



# Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan

## Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report

November 2023





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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Purpose of this Report

This screening report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan Submission Version (2023) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/ EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations. A SEA is required if the Neighbourhood Plan is deemed to have a likely significant effect on the environment.

This report will also screen to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). An HRA screening report is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected Habitats (European) Sites as a result of the implementation of a plan or project.

## 1.2 The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan will set out planning policies for the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan area. Once formally adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan carries the same legal weight as Local Development Plans adopted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in this case Braintree District Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan includes a Vision, which expresses the community's aspirations for the plan area. This Vision is included within the Plan as follows:

'The Parish of Steeple Bumpstead will be a place where residents enjoy an excellent quality of life and people feel valued. Heritage assets will be protected; countryside, wildlife and valuable views will be safeguarded and celebrated. Homes, businesses and other facilities will meet the needs of a vibrant, affordable and safe rural community.'

A number of economic, social and environmental objectives have been devised for the Neighbourhood Plan. These are:

- To protect and respect the landscape, wildlife and countryside of the Parish, and cherish its natural beauty.
- To minimise the impact of any future development on the landscape and scenic beauty of the area.
- To protect and respect the rich history and heritage of the Parish.
- To minimise the impact of any future development on the heritage assets of the village.
- To ensure that likely future housing supply is matched with likely future housing

needs.

- To ensure an appropriate mix of housing for local needs, including affordable housing.
- To define appropriate criteria for identifying potential sites for housing and types of homes required.
- To support local business and retain local employment.
- To encourage new business and employment opportunities in the Parish.
- To maintain and protect the community facilities and services available to residents.
- To ensure that the open public spaces within the village are protected and properly maintained.
- To improve safety for all highway users in, through and around the village, including pedestrians and cyclists.
- To promote and support public transport, and travel by foot and cycle.

## 1.3 The Braintree District Council Local Plan

The Braintree District Local Plan was adopted in 2022, with a plan period that extends to 2033. The content of the Local Plan relevant to Steeple Bumpstead is outlined in the corresponding sub-sections.

### 1.3.1 Steeple Bumpstead in the Local Plan and Spatial Strategy

The Local Plan identifies Steeple Bumpstead as a 'Second Tier' village. Key Service Villages are defined within the Local Plan as Second Tier villages are those which may not serve a wider hinterland but provide the ability for some day to day needs to be met, although they lack the full range of facilities of a Key Service Villages. Development of a small scale may be considered sustainable within a Second Tier village, subject to the specific constraints and opportunities of that village. The Local Plan identifies an appropriate amount of new development in Second Tier villages to support thriving rural communities.

The Local Plan allocates a single site within Steeple Bumpstead for residential development purposes, and another site is also recognised within Policy LPP6 (Business Parks), namely Blois Meadow Business Centre. The Policy sets out that in order to maintain the character of this and other such sites, and to meet identified needs, the Blois Meadow Business Centre is allocated for Use Class E (g), office use, research and development, and industrial processes (other than industrial processes falling within Use Class B2).

### 1.3.2 Development Boundaries

The Local Plan includes Policy LPP1 - Development Boundaries, which sets out that within development boundaries, development will be permitted where it satisfies amenity, design, environmental and highway criteria and where it can take place without material adverse

detriment to the existing character and historic interest of the settlement. Development outside development boundaries will be confined to uses appropriate to the countryside whilst also protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The village of Steeple Bumpstead has a defined development boundary drawn around the built up area.

### 1.3.3 Housing Allocations

A single Housing Allocation is included within Steeple Bumpstead's development boundary as set out in the Local Plan. This allocation is:

- STEB395 - Land South of Freezes Farm, North Street/Water Lane (allocated for 28 dwellings)

The site is subject to full planning permission (reference: 18/00408/FUL) and construction began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2021.



## 2. Legislative Background

### 2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27<sup>th</sup> June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment states that,

‘Environmental assessment is an important tool for integrating environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(10) All plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors and which set a framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment(7), and all plans and programmes which have been determined to require assessment pursuant to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna(8), are likely to have significant effects on the environment, and should as a rule be made subject to systematic environmental assessment. When they determine the use of small areas at local level or are minor modifications to the above plans or programmes, they should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(11) Other plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects may not have significant effects on the environment in all cases and should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have such effects.’

The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan may influence frameworks for future development or become used ancillary to those plans and programmes that do set such a framework, and as such it has been determined that the principle of the Neighbourhood Plan should be screened for the necessary application of the SEA Directive.

The Report from the Commission to The Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions states, on the application and effectiveness of the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Directive 2001/42/EC), that ‘the following Plan & Programme (P&P), and modifications to them, are covered when prepared and/or adopted by an authority and required pursuant to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions:

- P&P prepared for certain sectors and which set the framework for future development consent in respect of projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment-EIA-Directive.
- P&P requiring an assessment under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

- P&P setting the framework for development consent in respect of projects (not limited to those listed in the EIA Directive; see above) and determined by "screening" as being likely to have significant environmental effects.'

This report represents this screening process in regard to the content and influence of the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan.

## 2.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site (also referred to as Habitats sites in the National Planning Policy Framework), in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

The first stage of HRA is the screening assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of Habitats sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites.

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to accompany the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with certain obligations, which includes the need to undertake an HRA.

In line with the Court judgement (CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats site.

On 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) held a referendum and voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 26 June 2018, The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 received Royal Assent and the UK left the EU. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 made sure that UK laws continue to operate following the UK's exit. Relevant EU Directives have been transposed into UK law and those are unchanged until amended by Parliament. The requirements for HRA under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) remain in place with minor changes being affected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Parliament is however at liberty to introduce future changes to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) since, after 31 December 2020, the UK is no longer bound by the EU Habitats and Wild Birds Directives.



At the present time the position, under section 6(3) EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (as amended), is that the courts in the UK, with the sole exception of the Supreme Court, will continue to be bound by HRA judgements handed down by the CJEU and by domestic courts prior to 31 December 2020 when interpreting the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This is the case as long as the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) remain unmodified by Parliament.

There is currently a legal requirement for HRA screening of Plans prior to being adopted so any additional plans or projects which might reasonably interact with the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan will be considered before post consultation.

## 3. SEA Screening

### 3.1 When is SEA Required?

Planning Practice Guidance – Strategic environmental assessment requirements for Neighbourhood Plans (Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 11-026-20140306) states that,

‘In some limited circumstances, where a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft Neighbourhood Plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a “screening” assessment and the requirements are set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of those Regulations.

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with European Union obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).

To decide whether a draft Neighbourhood Plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan’s preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies.

Each consultation body will be able to advise on particular topics relevant to its specific area of expertise and responsibility, and the specific information that it holds.

Where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared. A copy of the statement must be submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner.’

Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive set out the circumstances in which a SEA is required. Table 1 sets out the assessment of whether the principle of the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan will require a full SEA.

**Table 1: Exploring whether the Principle of the Plan would warrant SEA**

<p><b>Question 1: Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?</b></p>
<p>Yes - The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for adoption through legislative procedure.</p>
<p><b>Question 2: Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provision? (Typical characteristics of "administrative provisions" are that they are publicly available, prepared in a formal way, probably involving consultation with interested parties. The administrative provision must have sufficient formality such that it counts as a "provision" and it must also use language that plainly requires rather than just encourages a Plan to be prepared.)</b></p>
<p>Yes - The Neighbourhood Plan would be considered as falling within the category of an 'administrative provision'.</p>
<p><b>Question 3: Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive?</b></p>
<p>Yes to both criteria - The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.</p>
<p><b>Question 4: Will the Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?</b></p>
<p>The Neighbourhood Plan's likely effect on sites and requirement for an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive is explored in Section 4 of this Report.</p>
<p><b>Question 5: Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a Plan likely to require assessment under the Habitats Directive?</b></p>
<p>Yes to one of the criteria - the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.</p>
<p><b>Question 6: Does the Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in the Annexes of the EIA Directive)?</b></p>

Yes - the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.

**Question 7: Is the Plans sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial or budget Plan, or is it co -financed by structural funds or European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) programmes 2000 to 2006/7?**

The Neighbourhood Plan does not serve a purpose related to national defence or civil emergency, a financial or budget Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan is not co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7.

**Question 8: Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?**

Likely significant effects are explored in more detail in Section 3.3 of this Screening Report. The 'conclusions' section of the Report outlines whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA or not due in regard to its effects on the environment.

The following section looks at the criteria for assessing the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan and the identified effects of the Neighbourhood Plan in line with the criteria. Crucially, it will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on the environment.

## 3.2 Criteria for Assessing the Effects of the Neighbourhood Plan

Criteria for determining the likely significant effects on the environment, referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below.

### Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

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

## Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).

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

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the transboundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
  - \* special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
  - \* exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
  - \* intensive land-use,
  - \* the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

### 3.3 Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan

The following assessment will consider the likelihood of the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan (at the time of writing) to have significant effects on the environment. The table below will explore the likelihood of effects on the following required themes, as included within Annex I of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC):

- Biodiversity;
- Population;
- Human health;
- Fauna;
- Flora;
- Soil;
- Water;
- Air;
- Climatic factors;
- Material assets;
- Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage;
- Landscape; and
- The interrelationship between the above factors.

**Table 2: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on the Environment**

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p>	<p>The Plan sets out relevant policies which will be used to determine proposals for development within the Neighbourhood Plan area once adopted.</p> <p>A Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and once brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies only in the Local Plan for that Neighbourhood Plan area. The principle of growth is established for Steeple Bumpstead as a ‘Second Tier’</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>village’ is identified as appropriate within the development boundary.</p> <p>The adopted Braintree Local Plan identifies an allocation within the Neighbourhood Plan area and this is currently under construction. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any additional land for development purposes.</p> <p>Irrespective of the Neighbourhood Plan policies’ compliance with those of the Local Plan, which will be considered between the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority in finalising the Neighbourhood Plan and through the independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that the degree to which the Neighbourhood Plan sets a framework for development is low. This is primarily due to the Neighbourhood Plan not allocating land for development.</p>
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan, when/if ‘made’, will have weight in all planning decisions within the plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan provides policies for the Plan area, relevant to a local level only. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development purposes. An allocation within the Neighbourhood Plan area is included within the adopted Braintree Local Plan, indicating that housing needs will be met within the Neighbourhood Plan area to 2033.</p> <p>In consideration of the above, the degree to which the Neighbourhood Plan influences other plans or programmes is considered relatively low in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area. This is primarily related to the Plan’s position of not allocating land for development purposes.</p>
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Plans are required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to ensure environmental considerations are taken into account. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies related (directly / indirectly) to</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p>ensuring environmental considerations will be integrated into any forthcoming development within the Plan area. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy SB3 - Design in Harmony with the Built and Historic Environment</li> <li>• Policy SB2 – Protected Views</li> </ul> <p>Irrespective of the adequacy of the above policies, adopted Local Plan policies apply within the Neighbourhood Plan area, which have been subject to thorough assessment within the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. This ensures that environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, will be considered for all development proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan area</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan reflects a small area and the Plan’s policy content seeks to address environmental issues. The policy content of the adopted Local Plan will additionally apply to any proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Local Plan policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) within the context of the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan and this Screening Report identify the following potential (direct / indirect) environmental problems or sources of potential problems relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of areas on the Priority Habitat Inventory exist throughout the Plan area, including: good quality semi-improved grassland; deciduous woodland; traditional woodland; and Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat associated with Moyns Park.</li> <li>• Three areas of Ancient / Semi-Natural Woodland exist within the Plan area.</li> <li>• The Parish contains approximately 52 Listed Building, including the Grade I listed Church of St Mary the Virgin, and Moyns Park, as well as the</li> </ul>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>Grade II* Listed: Gun House; Moot Hall; Ancient House; Latchleys Farmhouse; and Brick House.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a designated Conservation Area within the historic core of the village, which contains a number of high quality buildings, including a total of 21 listed buildings.</li> <li>• The Plan area contains two Scheduled Monuments: Dovecote at Blois Farm; and Latchley's Farm moated site and fishponds.</li> <li>• Bumpstead Brook, which is a tributary of the River Stour, runs south-west to north-east through the centre of the village. There are areas of land within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 associated with the river.</li> <li>• The majority of the Plan area is within a Source Protection Zone (SPZ) (Zone III - Total Catchment). Small areas of Zone I (Inner Protection Zone) and Zone II (Outer Protection Zone) are located within the north eastern corner of the Parish boundary. SPZs are defined around large and public potable groundwater abstraction sites. The purpose of SPZs is to provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality through constraining the proximity of an activity that may impact upon a drinking water abstraction.</li> <li>• The non-developed areas of the Plan area, and those also not in non-agricultural use, are predominantly Grade 2 ('very good') soils. Grade 2 soil represents the best and most versatile soil within the wider District context.</li> <li>• The Plan area is located within the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area (NCA).</li> <li>• The NCA is characterised as predominantly arable with a wooded appearance. There is some pasture on the valley floors. Field patterns are irregular despite rationalisation, with much ancient countryside surviving. Winding, narrow and</li> </ul>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>sometimes sunken lanes are bounded by deep ditches, wide verges and strong hedgerows. A strong network of public rights of way provides access to the area’s archetypal lowland English countryside.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parish of Steeple Bumpstead is covered by three Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), as identified within the District Councils’ Local Landscape Assessment (2006). These are the Hempstead Farmland Plateau to the south of the village, the Stour River Valley which encompasses the village of Steeple Bumpstead itself, and the Bumpstead Farmland Plateau to the north of the village. The key characteristics of these LCAs are identified as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A rolling arable farmland and hills surrounding steep valleys with small streams.</li> <li>- Settlements located in the valleys.</li> <li>- A number of interesting and colourful vernacular buildings within small linear settlements.</li> <li>- An overall strong sense of tranquillity and sense of place.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</p>	<p>The content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not in conflict with those relevant planning documents within the wider district and county area related to waste management or water protection.</p>
<p>The probability, duration, frequency and</p>	<p>The following impacts have been identified within this</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
reversibility of the effects on the following factors:	Screening Assessment:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity</li> </ul>	<p>The Plan does not specifically include any thematic policy regarding biodiversity. The Plan area is relatively free from constraint or features in this regard, aside from pockets of land identified as Priority habitat scattered throughout. Braintree Local Plan policies regarding biodiversity apply within the Plan area. It is not considered necessary for the Neighbourhood Plan to reiterate them.</p> <p>The HRA element of this Screening Report, due to the content of the Plan, outlines that there will be no likely significant effects on the designated features of the Habitats site within scope, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.</p> <p>In consideration of all of the above effects on biodiversity that would require the full application of the SEA Directive (a SEA Environmental Report) can be screened out.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population</li> </ul>	<p>It is considered that there would be no significant effects on population resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan. This is due to the small scale of the Plan area.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health</li> </ul>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan includes Policy SB8 – Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation which identifies existing open spaces and seeks their protection. This can be seen to support the principles of improving health and wellbeing in the plan area.</p> <p>There are therefore no significant effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan regarding human health that would warrant a strategic assessment through SEA.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fauna</li> </ul>	<p>There are no direct impacts resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan on fauna that are considered significant</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>at the Plan level. The Plan seeks the protection and enhancement of biodiversity at key sites and does not propose any development that could lead to the direct deterioration of habitats.</p> <p>Possible effects on fauna (outside those associated with Habitats sites) cannot be considered strategically significant to the extent that Strategic Environmental Assessment would be warranted. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case 'project level' basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA's adopted Local Plan.</p> <p>Effects on fauna from the content of the Neighbourhood Plan can therefore be screened out.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flora</li> </ul>	<p>Various areas of priority habitat exist within the plan area. The Plan does not actively seek their protection and enhancement; however, it should be acknowledged that relevant to such matters, Local Plan policies apply within the Neighborhood Plan area.</p> <p>As a result, no effects are expected to result from the Neighbourhood Plan regarding flora.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil</li> </ul>	<p>The non-developed areas of the Neighbourhood Plan area consist of predominantly Grade 2 ('very good') soils. Although no thematic policies are included within the Plan that address soil quality, it should be acknowledged that Local Plan policies apply on the matter and that the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development purposes. There are no identified negative implications surrounding soil quality as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<p>Land within Source Protection Zones I, II and III make up the entirety of the Plan area. Source Protection Zones (SPZs) respond to sources such as wells, boreholes and springs</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>used for public drinking water supply. These zones show the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and as such no uses are considered to give rise to ground water pollutants (e.g. give rise to hazardous substances such as pesticides, oils, petrol and diesel, solvents, arsenic, mercury or chromium VI; or non-hazardous substances such as ammonia or nitrates).</p> <p>The HRA element of this Screening Report confirms that there are no potential pathways for development within the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan area to impact on the single Habitats site within scope of the HRA.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air</li> </ul>	<p>The Plan area contains no areas designated or otherwise identified as having poor air quality. Additionally, the Local Plan does not allocate land for development purposes or include any other commitments that would lead to a deterioration in air quality. There will be significant effects on air quality as a result.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climatic factors</li> </ul>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan area contains an area of Flood Risk Zone 3 associated with Bumpstead Brook, a tributary of the River Stour. This area, in part, also corresponds to the built up area of Steeple Bumpstead.</p> <p>There is no thematic policy within the Neighbourhood Plan regarding flooding. No development allocations are proposed within the Plan however, and it is considered that should any speculative development proposals come forward, adopted Local Plan policies on flood risk and climatic factors will apply.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that SEA would not be required regarding matters of flood risk.</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Material assets</li> </ul>	<p>The Plan area contains land within a Minerals Consultation Area (MCA) for sand and gravel as identified within the County Council’s adopted Minerals Local Plan. These areas are associated with Bumpstead Brook, which flows south-west to north-east through the Plan area. Nevertheless, the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for development proposals or contain any commitments that are considered contrary to preserving the integrity of these deposits.</p> <p>The Plan area does not contain any existing or allocated sites for waste management facilities within the County Council’s adopted Waste Local Plan.</p> <p>Regarding other material assets, the content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not considered to have any significant effects due to the extent / size of the Plan area. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA’s adopted Local Plan.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural heritage</li> </ul>	<p>The Plan area contains numerous Listed Buildings and two Scheduled Monuments. The Plan does not allocate land for development purposes that could have any effects on these listings or their settings. The Plan includes the specific thematic Policy SB3 – Design in Harmony with the Built and Historic Environment. Similarly, the protection of the historic environment is a recurring theme throughout various other Plan policies and objectives.</p> <p>Irrespective of the adequacy of the Plan’s policy in the conservation and enhancement of the Plan area’s heritage assets and their settings, policy regarding the protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment also exists at the LPA level which additionally applies in the Plan area. The effects on heritage are, as a result, considered a development management issue in the context of the Plan and its content. There are not considered to be any elements of the Plan that would give rise to significant</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	effects on the historic environment at the strategic level that would require the full application of the SEA Directive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape</li> </ul>	<p>The parish is within South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area (NCA) and contains many features synonymous with this NCA's landscape character. The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and includes Policy SB2 – Protected Views seeks their maintenance and enhancement within development proposals.</p> <p>In light of the Plan not allocating land for development purposes and in consideration also of the requirements of development proposals in accordance with the adopted Braintree Local Plan, there are no significant strategic landscape effects identified within this Report that would warrant the requirement for the application of the SEA Directive and the formulation of a SEA Environmental Report.</p>
The cumulative nature of the effects.	The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and therefore any negative cumulative effects can be ruled out.
The trans boundary nature of the effects.	The adopted Braintree Local Plan can be seen to support the protection and improvement of conditions relevant to those sustainability factors listed within the SEA Directive. The Neighbourhood Plan is broadly aligned with the principles of those wider thematic environmental policies. The HRA Screening element of this Report, which explores in-combination effects with other relevant plans and projects, also identifies no in-combination effects regarding Habitats (European) sites.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to	It is considered that there is no risk to human health or the environment as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is in consideration of the above screening requirements related

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
accidents).	to sustainability themes. The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to give rise to any accidents that can be considered to have a significant risk to human health or the environment.
The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The Neighbourhood Plan relates to the local level only. The magnitude and spatial extent of the Plan’s content is therefore not considered significant in a wider District context. No effects are highlighted within this SEA screening at either the local or wider geographic area.
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</li> <li>• exceeded environmental quality standards</li> <li>• intensive land use</li> </ul>	As highlighted above in the screening of the Neighbourhood Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has not been assessed as having negative effects associated with environmental themes.
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has not been assessed as having any significant effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.

## 4. HRA Screening

### 4.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

This section forms a plan level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) as required by Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

This section of this Report aims to:

- Identify the Habitats sites within 20km of Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Summarise the reasons for designation and Conservation Objectives for each site to be considered in this assessment.
- Screen the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan for its potential to impact upon a Habitats site.
- Assess the potential for in combination effects from other projects and plans in the area.
- Identify if there are any outstanding issues that need further investigation.

### 4.2 Court Judgements and their consideration in this Report

#### 4.2.1 CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17

In line with the Court judgement (CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats site.

This HRA Screening Report does not therefore consider mitigation measures within the assessment of Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan.

#### 4.2.2 CJEU Holohan C- 461/17

This Court judgement now imposes more detailed requirements on the competent authority at Appropriate Assessment stage:

1. [...] an 'Appropriate Assessment' must, on the one hand, catalogue the entirety of habitat types and species for which a site is protected, and, on the other, identify and examine both the implications of the proposed project for the species present on that site, and for which that site has not been listed, and the implications for habitat types and species to be found outside the boundaries of that site, provided that those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site.

2. [...] the competent authority is permitted to grant to a plan or project consent which leaves the developer free to determine subsequently certain parameters relating to the construction phase, such as the location of the construction compound and haul routes, only if that authority is certain that the development consent granted establishes conditions that are strict enough to guarantee that those parameters will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

3. [...] where the competent authority rejects the findings in a scientific expert opinion recommending that additional information be obtained, the 'Appropriate Assessment' must include an explicit and detailed statement of reasons capable of dispelling all reasonable scientific doubt concerning the effects of the work envisaged on the site concerned.

Within this Stage 1 HRA Screening report, the assessment determines the requirement whether or not a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is needed for the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan.

## 4.3 Habitats (European) Sites

Habitats sites is the term used in the (revised) NPPF (2023) to describe any site which would be included within the definition at Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) for the purpose of those regulations. These now form part of the UK national network of sites for nature protection. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of UK's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

All Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated for other species, and for Habitats. Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) are also part of the National Network of sites. This is because all SPAs and SACs are comprised of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all Ramsar sites in England are SSSIs. Together, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites make up the Habitats sites in England. The following offers a description and explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites.

### 4.3.1 Explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites

#### Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds. Example: Breckland SPA is classified for internationally important number of breeding stone curlew, woodlark and nightjar. Legislation: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

#### Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

SACs are areas designated to protect habitat types that are in danger of disappearance, have a small natural range, or are highly characteristic of the region; and to protect species that are endangered, vulnerable, rare, or endemic. Example: Devil's Dyke SAC has semi-natural dry

grasslands and scrubland on calcareous substrates with important orchid sites. Legislation: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

### Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)

Ramsar Sites are designated to protect the biological and physical features of wetlands, especially for waterfowl habitats. For example, Chippenham Fen Ramsar site is of international importance for its wide range of wetland habitats and associated flora, birds and insects.

Ramsar sites often overlap with SACs and SPAs and UK planning policy determines that they should be accorded the same importance when developments are proposed. Legislation: Ramsar Convention (1971) – Wetlands of International Importance.

### 4.3.2 Habitats sites to be considered

There is only 1 Habitats site (SPA/SAC/Ramsar) which lies within 20 km of Steeple Bumpstead.

**Table 3: Habitats sites within 20km to be considered in this assessment**

SPA
N/A
SAC
Devil's Dyke
Ramsar
N/A

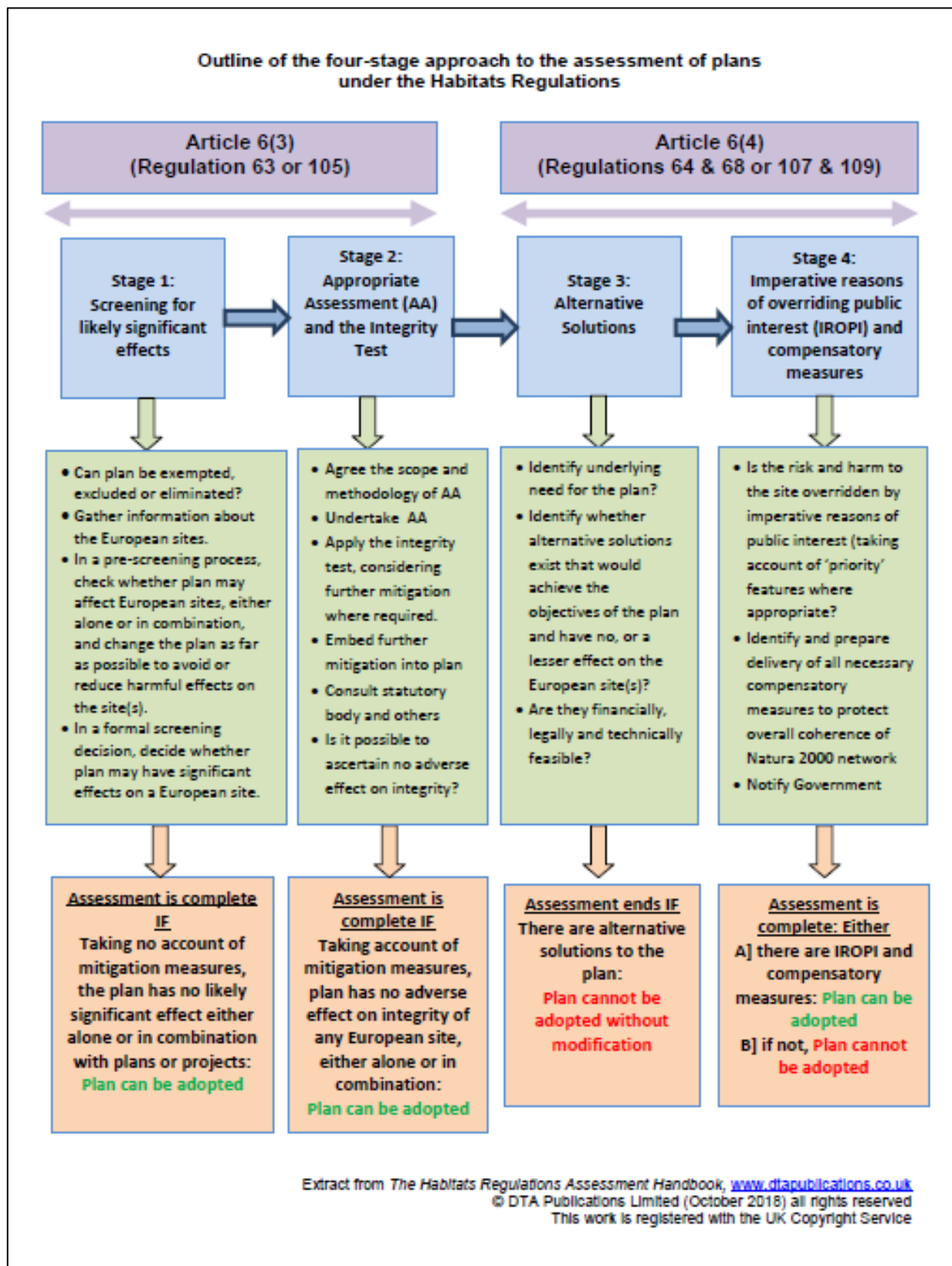
The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the recreational Zones of Influence (ZOI) of Habitats sites (and underpinning SSSIs) on the Essex coast and 5km Zone of Influence as identified by Natural England for Devil's Dyke SAC and its underpinning sensitive SSSI in Cambridgeshire as identified by Natural England to consider potential impacts on statutory sites.

Consideration was given to potential impact pathways, Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) for the underpinning SSSIs for the Habitats sites listed in Table 3 and confirmed on MAGIC website [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk).

## 4.4 Method and Approach

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the ‘basic conditions’ set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA screening report; this is necessary to ensure the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Habitats (European) site or a Habitats (European) offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This document relates only to Stage 1 of the HRA process as set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Outline of the Four Stage Approach to the Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Regulations (taken from the DTA handbook).



### 4.4.1 Stage 1: HRA Screening

The screening stage identifies if any significant effects are likely because any policies or projects will have an impact on a Habitats site. Table 4 identifies the different categories assigned to each policy in the plan: Category A identifies those policies or projects that are considered to have No Negative Effect. Category B identifies those policies or projects that will have No Likely Significant Effect. Category C identifies those policies or projects that might have Likely Significant Effect upon a Habitats site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Section 4.5 considers each policy or projects and the results of the screening exercise recorded.

Each of the policies in the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan has been screened to identify whether they would have any effect on a Habitats site and allocated to a category as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Screening categorisation**

<b>Category A: No negative effect</b>
Policies or projects that will not be likely to have any negative effect on a Habitats site.
<b>Category B: No Likely Significant Effect</b>
Policies or projects that could have an effect but would not be likely to have a <i>significant</i> negative effect on a Habitats site alone or in combination. This conclusion could only be reached if the effects, even in combination and taking the precautionary principle into account, are considered trivial.
<b>Category C: Likely Significant Effect</b>
Policies or projects which are predicted to have a likely significant effect on a Habitats site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects and require revision or further assessment (Appropriate Assessment).

### 4.4.2 Potential impacts of Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan on Habitats Sites

There are a wide range of potential impacts on Habitats Sites that could arise from development plans. These can be summarised as -

- Land take by development;
- Impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying



interest species within the Habitats site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for an identified species.

- Increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;
- Changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for waste water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas;
- Changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial developments, quarries and waste management facilities.

Each policy will be assessed against the criteria in the table below.

**Table 4: Assessment of potential impacts on Habitats Sites**

Nature of potential impact	How the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site	Why these effects are not considered significant
Land take by development	The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan area is outside the boundaries of the one Habitats site within scope of this HRA.	No likely significant effects are expected, as no development will be allocated on designated land. It is therefore, considered that impacts from land take by development can be screened out when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan area does not contain any land providing functional use by designated features of the Habitats site.	There is no risk of impacts on protected species outside of the Habitats site.  It is therefore considered that this impact pathway will not result in likely significant effects upon any Habitats site from the Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, impacts on protected species outside the Habitats site from the Neighbourhood Plan (either

Nature of potential impact	How the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site	Why these effects are not considered significant
		alone or in combination with other plans and projects) on the Habitats site can be screened out from further assessment.
Recreational pressure and disturbance	The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 5km Zone of Influence of the Devil’s Dyke SAC.	Although the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan does allocate land for development, impacts from recreation arising from the NP are screened out given the 15km distance, when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
Water quantity and quality	There is no potential pathway for development within the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan area to impact on the Habitats site within scope of this HRA.	Although the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan does allocate land for development, no likely significant effects are expected given the 15km distance and no impact pathway, so changes in water quantity or quality have been screened out when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans.
Changes in pollution levels	It is considered that there is no pathway for development to result in pollution impacts.	Although the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan does allocate land for development, no likely significant effects are expected given the 15km distance, so changes in air pollution have been screened out when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans.

## 4.5 Results from HRA Screening of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Each of the policies in the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan was screened in turn to identify whether they would have any impact on a Habitats site and the result of this exercise is recorded in Table 5.

**Table 5: Assessment of potential impacts from the Plan policies**

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
<p>Policy SB1 - Location of New Development</p>	<p>Development proposals within the Steeple Bumpstead Development Boundary as shown on Maps SB1a and SB1b attached will be supported provided that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Are located on brownfield development; and</li> <li>ii. Represent sustainable development; and</li> <li>iii. Meet relevant requirements set out in other policies of this Plan.</li> </ul> <p>Development proposals outside of the Steeple Bumpstead Development Boundary will be supported where the proposals relate to a Rural Exception Scheme or uses appropriate to the countryside such as agricultural uses.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy SB2 - Protected Views</p>	<p>The village of Steeple Bumpstead is characterised by views across and down into the valley, and views to and from the Church of St</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>Mary the Virgin. Specific Protected Views are identified within the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) which forms part of the Plan, and as shown on Map SB2 attached. Development proposals will be supported provided that they protect and / or enhance these views.</p> <p>Development proposals which may have an adverse impact upon views across and down into the valley, and views to and from the Church of St Mary the Virgin, should be supported by a visual impact assessment which demonstrates the impact of the development upon views which are important to the character of the area.</p>		
<p>Policy SB3 - Design in Harmony with the Built and Historic Environment</p>	<p>All new development proposals in the area should demonstrate good quality design and respect the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area, and should be in conformity with the Steeple Bumpstead Parish Design Guidance and Codes as attached to this Neighbourhood Plan as an Appendix.</p> <p>New development proposals will be supported provided that they fulfil all of the following requirements:</p> <p>(a) Using design that respects the scale and character of existing and</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>surrounding buildings; and</p> <p>(b) Demonstrating that the design of the particular development has addressed and protected the positive features of the character of the local area; and</p> <p>(c) Using materials which are compatible with the materials of the host or surrounding buildings; and</p> <p>(d) Demonstrating that there is no or minimal negative impact on views or historic assets and their settings.</p> <p>The village of Steeple Bumpstead is located in a valley, where the existing settlement pattern is predominately located below 70m AOD, as shown in Map SB3 attached. This pattern of development is important to the character and appearance of the area. New development proposals located above 70m AOD will be required to provide a Visual Impact Assessment which demonstrates the impact of the development on the character, appearance, and settlement pattern of the Parish. Proposals which have a detrimental impact on the character, appearance, and existing settlement pattern of the Parish will not be supported.</p>		
Policy SB4 -	Proposals for new dwellings on	No,	No specific



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
Residential Development on Garden Land	<p>private residential gardens will be discouraged and will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:</p> <p>(a) the reduced garden sizes of the existing dwellings in combination with the garden sizes of the new dwellings relate well to each other and to the surrounding neighbourhood; and</p> <p>(b) the character of the surrounding neighbourhood (in terms of appearance and the massing of development and landscape value) is respected.</p>	Category A	recommendations
Policy SB5 - Affordable Housing	<p>New development proposals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide affordable housing in accordance with the requirements set out within the adopted Braintree District Local Plan; and</li> <li>• Outline current local needs for affordable housing, and demonstrate how the proposed development will assist in meeting local needs; and</li> <li>• Ensure that affordable housing provision is made available in the first instance to people with a local connection to the Parish.</li> </ul> <p>Outside of the defined Steeple Bumpstead village Development Boundary, proposals for a Rural</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>Exception Site will be supported, subject to 100% allocation to affordable housing within the Rural Exception Site as well as the requirements of other policies within this Plan, provided that the affordable housing will be made available in the first instance to people with a local connection to the Parish in perpetuity.</p>		
<p>Policy SB6 - Protecting Existing Business Uses</p>	<p>Proposals which will result in the loss of an existing business use (including Use Classes B2, B8, and E) will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the site has been marketed effectively for a minimum of twelve months at a rate which is comparable to local market value for its existing use, or as redevelopment opportunity for other similar uses, and it can be demonstrated that the continuous existing use of the site is no longer viable, taking into account the site's existing and potential long-term market demand in its current use. Business park allocations within the Parish are shown in Map SB6 attached.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy SB7 - Farm Businesses</p>	<p>Outside development boundaries, proposals which support the diversification of farm businesses through small-scale commercial development will be supported provided that the development relates to the conversion and re-</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>use of existing buildings that are of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without complete re-building.</p> <p>Proposals for the provision of rural workers' accommodation will be supported provided that the need is demonstrated in order to support the future management of the farm business. Accommodation should be provided through the conversion and re-use of existing buildings where possible.</p>		
<p>Policy SB8 - Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation</p>	<p>Development at the public open space areas, Humphrey's Meadow and Camping Close and Other Areas of Community Value (as shown on Map SB8 attached) will be permitted where the proposals are ancillary to the existing uses on the site, and support and enhance the enjoyment of these areas.</p> <p>Proposals for development that would result in the loss of the whole or part of the public open space areas, including Humphrey's Meadow and Camping Close and Other Areas of Community Value (as shown on Map SB8 attached) will not generally be permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances for essential utility infrastructure where no other feasible alternative site is available, or where an equivalent</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>or enhanced replacement facility is provided in a convenient and accessible location.</p>		
<p>Policy SB9 - Protecting Community Uses</p>	<p>Proposals which will result in the loss of an existing community uses (including Use Classes E and F) will be supported provided that it can be demonstrated that the site has been marketed effectively for a minimum of twelve months at a rate which is comparable to local market value for its existing use, or as redevelopment opportunity for other similar uses, and it can be demonstrated that the continuous existing use of the site is no longer viable, taking into account the site’s existing and potential long-term market demand in its current use.</p> <p>Marketing evidence is not required in relation to educational facilities (Use Class F). Proposals resulting in the loss of an educational facility will not be supported unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the existing use of the educational facility is redundant, a satisfactory alternative facility is to be provided or local education needs will be appropriately provided for in the area to the satisfaction of Essex County Council, lead authority for education.</p> <p>Areas of community use are shown in Map SB9 attached.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
<p>Policy SB10 - Impact of New Development on Traffic</p>	<p>Proposals for new development will be required to:</p> <p>(a) Provide safe and convenient access for vehicles and pedestrians with visibility splays consistent with current standards; and</p> <p>(b) Submit a Transport Assessment or Statement and Travel Plan as appropriate.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy SB11 - Parking Provision</p>	<p>Development proposals that generate an increased need for parking must provide adequate and suitable off-street parking in order to minimise obstruction of the local road network in the interests of the safety of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists. Parking spaces can take the form of spaces or garage / car port facilities, but must be permanently available to the resident for parking use.</p> <p>Any new residential parking to be provided, whether in new development or through additional provision associated with alterations or extensions to existing development, is required to have regard to Essex Parking Standards (or any subsequent update to this) and the design principles established in the Essex Design Guide. Departures from the Essex Parking Standards (EPS)</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>will require the submission of supporting evidence.</p> <p>Proposals that would reduce the existing level of off-street parking provision will be resisted unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount of overall provision is adequate for the existing and future use of the site.</p>		

#### 4.5.1 Recommendations

There are no recommendations for the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan as they have all been assigned to Category A. There will therefore be no need for any residential development subsequently coming forward under this Plan to be subject to a project level HRA. As such there is no requirement for this Plan to progress to Appropriate Assessment.

Although the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan does allocate land for development purposes, given the 15km distance from the single Habitats site within scope of this assessment, there are no predicted effects from the Plan alone and no residual effects to consider in combination with other plans and projects.

There is therefore no need to identify any relevant plans or projects likely to result in a significant effect on Habitats sites in combination with the Plan.

In the context of this HRA, there are no relevant plans or projects to be considered in combination with Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan.

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development consent. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

Planning Practice Guidance on SEA of Neighbourhood Plans indicates that a strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where a Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites for development; the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan; or the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and seeks to strengthen the protection and enhancement of assets at the local level and in a local context.

In consideration of the findings of this Screening Report, the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan can be **screened out** for its requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

### 5.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

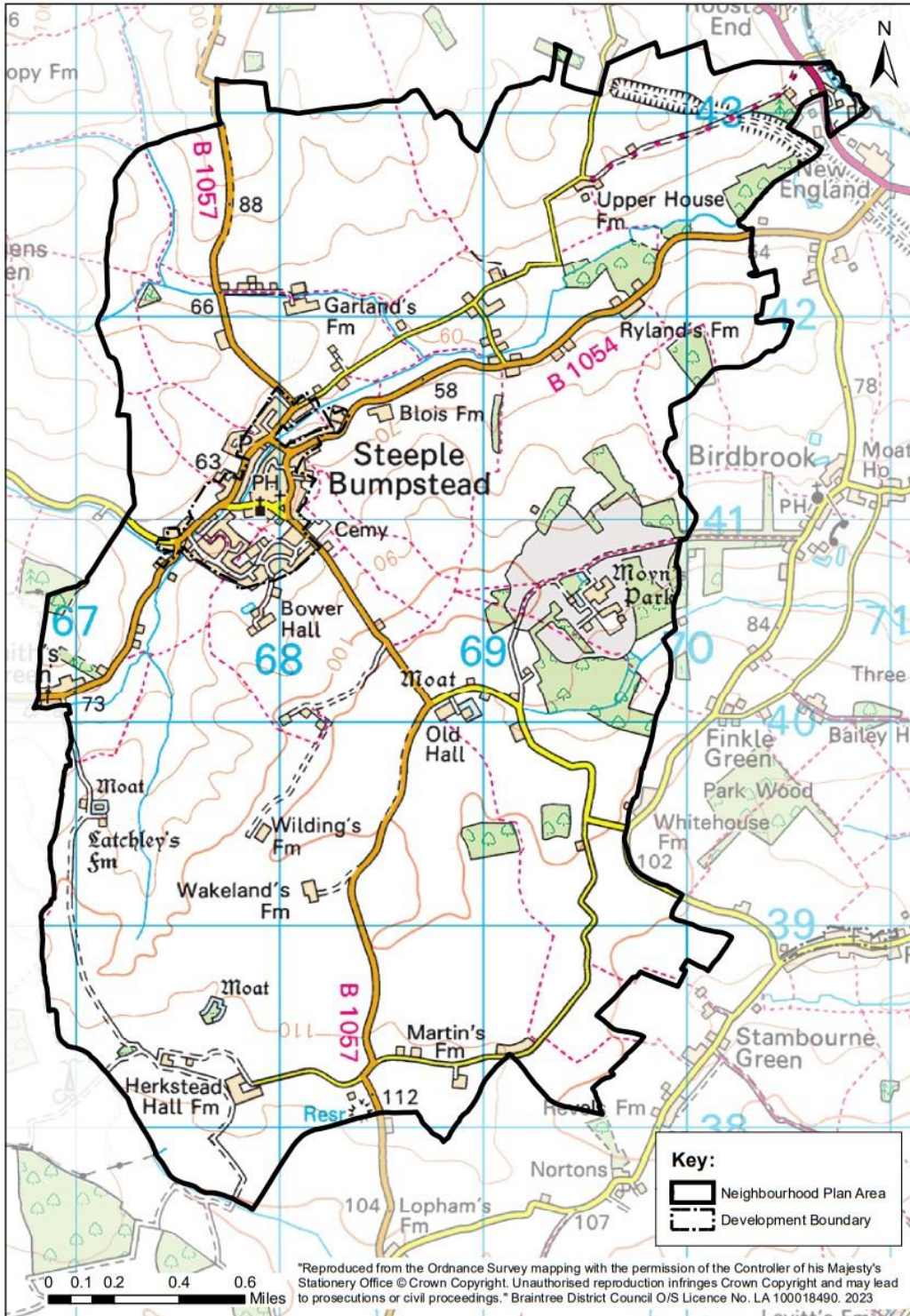
Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA Screening Report, indicates that, without mitigation embedded, the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have Likely Significant Effect on the designated features of any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) is therefore **screened out**.

## 6. References

- Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan Submission Version 2023
- Braintree District Council Local Plan (2022)
- Land Use Consultants (Aug 2016) HRA screening report for Braintree District Draft Local Plan
- Land Use Consultants (May 2017) HRA Report for North Essex Authorities Shared Strategic Part 1 for Local Plans Pre-submission (Regulation 19)
- Natural England Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England Website:  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6581547796791296#content>
- Natural England Advice to Cambridgeshire authorities to consider appropriate consideration of recreational pressure impacts, through relevant residential development, to sensitive SSSIs (ref 330067, dated 12 July 2019)
- Tydlesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, (April 2022) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited

# Appendix 1

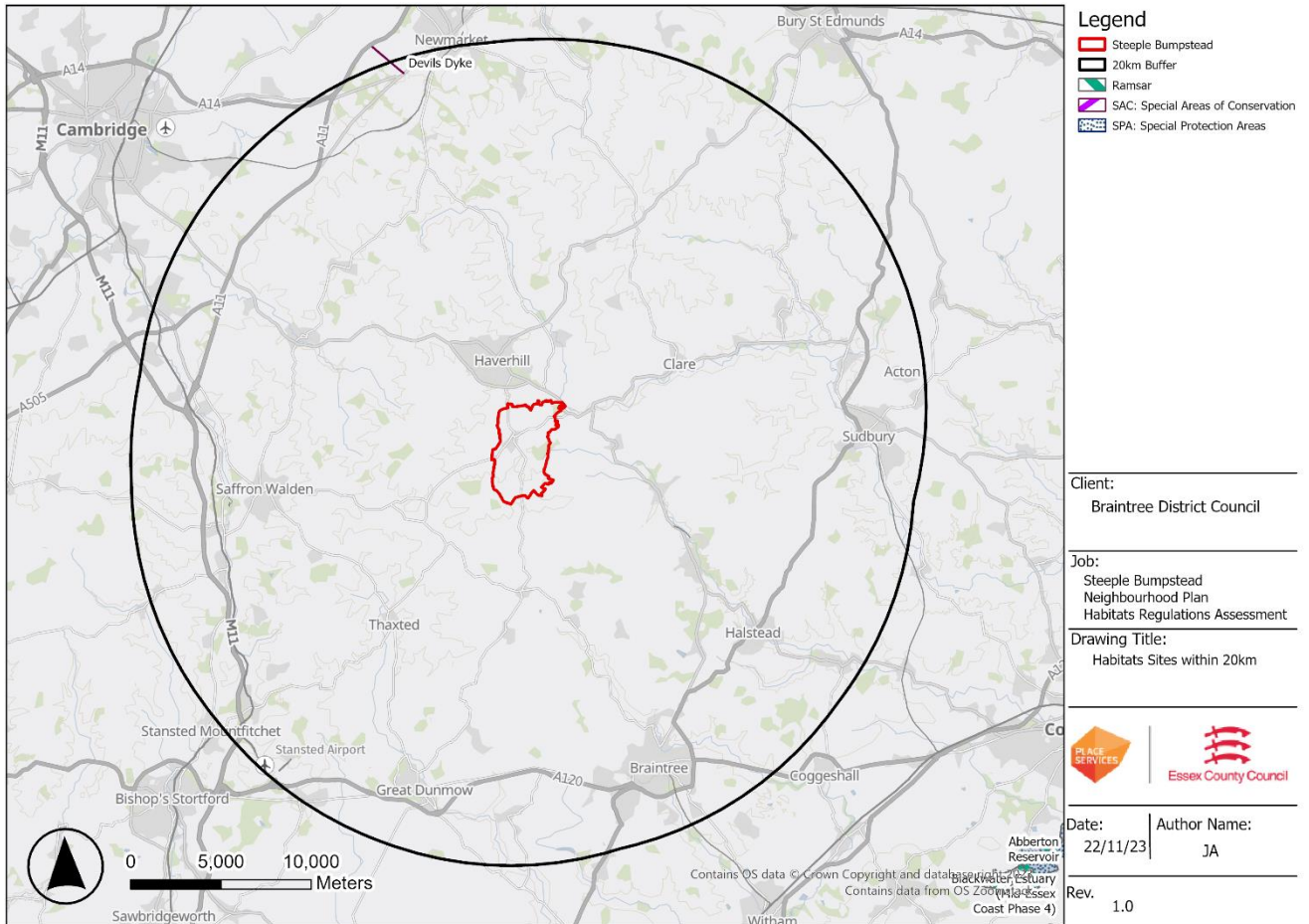
## The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan area



Source: Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan (2023)

# Appendix 2

## Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan area & Locations of Habitats Sites within 20 km



Source: Place Services (2023)



**Place Services**

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