

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement

June 2025

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement for the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

Summary

This document is the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement under regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004 on the determination of the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan Review (MWNDP) Review.

The policies within the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan Review have been screened under the Strategic Environment Assessment process. The conclusion of the SEA Screening Process is that none of the proposed policies within the draft Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan has the potential to have a significant effect on the natural environment. The draft Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan can be 'screened out' of the Strategic Environment Assessment process and an 'Appropriate Assessment' is not required.

Introduction

The Government has confirmed that sustainability appraisals are only required for development plan documents and do not apply in the case of neighbourhood plans although the qualifying body must demonstrate how its neighbourhood plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development. However, neighbourhood plans must not breach and must be otherwise compatible with EU and Human Rights obligations. Neighbourhood plans therefore need to be considered against, for example, the Habitats and Strategic Assessment Directives and associated regulations. Whilst it is not the case that every neighbourhood plan will need an environmental assessment of the type normally associated with the process of preparing Local Plans, they may, subject to their scope and the issues they are seeking to address, be required to produce an environmental assessment if the plan is determined as likely to have significant environmental effects.

Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) are required by EU Directive 2001/42/EC, to assess the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. This Directive was implemented in the United Kingdom in July 2004 with the adoption of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations). The requirement for SEA is assessed under Regulation 9 (1). The SEA focuses on impacts on the natural environment with some limited consideration of human population needs and material assets. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) itself should, among other things, consider options, quantify potential impacts and offer advice on alternatives, or mitigating measures, where impacts are likely.

Regulation 8 of the SEA Regulations prevents the adoption or submission of a plan for which an environmental assessment is required before the SEA is completed and prohibits the adoption or submission of a plan before the responsible authority has determined whether the plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

It is not possible to rule out the need for an SEA without first carrying out a screening process to establish whether or not the MWNDP is likely to have significant environmental effects (Article 3(1)). Under Article 3(4) of the Directive, and Regulation 5 of the Regulations, the responsible authority must determine which

plans, other than those for which an SEA is automatically required, are likely to have significant environmental effects. The “responsible authority” as defined by Regulation 2, is the authority on whose behalf a plan is prepared.

Both the Directive (in Annex II), and the Regulations (in Schedule 1), set out specific criteria for determining the likely significance of the environmental effects of a plan. The process for determining whether or not a SEA is required is called screening. These criteria include specific considerations regarding the characteristics of the plan, the effects of the plan, and the area likely to be affected by the plan.

A determination cannot be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted: the Environment Agency; Natural England; and Historic England.

Within 28 days of making its determination, the Council must publish a statement setting out its decision. If it determines that an SEA is not required, the statement must include reasons for this.

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood Planning is a community right introduced by the Localism Act 2011. Take up of the new right will be voluntary and at the discretion of neighbourhoods and communities.

The Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2019, replacing almost all existing planning guidance. This was updated again in July 2021. This is what it says on neighbourhood planning:

29. Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies¹⁸.

30. Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.

The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (SI 637) came into force on 6 April 2012 and have since been amended most recently through the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 which became effective on 1st October 2016 (SI 934). This sets out the procedures for designating a Neighbourhood Plan area and getting the Plan adopted through the planning system.

Relationship to the Shropshire Local Plan

The MWNDP must conform to higher level policy. This means that it must conform to national and local policy including Shropshire Council’s strategic planning policy, which is contained in the Shropshire Core Strategy and the Site Allocations & Management of Development, which makes up the Development Plan.

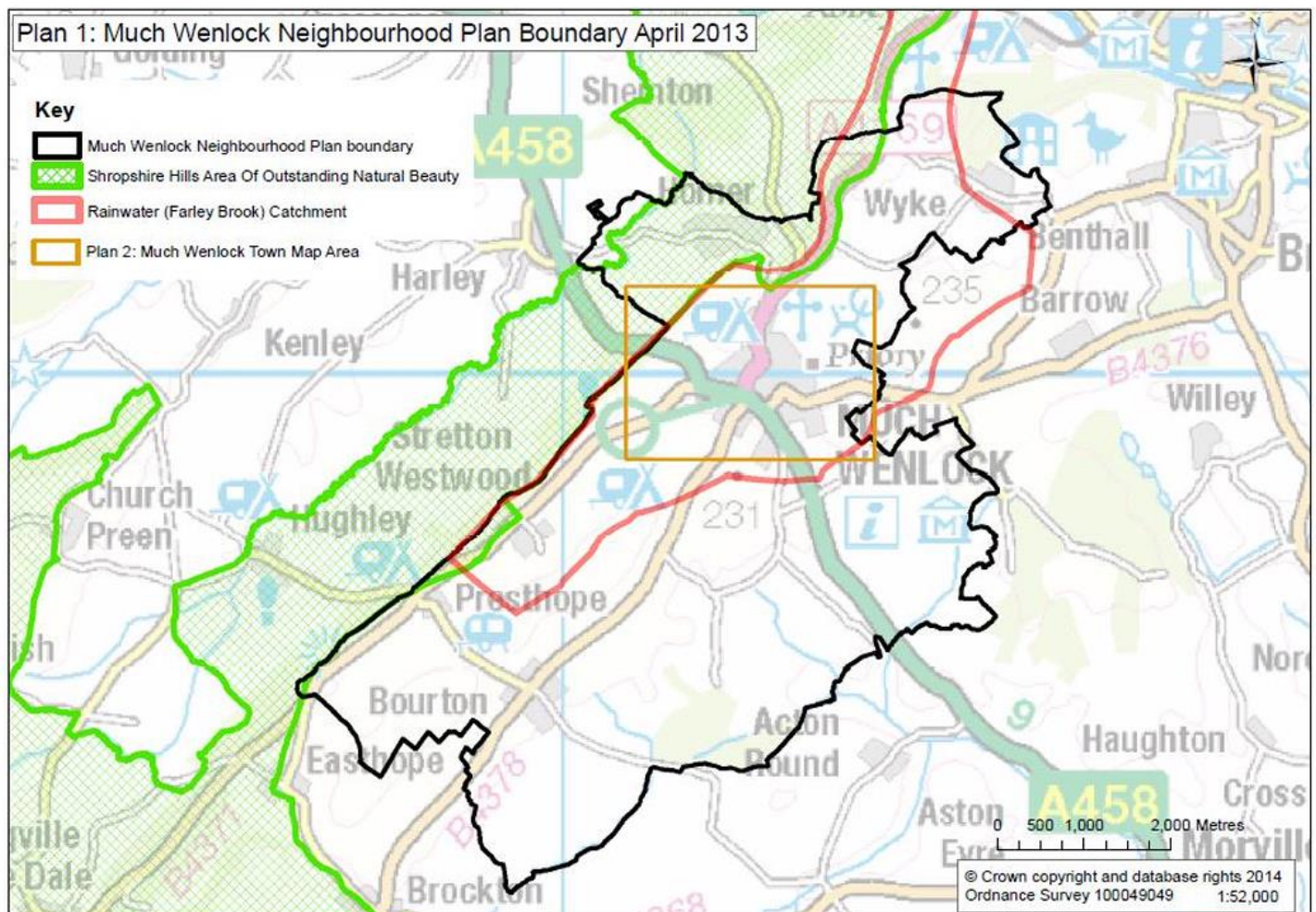
However, the current development plan is out now out of date and therefore the existing documents are under review. Shropshire have now reached the examination stage of the Local Plan Review, an appropriate and sensible approach from this point is to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plan on the basis of the

emerging strategy and policies, working closely with Shropshire Council during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and supporting documents.

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Review

The current Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan period runs from 2013 to 2026. Given the progress of the emerging Shropshire Local Plan through its examination stage, in March 2023 the Much Wenlock Parish Council Planning and Environment Committee decided to review the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan.

Much Wenlock Designated Neighbourhood Area



An application by Much Wenlock Town Council to designate a neighbourhood plan area went out for public consultation from 27 June to 10 August 2010. The application was approved by Shropshire Council's Cabinet on 12 September 2012 and a formal notice was issued. For the purposes of Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Review the same designated area will be used.

Vision Statement

The Vision is being finalised and is in draft form. The vision in the existing neighbourhood plan has been

reviewed in light of comments stemming from the community via the community events and survey that have taken place as part of the work on the Plan review.

The Plan period will be from 2024 to 2038, to coincide with the period for the Shropshire Local Plan Review, which is standard practice where there is an emerging Local Plan.

The starting point for the review of MWNDP was to ensure that the residents of Much Wenlock parish were given the opportunity to decide what development should happen and where it should take place until the end of the Plan period in 2038.

The vision, encapsulated by the line, 'Our Plan, Our Future' has been defined by the desires, concerns and aspirations of local residents and other stakeholders of Much Wenlock parish. The objectives and policies that are set out in the Plan come directly from the views and opinions expressed at consultation events hosted by community volunteers and an on-line survey.

The community has said it wants the Plan to shape future development so that it:

- meets local needs in ways that are in keeping with the scale and size of the town and other settlements in the Parish;
- complements and enhances our natural and historic environment;
- creates job opportunities for local people and protects the important tourist industry by enhancing the visitor attraction offer;
- protects the high quality nationally-recognised rural landscapes and the town's landscape setting; and
- addresses our long-standing issues of flooding, traffic and affordable housing.

Much Wenlock is a small historic Shropshire market town with a wider rural parish area which runs from the lip of the Severn Gorge down to the southwest along Wenlock Edge. Much Wenlock is also one of the most desirable places to live in Shropshire because of the town's qualities and especially its location near the growth points of Telford and Shrewsbury and being within ready commuting distance of the West Midlands conurbation.

The resulting development pressures and high house prices set us a challenge to provide housing to meet local needs in a way that respects the quality of the town and its rural setting, in tandem with the provision of high standard infrastructure. Residents have told us that their vision for the future include support for:

- healthcare provision which meets the requirements of the current ageing population and likely population growth resulting from housing development targets;
- the provision of safe pedestrian pathways and, where possible, cycleways;
- flood control by both technical and natural means; and
- delivering housing, including affordable housing, that meets the needs of local people. This includes provision for the older population and those with disabilities which embraces the concept of healthy living for all.

The vision is aimed at helping Much Wenlock to retain its identity as a market town within a beautiful rural parish. The Town Council will treat the MWNDP as an Action Plan and have resolved to review the Plan within three years of the making of the Plan and monitor it annually. The initial review will focus on housing delivery and will be able to assess progress on the granting of planning permissions and/or the delivery of housing in the Plan area. If necessary, the review of the Plan will be the trigger either for the modification of some of its policies and/or the allocation of a suitable urban extension site that itself meets the basic conditions.

The Plan represents a starting point for localism and we expect that there will be considerable progress in protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment and supporting the economic vitality of the

town centre and wider parish over the plan period.

The Town Council will develop formal indicators to monitor the Plan in the years ahead.

Objectives

To deliver the local community’s ambitions and needs for the plan period from 2024 to 2038 the Plan has a number of objectives:

- 1. **Housing:** To ensure that any new housing in the parish contributes to meeting local housing needs. This will encompass a collaborative approach with housing associations, the local authority and developers to deliver affordable housing and homes suitable for young first-time buyers, for families and for older people including those wishing to downsize.
- 2. **Employment and the town centre:** To support opportunities that enable locally based employment, to reduce out-commuting. This includes supporting a thriving town centre which acts as a focal point for the parish and its residents, with a range of uses.
- 3. **Landscape and environment:** To protect the valued landscape and countryside setting of the parish, ensuring that that development is directed to the most sustainable locations, near to local facilities. This will include prioritising the reuse of brownfield sites. Local views considered to be particularly significant will be protected, alongside local green spaces. The plan also seeks to encourage biodiversity through the safeguarding, expansion and connectivity of habitats and wildlife corridors.
- 4. **Built character and heritage:** To retain the built character and identity of the individual settlements that make up the parish and to conserve and celebrate local heritage. New development should be designed to the highest standard, contributing to the overall look and feel of the area in which it is located.
- 5. **Tackling flooding:** To ensure that the causes and impacts of flooding are mitigated as far as possible, supporting the creation of new flood attenuation areas and protection from development of existing known flood areas.
- 6. **Community facilities:** To support the provision of facilities that meet the needs of the local community. This includes provision for all ages and abilities.
- 7. **Getting around:** To promote opportunities for more sustainable ways to get around the parish and its settlements, by supporting improvements to the walking and cycling route network. This will encourage healthier lifestyles, promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing.

An overarching principle of the MWNDP will be to ensure that all policies are considered in terms of how they individually and collectively contribute to sustainable development, i.e. how they contribute to environmental, economic and community well-being.

Summary of proposed policies

Proposed Policy	Summary
Policy MW1: Supporting sustainable development	This policy seeks to ensure that any development within the parish is directed to the most appropriate, sustainable

Proposed Policy	Summary
	locations, where there is easy access to the main village services and facilities. This will help to protect the wider sensitive landscape of the parish and safeguard against the sprawl and coalescence of the individual parish settlements. The policy supports the re-use of previously developed brownfield sites in preference to greenfield. It also supports the concept of compact and walkable neighbourhoods to address the potential additional strains of development in the parish on road systems, particularly for developments that are furthest away from the main facilities.
Policy MW2: Meeting Local Housing Needs	The Plan does not seek to allocate sites for residential development. This policy seeks to influence the mix (type, size, tenure, affordability) of any new housing development in the parish in order that it contributes to identified local housing needs. It is underpinned by a Housing Needs Assessment that has been prepared for the parish and local feedback from residents.
Policy MW3: Rural exception sites	The policy sets out parameters against which any rural exception sites should be considered. It's an update to the existing policy. There has been a RES delivered in the parish in recent years.
Policy MW4: Infill development	The policy sets out how infill development, which may come forward as windfall, should be considered in terms of contributing to local character.
Policy MW5: Protecting existing employment land	This is an expansion of the policy in the made NDP and is being retained. It effectively seeks to protect existing sites for employment use and encourage new, in particular where they may be used for mixed use development (housing / employment)
Policy MW6: Enhancing the village centre	The policy seeks to support uses that will help to retain the vibrancy of Much Wenlock village centre, attracting additional footfall through support for independent shops and improving the public realm. It builds on an existing policy in the NDP, adding additional local detail.
Policy MW7: Supporting sustainable rural tourism	The policy supports sustainable tourism activities in terms of the provision of facilities for visitors, setting out what would be supported and the criteria against which they would be assessed. An associated project will be to actively develop a visitor strategy for the parish – exploring signage, promoting active travel including routes to and from the railway stations at Telford and Shrewsbury.

Proposed Policy	Summary
Policy MW8: Flexible workspaces and opportunities for home working	This policy recognises the growing contribution of home-based and small-to-medium sized businesses in Much Wenlock and seeks to encourage opportunities for them, including by supporting the provision of start-up and move-on business units as well as the provision of a shared office space. This would provide a greater incentive and opportunity for local people to work locally. Homeworking too has become commonplace for many in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.
Policy MW9: Reducing Flood risk	The policy builds on the existing policy to set out parameters for development proposals in terms of reducing flood risk and ensuring adequate drainage. It is underpinned by an extensive evidence base and links to the later policy on biodiversity in terms of exploring natural mechanisms to reduce surface water.
Policy MW10: Improving walking, cycling and equestrian opportunities	The policy seeks to promote opportunities to improve the 'movement network' locally to enable walking, cycling (and equestrian) etc. This will help to encourage a shift to active travel, at least for shorter journeys in and between the settlements. Specific projects where improvements could be made have been set out as projects, in conjunction with the policy. The policy embeds the walkable neighbourhoods concept, which is nationally endorsed. It seeks to ensure that any new development is accessible to the main 'active' route network.
Policy MW11: Publicly accessible parking	Notwithstanding the overarching aim to promote active travel, it is unrealistic to expect a rural community such as Much Wenlock to move away from vehicles altogether. This also applies to visitors to the area – there is no railway station in so most arrive by private vehicle. The policy seeks to safeguard existing off-road public car parking and where appropriate, support additional that will serve the village centre – this would be required to include provision for EV charging points and cycle facilities.
Policy MW12: Alleviating traffic impacts at key pinchpoints	Whilst strategic transport matters fall largely outside the scope of the NDP (dealt with by Shropshire Highways/ National Highways), the NDP identifies particular road junctions and 'pinchpoints' that experience challenging traffic conditions. This will ensure that any new development addresses these specifically in their Transport Statements/ Assessments.

Proposed Policy	Summary
Policy MW13: Community facilities (recreational, sports, cultural)	The policy seeks to safeguard existing important community facilities and also supports the provision of upgrades where required or new facilities, which may come forward through future development/ contributions etc. An audit of facilities has been undertaken to identify this need.
Policy MW14: Character and Design of development	The policy seeks to ensure that development is designed to the highest standards and contributes positively to local character. It adds additional local detail to national and local plan policies and is underpinned by a design guidance prepared for the parish.
Policy MW15: Heritage assets	The policy seeks to conserve/ enhance/ celebrate local heritage. It identifies a list of 'non-designated heritage assets' which contribute to the local sense of place and identity. It also sets out parameters related to the Conservation Area.
Policy MW16: Local Green Space	This policy designates Local Green Spaces in the parish, justified against the NPPF criteria.
Policy MW17: Locally significant views	This policy sets out a series of views in and across the parish, which have been identified by the community as being important to safeguard. The policy seeks to safeguard the views from inappropriate development.
Policy MW18: Green/blue infrastructure and biodiversity net gain	This policy seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of MW's green and blue spaces – including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in off-setting the effects of air pollution - are recognised and enhanced. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure. This will serve to support the requirement to conserve and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy whilst accommodating sustainable development.
Policy MW19: Landscape and environment	This policy seeks to ensure that development proposals have considered how they can enhance the natural environment – both flora and fauna – including the features of it that are particularly distinctive to Much Wenlock. It also seeks to ensure that development proposals contribute to the provision of adequate open space.

Proposed Policy	Summary
Policy MW20: Dark skies	Parts of Much Wenlock parish provide ideal locations from which to enjoy dark skies and stargazing. These dark skies also support both nocturnal and diurnal wildlife. This policy seeks to ensure that development does not encroach on this valued aspect of parish.
Policy MW21: Climate change and design	Noting that energy use in UK housing accounts for 27% of total carbon emissions, this policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, materials and energy use. This will help to mitigate against climate change and contribute to achieving the national target of zero net carbon by 2050.

Monitoring and Review

Much Wenlock Town Council will monitor the delivery of its policies and work to ensure that benefits to the communities within the Parish are achieved.

Assessment of Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Government has set down planning guidance following publication of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The guidance advises that ‘To decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan’s preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies. Where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared.’

In principle, neighbourhood plans should not be subject to the SEA Directive or require sustainability appraisal because they do not normally introduce new policies or proposals or modify planning documents which have already been subject to sustainability appraisal. However, they might occasionally be found likely to give rise to significant effects that have not been previously assessed. In screening a plan, Article 3 (6) of the SEA Directive requires that the relevant bodies concerned with environmental matters, as defined by individual Member states, shall be consulted as part of the screening process. In the case of the UK, the statutory environmental consultees are: Natural England; the Environment Agency; and Historic England.

It is considered that the screening methodology should address the issues identified in the table below.

Screening Stage	Purpose
Assessing the MWNDP against Annex II Criteria	To establish whether or not the MWNDP is likely to have a significant effect on the Annex II criteria. This will take account of the role of the MWNDP in relation to existing policy context

Conclusion on whether the screening exercise identifies a need for SEA	To set out conclusions from the screening exercise
Recommendations for how the MWNDP should proceed in relation to SEA requirements	To set out the broad approach needed to carry out an SEA on the MWNDP or, where the screening report suggests no SEA is required, to determine the parameters within which the MWNDP will need to operate to avoid triggering a need for SEA.

Assessing the MWNDP against Annex II Criteria

Annex II of the SEA Directive sets out the criteria for determining if there are likely to be significant effects resulting from the implementation of a plan.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likely to have significant environmental effects	Summary of significant effects
1a) 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	<p>The MWNDP proposes a framework for development proposals focusing on meeting local housing needs, including affordable housing and homes for first time buyers, families and downsizers; enabling locally based employment; protecting valued landscapes, views and biodiversity by prioritising the reuse of brownfield land; celebrating local heritage through sensitive design; tackling flooding; supporting the provision of community facilities and improving the cycling and walking network.</p> <p>The emerging Shropshire Local Plan policy SP1 ('The Shropshire Test') supports development that will contribute to meeting local needs and that make its settlements more sustainable .</p> <p>Policy S13.3 of the emerging Local Plan considers Much Wenlock as a Key Centre which will contribute towards strategic growth objectives in the east of the County, delivering around 200 dwellings and around 2 hectares of employment development. According to the policy, new residential development will primarily be delivered through the residential site allocation, complemented by appropriate small-scale windfall residential development within the Much Wenlock development boundary as well as appropriate cross-subsidy and exception development.</p>
1(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	The MWNDP responds to other plans and programmes such as the NPPF and Shropshire Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

		<p>The MWNDP has been specifically guided by and is aligned with the aims and objectives of the emerging Shropshire Local Plan and is likely to have a positive impact on these plans through its policies to deliver sustainable development and protect and enhance the local character and environment.</p>
<p>1(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	No	<p>The MWNDP recognises the objective of achieving sustainable development in the local area.</p> <p>The MWNDP contains policies that seek to designate Local Green Spaces, recognise and enhance green and blue infrastructure, ensure developers consider how they can enhance the natural environment and provide adequate open space, protect dark skies and to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, materials and energy use.</p> <p>The MWNDP seeks to direct development within the parish to the most appropriate, sustainable locations with access to the main village services and facilities. It embeds the walkable neighbourhoods concept, which is nationally endorsed. The MWNDP also supports the re-use of previously developed brownfield sites in preference to greenfield.</p> <p>The MWNDP recognises the growing contribution of home-based and small-to-medium sized businesses in Much Wenlock and seeks to provide greater incentives and opportunities for local people to work locally.</p> <p>Proposals set out within the MWNDP are designed to have a positive impact on local environmental assets and places valued by local people in the MWNDP area. They will primarily focus on the protection and enhancement of open spaces, biodiversity and historic buildings, as well as tackling flooding and supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy by measures to meet a high level of sustainability and energy efficiency.</p>
<p>1(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan</p>	No	<p>The policies in the MWNDP are largely protective in terms of their impacts on environmental, community and economic matters. The MWNDP does not seek to allocate sites.</p> <p>A key issue in the parish relates to flooding. The MWNDP aims to secure ways of reducing existing flood risk and avoiding any increase in flood risk, while also reducing water pollution throughout the parish.</p>

		<p>Environmental issues may be triggered through the development of allocated housing sites, rural exception sites or infill development. However, these sites will need to be in conformity with both national and local policy including the emerging Shropshire Local Plan and MWNDP which seek to prevent environmental harm and promote and improve environmental quality.</p> <p>There are no Air Quality Management Areas within the MWNDP area.</p>
1(e) 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)	No	<p>The MWNDP policies do not propose any changes that are likely to have a severe impact on the environment i.e. tree preservation orders or existing public rights of way. The emerging Shropshire Local Plan chapter on the Natural and Historic Environment contains positive enabling policies. The MWNDP has adopted a similar approach that is intended to have a positive effect.</p>
2(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	No	<p>The Plan does not seek to allocate sites for residential development therefore it is unlikely that the MWNDP would result in any irreversible damaging environmental impacts. All new development should be sustainable and be in accordance with existing planning policy.</p>
2(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	No	<p>It is not possible to fully assess the cumulative effects of future development until planning applications have been submitted and assessed. However, it is anticipated that forthcoming issues could include the effect on school capacity, highway safety and the loss and movement of jobs. It may be possible to address some or all of these cumulative issues through mitigation measures, financial contributions, and in the detailed part of the planning application process. Further to this it is thought the policies within the MWNDP will generate positive effects.</p> <p>Application of the policies contained in the MWNDP attempt to prevent detrimental cumulative effects by assuring that new development will address environmental, social and economic issues created by each development.</p>
2(c) The transboundary nature of the effects	No	<p>It is unlikely that there will be any obvious transboundary arising from the policies within the MWNDP.</p> <p>Improvements to more sustainable transport modes and linkages, including cyclin and walking as outlined in Policy</p>

		MW10 should help to minimise any transboundary effects.
2(d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	No	<p>It is unlikely that there will be any obvious risks to human health arising from the policies within the MWNDP.</p> <p>Health and Safety standards on developments arising within the plan area will be controlled/ governed by relevant statutory guidelines and codes. Any risks arising from the policies and proposals in the MWNDP will be managed in accordance with the relevant statutory frameworks.</p>
2(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No	The MWNDP covers an area of approximately 3,541 hectares. The MWNDP is likely to affect a residential population of approximately 2,906 people over the life of the Plan.
2(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. special natural characteristics or cultural heritage ii. exceeded environmental quality standards iii. intensive land-use 	No	<p>The MWNDP is unlikely to adversely affect the value and vulnerability of the area in relation to its natural or cultural heritage. In fact it will provide greater support to enhance the setting of heritage assets and of green spaces.</p> <p>Where possible, policies will encourage new opportunities for recreation, access and leisure.</p> <p>The MWNDP policies will aim to preserve and enhance all known sites of ecological or environmental importance.</p> <p>The policies contained in the MWNDP provide opportunities for development if they are planned and designed to protect and enhance local wildlife species and habitats.</p> <p>The plan also seeks to support the transition to a zero carbon economy including effective measures to minimise pollution and to meet high levels of sustainability and energy efficiency.</p> <p>These are in line with policies in the emerging Local Plan dealing with the Natural and Historic Environment and Climate Change.</p>
2 (g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	No	It is considered that the MWNDP is unlikely to have an adverse impact on its existing landscapes. The MWNDP seeks to ensure that development is located in the most sustainable locations, within the settlement boundaries and away from sensitive environmental areas. A number

		<p>of policies seek to safeguard such areas, for instance the Policy MW16 (Local Green Space) and the policies around Landscape, environment and biodiversity. None of the policies – individually or collectively – would impact negatively on the designated environmental sites.</p> <p>In terms of heritage assets, there is one Scheduled Monument in the parish: Wenlock Priory in the centre of Much Wenlock. This is protected at national level and is managed by English Heritage. The MWNDP includes a policy to support sustainable rural tourism, which seeks to ensure that the benefits of tourism to the parish can be capitalised upon, but without compromising both the natural and built environment upon which it relies.</p> <p>There are two Conservation Areas in the Parish (Much Wenlock and Bourton), which are protected via National Policy. Conservation Area appraisals exist to manage development carefully in these areas and the MWNDP policy relating to local character supports their careful consideration.</p> <p>The parish has a significant number of nationally listed assets. The MWNDP identifies non-designated heritage assets which contribute to local character and heritage. The associated policy seeks to ensure that these are maintained in a way to conserve/preserve them.</p>
--	--	--

Conclusion of the SEA Screening Process for the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

The policies within the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan Review have been screened under the Strategic Environment Assessment process. The conclusion of the SEA Screening Process is that none of the proposed policies within the draft Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan has the potential to have a significant effect on the natural environment. The draft Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan can be 'screened out' of the Strategic Environment Assessment process and an 'Appropriate Assessment' is not required.

Update at Regulation 16

Following the Regulation 14 consultation, Much Wenlock Town Council have updated the draft Neighbourhood Plan in response to comments received. On reviewing the version of the draft Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Review submitted at Regulation 15, Shropshire Council is of the opinion that none of the proposed policies within the draft Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan has the potential to have a significant effect on the natural environment. As a result, the screening opinion remains the same

and the draft Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan can be 'screened out' of the Strategic Environment Assessment process and an 'Appropriate Assessment' is not required.

Appendix 1: Responses from statutory consultees

Shropshire Council (Development Plans)
Forward Planning Team
Shirehall Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY2 6ND

Our ref: SV/2016/109232/SE-
03/SC1-L01
Your ref: SEA Screening
Consultation
Date: 27 September 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Review (2024 – 2038) – Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report Consultation

Strategic Environmental Assessment

The European Union directive 200142/EC requires a SEA to be undertaken for certain types of plans and programmes that would have 'significant' environmental effect(s).

Paragraph: 046 in the Flood Risk and Coastal Change section of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (Reference ID: 11-046-20150209) states "a strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:

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

Having reviewed the Screening Report submitted, and in consideration of the matters within our remit, and given the lack of specific site allocations within the neighbourhood plan, we concur with the conclusions that the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is unlikely to have significant environmental impacts, and a **Strategic Environmental Assessment** is not therefore required.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive (1992) requires that any plan (or project), which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site (also known as a "Natura 2000" site), but would be likely to have a

Environment Agency
Hafren House Welshpool Road, Shelton, Shrewsbury, SY3 8BB.
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency

significant effect on such a site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to an 'appropriate assessment' of its implications for the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Having reviewed the screening report, and in consideration of matters within our remit, we concur that the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on the European designated sites.

We note that no European or Ramsar sites have been identified within the plan area and there does not appear to be any obvious pathways to sites in neighbouring plan areas.

We trust that the above is of assistance.

Yours faithfully

Emma Millband
Planning Officer

Direct e-mail emma.millband@environment-agency.gov.uk

Date: 22 October 2024
Our ref: 488435
Your ref: Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Review



Ms Rosie Corner
Shropshire Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

Rosie.Corner@shropshire.gov.uk

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Ms Corner

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Review - SEA/HRA Screening Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 18 September 2024.

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.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

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.**

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

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

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team



Historic England

Ms Rosie Corner
Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY2 6ND

Direct Dial: 0121 625 6887

Our ref: PL00796942

19 September 2024

Dear Ms Corner

**MUCH WENLOCK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SEA & HRA SCREENING OPINION
CONSULTATION**

Thank you for your consultation and the invitation to comment on the SEA Screening Document for the above Neighbourhood Plan.

For the purposes of consultations on SEA Screening Opinions, Historic England confines its advice to the question, "Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?" in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage.

Our comments are based on the information supplied with the screening request. On the basis of the information supplied and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of the 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with your view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

Regarding HRA Historic England does not disagree with your conclusions but would defer to the opinions of the other statutory consultees.

The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for a SEA is made. If a decision is made to undertake a SEA, please note that Historic England has published guidance on Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Historic Environment that is relevant to both local and neighbourhood planning and available at: <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

I trust the above comments will be of help in taking forward the Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours sincerely,

P. Boland.



THE FOUNDRY 82 GRANVILLE STREET BIRMINGHAM B1 2LH

Telephone 0121 625 6888
[HistoricEngland.org.uk](https://www.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.



Historic England

Peter Boland
Historic Places Advisor
peter.boland@HistoricEngland.org.uk

cc:



THE FOUNDRY 82 GRANVILLE STREET BIRMINGHAM B1 2LH

Telephone 0121 625 6888

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.