

Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Development Plan Revised Pre Submission version, May 2013

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement, June 2013 Appropriate Assessment Screening

1. Introduction

1.1 What is the screening statement?

1.2 This report has been produced to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

1.3 This document also addresses the need for Appropriate Assessment, in accordance with European Directive 92/43/EEC, commonly known as the Habitats Directive.

1.4 The Draft plan has already been screened for SEA, why has this further screening opinion been undertaken?

1.5 The first draft version of the Business Neighbourhood Plan was screened for SEA in September 2012 and a copy of the Screening Opinion was sent to the three statutory consultation bodies. That earlier Screening Opinion concluded that:
“The Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Development Plan will provide a framework for a significant amount of development in the locality, with effects that will spread beyond the plan boundary and beyond the city centre. It is considered that these effects on the environment, which includes a listed building, could be significant. It is, therefore, concluded that CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.”

English Heritage and the Environment Agency concurred with the findings of the draft Screening Opinion and Natural England recommended that the effects of the Plan on the natural environment should be assessed.

The basis for that Screening Opinion was that the Draft Business Neighbourhood Plan was proposing to allocate a number of sites across Central Milton Keynes in order to deliver the quantum of development proposed for Central Milton Keynes (CMK) in the emerging Core Strategy. It was the option of Milton Keynes Council that the inclusion of Site Allocations in the draft Plan meant that the potential impacts of the Plan potentially extended beyond the high level and strategic impacts of development that had been fully assessed in the SA/SEA for the Core Strategy.

Following the draft Screening Opinion however, further work and clarification as to the Business Neighbourhood Plan’s intentions have emerged and it is now clear that the Plan is not making site allocations, but rather is indicating a preferred location for a number for land uses within CMK. With this clarification in mind it is considered appropriate to undertake a revised Screening Opinion for the emerging Plan.

1.6 What is the Business Neighbourhood Plan trying to achieve?

- 1.7 The Business Neighbourhood Area covers the whole of the CMK development area as defined in the Core Strategy, including Campbell Park. The neighbourhood area is primarily commercial in nature, albeit with some existing residential development and more planned to be delivered up to 2026 through the Core Strategy. The aim of the CMK business neighbourhood plan is to celebrate CMK's distinct design and heritage which contribute to the commercial attractiveness and quality of life, as well as promoting CMK's emerging role as the centre of a prosperous and growing region. The Plan provides investors, developers and landowners considerable flexibility in how they develop their plots but asks them to take greater responsibility in helping to build a successful city centre.
- 1.8 The Plan aims to:
- encourage the expansion of the diversity of the retail offer of CMK
 - encourage the development of offices in line with the development proposed in the Core Strategy
 - reserve key sites for major opportunities
 - encourage the delivery of the 5,000 homes planned for CMK in the Core Strategy and
 - enrich the social, cultural and sporting life of the city centre with new facilities.

2. Policy context

- 2.1 The Milton Keynes Local Plan was formally adopted December 2005. The Local Plan provides the statutory land use planning framework for Milton Keynes and a number of strategic policies, including Policy S5 for Central Milton Keynes.
- 2.2 The Council submitted the Core Strategy in March 2011. The submission document contains the vision, objectives and strategic policies for the future of Milton Keynes to 2026 – Policy CS7 applies to CMK. Following the examination of the Core Strategy in summer 2012, and subject to the Inspector's report, it is anticipated that the Core Strategy will be adopted in July 2013. Upon adoption, Policy CS7 will replace Policy S5 from the Milton Keynes Local Plan, although a number of detailed Town Centre and Shopping policies in the local plan will remain as saved policies.
- 2.3 Although the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and the Core Strategy, it can promote more development, but must not propose less. It will also provide a more local context to the non-strategic policies of the Local Plan.
- 2.4 The Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to public consultation in accordance with the relevant regulations prior to its adoption.

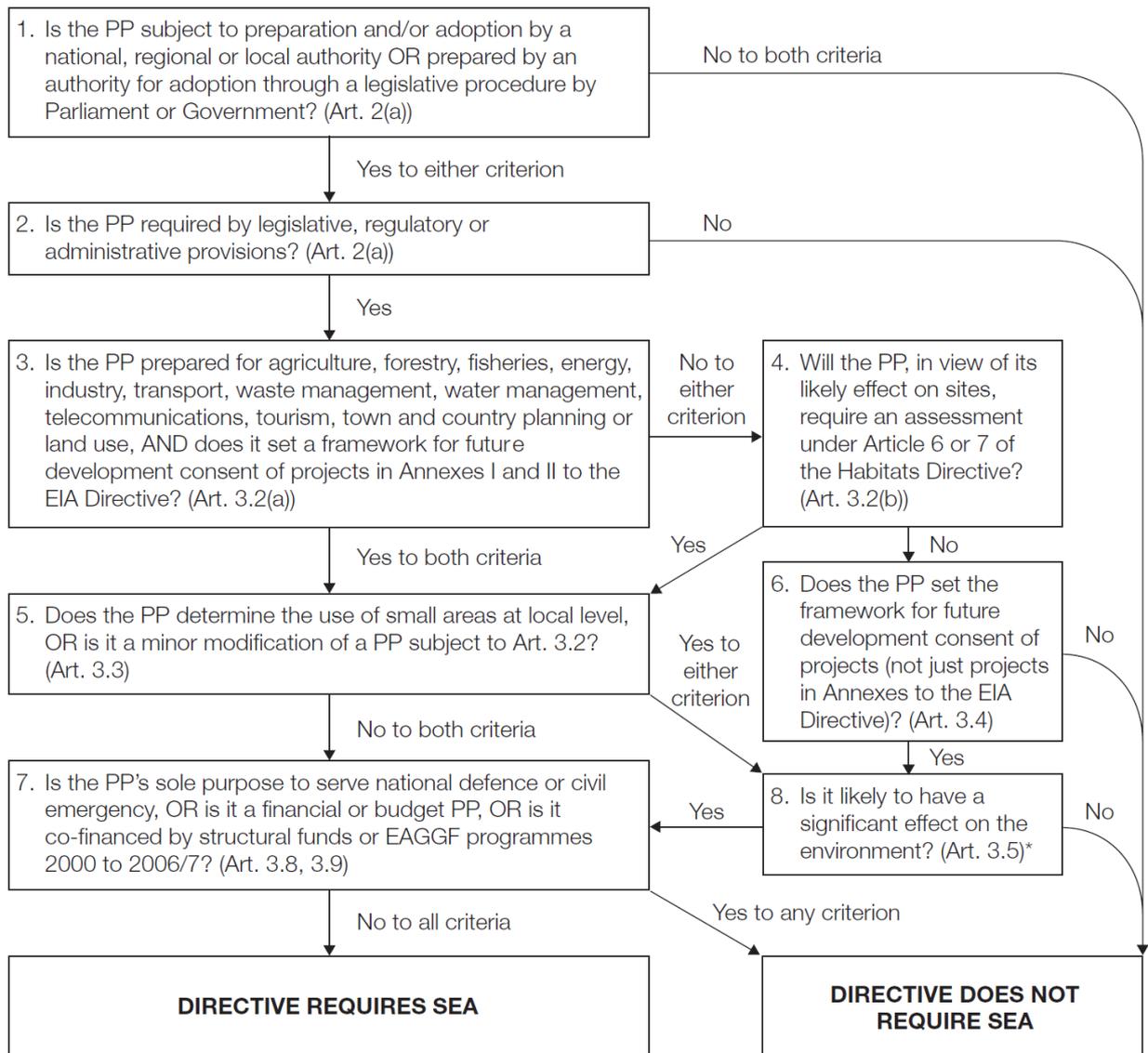
3. SEA Screening

- 3.1 The requirement for a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) is set out in the “Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004”. There is also practical guidance on applying European Directive 2001/42/EC produced by the ODPM (now DCLG)¹. These documents have been used as the basis for this screening report.

- 3.2 Neighbourhood Plans must be screened to establish whether or not they will require Strategic Environmental Assessment. The ODPM practical guidance provides a checklist approach based on the SEA regulations to help determine whether SEA is required. This guide has been used as the basis on which to assess the need for SEA as set out below.

Figure 1: Establishing the need for SEA

¹ A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2005) (ODPM)



*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

Figure 2: Establishing the need for SEA of the Neighbourhood Plan

Stage	Answer	Reason
1. Is the SPD 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 of Government? (Article 2(a))	Yes	It will be prepared by the CMK Town Council with the CMK Alliance Steering Group and will be adopted by Milton Keynes Council under the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.
2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))	Yes	Although there is no requirement to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, they are subject to formal procedures and regulations laid down by national government. In light of the European Court of Justice ruling in the Case C-567/10 it is considered that this means the NP is 'required'.
3. Is the SPD 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))	No	The NP is prepared for town and country planning purposes but does not explicitly set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I or II of the EIA Directive.
4. Will the plan in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats directive?	No	The Core Strategy was screened and it was concluded that appropriate assessment was not required. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the Core Strategy and, although it can propose more development, it is unlikely to be significant enough to require assessment under the Habitats Directive.
6. Does the plan set the framework for future development consent of projects?	Yes	The Neighbourhood Plan will provide a framework for future development consent of projects in the area.
8. Is the SPD likely to have a significant effect on the environment?	See results of Figure 3: Determining the likely significance of effects	

Figure 3: Determining the likely significance of effects

SEA Directive Annex II: Criteria for determining likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5)		
Criteria	✓/✗	MKC Comment
<i>The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</i>		
1a) 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	✓	The NP will set a policy framework for the determination of planning applications for future development projects, in terms of location, nature and scale/ Once the Neighbourhood Plan has passed examination and its referendums, it will become part of the Development Plan for the area.
1b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	✓	The NP will form part of the statutory development plan for MK. It is influenced by the Core Strategy but may influence the preparation of future local plans for the area such as Plan MK.
1c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	✓	The achievement of sustainable development in one of the basic conditions that a Neighbourhood Plan must meet. The Business Neighbourhood Plan aims to deliver sustainable development by balancing economic growth with environmental and social matters.
1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	✗	It is not considered that there are any particular environmental problems relevant to the plan.
1e) 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).	✗	The SPD is unlikely to be directly relevant in regard to this criterion.
<i>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</i>		
2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	x	Overall the effects of the plan on SEA topics are considered to be neutral. Where new development might have a negative effect this will be reasonably long term, although the effect is potentially reversible as redevelopment can occur.
2b) The cumulative nature of the effects	x	The effects of the Neighbourhood Plan needs to be considered alongside the Core Strategy however it is not considered that the neighbourhood plan introduces

		<p>significant additional effects over and above those already considered in the SA for the Core Strategy.</p> <p>While the NP covers an area and sets a framework for what is likely to be a significant amount of development, the NP itself will not result in this development; the development could come forward with or without the NP.</p> <p>Given that the whole borough could potentially be covered by neighbourhood plans, each promoting policies and development, there could be a significant cumulative impact of multiple neighbourhood plans although as plans cannot overlap, their impact would be limited to the area that they cover.</p>
2c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects	✓	<p>Given the role of Central Milton Keynes as a key regional commercial centre, it is possible that the effects of the business neighbourhood plan on the economy could be more than local. The plan's policy that seeks to increase car parking standards for B1 development in CMK would be likely to see an increase in the number of car journeys into CMK. However, the policy would be likely to result in an increase of some 900 parking spaces over and above the 3,300 new spaces that the current planned level of development would generate. Given this context, it is not considered likely that there would be significant effects.</p>
2d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	x	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not require development to take place, it encourages and sets out policies to guide development. Its impact on human health is considered to be limited and it is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment due to accidents.</p>
2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	✓	<p>The effects on the economy of CMK are likely to extend beyond the NP boundary and beyond the CMK itself. Given the role of Central Milton Keynes as a key regional commercial centre, it is possible that the effects could extend beyond the Borough boundary.</p>

<p>2f) 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 III. intensive land-use</p>	✓	<p>The NP will cover an area which includes a listed building (the shopping centre building), and numerous examples of 20th century architecture meaning the area is valuable and vulnerable in this respect.</p>
<p>2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status</p>	x	<p>There are no areas or landscapes with these designations in Milton Keynes.</p>

4. SEA Conclusion

- 4.1 The Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Development Plan will provide a planning policy framework to assist with the delivery of the quantum of development as required by the Core Strategy. It is important to note that the NP sits within the context set by the Core Strategy in terms of the quantum and type of development envisaged for CMK and whilst the NP sets out policies designed to encourage certain uses to be located on certain sites, it does not make formal site allocations but remains flexible in this respect.
- 4.2 Whilst, due to the role of CMK as a regional centre for retail and employment, the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan on the economy, in particular, could spread beyond the plan boundary and beyond the city centre, it is considered that overall the plan will not have significant effects on the environment. It is, therefore, concluded that CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan does not need to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

5. **Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening**

5.1 Legal protection is afforded to habitats and species of European importance through Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna - known as the 'Habitats Directive'. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive require AA of plans to be undertaken. This involves assessing the contents of plans to ensure that their policies and proposals maintain the integrity of Natura 2000 sites. The assessment must determine whether the plan would adversely affect the nature conservation objectives of each site. Where negative effects can be identified, other options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.

5.2 The application of the precautionary principle through the Habitats Directive means that plans can only be permitted once it is shown that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. In the rare case of there being no alternatives available or over-riding reasons of public interest why a plan needs to be implemented, plans that do have negative impacts may still be approved.

6. **Screening for Appropriate Assessment**

6.1 At the request of Natural England, the CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan has been screened to determine whether the plan is likely to have any significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The screening opinion is attached in **Appendix A**.

8. **Consultation**

8.1 The three statutory bodies for the purposes of SEA Screening are English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England. These three bodies were consulted for a period of 5 weeks starting on 21 May 2013. The following responses were received:

English Heritage: agrees with the Council's conclusion that the CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan does not need to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Environment Agency: the Environment Agency is in agreement with MKC's [conclusions](#) ie that the CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan does not need to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Natural England: No comments received.

9. **Contact**

Further information can be obtained from:

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Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Development Plan Revised Pre Submission version, May 2013

Appropriate Assessment Screening

1. Introduction

This document has been produced to determine whether policies and proposals in the Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Plan will have a significant adverse impact on any Natura 2000 sites.

The screening was requested by Natural England in their response to a draft Screening Opinion of a previous draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan in October 2012. The initial opinion of Milton Keynes Council was that as the Core Strategy HRA screening concluded that Appropriate Assessment was not required and, as the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Core Strategy, then it too is unlikely to require Appropriate Assessment. The view of Natural England is that, as a plan in its own right, the Neighbourhood Plan should be screened for its effect on N2K sites.

Principally, the role of this document is to report on the 'screening' process undertaken to determine whether the Business Neighbourhood Plan will have any significant impact on the Natura 2000 sites and as such whether a full Appropriate Assessment (AA) will need to be undertaken.

1.1 Background

Legal protection is afforded to habitats and species of European importance through Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna – known as the 'Habitats Directive'. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive require AA of plans to be undertaken. This involves assessing the contents of plans to ensure that their policies and proposals maintain the integrity of Natura 2000 sites. The assessment must determine whether the plan would adversely affect the nature conservation objectives of each site. Where negative effects can be identified, other options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.

There are two types of Natura 2000 site – Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). SACs are mainly habitat features, stemming from the Habitats Directive, whereas SPAs are features comprising populations of bird species. A number of qualifying features are identified for each Natura 2000, for which conservation objectives have been developed.

The purpose of AA is to assess the impacts of land-use plans, such as the Neighbourhood Plan, against the conservation objectives of any related Natura 2000 sites. The assessment must determine whether the plan would adversely affect the nature conservation objectives of each site. Where negative effects can be identified, other options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.

The application of the precautionary principle through the Habitats Directive means that plans, such as the Core Strategy, can only be permitted once it is shown that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. In the rare case of there being no alternatives available or over-riding reasons of public interest why a plan needs to be implemented, plans that do have negative impacts may still be approved.

1.2 The stages of Appropriate Assessment

There are three stages in carrying out Appropriate Assessment,:

1. Determining whether the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects- the screening stage
2. Appropriate Assessment ascertaining the effect on site integrity
3. Mitigation & alternative solutions- Where there is a risk of the plan having adverse effects on the integrity of a site, there should be an examination of mitigation measures and alternative solutions.

Together these three stages are described as Appropriate Assessment, which should not be confused with the second task in the wider process.

This report covers stage 1- screening.

2. Screening

The screening process involves 3 main stages

1. Identifying relevant Natura 2000 sites
2. Summarising potential effects of the CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan on these Natura 2000 sites, including those in combination with other plans and programmes; and
3. Screening out those sites which are likely to be unaffected by the Core Strategy

2.1 Identifying Natura 2000 sites

Milton Keynes lies in an area void of any Natura 2000 sites. The nearest European site is the Chiltern Beechwoods to the south of the Borough although Natural England are of the view that the site would not be affected by Milton Keynes planning policy due to the distance of the site from Milton Keynes and there being no obvious impact pathways. However, in liaison with Natural England the Council has identified three sites that could potentially be affected by the Core Strategy, and other Local Development Documents, including the CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan due to the pathway provided by the Upper Nene and the River Great Ouse, which feed in to Natura 2000 sites. These sites are:

- **Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA** – the SPA designation is due to the site's importance as an internationally important assemblage of birds.

- **Ouse Washes SPA /SAC-** The SPA designation is due to the site's importance as an internationally important assemblage of birds. The presence of the spined loach (*Cobitis taenia*) – the clear water and abundant macrophytes, is particularly important in the Counter Drain, and a healthy population of spined loach is known to occur
- **Portholme SAC-** It is the largest surviving traditionally-managed meadow in the UK, with an area of 104 ha of alluvial flood meadow. Supports a small population of fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*.

2.2 Potential effects of the CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan (the NP)

The starting point for the NP is the quantum of development planned for Central Milton Keynes (CMK) in the Milton Keynes Core Strategy. The NP sets out detailed and local level policies for CMK and has to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for Milton Keynes. Central Milton Keynes is some 85 km upstream from upstream of the Ouse Washes SPA / SAC and some 20 km from the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits, which lie in a separate catchment area to Milton Keynes.

The Core Strategy proposals for CMK over the plan period to 2026 include an additional 5,000 houses (on top of existing commitments), associated services and facilities, including office development and the continuation of the focus of CMK as a regional shopping centre.

As such, the possible impacts of the NP on the identified Natura 2000 sites are identified as:

- Indirect effect through increased drain inputs and hard surface run off into the River Great Ouse associated with development of homes, employment sites and roads;
- Indirect effect through increased levels of input into the River Great Ouse through increased treated sewage effluent related to new development;
- Indirect effect through modification of the river corridor and flood plain by new roads, bridges, riverside development etc, needed to deliver the strategy
- Indirect effect through raising concentrations of phosphorus by increasing inputs into the River Great Ouse of treated sewage effluent related to new development.
- Indirect effect on air quality affecting the Upper Nene Valley Gravel pits through additional development and construction.

2.3 Screening of sites

The process of screening the Natura 2000 sites can be seen in the attached matrix. The data in the matrix is based on that collected for the screening of the Core Strategy which involved identifying and assessing existing data sources and consulting with the Environment Agency, who have the best scientific knowledge in the area of water quality and flow, the source through which the potential effects on the Natura 2000 sites had been identified.

3.0 Conclusions

As a result of the screening process it has been concluded that:

- The impact of the CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan on water flow will not be significant primarily because Milton Keynes already has a comprehensive flood management system in place that has ensured the effective control of water flows, alongside the continued growth of the city. The NP does not affect the continuation of this approach which is protected in the Core Strategy and which will ensure continued effective management of the flow of water into the Great Ouse from Milton Keynes.
- The Growth Strategy developed for the city has used flood risk maps as a key constraint to directions for growth. As such, the broad locations for growth to be identified in the Core Strategy are away from flood risk areas, further reducing the potential of the plan to have a significant impact on water flow. The NP does not change that position.
- Although the Core Strategy screening considered its effects in combination with other proposals in the MKSM sub region where it was noted that the majority of proposals affect the River Nene Catchment area (in the case of Northampton) and ultimately the Thames for Aylesbury Vale, it is important to note that NP does not affect development proposals within the River Nene Catchment.

Therefore, considering the above factors, it is concluded that any effect on the flow of water and subsequent impact on the Natura 2000 sites from policies and proposals in the Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Plan and other 'in-combination' plans and projects is likely to be minimal.

A summary of these conclusions and how they were drawn can be seen in Appendix 2- No significant effects table.

As a result of this screening process it has been concluded that the policies and proposals in the Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Plan are unlikely to have a significant impact on the identified Natura 2000 sites. Therefore there is no need to subject the plan to a full Appropriate Assessment.

Screening matrix for the Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Plan

<p>Brief description of the plan</p>	<p>The Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Plan is a neighbourhood plan prepared under the provisions of the Localism Act and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. It has been prepared by a team of volunteers representing the CMK business and residential community, led by CMK Town Council. It has to be prepared with regard to the NPPF and in general conformity with the Milton Keynes strategic planning policies. The NP provides a number of policies relating to the development and use of land within CMK.</p>
<p>Brief description of the Natura 2000 sites</p>	<p>Ouse Washes SAC- The Ouse Washes represent Spined Loach <i>Cobitis taenia</i> populations within the River Ouse catchment. The Counter Drain, with its clear water and abundant macrophytes, is particularly important, and a healthy population of spined loach is known to occur.</p> <p>Ouse Washes SPA- The main interest of the site is the internationally important birds. Much of the conservation importance of the SPA is due to its use as a functional washland, with extensive winter flooding and traditional forms of agricultural management, including grazing and mowing of permanent grassland and rotational ditch clearance, which forms the supporting habitat for the bird population. Recent summer flooding has affected the breeding birds and the traditional washland management regime. This may affect food availability for winter waterfowl. Nutrient enrichment continues to be a problem, possibly resulting in some</p>

plant species as well as some fish and invertebrate species declining.

Portholme SAC This large site in Cambridgeshire represents **lowland hay meadows** in eastern England. It is the largest surviving traditionally-managed meadow in the UK, with an area of 104 ha of alluvial flood meadow (7% of the total UK resource). There has been a long history of favourable management and very little of the site has suffered from agricultural improvement, and so it demonstrates good conservation of structure and function. It supports a small population of fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*.-

Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA -

This chain of both active and exhausted sand and gravel pits extends for approximately 35 kilometres along the alluvial deposits of the River Nene floodplain from Clifford Hill on the southern outskirts of Northampton, downstream to Thorpe Waterville, north of Thrapston. They form an extensive series of shallow and deep open waters which occur in association with a wide range of marginal features, such as sparsely-vegetated islands, gravel bars and shorelines, and habitats including reedswamp, marsh, wet-ditches, rush pasture, rough grassland and scattered shrub. This range of habitat and the varied topography of the lagoons provide valuable resting and feeding conditions for major concentrations of wintering waterbirds, especially ducks and waders. Species such as golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria* and lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* also spend time feeding and roosting on surrounding agricultural land outside

	the SPA.
Assessment criteria	
<p>Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), likely to give rise to impacts on Natura 2000 sites</p>	<p>The NP will set out planning policies to encourage the delivery of the quantum of development proposed for CMK in the Core Strategy. In terms of the impact of the plan on N2K sites, Central Milton Keynes lies some some 85 Km upstream of the Ouse Washes SPA / SAC an some 20 km from the boundary of the Upper Nene Gravel Pits SPA and is in a different river catchment area.</p> <p>The plan aims to celebrate CMK's distinct design and heritage which contribute to the commercial attractiveness and quality of life, as well as promoting CMK's emerging role as the centre of a prosperous and growing region. The Plan provides investors, developers and landowners considerable flexibility in how they develop their plots but asks them to take greater responsibility in helping to build a successful city centre.</p> <p>The Plan aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage the expansion of the diversity of the retail offer of CMK • encourage the development of offices in line with the development proposed in the Core Strategy • reserve key sites for major opportunities • encourage the delivery of the 5,000 homes planned for CMK in the Core Strategy and • enrich the social, cultural and sporting life of the city centre with new facilities.
<p>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination) with other plans or projects) on Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size and scale 	<p>The plan has no direct impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>It would not reduce the size and scale of any sites, involve any land-take, nor would it affect any Natura 2000 sites during any construction or</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land-take • Distance to the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site • Resource requirements (water abstraction etc...) • Emissions (disposal to land, water or air) • Excavation requirements • Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc... • Other 	<p>operations.</p> <p>There <i>could</i> however be indirect effects of resource requirements and emissions through water. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased drain inputs and hard surface run off into the River Great Ouse associated with development of homes, employment sites and roads; 2. Increased inputs to the Great Ouse through increased treated sewage effluent related to new development; 3. Modification of the river corridor and flood plain by new roads, bridges, riverside development etc, needed to deliver the strategy 4. Raised concentrations of total phosphorus by increased inputs into the River Ouse through treated sewage effluent related to new development. 5. Indirect effect on air quality affecting the Upper Nene Valley Gravel pits through additional development and construction.
<p>Describe any likely changes to the sites arising as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in habitat area • Disturbance to key species • Habitat or species fragmentation • Reduction in species density • Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc...) • Climate change 	<p>Increased input into the Great River Ouse <i>could</i> cause increased instances of flooding, which would have an impact on the habitats in the Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>An increase in sewage effluent discharged into the Great Ouse <i>could</i> affect water quality, disturbing the balance needed to support key species.</p> <p>The plan would not see any direct reduction in habitat area or direct fragmentation of habitats or species. It would not have any influence on the climate at the two sites.</p>
<p>Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 sites as a whole in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interference with the key relationships 	<p>Any change in water quality could affect the composition of aquatic macrophytes needed to support the</p>

<p>that define the structure of the site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site 	<p>Spined Loach in the Ouse Washes SAC. This could also possibly result in adverse impacts on the interest features of the SPA, through the decline of some plant species as well as some fish and invertebrate species, which could lead to a decline in the internationally important breeding and wintering birds, if nutrient enrichment continues.</p> <p>Any increase in water flow could have an impact on the flood patterns which support the function of the Ouse Washes SPA , and the Portholme SAC.</p> <p>Due to the limited pathways, the NP is not considered to have any impact on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pots area.</p>
<p>Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss • Fragmentation • Disruption • Disturbance • Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality) 	<p>The Environment Agency monitors the chemical and biological quality of river water through the UK.</p> <p>Monitoring results at 5 sites in Milton Keynes show 4 out of 5 have been in conformity with quality targets on a consistent basis since 1988, throughout the growth and development of Milton Keynes.</p> <p>Environment Agency research for the Regional Spatial Strategy shows that the Sewage Treatment Works at Cotton Farm in Milton Keynes has the potential to deal with the increased waste water treatment required to support housing growth.</p>
<p>Describe from the above those elements of the plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.</p>	<p>It has been concluded that the proposals in the plan, in isolation or in combination with other plans, will not have a significant impact on the Natura 2000 sites. This is explained fully in the 'No Significant Effects</p>

	Table' (Appendix 2).
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Appendix 2- No Significant Effects Table

Name of the project or plan	Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Plan
Name and location of the Natura 2000 sites	Ouse Washes SPA/SAC (Cambridgeshire/ Norfolk) and Portholme SAC (Cambridgeshire) The sites lie approximately 85 km downstream from the area covered by the Milton Keynes Core Strategy. Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA – the site lies some 20In from CMK, in a different catchment flood management area
Description of the plan	The Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Plan covers the area of CMK and Campbell Park. The designated Neighbourhood Area map is shown here: http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-policy/documents/CMK_final_map.pdf This is a neighbourhood plan that takes as its starting point the strategic policies in the Core Strategy.
Is the plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?	No
The assessment of significant effects	
Describe how the plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 sites.	The plan affects land uses upstream from the Great Ouse Natura 2000 sites and some 20kn away from the Upper Nene sites. In combination with the Core Strategy and other local plans, it will control the development of new houses and associated development planned for CMK. Natural England indicated that this has potential to impact indirectly on the two Natura 2000 sites through affecting the flow and quality of water in the Great River Ouse, which feeds into the sites and potentially on the Upper Nene sites.
Explain why these effects are not considered significant	<u>Water flow</u> It is considered that the impact of the NP on water flow will not be significant primarily because Milton Keynes already has a comprehensive flood management system in place that has ensured the effective control of

water flows, alongside the continued growth of the city. The Core Strategy continues this approach which, informed by the emerging Water Cycle Strategy, will ensure continued effective management of the flow of water into the Great Ouse from Milton Keynes. The NP does not change this situation.

The Growth Strategy developed for the city has used flood risk maps as a key constraint to directions for growth. As such, the broad locations for growth to be identified in the Core Strategy are away from flood risk areas, further reducing the potential of the plan to have a significant impact on water flow. Again, the NP does not alter this position.

In considering the NP in combination with other proposals in the region, it is noted that the majority of proposals outside of the NP and the MK Core Strategy affect the River Nene Catchment area (in the case of Northampton) and ultimately the Thames for Aylesbury Vale.

Therefore, considering the above factors, it is concluded that any effect on the flow of water and subsequent impact on the Natura 2000 sites from development in Milton Keynes and other 'in-combination' plans and projects is likely to be minimal.

Water Quality

In terms of water quality, Environment Agency monitoring figures show that since 1988, throughout the continued growth of the city, water quality levels have consistently been compliant with set targets at 4 out of the 5 monitoring stations, with only occasional failure to comply with targets. The one area where water quality has not complied with targets being the Broughton Brook tributary, which is a relatively minor watercourse in the catchment area.

Environment Agency reports suggest that existing Sewage Treatment facilities in Milton Keynes are adequate to cope with the increased in waste-water resulting from new development. It is felt

	<p>that any potential decrease in water quality in the Natura 2000 sites, resulting from increased levels of effluent discharged into the Great Ouse, will be negligible due to the distance (approximately 85km) between the point of discharge and the sites and the resultant dilution factor associated with the level of water in the catchment area. There are also stringent procedures in place through the Environment Agency that would prevent inappropriate levels of sewage effluent being discharged into the water course.</p> <p>As with water flow, the 'in-combination' effects on water quality of the NP and the Core Strategy, alongside other regional proposals will be insignificant due to the spread of impacts over various catchment areas.</p>	
List of agencies to be consulted	Environment Agency Natural England	
Response to consultation	<p>Initial consultation with Natural England on the Core Strategy proposals helped establish protected sites that could be affected by the Core Strategy and how this may occur.</p> <p>Consultation with the Environment Agency helped to confirm that the impacts of implementing the Core Strategy would not be significant.</p> <p>This was subsequently clarified with Natural England, who concurred with the conclusions of the screening report for the Core Strategy.</p>	
Data collected to carry out the assessment		
Who carried out the assessment?	Sources of data	Level of assessment completed

Milton Keynes Council, Spatial Planning Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Environment Agency data. • Environment Agency submission to the South East Plan EiP. • JNCC – UK SAC/ SPA site list 	The assessment took the form of a desktop study, utilising existing information and knowledge. Given the responses to higher level plans, the comments of the Environment Agency and the relationship between Milton Keynes and the Natura 2000 sites, it can be concluded that there is a high level of confidence in the assessment results.
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Overall conclusions

On the basis of the information collected it is the Council's opinion that the Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Plan, to which this screening relates is-

- a) not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European sites; and
- b) not likely to have significant effects on either of the three European sites nearest the neighbourhood plan area (including in combination with other plans and projects)

Accordingly, a full appropriate assessment will not be required of those effects under Regulation 48, 49 and 54 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994, before the Council decides to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for this plan.

