

**BLETSONE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SEA REPORT**

**APPENDIX C Scoping Request Response**

## Samantha Boyd

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**From:** Benn, Neville A <neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 20 March 2018 11:20  
**To:** Samantha Boyd  
**Subject:** RE: Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Opinion Letter

Hi Sam

Apologies. I thought I had responded.

We have no comment to make.

Kind regards

### Neville Benn

Principal Planning Advisor  
Sustainable Places  
East Anglia Area (West)

✉ Environment Agency, Bromholme Lane, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE28 4NE  
☎ Internal: 51906  
☎ External: 0203 0251906  
📧 [neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk)



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**From:** Samantha Boyd [mailto:s.boyd@WoodsHardwick.com]  
**Sent:** 20 March 2018 10:55  
**To:** Benn, Neville A <neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Opinion Letter

Hi Neville

We have not received a response from the EA on the Scoping Opinion. Please can you provide your response as a matter of urgency.

Kind regards,  
For and on behalf of Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd

Samantha Boyd  
Associate Planner

Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd  
15-17 Goldington Road  
Bedford  
MK40 3NH

Tel: 01234 268862  
Mob:07469 143908

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---

**From:** Samantha Boyd  
**Sent:** 06 February 2018 10:08  
**To:** 'consultations@naturalengland.org.uk' <[consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)>; 'Sonia Gallaher' <[Sonia.Gallaher@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:Sonia.Gallaher@bedford.gov.uk)>; 'neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk' <[neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk)>; 'Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk' <[Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk)>  
**Cc:** 'Ann Gibbons' <[anngibbons@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:anngibbons@hotmail.co.uk)>; 'Trevor Roff' <[trevorroff@regenerationpositive.co.uk](mailto:trevorroff@regenerationpositive.co.uk)>  
**Subject:** Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Opinion Letter

Dear All,

On behalf of Bletsoe Parish Council, please find attached a Scoping Letter for your comments in relation to Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan following the results of the Screening Opinion where it was concluded that SEA is required.

Bletsoe SEA must be undertaken within a tight timescale (31 March 2018) in order to receive the necessary funding, therefore we would appreciate your comments by the Scoping deadline of 12 March 2018.

Kind regards,  
For and on behalf of Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd

Samantha Boyd  
Associate Planner

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## Samantha Boyd

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**From:** Sonia Gallaher <Sonia.Gallaher@bedford.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 13 March 2018 13:30  
**To:** Samantha Boyd  
**Subject:** RE: Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Opinion Letter

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Samantha,

We have no comments on the scoping opinion letter.

Many thanks

**Sonia Gallaher**

**Senior Planning and Transportation Officer**

**Planning Policy**

**Bedford Borough Council**

✉ Room 415, 4th Floor

Borough Hall

Cauldwell Street

Bedford

MK42 9AP

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💻 [sonia.gallaher@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:sonia.gallaher@bedford.gov.uk)

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---

**From:** Samantha Boyd [<mailto:s.boyd@WoodsHardwick.com>]  
**Sent:** 13 March 2018 12:39  
**To:** Sonia Gallaher; [neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk)  
**Subject:** RE: Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Opinion Letter

Hi

Please could we have your comments on the Scope of the SEA.

Kind regards,  
For and on behalf of Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd

Samantha Boyd  
Associate Planner

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15-17 Goldington Road  
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Tel: 01234 268862  
Mob:07469 143908

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---

**From:** Samantha Boyd  
**Sent:** 06 February 2018 10:08  
**To:** 'consultations@naturalengland.org.uk' <consultations@naturalengland.org.uk>; 'Sonia Gallaher' <Sonia.Gallaher@bedford.gov.uk>; 'neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk' <neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk>; 'Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk' <Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk>  
**Cc:** 'Ann Gibbons' <anngibbons@hotmail.co.uk>; 'Trevor Roff' <trevorroff@regenerationpositive.co.uk>  
**Subject:** Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Opinion Letter

Dear All,

On behalf of Bletsoe Parish Council, please find attached a Scoping Letter for your comments in relation to Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan following the results of the Screening Opinion where it was concluded that SEA is required.

Bletsoe SEA must be undertaken within a tight timescale (31 March 2018) in order to receive the necessary funding, therefore we would appreciate your comments by the Scoping deadline of 12 March 2018.

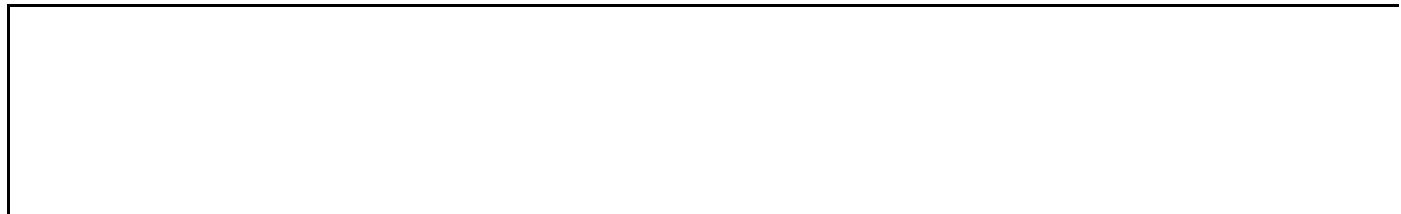
Kind regards,  
For and on behalf of Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd

Samantha Boyd  
Associate Planner

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Date: 14 February 2018  
Our ref: 238222  
Your ref: Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Opinion



Samantha Boyd  
s.boyd@WoodsHardwick.com

Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Samantha Boyd

Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Opinion

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 06 February 2018

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.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made..

**Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan.**

However, we refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

For clarification of any points in this letter, please contact Victoria Wight on 0208 2257617. For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours sincerely  
Hannah Bottomley  
Consultations Team



# Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

## Natural environment information sources

The [Magic](#)<sup>1</sup> website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available [here](#)<sup>2</sup>.

**Priority habitats** are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)<sup>3</sup>. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

**National Character Areas (NCAs)** divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)<sup>4</sup>.

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**, the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](#)<sup>5</sup> website and also from the [LandIS website](#)<sup>6</sup>, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

## Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#)<sup>7</sup> sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](#)<sup>8</sup> sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

### Landscape

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<sup>1</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

<sup>3</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

<sup>5</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>8</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

### Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)<sup>9</sup>), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)<sup>10</sup>. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

### Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)<sup>11</sup>) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice [here](#)<sup>12</sup> to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

### Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 112. For more information, see our publication [Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land](#)<sup>13</sup>.

## **Improving your natural environment**

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development. Examples might include:

- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

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<sup>9</sup><http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

<sup>11</sup><http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

<sup>13</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance on this](#) <sup>14</sup>).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

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<sup>14</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

Ms Samantha Boyd  
Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd  
15-17 Goldington Road  
Bedford  
Bedfordshire  
MK40 3NH

Direct Dial: 01223 582746

Our ref: PL00098382

9 March 2018

Dear Ms Boyd

**Ref: Scoping Opinion for Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Thank you for your email requesting a scoping opinion for the Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local and neighbourhood planning process. Therefore we welcome this opportunity to review the Scoping Letter by Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd, and provide our comments below.

In the first instance, we would refer you to the guidance in Historic England Advice Note 8: *Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment*, which can be found here: [<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/)

This advice sets out the historic environment factors which need to be considered during the Strategic Environmental Assessment or Sustainability Appraisal process, and our recommendations for information you may need to include.

We are pleased to note inclusion of the historic environment as a consideration throughout the scoping letter, as well as the stated intention to use the most up to date evidence possible. We are agreed that there are unlikely to be any effects on heritage assets outside the parish boundary.

We note the use of 'ancient monument' and 'scheduled ancient monument' in the scoping letter. With regard to terminology, the generally accepted modern usage is "Scheduled Monument" rather than "Scheduled Ancient Monument". This reflects the fact that many monuments are not ancient, but also would make sure the SEA is in line with the terminology found in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, is a core planning principle, as set out in paragraph 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the



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[HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)



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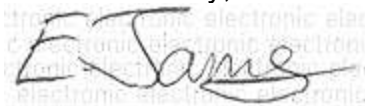
Framework). We therefore positively welcome Objective 3: Heritage Assets, but suggest that its title is changed to 'Historic Environment' - again to reflect the terminology found in the Framework.

We would also suggest that the source of information for designated heritage assets, in addition to Bedford Borough Council with relation to the conservation area, is the National Heritage List, which can be accessed via our website. We suggest also that, given the significance of the historic environment in Bletsoe as identified in the Scoping Letter, more information on the non-designated below ground archaeology in the parish could be included if considered appropriate. This can either be obtained from the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record, or via the Heritage Gateway <<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>>.

Excepting these minor points, therefore, we are content with the proposed scope of the SEA for Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Historic Places Team who can be reached on 01223 582749.

Yours sincerely,



Edward James  
Historic Places Advisor, East of England  
Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk

## Samantha Boyd

---

**From:** James, Edward <Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 13 March 2018 15:46  
**To:** Samantha Boyd  
**Subject:** RE: Historic England advice on case PL00098382

Dear Samantha,

Thank you for your email. That is entirely reasonable, and I am certainly happy with that provision, yes. I think the only suggestion I would have is that where adverse impacts are unavoidable, the policy should include provision for requiring a programme of archaeological investigation, subject to agreement with the local authority planning archaeologist.

I hope that helps, but please contact me if you have any other queries on this or any other matter.

Kind regards,

Edward

-----  
Edward James MA BA ACIfA  
Historic Places Adviser  
Planning Group | East of England  
Historic England

Direct Line: 01223 582 746  
Mobile: 07833 718 273

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-----Original Message-----

From: Samantha Boyd [mailto:s.boyd@WoodsHardwick.com]  
Sent: 13 March 2018 10:57  
To: James, Edward  
Subject: RE: Historic England advice on case PL00098382

Hi Edward,

Thank you for your comments. We note your suggestion that more information on the non-designated below ground archaeology in the parish could be included if considered appropriate. Bletsoe is a very small parish and the Parish Council do not have the budget to employ a heritage consultation to provide such detailed and specialist information. Therefore would you consider it appropriate to include a section in each of the site allocation policies that requires developers to demonstrate there would be no adverse impact on archaeological interests.

Kind regards,  
For and on behalf of Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd

Samantha Boyd  
Associate Planner

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15-17 Goldington Road  
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MK40 3NH

Tel: 01234 268862  
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-----Original Message-----

From: Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk [mailto:Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk]  
Sent: 09 March 2018 18:59  
To: Samantha Boyd <s.boyd@WoodsHardwick.com>  
Cc: Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk  
Subject: Historic England advice on case PL00098382

Dear Samantha,

I am writing in relation to the following:

SEA/SA/IIA: Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Sustainability Appraisal/ Integrated Impact Assessment SEA of Bletsoe Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan, Bedford Borough Council [Case Ref. PL00098382; HE File Ref. ; Your Reference. ]

Thank you for consulting Historic England about the above consultation. I apologise that we were not able to respond sooner, but please find the response attached. Please contact me if you have any queries.

Yours Sincerely

Edward James  
Historic Places Advisor, East of England  
E-mail: Edward.James@HistoricEngland.org.uk  
Direct Dial: 01223 582746

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