

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany
Regulation 14 consultation

Ropley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

January 2018

Quality information

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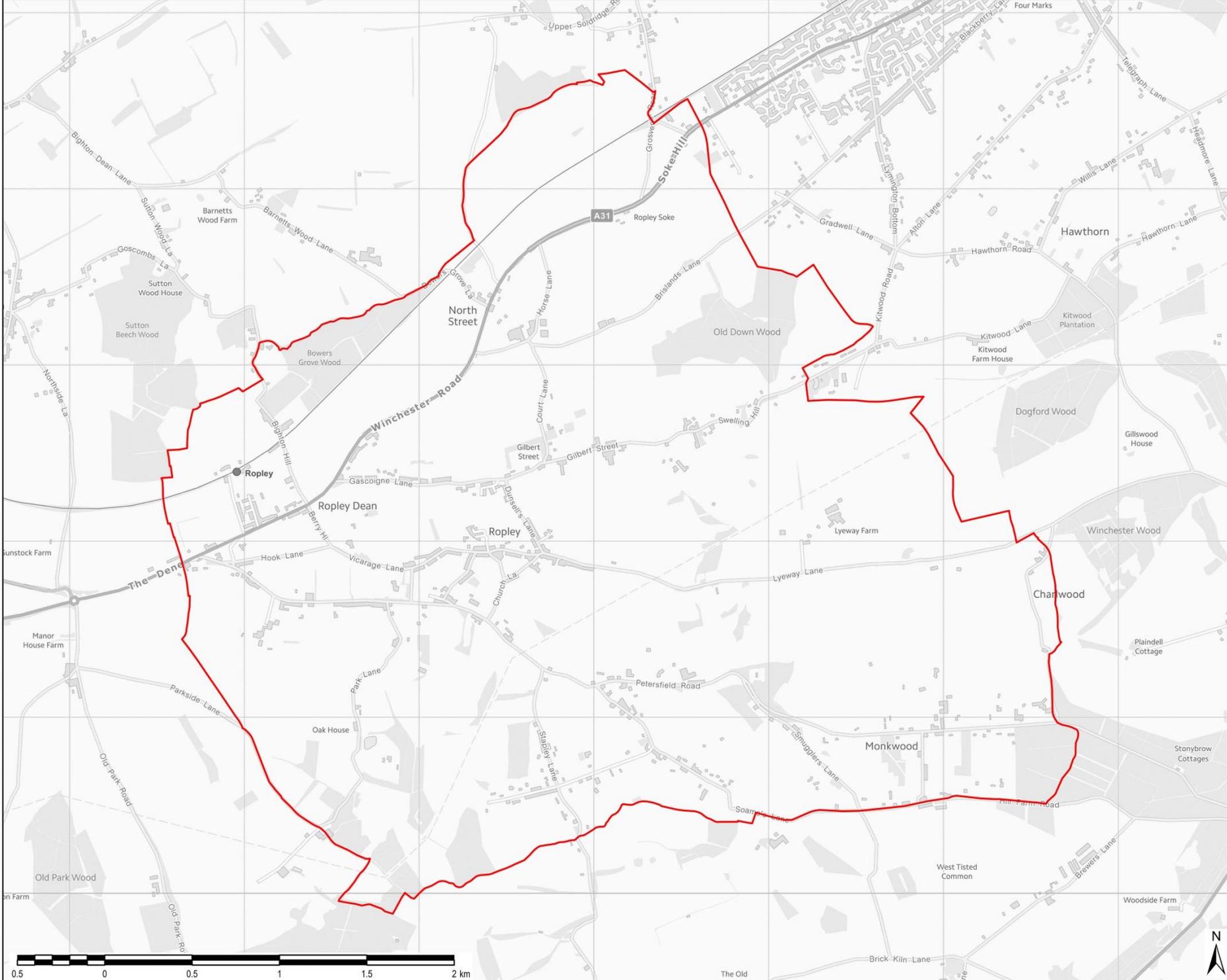
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LEGEND
 Ropley Neighbourhood Plan Area

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Purpose of Issue
DRAFT

Client
ROPLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

Project Title
STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ROPLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Drawing Title
ROPLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

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Non-Technical Summary

What is strategic environmental assessment?

A strategic environmental assessment has been undertaken to inform the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan (RNP). This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan, and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

What is the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan?

The RNP presents a plan for the administrative area of Ropley Parish for the period to 2028, excluding the sections of the parish located within the boundary of the South Downs National Park. Prepared to be in conformity with the East Hampshire District Local Plan (2014), it sets out a vision and a range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area.

It is currently anticipated that the RNP will undergo referendum later in 2018.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Submission version of the RNP, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (September 2017), which includes information about the Neighbourhood Plan area's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the RNP and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the RNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the RNP has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the RNP;
- The likely significant environmental effects of the RNP;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the RNP; and
- The next steps for the RNP and accompanying SEA process.

Assessment of alternative approaches for the RNP

A key aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to ensure that housing delivered in the parish is appropriately located for local needs.

To support decision making on this element of the plan, the SEA process has considered eight sites with a view to exploring the sustainability implications of delivering housing in alternative locations in the parish.

The eight sites are as follows:

- Site 9 – Land between Homeview and Wyckham House
- Site 19 – Tresaith, Petersfield Road
- Site 20 – The Bungalow, Winchester Road
- Site 22 - Site of the former Chequers Pub
- Site 25 – Triangle of land at A31/Petersfield Road junction
- Site 26 – Land West of the former Doctor's Surgery, Petersfield Road
- Site 27 – Land West of May Cottage, Petersfield Road
- Site 28 – Land adjacent to Hale Close, to the rear of Church Street

To support the consideration of the suitability of these eight sites as potential housing allocations to take forward through the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the sites and potential effects that may arise.

The findings of the appraisal are presented in Tables 4.1 to 4.8 in the main body of the Environmental Report.

Following consideration of the outcomes of the site assessment undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, consultation events on the Neighbourhood Plan, an ongoing consideration of viability and achievability and a consideration of the SEA findings, three sites have been allocated in the current version of the plan for housing, as follows:

- Site 9 – Land between Homeview and Wyckham House
- Site 22 - Site of the former Chequers Pub
- Site 28 – Land adjacent to Hale Close, to the rear of Church Street.

Assessment of the current version of the RNP

The current consultation version of the RNP presents 24 planning policies for guiding development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process has assessed the policies put forward through the current version of the RNP. The Environmental Report has presented the findings of the assessment under the following SEA Themes:

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Climate Change;
- Landscape and Historic Environment;
- Land, Soil and Water Resources
- Population and Community;
- Health and Wellbeing; and
- Transportation

The assessment has concluded that the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'Population and Community' and 'Health and Wellbeing' SEA Themes. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on delivering housing which meets local needs, improving the quality of life of residents and supporting green infrastructure enhancements.

In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan has a strong focus on protecting and enhancing landscape and villagescape character and the setting of the historic environment, including relating to the Ropley Conservation Area and setting of St Peter's Church. This will lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape and Historic Environment' theme.

The Neighbourhood Plan will also initiate a number of beneficial approaches regarding the 'Biodiversity', 'Land, Soil and Water Resources', 'Climate Change' and 'Transportation' SEA themes. However these are not considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and the scale of proposals.

Next Steps

Subsequent to the current consultation on the Regulation 14 version of the RNP, the Neighbourhood Plan will be updated by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to reflect comments received. This Environmental Report will be updated to reflect the changes made to the plan.

The RNP and Environmental Report will be submitted to East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) for their consideration. EHDC will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the RNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the EHDC Local Plan.

If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the RNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Ropley Parish Council, with support from the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the RNP, then it will be passed to EHDC with a request it is adopted. Once adopted, the RNP will become part of the Development Plan for Ropley Parish.

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Ropley Neighbourhood Plan (RNP).
- 1.2 The RNP is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the administrative area of Ropley Parish, excluding the parts of the parish located within the boundary of the South Downs National Park. Prepared to be in conformity with the East Hampshire District Local Plan (2014), the Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision and a range of planning policies for the parish.
- 1.3 It is currently anticipated that the RNP will be submitted to East Hampshire District Council later in 2018.
- 1.4 Key information relating to the RNP is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan

Name of Qualifying Body	Ropley Parish Council
Title of Plan	Ropley Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	<p>The Ropley Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the East Hampshire District Local Plan.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan, when made, will be used to guide and shape development within Ropley Parish.</p>
Timescale	To 2028
Area covered by the plan	The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the parish of Ropley in Hampshire. It excludes two small parts of the parish located within the South Downs National Park. (Figure 1.1)
Summary of content	The Ropley Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Plan contact point	<p>Carole Oldham</p> <p>Ropley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group</p> <p>Email address: caroleoldham@outlook.com</p>

SEA explained

- 1.5 The RNP has been screened in as requiring an SEA.
- 1.6 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding or mitigating negative environmental effects and maximising positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the RNP seeks to maximise the emerging Neighbourhood Plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.7 The SEA has been prepared in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive¹.
- 1.8 The SEA Regulations require that a report is published alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.9 In line with the SEA Regulations this Environmental Report must essentially answer four questions:
 - What is the scope of the SEA?
 - What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?
 - 'Reasonable alternatives' must have been appraised for the plan.
 - What are the appraisal findings at this stage?
 - i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
 - What happens next?
- 1.10 These questions are derived from Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which present 'the information to be provided within the report'. **Table 1.2** presents the linkages between the regulatory requirements and the four SEA questions.

Structure of this Environmental Report

- 1.11 This document is the Environmental Report for the RNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed above with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations.
- 1.12 Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the Environmental Report in order to meet regulatory² requirements

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ³
What is the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
What is the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
What's the scope of the SEA?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) The likely significant effects associated with alternatives Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next steps for plan making/SEA process.

² Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

³ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

2. Local Plan context and vision for the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan

Local Plan context for the RNP

- 2.1 The Ropley Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the East Hampshire District Local Plan.

East Hampshire District Local Plan: Local Plan Part 1: Joint Core Strategy

- 2.2 The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was adopted by East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) on 8th May 2014 and was prepared jointly with the South Downs National Park Authority.
- 2.3 The JCS is the overarching planning policy document for the district. Setting out the strategy for the future development of the district over the period to 2028, the JCS identifies the overall spatial vision and economic, social and environmental objectives for the district and the amount, type and broad location of development needed to fulfil those objectives.
- 2.4 In the JCS, Ropley has been categorised as being part of Level 4 of the district's settlement hierarchy, within the 'other settlements with a settlement policy boundary' category. This is below the 'Market Town', 'Large Local Service Centre' and 'Small Local Service Centre' categories. The JCS indicates that the 'other settlements with a settlement policy boundary' are those which "...have a limited range of local services and may be appropriate for some further small scale local development."

East Hampshire District Local Plan: Local Plan Part 2: Housing and Employment Allocations

- 2.5 The Housing and Employment Allocations was adopted by East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) on 7th April 2016.
- 2.6 The primary purpose of the document is to identify specific sites to meet the individual housing and employment targets set out in policies CP3 and CP10 of the JCS, and to set out guidance for the development of these sites.
- 2.7 The document allocates land for in the region of 42 dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan area, as follows:
- Land at adjacent to Bullfinches, Park Lane in Ropley is allocated for residential development for about 7 dwellings on 0.8ha.
 - Land at the corner of Dunsells Lane and Gilbert Street in Ropley is allocated for residential development for about 15 dwellings on 0.69ha
 - Land off Hale Close in Ropley is allocated for residential development for about 5 dwellings on 0.2ha.
 - Land southwest of Dean Cottage is allocated for residential development for about 15 dwellings on 0.95ha.

East Hampshire District Local Plan: Local Plan Part 3 (emerging): Development Management and Other Allocations

- 2.8 Currently in development, Part 3 of the Local Plan will provide detailed planning policies on issues that are relevant to dealing with planning applications, and will also allocate land for specific purposes for those parts of the district that lie outside of the boundaries of the South Downs National Park.

Vision for the RNP

- 2.9 The vision for the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan, developed during initial stages of plan preparation, is as follows;
- 2.10 *"The parish of Ropley will continue to retain its character and identity comprising a central core community surrounded by a number of discrete settlements set in a rural landscape.*
- 2.11 *New housing of a type and size to meet the needs of those who currently or have previously lived within the Parish, will be supported by the careful siting of new homes and other facilities so that they are integrated sympathetically into the built environment and the landscape. Settlements will continue to be separated from each other by areas of countryside where farming and other rural businesses will continue to thrive and evolve"*
- 2.12 *Furthermore the cultural and community assets of the Parish, including the church, shop, post office, village hall and sports facilities that have been identified as being of value and importance, will have been maintained and further enhanced."*

3. The Scope of the SEA

SEA Scoping Report

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: “When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.⁴ These authorities were consulted on the scope of the RNP SEA in October 2017.
- 3.2 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional and local plans and strategies relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Baseline data against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed;
 - The key sustainability issues for the Neighbourhood Plan; and
 - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
- 3.3 Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in **Appendix A**.
- 3.4 Comments received on the Scoping Report, and how they have been considered and addressed, are presented in **Table 3.1**. No comments were provided by Natural England within the consultation window.

Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
Historic England	
Martin Small: Principal Adviser, Historic England Planning (Bucks, Oxon, Berks, Hampshire, IoW, South Downs National Park and Chichester)	
The nature of the locally-led neighbourhood plan process is that the community itself should determine its own agenda based on the issues about which it is concerned. At the same time, as a national organisation able increasingly to draw upon our experiences of neighbourhood planning exercises across the country, our input can help communities reflect upon the special (heritage) qualities which define their area to best achieve aims and objectives for the historic environment. To this end information on our website might be of interest: http://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/	Comment noted

⁴ In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme’.

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>In addition, general guidance on Sustainability Appraisal and the historic environment is set out in Historic England's publication "Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and The Historic Environment": https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>Turning to our specific comments, , we are disappointed that there is no mention of the historic environment of Ropley in the vision of the Neighbourhood Plan as set out in paragraph 1.3 of the Scoping Report.</p>	<p>To support the vision of the Neighbourhood Plan, nine objectives were also developed by the Neighbourhood group. Objective 8 of the Draft Version of the Neighbourhood Plan aims to achieve the following: <i>'To protect and enhance the character and setting of all listed buildings, Conservation Areas and other important but non-designated heritage assets within the Parish'</i></p>
<p>We welcome the inclusion of the historic environment as a theme but suggest treating landscape and the historic environment as separate matters. Both are substantial matters in their own right, worthy of separate consideration as they are subject to different issues. Taking the two together could lead to the masking of effects on one or the other. However, we welcome the inclusion of both designated and non-designated sites and areas, the setting of heritage assets ("cultural" is unnecessary as "heritage assets" are an accepted term as defined by the NPPF) and archaeological assets in the "Focus of Theme".</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>We do not consider the number or location of listed buildings or the designation of the Conservation Area to be sustainability "issues" as such, but part of the baseline. The potential effects of new development on those heritage assets are, however, as recognised in the Scoping Report, a potential issue.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>The third "key message" from the National Planning Policy Framework in sub-section 5.2 is a requirement for Local Plans rather than Neighbourhood Plans. If, however, this reference is to be retained then reference could also be made to the requirement in paragraph 157 of the Framework for local plans to "contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment" (paragraph 157).</p>	<p>The following text has been included as a key message from the NPPF within the Landscape and Historic Environment Section in Appendix A: <i>'contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment'</i></p>

Consultation response

How the response was considered and addressed

We welcome the reference to the requirement of paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework that “neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area.....based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics”.

However, has there been a characterisation of the Plan area to provide that “understanding and evaluation” ? Historic England considers that Neighbourhood Development Plans should be underpinned by a thorough understanding of the character and special qualities of the area covered by the Plan. We therefore suggest a characterisation study as a precursor to neighbourhood plans as such a study can help inform locations and detailed design of proposed new development, identify possible townscape improvements and establish a baseline against which to measure change. If no such characterisation exists then this should be identified as a gap in the baseline.

Policy RNP9 within the draft Neighbourhood Plan outlines the list of locally important heritage assets within the parish.

Policy RNP14 within the draft Neighbourhood Plan states that ‘when developed’, any development within or adjacent to a conservation area should be carried out in conjunction with the associated appraisal and/or management plan.

Information from the 2013 ‘Landscape Capacity Study’ has been added to the Landscape and Historic Environment Section in Appendix A, and considered within the policy appraisal of the draft plan (presented in section 5 of this Environmental Report).

Although not “policy” as such, it might also be worth citing the National Planning Practice Guidance’s advice that Neighbourhood Plans should include enough information, where relevant, “about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the local plan into action at a neighbourhood scale” and “about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions”

The NPPG advice has been added to the Landscape and Historic Environment section in Appendix A, cited within the ‘context review’.

We welcome the reference to the Hampshire Historic Environment Record in sub-section 5.3.1, but would also welcome a reference to the Hampshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment as well. Is there a list of locally important buildings? If not, then this should also be identified as another gap in the baseline, and this should be a project to contribute to the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Reference to the Historic Landscape Character Assessment has been added to the Landscape and Historic Environment section in Appendix A, presented within the ‘summary of current baseline’.

Otherwise, we welcome the sustainability baseline for the historic environment of the parish set out in sub-section 5.3.1, including the recognition of a lack of a Character Appraisal and/or a Management Plan for the Conservation Area as a gap in the baseline. The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is the perfect opportunity to undertake an Appraisal and to identify management recommendations – has there been any or is there any ongoing loss of character through inappropriate development, inappropriate alterations to properties under permitted development rights, loss of vegetation or insensitive streetworks? Such an Appraisal should be an important part of the evidence base for the Plan.

Policy RNP9 within the draft Neighbourhood Plan outlines the list of locally important heritage assets within the parish.

Comment noted. Policy RNP14 within the draft Neighbourhood Plan recognises the need for development within and/or adjacent to a conservation to be carried out in conjunction with an appraisal and/or management plan.

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>The Historic England Heritage at Risk only includes Grade II secular buildings in London. We also welcome the identification of the lack of a survey of Grade II listed buildings in the Plan area as a gap in the baseline. Again, the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for such a survey to be undertaken.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>We welcome the proposed sustainability objectives in sub-section 5.4 of the Report. However, we would prefer the first assessment question to be <i>“Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting”</i>. We would prefer the second assessment question to be <i>“Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the two parts of the Ropley Conservation Area and its setting”</i>. We would welcome an additional assessment question <i>“Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, including historic landscapes”</i>.</p>	<p>Assessment questions updated accordingly and presented in the ‘SEA Framework’ section of this environmental report (see table 3.2).</p>
<p>We would expect the Scoping Report to set out the indicators or measures by which the policies and proposals of the Plan can be assessed against the objectives and sub-objectives. The Historic England advice on Strategic Environmental Assessments and the Historic Environment contains a range of possible indicators for assessing and monitoring the performance of the policies and proposals of the Plan against a historic environment objective. Not all of these will be relevant, but we suggest that the following be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the number and percentage of different heritage assets at risk; – the percentage of planning applications where archaeological investigations were required prior to approval; and – the percentage of planning applications where archaeological mitigation strategies were developed and implemented. 	<p>These elements have been considered through the SEA process.</p> <p>In relation to heritage at risk, there are no sites deemed to be ‘at risk’ within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>In relation to archaeological assets, the two elements highlighted have been considered through the assessment. This includes in terms of the potential for Neighbourhood Plan policies to promote the undertaking of investigations and, where appropriate, mitigation strategies. This is reflected through an updated SEA Framework which includes these elements as appraisal questions.</p>
<p>Environment Agency Charlotte Lines: Senior Planning Advisor</p>	
<p>We recommend an objective is included to protect and enhance the environment. Indicators should relate to the environmental constraints in your local area. This may include water quality, and biodiversity.</p>	<p>Relevant objectives and assessment questions presented within the SEA Framework section of this environmental report, specifically within Table 3.2.</p>

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>We also recommend your SA takes account of relevant policies, plans and strategies including your local Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, flood risk strategies (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-current-schemes-and-strategies), and the South East River Basin Management Plan (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-east-river-basin-management-plan)</p>	Comment noted
<p>Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf.</p>	Comment noted

Key Sustainability Issues

3.5 Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the SEA Scoping Report was able to identify a range of sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of SEA. These issues are as follows, presented by eight SEA Themes. In the absence of any significant or tangible issues, the air quality SEA Theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.

3.6 Air Quality

- Air quality in the Neighbourhood Plan area is good, with no significant issues identified.
- There are no Air Quality Management Areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Housing growth in the wider area may impact on traffic and congestion in the Neighbourhood Plan area, in particular on the A31, which has the potential to increase emissions and reduce air quality. It should be noted though that the existing baseline for air pollutants is very low in Ropley.
- Due to the absence of any significant air quality issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area, **air quality has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

3.7 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats are present throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area, supporting a range of species.
- A number of areas of ancient woodland are present in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- No nationally designated sites are present within the Neighbourhood Plan area

3.8 Climate Change

- The main risks from fluvial flooding and surface water drainage flooding are along the highways network within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including sections of the A31, Petersfield Road and Gascoigne Lane. However, overall risks from fluvial and surface water flooding are relatively limited.

- East Hampshire District has recorded consistently higher greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions total per capita in comparison to the regional and national averages.

3.9 Landscape and Historic Environment

- The Neighbourhood Plan area adjoins the South Downs National Park.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a distinctive landscape.
- There are 41 nationally listed buildings within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- The Ropley Conservation Area covers two parts of Ropley village.
- A key feature of the conservation area, the Church of St Peter, was severely damaged in a fire in June 2014.
- New development has the potential to lead to beneficial and adverse effects on the historic environment, including through affecting the setting of cultural heritage assets and landscape/townscape quality.
- New development could lead to pressures on non-designated sites and villagescapes, including from the loss of key built and natural features.
- Improvement in access to and enhancement of, historic environment assets and enhancements to local distinctiveness through high quality development has potential for positive benefits for the visitor economy.

3.10 Land, Soil and Water Resources

- No significant watercourses are present in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- It is uncertain whether agricultural land in the Neighbourhood Plan area comprises land classified as the 'best and most versatile'.
- An Outer Protection zone (Zone 2) SPZ underlies the northern and southern parts of the parish, including the southern half of Ropley village.
- The whole of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within a eutrophic Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.

3.11 Population and Community

- Based on the most recent census data available, the population of the Neighbourhood Plan area increased at a similar rate to regional and national trends, but at a greater rate than East Hampshire.
- A larger number of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the older age categories (45-59 and 60+) in comparison to the regional and national trends.
- The population of the Neighbourhood Plan area is ageing, potentially placing increased pressures on local health services and facilities.
- There is one Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) covering the entirety of the Neighbourhood Plan area. This is located in the top 30% least deprived deciles in relation to the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation domain.

3.12 Health and Wellbeing

- The majority of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves to have 'very good health' or 'good health', broadly aligning to the totals for East Hampshire, and more favourable than averages for the South East and England.

- The key priority issues within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Hampshire include understanding the needs of the more vulnerable children in the county, improving the mental and physical health of local residents, reducing the impact of ill-health and promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing preventable disabilities and reducing social isolation and loneliness.

3.13 Transportation

- The Neighbourhood Plan area does not contain a railway station with mainline services. The nearest stations are located in Alton, approximately 10km to the north-east, and Winchester, located approximately 15km to the west
- As of August 2017, the principal bus routes through the Neighbourhood Plan area were route 64 and route 240, connecting residents to Winchester, Alton and Alresford. Services are fairly frequent for route 64, but infrequent for route 240.
- In regards to the highways network, the A31 is the main road passing through the northern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area. There is a network of country lanes passing through the central and southern sections, including Gascoigne Lane, Lysways Lane and Petersfield Road.
- The main congestion points within the Neighbourhood Plan area are along the A31.
- Residents have access to the 'St Swithun's Way', a footpath extending approximately 50km from Winchester to Farnham.
- Over 95% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to a car or van, perhaps in part due to the fact that Ropley is an affluent and rural location.

SEA Framework

3.14 The issues were then translated into an 'SEA Framework'. This SEA Framework provides a methodological framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects on the baseline. The SEA framework for the RNP is presented below, excluding the SEA Themes which have been scoped out.

Table 3.2: SEA Framework for the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan

SEA Objective	Assessment questions
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the status of the locally designated sites of significance within and/or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary? • Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?

SEA Objective	Assessment questions
Climate Change	
<p>Reduce the level of contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan area</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need to travel via privately owned vehicle? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?
<p>Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that no inappropriate development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing surface water runoff (either within the plan area or downstream)? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the plan area to the effects of climate change, including enhancements to ecological networks?
Landscape and Historic Environment	
<p>Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage resource within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the historic environment and archaeological assets.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting? • Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the two parts of the Ropley Conservation Area and its setting? • Support the integrity of the historic setting of key buildings of cultural heritage interest? • Conserve and enhance local diversity and character? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment? • Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, including historic landscapes? • Support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies.

SEA Objective	Assessment questions
Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and villagescapes.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the integrity of the local landscape character? • Support the integrity of the South Downs National Park, which lies adjacent to the parish? • Conserve and enhance landscape and villagescape features?
Land, Soil and Water Resources	
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land? • Direct development on greenfield sites to land not classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land?
Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of waste produced? • Support the minimisation, reuse and recycling of waste? • Maximise opportunities for local management of waste in order to minimise export of waste to areas outside? • Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?
Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support improvements to water quality? • Minimise water consumption?
Population and Community	
Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community facilities? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities? • Minimise fuel poverty? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?
Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?

SEA Objective	Assessment questions
<p>Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Support enhancements to the current housing stock? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people’s needs? • Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? • Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?
<p>Health and Wellbeing</p>	
<p>Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? • Align to the key priority areas outlined in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment? • Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards? • Promote the use of healthier modes of travel? • Improve access to the countryside for recreational use?
<p>Transportation</p>	
<p>Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Facilitate working from home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?

4. What has plan making / SEA involved to this point?

Introduction

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include...
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
 - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, this section explains how preparation of the current version of the RNP has been informed by an assessment of alternative locations for non-strategic scale development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Overview of plan making / SEA work undertaken since 2015

- 4.3 Plan-making for the RNP has been underway since 2015. Initial work incorporated a questionnaire which was developed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The questionnaire invited local residents to comment on the future of the local community, including on the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.4 Subsequent actions have included the development of a Neighbourhood Plan website, the formation of six area groups to feed in local views and ideas and a significant number of workshops and public meetings.
- 4.5 The following sections discuss the evolution of the RNP in association with the SEA process.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.6 A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the RNP. The SEA Regulations⁵ are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the Environmental Report should present an appraisal of the '*plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan*'.
- 4.7 The following section therefore describes how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan area through exploring potential locations for housing allocations.

⁵ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

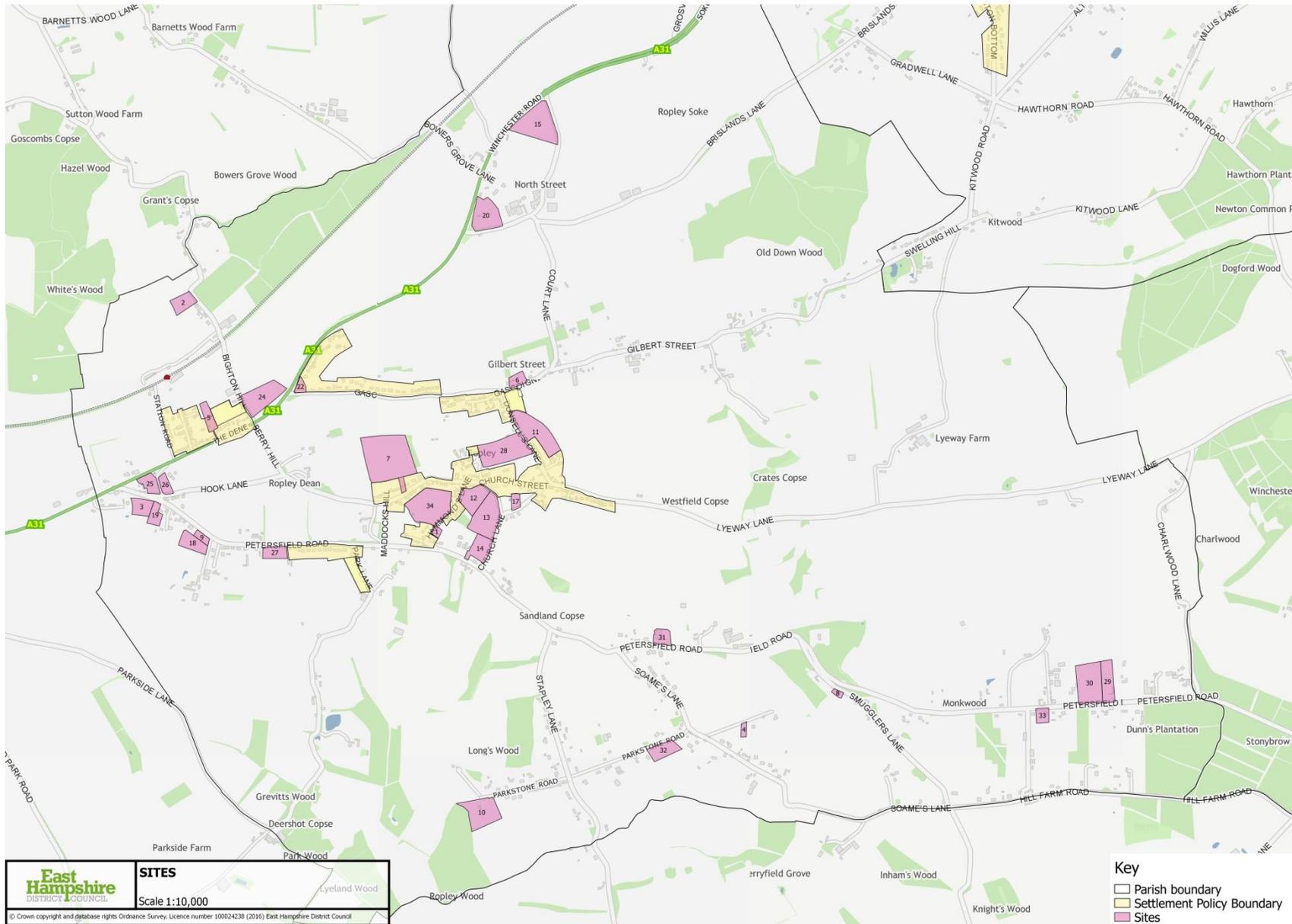


Figure 4.1: Sites considered as potential housing allocations for the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan

Assessment of potential locations for housing allocations

- 4.8 As discussed in Section 2.1, the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in conjunction with the provisions of the East Hampshire District Local Plan.
- 4.9 Policy CP2 (Spatial Strategy) of the Joint Core Strategy sets out a settlement hierarchy for the district, with Ropley located within “Level 4 - Other Settlements with a settlement policy boundary” of the hierarchy. This means that Ropley may be appropriate for further small-scale development. Additionally, Policy CP10 (Spatial Strategy for Housing) sets out the minimum number of new dwellings to be developed in each of the levels in the settlement hierarchy, including Level 4. Specifically, Ropley is one of the twenty settlements referred to as “other villages outside the National Park” that should together provide a minimum of 150 dwellings in the remaining lifetime of the Local Plan (post 2021 to 2028).
- 4.10 To gain a more in-depth understanding of housing need in the parish, a Housing Needs Assessment was undertaken for the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan in 2016.⁶ Whilst providing a range of indicative figures, this indicated that there was likely to be a need for 56 homes to be delivered in the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2016 and 2028. Given recent planning permissions, this need has already almost been met in the parish. However, the Neighbourhood Plan group recognises that to deliver certain types and tenures of housing, including affordable and self-build housing, an additional limited degree of housing provision may be required in the plan period.
- 4.11 To support the development of a spatial strategy to deliver these indicative housing needs therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was keen to consider alternative locations for delivering potential housing allocations in the parish.
- 4.12 To facilitate the identification of the sites available for such allocations, a ‘Call for Sites for Housing’ was undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan in April 2016. This led to 16 sites being identified as being available for consideration as potential allocations. In addition to the sites put forward through the Call for Sites, 15 sites had also been previously been put forward through the SHLAA process for the Local Plan, which the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group felt also should be considered as potential allocations.⁷
- 4.13 In addition to the sites identified through the Call for Sites/ SHLAA, a number of further sites were also identified as being appropriate for consideration. This included: the site adjacent to Hale Close (located to the rear of Church Street), which had subsequently become available; and the site of the former Chequers Inn, which consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan had indicated that potentially there is a strong community desire for the site to be redeveloped.
- 4.14 A site assessment was then undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on the 31 sites identified through the process above. This considered a range of factors, such as accessibility to services and facilities, road access, public transport links, landscape character, physical constraints, agricultural land quality and number of other elements. The process for the site assessment, and findings, are presented in the Evidence Base documents for the Neighbourhood Plan.⁸

⁶ AECOM (July 2016) Housing Needs Assessment for the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan)

⁷ Three of the sites identified through the Call for Sites/ SHLAA were then subsequently withdrawn for consideration by the landowner.

⁸ The Neighbourhood Plan site assessment findings can be accessed on <http://www.myropley.org.uk/ropley-neighbourhood-planning/>

4.15 Eight sites⁹ were then identified through the site assessment as the highest scoring, and as such the most appropriate for further consideration as potential allocations to be taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.16 The eight sites are as follows:

- Site 9 – Land between Homeview and Wyckham House
- Site 19 – Tresaith, Petersfield Road
- Site 20 – The Bungalow, Winchester Road
- Site 22 - Site of the former Chequers Pub
- Site 25 – Triangle of land at A31/Petersfield Road junction
- Site 26 – Land West of the former Doctor's Surgery, Petersfield Road
- Site 27 – Land West of May Cottage, Petersfield Road
- Site 28 – Land adjacent to Hale Close, to the rear of Church Street

4.17 The location of these sites is identified in Figure 4.1 above.

4.18 To support the consideration of the suitability of these sites as potential allocations for the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the eight sites and potential effects that may arise. In this context the sites have been considered as in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision making questions developed during SEA scoping (Table 3.2) and the baseline information.

4.19 The tables below present this appraisal, and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the seven SEA themes.

⁹ Ten sites were initially identified as having the highest scores through the site assessment process. Two sites were however subsequently withdrawn due to the identification of site access issues which could not be readily overcome.

Table 4.1: Site 9 – Land between Homeview and Wyckham House

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 9 – Land between Homeview and Wyckham House	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development with the potential to be taken forward.</p> <p>The site does not contain features or areas of significant biodiversity value. The site contains no, and is not adjacent to or in close proximity to, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat. It also not adjacent or close to SINC's or other locally designated sites.</p>	
Climate change	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The site is also not within an area at risk of surface water flooding. Whilst areas of higher risk of flooding are located on the opposite site of Petersfield Road, associated with the small watercourse at this location, the site is elevated above this area.</p> <p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, the site is located relatively close (c.300m) to bus links and facilities located on the A31 (including the filling station/shop and restaurant).</p>	
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>The site is currently a previously developed infill site which detracts from local distinctiveness. Development at this location would reflect existing settlement patterns in the area.</p> <p>The site is not located within the setting of the Ropley Conservation Area, and no listed buildings or other historic environment designations are present in the setting of the site. The site is also not within an Area of Importance for archaeology.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>The site is on previously developed land. As such an allocation at this location will support the efficient use of land.</p> <p>The site is not located within a groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, the site is located relatively close (c.300m) to bus links and facilities located on the A31 (including the filling station/shop and restaurant).</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site is not readily accessible to the village's extensive public rights of way network. The site is approximately 5.7km from Mansfield Park Surgery.</p>	
Transportation	<p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, the site is located relatively close (c.300m) to bus links and facilities located on the A31 (including the filling station/shop and restaurant).</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

Table 4.2: Site 19 – Tresaith, Petersfield Road

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 19 – Tresaith, Petersfield Road	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development with the potential to be taken forward.</p> <p>The site does not contain features or areas of significant biodiversity value. The site contains no, and is not adjacent to or in close proximity to, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat. It also not adjacent or close to SINC's or other locally designated sites.</p>	
Climate change	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The site is also not within an area at risk of surface water flooding. Whilst areas of higher risk of flooding are located on the opposite site of Petersfield Road, associated with the small watercourse at this location, the site is elevated above this area.</p> <p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.6km from the main village centre, the site is located relatively close (c.200m) to bus links and facilities located on the A31 (including the filling station/shop and restaurant).</p>	
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>The site is well screened from the road and surrounding properties. As such development at this location would not have significant impacts on landscape character. Development at this location would reflect existing settlement patterns in the area.</p> <p>The site is not located within the setting of the Ropley Conservation Area. Whilst the Grade II listed Little Barton is located approximately 40m from the site, the site is well screened and no significant negative impacts are anticipated on the setting of the building from potential development at this location. The site is not within an Area of Importance for archaeology.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>Development at this site will lead to the loss of productive land. Land at this location is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land, however recent (post 1988) land classification has not been carried out at this location. In this context it is uncertain whether land at this location comprises land as the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land (i.e. Grade 3a land) or land not classified as such (i.e. Grade 3b land).</p> <p>The site is not located within a groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.6km from the main village centre, the site is located relatively close (c.200m) to bus links and facilities located on the A31 (including the filling station/shop and restaurant).</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site is not readily accessible to the village's extensive public rights of way network. The site is approximately 5.6km from Mansfield Park Surgery.</p>	
Transportation	<p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, the site is located relatively close (c.200m) to bus links and facilities located on the A31 (including the filling station/shop and restaurant).</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

Table 4.3: Site 20 – The Bungalow, Winchester Road

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 20 – The Bungalow, Winchester Road	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development with the potential to be taken forward.</p> <p>The site does not contain features or areas of significant biodiversity value. The site contains no, and is not adjacent to or in close proximity to, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat. It also not adjacent or close to SINC's or other locally designated sites.</p>	
Climate change	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The site is also not within an area at risk of surface water flooding, although the A31 and Brislands Lane are at some risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>Whilst the site is approximately 2.5km from the main village centre, the site is located adjacent to a bus stop.</p>	
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>Due to its very open perspective from the south, development at the site has the potential to have significant impacts on landscape character.</p> <p>The site is also located within the setting of the Grade II listed Turnpike Cottage, with development likely to impact on views to and from the cottage.</p> <p>The site is not within the setting of the Ropley Conservation Area and is not within an Area of Importance for archaeology.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>Development at this site will lead to the loss of productive land. Land at this location is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land, however recent (post 1988) land classification has not been carried out at this location. In this context it is uncertain whether land at this location comprises land as the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land (i.e. Grade 3a land) or land not classified as such (i.e. Grade 3b land).</p> <p>The site is within a Zone 2 groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>The site is located at significant distance (2.5km) from the services and facilities in the main village centre. The site is however located adjacent to a bus stop.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site is located 100m from a footpath which links to the south. The site is approximately 3.2km from Mansfield Park Surgery.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located at significant distance (2.5km) from the services and facilities in the main village centre. The site is however located adjacent to a bus stop.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

Table 4.4: Site 22 - Site of the former Chequers Pub

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 22 - Site of the former Chequers Pub	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development with the potential to be taken forward.</p> <p>The site does not contain features or areas of significant biodiversity value. The site contains no, and is not adjacent to or in close proximity to, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat. It also not adjacent or close to SINC's or other locally designated sites.</p>	
Climate change	<p>The Environment Agency has confirmed that, following recent flood risk modelling, the site is within a Flood Zone 1.</p> <p>The site is not within an area at risk of surface water flooding, although the A31 and Gascoigne Lane are at some risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>Whilst the site is approximately 2km from the main village centre, the site is adjacent to a bus stop.</p>	
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>The site currently detracts from local character. As such, redevelopment of the site offers opportunities to enhance the quality of the built environment and public realm.</p> <p>The site is visible from the road, but is relatively screened from surrounding properties. Development at this location would reflect existing settlement patterns in the area. The site is also not within the setting of an Area of Significant Visual Prominence.</p> <p>The site is not within the setting of the Ropley Conservation Area and is not within an Area of Importance for archaeology. No listed buildings or other historic environment designations are present in the setting of the site.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>The site is located on previously developed land. As such an allocation at this location will support the efficient use of land.</p> <p>The site is within a Zone 2 groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Whilst the site is approximately 2km from the main village centre, the site is located directly adjacent to bus links located on the A31, and approximately 1km from the facilities located along the A31, including the filling station/shop and restaurant.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site is located adjacent to a footpath which extends approximately 700m to the south west towards the main village centre. The site is also adjacent to a footpath which extends approximately 300m to the north west towards Ropley station. The site is approximately 5km from Alresford Surgery (to the west) and Mansfield Park Surgery (to the north east)</p>	
Transportation	<p>Whilst the site is approximately 2km from the main village centre, the site is located directly adjacent to bus links located on the A31, and approximately 1km to the facilities located along the A31, including the filling station/shop and restaurant.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

Table 4.5: Site 25 – Triangle of land at A31/Petersfield Road junction

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 25 – Triangle of land at A31/Petersfield Road junction	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development with the potential to be taken forward.</p> <p>The site does not contain features or areas of significant biodiversity value. The site contains no, and is not adjacent to or in close proximity to, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat. It also not adjacent or close to SINC's or other locally designated sites.</p> <p>There is a pond located directly to the north of the site.</p>	
Climate change	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, land within the southern section of the site is within Flood Zone 3.</p> <p>There are areas of land in the southern section of the site which are at medium and high risk of surface water flooding. The road passing adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site is at high risk from surface water flooding.</p> <p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, the site is located within close proximity to a bus stop.</p>	
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>Due to its open perspective from the north, development at the site has the potential to have impacts on landscape character. The site is visible from the residential properties located to the east and the west of the site, and is also within the setting of the Grade II listed 'Ropley Lodge', which is located directly to the north of the site. Development is therefore likely to impact on views to and from the lodge.</p> <p>The site is not located within the setting of the Ropley Conservation Area and is not within an Area of Importance for archaeology. The site is also not within the setting of an Area of Significant Visual Prominence.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>Development at this site will lead to the loss of productive land. Land at this location is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land, however recent (post 1988) land classification has not been carried out at this location. In this context it is uncertain whether land at this location comprises land as the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land (i.e. Grade 3a land) or land not classified as such (i.e. Grade 3b land).</p> <p>The site is not located within a groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, the site is located relatively close (c.250m) to bus links and facilities located on the A31 (including the filling station/shop and restaurant).</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site is approximately 4.5km from Alresford Surgery (to the west) and 5.7km to Mansfield Park Surgery (to the north east). The site is approximately 400m from a footpath which links to Ropley train station. St Swithun's Way is located approximately 800m to the south west of the site.</p>	
Transportation	<p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, the site is located relatively close (c.250m) to bus links and facilities located on the A31 (including the filling station/shop and restaurant).</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

Table 4.6: Site 26 – Land West of the former Doctor’s Surgery, Petersfield Road

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 26 – Land West of the former Doctor’s Surgery, Petersfield Road	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development with the potential to be taken forward.</p> <p>The site does not contain features or areas of significant biodiversity value. The site contains no, and is not adjacent to or in close proximity to, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat. It also not adjacent or close to SINC’s or other locally designated sites.</p> <p>There is a pond located approximately 20m to the north west of the site.</p>	
Climate change	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, land within the northern section of the site is within Flood Zone 3.</p> <p>Parts of the northern section of the site are at risk from surface water flooding; however this is a low risk. The road passing adjacent to the western boundary of the site is at high risk from surface water flooding.</p> <p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, the site is located within close proximity to a bus stop.</p>	
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>The site is well screened from the north and the south from the road and the row of trees. However, the site is visible from the residential properties located to the east and the west of the site. Development at this location would reflect existing settlement patterns in the area. The site is also not within the setting of an Area of Significant Visual Prominence.</p> <p>The site is within the setting of the Grade II listed ‘Little Barton’, which is located directly to the south. However, as this section of the site is well screened, no significant negative impacts are anticipated on the setting of the building from potential development at this location. The site is not located within the setting of the Ropley Conservation Area and is not within an Area of Importance for archaeology.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>Land at this location is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land, however recent (post 1988) land classification has not been carried out at this location. In this context it is uncertain whether land at this location comprises land as the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land (i.e. Grade 3a land) or land not classified as such (i.e. Grade 3b land).</p> <p>The site is not located within a groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, the site is located relatively close (c.250m) to bus links and facilities located on the A31 (including the filling station/shop and restaurant).</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site is approximately 4.5km from Arlesford Surgery (to the west) and 5.7km to Mansfield Park Surgery (to the north east). The site is approximately 400m from a footpath which links to Ropley train station. St Swithun’s Way is located approximately 800m to the south west of the site.</p>	
Transportation	<p>Whilst the site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, the site is located relatively close (c.250m) to bus links and facilities located on the A31 (including the filling station/shop and restaurant).</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

Table 4.7: Site 27 – Land West of May Cottage, Petersfield Road

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 27 – Land West of May Cottage, Petersfield Road	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development with the potential to be taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>The site does not contain features or areas of significant biodiversity value. The site contains no, and is not adjacent to or in close proximity to, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat. It also not adjacent or close to SINC's or other locally designated sites.</p>	
Climate change	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1.</p> <p>The site is not within an area at risk of surface water flooding, although Petersfield Road is at some risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>The site is approximately 1.5km from the main village centre, and is not adjacent to or within the proximity of a bus stop. As such, development on the site is not likely to promote a limitation in greenhouse gas emissions per capita.</p>	
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>The site is well screened from the north by the row of trees located along Petersfield Road. Views in from the south are restricted due to the sites location at the bottom of a slope. Development at this location would reflect existing settlement patterns in the area. The site is also not within the setting of an Area of Significant Visual Prominence.</p> <p>The site is within the setting of the Grade II listed 'Fieldview Cottage', which is located adjacent to the north western corner of the site. Development is therefore likely to impact on views to and from the cottage. The site is not located within the setting of the Ropley Conservation Area and is not within an Area of Importance for archaeology.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>Land at this location is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land, however recent (post 1988) land classification has not been carried out at this location. In this context it is uncertain whether land at this location comprises land as the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land (i.e. Grade 3a land) or land not classified as such (i.e. Grade 3b land).</p> <p>The site is not located within a groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>The site is located at significant distance (1.5km) from the services and facilities in the main village centre, and is not located near to a bus stop.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>Alresford Surgery is located approximately 5km to the west of the site. The nearest footpath 'St Swithun's Way' is located approximately 600m to the east of the site.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located at distance (1.5km) from the services and facilities in the main village centre, and is not located near to a bus stop.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

Table 4.8: Site 28 – Land adjacent to Hale Close, to the rear of Church Street

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 28 – Land adjacent to Hale Close, to the rear of Church Street	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development with the potential to be taken forward.</p> <p>The site does not contain features or areas of significant biodiversity value. The site contains no, and is not adjacent to or in close proximity to, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat. It also not adjacent or close to SINC's or other locally designated sites.</p>	
Climate change	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1.</p> <p>The site is not within an area at risk of surface water flooding, although sections of Dunsell's Lane are at some risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>The site is located within the main village centre and is within close proximity to local service and facilities. As such, development on the site is not likely to increase the reliance on privately owned vehicles. Additionally, the site is approximately 100m from a bus stop.</p>	
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>To the north, east and west the site is well screened from view by the existing rows of trees or hedgerows which mark its boundaries. Development at this location would reflect existing settlement patterns in the area.</p> <p>Due to the relatively open perspective to the south of the site, development of the site is likely to impact on the setting of the Church of St Peter.</p> <p>The site is within the setting of the Ropley Conservation Area, which is located directly to the south. Development has the potential to impact upon the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area, including upon the heritage assets located within its boundaries (including a variety of Grade II listed buildings associated with the Church of St Peter).</p> <p>The site is not within an Area of Importance for archaeology.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>Development at this site will lead to the loss of productive land. Land at this location is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land, however recent (post 1988) land classification has not been carried out at this location. In this context it is uncertain whether land at this location comprises land as the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land (i.e. Grade 3a land) or land not classified as such (i.e. Grade 3b land).</p> <p>The site is not located within a groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>The site is located within the main village centre and is within close proximity to local services and facilities (including the Ropley CoE Primary School, Post Office and local shop, parish hall, sports pavilion, tennis club and the Church of St Peter). Additionally, the site is approximately 100m from a bus stop.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>There is a footpath passing through the north western section of the site which adjoins to St Swithun's Way (approximately 100m to the south) and the village's extensive public rights of way network. It is also located close to the Recreation Ground.</p> <p>Mansfield Park Surgery is located approximately 5km to the north east of the site.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located within the main village centre and is within close proximity to local services and facilities (including the Ropley CoE Primary School, Post Office and local shop, parish hall, sports pavilion, tennis club and the Church of St Peter). Additionally, the site is approximately 100m from a bus stop.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

Current approach in the Neighbourhood Plan and the development of Neighbourhood Plan policies

Choice of sites taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan

4.20 The current version of the Neighbourhood Plan allocates three potential sites for housing and one potential site for community uses. These are as follows:

- Site 9 – Land between Homeview and Wyckham House
- Site 22 - Site of the former Chequers Pub
- Site 28 – Land adjacent to Hale Close, to the rear of Church Street.

4.21 In addition the Land adjacent to Dunsell's Lane site is allocated for community uses.

4.22 This follows the outcomes of the site assessment, consultation events, an ongoing consideration of viability and achievability and a consideration of the SEA findings presented above.

Neighbourhood Plan policies

4.23 To support the implementation of the vision for the Neighbourhood Plan discussed in Section 2.2, the current version of the RNP puts forward 24 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

4.24 Following the preparation of an initial version of the RNP in mid-2017, the draft policies presented in the plan underwent an initial assessment through the SEA process. A number of recommendations were made at this stage, with the aim of enhancing the sustainability performance of the plan. The draft Neighbourhood Plan was then updated to reflect these recommendations.

4.25 The current policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, which were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering, are as follows:

Table 4.2: Ropley Neighbourhood Plan policies

Policy Number	Policy Name
RNP1	Settlement Gaps
RNP2	Settlement Policy Boundaries
RNP3	Key Vistas and Areas of Significant Visual Prominence
RNP4	Maintenance of Trees, Verges, Hedgerows and Banks
RNP5	Development along Narrow Lanes
RNP6	Protection for Sunken Lanes
RNP7	Construction Environmental Management Policy
RNP8	Ropley Local Green Spaces
RNP9	Non-Designated Heritage Assets
RNP10	Local Nature Conservation Networks
RNP11	Rights of Way
RNP12	Design Policy
RNP13	Design Policy
RNP14	Design Policy
RNP15	Design Policy
RNP16	Design Policy
RNP17	Dark Skies Policy
RNP18	Housing Allocation Numbers
RNP19	Site 28 Housing Development Policy
RNP20	Site 8 Housing Development Policy
RNP21	Policy covering Self Builds
RNP22	Policy covering development in Site 22 the site of the former Chequers Inn
RNP23	Currently Protection for the Community Assets
RNP24	Policy Designating the New Community Asset

5. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

Introduction

- 5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current Regulation 14 version of the RNP. This chapter presents:
- An appraisal of the current version of the RNP under the seven SEA Theme headings; and
 - The overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

Approach to the appraisal

- 5.2 The appraisal is structured under the seven SEA themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA.
- 5.3 For each theme 'significant effects' of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.
- 5.4 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.5 No European or nationally designated sites are located within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area. In the local context, key sites of biodiversity importance for the Neighbourhood Plan area include the dispersed network of deciduous woodland BAP priority habitat patches. The most significant areas of this type of BAP priority habitat also comprise areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, with eight of these areas designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).
- 5.6 A number of policies put forward in the Neighbourhood Plan have either a direct or indirect impact upon biodiversity and geodiversity. For example, Policy RNP4 (Maintenance of Trees, Verges, Hedgerows and Banks) states that new development should retain these features and that any new planting in association with the new development should compose of indigenous species. Policy RNP4 also outlines that new development should seek to protect and enhance the area's ecological networks, the provision which is supported by Policy RNP10 (Local Nature Conservation Networks). A central element of Policy RNP10 is to support the Neighbourhood Plan area's ecological networks by designating three Local Nature Conservation Networks (LNCNs) within its boundary. Specifically, development proposals within or adjacent to the boundaries of the LNCNs will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that there would be no adverse impacts to biodiversity, via the completion of an ecological impact assessment.

- 5.7 Housing delivery through the Neighbourhood Plan will take place through development at three sites, including on Land off Hale Close (Policy RNP19), Land at the Junction of Winchester Road and Gascoigne Lane (Policy RNP20) and Land between Homeview and Wykeham House on Petersfield Road (Policy RNP21). Additionally, Land adjacent to Dunsell's Lane has been reserved for community uses (Policy RNP24). In this context, none of the allocated sites overlap with a BAP Priority Habitat, SINC or LNCN, and are not within SSSI Impact Risk Zones.
- 5.8 Overall therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan sets a solid basis for the protection and enhancement of habitats and ecological networks in the Neighbourhood Plan area, supporting the provisions of Policies CP21 and CP28 of the Joint Core Strategy.

Climate Change

- 5.9 In terms of climate change adaptation, the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework will help address potential flood risk issues in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Whilst the sites allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan are not within areas of flood risk, a number of the policies will further help manage flood risk issues in the area. Policy RNP15 (Design Policy) states that driveways and parking areas should comprise of permeable materials, where possible, with the aim of managing the risk of surface water flooding from new development. Additionally, the provisions of Policy RNP8 (Ropley Local Green Spaces) and Policy RNP10 (Local Green Infrastructure Networks) will help increase the capacity of the landscape and villagescape to adapt to extreme weather events and the other impacts of climate change.
- 5.10 In terms of climate change mitigation, road transport is an increasingly significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Based on the 2011 census data, the most popular method of travelling to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area is via driving a car or van (45.6%). Although this broadly aligns to the average for East Hampshire (47.4%), the district as a whole has recorded higher per capita emissions than both the South East of England and England as a whole since 2005. Supporting a limitation of greenhouse gas emissions, Policy RNP2 (Settlement Policy Boundaries) states that development proposals will be supported if they are located within the six settlement boundaries within the Neighbourhood Plan area, which are the locations within the Neighbourhood Plan area with better access to services and facilities. This will be supported by the housing site allocations proposed by the Neighbourhood Plan (as outlined by the provisions of Policies RNP19-21). In this context these policies will help limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport by facilitating access to existing bus routes (as facilitated by the allocations at Land at the Junction of Winchester Road and Gascoigne Lane, and Land between Homeview and Wykeham House on Petersfield Road) and key village services (as facilitated by the allocation at the Land off Hale Close).

Landscape and Historic Environment

- 5.11 The Neighbourhood Plan area contains a variety of heritage assets, including 41 nationally listed buildings and the Ropley Conservation Area. In this context, a central focus for the policies proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan is on protecting and enhancing the quality of the public realm, supporting local distinctiveness, protecting landscape and villagescape character and supporting the conservation of the historic environment.
- 5.12 In this regard, Policy RNP12 (Design Policy) states that new development should positively contribute to the public realm and sense of place, ensuring that the scale, height, density and design of the development is appropriate to its context within the Neighbourhood Plan area. This statement of intent is further supported by the provisions of Policy RNP13 (Design Policy), which outlines that developments of more than two dwellings should incorporate variations in design and/or materials such that the appearance of no more than two dwellings are identical. Additionally, Policy RNP14 (Design Policy) and Policy RNP16 (Design Policy) outlines that the variations in materials must also be in keeping with those used on adjacent buildings. As such,

the application of these policies will positively support the local villagescape character by ensuring that the style of development is sensitive to its surroundings.

- 5.13 In order to support the conservation of the historic environment, Policy RNP9 (Non-Designated Heritage Assets) identifies the locally important heritage assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Principally, Policy RNP9 states that development proposals must retain the significance of these heritage assets, including their contribution to local distinctiveness. Policy RNP14 (Design Policy) states that all development in and adjacent to the Ropley Conservation Area should be carried out in conjunction with, when prepared, its Conservation Area Appraisal and/or Conservation Area Management Plan. This is particularly significant in the context of the proposed housing allocation at 'Land off Hale Close' (Policy RNP19) and the community facility allocation at 'Land adjacent to Dunsell's Lane (Policy RNP24), which are located in the setting of Ropley Conservation Area. As such, the provisions of Policy RNP19 (Site 28 Housing Development Policy) state that development must have a design, layout and landscaping of high quality and character which respects the characteristics of the village and avoids any harm to the Church Street part of the Ropley Conservation Area and its setting.
- 5.14 In relation to the landscape designations, the southern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area is directly adjacent to the South Downs National Park. Policy RNP3 (Key Vistas and Areas of Visual Prominence) states that new development should protect key views to and from the National Park. In regards to the allocated sites for housing development (see Policies RNP19-21) and community use (see Policy RNP24) within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the sites are not within the boundaries of an Area of Visual Prominence (AVP) and are also not within proximity to the South Downs National Park. Along with the aforementioned design policies and the relatively limited number of dwellings anticipated through the duration of the plan period (27 in total, after the implementation of existing planning permissions), it is therefore expected that development will be sympathetic to landscape character.
- 5.15 A number of policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will further support local distinctiveness. For example, Policy RNP1 (Settlement Gaps) states that development within the six settlement gaps in the Neighbourhood Plan area will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that it would not undermine the physical and/or visual separation of settlements. Policy RNP2 (Settlement Policy Boundaries) also seeks to focus development within settlement boundaries. This will help prevent the coalescence of settlements within the Neighbourhood Plan area, enabling them to retain their separate identities.
- 5.16 Overall, the policies outlined above provide a robust basis for the conservation and enhancement of landscape and villagescape character in the Neighbourhood Plan area and the conservation of historic environment assets and their settings.

Land, Soil and Water Resources

- 5.17 In relation to the allocated sites for housing development (see Policies RNP19-21) and community use (see Policy RNP24) in the Neighbourhood Plan area, development on 'Land off Hale Close' and 'Land adjacent to Dunsell's Lane' would result in the loss of existing greenfield land. In the absence of a detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) assessment, it is not currently possible to determine whether the sites are underlain by the 'Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land'. Based on the 1:250,000 series of ALC maps produced by Natural England, the majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is underlain by Grade 3 (good to moderate quality) agricultural land. It is useful to acknowledge, however, that the proposed development level within the Neighbourhood Plan area as outlined in Policy RNP18 (Housing Allocation Numbers) is not of a scale which would cause significant loss of available greenfield land within the lifetime of the plan period. Furthermore, the redevelopment of 'Land at the Junction of Winchester Road and Gascoigne Lane' (see Policy RNP20) and 'Land between Homeview and Wykeham House on Petersfield Road' (see Policy RNP21) will promote the best use of previously developed land.

- 5.18 Policy RNP8 (Ropley Local Green Spaces) and Policy RNP10 (Protecting the Local Environment) aim to protect and enhance the existing network of open spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Whilst these policies do not specifically relate to land, soil and water resources, the policies will help promote and protect these resources, including through the promotion of high quality green infrastructure networks in the Neighbourhood Plan area and the protection and enhancement of key landscape features.

Population and Community

- 5.19 With reference to the East Hampshire Local Plan, Policy CP2 (Spatial Strategy) of the Joint Core Strategy sets out a settlement hierarchy for the district, with Ropley located within “Level 4 - Other Settlements with a settlement policy boundary” of the hierarchy. This means that Ropley may be appropriate for further small-scale development. Additionally, Policy CP10 (Spatial Strategy for Housing) sets out the minimum number of new dwellings to be developed in each of the levels in the settlement hierarchy, including Level 4. Specifically, Ropley is one of the twenty settlements referred to as “other villages outside the National Park” that should together provide a minimum of 150 dwellings in the remaining lifetime of the Local Plan (post 2021 to 2028).
- 5.20 To further gain an understanding of housing need in the parish, a Housing Needs Assessment was undertaken for the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan in 2016.¹⁰ This indicated that there was likely to be a need for 56 homes between 2016 and 2028. In this context, Policy RNP18 (Housing Allocation Numbers) states that 73 dwellings will be delivered in Ropley parish between 2016-2028, through the implementation of existing planning permissions and the sites allocated through Policies RNP19-21 in the Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, it is expected that the allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan will meet and exceed objectively assessed housing needs arising locally, particularly given the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to facilitate the delivery of specific types of housing for local needs, including affordable housing and self-build housing.
- 5.21 A variety of policies within the Neighbourhood Plan build upon the Ropley Village Design Statement and outline detailed requirements for the design and materials of new development in order to respect the character, identity and context of the village (see Policy RNP13, RNP14 and RNP16). Notably, Policy RNP12 (Design Policy) states that new development must positively contribute to the public realm and sense of place. Policy RNP17 (Dark Skies Policy) requires development to have no significant adverse effects upon the darkness of the night sky, the amenities of adjoining residents or upon wildlife habitats. It is expected that these policies will positively enhance the character of the community, supporting the quality of life of residents and the satisfaction of residents with the neighbourhood as a place to live. Furthermore, Policy RNP23 (Currently Protection for the Community Assets) outlines that proposals for the change of use of the Parish Hall, Sports Pavilion and adjoining recreation ground, Coffee Room, the Thai Lounge and community shop will not be permitted unless they are no longer required for that use. This will help preclude the loss of the key social and community facilities which support the vitality of the Neighbourhood plan area.
- 5.22 In line with other areas of the UK, the population of the Neighbourhood Plan area is ageing. Based on the 2011 census data, 27.7% of residents are within the 60+ age category, in comparison to 26.4% for East Hampshire, 23.3% for the South West and 22.3% for England. As such, the locations of the allocated sites are considered to be appropriate due to their locations (see Policy RNP2) being accessible to bus routes and key services and facilities (see the ‘Transportation’ theme below. This will support accessibility and help reduce the need to travel for amenities.

¹⁰ AECOM (July 2016) Housing Needs Assessment for the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan)

Health and Wellbeing

- 5.23 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Hampshire raises a number of priorities for discussion. Some of the key priority issues for Hampshire are linked to improving mental and physical health of local residents, promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing social isolation and loneliness. In this context, the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan will bring a range of benefits for the health and wellbeing of residents living in the parish, as well as addressing some of the challenges identified within the JSNA.
- 5.24 In terms of reducing social isolation and loneliness, there is a strong focus on protecting the existing social and community facilities which contribute to the wellbeing of local residents, including the Parish Hall, Sports Pavilion and adjoining recreation ground, Coffee Room, the Thai Lounge and the community shop. Specifically, Policy RNP23 (Protection for the Community Assets) states that the change of use of these assets will not be permitted unless they are no longer required for their existing use. Policy RNP24 (Designating the New Community Asset) allocates approximately 0.6 ha of land adjacent to Dunsell's Lane for future community uses, which will further benefit the health and wellbeing of local residents and positively enhance the vitality of the local community.
- 5.25 There is now robust evidence that access to the natural environment improves people's health and wellbeing through encouraging healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation. In this context, a number of policies within the Neighbourhood Plan aim to protect open spaces. Policy RNP8 (Ropley Local Green Spaces) states that development within the four allocated Local Green Spaces surrounding the village centre of Ropley will not be permitted except in very special circumstances, with Policy RNP10 (Local Nature Conservation Networks) outlining similar provisions for the three LNCNs within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Additionally, Policy RNP11 (Rights of Way) outlines that any development on land which has a right of way crossing it or adjacent to it will be required to replace stiles with gates and provide suitable surface treatment on the right of way to achieve a minimum width of 1.2 metres. These provisions will support the health and wellbeing of residents through enhancing recreational opportunities and encouraging active lifestyles. The quality of life of residents will also be supported by the provisions outlined in Policy RNP12 (Design Policy), with requirements for new development to positively contribute to the public realm and sense of place.
- 5.26 Overall, the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan aim to protect the assets which positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of local residents. However, there may be potential for the plan to further clarify how enhancements to open space, footpaths and other key recreational opportunities can be delivered through a coordinated approach to Green Infrastructure planning in the Neighbourhood Plan area, in order to deliver the widest range of benefits possible – such as for recreation, biodiversity and landscape character. This includes in conjunction with existing green infrastructure work being carried out by East Hampshire District Council, Hampshire County Council, Natural England and other organisations.

Transportation

- 5.27 In regards to the 2011 census data, the most popular method of traveling to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area is via driving a car or van. In this context, there is a need to encourage a modal shift from a reliance on private vehicles towards alternative modes of transport. Notably, 'Land at the Junction of Winchester Road and Gascoigne Lane' (see Policy RNP20) and 'Land between Homeview and Wykeham House on Petersfield Road' (see Policy RNP21) are within proximity to stops on the main bus route through the Neighbourhood Plan area, connecting to the settlements of Alton and Winchester. The 'Land off Hale Close' allocation (see Policy RNP19) is also in close proximity to key village services, including the school and shop/post office. This will reduce the need to travel to access amenities.

- 5.28 A number of policies within the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure the continued functioning of the existing road network. For example, Policy RNP5 (Development along Narrow Lanes) states that development proposals of more than five dwellings will not be permitted if the site access would be from a road of single-vehicle width, unless it is within 250m of a two-vehicle width road. Policy RNP6 (Protection for Sunken Lanes) confirms that development which would involve the creation of a new access onto a sunken lane will not be permitted. Additionally, Policy RNP7 (Construction Environmental Management Policy) states that a development which could potentially result in site construction traffic using narrow lane(s) will only be permitted subject to the completion of a CEMP. Furthermore, in relation to the safety of residents, development on land which has a right of way crossing it or adjacent to it will be required, where practicable, to provide appropriate sight lines at the junction of the right of way and the highway, as per the provisions of Policy RNP14 (Rights of Way).

Conclusions at this current stage

- 5.29 The assessment has concluded that the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'Population and Community' and 'Health and Wellbeing' SEA Themes. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on delivering housing which meets local needs, improving the quality of life of residents and supporting green infrastructure enhancements.
- 5.30 In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan has a strong focus on protecting and enhancing landscape and villagescape character and the setting of the historic environment, including relating to the Ropley Conservation Area and setting of St Peter's Church. This will lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape and Historic Environment' theme.
- 5.31 The Neighbourhood Plan will also initiate a number of beneficial approaches regarding the 'Biodiversity', 'Land, Soil and Water Resources', 'Climate Change' and 'Transportation' SEA themes. However these are not considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and the scale of proposals.

6. What are the next steps?

- 6.1 Subsequent to the current consultation on the Regulation 14 version of the RNP, the draft plan will be updated by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to reflect comments received. This Environmental Report will be updated to reflect the changes made to the plan.
- 6.2 The RNP will then be submitted to East Hampshire District Council Local Planning Authority) for its consideration. East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the RNP meeting legal requirements and whether it is in general conformity with the EHDC Local Plan.
- 6.3 The Examiner will be able to recommend that the RNP is put forward for a referendum, or that it should be modified or that the proposal should be refused. EHDC will then decide what should be done in light of the Examiner's report. Where the report recommends modifications to the plan, EHDC will invite the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to make modifications to the plan, which will be reflected in an updated Environmental Report. Where the Examiner's Report recommends that the proposal is to be refused, EHDC will do so.
- 6.4 Where the examination is favourable, the RNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by EHDC with support from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the plan, then it will be passed to EHDC with a request it is 'made'. Once 'made', the RNP will become part of the Development Plan for Ropley parish.

Appendix A Context Review and Baseline

Air Quality

Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- 'Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan'.
- New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

In terms of the local context, East Hampshire District Council is required to monitor air quality across the county under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995), report regularly to Defra and take action where nationally set levels are likely to be exceeded. Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene and particulates. Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area.

Summary of Current Baseline

No AQMAs are located within the Neighbourhood Plan area, and none are designated within East Hampshire District. The closest AQMAs are located in Winchester city centre and Farnham.

Recent monitoring has not indicated that exceedances of emissions standards are likely to occur.

Summary of Future Baseline

Whilst no significant air quality issues currently exist within the Neighbourhood Plan area, new housing provision within the Neighbourhood Plan has the potential for adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants such as NO₂.

An area of particular sensitivity to increased traffic flows is likely to be the A31. However these effects may be offset in part by factors such as measures implemented through the East Hampshire Local Plan and the Hampshire Local Transport Plan.

It should be noted though that the existing baseline for air pollutants is very low in Ropley, and significant air quality issues are unlikely to arise with moderate increases in traffic flows.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Context Review

At the European level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy¹¹ was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver an established new Europe-wide target to *'halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020'*.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.
- Promote the 'preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and the 'protection and recovery of priority species'. Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.
- Set criteria based policies for the protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, giving weight to their importance not just individually but as a part of a wider ecological network.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including green infrastructure (i.e. 'a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities').
- Plan positively for 'green infrastructure' as part of planning for 'ecological networks'.
- High quality open spaces should be protected or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established.

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)¹² sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It was in part a response to the UK's failure to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2010 and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

Reflecting the commitments within the Natural Environment White Paper and the EU Biodiversity Strategy, 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' aims to *'halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'*¹³.

¹¹ European Commission (2011) Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 [online] available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/EP_resolution_april2012.pdf> last accessed [15/05/17]

¹² Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: <<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>> last accessed [30/08/17]

¹³ DEFRA (2011): 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services', [online] Available to download from: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services>> last accessed [30/08/17]

Summary of Current Baseline

Internationally and European Designated Sites (Ramsar Sites/SPA/SAC)

No Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites lie within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The closest European designated site is the River Itchen SAC, which is located approximately 5km west of Neighbourhood Plan area boundaries. The East Hampshire Hangars SAC is also located approximately 7km east of Neighbourhood Plan area boundaries.

Nationally Designated Sites (SSSIs/NNRs)

No nationally designated biodiversity sites are located in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The closest SSSI to the Neighbourhood Plan area is the Alresford Pond SSSI, which is located 3km west of parish boundaries. The River Itchen SSSI, which covers the area also designated as the River Itchen SAC, is located approximately 5km west of parish boundaries.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs.

Indicating a reduced likelihood of impacts from the Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan area does not lie within an IRZ for the type of development likely to be taken forward through the RNP.

Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats

UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats cover a wide range of semi-natural habitat types, and were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). The BAP priority habitats¹⁴ located within the Neighbourhood Plan include a number of areas of deciduous woodland priority habitat. The more significant areas of this type of BAP priority habitat, which in many cases also comprise areas of ancient woodland, are at the following locations:

- a large area north of the railway line close to Bighton Hill (also categorised as ancient woodland);
- small areas within Ropley village, including at Ropley Manor, east of Hammonds Lane and Ropley Grove;
- a significant area north of Swelling Hill (also categorised as ancient woodland);
- an area north of where Petersfield Road and Smugglers Lane converge (also categorised as ancient woodland);
- an area west of Stapley Lane (also categorised as ancient woodland); and
- a number of areas in the far south of the Neighbourhood Plan area (also categorised as ancient woodland).

Eight areas comprising of ancient woodland are designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SINCs), including Westfield Copse, Old Down Wood, Little Down, Monk Wood/Stony Brow, Harcombe Wood, Park Wood, Lyeland Wood and Ropley Wood.

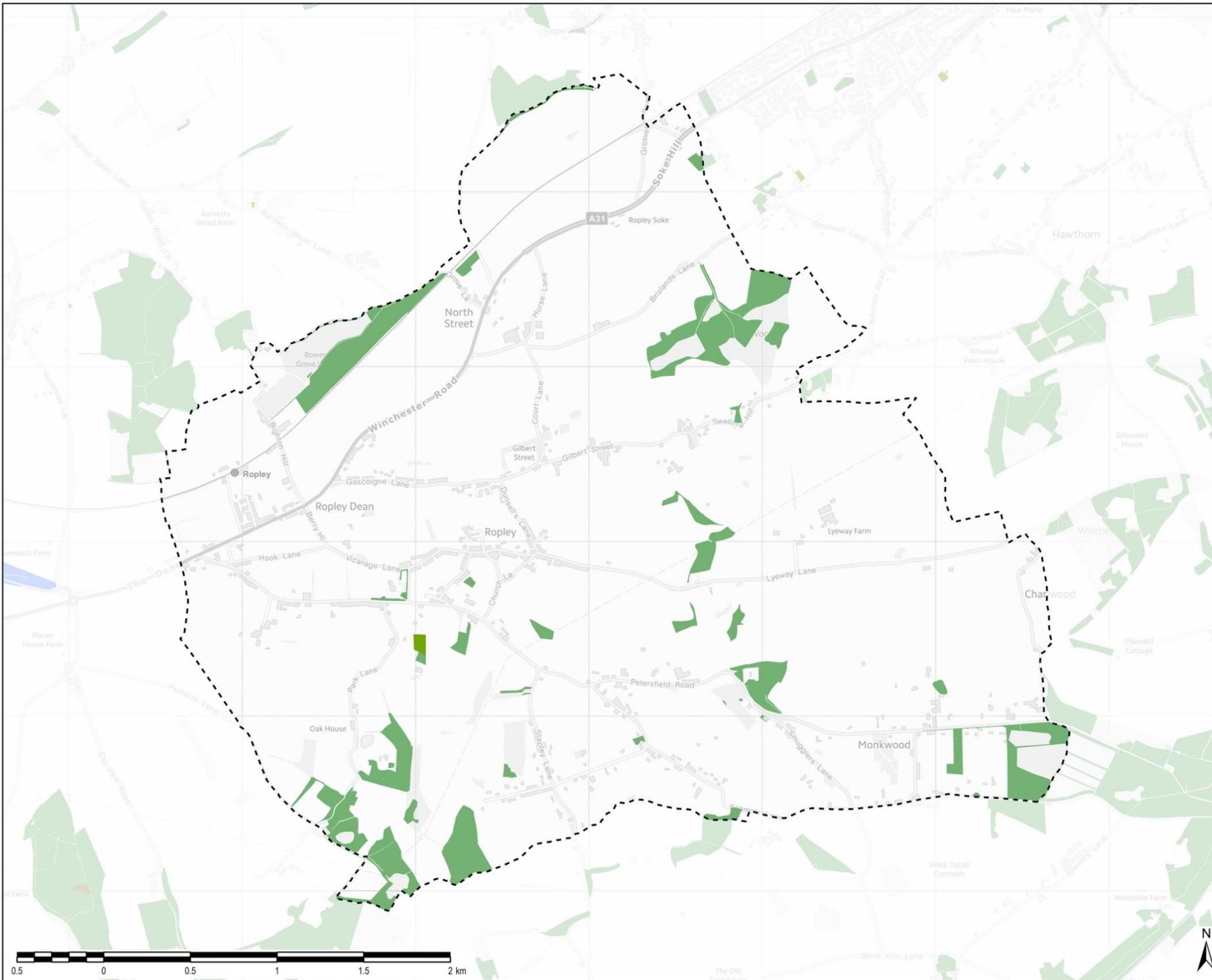
¹⁴ MAGIC (2017): 'Interactive Mapping Tool' [online] available to access via: <<http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>> last accessed [30/08/17]

Summary of Future Baseline

Habitats and species have the potential to come under increasing pressures from housing and infrastructure development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks. This may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition and character of habitats.

Benefits for biodiversity have the potential to arise from the increasing integration of biodiversity considerations within decision making, including sub-regional green infrastructure work being undertaken by Natural England, East Hampshire District Council, Hampshire County Council and other organisations.

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LEGEND

- Ropley Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats**
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Deciduous Woodland
- Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Traditional Orchard

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Purpose of Issue **DRAFT**

Client
ROPLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

Project Title
STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ROPLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Drawing Title
BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN PRIORITY HABITATS

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Climate Change

Context Review

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report to achieve the following:

- *'Based on the latest understanding of current, and future, climate risks and opportunities, vulnerability and adaptation, what should the priorities be for the next UK National Adaptation Programme?'*¹⁵

The evidence report contains six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years, see below:

1. Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;
2. Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures;
3. Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;
4. Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;
5. Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
6. New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals

The UK Climate Change Act¹⁶ was passed in 2008 and established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. It also highlighted the role it would take in contributing to collective action to tackle climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, and more recently as part of the UN-led Paris Agreement.

The Climate Change Act includes the following:

- 2050 Target. The Act commits the UK to reducing emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels.
- Carbon Budgets. The Act requires the Government to set legally binding 'carbon budgets'. A carbon budget is a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period. The carbon budgets are designed to reflect the cost-effective path to achieving the UK's long-term objectives. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.
- The Committee on Climate Change was set up to advise the Government on emissions targets, and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The National Adaptation Programme requires the Government to assess the risks to the UK from climate change, prepare a strategy to address them, and encourage key organisations to do the same. For more detail, visit the UK adaptation policy page¹⁷.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

¹⁵ GOV.UK: 'UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report January 2017', [online] available to download from: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017>> last accessed [05/07/17]

¹⁶ GOV.UK (2008): 'Climate Change Act 2008', [online] accessible via <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>> last accessed [05/07/17]

¹⁷ Committee on Climate Change (2017): 'UK Adaptation Policy' [online] accessible via <<https://www.theccc.org.uk/tackling-climate-change/preparing-for-climate-change/uk-adaptation-policy/>> last accessed [05/07/17]

- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a 'core planning principle'.
- There is a key role for planning in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, including in terms of meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008¹⁸. Specifically, planning policy should support the move to a low carbon future through:
 - Planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions;
 - Actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;
 - Setting local requirements for building's sustainability in a way that is consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy;
 - Positively promoting renewable energy technologies and considering identifying suitable areas for their construction; and
 - Encouraging those transport solutions that support reductions in GHG emissions and reduce congestion.
- Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding, with development 'not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding'. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

The Flood and Water Management Act¹⁹ highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings);
- Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water;
- Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and
- Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)²⁰

Further guidance is provided in the document 'Planning for SuDS'.²¹ This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of 'contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure'.

At the local level, the most Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)²² for East Hampshire District (2008) was developed to support the Local Plan and allow the District Council to prepare appropriate policies for flood risk management.

The following policies within the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014) directly relate to the Climate Change SEA theme:

¹⁸ The Climate Change Act 2008 sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO₂ emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

¹⁹ Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

²⁰ N.B. The provision of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 came into force on the 1st of October 2012 and makes it mandatory for any development in England or Wales to incorporate SuDs.

²¹ CIRIA (2010) 'Planning for SuDs – making it happen' [online] available to access via http://www.ciria.org/Resources/Free_publications/Planning_for_SuDS_ma.aspx last accessed [05/07/17]

²² East Hampshire District Council (2008): 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment', [online] available to download via: <http://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-policy/evidence-base/evidence-base-environment> last accessed [30/08/17]

- CP25: Flood Risk; and
- CP28: Green Infrastructure

Summary of Current Baseline

Contribution to Climate Change

In relation to GhG emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that the district of East Hampshire has had consistently higher per capita emissions total than that of both the South East of England and England as a whole since 2005 (see Table 4.1). East Hampshire District has seen a 13.6% reduction in the percentage of total emissions per capita between 2005 and 2012, lower than the reductions for the South East (15.9%) and England (16.7%).

Potential effects of climate change

The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team²³. UKCP09 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the South East of England by 2050 for a medium emissions scenario²⁴ are likely to be as follows:

- The central estimate of increase in winter mean temperature is 2.2°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.8°C; and
- The central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is 16% and summer mean precipitation is –19%.

Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Neighbourhood Plan area. These include:

- Effects on water resources from climate change;
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

²³ The data was released on 18th June 2009: See: <<http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/>> last accessed [04/02/17]

²⁴ UK Climate Projections (2009) South East 2050s Medium Emissions Scenario [online] available at: <<http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/23907?emission=medium>> last accessed [28/03/17]

Flood Risk

Most of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within Flood Zone 1, classified as having a 0.1% chance (1 in 1000 chance) of being affected by fluvial flooding in any given year. Parts of the highways network within the Neighbourhood Plan area are at medium risk of fluvial flooding, including the A31 and Petersfield Road.

Surface water drainage and sewer flooding is also a risk for some parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area, with sections of low-medium risk along parts of the highways network, including the A31, Petersfield Road and Gascoigne Lane. The areas at risk from surface water drainage and sewer flooding are similar in location to the areas at risk from fluvial flooding, previously discussed.

Overall, the Neighbourhood Plan area is not significantly constrained by flood risk issues.

Summary of Future Baseline

Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This is likely to increase risks associated with climate change (including fluvial and drainage related flooding) with an increased need for resilience and adaptation. Additionally, future development has the potential to exacerbate flood risks.

In terms of climate change mitigation, GhG emissions generated in the Neighbourhood Plan area may decrease with the wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies. However, an increase in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area has the potential to contribute to increases in absolute levels of GhG emissions.

East Hampshire District Council may wish to designate Critical Drainage Areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area (in the absence of any designations from the Environment Agency)²⁵ highlighting the locations at particular risk of flooding during severe weather events for reasons such as surface water capacity issues.

Landscape and Historic Environment

Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance.
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance', taking account of 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- Contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.
- Develop 'robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics'.
- Consider the effects of climate change in the long term, including in terms of landscape. Adopt 'proactive strategies' to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

²⁵ GOV.UK (2017): 'Flood Risk Assessment in Flood Zone 1 and Critical Drainage Areas', [online] available to view via: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-in-flood-zone-1-and-critical-drainage-areas> last accessed [29/08/17]

Additionally, the National Planning Policy Guidance states that Neighbourhood Plans should include enough information, where relevant, *“about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the local plan into action at a neighbourhood scale”* and *“about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions”*.

The Government’s Statement on the Historic Environment for England²⁶ sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.

Summary of Current Baseline

Landscape

The southern part of the Neighbourhood Plan area adjoins the South Downs National Park. The South Downs National Park was designated in 2010 and covers an area of 1,600km². The following seven Special Qualities were agreed by the South Downs National Park Authority in 2011:

- Diverse, inspirational landscapes and breath-taking views;
- A rich variety of wildlife and habitats including rare and internationally important species;
- Tranquil and unspoilt places;
- An environment shaped by centuries of farming and embracing new enterprise;
- Great opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences;
- Well-conserved historical features and a rich cultural heritage;
- Distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area.

A Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken for East Hampshire on behalf of East Hampshire District Council and Hampshire County Council in 2006²⁷. Drawing on a range of factors, including geology, soils, topography, the historic environment and land uses, this determined a range of landscape types and character areas in the district.

The two character areas present in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and descriptions, are as follows:

3e: Downland Mosaic: Ropley: Covering the western 70% of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the key characteristics of the area are as follows:

- Undulating, low lying landscape gently sloping to the west.
- Shallow well drained calcareous silty soils support mainly arable cropping mixed with some areas of pasture and horse paddocks.
- Small to medium sized fields of early enclosure are bound by beech and elm sucker hedgerows. There are in addition areas of large more open fields, particularly to the north of Ropley.
- Assorted fields carved from woodland form a mosaic with ancient woodland in the south of the area.
- Ancient woodland blocks survive on the higher land e.g. Ropley Wood and Lyeland Wood.

²⁶ HM Government (2010) The Government’s Statement on the Historic Environment for England [online] available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx last accessed [30/08/17]

²⁷ LUC on behalf of East Hampshire District Council and Hampshire County Council, (July 2006) East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment

- Small scale enclosed character is accentuated by the wooded lanes which dip down into the character area from the adjacent clay plateau.
- Relatively densely settled with a linear dispersed pattern of settlement along the rural lanes. This forms a very different pattern to the small, nucleated settlements of other character areas of this type.
- Woodland and hedgerows form strong edges along the rural lanes and settlement is not evident when travelling across the area.
- Narrow rural roads cut through the landscape and form the structure of the linear settlements.

2b: Clay Plateau: Four Marks: This character area covers the eastern 30% of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Its key characteristics are as follows:

- Elevated undulating plateau with an almost continuous clay cap overlying the chalk bedrock. A more rolling landform is evident to the north around Bentworth indicating the transition to the chalk downland.
- A landscape dominated by pasture but also with some arable fields, reflecting variations in soil type and including considerable areas of pasture managed by horse grazing.
- Fields of late medieval origin in the north and south of the area with the central part of the character area comprising distinctive planned enclosure of the late 19th century (at Four Marks, Dry Hill and Medstead).
- Ancient woodlands have been replanted, and often comprise a mix of broadleaved and coniferous tree species. The majority are relatively small.
- Occasional areas of neutral grassland and ponds and a relatively intact hedgerow network contribute to the ecological value of the landscape.
- Tree cover creates a secluded and enclosed landscape contrasting with the openness of the arable fields.
- Parkland of local importance (Hampshire Register).
- Settlement includes isolated farmsteads of 18-19th century and of medieval origin and small nucleated villages of medieval origin and a higher settlement density and distinctive pattern of former small-holder plots of more recent origin around Four Marks.
- Cut by the A31 but otherwise a network of rural roads cross the area. A good rights of way network, including parts of the historic route of the Pilgrim's Way (linking Winchester and Canterbury - much of it now formed by the A31) and St. Swithun's Way between Winchester and Farnham, as well as a network of quiet rural lanes.
- Despite the density of settlement around the A31 at Four Marks this is a peaceful and in places a tranquil and rural landscape.

Completed in 2013, the 'Landscape Capacity Study' (LCS)²⁸ for East Hampshire was undertaken as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The scope of the LCS was to provide an assessment of the landscape and visual sensitivities of the six key settlements within the district in order to determine where best to locate development without causing significant and detrimental damage to the landscape. The settlements included Rowlands Castle, Horndean, Clanfield, Liphook, Alton and Four

²⁸ East Hampshire District Council (2013): 'Landscape Capacity Study and SHLAA Site Assessment: A Summary Report', [online] available to download via: <<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-policy/evidence-base/evidence-base-environment>> last accessed [16/01/18]

Marks. Within the LCS, an overall landscape sensitivity value was allocated to each settlement through considering their landscape character and visual sensitivities to change.

In this context, 30% of the Neighbourhood Plan area is situated within the 'Clay Plateau: Four Marks' character area. The LCS states that the overall landscape sensitivity value for Four Marks is 'low/medium', outlining how:

"The landscape of the Character Area is a more rolling landform with pasture giving rise to significant areas of horse grazing. Tree cover creates a secluded enclosed landscape and contrasts with the openness associated with the arable farming to the north. Four Marks lies on an elevated plateau and is one of the highest villages in the county. Although distant views are available from some vantage points, the village is characterised by significant tree cover which preclude many views of the village. These locally important trees reduce the visual sensitivity of the Character Area and ensure that the village is largely inconspicuous in the wider landscape.

The characteristic landscape of the Four Marks area is one of fine mature trees and hedgerows forming a well wooded enclosed landscape associated with an undulating landform. These qualities should generally ensure that development is inconspicuous and capable of sensitive implementation without being intrusive"

Historic Environment

Completed in 1999, the Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLCA)²⁹ for Hampshire aimed to identify and understand the historic development of the landscape within the county. The HLCA classifies Hampshire into 11 character areas, with the Neighbourhood Plan area located within the 'Hampshire Downs' historic landscape character area. The Character area contains four specific landscape types, including chalk and clay, open arable, clay plateau and urban areas. The HLCA states that the majority of the field patterns within the Hampshire Downs character area are of parliamentary character, with the area surrounding Four Marks having a significant occurrence of late scattered settlement and paddocks associated with parliamentary-type fields.

The Ropley Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich and varied historic environment. In terms of historic character, the area is characterised by low settlement density with isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure, and the small villages of medieval origin (e.g. Ropley) surrounded by earlier enclosures. Some of the isolated farmsteads may represent shrunken medieval hamlets.

The original part of Ropley developed around the church in the 12th century, with a number of outlying hamlets. Subsequent development along the interconnecting lanes has resulted in a larger village characterised by a dispersed informal pattern of development along the roadside. Boundary hedges, walls and mature trees create a strong sense of enclosure and in many cases development is not evident. Between the roads are areas of open agricultural land and paddocks. Buildings are predominantly brick, with some flint, tile hanging and weatherboarding. Roofs include thatch, tile and slate.

Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms.

41 nationally listed buildings are present in the Neighbourhood Plan area. These comprise: two Grade II* listed buildings, Ropley House on Vicarage Lane and Soames Place on Soames Lane; and 39 Grade II listed buildings.

²⁹ Hampshire County Council (1999): 'Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment: Volumes 1-5', [online] available to download via: <<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/historicenvironment/landscape>> last accessed [16/01/18]

The Neighbourhood Plan area contains no Grade I listed buildings. Likewise there are no scheduled monuments, nationally registered battlefields or registered historic parks and gardens within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Conservation areas are locally designated because of their special architectural and historic interest³⁰. The Ropley Conservation Area was designated in 1976 and covers two parts of the village. One of these areas is centred on Church Street and the other is centred on South Street.

The Church Street part of the conservation area contains a number of cottages, including the Forge, as well as the Church of St Peter, the school and more substantial houses such as the Old Post House and the Old Parsonage. Church Street winds gently so that different viewpoints are revealed along the way. Most of the houses front directly onto the street; this together with the boundary hedges, walls and mature trees create a strong sense of enclosure.

The 800 year old Church of St Peter is set back from the road on an embankment and so creates a dominating influence on the street scene. On 19th June 2014, the church was almost completely destroyed in a fire, with significant impacts on the villagescape. A planning application for the rebuilding and extension of the church was submitted earlier in 2017.

The South Street part of the conservation area is a mixture of very small cottages and large country houses such as Hall Plan and Ropley Grove. The cottages front either directly on to or close to the roadside, but the larger dwellings are set further back from the road. As in the Church Street area, the boundary walls and hedges and mature trees are important features.³¹

The Ropley Conservation Area does not have an up to date conservation area appraisal or management plan.

Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be 'at risk'. No features or areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area are deemed to be 'at risk'. The 2017 Heritage at Risk Register for the South East however only highlights Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings which are at risk outside of London, unless they are Grade II listed places of worship, and conservation areas with an up-to-date conservation area appraisal or management plan. This means that no information is available regarding the level of risk facing the majority of listed buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The Hampshire Historic Environment Record (HER) is a publicly available resource used for the purposes of planning, conservation, research, education and general interest. The HER database provides an index of archaeological sites, monuments, landscapes, listed buildings and other information regarding the historic environment. 126 records within the parish are on the Hampshire HER database, incorporating a wide range of features. These include: Neolithic, Bronze Age and Roman remains; chalk pits; earthworks; houses and parks; field systems; features associated with the railway; World War II research centres; 19th Century tombs; boundary walls; and a range of others.

It should be noted that not all of the area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are seen as important by the local community. For example, open spaces and key distinctive buildings in the area are likely to be of value for local people.

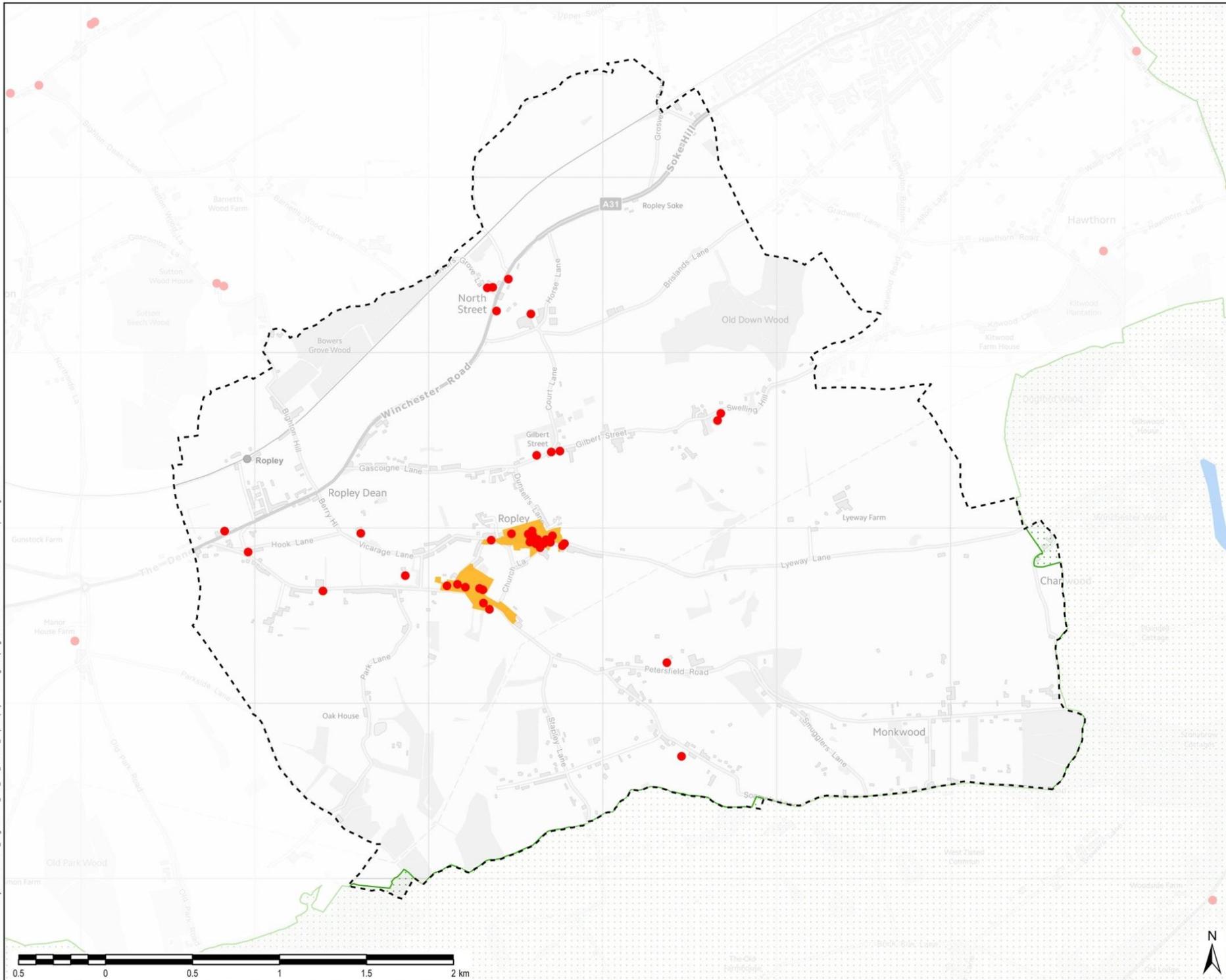
³⁰ Historic England (2017): 'Conservation Areas', [online] available to access via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/conservation-areas/>> last accessed [27/03/17]

³¹ East Hampshire District Council: Village Design Statement 2016

Summary of Future Baseline

New development areas in the Neighbourhood Plan area have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets; for example through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations offer a degree of protection to cultural heritage assets and their settings.

New development has the potential to lead to small, but incremental changes in landscape and villagescape character and quality in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area; for instance through the loss of landscape features and visible impact. However, new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset, and in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area there is opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the key features and areas and better reveal assets' cultural heritage significance. In this context building works to remediate damage caused by the fire at the Church of St Peter are likely to support the character of the Ropley Conservation Area through rejuvenating this key heritage feature in the area.



THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ISSUE THAT IT WAS ISSUED FOR AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT

LEGEND

- Ropley Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Listed building
- South Downs National Park
- Record of Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area

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 Conservation area digitised indicatively from historic mapping

Purpose of Issue **DRAFT**

Client
ROPLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

Project Title
STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ROPLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Drawing Title
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Drawn CN	Checked JW	Approved RP	Date 31/08/2017
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Drawing Number **FIGURE 5.1** Rev **01**

Land, Soil and Water Resources

Context Review

The EU's Soil Thematic Strategy³² presents a strategy for protecting soils resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety.

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) drives a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra's intention is to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management' across England. The Environment Agency is establishing 'Significant Water Management Issues' and recently presented second River Basin Management Plans to ministers. The plans seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority' and 'priority hazardous' substances; and
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance soils. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account.
- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.
- Encourage the effective use of land' through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to 'set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances'.
- Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply.
- With regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan.

Other key documents at the national level include Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England³³, which sets out a vision for soil use in England, and the Water White Paper³⁴, which sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. In terms of waste management, the Government Review of Waste Policy in England³⁵ recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.

³² European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm> last accessed [15/05/17]

³³ Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available to download from: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england>> last accessed [30/01/17]

³⁴ Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at <<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>> last accessed [30/01/17]

³⁵ Defra (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: <<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf>> last accessed [30/01/17]

Summary of Current Baseline

Quality of Agricultural Land

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality.

In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has not been undertaken within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Based on the 1:250,000 series of ALC maps produced by Natural England³⁶ and utilised for strategic purposes, the land in the Neighbourhood Plan area is mostly Grade 3 good to moderate. However there is no detailed information available as to whether the Grade 3 areas are Grade 3a (i.e. land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land) or Grade 3b (which is not classified as such).

Watercourses

No significant watercourses (including rivers or streams) are present in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Water features are instead limited to a number of ponds present in the parish.

Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. The zones show the risk of contamination from activities that might cause groundwater pollution in the area. An Outer Protection zone (Zone 2) SPZ underlies the northern and southern parts of the parish, including the southern half of Ropley village itself. A Zone 2 SPZ comprises an area defined by a 400 day travel time from any pollution below the water table to the groundwater source.

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwater has nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or is thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. Areas associated with such groundwater are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs), and as such, they are recognised as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Member States are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. NVZs for 2017-2020 started on January 1st 2017³⁷, including new areas of NVZs and excluding areas that have been de-designated. The Neighbourhood plan area lies within a eutrophic NVZ area.

Summary of Future Baseline

Due to increasing legislative and regulatory requirements, there are increasing pressures to improve recycling and composting rates.

In terms of water quality, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (and its replacement) are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in waterbodies in the wider area. Water quality has the potential to be affected by pollution incidents in the area, the presence of non-native species and future physical modifications to waterbodies.

³⁶ Natural England (2011): 'Agricultural Land Classification map London and the South East (ALC007)', [online] available to download via: <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/141047?category=5954148537204736>> last accessed [30/03/17]

³⁷ GOV.UK (2017): 'Nutrient Management: Nitrate Vulnerable Zones' [online] available to access via: <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nutrient-management-nitrate-vulnerable-zones>> last accessed [17/03/17]

Population and Community

Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- To 'boost significantly the supply of housing', local planning authorities should meet the 'full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing' in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.
- With a view to creating 'sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities' authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified.
- In rural areas, when exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
- The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It explains how good design is a key aspect in sustainable development, and how development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime, not just in the short term. Good architecture and landscaping are important, with the use of design codes contributing to the delivery of high quality outcomes. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places.
- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Ensuring that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' is of 'great importance' and there is a need to take a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.

The 'Ready for Ageing?' report, published by the Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change³⁸ warns that society is underprepared for an ageing population. The report states that *'longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises'*. The report recognises that the supply of specialist housing for the older generation is insufficient for the demand. There is a need for central and local Government, housing associations, and house builders to ensure that these housing needs are better addressed, giving as much priority to promoting an adequate market of social housing for the older generation as is given to the younger generation.

³⁸ Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) Ready for Ageing? [online] available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/> last accessed [04/07/17]

At the local level, the following policies within the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy³⁹ (2014) directly relate to the Population and Community SEA theme:

- CP10: Spatial strategy for housing;
- CP11: Housing tenure, type and mix;
- CP12: Housing and extra care provision for the elderly;
- CP13: Affordable housing on residential development sites;
- CP14: Affordable housing for rural communities; and
- CP15: Gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people.

Summary of Current Baseline

Population

The population of Ropley increased at a similar rate to the South East of England and England between 2001 and 2011. Comparatively, the population of Ropley increased at a greater rate than East Hampshire in the same timescale. In 2011, approximately 1.4% of the population of East Hampshire lived within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Age Structure

Generally, there are a greater number of residents within the 60+ age category within the Neighbourhood Plan area (27.7%) in comparison to the totals for the South East (23.3%) and England (22.3%), as shown in Table 7.2. However, the values for the Neighbourhood Plan area broadly align with the value for East Hampshire (26.4%), indicating a district-wide trend. In contrast there are fewer residents within the working age categories (25-44 and 45-59) in the Neighbourhood Plan area (43.7%) in comparison to the totals for East Hampshire (45.3%), the South East of England (46.4%) and England (46.9%). There are similar numbers of younger residents (0-15 and 16-24) in the Neighbourhood Plan area (28.7%) compared with the totals for East Hampshire (28.5%). However, the values are lower than the totals for the South East (30.2%) and England (30.8%).

Household Deprivation

Census statistics measure deprivation across four 'dimensions' of deprivation, summarized below:

- **Employment:** Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick.
- **Education:** No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.
- **Health and Disability:** Any person in the household that has generally 'bad' or 'very bad' health, or has a long term health problem.
- **Housing:** The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

Fewer households are deprived within the Neighbourhood Plan area (39.9%) in comparison to East Hampshire (46.4%), the South East (52.3%) and England (57.5%). Out of the 39.9% of households which are deprived in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the majority are deprived in one or two dimensions, which is similar to the regional and national trends.

³⁹East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority (2014): 'East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy', [online] available to download via: <<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-plan>> last accessed [30/08/17]

Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.
- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
 1. 'Geographical Barriers': relating to the physical proximity of local services
 2. 'Wider Barriers': relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.
 3. 'Indoors Living Environment' measures the quality of housing.
 4. 'Outdoors Living Environment' measures air quality and road traffic accidents.

Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:

- **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index:** The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
- **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index:** The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2015, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalized into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales.

There is one LSOA covering the extent of the Neighbourhood Plan area: E01022627: East Hampshire 007F. Analysis of the data presented in Table 7.4 below shows that this LSOA is one of the top 30% least deprived in England. The LSOA is within the top 10% least deprived deciles for the employment domain, health deprivation and disability domain and the crime domain. In contrast, the LSOA is within the top 30% most deprived deciles for the barriers to housing and services domain, living environment domain, geographical barriers sub-domain and the indoors sub-domain.

Housing Tenure

Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, 80.1% of residents either own their home outright or with a mortgage, compared to 73.9% for East Hampshire, 67.6% for the South East and 63.3% for England.

There are also fewer residents within socially rented accommodation in the Neighbourhood Plan area (9.7%) in comparison to district, regional and national averages. The proportion of residents within privately rented accommodation in Neighbourhood Plan area is 6.3%, compared to 11.7% for East Hampshire, 16.3% for the South East and 16.8% for England.

Education

Based on the 2011 census data, 12.3% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area have no qualifications, fewer than the percentages for East Hampshire (16.9%), the South East (19.1%) and England (22.5%). In contrast there are a higher number of residents with Level 4 qualifications within the Neighbourhood Plan area (41.6%), compared with the totals for East Hampshire (33.9%), the South East (30.0%) and England (27.4%). The number of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area with either an apprenticeship, Level 3 qualification, or other qualification, broadly aligns with the regional and national trends.

Employment

In regards to employment within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the following three occupation categories support the most residents:

- Professional occupations (21.8%);
- Managers, directors and senior officials (20.9%); and
- Associate, professional and technical occupations (15.8%).

Overall, 58.5% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area are employed in one of the above three occupation categories, compared with 47.8% in East Hampshire, 44.8% in the South East and 41.2% in England. This suggests that the Neighbourhood Plan area has a highly skilled workforce, which is also supported by the higher number of residents with a Level 4 qualification (previously discussed). Generally, there are fewer residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area employed within the elementary occupations, process plant/machine operatives, and the sales and customer service occupation categories compared to the regional and national percentages.

Summary of Future Baseline

The population of Ropley increased at a higher rate between the years 2001 and 2011 in comparison to East Hampshire. Additionally, there are a higher number of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area within the older age categories (60+) in comparison to the regional and national trends. It is important to recognise the potential pressures that an ageing population within the Neighbourhood Plan area can place on local health services and community facilities.

Levels of deprivation in the Neighbourhood Plan area are likely to remain low, particularly due to the high levels of income, employment, education skills and training. The results from the 2015 IMD indicate that the quality of the living environment, the geographical barriers and the barriers to housing and services are the main issues. The suitability of housing for local requirements depends in part on the successful implementation of policies outlined the 2014 Joint Core Strategy.

Health and Wellbeing

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.
- A core planning principle is to 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all'.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities'

- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Set out the strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities.
- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

In relation to other key national messages in relation to health, Fair Society, Healthy Lives⁴⁰ ('The Marmot Review') investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: "overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities".

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in providing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

At the local level, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)⁴¹ for Hampshire contains sections on starting well, staying well and ageing well Hampshire. The key priority issues within the district include understanding the needs of the more vulnerable children in the county, improving the mental and physical health of local residents, reducing the impact of ill-health and promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing preventable disabilities and reducing social isolation and loneliness. Additionally, the following policies within the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014) directly relate to the Health and Wellbeing SEA theme:

- CP8: Town and village facilities and services;
- CP16: Protection and provision of social infrastructure; and
- CP17 and CP18: Protection of open space, sport and recreation and built facilities

Summary of Current Baseline

Health Indicators and Deprivation

Deprivation is a significant contributor to poor health and can have adverse effects on wellbeing, with elements related to poor housing quality, living environment, income and employment. In this context, 86.4% of residents the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health', broadly aligning with the total for East Hampshire (85.2%), but greater than the totals for the South East (83.6%) and England (81.4%). Contrastingly, the number of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area considering themselves to have 'bad health' or 'very bad health' is only 3.5%, compared with 3.4% in East Hampshire, 4.4% in the South East, and 5.4% in England.

The high percentage of 'very good health' and 'good health' within the Neighbourhood Plan area aligns with the disability data. 86.6% of residents in Ropley report that their daily activities are 'not limited', broadly aligning with the trends for East Hampshire (85.1%), the South East (84.3%), and England (82.4%).

⁴⁰ The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available to download from: <<https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16404325/d215-the-marmot-review-implications-for-planning.pdf>> last accessed [07/07/17]

⁴¹ Hampshire County Council (2015): 'Hampshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment', [online] available to download via:

Summary of Future Baseline

Health and wellbeing levels within the Neighbourhood Plan area are excellent, with a high percentage of residents reporting 'good' or 'very good' health, and a low percentage of residents reporting that their activities are limited in some way.

However, a growing and ageing population within the Neighbourhood Plan area might place future pressures on health services in the area. Similarly, ongoing cuts to community services have the potential to lead to effects on health and wellbeing over the long term.

In addition to the key priority issues outlined within the JSNA, obesity is seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, including increasing the risk of a range of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

Transportation

Context Review

European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth.

At the local level, each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to produce and adopt a Local Transport Plan through the Local Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. The long term strategy for the Hampshire Local Transport Plan⁴² (2011-2031) is to create '*safe, efficient and reliable ways to get around a prospering and sustainable Hampshire*'. The Local Transport Plan aims to help the County Council make progress on its corporate policies⁴³ of developing and supporting stronger, safer communities, maximising well-being and enhancing quality of place.

Additionally, policy 'CP31: Transport' within the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014) directly relates to the Transportation SEA theme.

Summary of Current Baseline

Rail Network

Ropley Station is located towards the north western corner of the Neighbourhood Plan area; however it is not served by national services. Along with Alresford, Medstead and Alton Station, Ropley Station is part of the 'Watercress Line' (or Mid Hants) heritage railway, providing a seasonal steam train service between New Alresford and Alton. It is a popular tourist attraction.

Alton railway station⁴⁴ is located approximately 10km to the north east of the Neighbourhood Plan area, providing half-hourly services to London Waterloo with a journey time of approximately 85 minutes. Other destinations include Farnham, Aldershot and Woking. Winchester railway station is located approximately 15km to the west of the Neighbourhood Plan area, with more frequent services connecting residents to a wider variety of national destinations. These include London, Basingstoke, Southampton, Bournemouth, Weymouth, Oxford, Birmingham and Manchester Piccadilly.

⁴² Hampshire County Council (2011): 'Hampshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2031', [online] available to download via: <<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/strategies/transportstrategies>> last accessed [30/08/17]

⁴³ Hampshire County Council (2017): 'Serving Hampshire: Strategic Plan for 2017-2021', [online] available to access via: <<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/strategiesplansandpolicies/corporatestrategy>> last accessed [30/08/17]

⁴⁴ National Rail (2017): 'Alton Station', [online] available at: <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/AON.aspx> last accessed [31/08/17]

Bus Network

In regards to the bus network, based on the 2017/2018 timetable for Hampshire⁴⁵, there are two bus services operating within the Neighbourhood Plan area:

- Route 64: Winchester – Alton (via Ropley): Services every 30 minutes; and
- Route 240: Ropley – Alresford: Irregular services between Monday and Thursday.

Road Network and Congestion

The A31 extends east to west through the northern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, connecting residents to the towns of Farnham and Guildford to the north east, and the city of Winchester and the M3 to the west. This route can become particularly congested during peak times, and is therefore an area of particular sensitivity to increasing traffic flows. Comparatively, the central and southern sections of the Neighbourhood Plan are accessible via a network of country lanes including Gascoigne Lane, Lysways Lane and Petersfield Road.

Cycle and Footpath Network

As of August 2017, there were no National Cycle Network routes passing through the Neighbourhood Plan area⁴⁶. Accessible via New Alresford (approximately 4km to the east of Ropley), Route 23 is the nearest national route to the Neighbourhood Plan area, extending approximately 125km from Southampton to Reading. With regard to the footpath network, 'St Swithun's Way'⁴⁷ passes directly through the village of Ropley and extends approximately 50km from Winchester to Farnham.

Availability of Cars and Vans

Based on the 2011 census data, 96.4% of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to at least one car or van, which is higher than the percentages for East Hampshire (88.8%), the South East (81.4%) and England (74.2%).

Travel to Work

The most popular method of travelling to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area is via driving a car or van (45.6%), broadly aligning with the total for East Hampshire (47.4%), but greater than the totals for the South East (41.3%) and England (36.9%). Only 3.8% of the working population in the Neighbourhood Plan area choose to walk or catch a bus, coach or minibus to work. This is lower than the totals for East Hampshire (7.4%), the South East (10.4%) and England (11.8%).

Summary of Future Baseline

New development has the potential to increase traffic and cause congestion within the Neighbourhood Plan area, particularly along the A31. Additionally, public transport use has the potential to remain low compared with private car use; likely to due to the infrequent nature of the bus services, the absence of a railway station connected to the national rail network and the rural setting of the parish.

Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by 2014 Joint Core Strategy and the Hampshire LTP, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by private car.

⁴⁵ Hampshire County Council (2017): 'Hampshire Map', [online] available to download via:

<<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/trafficandtravel/publictransport/timetables>> last accessed [31/08/17]

⁴⁶ Sustrans (2017): 'National Cycle Network Map', [online] available to view via: <<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map>> last accessed [05/07/17]

⁴⁷ Hampshire County Council (no date): 'St Swithun's Way', [online] available to view via:

<<https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryside/walking/stswithunsway>> last accessed [31/08/17]

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