

Collingham Neighbourhood Plan

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Changes made by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (the 2019 Regulations) updated the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 2017 Regulations). Most of these changes involved transferring functions from the European Commission to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales because of the UK leaving the EU. All other processes or terms in the 2017 Regulations remain unchanged and existing guidance is still relevant. The obligations of a competent authority in the 2017 Regulations for the protection of sites or species did not change. A competent authority is a public body, statutory undertaker, minister or department of government, or anyone holding public office. The main changes to the 2017 Regulations are:

- the creation of a national site network within the UK territory comprising the protected sites already designated under the Nature Directives, and any further sites designated under these Regulations;
- the establishment of management objectives for the national site network (the 'network objectives');
- a duty for appropriate authorities to manage and where necessary adapt the national site network as a whole to achieve the network objectives;
- an amended process for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);
- arrangements for reporting on the implementation of the Regulations, given that the UK no longer provides reports to the European Commission;
- arrangements replacing the European Commission's functions with regard to the imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) test where a plan or project affects a priority habitat or species;
- arrangements for amending the schedules to the Regulations and the annexes to the Nature Directives that apply to the UK.

1.2 SACs and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in the UK no longer form part of the EU's Natura 2000 ecological network. The 2019 Regulations have created a national site network on land and at sea, including both the inshore and offshore marine areas in the UK. The national site network includes:

- existing SACs and SPAs;
- new SACs and SPAs designated under these Regulations;

Any references to Natura 2000 in the 2017 Regulations and in guidance now refers to the new national site network.

Maintaining a coherent network of protected sites with overarching conservation objectives is still required in order to:

- fulfil the commitment made by government to maintain environmental protections;
- continue to meet our international legal obligations, such as the Bern Convention, the Oslo and Paris Conventions (OSPAR), Bonn and Ramsar Conventions.

1.3 As a land use plan, an assessment of the Collingham Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) may be required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (the Habitat Regulations) in order to determine whether the Plan may result in a significant effect on identified sites.

1.4 The screening process is used to establish whether any elements of the Plan may have a significant effect on these sites. Regulation 32 in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out an additional basic condition to those set out in primary legislation. Regulation 32 states: "The making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (d)) or a

European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (e)) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

2.0 The Collingham Neighbourhood Plan

2.1 This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by and for residents of the parishes of Collingham. The Neighbourhood Area (the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan) includes the whole of the parish and was formally designated by Newark and Sherwood District Council (the Local Planning Authority) on 12th October 2020.

2.2 The Plan is based on a Vision, which is made up of three elements:

- **Building a Strong Community** – ensuring that the community is supported by a strong social structure and appropriate infrastructure.
- **Supporting a Vibrant Trading Environment** – to develop the economic vibrancy of the village.
- **Delivering a Good Place to Live** – Ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment, amenities and facilities whilst allowing appropriate new development.

The Plan has seven objectives:

Objective 1: Sustainable Development

To ensure that proposals for new development are presented within the wider social, economic and environmental context and that informed decisions about future growth can be made.

Objective 2: Environment, Climate Change & Flood Risk

To effectively protect and manage the natural environment in and around Collingham to achieve sustainable development and mitigate the effects of climate change and flooding.

Objective 3: Design and Heritage

To ensure that all future development, regardless of type or location, does not have a negative impact on the village's unique character, historic environment and landscape setting.

Objective 4: Accessibility, Communications & Sustainable Transport

To facilitate safe movement and access to services and all forms of communications for residents and visitors, through and around Collingham, maximizing the use of sustainable modes.

Objective 5: Community Facilities & Amenities

To protect and enhance the range of community facilities and amenities within the village to improve the quality of life for people both living and working in Collingham.

Objective 6: Housing and Employment

To support limited residential and commercial development within the village, through meeting the strategic requirements for growth whilst maximizing the benefits for the community.

Objective 7: Green Spaces & The Countryside

To protect and enhance the green spaces and ecological corridors in the village and improve connectivity of the public right of way network with access for all.

2.3 The Collingham Neighbourhood Plan's policies are summarised below:

Policy SD1: Sustainable Development

This policy supports development that accords with the spatial strategy and other relevant policies of the Newark and Sherwood Development Plan, while contributing positively to sustainable development in Collingham. Proposals should address the following considerations in a way that is proportionate to their scale, nature and location:

- design quality and local character, informed by the Collingham Design Code;
- flood risk and drainage, with no increased risk on or off site;
- blue and green infrastructure, biodiversity, recreation and climate resilience;
- safe, convenient and inclusive access for walking, cycling and public transport;
- community wellbeing, open space and healthy environments;
- avoiding unnecessary loss of best and most versatile agricultural land; and proportionate infrastructure and mitigation where needed.

Policy E1: Climate Change and Carbon Emissions

This policy supports development that helps address climate change in a proportionate way. It encourages applicants to reduce energy demand, improve energy efficiency, and incorporate renewable or low-carbon technologies where appropriate.

Higher environmental performance will be supported where it is appropriate and does not conflict with other Development Plan policies;

- electric vehicle charging and secure cycle parking/storage should be provided in line with Building Regulations, district guidance and other relevant standards; and
- renewable and low-carbon energy proposals will be supported where landscape, heritage, amenity, biodiversity and highway-safety impacts are acceptable.

Policy E2(a): Blue & Green Infrastructure

This policy supports the protection, enhancement and extension of Collingham's blue and green infrastructure network:

- development should retain and improve natural features, protect water habitats, strengthen ecological connectivity, and support access to the countryside;
- new or improved links for walking, cycling and horse-riding should connect to existing footpaths, bridleways, byways and other rights of way where appropriate;
- landscape design should create habitats and wildlife-friendly features; and
- blue and green spaces should be multifunctional, supporting biodiversity, drainage, climate adaptation and public enjoyment.

Policy E2(b): Biodiversity

This policy ensures that development contributes positively to biodiversity and protects important species and habitats. Development subject to the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement must deliver at least 10% net gain in accordance with national legislation and Local Planning Authority requirements:

- on-site biodiversity delivery should be maximised wherever practicable; protected species, habitats, trees, hedgerows and water environments should be protected and enhanced; and
- nature-friendly design measures such as native planting, SuDS, bat and bird boxes, swift bricks and hedgehog-permeable boundaries should be incorporated where appropriate.

Policy E3: Public Rights of Way & Wildlife Corridors

This policy supports the protection and sensitive integration of Public Rights of Way within development. It applies where development affects an existing route or creates, diverts or improves a route:

- routes should retain continuity and character and, where possible, contribute to green infrastructure;
- improvements to connectivity, accessibility, safety, surface condition and biodiversity value should be proportionate to the proposal; and
- surfacing, planting, boundaries and street furniture should be appropriate for the lawful users of the route, including equestrian users where relevant.

Policy E4: Flood Risk

This policy directs development away from areas at highest flood risk and requires proposals to manage flood and surface-water risk safely:

- site-specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required where relevant;
- surface-water run-off must be managed so as not to increase flood risk on or off site, with advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority where appropriate; and
- Sustainable Drainage Systems should provide drainage, biodiversity, amenity, landscape and blue-green infrastructure benefits.

Policy DH1: Sense of Place

This policy promotes high-quality, sustainable and locally distinctive design. It supports proposals that respond positively to Collingham's character, landscape setting and historic environment:

- development of retail and other main town centre uses should support the Collingham Local Centre, consistent with national policy and the wider Development Plan;
- the Collingham Design Code should inform relevant proposals, with departures justified through a design-led approach; and
- design statements should explain how local character, sustainability and inclusive design have been addressed.

Policy DH2: Public Realm

This policy supports development that enhances the quality, accessibility and character of streets and public spaces in Collingham:

- proposals should maintain or improve safety, appearance and accessibility;
- frontages, routes, planting and street features should respond to local character; and
- new public spaces should be safe, welcoming, inclusive, well landscaped and properly managed.

Policy DH3: Historic Environment

This policy ensures development within or near the Collingham Conservation Area protects and enhances its historic character:

- proposals should demonstrate understanding of heritage significance;
- local built form, materials, roofscape and important views should be respected; and
- the Conservation Area Appraisal and Collingham Design Code should inform design responses.

Policy ATC1: Cycle, Pedestrian and Equine Routes

This policy supports improvements to Collingham's active-travel and multi-user route network:

- development should improve or connect walking, cycling and equestrian routes where appropriate;
- new or improved routes should be safe, inclusive and designed with good visibility and natural surveillance;
- bridleways, byways and equestrian routes should be treated with appropriate surfacing, signage and boundary design.

Policy ATC2: Public Transport Connectivity

This policy supports development that improves access to, and integration with, public transport:

- proposals should provide safe and direct walking and cycling links to bus stops and Collingham railway station;

- interchange between transport modes should be supported through cycle parking, signage, accessible routes and safe crossings; and
- development near the operational railway or level crossings should engage Network Rail early and provide any necessary safety mitigation.

Policy ATC3: Highways Impact

This policy supports development that provides safe and suitable access for all users and avoids unacceptable residual cumulative impacts on the highway and movement network:

- appropriate measures should avoid, minimise or mitigate transport impacts arising directly from development;
- where needed, proportionate mitigation or contributions may support junction, traffic management, public transport, pedestrian, cycle or safety improvements.

Policy ATC4: Parking Standards

This policy supports parking provision for non-residential development that is appropriate to the type, scale and operational needs of the proposal:

- parking design should respond to site accessibility, employee and visitor demand, local character, active travel and highway safety;
- layouts should have regard to the Newark and Sherwood Residential Cycle and Car Parking Standards and Design Guide SPD, including avoiding poorly overlooked rear parking courts where possible; and
- parking and servicing arrangements should maintain safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users.

Policy ATC5: High Speed Digital Connectivity

This policy supports reliable, high-quality digital infrastructure where digital connectivity is material to the use of the site:

- new dwellings, commercial floorspace and relevant forms of development should prioritise gigabit-capable broadband where feasible;
- passive infrastructure such as ducting and cabling routes should be provided where practical and proportionate; and
- supporting information should explain how digital infrastructure and known constraints have been considered where relevant.

Policy CF1: Community Assets & Facilities

This policy supports the enhancement and protection of valued community facilities:

- proposals that improve access, quality or capacity will be supported;
- loss of facilities will only be supported where lack of need, lack of viability, or suitable replacement provision is demonstrated;

- continued access should be secured during temporary or partial loss caused by redevelopment where practicable.

Policy CF2: Local Green and Open Spaces

This policy supports the provision, protection and enhancement of green and open spaces that serve community, recreational, amenity, landscape or biodiversity purposes:

- new development should provide green and open space in accordance with district standards where proportionate;
loss of existing spaces such as allotments, sports fields, play areas and amenity greens will only be supported where they are no longer needed or are replaced by equivalent or better provision;
- Main Open Areas identified in the wider Development Plan are not treated as ordinary replaceable open-space typologies by this policy.

Policy HE1: Housing Type & Density

This policy promotes a balanced and inclusive housing mix that meets local needs and reflects Col-lingham's character:

- on larger residential schemes, the housing mix should have regard to the broad indicative direction in Table HE1 and any updated evidence;
- smaller homes, family housing and homes suited to older people are particular priorities;
- self-build/custom-build housing and appropriate rural exception housing will be supported where consistent with the Development Plan; and
- density should make efficient use of land while respecting local character, Core Policy 3 and the Col-lingham Design Code.

Policy HE2: Affordable Housing Provision

This policy supports affordable housing that meets local needs and is well integrated into new de-velopment:

- affordable housing should be provided in accordance with Core Policy 1, relevant national policy and updated evidence;
- smaller homes, family housing and accessible/adaptable homes should be prioritised where justified by need;
- rural exception sites should be adjacent to, and well related to, the built-up area and should remain primarily affordable housing-led;
- a tenure mix of 60% rented and 40% affordable home ownership is sought unless evidence or viability supports another mix.

Policy HE3: Employment & Economic Development

This policy supports a strong and diverse local economy by protecting existing employment land and encouraging appropriate business growth:

- small business units, workshops, starter units and flexible/co-working spaces are supported on existing or allocated employment sites;
- rural business diversification, sustainable rural tourism and home-based businesses will be supported where impacts are acceptable;
- employment-generating proposals outside existing or allocated areas may be supported where they are appropriate in scale, well related to the settlement and do not harm village setting, amenity, traffic or parking conditions; and
- loss of employment land or premises must be robustly justified.

3.0 HRA Screening Assessment of the Collingham Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1 For the HRA Screening assessment the Neighbourhood Plan Area was checked to see if any Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation sites (SAC), or Ramsar sites were located within its area, as well as those considered as potential sites (pSPA, cSAC & pRamsar). The assessment also checked to see if any of these internationally important sites were located within a 15km radius from the Neighbourhood Plan area. There is also an area to be considered that is of importance to breeding populations of woodlarks and nightjars. In line with advice from Natural England, this area is effectively treated as if it is a SPA or pSPA and is referred to as ppSPA (possible potential SPA). None of these sites, including the ppSPA, were within the Plan Area or within 15km.
- 3.2 The Plan is not connected to the management of any of the areas discussed in paragraph 3.1. While the Plan seeks to guide and inform development, it does not propose new development or allocate sites for development.
- 3.3 Existing plans and proposals must be considered when assessing new plans or programmes for likely significant effects as they may create 'in combination' effects. For the Collingham Neighbourhood Plan the existing plans to be considered are Newark and Sherwood District Council's Amended Core Strategy (ACS) (2019) and Allocations and Development Management DPD (ADMDPD) (2013), which have both been through HRA. The ADMDPD is being reviewed and an amended version, the Allocations and Development Management DPD (AADMDPD) was subject to an Examination in Public in November 2024. This has also been subject to HRA. The Collingham Neighbourhood Plan has been produced to be in strategic conformity with these documents.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 For the reasons set out above, it is considered that there are not likely to be any significant effects from the production and implementation of the Collingham Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore unnecessary to undertake a full HRA of the Plan.