



## Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

On behalf of  
Parson Drove Parish Council  
in relation to the  
Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan

<b>Date of assessment:</b>	4 April 2018 <i>(initial assessment and date of draft SEA Screening Report that statutory consultees were consulted on )</i>
<b>Date of final report:</b>	1 June 2018
<b>Date/ version of neighbourhood development plan to which Screening Report applies:</b>	Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan – emerging draft, received 9 March 2018

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## Overview

**Neighbourhood development plan (NDP) to which this Screening Report applies:**

Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan

**Version/ date of NDP to which this Screening Report applies:**

Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan – received on 9 March 2018

**Neighbourhood area to which the NDP applies:**

Parson Drove Neighbourhood Area

**Parish council/s within the neighbourhood area:**

Parson Drove Parish Council

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report determines whether or not the contents of the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Development Plan (PDNDP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.2 The purpose of the PDNDP is to maintain the parish's "vibrant community through proportionate growth which delivers a range of housing, and additional employment opportunities, whilst protecting the rural setting of the settlements within it." It also aims to give local people "opportunities to live and work in the place they grew up in" and ensure that they "will be well served by local services" (extracts from PDNDP vision). The draft PDNDP includes policies on housing development; the scale of housing developments; community consultation; protecting agricultural land; maintaining separation between settlements; and road and pedestrian safety.
- 1.3 Details of the legislation that require the need for this screening exercise and the SEA screening assessment criteria are outlined in sections 2 and 3 of this report respectively. Section 4 screens the PDNDP against the criteria in section 3 and determines whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and if a full SEA is required. Sections 5 and 6 present the outcomes of consultation with the Statutory Agencies and section 7 presents the screening outcome.

## 2. Legislative Background

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 (Schedule 9) introduced neighbourhood planning into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The 1990 Act, as amended by Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011, requires that neighbourhood development plans (NDPs) meet a set of basic conditions, one of which being that the making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
- 2.2 To ensure that a NDP meets this basic condition, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) may be required to determine the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the NDP. The basis for Strategic Environmental legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC, which was transposed into domestic law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or 'SEA Regulations'. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005).
- 2.3 Where a proposed plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or European offshore marine site (in relation to the Habitats Directive), this will also trigger the need to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 makes provision in relation to the Habitats Directive. The Directive requires that any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European site must be subject to an appropriate assessment. To achieve this, paragraph 1 of schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 prescribes a basic condition that the making of a neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site. Paragraphs 2 to 5 go on to amend the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 so as to apply its provisions to neighbourhood development orders and plans.
- 2.4 This report screens the PDNDP against various criteria to determine if a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. A SEA would assess the NDP against the European legislation outlined above, and would conclude whether the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations with regards to the environment.

### 3. Criteria for Assessing the Effects of Neighbourhood Development Plans

3.1 Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC details the criteria for determining whether plans are likely to have significant environmental effects. This criteria is outlined below.

#### Article 3, Scope

5. Member States shall determine whether plans or programmes referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 are likely to have significant environmental effects either through case-by-case examination or by specifying types of plans and programmes or by combining both approaches. For this purpose Member States shall in all cases take into account relevant criteria set out in Annex II, in order to ensure that plans and programmes with likely significant effects on the environment are covered by this Directive.

#### Annex II Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5)

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to

- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;
- 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).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- the cumulative nature of the effects;
- the transboundary nature of the effects;
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
  - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
  - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;
  - intensive land-use;

- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

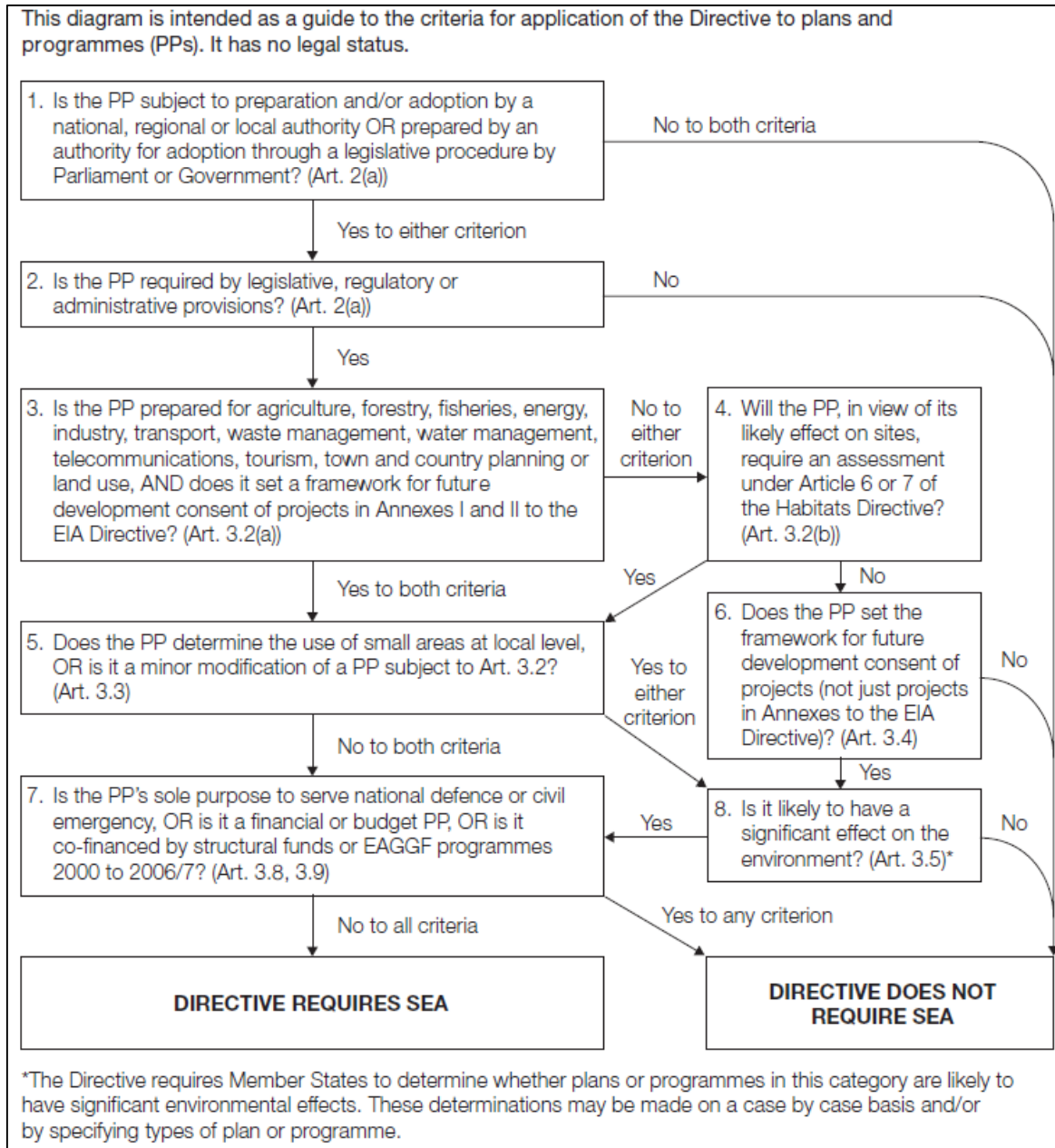
## 4. Assessment

- 4.1 The Department of the Environment has produced a flow chart diagram<sup>1</sup> which sets out the process for screening a planning document to ascertain whether a full SEA is required. See Figure 1 below.
- 4.2 Annexes I and II of Directive 2011/92/EU (as referred to in Figure 1, question 3) can be found here:  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011L0092&from=EN>  
(see <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/eia-legalcontext.htm> for details of amendments).
- 4.3 Articles 6 and 7 of the Habitats Directive (as referred to in Figure 1, question 4) can be found here: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043&from=EN>.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Environment, A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2005)

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



4.4 The process outlined in Figure 1 has been undertaken for the PDNDP and the findings are outlined in Table 1. As the questions have been answered using the flow diagram above, some of the questions may not be applicable as a result of previous answers: where this is the case, the response is stated as 'not applicable'.

Table 1: Assessment of Parson Drove Neighbourhood Development Plan against Figure 1

Criteria	Response: Yes/ No/ Not applicable	Details
1. Is the NDP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?	Yes	Whilst the PDNDP is being prepared by a neighbourhood plan working group on behalf of Parson Drove Parish Council, it will be adopted by Fenland District Council as the local planning authority. <b>Go to 2</b>
2. Is the NDP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions?	No, but answer treated as 'yes' (see details to right)	Whilst the production of a Neighbourhood Plan is not a requirement and is optional, it will, if made, form part of the Development Plan for the Fenland District. It is therefore important that this screening process considers the potential effects. <b>Go to 3</b>
3. Is the NDP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive?	No	The PDNDP is being prepared for planning and land use purposes but it does not set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive. <b>Go to 4</b>
4. Will the NDP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?	No	The emerging PDNDP will not have any effects on sites and as such does not require an assessment under Articles 6 and 7 of the Habitats Directive. <b>Go to 6</b>
5. Does the NDP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of an NDP subject to Art. 3.2?	Not applicable	Not applicable
6. Does the NDP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)?	Yes	The PDNDP will set the framework for development consents in the neighbourhood area. <b>Got to 8</b>
7. Is the NDP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7?	Not applicable	Not applicable
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?	No	The scope of the emerging PDNDP and the geographical area to which it applies are relatively limited.

		The implementation of the PDNDP (alongside national and local policy) is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment (as assessed in Table 2 below).
<b>Outcome:</b>		<b>SEA not required</b>

Table 2: Assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment

SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	Fenland District Council Assessment	Likely significant environmental effect?
<b>1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to—</b>		
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	The PDNDP would, if adopted, form part of the Statutory Development Plan and contribute to the framework for the assessment of future development projects. However, the PDNDP would only apply to a very limited geographical area where few proposals are anticipated and any proposals are expected to be of a relatively small scale.	No
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The PDNDP would not influence other plans and programmes to a significant degree. The PDNDP is required to be in general conformity with the Fenland Local Plan. While there is no requirement for any replacement of the Fenland Local Plan to conform to the policies of the PDNDP (if adopted), the PDNDP may have some, limited, influence on policies within a future local plan.	No
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	The emerging PDNDP includes a policy which aims to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land, though there are no other policies promoting environment considerations.  It is therefore considered that the PDNDP does integrate environmental considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development to a degree, though it is not anticipated that the	No



	environment effects will be significant.	
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The majority of the neighbourhood area (parish) is in flood zone 3. There are some minor areas on the periphery of the flood zone 3 areas which are in flood zone 2. Some built up areas in Parson Drove village are in flood zones 2 or 3, though the core of the village is in flood zone 1. The majority of the built up area of Church End is in flood zone 2 or 3. However, the PDNDP is not anticipated to have any direct, specific implications within the flood zone areas.	No
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The PDNDP is not relevant to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment.	No
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to—		
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The effects of the implementation of the PDNDP are largely uncertain in terms of frequency, duration, probability and reversibility: however, the effects are not likely to be significant, are likely to be minimal and may be positive.	No
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	The cumulative effects of the implementation of the PDNDP are expected to be very limited.	No
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	The effects of the implementation of the PDNDP are not expected to be transboundary.	No
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	The PDNDP is not expected to pose any risks to human health or the environment: the effects of policies may be positive in relation to these elements.	No
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The PDNDP area, in combination with Wisbech St Mary, has a population of around 3,087 (2011 Census: statistics only available at ward level). The effects of the implementation of the plan are expected to be localised and limited to within the plan area, therefore the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects are expected to be limited.	No
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—	The PDNDP is not proposing to allocate any sites. The effects of the plan in relation to these issues	No

(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and	are expected to be neutral or positive.	
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	There are no areas with protection status within the plan area itself. The plan area is within a 'SSSI/ SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar Impact Risk Zone' for the Nene Washes. However any effects of the PDNDP are expected to be positive and localised, and are not likely to be significant.	No

## 5. Consultation of Statutory Agencies

- 5.1 The assessment in section 4 indicates that Fenland District Council consider that it is unlikely that there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the PDNDP (as submitted at the date of this assessment) and thus a SEA is not required. The relevant Statutory Agencies, namely the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, have been consulted on this screening opinion based on the PDNDP in its current form. A summary of the responses received during this consultation are provided below: copies of the full responses can be found at appendices 2 and 3.

### Environment Agency

- 5.2 No response received.

### Historic England

- 5.3 Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

### Natural England

- 5.4 Natural England supports the conclusion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report (4 April 2018) that it is unlikely that there will be any significant environmental effects arising as a result of the draft Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan.

- 5.5 In addition, Natural England stated:

*“We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies/ proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.*

*Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisors, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/ SEA is necessary.”*

## 6. Response to Natural England’s advice: habitats considerations

- 6.1 In light of Natural England’s advice above, the council can confirm that there are no wildlife sites within the parish itself, however it should be noted that the Nene Washes SSSI, SPA & Ramsar site is located approximately 3 km south of the village. Having reviewed the species data provided by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC), there are a few local records of bats, badgers, brown hare, water voles and amphibians. However it is important to note that for all minor and major applications the applicant is required to complete a Biodiversity Checklist and this will identify the presence of any protected species or priority habitats. The applicant will need to agree any avoidance or mitigation measures with the local planning authority to ensure environmental impacts are avoided.
- 6.2 Furthermore, the SEA screening exercise undertaken, as set out in this report, did not flag up the need to complete a habitats regulation assessment (HRA). While the purpose of this report is to undertake a screening exercise to determine whether the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan requires a full Strategic Environmental Assessment, the nature of the SEA screening process means that impacts upon habitats are considered as part of the process.
- 6.3 The assessment in section 4 considers the effects of the neighbourhood plan in respect of designated sites and determines that implementation of the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan is not expected to result in significant effects on designated sites. Specifically, Table 1 of this Screening Report, Assessment of Parson Drove Neighbourhood Development Plan against Figure 1, includes this question and response:

4. Will the NDP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?	No	The emerging PDNDP will not have any effects on sites and as such does not require an assessment under Articles 6 and 7 of the Habitats Directive. <b>Go to 6</b>
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- 6.4 In the context of neighbourhood planning, a full HRA may be required where a neighbourhood plan is deemed likely to result in significant negative effects on protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites) as a result of the plan’s implementation.
- 6.5 Through its strategic policies, the Local Plan effectively defines the parameters within which the neighbourhood plan may operate. Policy LP3 (Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside) of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) directs the majority of the district’s growth to the market towns of March, Whittlesey, Wisbech and Chatteris. Parson Drove is classified as a ‘limited growth village’ in the settlement hierarchy, while Church End is an ‘other village’, thus permitting a small amount of growth in Parson Drove village, and very limited development in Church End of typically single dwellings. The Local Plan was subject to Sustainability Appraisal<sup>2</sup> (incorporating SEA) and HRA<sup>3</sup> during its preparation.
- 6.6 The Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan is not proposing a higher level of growth than that set out in the Local Plan. Rather, policy LP12 (Rural Areas Development Policy) of the adopted Fenland Local Plan states (in summary) that should a proposal for development

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/7045/The-Planning-Policy-Library> (see docs CD004(a) (b) (c) (d));  
<http://www.fenland.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7798&p=0> ;  
<http://www.fenland.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7795&p=0>  
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fenland.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7800&p=0>

increase the number of dwellings in the village by 10% or more, community or parish council support for the scheme will be required. The Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan proposes to increase this threshold to 20%.

- 6.7 Section 7 of this report concludes that it is unlikely that there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan and thus an SEA is not required. In light of all the above, it is reasonable to conclude that a full HRA is also not required.

## 7. Screening Outcome





- 7.1 As a result of the assessment in section 4, and following consultation of the Statutory Agencies, Fenland District Council consider it unlikely that there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Development Plan, as submitted at the date of this assessment. As such, a full SEA does not need to be undertaken for the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Development Plan.

### **NOTE TO PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL**



- 7.2 If the objectives, aims and/ or policies covered by the PDNDP should change (other than minor changes), or specific sites are allocated for development, this screening process should be undertaken for the revised plan. Please contact Fenland District Council for advice in such instance.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Emails to statutory consultees

Emma Naylor     Actions

To: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk; eastofengland@HistoricEngland.org.uk; enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Attachments: (2) Download all attachments  
 SEA Screening Report\_PARSO~1.pdf (560 KB) [Open as Web Page];  Parson Drove Neighbourhood~1.pdf (4 MB) [Open as Web Page]

06 April 2018 10:26

Good morning all,

Please find attached the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the draft Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan.

I also attach the version of the draft neighbourhood plan that this screening opinion is based on. The neighbourhood plan is currently in draft format, and the group is currently refining their policies based on informal Fenland District Council feedback: they intend to take the plan to Reg 14 consultation soon.

As you will see, the report attached concludes that in FDC's opinion, the draft neighbourhood plan is not likely to result in significant environmental effects, and therefore Strategic Environmental Assessment is not necessary.

**I would be grateful for your thoughts on this opinion, and indeed the wider report, by Friday 18th May (6 weeks).**

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

**Kind regards,**

**Emma Naylor BA (Hons) MPlan  
Neighbourhood Strategy Officer**

Normal working days: Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

Fenland District Council,  
Fenland Hall,  
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PE15 8NQ

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# Strategic Environmental Assessment of Draft Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan

Emma Naylor



Actions

To: [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Attachments: (2) Download all attachments

SEA Screening Report\_PARSO~1.pdf (560 KB) [Open as Web Page]; Parson Drove Neighbourhood~1.pdf (4 MB) [Open as Web Page]

17 May 2018 10:24

Good morning,

I note that I have not yet received your response to my earlier email regarding the SEA screening opinion for the Draft Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan.

I originally set the deadline of tomorrow (18 May). If you intend to submit comments but are going to be unable to meet this deadline please let me know. *If your comments are imminent please ignore this email and accept my apologies.*

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Kind regards,**

Appendix 2: Historic England response



Historic England

EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

Ms Emma Naylor  
Fenland District Council  
Fenland Hall  
County Road  
March  
Cambridgeshire  
PE15 8NQ

Direct Dial: 01223 582746

Our ref: PL00366702

11 May 2018

Dear Ms Naylor

Thank you for your email of 6 April 2018 regarding the above consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore we welcome this opportunity to review the SEA Screening report for Parson Drove's Neighbourhood Plan. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion, which includes a draft of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Screening Report indicates that the Council considers that the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We note that the plan does not itself seek to allocate land for development, although it includes provision for a 20% increase in housing numbers over the plan period. However, 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 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence dated 6 April 2018. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SA/SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance) where we consider that, despite the SA/SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.



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HistoricEngland.org.uk







Historic England

EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

Yours sincerely,

Edward James  
Historic Places Advisor, East of England  
Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk



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*Historic England is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 2000 (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). All information held by the organisation will be accessible in response to an information request, unless one of the exemptions in the FOIA or EIR applies.*

# Appendix 3: Natural England response

Date: 09 April 2018  
Our ref: 243369  
Your ref: Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan



Emma Naylor  
Fenland District Council  
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CW1 6GJ

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Emma Naylor

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the draft Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 06 April 2018.

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**

Based on the small scale and nature of development promoted through the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan Natural England supports the conclusion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report (4 April 2018) that it is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising as a result of the draft Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **Neighbourhood Plan**

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans in light of the SEA Directive is contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>1</sup>. The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance 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 may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours sincerely  
Hannah Bottomley  
Consultations Team

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