URBAN VISION ENTERPRISE

Leek Neighbourhood Plan
Basic Conditions Statement
September 2026 (V2.3)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This is a Basic Conditions Statement, prepared to be part of the Regulation 15 submission of the Leek Neighbourhood Plan.

The statement explains how the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements.

2. Meeting Legal Requirements

2.2 General Requirements

Qualifying Body

The draft Plan is being submitted by Leek Town Council, which is the qualifying body for neighbourhood planning for Leek Parish.

The Neighbourhood Plan

The draft Neighbourhood Plan relates to the use and development of land and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in planning legislation, policy and guidance. This includes designation of the Neighbourhood Area, screening (Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment) and statutory consultation (Regulation 14).

Period of Effect

The draft Neighbourhood Plan states the period for which it is to have effect in the Introduction, Paragraph 1.1 (until the end of 2035).

Excluded Development

The draft Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with mineral extraction, waste development, nationally significant infrastructure or any other matters set out in Section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Neighbourhood Area

The draft Neighbourhood Plan relates to the designated Leek Neighbourhood Area (Leek parish area) and to no other area.

2.1 The Basic Conditions & Other Legal Requirements

The basic conditions that neighbourhood plans must meet are summarised as follows:

- must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- must be appropriate having regard to national policy;
- must not deliver less housing development;
- must be compatible with EU obligations.

Regulations specify an additional basic condition that a plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which set out the habitat regulation assessment process for land use plans, including consideration of the effect on habitat sites.

In addition, the plan:

- must meet requirements of human rights law;
- address climate change and mitigation;
- take account of any Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

The following chapters of this statement deal with the basic conditions and other legal requirements in more detail.

3. Sustainable Development

3.1 Dimensions of Sustainable Development

The National Planning Policy Framework August 2026 states that sustainable development has economic, social and environmental dimensions.

The draft plan proposal takes a balanced approach to enabling growth, whilst also considering economic, social and environmental sustainability.

3.2 Strategy for Sustainable Development

The Neighbourhood Plan includes a strategy for sustainable development in Chapter 2 (2.3 and 2.4). This identifies key issues for the Neighbourhood Plan to address:

- Responding to climate change and the need to promote biodiversity;
- Town centre recovery and diversification, building on the strengths identified by the community;
- Creating more sustainable live/work patterns and travel;
- Creating local economic opportunities;
- The need for housing to meet local need, including affordable housing;
- Reuse of vacant buildings, including historic mills;
- Realising the potential of the visitor economy.

To address these, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to promote sustainable development and growth by:

- Promoting Town Centre diversification and business growth;
- Supporting regeneration of key sites and buildings;
- Encouraging residential development, including in and around the Town Centre;
- Supporting good connectivity (high-speed broadband).

Sustainability is addressed in various ways:

- Protection of natural and built heritage and biodiversity;
- Requiring green and sustainable design;
- Promoting balanced transport provision and active travel.

3.3 Policies to Achieve Sustainable Development

The Plan seeks to achieve sustainable physical and economic development and growth, supporting the vitality of the Town Centre and creating local economic opportunity. This includes:

Policy TCE1: Leek Town Centre, Employment and Facilities
Policy TCE2: Town Centre Redevelopment Opportunities
Policy TCE3: Heritage-Led Regeneration

The Plan does not undertake specific housing site allocations, but does seek to increase the residential population in and around the Town Centre, including through Policies TCE2 and TCE3, referred to above, which enable mixed use development and building refurbishments, including residential accommodation.

In addition, the following policies seek to support and shape residential development:

Policy RES1: Residential Development;
Policy RES2: Affordable Housing.

Policy TCE3, mentioned previously, supports heritage-led regeneration, recognising the economic importance of heritage. Policies to protect or enhance the natural, rural and historic environments are:

Policy DCE1: Rural Environment, Green & Blue Infrastructure
Policy DCE3: Leek Conservation Area
Policy DCE4: Caldon Canal Conservation Area

The policies seek to achieve a balance between protection and recognising the economic and community values of the natural and historic environments and protection for future generations.

Good design is fundamental to ensure that growth is sustainable. Poor design can cause economic, social and environmental harm, and create regeneration challenges in the future. Different aspects of design are addressed in the following policy:

Policy DCE2: Design

Transport and movement are important to supporting sustainable growth and addressing climate change. This is addressed in:

Policy TRM1: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

The policies have been prepared against the context of increasing awareness of the impacts of climate change and the urgent need to address the causes.

The combination of policies enabling growth and addressing economic, social and environmental sustainability mean that the plan will help to achieve sustainable development. This takes account of the needs of current and future generations.

4. National Policy and Guidance

4.1 Having Regard to National Policy and Guidance

The draft plan has regard to the National Planning Policy Framework August 2026 (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

Chapter 1 Introduction: sets out economic, social and environmental objectives. **Chapter 2 Plan-making policies:** sets out that a neighbourhood plan should not result in less development than specified in other parts of the development plan which cover the same area. Policy PM5 and PM17 deal with neighbourhood plans, which can allocate sites and include policies to address particular local issues. The Leek Neighbourhood Plan includes policies and identifies sites, and will deliver additional development.

Chapter 4 Achieving sustainable development: introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with different approaches to development in settlements and outside of settlements (Policies S3, S4, S5). Policy S6 relates to Neighbourhood Plans. **Chapter 5 Meeting the challenge of climate change:** is wider in scope than previous NPPFs, referring to limiting the need for travel, active travel, design, habitats, flood risk, sustainable drainage, green infrastructure, and other matters. Climate change is a key theme underpinning the Leek Neighbourhood Plan, through a range of use, growth, design, movement and environmental policies. These address walkable neighbourhoods, local facilities, active travel, amenity, biodiversity, conservation of embodied energy, and other matters.

The Leek Neighbourhood Plan policies are based on evidence and the outcomes of community engagement and have been written to provide a clear framework for decision-making. Feedback from previous neighbourhood plan independent examinations has also informed the drafting of the policies.

The neighbourhood plan is based on a range of evidence, in line with the NPPF and planning practice guidance. The submission of the Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by a full list of relevant evidence documents and reports. This includes a purpose-commissioned AECOM Town Design Code.

Planning Practice Guidance has also been considered, including guidance relating to the process for preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, and also guidance on the themes addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The National Design Guide 2021 and the draft replacement National Design Guide have also informed various parts of the Plan.

4.2 NPPF August 2026

The following table describes how different chapters and policies of the NPPF have been addressed in the Leek Neighbourhood Plan.

NPPF August 2026 Chapters and Policies	**Leek Neighbourhood Plan Policies**
Chapter 6 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes Policies HO1-13	Policy TCE2: Town Centre Redevelopment Opportunities Policy TCE3: Heritage-Led Regeneration Policy RES1: Residential Development; Policy RES2: Affordable Housing. Policy DCE2: Design The policies set out sustainable locations for residential development, amenity standards and shape how affordable housing should be provided. Other policies identify opportunity sites and other opportunities for reuse or redevelopment for residential units in and around the Town Centre. Good design is an essential part of housing development.
Chapter 7 Building a strong, effective economy Policies E1-4	Policy TCE1: Leek Town Centre, Employment and Facilities Policy TCE2: Town Centre Redevelopment Opportunities Policy TCE3: Heritage-Led Regeneration The policies support the diversification and development of the town centre, to help enhance its vitality. This includes opportunities for reuse or redevelopment in and around the Town Centre, which could include commercial uses. Residential development in and around the Town Centre would increase the catchment and enhance the viability of different businesses in the Town Centre.

Chapter 8 Ensuring the vitality of town centres Policies TC1-4	Policy TCE1: Leek Town Centre, Employment and Facilities Policy TCE2: Town Centre Redevelopment Opportunities Policy TCE3: Heritage-Led Regeneration Policy RES1: Residential Development; Policy DCE2: Design Policy DCE3: Leek Conservation Area The policies support the diversification and development of the town centre, including identification of key redevelopment opportunities and heritage-led regeneration of historic buildings around the edge of the town. In addition, the policies would support increase in the residential catchment in and around the town centre. The economic importance of Leek's historic environment is also recognised.
Chapter 12 Making effective use of land Policies L1-3	Policy TCE1: Leek Town Centre, Employment and Facilities Policy TCE2: Town Centre Redevelopment Opportunities Policy TCE3: Heritage-Led Regeneration Policy RES1: Residential Development; Policy DCE1: Rural Environment, Green & Blue Infrastructure Policy DCE2: Design Various policies support effective use of land, with priority for brownfield sites and under-utilised buildings, whilst also safeguarding the environment and creating safe and healthy places.
Chapter 14 Achieving well-designed places Policies DP1-4	Policy RES1: Residential Development; Policy DCE2: Design Policy DCE3: Leek Conservation Area Policy DCE4: Caldon Canal Conservation Area Policy TRM1: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel Housing, design, conservation and transport policies address quality of development in terms of function, attractiveness, landscaping, accessibility, safety, character and distinctiveness. Innovative and green design are supported. These policies have also taken

	account of the National Design Guide 2021 and its draft replacement.
Chapter 15 Promoting sustainable transport Policies TR1-8	Policy RES1: Residential Development; Policy DCE2: Design Policy TRM1: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel Policies promote sustainable and active travel and pedestrian and cycle facilities, including by addressing permeability and connectivity in development.
Chapter 16 Promoting healthy communities Policies HC1-8	Policy TCE1: Leek Town Centre, Employment and Facilities Policy RES1: Residential Development; Policy DCE1: Rural Environment, Green & Blue Infrastructure Policy DCE2: Design Policy TRM1: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel Various policies contribute to the creation of healthy, inclusive and safe places, accessibility and healthy lifestyles, including access to green and natural environments, good amenities, good permeability and connectivity and opportunities for recreation and active travel.
Chapter 18 Managing flood risk and coastal change Policies F1-9	Policy RES1: Residential Development; Policy DCE2: Design Sustainable Drainage Systems are addressed specifically in Policies RES1 and DCE2.
Chapter 19 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment Policies N1-6	Policy DCE1: Rural Environment, Green & Blue Infrastructure Policy DCE2: Design DCE1 focuses specifically on the natural environment, landscape and watercourses, including habitats and rural character. Design policy also addresses green infrastructure.

Chapter 20 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment Policies HE1-10	Policy TCE1: Leek Town Centre, Employment and Facilities Policy TCE2: Town Centre Redevelopment Opportunities Policy TCE3: Heritage-Led Regeneration Policy DCE1: Rural Environment, Green & Blue Infrastructure Policy DCE2: Design Policy DCE3: Leek Conservation Area Policy DCE4: Caldon Canal Conservation Area Various policies address heritage or have implications for heritage, in terms of conservation and supporting heritage-led regeneration. Heritage has been considered as an integral part of wider social, economic and environmental planning for the area.

5. Housing

5.1 Policies Addressing Housing

Various policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have implications for housing. The main focus of policies is on supporting housing development, to meet local needs.

The following table considers the implications of different policies for housing delivery.

NP Policy	Implications for housing delivery
Policy TCE1: Leek Town Centre, Employment and Facilities	The policy would support residential development in the Town Centre, though it is noted that permitted development rights already support some conversions.
Policy TCE2: Town Centre Redevelopment Opportunities	Redevelopment could include residential accommodation, expanding the residential catchment of the Town.
Policy TCE3: Heritage-Led Regeneration	Conversion of historic buildings could include reuse for residential purposes, creating new residential accommodation in walking distance of the Town Centre.
Policy RES1: Residential Development;	The policy supports residential development in sustainable locations. The policy would augment and not restrict the development of strategic site allocations.
Policy RES2: Affordable Housing;	The policy seeks to shape housing but would have no implications for the amount of housing delivered.
Policy DCE1: Rural Environment, Green & Blue Infrastructure;	The policy protects the rural environment and blue and green infrastructure, so would shape but not limit the development of allocated sites.
Policy DCE2: Design;	The policy would help to ensure that housing was sustainable but would not limit amount of housing delivered.

Policy DCE3: Leek Conservation Area;	The policy could influence the quality of housing but would not limit amount of housing delivered.
Policy DCE4: Caldon Canal Conservation Area;	This policy has little or no implication for housing delivery. However, it is an important amenity for the local population.
Policy TRM1: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel.	The policy would shape housing development but not limit the amount of housing delivered.

5.2 Housing Delivery

The Neighbourhood Plan supports additional residential development.

Policies would shape, but not reduce, the amount of housing delivery through strategic site allocations.

5.3 General Conformity

Neighbourhood Plans are no longer required to be in general conformity with strategic local policies. Nonetheless, the Plan was prepared to support and not undermine the strategic policies and spatial in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.

Had the Basic Conditions not been amended, the Plan would be in general conformity, including in terms of housing delivery.

6. EU Obligations

6.1 Screening

The Neighborhood Plan was screened to determine whether full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) was required.

Screening of Neighborhood Plans is normally undertaken by the local planning authority. However, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council declined to undertake the screening. Screening was therefore commissioned through the national support programme, and the following report was prepared.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion
Locality and Leek Town Council
May 2024

The report concluded that HRA appropriate assessment was not required and that the Plan would not require full SEA.

The three statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England) were consulted on the screening opinion between 30th April and 24th May 2024 and all agreed with the screening outcome.

6.2 EU Obligations

Given the screening outcome, which took account of the responses of national statutory bodies, the draft Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions relating to not breaching EU obligations and Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

7. Human Rights

7.1 Equalities Assessment

This part of this statement comprises an equalities assessment, to help demonstrate that the Neighbourhood Plan meets Human Rights requirements.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who have a "protected characteristic" and those who do not.

Protected characteristics are defined in the Equality Act as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Everyone has at least two protected characteristics and this can change over a person's lifetime.

An Equalities Assessment is a systematic analysis of policies, to consider the potential for adverse impact on a particular group or community, in particularly those with a protected characteristic.

7.2 Community Engagement

The Neighbourhood Plan needs to cater for the diverse range of needs of the population. There is evidence to suggest that diversity is an important factor in achieving effective and sustainable growth.

The draft plan is based on evidence (including economic, social and environmental data and analysis) and also the outcomes of engagement with the local community and stakeholders, from the earliest stages of the process.

Statutory consultation (Regulation 14) was undertaken, and this took account of consultation case law, including compliance with Gunning principles.

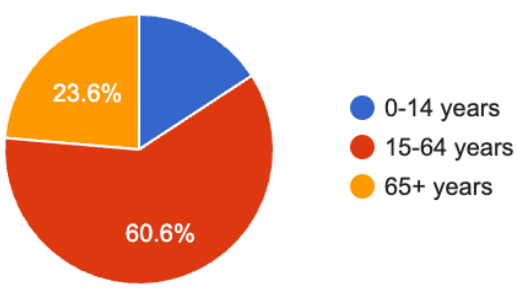
7.3 Leek General Population Characteristics

Sourced from the 2021 Census key statistics the following tables illustrate the age structure and ethnic characteristics of residents who live in Leek Parish (nomisweb.co.uk).

Age Structure

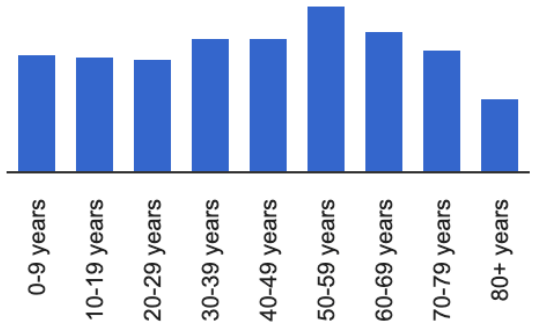
Age Groups

0-14 years	3,063
15-64 years	11,745
65+ years	4,584



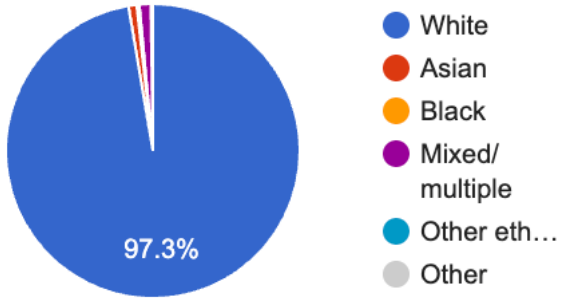
Age Distribution

0-9 years	2,025
10-19 years	2,003
20-29 years	1,975
30-39 years	2,323
40-49 years	2,318
50-59 years	2,896
60-69 years	2,449
70-79 years	2,127
80+ years	1,276



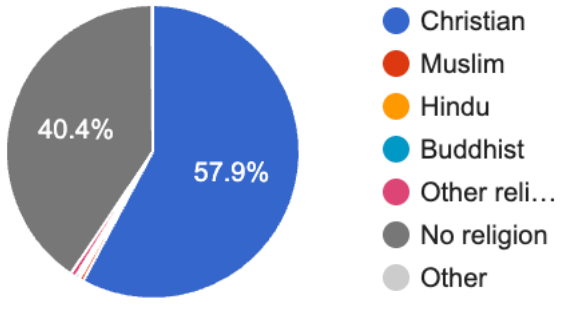
Ethnic Group

White	18,850
Asian	175
Black	56
Arab	6
Mixed/multiple	243
Other ethnic group	37



Religion

Christian	10,516
Muslim	82
Hindu	34
Sikh	14
Buddhist	59
Jewish	9
Other religion	110
No religion	7,351



Sexual Orientation

Table 1: Sexual orientation, 2021, England, Wales and regions of England

Area Name	Straight or Heterosexual (percent)	Gay or Lesbian (percent)	Bisexual (percent)	Pansexual (percent)	Asexual (percent)	Queer (percent)	All other sexual orientations (percent)
England	89.37	1.54	1.29	0.23	0.06	0.03	0.02
Wales	89.42	1.49	1.24	0.18	0.06	0.02	0.01
North East	91.03	1.56	1.19	0.18	0.06	0.02	0.01
North West	90.12	1.69	1.22	0.20	0.05	0.02	0.02
Yorkshire and The Humber	89.75	1.43	1.31	0.22	0.06	0.03	0.02
East Midlands	89.77	1.28	1.25	0.21	0.06	0.02	0.02
West Midlands	89.91	1.21	1.06	0.20	0.05	0.02	0.02
East of England	90.18	1.21	1.14	0.21	0.06	0.02	0.02
London	86.19	2.23	1.52	0.37	0.05	0.06	0.04
South East	89.84	1.48	1.29	0.22	0.06	0.03	0.02
South West	89.51	1.43	1.43	0.22	0.07	0.03	0.02

Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

7.4 Impacts on Protected Characteristics

The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

Policy TCE1: Leek Town Centre, Employment and Facilities
Policy TCE2: Town Centre Redevelopment Opportunities
Policy TCE3: Heritage-Led Regeneration
Policy RES1: Residential Development;
Policy RES2: Affordable Housing;
Policy DCE1: Rural Environment, Green & Blue Infrastructure;
Policy DCE2: Design;
Policy DCE3: Leek Conservation Area;
Policy DCE4: Caldon Canal Conservation Area;
Policy TRM1: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel.

Equalities assessment requires consideration of the impact of these policies on each of the protected characteristics. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

It should be noted that the needs, attitudes and opinions of people within any of these groups are as diverse as in the wider population, sometimes with very polarised views.

The plan will potentially benefit most or all of the local community, by supporting the vitality of the Town Centre, shaping housing development to meet diverse local needs, and supporting regeneration. The Plan protects the natural and historic environments and promotes high quality design, with an emphasis on ease of movement and pedestrian convenience. The plan addresses climate change through a range of practical requirements.

More specifically against protected characteristics, the following are of particular relevance.

Age

Age can have implications for mobility, access to cars (especially older and younger groups), reliance on local facilities, changing housing needs and health, among other matters.

The plan seeks to deliver regeneration and Town Centre vitality. In addition, it seeks to provide housing to meet a range of needs. The plan protects and enhances the natural and historic environments. The plan supports ease of movement, sustainable transport, walking and healthy lifestyles. This would be beneficial to people of all ages, including younger and older people without access to a car.

Disability

Disability can have implications for accessibility, housing needs, access to employment, access to facilities and other factors.

The plan seeks to create environments convenient to pedestrians and to support ease of movement and healthy lifestyles. It also promotes housing suitable for a range of needs. The impact on people with disabilities will be positive.

Gender Reassignment:

Gender reassignment may have implications for housing, community facilities, safety and a range of other planning matters.

The plan cannot directly address the social attitudes that underpin prejudice and hate crimes. However, the plan places emphasis on diversity, including in housing, employment and local facilities. The impact will be positive.

Maternity and Pregnancy

Maternity has implications for numerous factors, including ease of movement, changing housing needs, and access to local facilities.

The plan seeks to provide housing to meet a range of needs, supported by a strong town centre. It seeks to create environments convenient to pedestrians and to support ease of movement. The impact on pregnant women will be positive.

Race

Race and culture can be factors in housing needs, community facilities, safety and a range of other planning matters.

The plan cannot directly address the social attitudes that underpin prejudice and hate crimes. However, it does seek to provide high quality housing to meet a range of needs and a well-designed and safe built environment for all. The impact will be positive on people of all races.

Religion or Belief

Some religious beliefs may have implications for housing, community facilities, safety and other planning matters.

The plan places emphasis on diversity, including in housing, employment and local facilities. The impact will be positive.

Sex

Sex can have implications for a range of factors, including housing needs, community facilities, safety and a range of other planning matters.

The plan seeks to shape housing and support local facilities and economic opportunity. It supports active travel and creation of safe and convenient places. The impact will be positive.

Sexual Orientation:

LGBT+ status may have implications for housing, community facilities, safety and a range of other planning matters.

The plan cannot directly address the social attitudes that underpin prejudice and hate crimes. However, the plan places emphasis on diversity, including in housing, employment and local facilities. The impact on LGBT+ people will be positive.

7.6 Equality Conclusions

The Neighbourhood Plan provides a strategy for the development of the neighbourhood area, and a range of policies, which will result in positive benefits for the local community, including those with protected characteristics.

8. Other Legal Requirements

8.1 Climate Change and Mitigation

Climate change and mitigation have been considered in various policies, which collectively seek to reduce carbon use.

Mixed use and walkable neighbourhoods are addressed in Policies TCE1, TCE2, TCE3, RES1, DCE2 and TRM1.

Guidance on green development and reducing carbon use is in the interpretation to Policy DCE2.

Building conservation is addressed in Policies TCE3, DCE3 and DCE4. Conservation of built fabric includes conservation of the embodied energy used in a building's construction, also avoiding unnecessary landfill.

Flood risk and sustainable drainage systems are addressed in Policies RES1 and DCE2.

The rural environment and blue/green infrastructure, including trees, are addressed in Policy DCE1 and DCE2.

Sustainable transport and active travel are promoted in Policies DCE2 and TRM1.

Climate change and mitigation are key themes running through the policies of Neighbourhood Plan, addressed in multiple ways.

8.2 Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Policy DCE1 addresses the rural environment and green & blue infrastructure throughout the Parish. The policy seeks to ensure that development avoids adverse impacts and takes opportunities to enhance natural and green environments.

The policy includes an explicit requirement for development to consider the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. In addition, the policy interpretation provides practical examples and opportunities for environmental enhancement.

Green and blue infrastructure are also addressed in Policies RES1 and DCE2.

9. Conclusion

9.1 Legal Compliance

The Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions, is compatible with human rights law and meets other legal requirements, as demonstrated in this statement.

Appendix 1

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion
Locality and Leek Town Council
May 2024

4. Summary of screening opinion

4.1 This screening opinion has considered whether the LNP is likely to lead to significant environmental effects in the context of the SEA Regulations.

4.2 The screening has considered potential environmental effects that may arise as a result of the LNP. Whilst some limited environmental effects have the potential to take place as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that these are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Regulations and their requirements.

4.3 Key factors in concluding that effects will not be significant are as follows:

- The absence of specific site allocations or growth strategy policies within the LNP.
- Though there are some sensitive receptors, there is a suitable protective framework for environmental assets within the SMLP and national policy.

4.4 A further consideration is that HRA screening (see para. 2.15) has found that appropriate assessment is not required, hence the need for SEA is not triggered on HRA / appropriate assessment related grounds.

4.5 For these reasons, it is considered that the LNP is not subject to the requirements of the SEA Regulations. As a result, **a full SEA process meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations is not deemed necessary to accompany the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.**

4.6 The three statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England) were consulted on the screening opinion between 30th April and 24th May 2024. All three consultation bodies concluded that, in their opinion, SEA is not required for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. The consultation responses are contained in **Appendix A**.

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