

# **PIRTON**

# **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

## **2011 – 2031**



### **BASIC**

### **CONDITIONS**

### **STATEMENT**

**October 2016**

## **1. Overview**

This Basic Conditions Statement has been prepared in support of the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) and intends to demonstrate that the Plan has been prepared observing;

- All legal aspects of neighbourhood plan making;
- All relevant national and local level planning policies relevant to Pirton;
- An appropriate level of guidance, both statutory and non-statutory, on all aspects of plan making; and
- Best practice in transparent and inclusive consultation and engagement.

Principally, this statement demonstrates the way in which the Plan conforms to the basic conditions as identified in Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990) and is legal in every other respect.

The structure of this statement will be as follows:

- Background to the Plan: providing a broad overview of the reasons for the Plan and the processes included in its production;
- Statement of Legal Conformity: confirming that the plan proposal package comprises the appropriate level of information to be considered compliant with the Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation 2012 (as amended) and that the Plan has been prepared in conformity with the further provisions of the TCPA 1990; and
- Assessment against the basic conditions: demonstrating that compliance with the basic conditions has been at the heart of the Plan's production.

## **2. Background to the Plan**

Pirton Parish Council submitted their area application to North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) on 24 September 2013 to confirm their role as a qualifying body eligible to produce a neighbourhood plan. As part of this submission they proposed the adoption of the entire Parish as the relevant neighbourhood area. The neighbourhood area was then formally designated without amendment on 28 January 2014.

The proposed Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan (Pirton Neighbourhood Plan or ‘the Plan’) was proposed by way of a reaction to the dated nature of the adopted NHDC Local Plan (first adopted 1996) and the emerging status of what was at the time a very early iteration of the new Local Plan. The intention of the Pirton Plan was, and remains, to ensure that development is delivered in the village and Parish in a sustainable manner sensitive to local constraints and with a view towards meeting local development needs.

The Plan takes a positive approach to the delivery of new homes, jobs, services and facilities and has successfully engaged the people of the parish to ensure that they are at the centre of helping shape its delivery. In particular the Plan sets out a forward looking framework of policies that are permissive in nature yet detailed enough to safeguard and where possible enhance the most important features of the Parish, the village and their character.

The Plan has been researched and written by members of a steering group appointed by Pirton Parish Council with the benefit of close support from officers of NHDC officers, Planning Aid England and a number of specialist consultants who have assisted in the fields of evidence gathering and analysis, legal and policy conformity and consultation / engagement.

The majority of work towards the Plan has been undertaken by the members of the steering group themselves that at time of submission comprises seven members comprising a mix of residents and councillors. Due to its open membership, set against a detailed constitution prepared in August 2013, the steering group has included numerous other members over its course. All of the previous members of the steering group are identifiable from the full catalogue of meeting minutes made available on the well-stocked Pirton Neighbourhood Plan website ([www.pirtonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk](http://www.pirtonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk)). A selection of steering group meetings has been attended by one or more of the team of officers and consultants supporting the plan. Each meeting has also formed part of an entirely transparent consultation process with public attendance invited at each meeting with facility for attendees to ask questions and seek specific feedback.

Building on the open nature of the steering group meetings, it is important to confirm that all decisions made within the Plan have been informed by significant community consultation and stakeholder engagement including engagement with strategic landowners or promoters. Specifically following on from the decision of the Parish Council to adopt the proposed development boundary and not to allocate specific development sites in the Plan, the steering

group were keen to ensure that landowners fully understood the position of the Parish Council on why certain decisions were made or directions taken. The process has been transparent and inclusive and has been matched stride-for-stride by regular updates and posted minutes on the website included above. The full programme of consultation and engagement is set out and explained in detail in the accompanying Consultation Statement.

The Plan is also supported by a proportionate evidence base that comprises: a mixture of documentation prepared to underpin the new Local Plan; previously prepared documents produced by the Parish Council (some of which is referenced in the area application letter); new original evidence that has been produced solely to inform any more locally specific policies in the Plan; and a mixture of national studies and statistics. The production of the Plan was also seen by the Parish Council as representing the natural progression from the Village Design Statement, drafted and submitted to NHDC in 2003 which was adopted by NHDC as Supplementary Planning Guidance and will remain extant until the adoption of the new Local Plan.

The Plan is underpinned by a clear vision and set of objectives set out on page 21 of the submission document. Links between each objective and policy are included prior to the individual policies of the plan.

### **3. Statement of Legal Conformity**

Asides from the Plan's conformity with the basic conditions tests, it is important that its production has observed all of the relevant requirements included in the suite of primary and secondary legislation guiding the production of neighbourhood development plans (NDPs). The table below sets out a clear statement of the Plan's conformity with the relevant sections and schedules of the TCPA 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation 2012 (as amended). The following checklist has been informed by the Planning Advisory Service guidance issued to inform Local Planning Authorities of the legal requirements of NDPs.

<b>Act, section, schedule or regulation</b>	<b>Test</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Legally compliant?</b>
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B para 5	Is the proposal in question a repeat proposal? Has the local planning authority refused a previous similar proposal under para 12 or Section 61E or has it failed at referendum?	No on both fronts. This is the first NDP prepared by Pirton Parish Council.	Yes
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B para 6(2)(a) and Section 61F	Is the body who submitted the Plan a qualifying body for the purpose of neighbourhood plan making?	Yes. As clarified under Section 61F a parish council can act as a qualifying body for neighbourhood planning purposes. The plan has been prepared and submitted by Pirton Parish Council.	Yes
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B para 6(2)(b) and Section 61F	Does the plan proposal comply with the other relevant provisions made under Section 61F relating to neighbourhood area designation?	Yes. The entire civil parish area was designated as the neighbourhood area by NHDC following a 6 week period of consultation on 28 January 2014 without amendments. A map of the neighbourhood area can be found at Appendix 1 of this statement.	Yes
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B para 1, para 6(2)(c) and NP (General) Regs 2012 Regulation 15	Have the qualifying body submitted the following in a satisfactory form to NHDC: 1. A map or statement identifying the area to which the plan relates;	Yes. All of the documents (including this Basic Conditions Statement) have been submitted as a single package to NHDC. Additionally, either	Yes

Act, section, schedule or regulation	Test	Comment	Legally compliant?
	<p>2. A consultation statement (which contains details of those consulted, how they were consulted, summarises the main issues and concerns raised and how these have been considered, and where relevant how they are addressed in the proposed NDP;</p> <p>3. The proposed NDP;</p> <p>4. A statement explaining how the NDP meets the basic conditions; and</p> <p>5. Either an environmental statement or a statement confirming why no SEA is required in support of the NDP.</p>	<p>copies of or links to the key evidence documents prepared in support of the Plan will be made available to officers for publicity. Links to all relevant evidence documents are included within the appendices of the Plan.</p>	
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B para 4, para 6(2)(d) and NP (General) Regs 2012 Regulations 14 and 15(2)(a)	Has the qualifying body complied with the requirements regarding the scope of pre-submission consultation?	<p>Yes. The Plan was made available for consultation for a period of 6 weeks between 4 April and 16 May 2016 inviting representations from all groups detailed under Regulation 14 of the NP (General) Regs 2012. This was done through advertising the Plan within the Parish area as described in the accompanying Consultation Statement, and individual letters to statutory and other consultees. A follow up meeting was then held with key respondents, including landowners, to explain the process and next steps. A copy of the Plan was also sent to NHDC for comment with their feedback discussed as</p>	Yes

Act, section, schedule or regulation	Test	Comment	Legally compliant?
		part of a series of steering group meetings.	
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B para 6(3), Section 61J (and also PCPA 2004 Section 38B(1)(b))	Does the Plan seek to grant or support planning permission for any development categorised as 'excluded development' under Section 61K of the TCPA 1990?	No.	Yes
PCPA 2004 Section 38A(2)	Does the Plan meet the definition of 'neighbourhood development plan' in that does it set out policies in relation to the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area?	Yes.	Yes
PCPA 2004 Section 38B(1)(a)	Does the 'neighbourhood development plan' specify the time period for which it is to have effect?	Yes. The period is stated as 2011 to 2031 mirroring that of the current emerging NHDC Local Plan.	Yes
PCPA 2004 Section 38B(1)(c)	Does the 'neighbourhood development plan' relate to more than one neighbourhood area?	No.	Yes

The table above demonstrates that the Plan has accurately observed the required procedures and exclusions and is legal in every respect.

#### **4. Assessment against the basic conditions**

The principal objective of this statement is to demonstrate the way in which the Plan complies with the basic conditions tests.

The basic conditions applicable to both Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders are identified at Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990). The basic conditions specifically relevant to Neighbourhood Development Plans, as clarified by paragraph 065 of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), are as follows:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the plan.
- The making of the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- The making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
- The making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the plan. For clarity, further conditions have been prescribed relating to the assessment of a Plan's impact on European Habitats.

This section will assess the direction and the 13 policies of the Plan against the clear tests set out above. It is recognised that there is no prescribed approach dictating how this assessment should take place. It has therefore been decided to undertake the assessment against both national and local strategic policy together on a neighbourhood plan policy by policy basis.

It is noted that there is no requirement for a neighbourhood plan to conform with any emerging local plan. However, due to the dated nature of the adopted Local Plan and the advanced stage of the emerging Plan, along with its extensive evidence base, the direction of the future strategy is considered by the Parish Council to carry weighty relevance. In this regard reference 41-009-20160211 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) suite confirms:

*“Although a draft Neighbourhood Plan or Order is not tested against the policies in an emerging Local Plan the reasoning and evidence informing the Local Plan process is likely to be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested. For example, up-to-date housing needs evidence is relevant to the question of whether a housing supply policy in a neighbourhood plan or Order contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.”*

The rationale is that provided the policies of the Plan avoid conflicting with any aspect of the NPPF or the Local Plan, and otherwise supports their intent, then they will inherently ensure their continued delivery. In light of this advised approach it is important to reaffirm that the



production of the Plan has been fully supported by NHDC officers who have advised on the implications of their own strategy on a step by step basis.

In addition a short supporting section will be provided within this Statement that demonstrates how the process employed in the delivery of the Plan has observed all other relevant guidance included within the PPG. The consideration of whether the making of the Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and is compatible with EU obligations (including those relating to the protection of Habitats) will similarly be done against the Plan as a whole.

### **Assessment against national policy and guidance and strategic local policy**

To ensure compliance with both of these basic conditions throughout the course of its production the Plan has been produced with constant sight of the following:

- The policies of the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan (adopted 1996 with policies saved 2007);
- The National Planning Policy Framework as a whole; and
- The Planning Practice Guidance suite.

On review of the adopted Local Plan it is clear that there are a very limited number of strategic policies that would be considered entirely up-to-date. The original plan period (1986 to 2001) has long since expired and the document therefore no longer includes relevant strategic policy dictating the quantum of development to be delivered within the District. To this extent elements of Pirton's Plan have been delivered in something of a vacuum, leaving the Parish Council with the task of effectively 'bridging the gap' between the adopted Local Plan and NHDC's emerging strategy. They have done this through primarily referring to the NPPF.

The decision was also made relatively early on in the Plan's production to defer any allocations of development sites to the emerging Local Plan, a decision that was in their gift. To confirm, the PPG states that neighbourhood plans are able to allocate sites if they so choose – Pirton Parish Council have opted against exercising this right. Instead, the Neighbourhood Plan primarily comprises a set of general policies designed to ensure that any development that comes forward on a 'windfall' basis is delivered in a sensitive and sustainable fashion in the context of the village.

Cross referencing of the NPPF, any relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan and evidence drawn upon during the production of the Plan's strategy and policies has been interwoven into the Plan throughout. Each policy (picked out clearly within the plan through use of bold text and a shaded policy box) provides a detailed section following the policy text setting out its justification and the evidence drawn upon to help Pirton Parish Council arrive at their conclusions. Indeed, the decision was made by the Parish Council to use the 'justification' section as the main depository for key evidence and survey outputs gathered during the course of the Plan's production.

The analysis set out below will explain the direction of each policy and will explicitly set out how they have taken the adopted Local Plan, the NPPF and any relevant evidence into account. It will also set out the key documents of the evidence base that were considered when producing the policy and finalising its wording.

Policy	<b>PNP1 – Meeting Local Need</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	29, 30, 50, 58, 70
NPPF conformity	In terms of managing the balanced and sustainable delivery of residential development specifically Policy PNP1 is the key policy of the Plan. At its heart is the intention to ensure that new residential developments provide for a mix of homes in line with the diverse local needs of the village, in line with paragraph 50 of the NPPF. The policy also includes a number of criteria that seek to ensure that such development is delivered at an appropriate scale balancing a number of local considerations. Indeed consideration of housing mix, design, local character, scale and sustainable transport are all provided for.
Relevant Local Plan policies	Policy 7: Selected Villages Beyond the Green Belt Policy 29: Affordable Housing for Urban Local Needs Policy 57: Residential Guidelines and Standards
Local Plan conformity	<p>In general terms Policy PNP1 simply seeks to build upon and in some instances update the current adopted Local Plan policy. In accordance with Policy 7 of the Local Plan (and indeed the emerging strategy within the new Local Plan) PNP1 seeks to direct new residential development towards sites within the settlement boundary. Additionally, and in accordance with Policy 29, PNP1 seeks to secure an adequate level of affordable housing on qualifying sites.</p> <p>Where PNP2 seeks to add additional detail to the more general approach to development included within the Local Plan is through the introduction of a 30-unit cap on new development within Pirton village. This upper limit is intended to ensure that the scale of new development within Pirton is commensurate with its village character and that it does not overburden the village’s services with an escalation in housing delivery within a short time period.</p> <p>The 30-unit figure has been identified taking into account a combination of public consultation, discussions with NHDC and an assessment of the fabric of the village within the supporting Character Assessment. It essentially seeks to balance the three main</p>

	<p>considerations of the desires of residents (who weighed in favour of an upper limit of 10 units), the character analysis of the village (that identified the upper limit of new residential schemes over recent years comprised around 25 units) and NHDC advice on viability and the ability of new developments to subsidise supporting infrastructure (NHDC advised on a 30 unit lower limit).</p> <p>The design approach advocated by PNP1, allied with the preference for smaller scale schemes, is additionally in line with Policy 57 of the Local Plan and the Pirton Village Design Statement SPG.</p> <p>It has been mentioned in a number of representations made towards the Neighbourhood Plan during its course that the proposed upper limit will serve as a constraint on the strategic targets of the development plan. At this stage it is worth confirming that there are no current strategic requirements for Pirton within the adopted Local Plan other than to accommodate suitably scaled development within the settlement boundary. In terms of looking ahead to the emerging Local Plan this position is maintained.</p> <p>As of September 2016 Pirton has not been assigned a housing target (unlike several other settlements) within the emerging Local Plan nor is it to be subject of any future allocations. This follows the grant of outline planning permission on SHLAA Site 214 (to be previously allocated in the emerging Local Plan as Site PT1) and the deletion of SHLAA Site 064S (previously PT2) following a further review of heritage constraints. Instead, all that is required of Pirton is to accommodate windfall development that complies with the general policies of the development plan.</p> <p>Pirton currently stands to be subject of Policy SP8, as a Category A village. To this end there is no strong presumption within SP8 at this stage that Pirton (or indeed any other Category A village) should bear any future windfall development that is disproportionate to the scale of the settlement, nor does SP8 place any significant reliance on the ability of villages on this tier to deliver development. The strategic requirements of the emerging Local Plan currently stand to be met by development in and around the larger settlements of the District and the proposed allocations across the rural area.</p> <p>It is also worth confirming that the Policy does not seek to restrict the ability to deliver development already assessed and permitted within Pirton (primarily the recently permitted outline proposal at SHLAA Site 214 'Holwell Turn'). Instead it sets a benchmark against which any future sites coming forward in the village should be assessed.</p>
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	Far from restricting future development in Pirton unduly, PNP1 provides a clear framework around which future speculative proposals should be based.
Evidence base	Pirton Housing Needs Survey 2010 Pirton Rural Community Profile 2013 Pirton July 2015 Village Consultation Pirton Character Assessment North Herts Local Plan Submission Draft September 2016

Policy	<b>PNP2 – Design and Character</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	58, 60, 61
NPPF conformity	Policy PNP2 seeks to reinforce locally distinctive design by drawing upon key elements of the Plan’s evidence base such as the Pirton Character Assessment and the Village Design Statement. In line with paragraph 60 of the NPPF, PNP2 seeks to provide a flexible framework of criteria applicable to all development that seek to promote local distinctiveness. Along with guidance on materials, building height and density, PNP2 also provides criteria to ensure that development provides a high level of legibility and accessibility to local residents through layout, the way they physically relate to the rest of the village and the way they are interconnected.
Relevant Local Plan policies	Policy 21: Landscape and Open Space Patterns in Towns Policy 57: Residential Guidelines and Standards
Local Plan conformity	Policy PNP2 seeks to build upon Policy 57 of the Local Plan through providing locally specific criteria that seek to build on the best elements of design within Pirton and preserve and enhance its character. PNP2 does this through referring to elements of both the Pirton Character Assessment, the Village Design Statement and the Parish Plan and builds them into the wording of the policy.
Evidence base	Pirton Character Assessment Pirton Parish Plan Pirton Village Design Statement

Policy	<b>PNP3 – Residential Extensions</b>
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Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	58, 60, 61
NPPF conformity	<p>Policy PNP3 seeks to build upon the guidance of PNP2 in providing a specific framework for residential extensions. This is in line with community wishes to include a policy that specifically deals with a form of development that is commonplace in the Parish.</p> <p>To this end PNP3 once again provides a similar approach to interpreting paragraphs 58, 60 and 61 of the NPPF through identifying the key criteria to ensure sensitivity of design and preservation of residential amenity without necessarily prescribing a strict design approach.</p>
Relevant Local Plan policies	<p>Policy 28: House Extensions</p> <p>Policy 57: Residential Guideline and Standards</p>
Local Plan conformity	Policy PNP3 seeks to effectively update Policy 28 of the Local Plan whilst providing criteria that are distinctive to Pirton. Whilst the two policies conflict to a degree it is considered that Policy 28 is non-strategic and therefore stands to be replaced by PNP3 upon the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan in line with paragraph 185 of the NPPF.
Evidence base	<p>Pirton Character Assessment</p> <p>Pirton Parish Plan</p> <p>Pirton Village Design Statement</p>

Policy	<b>PNP4 – Hedgerows, Trees and Verges</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	58, 109, 117
NPPF conformity	Policy PNP4 recognises the character and biodiversity value of hedgerows, trees and verges and provides a presumption towards their retention, albeit not an outright requirement. In this respect the policy is entirely consistent with Section 11 of the NPPF and, in addition, seeks to ensure the character and design qualities of retained and enhanced landscaping are recognised.
Relevant Local Plan policies	<p>Policy 14: Nature Conservation</p> <p>Policy 21: Landscape and Open Space Patterns in Towns</p> <p>Policy 57: Residential Guidelines and Standards</p>
Local Plan conformity	As described above, PNP4 seeks to identify the value that existing trees and vegetation can lend to development both in terms of

	quality design and a net gain in biodiversity. To this end PNP5 is entirely consistent with Policies 14, 21 and 57 of the Local Plan. PNP4 then goes further through the identification of specific features and approaches to landscaping that will ensure that the quality and value of new development is tailored to Pirton.
Evidence base	Pirton Character Assessment Pirton Parish Plan Pirton Village Design Statement

Policy	<b>PNP5 - Wildlife</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	58, 109, 117
NPPF conformity	Policy PNP5 seeks to complement PNP4 through ensuring that all new development proposals consider wildlife and irreplaceable habitats at the outset. The first two criteria seek to respond to the element of the NPPF requiring development to avoid any form of deleterious effect on habitats and wildlife. The third criteria seeks to promote suitable enhancements to wildlife within even the smallest development projects.
Relevant Local Plan policies	Policy 14: Nature Conservation
Local Plan conformity	Policy PNP5 directly complements Policy 14 of the Local Plan through seeking the protection and enhancement of habitats on development sites.
Evidence base	Pirton Character Assessment Pirton Parish Plan

Policy	<b>PNP6 – Local Green Spaces</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	76, 77
NPPF conformity	Within Policy PNP6 areas of open space have been identified in the village that are eligible for protection as Local Green Space, as defined within paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF. All of the areas of open space identified in the table accompanying PNP6 have been assessed against the criteria provided by paragraph 77 of the NPPF and all are demonstrated within the table as being special to the community. All areas to be designated have been identified through a positive process led by the outputs of consultation. In addition the

	majority of the identified areas of Local Green Space are either publically owned or sites protected under various other auspices (including common land).
Relevant Local Plan policies	Policy 21: Landscape and Open Space Patterns in Towns
NPPF conformity	As the concept of Local Green Space is relatively recent in planning terms (introduced by the NPPF) there is no directly comparable basis within the adopted Local Plan. At the same time Policy 21 provides a similar direction in that it seeks to preserve important structural green space within NHDC's settlement areas. Policy PNP6 has built on the evidence base of the Neighbourhood Plan and specifically identified the spaces to be subject of the highest level of protection.
Evidence base	Pirton Character Assessment

Policy	<b>PNP7 – Key Views and Vistas</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	115
NPPF conformity	Policy PNP7 seeks to respond to the need to ensure that all new development respects the setting and views into and out of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that directly abuts the developed area of Pirton village. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that 'great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty' in such designations. One of the primary points of reference, identified within PNP7, is the position statement of the Chilterns Conservation Board, the body tasked with overseeing the preservation of the AONB, an approach that is entirely appropriate in that it seeks to ensure development responds directly to local context.
Relevant Local Plan policies	Policy 11: Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Local Plan conformity	Policy PNP7 directly supports and in no way contradicts Policy 11 of the adopted local plan in that both seek to preserve the special characteristics of the AONB. To this end PNP7 is in direct conformity with the rest of the development plan.
Evidence base	Pirton Character Assessment Position Statement of Chilterns Conservation Board

Policy	<b>PNP8 – Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	126, 128, 129, 135, 139
NPPF conformity	Policy PNP8 clearly restates the NPPF’s presumption towards their conservation and enhancement of both designated and non-designated heritage assets. It also restates the requirement of applicants to ensure the consideration of the significance of heritage assets and the way in which they are to be protected or preserved lies at the heart of relevant development proposals.
Relevant Local Plan policies	Policy 16: Areas of archaeological significance and other archaeological areas Policy 19: Historic parks and gardens
Local Plan conformity	It is firstly noted that the saved policies of the Local Plan do not currently comprise a general policy dealing with listed buildings or conservation areas. In which case, there is significant value in introducing PNP8 to cover a village area (Pirton) which comprises a significant conservation area and a similarly significant number of listed buildings. To this end PNP9 directly complements the Local Plan.  In addition PNP8 seeks to add detail to Policy 16 in that it ensures that Pirton’s ‘Archaeology Alert Areas’ are immediately identifiable as comprising archaeological value.
Evidence base	Pirton Conservation Area Map Historic England Listed Building Lists Hertfordshire County Council Archaeological Alert Areas Pirton Character Assessment

Policy	<b>PNP9 – Community Facilities</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	28, 70
NPPF conformity	PNP9 seeks to directly respond to both paragraphs 28 and 70 of the NPPF in that it requires the retention of key local community facilities in Pirton that are to the benefit of the vitality and viability of the village.
Relevant Local Plan policies	None
Local Plan conformity	As with elements of Policy PNP8 it does not appear that there are any directly comparable policies within the Local Plan that cover



	<p>retention of community facilities. To this end PNP9 avoids any sort of conflict with the Local Plan.</p> <p>Pirton is, however, identified as a Category A village in the emerging Local Plan meaning it is recognised as a localised service centre providing facilities to its immediate hinterland. To this end the importance of retaining core facilities in the village is marked.</p>
Evidence base	Pirton Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2015

Policy	<b>PNP10 – Support for Local Business</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	21, 28, 43
NPPF conformity	<p>Policy PNP10 builds on the presumption included towards promotion of rural business and enterprise included within the NPPF. PNP10 provides a number of creative allowances that will enable a rural village such as Pirton to adapt and prosper.</p> <p>In addition PNP10 supports the expansion of communications infrastructure through the village to allow for more of a shift in business models towards home and remote working, thus enhancing the self-sufficient and sustainable credentials of Pirton.</p>
Relevant Local Plan policies	<p>Policy 7: Selected Villages Beyond the Green Belt</p> <p>Policy 25: Re-use of Rural Buildings</p> <p>Policy 36: Employment Provision</p>
Local Plan conformity	<p>Policy PNP10 provides a presumption towards development and the provision of new infrastructure in support of local business. The scope and scale of the policy, and the level of the development it seeks to introduce, is in keeping with Policy 7 of the Local Plan (small scale development appropriate to a village) in that it does not provide any specific allowances for larger scale development. In addition the policy promotes the productive reuse of rural buildings in line with Policy 25 and the delivery of employment provision on suitable sites in line with Policy 36.</p>
Evidence base	Pirton Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2015

Policy	<b>PNP11 – Safety of Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Motorists</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	30, 35, 69
NPPF conformity	Policy PNP11 is a general policy that supports the provision of safe transport infrastructure throughout the Parish, a modal shift from private car to more sustainable forms of transport and a reduction in greenhouse gases. To this end it encapsulates the general direction of Section 4 of the NPPF, paragraphs 30 and 35 in particular.
Relevant Local Plan policies	None
Local Plan conformity	It does not appear that there are any specifically comparable, or indeed conflicting, policies within the adopted development plan. Regardless, the continued promotion of permeability and safe pedestrian and cycle routes continues to bolster Policy 57 dealing with residential design standards.
Evidence base	Pirton Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2015

Policy	<b>PNP12 - Connectivity</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	30, 35, 69
NPPF conformity	Policy PNP12 very much seeks to complement PNP11 in that it openly promotes the provision of clear, legible and extensive footpath and cycle path networks and navigable streets. As a result PNP12 seeks to reinforce the guidance in the NPPF, specifically that relating to the promotion of sustainable transport and health communities.
Relevant Local Plan policies	None.
Local Plan conformity	As with PNP11 it does not appear that there are any specifically comparable, or indeed conflicting, policies within the adopted development plan. Regardless, the continued promotion of permeability and safe pedestrian and cycle routes continues to bolster Policy 57 dealing with residential design standards.
Evidence base	Pirton Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2015

Policy	<b>PNP13 – Car parking</b>
Relevant NPPF paragraphs / sections	39
NPPF conformity	Policy PNP13 responds to the provisions of paragraph 39 of the NPPF that allow local parking standards to be set, provided they have regard to issues such as accessibility levels of the development, the development type, availability of public transport, local car ownership levels and the need to reduce emissions.
Relevant Local Plan policies	Policy 55: Car Parking Standards
Local Plan conformity	Whilst Policy 55 has been identified as relevant in the context of PNP13 it is important to note that the detailed standards within Policy 55 have recently been replaced following the introduction of NHDC's 'Vehicle Parking at New Development' SPD (2011). PNP13 is not in conformity with the detail of Policy 55. It does, however, predominantly relate to the standards included within the SPD, effectively seeking to transpose them into eventual adopted development plan policy. The only variation relates to larger properties (3+ bedrooms) where the evidence based of the Plan denotes consistently high car ownership levels.
Evidence base	NHDC Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD Census data

In addition to national policy the production of the Plan has also had regard to national guidance; principally that contained within the NPPG. Whilst the NPPG does not carry the same statutory weight in terms of required conformity it does present a combination of a clear synopsis of recognised best practice and additional explanation of how the statutory requirements of the process should be observed. In particular (but not exclusively) the production of the Plan has been informed by the following paragraphs within the section entitled 'Neighbourhood Planning': 014 and 015 relating to the role of Parish Councils and the need for transparency; 040 and 041 relating to the requisite level of evidence and scope applicable to a neighbourhood plan; and 047 to 051 relating to conducting consultation.

### **Assessing whether the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development**

Firstly, it is important to recognise that the preceding section has robustly demonstrated that the Plan is in conformity with both the NPPF and the adopted Local Plan in every respect. The

policies of the former have the achievement of sustainable development at their core with the policies of the latter having been supported by an albeit dated level of sustainability evidence at the point of adoption. In addition, no strategic discrepancies have been identified between the draft Pirton Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging Local Plan, the latter strategy itself having been subject to an ongoing sustainability assessment process. To this end the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan has been developed with close attention to two sets of policies that inherently set the framework for sustainable development. What the Plan has done is built upon a base of both existing policies and evidence and has provided a suite of policies that both define and help achieve appropriate and sustainable development in the context of Pirton.

In addition the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment was considered at an early stage of the production of the Plan. It was identified from the earliest stage of the SEA process that the scope of Pirton's strategy would not give rise to any significant environmental effects.

To complement the analysis of the Plan's sustainability that has taken place elsewhere the table below takes a higher level approach to the demonstration of how the Plan achieves sustainable development. It firstly identifies the core dimensions of delivering sustainability as defined by paragraph 7 of the NPPF, provides a summary of how Pirton's Plan has sought to define the key sustainability issues in the Parish under each heading through the development of their objectives and then shows how the policy suite contributes towards overcoming these issues.

<b>NPPF sustainability objective and synopsis</b>
<p><u>Economic sustainability</u></p> <p>The Plan should contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>Related Plan objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support the rural economy by increasing the opportunity for home working, improving visitor facilities for the enjoyment of Pirton's countryside and rich heritage, and encouraging alternative business use for redundant farm buildings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relevant Plan policies</b></p> <p>PNP 9 – Community Facilities PNP10 – Support for Local Business</p>
<p><b>Commentary</b></p> <p>The Plan has responded positively to the requirements of the NPPF through the provision of policies that introduce a firm presumption towards the retention and provision of facilities and business opportunities that maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Pirton. Recognition of the small scale of the village and the rural nature of the Parish is implicit in the wording of the Plan's policies, including PNP9 and PNP10.</p>

To this end the way that both policies respond to the economic needs of the village is proportionate to its role in the overall hierarchy of the District – effectively promoting economic uses of a scale and format suited to its rural location. In addition the ability for initiatives such as home working and the delivery of a fuller and more diverse rural economy centred in and around the village helps to support notions around the reduction of carbon emissions and sustainable travel to work patterns.

#### **NPPF sustainability objective and synopsis**

##### **Social sustainability**

Support a strong, vibrant and healthy community, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

##### **Related Plan objectives**

- To encourage mixed housing growth that encompasses the needs of all ages and social strata with an emphasis on young families, elderly downsizers and affordable homes;
- To ensure that Pirton Parish remains a safe place to live (including pedestrian, equestrian, cyclist and motorist safety), adequately served by public transport, and with an emphasis on encouraging walking and cycling in and around the village and parish;
- To sustain and enhance community facilities for the benefit of all residents and the wider local community (including those with a disability); and
- To support the rural economy by increasing the opportunity for home working, improving visitor facilities for the enjoyment of Pirton's countryside and rich heritage, and encouraging alternative business use for redundant farm buildings.

##### **Relevant Plan policies**

PNP 1 – Meeting Local Need  
 PNP 9 – Community Facilities  
 PNP10 – Support for Local Business  
 PNP11 – Safety of Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Motorists  
 PNP12 – Connectivity  
 PNP13 – Car Parking

##### **Commentary**

Unsurprisingly for a Plan driven by the community's desires there is a heavy focus on achieving a greater level of social sustainability in the Parish, albeit without the strategy being to the detriment of either the economy or the environment. The Plan provides strong support for the delivery of a balance of homes, services, facilities and means of moving around that seeks to serve all sections of the community.

In terms of housing supply, the central policy of the Plan in this respect, PNP1, will ensure that the quantitative and qualitative need for homes in the village is met over the Plan period.

Each of the policies identified in the box above essentially seek to ensure that the people of the Parish, and indeed the surrounding Parishes, enjoy a full and sustainable life with Pirton village, and its constituent facilities and amenities, at its heart.

**NPPF sustainability objective and synopsis****Environmental sustainability**

Contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

**Related Plan objectives**

- To encourage sensitive and innovative development in accordance with the existing character of Pirton village and Parish, including its greenery, wildlife habitats, its built and archaeological heritage and connectivity to the countryside;
- To prevent urban sprawl and urbanisation and maintain Pirton as distinctive and separate place from the surrounding villages and the town of Hitchin;
- To ensure that Pirton Parish remains a safe place to live (including pedestrian, equestrian, cyclist and motorist safety), adequately served by public transport, and with an emphasis on encouraging walking and cycling in and around the village and parish;
- To ensure conservation and enhancement of the local landscape and biodiversity of the Parish of Pirton including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- To ensure conservation and enhancement of Pirton's rich heritage;
- To conserve and enhance the distinctive views which contribute towards Pirton's character and beautiful position as a rural settlement; and
- To protect important green and open spaces within Pirton Village and Pirton Parish and establish new green and open spaces within developments.

**Relevant Plan policies**

PNP 1 – Local Need  
PNP 2 – Design and Character  
PNP 3 – Residential Extensions  
PNP 4 – Hedgerows, Trees and Verges  
PNP 5 – Wildlife  
PNP 6 – Local Green Spaces  
PNP 7 – Key Views and Vistas  
PNP 8 – Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage

**Commentary**

Upon reading the Plan it is clear that the overriding central theme is one of preserving and wherever possible enhancing the rural and village character of Pirton and the Parish. This is clear in the attention paid to the conservation of wildlife, habitats, landscape, heritage assets and the general character of the village. At the same time policies such as PNP1 and PNP10 seek to ensure that this understandable intent to preserve is not done at the expense of meeting the development needs of both the community and the District.

The health of local residents is at heart of many of the plan's environmental policies, as well as the required stewardship of the countryside. This approach, however, is clearly identified as being but one strand towards delivering an attractive and prosperous community within which people are able to live and work.

## **Compatibility with EU obligations**

Consideration has been given as to whether the plan should be subject of either a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required by the Environmental Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (EAPP), or Appropriate Assessment, as required by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012.

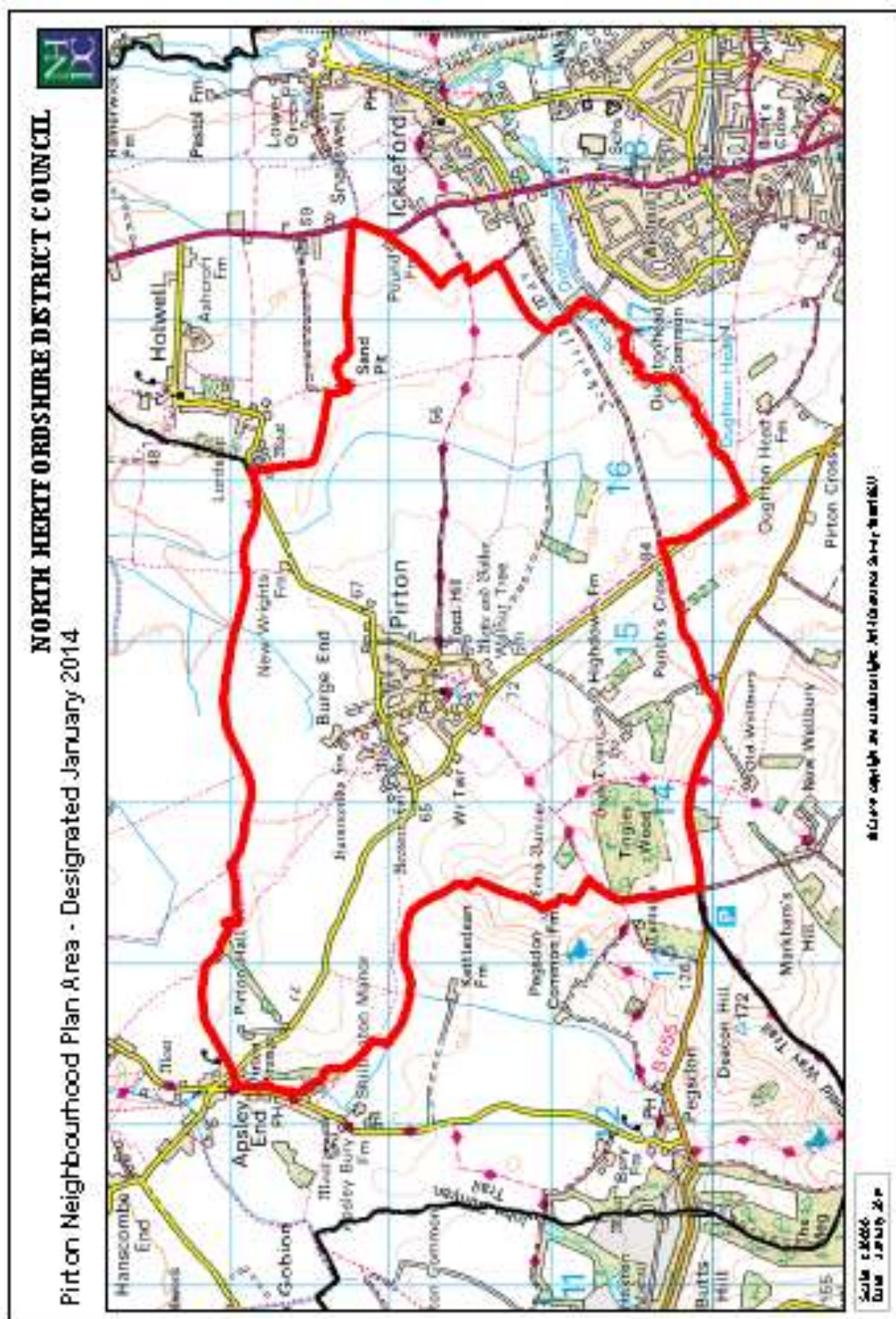
The requirement for screening for any Appropriate Assessment was ruled out at an early stage, following notification to this end from Natural England, as the neighbourhood area does not contain and is not within close proximity to a European site. NE's advice to NHDC is included at Appendix 2 of this Statement.

The requirement for SEA was also considered by NHDC at an early stage of the Plan process (prior to Regulation 14 consultation, in line with PPG advice). This was done with assistance from CAG Consultants who produced the required determination on behalf of NHDC that was then used as the basis of consultation with the relevant statutory bodies on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016 (Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England). A copy of the eventual determination is included at Appendix 3.

The Plan has also been subject extensive consultation that has involved all sections of the community. To this end sufficient work has been undertaken to ensure that it complies with the Equality Act 2010 and fails to discriminate against any grouping of people with a protected characteristic.



## Appendix 1 – The Neighbourhood Area





## Appendix 2 – Response to both SEA and HRA from Natural England

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016  
Our ref: 183252 Pirton NP SEA/HRA  
Your ref:

Clare Skeels - Senior Planning Officer  
North Hertfordshire District Council  
Council Offices, Gernon Road,  
Letchworth Garden City,  
Hertfordshire, SG8 3JF  
By email only: [Clare.Skeels@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Clare.Skeels@north-herts.gov.uk)



Customer Services  
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T 0300 060 3500

Dear Ms Skeels,

Pirton Neighbourhood Plan: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016 which was received by email 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

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.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/does-a-neighbourhood-plan-require-a-sustainability-appraisal/>

Natural England welcomes the production of an SEA Screening Report and is satisfied that the Local Planning Authorities conclusion that an SEA is not required is appropriate.

### Habitats Regulations Assessment

Where a Neighbourhood Plan could potentially lead to significant environmental effects it will be necessary to screen the Plan in relation to the 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.

In relation to the Habitats Regulations, a Neighbourhood Plan cannot progress if the likelihood of significant effects on any European Site, either alone (or in combination with other plans and projects) cannot be ruled out (see Schedule 2, The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012). 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.

Natural England welcomes the consideration given to the Habitats Regulations. We are satisfied that the conclusion of the Local Planning Authority (as competent authority) that there are no likely significant effects on European sites is appropriate, and therefore advise that further Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required.

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 Jamie Melvin on 020 602 61025. 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,

Mr Jamie Melvin  
Lead Adviser  
West Anglia Team

**Appendix 3 – SEA Determination, as issued by NHDC**



## **Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Determination**

Pirton Neighbourhood Plan

April 2016

North Herts District Council  
Pirton Neighbourhood Plan Screening Determination

A report by CAG Consultants

April 2016

Revision history

Version	Date	Version summary	Approvals
RO	5/4/16		Principal author: Gerard Couper Approved by: Tim Maiden
R1			Approved by:
R2			Approved by:
R3			Approved by:

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CAG Consultants

Founded in 1983, CAG Consultants is an independent, employee-owned co-operative. We provide support, research and analysis, policy advice and training in a wide range of fields relating to sustainable development and climate change. We have practitioners in stakeholder & community involvement, regeneration, evaluation, economics and regulatory affairs. We deliver high quality, innovative and thoughtful work for our clients, who include government departments, local authorities, public agencies, the NHS and regeneration and community planning partnerships across the UK. We pride ourselves on our strong ethical approach and our commitment to social justice and improving and protecting the environment.

CAG Consultants' Quality Management System is approved to the Quality Guild standard.

For more information, see [www.cagconsultants.co.uk](http://www.cagconsultants.co.uk)



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## 1. Introduction

This report sets out a draft Screening Determination for the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan and has been prepared on behalf of North Hertfordshire District Council by CAG Consultants. The purpose of the screening is to assess if the Neighbourhood Plan will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). More detail is given in the following sections on SEA and Neighbourhood Plans, and the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan specifically.

The assessment of the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan and the Draft Determination is included in sections 5 and 6.

## 2. Strategic Environmental Assessment context

European Union Directive 2001/42/EC requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that could have significant environmental effects. The Directive has been transposed into law for England and Wales in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).

Under the Regulations, the responsible body is required to determine whether a plan covered by the Regulations is likely to have significant environmental effects, and therefore whether a SEA is required. This process is called screening, and is undertaken using a specified set of criteria (set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations). The Regulations require that the results of this process are set out in an SEA Screening Determination (this document), which must be publicly available.

Before the responsible body makes a formal determination, there is a requirement to consult three statutory consultation bodies designated in the regulations (Historic England, the Environment Agency & Natural England) on whether an environmental assessment is required. This draft document has been produced to facilitate that consultation.

## 3. Neighbourhood Plans and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Planning Practice Guidance states<sup>1</sup> that "to decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan's preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004".

The Guidance also suggests that the "The local planning authority, as part of its duty to advise or assist, should consider putting in place processes to determine whether the proposed neighbourhood plan will require a strategic environmental assessment<sup>2</sup>." In this case North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) is providing assistance by undertaking the screening determination.

The Guidance notes particular circumstances which may require a SEA<sup>3</sup>:

"A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph: 028 Reference ID: 11-028-20150209

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph: 046 Reference ID: 11-046-20150209

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

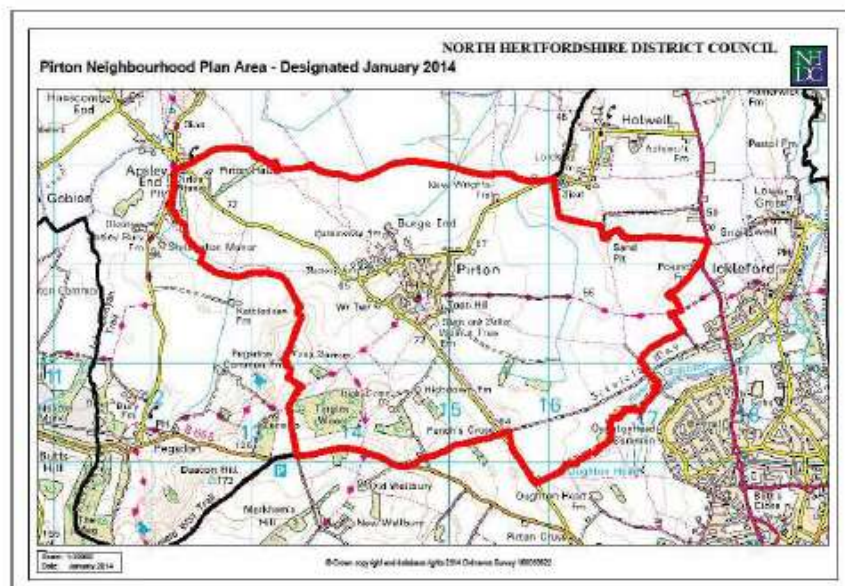
The Determination has taken account of the Guidance in reaching its conclusions, and it notes that the particular circumstances described above are encompassed by the criteria outlined in Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

#### 4. Pirton Neighbourhood Plan

Pirton is a village of approximately 1300 people with more than 520 homes. The village is situated on the slopes of the Chiltern Hills and on the edge of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within Pirton Parish. It is located in North Hertfordshire on the border with Bedfordshire.

A large part of Pirton Village is covered by Archaeological Alert Areas, as designated by Hertfordshire County Council working with NHDC. Pirton Parish has 55 listed buildings and four Scheduled Monuments, the majority within Pirton Village. Much of the village is designated as a conservation area.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by the Qualifying Body, Pirton Parish Council (PPC), and covers the period 2011 to 2031. In July 2013 the PPC established the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (PNPSG) which has included Parish Council members and community volunteers. The Neighbourhood Plan area was designated in January 2014 and is shown in the map below.



The Plan is the result of consultation within the community through questionnaires and informal open consultation events. It has also involved liaison with statutory bodies such as Historic England and Natural England and dialogue between the NHDC and the wider community, either through direct communication or through the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan dedicated web site and Facebook pages.



The Plan does not include proposals for housing or other development. Its overall approach is to support appropriate development which protects the character of the village and the environment. The Plan objectives<sup>4</sup> are shown in the box below.

- Mixed housing growth that encompasses the needs of all ages and social strata with an emphasis on young families, elderly downsizers and affordable homes.
- Sensitive and intelligent development in accordance with the existing character of Pirton village and Parish, including its greenery, wildlife habitats, its built and archaeological heritage and connectivity to the countryside.
- Pirton Parish remains a safe place to live, including pedestrian and vehicle safety on our narrow roads.
- Protection and enhancement of the local landscape and biodiversity of the Parish of Pirton including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Protection and enhancement of Pirton's rich heritage.
- Maintain separation from other centres of population.
- Maintain, and where possible enhance the distinctive views on entering and leaving Pirton Village, and within the village itself.
- Protect important green and open spaces within Pirton Village and Pirton Parish and establish new green and open spaces within new developments.
- Support, maintain and develop community facilities for the benefit of all residents and the business community.
- Support the rural economy and facilitate and increase the opportunity to work in Pirton and for others to enjoy the opportunities for recreation and improving health and well-being

## 5. Screening assessment

As noted above, the Regulations specify a set of criteria which must be used to assess whether any plan covered by the Regulation is likely to have a significant environmental effect and therefore require a SEA. The table below considers each of these criteria in turn.

**Table 1: Assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment**

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects	Likely to have significant effects?	Justification for assessment
1 (a) 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 framework for development in Pirton is currently set by the saved policies of the existing North Hertfordshire Local Plan and the NPPF. A new Local Plan is currently being developed, with adoption timetabled for March 2018. The Pirton Neighbourhood Plan does not include site allocations or provide for any other projects which are likely to have significant effects.
1 (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or	No	A Neighbourhood Plan is at the bottom of the planning hierarchy and

<sup>4</sup> Draft Plan page 12



programmes including those in a hierarchy.		must be in conformity with the Local Plan.
1 (c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No	The Plan focuses on protecting the quality of the village and its environment, particularly in the case of any development of any development which arises out of the existing District planning framework or the developing new Local Plan (which has been subject to sustainability appraisal at all stages). It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan's likely impact will be to have a positive effect on the environment by providing an additional layer of protection.
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan	No	None have been identified
1 (e) 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	The Plan will be in conformity with the saved Local Plan Policies, the NPPF and the emerging Local Plan which have taken account of existing European and National legislation for environmental protection. As noted above it is likely to have a positive effect by assisting with improving environmental protection.
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	No	No significant effects have been identified
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	No significant effects have been identified
2 (c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects	No	No significant effects have been identified
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	No	No significant effects have been identified
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No	No significant effects have been identified
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards (iii) intensive land-use	No	The neighbourhood area does contain sensitive features, particularly heritage features as noted above but there are no proposals in the Plan which are likely to have significant environmental effects on these features. In fact key Plan policies are designed to protect these features. A detailed and thorough Character Assessment for the area has been produced and published alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. The following specific policies protect sensitive features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PNP5 Hedgerows and Trees</li> <li>• PNP6 Local Green Spaces and</li> </ul>

		Open Spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PNP7 Wildlife</li> <li>• PNP8 Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage</li> <li>• PNP9 Key Views and Vistas</li> </ul>
2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status	No	As noted above Pirton is located on the edge of the Chilterns AONB. Any effects are likely to be positive. The views of the AONB from the village will be protected by policy PNP9.  As also discussed above, any other effects are also likely to be positive. The Habitats Regulation Assessment screening report produced by NHDC in February 2013 concluded that in combination, there is not likely to be any significant combined impact on European sites from any plans or projects developed for the District.

## 6. Screening determination

In summary, it is concluded that the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore a SEA is not required. The principal reasons for this conclusion are:

- No sites are allocated for development in the Plan.
- The Plan focuses on protecting the quality of the village and its environment, particularly in the case of any development which arises out of the existing District planning framework or the developing new Local Plan. It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan's likely impact will be to have a positive effect on the environment by providing an additional layer of protection.
- The neighbourhood area does contain sensitive features, particularly heritage features as noted above but there are no proposals in the Plan which are likely to have significant environmental effects on these features. In fact as already noted, key plan policies are designed to protect these features, and the Plan is supported by a comprehensive Village Character Assessment.