



Northumberland
County Council

Craster Parish Neighbourhood Plan

**Strategic Environmental
Assessment (SEA)**

**Screening Opinion
FINAL**

Prepared by the Neighbourhood Planning & Infrastructure Team,
Northumberland County Council

February 2020

Contents

Summary of Screening Opinion	3
1. Legislative background	4
Neighbourhood Planning and Strategic Environmental Assessment	4
2. Craster Draft Neighbourhood Plan	7
The Craster Neighbourhood Area	7
The Draft Craster Neighbourhood Plan Policy	8
3. Craster Parish Environmental Context	9
Landscape quality	9
Biodiversity and geodiversity	9
Heritage Assets	14
Flood Risk	15
Agricultural land	16
Pollution	17
4. Assessment	18
5. Conclusions	23
Appendix 1	

Summary of Screening Opinion

1. Craster Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan to address issues associated with a predominance of second homes and holiday homes in the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan contains only one policy that seeks to impose legal controls on the occupation of any new dwellings so that they are occupied only as a sole or 'principal' residence of the owner or occupier.
2. A Habitats Regulations Assessment screening opinion concludes that no significant effect on European sites would arise from the introduction of the proposed planning policy.
3. In the opinion of Northumberland County Council, Strategic Environment Assessment of the Craster Neighbourhood Plan is **NOT** required for the following reason:
 - The Plan covers a relatively small rural area and does not allocate sites for development or expressly support further development in the Craster Neighbourhood Area. Accordingly, significant positive or negative effects on the environment are considered unlikely to arise as a result of the introduction and implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.
4. This opinion is supported by the statutory consultation bodies, that is: the Environment Agency; Historic England; and Natural England. Their representations can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

1. Legislative Background

Neighbourhood Planning and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.1 The legislative framework for neighbourhood planning was created through the Localism Act in 2011. This introduced various changes to the Planning Acts¹ which established discretionary powers that allow parish councils to prepare 'neighbourhood development plans', often just called neighbourhood plans. These are planning policy documents. Once brought into legal force (known as being 'made'), they form part of the statutory development plan. This means that policies in made neighbourhood plans must be used by the local planning authority in the determination of planning applications; and where plans contain policies relevant to the proposed development, a decision must be made in accordance with the policy unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Neighbourhood plans therefore have an important role in decision making on planning applications.
- 1.2 Preparing a neighbourhood plan provides an opportunity for local communities to create locally specific planning policies that can shape and influence the type, scale and design of new development in their local area. They also allow certain protections to be created in policies that prevent development on locally valued green spaces and policies that support the retention of community facilities.
- 1.3 However, being part of the statutory development plan means that various legal obligations have been created to govern the proper preparation of neighbourhood plans. This includes the requirement for formal consultation and engagement during plan preparation; and the requirement for a neighbourhood plan to be examined by an independent person who must provide the local planning authority with a considered opinion on whether a draft neighbourhood plan meets a range of legal tests. These tests are known collectively as the 'basic conditions' and are set out in Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and in the Neighbourhood Planning General Regulations (2012) (as amended).

¹ The Localism Act introduced changes to the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) which, along with various statutory Regulations provide the legal framework allowing neighbourhood plans and orders to be prepared by parish councils.

1.4 In the context of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the basic conditions require, amongst other things, that:

- the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations;

and that:

- The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

1.5. Collectively, it is these two basic conditions that require further detailed consideration to be given to the impact a neighbourhood plan may have on the environment and on protected species and habitats before it can be brought into force. The procedures to be followed in determining whether a plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment are set out in European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive), which is transposed into UK legislation through The Environmental Assessment of Plans and programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).

1.6. Where a plan is judged likely to have significant environmental effects it is necessary to undertake an assessment of those effects in accordance with the processes set out in the SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations. In reaching that judgement on whether significant environmental effects are likely to arise from the introduction and implementation of a neighbourhood plan a process known as 'screening' is required. This establishes whether, in the opinion of a responsible authority, the plan will require further assessment or not. Where a plan requires further assessment, this will result in the need to prepare an environmental report which becomes one of the documents that must be submitted for independent examination alongside the plan.

- 1.7. When considering whether a plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects there are two main routes that may lead to a positive conclusion on that question:
- Firstly, in accordance with Regulation 5(3) of the SEA Regulations, if it has been determined that a plan requires ‘appropriate assessment’ under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) as a result of its likely impacts on European designated sites, this automatically triggers the need for SEA and the preparation of an environmental report. In such circumstances there is no further requirement to provide a separate screening opinion under the SEA Regulations;
 - Secondly, in accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations, the responsible authority must determine whether or not a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment. This is generally known as a ‘screening opinion’. If a screening opinion prepared by a responsible authority concludes that there are likely to be significant environmental effects arising from the implementation of the plan then SEA will be required, including the need to prepare an environmental report.
- 1.8 The County Ecologist has considered whether appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations is required for the Craster Neighbourhood Plan. An initial screening opinion has been provided confirming that appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations is not required.
- 1.9 This report provides a separate screening opinion regarding the environmental effects anticipated to arise from the introduction of the Craster Neighbourhood Plan and whether, in the opinion of Northumberland County Council as the responsible authority for the purposes of the SEA Regulations, the Plan would have significant environmental effects such that SEA is required.

2. Craster Draft Neighbourhood Plan

The Craster Neighbourhood Area

- 2.1 Craster Parish is a rural coastal parish in north Northumberland. The Neighbourhood Area covers the entire civil parish of Craster which is shown on Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. The Craster Neighbourhood Area



The Draft Craster Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.2 The Plan contains only one policy which seeks to deliver the Parish Council's objective to restrict the use of new dwellings to ensure that they are available only for permanent occupation by people wishing to live in the Parish. This policy, shown in full below, is designed to provide clarity to future developers and comfort to the local community that, should new housing development come forward within the Parish, enforceable legal restrictions would be placed on any planning permission for new dwellings to ensure occupation only as permanent residences rather than as second or holiday homes.

Policy 1: Managing second and holiday homes

Any new open market housing within the Craster Neighbourhood Area will be required to have a restriction to ensure its first and future occupation is limited to use only as a principal residence. New, unrestricted open market housing will not be supported.

A principal residence is that which is occupied as the resident's sole or main residence, where the resident spends the majority of their time when not working away from home.

The restriction will be secured through a section 106 legal agreement. This legal agreement will require the occupier of a home with a principal residence restriction to keep proof that they are meeting the restriction. An occupier will be obliged to provide this proof if/ when Northumberland County Council requests this information.

3. Craster Parish Environmental Context

Landscape quality

- 3.1 The Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers much of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The local area is characterised by cliffed headlands, rocky reefs and sandy bays. There are several threats to this AONB: inappropriate development; visitor pressures; changes in land value; climate change; and non-native invasive species.²
- 3.2 The Parish lies in the North Northumberland National Character Area (NCA). This NCA is characterised by a gently undulating inland plain dominated by arable farming; woodland cover is sparse and mainly confined to river valleys. It has a dramatic coastline which is exceptionally varied, with rocky headlands and cliffs contrasting with long, sweeping sandy beaches backed by dunes.³

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 3.3 The Berwickshire & Northumberland Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) stretches from St. Abb's Head to Alnmouth and extends out to four nautical miles. It contains a complex mix of marine habitats, associated species and communities which is unusually diverse for the North Sea. The site includes an important range and variation of intertidal mudflats and sandflats and has one of the best examples of east coast clean sand and seagrass beds, and of moderately exposed reefs. Intertidal and submerged sea caves also contribute significantly to the site's overall habitat diversity and international importance. This SAC also provides important habitats for the grey seal, supporting approximately 3% of the British annual pup production.⁴ Its component sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) are described below and are shown in figure 2.

² Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-19
http://www.northumberlandcoastaonb.org/files/Downloads/Northumberland%20Coast%20AONB%20Management%20Plan%202014-19_v1.2.pdf

³ Natural England NCA Profile: 01 North Northumberland Coastal Plain (NE516)
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5236546013757440?category=587130>

⁴ JNCC Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0017072>

- 3.4 The Northumberland Shore SSSI includes most of the coastline between the Scottish border and the Tyne Estuary and consists largely of sandy bays separated by rocky headlands with wave-cut platforms, backed by dunes or soft and hard cliffs. Discrete areas of estuarine intertidal mudflats and saltmarsh are also included. The site is of international or national significance for six bird species: purple sandpiper, turnstone, sanderling, golden plover, ringed plover and redshank.⁵
- 3.5 The Craster section was described as being in 'favourable' condition in surveys undertaken in 1999 and 2009 however, the condition threat risk is described as 'medium'. This would suggest that its condition is stable but that the threats, which include recreational use of the coast, are not insignificant.
- 3.6 The Castle Point to Cullernose Point SSSI comprises the rock exposures along the Northumberland coast, as well as complementary exposures just inland which are of geological importance in demonstrating features associated with the intrusion of the Whin Sill. The site also includes rare plant species, which are thought to be unique to Northumberland. The cliffs of Dunstanburgh support the largest mainland seabird colony in the county.⁶
- 3.7 The site is described as being in 'favourable' condition. Surveys of the six units that make up the overall site between 2000 – 2014 have all described 'favourable' conditions which suggests that the situation is stable.
- 3.8 The condition threat risk is variable along this stretch of coast but is generally 'low' or there is 'no identified condition threat'. Generally, the habitats within this SSSI are highly sensitive to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides, which should be avoided. Natural England also advise that access to this site, and any recreational activities within, may need to be controlled.

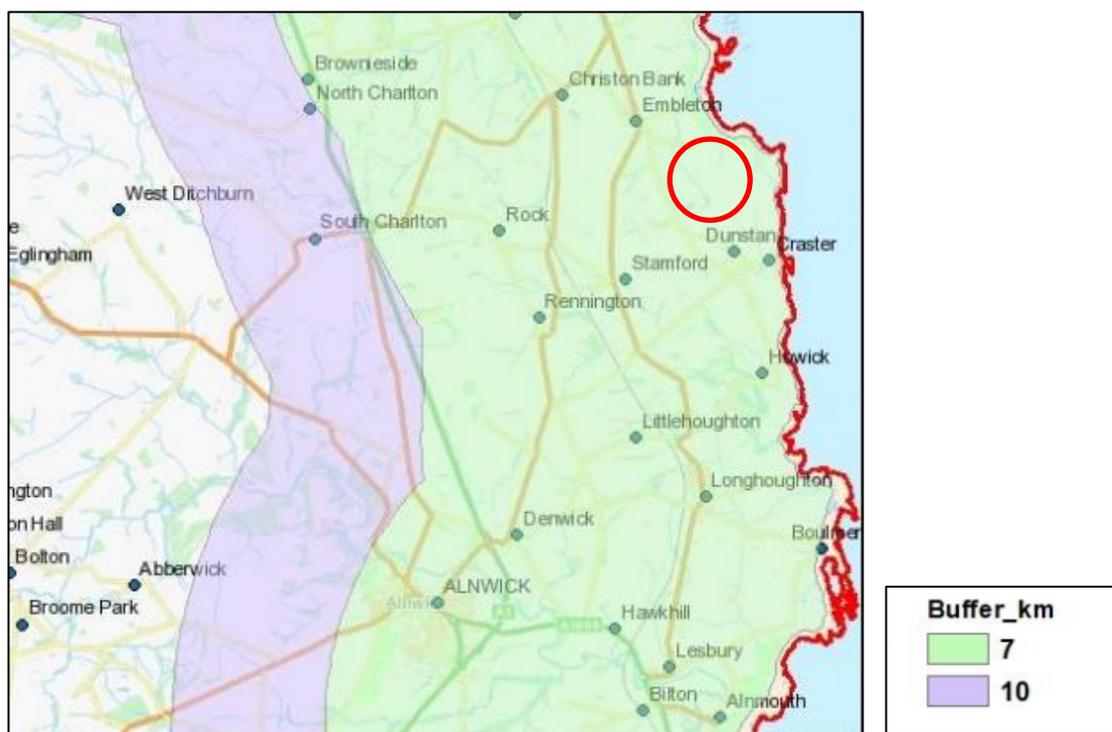
⁵ Natural England Designated Sites View

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S2000134&SiteName=northumberland%20shore&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

⁶ Natural England Designated Sites View

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1004448&SiteName=cullernose&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

Figure 4. Coastal Mitigation Service Zones



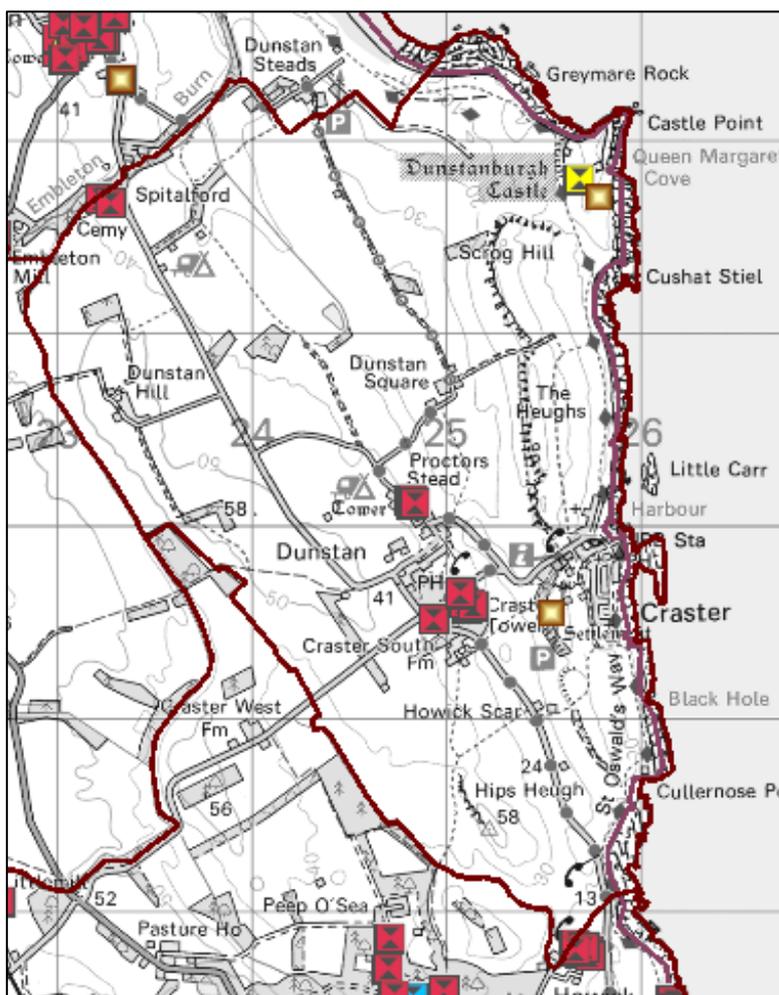
3.11 The aim of the CMS is to prevent a net increase in disturbance to bird species within the European designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure on those protected areas caused by new development. Financial contributions of £600 per dwelling are required from new development within Craster Parish. The funds created through the CMS will pay for mitigation measures including awareness raising and promoting behavioural change among visitors to the coast and implementing projects to manage visitor access and to improve bird habitats.⁸

⁸ Northumberland County Council. The Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service Strategy Document <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Local%20Plan/Northumberland-Coastal-Mitigation-Service-Strategy-Document-December-2018.pdf>

Heritage Assets

3.12 There are 17 designated heritage assets in the Parish: twelve are Grade II listed; two are Grade II* listed; and one is Grade I listed (Dunstanburgh Castle). There are also two scheduled monuments: Craster Defended Settlement; and Dunstanburgh Castle (Romano-British settlement, 14th century enclosure castle and harbour, and World War II pillbox and foxhole).⁹ These are shown in figure 5. None of the designated heritage assets are at risk.¹⁰

Figure 5. Designated Heritage Assets in Craster Parish¹¹



⁹ National Heritage List for England <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

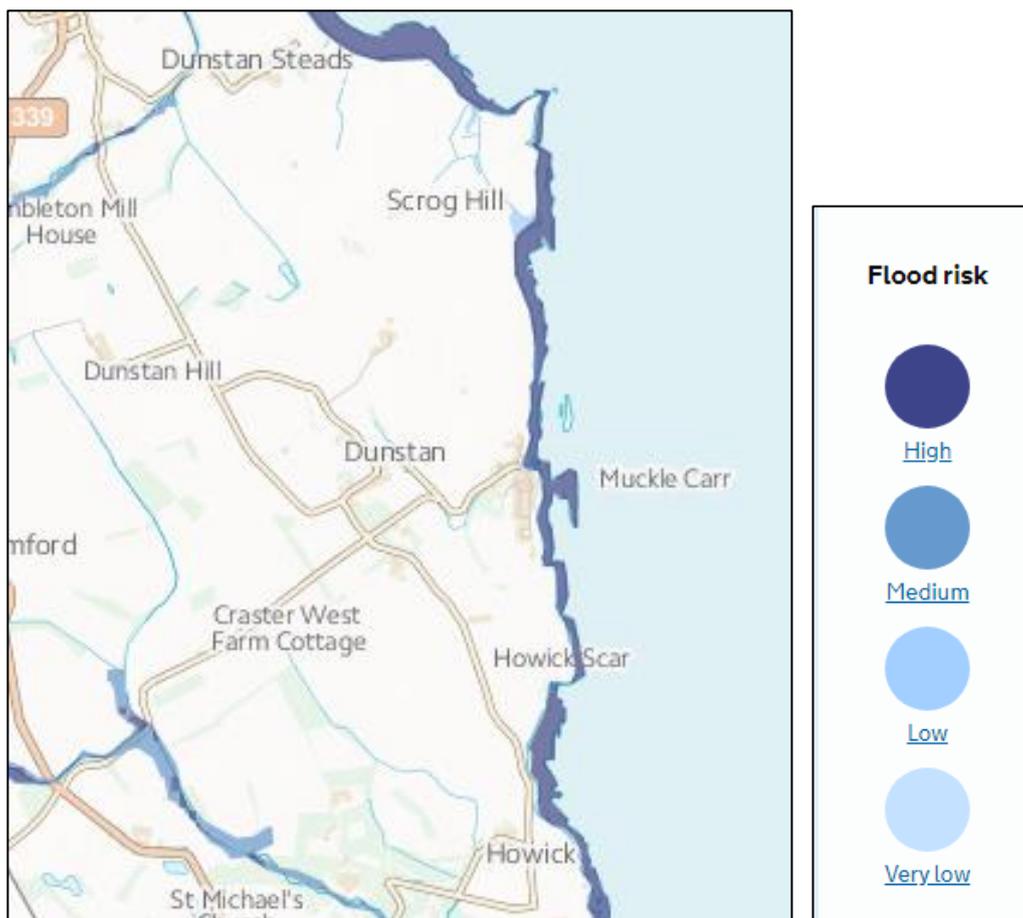
¹⁰ Historic England Heritage at Risk Register
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>

¹¹ DEFRA Magic Maps <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Flood Risk

3.13 The full extent of the coastline in the Craster Parish is at high risk of flooding, that is: each year the chance of flooding is greater than 3.3%. In addition, there is a medium flood risk along the Embleton Burn that flows across the northern edge of the Parish, that is: an annual chance of flooding of between 1% and 3.3% (see figure 6).

Figure 6. Flood risk in Craster Neighbourhood Plan Area¹²

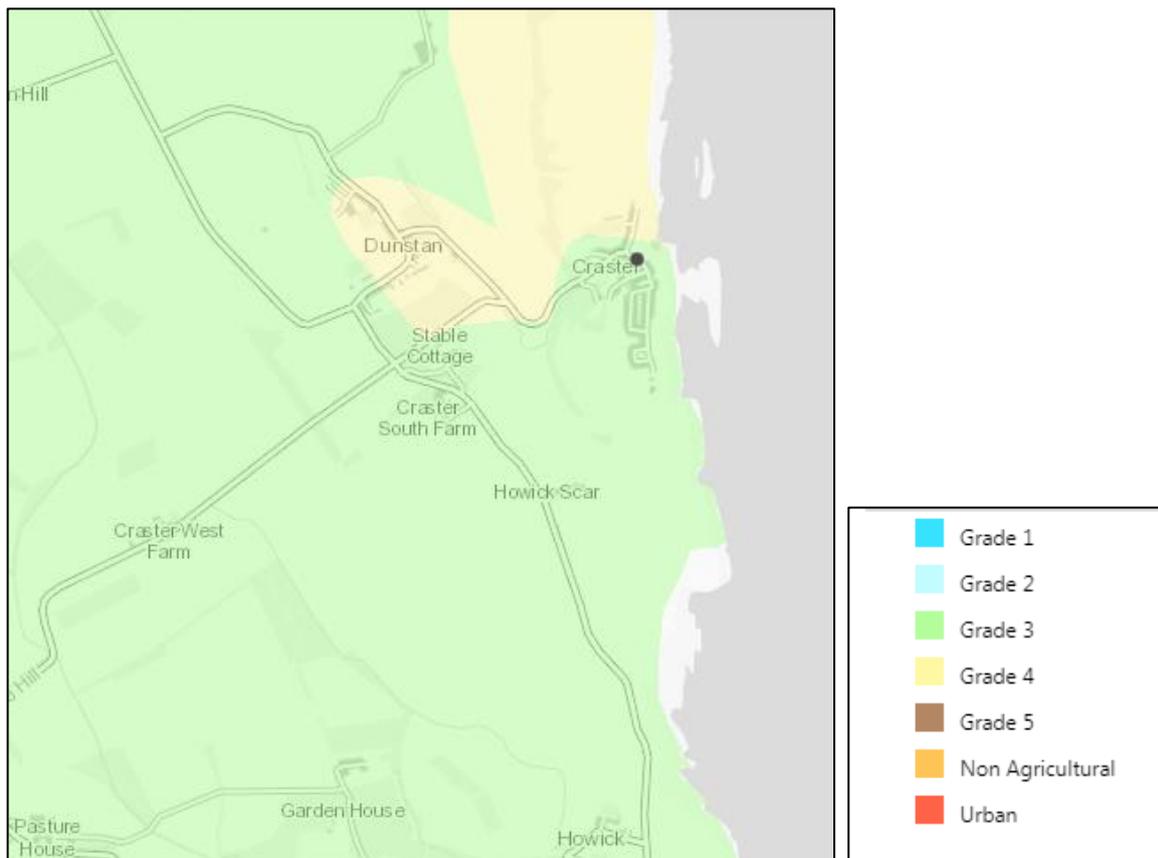


¹² Environment Agency Flood Risk
<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map>

Agricultural land

3.14 The Agricultural Land Classification system classifies land into five grades. Grade one is best quality and grade five is poorest quality. The major portion of the Plan area is grade 3 Agricultural land, i.e. good to moderate quality agricultural land. A smaller portion to the north of Craster village is grade 4 poor quality agricultural land (see figure 7).¹³

Figure 7. Agricultural Land Classification in Craster Parish



¹³ DEFRA Data Services

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/DefraDataDownload/?mapService=NE/AgriculturalLandClassificationProvisionalEngland&Mode=spatial>

Pollution

- 3.15 As of June 2018, the Craster Neighbourhood Area has no recorded Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), and air quality is not automatically monitored anywhere within the Neighbourhood Area as part of the annual screening process carried out by Northumberland County Council.¹⁴ There are no significant and tangible air quality issues in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.16 The Kielder Water Resource Zone (WRZ) serves the Neighbourhood Area. There is a large surplus of supply over demand in the Kielder WRZ and the area is not classed as seriously water stressed. There are no Groundwater Source Protection Zones in the area indicating that there is little risk of contamination from activities that might cause groundwater pollution in the area.¹⁵

¹⁴ <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Public-Protection/Pollution/2018-LAQM-Annual-Status-Report.pdf>

¹⁵ Northumbrian Water
<https://www.nwg.co.uk/responsibility/environment/wrmp/current-wrmp-2015-2020/>

4. Assessment

4.1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment arising from plans and programmes are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These have been used in this screening opinion to determine whether the Craster Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The criteria are split into two categories: those relating to the characteristics of the plan and those relating to the characteristics of the effects and areas likely to be affected.¹⁶ An assessment of the Craster Neighbourhood Plan against these criteria is set out in Table 1 below.

4.2 The likely significance of effects on the environment arising from introducing the proposed policy in the Craster Neighbourhood Plan have been determined using the criteria within the SEA Directive.

Table 1: Assessment of the likely significance of effects on the environment

Criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan, having regard to:	
(a) the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for development and does not set a framework to expressly support additional development. It therefore does not set a framework for the location, nature, size or operating conditions for projects or other activities and does not allocate resources. The Plan seeks only to control future occupation of any new residential development that may be approved having regard to the established decision making framework set out in other current local and national planning policies.

¹⁶ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Annex II Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

Criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan, having regard to:	
(b) the degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The Neighbourhood Plan is in accordance with the strategic policies in the existing development plan, and with policies proposed in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. It is a discreet document that does not influence other plans and programmes.
(c) the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for development. Its relevance for the integration of environmental considerations is therefore limited.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan	Given the very limited scale of development likely to arise in the Craster Neighbourhood Area having regard to existing development plan policies and those proposed in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan, the main environmental problems relevant to the Plan relate to recreational disturbance to European designated sites arising from tourists, visitors and any new residents who may occupy any new housing permitted following the introduction of the Plan. A programme of mitigation, the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service, has already been put in place to address the issues arising from any potential additional disturbance in those areas. The environmental context for the area described elsewhere in this Screening Opinion reveals no other particular environmental problems of any relevance to the Plan.

Criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan, having regard to:	
<p>(e) the relevance of the plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</p>	<p>Neighbourhood plans cannot contain policies or proposals in respect of waste management since this is 'excluded development' by virtue of the Planning Acts. The Plan has no particular relevance for the implementation of other Community legislation, apart from its limited association with legislation designed to ensure continued protection of European designated sites. A programme of mitigation, the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service, has already been put in place to address the issues arising from any potential additional recreational disturbance in those European designated sites along the Northumberland coast.</p>

Criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard to:	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for development and does not expressly support additional development. It is therefore not anticipated that any significant positive or negative effects are likely to arise from the implementation of the Plan.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for development and does not expressly support additional development. It is therefore not anticipated that any significant positive or negative effects are likely to arise from the implementation of the Plan, and no cumulative impact is predicted.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for development and does not expressly support additional development. It is therefore not anticipated that any significant positive or negative effects are likely to arise from the implementation of the Plan and no transboundary effects are predicted.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment.	The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for development and does not expressly support additional development. It is therefore not anticipated that any significant positive or negative effects are likely to arise from the implementation of the Plan, and no significant risks to human health or the environment are predicted.

Criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard to:	
<p>(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</p>	<p>The single policy in the Craster Neighbourhood Plan applies solely to new development in Craster Parish. The magnitude of any effects will be extremely small as is the spatial extent of any effects. The geographical area and the size of the population likely to be affected by implementation of the Plan are both very small.</p>
<p>(f) 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 or limit values; • intensive land-use; • the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status 	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for development and does not expressly support additional development. It is therefore not anticipated that any significant positive or negative effects are likely to arise from the implementation of the Plan.</p> <p>The Craster Neighbourhood Area contains a number of international and national ecological and heritage designations. This makes the area highly valued but also sensitive and potentially vulnerable to disturbance and to change. However, as described in the Screening Opinion, the general condition of these designated areas and assets is favourable and the risk to their status from implementation of the Plan is judged to be low.</p> <p>The single policy in the Craster Neighbourhood Plan proposes to restrict the occupation of any new dwellings as a principal residence. This could intensify land use in terms of recreation including dog walking which could add to disturbance to protected species in designated habitats. However, a programme of mitigation, the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service, has already been put in place to address the issues arising from any potential additional recreational disturbance in those European designated sites along the Northumberland coast.</p>

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The potential positive or negative effects of the Craster Neighbourhood Plan on the environment have been found not to be significant.
- 5.2 The Plan covers a small rural area along the north Northumberland coast. The policy set out within the Plan seeks to create controls over the occupation of any new dwellings permitted through the implementation of policies contained elsewhere in the development plan. Its purpose is to support a vibrant local community in the Parish.
- 5.3 Significant environmental effects are considered unlikely to arise through the implementation of the Plan, which does not allocate land for development or expressly support new development.
- 5.4 On the basis of the assessment of the likely significance of effects on the environment of implementing the Plan as set out in Table 1 of this Screening Opinion, the conclusion is:

In the opinion of Northumberland County Council, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, Craster Neighbourhood Plan *is unlikely to have any significant positive or negative effects on the environment*. Therefore Strategic Environmental Assessment is NOT required for the Craster Neighbourhood Plan for the following reason:

- **The Plan covers a relatively small rural area and does not allocate sites for development or expressly support further development in the Craster Neighbourhood Area. Accordingly, significant positive or negative effects on the environment are considered unlikely to arise as a result of the introduction and implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.**
- 5.6 This conclusion is supported by the statutory consultation bodies.

Appendix 1: Responses received from Consultation Bodies



Historic England

Ms Sarah Brannigan
Northumberland County Council
Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure
Planning Services
County Hall, Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

Direct Dial: 0191-2691232

Our ref: PL00673963

14 February 2020

Dear Ms Brannigan

**Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004: Regulation 9
Craster Neighbourhood Plan: SEA Screening Opinion, January 2020**

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the above Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion. As the public body that advises on England's historic environment, we are pleased to offer our comments.

Based on the analysis set out in the Screening Opinion, and within the areas of interest to Historic England, we agree that the emerging plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and, therefore, it does not need SEA. In coming to this view we have taken the following factors into consideration:

- The plan area contains some heritage assets including several listed buildings, and the potential for non-designated assets.
- Heritage assets are fragile and irreplaceable and can be damaged by change through development both directly and indirectly by development in their setting.
- The plan is not expected to allocate sites for development.

As such, from the perspective of our area of interest, the need for SEA of the draft plan can be screened out as it is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects (positive or negative). However, the views of the other two statutory consultees should be taken into account before you conclude on whether SEA is needed. According to Regulation 11 of the above Regulations, I look forward to receiving a copy of your determination in this case.

We reserve the right to review our opinion should the plan change materially in its content and direction. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries relating to our comments or would like any further information.

Yours sincerely,



BESSIE SURTEES HOUSE 41-44 SANDHILL NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE NE1 3JF

Telephone 0191 269 1255
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.

creating a better place



Sarah Brannigan
Northumberland County Council
Planning Strategy
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

Our ref: NA/2009/103757/SE-
20/SC1-L01
Your ref:
Date: 14 February 2020

Dear Sarah

Craster Neighbourhood Plan Consultation on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion January 2020

Thank you for consulting us on the above Screening Opinion which we received on 23 January 2020.

Environment Agency Position

Based on matters within our remit, it is considered that Craster Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment when considered against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. Therefore, a SEA will not be required.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Lucy Mo
Planning Technical Specialist - Sustainable Places



Tyneside House, Skinnerburn Road, Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7AR.
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
www.environment-agency.gov.uk



Date: 02 March 2020
Our ref: 306696
Your ref: Craster Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening



Ms S. Brannigan
Planning Officer
Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure
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CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Ms Brannigan

Planning consultation: Craster Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 23 January 2020 which was received by Natural England on the same day.

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.

Strategic Environmental Assessment - Screening

Where Neighbourhood Plans could have significant environmental effects, they may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended). 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 planning practice guidance.

Natural England **agrees** with the conclusion of the SEA Screening Assessment - an SEA is not required for the Craster Neighbourhood Plan as it is unlikely to have any significant positive or negative effects on the environment.

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 only please contact me on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Andrew Whitehead
Northumbria Area Team