

The Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement

Appendix 2: Sustainability Appraisal report

March 2017



2016-2031

GROVEHILL FUTURE

Jo Deacon

From: Laura Wood
Sent: 23 September 2015 10:14
To: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk; Historic England EastofEngland;
anna.parr@environment-agency.gov.uk
Cc: Jo Deacon
Subject: Screening opinion - Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan
Attachments: Grovehill Future NP SEA and HRA Screening Report - September 2015.docx;
Screening letter.doc

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please find attached a request for comments on a Screening Opinion for the emerging Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan. This request is being sent out by the Borough Council on behalf of the Grovehill Futures Neighbourhood Forum.

If you are not the correct contact within your organisation I would be grateful if you could forward this request on to the most appropriate person.

We would welcome any comments you may have by 23 October.

If you have any questions please contact myself or my colleague Jo Deacon (cc'd into this email).

Kind regards.

Laura

Laura Wood
Team Leader – Strategic Planning & Regeneration
Dacorum Borough Council
01442 228661

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Dacorum Borough Council has now started to charge a CIL on residential and retail developments within its administrative area. In order to calculate any CIL Charges and to administer the procedures set out in the CIL Regulations we require the submission of a CIL Additional Information Form with all planning applications even those for which no charge may ultimately be levied.

Find out how CIL may affect you at www.dacorum.gov.uk/cil

Date: 23 September 2015
Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Contact: Laura Wood
Email: laura.wood@dacorum.gov.uk
Directline: 01442 228661
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By email

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Dear Sir / Madam

Grovehill Future Draft Neighbourhood Plan – consultation on screening for Strategic Environment Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

A Neighbourhood Plan is currently being developed for the Grovehill Neighbourhood Area which is situated in the northern part of Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire. Once adopted the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the area.

Dacorum Borough Council, working in conjunction with the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Forum, has appointed consultants C4S to undertake a screening exercise to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, and/or an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).

A copy of the Screening Report is attached which includes the consultant's determinations that neither an SEA nor an Appropriate Assessment would be required. Both the authority and Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Forum support these findings. We wish however to seek confirmation from your organisation as to whether you agree with the screening findings included in this report. We would be grateful for your response by **23 October 2015** to enable work on the plan to progress to timetable. If you will not be able to respond by this date, we would be grateful if you could let us know so that the Neighbourhood Forum can amend their work programme accordingly.

Page 2 of the Screening Report document shows the agreed Neighbourhood Plan area, followed by a summary of the broad content and objectives of the Plan. The Council is satisfied that these plan policies are in general conformity with those within its own Core Strategy, which has been subject to its own Sustainability Appraisal process (incorporating SEA) and an Appropriate Assessment Report. These are available on our website:



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<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/local-planning-framework>

If you have any queries regarding the screening opinion, or would like further information on the Neighbourhood Plan itself, please contact either myself (details above) or my colleague Jo Deacon on 01442 228366 or email jo.deacon@dacorum.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "LWood". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Laura Wood
Team Leader – Strategic Planning
Strategic Planning and Regeneration



Grovehill Future Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

and

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report

September 2015

Grovehill Future Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

and

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report

September 2015

Prepared for: Dacorum Borough Council, Strategic Planning and Regeneration

R. Gardner, C4S at TRL Ltd.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan

On 11th February 2014 Dacorum Borough Council Cabinet designated the Grovehill Future organisation as the Neighbourhood Forum for the Grovehill Neighbourhood Area.

A Neighbourhood Plan (Grovehill Future NP) is now being prepared under the provisions of the Localism Act of 2011 to set planning policies for the development and use of land within Grovehill and create a vision for regenerating Henry Wells Square and the surrounding area. Once adopted the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the area.

1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The objective of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)¹ is to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans/programmes. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for certain type of plans and programmes to determine whether the plan or programme could have significant effects on the environment. The Grovehill Future NP falls within the categories of plan that might require SEA, but only if it is first determined that the plan would result in significant effects.

Government planning guidance for neighbourhood plans 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"².

¹ European Union Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) as implemented in the UK by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004 No. 1633)

² <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans/>

Section 3 of this report documents the findings of the Screening Assessment that has been undertaken.

1.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment

In addition to the need to consider whether SEA is required, it is also necessary to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment is required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)³, which relate to Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. This would be required if there was the potential for the Grovehill Future NP to have an adverse effect on the integrity of internationally important sites for nature conservation, the closest of these to Grovehill being the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

As with SEA, a screening process has been undertaken and this report documents the findings of that process (see Section 4).

2 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan

The neighbourhood plan covers the area shown in Figure 1.

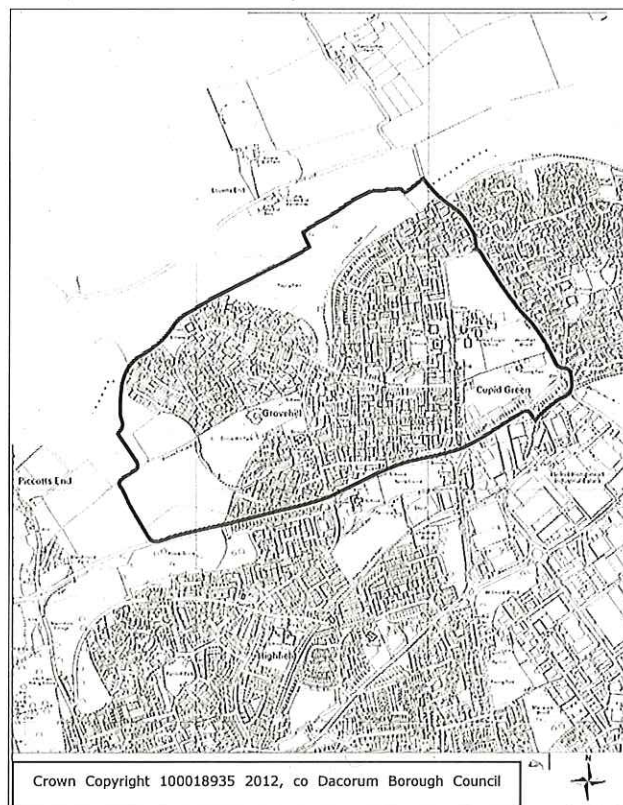


Figure 1: Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Area

³ The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010 transpose European Union Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law.

The aims of the Grovehill Future NP are as follows:

- Redefine the local hub for Grovehill at Henry Wells Square;
- Set out a clear vision for the ward that most people in the community support;
- Influence the types of development that meets the needs of the community;
- Improve and establish the impacts of connectivity for pedestrian and cyclists and encourage sustainable transport;
- Encourage and improve the natural and built environment of the ward; and
- Support and maintain community facilities and services within the ward.

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan includes policies covering the following topics:

Housing:

- Access and Connectivity:
 - Provide safe, street level access for pedestrians & cyclists
 - Provision of good public transport connections from new developments to the town centre/railway station.
 - Well designed, designated cycle routes to link all parts of Grovehill
 - Where practicable, consider the removal of underused and unpopular underpasses and install street level crossings
 - Clear signposting
 - Consideration should be given to the sensitive provision of storage facilities for refuse collection bins
- Environment:
 - New developments should be softened by the use of appropriate landscaping planting. Such planting should not undermine the structure or integrity of any new buildings.
 - All existing trees affected by any development proposal should be surveyed and assessed in accordance with BS 5837. If a development results in the loss of any woodland trees, they should be replaced with saplings of an appropriate species and planted elsewhere within existing woodland areas.
 - Environmentally sensitive lighting should be used to provide safe & secure off-road routes.
- Social and Community Facilities:
 - Consideration should be given to the inclusion of play facilities specifically for children and young people in all age-groups.
 - The provision of a combination of living and small-scale employment space will be encouraged (i.e. live-work units).
 - There should be adequate and high-quality public spaces (including the provision of benches and covered areas) provided along important pedestrian routes within the housing development.
- Design:
 - New homes should be constructed to an appropriate height to reflect the local character, maintain a low skyline, to preserve areas with existing open characteristics within Grovehill and include suitable wildlife corridors (retaining existing hedgerows and trees).

- Houses should be of a good quality design, use materials to complement the existing vernacular and comply with modern energy efficient standards (C rating of the Energy performance rating: EU directive 2002/91; Housing Act 2004; Energy performance of buildings regulations (SI 2007/991)).
- New homes should provide an adequate minimum area per room in accordance with the relevant space standards.
- Parking:
 - The provision of off-road parking will be preferable to the creation of new garage blocks.
 - Where garages are provided, these will be of appropriate size commensurate to modern vehicles
- Housing Mix:
 - Any new development shall seek to provide a mix of new homes to help meet local needs. In particular, support will be given to the provision of the following housing types:
 - Smaller starter homes;
 - Larger family homes;
 - Accommodation for the elderly; and
 - Properties for available to ownership and rent (including affordable and socially supported housing).

Garage blocks:

- Where there is an identified need, any rebuilding or refurbishment of existing garage blocks should provide units of a size commensurate with modern vehicles.
- Any refurbishment of existing garage blocks shall be designed to prevent crime and facilitate natural surveillance, provide appropriate lighting and make provision for CCTV to create a safe and attractive environment.
- Any refurbishment shall include planting and landscaping to reduce any visual impact and improve the local environment.
- Any redevelopment of garage blocks will complement and integrate with the existing community and be constructed to achieve good quality design and use of appropriate materials.
- Any proposal to refurbish, redevelopment or construct new garage blocks within Grovehill should accord with the design principles set out within the Dacorum Borough Council's Core Strategy Policies CS11, CS12 and CS13

Public and Green Space Amenities:

- High quality and well-designed public spaces
- Include environmentally sensitive lighting, where necessary, to provide safe and secure off-road routes.
- Provide adequate and high quality public space furniture within and along important routes.
- Provide high quality seating and covered areas.
- Provide recreational facilities for children and young people.
- Include planting and landscaping to reduce visual impact of the development and improve the natural environment.
- Support the installation of artwork and temporary exhibitions in public areas
- Create better public access between green spaces.
- Promote a greater range of uses in urban green spaces.

Henry Wells Square Redevelopment Principles:

- An increase in the number of units (retail/business) within Henry Wells Square should be encouraged;
- The redevelopment should incorporate the provision for new homes above the retail/business units;
- The redevelopment of Henry Wells Square must seek to improve the experience for the consumer and encourage a diverse variety of retail outlets and businesses. In order to achieve this, the following should be taken into consideration when developing the design of the site:
 - Landscaping in and around the Square to encourage the use of external spaces for meeting/relaxing; to complement existing surroundings; and to be aesthetically pleasing.
 - Adequate and aesthetic lighting;
 - Covered, well paved areas;
 - Easy, safe and suitable access to shopping areas and other facilities within the site for pedestrians and vehicles.
 - Informative sign posting, clear street names, unit numbers and names
- The redevelopment must ensure all existing places of worship are retained, enhanced or provided elsewhere within the site;
- The redevelopment of Henry Wells Square should provide safe and convenient access off Aycliffe Drive and include sufficient car parking to meet the needs of the local centre.

Grovehill Connectivity and Public Realm:

- Where required and possible, amend and upgrade existing pathways to make the routes easier to navigate.
- Form a connected network of well designed, shared cycle routes throughout Grovehill with links to any new developments and to the wider regional cycle network, e.g. the Nickey Line.
- Where practicable, consider the removal of underused and unpopular underpasses and install street level crossings.
- Implement signage throughout the pedestrian and cycle network to direct people to Henry Wells Square, local schools, other community facilities as well as towards adjacent rights of way in the surrounding countryside. Any new signage should typically be natural wood signs and include maps where appropriate. It may be appropriate to provide pavement markings in accordance with the Highway Authority's standards to improve legibility of the existing and any new pedestrian and cycle networks.
- Pedestrian and cycle networks should be made safe and secure utilising environmentally sensitive lighting.
- Any non-essential street furniture should be removed in order to de-clutter the street scene.
- Where required, provide traffic calming measures, taking account of users of all modes of transport in accordance with the relevant Highway Authority's standards.

3 Screening for SEA

3.1 Introduction

A Sustainability Appraisal incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive has been undertaken for the adopted Dacorum Core Strategy and also the Dacorum Site Allocations document, that is to be finalised before being submitted to the Secretary of State for an independent examination to be undertaken by a planning inspector.

Some of the policies and allocations included in these Borough wide planning documents, are directly relevant to the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan area (e.g. Local Allocation 1: Marchmont Farm; and the potential allocation H/h111 Henry Wells Square⁴), however as they have already been subjected to SEA there is no need to repeat the process for these plan elements.

Therefore the screening process for the Grovehill Future NP just needs to focus on the specific policies and proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan and not on the wider principles of whether the area should be subject of new development / redevelopment or not.

3.2 SEA Screening

Annex II⁵ of the SEA Directive contains criteria for determining whether plans are likely to have significant environmental effects. These criteria are included in Table 1 along with an assessment of the likelihood of significant effects arising from the implementation of the Grovehill Future NP.

Table 1: SEA Screening for the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood of significant effects	Assessment Commentary
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to—		
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	No	The NP sets the framework for redevelopment activities at a local level but the effects are not considered significant in terms of SEA.

⁴ This site has not been allocated in either the Core Strategy or the Site Allocations document but has been subject to high level assessment as part of the SA/SEA for the Site Allocation options that were included in Dacorum's Supplementary Schedule of Site Appraisals (September 2014)

⁵ Included as Schedule 1 in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	No	The NP sits below other plans in the hierarchy that have been subject to SEA.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	No	The NP promotes sustainable development but the effects are not considered significant in terms of SEA.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	No	The NP does not contain policies that would give rise to environmental problems.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	No	The NP does not contain policies relevant to the implementation of EC legislation.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to—		
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	No	
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	No	The NP will have some positive cumulative effects with the Core Strategy but these will not be significant.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	No	This criterion relates to effects on other EU Member States.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	No	The NP will not result in any risks to human health.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	No	The NP covers a small local area and the effects are likely to be restricted to that area.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—		
(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;	No	<p>The NP area includes the Woodhall Wood wildlife site that is an area of ancient woodland.</p> <p>The NP area contains Hunting Gate Wood - extension of Margaret Lloyd Park.</p> <p>The NP area includes an area of local archaeological importance "<i>Evidence of high status Roman occupation including burials</i>" to the south of Woodhall Wood.</p> <p>The NP area is partly within the Metropolitan Green Belt.</p> <p>The objectives and policies within the NP will not have significant effects on these special characteristics.</p>

(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or	No	The NP plan will not result in any environmental standards or limit values being exceeded.
(iii) intensive land-use; and	No	The NP relates to improvement of the current land use and not new intensive land use.
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	No	The NP area is >1km from the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The NP will not have any adverse effects on the setting of the AONB.

3.3 SEA Screening Outcome

The screening assessment documented in Table 1 did not identify any criteria where significant effects are likely to result from the implementation of the draft Grovehill Future NP.

As a result of this finding it is considered that it will not be necessary to undertake an SEA of the Grovehill Future NP. However before a decision can be finalised it will be necessary to consult with the statutory environmental bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England) to receive their formal views on whether SEA is required.

This Screening Report will be used for the purposes of that consultation.

4 Habitats Regulations Assessment

4.1 Introduction

In addition to SEA it is also necessary to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment should be carried out to meet the obligations of the Habitats⁶ and Wild Birds⁷ Directives. These Directives aim to protect and improve Europe's most important habitats and species, such as the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation situated in the north of Dacorum Borough.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was undertaken for the adopted Dacorum Core Strategy and this was revisited for the Dacorum Site Allocations document.

The HRA for these higher level plans concluded that there would be no significant effects on Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, this being the only European Site likely to be affected by development in Dacorum. Natural England concurred with this conclusion.

⁶ Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

⁷ Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds

4.2 HRA Screening

Chiltern Beechwoods SAC is situated approximately 6km to the north-west of the neighbourhood plan area.

The Grovehill Future NP does not introduce a new development that would result in any effects that would be of a scale that would alter the findings of the previous HRA of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations document. Therefore the conclusions of the Core Strategy HRA Report remain unchanged and it will not be necessary to undertake any further HRA, namely an Appropriate Assessment, for the Grovehill Future NP.

5 Conclusion and Next Steps

The screening processes documented in Sections 3 and 4 have concluded that, subject to confirmation from the statutory consultation bodies, neither SEA nor an Appropriate Assessment will be required to be undertaken during the development of the Grovehill Future NP. Following the receipt of responses from the statutory consultation bodies the screening decisions will be finalised.

If significant changes are made to the policies in the Draft Grovehill Future NP following the consultation it may be necessary to revisit the screening, however this is considered to be unlikely given the scope of the Plan.



Historic England

East of England

Laura Wood
Strategic Planning and Regeneration
Dacorum Borough Council
Civic Centre
Marlows
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP1 1HH

Our ref: HD/P 5252
Your ref: None
Telephone: 01223582746

Sent via email only to laura.wood@dacorum.gov.uk

20th October 2015

Dear Laura Wood

Re: Grovehill Future Draft Neighbourhood Plan – consultation on screening for Strategic Environment Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Thank you for your letter dated 23rd September 2015 and the attached Screening Report for the above Neighbourhood Plan. We have the following comments.

For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, “Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?” in respect to our area of concern, Cultural Heritage. Our comments are based on the information supplied within your letter dated 23rd September 2015 and the Screening Report. It is for Dacorum Borough Council to make the final decision in terms of whether an SEA is required for the neighbourhood plan.

The Screening Report indicates that the Council considers that the neighbourhood plan will not significantly affect any ‘special natural characteristics or cultural heritage’ in the plan area.

It is acknowledged that whilst there are site allocations directly relating to the neighbourhood plan area (such as Marchmont Farm and potentially Henry Wells Square) these have been/will be the subject of an SEA through the wider Site Allocations process and it is therefore not your intention to repeat the process for this neighbourhood plan, which seems reasonable. It is however considered that the outcome of the SEA process with regard to these two sites should be clearly reflected within the Screening Report and within the emerging neighbourhood plan for clarity. We would also like to highlight our previous representations on the Site Allocations, most recently dated 22 September 2015, particularly with regard to comments over the site allocation at Marchmont Farm.

In terms of the screening assessment itself, we welcome the acknowledgment of the site of archaeological importance to the south of Woodhall Wood. It is considered the Screening Report should contain more information on the Historic Environment and highlight historic designations such as the one designated heritage asset within the area, the Grade II Listed farmhouse, and make note of non-designated Heritage

Assets, seeking appropriate protection. The proximity to the Piccotts End Conservation Area and associated Listed Buildings should also be acknowledged.

Notwithstanding the above, on the basis of the information supplied, as potential development sites within the neighbourhood plan boundary have been covered by an SEA within the Site Allocations process, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of an SEA is not required for the neighbourhood plan.

We should like to stress that the above opinions are based on the information provided by you within your letter dated 23rd September 2015, the Screening Report and previous consultation on the Site Allocations (our most recent response dated 22 September 2015). 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 as a result of the neighbourhood plan where we consider that, despite the absence of an SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the Historic Environment.

The views of other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for the SEA is made. I would be pleased if you can send copies of the determination as required by Regulation 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

In terms of the drafting of the neighbourhood plan itself, to ensure the adequate consideration of the Historic Environment within the plan, I have attached a link to our website which contains information and publications which will be of assistance: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/>.

For information and for further policy consultation please note our new consultation email address for the East of England, eastplanningpolicy@HistoricEngland.org.uk.

I hope you have found the above of some assistance. If you would like any clarification or would like to discuss the above please do not hesitate to contact me on my direct dial 01223 582746 or email me at kayleigh.wood@HistoricEngland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kayleigh Wood', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Kayleigh Wood
Historic Environment Planning Adviser (East of England)
kayleigh.wood@HistoricEngland.org.uk

Date: 28 October 2015
Our ref: 166383
Your ref:



Laura Wood
Laura.Wood@dacorum.gov.uk

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T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms Wood,

Grovehill Future Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 23rd September 2015.

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.

We support the aim to encourage and improve the natural environment of the ward and the use of environmentally friendly lighting, the inclusion of wildlife corridors and planting and landscaping to minimise the effect of development on the natural environment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Natural England was consulted for the Presubmission Site Allocations document for Dacorum, to which we responded on 3rd November 2014. In this response, we provided comments on the Local Allocations policies and master plans, including Policy LA1: Marchmont Farm, Hemel Hempstead. Our comments were as follows:

'We are pleased to note that an ecological survey of the site has already been undertaken and further surveys will be undertaken at the planning application stage and prior to any development taking place. Natural England is satisfied that proposals are unlikely to have any adverse effect on statutorily designated sites. We welcome that all trees and hedgerows within the site are to be retained and existing ecological corridors through and around the site to Howe Grove, Margaret Lloyd Park and the wider countryside are to be maintained. The Sustainability Appraisal identifies positive effects on greenhouse gas emissions and air quality, as the site has good access to local facilities which could decrease the need to travel, reducing the level of growth in emissions. We support improvement to pedestrian and cycle access and incorporation of open space and green linkages.'

As the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan is not introducing new development that would alter these findings, Natural England is in agreement that no SEA will be required for this plan.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Natural England was consulted on the Dacorum Core Strategy and Site Allocations documents. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Core Strategy found no significant effects on Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from individual developments as a result of either

air pollution or recreational disturbance. The assessment was updated to ensure there are no cumulative significant impacts on the SAC due to development proposed around Hemel Hempstead and the wider region. Natural England agreed with the conclusions of the HRA and the avoidance and mitigation measures proposed.

The Grovehill Future Draft Neighbourhood Plan document does not put forward any sites that are of a scale and/or location that will alter the findings of the previous HRA (of the Core Strategy) or the Site Allocations document, therefore Natural England concurs that there is no requirement to carry out an HRA for this Neighbourhood Plan. However, for clarity we advise that the Screening Report is amended to demonstrate that potential in-combination effects, with other projects and plans, have been considered. This is required to enable the Report to conclude that the Plan alone, and in-combination with other plans and projects, is unlikely to have a significant effect.

For awareness, Neighbourhood Plans cannot exist where there is likely to be a significant effect on a European designated site. For this reason, Neighbourhood Plans cannot get as far as the Appropriate Assessment (AA) stage of a Habitats Regulations Assessment. Paragraph 1.3 and Part 4 of the Grovehill Future Draft Neighbourhood Plan are therefore incorrect when they refer to a requirement to determine whether an AA should be carried out. The requirement under the Habitats and Birds Directives as transposed into English law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, is that a Likely Significant Effect test is carried out to ascertain whether there is likely to be a significant effect on the integrity of a European designated site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Subject to implementation of the amendment suggested above, Natural England is satisfied that this 'test' has been applied through the HRA Screening Report.

I hope these comments are helpful. For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Kate Ginn on 07876034621. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Kate Ginn
Sustainable Land Use Adviser

Jo Deacon

Subject: FW: Screening opinion - Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan

From: SPHatfield [<mailto:SPHatfield@environment-agency.gov.uk>]

Sent: 23 October 2015 09:27

To: Laura Wood

Subject: RE: Screening opinion - Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan

Hi Laura

Having taken a look at the information submitted we don't have any specific comments to make. Therefore we see no reason to request a SEA or an Appropriate Assessment.

Kind regards

Natasha Smith
Planning Advisor

Sustainable Places | Environment Agency - Hertfordshire and North London

Apollo Court, 2 Bishops Square Business Park, St Albans Road West, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9EX

☎ Internal: 725 2332

☎ External: 01707 632332

✉ SPHatfield@environment-agency.gov.uk

From: Laura Wood

Sent: 23 September 2015 10:14

To: 'consultations@naturalengland.org.uk'; 'Historic England EastofEngland'; 'anna.parr@environment-agency.gov.uk'

Cc: Jo Deacon

Subject: Screening opinion - Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please find attached a request for comments on a Screening Opinion for the emerging Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan. This request is being sent out by the Borough Council on behalf of the Grovehill Futures Neighbourhood Forum.

If you are not the correct contact within your organisation I would be grateful if you could forward this request on to the most appropriate person.

We would welcome any comments you may have by 23 October.

If you have any questions please contact myself or my colleague Jo Deacon (cc'd into this email).

Kind regards.

Laura

Laura Wood

Team Leader – Strategic Planning & Regeneration

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Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)