

**Babergh & Mid Suffolk District
Councils**

**Chelmondiston Parish
Council Neighbourhood
Plan
SEA Screening Opinion**

Final report

Prepared by LUC
March 2020

Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils

Chelmondiston Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan
SEA Screening Opinion

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1.	Draft Report	O. Dunham	K Nicholls	J Owen	23.03.2020
2.	Final Report	O Dunham	K Nicholls	J Owen	31.03.2020

Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction **1**

Chapter 2
SEA Screening **2**

Scope of the NDP	2
Baseline Information	3
SEA Screening Conclusion	8
Next Steps	8

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Chelmondiston Parish Council is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). Chelmondiston is located within Babergh District, approximately seven miles to the south east of Ipswich. LUC has been appointed by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to consider whether there is a need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be undertaken for the NDP.

1.2 SEA may be required for a Neighbourhood Plan, if it is likely to have significant environmental effects. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is similar to SEA but includes assessment of the likely significant effects of a plan or programme on economic and social factors, as well as environmental factors. Planning Practice Guidance¹ (PPG) clarifies that there is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to be subject to SA, but that SA can be used to demonstrate how the plan will contribute to sustainable development.

1.3 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have commissioned LUC to carry out SEA Screening of the Pre-Submission Draft version of the Chelmondiston NDP in order to determine whether an assessment is required under European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive), transposed into UK law through the SEA Regulations².

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

² The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633), as amended by The Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI

2018/1232). It should be noted that the purpose of the amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the European Union. No substantive changes are made to the way the SEA regime operates.

Chapter 2

SEA Screening

Scope of the NDP

2.1 Chelmondiston Parish Council has prepared the Pre-Submission Draft (Regulation 14) version of the NDP which is being subject to public consultation.

2.2 The Chelmondiston NDP covers the entire parish, including the main settlement of Chelmondiston as well as the hamlets of Pin Mill and Lings Lane. As the NDP covers both Chelmondiston and Pin Mill, it is described in the NDP as being the 'Chelpin Plan' for short. For the purposes of this SEA Screening, it is referred to by its formal name of Chelmondiston NDP, after the name of the parish.

2.3 The Pre-Submission Draft NDP includes a vision for the long-term future of Chelmondiston along with seven objectives which aim to deliver the vision for Chelmondiston:

1. To help manage future housing growth and to meet local housing needs within the neighbourhood area.
2. To conserve and enhance the character of the neighbourhood area.
3. To protect local green spaces and open spaces within the area.
4. To protect the area's natural heritage – our coast, countryside, the AONB and designated wildlife sites.
5. To protect and enhance community and recreation facilities.
6. To support local business and economic development.
7. To ensure that the area has appropriate levels of infrastructure.

2.4 The NDP then sets out ten planning policies (CNDP1 - 10) to realise and deliver the vision. Policy CNDP1 is a new housing development policy that supports housing development where it comes forward within the defined settlement boundaries for Chelmondiston, Pin Mill and Lings Lane. It states that proposals for development located outside of these settlement boundaries will only be permitted where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is an identified local need for the proposal and that it cannot be satisfactorily located within the settlement boundary. The NDP does not allocate specific sites for housing or other development. Policies CNDP2-10 are mainly criteria-based policies covering topics such as design principles, heritage assets, the

protection of open space, landscape and biodiversity, the protection of community facilities and the local economy. Together these policies seek to ensure that new development is high quality and sensitively designed so as not to have adverse impacts on the surroundings.

Baseline Information

2.5 This section summarises baseline information for the parish of Chelmondiston, drawing from the information set out in the Pre-Submission Draft NDP.

Context

2.6 Chelmondiston is a village and civil parish in the Suffolk District of Babergh, eastern England. It is located around seven miles south east of Ipswich. The parish lies on the northern edge of the Shotley Peninsula, roughly halfway between Ipswich and the eastern tip of the peninsula (Shotley Gate). The peninsula is bounded by the River Stour to the south and the River Orwell to the north. The main part of Chelmondiston lies on the peninsula plateau and has established itself along the route of the B1456, with the majority of development located to the north of the B1456.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

2.7 Small parts of the parish lie within the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site and the Orwell Estuary SSSI, while these sites also border the parish to the north. Priority habitats within the site include deciduous woodland, traditional orchards, lowland heathland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, mudflats and coastal saltmarsh.

2.8 The range of habitats encourages many priority species: corn bunting, lapwing, redshank, turtle dove and yellow wagtail.

2.9 Although there is only one small area of ancient semi-natural woodland in the parish (the north east corner of Broomfield Covert), the eastern part of Bylam Wood is a Planted Ancient Woodland Site, and the other woodland is mostly broadleaved, and therefore valuable habitat for invertebrates, nesting and roosting birds, understory and woodland plants. The tidal estuary fringe of Pin Mill woods is of particular interest, being a rare example of woodland adjacent to estuarial saltwater.

Population

2.10 The 2011 census showed the total number of usual residents of the parish was 1,054. The average age of the

population is slightly above the Suffolk average, with the median age for the parish being 50 compared to 42 for the county. Just over half of the population is of working age (56%), while 16% is under 16, and 28% is aged 65 or above.

2.11 Unemployment is low (1.7%) and roughly half the figure for Suffolk as a whole. There is a higher than average number of residents with high level qualifications, and only 20% with no qualifications.

Human health

2.12 In terms of the health of Chelmondiston residents, just over 44% of people are classified as in very good health, 36% as good, 15.5% as fair, 3.7% as bad and 0.8% as very bad. These health ratings largely mirror the Babergh and England averages.

Soil

2.13 Chelmondiston parish comprises entirely of Grade 3 agricultural land; however, it is not known if any or all of this is Grade 3a (classed as best and most versatile agricultural land) rather the lower quality Grade 3b.

Water

2.14 The area along the River Orwell to the north is located within Flood Zone 3. Flood Zone 3 comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding (>1%), or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea (>0.5%) in any year.

Air and Climatic Factors

2.15 There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) that have been declared within Chelmondiston Parish, the nearest being in Ipswich.

2.16 The NDP does not indicate that there are issues with air quality in the area; however it is noted within the NDP that development should improve road safety within Chelmondiston Parish. The area is poorly served by public transport options.

2.17 Climate data is not available at parish level, but within Babergh District as a whole, reductions in overall carbon emissions of 37% were achieved between 2005 and 2017. This reduction was mostly due to progress in reducing emissions from domestic sources, closely followed by industrial and commercial sectors, with minimal progress on transport emissions. Transport makes the largest contribution to carbon emissions in Babergh District.

Material Assets

2.18 The parish has several open spaces on the edge of Chelmondiston village and within the hamlet of Pin Mill. These open spaces are designated through Policy LP28 of the emerging Joint Local Plan.

2.19 Chelmondiston is not well-served by public transport, with only one bus route, the 97, which goes from Shotley Gate to Ipswich Old Cattle Market and runs approximately every two hours from 6:45am to 5:45pm.

2.20 There are a number of Public Rights of Way within the parish, many are circular routes and along the coast.

2.21 The parish has one primary school located in the village of Chelmondiston and it is assumed that it is operating sufficiently as there is no need to either expand or contract capacity.

2.22 The County Council notes that mineral extraction is a main threat to the landscape and Chelmondiston has been included within a Minerals Consultation Area in the Suffolk Minerals Core Strategy.

Cultural heritage

2.23 Pin Mill hamlet is part of a Conservation Area which borders the Orwell and runs halfway up the valley of Pin Mill Road. The Conservation Area contains one Listed Building (Grade II). There are also six other Listed Buildings (all Grade II) within the parish. None of these features appear on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. There are no Scheduled Monuments within the parish.

2.24 There are also 14 non-designated heritage assets within the parish.

Landscape

2.25 The majority of the parish lies within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, and the remainder of the parish lies within the AONB Project Area. The AONB Project Area consists of areas adjacent to the AONB that share many similar landscape features. The AONB Partnership has been managing these project areas of the Shotley Peninsula and the south side of the Orwell Estuary in the same way as the designated AONB, to protect and enhance their landscape and heritage.

2.26 The landscape of the Shotley Peninsula is predominantly ancient estate farmlands, with salt marshes and intertidal mudflats along the edge of the Orwell. The mudflats, designated as a priority habitat, are an important winter-

feeding area for estuary birds, wildfowl and waders. The main crops farmed are winter wheat, winter and spring barley potatoes and sugar beet. Local farms are modest in size and therefore fields are also relatively small, frequently divided by copses, hedgerows and woodland. Even within the built-up area of the village there are open spaces and large tracts of garden providing continuity of habitat to the fields and woodlands.

SEA Screening

2.27 An assessment has been undertaken to determine whether the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Draft Chelmondiston NDP requires SEA in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

2.28 **Figure 2.1** overleaf presents the flow diagram entitled 'Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes' which is taken from the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive³, published in September 2005. This is a useful guide when considering whether a plan should be subject to SEA (The Practical Guide has been superseded by the National Planning Practice Guidance; however, it still provides a useful and relevant guide to the process to use in making SEA screening decisions).

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf

Figure 2.1 Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes

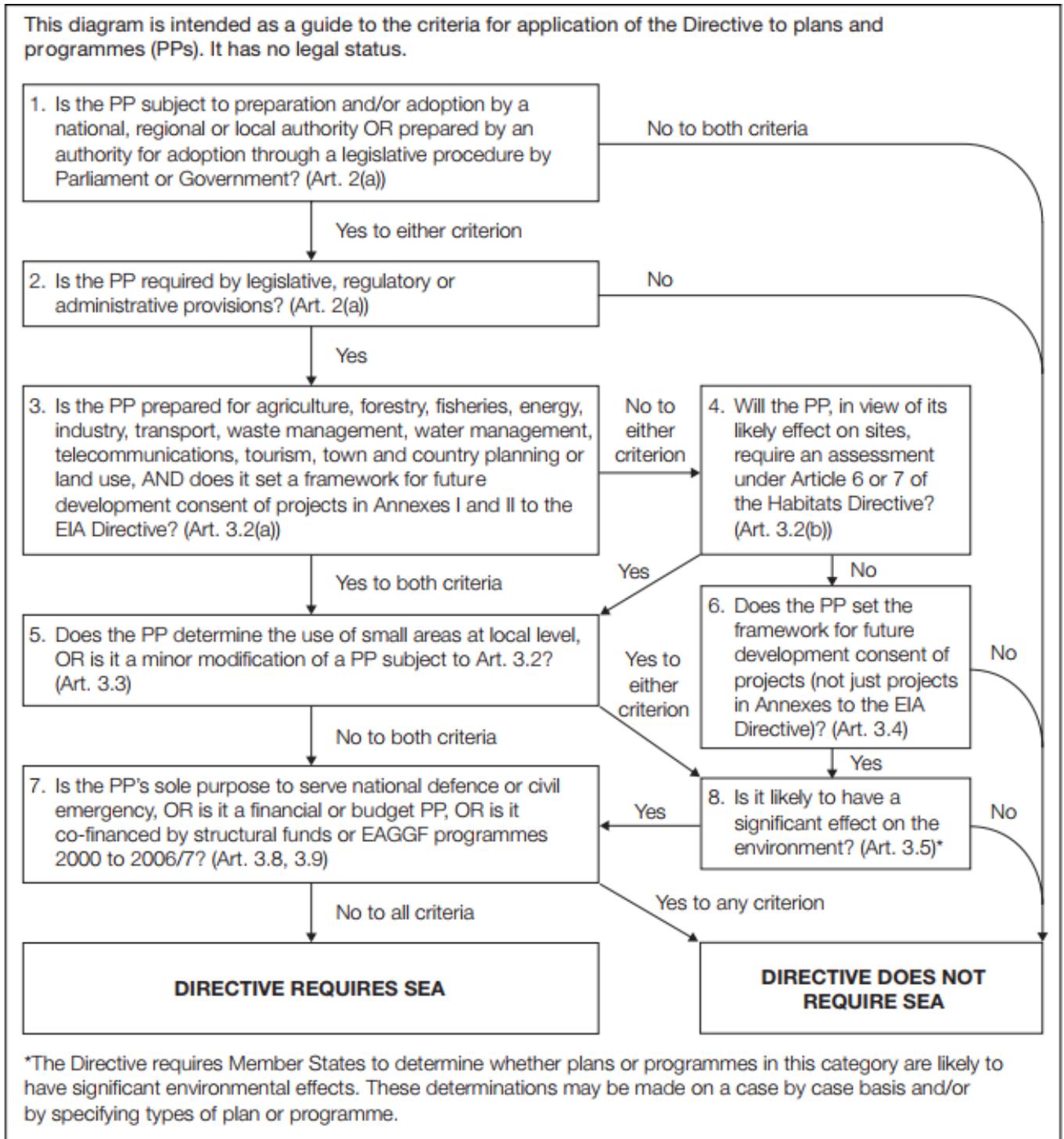


Table 2.1: Application of SEA Directive to the Chelmondiston NDP

Stage	Yes/No	Reason
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))	Yes	The NDP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and will be adopted ('made') by the Local Authority (Babergh District Council) as part of the statutory development plan. Move to Q2.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	No	The NDP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. However, there is no requirement to produce a Neighbourhood Plan; it is an optional plan. Once made it will become part of the statutory development plan. Therefore, it should continue to be screened. Move to Q3.
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))	Yes and No	The NDP is being prepared for town and country planning and land use, but it does not set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive. Move to Q4.
4. Will the PP, 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))	No	Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening has been undertaken separately on the content of the Chelmondiston NDP and it has been screened out of requiring Appropriate Assessment. No: Move to Q6.
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)	Yes	The NDP does not allocate any sites for housing development but the policies in the NDP do set out a framework to help guide development in Chelmondiston up to 2036. Move to Q8.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	No	See Table 2.2. SEA IS NOT REQUIRED.

2.29 Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. These are listed in **Table 2.2** below along with comments on the extent to which the Chelmondiston NDP meets these criteria.

Table 2.2 Likely Significant Effects

SEA Requirement	Comments
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:	
1. 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	Once made, the NDP will become part of the statutory development plan and will guide the delivery of development in Chelmondiston Parish, including in terms of design. The NDP does not allocate any sites for housing or other types of development but does set out a policy framework to help guide development in Chelmondiston up to 2036. The adopted Babergh Core Strategy (2014) identifies Chelmondiston as a Hinterland Village in Policy CS2 – Settlement Pattern. This policy seeks to direct development to towns/urban areas and to the Core Villages and Hinterland Villages. The Core Strategy provides

SEA Requirement	Comments
	<p>for a total of 1,050 dwellings at the Hinterland Villages over the Plan period to 2031.</p> <p>The emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan identifies Chelmondiston as a Hinterland Village and Pins Mill and Lings Lane as Hamlets. While the new Local Plan is unlikely to be adopted until 2021, it has been taken into consideration in the preparation of the NDP. It is noted that the Preferred Options version of the Joint Local Plan makes provision for building 9,343 new homes across Babergh between 2018 and 2036 and that it is proposed that 10% of these will be in the Hinterland Villages. For Chelmondiston specifically, the Preferred Options document identifies a minimum figure of 52 new homes.</p>
<p>2.the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy</p>	<p>The NDP has to be in general conformity with the local strategic framework (i.e. the adopted Babergh Core Strategy (2014) and the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan). The NDP must also have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework. The NDP does not have influence over other plans. Once made, the NDP will form part of the statutory development plan for Chelmondiston Parish and will be used in conjunction with the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (once adopted) to determine planning applications.</p>
<p>3. the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,</p>	<p>One of the Basic Conditions which the NDP must meet is to contribute to sustainable development.</p>
<p>4. environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,</p>	<p>Baseline information relating to Chelmondiston Parish was described earlier in this chapter. Key issues of relevance to the NDP are the presence of potentially high-quality agricultural land in the parish, the presence of land within Flood Zone 3, several areas of priority habitat, a SSSI, a Ramsar site and SPA, the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, a Conservation Area and a number of designated heritage assets in the parish centre.</p>
<p>5. 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).</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</p>	
<p>6. the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,</p>	<p>The NDP does not allocate any sites for housing or other types of development; however it does set out a policy framework to help guide development in Chelmondiston up to 2036. The Chelmondiston NDP covers the period 2020-2036 and the effects of housing development that occurs during the plan period are expected to be long-term and permanent. Any effects associated specifically with construction are likely to be short-term and temporary.</p>
<p>7. the cumulative nature of the effects,</p>	<p>Cumulative effects could result from the NDP in combination with development that takes place in the surrounding towns and villages – albeit the parish of Chelmondiston is rural. Chelmondiston village itself is about two miles from the nearest settlement, Woolverstone to the north west.</p> <p>As the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan is still in its development, it is not yet possible to assess with certainty the amount and location of development that may result from the Plan within and close to Chelmondiston Parish.</p> <p>The Adopted Babergh Core Strategy (2014) identifies Chelmondiston as a 'hinterland village' in the settlement hierarchy, with the expectation that new development should meet local needs.</p>

SEA Requirement	Comments
8. the transboundary nature of the effects,	The NDP focuses on Chelmondiston Parish only. Transboundary effects under the SEA Regulations refers transboundary effects on other EU Member States; therefore they are not relevant to this NDP.
9. the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),	There are no anticipated risks to human health or the environment from the NDP.
10. the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),	The NDP covers all of Chelmondiston Parish. The population of the parish in the 2011 Census was 1,054 people.
11. the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, ■ exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, ■ intensive land-use, 	Chelmondiston Parish is home to a number of Priority Species and Priority Habitats, small parts of the parish lie within the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Ramsar site and SPA and Orwell Estuary SSSI. The parish also lies within Sussex Coast and Heaths AONB. There are seven listed buildings within the parish of Chelmondiston that are included on Historic England's National List, as well as a Conservation Area.
12. the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The parish lies within the Sussex Coast and Heaths AONB. Development within or close to the AONB could adversely affect its characteristic shingle beaches, heathland, forest and estuaries.

SEA Screening Conclusion

2.30 A screening assessment has been undertaken by applying the criteria from the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations to determine whether or not the Chelmondiston NDP is likely to have significant environmental effects when assessed against the topics listed in the SEA Regulations.

2.31 The NDP sets out a vision and detailed planning policies to shape development in the parish up to 2036. It sets out a policy framework to help guide development in Chelmondiston. Although the parish contains sensitive environmental assets, it does not allocate sites for development, with the NDP policies instead focusing on ensuring that development is delivered in a way that safeguards the environmental assets. Allocations will be made through the emerging Joint Mid Suffolk and Babergh Local Plan. The Local Plan is being subject to SA (incorporating

SEA) throughout its preparation, which will assess the likelihood of significant effects arising from potential development allocations. Mitigation will be provided by policies within the NDP and in the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan; however given the current stage of development, emerging policies may change.

2.32 On this basis, it is considered that the Chelmondiston NDP will not have significant environmental effects and that SEA is therefore not required.

Next Steps

2.33 This SEA screening opinion will be sent to the three statutory consultees (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) and will be reviewed as appropriate in light of any comments received.