

# **Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) &  
Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Screening Report  
(November 2014)

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter known as 'SWNP') 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. This assessment was carried out using the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029 Version 3 as provided by Shenstone Parish Council for this screening process.
- 1.2 This report will also screen to determine whether the SWNP requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). 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 a HRA. Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Cannock Extension Canal SAC are within a 15km radius of the plan boundary. Whilst the River Mease SAC is within 15km of the SWNP boundary, the SWNP boundary is outside the water catchment area. Appendix 1 shows the Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the plan boundary.
- 1.3 The purpose of the SWNP is to provide a set of statutory planning policies to guide development within Stonnall Ward over the life of the plan. The Plan sets out the community's vision of how the area will look by 2029. The SWNP provides support for development which meets local needs, for improved facilities and infrastructure to serve the community and seeks to protect and enhance important elements of the local environment.
- 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 SWNP and the need for SEA. Section 4, provides a screening assessment of both the likely significant effects of the implementation of the SWNP and the need for a Habitats Regulation Assessment.
- 1.5 A summary of findings and conclusions for both screening processes can be found in the conclusions chapter at section 5.

## 2. Legislative Background

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

- 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 2004, or SEA Regulations. 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. It is considered best practice to incorporate requirements of the SEA Directive into an SA as discussed within the NPPF at paragraph 165. However, the 2008 Planning Act amended the requirement to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal for only development plan documents (DPD's), but did not remove the requirement to produce a Strategic Environmental Assessment. As a Neighbourhood Plan is not a development plan document it therefore does not legally require a Sustainability Appraisal. Where appropriate, however, an SEA still needs to be undertaken in line with the SEA regulations. The purpose of this report is to determine if SEA is required for the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3 The District Council is required to consult three statutory consultation bodies designated within the regulations, these are; English Heritage, 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 (HRA)**

- 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 SWNP 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.

### **Description of the Plan or Programme**

- 2.7 The SWNP has been prepared by the Stonnall Strategy Group on behalf of the Qualifying Body (Shenstone Parish Council). The Plan includes 29 Planning Policies within eight policy themes which relate to the whole of Stonnall Ward (the designated Neighbourhood Area). The eight policy themes covered by the SWNP are; Housing, Transport, Local Shops, Communications, Health Care, Local Community Facilities, Historic Environment, and Landscape and Environment.
- 2.8 The policies relate to the designated Neighbourhood Area and prioritise the protection of the environment and character of Stonnall Ward. Policies also seek to provide support for housing development to meet local needs, new and improved community facilities, the protection of the built and natural environment, improvements to transport infrastructure and improved broadband connection.

### 3. SEA Screening

#### Criteria for Assessing the Effects of UNP

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

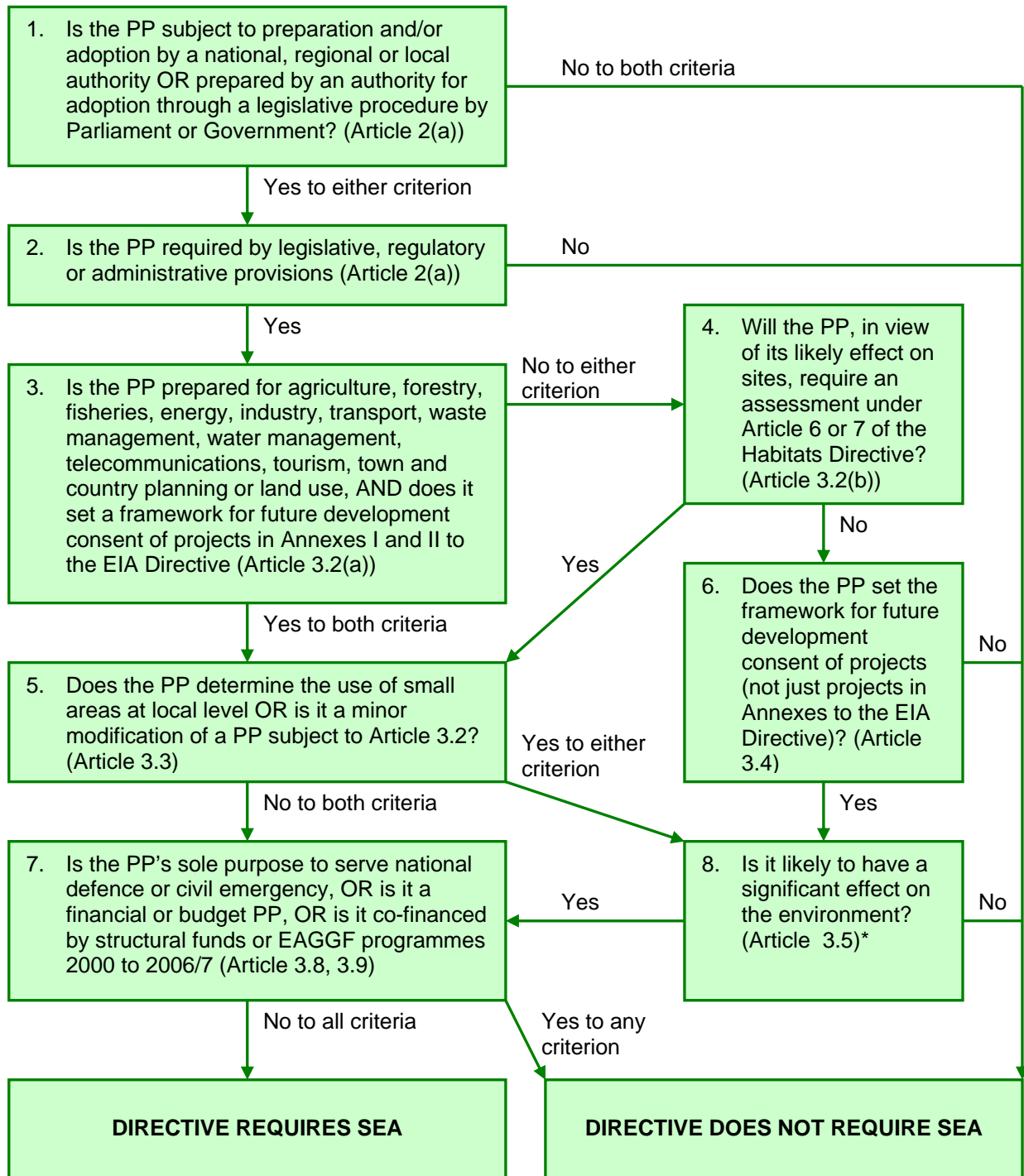
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to
  - the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
  - the degree to which 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**

- 3.2 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 is currently made up of the saved policies from the 1998 Lichfield District Local Plan (saved September 2007). Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with these saved policies. These saved policies pre-date the NPPF as such they may not carry significant weight within the decision making process.
- 3.3 Lichfield District Council has been preparing a new Local Plan for sometime. The Local Plan Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2013 and Hearing Sessions for the Examination of the Plan commenced in June 2013. To date the Inspector has issued initial findings in the form of an Annex attached to the Inspector's letter to the District Council dated 28<sup>th</sup> August 2013. The District Council consulted on a number of proposed Main Modifications to the Plan during early 2014. The Local Plan Strategy was subject to a 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.
- 3.4 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 figure1.

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.

3.5 The process in figure 1 has been undertaken and the findings can be viewed in Table 1. Table 1 shows the assessment of whether the SWNP 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))	Yes	This Neighbourhood Plan is prepared by Shenstone 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))	Yes	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 Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan 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))	Yes	The SWNP is prepared for town and country planning and land use. The plan sets out a framework for future development in the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Area. Once 'made' the SWNP 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))	Yes	The Neighbourhood Plan could potentially have an impact on internationally designated wildlife sites covered by the Habitats Regulations. See screening assessment for HRA 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)	Yes	The SWNP does not identify any land allocations at the local level. Once 'made' the SWNP 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)	Yes	The SWNP, once the 'made', forms part of the statutory development plan and will be used to determine planning applications within the designated Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Area. Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan will set the framework for future developments.
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)	No	The SWNP 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)	Yes	The SWNP could potentially have a significant effect on the environment, not just within the Neighbourhood Area but also within the District. The SWNP could also impact upon a number of Natura 2000 sites, including the Cannock Chase SAC (see HRA section). For these reasons a case by case assessment of the SWNP is required.

3.6 A number of the criteria above suggest that SEA of the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan may be required. Criteria 4 and Criteria 8 of the assessment in Figure 1 and Table 1 considered that the Neighbourhood Plan may have a significant effect on the environment, particularly relating to Natura 2000 sites. Depending on the proposals within the plan and a case by case assessment may be made on a case by case basis. The criteria for undertaking such an assessment are drawn from Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive as set out at paragraph 3.1 of this report. Table 2 outlines the result of this assessment in relation to the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan (Draft 4) September 2014.

3.7 The following assessment will consider the likelihood of the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan (as published at the date of this report) to have significant effects on the environment.

**Table 2: Assessment if 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 SWNP will set out the framework which will be used to determine proposals for development within the neighbourhood area. The SWNP also provides protection to the character of the area which will influence potential development across the plan period. There is therefore the potential for an effect on the environment resulting from the proposals in the plan.  However the plan does not propose development in excess of that identified within the emerging Local Plan Strategy (LPS) nor does it allocate sites for development. As such the SA/SEA carried out by the District Council for

	the LPS is considered sufficient.
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	<p>The SWNP must be in general conformity with the Lichfield District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Plan Allocations document has not yet been produced as such the neighbourhood plan cannot be influenced this. The SWNP only provides policies for the area it covers and the Local Plan Strategy will provide the necessary strategic context when determining planning applications.</p> <p>The SWNP will help to deliver the overall aims of the Local Plan. Stonnall is not identified as a key settlement within the Local Plan Strategy and the Neighbourhood Plan does not proposed to restrict development which is considered to be in broad conformity with the LPS.</p>
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	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 not seek to allocate sites. As such the impact of the plan on the environment is minimal.
Environmental problems relevant to the plan.	The environmental impacts of the proposals within the SWNP are likely to be minimal due to the scale of the development proposed. The Plan does not propose more development than is identified within the LPS and as such the SA/SEA carried out by the District Council is considered sufficient.
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 SWNP has to be in general conformity with the Local Plan. The adopted Local Plan and emerging LPS has had regard to European Community legislation on the environment and therefore this legislation will not be relevant for the Neighbourhood Plan.
<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.	Development is supported within the SWNP and therefore an element of environmental change will occur, the impacts of which will depend upon the proposals. The SWNP seeks to minimise the effects of development on its immediate surroundings and provide protection to important environments.
The cumulative nature of the effects.	The cumulative effects of proposals within the SWNP are unlikely to be significant on the local environment given the level of development proposed does not exceed that within the LPS.

<p>The trans boundary nature of the effects.</p>	<p>Effects will be local with limited effects on neighbouring areas. Neighbourhood Plans are at varying stages of preparations in areas adjoining the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Area which will set planning policies for those areas. However, the policies within the SWNP relate only to the designated Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Area as such there will be no trans boundary effects.</p>
<p>The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).</p>	<p>There is limited risk to human health or the environment as a result of the SWNP.</p>
<p>The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</p>	<p>The scale of development proposed through the SWNP 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>
<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 SWNP is unlikely to adversely affect the value and vulnerability of the area in relation to the special natural characteristics or cultural heritage. The policies within the SWNP seek to provide greater protection to existing heritage assets in the area and important environments. The plan does not allocate sites and as such many of these issues would be considered at a later stage.</p> <p>The level of development proposed through the SWNP is unlikely to lead to intensive land use and as such not affect the value and vulnerability of the area.</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>The Cannock Chase SAC and AONB lies within 15km of the SWNP boundary. Developments within the Cannock Chase SAC 15km zone of influence will in combination have an effect on the integrity of the SAC. The inclusion of policy LE5 will ensure 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.</p> <p>The SWNP boundary is within 15km of the Cannock Extension Canal SAC and is outside of the River Mease SAC water catchment. There will be no significant effects from the proposals within the SWNP on these SACs.</p>

### Screening Outcome

3.8 The SWNP does not propose more development than is set out within the Local Plan Strategy, nor does it allocate sites for development. The conclusions of the above screening assessment on the 'Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029 Version 3 indicate that Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required for the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan.

## 4. HRA 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 and 8 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.
- 4.5 This section of the report provides a "screening" assessment for the SWNP. 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 SWNP will have any likely significant effects to determine whether the subsequent stages will be required.

### **Relevant Natura 2000 sites**

- 4.6 The relevant Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the Stonnall Neighbourhood Area are;
- Cannock Chase SAC – approximately 10km to the North-West
  - Cannock Extension Canal – approximately 3.5km to the West
  - River Mease SAC – approximately 13km to the North-East
  - Humber Estuary SAC –River Trent whose catchment is part of the Humber Estuary SAC is within the SWAP 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 Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Area boundary. However, the SWNP boundary is not within the River Mease water catchment area (as illustrated at Appendix A) The River Trent whose water catchment is part of the Humber Estuary SAC is within the SWNP boundary. Therefore the HRA screening assessment needs to identify if any likely significant effects on the reasons for these sites to be designated will be caused by the implementation of the plan.

This assessment has been undertaken having regard to the results and information in the HRA and HRA addendum prepared for the Local Plan Strategy and is set out at Table 3.

**Table 3: Sites within 15km of Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Area<sup>1</sup>**

Name of Site	Reason for Designation	Conservation Objectives	Identified Impacts
<b>Cannock Chase SAC</b>	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ European dry heaths</li> </ul> Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix</li> </ul>	Maintain in favourable condition Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix for which the area is considered to support a significant presence. European dry heaths for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom	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 has to 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. 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.
<b>Cannock Extension Canal SAC</b>	Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Floating water-plantain</li> </ul>	Maintain favourable condition as this is considered to be one of the	The population of Luronium natans in this cul-de-sac canal is dependent upon a balanced level of boat traffic. If the canal is

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

	Lurionium natans	best areas in the United Kingdom	not used, the abundant growth of other aquatic macrophytes may shade-out the Lurionium natans unless routinely controlled by cutting. An increase in recreational activity would be to the detriment of Lurionium natans. Existing discharges of surface water run-off, principally from roads, cause some reduction in water quality.
<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 Ranunculus fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation</li> </ul> <p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Spined loach Cobitis taenia</li> <li>▪ Bullhead Cottus gobio</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 Austropotamobius pallipes</li> <li>▪ Otter Lutra lutra</li> </ul>	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.	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 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.
<b>Humber Estuary</b>	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Estuaries</li> </ul>	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time - for which the area is	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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> <li>▪ Coastal lagoons * Priority feature</li> <li>▪ Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> <li>▪ Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia 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>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>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>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p>	<p>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 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</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grey seal <i>Halichoerus grypus</i></li> </ul>	<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>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 have been assessed in relation to the specific features and environmental conditions of the protected sites, as could be effected by the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan, 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 4-7 set out the assessment based on the effects of the SWNP 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 SWNP likely to impact upon this site	<i>Potential</i>	<i>Potential</i>	<i>Potential</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
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 residential development within 15km of the SAC will, alone or in combination, have an impact upon the integrity of the SAC. The Local Plan Strategy (as modified) contains policies which seek to ensure that before development is permitted it must be demonstrated that it will not have any adverse effects upon the integrity of the SAC having regard to avoidance or mitigation measures. However the Local Plan Strategy has not yet been adopted. The SWNP includes a policy (Policy LE5) which ensures that development will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that it will not have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the SAC having regard to avoidance and mitigation measures.							
Assessment of effects and why not considered significant	The Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Area is on the edge of the 15km radius surrounding the site. Evidence has highlighted there are vulnerabilities from recreational pressures. The SWNP supports residential development which could be located within the 15km radius of the SAC. The SWNP includes a policy (Policy LE5) which ensures that development will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that it will not have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the SAC having regard to avoidance and mitigation measures.							
<b>Conclusion: No significant effects</b>								

**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 SWNP likely to impact upon this site	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Possible effects in combination	None							

<b>with other plans</b>	
<b>Assessment of effects and why not considered significant</b>	The Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood area is within the 15km radius surrounding this site. Development within the neighbourhood area would not have a direct impact upon the habitat, any protected species, air and water quality of this site. It is considered that the plan would have no significant effects.
<b>Conclusion: No significant effects</b>	

**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 SWNP likely to impact upon this site	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Possible effects in combination with other plans	None.							
<b>Assessment of effects and why not considered significant</b>	Whilst the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Area is within 15km of the River Mease SAC, it is outside of the River Mease SAC Water catchment area (as identified at appendix 1). As such no significant effects are likely.							
<b>Conclusion: No significant effects</b>								

**Table 7: 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 SWNP 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 SWNP 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. The Local water providers and foul waste company have been contacted regarding the emerging Local Plan Strategy and have up to date plans agreed with EA with regards to the impact upon the River Tame and River Trent. They have advised that no additional treatment works or changes to any of their existing consents would be necessary to accommodate the proposed levels of growth within the emerging Local Plan Strategy. As the SWNP does not propose more growth than the Local Plan it is unlikely this position would change.							
<b>Conclusion: No significant effects</b>								

**Screening Outcome**

- 4.10 Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 do not identify any significant effects upon the identified European sites as a result of the SWNP (as published at the date of this report). The presence of Policy LE5 ensures development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it will not have a significant effect on the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC.
- 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 SWNP. The assessment concludes that the policies within the SWNP will not have significant impacts upon the European sites identified within the assessment.
- 4.12 The conclusions of the screening assessment above indicate that the further stages of Appropriate Assessment are not required for the SWNP.

## **5. Conclusions and recommendations of the Screening Assessments**

- 5.1 This report contains the detail of the assessment of the need for the Stonnall Ward 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 Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029 Version 3 provided to Lichfield District Council in October 2014 for the purposes of this screening report. 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 modified version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

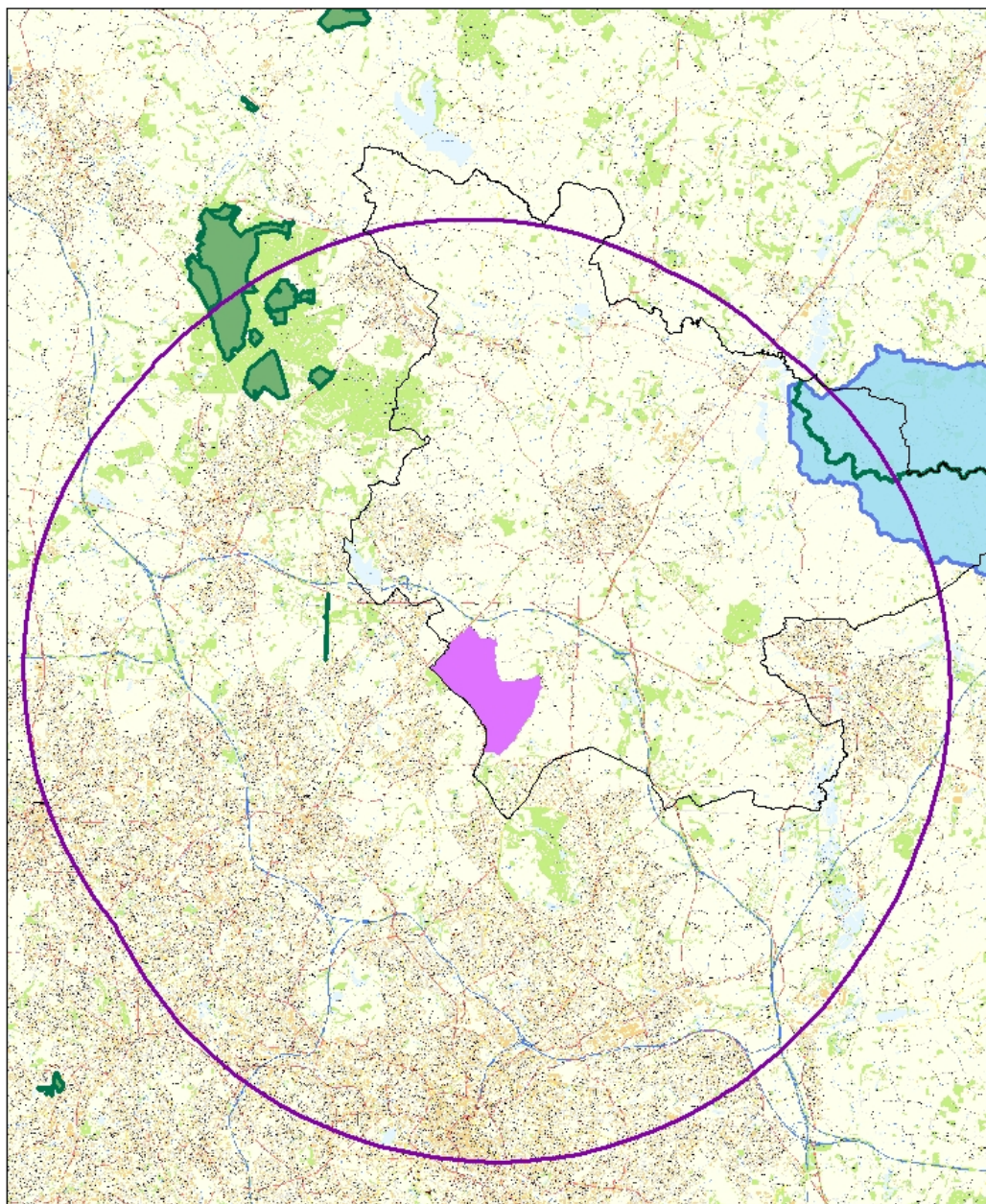
- 5.3 In relation to the requirement for the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment, the assessment detailed in Section 3 of this report concludes that as the plan in its current form is not likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore SEA will not be required.

### **Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

- 5.4 In relation to the requirement for the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to Habitat Regulations Assessment, the assessment detailed at Section 4 of this report concludes that whilst there are potential significant effects upon the Cannock Chase SAC the inclusion of Policy LE5 ensures that development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated it will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC. The report concludes that there will be no potential significant effects upon the identified designated European sites and as such no further work as part of the compliance with the Habitat Regulations will be required.



5.5 **Appendix 1: Map of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of Neighbourhood Plan Boundary**



**Key**

-  Lichfield District Boundary
-  Stonnall Neighbourhood Area 15k Radius
-  Stonnall Neighbourhood Area
-  Special Areas of Conservation
-  River Mease SAC Water Catchment

*Lichfield*  
district council  
[www.lichfielddc.gov.uk](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk)

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**Appendix 2 – HRA review of Proposed Policies in Stonnall Neighbourhood Plan**

SWAP Policy Number	Description of Policy	Any likely significant effects on European Sites anticipated as a result of the policy?
<b>Housing</b>		
<b>Policy H1</b>	Support for infill residential development to meet local needs.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. This could lead to a limited amount of development which could affect European Sites. However, the inclusion of policy LE5 ensures development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC.
<b>Policy H2</b>	Support for small scale rural exception sites for affordable homes.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. This could lead to a limited amount of development which could affect European Sites. However, the inclusion of policy LE5 ensures development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC.
<b>Policy H3</b>	Support design of homes which meet the principles of Lifetime Homes.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.
<b>Policy H4</b>	Development will complement and contribute to the character and setting of the village.	<b>No</b> – the policy relates to the built fabric and design of any new residential development.
<b>Policy H5</b>	Development will be built to the Code for Sustainable Homes standard.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.
<b>Transport</b>		
<b>Policy T1</b>	Support for smart travel schemes.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. The policy relates to improvements to sustainable modes of transport.
<b>Policy T2</b>	Support improvements for pedestrian and cycle facilities.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. The policy relates to improvements to sustainable modes of transport.
<b>Policy T3</b>	Support for proposals to route HGV/LVG traffic away from the local road network.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.
<b>Policy T4</b>	Support road infrastructure improvements to address local traffic issues.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.
<b>Better Local Shops</b>		
<b>Policy LSH1</b>	Resist the loss of existing shopping facilities.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.

<b>Policy LSH2</b>	Support for new or improved business, services and facilities.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.
<b>Policy LSH3</b>	Support environmental improvements to the existing shops.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.
<b>Communications</b>		
<b>Policy COM1</b>	Support improvements to broadband infrastructure.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. The policy relates to improvements to broadband and communication services.
<b>Health Care</b>		
<b>Policy HC1</b>	Support improvements to health care facilities.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. The policy supports improvements to health care provision.
<b>Policy HC2</b>	Support improvements to transport infrastructure that enable access to health care services.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.
<b>Better Local Community Facilities</b>		
<b>Policy CF1</b>	Support proposals to enhance existing community facilities.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.
<b>Policy CF2</b>	Support retention of existing community buildings unless acceptable alternative provision is provided.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.
<b>Policy CF3</b>	Protection of existing playing fields and play facilities. Support for improvements to existing provision.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. The policy supports the retention and improvement of existing facilities.
<b>Policy CF4</b>	Protection of existing open spaces and support for new provision alongside any development.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. The Policy ensures existing open spaces are protected and new development provides adequate open space.
<b>Policy CF5</b>	Support for existing and new allotment space.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not proposed development.
<b>Historic Environment</b>		
<b>Policy HB1</b>	Development proposals relating to important local buildings will be expected to retain the character of buildings and area.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. Policy LE5 ensures that any development which leads to a net increase in dwellings will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC.
<b>Policy HB2</b>	Protection of heritage assets and ensure that any development recognises the importance of any assets.	<b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. Policy LE5 ensures that any development which leads to a net increase in

		<p> dwellings will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC.</p>
<b>Policy HB3</b>	<p>Redevelopment or alterations to historic farmsteads and agricultural buildings will be sensitive to their distinctive character.</p>	<p><b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development. Policy LE5 ensures that any development which leads to a net increase in dwellings will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC.</p>
<b>Policy HB4</b>	<p>Development must take account of known surface and subsurface archaeology and ensure significant deposits are considered during development.</p>	<p><b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.</p>
<p><b>Landscape and Environment</b></p>		
<b>Policy LE1</b>	<p>Development must mitigate for impacts on biodiversity.</p>	<p><b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.</p>
<b>Policy LE2</b>	<p>Support for projects and proposals which increase wildlife habitats in a accordance with Staffordshire and Lichfield District's Biodiversity Action Plans.</p>	<p><b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.</p>
<b>Policy LE3</b>	<p>Requires development proposals to retain existing trees and hedgerows of good quality and/or significance.</p>	<p><b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.</p>
<b>Policy LE4</b>	<p>Development will be required to include provision of appropriate landscaping and green infrastructure.</p>	<p><b>No</b> – the policy itself does not propose development.</p>
<b>Policy LE5</b>	<p>Before development is permitted it must demonstrate it will not have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC.</p>	<p><b>No</b> – the policy will ensure that development will not permitted unless it is demonstrated that the development will not have an adverse effect, whether direct or indirect upon the SAC having regard to avoidance or mitigation measures.</p>

### ***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, English Heritage and Environment Agency) who have been consulted through the SEA & HRA process and their responses. These are set out in chronological order.

***3.1 SEA & HRA Screening Opinion Letter 14/11/2014***

***3.2 Natural England Response 05/12/2014***

***3.3 English Heritage Response 08/12/2014***

***Please note: No response received from Environment Agency***

Your ref  
Our ref SWNP-SEA-HRA  
Ask for Patrick Jervis  
email [patrick.jervis@lichfielddc.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.jervis@lichfielddc.gov.uk)

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

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14<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **STONNALL WARD NEIGHBOURHOOD SCREENING OPINION FOR AN SEA & HRA**

Shenstone Parish Council is currently undertaking the pre-submission consultation on their draft Neighbourhood Plan as part of this process the Parish Council has requested Lichfield District Council to undertake screening for SEA & HRA of their Neighbourhood Plan. The District Council has undertaken a screening process and produced the attached Screening Report which concludes that SEA and HRA of the Stonnall Ward Neighbourhood Plan (as currently drafted) 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 or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and will therefore require an SEA. The Stonnall Strategy Group 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 or not 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 a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

If you have any comments I would ask for these to be sent within the next 21 days (by 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014) and if you have any queries please contact myself, Mr Patrick Jervis on 01543 308196. If no reply is received by Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December it will be assumed that you concur with the conclusions of the Screening Report.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Jervis  
Planning Officer  
Development Plans and Implementation



Lichfield District Council

For the attention of Patrick Jervis

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Patrick

**Planning consultation: STONNALL WARD NEIGHBOURHOOD SCREENING OPINION FOR AN SEA & HRA**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 14 November 2014 which was received by Natural England on the same day.

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.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

I can confirm that Natural England agrees with the reasoning set out in the screening report that SEA would not be required for the Neighbourhood Plan in its current form regarding likely significant effects on the environment.

**Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

Natural England notes and agrees with the thought process concluding that all the named European Sites<sup>1</sup> can be 'screened out' from further HRA assessment. We offer the following explanatory advice in relation to Cannock Chase SAC:

Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is vulnerable to recreation impacts associated with new housing in the 'zone of influence' identified around the SAC. With respect to the Stonnall Ward NP Natural England notes and welcomes the proposal to use a specific policy 'LE5'. It is particularly important that such a policy is included in the Neighbourhood Plan as it cannot rely on avoidance/mitigation measures contained in the Local Plan (specifically Policy NR7) until that Plan is formally adopted. Your colleague Heidi Hollins is the Council's representative on the SAC Partnership and you should speak to Heidi about the project's progress accordingly.

We advise that use of Policy LE5 would benefit from reference to the District Council's 'Interim mitigation guidance for the Cannock Chase SAC' (November 2013). This will help ensure that applicants are aware of relevant background information.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cannock Chase SAC, Cannock Extension Canal SAC, River Mease SAC and the Humber Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar site.

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 relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact me on 0300 060 1640. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

Antony Muller  
Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development and Wildlife Team – North Mercia Area





ENGLISH HERITAGE

WEST MIDLANDS REGION

**Mr Patrick Jervis  
Development Plans Team  
District Council House  
Lichfield District Council  
Frog Lane  
Lichfield  
Staffordshire  
WS13 6YZ**

Our ref: 1248-1249  
Your ref:  
Telephone 0121 625 6887  
Fax

08 December 2014

Dear Mr Jervis

**STONNALL WARD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - STRATEGIC  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING OPINION & HRA  
SCREENING REPORT**

Thank you for your consultation received on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October and the request for a Screening Opinion.

For the purposes of consultations on SEA Screening Opinions, English Heritage 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, including that set out in the draft plan, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], English Heritage concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is currently unlikely to be required.

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 English Heritage 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: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/strategic-environ-assessment-sustainability-appraisal-historic-environment/>.



8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, THE AXIS, 10 HOLLIDAY STREET, BIRMINGHAM B1 1TG

Telephone 0121 625 6820 Facsimile 0121 625 6821


[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

Please note that English Heritage operates an access to information policy.  
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available

As regards the HRA Screening Report English Heritage does not wish to comment in detail and would defer to Natural England and other statutory consultees, however, we have no adverse comments to make on the report.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Boland', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Pete Boland  
Historic Places Adviser  
E-mail: [peter.boland@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:peter.boland@english-heritage.org.uk)



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