



# **Screening Assessment of the Draft Stone Neighbourhood Plan**

Strategic Environmental Assessment &  
Habitats Regulation Assessment

Stafford Borough Council

November 2018

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Stone Town Council has prepared a draft Neighbourhood Plan (NP) proposing new development that reflects the needs of the community. In preparing a draft Plan, Stone Town Council carried out a community consultation identifying key priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan to address and, as a result a number of planning policies and proposals have been created.
- 1.2. The Neighbourhood Plan will soon be undergoing a pre-submission consultation after this screening assessment has been completed. Following this consultation, the Town Council will be preparing to submit the draft Neighbourhood Plan to the Borough Council to proceed to independent Examination and subsequent Referendum.
- 1.3. In order for Neighbourhood Plans to proceed to referendum, they must meet the Basic Conditions set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Act<sup>1</sup>, which was inserted by the Localism Act 2011. The Borough Council needs to be satisfied that the Basic Conditions have been met. The Neighbourhood Plan must:
  - have regard to national policy
  - have special regard to listed buildings (where relevant)
  - have special regard to conservation areas (where relevant)
  - contribute to sustainable development
  - be in general conformity with strategic policies in the Local Plan
  - not breach EU obligations
- 1.4. In satisfying the basic conditions Stone Town Council, who is the responsible body for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, will be required to prepare a Basic Conditions Statement on submission to the Borough Council to demonstrate how the draft Plan meets the basic conditions set out above alongside the final Plan.

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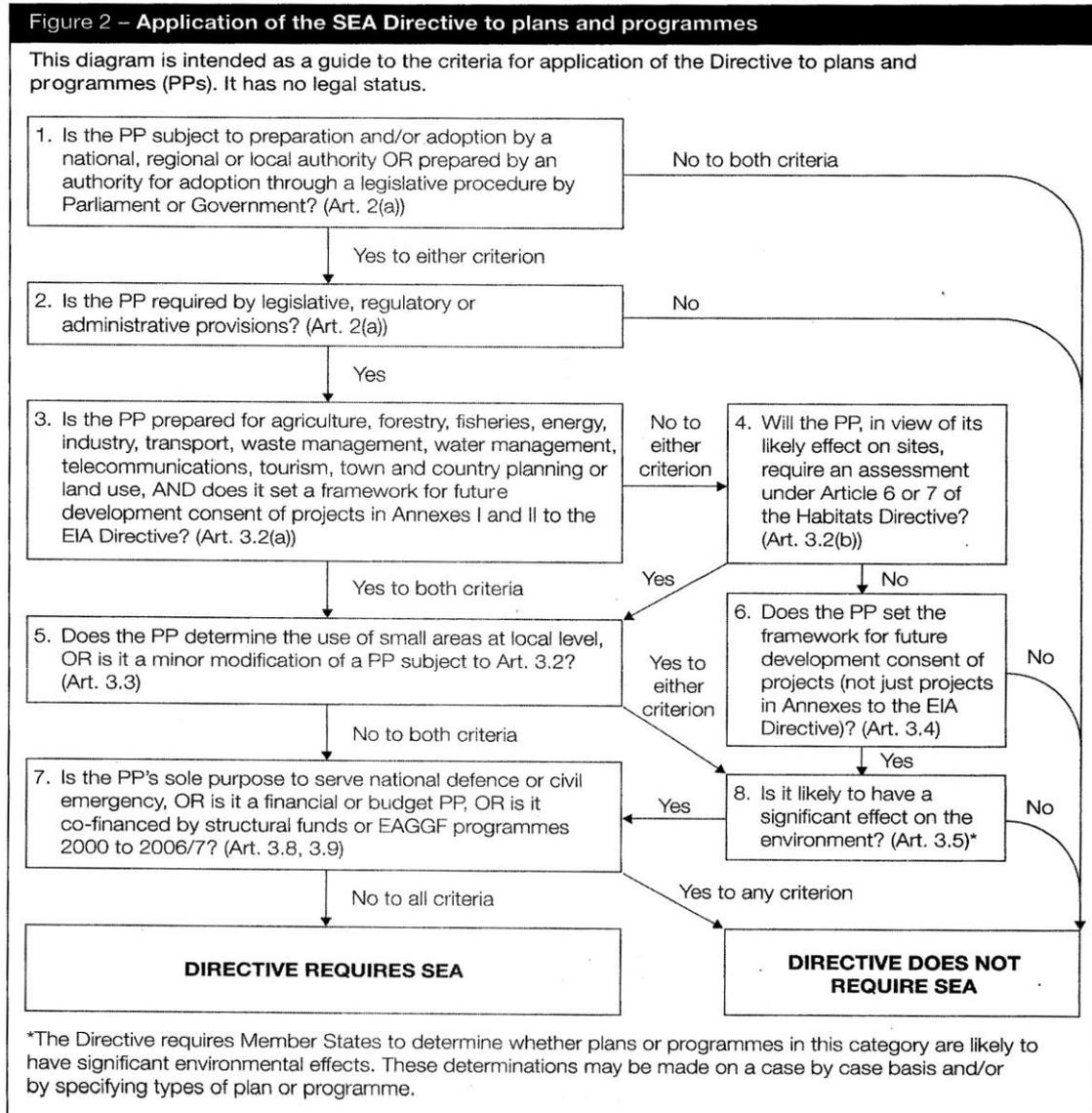
<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B.

## **2. Compatibility with EU obligations**

- 2.1. To meet the basic conditions the draft Stone Neighbourhood Plan must not breach EU obligations.
- 2.2. The Borough Council has prepared this screening assessment to determine whether the content of the draft Stone Neighbourhood Plan 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 Regulation Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 2.3. [The National Planning Practice Guidance](#) offers guidance on when a SEA may be required.
- 2.4. Neighbourhood Planning Regulations requires Neighbourhood Plans to submit either a statement of reasons; environmental report; or an explanation of why the plan is not subject to the requirements of the SEA Directive, to accompany a Neighbourhood Plan when it is submitted to a local planning authority.
- 2.5. Providing there are no significant changes to the proposals and the policies of the current draft Neighbourhood Plan, this screening assessment undertaken by Stafford Borough Council fulfils this requirement to accompany the final submission of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.6. In the context of neighbourhood planning, a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is required where a Neighbourhood Plan is deemed likely to result in negative significant effects occurring on protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites), as a result of the Plan's implementation.

### 3. SEA Screening

3.1. The diagram below illustrates the process for screening a planning document to ascertain whether a full SEA is required.



3.2. The questions below in Table 1 are drawn from the diagram above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied when considering a draft plan.

**Table 1 SEA Screening Process**

	Yes (go to question 2).	<p>The preparation and adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is regulated under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The draft NP is prepared by Stone Town Council (as the 'relevant body') and will be 'made' by Stafford Borough Council as the local planning authority.</p> <p>The preparation of NPs is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.</p>
<b>2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))</b>	No (go to question 3).	<p>Whilst the NP is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will, if 'made', form part of the Development Plan. It is therefore important and necessary to answer the following questions to determine whether the policies of the draft NP are likely to have significant environmental effects and if further environmental assessments will be required under the EU Directive.</p>
<b>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))</b>	Yes (go to question 5).	<p>The draft NP is being prepared for town and country planning, and land use purposes.</p> <p>As such, the draft NP contains a framework for future development consent of development projects, which may fall under section 10 of the Annex II of the EIA Directive.</p>

<b>4. Will the NP, 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))</b>		See HRA screening below.
<b>5. Does the NP determine the use of small areas at local level OR is it a minor modification of a plan or programme subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)</b>	Yes (go to question 8).	Yes. The Neighbourhood Plan includes Local Green Space sites within the defined settlement boundary which supports the provision of environmental protection. Some sites within the boundary have been given planning permission for housing, in line with the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031.
<b>6. Does the NP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)</b>		Not applicable.
<b>7. Is the NP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget plan or programme, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art. 3.8, 3.9)</b>		Not applicable.
<b>8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)</b>	No	The draft NP is unlikely to have any significant effect on the environment. Please see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 which provide a detailed assessment to support this conclusion.

- 3.3. To decide 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. The criteria from Schedule 1 of the Regulations are set out below.

**1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to**

- 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,
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
- 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).

**2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to**

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

- 3.4. Appendix 1 and 2 apply the above criteria to measure any likely significance effects on the environment arising from the draft Stone NP.

### **SEA Screening Outcome**

- 3.5. As a result of the assessment above, it is considered unlikely that any significant environmental effects will occur from the implementation of the Stone NP that were not considered and dealt with by the Sustainability Appraisal of the Plan for Stafford Borough (PFSB). As such the Stone NP does not require a full SEA to be undertaken.

## 4. HRA Screening

4.1. The box below illustrates the stages of HRA related to assessing potential impacts from planning policy documents.

### *Stage 1 Screening*

- Identify international sites in and around the plan/ strategy area
- Examine conservation objectives
- Identify potential effects on Natura 2000 sites
- Examine other plans and programmes that could contribute to 'in combination' effects
- If no effects are likely - report that there is no significant effect. If effects are judged likely or uncertainty exists - the precautionary principle applies, proceed to stage 2.

### *Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment*

- Collate information on sites and evaluate impact in light of conservation objectives
- Consider how plan 'in combination' with other plans and programmes will interact when implemented (the Appropriate Assessment)
- Consider how the effect on integrity of sites could be avoided by changes to the plan and the consideration of alternatives
- Develop mitigation measures (including timescale and mechanisms)
- Report outcomes of AA and develop monitoring strategies. If effects remain, following the consideration of alternatives and development of mitigation measures, proceed to stage 3.

### *Stage 3 Assessment where no Alternatives and impacts remain*

- Identify 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' (IROPI)
- Identify/ develop potential compensatory measures

4.2. Stafford Borough Council has carried out Stage 1 Screening on the draft Stone NP.

4.3. There are 6 European sites in Stafford Borough which may be affected by policies in the draft Stone NP:

- Cop Mere RAMSAR
- Aqualate Mere RAMSAR
- Motte Meadows SAC
- Cannock Chase SAC
- Chartley Moss SAC
- Pasture fields Salt Marsh SAC

4.4. The PFSB was subject to a full Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) including appropriate assessment and identification of mitigation measures. Some of the possible effects identified in the HRA, which relate to the sites above include: water quality deterioration, eutrophication, air pollution, surface water run-off, nitrogen deposition, and increased visitor pressure.

- 4.5. In light of the HRA it is considered the draft Stone NP does not propose anything which departs from the strategy set out in the PFSB. The PFSB contains a number of policies which aim to protect the SACs integrity and address water quality issues. These policies include Policy N5 - Sites of European, National and Local Nature Conservation Importance; Policy N6 - Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and Policy N7 - Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 4.6. The HRA carried out on the PFSB concluded that implementation of the Plan would not result in likely significant or in combination effects. As a result the Council does not consider that implementation of the draft Stone NP would result in likely significant or in combination effects on Natura 2000 sites.

#### **HRA Stage 1 Screening Outcome**

- 4.7. As a result of the assessment above, it is considered unlikely that any significant environmental effects will occur from the implementation of the draft Stone NP that were not considered and dealt with by the Habitats Regulation Assessment carried out on the PFSB. As such the draft Stone NP does not require a further HRA work to be undertaken.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1. The National Planning Practice Guidance advises that the local planning authority should consult with the relevant statutory consultation bodies. These are the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England whose responsibilities cover the environmental considerations of the Regulations to ensure all key environmental issues have been considered.
- 5.2. This assessment has been circulated to the above agencies. After receiving a response from all the consultees, their response will be added to this assessment and can be found in Appendix 3.

**Appendix 1: The Characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan, having regard to:**

	<b>Likely significant environmental effect?</b>	<b>Stafford Borough Council Assessment</b>
<b>a) The degree to which the Neighbourhood Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</b>	No	<p>The NP sets out a vision and 8 strategic aims to help shape future development within Stone. A number of planning policies have been formulated to help deliver the vision. These policies seek to deliver affordable &amp; housing types, quality design, support for new businesses, local retailing and Stone town centre, sports / recreation facilities, Local Green Space designations &amp; green infrastructure, the built environment, along with the principles for a Neighbourhood Development Order.</p> <p>It is not considered that the policies and proposals in the NP will have a significant environmental effect.</p>
<b>b) The degree to which the Neighbourhood Plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.</b>	Yes	<p>The draft NP is required to conform to national policy (NPPF) and strategic policies stipulated in the PFSB. The draft NP, if made, will form part of the Development Plan for Stafford Borough and will be used to determine planning applications within the Parish.</p>
<b>c) The relevance of the Neighbourhood Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</b>	Yes	<p>The NP seeks to provide affordable &amp; new housing types within a defined settlement boundary for the local community over the plan period.</p> <p>The plan encourages new employment and business uses to suit the local demographic profile and skills base of Stone, including home working.</p> <p>It is considered the draft NP will have a positive effect on the environment as it seeks to provide a range of new uses which will support open space and green infrastructure connectivity including Local Green Spaces.</p>

<p><b>d) Environmental problems relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The draft NP area is not located within a sensitive natural landscape of international or national designations but is bordered to the north by the North Staffordshire Green Belt, contains the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area and has floodplain areas.</p> <p>There are no Air Quality Management Areas in Stafford Borough which includes the Parish of Stone.</p>
<p><b>e) The relevance of the Plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The NP is not proposing development specifically related to waste management or water management.</p>

**Appendix 2 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard in particular to:**

	<b>Likely significant environmental effect?</b>	<b>Stafford Borough Council Assessment</b>
<b>a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.</b>	No	<p>There will no doubt be changes to the land use within Stone. This will largely be concentrated within the settlement boundary. New developments are expected to bring positive socio-economic benefits for the local community within Stone. Such proposals for development will be subject to meeting the requirements of policies set out in the PFSB in particular SP7, N2, N4, N5, N6 and N7.</p> <p>It is considered unlikely that any detrimental environmental impacts will occur from the proposals and the policies contained in the NP.</p>
<b>b) The cumulative nature of the effects of the Plan.</b>	No	<p>It is not expected any accumulative effects of the NP proposals and policies will lead to negative impacts, but result in positive impacts that will affect the Town.</p>
<b>c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects of the Plan.</b>	No	<p>There are not expected to be any significant trans-boundary effects as new development is designated within the settlement boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. It is expected that the local population will utilise the Trent and Mersey Canal but this will not lead to negative effects.</p>
<b>d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).</b>	No	<p>There are no significant effects to human health. The NP seeks to increase connectivity and accessibility to the natural environment whilst supporting local economic development. These benefits are considered to help increase recreation and healthy lifestyles.</p>

<p><b>e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) by the Plan.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>New housing provision, through the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough, will be developed within the defined settlement boundary and adjacent to existing residential areas and highway networks. Therefore the impacts from proposed developments are not considered to be detrimental.</p>
<p><b>f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the Plan due to:</b>  <b>(i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</b>  <b>(ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</b>  <b>(iii) Intensive land use and</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The NP includes sites of environmental and heritage importance.</p> <p>The Trent and Mersey Canal and towpath are designated as a Conservation Area together with the Stone Town Conservation Area, which fall within the NP area. The NP does not specifically propose new development within or adjacent to the Conservation Areas.</p> <p>Policy N8 in the PFSB ensures development proposals are sympathetic to the landscape character and environment.</p> <p>Policies of the NP seek to provide new affordable and housing types that will meet the local needs of the Town. It is not expected that this will result in the loss of locally important open space.</p>
<p><b>g) The effects of the Plan on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Policy N4, N5 and N6 of the PFSB protect sites of European importance, the natural environment and green infrastructure.</p> <p>It is not expected that the NP policies and proposals will have an adverse effect on these areas.</p>

### **Appendix 3: Responses from Statutory Consultees.**



Mr Alex Yendole  
Stafford Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Riverside  
Stafford  
ST16 3AQ

Direct Dial: 0121 625 6887

Our ref: PL00326703

21 March 2018

Dear Mr Yendole

**STONE TOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN- SEA AND HRA SCREENING**

Thank you for your consultation and the invitation to comment on the SEA/HRA Screening Document for 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.

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 is not required. 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,

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Date: 09 April 2018  
Our ref: 241257



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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

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Dear Alex

## **Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan Consultation on Screening Report**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 26/02/2018

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

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening**

We welcome the production of this SEA Screening report. Natural England notes and concurs with the screening outcome i.e. that no SEA is required.

Further guidance on deciding whether the proposals are likely to have significant environmental effects and the requirements for consulting Natural England on SEA are set out in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#).

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening**

Natural England notes the screening process applied to this Neighbourhood plan. We agree with the Council's conclusion of no likely significant effect upon the named European designated sites:

- Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar
- Motte Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Cannock Chase SAC
- Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar
- West Midland Mosses SAC
- Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC

### **Additional Notes:**

Taking into account the parish's location and the content of the draft plan you may wish to consider the following document which offers 'context' information for your parish's plan:

- [Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\) Partnership](#) – Information for developers and applicants on residential development

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter please contact Felicity Bingham on 02082 256387. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

Felicity Bingham  
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**East Midlands Team**  
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# Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

## Natural environment information sources

The [Magic](#)<sup>1</sup> website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available [here](#)<sup>2</sup>.

**Priority habitats** are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)<sup>3</sup>. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

**National Character Areas (NCAs)** divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)<sup>4</sup>.

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**, the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](#)<sup>5</sup> website and also from the [LandIS website](#)<sup>6</sup>, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

## Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#)<sup>7</sup> sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](#)<sup>8</sup> sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

### Landscape

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<sup>1</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

<sup>3</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

<sup>5</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>8</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

### Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)<sup>9</sup>), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)<sup>10</sup>. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

### Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)<sup>11</sup>) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice [here](#)<sup>12</sup> to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

### Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 112. For more information, see our publication [Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land](#)<sup>13</sup>.

## **Improving your natural environment**

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development. Examples might include:

- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

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<sup>9</sup><http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

<sup>11</sup><http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

<sup>13</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance on this](#) <sup>14</sup>).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

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<sup>14</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

Mr Alex Yendole  
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**Our ref:** UT/2006/000313/SE-  
04/SC1-L01  
**Your ref:** Screening Report - Stone  
Town Neighbourhood Plan  
**Date:** 25 April 2018

Dear Mr Yendole

### **SEA Screening Request for Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan**

Thank you for your email which was received on 16 April. We are sorry for the delay in our response.

As requested we have reviewed the Screening Assessment prepared in support of the Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan. Having reviewed the proposals we do not consider there to be any significant environmental impacts as a result of this plan, therefore, we concur with the conclusions of the report and do not require a SEA/SA to be undertaken in support of the plan.

We note the presence of the floodplain within the neighbourhood boundary, however as this does not affect the settlement boundary we have no concerns. We also note the presence of historic landfills within the settlement boundary, however as none of the propose residential and employment allocations affect this land we do not consider there to be significant environmental risk associated with this.

Yours sincerely

**Ms Anne-Marie McLaughlin**  
**Planning Advisor**

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