



Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan Review 2025 – Scope

**Strategic Environmental Assessment and
Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening**

Final Screening Outcome

June 2025

Last updated: 16 June 2025

Version: 1.1

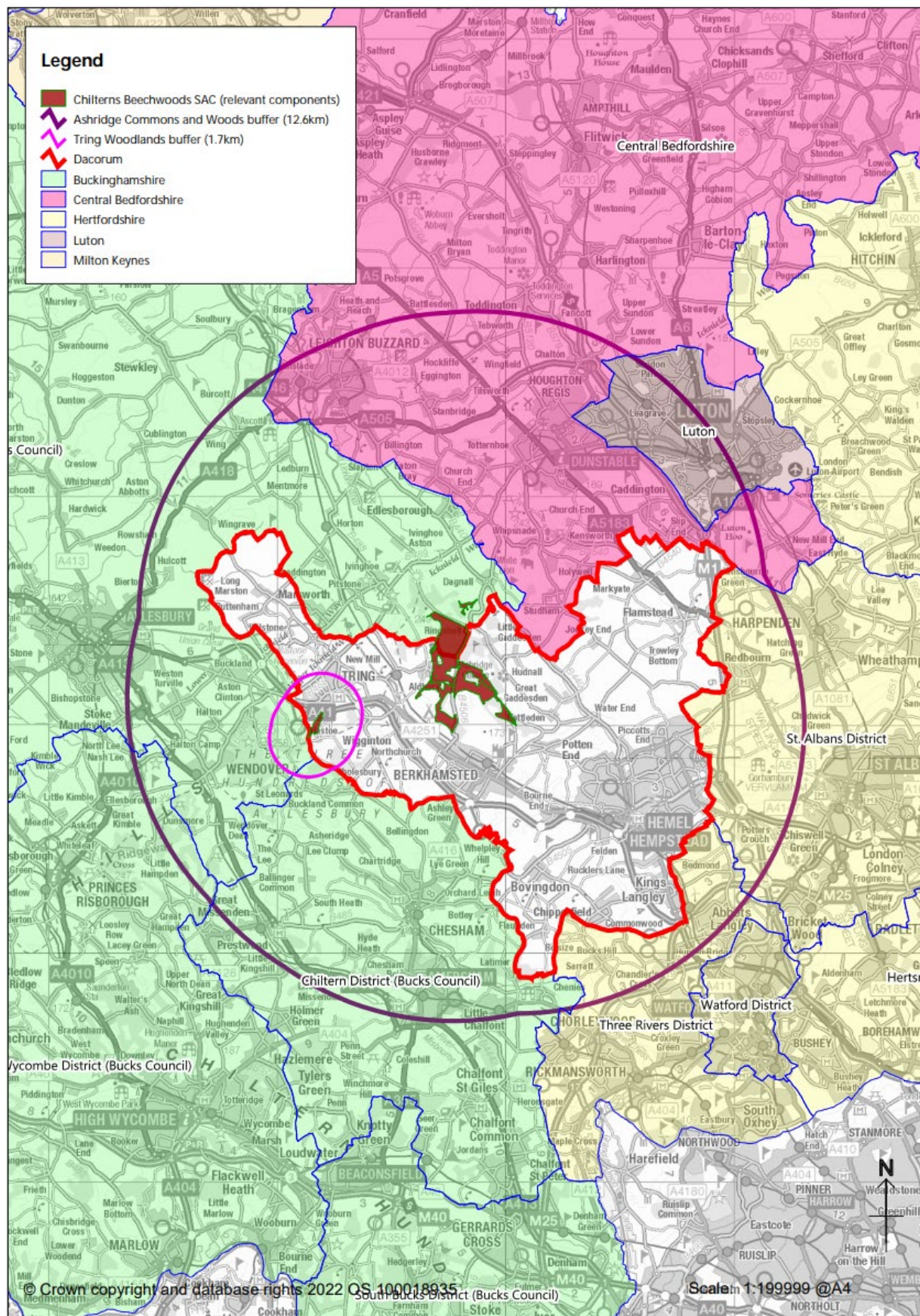
1. Summary

1. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) places a requirement for competent authorities – here the Council – to ascertain whether a plan or project will have any adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.
2. To assess whether a full HRA (Habitats Regulations Assessment) Appropriate Assessment is required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2017 (as amended), the Council has undertaken a screening assessment of the Chesham Bois Scope for a Neighbourhood Plan.
3. Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) are a way of ensuring the environmental implications of decisions are considered before any decisions are made. The need for environmental assessment of plans and programmes is set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Under these regulations, Neighbourhood Plans may require SEA if they could have significant environmental effects. A plan or project that has been identified as triggering an Appropriate Assessment is also required to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
4. To assess whether a SEA / HRA are required, the local planning authority must undertake a screening process. This must be subject to consultation with the three consultation bodies: Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Following consultation, the results of the screening process must be detailed in a screening statement, which is required to be made available to the public.
5. If a Neighbourhood Plan as drafted is considered potential to have significant environmental effects through the screening process, then the conclusion will be that the preparation of a SEA and/ or Appropriate Assessment is necessary.
6. Buckinghamshire Council considers that, following this Draft Screening statement, the Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan Review Scope does **not** have potential to introduce significant environmental effects so does require an SEA and does **not** require an HRA Appropriate Assessment.

7. A consultation took place with the statutory bodies and their conclusions are reflected in this final report. The consultation took place with Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England for 5 weeks between 9 May 2025 and 13 June 2025.
8. The screening statement follows.

2. The Proposed Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan

9. The proposed Neighbourhood Plan for Chesham Bois will cover the plan period to 2045 to coincide with the emerging Buckinghamshire (Bucks) Local Plan;
10. It will not be allocating sites.
11. It is also likely to contain policies on design coding, local heritage assets, the green infrastructure network, the sustainable travel network, community assets and a local centre, and on addressing the sustainability performance gap, all limited to reflect the existing planning policy context.
12. There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the NA. However, the NA lies within the 12.6km Zone of Influence of the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. The area is not within the Exclusion Zone.



3. Buckinghamshire Council's Final Screening Opinion

13. On this basis the Council's view is that no SEA nor HRA will be required for the Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan.
14. This is because the plan is not allocating sites and there are no significant environmental effects expected from the plan. Any windfall sites that do come forward would be assessed against the policy framework to be created and those in the Local Plan adopted for the area. In terms of impact on any SAC, the agreed Chiltern Beechwoods Mitigation Strategy [Development in the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation | Buckinghamshire Council](#) will apply to any development that takes place in the Zone of Influence. This ZOI covers the entire neighbourhood area. The neighbourhood plan should refer to the Mitigation Strategy for context, recognising it may need to change depending if the nature of the recreational pressures change over time.
15. The Council's Final Screening Outcome reflects the reviews of the two responses received from the consultation.

Consultation Responses

Date: 12 June 2025
Our ref: 512005
Your ref: Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan



Ms Ella Wood
Buckinghamshire Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

neighbourhoodplanning@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Ms Wood

Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 9 May 2025.

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 sites¹, 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.

¹ Habitats sites are those referred to in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

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

By email only to: Neighbourhoodplanning@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Our ref: PL00798841

Your ref: Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan SEA

Main: 020 7973 3700

e-seast@historicengland.org.uk

louise.dandy@historicengland.org.uk

Date: 16/06/2025

To whom it may concern

Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion

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. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied.

The information supplied indicates that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We also note there are no site allocations.

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, via email if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Louise Dandy
Historic Places Adviser