

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

Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan

September 2023

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## 1. Introduction and purpose of this report

- 1.1 This screening report is an assessment of whether (or not) the contents of the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan (MRNP) 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. A SEA is required if the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
- 1.2 This report will also screen to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. A HRA is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites) as a result of the implementation of a plan/project. As a general 'rule of thumb' it is identified that sites with pathways of 10-15km of the plan/project boundary should be included with an HRA. [Appendix 1](#) shows the plan boundary in relation to the 15km radius of Natura 2000 sites.
- 1.3 This screening assessment has taken place on the draft 'Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan (July 2023)' as provided by Mavesyn Ridware Parish Council for the purposes of this screening assessment in July 2023. The purpose of the MRNP is to provide a set of statutory planning policies to guide development within the neighbourhood area over the life of the plan. The Plan provides a series of policies under several themes/areas which it hopes will guide development.
- 1.4 The legislative background set out in the following section outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise. [Section 3](#) provides a screening assessment of both the likely significant environmental effects of the MRNP and the need for SEA. [Section 4](#) provides a screening assessment of both the likely significant effects of the implementation of the MRNP and the need for a Habitats Regulation Assessment.
- 1.5 This report will be split into two sections, the first covering the screening for the SEA and the second will cover the screening process for the HRA. A summary of findings and conclusions for both screening processes can be found at [Section 5](#).

## 2. Context and baseline

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC and was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, or SEA Regulations for short. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ (ODPM 2005).
- 2.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required Local Authorities to produce Sustainability Appraisals (SA) for all local development documents to meet the requirement of the EU Directive on SEA. Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that there is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a Sustainability Appraisal. However, the guidance notes that in ‘limited circumstances’ where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects then it may require Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken to assess whether the plan is likely to have such effects (Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 11-027-20190722). To determine whether a plan might have such effects it should be screened at an early stage of its preparation (Paragraph: 028 Reference ID: 11-028-20150209). The purpose of this report is to determine if SEA is required for the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3 The District Council is required to consult three statutory consultation bodies designated within the regulations, these are Historic England, Natural England, and Environment Agency on whether a SEA is required. Details of the consultation bodies responses can be found at [Appendix 3](#).

### Habitat Regulation Assessment

- 2.4 It is required by article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive and by regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) that an appropriate assessment is carried out with regard to the Conservation Objectives of the European Sites and with reference to other plans and projects to identify if any significant effect is likely for any European Site.
- 2.5 To fulfil the legal requirements to identify if likely significant effects will occur with the implementation of the MRNP upon European Sites (Natura 2000 sites) a screening assessment has been undertaken and is set out in [Section 4](#) of this report.
- 2.6 The legislation requires where there is a “risk” of a significant effect on a European Site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects then there will be requirement for the plan to progress from HRA screening to an Appropriate Assessment. This is known as the precautionary principle.

### Brexit and SEA requirements

- 2.7 The UK left the European Union on 31 January 2020. Under the UK-EU withdrawal agreement, a transition period ended on 31 December 2020, during which time all EU law continued to apply in the UK. During the transition period the UK needed to continue

following domestic law that implements EU law, or directly applicable EU law that is given effect through the EUWA 2018. Beyond the transition period, the SEA Regulations, which previously implemented the requirements of the SEA Directive in England, will continue to apply as before unless and until new legislation is introduced.

### Strategic Planning Context – Lichfield District Local Plan

- 2.8 The basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is examined require it to be in 'general conformity' with the strategic policies contained within the development plan for the area. Through its strategic policies, the Local Plan effectively defines the parameters within which the neighbourhood plan may operate.
- 2.9 Local Plans are subject to SEA (generally incorporated through a Sustainability Appraisal) and HRA. In screening the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan it is therefore relevant to consider the strategic policy context, to enable the identification of environmental effects not already considered and addressed through the Local Plan-making process.
- 2.10 The adopted Local Plan in Lichfield District consists of:
- Local Plan Strategy (adopted 2015) – sets the overarching spatial strategy for Lichfield District between 2008 and 2029 including the levels of development required and a suite of Development Management policies to guide development in the district.
  - Local Plan Allocations (adopted 2019) – is a delivery vehicle for the Local Plan and identifies non-strategic allocations to meet the requirements established within the Local Plan Strategy.
- 2.11 The District Council has been progressing a review of its adopted Local Plan since 2018. The Local Plan 2040 was submitted for examination in June 2022. In October 2022 the appointed planning inspectors agreed to 'pause' the examination of the Local Plan 2040 so that the District Council could ensure appropriate resources were in place to continue with the examination. At the time of preparing this screening report the examination of the Local Plan 2040 remained 'paused'.

### Description of the Plan or Programme

- 2.12 The MRNP has been prepared by a steering group on behalf of Mavesyn Ridware Parish Council (the Qualifying Body) and covers the entirety of the Parish Council area. The plan has been prepared to cover a period until 2040 which is aligned with the plan period of the emerging Lichfield District Local Plan.
- 2.13 The Plan includes twelve policies across four policy themes which are: Living and Working; Place and Heritage; Green Environment; and Infrastructure. Included within the plan are proposals to allocate land for residential development and extend the village settlement boundary to accommodate this, the allocation of land for an extension to the Church burial grounds and the allocation of Local Green Spaces. Further policies are included which support growth in the form of employment and community facilities, local emergency schemes, design, and protection of the historic and natural environment.

### 3. Strategic Environmental Assessment screening

- 3.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental effects of a plan before it is made. The SEA screening determines whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be produced.
- 3.2 In general terms, a neighbourhood plan may require full SEA where its policies and proposals are likely to result in significant environmental effects, particularly where such effects have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

#### Criteria for Assessing the effects of the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan

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

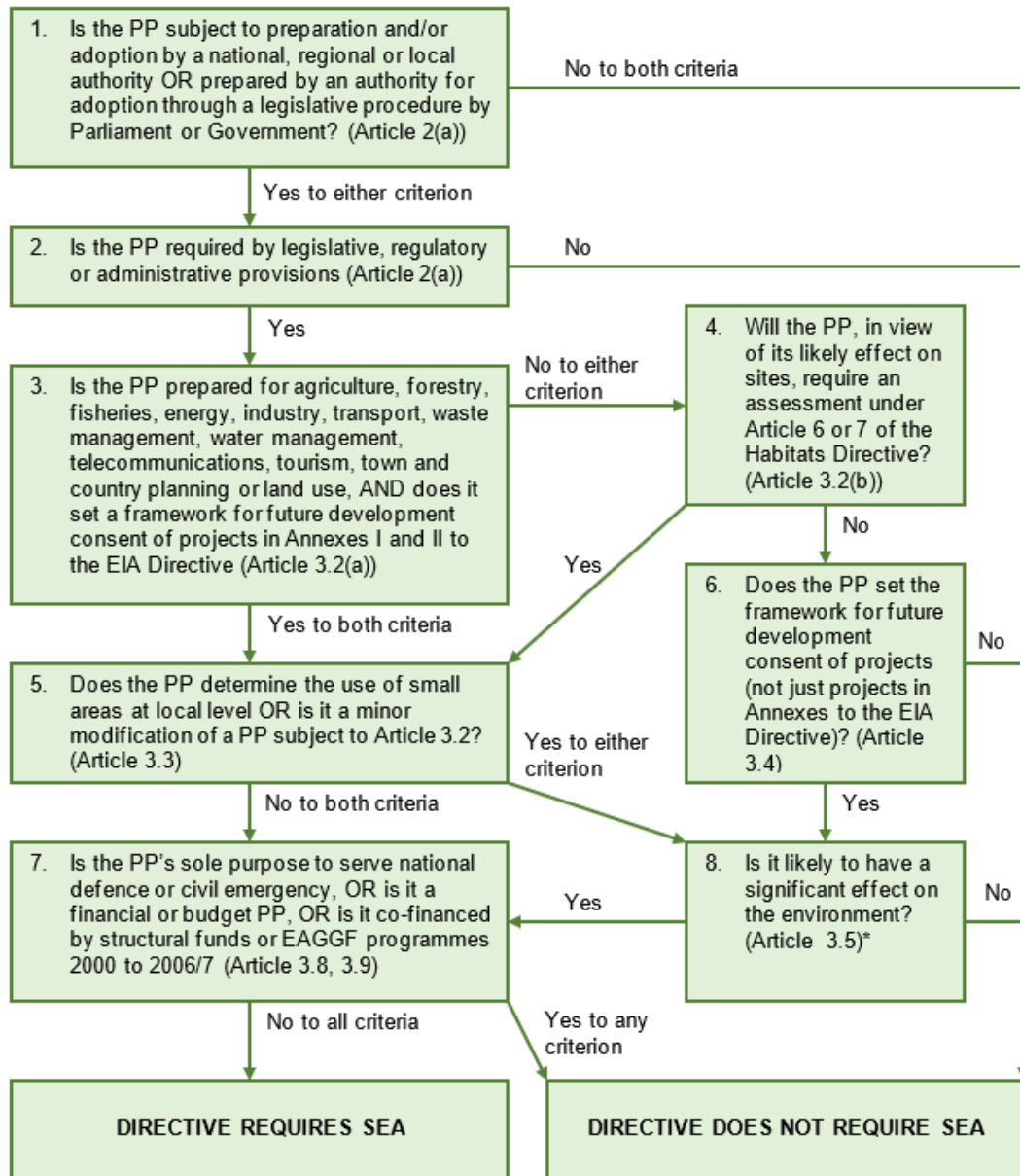
Source: Annex II of SEA Directive

2001/42/EC

## Assessment

- 3.4 It is required by the Localism Act that Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. The development plan for Lichfield District currently comprises of the adopted Local Plan Strategy and Local Plan Allocations documents. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with these policies. The Local Plan Strategy and Local Plan Allocation documents were subject to full Sustainability Appraisal which included a SEA assessment. This ensured that there were no likely significant effects which would be produced from the implementation of the Local Plan and if so, ensured mitigation measures were in place.
- 3.5 Guidance upon SEA's written by the Department of the Environment produces a diagram to the process for screening a planning document to ascertain whether a full SEA is required, see figure 1.

Figure 1. Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes (PPs)



\* 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.

3.6 The process in figure 1 has been followed and the findings can be viewed in Table 1. Table 1 shows the assessment of whether the MRNP will require a full SEA. The questions in table 1 are drawn from the diagram above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

Table 1: Establishing the need for SEA

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
1. Is the PP (plan or programme) 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))	<b>Yes</b>	This Neighbourhood Plan is prepared by Mavesyn Ridware Parish Council (as the Qualifying Body) under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. Once the plan is 'made' subject to examination and having received 50%+ or more 'yes' votes through a referendum it will be adopted by Lichfield District Council and become part of the Statutory Development Plan for the area.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	<b>Yes</b>	Communities have a right to produce a Neighbourhood Plan; however, communities are not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative purposes to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. However, once 'made' the MRNP would form part of the statutory development plan and will be used when making decisions on planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area. Therefore, it is considered necessary to answer the following questions to determine further if an SEA is required.
3. Is the PP 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? (Art 3.2(a))	<b>Yes</b>	The MRNP is prepared for town and country planning and land use. The plan sets out a framework for future development in the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Area. Once 'made' the MRNP would form part of the statutory development plan and will be used when making decisions on planning applications which may include development which may fall under Annex I and II of the EIA directive.
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?(Art. 3.2 (b))	<b>Yes</b>	The Neighbourhood Plan could potentially have an impact on internationally designated wildlife sites covered by the Habitats Regulations. The neighbourhood plan allocates sites which are not identified in the adopted Local Plan. See screening assessment for HRA in following section 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)	<b>Yes</b>	The MRNP does identify land for allocation at the local level, including land for residential development, extension to the burial ground and eight Local Green Spaces. Once 'made' the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan would form part of the statutory development plan and be used when making decisions on planning applications of small areas at the local level.
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)	<b>Yes</b>	The MRNP, once the 'made', forms part of the statutory development plan and will be used to determine planning applications within the designated neighbourhood area. Therefore, the neighbourhood plan will set the framework for future developments.

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve the 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)	<b>N/A</b>	The Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with any of these categories of plan.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	<b>Yes</b>	The MRNP could potentially have a significant effect on the environment not just within the neighbourhood area but also within the District. The plan allocated a site for residential development, extension to the burial ground and the allocation of a Local Green Spaces. The MRNP could also impact upon Cannock Chase SAC a Natura 2000 sites, (see HRA section). The adopted Local Plan includes Policy NR7 which ensures that before development is permitted it must demonstrate that it (alone or in combination) will not have an adverse effect, whether direct or indirect, upon the integrity of the SAC having regard to avoidance or mitigation measures. A case by case assessment of the MRNP is required.

3.7 Several the criteria above suggest that SEA of the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan may be required. Criteria 8 of the assessment in Figure 1 and Table 1 considered that the Neighbourhood Plan may have a significant effect on the environment depending on the proposals within the plan and a case-by-case assessment may be made. The criteria for undertaking such an assessment are drawn from Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive as set out at paragraph 3.3 of this report.

3.8 The following assessment will consider the likelihood of the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan (provided for the purposes of this report) to have significant effects on the environment.

Table 2: Assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Summary of Significant effects
<b>The characteristics of the plans, having regard to;</b>	
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.	Once 'made'; the MRNP will set out the framework which will be used to determine proposals for development within the neighbourhood area regarding, for example, housing, commercial uses, community facilities and protection of specific open spaces. The plan provides protection to the character of the area which will influence development across the plan period. The plan seeks to allocate land for residential development, extension to the church burial ground and designate a number of Local Green Spaces. There therefore is the potential for an effect ion the

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Summary of Significant effects
	environment resulting from the proposals within the plan.
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	<p>The MRNP must be in general conformity with the Lichfield District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The MRNP only provides policies for the area it covers and the Local Plan Strategy and Local Plan Allocations will provide the necessary strategic context when determining planning applications. The adopted Local Plan does not identify any of the settlements within Mavesyn Ridware Parish as settlements to take a significant proportion of growth.</p> <p>The emerging Local Plan is currently submitted for examination. The emerging plan does not identify any of the settlements within Mavesyn Ridware Parish as a settlement to take a significant proportion of growth.</p> <p>As such the MRNP is would not influence other plans and programmes to a significant degree.</p>
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	<p>Any Neighbourhood Plan is required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and therefore the likelihood of significant effects on the environment is minimised. This plan does seek to allocated sites; for residential and commercial development, extension to the burial ground and a number of Local Green Spaces. As such the plan is likely to have an impact on the environment.</p>
Environmental problems relevant to the plan.	<p>Any environmental impacts of the proposals within the MRNP are likely to be minimal, if they arise at all. The impacts of the proposals within the MRNP are likely to be minimal due to the scale of development proposed. Detail within the plan identifies that development proposals have been assessed to avoid and/or mitigate for any environmental problems which may impact.</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>The MRNP has to be in general conformity with the Local Plan. The adopted Local Plan Strategy and Local Plan Allocations has had regard to European Community legislation on the environment and therefore this legislation will not be relevant for the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
<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>Development is proposed and supported within the MRNP and therefore an element of environmental change will occur, the impacts of which will depend upon the proposals and will be subject to the policies within the adopted Local Plan and the MRNP. The Local Plan seeks to guide development to ensure it is delivered to high levels of sustainability. Further the neighbourhood plan seeks to result in positive environmental</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Summary of Significant effects
	effects through polices to protect the environment, landscape and open spaces.
The cumulative nature of the effects.	The cumulative effects of proposals within the MRNP are unlikely to be significant on the local environment given the relatively minimal level of development proposed. However, the level of development proposed does exceed that within the adopted Local Plan as no such requirement was provided, however the level of development is minimal and seeks to meet an identified local need.
The trans boundary nature of the effects.	Effects will be local with limited effects on neighbouring areas as the policies within the MRNP only apply to the designated area.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	The MRNP is not expected to pose any risks to human health or the environment. The effects of the policies may even enhance these elements.
The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The scale of development proposed through the MRNP is small and therefore effects are likely to be localised. It is unlikely that the effects of proposals within the neighbourhood plan will be large scale and extensive.
<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>The MRNP is likely to affect the value and vulnerability of the area in relation to the special natural characteristics or cultural heritage due to the impacts upon the Cannock Chase SAC through increasing recreational pressure on the site. The plan promotes greater residential development than is set out within the adopted Local Plan. The adopted Local Plan includes policies to mitigate for the impacts of recreational pressure on the SAC. The MRNP and LPS policies would be used to ensure mitigation is secured as such any affects are to be mitigated.</p> <p>The level of development proposed through the MRNP is unlikely to lead to intensive land use and as such do not affect the value and vulnerability of the area.</p> <p>Policies within the MRNP seeks to protect and enhance local assets, improving the sustainability and quality of the local environment and providing protection to historic assets.</p>
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	The Cannock Chase SAC and AONB lies within 15km of the MRNP boundary. Developments within the Cannock Chase SAC 15km zone of influence will in combination have an effect on the integrity of the SAC. The MRNP would need to be in accordance with the adopted Policy NR7 which ensures that before development is permitted it must demonstrate that it (alone or in combination) will not have an adverse effect, whether direct or indirect, upon the integrity of the SAC having regard to avoidance or mitigation measures.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Summary of Significant effects
	The MRNP boundary is within 15km of the Cannock Extension Canal SAC, West Midlands Mosses, Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC, Humber Estuary and outside the River Mease SAC water catchment. There will be no significant effects from the proposals within the MRNP on these SAC.

### Screening outcome

- 3.9 The MRNP allocates sites for development/re-development, the extension of the church burial ground and several Local Green Spaces. Specifically the allocations for the residential development at Hill Ridware and possible redevelopment at Blithbury is for development that is not specifically set out within the adopted Local Plan. As the plan as drafted seeks to allocate site(s) for development it is considered that SEA is required to assist in illustrating how these decisions were arrived at.
- 3.10 The conclusions of the above screening assessment on Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan indicate that Strategic Environmental Assessment will be required.

## 4. Habitat Regulation Assessment screening

- 4.1 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the assessment required for any plan or project to assess the potential impacts against the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 wildlife sites. The assessment must determine whether the plans would adversely affect, or are likely to affect, the integrity of a site(s) in terms of its nature conservation objectives. Where negative effects are identified other options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.
- 4.2 Under Criteria 4 of Figure 1 and Table 1 it was concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan may have an impact upon internationally designated sites and as such a 'case by case' assessment is required.
- 4.3 The HRA process is generally divided into three stages. The initial stage of the HRA process is called the screening stage and determines if there are any likely significant effects or risk of significant effects possible as a result of the implementation of the plan. If there are significant effects the plan will need to undertake an Appropriate Assessment. The screening process should provide a description of the plan and an identification of the Natura 2000 sites which may be affected by the plan and assess the significance of any possible effects on the identified sites.
- 4.4 The Lichfield Local Plan Strategy was subject to HRA during its production. This assessment looked at all internationally designated sites which could be impacted by development within Lichfield District. [The Habitat Regulations Assessment: Lichfield District & Tamworth Borough](#) (May 2012) was updated by the [Addendum to Habitat Regulations Assessment](#) (January 2014) which concluded that the Local Plan Strategy (as modified by the proposed Main Modifications) would have no likely significant effects upon European sites. The Local Plan Allocations document has also been supported by HRA during its production and follows from the Local Plan Strategy. The Habitat Regulations Assessment [Habitat Regulations Assessment \(January 2018\)](#) was published alongside the allocations document.
- 4.5 This section of the report provides a "screening" assessment for the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan. It looks at the potential impacts of the plan's proposals on European Sites within 15km of the Neighbourhood Plan area; these sites are illustrated at [Appendix 1](#). The following screening assessment will determine if the MRNP will have any likely significant effects to determine whether the subsequent stages will be required.

### Relevant Natura 2000 sites

- 4.6 As a general 'rule of thumb' it is identified that sites with pathways of 10-15km of the plan/project boundary should be included with an HRA. The relevant Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Area are:
- Cannock Chase SAC – approximately 4.3km to the west.
  - Cannock Extension Canal – approximately 11.3km to the south-west.
  - River Mease SAC – approximately 9.2km to the south-east.



- Pasturefields Salt Marsh – approximately 9km to the north-west.
- West Midlands Meres and Mosses – approximately 8km to the north-west.
- Humber Estuary SAC River Trent whose catchment is part of the Humber Estuary SAC is within the MRNP boundary.

4.7 The Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC), The Cannock Extension Canal SAC and the River Mease SAC are within a 15km radius of the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Area boundary. However, the MRNP boundary is not within the River Mease water catchment area, the River Trent whose water catchment is part of the Humber Estuary SAC is within the MRNP boundary. Therefore, the HRA screening assessment needs to identify if any likely significant effects will be caused by the implementation of the plan. This assessment has been undertaken having regard to the results and information in the HRA prepared for the adopted Local Plan and is set out at Table 3.

Table3: Sites within 15km of the Neighbourhood Area<sup>1</sup>

Name of Site	Reason for Designation	Conservation Objectives	Identified Impacts
<p><b>Cannock Chase SAC</b></p>	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- European dry heaths.</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix.</li> <li>- Wet heathland with cross leaved heath.</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats.</li> <li>- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and,</li> <li>- The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely.</li> </ul>	<p>Visitor pressures include dog walking, horse riding, mountain biking and off-track activities such as orienteering, all of which cause disturbance and result in erosion, new track creation and vegetation damage. Bracken invasion is significant but is being controlled. Birch and pine scrub, much of the latter from surrounding commercial plantations, is continually invading the site, and must be controlled. High visitor usage and the fact that a significant proportion of the site is Common Land, requiring Secretary of State approval before fencing can take place, means that the reintroduction of sustainable management in the form of livestock grazing has many problems. Cannock Chase overlies coal measures which have been deep-mined. Mining fissures continue to appear across the site even though mining has ceased, and this is thought to detrimentally affect site hydrology.</p> <p>Furthermore, the underlying Sherwood Sandstone is a major aquifer with water abstracted for public and industrial uses and the effects of this on the wetland features of the Chase are not fully understood.</p> <p>Furthermore Natural England have since raised concern in regard to the potential impact on air quality from both the construction phase of development and any increase in vehicular traffic in proximity of the SAC. Increased traffic can increase the airborne concentration of nitrogen oxides (No<sub>x</sub>) and ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) and subsequent rate of nitrogen deposition from the atmosphere. This can lead to nutrient</p>

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from the Habitat Regulations Assessment: Lichfield District & Tamworth Borough (May 2012)

			enrichment and acidification of soils, encouraging more tolerant ruderal species at the expense of sensitive plan, lower plan and invertebrate communities. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Cannock Extension Canal SAC</b>	<p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Floating water-plantain Luronium natans.</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent and distribution of habitats of qualifying species</li> <li>- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species</li> <li>- The supporting processes on the habitats of qualifying species rely</li> <li>- The populations of qualifying species, and,</li> <li>- The distribution of qualifying species within the site</li> </ul>	<p>The population of Luronium natans in this cul-de-sac canal is dependent upon a balanced level of boat traffic. If the canal is not used, the abundant growth of other aquatic macrophytes may shade-out the Luronium natans unless routinely controlled by cutting. An increase in recreational activity would be to the detriment of Luronium natans. Existing discharges of surface water run-off, principally from roads, cause some reduction in water quality.</p>
<b>River Mease SAC</b>	<p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation</li> </ul>	<p>Maintain the river as a favourable habitat for floating formations of water Crowfoot (ranunculus), populations of bull head, spined loach and white clawed crayfish and the river and adjoining land as habitat for populations of otter.</p>	<p>The River Mease is an unusually semi-natural system in a largely rural landscape, dominated by intensive agriculture. Water quality and quantity are vital to the European interests, whilst competition for water resources is high. Diffuse pollution and excessive sedimentation are catchment-wide issues which have the potential to affect the site. The SSSI assessment report undertaken in 2007 notes</p>

<sup>2</sup> Extract from Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Lichfield District Local Plan 2040 (publication version).

	<p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spined loach <i>Cobitis taenia</i></li> <li>- Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i></li> </ul> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i></li> <li>- Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i></li> </ul>		<p>the site's adverse condition and identifies the following issues: drainage, invasive freshwater species, water pollution – agriculture/run-off, water pollution – discharge. Significant new development could take place within the catchment as a result of new housing and employment development in North-West Leicestershire, South Derbyshire and East Staffs which may impact upon water quality and quantity. The continuing creation of the National Forest will lead to further catchment wide changes in land use.</p>
<p><b>Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC</b></p>	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <p>Inland salt meadows; inland saltmarshes *Priority feature</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats</li> <li>- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and</li> <li>- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely</li> </ul>	<p>This inland saltmarsh is dependent upon traditional agricultural management, with livestock grazing and no, or minimal use, of agricultural chemicals. It is also dependent upon the brine source being maintained and whilst the hydrogeology of the site is not fully understood, it would be likely to be vulnerable to any abstractions of water from the underground aquifer. The site is managed by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust with support from Natural England's Reserve Enhancement Scheme.</p>

<p><b>West Midland Mosses &amp; Chartley Moss SAC</b></p>	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds; Acid peat- stained lakes and ponds</li> </ul> <p>Transition mires and quaking bogs; very wet mires often identified by unstable ‘quaking’ surface.</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats</li> <li>- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and</li> </ul> <p>The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely</p>	<p>Site threatened by nutrient enrichment, including atmospheric deposition of nutrients. A Management Agreement controls agricultural run-off at Chartley Moss. Trees at this site trap airborne nutrients and provide roost areas for birds, but the enrichment effect of both is only localised. All parts of that site are vulnerable to recreational disturbance, particularly the northern portion which is a scout camp.</p>
<p><b>Humber Estuary</b></p>	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Estuaries.</li> <li>- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide.</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time.</li> </ul>	<p>Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time - for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Estuaries, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, of which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p>	<p>The Humber Estuary is subject to the impacts of human activities (past and present) as well as ongoing processes such as sea level rise and climate change. Management intervention is therefore necessary to enable the estuary to recover and to secure the ecological resilience required to respond to both natural and anthropogenic change. Key issues include coastal squeeze, impacts on the sediment budget, and geomorphological structure and function of the estuary (due to sea level rise, flood defence works, dredging, and the construction, operation and maintenance of ports, pipelines, and other infrastructure), changes in water quality and flows, pressure from additional built development, and damage and disturbance arising from access, recreation, and other activities. Coastal squeeze is being addressed through the development and implementation of the Humber Flood</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coastal lagoons * Priority feature.</li> <li>- Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand.</li> <li>- Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>).</li> <li>- Embryonic shifting dunes.</li> <li>- Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes').</li> <li>- Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes') * Priority feature.</li> <li>- Dunes with <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>.</li> <li>- River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Grey seal <i>Halichoerus grypus</i>.</p>	<p>Coastal lagoons, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Embryonic shifting dunes, which are considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes"), for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"), for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Dunes with <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>, which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p>	<p>Risk Management Strategy. All proposals for flood defence, development, dredging, abstractions, and discharges which require consent from any statutory body, and land use plans which may have impacts upon the site are subject to assessment under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &amp;c.) Regulations 1994 (the "Habitats Regulations"). Diffuse pollution will be addressed through a range of measures including implementation of the Waste Water Framework Directive and Catchment Sensitive Farming initiatives.</p> <p>Other issues are addressed via a range of measures including regulation of on-site land management activities and implementation of the Humber Management Scheme, developed by all relevant statutory bodies to assist in the delivery of their duties under the Habitats Regulations.</p>
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		<p>Petromyzon marinus, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Lampetra fluviatilis for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Halichoerus grypus for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p>	
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- 4.8 The likelihood of significant effects has been assessed in relation to the specific features and environmental conditions of the protected sites, as could be affected by the MRNP, or in combination with other known plans, taking particular account of the sites conservation objectives. As part of establishing what effects are significant, the probability of impact, duration of the impact, frequency of any impact and reversibility of impact have been considered
- 4.9 Tables 4-9 set out the assessment based on the effects of the MRNP on the four sites detailed above.



Table 4: Cannock Chase SAC

	Direct Habitat loss	Impact on protected species	Air Quality	Water Quality	Recreational Pressures	Water Quantity	Change in Surrounding Land Use	Invasive Species
Is MRNP likely to impact upon this site	Potential	Potential	Potential	No	Yes	No	No	No
Possible effects in combination with other plans	The site is influenced by traffic and visitors from a wide area. Evidence has been produced which demonstrates that any new development within 15km of the SAC will, alone or in combination, have an impact upon the integrity of the SAC due to the potential for increasing visitors to the SAC. Possible impact on air quality of both the construction phase and any increase in vehicular traffic.							
Assessment of effects and why not considered significant	The Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Area is approximately 4.3km east of the Cannock Chase SAC. Evidence has highlighted there are vulnerabilities from recreational pressures caused predominantly by increased use from new residential development but also from other forms of development within a 15km radius of the SAC. The MRNP as drafted includes policies relating to development/allocations for residential development which would fall within 15km of the SAC and as such would have a likely significant effect. However, the adopted Local Plan, which the neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with, includes policy NR7 (Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation) which requires development to demonstrate that alone or in combination with other developments it will not have an adverse effect whether direct or indirect upon the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC. Local Plan Policy NR7 ensures that any development within the neighbourhood area will need to demonstrate that it will not have adverse effects upon the SAC.							
Conclusion: No significant effects								

Table 5: Cannock Extension Canal SAC

	Direct Habitat loss	Impact on protected species	Air Quality	Water Quality	Recreational Pressures	Water Quantity	Change in Surrounding Land Use	Invasive Species
Is MRNP likely to impact upon this site	No	No	Potential	No	No	No	No	No

Possible effects in combination with other plans	Possible impact on air quality of both the construction phase and any increase in vehicular traffic.
Assessment of effects and why not considered significant	The Mavesyn Ridware is Neighbourhood area 11.3km from the SAC. Development within the neighbourhood area would not have a direct impact upon the habitat, any protected species, air, and water quality of this site nor would any policies within the plan as drafted have a direct impact upon the site.
Conclusion: No significant effects	

Table 6: River Mease SAC

	Direct Habitat loss	Impact on protected species	Air Quality	Water Quality	Recreational Pressures	Water Quantity	Change in Surrounding Land Use	Invasive Species
Is MRNP likely to impact upon this site	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Possible effects in combination with other plans	None. The adopted Local Plan includes policy to ensure that development is only permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will not be an adverse effect upon the integrity of the River Mease SAC.							
Assessment of effects and why not considered significant	Whilst the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan Area is within 15km of the River Mease SAC, it is outside of the River Mease SAC catchment area. As such no significant effects are likely.							
Conclusion: No significant effects								

Table 7: Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC

	Direct Habitat loss	Impact on protected species	Air Quality	Water Quality	Recreational Pressures	Water Quantity	Change in Surrounding Land Use	Invasive Species
Is MRNP likely to impact upon this site	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Potential</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Possible effects in combination with other plans	Possible impact on air quality of both the construction phase and any increase in vehicular traffic.							
Assessment of effects and why not considered significant	The vulnerabilities of the site are to changes in water quality and water quantity, the LPNP proposes no development and no changes to water quality or water quantity will arise.							
<i>Conclusion: No significant effects</i>								

Table 8: West Midland Mosses and Chartley Moss SAC

	Direct Habitat loss	Impact on protected species	Air Quality	Water Quality	Recreational Pressures	Water Quantity	Change in Surrounding Land Use	Invasive Species
Is MRNP likely to impact upon this site	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Potential</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Possible effects in combination with other plans	Possible impact on air quality of both the construction phase and any increase in vehicular traffic.							
Assessment of effects and why	The vulnerability of the site arises from localised agricultural run-off, water quality, water quantity and recreational disturbance. The MRNP proposes no development and due to the distance of the Parish from this SAC no significant in combination effects will arise.							

not considered significant	
<i>Conclusion: No significant effects</i>	

Table 9: Humber Estuary SAC

	Direct Habitat loss	Impact on protected species	Air Quality	Water Quality	Recreational Pressures	Water Quantity	Change in Surrounding Land Use	Invasive Species
Is MRNP likely to impact upon this site	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Possible effects in combination with other plans	None - The site is currently managed as a National Nature Reserve. It would be vulnerable to on site physical alterations to the water quality and quantity. There are many plans still being developed along the length of the river system.							
Assessment of effects and why not considered significant	Site is over 20km from the MRNP boundary. Development proposals within the neighbourhood area will not affect the site physically as any effects would be through discharges into the River Tame and Trent as this eventually flows to the Humber. As the MRNP proposes only limited growth than the Local Plan it is unlikely this position would change.							
<i>Conclusion: No significant effects</i>								

## Screening Outcome

- 4.10 Tables 4 to 9 do not identify any significant effects upon the identified European sites as a result of the MRNP (as published at the date of this report)
- 4.11 [Appendix 2](#) sets out a detailed assessment of the likely significant effects on European sites as a result of each policy within the MRNP. The assessment concludes that none of the policies within the MRNP are likely to have significant impacts upon the European sites identified within the assessment.
- 4.12 The Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan proposes only limited development, which whilst within the zone of influence of the Cannock Chase SAC, as identified in table 4 there is no significant effects. The neighbourhood plan will need to be in broad conformity with the adopted Local Plan and as such Policy NR7 ensures which requires development to demonstrate that alone or in combination with other developments it will not have an adverse effect whether direct or indirect upon the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC.
- 4.13 The conclusions of the screening assessment above indicate that it is not considered that a full HRA assessment for the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan is not required.
- 4.14 Following consultation with the statutory consultees, Natural England disagree with the outcome of the above screening assessment and consider that further stages of HRA will be required. This is further detailed within the following section of this report.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations of the screening assessments

- 5.1 This report contains the detail of the assessment of the need for the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment as required by the SEA Directive and Appropriate Assessment as required by the Habitats Directive.
- 5.2 The assessment of both of these requirements has been undertaken on the Draft Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan produced in July 2023 for the purposes of this screening assessment. As such if the content of the Neighbourhood Plan is significantly changed there may be the need for a further screening exercise to be undertaken on any revised version of the plan.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

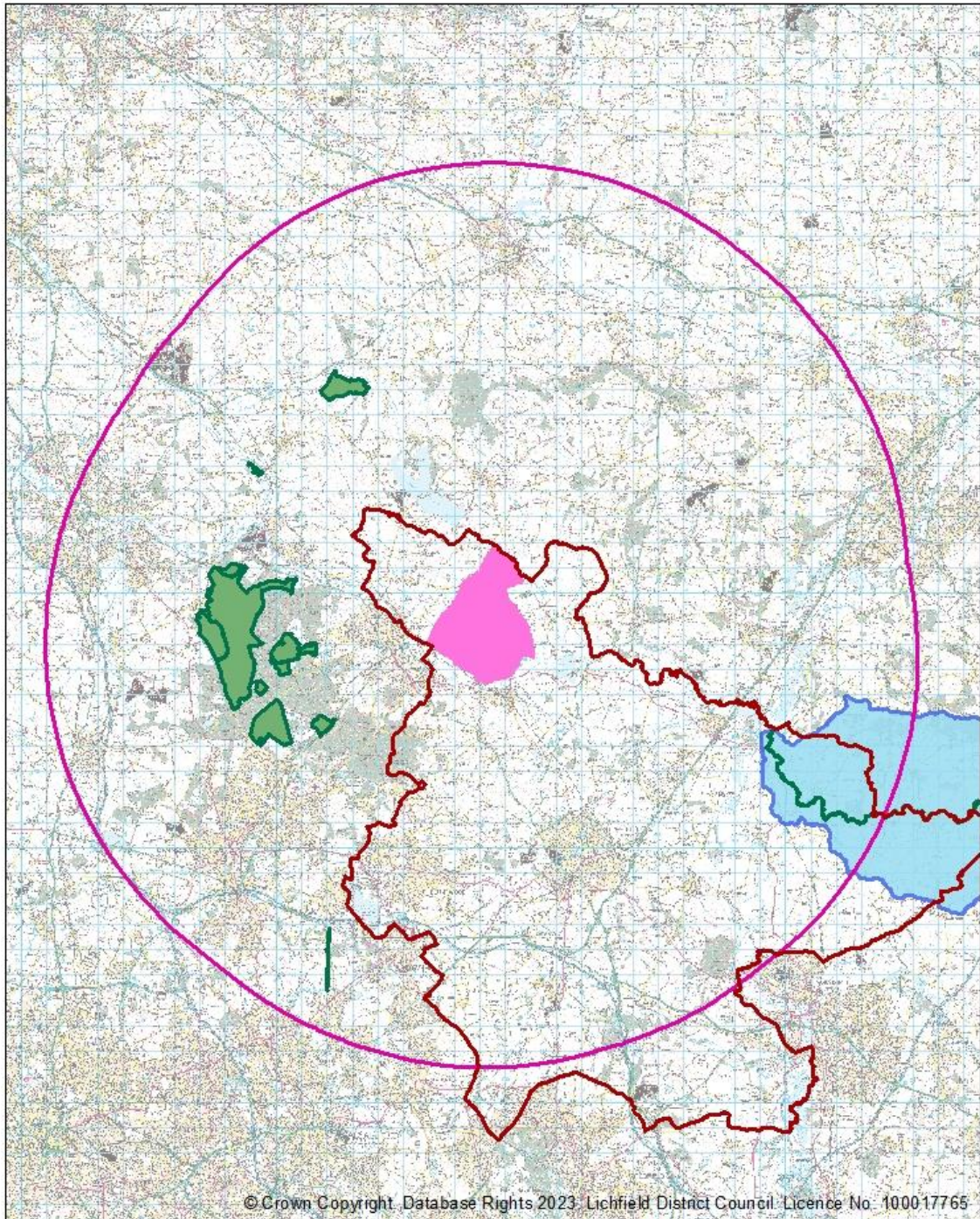
- 5.3 In relation to the requirement for the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment, the assessment detailed in [Section 3](#) of this report concludes that as the plan in its current form is likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore SEA will be required. The statutory consultees indicated they agreed with the conclusions of this screening report with regard to SEA.

### Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 5.4 In relation to the requirement for the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to Habitat Regulations Assessment, the assessment detailed at [Section 4](#) of this report concluded that there are no potential significant effects upon European Sites and no further work as part of the compliance with the Habitat Regulations will be required. Natural England disagreed with the conclusions of this screening report and have advised that further stages of HRA will be required and that this should assess both the recreational pressures on Cannock Chase SAC and evaluate the potential impact on air quality from both the construction phase and any vehicular traffic. Detail of the responses provided by Natural England are included at [Appendix 3.2](#) of this report.
- 5.5 Following the responses from Natural England it is recommended that further stages of HRA are undertaken in respect of the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan (as currently drafted) to satisfy the concerns of Natural England and ensure compliance with the Habitats Directive.



## Appendix 1: Map of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of Neighbourhood Area



### Key

-  Lichfield Boundary
-  Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Area
-  Neighbourhood Area 15km radius
-  Special Areas of Conservation
-  River Mease SAC Water Catchment

## Appendix 2: HRA review of draft policies in the Neighbourhood Plan

MRNP Policy Number	Description of Policy	Any likely significant effects on European Sites anticipated as a result of the policy?
Policy MR01: Residential Development	Supports small scale residential development within village boundary, including extending the boundary. Includes policy in relation to the type, tenure, and design of dwellings	Possibly – The policy provides support for residential development in several specific circumstances including extension of the village settlement boundary. Residential development within the Cannock Chase ZOI has an effect on the SAC due to increased recreational pressures. However, adopted Local Plan includes policy which requires development to demonstrate that alone or in combination with other developments it will not have an adverse effect whether direct or indirect upon the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC. As the neighbourhood plan is required to be in general conformity with the adopted Local Plan it is considered the adopted policy ensures appropriate mitigation for any such effects.
Policy MR02: Land East of Hill Ridware	Allocation of residential and retail development and open space.	Possibly – The policy proposes a residential allocation including limited retail development and open space. Residential development within the Cannock Chase ZOI has an effect on the SAC due to increased recreational pressures. However, adopted Local Plan includes policy which requires development to demonstrate that alone or in combination with other developments it will not have an adverse effect whether direct or indirect upon the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC. As the neighbourhood plan is required to be in general conformity with the adopted Local Plan it is considered the adopted policy ensures appropriate mitigation for any such effects.
Policy MR03: Employment	Supports small scale infill employment development within the existing village. Supports the diversification of the rural economy.	No – the policy does not itself propose development.
Policy MR04: Blithbury Redevelopment	Supports the redevelopment of brownfield site within the neighbourhood area for a range of potential future uses including C2, C3, F1 uses.	Possibly – the policy does not itself propose specific development but does provide support for a range of potential uses of a brownfield site including residential development (C3). Residential development within the Cannock Chase ZOI has an effect on the SAC due to increased recreational pressures. However,



MRNP Policy Number	Description of Policy	Any likely significant effects on European Sites anticipated as a result of the policy?
		adopted Local Plan includes policy which requires development to demonstrate that alone or in combination with other developments it will not have an adverse effect whether direct or indirect upon the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC. As the neighbourhood plan is required to be in general conformity with the adopted Local Plan it is considered the adopted policy ensures appropriate mitigation for any such effects.
Policy MR05: Sustainable Design	Provides a range of criteria for development, where permitted to ensure sustainable design including, for example, the massing, accessibility, green infrastructure, and materials.	No – the policy does not itself propose development.
Policy MR06: Heritage and Character	Provides protection to heritage assets.	No – the policy does not itself propose development.
MR07: Landscape and Nature	Provides protection and supports enhancement for the historic and natural environment.	No – the policy does not itself propose development.
Policy MR08: Local Green Space	Allocates eight Local Green Spaces within the Parish.	No – the policy does not itself propose development.
Policy MR09: Local Facilities	Supports the protection and enhancement of existing community facilities and the provision of new facilities.	No – the policy does not itself propose development.
Policy MR10: Local Energy Generation	Supports the development of local energy generation schemes.	No – the policy does not itself propose development.
Policy MR11: Movement and Active Travel	Requires development to be designed to support active travel and maximise accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.	No – the policy does not itself propose development.
Policy MR12: Burial Ground	Allocates land for the extension of existing burial ground.	No – the policy does not itself propose development.

## Appendix 3: SEA & HRA Screening opinion and statutory consultee responses

The following appendix includes the screening opinion requests from Lichfield District Council to the Statutory Bodies (Natural England, Historic England, and Environment Agency) who have been consulted through the SEA & HRA process and their responses.

- 3.1 SEA & HRA Screening Opinion Letter
- 3.2 Historic England Response
- 3.3 Natural England Response
- 3.4 Environment Agency Response

### Appendix 3.1: SEA & HRA Screening Opinion Letter

Your ref -  
Our ref MRNP-SEA-HRA  
Ask for Patrick Jervis  
Email Patrick.jervis@lichfielddc.gov.uk



District Council House, Frog Lane  
Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 6YU

Direct Line 01543 308132  
Customer Services 01543 308000

14 August 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

**Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan – Screening opinion for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

Mavesyn Ridware Parish Council has requested Lichfield District Council to undertake screening for SEA & HRA of their draft Neighbourhood Plan. The District Council has undertaken a screening process and produced the attached Screening Report which concludes that SEA of the neighbourhood plan will be required and HRA of the plan will not be required.

Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI No.1633) Lichfield District Council ('the responsible authority') is required to consult with the consultation bodies in determining whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and will therefore require an SEA. The Parish Council also requested screening opinion with regards to the need for a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

I am therefore requesting that you consider the attached Screening Report and provide any comments on its conclusions to assist in determining whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and will therefore require an SEA. I would also welcome your comments on the need for an HRA.

If you have any comments, please can they to be sent within the next 21 working days (by 6 September 2023) and if you have any queries, please feel free to contact me. If no reply is received by 5pm on 6 September 2023 will be assumed that you concur with the conclusions of the Screening Report.

Yours faithfully

Patrick Jervis  
**Principal Place Policy Officer**  
Core Services

### Appendix 3.3: Historic England Responses



Historic England

Mr Patrick Jervis  
Lichfield District Council  
District Council House  
Frog Lane  
Lichfield  
Staffordshire  
WS13 6YZ

Direct Dial: [REDACTED]

Our ref: PL00793844

24 August 2023

Dear Mr Jervis

### **MAVESYN RIDWARE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN- SEA AND HRA SCREENING**

Thank you for your consultation and the invitation to comment on the SEA/HRA Screening Document for the above Neighbourhood Plan.

For the purposes of consultations on SEA Screening Opinions, Historic England confines its advice to the question, "Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?" in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage.

Our comments are based on the information supplied with the screening request. On the basis of the information supplied and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of the 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with your view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.

Regarding HRA Historic England does not disagree with your conclusions but would defer to the opinions of the other statutory consultees.

The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for a SEA is made. If a decision is made to undertake a SEA, please note that Historic England has published guidance on Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Historic Environment that is relevant to both local and neighbourhood planning and available at:

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

I trust the above comments will be of help in taking forward the Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours sincerely,

P. Boland.



THE FOUNDRY 82 GRANVILLE STREET BIRMINGHAM B1 2LH  
Telephone 0121 625 6888  
[HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)





Historic England

Peter Boland  
Historic Places Advisor



cc:



THE FOUNDRY 82 GRANVILLE STREET BIRMINGHAM B1 2LH  
Telephone 0121 625 6888  
[HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)



*Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any Information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.*

### Appendix 3.3: Natural England Response



Date: 01 September 2023  
Our ref: 445677  
Your ref: MRNP-SEA-HRA



Lichfield District Council  
District Council House  
Frog Lane  
Lichfield  
Staffordshire WS13 6YU

Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Patrick Jervis

**Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan - Screening opinion for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 14 August 2023 which was received by Natural England on 14 August 2023

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

**Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

**It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:**

- **The plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and will therefore require an SEA**
- **New residential/tourist accommodation in this area requires a HRA**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

Natural England agrees with the findings of the screening report, and a SEA is required for the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

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

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected

species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

### **Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)**

Natural England disagrees with the findings of the screening report, and a HRA is required for the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan.

New residential/tourist accommodation in this area requires an HRA and financial contributions to mitigate increased recreational disturbance on Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The application site is within close proximity of the [Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#) which is a European designated site, and therefore has the potential to affect its interest features. European sites are afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The SAC is notified at a national level as the [Cannock Chase Site of Special Scientific Interest \(SSSI\)](#).

In considering the European site interest, Natural England advises that you, as a competent authority under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations, should have regard for any potential impacts that a plan or project may have<sup>1</sup>. The [Conservation objectives](#) for each European site explain how the site should be restored and/or maintained and may be helpful in assessing what, if any, potential impacts a plan or project may have.

Further general advice on the consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries regarding this letter, for new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

Emily Bond  
Advisor West Midlands Planning Team

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<sup>1</sup> Requirements are set out within Regulations 63 and 64 of the Habitats Regulations, where a series of steps and tests are followed for plans or projects that could potentially affect a European site. The steps and tests set out within Regulations 63 and 64 are commonly referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' process.

The Government has produced core guidance for competent authorities and developers to assist with the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. This can be found on the Defra website. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/habitats-review/implementation/process-guidance/guidance/sites/>

## Annex A

Natural England offers the following additional advice:

### **Landscape**

Paragraph 174 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) highlights the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes through the planning system. This application may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes, including any local landscape designations. You may want to consider whether any local landscape features or characteristics (such as ponds, woodland, or dry-stone walls) could be incorporated into the development to respond to and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness, in line with any local landscape character assessments. Where the impacts of development are likely to be significant, a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment should be provided with the proposal to inform decision making. We refer you to the [Landscape Institute](#) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for further guidance.

### **Best and most versatile agricultural land and soils**

Local planning authorities are responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) information to apply NPPF policies (Paragraphs 174 and 175). This is the case regardless of whether the proposed development is sufficiently large to consult Natural England. Further information is contained in [GOV.UK guidance](#) Agricultural Land Classification information is available on the [Magic](#) website on the [Data.Gov.uk](#) website. If you consider the proposal has significant implications for further loss of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land, we would be pleased to discuss the matter further.

Guidance on soil protection is available in the Defra [Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites](#), and we recommend its use in the design and construction of development, including any planning conditions. For mineral working and landfilling separate guidance on soil protection for site restoration and aftercare is available on [Gov.uk](#) website. Detailed guidance on soil handling for mineral sites is contained in the Institute of Quarrying [Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils in Mineral Workings](#).

Should the development proceed, we advise that the developer uses an appropriately experienced soil specialist to advise on, and supervise soil handling, including identifying when soils are dry enough to be handled and how to make the best use of soils on site.

### **Protected Species**

Natural England has produced [standing advice](#)<sup>2</sup> to help planning authorities understand the impact of particular developments on protected species. We advise you to refer to this advice. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on protected species where they form part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest or in exceptional circumstances.

### **Local sites and priority habitats and species**

You should consider the impacts of the proposed development on any local wildlife or geodiversity sites, in line with paragraphs 175 and 179 of the NPPF and any relevant development plan policy. There may also be opportunities to enhance local sites and improve their connectivity. Natural England does not hold locally specific information on local sites and recommends further information is obtained from appropriate bodies such as the local records centre, wildlife trust, geoconservation groups or recording societies.

Priority habitats and Species are of particular importance for nature conservation and are included in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Most priority habitats will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. List of priority habitats and species can be found on [Gov.uk](#).

Natural England does not routinely hold species data, such data should be collected when impacts on

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

priority habitats or species are considered likely. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land, further information including links to the open mosaic habitats inventory can be found [here](#).

### **Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees**

You should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in line with paragraph 180 of the NPPF. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland [Inventory](#) which can help identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have produced [standing advice](#) for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees. It should be taken into account by planning authorities when determining relevant planning applications. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees where they form part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest or in exceptional circumstances.

### **Environmental gains**

Development should provide net gains for biodiversity in line with the NPPF paragraphs 174(d), 179 and 180. Development also provides opportunities to secure wider environmental gains, as outlined in the NPPF (paragraphs 8, 73, 104, 120, 174, 175 and 180). We advise you to follow the mitigation hierarchy as set out in paragraph 180 of the NPPF and firstly consider what existing environmental features on and around the site can be retained or enhanced or what new features could be incorporated into the development proposal. Where onsite measures are not possible, you should consider off site measures. Opportunities for enhancement might include:

- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Designing lighting to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

Natural England's [Biodiversity Metric 4.0](#) may be used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial and intertidal habitats and can be used to inform any development project. For small development sites the [Small Sites Metric](#) may be used. This is a simplified version of [Biodiversity Metric 4.0](#) and is designed for use where certain criteria are met.

Natural England's [Environmental Benefits from Nature tool](#) may be used to identify opportunities to enhance wider benefits from nature and to avoid and minimise any negative impacts. It is designed to work alongside [Biodiversity Metric 4.0](#) and is available as a beta test version.

### **Green Infrastructure**

Natural England's [Green Infrastructure Framework](#) provides evidence-based advice and tools on how to design, deliver and manage green infrastructure (GI) . GI should create and maintain green liveable places that enable people to experience and connect with nature, and that offer everyone, wherever they live, access to good quality parks, greenspaces, recreational, walking and cycling routes that are inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed and accessible for all. GI provision should enhance ecological networks, support ecosystems services and connect as a living network at local, regional and national scales.

Development should be designed to meet the [15 Green Infrastructure Principles](#). The Green Infrastructure Standards can be used to inform the quality, quantity and type of green infrastructure to be provided. Major development should have a GI plan including a long-term delivery and management plan. Relevant aspects of local authority green infrastructure strategies should be delivered where appropriate.

GI mapping resources are available [here](#) and [here](#). These can be used to help assess deficiencies in greenspace provision and identify priority locations for new GI provision.

### **Access and Recreation**

Natural England encourages any proposal to incorporate measures to help improve people's access to the natural environment. Measures such as reinstating existing footpaths together with the creation of new footpaths and bridleways should be considered. Links to urban fringe areas should also be explored to strengthen access networks, reduce fragmentation, and promote wider green infrastructure.

### **Rights of Way, Access land, Coastal access and National Trails**

Paragraphs 100 and 174 of the NPPF highlight the importance of public rights of way and access. Development should consider potential impacts on access land, common land, rights of way and coastal access routes in the vicinity of the development. Consideration should also be given to the potential impacts on any nearby National Trails. The National Trails website [www.nationaltrail.co.uk](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk) provides information including contact details for the National Trail Officer. Appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated for any adverse impacts.

### **Biodiversity duty**

Your authority has a [duty](#) to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of your decision making. Conserving biodiversity can also include restoration or enhancement to a population or habitat. Further information is available [here](#).

## Appendix 3.4: National Highways Response

Good morning Patrick.

I have been forwarded a copy of the Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan SEA/HRA Screening Report. I would have no comments to provide at this stage and note the conclusions drawn that SEA will be required. Upon consultation I look forward to reviewing any forthcoming SEA Scoping Report for the Plan. Any future correspondence on this Neighbourhood Plan, and indeed all strategic work, should be directed to [WestMidsPlanning@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:WestMidsPlanning@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Kind regards.

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**Planning Specialist - Sustainable Places**

**Environment Agency - West Midlands Area**

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