

Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan



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

February 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 Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan 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 Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan will set out planning policies for the Abbots Langley 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 Three Rivers 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:

'In 2038, Abbots Langley is a predominantly semi-rural parish, its main settlements surrounded by Green Belt. Abbots Langley Village itself is a thriving destination, capitalising on increasing numbers of visitors to the parish and providing a range of shopping and eating opportunities as well as leisure activities. The historic core remains, and new developments reflect the local character of the area to maintain the village feel with sufficient local facilities to meet the primary retail, healthcare, child education and leisure/sport activities for local residents. The Abbots Langley Village Centre has been improved following the proposals of the Masterplan for this area.

Visitors are attracted by the continued presence of the Warner Bros. Studios, which has been expanded to provide additional facilities and opportunities for local employment. Additionally, the regeneration along the Grand Union Canal has encourage more canal traffic, and increased footfall in the village centre.

The development of smaller and more affordable properties, in-keeping with the local area, has enabled first time buyers and new families to move into the area, bringing renewed energy to the area and a perpetuation of local events and activities. Older people in the area have the opportunity to downsize to more manageable properties, freeing up homes for growing families. These families are

attracted to the area because of the excellent schools, which have expanded to meet the local need and are more accessible with improved links east-west through the parish.

New homes have been designed sustainably to reduce their impact on the environment. Opportunities to enable people to work from home, should they wish, combined with the retention of a series of global businesses, has meant that fewer people are commuting out as jobs and training are available locally. Those that are commuting find it easier to get to Kings Langley station as the public transport, pedestrian and cycle access have been improved. Public transport services should be well maintained particularly local train services at Kings Langley Station.

The growing community's needs are well-met with an expanded medical centre as a District Health Hub, new playgrounds and leisure facilities and the ongoing resource offered by the Henderson Hub. The green spaces across the parish, well-linked by footpaths and cycle-paths, enable locals to enjoy the countryside on their doorstep. Equally these areas provide a haven for wildlife and native plants, increasing local biodiversity.

The parish has been able to install additional electric vehicle charging points at key locations and at new developments. A local car sharing scheme/ on-demand public transport /shared taxis services have reduced the need for multiple car-owning households and on-street residential parking pressures. This, in combination with the planting of trees and vegetation along the main routes, has helped to reduce the air and noise pollution. Houses have been well insulated and implemented alternative heating systems with less dependence on fossil fuels.

The community is more balanced in the age groups living here.'

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

- Objective 1: Ensure that new developments are sustainably sited and contribute to both the local housing needs of the parish while helping to deliver the district-wide housing requirement, including more affordable housing (of all types) as well as housing that addresses the needs of residents of all ages.
- Objective 2: Ensure new development reflects the high-quality local context in terms of building style and materials and is sensitively designed to be attractive, to minimise flood risk, mitigate climate change, promote biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint.
- Objective 3: Strengthen, support and promote local economic activity in all retail, industrial, commercial and professional activities and maximise opportunities for tourism including the regeneration of the Grand Union Canal.
- Objective 4: Protect both historic and the environmental assets of the parish, preserving the green setting of the settlements and the individual green spaces within them, ensuring that they are linked to create wildlife corridors. Maintain as much as possible, the five distinctive statutory purposes of Green Belt

policies in the Parish.

- Objective 5: Ensure that the provision of local infrastructure and facilities including expanded primary health care facilities and sufficient school places to address the needs of existing and future residents.
- Objective 6: Improve sustainable transport and movement across the parish, in particular through electric vehicle modes, on-demand services and public transport, specifically ensuring there is a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists as well as motorists.
- Objective 7: Explore the potential for viable renewable energy projects locally, serving and ideally owned by the local community.
- Objective 8: Encourage the production of local food including local farms, horticulture, community projects and private gardens/allotments.

## 1.3 The Three Rivers District Council Local Plan

The adopted Local Plan consists of three main documents: a Core Strategy Development Plan Document Development Plan Document (DPD), a Development Management Policies DPD and a Site Allocations Local Development Document (LDD). The content of these relevant to Abbots Langley is outlined in the corresponding sub-sections.

### 1.3.1 The Core Strategy DPD (2011)

The adopted Three Rivers Core Strategy contains the current strategic planning policy for the District and thus the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area. The Core Strategy 2011 includes a number of policies related to a strategy for growth in the District, the delivery of growth and the provision of infrastructure. A Sustainability Appraisal was carried out for the Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy categorises the various settlements within the Neighbourhood Plan area as follows:

- Abbots Langley – Key Centre
- Leavesden (the western / north-western part of the settlement is within the Neighbourhood Plan area) – Key Centre
- Kings Langley (the eastern part of the settlement to the east of the river is within the Neighbourhood Plan area) – Secondary Centre
- Bedmond - Village

The Core Strategy's Spatial Strategy identifies that new development will be directed towards previously developed land (including surplus employment land) and appropriate infilling opportunities within the urban areas of the Principal Town (Rickmansworth) and Key Centres, as the most sustainable locations in the District. More limited new development will take place on previously developed land (including surplus employment land) and appropriate infilling opportunities within the Secondary Centres, recognising that such settlements are not generally as sustainable as the Principal Town and 'Key Centres'

however do provide some access to services and facilities and are generally close to larger settlements. Some growth will help to sustain the vitality and viability of these settlements. Limited development to meet local needs will take place in the villages of Bedmond and Sarratt, recognising the need to sustain these more rural areas.

Policy PSP2 – Development in the Key Centres (South Oxhey, Croxley Green, Abbots Langley, Chorleywood, Leavesden and Garston and Mill End) sets out that such settlements will provide approximately 60% of the District’s housing requirements over the Plan period on sites predominantly within the urban area, on previously developed land. Improvements specific to Abbots Langley and Leavesden (those parts within the Neighbourhood Plan area) include:

- Recognise that the former Leavesden Aerodrome site which includes the nationally important film studios is anticipated to be significant in meeting needs for housing and employment through mixed use redevelopment. Specific proposals for the site will be included in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
- Maintain and enhance primary and secondary shopping frontages within Abbots Langley, Chorleywood and South Oxhey District Shopping Centres and the Local Shopping Centre at Croxley Green to meet needs from existing and new housing development and to enable Key Centres to be sufficient in meeting local daily needs.
- Provide for a modest extension of retail floorspace within the Key Centres where opportunities arise in accordance with the Retail Capacity Study.
- Conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness of the Key Centres, particularly the historic cores of Abbots Langley, Croxley Green and Chorleywood.
- Improve provision of, and access to, services and facilities, to meet future demands, specifically through:
  - Highway improvements to A41 and surroundings in relation to Leavesden Aerodrome.
  - Improvements to bus services to and from Leavesden area including to the shuttle service from Leavesden Aerodrome to Watford Junction Station.
  - Improve the range of youth facilities in all Key Centres.
  - Improve facilities and accessibility at Leavesden Country Park.
  - Improve outdoor leisure facilities for residents of Abbots Langley.
  - Provide additional neighbourhood policing and facilities in the Abbots Langley area.
  - Expansion of existing schools and/or provision of new schools meet identified needs in the Key Centres.

Policy PSP3 - Development in Secondary Centres (Kings Langley, Carpenders Park, Eastbury, Maple Cross, Moor Park, Oxhey Hall) sets out that such settlements shall provide approximately 24% of the District’s residential growth needs whilst also maintaining and enhancing employment opportunities. Improvements specific to the part of Kings Langley

that is located within the Neighbourhood Plan area include:

- Recognise Kings Langley as a cross boundary village shared with Dacorum Borough Council which therefore requires a co-ordinated approach between the two authorities in planning for the future of the village.
- Improve provision of access to services and facilities, to meet future demands, specifically through:
  - Traffic management improvements to the C76 between Kings Langley Station and Barnacres Lane (in Dacorum Borough) and to the A412 (Denham Way) in Maple Cross
  - Improvement of bus services from Kings Langley Employment Area to Key Centres in District
  - Improvement of parking and cycling facilities at Kings Langley, Moor Park and Carpenders Park stations
  - Expansion of existing schools and/or provision of new schools meet identified needs in the Secondary Centres.

Policy PSP4 – Development in Villages (Bedmond, Sarratt) sets out that development in Villages will be strictly controlled in order to protect the character, landscape, heritage and wildlife of the wider countryside, and the openness of the Green Belt. Some limited small-scale development in or on the edge of the villages in order to meet local community and business needs is considered appropriate. Regarding housing, this would amount to approximately 1% of the District’s housing requirements over the Local Plan period. Improvements specific to Bedmond include:

- Traffic management improvements to the C77 (Bedmond Road).
- Extending provision at Bedmond Sports and Social Club site, Toms Lane, to
- include facilities for young people.

### 1.3.2 The Development Management Policies DPD (2013)

The Development Management Policies Local Development Document (LDD) sets out the criteria against which all planning applications in the District will be considered, including those settlements and the countryside areas of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area. The Council considers these policies will enable the long term vision for Three Rivers set out in the Core Strategy.

### 1.3.3 The Site Allocations LDD (2014)

The Site Allocations LDD supports the delivery of the Core Strategy. It allocates specific sites to meet needs for housing, employment, education, shopping and open spaces in Three Rivers. The LDD allocates land for development purposes within the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area across five sites at a combined quantum of approximately 565 dwellings. The LDD also allocates one site in Leavesden for 30 dwellings, and one site in Kings Langley for 100 dwellings. No potential residential allocations are included within

Bedmond.

## 1.4 The Emerging Three Rivers Local Plan

Three Rivers District Council is preparing a new Local Plan that will set out a vision and policy framework for the future levels of growth within the District up until 2038.

At the time of writing, the Local Plan is at the 'Regulation 18 Preferred Policy Options' stage, which includes sites for potential allocation. A consultation on the 'Local Plan Regulation 18 Preferred Policy Options and Sites for Potential Allocation' documents ran from June 2021 to August 2021.

The emerging Local Plan seeks a continuation of the Settlement Hierarchy as adopted, and the broad spatial / distribution strategy of growth as the adopted Core Strategy. The emerging Local Plan proposes potential development allocations, expressed as options within Abbots Langley, Leavesden, Kings Langley and Bedmond. In Abbots Langley 13-14 sites have been proposed, with a further 2-3 identified within Kings Langley, and an additional 3 in Bedmond.

## 2. Legislative Background

### 2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 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 Abbots Langley 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 Abbots Langley 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 Abbots Langley 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 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 or 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 Abbots Langley 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 Abbots Langley 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 Abbots Langley 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 development is established for both Abbots Langley as a ‘Key Centre’ in the District, Leavesden and Kings Langley, both ‘Secondary Centres’ and also the ‘Village’ of Bedmond within the adopted Three Rivers Local Plan’s settlement hierarchy. The emerging Three Rivers Local Plan similarly allows for development to come forward in the Key Centres, Secondary Centres, and villages however does not identify a dwelling threshold applicable for the Neighbourhood Plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>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. It is assumed that allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan area will be included within the emerging Three Rivers Local Plan. These allocations would be required, if 'made' in advance of the adoption of the Local Plan, to accord with the policy requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan.</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 particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</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 ensuring environmental considerations will be integrated into any forthcoming development within the Plan area. These are:</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>• Policy AL11: Natural Landscape and Rural Character</li> <li>• Policy AL12: Green Infrastructure and Development</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>
Environmental problems relevant to the plan area	<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>• The Plan area is within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZs) of several SSSIs that are outside the Plan area. Development proposals within IRZs are required to be consulted on with Natural England, should they be of a type or size that could warrant negative effects on the relevant SSSI.</li> <li>• As a result of this, in many areas of the Plan area any residential developments with a total net gain in residential units would require consultation with Natural England at the planning application stage.</li> <li>• A number of Priority habitats (from the Priority</li> </ul>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>Habitat Inventory<sup>1)</sup> are scattered throughout the Plan area. These include Traditional Orchard, Open Mosaic Habitat, Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland, Ancient Replanted Woodland, Deciduous Woodland, Broadleaved Woodland, Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Good quality semi-improved grassland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are approximately 73 listed buildings within the Plan area, most of which are Grade II.</li> <li>• Of these listed buildings, there exists the Grade I listed Church of St Lawrence the Martyr in Abbots Langley.</li> <li>• Also with the Plan area are approximately five Grade II* listed buildings.</li> <li>• There are two Conservation Areas within the Plan area; Abbots Langley, and Hunton Bridge.</li> <li>• The entirety of the plan area is within various Source Protection Zones (SPZs). 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. Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, there lie areas of Zone I (Inner Protection Zone), Zone II (Outer Protection Zone) and Zone III (Total Catchment).</li> <li>• Land within Flood Risk Zones 3 and 2 exists within the Neighbourhood Plan area at its western boundary. This is associated with the River Gage.</li> <li>• The non-developed areas of the Plan area, and those also not in non-agricultural use, are</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> a spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>Grade 3 ('good to moderate') soils. Grade 2 soil represents the best and most versatile soil within the wider District context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The entirety of the non-developed parts of the Plan area are designated as within the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB).</li> <li>• The Plan area is located within both the Northern Thames Basin, and Chilterns National Character Areas (NCAs).</li> <li>• The Northern Thames Basin NCA is characterised as having a diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.</li> <li>• The Chilterns NCA is characterised as having enclosed views within branching valleys, sunken routeways and extensive woodland and hedgerow-enclosed fields. Ancient woodland has remained on extensive clay-with-flint deposits. There are not inconsiderable areas of Grade 1 and 2 land that are associated with lower-lying areas and river valleys.</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 includes Policy AL11: Natural Landscape and Rural Character and Policy AL12: Green Infrastructure and Development which set out protection objectives and priorities for biodiversity improvements in the Plan area and the impact of development proposals on the local environment, such as securing biodiversity net gain.</p> <p>The Plan area is within the IRZs of several SSSIs not within the Plan area. Any planning applications coming forward within the plan area may require consultation with Natural England should they be of a size or type that meets specific conditions. Nevertheless, the Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes that could potentially conflict with any such requirements.</p> <p>The HRA element of this Screening Report, due to the content of the Plan, there will be no likely significant effects on the designated features of Habitats sites 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 AL14: Protection and Maintenance of Local Green Spaces which designates existing green 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</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	warrant a strategic assessment through SEA.
<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 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>Numerous and various areas of Priority Habitat exist within the plan area. The Plan seeks to protect and enhance existing biodiversity assets in the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>In addition to the Plan’s policies that seek the protection and enhancement of flora, the Three Rivers Local Plan policies apply relevant to such matters and the minimisation of effects. 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 3 (‘good to moderate’) soils. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development purposes, and encourages the use of previously developed land in the first instance. There are no identified negative implications surrounding soil quality as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan.</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>Water</li> </ul>	<p>Land within Source Protection Zones I, II and III makes up the entirety of the Plan area. Source Protection Zones (SPZs) respond to sources such as wells, boreholes and springs 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 identifies that the Plan area lies outside the IRZ for water sensitive Habitat sites within the scope of this assessment and that no likely significant effects are expected of the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air</li> </ul>	<p>Although consultation with Natural England is required for any development that could cause air pollution (regarding industrial/agricultural development) in association with the IRZs of SSSIs in parts of the Plan area, no allocations are included within the Plan. If speculative development does come forward within the Plan period, consultation would be required at the planning application stage and is not considered a matter would warrant SEA, as a strategic process, to be undertaken.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climatic factors</li> </ul>	<p>The Plan includes Policy AL5: Design of Development, which seeks sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to be incorporated into developments proposals, where applicable.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan area contains an area of Flood Risk Zone 3 associated with the Rivers Gage, which is in close proximity to the eastern edge of the built up area of Kings Langley. No development allocations are proposed within the Plan and it is considered that Policy AL5 is</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>sufficient in conjunction with adopted Local Plan policies to ensure that any effects are avoided in the first instance and mitigated where that is not possible.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that SEA would not be required regarding matters of flood risk and any speculative development coming forward within the Neighbourhood Plan area in the Plan period can be considered at the planning application stage.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Material assets</li> </ul>	<p>The Plan area does not contain land within a Minerals Consultation Area (MCA) within the County Council’s adopted Minerals Local Plan. The Plan area similarly 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, as well two Conservation Areas. 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 AL7: Listed Buildings and Structures of Character, and the historic environment is a recurrent theme throughout the Plan’s various other policies.</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</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	and its content. There are not considered to be any elements of the Plan that would give rise to significant 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 a sensitive landscape, in regard to the protection objectives of the Northern Thames Basin Valley National Character Area (NCA) and the Chilterns NCA. The Plan area contains some features synonymous with these NCAs and furthermore undeveloped areas within the Plan area are entirely within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and includes Policy AL11: Natural Landscape and Rural Character, which seeks the maintenance and enhancement of landscape features 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 Three Rivers 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 Three Rivers 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.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).</p>	<p>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 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.</p>
<p>The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</p>	<p>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>
<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>	<p>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.</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>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.</p>

## 4. HRA Screening

### 4.1 Habitat 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 Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Summarise the reasons for designation and Conservation Objectives for each site to be considered in this assessment.
- Screen the Abbots Langley 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

As previously mentioned, 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 Abbots Langley 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 Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan.

## 4.3 Habitats (European) Sites

Habitats sites is the term used in the (revised) NPPF (2021) 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: South West London Waterbodies is internationally important for wintering waterfowl. Legislation: 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: Chiltern Beechwoods is designated for its habitats which qualify under Annex I of the European Habitats Directive2: H9130 Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests; Beech forests on neutral to rich soils and H6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or lime..Legislation: 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, South West London Waterbodies which comprises a number of reservoirs and former gravel pits in the Thames Valley and support internationally important numbers of Gadwall and Shoveler 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 and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

4.3.2 Habitats Sites to be considered

There are three Habitats sites which lie within 20 km of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area. This is shown in Table 3 and in Appendix 2.

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

SPA
N/A
SAC
Burnham Beeches
Chilterns Beechwoods
Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods
Ramsar
N/A

Consideration was given to potential impact pathways, Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) for the

underpinning SSSIs for the Habitats sites listed in Table 3 and Zones of Influence (ZOI) as confirmed on MAGIC website [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk) and Abbots Langley parish lies outside the 5.6 km ZOI for Burnham Beeches SSSI (19.1km) and that for Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods (19.6 km).

The Abbots Langley NP area lies within the 12.6km ZOI for Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (9km) for predicted recreational impacts. However, the greatest pressure, noted in the report to Dacorum BC (Footprint Ecology, 2022) and experienced on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, is in Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI and Tring Woodlands SSSI. Natural England has provided advice relating to the need for a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) for the Ashridge Estate. Based on the evidence, Natural England believes the following LPAs and other bodies should be involved in the development of this strategic solution:

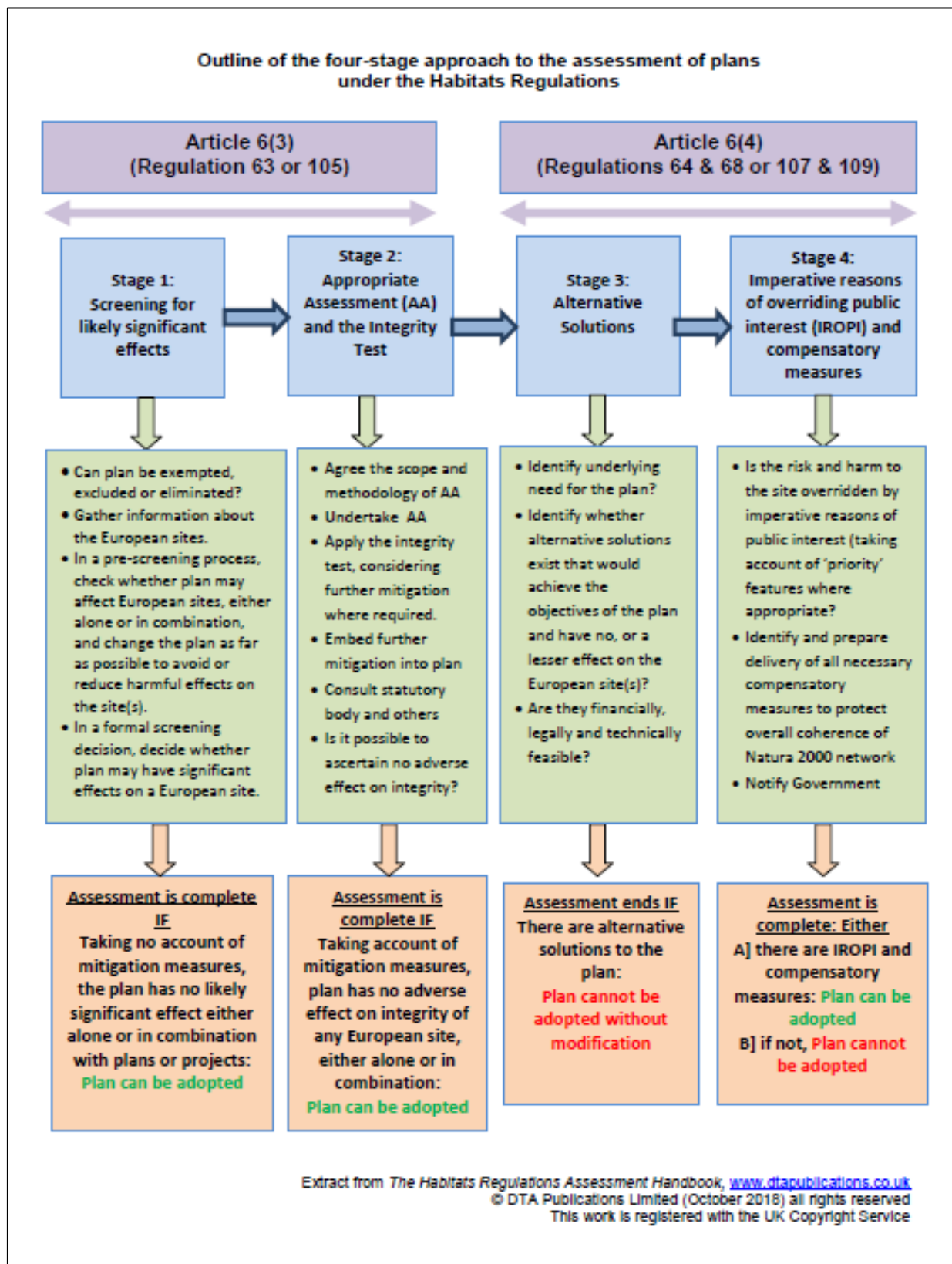
- Buckinghamshire Council (Aylesbury Vale and Chilterns Districts);
- Central Bedfordshire Council;
- Dacorum Borough Council;
- St Albans City and District Council;
- Hertfordshire County Council (as Ecological advisors to Dacorum Borough Council and St Albans City and District Council); and
- National Trust as land owner and delivery body for Ashridge Estate.

The above are the districts/unitary authorities providing the majority of the visits, and impact to this component part of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and the list does not include Three Rivers DC. As the Abbots Langley NP does not allocate any land for development, there is no predicted impacts nor would support for residential development being considered as significant. It is therefore concluded that there is no likely significant effect on any of the Habitats sites within scope resulting from the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan.

## 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 Abbots Langley 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**

<p><b>Category A: No negative effect</b></p> <p>Policies or projects that will not be likely to have any negative effect on a Habitats site.</p>
<p><b>Category B: No Likely Significant Effect</b></p> <p>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.</p>
<p><b>Category C: Likely Significant Effect</b></p> <p>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).</p>

#### 4.4.2 Potential impacts of Abbots Langley 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 5: Assessment of potential impacts on Habitats Sites**

Nature of potential impact	How the Abbots Langley 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 Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area is outside the boundaries of the Habitats sites within scope of this HRA screening.	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 Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the 12.6 km IRZ for Chilterns Beechwoods SSSI which underpins the SAC designation.	There is no risk of impacts on protected species outside of the protected sites.  It is therefore considered that this impact pathway will not result in likely significant effects upon Habitats sites from the Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, impacts on protected species outside the protected sites from the Neighbourhood Plan (either alone or in combination with

Nature of potential impact	How the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site	Why these effects are not considered significant
		other plans and projects) on the Habitats sites can be screened out from further assessment.
Recreational pressure and disturbance	The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 5.6km Zone of Influence (ZOI) for Burnham Beeches SAC but within the 12.6km ZOI for Chilterns Beechwoods for predicted recreational impacts.	The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development, so impacts from recreation arising from the NP are screened out when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
Water quantity and quality	The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the IRZ for water sensitive Habitat sites within the scope of this assessment.	No likely significant effects are expected so changes in water quantity and quality have been screened out when considered from the Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
Changes in pollution levels	The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the IRZ for pollution levels for sensitive Habitat sites and there are none within the scope of this assessment.	No likely significant effects are expected, 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 Abbots Langley 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 6: 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 AL1: Location and Scale of Development</p>	<p>A. Development in the Parish will be focused within the settlement boundaries as defined on Figure 5.1 and the Policies Maps.</p> <p>B. The Neighbourhood Plan supports the continued washing over of Bedmond village by the Green Belt, as shown on the Figure 7 and the Policies Maps.</p> <p>C. Development proposals outside the settlement boundaries will not be supported unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. it is in accordance with Three Rivers District Council Core Strategy policies in respect of appropriate uses in the countryside; and</li> <li>ii. the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area; or</li> <li>iii. where relevant, the development brings redundant or vacant historic buildings back into optimal beneficial re-use; or</li> <li>iv. it relates to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is</li> </ul>	<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>available; or</p> <p>v. it is on sites allocated for those uses in the Three Rivers Core Strategy or its successor.</p> <p>D. Development which meets either the exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt set out in paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework, or demonstrates very special circumstances, as set out in paragraph 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework, will be supported.</p> <p>E. Proposals should make the best use of all suitable brownfield land, where available, before greenfield land is released.</p>		
<p>Policy AL2: Housing Mix</p>	<p>A. Proposals that will deliver a high proportion of smaller (1-3 habitable rooms) dwellings at lower to median local cost; and medium (5 habitable rooms) dwellings will be supported within the Parish, and in accordance with Policy AL5 (Design of Development) of this Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>B. Housing development must contribute to meeting the existing and future housing needs of the Parish.</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>Developers are required to submit a Parish-specific Affordable Housing and Dwellings Mix Strategy with any planning application. The Strategy must clearly set out identified housing needs within the Parish and demonstrate how the proposed development addresses those needs.</p> <p>C. Subject to the other policies of this plan, proposals for self- and custom build housing will be supported.</p>		
<p>Policy AL3: Affordable Homes</p>	<p>All residential development proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan area shall provide affordable housing as required by Policy CP4 of the Three Rivers Core Strategy or its successor. Affordable homes should be well integrated with market housing. The type and size of affordable homes should meet the specific needs identified for the Parish, as set out in the Abbots Langley Local Housing Needs Assessment, with a minimum of 25% of the provision comprising First Homes.</p> <p>Development proposals that enable an uplift to the discounts provided on the First Homes element of the</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>development - up to 50% - to assist single occupants on median and lower quartile incomes, will be supported. Such proposals should seek to prioritise those with local connections to the Parish and key workers.</p>		
<p>Policy AL4: Character of Development</p>	<p>A. Development proposals should conserve and, where practicable, enhance the character of the Conservation Area and/or Character Area in which it is located (as shown on Figure 11, the Policies Map and as described in the Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Code, Appendix E.) Developments should reflect the architectural variety found locally and use materials that are in keeping with those found in existing buildings in the immediate locality. This will help to avoid building design that is inappropriate to the Plan area. Innovation in design will be supported, where this demonstrably enhances the quality of the built form.</p> <p>B. As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location development proposals should:</p> <p>a. make a positive contribution to the visual impact of the</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>main highway approaches into the settlements, as shown on Figure 10;</p> <p>b. incorporate the principles included in the Conservation Area guidance where applicable, and the Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Code, Appendix E; and</p> <p>c. protect views and vistas along the Grand Union Canal and River Gade; and</p> <p>d. not have a significantly detrimental impact on the local views as set out in Policy AL13.</p>		
<p>Policy AL5: Design of Development</p>	<p>Development proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design, which responds and integrates well with its surroundings, meets the changing needs of the population of the neighbourhood area. In addition they should minimise their impacts on the natural and historic environment. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have sought to address the following matters:</p> <p>a. Being guided by the principles of 'Building for a Healthy Life' unless alternative principles would otherwise</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>result in a higher quality of design. Development proposals are encouraged to achieve the commendation.</p> <p>b. The guidance contained within the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance and Code (see Appendix E).</p> <p>c. Avoiding development over two storeys unless it can be demonstrated that it will not have a detrimental impact on views, streetscape or character of an area. Development of three-storeys and above on or close to the boundary of sites adjacent to the settlement boundary abutting open countryside will not be supported.</p> <p>d. The creation of variety through the use of a range of housing designs, provided that the predominant type of design reflects the character of the area.</p> <p>e. Dwellings designed to be suitable for older residents (aged 60 and over) are encouraged to reflect the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles;</p> <p>f. Such dwellings may also be suitable for younger residents</p>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>and are not intended to be restricted in use.</p> <p>g. To design layouts of safe and secure dwellings that meet the requirements of ‘Secure by Design’ and minimise the likelihood and fear of crime.</p> <p>h. Provide adequate cycle storage and off-road parking for residents, visitors and service vehicles – including electric vehicle charging points – in accordance with the Three Rivers District Council Parking Standards.</p> <p>i. Traffic generation and on-street parking does not adversely affect vehicular and pedestrian safety.</p> <p>j. Development that is required to provide Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is expected to be accommodated on site. Such development is encouraged to demonstrate the use of a wide range of creative SuDS solutions, for example through the provision of SuDS as part of green spaces, green roofs, permeable surfaces and rain gardens. SuDS provision must demonstrate how its design will enhance wildlife and biodiversity, as well as</p>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>minimise the impacts of flooding.</p> <p>k. To ensure that areas requiring service and maintenance including watercourses are accessible at all times.</p>		
<p>Policy AL6: Environmentally Sustainable Design</p>	<p>A. Development proposals which incorporate design and environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption and climate effects will be supported. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals should demonstrate how they have responded positively to the following matters:</p> <p>a. non-residential developments should aim to meet the Buildings Research Establishments BREEAM building standard ‘excellent’, and residential dwellings should aim for an EPC rating of B or above; and</p> <p>b. Siting and orientation of buildings to optimise passive solar gain.</p> <p>c. The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials.</p> <p>d. Installation of energy</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>efficiency measures such as loft insulation and double glazing.</p> <p>e. Reducing water consumption through the use of grey water systems.</p> <p>f. Providing low carbon sustainable design and avoid or mitigate all regulated emissions using a combination of on-site energy efficiency measures (such as insulation and low energy heating systems), on-site zero carbon technologies (such as solar panels) and only where necessary off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions.</p> <p>g. Reducing fuel poverty levels, such as replacement of lighting by lower wattage light sources.</p> <p>h. Providing the infrastructure for adequate electric vehicle charging points for each dwelling, where new parking provision is expected to be made, in accordance with Three Rivers District Council Parking Standards.</p> <p>Where a development cannot achieve one or more of the criteria (for instance for practical reasons), then this would not render the scheme</p>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>unacceptable, providing a robust demonstration can be provided by the developer.</p> <p>B. Alterations to existing buildings, including the sensitive retrofitting of historic buildings, should be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with current sustainable design and construction standards.</p> <p>C. Proposals for individual and community scale energy, for instance from hydro-electricity, solar photovoltaic panels, local biomass facilities, anaerobic digestions and wood fuel products will be supported subject to the following criteria:</p> <p>a. the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape; and</p> <p>b. the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents; and</p> <p>c. the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.</p>		



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
<p>Policy AL7: Listed Buildings and Structures of Character</p>	<p>A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the Holy Well in Bedmond (as detailed in Appendix F) and those assets within the parish contained in the Heritage Environment Record and which are not already nationally listed are identified as non-designated heritage assets.</p> <p>B. Development proposals affecting heritage assets - including non-designated heritage assets - either directly or indirectly, should conserve and enhance the significance and those elements of the setting that contribute to the significance. This could include, where appropriate, the delivery of development that will make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the heritage asset, or reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness with particular regard given to the prevailing styles of design and use of materials in a local area. Proposals are expected to be accompanied by a Heritage Statement.</p> <p>C. Development proposals should demonstrate that they have taken into account the potential impact on above and below ground archaeological</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>deposits to ensure that evidence which could contribute to the understanding of human activity and past environments is not lost.</p> <p>Where a scheme has a potential impact on archaeological remains (below or above ground) a Heritage Statement or similar should be prepared in support of planning applications.</p> <p>D. A proactive stance will be taken to any heritage assets that may be at risk. This will include working with property owners to find a use that will enable them to be put back into optimum viable use.</p> <p>E. Particular care should be taken in the Conservation Area to ensure that alterations and new buildings contribute to the enhancement of the historic environment, in accordance with the guidance set out in the Abbots Langley Village and Hunston Bridge Conservation Area Appraisals.</p>		
<p>Policy AL8: Retaining and Enhancing the Vitality and Viability of</p>	<p>ABBOTS LANGLEY VILLAGE CENTRE</p> <p>A. There is a need to maintain the economic health, vitality and viability of the Village</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
Local Centres	<p>Centre, as defined on the Policies Maps, in balance with residential development and infrastructure. Therefore, development proposals that provide a balance of uses – retail, leisure and community, commercial and residential - will be supported subject to compliance with all relevant development plan policies. Proposals that add to or sustain the distribution of local neighbourhood convenience shops in particular, where they are designed to be accessible on foot or by bicycle, will be supported.</p> <p>B. Development proposals to enhance Abbots Langley Village Centre, as set out in the Village Centre Masterplan, will be supported, where this will not result in the significant detrimental impact to local heritage assets. In Chapter 5 of the Abbots Langley Village Centre Masterplan, design proposals are given for four distinct areas in the village centre which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Around the Library and St Saviour’s Church.</li> <li>b. In front of St Lawrence Church</li> <li>c. Main Shopping Parade</li> </ul>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>d. Breakspeare Special School site after 2024</p> <p>Maps and illustrations are provided to show the proposals for each of the four areas. For the Breakspeare School site, a separate Feasibility Study was conducted to determine the site’s suitability for a new enlarged Health Centre to replace the Vine House Health Centre after 2024 after the school is relocated to Croxley Green in 2024.</p> <p>C. Positive consideration will be given to applications that will improve the quality of shop fronts and signage in these areas.</p> <p>TEMPORARY USES</p> <p>D. The use of E, F1 and F2 premises for temporary uses will be supported. Such uses include ‘pop up’ shops and cultural, creative and leisure uses introduced on a temporary basis or for specific events. Proposals must demonstrate that they will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential, through excessive noise and pollution. Such uses will generally not be considered</p>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>appropriate if the operation of the business requires a large number of vehicle parking spaces in order to function.</p> <p><b>RE-USE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS</b></p> <p>E. The reuse of historic buildings within Abbots Langley Village Centre for activities that will enhance the vitality and viability of the Village Centre are strongly encouraged. Any alterations to historic buildings will need to be sympathetic to the historic and architectural significance and character of the building</p> <p><b>EATING AND DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS</b></p> <p>F. Proposals for eating and drinking establishments (Classes E, F1 and F2, including where consumption of food and drink is an ancillary activity) to site tables and chairs outside their premises are supported, provided they do not impede pedestrian movement.</p> <p><b>LOCAL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES</b></p> <p>G. Proposals which result in the loss of existing local neighbourhood convenience</p>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>shops will be resisted.</p> <p>H. To secure the ongoing vitality of Bedmond village centre, proposals which protect, enhance and promote a diverse range of village centre uses – including retail, leisure, cultural and community - will be supported, subject to the other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.</p>		
<p>Policy AL9: Supporting Recreation and Sustainable Tourism</p>	<p>A. Development proposals for recreational and tourism activities, including additional visitor accommodation and a Visitor Centre, will be supported where the following criteria can be met:</p> <p>a. There are demonstrable economic and social benefits of the proposals; and</p> <p>b. There is no significant detrimental impact on the existing community; and</p> <p>c. Adequate provision for parking is included, particularly for proposals within or adjacent to the local centres; and</p> <p>d. the siting, scale and design has strong regard to the local character, historic and natural assets of the surrounding area and the design and materials</p>	<p>No, Category B</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effect</p> <p>Recommendation to add to the policy text clause d. to refer to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC to avoid recreational pressure (see suggested text underlined below).</p> <p>d. the siting, scale and design has strong regard to the local character, historic and natural assets of the surrounding area and the design and materials are in keeping with the local style and reinforce local distinctiveness and provide a strong sense of place. Sufficient greenspace should be provided</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>are in keeping with the local style and reinforce local distinctiveness and provide a strong sense of place.</p> <p>B. Proposals for the improvement of signage for local facilities will be supported, provided that they can be satisfactorily integrated within their surroundings.</p>		<p>within walking distance of residential developments to avoid recreational impacts on Chilterns Beechwoods SAC</p>
<p>Policy AL10: A Safe, Attractive and Welcoming Village Centre</p>	<p>Development proposals to enhance the public realm in Abbots Langley Village Centre will be encouraged, particularly where they enhance movement by pedestrians. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the widening of pavements</li> <li>b. the inclusion of cycling facilities</li> <li>c. provision of electric charging points</li> <li>d. information totem points providing guidance and information for visitors and residents.</li> </ul>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy A11: Natural Landscape and Rural Character</p>	<p>A. Development proposals should maintain and where practicable enhance the natural environment, landscape features, the rural character and setting of the Parish. Development</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>proposals that would achieve a net gain in biodiversity will be particularly supported.</p> <p>B. Where reasonable and necessary, development proposals are expected to demonstrate that they have addressed the following matters:</p> <p><b>TREES AND WOODLAND</b></p> <p>a. There is no unacceptable loss of, or damage to, existing trees or woodlands during or as a result of development. If veteran or notable trees must be removed, they should be replaced with trees of a similar potential size and native species elsewhere on the site, unless this is clearly not possible. In fact our landscape has to increase the number of native trees.</p> <p>b. Where trees and/or shrubs are replaced with new plantings, native or locally appropriate varieties attractive to insects, birds and other wildlife must be used.</p> <p><b>HEDGEROWS:</b></p> <p>c. Development that would result in the loss of, or the deterioration in the quality of, hedgerows will not be supported with the exception</p>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>of removal for vehicular access. In this case, the access should include trees at either end of the retained hedgerow to aid wildlife to cross overhead from crown to crown.</p> <p>FAUNA:</p> <p>d. The provision of hedgehog holes in new residential fencing will be supported.</p> <p>e. Development proposals which provide bird and bat nesting boxes will be supported.</p> <p>f. The provision of a communal pond and wildlife friendly communal 'green spaces,' within new major developments, will be supported.</p>		
<p>Policy AL12: Green Infrastructure and Development</p>	<p>A. Proposals should be designed to create, conserve, enhance and manage green spaces and connect chains of green infrastructure, as identified on Figure 13, with the aim of delivering a measurable net environmental benefit for local people and wildlife. Proposals for development must be supported by a biodiversity appraisal, which must demonstrate how negative</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>impacts would be minimised and biodiversity net gain achieved.</p> <p>B. The appraisal should demonstrate that where significant harm cannot be avoided, proposed development and other changes should adequately mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the harm. The appraisal must demonstrate a measurable biodiversity net gain of 10% by utilising the Defra biodiversity metric (or as amended). Where this is not demonstrated, permission for planning or for change should be refused.</p> <p>C. Measures to achieve biodiversity net gain, mitigation or compensation involving the creation of habitat and/or relocation of species, must be agreed by the Local Planning Authority and include sufficient funding to support at least 30 years of post-development habitat management or land use change.</p> <p>D. Proposals that seek to improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces will be encouraged in order to enhance the green</p>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>infrastructure of the Parish. Conversely, proposals which threaten to damage such connectivity will be strongly resisted.</p> <p>E. The planting of additional native species trees and/ or continuous hedgerows to provide wildlife corridors and to offset the effects of air pollution and to provide cooling and shelter for people as well as a habitat for wildlife will be supported.</p>		
<p>Policy AL13: Protection of Locally Significant Views</p>	<p>The Plan identifies the following locally significant views (mapped in Figure 14):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View 1: View to the north from Hyde Farm.</li> <li>• View 2: View to Potters Crouch Hamlet.</li> <li>• View 3: View to the Church of the Ascension and White Hart.</li> <li>• View 4: View from Longspring Wood to Local Wildlife Site and the Green Belt.</li> <li>• View 5: View of the Grand Union Canal.</li> <li>• View 6: View of St Lawrence Church.</li> </ul>	<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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View 7: View in Leavesden Country Park.</li> <li>• View 8: View to Cheques Lane.</li> <li>• View 9: View to Langley Lane Play Area and farmlands.</li> <li>• View 10: View from Langleybury Lane to the Open Field.</li> <li>• View 11: View from Gypsy Lane Railway Bridge across open fields.</li> <li>• View 12: View of the Horsefield Meadow (Site CFS56), Bedmond.</li> </ul> <p>As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals within the shaded arcs of the various views as shown on Figure 14 should be designed in a way that safeguards the locally significant view or views concerned.</p>		
<p>Policy AL14: Protection and Maintenance of Local Green Spaces</p>	<p>The following 13 spaces, as shown on the Policies Map are designated as a local green spaces:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jubilee Gardens</li> <li>2. Tanners Wood</li> </ol>	<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>3. Abbots Village Park and Woodlands at the Manor House Grounds</p> <p>4. Primrose Hill playing fields</p> <p>5. Langleybury cricket ground</p> <p>6. Abbots Langley Horses Field</p> <p>7. Bedmond Green, Toms Lane, Bedmond</p> <p>8. The Breakspear Farm, Holy Well and surrounding nature reserve (inc. Moor Wood)</p> <p>9. Longspring Wood</p> <p>10. Bedmond playing fields</p> <p>11. Bedmond Meadow</p> <p>12. The Spinneys in Bedmond</p> <p>Local policy for managing development on a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts; proposals for development on Local Green Spaces will not be supported unless they conform to with national policy guidelines.</p>		
<p>Policy AL15: Continue to Provide, Maintain and Improve Public</p>	<p>A. Proposals for new/expanded facilities should meet identified needs for leisure and social needs in the community that are not</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
Facilities for the Community	<p>adequately provided for at present, where:</p> <p>a. Proposals are consistent with Green Belt policies.</p> <p>b. Proposals would not have significant harmful effects on the amenities of surrounding residents and the environment or heritage in the local area.</p> <p>B. Proposals that would result in the loss of community and leisure facilities will only be supported if alternative and equivalent facilities are provided of at least the same standard and which are equally accessible to the local community.</p>		
Policy AL16: Allotments and Community Growing Spaces	<p>A. Proposals that would result in the loss of all or part of existing allotment spaces will not be supported unless alternative and equivalent allotment space is provided. Alternative allotment provision proposed as part of such proposals will be required to meet the following criteria:</p> <p>a. the scale of the alternative site must be of at least an equivalent scale to the existing allotment provision; and</p> <p>b. the quality of the alternative site must be of at least an</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>equivalent standard in terms of layout and soil character to the existing allotment provision; and</p> <p>c. the location of the alternative provision must be generally accessible by pedestrians and cyclists and within or adjacent to the defined settlement areas, as shown on the Policies Map in Chapter 15.</p> <p>B. The provision of allotment facilities and/or community growing spaces of a size appropriate to developments, particularly where these can be used to create attractive screening will be encouraged for places such as car parking areas.</p>		
<p>Policy AL17: Protection of Public Houses</p>	<p>A. Development proposals to change the use of public houses (Class sui generis) will only be supported if such a use is demonstrably unviable. In order to demonstrate this, evidence will be required to show that the existing public house has been actively marketed for a period of not less than 12 months at a reasonable market value for drinking establishment floorspace, that are comparable to the market values for drinking</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>establishment floorspace in that general locality.</p> <p>B. Proposals for the expansion of existing public houses (Class sui generis) in the Parish to develop appropriate community-based activities, such as a restaurant will be supported, subject to complying with other policies within the plan and provided the scale, design and materials are in keeping with the local character and reinforce the local distinctiveness of the surroundings.</p>		
<p>Policy AL18: Maintaining Existing Sports and Recreation Facilities</p>	<p>A. In order to provide for the increased need for leisure provision to support the growing population of the Parish, development proposals that deliver the following shall be strongly supported:</p> <p>a. Provision of purpose-designed storage units to house sports equipment near to the pitches and facilities used by the various sports and leisure groups.</p> <p>b. Equipment that help the Parish Staff maintain the sports facilities to ensure the pitches and courts are kept in good condition throughout the</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>year.</p> <p>c. Ensure that team changing rooms are provided and well-maintained, where required.</p> <p>d. Ensure appropriate seating is provided for spectators wishing to watch local team games.</p>		
<p>Policy AL19: Maintaining Existing Health Services</p>	<p>A. Proposals to enhance and facilitate the continued delivery of health facilities at key sites within the village of Abbots Langley and surrounding settlements, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported.</p> <p>B. Proposals for the expansion, including relocation locally if required, of these services will be supported subject to the following criteria:</p> <p>a. the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment.</p> <p>b. the proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the local road network.</p> <p>c. the proposal is located within or immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary as</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
	defined in Policy AL1.		
Policy AL20: Education Provision	<p>A. Proposals which provide, enhance and facilitate the continued delivery of educational provision on existing state education land, including associated playing fields, as defined on the Policies Map in Chapter 15, will be supported.</p> <p>B. Proposals for the expansion of existing schools in the Plan area will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Expansion would not exacerbate existing access related or traffic circulation problems, or that suitable mitigation measures are being brought forward as part of the proposal.</li> <li>b. The development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent users; and</li> <li>c. The development does not conflict with other Plan policies or proposals.</li> </ul> <p>C. Where expansion of an existing school is not possible, and/or a proposal for a new school is brought forward, the proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>that:</p> <p>a. The development would be safely accessible by pedestrians and cyclists and is well related to bus routes and/or there is adequate provision for waiting school buses to park.</p> <p>b. The development has appropriate vehicular access and does not adversely impact upon traffic circulation.</p> <p>c. The development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent uses.</p> <p>d. The development does not conflict with other Plan policies or proposals.</p>		
<p>Policy AL21: Footpaths, Cycle Paths and Bridleways</p>	<p>A. To ensure that residents can access social, community, public transport, schools, retail and other important facilities both within Abbots Langley and in neighbouring settlements, new developments should ensure safe pedestrian, and where feasible cycle, access to link up with the existing footpath and cycleway network, as defined in Figure 20 and Figure 21.</p> <p>B. Development proposals to</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>improve cycling and walking will be supported, including new linkages as shown in Figure 19. In particular, provision of cycle and pedestrian routes that are physically separated from vehicular traffic and from one another will be strongly supported. Such routes should also incorporate access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters.</p> <p>C. The network of ancient lanes across the Abbots Langley as shown in Figure 18 will be protected and enhanced. Development proposals that would have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the existing historic network will not be supported.</p> <p>D. Proposals to maintain and improve access by walking and cycling throughout the Parish, particularly in the parks and open countryside, should be encouraged to support safe, healthy exercise for all ages.</p>		
<p>Policy AL22: Bus Services and Community Transport</p>	<p>Contributions from new major development in the Parish will be used to provide additional community bus services or, where appropriate, improvements to the public bus service by way of</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>increased services and improvements to public transport infrastructure. These contributions will be collected through Section 106 Agreements or the Community Infrastructure Levy.</p>		
<p>Policy AL23: Public Car Parking</p>	<p>A. Development proposals that would result in an unacceptable loss of existing publicly available off-street car parking spaces will not be supported.</p> <p>B. Proposals that enable the provision of additional, publicly accessible off-road car parking spaces, to alleviate parking congestion near to businesses, schools and at transport hubs, will be supported.</p> <p>C. Alongside any new public car parking provision, the following facilities will be strongly supported as part of that provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. dedicated bicycle parking facilities, preferably with e-bike charging points, covered and secure; and</li> <li>b. future-proofed electric vehicle charging points.</li> </ul>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

#### 4.5.1 Recommendations

There is only a single recommendation for the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan as they have all been assigned to Category A except Policy AL9: Supporting Recreation and Sustainable Tourism. 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.

As the parish of Abbots Langley does not allocate any land, 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 the context of this HRA, there are no relevant plans or projects to be considered in combination with Abbots Langley 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 Abbots Langley 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)

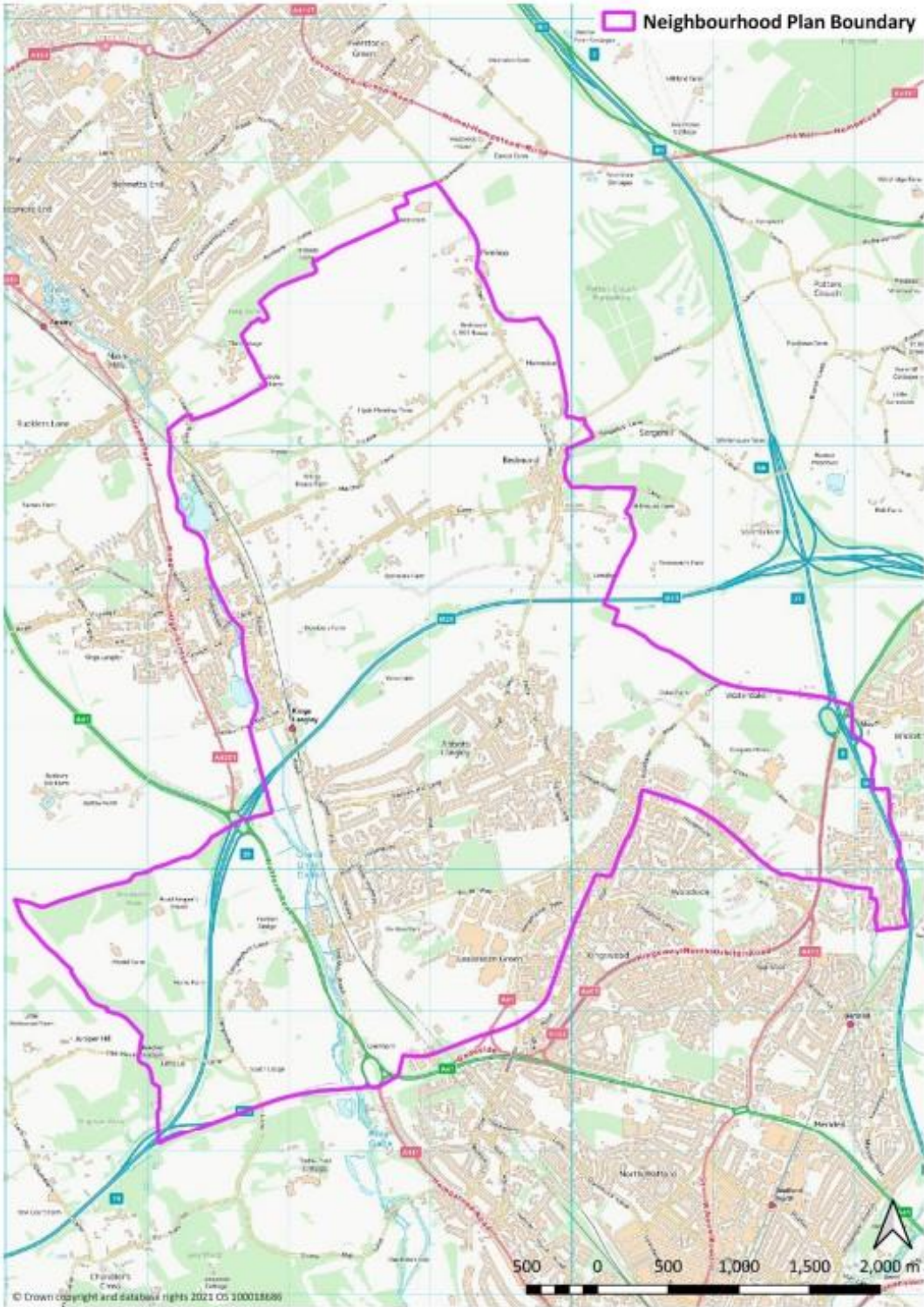
Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA Screening Report indicates that without mitigation embedded, the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have Likely Significant Effect on the designated features of a Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.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

## 6. References

- Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan (December 2022)
- Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy SPD (Buckinghamshire Council, November 2020)
- Footprint Ecology ( Visitor survey, recreation impact assessment and mitigation requirements for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and the Dacorum Local Plan. by Footprint Ecology for Dacorum Borough Council.
- Panter, C., Liley, D., Lake, S., Saunders, P., & Caals, Z. (2022). Visitor survey, recreation impact assessment and mitigation requirements for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and the Dacorum Local Plan. Report by Footprint Ecology for Dacorum Borough Council
- Three Rivers District Council DPD (adopted 2011)
- Tydlesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, (April 2022) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited

# Appendix 1

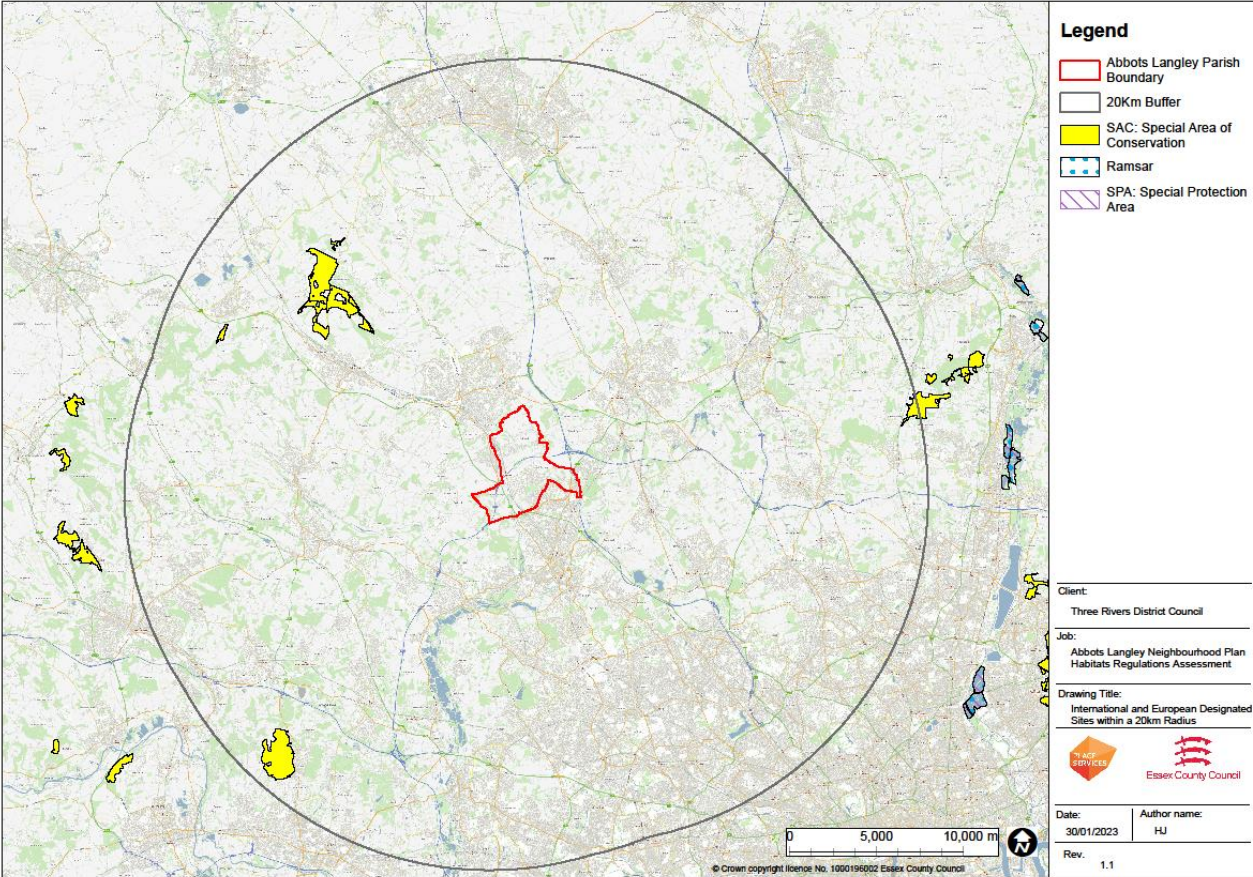
## The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area



Source: Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan

# Appendix 2

## Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan area & Locations of Habitats Sites within 20 km



Source: Place Services, 2023



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