



# **Screening Statement**

## **Determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

### **Audley Neighbourhood Plan Screening Document V2.4a**

**January 2023**

# Screening Statement

## **Determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC for the Audley Neighbourhood Plan Screening Document V2.4a**

### **1. Introduction**

This Screening Statement is designed to determine whether or not the content of the Audley Neighbourhood Plan Screening Document V2.4a requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation of plans and programmes prior to their final adoption. SEA is a tool used internationally to improve the environmental performance of plans so that they can better contribute to sustainable development.

Establishing whether a Neighborhood Plan takes into account SEA is an important legal requirement. The Independent Examiner subsequently appointed to consider the Audley Neighborhood Plan will check that it meets the 'Basic Conditions' set out in the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). One of the Basic Conditions is whether the Neighborhood Plan is compatible with European obligations. This includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. This directive is transposed into UK law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004). A Neighborhood Plan must be compatible with European Union obligations, as incorporated into UK law, in order to be legally compliant.

In meeting these obligations, the national PPG sets out that an initial screening stage is required to establish whether a Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. As the “responsible authority” this report sets out Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's conclusions in respect of the emerging policies for the Audley Neighbourhood Plan.

### **2. Legislative Background**

In accordance with the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9(1)), the Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. This process is commonly referred to as a “screening” assessment. Where the Council determines that Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required, then the Council must, under Regulation 9(3), prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination. Where it is determined that proposals in a Neighbourhood Plan are likely to have significant environmental effects, the plan may require a SEA. Draft Neighbourhood Plan proposals should then be assessed to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects as prescribed in regulation 12 (2) and (3) of the above legislation.

In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Audley Parish Council (the qualifying body) has requested Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (NuLBC), as the

responsible authority, to consider whether an environmental assessment of the emerging Audley Neighbourhood Plan is required due to significant environmental effects.

Whether a Neighbourhood Plan requires an SEA, and if so, the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the Plan. The national Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) suggests that an SEA may be required, where:

- 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; and
- The Neighbourhood Plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Council's Local Plan.

It remains the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority to ensure that all the regulations appropriate to the nature and scope of a Neighbourhood Plan proposal submitted to it have been met in order for the proposal to progress. However, it remains the qualifying body's responsibility to make every effort to ensure the resultant draft Neighbourhood Plan that it submits to the Local Planning Authority:

- Meets each of the basic conditions;
- Has been prepared in accordance with the correct process and all those required to be consulted have been;
- Is accompanied by all the required documents.

### **3. Audley Neighbourhood Plan Screening Document V2.4a**

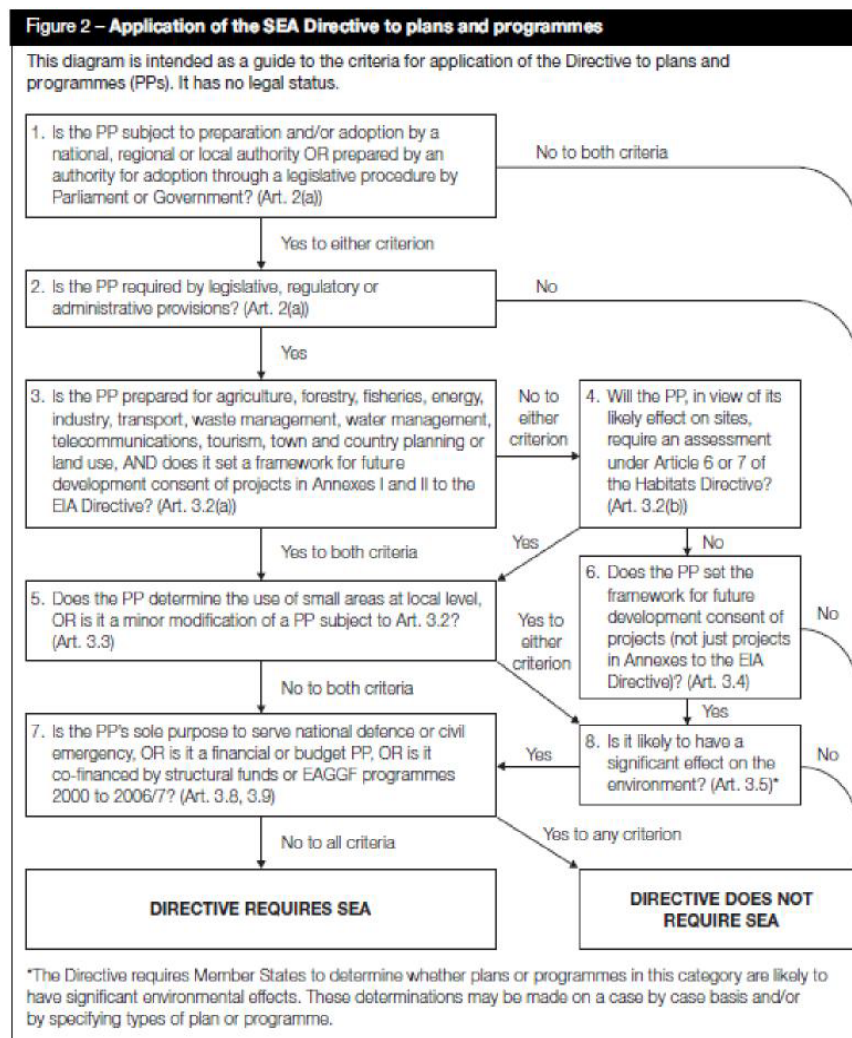
The Audley Neighbourhood Plan Screening Document V2.4a presents an overarching vision, followed by a subset of aims seeking to encourage appropriate and sustainable development whilst protecting the rural character of the neighbourhood plan area (Audley parish). The key topics covered by policies are summarised below:

- **Housing**
  - ANP1: Residential Development
- **Economy**
  - ANP2: Business and Community Facilities
  - ANP3: Audley Village Centre (Church Street)
- **Design and Heritage**
  - ANP4: Sustainable Design
  - ANP5: Audley Conservation Area
  - ANP6: Character of Settlements
  - ANP7: Heritage
  - ANP8: Shopfronts
- **Green Environment**
  - ANP9: Natural Environment and Landscape
  - ANP10: Green Infrastructure
  - ANP11: Local Green Spaces
- **Infrastructure**
  - ANP12: Transport and Active Travel
  - ANP13: Local Energy Generation

### **4. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening**

The process for determining whether or not an SEA is required is called screening. The SEA screening is a two stage process. The first part considers the Neighbourhood Plan against the SEA assessment flow chart set out in the national guidance 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (see Figure 1 and Table 1).

**Figure 1. Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes. Flow Chart from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive'.**



**Source:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

The second part of the assessment is required in order to answer specific questions contained in the above (Figure 1), specifically question 8, and considers whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effects on the environment, using criteria drawn from the EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC (Annex II) and Schedule 1 of the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (See Figure 2 and Table's 2 and 3).

**Figure 2. Criteria for determining the likely significance effects to the environment.**

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to

- 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 degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, - environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
- 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).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the trans-boundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
  - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
  - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
  - intensive land-use,
  - the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

**Source:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/schedule/1/made>

The regulations state that before making a determination the three statutory consultation bodies must be consulted: The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's assessment and response in determining whether the emerging Audley Neighbourhood Plan requires an SEA is presented in Table's 1, 2 and 3.

## 5. Assessment and Screening of the Audley Neighbourhood Plan Screening Document V2.4a

Table 1: Part 1 SEA screening. Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes

Establish the Need for SEA (as demonstrated in Figure 1)		
Stage	Yes / No	Reason
1	Yes	<p>The preparation and adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by the parish council (as the “relevant body”) and will be “made” by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (as the responsible Authority) subject to passing an independent examination and community referendum. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012, and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.</p> <p><b>GO TO STAGE 2</b></p>
2	Yes / No	<p>Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is not a requirement of the Town and Country Planning Act as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will be “made” and eventually form part of the Development Plan for Newcastle-under-Lyme. It is important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have a significant environmental effects and hence whether an SEA is required under the SEA Directive.</p> <p>The strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Joint Core Spatial Strategy and the emerging Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to align and be in general conformity with this.</p> <p><b>GO TO STAGE 3</b></p>
3	Yes	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared for town and country planning, and land use purposes for Audley.</p> <p>Development management type policies are included in the Neighbourhood Plan to encourage sustainable development,</p>

	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))		economic diversity, good design, protection / enhancement of the rural built, historic and natural environment (landscapes, wildlife corridors and habitats); enhancement of green infrastructure, community services and facilities; and provide local transport infrastructure and opportunities for local energy generation.  <b>GO TO STAGE 5</b>
4	Will the Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	Not Applicable	This Neighbourhood Plan will be screened separately on the need for Habitats Regulations Assessment.  <b>GO TO STAGE 5</b>
5	Does the Neighbourhood Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Yes / No	The Neighbourhood Plan supports new development (residential, commercial and economic uses) within defined settlement boundaries across the designated neighbourhood area, but does not propose any specific site allocations for development across the plan area. Furthermore, the Neighbourhood Plan designates a series of Local Green Spaces in recognition of their open / green character and community / amenity value.  <b>GO TO STAGE 8</b>
6	Does the Neighbourhood Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Yes	Once the Neighbourhood Plan is made, it will form part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to assist in the determination of planning applications. The intention is that the Neighbourhood Plan will provide a land use policy framework for future development at a local level.  <b>GO TO STAGE 8</b>
7	Is the Neighbourhood Plan's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR it a financial or budget PP, or it is co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art. 3.8, 3.9)	Not applicable	Not Applicable  <b>GO TO STAGE 8</b>
8	Is it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)	Unlikely	Assessment and responses regarding this matter are presented in Table's 2 and 3  <b>SEE TABLES 2 AND 3</b>

**Table 2. Part 2a SEA Screening: II Application of Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects of a Neighbourhood Plan (SEA Directive Article 3(5) Annex II).**

<b>(1) Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard, in particular, to;</b>		
<b>SEA Directive Criteria Annex II</b>	<b>NuLBC Response</b>	<b>Likely environmental effect?</b>
<p><b>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;</b></p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan would, if made, will form part of the statutory Development Plan for Newcastle-under-Lyme and contribute to the local planning policy framework.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate individual sites for development, thereby providing no specific details of developable areas and scale of future development. However, Policies ANP1, ANP2, and ANP3 for residential, employment (E, F1 and F2 Use Class) and commercial / retail development is directed within defined settlement and centre boundaries. These are considered appropriate and sustainable locations for development, although some minor impacts are potentially possible. However, the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan seek to support development through building conversions and infill, but aim to minimise / prevent impacts on the Green Belt, rural and historic character (e.g. Conversation Area and architectural / non-designated and designated assets) of the area, and the natural environment (landscapes, habitats and designated areas of nature conservation) as set out in policies ANP5, ANP6, ANP7 and ANP9.</p> <p>The above policies will help determine the outcome of future development proposals, and achieve the Neighbourhood Plan's overall vision of ensuring a sustainable and pleasant place to live that meets the needs of the local residents whilst protecting and enhancing the rural and historic character of the neighbourhood plan area.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;</b></p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is required to be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and at this stage the policies of the Joint Core Spatial Strategy and 'saved' Local Plan 2011 policies. The Neighbourhood Plan should not significantly influence other plans and programmes, but may have a limited degree of influence over the formation of the future strategic policies for the emerging Local Plan.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan will be made alongside the emerging higher order Local Plan and form part of the Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will</p>	<p>No</p>



	provide supplementary information to the Development Plan on a local scale.	
<b>The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental conditions in particular view to promoting sustainable development;</b>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan includes development management themed policies seeking to ensure appropriate and sustainable development within defined rural settlements, with particular focus on protecting / enhancing existing environmental, historical and heritage assets (policies ANP4, ANP5, ANP6, ANP7 and ANP9).</p> <p>Development would be subject to the policies in the NPPF, as well as the Joint Core Strategy and 'saved' Local Plan 2011 policies. The Neighbourhood Plan attempts to demonstrate its policy conformity with local / national aims and policies. The Neighbourhood Plan's vision, aims and policies have been developed in consideration of the three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) to sustainable development as described in the NPPF.</p>	No
<b>Environmental Problems relevant to the plan or programme;</b>	<p>Across the neighbourhood plan area there are no international / national designations. There are 10 Sites of Biological Importance (SBI), 7 Biodiversity Alert Sites (BAS), 2 Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and 12 Ancient Woodland (see Appendix 1 for map of all environmental designations). All environmental designations are located outside the settlement boundaries - Audley, Bignall End, Wood Lane, Miles Green, Halmer End and Alsagers Bank. Of the 17 Local Wildlife Sites identified, 4 of them partially adjoin existing settlement boundaries (Audley, Bignall End, Wood Lane and Halmer End). The Neighbourhood Plan does not provide site specific allocations for development, therefore it difficult to determine exactly where future development will take place (i.e. anywhere within the settlement boundaries as indicated by policies ANP1 and ANP2), and where potential impacts may occur.</p> <p>Audley Castle Banks Biodiversity Alert Site partially adjoins the northern boundary of Audley settlement. The topographical contours show approximately a 10-20 meter decent from the settlement boundary to the Local Wildlife Site. Future development directed within Audley settlement (as supported by policies ANP1 and ANP2) could potentially result in increased runoff onto the Local Wildlife Site, but impacts are not likely to be significant.</p> <p>Bignall End Coal Yards Site of Biological Importance partially adjoins the northern boundary of Bignall End settlement. The topographical contours show approximately a 10 meter accent from the settlement boundary to the Local Wildlife Site. Future development within Bignall End settlement is</p>	Uncertain / unlikely

	<p>unlikely to have any significant effects on the Local Wildlife Site from runoff.</p> <p>Burgess's Wood Biodiversity Alert Site partially adjoins the southern boundary of Wood Lane settlement. The topographical contours show approximately a 10-20 meter decent from the settlement boundary to the Local Wildlife Site. Future development within Wood Lane settlement could potentially result in increased runoff onto the Local Wildlife Site, but impacts are not likely to be significant.</p> <p>Podmore Pool Site of Biological Importance partially adjoins the southern boundary of Halmer End settlement. The topographical contours show approximately a 10-20 meter decent from the settlement boundary to the Local Wildlife Site. Future development within Halmer End settlement could potentially result in increased runoff onto the Local Wildlife Site, but impacts are not likely to be significant.</p> <p>Within the neighbourhood area there are 13 Listed Buildings (all Grade II), with 4 of them located within existing settlement boundaries (Audley and Bignall End). There are 3 Locally Listed Buildings and Structure all located within settlement boundaries (Audley and Bignall End). A Scheduled Ancient Monument (Castle Hill Motte) is located in close proximity to the northern boundary of Audley settlement. A Conservation Area is designated within the north-eastern boundary of Audley settlement (See Appendix 2 for map of all historic designations across the neighbourhood plan area). Depending on the location, new or infill development within Audley settlement (as supported by policy ANP1 and ANP2) could potentially impact on the Conservation Area and Listed / Locally Listed Buildings within the vicinity. Future development would need to take this into account.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan presents specific policies seeking to preserve / enhance, and prevent harm or degradation to the natural and historical environment which contributes to the rural character of Audley of the neighbourhood area (policies ANP5, ANP6, ANP7 and ANP9). Development would be subject to the policies in the NPPF, as well as the Joint Core Strategy and saved Local Plan 2011 policies in relation to protecting / enhancing the natural and historic environment. The Neighbourhood Plan attempts to demonstrate its policy conformity with local / national aims and</p>	
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	policies to conserve, protect and enhance the environment in its natural and historic form.	
<b>The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of (European) community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection;</b>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan summarises key issues identified from community engagement with sustainable drainage systems (housing) being one of them. The Neighbourhood Plan does not present specific policies ensuring adequate on site drainage and water / flood management measures as a result of development. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the impacts of water resources and watercourses across the neighbourhood plan area. However, Policy ANP4 makes reference to the Green Guidance Notes (Chapter 8) which explores themes of water and waste management. The Green Guidance Note acknowledges development should minimise water pollution, and it suggests ways of 'building green' through rainwater harvesting and storage / reuse of grey water, and ensuring hard surfaces / materials are kept to a minimum and be water permeable.</p> <p>The implementation of any potential community legislation is unlikely to be significantly compromised by the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	No

**Table 3. Part 2b SEA Screening: II Application of Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects of a neighbourhood Plan (SEA Directive Article 3(5) Annex II)**

<b>(2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to;</b>		
<b>SEA Directive Criteria Annex II</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Likely environmental effect?</b>
<b>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;</b>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any specific sites for development (housing, employment etc), although it would be anticipated that future development would mainly occur within defined settlement boundaries (as supported by policies ANP1 and ANP2). Because there no site allocations it is difficult to determine the long term effects from future development, both within the settlement boundaries and across the wider area of the parish. The wider area of the parish (beyond the settlement boundaries) is designated Green Belt which offers certain protection from development.</p> <p>Future development is likely to generate CO2 emissions from increasing traffic movements, household waste, and there is the potential for pollution to Local Wildlife Sites without</p>	Unlikely

	<p>appropriate sustainable drainage. However, some of the above effects have the potential to be mitigated by the plans own policies that seek to promote environment protection / enhancement (policy ANP5, ANP7, ANP9, ANP10), sustainable modes of transport (policy ANP12), good design (ANP4, ANP6 and ANP7) and green infrastructure (policy ANP9, ANP10 and ANP11).</p> <p>The potential net effects of the Neighbourhood Plan are unlikely to be significant to the wider environment, but the neighbourhood plan areas environmental and historical assets need to be taken into account when considering future development.</p>	
<b>The cumulative nature of the effects;</b>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate specific sites for development (housing, employment etc), but the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment shows 22 dwellings as existing residential commitments (planning approval) within and outside the settlement boundaries.</p> <p>Sites that may come forward (identified outside the neighbourhood plan process) for development may result in some potential cumulative impacts on the environment. This may include increase traffic flows, CO2 emissions and surface water flooding. However, given the existing natural and historical characteristics of the neighbourhood plan area alongside the policies proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan, the cumulative effects are unlikely to be considered significant for the local environment.</p>	Unlikely
<b>The trans-boundary nature of the effects;</b>	<p>Future development across the neighbourhood plan area may impose some impacts to the surrounding parishes in terms of increasing traffic flows and CO2 emissions. However, it is not expected to be any significant trans-boundary effects.</p>	Unlikely
<b>The risk to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);</b>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to pose any significant risks to human health. The Neighbourhood Plan presents policies seeking to improve human health by encouraging a good mix of housing (policy ANP1), supporting the local economy in terms of employment / office development (policy ANP2), and promoting sustainable modes of travel, enhancing accessibility via footpaths, cycle routes, public rights of ways</p>	Unlikely

	<p>and open / green spaces (policy ANP12), thereby accommodating the needs of the residents.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to pose any significant risks to the environment, although the existing Local Wildlife Sites and historical designations (Conservation Area and Listed / Locally Listed Buildings) adjoining or within settlement boundaries must be taken into account when considering future development.</p> <p>The policies proposed within the Neighbourhood Plan have the potential to mitigate any risks to human health or the environment imposed by potential future development.</p>	
<p><b>The magnitude and the spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</b></p>	<p>The neighbourhood plan area covers the Audley parish and is approximately 4718 hectares in size. According to Census 2011, the total population for the neighbourhood plan area is 8,549.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose specific site allocations for development. 22 dwellings are recorded as existing commitments for residential development. Over the course of the plan period, the neighbourhood plan area is likely to experience minor increases in population, but affects are unlikely to be significant.</p>	<p>Unlikely</p>
<p><b>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>I. Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</b></li> <li><b>II. Exceed environmental quality standards or limit values</b></li> <li><b>III. Intensive land use</b></li> </ul>	<p>I. The neighbourhood plan area has a number of natural and historic designations / assets. These include Biodiversity Alert Sites, Sites of Biological Importance, Regionally Important Geological Structures, Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings and Structures. The Neighbourhood Plan presents policies to enhance / protect these designations / assets when considering future development (policies ANP5, ANP6, ANP7 and ANP9). The majority of the environmental designations are located beyond the existing settlement boundaries, with only a few adjoining them. Overall, the environmental designations would not likely to be vulnerable to significant impacts from development. Historical designations are located across the neighbourhood plan area, both within and beyond the settlement boundaries. Policies ANP1</p>	<p>Unlikely</p>

	<p>and ANP2 are supportive of development within the settlement boundaries including infill. Proposed development needs to be mindful of the historical designations, particularly within Audley settlement as it contains a Conservation area and Listed / Locally Listed Buildings. However, the Neighbourhood Plan policies offer consideration and possible mitigation (ANP5, ANP6 and ANP7), and the historical designations would not likely to be vulnerable to significant impacts from development.</p> <p>II. The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as those relating to air, water and soil quality. It should be noted that specific measures have not identified in the neighbourhood plan's policies to mitigate the impacts of flooding (i.e. implementation of sustainable drainage systems). However, the Neighbourhood Plan's policies seeks to maintain and enhance quality standards within the natural and built environment through the delivery of sustainable design, green infrastructure, sustainable transport provision, and natural / landscape maintenance (i.e. Policies ANP4, ANP9, ANP10, ANP12).</p> <p>III. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate specific sites for development, and therefore unlikely to bring forward development of an extent that would result in a significant intensification of local land use.</p>	<p>Unlikely</p> <p>Unlikely</p>
<p><b>The effect on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protected status;</b></p>	<p>There are no designated landscapes within or near the neighbourhood plan area.</p> <p>The neighbourhood plan area is categorised by the following saved policies for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011: Landscape Enhancement and Landscape Restoration (Policies N20 and N21). The settlements are characterised by 'landscape restoration' and the wider area is characterised by 'landscape enhancement'. Collectively these policies seek to preserve, improve and enhance the quality and character of the landscape across the neighbourhood plan area.</p>	<p>Unlikely</p>

## 6. Screening Outcome







Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council has concluded that the emerging Audley Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have any significant environmental effects, and accordingly will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The main reasons for this conclusion are:

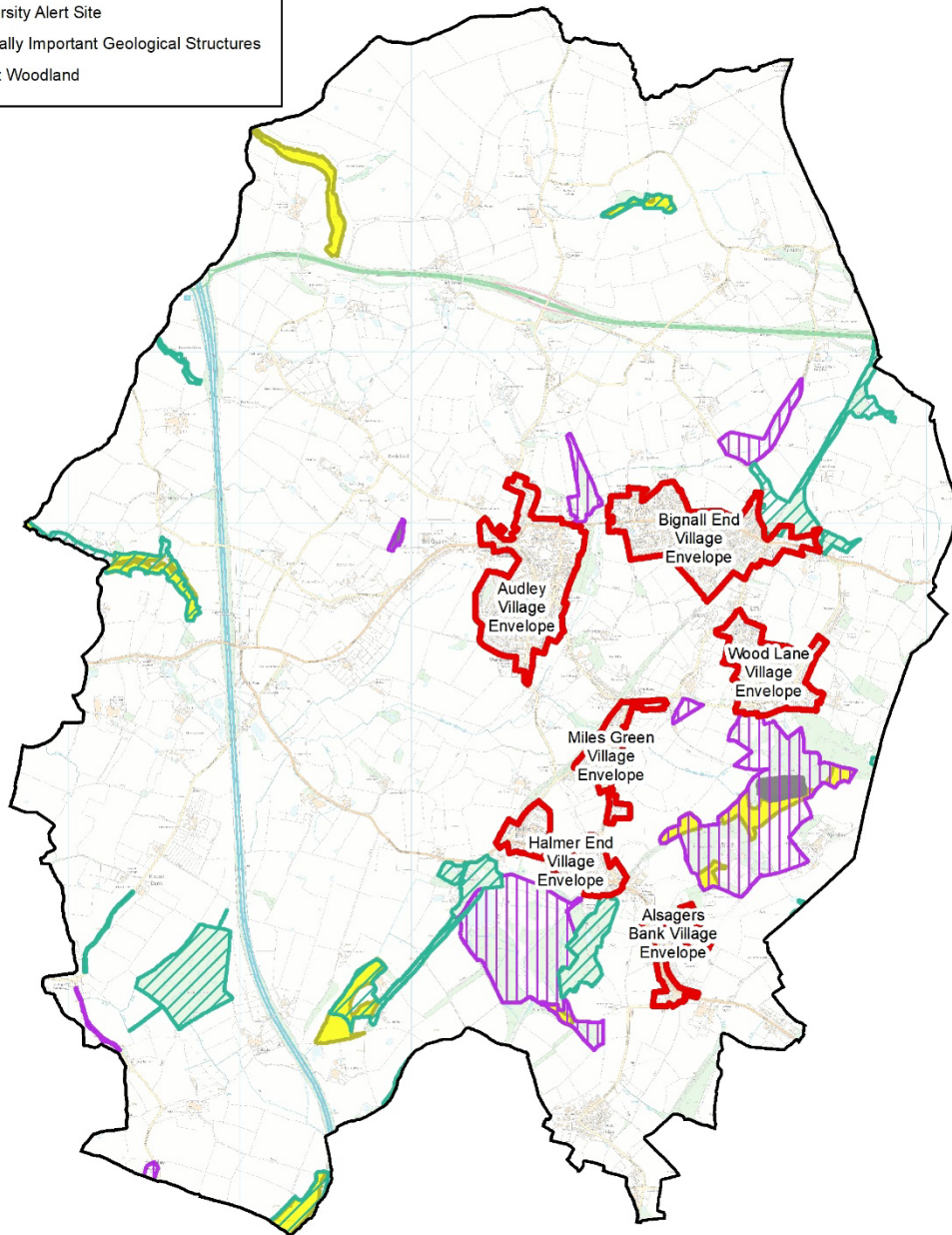
- The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to align itself with the Borough Council's adopted Development Plan which includes the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Core Strategy, and Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011 'saved' policies. Additionally the Neighbourhood Plan is subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening;
- The Neighbourhood Plan does not provide any specific site allocations for development. It focuses development within defined settlement boundaries including Audley, Miles Green, Bignall End, Wood Lane, Alsagers Bank and Halmer End. These are considered the most appropriate and sustainable locations for future development;
- Future development could potentially have minor impacts to the natural and historical designations / assets, particularly within the Audley settlement due to the presence of the Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings and Structures. However, some of the effects have the potential to be mitigated by the Neighbourhood Plan's own policies which seek to promote and deliver environment protection / enhancement. As a result, it is difficult to foresee any significant environmental effects;
- The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to avoid or minimise the environmental effects of future developments, especially with impacts to the natural and historic environment. It presents development management themed policies to conserve, protect and enhance environmental, historical, cultural and heritage assets for determining future development proposals;
- The spatial extent and the magnitude of the population affected are not considered significant for the purpose of the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA);

In addition to the SEA screening of the Audley Neighbourhood Plan Screening Document V2.4a, there is a need to assess the likelihood of the plan having an adverse impact on internationally designated wildlife sites. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required by the European Habitats Directive, and screening will be undertaken for this separately.

# Appendix 1: Environmental Designations, Audley

**Key**

-  Neighbourhood Plan Area Boundary
-  Settlement Boundaries
-  Site of Biological Importance
-  Biodiversity Alert Site
-  Regionally Important Geological Structures
-  Ancient Woodland



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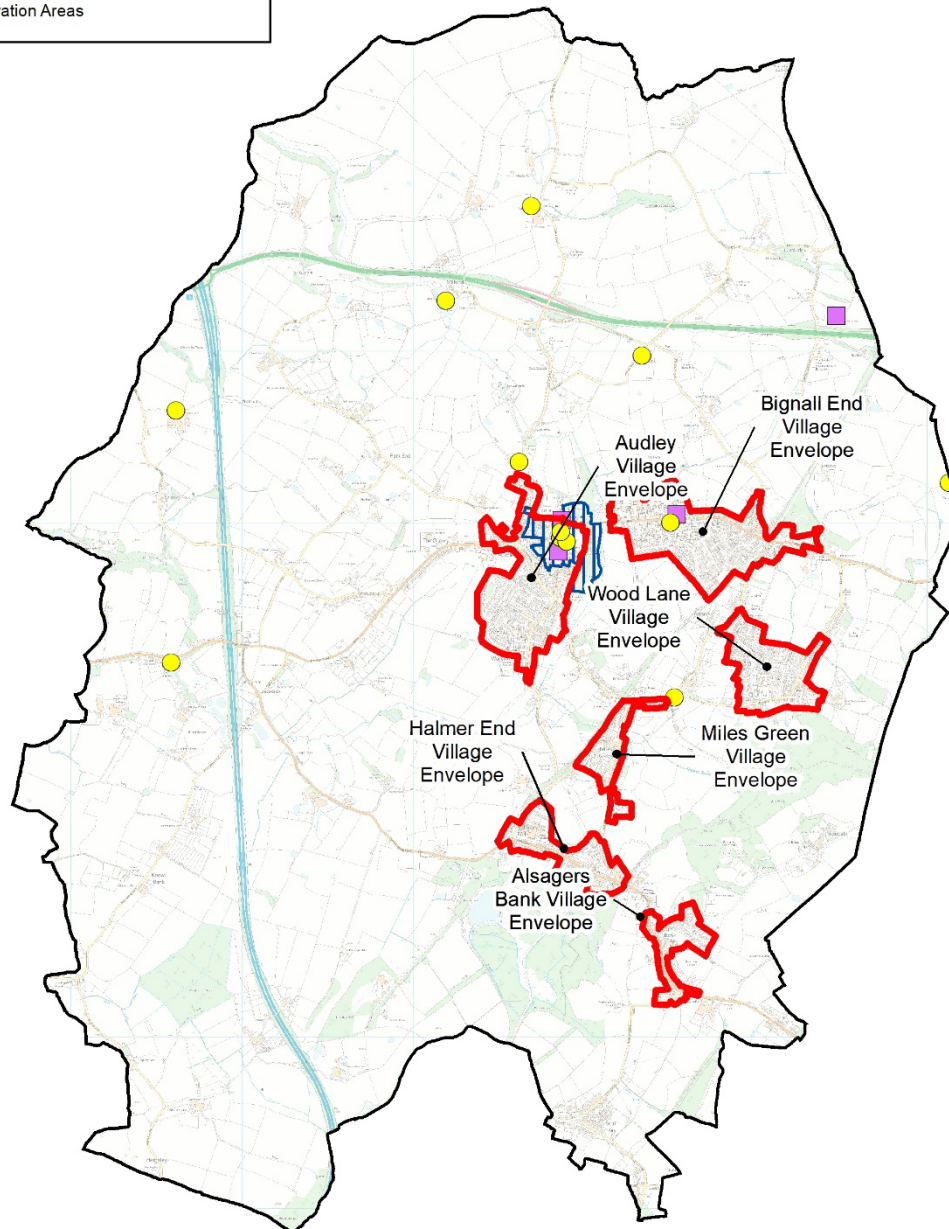
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## Appendix 2: Historical Designations, Audley

### Key

-  Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
-  Settlement Boundaries
-  Listed Buildings
-  Locally Important Buildings and Structures
-  Conservation Areas



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