

HIGH HALSTOW PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2020 – 2037

BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT
(INCLUDING AREA STATEMENT)

MAY 2022



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1. Introduction

This document

1.1 This Basic Conditions Statement has been produced to accompany the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan. It sets out how the Basic Conditions prescribed by Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 are considered to have been met. The Basic Conditions are:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the Neighbourhood Plan. The prescribed condition is that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or an offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habits Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

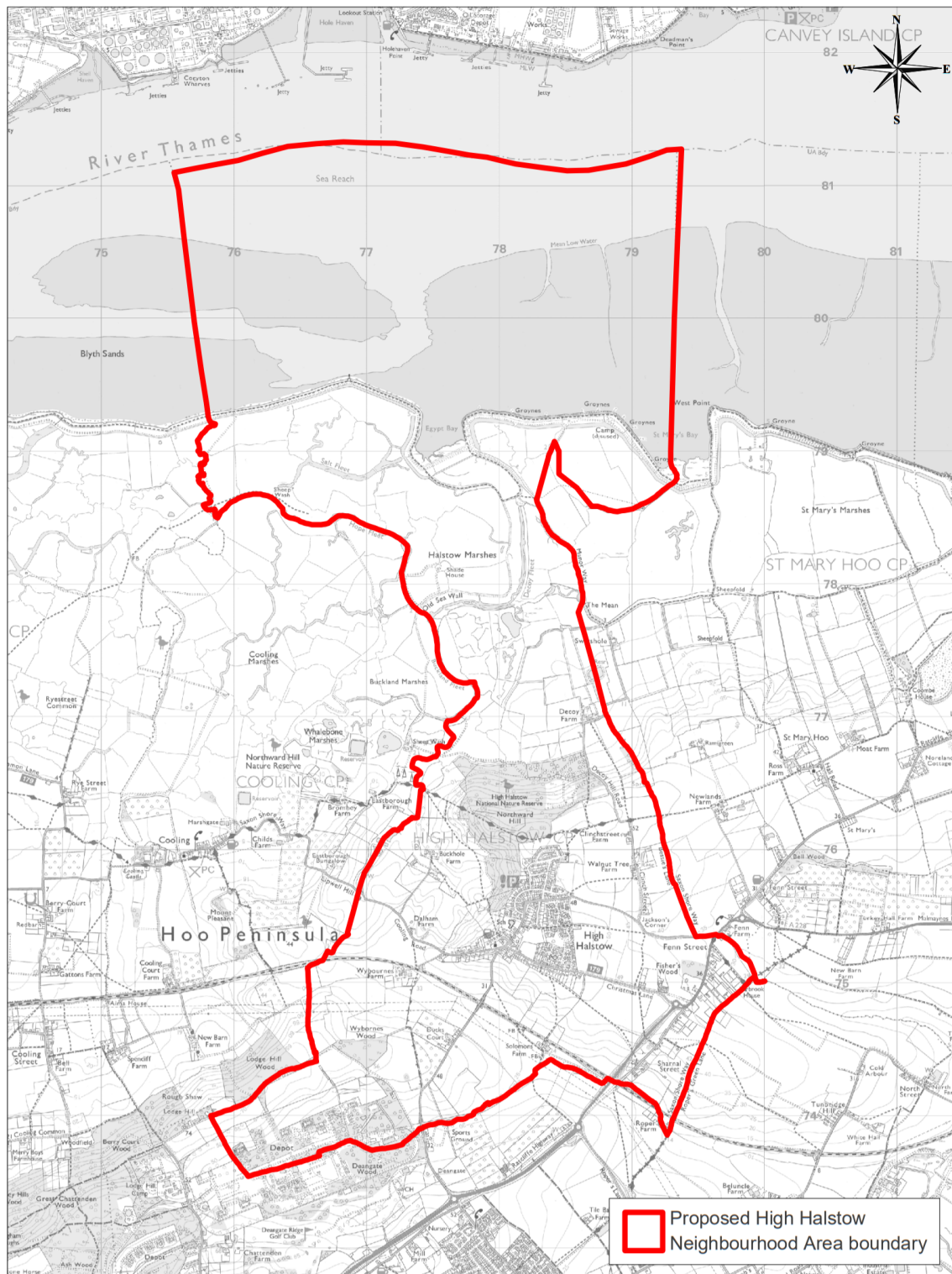
1.2 There are two further basic conditions but these only apply to the making of a Neighbourhood Development Order and are thus not considered relevant for this document.

Other supporting documents

- 1.3 The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan is supported by a Consultation Statement and this Basic Conditions Statement (incorporating an Area Statement).
- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan also makes use of evidence prepared by and on behalf of Medway Council as part of the Local Plan process. These and other documents are referenced as appropriate in the Neighbourhood Plan and include:
- High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan, Consultation Statement, 2022
 - High Halstow Design Code, Urbed, 2022
 - High Halstow Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion, 2021.
 - High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion, 2021.
 - Hoo Development Framework, September 2021
 - Hoo Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study, 2019
 - Medway Employment Land Needs Assessment, 2015
 - Medway Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework 2021
 - Medway Heritage Asset Review, 2017
 - Medway Housing Design Standards (Interim), November 2011
 - Medway Landscape Character Assessment, 2011
 - Medway Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020-2030, 2020
 - Medway Village Infrastructure Audit, 2017
 - North Kent Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2015
 - Planning for Growth on the Hoo Peninsula, March 2020
 - State of Medway Report: Natural Assets and Open Space, 2008

Key statements, including Area Statement

- 1.5 The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted to Medway Council by High Halstow Parish Council. The Parish Council is the qualifying body and is entitled to submit a Neighbourhood Plan for the High Halstow Parish Council area.
- 1.6 The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies that relate to development and the use of land within the neighbourhood area, as shown in Figure 1. The Neighbourhood Area was designated in June 2018 (see Appendix A). The boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area is the same as the Parish Council boundary.
- 1.7 The Neighbourhood Plan does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area. There are no other adopted Neighbourhood Development Plans which cover the neighbourhood area.
- 1.8 The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2020 to 2037. This is in line with the emerging Medway Council Local Plan, which has the same time horizon.
- 1.9 The Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any policies which relate to excluded development as defined by section 61k of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.



Proposed High Halstow Neighbourhood Area

Medway
COUNCIL
Serving You
Scale: 1:40000 02/05/18
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Figure 1: High Halstow Neighbourhood Area

2. National Planning Policy

Introduction

- 2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan must show that it has regard to national policies contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This is principally provided by the 2021 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) published by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (renamed as the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities from September 2021).
- 2.2 The NPPF states at paragraph 18 that neighbourhood plans should contain non-strategic policies. At paragraph 21 it states that strategic policies (in the Development Plan) provide a clear starting point for non-strategic policies and that strategic policies *‘should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies’*.
- 2.3 The power of a neighbourhood plan is clearly set out in paragraph 30 of the NPPF, which states that *‘once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area’*.
- 2.4 This section of the Basic Conditions Statement demonstrates that the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan has regard to relevant goals within the 2021 NPPF in relation to:
- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 - Building a strong, competitive economy
 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
 - Promoting sustainable transport
 - Supporting high quality communications
 - Making effective use of land
 - Achieving well-designed places
 - Protecting Green Belt land
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
 - Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals
- 2.5 The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan has ten primary objectives. These are summarised in Table 1 below and identify which NPPF goals each objective addresses. The sections following this provide a summary of how policies in the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan conform to the 2021 NPPF goals.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

Table 1: Alignment of High Halstow NDP Objectives with NPPF

| High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan Objective | Relevant National Planning Policy Framework (2021) goals |
|---|---|
| <p>Objective 01: Community well-being</p> <p>To provide and enhance facilities that maintain and develop the wellbeing of the community.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the vitality of town centres |
| <p>Objective 02: Green Space</p> <p>To preserve and improve sympathetic access to existing green spaces and further provide additional green spaces within the developed environment.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting healthy and safe communities • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment |
| <p>Objective 03: Community Identity</p> <p>To maintain and enhance the strong sense of community and maximise the opportunity for engagement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting healthy and safe communities |
| <p>Objective 04: Rural setting</p> <p>To keep High Halstow a rural village</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment |
| <p>Objective 05: Leisure and tourism</p> <p>To maintain and develop High Halstow as an area rich in history and natural beauty, as well as supporting local leisure and tourism opportunities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting healthy and safe communities • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment • Conserving and enhancing the historic environment • Building a strong, competitive economy |
| <p>Objective 06: Traffic</p> <p>Minimise the impact of vehicular traffic and improve opportunities for active and sustainable travel facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting sustainable transport |
| <p>Objective 07: Sustainable Environment</p> <p>To provide a sustainable environment for the residents and wildlife of High Halstow whilst being mindful of conserving an ecological balance.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting sustainable transport • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment |
| <p>Objective 08: Health and well-being</p> <p>To provide an effective locally based healthcare facility to suit the needs of the local population.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting healthy and safe communities |
| <p>Objective 09: Housing for the community</p> <p>Housing should be relevant to community need and sympathetic to local styles</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making effective use of land • Delivering a sufficient supply of homes |
| <p>Objective 10: Infrastructure</p> <p>Provide infrastructure that is robust enough to support existing and future networks.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a strong, competitive economy • Promoting healthy and safe communities |

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

2.6 The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan sets out the following policies that aim to deliver a sufficient supply of homes:

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Policy HH PQ4: Land to the east of High Halstow | 2021 NPPF ref. (para) - 60-80 |
| Policy HH PQ5: Housing type and mix | |
| Policy HH PQ6: Self and custom build housing | |

- Land to the east of High Halstow is a strategic site where approximately 760 new homes and supporting infrastructure is proposed in the Hoo Development Framework and the emerging Medway Local Plan, and where it is envisaged that funding awarded to Medway Council through the Governments Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) will help unlock. The Neighbourhood Plan notes that the allocation of the site will need to be subject to the Local Plan process and that, if it is, then a set of criteria are established in **Policy HH PQ4**, to help shape growth that responds to the local context.
- **Policy HH PQ5** and **Policy HH PQ6** support the principle of delivering a sufficient supply of homes through its alignment with paragraph 62 of the NPPF by stipulating that provision should be made for a mix of housing that meets the needs of the community, including people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

Building a strong, competitive economy

2.7 The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan sets out the following policies to build a strong and competitive economy:

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Policy HH C1: Village centre and facilities | 2021 NPPF ref. (para)- 81-85 |
| Policy HH C3: Communication Technology | |
| Policy HH M2: Active Travel | |
| Project / Aspiration HH Mb: New walking and cycle routes | |
| Policy HH M3: Bus services, routes and infrastructure | |
| Policy HH M4: Rail services, routes and infrastructure | |

- In accordance with paragraph 81 of the NPPF, which places significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity, **Policy HH C1** seeks to ensure that the loss of shops and related commercial services for the local community will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that reasonable efforts have been made to secure their continued use for these purposes. It also welcomes the provision of new facilities, including opportunities for local office space to cater for people who no longer commute

on a regular basis following the Covid pandemic and changes to working patterns, but who may need a dedicated office space away from the home.

- **Policy HH C3** seeks to ensure that proposals for new development are capable of receiving high, gigabit-capable speeds and reliable mobile and broadband. By seeking to create improved communications within High Halstow, the policy aligns with para. 81 of the NPPF which stipulates that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.
- **Project / Aspiration HH Mb, Policy HH M3, and Policy HH M4** all aim to create improved active travel and public transport infrastructure within High Halstow. This therefore supports the NPPF, which at para. 82 (c) acknowledges that planning policies should seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure.

Ensuring the vitality of town centres

2.8 A number of policies (and projects) in the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure the vitality of the town centre:

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Policy HH C1: Village centre and facilities | 2021 NPPF ref. (para)- 86-91 |
| Policy HH PQ4: Land to the east of High Halstow | |

- **Policy HH C1** seeks to maintain the viability and vitality of the High Halstow by encouraging proposals which protect existing and provide new opportunities for important local services and facilities. This aligns with paragraph 86 (b) of the NPPF, which state that planning policies should ‘define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre’. The Policy seeks to direct the majority of this type of growth towards the village centre.
- Meanwhile, **Policy HH PQ4** seeks to ensure any development on the Land to the east of High Halstow sites integrates well with the existing built-form and strengthens the centre of High Halstow. This aligns with paragraph para 86 (f) of the NPPF which states that planning policies should ‘recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites’
- The Neighbourhood Plan also notes that where new facilities are proposed but which cannot be accommodated in the existing village centre, then they should be located as close as possible to the existing built up area and with good connections to the existing village centre. The associated Design Code envisages a small local centre in the east of High Halstow growth area, focussed around provision of a new primary school. This is located close to the existing community.

Promoting healthy and safe communities

2.9 A number of policies (and projects) in the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan promote healthy and safe communities:

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Policy HH E5: Local Green Spaces | 2021 NPPF ref. (para)- 92-103 |
| Policy HH E6: New green spaces | |
| Policy HH M1: Green routes | |
| Policy HH M2: Active Travel | |
| Project / Aspiration HH Mb: New walking and cycle routes | |
| Policy HH M5: Street design | |
| Project HH Mc: Traffic management and safety | |

- **Policy HH E5** designates 12 Local Green Spaces. This supports the aspirations of paras. 101 and 102 of the NPPF which highlights the importance of designating green space in line with local planning policies and sustainable development. Meanwhile **Policy HH E6** establishes a series of criteria for new green spaces within High Halstow. This Policy, along with **Policy HH M1**, which seeks to provide new and improved green routes throughout the Parish, therefore align with para. 98 of the NPPF, which recognises that “access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities”.
- **Policy HH M2** promotes active travel by giving support to development proposals which incorporate improved and extended footpaths and cycle paths, that provide natural surveillance of public spaces and improve cycle facilities. This supports the aspirations laid out in para. 92 (b) of the NPPF which promotes safe places that are not undermined by fear of crime through the creation of high quality public space and legible pedestrian routes, both of which encourage continual use of public areas as well; and para. 92 (c) of the NPPF which calls for street layouts that encourage walking and cycling. **Project/Aspiration HH Mb** supports this policy, outlining aspirations to improve existing and develop new cycleways in High Halstow. Both projects/aspirations align with para 92 (a) of the NPPF which promote street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods.
- **Policy HH M5** and **Project HH Mc** support proposals which contribute towards making High Halstow’s street network a safer place for people to travel around by foot and by bicycle. It supports proposals for play streets and homezones within new development areas, including shared spaces, greenery, traffic calming and low speed limits. This aligns with para. 92 (c) of the NPPF which notes how planning policies should aim to achieve places which “enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”

Promoting sustainable transport

2.10 The following policies (and projects) in the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan promote sustainable transport:

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Policy HH M2: Active Travel | 2021 NPPF ref. (para)- 104-113 |
| Project / Aspiration HH Mb: New walking and cycle routes | |
| Policy HH M3: Bus services, routes and infrastructure | |
| Policy HH M4: Rail services, routes and infrastructure | |
| Policy HH M6: E-vehicles, Mobility as a Service and Mobility Hubs | |

- Policy HH M2** gives support to development proposals that incorporate improved and extended footpaths and cycle paths where appropriate. This supports the aspirations laid out in paragraph 106 (d) of the NPPF which notes that planning policies should “provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking”. Applications should also give “give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements within the scheme and neighbouring areas” as per paragraph 112 (a) of the NPPF. **Project/Aspiration HH Mb** supports these aspirations by proposing new routes suitable for development which the Parish Council hopes to work with the partner organisations to explore opportunities.
- Policy HH M6** encourages proposals for super-fast communal e-vehicle charging points and shared mobility infrastructure within the public realm. This Policy, in combination with **Policy HH M3** and **HH M3**, which both aim to reduce the generation of road traffic through the provision of new and improved bus and rail infrastructure, align with the NPPF’s aims of actively managing patterns of growth to support sustainable transport objectives by focusing development on sustainable locations and offering a genuine choice of transport modes which can help to improve air quality, as set out in paragraph 105 of the NPPF.

Supporting high quality communications

2.11 The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan sets out the following policy to support high quality communications:

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Policy HH C3: Communication Technology | 2021 NPPF ref. (Para)- 114- 118 |
|--|---------------------------------|

- **Policy HH C3** suggests that new proposals for new development should be capable of receiving high, gigabit-capable speeds and reliable mobile and broadband connections. It therefore aligns with the NPPF, which at para. 114 recognises that “advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being.”

Making effective use of land

2.12 The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan sets out the following policies to make effective use of land.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Policy HH PQ1: Design | 2021 NPPF ref. (Para)- 119 - 125 |
| Policy HH PQ5: Housing type and mix | |
| Policy HH E1: Natural Environment | |

- **Policy HH PQ5** supports the provision of a mix of housing that meets the needs of the community based on the most-up-to-date evidence. This aligns with paragraph 124 (a) of the NPPF which stipulates that decisions should take into account the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development.
- The NPPF also recognises that supporting the efficient use of land also means responding to the prevailing character and setting of an area (para 124 (d)) and of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places (para 124 (e)). Para 125 then goes on to state that development should ‘*make optimal use of the potential of each site*’. This is reflected through **Policy HH PQ1** which requires proposals to show how they ‘respond positively to the setting and character of High Halstow, and which reflect the guidance and principles outlined in the High Halstow Design Code’. The Design Code published alongside the Neighbourhood Plan provides guidance on appropriate densities and forms of development in High Halstow that reflect the character of the area but which also respond to and help strengthen local character.
- **Policy HH E1** supports developments which are able to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain of 10%. This aligns with NPPF paragraph 120 (a) which notes that planning policies and decisions should take opportunities to achieve net environmental gains such as developments which enable new habitat creation.

Achieving well-designed places

- 2.13 This section of the NPPF stresses the importance of high quality design in buildings and places. A number of the policies in the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan encourage high quality design. Para. 127 of the NPPF notes that plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations that are developed with local communities to reflect local aspirations. Policies that align with this in the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Policy HH E2: Countryside and Rural Landscape | 2021 NPPF ref. (Para)- 126 - 136 |
| Policy HH E9: Lighting | |
| Policy HH M5: Street design | |
| Project / Aspiration HH PQa: Architectural variety and innovation | |
| Policy HH PQ1: Design | |
| Policy HH PQ2: Non-designated Heritage and Archaeological Assets | |
| Policy HH PQ4: Land to the east of High Halstow | |
| Project / Aspiration HH PQb: Design review | |

- **Policy HH E2, Policy HH E9, HH PQ1, and HH PQ2** all align with para 130(c) of the NPPF, which states that developments should be *‘sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting’*: HH E2 through the protection of High Halstow’s landscape setting, HH E9 through the protection of night skies from excessive light pollution, HH PQ1 by seeking to ensure that new development within the village responds positively to the setting and character of High Halstow, and HH PQ2 through the protection of non-designated heritage assets.
- **Policy HH E6, HH M1, and HH M2** all encourage new development to provide for the natural surveillance of public spaces and a safe pedestrian environment, supporting crime prevention, thus aligning with the goals of paragraph 130 (f) of the NPPF.
- Para. 130 (e) of the NPPF aims to optimise mixed development including green and public space to create attractive, distinctive places. **Policy HH E1** supports this by enforcing requirements for biodiversity net gain on development sites.
- **Project HH PQa** encourages new development to adopt more variety and innovation within their proposals as long as they still are able to respond to the positive characteristics of High Halstow. Therefore, the plan aligns with paragraph 134 (b) of the NPPF, which states that significant weight should be given to “outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.”

- **Policy HH E2** seeks to ensure that development located in the open countryside around High Halstow will be considered in relation to the extent to which its location, scale, design and materials would protect the local landscape character and enhance the future appearance of the landscape and its nature conservation interest. The Plan therefore aligns with para 130 (c), which mentions the importance of planning policies in ensuring that developments are sympathetic to local character, including landscape setting.

Protecting Green Belt land

- 2.14 There is no land designated as Green Bet within the High Halstow Parish. The plan therefore does not have any specific policies or project which seek to protect, nor develop on, the Green Belt.

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

- 2.15 The overall aim of the policies (and projects) outlined below is to align with the NPPF’s agenda in para. 152 to support the transition to a low carbon future through the careful planning of development and movement:

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Policy HH E2: Countryside and Rural Landscape | 2021 NPPF ref. (para)- 152-173 |
| Policy HH E5: Local Green Spaces | |
| Policy HH E6: New Green Spaces | |
| Policy HH E8: Towards zero-carbon development | |
| Policy HH M2: Active travel | |
| Policy HH M6: E-vehicles, Mobility as a Service and Mobility Hubs | |
| Project/Aspiration HH Mb: New walking and cycle routes | |
| Policy HH M1: Green Routes | |
| Policy HH M3: Bus services, routes and infrastructure | |
| Policy HH M4: Rail services, routes and infrastructure | |

- **Policies HH M1, HH M2, HH M3, HH M4 and HH M6, and Project/aspirations HH Mb** conform to the NPPF’s aims (paragraph 152) of supporting the transition to a low carbon future and contributing to reductions in greenhouse gases by reducing overdependence on cars. This is predominantly achieved by promoting alternatives, be it through the expansion of walking and cycling routes (and facilities), new public transport services or the provision of accessible electric charging points.

- **Policies HH E2, HH E5 and HH E6** also help in moderating the impacts of over-development on climate change through the preservation of green infrastructure for community and public use. This aligns with paragraph 150 (a) of the NPPF whereby development is encouraged to be planned in a way that reduces climate vulnerability through the provision of green infrastructure.
- **Policy HH E8** encourages development applications to demonstrate accordance with BREEAM and Passivhaus standards to help improve building resource efficiencies. In doing so, it aligns with aspirations set out in para 150 (b) of the NPPF which calls for new development to be planned in ways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions through design.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

2.16 This chapter of the NPPF promotes the positive impact that planning policies and decisions can have on natural environment, specifically through protection and enhancement of landscapes, biodiversity, character and soil quality. Relevant policies in the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan are:

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Policy HH E1: Natural Environment | 2021 NPPF ref. (para)- 174-188 |
| Policy HH E2: Countryside and Rural Landscape | |
| Policy Policy HH E5: Local Green Spaces | |
| Policy HH E6: New Green Spaces | |
| Policy HH E9: Lighting | |
| Policy HH PQ1: Design | |

- **Policy HH E1** notes that new development ‘will be required to result in a minimum net biodiversity gain of 10%’. In doing so, it builds upon the goals set out in Para. 173 (d) of the NPPF which says that ‘*planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity*’. **Policy HH E5** and **HH E6** also respond to these aspirations through the designation of Local Green Spaces and the encouragement for provision of well designed, accessible and useable new green spaces.
- **Policy HH E2** stipulates that development proposals which would cause unacceptable harm to the local landscape character, archaeological or nature conservation interest will not be supported. Through this policy therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan conforms to para. 184 (d) by attempting to minimise impacts on biodiversity
- **Policy HH E9** aligns with Para 15 (c) which call for development to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on dark landscapes and nature conservation.
- **Policy HH PQ1** can be seen to support this through considered design and development that is sympathetic to the surrounding environment and natural landscape. This supports

para. 179 (b) of the NPPF that promotes the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

2.17 Paras. 189 and 190 of the NPPF promote the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets to ensure their enjoyment into the future. Relevant policies in the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan are:

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Policy HH PQ2: Non-designated Heritage and Archaeological Assets | 2021 NPPF ref. (para)- 189-208 |
| Policy HH E8: Towards zero-carbon development | |
| Policy HH PQ1: Design | |

- Paragraph 190 of the NPPF explains that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. **Policy HH PQ2** supports the NPPF’s aims by ensuring that development proposals preserve and enhance all non-designated heritage assets
- **Policy HH PQ1:** Design responds to the NPPF by directing new development proposals to the High Halstow Design Code and insisting that they should be underpinned by good design principles, which include the need to show a clear level of understanding of the proposal’s impacts on the historic environment. Similarly, **Policy HH E8** insists that the retrofitting of historic buildings and heritage assets must safeguard the special characteristics of these assets.

Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals

2.18 The High Halstow NDP does not include policies which relate to this NPPF aim, therefore decisions on this matter will need to refer to the Medway Local Plan and Emerging Local Plan.

3. Sustainable Development

Achieving sustainable development

- 3.1 The NPPF, at paragraph 7, states that the *‘purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development’*. Sustainable development is defined as *‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’* (paragraph 7).
- 3.2 The NPPF views sustainability as made up of three objectives: economic, social and environmental. These objectives are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The objectives are:
- *Economic*: to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
 - *Social*: to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being.
 - *Environmental*: to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 3.3 The following tables (Tables 2 - 4) summarise how the objectives and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan contribute toward sustainable development, as defined in the NPPF. This demonstrates that the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are considered to comprise a balance of social, economic and environmental goals.

Table 2: How the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to economic sustainability

| Economic | |
|--|---|
| NPPF definition: 'Building a strong, responsive and competitive economy' | |
| Neighbourhood Plan Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 01: Community well-being - To provide and enhance facilities that maintain and develop the wellbeing of the community. • Objective 05: Leisure and tourism - To maintain and develop High Halstow as an area rich in history and natural beauty, as well as supporting local leisure and tourism opportunities. • Objective 10: Infrastructure - Provide infrastructure that is robust enough to support existing and future networks. |
| Neighbourhood Plan Policies (and projects) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy HH C1: Village centre and facilities • Policy HH M2: Active Travel • Project / Aspiration HH Mb: New walking and cycle routes • Policy HH M3: Bus services, routes and infrastructure • Policy HH M4: Rail services, routes and infrastructure |
| Commentary | <p>The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan is committed to creating an environment in which businesses can thrive, with existing social and community facilities protected and proposals for new facilities supported, including a new employment hub with online and video conferencing capabilities. The critical mass created by potential future growth on land to the east of High Halstow as envisaged through the Hoo Development Framework will help support and sustain local businesses and services. The Design Code and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan require any new growth to be well connected and integrated with the existing community, supporting use of existing services and facilities.</p> <p>The Plan also aims to improve accessibility and connectivity within High Halstow through enhanced walking and cycling routes and the incorporation of public transport services to reduce car dependence.</p> |

Table 3: How the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to social sustainability

| Social | |
|--|---|
| NPPF definition: 'Support strong, vibrant and healthy communities' | |
| Neighbourhood Plan Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 01: Community well-being - To provide and enhance facilities that maintain and develop the wellbeing of the community. • Objective 02: Green Space - To preserve and improve sympathetic access to existing green spaces and further provide additional green spaces within the developed environment. • Objective 03: Community Identity - To maintain and enhance the strong sense of community and maximise the opportunity for engagement. • Objective 06: Traffic - Minimise the impact of vehicular traffic and improve opportunities for active and sustainable travel facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. • Objective 08: Health and well-being - To provide an effective locally based healthcare facility to suit the needs of the local population. • Objective 09: Housing for the community - Housing should be relevant to community need and sympathetic to local styles • Objective 10: Infrastructure - Provide infrastructure that is robust enough to support existing and future networks. |
| Neighbourhood Plan Policies (<i>and projects</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy HH C1: Village centre and facilities • Policy HH C2: Education • Policy HH E5: Local Green Spaces • Policy HH E6: New green spaces • Policy HH M1: Green routes • Project / Aspiration HH Ma: Links to Coastal Path • Policy HH M2: Active Travel • Project / Aspiration HH Mb: New walking and cycle routes • Policy HH M3: Bus services, routes and infrastructure • Policy HH M4: Rail services, routes and infrastructure • Project HH Mc: Traffic management and safety • Policy HH M6: E-vehicles, Mobility as a Service and Mobility Hubs • Policy HH PQ5: Housing type and mix • Policy HH PQ6: Self and custom build housing |
| Commentary | <p>The Plan encourages the provision of community facilities such as green infrastructure, retail, and flexible multi-use facilities. These facilities provide opportunities for community uses and increased social interaction. The Plan acknowledges that these facilities and active travel routes to connect them can contribute towards good placemaking and a healthier society.</p> <p>The plan also puts community safety at the heart of its policies, with dedicated projects intended to help deliver traffic and pedestrian safety measures as well as policies that provide natural surveillance of public spaces for the same purpose.</p> <p>It also supports provision of a mix of homes, sizes and tenure types, including homes for an ageing population as well as First Homes and opportunities for Self and Custom build, providing a wide choice to meet local housing needs.</p> |

Table 4: How the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to environmental sustainability

| Environmental | |
|---|--|
| NPPF definition: 'Contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment' | |
| Neighbourhood Plan Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 02: Green Space - To preserve and improve sympathetic access to existing green spaces and further provide additional green spaces within the developed environment. • Objective 04: Rural setting - To keep High Halstow a rural village • Objective 06: Traffic - Minimise the impact of vehicular traffic and improve opportunities for active and sustainable travel facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. • Objective 07: Sustainable Environment - To provide a sustainable environment for the residents and wildlife of High Halstow whilst being mindful of conserving an ecological balance. |
| Neighbourhood Plan Policies (<i>and projects</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy HH E1: Natural Environment • Policy HH E2: Countryside and Rural Landscape • Policy HH E4: Important views • Policy HH E5: Local Green Spaces • Policy HH E6: New green spaces • Policy HH E7: Flood risk • Policy HH E8: Towards zero-carbon development • Policy HH E9: Lighting • Policy HH M1: Green routes • Policy HH M2: Active Travel • Project / Aspiration HH Mb: New walking and cycle routes • Policy HH M3: Bus services, routes and infrastructure • Policy HH M4: Rail services, routes and infrastructure • Policy HH M6: E-vehicles, Mobility as a Service and Mobility Hubs • Policy HH PQ1: Design • Policy HH PQ2: Non-designated Heritage and Archaeological Assets |
| Commentary | <p>Throughout the Plan, but particularly through Policy HH PQ2, consideration is given to the protection and enhancement of sites that hold significant historical value.</p> <p>Active Travel is encouraged through connected walking and cycling routes in an attempt to decrease car usage and thus mitigate climate change. Environmental sustainability is also encouraged in the design and construction of developments, as well as the promotion of electric vehicles charging ports. This aligns with NPPF objectives through helping to minimize pollution and mitigating climate change risks through the shift towards a low carbon economy and sustainable transport modes.</p> <p>Policy HH E1 contributes significantly to High Halstow's role in promoting environmentally sustainable development. It seeks to ensure development does not result in any significant loss of natural assets and aims to enhance the existing. Furthermore, it points developers towards the Natural England biodiversity metric in order to require the provision of a 10% net-gain in biodiversity from development.</p> |

4. The Development Plan

Status of the development plan

- 4.1 For Neighbourhood Plans to meet the Basic Conditions set out in the Neighbourhood Planning regulations they need to demonstrate general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan.
- 4.2 The NPPF establishes what should be covered by a strategic policy in a Local Plan. It states that such policies should provide a clear starting point for any non-strategic policies that are needed and should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies. It states that such policies should help to deliver²:
- Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure, and other commercial development;
 - Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - Community facilities (such as health and cultural infrastructure); and
 - Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 4.3 For High Halstow, these are set out in the Local Plan. The Local Plan was formally adopted in 2003. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all Structure and Local Plan policies were saved for three years from the date the Act, or the Plan, was adopted. Medway's Local Plan policies were due to expire in September 2007. As there were no appropriate Local Development Documents adopted to replace the Local Plan, Medway Council applied to the Secretary of State to save those policies which remained in conformity with national and regional planning policies. The 2003 'saved' policies are considered in this section of the Basic Conditions Statement where appropriate, though all are dated – in particular, the Local Plan states at para 1.6.1 that 'this local plan can only cover the period 1996-2006'. Medway Council sought to update the Local Plan with a new Core Strategy but this was withdrawn from examination in November 2013.
- 4.4 The Basic Conditions indicates where the Neighbourhood Plan conforms to adopted strategic policies where appropriate. It is though important that the Neighbourhood Plan looks forward and responds to the direction of travel established in the emerging Local Plan for Medway now being prepared. This Basic Conditions Statement thus also shows how the Neighbourhood Plan aligns with the emerging Local Plan which, upon adoption, is expected to cover the period to 2037.
- 4.5 This section of the Basic Conditions Statement demonstrates that the Neighbourhood Plan is in conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan.

² See para 20, NPPF, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/740441/National_Planning_Policy_Framework_web_accessible_version.pdf

The Medway Local Plan 2003: Saved Strategic Policies

4.6 It is important to note that the emerging Local Plan, along with the Hoo Development Framework and funding awarded through the Housing Infrastructure Fund now envisages significant growth across the Hoo Peninsula and in High Halstow, which was not included in the 2003 Local Plan. As far as possible, and with the considerable gap (almost twenty years’) between adoption of the Local Plan and the current time, the table below shows how the Neighbourhood Plan conforms with the saved strategic policies of the Local Plan.

Table 5. Summary of conformity of the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan with the Medway Local Plan 2003

| Medway Local Plan Strategic Policies | High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan Policy |
|--|---|
| <p>Policy S1: Development Strategy</p> | <p>This policy supports the revitalisation and reuse of land within the main Medway Towns. Reference is made to restricting peripheral expansion ‘onto fresh land’, mainly in the context of land to the north and east of Gillingham. Although the Neighbourhood Plan puts in place policies that seek to influence the nature and form of any future growth (in response to the more recent suite of documents emerging from Medway Council) it does not allocate land for growth, which it leaves to the emerging Local Plan, and contains policies that seek to protect areas of important landscape character and value.</p> <p>The policy seeks to integrate land use and transport. The NDP aligns with this Strategic Policy through its commitment to produce an improved transport network. Through Policy HH M2, The Plan supports the provision of improved active travel infrastructure, with Project HH Mb identifying suitable new walking and cycle routes. Furthermore, through Policies HH M3 and M4 the plan supports the development of new and improved bus and rail services, supporting a transition away from private vehicle use. New and improved transport facilities</p> <p>Furthermore, the Plan also seeks to protect High Halstow’s valued landscape through Policy HH E2.</p> |
| <p>Policy S2: Strategic Principles</p> | <p>The Plan seeks to promote sustainable new development by improving accessibility to key facilities throughout the Parish, including education, including employment locations, through the support of improved active travel infrastructure and public transport options (Policy HH M2, HH M3 and HH M4)</p> |
| <p>Policy S3: River Medway</p> | <p>The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy.</p> |
| <p>Policy S4: Landscape and Urban Design Guidance</p> | <p>Policy HH E2 of the High Halstow NDP conforms to this policy by stipulating that new development will be considered in relation to the extent to which its location, scale, design and materials would protect the local landscape character and enhance the future appearance of the landscape and its nature conservation interest. The associated Design Guide and suite of ‘Place Quality’ policies in the NDP seek to ensure that any new development responds to and strengthens local character.</p> |

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| Policy S5: Medway's 'City' Centre | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S6: Planning Obligations | The High Halstow NDP does not establish requirements for s106 agreements or similar, though does identify a series of projects and aspirations towards which future funding might be directed, including, for example, active travel infrastructure. It also supports the provision of new community facilities and indicates a strategy for education subject to the scale and nature of any growth to the east of High Halstow. |
| Policy S7: Rochester Riverside Action Area | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S8: Chatham Maritime | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S9: Chatham Historic Dockyard | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S10: Strood Waterfront Action Area | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S12: Kingsnorth | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S13: Isle of Grain | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S14: Ministry of Defence Estate, Chattenden | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |

The Medway Council Emerging Local Plan 2019-2037

4.7 The emerging Local Plan set out 31 strategic policies. The table below comments on how the Neighbourhood Plan conforms to these. This is based upon the October 2021 version of the emerging Local Plan published for Full Council, but which was subsequently withdrawn from that meeting. An update and next steps are yet to be published.

Table 6. Summary of conformity of the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan with the emerging Medway Local Plan 2019

| Emerging Local Plan Strategic Policy | High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan |
|---|---|
| <p>Policy S1: A Vision for Medway in 2037</p> | <p>Policy S1 in the emerging Local Plan states that ‘The Hoo Peninsula retains its distinctive character and contrasts - of remoteness and special places for nature, with its strategic economic and infrastructure role and thriving communities’. It also notes that villages have grown, that residents have a choice of services and facilities, reducing the need to travel and supporting local community life.</p> <p>The NDP aligns with this Policy through Policy HH E2, which defines the open countryside around High Halstow as a ‘Valued Landscape’ and seeks to protect it in order to retain the element of remoteness that comes with the Hoo Peninsula.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Policy HH C1 aims to ensure community and retail facilities continue to be concentrated in the Village Centre, ensuring that residents have a range of choice for services and facilities, reducing the need to travel and supporting community life.</p> <p>The NDP supports active travel infrastructure and, where development comes forward, a mix of housing types and tenures. It also supports and encourages low and zero carbon development in line with Policy S1.</p> |
| <p>Policy S2: Spatial Development Strategy</p> | <p>Policy S2 supports growth of 10,000 homes on the Hoo Peninsula, including new homes at High Halstow as shown in the key diagram and as indicated in the Hoo Development Framework.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan reflects this through policies that shape and influence the nature and form of future development, such that it contributes to the quality of place and life for all, but such that it also protects and enhances important landscapes and environmental areas.</p> <p>In particular, the NDP aligns with this Policy through Policy HH PQ4. This Policy recognises the need for new homes in the area and supports the delivery of homes on the Land East of High Halstow subject to meeting a range of criteria. This is expanded upon further in the associated Design Code prepared alongside the NDP.</p> |
| <p>Policy S3: Sites of International Importance for Nature Conservation.</p> | <p>The High Halstow NDP is in full support of Policy S3 in the emerging Local Plan. Policy HH E1 stipulates that all development proposals will need to demonstrate that their proposals will not adversely affect the integrity of a designated European site.</p> |
| <p>Policy S4: Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment</p> | <p>Through Policy HH E1, the NDP seeks to protect High Halstow’s natural environment. The Policy sets out a series of criteria for development proposals, demonstrating how adverse impacts on the natural environment are kept to a minimum. Significantly, the Policy insists that all development should, where appropriate and possible, result in</p> |

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| | <p>minimum net environmental and biodiversity gains of 10% (it is noted that the emerging Plan says 20%: should this be adopted it will supersede the policy in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, until such time as the new Local Plan proceeds and is adopted, the reference to 10% in the NDP aligns with the Environment Act). Furthermore, Policy HH E5 and HH E6 designate areas as Local Green Spaces and seek to provide new green spaces respectively, in an effort to conserve High Halstow's natural environment.</p> |
| <p>Policy S5: Landscape Protection and Enhancement</p> | <p>The NDP, through Policy HH E2, recognises the importance of High Halstow's rural landscape. The Policy therefore stipulates that any development in areas of 'Valued Landscape' will be required to demonstrate how it protects and enhances its landscape and character. As such, development proposals which would cause unacceptable harm to the local landscape character, archaeological or nature conservation interest will not be supported.</p> |
| <p>Policy S6: Securing strong Green Infrastructure.</p> | <p>The NDP is committed to conserving and enhancing the existing green infrastructure within High Halstow. The Plan seeks to ensure developments provide a biodiversity net gain (Policy HH E1). It also promotes the development of new and improved green routes (Policy HH M1), as well as better active travel opportunities (Policy HH M2 and Project / Aspiration HH Mb) that will help maintain links and connections between the village and surrounding countryside. The Plan also designates 12 areas as local green spaces (Policy HH E5), and supports new development which provides appropriate new green spaces (Policy HH E6). It also supports the design and provision of multi-functional SuDS that include natural areas and form part of the network of green infrastructure in High Halstow.</p> |
| <p>Policy S7: Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</p> | <p>High Halstow is not located within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The High Halstow NDP therefore does not relate to this strategic policy.</p> |
| <p>Policy S8: Green Belt Policy</p> | <p>High Halstow does not feature any area of Green Belt. The High Halstow NDP therefore does not relate to this strategic policy.</p> |
| <p>Policy S9: Strategic economic development</p> | <p>Although High Halstow is not identified as a suitable location for principle employment development, it does recognise that, as work patterns have changed in response to the Covid pandemic, that more people may work from home or like to work close to home as opposed to making long commutes. The NDP, at policy Policy HH C1, supports the provision of employment space in High Halstow. It also supports the retention of, improvement to and provision of new community facilities and services that support and sustain village life and thus the local economy.</p> |
| <p>Policy S10: Managing employment capacity</p> | <p>High Halstow does not feature any of the employment sites relevant for this policy. The NDP therefore relies on the Local Plan to cover this.</p> |
| <p>Policy S11: New employment growth.</p> | <p>This Policy does not apply to High Halstow, as it is not a designated new employment site. The High Halstow NDP therefore does not relate to this strategic policy.</p> |
| <p>Policy S12: Local Development Order - Innovation Park Medway</p> | <p>The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy.</p> |

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| Policy S13: Town Centres Strategy | Although the strategic policy is focussed on Town Centres, the High Halstow NDP does seek to reinforce and strengthen the existing village centre and mix of services and facilities to support everyday needs and reduce out-commuting. |
| Policy S14: Hierarchy of Centres | High Halstow falls under the Local/Rural Centre tier in the hierarchy of centres identified in the strategic policy. This seeks to maintain local services, shops and facilities for day-to-day needs. The NDP aligns with the emerging Local Plan through Policy HH C1 which seeks to protect existing and provide new local services and facilities. Through the Design Code it also shows that where new facilities might be provided as part of new growth to the east of High Halstow, that these should be accessible to all, well integrated with the existing community and that new uses are complementary to those in the existing village centre. |
| Policy S15: Chatham Town Centre | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S16: Rochester District Centre | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S17: Gillingham District Centre | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S18: Strood District Centre | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S19: Rainham District Centre | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S20: Hoo - Supporting New Growth | The strategic policy recognises that major growth across Hoo will trigger a demand for new centres and facilities. This is also shown in the Hoo Development Framework. Alongside the NDP, the Design Code shows how future growth to the east of High Halstow might accommodate new services and facilities and be designed such that they are well integrated with the existing community and complement the existing centre. These feeds through into policies in the NDP. |
| Policy S21: Hempstead Valley District Centre | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S22: Infrastructure delivery | <p>Infrastructure requirements for High Halstow are set out in the Medway IDP and Hoo Development Framework. These relate to the HIF proposals. In addition to strategic infrastructure required to help unlock and support future growth, the NDP identifies more localised infrastructure that would be supported.</p> <p>Policy HH C3, supports the delivery of better communication technology, stipulating that new development should be capable of receiving high, gigabit-capable speeds and reliable mobile and broadband connections.</p> <p>Policy HH C2 supports the delivery of new primary school places.</p> <p>Policy HH M2 supports provision of active travel infrastructure and policies HH M3 and HH M4 support improvements to bus services and connections with the proposed new railway station just to the south of the Parish boundary.</p> |

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| | The NDP also includes a number of projects and aspirations for infrastructure improvements that the Parish will continue to explore with the appropriate partners. |
| Policy S23: Infrastructure delivery on the Hoo Peninsula . | The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to repeat or add to this strategic policy., beyond setting out options in respect of potential locations for new primary school places in High Halstow which might be required by new growth to the east of the village. |
| Policy S24: Infrastructure phasing on the Hoo Peninsula | The strategic policy states that a new / expanded primary school in High Halstow must be completed before occupation of the 186th dwelling on land to the east of High Halstow. The NDP reflects this by noting that such facilities should be delivered in the early phases of development to minimise disruption and support community cohesion. |
| Policy S25: Place-based Vision for Access and Movement | The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan, through Policy HH M2 , seeks to improve the transport network by supporting the provision of improved active travel infrastructure, with Project HH Mb identifying suitable new walking and cycle routes. Furthermore, through Policies HH M3 and M4 the plan supports the development of new and improved bus and rail services, supporting a transition away from private vehicle use. |
| Policy S26: Vision for Minerals Supply | The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to repeat or add to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S27: Vision for Waste Management | The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to repeat or add to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S28: Energy Supply | The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to repeat or add to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S29: Supporting Medway’s Culture and Creative Industries | Through Policy HH C1 , the High Halstow NDP aims to retain High Halstow’s community facilities, as well as support the provision of new spaces. The policy seeks to concentrate these in the village centre, helping to create a social and cultural hub for the Parish. |
| Policy S30: Chatham Intra | The High Halstow NDP does not relate to this strategic policy. |
| Policy S31: Historic Environment | Through Policy HH PQ1 the NDP stipulates that new development within High Halstow should respond positively to the local setting and character of High Halstow. Policy HH PQ2 identifies non-designated heritage assets and stipulates that development proposals affecting these and their settings within the Parish Boundary shall be permitted only if they protect and enhance the historic or architectural interest of the asset and their settings |

5. Strategic Environment Assessment / HRA

- 5.1 In October 2021 the draft High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan was screened for SEA and HRA by Medway Council in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 5.2 The SEA regulations require the responsible authority (Medway Council) to determine whether or not a plan is likely to have a significant environmental effect and therefore whether SEA is needed.
- 5.3 At the same time as the SEA screening, a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) was conducted. The purpose of a HRA is to determine whether significant effects on a Natura 2000 site could be ruled out on the basis of objective information and best scientific knowledge.
- 5.4 The Screening opinion concluded that the draft High Halstow neighbourhood plan does not require a SEA or a HRA.
- 5.5 Furthermore, Medway Council consulted with the statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency) who agreed with the screening opinion that no SEA or HRA was required. However, Natural England did remark that further screening will need to take place as part of the Local Plan process, to allow them to further understand environmental effects of future development.
- 5.6 For comprehensiveness, a copy of the SEA / HRA screening report is included in Appendix B.

6. Sustainability Appraisal

‘Light touch’ appraisal

- 6.1 Although the SEA/ HRA Screening concluded that these were not required, a ‘light touch’ Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been undertaken proportionate with the Neighbourhood Plan. This reflects best practice and is based upon the Sustainability objectives prepared by Medway Council for the purposes of the Emerging Local Plan 2019-2038.
- 6.2 The objectives are listed in Table 7 (overleaf), while Table 8 displays the appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan against these objectives. This demonstrates that the Neighbourhood Plan responds positively to the objectives and will thus help contribute to the delivery of sustainable development in High Halstow through its blend of policies that will deliver social, economic and environmental benefits.

Table 7. Medway Council Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

| Category | Topic | Objectives |
|--|---|--|
| Economic | Education and Skills | To improve skill levels and encourage suitable employment opportunities in accessible locations. |
| | Transportation and Accessibility | |
| | Economy, Enterprise, and Employment | |
| | Economy, Enterprise, and Employment | To have a successful economic base able to sustain economic growth and competitiveness |
| | Transportation and Accessibility | |
| | Economy, Enterprise, and Employment | To protect and support the growth, vitality and viability of the Boroughs centres |
| | Landscape, Natural Heritage and Open Space | |
| Environmental | Landscape, Natural Heritage and Open Space | Conserve and enhance the existing green network |
| | Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Designated Sites | |
| | Climate Change | To reduce our contribution to the impacts of climate change |
| | Air Quality and Environmental Pollution | |
| | Waste Management | |
| | Climate Change | To adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change |
| | Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Designated Sites | |
| | Design Quality | |
| | Water Environment | |
| | Historic Environment and Archaeology | Promoting, enhancing and respecting our historic/cultural heritage assets |
| | Design Quality | |
| | Material Assets, Minerals and Resources | Making the best use of natural assets |
| | Water Environment | |
| | Landscape, Natural Heritage and Open Space | |
| | Social | Healthy and Safe Communities |
| Landscape, Natural Heritage and Open Space | | |
| Social Inclusion and Quality | | Promote strong and inclusive communities |
| Healthy and Safe Communities | | |
| Transportation and Accessibility | | |
| Population and Housing | | To provide sufficient and affordable housing suitable to peoples lifestyles and needs |

Table 8. High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan considered against Medway Council Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

| SA Objective | Neighbourhood Plan Response |
|---|--|
| <p>To improve skill levels and encourage suitable employment opportunities in accessible locations.</p> | <p>Policy HH C1 supports the protection and provision of employment opportunities and seeks to direct them to the most accessible locations.</p> <p>Policy HH C2 looks to improve skill levels by supporting the provision of increased primary school places. The policies in the Plan and in the associated Design Guide require services and facilities to be located in accessible places and designed to be flexible and adaptable for different uses.</p> <p>The Plan aims to improve accessibility throughout the Parish through the introduction of new active travel infrastructure (Policy HH M2) and improved public transport services (Policies HH M3 and HH M4)</p> |
| <p>To have a successful economic base able to sustain economic growth and competitiveness</p> | <p>In order to promote High Halstow as a successful economic base, the NDP, through Policy HH C1 seeks to protect existing facilities and support the provision of key community facilities to the village centre. Furthermore, in order to ensure High Halstow remains an attractive place for businesses, Policy HH C3 ensures that new development is capable of receiving high, gigabit-capable speeds and reliable mobile and broadband connections.</p> |
| <p>To protect and support the growth, vitality and viability of the Boroughs centres</p> | <p>Through Policy HH C1, the NDP seeks to protect the existing, and support the provision of key community facilities to the village centre. Where new growth triggers the need for new facilities, the Plan and associated Design Guide indicates that if these cannot be provided in the existing village centre, then these should be well integrated with the existing community, linked back to the existing centre, and that uses complement existing services and facilities.</p> |
| <p>Conserve and enhance the existing green network</p> | <p>The NDP is committed to conserving and enhancing the existing green network within High Halstow. The Plan seeks to ensure developments provide a biodiversity net gain (Policy HH E1). It also promotes the development of new and improved green routes (Policy HH M1), as well as better active travel opportunities (Policy HH M2 and Project / Aspiration HH Mb) connecting with these.</p> <p>The Plan also designates 12 areas as local green spaces (Policy HH E5), and supports new development which provides well-designed, accessible and useable new green spaces (Policy HH E6).</p> |
| <p>To reduce our contribution to the impacts of climate change</p> | <p>Policy HH M1, HH M2, HH M3, HH M6 and Project / Aspiration HH Mb conform to this objective by promoting alternative methods of travel to private vehicle, be it through the expansion of walking and cycling routes (and facilities), new alternative transport services or the provision of accessible electric charging points in new development.</p> <p>Meanwhile Policy HH E1, HH E2, HH E5 and E6 also help in moderating the impacts of climate change through the preservation of green infrastructure for community and public use.</p> <p>Furthermore, through Policy HH E8, the NDP encourages development applications to demonstrate accordance with BREEAM</p> |

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| | and Passivhaus standards to help improve building resource efficiencies. |
| To adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change | To help mitigate against the impacts of climate change, the Plan seeks to ensure that development incorporates measures that manage and minimise flood risk and surface water run-off (Policy HH E7). It also supports low and zero carbon development at Policy HH E8 . |
| Promoting, enhancing and respecting our historic/cultural heritage assets | Policy HH PQ2 stipulates that development proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets and their settings within the Parish Boundary shall be permitted only if they protect and enhance the historic or architectural interest of the asset and their settings |
| Making the best use of natural assets | Policies with regard to the use of natural assets are established in the Local Plan, and will be covered in the emerging Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to repeat or add to those policies as they are considered to appropriately cover the challenges faced in High Halstow. |
| To facilitate the improved health and wellbeing of the Boroughs residents | The Neighbourhood Plan supports development and provision of infrastructure that supports active and healthy lifestyles to walk and cycle within High Halstow (Policies Policy HH M1, HH M2, HH M3, HHM6 and Project / Aspiration HH Mb . Meanwhile, Policy HH E5 and HH E6 seeks to protect existing, and support the provision of new green spaces within High Halstow, which provide key opportunities for exercise and leisure. The suite of Place Quality and movement policies also seek to influence the design of new development to integrate safe, attractive and well-connected walking and cycling routes. |
| Promote strong and inclusive communities | Policy HH C1 protects existing community facilities within the High Halstow neighbourhood area, and supports proposals for new community facilities. Furthermore, the Plan makes efforts to ensure that all new and existing community facilities are well connected and inclusive for all residents through the development of active travel routes and infrastructure (Policy HH M2 and Project HH Mb) |
| To provide sufficient and affordable housing suitable to peoples lifestyles and needs | Policy HH PQ5 supports the delivery of housing that meets the identified need of High Halstow, this includes requiring schemes to deliver the maximum amount of affordable housing, in line with the Local Plan threshold. |

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The Neighbourhood Plan aligns with the principles of sustainable development and goals established in the NPPF.
- 7.2 Despite being dated, the Neighbourhood Plan also broadly confirms to the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The emerging Local Plan sets our ambitions for growth across the Hoo Peninsula, including at High Halstow, reflecting the HIF funding awarded to Medway Council and the publication of the Hoo Development Framework. Although not adopted, these documents indicate the direction of travel and the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with this in mind, conforming with the strategic policies of the emerging Local Plan.
- 7.3 The Basic Conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the TCPA 1990 are considered to be met by the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan and all the policies therein.
- 7.4 It is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan complies with the Basic Conditions, and, subject to any modifications recommended by the Examiner, should proceed to referendum.

Appendix A: Neighbourhood Plan Designation

The parish of High Halstow was designated as a neighbourhood area at a Cabinet meeting on 12 June 2018. Copied below are the relevant minutes of the Cabinet meeting:

| <i>Decision number:</i> | <i>Decision:</i> |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 84/2018 | The Cabinet approved the publication of the application for the proposed Neighbourhood Area consistent with the parish boundary of High Halstow, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, for the purposes of statutory consultation. |
| 85/2018 | The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, to approve the designation of the proposed High Halstow Neighbourhood Area, consistent with the parish boundary, for the purpose of producing a Neighbourhood Plan, following the statutory consultation period. |

Appendix B: SEA / HRA

High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation version

October 2021

**Draft Strategic Environment Assessment and
Habitats Regulations Assessment
Screening Report**

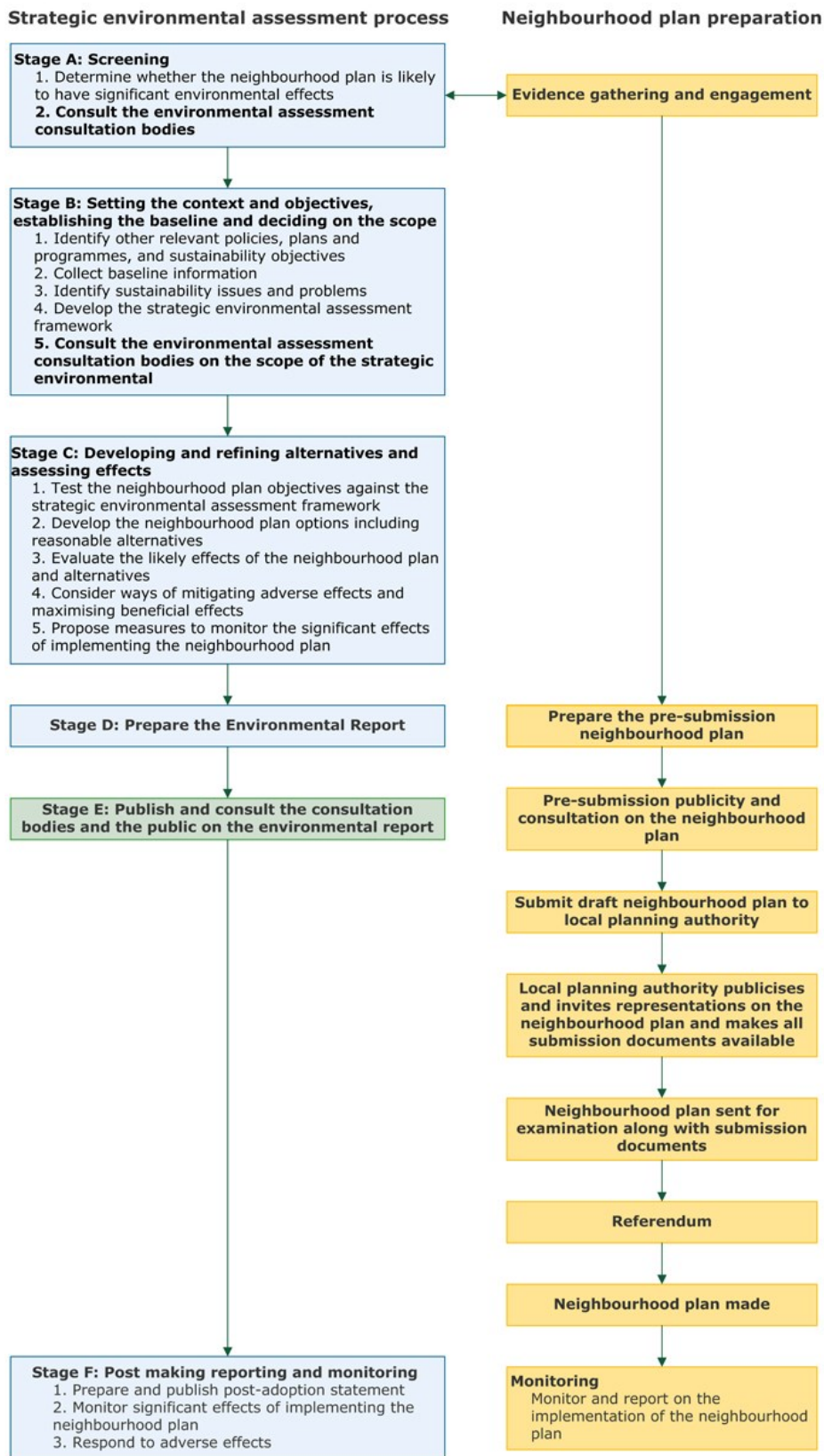
1. Introduction

- 1.1. The need for environmental assessment of plans is set out in the EU Directive 2001/42/EC – known as the SEA Directive. Under this Directive, Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) may require an SEA – but this will depend on the content of each NP. Similarly, the need for Habitats Regulations Assessment is set out within Article 6 of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, and interpreted into British law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 1.2. One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner of a NP is whether the making of the plan is compatible with European Union obligations such as the Habitats Directive. Where an NP could have significant environmental effects on a European Site, it may fall within the scope of the Habitats Directive and therefore require full appropriate assessment to ascertain the effect on those sites' integrity. Where effects are assessed, mitigation measures and alternative solutions would then be required to be identified.
- 1.3. The ultimate aim of the Directive is to “maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest” (Habitats Directive, Article 2(2)). This aim relates to habitats and species, not the European sites themselves, although the sites have a significant role in delivering favourable conservation status. The Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle to European sites. Plans and projects can only be permitted having ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) in question. Plans and projects with predicted adverse impacts on European sites may still be permitted if there are no alternatives to them and there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) as to why they should go ahead. In such cases, compensation would be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network. In order to ascertain whether or not site integrity will be affected, a Habitats Regulations Assessment should be undertaken of the plan or project in question.
- 1.4. Whether an NP requires a Habitat Regulations Assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft NP. An HRA may be required, for example, where:
 - the NP allocates sites for development
 - the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals *in the plan*
 - the NP may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through the HRA of the Local Plan
- 1.5 The main determining factor as to whether an HRA is required on an NP is if the policies and proposals it contains are likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Those NPs containing land allocations for development, whose impacts have not been tested in the local authority's plan, may require an HRA. NPs which do not contain such allocations (*or simply reflect allocations already identified as part of a local authority plan*) are less likely to require an HRA.
- 1.6 Medway Council is legally required to determine whether the High Halstow NP will require an HRA in consultation with statutory bodies. However, if it is concluded that a full appropriate assessment is required, those preparing the plan are responsible for its production and it must form part of the material that is consulted on once the formal consultation stage post-submission to the LPA is reached (Regulation 16 Consultation).

2. SEA Screening Process

- 2.1. High Halstow Parish Council requested an SEA and HRA screening opinion of its pre-submission High Halstow NP. It is Medway Council's responsibility to assess whether the policies and proposals in the Draft Regulation 14 NP are likely to have 'significant environmental effects'.
- 2.2. The National Planning Practice Guidance in relation to strategic environmental assessments sets out the approach to producing an SEA Figure 1 (below). This guidance recommends that an assessment be undertaken in the early stages of plan making.
- 2.3. The first stage is the screening process (Stage A in Figure 1 below) to determine whether the NP is likely to have significant environmental effects. The screening process includes a 5 week consultation with the statutory consultees. If the screening process concludes that the High Halstow NP requires an environmental report, the Parish Council is responsible for preparing the scoping report (Stage B) and must consult the statutory consultees. Stages B and C would need to include consideration of reasonable alternatives, to inform the selection and refinement of the preferred options. The preparation of the Environmental Report (Stage D) would need to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the policies in the NP and of the reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan.

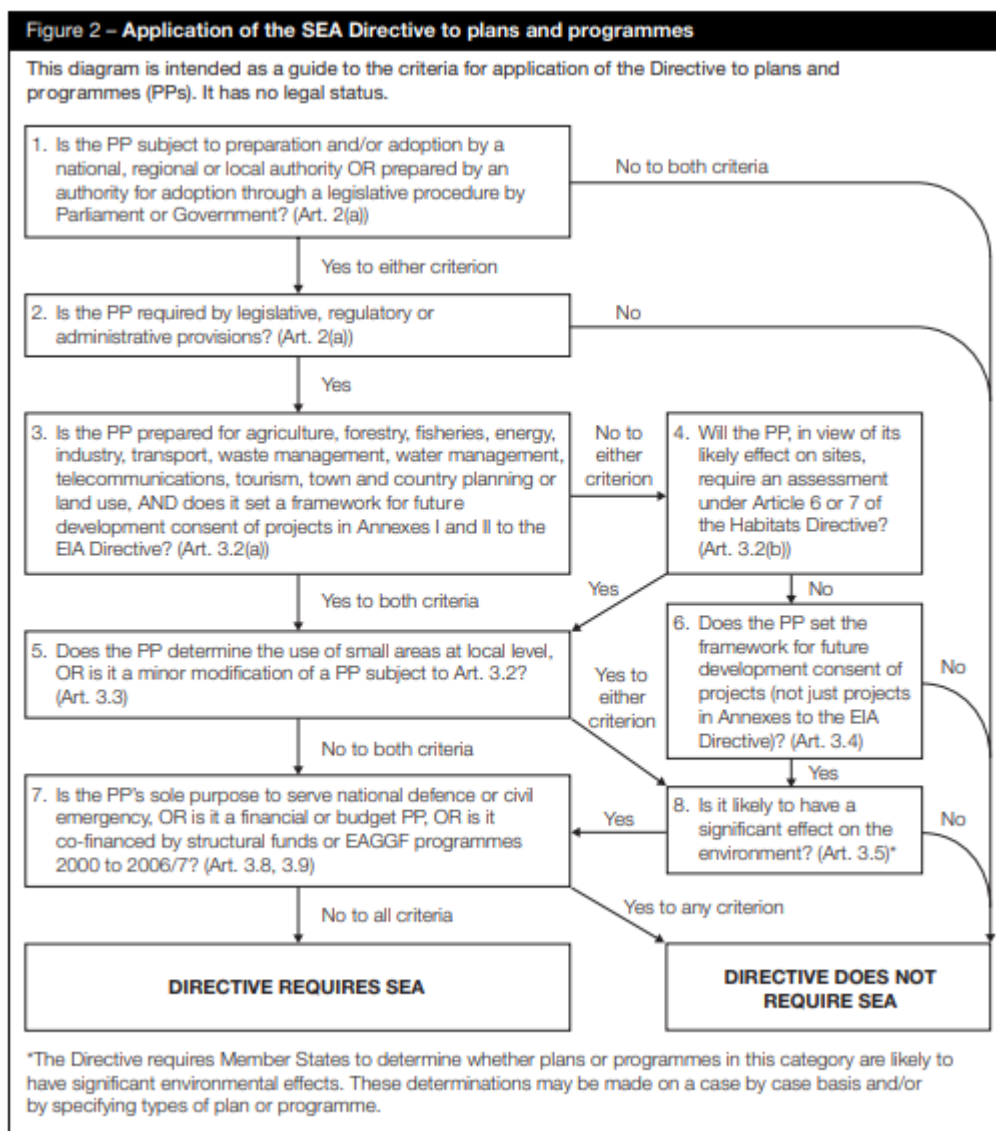
Figure 1: SEA Process for NPs



Source: Planning Practice Guidance

2.4. The SEA Directive aims to integrate environmental considerations into the preparation of plans and secure a high level of protection for the environment as well as promoting sustainable development. This Screening Report seeks to determine whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for the High Halstow NP in accordance with European and National legislation. To establish if an NP needs to be accompanied by a full SEA, a “screening” assessment is required against a series of criteria set out in the SEA Directive. A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive sets out in a diagrammatic form the series of criteria, reproduced in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Application of the SEA directive to plans and programmes



Source: A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

3. 3 Screening Opinion

3.1. Assessment 1: Establishing the Need for SEA

| Stage | Yes/ No | Reason |
|---|---------|---|
| 1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority, OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a)) | Yes | The preparation and adoption of the NP is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The NP has been prepared by High Halstow Parish Council (as the 'relevant body') and subject to the outcome of Examination and referendum will be 'made' by Medway Council as the local authority. The preparation of NPs is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and The Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended). <i>GO TO STAGE 2</i> |
| 2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a)) | Yes | Whilst the NP is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended), it will if 'made', form part of the Development Plan for Medway. The NPPF states that neighbourhoods should develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development and plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan. <i>GO TO STAGE 3</i> |
| 3. Is the NP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste 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? (Art. 3.2(a)) | Yes | The NP is being prepared for town and country planning and land use. The NP will therefore provide a framework for future development consent of development projects in Annex II of the EIA Directive including Infrastructure projects 10(b) Urban-development projects), including any proposals which may come forward on the proposed strategic local plan allocation for 750 homes on Land to the East of High Halstow. |
| 4. Will the NP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future | No | A Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening of the High Halstow NP is included below. |

| | | |
|---|-----|---|
| development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b)) | | |
| 5. Does the NP determine the use of small areas at local level OR is it a minor modification of a plan or programme subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3) | Yes | The NP is expected to determine the use of small sites at a local level only. The NP will also contribute to the determination of planning applications which may come forward on the proposed strategic allocation for 750 homes on Land to the East of High Halstow as a material consideration. However it is not considered that the plan will determine the use of land. <i>GO TO STAGE 8.</i> |
| 8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5) | No | See Assessment 2: Likely significant effects on the environment: Summary: The Neighbourhood Plan seeks general conformity with the adopted Core Strategy and Development Plan Documents and regard to the emerging local plan which includes the proposed allocation of 750 homes at Land to the east of High Halstow. Policies in the plan which relate to this site will be triggered should the local plan, including the allocation, be adopted. Equally, the plan does in itself not allocate any sites for development. Given the geographic area and population of the plan area, the effects of the plan will be relatively localised. The plan should not significantly impact on any habitat of European designation, and it promotes sustainable development, as well as setting out a framework by which future development should be assessed. In doing so it will seek to minimise the impacts of future development on the environment. <i>DIRECTIVE DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA</i> |

3.2. Assessment 2: Likely Significant Effects on the environment

| SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004 | Medway Council assessment | Likely significant environmental effect? |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan, having regard to: | | |

| | | |
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| <p>The degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p> | <p>The NP would, if made, form part of the statutory Development Plan and as such does contribute to the framework for future development consent of projects which could have environmental effects, including the potential local plan allocation of 750 homes on Land to the east of High Halstow. The plan itself does not allocate sites for development but sets a framework within which any allocations or development should be assessed. The NP sits within the wider framework of the NPPF and the emerging Medway Local Plan. As such, the projects for which this NP helps to set a framework are localised in nature and will have a geographically restricted local impact on the environment and resource implications. While it is acknowledged that there are environmentally sensitive sites within the plan area, the plan does not allocate sites for housing and therefore its local impact will be limited.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>The degree to which the Plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.</p> | <p>The NP must take into account the National Planning Policy Framework and the plan should be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the emerging Medway Local Plan. Whilst significant to the High Halstow area of Medway, the NP should not significantly influence other plans and programmes, but may have a limited degree of influence over the implementation of future strategic policies in Medway including the proposed allocation of 750 homes on Land to the East of High Halstow.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p> | <p>An NP is required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and therefore the likelihood of significant effects on the environment is minimised. The High Halstow NP seeks to promote sustainable forms of development including housing and employment development; to encourage sustainable tourism, and sustainable travel options. Given the geographic area of the NP and the location of facilities within and close to the plan area, development is likely to be sustainably located in relation to services. It is therefore considered that the NP integrates environmental considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>Environmental problems relevant to the Plan.</p> | <p>There are no Air Quality Management Areas within the plan area. There are some areas of surface water flood risk in the plan area, as well as flood risk from the River Thames, however the plan does not allocate sites for development</p> | <p>No</p> |

| | | |
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| | or promote changes in these areas. There are also a number of locally, nationally and internationally designated sites within the plan area, however the plan is not expected to have any significant effects on these sites. The plan could have positive effects on the environment, through its promotion of sustainable modes of transport. | |
| The relevance of the Plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection). | The NP is not directly relevant to the implementation of European legislation, albeit it will seek to address environmental, economic and social issues in the neighbourhood area and is linked to issues such as environmental protection. | No |
| 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 NP does not allocate development sites, but includes policies by which development proposals would be judged including any proposals which may come forward on the proposed strategic allocation for 750 homes on Land to the East of High Halstow. The NP will contain a number of policies and guidance including a design code which is currently being prepared, which seek to protect and enhance the environment and secure the retention and enhancement of local employment; services and facilities. There may also be longer-term irreversible effects relevant to changes in land use though the scale and siting of change will mean that the environmental effects are not likely to be significant. | No |
| The cumulative nature of the effects of the Plan. | The NP does not allocate development sites, but includes policies and guidance by which development proposals would be judged including any proposals which may come forward on the proposed strategic allocation for 750 homes on Land to the East of High Halstow. The cumulative effects of proposals within the NP are unlikely to be significant on the local environment. The emerging Local Plan will be subject to a full Sustainability Appraisal, which addresses cumulative matters in more detail. | No |
| 3.3. The trans-boundary nature of the effects of the Plan. | High Halstow borders other parishes in Medway, and a new train station is proposed adjacent to the boundary with the parish of Hoo St Werburgh. The plan prioritises cycle and pedestrian access routes from the area to new | No |

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| | station. The NP is not expected to have any significant trans-boundary effects. | |
| 3.4. The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents). | No significant risks to human health have been identified, nor have risks to the environment. The plan seeks to conserve the natural environment in the area. | No |
| The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) by the Plan. | Given the geographic area and population of the plan area, which makes up only a small proportion of Medway's population overall, the effects of the plan will be relatively localised. No development is proposed directly in the therefore the potential for environmental effects is also likely to be localised to this Parish. It is very unlikely that the effects of the proposals within the NP will be extensive or have any spatial impact. | No |
| The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the Plan due to: (i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) Intensive land use | High Halstow Parish contains within its boundary areas which are designated: The Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site. The Parish also overlaps with the South Thames Estuary and Marshes SSSI and the Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill SSSI and Great Chattenden Wood Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland. The Parish also has many heritage assets including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings and a conservation area that benefit from special protections. These assets are mapped in the plan, including the wetland bird habitats of global importance. Much of the area is also high grade agricultural land leading into the designated estuarine environments noted above. A stated objective of the plan is the protection of the built environment heritage of the Parish. The area contains a mosaic of habitats, filled with birds and other flora and fauna including some of the most vulnerable species in the UK such as the nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> and the water vole <i>Arvicola amphibius</i> , the population of which in Britain has undergone severe and ongoing declines over the last 50 years, which combined with range contraction towards the South East of England has meant that the population in Kent is crucial to the species' habitat, with this SSSI identified by the BTO as the most important site for the species nationally, holding more than 1% of the UK-wide population as of 2018. The management of | No |

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| | <p>these habitats in relation to protection from disturbance is undertaken by Birdwise – the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Scheme (SAMMS) which covers the coastline of North Kent, between Gravesend and Whitstable, including portions of High Halstow Parish. Medway Council is a supportive member of this initiative, which seeks to mitigate any disturbance to protected species as a result of recreational use of protected areas. There are no additional site allocations within the NP, and cumulative impacts will be assessed through the emerging local plan process. The special natural characteristics and cultural heritage of High Halstow will not be significantly adversely affected by the NP, and the NP is not expected to exceed environmental quality standards relating to flood zones, WFD standards, or AQMAs, or limit values, and no additional intensive land uses are proposed in the plan. No consultation has been undertaken with Southern Water by the neighbourhood plan group.</p> | |
| <p>The effects of the Plan on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status.</p> | <p>The Neighbourhood Plan will not impact adversely on the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site, the South Thames Estuary and Marshes SSSI or the Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill SSSI or Great Chattenden Wood Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland. The NP is not likely to have a significant impact on any sites, area or landscapes with national or community protection status. There will be no likely significant effects on any European Sites, as demonstrated in Section 4 below.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>Assessment 2 Conclusion</p> | <p>The High Halstow NP is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.</p> | |

4. Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

- 4.1. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening tests whether the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites of European Importance, will require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (Article 3.2(b)).
- 4.2. There are a number of sites both within Medway, and in close proximity and within 10km, that are designated for their environmental features as Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. These include:
- Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA (and Ramsar*) site
 - Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA (and Ramsar) site
 - The Swale SPA (and Ramsar) site

- North Downs Woodland SAC
 - Queendown Warren SAC and Peters Pit SAC (+10km)
- 4.3. High Halstow Parish contains within its boundary areas which are designated including the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site. The Parish also overlaps with the South Thames Estuary and Marshes SSSI and the Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill SSSI and Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland.
- 4.4. New development that is delivered within Medway as part of the emerging local plan and windfalls over the next two decades is likely to place additional pressure on these areas, particularly through increased recreational pressure on European sites in the area.
- 4.5. Medway Council is working in partnership with neighbouring local planning authorities to implement a strategic approach to manage the impact of recreational disturbance on the European sites of the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuary and Marshes SPAs/Ramsar sites. Medway Council works in collaboration with local planning authorities in North Kent to contribute to the delivery of a strategic access mitigation scheme to address potential damage from population increases on the designated habitats of the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries and Marshes.
- 4.6. However, in this respect the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (2017) for the Regulation 18 Local Plan, April 2017, and the Medway Local Plan Development Strategy Interim Consideration of the Implications of Development Strategy Scenarios on European Site tested the impact of four development scenarios for Medway to 2036, including a rural town centred on Hoo St Werburgh. Although this did not screen out impacts, the report provided a full screening assessment in line with Stage 1 of the HRA process. Further work is ongoing to meet HRA requirements for Medway's Local Plan which will shortly be published for Regulation 19 Consultation.
- 4.7. With respect to the assessment of disturbance impacts due to increased recreational pressure noted above, further bespoke mitigation may be required in future beyond the standard tariff contribution to the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) currently administered by Birdwise in Medway and North Kent which acts to mitigate pressures on designated sites. Bespoke measures have been recommended for incorporation within the Development Strategy as part of the Habitats Regulations process, and a further Strategic Environmental Management Scheme is progressing to enable potential developments proposed as part of Medway's local plan, supported by £14m Housing infrastructure funding from Government. It is recognised that these may not be considered for the purposes of this screening assessment in line with the 2018 CJEU ruling regarding mitigation measures at screening stage.
- 4.8. The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan allocates no specific sites for residential development (though it includes some policies by which development would be appraised, including the potential strategic allocation of 750 homes on Land east of High Halstow). While High Halstow Parish is located in close proximity, and indeed overlaps with a site of European importance in Medway, on balance, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to cause a significant effect on any European site, including cumulatively, in combination with other plans or proposals, will not require a full appropriate assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (Art. 3.2(b)).

****Note: The NPPF 2019 internationally designated Ramsar sites should be subject to the same consideration as the European sites.***

5. Consultations with Statutory Consultees

Natural England



Our reference: 369319

Dear Lachlan Anderson-Frank

Thank you for your email consulting Natural England on the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 draft Environmental Screening Report; please accept my apologies once again for the delay in providing our comments and any inconvenience that this has caused.

Whilst Natural England acknowledges that the Neighbourhood Plan itself is not proposing any allocations, it does include policies to guide and shape development if the emerging Medway Local Plan proposes development within the Parish. In addition it includes broader aspirations which could have environmental implications such as the proposed linking routes to the England Coast Path, for example.

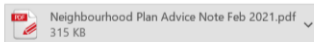
Whilst we consider that it is unlikely the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will result in significant environmental effects, in the absence of the overarching assessment of environmental effects from the Local Plan it is difficult for Natural England to provide advice at this stage. Subject to information on the allocations and the avoidance and mitigation measures within the emerging Local Plan being sufficient to ensure that the overarching Local Plan Policies and allocations do not result in significant environmental effects (as tested via the sustainability appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment), Natural England would advise that the Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to require a specific Strategic Environmental Assessment or Habitats Regulations Assessment.

I understand that the Design Code to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a public consultation due to commence in the next few weeks and believe the for the Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation is also due in the next couple of months. Given the similar timeframes, it would appear sensible for the decision on the screening of the Neighbourhood Plan to be revisited once the Local Plan and associated documents are available for consultation. This would allow Natural England to provide advice with a greater degree of certainty that the Neighbourhood Plan will not result in negative environmental effects.

I hope these comments are helpful and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Kind regards
Sean

Environmental Agency



Lachlan

We are unable to provide any bespoke comments but can offer the attached advice.

Jo

Jo Beck Sustainable Places Team Leader (Kent)

Environment Agency, Kent, South London and East Sussex Area

☎ 0208 474 6713

✉ jo.beck@environment-agency.gov.uk

🕒 Work pattern: Monday, Wednesday and Thursdays 9.30am to 3pm; Tuesday and Fridays 9.30am to 5pm (term time only)

Historic England

Dear Lachlan

Thank you for inviting Historic England's comment on the screening of the High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan for Strategic Environmental Assessment. As Historic England's remit is limited to advising on the implications of planning for the historic environment, our assessment of the plan's potential environmental effects has been limited to these areas.

I am happy to confirm that we do not feel the plan has potential for likely significant effects within our areas of interest and, as such, agree with the Council's determination to screen out the need for SEA. Our view is based on the understanding that policies relating to the development of land east of High Halstow will not be brought into effect unless that land is allocated for development within the Medway Local plan and that the effects of this policy will be considered alongside a Local Plan Allocation in the SA/SEA for that document.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any queries relating to our comments

yours sincerely

Robert Lloyd-Sweet

Robert Lloyd-Sweet | Historic Places Adviser | South East England | Historic England

Cannon Bridge House | 25 Dowgate Hill | London | EC4R 2YA

Mobile: 07825 907288

6. Conclusions

6.1. As a result of the assessment above it is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the proposals in the High Halstow NP, and as such, no SEA or appropriate assessment is required. Natural England did remark that further screening will need to take place alongside the Design Code and the upcoming Local Plan, to allow them to further understand environmental effects of future development. This report has been sent to the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England for a screening opinion. If the issues addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan should change then a new screening process will need to be undertaken determine whether an SEA will be required.

High Halstow Parish Council
Neighbourhood Plan: 2020 - 2037

Basic Conditions Statement
(Including Area Statement)

May 2022



High Halstow Parish Council

Web: <https://highhalstowneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/>

Email: www.highhalstow-pc.gov.uk

Address: High Halstow Parish Council, 50 Pepys Way Strood Rochester Kent, ME2 3LL