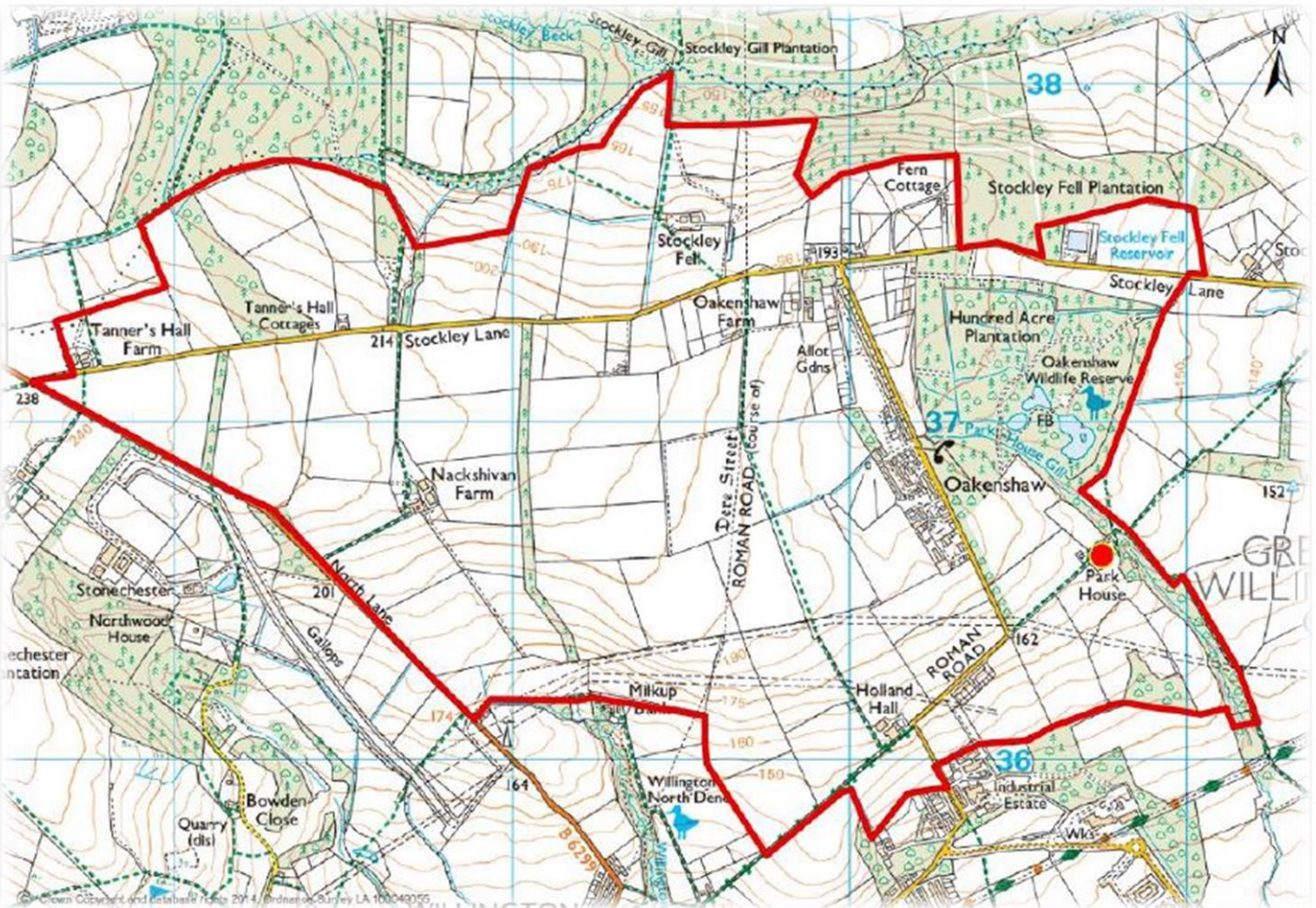


# Oakenshaw Neighbourhood Plan

## Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report



February 2020



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## Screening Summary

**Table 1 Summary of Neighbourhood Plan**

Details of Neighbourhood Plan	
Name of Neighbourhood Plan	Oakenshaw Neighbourhood Plan - Consultation Draft (September 2019)
Geographic Coverage of the Plan	Area within Greater Willington Parish (approximately 468 hectares)
Key topics / scope of Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restricting the development of land outside a settlement boundary</li> <li>Supports the protection of locally valued landscape, viewpoints, green spaces, woodland, trees and biodiversity</li> <li>Encourages sympathetic design of new development</li> <li>Aims to meet specific residential needs (older and younger persons/families)</li> <li>Encourages energy efficiency and use of renewable sources of energy in new housing</li> <li>Requires developer contributions towards affordable housing and community facilities, including a new community hub.</li> <li>Prohibits large scale industry but supports home working, micro businesses and community enterprises, including community renewable energy projects.</li> </ul>

**Table 2 Summary of SEA Screening Opinion**

Local Authority Details	
Name and job title of officer undertaking screening opinion	Nadia Wetherell: Sustainability and Climate Change Officer
Contact	03000 265543
Date of assessment	January 2020
Conclusion of assessment	SEA is not required
Reason for conclusion	The ONP does not allocate land for development and its policies seek to restrict urban sprawl, encourage new community amenities (reducing the need to travel) and better protect and enhance local distinctiveness, landscape and biodiversity. The ONP is therefore not

Local Authority Details	
	considered likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
Name and job title of officer approving screening opinion	Stephen McDonald: Principal Officer - Low Carbon Economy Team
Date of approval	13th January 2020
Date of Submission Draft Screening Document	13th February 2020

**Table 3 Summary of HRA Screening Opinion**

Local Authority Details	
Name and job title of officer undertaking screening opinion	Nadia Wetherell: Sustainability and Climate Change Officer
Contact	03000 265543
Date of assessment	January 2020
Conclusion of assessment	No Likely Significant Effects to Natura 2000 sites. Appropriate Assessment is not required
Reason for conclusion	Following the preliminary screening assessment it can be concluded that all policies within the ONP can be eliminated from further Likely Significant Effects screening and Appropriate Assessment as they will have no negative effects on the relevant Natura 2000 sites and the policies as drafted seek to protect the natural and built environment.
Name and job title of officer approving screening opinion	Tammara Morris Hale, Senior Ecologist
Date of approval	13th January 2020
Date of Submission Draft Screening Document	13th February 2020

**Table 4 Summary of Statutory Consultee Comments**

Statutory Consultee	Summary of Comments
Historic England	To be added following consultation
Environment Agency	As above
Natural England	As above

## 1 Introduction

**1.1** The Oakenshaw neighbourhood plan area is situated within Greater Willington Parish, approximately 1.5 miles north of Willington and 5 miles south-west of Durham City in County Durham. Oakenshaw village is the main centre of population within the neighbourhood plan area, comprising a resident population of 470 persons (ONS, 2011).

**1.2** As with many former colliery settlements, the village lost the majority of its amenities, including schools, chapels and shops and several rows of housing, following the closure of the pit. The pit was re-opened from 1991 till 1993 but did little to improve the village's economy. The village was left without a club or pub when the Working Men's club burned down in 2002 and was replaced with housing.

**1.3** Oakenshaw hosts a large public open field at one end of the village, which runs parallel to New Row and includes a small football pitch, multiple use games area and children's playing area. Following the closure of the opencast mine in 1993 the land has been restored to a publicly accessible wildlife reserve, consisting of wetland areas surrounded by commercial woodland. Strips of remaining ancient woodland are present at Milkup Bank and Park House. Dere street and another unnamed Roman road also transect the Neighbourhood Plan area.

**1.4** The Neighbourhood area is predominantly situated within the Tyne and Wear Lowlands National Character Area, key characteristics of which include:

- A transitional landscape with pastoral farming on higher ground in the west giving way to arable and mixed farming in the valleys and to the east;
- A landscape heavily influenced by the mining and steel industries, in particular to the north and east, with scattered mining and industrial settlements of terraced and estate housing occupying prominent sites linked by a network of main roads;
- Open cast coal workings forming intrusive features in some areas, and restored open cast areas giving a manmade feel to parts of the landscape. Early restoration sites are often lacking in character, topography and natural and historic features, while later schemes are of more value for wildlife and amenity; and
- Numerous small plantations of conifers or mixed woodland, as blocks or shelterbelts, on hillsides; in places more extensive conifer woodlands on ridgetops and hillsides.

**1.5** The overall vision of the Oakenshaw Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter known as 'ONP') is as follows:

'That Oakenshaw retains and reinforces its character as an environmentally friendly village in a distinctly open rural setting. The green spaces and environmental assets of the Neighbourhood Area will be protected and enhanced, and support given to providing housing, facilities, amenities and opportunities that help to promote a flourishing community and economy.'

**1.6** Objectives have been developed in relation to the following topics:

- Village environment;
- Housing;
- Village community; and
- Village economy

## **Purpose of this Report**

This screening report is designed to determine whether the draft ONP requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

**1.7** This report will also determine whether the ONP requires an Appropriate Assessment as part of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018 (as amended). An Appropriate Assessment is required when likely significant effects to European protected wildlife sites, known as Natura 2000 sites are predicted to occur as a result of implementing a plan or project either on its own or in combination with other plans, projects or existing activities.

**1.8** The following section of this report provides further detail on the legislative background. Section 3 provides the screening opinion for SEA and section 4 provides the screening opinion for appropriate assessment as part of HRA.

## 2 Legislative Background

### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

**2.1** SEA is required for plans and programmes which are likely to have significant environmental effects by the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. This Directive is transposed into English legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations). These regulations will remain effective in the short-mid term following Brexit by the provisions made in the European Union Withdrawal Bill and associated EU Exit Regulations 2019. SEA is a systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of plans and programmes and aims to:

Provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

#### **SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)**

**2.2** In some limited circumstances, neighbourhood plans may have significant environmental effects and may therefore require strategic environmental assessment. In order to determine whether a plan is likely to have significant environmental effects a 'screening' assessment is undertaken, the requirements for which are set out in regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations.

**2.3** In the event that SEA is required it can be undertaken in conjunction with a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which takes account of social and economic effects in addition to environmental effects. There is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a SA as set out in section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However, a qualifying body must demonstrate how its plan or order will contribute to achieving sustainable development, which a SA will usefully provide.

### Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

**2.4** The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018 (as amended), referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations' implement in Great Britain the requirements of the European Union's Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC). As for SEA, the habitats regulations will remain effective post Brexit, in the short to mid term. The regulations aim to protect a network of sites known as Natura 2000 that have rare or important habitats and species threatened at a pan European level in order to safeguard biodiversity. The regulations require that:

A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which:



- A) Is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and
- B) Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site,

Must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

## **Habitat Regulations (Regulation 63 (1))**

**2.5** In addition, amendments made to the regulations clarify that neighbourhood plans and development orders in areas where there could be likely significant effects on a Natura 2000 site should be subject to an Appropriate Assessment to demonstrate how impacts will be mitigated.

**2.6** Therefore, as the ONP is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of Natura 2000 sites it will be subject to HRA to determine in the first instance (through a screening process) whether the Plan is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s). If likely significant effects cannot be screened out then an Appropriate Assessment will need to be undertaken. In these cases, the parish council or neighbourhood forum will need to provide such information as the Council may reasonably require in order to undertake the assessment.

**2.7** In the event that the appropriate assessment concludes that adverse effects upon the integrity of a Natura 2000 site cannot be objectively ruled out or mitigated, the Neighbourhood Plan should not be made unless:

- The absence of alternatives solutions can be demonstrated;
- Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest can be demonstrated; and
- Compensatory measures can be secured.

## 3 SEA Screening

**3.1** The neighbourhood forum for the ONP has requested a SEA screening opinion of its Neighbourhood Plan. It is Durham County Council's responsibility to assess whether the draft policies and proposals in the ONP are likely to have 'significant environmental effects'.

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

**3.3** The statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England) will be consulted to determine whether they agree with the conclusion of this screening opinion. The neighbourhood forum will need to make arrangements for undertaking SEA of the ONP and its alternatives in the event that the screening opinion concludes that it is required which is then further qualified by the statutory consultees.

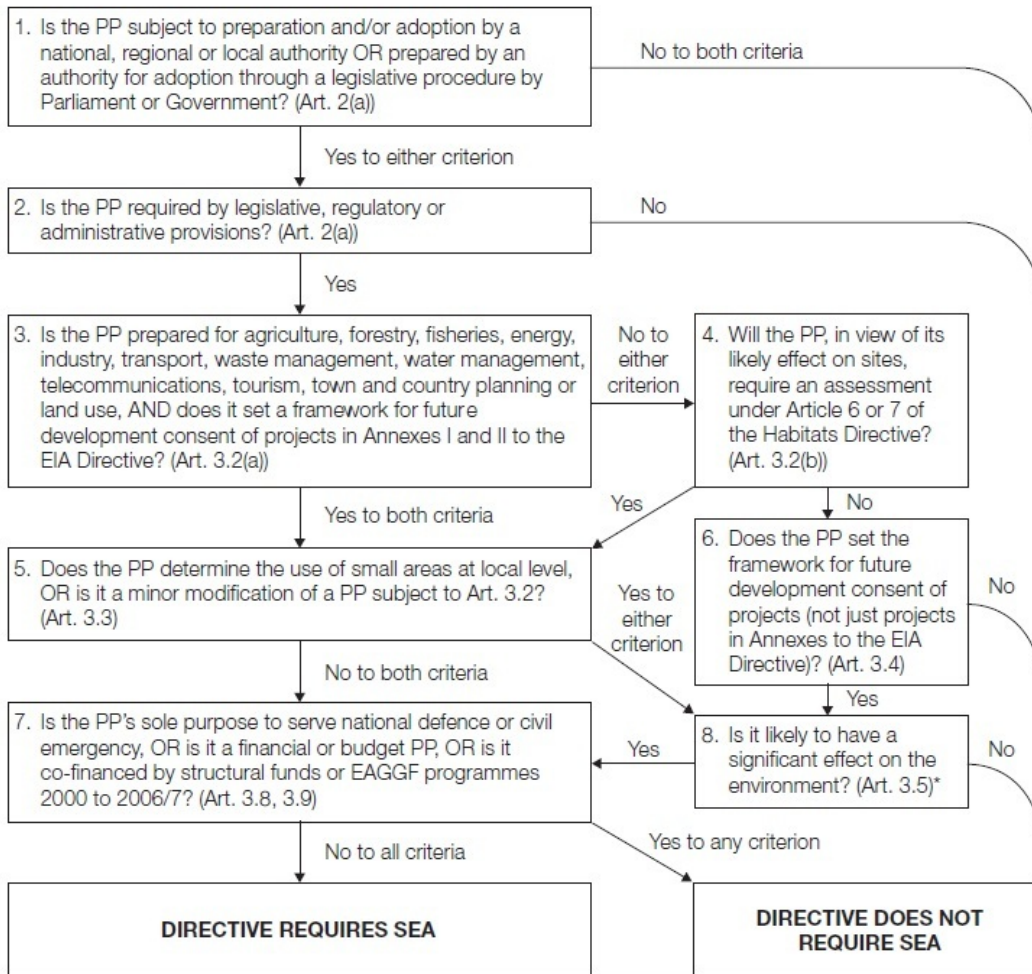
**3.4** The following flowchart outlines the criteria to be taken into account and process to follow when formulating a pre-consultation screening opinion for SEA: <sup>(i)</sup>

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i Source: former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005) [A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)

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

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



\*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

**3.5** The process in figure 1 has been undertaken and the findings can be viewed in Table 5. The questions in table 5 are drawn from the diagram above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied. Table 6 provides specific detail on question 8 in relation to the criteria for determining likely significant effects referred to in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive and regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations.

**Table 5 Assessment 1: Establishing the need for SEA**

Stage	Answer	Reason
1. Is the PP subject to preparation and / or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2 (a))	Y	ONP is not a Development Plan Document, however if the document receives 50% or more 'yes' votes through a referendum it will be adopted by Durham County Council.

# Oakenshaw Neighbourhood Plan SEA & HRA Screening Report

Stage	Answer	Reason
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2 (a))	N	Communities have a right to be able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, however communities are not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. This plan however is subject to 'provisions' that require it to be prepared in a formal way and if adopted would form part of the statutory development plan. Therefore it is considered necessary to answer the following questions to further establish if an SEA is required.
3. Is the PP required 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? (Art.3.2(a))	N	The ONP is prepared for town and country planning or land use but it does NOT set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art.3.2(b))	N	See HRA screening assessment in section 4 of this report
5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	N/A	Not applicable - As the answer to question 4 is 'no', the next applicable question following the flowchart is question 6.
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Y	The ONP sets policies which planning applications within the neighbourhood area must adhere to.
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7 (Art. 3.8, 3.9)	N/A	Not applicable - As the answer to question 6 is 'yes', the next applicable question following the flowchart is question 8.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)	N	Please see Table 2 for further information
<b>Conclusion</b>	The ONP does <b>NOT</b> require SEA	

**Table 6 Assessment 2: Likely Significant Effects on the Environment**

SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment Commentary
<b>The characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan, having regard to:</b>	

SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment Commentary
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 ONP would, if made form part of the statutory Development Plan and as such does contribute to the framework for future consent of projects, albeit these will be localised in nature and are likely to have limited resource implications.
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The ONP will need to be in general conformity with the relevant Development Plan. Therefore the ONP should not significantly influence other plans and programmes
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	<p>It is a condition of Neighbourhood Planning that neighbourhood plans are to demonstrably contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. The ONP contributes toward sustainable development through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Restricting development on land outside the settlement boundary will contribute towards directing new development to locations which are likely to have better access to existing services and facilities or the have the potential to better served by them in future in line with the aspirations of the ONP</li> <li>● Policies supporting the protection of landscape, viewpoints, green spaces, woodland, trees and biodiversity</li> <li>● Encouraging design of new development to be appropriate to the character of the village, surrounding area and protect existing amenity</li> <li>● Aims to meet specific residential needs</li> <li>● Encouraging energy efficiency and use of renewable sources of energy in new housing</li> <li>● Requiring developer contributions towards affordable housing and community facilities, including a new community hub.</li> <li>● Supporting home working, micro businesses and community enterprises, including community renewable energy projects</li> </ul>
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited amenities and facilities within the ONP area</li> <li>● Small parcels of ancient woodland within the ONP area</li> <li>● Route of two Roman roads (Dere Street and an unnamed road) transect the ONP area</li> </ul>

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SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Nature Reserve (Willington North Dene) adjacent to southern boundary</li> <li>Approximately 50% of the neighbourhood area has been identified by the County Durham Landscape Strategy as a Landscape Improvement Priority Area in order to enhance landscapes that have been degraded in the past by coal mining.</li> </ul>
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).	The ONP is not directly connected to the implementation of European legislation
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>	
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>Once made the ONP and its policies will be in effect until 2035. However the ONP does not allocate any land for development and will therefore not have any direct, permanent effects. Rather, the ONP establishes, through its policies, general criteria for testing purposes which seek to restrict urban sprawl, encourage new community amenities and better protect and enhance local distinctiveness, landscape and biodiversity. The ONP is therefore highly unlikely to result in either temporary or permanent significant adverse environmental effects.</p> <p>However, in order to ensure that the ONP policies do deliver the desired outcomes for the sustainability and environmental protection/enhancement of the neighbourhood area it is recommended that they are subject to monitoring to ensure a review of the Plan can be triggered in the event of non-delivery of outcomes or undesired or unintended consequences. Monitoring indicators could be usefully identified against each policy.</p>
The cumulative nature of the effects	No cumulative effects are anticipated, albeit as recommended above, the Plan will benefit from monitoring over time.
The trans boundary nature of the effects	There are not expected to be any significant trans boundary effects arising from the Neighbourhood Plan. Any effects would be localised to the neighbourhood area.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	The provisions within the Plan do not provide unacceptable risks to human health or the environment.
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The ONP area covers approximately 468 hectares, with Oakenshaw village being the main centre of population, comprising a resident population of 470 persons. Any

SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment Commentary
	effects would be localised in nature and limited to the neighbourhood plan area.
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,</li> <li>- exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,</li> <li>- intensive land-use,</li> </ul>	<p>The neighbourhood plan area is assessed as being of low - moderate environmental value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Roman roads</li> <li>• 2 small areas of ancient woodland</li> <li>• 1 non designated local wildlife site within the neighbourhood plan area</li> <li>• 1 designated local nature reserve close adjacent to plan area boundary</li> </ul> <p>There have been no known exceedances of national air quality objectives within the ONP area. The ONP is not expected to exceed environmental limits</p> <p>The ONP does not allocate any land for development. Proposals will be expected to make the most efficient use of land in conformity with the relevant Development Plan.</p>
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The ONP area does not contain any nationally, European Community or internationally protected landscapes.
<b>Assessment 2 Conclusion</b>	The ONP does not allocate land for development and its policies seek to restrict urban sprawl, encourage new community amenities (reducing the need to travel) and better protect and enhance local distinctiveness, landscape and biodiversity. The ONP is therefore not considered likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

## 4 HRA Screening

**4.1** HRA Screening is fundamentally a risk assessment to determine whether a subsequent more detailed stage of assessment, known as 'appropriate assessment' is required. The screening assessment involves an assessment of relevant Natura 2000 sites that could be affected directly or indirectly by the Neighbourhood Plan and its proposals.

### Relevant Natura 2000 sites

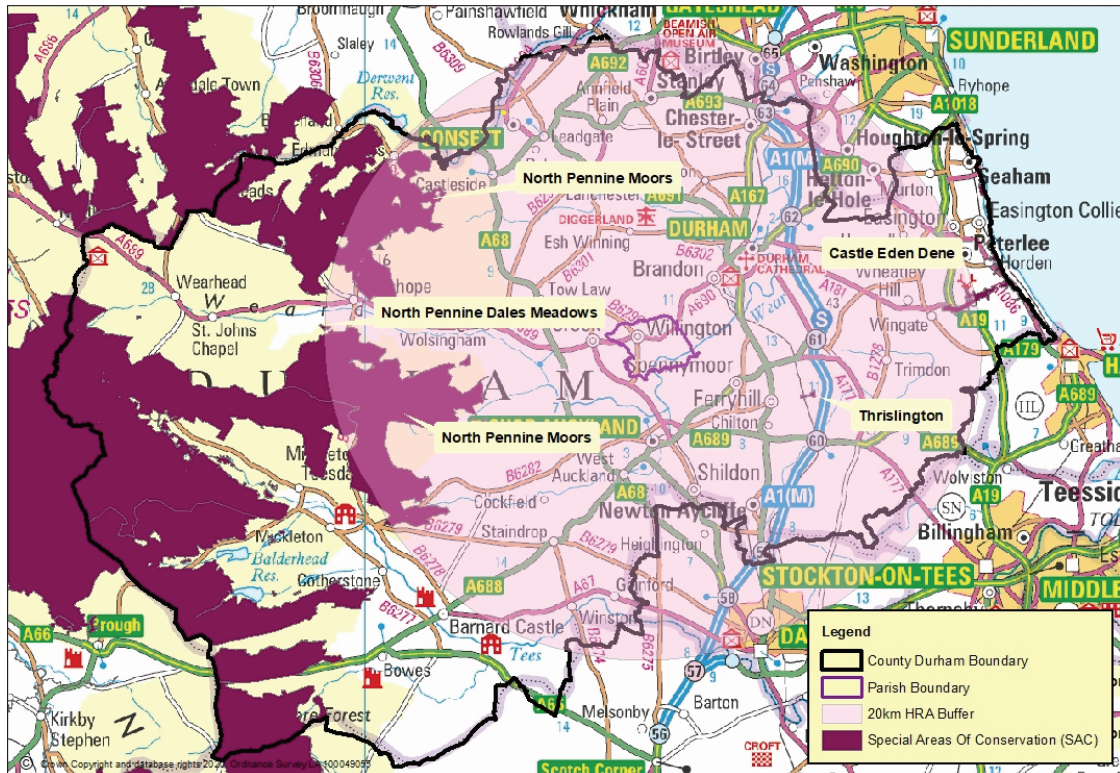
**4.2** In line with the agreed methodology of the HRA of the County Durham Plan, all sites within 20km of the plan area (in this case the neighbourhood plan area) should be included within the HRA screening exercise, in addition to those outwith the 20km buffer that are ecologically / hydrologically linked or are likely to be subject to increased recreational pressure. The following table and maps show the sites falling within the buffer including:

**Table 7 Relevant Natura 2000 sites**

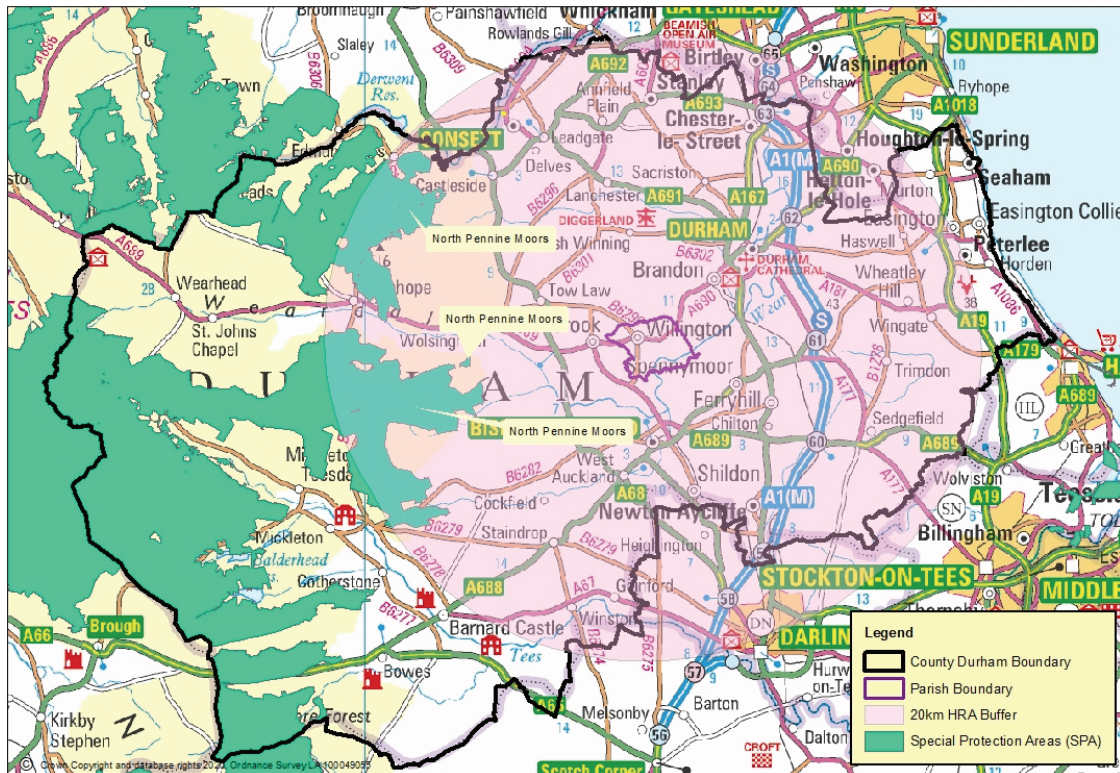
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	Special Protection Area (SPA)
North Pennine Moors	North Pennine Moors
North Pennine Dales Meadows	
Castle Eden Dene	
Thrislington	



**Map 1 Special Areas of Conservation within 20km**



**Map 2 Special Protection Areas within 20km**



**4.3** There are not considered to be any ecological, hydrological or other links / impact pathways which could potentially affect other Natura 2000 sites falling outside the buffer. Therefore, only those shown on the map are included within the screening exercise. The following table provides an overview of each site.

**Table 8 Overview of Natura 2000 Sites**

Site	Description	Qualifying Features	Reported Threats/Pressures	Key Environmental Conditions
North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC	The series of isolated fields that comprise this SAC encompass the range of variation exhibited by Mountain hay meadows in the UK and contains the major part of the remaining UK resources of this habitats type. The grasslands included within the SAC exhibit very limited effects of agricultural improvement and show good conservation of structure and function. A wide range of rare and local meadow species are contained within the meadows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt laden soils (<i>Molinia caeruleae</i>); Purple moor-grass meadows</li> <li>Mountain hay meadows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fertiliser use</li> <li>Change in land management</li> <li>Air pollution</li> <li>Inappropriate cutting/mowing</li> <li>Changes in species distribution</li> <li>Inappropriate timing of grazing</li> <li>Overgrazing/Undergrazing</li> <li>Hydrological changes</li> <li>Inappropriate weed control</li> <li>Invasive species</li> <li>Direct impacts from third party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reduction in area and any consequent fragmentation</li> <li>Appropriate management (grasslands are dependent upon traditional agricultural management, with hay cutting)</li> <li>No exposure to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides</li> <li>Limited air pollution</li> </ul>
North Pennine Moors SAC	The North Pennine Moors (along with the North York Moors) hold much of the upland heathland of northern England. At higher altitudes and to the wetter west and north of the site complex, the heaths grade into extensive areas of blanket bogs. The site is considered as supporting the major area of blanket bog in England. A significant proportion remains active with accumulating peat, although these	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>: Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath</li> <li>European dry heaths</li> <li><i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands</li> <li>Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As for Moor House</li> <li>Upper Teesdale SAC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Control of grazing</li> <li>Appropriate moorland management including management of scrub/tree/bracken encroachment</li> <li>Limited air pollution</li> <li>No drainage of wet areas</li> <li>- maintenance of wet areas</li> <li>Maintenance of water quality - organics/silt form physical disturbance</li> </ul>

Site	Description	Qualifying Features	Reported Threats/Pressures	Key Environmental Conditions
	<p>areas are often bounded by sizeable zones of currently non-active bog, albeit on deep peat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>calaminariae</i>; Grasslands on soils rich in heavy metals</li> <li>• Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands; Montane acid grasslands</li> <li>• Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone</li> <li>• Blanket bogs</li> <li>• Petrifying springs with tufa formation</li> <li>• (<i>Cratoneurion</i>); Hard-water springs depositing lime</li> <li>• Alkaline fens; Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens</li> <li>• Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae and Galepsietalia ladani</i>); Acidic scree</li> <li>• Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; Plants in crevices in base-rich rocks</li> <li>• Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; Plants in crevices on acid rocks</li> <li>• Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited erosion by human impacts (e.g. Recreation)</li> <li>• Very little peat extraction (no mechanised extraction)</li> </ul>

Site	Description	Qualifying Features	Reported Threats/Pressures	Key Environmental Conditions
North Pennine Moors SPA	The habitat of the North Pennine Moors SAC support the qualifying bird species listed in the next column	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British Isles; Western acidic oak woodland</li> <li><i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>; Marsh saxifrage</li> <li><i>Circus cyaneus</i>; Hen harrier (Re-producing)</li> <li><i>Falco columbarius</i>; Merlin (Re-producing)</li> <li><i>Falco peregrinus</i>; Peregrine falcon (Re-producing)</li> <li><i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>; European golden plover (Re-producing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire and fire suppression</li> <li>Grazing</li> <li>Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions</li> <li>Hunting and collection of wild animals including damage caused by game (excessive density) and taking / removal of wild animals</li> <li>Reduced fecundity / genetic depression</li> </ul>	As for North Pennine Moors SAC
Castle Eden Dene SAC	Castle Eden Dene SAC was designated in April 2005 and covers an area of approximately 194 hectares. The SAC represents the most extensively northerly native occurrence of <i>Taxus baccata</i> ; Yew woods in the UK and is one of the best areas in the UK. Extensive yew groves are found in association with <i>Fraxinus-Ulmus</i> ; Ash-elm woodland and it is the only site	<i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles; Yew-dominated woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invasive Species</li> <li>Forestry and Woodland Management</li> <li>Deer</li> <li>Air Pollution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No loss of ancient semi-natural stands</li> <li>At least current area of recent semi-natural stands maintained, although their location may alter.</li> <li>Woodland natural processes and structure / structural diversity maintained</li> </ul>

Site	Description	Qualifying Features	Reported Threats/Pressures	Key Environmental Conditions
Thrislington SAC	<p>selected for yew woodland on magnesian limestone in north-east England.</p> <p>Thrislington SAC is a small site but nonetheless contains the largest of the few surviving stands of CG8 <i>Sesleria albicans</i> - <i>Scabiosa columbaria</i> grassland. This form of calcareous grassland is confined to the Magnesian Limestone of County Durham and Tyne and Wear. It now covers less than 200 hectares and is found mainly as small scattered stands.</p>	<p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air pollution</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Changes to site conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural regeneration to maintain canopy density over a 20 year period</li> <li>• Limited loss of native woodland species to non-native or other external factors (e.g. Pollution, disease)</li> <li>• Limited air pollution</li> <li>• Maintain species, habitats and structures characteristic to the site</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No reduction in extent</li> <li>• Continuous management by seasonally-adjusted grazing and no overgrazing</li> <li>• No fertiliser input</li> <li>• Control of invasive species</li> <li>• Limited air pollution</li> </ul>

## Assessment of Effects

**4.4** Following the identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites to the neighbourhood area, it is then necessary to determine whether any or all of the proposals in the ONP can be eliminated on the basis that they cannot have any conceivable effect on the relevant Natura 2000 sites, e.g. if it is a general policy statement. The following preliminary assessment categories have therefore been assigned to the ONP policies.

**Table 9 Preliminary Assessment Categories**

Category	Sub Category	Description
1. No negative effect	A	Policy or measure will not lead to built development. For example it relates to green infrastructure, design or other qualitative criteria, or it is not a land-use planning policy
	B	Policy or measure may encourage new development but due to development type, distance from Natura 2000 Sites and / or absence of connected impact pathways no negative effect is likely to occur.
	C	Policy or measure supports or may encourage new development that has the potential for adverse effects. However, additional wording can be added to the draft to safeguard against such and enable policy or measure to be screened out.
	D	Policy intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures may have a positive effect on a Natura 2000 Site.
	E	Policy intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a Natura 2000 Site.
	F	Policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on Natura 2000 sites and associated sensitive areas
	G	Policy is similar to existing Development Plan policy which has already been assessed as having no likely significant effects
2. No significant effect	-	No significant effect either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, because effects are trivial or minimal.
3. Likely significant effect alone	-	Policy could impact upon a Natura 2000 site because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development that may be very close to it, or ecologically, hydrologically or physically connected. Alternatively, it may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressure
4. Likely significant effect in combination	-	The policy would have no significant effect alone but the cumulative effects when combined with those of other policies or projects are likely to be significant

**4.5** An assessment of likely significant effects has been undertaken for all measures of the ONP resulting in the following categories and sub categories being assigned.

**Table 10 Categorisation of ONP Policies**

Policy / Measure	North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC	North Pennine Moors SAC	North Pennine Moors SPA	Castle Eden Dene SAC	Thrislington SAC
ENV1: Maintaining the Open Rural Character and Areas of Separation	1A	1A	1A	1A	1A
ENV2: Local Green Spaces	1A	1A	1A	1A	1A
ENV3: Green Infrastructure and Natural Landscape	1A	1A	1A	1A	1A
H1: Small Scale Housing Development	1B	1B	1B	1B	1B
H2: Large Scale Housing Development Requirements	1B	1B	1B	1B	1B
H3: Housing Development outside of the Existing Settlement Boundary of Oakenshaw	1B	1B	1B	1B	1B
H4: Community led housing provision for older or disabled persons	1B	1B	1B	1B	1B
H5: Parking Standards for new residential development	1A	1A	1A	1A	1A
VC1: Community hub	1B	1B	1B	1B	1B



Policy / Measure	North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC	North Pennine Moors SAC	North Pennine Moors SPA	Castle Eden Dene SAC	Thrislington SAC
VC2: Community use of the field west of New Row	1B	1B	1B	1B	1B
Econ1: Development and sustainability of local home-based businesses and facilitating working from home through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.	1B	1B	1B	1B	1B
Econ2: Improving Digital Connectivity	1A	1A	1A	1A	1A
Econ3: Tourism development	1E	1E	1E	1E	1E
Econ 4: Community Renewable Energy and Enterprise projects	1B	1B	1B	1B	1B

## Conclusion

**4.6** Following the preliminary screening assessment it can be concluded that all policies within the ONP can be eliminated from further Likely Significant Effects screening and Appropriate Assessment as they will have no negative effects on the relevant Natura 2000 sites and the policies as drafted seek to protect the natural and built environment.

## 5 Recommendations and Conclusion

**5.1** The conclusions of the SEA and HRA screening assessments are that the ONP will not require Strategic Environmental Assessment under the provisions of the SEA Regulations or Appropriate Assessment under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations.

**5.2** However, in order to ensure that the ONP policies do deliver the desired outcomes for the sustainability and environmental protection/enhancement of the neighbourhood area it is recommended that they are subject to monitoring to ensure a review of the Plan can be triggered in the event of non-delivery of outcomes or undesired or unintended consequences. Monitoring indicators could be usefully identified against each policy.

**5.3** In addition, communities writing neighbourhood plans are in a unique position to contribute to tackling the climate emergency. The Centre for Sustainable Energy has developed guidance for the neighbourhood planning process on this which can be viewed here: [Centre for Sustainable Energy](#) Whilst elements of the draft ONP policies will contribute positively to tackling the climate emergency these could be usefully reviewed against the guidance to determine if further, positive action can be taken.