

Draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats
Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Screening report

Statement of Reasons

This statement has been produced to comply with Regulation 15(1) e (ii) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

A neighbourhood plan is required to meet a number of basic conditions, one of which being it must not breach and be otherwise compatible with EU and Human Rights obligations.

This requires neighbourhood plans to be in accordance with the provisions of European Directive 2001/42/EC as implemented in England by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/1531) This requires those making plans that could impact on the environment to consider whether they are likely to have a significant effect or not.

Following a request from Over Hulton Neighbourhood Forum, Bolton Council produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Screening report for the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan. This is attached as Appendix 1.

The Screening opinion concluded that the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan does not require a SEA or a HRA. The reasons for this are;

- The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment under the terms of the SEA Directive that was not covered in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy or the Allocations Plan.
- There are no European protected sites within the within the administrative boundary of Bolton. The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) carried out a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) screening on the Core Strategy and the Allocations plan and concluded that a HRA was not required. As part of Bolton, here are no European protected sites within the Over Hulton neighbourhood plan boundary.

Bolton Council consulted with the statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency) who agreed with the screening opinion that no SEA or HRA was required. Their responses are provided in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report of the Draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental effects of a plan before it is made. The purpose of the SEA is to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to promote sustainable development.

1.2 A Habitats Regulation assessment (HRA) identifies whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European protected wildlife site, (Natura 2000 sites) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The aim of the Habitats Regulations is to protect the European sites from any harm.

1.3 The purpose of this Screening report is to determine whether the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan requires a SEA or a HRA as required by European Directives. It concludes that, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority neither a SEA nor a HRA are required.

2. Legislative background

2.1 To be 'made' a neighbourhood plan needs to comply with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations and the Habitats Regulations.

2.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.2.1 The Strategic Environmental Directive (SEA Directive 2001/42/EC), as implemented in England by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/1531), requires an SEA to be carried out for certain public plans and programmes that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

2.2.2 Not all neighbourhood plans require a SEA, but it is compulsory when submitting a neighbourhood plan to provide a screening statement setting out the reasons an SEA is not required. As a general rule of thumb SEA is more likely if a neighbourhood plan allocates sites or is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been addressed by the relevant local plan. In Over Hulton's case, this would be the Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan.

2.2.3 A Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations) was carried out for Bolton's Core Strategy in 2009ⁱ and for the Allocations Plan in 2013ⁱⁱ

2.3 Habitat Regulations Assessment

2.3.1 The Habitats Regulations assessment (HRA) process in England and Wales, implements appropriate assessment requirements under Article 6(3) and (4) of the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)* for development (plans or projects) that are likely to significantly affect EU protected habitats and species. Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 also provides for the HRA process to protect European sites and European marine sites by undertaking an assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

A HRA is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on Protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites)

2.3.2 There are no European protected sites within the administrative boundary of Bolton. The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) as specialist ecological adviser to Bolton Council carried out a HRA screening opinion for both the Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan in 2009 and 2013. This screening considered the sources of effects arising from the

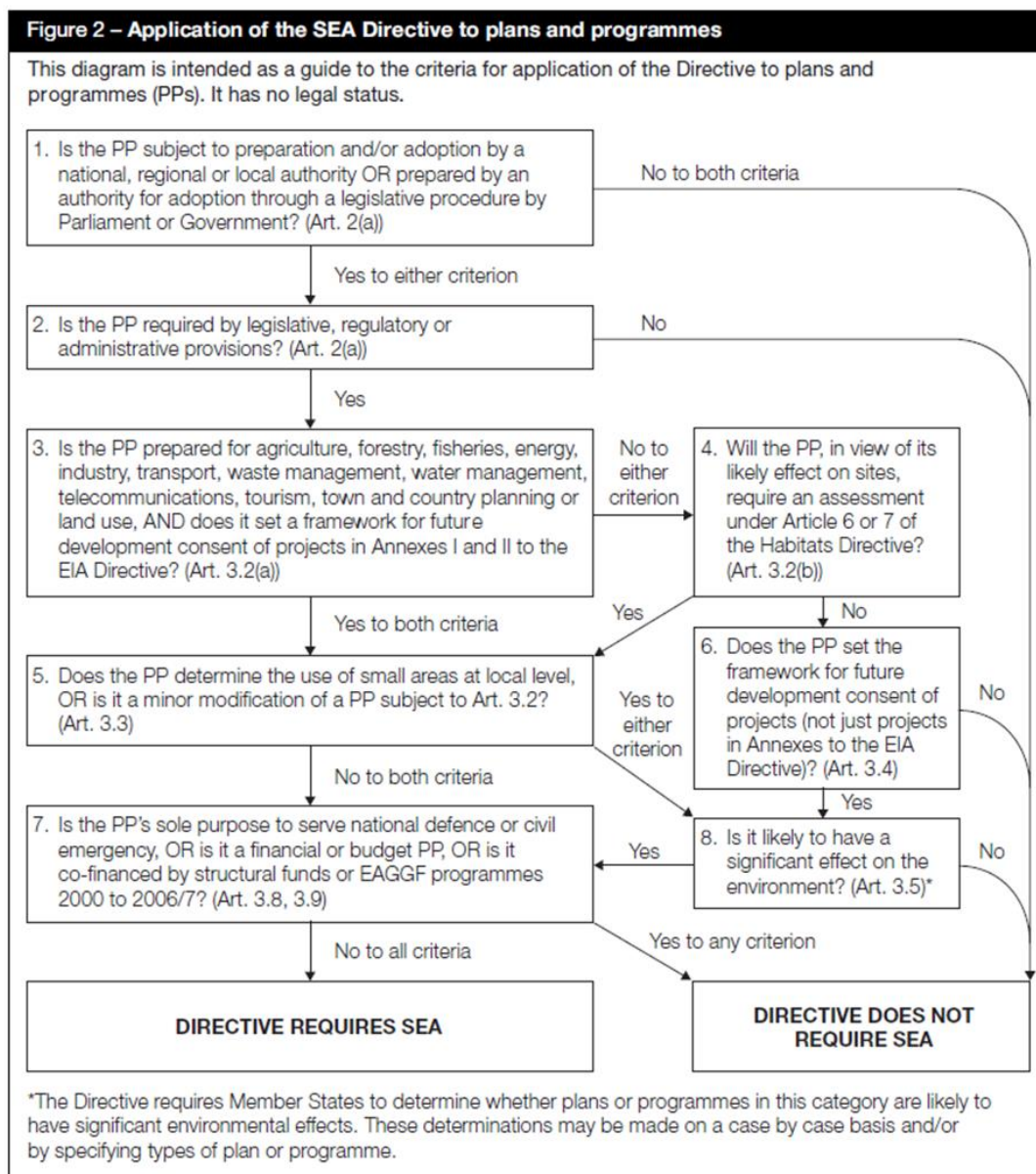
plans and identified the potential pathways to the European sites. The Screening Assessment concluded that there were no likely significant effects on any European Site by the Core Strategy or the Allocations Plan.

2.3.3 As part of Bolton, there are no European protected sites within the draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan boundary. Taking into consideration the screening assessment of the Core Strategy and the Allocations plan it is concluded a HRA is not required for the draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan.

3. SEA Screening process

3.1 The government's Planning Practice guidance (PPG) sets out guidance on SEA for neighbourhood plansⁱⁱⁱ.

Figure 1 (taken from A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) sets out how the SEA Directive applies to plans and programmes.



3.2 Applying the SEA Directive to Neighbourhood Plans

3.2.1 The first stage is to screen the neighbourhood plan to assess whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment, which have not been addressed through the sustainability appraisal of the relevant local plan. This screening

report has been prepared by Bolton Council and will be sent to the consultation bodies (the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England) for a screening opinion. If the consultation bodies determine that draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan will have significant effects on the environment, then a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be required.

4 The draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives

4.1 The residents, businesses and the wider community of Over Hulton have formulated the neighbourhood plan to shape the community they live in. It includes a vision and objectives and establishes land use policies to guide development within Over Hulton until 2037.

4.2 The Vision

The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan sets out the vision for Over Hulton,

4.2.3 By 2040, the settlement at Over Hulton will maintain sustainable patterns of development through conserving and enhancing the qualities of the built, natural and historic environment by promoting green infrastructure connectivity for humans and wildlife and ensuring new development reflects the areas distinctive qualities, historic characteristics and settlement pattern.

4.2.4 Opportunities to support the local economy and meeting the needs of the local community will have been optimised through the retention of and appropriate expansion of, existing services and community facilities. Support for local enterprise and job creation will be commensurate with the characteristics of the area.

4.2.5 Over Hulton will demonstrate its contribution towards meeting the challenge of climate change through high-quality design, support for sustainable travel and taking fullest possible advantage of opportunities to live work and study.

4.2.6 Over Hulton will respond to meet the changing needs of households by promoting appropriate opportunities to adapt and make best use of the existing housing stock, supporting sustainable residential development within the built settlement of Over Hulton.

4.2.7 To achieve this Vision, a set of Objectives has been established with each objective related back to at least one part of the vision. The 11 Objectives are detailed below;

4.3 Objectives

The Objectives of the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan are listed below.

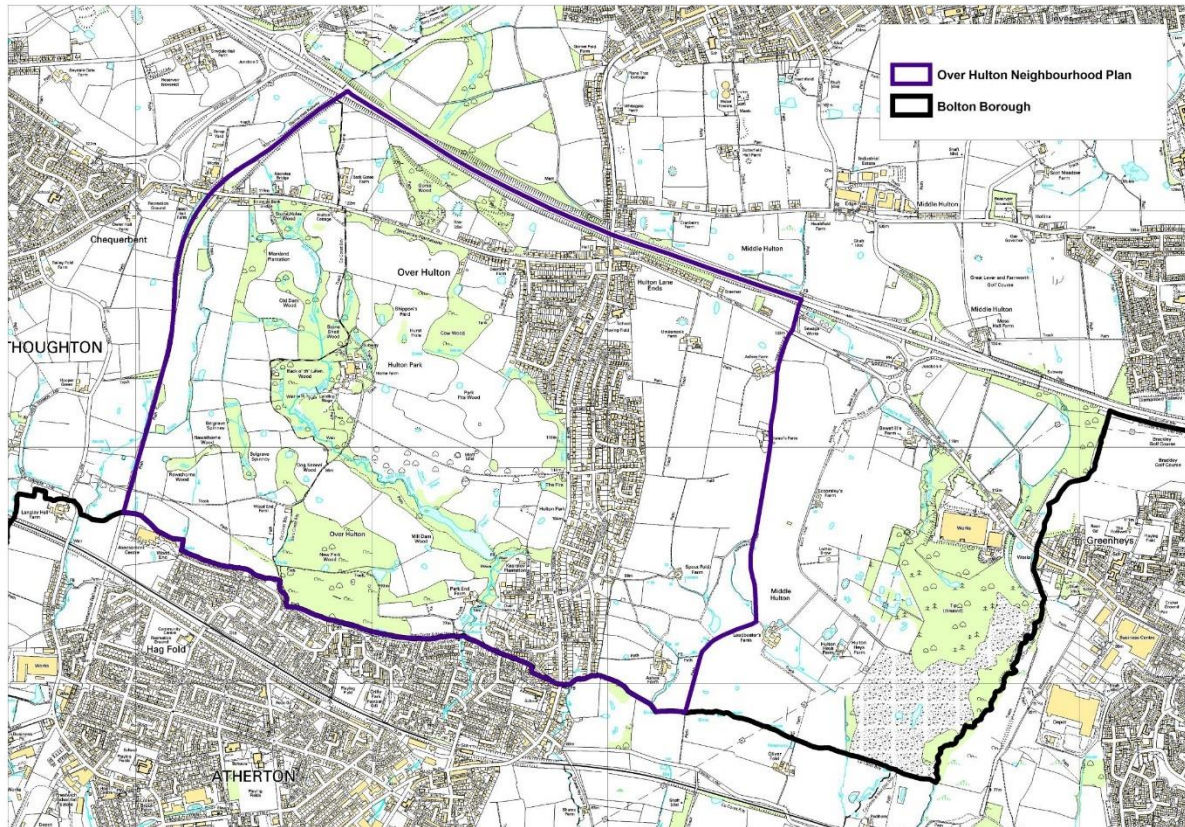
1. Promote and encourage enterprise that complements the character of the area, sustains the local economy, supports increased employment within Over Hulton and capitalises on links with other opportunities nearby.
2. Support the retention and enhancement of community facilities and their role in providing for community cohesion and opportunities for recreation.
3. Maintain and enhance the attractiveness of opportunities to meet day-to-day needs within the settlement and support the prosperity of existing provision on key points and routes within and through Over Hulton.
4. Conserve, enhance and promote the built heritage contained within the settlement at Over Hulton and celebrate its contribution towards local character.
5. Optimise the use of existing walking and cycling routes within the neighbourhood area and seek opportunities to promote and improve connectivity with green infrastructure.
6. Support opportunities for development that minimise trips by private car for employment, education and leisure.
7. Identify and enhance the qualities Over Hulton's surrounding landscape by promoting beneficial use of the Green Belt and through ensuring future development preserves the contribution that public access, key routes and use for recreation make to the significance and setting of Hulton Park Registered Park and Garden.
8. Ensure that new development contributes to local character through good design,

- enhancement of the street-scene and maintaining and enhancing the qualities of the built environment and public realm associated with Over Hulton's settlement pattern.
9. Support opportunities for new development within the existing built settlement where this would make more effective use of previously developed land and optimise the use of existing plots where compatible with its surroundings.
 10. Support and maintain the provision of primary school facilities within Over Hulton with spaces for all primary school age children living within the neighbourhood area.
 11. Promote development that mitigates the impact of climate change and supports the use of renewable resources.

5. Neighbourhood area

5.1 The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan covers the neighbourhood area approved by Bolton Council. The Neighbourhood Area is shown below.

Figure 2 Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan area



6. Plan Policies:

6.1.1 The Draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan establishes policies in relation to land use and development over the period to 2037. The plan contains policies which seek to deliver the vision and objectives of the Plan. The Policies contained within the draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan are intended to be used to inform and determine planning applications. The plan policies are listed below.

6.1.2 Sustainable Growth

- Policy SG1 – Location of Growth
- Policy SG2 (1) – Development adjacent to Green Belt
- Policy SG2 (2) – Permeability of development

6.1.3 Housing, Design and Local Character

- Policy HLC1 – Housing Mix
- Policy HLC2 – Design Principals
- Policy HLC2 (1) Heritage and Character
- Policy HLC2 (2) Townscape and frontages
- Policy HLC3 – Materials

6.1.4 Local Facilities and Community

- Policy LFC1 – Shops and Commercial Services
- Policy LFC1 (1) – Village Centres and permitted uses
- Policy LFC1 (2) – Loss of village centre uses
- Policy LFC2 – Infrastructure
- Policy LFC2 (1) – Infrastructure impact and new facilities
- Policy LFC2 (2) – Loss or reduction of community facilities or places of importance

6.1.5 Transport and Communication

- Policy TC1 – Walking and cycling infrastructure
- Policy TC2 – Electric vehicle charging points
- Policy TC3 – Car Parking

6.1.6 Landscape and Environment

- Policy LE1 – Locally important views
- Policy LE2 – Lighting
- Policy LE3 – Wildlife corridors
- Policy LE4 – Mature trees and hedgerows
- Policy LE5 – Hulton Park
- Policy LE6 – Local Greenspace Designations

7. Site being considered

The draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development.

8 Assessment

8.1 The purpose of the screening process (Stage A) is to establish whether the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan requires an SEA. To do this it has been assessed against a series of criteria set out in the SEA directive.

Table 1 below shows the assessment of whether the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan will require a full SEA. Table 2 assesses whether plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

Table 1: Establishing the need for SEA

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
1. Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by	Y	The preparation and adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan is allowed under the Town and Country

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Article 2(a))		Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The draft Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Over Hulton Neighbourhood Forum (as the 'relevant body') and will be 'made' if successful at referendum by Bolton Council as the Local Planning Authority.
2. Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))	Y	Producing a Neighbourhood Plan is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. However, once 'made' it will form part of the statutory development plan for Bolton. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether the draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, and therefore whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
3. Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management ,telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Article 3.2(a))	N	The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan is prepared for town and country planning, however it will not set the framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes 1 and II of the EIA Directive.
4. Will the Plan, in view of its likely effects on sites, require an assessment of future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Article 3.2(b))	N	The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan is unlikely to require an assessment under the Habitats Directive. A HRA screening Assessment was carried out by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit for the Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan. This report concluded that there are no likely significant effects on any European Site from the Core Strategy or the Allocations Plan.
5. Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local level OR is it a minor modification of a plan or proposal subject to Article 3.2?(Article 3.3)	Y	The draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan does not identify any sites for development.
6. Does the Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Article 3.4)	Y	The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan will form part of the Development Plan and will be used in the decision-making process on planning applications. Therefore, it will set the framework for development at a local level.
7. Is the Plan's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget plan or proposal, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Article 3.8, 3.9)	N	Not applicable.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Article 3.5)	N	The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan is unlikely to have any significant effects on the environment. To make this assessment, the plan is assessed against Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. Table 2 details the assessment undertaken which support the conclusion that the plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.

8.2 Table 1 indicates that the Draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan does not require a SEA unless it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Table 2 assesses the plan against the criteria from Schedule 1 of the SEA regulations to assess the significance of the effects.

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

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Significant environmental effect likely?	
	Yes/No	Justification
The characteristics of plans and programme, having regard, in particular, to:		
(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	<p>The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan will set out the framework which will be used to determine proposals for development within the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>Once 'made' the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan will become part of the Development Plan for the area. It is required to be in general conformity with the Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan; which both been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the requirements of the SEA directive)</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal carried out for the Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan is considered to be sufficient for the Over Hulton neighbourhood plan.</p>
b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan is required to conform to national policy (NPPF) and must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	No	<p>The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan seeks to maintain sustainable patterns of development through conserving and enhancing the qualities of the built, natural and historic environment.</p> <p>The objectives of the neighbourhood plan aim to promote sustainable development. One of the objectives is to 'Promote development that mitigates the impact of climate change and supports the use of renewable resources.' It is considered the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan will have a positive impact on the environment.</p>
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	No	<p>The draft neighbourhood plan sets out the key issues for Over Hulton that have been identified by the local community. These key issues included the following environmental issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of private vehicle use, which are resulting in congestion, traffic, air and noise pollution. • The private vehicle dominated layouts of streets and culs-de-sac and insufficient infrastructure to support alternative modes of transport such as cycling and walking.
(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	No	The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan is not proposing development specifically related to waste or water management.

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Significant environmental effect likely?	
	Yes/No	Justification
The characteristics of plans and programme, having regard, in particular, to:		
water protection)		
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	No	The draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan does not include any sites for development. The plan seeks to guide development in Over Hulton to ensure that it fits within the character of the existing village and reflects the aspiration. The draft neighbourhood plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.
b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	The cumulative effects of the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan are unlikely to be significant effects on the environment.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	No	The neighbourhood plans seeks to guide development within Over Hulton. and as such the effects of the plan will be localised to Over Hulton.
d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No	There are no significant risks to human health or the environment. The plan seeks to improve human health for all residents by ensuring high quality local facilities for existing and new residents, seeking to safeguard community facilities, places of importance, and local green spaces. Policies on local infrastructure including walking and cycling infrastructure seek to maximise opportunities for active travel, helping to increase recreation and contribute to healthier lifestyles.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected.	No	The plan area comprises the settlement of Over Hulton. The effects of the plan are likely to be localised.
(f)(i) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to special natural characteristics or cultural heritage.	No	<p>The neighbourhood plan area includes sites of environmental and heritage importance. Including, the Hulton Park estate which is a Grade II heritage asset located in the Green Belt. Policy LE5 seeks to guide the development within Hulton Park. LE5 seeks to preserve the heritage setting of Hulton Park including protecting estate cottage, the coal mining pits, the ha-ha and the Pretoria memorial.</p> <p>The neighbourhood plan also identifies community facilities and places of importance. It seeks to resist any development that would lead to a loss or reduction of a community facility.</p> <p>The plan will not lead to a significant environmental effect but is likely to protect areas of environmental and heritage importance through its policies.</p>
f)(ii) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values.	No	Not relevant to the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan.
(f)(iii) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to intensive land use.	No	The draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan does not include any sites for development; this will not lead to intensive land use.
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a	No	The draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood plan area includes wildlife corridors, areas of ancient

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Significant environmental effect likely?	
	Yes/No	Justification
The characteristics of plans and programme, having regard, in particular, to:		
recognised national, Community or international protection status.		woodland, and Sites of Biological importance. The draft neighbourhood plan seeks to enhance biodiversity and facilitate the creation of wildlife corridors between Sites of Biological Importance. Policy LE5 Hulton Park seeks to enhance existing habitats and preserve green open spaces. The neighbourhood plan will seek to protect Over Hulton's open landscape and green spaces. It is expected to have a positive affect on landscapes through its policies.

9. Conclusions

9.1 As a result of the assessment in Table 2 is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the proposals in the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan that were not covered in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy or the Allocations Plan. As such, it is considered that the draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan does not require a full SEA to be undertaken.

9.2 This report concludes that there are no European protected sites within the Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan boundary. Taking into consideration the screening assessment of the Core Strategy and the Allocations plan it is concluded a HRA is not required.

9.3 This screening report will be sent to the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England for a screening opinion. If the issues addressed in the neighbourhood plan should change then a new screening process will need to be undertaken determine whether an SEA will be required.

Appendix 2

Consultation responses to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report of draft Over Hulton neighbourhood plan

Historic England



Ms Nicola Farrell

Direct Dial: 0161 242 1445

Bolton Council

3rd Floor

Our ref: PL00731522

Town Hall

Bolton

BL1 1RU

22 December 2020

Dear Ms Farrell

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion for Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan

We write in response to your e-mail of 10 December 2020, seeking a formal Screening Opinion from Historic England as to whether a SEA is required for Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan.

For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine the advice given to the question, “Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?”, in respect to our area of concern, cultural heritage. Our comments are based on the information supplied at this time within the Screening Report.

The Neighbourhood Plan area includes three Grade II Listings and one Grade II Park and Garden. There are also likely to be other features of local historic, architectural or archaeological value and consideration should also be given to the wider historic landscape.

In the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 [Annex II of SEA Directive], and on the basis of the information supplied, it is considered that the draft plan appears to propose no site allocations or policies that would have significant environmental effects upon the historic environment, and so Historic England concur with your conclusion that it *“is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the proposals in the draft Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan that were not*

covered in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy or the Allocations Plan”, and agree that the preparation of a full Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

We would like to stress that this opinion is based on the information made available. To avoid any doubt, this decision does not preclude Historic England providing further advice on later stages of the SEA process, should this be required, nor objecting to specific proposals that may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance), where we consider that these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

The views of all statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for SEA is made.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the Bolton Council and the Greater Manchester Archaeology Advisory Service (GMAAS) are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on: local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the HER (formerly SMR); how the policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of historic assets.

We would request that you please send Historic England a copy of the determination as required by Reg 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Yours sincerely,

Pippa Brown

Historic Places Adviser

Pippa.Brown@historicengland.org.uk



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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.

Consultation response from the Environment Agency

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Planning & Engineering Services Department
PO Box 29
Bolton
Lancashire
BL1 1RU

Our ref: SO/2006/000212/SE-03/DS1-L01

Your ref:

Date: 03 March 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: SA/SEA Draft SA/SEA

Thank you for sending through for consultation the above screening opinion to the Environment Agency.

Environment Agency position

We note and acknowledge the Councils screening decision and have no further comments to make.

Yours faithfully

Mrs SYLVIA WHITTINGHAM
Planning Advisor

Direct dial 0203 0251059

Direct e-mail sylvia.whittingham@environment-agency.gov.uk

Consultation response from Natural England

Date: 11 December 2020

Our ref: 337038

Your ref: Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan

Nicola Farrell
Bolton Council

Nicola.Farrell@bolton.gov.uk

BY EMAIL ONLY



Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Nicola

Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan SEA/HRA screening statement

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 10 December 2020 which was received by Natural England on 10 December 2020

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

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of

Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

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

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

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

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

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

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening
Natural England agrees with the report's conclusions that the Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to result in a significant effect on any European Site, either alone or in combination and therefore no further assessment work would be required.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely
Jacqui Salt
Consultations Team

ⁱ [http://www.bolton.gov.uk/sites/DocumentCentre/Documents/Sustainability Appraisal including annexes.pdf](http://www.bolton.gov.uk/sites/DocumentCentre/Documents/Sustainability%20Appraisal%20including%20annexes.pdf)

ⁱⁱ

<http://www.bolton.gov.uk/sites/DocumentCentre/Documents/Allocations%20Plan%20SD09%20and%2011%20Sustainability%20Appraisal%20plus%20annex.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ PPG paragraph 033 <http://planningguidance.comunities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans/>