



Great Brickhill Neighbourhood Plan 2026

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

Screening Outcome

March 2026

Last updated: 27 March 2026

Version: 1

1. Summary

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 HRA (Habitats Regulations Assessment) Appropriate Assessment is required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2017 (as amended), the Council has undertaken a screening assessment of the Great Brickhill Draft Neighbourhood Plan.
3. Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) are a way of ensuring the environmental implications of decisions are considered before any decisions are made. The need for environmental assessment of plans and programmes is set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Under these regulations, Neighbourhood Plans may require SEA if they could have significant environmental effects. A plan or project that has been identified as triggering an Appropriate Assessment is also required to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
4. To assess whether a SEA / HRA are required, the local planning authority must undertake a screening process. This must be subject to consultation with the three consultation bodies: Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Following consultation, the results of the screening process must be detailed in a screening statement, which is required to be made available to the public.
5. If a Neighbourhood Plan as drafted is considered to have potential significant environmental effects through the screening process, then the conclusion will be that the preparation of a SEA and/ or Appropriate Assessment is necessary.
6. Buckinghamshire Council considers that, following this Screening statement, the Great Brickhill Neighbourhood Plan Scope does **not** have potential to introduce significant environmental effects so does **not** require an SEA and does **not** require an HRA Appropriate Assessment.

7. A consultation took place with the statutory bodies, Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England for five weeks between the 5 February and 13 March 2026. Responses were not received by Historic England or The Environment Agency and therefore the consultation was extended until 25 March 2026. No further comments were received. The response and conclusions from Natural England are reflected in the final report.
8. The screening statement follows

2. The Great Brickhill Neighbourhood Plan - draft

9. The Parish Council has prepared a draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan, following completion of the required Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation.
10. The plan:
 - covers the plan period to 2035,
 - does not allocate any sites for development,
 - will designate Local Green Spaces,
 - contains policies on design guidance and coding, protecting landscape and rural character, enhancing biodiversity and green spaces, drainage and environmental quality, housing mix for ageing population needs, safeguarding heritage assets, protecting community facilities, improving infrastructure and transport.
 - Policy GB8.1: The 'Land north of the A4146' sets out an area-specific approach to address the issues affecting the location shown in the Neighbourhood Plan. This policy is not allocating land for development.
11. There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the NA. The Chiltern Beechwoods SAC is 16km South of the Neighbourhood Area. The Kings and Bakers Woods and Heaths SSSI is adjacent to the Southeast border of the Neighbourhood Area.

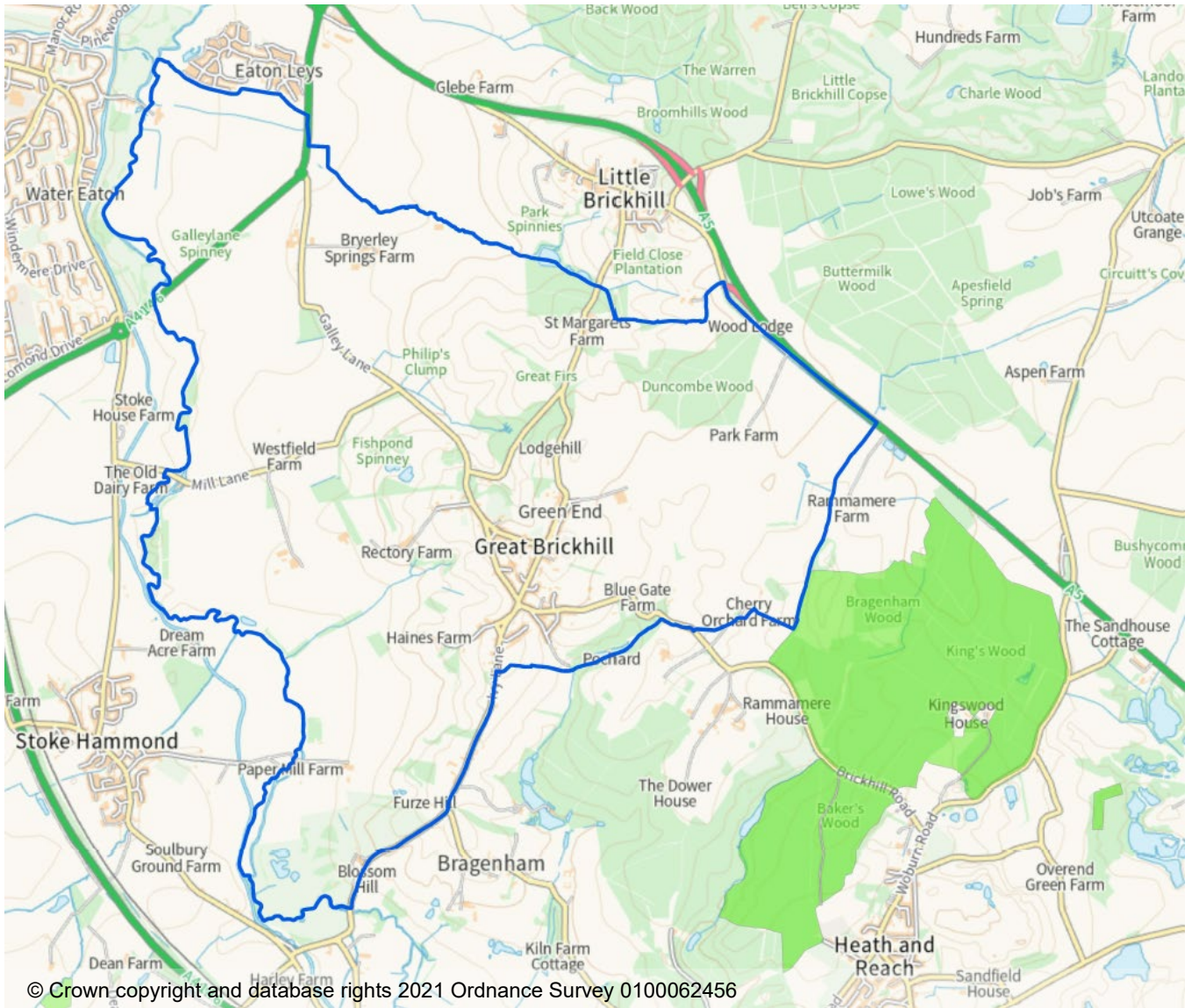


Figure 1: Map showing the location of the Kings and Bakers Wood and Heaths SSSI

3. Buckinghamshire Council's Draft Screening Opinion

12. The Council has reviewed the information provided by Great Brickhill Parish Council (Appendix 1) and agrees that the conclusions are consistent with the Council's assessment.

3.1. Strategic Environmental Assessment

13. In undertaking the SEA screening, the Council has assessed the scope, content, and potential effects of the GBNP against the SEA Regulations criteria. Key considerations include:
- The plan does not allocate land for development.
 - Policies are protective or enhancement led, seeking to conserve local character and the natural environment.
 - Future windfall proposals will be determined within the existing Local Plan framework, which has already been subject to full SEA.
14. Given the types of policies and the absence of land allocations, it is considered that the Great Brickhill Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects.

3.2. Habitats Regulations Assessment

15. Great Brickhill is not located within or immediately adjacent to any European designated sites. The nearest SAC is 16km to the south, the Chiltern Beechwoods nearest extent near Ringshall. Therefore, no HRA is needed due to distance. The plan does not allocate sites or promote growth beyond what is already anticipated in the Local Plan. The council is satisfied that the plan will not lead to any significant effects on European designated sites.

4. Conclusion

16. Having considered the content of the Great Brickhill Neighbourhood Plan the Council concludes that:
 - **A Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required, and**
 - **A Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required.**
17. This is because the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate development sites and is not expected to result in significant environmental effects or have any likely significant effects on European designated sites. Any windfall sites that may come forward during the plan period will be assessed against the policy framework provided by the Neighbourhood Plan and the adopted Local Plan.
18. The Council's recommendation in the Final Screening Outcome is supported by the findings of the formal consultation. A response was received from Natural England; however, Historic England and the Environment Agency did not provide comments. The response from Natural England is included below.

5. Consultation Responses

Date: 12 March 2026
Our ref: 540679
Your ref: Great Brickhill Neighbourhood Plan



Ms Ella Wood
Buckinghamshire Council

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BY EMAIL ONLY
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Dear Ms Wood

Great Brickhill Neighbourhood Plan - SEA/HRA Screening Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 5 February 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.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

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; and,**
- **significant effects on Habitats sites¹, either alone or in combination, 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 areas (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 or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

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

¹ Habitats sites are those referred to in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

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.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team