

Houghton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2029

Basic Conditions Statement

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A draft Neighbourhood Development Plan must meet each of a set of basic conditions before it can be put to a referendum and be made. The basic conditions are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 1.2 This Statement has been prepared for Houghton Parish Council to demonstrate that the Houghton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2029 (the NDP) meets legal requirements and the prescribed basic conditions.
- 1.3 The Statement confirms that:
- the legal requirements have been met (section 2).
 - having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the NDP (section 3).
 - the NDP contributes to sustainable development (section 4).
 - the NDP is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the relevant development plan, Test Valley Borough Council's Adopted Local Plan 2011-2029 (the Local Plan) (section 5).
 - the NDP does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations, and that the making of the NDP does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (section 6).

2. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 The NDP relates to the area that was designated by Test Valley Borough Council as a Neighbourhood Area on 13 June 2017. The NDP relates only to this Neighbourhood Area. No other Neighbourhood Development Plan has or is being made for the Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.2 Houghton Parish Council is a qualifying body.
- 2.3 The NDP is a plan which sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in the Neighbourhood Area and which has been prepared in accordance with the statutory provisions.
- 2.4 The NDP specifies the period for which it is to have effect (2020-2029).
- 2.5 The NDP does not include provision about development that is excluded development, such as mineral and waste matters, nationally significant infrastructure projects or other prescribed development under section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. REGARD TO NATIONAL POLICIES AND ADVICE

- 3.1 The NDP has been prepared with appropriate regard to the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).² The NDP will help achieve national planning policies at the parish level.
- 3.2 NPPF paragraph 13 sets out requirements for how communities should engage in neighbourhood planning. In accordance with this national policy, the NDP supports the delivery of strategic policies set out in the Local Plan and seeks to shape and direct development that is outside these strategic policies.
- 3.3 In accord with NPPF paragraph 16, the NDP:
- contributes to the objective of achieving sustainable development, as explained in section 4 of this Statement.
 - has been prepared positively.
 - has been shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement with the community and other consultees, as explained in the Consultation Statement.
 - contains policies that are clearly written and unambiguous.
 - is accessible via the Parish Council website.
 - serves a clear purpose in the context of the Houghton Neighbourhood Area, complementing rather than duplicating existing national and Local Plan policies as explained in this section and section 5.
- 3.4 The NPPF sets out more specific guidance on neighbourhood plans, to which the Parish Council in preparing the NDP has had regard to as follows:
- NPPF paragraph 29: Houghton Parish Council have used neighbourhood planning powers to develop a local vision for the Neighbourhood Area and to set planning policies in the NDP as part of the statutory development plan.
 - NPPF paragraph 29: the NDP is considered to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.³ The NDP reflects the strategic policies and plans positively to support them. It does not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan, or undermine its strategic policies. The NDP provides criteria-based planning policies to guide new housing and environmental protection. The general conformity of the NDP with the strategic policies of the Local Plan is set out in more detail in section 5.

¹ July 2021, replacing the previous version published in February 2019.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

³ Test Valley Borough Council, Adopted Local Plan 2011-2029, Annex A.

- NPPF paragraph 31: the preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focussed tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned. In preparing the NDP, use has been made of existing published and other evidence sources, supplemented as necessary by information gathered locally including through a resident survey. This supporting material is referred to throughout the NDP as required and is summarised in Appendix A of the Plan.

3.5 PPG indicates that a policy should be clear and unambiguous to enable a decision maker to apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. The guidance further advises that policies should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence, reflecting and responding to both the context and the characteristics of the area.⁴ There is no ‘tick box’ list of evidence required, but proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken. The evidence should be drawn upon to explain succinctly the intention and rationale of the policies.⁵ In accordance with this guidance, NDP policies have been carefully drafted to be clear and unambiguous and are based on appropriate and proportionate evidence. The evidence supporting each policy is confirmed in the explanatory text.

3.6 The regard had to national policies is set out in more detail on an NDP policy-by-policy basis in Table 1.

⁴ PPG Paragraph: 041 Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

⁵ PPG Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 41-040-20160211

Table 1: National policies by NDP policy

| NDP policy | Regard to national policies |
|--|--|
| <p>Policy HTN1 Sustainable development</p> <p>Development proposals which contribute to the sustainable development of the Houghton Neighbourhood Area will be supported. In making this assessment, the following objectives will be sought and balanced, as relevant to the proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. meeting the needs of the community for housing, services and facilities; 2. supporting small business uses and the re-use of existing buildings for commercial purposes, where these are in accordance with Local Plan policy and compatible with the rural character of their surroundings; and 3. taking all opportunities to conserve and wherever possible enhance the built, historic and natural environments. | <p>Policy HTN1 reflects the national policy objective that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and that in doing so economic, social and environmental objectives should be pursued in a mutually supportive way (NPPF paras. 7 and 8).</p> <p>The NDP is the vehicle for guiding development in the locality towards sustainable solutions, taking into account the character, needs and opportunities of the Neighbourhood Area (NPPF para.9).</p> |
| <p>Policy HTN2 Community services, facilities and recreational open space</p> <p>Development involving the loss of the community services, facilities and recreational open space shown on Plan 5 will only be supported when the criteria in Local Plan policies COM14 and LHW1 as applicable can be shown to be met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Saints Church • The Boot Inn • Houghton allotments • Houghton Village Hall • Playing field and children’s playground. <p>The provision of new or the enhancement of existing community facilities will be supported provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the siting, scale and design respects the character of the surrounding area; and 2. the local road network can safely accommodate the additional traffic; and 3. provision is made for off-road vehicle parking and cycle parking/storage in accordance with Local Plan policy T2. | <p>Policy HTN2 supports the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, as part of supporting a prosperous rural economy in line with NPPF para. 84 d).</p> <p>It takes account of NPPF para. 93 which requires planning policies to plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. It also has regard to NPPF para. 98 in respect of recreational land and buildings.</p> |

| NDP policy | Regard to national policies |
|--|---|
| <p>Policy HTN3 Type of new housing</p> <p>New housing development should provide dwellings of a type and size that meets the latest assessment of local needs. This includes predominantly providing dwellings with 2- and 3-bedrooms to meet the need for smaller property. Larger dwellings will only be supported where there is up-to-date evidence of a local need for such homes.</p> | <p>Policy HTN3 seeks to ensure that housing needs and requirements in the Neighbourhood Area will be met in accord with NPPF paras. 60 and 78. The policy is responsive to local circumstances and supports housing developments that reflect local needs as to size, type and tenure in accord with NPPF para. 62.</p> |
| <p>Policy HTN4 Village design</p> <p>Development proposals should protect and enhance the key characteristics of Houghton village as set out in Table 2 and having regard to the design components identified in Appendix B. In particular, proposals should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintain the overall dispersed and linear form of the village through the siting and orientation of development; and 2. be in keeping with the character of properties in the locality, including as to scale, height, materials and detailing; and 3. make provision for off-road vehicle parking and cycle parking/storage in accordance with Local Plan policy T2; and 4. provide boundary treatments using traditional local styles and materials suitable to the rural context. Existing boundary hedgerows should be maintained and strengthened, and new hedgerows of native deciduous species provided wherever possible; and 5. retain existing roadside grass verges, with provision of new verges encouraged; and 6. use native deciduous species for new tree planting; and 7. avoid undue adverse impacts on amenity, wildlife and dark skies from external lighting and signage. | <p>Policy HTN4 seeks to achieve a high quality of design reflecting NPPF chapter 12 particularly para. 130. The policy provides guidance which reflects work being undertaken to prepare a Village Design Statement for the village ensuring that it has been developed with the local community to reflect local aspirations and is grounded in an understanding and evaluation of the area's defining characteristics (NPPF para. 127).</p> |
| <p>Policy HTN5 Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area</p> <p>Development proposals in or adjacent to the Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area should preserve or enhance its character or appearance, having regard to its significance and special interest as this is set out in the Conservation Area Policy document adopted by Test Valley Borough Council, including by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reflecting traditional building forms in terms of density, height, massing and scale; | <p>Policy HTN5 has regard to national policy in NPPF chapter 16 which deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.</p> |

| NDP policy | Regard to national policies |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <p>and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. using local or traditional materials, colours and detailing; and 3. retaining and reinforcing local landscape features such as trees and hedgerows. <p>In considering proposals affecting the following non-designated heritage assets in the Conservation Area, regard will be had to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset concerned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rectory Cottage • Rose Cottage • School House • Church Stowe including boundary walls • Wayside Cottages • The Boot Inn • Yew Tree Cottage • Walnut Cottage • Orchard Cottage • Outbuilding north of Forge Cottage • Rosemary Cottage • The Old Post Office • Coopers Farm • Meadow Barn (eastern part) • Riverside • Walled garden in grounds of Kent's Orchard • Properties north-east of Meadow View (2) • Estate cottages opposite The Rowans • Roadside building south of The Rowans • Terrace of four dwellings at Houghton Corner • South End Cottages • Testwood House • Littlemead • Test Lodge • Dairy House • Buildings north-east of Bossington Mill. | |

| NDP policy | Regard to national policies |
|--|--|
| <p>Policy HTN6 Landscape character</p> <p>Development proposals will be supported where it can be shown that landscape character and key valued characteristics will be protected, conserved and where possible enhanced when assessed against the Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment. The landscape character of the Middle Test Valley Floor will be protected, conserved and enhanced by seeking to ensure that development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. respects and conserves the existing linear form of Houghton village, avoiding further encroachment onto the valley side and development on the valley floor; and 2. does not lead to the coalescence of settlements, so as to protect the physical separation between Houghton and adjoining settlements; and 3. minimises the impact on landscape character and positively enhances the sense of place and local distinctiveness, taking account of policy HTN4; and 4. provides for any impacts to be satisfactorily mitigated by a landscaping scheme which is itself acceptable. <p>The landscape character of the Thruxton and Danebury Chalk Downland will be protected, conserved and enhanced by seeking to ensure that development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. responds to the local characteristics of the landscape; and 6. maintains the historic integrity of the settlement pattern; and 7. avoids undue impact on views, rural character and sense of openness; and 8. otherwise mitigates the visual impact arising from new structures, buildings and changes of use through suitable native species planting which is itself not out of character with the landscape; and 9. does not unduly impact on elevated views from outside the Neighbourhood Area. <p>Trees, woodland and hedgerows will wherever possible be conserved, with every opportunity taken to restore, strengthen and where possible enhance and make new provision.</p> | <p>Policy HTN6 has regard to national policy in NPPF chapter 15 which deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. It is in line with NPPF para. 174 which requires planning policies to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting valued landscapes in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality, and to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.</p> |
| <p>Policy HTN7 Important views</p> <p>Development proposals should not block, or materially intrude into or detract from, the important views listed below and shown on Plans 8A or 8B:</p> | <p>Policy HTN7 identifies important views in the Neighbourhood Area. In doing so it contributes to an appreciation of the intrinsic character and beauty of</p> |

| NDP policy | Regard to national policies |
|--|--|
| <p>Views shown on Plan 8A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views 1 and 2: looking north-west and south-west at North Houghton • Views 3 and 4: looking west and east at Tiebridge Farm • Views 5 and 6: looking north-west and north-east at Houghton Lodge • View 7: looking south-west at Houghton Lodge • View 8: looking east at Freemantle Farm <p>Views shown on Plan 8B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views 9 and 10: looking east from the village road • View 11: looking west from public footpath • View 12: looking south-west from public footpath rear of Chapel Close • Views 13 and 14: looking north-east and south-east from the village road • View 15: looking south-east from the village road • View 16: looking west from public footpath at Houghton Farm • View 17: looking west from the village road • View 18: looking east from the village road. | <p>the countryside (NPPF para. 174 b)) and helps to ensure that development will be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding landscape setting (NPPF para. 130 c)).</p> |
| <p>Policy HTN8 Local Green Spaces</p> <p>The following sites as shown on Plan 9 are designated as Local Green Spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGS1: land between Houghton Lodge and Wisteria Cottage • LGS2: land between Rose Cottage and Fremantle Farm • LGS3: land between Drayton Corner and Fir Tree Cottage • LGS4: land at Church Lane • LGS5: land between Yew Tree Cottage and Ladymead Cottage • LGS6: Houghton allotments • LGS7: Houghton recreation ground • LGS8: land north of Clarendon Way • LGS9: land south of Clarendon Way • LGS10: land between The Retreat and Bossington Estate Offices • LGS11: land west of Horsebridge Road. <p>Development will be managed in a manner consistent with that applicable to designated Green Belt.</p> | <p>Policy HTN8 provides for the designation of Local Green Space in accord with the provisions of NPPF paras. 101-103. The NDP’s vision, objectives and policy HTN1 make it clear that the designations have been taken into account in, and are consistent with, the local planning of sustainable development, and that they complement investment in jobs, homes and other essential services. All the designations are capable of enduring beyond 2029. Appendix C to the NDP explains how each Local Green Space meets the qualifying criteria set out in NPPF para. 102.</p> |

| NDP policy | Regard to national policies |
|--|---|
| <p>Policy HTN9 Renewable and low carbon energy projects</p> <p>Proposals for renewable energy projects and associated infrastructure will be supported where they can demonstrate that the following requirements can be met. In making this assessment, any other existing, permitted or proposed similar developments in the locality will be taken into account so that cumulative impacts are considered. Wherever possible, proposals should be situated on previously-developed or non-agricultural land provided this is not of biodiversity value. The requirements are that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. any proposed use of agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, that poorer quality land has been used in preference to land of higher quality, and that the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and encourages biodiversity improvements; and 2. the impacts on landscape character, views and visual amenity are acceptable, or are capable of being satisfactorily mitigated by a landscaping scheme which is itself acceptable; and 3. there will be no undue loss of amenity to the occupiers of residential properties, including by way of external security fencing, lighting or the design and siting of any installation; and 4. the local highway network and the proposed means of vehicular access can cater safely for both the volume and type of vehicles anticipated, and the proposed access would not cause significant detriment to the character and appearance of the locality; and 5. where relevant, sustainable drainage proposals are included to acceptably manage surface water and avoid risk of pollution, soil erosion and damage to wildlife habitats; and 6. any affected heritage assets have been conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, taking account of the impact of proposals on views important to their setting; and 7. there are no unacceptable impacts to biodiversity interests; and 8. there are no unacceptable impacts on the utility and enjoyment of public rights of way. <p>Where appropriate, any planning permission may be granted subject to conditions to ensure that installations are removed when no longer in operational use, and that the land is restored to its previous condition.</p> | <p>Policy HTN9 supports suitable renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts, are addressed satisfactorily in accord with NPPF para. 155 a).</p> |

4. ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The making of the Houghton NDP will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

4.2 The NPPF explains that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives:

- **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.3 The NPPF emphasises that these objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways, so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the objectives. The objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

4.4 Section 3 of this Statement explains how the NDP has had regard to national policy and advice, and thus how it will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

4.5 The NDP is also considered to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan (see section 5). The Local Plan sets out a spatial strategy to achieve sustainable development in Test Valley Borough that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. These themes echo the three objectives for the planning system defined in the NPPF. Having regard to this context, the NDP will deliver sustainable development by setting out a balanced set of policies which address the strategic themes in the Local Plan.

4.6 Policy HTN1 establishes that the NDP will play an active role in guiding development in the Neighbourhood Area to a sustainable solution. The aim will be to consider how individual proposals contribute to sustainability, assessed across economic, social and environmental objectives, to best deliver the NDP’s vision and objectives. Importantly the policy approach recognises the interdependence of the objectives and the need to take into account the character, needs and opportunities of the Neighbourhood Area. Table 2 sets out how the NDP will help achieve sustainable development, by contributing to each of the three national objectives through its Vision, objectives and policies.

Table 2: Sustainable development

| Objective | How the Houghton NDP contributes |
|-----------|--|
| Economic | <p>The Vision includes that by 2029 Houghton will be a village with facilities to meet its needs.</p> <p>Relevant objectives are to protect, maintain and improve community services and facilities and to provide a framework for the assessment of proposals for the provision of renewable and low carbon energy projects.</p> <p>Plan policies directly address the economic objective by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting proposals for small business uses and the re-use of existing buildings for commercial purposes (policy HTN1). • Supporting the retention of community services and facilities and supporting their expansion and new provision (policy HTN2). • Providing planning policy design criteria to give clear guidance so that those bringing proposals forward can do so with confidence (policy HTN4). • Providing planning policy criteria for the assessment of proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation (policy HTN9). <p>Other NDP policies support the economic objective indirectly. Policies addressing the social objective help to maintain and promote a thriving rural community and thus demand for goods and services. Policies addressing the environmental objective serve to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and historic environments, providing a stable basis for economic activity.</p> |
| Social | <p>The Vision includes that by 2029 Houghton will be a peaceful and tranquil village with facilities and a mix of housing to meet its needs, and where new development has respected the existing local character.</p> <p>Relevant objectives include to protect, maintain and improve community services and facilities, including open space and buildings used for sport and recreation, to support health, social and cultural well-being; to help meet housing requirements by encouraging a mix of type and size of properties in line with community needs; to conserve the rural character of the village and to preserve and</p> |

| Objective | How the Houghton NDP contributes |
|---------------|---|
| | <p>enhance the things that are valued by the people of Houghton; to ensure that any future development meets the needs of the community and takes account of its impacts including on infrastructure and amenities; and to protect Local Green Spaces of particular importance to the local community.</p> <p>Plan policies directly address the social objective by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting community services, facilities, and recreational open space supporting the health, social and cultural well-being of the community (policy HTN2). • Requiring new dwellings to be of a type and size that contributes to meeting housing needs (policy HTN3). • Requiring designs which protect and enhance key village characteristics, including ensuring that undue adverse impacts on amenity will be avoided (policy HTN4). • Maintaining a sense of place and fostering community identity by ensuring new development has regard to the character or appearance of the Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area and by protecting landscape character and important views (policies HTN5, HTN6, and HTN7). • Designating and protecting Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to the community (policy HTN8). <p>Other NDP policies support the social objective indirectly. Policies addressing the economic objective support proposals for small business uses and the re-use of existing buildings for commercial purposes, enabling local employment opportunities. Policies addressing the environmental objective serve to protect the Neighbourhood Area’s built, historic and natural environments which contributes to the sense of place, character and community identity.</p> |
| Environmental | <p>The Vision includes that by 2029 Houghton will be a place where the built environment has been preserved or enhanced, and where new development has respected the existing local character, and a parish whose distinctive landscape character, views and open spaces have been protected and where appropriate enhanced.</p> <p>Relevant objectives include to conserve the rural character of the village and to preserve and enhance the things that are valued by the people of Houghton such as its peace and tranquillity; to ensure that any future development is in keeping with the rural setting and meets the needs of the community; to protect Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area, important buildings and open spaces; to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character; to protect important views of the landscape and the settlement within it, and to protect Local Green Spaces of particular importance to the local community.</p> <p>Plan policies directly address the environmental objective by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring designs which protect and enhance key village characteristics (policy HTN4). |

| Objective | How the Houghton NDP contributes |
|-----------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing planning policy criteria to ensure that development proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area (policy HTN5). • Protecting landscape character and important views (policies HTN6 and HTN7). • Designating and protecting Local Green Spaces which are demonstrably special to the community and hold a particular local significance (policy HTN8). • Providing planning policy criteria for the assessment of proposals for renewable and low carbon energy projects which safeguard agricultural land, landscape character, views, visual and residential amenity, drainage, heritage and biodiversity interests (policy HTN9). <p>Other NDP policies support the environmental objective indirectly. Policies addressing the social objective help to promote the health, social and cultural well-being of the community by making use of the local environment in varying ways. Policies addressing the economic objective support the continued delivery of goods and services locally, reducing the need to travel.</p> |

5. GENERAL CONFORMITY WITH STRATEGIC POLICY

- 5.1 The Houghton NDP is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the area. This is Test Valley Borough Council's Adopted Local Plan 2011-2029. The strategic policies are identified in Annex A to the Local Plan. Table 3 explains how each of the NDP's policies align with these policies. The Local Plan can be seen at <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/local-development-framework/dpd>.

Table 3: General conformity of NDP policies with strategic policies.

| NDP policy | Local Plan strategic policies |
|--|---|
| Policy HTN1 Sustainable development | Policy HTN1 is in general conformity with strategic policy SD1 <i>Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development</i> . It adds local detail as to the social, economic and environmental objectives of sustainable development within the Neighbourhood Area. |
| Policy HTN2 Community services, facilities and recreational open space | Policy HTN2 is in general conformity with strategic policies COM14 <i>Community Services & Facilities</i> , LHW1 <i>Public Open Space</i> , and T2 <i>Parking Standards</i> . It adds local detail by identifying specific community facilities and open spaces which are to be protected under the policy, and by encouraging new provision. |
| Policy HTN3 Type of new housing | Policy HTN3 is in general conformity with strategic policy COM1 <i>Housing Provision 2011-2029</i> . It adds local detail by setting out the type and size of housing that will be required to meet local needs. |
| Policy HTN4 Village design | Policy HTN4 is in general conformity with strategic policies E1 <i>High Quality Development in the Borough</i> and T2 <i>Parking Standards</i> . It adds local detail on relevant considerations such as settlement form, character, parking, boundary treatments, and amenity. |
| Policy HTN5 Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area | Policy HTN5 is in general conformity with strategic policy E9 <i>Heritage</i> . It adds local detail in respect of the Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area including non-designated heritage assets. |
| Policy HTN6 Landscape character | Policy HTN6 is in general conformity with strategic policy E2 <i>Protect, Conserve and Enhance the Landscape Character of the Borough</i> . Informed by the Landscape Character Assessment, it adds local detail on landscape types and features in the Neighbourhood Area. |
| Policy HTN7 Important views | Policy HTN7 is in general conformity with strategic policy E2 <i>Protect, Conserve and Enhance the Landscape</i> |

| NDP policy | Local Plan strategic policies |
|--|--|
| | <i>Character of the Borough.</i> It adds local detail by identifying important views in the Neighbourhood Area. |
| Policy HTN8 Local Green Spaces | Policy HTN8 is in general conformity with strategic policies E2 <i>Protect, Conserve and Enhance the Landscape Character of the Borough</i> , E5 <i>Biodiversity</i> , E6 <i>Green Infrastructure</i> and LHW1 <i>Public Open Space</i> . It adds local detail by identifying Local Green Spaces. |
| Policy HTN9 Renewable and low carbon energy projects | Policy HTN9 is in general conformity with strategic policies E2 <i>Protect, Conserve and Enhance the Landscape Character of the Borough</i> , E5 <i>Biodiversity</i> , E7 <i>Water Management</i> , E9 <i>Heritage</i> and T1 <i>Managing Movement</i> . It adds local detail by providing a specific policy for renewable and low carbon energy projects, addressing issues of concern in the Neighbourhood Area. |

6. EU OBLIGATIONS

6.1 The Houghton NDP is compatible with European Union obligations as detailed in Table 4 and as transposed into UK law.

Table 4: EU obligations

| EU Obligation | Compatibility of the Houghton NDP |
|---|--|
| <p>Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive</p> <p>Habitats Directive</p> | <p>In November 2019 Houghton Parish Council requested Test Valley Borough Council as the responsible authority to provide a screening opinion to determine whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) were required for the NDP. A Briefing note was provided to the Borough Council in support of this request. Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency were consulted in accordance with the regulations.</p> <p>The Borough Council’s response dated 23 December 2019 was that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEA: the NDP would not be likely to have significant environmental effects and that on this basis SEA would not be required; • HRA: that the proposed NDP is not likely to have a significant effect on European designations. <p>A statement has been prepared by the Borough Council setting out its reasons for the determination, in accordance with the regulations. This statement (excluding Annexes) is at Appendix 1. The full Statement with Annexes which include the Briefing Note provided to the Borough Council by the Parish Council may be seen at https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/neighbourhood-planning/houghton-neighbourhood-plan. The requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives are considered to have been met.</p> |
| <p>Water Framework Directive</p> | <p>Adopted Local Plan policy E7 requires that development proposals do not result in the deterioration of, and where possible assist in improving water quality and be planned to support the attainment of the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. The NDP does not make proposals for development which would hinder the achievement of this policy or the attainment of relevant environmental objectives. The NDP is considered to be compatible with the Water Framework Directive.</p> |
| <p>European Convention on Human Rights</p> | <p>The NDP is fully compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, transposed into UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998. It has been prepared within the existing framework of statute, national planning policy and guidance, and Borough-level strategic planning policies. In accordance with established process, its preparation has included consultation with the local community and it is subject to independent examination. The policies within the Plan are considered to comply with the requirements of EU obligations in relation to Human Rights.</p> |

Houghton Neighbourhood Plan

Request for Screening Opinion for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Introduction

This statement has been prepared by Test Valley Borough Council (as responsible authority) to determine whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or a Habitats Regulations Assessment are required for the draft Houghton Neighbourhood Plan following the submission of a screening opinion.

The Regulations advise that where the responsible authority determines that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), it shall prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination. This statement fulfils that requirement.

Context

The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan involves a series of stages as required by legislation before it can be 'made'. To be 'made', a Neighbourhood Plan must meet certain Basic Conditions. These include that the making of the plan "*does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations*".

One of these obligations is Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'. This is often referred to as the strategic environmental assessment (or SEA) Directive. The SEA Directive seeks "*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.*" The SEA Directive is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations') and it is these Regulations that the neighbourhood plan will need to be compatible with.

Another key obligation is Directive 92/43/EEC 'on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora', often referred to as the Habitats Directive. This has been translated into UK law via The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Under the 'Habitats Regulations' an assessment referred to as an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken if a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European protected wildlife site.

Under both the SEA and Habitats Regulations it is the Council's role to advise whether further work is required once the first stage, a screening assessment, has been undertaken by the Parish Council on its Neighbourhood Plan.

Process

A screening report has been produced on behalf of Houghton Parish Council (Annex A). This was submitted to the Council on the 4th November 2019. The report concluded that a full SEA would not be required. In accordance with the regulations, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency were consulted on the findings of the screening report. The consultation started on the 5th November for a five week period ending on 11th December. A summary of the responses received and the Council's response is outlined in Table A. Copies of the responses are included at Annex B.

Table A: Summary of Responses

| Consultation body (date of response) | Consultation response (summary) | Test Valley BC response |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Environment Agency No response received | <i>No response received</i> | N/A |
| Natural England 11 th December | Thank you for submitting a screening request for the Houghton Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA. Based on the location of the neighbourhood and the information submitted in support of the screening request, notably that the plan will not be allocating sites for development, <u>Natural England do not consider that a SEA is required.</u> Based on this same information we concur with the conclusion that an <u>appropriate assessment would not be required.</u> | Response noted |
| Historic England 11 th December | The Screening Report indicates that the Parish Council considers that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We note that the neighbourhood plan does not seek to allocate land 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], <u>Historic England concurs with the Parish Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.</u> | Response noted |

Conclusion

Having regard to the letter and associated briefing note that the Parish Council provided (Annex A), the consultation responses from Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England indicated that having regard to the matters within their remit, the proposed Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to have significant environmental effects.

The Council has had due regard to the statutory consultee responses and the criteria within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations in coming to a view on whether the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. Based on the summary of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan (as provided within the Briefing Note), it is the Council's opinion that the Plan would not be likely to have significant environmental effects. On this basis, a Strategic Environmental Assessment would not be required for the proposed Houghton Neighbourhood Plan.

With regards to the Habitats Regulations and whether an Appropriate Assessment is required, the Council concludes that the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on European designations. This is supported by the response from Natural England.

A response was sent to the Parish Council on the 23 December (see Annex C).