

**ERCALL MAGNA NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN 2017-2031**

**REGULATION 15 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL  
ASSESSMENT SCREENING STATEMENT**

**OCTOBER 2021**

# **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING STATEMENT FOR THE ERCALL MAGNA NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

This document is the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement under Regulation 9 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004 on the determination of the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). This SEA Screening Statement concludes that the Ercall Magna NDP is unlikely to have a significant environmental effect. Therefore the Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan is screened-out of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process and no further assessment under the SEA Regulations are deemed to be necessary.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The government has determined that sustainability appraisals are only required for Local Plans and do not apply to Neighbourhood Plans. However Neighbourhood Plans must not breach and must be compatible with EU and Human Rights obligations. Neighbourhood Plans therefore need to be considered against the Habitats and Strategic Environmental assessment Directives and associated Regulations. Whilst not every Neighbourhood Plan will need a Strategic Environmental Assessment it is necessary for the qualifying body Ercall Magna Parish Council to prepare a Screening Statement to determine whether the scope and matters addressed in the Neighbourhood Development Plan are likely to have significant environmental effects that would require a Strategic Environmental assessment to be undertaken.

1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) are required by **EU Directive 2001/42/EC** to assess the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. This Directive was implemented in the UK in July 2004 with the adoption of the **Environmental Assessment of Plans and programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations)**. The requirement for SEA is assessed under **Regulation 9 (1)**. The SEA focuses on impacts on the natural environment with some limited consideration of human needs and material assets. The SEA itself should amongst other things consider options quantify impacts and offer advice on alternatives or mitigating measures where impacts are likely.

1.3 The **Regulations** go further than the EU Directive to explicitly prevent the adoption or submission of a Plan for which an Environmental Assessment is required before the SEA is completed. This Regulation also prohibits the adoption or submission of a Plan before the responsible authority has determined whether the Plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

1.4 Whilst it is clear that different parts of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031 will have varying degrees of environmental impact it is not possible to

categorically rule out the need for SEA without first carrying out a **Screening Assessment** to establish whether or not the Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan is likely to have significant environment effects. **Under Article 3(4) of the Directive and Regulation 5 of the Regulations** the responsible authority must determine which Plans, other than those for which an SEA is automatically required, are likely to have significant environmental effects. The responsible authority is the authority (as defined by **Regulation 2**) on whose behalf the Plan is prepared, that is Ercall Magna Parish Council.

1.5 Both the Directive (in annex 11) and the Regulations (in Schedule 1) set out specific criteria for determining the likely significance of the environmental effects of a Plan. The process for determining whether or not an Assessment is required is called **Screening**. The criteria includes specific considerations regarding the characteristics of the Plan, the impact of the Plan and the area likely to be affected by the Plan.

1.6 A determination cannot be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted, that is the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.

1.7 Within 28 days of making its determination the Parish Council must publish a statement such as this one setting out its decision. If it determines that an SEA is not required the Statement must set out the reasons for this.

## **2.0 Neighbourhood Planning**

2.1 Neighbourhood planning is a community right introduced under the Localism Act 2011 and guidance on its implementation is included in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2.2 Neighbourhood Plans form part of the Development Plan and as such are subject to the **Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations)**.

## **3.0 Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan**

3.1 The Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Area was designated by Telford & Wrekin Council on 19<sup>th</sup>. September 2013 and Ercall Magna Parish Council was recognized as the qualifying body to produce the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

3.2 The Ercall Magna NDP is based on a number of locally important policy broad objectives, these include:

- Housing
- Environment
- Pedestrians, traffic and transport
- Economy and jobs
- Community wellbeing

- Long term sustainability.

3.3 These policy objectives form the basis of the detailed policies that comprise the Neighbourhood Development Plan that will be the subject of public consultation, Independent Examination and a public referendum. A positive result at referendum will result in the plan being made. The Plan will then become part of the Telford & Wrekin Council Development Plan.

#### **4.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

4.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) set out the process by which the Strategic Environmental Assessment of Plans must be undertaken. Government and the relevant environmental agencies have provided further guidance on the process.

4.2 Telford & Wrekin Council has undertaken several stages of Environmental Assessment during the preparation of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031, most recently in the Sustainability Reports of 2016 and 2017. The Parish Council is satisfied that the policies contained in the Neighbourhood Development Plan are in conformity with the Local Plan and are covered by the Telford & Wrekin Integrated Appraisal (2016) and Addendum (2017) and that as a result no further Assessments are required.

4.3 This SEA Screening Statement seeks to assess whether any policy in the NDP would result in a likely significant effect on the environment. This assessment follows the process used in the latest Telford & Wrekin Local Plan documents and relies on evidence gathered during the preparation of the Local Plan. The statutory consultees will be given an opportunity to comment on this SEA Screening Statement and Telford & Wrekin Council will have regard to the representations submitted by the statutory consultees prior to “making” the Neighbourhood Plan as required under Regulation 16(3).

4.4 In principle Neighbourhood Plans should not be subject to the SEA Directive or require sustainability appraisal because they do not normally introduce new policies or proposals or modify planning documents that have already been subject to sustainability appraisal. However they might occasionally be found likely to give rise to significant effects that might that have not been previously assessed.

4.5 When screening a plan Article 3(6) of the SEA Directive requires that the relevant bodies concerned with environmental matters, as defined by individual member states, shall be consultees as part of the screening process. In the UK the statutory environmental consultees are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.

## 5.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

5.1 Each Policy within the Neighbourhood Development Plan has been screened to determine whether it has the potential to cause a “likely significant effect” on the environment.

5.2 Any policy with no “likely significant effect” will be screened-out of the SEA process. Any policy where potential for a “likely significant effect” is identified will be subject to further more detailed assessment.

5.3 The table below identifies the screening methodology.

<b>Screening Stage</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Assessing the Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan against the Annex II Criteria (SEA Directive).	To establish whether or not the NDP is likely to have a significant effect on the Annex II Criteria. This will take account of the role of the NDP in relation to the existing policy context
Conclusion on whether the Screening exercise identifies a need for SEA.	To set out conclusions from the Screening exercise.
Recommendations for how the NDP should proceed in relation to SEA requirements.	To set out the broad approach needed to carry out an SEA for the NDP or, where the screening exercise suggests no SEA is required, to determine the parameters within which the NDP will need to operate to avoid triggering a need for SEA.

## 6.0 Assessing the Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan against Annex II Criteria (SEA Directive)

6.1 Annex II of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive sets out the criteria for determining if there are likely to be significant environmental effects resulting from the implementation of the NDP.

6.2 The following tables set out the Annex II Criteria and summarise the likely effects of the Policies in the NDP.

<b>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)</b>	<b>Likely to have significant environmental effects</b>	<b>Summary of significant effects</b>
<b>1a) The degree to which the Plan or Programme sets a framework for projects either with regard to the location, nature, size or by allocating resources.</b>	No	<p>The NDP proposes a number of development Policies including Housing, Economy and Jobs, Environment and Green Space, Pedestrians, Traffic and Transport, Conservation and Heritage, Community Wellbeing, Long Term Sustainability and Responding to the challenge of Climate Change.</p> <p>These Policies will contribute towards the local strategic policies for development.</p> <p>The NDP is in conformity with the NPPF and the Telford &amp; Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031 that has already undergone a Sustainability Appraisal.</p>

<p><b>1b) The degree to which the Plan or Programme influences other Plans or Programmes, including those in a hierarchy.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The NDP has regard to the NPPF and the Telford &amp; Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031. As the NDP is a lower tier planning policy document it is likely to have a positive impact on these Plans through its Policies to deliver sustainable development and to protect and enhance the local environment. The NDP will help to deliver the Policies in the Local Plan.</p> <p>The focus of the NDP is on issues identified within the T&amp;W Local Plan and arising from public consultation. The NDP gives limited attention to other Plans in the West Midlands because this would not be particularly helpful to the delivery of the NDP.</p>
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<p><b>1c) The relevance of the Plan or Programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The NDP has regard to the objective of achieving sustainable development in the Neighbourhood Area. The NDP includes Policies that seek to protect and retain local valuable green space, public rights of way, provide new homes to meet local needs and help to promote and support local services and facilities. The NDP aims to support and promote public transport opportunities and the reuse of existing buildings and previously used land.</p> <p>The Policies in the NDP support the provision of a balanced range of good quality housing (size, type and affordability) as highlighted by residents through consultation. The Policies of the NDP been prepared to have a positive impact on local environmental assets.</p>
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<p><b>1d) Environmental problems relevant to the Plan.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>There are no major allocations in the NDP that are not included in the Local Plan. The NDP supports the provision of adequate off-street parking and improvements to pedestrian and cycle route through and between new development and between open spaces. Environmental problems could be triggered through new housing or employment development, however the impact on traffic and highway safety, drainage, ecology, biodiversity and the environment is unclear at this stage.</p> <p>If a planning application is submitted to the Local Planning Authority it would have to go through an assessment process prior to determination in which conditions or mitigation measures could be put in place to remove or reduce any environmental problems before the proposed development would be considered acceptable.</p>
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<p><b>1e) The relevance of the Plan or Programme to the implementation of community legislation in respect of the environment. (e.g. Plans and Programmes linked to waste management, water protection or related matters).</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The NDP Policies do not propose any changes that are likely to have a harmful impact on the environment (i.e. affecting Tree Preservation Orders or public rights of way). The T&amp;W Local Plan Policies in respect of the natural environment are positive enabling policies.</p> <p>The NDP has adopted a similar approach and as a result are likely to have a positive and beneficial impact.</p>
<p><b>2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Due to the limited scale of new development it is unlikely that the NDP would result in any irreversible and damaging environmental impacts. Any new development should be sustainable and in accordance with national and local planning policy.</p>

<p><b>2b) The cumulative nature of the effects.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>It is not possible to fully assess the cumulative effects of future development until planning applications have been submitted and assessed against the Policies in the Local Plan. However it is anticipated that the likely issues would be the impact on school places, transportation and highway safety.</p> <p>These matters are the responsibility of Telford &amp; Wrekin Council. It may be possible to address some or all of these cumulative issues through mitigation measures, financial contributions and conditions during the detailed stages of determining the planning applications. As far as possible the Policies in the NDP will generate positive and beneficial effects.</p>
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<p><b>2c) The Trans-boundary nature of the effects.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Housing and Employment Policies in the NDP are unlikely to generate any significant cross-boundary effects. By protecting local green spaces the NDP may help to reduce the pressure on open spaces and green spaces elsewhere. Support for more sustainable modes of transport and linkages including cycling and walking should help to minimize any trans-boundary effects. Any effects are likely to be mainly local. There may be some effects on surrounding areas but at this stage it is not clear what these effects might be.</p>
<p><b>2d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>It is unlikely that there will be any obvious risks to human health arising from the Policies of the NDP. Health and safety standards in respect of developments within the NDP area will be controlled and governed by the relevant statutory regulations, guidelines and codes. Any risks arising from the Policies and proposals in the NDP will be managed in accordance with the relevant statutory frameworks. However no details have been submitted or are shown in the NDP.</p>

<p><b>2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Policies contained in the NDP seek to protect and enhance open spaces and local amenities and services, whilst supporting a mix of new homes and small-scale employment to meet local needs. The NDP will have an impact on the local population and it has been prepared to address local issues and matters of concern raised by local people through consultation.</p>
<p><b>2f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be effected due to:</b>  <b>1) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage.</b>  <b>2) Exceeded environmental quality standards.</b>  <b>3) Intensive land use.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The NDP is unlikely to adversely affect the value and vulnerability of the Neighbourhood Area in respect of its natural or cultural heritage. The NDP is more likely to provide greater support to enhance the setting of heritage assets and of local green spaces. Where possible the NDP Policies will encourage new opportunities for recreation, access and leisure. The NDP will seek to protect all known sites and areas of ecological and environmental importance. The NDP Policies will seek to increase green spaces and protect the surrounding countryside, landscape, wildlife and the natural features of Ercall Magna.</p> <p>The NDP Policies are in conformity with the NPPF and the T&amp;W Local Plan 2011-2031.</p>

<p><b>2g) The effects on areas or landscapes that have a recognised national, community or international protected status.</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>It is considered unlikely that the NDP will have an adverse impact in existing landscapes within the Neighbourhood Area. The NDP does not propose any new development on the best and most versatile agricultural land.</p> <p>A Screening Statement in respect of the Habitat Regulations (HRA) has been prepared that concludes that the Ercall Magna NDP is screened-out of the HRA process and that no further HRA Assessments (including Appropriate Assessments are deemed necessary.</p>
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## 7.0 Conclusion

7.1 The conclusion of this Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Statement is that the Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and is therefore screened-out of the SEA process and that no further assessment under the SEA Regulations is recommended. The three statutory consultees; Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England will be given an opportunity to comment on this screening statement and Telford & Wrekin Council as the Local Planning Authority will have regard to their comments prior to “making” the Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan.