

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion

**Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan Revised Draft (Regulation 14)
January 2024**

Prepared by:

London Borough of Camden

March 2024

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. A neighbourhood plan may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to comply with European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”. The European Directive is transposed into law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations). Under Article 3(3) and 3(4) of the SEA Directive, SEA is required for plans and programmes which “determine the use of small areas at a local level and minor modifications to plans and programmes” where they are determined to be likely to have significant environmental effects.
- 1.2. It is the Council’s responsibility to identify whether an SEA should be undertaken on a neighbourhood plan. This is determined through an SEA screening exercise (see table below).
- 1.3. There is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), as set out in section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
- 1.4. The screening process is based upon consideration of standard criteria in Annex II of the Directive to determine whether the plan is likely to have “significant environmental effects”. The result of the Council’s screening process is detailed in this screening statement.
- 1.5. A draft revised Plan (Regulation 14) dated January 2024 has been produced by Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum. The draft proposes revisions to certain policies in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan 2018 and incorporates two new policies. This is the version that the Council has undertaken an SEA screening assessment of, and which has been issued for public consultation in the neighbourhood area. This formal period of consultation closed on 28 February 2024. The Council has considered the Plan’s policies and determined that the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
- 1.6. This screening report incorporates the responses provided by the statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency).

2. Vision, objectives and policy priorities of the plan

2.1. The stated vision of the draft Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan is:

“Our vision is to conserve and foster Hampstead’s charm and liveability by protecting the distinctive character of buildings and open spaces, the Heath, healthy living, community spirit and the local economy, while also increasing sustainability, mitigating climate change and enhancing the natural environment.”

2.2 The “main aims” of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

To ensure that Hampstead is:

- Lively and contemporary, while safeguarding the fine heritage of streets and buildings;
- Promoting sustainability and energy efficiency, in order both to mitigate and adapt to climate emergency;
- Enduringly green, with the Heath, open spaces, trees and landscapes well protected;
- Safe and walkable, with good public transport and alternatives to use of cars;
- Business-friendly – to meet needs of residents, workers and visitors and back local enterprise;
- A community with good amenities, a sense of belonging and mutual support.

2.3 The ‘original’ Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan was formally ‘made’ (adopted) by Camden Council in October 2018. The draft published by the Forum in January 2024 is a partial revision of the adopted Plan. The amendments respond to changing circumstances, including the introduction of Use Class E in 2020. The review has also been prompted by the Forum’s desire to strengthen and expand the environmental provisions in the Plan, as explained on their website:

“...the accelerating climate crisis demands new technologies that reduce consumption of fossil fuels, such as solar power and heat pumps. The idea behind our new proposals on sustainable design is to encourage such energy-saving measures while protecting the important heritage of Hampstead’s Victorian houses.

New construction is very damaging to air quality. So the revised Plan encourages adaptation of existing houses rather than replacing them with new ones. However, refurbishment projects too can be very disruptive to neighbours, especially in our dense, hilly and narrow streets. Therefore, we are proposing new policies that will require builders to be more considerate.

In addition, we seek to build the innovative ‘biodiversity corridors’ designated in the existing Plan into a biodiversity network with fewer barriers to flora and fauna moving through the area, especially around the fringes of Hampstead Heath.”

2.4 The table below has been prepared by Camden Officers and summarises the main changes to policies in the adopted Plan.

Name of policy	Description of change to adopted Plan
DH1: Design	<p>Additional requirement to demonstrate how proposals will help to mitigate climate change; how development will respond positively to gaps between buildings and to existing rooflines</p> <p>Seeks to maintain gaps between buildings where they provide glimpses of back gardens or locally important views</p> <p>New requirements for dormer windows</p>
DH2: Conservation areas and listed buildings	No significant changes
DH3: Sustainable Development, new policy	Sets out requirements relating to the retrofitting of existing buildings, net zero carbon development, use of sustainable materials and sustainable design
DH4: Clean and considerate construction, new policy	Seeks to reduce the impact of construction activities on neighbours and the environment by encouraging off-site/ modular construction; submission of information/details to the Council to ensure impacts are appropriately addressed; use of Considerate Constructors’ accreditation and keeping the highway free of obstruction/rubbish
DH5: The urban realm	Additional support for various greening and sustainability measures in the public realm
NE1: Supporting biodiversity and mitigating climate change	<p>Sets out a variety of ways in which gains (10%) for biodiversity can be realised</p> <p>Requirements for providing green gaps/buffers for the movement of wildlife, including in residential gardens</p>
NE2: Ecological networks and biodiversity corridors	Sets out further detail on how corridors will be protected and enhanced
NE3: Local green spaces	Largely unchanged; includes reference to protecting the setting/ fringes of Hampstead Heath
NE4: Trees	Additional reference to the planting of street trees

BA1: Local requirements for Basement Impact Assessments and mitigation	Additional reference to assessing cumulative impacts (ground movement and hydrogeology) Requirement for biodiversity measures to offset impact of construction on gardens
BA2: Basement Construction Plans and monitoring	Additional reference to movement and vibration monitoring during excavation works
BA3: Local Requirements for Construction Management Plans (CMP)	No significant changes
EC1: Healthy retail mix	Minor changes to reflect introduction of Use Class E Promotes creation of hubs for community-related and cultural activities (as per the LB Camden Future High Streets Prospectus)
EC2: Contributing positively to the retail environment	Additional requirement for lighting of shopfronts to be minimised and in doing so have regard to impacts on wildlife
HC1: Housing mix	Additional support for the role of Community Land Trusts in providing affordable housing
HC2: Community facilities	Additional support for proposals facilitating cultural activities The Plan provides guidance for two strategic sites – Queen Mary’s House and Royal Mail Delivery Office, Shepherds Walk - in the context of allocations set out in the draft new Camden Local Plan
HC3: Enhancing street life through the public realm	No significant changes

3. Assessment

- 3.1. The ‘responsible authority’ (London Borough of Camden) must determine whether a plan or programme, in this case the revised draft Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan, is likely to have significant environmental effects with reference to the criteria specified in Schedule 1 of the Regulations.
- 3.2. These criteria are set out in the table below, along with consideration of the likely impact of the Neighbourhood Plan against each.

SEA Directive criteria	Comments	Likely Significant Effects?
Characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular to:		
<p>1a) 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</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to national policy and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the boroughs (one of the 'Basic Conditions' neighbourhood plans are tested against)</p> <p>The draft Neighbourhood Plan, if adopted, would form part of the statutory Development Plan for the borough and as such contribute to the framework for future projects and activities in the Neighbourhood Area</p> <p>The Plan does not allocate sites for development or address issues outside of those already assessed in the Council's Local Plan SAs (which incorporated SEA) and as such is not considered to have significant effects in this regard</p> <p>As stated above, the revised Neighbourhood Plan sets out guidance for two Strategic Sites. This is set in the context of site allocations in the draft new Camden Local Plan for which a full SEA is being undertaken. [The role of these sites was also considered through the SEA for the Camden Draft Site Allocations Local Plan published in 2020 and 2021/22; these allocations have subsequently been incorporated into the draft new Local Plan]</p>	No
<p>1b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan must be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and in general conformity with the respective Council's strategic policies</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan may form the context for, and influence, other documents for this area. However, it is considered the extent of impact is unlikely to be significant in this regard due to the general conformity with the documents mentioned. Any plans or programmes considering the Neighbourhood Plan may themselves be subject to a separate consideration of the requirement for SEA</p>	No

<p>1c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to make a positive contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). The Plan's policies have sought to achieve social, economic and environmental gains simultaneously</p> <p>The revised draft Neighbourhood Plan aims to strengthen and expand policy requirements and expectations relating to climate change, the circular economy and biodiversity</p> <p>The draft revised Plan retains coverage of a wide range of matters, as set out in the 2018 adopted document, including support for the area's Town and Neighbourhood Centre, promotion of public realm/environmental improvement measures, support for community facilities, and the management of impacts on residents' and the local area from construction</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme</p>	<p>The Plan takes a positive approach to the environment. It encourages the retrofitting of buildings (the re-use of existing building, their fabric/materials), improving energy efficiency and living conditions and use of sustainable design approaches</p> <p>The Plan sets targets for emissions in the context of policies in the adopted London Plan 2021 and sets out evidence that planning applications will in some cases be expected to provide to the Council, such as Whole Life Carbon Assessments</p> <p>The revisions to the Neighbourhood Plan identify possible ways in which biodiversity net gains can be delivered and seek the provision, safeguarding and enhancement of wildlife corridors to enable the movement of wildlife</p> <p>The Plan retains policies in the 2018 Plan to protect local green spaces and trees. Potential impacts from development on biodiversity, gardens and trees are identified, e.g. light pollution and excavation and disturbance from basement construction</p>	<p>No</p>

	<p>Overall, it is considered that the Plan's policies will, on implementation, have beneficial effects</p> <p>These effects are not considered to extend significantly beyond existing issues and policies in the Camden Local Plan and thus do not require testing through SEA. The Plan also responds to policies supporting circular economy practices and reductions in carbon emissions in the adopted London Plan</p>	
1e) 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)	The neighbourhood plan is not directly relevant to the implementation of community legislation on the environment	No
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	The policy approaches are not considered to extend significantly beyond the Council's policies which have been subject to SEA	No
2b) The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>Cumulative effects occur where the outcome of one or more policies, when put together, have a significant combined effect.</p> <p>The draft Plan does not allocate sites for development nor do the policies extend significantly beyond those already subject to SEA in the Council's Local Plan</p>	No
2c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects	There are no significant trans-boundary effects arising from the Neighbourhood Plan	No
2d) The risks to human health or the	There are unlikely to be risks to human health or the environment arising from the	No

environment (e.g. due to accidents)	Plan. The policies through promoting greening of the built environment and active travel modes (walking and cycling) are likely to assist in improving health outcomes	
2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	<p>The Plan will apply to new development in the neighbourhood plan area</p> <p>The area covered by this Plan includes Hampstead Town ward and a significant part of Frognal and Fitzjohns ward. It includes most of Hampstead Heath and a small part of Gospel Oak ward. It does not include Church Row and Perrin's Walk</p> <p>The Plan Area contains about 10,600 residents in about 4,800 households</p>	No
2f) 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 iii) intensive land-use	<p>Camden Local Plan policies relating to town centres, parks and open spaces, design, basements, transport, construction management and environmental protection will apply alongside the Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>The policies in the draft Neighbourhood Plan are not considered to step significantly beyond the intentions of adopted London or local policy. The extent of possible effects is not considered sufficient to warrant SEA as these have already been subject to SEA in the Council's Local Plan</p>	No
2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	There is a Site Special Scientific Interest designated within part of Hampstead Heath. The policies in the neighbourhood plan are unlikely to give rise to any adverse impacts on the site's conservation. The Plan specifically acknowledges the importance of the fringes/setting of the Heath and includes various measures intended to support wildlife	No

4. Final Screening outcome

- 4.1. The screening assessment has identified that the draft Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects. On this basis, no SEA needs to be undertaken.
- 4.2. The Council has consulted the following statutory consultation bodies, specified in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Section 9):
 - Natural England;
 - Historic England; and
 - Environment Agency.
- 4.3. The responses received from the statutory bodies are attached below. They concur with the Council's opinion that a full SEA is not required in this instance. Regarding the EA's response, the latest data on relative flood risk in Camden and location of aquifers and Source Protection Zones is set out in the Council's new [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#), part of the evidence base for the Draft New Local Plan. The adopted and emerging Local Plan has policies dealing with all forms of flood risk in the Borough. Natural England's comments refer to engagement with various parties. The Council's Nature Conservation Officer and the City of London Corporation (as manager of Hampstead Heath) are being engaged as part of the relevant consultation processes for amending the Neighbourhood Plan. More widely, they are consultees for allocations in Camden's Draft New Local Plan and in the event of other significant ('windfall') sites coming forward for development in the plan area, will be involved at planning application stage in line with LB Camden's consultation procedures.
- 4.4. This Screening Opinion, including the consultation body responses, are being shared with the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum.

Response from The Environment Agency 27 February 2024

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for consulting us on the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

We have had to prioritise our limited resource and focus on strategic plans where the environmental risks and opportunities are highest. We attach our advice note which sets out our substantive response to Neighbourhood Plan consultations including Strategic Environmental Assessment screening and scoping.

We recognise that Neighbourhood Plans provide a unique opportunity to deliver enhancements to the natural environment at the local level. This advice note sets out the key environmental issues, within our remit, which should be considered. It also references sources of data you can use to check environmental features.

We hope this is helpful as you prepare evidence and the Neighbourhood Plan itself.

Kind regards,

Tanzin Ferdous

Planning Advisor, Hertfordshire and North London Sustainable Places

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Email: HNLsustainablePlaces@environment-agency.gov.uk

Hertfordshire and North London Neighbourhood Plan Advice Note

Updated: June 2021

Neighbourhood Plans provide a unique opportunity to deliver enhancements to the natural environment at the local level. This document sets out the key environmental issues, within our remit, which should be considered.

We have had to prioritise our limited resource and focus on strategic plans where the environmental risks and opportunities are highest. This advice note sets out our substantive response to Neighbourhood Plan consultations including Strategic Environmental Assessment screening and scoping.

Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/consider-environment-neighbourhood-plans/>

Drawing up a neighbourhood plan is a fantastic opportunity to build community resilience to climate change and make the local natural environment better. Opportunities include:

- New green spaces and improvements to public space through new development. This could include planting trees, creating rainwater gardens or enhancing local waterways for water quality and biodiversity.
- Recognising the value of certain environmental features within a plan area, e.g. a floodplain, wetland habitat or rivers. Identify these features and outline how you intend to protect them and improve them.
- Helping a community to manage and adapt to the risk of flooding and climate change by incorporating natural features and green space to manage and store water, and supporting the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).
- Promoting energy and water efficiency measures for new builds. These measures will reduce the cost of construction for developers and help to reduce utility bills for future occupiers. This will also help reduce unsustainable water consumption and carbon emissions.

We also recommend your Plan takes account of relevant Local Planning Authority's policies, plans and strategies including Local Planning Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, flood risk strategies (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-current-schemes-and-strategies>), and the Thames River Basin Management Plan (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/289937/geth0910bswa-e-e.pdf) as appropriate.

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The information below explains the key issues we would consider in reviewing your Plan. We aim to reduce flood risk, while protecting and enhancing the water environment.

Infrastructure Delivery

We recommend that environmental infrastructure, including habitat enhancements, water storage areas, and green space, is taken into account if the Plan looks to fund local infrastructure.

Flood risk

Development must be safe and should not increase the risk of flooding.

Neighbourhood Plans should conform to national and local policies on flood risk:

If a Neighbourhood Plan is proposing sites for development please check whether there are any areas of Flood Zones 2 or 3 within the proposed site allocations. You can view a site's flood zone on the Flood Map for Planning on our website: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

If the proposed allocation is located within Flood Zone 2 or 3 you should consult the Flood Risk and Coastal Change pages of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG): <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change/>.

Here you can determine whether the flood risk vulnerability of the proposed development and the flood zone are compatible. In accordance with national planning policy the Sequential Test should be undertaken to ensure development is directed to the areas of lowest flood risk taking into account climate change. This should be informed by the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning and the Local Planning Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), if they have one. We recommend you contact the Local Planning Authority to discuss this requirement further.

If the Neighbourhood Plan proposes development in flood risk areas, the Strategic Environmental Assessment should include baseline information about the flood risks, and include it as a key sustainability issue and as an objective.

We would have concerns if development is allocated in this high risk flood zone without the Sequential Test being undertaken. It is important that your Plan also considers whether the flood risk issues associated with these sites can be safely managed to ensure development can come forward.

We can provide any flooding information which we have available – such as predicted flood levels and historical flood data. Please note that there may be a charge for this information. Please contact our Customers and Engagement Team at HNLinquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk for further details. In addition to the above you should also check with the Local Planning Authority's Neighbourhood Planning team with regards to other sources of flooding (such as surface water, groundwater, sewers and historic flooding) as detailed in their Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), now has responsibility for local flood risk management and may hold flooding information that is not identified on our Flood Map.

Climate Change Allowances

The Local Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should indicate the extent of flood zones with likely climate change. On 19 February 2016, we published new guidance for planners and developers on how to use climate change allowances: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>

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Flood Defences

Areas of your Neighbourhood Plan area, or proposed sites, may be given protection by a flood defence/alleviation scheme. Where this is the case the Plan should acknowledge this and identify the level of protection provided (including any climate change allowance). It should be noted that flood defences are intended to protect existing properties and are not to facilitate new development in areas that would otherwise be impacted by flooding. Any assessment of development behind flood defences should consider the impacts of a breach or overtopping. Where it is determined that new development should be behind a flood defence financial contributions may be sought to maintain or improve the structure.

Thames Estuary 2100 (Tidal Defences)

In line with requirements set out in the Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100) plan, developments in this location will need to demonstrate how the flood defence could be raised in the future to meet the demands of climate change.

No activities on site should preclude access to the flood defence from maintenance or prevent the future raising of flood defences. In some cases we hold technical drawings of flood defence structures which may be of use. To request these you should contact our Customers and Engagement Team at hnlenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Ecology and Water Management

Proximity to watercourse/ Ecology

Main rivers can be viewed on the Environment Agency's map:

<https://environment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=17cd53dfc524433980cc333726a56386>

The neighbourhood plan should draw upon evidence of designated or non-designated sites of nature conservation sites of international, national or local importance, and seek to ensure these sites are safeguarded and there is no degradation to these sites. The mitigation hierarchy of avoid mitigate and compensate should be followed to ensure this.

In accordance with national policy, any development proposal should avoid significant harm to biodiversity and seek to protect and enhance it; delivering **biodiversity net gain**. The forthcoming Environment Bill will mandate when enacted the demonstration of a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain using the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 (or subsequent version), even where development proposals do not result in biodiversity loss. The Neighbourhood Plan could identify opportunities to incorporate requirements for achieving biodiversity and wider environmental net gains.

The provision of green infrastructure, particularly along rivers, can bring about benefits for people and wildlife. Creating networks of green space and habitats can also ensure wildlife are able to migrate and move across sites more easily enabling recovery and resilience of different wildlife species. The Neighbourhood Plan could play a role in helping to preserve, safeguard and establish green buffer zones along rivers by including policies or design guidance for their area. Even where buffer zones do not currently exist it is becoming more vital that we create them not just for the benefit of biodiversity but to reduce flood risk and increase our resilience to climate change.

This is a key way in which we can carry out our legal duty to further and promote the ecological and landscape value of rivers and land associated with them. In urban areas, in particular, rivers have often been degraded by past development, and we expect that any new development should go some way to redress the balance.

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Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to promote river restoration and enhancements helping us all to achieve the targets to improve waterbodies as part of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). There should be no deterioration in water quality and development should bring about improvements to the ecological status of any water body. Local WFD catchment data for the rivers in your area can be obtained from: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/RiverBasinDistrict/>. We have identified WFD action measures for specific locations or whole reaches of watercourse (e.g. river bank restoration, improving fish passage, etc) and can be obtained from hnlenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk on request.

Objectives to achieve WFD improvements across all sectors are outlined in the Thames River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) (<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=River+Basin+Management+Plans>).

An assessment of the potential impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan on watercourses under WFD should be included within the SEA/SA appraisal, making use of the datasets available above.

Groundwater Quality

Development must not cause pollution to the water environment.

Aquifers and Source Protection Zones

Some of your local area, and specific potential site allocations, may be located upon or within aquifers and Source Protection Zones (link below). SPZ 1 is especially sensitive. You might consider these within your Plan and when allocating sites. The relevance of the designation and the potential implication upon development proposals should be seen with reference to our Groundwater Protection guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

To see if a proposed development is located within a Source Protection Zone, please use our online map: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/groundwater-source-protection-zones-spzs>

Land Contamination

You must consider land contamination when preparing your plan. Managing it during development is key to addressing past contamination and preventing further impacts during development.

You can establish if a site may be contaminated in several ways. Your Local Authority may hold a register of sites it knows to be contaminated. A list of potentially contaminated sites can be accessed on the following link:

<https://www.clare.co.uk/useful-government-legislation-and-guidance-by-country/76-key-documents/198-doe-industry-profiles>

We recommend you contact your Local Authority's Environmental Health team who may hold records on known/potential land contamination. Please note our primary concern is with regards to water quality. Your Local Authority's Environmental Health team will advise you on issues related to human health.

Your plan may include areas which are located on aquifers and Source Protection Zones. These areas represent the most sensitive and highest risk in terms of potential pollution to protected groundwater supplies, some of which are used for drinking water. These should be considered within your plan if growth or development is proposed here. Further information can be accessed on the following links:

Guiding principles for the Land Contamination

<https://www.clare.co.uk/useful-government-legislation-and-guidance-by-country/192-guiding-principles-for-land-contamination-gplc>

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Approach to Groundwater Protection:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692989/Environment-Agency-approach-to-groundwater-protection.pdf

Water supply and foul drainage

When allocating sites in your Plan, you will need to consider if the water supply and foul drainage infrastructure can accommodate the development. Your local water company can provide further information about water supply and sewerage capacity. Our 'Water Stressed Areas – final classification' 2013 explains that our area is seriously water stressed. This is particularly significant as population numbers rise and there are increased impacts from climate change on water resource availability and reliability. The Neighbourhood Plan should consider what further measures could help the local area achieve water sustainability that are not already in the Local Plan, water efficiency standards and measures including the retrofitting of existing buildings.

Surface water drainage

The inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) should always be a consideration within any development to reduce the risk of surface water flooding on and off site. The Lead Local Flood Authority, is the main contact for SUDS issues. However, we have interest in SUDS from a groundwater protection perspective and improving water quality.

The collection and dispersal of clean surface water to ground to recharge aquifer units and prevent localised drainage or surface systems flooding in heavy rainfall is encouraged. However, dispersal into the ground through soakaways or other infiltration systems requires a site-specific investigation and risk assessment. Generally, we would accept roof drainage going to soakaway (or other systems), but other surface drainage may need to go through treatment systems or to foul main, for instance vehicle parking. Infiltrating water has the potential to cause mobilisation of contaminants present in shallow soil/made ground which could ultimately cause pollution of underlying groundwater resources. Where contamination is known or suspected, remedial or other mitigating measures will likely be required so that it can be demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to Controlled Waters.

We advise applicants to follow our guidance – Groundwater Protection. This is a report that highlights the importance of groundwater and encourages industry and other organisations to act responsibly and improve their practices. This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

The design of the drainage systems should be in line with G1, G9, G12 and G13 position statements: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-position-statements>

Please note

This document is a response to a Neighbourhood Plan consultation and does not represent our final view in relation to any future planning application made in relation to any site. You should seek your own expert advice in relation to technical matters relevant to your neighbourhood plan before submission.

If you have any questions please contact the Hertfordshire and North London Sustainable Places team: HNL.SustainablePlaces@environment-agency.gov.uk

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www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Response from Historic England, 26 February 2024

Dear Mr Triggs

London Borough of Camden

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan –
SEA Screening Opinion

Thank you for consulting Historic England in respect of the SEA Screening Opinion for the revised Hampstead NDP.

As the Government's adviser on all matters pertaining to the historic environment and a consultation body for the purposes of Regulation 10(4) of the Town and Country (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 ("the EIA Regulations"), Historic England writes to inform the London Borough of Camden's Scoping Opinion on the Environmental Statement for the Proposed Neighbourhood Plan for Somers Town, London.

On the basis of this information provided we agree with the Council's assessment that strategic environmental assessment is not required, as set out under the criteria specified in Schedule 1 of the SEA regulations.

It must be noted that this advice does not affect our obligation to advise you on, and potentially object to any specific development proposal which may subsequently arise from this request and which may have adverse effects on the environment. We trust this advice is of assistance in the preparation of your scoping opinion.

Richard Parish
Historic Places Adviser
London and South East Team
Historic England

Response from Natural England 21 March 2024

Date: 21 March 2024
Our ref: 467374
Your ref: Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan



Mr Andrew Triggs
London Borough of Camden

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T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Andrew.Triggs@camden.gov.uk

Dear Mr Triggs

Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening Opinion Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 16 February 2024.

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 (SEA)

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely.

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection area (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- 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.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in

Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team