



Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Determination

(Regulation 11 of the Environmental Assessment
of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004)

November 2020

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REDGRAVE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION

1. Introduction

This assessment relates to the 'Redgrave Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 – 2036' (the 'Plan') which was published for Regulation 14 Pre-submission consultation in September 2020.

In some circumstances a neighbourhood plan could have significant environmental effects and may fall within the scope of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the Plan is compatible with European Union obligations. Whether a neighbourhood plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment and the level of detail needed will depend on what is proposed in the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the characteristics of the local area.

This report therefore determines whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required for the Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan. In doing so it refers to:

- The SEA Screening Report prepared by Land Use Consultants [*hereafter referred to as LUC*] which can be viewed at: www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/RedgraveNP
- The responses to this from the statutory consultees (See Appendix 1).

Section 2 below sets out the legislative background. Section 3 sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. Section 4 summarises the assessment and Section 5 sets out the conclusions based on the screening assessment and the responses of the statutory consultees. The determination is set out in Section 6.

2. Legislative Background

European Union Directive 2001/42/EC requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that would have a significant environmental effect. The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) require that this is determined by a screening process, which should use a specified set of criteria (set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations). The results of this process must be set out in a SEA Screening Statement, which must be publicly available.

In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Redgrave Parish Council (the qualifying body) requested Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC), as the responsible authority, to determine whether an environmental report on the emerging Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan is required due to significant environmental effects. In making this determination, MSDC should have regard to Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

Pre-Submission Consultation on this draft plan was carried out between mid-September and early November 2020. In line with the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance, the plan's potential scope should be

assessed at an early stage against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. As indicated above MSDC therefore commissioned LUC to prepare a screening report to assess whether an SEA would be required.

A SEA can be required in some limited situations where a sustainability appraisal is not needed. Neighbourhood Planning is one of these situations. Sustainability Appraisals (SAs) may incorporate the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, which implement the requirements of the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

A Sustainability Appraisal ensures that potential environmental effects are given full consideration alongside social and economic issues and it is good practice to do one to understand how a plan is to deliver sustainable development. However, NPPF Planning Practice Guidance states that there is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to undertake a sustainability appraisal as set out in section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It is down to the qualifying body to demonstrate whether its plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This is the purpose of the SEA Screening Report.

3. Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC

The criteria are set out in the following table:

<p>The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 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,2. the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy3. the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,4. environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,5. 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>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,7. the cumulative nature of the effects,8. the trans-boundary nature of the effects,9. the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),10. the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),11. the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,o exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,o intensive land-use,12. the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.
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[Source: Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC]:

4. Assessment

The Neighbourhood Plan includes the following Vision Statement:

“By 2036 Redgrave will continue to be a small, beautiful village that has developed sustainably. It will develop in proportion to its rural character; rich in green spaces surrounded by a diverse rural environment with a better balance of housing to meet the needs of its residents.”

The draft Plan then sets out sixteen planning policies. It references those new housing schemes that already benefit from the grant of planning permission and allocates one site for eight dwellings to meet other housing need. The remaining policies seek to shape future development within the designated Plan area and these are themed around ‘Community’, the ‘Built & Natural Environment’, and ‘Business & Infrastructure’.

A full assessment of the likely effects of the Plan are set out in the Screening Report dated September 2020 prepared by LUC. A copy of this can be viewed at:

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Redgrave-NP-SEA-Screening-Report-Sep20.pdf>

5. Screening Conclusion

The Screening Report prepared by LUC notes that the Plan allocates one site for residential development, delivering 8 homes, in addition to the 16 homes on other sites for which planning permission has already been granted. It also notes that residential development allocated through the Plan could have a range of environmental effects both during construction and afterward and, it discusses its proximity to the Conservation Area and listed buildings, and that it lies within the Impact Risk Zone associated with nationally and internationally designated Redgrave and Lopham Fen.

The Screening Report also notes that there are policies in the Plan and in the adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy that may provide mitigation, and that mitigation may also be provided by the policies in the emerging Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan but, given the sensitivity of the area in which the allocation is located it is considered that the potential to have significant environmental affects **cannot be screened out** for its requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

Consultation on the Screening Report was carried out with Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency.

Natural England agreed with the conclusion of the Screening Report. Historic England advised that SEA is not required on heritage grounds but do refer to recommendations that will be made as part of the Regulation 14 consultation process. Their full responses are set out in Appendix 1. No response has been received from the Environment Agency.

6. Determination

In the light of the SEA Screening Report prepared by Land Use Consultant and the responses from the statutory bodies it is determined that a precautionary approach is necessary and that the Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan **does require** a Strategic Environmental Assessment in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

By e-mail dated Mon 2 November 2020



Re: 331466 SEA / HRA Screening Consultation for Redgrave NP

Dear Paul,

Thank you for consulting Natural England.

Based on the documents provided we agree with the conclusions of both the HRA and SEA screening reports

Kind regards.

Richard Hack
Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development (Brecks)
Norfolk and Suffolk Area Team
Natural England

www.gov.uk/natural-england

During the current coronavirus situation, Natural England staff are working remotely and from some offices to provide our services and support our customers and stakeholders. Although some offices and our Mail Hub are now open, please continue to send any documents by email or contact us by phone to let us know how we can help you. See the latest news on the coronavirus at <http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> and Natural England's regularly updated operational update at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/operational-update-covid-19>.



By e-mail dated Fri 23 Oct 2020



Historic England

Re: Redgrave NP – SEA / HRA Screening Consultation

Dear Paul,

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 Redgrave 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 supporting information (screening report and draft neighbourhood plan) supplied with the consultation indicates that within the plan area there is a range of designated historic environment assets, including Redgrave Conservation Area and 48 listed buildings, including three designated at Grade II* and above. There is also likely to be other features of local historic, architectural or archaeological value, and consideration should also be given to the wider historic landscape. The documentation indicates that the Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan proposes to allocate a site for 8 houses, identified as RED1.

Site RED1 is located on Churchway, to the north-east of the village centre and on a section of a larger area of land currently used as recreation ground. The site is not within the conservation area, and not within the immediate vicinity of any other highly designated heritage assets. It is considered that the development of the site may reflect changes to the setting of the conservation area and potentially listed buildings within the village, but that these changes are unlikely to cause 'significant effects' in the context of this Strategic Environmental Assessment screening. We consider that a positive strategy for this site allocation policy would be to include considerations of locally distinctive design, sensitive treatment for any highways infrastructure and signage, and appropriate landscaping. We will advise as such via the Regulation 14 consultation.

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 considers that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is **not required** on heritage grounds.

Historic England nonetheless 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.

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.

Cont....

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.

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

Kind regards,

Edward James
Historic Places Adviser - East of England
Historic England

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