

ALTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Basic Conditions Statement



PUBLISHED by Alton Town Council in accordance with Regulation 15(1)(d) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) in respect of the Modification Proposal to the made Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan.

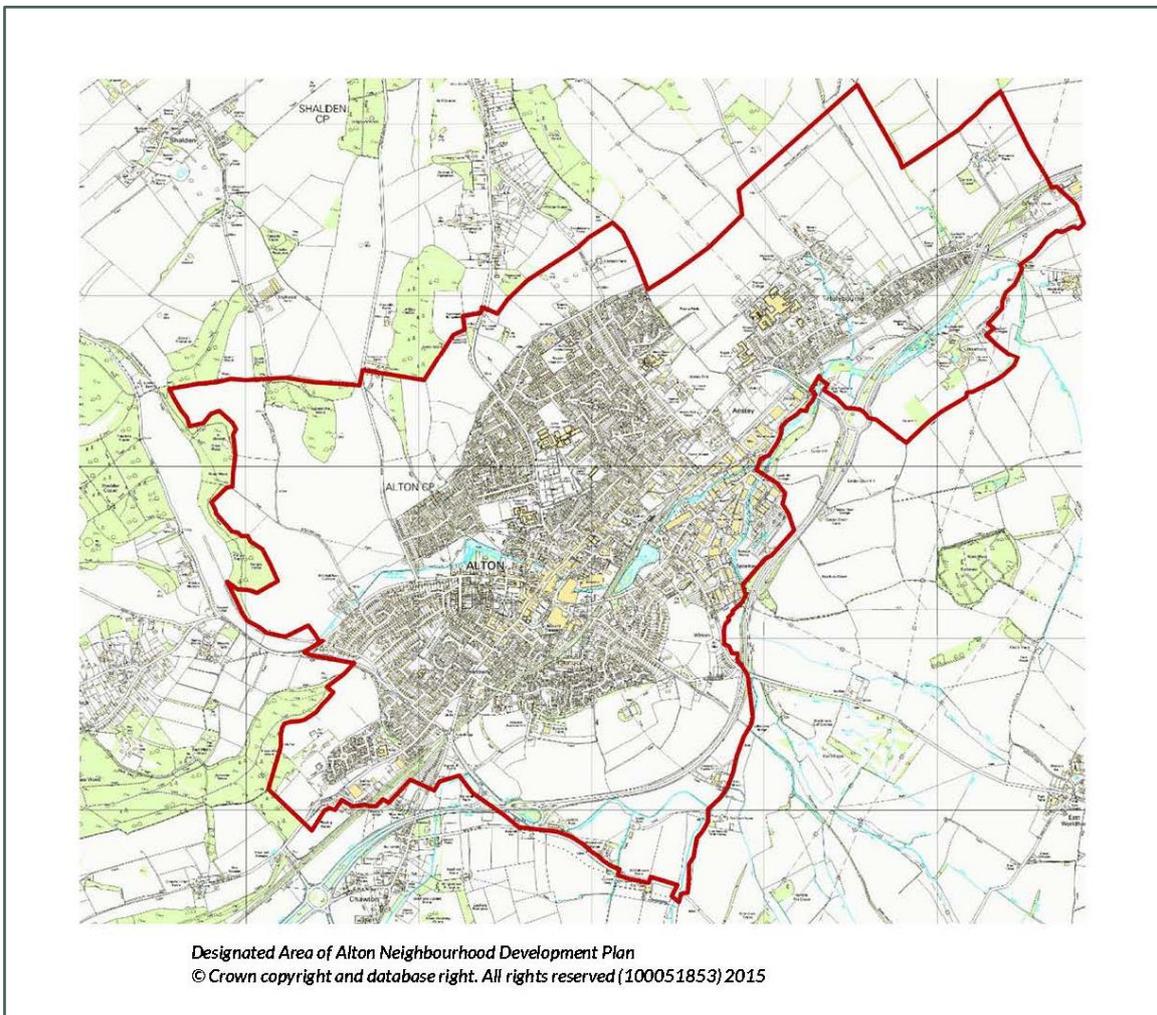
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Alton Town Council ("the Town Council") to accompany its submission of the Modified Version of the Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan ("the Modified Plan") to the local planning authority, East Hampshire District Council ("the District Council"), under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ("the Regulations").
- 1.2 The Modified Plan has been prepared by the Town Council, a qualifying body, for the Neighbourhood Area, which coincides with the boundary of the Town Council area, with the exception of a small portion that lies within the boundary of the South Downs National Park, and which was designated by the District Council on 8 May 2014 (see Plan A below). The Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan ("the Made Plan") was made by the District Council on 12 May 2016.



Plan A: Designated Neighbourhood Area

1.3 The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 contains provisions to amend Section 38 of the Planning & Compensation Act 2004 in relation to modifying a made neighbourhood plan. As a result, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) & Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2017, which came into force on 31 January 2018, amended the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) for this purpose.

1.4 Those amendments enable a qualifying body to propose modifications to a made neighbourhood plan that, if considered not to be so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the neighbourhood development plan, requires only an independent examination and not another referendum. The 2017 Regulations amend Regulations 14 to 20 of the 2012 Regulations so that the process for preparing, consulting on, submitting, publicising and examining such modifications matches that for neighbourhood plans in general. However, Regulations 14 and 15 are amended to require the qualifying body to publish a statement alongside the modification proposal at the Pre-Submission stage and alongside the modified neighbourhood development plan as proposed to be modified at the Submission stage respectively:

“setting out whether or not the qualifying body consider that the modifications contained in the modification proposal are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the neighbourhood development plan which the modification proposal would modify, giving reasons for why the qualifying body is of this opinion”.

1.5 The Town Council published its Modification Proposal and Modification Proposal Statement in February 2021 for the statutory minimum six-week consultation period in accordance with Regulation 14 as amended. The representations made on those documents have been analysed and no further amendments were required to be made to the submitted documentation. A full record of the consultation process and outcome is provided in the separate Consultation Statement, as per Regulation 15 (1)(b).

1.6 This Basic Conditions Statement, as per Regulation 15 (1)(d), sets out how the modification proposals meets the basic conditions requirements and how the Modified Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 11 of Schedule A2 to the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Specifically, the Regulations state that the Modified Plan will be considered to have met the conditions if:

- A. Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to modify the made Neighbourhood Development Plan,
- B. (Not relevant for this modification),
- C. (Not relevant for this modification),
- D. The modification of the made Neighbourhood Development Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

- E. The modification of the made Neighbourhood Development Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area),
- F. The modification of the made Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations.

1.7 Although the Modified Plan is submitted in full, this Statement focuses solely on how the modified Policy HO3 meets those tests, rather than revisit policies of the Made Plan that remain unmodified. The modified policy HO3 described in the Modified Plan continues to relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area. It does not relate to 'excluded development', as defined by the Regulations, and will apply for the plan period of the Made Plan, up to 31 March 2028.

1.8 The submission documents comprise:

- o The Modified Plan (incorporating a modified Policies Map)
- o A Site Allocation Process Report
- o The Basic Conditions Statement (including a statement from the District Council on the re-screening of the Modified Plan in relation to EU obligations on Strategic Environmental Assessment)
- o The Consultation Statement
- o The Modification Proposal Statement

2. CONDITION A: REGARD TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 2.1 The Modified Plan has been prepared with full regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of 2019. The review of the Made Plan has taken into account how that version modified the 2012 version of the NPPF, against which the Made Plan was assessed. Account has also been taken of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) where relevant.

- 2.2 The materially modified Policy HO3 makes provision for 877 new homes through existing and new housing allocations, commitments, and completions as at January 2021. These existing and new allocations, commitments and completions meet, and exceed, the identified “housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas” (§65 of the NPPF) confirmed by the District Council as 700 new homes in the plan period for the designated Alton Neighbourhood Area which includes Holybourne.

3. CONDITION D: CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 It was determined by the District Council that the Made Plan did not have the potential for significant environmental effects and so a Strategic Environmental Assessment was not required. The District Council has rescreened the Modified Plan and has reached the same conclusion (see Section 5).
- 3.2 In the absence of an Assessment or Sustainability Appraisal, the sustainability performance of the modified Policy HO3 has been summarised below.
- 3.3 Proposing the reuse of brownfield land and directing the growth of the town to the most sustainable locations that is compatible with its size and location in the adopted spatial strategy will have a positive environmental effect. This will also prevent unplanned growth on the edge of the town as harmful incursions into the surrounding countryside and avoids inadequate infrastructure provision.
- 3.4 The allocation of land for new homes at Alton Magistrates Court will lead to the loss of community uses, however in making provision for new homes, the modified Policy HO3 is meeting local needs and therefore avoids an adverse social effect. This will also lead to sustaining the local labour market to support local businesses but will lead to the loss of employment land at Molson Coors, hence a neutral economic impact is predicted.

4. CONDITION E: GENERAL CONFORMITY WITH STRATEGIC POLICIES

- 4.1 The Made Plan was prepared to ensure its general conformity with the development plan for East Hampshire, that is the strategic policies of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (adopted June 2014).
- 4.2 The modified Policy HO3 accords with Policies CP2 and CP10 of the Joint Core Strategy by consolidating the Made Plan allocations with housing commitments and completions in the designated Neighbourhood Area to make, and exceed, its contribution to the District's housing supply over the plan period.

5. CONDITION F: COMPATIBILITY WITH EU LEGISLATIONS

5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act. The Plan has been subject to extensive engagement with those people local to the area who could be affected by its policies and their views have been taken into account in finalising the Plan.

5.2 A screening opinion was issued by the District Council for the Made Plan in June 2015, which confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan would not have any significant environmental effects and that an SEA would not be required for the Neighbourhood Plan to be in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42. The District Council also determined that no Habitats Regulation Assessment was required of the Neighbourhood Plan under the EU Habitats Regulations because:

“The settlement of Alton is well over 5km from the Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area and Solent European sites therefore no further assessment work will be required.”

5.3 The District Council has now undertaken a re-screening of the Modified Plan for submission, appended to this document. It concludes (see paragraph 5.7):

“Having regard to the considerations above and those in appendix 1, East Hampshire District Council considers that the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Review is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects and therefore will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.”

5.4 In respect of Directive 2008/98/EC – the Waste Framework Directive – the Neighbourhood Plan does not include any policies in relation to the management of waste. On that basis, this Directive is not considered relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore could not be breached.

5.5 In respect of Directive 2008/50/EC – the Air Quality Directive – the Neighbourhood Plan includes some policies relevant to Air Quality. These policies are tested in accordance with national policy and guidance relevant to their content. The policies are not considered to breach the requirements of the Air Quality Directive.

Alton Neighbourhood Plan Review

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Screening Report - Determination under Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Final Determination

10/02/2021



**East
Hampshire**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report sets out the East Hampshire District Council's final determination under Regulation 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 on whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required for the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Review .

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.2. Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (implementing Directive 2001/42/EC known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive), specific types of plans that set out the framework for future development consent of projects must be subject to an environmental assessment.
- 1.3. There are exceptions to this requirement for plans that determine the use of a small area at a local level and for minor modifications, if it has been determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. The Review of the Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to manage future development on specific sites relating to a small area of land, in a small parish (Town Council boundary) level area within the wider Local Planning Authority area. It is unlikely that the Review will have any significant trans-boundary effect, taken primarily to mean impacting on another EU member state, as defined in the EIA Regulations. Even if 'transboundary' were to be defined as impacting on the jurisdiction of other administrative areas within the UK (for example between parishes or districts) the effect would be minimal.
- 1.4. A neighbourhood plan must meet a set of basic conditions in order to be adopted and if necessary, put to a referendum. One of these conditions is that the plan does not breach or is otherwise compatible with EU obligations such as (where appropriate) the requirement for SEA. Under Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, a responsible authority (such as a parish council in the case of an emerging Neighbourhood Plan) must determine if a neighbourhood plan requires an environmental assessment. Where East Hampshire District Council determines that SEA is not required then under Regulation 9(3), it must prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination. The need for SEA is considered under Section 5 of this report.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.5. Under separate legislation (the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated Regulations), a local planning authority must carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of its proposals, when preparing a local plan. Neighbourhood plans are excluded from this requirement; however, they must still contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Sustainability Appraisal for the East Hampshire District Local Plan incorporates the requirements of SEA, and so the Local Plan's Sustainability Appraisal (SA) provides relevant information for determining the potential environmental effects of implementing the neighbourhood plan, and their significance. The East Hampshire District Joint Core Strategy (Adopted June 2014) and supporting documents have.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Alton Neighbourhood Plan Area, covering the entire Parish, was designated by East Hampshire District Council on 30 May 2014, under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012), which came into force on 6 April 2012.
- 2.2. The Alton Neighbourhood Plan (2011-2028) was submitted to East Hampshire District Council on 17 June 2015. The Regulation 16 consultation took place between Friday 10 July and Friday 21 August 2015 whereby the Plan was publicised, and comments were invited from the public and stakeholders.
- 2.3. East Hampshire District Council appointed an Independent Examiner to review whether the Plan met the basic conditions required by legislation and whether the plan should proceed to referendum.
- 2.4. The Examiner's Report concluded that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions, and that subject to the modifications in the examiner's report, the plan should proceed to referendum.
- 2.5. Following a positive referendum result, East Hampshire District Council made the Alton Neighbourhood Plan ("the Plan") part of the Development Plan at a Council meeting on Thursday 12 May 2016

Background to SEA

- 2.6. East Hampshire undertook a SEA Screening report at the early stages of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation. The final assessment is appended to this report at appendix 1 which concluded that:

“Following its assessment against Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations it is the unanimous view of the three statutory bodies as well as the LPA that the Plan will not give rise to any significant environmental effects. Therefore, a full Environmental Report is not required in support of the Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan.”

3. Scope of the review of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1 The purpose of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Review is to review and update the HO3 residential allocation policies. The review will only consider:
1. Where existing Neighbourhood Plan Allocations can be removed as a result of being at the advanced stages of build out and complete or almost complete
 2. Where existing allocations should be retained as a result of either being at the early stages of being built out or have not yet commenced.
 3. Where existing allocations should be modified in terms of development capacity (likely reduced) due to now having further detailed information regarding site constraints.
 4. Potential new housing sites for allocation that are within the existing Settlement Policy Boundary and are either coming forward through the planning application process now or could come forward as windfall in line with JCS Policies CP2 and CP10.
- 3.2 The review to the Neighbourhood Plan is being undertaken in conformity with the adopted East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (adopted June 2014).

4. Purpose of the review

- 4.1 The reason for this focussed review is to ensure (in the absence of an up to date Local Plan) that the Neighbourhood Plan continues to support Policies CP2 and CP10 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (adopted June 2014).

- 4.2 In light of revisions to the NPPF and its accompanying guidance and in the absence of an up to date Local Plan, the review of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan intends to continue to provide homes to meet local needs, boost town centre viability, improve services and facilities, as well as enhance public open spaces. Allocating more homes in relation to the minimum 700 dwelling target in the JCS will help strive further to meeting these opportunities and will also ensure paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is engaged, essentially maintaining full weight of its policies for a further two-year period, following adoption. This will allow Alton and its residents to have a say on the location of growth and avoid the risk of speculative development

5. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 5.1 In relation to the above proposals, this document presents a final “screening” opinion as to whether they are likely to have significant environmental effects.

The SEA Screening Process

- 5.2 The process for determining whether an SEA is required is called screening. To conduct this screening exercise, it is necessary to determine if a plan will have significant environmental effects using the criteria set out in Schedule I of the 2004 Regulations. A determination cannot be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted: The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.
- 5.3 Within 28 days of making its determination the authority must publish a statement such as this one, setting out its decision. If it determines that an SEA is not required, the statement must include the reasons for this.

SEA Determination and Reasons for Determination

- 5.4 Before making a final determination under Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the three consultation bodies were consulted. The responses received are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Comments received by Consultation bodies

Consultation Body	Comments
Environment Agency	No response received.
Historic England	29/01/2021

Consultation Body	Comments
	<p>Historic England agrees with the council's opinion that SEA is not required, for the following reasons. The quantum of development for Alton was established by the East Hampshire District Joint Core Strategy 2014, which was itself the subject of a sustainability appraisal and the two new proposed site allocations within the Review of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan are both located within the existing settlement policy boundary. We therefore conclude that the Review does not establish a new framework for future development: it is a lower tier plan in a hierarchy of plans where the framework for development has already been set, and been subject to sustainability appraisal, by a higher tier plan.</p>
Natural England	<p>26/01/2021</p> <p>Natural England agrees with the judgment of the Council that the modifications do not have the potential for significant environmental effects and an SEA will not be necessary.</p> <p>09/02/2021</p> <p>Having taken a look at the screening document and based on the proximity to designated sites we would agree with the conclusion that SEA would not be required in this instance – as per our previous response back in 2015 and that an HRA would equally not be required as part of this process. We would however suggest that the LPA records this fact in a short document to ensure they have the decision is noted for reference should it be required as our opinion in this instance is purely an advisory one and it is down to the responsible authority to make the final decision.</p>

SEA Screening Final Determination of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Review

- 5.5 Appendix 1 provides details of the screening assessment dated 11 June 2015 for the existing Alton Neighbourhood Plan (2011-2028). East Hampshire District Council has reviewed its contents in light of the proposed scope and purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan Review and concludes that the focussed review of the plan relates to an overall small area of land which supports policies from the East Hampshire District Joint Core Strategy (adopted June 2014), namely CP2 and CP10, which was subject to SEA (as part of a Sustainability Appraisal) at a higher tier and as such the review falls within the scope of the evidence base that supported the Joint Core Strategy 2011-2028.
- 5.6 In addition to the above, the Neighbourhood Plan Review will be focused on reviewing and updating existing allocations, as well as the addition of approximately 300 dwellings. Any potential new housing sites for allocation will be in the existing Settlement Policy Boundary and are either already coming forward via the planning application process or could come forward via windfall in line with current Joint Core Strategy Policies. For example, approximately 220 dwellings, a care home and associated living units are associated with the former Molson Coors Brewery site, which was given resolution to grant planning permission in November 2020. Therefore, this focused review of the Neighbourhood Plan relates to a small area, even when covered cumulatively, and the existing Joint Core Strategy SA (including SEA) has already considered the issues of strategic merit.
- 5.7 Having regard to the considerations above and those in appendix 1, East Hampshire District Council considers that the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Review is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects and therefore will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 5.8 This **final determination** was made on **10/02/2021** having regard to the responses of the consultation bodies. It may need to be revised and updated, should the proposals of the emerging Alton Neighbourhood Plan Review change from those that have been described in this document.

Appendix 1

Determining the need for SEA: Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan

Date of assessment: 11th June 2015

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all local development documents (LDDs) to be supported, and to a great extent led, by a formal Sustainability Appraisal (SA) designed to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive. This requirement was amended as part of the Planning Act 2008 to only require full SA of development plan documents (DPDs) which are those documents that make up a 'local plan.' There is no requirement under either Act for a full SA to be prepared for Neighbourhood Development Plans. However, SEA may still be required.

Following the amendment to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 in February 2015 there is now a requirement for either an Environmental Report or a statement of reasons why an Environmental Report is not required to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority under Regulation 15. In the event that the following report is completed and no SEA is required then this document will comprise this aspect of the submission package.

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) suite, amended in February 2015, provides an overview of the approach that should be taken when identifying the need for SEA of Neighbourhood Development Plans:

"In some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a "screening" assessment and the requirements are set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of those Regulations.

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive)."

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (EAPP Regulations) are used to determine whether a plan or programme (PP) such as the Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan require SEA, directing the responsible authority in a series of steps to reach a view.

The following assessment, in accordance with the EAPP Regulations, was undertaken by East Hampshire District Council to identify any requirement for full SEA. The relevant Articles from the SEA directive are given in brackets:

Regulation	Yes/No	Reason
<p>Regulation 2 (1)</p> <p>PP means plans and programmes, including those co-financed by the European Community, as well as any modifications to them, which –</p> <p>(a) are subject to preparation or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level; or</p> <p>(b) are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government; and in either case,</p> <p>(c) are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions;</p> <p>(Article 2(a))</p>	Yes	<p>The Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan is prepared by Alton Town Council. Upon successful completion of an examination and referendum it will be made by the local authority as part of the development plan. It is regulated by legislative procedures.</p>
<p>Regulation 5(2)</p> <p>Is it a PP which:</p> <p>(a) Is prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use; AND</p> <p>(b) Sets the framework for future development consent of projects in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC?</p> <p>(Article 3.2(a))</p>	Yes	<p>The NP is a PP required for town and country planning purposes.</p> <p>The NP seeks to allocate a number of development sites that may be used to deliver development consents requiring EIA. Whilst this will be screened on an application by application basis, this requirement cannot be ruled out at this stage.</p>
<p>Regulation 5(3)</p> <p>Has the PP, in view of the likely effect on sites, been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?</p> <p>(Article 3.2(b))</p>	No	<p>Natural England has been consulted in relation to the requirement. The settlement of Alton is well over 5km from the Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area and Solent European sites therefore no further assessment work will be required.</p>

<p>Regulation 5(4)</p> <p>Is the first formal preparatory act of the plan on or after 21st July 2004; and does the plan set the framework for future development consent of projects?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The first formal preparatory act falls after 21st July 2004 and the plan does set the framework for future development consent of projects.</p>
<p>It may be required that the Plan would be automatically eligible for full SEA, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The answer to the questions posed by Regulation 5(2) are both No; or - The answer to questions posed by exemptions set out under Regulation 5(5) or 5(6) apply. <p>In either event the tests set out under Regulation 9(1) below must then be satisfied to ensure that no significant environmental effect is likely and no SEA is required.</p>		
<p>Regulation 5(5)</p> <p>Is the PP's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency; a financial or budget PP; or is it co-financed under Council Regulations (EC) No's 1260/1999 or 1257/1999?</p> <p>(Articles 3.8, 3.9)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>These do not apply.</p>
<p>Regulation 5(6)</p> <p>Does the PP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Determine the use of a small area at local level; or (b) Propose a minor modification of an existing PP subject of the regulations. <p>(Article 3.3)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>(a) The strategic framework for Alton is included in the adopted Joint Core Strategy for East Hampshire. It identifies the development requirements for the town and considers how these can be delivered in the context of the District as a whole. In this context the Neighbourhood Development Plan only seeks to determine the precise locations of growth within the locality of Alton, on specific development sites. To this end, it is considered that the Plan principally seeks to determine the use of small areas of land at a local level.</p> <p>(b) The Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan does not propose minor modifications of an existing PP subject of the regulations.</p>
<p>It may still be required that the Plan would be eligible for full SEA, unless it is determined that it will not give rise to significant environmental effects under Regulation 9.</p>		

<p>Regulation 9(1)</p> <p>Is the PP likely to have a significant effect on the environment taking into account the views of the consultation bodies and the criteria set out at Schedule 1 of the Regulations?</p> <p>(Article 3.5)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Following consultation with Natural England, Historic England, the Environment Agency, the LPA and the qualifying body's own assessment of likely environmental effect, the following conclusion has been reached:</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Development Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.</p>
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Determining significant environmental effects

The following assessment has been made as to whether the plan is likely to have any significant environmental effects. Along with advice from the LPA, this takes into account the responses and independent assessments of the three consultation bodies against the Schedule 1 criteria in the EAPP Regulations, set out below.

Following consultation the three consultation bodies have returned the following opinions:

Consultation body	Date of response	SEA required?	Summary comments
<p>Natural England</p>	<p>Email dated 3rd June 2015</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Given the additional information that has been provided by EHDC on behalf of Alton TC, Natural England do not require a SEA for the Alton Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

<p>Historic England</p>	<p>Letter dated 26th May 2015</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The SEA-compliant Sustainability Appraisal of reasonable housing site options across East Hampshire (outside the South Downs National Park) undertaken for the Local Plan Part 2 included sites at Alton, from which the proposed allocations sites have been selected. It is clear that this appraisal has included an assessment of likely effects on the historic environment.</p> <p>Historic England is therefore content that the proposed allocations sites in the Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan have been subject to an adequate and appropriate Strategic Environmental Assessment. In addition, the Town Council has undertaken further assessment of proposed allocation sites.</p>
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Environment Agency	Email dated 29 th May 2015	No	The Environment Agency are satisfied that unless the Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan is intending to significantly exceed the Joint Core Strategy target of a minimum of 700 dwellings or change the sites that are being allocated, any environmental effects of this quantum of development and alternative sites will already have been considered.
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Copies of the full responses of the consultation bodies are appended to this statement.

The assessment set out below, as well as the assessment of the three consultation bodies, has been undertaken bearing in mind the following context:

- The Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan has been produced to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted *East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy*, which itself was subject of SEA;
- Where relevant, we have had reference to the SEA work undertaken in support of the emerging aspects of the further parts of the development plan;
- The assessment set out below has been informed in a large part by discussions and the written responses of the three named consultation bodies;
- The assessment set out below has also been informed by other relevant screenings of the Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan against the Habitats Regulations.

Criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment	Significant environmental effect (positive or negative)?
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard to:		

<p>The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either in regard to location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p>	<p>The PP only sets the framework for projects in a local context. There is a statutory requirement for this Plan's policies to be within the context of strategic policies in the adopted development plan. It therefore cannot provide for development that significantly exceeds, at a strategic level, the intentions of the adopted Local Plan. Rather, it provides for local Town allocations.</p>	<p>None likely</p>
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in the hierarchy.</p>	<p>Whilst Neighbourhood Development Plans comprise part of the statutory development plan for the LPA area, they are required to conform with the strategic policies of the development plan. They are effectively the bottom tier of the statutory policy pyramid.</p>	<p>None likely</p>
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular, with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Development Plans are required by legislation to help achieve sustainable development. This is one of the basic conditions against which the Plan will be tested at examination. This includes environmental sustainability, as one of the three pillars identified in the NPPF. The primary objective of the Plan is to plan positively and achieve a sustainable level of growth, whilst maintaining both the built and natural environment of the town and its surrounding area.</p>	<p>None likely</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.</p>	<p>The Plan will seek to address environmental, economic and social issues in the neighbourhood area.</p>	<p>None likely</p>
<p>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).</p>	<p>The Plan is not relevant in this instance, as the matters described are guided by higher level legislation (and in some instances these matters fall under the category of 'excluded development' for Neighbourhood Development Plans). Instead, the policies of the Plan must have regard to these matters and seek to ensure that any development it promotes does not compromise the objectives of higher level strategies.</p>	<p>None likely</p>
<p>The characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</p>		
<p>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan will set the local vision, objectives and policies to guide new housing development in the neighbourhood area. It is likely to result in long-term effects associated with changes to land use and physical development of land.</p>	<p>None likely</p>

<p>The cumulative nature of the effects.</p>	<p>The cumulative nature of the effects is described in part above. Ultimately the cumulative nature of the effects can be characterised by the impact that residents of the level of new homes planned for the Town will have on the environment. Whilst it is accepted that, unmitigated, there may be a number of potential effects around traffic movement, waste generation, recreational uses and impact on the water environment, the Plan in combination with the adopted development plan and other plans and programmes propose measures to restrict and neutralise the impact of new development in and around areas of sensitivity.</p>	<p>None likely</p>
<p>The trans-boundary nature of the effects.</p>	<p>In context the Plan is seeking to manage future development on specific sites in a small, parish level area within the wider LPA area. It is unlikely that the Plan will have any significant trans-boundary effect, taken primarily to mean impacting on another EU member state, as defined in the EIA Regulations. Even if 'trans-boundary' were to be defined as impacting on the jurisdiction of other administrative areas within the UK (for example between parishes or districts) the effect would be minimal.</p>	<p>None likely</p>
<p>The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents).</p>	<p>It is highly unlikely that the Plan will give rise to any significant instances of risk to human health. It principally proposes the delivery of residential and domestic scale development by way of a set of policies that seek to take into account all residual effects on residents, including traffic movement, fumes and pollution.</p>	<p>None likely</p>
<p>The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</p>	<p>As identified above it is highly unlikely that any environmental effect brought about by the Plan will be of any magnitude or impact on any area of scale. Neighbourhood Development Plans have a very limited ability to influence the delivery of strategic levels of development and this particular Neighbourhood Development Plan only seeks to direct development to small areas at local level.</p>	<p>None likely</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>There are parts of the Neighbourhood Area which are both highly valued and vulnerable, namely areas prone to flooding, landscape, the Conservation Area and maintaining the Alton/Chawton Gap.</p>	<p>None likely</p>

The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The settlement of Alton is well over 5km from the Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area and Solent European sites. It is also outside the designated South Downs National Park.	None likely
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Determination of the requirement for SEA

As a result of the assessment set out above, incorporating the comments of the three consultation bodies, East Hampshire District Council, as the responsible authority, determines that:

Following its assessment against Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations it is the unanimous view of the three statutory bodies as well as the LPA that the Plan will not give rise to any significant environmental effects. Therefore, a full Environmental Report is not required in support of the Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan.



Historic England

Ms Amanda Dunn
Principal Policy Planner
East Hampshire District Council
Penns Place
Petersfield, GU31 4EX.

Our ref: HD/P5236/
Your ref:
Telephone: 01483 252040
Fax:

26th May 2015

Dear Amanda,

Alton Town Neighbourhood Town Council – Re-screening for SEA

Thank you for your e-mail of 18th May in response to my letter of 6th May regarding the above. I apologise for the delay in getting back to you.

It is clear that there has been a misunderstanding on my part as to whether or not land for approximately 700 dwellings in Alton was to be allocated through the Local Plan Part 2 or the Neighbourhood Plan. Nevertheless, we remain of the view, as previously advised, that this quantum of development could have potentially significant environmental effects and that we would therefore expect any Plan proposing such a quantum to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

However, the note from the Town Council advises that the SEA-compliant Sustainability Appraisal of reasonable housing site options across East Hampshire (outside the South Downs National Park) undertaken for the Local Plan Part 2 included sites at Alton, from which the proposed allocations sites have been selected. Having referred to this Appraisal it is clear it has included an assessment of likely effects on the historic environment.

I am therefore content that the proposed allocations sites in the Alton Neighbourhood Plan have been subject to an adequate and appropriate Strategic Environmental Assessment. In addition, the Town Council has undertaken further assessment of proposed allocation sites.

I therefore confirm that, in the light of this information, it is the view of Historic England that a Strategic Environmental Assessment **is not** required for the Alton Neighbourhood Plan.

Thank you again for consulting Historic England on this re-screening and for the additional information.

Cont'd

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Yours sincerely,



Martin Small
Principal Adviser, Historic Environment Planning
(Bucks, Oxon, Berks, Hampshire, IoW, South Downs National Park and Chichester)

E-mail: martin.small@historicengland.org.uk



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Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Amanda Dunn

From: Lax, Laura <laura.lax@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: 29 May 2015 11:02
To: Amanda Dunn
Cc: 'Barker, Francesca (NE)'
Subject: RE: Alton Neighbourhood Plan

Hi Amanda

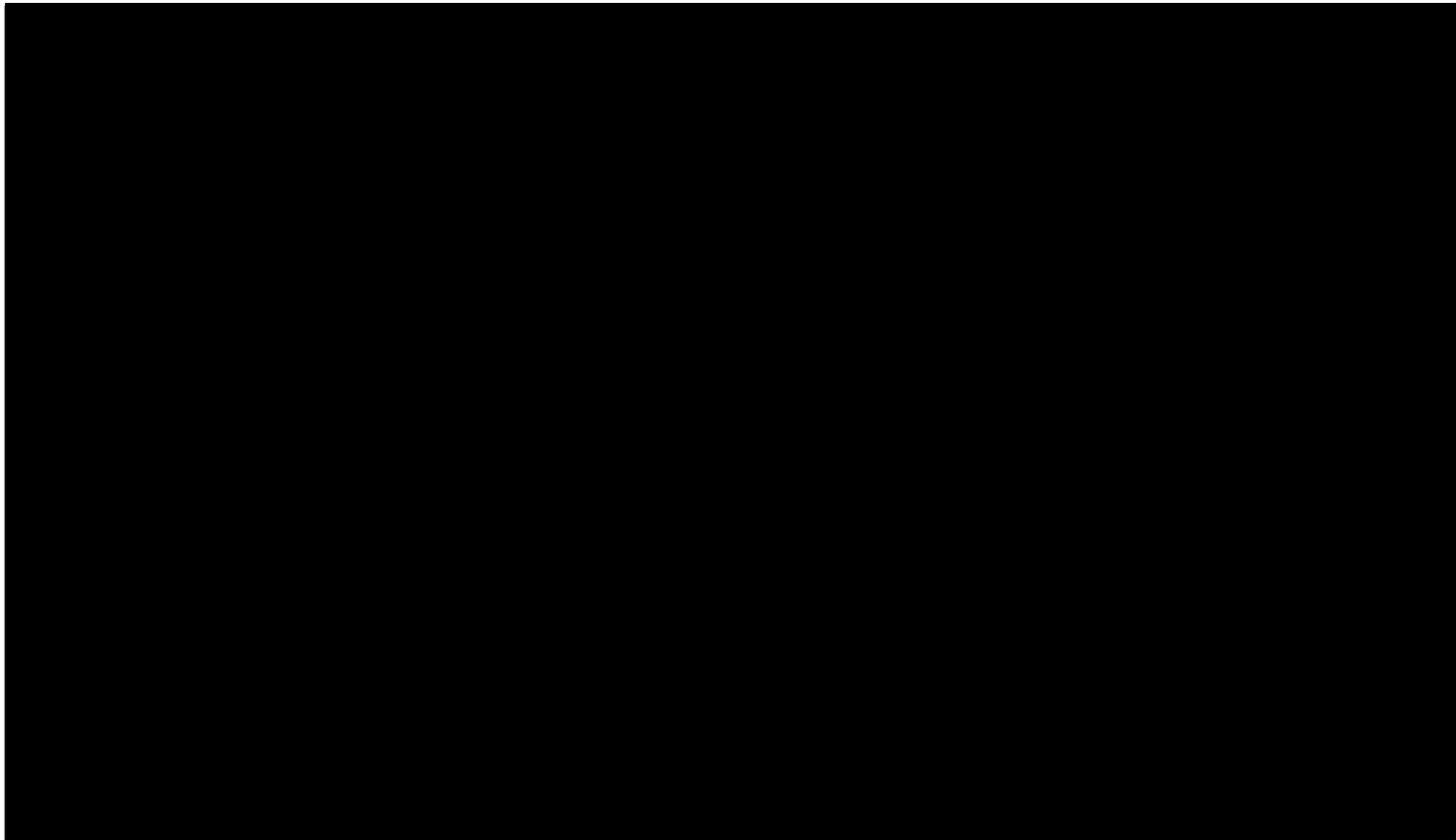
Thank you for the additional information that you have sent through regarding the site assessment and selection process for Alton Neighbourhood Plan. Having reviewed this information, we are satisfied that unless the Alton Neighbourhood Development is intending to significantly exceed the Joint Core Strategy target of a minimum of 700 dwellings or change the sites that are being allocated, any environmental effects of this quantum of development and alternative sites will already have been considered. Therefore in our opinion we would advise that no SEA is required. We feel it is however important that this additional information on site selection is included as part of the evidence base supporting the Neighbourhood Plan as it moves forward.

I hope that the above is useful to East Hampshire District Council, as the decision maker, to make an informed decision regarding the need for SEA

Kind regards
Laura

Laura Lax
Environment Agency - Solent and South Downs
Sustainable Places, West
Tel: 01794 834587
Email: laura.lax@environment-agency.gov.uk

Our [Flood Risk Standing Advice](#) has been updated.



Amanda Dunn

From: Barker, Francesca (NE) <Francesca.Barker@naturalengland.org.uk>
Sent: 03 June 2015 11:52
To: Lax, Laura; Amanda Dunn
Subject: RE: Alton Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Amanda,

I am sorry I haven't been able to get back to you sooner.

I agree with the Environment Agency's position that given the additional information that has been provided, that Natural England do not require a SEA for the Alton Neighbourhood Plan.

Warmest wishes,

Francesca Barker
Land Use Lead Adviser
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Area Team

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If you have just sent me a land use consultation, please resend to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk or, for any other land use query, please contact our Land Use Planning Enquiry line (0300 060 3900) in the first instance.

We are here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

In an effort to reduce Natural England's carbon footprint, I will, wherever possible, avoid travelling to meetings and attend via audio, video or web conferencing.

Natural England is accredited to the Cabinet Office Customer Service Excellence Standard

