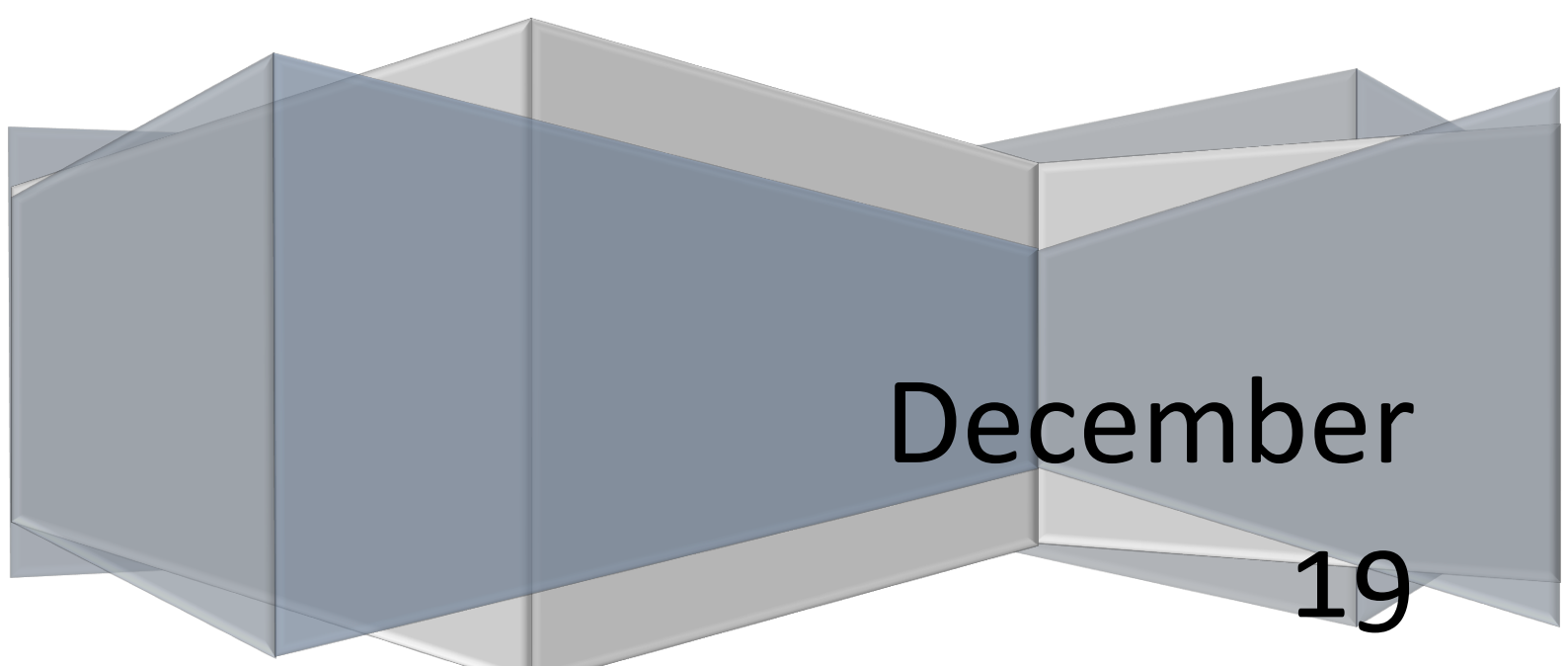


Cheshire East Council

Alderley Edge Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Report

T. Evans, Neighbourhood Planning Manager



**December
19**

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Abbreviations:

CEC	Cheshire East Council
CELPS:	Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy
MBLP:	Macclesfield Borough Local Plan
AENDP:	Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Development Plan
AENA:	Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Area
NP:	Neighbourhood Plan
KSC:	Key Service Centre
LSC:	Local Service Centre

1.0 Introduction

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a way of ensuring the environmental implications of decisions are taken into account before any such decisions are made. The need for environmental assessment of plans and programmes is set out in the EU Directive 2001/42/EC – known as the SEA Directive. Under this Directive, Neighbourhood Plans may require SEA – but this will depend on the content of each Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA Directive makes SEA a mandatory requirement for:

Plans which are prepared for town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive; or Plans which have been determined to require an assessment under the Habitats Directive.

A screening of a draft plan must be undertaken by the responsible authority prior to adoption or submission to the legislative procedure. In this case the 'responsible authority' is Alderley Edge Parish Council however Cheshire East Council, upon request, has agreed to provide a screening opinion on the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Development Plan (AENDP) to determine if SEA is required. If it is concluded that an SEA is required, Alderley Edge Parish Council are responsible for its production and it must form part of the material that is consulted on once the formal consultation stage is reached.

The main determining factor as to whether SEA is required on a Neighbourhood Plan is if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Those Neighbourhood Plans containing land allocations for development, which are not included in the local authority's plan, are likely to require SEA. Neighbourhood Plans which do not contain such allocations (or simply reflect allocations already identified as part of a local authority plan) are less likely to require SEA.

If SEA is required, Alderley Edge Parish Council may wish to consider voluntarily expanding the scope so that it covers wider economic and social issues. This is the approach taken by Cheshire East Council, whereby SEA is included within the broader Sustainability Appraisal of plans. The advantage of undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal is that it can demonstrate the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan on social, economic and environmental factors and therefore demonstrate to an examiner that the Plan that has been prepared is the most sustainable given all alternatives.

1.1 Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Where a neighbourhood plan could have significant environmental effects it may require a SEA.

Whether a neighbourhood plan requires SEA and (if so), the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft neighbourhood plan. SEA may be required for example when:

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

1.2 Requirement for HRA

In the context of neighbourhood planning, a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is required where a Neighbourhood Plan is deemed likely to give rise to significant effects on protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites), as a result of the plan's implementation. If no significant effect is deemed likely, HRA is not required. Where HRA is undertaken, it is good practice to identify sites within 10-15km of the plan/project boundary and include them in a HRA.

1.3 Legislative Background

The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal is the [European Directive 2001/42/EC](#) which has subsequently been transposed into English law by the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#), or SEA Regulations. The government has produced guidance in relation to these regulations, entitled '[A practical guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)'.

Schedule 2 of the [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#) makes provision in relation to the Habitats Directive. The Directive requires that any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European site must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. To achieve this, paragraph 1 prescribes a basic condition that the making of a neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. Paragraphs 2 to 5 of the Schedule amend the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 so as to apply its provisions to neighbourhood development orders and neighbourhood plans. In particular, paragraph 4 inserts new regulation 78A which provides that a neighbourhood development order may not grant planning permission for development which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

Schedule 3 of the [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#) makes provision in relation to the [Environmental Impact Assessment \(EIA\) Directive](#). The Directive requires that EIA development must be subject to a development consent process. To AENable this, Schedule 3 prescribes a basic condition that applies where development which is the subject of a proposal for a neighbourhood development order is of a type caught by the EIA Directive, and applies to the relevant provisions of the [Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2011\(3\)](#) ("the EIA Regulations") with appropriate modifications ([regulation 33](#) and paragraphs [1 to 4 and 6 of Schedule 3](#)). Paragraphs 5 and 7 to 13 of Schedule 3 correct errors in the EIA regulations.

This report seeks to determine if the AENDP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

1.4 The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

The basic conditions require Neighbourhood Plans to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority. The Macclesfield Borough Local Plan was adopted in 2004. Some of the policies within the Local Plan have been 'saved', which means they are still used in determining planning applications. As policies become out of date through lack of conformity with the NPPF or where more up to date evidence is available, they can be given less weight for decision making purposes, particularly on strategic issues.

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) was adopted on 27th July 2017 and sets the strategic approach to development across the sub-region.

The CELPS was subject to a full Sustainability Appraisal which included SEA. This ensured that no likely significant effects are expected to arise from the implementation of the CELPS or the delivery of the quantum of development identified in it.

1.5 Screening Process

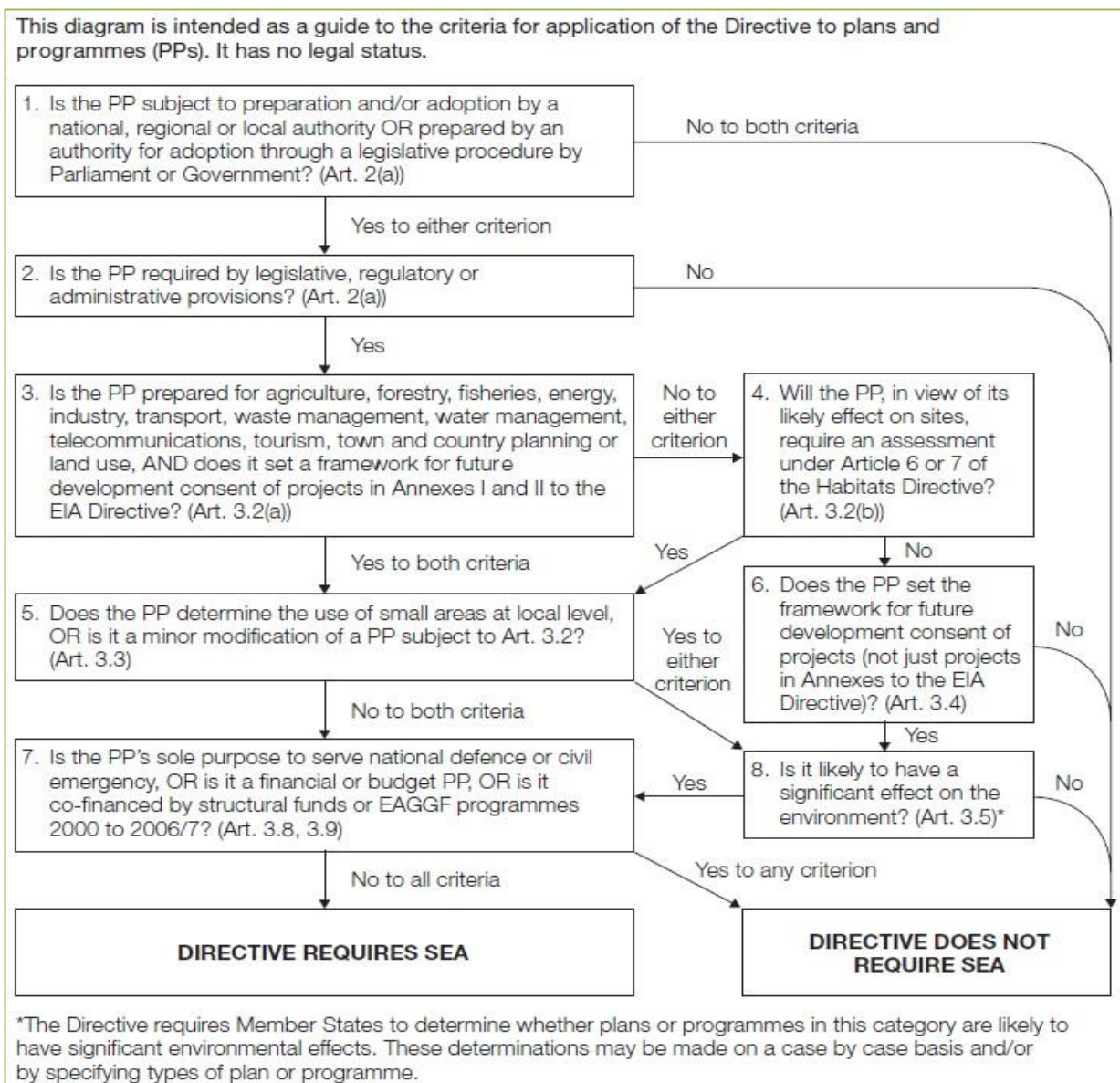
Alderley Edge Parish Council has requested a SEA screening opinion of its Neighbourhood Plan. It is the qualifying body's responsibility to undertake an assessment of whether their proposed policies are likely to have 'significant environmental effects' however on request, CEC will

undertake such an assessment on behalf of the qualifying body. The Plan does not have to be at a final draft stage to be assessed.

The screening opinion assessment is undertaken in two parts: the first part will assess whether the plan requires SEA (as per the flow chart which follows); and the second part of the assessment will consider whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, using criteria drawn from [Schedule 1 of the EU SEA Directive](#) and the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (see section 5).

The three statutory consultation bodies (English Heritage, Environment Agency and Natural England) have been consulted to establish whether the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA and whether the plan may have a 'significant environmental effect' on the environment. Should it be concluded that SEA is required Alderley Edge Parish Council will need to undertake a SEA with a SEA Scoping Report exercise as the first stage.

The government guidance [‘A practical guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’](#) sets out the following approach to be taken in determining whether SEA is required:



1. 5.1 Summary of the Screening Assessment

Summary	
Neighbourhood Plan:	Alderley Edge Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan
Geographic Coverage:	The Parish of Alderley Edge
Key Topics/scope of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale and type of housing • Rural character and environment • Services and facilities
Key Issues	Regulation 14 plan with some scope to revise policies. Role as a village settlement, recent impact of local growth adjoin the settlement, managing environment and landscape issues.
Summary of Screening opinion	
Assessor:	Tom Evans, Neighbourhood Planning Manager
Date of assessment	December 2019
Conclusion of	SEA is not required
Reason for conclusion	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose to allocate specific sites for future development, and promotes criteria based policies that seek to shape future development proposals, on a small scale basis, that reduce and manage impact on the environment (both natural and built).</p> <p>Designated sites within the neighbourhood area: There are no European Sites within the neighbourhood area and one within 15km of it.</p> <p>There are Sites of Biological Interest and Ancient Woodland within the neighbourhood area and adjoin its boundary to the south east.</p> <p>Designated heritage assets within the neighbourhood area: There are 3 conservation areas, 26 Grade II listed buildings, 1 grade 1 Listed Building and 1 Grade II* Listed building, alongside 2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 11 locally listed buildings within the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>Flood Risk zones within the neighbourhood area: Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 are present to the northern boundary of the neighbourhood area, (see appendix E) .</p> <p>Effect on the Environment: The neighbourhood plan does not introduce new policy that enables a significant effect on the environment to be implemented. As a lower tier plan all development proposals will be subject to assessment against the NP and higher tier policies, plans and legislation that seek to protect locally, nationally and internationally designated sites. The CELPS sets the strategic development framework for Alderley Edge, including broad levels of growth appropriate to rural areas, and has been tested through integrated SEA to ensure the effect of this growth is acceptable in environmental terms. The AENDP does not propose additional growth at a significant scale beyond that already accepted in the CELPS, nor does it include specific proposals of a scale or intent large enough or with an impact significant enough, that would lead to additional significant effects on the environment or designated sites. The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are criteria based and seek to safeguard existing assets and the plan does not introduce policies which would significantly change the status of land beyond the planning framework in place, therefore SEA is not required.</p>
Statutory Consultee	Summary of Comments
English Heritage	SEA not required
Environment Agency	SEA not required
Natural England	SEA not required

2.1 Plan Context

For the purposes of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) Settlement Hierarchy, Alderley Edge falls within the category of 'Local Service Centre'. Policies PG1 and PG2 of the CELPS set out the preferred development strategy and distribution of development for the Borough. The distribution of future development in the Borough is intended to be focused on the Key Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield and the 9 Key Service Centres. The LSC areas are anticipated to accommodate a small scale development to meet needs and priorities.

The parish area is covered by Policy PG6 Open Countryside which generally restricts development in the countryside but does also identify development which would be considered acceptable. The parish is also located in an area covered by Green Belt Policy PG3 that introduces further restrictions on development in the area.

Alderley Edge is set within the Green Belt and, via the emerging SADPD, is proposed to be subject to a settlement boundary defining the extent of the urban area.

The CELPS outlines that a modest growth in housing and employment will be supported in LSCs and identifies a need to deliver some 3500 homes and 7ha of employment land.

The Plan area contains important natural habitats and waterbodies, a variety of heritage assets and has been the subject of locally limited new residential development.

The Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Development Plan (AENDP) does not allocate specific sites for development and instead identifies a series of criteria based policies against which development proposals should be assessed within the neighbourhood area. Such criteria are designed to ensure the delivery of sustainable development to meet the objectives of the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan.

Planning applications within the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Area (AENA) will be assessed against the policies in the AENDP, saved development plan policies and other material planning considerations, including the recently adopted CELPS.

No assessment of potential development sites has been undertaken as part of the AENDP process.

2.2 Aims of the Plan:

The AENDP document sets out a vision for the parish and what the neighbourhood plan should achieve. The vision for Alderley Edge is:

To promote the evolution and growth of Alderley Edge, whilst preserving our unique village culture, identity and character and protecting the quality of life and well-being of the residents, employers, employees, and other stakeholders.

2.3 Objectives

In order to deliver the vision, the AENDP has set out a series of objectives on housing,

2.4 Designated sites within the neighbourhood area:

There are no European Designated Sites within the Neighbourhood Area itself and one (SAC) within 15km of it.

2.5 Policies

The AENDP contains a number of policies that will be used to ensure the delivery of the vision and objectives and guide individual development management decisions. An assessment of these policies impact on European Sites has been carried out and concludes that no likely adverse impact will arise. The full assessment and table of policies is included at Table 3 below.

The following sections assess whether the plan requires SEA due to its content and whether it is likely to give rise to a significant effect on designated sites or the environment.

3.0 Screening Assessment

3.1 Assessment 1: Does the Neighbourhood Plan require a SEA?

Stage	Y/N	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))	Y	The preparation and adoption of the NP is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The NP will be prepared by Alderley Edge Parish Council (as the 'relevant body') and will be 'made' by Cheshire East Council as the local authority. The preparation of NPs is subject to the various regulations including: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and The Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012.
		GO TO STAGE 2
2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	Whilst the NP is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will if 'made', form part of the Development Plan for the Borough. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.
		GO TO STAGE 3
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))	Y	The NP is being prepared for town and country planning, local transport and land use as it makes proposals to manage the development of land for housing and employment uses. As such, the NP contains a framework for future development consent of urban development projects (listed as 10(b) in Annex II of the EIA Directive). The NP does not specifically allocate any land for development purposes.
		GO TO STAGE 5
4. Will the NP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))	N	No, the policies in the plan are criteria based and unlikely to directly affect designated sites.
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)	Y	The NP intends to support local development for residential and employment/commercial use through criteria based policies. There is therefore the potential for an effect on the environment resulting from policies in the plan. However, policies are criteria based and do not instigate changes to land use directly. Additionally The Neighbourhood Plan sits within the wider framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan strategy and the saved policies of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan 2004, therefore the Neighbourhood Plan will help to set the framework for projects that are localised in nature and are likely to have limited resource implications.
		GO TO STAGE 8
6. Does the NP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Y	Yes, the NP contributes to establishing a local policy framework within which planning consent will be considered for a wide range of development proposals. Whilst the NP may establish very local criteria to enable development within criteria based parameters, higher tier policies, plans and legislation exist to ensure that the NP is used within a framework with sufficient protection for environmental considerations.
7. Is the NP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget plan or programme, OR is it co- financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art. 3.8, 3.9)	N	The NP does not fall into any of the criteria listed.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)	N	See Assessment 2: Likely significant effects on the environment
On the basis of criterion 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 above, it is necessary to assess whether the neighbourhood plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This assessment is undertaken through Assessment 2 below.		

3.2 Assessment 2: Is the Neighbourhood Plan likely to have a Significant Effects on the Environment?

The EIA Regulations include thresholds under which development proposals are not required to be screened to determine whether an EIA should be required. These are:

- The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwelling house development
- The development includes more than 150 dwellings
- The overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.

Under these thresholds there is no obligation to screen urban development projects for EIA.

The neighbourhood plan does not include more than 1 hectare of non-residential development; it does not allocate sites for more than 150 dwellings and the Plan contains no proposals to develop an area that exceed 5 hectares.

Whilst these tests do not apply to plan-making they are useful as a bench-mark for comparison. The AENDP does not exceed any of the thresholds identified in the EIA regulations and it is therefore reasonable to suggest that the effects of the plan on the environment, in general, cannot be significant.

However there may be specific features or special characteristics in this location upon which the plan may have a significant effect. It is therefore important to understand if there is any specific reason the plan could be considered to give rise to a significant effect on the environment. Using Schedule 1 of the SEA regulations, the following assessment has been undertaken to determine if there is any other reason why the AENDP may give rise to a significant effect on the environment.

Issue	Effect?	Reasons
Biodiversity	1. No significant effect	Whilst there are locally significant assets present, the neighbourhood plan, alongside existing policy held in the CELPS and the wider Development Plan provides sufficient protection. No proposed policies are likely to give rise to a substantially negative impact on biodiversity and natural assets.
Population	1. No significant effect	Alderley Edge Parish has a population of 4,780 people (2011 Census). 27.8% of people are aged between 45 and 64 which may lead to a demand in the future for accommodation for more suitable for an elderly population. Outside of committed sites there is no allocated land for residential development that may accommodate future housing need locally within the neighbourhood area.
Human health	1. No significant effect	Housing is a key detriment of human health. On a limited basis, the plan seeks to provide housing suitable for the local population which would result in a positive effect on human health and enable older residents to downsize within their community, and first time buyers and families to access suitable housing contributing to well being. The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Alderley Edge (Chelford ward) shows the population here is generally in good health with least deprived areas). The Joint Strategic Needs assessment for Alderley Edge (Chelford ward) shows the population here is generally in good health with notable indicators related to aging population over 65, emergency admission for children 0-4 and new cases of breast cancer. The neighbourhood plan introduces positive criteria based policies to assist in delivering the type of development that will contribute in addressing some of these issues through protecting recreation and leisure assets in particular, however the policies included are unlikely to have a significant effect beyond the local area.
Fauna	1. No significant effect	There are Sites of Biological Interest and areas of Ancient Woodland within the neighbourhood area. Identified sites are subject to existing protection. The neighbourhood plan seeks to protect existing assets and does not introduce policies that are likely to harm local fauna.
Flora	1. No significant effect	There are Sites of Biological Interest and areas of Ancient Woodland within the neighbourhood area. Identified sites are subject to existing protection. The neighbourhood plan seeks to protect existing assets and does not introduce policies that are likely to harm local fauna.
Soil	1. No significant effect	Agricultural land classification grade three is present within the neighbourhood area. No development is proposed in the neighbourhood plan that would give rise to the development of best and most versatile agricultural land.
Water	1. No significant effect	Flood zones two and three are present within the neighbourhood area. The policies proposed are unlikely to exert a significant impact on the existing approach to development in areas of flooding, and flooding issues are addressed by the wider development plan/other legislation.
Air	1. No significant effect	There are no air quality management areas within the neighbourhood area. The plan is unlikely to significantly impact this issue.
Material assets	1. No significant effect	There is one area of historic landfill within the neighbourhood area, to the north of the area outside the settlement. The policies in the plan do not address such issues and are therefore unlikely to result in a significant effect on the environment. No other material assets are present.
Landscape	1. No significant effect	AENDP emerging policies seek to ensure that new development does not harm locally valued landscape features and the countryside.
Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	1. No significant effect	There are 3 conservation area, 26 Grade II listed buildings, 1 grade 1 Listed Building and 1 Grade II* Listed building, alongside 2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 11 locally listed buildings within the neighbourhood area, some of which may be directly affected by new development across the Plan period. If necessary, the usual mitigation measures will be required to be adhered to through the implementation of planning permission and therefore it is reasonable to respect that the effect of development on these structures and their settings will be addressed by other parts of the planning system. Policies in the Development Plan will continue to apply to heritage matters and therefore neighbourhood plan policies overall are unlikely to enable the delivery of new development which would not already be possible under the existing local framework. As such the NP policies are unlikely to have a significant effect on heritage assets directly or on the approach taken to heritage assets in the development planning process.

3.3 Determining whether the AENDP is likely to have a significant effect on Designated Sites

Alderley Edge NP Objective	Alderley Edge NP Policy	Effect on European Designation
To improve the environment of Alderley Edge and the experience for all those who live, work, or visit Alderley Edge both now and in the future.	All	
To support new housing development that maintains and enhances the culture, identity, and character of Alderley Edge, and meets the local need and supports a balanced community.	Draft Policy AE1: Alderley Edge Development Strategy	1C. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE2: Design, Scale and Type of New Housing	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE3: Sustainable Housing Design	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE4: Rear Carden and Backland Development	1A. No negative effect
To deliver a strong, competitive economy that maximises the strength and role of existing large businesses in the village and supports start-ups, and small and independent businesses, providing the right conditions to grow.	Draft Policy AE5: Encouraging Entrepreneurship	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE6: Supporting Existing Businesses	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE7: Encouraging Visitor Support for Local Businesses	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE8: Supporting a Vibrant Village Centre	1A. No negative effect
To ensure that green space, surrounding Green Belt, and other natural assets are preserved for the enjoyment of present and future generations.	Draft Policy AE3: Sustainable Housing Design	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE4: Rear Carden and Backland Development	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE9: Landscape Character and Access	1B. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE10: Local Green Spaces	1B. No negative effect
To ensure the local historic character and rural heritage of Alderley Edge is protected and enhanced while meeting 21st century needs.	Draft Policy AE3: Sustainable Housing Design	1B. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE11: Protecting and Enhancing the Conservation Area and adjacent areas	1B. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE12: Local and Historic Character	1B. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE13: Key Views and Townscape	1B. No negative effect
To create a safe pedestrian and cycle friendly environment with easy access for all users throughout. To work in partnership with transport providers for improvements to public transport whilst addressing	Draft Policy AE3: Sustainable Housing Design	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE14: Sustainable Transport Routes	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE15: Promoting Accessibility to Public Transport	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE16: Supporting the provision of additional parking	1A. No negative effect

parking constraints and this will be achieved through NOP Policies AE3, AE14, AE15, AE16, AE17 and AE18.	spaces at Ryleys Lane car park which is adjacent to the Park to Improve car parking facilities in Alderley Edge	
	Draft Policy AE17: Car Parking	1A. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE18: The Station Gateway	1A. No negative effect
To retain, and provide new, community facilities that will meet the changing needs of a growing community and mitigate the impacts of new growth.	Draft Policy AE19: Protecting and Enhancing Local Community Facilities	1C. No negative effect
	Draft Policy AE20: Chorley Hall Playing Fields	1C. No negative effect

Category	Description
1A. No negative effect	Policy will not lead to development. For example it relates to design or other qualitative criteria, or it is not a land-use planning policy.
1B. No negative effect	Policy intended to conserve or enhance the nature, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a European Site.
1C. No negative effect	Policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through other policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Sites and associated sensitive areas.
1D. No negative effect	Policy is similar to, or compliant with, The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy policy which has been assessed as having no negative effects by a HRA/SA.
2. No significant effect	No significant effect either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, because effects are trivial, minimal or mitigated through other policies in combination.
3. Likely significant effect alone	Policy could indirectly affect a European Site, because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development that may be very close to it, or ecologically, hydrologically or physically connected to it, or it may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressure.
4. Likely significant effects in combination	The policy alone would not be likely to have significant effects but if the effects are combined with the effects of other policies or proposals provided for or coordinated by the relevant plans or projects the cumulative effects would be likely to be significant.

3.4 Assessment 2: Is the Neighbourhood Plan likely to have a Significant Effects on the Environment?

Characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan, having regard to:	Cheshire East Council assessment	Likely significant effect?
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.	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. The NP is expected to determine the use of small areas at a local level and sits within the wider framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the CEC Local Plan Strategy (2017), the emerging Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (2019) and the 'saved' Local Plan policies contained within the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan 2004. The projects for which this NP helps to set a framework are localised in nature but may have limited resource implications.	N
The degree to which the Plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The NP must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. The policies within the NP should also be in general conformity with any strategic 'saved' Local Plan policies held within the Macclesfield LP, and CELPS Strategic Policies. The CELPS is being prepared in two stages and because Alderley Edge Parish falls within the Local Service Centre category, the detailed policy framework for this tier of settlement is yet to be fully developed and therefore the conclusions reached in the NP may exert a limited degree of influence over the formation of future strategic and non-strategic policies in the Development Plan. However, the scope to depart from conclusions reached in the NP remains available to plan makers addressing issues relevant to this location.	N
The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The NP is expected to work to protect and enhance the natural environment of the area within a wider policy framework including, but not limited to the NPPF, the saved policies of the Development Plan for Cheshire East Council and the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, alongside the emerging SADPD. The NP addresses a series of local environmental issues. In combination with other plans and legislation, it is considered that the NP will integrate environmental considerations and promote sustainable development but may also give rise to a limited, but positive effect on the environment through implementation of policies that protect the countryside and habitats.	N
Environmental problems relevant to the Plan.	There are no identified environmental problems relevant to the Plan. Where relevant, future development proposals will need to consider the impact of the plan on flood risk, designated sites and other primary and secondary impacts on the environment.	N

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, although it will need to take the impact of the Water Framework Directive into account.	N
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects of the Plan.	Whilst development may take place which is informed by the NP, the NP does not assist in instigating development directly through allocation of specific sites. There are therefore likely to be short-term effects resulting from activity associated with the development of small scale, un-allocated sites within the AENA, but not as a direct result of policies in the NP.	N
	There may also be longer-term effects relevant to changes in land use which may be positive but on a limited scale may have a negative impact on environmental factors. The plan seeks to establish a local framework to address such issues and also relies on higher tier plans and policies to deliver mitigation of such negative impacts.	N
	Where proposals are received to develop small scale sites in accordance with draft NP policies, such proposals will also be subject to national and local policies in regard to environmental protection and mitigation of impacts. The plan does not deviate from such guidance.	N
The cumulative nature of the effects of the Plan.	Whilst the NP references allocations to be undertaken as part of the emerging SADPD process, it does not seek to bring forward allocation of small scale sites that are not specifically detailed in the Cheshire East LPS or already have planning permission granted. Given the limited levels of growth supported in the plan, cumulative effects of development are likely to be limited. The plan contains policies that seek to enhance protection for a series of local environmental assets, in these cases there may be a positive cumulative effect on protecting such assets, however given the presence of other policies related to such matters, the effect is not considered to be significant.	N
The trans-boundary nature of the effects of the Plan.	The plan is limited in geographic extent and its policies and proposals are localized seeking to manage, rather than implement change. Therefore there are not expected to be any significant trans-boundary effects.	N
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	There are no identified significant risks to human health in the plan area and the plan does not support policies or programs that are likely to give rise to such risks. Indeed, the NP is likely to improve human health through positive assertions on protection of natural assets and sustainable transport.	N
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) by the Plan.	Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan covers the parish of Alderley Edge Parish. The NP is likely to affect a resident population of approximately 4708 people over the life of the Plan across a parish located in a mainly rural area. The population within the parish is expected to experience limited population growth associated with recently consent residential development.	N

The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the Plan due to: Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or intensive land use	The neighbourhood area contains a number of important cultural, natural and environmental assets both within and adjacent to the plan area however the limited levels of development supported, and existence of other mitigating policies is likely to minimise impact here. The NP sets out to deliver new development within a framework supportive of small scale development, implemented sensitively to preserve and enhance local natural, environmental and heritage assets. Given that the Borough is generally rural in nature, and Alderley Edge Parish is predominantly a rural parish with many biodiversity assets and natural habitats, most proposed development will have an impact on the environment in the wider sense, and in some cases in a specific, locationally based sense that cannot yet be identified or assessed until the location of development is proposed. Higher tier policies exist to offer adequate protection to the existing natural, cultural and environmental assets within and adjacent to the plan area.	N
	The draft NP does not exceed environmental quality standards or limit values.	N
	Specific sites are not identified for development and therefore no assessment has been undertaken in regard to intensive use of land. Future development proposals will be assessed against other policies within the Development Plan (which, in totality, should mitigate against the over-development of land).	N
The effects of the Plan on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status.	There are Sites of Biological Interest, and areas of Ancient Woodland within and immediately adjacent to the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Area. Policies are included in the Plan which seek to preserve and protect biodiversity and habitats.	N
	The plan area does not include designated landscapes however introduces policies that address landscapes that may be locally sensitive to development.	N
	The location of these sites within the neighbourhood plan area makes their presence relevant however the limited levels of growth and absence if identified locations of sites do not give rise to a significant impact to the environment.	N
Assessment 2 Conclusion	The AENDP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.	Directive does not require SEA

4.0 Screening Conclusion

The Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan includes policies that support small scale development at a scale in conformity with the approach taken by the CELPS. It introduces criteria based policies (which are yet to be finalised) that address local issues but which do not alter the status of land to a degree which would have a significant effect on the environment.

There are no designated sites of European significance within the neighbourhood area and one within 15km proximity of the plan. The AENDP also seeks to ensure that any new development is addressed sensitively in the context of evidence prepared in relation to natural, heritage and landscape assets thus incorporating environmental protection in general and at specific designated locations.

Given the above and the absence of sites within the plan area, the assessment therefore concludes that the AENDP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment or on designated sites and therefore HRA and SEA are not required.

4.1 Monitoring of AENDP Policies

Whilst Alderley Edge Parish Council is committed to the delivery of the objectives held within the AENDP, there may be circumstances where development will not come forward entirely as anticipated. Cheshire East Council, as part of its monitoring of the Development Plan, including this neighbourhood plan, monitor performance through a Monitoring Report produced annually. The AENDP will also be monitored through this process. Generally, the outcome of the monitoring process will inform whether specific intervention actions should be pursued in the AENDP. If these actions fail to address under performance then other complementary plans and strategies should be reviewed.

5.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Responses from Statutory Consultees:

1. Historic England:

Dear Mr Evans

ALDERLEY EDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Historic England is the Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment in England. We are a non-departmental public body established under the National Heritage Act 1983 and sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). We champion and protect England's historic places, providing expert advice to local planning authorities, developers, owners and communities to help ensure our historic environment is properly understood, enjoyed and cared for.

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the above document. At this stage we have no comments to make on its content.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Boyle

2. Environment Agency:

Dear Sir

Alderley Edge Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion

Thank you for requesting a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening opinion from us on 20th December 2019 for the Alderley Edge Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan.

Environment Agency Position

We have screened the proposals based on the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive.

In view of the fact that the plan does not allocate land for development, and there are no European Designated sites within the area, we do not consider there to be significant environmental effects for those issues within our remit. Therefore we do not consider that an SEA is required.

We look forward to the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan in due course.

Yours faithfully

Jeni Templeman
Sustainable Places Advisor

3. Natural England:

Dear Tom

Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan - Request for Screening Opinion

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 20 January 2020 which was received by Natural England on 20 January 2020

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance. The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

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

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

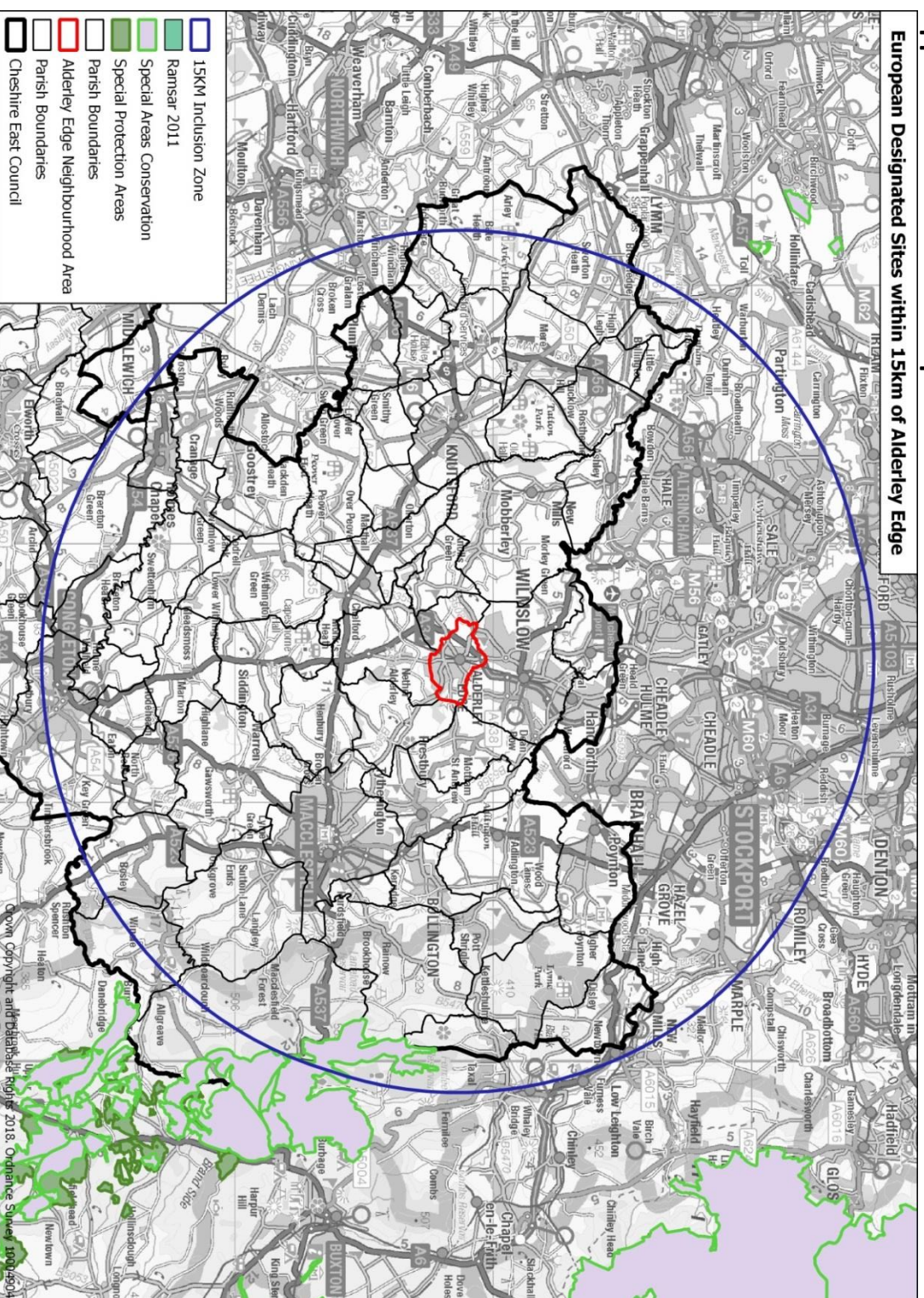
We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected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

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

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

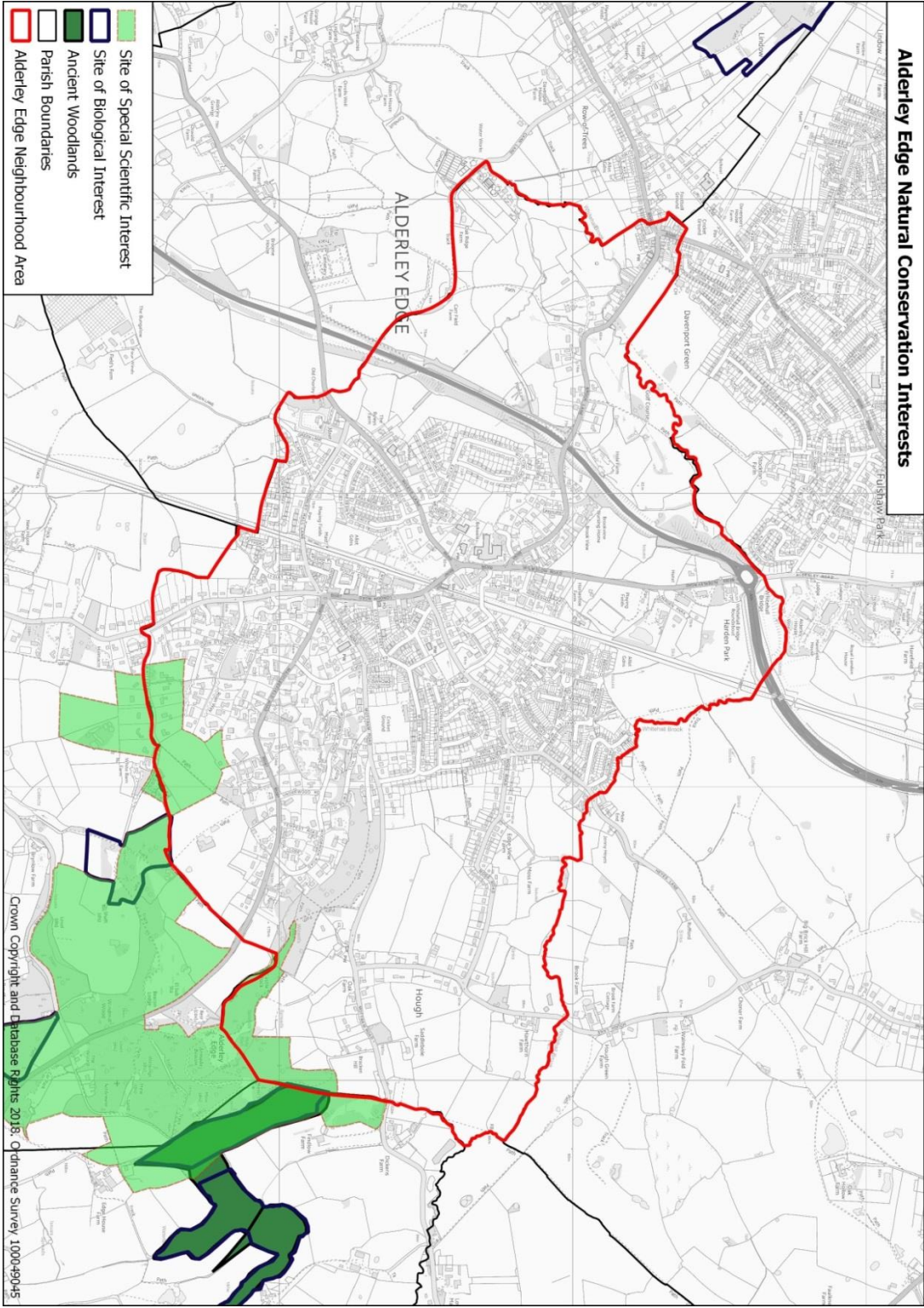
Yours sincerely
Jacqui Salt
Consultations Team

Appendix B: Location of Alderley Sites

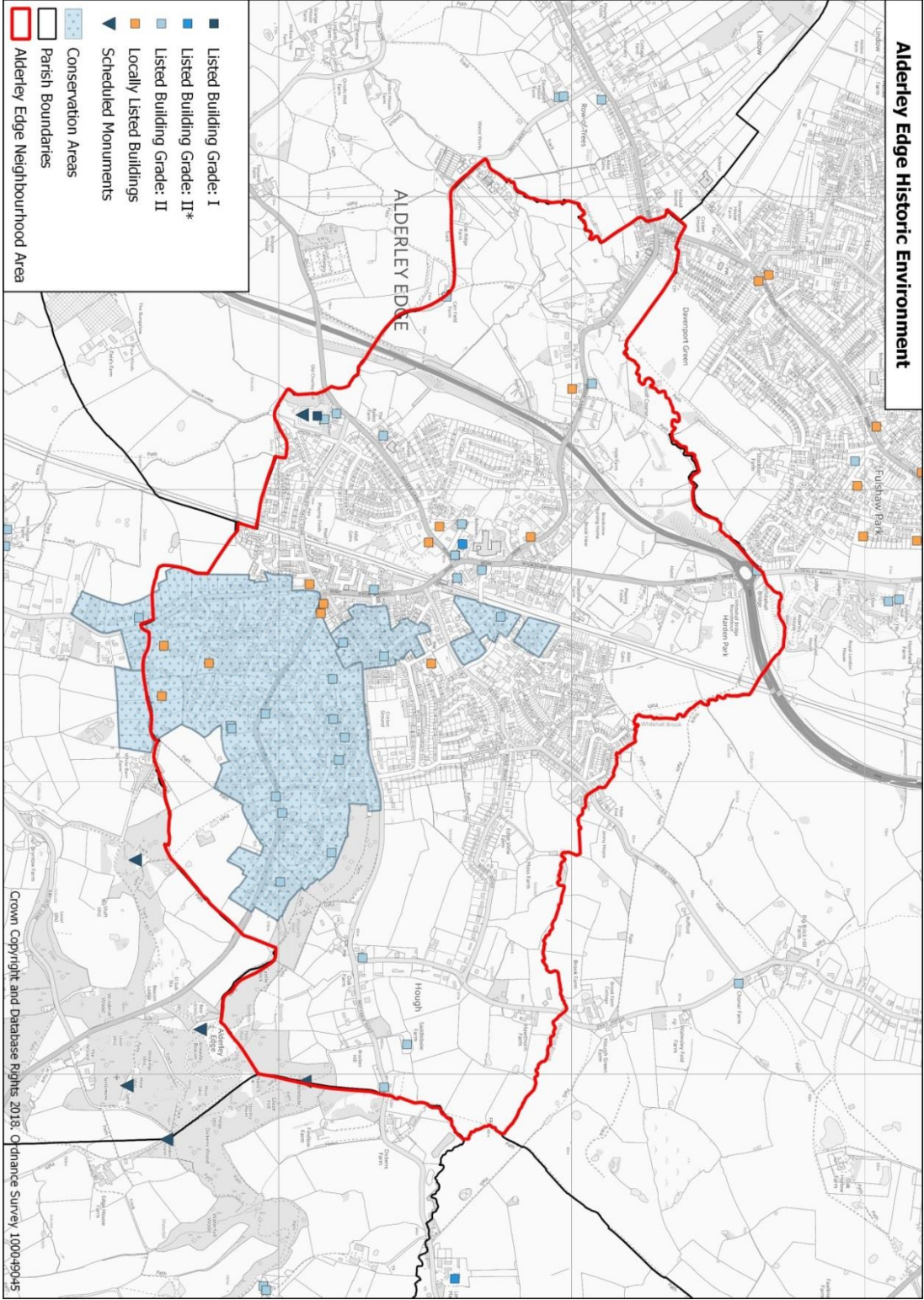


Appendix C: Local Environmental Designations

Alderley Edge Natural Conservation Interests



Appendix D: Designated and Non-Designated Historic Assets



Appendix E: Flood Risk

Alderley Edge Flood Risk Zones

