

Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan (MNDP)



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report

November 2021





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1. Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of this Report

This Screening Report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan (Submission Modification Draft) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/ EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations.

1.2 The Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Neighbourhood Development Plan will set out planning policies for the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan area. Once formally adopted, a Neighbourhood Development Plan carries the same legal weight as Local Development Plans adopted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in this case Mid Suffolk District Council.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan gives the community direct power to develop a shared vision for the Parish of Mendlesham and shape its development and growth. The Neighbourhood Development Plan identifies three major objectives for the Plan area. These are as follows:

- To protect and enhance the rural and historic qualities of the neighbourhood/parish while encouraging the right kind of growth to deliver employment, housing (a range of) and community services which meet the needs of the local people.
- To develop and sustain the key service centre (now Core Village) status of the neighbourhood/parish by encouraging development that supports a range of employment, services and housing; meeting the needs of local people while protecting and enhancing the quality of the local environment.
- To develop a vibrant and prosperous neighbourhood by encouraging development that supports a range of businesses, services and housing; meeting the needs of local people while protecting and enhancing the quality of the local environment.

1.3 The emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan

The emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan sets out the planning policies and land allocations to guide the future development of the two districts up to 2037. It includes policies on a wide range of topics such as housing, employment, services and facilities, and the natural environment. The emerging Local Plan is, at the time of writing, going through the process of Examination in Public (EiP).

1.3.1 Content regarding the Neighbourhood Development Plan area within the emerging Local Plan

1.3.1.1 The Mid Suffolk Settlement Hierarchy and Principle of Development

The emerging Local Plan identifies Mendlesham as a 'Core Village' and Mendlesham Green as a 'Hamlet Village' within the Mid Suffolk Settlement Hierarchy. Relevant to Mendlesham, Policy SP03 - Settlement Hierarchy of the Local Plan states that:

'Ipswich Fringe settlements, Market Towns/Urban Areas and Core Villages will act as a focus for development, which will be delivered through site allocations in the Plan and/or in Neighbourhood Plans, and windfall development in accordance with the relevant policies.'

Settlement boundaries have been created as defined on the Policies Map in order to demonstrate the extent of land which is required to meet the development needs of the Plan. New allocations are included within the defined settlement boundaries. The principle of development is established within settlement boundaries, subject to the other policies in the Plan. Outside of the defined boundaries in isolated locations development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.'

The emerging Local Plan includes a settlement boundary within which the main built up area of Mendlesham is included. This settlement boundary as included within the emerging Local Plan to include the area of a single site allocation: (Policy) 'LA073 – Allocation: Land south of Glebe Way, Mendlesham' for 75 dwellings and associated infrastructure.

The built up area of Mendlesham Green is also included within a settlement boundary, yet no Local Plan allocations are included within the hamlet. Relevant to (and in setting out the principle of development within) Mendlesham Green, Policy LP01 – Windfall development in hamlets and dwelling clusters, states that:

'Proposals for windfall development within dwelling clusters and/or a defined hamlet may be acceptable, subject to all the following criteria applied:

- a) It would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the settlement, landscape (including the AONB), residential amenity or any heritage, environmental or community assets.*
- b) It would not result in consolidating sporadic or ribbon development or result in loss of gaps between settlements resulting in coalescence. The cumulative impact of the proposal on the location, context and infrastructure is considered acceptable.*
- c) The scale of development is infill only for a single dwelling and or pair of semi detached dwellings.*
- d) Special regard shall be given to development proposals preserving and enhancing the AONB and to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and*

geodiversity affected by the proposal.

e) All new development will be expected to minimise dependence on fossil fuels and make the fullest contribution to the mitigation of climate change through implementation of sustainable construction practices and renewable energy technologies.'

1.3.1.2 Minimum housing requirement and site allocations

The emerging Local Plan sets out a total dwelling requirement for Mendlesham of 161 homes, acknowledging that 86 of these are identified as 'outstanding planning permissions' granted as of 1st April 2018. The Local Plan adds,

'If outstanding planning permissions (OPPs) granted as of 1st April 2018 expire during the lifetime of the Plan, then the corresponding offset number of dwellings, will need to be identified within the same Neighbourhood Plan area to meet the total requirement.'

The Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan includes provision for 229 dwellings in the Plan period, including both commitments and completions in this overall figure, as well as a windfall allowance of two dwellings per annum and an 'exception site' of 10 dwellings at Mendlesham Green.

As set out above, the Local Plan allocates 5.3 hectares of land to the south of Glebe Way in Mendlesham for 75 dwellings and associated infrastructure. This site is also allocated within the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan for 75 dwellings, however the Neighbourhood Development Plan notes that 28 of these have planning permission in the northern part of the wider site.

2. Legislative Background

2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment states that,

‘Environmental assessment is an important tool for integrating environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(10) All plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors and which set a framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment(7), and all plans and programmes which have been determined to require assessment pursuant to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna(8), are likely to have significant effects on the environment, and should as a rule be made subject to systematic environmental assessment. When they determine the use of small areas at local level or are minor modifications to the above plans or programmes, they should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(11) Other plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects may not have significant effects on the environment in all cases and should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have such effects.’

The Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan would influence frameworks for future development and would also be used ancillary to those plans and programmes that do set such a framework. As such it can be determined that the principle of the Neighbourhood Development Plan should be screened for the necessary application of the SEA Directive.

The Report from the Commission to The Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions states, on the application and effectiveness of the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Directive 2001/42/EC), that

‘the following Plan & Programme (P&P), and modifications to them, are covered when prepared and/or adopted by an authority and required pursuant to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions:

- *P&P prepared for certain sectors and which set the framework for future development consent in respect of projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment-EIA-Directive.*

- *P&P requiring an assessment under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).*
- *P&P setting the framework for development consent in respect of projects (not limited to those listed in the EIA Directive; see above) and determined by "screening" as being likely to have significant environmental effects.'*

This report represents this screening process in regard to the content and influence of the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan.

3. SEA Screening

3.1 When is SEA Required?

Planning Practice Guidance – Strategic environmental assessment requirements for neighbourhood plans (Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 11-026-20140306) states that,

‘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).

To decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan’s preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies.

Each consultation body will be able to advise on particular topics relevant to its specific area of expertise and responsibility, and the specific information that it holds.

Where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared. A copy of the statement must be submitted with the neighbourhood plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner.’

Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive set out the circumstances in which a SEA is required. Table 1 sets out the assessment of whether the principle of the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan will require a ‘full’ SEA Environmental Report.

Table 1: Exploring whether the Principle of the Plan would warrant SEA

Question 1: Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?

Yes - The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared for adoption through legislative procedure.

Question 2: Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provision? (Typical characteristics of "administrative provisions" are that they are publicly available, prepared in a formal way, probably involving consultation with interested parties. The administrative provision must have sufficient formality such that it counts as a "provision" and it must also use language that plainly requires rather than just encourages a Plan to be prepared.)

Yes - The Neighbourhood Development Plan would be considered as falling within the category of an 'administrative provision'.

Question 3: Is the 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?

Yes to both criteria - The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.

Question 4: Will the Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?

The Neighbourhood Development Plan's likely effect on sites and requirement for an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive is explored in Section 4 of this Report.

Question 5: Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a Plan likely to require assessment under the Habitats Directive?

Yes to one of the criteria - the policies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

Question 6: Does the Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in the Annexes of the EIA Directive)?

Yes - the Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared for town and country

planning and sets a framework for future development consent.

Question 7: Is the Plans sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial or budget Plan, or is it co -financed by structural funds or European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) programmes 2000 to 2006/7?

The Neighbourhood Development Plan does not serve a purpose related to national defence or civil emergency, a financial or budget Plan. The Neighbourhood Development Plan is not co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7.

Question 8: Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?

Likely significant effects are explored in more detail in Section 3.3 of this Screening Report. The 'conclusions' section of the Report outlines whether the Neighbourhood Development Plan requires SEA or not due in regard to its effects on the environment.

The following section looks at the criteria for assessing the effects of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the identified effects of the Neighbourhood Development Plan in line with the criteria. Crucially, it will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on the environment.

3.2 Criteria for Assessing the Effects of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

Criteria for determining the likely significant effects on the environment, referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below.

Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

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

- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).

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

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the transboundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),

Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - * special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
 - * exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
 - * intensive land-use,
 - * the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

3.3 Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Development Plan

The following assessment will consider the likelihood of the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan (Submission Modification Draft) to have significant effects on the environment. The table below will explore the likelihood of effects on the following required themes, as included within Annex I of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC):

- Biodiversity;
- Population;
- Human health;
- Fauna;
- Flora;
- Soil;
- Water;
- Air;
- Climatic factors;
- Material assets;
- Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage;
- Landscape; and
- The interrelationship between the above factors.

Table 2: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on the Environment

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>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 Development Plan sets out relevant policies which will be used to determine proposals for development within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area once 'made' and adopted. The extent to which any conflicts exist between the Neighbourhood Development Plan and District level policies within the Local Plan have been considered between the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority in finalising the Neighbourhood Development Plan, and will further form part of the independent examination of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Development Plan states that, 'Mendlesham has been given an individual target of a minimum of 161 new dwellings for the period 2018 - 2037.' This requirement is included within the emerging Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Development Plan includes one allocation for residential development that does not have planning permission. This allocation is replicated within the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan, however the corresponding policy for the site within the emerging Local Plan has different criteria-based requirements.</p> <p>A Neighbourhood Development Plan must demonstrate conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and once brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies (only) in the Local Plan for the Neighbourhood Development Plan area. The possibility of the Neighbourhood Development Plan being 'made' before the emerging Local Plan is adopted indicates that the degree to which the Plan sets a framework (both in regard to policy and allocating resources) is, at present, high.</p>
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Development Plan provides policies for the Plan area, relevant to a local level only. The Neighbourhood Development Plan allocates land for development purposes and its policies are considered to be in general conformity to that of the emerging Local Plan. The</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>hierarchy.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Development Plan, when/if ‘made’, will have weight in all planning decisions within the Plan area, however it should be acknowledged that issues identified as ‘strategic’ within the Local Plan will have priority over any of the Neighbourhood Development Plan policies.</p> <p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes is therefore considered low and relevant only to the Plan area.</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 to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Neighbourhood Development Plan policies seek to ensure environmental considerations are taken into account. The Neighbourhood Development Plan includes policies related (directly / indirectly) to ensuring environmental considerations will be integrated into any forthcoming development within the Plan area. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP5 – Historic Environment; • MP6 – Building design; • MP8 – Green areas; and • MP10 – Open spaces. <p>Irrespective of the adequacy of the above policies, adopted Local Plan policies apply within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area, which have been subject to assessment through an accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitats Regulations Assessment. The policies of the emerging Local Plan also hold weight in planning decisions due to the Plan’s current stage of preparation (submitted, and going through EiP at the time of writing). The emerging Local Plan has also been subject to Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment / Appropriate Assessment. This ensures that environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, will be considered for all development proposals within the Neighbourhood</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	Development Plan area.
Environmental problems relevant to the plan area	<p>The Neighbourhood Development Plan reflects a small area and the Plan’s policy content seeks to address environmental issues. The policy content of the adopted (and emerging) Local Plan will additionally apply to any proposals within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area. Local Plan policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) within the context of the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Development Plan and this Screening Report identify the following potential (direct / indirect) environmental problems or sources of potential problems relevant to the Neighbourhood Development Plan area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan area is within two SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) associated with the Gipping Great Wood SSSI (to the south west of the Plan area) and the Mickfield Meadow SSSI (to the south west). Some development proposals within IRZs are required to be consulted on with Natural England, should they be of a type or size that could warrant negative effects on the relevant SSSI. No such developments are proposed with the Plan however. • There are areas of Woodland Priority Habitat (with a High Spatial Priority) to the south-west of the main built up area of Mendlesham (Mendlesham / Millennium Wood) and to the east / north-east (as identified within the National Forest Inventory¹). These areas also correspond to Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats on the inventory. • There are 45 listings covering the parish of Mendlesham, 23 of which are within the Conservation Area. • The grade I listed Church of St Mary lies at the eastern end of the village. There is a grade II* listed

¹ a spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>Elms Farmhouse in Old Station Road south of the centre of the village. Another wealden house, listed grade II, can be found at 16 Old Market Street.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Suffolk County Sites and Monuments Record lists nearly 150 sites of archaeological interest from various periods in the parish of Mendlesham. <p>The Environment Agency has defined Source Protection Zones (SPZs) for groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs used for public drinking water supply. These zones show the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area. The majority of the Plan area is within a Source Protection Zone (Zone III - Total Catchment). This is defined as the area around a source within which all groundwater recharge is presumed to be discharged at the source.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased water abstraction from groundwater aquifers as well as the rivers for public water supplies, agriculture and industry has led to reduced river flows and water levels in the valley. Areas of Flood Risk Zone 3 are found to the east / south-east of the main built up area of Mendlesham following the channel of the River Dove. Additionally, a similar stretch can be found to the north of the main built up area. Both of these areas of flood risk are extensive and are in close proximity to the settlement boundary. Within the Plan area and its surrounds Mendlesham Stream is a water body which has a moderate ecological status, a good chemical status and a moderate overall water body status (a moderate change from natural conditions as a result of human activity) as of 2015 (The Anglian River Basin Management Plan). Prior to 2015, the river water body had a bad overall and ecological status in 2009 (severe change from natural conditions; major impact on amenity, wildlife and fisheries with many species not present) the only water body in the

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>study that had such a status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the Plan area lies within land identified as Agricultural Land Classification Grade 3, which means that soil quality is good to moderate. Areas of the Plan area are also classified as having ‘very good’ (Grade 2) quality soil, notably that area to the east and south-east of the built up area of Mendlesham. For context, Grade 2 soil represents the ‘best and most versatile’ soil within the District and also the County, and represents a relatively small proportion of land holistically. • The Plan area is located within the South Norfolk & High Suffolk Claylands National Character Area (NCA). Within this area (although not necessarily specific to Mendlesham), development pressure across the majority of the NCA has generally been low, although scattered development resulting in creeping suburbanisation of many settlements has occurred.
<p>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).</p>	<p>The content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not in conflict with those relevant planning documents within the wider district and county area related to waste management or water protection.</p>
<p>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects on the following factors:</p>	<p>The following impacts have been identified within this Screening Assessment:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity 	<p>The Plan includes Policy MP8 – Green Areas, which sets out</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>that development proposals must identify their effect on the local green environment including any net gain in biodiversity through wildlife habitat creation that could help to restore and repair fragmented biodiversity networks. This seeks positive effects on biodiversity.</p> <p>Regarding Habitats Sites, three lie within 20 km of Mendlesham parish (Breckland Special Protection Area, Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation, and Redgrave & South Lopham Fens Ramsar). The Plan area is not within the Zone of Influence for any of these Habitats Sites, however.</p> <p>In consideration of all of the above, effects on biodiversity resulting from the Plan can therefore be ruled out.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population 	<p>It is considered that there would be no significant effects on population resulting from the Neighbourhood Development Plan. This is due to the small scale of the Plan area.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health 	<p>The Neighbourhood Development Plan includes Policy MP8 – Green Areas, which states that proposals for new housing must include a suitable provision of, or contribution towards, functional green areas for local residents’ (including those with limited mobility) recreational purposes in accordance with the current Mid Suffolk District Council’s standards for open space provision. This ensures some degree of positive effect, proportionate to growth in the Plan area.</p> <p>There are considered to be no possible significant effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Development Plan regarding human health that would warrant a strategic assessment through SEA.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fauna 	<p>There are no direct impacts resulting from the Neighbourhood Development Plan on fauna that are considered significant at the Plan level. The Plan seeks net gains in biodiversity and does not propose / allocate sites for development that are identified as leading to the deterioration of designated</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>habitats. It is possible that development could be forthcoming within the Plan area that could have negative impacts on protected species, however these cannot be considered strategically significant to the extent that Strategic Environmental Assessment would be warranted. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case 'project level' basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA's adopted (and emerging) Local Plan.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flora 	<p>Numerous and various areas of Priority Habitat exist within the Plan Area. The Plan seeks to ensure that development proposals provide a net gain in biodiversity and the restoration and repair of fragmented biodiversity networks, through Policy MP8 – Green Areas. In addition to this adopted (and emerging) Local Plan policies apply. As a result, no effects are expected to result from the Neighbourhood Development Plan regarding flora.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil 	<p>The majority of the non-developed areas of the Neighbourhood Development Plan area consist of Grade 3 soil. Despite this, the Plan's site allocation (without planning permission) is located within an area identified as containing Grade 2 soil. This represents some of the best and most versatile in the District. There is the potential for a negative effect as a result of this allocation, however this is not considered significant in regard to the small scale of the allocation and the precedent set through part of the site having planning permission.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water 	<p>The Plan area is within a groundwater Source Protection Zone (Zone III). The Neighbourhood Development Plan does not allocate land for any development purposes that could give rise to ground water pollutants (e.g. give rise to hazardous substances such as pesticides, oils, petrol and diesel, solvents, arsenic, mercury or chromium VI; or non-hazardous substances such as ammonia or nitrates).</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>Pollution control policies at the LPA level apply within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area to ensure that no negative effects on water quality should be experienced within Mendlesham.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air 	<p>There are no identified air quality issues within the Plan area. Although consultation with Natural England is required for proposals that could cause air pollution (regarding industrial/agricultural development) in association with the IRZs of SSSIs in parts of the Plan area, no such development is proposed within the Plan. Furthermore, consultation would be required at the planning application stage and as such this is not considered a matter that would warrant SEA, as a strategic process, to be undertaken.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climatic factors 	<p>No policies exist within the Plan that thematically address flood risk issues, although it should be acknowledged that existing adopted Local Plan policies regarding flood risk apply in the Plan area.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Development Plan area contains an area of Flood Risk Zone 3 to south east of the Mendlesham settlement boundary. The Plan’s sole allocation without planning permission lies partially within this area, and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (Level 2) accompanies the Plan to explore the implications for this allocation in light of alternative site options. Within the scope of this Screening Report, it can be considered that negative effects could not be ruled out. As such it is considered that the uncertainty surrounding the effects of the proposals in the plan would warrant a SEA to be required.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material assets 	<p>The Plan area does not contain any land within a Minerals Consultation Area (MCA) within the County Council’s adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2020). The Plan therefore does not have any conflict with the MCA.</p> <p>Regarding other material assets, the content of the</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>Neighbourhood Development Plan is not considered to have any significant effects due to the extent / size of the Plan area. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA's adopted (and emerging) Local Plan.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural heritage 	<p>The Plan area contains numerous Listed Buildings, as well as a Conservation Area, associated with the built up area of Mendlesham. The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes within the Conservation Area, however the Plan's allocation of Land south of Glebe Way (Policy MP1) is located in close proximity to a Grade II* listed farmhouse and its setting. The potential for harm can not be ruled out within the scope of this SEA Screening Report, and as such, it can be considered that the uncertainty surrounding such effects would warrant the application of the SEA Directive and the formulation of a SEA Environmental Report.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape 	<p>The Plan area is located within the South Norfolk & High Suffolk Claylands National Character Area (NCA). Within this area, development pressure across the majority of the NCA has generally been low. Nevertheless, the protection of landscape value is a recurring thread throughout the Plan and the Plan includes policy content (Policy MP5 – Historic Environment, and those associated with site allocations) relevant to landscape character and its preservation.</p> <p>In light of the Plan's policy stance regarding landscape character and in consideration also of the requirements of development proposals in accordance with the District Council's adopted (and emerging) Local Plan, there are no significant strategic landscape effects identified within this Report that would warrant the requirement for the application of the SEA Directive and the formulation of a SEA Environmental Report.</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
The cumulative nature of the effects.	Although the above consideration of the possible effects of the Plan’s content highlights the potential for significant effects related to heritage and flood risk, these are considered isolated. As such, no significant cumulative effects have been identified within the scope of this Screening Report.
The trans boundary nature of the effects.	The adopted (and emerging) Local Plan at the District level can be considered to support the protection and improvement of conditions relevant to those sustainability factors listed within the SEA Directive. The Neighbourhood Development Plan is not considered to be in conflict with the wider thematic policies of the Local Plan. The HRA Screening Report undertaken to accompany the Neighbourhood Development Plan, which explores in-combination effects with other relevant plans and projects, also identifies no in-combination effects regarding Habitats (European) Sites.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g., due to accidents).	It is considered that there is no risk to human health or the environment as a result of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. This is in consideration of the above screening requirements related to sustainability themes. The Neighbourhood Development Plan is unlikely to give rise to any accidents that can be considered to have a significant risk to human health or the environment.
The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The Neighbourhood Development Plan relates to the local level only. The magnitude and spatial extent of the Plan’s content is unlikely to be significant in a wider District context. Effects are not expected to be realised over a wide geographic area.
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:	As highlighted above in the screening of the Neighbourhood Development Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Development Plan has been assessed as having the potential for negative effects associated with heritage and flood risk that would warrant further exploration

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special natural characteristics or cultural heritage • exceeded environmental quality standards • intensive land use 	<p>through the application of the SEA Directive.</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Development Plan has not been assessed as having any significant effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>

4. Conclusion

4.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development consent. The policies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at the local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

Paragraph 046 of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that:

‘Whether a neighbourhood plan proposal requires a strategic environmental assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed. A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:

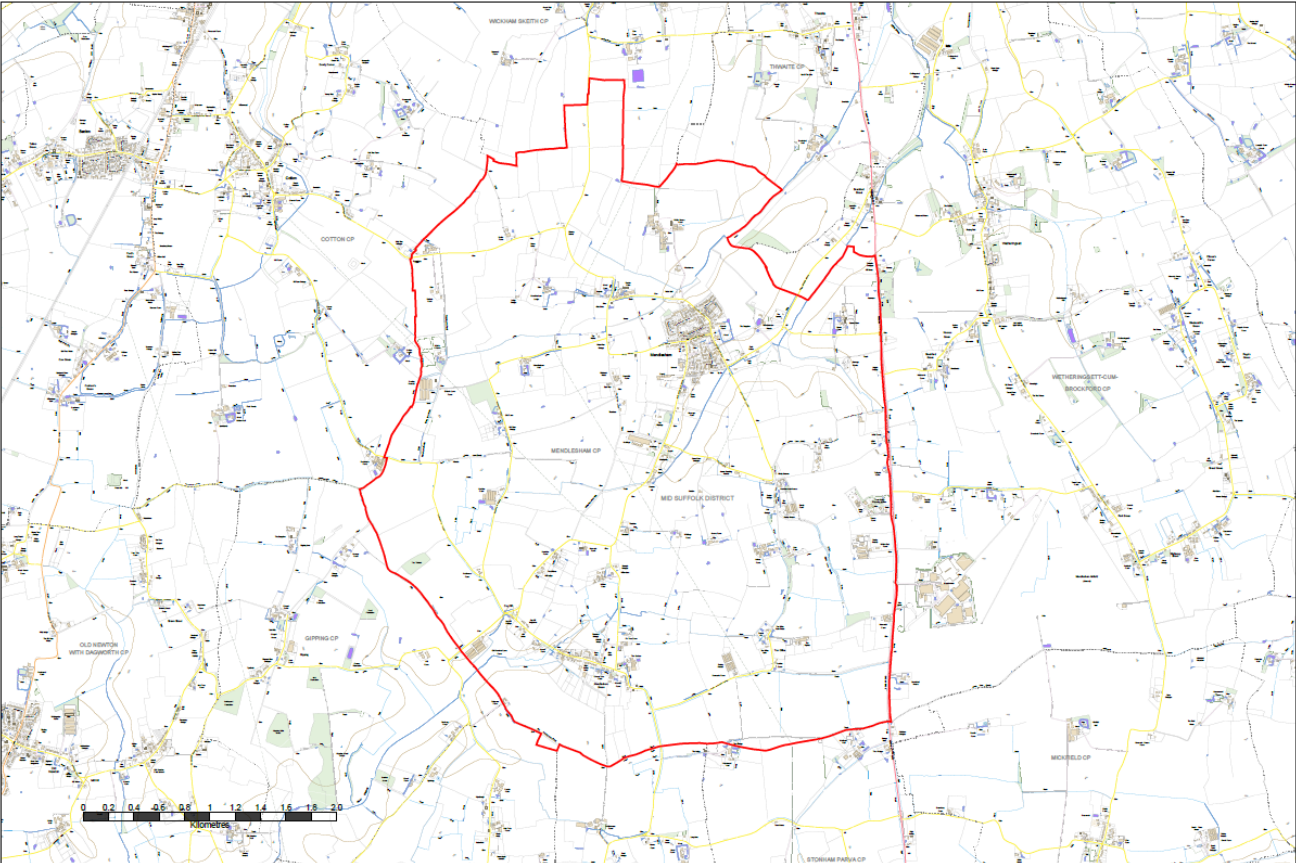
- *a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development*
- *the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan*
- *the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the local plan or other strategic policies for the area.’*

The Plan allocates land for development purposes and the Plan area contains sensitive natural and heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the Plan. As such there exists the potential for negative effects on the environment. Although these effects have since been explored within the Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging Local Plan, namely the allocation of site ‘Land to the South of the Ropers Farm estate, South of Glebe Way’ for 75 dwellings within both the emerging Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Development Plan, the emerging Local Plan is yet to found sound or adopted. The Neighbourhood Development Plan could therefore allocate the site in the first instance, and provide a policy framework for any future planning application related to it.

As such, it is considered that the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan can therefore be **screened in** for its requirement of SEA in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

Appendix 1

The Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan area



Source: Mendlesham Neighbourhood Development Plan



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