

Weston & Crewe Green Neighbourhood Plan

Habitat Regulation Assessment, Strategic Environmental
Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal Screening
Assessment Report

July 2025

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Abbreviations

CE	Cheshire East
CEC	Cheshire East Council
CELPS	Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (2017)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
HRA	Habitat Regulation Assessment
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
OSRA	Other Settlements and Rural Area
SADPD	Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (2022)
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
WCGNA	Weston & Crewe Green Neighbourhood Area
WCGNP	Weston & Crewe Green Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

- 1.1. This screening assessment report sets out CEC's determination of whether the W&CGNP requires HRA, SA, or SEA.
- 1.2. A screening assessment of the draft W&CGNP must be undertaken by the responsible authority prior to adoption or submission to the legislative procedure. In this case the 'responsible authority' is Weston and Crewe Green Parish Council, however, upon request, CEC has agreed to provide a screening assessment on the W&CGNP to determine if HRA, SA, or SEA are required. If it is concluded that either are required, Weston and Crewe Green Parish Council will be responsible for its production, and it must form part of the material that is consulted on once the formal consultation stage is reached.

Requirement for HRA, SA, and SEA

- 1.3. In the context of neighbourhood planning, HRA is required where a neighbourhood plan is deemed likely to give rise to significant effects on protected European designated sites (Natura 2000 sites), because of the neighbourhood plan's implementation. If no significant effect is deemed likely, HRA is not required. Where HRA is undertaken, it is good practice to identify sites within 10-15km of the plan/project boundary and include them in HRA.
- 1.4. The neighbourhood planning practice guidance¹ states that there is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have SA. However, qualifying bodies may find this a useful approach for demonstrating how their draft plan or order meets the basic condition of contributing to sustainable development. Material produced as part of SA of the local plan may be relevant to a neighbourhood plan.
- 1.5. Where a neighbourhood plan could have significant environmental effects, it may require SEA. Whether the W&CGNP requires SEA and (if so), the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft W&CGNP. SEA may be required for example when:
- a) The neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development.
 - b) The neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by proposals in the plan.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

- c) The neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with via an SA of the Local Plan.

1.6. The main determining factor as to whether SEA is required on a neighbourhood plan is if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Those neighbourhood plans containing land allocations for development, which are not included in the local authority's plan, are likely to require SEA. Neighbourhood plans that do not contain such allocations (or simply reflect allocations already identified as part of a local authority plan) are less likely to require SEA.

1.7. If SEA is required, Weston and Crewe Green Parish Council may wish to consider voluntarily expanding the scope so that it covers wider economic and social issues. This is the approach taken by CEC, whereby SEA is included within the broader SA of plans. The advantage of undertaking an SA is that it can demonstrate the impact of the WCGNP on social, economic, and environmental factors and therefore demonstrate to an examiner that the WCGNP that has been prepared is the most sustainable given all alternatives.

Legislation

1.8. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010² (known as the Habitats Regulations) transposes the requirements of the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of wild fauna and flora) into UK Law, and establishes whether a plan, policy, project or programme is likely to have significant effects, whether alone or in combination with other plans or strategies, on internationally protected sites of biodiversity conservation importance (protected sites).

1.9. Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012³ makes provision in relation to the Habitats Directive. The Directive requires that any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European site must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. To achieve this, paragraph 1 prescribes a basic condition that the making of a neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European designated site. Paragraphs 2 to 5 of the Schedule amend the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 to apply its provisions

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents>

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents>

to neighbourhood development orders and neighbourhood plans. Paragraph 4 inserts new regulation 78A which provides that a neighbourhood development order may not grant planning permission for development which is likely to have a significant effect on a European designated site.

1.10. Schedule 3 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 makes provision in relation to the EIA Directive⁴. The Directive requires that EIA development must be subject to a development consent process. To enable this, Schedule 3 prescribes a basic condition that applies where development which is the subject of a proposal for a neighbourhood development order is of a type caught by the EIA Directive and applies to the relevant provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011(3)⁵ (“the EIA Regulations”) with appropriate modifications (regulation 33⁶ and paragraphs 1 to 4 and 6 of Schedule 3⁷). Paragraphs 5 and 7 to 13 of Schedule 3 correct errors in the EIA regulations.

1.11. The basis for SA and SEA is the European Directive 2001/42/EC⁸, which has subsequently been transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004⁹, or SEA Regulations. The government has produced guidance in relation to these regulations, entitled ‘Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal’¹⁰.

The Development Plan for Cheshire East

1.12. The basic conditions require the WCGNP to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority.

1.13. The CELPS was adopted on the 27th of July 2017 and sets the strategic approach to development across the Borough. The CELPS was subject to a full SA, HRA and SEA. This ensured that no likely significant effects are expected to arise from the implementation of the CELPS or the delivery of the quantum of development identified in it.

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:I28036>

⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/1824/contents>

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/1824/regulation/33/made>

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/1824/schedule/3/made>

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32001L0042>

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/contents>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#strategic-environmental-assessment-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans>

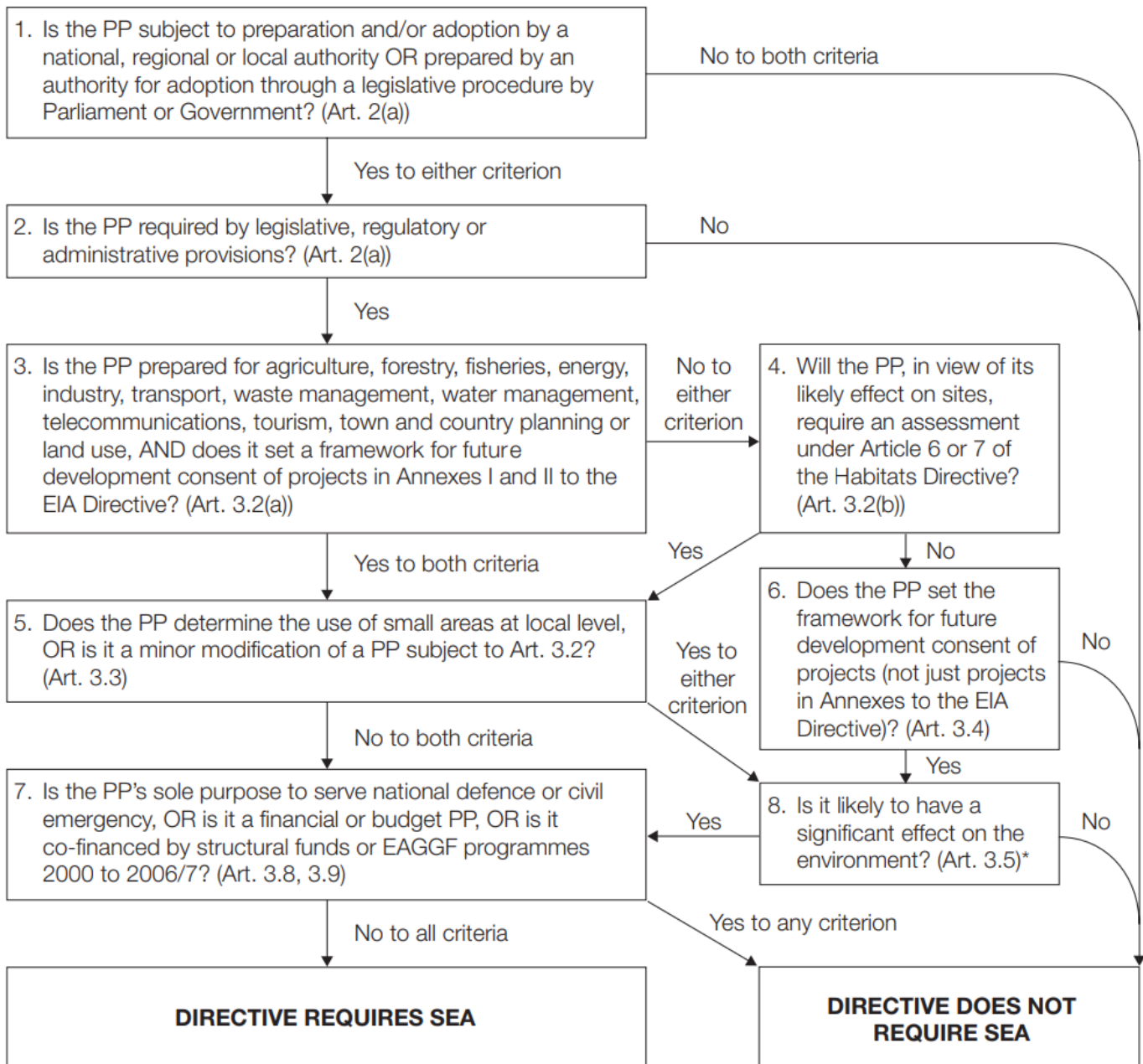
1.14. The SADPD was adopted on the 14th of December 2022 and sets out non-strategic and detailed planning policies to guide planning decisions and allocate additional sites for development, where necessary, to assist in meeting the overall development requirements set out in the CELPS. It has been prepared to support the policies and proposals of the CELPS by providing additional policy detail. The SADPD was subject to a full SA which included HRA and SEA. This ensured that no likely significant effects are expected to arise from the implementation of the SADPD or the delivery of the quantum of development identified in it.

1.15. On the 1st of July 2022, it was resolved by CEC that the process of producing a new local plan would begin. An issues paper consultation was carried out between the 8th of April 2024 and the 1st of July 2024. CEC are currently reflecting on the responses received as part of this consultation.

Screening Assessment Process

1.16. The screening assessment will be undertaken in three parts. First, an assessment will be as to whether the WCGNP requires HRA, then SA, and finally SEA.

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

Figure 1: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes.

Summary

WCGNP

2.1. The qualifying body for the WCGNP is Weston and Crewe Green Parish Council.

2.2. The WCGNA covers Weston and Crewe Green Parish within CE.

2.3. The themes and key issues of the WCGNP are:

- a) Climate change and sustainability
- b) Environment
- c) Housing
- d) Transport
- e) Local economy
- f) Community facilities
- g) Heritage
- h) Design

Screening Report

2.4. This report was undertaken by Tom Evans, Strategic and Environmental Planning Manager, and Greg Woolridge, Strategic Planning Officer, of CEC.

2.5. This report was carried out on 09/07/2025.

2.6. The conclusion of this report is that a full HRA, SA, and SEA reports are not required.

2.7. The reasons for this conclusion are:

- a) The WCGNP does not propose to allocate specific sites for future development and promotes criteria-based policies that seek to shape future development proposals, on a small-scale basis, that reduce and manage impact on the both the natural and built environment.
- b) There are no European designated sites located within the WCGNA. There are designated sites located within a 15km proximity of the WCGNA (Appendix B), the nearest European designation is Black Firs and Cranberry Bog.
- c) There are designations relating to the natural environment located within and adjacent to the WCGNA (Appendix C), such as:
 - i. 5 Sites of Biological Importance (within)
 - ii. 1 Ancient Woodland (adjacent)

- d) There are designations relating to historic environment located within and immediately adjacent to the WCGNA (Appendix D), such as:
 - i. 1 Grade I Listed Buildings
 - ii. 35 Grade II Listed Buildings
 - iii. 3 Grade II* Listed Buildings
 - iv. 8 Locally Listed Buildings
 - v. 3 Conservation Area Areas
 - vi. 1 Registered Park/Garden
- e) There are designations relating to flood risk located within and immediately adjacent to the WCGNA (Appendix E), such as:
 - i. Flood risk zones 2 and 3 run across the north-eastern, eastern, and south-western parts of the area.
- f) The WCGNP does not introduce new policy that enables a significant effect on the environment to be implemented. As a lower tier plan all development proposals will be subject to assessment against the WCGNP and higher tier policies, plans and legislation that seek to protect locally, nationally, and internationally designated sites. The CELPS sets the strategic development framework for Weston and Crewe Green, including broad levels of growth appropriate to urban and rural areas, and has been tested through integrated HRA, SA, and SEA reports to ensure the effect of this growth is acceptable in social, economic and environmental terms. The WCGNP does not propose additional growth at a significant scale beyond that already accepted in the CELPS, nor does it include specific proposals of a scale or intent large enough or with an impact significant enough, that would lead to additional significant effects on the environment or designated sites. The policies in the WCGNP are criteria based and seek to safeguard existing assets and the plan does not introduce policies which would significantly change the status of land beyond the planning framework in place.

Statutory Consultees

2.8. The Environment Agency. No response.

2.9. Historic England. Significant effects unlikely.

2.10. Natural England. Significant effects unlikely.

2.11. The full responses received from the statutory consultees can be found in Appendix A.

WCGNP

Context

- 3.1. Weston and Crewe Green is a rural parish and for the purposes of the CELPS settlement hierarchy, falls within the category of 'OSRA'. Policies PG 1 and PG 2 of the CELPS set out the preferred development strategy and distribution of development for the Borough. The distribution of future development in the Borough is intended to be focused on the Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield and the nine Key Service Centres.
- 3.2. The CELPS outlines that a small growth to meet need and support the vitality of OSRA will be supported and identifies an expectation to accommodate a delivery in the order of some 2,950 homes and 8 hectares of employment land (excluding the 61 hectares Employment Improvement Area at Wardle) in OSRAs.
- 3.3. The parish area includes designations of CELPS Policy PG 6 Open Countryside, and PG 3 Green Belt, which generally restricts development in the countryside but does also identify development which would be considered acceptable.
- 3.4. The WCGNA contains important natural habitats and waterbodies, hosts some larger scale residential development and some employment areas, and is located adjoining the parishes of Crewe, Haslington, Barthomley, Hough and Chorlton, and Shavington.
- 3.5. The WCGNP does not allocate specific sites for development and instead identifies a series of criteria-based policies against which development proposals should be assessed within the WCGNA. Such criteria are designed to ensure the delivery of sustainable development to meet the objectives of the WCGNP.
- 3.6. Planning applications within the WCGNA will be assessed against the policies in the WCGNP, the CELPS, and the SADPD, and any other material planning considerations.
- 3.7. Specific development sites have not been identified in the WCGNP, no assessment of potential development sites has been undertaken as part of the WCGNP process.

Vision

- 3.8. The WCGNP document sets out a vision for the parish and what the NDP should deliver:

3.9. In 2030 all the existing and future communities which make up the Parish will maintain their individual characters as a vibrant rural area with a strong sense of community.

It will continue to be an area of mixed age groups where local people can live, work and play enjoying a high quality of life.

The unique character of each of the individual settlements within the plan area will be retained and enhanced.

It will provide outdoor recreation and open space, rich in wildlife and natural beauty for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

The current green belt and strategic green gaps will be retained to provide a buffer between the settlements to retain the open countryside and rural character of the area.

Objectives

3.10. To deliver the vision, the WCGNP has set out the objectives on the following subjects:

- To promote steps to mitigate climate change, reduce carbon emissions and support sustainable development across the plan area.
- To retain and enhance the character of our existing settlements and prevent urban sprawl
- To safeguard our areas of Local Green space, ranging from amenity open space to those areas which have been purpose designed
- To ensure that any new housing development meets the identified needs of Weston and Crewe Green and is in keeping with the character of the area, and does not negatively affect the important local landscape and environment
- To encourage good quality design in relation to all new development and renovation/ extension of existing.
- To encourage small scale business activity and local employment opportunities.
- To maintain and promote community services and facilities in the plan area.
- To reduce the harmful impact of traffic through the settlements including a reduction in air pollution, noise and vibration and improve highway safety and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists..

Policies

- 3.11. The WCGNP contains several policies that will be used to ensure the delivery of the vision and objectives and guide individual development management decisions. An assessment of these policies impact on European sites has been carried out and concludes that no likely adverse impact will arise. The full assessment and table of policies is included at Table 1 below.
- 3.12. The following sections assess whether the plan requires an HRA, SA or SEA due to its content and whether it is likely to give rise to a significant effect on designated sites or the environment.

Screening Assessment

Assessment 1: Does the WCGNP Require HRA

4.1. To determine whether the NP requires a formal HRA, it has been assessed in relation to several key considerations. These include the HRAs already undertaken for higher-tier plans under which the NP sits, the integrity of protected sites within or near the NP area, and the potential effects and likelihood of the NP impacting protected sites. The findings of this assessment are presented below.

HRA for the Local Plan

4.2. The LPS (2017), the SADPD (2022) were subject to HRA. These assessments concluded that the documents would not have any significant effects on any protected sites.

Protected Sites within Proximity of the NP Area

4.3. There are no sites within the WCGNA, but there are 5 sites within 15km of the NP area.

Potential Effects of the WCGNP

4.4. Table 1 below presents the proposed policies of the WCGNP and to what extent they would have an effect on the European designated sites. This is achieved by applying an effect category based on the policy's content.

Proposed Policy	Effect
CC1 Climate Change	1B. No negative effect
E1 - Landscape Quality, Countryside and Open Views	1B. No negative effect
E2 Habitat Protection and Biodiversity	1B. No negative effect
E3 Local Green Space	1B. No negative effect
H1 Local Housing Need and Scale of Development	1A. No negative effect
H2 Settlement Boundaries	1D. No negative effect
H3 Wychwood Village	1B. No negative effect
H4 Car Parking on Existing and New Developments	1A. No negative effect
T1 Traffic Management	1C. No negative effect
T2 New Accesses	1A. No negative effect
T3 Footpaths	1B. No negative effect
LE1 Supporting Homeworking	1A. No negative effect

LE2 Supporting small scale business development	1A. No negative effect
C1 Community Facilities	1B. No negative effect
HE1 Conservation Areas	1B. No negative effect
HE2 Re-use of Non-Designated Heritage Assets	1B. No negative effect
HE3 Heritage Assets	1B. No negative effect
D1 Design	1A. No negative effect

Effect Category	Description
1A. No negative effect	The policy will not lead to development. For example, it relates to design or other qualitative criteria, or it is not a land-use planning policy.
1B. No negative effect	The policy intended to conserve or enhance the nature, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a European Site.
1C. No negative effect	The policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through other policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Sites and associated sensitive areas.
1D. No negative effect	The policy is like, or compliant with, the CELPS/SADPD policies which has been assessed as having no negative effects by HRA/SA.
2. No significant effect	The policy would have no significant effect either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, because effects are trivial, minimal or mitigated through other policies in combination.
3. Likely significant effect alone	The policy could indirectly affect a European Site, because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development that may be very close to it, or ecologically, hydrologically or physically connected to it, or it may increase disturbance because of increased recreational pressure.

4. Likely significant effects in combination	The policy alone would not be likely to have significant effects but if the effects are combined with the effects of other policies or proposals provided for or coordinated by the relevant plans or projects the cumulative effects would be likely to be significant.
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Table 1

Conclusion

4.5. Based on the above, CEC determines that the WCGNP is unlikely to have a significant effect on European designated sites and therefore, a full HRA is not required.

Assessment 2: Does the WCGNP Require SA

- 4.6. SA is a process to assess the social, environmental, and economic impacts of a Plan, and is performed alongside the production of the Plan.
- 4.7. The National Planning Policy Framework states that 'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'. It goes on to say that 'there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental'.
- 4.8. SA is required under The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004¹¹; and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which places an obligation on the Council to undertake SEA on land use and spatial plans.
- 4.9. SA has been undertaken on higher-tier plans within CE, such as the CELPS and SADPD, which the WCGNP will sit beneath, and with which it must be in general conformity.
- 4.10. As previously stated, the neighbourhood planning practice guidance confirms that there is no legal requirement for neighbourhood plans to be subject to SA. However, it must be demonstrated how a plan or will contribute to achieving sustainable development and the neighbourhood planning practice guidance suggests that a SA might be an appropriate way to do this and that the guidance on SA of local plans should be referred to.

Conclusion

- 4.11. As there is no legal requirement for SA to be undertaken on neighbourhood plans, provided a simple assessment of the neighbourhood plan's performance against sustainability criteria is performed, including environmental, social, and economic factors, it is concluded that a full SA is not required for the WCGNP.

¹¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>

Assessment 3: Does the WCGNP Require SEA

Stage 1

4.12. Table 2 below begins the SEA screening assessment with stage 1, which outlines whether the NP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority, OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The preparation and adoption of the NP is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The NP will be prepared by (as the 'relevant body') and will be 'made' by CEC as the local authority. The preparation of NDPs is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and The Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012. GO TO STAGE 2
2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	Whilst the NP is not a requirement and is optional under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will if 'made', form part of the Development Plan for the Borough. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether an SEA is required under the Directive. GO TO STAGE 3
3. Is the NP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))	Y	The NP is being prepared for town and country planning, local transport, and land use as it makes proposals to manage the development of land for housing and employment uses. As such, the NP contains a framework for future development consent of urban development projects (listed as 10(b) in Annex II of the EIA Directive). The NP does not specifically allocate any land for development purposes. GO TO STAGE 5
4. Will the NP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))	N	No, the policies in the NP are criteria-based and unlikely to directly affect designated sites.

5. Does the NP 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? (Art. 3.3)	Y	The NP intends to support local development for residential and employment/commercial use through criteria-based policies. There is therefore the potential for an effect on the environment resulting from policies in the plan. However, policies are criteria-based and do not instigate changes to land use directly. Additionally, The NP sits within the wider framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the adopted CELPS (2017) and the SADPD (2022), therefore the NP will help to set the framework for projects that are localised in nature and are likely to have limited resource implications.
		GO TO STAGE 8
6. Does the NP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Y	Yes, the NP contributes to establishing a local policy framework within which planning consent will be considered for a wide range of development proposals. Whilst the NP may establish very local criteria to enable development within criteria-based parameters, higher tier policies, plans and legislation exist to ensure that the NP is used within a framework with sufficient protection for environmental considerations.
7. Is the NP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget plan or programme, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art. 3.8, 3.9)	N	The NP does not fall into any of the criteria listed.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)	N	See Assessment 2: Likely significant effects on the environment

Table 2

Stage 1 Conclusion

4.13. Based on criterion 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 above, it is necessary to assess whether the NP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This assessment is undertaken through Stage 2 below.

Stage 2

4.14. The EIA Regulations include thresholds under which development proposals are not required to be screened to determine whether an EIA should be required.

These are:

- The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwelling house development
- The development includes more than 150 dwellings
- The overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.

4.15. Under these thresholds there is no obligation to screen urban development projects for an EIA.

4.16. The NP does not include more than 1 hectare of non-residential development; it does not allocate sites for more than 150 dwellings, and the overall area of the development does not exceed 5 hectares.

4.17. The WCGNP does not exceed any of the thresholds identified in the EIA regulations. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the effects of the plan on the environment, in general, cannot be significant. However, there may be specific features or special characteristics in this location upon which the plan may have a significant effect. It is therefore important to understand if there is any specific reason the plan could be considered to give rise to a significant effect on the environment. Using Schedule 1 of the SEA regulations, the following assessment has been undertaken to determine if there is any other reason why the WCGNP may give rise to a significant effect on the environment.

Issue	Effect	Reason
Biodiversity	No significant effect	Whilst there are significant local assets, the policy framework provided by the neighbourhood plan, alongside existing policy held in the CELPS, and the wider Development Plan provides sufficient protection. No proposed policies are likely to give rise to a substantially negative impact on biodiversity and natural assets.
Population	No significant effect	Weston and Crewe Green Parish has a population of 2100 people (2021 Census). Most people are aged between 45 and 79 which may lead to a demand in the future for accommodation more suitable for an elderly population. Outside of committed sites there is

		no allocated land for residential development within the NP that may accommodate future housing need locally within the neighbourhood area. The policies in the neighbourhood plan anticipate this to some degree in policy H1 and are unlikely to exert a significant impact on population/demographic change but do seek to ensure an appropriate mix of housing is secured where it does come forward.
Human health	No significant effect	Housing is a key detriment of human health. On a limited basis, the plan seeks to provide housing suitable for the local population which would result in a positive effect on human health and enable older residents to downsize within their community, and first-time buyers and families to access suitable housing contributing to wellbeing. The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Weston and Crewe Green Parish to be generally affluent (within 30% of least deprived neighbourhoods). The Joint Strategic Needs assessment for Weston and Crewe Green Parish Wards (Haslington) shows the population here is generally in good health with notable exceptions to health equality being admissions for A&E age 0-4, and new cases of prostate cancer. The JNSA shows the over 65 population is high. The neighbourhood plan introduces positive criteria based policies to assist in delivering the type of development that will contribute to addressing some of these issues. However, the policies included are unlikely to have a significant effect beyond the local area.
Fauna	No significant effect	Designated sites are subject to existing protection via other policies. The NP seeks to protect existing assets and does not introduce policies that are likely to harm local fauna.
Flora	No significant effect	Designated sites are subject to existing protection via other policies. The NP plan seeks to protect existing assets and does not introduce policies that are likely to harm local flora.
Soil	No significant effect	Agricultural land classification grades 2 and 3a and 3b are present within the neighbourhood area. No development is proposed in the neighbourhood plan that would give rise to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.
Water	No significant effect	Flood zones 2 and 3 are within the neighbourhood area. The policies proposed are

		unlikely to exert a significant impact on the existing approach to development in areas of flooding, and flooding issues are addressed by policies in the wider development plan/other legislation.
Air	No significant effect	There are no air quality management areas within the neighbourhood area. The policies contained in the plan are unlikely to significantly impact this issue.
Material assets	No significant effect	There is 1 area of historic landfill within the neighbourhood area. The policies in the plan do not address such issues and are therefore unlikely to result in a significant effect on the environment. No other material assets are present.
Landscape	No significant effect	There is 1 ancient woodland adjacent to the neighbourhood area and sites of biological importance within the area. WCGNP emerging policies seek to ensure that new development does not harm locally valued landscapes and the rural setting.
Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	No significant effect	There are multiple heritage assets in the Parish, some of which, particularly the settings, may be directly affected by new development across the Plan period. Nevertheless, policies exist in the NP which seek to protect heritage assets, alongside similar policies in the Development Plan and therefore the policies overall are unlikely to enable the delivery of new development which would not already be possible under the existing local framework. As such the NP policies are unlikely to have a significant effect on heritage assets directly or on the approach taken to heritage assets in the development planning process.

Table 3

Characteristics of the NP, regarding:	Cheshire East Council Assessment	Likely Significant Effect? (Y/N)
The degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The NP would, if made, form part of the statutory Development Plan and as such does contribute to the framework for future development consent of projects. The NP is expected to determine the use of small areas at a local level. The NP sits within the wider framework	N

	of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the CELPS (2017) and the SADPD (2022), therefore the projects for which this NP helps to set a framework are localised in nature but may have resource implications.	
The degree to which the Plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The NP must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. The policies within the NP should also be in general conformity with any strategic policies held within the CELPS and detailed development policies of the SADPD. The WCGNP can exert a limited degree of influence over the formation of future strategic and non-strategic policies in the Development Plan, since these matters are now fully settled with adoption of the part two plan, the SADPD.	N
The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The NP is expected to work to protect and enhance the natural environment of the area within a wider policy framework including, but not limited to the NPPF, the CELPS, and the SADPD. The NP addresses a series of local environmental issues. Draft policies have been identified to provide a sustainable level of growth within the parish. In combination with other plans and legislation, it is considered that the NP will integrate environmental considerations and promote sustainable development but may also give rise to an effect on the environment through the identification of a growth location.	N
Environmental problems relevant to the Plan.	There are no environmental problems relevant to the Plan. Where relevant, future	N

	development proposals will need to consider the impact of the plan on flood risk, designated sites and other primary and secondary impacts on the environment.	
The relevance of the Plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The NP is not directly relevant to the implementation of European legislation, although it will need to take the impact of the Water Framework Directive into account.	N
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects of the Plan.	Whilst development may take place, which is informed by the NP, the NP does not assist in instigating development directly through allocation of sites. There are therefore likely to be short-term effects resulting from activity associated with the development of small scale, un-allocated sites within the NA.	N
	There may also be longer-term effects relevant to changes in land use which may be positive but on a limited scale may have a negative impact on environmental factors. The plan seeks to establish a local framework to address such issues and also relies on higher tier plans and policies to deliver mitigation of such negative impacts.	N
	Where proposals are received to develop small scale sites in accordance with draft NP policies, such proposals will also be subject to national and local policies in regard to environmental protection and mitigation of impacts.	N
The cumulative nature of the effects of the Plan.	The NP does not seek to bring forward allocation of small-scale sites that are not specifically detailed in the CELPS or already have planning permission granted. Given the	N

	limit levels of growth supported in the plan, such effects are likely to be limited.	
The trans-boundary nature of the effects of the Plan.	There are not expected to be any significant trans-boundary effects.	N
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g., due to accidents).	There are no significant risks to human health. Indeed, the NP is likely to improve human health through positive assertions on protection of natural assets and sustainable transport.	N
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) by the Plan.	WCGNP covers the parish of Weston and Crewe Green Parish. The NP is likely to affect a resident population of approximately 2100 people over the life of the Plan across a parish located in a mainly rural area. The population within the parish is expected to grow due to the sites within the CELPS.	N
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the Plan due to: Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or intensive land use	The NA contains a number of important cultural, natural and environmental assets both within and adjacent to the plan area however the limited levels of development supported, and existence of other mitigating policies seek to minimise impact here. The NP sets out to deliver new development within framework supportive of small-scale development, implemented sensitively to preserve and enhance local natural, environmental and heritage assets. Given that the Borough is generally rural in nature, and Weston and Crewe Green Parish is predominantly a rural parish with a wealth of biodiversity and natural habitats, most proposed development will have an impact on the environment in the wider sense, and in some cases in a specific, locationally	N

	based sense that cannot yet be identified or assessed. Higher tier policies exist to offer adequate protection to the existing natural, cultural and environmental assets within and adjacent to the plan area.	
	The draft NP does not exceed environmental quality standards or limit values.	N
	Specific policies are included to ensure land is not over developed. Future development proposals will be assessed against other policies within the Development Plan (which, in totality, should mitigate against the over-development of land).	N
The effects of the Plan on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status.	There are areas of SBIs within, and Ancient Woodland located immediately adjacent to the NA. Policies are included in the NP that seek to preserve and protect biodiversity and habitats.	N
	The NA does not include designated landscapes however introduces policies that address landscapes, and views, that may be locally sensitive to development.	N
	The location of these sites within the NP area makes their presence relevant however the limited levels of growth and locations of sites do not give rise to a significant impact to the environment.	N

Table 4

Stage 2 Conclusion

4.18. The WCGNP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment and Directive does not require an SEA.

Conclusion

- 4.20. The WCGNP includes policies that support small scale development at a scale in conformity with the approach taken by the CELPS. It introduces criteria-based policies (that are yet to be finalised) that address local issues, but which do alter the status of land to a degree which would have a significant effect on the environment.
- 4.21. There are no designated sites of European significance within the NA but there are 5 within a 15km proximity, however, due to the nature of the policies, and that the NP does not allocate sites for development, the effect of the plan on these sites is not considered to be significant. The WCGNP also seeks to ensure that any new development is addressed sensitively in the context of evidence prepared in relation to natural, heritage and landscape assets thus incorporating environmental protection in general and at specific designated locations.
- 4.22. The assessment therefore concludes that the WCGNP is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment or on designated sites and therefore an HRA, SA and SEA are not required.

Monitoring of the WCGNP

- 4.23. Whilst Weston and Crewe Green Parish Council is committed to the delivery of the objectives held within the NP, there may be circumstances where development will not come forward entirely as anticipated. CEC, as part of it's monitoring of the Development Plan, including this NP, monitor performance through a Monitoring Report produced annually. The WCGNP will also be monitored through this process with regards to its progress. Generally, the outcome of the monitoring process will inform whether specific intervention actions should be pursued in the WCGNP. If these actions fail to address under performance, then other complementary plans and strategies should be reviewed.

Appendices

Appendix A: Representations from Statutory Consultees

Environment Agency

Historic England

Greg Woolridge
Strategic Planning
Cheshire East Council

Our ref: PL00799329

Your ref:

Telephone: 0161 242 1445

Date: 28 July 2025

By email

Dear Greg

Weston & Crewe Green Neighbourhood Plan Screening Assessment Report July 2025

We write in response to your e-mail of 09 July 2025, seeking a formal Screening Opinion from Historic England as to whether SEA is required for Weston and Crewe Green Neighbourhood Plan. As the public body that advises on England's historic environment, we are pleased to offer our comments.

For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine the advice given to the question, "Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?" in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage. Our comments are based on the information supplied at this time within the Screening Report.

The Neighbourhood Plan and adjacent area includes a number of designated heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas and a registered park & garden. There are also other features of local historic, architectural or archaeological value.

The screening assessment report concludes that the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan are not expected to significantly affect heritage assets, either directly or in terms of the overall approach to heritage in the development planning process.

In the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 Annex II of the SEA Directive, and on the basis of the information supplied, we concur that the draft plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects upon the historic environment, and so Historic England are of the view that SEA is unlikely to be required.

We would like to stress that this opinion is based on the information made available on 09 July 2025. To avoid any doubt, this decision does not preclude Historic England providing further advice on later stages of the SEA process, should this be required, nor objecting to specific

proposals that may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan), where we consider that these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

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

Historic England advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the Cheshire East Council and the Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service 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 HER (formerly SMR); how policies or proposals 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 historic assets.

We request that you please send Historic England a copy of the determination as required by Reg 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Yours sincerely

Pippa Brown

Historic Places Adviser

Natural England

Date: 11 August 2025
Our ref: 518953
Your ref: Weston & Crewe Green Neighbourhood Plan



Mr Greg Woolridge
Cheshire East Council

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Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

BY EMAIL ONLY

neighbourhoods@cheshireeast.gov.uk

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Woolridge

Weston & Crewe Green Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Consultation

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

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

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".

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.

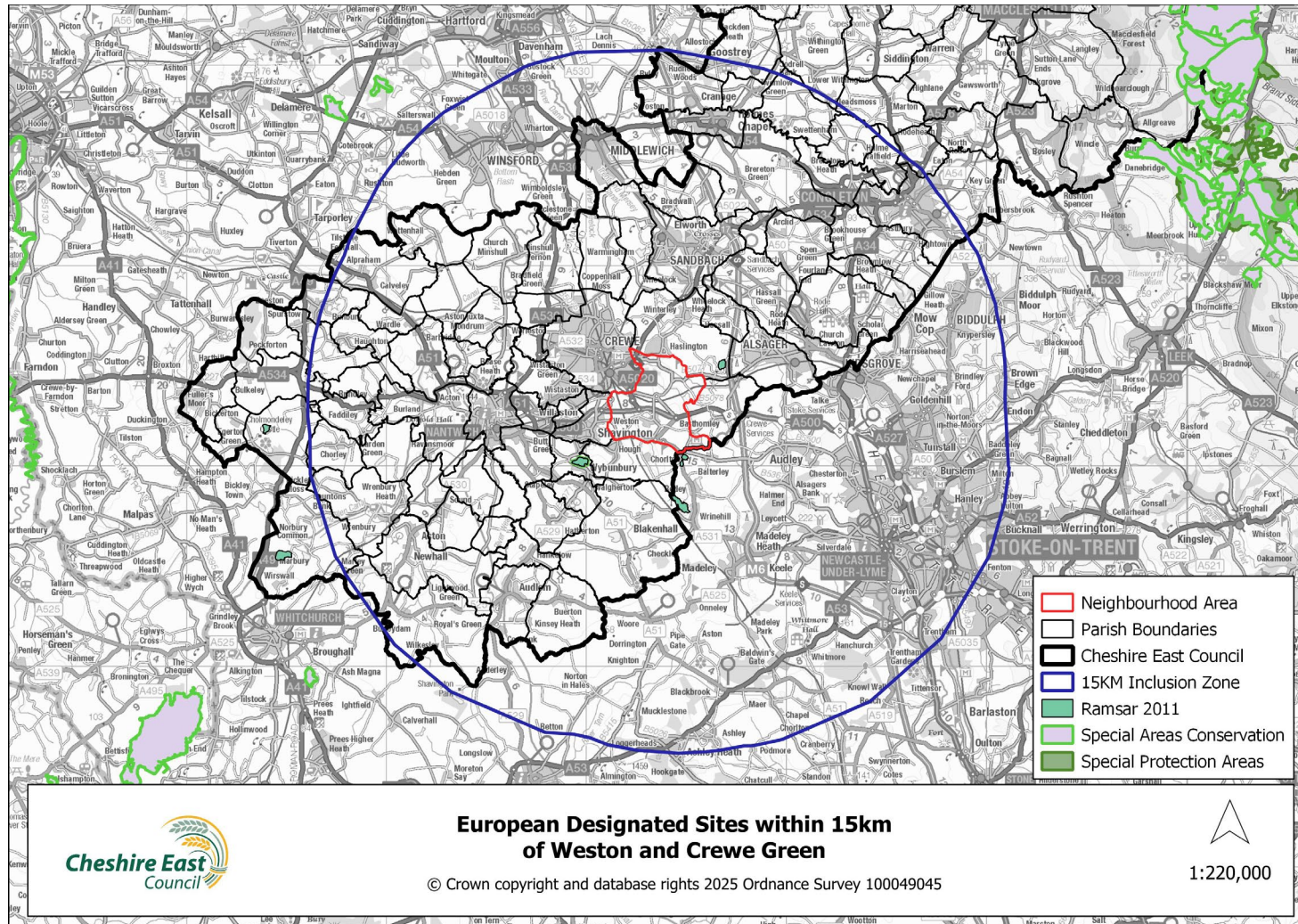
Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

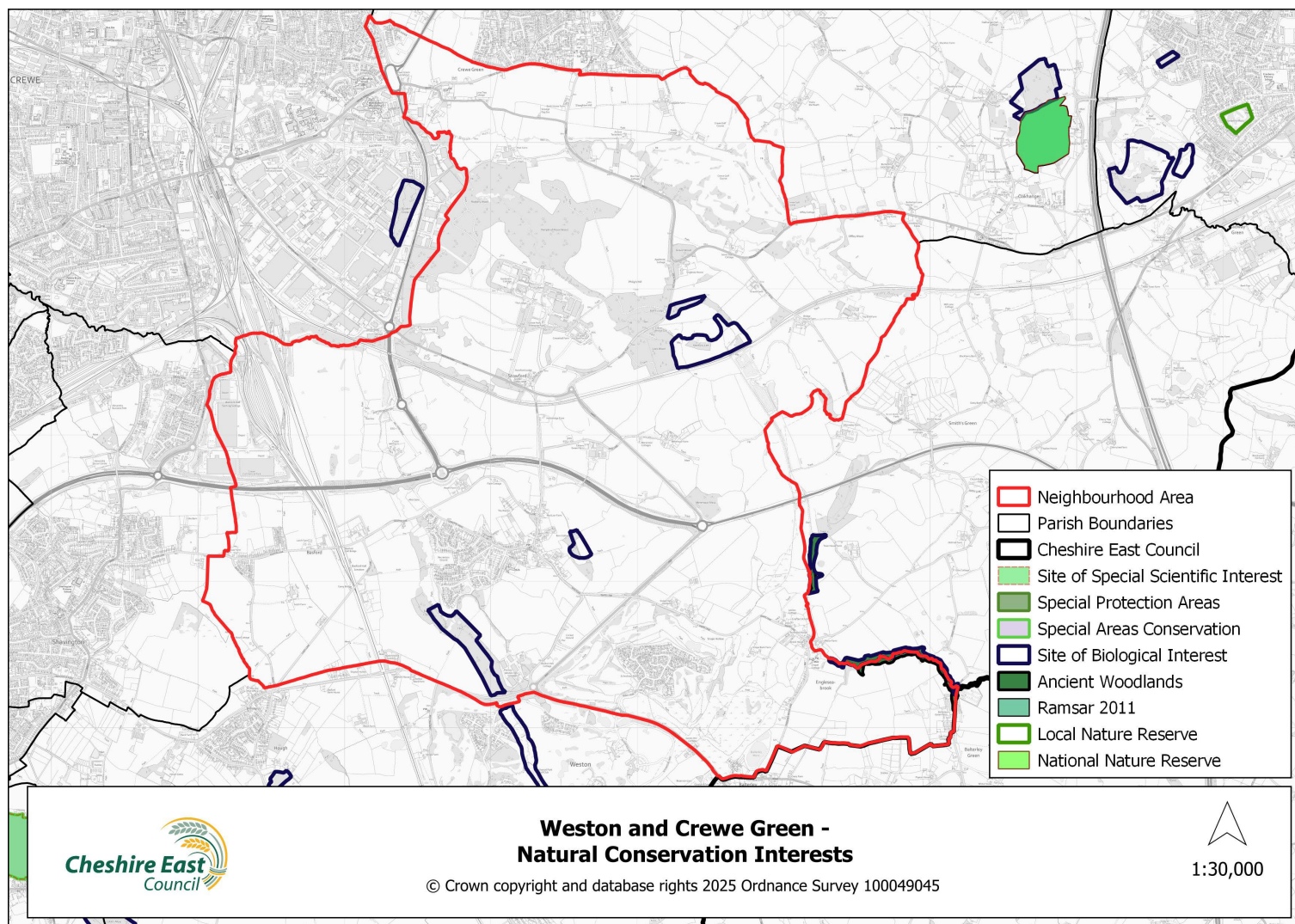
Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team

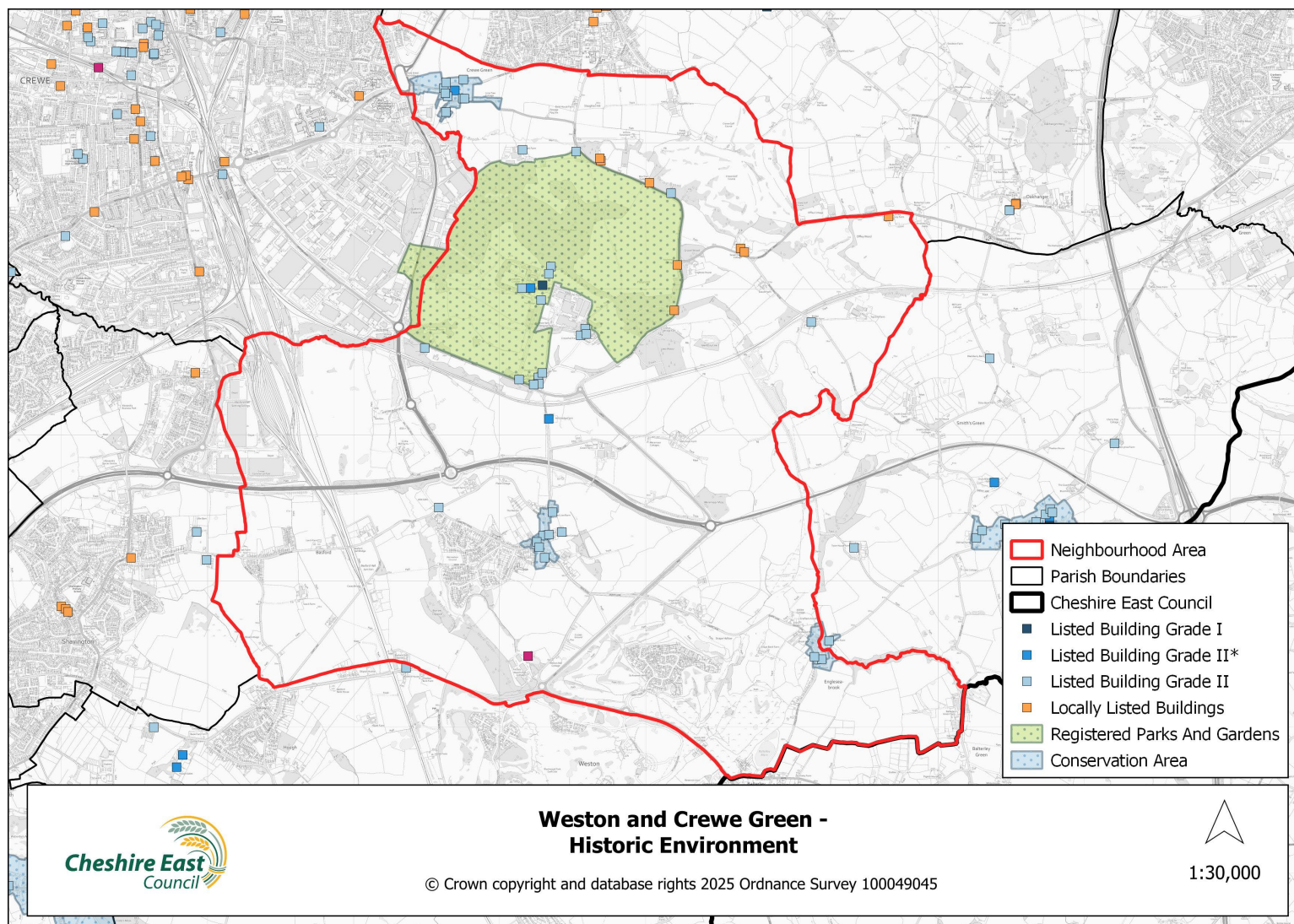
Appendix B: Location of European Designations



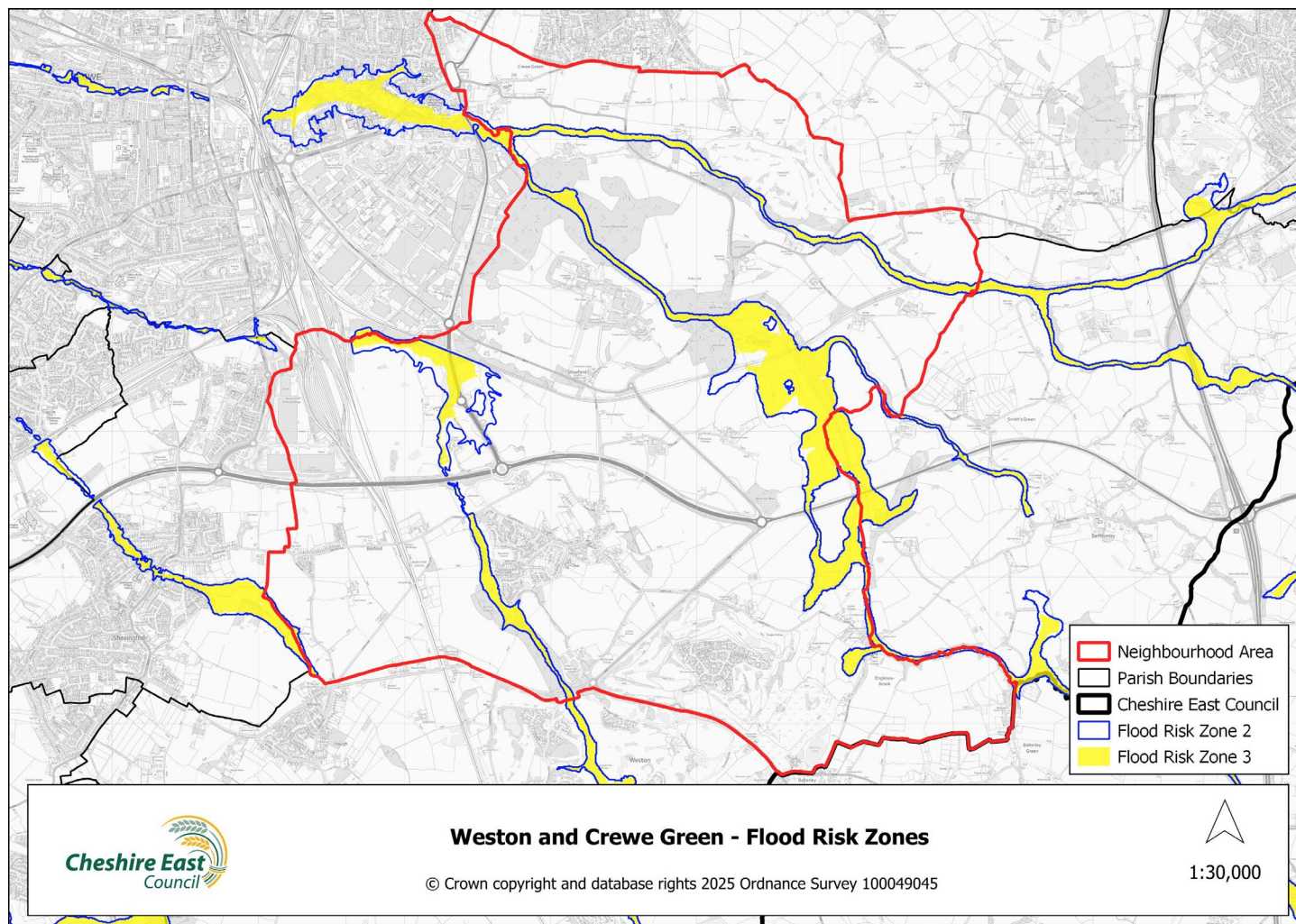
Appendix C: Location of Natural Environment Designations



Appendix D: Location of Historic Environment Designations



Appendix E: Location of Flood Risk Zone Designations





Open Fair Green

