

**Babergh & Mid Suffolk District
Councils**

**Sproughton
Neighbourhood Plan
SEA Screening**

Final report

Prepared by LUC

June 2022

Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils

Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Sproughton Parish Council is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Sproughton is located within the east of Babergh District, just to the west of Ipswich. LUC has been appointed by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to consider whether there is a need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 SEA may be required for a Neighbourhood Plan if it is likely to have significant environmental effects. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is similar to SEA but includes assessment of the likely significant effects of a plan or programme on economic and social factors, as well as environmental factors. Planning Practice Guidance¹ (PPG) clarifies that there is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to be subject to SA, but that SA can be used to demonstrate how the plan will contribute to sustainable development.

1.3 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have commissioned LUC to carry out SEA Screening of the Pre-Submission Consultation version of the Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan (September 2021), taking into account post-consultation modifications (May 2022) in order to determine whether an assessment is required under European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive), transposed into UK law through the SEA Regulations².

1.4 LUC conducted SEA Screening on the Pre-Submission Consultation Neighbourhood Plan in October 2021 and concluded that the Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and that full SEA was therefore not required. Since this time Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening of the Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken separately by LUC on behalf of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and the outcomes have informed this update to the original SEA Screening outcome. The May 2022 post-consultation Modifications have also been considered.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

² The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633) as amended by The Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232) and The Environmental Assessment

of Plans and Programmes (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/1531). It should be noted that the purpose of the amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the European Union. No substantive changes are made to the way the SEA regime operates.

Chapter 2

SEA Screening

Scope of the Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan

2.1 Sproughton Parish Council and a Sub-Committee Group of local residents prepared the Pre-Submission Consultation version of the Neighbourhood Plan (September 2021) which was subject to public consultation in Autumn 2021. Since the consultation, a number of post-consultation changes have been proposed to the Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan covers the entire Parish of Sproughton.

2.2 The Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan includes a vision and 24 objectives that sit within seven themes:

1. Housing.
2. Business and Employment.
3. Natural Environment.
4. Historic Environment.
5. Development Design.
6. Infrastructure, Services and Facilities.
7. Transport.

2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan then sets out 21 planning policies (SPTN 1 – 21) to address those objectives, covering topics including the overall spatial strategy, protection of the natural and historic environment and design and infrastructure considerations.

2.4 The overall strategy for development in Sproughton is set out in policy SPTN1: Spatial Strategy, which states that the Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development which aligns with the district's Settlement Hierarchy. Proposals for development located outside the Settlement Boundary will only be permitted where they are in accordance with national and district level policies. The Neighbourhood Plan does not make any site allocations for new housing or other built development.

2.5 Policy SPTN5: New Business and Employment Development supports new business development proposals that are located within the Settlement Boundaries.

2.6 Policy SPTN8: Settlement Gaps addresses the protection of the open and undeveloped nature of the Settlement Gaps within Sproughton Parish and seeks to

prevent coalescence with the urban area of Ipswich and other surrounding parishes.

Baseline Information

2.7 This section summarises baseline information for the Parish of Sproughton, drawing from the information set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Context

2.8 Sproughton Parish is located in the Suffolk District of Babergh, eastern England. It is within the fringes of Ipswich to the east.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

2.9 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites within Sproughton Parish, however the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within a 13 kilometre Zone of Influence of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site and Orwell Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which are located around 10km to the south east.

2.10 There are no Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) within Sproughton, but there are three County Wildlife Sites located within the Parish: Sproughton Park, Burstall Long Wood and Hazel Wood. In addition, there are areas of Ancient Woodland across the Parish and four priority habitats present: deciduous woodland, traditional orchard, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and good quality semi-improved grassland.

2.11 Sproughton is also home to the priority species, Lapwing.

Population

2.12 Data from the 2011 Census shows that Sproughton Parish had a population of 1,376 people living in 581 households. The gender balance was 48.8% male and 51.2% female.

2.13 The proportion of people aged 65+ in 2011 was 26.4% which is higher than the average for Babergh District as a whole (21.4%) and significantly higher than the average for England (16.3%). The average number of children under 16 within the Parish is 7.2% lower than the district average. Also, 78.6% of houses are owned outright or with mortgage within the Parish compared to the national average of 63%.

2.14 The 2011 Census showed that there were 1,007 (67.9%) economically active residents aged 16 to 74 which was lower than both the Babergh average of 70.3% and the England average of 69.9%. The results of the 2020 Neighbourhood Plan Household Survey indicated that 17% of respondents

work either at home or in Sproughton, while 39% work outside of the Parish and 44% of residents are retired.

Human Health

2.15 In terms of the health of Sproughton residents, 47.2% of people are classified as in very good health, 33.5% as good, 13.1% as fair, 4.4% as bad and 1.9% as very bad. These health statistics are broadly similar to those for Babergh District and for England as a whole; however the 'very bad' and 'bad' figures for Sproughton Parish are higher than the averages for Babergh District at 0.9% and 3.4% respectively and for England at 1.2% and 4.2% respectively.

2.16 Sproughton has an ageing population which is likely to lead to more cases of residents suffering from age-related conditions such as dementia.

Soil

2.17 Sproughton Parish is comprised of heavy clay soil in the north of the Parish which supports several ancient woodlands as well as deep well drained loamy soils and silty and peat soils.

2.18 The Parish is comprised of Grades 2 and 3 agricultural land. It is not known if this land is Grade 3a (classed as high quality) or the lower quality Grade 3b.

Water

2.19 The majority of the Parish lies outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3, aside from the area around the River Gipping which runs through the north eastern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area. This area is within the floodplain and therefore within Flood Zone 3. Flood Zone 3 comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding (>1%), or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea (>0.5%) in any year.

Air and Climatic Factors

2.20 There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) that have been declared within Sproughton, the nearest being approximately 2km away in Ipswich.

2.21 Climate data is not available at Parish level, but within Babergh District as a whole, reductions in overall carbon emissions of 26% were achieved between 2005 and 2018. This reduction was mostly due to progress in reducing emissions from domestic sources, closely followed by industrial and commercial sectors, with minimal progress on transport emissions. Transport makes the largest contribution to carbon emissions in Babergh District.

Material Assets

2.22 Sproughton has a church, primary school, pub (which is currently unoccupied), community centre, community shop, antiques shop and various social and community groups.

2.23 Sproughton is well served with Public Rights of Way (PROWs) with a network of 22 PROWs linking various parts of the Parish. They also provide access to the wider countryside to the west and along the River Gipping to the north. 83% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Residents Questionnaire noted that public footpaths were a positive feature within the community and were keen to improve the network.

2.24 An issue raised by many residents during the consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan was traffic and road safety, with the speed and volume of traffic and parking being the key issues.

2.25 There is a daily bus service to Ipswich and a school bus service to local schools.

2.26 There are two industrial estates within the Parish, one of which is an enterprise park.

2.27 All of Sproughton Parish is included within a Minerals Consultation Area in the Suffolk Minerals Core Strategy.

Cultural heritage

2.28 The village has medieval origins associated with the river crossing. Overall, the historic character of the area remains intact with a large, thatched Tithe Barn, the church and mill forming an attractive cluster close to the river crossing.

2.29 There are currently 17 Listed Buildings within the Parish. The All-Saints Church is Grade II* and the remaining buildings are Grade II listed. None of these buildings are on Historic England's 'Heritage at risk' register.

2.30 The village centre contains several listed buildings which cluster around the Church and Sproughton Hall, and extend along Lower Street, reflecting the origins and oldest parts of the settlement close to the river. There is a further cluster of historic buildings (one of which is listed) around River's Farm and Sproughton House. Furthermore, Chantry Park

Registered Park and Garden lies adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area.

2.31 As well as those buildings on the statutory list, there are over 40 buildings in the parish of local significance that make a positive contribution to the character of the area and sense of place.

2.32 There is currently no Conservation Area designated within Sproughton, but this is being explored by the Parish Council in conjunction with Babergh District Council.

Landscape

2.33 The Suffolk County Landscape Character Appraisal identifies five landscape character types within the Parish as follows:

- Valley Meadowlands
- Rolling Estate Farmlands
- Rolling Valley Farmlands
- Ancient Plateau Claylands
- Plateau Farmlands.

2.34 The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies 10km from the Parish to the south east.

SEA Screening

2.35 An assessment has been undertaken to determine whether the Pre-Submission Consultation version of the Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan (September 2021) taking into account post-consultation modifications (May 2022) requires SEA in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

2.36 **Figure 2.1** overleaf presents the flow diagram entitled 'Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes' which is taken from the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive³, published in September 2005. This is a useful guide when considering whether a plan should be subject to SEA (The Practical Guide has been superseded by the National Planning Practice Guidance; however it still provides a useful and relevant guide to the process to use in making SEA screening decisions).

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf

Figure 2.1: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes

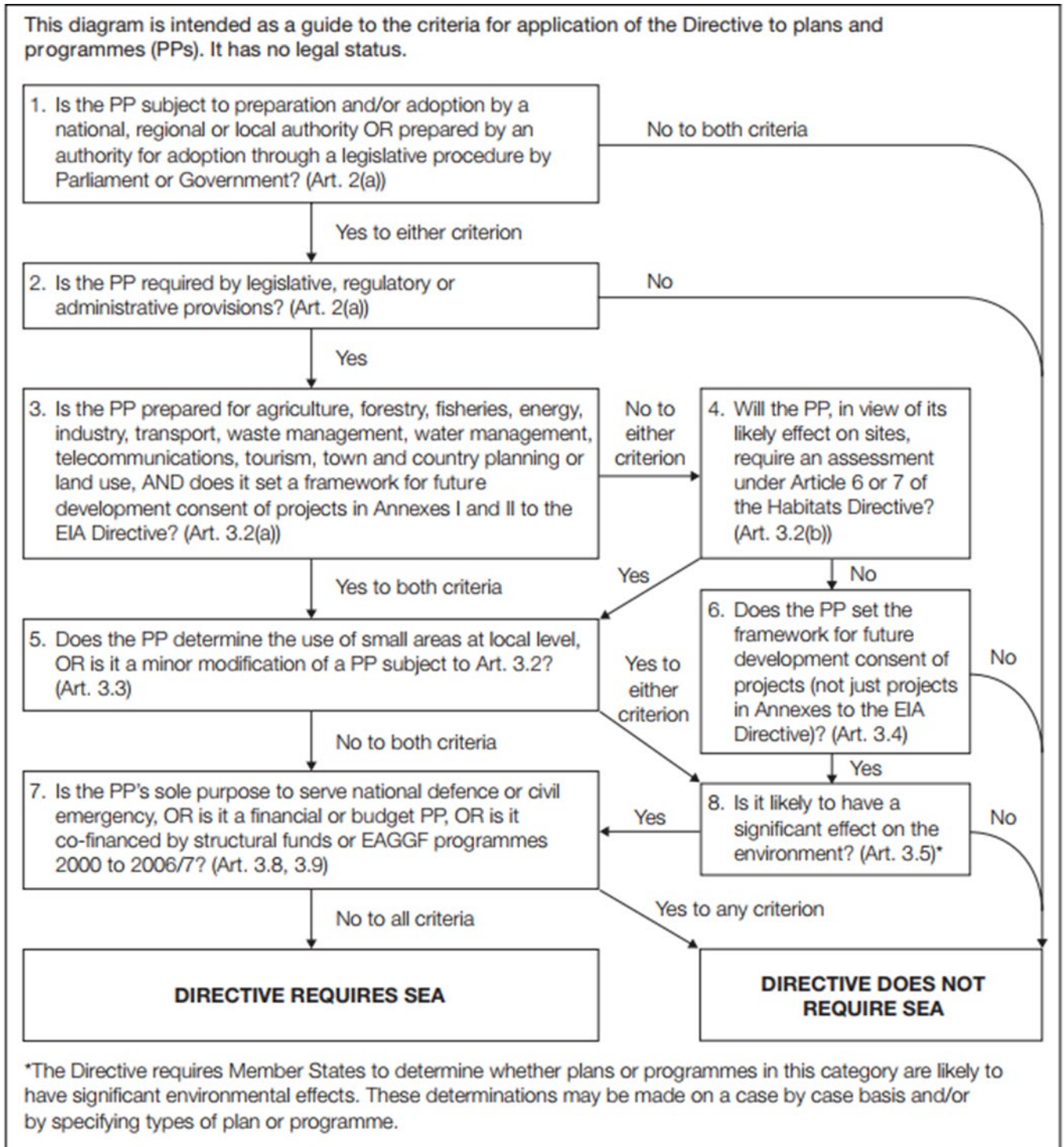


Table 2.1: Application of SEA Directive to the Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
1. Is the PP (plan or programme) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and will be adopted ('made') by the Local Authority (Babergh District Council) as part of the statutory development plan. Move to Q2.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	No	The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. However, there is no requirement to produce a Neighbourhood Plan; it is an optional plan. Once made it will become part of the statutory development plan. Therefore, it should continue to be screened. Move to Q3.
3. Is the PP 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? (Art 3.2(a))	Yes and No	The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared for town and country planning and land use, but it does not set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive. Move to Q4.
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	No	HRA screening of the Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken separately on behalf of Babergh District Council and has concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have significant effects on European sites, either alone or in combination. No: Move to Q6.
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Yes	Although the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development it includes policies which proposals for development within the Parish will be assessed against. Move to Q8 for assessment of significant effects.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	No	See Table 2.2 . SEA IS NOT REQUIRED.

2.37 Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. These are listed in **Table 2.2** below along with comments on the extent to

which the Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan meets these criteria.

Table 2.2: Likely Significant Effects

SEA Requirement	Comments
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:	
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	Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory development plan and will guide the delivery of development in Sproughton Parish, including in terms of design. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for residential or other forms of development. The adopted Babergh Core Strategy (2014) identifies Sproughton as a Hinterland Village. However, the Core Strategy makes the distinction between the parish and the village of Sproughton. The built up areas on the urban edge of Ipswich that are in the parish of Sproughton are not considered to be within or part of a hinterland

SEA Requirement	Comments
	<p>village, but rather part of the urban area of Ipswich. Policy CS2 – Settlement Pattern seeks to direct development to towns/urban areas (which includes the Ipswich Fringe) and to the Core Villages and Hinterland Villages, and states that development in the countryside will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances subject to a proven justifiable need.</p> <p>The emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan identifies Sproughton as being within the Ipswich Fringe and as a Core Village within Babergh. While the new Local Plan is not yet adopted, it has been taken into consideration in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is noted that the Regulation 19 (Pre-Submission) version of the Joint Local Plan (November 2020) makes provision for building at least 9,611 new homes across Babergh between 2018 and 2037 and that it is proposed that 21% of these will be in the Ipswich Fringe. The Joint Local Plan identifies a minimum housing requirement for Sproughton of 1,514 new homes between 2018 and 2037, of which 84 already had planning permission but had yet to be completed as of 1st April 2018. The remaining housing requirement is to be met through allocations made in the Joint Local Plan. In addition, the emerging Joint Local Plan has identified Sproughton as a strategic employment location with two strategic employment sites. There is no requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to identify additional housing or employment sites in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
2.the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The Neighbourhood Plan has to be in general conformity with the local strategic framework (i.e. the adopted Babergh Core Strategy (2014) and the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan). The Neighbourhood Plan must also have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework. The Neighbourhood Plan does not have influence over other plans. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for Sproughton Parish and will be used in conjunction with the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (once adopted) to determine planning applications.
3. the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,	One of the Basic Conditions which the Neighbourhood Plan must meet is to contribute to sustainable development.
4. environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,	Baseline information relating to Sproughton Parish was described earlier in this chapter. Key issues of relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan are the presence of the Flood Zone 3, designated heritage assets and a number of international and nationally designated nature conservation sites within close proximity of the Parish.
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).	N/A
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
6. the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for housing or other forms of development.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period up to 2037. Effects of the Neighbourhood Plan are expected to be indirect (due to not allocating sites) but long-term and permanent.</p>
7. the cumulative nature of the effects,	<p>Cumulative effects could result from the Neighbourhood Plan in combination with development that takes place in the surrounding towns and villages, although the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for housing or other forms of development.</p> <p>The Adopted Babergh Core Strategy (2014) identifies Sproughton as a Hinterland Village. However, the Core Strategy makes the</p>

SEA Requirement	Comments
	<p>distinction between the parish and the village of Sproughton. The built up areas on the urban edge of Ipswich that are in the parish of Sproughton are not considered to be within or part of a hinterland village, but rather part of the urban area of Ipswich. New development will be directed sequentially to these urban areas as well as to the Core Villages and Hinterland Villages. The scale and location of development will depend upon the local housing need, the role of settlements as employment providers and retail/service centres, the capacity of existing physical and social infrastructure to meet forecast demands and the provision of new/enhanced infrastructure, as well as having regard to environmental constraints and the views of local communities as expressed in parish/community/neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>The emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan identifies a minimum housing requirement of 1,514 new homes which is to be met through planning permissions for 84 homes that had not been completed by 1st April 2018 and sites that the emerging Joint Local Plan allocates for development. In addition, the emerging Joint Local Plan has also designated Sproughton Enterprise Park and Farthing Road Industrial Estate as strategic employment locations.</p>
8. the transboundary nature of the effects,	The Neighbourhood Plan focuses on Sproughton Parish only. Transboundary effects under the SEA Regulations refers transboundary effects on other EU Member States; therefore they are not relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.
9. the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),	There are no anticipated risks to human health or the environment from the Neighbourhood Plan.
10. the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),	The Neighbourhood Plan covers all of Sproughton Parish. The population of the Parish in 2011 was 1,376 people.
11. the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, ■ exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, ■ intensive land-use, 	Sproughton Parish is home to a number of County Wildlife Sites and is within a 13-kilometre Zone of Influence of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site and Orwell Estuary SSSI. Areas of Ancient Woodland are also present in the Parish. There are 17 Listed Buildings within the Parish. The Parish also has an area of land within Flood Zone 3 along the River Gipping and contains a significant proportion of Grade 2 agricultural land.
12. the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	There are no designated landscapes within or close to Sproughton Parish.

SEA Screening Conclusion

2.38 A screening assessment has been undertaken by applying the criteria from the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations to determine whether or not the Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects when assessed against the topics listed in the SEA Regulations.

2.39 The Neighbourhood Plan sets out objectives and planning policies to shape development in the Parish up to 2037 and decision makers will need to consider the criteria of these policies when determining future applications in the Parish. It does not directly impact on land use through the allocation of sites for housing or other forms of development.

2.40 On this basis, it is considered that the Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and that full SEA is therefore not required.

Next steps

2.41 This SEA screening option will be sent to the three statutory consultees (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) and will be reviewed as appropriate in light of any comments received.

LUC
June 2022

Chapter 2
SEA Screening

Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan
June 2022