



# **North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

### **Screening Report**

**Prepared by the Communities & Infrastructure Team**

**Northumberland County Council**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under European legislation<sup>1</sup> for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. This particularly relates to plans which designate sites for development.
- 1.2 The purpose of the SEA is to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to integrate considerations of the environment into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- 1.3 The SEA process sets out criteria for assessing the significance of the impact of a plan on the environment. For example, if a plan proposes a housing development it may have an impact on the wildlife of the area or have an impact on landscape. If a significant effect is possible, the assessment requires the consideration of options and for the evaluation of the potential effects on the environment.
- 1.4 To ascertain if SEA is required, a screening exercise is undertaken which looks at the proposals in a Neighbourhood Plan to see if a significant effect is likely. The criteria for this screening are set out in the relevant legislation<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.5 This report details the assessment undertaken by the Local Authority of the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan against the need for EA. It concludes that, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, an SEA is required.
- 1.6 This report was sent to the consultation bodies<sup>3</sup> of the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England in order to seek their views on its contents<sup>4</sup>. The consultation ran from 04 November until 25 November 2016.
- 1.7 Historic England considered that SEA was not required as they considered that the Plan is unlikely to result in significant effects in relation to Historic England's remit (i.e. cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage).
- 1.8 The Environment Agency agreed with the Screening Opinion in that the need for SEA is triggered by the location of nature conservation designations within and adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area. They acknowledged Natural England's remit under these circumstances. In addition, the Environment Agency also made reference to the need to consult the Local Authority's coastal engineers on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The Environment Agency also raised issues regarding new discharges from new development and existing issues such as eutrophication further up the coast. They therefore

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<sup>1</sup> [European Directive 2001/42/EC \(SEA Directive\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> See footnote above, plus [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 \(SEA Regulations\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> As set out in Regulation 4(1) of the SEA Regulations 2004 and identified as the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England.

<sup>4</sup> As set out in Regulation 9(2)(b) of the SEA Regulations 2004.

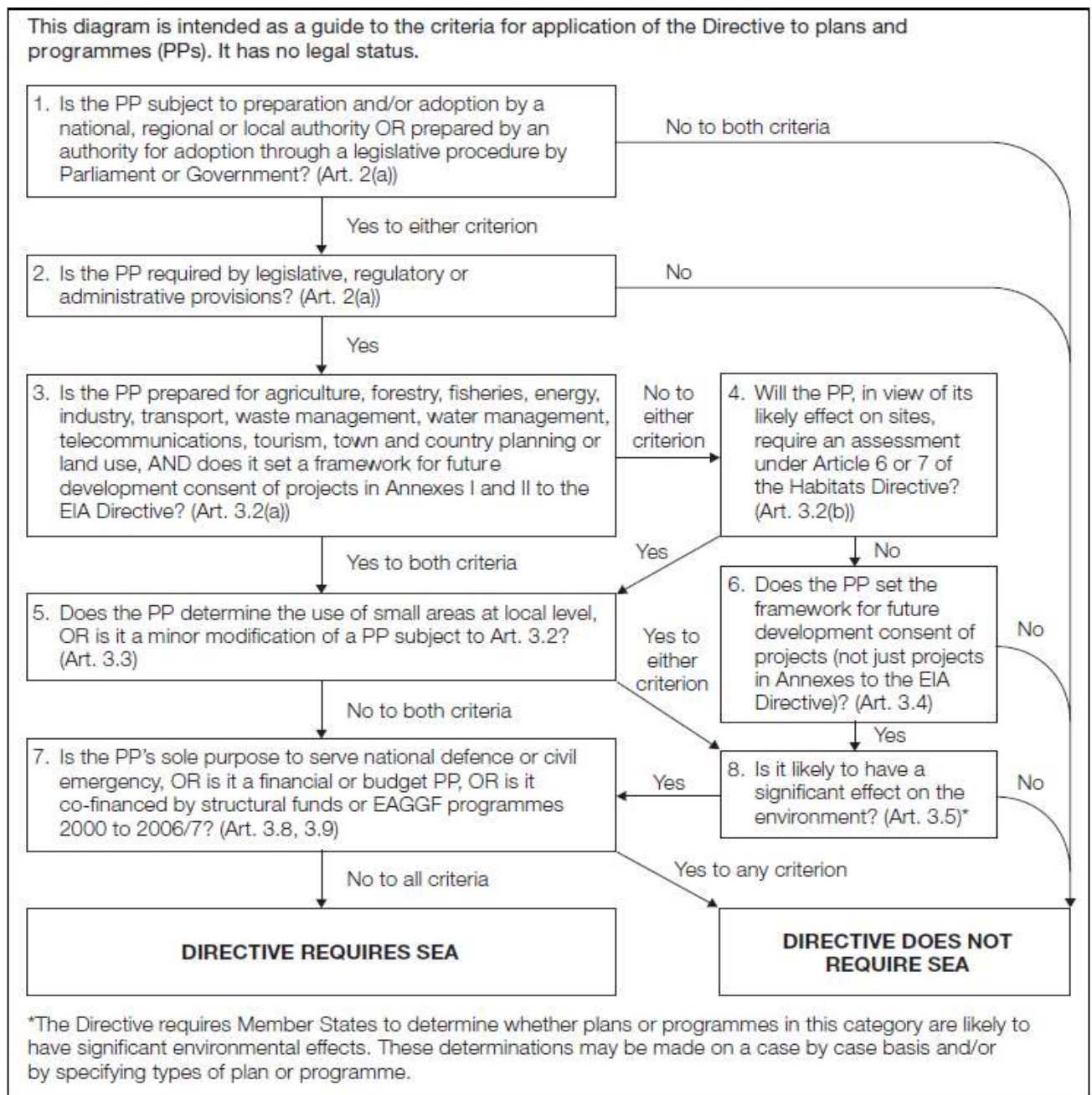
recommended that any future development clearly takes account of the nutrients associated with any new or increased discharges and requests that these are monitored. Reference is also made to the number of caravan parks within the Neighbourhood Area which have existing permits to discharge treated effluent; they stated that any increase in a caravan park size should also trigger a review of the existing Environmental Permit Regulations permit to discharge treated effluent.

- 1.9 Natural England agreed with the Screening Opinion and considered that, in their view, the proposals contained within the Neighbourhood Plan will have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England have a statutory duty to protect. They considered that there should now be an assessment in order to determine the potential impact on these sensitive sites and what possibilities exist for the avoidance/mitigation of the effects. They provided a list of sites which have been identified as being potentially significantly affected by the plan policies and potential allocations. They recommend further assessment to ascertain the likelihood of significant effects on habitats and protected species. Further information is contained within their response and can be found at Appendix 2 of this report.

## 2. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.1 Regulation 15 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended, requires that certain specified information is provided alongside a draft neighbourhood plan when it is submitted to the local planning authority. In summary, this information is:
- A map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates;
  - A consultation statement;
  - The proposed neighbourhood development plan;
  - A 'basic conditions statement'; and
  - An environmental report, or a screening opinion indicating that an environmental report is not required.
- 2.2 The objective of the SEA Directive is:
- “To provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of development plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development”* – EU Directive 2001/42/EC (Article 1).
- 2.3 To establish if a Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA, a screening assessment is required against a series of criteria set out in the SEA Directive. Figure 1 sets out the screening process and how a plan would be assessed against the SEA Directive criteria. An assessment of the characteristics of the draft North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan against these criteria is set out in Table 1.

**Figure 1: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes**



Source: A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, ODPM (2005)<sup>5</sup>

2.4 Table 1, below, sets out the eight questions identified in the diagram above and provides an answer with regard to the proposed North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

**Table 1: Application of the SEA Directive to the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan**

Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Article 2(a))	Yes	Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by a qualifying body (Parish/Town Councils) under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). This Neighbourhood Plan is prepared by North Sunderland Parish Council (as the “relevant body”), supported by Beadnell Parish Council and Bamburgh Parish Council. It will be ‘made’ by Northumberland County Council as the local authority. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is subject to The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, along with the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2013, (as amended)
2. Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))	No	Communities have a right to be able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. However, communities are not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative purposes to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. If adopted, the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan would form part of the statutory development plan; it is therefore considered necessary to answer the following questions to determine further if SEA is required.
3. Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Article 3.2(a))	Yes	A Neighbourhood Plan can include these policy areas and could provide, at a neighbourhood area level, the framework for development that would fall within Annex II of the EIA Directive. Developments that fall within Annex I are ‘excluded’ development for Neighbourhood Plans (as set out in Section 61(k) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)). There is a possibility that the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan would promote or allocate land for some of the types of projects listed in Annex II of the EIA Directive (see Appendix 1 of this report for details).

Stage	Y/N	Reason
4. Will the Plan, in view of its likely effects on sites, require an assessment of future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Article 3.2(b))	Yes	A Neighbourhood Plan could potentially have impacts on sites covered by the Habitats Regulations. The area of the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan includes and abuts such sites. Therefore, given that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to promote development of certain types in certain areas, (even though these may not be within or immediately adjacent to the sites concerned), the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to need to be subject to HRA Appropriate Assessment. A separate HRA screening assessment to ascertain whether an Appropriate Assessment will be required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, which relate to Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive.
5. Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Article 3.2? (Article 3.3)	Yes	A Neighbourhood Plan can determine the use of small areas at a local level. The North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan includes policies relating to the location of sustainable development and may (within its scope) specifically allocate land for development and/or define the limits of development around settlements.
6. Does the Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Article 3.4)	Yes	Once 'made', a Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used in the determination of planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area. Therefore, it sets the framework for future developments at a local level.
7. Is the Plan's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Article 3.8, 3.9)	No	The North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with these issues.



Stage	Y/N	Reason
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Article 3.5)	Yes	The North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan should accord with the strategic policies contained within the statutory development plan. While no likely significant effects upon the environment have been identified, specific development is likely to be proposed through the plan, possibly including land allocation or the reserving of land for future settlement expansion through the drawing of settlement limits. It is therefore considered possible that the plan could have effects on heritage assets, landscape, biodiversity interests or areas of flood risk over and above those that would occur if levels of development were limited to those set in existing plans.

- 2.5 The conclusion of the assessment in Table 1 is that, depending on the content of a Neighbourhood Plan, an SEA may be required. For this reason, a case by case analysis of Neighbourhood Plans will be required to determine any potential significant effects on the environment.
- 2.6 Assessment of the significance of the effect of a Neighbourhood Plan will depend on the proposals within it. The criteria for assessing the likely significance of effects are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These are shown below in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Criteria for determining likely significance of effects on the environment**

<p><b>1. The characteristics of neighbourhood plans, having regard, in particular, to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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;</li><li>b) the degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;</li><li>c) The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;</li><li>d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan;</li><li>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 waste protection)</li></ul>
<p><b>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;</li><li>b) The cumulative nature of the effects;</li><li>c) The transboundary nature of the effects;</li><li>d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);</li><li>e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</li><li>f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</li><li>(ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;</li><li>(iii) Intensive land use</li></ul></li><li>g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</li></ul>

### **3. North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan**

- 3.1 North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan area covers an area of the North Northumberland coastline from Budle Bay in the north to Beadnell Bay in the south, taking in the Farne Islands and also stretching inland up to around five kilometres.
- 3.2 It comprises the whole of the area of the Civil Parishes of North Sunderland, Bamburgh and Beadnell. North Sunderland Parish Council is the 'qualifying body' – i.e. leading the Neighbourhood Plan – in partnership with Beadnell and Bamburgh Parish Councils.
- 3.3 The eastern part of the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan area is part of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The coastline itself, with its dunes, sandy bays and rocky outcrops, includes highly valued international nature conservation designations.
- 3.4 Seahouses / North Sunderland, a 'service centre' in the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy, is the largest settlement in the area; Bamburgh and Beadnell are the other two settlements of significance and there are a few small hamlets scattered further inland and sizeable tracts of farmed and wooded countryside in a rolling lowland setting
- 3.5 The Neighbourhood Area is shown on Map 1.

**Map 1: The North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Area**



3.6 The Vision and Objectives of the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan are set out below:

## DRAFT VISION:

*“Recognising that our area was once the beating heart of the Kingdom of Northumbria, we want to re-invigorate this thriving community with an emphasis on 'People, Place and Prosperity' to create three vital villages where people will want to live, work and play for centuries to come.”*

## DRAFT OBJECTIVES likely to form the basis of the pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan:

### PART 1: PLACE

**Objective 1 [Landscape]** To secure new development that benefits our communities whilst affording the highest level of protection to our valued habitats, landscapes, seascapes, villages and dark skies that make our area special

**Objective 2 [Sense of Place]** To enhance the 'sense of place' in the three parishes by ensuring new development takes place at the right scale and in the right places, with an emphasis on high quality design which reflect the principles of the AONB Design Guide and the AONB Management Plan.

**Objective 3 [Historic Environment]** To protect and enhance Heritage Assets in the Plan Area, especially those that contribute to our 'sense of place' and are those that are valued and relevant to our local community

### PART 2: PEOPLE

**Objective 4 [Housing]** To put the heart back into our communities by making sure we have enough of the right mix and tenure of housing.

**Objective 5 - [Local Green Spaces]** To ensure that our settlements have space for 'play', we will identify and protect Local Green Spaces in the Plan area

**Objective 6 - [Community Facilities]** To protect, improve and where feasible provide year-round Community and Recreational facilities for that benefit residents as well as tourists

### PART 3: PROSPERITY

**Objective 7 [New and expanded business development]** To provide a positive framework for new and expanded business development

**Objective 8 - [Local Economy and Tourism]** To provide a positive framework for a diverse year round local economy that benefits local people and visitors.

LIKELY SUBJECTS OF POLICIES UNDER EACH OF THE OBJECTIVES
<b>PART 1: PLACE</b>
<b><i>Objective 1 [Landscape]</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable development in the Plan Area</li> <li>• Landscapes, seascapes and habitats</li> <li>• Coastal management and the coastal strip</li> </ul>
<b><i>Objective 2 [Sense of Place]</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design in new development</li> <li>• Shop fronts</li> <li>• Advertisements</li> <li>• Sustainable development within the settlement boundary of Seahouses</li> <li>• Land to the east of Broad Road, Seahouses</li> <li>• Sustainable development outside the settlement boundaries of Seahouses, Bamburgh and Beadnell</li> <li>• Traffic management in Bamburgh</li> </ul>
<b><i>Objective 3 [Historic Environment]</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seahouses and North Sunderland Conservation Areas</li> <li>• Bamburgh Conservation Area</li> <li>• Historic core of Beadnell</li> <li>• Heritage assets in the Plan Area</li> </ul>
<b>PART 2: PEOPLE</b>
<b><i>Objective 4 [Housing]</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal residence and affordable housing</li> <li>• Local needs housing in smaller settlements and hamlets</li> <li>• Housing mix and type</li> <li>• Change of use from holiday use to residential</li> </ul>
<b><i>Objective 5 [Local Green Spaces]</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Green Space in Beadnell</li> <li>• Local Green Space in Bamburgh</li> <li>• Local Green Space in Seahouses and North Sunderland</li> </ul>
<b><i>Objective 6 [Community Facilities]</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Assets</li> <li>• New tourist and community facilities</li> <li>• Footpaths and cycleways in the Plan Area</li> </ul>
<b>PART 3: PROSPERITY</b>
<b><i>Objective 7 [New and expanded business development]</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New small scale start up business development</li> <li>• Extension and expansion of business uses</li> <li>• Broadband</li> </ul>
<b><i>Objective 8 [Local Economy]</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Static caravan sites</li> <li>• New tourism development</li> </ul>

- 3.7 The Plan is therefore likely to contain policies that seek to deliver the above topic areas. It is not yet clear whether the Neighbourhood Plan will allocate land for particular uses, although it would appear from the list of topics under the 'Sense of Place' that the Plan will define settlement limits which might be

seen as increasing the clear opportunities for development over and above past development rates and/or what is now proposed for the 'small area' defined in the emerging Core Strategy. The topic entitled 'Extension and Expansion of Business Uses' may also result in additional development opportunities involving land take.

#### **4. SEA Screening Assessment**

- 4.1 The scope and topic areas of the emerging North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan have been used to undertake this screening assessment. Based on information available so far, and the uncertainties still surrounding the exact content of the Neighbourhood Plan, the conclusion of the screening exercise is that an SEA is required.
- 4.2 Should there be significant change to the likely policy content, then the Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to a further screening assessment to ensure that conclusions arrived at in this document continue to apply.
- 4.3 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment are being carried out alongside the emerging Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy. These documents must be taken into account in undertaking this screening assessment. If it is considered that the level, coverage or likely effects of development will not be significantly greater or different as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan, then an SEA may not be required after all.
- 4.4 It should be noted that an SEA would be required as a matter of course if an Appropriate Assessment were to be triggered under the Habitats Regulations. There are a number of internationally important nature conservation designations in and adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area and an HRA is being carried out – also considering whether the Neighbourhood Plan will be a greater impact on these sites than the Core Strategy.



**Table 2: Assessment of the likelihood of significant effects on the environment**

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Significant Environmental Effect likely?	
	Yes/no	Justification
<b>The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
<b>(a)</b> the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	No	The main framework will continue to be at the Core Strategy level, which is itself subject to SEA as a matter of course. The North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for development, and sets out positive planning policies seeking to encourage development which would be sympathetic to the area, in line with specific protective policies elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan.
<b>(b)</b> the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	It is possible that the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan could inform future supplementary guidance in the area. However, this is unlikely in the immediate future. The present draft document will have to accord with existing higher-level plans and programmes and builds upon them through the inclusion of locally-specific policies which seek to protect and enhance the local built and natural environments. Due to the locally-specific nature of the policies, the effects of the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan on other plans and programmes within the wider development plan will be slight.
<b>(c)</b> the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	No	The North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan seeks to promote sustainable development overall and does not seek any relaxations to sustainable development principles set out in higher-level plans. The North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan is likely to include a significant number of specific policies seeking to promote sustainable development - e.g. relating to the reuse of existing buildings, conservation of designated heritage assets and protection of the natural environment. None of the prospective policies is considered likely to have a net negative effect on overall sustainability.

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Significant Environmental Effect likely?	
	Yes/no	Justification
<b>The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
<b>(d)</b> environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	No	Due to the scale of development proposed, the environmental impact of the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be minimal. It may even be that certain environmental problems could be lessened through the implementation of the Plan.
<b>(e)</b> the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection)	No	<p>The North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan has to be in conformity with the strategic policies contained within other relevant planning documents. The current Development Plan for the area consists of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Local Plan (April 1999). Policies in this plan continue to be material planning considerations where they comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). New planning policies are emerging through the Northumberland County Council Core Strategy.</p> <p>The North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan supports the implementation of higher level policies at the neighbourhood area level, (including informal policies within the AONB Management Plan). It is therefore not considered to have significant influence on other plans and programmes or their effects on the environment.</p>

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Significant Environmental Effect likely?	
	Yes/no	Justification
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
<b>(a)</b> the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	No	At present, it is unlikely that land allocations for built uses will be included in the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan, with the possible exception of a small extension to the land allocated for employment purposes at North Sunderland. Settlement limits are likely to be defined around the three main settlements. These would allow capacity for proportionate additional development to occur over the plan period although, of course, any applications for new build development within the settlement expansion zones, so defined, could be refused if not complying with other policies, many of which are designed to protect the environment from unacceptable development, in line with the overall protective policy context of the development plan.
<b>(b)</b> the cumulative nature of the effects	No	It is unlikely that significant environmental effects would result from policies in the emerging North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan is not thought likely to facilitate a level of development significantly above that of higher-level development plan documents. Having stated this, it is possible that marginally more development than previously anticipated could result from the redrawing of settlement limits and that a larger proportion of new build dwellings could have permanent occupants. Conversely, the settlement limits, once redefined, would be highly <u>unlikely</u> to take development closer to protected sites (mostly along the coastline). The Neighbourhood Plan supports sustainable development which would protect and enhance the built and natural environment but it is not anticipated that the Plan would result in significant effects, whether in isolation or cumulatively.

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Significant Environmental Effect likely?	
	Yes/no	Justification
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
<b>(c)</b> the transboundary nature of the effects	No	It is not anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan would result in transboundary effects as the three parishes do not straddle or abut local authority (or national boundaries).
<b>(d)</b> the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No	At this point, it is thought unlikely that there would be risks to human health or the environment arising from the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan.
<b>(e)</b> the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	No	It is unlikely that land allocations for built uses will be included in the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan, with the possible exception of a small extension to the land allocated for employment purposes at North Sunderland. Settlement limits are likely to be defined around the three main settlements. Policies are likely to aim to retain permanent residents in new build dwellings. In spite of the above, these growth elements should be, proportionately, well within the overall levels of development experienced in the area in the past and must also be seen in the context of the many proposed policies that seek to protect the natural and built environment and the wider context of protective policies in the development plan. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan is not anticipated to have significant environmental effects, as regards the population or the area affected.

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Significant Environmental Effect likely?	
	Yes/no	Justification
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
<b>(f)(i)</b> the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to special natural characteristics or cultural heritage.	No	The North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan area contains a number of important designations, including internationally recognised Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), along with national Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and many important designated heritage assets. Most of the Neighbourhood Area is located within the Northumberland Coast AONB. There has been a lengthy history of development pressure potentially affecting the important coastal and designations and thus a long history of scrutinising development against several layers of protective policy. The Neighbourhood Plan, as currently drafted, will seek to add to the effectiveness of local protections and would not affect the way in which higher level protective and conserving policies would be applied. While it would, potentially add marginally to the rate of growth of settlements and the level of the permanent population, this would be well within the scope of protective policies already in place, and those emerging, to apply the necessary safeguards. It is therefore unlikely that important natural or heritage assets would be significantly affected by the Neighbourhood Plan in a net negative way.
<b>(f)(ii)</b> the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values.	No	This would be unlikely to result from the proposals.

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Significant Environmental Effect likely?	
	Yes/no	Justification
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
<b>(f)(iii)</b> the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to intensive land use.	No	This would be unlikely to result from the proposals. Any intensification of land use would, under the proposed policies, be contained in less vulnerable areas, would be proportionate in scale to the existing and past growth, and would be assessed in relation to several layers of protective policies.
<b>(g)</b> the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	No	The AONB is protected largely (though by no means entirely) for its landscape value and quality. Given the proposed content of the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan, its focus on sustainable development which is sympathetic to the qualities of the area and the integration of sustainability criteria early on in the process, significant net adverse effects on landscape quality within the area are not likely to result from the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the character of the landscape and should result in a neutral or slight positive effect through giving weight to aspects of the AONB Management Plan and providing locally-specific detail and protection which is not provided at other levels of the development plan.

## **5. SEA Assessment Conclusion**

- 5.1 On the basis of the SEA Screening Assessment set out in Table 2 above, the conclusion is that, while the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant adverse effects in relation to many of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, it will nevertheless need to be subject to SEA primarily because of its possible effects on internationally recognised nature conservation sites and the consequent need for an assessment of future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (Article 3.2(b)).
- 5.2 In mitigation of this, it is likely that the North Northumberland Neighbourhood Plan will strategically compliant with higher level plans and will promote and enhance policies that seek to protect the special qualities of the local environment, the ecology and the natural and built heritage within the Plan area.
- 5.3 Statutory bodies - i.e. the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England were consulted on these conclusions in parallel with conclusions regarding the need for and assessment of future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (Article 3.2(b)).
- 5.4 Historic England considered that SEA was not required as they considered that the Plan is unlikely to result in significant effects in relation to Historic England's remit (i.e. cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage).
- 5.5 The Environment Agency agreed with the Screening Opinion in that the need for SEA is triggered by the location of nature conservation designations within and adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area. They acknowledged Natural England's remit under these circumstances. In addition, the Environment Agency also made reference to the need to consult the Local Authority's coastal engineers on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The Environment Agency also raised issues regarding new discharges from new development and existing issues such as eutrophication further up the coast. They therefore recommended that any future development clearly takes account of the nutrients associated with any new or increased discharges and requests that these are monitored. Reference is also made to the number of caravan parks within the Neighbourhood Area which have existing permits to discharge treated effluent; they stated that any increase in a caravan park size should also trigger a review of the existing Environmental Permit Regulations permit to discharge treated effluent.
- 5.6 Natural England agreed with the Screening Opinion and considered that, in their view, the proposals contained within the Neighbourhood Plan will have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England have a statutory duty to protect. They considered that there should now be an assessment in order to determine the potential impact on these sensitive sites and what possibilities exist for the avoidance/mitigation of the effects. They provided a list of sites which have been identified as being potentially significantly affected by the plan policies and potential allocations. They recommend

further assessment to ascertain the likelihood of significant effects on habitats and protected species. Further information is contained within their response and can be found at Appendix 2 of this report.

- 5.7 In conclusion, following feedback from the consultation bodies, SEA in relation to the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan will be required due to its possible effects on internationally recognised nature conservation sites and the consequent need for an assessment of future development under Article 6 and 7 of the Habitats Directive (Article 3.2(b)).



## Appendix 1: Annex I and Annex II of the EIA Directive<sup>6</sup>

### Annex I

Crude-oil refineries (excluding undertakings manufacturing only lubricants from crude oil) and installations for the gasification and liquefaction of 500 tonnes or more of coal or bituminous shale per day.

2. (a) Thermal power stations and other combustion installations with a heat output of 300 megawatts or more;
- (b) Nuclear power stations and other nuclear reactors including the dismantling or decommissioning of such power stations or reactors<sup>(1)</sup> (except research installations for the production and conversion of fissionable and fertile materials, whose maximum power does not exceed 1 kilowatt continuous thermal load).
3. (a) Installations for the reprocessing of irradiated nuclear fuel;
- (b) Installations designed:
  - (i) for the production or enrichment of nuclear fuel;
  - (ii) for the processing of irradiated nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste;
  - (iii) for the final disposal of irradiated nuclear fuel;
  - (iv) solely for the final disposal of radioactive waste;
  - (v) solely for the storage (planned for more than 10 years) of irradiated nuclear fuels or radioactive waste in a different site than the production site.
4. (a) Integrated works for the initial smelting of cast iron and steel;
- (b) Installations for the production of non-ferrous crude metals from ore, concentrates or secondary raw materials by metallurgical, chemical or electrolytic processes.
5. Installations for the extraction of asbestos and for the processing and transformation of asbestos and products containing asbestos: for asbestos-cement products, with an annual production of more than 20 000 tonnes of finished products, for friction material, with an annual production of more than 50 tonnes of finished products, and for other uses of asbestos, utilisation of more than 200 tonnes per year.
6. Integrated chemical installations, i.e. those installations for the manufacture on an industrial scale of substances using chemical conversion processes, in which several units are juxtaposed and are functionally linked to one another and which are:
  - (a) for the production of basic organic chemicals;
  - (b) for the production of basic inorganic chemicals;
  - (c) for the production of phosphorous-, nitrogen- or potassium-based fertilisers (simple or compound fertilisers);
  - (d) for the production of basic plant health products and of biocides;
  - (e) for the production of basic pharmaceutical products using a chemical or biological process;
  - (f) for the production of explosives.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32011L0092>

7. (a) Construction of lines for long-distance railway traffic and of airports <sup>(2)</sup> with a basic runway length of 2 100 m or more;
- (b) Construction of motorways and express roads <sup>(3)</sup>;
- (c) Construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or realignment and/or widening of an existing road of two lanes or less so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new road or realigned and/or widened section of road would be 10 km or more in a continuous length.
8. (a) Inland waterways and ports for inland-waterway traffic which permit the passage of vessels of over 1 350 tonnes;
- (b) Trading ports, piers for loading and unloading connected to land and outside ports (excluding ferry piers) which can take vessels of over 1 350 tonnes.
9. Waste disposal installations for the incineration, chemical treatment as defined in Annex I to Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste <sup>(4)</sup> under heading D9, or landfill of hazardous waste, as defined in point 2 of Article 3 of that Directive.
10. Waste disposal installations for the incineration or chemical treatment as defined in Annex I to Directive 2008/98/EC under heading D9 of non-hazardous waste with a capacity exceeding 100 tonnes per day.
11. Groundwater abstraction or artificial groundwater recharge schemes where the annual volume of water abstracted or recharged is equivalent to or exceeds 10 million cubic metres.
12. (a) Works for the transfer of water resources between river basins where that transfer aims at preventing possible shortages of water and where the amount of water transferred exceeds 100 million cubic metres/year;
- (b) In all other cases, works for the transfer of water resources between river basins where the multi-annual average flow of the basin of abstraction exceeds 2 000 million cubic metres/year and where the amount of water transferred exceeds 5 % of that flow.
- In both cases transfers of piped drinking water are excluded.
13. Waste water treatment plants with a capacity exceeding 150 000 population equivalent as defined in point 6 of Article 2 of Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment <sup>(5)</sup>.
14. Extraction of petroleum and natural gas for commercial purposes where the amount extracted exceeds 500 tonnes/day in the case of petroleum and 500 000 cubic metres/day in the case of gas.
15. Dams and other installations designed for the holding back or permanent storage of water, where a new or additional amount of water held back or stored exceeds 10 million cubic metres.
16. Pipelines with a diameter of more than 800 mm and a length of more than 40 km:
  - (a) for the transport of gas, oil, chemicals;
  - (b) for the transport of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) streams for the purposes of geological storage, including associated booster stations.
17. Installations for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs with more than:
  - (a) 85 000 places for broilers, 60 000 places for hens;

- (b) 3 000 places for production pigs (over 30 kg); or
  - (c) 900 places for sows.
18. Industrial plants for the production of:
    - (a) pulp from timber or similar fibrous materials;
    - (b) paper and board with a production capacity exceeding 200 tonnes per day.
  19. Quarries and open-cast mining where the surface of the site exceeds 25 hectares, or peat extraction, where the surface of the site exceeds 150 hectares.
  20. Construction of overhead electrical power lines with a voltage of 220 kV or more and a length of more than 15 km.
  21. Installations for storage of petroleum, petrochemical, or chemical products with a capacity of 200 000 tonnes or more.
  22. Storage sites pursuant to Directive 2009/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the geological storage of carbon dioxide<sup>(6)</sup>.
  23. Installations for the capture of CO<sub>2</sub> streams for the purposes of geological storage pursuant to Directive 2009/31/EC from installations covered by this Annex, or where the total yearly capture of CO<sub>2</sub> is 1,5 megatonnes or more.
  24. Any change to or extension of projects listed in this Annex where such a change or extension in itself meets the thresholds, if any, set out in this Annex.

## **Annex II**

### **1. AGRICULTURE, SILVICULTURE AND AQUACULTURE**

- (a) Projects for the restructuring of rural land holdings;
- (b) Projects for the use of uncultivated land or semi-natural areas for intensive agricultural purposes;
- (c) Water management projects for agriculture, including irrigation and land drainage projects;
- (d) Initial afforestation and deforestation for the purposes of conversion to another type of land use;
- (e) Intensive livestock installations (projects not included in Annex I);
- (f) Intensive fish farming;
- (g) Reclamation of land from the sea.

### **2. EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY**

- (a) Quarries, open-cast mining and peat extraction (projects not included in Annex I);
- (b) Underground mining;
- (c) Extraction of minerals by marine or fluvial dredging;
- (d) Deep drillings, in particular:
  - (i) geothermal drilling;
  - (ii) drilling for the storage of nuclear waste material;
  - (iii) drilling for water supplies;

with the exception of drillings for investigating the stability of the soil;

- (e) Surface industrial installations for the extraction of coal, petroleum, natural gas and ores, as well as bituminous shale.

### **3. ENERGY INDUSTRY**

- (a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (projects not included in Annex I);
- (b) Industrial installations for carrying gas, steam and hot water; transmission of electrical energy by overhead cables (projects not included in Annex I);
- (c) Surface storage of natural gas;
- (d) Underground storage of combustible gases;
- (e) Surface storage of fossil fuels;
- (f) Industrial briquetting of coal and lignite;
- (g) Installations for the processing and storage of radioactive waste (unless included in Annex I);
- (h) Installations for hydroelectric energy production;
- (i) Installations for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms);
- (j) Installations for the capture of CO<sub>2</sub> streams for the purposes of geological storage pursuant to Directive 2009/31/EC from installations not covered by Annex I to this Directive.

### **4. PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING OF METALS**

- (a) Installations for the production of pig iron or steel (primary or secondary fusion) including continuous casting;
- (b) Installations for the processing of ferrous metals:
  - (i) hot-rolling mills;
  - (ii) smitheries with hammers;
  - (iii) application of protective fused metal coats;
- (c) Ferrous metal foundries;
- (d) Installations for the smelting, including the alloyage, of non-ferrous metals, excluding precious metals, including recovered products (refining, foundry casting, etc.);
- (e) Installations for surface treatment of metals and plastic materials using an electrolytic or chemical process;
- (f) Manufacture and assembly of motor vehicles and manufacture of motor-vehicle engines;
- (g) Shipyards;
- (h) Installations for the construction and repair of aircraft;
- (i) Manufacture of railway equipment;
- (j) Swaging by explosives;
- (k) Installations for the roasting and sintering of metallic ores.

### **5. MINERAL INDUSTRY**

- (a) Coke ovens (dry coal distillation);
- (b) Installations for the manufacture of cement;
- (c) Installations for the production of asbestos and the manufacture of asbestos products (projects not included in Annex I);
- (d) Installations for the manufacture of glass including glass fibre;
- (e) Installations for smelting mineral substances including the production of mineral fibres;
- (f) Manufacture of ceramic products by burning, in particular roofing tiles, bricks, refractory bricks, tiles, stoneware or porcelain.

## **6. CHEMICAL INDUSTRY (PROJECTS NOT INCLUDED IN ANNEX I)**

- (a) Treatment of intermediate products and production of chemicals;
- (b) Production of pesticides and pharmaceutical products, paint and varnishes, elastomers and peroxides;
- (c) Storage facilities for petroleum, petrochemical and chemical products.

## **7. FOOD INDUSTRY**

- (a) Manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats;
- (b) Packing and canning of animal and vegetable products;
- (c) Manufacture of dairy products;
- (d) Brewing and malting;
- (e) Confectionery and syrup manufacture;
- (f) Installations for the slaughter of animals;
- (g) Industrial starch manufacturing installations;
- (h) Fish-meal and fish-oil factories;
- (i) Sugar factories.

## **8. TEXTILE, LEATHER, WOOD AND PAPER INDUSTRIES**

- (a) Industrial plants for the production of paper and board (projects not included in Annex I);
- (b) Plants for the pre-treatment (operations such as washing, bleaching, mercerisation) or dyeing of fibres or textiles;
- (c) Plants for the tanning of hides and skins;
- (d) Cellulose-processing and production installations.

## **9. RUBBER INDUSTRY**

Manufacture and treatment of elastomer-based products.

## **10. INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS**

- (a) Industrial estate development projects;
- (b) Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks;
- (c) Construction of railways and intermodal transshipment facilities, and of intermodal terminals (projects not included in Annex I);
- (d) Construction of airfields (projects not included in Annex I);

- (e) Construction of roads, harbours and port installations, including fishing harbours (projects not included in Annex I);
- (f) Inland-waterway construction not included in Annex I, canalisation and flood-relief works;
- (g) Dams and other installations designed to hold water or store it on a long-term basis (projects not included in Annex I);
- (h) Tramways, elevated and underground railways, suspended lines or similar lines of a particular type, used exclusively or mainly for passenger transport;
- (i) Oil and gas pipeline installations and pipelines for the transport of CO<sub>2</sub> streams for the purposes of geological storage (projects not included in Annex I);
- (j) Installations of long-distance aqueducts;
- (k) Coastal work to combat erosion and maritime works capable of altering the coast through the construction, for example, of dykes, moles, jetties and other sea defence works, excluding the maintenance and reconstruction of such works;
- (l) Groundwater abstraction and artificial groundwater recharge schemes not included in Annex I;
- (m) Works for the transfer of water resources between river basins not included in Annex I.

## **11. OTHER PROJECTS**

- (a) Permanent racing and test tracks for motorised vehicles;
- (b) Installations for the disposal of waste (projects not included in Annex I);
- (c) Waste-water treatment plants (projects not included in Annex I);
- (d) Sludge-deposition sites;
- (e) Storage of scrap iron, including scrap vehicles;
- (f) Test benches for engines, turbines or reactors;
- (g) Installations for the manufacture of artificial mineral fibres;
- (h) Installations for the recovery or destruction of explosive substances;
- (i) Knackers' yards.

## **12. TOURISM AND LEISURE**

- (a) Ski runs, ski lifts and cable cars and associated developments;
  - (b) Marinas;
  - (c) Holiday villages and hotel complexes outside urban areas and associated developments;
  - (d) Permanent campsites and caravan sites;
  - (e) Theme parks.
13. (a) Any change or extension of projects listed in Annex I or this Annex, already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed, which may have significant adverse effects on the environment (change or extension not included in Annex I);

- (b) Projects in Annex I, undertaken exclusively or mainly for the development and testing of new methods or products and not used for more than two years.

## Appendix 2: Screening Opinion Consultation Responses from Consultation Bodies

Date: 18 November 2016  
Our ref: 200780  
Your ref: North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan SEA



Rob Naples  
Planning Officer  
Communities & Infrastructure  
Strategic Planning & Housing  
Northumberland County Council  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF  
[Rob.Naples@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Rob.Naples@northumberland.gov.uk)

Customer Services  
Hombeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

### BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Rob Naples,

**Planning consultation:** North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan SEA screening opinion  
**Location:** Bamburgh Parish, North Sunderland Parish, Beadnell Parish; Northumberland County

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 07 November 2016 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

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

<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans>.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans in light of the SEA Directive is contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>1</sup>. The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

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

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect. As we have no evidence of these effects having

<sup>1</sup> Available [here](#)



been assessed within a Local Plan, we consider that there should now be an assessment in order to determine the potential impact on these sensitive sites and what possibilities exist for the avoidance/mitigation of the effects.

The following sites have been identified as being potentially significantly affected by the plan policies and potential allocations:

- Lindisfame Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Bamburgh Coast and Hills SSSI, Brada Hill SSSI, Bradford Kames SSSI, Newton Links SSSI, Northumberland Shore SSSI, Bamburgh Dunes SSSI and Farne Islands SSSI
- Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- North Northumberland Heritage Coast
- Farne Islands National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Lindisfame NNR
- Lindisfame Ramsar Site and Northumbria Coast Ramsar Site
- Farne Islands Special Protection Area (SPA), Lindisfame SPA and Northumbria Coast SPA
- Northumberland Marine Potential Special Protection Area (pSPA)
- Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast Special Area Conservation (SAC) and North Northumberland Dunes SAC
- Site of 20 ha or more of best and most versatile agricultural land.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

Where a neighbourhood plan could potentially affect a European protected site, it will be necessary to screen the plan in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010), as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations'). One of the basic conditions that will be tested at Examination is whether the making of the plan is compatible with European obligations and this includes requirements relating to the Habitats Directive, which is transposed into the Habitats Regulations.

**In accordance with Schedule 2 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, a neighbourhood plan cannot be made if the likelihood of significant effects on any European Site, either alone (or in combination with other plans and projects) cannot be ruled out.**

Therefore, measures may need to be incorporated into the neighbourhood plan to ensure that any likely significant effects are avoided in order to secure compliance with the Regulations. A screening exercise should be undertaken if there is any doubt about the possible effects of the plan on European protected sites. This will be particularly important if a neighbourhood plan is to progress before a local plan has been adopted and/or the neighbourhood plan proposes development which has not been assessed and/or included in the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the local plan.

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 Ellen Bekker on 0208 225 7091 or [ellen.bekker@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:ellen.bekker@naturalengland.org.uk). For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely,

Ellen Bekker  
Northumbria Area Team

## Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

### Natural environment information sources

The [Magic<sup>2</sup>](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/) website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification**, **Ancient Woodland**, **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**, **Local Nature Reserves**, **National Parks (England)**, **National Trails**, **Priority Habitat Inventory**, **public rights of way** (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and **Sites of Special Scientific Interest** (including their impact risk zones). Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available [here<sup>3</sup>](#).

**Priority habitats** are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here<sup>4</sup>](#). Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

**National Character Areas (NCAs)** divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here<sup>5</sup>](#).

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

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

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic<sup>6</sup>](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/) website and also from the [LandIS website<sup>7</sup>](http://landis.org.uk/), which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

### Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework<sup>8</sup>](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2) sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance<sup>9</sup>](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/) sets out supporting guidance. Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

#### Landscape

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as

<sup>2</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

<sup>4</sup> <http://web.archive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habitatsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

<sup>6</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>9</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>



ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

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

#### Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)<sup>10</sup>), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)<sup>11</sup>. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

#### Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)<sup>12</sup>) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice [here](#)<sup>13</sup> to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

#### Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 112. For more information, see our publication [Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land](#)<sup>14</sup>.

#### **Improving your natural environment**

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

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

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

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.

<sup>10</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

<sup>12</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

<sup>14</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>

- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance on this](#) <sup>15</sup>).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

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<sup>15</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

Mr Rob Naples  
Northumberland County Council  
Strategic Planning & Housing  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF

**Our ref:** NA/2009/103757/SE-  
08/SC1-L01

**Your ref:**

**Date:** 24 November 2016

Dear Mr Naples

**North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan  
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion Request**

Thank you for referring the above SEA Screening Opinion.

The Environment Agency considers that the impact of the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan will not result in any significant environmental effects beyond those already assessed as part of the preparation of the Local Plan and identified within the submitted SEA Screening Opinion.

Due to the proximity of a number of internationally important nature conservation designations in and adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area, the SEA Screening Opinion identifies the need for an assessment of future development under the Habitats Directive (Article 3.2(b)). It is considered necessary to undertake an SEA and prepare an Environmental Report. We acknowledge this requirement, however, we refer you to Natural England to provide comments on this matter for advice with regard to the European designated conservation sites.

In general, we support the environmental outcomes within the North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan and the Screening Opinion. However, we wish to make the following comments.

**Coastal**

It is important that the Local Authority coastal engineers are consulted on this application. Local Authorities are the lead coastal protection authority under the Coastal Protection Act 1949.

One of our main considerations relates to new discharges from any new development and their potential impact upon the coast and our coastal waters as we currently have issues of eutrophication higher up the coast, around Holy Island and

Environment Agency  
Tyneside House Skinnerburn Road, Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7AR.  
Customer services line: 03708 506 506  
[www.gov.uk/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/environment-agency)  
Cont/d..

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Budle Bay. In an effort to reduce this problem, we are working with partners and stakeholders to gather further data and evidence with a view to implementing measures through the Water Framework Directive (WFD) actions for Transitional and Coastal Waters. We, therefore, recommend that any future development clearly takes account of the nutrients associated with any new or increased discharges and monitors these discharges.

We advise that any decisions relating to development follow the Mitigation Hierarchy of Avoidance, Minimisation, Restoration/Rehabilitation and finally Offset.

**Foul Drainage**

A number of caravan parks in the Neighbourhood Plan area have existing permits, issued by the Environment Agency, to discharge treated effluent. Any proposed increase in a caravan park size should also trigger a review of the existing Environmental Permit Regulations permit to discharge treated effluent.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Louise Tait**  
**Senior Planning Advisor**

Direct dial 02084746523  
Direct e-mail [louise.tait@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:louise.tait@environment-agency.gov.uk)

End

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Historic England

NORTH EAST OFFICE

Mr Rob Naples  
Northumberland County Council  
Communities & Infrastructure  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF

Direct Dial: 0191-2691232

Our ref: PL00047183

25 November 2016

Dear Mr Naples

**SEA Regulations 2004, Consultation on SEA Screening Opinion  
North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan**

Thank you for your letter of 7 November giving us the opportunity comment on the above.

Having considered the screening opinion report and the content of the emerging neighbourhood plan, I agree that implementation of the plan is unlikely to result in significant adverse effects in relation to those criteria in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations relating to Historic England's remit (ie. cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage).

Thanks you for consulting Historic England.

Yours sincerely,

Jules Brown  
Historic Places Adviser  
[jules.brown@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:jules.brown@historicengland.org.uk)

cc:



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

Telephone 0191 269 1255  
[HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)



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