Housing Numbers to Deliver Through the GSNP

In accordance with paragraph 66 and 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), HDC have supplied the Parish Council with an indicative housing requirement figure of 60 dwellings for the period between 2011 and 2036.

Monitoring data up to 31 March 2023 shows that there has been a total of 25 dwellings completed in the parish between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2023. There are a further five homes with planning permission. On this basis, approximately 30 of the 60 homes needed to meet the indicative housing requirement have already been met.

The GSNP is therefore planning to bring forward allocations to satisfy the residual indicative requirement of 30 homes during the plan period (up to 2036), and the group were keen to consider where growth could be delivered. This is discussed below.

Consideration of Potential Site Options

Initially, a 'call for sites' process was completed between August to October 2022 which invited site submissions for various uses. This included sites to support the provision of a community hall, NHS services and training services, as well as affordable housing, retirement homes, private housing, and small scale commercial units.

Eight sites were submitted in response to the Call for Sites and a further two were identified through the most recently available Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)¹ completed by Huntingdonshire District Council in December 2017. Therefore, a total of ten sites were considered for further assessment.

An independent and objective assessment process of the ten sites was undertaken, with the findings presented in a Site Options and Assessment (SOA) Report (May 2023). The purpose of the assessment was to establish whether the sites are suitable, available, and deliverable for a potential Neighbourhood Plan allocation in accordance with national planning guidance. The [SOA Report](#) contributes to the evidence base for the GSNP.

The assessment concluded that none of the sites are considered to be free of any substantive constraints and therefore immediately suitable, available, and achievable for a Neighbourhood Plan allocation.

A total of five sites were considered to be potentially suitable, available, and achievable for a Neighbourhood Plan allocation either in full or in part, and subject to the resolution or mitigation of identified constraints.

¹ Huntingdonshire District Council (2017): [List of Supporting Documents for the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 - HOUS/02: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \(HELAA\)](#)

The five sites identified as potentially suitable for housing allocation in the SOA Report are listed in **Table NTS1** below and have been taken forward for further consideration through the SEA process.

Table NTS1: Shortlisted sites considered through the SEA process

SEA Site ID	Name of Site, Address	Site size (hectares) ²
Site NP1	Brook Farmyard, The Highway	0.8
Site NP4	Land south of 29 The Green, Great Staughton	0.71
Site NP5	Land between 20 Cage Lane and Avery Hill, Great Staughton	0.4
Site NP7	Site is located on Perry Road /B661	0.5
Site NP8	Perry Road / B661, Great Staughton	0.67

Assessment of shortlisted sites through the SEA

To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the GSNP, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at each site.

In this context, the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping. This SEA site assessment was undertaken separately to the SOA undertaken on behalf of the Neighbourhood Group.

The locations of the five sites considered through the SEA site assessment process are presented in the figure below. **Tables 4.2 to 4.6** within the main body of the Environmental Report presents the detailed findings of the assessment and provide an indication of each site’s sustainability performance in relation to the five themes which have been scoped-in to the SEA.

Sources of information to support the appraisal has included (amongst others): Ordnance Survey maps, MAGIC Interactive Map,³ the Environment Agency’s Flood Risk Maps for England,⁴ Natural England’s Agricultural Land Classification maps,⁵ Google Earth,⁶ reports and interactive mapping layers available on Huntingdonshire District Council’s webpages,⁷ the Cambridgeshire HER,⁸ and baseline studies provided by the Neighbourhood Group (including sequential testing for the sites⁹).

² Represents total site size and not necessarily the total developable area.

³ MAGIC (2021): [MAGiC Interactive Map](#)

⁴ GOV.UK (2021): [Get flood risk information for planning in England](#)

⁵ Natural England (2021): [Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps](#)

⁶ Google (2021): [Google Earth](#)

⁷ Huntingdonshire District Council (2024): [Tree Preservation](#)

⁸ Heritage Gateway (2024): [Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record](#)

⁹ Cambridge Acre (2024): [Working Draft Only - Sequential Test Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan](#)



Figure NTS1: Shortlisted site options considered through the SEA

Summary of Appraisal Findings

A summary of the findings is presented in **Table NTS2** below and the accompanying paragraphs. This provides an indication of how the sites have performed in relation to each of the SEA themes.

Table NTS2: Summary of SEA site assessments

Site	Biodiversity	Climate Change (inc. Flood Risk)	Community Wellbeing and Transportation	Historic Environment	Landscape
NP1	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Yellow
NP4	Yellow	Red	Green	Cyan	Cyan
NP5	Cyan	Cyan	Red	Yellow	Red
NP7	Cyan	Red	Green	Yellow	Red
NP8	Red	Red	Cyan	Cyan	Red
Key					
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Red	Likely positive effect		Green
Neutral/no effect		Yellow	Uncertain effect		Cyan

The assessment findings conclude that **Site NP1 and Site NP4 are the most favourable site options with respect to the biodiversity theme**, primarily given the absence of any designated ecological sites or any priority habitats which contribute to wider ecological networks. **Site NP8 is the least well performing site option** given the potential impacts to an area of deciduous woodland priority habitat if brought forward for development.

With respect to climate change mitigation, it is recognised that all sites perform similarly in this respect. This is primarily given that all sites are within relative proximity to the village centre, with development potentially facilitating opportunities to enhance connections and accessibility to public transport via public rights of way (limiting emissions from private vehicles). However, growth within the neighbourhood area will result in an increase in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions during the plan period.

In terms of climate change adaptation, **all site options are within Flood Zone 1 and have a relatively low risk of fluvial flooding. Surface water flood risk issues are prevalent across sites NP1, NP4, NP7 and NP8**, with potential impacts dependent on the extent to which suitable drainage measures are incorporated into

the design of any schemes which come forward. Sequential testing for the sites is ongoing.

The extent to which the sites have the potential to deliver positive outcomes for the local community depend on several factors, including:

- Potential to contribute positively to residual housing needs (including affordable homes).
- Potential to enhance accessibility and connectivity to local amenities and public transport networks; and
- Potential to integrate with the existing development and surroundings, supporting vitality and social cohesion.

On this basis, Site NP1, Site NP4 and Site NP7 perform most favourably with respect to the community wellbeing and transportation SEA theme.

Great Staughton village is particularly sensitive from a heritage perspective, with several nationally designated listed buildings and scheduled monuments in proximity to the site options. Impacts are dependent (in part) on the design of any proposals which come forward, and it is acknowledged that proposals have the potential to both enhance or detract from the setting of nearby heritage designations and features. However, **Site NP5 and Site NP7 are the least constrained sites from a heritage perspective, given their relative distance from any heritage assets and areas.**

From a landscape perspective, none of the potential site options are constrained by any designated landscapes (e.g., National Parks, National Landscapes) or areas of Green Belt land. However, **local landscape and villagescape character varies between site options, with Site NP1 is the most favourable site option in this respect.** Specifically, this site contains some areas of brownfield land which (in its current form) may detract from the character of the villagescape. It is therefore anticipated that redevelopment at this location may result in villagescape character enhancements. The remaining sites may all alter the existing village form, extending the built environment into the surrounding countryside. **However, impacts to landscape character are most pronounced for Site NP5, Site NP7 and Site NP8.**

Choice of sites taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan

The GSNP supports an approach which seeks to deliver sustainable development which is sensitive to the environmental constraints within the neighbourhood area, and which is intended to meet specific housing requirements or other community objectives. On this basis, the GSNP takes forward the following two sites as Neighbourhood Plan allocations:

- Site NP1 'Brook Farmyard, The Highway' (see Policy GSNP3)
- Site NP4 'Land south of 29 The Green, Great Staughton' (see Policy GSNP4)

The choice of site allocations has been informed by the findings of the site assessment undertaken for the GSNP, community consultation, and engagement

events. With respect to the flood risk constraints at the proposed site allocations, the findings of the sequential test concluded that:

- The flood risk issues associated with Site NP1 are contained to the north of the site, and that if the site were to be allocated that criteria should be included applied to ensure that a suitable surface water drainage strategy is implemented.
- Although Site NP4 has a higher degree of flood risk, it is considered the most appropriate for residential development. The Great Staughton Parish Council will need to ensure development can be made safe throughout its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere before allocating the site in the GSNP.

The site-specific policies within the GSNP for the proposed site allocations (see Policies GSNP3 – GSNP4) contain further detail with respect to design and mitigation considerations which aim to address any potential constraints to development. These aspects are further discussed within the plan appraisal section of the Environmental Report (see **Chapter 5** of this report).

The GSNP also states:

“The Parish Council concluded that the site at Brook Farm is the only site that offered the potential for a new GP Surgery / NHS health facility albeit there are a number of constraints that need to be addressed to ensure that the development is brought forward in a way which conserves and enhances the nearby heritage and landscape assets.

“The Parish Council also considered the site to the south of 29 The Green to sit within the built-up part of the settlement more appropriately, particularly given the more recent Community Land Trust Housing at Jewell Close and have significantly less impact upon the surrounding countryside than other proposals put forward.

“Therefore, the two allocations to meet the needs of the Parish are proposed at Brook Farm, The Highway as part of a wider development which will bring forward a new GP Surgery and NHS health facility and a further housing allocation at to the south of 29 The Green.”

It is recognised that the total number of new homes proposed through these allocations is 20 homes, slightly short of the residual target of 30 homes for the neighbourhood area. In this respect, the GSNP supports limited windfall development on infill sites to contribute to local needs (see Policy GSNP1) and the community is also committed to working with local landowner / developer for Site NP1 to determine whether the site could accommodate a proportion of housing as part of a mixed-use scheme.

Appraisal of the submission version of the GSNP

The submission version of the GSNP presents 19 planning policies for guiding development in the neighbourhood area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering.

Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the Environmental Report presents the findings of the assessment as a commentary of effects under each SEA theme.

Chapter 5 within the main body of the Environmental Report presents the detailed findings of the appraisal. The conclusions are presented below.

Overall, no potential significant negative or positive effects have been identified through the policy appraisal of the GSNP. However, the policy appraisal has identified a number of broad positive effects associated with all five SEA themes. This reflects the strong focus that the GSNP has on supporting sustainable development which is sensitive to the environmental constraints within the neighbourhood area, and which is intended to meet specific housing requirements or other community objectives. With specific reference to each SEA theme:

Positive effects are considered likely in relation to biodiversity. Policies encourage proposals to ensure development is sensitive to the surrounding natural environment and local character, taking into consideration ways in which the environment and biodiversity can be enhanced, deliver significant net gains in excess of the statutory requirement, and avoid impacts. This will help to improve the ecological value of the neighbourhood area.

Neutral effects are considered likely in respect to climate change and flood risk. The GSNP has the potential to lead to positive effects through supporting proposals that promote the inclusion of low carbon design solutions, encourage sustainable and active travel, and proactively respond to the potential impacts of climate change (particularly with respect to flood risk) through the implementation of appropriate drainage solutions. However, it is recognised that new development would lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions due to an increase in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area.

With further respect to flood risk, the SEA recommends the site allocation policy (Policy GSNP4) is enhanced to encourage applications to be accompanied by a proportionate flood risk assessment which considers the potential impacts of any development from all potential sources of flood risk. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that the provisions of Policy GSNP15 outlines several measures which seek to reduce overall flood risk in the neighbourhood area from new development. The site allocated under Policy GSNP4 has a very low risk of fluvial flooding but is at risk of surface water flooding. The policy sets requirements for managing flood risk on the site – including a flood risk assessment and implemented a sustainable drainage strategy. **The site will be subject to the Sequential Test set out in national policy.**

The assessment has concluded that the GSNP is also likely to have **positive effects in terms of community wellbeing and transportation**, due to the plan bringing forward sites for development that will positively contribute towards local need, and in sustainable locations with respect to access and connectivity to community infrastructure and public transport options. Furthermore, the policies have a strong design focus which should help to encourage the delivery of high-quality living environments within the neighbourhood area. Additionally, the plan sets out policies that will work to ensure community wellbeing is maintained and enhanced through development by safeguarding areas of green space provision and includes stipulations that will improve the public realm to the benefit of the community.

Positive effects are also considered likely in relation to the historic environment. The site allocation policies include provisions that will help screen development from surrounding historic environment features and include design stipulations which will ensure development is in keeping with the surrounding historic environment by using similar design choices, features, and layouts. Furthermore, the wider plan policies work to protect features contributing to the environment, encouraging proposals to respect the relationship between the natural and built environment and facilitating public realm improvements. As such, the GSNP policies work well to help maintain and enhance the setting of the historic environment of the neighbourhood area.

It is also expected that the GSNP will bring forward **positive effects for the local landscape** through design stipulations included in the site allocation policies that help to ensure important features within and in proximity to the sites are fully considered, maintained, and enhanced through development (including veteran trees). This conclusion also reflects the focus of the wider plan policies on supporting the significance of the local landscape and villagescape character and the interrelationship between the natural and built environment.

Monitoring

The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Huntingdonshire District Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Huntingdonshire District Council.

Next steps

This is the version of the SEA Environmental Report which accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Huntingdonshire District Council, for subsequent Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.

If the Independent Examination is favourable, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Huntingdonshire District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for the parish.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment in support of Great Staughton Parish Council's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (henceforth known as the 'GNSP') is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of Huntingdonshire District Council's Local Plan to 2036 (adopted in 2019). Due regard is also given to the emerging Huntingdonshire Local Plan Review.
- 1.4 It is currently anticipated that the GNSP will be submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council later in 2024. Key information relating to the GNSP is presented in **Table 1.1** below.

Table 1.1: Key Facts Relating to the GNSP

Name of Responsible Authority	Great Staughton Parish Council
Title of Plan	Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan ('the GNSP')
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	<p>The GNSP is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with Huntingdonshire's adopted Local Plan, with due regard given to the emerging Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan Review.</p> <p>The GNSP will be used to guide and shape development within the neighbourhood area.</p>
Timescale	To 2036
Area covered by the plan	The neighbourhood area covers the parish of Great Staughton, in Huntingdonshire.

Summary of content	The GSNP will set out a vision, strategy, and range of policies for the neighbourhood area.
Plan contact point	Robert Jewell: Chair - Great Staughton Parish Council Email: gtstaughtonparishchair@outlook.com

SEA screening for the GSNP

- 1.5 A Neighbourhood Plan requires Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, Neighbourhood Plans are more likely to be screened in as requiring an SEA if both the following apply:
- 1) the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in an area with significant environmental constraints, such as, for example, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or large concentrations of heritage assets; and
 - 2) the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate sites for development.¹⁰
- 1.6 SEA screening for the GSNP was completed in September 2023¹¹. Whilst Huntingdonshire District Council concluded that an SEA was not required, Historic England responded to confirm that in their view, an SEA was required. This is given the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) upon the historic environment. Furthermore, the Environment Agency highlighted the surface water flood risk on the proposed allocation at land south of 29 The Green. Natural England considered that significant impacts on the environment and habitats were unlikely but expressed that views of local wildlife organisations should also be sought in determining if an SEA / HRA was required.
- 1.7 In light of this outcome, a proportionate SEA process is being undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).¹²

SEA explained

- 1.8 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the GSNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

¹⁰ DLUHC (February 2022): [Planning Newsletter - Message from Chief Planner](#).

¹¹ Huntingdonshire District Council (2023): [Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report: Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan September 2023](#).

¹² UK Government (2004): [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)

1.9 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:

- i. When deciding on ‘*the scope and level of detail of the information*’ which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues.
- ii. A report (the ‘Environmental Report’) is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e., the draft GSNP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses ‘likely significant effects’ that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

1.10 This ‘Environmental Report’ is concerned with item ‘ii’ above.

Structure of this Environmental Report

1.11 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the GSNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed below with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows.

Table 1.2: Questions that Must be Answered by the SEA Environmental Report to Meet the Regulatory¹³ Requirements

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ¹⁴
What is the plan seeking to achieve?	An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan.
What’s the scope of the SEA?	Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. The relevant environmental protection objectives , established at international or national level. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.

¹³ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

¹⁴ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ¹⁴
What are the key issues and objectives?	Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment.
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?	Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with. The likely significant effects associated with alternatives . Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?	The likely significant effects associated with the submission version of the plan . The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the submission version of the plan .
What happens next?	The next steps for the plan making / SEA process.

2. Local Plan Context and Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

Local Plan context for the GSNP

- 2.1 Located within Huntingdonshire, the GSNP is being prepared in the context of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (adopted in 2019).
- 2.2 The Huntingdonshire Local Plan sets out the long-term planning and land use policies within Huntingdonshire. The Local Plan includes documents referred to as the Development Plan. In this respect, the Development Plan for Huntingdonshire District Council currently includes the following documents:¹⁵
 - Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 - A suite of made neighbourhood plans; and
 - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plans.
- 2.3 In January 2023, Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet agreed to the preparation of a full update to the adopted Local Plan which will set out a plan for how the district will grow over future decades. As per the latest available Local Development Scheme¹⁶ for the District, a preferred options consultation on the emerging Local Plan is scheduled for summer/autumn 2025.
- 2.4 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for Huntingdonshire, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Huntingdonshire, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

Vision, Aims, and Objectives for the GSNP

- 2.5 The vision for the GSNP captures the community's views and aspirations for the neighbourhood area as expressed through the neighbourhood planning process. It forms the basis on which the neighbourhood objectives and proposed policies have been formulated.
- 2.6 The vision is as follows:

'To value, protect and enhance the rural and historical character and community spirit of Great Staughton, ensuring that future development retains the green spaces and vistas, but also provides a sustainable community with appropriate facilities for its residents'

¹⁵ Huntingdonshire District Council (2024): [Huntingdonshire Development Plan](#)

¹⁶ Huntingdonshire District Council (2023): [Local Development Scheme March 2023](#)

2.7 The vision is accompanied by nine strategy objectives grouped into five inter-related themes, as follows:

- Growth and the Future.
- Village Character.
- Climate Change.
- Transport and Connections; and
- Local Facilities, Services and Business.

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Summary of SEA scoping

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: ‘When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies’.
- 3.2 In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England.¹⁷ These authorities were consulted on the scope of the SEA for a period of five weeks between December 2023 and January 2024. No response was received from the Environment Agency.
- 3.3 In light of the possible flood risk concerns associated with some of the available site options within the neighbourhood area, the Scoping Report was also shared with the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA), Cambridgeshire County Council, for their comment.
- 3.4 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out the following information:
 - A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and local plans and strategies relevant to the GSNP.
 - Baseline data against which the GSNP can be assessed.
 - The key sustainability issues for the GSNP; and
 - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the GSNP can be assessed.
- 3.5 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they have informed the SEA process, are summarised overleaf in **Table 3.1**.

¹⁷ In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme’.

Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

Consultation Response	How the Response was Considered and Addressed
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Historic England

Historic Places Adviser (response received on 22nd January 2024)

‘We are pleased to see reference to the advice and methodology contained with Historic England’s various recommended good practice and advice notes which set out the historic environment factors which need to be considered during the Strategic Environmental Assessment or Sustainability Appraisal process, and our recommendations for information you should include.

We would expect a proportionate assessment based on this methodology to be undertaken for any site allocation where there was a potential impact, either positive or negative, on a heritage asset, and the SEA consequently to advise on how any harm should be minimised or mitigated.

We are pleased to see that Great Staughton’s local non-designated heritage assets will be included in the assessment, and the Historic Environment Record has been and will be further consulted at a higher level. In line with Historic England’s advice, we recommend that the HER is consulted rather than the Gateway as this is more likely to be up to date.

In respect of the proposed assessment questions, we would recommend the inclusion of an additional question specifically to consider the Conservation Areas along the lines of ‘...protect and enhance the Great Staughton Conservation Areas’.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local planning 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) in addition, they will be able to advise how any site 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

Comments noted.

The additional assessment question has been incorporated into the SEA Framework.

Potential impacts to the historic environment as of result of GSNP policies and proposals are considered and discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report.

Consultation Response

How the Response was Considered and Addressed

for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

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.'

Natural England

Consultations Team (response received on 24th January 2024)

'Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping request: Natural England has no specific comments to make on the scope of this neighbourhood plan's SEA'

Comment noted.

LLFA

Cambridgeshire County Council Senior SuDS and Flood Risk Officer (response received on 10th January 2024)

'...The Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report submitted includes information on the wider Great Staughton area. However, water environment proposals should be assessed on a site-by-site basis, particularly in areas with substantial surface water flood risk.

Please note, we expect a full flood risk assessment and/or surface water drainage strategy to be submitted to support any planning application.

As part of the surface water strategy, the requirements of any local surface water drainage planning policies must be met, and the recommendations of the relevant Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Management Plan must be considered'.

Comment noted.

Sequential testing for the available site options within the neighbourhood area has been undertaken and contributes to the evidence base for the GSNP.

Potential flood risk impacts associated with GSNP policies and proposals has also been considered through the SEA process, presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report.

3.6 Key baseline information (including the planning policy context review and maps of environmental designations) is presented in **Appendix A**.

3.7 The key sustainability issues identified at scoping, along with the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions, are presented below.

Key sustainability issues

Air Quality

- There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within the neighbourhood area. The latest Annual Status Report (ASR) notes that the main source of air quality issues within Huntingdonshire is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) from vehicle emissions, mostly originating from the A14 and to a lesser extent the A1.
- The GSNP Steering Group note that there are high levels of HGV movements through the village of Great Staughton, which is a source of localised air pollution.
- Due to the absence of any significant air quality issues within the neighbourhood area itself, **the air quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

Biodiversity

- There are no European designated sites for biodiversity conservation within 5 km of the neighbourhood area.
- There is one nationally designated site for biodiversity conservation within the neighbourhood area: Perry Woods SSSI. There are two other SSSI located within 2 km of the neighbourhood area.
- The whole of the neighbourhood area overlaps with either one or multiple SSSI Impact Risk Zones; however, they are not applicable to the types of development likely to come forward during the plan period.
- There are several areas of local biodiversity importance within the neighbourhood area. This includes (but is not limited to), County Wildlife Sites, Birds Meadow, the River Kym, Perry and Agden Woods, roadside verges, hedgerows, and meadows.
- The neighbourhood area is also home to various habitat types identified in the Priority Habitat Inventory, including floodplain grazing marsh, deciduous woodland (including sites of ancient woodland), and lowland fens (see **Figure A3**). Associated with these habitats are also areas of Network Enhancement Zone and Network Expansion Zone 2.

Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)

- Any increases in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area (associated with the delivery of new housing and employment land) has the potential to increase the area's overall greenhouse gas emissions in the neighbourhood area.
- Huntingdonshire District Council formally recognised a climate emergency in February 2023 and has resolved to support local authorities (and, by extension, neighbourhood groups) to help tackle climate change through plan-making where possible.

- The largest sector for CO₂ emissions in 2022 was the Transport sector, contributing 34% to the total emissions in Huntingdonshire.
- The neighbourhood area is mostly located within Flood Zone 1 (less than 0.1% annual probability of river flooding); however, there is a band of land in Flood Zones 2 (between 0.1% – 1% annual probability of river flooding) and 3 (1% or greater probability of annual probability of river flooding), associated with the presence of the River Kym, which intersects with the neighbourhood area across its central belt.
- The neighbourhood area is also at risk of varying levels of surface water flooding, ranging from Very Low (annual chance of flooding of less than 0.1% each year) to High (annual chance of flooding of greater than 3.3% each year). Surface water run-off from development can exacerbate the risk of flooding by increasing the run-off from land to water courses.
- The GSNP should seek to increase the resilience of the neighbourhood area to the effects of climate change by supporting and encouraging adaptation strategies.

Community Wellbeing and Transport

- The neighbourhood area has a modest offer of community services and facilities, with a greater variety of amenities in neighbouring locations.
- As the neighbourhood area is predominantly rural, there is a good supply of local woodland and rivers, many of which can be accessed by the extensive local public footpath network. The neighbourhood area also contains a designated Local Green Space ('The Recreation Ground').
- Housing affordability, and availability of appropriate dwelling types and sizes, is a key local issue identified by the community.
- The main roads within the neighbourhood area are the B645 and the B661, which are both located in the northern half of the neighbourhood area, passing through Great Staughton village. The remaining road network within the neighbourhood area is made up of C roads and unclassified roads.
- Highway safety for pedestrians and cyclists in Great Staughton village is a concern, with issues arising from the types of traffic that pass through the village (including high levels of HGV movements), high traffic volumes, the speed of traffic, inadequate pavements, and junctions.
- The neighbourhood area benefits from the presence of Local Cycle Route HDC7 (which passes through Great Staughton village) and an extensive network of Public Rights of Way (PROW) (including Public Footpaths and Bridleways).
- Public transport options are limited to infrequent bus services to St Neots, Tilbrook, and Huntingdon. There is no train station within the

neighbourhood area, with residents needing to travel to St Neots or Huntingdon to access train links.

- The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium and (potentially) longer term. New development proposals should seek to connect and where possible extend PROW networks to maximise opportunities for active travel.

Historic Environment

- The neighbourhood area contains: one Grade I listed building; one Grade II* listed building; 46 Grade II listed buildings; and five Scheduled Monuments. The neighbourhood area is also home to two Conservation Areas: 'Gt Staughton' and 'Staughton Highway'.
- There are 188 features within the neighbourhood area based on a high-level review of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER).
- The GSNP also identifies six non-designated heritage assets of local importance that it will seek to give protect and safeguard from inappropriate development.
- It will be important to ensure that future development avoids/ minimises impacts upon the historic environment and maximises opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure, to the indirect benefit of heritage settings.
- The design of any new strategic-scale developments needs to be in sympathy with the rural and historical character of the parish.

Landscape

- Great Staughton is not constrained by any designated landscapes (e.g., National Parks, National Landscapes) or areas of Green Belt land.
- Great Staughton sits entirely within the '88 Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands (NE555)' National Character Area (NCA). The NCA profiles list several key characteristics and statements of environmental opportunities for these areas.
- The Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (2022) (SPD)¹⁸ identifies that the entirety of the neighbourhood area is located within the 'Southern Wolds' landscape character area (LCA). The SPD describes the key characteristics, key forces for change, and land management guidelines for the LCA.
- The Great Staughton Landscape & Townscape Assessment (2023) (LTA)¹⁹ identifies the defining characteristics of the neighbourhood area to be the linear settlement pattern of Staughton Highway, the separate identities of its settlements, the many distinctive and far-reaching views

¹⁸ Huntingdonshire District Council (2022): [Landscape and Townscape SPD 2022](#)

¹⁹ Great Staughton Parish Council (2023): [Landscape and Townscape assessment](#)

into and out of the settlements as well as the views across the wider landscape which are enjoyed from the roads and public footpaths. The LTA also identifies a number of locally valued views and splits the neighbourhood area into six distinctive Character Areas.

- There are a range of landscape features present within the neighbourhood area which contribute to the character and quality of the landscape (including trees with Tree Preservation Order [TPO] designations).
- Huntingdonshire District Council have allocated several TPOs within the neighbourhood area in the interest of their amenity and/or nature conservation value. Their location is available to view on the Council's website.²⁰
- There are proposals for a new solar farm (East Park Energy), located within the neighbourhood area.

Land, Soil, and Water Resources

- The provisional Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) data indicates the neighbourhood area is underlain by areas of high-quality agricultural land. To the north of the neighbourhood area, by Great Staughton village, the land is identified as 'Good to Moderate' for agricultural land suitability.
- The southern half of the neighbourhood area contains areas of 'Very Good' land for agricultural purposes. However, in the absence of a detailed ALC assessment it is currently not possible to determine whether the Grade 3 areas can be classified as Grade 3a (i.e., best and most versatile land) or Grade 3b land.
- The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021) (MWLP)²¹, identifies several Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) for Sand and Gravel and Brickclay within the neighbourhood area. This includes one at Great Staughton village, which is almost entirely located within a Sand and Gravel MSA; the western half of the village is also under a Brickclay MSA. The MWLP also notes that there is a consultation area for a Water Recycling Area, to the west of the neighbourhood area.
- Water resources within the neighbourhood area include the River Kym, the River Ouse, and drainage ditches along field margins. There is also Grafham Water in proximity to the north of the neighbourhood area.

3.8 Due to the level of growth which is likely to come forward during the plan period, significant issues related to the Land, Soil, and Water Resources theme are unlikely. Therefore, this topic has **been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process**. It is noted, however, that the minerals

²⁰ Huntingdonshire District Council (2023): [Tree Preservation](#)

²¹ Cambridgeshire County Council (2021): [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan](#)

authority will likely need to be consulted for any planning applications which come forward in the neighbourhood area.

SEA Framework

3.9 The SEA Framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard ‘tests’. Each proposal within the submission version of the GSNP has been assessed consistently using the framework in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: SEA Framework

SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the GSNP
Biodiversity	
Protect and enhance biodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance nationally, and locally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and the links between them? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support habitat restoration or new habitat creation within the identified Network Enhancement or Expansion Zones? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks and the network of open spaces?
Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)	
Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities in the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made by polluting vehicles? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Improve or extend local footpaths, cycle paths or strategic green infrastructure routes? • Increase the number of new development meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Support the transition to electric vehicles?

SEA Objective

Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the GSNP

- Avoid development in areas of higher flood risk?

Community Wellbeing and Transport

Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents and in suitably connected places, supported by the appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure to enable cohesive and inclusive communities.

- Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing?
- Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local needs?
- Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's changing needs?
- Retain and improve the availability, quality, and/ or accessibility of local services and facilities?
- Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities?
- Contribute to improving aspects of deprivation in the neighbourhood area?
- Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing and future residents?

Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

- Support the objectives within the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes?
- Encourage the uptake of active travel opportunities?
- Extend or improve active travel networks?
- Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles to access workplaces outside of the neighbourhood area?
- Improve road safety?
- Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?
- Improve parking facilities?

Historic Environment

Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

- Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings?
- Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings?

SEA Objective

Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the GSNP

- Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Cambridgeshire HER?
 - Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?
 - Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the neighbourhood area?
-

Landscape

Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including green infrastructure corridors.

- Protect and/ or enhance local landscape character and quality of place?
 - Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character?
 - Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place?
 - Protect and extend/ enhance green infrastructure corridors?
 - Protect visual amenity?
 - Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the rural setting, including trees and hedgerows?
-

4. Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives Through the SEA

Introduction

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include...
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
 - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, how the SEA process to date has informed the consideration of different approaches for key elements of the GSNP.

Defining Reasonable Alternatives

- 4.3 Whilst work on the GSNP has been underway for some time, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of work to date, but rather to explain work undertaken to develop and appraise reasonable alternatives.
- 4.4 In the context of the above, this chapter of the Environmental Report presents information on reasonable alternative approaches to addressing key issues that are of central importance to the GSNP.

Housing Numbers to Deliver Through the GSNP

- 4.5 In accordance with paragraph 66 and 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), HDC have supplied the Parish Council with an indicative housing requirement figure of 60 dwellings for the period between 2011 and 2036.
- 4.6 Monitoring data up to 31 March 2023 shows that there has been a total of 25 dwellings completed in the parish between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2023. There are a further five homes with planning permission. On this basis, approximately 30 of the 60 homes needed to meet the indicative housing requirement have already been met.
- 4.7 The GSNP is therefore planning to bring forward allocations to satisfy the residual indicative requirement of 30 homes during the plan period (up to 2036), and the group were keen to consider where growth could be delivered. This is discussed below.

Consideration of Potential Site Options

- 4.8 Initially, a 'call for sites' process was completed between August to October 2022 which invited site submissions for various uses. This included sites to support the provision of a community hall, NHS services and training services,

as well as affordable housing, retirement homes, private housing, and small scale commercial units.

- 4.9 Eight sites were submitted in response to the Call for Sites and a further two were identified through the most recently available Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)²² completed by Huntingdonshire District Council in December 2017. Therefore, a total of ten sites were considered for further assessment.
- 4.10 An independent and objective assessment process of the ten sites was undertaken, with the findings presented in a Site Options and Assessment (SOA) Report (May 2023). The purpose of the assessment was to establish whether the sites are suitable, available, and deliverable for a potential Neighbourhood Plan allocation in accordance with national planning guidance. The [SOA Report](#) contributes to the evidence base for the GSNP.
- 4.11 The assessment concluded that none of the sites are considered to be free of any substantive constraints and therefore immediately suitable, available, and achievable for a Neighbourhood Plan allocation.
- 4.12 A total of five sites were considered to be potentially suitable, available, and achievable for a Neighbourhood Plan allocation either in full or in part, and subject to the resolution or mitigation of identified constraints.
- 4.13 The five sites identified as potentially suitable for housing allocation in the SOA Report are listed in **Table 4.1** below and have been taken forward for further consideration through the SEA process.

Table 4.1: Shortlisted sites considered through the SEA process

SEA Site ID	Name of Site, Address	Site size (hectares) ²³
Site NP1	Brook Farmyard, The Highway	0.8
Site NP4	Land south of 29 The Green, Great Staughton	0.71
Site NP5	Land between 20 Cage Lane and Avery Hill, Great Staughton	0.4
Site NP7	Site is located on Perry Road /B661	0.5
Site NP8	Perry Road / B661, Great Staughton	0.67

²² Huntingdonshire District Council (2017): [List of Supporting Documents for the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 - HOUS/02: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \(HELAA\)](#)

²³ Represents total site size and not necessarily the total developable area.

Assessment of shortlisted sites through the SEA

4.14 To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the GSNP, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at each site.

4.15 In this context, the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping. This SEA site assessment was undertaken separately to the SOA undertaken on behalf of the Neighbourhood Group.

4.16 The locations of the five sites considered through the SEA site assessment process are presented in **Figure 4.1** below. **Tables 4.2 to 4.6** which follow present the findings of the assessment and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the five themes which have been scoped-in to the SEA, as follows:

- Biodiversity.
- Climatic Change (including Flood Risk).
- Community Wellbeing and Transport.
- Historic Environment; and
- Landscape.

4.17 **Table 4.7** provides a summary of these findings.

4.18 Sources of information to support the appraisal has included (amongst others): Ordnance Survey maps, MAGIC Interactive Map,²⁴ the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps for England,²⁵ Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification maps,²⁶ Google Earth,²⁷ reports and interactive mapping layers available on Huntingdonshire District Council's webpages,²⁸ the Cambridgeshire HER,²⁹ and baseline studies provided by the Neighbourhood Group (including sequential testing for the sites)³⁰.

²⁴ MAGIC (2021): [MAGiC Interactive Map](#)

²⁵ GOV.UK (2021): [Get flood risk information for planning in England](#)

²⁶ Natural England (2021): [Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps](#)

²⁷ Google (2021): [Google Earth](#)

²⁸ Huntingdonshire District Council (2024): [Tree Preservation](#)

²⁹ Heritage Gateway (2024): [Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record](#)

³⁰ Cambridge Acre (2024): [Working Draft Only - Sequential Test Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan](#)



Figure 4.1: Shortlisted site options considered through the SEA

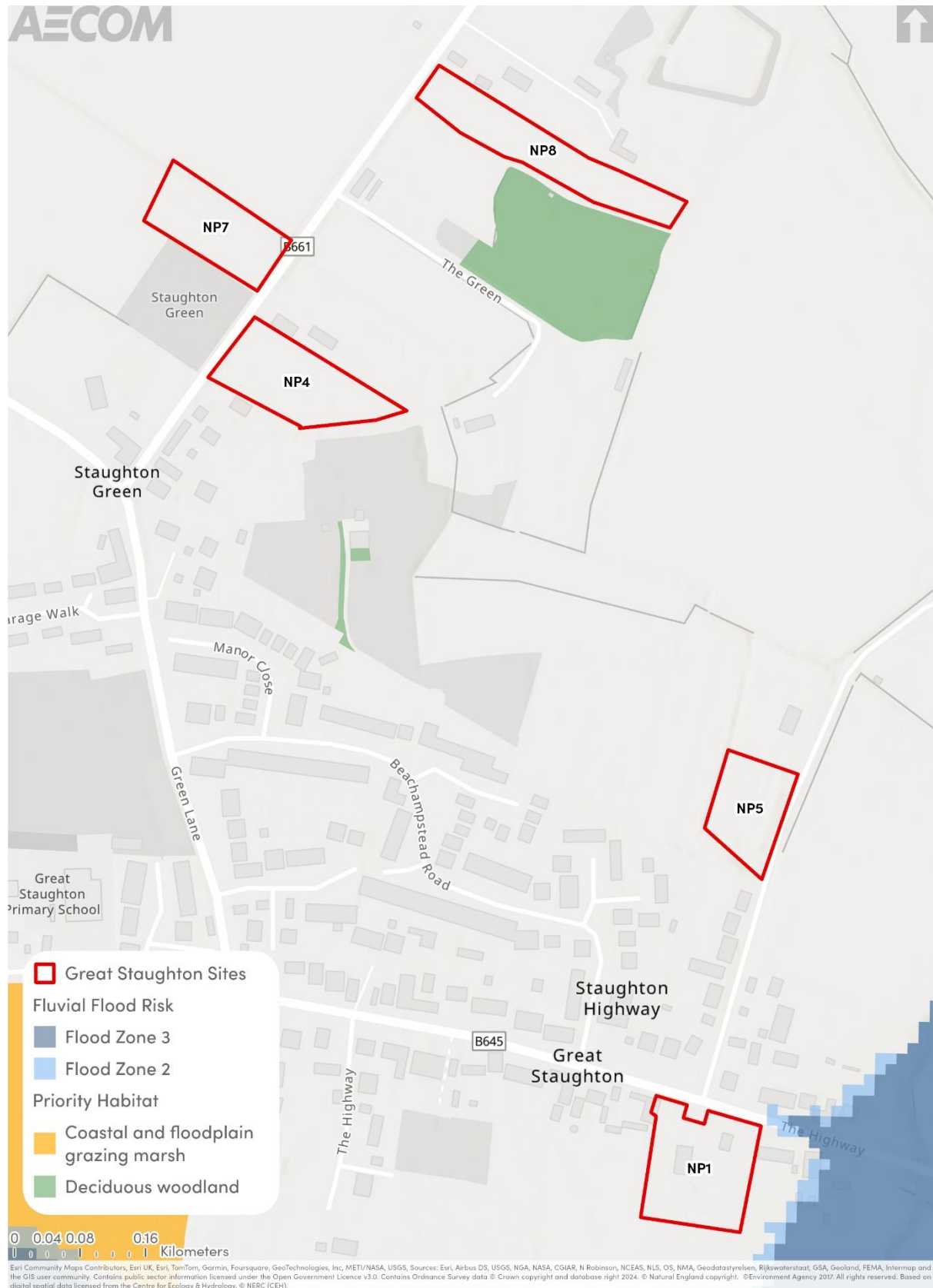


Figure 4.2: Biodiversity and fluvial flood risk considerations

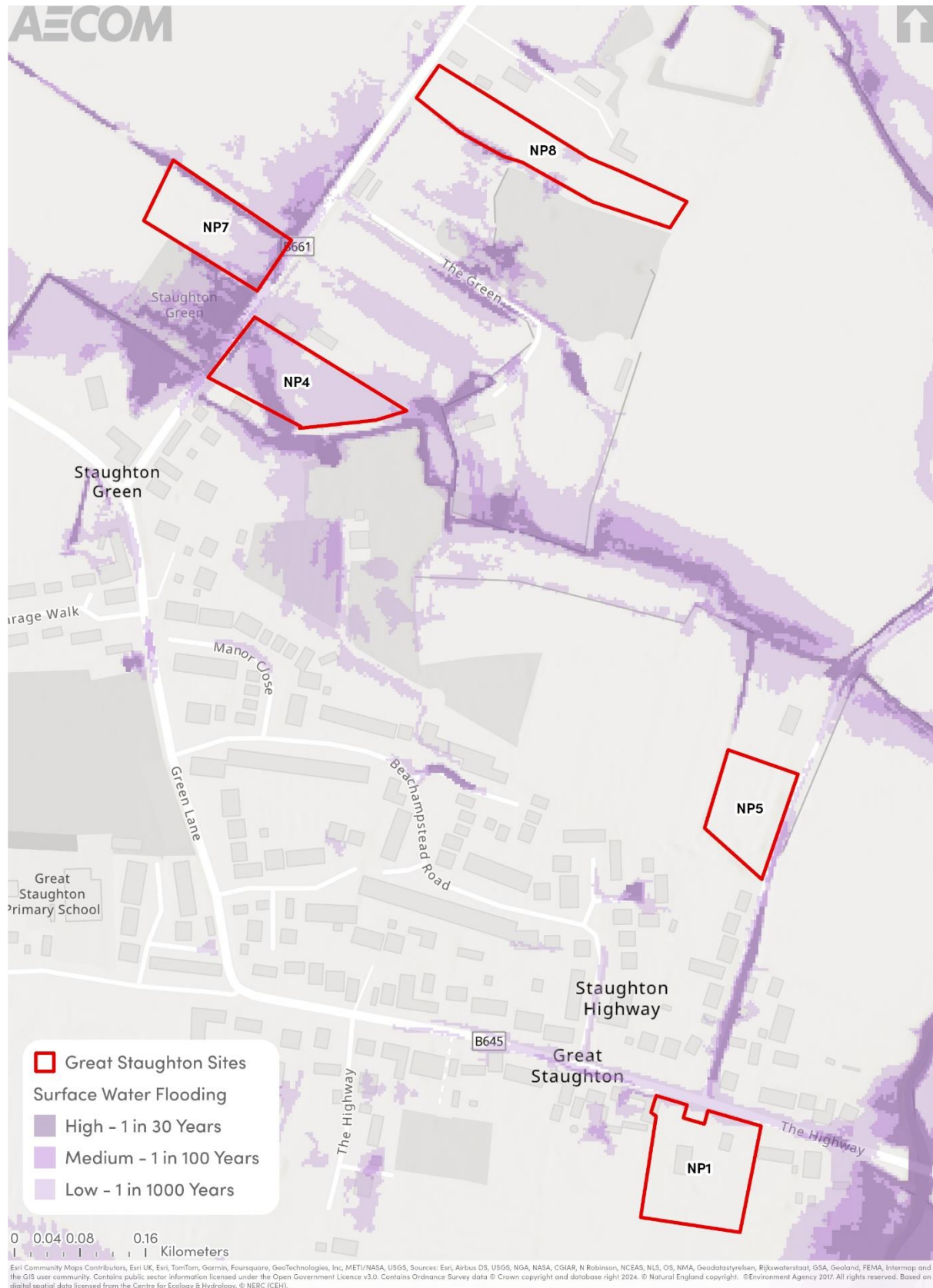


Figure 4.3: Surface water flood risk considerations



Figure 4.4: Historic environment considerations

SEA site assessment findings

Site NP1 (Table 4.2)



SEA Theme

Biodiversity

There are no designated sites of international, national, or regional importance for biodiversity conservation within proximity to the site; however, it is noted there is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) approximately 1.6km to the north. Whilst Site NP1 overlaps with SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for at least one SSSI, the types of development likely to come forward through the GSNP would not require consultation with Natural England (i.e., rural non-residential, residential, and rural residential).

There are no locally designated sites for biodiversity conservation, or designated habitats (e.g. Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat or ancient woodland) in proximity of Site NP1. It is noted that there is a tree with a TPO designation located in the south-western corner of the site, as well as boundary vegetation on the western and southern site boundaries, and some trees and hedgerows within the site.

Overall, **neutral effects** are considered pre-mitigation if development comes forward on this site. This reflects the presence of an important tree and boundary vegetation.

SEA Theme

Climate Change (Including Flood Risk) Whilst development of the site would result in the built footprint of the settlement increasing, it is unlikely to bring forward significant impacts due to the moderate size of the scheme. The site is located adjacent to The Highway, which would allow for safe active travel opportunities to the settlement centre via the raised pavement. This may limit the need to travel via private car (and associated emissions).

Regarding flood risk, the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1 and as such is at low risk of fluvial flooding (although the site is adjacent to Flood Zone 2, which is a medium risk for flooding). There is a small area to the north of the site at low risk of surface water flooding, and medium to high risk on the eastern and western boundaries.

Overall, given the site is within proximity to areas at risk of surface water flooding, **negative effects** are concluded most likely at this stage before mitigation measures.

Community Wellbeing and Transport Great Staughton village has a limited offering of services, amenities, and facilities. However, there is an abundance of local green space, given the rural setting of the area surrounding the village. The site is located within proximity to the village's existing services, facilities, and amenities.

Public transport within Great Staughton village is limited to infrequent bus services; therefore, journeys are generally made with private vehicles or forms of active transport (e.g. walking or cycling). In this respect, the site is suitably located adjacent to The Highway (the main road that passes through the village, which also becomes a cycleway in the stretch of road by the site) and is in proximity of bus stops and several PRow. Therefore, Site NP1 is well placed to benefit from the village's existing transport networks.

GSNP has identified a need for additional housing, especially affordable housing. However, as the site has been recommended for mixed-use development by the landowner, this may reduce the viability of bringing forward affordable homes.

It has been noted by Neighbourhood Group that highway safety, especially for pedestrians and cyclists, in Great Staughton village is a concern, with issues arising from the types of traffic that pass through the village, high traffic volumes, the speed of traffic, inadequate pavements and junctions. The development of this site would have the potential to exacerbate these issues, as it is likely that development will bring additional private vehicles onto roads within the village. However, the effects are perhaps less

SEA Theme

	<p>likely to be significant due to the moderate size of allocation being proposed.</p> <p>Given the above, positive effects are considered likely if this site is allocated for development – reflecting the proximity of the site to existing amenities and transport infrastructure.</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>This site is located within 50m of a number of listed buildings; in particular, two would likely be impacted by development on this site due to changes in their views and setting. These are Grade II Brook Farmhouse, and Grade II The Limes. Additionally, Staughton Highway Conservation Area is located 10 m to the west of the site. Therefore, it is possible that development at this location could impact upon the wider historic area, through changes to the setting of the conservation area.</p> <p>Whilst there are no heritage assets located on the site, due to likelihood of two heritage features to be impacted by development of this site, negative effects are considered likely pre-mitigation.</p>	
Landscape	<p>The site is not constrained by any designated landscapes (e.g., National Parks, National Landscapes) or areas of Green Belt land.</p> <p>Great Staughton is noted for having a historic linear settlement pattern, which is especially evident along the southern side of The Highway (where Site NP1 is located). As the site conforms to the existing settlement pattern, no negative effects are anticipated in this respect. Furthermore, the site adjoins existing development to the north, east, and west, and is at a similar elevation as the settlement and surrounding development. As such, impacts to any locally important views are likely to be kept to a minimum.</p> <p>With respect to local landscape features of interest, the site contains one TPO in the south-western corner of its boundary, in addition to other (non-designated) trees. It is anticipated that this feature could be retained through any new development proposals which come forward.</p> <p>The Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2022) (HLTA) places the Parish within the Southern Wolds landscape character area (LCA). Additionally, the Great Staughton Landscape & Townscape Assessment (GSLTA) identifies seven LCA within the neighbourhood area; site NP1 falls within LCA 1 'The Highway; The Causeway; Green Lane and The Green'. Site NP1 has the potential to lead to negative effects in relation to some of the important sensitivities, including treelined and grassed borders (as this type of vegetation is</p>	

SEA Theme

present within the site boundary). However, as the site contains some areas of brownfield land which (in its current form) may detract from the character of the villagescape, it is anticipated that redevelopment at this location may result in villagescape character enhancements.

Overall, **neutral effects** are considered likely if this site is allocated. Effects are dependent on the design of the scheme which is brought forward.

Key

Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)



Likely positive effect



Neutral / no effect



Uncertain effect



Site NP4 (Table 4.3)



SEA Theme

Biodiversity

There are no designated sites of international, national, or regional importance for biodiversity conservation in the immediate proximity of Site NP4, though it is noted there is a SSSI approximately 1.2km to the north. No overlap with SSSI IRZs will occur through developing this site. As such consultation with Natural England can be avoided.

There are no locally designated sites or features for biodiversity conservation, or BAP Priority Habitat or ancient woodland, in proximity of Site NP4. It is noted there is a level of boundary vegetation that likely contributes to biodiversity connectivity on the site and in the wider neighbourhood area.

Overall, **neutral effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site pre-mitigation. This reflects the absence of any designated ecological assets within and in proximity to the site.

Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)

Whilst development of the site would result in the built footprint of the settlement increasing, it is unlikely to bring forward significant impacts due to the moderate size of the scheme. The site is located adjacent to The Green, which would allow for safe active travel opportunities to the settlement centre via the raised

SEA Theme

pavement. This may limit the need to travel via private car (and associated emissions).

Regarding flood risk, the Site NP4 is wholly within Flood Zone 1 and as such is at low risk of fluvial flooding. The site is also located in an area of mostly low risk of surface water flooding; however, the risk increases on the northern and southern site boundaries – with an area at high risk on the northern site boundary adjacent to The Green. Surface water flood risk is also more prevalent at low spots in more frequent / intense rainfall events and provides a flow path in an easterly / south-easterly direction in extreme events. Given the presence of existing flow paths and watercourses, surface water flood risk could increase at this location.

Development at this site, therefore, has the potential to be at risk of surface water flooding, and also has the potential to worsen existing flood risk due to the introduction of additional impermeable surfaces.

Overall, **negative effects** are concluded most likely for this SEA theme at this site before mitigation measures. This is due to the elevated risk of surface water flooding, including the high risk along the southern site boundary and intersecting the site in the western half.



Community Wellbeing and Transport

Site NP4 has an indicative housing capacity of 20 homes, which is likely large enough to support affordable housing provision in line with local policy. Additionally, the site is suitably located to make use of the village's existing services, facilities, amenities, and green spaces, as the majority of them are located within a 10-minute walking distance of the site. There is pavement provision along The Green and Green Lane to facilitate safe active travel opportunities.

Additionally, Site NP4 is suitably located on the B661, and is within a two-minute walking distance of bus stops and the HDC 7 Cycleway. The site also benefits from being located in proximity of several PROW. Therefore, site NP4 is well placed to benefit from the village's existing transport network.

The addition of dwellings along the B661 has the potential to exacerbate issues linked to highway safety, high traffic volumes, and traffic speed given it will likely bring additional private vehicles onto roads within the village. However, the effects are unlikely to be significant due to the moderate size of allocation being proposed.

SEA Theme

	Given the above, positive effects are considered likely if this site is allocated for development. This is due to being located within proximity to existing community and transport infrastructure.	
Historic Environment	This site is located within 35m of one listed building – Grade II 31 and 33 The Green. Whilst it is possible that developing this site could impact on the setting of this listed building, the site is screened by dense vegetation (including trees); therefore, impacts to the setting of this designation are unlikely. Overall, uncertain effects are considered likely if bringing forward development at this location as potential impacts are dependent on the design of any schemes which come forward.	
Landscape	<p>The site is not constrained by any designated landscapes (e.g., National Parks, National Landscapes) or areas of Green Belt land.</p> <p>Site NP4 adjoins existing development to the north and south. Due to this, and due to the site being at a lower elevation than the surrounding area, visual impacts are minimised.</p> <p>Great Staughton is noted for having a historic linear settlement pattern, which is especially evident along the B661 (which is where site NP4 is located). If the total capacity of 20 homes is delivered on this site, it is possible that the development would deviate from the historic linear settlement pattern, which could result in negative landscape effects.</p> <p>The Great Staughton Landscape & Townscape Assessment (GSLTA) identifies site NP4 as being within LCA 1 'The Highway; The Causeway; Green Lane and The Green'. Site NP4 has the potential to lead to negative effects in relation to some of the important sensitivities, including treelined and grassed borders (as this type of vegetation is present within the site boundary).</p> <p>Overall, uncertain effects are considered likely if this site is allocated. Whilst the site is well-placed to adjoin with the village's existing development, it could cause deviation from the village's historic settlement pattern. However, effects are dependent on the design of the scheme which is brought forward.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Site NP5 (Table 4.4)



SEA Theme

Biodiversity

There are no designated sites of international, national, or regional importance for biodiversity conservation in the immediate proximity of Site NP5, though it is noted there is a SSSI approximately 1.4km to the north. No overlap with SSSI IRZs will occur through developing this site. As such consultation with Natural England can be avoided.

Whilst the site does not contain BAP Priority Habitat or ancient woodland, it is noted there is a level of boundary vegetation on all site boundaries. This likely contributes to biodiversity connectivity on the site and in the wider neighbourhood area.

Overall, **uncertain effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site pre-mitigation. This reflects the potential disturbance to boundary vegetation and impacts to wider ecological connectivity if the vegetation is removed to accommodate new development. However, it is noted that this is dependent on the design of any scheme which comes forward, and it is likely that the vegetation could be retained and enhanced (where possible) to deliver net gains.

Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)

Whilst development of the site would result in the built footprint of the settlement increasing, it is unlikely to bring forward significant impacts due to the moderate size of the scheme. However, the

SEA Theme

site is located adjacent to Cage Lane, which has limited opportunity to provide safe active travel opportunities due to the reduce pavement provision. Therefore, an allocation at this location is perhaps less likely to reduce the reliance on private vehicles for undertaking some day-to-day activities within the neighbourhood area (and associated emissions).

Site NP5 is wholly within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of fluvial and surface water flooding. However, the eastern site boundary is adjacent to an area of surface water flood risk associated with Cage Lane, though it is unlikely to impact development at this location if it were to be allocated.

Overall, **uncertain effects** are most likely for this SEA theme pre-mitigation, with impacts depending on the extent to which the scheme could connect with existing PRow / public transport and limit potential emissions associated with private vehicles.

Community Wellbeing and Transport

Site NP5 has a housing capacity of 14 homes; this is large enough to support affordable housing provision in line with local policy. Site NP5 is also suitably located to make use of the village's existing services, facilities, amenities, and green spaces, as the majority of them are located within a 10-minute walking distance of the site. However, it is noted there is limited pavement provision along this road to facilitate safe pedestrian movements.

Additionally, the site is suitably located on Cage Lane (which also overlaps with the HDC 7 Cycleway) and is within a 5-minute walking distance of bus stops. The site also benefits from being located in proximity of several PRow. As such, it is well placed to benefit from the village's existing transport network (providing suitable pedestrian access and connectivity is secured through the design of the scheme).

New homes located along Cage Lane has the potential to exacerbate issues linked to highway safety, high traffic volumes, and traffic speed - given it will likely bring additional private vehicles onto roads within the village.

Given the above, **mixed effects** are considered likely at this time. This reflects the proximity of the site to existing community infrastructure and its ability to support additional housing (including affordable housing) – which are positive impacts for community wellbeing and transport. This conclusion also acknowledges negative impacts linked to the lack of pedestrian connectivity via Cage Lane and the narrow nature of the road – which could lead to potential increases in traffic-related issues on the local road network.

SEA Theme

Historic Environment	There are no designated heritage assets or areas of historical importance within proximity to the site. Given its relative distance from historic features, neutral effects are considered likely for this site under this SEA theme.	
Landscape	<p>The site is not constrained by any designated landscapes (e.g., National Parks, National Landscapes) or areas of Green Belt land.</p> <p>Site NP5 adjoins existing development to the south. It is at a similar elevation to the rest of the settlement; as such, visual impacts are minimised from the surrounding landscape. However, the site would result in an extension of the existing built-form (to the north) and be visible from a number of surrounding properties.</p> <p>Great Staughton is noted for having a historic linear settlement pattern, which is especially evident along Cage Lane. If the total capacity of 14 homes is delivered on this site, it is possible that the development would deviate from the historic linear settlement pattern. As such, the allocation of this site could cause negative landscape effects.</p> <p>The Great Staughton Landscape & Townscape Assessment (GSLTA) identifies Site NP5 as being within LCA 1 'The Highway; The Causeway; Green Lane and The Green'. Site NP5 has the potential to lead to negative effects in relation to some of the important sensitivities, in the absence of mitigation.</p> <p>Overall, negative effects are considered likely if this site is allocated. Whilst the site is well-placed to adjoin with the village's existing development, it could cause deviation from the village's historic settlement pattern, impact upon the sensitive landscape features which form part of the character of LCA 1, and be visible from a number of properties to the south west (off Moory Croft Close, and Lye Close).</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)	Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect	Uncertain effect	

Site NP7 (Table 4.5)



SEA Theme

Biodiversity

The site is not within proximity to designated sites of international, national, or regional importance for biodiversity, nor does it overlap with SSSI IRZs. As such consultation with Natural England can be avoided.

There are no locally designated sites or features for biodiversity conservation, or BAP Priority Habitat or ancient woodland, in proximity of the site. It is noted, however, that there is extensive boundary vegetation on all site boundaries. This likely contributes to biodiversity connectivity on the site, and to the network across the wider neighbourhood area.

Overall, **uncertain effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site pre-mitigation. This reflects the extensive amount of boundary vegetation on the site boundaries of the site that could be lost (i.e., through removal to facilitate access), which could be impacted through development.

Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)

Development of Site NP7 will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions, linked to the construction phase of development, the increase in the built footprint of Great Staughton village, as well as an intensification of use at this site. Although, as the size of development proposed to be brought

SEA Theme

forward at this site is relatively moderate, significant impacts are unlikely to be anticipated in this respect.

Regarding flood risk, the Site NP7 is wholly within Flood Zone 1 and as such is at low risk of fluvial flooding.

Parts of the site are within areas of medium and high surface water flood risk. Development at this site, therefore, has the potential to be at risk of surface water flooding, and also has the potential to worsen existing flood risk due to the introduction of additional impermeable surfaces.

Overall, given the elevated risk of surface water flooding, **negative effects** are concluded most likely at this stage before mitigation measures.

Community Wellbeing and Transport

Site NP7 has an indicative housing capacity of ten homes, which is perhaps less likely to facilitate the delivery of affordable homes in line with local policy. However, the site is suitably located to make use of the village's existing services, facilities, amenities, and green spaces, as the majority of them are located within a 10-minute walking distance of the site. There is pavement provision to facilitate safe pedestrian movements along The Green.

Public transport within Great Staughton village is limited to infrequent bus services; therefore, journeys are generally made with private vehicles or forms of active transport (e.g. walking or cycling). In this respect, Site NP7 is suitably located on the B661, and is within a two-minute walking distance of bus stops and the HDC 7 Cycleway. The site also benefits from being located in proximity of several PROW.

The addition of the dwellings along B661 The Green has the potential to exacerbate issues linked to highway safety, high traffic volumes, and traffic speed - given it will likely bring additional private vehicles onto roads within the village, as it is likely that development will bring additional private vehicles onto roads within the village. However, the effects are unlikely to be significant due to the moderate size of allocation being proposed.

Given the above, **positive effects** are considered likely if this site is allocated for development. This site benefits from pedestrian access to the village's existing amenities and transport infrastructure.

Historic Environment

There are no designated heritage assets or areas of historical importance within proximity to the site. Given its relative distance from historic features, **neutral effects** are considered likely for this site under this SEA theme.

SEA Theme

Landscape	<p>The site is not constrained by any designated landscapes (e.g., National Parks, National Landscapes) or areas of Green Belt land.</p> <p>Site NP7 is located adjacent to undeveloped land and open fields; therefore, development at this site would represent an extension to the existing built form of the village to the north, in contrast to the existing development patterns. Visual impacts are less likely to be screened from nearby development, and views may be disrupted given the open nature of the surrounding land.</p> <p>Great Staughton is noted for having a historic linear settlement pattern, which is especially evident along the B661 where the site is located. Development at this location would deviate from the historic linear settlement pattern, facilitating growth to the north of the B661 (The Green) in comparison to most of the existing development which is primarily located to the south of The Green.</p> <p>The Great Staughton Landscape & Townscape Assessment (GSLTA) identifies Site NP7 as being within LCA 1 'The Highway; The Causeway; Green Lane and The Green'. Site NP7 has the potential to lead to negative effects in relation to some of the important sensitivities, which would likely require mitigation to reduce negative impacts.</p> <p>Overall, negative effects are considered likely if this site is allocated. This is due to the potential impacts on the village's historic settlement pattern, and the intervisibility of the site with the surrounding open farmland.</p>	
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Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Site NP8 (Table 4.6)



SEA Theme

Biodiversity

There are no designated sites of international, national, or regional importance for biodiversity conservation in the immediate proximity of Site NP8, though it is noted there is a SSSI approximately 930m to the north. No overlap with SSSI IRZs will occur through developing this site. As such consultation with Natural England can be avoided.

In terms of features present within the site, deciduous woodland BAP Priority Habitat runs adjacent to the south-eastern border of the site. This habitat could be disturbed by development on this site through increased noise and light pollution. Additionally, there is boundary vegetation on the site boundaries that likely contributes to biodiversity connectivity on the site and in the wider neighbourhood area.

Overall, **negative effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site. This reflects the presence of a BAP priority habitat in the site's immediate vicinity, and the potential for development to impact upon its integrity directly and indirectly.

SEA Theme

Climate Change (Including Flood Risk) Development of Site NP8 will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions, linked to the construction phase of development, the increase in the built footprint of Great Staughton village, as well as an intensification of use at this site. However, as the size of development proposed to be brought forward at this site would be relatively moderate, significant impacts are not anticipated in this respect.

Whilst the site is within proximity to services and facilities in the village, its location to the north of the existing built-up area is perhaps less likely to reduce the reliance on private vehicles for accessing local amenities (and associated emissions).

Site NP8 is wholly within Flood Zone 1 and as such is at low risk of fluvial flooding. The majority of the site is located in an area of mostly low very risk of surface water flooding, however, there is also a thin stretch of land adjacent to the site's south-eastern border that is noted to have high risk of surface water flooding.

Overall, **negative effects** are most likely for this SEA theme pre-mitigation, due to the high risk of surface water flooding in the southern extent.

Community Wellbeing and Transport The indicative capacity for housing at this location is up to three homes – this level of growth is not likely to support affordable housing provision. The site is suitably located to make use of the existing services, facilities, amenities, and green spaces in the north and west of the village, being located within a 10-minute walking distance of this part of the village. There is pavement provision to facilitate safe pedestrian movements along The Green.

Public transport within Great Staughton village is limited to infrequent bus services; therefore, journeys are generally made with private vehicles or forms of active transport (e.g. walking or cycling). In this respect, the site is suitably located on the B661, and is within a two-minute walking distance of bus stops and the HDC 7 Cycleway. The site also benefits from being located in proximity of several PROW. As such, site NP8 is well placed to benefit from the village's existing transport network.

Whilst the site is within proximity to services and facilities in the village, its location to the north of the existing built-up area is perhaps less likely to support community cohesion and integration.

Given the above, **uncertain effects** are considered likely if this site is allocated for development. This site is located in an area close the village's existing amenities and transport infrastructure

SEA Theme

	but has limited potential to contribute towards housing needs and community cohesion.	
Historic Environment	This site is located approximately 55m south of the Staughton Green moated site, Great Staughton scheduled monument. Whilst it is possible that developing this site could impact on the setting of this scheduled monument, the site is largely screened from by dense vegetation and a level of existing development. As such, impacts to the setting of this designation are dependent on the design of any scheme which would come forward at this location. As such, uncertain effects are considered likely for this site under this SEA theme.	
Landscape	<p>The site is not constrained by any designated landscapes (e.g., National Parks, National Landscapes) or areas of Green Belt land.</p> <p>Site NP8 is located adjacent to undeveloped land and open fields; therefore, development at this site would represent an extension to the existing built form of the village to the north, contrary to the existing character of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>An allocation at this location would deliver housing growth approximately 250m to the north of existing development within the village, extending the built-form. Whilst visual impacts are likely to be relatively screened from view given the relatively flat topography and boundary vegetation, new development may significantly impact upon the special qualities of LCA 1 'The Highway; The Causeway; Green Lane and The Green'.</p> <p>Overall, negative effects are considered likely if this site is allocated. This is due to the potential impacts on the village's historic settlement pattern, contrary to the existing character of the surrounding landscape.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Summary of Appraisal Findings

4.19 A summary of the findings is presented in **Table 4.7** below and the accompanying paragraphs. This provides an indication of how the sites have performed in relation to each of the SEA themes.

Table 4.7: Summary of SEA site assessments

Site	Biodiversity	Climate Change (inc. Flood Risk)	Community Wellbeing and Transportation	Historic Environment	Landscape
NP1	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Yellow
NP4	Yellow	Red	Green	Blue	Blue
NP5	Blue	Blue	Red	Yellow	Red
NP7	Blue	Red	Green	Yellow	Red
NP8	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Red
Key					
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Red	Likely positive effect		Green
Neutral/no effect		Yellow	Uncertain effect		Blue

4.20 The assessment findings conclude that **Site NP1 and Site NP4 are the most favourable site options with respect to the biodiversity theme**, primarily given the absence of any designated ecological sites or any priority habitats which contribute to wider ecological networks. **Site NP8 is the least well performing site option** given the potential impacts to an area of deciduous woodland priority habitat if brought forward for development.

4.21 **With respect to climate change mitigation, it is recognised that all sites perform similarly in this respect.** This is primarily given that all sites are within relative proximity to the village centre, with development potentially facilitating opportunities to enhance connections and accessibility to public transport via public rights of way (limiting emissions from private vehicles). However, growth within the neighbourhood area will result in an increase in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions during the plan period.

4.22 In terms of climate change adaptation, **all site options are within Flood Zone 1 and have a relatively low risk of fluvial flooding. Surface water flood risk issues are prevalent across sites NP1, NP4, NP7 and NP8**, with potential impacts dependent on the extent to which suitable drainage

measures are incorporated into the design of any schemes which come forward.

4.23 The extent to which the sites have the potential to deliver positive outcomes for the local community depend on several factors, including:

- Potential to contribute positively to residual housing needs (including affordable homes).
- Potential to enhance accessibility and connectivity to local amenities and public transport networks; and
- Potential to integrate with the existing development and surroundings, supporting vitality and social cohesion.

4.24 On this basis, Site NP1, Site NP4 and Site NP7 perform most favourably with respect to the community wellbeing and transportation SEA theme.

4.25 Great Staughton village is particularly sensitive from a heritage perspective, with several nationally designated listed buildings and scheduled monuments in proximity to the site options. Impacts are dependent (in part) on the design of any proposals which come forward, and it is acknowledged that proposals have the potential to both enhance or detract from the setting of nearby heritage designations and features. However, **Site NP5 and Site NP7 are the least constrained sites from a heritage perspective, given their relative distance from any heritage assets and areas.**

4.26 From a landscape perspective, none of the potential site options are constrained by any designated landscapes (e.g., National Parks, National Landscapes) or areas of Green Belt land. However, **local landscape and villagescape character varies between site options, with Site NP1 is the most favourable site option in this respect.** Specifically, this site contains some areas of brownfield land which (in its current form) may detract from the character of the villagescape. It is therefore anticipated that redevelopment at this location may result in villagescape character enhancements. The remaining sites may all alter the existing village form, extending the built-environment into the surrounding countryside. **However, impacts to landscape character are most pronounced for Site NP5, Site NP7 and Site NP8.** This is reflected in the appraisal findings above.

Developing the preferred approach

Choice of sites taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan

4.27 The GSNP supports an approach which seeks to deliver sustainable development which is sensitive to the environmental constraints within the neighbourhood area, and which is intended to meet specific housing requirements or other community objectives. On this basis, the GSNP takes forward the following two sites as Neighbourhood Plan allocations:

- Site NP1 'Brook Farmyard, The Highway' (see Policy GSNP3)

- Site NP4 'Land south of 29 The Green, Great Staughton' (see Policy GSNP4)

4.28 The choice of site allocations has been informed by the findings of the site assessment undertaken for the GSNP, community consultation, engagement events, and the sequential test results. The sequential test concluded that:

- The flood risk issues associated with Site NP1 are contained to the north of the site, and that if the site were to be allocated that criteria should be included applied to ensure that a suitable surface water drainage strategy is implemented.
- Although Site NP4 has a higher degree of flood risk, it is considered the most appropriate for residential development. The Great Staughton Parish Council will need to ensure development can be made safe throughout its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere before allocating the site in the GSNP.

4.29 The site-specific policies within the GSNP for the proposed site allocations (see Policies GSNP3 – GSNP4) contain further detail with respect to design and mitigation considerations which aim to address any potential constraints to development. These aspects are further discussed within the plan appraisal section of the Environmental Report (see **Chapter 5**, below).

4.30 The GSNP also states:

“The Parish Council concluded that the site at Brook Farm is the only site that offered the potential for a new GP Surgery / NHS health facility albeit there are a number of constraints that need to be addressed to ensure that the development is brought forward in a way which conserves and enhances the nearby heritage and landscape assets.

“The Parish Council also considered the site to the south of 29 The Green to sit within the built-up part of the settlement more appropriately, particularly given the more recent Community Land Trust Housing at Jewell Close and have significantly less impact upon the surrounding countryside than other proposals put forward.

“Therefore, the two allocations to meet the needs of the Parish are proposed at Brook Farm, The Highway as part of a wider development which will bring forward a new GP Surgery and NHS health facility and a further housing allocation at to the south of 29 The Green.”

4.31 It is recognised that the total number of new homes proposed through these allocations is 20 homes, slightly short of the residual 30 homes for the neighbourhood area. In this respect, the GSNP supports limited windfall development on infill sites to contribute to local needs (see Policy GSNP1) and the community is also committed to working with the local landowner / developer for Site NP1 to determine whether the site could accommodate a proportion of housing as part of a mixed-use scheme.

5. Appraisal of the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the submission version of the GSNP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the submission version of the GSNP under the five SEA theme headings.
- Consideration of potential cumulative effects; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage.

Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan Policies

5.2 To support the implementation of the vision statement for the GSNP, the submission version of the plan puts forward 19 policies to guide new development within the neighbourhood area. Specifically:

Table 5.1: Policies in the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan

Policy Reference	Policy Name
GSNP1	Spatial strategy
GSNP2	Built Up Area Boundary
GSNP3	NHS Healthcare Facility at Brook Farmyard
GSNP4	Housing Allocation at The Green
GSNP5	Housing Mix
GSNP6	Allocation of Affordable Housing
GSNP7	Landscape and Townscape Characteristics
GSNP8	Local Green Space
GSNP9	Great Staughton Conservation Areas
GSNP10	Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets
GSNP11	Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitats
GSNP12	Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency

Policy Reference	Policy Name
GSNP13	Community Led Renewable Energy Projects
GSNP14	Water Efficiency
GSNP15	Surface Water Flood Risk
GSNP16	Walkable and Cycle Neighbourhoods
GSNP17	Road Safety and Parking
GSNP18	New Pedestrian and Cycle Routes
GSNP19	Protect Local Services and Facilities

Approach to the Appraisal

- 5.3 For each theme, ‘significant’ effects of the submission version of the GSNP on the baseline are predicated and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. For example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects as far as possible. These effect ‘characteristics’ will be described within the assessment, as appropriate.
- 5.4 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the GSNP. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects to ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.
- 5.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect ‘characteristics’ are described within the assessment as appropriate.

Biodiversity

- 5.6 In terms of nationally designated sites, the neighbourhood area has the Perry Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within its boundaries to the north. Additionally, the Grafton Water SSSI is located adjacent to the northern neighbourhood boundary, and the Little Paxton Wood SSSI is located approximately 1.3km to the east. Despite the presence of these designations, the neighbourhood area does not overlap with SSSI Impact Risk Zones for the development types likely to come forward through the GSNP (i.e., rural non-residential, residential, and rural residential).

5.7 Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats in the neighbourhood area include coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, lowland fens, deciduous woodland, and traditional orchards – with areas of ancient woodland also present. Both the sites allocated under Policy GSNP3 and Policy GSNP4 are located at distance from these important habitat areas; as such, development would be unlikely to impact upon their integrity and biodiversity value.

5.8 With further reference to the proposed site allocations:

- Policy GSNP3 does not make specific stipulations relating to biodiversity, likely due to being a brownfield site with limited biodiversity value. However, it does include policy provisions to safeguard a veteran tree and bring forward appropriate landscaping on the site. This will likely extend to benefit biodiversity through the protection and enhancement of features that contribute to biodiversity value and connectivity; for example, including new green infrastructure.
- Policy GSNP4 does have a biodiversity focus. It indicates development proposals must undertake an ecological survey to determine measures for biodiversity protection and enhancement. It also stipulates development of the site will need to retain and protect existing boundary trees and hedgerows, and plant new screening trees and hedgerow vegetation. Through these means the policy works effectively to ensure biodiversity value is not lost through development, and biodiversity connectivity is maintained and enhanced for the benefit of the wider biodiversity network in the neighbourhood area.

5.9 The neighbourhood plan also includes a specific biodiversity policy. Policy GSNP11 presents several important sites for biodiversity and wildlife value in the neighbourhood area – including trees, copses, and ponds. It outlines the need for potential development on these sites to avoid adverse impacts wherever possible and mitigate the impacts where they are unavoidable. The policy also sets out additional requirements to the mandatory biodiversity net gain set by national policy; indicating developments will need to achieve a 20% net gain through several suggested means – including tree planting. As such, the policy performs well in terms of biodiversity.

5.10 In conclusion, **minor positive effects** are considered likely for biodiversity. This reflects the focus on ensuring development maintains and enhances biodiversity through the site allocation policies and the wider policy framework. It also reflects the provisions under the biodiversity specific policy, which further ensures biodiversity is safeguarded and enhanced.

Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)

5.11 The GSNP provides an opportunity to include policies that help to reduce carbon emissions created by new development in the area, and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. While it is recognised that there is little value in duplicating planning policies which are already set out in the Local Plan, the GSNP should focus on what could be strengthened, and respond to local considerations. This can include vulnerability to overheating, flooding or water

stress impacts, car dependency, opportunities for renewable energy, sustainable design, and construction.

- 5.12 In terms of climate change mitigation, the site allocated for housing development under Policy GSNP4 is adjacent to The Green, which allows for safe cycle and pedestrian access to the wider road network via a raised pavement. The site allocated under Policy GSNP3 is located adjacent to The Highway, which also allows for safe active transport through pavement provision. As such, both site allocation will likely contribute to reducing emissions linked to transportation in the neighbourhood area by supporting active travel uptake. More broadly, active transportation uptake is also the focus of Policy GSNP16, which works to reduce emissions linked to transport by providing new and improving existing footpaths to boost pedestrian and cycle connectivity.
- 5.13 Policy GSNP3 further works to bring forward mitigating effects through demonstrating the need for energy and water-resource efficient development – thus reducing emissions generated onsite. This is also the focus of Policy GSNP12, which works to ensure developments lower their greenhouse gas emissions, improve their climate resilience, and support renewable and low carbon energy generation and use wherever possible. Again, this will help to lower greenhouse gas emissions and extend the lifespan of development, reducing the need for redevelopment of sites in the future. Renewable energy and water efficiency is also the focus of Policies GSNP13 and GSNP14 respectively.
- 5.14 In terms of climate change adaptation, a summary of the flood risk concerns with the proposed site allocations is presented below:
- The site allocated for healthcare infrastructure under Policy GSNP3 has a low risk of fluvial flooding, though it is in proximity to areas within flood risk zones. The site itself is at little to no risk of surface water flooding, but some areas adjacent to the site boundaries have a high risk. Redevelopment of the site and the increase in infrastructure could exacerbate the existing flood risk issues. Policy GSNP3 sets out the need to provide a site-specific flood risk assessment and mitigation strategy, to demonstrate flood risk on the site (and outside its boundaries) can be safely managed.
 - The site allocated under Policy GSNP4 has a very low risk of fluvial flooding but is at risk of surface water flooding. According to the draft sequential test report by Cambridge Acre³¹, it is found to be sequentially preferable and the most appropriate location for residential development – though given the flood risk potential the Great Staughton Parish Council will need to ensure development of the site will not exacerbate flood risk elsewhere in the neighbourhood area. Policy GSNP4 sets requirements for managing flood risk on the site – including providing a site-specific flood risk assessment and mitigation strategy. This will help to ensure that the flood risk is appropriately addressed.

³¹ Cambridge Acre (2024): [Working Draft Only - Sequential Test Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan](#)

- It is further acknowledged that the provisions of Policy GSNP15 outlines several measures which seek to reduce overall flood risk in the neighbourhood area from new development.
- 5.15 Policy GSNP4 includes stipulations for further climate change adaptation, through retaining and increasing green infrastructure provision. Increased levels of vegetation on the site that will likely come forward through these policy stipulations will contribute to climate change and flood risk mitigation – by capturing and storing increased levels of carbon dioxide through photosynthesis, and intercepting water runoff. This focus on protecting green infrastructure is reiterated in policies GSNP8 and GSNP11, benefitting climate change adaptation through maintaining and enhancing levels of carbon capture and softly managing flood risk.
- 5.16 Furthermore, it is anticipated that policy GSNP15 will help to reduce flood risk on both the allocated sites and across the wider neighbourhood area through the installation of surface water drainage systems, and the implementation of surface water drainage strategies.
- 5.17 Reflecting on the above, **neutral effects** are considered likely through the GSNP. This reflects the broad support provided through the policy framework to climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives; and the delivery of additional growth on sites within proximity to local amenities which will support a limitation of emissions.

Community Wellbeing and Transport

- 5.18 The GSNP supports an approach which seeks to deliver sustainable development which is sensitive to the environmental constraints within the neighbourhood area, and which is intended to meet specific housing requirements or other community objectives. On this basis, the GSNP takes forward the following two sites as Neighbourhood Plan allocations:
- Site NP1 'Brook Farmyard, The Highway'; and
 - Site NP4 'Land south of 29 The Green, Great Staughton'
- 5.19 The choice of site allocations has been informed by the findings of the site assessment undertaken for the GSNP, community consultation, and engagement events. The site-specific policies within the GSNP for the proposed site allocations (see Policies GSNP3 – GSNP4) contain further detail with respect to design and mitigation considerations which aim to address any potential constraints to development.
- 5.20 It is recognised that the total number of new homes proposed through these allocations is 20 homes, slightly short of the residual 30 homes for the neighbourhood area. In this respect the GSNP supports limited windfall development on infill sites to contribute to local needs (see Policy GSNP1) and the community is also committed to working with the local landowner / developer for Site NP1 to determine whether the site could accommodate a proportion of housing as part of a mixed-use scheme.

- 5.21 With respect to housing type, tenure, and affordability, the delivery of housing through Policy GSNP4 will allow for an appropriate mix of tenures to come forward, including at least 40% affordable housing and smaller housing units that are suitable for older people seeking to downsize, and younger adults seeking to buy their first home. This is reiterated in policy GSNP6 – which outlines a 50% split between affordable housing to rent and low-cost ownership. The housing need of the community is further considered through Policy GSNP5. These policies contribute to community wellbeing by providing more homes and allowing family units to stay together.
- 5.22 Additionally, the GSNP seeks to allocate a site for a new local NHS health facility under Policy GSNP3, in order to deliver enhanced local healthcare provision for the community. This includes a doctor's surgery and a dispensary. The policy also indicates the provision of additional community facilities alongside the NHS facility will also be supported, including (but not limited to): recreation, education, and retail facilities. This would support enhanced community wellbeing in the neighbourhood area by providing new facilities and reducing the need to travel outside the neighbourhood area to access key infrastructure.
- 5.23 Public transport within the neighbourhood area is limited to infrequent bus services to locations including (but not limited to) St Neots, Tilbrook, and Huntingdon. The site allocated under Policy GSNP4 is within 150m of the nearest two bus stops – both located to the south-west along The Green and Green Lane. Furthermore, the site allocated under Policy GSNP3 is approximately 200m east of the nearest bus stop on The Highway. Transport considerations linked to the proposed site allocations are further discussed below:
- The site allocated under Policy GSNP3 is adjacent to B645 The Highway, which connects the wider strategic road network – providing access to locations including St Neots, Eaton Ford, and Eynesbury. The Highway has raised pavements to allow for safe active transportation to the centre of Great Staughton to the west. The allocation policy stipulates development proposals will need to ensure the provision of safe vehicular movement to and from the site and provide an appropriate amount of car parking and secure cycle parking facilities. Again, this works to maintain a good level of ingress and egress to the site – which is vital given its important community use, as well as encouraging an uptake in active transportation opportunities.
 - The site allocated under Policy GSNP4 is adjacent to the B661 The Green – allowing for vehicular access to the settlement centre via a connection to Green Lane, and to the A1 outside of the neighbourhood area to the north-east. The Green and Green Lane have raised pavements that would facilitate safe active transport to the settlement centre from the site. Policy GSNP4 indicates development proposals will need to provide safe vehicular access to and from the site and contribute to improvements to the pedestrian crossing on the B645; this helps to maintain a good level of ingress and egress to The Green and promotes safe active transportation.

5.24 In terms of the wider GSNP policy framework, Policies GSNP8 and GSNP11 perform positively through designating a local green space and safeguarding green infrastructure areas – such as open spaces, meadows, and woodlands. This will support strong, healthy communities by providing safe areas to engage with exercise and in community events. Additionally, Policy GSNP19 works to protect the existing local services and facilities; again, safeguarding community wellbeing by protecting important facilities and services, thus reducing the need to travel outside the neighbourhood area to access infrastructure.

5.25 Policies GSNP9, GSNP16 and GSNP18 also provide community wellbeing and transport benefits by ensuring development safeguards important routeways for cyclists and pedestrians, creates pedestrian friendly streets, and creates new connections to the network – including safe pedestrian crossings. This will encourage a greater uptake in local active transport, which benefits physical health. Finally, Policy GSNP17 is concerned with road safety and parking in the neighbourhood area. It indicates development proposals will be assessed for their impact on road safety; they'll need to provide sufficient on and off-street parking, and where proposals will have an impact on road safety mitigation will be required. As such, the policy works well to mitigate any impacts linked to new development on the local road network.

5.26 In conclusion, the GSNP is considered likely to lead to **positive effects** in relation to community wellbeing and transport. This reflects the plan's focus on delivering a good number of homes to meet the identified need, the allocation of a site for healthcare facilities, the importance placed on safeguarding community facilities, and the maintenance of active transport opportunities and the safety of the road network.

Historic Environment

5.27 The historic environment within the neighbourhood area includes 48 listed buildings (one Grade I, one Grade II*, and 46 Grade II), five scheduled monuments, and two conservation areas. Growth through the GSNP will likely have an impact on the existing historic environment via impacts to the setting of heritage assets and areas. This is considered below:

- The partially brownfield site allocation under Policy GSNP3 is within 5m of Grade II Brook Farmhouse (to the west), and Grade II The Limes to the north. It is also adjacent to the Staughton Highway Conservation Area, located to the west. As such, it is likely development of the site will impact upon the setting of these heritage assets and areas through changes to their surroundings and altering views to and from the assets from along The Highway. The policy makes provisions for the historic sensitivities in this part of the neighbourhood area by outlining the need for development proposals to be designed and landscaped to enhance the setting of these listed buildings, and the character and appearance of the conservation area. This includes submitting a heritage impact assessment. This will help to ensure positive outcomes for the historic environment.

- It is noted the Grade II 31 and 33, The Green listed feature is approximately 35m to the east of the site allocated under Policy GSNP4. It is anticipated that development of this site would be screened from this asset given the vegetation which exists around the site which provides an element of visual screening. Nevertheless, the policy includes a stipulation for this heritage asset – indicating the design of a scheme will need to ensure development safeguards the setting of the nearby designation, including through retaining and planting trees and hedgerows. This reduces the potential for negative impacts to the setting of the asset, helping to safeguard its significance.

5.28 The GSNP also includes specific historic environment policies. Policy GSNP9 is concerned with preserving and enhancing the character and / or appearance of the Staughton Highway Conservation Area, and the Great Staughton Conservation Area. This includes through ensuring new development is appropriate and considerate of the designated areas. Furthermore, Policy GSNP10 protects designated and non-designated heritage assets within the neighbourhood area by ensuring development proposals are designed to be considerate of important structures and are accompanied by archaeological investigations and heritage statements where appropriate. These both benefit the historic environment by ensuring the significance of heritage features is maintained and enhanced through development.

5.29 The wider plan policies also work to enhance the historic environment of the neighbourhood area. Policies GSNP8 and GSNP11 work to protect green infrastructure in Great Staughton. This benefits the historic environment by safeguarding features that may contribute to the setting of heritage assets and areas. Policy GSNP17 indicates highways work within or in proximity to the two conservation areas must be sensitively designed and seek to conserve or enhance the significance of the designated area as well as specific features. This contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of the historic environment.

5.30 In conclusion, **positive effects** are considered likely for the historic environment. This reflects the heritage stipulations under the site allocation policies, and the benefits the wider GSNP policies will bring – all of which contribute to maintaining and enhancing the historic environment.

Landscape

5.31 Both of the site allocation policies cover sites within local Landscape Character Area 1: The Highway; The Causeway; Green Lane and The Green. This part of the neighbourhood area is characterised by a mix of architectural styles with different building styles and materials, grassed areas and treelined borders, and various landmarks – including a Baptist church and the White Hart pub. Given these sensitivities, both of the site allocation policies include a landscape focus. This is discussed below:

- Policy GSNP3 requires development proposals to be designed to enhance the character and appearance of the area, including through

protecting the tree preservation order and incorporating sensitive landscaping schemes.

- Policy GSNP4 indicates development of the site will need to retain existing and plant new hedgerows and trees to provide visual screening effects to the surrounding landscape and respect the existing development in nearby locations.

5.32 More broadly, Policy GSNP2 works to protect the landscape by designating a built-up area boundary for Great Staughton village within which development will be supported (in principle). This will help to reduce the potential for inconsiderate and inappropriate development to come forward outside the boundary, to safeguard the open countryside and village setting. In this way the spatial framework is respecting and enhancing the landscape through ensuring development integrates well with the existing built-up area,

5.33 The wider neighbourhood plan policies also seek to improve landscape and visual amenity within the neighbourhood area. For example, Policy GSNP7 outlines that development must maintain and enhance the landscape and settlement character via various mechanisms. These include retaining the historic settlement pattern, avoiding significant impacts of important views, and incorporating sensitive settlement edges to reinforce the connection between the built and rural landscape. Policy GSNP9 is concerned with development within and in the setting of the conservation areas; indicating development will need to be appropriate and fully consider the Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape Assessment, for example through the design of buildings. This will positively impact upon the landscape and villagescape by ensuring new development integrates with the existing built environment. Furthermore, Policies GSNP8 and GSNP11 work to protect green spaces and infrastructure; this safeguards and enhances the landscape through protecting important features that contribute to views and landscape gaps and maintaining natural screening.

5.34 In conclusion, **positive effects** are considered likely through the GSNP. This reflects the landscape considerations of the site allocation policies and the spatial framework, which work to reduce effects of new development on the rural and built-up landscape and deliver enhancements (where possible). It also reflects the focus of the wider plan policies on supporting the significance of the local landscape and villagescape character and the interrelationship between the natural and built environment.

Conclusions at this current stage

5.35 Overall, no potential significant negative or positive effects have been identified through the policy appraisal of the GSNP. However, the policy appraisal has identified a number of broad positive effects associated with all five SEA themes. This reflects the strong focus that the GSNP has on supporting sustainable development which is sensitive to the environmental constraints within the neighbourhood area, and which is intended to meet specific housing requirements or other community objectives. With specific reference to each SEA theme:

- 5.36 **Positive effects are considered likely in relation to biodiversity.** Policies encourage proposals to ensure development is sensitive to the surrounding natural environment and local character, taking into consideration ways in which the environment and biodiversity can be enhanced, deliver significant net gains in excess of the statutory requirement, and avoid impacts. This will help to improve the ecological value of the neighbourhood area.
- 5.37 **Neutral effects are considered likely in respect to climate change and flood risk.** The GSNP has the potential to lead to positive effects through supporting proposals that promote the inclusion of low carbon design solutions, encourage sustainable and active travel, and proactively respond to the potential impacts of climate change (particularly with respect to flood risk) through the implementation of appropriate drainage solutions. However, it is recognised that new development would lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions due to an increase in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area.
- 5.38 With further respect to flood risk, the SEA recommends the site allocation policy (Policy GSNP4) is enhanced to encourage applications to be accompanied by a proportionate flood risk assessment which considers the potential impacts of any development from all potential sources of flood risk. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that the provisions of Policy GSNP15 outlines several measures which seek to reduce overall flood risk in the neighbourhood area from new development. The site allocated under Policy GSNP4 has a very low risk of fluvial flooding but is at risk of surface water flooding. The policy sets requirements for managing flood risk on the site – including a flood risk assessment and implemented a sustainable drainage strategy. **The site will be subject to the Sequential Test set out in national policy.**
- 5.39 The assessment has concluded that the GSNP is also likely to have **positive effects in terms of community wellbeing and transportation**, due to the plan bringing forward sites for development that will positively contribute towards local need, and in sustainable locations with respect to access and connectivity to community infrastructure and public transport options. Furthermore, the policies have a strong design focus which should help to encourage the delivery of high-quality living environments within the neighbourhood area. Additionally, the plan sets out policies that will work to ensure community wellbeing is maintained and enhanced through development by safeguarding areas of green space provision and includes stipulations that will improve the public realm to the benefit of the community.
- 5.40 **Positive effects are also considered likely in relation to the historic environment.** The site allocation policies include provisions that will help screen development from surrounding historic environment features and include design stipulations which will ensure development is in keeping with the surrounding historic environment by using similar design choices, features, and layouts. Furthermore, the wider plan policies work to protect features contributing to the environment, encouraging proposals to respect the relationship between the natural and built environment and facilitating public realm improvements. As such, the GSNP policies work well to help maintain and enhance the setting of the historic environment of the neighbourhood area.

5.41 It is also expected that the GSNP will bring forward **positive effects for the local landscape** through design stipulations included in the site allocation policies that help to ensure important features within and in proximity to the sites are fully considered, maintained, and enhanced through development (including veteran trees). This conclusion also reflects the focus of the wider plan policies on supporting the significance of the local landscape and villagescape character and the interrelationship between the natural and built environment.

6. What are the next steps?

Next steps

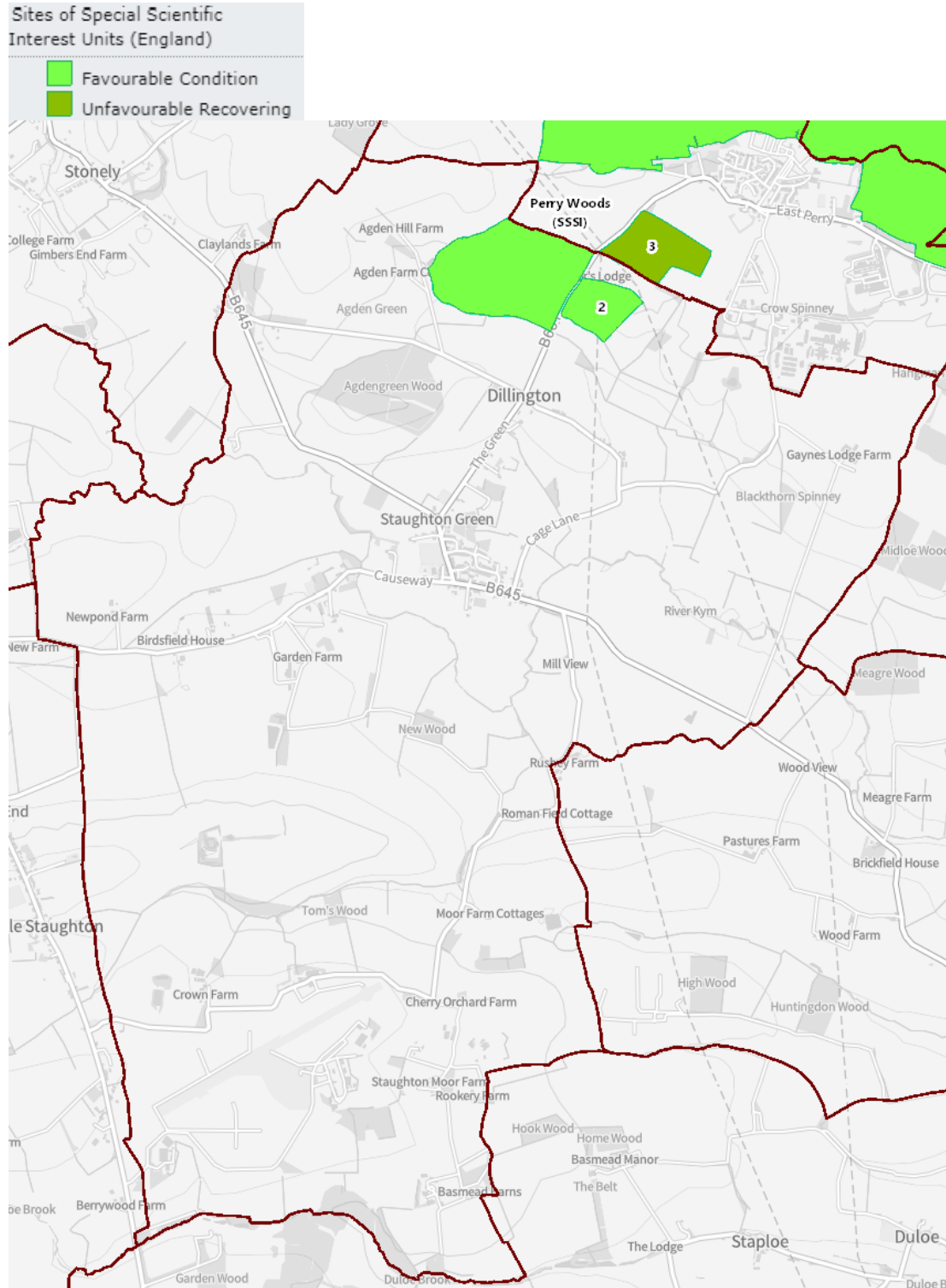
- 6.1 This is the version of the SEA Environmental Report which accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Huntingdonshire District Council, for subsequent Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.
- 6.2 If the Independent Examination is favourable, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Huntingdonshire District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for the parish.

Monitoring

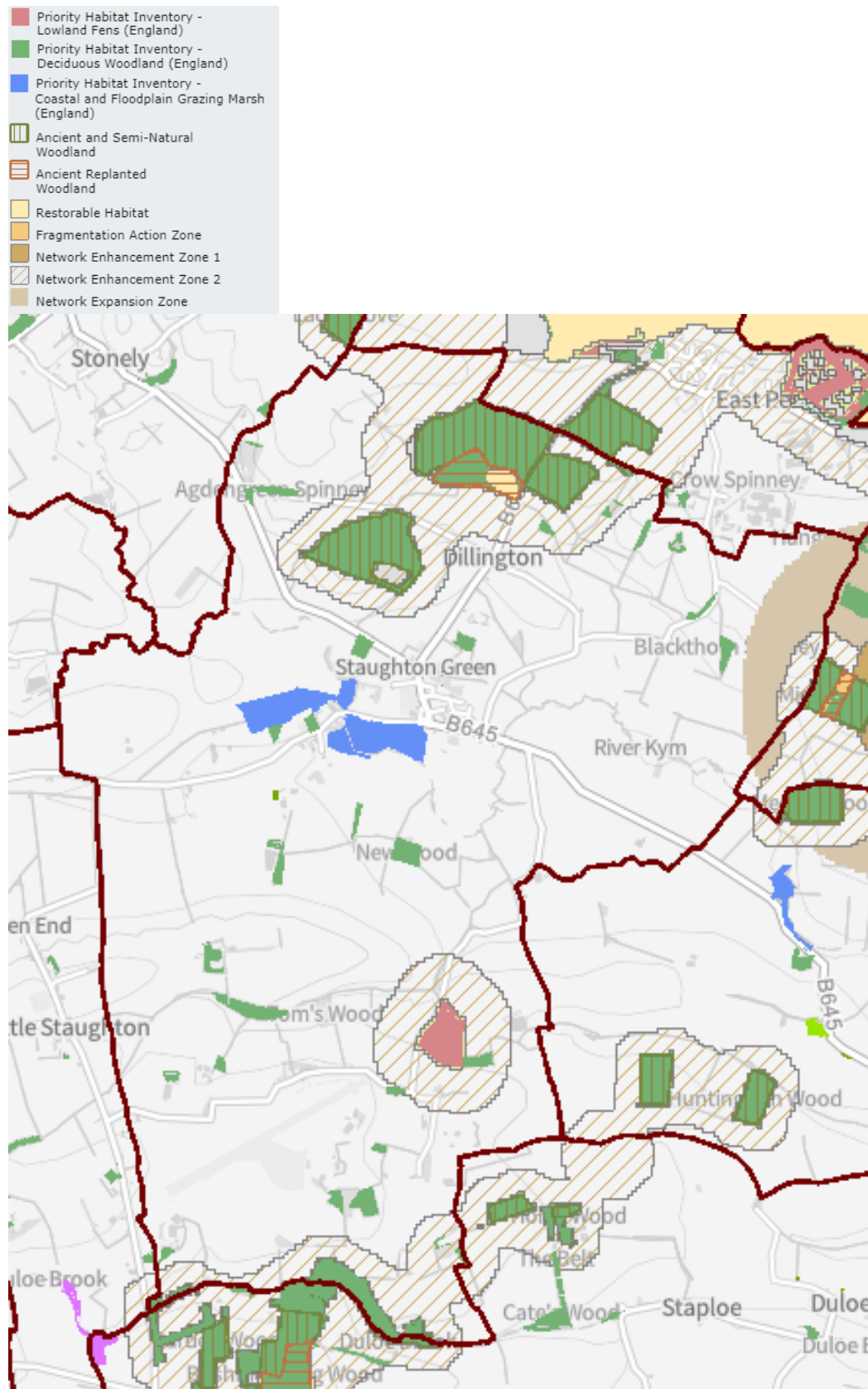
- 6.3 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.
- 6.4 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Huntingdonshire District Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Huntingdonshire District Council.

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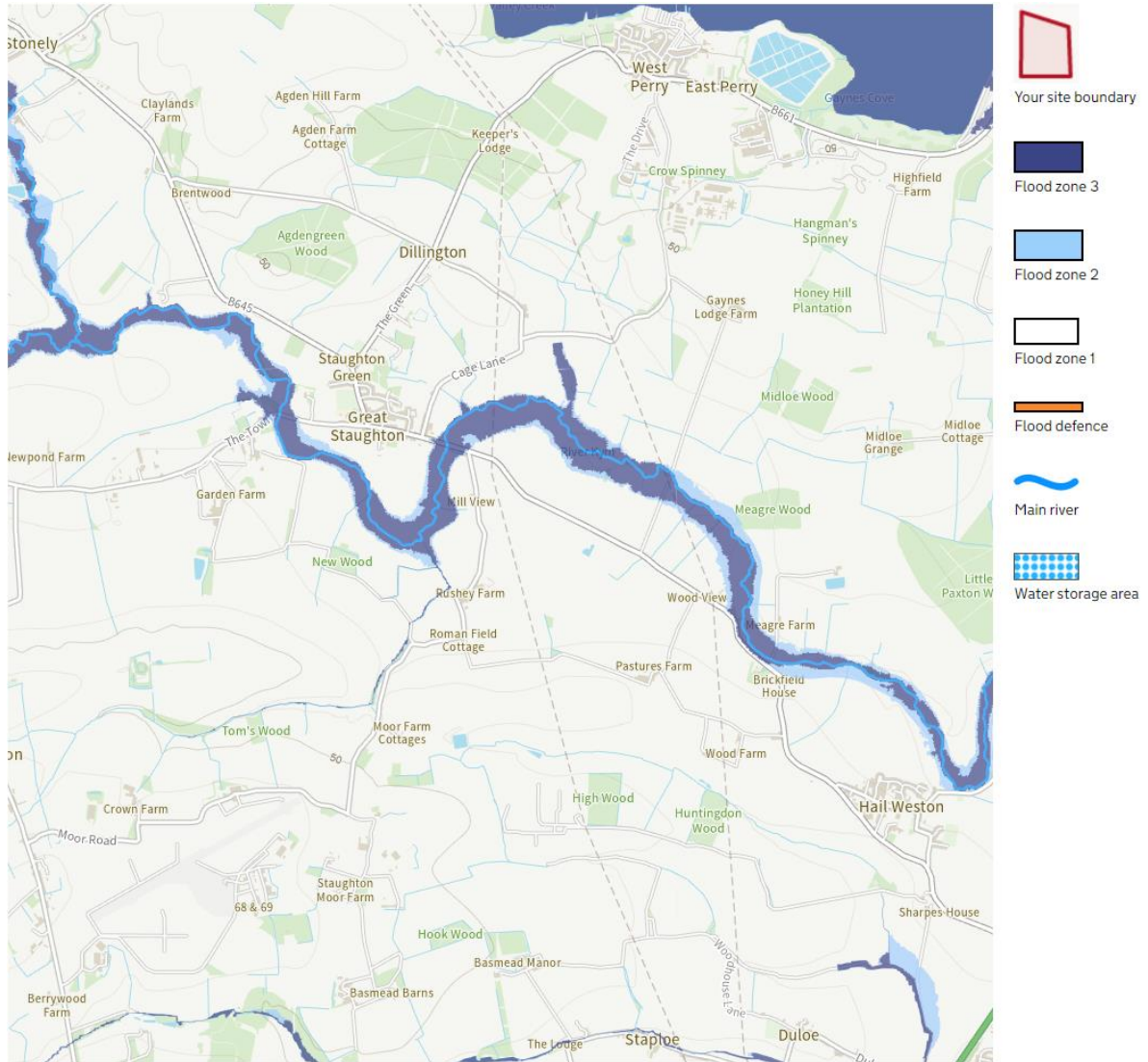
Appendix A : Context Review and Baseline



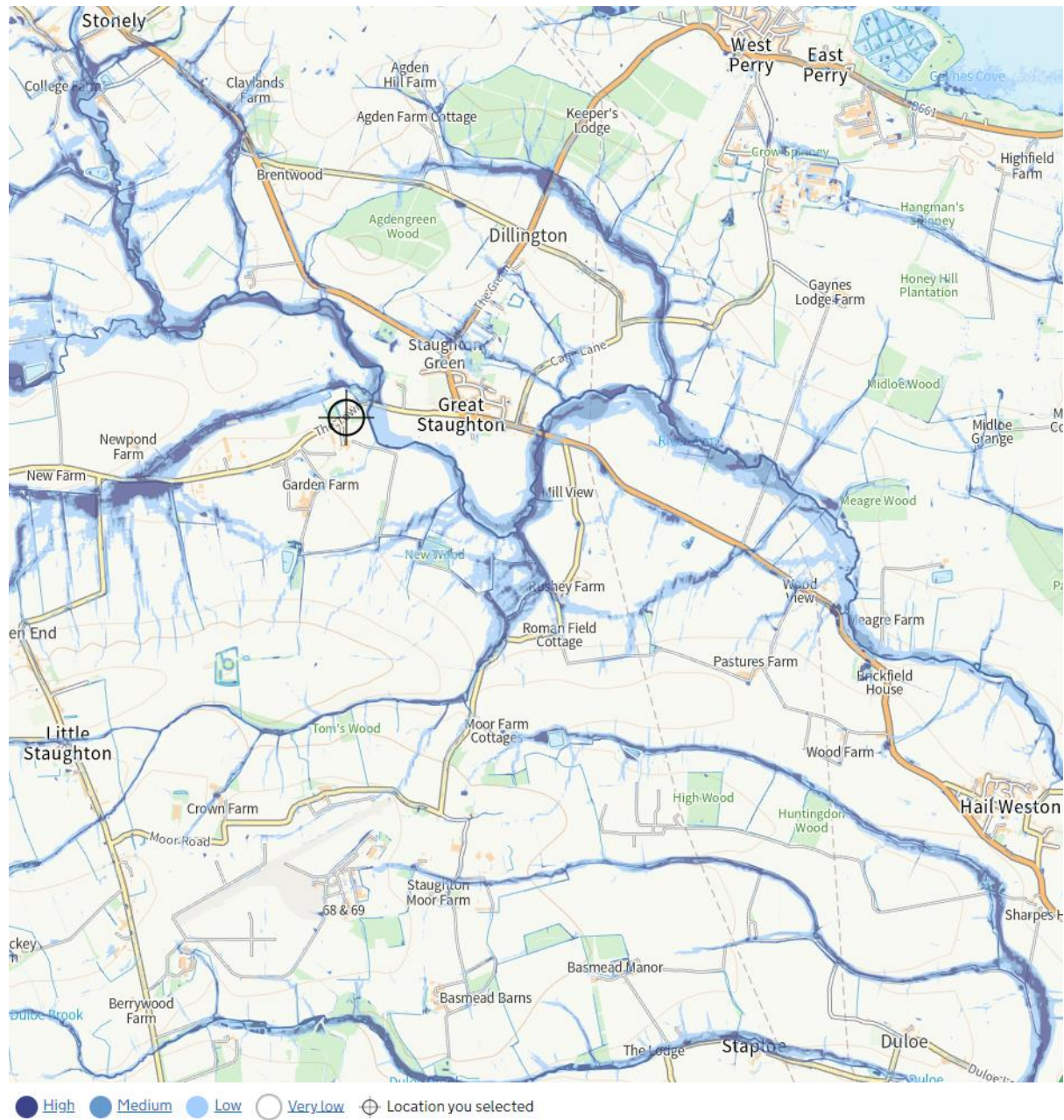
Appendix A Figure 1: Ecological Designations



Appendix A Figure 2: Habitats



Appendix A Figure 3: Fluvial flood risk



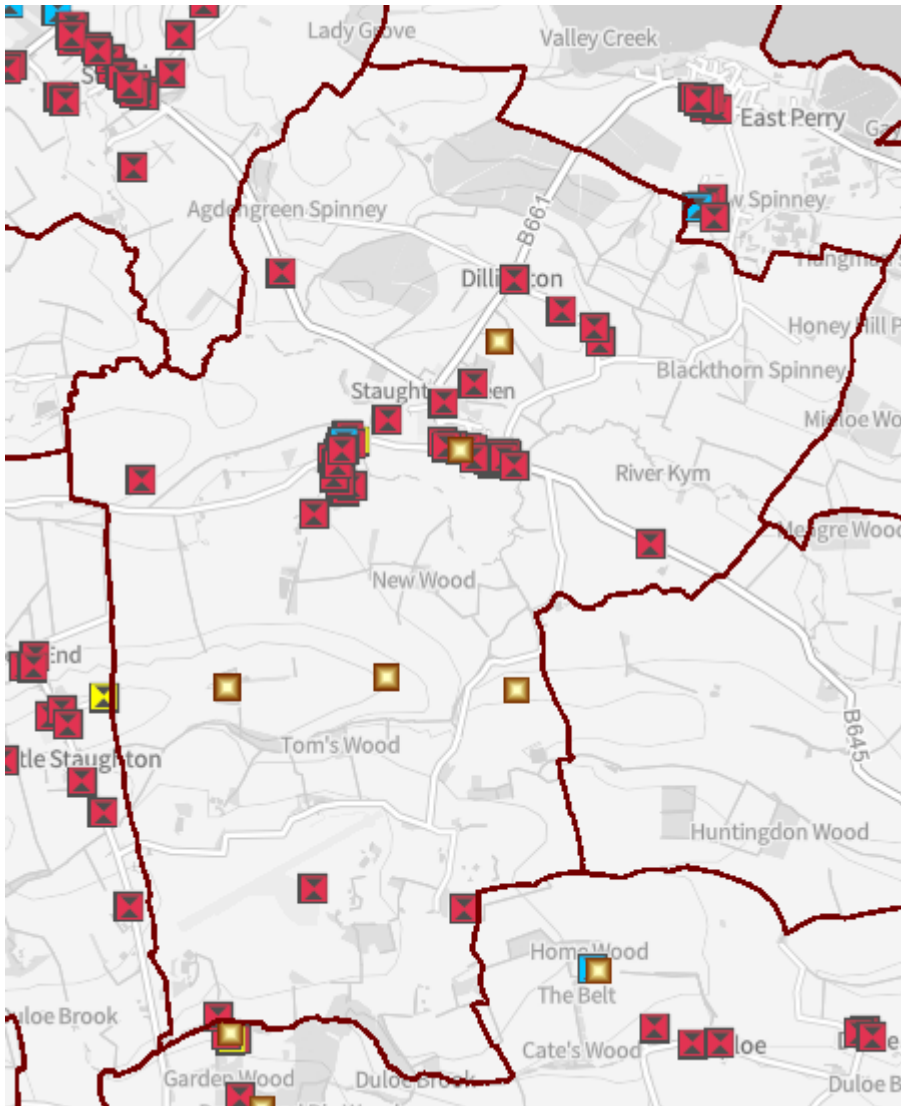
Appendix A Figure 4: Surface water flood risk

Listed Buildings

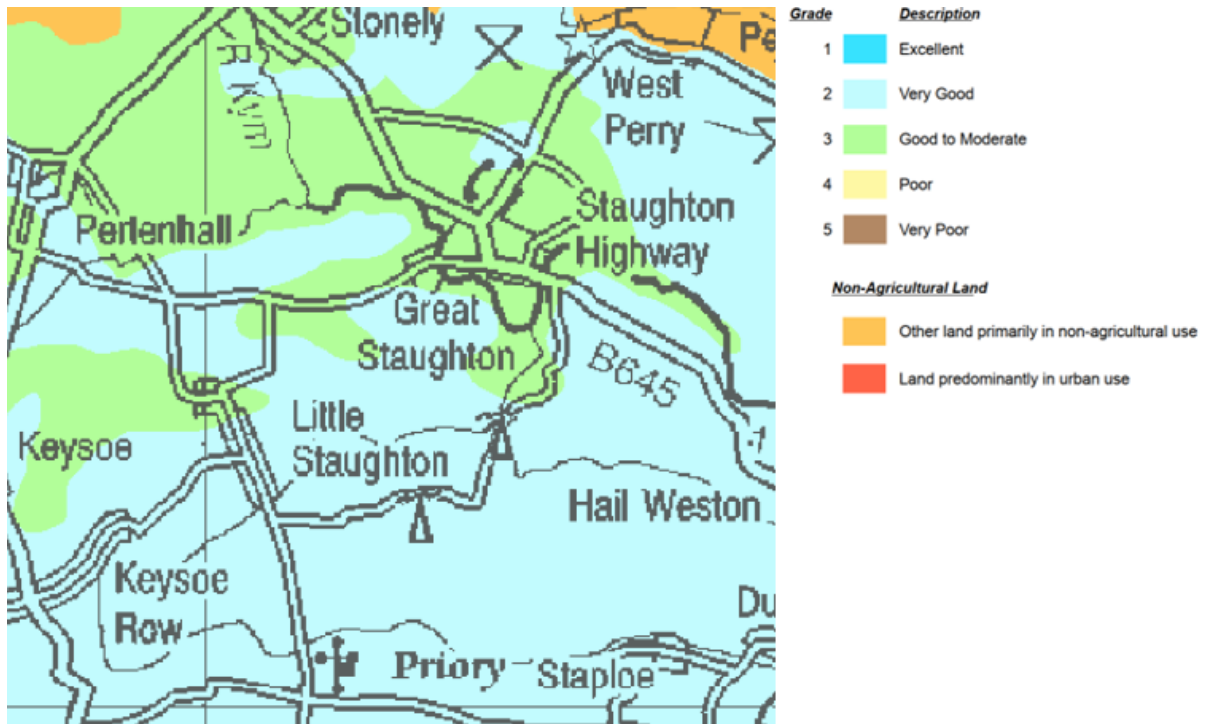
- I
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- II*

Scheduled Monuments

-



Appendix A Figure 5: Listed buildings and scheduled monuments



Appendix A Figure 6: Agricultural land classification

Table A-1: Key Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to the SEA themes

Document Title	Year of Publication
Applicable for several SEA themes	
<u>National Planning Policy Framework & Guidance (NPPF & PPG)</u>	2023
<u>Environment Act</u>	2021
<u>Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036</u>	2019
<u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u>	2018
<u>Huntingdonshire District Council - Supplementary Planning Documents and Policy Guidance (various)</u>	Various
<u>Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan: Supporting Evidence</u>	Various
<u>Local Plan Update</u>	Emerging
Air Quality	
<u>The Environmental Targets (Fine Particular Matter) (England) Regulations 2023</u>	2023
<u>2023 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) for the year 2022</u>	2023
<u>The Clean Air Strategy</u>	2019
<u>UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations</u>	2017
Biodiversity	
<u>Natural England: Urban Greening Factor for England</u>	2023
<u>Natural England: Links between Natural Environments and Mental Health</u>	2022
<u>Natural England: Links between Natural Environments and Physical Health</u>	2022
<u>Natural England: Water Quality and Nutrient Neutrality Advice</u>	2022
<u>Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy</u>	2022
<u>Huntingdonshire District Council Healthy Open Spaces Strategy</u>	2020

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework</u>	2012
<u>The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper)</u>	2011
<u>Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services</u>	2011
<u>Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act</u>	2006
<u>UK Biodiversity Action Plan</u>	1994
Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)	
<u>Huntingdonshire Climate Strategy</u>	2023
<u>Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy</u>	2022
<u>UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022</u>	2022
<u>Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener</u>	2021
<u>National Infrastructure Assessment</u>	2021
<u>The UK Sixth Carbon Budget</u>	2020
<u>National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy</u>	2020
<u>Heat Networks: Building a Market Framework</u>	2020
<u>The Clean Air Strategy 2019</u>	2019
<u>Clean Growth Strategy</u>	2019
<u>The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting</u>	2018
<u>The Clean Growth Strategy</u>	2017
<u>Huntingdonshire District Council: Level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</u>	2017
<u>How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk</u>	2012
<u>Flood and Water Management Act 2010</u>	2010
<u>Climate Change Act 2008</u>	2008
Community Wellbeing and Transport	
<u>Levelling-up and Regeneration Act</u>	2023

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy</u>	2023
<u>Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Health & Wellbeing and Integrated Care Strategy</u>	2022
<u>Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain</u>	2021
<u>Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On</u>	2020
<u>Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge</u>	2020
<u>Huntingdonshire District Council Healthy Open Spaces Strategy</u>	2020
<u>Healthy and Safe Communities Planning practice guidance</u>	2019
<u>The National Design Guide</u>	2019
<u>Planning for Sport Guidance</u>	2019
<u>The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead</u>	2017
<u>The Department for Transport’s Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy</u>	2016
<u>Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2031</u>	2015
Historic Environment	
<u>Historic England: Heritage and Climate Change</u>	2022
<u>Historic England: Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment</u>	2022
<u>Historic England: Tall Buildings Advice Note</u>	2022
<u>National Model Design Code</u>	2021
<u>The National Design Guide</u>	2019
<u>Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal Designation and Management</u>	2019
<u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u>	2018
<u>Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning: The Setting of Heritage Assets</u>	2017
<u>Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</u>	2016

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans</u>	2015
Landscape	
<u>Huntingdonshire District Council Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document 2022</u>	2022
<u>National Model Design Code</u>	2021
<u>The National Design Guide</u>	2019
Land, Soil, and Water Resources	
<u>Anglian Water: Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024</u>	2023
<u>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan</u>	2021
<u>Waste Management Plan for England</u>	2013
<u>Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England</u>	2011
<u>Water for Life</u>	2011
<u>Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England</u>	2009