

Chart Sutton Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Determination Statement

This document has been prepared by Alison Eardley Consulting on behalf Chart Sutton Parish Council.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Summary

As a result of the assessment in section 3, there is potential for significant environmental effects arising from the CSNP.

As such, it **does require** a full SEA to be undertaken. This conclusion was sent to the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England for comment. Full responses are included in Appendix B. None of the bodies have explicitly ruled in or out the need for an SEA to be undertaken. However, as the Neighbourhood Plan does include a site allocation, it has been agreed with the Parish Council that an SEA will be undertaken.

1.2 SEA Background

This screening report is designed to determine whether Chart Sutton Neighbourhood Plan (CSNP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

The Neighbourhood Area for Chart Sutton was designated by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) on 28 November 2024. It aligns with the boundary of Chart Sutton Parish.

The CSNP Plan is in draft form but the scope has been established. This includes provision for the allocation of a site/ sites to meet the identified need of 35 dwellings.

The timeframe for the CSNP is 2025 to 2038, aligning with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2019-2038 (MLPR). The plan seeks to achieve the following vision:

Chart Sutton Parish, both the central village and outlying areas, will retain its rural character and community spirit. Residents of the Parish appreciate the peace and quiet afforded by its location. Any new development will be directed to the most sustainable parts of the Parish and its design will respect the natural environment and our heritage whilst meeting the needs of all age groups in the community. We will strive to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Parish, notably the Greensand Way. We will support opportunities that enable our residents and visitors to access our natural spaces more easily as it is recognised that these promote wellbeing. Community facilities such as the Village Hall and St Michael's Church will remain focal points within the village and they will, where possible, be improved to become more attractive to residents. Preservation of our rurality is paramount.

The vision will be delivered through the following objectives:

Objective 1: Rurality To safeguard the rural character of the Parish. This includes improving access to the Greensand Way, Recreation Ground, protecting the Green Belt, safeguarding the important and dramatic views into and out of the villages and across the Weald and protecting trees, hedgerows and ponds. The distinctive, ridgeline landscape, ancient woodlands and open, farming character will be preserved.

Objective 2: Heritage To preserve and celebrate our built heritage and the identities of the individual settlements. Combined, these give a sense of place and character. All new development must be carefully and sustainably designed to enhance what exists already. The encroachment caused by the rapidly expanding Maidstone will be guarded against.

Objective 3: Environment To support the diversity of wildlife and habitats that is found here. Living close to nature is the reason so many people love our area. We aim to enhance and protect nature through the creation of improved habitats for wildlife, maintenance of native hedgerows and planting more trees and wildflowers. Dark skies are rare and, despite the proximity of Maidstone, Chart Sutton enjoys a low level of light pollution and this is to be actively preserved in our neighbourhood. The expansion of polytunnels is to be resisted where possible.

Objective 4: Housing To support limited housing growth that helps to meet the needs of residents in terms of size, tenure (to buy/to rent) and affordability of homes. Development in our neighbourhood area should encourage healthy lifestyles and conserve the architectural and historical features of the area. Any development should use appropriate materials and styles, including ragstone and Kent peg tiles. Consideration will be given to community housing provision for both young and older people and any housing should be restricted to two storey dwellings. The urban cul-de-sac model will be discouraged. Adequate green space is to be provided, preferably with ponds.

Objective 5: Wellbeing To improve and better connect our network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways so that people can access local and nearby facilities more easily. This may well necessitate improved signage. Homes within the village confines should link to facilities by safe, attractive and inviting walkable routes to encourage healthy lifestyles. something for everyone. In the village centre, support networks will enable elders to live in their own homes. Young families will have safe places to play, walk and cycle. Events will build unity and community spirit. We will continue to encourage use of the village hall as a community hub. Clean energy use in the villages will be welcomed and we will consider environmentally friendly schemes such as improved waste recycling and community energy schemes. The health and well-being of our community will be a priority. Communications (mobile phone and internet connectivity) will be improved.

Objective 6: Facilities Chart Sutton badly needs a village hub; a convenient meeting place (for parents and others) that also be used to accommodate peripatetic services eg hairdresser, GP, Bank, chiropodist, clothing etc. Such a community hub could include a café or this could possibly be incorporated within an updated village shop. A community orchard or allotments would also improve village life. Other improvements needed include enhanced broadband (essential for local

businesses and those who frequently work from home), traffic speed and pavements that actually connect all parts of the village. Efforts to prevent or mitigate the effects of flooding in parts of the village are to be continued.

The legislative background set out below outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise. Section 3 provides a screening assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the draft plan and the need for a full SEA.

1.3 Legislative Background

The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC and was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations.

This report focuses on screening for SEA and the criteria for establishing whether a full assessment is needed.

2 Assessment

2.1 Overview

The diagram below illustrates the process for screening a planning document to ascertain whether a full SEA is required.

The ODPM publication “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive” (2005) sets out the approach to be taken in order to determine whether SEA is required.

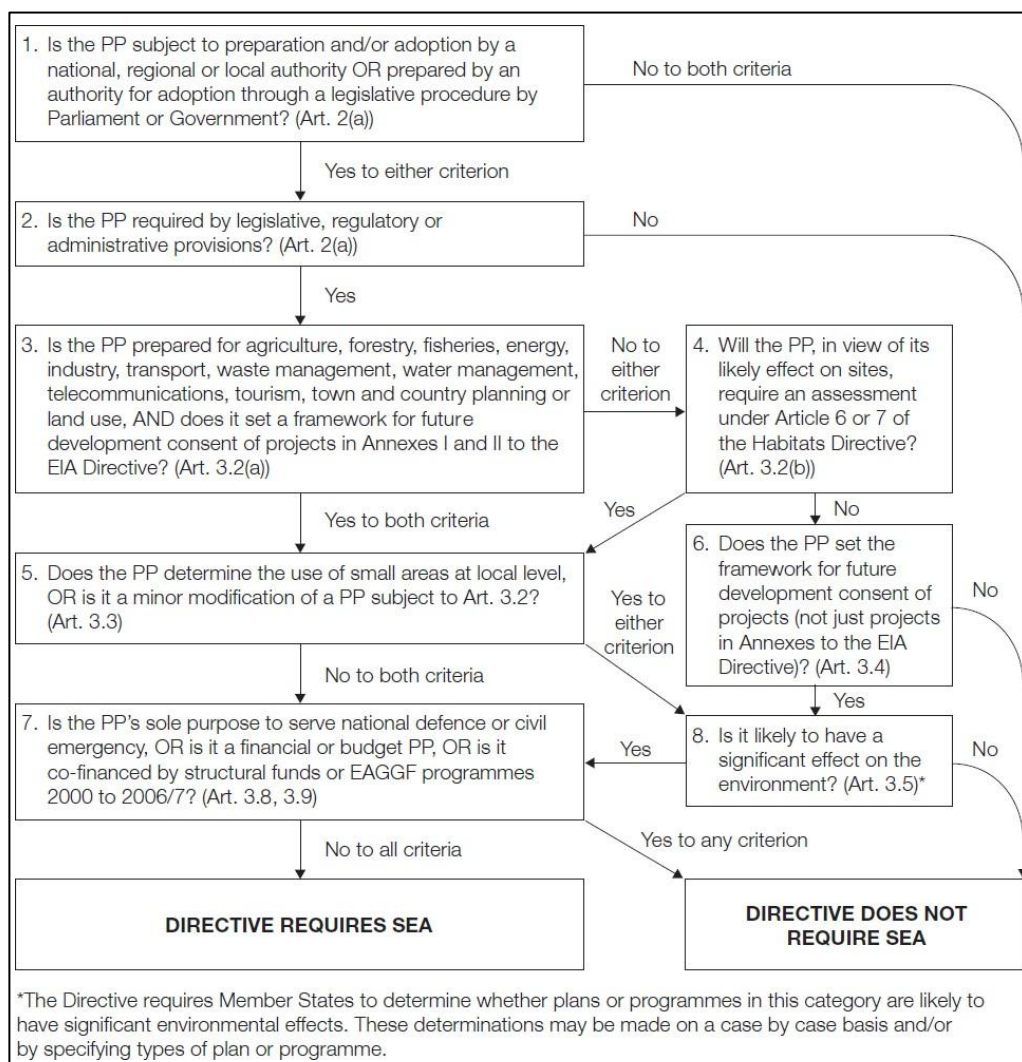


Figure 1. Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes (from “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive”)

This assessment is therefore split into two parts. Part 1 runs the draft plan through the questions outlined in the diagram above and includes commentary on whether the need for SEA is triggered. Part 2 further assesses stage 8, on whether there is a likely significant impact. The screening opinion takes a ‘precautionary approach’ and when it is unclear as to how the Directive may be applied it is assumed that there are possible likely significant effects.

2.2 Part 1 - Application of the Directive to the draft NP

Table 1. Establishing the need for SEA by following the flowchart in Figure 1.

Stage	Y/N	Justification
1) Is the PP (plan or programme) 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	NPs are prepared by Parish councils under the provision of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism act 2011. GO TO STAGE 2
2) Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	It is not a requirement for a Parish to produce a NP. However, once “made” the plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used when making decision on planning applications. GO TO STAGE 3
3) Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	Y	The NP is being prepared for town and country planning and land use. The CSNP conforms to the adopted MLPR policies. It contains a general framework for all future development consent and thus projects which could be listed in Annex II of the EIA Directive. GO TO STAGE 5

Stage	Y/N	Justification
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4) Will the PP, in view of its likely effects on sites require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))		NOT APPLICABLE
5) Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Y	The CSNP does seek to allocate land for a specific purpose (housing/ mixed use development). GO TO STAGE 8
6) Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)		NOT APPLICABLE
7) Is the PP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)		NOT APPLICABLE
8) Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	Y	SEE TABLE 2

2.3 Part 2 – Likely significant effects on the environment

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below, together with a commentary on whether the draft NDP would trigger the need for a full assessment.

Table 2. Assessing Likely Significant Effects (LSE) for the characteristics of plans and programmes, with particular regard to the following criteria.

SEA Directive Criteria	LSE	Commentary
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	Y	The CSNP does seek to allocate specific land for development (housing/ mixed use). It also contains policies which guide how development should take place, for instance with regards design, housing mix etc.
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	Y	The CSNP will be in conformity with the MLPR, which has been subject to SEA. The Local Plan has identified a need for 35 housing units in the Parish, which the CSNP is seeking to allocate.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	N	The CSNP Review has been prepared with sustainability in mind from the outset. This will be set out fully in the basic conditions statement, required later in the process.
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	Y	Policy impacts upon environmental aspects such as flood risk, ecology and landscape could result from the allocation of a site/sites.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	N	The CSNP will not affect the implementation of European Community environmental legislation (or those now transcribed in UK law).
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Y	The CSNP Review <u>does</u> seek to allocate specific land for development. Therefore there could be negative impacts stemming from the plan policies.
The cumulative nature of the effects	Y	Significant cumulative effects are considered unlikely although this would depend on the number of allocations.

SEA Directive Criteria	LSE	Commentary				
The transboundary nature of the effects	N	No significant trans boundary effects from the CSNP are expected.				
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	N	The CSNP is not anticipated to create any significant risks to human health nor the environment.				
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	N	The CSNP covers the Parish of Chart Sutton, which contains the main village of Chart Sutton itself and some smaller rural housing clusters. Beyond these, the Parish is rural in nature. Significant effects are not predicted across or outside of this geographical area.				
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, ii. exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, iii. intensive land-use 	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. There are small pockets of ancient woodland in the Parish. There are also pockets of traditional orchards and deciduous woodland. From a built heritage perspective, there are 38 listed buildings. The Plan seeks to identify non-designated heritage assets. Whilst many of the policies in the Plan seek to safeguard the special characteristics of the Parish, the Plan is seeking to allocate a site/sites, which could impact these special characteristics. ii. The CSNP includes policies to safeguard areas of biodiversity and protect local green spaces and views. Also policies designed to safeguard local heritage assets. iii. The allocated site/ sites will impact specific sites within the Parish. 				
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	N	<p>The Parish is not within the zone of influence of any internationally protected sites.</p> <p>There are number of national and community areas that have such protected status within / near to the Parish.</p> <p>Within the Parish there is:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="842 1906 1461 1973"> <thead> <tr> <th>Designation</th> <th>Sites</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Designation	Sites		
Designation	Sites					

SEA Directive Criteria	LSE	Commentary	
		National Landscape Character Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1086 230 1457 1249">• Wealden Greensand (NCA 120) – The long, curved belt of the Wealden Greensand runs across Kent, parallel to the North Downs, and on through Surrey. It moves south, alongside the Hampshire Downs, before curving back eastwards to run parallel with the South Downs in West Sussex. Around a quarter of the NCA is made up of extensive belts of woodland – both ancient mixed woods and more recent conifer plantations. In contrast, the area also features more open areas of heath on acidic soils, river valleys and mixed farming, including areas of fruit growing. <li data-bbox="1086 1272 1457 1964">• Low Weald (NCA 121) - A broad, low-lying clay vale which largely wraps around the northern, western and southern edges of the High Weald. It is predominantly agricultural, supporting mainly pastoral farming owing to heavy clay soils, with horticulture and some arable on lighter soils in the east, and has many densely wooded areas with a high proportion of ancient woodland. Around 9 per

SEA Directive Criteria	LSE	Commentary	
			cent of it falls within the adjacent designated landscapes of the Surrey Hills, Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the South Downs National Park.
		Landscape of Local Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose Valley • Greensand Ridge • Low Weald
		Ancient woodland	Some pockets of ancient woodland
		Traditional orchard	Some areas of traditional orchards
		Local Green Spaces	The Plan seek to designate modest number of Local Green Spaces
		<p>Beyond the Parish but within Maidstone Borough to the north (approx. 5.5 miles) is the North Downs Woodlands SAC. Further afield, beyond the Borough Boundary are Queendown Warren SAC, Peter’s Pit SAC and North Downs Woodlands SAC. To the much further north is the Medway Estuary & Marshes SPA and Ramsar site.</p> <p>The CSNP does seek to allocate sites to the extent considered acceptable in the MLPR, which has been subject to its own SEA (and HRA). No significant impacts are therefore anticipated on the internationally important sites.</p> <p>There may be impacts on sites of national/ local importance.</p>	

Part 2 Overall Conclusion		The Chart Sutton Neighbourhood Plan, as a result of the site allocation/s could have a significant effect on the environment.
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2.4 Screening Outcome

As a result of the assessment in section 3, there is potential for significant environmental effects arising from the CSNP. As such, it does require a full SEA to be undertaken.

This conclusion will be sent to the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England for comment (see Appendix B).

Appendix A

Record here all environmental effects you expect to be created by the Plan. Where available, please refer to the Sustainability Appraisal.

Consider effects on all of the following aspects of the environment:

- Biodiversity and wildlife including protected sites
- Landscape and land use including geology
- Water environment including pollution and flooding
- Historic environment including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments
- Climate change including energy use in building and fuel use in transport
- Air quality including tendency for private care use and idling
- Human health including access to walking opportunities

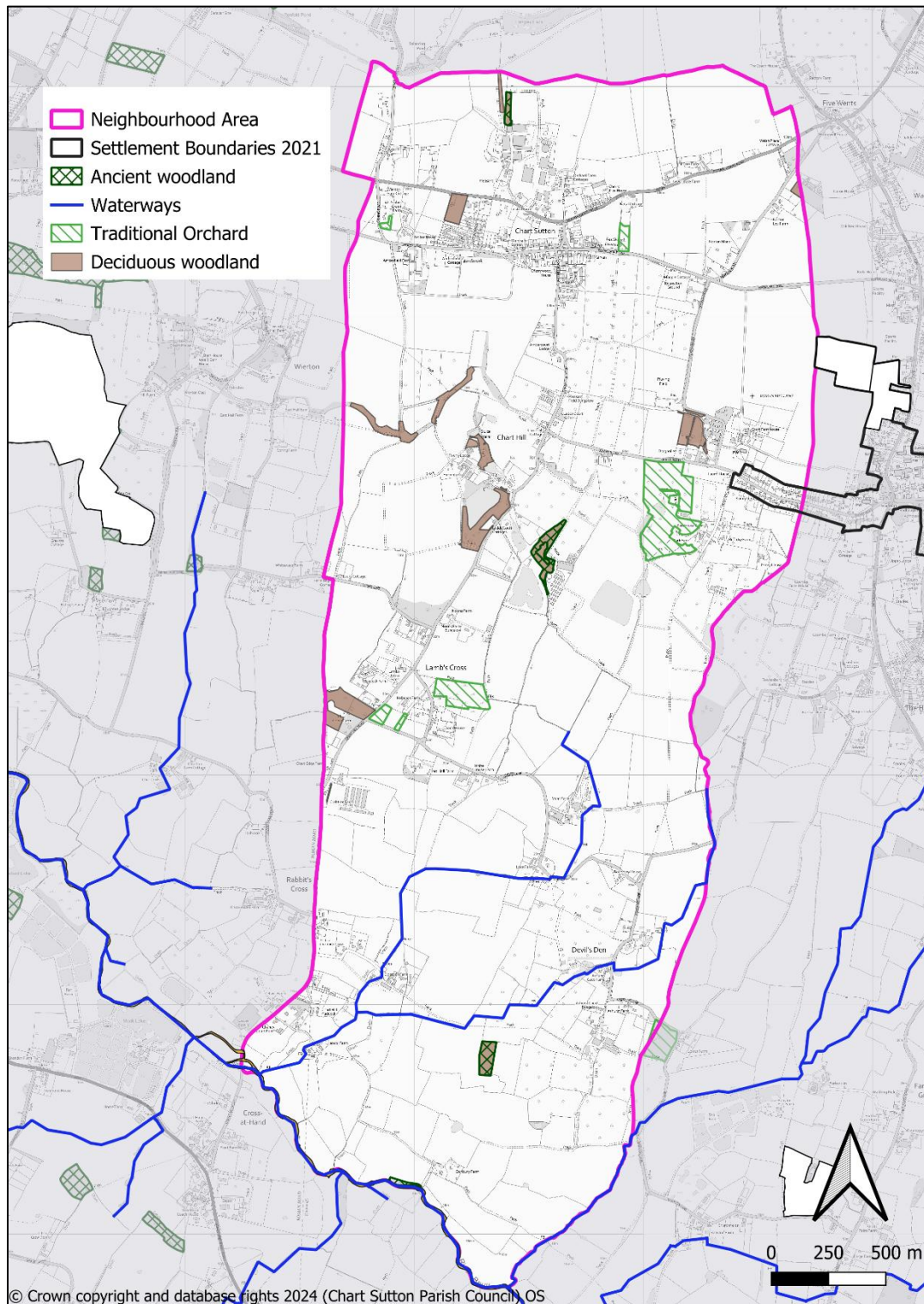
Biodiversity and wildlife including protected sites

The following designations are found within the Parish, which have been mapped within the Plan (see Map below):

Designation	Sites
National Landscape Character Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wealden Greensand (NCA 120) – The long, curved belt of the Wealden Greensand runs across Kent, parallel to the North Downs, and on through Surrey. It moves south, alongside the Hampshire Downs, before curving back eastwards to run parallel with the South Downs in West Sussex. Around a quarter of the NCA is made up of extensive belts of woodland – both ancient mixed woods and more recent conifer plantations. In contrast, the area also features more open areas of heath on acidic soils, river valleys and mixed farming, including areas of fruit growing. • Low Weald (NCA 121) - A broad, low-lying clay vale which largely wraps around the northern, western and southern edges of the High Weald. It is predominantly agricultural, supporting mainly pastoral farming owing to heavy clay soils, with horticulture and some arable on lighter soils in the east, and has many densely wooded areas with a high proportion of ancient woodland. Around 9 per cent of it falls within the adjacent designated landscapes of the Surrey Hills, Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the South Downs National Park.

Ancient woodland	Some pockets of ancient woodland
Traditional Orchards	Some areas.
Local Green Spaces	As set out in Policy CS6 (Local Green Space)

Table 1: Designated habitats in the Neighbourhood Area



There are other distinctive natural features particular to the Parish that, whilst not protected through statutory designations, provide vital habitats for flora and fauna. This includes hedgerows, verges, ponds and trees/woodland.

A policy in the CSNP seeks designate Local Green Spaces. Some of these may be designated for their wildlife value. Equally a policy will set out criteria as to how proposals can respond positively to the environment and support biodiversity.

Effects of the Plan: POSITIVE OVERALL: The policies are intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity. Relevant policies:

- Policy CS2 (Site Allocation) – The policy will seek to allocate a site/s for housing / mixed use development. The principle of the Parish housing up to 35 units has been established in the MLPR. The precise site/s is yet to be identified but all those being considered are greenfield locations. It is likely that an SEA will be required to evaluate the potential impacts and establish which site/s are the most sustainable. The policy will require provision for biodiversity improvements and retention of existing natural features where feasible.
- Policy CS5 (Landscape and biodiversity) - The policy will identify natural features included those that are protected by statutory designations and those which are not, but which are important to the Parish. It will support their safeguarding and incorporation within any new developments. The policy also seeks to protect and enhance the mapped network of green (and blue – largely ponds) infrastructure. The plan supports improving and, where possible, extending/linking up this network. Biodiversity opportunity areas are identified in conjunction with the Maidstone Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan and the Kent-wide nature recovery strategy.
- Policy CS6 (Local Green Spaces) - The policy seeks to designate a series of local green spaces, all of which form part of the network of green infrastructure and some which may be demonstrably special for wildlife reasons.
- Policy CS9 (Sustainable travel) – The policy seeks to encourage a shift away from motor vehicles and promotes active travel. Areas where the rights of way network can be improved/better connected are identified. This will serve to encourage more active travel notably for residents and visitors. Reducing car use along the coastline will help to protect this sensitive part of the landscape. Encouraging use of a wider range of paths will help to dissipate footpath overuse.

Landscape and land use including geology

There are a number of landscape designations as noted above. In addition there are other distinctive natural features particular to Chart Sutton that, whilst not protected through statutory designations, provide vital habitats for flora and fauna. This includes veteran and mature trees and established woodland, hedgerows, ponds, mature planted gardens, and green verges alongside roads.

There is no settlement boundary for Chart Sutton, but the Plan follows the principle of walkable neighbourhoods, focusing on connectivity between homes and local services, facilities and transport nodes. Hence any development will be focused around the main village.

Within the national Landscape Character Areas described in the previous section, MBC has identified

three areas of Local Landscape Value that cut across the area:

- Loose Valley – The Loose Valley is located just to the north of the Parish and runs into Maidstone town to the south and the Len valley runs to and through Mote Park from the east.
- Greensand Ridge - The undulating Greensand Ridge, which cuts through the Parish of Chart Sutton, provides a distinctive landscape characterised by sunken lanes and hidden valleys with panoramic views southwards to the Low Weald. The landscape is generally a varied and pleasant mix of winding lanes and mixed farmlands with a high percentage of fruit, scattered small woodlands and grasslands interspersed with larger arable fields. Orchards and hops used to be more frequent but now the landholdings are fragmented and much of the land use converted to arable.
- Low Weald – Located to the south, the Low Weald is bisected by the Beult, Teise and Medway rivers and includes an abundance of ponds and small stream valleys often with wet woodlands of alder and willow and scattered orchards. The field patterns, many of medieval character, hedgerows, stands and buildings of character add to the distinctive character of the area. Traditionally, orchards and hops were widespread. But during the 20th century many were converted to horticultural and arable crops.

Within these landscapes are many attractive villages with historic vernacular style buildings, and there is a particularly strong use of ragstone throughout the landscape, which reflects the underlying geology.

Effects of the Plan: OVERALL POSITIVE: The policies are intended to protect the natural and built environment, including biodiversity. They also seek to influence the design of development as opposed to leading to development itself. Relevant policies:

- Policy CS2 (Housing/Mixed use allocation) – The policy will seek to allocate a site/s for housing / mixed use development. The principle of the Parish housing up to 35 units has been established in the MLPR. The precise site/s is yet to be identified but all those being considered are greenfield locations but sitting outside the Landscapes of Local Value. It is likely that an SEA will be required to evaluate the potential impacts and establish which site/s are the most sustainable. The policy will require provision for biodiversity improvements and retention of existing natural features where feasible.
- Policy CS3 (Character and Design of development) - The policy will set out criteria to reinforce the character of the settlement within the wider landscape. These principles will be embedded within the site allocation policy.
- Policy CS5 (Landscape and biodiversity) - The policy identifies natural features that are not protected by statutory designations but which are important to the Parish and supports their safeguarding and incorporation within any new developments. It also seeks to protect and enhance the mapped network of green (and blue) infrastructure. The plan supports improving and, where possible, extending/linking up this network. Biodiversity opportunity areas are identified.
- Policy CS7 (Locally Significant Views) - A series of views have been identified, which should be safeguarded from inappropriate development as this will potentially erode local character.

The site allocation policy will need to ensure that any impacts on identified views are mitigated.

- Policy CS8 (Dark skies) – Seeks to protect those parts of the Parish experiencing darker skies from unnecessary light pollution.

Water environment including pollution and flooding

There are few watercourses in the Parish and flooding is not a significant problem – where it does exist, it is often associated with heavy rainfall combined with lack of maintenance of drains and ditches. Where surface water run-off is witnessed, the plan supports the introduction of ponds to assist with drainage.

Effects of the Plan: OVERALL POSITIVE: Policies will seek to ensure that pollution and flooding issues are not exacerbated locally. Relevant policies:

- Policy CS2 (Site allocation) – It will be imperative the site is able to demonstrate sustainable drainage. There are opportunities to incorporate multi-functional sustainable drainage systems that can benefit biodiversity and potentially to impact, in a positive way, areas of existing problematic surface water flooding.
- Policy CS2 (Character and Design) - The policy sets out design criteria and promotes planting and the use of biodiverse drainage systems where required.
- Policy CS5 (Landscape and environment) - The policy identifies natural features that are not protected by statutory designations but which are important to the Parish and supports their safeguarding and incorporation within any new developments. It also seeks to protect and enhance the mapped network of green (and blue – largely ponds) infrastructure. The plan supports improving and, where possible, extending/linking up this network. Biodiversity opportunity areas are identified.

Historic environment including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments

There are 38 individual/groups of buildings and assets in the Parish today that are recognised through a listing for their contribution to national heritage.

There is no scheduled monuments.

There is no conservation area.

In addition, a series of non-designated heritage assets are being pursued through the emerging CSNP.

Effects of the Plan: OVERALL POSITIVE: The policies will seek to protect and, where possible, enhance the built environment/ heritage assets. Relevant policies:

- Policy CS2 (Site allocation) – It will be important to assess the relative impact of potential sites on the historic environment.

- Policy CS2 (Character and Design) - The policy sets out criteria that will support design to be sympathetic to and enhance local character, including built character.
- Policy CS4 (Conserving heritage assets) - The policy seeks to identify a series of heritage assets that are not nationally listed but which are significant to the Parish. These will be identified as 'non-designated heritage assets'. The policy includes criteria to ensure that development impacts on these (and listed assets) are considered. Equally that below ground archaeological assets are fully considered. The policy will also make recommendations about potential heritage assets at risk.

Climate change including energy use in building and fuel use in transport

The need to contribute towards mitigating the impacts of climate change is an important thread running through the plan and is considered in a number of policies.

Effects of the Plan: OVERALL POSITIVE: The policies will provide opportunities to assist in mitigating the impacts of climate change. Relevant policies:

- Policy CS2 (Site allocation) – The policy will embed principles of sustainable design as set out in national and strategic policy and also within Policy CS3 of the CSNP.
- Policy CS3 (Character and design of development) – The policy will include sustainable design principles that should be applied to all development proposals.
- Policy CS9 (Sustainable travel) – The policy supports the concept of development that is well-connected to the 'active travel' network, within easy walking distance of key facilities and transport nodes.

Air quality including tendency for private car use and idling

The need to contribute towards mitigating climate change is an important thread running through the plan and is considered in a number of policies. There are a number of B roads running directly through the village, both north-south (connecting south to Staplehurst and north to Maidstone) and east-west (connecting to Sutton Valence and Coxheath). This means there is a lot of through-traffic, including heavy good vehicles. Strategic route policy is dictated by the National Highways and KCC Highways, hence the CSNP has little influence over this. The plan does, however, include a policy to support opportunities to improve walking and (where feasible) cycling, as well as recreational horse-riding, notably for shorter inter-Parish journeys and to nearby areas.

Effects of the Plan: OVERALL POSITIVE: The policies will offer opportunities to enhance active travel opportunities in the village and wider Parish. Relevant policies:

- Policy CS2 (Site allocation) – Allocation of a site may provide opportunities to enhance pedestrian connectivity in the village and access to local facilities.
- Policy CS9 (Sustainable travel) – the policy supports improvements that will enable more journeys to be taken on foot, and where feasible, by bike. This includes identifying areas where the current movement route network might be improved and/or expanded to accommodate this. This will help to reduce some car journeys. It will have a knock on positive impact on the mental and physical wellbeing of people.

Human health including access to walking opportunities

The health and well-being of the community has been considered throughout the plan making process. It is important that the community has access to the countryside, outdoor space, recreational and sporting facilities. Equally to housing that meets local needs. This is important for both physical and mental well-being. Equally, providing opportunities for people to work nearer to or from home can have a positive effect on well-being.

Effects of the Plan: OVERALL POSITIVE: The policies collectively will assist in enhancing the overall viability and vitality of the village and wider Parish. Relevant policies:

- Policy CS1 (Meeting local housing needs) – The policy seeks to influence the type of housing delivered in terms of size, tenure, affordability etc. This policy will be underpinned by a Local Housing Needs Assessment.
- Policy CS2 (Site allocation) – In combination with Policy CS1, the allocation of a site/s will lead to improved opportunities for those in housing need to find a property in the Parish. This could enhance the overall vitality and viability of the village and wider Parish.
- Policy CS9 (Sustainable travel) – This policy supports active travel which would have a direct health benefit to residents and visitors.
- Policy CS10 (Important community facilities) – The policy sets out the existing community facilities and where improvements would be supported, based on feedback from the local community. It will also identify support for new facilities, that could be provided by way of the site allocation/s. This will contribute positively to the physical and mental health and well-being of those living in and visiting the Parish.

Appendix B

Responses from Statutory Environmental Bodies.

Environment Agency

No specific response – generic advice note issued.

Tom Gilbert

From: Neighbourhood Planning (MBC)
Sent: 17 September 2025 08:03
To: Tom Gilbert
Subject: FW: NE ref: 525719 - Maidstone Borough Council - Chart Sutton Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Assessment Consultation
Attachments: 1. Chart Sutton Neighbourhood Development Plan_Emerging Draft Plan_July 2025.docx; SEA & HRA Screening Report Chart Sutton Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan (August 2025).docx; 525719 Chart Sutton NP Hub Checklist.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: SM-Defra-Plan Cons Area Team (Sussex and Kent) (NE) <PlanConsAreaTeamSussexandKent@defra.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 September 2025 14:34
To: Neighbourhood Planning (MBC) <NeighbourhoodPlanning@Maidstone.gov.uk>
Subject: NE ref: 525719 - Maidstone Borough Council - Chart Sutton Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Assessment Consultation

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Tom Gilbert,

It would appear that no new site allocation details are included in the attached documents, so at this stage we have no comments to make.

However, please do consult us again should such details be added,

Yours sincerely,

Becky Bishop for the Sussex & Kent Planning Inbox



By email only to: LDF@MAIDSTONE.GOV.UK

Our ref: PL00799722

Main: [REDACTED]
e-seast@historicengland.org.uk

Date: 14/10/2025

Dear Sir or Madam

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the SEA Scoping Report for the Chart Sutton Neighbourhood Plan.

In terms of the historic environment, we consider that the report has identified the plans and programmes which are of most relevance to the development of the plan, that it has established an appropriate baseline against which to assess the plan's proposals and that it has put forward a suitable set of objectives and indicators. Overall, we believe that it provides an appropriate framework for assessing significant effects which this plan might have upon the historic environment.

However, we would suggest that there has been an error in the scoping report highlighting English Heritage as statutory consultee; this needs to be amended throughout to Historic England.

Historic England strongly advises that conservation and archaeological advisers are closely involved throughout the preparation of the SEA of this plan. Historic England has produced guidance for all involved in undertaking SEA exercises which gives advice on issues relating to the historic environment. This can be found [here](#).

Yours sincerely

Louise

Louise Dandy
Historic Places Advisor