



EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Screening Report

**Strategic Environmental Assessment &
Habitats Regulation Assessment**

March 2018

On behalf of Fordham Parish Council in relation to the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan

Date of assessment:	23 March 2018
Date/ version of neighbourhood development plan to which Screening Report applies:	"Draft for Pre-Submission Consultation (March 2018)"

Contents

Overview	i
1. Introduction	2
2. Strategic Planning Context	3
3. Summary of Draft Fordham Neighbourhood Plan	5
4. Criteria for Assessing the Effects of Neighbourhood Plans	9
5. SEA Screening Assessment of Fordham Neighbourhood Plan	12
6. Screening Outcome.....	17
Appendix 1: Consultation with Statutory Agencies.....	18

Overview

Neighbourhood development plan (NDP) to which this Screening Report applies:
Fordham Neighbourhood Plan

Version/ date of NDP to which this Screening Report applies:
Draft for Pre-Submission Consultation (March 2018)

Neighbourhood area to which the NDP applies:
Fordham Neighbourhood Area

Parish council within the neighbourhood area:
Fordham Parish Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Neighbourhood Plans must meet the 'basic conditions' set out in 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This includes demonstrating that the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations such as:
 - **Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001** on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, transposed into UK law by The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004; and
 - **Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora**, which was initially transposed into UK law by The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 with various amendments consolidated by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to undertake a screening exercise to determine whether the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) requires a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and / or Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). The screening exercise will therefore support the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan in satisfying the basic conditions.
- 1.3. In general terms, a neighbourhood plan may require full SEA where its policies and proposals are likely to result in significant environmental effects, particularly where such effects have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.
- 1.4. In the context of neighbourhood planning, a full Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) may be required where a Neighbourhood Plan is deemed likely to result in significant negative effects occurring on protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites) as a result of the plan's implementation.

2. Strategic Planning Context

- 2.1. The basic conditions require a Neighbourhood Plan to be in *general conformity* with the strategic policies contained in the development plan (the Local Plan) for the area.
- 2.2. Through its strategic policies, the Local Plan effectively defines the parameters within which the Neighbourhood Plan may operate. Throughout its preparation, Local Plans are subject to SEA (generally incorporated through a Sustainability Appraisal) and HRA. In screening the Neighbourhood Plan it is therefore relevant to consider the strategic policy context, to enable the identification of environmental effects not already considered and addressed through the Local Plan-making process.

Local Plan 2015

- 2.3. The current East Cambridgeshire Local Plan was adopted in 2015 and defines strategic (and more locally specific) policies for the area. At the time at which the FNP is examined to be examined, the Local Plan 2015 (LP15) is likely to remain the adopted Local Plan.
- 2.4. The LP15 directs the majority of growth to main settlements (such as Ely, Littleport and Soham). Growth in large villages, such as Fordham, is fairly limited. The LP15 identifies three fairly modest site allocations to deliver in the region of 26 dwellings. In addition, the LP15 defines a Development Envelope within which growth is, in principle, generally acceptable. In addition, the LP15 allocates land for employment development at an existing business park located in the parish, but physically separate from Fordham village. During its preparation, the LP15 was subject to Sustainability Appraisal and HRA.

Submitted East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018

- 2.5. In February 2018, East Cambridgeshire District Council submitted for examination a new Local Plan, along with supporting evidence base. Examination of the Local Plan will take place in summer 2018. If successful, the new Local Plan will replace the LP15.
- 2.6. The submitted Local Plan continues to focus growth in the main settlements, but seeks to deliver a greater proportion of growth to 'Large Villages' and 'Medium' villages than the LP15.
- 2.7. The submitted Local Plan proposes six allocations for housing development within Fordham village, to deliver in the region of 303 dwellings. In addition, a number of parcels of employment land at the existing business park south of Fordham village are identified. The submitted Local Plan continues to apply a Development Envelope to Fordham village.
- 2.8. It should be noted that four of the six proposed housing allocations have already been supported through the planning system, either through the granting of planning permission or a Planning Committee resolution to grant planning permission. Sites allocations with extant planning permission / resolution to grant will deliver in the region of 271 dwellings. Consequently, the submitted Local Plan and its supporting evidence base reflects future growth in Fordham more accurately.

Sustainability Appraisal (submitted Local Plan)

- 2.9. The Sustainability Appraisal prepared for the submitted Local Plan incorporated the requirements of SEA. Throughout the stages of plan preparation, the Sustainability Appraisal influenced policy formulation and the allocation of development sites.
- 2.10. A range of sites were appraised in Fordham village. The proposed sites and overall level of growth are considered to provide a sustainable approach to growth in Fordham.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (submitted Local Plan)

- 2.11. In November 2017, East Cambridgeshire District Council published the Habitats Regulation Assessment Methodology and Screening Document alongside public consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan.
- 2.12. The following Natura 2000 sites were scoped for the submitted Local Plan HRA for consideration:
- Fenland SAC (including Wicken Fen, Woodwalton Fen and Chippenham Fen Ramsars)
 - Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar
 - Devil's Dyke SAC
 - Breckland SAC/SPA
- 2.13. The potential significant effects identified during the HRA screening were:
- Habitat damage and/or loss
 - Disturbance from urbanisation effects (for example, predation by cats)
 - Disturbance from increased recreational pressure
 - Reduced air quality as a result of increased vehicle journeys
 - Water quality changes from water consumption and abstraction
 - Reduced water quality from pollution due to increased demand for waste water treatment
- 2.14. The Screening Document concludes that:

“It is the opinion of the Local Planning Authority that it is reasonable to conclude that the policies within the Local Plan identified as having potential effects, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are unlikely to result in significant adverse effects on any of the Natura 2000 or Ramsar Sites and can be screened out.

As no policies remain likely to have significant negative effects, it is the recommendation of this screening assessment that further Appropriate Assessment of the Local Plan is not necessary.”

- 2.15. In its consultation response (dated 19 December 2017), Natural England indicates that:

“Natural England generally considers the Local Plan to be legally compliant, positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.”

- 2.16. Generally, the HRA & Screening Document is considered relevant and appropriate in the context of this screening assessment. However, it should be noted that in its response

Natural England indicates one outstanding issue relating to the delivery of sufficient additional green infrastructure. This is a relevant consideration in respect of this screening assessment, due to the implications for recreational pressure on designated sites.

- 2.17. In assessing Fordham site allocations the HRA Screening Document confirms that Chippenham Fen is not publicly accessible, and will not therefore be affected by recreational pressure as a result of growth in Fordham or other settlements in the locality.

3. Summary of Draft Fordham Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1. The subject of this screening report is the Draft Fordham Neighbourhood Plan¹ (FNP), which was published for consultation in March 2018.
- 3.2. The FNP has been prepared by Fordham Parish Council, the 'qualifying body' for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. The Fordham Neighbourhood Area was approved by East Cambridgeshire District Council in December 2017, and is coterminous with Fordham's civil parish boundary.
- 3.3. The FNP and supporting information are available to view and download from Fordham Parish Council's neighbourhood planning website². Where necessary, please refer to the FNP alongside this screening report.
- 3.4. The FNP sets out the following objectives:
- To manage the growth that occurs in Fordham to ensure it is sustainable for Fordham's context, delivering a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures.
 - To preserve the rural setting of the village and to ensure that access to the countryside and important rural views and open areas are maintained.
 - To ensure that development is located where opportunities to travel to key services by foot or other sustainable modes of transport are maximised.
 - Retaining a tight village nucleus within the Development Envelope and avoiding ribbon development.
 - To maintain, and wherever possible enhance, key community infrastructure and services, including but not limited to the village pubs and restaurants, the village hall, play equipment, sports facilities, public transport, schools, nurseries and churches.
 - To ensure that local businesses continue to be successful and wish to remain in Fordham.
 - To protect local wildlife and habitats and enhance the green infrastructure in and around Fordham.

¹Regulation 14 Pre-submission consultation draft

² Fordham Neighbourhood Plan website: <https://fordhamnp.wordpress.com/>

- To ensure that people can move safely and without hindrance throughout Fordham and to neighbouring areas.
- To ensure new development creates a safe and secure environment.

3.5. In summary, to deliver these objectives the FNP proposes the following policies:

- Policy 1: Housing Growth;
- Policy 2: Character & Design;
- Policy 3: Local Green Spaces;
- Policy 4: Maintaining Separation;
- Policy 5: Ironbridge Path & New Path Area;
- Policy 6: Locally Important Views;
- Policy 7: Locally Important Buildings & Structures;
- Policy 8: Wildlife & Habitats;
- Policy 9: Services & Facilities;
- Policy 10: Provision of Medical & Educational Facilities;
- Policy 11: Pedestrian Access & Public Rights of Way;
- Policy 12: Car Parking; and
- Policy 13: Cycle Parking & Storage.

Development Opportunities

- 3.6. As indicated in objective 1, the FNP seeks to ‘manage growth ...to ensure it is sustainable’. Recently, Fordham has been subject to a number of development proposals.
- 3.7. Draft *Policy 1: Housing Growth* proposes seven site allocations (referenced FH1 – FH7), providing in the region of 311 dwellings³.
- 3.8. Of these seven site allocations, five sites (at the time of writing) have extant planning permission, or a resolution to grant planning permission following a decision by East Cambridgeshire District Council’s Planning Committee:
- FH2 Land north east of Rules Garden – 15 dwellings
 - FH3 Land off Station Road - 27 dwellings
 - FH5 Scotsdale Garden Centre- 150 dwellings (max.)
 - FH6 Land north of Mildenhall Road – 79 dwellings (max.)
 - FH7 Land between 37 and 55 Mildenhall Road - 8 dwellings
- 3.9. It should also be noted that draft allocations FH1 to FH6 are proposed for allocation by the submitted East Cambridgeshire Local Plan. Consequently, the FNP does not identify sites which are not already identified by the emerging Local Plan, or benefitting from planning consent.
- 3.10. Other development opportunities noted by the FNP, such as infill, rural exception sites and Community Land Trust development, reflect strategic policies in the existing East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and submitted Local Plan
- 3.11. Whilst the submitted East Cambridgeshire Local Plan proposes site allocations for employment use, the FNP remains silent on this issue.

³ Along with other uses where the site is proposed for allocation for a mixed-use scheme.

- 3.12. In conclusion, over the plan period the FNP is not expected to deliver additional growth beyond that which is already identified by the submitted Local Plan or existing planning consents.

Fordham's Environment

- 3.13. The FNP describes clearly Fordham's history, landscape and character. Fordham includes a mix of historic buildings and post-war growth. The landscape is defined by the surrounding 'East Anglian Chalk', agricultural landscape, and proximity to the River Snail. The FNP includes a number of policies for the sole purpose of conserving and enhancing Fordham's natural and built environment.
- 3.14. Draft policy 2 is a criteria-based policy which seeks to preserve important natural and built features, including heritage assets, and maintain character and design principles which are relevant to Fordham's local distinctiveness.
- 3.15. Draft policy 3 proposes the designation of four, substantive areas of open space for designation as Local Green Space, for the purpose of recreation and other qualities. Draft policy 4 seeks to maintain separation between Fordham and neighbouring built areas. In combination, these policies define further areas where development will, in most cases, not be appropriate.
- 3.16. Draft policy 5 seeks to protect the area around Ironbridge Path and New Path, which is a tranquil area very close to the centre of the village containing some woodland, fields, paddocks and a number of public rights of way.
- 3.17. The FNP includes draft policies which identify for protection features important to Fordham's historic environment. Draft policy 6 designates and preserves eight locally important views. Many of these views relate to views of heritage assets, including listed buildings. Draft policy 7 designates 13 locally important buildings and structures.
- 3.18. Draft policy 11 seeks to protect and enhance pedestrian access and public rights of way. Thereby improving access to the countryside.
- 3.19. The FNP identifies a number of nationally and internationally significant habitats in proximity of Fordham, notably Fordham Wood (SSSI), Chippenham Fen (Ramsar), and locally important habitats including the River Snail corridor and Townsend Woods. Draft policy 8 seeks to protect nationally and internationally designated sites, ensure greater connectivity between habitats, and deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

Summary of likely environmental effects

- 3.20. The FNP does not seek to increase the quantum of growth identified by the submitted Local Plan. The FNP principally seeks to enhance Fordham's sustainability through the inclusion of a number of policies relating to Fordham's natural and built environment.
- 3.21. The designation through the Neighbourhood Plan of green infrastructure, namely publicly accessible green spaces, supported by improvements to pedestrian access and enhancement of public rights of way may deliver environmental benefits. For example, reducing recreation pressure at internationally and nationally important habitats (designated sites).
- 3.22. The draft policies do not appear to deviate significantly from the strategic policies for the area, and are likely to be capable of satisfying the 'general conformity' basic condition.

The draft policies appear environmentally conscientious, and on review, are considered unlikely to result in significant negative environmental effects.

4. Criteria for Assessing the Effects of Neighbourhood Plans

- 4.1. The Localism Act 2011 (Schedule 9) introduced neighbourhood planning into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The 1990 Act, as amended by Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011, requires that neighbourhood development plans meet a set of basic conditions, one of which being that the making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
- 4.2. To ensure that a NDP meets this basic condition, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) may be required to determine the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the NDP. The basis for Strategic Environmental legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC, which was transposed into domestic law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or 'SEA Regulations'. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005).
- 4.3. Where a proposed plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or European offshore marine site (in relation to the Habitats Directive), this will also trigger the need to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 makes provision in relation to the Habitats Directive. The Directive requires that any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European site must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. To achieve this, paragraph 1 of schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 prescribes a basic condition that the making of a neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site. Paragraphs 2 to 5 go on to amend the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 so as to apply its provisions to neighbourhood development orders and plans.
- 4.4. Section 5 screens the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan against various criteria to determine if a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. A SEA would assess the NDP against the European legislation outlined above, and would conclude whether the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations with regards to the environment.
- 4.5. Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC details the criteria for determining whether plans are likely to have significant environmental effects. This criteria are outlined below.

Figure 1: SEA Assessment Criteria

Article 3, Scope

5. Member States shall determine whether plans or programmes referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 are likely to have significant environmental effects either through case-by-case examination or by specifying types of plans and programmes or by combining both approaches. For this purpose Member States shall in all cases take into account relevant criteria set out in Annex II, in order to ensure that plans and programmes with likely significant effects on the environment are covered by this Directive.

Annex II Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5)

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to

- 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;
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;
- 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).

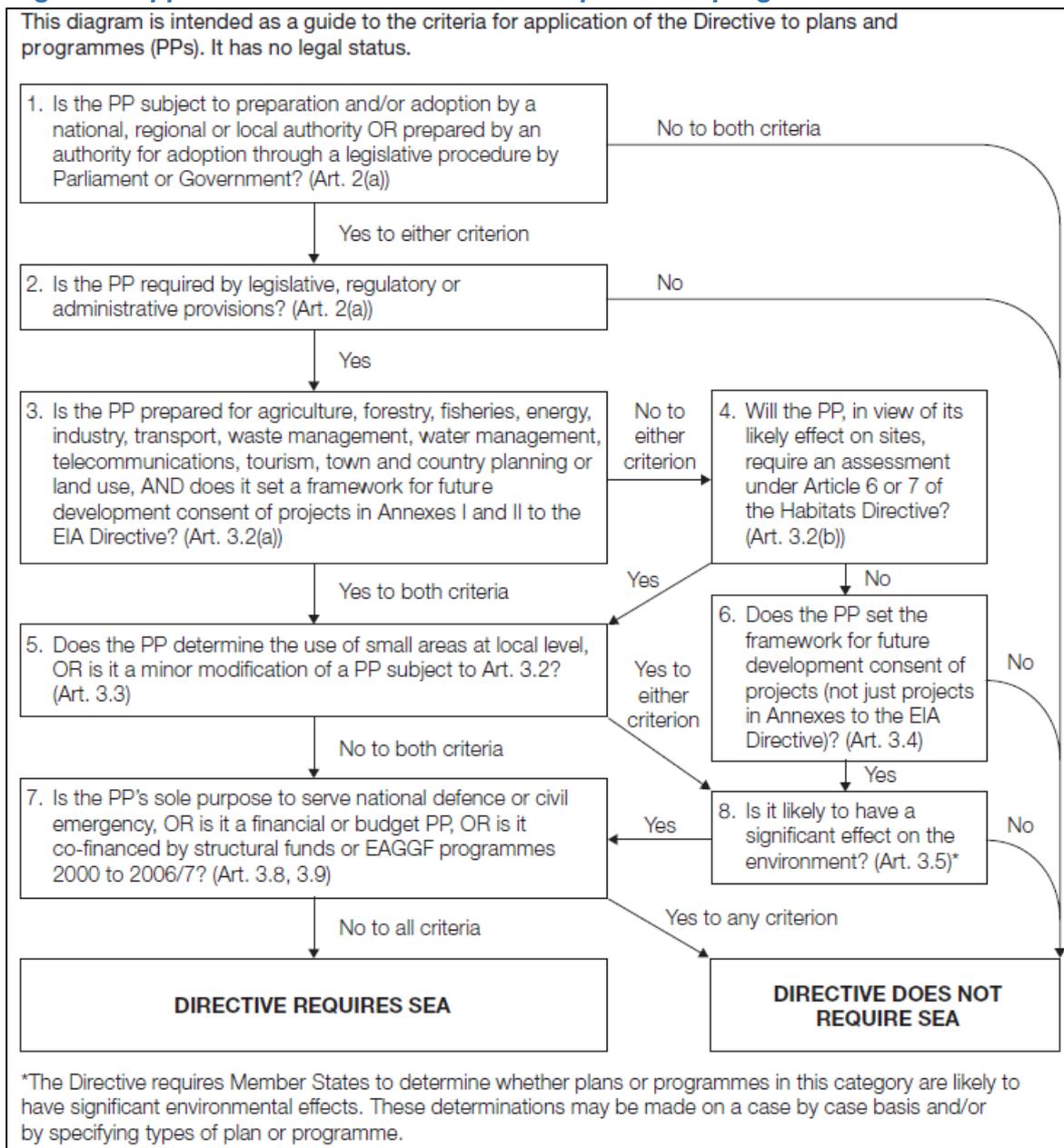
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- the cumulative nature of the effects;
- the transboundary nature of the effects;
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
 - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;
 - intensive land-use;
- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

4.1 The Department of the Environment produced a flow chart diagram⁴ which sets out the process for screening a planning document to ascertain whether a full SEA is required. See Figure 1 below.

⁴ Department of the Environment, A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2005)

Figure 2: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes⁵



4.4 The process outlined in Figure 2 has been undertaken for the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan and the findings are outlined in Figure 3. As the questions have been answered using the flow diagram above, some of the questions may not be applicable as a result of previous answers: where this is the case, the response is stated as 'not applicable'.

⁵ Annexes I and II of Directive 2011/92/EU (as referred to in Figure 2, question 3) available at:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011L0092&from=EN>

(see <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/eia-legalcontext.htm> for details of amendments).

Articles 6 and 7 of the Habitats Directive (as referred to in Figure 2, question 4) available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043&from=EN>.

5. SEA Screening Assessment of Fordham Neighbourhood Plan

5.1. Figure 3 provides assessment of the FNP to identify likely significant effects on the environment.

Figure 3. Assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment

SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	East Cambridgeshire District Council Assessment	Likely significant environmental effect
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, 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;	The FNP would, if adopted, form part of the Statutory Development Plan and contribute to the framework for future development projects. However, the FNP would only apply to a very limited geographical area (the Fordham Neighbourhood Area) where a limited number of proposals are anticipated over the plan period.	None
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The FNP would not influence other plans and programmes to a significant degree. The FNP is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.	None
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	<p>It is a basic condition that a Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The proposed FNP includes a number of policies which promote environmental considerations.</p> <p><i>Policy 2: Character & Design, Policy 6: Locally Important Views and Policy 7: Locally Important Buildings & Structures</i> have been prepared for the express purpose of conserving and enhancing the historic and heritage assets.</p> <p><i>Policy 3: Local Green Spaces</i> proposes the designation of publicly-accessible local green spaces including an area of woodland. <i>Policy 5: The Ironbridge Path & New Path Area</i> seeks to protect this green area from harmful development and <i>Policy 8: Wildlife & Habitats</i> which resists development that would harm wildlife or their habitats, promotes the retention of existing natural features and seeks a biodiversity net gain from development proposals. <i>Policy 11: Pedestrian Access & Public Rights of Way</i> seeks to maintain</p>	None

	<p>existing routes and improve connectivity. By designating public open, green spaces for protection, and enhancing pedestrian access, the FNP may contribute to reducing recreational disturbance and visitor pressure at designated site.</p> <p>In addition, <i>Policy 9: Services & Facilities</i> and <i>Policy 10: Provision of Medical & Educational Facilities</i> are likely to support the social dimension of sustainable development, through protecting and enhancing local services.</p> <p>Whilst the FNP seeks to allocate seven housing sites in Policy 1, these sites are all proposed for development in the emerging East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, or are allocated by the adopted Local Plan, or benefit from planning permission (or resolution to grant planning permission). The FNP is therefore unlikely to result in an increase in the amount of growth which will be delivered in Fordham over the course of the plan period. Growth in Fordham has been assessed through Sustainability Appraisal and HRA for the submitted Local Plan.</p>	
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	There is a large area within Flood Zone 2 and 3 around the River Snail which traverses the neighbourhood area. Some of this area benefits from flood defences. However the FNP does not include specific proposals within the flood zone areas.	None
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The FNP is not relevant to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment.	None
2. 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;	The effects of the implementation of the FNP are expected to be minimal in terms of probability, duration and frequency.	None
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	The cumulative effects of development sites identified by the FNP have been considered through the Local Plan process, namely the Sustainability Appraisal and HRA.	None
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	It is not anticipated that any effects will be transboundary.	None

(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	The FNP is not expected to pose any risks to human health or the environment: the effects of policies may enhance these elements.	None
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The Fordham neighbourhood area had approximately 2,700 residents at the last Census and is relatively small in size. The extent of any effects of the implementation of the FNP are therefore expected to be limited to the immediate local area.	None
(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 or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and	<p>There are a number of natural assets in proximity of Fordham. Brackland Rough SSSI is located to the south of the village and Chippenham Fen (which is a designated NNR, SSSI, Ramsar and SAC) approximately 1km to the south east of the main built area of the village and approximately 800m to the south of the eastern reaches of the village along Mildenhall Road. The majority of Chippenham Fen is outside Fordham Parish but there is a small area located within the parish boundary. Snailwell Meadows SSSI is just outside the parish area to the south and Soham Wet Horse Fen SSSI is to the north west and these are approximately 2.2km and 1.5km from the village respectively.</p> <p>The scale of growth proposed by the FNP reflects the submitted East Cambridgeshire Local Plan. The effects of this growth upon the environment have been assessed through Sustainability Appraisal and HRA of the Local Plan, and other supporting evidence base documents.</p> <p>Fordham village includes a number of listed buildings and has a designated Conservation Area. The FNP includes several policies relating to the historic environment and heritage assets (namely policies 2, 6 and 7).</p>	None
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	Any effects of the FNP are expected to be positive and localised: the effects are not likely to be significant. Policy 4 protects the open character of the landscape surrounding Fordham village.	None

5.2. Figure 4 applies the SEA Directive criteria to the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 4: Application of the SEA Directive to Fordham Neighbourhood Plan

Criteria	Response: Yes/ No/ Not applicable	Details
1. Is the NDP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?	Yes	The preparation and adoption of the FNP is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. Whilst the FNP has been prepared by Fordham Parish Council it will be adopted by East Cambridgeshire District Council as the local authority. GO TO STAGE 2
2. Is the NDP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions?	Yes	Whilst the production of a Neighbourhood Plan is not a requirement and is optional, it will, if made, form part of the Development Plan for the East Cambridgeshire District Council area. It is therefore important that this screening process considers the potential effects. GO TO STAGE 3
3. Is the NDP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water 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?	Yes – Town & Country Planning / land use; No - EIA Directive Annex I & II	The FNP is being prepared for town and country planning and land use. It does not set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive. GO TO STAGE 4.
4. Will the NDP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?	No	All sites proposed for allocation by the FNP are either identified by the submitted Local Plan or have existing planning consent. Sites identified by the FNP have been considered through the HRA prepared to inform the submitted East Cambridgeshire Local Plan. No likely significant effects on designated sites were identified, and as such will not require an assessment under Articles 6 and 7 of the Habitats Directive. GO TO STAGE 6
5. Does the NDP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of an NDP subject to Art. 3.2?	N/A	

6. Does the NDP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)?	Yes	Alongside the East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan, the FNP will set the framework for development consents in the neighbourhood area. GO TO STAGE 8
7. Is the NDP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7?	N/A	
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?	No	The extent to which implementation of the FNP will result in likely significant environmental effects is assessed in Figure 3. The assessment identifies that no likely significant environmental effects are expected to arise through implementation of the FNP.
Outcome:	SEA not required	

6. Screening Outcome

- 6.1 The assessment in Section 4 indicates that it is unlikely that there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the FNP and thus an SEA is not required.
- 6.2 The assessment in section 4 also considers the effects of the FNP in respect of designated sites. The assessment determines that implementation of the FNP is not expected to result in likely significant effects on designated sites and therefore, a full HRA is not required for the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.3 Following the assessment undertaken in section 4, East Cambridgeshire District Council consulted relevant Statutory Agencies, namely the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. Two of the statutory bodies concurred with the assessment of the FNP and the Environment Agency confirmed that they did not have scope for providing comments on the draft Screening. The full responses are provided in Appendix 1.
- 6.4 In the event that the objectives, aims and/or policies covered by the FNP should change significantly during the plan-making process, this screening process will be reviewed.

Appendix 1: Consultation with Statutory Agencies

The assessment indicates that East Cambridgeshire District Council consider that it is unlikely that there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the FNP (as submitted at the date of this assessment) and thus a SEA and/or HRA is not required. The relevant Statutory Agencies, namely the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, have been consulted on this screening opinion based on the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan in its current form. The responses received during this consultation are detailed below:

Environment Agency

“Thank you for your request for a screening opinion.

Due to resource pressures, we are no longer able to provide bespoke advice on screening opinions. If there is a specific issue which you require our expert advice on before issuing the screening opinion then please contact us with details and we will endeavour to assist you. We remain a statutory consultee for scoping opinion so please continue to submit these for our review and comments.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact us.”

Historic England

“Thank you for your email of March 23rd 2018 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 this SEA Screening Report. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, “Is it (the Fordham 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 Fordham Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have any significant effects on the historic environment. We note that it proposes to allocate sites for development, but that these sites have been subject to analysis through the Sustainability Appraisal process for the emerging East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

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, as it would duplicate work already undertaken as part of the local plan update process.

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 March 23rd 2018. 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.

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.”

Natural England

“Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 23 March 2018.

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

Based on the small scale and nature of development promoted through the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan Natural England supports the conclusion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (March 2018) and agrees that full SEA and HRA are not required’.

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests are concerned (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 SEA Directive 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.”