

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Screening and Habitats Regulation
Assessment (HRA) Screening Determination
for Farndon Neighbourhood Plan

Prepared on behalf of Farndon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group by Cheshire
West and Chester Council

June 2017

Based on Farndon Neighbourhood Development Plan v9.6
(May 2017)

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Neighbourhood Plan

Appendix 2: Comments received on the initial and updated SEA Screening
Opinion (September 2015 and December 2015).

1.0 Introduction

This document is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening determination for the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan, which has been prepared in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended). This document also sets out the decision on whether separate screening and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required under European Directive 92/43/EEC and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).

In September 2015, an initial SEA screening assessment was produced based upon emerging policies in the pre-submission draft of Farndon Neighbourhood Plan. As required by the regulations, the Council then consulted four specified environmental organisations on the SEA screening assessment – Countryside Agency and English Nature (now merged to form Natural England); English Heritage (now known as Historic England) and the Environment Agency. Due to the proximity to the Welsh border Natural Resources Wales and CADW were also consulted. Responses were received from Natural England, Environment Agency and CADW. CADW commented that the Plan should include reference to Scheduled Monuments and the large number of Listed Buildings in and around the borough of Holt on the west bank of the River Dee but did not make any specific comments relating to the need for SEA or HRA. Natural England suggested that further clarification was required to be able to reach a conclusion of no likely significant effects, especially with regard to use of the riverbank and homes and consideration of protected sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The other consultees did not respond and it was therefore assumed that they had no comments. Details of the consultation responses are provided in Appendix 2.

The screening opinion was updated in December 2015 based on policies set out in the December 2015 draft of the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan (received by Cheshire West and Chester on 20 December 2015), taking account of comments received from Natural England on the initial version of the Neighbourhood Plan and screening opinion. The updated Neighbourhood Plan included clarification that 'encouraging tourism' relates to encouraging use of common land along the riverbank, rather than widespread tourism increases throughout Farndon or changes along the length of the riverbank, and provided additional information relating to the Special Area of Conservation and SSSI within Farndon. Following this clarification, the updated screening opinion concluded that no significant environmental effects would result from the emerging plan, and that full SEA and HRA would not, therefore, be required.

Between March 2016 and May 2016, the pre-submission Farndon neighbourhood plan was subject to public consultation for a period of 11 weeks. In response to comments made on the plan, amendments were made and a final draft version of

the plan prepared for formal submission to Cheshire West and Chester Council in June 2017.

This SEA and HRA screening determination is based on the findings of the updated screening assessment. It also takes account of amendments to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan policies since that original screening was undertaken. Although changes have been made to the plan, those changes are not considered to be significant in relation to the SEA screening and do not alter the conclusion that it is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan. The conclusion remains that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. Likewise, the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have an adverse effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010), alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Location and geographical scope of the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan

Farndon lies eight miles south of the city of Chester and is set on a sandstone outcrop above the River Dee, a natural border between England and Wales. It is a small village of approximately 1,517 people (2011), but includes a number of services including a school, two pubs, a post office and a number of small commercial businesses.

The Farndon Neighbourhood Area follows the same boundaries as the area covered by Farndon Parish Council (as amended through the Community Governance Review in April 2015). It includes the settlements of Farndon and Crewe by Farndon, and is located within the wider Farndon ward.

Relationship to other plans and programmes

Once 'made' the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of development plan for Cheshire West and Chester, alongside the adopted Local Plan policies in place at the time it is made.

The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to national policy; be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan; must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and meet EU obligations and human rights requirements.

The current adopted Local Plan for the area is the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) – Strategic Policies (adopted January 2015). This plan sets out the overall spatial strategy and strategic planning policies for the borough to 2030. Work

on the Local Plan (Part Two) – Land allocations and detailed policies – is currently underway. Until that plan is adopted, a number of policies within the Chester District Local Plan (adopted May 2006) remain in place and form part of the development plan for the Farndon neighbourhood area.

The adopted Local Plan policy framework forms the baseline for the SEA and HRA screening assessment. The screening assessment has considered the potential effects of the Neighbourhood Plan over and above the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One).

The key Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies applicable to Farndon are:

- STRAT1 (Sustainable Development)
- STRAT2 (Strategic Development)
- STRAT8 (Rural Area)
- STRAT9 (Green Belt and countryside)
- STRAT10 (Transport and accessibility)
- SOC1 (affordable housing)
- SOC2 (Rural exception sites)
- SOC3 (Housing mix and type)
- SOC5 (Health and well-being)
- SOC6 (Open space sport and recreation)
- ENV2 (Landscape)
- ENV3 (Green infrastructure)
- ENV4 (Biodiversity and geodiversity)
- ENV5 (Historic environment)
- ENV6 (High quality design and construction)

The Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies have been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Assessment Directive and a screening exercise under the Habitats Directive. This screening exercise has considered the effects of the neighbourhood plan in this context. The Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan (Part One) sets out the impacts of the strategic policies that apply to Farndon.

Scope of Neighbourhood Plan

Key objectives for the neighbourhood plan are:

- Protect and maintain the rural character of the landscape and the natural environment.
- Protect the built environment, heritage assets and the Conservation Area.

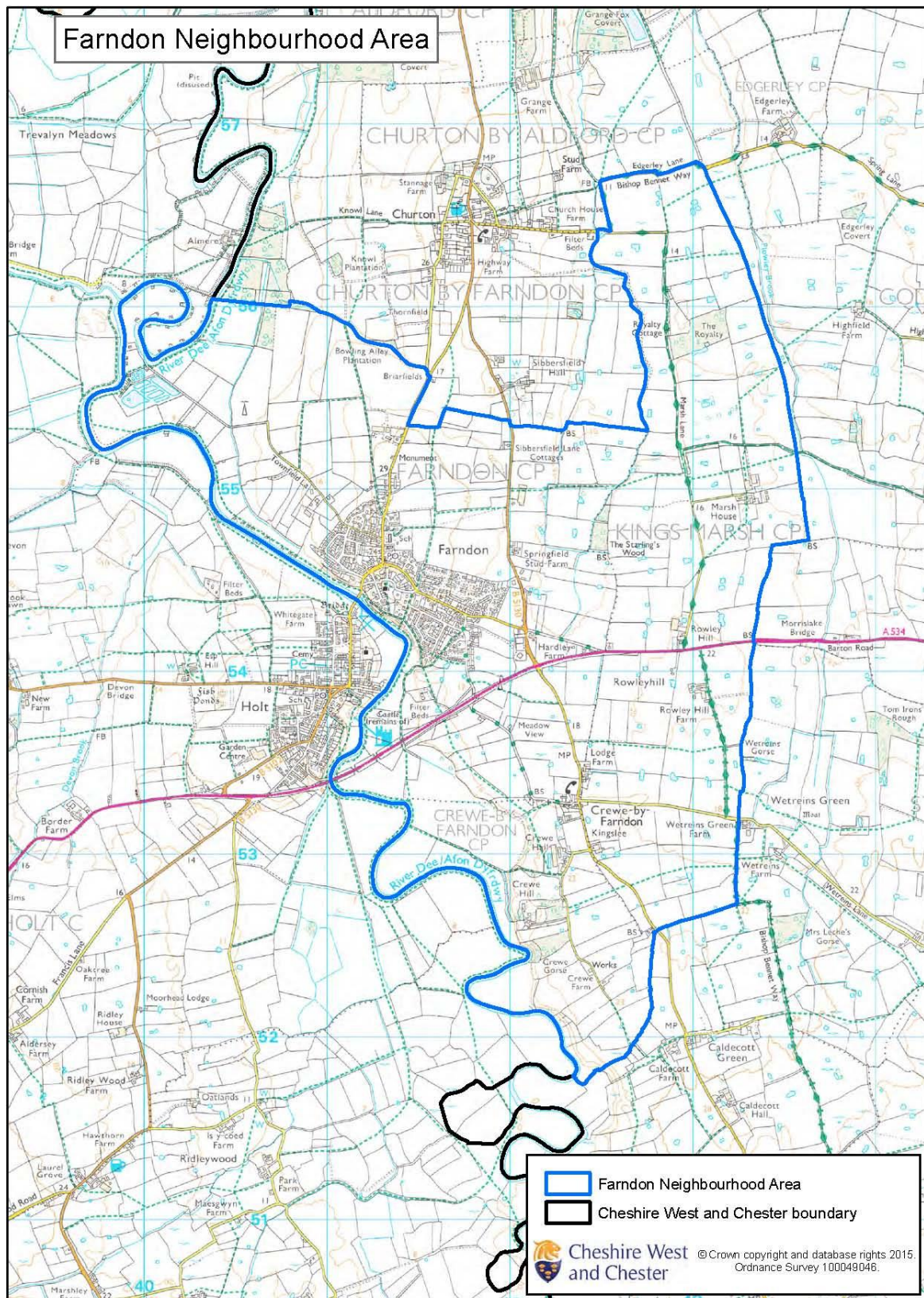
- Strengthen existing economic activities and support new opportunities for local employment.
- Strengthen public facilities.
- Ensure that housing growth reflects the needs of residents
- Support future development on 'previously developed land' in sustainable locations.
- Respect the distinctive local character (of the historic buildings) with regard to new development in relation to building materials, building lines and density, height, massing and design.

The neighbourhood plan sets out a suite of policies under the themes of:

- The local economy.
- Homes to meet the needs of the village.
- Protecting the built environment.
- Facilities for local people.
- Transport and communication.
- Protecting landscape and environment.
-

These policies work within the framework set by the Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies. The proposed policies in the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan do not propose a level of development outside of the levels proposed in the Local Plan nor do they significantly alter the planning policy position for the area. The plan provides local level guidance on how the future development set by the Local Plan should come forward.

- Map 1 – Farndon Neighbourhood Area



2.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

Legislative Background and Methodology

European Directive 2001/42/EC requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA Directive) to be carried out for certain plans and programmes to assess their effects on the environment. This Directive was transposed in law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Neighbourhood Development Plans fall within the scope of this legislation. They are a plan as defined by Article 3(2) of the SEA regulations and Regulation 5 paragraph 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. However, Neighbourhood Plans are land use planning documents prepared at the local level to determine land use in a small area.

Under Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive and Regulation 5 paragraph 6 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is only required for documents that determine land use in small areas at the local level where it is considered that they are likely to have 'significant environmental effects'. This is carried out through a screening determination.

Screening methodology

The role of the screening exercise is to determine whether the effect of the implementation of a plan or programme is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

The criteria for assessing whether a plan or programme is likely to have a significant environmental effect are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

The assessment criteria used to determine whether a plan or programme will have significant environmental effects are separated into two categories:

- those relating to the characteristics of the plan; and
- those relating to the characteristics of the plan's effects and of the area likely to be affected.

The first step for carrying out the screening is to work out the relationship of the proposed elements of the Neighbourhood Plan and their interactions with the environment (and sustainability). The second step is to determine whether the effects of the impacts identified will be significant. Table 1 and Table 2 show where the draft policies in the plan are likely to have an impact on the topics areas of the SEA Directive and the testing of significant environment effects of the Plan.

The other key part of the Neighbourhood Plan screening has been to consider the context of its preparation and its interaction with the higher tier development plan - the Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies for Cheshire West and Chester and the retained policies of the Chester District Local Plan (adopted 2006). In order to inform this assessment a review of the anticipated effects of the draft policies and their relationship to policies at the Local Plan level was carried out. This can be found in Appendix 1 to this report which sets out the exact nature of the neighbourhood plan policies and how they interact with the Local Plan. In summary the characteristics of the plan policies mean that:

- Any effects of them are likely to be relatively small scale, local at the neighbourhood level.
- The plan does not allocate sites for housing or employment development and many of the policies seek to minimise and control potential negative impacts of new development.
- The plan does not set the level of development for the area. The strategic context for the Neighbourhood Plan has been set at the Local Plan level.
- The plan identifies areas of local greenspace and includes policies relating to biodiversity, trees and protection of the character of the area. These policies are likely to have a beneficial effect for landscape, biodiversity and population and human health.
- Policies in the plan aim to protect and enhance the conservation area and local character, and as such are likely to have a beneficial effect on culture and heritage.

Conclusion

The screening assessment has found that whilst potential environmental effects have been predicated as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan policies, these are not likely to be significant. The screening has concluded that there will not be significant environmental effects arising from the submission draft Farndon Neighbourhood Plan (November 2016). A full Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan is therefore not required.

Table 1: Testing of significant effects	
	Significance Test
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,	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is a local level land use planning document to determine land use in a small area. Once made, it will work within the planning policy framework for the borough, alongside the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan will provide a local planning policy framework for Farndon that will become part of the development plan for Cheshire West and Chester. It is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The Farndon Neighbourhood Plan will not impact on the broad location, nature, and scale of new development over and above that set by adopted Local Plan for the borough. It will provide local level guidance within the strategic framework on the nature of development in the Farndon Neighbourhood Area. The Neighbourhood Plan policies will work alongside the strategic policies in the development plan, other development management measures and environmental protection legislation.</p>
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan will be the most detailed, local level planning policy for the area. It must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan and will therefore have limited influence over changing the policies in plans at the higher strategic level.</p>
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is required under legislation to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Whether this basic condition is met will be tested during the examination of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the framework for the promotion of sustainable development is set by the Government's Strategy for Sustainable Development, the National Planning Policy Framework and the policies in the adopted Local Plan for the borough. The Neighbourhood Plan will have limited influence over changing the sustainable development policies in plans and policies at the higher strategic level.</p>

What are the environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme?	<p>The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Local Plan (Part One) is a comprehensive overview of the issues in Cheshire west and Chester. There are no specific additional environmental problems identified for the Farndon area.</p>
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan will have no direct role in the delivery of community legislation on the environment, but does include policies relating to environmental issues. The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to Habitats Regulation Assessment screening as set out in Part Two of this document.</p>

Table 2: Characteristics of the plan's effects and of the area likely to be affected¹

Identified effects	Probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Cumulative nature of the effects	Trans-boundary nature of the effects	Risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	Magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on environmental quality standards or limit values,	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on intensity of land-use	Effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	Significant environmental effect?
Sustainability of local businesses	Medium probability as limited number of local businesses within a small settlement area. Frequency is difficult to assess as the impact of the policy on business is dependent on other aspects outside of planning e.g. residents using local services rather than large shopping centres nearby. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	Each new housing development has the potential to add to the retention of local business. There is a potential small cumulative effect.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	None	None	None	None identified – see HRA screening. Small impact on Conservation Area as policies seek to protect and enhance local character.	No

¹ Schedule 1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment, The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

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Increase employment	Low probability as small settlement size won't support a large number of businesses. Low frequency as little demand and few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	Each new development has the potential to add to encouraging new, and retaining exiting employment opportunities. There is a potential small cumulative effect.	None	None	Very limited impact as policy mainly relates to re-use of existing buildings.	None	None	None	Very limited impact as policy mainly relates to re-use of existing buildings.	No
Reuse empty buildings	Medium probability as scarcity of development space within the village would see demand for reuse of empty buildings. Low frequency as few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	There is a potential small cumulative effect as reusing of empty buildings can show an area is in demand.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	None	None	None	None identified – see HRA screening. Small impact on Conservation Area as policies seek to protect and enhance local character.	No

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Encourage tourism	The Plan refers to increasing the number of visitors to the village through welcoming small-scale retail and leisure facilities that meet certain criteria set out in the policies. Impacts would likely be small scale as it relates to low-key leisure uses in small areas of the Neighbourhood Area (village shopping area and area of common land along the riverbank). As the area is not currently a tourist area and has limited demand and facilities, probability and frequency is likely to be low. Impacts would be	There is a potential small positive cumulative effect on employment, as well as a potential small negative cumulative effect on the habitat itself from recreational impacts. Cumulative impacts are likely to be limited by the small scale, frequency and probability of increased tourism as the area is not currently a tourist area and has limited demand and facilities.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level. Low-key recreational uses along the river bank relate to a small area of common land only.	The River Dee in this location forms part of the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation and River Dee SSSI. Further low-key recreational activity on the riverbank could have negative impacts on habitat if such activities were to occur. However, such activities would be small-scale in nature and occur in a small area of common land. The policy explicitly recognises the value of the area and requires any development of the river bank to	None	Further low-key recreation, should it occur, could increase intensity of land use, but impacts would be limited given the small scale nature of associated facilities. The public toilets and picnic area have only recently been reopened and cleared, and in the past boat hire services and café/restaurant operated along the riverbank; as	The River Dee in this location forms part of the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation and River Dee SSSI. Low-key recreational activity along the riverbank could lead to recreational pressures and potential negative impacts on habitats. However, the impact on protected sites and landscapes should not be significant because protection of the riverbank and River Dee SSSI is explicitly	No

Identified effects	Probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Cumulative nature of the effects	Trans-boundary nature of the effects	Risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	Magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on environmental quality standards or limit values,	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on intensity of land-use	Effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	Significant environmental effect?
	permanent and long-term.					protect and have regard for guidance to conserve designated sites and River Dee itself. This should minimise potential impacts on the area of value.		such, any increase in activity and small-scale development which could accompany further low-key recreation should not be significantly greater than that already or previously operational in this area. Further, policy seeks to protect, and explicitly recognises the value of the riverbank.	established in policy. The public toilets and picnic area have only recently been reopened and cleared and in the past boat hire services and café/restaurant operated along the riverbank; as such, potential increase in reactional activity should not be significantly greater than that already or previously operational in this area.	
Encourage use of brownfield	Low probability and frequency as limited opportunities on	Each new development has the potential to add to	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood	None	None	None	Potential impact of use of brownfield land on SSSI due	No

Identified effects	Probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Cumulative nature of the effects	Trans-boundary nature of the effects	Risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	Magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on environmental quality standards or limit values,	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on intensity of land-use	Effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	Significant environmental effect?
land	brownfield sites. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	encouraging use of brownfield land. There is a potential small cumulative effect.			level.				to proximity. However, level of development likely to be very small as limited brownfield opportunities.	
Appropriate design	Low probability as unlikely to be a lot of new development. Low frequency as little demand and few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	There is a potential small positive cumulative effect of appropriate design. However, inappropriate design could have a potential large negative cumulative effect.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	Potential small impact on protection of the Conservation Area.	None	None	Potential small impact on protection of the Conservation Area.	No
Improve local environment	Low probability as unlikely to be a lot of new development. Low frequency as little demand and few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-	There is a potential small positive cumulative effect. However, development contrary to these policies could have a large negative	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	None	None	None	None identified – see HRA screening. Potential small positive impact on protection of the Conservation Area and local	No

Identified effects	Probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Cumulative nature of the effects	Trans-boundary nature of the effects	Risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	Magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on environmental quality standards or limit values,	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on intensity of land-use	Effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	Significant environmental effect?
	term.	cumulative effect.							landscapes.	
Provide appropriate housing to meet local needs	Medium probability as existing permissions means the area has met its minimum housing target; however specialist needs are still likely to remain. Low frequency as limited demand and limited opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	There is a potential positive cumulative effect of providing the needed housing in the parish. However, development contrary to these policies could have a large negative cumulative effect.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	None	The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for housing development. It does identify, however, in the housing policy text that the southerly parts of sites near the River Dee floods regularly and is unsuitable for housing, and that land north of Farndon Bridge drains into the Dee so impacts in terms of water quality, supply and disposal need to be considered in	None	There is potential for housing development to impact on protected sites. However, the Neighbourhood Plan limits house building levels, promotes building on brownfield land and considers the design of new development, so the impact is likely to be very limited.	No

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							any development proposal.			
Protect local character and views	Low probability as unlikely to be a lot of new development. Low frequency as little demand and few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	There is a potential small positive cumulative effect. However, development contrary to these policies could have a large negative cumulative effect.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	None	None	None	Potential small positive impact in terms of protection of SSSI, and character of the Conservation Area.	No
Protect Conservation Area	Low probability as unlikely to be a lot of new development. Low frequency as little demand and few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	There is a potential small positive cumulative effect. However, development contrary to these policies could have a large negative cumulative effect.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	Potential small impact on protection of the Conservation Area.	None	None	Potential small impact on protection of the Conservation Area.	No
Reduce negative impact of	Low probability as unlikely to be a lot of new development.	There is a potential small positive cumulative effect.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood	None	None	None	None identified – see HRA screening.	No

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development	Low frequency as little demand and few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	However, development contrary to these policies could have a large negative cumulative effect.			level.				Potential small impact on protection of the Conservation Area.	
Improved accessibility by foot and bicycle	Low probability as unlikely to be a lot of new development. Low frequency as little demand and few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	There is a potential small positive cumulative effect. However, development contrary to these policies could have a large negative cumulative effect.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	None	None	None	None identified – see HRA screening and no impact on Conservation Area.	No
Protection of existing open space	Low probability as unlikely to be a lot of new development. Low frequency as little demand and few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	There is a potential small positive cumulative effect. However, development contrary to these policies could have a large negative cumulative effect.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	None	None	None	None identified – see HRA screening and no impact on Conservation Area.	No

Identified effects	Probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Cumulative nature of the effects	Trans-boundary nature of the effects	Risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	Magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on environmental quality standards or limit values,	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on intensity of land-use	Effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	Significant environmental effect?
Protect best and most versatile farmland	Low probability as unlikely to be a lot of new development. Low frequency as little demand and few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	There is a potential small positive cumulative effect. However, development contrary to these policies could have a large negative cumulative effect.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	None	None	None	None identified – see HRA screening and no impact on Conservation Area.	No
Protect wildlife	Low probability as unlikely to be a lot of new development. Low frequency as little demand and few opportunities. Impacts would be permanent and long-term.	There is a potential small positive cumulative effect. However, development contrary to these policies could have a large negative cumulative effect.	None	None	Local, small scale impact, at neighbourhood level.	Potential small positive impact on biodiversity.	None	None	Potential small positive impact in terms of protection of SSSI.	No

3.0 Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

Legislative Background

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended in 2012) transpose the requirements of the European Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC into UK law. The Habitats Directive and Regulations afford protection to plants, animals and habitats that are rare and vulnerable in a European context.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a systematic process through which the performance of a plan or project can be assessed for its likely impact on the integrity of a European Site. European Sites, also referred to as Natura 2000 sites, consist of Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); Potential Special Protection Areas and candidate Special Areas of Conservation (pSPA and cSAC); and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states: 'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives'.

The first stage of HRA is to screen a plan or programme to identify if there are likely to be any significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. This will indicate whether a full Appropriate Assessment is required. The regulations require that the impacts and effects of any land use plan being assessed, are considered in combination with other plans and projects that may also be affecting the relevant European site(s).

Inter-relationship with the Local Plan HRA

The Local Plan has already been through the HRA process, and the results detailed in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Publication Draft (Part 1) Strategic Policies Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report. Each of the Natura 2000 sites within 15km of Farndon Neighbourhood Area were assessed at the Local Plan level. This appraisal forms the baseline for the HRA screening assessment of the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan with the prime consideration being the potential effects of the Neighbourhood Plan over and above those of the already assessed for the Local Plan. The Local Plan was screened out through this process, as not leading to a likely significant effect on European Sites.

It is considered that as long as the proposed policies of a Neighbourhood Plan do not alter the strategic policy framework assessed in the Local Plan (Part One) Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report, then an additional separate full screening exercise on the Neighbourhood Plan will not be required. However, if the Neighbourhood Plan does change the strategic policy framework then a separate

Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report to assess the effect on European Sites would be required.

Context

There are 2 European designated sites identified within a 15km buffer from the boundaries of the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan. There is 1 Ramsar designation spread over two sites, one SAC, and no SPAs.

These are shown in Map 2.

Outcome of high level screening

1. *Is the Neighbourhood Plan directly connected with, or necessary to the management of a European site for nature conservation?*

No.

2. *Does the Neighbourhood Plan propose new development or allocate sites for development?*

No.

Are there any other projects or plans that together with the Neighbourhood Plan that could impact on the integrity of a European Site?

Yes, the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One), and the policies retained from the Chester District Local Plan.

3. *Are there any potential impacts on the integrity of a European site?*

The Neighbourhood Plan will not work in isolation and will be used alongside the other development plan policy documents, including the Local Plan Part One and retained policies in the Chester District Local Plan, for determining planning applications for new development. The level of development to come forward in Farndon in the future has been set by Local Plan policy. The Neighbourhood Plan is in conformity with this and will guide how this should come forward locally.

Due to the location of the River Dee SAC and SSSI within Farndon, there is the potential for impacts. However, the nature of the policies means that the scope for additional development is very limited and criteria have been included to provide protection to important sites and biodiversity. There are no specific issues highlighted in the HRA of the emerging Local Plan in relation to Farndon, although there are other more general potential impacts highlighted as a result of the quantum and location of development proposed for the borough as a whole

in the Local Plan Part One. However, it is considered there are sufficient mitigation and control measures in the policy framework of the Local Plan Part One to avoid and mitigate any of these adverse effects on the integrity of European sites in the emerging Local Plan.

Therefore, it is considered that any proposals coming forward for Farndon in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan would not result in a likely significant effect on a European site than already identified and assessed through the Local Plan Part One Habitats Regulation Assessment Report.

Whether the Neighbourhood Plan alters the policy position significantly for the area, with reference to the potential impact on European sites, is set out below. Please note that this screening determination is based on the policies included in the submission draft Farndon Neighbourhood Plan. The list of policies has changed from those in the pre submission draft plan which was subject to the original screening. However, the overall conclusion that there is unlikely to be any significant impact on European sites remains unchanged.

Policy	Change in policy position in Local Plan and retained policies? Y/N
1.1 Protecting existing employment premises and opportunities	N
1.2 Promote employment opportunities	N
1.3 Encourage a range of goods and services within the village shopping area	N
1.4 Protect common land along the riverbank.	N
2.1 Site preferences	N
2.2 Mixed style housing development	N
2.3 Size and scale of housing.	N
3.1 New development to be low key and preserve views and vistas	N
3.2 Design and layout to new developments will be required to respect	N
3.3 Conservation Area and areas around or in the eye line of listed buildings	N
4.1 Provision of facilities and services	N
4.2 Change of use or redevelopment supported where	N

Policy	Change in policy position in Local Plan and retained policies? Y/N
it can be demonstrated	
4.3 'Development Impact Assessment'	N
4.4 Accessibility and footpaths.	N
5.1 Road safety and congestion	N
5.2 Pedestrians and cyclists.	N
6.1 Conserve the landscape	N
6.2 Protect and conserve natural assets – including wildlife and trees	N
6.3 Protect and conserve the environment – including land and river	N
6.4 Protect local green spaces.	N

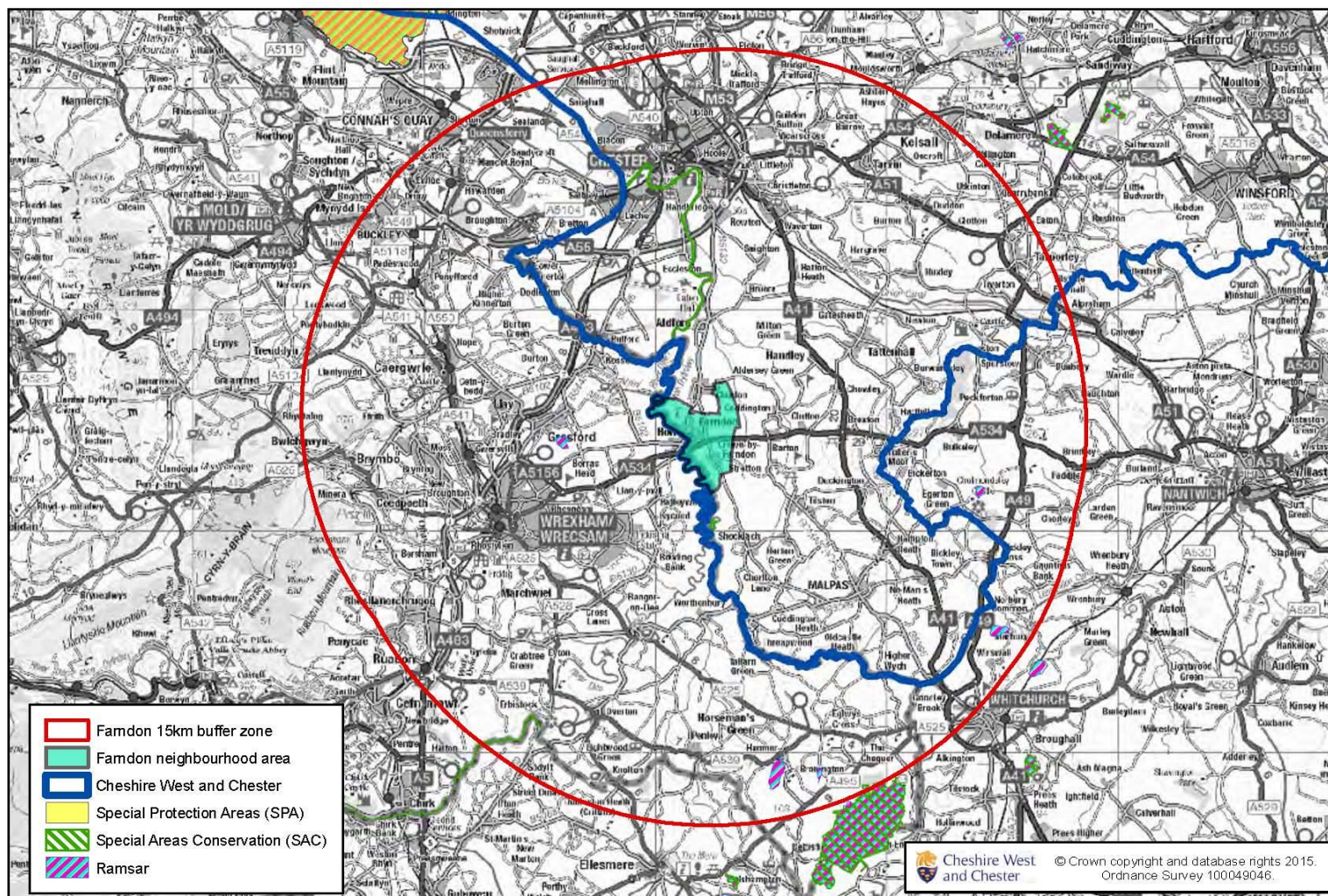
There are no specific issues highlighted in the HRA of the Local Plan (Part One) in relation to Farndon, although there are other more general potential impacts highlighted as a result of the level and location of development proposed for the borough as a whole. It is considered that there are sufficient mitigation and control measures in the policy framework of the Local Plan (Part One) to avoid and mitigate any of these adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.

It is considered, therefore, that any proposals coming forward for Farndon in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan would not result in a likely significant effect on a European site than already identified and assessed through the Local Plan (Part One) Habitats Regulation Assessment Report.

Conclusion

The Farndon Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have an adverse effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (d), alone or in combination with other plans and projects. As such, a separate full screening exercise and Habitats Regulations Assessment are not considered to be required.

Map 2- European Designations within a 15km distance of the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan



Appendix 1

Overview of Policies and Identified Effects of the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan.

Some the Draft Neighbourhood Plan policies have been renumbered, re-drafted, incorporated within other policies or deleted since the earlier version (December 2015) which was subject to the SEA Screening and consultation in December 2015. There are, however, no changes to the identified effects arising from these amendments.

The table below shows the identified effects from the amended policies in the submission draft neighbourhood plan. Amended policies are shown in ***italics*** underneath the original draft policies which were subject to the SEA Screening in December 2015. Revised policies have been assessed and potential effects and relationship to the Local Plan identified below.

Plan elements	Summary of policy	Identified potential effects of policy (taking into account SEA topics)	Relationship to adopted Local Plan and policies retained in the Chester District Local Plan.
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<p>Policy 1 – The Local Economy</p>	<p><i>Protect and promote employment opportunities</i></p> <p>Farndon currently has a number of vacant business premises – generally small except at Monument Place where larger industrial spaces are available. Proposals which would result in loss of business will be required to demonstrate that reasonable attempts have been made to preserve employment opportunities and that these premises are no longer viable.</p> <p><i>Encourage use of riverbank for low-level tourism</i></p> <p>The River Dee and the nearby cliff area are designated SSSI's and any proposed use or development of this area must be consistent with the objectives for conserving or enhancing the SSSI.</p> <p>Many local people and visitors enjoy the riverbank. It is an important geological SSSI and extends all along the Triassic sandstone cliffs, fishing pegs for licensed use are available as the riverbank is common land, riverside footpaths run to the north and south of the bridge with further south, a boardwalk maintained by the Parish Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council. Farndon Parish Council is currently discussing the re-opening of the public toilets and clearing the picnic area to make the area attractive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability of local businesses • Increase employment • Reuse empty buildings • Encourage use of common land along the riverbank 	<p>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • STRAT 2 • STRAT 8 • STRAT 11 • ECON 1 • ECON 2 • ECON 3 • ENV 3 • ENV 4 <p>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC 6 • EC 11 • RET 12
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<p>Policy 1.1 Protecting existing employment premises and opportunities</p>	<p><i>Proposals which result in loss of employment premises will be required to demonstrate that:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the premises have been empty and actively marketed for six to twelve months; and</i> <i>reasonable attempts have been made to preserve employment opportunities for relocating the works within the Parish; and</i> <i>the premises are no longer viable for any employment – commercial or industrial</i> <p><i>The loss of retail and other employment premises within Farndon itself to wholly residential use will be strongly resisted.</i></p> <p><i>The re-use of existing rural building outside the ‘settlement boundary’, especially for economic purposes, will be supported.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sustainability of local businesses</i> <i>Increase employment</i> <i>Reuse empty buildings</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>STRAT 1</i> <i>STRAT 2</i> <i>STRAT 8</i> <i>STRAT 9</i> <i>ECON 1</i> <i>ECON 2</i> <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>EC 6</i> <i>EC 11</i>
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<p>1.2 Promote employment opportunities</p>	<p><i>Proposals for the development of new businesses or expansion of existing businesses will be supported where the development: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• is located within the existing employment site at Monument Place as identified in Local Plan (Part Two); or</i> <i>• involves the redevelopment of ‘previously developed land’ within the settlement boundary; or</i> <i>• is a sympathetic conversion of existing rural buildings for employment purposes.</i> <p><i>Proposals for new or expanded businesses should respect the local character of Farndon itself and especially of the Conservation Area.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Sustainability of local businesses</i> <i>• Increase employment</i> <i>• Reuse empty buildings</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• STRAT 1</i> <i>• STRAT 2</i> <i>• STRAT 8</i> <i>• STRAT 9</i> <i>• ECON 1</i> <i>• ECON 2</i> <p><i>The policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• EC 11</i>
<p>1.3 Encourage a range of goods and services within the village</p>	<p><i>Proposals for new retails, service and leisure facilities will be supported which: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• enhance the viability of the High Street area; and</i> <i>• respect the Conservation Area; and</i> <i>• do not detract from the local character of Farndon High Street; and</i> <i>• are proportionate to the location in scale and type.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Sustainability of local businesses</i> <i>• Increase employment</i> <i>• Enhancement of retail and community facilities</i> <i>• Appropriate design & protection of local character</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• STRAT 1</i> <i>• STRAT 2</i> <i>• STRAT 8</i> <i>• STRAT 11</i> <i>• ECON 2</i> <i>• SOC 5</i> <i>• ENV 6</i> <p><i>The policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• ENV37</i>

<p>1.4 Protect common land along the riverbank.</p>	<p>Any proposed use or development of the riverbank must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent with the objectives for conserving or enhancing the Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the River Dee itself; and • comply with the requirements of Natural England with respect to the riverbank area; and • have regard to the guidelines for built development and landscape management included in the Dee Valley CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of habitats and landscape 	<p>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • ECON 3 • SOC5 • ENV2 • ENV 4 <p>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENV27 • ENV28
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<p>Policy 2 – Homes to meet the needs of the village</p>	<p>Utilise 'brownfield land' first as in the Housing Bill 2015 and then consider other sites within the built up area of Farndon. Development would thereby be small scale, in-fill and not impinge on quality agricultural land.</p> <p>N.B. This Farndon Plan does not seek to allocate individual sites.</p> <p>For the SHLAA site near the Dee, the most southerly part floods regularly and is unsuitable for housing. North of this, the land drains to the Dee so impacts on the river in terms of water quality particularly, therefore water run-off, supply and disposal need to be considered.</p> <p>Limit house building in Farndon to seven properties a year, unless there is a demonstrable need for first-time homes or sheltered accommodation for residents. Reviewed on a five yearly basis.</p> <p>Provide a mix of housing including smaller two and three bedroomed homes for outright purchase to allow for downsizing and first time buyers. Houses defined as 'affordable' to be built for local people in accordance with the most recent legislation and to remain 'affordable' in perpetuity.</p> <p>Enhance the natural and built environment of Farndon with Cheshire-style house design complying with Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012.</p> <p>Housing schemes which will ultimately exceed the seven per year favoured by the residents – such as the two sites already approved at Top Farm and Churton Road – should nevertheless be staged over a number of years. Houses should be of varied style and size built in small groups, reflect the village character and designed to fit the location. Above all, they should respect the local vernacular and avoid the anodyne style of estate-type buildings that surround many rural villages.</p> <p>The clear intention of this Neighbourhood Plan housing policy is to ensure that Farndon remains a rural village, offers a mix of properties in small developments to suit the local population, is sustainable with respect to services and facilities and does not become a dormitory village.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage use of brownfield land • Provide appropriate housing to meet local needs • Appropriate design • Improve local environment <p>31</p>	<p>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • STRAT 2 • STRAT 8 • STRAT 11 • SOC 1 • SOC 3 <p>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HO 4 • HO 5 • HO 15
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<p>2.1 Site preferences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>building within the settlement boundary on 'previously developed land' – also known as 'brownfield land' will be supported first, as described in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan, Part One 2016, STRAT 1 and</i> • <i>subsequently, on small scale undeveloped land within the settlement boundary avoiding over intensity.</i> • <i>Outside the settlement boundary, small scale redevelopment of previously developed sites, close to the edge of the settlement may be acceptable.</i> <p><i>all are in preference to the allocation of agricultural land for residential or commercial use.</i></p> <p><i>Proposals which meet the above criteria must also meet the requirements of policies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Encourage use of brownfield land</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HO 4 • HO 5
<p>2.2 Mixed style housing development</p>	<p><i>New housing development should provide a mix of housing to meet local needs including: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>smaller two and three bedroomed homes for outright purchase to allow for downsizing as well as first time buyers; and</i> • <i>houses defined as 'affordable' should be allocated to those with a local connection and remain 'affordable', in perpetuity.</i> • <i>Sheltered accommodation for existing residents or people with a long term connection with the Parish, where there is a demonstrable need.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide appropriate housing to meet local needs</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 8 • STRAT 11 • SOC 1 • SOC 3 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HO 15

<p>2.3 Size and scale of housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>house building in Farndon will be limited to small scale developments, respecting the character of the village</i> • <i>multiple small scale or large 'estate type' developments will not be permitted</i> • <i>developments should be well integrated into the existing settlement and with good pedestrian connections</i> • <i>developments should reflect the criteria set out in Building for Life 12</i> • <i>housing schemes should reflect updated information on local housing needs in Farndon, as defined by the five yearly review done by the Parish Council</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide appropriate housing to meet local needs</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 2 • SOC 3
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	<p><i>New development to be low key and preserve views and vistas</i></p> <p>Farndon is a tightly contained village surrounded by modern housing estates mostly built since the 1960's on agricultural land. All new development should respect the local character of the Conservation Area in design and materials, it should not be massed, nor built to a height as to destroy the visual lie of the land, which in Farndon rises towards the Church, or block views into and out of the village, especially the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The local landscape and village-scape must be respected as recommended in Building for Life 12 Criteria numbers 5, 6 and 7 and the character of the village not significantly changed.</p> <p><i>Conservation Area and listed buildings respected</i></p> <p>The design of all new houses, alterations, conversions and extensions to buildings within or adjacent to the Conservation Area or listed buildings should respect the logic and distinctive heritage of conservation in the design, use of quality building materials in the vernacular and preservation or natural features including trees and hedgerows. It is important to conserve and enhance the character of buildings close to or within eye line of any new development.</p> <p><i>Brownfield sites prioritised</i></p> <p>The Queens Speech of 27 May 2015 included a new Housing Bill requiring the prior use of 'brownfield land' and the establishment of a statutory register with the aim of getting development plans in place on 90% of suitable brownfield land by 2020. This is the preference (96%) expressed by residents. There are three small 'brownfield sites' in Farndon and developers will be required to consider these sites before putting forward plans to build on other SHLAA sites or on the green fields which surround the village.</p> <p>Development proposals that do not contribute positively to the Farndon built environment or the distinctive character of the Conservation Area will not be permitted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect local character and views • Appropriate design • Protect Conservation Area • Encourage use of brownfield land 	<p>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • ENV 5 • ENV 6 <p>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENV 37 • ENV 38
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<p>3.1 New development to be low key and preserve views and vistas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new development, particularly in the Conservation Area or adjacent to listed buildings or landmarked structures, should be low key and appropriate to the area in terms of scale, mass and height; and • a sense of enclosure should be provided based on an appropriate height/width ratio, with a flexible and varied building line and street width; and • development should preserve and enhance key vistas by using landmark buildings or significant landscape features as focal points; and • edge of settlement sites should aim to fit the development into the wider landscape by appropriate and dominant landscaping and appropriate spacing between buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect local character, views and landscape • Appropriate design • Protect Conservation Area 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • ENV 2 • ENV 5 • ENV 6 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENV 37 • ENV 38
<p>3.2 Design and layout to new developments will be required to respect</p>	<p><i>The design and layout of new developments will be required to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect the local landscape and villagescape as recommended in Building for Life 12 Criteria numbers 5,6 and 7; and • comply with the policies included in the CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016 with respect to landscape management and built environment; and • ensure that the character of the village is not significantly changed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect local character • Protect local landscape • Appropriate design 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • ENV 2 • ENV 5 • ENV 6 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENV 37

<p>3.3 Conservation Area and areas around or in the eye line of listed buildings</p>	<p><i>The design of all new houses, alterations, conversions and extensions to buildings within or adjacent to the Conservation Area or listed buildings and their settings, should respect the distinctive heritage and character in the design, use of quality building materials in the vernacular, preservation of natural features including trees and hedgerows and where possible make a positive contribution to the wider public realm in terms of hard and soft landscaping and associated street lighting and furniture.</i></p> <p><i>Developers should take account of the updated Conservation Area Appraisal for Farndon prepared by the Conservation team at Chester Council.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Protect local character</i> • <i>Appropriate design</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • ENV 2 • ENV 5 • ENV 6 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENV 37 • ENV 38
<p>Policy 4 – Facilities for Local People</p>	<p><i>Proposals for development will be required to identify their likely impact on local infrastructure, services and facilities and to demonstrate how any such impacts will be addressed.</i></p> <p>The 'Development Impact Assessment' must cover anticipated numbers of new pupils at the school and patients at the surgery, number of cars and weight of increased traffic and disruption associated with new buildings activities including provision of gas, electricity, water and sewage. Developers must demonstrate how they will ensure that they safely link development to village services and finance the improvement of village infrastructure and services to offset the impact of each development.</p> <p>Developers will be expected to liaise with the Cheshire Footpath Society, local landowners and farmers to ensure that new and existing footpaths are clearly marked and accessible, with sufficient grassed area retained to allow safe passage when crops are planted.</p> <p>Proposals that do not positively contribute to Farndon will be resisted. Local businesses have expressed the opinion that further extension of parking prohibitions would have a detrimental effect on business and might affect their viability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate design • Reduce negative impact of development • Improved accessibility by foot and bicycle 	<p>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • STRAT 2 • STRAT 8 • STRAT 11 • ECON 2 • SOC 5 • ENV 6 <p>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SR 17

<p>4.1 Provision of facilities and services</p>	<p><i>The provision of new community facilities and services within the defined settlement boundary will be supported subject to respecting residential amenity and local character.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Appropriate design</i> • <i>Protect local character</i> • <i>Enhancement of community facilities</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 8 • STRAT 11 • ECON 2 • SOC 5 • ENV 6
<p>4.2 Change of use or redevelopment supported where it can be demonstrated</p>	<p><i>Change of use or redevelopment will only be supported where it can be demonstrated, in the case of public and community services, that the proposal: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>includes alternative provision, in a suitable location, of equivalent or enhanced facilities; and</i> • <i>it is accessible to all by public transport, walking, cycling or by car, and has adequate car parking.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Protection and enhancement of community facilities</i> • <i>Promotion of sustainable travel</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 11 • ECON 2 • SOC 5 • ENV 6 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CF3

<p>4.3 'Development Impact Assessment'</p>	<p><i>Proposals for development will be required to identify their likely impact on local infrastructure, services and facilities and to demonstrate how any such impacts will be addressed through the prior preparation of a 'Development Impact Assessment' covering anticipated numbers of new pupils at the school and patients at the surgery, numbers of cars and weight of increased traffic and disruption associated with new building activities including provision of gas, electricity, water and sewage.</i></p> <p><i>The detail of the assessment should reflect the size of the proposed development. In the case of housing numbers below ten, the assessment may be limited to describing the planned numbers of new residents, school pupils at primary and secondary level, and cars. Where developments are of ten or more properties, the assessment should be comprehensive.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reduce negative impact of development</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 11 • SOC 5
<p>4.4 Accessibility and footpaths.</p>	<p><i>•demonstrate how they will ensure that they safely link developments of ten or more houses to village services and</i></p> <p><i>•liaise with the Cheshire Footpath Society, local landowners and farmers to ensure that new and existing footpaths are clearly marked and accessible, with sufficient grassed area retained to allow safe passage when crops are planted.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promotion of sustainable travel</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 10 • STRAT 11 • SOC 5 • ENV 6 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SR 17

<p>Policy 5 – Transport and communication</p>	<p><i>Road safety and congestion</i></p> <p>Developers must, in all applications include a realistic assessment of the impact that the inevitable increase in traffic will have on the normal life of the village, especially at peak and school times, and must clearly identify the mitigating actions they will incorporate into the development and the timetable for delivery. Safe walking routes to school and the centre of the village are a requirement as are conformity with the relevant Building for Life 12 Criteria. Development where unacceptable levels of traffic and associated dangers will be generated and cannot be ameliorated will not be approved.</p> <p><i>Pedestrians and cyclists</i></p> <p>New developments must include provision for safe, wide, smooth surfaced and direct footpaths and cycle routes from the proposed development into the village centre and to the school. If appropriate, the new footpaths should link with the existing network of public footpaths which should be enhanced by the developer to provide safe passage. Developments on roads where no pavements exist will be the subject of discussions between the Parish Council, developers and planners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate design • Reduce negative impact of development • Improved accessibility by foot and bicycle 	<p>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • STRAT 10 • STRAT 11 <p>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SR 17
<p>5.1 Road safety and congestion</p>	<p><i>Developers must, in all significant applications, include a realistic assessment of the impact that the inevitable increase in traffic will have on the normal life of the village especially at peak and school times, and must clearly identify the mitigating actions they will incorporate into the development and the timetable for delivery.</i></p> <p><i>Development where unacceptable levels of traffic and associated dangers will be generated and cannot be ameliorated will not be approved.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reduce negative impact of development</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>STRAT 1</i> • <i>STRAT 10</i> • <i>STRAT 11</i>

<p>5.2 Pedestrians and cyclists.</p>	<p><i>New developments must include provision for safe, wide, smooth surfaced and direct footpaths and cycle routes from the development into the village centre and to the school.</i></p> <p><i>If appropriate, the new footpaths should link with the existing network of public footpaths which should be enhanced by the developer to provide safe passage.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Appropriate design</i> • <i>Reduce negative impact of development</i> • <i>Improved accessibility by foot and bicycle</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • STRAT 10 • STRAT 11 • SOC 5 • ENV 6 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SR 17
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<p>Policy 6 – Landscape and environment</p>	<p><i>Protect and conserve natural assets</i></p> <p>The River Dee and the nearby cliffs are designated SSSI's and the Dee itself is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore the Farndon Neighbourhood Development Plan will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening. These geological and natural assets must be protected and conserved in conjunction with policy ENV4 (CWaC Local Plan Part 1).</p> <p><i>Protect green spaces</i></p> <p>There are few areas within Farndon itself where residents may enjoy open green space. Some of the roads in 1960's and 1970's housing developments have wide grassed verges and mature trees, there are two play areas on two separate estates, and a playing field, three tennis courts and a crown green bowling green adjacent to the Sports and Social Club at the eastern edge of the village.</p> <p>Local green spaces, fields and the riverbank surround the village. All are important recreational areas for walking, fishing, bird watching and cycling. This was clearly expressed during the discussions at community meetings in response to the household questionnaires and through the great concern showed by residents when four of the fields adjacent to the village were approved for large housing development during 2012 and 2013 with disturbance to small animal habitat and ancient hedgerows and destruction of agricultural land.</p> <p>Resident believe that any new development in the parish should:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of existing open space • Protect best and most versatile farmland • Encourage use of brownfield land • Protect wildlife • Protect local character and views 	<p>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • STRAT 9 • STRAT 11 • SOC 5 • SOC 6 • ENV 2 • ENV 3 • ENV 4 <p>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENV 17 • ENV 22 • ENV 28
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with CWAC policy EC20 - that development involving loss of the 'best and most versatile agricultural land' will not be allowed • Take account of the Housing Bill 2015 9in draft) – requiring the prior use of brownfield land. • Comply with CWaC Policy ENV4 on hedgerows. • Produce a wildlife assessment of the site including appropriate actions to conserve and protect the flora and fauna. • Observe constraints – Lower Dee Policy, Environment Agency • Make provision for green spaces within developments and the inclusion of hedges and trees on the boundaries as barriers to noise and provide safe passage for wildlife. <p><i>Conserve the landscape</i></p> <p>Farndon is set in a rural landscape of rolling farmland and copses on three sides and the River Dee on the fourth. It is distinctive with the High Street rising steeply from the river to the highest point of the village at Top Farm from where the land flattens out towards the east but falls to the north.</p> <p>This landscape means that the village has a rising silhouette when viewed from the north and the west with St Chad's church tower dominating as the highest building. Every field around the village is high or medium quality agricultural land, some is 'best and most versatile' and all is constantly in use.</p> <p>All of this is important to residents who believe that new development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the views towards the village and the vistas from within 	42	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the rural nature of Farndon • Conserve the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – Farndon Cliffs and the River Dee • Respect, preserve and enhance the character of the local landscape – complying with Building for Life 12 Criteria 5, 6 and 7 • Provide footpaths to and from village amenities to reduce traffic and ensure safety for pedestrians. As in Building for Life 12 Criteria 8 & 9. 		
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<p>6.1 Conserve the landscape</p>	<p><i>Development will be required to take the following into account: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<i>the location and setting of tree planting should be designed to conserve and enhance local character, and native tree species should be planted; and</i> •<i>existing mature trees should be retained and protected on development sites. In the case of a tree which is deemed diseased or unsafe by a tree specialist, a suitable replacement native tree must be planted; and</i> •<i>existing hedgerows must be retained, especially those on the side of roads within the Parish. Sections of hedgerows should only be removed for public road and access to development sites. Any damaged hedgerows must be replanted with native hedgerow species; and</i> •<i>new hedgerows are encouraged as boundary treatments around and within new developments; and</i> •<i>existing sandstone walls, including those which are part of hedgerows must be retained, repaired if necessary and kept in good order; and</i> •<i>within the Conservation Area, general boundary features should be in keeping with the existing character of the immediate area and should include conservation of existing or inclusion of new red sandstone walling and black and white railings (Cheshire railings). Suburban style garden boundaries will be resisted; and</i> •<i>respect, preserve and enhance the character of the local landscape – complying with “Building for Life 12 Criteria”, 5, 6 and 7 and</i> •<i>conform with the guidelines for built and development management – complying with Landscape Character Area 15f of CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016, Dee Valley.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Protect wildlife</i> • <i>Protect local character and views</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • STRAT 9 • STRAT 11 • ENV 2 • ENV 4 • ENV 5 • ENV 6 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENV 22
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<p>6.2 Protect and conserve natural assets – including wildlife and trees</p>	<p><i>Development proposals should protect and wherever possible enhance biodiversity and natural assets through: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>preparation of wildlife assessments including appropriate action to conserve and enhance flora and fauna; and</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>retention of existing water courses and wetland features including ponds and marl pits; and</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>protection of the trees within the parish covered by Tree Protection Orders and other mature or important trees or groups of trees; and</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>provision of green spaces and green corridors within developments and the retention of mature trees and hedges along boundaries as barriers to noise and to provide safe passage for wildlife.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance habitats and wildlife 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOC 5 • SOC 6 • ENV 2 • ENV 3 • ENV 4 • ENV 6 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENV 21 • ENV 22 • ENV 27
<p>6.3 Protect and conserve the environment – including land and river</p>	<p><i>Development must: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>comply with paragraph 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework - that development involving loss of the ‘best and most versatile agricultural land’ will not be allowed; and</i> • <i>observe the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and Local Plan Part One encouraging the reuse of ‘previously developed’ land in preference to greenfield land; and</i> • <i>observe constraints - Lower Dee Policy, Environment Agency; and</i> • <i>conserve the Farndon Cliffs and River Dee (SSSI and SAC).</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect best and most versatile farmland • Encourage use of brownfield land • Protect habitats and wildlife 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRAT 1 • ENV 2 • ENV 4 <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENV 27 • ENV 28

<p>6.4 Protect local green spaces.</p>	<p><i>Local green spaces are designated at the sites shown on Map X and will be protected from development. They are: -</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Farndon Community Club – the football field owned by Barnston Estates, and the adjoining land stretching from the tree line to the clubhouse, owned by the Parish Council.</i> <i>2. Wimpey Estate – Limetree Drive and Nightingale Close where small plots of green verge are in the ownership of the Parish Council.</i> <i>3. Townfield Lane – the lower half of the field of which the Maddock's Close housing estate forms the upper half. Owned by Redrow Estates.</i> <p><i>All landowners have been informed by letter from the Parish Council</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Protection of existing open space for amenity value</i> 	<p><i>This policy is in line with the following policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>STRAT 1</i> • <i>STRAT 11</i> • <i>SOC 5</i> • <i>SOC 6</i> • <i>ENV 3</i> • <i>ENV 4</i> <p><i>This policy is in line with the following retained policies of the Chester City Local Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ENV 17</i>
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Appendix 2: Comments received during consultation on draft Screening Assessment – September 2015 and December 2015

Agency	Date Consulted	Response	Date consulted	Response
Environment Agency	10 th September 2015	We have no comments to make on the SEA and HRA Screening Opinions for the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan.	23 rd December 2015	We have no comments to make regarding the screening opinion updates.
Historic England	10 th September 2015	No response received	23 rd December 2015	No response received
Natural England	10 th September 2015	See correspondence below	23 rd December 2015	See correspondence below
Natural Resources Wales	10 th September 2015	No response received	23 rd December 2015	No response received
CADW	10 th September 2015	No response received	23 rd December 2015	Having reviewed the documents attached to your email, we note that the Farndon Neighbourhood Development Plan's policies 3 (Protecting the built environment) and 6 (landscape and environment) should include reference to Scheduled Monuments and a large number of Listed Buildings in and around the medieval borough of Holt on the west bank of the River Dee, which faces east towards Farndon.

Natural England response to initial Screening Assessment (September 2015)

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 10 September 2015 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

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. Natural England are of the opinion that further clarification is required to be able to reach a conclusion of no likely significant effects.

It is not clear how the conclusion of no likely significant effects has been reached with regards to use of the riverbank and homes in the Neighbourhood Plan area. We advise considering this in more detail as there are sensitive protected sites within the plan area, particularly because the plan is offering support to certain aspects/locations.

The neighbourhood plan area includes a section of the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This is also notified at a national level as River Dee (England) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for both its wildlife and geomorphology interest. In addition, Dee Cliffs, Fardon SSSI is within the plan area.

SEA screening

Table 2 (Characteristics of the plan's effects and of the area likely to be affected) – encourage tourism - identifies a potential small negative cumulative effect on the habitat itself. It is not clear how this has been screened out.

The "Effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status" relies on the HRA screening and does not consider assets outside of the European site (for example, the SSSIs).

Appendix 1

Policy 1 (encourage use of riverbank for low-level tourism)

The proposals for developing the tourism potential of the riverbank fail to acknowledge that the River Dee is a SSSI and SAC, only mentioning the geological interest of Dee Cliffs, Farndon SSSI (Appendix 1, Policy 1). We advise that biodiversity, geodiversity and protected sites, including the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC and River Dee (England) SSSI, are considered as part of this assessment.

Any proposals for developing tourism need to be consistent with objectives for conserving and enhancing the SSSI. Note also that some operations within the SSSI may require SSSI consent, for example, construction of new fishing pegs.

Policy 2 (homes to meet the needs of the village)

The SEA/HRA states that the plan is not proposing new development or allocating sites for development. This policy, however, appears to offer support to homes in certain locations through offering policy support to the SHLAA sites put forward. Our understanding is that the SHLAA does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for housing. Therefore, it is not clear whether the sites put forward have been fully assessed. We would like to see this considered or clarification of the status of these sites. This is particularly important for locations in proximity to the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC. For the site near the Dee, the most southerly part flood regularly so appears unsuitable for housing. North of this, the land drains to the Dee so impacts on the river in terms of water quality particularly, but also water supply need to be considered.

Policy 6 (landscape and environment)

Conservation of Dee Cliffs, Fardon geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) does not appear to have been considered within the assessment. We advise consideration of geological interest within the neighbourhood as well as wildlife.

The landscape and environment policy fails to recognise the protection given to the River Dee itself, which is the most important natural site in the parish.

Natural England would like to see the neighbourhood plan strengthened by incorporating additional safeguards for the protection and enhancement of the international, national and locally designated sites present or by making a clear reference to the policy protecting these sites in the local plan.

Where Neighbourhood Plans could have significant environmental effects, they may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Further guidance on deciding whether the proposals are likely to have significant environmental effects and the requirements for consulting Natural England on SEA are set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance at:

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

In accordance with Schedule 2 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, a neighbourhood plan cannot be made if the likelihood of significant effects on any European Site, either alone (or in combination with other plans and projects) cannot be ruled out.

Therefore, measures may need to be incorporated into the neighbourhood plan to ensure that any likely significant effects are avoided in order to secure compliance with the Regulations. A screening exercise should be undertaken if there is any doubt about the possible effects of the plan on European protected sites. This will be particularly important if a neighbourhood plan is to progress **before** a local plan has been adopted and/or the neighbourhood plan proposes development which has not been assessed and/or included in the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the local plan.

Natural England response to updated Screening Assessment (December 2015)

Screening Statement

Natural England is in agreement with the Screening Statement, as long as the proposed policies of the Neighbourhood Plan do not alter the strategic policy framework assessed in the Local Plan Part One Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report then a separate HRA and SEA will not be required.

If this situation changes then a separate SEA and HRA Screening will be required and Natural England would wish to be consulted.

Draft Neighbourhood Plan

If the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) offers support to additional development over and above what is required in the Local Plan, we advise including wording to the effect that only development that is in conformity with the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part One biodiversity policy (ENV 4: Biodiversity and geodiversity) will be supported.

We would also advise ensuring that the area's Best and Most Versatile agricultural land is conserved through making the links to policy STRAT 1 Sustainable development in the Local Plan.

Opportunities to incorporate features into new build or retro fitted buildings which are beneficial to wildlife, such as the incorporation of roosting opportunities for bats or the installation of bird nest boxes should also be considered as part of any new development proposals.

Consideration should be given as to whether the plan or proposal has any impacts on protected species. To help with this, Natural England has produced standing advice to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected or Biodiversity Action Plan species should they be identified as an issue. The standing advice also sets out when, following receipt of survey information, you should undertake further consultation with Natural England.

Environment Agency response to initial Screening Assessment (September 2015)

Cheshire West and Chester Council
Planning Policy
4 Civic Way
Ellesmere Port
CH65 0BE

Our ref: SO/2009/105235/OR-
28/PO3-L01

Your ref: NP010

Date: 15 October 2015

FAO Catherine Morgetroyd

Dear Madam

SEA and HRA Screening Opinion for Farndon Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for requesting our comments on the above consultation which was received in this office 24th September 2015.

We have no comments to make on the SEA and HRA Screening Opinions for the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan.

We look forward to seeing the Neighbourhood Plan progress.

Yours faithfully

Ms DAWN HEWITT
Planning Advisor

Direct dial 02030250535

Direct e-mail dawn.hewitt@environment-agency.gov.uk

Environment Agency
Richard Fairclough House Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1HT.
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Environment Agency response to updated Screening Assessment (December 2015)

Cheshire West and Chester Council
Development Management
4 Civic Way
Ellesmere Port
CH65 0BE

Our ref: SO/2009/105235/OR-28/PO4-L01

Your ref: V4 Dec 15

Date: 15 January 2016

FAO Catherine Morgetroyd

Dear Madam

Farndon Neighbourhood Plan Screening

Thank you for referring the above consultation which was received 31st December 2015.

We have no comments to make regarding the screening opinion updates.

Yours faithfully

Ms DAWN HEWITT
Planning Advisor

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