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**Warburton
Neighbourhood Development Plan
2024 - 2039**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment
Screening Report**

Kirkwells

The Planning People

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kirkwells Planning Consultants have prepared this screening report on behalf of Warburton Parish Council to support the Parish Council in determining whether the contents of the proposed Warburton Neighbourhood Plan are likely to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.2 The requirement to undertake environmental assessment of plans and programmes was established in the EU Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive), transposed into English law in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations SEA is required where a plan or programme is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The assessment provides the main mechanism for ensuring that the environmental implications of decisions are considered before decisions are made and should be an integral part of plan preparation where potential for significant effects on the environment have been identified.

2. Background

- 2.1 Neighbourhood Planning gives local communities the opportunity to prepare planning documents for their area, enabling them to shape the future of where they live and giving them greater ownership of the plans and policies that affect them. Introduced under the Localism Act in 2011, Neighbourhood Plans provide a relatively new tier of planning policy.
- 2.2 Planning policy for the district is contained in several planning documents. [Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022 to 2039](#) was adopted on 21st March 2024. Appendix A: Replaced District Local Plan Policies Table A.8 Replaced Trafford Local Plan Policies sets out which Trafford Local Plan policies have been replaced. Local planning policies are also set out in [Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy Development Plan Document, adopted January 2012 and Saved Policies from the Revised Unitary Development Plan, 2006](#). Most of the UDP policies are no longer operational as they have been superseded by other Local Plan documents including the Core Strategy. Consideration of the compliance of the local plan policies with the revised National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) was published in 2019¹ and the NDP only refers to those policies not considered to be out of date.
- 2.3 Warburton Parish was designated as a neighbourhood area by Trafford Council on 4th March 2019. The Draft NDP has been prepared following an informal consultation on a Vision, Objectives and key planning themes document in late 2021 / early 2022, and informal consultation on the emerging Draft Plan in May and June 2023. The Draft Plan and has been informed by a range of background and supporting documents including a masterplan and design guidelines and a historic environment report. The relevant background documents can be found on the NDP pages of the Warburton Parish Council website <https://www.warburtonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan> .

¹ [A Review of Local Development Plan Policies](#)

- 2.4 Trafford Council confirmed to the Parish Council that they cannot undertake the SEA and HRA Screening Assessments for the NDP. However, the Council was consulted on drafts of the two documents and has provided advice and support during the preparation of the Plan policies and proposals.

3.0 Warburton Draft NDP

- 3.1 Warburton parish has a low lying, rural character and includes a number of working farms. There are several areas of woodland (including ancient woodland) and some traditional orchards. The boundaries of the Parish are delineated by the water courses of Red Brook to the north and the River Bollin to the south. The Manchester Ship Canal forms the boundary to the west and part of the old course of the River Mersey lies to the north and west of the village. There are also numerous ponds, many dating from medieval times. Most of the area, apart from an area to the north near Partington, is washed over by the Green Belt.
- 3.2 Development is concentrated in the village of Warburton and the smaller settlement of Mossbrow. There are two churches. The old church of St Werburgh dates from Saxon times and is located close to the toll bridge. The newer church of St Werburgh is on Bent Lane, about half a mile from the medieval church and includes the Parish Room. The Saracen's Head public house is located just outside the village on Paddock Lane.
- 3.3 There are 22 listed buildings including Grade I Old Church of Saint Werburgh and a Conservation Area in Warburton village. A list of Non designated Heritage Assets (NdHAs) is in the process of being adopted by Trafford Council. There is evidence that a large area of the northwest of the parish around Warburton Park was occupied by a medieval deer park, believed to date from the 1200s. This is a significant heritage asset with potential for further archaeological interest.
- 3.4 The Draft NDP has a Vision and 9 Objectives. The Objectives are:
- Objective 1: To conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape, buildings and heritage assets of the Parish, ensuring that any development is sympathetic, sensitively designed and high quality which is keeping with local character and respects the Village Design Statement.
 - Objective 2: To develop green credentials and promote conservation, allowing wildlife to flourish in woods, hedgerows, fields and watercourses.
 - Objective 3: To encourage the further development of Green Infrastructure throughout the Parish, linking up to neighbouring Parishes where possible and further developing the informal recreational facilities of the Parish.
 - Objective 4: To promote the legacy/history of the village and its setting as social capital, publicising its importance so that it becomes more widely known.
 - Objective 5: To encourage safe and sustainable transport and improve opportunities for walking and cycling.
 - Objective 6: To maintain a diverse, cohesive, safe and healthy local community, maintaining the character and vitality of the Parish.
 - Objective 7: To plan for local infrastructure and digital connectivity improvements and their enhanced resilience which meet the existing and future requirements of residents and respects the local landscape.

- Objective 8: To integrate farmers and agriculture in the broader community through supporting diversification / more sustainable land use and encouraging local production and consumption.
- Objective 9: To ensure a greener future by maximising energy and resource efficiency, creating a low-carbon neighbourhood.

3.5 The Draft NDP includes emerging, draft local planning policies which aim to:

- Conserve and enhance local and historic landscape character and promote enhancements to wildlife and habitats (Policies W1 Conserving and Enhancing Local Landscape Character, W2 Warburton Deer Park, W3 Protecting and Enhancing Wildlife and W4 Warburton Moss).
- Conserve and enhance built heritage assets and promote high quality and sustainable design in new development (Policies W5 Responding to Local Character, W6 Protecting Heritage Assets, W7 Non designated Heritage Assets, W8 Warburton Conservation Area, W9 Archaeology, W10 Warburton Masterplan, W11 Sustainable Design and Climate Change).
- Promote walking and cycling as part of active and sustainable travel (Policy W12 Walking and Cycling),
- Protect areas of Local Green Space (Policy W13 Local Green Space) and
- Support rural employment opportunities and renewable energy schemes and protect local community facilities (Policies W14 Rural Diversification, W15 Energy Proposals and W16 Community Facilities).

3.6 The emerging Draft Warburton NDP was published for informal consultation until the end of June 2023.

3.7 The responses to the informal consultation informed a number of amendments to the Draft Plan, most of which were minor. There were some changes to the wording of the built heritage policies following advice from Trafford Council's conservation officer and the Warburton Masterplan and policy was revised to be in closer alignment with PFE, to ensure greater general conformity. This meant that the density and quantum of development within Warburton neighbourhood plan area has been increased from that proposed in the emerging Draft Plan. The proposed density is now 25dph and approximately 400 housing units would be delivered; this is in line with PFE.

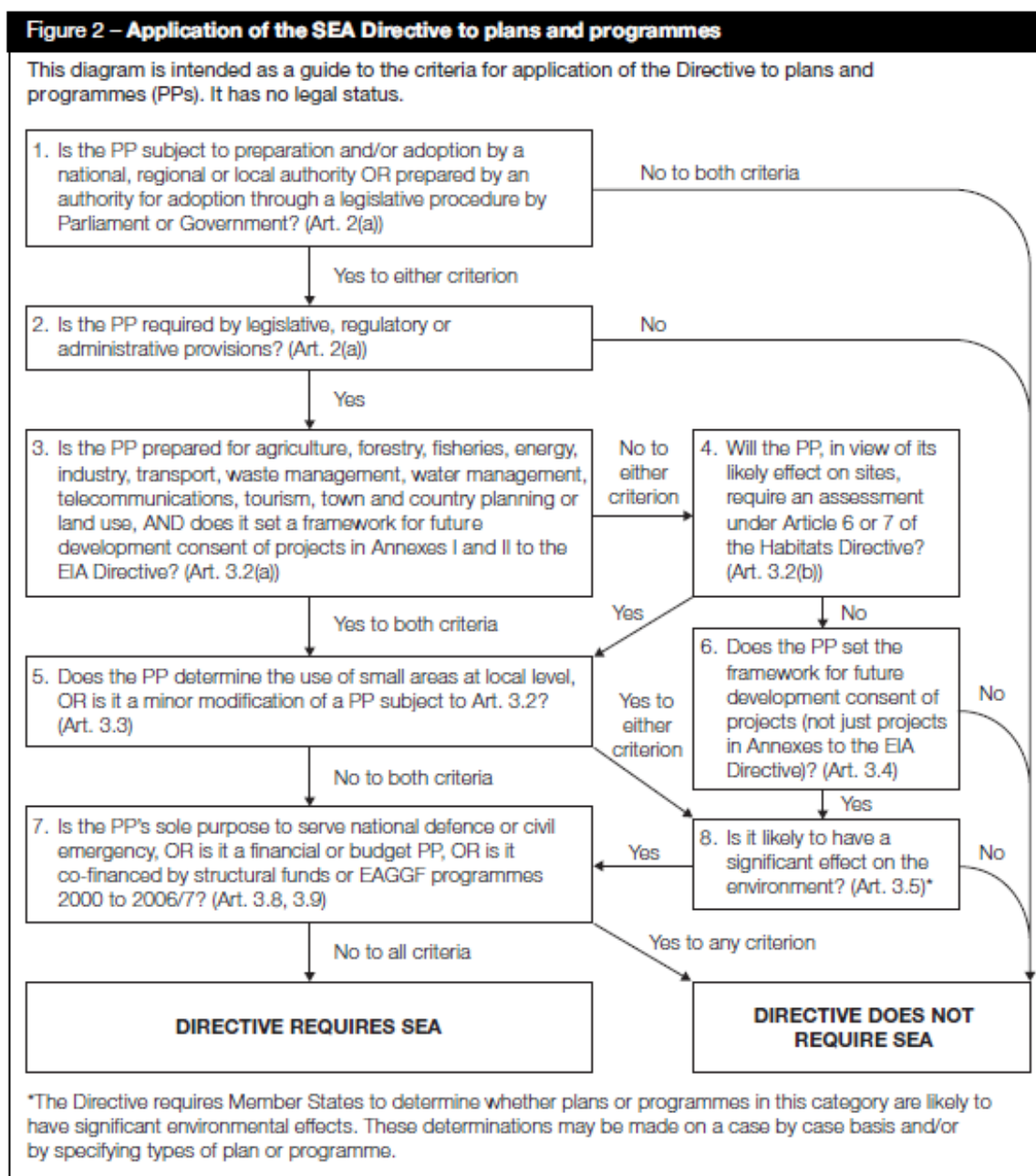
3.8 Warburton Masterplan and Design Guide and other background documents can be found on the neighbourhood plan pages of Warburton Parish Council's website – see <https://www.warburtonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan> .

3.9 Following the period of formal consultation (Regulation 14), the Draft Plan will be finalised for submission later in 2024.

4. SEA Screening

4.1 The Draft Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed using guidance provided in the Department of the Environment 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (September 2005) (Figure 2). This describes the process through which plans and programmes should be assessed.

Figure 1: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes



4.2 The Parish Council has followed this process with the findings of the assessment described in Table 1.

Table 1: SEA Assessment

Stage	Y/N	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))	Y	The Neighbourhood Plan is not a Development Plan Document, however if the document receives 50% or more 'yes' votes through a referendum it will be 'made' (adopted) by Trafford Council.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions (ART. 2 (a))	N	<p>Communities have a right to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, however they are not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative purposes to produce one.</p> <p>The Plan however if adopted would form part of the Development Plan and as such it is considered necessary to answer the following questions to determine further if SEA is required.</p>
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 of the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2 (a))	Y	The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared for town and country planning and land use and will when adopted set out a framework for future development in the Neighbourhood Plan designated area. This could potentially include uses detailed in Annexes I and II of the EIA Directive.
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effects on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art 3.2 (b))	N	<p>The proximity of four European sites (2 SACs and 2 Ramsar sites) within approx. 15 km of the NDP area boundary indicates that there could be potential for the plan to have a significant adverse effect on European sites. (In addition, the Mersey Estuary (a Ramsar Site and SPA) is just over 20km away to the west.)</p> <p>The existence of part of a strategic site allocation which includes 400 houses within Warburton NDP area is considered to make this possible, alongside other NDP policies which support other appropriate development (subject to Green Belt policies).</p> <p>However, the strategic site allocation is included in a higher-level plan (Places For Everyone) which has undergone HRA and Integrated Assessment and is referred to in</p>

Stage	Y/N	Reason
		<p>the emerging Trafford Local Plan which has undergone HRA.</p> <p>The NDP does not propose significant development over and above that set out in the higher-level strategic plan PFE. Three options for the Warburton Masterplan were prepared for informal consultation at the same time as the emerging Draft Plan.</p> <p>Following concerns from Trafford Council about general conformity with PFE the preferred option was amended to provide a similar quantum of development and density as PFE. However, the Draft Plan has retained its strong focus on the protection of natural heritage assets and built heritage / archaeology. The NDP policies taken together should help to mitigate adverse effects arising from the proposed development of the strategic site.</p> <p>This was confirmed in the initial HRA screening of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
<p>5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, or is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan has potential to determine the use of small areas at a local level, whether that is through the application of detailed criteria or the allocation of land.</p> <p>However, the Warburton NDP does not include any additional site allocations for development and does not propose to significantly increase the quantum of development already planned for in PFE.</p> <p>Several areas of land are identified for Local Green Space designation.</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan contains policies through which planning applications within the designated area will be determined.</p>
<p>7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial or budget PP, or is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/07? (Art 3.8, 3.9)</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Stage	Y/N	Reason
<p>8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)</p>	<p>?</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan will need to have regard to national planning policy and be in general conformity with local planning policy. This includes policies contained in the Local Plan.</p> <p>Built heritage assets in the NDP area include Warburton conservation area and 22 listed buildings. There are also numerous non designated heritage assets including the site and features associated with a medieval Deer Park.</p> <p>A masterplan has been prepared for that part of the neighbourhood area within the proposed strategic site allocation in PFE. This has been informed by the natural and built heritage assets within and close to the site and requires development to protect and enhance these assets wherever possible.</p> <p>The Warburton Masterplan sets out development and design principles for that part of the proposed strategic site within the neighbourhood area and design guidelines for the parish as a whole. These are referred to in policies in the Plan which aim to protect local character and built and natural heritage.</p> <p>The policies within the Plan are criteria based and place a strong focus on protecting the natural environment and the historic environment.</p> <p>Given the nature of the Plan the Parish Council would conclude that the Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment. Confirmation on this is requested from the three statutory bodies.</p>

4.3 Further analysis on the likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan in relation to Schedule 1 of the Regulations is provided in Table 2 on p9.

Table 2: Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

SEA Requirement	Comments
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	The Neighbourhood Plan has potential to determine the use of small areas at a local level, whether that is through the application of detailed criteria or the allocation of land.
b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The Plan sits in a hierarchy and must be in conformity with strategic policies in the development plan. It is unlikely to influence other plans and programmes.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	The Neighbourhood Plan promotes sustainable development. It has a strong focus on environmental protection and ensuring natural and built assets are protected. This includes protection of non-designated heritage assets.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	There are known problems related to air and water quality of European sites in close proximity of the neighbourhood area. However these are being addressed through higher level plans and programmes led by GMCA including the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan and River Basin Management Plans for the North West and Places for Everyone has a role in addressing water and air quality.
(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).	The Neighbourhood Plan has no relevance to the implementation of Community legislation.
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	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan covers a 15-year plan period and seeks to balance development with the protection of the natural and historic environment. The need to maintain the landscape character, biodiversity and built heritage of the Parish is given a strong focus.</p> <p>The Plan places a strong emphasis on protecting the environmental qualities, historic assets and local community needs of the area.</p>

SEA Requirement	Comments
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:	
	The proposed strategic site allocation makes it possible that significant effects will occur, but these are addressed in higher level strategic policies and plans.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	<p>The Plan has regard to emerging plans Places For Everyone and Trafford Local Plan. These higher-level policies and proposals will ensure the protection of environmental assets and there is not considered to be a requirement to consider any cumulative impacts of development.</p> <p>The proposed strategic site allocation makes it likely that negative significant environmental effects will occur either individually or cumulatively with other development and decisions.</p> <p>The protective criteria however will assist with mitigating any negative significant environmental effects individually or cumulatively with other development and decisions.</p>
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	There are no transboundary effects. The Plan applies to the Neighbourhood Plan only.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	<p>The Plan poses no risk to human health.</p> <p>In fact, the Plan is likely to improve human health by supporting sustainable and active travel such as walking and cycling and encouraging better access to the countryside.</p>
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	<p>Warburton is a small parish with an area of 796 hectares.</p> <p>Effects are considered to be limited to the Neighbourhood Plan area only.</p>
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to - (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and	The Parish is mostly washed over by the Green Belt and enjoys attractive countryside with a historic village, farmsteads and landscape. There are 22 listed buildings within the Parish including a Grade I Church, and numerous archaeological and other built heritage assets with potential for others to be discovered.

SEA Requirement	Comments
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:	
	<p>Natural heritage assets within the Parish include areas of ancient woodland, ponds and water courses. There are areas of former mossland which may have potential for restoration.</p> <p>Whilst there is potential for impacts on environmental and heritage assets the wording of the plan and strong focus on protection and enhancement make this unlikely. The Plan is very much focussed on ensuring that the special qualities of this area are protected.</p> <p>The plan contains specific policies for the protection of these assets including their settings.</p>
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The Plan is very much focussed on ensuring that the special qualities of this area are protected.

5. Warburton Masterplan

- 5.1 The final version of the Masterplan seeks to provide suitable developable areas and reduce the impact of development on the local environment. A number of small pocket green spaces are proposed.
- 5.2 Layouts and designs would respond to the character of the rural area of Warburton.

Warburton NDP Masterplan



Development Parcels and Indicative Quantum of Housing Development

Total residential areas:	16.0 ha		
Total units at DPH:	400		
Parcel A area:	2.7 ha	Parcel D area:	0.5 ha
Parcel A units:	68	Parcel D units:	10
Parcel B area:	2.4 ha	Parcel E area:	3.2 ha
Parcel B units:	60	Parcel E units:	80
Parcel C area:	6.0 ha	Parcel F area:	1.2 ha
Parcel C units:	150	Parcel F units:	32

6. Screening Outcome

- 6.1 Internal screening of the Neighbourhood Plan in June 2023 concluded that it is likely that the Neighbourhood Plan would not result in a significant environmental effect due to the distance of the neighbourhood area from the nearest European sites and the strong focus of the Neighbourhood Plan on the protection of the natural environment and built heritage assets which should help to mitigate any significant effects.
- 6.2 The Parish Council is satisfied that the Plan is unlikely to result in significant negative effects and policies and proposals may lead to positive effects.
- 6.3 Under its 'duty to support', Trafford Council reviewed the first version of the SEA Screening Assessment and agreed that, based on the preparation of the August 2022 emerging Draft Version of the NDP, the NDP did not require a full Environmental Report. Trafford Borough Council confirmed that it agreed with the HRA screening conclusion based on that the plan aims to protect and does not propose development beyond the New Carrington site, which was subject to PFE screening. There are heritage assets and a conservation area, but no additional sites are proposed for development in the NDP. However, there was a caveat that the scope of the proposed masterplan was not yet known at that time.
- 6.4 The SEA and HRA Screening Assessments for the emerging Draft Plan were published for consultation with Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency in June 2023.
- 6.5 Only one response was received. This was from Natural England who agreed with the screening outcome and advised '**It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely.**' A copy of the letter is provided in Appendix 1.
- 6.6 The HRA and SEA screening assessments were reviewed and updated to take into account the policies and proposals in the final version of the Draft Plan together with the Warburton Masterplan. The Warburton Draft Neighbourhood Plan will be published for formal Regulation 14 consultation from early July until the end of August 2024.
- 6.7 The Draft Warburton Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents are published on the neighbourhood plan pages of the Parish Council's website <https://www.warburtonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan>.
- 6.8 The views of the three statutory bodies were requested before the screening opinion could be confirmed.
- 6.9 The responses were as follows:

- **Environment Agency:**

'Thanks for the email.


Any review of the plan outside of formal consultation stage would fall under our charge planning advice service and should you wish for the Environment Agency to review the draft plan please email the team at SPPlanning.RFH@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Notwithstanding the above I have quickly reviewed the screening opinion and can confirm with that there are no significant environmental effects as a result of the plan for issues within our remit.'

- **Natural England:**

No response prior to the Regulation 14 consultation.

- **Historic England:**

 Historic England

Ms Louise Kirkup
Kirkwells
Lancashire Digital Technology Centre
Bancroft Road
Burnley
BB10 2TP

Direct Dial: 0161 242 1445
Our ref: PL00795844
24 May 2024

Dear Ms Kirkup

Warburton Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion May 2024

We write in response to your e-mail of 2nd May 2024 seeking a formal screening opinion from Historic England on the need to prepare a SEA for Warburton Neighbourhood Plan.

Historic England has produced a document that you might find helpful in providing guidance on the effective assessment of the historic environment in Strategic Environmental Assessments. This can be found at:
<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine the advice given to the question, "Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?", in respect to our area of concern, cultural heritage.

In the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 [Annex II of SEA Directive], and on the basis of the information supplied, it is considered that the draft plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects upon the historic environment, and so Historic England conclude that SEA is unlikely to be required.

We would like to stress that this opinion is based on the information made available in the email dated 2nd May 2024. To avoid any doubt, this decision does not preclude Historic England providing further advice on later stages of the SEA process, should this be required, nor objecting to specific proposals that may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance), where we consider that these would have an adverse effect upon the historic environment. We note that the views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for SEA is made.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of



SUITES 3.3 AND 3.4 CANADA HOUSE 3 CHEPSTOW STREET MANCHESTER M1 5FW
Telephone 0161 242 1416
HistoricEngland.org.uk

Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.



Trafford Council and GMAAS are closely involved in the development of the plan. They are best placed to advise on: local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the HER (formerly SMR); how the policies or proposals 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 historic assets.

Thank you for consulting Historic England. We request that you please send us a copy of the determination as required by Reg 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Yours sincerely,

Pippa Brown
Historic Places Adviser
Pippa.Brown@historicengland.org.uk

cc:



SUITES 3.3 AND 3.4 CANADA HOUSE 3 CHEPSTOW STREET MANCHESTER M1 5FW
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Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.

- 6.10 Therefore the consultation bodies who responded agreed that the Draft Warburton NDP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects upon the natural and historic environment.

Appendix 1 Copies of Responses of Consultation Bodies to Initial SEA Screening Assessment, June 2023

Natural England

Date: 26 July 2023
Our ref: 439975
Your ref: Warburton Neighbourhood Development Plan



Louise Kirkup
Kirkwells on behalf of Warburton Parish Council

Horbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
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BY EMAIL ONLY

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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Louise Kirkup

Warburton Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening and HRA Screening Opinion Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 29 June 2023.

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.

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

Natural England have been working with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) on the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for Places for Everyone which covers Greater Manchester and wider growth beyond Warburton.

On the basis of Places for Everyone becoming adopted and the mitigation being brought forward, Natural England are of the opinion that the neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection area (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland.

The plan area is also unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

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

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

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

before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Zoe Haysted, Sustainable Development Lead Adviser
Wetlands, Water and Woodlands (Cheshire to Lancashire)

Kirkwells

The Planning People

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