

Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) &
Habitat Regulations Assessment

Screening Report
(Cannock Chase Council, 20th March 2025)

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2 SEA Screening	7
3 Establishing the need for a SEA	9
4 SEA Screening	11
5 HRA Screening	14
6 Conclusion.....	20
Appendix 3: Details of European sites with the potential to be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan	26
Appendix 4 Consultation with statutory environmental bodies	29

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan (NCNP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/ EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and / or a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). See Appendix 1 for a map showing the extent of the NCNP area
- 1.2 This screening assessment has been undertaken based on the information submitted by Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group dated 18th March 2025 as shown in Appendix 2 The information provided at this stage is limited, setting out the likely key components of the NCNP but with no draft policies or maps available at this stage for the purpose of screening. The draft Neighbourhood Plan has not been subject to consultation at this stage.
- 1.3 National Planning Practice Guidance indicates ‘A neighbourhood plan may require a strategic environmental assessment if the draft neighbourhood plan falls within the scope of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. This may be the case if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This may be the case, for example, where a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development’, paragraph: 073 Reference ID: 41-073-20190509.
- 1.4 The HRA refers to the assessment of the potential effects of a development plan on one or more European sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites, as well as candidate sites.
- 1.5 SPAs are classified under the European Council Directive “on the conservation of wild birds” (79/409/EEC; ‘Birds Directive’) for the protection of wild birds and their habitats (including particularly rare and vulnerable species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive, and migratory species);
- 1.6 SACs are designated under the Habitats Directive and target particular habitats (Annex 1) and/or species (Annex II) identified as being of European importance.
- 1.7 Ramsar sites support internationally important wetland habitats and are listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention, 1971).
- 1.8 These are collectively referred to as designated sites within this report.
- 1.9 Figure 1 presents a diagram widely used to show the general assessment process for whether plans and programs require an SEA.

Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations present criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment as set out below. The NCNP will be screened taking into account this process and use of the criteria to determine whether an SEA is required.

The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to—

(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;

(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;

(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;

(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and

(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of [retained EU law] on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

1.10 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to—

(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;

(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;

(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;

(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);

(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);

(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—

(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;

(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or

(iii) intensive land-use; and

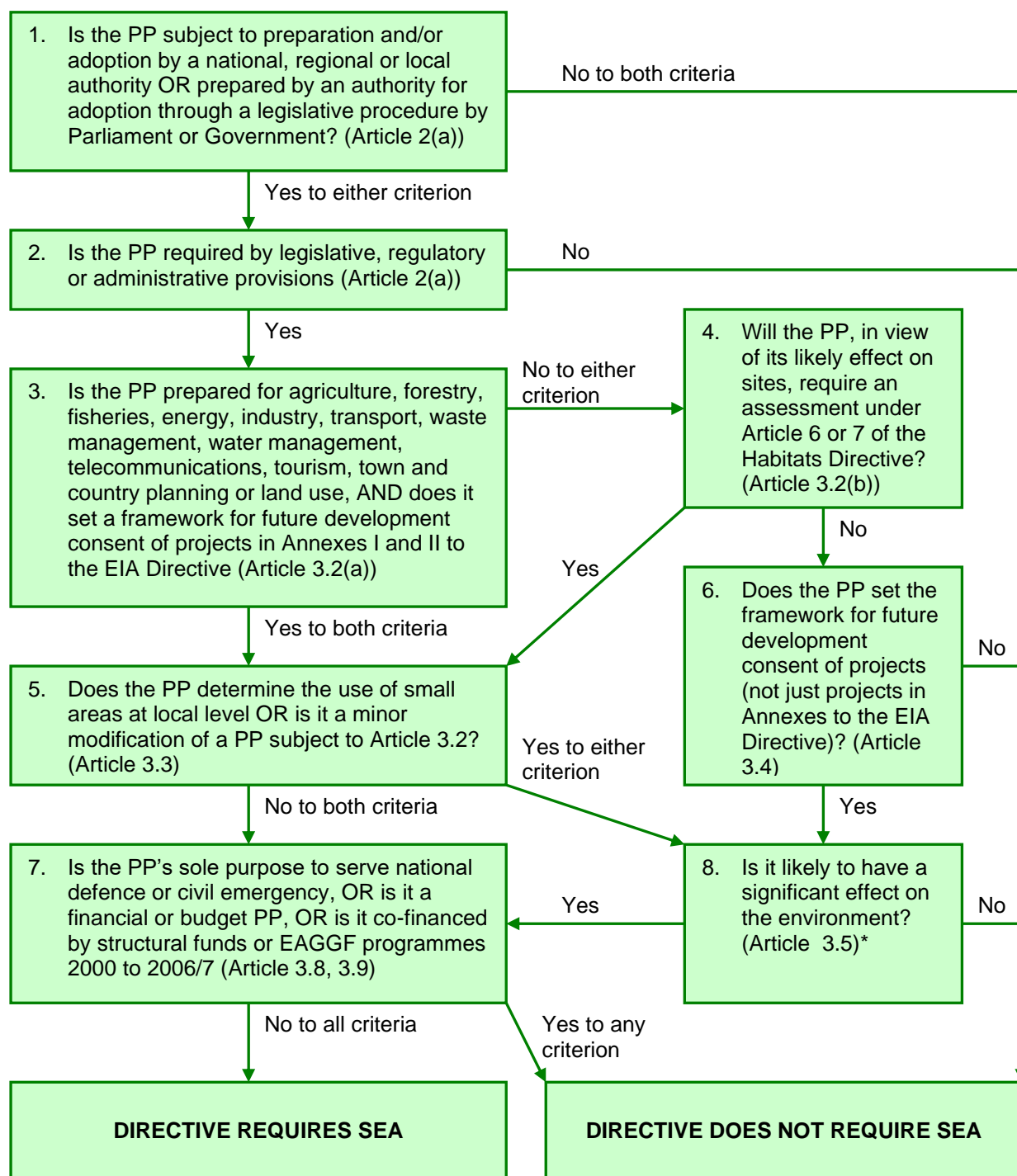
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

1.11 The process of SEA screening only refers to the assessment of the potential effects of a development plan on one or more sites afforded the highest level of protection in the UK: SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites. The former two were classified under European Union (EU) legislation but, since 1 January 2021, are protected in the UK by the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended). Although the EU Directives

from which the UK's Habitats Regulations originally derived are no longer binding, the Regulations still make reference to the lists of habitats and species that the sites were designated for, which are listed in annexes to the EU Directives.

- 1.12 The District Council is required to consult three statutory consultation bodies designated within the regulations, these are; Historic England, Natural England and Environment Agency on whether a SEA is required.

Figure 1 A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Directive 2005 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

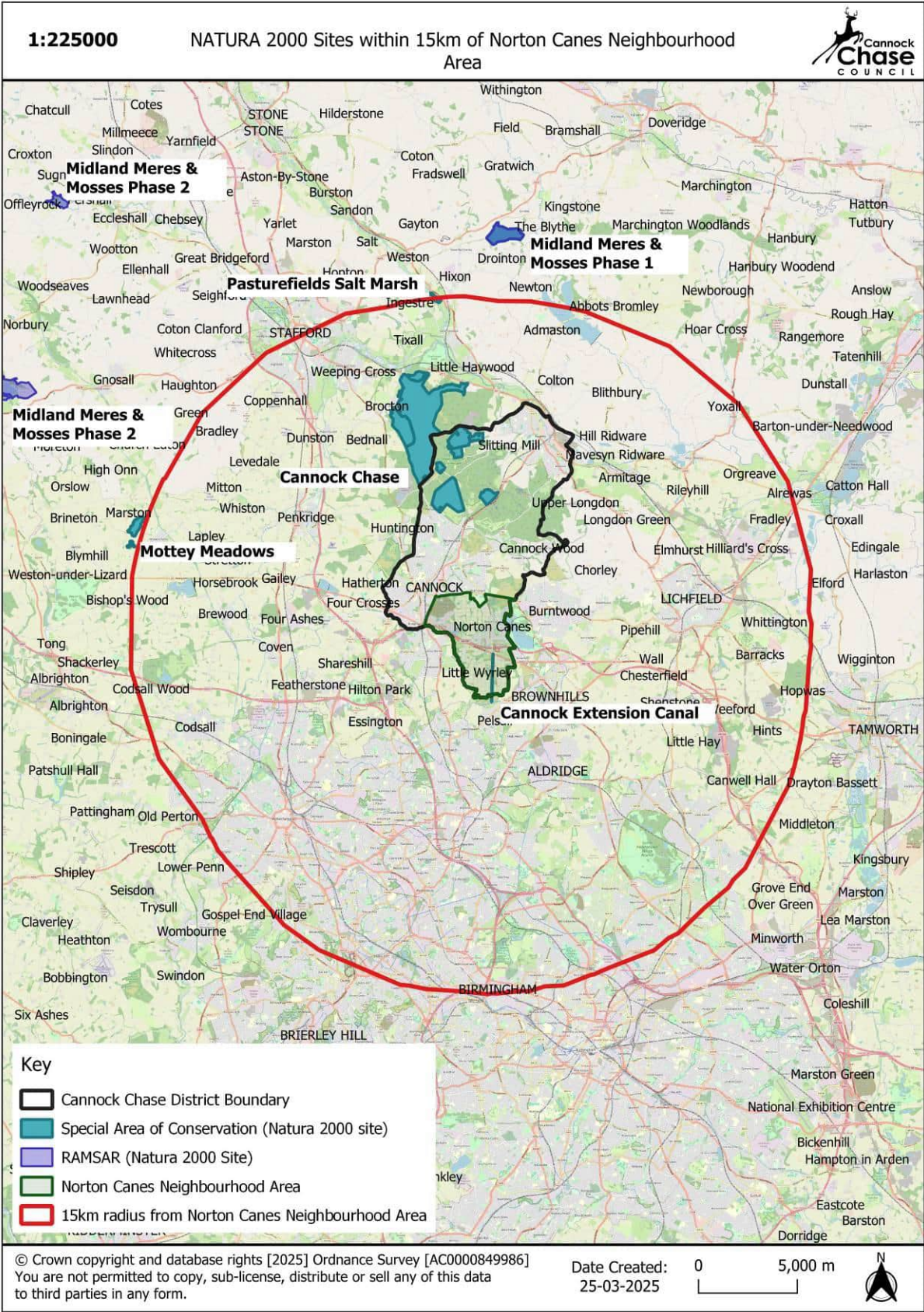


* The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

2 SEA Screening

- 2.1 Evidence to support the Local Plan has identified a 15km radius around designated sites where impacts from development could occur. The 15km distance has been used both in the application of a mitigation fund arising from visitor pressure and for use in screening the impact on air quality for designated sites. As such, the following designated sites will be considered when undertaking the SEA screening of the NCNP.
- 2.2 Figure 2 shows designated sites in relation to the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area with a 15km buffer and Appendix 3 shows the details of the designated sites within 15km of the NCNP area..
- 2.3 SPA and SAC sites within 15km of the Norton Canes Neighbourhood Area
- Cannock Extension Canal SAC - within Neighbourhood Area
 - Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - 4.10km at closest point to boundary of Neighbourhood Area
 - Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC - 14.75km at closest point to boundary of Neighbourhood Area
- 2.4 SPA and SAC sites within 20km of the Norton Canes Neighbourhood Area
- West Midlands Mosses SAC
 - Motte Meadows SAC
- 2.5 SPA and SAC sites in the wider vicinity with potential hydrological connections
- Fens Pools SAC
 - River Mease SAC
 - Humber Estuary, SPA and Ramsar site

Figure 2: 15km buffer around Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan area showing European designated sites



3 Establishing the need for a SEA

3.1 The following table utilises the questions set out in Figure 1 to determine how whether the draft plan requires SEA. The answer and reasoning is set out in Table 1 for each question.

Table 1: Establishing the Need for SEA

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
1. Is the PP (plan or programme) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	The preparation of NPs is subject to: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012. The preparation and adoption of the CWNP is regulated under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The draft NP is prepared by Norton Canes Parish Council (as the 'relevant body') and will be 'made' by Cannock Chase Council as the <u>local planning authority</u> .
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	No	NPs are not a legislative requirement. However, once 'made' it will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and be used when making decisions on planning applications in the area it covers.
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	Yes	The draft NP contains land use planning policies for town and country planning, and land use purposes. As such, it sets a framework for future development consent of development projects, which may fall under section 10 of the Annex II of the EIA Directive.

4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?(Art. 3.2 (b))	Yes	The Neighbourhood Plan could potentially have an impact on internationally designated sites covered by the Habitats Regulations. See screening assessment for HRA in following section of this report.
5. Does the PP Determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art.3.3)	Yes	The NCNP will identify allocations for development at the local level and may contain policies which influence use of land locally. Once 'made' the NCNP will form part of the statutory development plan and be used when making decisions on planning applications of small areas at the local level.
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Yes	The NCNP, once 'made', forms part of the statutory development plan and will be used to determine planning applications within the designated Norton Canes Neighbourhood Area.
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	No	The NCNP does not have these specified purposes.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	Yes	The NCNP could potentially have a significant effect on the environment, although this is not possible to determine based on the information provided at this stage.

3.2 The results of the assessment shows there is a requirement for SEA screening.

4 SEA Screening

- 4.1 To determine whether the Plan might have significant environmental effects (stage 8), its potential scope should be assessed against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 4.2 Table 2 considers the characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan and Table 3 considers characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

Table 2: Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive): *The characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan*

The Characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan, having regard to:	Likely significant effect on designated sites	Assessment
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	Uncertain	Once 'made'; the NCNP will set out the framework which will be used to determine proposals for development within the neighbourhood area. It is indicated that the NCNP will include site allocation policies which would guide different forms of development on a number of sites, mainly indicated to be small scale and indicative locations are outlined. One of the sites is directly adjacent to the Cannock Extension Canal SAC (Grove Colliery), although the indicative proposals are small scale redevelopment. At this stage, the specific boundary, scale and quantum of development as a result of the plan is not known. It also proposes improvements to existing Rights of Way including a pedestrian/cycle crossing of the A5 in the vicinity of the Cannock Extension Canal SAC. There is therefore the potential for an effect on designated sites resulting from the proposals in the plan, although it cannot be determined whether this is significant.
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	The draft NP is required to conform to national policy (NPPF) and strategic policies in the Cannock Chase Local Plan (Part 1). The draft NP, if made, will form part of the Development Plan for Cannock Chase and be used to determine planning applications within the Parish.

The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	Uncertain	Any Neighbourhood Plan is required to contribute to sustainable development in compliance with the Basic Conditions under the Localism Act 2011. This does not infer a likely significant effect on designated sites, however at this stage it remains unclear.
Environmental problems relevant to the plan.	Uncertain	The indicative range of policies are not perceived to cause environmental problems. However, although unlikely, it is not clear based on the information available at this stage whether any of the proposals for development within the plan would result in environmental problems, particularly the Cannock Extension Canal SAC which is sensitive to changes in water quality.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	No	The NP is not proposing development specifically related to waste management or water management.

Table 3: Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive): Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected

Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to;	Likely significant effect on designated sites	Assessment
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	Uncertain	Proposals for development will result in a permanent change to the use of land. It is indicated this could include development on undeveloped land (housing for the elderly, relocation of Traveller Site, leisure uses adjacent A5). It is not clear at this stage whether any development proposal would have a likely significant effect on designated sites, but if this was determined it would not be reversible.
The cumulative nature of the effects.	Uncertain	The cumulative effects of proposals within the NCNP will require consideration once the quantum, location and scale of development is known, in combination with sites proposed for allocation in the emerging Cannock Chase Local Plan.

The trans boundary nature of the effects.	No	The proposals within the NCNP are unlikely to have a significant impact on neighbouring areas.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	No	No risks to human health or the environment have been identified as a result of draft proposals in the NCNP.
The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	No	The scale of development proposed through the NCNP at this stage appears to be relatively small, therefore effects are likely to be localised. It is unlikely that the effects of proposals within the neighbourhood plan will be large scale and extensive.
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage - exceeded environmental quality standards - intensive land use 	Yes	<p>Norton Canes Parish contains two Grade II* Listed Buildings (Little Wyrley Hall and St James' Church) and one Grade II Listed Building (Barn south of Little Wyrley Hall). The Parish Council have identified Grove Colliery as having potential for heritage-led regeneration due to the history of mining at the site.</p> <p>The Parish contains Cannock Extension Canal SAC containing Annex II species Floating water-plantain. This is vulnerable to change according to both water quality, air quality and the use of the canal by boat traffic (a low volume enabling the water plantain to flourish, while depressing the growth of emergents).</p>
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	Uncertain	It is proposed that the NCNP will include allocations for development. It is possible that this could have an effect on Cannock Chase SAC and/or Cannock Extension Canal SAC although this is yet to be determined.

SEA Screening Outcome

- 4.3 As a result of the assessment above, it is considered uncertain whether any significant detrimental environmental effects will occur from the implementation of the NCNP. In line with the precautionary principle, a full SEA is therefore required to be undertaken.

5 HRA Screening

5.1 The requirement to undertake HRA of development plans was confirmed by the amendments to the Habitats Regulations published for England and Wales in July 2007 and updated in 2010 and again in 2012. These updates were consolidated into the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

5.2 In accordance with the Habitats Regulation Assessment, the process of HRA screening is undertaken as follows:

Screening is a simple assessment to check or screen if a plan:

- is directly connected with or necessary for the conservation management of a European site; or
- is likely to have a significant effect on a European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects

Following the ruling in *People Over Wind*¹, Stage 1 Screening can only take account of those elements which are essential to, or characteristic of, a plan, and which are not specifically aimed at mitigating specified impacts on named international sites. .

5.3 When the Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' it will become part of the Cannock Chase Council Local Development Framework. The Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help determine planning applications within the Norton Canes designated Neighbourhood Area, it is therefore, NOT directly connected with, or necessary for the conservation management of a European designated site.

5.4 The results of the screening assessment based on the likelihood of significant effects of the draft NCNP on European designated sites are shown in Table 4.

¹ *People Over Wind & Sweetman v. Coillte Teoranta* (C-323/17)

Table 4: Habitats Regulations screening of elements of the draft NCDP

Element of Plan	Screening Conclusion	Justification
Proposed heritage led regeneration of former Grove Colliery Lime Lane B4154 including new built development on the brownfield parts of the site. Taking account of the “loosening” of controls on development on Green Belts with reference to “Grey Belt” in the latest National Planning Policy Guidance, this could include development of live/work units.	Screened in	Policy could lead to development immediately adjacent to Cannock Extension Canal SAC. Key considerations include run-off affecting water quality, uncertainty of proposals and whether this would increase leisure/recreational use of the canal and land adjacent to the canal, litter, pollution, levels of vehicles and impact on air quality. These factors could result in a disturbance or change to the habitat conditions for the qualifying feature: Floating water-plantain.
Identifying a site or sites within the village for housing for the elderly, including possibly a substantial area of undeveloped land behind existing properties between the village centre car park and Burntwood Road/Walsall Road, or if this can't be made to work consider use of part of the Green belt land west of Hednesford Road.	Screened in	Policy could lead to development on previously undeveloped land. Lack of clarity on precise scale and location. Potential for impact on Cannock Chase SAC and/or Cannock Extension Canal SAC.
Promoting development on small infill sites within the village for the erection of affordable bungalows for the elderly and support 5 to 10 per cent of small bungalows on major new housing sites.	Screened out	Sustainable infill development which accords with national and local planning policy is currently acceptable in principle within the development boundary. New residential development is subject to a charge which funds mitigation arising from increased visitor pressure on Cannock Chase SAC. Therefore, this proposal will not result in any change.

Element of Plan	Screening Conclusion	Justification
Identifying a site adjacent to the existing Community Centre on Brownhills Road for an extension or new building to provide additional indoor leisure/recreation facilities.	Screened out	The Community Centre is within development boundary and development could come forward in this location without allocation in the NCNP.
Supporting creation of a roadside uses/leisure services hub on the land between the Turf Inn and the M6 Toll.	Screened in	Policy could lead to development on previously undeveloped land outside the development boundary. Potential for impact on Cannock Chase SAC and/or Cannock Extension Canal SAC
Supporting allocation of a site south of the A5 Watling Street and east of Watling Street Business Park for the re-location of an existing Travelling Showpeople site from Grove Colliery partly to enable implementation of policy 1 above to be achieved.	Screened in	Policy could lead to development on previously undeveloped land outside the development boundary. Potential for impact on Cannock Chase SAC and/or Cannock Extension Canal SAC due to run off/increased access
Support allocation of a site for a convenience store adjacent to the major Norton Hall Lane housing site.	Screened in	Scale and location of convenience store uncertain. Potential for impact on Cannock Chase SAC and/or Cannock Extension Canal SAC
Supporting improvements to the existing footpath/bridleway network across the Parish including identifying 5 key circular routes form the village, possibly with funding from major housing and employment developments in the Green Belt proposed in the Cannock Chase Local Plan.	Screened in	Any impact dependent on whether footpath/bridleway link will utilise the existing road/footpath network or result in the use of undeveloped land, and whether the links will increase access to designated sites.

Element of Plan	Screening Conclusion	Justification
Work with partners to achieve a link through Norton Canes to National Cycle Route 5.	Screened in	Any impact dependent on whether cycle link will utilise the existing road/footpath network or result in the use of undeveloped land, and whether the links will increase access to designated sites. Screened in due to uncertainty.
Specific provision for a safe pedestrian/cycle crossing of the A5 in the vicinity of the Cannock Extension Canal.	Screened in	Potential for increased access to Cannock Extension Canal. Key considerations include uncertainty of proposals and whether this would increase leisure/recreational use of the canal and land adjacent to the canal, litter, pollution.
In relation to community facilities a policy to support retention of existing or mitigation against loss.	Screened out	Will not result in development or change.
Prioritising biodiversity improvements based on the Nature Recovery Strategy produced for the Parish Council by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust including opportunities arising from major housing and employment sites in the Green Belt proposed in the Cannock Chase Local Plan.	Screened out	Will not result in development or change. Potentially beneficial effect.
Identifying a list of buildings for inclusion in a local list of buildings of architectural and historic interest giving priority to their retention and sensitive alterations.	Screened out	Will not result in increased development, other than sensitive alterations.

Element of Plan	Screening Conclusion	Justification
Support for Conservation Area status of the hamlet of Little Wyrley.	Screened out	Will not result in development or change.
Support initiatives to train/employ local people particularly in connection with major new employment allocations at Kingswood and adjacent to Watling Street Business Park proposed in the Cannock Chase Local Plan.	Screened out	Will not result in development or change.
Support expansion of health services to meet the needs of a growing population with use of planning obligations in connection with major housing developments.	Screened in	Unclear if the proposal will lead to increased development which could impact Cannock Chase SAC and/or Cannock Extension Canal SAC
Resolve the issue of improvements to primary education with use of existing and proposed planning obligations in connection with major housing developments.	Screened in	Unclear if the proposal will lead to increased development which could impact Cannock Chase SAC and/or Cannock Extension Canal SAC
Identify a boundary for the village centre within which proposals for retail, food and drink and other local service uses would be supported.	Screened out	Will not result in development or change.

Element of Plan	Screening Conclusion	Justification
Support retention of and improvements to smaller open spaces within the village in addition to those identified in the Local Plan as Green Space Network.	Screened out	Will not result in development or change. Potentially beneficial effect.

Cumulative Impact

- 5.5 It is not clear the scale of new development proposed by the NCNP, although it would be anticipated that it would be less than the emerging Cannock Chase Local Plan. The cumulative impact of increased development should be considered, particularly in relation to any potential hydrological connections to Cannock Extension Canal SAC.
- 5.6 Government guidance states that you must take a precautionary approach with decisions at each stage of the HRA process.
For example, if you cannot rule out:
- the risk of a plan having a significant effect on a European site at stage 1: screening, you must carry out an Appropriate Assessment
- 5.7 The screening exercise has resulted in a number of outcomes being uncertain as a result of the intention for the Neighbourhood Plan to contain site allocations for development and the limited information available on the precise location, quantum of development, scale of site and use of the land and cumulative impact of the site allocations, in combination with proposals in the emerging Cannock Chase Local Plan in production by Cannock Chase District Council.
- 5.8 The Cannock Extension Canal SAC is in the Neighbourhood Area and the Neighbourhood Area is in close proximity (within 5km) of the Cannock Chase SAC and within 15km of the Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC.
- 5.9 Whilst indicative information has been provided which is sufficient for the purposes of screening, there is uncertainty whether the Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan would have a likely significant effect on the identified SAC sites within 15km of the Neighbourhood Area.

HRA Screening Outcome

- 5.10 In line with the precautionary principle, a likely significant effect on the integrity of the European sites cannot be ruled out at this stage and therefore Appropriate Assessment is required.

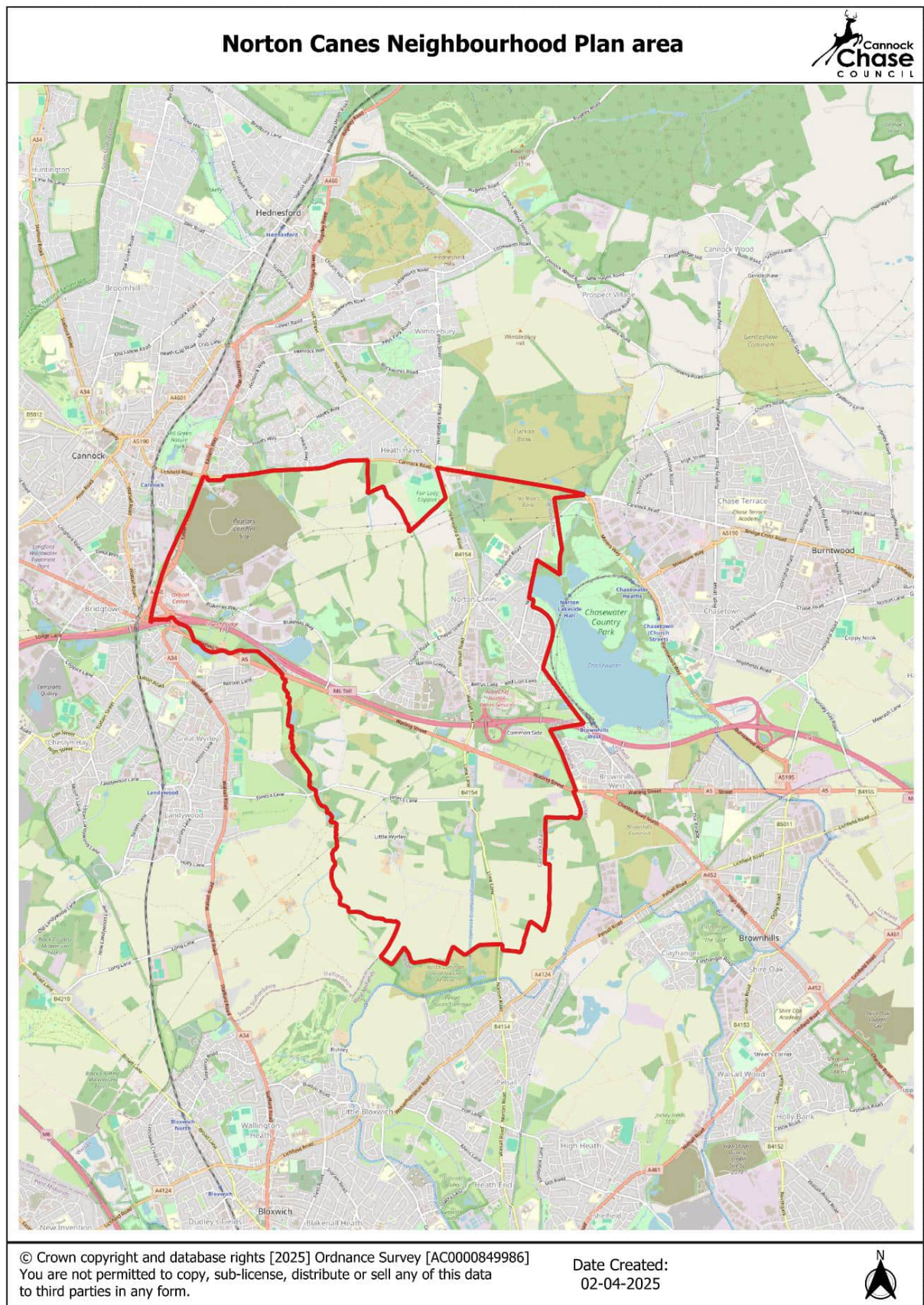
6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The lack of detailed information provided at this stage of the consideration of the NCNP makes it difficult to assess whether a significant effect is likely to occur on a European site as a result of policies and proposals in the Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.2 As a result of the assessment, and in line with the precautionary principle, it is considered that the Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan

should be subject to the process of Sustainability Appraisal and that an Appropriate Assessment of the plan will be required.

- 6.3 It is recommended that the process of Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment are undertaken at the point at which draft policies and site allocations are available to be tested. Greater clarity on the proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan will result in greater accuracy of the assessment of likely significant effects on the European Sites.
- 6.4 The emerging Cannock Chase Local Plan (2018-2040) has been subject to the process of Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment. Whilst the Local Plan is not yet adopted, some of the findings of the SA and HRA process may be relevant to the consideration of the likely effects of the Neighbourhood Plan, due to the fact that the Local Plan proposes a higher rate of growth and development. It is advised that these documents are considered in any further work related to SA and HRA of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Appendix 1: Map of NCNP area



Appendix 2: Details of Neighbourhood Plan sent to Cannock Chase Council by Norton Canes Parish Council on 18 March 2025

NORTON CANES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT FORMAL REQUEST TO CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL FOR SCREENING

Part of the statutory process involved in producing a Neighbourhood Plan is to seek a formal screening opinion from the District Council as to whether the Plan will require to be accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) based on information about the likelihood of significant environmental effects of the proposed policy content of the plan. Such effects are likely where land is proposed to be allocated for development which could result in impacts on statutorily protected sites including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SACs are of European significance and SSSIs of national significance.

Within the Parish there is a SAC – The Cannock Extension Canal running south from the A5 Watling Street to the Parish boundary with Walsall Borough. Its SAC status is based on the existence of a rare floating water plantain. There is also an SSSI at No Mans Bank situated between the A5190 Cannock Road and Burntwood Road which is a heathland habitat.

Informal advice has been sought from District Council planners, who have indicated that a full draft plan with policies does not need to be available for a screening determination to be made, but rather as a minimum an indicative list of policies or topics that are proposed to be covered in the Plan and in particular intentions regarding development allocations.

The proposed list of policies and proposals in the document below is a summary of the proposed content of the Neighbourhood Plan which has been discussed with the Process Group and the Steering Group. The intention is therefore to submit this list to the District Council and formally request a screening determination. If, as anticipated, the response is that SEA and HRA will be required, this information can then be sent to Locality, an organization who offer Parish Councils funding for this type of work, with a formal application for grant funding. It is understood that planning consultants are in place to carry out the work and so enable the content of the plan to be finalized, consulted on and then submitted to the District Council for them to organize an Examination into the Plan.

NORTON CANES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SUMMARY OF DRAFT PROPOSED POLICIES

Proposed policies involving allocation of sites for development

1. Proposed heritage led regeneration of former Grove Colliery Lime Lane B4154 including new built development on the brownfield parts of the site. Taking account of the “loosening” of controls on development on Green Belts with reference to “Grey Belt” in the latest National Planning Policy Guidance, this could include development of live/work units.
2. Identifying a site or sites within the village for housing for the elderly, including possibly a substantial area of undeveloped land behind existing properties between the village centre car park and Burntwood Road/Walsall Road, or if this can’t be made to work consider use of part of the Green belt land west of Hednesford Road .
3. Promoting development on small infill sites within the village for the erection of affordable bungalows for the elderly and support 5 to 10 per cent of small bungalows on major new housing sites.
4. Identifying a site adjacent to the existing Community Centre on Brownhills Road for an extension or new building to provide additional indoor leisure/recreation facilities.
5. Supporting creation of a roadside uses/leisure services hub on the land between the Turf Inn and the M6 Toll.
6. Supporting allocation of a site south of the A5 Watling Street and east of Watling Street Business Park for the re-location of an existing Travelling Showpeople site from Grove Colliery partly to enable implementation of policy 1 above to be achieved.
7. Support allocation of a site for a convenience store adjacent to the major Norton Hall Lane housing site.

Other proposed policies

8. Supporting improvements to the existing footpath/bridleway network across the Parish including identifying 5 key circular routes form the village, possibly with funding from major housing and employment developments in the Green Belt proposed in the Cannock Chase Local Plan.
9. Work with partners to achieve a link through Norton Canes to National Cycle Route 5.
10. Specific provision for a safe pedestrian/cycle crossing of the A5 in the vicinity of the Cannock Extension Canal.
11. In relation to community facilities a policy to support retention of existing or mitigation against loss.
12. Prioritising biodiversity improvements based on the Nature Recovery Strategy produced for the Parish Council by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust including opportunities arising from major housing and employment sites in the Green Belt proposed in the Cannock Chase Local Plan.

13. Identifying a list of buildings for inclusion in a local list of buildings of architectural and historic interest giving priority to their retention and sensitive alterations.
14. Support for Conservation Area status of the hamlet of Little Wyrley.
15. Support initiatives to train/employ local people particularly in connection with major new employment allocations at Kingswood and adjacent to Watling Street Business Park proposed in the Cannock Chase Local Plan..
16. Support expansion of health services to meet the needs of a growing population with use of planning obligations in connection with major housing developments.
17. Resolve the issue of improvements to primary education with use of existing and proposed planning obligations in connection with major housing developments.
18. Identify a boundary for the village centre within which proposals for retail, food and drink and other local service uses would be supported.
19. Support retention of and improvements to smaller open spaces within the village in addition to those identified in the Local Plan as Green Space Network.

Appendix 3: Details of European sites with the potential to be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan

Cannock Extension Canal

Qualifying Features

S1831. Floating water-plantain *Luronium natans*

Conservation Objectives

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Non-qualifying habitats and species on which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend

Cannock Extension Canal in central England is an example of anthropogenic, lowland habitat supporting floating water-plantain *Luronium natans* at the eastern limit of the plant's natural distribution in England. A very large population of the species occurs in the canal, which has a diverse aquatic flora and rich dragonfly fauna, indicative of good water quality. The low volume of boat traffic on this terminal branch of the Wyrley and Essington Canal has allowed open-water plants, including floating water-plantain, to flourish, while depressing the growth of emergents.

Cannock Chase SAC

Qualifying Features

H4030 European dry heaths

H4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*

Conservation Objectives

- Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the

Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats.
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and,
- The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely.

Non-qualifying habitats and species on which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend

Dry heathland – *Calluna vulgaris*, *Ulex gallii*, *Calluna vulgaris* and *Deschampsia flexuosa* heaths.

Within the heathland, species of northern latitudes occur, such as cowberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* and crowberry *Empetrum nigrum*.

Cannock Chase has the main British population of the hybrid bilberry *Vaccinium intermedium*, a plant of restricted occurrence. There are important populations of butterflies and beetles, as well as European nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and five species of bats.

Cannock Chase is also a regional refuge for declining and vulnerable reptile species such as adder, common lizard, and slow worm.

Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC

Qualifying Features

1340. Inland salt meadows

Conservation Objectives

- Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;
- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.

Non-qualifying habitats and species on which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend

Pasturefields Salt Marsh is the only known remaining example in the UK of a natural salt spring with inland saltmarsh vegetation. The vegetation consists of red fescue *Festuca rubra*, with common saltmarsh-grass *Puccinellia maritima*, lesser sea-spurrey *Spergularia marina*, saltmarsh rush *Juncus gerardii* and sea arrowgrass *Triglochin maritimum* in the most saline situations.

This extremely rare habitat contains a number of halophytic plants and is locally important for breeding waders including:

- Snipe, *Gallinago*. Habitat preference: grassland, heathland, moorland, freshwater, farmland, and coastal wetlands. Diet: insects, earthworms and crustaceans in the mud.
- Common redshank, *Tringa tetanus*. Habitat preference: rivers, wet grassland, moors and estuaries. Diet: invertebrates, especially earthworms, crane fly larvae (inland) crustaceans, molluscs, marine worms (estuaries).

Appendix 4 Consultation with statutory environmental bodies

Responses from statutory environmental bodies for consultation on the
Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment
Screening Report:



Historic England

Ms Jemma March
Cannock Chase District Council
Civic Centre
Beecroft Road
Cannock
Staffordshire
WS11 1BG

Direct Dial: [REDACTED]

Our ref: PL00798585

1 May 2025

Dear Ms March

NORTON CANES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - SEA & HRA SCREENING OPINION CONSULTATION

Thank you for the above consultation and invitation to comment on the screening of the above Neighbourhood Plan.

For the purposes of consultations on SEA Screening Opinions, Historic England confines its advice to the question, "Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?" in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage.

We have carefully reviewed your screening documentation. Our comments are based on the information supplied with the screening request. On the basis of the information supplied and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of the 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with your view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment will be required due to the lack of finalised policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Regarding HRA Historic England does not disagree with your conclusions but would defer to the opinions of the other statutory consultees.

The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for a SEA is made. If a decision is made to undertake a SEA, please note that Historic England has published guidance on Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Historic Environment that is relevant to both local and neighbourhood planning and available at: [<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/)

I trust the above comments will be of help in taking forward the Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours sincerely,



THE FOUNDRY 82 GRANVILLE STREET BIRMINGHAM B1 2LH

Telephone 0121 625 6888
HistoricEngland.org.uk

Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any Information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.



Historic England

P. Boland.

Peter Boland
Historic Places Advisor



CC:



THE FOUNDRY 82 GRANVILLE STREET BIRMINGHAM B1 2LH

Telephone 0121 625 6888
HistoricEngland.org.uk

Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any Information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.

Date: 08 May 2025
Our ref: 508444
Your ref: Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan



Jemma March
Interim Planning Policy Manager
Cannock Chase Council
[REDACTED]

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

BY EMAIL ONLY

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Jemma March

Cannock Chase Council - Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Consultation.

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 03 April 2025

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Strategic Environmental Assessment - required due to need for appropriate assessment.

In this case, an appropriate assessment is necessary due to the neighbourhood plan allocating sites for development. Mitigation measures may be required to ensure no adverse effect on the site integrity of [Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#).

Natural England advises that without suitable mitigation, this plan would result in a significant environmental effect as outlined above. We cannot offer advice on how the relevant legislation should be applied or interpreted and recommend the LPA seeks its own legal advice as to whether a SEA is required in this case. If no significant effects are identified following the HRA process then it may be prudent to carry out a screening assessment under the SEA Directive to demonstrate where there is consensus on the likelihood of significant environmental effects and any actions proposed to mitigate effects.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

Habitats Regulations Assessment – screening and appropriate assessment requirement.

Where a neighbourhood plan could potentially affect a '[habitats site](#)', it will be necessary to screen the plan in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations'). Where likely significant effects are identified, it will be necessary to undertake an appropriate assessment of the neighbourhood plan and, if needed, identify and secure appropriate mitigation measures to ensure the plan does not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of the habitats site.

In accordance with Schedule 2 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), a neighbourhood plan cannot be made if it breaches the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

A screening exercise should be undertaken if there is any doubt about the possible effects of the plan on the habitats site(s). This will be particularly important if a neighbourhood plan is to progress **before** a local plan and/or the neighbourhood plan proposes development which has not been assessed and/or included in the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the local plan. Where mitigation is necessary to ensure no effects then this will need to be properly assessed via an appropriate assessment.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Emily Bond
Higher Officer – Sustainable Development
West Midlands Area Team

Jemma March
Cannock Chase Council
Planning Policy
PO Box 28
Cannock
Staffordshire WS11 1BG

Our ref: SV/2023/111809/SE-01/SC1-L01

Your ref:

Date: 08 May 2025

Dear Jemma,

Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion for Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan.

Thank you for your consultation on the above screening reports for the Norton Canes Neighbourhood Plan sent on 3 April 2025. We note that the plan is at an early stage of development and only indicative intentions regarding policies and proposals have been put forward at this stage.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The European Union directive 200142/EC requires a SEA to be undertaken for certain types of plans and programmes that would have 'significant' environmental effect(s).

Paragraph: 046 in the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal Guidance (Reference ID: 11-046-20150209) states "a strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan".

Having reviewed the Screening Report submitted, and in consideration of the matters within our remit, and given the lack of specific site allocations or policies within the neighbourhood plan at this stage, we concur with the conclusions that there is uncertainty of whether the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) would have any significant environmental impacts. We agree that a precautionary approach should be taken and that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is therefore required.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive (1992) requires that any plan (or project), which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site (also known as a "Natura 2000" site), but would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to an 'appropriate assessment' of its implications for the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

We also agree with the conclusions that a precautionary approach should be taken as it is not clear whether any significant effect is likely to occur on a European Site.

Environment Agency
Hafren House Welshpool Road, Shelton, Shrewsbury, SY3 8BB.
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Cont/d..

We do not offer detailed bespoke advice on policy but advise you ensure conformity with the adopted local plan and refer to guidance within our area neighbourhood plan 'proforma guidance' (latest copy attached). This has guidance on flood risk, water quality, including wastewater, and other environmental considerations.

We trust that the above is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Nanette Brown
Planning Officer
Environment Agency West Midlands Area

Team email: westmidsplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Planning

Environment Agency consultation guide/pro-forma

Version 8, February 2024

The Environment Agency aims to reduce and protect against flood risk, whilst protecting and enhancing the water environment, land, and biodiversity. To assist us in the West Midlands Area in providing the most focused and accurate consultation responses through the Neighbourhood Planning process we have produced the below guidance and pro-forma for you to consider, complete and return to Cannock Chase Council.

You may wish to also refer to the [Neighbourhood planning - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning) guidance to assist you in the preparation of your Plan.

The Environment Agency, along with Natural England, Historic England, and the Forestry Commission (now known as Forestry England), has also produced some national guidance which offers further environmentally specific information in the context of Neighbourhood Planning and gives ideas on incorporating the environment into Plans. The guidance is available at: [How to consider the environment in Neighbourhood plans](#).

In the context of Climate Change there is further information on writing a low-carbon Neighbourhood Plan available at: [How to write a neighbourhood plan in a climate emergency](#).

To compliment the above we have produced the following guidance to assist you in the West Midlands Area specifically. This takes you through some of the relevant environmental issues your community should consider when producing a Neighbourhood Plan. We recommend completing the pro-forma to check the environmental constraints specific to your Plan area, which should help identify challenges, inform evidence and policy, and assist delivery of sustainable solutions. This approach will help ensure you have a robust Plan.

Flood Risk: Your Plan should conform to national and local policies on flood risk. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Paragraph 170 states that ‘Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere’.

With reference to the Cannock Chase Council Local Plan (adopted June 2014) it is important that your Plan is in accordance with Policy CP16 – Climate Change and Sustainable Resource Use. https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/site-old/local_plan_part_1_09.04.14_low_res.pdf

If your Plan is proposing sites for development you should check whether any of the proposed allocations are at risk of river or tidal flooding based on our Flood Map (of modelled flood risk). For example, are there any areas of Flood Zone 3 or 2 (High and Medium Risk). In line with National Planning Policy and, specifically, the Sequential Test, you should aim to locate built development within Flood Zone 1, the low-risk Zone. Our **Flood Map** can be accessed via the following link: [Check the long term flood risk for an area in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

In addition to the above you should also check with the Council’s Planning Policy Team with regards to other sources of flooding (such as surface water, groundwater, sewers, and historic flooding) as detailed in their Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Staffordshire County

Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), has responsibility for local flood risk management and may hold flooding information that is not identified on our Flood Map.

Specifically, some watercourses have not been modelled on our Flood Maps (Our Flood Maps primarily show flooding from Main Rivers, not ordinary watercourses, or un-modelled rivers, with a catchment of less than 3km²). The SFRA also gives information on the 'functional floodplain', also known as Flood Zone 3b. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) shows the different Flood Zones in Table 1 in the Flood Risk and Coastal Change Section: [Flood risk and coastal change - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances)

Any allocations in areas of flood risk should include a consideration of climate change (see below). In the absence of up-to-date modelled flood risk information, or a site-specific FRA, to confirm an appropriate allowance you may wish to utilise the current Flood Zone 2 extent (where available) to indicate the likely, nominal, Flood Zone 3 with climate change extent. Where no modelling or flood map outline is available you will need to consider an alternative approach. Where an un-modelled watercourse is present, or adjacent to a site, then it may be prudent to incorporate a buffer zone, relative to topography, in consideration of flood risk not shown on the Flood Map.

Some assessment is necessary in your Plan, to confirm that the site is developable. This includes safe occupation and that there will be no impact on third parties. You might seek opportunities to reduce flood risk.

All 'major development' sites with flood risk issues, especially those with ordinary watercourses or un-modelled rivers within/adjacent or near to sites, are likely to need detailed modelling at the planning application stage to verify the design flood extents, developable areas and that the development will be sustainable.

Climate Change: Your Local Authority's SFRA should indicate the extent of flood zones with likely climate change. The NPPG refers to Environment Agency guidance on considering climate change in planning decisions which is available online: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances> .

Please refer to our separate 'Area Climate Change Guidance' (March 2023) for more information on how to consider and incorporate allowances in development proposals. This advises that an allowance should be added to 'peak river flows' to account for 'climate change' which should be specific to a river 'management catchment'.

You may wish to use the following link in conjunction with our Area Specific Climate Change Guidance to ascertain the correct climate change peak flows allowances in your area: [Climate change allowances for peak river flow in England \(data.gov.uk\)](https://data.gov.uk/dataset/climate-change-peak-flows-allowances).

Surface water (peak rainfall intensity) climate change allowances should be discussed with the LLFA.

Flood Defences: Areas of your Parish, or proposed sites, may be afforded protection by a flood defence/alleviation scheme. Where this is the case, your Plan should acknowledge this and identify the level of protection provided (including any climate change allowance). It should be noted that flood defences are intended to protect existing properties and are not to facilitate new development in areas that would otherwise be impacted by flooding. Any assessment of development behind flood defences should consider the impacts of a breach or overtopping.

Where it is determined that new development should be behind a flood defence financial contributions may be sought to maintain or improve the structure.

Waste Water Infrastructure: Waste water infrastructure is also of importance in your Plan. Where housing is proposed you should use the pro-forma to identify the receiving treatment works and whether the housing and/or any employment growth can be accommodated without impacting the receiving treatment works. You should look at physical capacity issues (e.g. network pipes) and environmental capacity (quality of treated effluent) issues.

The Environment Agency has previously offered advice to Cannock Chase Council, as part of their strategic work, to help ensure that their strategic housing growth can be accommodated in consideration of waste water infrastructure. Information on local treatment works and their ability to accommodate housing and employment growth can be found in the South Staffordshire Water Cycle Study (WCS). [In addition you should contact the Water Company for further advice.](#)

Where there is an identified constraint (amber or red) you should demonstrate that there is a solution (it may be already programmed or could be a possible future infrastructure upgrade) to help improve the capacity issue and enable the development to go ahead. This will require consultation with the Water Company, and we have developed some general questions to assist this process. The outcome of this may inform a 'phasing' policy within your plan where appropriate. It may also be necessary to produce an 'Infrastructure Delivery Plan' to set out any key milestones for wastewater infrastructure upgrades and improvements. The evidence you produce should give a reasonable degree of certainty to all parties, helping demonstrate development is deliverable, and importantly ensure that your plan is 'sound'.

Note: Government Guidance states that sufficient detail should be provided to give clarity to all parties on when infrastructure upgrades will be provided, looking at the needs and costs (what and how much). The NPPG refers to "ensuring viability and deliverability – pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan making and decision making". Plans should be "deliverable".

We would recommend discussions with the Utility Company to ascertain how you can progress with your Plan without impact on the works. To assist in these discussions, we would recommend the following:

- What solutions are programmed within Asset Management Plans (AMP)? When will these solutions be delivered? Are there any options for accelerating these schemes via developer contributions?
- In the absence of any improvement schemes what could alternative solutions be (type and location of) for short/medium/long term growth. Are these solutions cost prohibitive?
- Are there any short-term options to facilitate growth? Some options to consider could be SUDS retrofitting or removing surface water from sewer systems.
- Utility companies could be asked about what Water Framework Directive (WFD) work they already have programmed in to their AMP Schemes for Phosphate stripping or other sanitarities (e.g. ammonia/Biological Oxygen Demand).
- With reference to the Nutrient Management Plan (where this is relevant), and Phosphate specific issues, are there any stringent measures factored in to ensure no environmental deterioration? What improvement scheme is, or could be, in place to bring forward development?

Water Management and Groundwater Protection: In February 2011, the Government signalled its belief that more locally focussed decision making, and action should sit at the heart of improvements to the water environment. This is widely known as the catchment-based approach and has been adopted to deliver requirements under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). It seeks to:

- deliver positive and sustained outcomes for the water environment by promoting a better understanding of the environment at a local level; and
- encourage local collaboration and more transparent decision-making when both planning and delivering activities to improve the water environment.

Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to deliver multi-functional benefits through linking development with enhancements to the water environment. Local WFD catchment data can be obtained from: [River Basin Catchment Data Explorer](#).

The Cannock Chase Council boundary falls within the Humber River Basin Management Plan area and the document highlights key issues and actions for the Humber catchment that should be of use in developing your Neighbourhood Plan. [Humber river basin district river management plan: updated 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Aquifers and Source Protection Zones (SPZs): Some of your local area, and specific potential site allocations, may be located upon or within aquifers and Source Protection Zones (link below). SPZ 1 is especially sensitive. You might consider these within your Plan and when allocating sites. The relevance of the designation and the potential implication upon development proposals should be seen with reference to our Groundwater Protection Position Statements: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-position-statements>

Development and surface water drainage will need to be carefully located and designed to avoid pollution risks to waters and address potential environmental impact associated with low flows. For example SuDS may need to provide multiple levels of treatment. To address any quantitative issues with the waterbodies, SuDS should be designed so as to maximise recharge to the aquifer and support water levels in receiving rivers.

Water Efficiency at Neighbourhood Plan Level: Local Water Efficiency targets may be secured in a neighbourhood plan or higher-level local plan policy. The draft Technical Standards – Housing Standards Review (Paragraph 14) provided advice on more stringent ('optional') water efficiency targets/measures, which go beyond the minimum building regulations standard. Paragraph 14 states that..."Neighbourhood Planning Bodies will only be able to apply the space standard and not optional requirements".

These standards have since been enshrined into the Building Regulations (part G) "*The optional requirement only applies where a condition that the dwelling should meet the optional requirement is imposed as part of the process of granting planning permission. Where it applies, the estimated consumption of wholesome water calculated in accordance with the methodology in the water efficiency calculator, should not exceed 110 litres/person/day*". However, there is no direct responsibility for Neighbourhood Plans to incorporate these water efficiency measures.

Cemetery Allocations: Allocations for cemeteries brought forwards within Neighbourhood Plans must consider their location in relation to Flood Zones, Source Protection Zones (Any Borehole, including private boreholes, for potable supply should be considered) and Type of Aquifer. We

would offer comments primarily in relation to the protection of controlled waters (i.e. groundwater and surface water). Matters relating to human health should be directed to the Local Authority. If steps are not taken to reduce the risks, burials can present a risk to the water environment. The proposed burial ground will need to meet our minimum groundwater protection requirements as set out in the following document: [Protecting groundwater from human burials - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials) .

Biodiversity Net Gain: Development of allocated sites offers the opportunity for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as referenced in Paragraphs 187, 192 and 193 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment'. Specifically, any ponds and flood storage areas if designed correctly could also provide opportunity for blue and green infrastructure, such as wetland habitat throughout the year as well as providing a recreation amenity.

Whilst we would not necessarily expect to see specific BNG details for allocations within the Plan, there may be an opportunity to promote 'Net Gains' within your Policies.

Please see [Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-net-gain) and [Biodiversity Net Gain for local authorities | Local Government Association](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-net-gain-for-local-authorities) for further information.

Neighbourhood Plan Environment Agency Pro-Forma

Site Allocation Description e.g. name, type and number of units.	Flood Zone (3/2/1) *	Unmodelled river or ordinary watercourse in or adjacent to site	Other sources of flooding (e.g. SW, GW, SF)	Flood Defence	Aquifer/Source Protection Zone 1 (Description)	Environmental Capacity at Treatment Works (Red – potential showstopper, Amber – possible problem; or Green – likely to be no issues)
Example	2	Y	SW	N	N	Amber
		Y/N		Y/N	Y/N	
		Y/N		Y/N	Y/N	
		Y/N		Y/N	Y/N	
		Y/N		Y/N	Y/N	
		Y/N		Y/N	Y/N	
		Y/N		Y/N	Y/N	
		Y/N		Y/N	Y/N	

***Note to above:** Flood Zone 3 is the high-risk zone and is defined for mapping purposes by the Environment Agency's Flood Map For Planning (Rivers and Sea). Flood Zone 3 refers to land where the indicative annual probability of flooding is 1 in 100 years or less from river sources (i.e. it has a 1% or greater chance of flooding in any given year). Flood Zone 2 is land where the indicative annual probability of flooding is between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 years. Flood Zone 1 is the low-risk Zone with a flood risk in excess of 1 in 1000 years.

When considering 'other sources of flooding' you should refer to the SFRA and contact Cannock Chase Council to ascertain whether the Parish, or specific allocated site, is impacted by surface water, groundwater, or sewer flooding etc. The team and/or the LLFA may also have historic flooding information to help inform your plan. More information on sewer flooding, or plans to remedy such, may be available from the Water Company.

Produced by: West Midlands Sustainable Places Team.

Please contact us at: westmidsplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk