

Addendum to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Determination and Habitat Regulation Assessment

Wymondley Neighbourhood Plan

Reason for Addendum

This addendum has been prepared by North Hertfordshire District Council following the exploratory meeting for the Wymondley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

At the exploratory meeting on 30 January 2019, the examiner, Deborah McCann raised concerns about the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening document that had been submitted. The original SEA screening report was prepared by the Wymondley Parish Neighbourhood Plan Forum and was submitted to the District Council in March 2017. The screening report was prepared using a standard template which has been prepared by consultants on behalf of the District Council to enable neighbourhood planning groups to start the SEA screening for their neighbourhood plan.

The District Council sent the screening report to the three statutory consultees, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England on 12 June 2017. Responses were requested by 24 July 2017.

One response was received during the consultation period from Historic England and a further response was received from Natural England after the close of the consultation period.

Both responses stated that there was no need for a SEA to be undertaken.

After the exploratory meeting, the SEA screening was sent to the Environment Agency again to request a formal response. The Environment Agency has confirmed that following a review of the environmental constraints affecting the neighbourhood plan, there are no comments and that they do not consider there to be any potential significant environmental effects.

The District Council has amended the SEA Screening report to include a screening determination.

Habitat Regulation Assessment

The Habitat Regulation Assessment was discussed at the exploratory meeting. At the time the Wymondley Parish Neighbourhood Plan was submitted, the District Council was satisfied that there was no need for an HRA to be undertaken as the Habitat Regulation Assessment that had been prepared as part of the Local Plan concluded that it was unlikely that there would be any significant effects on any European sites and that no appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive was required.

Following the exploratory meeting, the District Council has drafted a simple pro-forma to help screen neighbourhood plans, which has been based on the Local Plan assessment. Whilst this pro-

forma has not yet been agreed with Natural England¹, the District Council considers that because there are no site allocations in the Wymondley Parish Neighbourhood Plan it is not likely to cause a significant adverse effect on a European Site and that no further action is required. A completed copy of the draft screening template is attached. The Council is intending to meet with Natural England to discuss the template (and other matters). Any relevant updates on this matter will be reported to the Examination.

¹ Agreement with Natural England and / or the content of the template may be influenced by any comments submitted upon the Council's own Updated Habitat Regulation Assessment for the new Local Plan. This is currently being consulted upon alongside the Local Plan Main Modifications. This consultation closes on 11 April 2019. The next steps in the Local Plan Examination will then be determined by the Inspector.