

BRIGSTOCK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

October 2017

Draft Habitat
Regulations Assessment
Screening Statement

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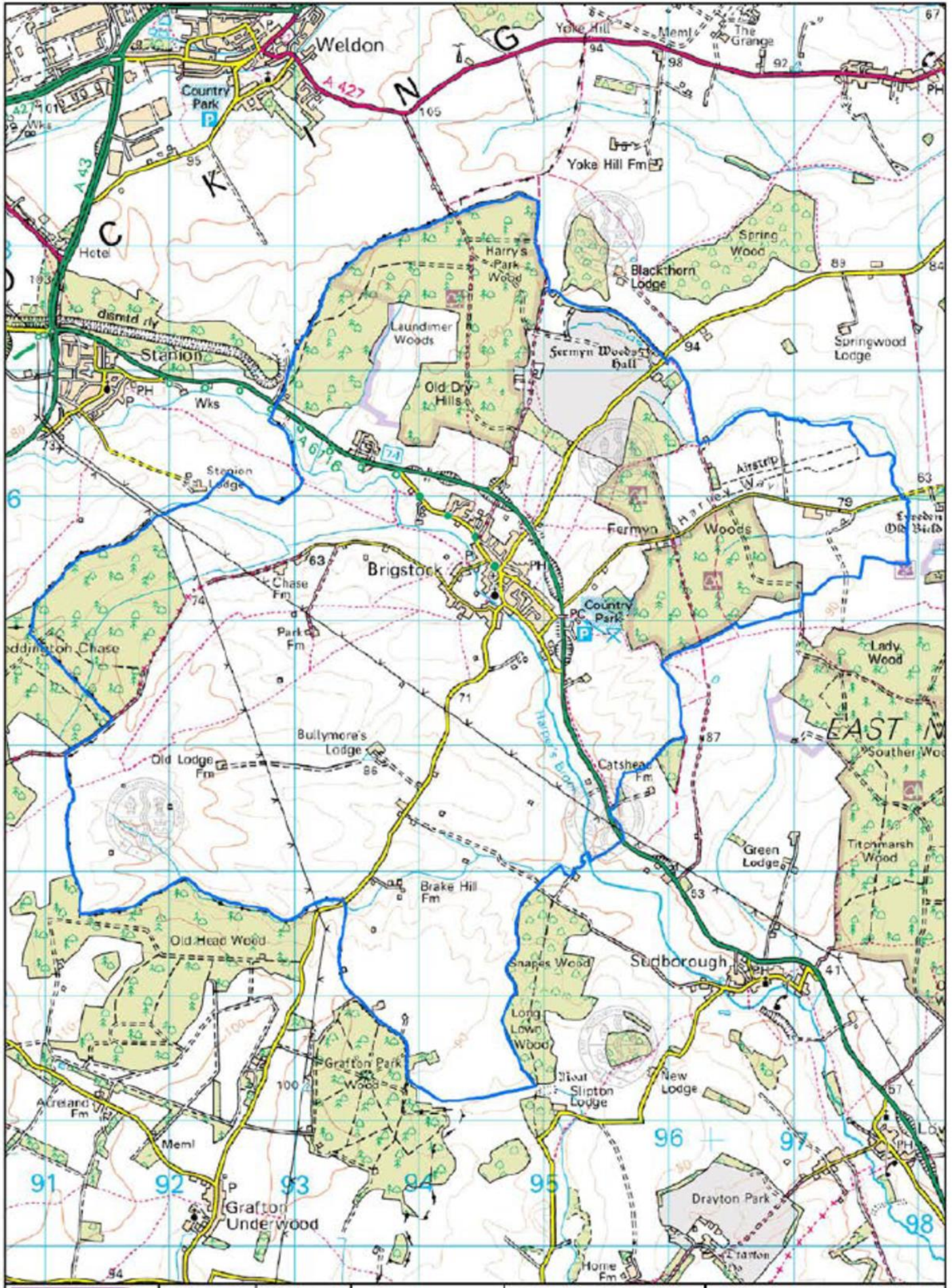
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1. Introduction

This Habitat Regulations Screening Report has been undertaken to support the Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan which is being produced by the Brigstock Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (general) Regulations 2012.

The aim of this Screening Report is to assess whether there are likely to be significant effects on European Sites as a result of the emerging policies set out in the pre-submission draft Neighbourhood Plan that would necessitate the production of a full Habitat Regulations Assessment.

This report assesses, as far as practical, whether there are likely to be any significant effects on the qualifying features of European Designated Sites within or relatively proximate to the approved Neighbourhood Plan area, which comprises the civil parish of Brigstock.





 Scale: 1:38,000

Planning Services
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Brigstock Proposed Neighbourhood Area

2. Details of the Neighbourhood Plan

Title of the plan:

Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan.

Name of Qualifying Body and Local Planning Authority:

The qualifying body preparing the Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan is Brigstock Parish Council. The Local Planning Authority is East Northamptonshire Council.

Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan contact point:

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Location and spatial extent of the Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan:

The Neighbourhood Plan covers the Brigstock Neighbourhood Area, comprising the parish of Brigstock in Northamptonshire (Figure 1).

The Brigstock Neighbourhood Development Plan area is situated in Rockingham Forest to the south-east of the town of Corby in East Northamptonshire District. The village of Brigstock lies on the west side of the A6116 on Harper's Brook- a tributary of the river Nene.

Timeframe of the Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan:

To 2031.

Main aims of the Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan:

The main aims of the Neighbourhood Plan are as represented in the following diagram:



Relationship with the Local Plan:

The Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 and the remaining policies from the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan.

The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was adopted in July 2016. It is the strategic Part 1 Local Plan for Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough. It outlines a big picture to be developed in more detail through the Part 2 Local Plans prepared by the District and Borough Councils and by Neighbourhood Plans prepared by Neighbourhood Planning Groups. A Habitat Regulations Assessment was undertaken alongside plan-making.

The Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP), the Local Plan Part 2 (site specific policies), was adopted by East Northamptonshire Council on 18 July 2011. Many policies from the RNOTP were replaced by the new Joint Core Strategy policies, with effect from 14 July 2016.

Will the Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan propose allocations? And if so, will these be over and above those likely to be included in the Local Plan?

The JCS's housing requirement for East Northamptonshire equates to 8,400 dwellings (420 dwellings per year) over the period 2011-2031. Of this, the rural housing requirement for East Northamptonshire district is 820 dwellings over the plan period. There is no specific housing provision Brigstock parish.

The Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan makes a housing provision for Brigstock for the period 2011 to 2031 of around 60 dwellings. This figure is based on recent studies undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The latest version of the Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan anticipates allocating one new site for the development of 25 dwellings in Brigstock village.

3. Legislative Background

Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive states that:

Any plan or project not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

The purpose of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is therefore to ensure the protection of European Designated Sites (Natura 2000) wherever practicable. European Designated Sites are designed to form an ecologically coherent network of designated spaces across Europe.

European Designated Sites, (Natura 2000) include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas for Conservation (SAC). As a matter of policy the government also expects authorities to treat Ramsar sites, candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC) and proposed Special Protection Areas (pSPA) as if they are European Designated Sites for the purpose of considering development proposals that may affect them.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which include the need to undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

4. North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Habitat Regulations Assessment

The Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area.

The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was adopted in July 2016. It is the strategic Part 1 Local Plan for Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough. It outlines a big picture to be developed in more detail through the Part 2 Local Plans prepared by the District and Borough Councils and by Neighbourhood Plans prepared by Neighbourhood Planning Groups.

In 2012 a draft Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment (Likely Significant Effects) exercise for the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy was undertaken for consultation. Following comments from Natural England in 2013 a Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment (Likely Significant Effects) exercise for the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy was undertaken.

The Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment concluded that any policies and developments outlined within the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, potential non-strategic sites or sites that have submitted a planning application, but has not yet been granted will not lead to an adverse effect on the integrity of Rutland Water SPA, SAC, Ramsar site, Barnack Hills and Holes SAC, Nene Washes SPA/SAC/Ramsar site or Orton Pit SAC either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. As such, it is considered that the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy will have no effects on Integrity of the above mentioned designated sites.

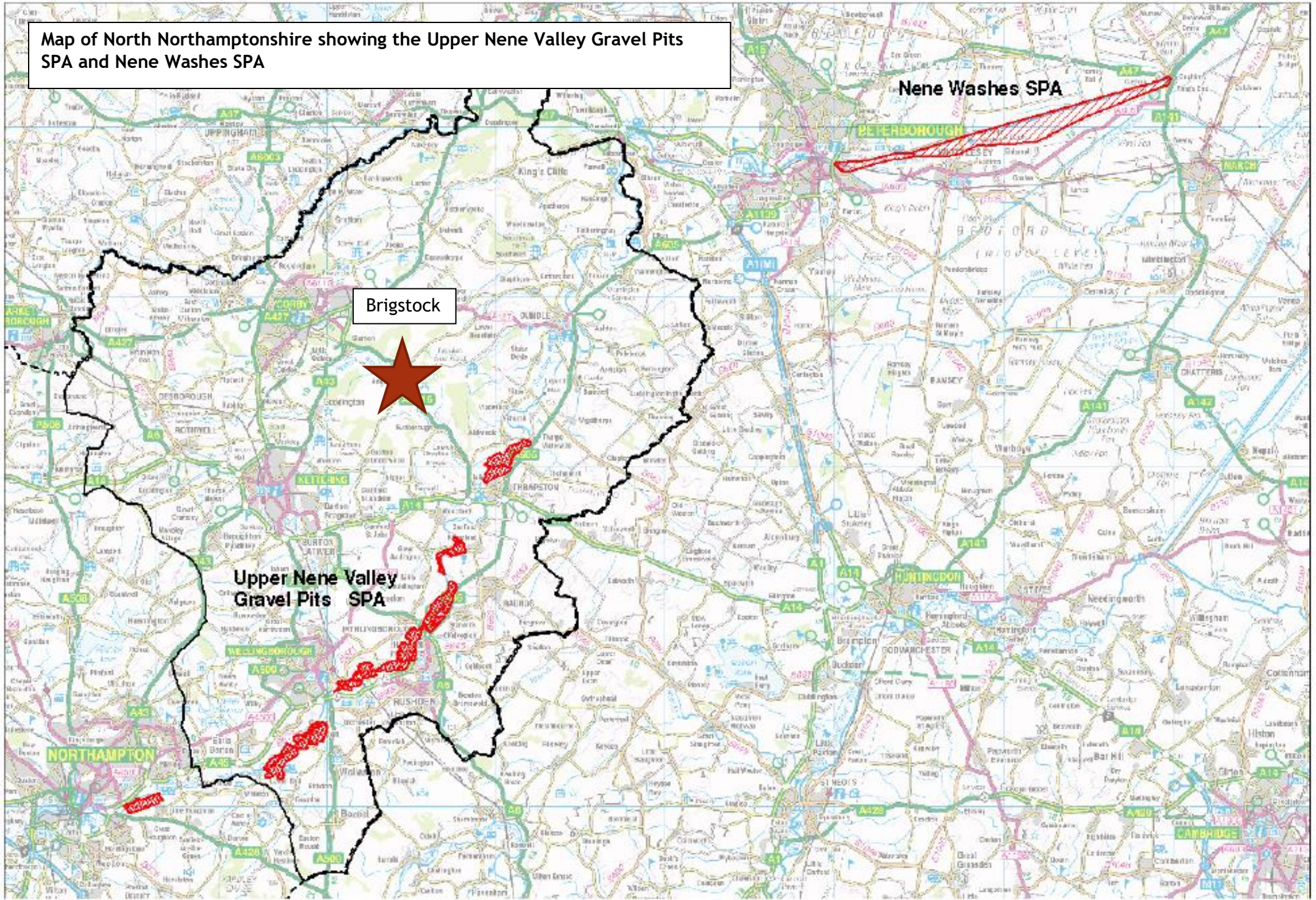
However, there was potential for effects on integrity of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar site as a result of the current policies, Strategic sites and proposed nonstrategic sites within 3-4km of the designated site.

Potential exists for new residential and employment sites to affect the integrity of the Nene Washes SAC site, due to the catchment for the Harper's Brook/River Nene. This issue cannot be explored in detail until the application stage as it is only at that stage that detailed water quality and WwTW capacity analyses are possible. However, at this stage, the statutory water company has not raised any concerns regarding the ability to service the expected levels of development in North Northamptonshire, so it is considered that the Joint Local Plan will not impact upon the integrity of the SPA.

Recommendations have been made for avoidance and mitigation measures for existing Strategic sites near the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits and Nene Washes designated sites. These recommendations can be translated to additional potential non-strategic sites, or other planning applications within near the designated site.

The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Habitat Regulations Assessment makes it clear that the focus for Habitat Regulations Screening in connection with the Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan should be potential for the Plan, by itself or in combination with other Plans, policies or programmes to give rise to significant adverse impacts upon the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and the Nene Washes SAC.

Map of North Northamptonshire showing the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Nene Washes SPA



5. Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits is located within Northamptonshire and is an area approximately 35km in length and approximately 1360ha in size. It is located within 0.5km of Wellingborough, Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough. The Brigstock Neighbourhood Area is about 5km to the north-west.

The site comprises a chain of extant and extinct gravel pits that follow alluvial deposits along the River Nene. It is dominated by a mix of shallow and deeper inland waterbodies, with associated marginal vegetation, improved grassland and nationally scarce wet broad-leaved deciduous woodland dominated by white willow (*Salix alba*) with crack willow (*S. fragilis*) and occasionally ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Osier (*S. viminalis*) and grey willow (*S. cinereal*). The site contains internationally important populations of nonbreeding wintering waterbirds that have been found in numbers in excess of 20,000 individuals.

The site's conservation objectives have been taken into account including consideration of the citation for the site and information supplied by Natural England. The potential significant effects of the proposals on the international nature conservation interests for which the site was designated may be summarised as:

- Changes in water quality related to increased levels of sewerage outfall (increased phosphate loading) and diffuse pollution sources.
- Indirect disturbance and environmental nuisance (air quality, noise, lighting, visitor pressure) leading to a decrease in key species populations over time.

6. Nene Washes SAC

Nene Washes is located to the east of Peterborough within Cambridgeshire. It is located approximately 25km east of Brigstock. The designated site is being considered under the Appropriate Assessment as it is located downstream of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits designated site on the River Nene.

The SPA is 1517ha, the Ramsar site is 1300ha and the SPA is 88ha. The SPA and Ramsar site consist of one of the UKs last remaining areas of natural washland habitat. The grassland habitats are traditionally used to accommodate seasonal uptake of flood waters and are cattle grazed. The mosaic habitat and swards are an important feature for summer ground nesting and foraging birds. In the winter months birds feed within small pockets of arable land. The SAC consists of the 14th century dyke Moreton's Leam which is located to the south of the SPA and Ramsar site. The site is regularly used by bird populations displaced by high flood water from the Ouse Washes SAC, SPA Ramsar site.

The Nene Washes supports internationally important populations of wildfowl and waders. In addition it is noted for its populations of spined loach, scarce plants and vulnerable and rare invertebrates associated with remnant fenland habitat.

The key environmental vulnerabilities for the site are:

- Significant disturbance to wintering birds as a result of activities connected with ongoing urban development;
- Increased disturbance to wintering birds by increasing numbers of public with dogs using the public rights of way. Demand for access and formal / informal recreational activities within the Nene Valley are increasing. In addition the area is used for recreational activities such as water sports and fishing;
- Habitat succession from short grassland to rank grassland, scrub / woodland due to lack of grazing;
- Invasive non-native species are present within the site such as water pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*), Nuttall's Pondweed (*Elodea nuttallii*) and New Zealand pigmyweed (*Crassula helmsii*); and
- Maintenance of water quality and water quantity.

7. Screening Assessment

The table below provides an assessment of any likely significant effect of each Neighbourhood Plan policy on the European Designated Sites. For the purposes of this assessment the policies appraised are those that were issued in the Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan Draft Plan for Regulation 14 Consultation (June 2017).

Key

- No likely significant effect (NLSE) on the site's qualifying features
- Likely significant effect (LSE) on the site's qualifying features
- Uncertain whether it is NSLE or LSE

Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Comments	Likely effect in identified sites	
		Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	Nene Washes SPA
Policy B1: Housing Provision The housing provision for Brigstock for the period 2011 to 2031 is around 60 dwellings.	Taking account of existing commitments, the residual housing requirement that needs to be planned for would be around 35 new homes. This policy aims to support a limited scale of development that is sufficiently distant from the European Sites to cause any direct significant effects.	NLSE	NLSE
Policy B2: Infill Permission for housing development within the Brigstock Village boundary will be supported	This policy aims to support windfall development within the village boundary.	NLSE	NLSE
Policy B3: North of Stanion Road Some 1.9 hectares of land north of Stanion Road, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for housing development.	Site specific criteria requires development to incorporate an appropriately designed, constructed and maintained sustainable drainage system. Providing the policy criteria are observed in considering the scheme design, this will avoid impacts to surrounding ecologically important sites.	NLSE	NLSE
Policy B4: Housing Mix New housing development shall	This Policy does not seek to deliver new development. The ambition of this policy is to address the	NLSE	NLSE

Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Comments	Likely effect in identified sites	
		Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	Nene Washes SPA
provide for a mix of housing types	<p>imbalance in the existing housing stock and to enable a greater number of smaller dwellings to be built in Brigstock to meet local needs.</p> <p>It is, therefore, unlikely to have a significant negative effect on any of the qualifying features or any in combination effects, with other projects and plans.</p>		
<p>Policy B5: Affordable Housing The need for affordable housing will be largely met by identified housing developments identified. On windfall housing developments of 11 dwellings or more, the minimum affordable housing provision is 40%. Affordable housing may also be permitted on rural exception sites within or adjoining the Brigstock Village Boundary.</p>	<p>The ambition of this policy is to create clarity of outcome for 'exception site' development if or when it occurs in Brigstock. It creating the mechanism to demonstrate whether there is local support or not should proposals come forward. Should this type of development occur the policy ensures local people can access the affordable housing proposal.</p> <p>It is, therefore, unlikely to have a significant negative effect on any of the qualifying features or any in combination effects, with other projects and plans.</p>	NLSE	NLSE
<p>Policy B6: Countryside The Countryside will be protected.</p>	<p>This Policy does not seek to deliver new development. The ambition of this policy is to protect and retain the character of the local countryside.</p> <p>It is, therefore, unlikely to have a significant negative effect on any of the qualifying features or any in combination effects.</p>	NLSE	NLSE

Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Comments	Likely effect in identified sites	
		Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	Nene Washes SPA
<p>Policy B7: Landscape Buffer The open and undeveloped character of the Brigstock Buffer Zone will be retained.</p>	<p>This policy aims to protect a local green buffer zone. This policy is not likely to effect the qualifying features of designated sites due to proximity of the neighbourhood area to designated sites.</p>	NLSE	NLSE
<p>Policy B8: Landscape Character and Locally Important Views Development should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape.</p>	<p>This policy seeks to protect landscape character.</p>	NLSE	NLSE
<p>Policy B9: Rockingham Forest Within Brigstock parish the regeneration of Rockingham Forest and the strengthening of the Harper's Brook Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Corridor will be supported.</p>	<p>This policy aims to protect and enhance Green Infrastructure in the neighbourhood area. This is likely to have positive effect within the neighbourhood area but no likely effect on any of the site's qualifying features due to proximity. Some minor positive effects may result from protecting GI adjacent to Harper's brook- a tributary of the river Nene</p>	NLSE	NLSE
<p>Policy B10: Ecology and Biodiversity Development should not harm the network of local ecological features and habitats.</p>	<p>There are opportunities to incorporate habitat creation within developments to increase their sustainability and create landscape scale habitat connectivity.</p>	NLSE	NLSE
<p>Policy B11: Local Green Spaces</p>	<p>This policy seeks to designate Local Green Spaces.</p>	NLSE	NLSE

Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Comments	Likely effect in identified sites	
		Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	Nene Washes SPA
Four sites have been designated as Local Green Spaces.			
Policy B12: Community Services and Facilities Development that would result in the loss of the following facilities will not be supported.	This policy aims to support the retention of existing services and facilities.	NLSE	NLSE
Policy B13: Infrastructure New development will be supported by the provision of new or improved infrastructure, together with financial contributions for off-site infrastructure requirements.	This policy aims to support the timely delivery of infrastructure.	NLSE	NLSE
Policy B14: Wallis's Mill The re-use of Wallis's Mill for business use or dwellinghouses is supported.	This policy aims to support re-use of this building. Although no criteria has been outlined to consider any development against them, the development will be within the village centre and not at risk of affecting the European Sites.	NLSE	NLSE
Policy B15: Local Heritage Assets Development proposals should take account of local heritage assets or their setting.	To conserve and enhance heritage in new development where appropriate.	NLSE	NLSE
Policy B16: Design Only developments which reflects the distinctive, traditional character	This Policy seeks to address design issues and does not seek to deliver new development.	NLSE	NLSE

Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Comments	Likely effect in identified sites	
		Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	Nene Washes SPA
of Brigstock and meet the requirements of the Brigstock Village Design Statement will be supported.			
<p>Policy B17: Construction Method Statements Other than for minor development, prior to the commencement of development a Construction Method Statement shall be prepared.</p>	This Policy seeks to address the construction methods of new developments and does not seek to deliver new development.	NLSE	NLSE
<p>Policy B18: Sudborough Road Employment Area The Sudborough Road Employment Area will be safeguarded for employment development.</p>	This policy seeks to retain existing employment opportunities.	NLSE	NLSE
<p>Policy B19: Rural Economy The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in the Countryside through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings will be supported.</p>	<p>This policy may result in new buildings or extensions for employment or business uses within Brigstock parish. The ambition of this policy is to see the continuation of a thriving local community, supporting local business and employment. Any development will be in keeping and of small scale. It is, therefore, unlikely to have a significant negative effect on any of the qualifying features or any in combination effects.</p>	NLSE	NLSE
<p>Policy B20: Brigstock Camp</p>	The policy concern the re-development of a previously	NLSE	NLSE

Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Comments	Likely effect in identified sites	
		Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	Nene Washes SPA
<p>The deployment of a large-scale solar farm will be supported provided the installations are removed after 25 years and the whole site planted with trees and managed as woodland thereafter.</p> <p>The redevelopment of the brownfield element of Brigstock Camp for the following uses will be supported.</p>	<p>developed site. This policy is not likely to effect the qualifying features of designated sites due to proximity of the neighbourhood area to designated sites.</p>		

8. Conclusion

The assessment suggests that there are likely to be no significant negative effects on the European Designated Sites resulting from the Policies detailed within the draft Brigstock Neighbourhood Plan.

Therefore, based on the submitted draft, a full Habitat Regulations Assessment is not required.