



(Neighbourhood Plan Pre-submission Draft)

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

Updated January 2026

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1. Introduction

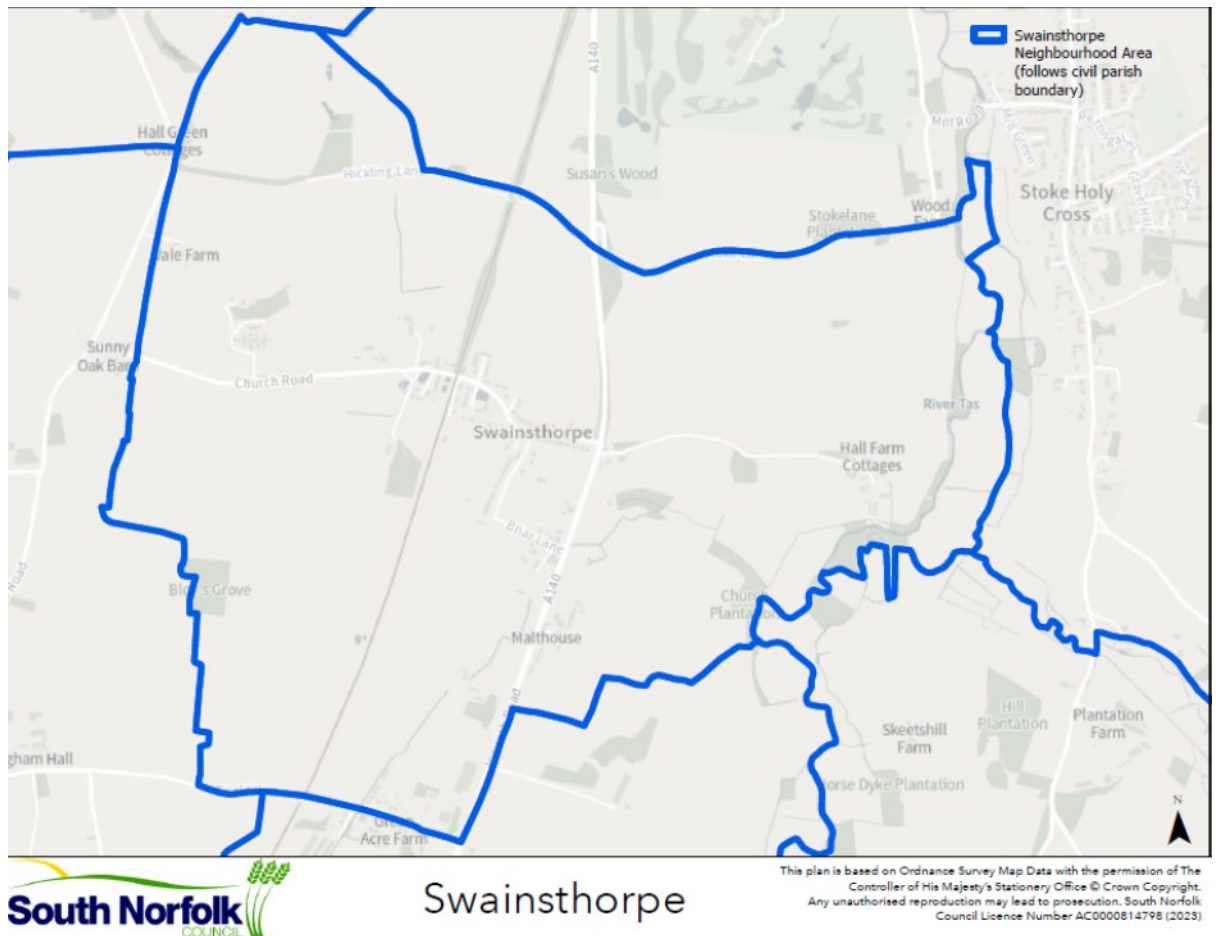
- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to determine if the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan requires Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) through a process known as SEA screening.
- 1.2 The Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan has been commissioned by Swainsthorpe Parish Council and developed by a Steering Group of residents. The first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared for 'pre-submission consultation' in December 2025. Should the draft policies change in a significant way, the SEA screening process will be repeated. The draft policies used in this screening are dated 16.10.2025. Once adopted, the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan will provide a vision for the parish of Swainsthorpe and policies that future development must take into account for twenty years up till 2046.
- 1.3 This report fulfils the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment and Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended.
- 1.4 This report provides details of the draft pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan policies and explains the legislative background to SEA screening, before providing an account of the SEA screening exercise for the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan.

2. The Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 In February 2024, Swainsthorpe Parish Council submitted a Neighbourhood Area application for the purposes of developing a Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed area followed the civil parish boundary and therefore, in accordance with Regulation 5A of the 'Town and Country Planning, England - Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012' (as amended) South Norfolk Council designated the Neighbourhood Area. The Parish Council is the relevant body for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.¹

¹ <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/future-development/neighbourhood-plans/emerging-neighbourhood-plans-south-norfolk/swainsthorpe-neighbourhood-plan>. Information obtained 24.09.2025.

Figure 1 below: Map showing the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Area.
Source: South Norfolk and Broadland Council website. Map obtained 30.09.2025.



- 2.2 The Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has developed the draft aims, vision, objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan through community consultation. The purposes of the draft Neighbourhood Plan policies are to build upon policies in line with the Greater Norwich Local Plan (adopted by South Norfolk Council on the 25th March 2024) and the emerging South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan, which, once adopted, will become part of the Development Plan for South Norfolk. The emerging South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan does not contain any site allocations within Swainsthorpe parish. There are no site allocations for development in Swainsthorpe parish within the draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3 A Data Profile for the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan has been completed, which contains information on community infrastructure, housing and the built-environment, transport and access and environment and landscape. Information from the data profile is used within this SEA screening.

2.4 The Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan draft vision is:

Swainsthorpe will retain and enhance the strong community spirit. The peace, tranquility and wildlife of the village will be maintained.

Any new buildings will be well designed, environmentally sustainable and respect the character of Swainsthorpe.

Positive mitigation measures will be sought to offset the impact of new energy and infrastructure projects in the parish.

There will be good footpaths, cycleways and bridleways which provide connections both within the parish and beyond, accessible for all users.

Our existing views (particularly the iconic views of St Peter's Church) and green spaces will be valued, protected and enhanced.

2.5 The Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan draft objectives and policies at 16.10.2025 are:

Objective 1 Development and design: To support very limited infill development within the settlement boundary that is well designed, environmentally sustainable and respects the character of Swainsthorpe.

Policy SWS1: Design

The design of all new development will reflect the local distinctiveness and character of the parish and seek to enhance its quality.

When considering proposals for new development, irrespective of scale or use, proposals must demonstrate how the design of the proposal has been developed with regard to the Character Area analysis in the Swainsthorpe Design Guidance and Codes 2025.

Proposals for new developments in Swainsthorpe should accord with the following:

a) **Layout:** New development must reflect the rural nature of the village and keep suitable gaps between buildings to preserve short views, as their loss would harm the village's natural, rural character. New development must maintain visual connections to the surrounding landscape and long views out of the settlement through careful consideration of site layout. Important views of the church must be protected. Proposals must reflect the topography of the site, and

maintain Swainsthorpe's open feel and rural character.

b) **Building line and front gardens:** Development should follow the existing building line (where there is a clear and obvious building line) relative to neighbouring dwellings and to the wider streetscape. The setback of new development must allow for adequate space to accommodate front garden space. All dwellings should have a clear separation between private and public realm and careful consideration should be given to the design of refuse storage and cycle parking when this is to be located to the front of the building.

c) **Scale:** The height and scale of new buildings must respect the overall scale and height of adjacent buildings. Large blank facades with no openings should be avoided, except where they have noise cancelling benefits such as when facing a road such as the A140. The scale and design of development, including landscape screening, should not be intrusive to internal or external views. New development must be proportionate to the rural nature of the existing village and the scale and pitch of roof design should integrate with surrounding development, whilst avoiding overly complex design.

d) **Landscaping and views:** Locally important views of the church from surrounding countryside and from the A140 to the north must be protected. Screening measures must be used, such as planting of trees and hedgerows, to mitigate the impact on the landscape or views of any development, including energy projects or industrial/commercial development. Any major changes to the landscape or view, which is temporary (for construction purposes) must be restored to its original or enhanced quality. Gaps between neighbouring tandem properties should be wide enough to maintain views of the countryside.

e) **Streetscape:** Development must provide adequate separation distances between facing windows to ensure privacy from overlooking is maintained. The building typology of any infill Development must respect the existing surrounding context. Development should ensure that there is diversity and variety in scale and bulk informed by the building types of the surrounding context.

f) **Parking:** should be integrated on-plot and with parking spaces set behind the building line, preferably to the side of the plot. For narrow dwellings where front-of-building parking is the only possible option, ensure manoeuvring areas for the car parking does not dominate the street frontage. Parking should not be placed in front of any ground floor windows. Car parking ports could be used for variety and should be designed to sensitively complement the surrounding dwellings, considering form, materiality and placement. On-street-parking should be avoided wherever possible, particularly within the village centre.

g) **Lighting:** All external lighting should be kept minimal, at low level and at low intensity.

h) **Design features and materials:** Development proposals must demonstrate that the materials used have been selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment and refers to the outlined Swainsthorpe material and vernacular palette presented in the **Design Guidance and Codes**. Rooflines should have a rhythmic pattern of chimneys. Dormer windows whether added later or included in the original scheme, should reflect the form of the main roof and be of an appropriate and proportional size to the original building, whilst not increasing the overall height of the dwelling.

Policy SWS2: New housing

The scale and pattern of new development in the parish should conserve and enhance the form and character of the existing settlement of Swainsthorpe.

New housing development within the Parish over the plan period, should consolidate the existing settlement pattern and be located within the defined settlement limits as set out in the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan. The settlement limits have been drawn to allow for only very limited 'infill' development preventing further extension into the surrounding countryside due to the limited services and facilities available and the narrowness of local roads.

Where new development is to occur in the parish, the development of brownfield sites will be prioritised, and the scale of development proposed should reflect the position of Swainsthorpe within the identified settlement hierarchy for the District.

Proposals for new infill or windfall development within the settlement boundaries such as individual dwellings will be supported provided that the proposal maintains or enhances the form, character and setting of the existing settlement pattern and that they do not detract from views of the Church.

Proposals for development outside of the identified settlement boundaries will only be supported where it meets the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 84) or it accords with other national, district or neighbourhood level policies or is an exception site for affordable housing to meet identified local needs.

Objective 2 Access: To encourage safe, convenient and accessible pedestrian, cycle, equine and vehicular access within Swainsthorpe parish and to surrounding access.

Policy SWS3: Connections and Rights of Way

Existing public rights of way must be protected and enhanced. Where new development is likely to affect the route of an existing right of way, that right of way must preferably be retained unless it can be demonstrated that there is strong community support for it to be re-routed.

Where existing public rights of way are unavoidably to be lost or impacted, appropriate diversions and new routes should be provided that are equally safe and convenient for all users including people with limited mobility, people using pushchairs or in wheelchairs, and cyclists and horse riders.

New development proposals must improve or enhance public rights of way for example through the provision of new routes, new connections, improved surfaces or signage.

New connections

Otherwise acceptable proposals, which would contribute to making the parish safer and more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists and would contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents will be supported. Where new pedestrian or cycle routes or crossings are to be provided, they should be safe, accessible and suitable for all users.

All new developments should have, where reasonably possible, new footpath and/or bridleway connections created, linking to the existing right of way network surrounding the village and provide comprehensive and cohesive network which allows for access to the wider countryside and adjoining parishes.

Objective 3 Environment: To protect and enhance the heritage and natural environment of Swainsthorpe.

Policy SWS4: Heritage

The historic significance of existing heritage asset in the parish, both designated and non-designated will be protected.

Proposals for new development should ensure that its design complements the shape and form of the existing settlement pattern, respects the setting of designated heritage assets including views of the Church, its setting and the space around it.

The following are heritage assets that are considered to be locally important to Swainsthorpe in terms of their architectural, historical, or cultural significance and these will be treated as Non-designated Heritage Assets:

1. The Old School House
2. Ransome Old Smithy, Briar Lane
3. Milestone at A140/ Church Road junction
4. The Old Rectory, 6 Church Road
5. New Village Sign 1996
6. 1920s Council Houses, Church Road
7. Yew Tree Cottages, junction Briar Lane and the A140
8. Beehive Cottage, 28 Church Road
9. Church Farm, Longbrooke Drive
10. Ivy House , 52 Church Road
11. Orchard Cottage, 58 Church Road
12. Violet Bank, 66 Church Road
13. The Vale
14. The Granary, Church Road
15. The Barn, Church Road
16. The Croft, Church Road

Policy SWS: Green Spaces

Local Green Spaces

The following existing green spaces within the parish are identified as Local Green Spaces:

- a) Village Green (including children's play area)
- b) Millennium Green
- c) Jubilee Garden
- d) Pond and surrounding green space at Longbrooke Drive
- e) Churchyard
- f) Green space at The Vale.

Development within Local Green Spaces will be managed consistent with the approach taken to managing Green Belts.

New Green Spaces

The creation of new green spaces such informal amenity areas, play spaces and areas for dog walking will be supported where they comply with other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy SWS6: Biodiversity

Proposals for new development will be expected to protect and enhance existing ecological networks, wildlife corridors and priority habitats and species.

Existing priority habitats such as woodland areas, and other features of biodiversity value within the parish should be retained, and where practicable be incorporated into the design of new proposals. These include:

- trees, both individual trees and narrow woodland belts
- hedgerows, including ancient hedgerows
- reed filled ditches
- ponds, including the existing network of waterbodies in the parish
- blocks of managed mixed deciduous woodland

Development proposals must avoid the loss of trees and hedgerows and must protect and enhance local habitats and wildlife corridors. New wildlife corridors should be designed and located help increase movement between isolated populations.

Where loss or damage to a biodiversity feature is unavoidable, the benefits of the development must clearly outweigh the impacts and the development shall provide for mitigation in the form of appropriate replacement or replanting or creation of appropriate natural features on site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting or feature, or, as a last resort, compensation measures will be sought. If suitable mitigation or compensation measures cannot be provided, planning permission will be refused.

Otherwise acceptable development proposals will be supported where they provide a minimum net gain of 10 per cent in biodiversity, moving towards an aspiration for 20 per cent, delivered on-site in the first instance, through, for example the creation of new and the restoration and enhancement of existing natural habitats, e.g. ponds, hedgerows, wildflower meadows, new woodlands and the planting of additional trees and hedgerows.

Where biodiversity net gain is to be delivered via off- site habitat

creation, this should be preferably delivered elsewhere in the parish and targeted at the proposed woodland opportunity areas and wildlife corridors.

The design of all new development should connect existing landscape features and promote biodiversity through the planting of local trees, plants and hedgerows. Existing road verges should be enhanced to increase biodiversity and act as wildlife corridors of safe passage for wildlife; and development should provide bat, owl and bird boxes and bat friendly lighting to maintaining foraging routes.

Policy SWS7: Floodrisk

All proposed development should be directed away from areas of the parish at highest risk of flooding from surface water (whether existing or future) listed below:

- Junction of Longbrooke Drive and Church Road
- Junction of Briar Lane and the A140
- Bridleway to Rookery Barn
- Hickling Lane
- Land next door to the garage on the A140
- Western extent of Church Road
- The Vale

Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

All new development including minor development, is required to use appropriate sustainable drainage system which will mitigate and protect against pollution, provide drainage and wider amenity, recreational and biodiversity benefits commensurate with the size of the development proposed.

Development will be expected to demonstrate (through the submission of a drainage strategy to accompany the submission of a planning application) how it will seek to achieve lower than greenfield run off rates, mitigate its own flooding and drainage impacts, whilst avoiding increases of flooding elsewhere.

Policy SWS8: Landscape Character and Important views

Proposals for new development in the parish should take into account

the distinctive landscape features and character of the landscape character type within which the proposal is located demonstrating how it has taken account of the specific guidance for that character type.

The following views and vistas within Swainsthorpe are identified as Important Public Local Views.

1. St Peter's Church
2. Entrance to the village, looking west towards St Peter's Church from Church Road
3. From the end of Church View looking north across the fields
4. View from the A140 looking east across to the Tas Valley both from The Sugar Beat Eating House and from Briar Lane across the new vineyard
5. Church Farm from Church Road west of the village looking east across the fields
6. View from the A140 /Hickling Lane looking south-west across the fields with the outline of St Peter's Church on the horizon
7. View of the entrance to The Vale
8. View of the bridleway beside Ivy House leading to Hickling Lane
9. Views from Hickling Lane which runs east -west from the A140 to Gowthorpe Lane and forms the northern border of the Parish of Swainsthorpe

Development proposals within or which would affect an important public local view should not detract from, or have an adverse impact upon the landscape or character or any key features of these views.

Proposals for new buildings outside the Settlement Boundaries should be accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, or other appropriate and proportionate evidence, which demonstrates how the proposal can be accommodated in the countryside without having a significant detrimental impact, by reason of the buildings' scale, materials and location, on the key features of the views.

Any development which would have a significant adverse impact upon the landscape or character of the view concerned will not be supported.

Objective 4 Environment: To mitigate against detrimental change, including new energy and infrastructure projects.

Policy SWS9: Mitigating the impacts of energy projects

The impacts on the Neighbourhood Area of energy infrastructure projects and associated developments (e.g. renewable energy projects, interconnectors, pylons, overhead wires, converter stations, pipelines etc) including the cumulative impacts from multiple schemes should be given significant weight in the determination of such schemes.

The sensitivity to change of the relevant landscape character type should be given significant weight in the determination of proposals

Where works take place which have temporary impacts, the emphasis should be on timely restoration once works have been completed.

Where mitigatory or compensatory measures are identified which are considered necessary to remedy the permanent or long-term impacts of energy schemes on the landscape, natural environment, wildlife and nature recovery, historic environment or the residential amenity for the parish, these should be provided in the first instance directly in the parish where those impacts are most felt.

Only if this is not possible or practicable should they be provided elsewhere in the parish. Where such mitigations are required in respect of biodiversity, the standard biodiversity net gain metric of 10% should be applied.

Objective 5 Community: To ensure Swainsthorpe has the right facilities for the future needs of the community.

Policy SWS10: Community Facilities

The parish has the following community facilities:

- a) St Peter's Church, including community facility
- b) Children's Play area
- c) Allotments
- d) Sugar Beat Eating House (Public House)
- e) Millenium Green
- f) Jubilee Garden

Proposals for development including changes of use which would involve the potential loss of one of the existing community facilities identified above will not be supported. The exception will be where an improved or equivalent facility can be located elsewhere in the parish in an equally convenient, safe and accessible location or where there is no reasonable prospect of continued viable use, and this can be sufficiently demonstrated.

Policy SWS11: Centre of the village

Otherwise acceptable proposals that would provide for a new, community/village hall with off street car parking, located either in the centre of the village or in an alternative location with safe, and convenient access, will be supported.

Proposals for such a development will need to consider the following:

- a. the significance and setting of St Peter's Church, including views of it, and any other designated heritage assets ensuring they are safeguarded and, where practicable, enhanced.
- b. the protection of existing areas of green space such as the village green.
- c. safe access and egress for vehicles onto Church Road.
- d. safe pedestrian and cycle connections to the rest of the village.
- e. the provision of facilities for cycle parking and electric charging.
- f. a car park layout which takes account of any flood risk so that there are no adverse impacts upon surface water drainage and that greenfield run off rates are not increased.
- g. a car park layout which mitigates potential pollution impacts caused by surface water runoff.
- h. the inclusion of suitable biodiversity enhancements and landscaping of the site and its boundaries to ensure its assimilation into the surrounding area.
- i. the scale, mass, height and layout of any proposed building and its impact on the character of the streetscape and wider landscape..
- j. minimising external lighting, at low level and at low intensity.
- k. materials from the palette of materials as shown in the Swainsthorpe Design Guidance and Codes 2025.
- l. the inclusion of low carbon and sustainable features such as solar panels, grey water recycling, air or ground source heat pumps, rain water capture
- m. the amenity of adjoining residents.

3. Legislative Background

- 3.1 European Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment ('SEA Directive') introduces the need to undertake a strategic environmental assessment ('SEA') during the development of some plans and programmes. The main purpose of SEA, according to Article 1 of the SEA Directive, is:
- 'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.'
- 3.2 The SEA Directive is transcribed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which establishes the requirement to undertake a sustainability appraisal (SA) for some documents used for planning purposes. The SA process incorporates the requirement for SEA, but typically has a broader scope and considers the social and economic issues in addition to the environmental effects.
- 3.3 The requirement to undertake SA of supplementary planning documents (SPD) was removed by the Planning Act 2008. However, the need to establish whether the planning document requires SEA, through the SEA Directive, remains. Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive explain which plans and programmes require SEA. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance, suggests that an SPD will only require an SEA in exceptional circumstances, if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been assessed through the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 3.4 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 amends the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2013 to provide clarification on the SEA related documents which must be submitted alongside neighbourhood planning proposals. Regulation 2(4) of the amendment regulations 2015 adds to the list of documents that a neighbourhood planning group must submit to a local planning authority with a proposal for a neighbourhood plan, which is presented in regulation 6 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The additional document which must be submitted is either an environmental report, should SEA be required, or a statement of reasons why an environmental assessment is not required.
- 3.5 The UK left the EU on 31st January 2020. Under the UK-EU withdrawal agreement, a transition period ended on 31st December 2020, during which time all EU law continued to apply to the UK. During the transition

period the UK needed to continue following domestic law that implements EU law, or directly applicable EU law that is given effect through the EUWA 2018. Beyond the transition period, the SEA Regulations, which previously implemented the requirements of the SEA Directive in England, will continue to apply as before unless and until new legislation is introduced.²

4. An overview of the screening assessment

- 4.1 Figure 1 overleaf is taken from 'A practical guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' and illustrates the process for screening a Neighbourhood Plan to ascertain whether a full SEA is required (Article numbers relate to European Directive 2001/42/EC).
- 4.2 The screening for the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan is highlighted in orange. To carry out the screening process it is necessary to consider each of the criteria set out in Figure 1, this is done in Table 1 on the following page.
- 4.3 Table 2 addresses criteria 8 by considering if the pre-submission draft Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This is done by considering the Plan against the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in the Directive³. The criteria are listed in Table 2 of this document.
- 4.4 Once the process set out in Figure 1 has been completed, a screening outcome can be reached and the conclusion can be found in section 5.

² www.neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/understand-plan-requires-strategic-environmental-assessment-sea/ Information obtained 02.07.2024.

³ Article 3.5 of European Directive 2001

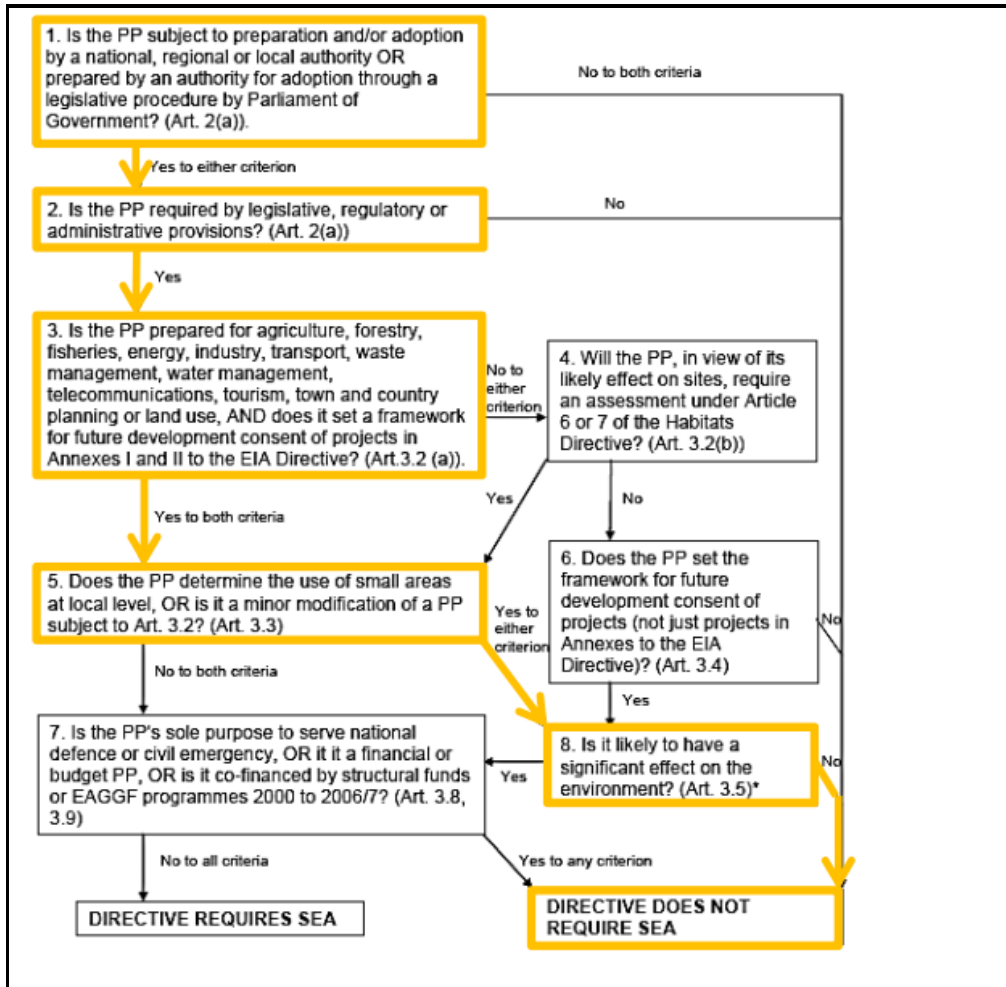


Figure 3 above: Application of the SEA Directive to Neighbourhood Plans.

5. The assessment of the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan

5.1 Table 1 below assesses the need for full SEA of the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan. The criteria in Table 1 are drawn from Figure 1 which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

Table 1: Assessment of the Need for SEA for the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan

Assessment Criteria	Assessment	Reason
1. Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a0))	Yes	The intention is for the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Pla to be adopted by South Norfolk Council through a legislative procedure.
2. Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	The Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan would be a statutory document, prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended.
3. Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIX Directive?	Yes	The Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan is a document prepared for town and country planning purposes. It aims to influence and shape new development in line with the Greater Norwich Local Plan and the emerging South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan.
5. Does the plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a Plan or Programme subject to Art. 3.2?	Yes	The Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan will determine the use of small areas at a local level and contains no site allocations for development.

Assessment Criteria	Assessment	Reason
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment (Article 3.5)?	No	Justification is given for this decision in Table 2.

The final question in the SEA screening process for the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan was question 8: Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? In asking this question, the SEA Directive refers to Article 3.5, which states that the relevant criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive shall be considered when determining whether there are likely to be significant effects. Table 2 below, uses the criteria in Annex II to determine if the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA.

Table 2: Determining the Likely Significant Effects of the of the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan on the Environment.

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Assessment	Is there a Significant Environmental effect?
<p>(1) Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard, in particular, to: The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p>	<p>The draft Neighbourhood Plan sets a framework for development within the parish in accordance with the Greater Norwich Local Plan and the emerging South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan. The draft Neighbourhood Plan builds upon the existing framework by providing some additional details of the nature of development and supplements the existing policy on a local scale only. There are no site allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy SW11 Centre of the Village is not seeking to allocate or identify land for a site specific proposal, but instead provide a policy framework for the determination of applications should they come forward for a new community/village hall with off street car parking.</p>	No

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Assessment	Is there a Significant Environmental effect?
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted alongside the Greater Norwich Local Plan and provides supplementary information on a local scale rather than influencing the overall direction of the Local Plan.	No
The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	Environmental considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development within the draft Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan include protecting Landscape Character and Important Views, protecting Local Green Spaces, avoiding areas of flood risk and protecting and enhancing existing ecological networks, wildlife corridors and priority habitats and species.	No
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	There are no environmental problems relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.	No
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The Neighbourhood Plan is in conformity with the GNLP adopted by South Norfolk Council and is therefore not directly relevant to the implementation of other European legislation.	No
(2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, to: The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects.	The overall impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan will be in accordance with the GNLP adopted by South Norfolk Council and unlikely to have significant effects.	No
The cumulative nature of the effects.	The Neighbourhood Plan will not lead to significant cumulative negative effects.	No

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Assessment	Is there a Significant Environmental effect?
The transboundary nature of the effects.	The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have an impact on neighbouring parishes. New housing development within the Parish over the plan period, should consolidate the existing settlement pattern and be located within the defined settlement limits as set out in the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan.	No
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to introduce significant risks to human health or the environment.	No
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected.)	The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the civil parish of Swainsthorpe. The usual resident population of Swainsthorpe parish was 392 usual residents on Census day 2021. The Neighbourhood Plan policies are unlikely to have a significant impact on a wider geographical area or population. There are no site allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan.	No
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the plan due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage - Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values - Intensive land use - The effects on areas or landscapes which have a 	The draft Neighbourhood Plan contains policies to protect natural characteristics and heritage. The plan should contribute to improving the environment through protecting Local Green Spaces and protecting and enhancing biodiversity. Proposals for new development in the parish should take into account the distinctive landscape features and character of the landscape character type within which the proposal is located demonstrating how it has taken account of the specific guidance for that character type.	No

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Assessment	Is there a Significant Environmental effect?
recognised national, Community or international protection status.	See above	See above

5. Screening Outcome

As a result of the findings in Table 1 and Table 2, it is concluded that the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects and full SEA is not required. There are no site allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan.

The three statutory consultation bodies, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency were consulted on the outcome of this report, in accordance with regulation 9(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Responses were received from Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency in agreement that full SEA is not required. The responses can be seen in Appendix A.

South Norfolk Council issued a SEA and HRA Determination Statement following the outcome of the consultation with the Statutory Bodies. This can be seen in Appendix B.

Appendix A: Consultation responses from Statutory Bodies

Environment Agency

Our ref: AE/2025/131059/01-L01

Date: 28 November 2025

Dear Ms West

SWAINSTHORPE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

Thank you for consulting us on the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan. We have reviewed the report, as submitted, and do not disagree with the conclusion that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

Yours sincerely

Mr Alasdair Hain-Cole
Planning Officer

Direct e-mail planning.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk

Historic England

From: McGivern, Ross
To: Neighbourhood Plans
Subject: Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion
Date: 22 December 2025 18:19:02

Dear Vicky,
Our ref: PL00800673

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore, we welcome this opportunity to review the Screening Report for this plan. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion.

The Screening Report indicates that the Council considers that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We note that the plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development.

On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan) where we consider that, despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

Please do contact me, either via email or the number below, if you have any queries.

Kind regards,
Ross
Ross McGivern

Historic Places Adviser | Partnerships Team | East of England
Historic England, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BU

Ensuring our heritage lives on and is loved for longer.
historicengland.org.uk

Natural England

Dear Ms West

Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan - Review - SEA & HRA Screening
Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 24 November 2024.

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

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

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

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA.

Further information is included in Natural England's standing advice on protected species.

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

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

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages. Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team

Appendix B: South Norfolk Council HRA and SEA Determination Statement

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) - Determination Statement

Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan

This determination statement has been produced by South Norfolk Council, as the “responsible authority”, to meet the requirements of Regulations 9 and 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The regulations implement European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

As the “competent authority” in respect of the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017, South Norfolk Council is also required to determine whether the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination). This statement also provides a determination in respect of this requirement.

SEA & HRA Screening Assessment of Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan

Swainsthorpe Parish Council is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish. Preliminary SEA and HRA Screening Assessments were undertaken for the draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan, and subsequent reports were produced in October/November 2025. These were preliminary draft SEA and HRA Screening Assessments, subject to consultation with the statutory environmental bodies.

Consultation with Statutory Bodies

The draft SEA and HRA Screening Reports, detailing the results of the initial screening assessment of the plan and the preliminary conclusion shared by South Norfolk Council and the Qualifying Body (that the plan is not likely to result in significant environmental effects and is unlikely to have significant effects on European sites), was circulated to the statutory bodies - namely the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The statutory bodies were invited to provide comments on the Screening Report within a 5 week consultation period over November / December 2025. Responses were received from all three bodies. Details of these responses can be found in the updated SEA and HRA Screening Reports.

In summary:

- The Environment Agency supports the conclusion that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.
- Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required, based on the information provided.
- Natural England supports the conclusion of the draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report, that significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely and that significant effects on Habitat sites, either alone or in combination, are also unlikely.

Conclusion

Based on the assessment undertaken in the SEA and HRA Screening Reports and the responses received from the consultation bodies, South Norfolk Council considers that it is unlikely that significant environmental effects and/or significant effects on European sites will arise from implementation of the Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan, and therefore that a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment are not required.

South Norfolk Council, January 2026