

Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitat
Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Screening Opinion Report

July 2024



Contents

1) Introduction.....	3
2) Background.....	3
Introduction to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).....	3
3) The Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan Draft 2024.....	3
The Neighbourhood Plan’s Vision.....	4
The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are:	4
List of Planning Policies in the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan:	5
4) The Screening process	6
SEA Screening Stage 1 – Application of the SEA Directive to the Neighbourhood Plan	8
SEA Screening Stage 1 - Conclusions.....	9
SEA Screening Stage 2 – Assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment	9
SEA Screening Stage 2 – Conclusions	13
5) Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening.....	13
HRA screening of the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan conclusion.....	15
6) SEA/HRA screening opinion determination	15
Appendix A: Extracts from the SA and HRA of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016	
Appendix B: Statutory Consultee responses	

1) Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the screening assessment for the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan and has been prepared by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. The purpose of the screening is to assess if the Neighbourhood Plan will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and /or a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA). Section 7 outlines the conclusions of the screening opinion.
- 1.2. An initial screening report was prepared and sent to the statutory consultation bodies, as set out in Regulation 4 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 for a six week consultation period, and their responses form part of this screening opinion report (attached at Appendix B).

2) Background

Introduction to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

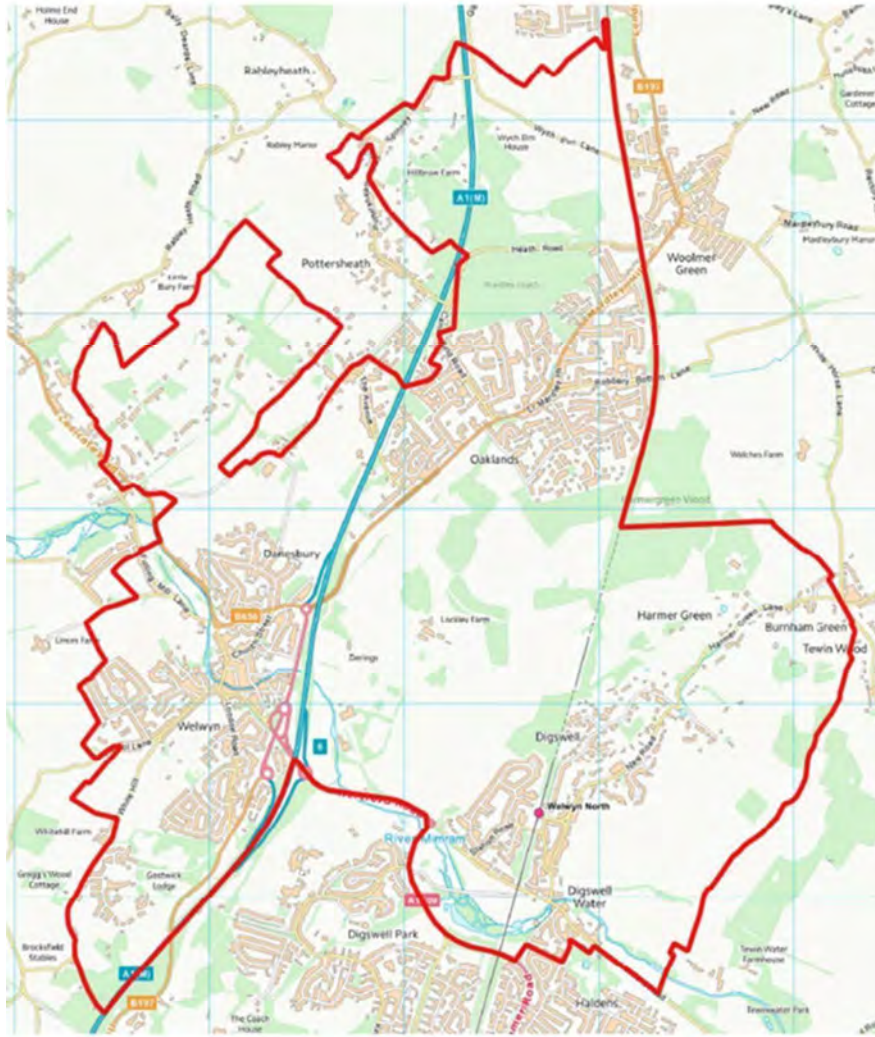
- 2.1. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under European legislation for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. This particularly relates to plans that designate sites for development. When a neighbourhood plan becomes “made” (adopted) it will have legal status as a statutory development plan document. As the Neighbourhood Plan will become a statutory development plan document, there is a legal requirement to assess the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan against the requirements of European Union Directive 2001/42/EC; also known as the “Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive”. The objective for SEA is: “to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, and environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.” (SEA Directive, Article 1).
- 2.2. The SEA Directive was incorporated into national law through The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004 No 1633) (the SEA Regulations). Detailed guidance on these regulations can be found in the [Government’s Planning Practice Guidance](#).
- 2.3. The UK left the EU on 31st January 2020. Under the UK-EU withdrawal agreement, a transition period ended on 31st December 2020, during which time all EU law continued to apply to the UK. During the transition period the UK needed to continue following domestic law that implements EU law, or directly applicable EU law that is given effect through the EUWA 2018. Beyond the transition period, the SEA Regulations, which previously implemented the requirements of the SEA Directive in England, will continue to apply as before unless and until new legislation is introduced. Similarly, the HRA regulations also remain extant.

3) The Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Version April 2024

- 3.1. Welwyn Parish Council (NCPC) was granted approval in principle for the physical boundary of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in September 2020.

The illustration below shows the extent of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area, which is the Welwyn Parish Council area.

Figure 1.0



The Neighbourhood Plan's Vision

“A visually, culturally, economically and socially attractive Parish, with excellent services, facilities and amenities offering a high quality of life, in locations where families can live and prosper in a sustainable environment.”

The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

Objective 1: Enable the building in the Parish, of well-designed and sympathetic housing developments.

Objective 2: Promote the environment; support actions to combat the climate emergency

Objective 3: Highlight concerns and champion solutions for local travel and transport

Objective 4: Promote and enable the well-being of residents.

The Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 3.2 The planning policies set out in the Neighbourhood Plan seek to support and implement the vision for Welwyn. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies that the area faces a number of development challenges and it is the aim of the Neighbourhood Plan to address these by developing locally specific planning policy and defining key projects to improve the area. These are locally derived policies and will be applied to planning decisions across the neighbourhood plan area.
- 3.3. It is not the intention of the Plan to duplicate or anticipate what is already said in national policy or Welwyn Hatfield's adopted Local Plan. The purpose of this plan is to add value to these existing policies, ensuring any new policy is locally distinctive and specific to Welwyn. The Neighbourhood Plan must be read in conjunction with Welwyn Hatfield's adopted Local Plan and be in general conformity with Borough-wide strategic policies.
- 3.4. Welwyn Parish Council would also like to bring forward projects that will improve the area. These are not land-use planning policies, rather they are community aspirations and neighbourhood infrastructure and are included in the plan as a focus for community action and to prioritise capital investments. These are identified in the Neighbourhood Plan by orange shaded boxes. Design Principles are shown in purple shaded boxes. Neighbourhood Plan policies are shown in blue shaded boxes.

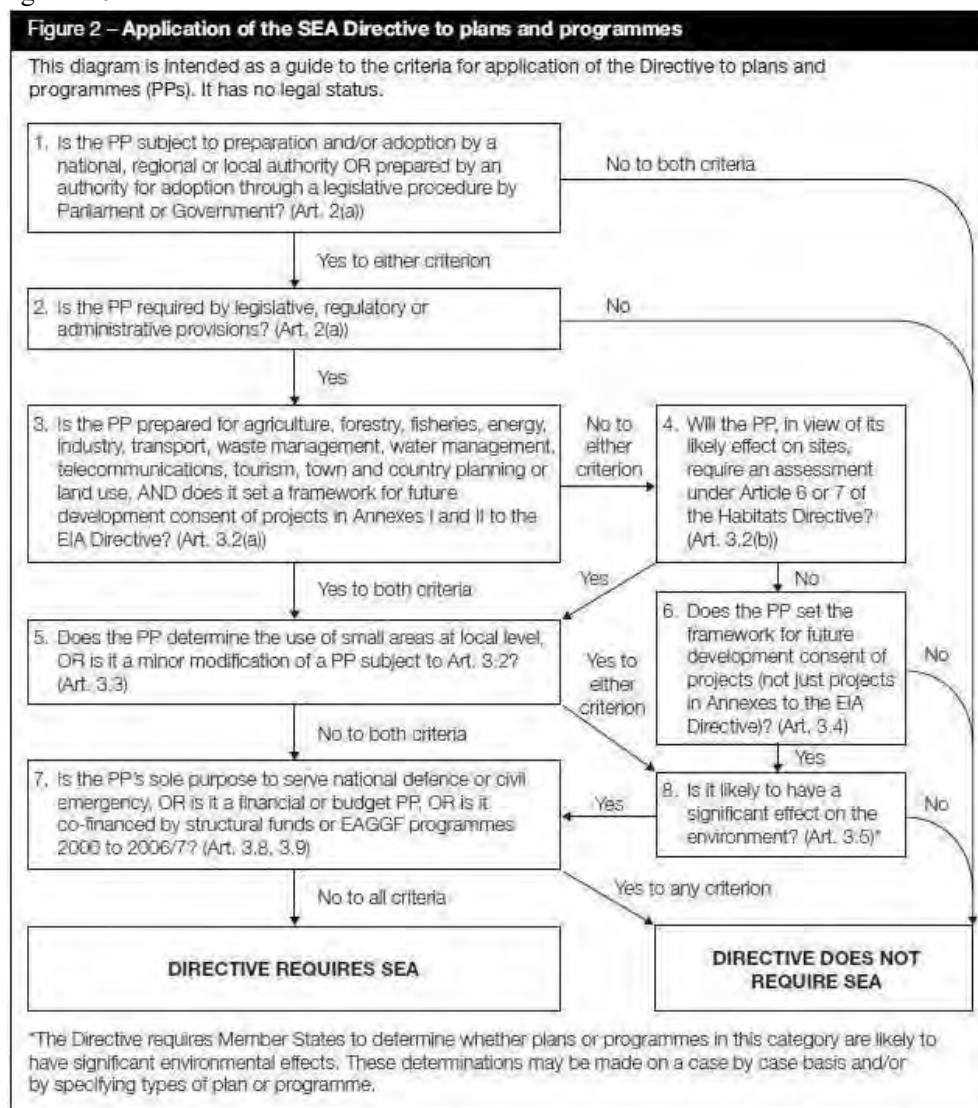
List of Planning Policies in the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan:

- Policy 1: Landscaping and Screening
- Policy 2: Local Green Spaces
- Policy 3: Green Gaps and Wildlife Corridors
- Policy 4: Preservation of Open Spaces, Nature Reserves and General Landscape
- Policy 5: Protection of River Mimram, Singlers Marsh and Danesbury Park
- Policy 6: Biodiversity
- Policy 7: Wildlife Habitat Protection
- Policy 8: Development of Larger Sites (> 10 dwellings or ≥ 0.5 ha)
- Policy 9: Development of Smaller Sites (< 10 dwellings or < 0.5ha)
- Policy 10: General Housing Mix and Location Context
- Policy 11: Generic Policy for Welwyn Village
- Policy 12: Generic Policy for Digswell
- Policy 13: Generic Policy for Oaklands and Mardley Heath
- Policy 14: Generic Policy for Allocated Sites
- Policy 15: Additional Response for HS32
- Policy 16: Additional Response for HS16
- Policy 17: Additional Response for HS18
- Policy 18: Additional Response for HS19
- Policy 19: Additional Response for HS20
- Policy 20: Sites Rejected from WHLP
- Policy 21: Change of Use for Premises
- Policy 22: Development for New Businesses
- Policy 23: Expansion of Educational Facilities
- Policy 24: Agricultural Land
- Policy 25: Maintain and Enhance a Safe and Healthy Travel Environment
- Policy 26: Overall Approach for the Environment
- Policy 27: Alternative Energy Sources & Renewable Energy
- Policy 28: Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets
- Policy 29: Key Views around the Parish
- Policy 30: Use of Funding from CIL

4) The Screening process

- 4.1. The process for determining whether or not SEA is required is called ‘screening’. The screening process is based upon consideration of standard criteria to determine whether the plan is likely to have “significant environmental effects”. The Government has produced guidance on the SEA process which is set out in [‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ \(ODPM 2005\)](#).
- 4.2. The following extract from ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ provides a flow diagram to demonstrate the SEA screening process the Practical Guide and illustrates the process for screening the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan to ascertain whether SEA is required. Appendix A contains an extract from the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA).

Figure 2.0



5) Initial Screening of the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 5.1. Stage 1 of the screening assessment is required to assess the plan against a series of criteria set out in the SEA Directive. The assessment criteria below in Table 1.0 are drawn from the diagram above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied when considering the environmental impact of a Neighbourhood Plan.

SEA Screening Stage 1 – Application of the SEA Directive to the Neighbourhood Plan

Table 1.0

SEA Assessment criteria	Neighbourhood Plan Outcome (Y/N)	Reasoning
1) Is a Neighbourhood Plan subject to preparation and / or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Article 2(a))	Y	The Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by a qualifying body (Welwyn Parish Council) under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The Local Planning Authority (Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council) has a statutory obligation to “make” a Neighbourhood Plan once it has successfully gone through the relevant statutory preparation stages, culminating in a local community referendum. At this stage, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the statutory development plan for the local authority area. To this extent, the Neighbourhood Planning process is directed through a legislative procedure which is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (and Amendments 2015) and the Localism Act 2011.
2) Is the Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))	N	<p>Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will, if “made”, form part of the Development Plan for the Borough. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.</p> <p>National Planning Practice Guidance sets out that draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This assessment should be undertaken in accordance with the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.</p>
3) Is the Neighbourhood Plan 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? (Article 3.2(a))	Y	A Neighbourhood Plan must relate to town and country, spatial and/or land use planning. Once made, it will form part of the statutory framework (“development plan”) used for the determination of planning applications. Neighbourhood Plans therefore set specific frameworks for future development consents.

4) Will the Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effects on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Article 3.2(b))	Y	A Neighbourhood Plan could potentially have impacts on sites covered by the Habitats Regulations. A Habitats Regulations Assessment screening of Neighbourhood Plans is required to assess if the plan proposals will impact negatively on internationally designated wildlife sites.
5) Does the Neighbourhood Plan determine the use of small areas at local level OR is it a minor modification of an existing plan/programme subject to Article 3.2 (Article 3.3)	Y	A Neighbourhood Plan can set out detailed, localised policies to reflect local aspirations, concerns or issues. The Neighbourhood Plan can also determine the use of sites in its neighbourhood plan area by making site specific land use allocations. The Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites within its local area for housing development. It will include additional site specific considerations for sites already allocated for development in the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016.
6) Is the Neighbourhood Plan likely to have a significant effect on the environment?	N	The Neighbourhood Plan could potentially have an effect on the environment. However, whether this is significant depends on the proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan. This requires individual assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan. The relevant criteria for determining whether Neighbourhood Plans are likely to have significant environmental effects are set out in Article 3(5) Annex II of the SEA Directive Stage 2 of this screening assessment determines whether or not the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan will lead to any significant effects on the environment and, therefore, whether the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be accompanied by a full SEA. .

SEA Screening Stage 1 - Conclusions

- 5.2. The conclusion of the assessment in Table 2 is that depending on the content of the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan, an SEA may be required. For this reason, an analysis of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan was required to determine the likely significant effects on the environment. Therefore, it is necessary to complete stage 2 of the SEA screening assessment.

SEA Screening Stage 2 – Assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment

- 5.3. To decide whether the Plan might have significant environmental effects, its potential scope should be assessed against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which are set out in the table below.

Table 2.0

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Schedule 1 of SEA Regulations)	Is the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan likely to have a significant environmental effect?	Justification for Screening Assessment
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.	No	The Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan will be setting the framework for projects in a local context. There is a statutory requirement for the Neighbourhood 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. The proposed neighbourhood plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development but adds additional site-specific criteria to those allocated in the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan.
b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	The Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan will be in conformity with the Development Plan for Welwyn Hatfield. The Neighbourhood Plan will also be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning guidance in the National Planning Policy Guidance. The conformity of the Neighbourhood Plan with other strategic plans and national policies is one of the basic conditions and will be checked at examination stage by an Independent Examiner.
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 will need to be in conformity with the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan, which advocates sustainable development and has been subject to full SEA and Sustainability Appraisals. It is also one of the Basic Conditions of producing a Neighbourhood Plan that it should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan was adopted in October 2023.

d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	No	It is considered that the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan will not introduce any environmental problems, rather it will seek to encourage development respecting the environment, including traffic management and sustainable travel. It includes several policies to protect and enhance the natural environment, such as Policy 2 which seeks to designate areas of Local Green Spaces for protection, Policy 3 Green Gaps and Wildlife corridors, Policy 4 Preservation of Open Spaces, Nature Reserves & General Landscape, Policy 5 Protection of the River Mimram, Singlers Marsh and Danesbury Park, Policy 6 biodiversity and Policy 7 Wildlife Habitat Protection.
e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of European Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	No	The Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan will not impact on the implementation of European Community legislation on the environment.
		Strategies relating to waste disposal or water protection are mostly dealt with by Hertfordshire County Council. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has a number of strategies in place, relating to waste management and environmental protection.
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	No	It is considered that the overall impact of the Neighbourhood Plan will be positive by maximising the positive environmental effects of development and minimising or avoiding negative impacts.
b) The cumulative nature of the effects	No	It is considered that the effect of this Neighbourhood Plan will be largely beneficial therefore any cumulative impacts will also be beneficial.
c) The transboundary nature of the effects	No	The effects of the proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan are limited to the area within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary and are unlikely to have a significant impact on neighbouring areas outside of the boundary.

d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	No	No significant risks to human health or the environment are envisaged through the application of this Neighbourhood Plan.
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is applicable only to developments within the neighbourhood plan area (Welwyn Parish area). There are no SSSIs located within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Sherrards Park Wood is an SSSI and Welwyn Parish is within an SSSI impact zone.</p> <p>The Lee Valley Ramsar site and Special Protection Area (SPA), which holds international significance, lies approximately 6 km east of the Borough. As part of the sustainability appraisal for the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan, the assessment considered the impact on these sites. While the Lee Valley sites are situated to the south of the borough, Welwyn Parish is located to the north, mitigating any potential impact.</p>
f) 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; or Intensive land-use.	No	The Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan is applicable to developments within Welwyn Parish, which includes Welwyn Conservation Area and listed buildings. Policy impacts on heritage assets have been assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. Welwyn Conservation Area has recently been reviewed and an Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted in March 2024.
g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national community or international protection status.	No	The overall impact of the Neighbourhood Plan will be positive by maximising the positive environmental effects of development and
		<p>minimising or avoiding negative impacts. Welwyn Hatfield has a number of sites of importance for nature conservation but these are protected by separate policies in the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan.</p> <p>If a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is deemed necessary then a full SEA would be required. The results of the HRA screening assessment are shown in section 6.1 of this report.</p>

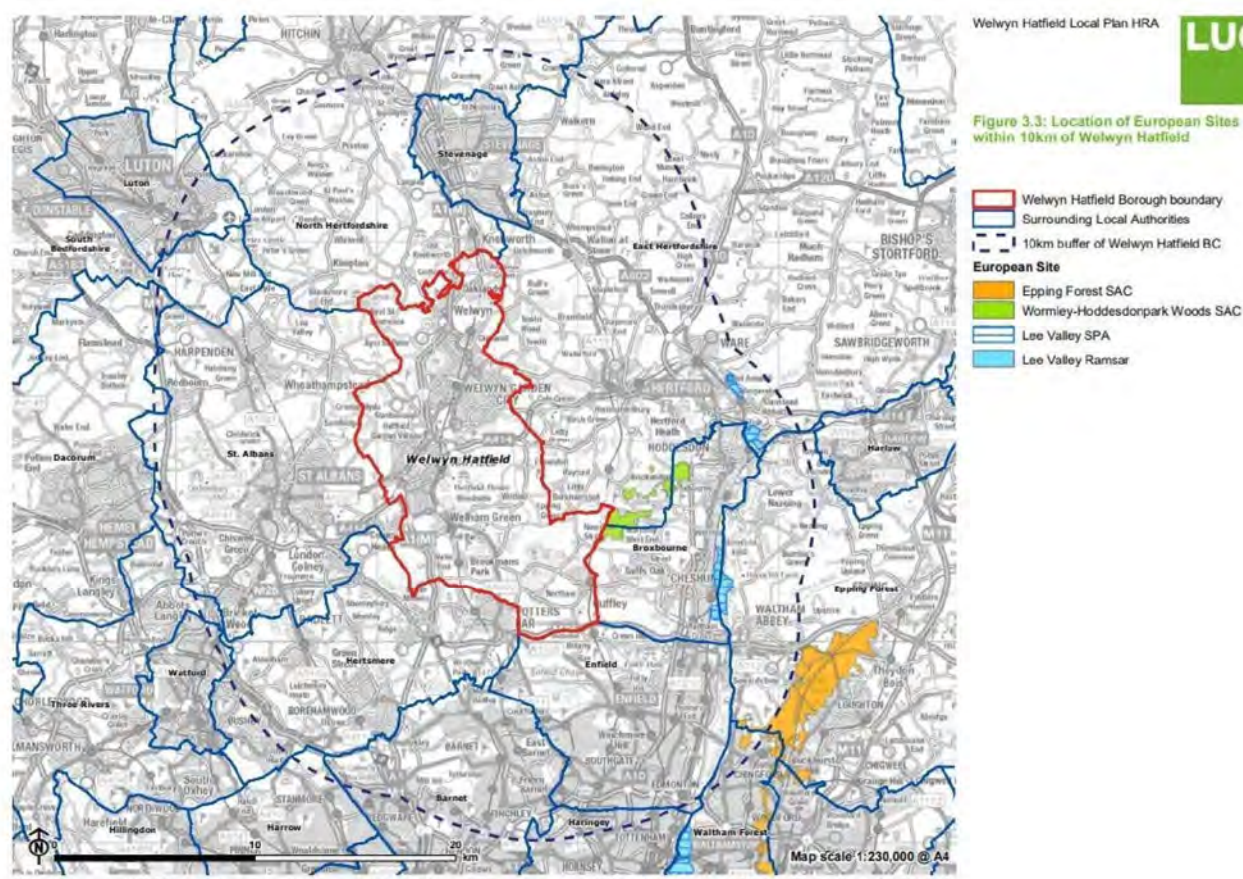
SEA Screening Stage 2 – Conclusions

- 5.4. On the basis of the screening set out in the above tables, it is concluded that the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan will not have significant environmental effects in relation to any of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, and therefore does not need to be subject to a full SEA. The main reasons for this conclusion 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 and a Habitats Regulation Assessment and 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.

6) Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening

- 6.1. The requirement to undertake HRA of development plans was confirmed by the amendments to the Habitats Regulations published for England and Wales in 2007; the currently applicable version is the Habitats Regulations 2017 as amended. These updates were consolidated into the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The assessment process examines the likely significant effects of the different spatial options on the integrity of the European wildlife sites of nature conservation importance within, close to or connected to the plan area. European wildlife sites are areas of international nature conservation importance that are protected for the benefit of the habitats and species they support. This assessment is known as a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA).
- 6.2. For the purposes of the HRA, international designated wildlife sites are Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Ramsar wetland sites.
- 6.3. The SEA Directive requires that if an eligible plan or programme requires an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive, then that plan or programme will also require an SEA. It is therefore advisable to check whether an assessment under the Habitats Regulations is required by undertaking HRA screening at the same time as screening for SEA.
- 6.4. The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan document has been subject to both SEA and HRA. These documents can be found on our website, under [Submission Documents](#). Both the [Sustainability Appraisal](#) and the [Habitats Regulation Assessment](#) were updated in 2020, following the promotion of additional sites for housing.
- 6.5. The following four European sites are identified as being within 10km of Welwyn Hatfield Borough. Their location is shown in Figure 3.0.
- Epping Forest SAC
 - The Lee Valley SPA
 - The Lee Valley Ramsar
 - Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC

Figure 3.0



- 6.6. The following conclusions were reached regarding the environmental effects of the policies contained in the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan, namely Policy SADM 28 Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Policy SADM 29 Welwyn, in relation to internationally designated wildlife sites. Extracts from the SEA and HRA of the Welwyn Hatfield Plan 2016 are attached as Appendix A.
- 6.7. Natural England's Site Improvement Plan notes that the SAC is actively managed in areas with access to the public. This has included sensitive management of access points and routes, which has already proven to have successfully mitigated the adverse effects of recreational pressure. Given the distance of most of the proposed development and mitigation provided through green infrastructure, in combination with management of the SAC, no adverse effect on the integrity of Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC is predicted as a result of recreational pressures when considering the plan on its own.
- 6.8. The HRA concluded that the Welwyn Hatfield Proposed Submission Local Plan would not have adverse effects on the integrity of Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC in relation to increased recreational pressure, either alone or in combination with other plans.
- 6.9. Epping Forest SAC and Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site lie 8.5km and 5.5km away from the Borough. Due to distance, the HRA found that these European sites will not be affected by nonphysical disturbance. Whilst a very small area of Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods does lie partially within the Borough, it is designated for a habitat, oak-hornbeam forests, and will therefore not be affected by noise, vibration and light.

Whilst some species living within the site may be sensitive to non-physical disturbance, the qualifying features and ecosystem as a whole is unlikely to be affected by noise, vibration and light pollution.

- 6.10. The HRA concluded that all European sites can be scoped out in relation to onsite impacts. Offsite impacts were scoped out in relation to Epping Forest SAC, due to its distance from Welwyn Hatfield Borough and given the nature of the qualifying species. Similarly, non-physical disturbance can be scoped out for Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC, due to the nature of the qualifying species.

HRA screening of the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan conclusion

- 6.12. There are no policies in the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan that require an HRA. The HRA of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan assessed the impact of development in Welwyn Hatfield on the four international designated European sites and concluded that the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan would not have any significant environmental effects on any of these sites. As the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan does not propose to allocate any sites itself, then clearly, a HRA of the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan is not required.

7) SEA/HRA Screening Opinion Determination

- 7.1. The Initial Screening Report (May 2024) was sent to the consultation bodies for a six-week consultation period, in May/June/July 2024, as set out in Regulation 4 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004; these are Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency.
- 7.2. The responses received from the three statutory consultees did not raise any matters or issues that changed the Council's opinion that SEA/HRA would not be required for the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Version April 2024.
- 7.3. Welwyn Hatfield Council therefore determines that the Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan does not require further environmental assessment (SEA or HRA) under the provisions of the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 or The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- 7.4. The consultation responses are included in Appendix B to this report.
- 7.5. This decision has been based on the information provided in the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan dated April 2024. If the content of the neighbourhood plan significantly changes, new or amended policies are introduced and/or there is a material change in the environmental characteristics of the locality, then this determination may be revisited to take account of those changes.

Appendix A: Extracts from the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016

Table 6.19: SA scores for the allocated and reasonable alternative sites in and around the villages north of Welwyn Garden City

SA Objectives		Likely Effects												
		Allocated Sites							Reasonable Alternatives					
		Welwyn			Woolmer Green	Oaklands and Mardley Heath			Welwyn			Woolmer Green		Oaklands and Mardley Heath
		HS20 Wel	HS49 Wel	HS18 Wel	HS15 WGr	HS17 OMH5	HS88 OMH	HS32 (GTLAA04)	Wel1	Wel2	Wel15	WGr2	WGr3	OMH7
1.1 ...lead to reduced health inequalities, and in particular improve the health of those living in communities characterised by relatively poor health?		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
1.2 ...lead to improved health for all?														
2.2 Ensure there is no increase in flood risk to people or property, taking into account climate change?		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.2 Significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport?	Proximity to employment and services	+	+	+	++	+	0	0	+	+	+	++	++	+
	Proximity to transport services	0	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	0

4.3 Avoid and reduce air pollution	Proximity to employment and services	+	+	+	++	+	0	0	+	+	+	N/A	++	+
------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	---	---	---	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----	----	---

SA Objectives		Likely Effects												
		Allocated Sites							Reasonable Alternatives					
		Welwyn			Woolmer Green	Oaklands and Mardley Heath			Welwyn			Woolmer Green		Oaklands and Mardley Heath
		HS200 Wel	HS419 Wel	HS118 Wel	HS115 WGr	HS17 OMH5	HS118 OMH	HS32 (GTLAA04)	Wel1	Wel2	Wel15	WGr2	WGr3	OMH7
	Proximity to transport services	0	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	0
4.4 Protect and enhance open space and landscape character, retaining local distinctiveness?	Open Space	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Landscape character	-?	-?	-?	-?	--?	--?	?	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	?
	Previously Developed Land	++?	++?	0	0	0	++?	++?	0	0	0	0	0	++?
	Retaining local distinctiveness	-	-	--	-	-	0	-	--	--	--	--	--	0

4.5 Conserve and enhance the Borough's character, sense of place and local distinctiveness, historic environment, heritage and cultural assets, and their settings?	-?	-?	0	-?	0	0	0	-?	-?	-?	-?	0	0
4.6 Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, taking into account the impacts of climate change?	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	0	-?

SA Objectives		Likely Effects												
		Allocated Sites						Reasonable Alternatives						
		Welwyn			Woolmer Green	Oaklands and Mardley Heath			Welwyn			Woolmer Green		Oaklands and Mardley Heath
		HS30 Wel	HS49 Wel	HS18 Wel	HS15 WGr	HS17 OMH5	HS85 OMH	HS32 (GTLAA04)	Wel1	Wel2	Wel15	WGr2	WGr3	OMH7
4.8 Avoid water pollution		-?	-?	-?	0	0	0	0	-?	-?	-?	0	0	0
4.10 Promote conservation and sustainable use of productive agricultural land and maximise the sustainable use of previously developed land		+	+	-	-	0	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
5.1 Provide the right amount, type and tenure of housing to	Amount of housing	0	0	0	+	0	0	++	+	0	0	N/A	0	0

meet identified local needs?	Affordable housing	0	++	++	++	++	++	0	++	++	++	N/A	++	++
	Dwellings for older people	++	++	++	++	++	++	0	++	++	++	N/A	++	++
6.1 Ensure the supply, location and quality of business and employment sites reflects the needs of local businesses and encourages a mixed and greener economy?		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++?	0	0
SA Objectives		Likely Effects												
		Allocated Sites						Reasonable Alternatives						
		Welwyn			Woolmer Green	Oaklands and Mardley Heath		Welwyn			Woolmer Green		Oaklands and Mardley Heath	
		HS30 Wel	HS49 Wel	HS18 Wel	HS15 WGr	HS17 OMH5	HS16 OMH	HS32 (GTLAA04)	Wel1	Wel2	Wel15	WGr2	WGr3	OMH7
6.2 Encourage economic investment in those areas most in need of regeneration, in a way that will benefit those most in need of rewarding employment?		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A

6.3 Enhance the vitality and attraction of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield town retail centres?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6.4 Sustain rural communities and their economies, small businesses and other rural diversification, while protecting rural character?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	++	N/A	N/A
6.5 Avoid sterilisation of mineral resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6.6 Provide access to training, skills development and lifelong learning to meet identified needs	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	N/A	++	++

Local Plan Policy	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the proposal	Likely effects if proposal implemented	European site(s) potentially affected	Potential mitigation measures – if implemented would avoid likely significant effect	Could the proposal have likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account)?
			Woods SAC could be affected by air pollution from increased vehicle use and damage from increased levels of recreational disturbance.	SADM 14: Flood Risk and Surface Water Management. SP 10: Sustainable Design and Construction. SP 12: Strategic Green Infrastructure. SP 13: Infrastructure Delivery. SADM 17: Urban Open Land. SADM 18: Environmental Pollution.	pollution and recreational pressure at Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site.

SADM28: Oaklands and Mardley Heath	<p>Development of 25 new homes.</p> <p>Development of Gypsy and Traveller site.</p> <p>Increase in vehicle use.</p> <p>Increase in recreational activities.</p> <p>Increase water</p>	<p>Increased air pollution.</p> <p>Disturbance from recreation.</p> <p>Increased water pollution and change in water quantity.</p>	<p>Epping Forest SAC could be affected by increased disturbance from recreational pressure.</p> <p>Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site could be affected by air pollution, recreational disturbance, water pollution and change in water quantity.</p>	<p>SP 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.</p> <p>SADM 3: Sustainable Travel for All.</p> <p>SP 9: Place Making and High Quality Design.</p> <p>SADM 11: Amenity and Layout.</p> <p>SADM 13:</p>	<p>Uncertain – The proposed allocations are small-scale and are situated 12km+ from the closest European site. Although some mitigation will be provided by other policies in the Local Plan, the nature of the development has the potential LSE on water quality and quantity at The Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar, and air pollution and recreational pressure at Wormley</p>
Local Plan Policy	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the proposal	Likely effects if proposal implemented	European site(s) potentially affected	Potential mitigation measures – if implemented would avoid likely significant effect	Could the proposal have likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account)?

Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA Screening Opinion Report

	demand and treatment.		Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC could be affected by air pollution from increased vehicle use and damage from increased levels of recreational disturbance.	<p>Sustainability Requirements.</p> <p>SADM 14: Flood Risk and Surface Water Management.</p> <p>SP 10: Sustainable Design and Construction.</p> <p>SP 12: Strategic Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>SP 13: Infrastructure Delivery.</p> <p>SADM 17: Urban Open Land.</p> <p>SADM 18: Environmental Pollution.</p>	<p>Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC. Further assessment is required.</p> <p>There are no LSE from recreational pressure at Epping Forest, or air pollution and recreational pressure at Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site.</p>
SADM29: Welwyn	<p>Development of 67 new homes.</p> <p>Increase in vehicle use.</p> <p>Increase in recreational activities.</p> <p>Increase water demand and</p>	<p>Increased air pollution.</p> <p>Disturbance from recreation.</p> <p>Increased water pollution and change in water quantity.</p>	<p>Epping Forest SAC could be affected by increased disturbance from recreational pressure.</p> <p>Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site could be affected by air pollution, recreational disturbance, water</p>	<p>SP 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.</p> <p>SADM 3: Sustainable Travel for All.</p> <p>SP 9: Place Making and High Quality Design.</p> <p>SADM 11: Amenities</p>	<p>Uncertain – The proposed allocations are small-scale and are situated 12km+ from the closest European site. Although some mitigation will be provided by other policies in the Local Plan, the nature of the development has the potential LSE on water quality and quantity at The Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar, and air</p>

Local Plan Policy	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the proposal	Likely effects if proposal implemented	European site(s) potentially affected	Potential mitigation measures – if implemented would avoid likely significant effect	Could the proposal have likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account)?
	treatment.		<p>pollution and change in water quantity.</p> <p>Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC could be affected by air pollution from increased vehicle use and damage from increased levels of recreational disturbance.</p>	<p>and Layout.</p> <p>SADM 13: Sustainability Requirements.</p> <p>SADM 14: Flood Risk and Surface Water Management.</p> <p>SP 10: Sustainable Design and Construction.</p> <p>SP 12: Strategic Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>SP 13: Infrastructure Delivery.</p> <p>SADM 17: Urban Open Land</p> <p>SADM 18: Environmental Pollution</p>	<p>pollution and recreational pressure at Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC. Further assessment is required.</p> <p>There are no LSE from recreational pressure at Epping Forest, or air pollution and recreational pressure at Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site.</p>

Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA Screening Opinion Report

SADM30: Welham Green	<p>Development of 80 new homes.</p> <p>Development of 40,500 sqm of employment floorspace.</p> <p>Development of</p>	<p>Increased air pollution.</p> <p>Disturbance from recreation.</p> <p>Increased water pollution and change in water</p>	<p>Epping Forest SAC could be affected by increased disturbance from recreational pressure.</p> <p>Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site could be affected by air</p>	<p>SP 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.</p> <p>SADM 3: Sustainable Travel for All.</p> <p>SP 9: Place Making and High Quality</p>	<p>Uncertain – The proposed allocations are small-scale and are situated 12km+ from the closest European site. Although some mitigation will be provided by other policies in the Local Plan, the nature of the development has the</p>
----------------------	--	--	--	--	---

Appendix B: Statutory Consultee Responses

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 June 2024 13:20
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Welwyn Draft Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion

You don't often get email from ross.mcgivern@historicengland.org.uk. [Learn why this is important](#)

**** WARNING: This email originated outside the WHBC Network. Please be extra vigilant when opening attachments or clicking links ****

Dear Julie,

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this 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 Welwyn 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 plan does not propose to allocate any sites 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. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the 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) where we consider that, despite the 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.

Please do contact me, either via email or the number below, if you have any queries.

Kind regards,
Ross



Historic Eng

Work with us to champion heritage and improve lives. Read our Future Strategy and get involved at historicengland.org.uk/strategy.

Follow us: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) Sign up to our [newsletter](#)

This e-mail (and any attachments) is confidential and may contain personal views which are not the views of Historic England unless specifically stated. If you have received it in error, please delete it from your system and notify the sender immediately. Do not use, copy or disclose the information in any way nor act in reliance on it. Any information sent to Historic England may become publicly available. We respect your privacy and the use of your information. Please read our full [privacy policy](#) for more information.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 June 2024 10:46
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: SEA/HRA Initial Screening Welwyn Neighbourhood Plan
Attachments: HNL NP advice note.pdf; EA Response 101120.pdf; EA Response 241020.pdf

Hello Lisa,

Thank you for your enquiry.

We welcome all consultations of this nature.

Unfortunately we cannot comment on all Neighbourhood Plans due to capacity.

I have however included a advice note, as well two previous responses sent to Welwyn and Hatfield LPA which include comments on the site allocations initially included in the Local Plan.

I hope this is helpful,

Thanks and all the best,

[REDACTED]

**Creating a better place
for people and wildlife**

Please accept my thanks for your email in advance - each UK adult sending one less 'thank you' email a day would save more than 16,400 tonnes of carbon a year.

Did you know that every email you send with an attachment costs 50g CO₂e per person? Sending an email with a link only costs 4g CO₂e per person. When emailing a document, Think Link and help us reach Net Zero.