

# Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan

## Modified Version (2025)

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### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion

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Prepared by: OpenPlan on behalf of Hough on the Hill Parish Council Date

#### 1. Introduction

This Screening Opinion has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), to determine whether the proposed modifications to the Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

#### 2. Legislative Context

SEA is required where a plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. The determination must consider criteria in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.

HRA is required where a plan is likely to have significant effects on a European site (SPA, SAC, or Ramsar site), alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

#### 3. Scope of the Proposed Modifications

The modified Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan:

- does not propose major development or new strategic site allocations;
- updates references to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) and the South Kesteven Local Plan (adopted 2020);
- clarifies existing policy intent, updates local evidence (e.g., Census 2021 data), and corrects factual or grammatical issues;
- continues to protect local character, heritage, landscape, biodiversity, and valued open spaces;
- has been assessed by the Qualifying Body as involving only minor or non-substantial material modifications;
- has been subject to public consultation under Regulation 14.

#### 4. SEA Screening Assessment

The proposed modifications do not introduce new development that would be likely to have significant environmental effects. They refine or clarify existing policies, update supporting evidence, and align with up-to-date strategic planning policy

- No new allocations or infrastructure proposals are included.
- Environmental protection policies (e.g., for green spaces, heritage, and biodiversity) are retained and strengthened.
- The Plan area is not within a highly environmentally sensitive location under national or international legislation.

**Conclusion (SEA):** The proposed modifications are not likely to have significant environmental effects. Therefore, a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

#### 5. HRA Screening Assessment

The Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Area does not contain or lie immediately adjacent to any European designated sites (e.g., SACs, SPAs, Ramsar). The modified Plan does not include proposals that are likely to result in additional recreational, air quality, water quality, or disturbance impacts.

- No site-specific development policies are added that might impact European sites.
- Strategic planning policies which have already been screened through the South Kesteven Local Plan continue to provide the higher-tier framework.
- No likely significant effects on European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans, are anticipated.

**Conclusion (HRA):** The proposed modifications are unlikely to have significant effects on any European sites. Therefore, a Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required.

#### 6. Recommended Determination

Based on the proposed modifications, supporting evidence, and statutory consultation:

a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required.

a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is not required.