

# **Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening report**

### **Statement of Reasons**

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

A neighbourhood plan is required to meet several basic conditions, one of which being it must not breach and be otherwise compatible with EU and Human Rights obligations. This requires neighbourhood plans to fully consider the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations which transpose the EU's SEA Directive into law and which requires those making plans that could impact on the environment to consider whether they are likely to have a significant effect or not.

Following a request from Welwyn Parish Council, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening report for Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Version April 2024.

The Screening opinion concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require a SEA or HRA.

The reasons for this are:

- The Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for housing. It provides additional site-specific considerations over and above those in the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Plan. These sites have already been through the site selection process, including a Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment and were found to be suitable, as part of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan housing site allocations process.
- The policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan are intended to protect and enhance the natural environment and will not result in any significant environmental effects.

The three statutory consultees, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency did not raise any matters or issues that change the Council's conclusion that SEA/HRA would not be required for the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan.

The consultation responses are included as Appendices to the Screening Opinion Report.