



Northumberland
County Council

**Warkworth Parish
Neighbourhood Plan**

**Strategic Environmental
Assessment (SEA)**

**Screening Opinion
FINAL**

Prepared by the Neighbourhood Planning Team,
Northumberland County Council

October 2023

Revision history

Version	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
V.1.0	October 2022	Screening Opinion based on the draft Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan	Sarah Brannigan	Planning Officer
V.2.0	September 2023	Revised Screening Opinion taking account of updated Plan	Rob Naples	Planning Officer
Final	October 2023	Final version taking account of consultation body responses.	Rob Naples	Planning Officer

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Summary of Screening Opinion

1. Warkworth Parish Council, as the qualifying body, is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Warkworth Parish. The Plan seeks to address a number of local issues around sustainability, housing need, design, the natural and built environment and transport. It is intended that the Plan will be 'made' by Northumberland County Council as the local planning authority and will form part of the statutory development plan for the area.
2. A Habitats Regulations Assessment screening opinion concludes that there are no likely significant effect on European Sites as a result of the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan.
3. Based on the characteristics of the draft Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan, together with the characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area, the conclusion of the SEA Screening in September 2023, in the opinion of Northumberland County Council, was that the plan is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment and SEA is therefore not required.
4. This opinion was sent to the consultation bodies, that is: the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, in order to seek their views on its conclusions. Historic England and Natural England supported the screening opinion's conclusions. The Environment Agency did not respond on this matter. The consultation body representations can be found appended to this report.
5. This current screening opinion takes account of modifications made to the Plan since a previous SEA Screening Opinion was completed. It reflects those modifications made to the original Plan. These changes are shown in Section 2 of this report.

1. Legislative Background

Neighbourhood Planning and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.1 The legislative framework for neighbourhood planning was created through the Localism Act in 2011. This introduced various changes to the Planning Acts¹ which established discretionary powers that allow parish councils to prepare 'neighbourhood development plans', often just called neighbourhood plans. These are planning policy documents. Once brought into legal force (known as being 'made'), they form part of the statutory development plan. This means that policies in made neighbourhood plans must be used by the local planning authority in the determination of planning applications; and where plans contain policies relevant to the proposed development, a decision must be made in accordance with the policy unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Neighbourhood plans therefore have an important role in decision making on planning applications.
- 1.2 Preparing a neighbourhood plan provides an opportunity for local communities to create locally specific planning policies that can shape and influence the type, scale and design of new development in their local area. They also allow certain protections to be created in policies that prevent development on locally cherished green spaces and policies that support the retention of community facilities.
- 1.3 However, being part of the statutory development plan means that various legal obligations have been created to govern the proper preparation of neighbourhood plans. This includes the requirement for formal consultation and engagement during plan preparation; and the requirement for a neighbourhood plan to be examined by an independent person who must provide the local planning authority with a considered opinion on whether a draft neighbourhood plan meets a range of legal tests. These tests are known collectively as the 'basic conditions' and are set out in Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and in the Neighbourhood Planning General Regulations (2012) (as amended).
- 1.4 In the context of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the basic conditions require, amongst other things, that:
 - The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and that:
 - The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

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

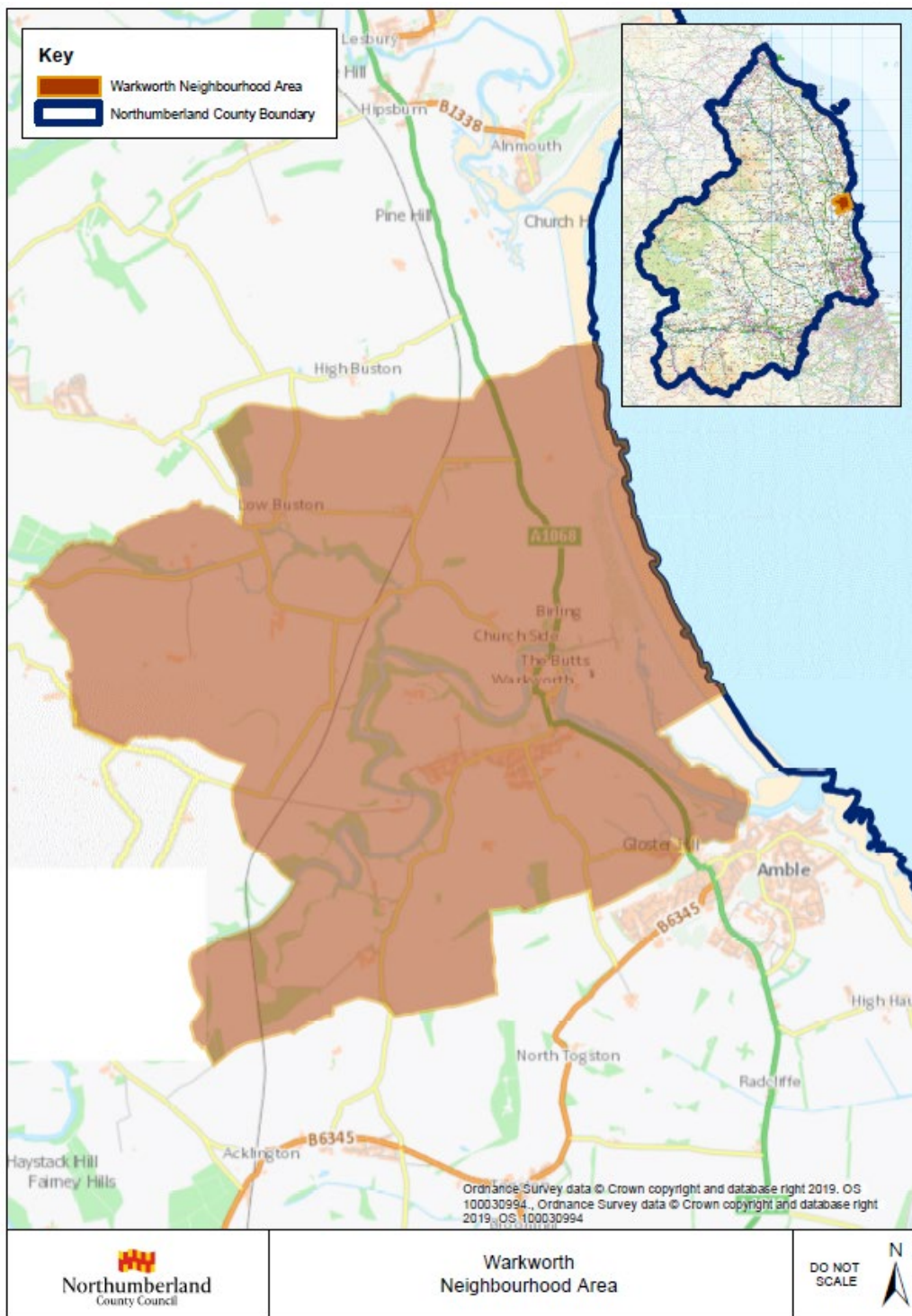
- 1.5. Collectively, it is these two basic conditions that require further detailed consideration to be given to the impact a neighbourhood plan may have on the environment and on protected species and habitats before it can be brought into force. The procedures to be followed in determining whether a plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment are set out in European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive), which is transposed into UK legislation through The Environmental Assessment of Plans and programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).
- 1.6. Where a plan is judged likely to have significant environmental effects it is necessary to undertake an assessment of those effects in accordance with the processes set out in the SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations. In reaching that judgement on whether significant environmental effects are likely to arise from the introduction and implementation of a neighbourhood plan a process known as 'screening' is required. This establishes whether, in the opinion of a responsible authority, the plan will require further assessment or not. Where a plan requires further assessment, this will result in the need to prepare an environmental report which becomes one of the documents that must be submitted for independent examination alongside the plan.
- 1.7. When considering whether a plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects there are two routes that may lead to a positive conclusion on that question:
 - Firstly, in accordance with Regulation 5(3) of the SEA Regulations, if it has been determined that a plan requires 'appropriate assessment' under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) as a result of its likely impacts on European designated sites, this automatically triggers the need for SEA and the preparation of an environmental report. In such circumstances there is no further requirement to provide a separate screening opinion under the SEA Regulations;
 - Secondly, in accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations, the responsible authority must determine whether or not a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment. This is generally known as a 'screening opinion'. If a screening opinion prepared by a responsible authority concludes that there are likely to be significant environmental effects arising from the implementation of the plan then SEA will be required, including the need to prepare an environmental report.
- 1.8 The County Ecologist has considered whether appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations is required for the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan. An initial screening opinion has been provided confirming that appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations is (not) required.
- 1.9 This report provides a separate screening opinion regarding the environmental effects anticipated to arise from the introduction of the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan and whether, in the opinion of Northumberland County Council as the responsible authority for the purposes of the SEA Regulations, the Plan would have significant environmental effects such that SEA is required.

2. The Draft Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan

The Warkworth Neighbourhood Area

2.1 Warkworth Parish is a rural coastal parish in Northumberland. The Neighbourhood Area covers the entire civil parish of Warkworth (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Warkworth Neighbourhood Area



The Draft Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan Vision and 'Aims'

Vision

In 2036 the Parish of Warkworth will continue to be an attractive place to live and grow with a community that is sustainable, cohesive, and thriving. We will have retained and improved our community facilities; protected and enhanced our valued green spaces and special landscapes; and conserved our unique historic environment. Warkworth will aspire to be a carbon neutral parish.

New development will minimise environmental harm by employing high quality design and sustainable building technology. Developments will be designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change.

The diverse needs and wellbeing of the existing and future residents will be provided for, and the community will be sustainable in relation to the facilities and infrastructure available to residents. Residents will have good access to facilities and be well connected by safe roads, cycle ways and footpaths.

All people who live in the parish will have the opportunity to participate in shaping their surroundings and feel proud of where they live.

Aims

Aim 1 – Sustainability

The special characteristics of our Parish and the vibrancy of our community will be conserved and enhanced by seeking high quality sustainable design in new development, which will make a positive contribution to social, environmental or economic needs and will mitigate any negative impacts.

Aim 2 – Housing

The location, quantity and type of housing built in the Parish will meet locally identified needs. Housing will reflect the distinct character and built heritage of Warkworth.

Aim 3 – Environment

The natural environment, including the Northumberland Coast AONB, will be conserved and enhanced, including biodiversity and green infrastructure networks and local green spaces which are valued by the community. New development will make a positive contribution to the historic and built environment.

Aim 4 – Community

Key community facilities and infrastructure will be protected and developed to ensure that the community is inclusive and sustainable.

Aim 5 – Economy

Appropriate and sustainable levels of commerce in a variety of sectors across the Parish will be encouraged, and key services and facilities that contribute to a thriving community will

be protected. Tourism will be managed so that it enhances the charm of the village and does not detract from the needs of permanent residents.

Aim 6 – Transport and access

Access to facilities and services will be facilitated for all residents, and visitors, by the creation of safe and high- quality roads, parking areas, pavements and green routes including footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways. The use of public transport will be encouraged.

The Draft Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Policy W1: Design

1. Development should ~~conserve and enhance local distinctiveness by demonstrating~~ **demonstrate** high quality design, where appropriate and relevant to the development, by:
 - a) Reflecting the incremental and phased development of the neighbourhood area;
 - b) Understanding and reflecting the scale and character of the locality;
 - c) Conserving and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, including **the integrity of the Warkworth Conservation Area. The assessment of significance should include** that generated by the relationship **of the asset** with ~~their~~ **its** setting;
 - d) Using good quality materials that complement those of adjoining and surrounding buildings;
 - e) Taking account of topography and natural features;
 - f) Respecting established building lines and introduces boundary treatments and rooflines that are in keeping with the street scene;
 - g) Demonstrating a commitment to sustainable design and construction, **including embedding renewable energy technology**;
 - h) Providing sufficient external amenity space, refuse and recycling storage and car and bicycle parking to ensure a high quality and well managed streetscape. **Parking should be provided to meet the requirements of Northumberland Local Plan policy TRA 4, including the provision of electric vehicle charging points where appropriate**;
 - i) Adopting the principles of sustainable drainage;
 - j) Ensuring the development would not prejudice the amenity of its future occupiers or that of adjacent properties in terms of overshadowing, loss of light, dominance, loss of privacy, noise or general disturbance;
 - k) Minimising both the likelihood of and fear of crime;
 - l) Creating a safe, accessible and well-connected environment that meets the needs of its users – encouraging cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel;
 - m) Ensuring that lighting associated with the development would not have a significant effect on residential amenity, ~~or~~ **wildlife or the important dark skies and tranquillity of the area**;
 - n) Incorporating measures to support species and habitats;
 - o) Retaining views that contribute to the settlement and landscape character;
 - ~~p) Providing sufficient, appropriately sited car parking and cycle storage to serve the needs arising from the development;~~

p) Ensuring the development would not result in unacceptable levels of noise, air or water pollution.

2. Where the application site lies within the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, proposals should be informed by the Northumberland Coast AONB Design Guide for the Built Environment.
3. Where a design and access statement is required as part of a planning application, this should demonstrate how the proposal has responded to the above as an integral part of the design process.

Policy W2: Small scale rural exception sites ~~Meeting housing needs~~

~~The mix of housing types and tenures delivered in the neighbourhood area, including the provision of affordable housing, should have regard to and be informed by evidence of housing needs. Evidence includes that contained within the Warkworth Housing Needs Survey (2021), Warkworth Housing Needs Assessment (2022) and the Northumberland Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2018) and any subsequent updates.~~

~~Development should contribute to meeting identified needs, particularly through the provision of one, two and three bedroom homes.~~

1. The development of affordable housing will only be permitted outside the Warkworth settlement boundary as an exception to meet locally identified housing need, subject to all the following criteria being met:
 - a) It should be demonstrated through the submission of a detailed site options appraisal, that the site is the most suitable site and that no other suitable and available sites exist within the Warkworth settlement boundary;
 - b) The site should adjoin the Warkworth settlement boundary;
 - c) The development should be small scale (less than 0.5 hectares in size or comprise less than 10 dwellings) and be appropriate in scale, design and character to the immediate surrounding area;
 - d) There must be a proven and unmet local need within the parish for affordable housing. All proposals are required to be supported by an up-to-date housing needs survey which takes account of the findings of the Warkworth Housing Needs Survey (2021), Warkworth Housing Needs Assessment (2022) and the Northumberland Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2018) and any subsequent updates;
 - e) Occupancy will, in perpetuity, be restricted to a person in housing need who is a resident of the parish, who works in the parish, or who has other strong links with the parish in accordance with the rural allocations criteria as set out by the Northumberland Homefinder Common Allocation Policy;
 - f) Proposals must comprise 100% affordable housing, that will be retained in perpetuity. The type and tenure must reflect the local and affordable needs of the community, particularly through the provision of one, two and three bedroom affordable homes to buy;
 - g) Where viability for a development providing 100% affordable housing cannot be achieved, an element of market housing which meets the identified needs within Warkworth Parish may be included within a rural exception scheme to provide

sufficient cross-subsidy to facilitate the delivery of affordable homes. In such cases, a viability assessment will be required to be submitted to demonstrate that cross-subsidy is necessary. This assessment will be independently verified.

For the avoidance of doubt, should planning permission be granted for a small scale rural exception site any future planning applications in the parish would also need to meet the criteria defined in 1a-1g above.

Policy W3: Local Green Spaces

The following areas, as defined on the policies map, are designated as local green space which will be protected from development in a manner consistent with the protection of land within the Green Belt:

- LGS01 Playing field between Morwick Road and Warkworth Castle
- LGS02 The Stanners Riverside Area
- LGS03 The Butts Riverside Area
- LGS04 Play area near school
- LGS05 Warkworth Castle Grounds
- LGS06 Warkworth Cricket Pitch
- LGS07 The Burgage plots including allotments/ community garden
- LGS08 Millennium garden
- LGS09 Football pitch, Beach Road
- ~~LGS10 Rotary Way~~
- LGS~~11~~10 The Braid, near Amble
- ~~LGS12 Warkworth Golf Course~~
- LGS~~13~~11 Warkworth School playing fields
- LGS~~14~~12 St Lawrence Church grounds
- LGS~~15~~13 Black Bridge area
- LGS~~16~~14 Corner of the field ~~Land~~ between back of Morwick Road and Mill Walk Woods
- LGS~~17~~15 Land surrounding the playing field, castle and cricket pitch
- ~~LGS18 Birling Gap (adjacent to cemetery, behind Beach Road car park)~~
- LGS~~19~~16 Rigg and furrow field, west of Warkworth Castle

Policy W4: Warkworth Conservation Area

1. Development within or affecting the setting of the Warkworth Conservation Area, will be supported where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting.
2. The following are key considerations when assessing the impact of development on the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting:
 - a) Retaining the medieval form and layout of the town, particularly the relationship between the castle, marketplace, church and bridge and the network of streets which link them, as well as the burgage plots;
 - b) Maintaining the mainly two-storey domestic building form and scale, with stone and slate as the principal construction material;
 - c) The importance of the topography of the town and relationship with its setting, particularly the connection of the castle to the river, sea and landscape;
 - ~~d) Maintaining the four distinct character areas of The Medieval Core, The Butts,~~

~~Woodlands and Station Road;~~

~~e) Reflecting the locally distinctive architectural characteristics, vernacular building forms and materials;~~

~~f) Respecting the prevailing density and form of the area;~~

d) The impact on significant views that are important to the character and appearance of the area, including the views: of and from Warkworth Castle, from Ember Path to The Butts, from the old and new bridges, approach to Warkworth from Morwick Road, **towards the church from the marketplace, the war memorial and the front elevation of Bridge End House, as well as** views from open spaces and riverside walks; and

e) The impact on the setting of the conservation area, particularly that related to residential dwellings on Morwick Road, Magdelene Fields, Birling, Old Cemetery and Old Helsay; ~~and~~

~~f) Retention of boundary treatments, including stone field boundary and garden boundary walls, as well as retaining walls. New boundary treatments should reflect locally distinctive forms and materials.~~

3. Special attention should be paid to the impact of development on key buildings and structures, which are identified **in the Warkworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal on the policies map** and their role in contributing to the significance of the conservation area.:

~~CA1 Warkworth Castle~~

~~CA2 Bridge~~

~~CA3 Gatehouse~~

~~CA4 Church of St Lawrence~~

~~CA5 Cave hermitage~~

~~CA6 Deer park boundary bank~~

~~CA7 St Lawrence Terrace~~

Policy W5: Community facilities

1. The following facilities are identified as having great importance to the local community and are identified on the policies map.

CF1 Post Office and general store;

CF2 Warkworth **Church of England Primary School NCEAT**;

CF3 St Lawrence's Church;

CF4 Warkworth United Reformed Church;

CF5 War Memorial Hall

CF6 Warkworth Cricket Ground.

2. Where planning permission is required development proposals will be supported which sustain or protect existing shops, facilities and services.

3. ~~A d~~Development that would result in the loss of the valued community services and facilities identified above will **not** be supported ~~where the applicant can demonstrate that unless:~~

a) It is no longer needed in its current form;

b) A replacement service or facility of sufficient size, layout and quality is to be provided in an alternative suitable location; or

- c) It would not be economically viable or feasible to retain the facility and there is no reasonable prospect of securing an alternative community use of the land or building.

Policy W6: Sustainable transport network

Support will be given to development that will improve and extend the existing public rights of way network, **including cycle routes**, identified on the policies map, allowing greater access to services and facilities for residents and visitors.

The public rights of way network identified on the policies map will be protected from development, unless:

- a) There is a clear and demonstrable justification for the loss of the route; and
- b) A suitable alternative route will be provided within an agreed timescale.

3. Warkworth Parish Environmental Context

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

- 3.1 There are several SSSIs that lie within the Neighbourhood Area. The River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands (SSSI) is one. The river which rises in the Cheviot Hills, flows eastwards through Warkworth, provides excellent habitats for wildlife including a few protected species. The principal habitats protected are hay meadows, woodland and the estuary. Furthermore, the Warkworth Dunes and Saltmarsh (SSSI), which is situated at the mouth of the River Coquet, provides and supports an exceptional diversity of plants and invertebrates.
- 3.2 There is one Ramsar site situated in the Neighbourhood Area (Northumbria Coast). The site supports nationally important numbers of purple sandpiper and high concentrations of turnstone. For that reason, this site is of high importance.
- 3.3 The Neighbourhood Area lies within the 7km boundary of the Coastal Mitigation Service. Warkworth Dunes and Saltmarsh (SSSI) is within the scope of the Coastal Mitigation Service.
- 3.4 There is one European Site, the North Northumberland Dunes which is classified as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). The site lies within the Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.5 The Parish also has a number of Ancient Woodlands along the River Coquet, mostly to the west of the settlement of Warkworth. The Ancient Woodlands provide special communities of plants and wildlife not found elsewhere, therefore are of significant importance.

Population and human health

- 3.6 The 2011 census recorded a parish population of 1,574. This represents an increase of 5.4% from 2001 where the recorded population was 1,493. The age structure in the resident population has changed: the proportion of young dependants has fallen whilst the proportion of elderly dependants has risen. This mirrors the County which has an ageing population. This is evident with Warkworth's average age in the 2001 census being 48.8 years; in 2011 the figure was 52.4. The proportion of Warkworth's population that is economically active decreased slightly; in 2001 the percentage was 60.1% and in 2011 dropped to 58.3%. The 2011 percentage is slightly lower than the average for Northumberland.
- 3.7 Overall, Warkworth Parish residents do not suffer from higher levels of deprivation. Warkworth is amongst the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in the county in 2019. Figures for income, education, employment, health and crime are fair to good. In terms of barriers to housing and service domains, Warkworth is amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. The outdoor living environment scores well.

- 3.8 In the 2011 Census, the health of Warkworth residents was considered to be on a par with Northumberland and England. Issues: Ageing population, lower quality of housing

Climatic Factors

- 3.9 In Warkworth, the summers are short, cool and windy, the winters are long, very cold, and extremely windy, and it is partly cloudy year-round. Over the course of the year, temperatures usually vary from 2c to 18c.
- 3.10 In regard to emissions there is no specific data for the Neighbourhood Area. However, at the Local Authority Level for Northumberland, there is detailed information about Carbon Dioxide emissions. The main source of Carbon Dioxide emissions in Northumberland comes from transport, due to the county being rural, which creates a dependence on cars and other transport modes. The transport total emissions for Northumberland are 650.5 CO₂ (kt), the industry emission total continues to reduce yearly, as does the domestic, commercial and public sector total, though the transport emission total remains high and continues a steady trend.
- 3.11 The 2011 census shows an average of 1.5 cars per household in the neighbourhood area, with 10.4% of households not owning a car or van. Figures from the Department for Transport show that for the county of Northumberland, the increase in car registrations has increased 10% from 2010 to 2020. The figures in 2010 stood at 148,235 registrations and in 2020 stood at 162,791 registrations. An increase in car ownership relates to an increase in carbon emissions, this can be seen within point 3.10, which concludes that transport sector is contributing to the most emissions within the county.

Material Assets

- 3.12 Most of the community facilities and services are in the main village, Warkworth. The village has a post office and general store, a primary school, St Lawrence's Church, Warkworth United Reformed Church, Memorial Hall, cricket ground, pubs and visitor accommodation.
- 3.13 The village of Warkworth is served by public transport with bus connections from Newcastle upon Tyne to both Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed. National Cycle Route 1 runs along the East coast through the eastern side of the Parish and through the village of Warkworth.

Heritage Assets

- 3.14 There are 122 listed buildings in the Warkworth parish. Four of which are grade I listed (Castle curtain walls with gateway, towers and attached buildings, Church of St Lawrence, The Donjon and Warkworth Hermitage), two are grade II* (Forecourt wall, railings and gates to Bridge End House and Warkworth House Hotel) 115 are grade II.

- 3.15 Within Warkworth parish, there are five scheduled monuments. These are: Warkworth Hermitage, St Mary Magdelene's Medieval Chapel and associated earthworks, 90m north of Mauldin, Cup and ring marked rock 430m north of Morwick Hall, Warkworth Castle and Warkworth Bridge.
- 3.16 The village of Warkworth is designated as a Conservation Area (CA). Within the CA is the scheduled monument, Warkworth Castle.
- 3.17 None of the designated heritage assets are at risk.

Water

- 3.18 The Kielder Water Resource Zone (WRZ) serves and supplies the Neighbourhood Area. There is a large surplus of supply over demand in the Kielder WRZ and the area is not classified as seriously water stressed. The forecast supply for the WRZ, shows no significant concerns about the understanding of near-term supply system performance, therefore, the water availability for the neighbourhood area is strong.
- 3.19 There are no Groundwater Protection Zones in the area, therefore indicating that there is little risk of contamination from activities that might cause groundwater pollution within the region.
- 3.20 The River Coquet is classed as having good to moderate water quality.

Flood Risk

- 3.21 Along the eastern coast of the parish, there is a high risk of flooding. This means that this area has a chance of flooding of greater than 3.3% each year.
- 3.22 Warkworth lies within the tidal limit of the River Coquet and as such is at risk from tidal and river flooding. The village of Warkworth has suffered from flooding in the past, including a major flooding event in 2008, a tidal event in 2013, and a number of instances from tidal and river flooding.

Agricultural land

- 3.23 The land within the Parish boundary is classified as grade 3 Agricultural Land. This land is of moderate quality and has some limitations in regard to the choice of crops that can be grown.
- 3.24 Most of the soil within the Neighbourhood Area are classified as slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils. However, to the south of the region, there is a small area of loamy soil with naturally high groundwater. Other soils in the Neighbourhood Area include sand dune soils and freely draining slightly acid loamy soils.

Air

3.25 The Warkworth Neighbourhood Area has no recorded Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Air quality is considered fair, and air pollution poses little or no risk.

Landscape quality

3.26 The coastline of the Parish is all declared as part of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Warkworth parish lies in between the North Northumberland Coastal Plain National Character Area (NCA) and the Southeast Northumberland Coastal Plain NCA.

3.27 The North Northumberland NCA, is a narrow strip that runs from the Anglo-Scottish border south to the mouth of the River Coquet, bounded by the sea to the East and the Northumberland Sandstone Hills to the west.

3.28 The Southeast Northumberland Coastal Plain is a flat, low-lying strip along the coast of the North Sea, extending from north Tyneside in the south to Amble and the Coquet Estuary in the North.

3.29 Warkworth parish sits at the top of NCA 13, which is the more rural part of the NCA.

4. Assessment

- 4.1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment arising from plans and programmes are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These have been used in this screening opinion to determine whether the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The criteria are split into two categories: those relating to the characteristics of the plan and those relating to the characteristics of the effects and areas likely to be affected.² An assessment of the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan against these criteria is set out in Table 1 below.
- 4.2 The likely significance of effects on the environment arising from introducing the proposed policy in the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan have been determined using the criteria within the SEA Directive.

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

Criteria	Significant Environmental Effect likely?	
	Yes/No	Comment
The characteristics of the plan, having regard to:		
(a) the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	No	The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for residential or other forms development. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for Warkworth Parish and will be used in conjunction with the Northumberland Local Plan to determine planning applications in the area.

² Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Annex II Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

Criteria	Significant Environmental Effect likely?	
	Yes/No	Comment
The characteristics of the plan, having regard to:		
(b) the degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	Due to the locally-specific nature of the policies, the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan on other plans and programmes within the wider development plan will be slight. Its policies are in general conformity with strategic policies in the existing development plan (Northumberland Local Plan, 2022). The Plan has been prepared having regard to national planning policies and guidance.
(c) the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	No	One of the basic conditions which the Neighbourhood Plan must meet is to contribute to sustainable development and address issues surrounding climate change. The parish council is drawing up a climate change policy in line with the requirements from Northumberland County Council and the plan includes three community actions regarding climate change and sustainability.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan	No	The draft plan seeks to address the following environmental problems, most of which are set out in the NPPF and Local Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing greenhouse gas emissions throughout the parish. • Minimise vulnerability and improve resilience • Encourage the reuse of existing resources • Support renewable and low carbon energy. • Protect leisure, recreation, and other green space areas. • Protection and enhancement of community facilities and services. • Better and more accessible transport links, allowing greater access to services and facilities for residents and visitors. • Provide more affordable housing within the parish. • Development within the conservation area needs to preserve or enhance the character of the area and setting.
(e) the relevance of the plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the	No	Neighbourhood plans cannot contain policies or proposals in respect of waste management since this is 'excluded development' by virtue of the Planning Acts. The Neighbourhood Plan has no particular relevance for the implementation of other Community legislation,

environment (e.g., plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).		apart from its limited association with legislation designed to ensure continued protection of European designated sites.
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Criteria	Significant Environmental Effect likely?	
	Yes/No	Comment
The characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard to:		
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	No	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2022-2036.</p> <p>Biodiversity, flora, and fauna Policy W1 seeks to ensure that development protects and enhances biodiversity and incorporates measures to support species and habitats. Policy W3 ensures designated local green space is protected.</p> <p>Population and human health By supporting the provision of a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of all sectors of the community, including older people, Policy W2 is likely to have a less than positive effect on housing stock.</p> <p>Climate factors Policy W1 may help with the reduction of CO² emissions as it encourages cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel throughout the Neighbourhood area.</p> <p>Additionally, Policy W3 also may help with the reduction of emissions, as designated local green spaces will be protected from development, bringing wider environmental benefits.</p> <p>Taken together, these policies are likely to have a less than significant positive effect on reducing the level of contribution to climate change and supporting the resilience of the community to the potential effects of climate change.</p> <p>Soil The Plan is unlikely to have significant positive or negative effect on soil quality.</p>

		<p>Water The plan is unlikely to have a significant positive or negative effect on the water quality of the River Coquet.</p> <p>Policy W1 is likely to have a less than significant positive effect on water, as it ensures that development would not result in unacceptable levels of water pollution.</p> <p>Air There is no significant positive or negative effect on air quality in Warkworth, so it is therefore, not necessary for the Neighbourhood Plan to repeat relevant policies within the local plan.</p> <p>Policies W1 and W6 are likely to have a less than significant positive effect on air quality in the Neighbourhood Area as they support, indirectly, walking and cycling networks and sustainable transport networks.</p> <p>Material Assets Policy W5 is likely to have a less than significant positive effect on community facilities as the policy supports development proposals that protects or sustains existing shops, facilities and services within Warkworth.</p> <p>Heritage Assets There is no significant positive or negative effect on heritage assets in Warkworth due to it not being necessary for the Neighbourhood Plan to repeat the protection from Local Plan Policies ENV7 and ENV9.</p> <p>Policy W4 supports development that preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting. The policy sets out locally specific considerations that would be used to assess the impact of development on the conservation area and its setting. This would ensure that the development within or affecting the conservation area is aware of the surroundings.</p> <p>Landscape Policy W1 specifies that development should conserve and enhance local distinctiveness by demonstrating high quality design, where appropriate and relevant to the development.</p>
(b) the cumulative nature of the	No	It is unlikely that any significant environmental effects would be observed as a result of the policies contained within the draft Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan does not seek

effects		to facilitate a level of development above that of higher-level documents within the Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan supports sustainable development, which would protect and enhance the built and natural environment. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan would result in significant effects, whether in isolation or cumulatively.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	No	N/A
(d) the risks to human health or the environment.	No	There are no anticipated risks to human health or the environment from the Neighbourhood Plan.

Criteria	Significant Environmental Effect likely?	
	Yes/No	Assessment
The characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard to:		
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	No	The population of the Parish according to 2011 Census is 1,574. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development, and whilst it will help to shape future development, the overall extent of future development is likely to be in line with the growth that would occur in the Parish without the Plan. There are no significant effects as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; • exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; • intensive land-use; • the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status 	No	The baseline information for the Parish has been described in Section 3. The Neighbourhood Area contains a number of internationally and nationally important environmental assets including SSSIs, a European Site, scheduled monuments, listed buildings and a conservation area. This makes the area highly valued but also sensitive and potentially vulnerable to disturbance and change. The risk to their status and condition from implementation of the Plan is judged to be low.
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a	No	The Northumberland Coast AONB covers the Neighbourhood Area. Given the content of the

recognised national, community or international protection status		Neighbourhood Plan and its focus on sustainable development, which is sympathetic to the qualities of the area, significant effects resulting from the Plan are unlikely.
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5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Following amendments to the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan following consultation on the Pre-Submission Draft Plan under Regulation 14 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the potential positive or negative effects of the Plan on the environment have been found not to be significant.
- 5.2 Significant environmental effects are considered unlikely to arise through the implementation of the Plan, which does not allocate land for development or expressly support new development.
- 5.3 On the basis of the assessment of the likely significance of effects on the environment of implementing the Plan as set out in Table 1 of this Screening Opinion, the conclusion is:

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

Appendix A: Consultation Body responses



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

Direct Dial:
Our ref: PL00791408

19 September 2023

Dear Mr Naples

Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004: Regulation 9 Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan: SEA Screening Opinion, September 2023

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

Based on the analysis set out in the revised Screening Opinion sent on 12 September 2023, and within the areas of interest to Historic England, we agree that the emerging plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and, therefore, it does not need SEA. In coming to this view we have taken the following factors into consideration:

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,

Jules Brown



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Telephone 0191 269 1266
HistoricEngland.org.uk



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

Date: 22 September 2023
Our ref: 449323
Your ref: Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan



Mr Rob Naples
Northumberland County Council

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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Naples

Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan - Revised Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 12 September 2023.

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

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

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites¹, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

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

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

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected

¹ Habitats sites are those referred to in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team