



Bierton Neighbourhood Plan

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

FINAL Screening Outcome

Version: 1.1

Online version: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/insert-link-to-policy>

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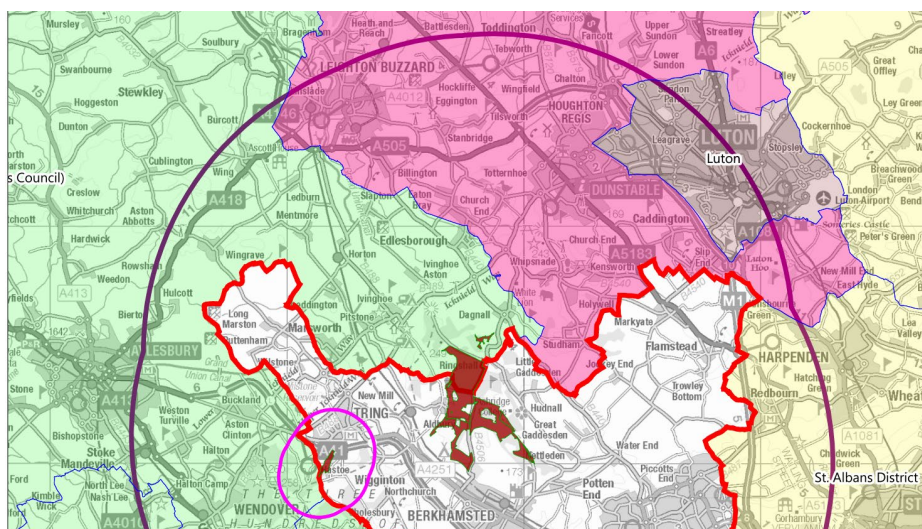
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Screening Update

1. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) places a requirement for competent authorities – here the Council – to ascertain whether a plan or project will have any adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.
2. To assess whether a full Appropriate Assessment is required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2017 (as amended), the Council undertook a screening assessment of the Birton with Broughton and Kingsbrook Draft Neighbourhood Plan the final screening was produced in August 2020.

The Need for HRA Screening Update

3. The Council has decided to issue an update to the August 2020 screening to account for the more recent evidence of recreational pressures affecting the Ashridge Commons and Woods/ Tring Woodlands SSSIs within the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. This evidence, an ecological report by Footprint Ecology, was published by Dacorum Borough Council in March 2022. [New strategy to protect Ashridge Estate and Tring Woodlands \(dacorum.gov.uk\)](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk) The neighbourhood area is almost all within the 12.6km Ashridge Commons and Woods Zone of Influence which runs in radius from the Ashridge Commons & Woods SSSI to the existing urban eastern side of Aylesbury.



Excerpt of map showing the Zone of Influence – The designated Berton neighbourhood area is immediately east of the existing built-up area of Aylesbury. The purple line is the 12.6 km ZOI boundary, Buckinghamshire Council area is in green, red line is the boundary with Dacorum BC, the SSSIs are show in brown https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/zone-of-influences.pdf?sfvrsn=e982079e_2

4. The Council's advice (published March 2022) for planning applications coming forward is that a Habitat Regulations Assessment is needed in the Zone of Influence for any applications that would increase the number of homes on a site. <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building-or-improving-your-property/chiltern-beechwoods-special-area-of-conservation-faqs/#further-information-and-faqs>
5. In terms of what is happening now on the recreational pressures issue, the council will continue to work with partner organisations to enable Buckinghamshire Council to develop a mitigation strategy for the recreational pressures. This is likely to be a financial contribution by way of a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMM) and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) provisions. Any financial contribution would be secured through a S106 bilateral or unilateral undertaking. The financial contributions will go towards mitigation projects for the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. Mitigation is likely to include measures which would avoid, reduce, or divert recreational pressures on these sensitive areas. Such measures could include financial contributions towards additional rangers, education, interpretation, physical work on sensitive sites and an access strategy. There would be monitoring of the success of such actions.

Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan

6. Comparing the draft scope for a neighbourhood plan (as used in the August 2020 HRA Screening) to the Regulation 14 consultation version the Council has no change to make to section 5 of the HRA screening assessment issued in August 2020. This is because the neighbourhood plan that has come forward (at Pre Submission) is the same substantively as was scoped and screened. There are no development allocations, no housing target and the only new housing that would come forward under the plan's own policies would be infill development of up to 4 homes in

development boundaries. Policies in the neighbourhood plan are also consistent with the Adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (September 2022) Policy D3 that already allows for infill development in medium villages, including Bierton.

Screening Update - Outcome

7. The Council also has no change to make to the HRA screening outcome of August 2020 set out in Section 6 of that report.
8. Buckinghamshire Council therefore considers that, following this Final Screening statement Update, the Draft Neighbourhood Plan does **not** require any further HRA work (such as an Appropriate Assessment). Therefore, the plan would not be likely to have any significant effects on a Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area.
9. Natural England responded on 1st July 2022 to agree with the Council's draft screening response.

Consultation

10. A consultation took place with Natural England from 17 June to 15 July 2022 (with this Update, the neighbourhood plan and the Council's August 2020 HRA Screening). Their response is reflected in this final report and the response received is overleaf.

Natural England Response

1 July 2022

Dear David,

Planning consultation: Bierton with Broughton and Kingsbrook Neighbourhood Plan - Updated HRA Screening

Our ref: 396972

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 16 June 2022 which was received by Natural England on the same day.

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.

Based on the plan submitted, Natural England agree with the assessment that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require an HRA.

Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

Yours sincerely,
Ellen

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<https://www.gov.uk/natural-england>

