

Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for The Strettons

Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Statement

October 2026

Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Statement for the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for The Strettons

Summary

The policies within the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for The Strettons (draft NDPTS) have been screened under the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) process. The conclusion of the HRA Screening Process is that none of the proposed policies within the draft NDPTS has the potential to have a significant effect on the natural environment. **The draft NDPTS can therefore be ‘screened out’ of the HRA process and no further HRA assessments (including ‘Appropriate Assessments’) are required.**

Following the Regulation 14 consultation and the subsequent redrafting period, Shropshire Council has reviewed the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for The Strettons submitted at Regulation 15. Shropshire Council has concluded that none of the proposed policies within the submitted draft of the NDPTS has the potential to lead to a ‘Likely Significant Effect’ on a European Site. Therefore, no further HRA is required.

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Introduction

The HRA process assesses the potential effects arising from a plan against the conservation objectives of any site designated for its nature conservation importance. Neighbourhood Plans form part of the statutory land use plan and as such must be subject to HRA under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The Local Authority is the ‘competent authority’ under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations and needs to ensure that Neighbourhood Plans have been assessed through the Habitats

Regulations process. This looks at the potential for significant impacts on nature conservation sites that are of European importance¹, also referred to as Natura 2000.

The Local Authority will determine whether the Neighbourhood Development Plan for The Strettons (NDPTS) is likely to result in significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites either alone or in combination with other plans and policies and, therefore, whether an 'Appropriate Assessment' is required.

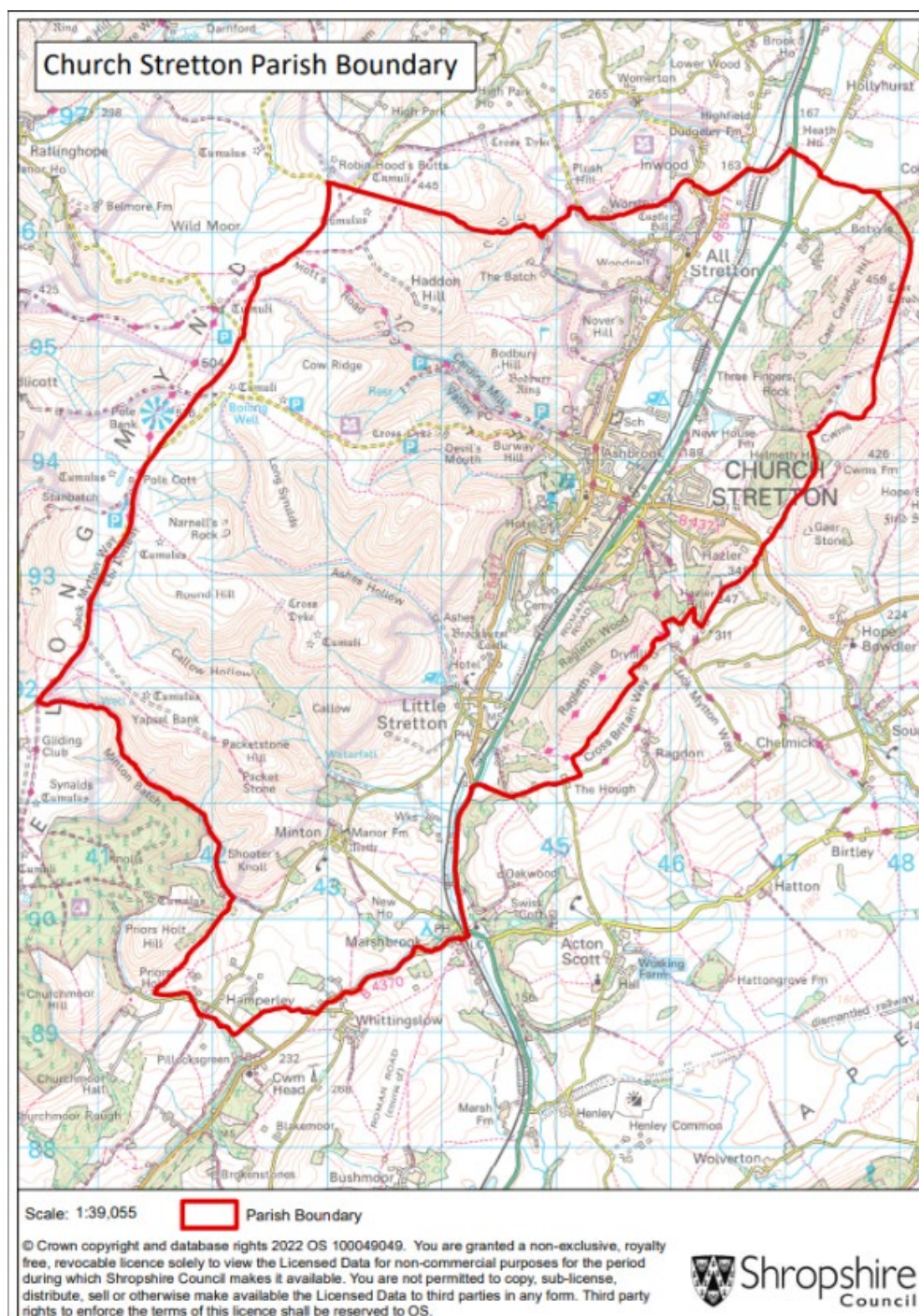
The Strettons Designated Neighbourhood Area

An application by Church Stretton Town Council to designate a neighbourhood plan area went out for public consultation from 10 December to 28 January 2022. The application was approved by Shropshire Council's Cabinet on 6 April 2022 and a formal notice was issued.

With effect from 1 May 2025 the name of the Parish changed to The Strettons, reflecting Shropshire Council electoral boundary changes. Thus the draft Church Stretton Neighbourhood Development Plan is now known as the draft Neighbourhood Plan for The Strettons.

Fig. 1 – Map showing designated neighbourhood area

¹ Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for other species, and for habitats.



Natural

environment designations

The following natural environmental designations exist within the neighbourhood area:

Designation	Sites
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	None
Special Protection Areas (SPA)	None
Ramsar Sites	None
National Landscape	The Shropshire Hills National Landscape

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	The Long Mynd SSSI
Geological Conservation Review sites (GCR)	None
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	Bagbatch Coppice Leasowes Cwms Common Hamperley Helmeth Hill Houghs Coppice Overbatch Ragleth Wood Ragleth Hill Worsley
Local Nature Reserves	Coppice Leasowes Rectory Wood and Field
Ancient and semi-natural woodland	Helmeth Hill Wood Houghs Coppice
Ancient Replanted Woodland	Caradoc Coppice Houghs Coppice
Local Green Spaces	Proposed: LGS1: Rectory Wood & Field LGS2: Coppice Leasowes LGS3: High Leasowes LGS4: Cudwell Meadow LGS5: The Wetlands LGS6: Contemplation Corner LGS7: Station Patch LGS8: Snatchfield LGS9: War Memorial/Burway Road triangle LGS10: Hazler Triangle
Priority habitats	Good quality semi-improved grassland Lowland dry acid grassland Upland heathland Upland flushes, fens and swamps Ancient and semi-natural woodland Deciduous woodland Woodpasture and parkland BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan)
Priority species	Lapwing

	Curlew Upland breeding birds areas Great crested newts
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The Stiperstones and The Hollies Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is within 9km of the NDPTS area. However, given the limited scale of development proposed by this plan, there are no anticipated effects on the SAC.

HRA Screening

Each policy within the draft NDPTS has been screened to determine whether it has potential to cause a 'Likely Significant Effect' on any European Site.

Any policy with no 'Likely Significant Effect' will be screened out of the HRA process. Any policy where potential for a 'Likely Significant Effect' is identified will be subject to further, more detailed, assessment (sometimes called an 'Appropriate Assessment') in line with the Habitats Regulations and relevant guidance documents.

The table below considers the potential impacts arising from each of the policies within the draft NDPTS.

Policy	Assessment of Potential Impacts	Potential for Likely Significant Effect
TS-NP1: Economy, Community and Tourism	This policy aims to maintain and expand the range of local economic opportunities and local community facilities, helping reduce the need for travel and its subsequent environmental impacts. Adverse impacts on the historic and natural environments include environmental harm, but also the associated economic harm to the visitor economy from making the area less attractive to tourists and other users. People choose to live, work and visit The Strettons because of the beautiful location, relationship with the Shropshire Hills and character as a market town. Small negative changes can cumulatively significantly impact the area for future generations. The Policy highlights possible negative impacts to ensure that they are given full consideration; it requires that development have no significant impact on residential amenity, historic environments, the natural environment (including designated landscapes), the character or rural lanes, verges, hedges and trees and road capacity and congestion.	Low

TS-NP2: Church Stretton Town Centre	No specific discussion of potential impacts.	Low
TS-NP3: Residential Development	Housing development will be supported within the Church Stretton Development Boundary, as the most sustainable location for growth, near to existing facilities. This helps to create a mixed use and walkable neighbourhood. The settlement has capacity for growth through brownfield development, infill and some redevelopment. In considering whether properties would have adequate garden space, considerations include any established pattern of gardens and the need to ensure sufficient space for recreation, play, drying washing and other typical garden activities.	Low
TS-NP4: Rural and Natural Environment	Various landscape designations, priority habitats and species are present within The Strettons. These include the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, the Long Mynd Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserves. As such, there is a high level of landscape and habitat value and sensitivity within the Parish. In addition, Section 85 of the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act) (as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023) requires ‘relevant authorities’, in exercising or performing any function that affect National Landscapes in England, to “seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape”. Application of the Policy should take account of designated landscapes, priority habitats and species, Dark Sky sites should avoid causing harm and take opportunities to enhance the wildlife, habitats, watercourses and biodiversity of The Strettons. Development should avoid the loss or harm of mature trees, woodland, ancient woodland and the wider treescape and ensure that trees and their roots are protected during construction and replaced with appropriate species where removal is unavoidable.	Low

	Development should cause no significant harm and should take opportunities to enhance views along the valley and views to and from the built area and surrounding landscape. In instances where a development will create considerable local benefits and harm to the rural environment cannot be avoided, then the development should demonstrate how this harm can be mitigated or compensated, for example through opportunities to restore damaged or lost habitats. Harm could include visual impacts, noise, pollution, light pollution or loss of sensitive landscape or landscape features.	
TS-NP5: Historic Environment	The alteration and adaptation of historic buildings to improve their environmental performance will be supported where it would preserve or take opportunities to enhance their significance.	Low
TS-NP6: Character	No specific discussion of potential impacts.	Low
TS-NP7: Sustainable Design	Development should take opportunities to provide or enhance green infrastructure and to enhance biodiversity, including through design, layout and landscape, through the planting of native species and through tree and hedge planting. Development should have no significant adverse impact on surrounding land and properties through surface water run-off. Support will be given to the inclusion of SuDS and use of water permeable materials for hard surfaces. The policy lists a number of strategies for reducing carbon use and supporting biodiversity. This includes the introduction of local renewable energy schemes such as ground heat pumps, photovoltaics, biomass and other technologies. This is suggestive supporting text rather than prescriptive policy so the resulting environmental impacts are not considered to be relevant to this assessment. The policy encourages pursuit of the BREEAM Excellent standard for commercial, industrial and public buildings and Passivhaus standards.	Low

	It also suggests a number of design features to support wildlife.	
TS-NP8: Transport and Active Travel	Placing new homes close to shops and local facilities helps to create a walkable neighbourhood. Walking and cycling helps to address traffic congestion. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies that promote an active travel area (i.e. walking and cycling area) and the support for a sustainable transport network that connects people to jobs, schools, and recreational activities while minimising environmental impact. Development proposals likely to generate significant additional car journeys must provide robust evidence showing how such journeys can be mitigated by effective provision of active travel options.	Low
TS-NP9: Local Green Space	10 Local Green Spaces have been proposed in the draft NDPTS. All of the sites are wholly within the boundary area of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape. Green Spaces are also valuable to nature and the ecology of an area, giving space for wildlife to thrive whilst keeping areas of habitat connected. As such, Green Spaces add to the “special qualities” of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape. Full details with maps showing the ten Local Green Spaces are provided in the accompanying Local Green Spaces Analysis Report.	Low

Consultation responses

Shropshire Council has produced this HRA Screening Statement to accompany the draft NDPTS at the Regulation 14 consultation stage. The screening opinion was sent to Natural England on 18 December 2025 for a five-week consultation period. Their response in full is presented in Appendix 1. It is their advice, on the basis of material supplied with the consultation, that ‘that the proposal can be screened out from further stages of assessment because significant effects are unlikely to occur, either alone or in combination’.

Conclusion of the HRA Screening Process for the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for The Strettons

The policies within the draft NDPTS have been screened under the HRA process.

The conclusion of the HRA Screening Process is that none of the proposed policies within the draft NDPTS has the potential to lead to a 'Likely Significant Effect' on a European Site.

It is Shropshire Council's opinion that the draft NDPTS Neighbourhood Development Plan can be 'screened out' of the HRA process and an 'Appropriate Assessment' is not required.

Appendix 1

Date: 16 January 2026
Our ref: 536675
Your ref: The Strettons Neighbourhood Development Plan
SEA & HRA Screening Consultation



Shropshire Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 080 3900

Dear Rosie

The Strettons Neighbourhood Development Plan – SEA & HRA Screening Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 01 December 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.

Natural England welcomes "Policy TS-NP4: Rural and Natural Environment" and advises that this policy should also include reference to "green and blue infrastructure" policies which prioritise the use of nature based solutions and consider the need for climate change adaption, including but not limited to: sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS).

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report

Natural England notes that your authority, as competent authority under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations, has screened the proposal to check for the likelihood of significant effects.

Your assessment concludes that the proposal can be screened out from further stages of assessment because significant effects are unlikely to occur, either alone or in combination. On the basis of the information provided, Natural England concurs with this view.

If the plan changes, in further stages of the process, it may be necessary to re-screen the plan and Natural England should be consulted at that stage.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely.

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection area (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscape) or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Natural England welcomes that the plan recognises that “*The Strettons*” is a rural Parish and falls entirely within the Shropshire Hills National Landscape area. Various landscape designations, priority habitats and species are present within The Strettons. These include the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, the Long Mynd Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserves. As such, there is a high level of landscape and habitat value and sensitivity within the Parish.

In addition, Section 85 of the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act) (as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023) requires ‘relevant authorities’, in exercising or performing any function that affect National Landscapes in England, to “seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape” This is a statutory duty. The use of the word ‘duty’ in the legislation means that it is something all ‘relevant authorities’ must do; it is not discretionary. The duty is considered to be a strengthening of the previous s.85 ‘duty of regard’ and seeks positive outcomes for the natural beauty, in its holistic sense, of our AONBs.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood 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 a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

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 an SEA. Further information 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 an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

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 a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Other advice

We refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely



Sally McLaughlin
Land use planning – West Midlands Area Team