

Draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review 2025-2041

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



October 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This screening report is designed to determine whether the content of the draft Regulation 14 Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review 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.

Whether a neighbourhood plan requires a SEA, and if so the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft neighbourhood plan. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that a SEA may be required, for example, where:

- the neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development;
- the neighbourhood plan 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 the SEA of the Local Plan in the area.

The screening report also examines the potential impact of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review on internationally designated wildlife sites and determines if the plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

When deciding on whether the proposals are likely to have significant effects, the local authority is required to consult Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. Where the local planning authority determines that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment) it should prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination.

South Worcestershire Development Plan Review 2021-2041

The South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWPDR) was adopted on 26 March 2026 by the three South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills; Worcester City; and Wychavon) and covers the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Area. The adopted Local Plan and supporting documentation can be read via this link [South Worcestershire Development Plan Review 2021 – 2041 - South Worcestershire Development Plan](#)

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023

Please note that under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, that received Royal Assent on 25 March 2026, SEA has now been replaced by Environmental Outcomes Reports (EOR). However, the Regulations relating to EOR have not yet been introduced and as such, the existing SEA process has been followed in this document and will continue to be used until further Regulations and guidance are issued.

1.2 DRAFT BROADWAS AND COTHERIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY

The draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review is essentially a community-led framework for guiding future development and growth of the parish to the year 2041. Nine draft policies have been proposed, focusing on topics including community facilities and sustainability, housing requirement, achieving good design, green space and views, travel and transport provision and employment and economic development.

1.3 BROADWAS AND COTHERIDGE DESIGNATED NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

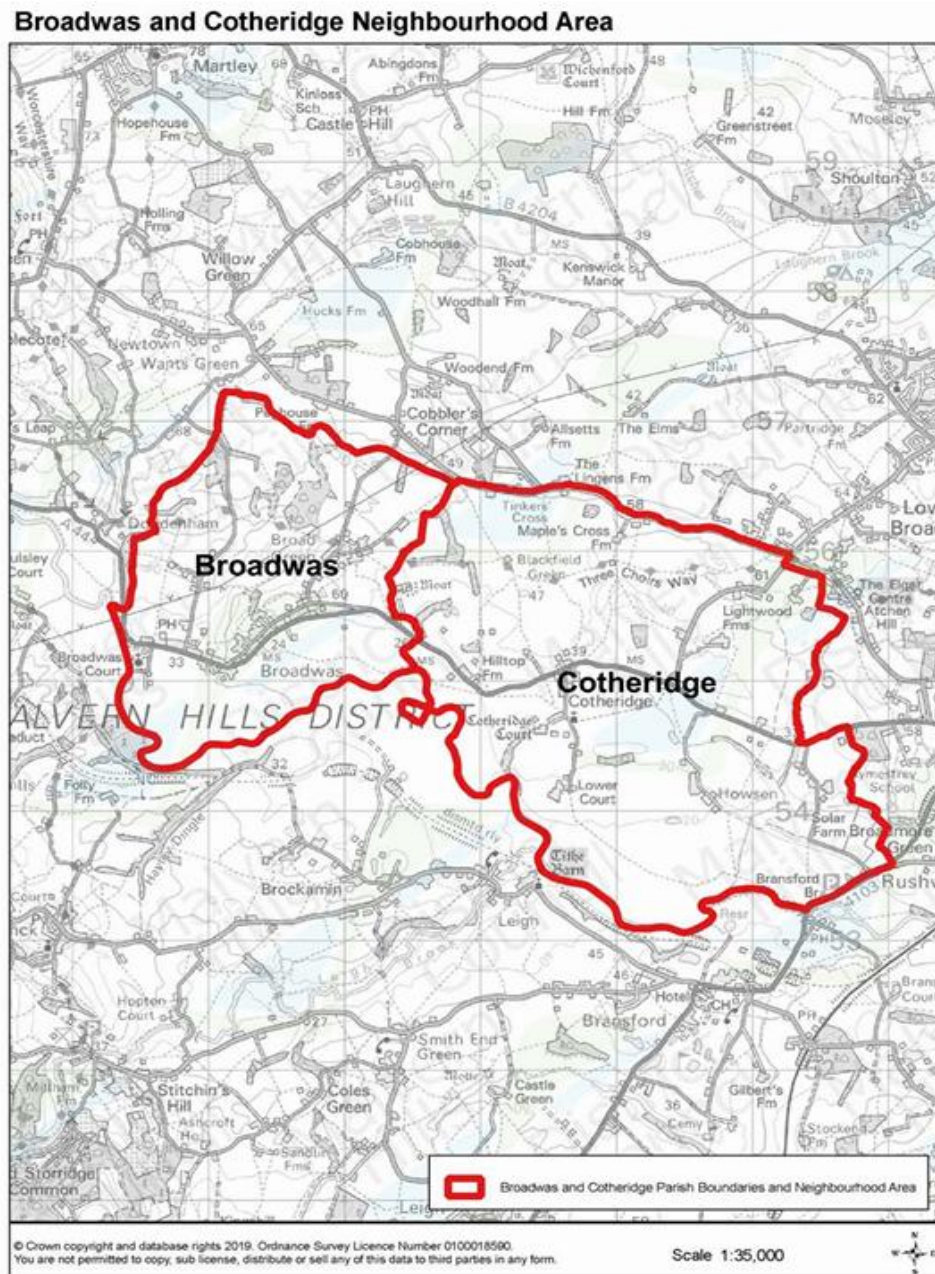


Figure 1 Designated Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Area

1.4 DRAFT BROADWAS AND COTHERIDGE PLAN REVIEW POLICY SUMMARIES

The nine policies proposed in the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review are summarised below.

DRAFT POLICY	SUMMARY
POLICY 1 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES	Development proposals that would result in the loss of any of the community facilities identified will not be supported unless no longer viable, or unable to be used as an alternative community facility. Where appropriate new development should consider how it can contribute to improved local facilities.
POLICY 2 – HOUSING TYPE AND SIZE	Residential development proposals are required to meet local housing needs against the requirements set out in the policy. This includes for affordable housing a tenure split of 69% social/affordable rent to 31% affordable home ownership. In addition, 2-bed and/or 3-bed should be provided on sites over a single dwelling. Homes should be accessible and adaptable, and bungalows should be provided to meet local demand.
POLICY 3 DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT	The supporting text sets out a range of design codes to achieve high quality building design and urban design from new development. These are incorporated into the policy as requirements for both residential and non-residential development.
POLICY 4 – LIGHTING DESIGN	To support dark skies and wider amenity the policy looks to support development proposals where details of proposed lighting are provided in accordance with good practice. These are to be achieved via planning conditions. Appropriate approaches to lighting should avoid glare and include avoidance of external lighting if possible; minimise impact; sources of light shielded and movement sensitive and timed lighting installed.

DRAFT POLICY	SUMMARY
POLICY 5 – LOCAL GREEN SPACES	The listed areas have been proposed to be designated as Local Green Space and protected accordingly.
POLICY 6 – RECREATIONAL GREEN SPACES	Listed sites are included as Recreational Green Space Designations. In addition, development proposal that provide new or enhanced open space are supported. Proposals that lead to the loss of open space would not be supported unless it can be clearly shown the facility is surplus to requirements, or an alternative equivalent facility can be delivered elsewhere.
POLICY 7 – KEY VIEWS	Key views have been identified as set out in Fig 16 and Fig 17. Development proposals, where possible should mitigate impacts on these identified views.
POLICY 8 – IMPROVING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY	Where appropriate / viable the Highways Authority should consider opportunities to secure contributions towards a range of new infrastructure to improve road safety.
POLICY 9 – COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT	Proposals for new commercial development and operations will be supported subject to clear development and operational limits as set out in the policy criteria.

1.5 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) PROCESS

The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC which was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations. Detailed guidance on these Regulations can be found in the Government publication “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive” (OPDM 2005).

The SEA process aims to ensure that likely significant environmental effects arising from a Plan are identified, assessed, mitigated, communicated and monitored, and that opportunities for public involvement are provided. It enables environmental considerations to be accounted for in decision-making throughout the production of a Plan in an integrated manner.

Figure 2 sets out the screening procedure and how a plan should be assessed against the SEA Directive criteria. This outline procedure has then been applied to the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review in Table 1.

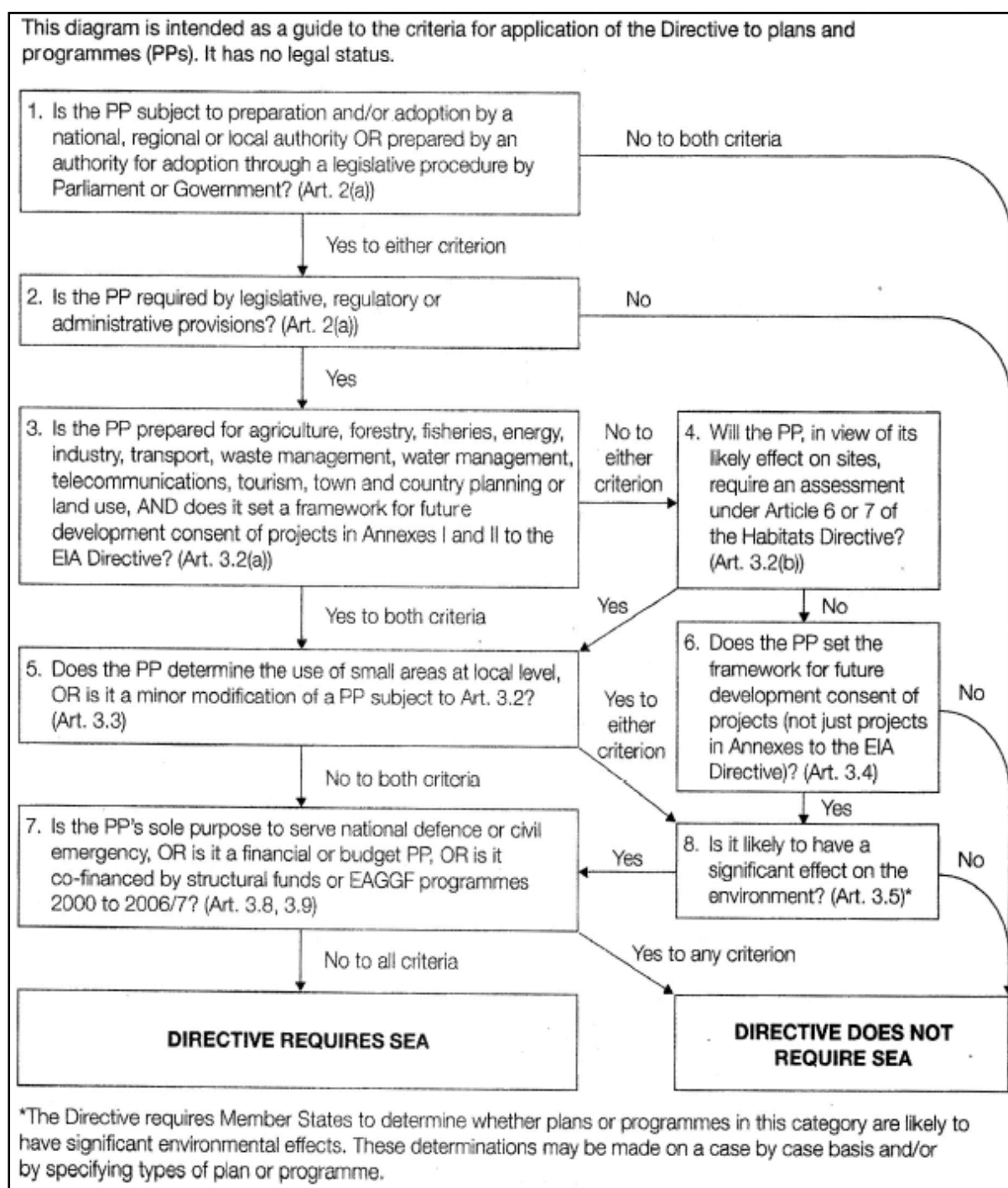


Figure 2 – Application of the SEA Directive to Plans and Programmes

Table 1: Assessment of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review using SEA Directive Criteria

Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review 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	This Neighbourhood Plan review is being prepared by a qualifying body as part of the Localism Act 2011. If the Plan review is passed by means of an either Examination and/or Referendum, it will be formally adopted by the Local Planning Authority. It will then form part of the local development framework and be afforded significant weight in planning decisions.
2. Is the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	N	A review of a neighbourhood plan is not a mandatory requirement, and the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review is being prepared voluntarily by the local qualifying body in line with the provisions of the Localism Act. The review is being undertaken to keep it up to date and maintain its weight etc. as part of the Local Development Framework, particularly in the light of the newly adopted SWDPR and latest NPPF. If the Plan review is adopted however, it will form part of the statutory development plan, and it is therefore considered necessary to answer the following questions to determine if an SEA is required.
3. Is the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review 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 Plan is prepared for town and country planning and sets out a framework for future development consent of projects.
4. Will the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan	N	See Screening Opinion for HRA in Section 3 of this report.

Review, 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))		
5. Does the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review 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 draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review is made up of several policies which, when adopted, will form part of the Development Plan, and so will have significant weight in planning decisions. The Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review includes design policies for three sites which are allocated in the adopted SWDPR.
6. Does the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Y	When readopted, the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review will be a statutory planning document. It will form part of the Development Plan, and so will have significant weight in planning decisions. The responsibility for issuing development consent will remain with the Local Authority.
7. Is the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review 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)	N	Not Applicable
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	The Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review is unlikely to have a direct significant effect on the environment in its current form as it is not proposing to allocate a site(s) for any type of development. However, certain policies i.e. Policy 2 and Policy 9 may have indirect effects as they are supporting certain types of development. However, the policies put in place mitigation and any possible impacts have also been screened out by the SWDPR SEA/HRA assessments.

Based upon the initial screening carried out against the criteria in Table 1 above, the draft Broadwas and Cotteridge Neighbourhood Plan Review may have a significant effect on the environment. To explore these potential effects further, a case-by-case assessment has been conducted. The criteria used in the undertaking of such an assessment are drawn from Article 3.5 (Annex II) of the SEA directive, and the results are shown in Table 2.

1.6 HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA) PROCESS

The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the assessment required for any plan or project to assess the potential implications for European wildlife sites. The HRA therefore looks at whether the implementation of the plan or project would harm the habitats or species for which European wildlife sites are designated. The relevant European wildlife site designations are Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which together form part of the Natura 2000 network.

In addition to SPAs and SACs, Ramsar sites are also designated areas which, as a matter of government policy, are to be treated in the same way as European wildlife sites (although they are not covered by the Habitats Regulations). European wildlife sites and Ramsar sites are collectively known as internationally designated wildlife sites.

The legislation sets out a process to assess the potential implications of a plan on internationally designated wildlife sites. The first stage of this process is a screening exercise where the details of nearby internationally designated sites are assessed to see if there is the potential for the implementation of the plan to have an impact.

2. SEA SCREENING

2.1 SEA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

European Directive 2001/42/EC requires a full Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans and programmes that would have a significant environmental effect.

Table 2 below provides the screening determination of the need to carry out a full Strategic Environmental Assessment for the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review. This has been made in accordance with the Regulations and will be subject to consultation with the strategic environmental bodies before Malvern Hills District Council makes its determination on the necessity for a full Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Table 2 – The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004: Schedule 1 - Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (SEA Directive, Annex II)	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Summary of significant events
1(a) the degree to which the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	YES	The Broadwas and Cotteridge Neighbourhood Plan Review would, if adopted, form part of the statutory Development Plan and as such would contribute to the framework for future development consent of projects.
1(b) the degree to which the Broadwas and Cotteridge Neighbourhood Plan Review influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	NO	The Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review, if adopted, will be used alongside the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR), in the determination of planning applications.
1(c) the relevance of the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	NO	The policies of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review are not considered to have a significant impact on the integration of environmental considerations.
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the draft Broadwas and	NO	The draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Broadwas and Cotheridge

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (SEA Directive, Annex II)	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Summary of significant events
Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review:		Neighbourhood Plan Review is more likely to promote environmental sustainability than create any environmental problems.
1(e) the relevance of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management and water protection);	NO	The policies of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review are not considered to be relevant to the implementation of EC legislation.
2(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review;	NO	It is considered unlikely that there will be any irreversible damaging environmental impacts associated with the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review. The Plan features policies which seek to protect and enhance the natural and built environment, and the plan is therefore likely to result in beneficial rather than damaging effects.
2(b) the cumulative nature of the effects of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review;	NO	The policies of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Pan Review are unlikely to have any significant cumulative negative environmental impacts.
2(c) the transboundary nature of effects of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review;	NO	The draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review is unlikely to have any significant negative environmental impacts on adjoining parishes.
2(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents) due to the draft	NO	It is considered that there will be no risk to human health or the environment as a result of the draft

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (SEA Directive, Annex II)	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Summary of significant events
Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review;		Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review.
2(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	NO	The policies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Review apply to the entirety of Broadwas and Cotheridge parishes and are unlikely to significantly affect areas beyond the Neighbourhood Area boundary.
2(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and	NO	The draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review will not have any substantial impact on these factors.
2(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	NO	The policies of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review are unlikely to have a negative impact on any environmental designations in the Neighbourhood Area.

2.2 SEA SCREENING OPINION

The assessment shown in Table 1 above identifies no potential significant negative effects arising from the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review and as such, will not require a full SEA to be undertaken. This determination is pending the findings of consultation and the formal views of the statutory environmental bodies. This view is taken as the policies in the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review seek to reinforce and do not deviate from the remit of the policies of the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan Review.

3. HRA SCREENING

3.1 HRA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

There are no internationally designated wildlife sites within the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Area. For the purposes of this screening assessment, sites that fall within a 20km radius are also considered. There are three sites identified within this range – Lyppard Grange SAC, which is approximately 15km west, Bredon Hill SAC which is approximately 32km south-east and Dixon Wood which is approximately 40km south-east of the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Area respectively.

Lyppard Grange Ponds SAC is located on the eastern outskirts of Worcester, situated amongst a 1990s housing development on former pastoral farmland. The site comprises two ponds in an area of grassland and scrub (public open space). The site provides habitat for Great Crested Newts *Triturus Cristatus*, which are dependent on both the existing terrestrial habitat (to provide foraging areas and refuge) and on the aquatic habitat (for breeding).

The potential impact of development on Lyppard Grange SAC as well as Bredon Hill SAC and Dixon Wood SAC was examined by a full HRA as part of the production of the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR). The HRA screening of the SWDP concluded that there was uncertainty with regard to the potential for significant effects on two sites as a result of increased disturbance, in particular due to increased recreational activity. Concerns were raised specifically relating to the Lyppard Grange SAC and the potential impact of proposed development on water levels and quality.

As a result of the concerns raised, a full Appropriate Assessment (AA) was conducted (this can be viewed on the SWDPR website [SWDPR Regulation 19 Publication Evidence Reports - South Worcestershire Development Plan](#))

The AA concluded that the policies of the SWDPR (including land allocations) were not likely to have adverse effects on the integrity of Bredon Hill SAC, Lyppard Grange SAC or Dixon Wood SAC. In addressing concerns relating to possible increased disturbance at the SACs, it was concluded that the location of the sites in relation to proposed developments and the availability of more suitable areas of open space for recreation in close proximity would keep potential impacts to a minimum. It was also considered that the policies of the SWDPR would sufficiently mitigate the potential impact of proposed developments on the water environment, leading to minimal effect on the SAC sites.

The policies in the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review are considered to be in general conformity with the SWDPR, and with this and the SWDPR SA in mind, it can be considered that the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review will have no negative impact on internationally designated wildlife sites.

3.2 HRA SCREENING OPINION

As a result of the above assessment, it is considered that the policies of the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review are in general conformity with those contained in the SWDPR. It is therefore concluded that the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review is unlikely to have a negative impact on any internationally designated wildlife sites and as such, the recommendation is made that a full AA is not required.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Screening Opinions Conclusions

Following the assessment made in Table 2, it is considered that a full SEA is not required for the draft Regulation 14 Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review as it is considered unlikely that there will be any significant environmental impacts as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan review. The Plan features policies which seek to protect and enhance the natural and built environment, and the plan is therefore likely to result in beneficial rather than damaging effects.

There are no internationally designated wildlife sites within Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Area, with the one identified site, Lyppard Grange SAC within a 20km radius having been assessed in the SWDPR HRA AA. As the Draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan is considered to be in general conformity with the SWDPR, is not seeking to propose any additional housing allocations or other types of development and is some distance from any internationally designated sites, it is considered that a HRA AA is not required.

Both above-mentioned recommendations were subject to consultation with the statutory environmental bodies, i.e. Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency. The five-week consultation period ran from Friday 3rd July to Friday 7th August 2026. All three consultation responses are included in Section 5 of this report, however, in short, all three statutory environmental bodies agreed that neither a full SEA nor HRA AA are required.

For the full consultation responses from the three statutory environmental bodies, see Section 5.

5. STATUTORY ENVIRONMENTAL BODIES CONSUTATION RESPONSES

Date: 04 August 2026
Our ref: 552681
Your ref: Broadwas & Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan SEA/HRA Screening



Planning Policy Team
Malvern Hills District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir or Madam,

Planning consultation: Broadwas & Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan and SEA/HRA Screening Local Plan Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 03 July 2026 which was received by Natural England on 03 July 2026

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.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

SEA/HRA Screening Consultation

Section 2: SEA Screening

The screening assessment has identified no potential significant negative effects arising from the Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood plan. As a result, a full SEA will not be undertaken; Natural England concur with this view.

Section 3: HRA Screening

The screening assessment concludes that as a result of the policies being in general conformity with those contained in the SWDPR, it is unlikely to have a negative impact on any internationally designated wildlife site. Therefore, a AA is not required; Natural England concur with this view.

Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan.

However, we refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and to the following information.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Further information on protected species and development 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 a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

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 an Strategic Environmental Assessment is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries regarding this letter, for new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Holly Marlow

Holly Marlow
Planning for a Better Environment – West Midlands Team.

Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

Natural environment information sources

The [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)¹ website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification**, **Ancient Woodland**, **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**, **Local Nature Reserves**, **National Parks (England)**, **National Trails**, **Priority Habitat Inventory**, **public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map)** and **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available from [the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres](http://theassociationoflocalenvironmentalrecordscentres.org/).

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)². Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)³.

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)⁴ website and also from the [LandIS website](http://www.landis.org.uk/)⁵, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)⁶ sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/)⁷ sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

Landscape

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

¹ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

⁴ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

⁵ <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁷ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)⁸), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)⁹. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)¹⁰) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice [here](#)¹¹ to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 112. For more information, see [Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land](#)¹².

Improving your natural environment

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment and should provide net gains for biodiversity in line with the [National Planning Policy Framework](#). If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you should follow the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy and seek to ensure impacts on habitats are avoided or minimised before considering opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. You may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development and how these could contribute to biodiversity net gain and wider environmental goals.

Opportunities for environmental enhancement might include:

- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to reduce impacts on wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.
- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.

Site allocations should be supported by a baseline assessment of biodiversity value. The statutory [Biodiversity Metric](#) may be used to understand the number of biodiversity units present on allocated

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land>

sites. For small development allocations the [Small Sites Metric](#) may be used. This is a simplified version of the statutory [Biodiversity Metric](#) and is designed for use where certain criteria are met. Further information on biodiversity net gain including [planning practice guidance](#) can be found [here](#)

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision. Natural England's [Green Infrastructure Framework](#) sets out further information on green infrastructure standards and principles
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance](#)¹³).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks or on verges, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

Natural England's [Environmental Benefits from Nature tool](#) may be used to identify opportunities to enhance wider benefits from nature and to avoid and minimise any negative impacts. It is designed to work alongside the statutory [Biodiversity Metric](#) and is available as a beta test version.

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>



Historic England

Planning Policy Team

Direct Dial: 0121 625 6893

Malvern Hills District Council

Worcestershire

Our ref: PL00802806

28 September 2026

Dear Planning Policy Team

RE: BROADWAS AND COTHERIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, MALVERN HILLS - STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) SCREENING OPINION REQUEST

Thank you for your consultation of 8 September and the request for a Screening Opinion in respect of the above Neighbourhood Plan. We understand that an earlier request was made in the summer but our Business Team has, unfortunately, not been able to locate that.

For the purposes of consultations on SEA Screening Opinions, Historic England confines its advice 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 with the screening request.

On the basis of the information supplied and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England is of the view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not likely to be required in relation to the historic environment.

The proposed policies in the draft Plan relate to allocation sites which do not extend beyond those approved in the extant South Worcestershire Development Plan, which considered the historic environment in its process.

The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for a SEA is made. If a decision is made to undertake a SEA, please note that Historic England has published guidance on



THE FOUNDRY 82 GRANVILLE STREET BIRMINGHAM B1 2LH

Telephone 0121 625 6888
HistoricEngland.org.uk

Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any Information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.



Historic England

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Historic Environment that is relevant to both local and neighbourhood planning and available at:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

Should it be concluded that, overall, a SEA will be required for the Plan, Historic England would be pleased to discuss the scope of the assessment in relation to the historic environment in due course.

We have no comments to make on the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

I hope that this information is of use to you at this time. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Rosamund Worrall

Rosamund Worrall
Team Leader (Development Advice)
Rosamund.Worrall@HistoricEngland.org.uk



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Malvern Hills District Council
Forward Planning
The Council House Avenue Road
Malvern
Worcestershire
WR14 3AF

Our ref: SV/2010/104077/OT-
32/IS1-L01
Your ref:
Date: 24 July 2026

Dear Planning Policy Team,
Email: NeighbourhoodPlanning@malvern hills.gov.uk

**Broadwas and Cotheridge Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Development Plan
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations
Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion**

I refer to your email of the 03 July 2026 with regard to the Broadwas and Cotheridge Parish SEA and HRA Screening Opinion for the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). We have reviewed the submitted documentation and offer the following comments for your consideration at this time.

Flood Risk

Based on our indicative Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea), we note the River Teme (statutory main river) flows along the entire Southern border of the Parish boundaries bringing large areas of Flood Zones 3 and 2 (the high and medium risk zones respectively) within the Parish.

It should be noted that the Flood Map provides an indication of 'fluvial' flood risk only. You are advised to discuss matters relating to surface water (pluvial) flooding with the drainage team at Malvern Hills District Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

Site Allocations: We would not, in the absence of any site allocations proposed within the NDP, offer any bespoke comment at this time.

However, please note that other potential development areas may be at flood risk given the presence of 'ordinary watercourses' which are un-modelled based on the scale and nature of the stream and receiving catchment (less than 3km²).

SEA / HRA Screening Opinion

To assist your Council's determination of the SEA and HRA Screening Opinion (dated June 2026), we note the conclusions achieved:

- The SEA Screening Opinion concludes that *“a full SEA is not required for the draft Regulation 14 Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review as it is considered unlikely that there will be any significant environmental impacts as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan review.”*
- The HRA Screening Opinion concludes that *“the draft Broadwas and Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan Review is unlikely to have a negative impact on any internationally designated wildlife sites and as such, the recommendation is made that a full AA is not required.”*

We therefore agree and advise based on the Screening Report submitted and in consideration of matters within our remit that the NDP is considered unlikely to have significant environmental impacts and or significant effects on European designated sites, based on the above conclusions we do not believe a full Appropriate Assessment will be required.

Furthermore, we do not offer detailed bespoke advice on policy but advise you ensure conformity with the local plan and refer to guidance within our area neighbourhood plan “pro-forma guidance”, I have attached an updated version for your consideration. Notwithstanding the above, for example it is important that these plans offer robust confirmation that development is not impacted by flooding and that there is sufficient wastewater infrastructure in place to accommodate growth. I trust the above is of assistance at this time.

I trust the above is of assistance at this time.

Yours faithfully

Mr. Ewan Burvill
Planning Officer

Direct e-mail ewan.burvill@environment-agency.gov.uk