

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for The Hauxley Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report

February 2023



Quality information

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Non-technical summary

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Hauxley Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) 2023-2036.
- 1.2 The HNP is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the adopted Northumberland Local Plan (March 2022).
- 1.3 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. Central to the SEA process is publication of an Environmental Report alongside the draft plan that presents certain required information. The aim is to inform the consultation and, in turn, plan finalisation.
- 1.4 Preparing the Environmental Report essentially involves answering three questions:
 - What has plan-making / SEA involved **up to this point?** including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
 - What are the SEA findings **at this stage?** - i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
 - What happens **next**

This Environmental Report NTS

- 1.5 This is the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Environmental Report for the HNP, in which the three questions are answered in turn. Firstly, there is a need to set the scene further by answering: *What's the scope of the SEA?*

What is the scope of the SEA?

- 1.6 The scope of the SEA is reflected in a list of topics and objectives, which, taken together indicate the parameters of the SEA and provide a methodological 'framework' for assessment. A summary of the SEA framework is presented below:

Table A: The SEA framework

SEA topic	SEA objective
Biodiversity	To protect, maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity and geodiversity sites and networks within and surrounding the Plan area.
Climate change	Avoid and manage flood risk and support the resilience of the Hauxley Neighbourhood Plan area to the effects of climate change.
Historic environment	Protect, enhance and manage the integrity, distinctive character and setting of heritage assets and the wider built environment.
Landscape	Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes.
Population and housing	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of occupants throughout their lives.
Health & Wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within and around the HNP area.

Plan making/SEA up to this point

- 1.7 An important element of the required SEA process involves assessing **reasonable alternatives** in time to inform development of the draft plan, and then publishing assessment findings in the Environmental Report. As the Northumberland Local Plan (NLP) does not allocate housing growth in Hauxley (setting a housing requirement figure or HRF of zero¹) and there is no local housing needs assessment, Hauxley Parish Council (HPC) did not consider allocating sites for housing growth in the HNP. As such, there are no reasonable alternatives to consider in terms of development site allocations.
- 1.8 One reasonable alternative was considered in the SEA process which pertains to HNP policy H1, Local Green Space (LGS). The policy designates 16 sites as LGS. The supporting text for the adopted NLP's policy INF5 (Open space and facilities for sport and recreation) states that '*whilst the opportunity to create Local Green Space through the Local Plan exists, the County Council considers that, given the need to show that any such designation is demonstrably special to a local community, the most appropriate mechanism for designating Local Green Space is through a neighbourhood plan.*' Engagement on the emerging HNP has identified that the distinctiveness of the plan area is hugely valued by the local community. Therefore, the HNP designates areas of Local Green Space seeking to protect these areas which contribute to the character and the landscape in the Parish.

¹ Policy HOU3 of the [Northumberland Local Plan \(2022\)](#)

1.9 The SEA considered the reasonable alternative of not designating the 16 LGS sites in the HNP as these would be offered a degree of protection through HNP and NLP policies seeking to protect the landscape and the natural environment.

1.10 In conclusion there are two reasonable alternatives pertaining to the LGS designation:

Option 1 – Given the importance of the sites identified in HNP (policy H1), to the local community, these should be designated as LGS to protect them from future encroachment.

Option 2 – Not to allocate areas of LGS as the majority of these areas would be offered a degree of protection through strategic and HNP policies seeking to protect the landscape and the natural environment.

1.11 Table B presents the assessment. Presented subsequently is HPC's response to the assessment, i.e. reasons for supporting the preferred approach, which is **Option 1**.

Assessment methodology:

1.12 Within each row of Table B (i.e. for each of the topics that comprise the SEA framework) the columns to the right hand firstly rank the options in order of preference and then, secondly, highlight instances of a predicted effects: significant positive (**dark green**), moderate positive (**medium green**), minor positive (**light green**), minor negative (**amber**), significant negative (**red**) and neutral (**blue**) effect on the baseline.

Table B: Options assessment

Topic	Option 1 HNP approach	Option 2 Reasonable alternative
Biodiversity	1	2
Climate change	1	2
Historic environment	1	2
Landscape	1	2
Population & housing	=	=
Health & Wellbeing	1	2

Summary discussion

- 1.13 The assessment shows a uniformly positive picture for both options with no negative effects. Option 1 is the best-performing, scoring moderate positives for 5 SEA topics with one neutral effect associated with the population and housing topic. The positive effects are replicated under Option 2 but are slightly reduced in magnitude (minor positives) with the same neutral effects predicted for the population and housing theme. Therefore, Option 1 is preferable to Option 2, as the effects are more positive. However, it does not automatically follow that Option 1 is best-performing overall. It is for the decision-maker (also consultees), not this assessment, to assign weight to the various pros and cons and then arrive at a conclusion on which scenario is best-performing overall.
- 1.14 The plan-makers responded to the options assessment as follows: “the preferred approach is to take forward Option 1 as the basis for the HNP”. This approach is considered to broadly align with the findings of the assessment, which finds Option 1 to perform generally more positively than Option 2. Whilst no significant negative effects are predicted for either option, it is recognised that the exclusion of SHLAA site 0160b from the settlement boundary set in policy H6 (Sustainable location of new development) could reduce the flexibility of utilising this site in future for housing. That said, the SHLLA assessed the site as ‘not LP compliant and not contributing to LP requirement, but potentially offering longer-term and/or post-plan contingency’. Therefore, no adverse effects are anticipated over the HNP period, and it may be possible to address the issue in a future review of the HNP should a demonstrable housing need arise.
- 1.15 With regards to Option 2, the same positive effects associated with Option 1 apply but these are slightly reduced in magnitude due to the exclusion of the LGS designations. Assessment highlights uniformly minor positive effects for all SEA themes except for the population and housing theme where the effects have neutral effects. Again, no negative effects are predicted for Option 2.

Assessment findings at this stage

- 1.16 Part 2 of the Environmental Report presents an assessment of the HNP (Option 1) as a whole, as it stands at the current time (pre-submission plan) and compares the effects expected through the 2 options.
- 1.17 Assessment findings are presented as a series of narratives under the SEA framework. The assessment reaches the following overall conclusions:
- 1.18 Overall, the Plan appraisal has served to highlight the potential for uniformly positive effects with one neutral effect.
- 1.19 Moderate positive effects are anticipated in relation to the biodiversity SEA theme due to policies seeking to protect areas of open green space through the LGS and Green gaps designations which will help reduce habitat fragmentation and recreational disturbance on important bird populations within the coastal biodiversity designated sites.
- 1.20 Moderately positive effects are also envisaged in relation to the climate change SEA theme due to policies likely to increase resilience to the effects of climate change, specifically flood risk, such as the designation of LGS, green gaps. The support for solar panels/ renewable energy measures within new development is also beneficial with respect to climate change mitigation.

- 1.21 The potential for moderate positive effects is recognised for the historic environment, namely through policies requiring new development to be in keeping with the character of the existing settlements and policies seeking to protect important areas of landscape that form an intrinsic part of the historic character and heritage of the Parish.
- 1.22 HNP policies safeguarding areas of high landscape value, valued green space and important spaces and views throughout the Parish are anticipated to produce moderately positive effects with respect to the landscape SEA theme.
- 1.23 Given the zero HRF and the absence of new housing provision in the HNP, the effects with respect to the population and housing are considered neutral overall. That said the plan includes several policies that ought to preserve the attractiveness of the NP area.
- 1.24 The SEA has not identified any major effects for the HNP. Several moderately positive effects have been identified that would require closer monitoring as suggested below:

Table C: Monitoring measures

Summary of effects	Monitoring measures
Biodiversity – moderate positive effects are predicted due to Plan policies designating LGS and green gaps designations.	Change in areas of biodiversity importance including sites of international, national, regional or sub-regional or local significance (e.g. Ramsar, SSSIs, SPAs, SAC's, LWS, and SINCS) Number of nationally/locally important wildlife sites in the county reported as being in 'poor condition'. Proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented Net change in condition of SSSI's Contributions made to the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service (NCMS)
Climate Change – moderate positive effects are predicted through measures likely to increase climate resilience and adaptation such as designating areas of LGS, green gaps and the support for solar panels / renewable energy measures within new development.	Number / type of developments permitted within flood zone 2 and 3 areas. Quality and quantity of open space provision Number of renewable/decentralised energy schemes installed/ permitted
Historic environment – moderate positive effects are recognised through policies requiring new development to be in keeping with the character of the existing	Changes in number of buildings and features of historic/ heritage importance (e.g. listed buildings, structures on the Northumberland Historic Environment record (HER))

Summary of effects

Monitoring measures

settlements and policies seeking to protect important areas of landscape that form an intrinsic part of the historic character and heritage of the Parish.

Landscape – moderate positive effects are predicted through policies seeking to safeguard areas of high landscape value.

Number and type of development permitted within each areas of the landscape character areas.

Health & Wellbeing – moderate positive effects are predicted due to the allocation of green gaps and LGS which serve to enhance access to open green space and encourage leisure/ recreation and walking/ cycling.

Achievement of open space and recreational space standard.

Number of walking/ cycling routes.

Next steps

- 1.25 This Environmental Report is published alongside the pre-submission version of the HNP. Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, when finalising the plan for submission.
- 1.26 The 'submission' version of the plan will then be submitted to NCC (alongside an Environmental Report Update, if necessary). The plan and supporting evidence will be then published for further consultation, and then submitted for examination.
- 1.27 If the outcome of the Independent Examination is favourable, the HNP will then be subject to a referendum, and the plan will be 'made' if more than 50% of those who vote are in support. Once made, the HNP will become part of the Development Plan for Northumberland.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Hauxley Neighbourhood Plan ('HNP') 2022–2036.
- 1.2 The HNP is being prepared in the context of the policies of the Northumberland Local Plan (adopted March 2022) (the 'NLP'). The HNP sets out a vision and a range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area, including protection and enhancement of its local distinctiveness and the natural environment.
- 1.3 Once 'made', the HNP will form part of the Northumberland Development Plan and will be used to guide and shape development within the Plan area.
- 1.4 SEA is a required process for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to minimising negative effects and maximising positive effects.²

SEA explained

- 1.5 It is a requirement that the SEA process is undertaken in-line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004).
- 1.6 In-line with the Regulations, a report (known as the Environmental Report) must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that "*identifies, describes and evaluates*" the likely significant effects of implementing "*the plan, and reasonable alternatives*".³ The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.7 More specifically, the Report must answer the following three questions:
 1. What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
 - including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
 2. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
 3. What happens next?

² Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process. The HNP was subject to screening, on the basis of which it was determined that there *is* a requirement for SEA (i.e. the plan was 'screened-in').

³ Regulation 12(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

This Environmental Report

- 1.8 This report is the Environmental Report for the HNP. It is published alongside the 'pre-submission' version of the Plan, under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended).
- 1.9 This report answers questions 1, 2 and 3 in turn, to provide the required information.⁴ Each question is answered within a discrete 'part' of the report.
- 1.10 However, before answering Q1, two further introductory sections are presented to further set the scene.

⁴ See **Appendix A** for further explanation of the report structure including its regulatory basis.

2. What is the plan seeking to achieve?

Introduction

2.1 This section considers the context provided by the applicable Local Plan before setting out the established HNP vision and objectives. The Local Plan comprises the Northumberland Local Plan ('NLP').

2.2 Figure 2.1 shows the plan area.

Figure 2.1: The HNP area



The NLP

- 2.3 Hauxley falls within the South East Northumberland Delivery Area as defined in the NLP. The settlement hierarchy set out in Policy STP1 (Appendix A) identifies Low Hauxley and High Hauxley as Small Villages. NLP Policy HOU3 (Housing requirements for neighbourhood areas) sets a zero minimum housing requirement figure (HRF) for Hauxley.
- 2.4 The NLP (paragraph 4.38) states that *“Northumberland contains many small villages and hamlets. While the Local Plan does not actively direct development to small villages, it is recognised that a level of development is required in rural areas to support social and economic vitality, and that development in one village can support services and facilities in another nearby. In small villages not identified as Main Towns, Service Centres or Service Villages, small scale development will be supported subject to Green Belt policy where relevant and a number of criteria.”*
- 2.5 Policy STP1 (Spatial strategy) of the NLP states that to support the social and economic vitality of rural area ‘Small Villages’ will support *“a proportionate level of development subject to Green Belt policy where relevant”*. The policy adds that sustainable development within, or immediately adjacent to the built up form of Main Towns, Service Centres, Service Villages, and Small Villages without defined Green Belt inset boundaries or settlement boundaries will be supported, subject to Green Belt policy considerations where relevant, if it is:
- Commensurate with the size of the settlement; and
 - Reflects the role and function of the settlement; and
 - Does not adversely impact upon the character and appearance of the settlement; and
 - Does not adversely impact upon the setting of the settlement or the surrounding countryside.

The HNP Vision & Objectives

2.6 The HNP is being prepared by the Hauxley NP planning Group and will cover the period 2022 to 2036.

2.7 The following vision has been established:

“ Our vision for the parish of Hauxley in 2036 is that its rural community remains sustainable and cohesive. The close and important links with the neighbouring parishes have been maintained, whilst the parish of Hauxley continues to be visually and physically distinct and separate from the urban area.

The distinctive and rich natural, built and historic environmental character of the parish will have been conserved and enhanced for future generations by ensuring new developments are appropriately located and their scale and design fully reflects the local area.

”

2.8 Three objectives have also been established to guide plan preparation, with a view to achieving the vision. These are reproduced below.

Table 2-1 The HNP Objectives

Objective	Description
1. Rich natural environment	Conserving and enhancing the tranquil and valued nature of the coastal environment of the parish.
2. Distinctive built and historic environment	Ensuring new development maintains and enhances local distinctiveness and contributes positively to the built and historic environment of the plan area.
3. sustainable and cohesive community	Ensuring new development is sustainable and supports the delivery of development needed by the local community whilst protecting the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside.

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Introduction

3.1 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SEA, i.e. the sustainability themes and objectives that should be a focus of the SEA. Supplementary information is presented in the SEA Scoping Report (Appendix II).

Consultation

3.2 The SEA Regulations require that “*when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. As such, these authorities were consulted over the period August to September 2022. The responses are summarised in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3-1 SEA scoping consultation responses

Consultee	Consultation response summary	AECOM response
Environment Agency	Recommended that an objective relating to protecting / enhancing the environment be included.	This is included in the SEA scoping report’s Biodiversity section & Table 3-3.
	The relevant SFRA / Flood Risk strategies need to be taken into account.	This is included in the Climate Change (adaptation) chapter (paragraphs 4.1.16 -4.1.18) & Table 4-3 of the SEA scoping report.
Natural England	Welcomed the themes scoped in, the report’s proposed objectives and questions for those themes.	Noted
	Suggested including reference to the existing Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service Strategy (NCMS) document so as to make clear the parish’s inclusion within this strategic approach to the recreational disturbance theme.	Added reference to NCMS in the biodiversity chapter (paragraph 3.1.9) of the SEA scoping report.
Historic England	Advised that no significant effects on the historic environment are envisaged, noting that the Plan is not allocating sites for development.	Noted

The SEA framework

- 3.3 The SEA framework has been established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise. This draws upon the baseline position and policy context that has been prepared for a range of SEA topics. The framework consists of a set of headline objectives and ancillary questions, which has been used to appraise the environmental effects of the draft Plan (and any reasonable alternatives).
- 3.4 Table 3.2 presents a list of topics and objectives that together form the back-bone of the SEA scope. Together they comprise a 'framework' under which to undertake assessment. The scoping report provides further detail on the ancillary questions used to help guide the appraisal.

Table 3-2 *Summary of the SEA framework*

SEA topic	SEA objective
Biodiversity	To protect, maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity and geodiversity sites and networks within and surrounding the Plan area.
Climate change	Avoid and manage flood risk and support the resilience of the Hauxley Neighbourhood Plan area to the effects of climate change.
Historic environment	Protect, enhance and manage the integrity, distinctive character and setting of heritage assets and the wider built environment.
Landscape	Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes.
Population and housing	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of occupants throughout their lives.
Health & Wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within and around the HNP area.

Part 1: What has plan-making/ SEA involved to this point?

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

Overview

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations an Environmental Report must include:
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
 - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 Work on the HNP commenced in January 2019 when Hauxley Parish Council held a consultation day with residents to inform them of the possibility of developing a Neighbourhood Plan and to gather their views on issues to be considered in the NP. The NP area, which constitutes the civil parish of Hauxley, was designated by NCC in March 2019.
- 4.3 Hauxley Parish Council (HPC) gathered a range of evidence and undertook consultation with communities and other key stakeholders to identify the issues and opportunities that need to be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan (avoiding duplication of issues covered by the NLP). Informed by the results of that consultation, a focused set of proposals, supported by evidence was developed.
- 4.4 HPC also commissioned AECOM to produce a Design Code for the Parish. This serves to provide an appreciation of Hauxley's existing character in order to create a set of design codes which will apply to any future development within the Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.5 The first step in the SEA process was the development of a Scoping Report, which was published for Consultation in August 2022.
- 4.6 A draft Plan has been shared with AECOM, who have undertaken an appraisal of the Plan 'as a whole', taking into account each of the individual policies in combination. As part of this process, it is important to consider 'reasonable alternatives'.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the HNP

- 4.7 A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives'. The SEA Regulations are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the Environmental Report should present an appraisal of the '*plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan*'.
- 4.8 The following sections therefore describe how the SEA process to date has considered key plan issues and has informed the development strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Housing Strategy

- 4.9 Overall County level housing numbers (targets) are primarily the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority; Northumberland County Council.

- 4.10 The Neighbourhood Plan policies must be in conformity with the adopted Northumberland Local Plan.
- 4.11 The spatial strategy of NLP is to focus the majority of new development within 'Main Towns' and 'Service Centres' and smaller growth within 'Service Villages'. Hauxley falls within the 'Small Villages' category. The latter is defined as "*a cluster of dwellings and associated buildings which has a recognised name and identity, a definable centre, and a church or other community building*". The NLP states that "*Northumberland contains many small villages and hamlets. While the Local Plan does not actively direct development to small villages, it is recognised that a level of development is required in rural areas to support social and economic vitality, and that development in one village can support services and facilities in another nearby. In small villages not identified as Main Towns, Service Centres or Service Villages, small scale development will be supported subject to a number of criteria.*"
- 4.12 Hauxley is part of the NLP's 'South East Delivery Area' which contains more than half the county's population. It also contains some of Northumberland's key employment centres with the A189 running through the Delivery Area from north to south. The NLP proposes to reinforce the role of South East Northumberland by allocating over half the housing growth to this area focussed on the towns of Cramlington, Blyth and Ashington.
- 4.13 The NLP (table 7.2 distribution of housing requirements and commitments in Northumberland) gives the minimum housing requirement for the South East Delivery Area as 9,000 over the NLP period (2016-2036). Completions and commitments (including minded-to-approve applications) total 10,992 dwellings (at March 2020). This leaves a residual (total housing required over plan period minus total completions and commitments and minded to approve over same period) of -1,992 homes. Based on this the South East Delivery Area is expected to 'over-deliver' by 1,992 dwellings by the end of the NLP period. Whilst the overall number of completions and commitments exceeds the minimum housing requirement over the plan period, the NLP allocates net additional dwellings to provide flexibility in meeting future needs and to help balance the County's housing market.
- 4.14 The NLP does not allocate sites for housing in the NP area, setting a zero housing requirement figure (HRF) for the Parish. In view of this and in the absence of a local housing need assessment the HNP does not allocate sites for housing. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives to consider in terms of housing growth or sites for residential development.
- 4.15 Reasonable alternatives considered in the SEA process pertain to HNP Policy H1 (Local green space) which allocates 16 sites as Local Green Space (LGS) across the NP area. The LGS designation provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. Designating a green area as LGS would give it protection consistent with that in respect of the Green Belt.
- 4.16 The NLP creates a specific designation of Protected Open Space which seeks to retain existing areas of open space within Northumberland (policy INF5 and NLP policies map). The supporting text to policy states that "*whilst the opportunity to create Local Green Space through the Local Plan exists, the County Council considers that, given the need to show that any such designation is demonstrably special to a local community, the most appropriate mechanism for designating*

Local Green Space is through a neighbourhood plan. Under the policy, development likely to result in loss of protected open space will not be supported unless it meets a set of criteria. These include, inter alia, the provision of a replacement area of space of equivalent or better quality, in a suitable location, or where the development proposed is for alternative sports and recreation, the needs for which, outweigh the loss. The NLP allocates numerous areas of POS throughout the County including three sites within Hauxley.

4.17 Engagement on the HNP has identified that the distinctiveness of the plan area is hugely valued by the local community. Therefore, the HNP designates areas of Local Green Space seeking to protect these areas which contribute to the character and the landscape in Hauxley and are highly valued by the community.

4.18 The SEA considered the approach (the *reasonable alternative*) of not designating the 16 sites in the HNP as LGS as these would be offered a degree of protection under the strategic (NLP) and HNP policies, seeking to protect the landscape and the natural and historic environment. The allocations as LGS may adversely impact future housing delivery on sites that may be suitable for future residential development within the villages of High Hauxley and Low Hauxley, should the need for additional housing arise.

4.19 In conclusion two reasonable alternatives have been considered to deal with this matter:

- **Option 1** – Given the importance of the sites identified in HNP (Policy H1), to the local community, these are to be designated as LGS to protect them from future encroachment.
- **Option 2** – Not to allocate areas of LGS as the majority of these areas would be offered a degree of protection through strategic and HNP policies seeking to protect the landscape and the natural/ historic environment.

4.20 It is pertinent to clarify the following with regards to reasonable alternatives:

- Defining scenarios - is ultimately the responsibility of the plan-maker, although the SEA consultant (AECOM) is well placed to advise.
- Assessing scenarios - is the responsibility of the SEA consultant.
- Selecting and justifying a preferred scenario - is the responsibility of the plan-maker.

Structure of this part of the report

4.21 This part of the report is structured as follows:

- **Section 5** explains the SEA appraisal methodology
- **Section 6** presents the appraisal of the HNP and reasonable alternative
- **Section 7** explains reasons for supporting the preferred approach
- **Section 8** presents conclusions and recommendations
- **Section 9** explains next steps and plan finalisation
- **Section 10** identifies monitoring measures

Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?

5. Introduction (to Part 2)

- 5.1 The aim of this section is to present an assessment of the current 'pre-submission' version of the HNP and the identified reasonable alternative.
- 5.2 The HNP puts forward 5 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. These are set out in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5-1 HNP policies

Policy ref.	Title
H1	Local green space
H2	Green gaps
H4	Local distinctiveness
H5	Residential design codes
H6	Sustainable location of new development

Methodology

- 5.3 The assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see Table 3.1) as a methodological framework.
- 5.4 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the policies under consideration and understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario) that is inevitably limited. Given uncertainties there is a need to make assumptions, e.g. in relation to plan implementation and aspects of the baseline that might be impacted. Assumptions are made cautiously and explained within the text (with the aim of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and conciseness). In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict 'significant effects', but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.
- 5.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e. the potential for the HNP to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes and projects. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

6. Assessment of the HNP & Reasonable Alternative

Introduction

6.1 The assessment is presented below under six topic headings, reflecting the established assessment framework (see Section 3). A final section (section 8) then presents overall conclusions. The aim of this section is to present assessment findings in relation to the two options set out below:

- Option 1 – Given the importance of the sites identified in HNP policy H1, to the local community, these should be designated as LGS to protect them from future encroachment.
- Option 2 – Not to allocate areas of LGS as the majority of these areas would be offered a degree of protection through strategic and HNP policies seeking to protect the landscape and the natural/ historic environment.

Biodiversity

Option 1

6.2 There are several protected biodiversity sites located within, and in proximity to, the NP area. These include the Northumbria Coast Ramsar / SPA, Coquet Island SSSI / SPA, Northumberland Shore SSSI and Low Hauxley Shore SSSI. The impact risk zones (IRZ) associated with nearby SSSI's extend through most of the NP area. The Parish also contains the Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre and Reserve and Amble Dunes Nature Reserve. There are areas of Priority Habitat including; Deciduous Woodland and Coastal Sand Dunes.

6.3 In this context, Policy H2 (Green gap) is positive as it seeks to protect large areas of green open space identified in the Plan stating that only development that does not conflict with the purposes of the designation will be supported. These areas include important habitats such as wetlands and constitute valuable wildlife corridors with functional links to the internationally designated biodiversity sites in Hauxley.

6.4 Policy H1 designates 16 sites of green open space areas as Local Green Space. The designation offers the same level of protection as that afforded to green belt land. All of these contribute to the green infrastructure networks extending throughout the Parish and wider area, providing habitats that support a wide range of biodiversity. Therefore, the policy is expected to have positive effects as it serves to reduce habitat loss and fragmentation by maintaining their functional contribution as ecological links. The designations also help to reduce recreational disturbance on Local wildlife Sites and the SSSI sites along the coast which support important bird populations.

6.5 Overall, **moderate positive effects** are considered likely due to policies seeking to protect areas of open green space through the LGS and Green Gaps designations which will help reduce habitat fragmentation and recreational disturbance on important bird populations within the coastal biodiversity designations.

Option 2

6.6 Option 2 does not include the LGS allocations of Policy H1, however, a substantial part of the area encompassed by the LGS sites in policy H1 overlaps the green gaps identified in policy H2 and will therefore be subject to the protection offered by policy H2. Furthermore, some of the LGS sites in policy H1 are designated as Protected Open Space in the NLP (policy INF5) and designated biodiversity sites are offered a degree of protection through strategic level policies in the NLP. Therefore, Option 2 would still include the positive effects associated with the green gaps (Policy H2) but the magnitude of effects is reduced to **minor positive** due to omitting the formal LGS designations. Overall, Option 1 is judged to be preferable with regards to biodiversity due to the added protection of the LGS designations.

Climate change

6.7 The HNP has limited to scope for significant effects on climate change mitigation. Therefore, this section is primarily concerned with climate change adaptation, specifically flood risk. The residential areas within the NP area fall predominantly within flood zone 1, although stretches of flood zone 2 and 3 exist along the coast, local water courses and the Hauxley Nature Reserve.

6.8 Well-planned green infrastructure can help an area adapt to, and manage the risks of climate change (including flood risk). Enabling and providing for green infrastructure within Hauxley is therefore a key means to promoting climate change adaptation measures within the HNP. Policy H1 which allocates 16 sites as Local Green Space performs positively in this respect. LGS provides multi-functional benefits including flood retention / attenuation, carbon sequestration and encourages active travel in the form of walking and cycling through attractive public realm. The LGS sites provide interconnected green infrastructure (GI) thus improving the Parish's resilience to future flood risk.

6.9 Policy H2 defines two green gaps between High Hauxley and Amble and between Low Hauxley and High Hauxley seeking to protect these areas from unsuitable development helping preserve the natural flood management such areas can provide serving to improve flood resilience.

6.10 Policy H5 (Residential design codes) is likely to have beneficial effects on climate change mitigation and adaptation as it requires development to optimise the orientation of buildings such that development benefits from solar gain and natural light. It also supports the retrofitting of roofs with solar panels and the installation of renewable energy measures.

6.11 The measures to increase climate resilience through designating areas of LGS, green gaps and the support for solar panels / renewable energy measures within new development are considered to have **moderate positive effects** on climate change adaptation.

Option 2

6.12 Option 2 does not include the LGS allocations (policy H1) which could result in the loss of some flood retention capacity and reduced permeability in the built up areas if these sites are lost to development. However, the potential adverse effects are offset by the green gaps designations in Policy H2 as these overlap large parts of the LGS areas in policy H1.

6.13 Additionally, the POS designations in the NLP also overlap some of the LGS areas. Therefore, Option 2 is anticipated to have **minor positive effects** overall.

6.14 In conclusion Option 1 is preferable with respect to climate change adaptation.

Historic environment

6.15 The NP area contains several heritage assets including 9 listed buildings in High Hauxley and a Scheduled Monument on Coquet Island, in addition to numerous non-designated assets (44 recorded in the HER⁵). These assets have been designated by Historic England as being of special interest by way of their historic and architectural value. Listing marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system, so that it can be protected for future generations. In this context, Policies H4 (Local distinctiveness) and H5 (Residential design codes) are positive as they seek high quality design that preserves local character, requiring new development that is in keeping with the various character areas in the Parish, having regard to existing spacing, layout, materials and elevations. The policies help ensure that future development takes account of the historic fabric and significance of the heritage assets and their settings.

6.16 Policy H2 (Green gaps) seeks to protect and enhance the rural character of the Parish by identifying areas of green open space to prevent coalescence with neighbouring settlements and protect the local landscape character which are of high heritage significance, forming part of the historic landscape and townscape character of the Parish. The HNP policies are therefore predicted to have favourable effects as they seek to protect to these important sites and their contribution to the historic environment.

6.17 Option 1 includes policy H1 (Local green space) which designates several areas of LGS including sites that make important contributions to the settings of designated heritage assets such as LGS10 (Land south of Hauxley Hall) which forms an important part of the setting of the Grade II* listed building.

6.18 Overall, the potential for **moderate positive effects** is recognised, namely through policies requiring new development to be in keeping with the character of the existing settlements and policies seeking to protect important areas of landscape that form an intrinsic part of the historic character and heritage of the Parish.

Option 2

6.19 Option 2 shares some of the positive effects associated with Option 1 but to a smaller extent as this option does not include the 16 LGS designations. Therefore, **minor positive effects** are anticipated for Option 2.

Landscape

6.20 The Hauxley Design Code highlights the sensitivity to change of much of the landscape surrounding Low and High Hauxley. This includes important views between Low and High Hauxley, High Hauxley and Amble and views out to sea, of Coquet Island along the coastline and across Hauxley Nature Reserve.

⁵ Northumberland Historic Environment Record

- 6.21 In this context Policy H2 (Green gaps) is anticipated to have beneficial effects as it serves to protect large parts of the landscape helping protect the rural character of the Parish's landscapes, preventing coalescence with Amble and preserving important views and vistas. That said, in the absence of the HNP important areas of landscape within the Parish would still be offered a degree of protection under strategic policies (e.g. the NLP's ENV1 and ENV3). Therefore, **moderate positive effects** are anticipated.
- 6.22 Other policies assessed as positive are H4 (Local distinctiveness) and H5 (Residential design codes) as these support high quality design that is in keeping with the local character of the built environment, the landscape and townscape.
- 6.23 Policy H1 (Local green Space) designates 16 green space areas as LGS, since these make a major contribution to the landscape character of the NP area, the policy is expected to have positive effects as it serves to preserve these important parts of the landscape.
- 6.24 Together, the HNP policies ought to safeguard areas of high landscape value and protect the landscape surrounding the built areas, as well as the important spaces and views throughout the Parish. Consequently, **moderately positive effects** are predicted overall.

Option 2

- 6.25 Option 2 performs slightly less positively as it excludes the LGS allocations (H1) (and therefore there is greater potential for alternative uses on these sites) leaving **minor positive effects**.

Population and housing

- 6.26 The NLP classifies High Hauxley and Low Hauxley as 'Small Villages'. These are expected to support some small scale development provided it retains the core form of the settlement; and is appropriate to the character / appearance of the settlement and the rural setting.
- 6.27 The Parish falls within the South East Delivery area which is allocated a minimum housing requirement of 9,000 dwellings over the NLP period (2016-2036). According to the NLP, completions and commitments total 10,992 dwellings (as of March 2020). This leaves a residual need of -1,992 homes; i.e. the area is expected to 'over-deliver' by 1,992 dwellings by the end of the NLP period. Given this expected surplus and the zero HRF set for Hauxley in the NLP, the HNP does not allocate sites for housing.
- 6.28 One of the main objectives of the HNP is 'ensuring new development is sustainable and supports the delivery of development needed by the local community whilst protecting the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside'. In this context, Policy H6 (sustainable location of new development) is potentially positive as it serves to ensure that new development is located in appropriate locations, well related to the existing settlement patterns within the Parish. The policy sets the settlement boundaries for Low and High Hauxley supporting residential development within these boundaries subject to HNP and NLP policies. Outside the settlement boundaries development will be supported where it meets the requirements of the NLP with regard to development in the countryside.

- 6.29 The settlement boundary defined in H6 would exclude SHLAA site 0160b NW of High Hauxley & S of New Park Caravan Site b, assessed as being suitable, achievable and deliverable, within a 11-15 year timeframe. The SHLAA⁶ states that the site is *'not compliant with the local plan and does not contribute to the housing requirement, but potentially offering longer-term and/or post-plan contingency'*. Excluding the site from the settlement boundary may therefore adversely impact its potential to provide housing should the need arise in future. However, in the absence of demonstrable housing need, the effects are not expected to be significant. There would also be opportunities to address this in future reviews of the NP should a need arise.
- 6.30 Policy H5 (Residential design codes) is anticipated to have positive effects as it requires new development to follow the guidelines set out in the Hauxley Design Code which promotes high quality design that is in keeping with the local vernacular and the character of the existing settlements within the Parish.
- 6.31 Overall, HNP is likely to help maintain the Parish's attractiveness as place to live through policies seeking to preserve its landscapes, open green spaces and rural character and distinctiveness. However, given the zero HRF and the absence of new housing provision, the effects are considered **neutral** overall.

Option 2

- 6.32 This option shares some of Option 1's beneficial effects with respect to maintaining the attractiveness of the Parish as a place to live but is also expected to have **neutral effects** as it does not include new housing allocations and there is no demonstrable local housing need or HRF.

Health and Wellbeing

- 6.33 The HNP allocations of LGS (H1) and green gaps (H2) are positive with respect to health and wellbeing as the designations serve to maintain and enhance access to attractive open green space and encourage active travel (walking and cycling) and leisure activities. This is expected to give rise to **moderate positive effects** on health and wellbeing

Option 2

- 6.34 This Option shares the positive effects associated with the Green gaps policy (H2) but lacks the additional beneficial effects associated with the 16 LGS designation and therefore is likely to produce **minor positive effects** overall.

⁶ Source: [Northumberland Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#)

Summary of assessment findings

- 6.35 Table 6.1 presents a summary of the assessment findings in relation to the two options.
- 6.36 With regards to methodology within each row (i.e. for each of the topics that comprise the SEA framework) of Table 5.1 the columns to the right hand side seek to both **categorise** the performance of each scenario in terms of effects on the baseline (using red, amber and light green and dark green)⁷ and also **rank** the alternatives in order of performance. Also, ' = ' is used to denote instances where the alternatives perform on a par (i.e. it not possible to differentiate between them). The appraisal matrix is followed by a discussion, setting out reasons for the appraisal conclusions reached, with reference to available evidence.
- 6.37 The assessment shows predominantly positive effects, with each of the options associated mainly positive effects. Option 1 scores moderate positives for 5 out of the 6 SEA themes with one neutral associated with the population and housing theme. Option 2 also performs well but less positively for 5 of the themes with one neutral but has no negative effects. However, it is for the decision-maker (also consultees), not this assessment, to assign weight to the various pros and cons and then arrive at a conclusion on which scenario is best-performing overall.

⁷ Red indicates a significant negative effect; amber a negative effect that is of limited or uncertain significance; light green a positive effect that is of limited or uncertain significance; and dark green a significant positive effect. Blue is assigned where effects are considered to be neutral or uncertain.

Table 6.1: Options assessment

Topic	Option 1 HNP approach	Option 2 Reasonable alternative
Biodiversity	1	2
Climate change	1	2
Historic environment	1	2
Landscape	1	2
Population & housing	=	=
Health & Wellbeing	1	2

7. The preferred approach

Introduction

7.1 The aim of this section is to present the reasons for supporting the preferred approach, in light of the scenarios assessment presented above. The rationale is provided by the plan-makers.

Reasons for supporting the preferred approach

7.2 The plan-makers responded to the assessment as follows:

“The preferred approach is to take forward Option 1 as the basis for HNP”. This approach is considered to broadly align with the findings of the assessment, which finds Option 1 to perform generally more positively than Option 2.

7.3 Whilst no significant negative effects are predicted for Option 1 (and 2) it is recognised that excluding SHLAA site 0160b from the settlement boundary, could reduce the potential to secure additional housing on a site that has been identified as suitable for residential development in the long term (post HNP/NLP period). However, it may be possible to address the issue in a future review of the HNP at some future point when a local housing need can be demonstrated.

7.4 With regards to Option 2, the assessment highlights mainly minor positive effects (biodiversity, climate change, historic environment, landscape and health and wellbeing), with one neutral effect (population and housing). No negative effects are predicted for Option 2.

7.5 The process of defining and assessing options serves to highlight that there are choices to be made, in respect of planning for the future of Hauxley. HPC views Option 1 as best representing sustainable development on balance.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

- 8.1 Overall, the Plan appraisal has served to highlight the potential for predominantly positive effects with one neutral effect.
- 8.2 Moderate positive effects are anticipated in relation to the biodiversity SEA theme due to policies seeking to protect areas of open green space through the LGS and Green gaps designations which will help reduce habitat fragmentation and recreational disturbance on important bird populations within the coastal biodiversity designated sites. The Plan's anticipated positive effects may be further boosted by the inclusion of a requirement for new development to achieve biodiversity net gain. Additionally, a policy requiring that new development in close proximity to the coast, contribute to the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service would help mitigate potential impacts on the biodiversity designation along the coast.
- 8.3 Moderately positive effects are also envisaged in relation to the climate change SEA theme due to policies likely to increase resilience to the effects of climate change, specifically flood risk, such as the designation of LGS, green gaps. The support for solar panels / renewable energy measures within new development is also beneficial with respect to climate change mitigation.
- 8.4 The potential for moderate positive effects is recognised for the historic environment, namely through policies requiring new development to be in keeping with the character of the existing settlements and policies seeking to protect important areas of landscape that form an intrinsic part of the historic character and heritage of the Parish.
- 8.5 HNP policies safeguarding areas of high landscape value, valued green space and important spaces and views throughout the Parish are anticipated to produce moderately positive effects with respect to the landscape SEA theme.
- 8.6 Given the zero HRF and the absence of new housing provision in the HNP, the effects with respect to the population and housing theme are considered neutral overall. That said the plan includes several policies that ought to preserve the attractiveness of the NP area. Including a policy that supports the principle of rural exception sites to address the needs of the local community may be beneficial as this would be helpful to households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.

Part 3: What are the next steps?

9. Plan finalisation

- 9.1 This Environmental Report accompanies the pre-submission version of the HNP for consultation. Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by HPC, when finalising the plan for submission.
- 9.2 The ‘submission’ version of the plan will then be submitted to NCC (alongside an Environmental Report Update, if necessary). The plan and supporting evidence will be then published for further consultation, and then submitted for examination.
- 9.3 If the outcome of the Independent Examination is favourable, the HNP will then be subject to a referendum, and the plan will be ‘made’ if more than 50% of those who vote are in support. Once made, the HNP will become part of the Development Plan for Northumberland.

10. Monitoring

- 10.1 The SEA regulations require ‘measures envisaged concerning monitoring’ to be outlined in this report.
- 10.2 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Northumberland County Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).
- 10.3 The SEA has not identified any major negative effects for the HNP. Several moderately positive effects have been identified that would require closer monitoring as suggested below:

Table 10.1 *Suggested monitoring indicators*

Significant effects	Monitoring measures
Biodiversity – Moderate positive effects are predicted due to Plan policies designating LGS and green gaps designations.	<p>Change in areas of biodiversity importance including sites of international, national, regional or sub-regional or local significance (e.g. Ramsar, SSSIs, SPAs, SAC’s, LWS, and SINCS)</p> <p>Number of nationally/locally important wildlife sites in the county reported as being in ‘poor condition’.</p> <p>Proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented</p> <p>Net change in condition of SSSI’s</p> <p>Contributions made to the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service (NCMS)</p>
Climate Change – Moderate positive effects are predicted through	Number / type of developments permitted within flood zone 2 and 3 areas.

measures likely to increase climate resilience and adaptation such as designating areas of LGS, green gaps and the support for solar panels / renewable energy measures within new development.

Quality and quantity of open space provision

Number of renewable/decentralised energy schemes installed/ permitted

Historic environment – Moderate positive effects are recognised through policies requiring new development to be in keeping with the character of the existing settlements and policies seeking to protect important areas of landscape that form an intrinsic part of the historic character and heritage of the Parish.

Changes in number of buildings and features of historic/ heritage importance (e.g. listed buildings, structures on the Northumberland Historic Environment record (HER))

Landscape – moderate positive effects are predicted through policies seeking to safeguard areas of high landscape value.

Number and type of development permitted within each areas of the landscape character areas.

Health & Wellbeing – moderate positive effects are predicted due to the allocation of green gaps and LGS which serve to enhance access to open green space and encourage leisure/ recreation and walking/ cycling.

Achievement of open space and recreational space standard.

Number of walking/ cycling routes.

Appendices

Appendix I: Meeting the Regulations

As discussed in section 1 above, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) explains the information that must be contained in the Environmental Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. Table AI.1 links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements, whilst Table AI.2 explains this interpretation. Table AI.3 identifies how and where within this report the requirements have/ will be met.

Table AI.1: Questions answered by this report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

Introduction	What's the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
SEA scope?	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level ▪ Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
SEA scope?	What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan ▪ The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be affected ▪ Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
SEA scope?	What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment
Part 1	What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) ▪ The likely significant effects associated with alternatives ▪ Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan
Part 2	What are the SEA findings at this current stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan ▪ The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
Part 3	What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A description of the monitoring measures envisaged

Schedule 2

Interpretation of Schedule 2

The report must include...

The report must include...

(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the plan seeking to achieve?</i>	
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>	i.e. answer – <i>What's the scope of the SA?</i>
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level		
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>	
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected		
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues & objectives?</i>	
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;	Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal		
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach')	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> [Part 1 of the Report]	
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.		
	The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the assessment findings at this current stage?</i> [Part 2 of the Report]	
	The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan		
	A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> [Part 3 of the Report]	

Table A1.2: Interpretation of the regulations

Table AI.3: ‘Checklist’ of how (throughout the SEA process) and where (within this report) regulatory requirements are met

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
A) The Environmental Report must present certain information	
1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Section 2 (‘What is the plan seeking to achieve’) presents this information.
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters have been considered in detail through scoping work, which has involved dedicated consultation on a Scoping Report.
3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The ‘SEA framework’ – the outcome of scoping – is presented within Section 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA?’).
4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	More detailed messages, established through a context and baseline review are also presented in Appendix II.
5. The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The SEA framework is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA’). Also, Appendix II presents key messages from the context review. With regards to explaining “ <i>how...considerations have been taken into account</i> ”, Section 7 explains ‘reasons for supporting the preferred approach’, i.e. explains how/ why the preferred approach is justified in light of alternatives assessment.
6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	section 6 presents alternatives assessment findings (in relation to housing growth, which is a ‘stand-out’ plan policy area). Chapter 6 presents an assessment of the draft plan. With regards to assessment methodology, Section 5 explains the role of the SEA framework/scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/ dimensions.
7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	The assessment highlights certain tensions between competing objectives, which might potentially be actioned when finalising the plan, and specific recommendations are made in Section 8.

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Shapters 4 and 5 deal with 'Reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with', in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues and options. Also, section 7 sets out reasons for selecting the preferred option (in-light of alternatives assessment).
9. Description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Section 10 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring.
10. A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	The NTS is provided at the beginning of this Environmental Report.
B) The Report must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan	
Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the Draft Plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)	At the current time, this Environmental Report is published alongside the 'pre-submission' version of the Neighbourhood Plan, with a view to informing Regulation 14 consultation.
C) The report must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan	
The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.	This Environmental Report, and consultation responses received, will be taken into account when finalising the plan.

Appendix II: The SEA Scoping Report

