

## **LONG STRATTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### **Screening Opinion for SEA**

#### **Introduction**

This screening report is designed to determine whether or not the proposal for a Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

The purpose of the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan is to enable local residents of Long Stratton and part of Tharston to develop a planning policy document for their local area so they can better reflect the aspirations of local people in how they wish to see their community to develop over the following 20 years or so, where development should go and what the nature of that development should be.

The legislative background set out below outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise.

#### **Legislative Background**

The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC and was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations. Detailed guidance on these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005).

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required Local Authorities to produce Sustainability Appraisals (SA) for all local development documents to meet the requirement of the EU directive on SEA. It is considered best practice to incorporate requirements of the SEA Directive into an SA.

As they are not a local development document, Neighbourhood Development Plans do not require a Sustainability Appraisal (although a voluntary SA can, of course, be undertaken). Due to the requirements of the SEA Directive, it is however, necessary to undertake a screening exercise to establish whether an SEA is required.

This report focuses on screening for SEA and the criteria for establishing whether a full assessment is needed.

## Assessment

Table 1 shows the assessment of whether the NDP will require a full SEA. The questions below are drawn from Figure 3 of the 'Practical Guide to the SEA Directive' which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

Table 1: Establishing the need for SEA

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Reason</b>
1. Is the Plan subject to preparation and / or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament of Government? (Article 2(a))	Yes	The Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Local Plan
2. Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))	Yes	Whilst a Neighbourhood Plan may not in itself be required, a plan of some form covering land use is. The Neighbourhood Plan is addressing part of that requirement and the process for producing a Neighbourhood Plan is covered by legislative provisions.
3. Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the SEA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))	No	The Neighbourhood Plan is prepared for town and country planning land use, but it is not anticipated that it will be a tool to manage development of the scale set out in the projects listed in Annexes I and II to the SEA Directive.
5. Does the Plan determine use of small areas at local level OR is it a minor modification of a Plan subject to Art 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	No	It is understood that the Neighbourhood Plan will not seek to allocate areas of land for development or use
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	No	See Table 2

Table 2: Determining the likely significance of effects

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Is there an effect?</b>	<b>Is the effect significant?</b>	<b>Reason</b>
<i>The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular to:</i>			
1a) The degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	Yes	No	The Neighbourhood Plan will provide development management policies for future planning applications to be considered against. It is understood that the Plan will not allocate land for new development. Therefore, the impact of such policies on the environment are likely to be minor.
1b) The degree to which the Plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	Possibly	No	The policies may affect the implementation of non-strategic Development Management Policies currently being prepared by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership within the immediate area (prepared by South Norfolk Council, Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council). It will not influence or impact on their more general use across the district.
1c) The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable	Yes	No	The Neighbourhood Plan is likely to include policies that affect environmental considerations, (for example, transport, housing and green

development			infrastructure policies that relate to the delivery of sustainable development)
1d) Environmental problems relevant to the Plan	Yes	No	The Neighbourhood Plan is to contain a number of policies relating to environmental issues (e.g. flood risk)
1e) The relevance of the Plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection)	No	No	The Neighbourhood Plan is not relevant to the implementation of European legislation such as waste management or water protection
<i>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to:</i>			
2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Yes	No	Whilst there are likely to be minor impacts from the use of policies in the determination of planning applications, the absence of the allocation of land or the promotion of major development resulting in significant changes in land-use means that these impacts are unlikely to be significant and the policies of the plan will be applied in conjunction with other national and local planning policy/guidance
2b) The cumulative nature of the effects	Yes	No	The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land or promote significant new development
2c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects	Yes	No	There are no trans-boundary issues

			across member states. Whilst it is possible that implementation of the policies within the Plan may have some impact on neighbouring parishes, they are unlikely to be of a significant effect
2d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	No	No	There are no significant risks to human health or the environment
2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Yes	No	The Plan relates to the parish of Long Stratton and part of the Tharston and Hapton parish area. The absence of land allocations or promotion of significant new development in the Plan mean that there only likely to be minor effects.
2f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,</li> <li>ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</li> <li>iii) intensive land-use</li> </ul>	Yes	No	The Plan area includes a small number of Listed Buildings
2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or	Yes	No	The Plan area lies adjacent to a number of areas/ landscapes that are subject to local designation. A

international protection status			SSSI ('Big Wood') adjoins the southern boundary of the Plan area. There are no national or internationally protected sites within the Plan area.
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### **Screening Outcome**

As part of this consideration, the statutory consultees for the SEA we invited to comment on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan. No additional comments were received from these relevant bodies.

As a result of the assessment it is concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects due to the absence of any land allocations or promotion of significant new development. It therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

**South Norfolk Council Planning Policy Team**  
**17 March 2020**