



**Strategic Environmental Assessment  
Screening Determination Statement  
for  
Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall  
Neighbourhood Plan**

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out a Screening Determination for the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan, and has been prepared by North Hertfordshire District Council with input from the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Planning Group. 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 (section 2), Neighbourhood Plans (section 3) and the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan specifically (section 4).
- 1.2 The assessment of the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan and the Determination is included in sections 5, 6 and 7.

## 2. Strategic Environmental Assessment Context

- 2.1. European Union Directive 2001/42/EC requires an SEA 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). The purpose of Strategic Environmental Assessment is to promote sustainable development through assessing the extent to which the plan will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.
- 2.2. Under Regulation 9 of the Regulations, the responsible body (local parish or town council or neighbourhood forum) is required to determine whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects, and therefore whether an 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. This document should be submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner.
- 2.3. 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. Consultation took place between January and February 2019 and two responses were received from Historic England and Natural England.

## 3. Neighbourhood Plans and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.1. Planning Practice Guidance states 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”<sup>1</sup>.*

3.2. The Guidance also suggests that *“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.

3.3. 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*
- 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”.*

3.4. This Screening 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. Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan

4.1. The Neighbourhood Plan covers the town of Baldock and the neighbouring parishes of Bygrave and Clothall, all of which are situated within North Hertfordshire. Outside Baldock, the neighbourhood area is largely rural in character, with agriculture and woodland predominating. There are three villages: Bygrave (which is split into two distinct parts), Clothall and Luffenhall – the latter lying on the border with East Hertfordshire. A map of the designated neighbourhood area is attached as Appendix 1.

4.2. The population of the neighbourhood area is around 10,700 people (2011 Census), but this is expected to rise considerably due to proposals for significant growth within and around Baldock contained in the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan. In total 3,298 additional dwellings are proposed over the period 2011-2031 (compared to 4,666 dwellings in the neighbourhood area in 2011), the great majority of which would be located in urban extensions to the town. The emerging Local Plan also proposes 19.6 hectares of additional employment land at Baldock, as well as new community facilities associated with the largest urban extension (site BA1), located to the north of the existing town.

4.3. While much of the neighbourhood area is designated as Green Belt, it does not contain any landscapes that are designated as being of national importance, nor any

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

<sup>2</sup> ibid

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

wildlife habitats of national or international importance<sup>4</sup>. Bygrave Common (which is the focus of proposed strategic housing site BA1) is, however, an important habitat for the corn bunting (a 'species of principal importance' listed under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006). There are, in addition, two local nature reserves – at Ivel Springs immediately to the north-west of Baldock and Weston Hills to the south – together with a number of local wildlife sites in Bygrave and Clothall parishes.

- 4.4. The neighbourhood area is rich in archaeological remains, which record successive waves of settlement over thousands of years. Extensive areas are designated as being of archaeological importance, especially around Baldock and Bygrave. There are six scheduled monuments, including the site of the Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age settlement that once existed at Baldock, which is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register due to the impact of ploughing on its archaeological interest. Baldock's later history as a planned medieval town, a coaching town and a centre for malting and brewing have left a rich built heritage, with many buildings in the town centre being listed (much of the town centre is also designated as a conservation area). St Mary's Church, listed grade 1, is on the Heritage at Risk register due to some parts of the building remaining in poor condition. Small clusters of listed buildings are also found in Luffenhall, Clothall and Upper Bygrave, and at Quickswood Farm to the north of Clothall village.
- 4.5. It is the emerging Local Plan that provides the principal framework for future development in the neighbourhood area, and this has been subject to sustainability appraisal and environmental assessment throughout its preparation, taking into account the various features of environmental and historic importance that exist. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to establish an alternative framework, but rather puts in place some additional safeguards to help mitigate potential environmental impacts of the development proposed in the Local Plan, ensure new development is of high quality and provide additional clarity about the community facilities that are needed.
- 4.6. The Neighbourhood Plan's objectives are to:
  - Sustain and strengthen Baldock's character as a historic and vibrant market town, and the rural character and separate identities of Bygrave, Clothall and Luffenhall.
  - Ensure that new development is well designed, maintains and reflects important features of Baldock and its surroundings, and is resilient to future climate change.
  - Secure the right infrastructure and facilities needed to serve the expanded town, and to avoid unacceptable impacts from new development.
  - Ensure that Baldock grows in a way that builds strong connections between all parts of the town, and which provides homes, services and job opportunities that cater for both existing and new residents.

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<sup>4</sup> In view of this, and the distance of any internationally important wildlife sites from the neighbourhood area, the neighbourhood plan does not require 'appropriate assessment' under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as it is not likely to have a significant effect on any such sites. This conclusion takes into account the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (NHDC, September 2018).

- 4.7. It does not contain a comprehensive set of policies to address all aspects of these objectives, as the Local Plan already provides reasonable coverage of the key issues. Instead, the Neighbourhood plan seeks to add to the Local Plan where the latter could usefully be supplemented. Like the Local Plan, it covers the period to 2031.
- 4.8. The Neighbourhood Plan has been produced on a voluntary basis by the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Planning Group (BBPlan), working through Bygrave Parish Council as the formal Qualifying Body. BBPlan's membership is drawn from local community organisations and the wider public and business community, as well as Bygrave Parish Council and Clothall with Luffenhall Parish Meeting.
- 4.9. The Neighbourhood Plan is the result of considerable research into the existing evidence base (particularly that supporting the emerging Local Plan), together with consultation with the community through a series of events and a questionnaire. It has also involved liaison with North Hertfordshire District Council, Hertfordshire County Council (in its roles as both landowner and highway authority) and national agencies such as Historic England and Sport England. Wider communication of BBPlan's activities has been carried out through direct communication with its members, the BBPlan web site and regular articles in the local media.

## 5. Screening Assessment

- 5.1. 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

<b>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects</b>	<b>Likely to have significant effects?</b>	<b>Justification for assessment</b>
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 Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall is currently set by the saved policies of the existing North Hertfordshire Local Plan. However, by the time the Neighbourhood Plan is made, the new Local Plan (covering the same time period as the Neighbourhood Plan) is expected to have been adopted. The Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared having regard to the emerging

		Local Plan, and does not include further site allocations or make express provision for any other projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects. Policy G1 supports some additional parking at Baldock station and identifies two possible locations, but does not make a specific allocation, and makes clear that the extent of any additional provision should be limited (a point expanded on in the supporting text). The potential sites identified for this purpose are currently developed or proposed for development in the emerging Local Plan. Consequently, Policy G1 is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, especially taking into account the additional environmental safeguards included in the Neighbourhood Plan, as set out below.
1 (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	A Neighbourhood Plan is at the bottom of the planning hierarchy and must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of 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 Neighbourhood Plan focuses on measures to ensure the local environment is protected (particularly in the context of the growth proposed in the emerging Local Plan), on the provision of new green infrastructure and improvements in some other facilities to support sustainable communities, and on the quality of design. The emerging Local Plan has been subject to sustainability appraisal at all stages, and the outcomes of those assessments have been considered in formulating the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a positive effect on the environment by providing an additional layer of policy protection, although

		these effects are unlikely to be 'significant' over and above the safeguards already set out in the emerging Local Plan (which have already been subject to environmental assessment).
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan	No	<p>While a number of specific environmental problems have been identified as being relevant to the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the plan itself is unlikely to have significant environmental effects in relation to those issues. To the extent that the Neighbourhood Plan may have an effect, it is likely to be positive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Air quality: while NO2 concentrations have not breached the relevant Air Quality Objective recently, air quality on some roads in central Baldock could deteriorate without adequate mitigation to address the risk of increased traffic congestion. The Neighbourhood Plan proposes some additional measures to help mitigate the risk of the Objective being breached.</li> <li>b) Flood risk: some parts of Baldock are at risk of surface water flooding. This was taken into account in preparing and assessing the emerging Local Plan policies. The Neighbourhood Plan contains a policy encouraging sustainable design, to help mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change more widely.</li> <li>c) Habitats: proposed site BA1 in the emerging local plan will result in the loss of habitat for the corn bunting (a 'species of principal importance' listed under the Natural Environment and Rural</li> </ul>

		<p>Communities Act 2006). It will also affect a local wildlife site on Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road, and potentially the Ivel Springs local nature reserve as well. These impacts, and appropriate mitigation, were taken into account in preparing and assessing the emerging Local Plan policies.</p> <p>d) Heritage assets: St Mary's Church and the scheduled monument at Walls Field in Baldock are both on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. The Neighbourhood Plan supports appropriate recreational uses on Walls Field, which would help to reduce the damage to its archaeological value which is occurring due to ploughing. The development of Site BA1 could also affect listed buildings and a scheduled monument located immediately to the west of it. This impact, and appropriate mitigation, was taken into account in preparing and assessing the emerging Local Plan policies.</p>
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 Neighbourhood Plan will be in conformity with the new Local Plan, as well as national policies for planning and the environment, which have taken account of existing legislation for environmental protection. As noted above, to the extent to which it is likely to have environmental effects, the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a positive effect by improving environmental protection policies.
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 and environmental thresholds, as noted above, but there are no proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan which are likely to have significant effects on them. In fact, a number of policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are designed to provide additional protection or mitigation. The following specific policies protect sensitive features:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• G2 Strategic green space</li> <li>• G3 Sustainable design</li> <li>• G4 Baldock conservation area</li> <li>• G5 Local heritage assets</li> <li>• E1 Transport and air quality</li> </ul>
2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status	No	The designated neighbourhood area does not contain any landscapes designated as being of international, national or local importance.

## 6. Consultation Responses

- 6.1. The Council have consulted the three statutory consultation bodies designated in the Regulations (English Heritage, the Environment Agency & Natural England) on whether an environmental assessment is required. Responses were received from all three statutory consultees; Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic

England. The three agencies have agreed with the draft screening report that a SEA is not required. A copy of the responses are attached as Appendices 2, 3 and 4.

## 7. Screening Determination

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

- No sites are allocated for development in the neighbourhood plan;
- The Plan focuses on additional safeguards to help mitigate potential environmental impacts of the development proposed in the Local Plan, ensure new development is of high quality and provide additional clarity about the community facilities that are needed. To the extent that the neighbourhood plan will have environmental effects in its own right, they are unlikely to be significant, and are anticipated to have a positive effect by providing an additional layer of protection.
- While the neighbourhood area does contain sensitive features, particularly designated heritage assets as noted above, there are no proposals in the neighbourhood plan which are likely to have significant environmental effects on them. In fact, as already noted, key plan policies are designed to provide additional protection for these features.

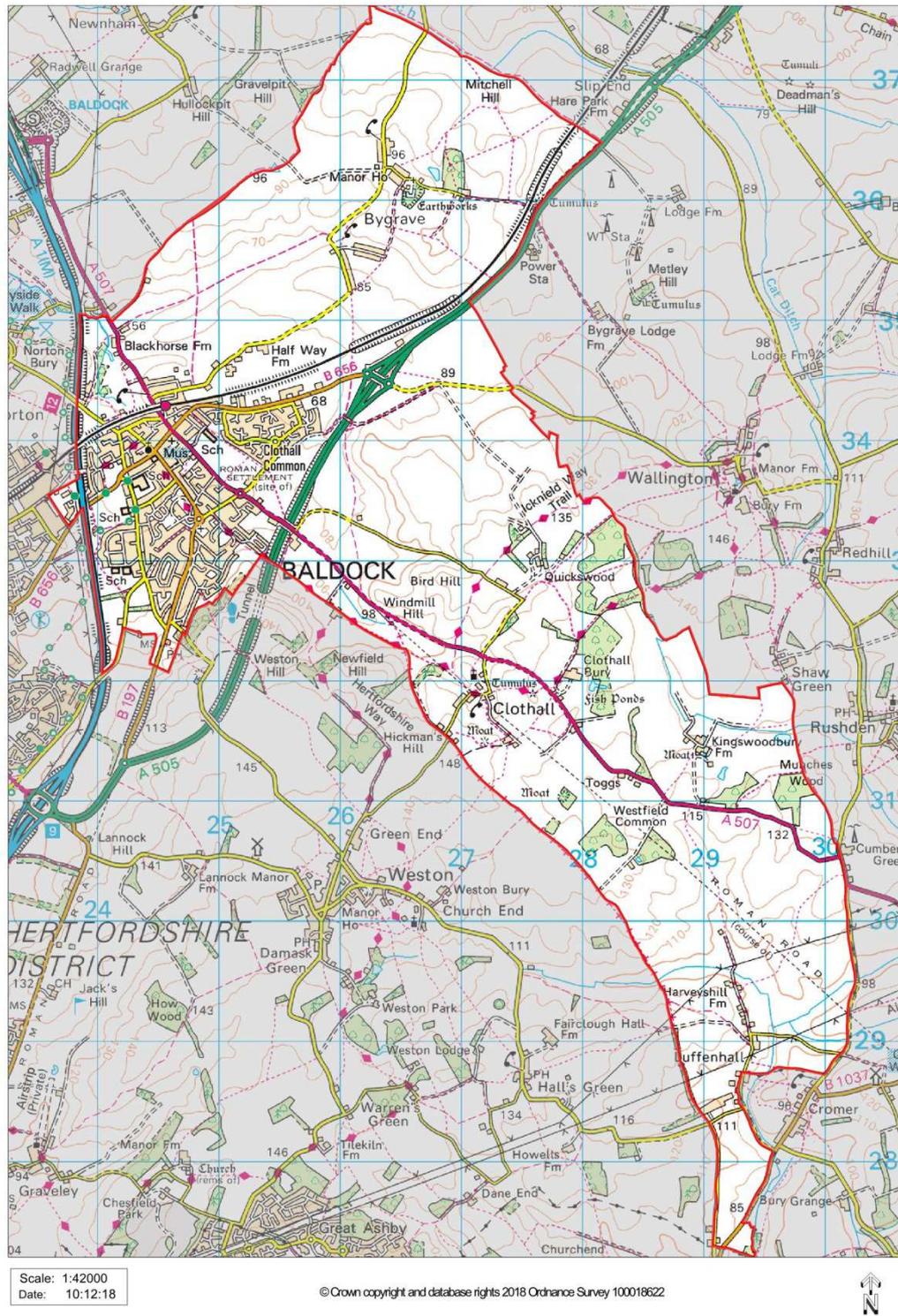
7.2. This screening determination will be reviewed when the Regulation 16 version of the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan is prepared.

## 8. Appendices

- 8.1. Appendix 1 – Map of the Neighbourhood Plan Area
- 8.2. Appendix 2 – Response from Historic England – January 2019
- 8.3. Appendix 3 – Response from Natural England – February 2019
- 8.4. Appendix 4 – Response from the Environment Agency – April 2019

## 8.1 Appendix 1 – Map of the Neighbourhood Plan Area

### Designated Neighbourhood Area - Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall



## 8.2 Appendix 2 – Response from Historic England – January 2019



Historic England

EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

Ms Clare Skeels  
Strategic Planning and Projects Group, North  
Hertfordshire District Council  
PO Box 10613  
Nottingham  
NG6 6DH

Direct Dial: 01223 582746

Our ref: PL00533229

16 January 2019

Dear Ms Skeels

**RE: Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening**

Thank you for your email of 9 January 2019 regarding the above consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore we welcome this opportunity to review the Screening Report for this plan. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion.

The Screening Report indicates that the Council considers that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We note that the neighbourhood plan does not seek to allocate land for development.

On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

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

I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence dated 9 January 2019. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SA/SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance) where we consider that, despite the SA/SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.



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Historic England

EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities 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 Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, 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 heritage assets.

Yours sincerely,

Edward James  
Historic Places Advisor, East of England  
Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk



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8.3. Appendix 3 – Response from Natural England – February 2019

Date: 21 February 2019  
Our ref: 269840



North Hertfordshire District Council

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
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Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/Madam

**Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Development Plan**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 9 January 2019.

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.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

**Natural England does not have any specific comments on the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan – SEA Screening Determination**

However, we refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours faithfully  
Dawn Kinrade  
Consultations Team

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

## Natural environment information sources

The [Magic](#)<sup>1</sup> website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available [here](#)<sup>2</sup>.

**Priority habitats** are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)<sup>3</sup>. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

**National Character Areas (NCAs)** divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)<sup>4</sup>.

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

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

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](#)<sup>5</sup> website and also from the [LandIS website](#)<sup>6</sup>, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

## Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#)<sup>7</sup> sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](#)<sup>8</sup> sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

### Landscape

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<sup>1</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

<sup>3</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

<sup>5</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>8</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

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

### Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)<sup>9</sup>), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)<sup>10</sup>. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

### Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)<sup>11</sup>) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice [here](#)<sup>12</sup> to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

### Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 112. For more information, see our publication [Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land](#)<sup>13</sup>.

## **Improving your natural environment**

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

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

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

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<sup>9</sup><http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

<sup>11</sup><http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

<sup>13</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance on this](#) <sup>14</sup>).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

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<sup>14</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

8.4. Appendix 4 – Response from the Environment Agency – April 2019

**From:** HNL Sustainable Places [<mailto:HNL.SustainablePlaces@environment-agency.gov.uk>]  
**Sent:** 02 April 2019 15:23  
**To:** Clare Skeels  
**Subject:** RE: Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan – SEA Screening Determination

Dear Clare,

Thank you for your email and apologies for the delay in reply.

After reviewing the report we can confirm that we have no comments to make as no site allocations are being made. As mentioned within the report the emerging North Herts Local Plan does suggest that a large housing allocation has been made within the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall area. If this stance on allocations changes we may wish to review our position.

Kind regards,

**Stuart Cook** BSc(Hons)

**Sustainable Places Planning Advisor**

Environment Agency

Hertfordshire & North London – Welwyn Garden City Team

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☎ External: 0208 474 5017 | Internal: 45017

✉ Email: [HNL.SustainablePlaces@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:HNL.SustainablePlaces@environment-agency.gov.uk)