

**Bolton by Bowland and
Gisburn Forest
Neighbourhood Plan -
Strategic Environmental
Assessment**

Environmental Report - June 2016

Kirkwells, Lancashire Digital Technology Centre

Bancroft Road

Burnley, Lancashire

BB10 2TP

JBA Project Manager

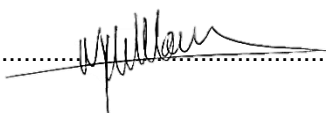
Laura Thomas
 JBA Consulting
 Epsom House
 Chase Park
 Redhouse Interchange
 DONCASTER
 South Yorkshire
 DN6 7FE

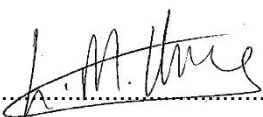
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Contract

This report describes work commissioned by Claire Parker from Kirkwells, on behalf of Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley Parish Council, by an email dated 11th September 2015. Matthew Williams and Laura Thomas of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

Prepared by  Matthew Williams BSc MSc
 Assistant Analyst

Reviewed by  Laura Thomas BA MRes CEcol MCIEEM
 Chartered Senior Ecologist

Purpose

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Non-Technical Summary

Kirkwells, on behalf of Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley Parish Council is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP). As part of this process, the Council is also carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which considers the potential environmental effects of the NP. This Environmental Report sets out findings of the SEA. It has been produced to meet the requirements of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (hereafter referred to as the 'SEA Regulations') and follows the guidance contained within A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (ODPM, 2005).

The full range of environmental receptors has been considered through the SEA. This is in fulfilment of the SEA Directive, which requires that an assessment identifies the potentially significant environmental impacts on 'biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic, material assets including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'.

The SEA Scoping Report for the NP was issued to the statutory consultation bodies in November 2015. A number of comments were received on the scope of the assessment and assessment framework, which were incorporated into the preparation of this Environmental Report.

Assessment of the SEA objectives against two management options ('do nothing', and 'Neighbourhood Plan in action') was undertaken. This identified the potential effects on the environment associated with these different management actions. The 'do nothing' option where no action is taken (assumes a scenario of uncontrolled development, without any plan in place) is likely to result in a number of significant adverse effects, particularly in relation to people and property, and other environmental assets including historic sites and biodiversity. Without active intervention and planning strategy, some of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat areas could be damaged or destroyed through natural processes, agricultural intensification and further development. Unconstrained development, which is not on brownfield sites, could potentially fragment wildlife corridors, reduce habitat connectivity, affect biodiversity, increase the risk of pollution and flooding, and reduce the areas climate change mitigation and adaptation targets.

The 'Neighbourhood Plan in action' option (action, which aims to provide for sustainable growth) aims to protect the existing rural and urban landscapes of the local area, deters harmful development to designated BAP species and habitats, decreases the risk of flooding and pollution, and promotes climate change mitigation and adaptation. Therefore, it is evident that by doing nothing or maintaining current levels of management, there are likely to be detrimental effects on the SEA objectives, which may be prevented by implementing policies proposed by the Bolton-by-Bowland and Gisburn Forest NP.

Assessment of the NP objectives and underpinning measures against the SEA objectives has been undertaken. No negative environmental effects have been identified from the NP objectives. Many of the proposed NP objectives have the potential for both direct and indirect environmental benefits. The NP objective 6 in particular has potential to provide a positive contribution to five of the ten SEA objectives, as it seeks to protect habitats and species, and maintains and enhances wildlife corridors. It also reduces flood risk, and mitigates climate change. In particular, there is opportunity for the NP to achieve a range of biodiversity benefits, including new habitat creation, enhancement of existing habitats and greater habitat connectivity. In addition, the majority of objectives within the strategy will contribute to achievement of the SEA objectives that seek to protect the integrity of the Borough's urban and, in particular, rural landscapes. As a result, the NP is likely to have a significant positive effect on the local communities.

Some of the NP policies, in particular BBGF7, BBGF12 and BBGF15, are likely to assist with climate change adaptation, reduction of flood risk and the protection of wildlife corridors and biodiversity. In particular, policy BBGF7, which aims to improve existing footpaths, linkages and accessibility whilst supporting biodiversity through new footpaths and cycle routes, could make a significant positive contribution to achievement of SEA objectives 3 and 9.

A detailed assessment of the potential cumulative effects of the NP actions should be undertaken when further details regarding specific project level measures and their implementation are known.

The SEA Regulations require the Parish councils to monitor the significant environmental effects (positive and negative) upon the implementation of the NP. Key potential environmental effects that require monitoring have been identified together with the monitoring indicators that can be applied to track whether such effects occur.

This Environmental Report will be subject to public consultation for 6 weeks alongside the draft Bolton-by-Bowland and Gisburn Forest NP. All consultation responses received will be reviewed and taken into consideration for the next stage of the appraisal process. This will involve the preparation of a Statement of Environmental Particulars (SoEP), which will set out how the findings of the Environmental Report and the views expressed during the consultation period have been taken into account as the NP has been finalised and formally approved. The SoEP will also set out any additional monitoring requirements needed to track the significant environmental effects of the Plan.

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Abbreviations

AONB.....	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
APE.....	Annual Probability Event
AQMA	Air Quality Management Areas
BTCP	Bird Targeting Conservation Project
CFMP.....	Catchment Flood Management Plan
DEFRA.....	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
HLS.....	Higher Level Stewardship
IBA	Important Bird and Biodiversity Area
IUCN.....	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LAQM TG.....	Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance
LNR.....	Local Nature Reserve
NERC.....	Natural Environment Research Council
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NVZ.....	Nitrate Vulnerable Zones
ODPM.....	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PFRA	Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment
SAC.....	Special Areas of Conservation
SEA.....	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPA.....	Special Protected Area
SSSI.....	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS.....	Sustainable Drainage System
UKBAP.....	United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan
UKCP09.....	United Kingdom Climate Projections 2009
WFD.....	Water Framework Directive

1 Introduction

1.1 The Neighbourhood Plan

The Localism Act, which received Royal Assent on 15th November 2011, introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans¹. Neighbourhood planning legislation came into effect in April 2012².

Neighbourhood planning can be taken forward by two types of body - town and parish councils or 'neighbourhood forums'. Neighbourhood forums are community groups that are designated to take forward neighbourhood planning in areas without parishes. It is the role of the local planning authority to agree who should be the neighbourhood forum for the neighbourhood planning area.

Neighbourhood plans, when complete, form part of the statutory development plan for an area. The Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley Parish Council applied to be designated a Neighbourhood Planning Area in February 2014. In May 2014, Ribble Valley Borough Council approved the application, which covered Bolton by Bowland Civil Parish and Gisburn Forest Civil Parish. The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, by the Parish Councils Steering group, began soon after its designation by Ribble Valley Borough Council. The plan will give local people more say in the future development of the two areas in the parish³ and will give the community the power to:

- make a neighbourhood development plan
- make a neighbourhood development order
- make a Community Right to Build order

The Localism Act 2011 introduced new powers for people to make neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood planning orders, with reduced involvement from central government. These new powers are in addition to existing opportunities for community involvement, which are already part of the planning system.

1.1.1 Weighting

From the day of publication, decision-takers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging neighbourhood plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging neighbourhood plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging neighbourhood plan to the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (the closer the policies in the emerging neighbourhood plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given)⁴.

1.2 Strategic Environmental Statement (SEA)

The purpose of a SEA is the systematic identification and evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of strategic plans, programmes or policies to aid the selection of a preferred option(s) that is economically viable, meets environmental objectives, legal requirements and provides the best social outcomes. It aims to identify potentially significant environmental effects created as a result of the implementation of the plan or programme on aspects such as “*biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climate, material assets including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors*” (Annex 1(f), European Directive 2001/42/EC).

1 Planning Portal. Neighbourhood Planning, 2015. Available: www.planningportal.gov.uk (Accessed: 8 October 2015)

2 Policy paper. 2010 to 2015 government policy: planning reform (Accessed: 5 October 2015)

3 Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan Draft Submission Version May 2015. (Accessed: 6 October 2015)

4 Paragraph 216 of the NPPF. Available: http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/annex-1-implementation/#paragraph_216 (Accessed 20 October 2015)

The SEA was conducted in line with the guidance detailed in 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive'⁵, and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The level of detail within the SEA was proportionate to that of the Neighbourhood Plan itself, and it identified environmental objectives for ensuring that the proposals of the plan take into account environmental considerations.

The requirement to undertake an SEA was determined by a screening exercise conducted in December 2014. The Screening Report concluded that, as the Neighbourhood Plan had the potential for possible impacts on the environmental quality and heritage of the area, a full SEA would be required⁶.

1.3 Legislative Regime

The European Directive 2001/42/EC requires that an Environmental Report be produced for those plans or programmes requiring SEA, which includes information on the "*relationship [of the plan or programme] with other relevant plans and programmes*" (Annex I(a)), in addition to relevant "*environmental protection objectives, established at international, [European] community or [national] level*" (Annex I (e)).

The Directive was transposed into English legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations'). The SEA Regulations form the basis by which all SEAs are carried out to assess the effects and impacts of certain plans and programmes on the environment. In conjunction with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and SEA Regulations, an Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Government publication, 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' was issued⁷.

This SEA Environmental Report addressed these legislative requirements through the procedural completion of stages B and C (see Section 1.4 of this report) as referred to within the practical guide. The Directive informs the requirement for information on "*relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan and programme*" and "*the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected*" (Annex (b), (c)).

1.4 Stages in the SEA process

The Environmental Report is a key output of SEA, presenting information on the effects of the "draft plan or programme", the Directive's term for the plan or programme on which formal public consultation is carried out⁸. This report has been produced in conjunction with the SEA Regulations and follows the guidance contained within the ODPM Guide (2005). The stages of the SEA process are outlined in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1-1: Stages in the SEA Process (from: ODPM, 2005)

SEA stages	Purpose
Stage A	Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
Stage B	Developing and refining options and assessing effects
Stage C	Preparing the Environmental Report
Stage D	Consulting on the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the Environmental Report Presentation to and adoption by the Council's Cabinet of the Neighbourhood Plan
Stage E	Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Neighbourhood Plan

5 ODPM, 2005. A Practical Guidance to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. Available: www.gov.uk (Accessed: 9 October 2015)

6 Kirkwells, 2014. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening: Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan.

7 ODPM, 2005. A Practical Guidance to the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Available: www.gov.uk (Accessed: 9 October 2015)

8 Ibid

1.5 The Study Area

Bolton by Bowland, Sawley and Gisburn Forest are three individual parishes who have united for form a single parish⁹. Ribble Valley Borough Council approved the application to be a Neighbourhood Planning Area covering the parishes of Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest, as shown in Figure 1-1.

1.5.1 Bolton by Bowland

Bolton by Bowland is a parish in the Ribble Valley Borough of Lancashire. The parish is entirely within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The parish covers an area of 2,550 hectares, has a population of 499 and contains 230 dwellings.

1.5.2 Gisburn Forest

Gisburn Forest Parish is located immediately to the north of Bolton by Bowland Parish within the Ribble Valley Borough of Lancashire, England. Gisburn Forest Civil Parish has a population of 151 and contains 67 dwellings according to the Office for National Statistics in 2011¹⁰.

⁹ Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan Draft Submission Version May 2015. (Accessed : 6 October 2015)

¹⁰ <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination> (Accessed: 6 October 2015)

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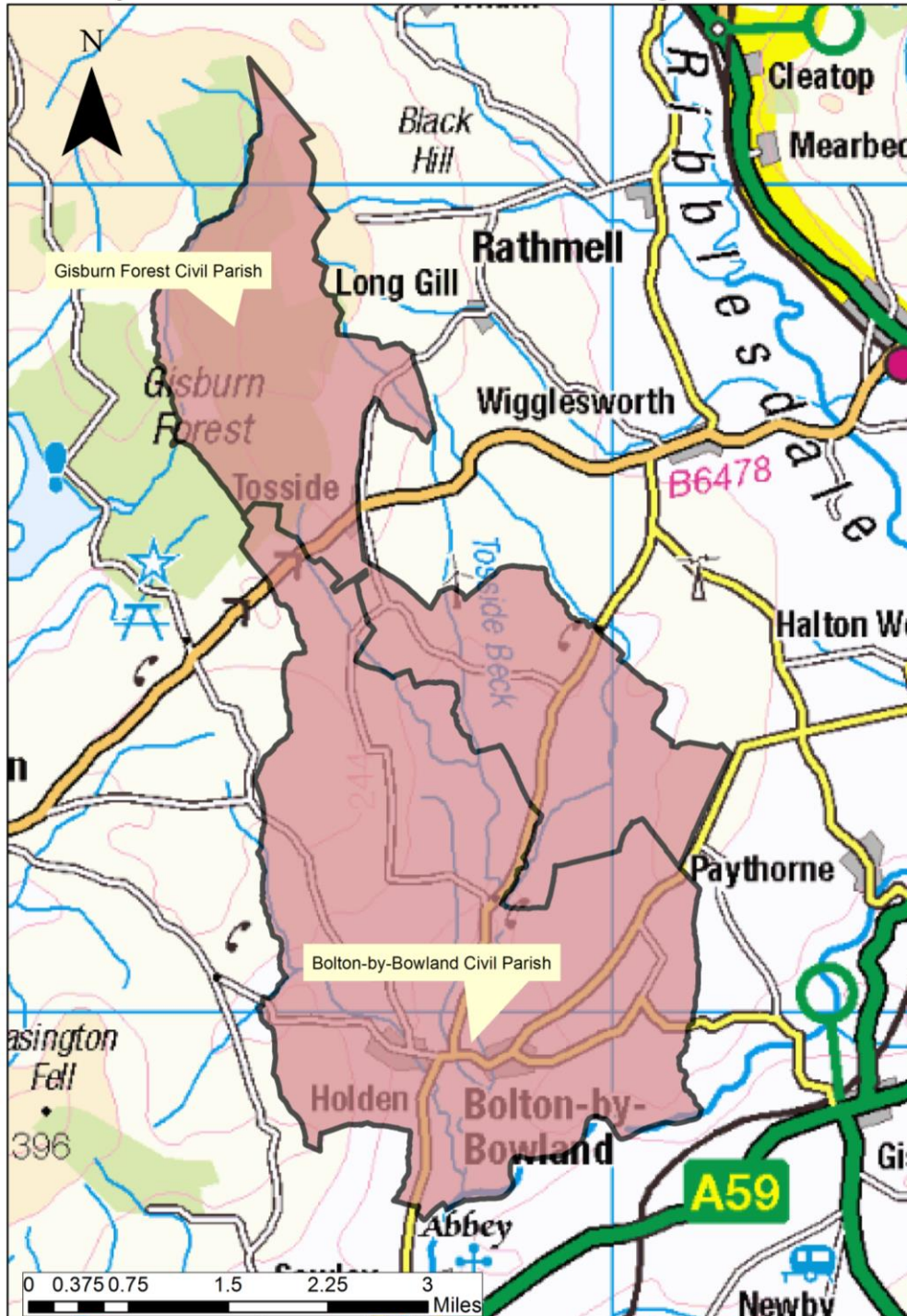


Figure 1-1: Extent of the study area (Bolton by Bowland Civil Parish and Gisburn Forest Civil Parish)

1.6 SEA Scoping

The Scoping Report for the SEA of the Bolton-by-Bowland Neighbourhood Plan was issued for consultation to the required consultation bodies (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency, along with the Forest of Bowland AONB) in November 2015. Comments received during the consultation period have been addressed in this Environmental Report, as detailed in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2: SEA Scoping Consultation Responses

Consultee	Comment Received	Action taken
Natural England email received 14 December 2015	Broadly satisfied with the SEA scoping report, but without seeing the draft Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan were unable to provide detailed comments.	Comment noted and Neighbourhood Plan delivery team should ensure plan is provided to Natural England.
	If the Neighbourhood Plan proposes development which may have a significant impact on designated sites (from air pollution) this may need to be scoped in.	Comment noted and a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening report has been produced to assess how the proposed development may impact on designated sites (see Appendix A).
Environment Agency letter dated 12 November 2015	It is the EA's opinion that any issues within their remit will not have any significant environmental effects and can be dealt with adequately through the provisions made in the NPPF.	Comment noted.
	The EA disagree with the conclusion of the SEA Scoping Report that the issues within their remit should be scoped in.	Comment noted, however it is considered that the conclusions of the Screening and Scoping report are still valid and that a SEA is required.
Historic England letter dated 14 December 2015	Concur that in this regard Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.	Comment noted.
	Recommends that further consideration be given to the criteria to be used to measure impacts on heritage significance, including matters of setting.	This has been taken into account in section 5.
	Sections 4.3 and 4.3.1 do not adequately summarise/describe the Forest of Bowland AONB and its overall importance	These sections (now section 2.3 and 2.3.2 in this Environmental Report) have been expanded upon.
Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) email received 9 December 2015	Sections 4.3 and 4.3.1 do not adequately summarise/describe the Forest of Bowland AONB and its overall importance	These sections (now section 2.3 and 2.3.2 in this Environmental Report) have been expanded upon.
	Please can the following plan and policies relating to the AONB and landscape character be added to Section 3 for consideration in compiling the Environmental Report: Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019; Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2009); National Character Area Profile – 33 Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill; and the National Character Area Profile – 34 Bowland Fells	These plans have been included (in section 2.2 of this Environmental Report)

2 Environmental Baseline

2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Environmental Report presents the findings of the baseline data collection exercise undertaken as part of the Scoping Report production. This identified the context and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and identified and the scope of the assessment.

2.2 Other relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives

An important aspect of the SEA process is the assessment of other policies, plans and programmes and their environmental protection objectives, to identify how these strategic objectives may influence the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. Identifying these relationships enables potential synergies to be determined, strengthening the benefits that can be gained from implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. This information is also used to inform the development of the environmental baseline and the identification of key issues and problems. In addition, any inconsistencies or constraints can be identified, which could hinder the achievement of the environmental protection objectives or those of the Neighbourhood Plan, and therefore providing a broad appraisal of the strategy's compliance with international, national and local considerations.

The ODPM SEA guidance recognises that no list of plans or programmes can be definitive and as a result, this report describes only the key documents, which may influence the Neighbourhood Plan. These are shown in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Policies, plans and programmes reviewed through this SEA process

Plan, Policy or Programme
International
EU Sustainable Development Strategy (revised 2006)
European Biodiversity Strategy to 2020
EC Birds Directive – Council Directive 2009/147/EEC on the conservation of wild birds
EU Floods Directive – Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks
EU Groundwater Directive – Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration
EC Habitats Directive – Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora
Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive – Directive 91/271/EEC concerning urban waste water treatment
EU Water Framework Directive – Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy
National
Securing the Future – the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)
Flood and Water Management Act (2010)
Water for People and the Environment, Water Resources Strategy for England and Wales (2009)
Future Water, The Government's water strategy for England (2008)
Making Space for Water – taking forward a new Government strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England (2005)
The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (2011)
Draft Water Bill (2012)
The National Flood Emergency Framework for England (2011)
The Carbon Plan (2011)
Building a Low Carbon Economy – the UK's Contribution to Tackling Climate Change (2008)
Climate Change Act (2008)
Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystems (2011)
England Biodiversity Framework (2008)
UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994)

Plan, Policy or Programme
National Wetland Vision (2008)
Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) (1981)
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)
Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act (1975)
Contaminated Land (England) Regulations (2006)
Heritage Protection for the 21st Century, White Paper (2007)
National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
Regional
Lancashire Climate Change Strategy 2009-2020 (2009)
North West River basin District - River Basin Management Plan (2015)
Local Air Quality Management. Technical Guidance LAQM.TG(09)
Local
Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan Submission version (2015)
Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019
Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
National Character Area Profile – 33 Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill; and the National Character Area Profile – 34 Bowland Fells
Ribble Valley Borough Council - Core Strategy 2008 - 2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley (2014)
Ribble Valley Community Strategy 2014-2019 (2014)
Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment for Ribble Valley Borough Council (2015)
2015 Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment for Ribble Valley Borough Council
Ribble Valley District Health Profile (2015)

2.3 Baseline Information: Environmental Characteristics and Key issues

A search of baseline environmental information was undertaken during the SEA Scoping process to identify the key environmental characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. This included details of the environmental status and condition of notable environmental features; current and future predicted trends in the evolution of the environment; and issues and problems currently affecting the environment.

The information obtained through this desk study exercise is set out in the following topic-specific sections, many of which are inter-linked. The information used to characterise the baseline environment is broadly strategic in nature and reflects the high-level objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. The baseline may require updating throughout the duration of the SEA process as the Neighbourhood Plan is developed further and new information becomes available.

2.3.1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

Designated Nature Conservation Sites

Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest have no Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites, National Nature Reserves (NNRs) or Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), however, there are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (see Figure 2-1). The two SSSIs are; White Moss (a lowland area consisting of fen, marsh and swamplands) and New Ing Meadow (neutral grassland)¹¹.

White Moss SSSI

White Moss is a watershed/valley side mire situated 5 km south-west of Long Preston at an elevation of about 185 m AOD. Formerly more extensive, White Moss has been reduced in recent

¹¹ Natural England (2015). Magic - Interactive Mapping. Available: <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/> (Accessed: 16 October 2015)
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years through agricultural reclamation but is important as the best surviving example in Lancashire of this mire type. The site lies in a peat-filled depression on boulder clay overlying limestone¹².

New Ing Meadow SSSI

New Ing Meadow lies at an altitude of around 125 AOD in the valley of a small tributary of the River Ribble, approximately 1.25 km north of the village of Bolton by Bowland. It represents an important example of one of the few remaining herb-rich hay meadows typical of this part of Lancashire. This vulnerable habitat has become increasingly scarce nationally. It has almost been destroyed in Lancashire due to agricultural intensification¹³.

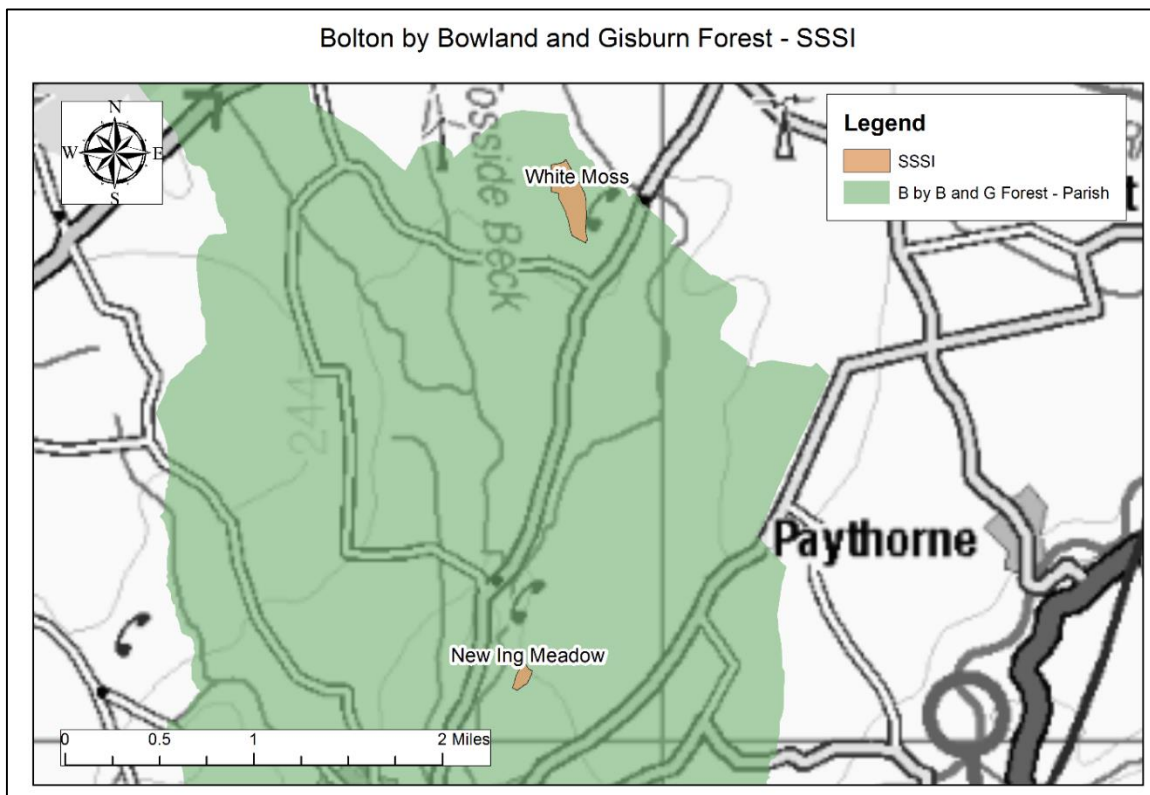


Figure 2-1: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the parishes of Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest

Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) implement Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive) into national legislation. In brief, the regulations "provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites"¹⁴. Whilst there are no SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites within the study area, the presence of sites within relatively close proximity, for example, the Bowland Fells SPA to the north-west will require assessment under these Regulations. A screening assessment has been conducted and is provided at Appendix A.

Priority Habitat Inventory

UK BAP priority habitats were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). The original list of UK BAP priority habitats was created between 1995 and 1999, and was revised in 2007, following

¹² Natural England (2015). White Moss. Available: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1002735&SiteName=white&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=> (Accessed 15 October 2015)

¹³ Ribble Valley (2015). Ribble Valley Sites of Special Scientific Interest - New Ing Meadow SSSI. Available: https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/file/8979/new_ing_meadow_sssi (Accessed: 14 October 2015)

¹⁴ JNCC (2010). The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Available: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1379> (Accessed: 16 October 2015)

publication of the Species and Habitats Review Report. Following this review, the list of UK BAP priority habitats increased from 49 to 65¹⁵. Habitats identified as being present in the project area:

- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Meadows
- Upland Calcareous Grassland
- Upland Hay Meadows
- Upland Heathland
- Blanket Bog
- Lowland Fens
- Upland Flushes, Fens and Swamps
- Deciduous Woodland

Ancient Woodlands

Trees and woodland classed as ‘ancient’ or ‘veteran’ are irreplaceable. Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish. Ancient woodland is considered important for its wildlife, soils, recreation, cultural value, history and contribution to landscapes¹⁶. Ancient woodland is any wooded area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes:

- Ancient semi-natural woodland mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration.
- Plantations on ancient woodland sites which are areas of ancient woodland where the former native tree cover has been felled and replaced by planted trees, usually of species not native to the site.

Ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites have equal protection under the National Planning Policy Framework. Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest, collectively, have ten Ancient Woodland sites, as shown in Figure 2-2. Ancient and semi-natural woodlands present in the study area include Ox Pasture Wood, Fooden High Wood, Clough Wood, Blue Scar Wood, Higher Skye Wood, Park House Wood, Rainsber Wood, Calf House Wood, New Ing Wood, and Springs Wood.

¹⁵ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2015. UK BAP list of priority habitats. Available: www.jncc.defra.gov.uk (Accessed: 8 October 2015)

¹⁶ Natural England and Forestry Commission. Ancient woodland and veteran trees: protecting them from development (2015). Accessible: www.gov.uk/guidance (Accessed: 8 October 2015)

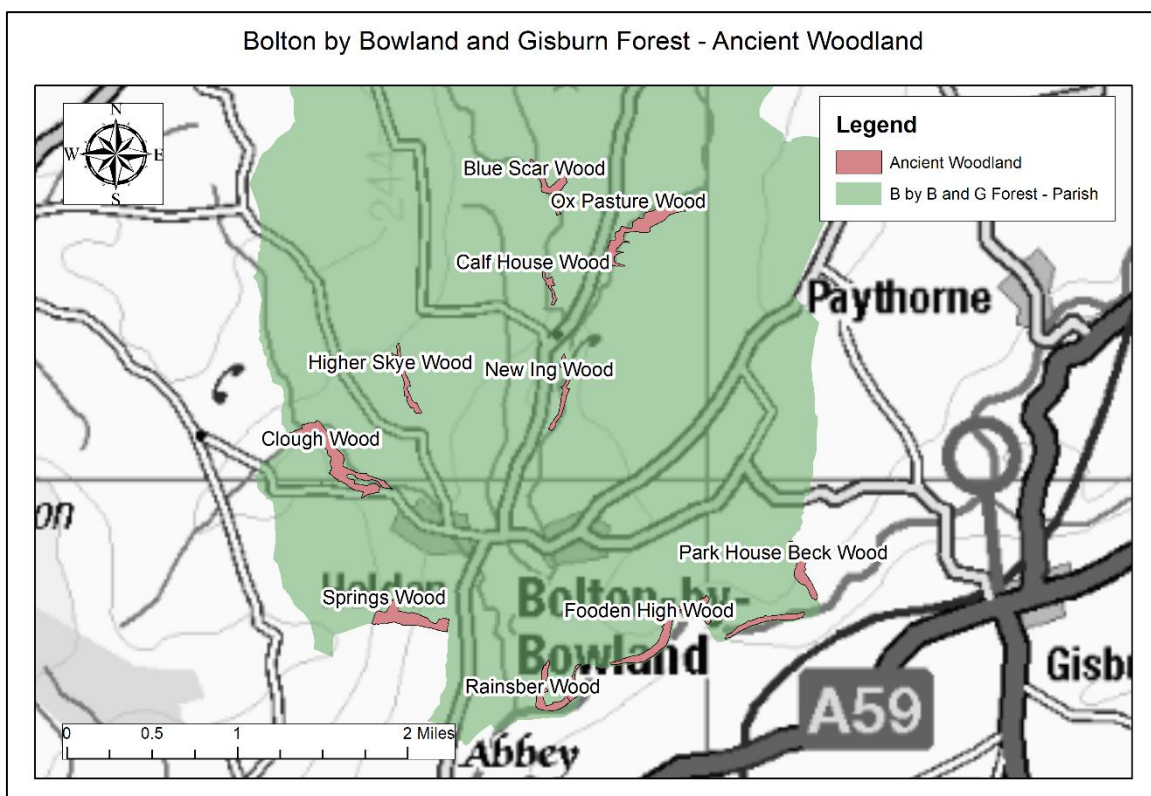


Figure 2-2: Ancient Woodland Sites in the parishes of Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest

Important Bird Areas - Bowland Fells

The Bowland Fells Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) supports a typical range of breeding upland birds, and is a breeding stronghold of Hen Harrier. The site is also important for breeding waders and gulls¹⁷.

Table 2-2: Populations of IBA trigger species (Source: Birdlife International, 2015)

Species	Season	Period	Population estimate	Quality of estimate	IUCN Category
Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Resident	1994	10 breeding pairs	Good	Not Recognised
Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>	Resident	1994	17 breeding pairs	Good	Least Concern
Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Resident	1994	14 breeding pairs	Good	Not Recognised
Common Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	Breeding	1993	520 breeding pairs	Good	Least Concern
Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	Breeding	2001	18,518 breeding pairs	Good	Least Concern
Mediterranean Gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	Breeding	2002	2 breeding pairs	Good	Least Concern
Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	Resident	1994	9 breeding pairs	Good	Least Concern
Species group -	Breeding	1999-	20,681	Good	n/a

Species	Season	Period	Population estimate	Quality of estimate	IUCN Category
waterbirds		2002	breeding pairs		

Bird Conservation Targeting Project Farmland Birds

The Bird Conservation Targeting Project (BCTP) was developed to target management and resources towards important sites for scarce and declining farmland and woodland birds. Records are brought together from a wide range of sources, including individual birdwatchers, county bird clubs and national surveys¹⁸. BCTP farmland bird species present in the study area include Curlew, Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Redshank, Snipe, Tree Sparrow and Twite.

Key environmental issues

Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest have no SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites, NNRs or LNRs, however, there are two SSSIs; White Moss (a lowland area consisting of fen, marsh and swamplands) and New Ing Meadow (neutral grassland). Whilst there are no SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites within the study area, the presence of sites within relatively close proximity will require assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The Bowland Fells Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) supports a typical range of breeding upland birds and contain eight IBA trigger species. There are 11 UK BAP priority habitats present in the project area, seven BCTP farmland bird species and ten ancient woodland areas.

2.3.2 Landscape and Visual Amenity

The Forest of Bowland is an area of barren gritstone fells, deep valleys and peat moorland, mostly in north-east Lancashire with a small part in North Yorkshire (before 1974, some of the area was in the West Riding of Yorkshire).

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) forms a western outlier to the Pennines, with gentle slopes and level ground on ridges¹⁹. Fast-flowing streams drain an extensive area of upland moorland and blanket mire, and bracken may dominate on lower ground. It has been designated an AONB since 1964 and the study area falls entirely within it. AONBs are designated in recognition of their national importance; this ensures that their character and qualities are protected for all to enjoy. AONBs are designated in recognition of being landscapes of national importance. Their statutory purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape; ensuring that their character and qualities are protected for all to enjoy. It is used for walking and cycling, though it is relatively unfrequented by tourists.

The Forest of Bowland AONB is internationally important for its heather moorland, blanket bog and rare birds, and was designated as a landscape of national significance for a variety of features, including²⁰:

- The grandeur and isolation of the upland core
- The steep escarpments of the moorland hills
- The undulating lowlands
- The serenity and tranquillity of the area
- The distinctive pattern of settlements
- The wildlife of the area
- The landscape's historic and cultural associations

¹⁸ RSPB (2015) The Bird Conservation Targeting Project. Available: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/forprofessionals/targeting/> (Accessed: 12 October 2015)

¹⁹ Forest of Bowland (2015). What is an AONB? Available: <http://forestofbowland.com/What-AONB> (Accessed: 15 October 2015)

²⁰ Forest of Bowland AONB (2014) Management Plan April 2014-March 2019. http://forestofbowland.com/files/uploads/pdfs/forest_of_bowland_mgmt_plan_2014-2019.pdf (Accessed: 21 January 2016)

The Forest of Bowland AONB also includes a detached part known as the Forest of Pendle separated from the main part by the Ribble Valley, and anciently a forest with its own separate history.

Statutory Duty

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 places two key statutory duties on local authorities in regard to AONBs: Section 85 states that, “in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land” in these areas, relevant authorities “shall have regard” to their purposes. Section 89 places a duty on local authorities to act jointly to produce and review management plans for the AONB within their administrative boundaries.

Landfill

There are only two historic landfills in the project area, both of which are just east of Bolton by Bowland; Scott Laithe landfill and Foulden landfill. The Scott Laithe landfill received inert, industrial, commercial and household waste between 1947 and 1995. Gas control measures have been taken to either vent the landfill gas away or burn it off. Details for the Foulden landfill are unknown²¹.

Key environmental Issues

The forest of Bowland is a designated AONB. There are also two historic landfills located just outside of the town of Bolton by Bowland.

2.3.3 Water Environment

Catchment Area and Flood Risk

Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest come under Sub-area 1 'Upper Ribble & Hodders' in Lancashire's Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP), as shown in Figure 2-3. This sparsely populated area has a generally low risk of flooding considering its very large size. Any properties that are at risk of flooding are dispersed in nature.

The sub-area is very rural and the rivers tend to be natural channels without flood defences. The Environment Agency estimate there are 230 properties at risk of flooding in a 1% annual probability event (APE) and this could rise to 350 due to the effects of climate change by 2100.

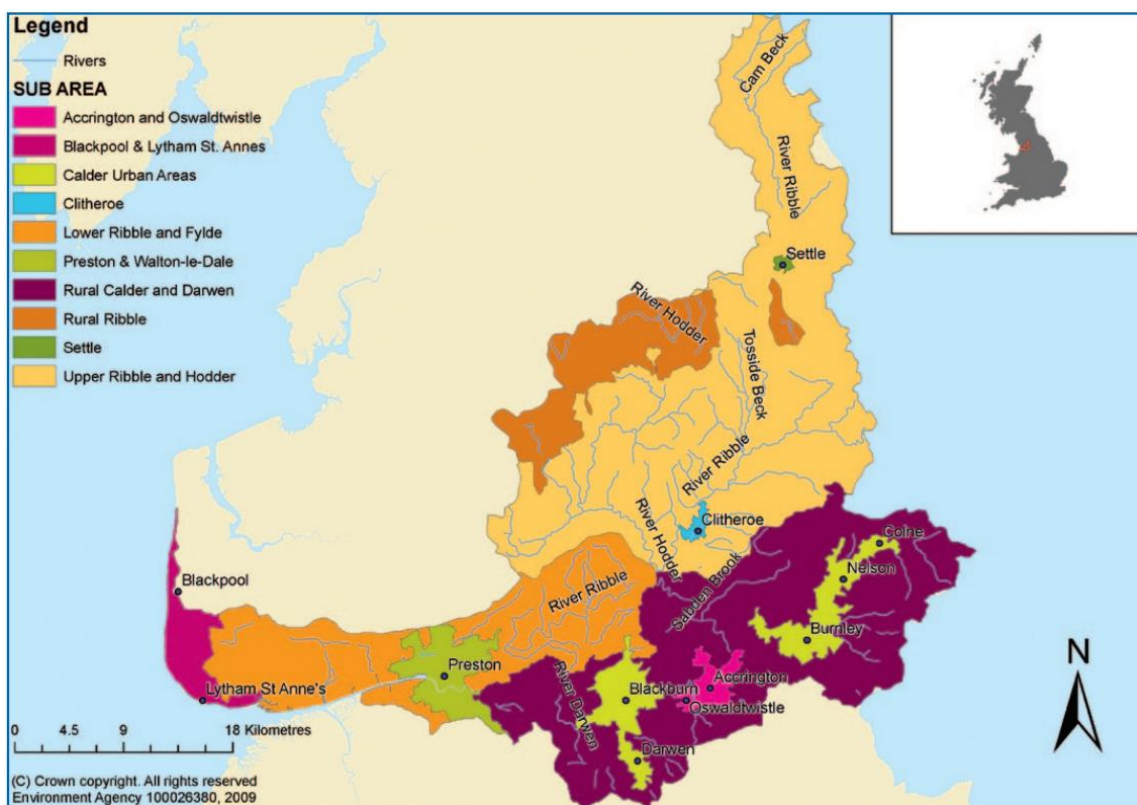


Figure 2-3: Lancashire CFMP Sub Areas (Source: Environment Agency, 2015)

Water Availability

The main river running through the parish council area is the River Ribble, south of Bolton by Bowland. There are many smaller tributaries running southwards through the area towards the River Ribble including, but not exclusive to Skirden Beck, Monubent Beck and Tosside Beck.

Water abstraction activities

Water can be abstracted from groundwater, surface water, or tidal water. An abstraction licence details on what is permitted such as how much water is allowed to be abstracted and at what times. According to the Environment Agency's water abstraction licences data, within the two parishes, there are two small water abstractions from groundwater sources and one small water abstraction from a surface water source²².

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is a European Directive which requires the introduction of strategic planning measures to manage, protect and improve the water environment and came into force in December 2000. The WFD was transposed into UK legislation in 2003, which resulted in the Environment Agency being made responsible for the production of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs).

River Basin Management Plan

The Ribble is one of the longest rivers in the North West, rising in the Yorkshire Dales and flowing into the Irish Sea. Its two main tributaries reflect the contrasts in the catchment. The River Hodder drains much of the Forest of Bowland AONB, whilst the River Calder flows through many of the industrial east Lancashire towns²³.

²² Environment Agency (2015). Water Abstraction Licences. Available: <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby> (Accessed 22 October 2015)

²³ Environment Agency. Water for Life and Livelihoods. River Basin Management Plan - North West River Basin District. (Accessed 22 October 2015)

Table 2-3: Key statistics for the Ribble catchment

River and Lake Water bodies	2009	Predicted 2015
% at good ecological status or potential	38	42
% assessed at good or high biological status (63 water bodies assessed)	45	50
% assessed at good chemical status (9 water bodies assessed)	67	67
% at good status overall (chemical and ecological)	38	42
% improving for one or more element in rivers		27

Groundwater Quality

Current quantitative quality is the degree to which a body of groundwater is currently affected by direct and indirect abstractions. The current quantitative quality for Skirden Beck, which runs through Bolton by Bowland, is good.

The current chemical quality is a measure of the present chemical condition of a water body (also called Chemical Status). There are two classes of chemical status of a water body (good or fail). The current chemical quality of Skirden Beck is good, but deteriorating²⁴. The area has no Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs).

River Quality

Current ecological quality is a measure of the present ecological condition of a surface water body (also called Ecological Status). There are five classes of ecological status of surface waters (high, good, moderate, poor or bad). The current ecological quality of Skirden Beck has been assessed as moderate. The current chemical quality of Skirden Beck is that it does not need assessment²⁵.

Fisheries

The Ribble and its tributaries provide good habitat for Salmon and Otter. Although numbers have increased over recent years, action is required to improve habitats for these species further. The upper Ribblesdale area also supports significant populations of native White-clawed Crayfish²⁶.

Key environmental Issues

There are no NVZs in Bolton by Bowland and there is a low risk of flooding. Only 230 properties are at risk of flooding (1% APE) in Ribble Valley. There are two small water abstractions from groundwater sources and one small water abstraction from a surface water source. Of the rivers and lake water bodies in the Ribble catchment, 38% had a good overall status (ecologically and chemically), which was expected to rise to 42% by 2015. The current quantitative groundwater quality and the groundwater chemical quality for Skirden Beck have both been assessed as 'good'. The Ribble and its tributaries provide good habitat for Salmon, Otters and Crayfish

2.3.4 Soils and geology

The underlying geology of Lancashire is comparatively simple and is formed from four major rock types from three main geological periods (Carboniferous, Permian and Triassic, and the Quaternary).

²⁴ Environment Agency. 2009 River Basin Management Plans - Groundwater. Available: <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby> (Accessed: 22 October 2015)

²⁵ Environment Agency. 2009 River Basin Management Plans - Rivers. Available: <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby> (Accessed: 22 October 2015)

²⁶ Environment Agency. Water for Life and Livelihoods. River Basin Management Plan - North West River Basin District. (Accessed 22 October 2015)

The Lower Carboniferous is represented by the shallow marine Carboniferous Limestone, which outcrops at Silverdale and the Ribble Valley, running through Clitheroe into Yorkshire. The deltaic, Upper Carboniferous Millstone Grit, forms the core of the upland area of the Forest of Bowland and the higher moors to the east of Chorley, while the succeeding Coal Measures underlie Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley in the south of the County. The coastal lowlands of the west of the County are generally formed of Permian and Triassic sandstones and mudstones²⁷. Lancashire was completely covered by ice during the last glacial advance of the Quaternary, or Ice Ages, and consequently the solid geology is largely covered by layers of glacially derived sediments. These form a skin of superficial deposits, which in places are so thick as to eradicate all visual clues as to the nature of the underlying solid geology. This drift has been eroded and shaped by fluvial, marine, aeolian and frost processes, which combine to create distinctive features and landscapes²⁸.

Key environmental Issues

The underlying geology of Lancashire is formed from four major rock types from three main geological periods (Carboniferous, Permian and Triassic, and the Quaternary).

2.3.5 Historic Environment

The parishes of Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest have a rich and diverse history. Bolton by Bowland is a village and civil parish in the Ribble Valley Borough of Lancashire, England. Before 1974, the village was part of Bowland Rural District in the West Riding of Yorkshire²⁹. In medieval times, it was known as Bolton in Bowland, reflecting the shifting boundaries of the ancient Forest of Bowland on whose southeast flank the village sits. Bolton by Bowland has two village greens. The smaller green contains the remains of a 13th Century stone cross and old stocks. The church has many ornamental carvings and a font dating from 1500, which bears the arms of the Pudsay, Percy, Tempest, Hammerton and other families. Overlooking the River Ribble is Rainsber Scar, known locally as Pudsay's leap³⁰.

There are no World Heritage Sites or registered Battlefields in the area.

²⁷ Natural England (2015). Lancashire's Geodiversity. Available: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/geodiversity/englands/counties (Accessed: 6 October 2015)

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Forest of Bowland (2015). The Lordship of Bowland. Available: <http://forestofbowland.com/node/1864> (Accessed: 12 October 2015)

³⁰ The Village of Bolton by Bowland (2015). Available: <http://www.bolton-by-bowland.org/> (Accessed 9 October 2015)

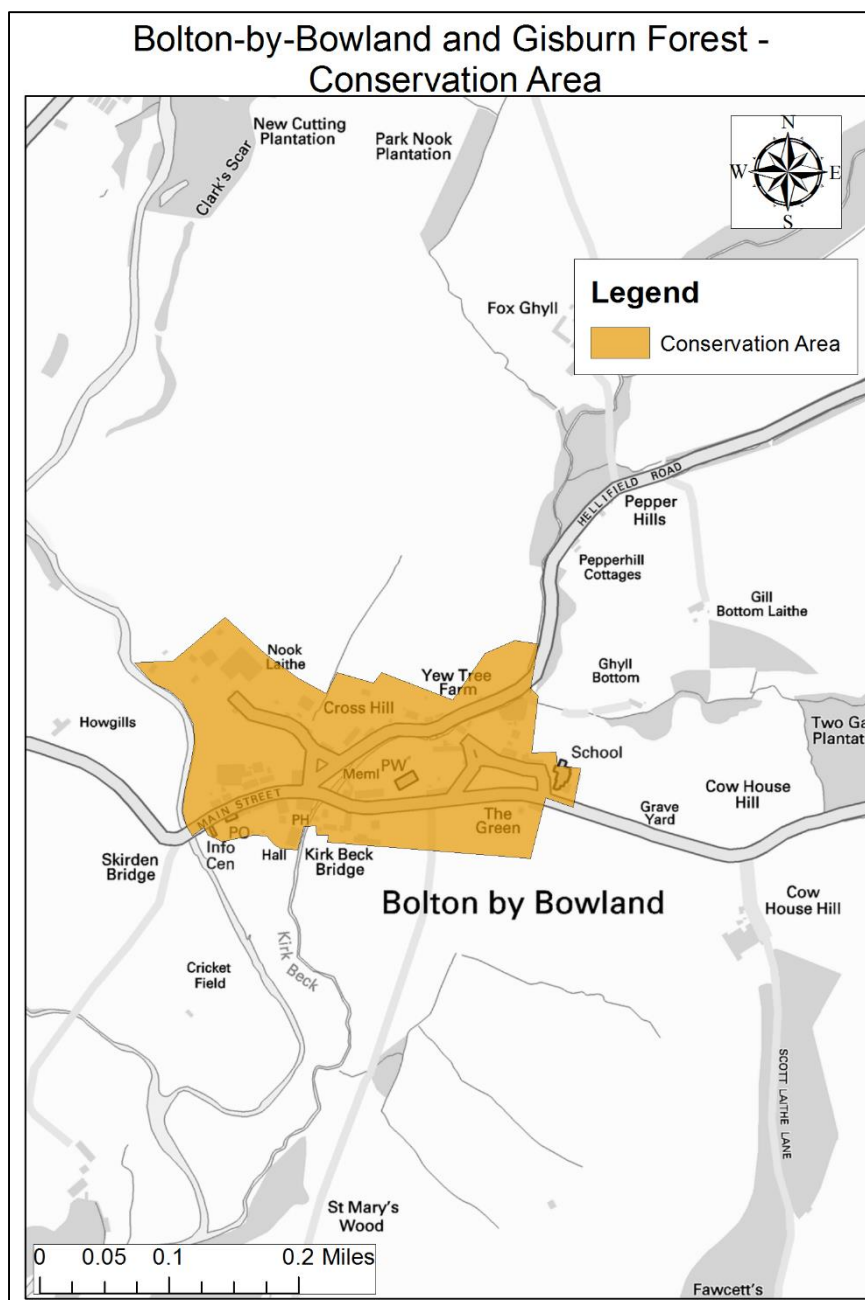


Figure 2-4: Conservation Area surrounding settlements in Bolton-by-Bowland.

The Bolton-by-Bowland town area is a conservation area, designated in 1974, as shown in Figure 2-4. The conservation area boundary encloses the whole of the settlement including the outlying farm buildings of Nook Laithe. The focus of the village is the village green in which stands an ancient stone cross at the junction of four roads; Main Street, Gisburn Road, Hellifield Road and an un-named cul-de-sac lane to Nook Laithe. Scheduled monuments, listed buildings, and other undesignated buildings, structures and areas of local importance are located in the area. Historic sites in the area include:

- Two scheduled monuments; these are historic sites of national importance and include the moated site 50m northeast of Holden Farm and, Sawley Cistercian Abbey (falling outside of Neighbourhood Plan area) and associated earthworks.

52 listed buildings: these are statutorily designated and include one Grade I listed building and 51 Grade II, as shown in Figure 2-4.

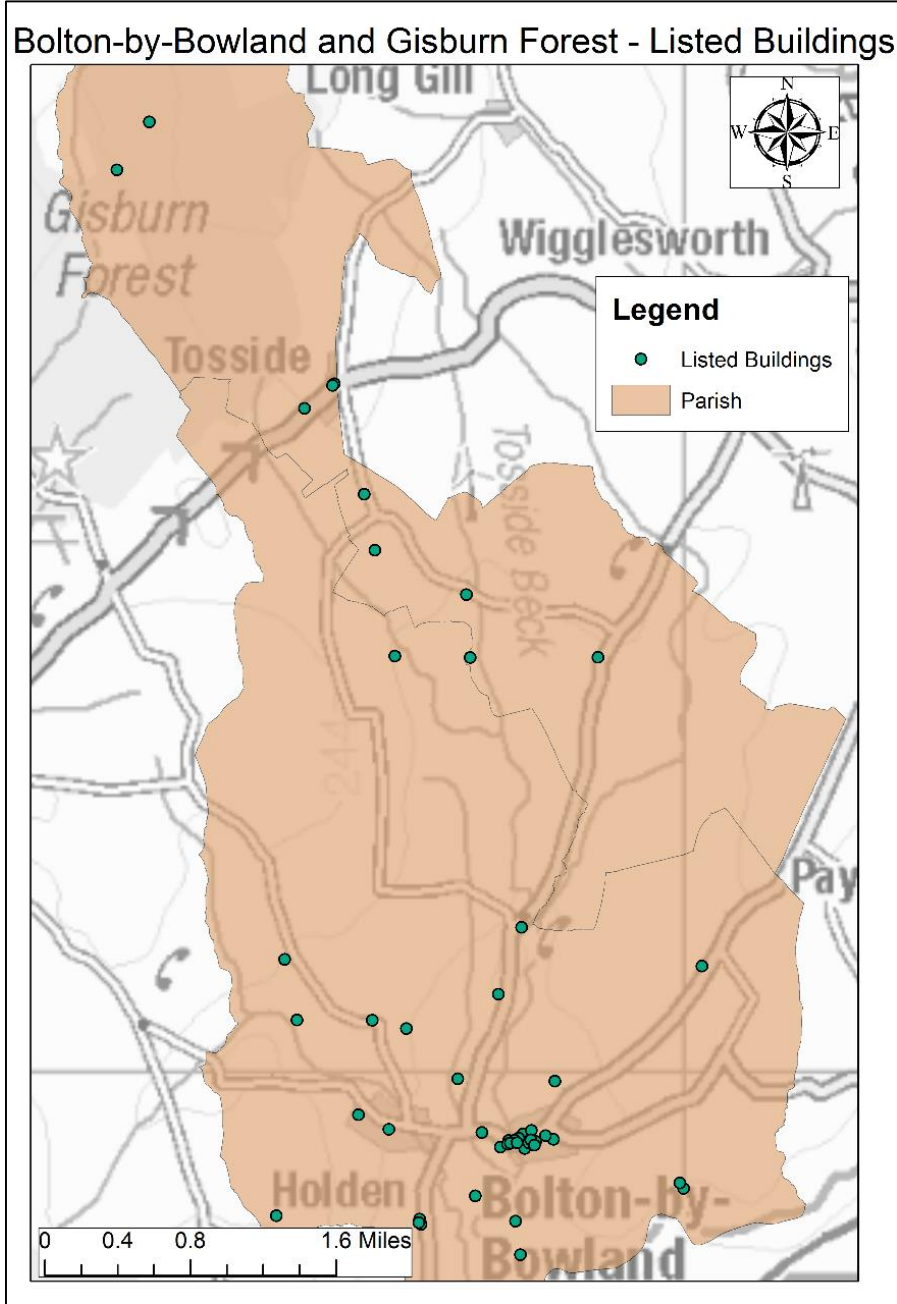


Figure 2-5: Listed Buildings in Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest civil parishes

Key environmental Issues
 Bolton by Bowland has two village greens. There are 2 scheduled monuments and 52 listed buildings, including one Grade I listed building. The settlement area (Bolton-by-Bowland) is a conservation area. There are no world heritage sites, or registered battlefields in the area

2.3.6 Population

The Ribble Valley has an estimated population, at the mid-year resident population estimate (2013-14), of 58,091, as shown in Table 2-4 below. This is an increase of 233 residents from the previous year. Gisburn Forest Civil parish had an estimated population of 151 residents in the 2011 census, and Bolton by Bowland had 499 residents (see Table 2-5).

Table 2-4: Mid-year resident population 2013-14 for Ribble Valley (Source:

www.lancashire.gov.uk)

Mid-year resident population 2013-14						
Area	2013	2014	Percentage Change and Components of Change 2013-14			
			Percentage Change	Natural Births	Net Internal Migration	Net External Migration
Ribble Valley	57,858	58,091	0.40%	-153	365	18

Table 2-5: Key Figures for 2011 Census: Key Statistics (Source: www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

Key Figures for 2011 Census				
Area	All Usual Residents	Males	Females	Households
Gisburn Forest Civil Parish	151	67	84	59
Bolton by Bowland Civil Parish	499	254	245	214

Health Statistics

Local authority health profiles are designed to show the health of people in each local authority area, and include comparisons with other similar populations³¹.

They are produced by Public Health Observatories and are updated annually. The information provided below is sourced from the 'Ribble Valley District Health Profile 2015'.

Health Indicators

The health of people in Ribble Valley is generally better than the England average. Deprivation is lower than average, however about 6.0% (600) children live in poverty. Life expectancy for men is higher than the England average. Life expectancy is 6.7 years lower for men in the most deprived areas of Ribble Valley than in the least deprived areas. Rates of statutory homelessness, violent crime, long-term unemployment, drug misuse and excess winter deaths are better than average. Table 2-6 shows how the health of people in this area compares with the rest of England. Local value and England value represents the rate per 100,000 population.

Table 2-6: Health Summary for Ribble Valley. Source: Ribble Valley Health Profile 2015

Health Summary for Ribble Valley		
Indicator	Local Value	England Value
Obese Adults	18.6	23.0
Percentage of physically active adults	62.6	56.0
Hospital stays for alcohol related harm	486	645
Hospital stays for self-harm	192.7	203.2
Incidence of TB	2.9	14.8
New STI	433	832
Hip fractures in people aged 65 and over	438	580
Smoking related deaths	283.7	288.7
Killed and seriously injured on roads	66.0	39.7

Community Indicators

In Year 6, 15.2% (98) of children are classified as obese, better than the average for England. The rate of alcohol specific hospital stays among those under 18 was 49.9 (per 100,000). This represents seven stays per year. Levels of GCSE attainment are better than the England average.

³¹ Public Health England. Ribble Valley District Health Profile 2015. Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england> (Accessed 9 October 2015)

Levels of smoking at time of delivery are worse than the England average, whereas, levels of breastfeeding are better than in England³².

Key environmental Issues

The population of Ribble Valley was 58,091 for 2013-14. There has been a small increase in the population for Ribble Valley. The combined estimated population for Gisburn Forest and Bolton by Bowland parishes was 650 in 2011.

The health of people in Ribble Valley is generally better than the England average. The level of deprivation, life expectancy for men, statutory homelessness, violent crime, long-term unemployment, drug misuse, childhood obesity, GCSE attainment, and excess winter deaths are better than average. Levels of smoking at time of delivery are worse than the England average.

2.3.7 Material assets

The three largest villages in the two civil parishes are Holden, Tosside and Bolton by Bowland.

Fewer residents have no car or van than elsewhere; 3.7% of residents in Bolton by Bowland, and 1.7% of residents in Gisburn Forest have no car or van compared to 13% in Ribble Valley and 25.8% across England. The largest road in the study area is the B6478, which connects the villages of Newton-in Bowland and Wigglesworth.

2.3.8 Air quality

There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in either the Bolton by Bowland or Gisburn Forest parishes.

Ribble Valley Borough Council has monitored nitrogen dioxide concentrations at eight sites over the last year (2014-15). The results from this monitoring indicate that the air quality objectives are not being exceeded at any location³³. No monitoring of any other pollutants has been undertaken but a review of the background maps available on the Defra website has indicated that no exceedances are expected. Ribble Valley Borough Council has considered the following sources of pollutants:

- Road Transport Sources
- Other Transport Sources
- Commercial and Domestic Sources
- Fugitive and Uncontrolled Sources

It has been determined that in each case there are no new or significantly altered sites of concern that meet the criteria within the guidance document Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance(09) (LAQM TG)³⁴.

Key environmental Issues

Air quality objectives are not being exceeded at any location. A review of the background maps available on the Defra website has indicated that no exceedances are expected. There are no AQMAs in the area and there are no new or significantly altered sites of concern.

2.3.9 Climate

The UK Climate Projection (UKCP09) provides probability-based projections of key climate variables, such as temperature and rainfall at a higher geographic resolution than has previously been available. Projections are based on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 'business as usual' emissions scenario.

32 Public Health England. Ribble Valley District Health Profile 2015. Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england> (Accessed 9 October 2015)

33 2015 Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment for Ribble Valley Borough Council. Available: www.ribbonvalley.gov.uk (Accessed: 6 October 2015)

34 Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Part III, Local Air Quality Management, Technical Guidance LAQM. TG(09), February 2009, DEFRA

At present Lancashire experiences a temperate climate with average winter temperatures of between 2 to 6 °C and average summer temperatures of between 12 and 16 °C. On average, winter rainfall in the region is between 100-800mm and summer rainfall between 100-300mm³⁵.

Climate Change

During the 20th century, the annual mean central England temperature warmed by about 1°C. The 1990s were exceptionally warm in central England by historical standards, about 0.6°C warmer than the 1961-1990 average.

The Lancashire Climate Change Strategy provides evidence of how the weather is already changing in the North West. It includes:

- 0.40°C rise in annual mean temperature at Manchester Airport between 1988 and 1997 (compared to the 1961-1990, 30 year average);
- 20% decrease in summer rainfall over the last century
- Increased high intensity rainfall since the 1960s
- Seasonal rainfall varying by as much as 15% from the average in the last 30 years
- Sea level rise at Liverpool of around 6cm in the last 50 years
- Increased flooding of some of the region's major rivers in the last few decades³⁶

Key environmental Issues

Lancashire has a temperate climate, with mean annual temperatures for 2014 between 8 and 10°C. The climate in Lancashire is projected to become wetter and warmer during the summer and winter months as a result of climate change.

³⁵ Met Office. (2015). UK actual and anomaly maps. Available: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/summaries/anomacts> (Accessed: 6 October 2015)

³⁶ The Lancashire Climate Change Strategy 2009-2020. Available: http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/190306/Lancashire_Climate_Change_Strategy_2009_2020.pdf (Accessed 6 October 2015)

2.4 SEA Scoping Conclusion

Following a review of this environmental baseline data it was possible to scope out air quality as an SEA issue, as it is unlikely that there will be significant environmental effects on these receptors arising from implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. A summary of the scoping conclusions are given in Table 2-7 below.

Table 2-7: Summary of the Scoping Conclusions

Receptor	Scoped In / Out	Conclusion
Landscape and visual amenity	Scoped in	<p>The landscape qualities and integrity of the Borough could be affected by changes to land use/management, including new development. Housing growth could affect locally important urban and rural landscapes and other locally important landscape areas.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan measures could enhance the landscape as it proposes strict planning constraints to ensure any development preserves the traditional character of the environment including the landscape.</p>
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Scoped in	<p>National and locally important biodiversity sites and species within the Borough, including two SSSI's and BAP habitats and species may be affected by the new housing, additional amenities and changes to the local transport (new bus services, road works etc.). The Neighbourhood Plan policies may present opportunities for biodiversity gain.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan measures could improve the biodiversity of the area through the protection of the AONB, greenspaces and the natural landscape. Habitat creation or enhancement could also be incorporated into Neighbourhood Plan measures, for example through the implementation of more natural flood risk management measures.</p>
Water environment	Scoped in	<p>New development could potentially affect the water environment both positively and negatively. The Neighbourhood Plan could give rise to changes in flood risk and water quality, and could affect provision of water resources, impact on WFD objectives and potentially result in indirect impacts on designated sites/species.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan may present opportunities for improved water management through the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), water attenuation facilities, and rainwater harvesting.</p>
Soils and geology	Scoped in	<p>Changes to land use/water management and new development could affect soil quality and underlying geology. Subsequent erosion of these lands could give rise to pollution pathways, increasing the risk of an adverse effect on other environmental receptors. Bolton by Bowland contains a significant percentage of agricultural land, which could be affected upon adversely (e.g. through erosion and waterlogging) because of changed land use or water management. Impacts on soil quality could then affect other aspects of the environment such as biodiversity and water quality.</p>
Historic environment	Scoped in	<p>Changes to the transport infrastructure and local amenities, and new housing, could have positive or negative impacts on historic sites, including scheduled monuments and listed buildings including impacts on their historic value or setting and changes to the landscape visually.</p> <p>Historic assets in the Borough could be affected by changes to the landscape and water management measures. Opportunities may exist to protect important sites or negative impacts could occur due to increased flood risk to vulnerable sites.</p>
Population	Scoped in	<p>A range of socio-economic characteristics of the Borough including social deprivation levels, health and wellbeing, access</p>

Receptor	Scoped In / Out	Conclusion
		<p>and recreation, and employment opportunities could be impacted upon by the Neighbourhood Plan. Critical social infrastructure, including schools, and residential and nursing homes could benefit from enhanced community facilities.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to provide significant positive benefits to the population of the Borough through reduced levels of flood risk to population generally (through new water management techniques). Vulnerable groups could benefit from additional amenities, and greater involvement in existing organisations.</p>
Material assets	Scoped in	<p>Critical infrastructure including the transport network, waste sites and utilities services could benefit from a number of policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Material assets, in particular amenity resources, could also benefit from improved existing transport facilities, infrastructure and services.</p>
Air quality	Scoped out	<p>With an improved and more sustainable transport infrastructure, the Neighbourhood Plan may have an effect on air quality in the Borough. The neighbourhood plan supports improvements to roads to reduce the negative impacts of increased traffic volume, size and speeds. This could improve the air quality of the area due to a decrease in emissions. However, new housing could result in increased carbon emissions associated with an increase in the population. Arguably, due to the localised nature, these effects will likely be very small and therefore air quality can be scoped out of this assessment.</p>
Climate	Scoped in	<p>Changes to the transport infrastructure and new developments could have knock-on effects on a range of environmental aspects including biodiversity, water resources and the local landscape. New housing could result in increased carbon emissions associated with an increase in the population. However, more sustainable travel could decrease carbon emissions.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan may include mitigation, resilience and adaption responses and measures that could contribute to addressing the future impacts of climate change effects.</p>

3 Strategic Environmental Assessment Framework

3.1 Introduction

The SEA framework, developed at the scoping stage, is used to identify and evaluate the potential environmental issues associated with the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The framework comprises a set of SEA objectives that have been developed to reflect the key environmental issues identified through the baseline information review in Section 5. These objectives are supported by a series of indicators, which are used as a means to measure the potential significance of the environmental issues and can be used to monitor implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. These Neighbourhood Plan objectives are tested against the SEA framework to identify whether each option will support or inhibit achievement of each objective.

Table 3-1 below summarises the purpose and requirements of the SEA objectives, indicators and targets.

Table 3-1: Definition of SEA objectives, indicators and targets

Purpose	
Objective	Provide a benchmark 'intention' against which environmental effects of the plan can be tested. They need to be fit-for-purpose.
Indicator	Provide a means of measuring the progress towards achieving the environmental objectives over time. They need to be measurable and relevant and ideally rely on existing monitoring networks.
Target	Describe the desirable state in relation to each objective in quantifiable terms. They can be devised so that they meet the minimum requirement for each objective or they can be more aspirational in nature. Targets need to be realistic and ideally quantitative.

3.2 SEA objectives, indicators and targets

SEA objectives and indicators have been compiled for each of the environmental receptors (Table 3-2), or groups of environmental receptors, scoped into the study during this phase of the project. These objectives have been refined or revised in response to comments received during the consultation phase on this SEA Scoping Report and in light of any additional information obtained during the life of the project.

Table 3-2: SEA objectives and indicators

Receptor	Objective	Indicator	Target(s)	
Landscape	1	Protect the integrity of the Borough's urban and, in particular, rural landscapes.	<p>Changes in the condition and extent of existing characteristic elements of the landscape.</p> <p>The condition and quality of new characteristics introduced to the environment.</p> <p>Percentage of open countryside.</p>	<p>No adverse impacts on landscape character of the AONB, NCA or other locally important landscapes/features as a result of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>No reduction in the percentage of land classified within the parishes as open countryside as a result of development arising from Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p>
	2	Protect and enhance designated sites and BAP habitats and species in the Borough.	Area of designated sites adversely affected by proposals from the Neighbourhood Plan.	No adverse impact on designated sites as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	3	Maintain and enhance habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors within the Borough.	<p>Monitoring of reported status of designated nature conservation sites.</p> <p>Percentage of land designated as nature conservation sites because of Neighbourhood Plan measures.</p> <p>Area of habitat created because of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>Improved conservation status of designated nature conservation sites as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p> <p>Increase in the area of good wildlife habitat, and land designated as nature conservation sites, as a result of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
	4	Improve the quality and quantity of the water in the Borough's rivers.	<p>Water quality of the Borough's watercourses.</p> <p>Number of SuDS schemes installed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Numbers of sites with high pollution potential (e.g. landfill sites, wastewater treatment works) at risk from flooding because of measures from the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>No deterioration to the WFD status of water bodies within the parishes.</p> <p>Increase in the number of SuDS schemes within the parishes.</p> <p>No increase in the number of sites with high pollution potential (e.g. landfill sites, wastewater treatment works) at risk from flooding because of measures implemented from the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
Water environment				

Receptor	Objective	Indicator	Target(s)	
	5	Do not inhibit achievement of the WFD objectives and contribute to their achievement where possible.	<p>Achievement of WFD objectives.</p> <p>Percentage of water bodies achieving 'Good' ecological status/potential.</p> <p>No deterioration in WFD status.</p>	<p>Increase in the percentage of water bodies within the parishes achieving 'Good' ecological status/ potential.</p> <p>No deterioration to the WFD status of water bodies within the catchment.</p>
Soils and geology	6	Reduce the risk of soil erosion and pollution.	<p>Area of agricultural, rural and greenfield land affected by Neighbourhood Plan measures.</p> <p>Numbers of sites with high pollution potential (e.g. landfill sites, wastewater treatment works) at risk from flooding because of measures from the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>Minor increase in the area of agricultural, rural and greenfield land given over to development as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation (particularly in fulfilment of Policy BBGF1 which targets land at the settlement boundaries of Bolton by Bowland, Tosside and Holden).</p> <p>No increase in the number of sites with high pollution potential (e.g. landfill sites, wastewater treatment works) at risk from flooding because of measures implemented from the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
Historic environment	7	Preserve and where possible enhance important historic and cultural sites in the Borough.	<p>Number of historic assets, and their setting, adversely affected by proposals from the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Number of vulnerable historic assets protected/enhanced by implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>No adverse impact on historic assets, or their setting, as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p> <p>Increase in the number of historic assets protected/ conserved/ enhanced (e.g. removed from the Heritage at Risk Register) as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p>
Population	8	Protect and enhance social and community facilities within the Borough	<p>Number of green spaces protected/enhanced/created as part of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Number of key services (e.g. hospitals, health centres, residential/care homes, schools etc.) protected/enhanced/created as part of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of green spaces protected/enhanced/created as part of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p> <p>Increase in the number of key services protected/enhanced/created as part of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
Material assets	9	Protect and enhance the existing transport infrastructure of the Borough.	<p>Length of road infrastructure enhanced (e.g. traffic calming measures) from implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Number of public transport initiatives enhanced/</p>	<p>Increase in the length of road infrastructure enhanced as part of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Increase in the number of public transport initiatives enhanced/established within the parishes as a result</p>

Receptor	Objective	Indicator	Target(s)
		established. Length of footpath created/ enhanced.	of Neighbourhood Plan implementation. Increase in the length of footpaths within the parishes as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.
Climate	10	Reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts and promote measures to enable adaptation to climate change impacts. Number of sustainable transport initiatives established because of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Number of renewable energy projects established within the Parishes. Number of residential properties and key services at risk of flooding.	Increase in the number of sustainable transport initiatives established from the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Increase in the number of renewable energy projects established within the Parishes because of Neighbourhood Plan implementation (taking into account the sensitivity of the landscape and designated nature conservation sites; see Appendix A). Reduction in the number of residential properties and key services at risk of flooding as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.

4 Plan Issues and Alternatives

4.1 Developing Alternatives

The SEA Directive requires an assessment of the plan and its 'reasonable alternatives'. In order to assess reasonable alternatives, different strategy options for delivering the Neighbourhood Plan have been assessed at a strategic level against the SEA objectives, and the environmental baseline as detailed section 2. The results of this assessment will be used to inform the decision-making process in choosing a preferred way of delivering the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2 Appraisal of actions

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. The Neighbourhood Plan objectives have been assessed against the SEA objectives for each of the following alternative options as shown in Table 4-1.

- **Do Nothing** - where no action is taken (assumes a scenario of uncontrolled development, without any plan in place).
- **Neighbourhood Plan in action** - action, which aims to provide for sustainable growth, is taken.

Table 4-1: Assessment of the strategy and alternative options against the SEA objectives

SEA Objectives		Options and Effects	
		Do Nothing	Neighbourhood Plan in action
1	Protect the integrity of the Borough's urban and, in particular, rural landscapes.	Without the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is more likely that the existing landscape character of the area and the building styles will not be maintained to the communities' desires. Development and the style of it will be unconstrained.	The Neighbourhood Plan aims to protect the existing rural and urban landscapes of the local area. If the plan is implemented, accordingly housing growth in the area will be sustainable, proportionate to the population and fitting with the local character.
2	Protect and enhance designated sites and BAP habitats and species in the Borough.	It is unlikely that there will be damage to the designated sites caused by development in the absence of any local development planning, as they have special status as protected areas. However, without active intervention and planning strategy, some of the BAP habitat areas could be damaged/destroyed through natural processes, agricultural intensification and further development.	Neighbourhood Plan measures would deter harmful development to designated sites and BAP species and habitats.
3	Maintain and enhance habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors within the Borough.	Unconstrained development, which is not on brownfield sites, could potentially fragment wildlife corridors, reducing habitat connectivity and causing detrimental effects to biodiversity within the parishes.	Increased linkages to wildlife corridors and actions to promote biodiversity conservation along routes to support local biodiversity objectives such as provision of new areas of woodland, new hedgerows and wetland habitats are included within the Neighbourhood Plan. Retaining existing field patterns and boundaries, including low hedgerows and tree cover will be of benefit to wildlife by

SEA Objectives		Options and Effects	
		Do Nothing	Neighbourhood Plan in action
			providing corridors for movement.
4	Improve the quality and quantity of the water in the Borough's rivers.	The NPPF requires the sequential and exception tests to be applied, therefore it is unlikely that housing development would go unchecked. There would be no negative impacts.	The Neighbourhood Plan implemented there should be little risk to contaminating the Parishes rivers through flooding of new developments.
5	Do not inhibit achievement of the WFD objectives and contribute to their achievement where possible.	There are existing controls in place through building regulations and consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority, therefore it is unlikely that WFD objectives will not be achieved, where possible.	There should be little risk to contaminating the Parishes rivers through flooding of new developments. SuDS, water attenuation facilities, water conservation measures, and rainwater harvesting are planned to be incorporated into their housing development design - reducing the risk of flooding and potential for reduced water quality, which will help protect the Parishes water bodies and potentially improve WFD status and help achievement of WFD objectives.
6	Reduce the risk of soil erosion and pollution.	Unrestrained housing developments, expansion of community facilities and increased hard surfaces in the village in the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan could increase surface water runoff, thereby increasing the risk of soil erosion and pollution incidents.	Protection of green spaces under the Neighbourhood Plan will reduce runoff (reducing the risk of polluting river water). New housing developments will incorporate SuDS and water attenuation facilities, where appropriate (reducing soil erosion from surface water runoff).
7	Preserve and where possible enhance important historic and cultural sites in the Borough.	Important cultural and historical sites would be protected by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and other legislation; however, there would be less community involvement in relation to future developments.	The Neighbourhood Plan will protect the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape, and it preserves important historical sites in the area, along with their setting.
8	Protect and enhance social and community facilities within the Borough	Without implementation of any local planning strategy, community facilities would not be as protected and may be lost from the area. Local green areas could be developed on.	The Neighbourhood Plan will support proposals for new, and improvements to, existing community facilities. The Neighbourhood Plan will also protect six green spaces in Bolton-by-Bowland from development.
9	Protect and enhance the existing transport infrastructure of the Borough.	There is a smaller likelihood that current and proposed cycleways and pathways would be maintained or developed up to the community's desired standard in the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan. Transport improvements (highway improvements, traffic calming measures etc.) may not take	The Neighbourhood Plan will improve and extend cycle paths and footpaths. The Neighbourhood Plan has also prioritised traffic calming measures and public transport.

SEA Objectives		Options and Effects	
		Do Nothing	Neighbourhood Plan in action
		precedence in the parish.	
10	Reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts and promote measures to enable adaptation to climate change impacts.	Unlikely to see renewable energy developments in the parishes (or uncontrolled and large scale renewable energy schemes may be implemented), green spaces could be developed upon, and cycleways and pathways may not be maintained or extended; thereby reducing the areas climate change mitigation targets and reducing the adaptability to climate change.	With the Neighbourhood Plan. micro/ small wind energy and micro hydro energy are to be installed to mitigate climate change. Furthermore, Traffic calming measures, improving pedestrian and cycle routes and more public transport should help to mitigate climate change (marginally). Protection of green spaces will reduce runoff (reducing flood risk), and therefore should reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts.

4.3 Conclusion

Table 4-1 suggests that the only realistic option is to implement the Neighbourhood Plan as it is evident that by doing nothing, with no local planning strategy in place, uncontrolled development could threaten the landscape, biodiversity and heritage of the area, and lead to the decline in condition, or loss, of community facilities, green spaces, footpaths/cycleways and other assets.

5 Appraisal of Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

5.1 Impact significance

The unmitigated impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan objectives on achieving the SEA objectives will be identified through the analysis of the baseline environmental conditions and use of professional judgement. The significance of effects will be scored using the five-point scale summarised in Table 5-1. If there is high uncertainty regarding the likelihood and potential significance of an impact (either positive or negative), it will be scored as uncertain.

Table 5-1: Impact significance key

Impact significance	Impact symbol
Significant positive impact	++
Minor positive impact	+
Neutral impact	0
Minor negative impact	-
Significant negative impact	--
Uncertain impact	?

Throughout the assessment, the following approach was applied:

- Positive, neutral and negative impacts are assessed, with uncertain impacts highlighted.
- The duration of the impact are considered over the short, medium and long term.
- The reversibility and permanence of the impact are assessed (e.g. temporary construction impacts, impacts that can be mitigated against/restored over time or irreversible changes to the environment).
- In-combination effects are also considered.

5.2 Neighbourhood Plan impacts assessment

Table 5-2 and Table 5-3 provide a summary of the outcomes of the environmental assessment of the draft Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies respectively. Table 5-34 shows the results of the assessment of cumulative effects of the Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies on achievement of the SEA objectives.

These are qualitative assessments that identify the range of potential effects that the Neighbourhood Plan may have on delivering the SEA objectives. Where a particular Neighbourhood Plan objective is underpinned by a series of actions, each of which may give rise to a range of environmental effects, an overall impact has been identified for each SEA objective.

Table 5-2: Assessment of Neighbourhood Plan (NP) objectives against SEA objectives

NP objective ID	NP objectives	SEA Objectives										Comments	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
1	To support a level of housing that is proportionate to the size and function of the designated area, its villages and hamlets and to ensure that new housing in the area is provided in a suitable range of tenures, types and sizes so that local people of all ages can continue to live in the area in a suitable home, families are attracted to the area, and local housing needs are met.	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This objective should directly benefit the landscape of the area, and potentially the historic environment although this is dependent on the location of any housing developments in relation to heritage assets. This objective protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape, and it preserves important historical sites in the area. An LVIA should be carried out to protect the AONB
2	To maintain the existing character and building styles of the area whilst allowing appropriate limited development.	++	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	This objective protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape. It also aims to enhance important historic and cultural sites (listed buildings).	
3	To protect and improve existing transport facilities, infrastructure and services.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	++	+	Infrastructure improvements should reduce traffic congestion, helping to mitigate climate change. Improved mobile and internet infrastructure will enhance social and community facilities.	
4	To promote local employment and ensure future development supports existing strengths of the area to enhance the rural economy and improve tourism.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	As none of the SEA objectives aim to support local employment, there are no objectives, which align directly with this NP objective; however, it does protect the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape and should enhance social facilities in the area through tourism.	
5	To protect and enhance existing community facilities.	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	This objective protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape and it will protect and enhance social and community facilities within the Parishes.	
6	To ensure that the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan promotes sustainable development for this and future generations by promoting key environmental assets(e.g. AONB, greenspaces and natural landscapes) and taking account of constraints (e.g. flooding)	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	This objective protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape, protects habitats and species, and maintains and enhances wildlife corridors. It also reduces flood risk, and mitigates climate change.	

Table 5-3: Assessment of Neighbourhood Plan policies against SEA objectives

Policy	Description	Actions	SEA Objective										Comments
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
BBGF1	Scale and type of new housing development	Development of 6 - 12 dwellings on the preferred sites in Bolton-by-Bowland (where it meets the specified criteria). Development on the preferred sites in Tosside (limited to an appropriate density and where it meets the specified criteria).	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	This policy should directly benefit the historic environment, and the landscape of the area. The policy must be in accordance with all other relevant policies within the plan for there to be neutral impacts on the other SEA objectives.
BBGF2	Housing in existing countryside settlements and farmsteads	Allow housing development in existing countryside settlements and farmsteads where development has no detrimental effect on the character and setting of the building and landscape, operational agriculture can continue and there are no extensions to the building.	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	This policy protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape, and it preserves important historical sites in the area.
BBGF3	Protecting heritage assets	Development within the conservation area and/or within the vicinity of a listed building will enhance/conservate the asset. Development will not be permitted where it is considered detrimental to the character and setting of the asset.	+	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	This policy protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape. It also aims to enhance important historic and cultural sites (listed buildings)
BBGF4	General design principles	Development within the designated area will be permitted when it meets the NP criteria, which (primarily) aims to conserve and protect the setting, character and landscape of the area and not to exploit local services and facilities.	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	This policy protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape, and it preserves important historical sites in the area. The policy also aims to protect community facilities.
BBGF5	Transport improvements	Highway improvements to benefit cyclists and pedestrians, traffic calming measures, and increasing public transport; all	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	Traffic calming measures, improving pedestrian and cycle routes and more public transport should help

Policy	Description	Actions	SEA Objective										Comments			
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
		funded by CIL payments and developer contributions														to mitigate climate change (marginally)
BBGF6	Supporting development of communications infrastructure	Development of new high speed broadband and mobile infrastructure (sympathetically designed)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0			High-speed broadband and mobile infrastructure will enhance social and community facilities.
BBGF7	Footpaths/connectivity	Improve existing footpaths, linkages and accessibility whilst supporting local residents and biodiversity through appropriate signage, new footpaths and cycle routes, linkages to wildlife corridors, and new habitats	0	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	+	++	+			Improved cycle paths and footpaths will aid climate change mitigation. There is a strong focus on biodiversity and wildlife corridors, which is beneficial to objectives 2 and 3.
BBGF8	Supporting existing local employment	Protect existing sources of local employment. Development of existing employment premises to alternative uses only permitted when they have been empty for 6 months or more and is in accordance with relevant Ribble Valley Core Strategy policies.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	As none of the SEA objectives aim to support local employment, there are no objectives, which align with policy BBGF8.
BBGF9	New local employment opportunities	New local employment opportunities will be permitted if they do not have a detrimental effect on the residential amenities or traffic; reduce open space or green infrastructure and are sustainable.	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This policy protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape.
BBGF10	Rural enterprise and farm diversification	New employment development in existing countryside settlements must not cause disturbance to neighbours, be isolated, or have detrimental effects on the character of the building, agriculture or landscape of the area.	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This policy protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape.
BBGF11	Tourism development	Proposals are encouraged where they; meet the criteria within Policy DMB3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, are	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0			This policy protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape. It should enhance social

Policy	Description	Actions	SEA Objective										Comments		
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
		sustainable, justify the loss or change of buildings, have sufficient curtilage space and do not harm the setting or character of the landscape.													facilities in the area.
BBGF12	Protection of local green spaces	Six green spaces are protected from developments.	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	+		Protection of green spaces will protect the integrity of the Parishes rural and urban areas, protect social facilities (cricket field, sports area) maintain wildlife corridors, reduce runoff (reducing flood risk, erosion and risk of polluting river water), and therefore should also reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts.	
BBGF13	Protection of local community facilities	Change of use of existing facilities is not permitted unless proposals have demonstrable benefits. New facilities and improvements to existing facilities are permitted where they have no detrimental effects to the traffic or residential amenities, they integrate services, and are accessible by pedestrians.	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	This policy protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape and it will protect and enhance social and community facilities within the Parishes.
BBGF14	Protecting and enhancing local landscape character	Development proposals will have to show regard to the character of the AONB. Developments must retain existing field patterns, protect and enhance woodland and use appropriate building materials	+	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This policy protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape, protects habitats and species, and maintains and enhances wildlife corridors.
BBGF15	Water management and surface water run-off	Developments designed to maximise the retention of surface water runoff, incorporate SuDS, water attenuation facilities, rainwater harvesting, and porous	0	0	0	++	++	+	0	0	0	0	+		Water management techniques should improve the quality and quantity of water in the Parishes rivers, reduce the likelihood of flooding, and reduce soil

Policy	Description	Actions	SEA Objective										Comments		
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
		materials should be used for driveways.													erosion.
BBGF16	Renewable energy	Micro/small wind energy and micro hydro energy. Views to be constrained - no harm to the natural beauty or quality of the landscape. Needs to be appropriate scale, form, design and location. Not to be remotely located.	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	This policy protects the integrity of the Parishes urban and rural landscape, protects habitats and species, and mitigates climate change.

Table 5-4: Cumulative effects of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) objectives on SEA objectives

Receptor	SEA objective	Assessment score	Justification
Landscape and Visual Amenity	1 Protect the integrity of the Borough's urban and, in particular, rural landscapes.	++	A number of the NP actions relate to ensuring development is appropriate to the Parishes and in keeping with local landscape character (e.g. BBGF1, BBGF2, BBGF3 and BBGF4), thereby resulting in a positive cumulative impact on local landscapes, including the AONB.
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	2 Protect and enhance designated sites and BAP habitats and species in the Borough.	0	Overall, the policies of the NP will have a neutral impact on designated sites as none are located within the Parishes and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (see Appendix A) has concluded no significant impact. Furthermore, whilst some actions (e.g. BBGF12, BBGF14) may have a positive impact on BAP habitats, overall the cumulative impact of the actions is considered neutral.
	3 Maintain and enhance habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors within the Borough.	+	A number of NP policies relate to protection of wildlife habitats (e.g. BBF7, BBGF12, BBGF13, and BBGF15) which will have an overall positive cumulative impact for habitat connectivity and wildlife.
Water Environment	4 Improve the quality and quantity of the water in the Borough's rivers.	+	Policy BBGF15 directly relates to water management and surface water run-off and a number of other NP actions will help to protect the Parishes water resources
	5 Do not inhibit achievement of the WFD objectives and contribute to their achievement where possible.	+	

Receptor	SEA objective	Assessment score	Justification
			thereby having an overall positive impact on these SEA objectives.
Soils and geology	6 Reduce the risk of soil erosion and pollution.	0	None of the NP objectives or policies are directly related to soil conservation and pollution, however, some policies may have an indirect impact on this SEA receptor. However, overall a neutral cumulative impact is concluded.
Historic Environment	7 Preserve and where possible enhance important historic and cultural sites in the Borough.	0	A number of the NP actions relate to ensuring development is appropriate to the Parishes and in keeping with local heritage features (e.g. BBGF1, BBGF2, BBGF3 and BBGF4). However, overall a neutral impact is concluded.
Population	8 Protect and enhance social and community facilities within the Borough	++	Policies BBGF12 and BBGF13 directly relate to protecting local community facilities and a number of other policies include aspects within them to promote establishment of new facilities or enhancement of existing ones, giving a strong overall benefit.
Material Assets	9 Protect and enhance the existing transport infrastructure of the Borough.	++	Policies BBGF5 and BBGF7 directly relate to enhancing local infrastructure, and a number of other NP policies include aspects within them to promote establishment of new infrastructure or enhancement of existing assets, giving a strong overall benefit.
Climate	10 Reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts and promote measures to enable adaptation to climate change impacts.	++	Throughout all NP policies, there is a theme of promoting sustainable development and development approaches that adapt to climate change, particularly in policies BBGF15 and BBGF16. Therefore, overall a strong beneficial cumulative impact is concluded.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

The NP aims to provide for sustainable growth, which enhances the traditional character and lifestyle of its communities. It is an important tool to protect and maintain the existing character of the area, whilst helping to deliver sustainable regeneration and growth.

This SEA has been undertaken to identify the likely significant environmental effects of implementation of the NP. A proportionate approach was adopted towards establishing the scope of the SEA, reflecting the level of the NP.

Different Plan options for delivering the NP have been assessed at a strategic level against the SEA objectives. These alternatives include the 'do nothing' scenario, where no action is taken (assumes a scenario of uncontrolled development, without any plan in place), and the 'Neighbourhood Plan in action' where action, which aims to provide for sustainable growth, is taken.

The assessment indicates that the 'Do nothing' approach is likely to result in some adverse effects, particularly in relation to people and property, and other environmental assets including historic sites and biodiversity. Without active intervention and planning strategy, some of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat areas could be damaged through natural processes, agricultural intensification and further development. Development, which is not on brownfield sites, could potentially fragment wildlife corridors, reduce habitat connectivity, affect biodiversity, and reduce the areas climate change mitigation and adaptation targets. These impacts could increase over time as responsible bodies may be unable to incorporate precautionary measures in existing or new developments in a response to climate change pressures.

The 'Neighbourhood Plan in action' option (action, which aims to provide for sustainable growth) aims to protect the existing rural and urban landscapes of the local area, deters harmful development to designated BAP species and habitats, and promotes climate change mitigation and adaptation. Therefore, it is evident that by doing nothing or maintaining current levels of management, it is more likely that there would be detrimental effects on the SEA objectives, which may be prevented by implementing policies proposed by the Bolton-by-Bowland and Gisburn Forest NP.

6.1.1 Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

Assessment of the NP objectives against the SEA objectives has been undertaken (see Table 5-2). No negative environmental effects have been identified from the NP objectives. Many of the proposed NP objectives have the potential for both direct and indirect environmental benefits. The NP objective 6 in particular has potential to provide a positive contribution to five of the ten SEA objectives, as it seeks to protect habitats and species, and maintains and enhances wildlife corridors. It also mitigates climate change. In particular, there is opportunity for the NP could achieve a range of biodiversity benefits, including new habitat creation, enhancement of existing habitats and greater habitat connectivity.

In addition, the majority of objectives within the Plan will contribute to achievement of the SEA objectives that seek to protect the integrity of the Borough's urban and, in particular, rural landscapes. As a result, the NP is likely to have a significant positive effect on the local communities.

At present, the potential effects associated with several of the NP objectives are neutral. These are largely neutral as they are employment or economy objectives rather than environmental objectives. There is a potential that to achieve these NP objectives it may result in physical interventions that could affect achievement of several of the SEA objectives, depending upon how they are implemented. These risks are directly associated with the type and scale of development or measures to achieve the social objectives, and their location in relation to important or sensitive environmental features. However, given that the NP includes objective 6 which seeks to deliver a range of environmental improvements, such interventions, if delivered in an inappropriate manner, would be likely to conflict with delivery of the NP. Therefore, the NP should ensure integration of its objectives across all underpinning actions so that delivery of individual measures does not conflict with achievement of the wider Plans objectives, but instead seeks to contribute towards these objectives at all stages of the Plans implementation.

A detailed assessment of the potential cumulative effects of the NP actions should be undertaken when further details regarding specific project level measures and their implementation are known.

6.1.2 Neighbourhood Plan Actions

Assessment of the NP Policies against the SEA objectives was undertaken (Table 5-3). Some neutral and positive environmental effects have been identified, with the majority having a neutral effect. Many of the NP policies have a neutral effect, as they do not directly align with SEA objectives.

Most of the NP policies had a positive effect on SEA objective 1. This was primarily because many of policies had a central focus to protect the integrity of the Borough's urban and, in particular, rural landscapes. Policies to promote tourism, employment and appropriate housing developments have a range of effects on the natural environment, and have the potential for indirect environmental benefits. NP actions that provide and maintain green spaces, SuDS, open spaces and hedgerows have the potential to provide a positive contribution to the SEA objectives concerned with biodiversity through the introduction of new wildlife habitat.

Some of the NP policies, in particular BBGF7, BBGF12 and BBGF15, are likely to assist with climate change adaptation, and the protection of wildlife corridors and biodiversity. In particular, policy BBGF7, which aims to improve existing footpaths, linkages and accessibility whilst supporting biodiversity through new footpaths and cycle routes, could make a significant positive contribution to achievement of SEA objectives 3 and 9.

The physical interventions that could come as a result of the NP actions could affect the achievement of the SEA objectives, depending on how the actual NP measures are implemented. These risks are directly associated with the type and scale of the actions and their location in relation to environmental features. Therefore, the NP should ensure that delivery of these measures does not adversely affect the achievement of the SEA objectives. These physical interventions should be subject to a thorough environmental assessment at the project stage to ensure they are sustainable and are delivered in accordance with the NP objectives.

6.2 Recommendations

The assessment of the NP objectives and actions has identified a number of areas where the NP could be strengthened to ensure delivery of a sustainable approach. These areas are associated with employment, economy and community facilities. Specifically, these apply to the following NP objectives:

- Objective 1: To support a level of housing that is proportionate to the size and function of the designated area, its villages and hamlets and to ensure that new housing in the area is provided in a suitable range of tenures, types and sizes so that local people of all ages can continue to live in the area in a suitable home, families are attracted to the area, and local housing needs are met.
- Objective 4: to promote local employment and ensure future development supports existing strengths of the area to enhance the rural economy and improve tourism facilities.

Although these objectives have a positive effect on SEA objective 1 (Protect the integrity of the Borough's urban and, in particular, rural landscapes.) and Objective 8 (Protect and enhance social and community facilities within the Borough), there are neutral effects on all the other SEA objectives. Therefore, while achieving these NP objectives there is an opportunity for the NP to implement measures that also consider the SEA objectives as a whole, and therefore produce a sustainable plan which enhances biodiversity, historic assets and landscape character.

In order to ensure that the NP does not result in adverse effects, all Plan objectives should be integrated so that delivery of individual policies does not conflict with achievement of the wider plan objectives. In addition, development and implementation of these actions should be effectively managed by ensuring that, where necessary, proposals are assessed to determine their potential environmental effects (positive and negative) in advance of their implementation and that appropriate mitigation measures are built into their delivery as required. Furthermore, care must be taken to protect the areas AONB status through LVIA analysis. This is especially true when considering any potential developments, which may alter the landscapes aesthetic or character (See A.7.6).

6.3 Monitoring

The SEA Regulations require the Parish Councils to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Key indicators and targets that require monitoring are listed in Table 6-1, below, and are based on those used as part of the SEA framework, together with the main Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies that they will help to monitor the achievement of.

The indicators and associated targets will enable the Neighbourhood Plan to be monitored and any problems or shortfalls to be highlighted and remedied at an early stage. If failings are evident, it will be necessary for the Neighbourhood Plan to be revised so that the achievement of the SEA objectives is not compromised. Of note, it is unlikely that any effects, negative or otherwise, will be seen immediately and that the relative time scale for monitoring will vary for each indicator/target.

Figure 6-1 below illustrates the process that will occur to trigger action when adverse effects of the Neighbourhood Plan implementation are identified through the proposed monitoring programme detailed below.

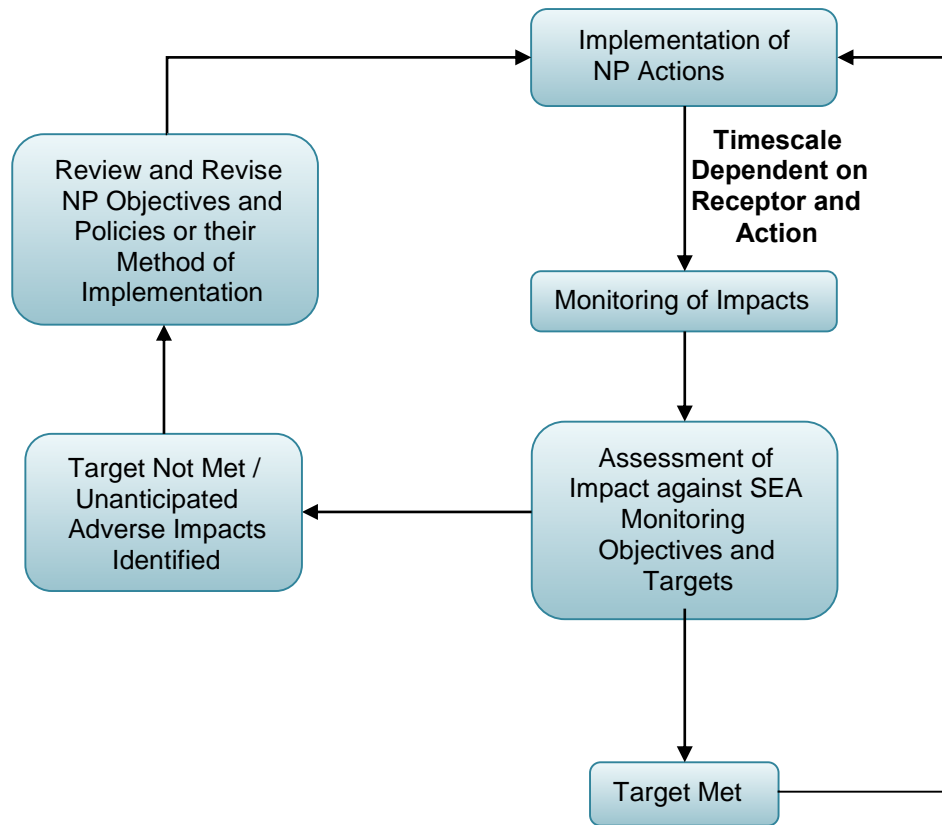


Figure 6-1: Process for ensuring adverse impacts of NP identified through SEA monitoring framework are mitigated/rectified

Table 6-1: Monitoring indicators and targets

Receptor	SEA Objective	Monitoring Indicator	Target(s)	
Landscape	1	Protect the integrity of the Borough's urban and, in particular, rural landscapes.	<p>Changes in the condition and extent of existing characteristic elements of the landscape.</p> <p>The condition and quality of new characteristics introduced to the environment.</p> <p>Percentage of open countryside.</p>	<p>No adverse impacts on landscape character of the AONB, NCA or other locally important landscapes/features as a result of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>No reduction in the percentage of land classified within the parishes as open countryside as a result of development arising from Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p>
	2	Protect and enhance designated sites and BAP habitats and species in the Borough.	Area of designated sites adversely affected by proposals from the Neighbourhood Plan.	No adverse impact on designated sites as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	3	Maintain and enhance habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors within the Borough.	<p>Monitoring of reported status of designated nature conservation sites.</p> <p>Percentage of land designated as nature conservation sites because of Neighbourhood Plan measures.</p> <p>Area of habitat created because of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>Improved conservation status of designated nature conservation sites as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p> <p>Increase in the area of good wildlife habitat, and land designated as nature conservation sites, as a result of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
	4	Improve the quality and quantity of the water in the Borough's rivers.	<p>Water quality of the Borough's watercourses.</p> <p>Number of SuDS schemes installed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Numbers of sites with high pollution potential (e.g. landfill sites, wastewater treatment works) at risk from flooding because of measures from the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>No deterioration to the WFD status of water bodies within the parishes.</p> <p>Increase in the number of SuDS schemes within the parishes.</p> <p>No increase in the number of sites with high pollution potential (e.g. landfill sites, wastewater treatment works) at risk from flooding because of measures implemented from the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
Water environment				

Receptor	SEA Objective	Monitoring Indicator	Target(s)
	5 Do not inhibit achievement of the WFD objectives and contribute to their achievement where possible.	Achievement of WFD objectives. Percentage of water bodies achieving 'Good' ecological status/potential. No deterioration in WFD status.	Increase in the percentage of water bodies within the parishes achieving 'Good' ecological status/potential. No deterioration to the WFD status of water bodies within the catchment.
Soils and geology	6 Reduce the risk of soil erosion and pollution.	Area of agricultural, rural and greenfield land affected by Neighbourhood Plan measures. Numbers of sites with high pollution potential (e.g. landfill sites, wastewater treatment works) at risk from flooding because of measures from the Neighbourhood Plan.	Minor increase in the area of agricultural, rural and greenfield land given over to development as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation (particularly in fulfilment of Policy BBGF1 which targets land at the settlement boundaries of Bolton by Bowland, Tosside and Holden). No increase in the number of sites with high pollution potential (e.g. landfill sites, wastewater treatment works) at risk from flooding because of measures implemented from the Neighbourhood Plan.
Historic environment	7 Preserve and where possible enhance important historic and cultural sites in the Borough.	Number of historic assets, and their setting, adversely affected by proposals from the Neighbourhood Plan. Number of vulnerable historic assets protected/enhanced by implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.	No adverse impact on historic assets, or their setting, as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation. Increase in the number of historic assets protected/conserved/enhanced (e.g. removed from the Heritage at Risk Register) as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.
Population	8 Protect and enhance social and community facilities within the Borough	Number of green spaces protected/enhanced/created as part of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Number of key services (e.g. hospitals, health centres, residential/care homes, schools etc.) protected/enhanced/created as part of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Increase in the number of green spaces protected/enhanced/created as part of Neighbourhood Plan implementation. Increase in the number of key services protected/enhanced/created as part of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Receptor	SEA Objective	Monitoring Indicator	Target(s)
Material assets	9 Protect and enhance the existing transport infrastructure of the Borough.	<p>Length of road infrastructure enhanced (e.g. traffic calming measures) from implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Number of public transport initiatives enhanced/ established.</p> <p>Length of footpath created/ enhanced.</p>	<p>Increase in the length of road infrastructure enhanced as part of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Increase in the number of public transport initiatives enhanced/established within the parishes as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p> <p>Increase in the length of the footpath within the parishes as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p>
Climate	10 Reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts and promote measures to enable adaptation to climate change impacts.	<p>Number of sustainable transport initiatives established because of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Number of renewable energy projects established within the Parishes.</p> <p>Number of residential properties and key services at risk of flooding.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of sustainable transport initiatives established because of implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Increase in the number of renewable energy projects established within the Parishes because of Neighbourhood Plan implementation (taking into account the sensitivity of the landscape and designated nature conservation sites; see Appendix A).</p> <p>Reduction in the number of residential properties and key services at risk of flooding as a result of Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p>

7 Next Steps

This SEA Environmental Report will be consulted upon with statutory consultees (i.e. Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency, along with the Forest of Bowland AONB) and the general public alongside the NP.

Following adoption of the Neighbourhood plan, an SEA Statement of Environmental Particulars will be produced outlining how the SEA process has influenced the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, how consultation comments were taken into consideration and how the Strategy will be monitored.

Appendices

A Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment - Screening

A.1 Introduction

This Appendix details the Screening Stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan that is in development by the Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley Parish Council. It is intended to identify, describe and assess the likely significant effects of implementing the neighbourhood plan on European designated sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)) and also Ramsar sites within and around Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest parishes.

This Appendix also provides supporting evidence for the conclusions reached within the Environmental Report produced as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan.

This assessment is based on the Draft submission version of the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan, issued in May 2015. Further iterations of the plan may require reassessment.

A.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment

A.2.1 Legislative Context

European Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (Habitats Directive) provides legal protection to habitats and species of European importance. The principal aim of this directive is to maintain at, and where necessary restore to, favourable conservation of the status of flora, fauna and habitats found at these designated sites (i.e. SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites). The Directive is transposed into English legislation through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).

It is a requirement of Article 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) that "*the plan-making authority for that plan must, before the plan is given effect, make an **appropriate assessment** of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives*", where the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and where it is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site. Article 102 also requires that "*in the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 103 (considerations of overriding public interest), the plan-making authority or, in the case of a regional strategy, the Secretary of State must give effect to the land use plan only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site or the European offshore marine site (as the case may be)*".

The HRA process is underpinned by the precautionary principle, especially in the assessment of potential impacts and their resolution. If it is not possible to rule out likely significant effects on the evidence available, then it is assumed that a risk may exist and it needs to be addressed in the assessment process, preferably through changes to the proposed measure or through options such as avoidance or control measures. Only once this assessment has been completed can it be concluded that there is no adverse risk to a European site resulting from the plan.

Spatial planning documents, such as Neighbourhood Plans, are required to undergo HRA if they are not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of a European site. As the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan is not connected with, or necessary to, the management of European designated sites, it is considered necessary to undertake a HRA.

A.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment Methodology

The Habitats Regulations Assessment process follows three stages as outlined in the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance "*Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment*". These stages are described in Table A-1.

Table A-1: The HRA Process

Stage/Task	Description
HRA Task 1 - Screening	<p>This process identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and determines whether these impacts are likely to be significant.</p> <p>If no adverse impact is determined, the project or plan can proceed. If an adverse impact is identified, task 2 is commenced.</p>
HRA Task 2 - Appropriate Assessment	<p>Task 2 is subsequent to the identification of likely significant effects upon a European site in task 1. This assessment determines whether a project or plan would have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans.</p> <p>This assessment is confined to the effects on the internationally important habitats and species for which the site is designated (i.e. the interest features of the site).</p> <p>If no adverse impact is determined, the project or plan can proceed. If an adverse impact is identified, task 3 is commenced.</p>
HRA Task 3 - Mitigation and Alternatives	<p>Where a plan or project has been found to have adverse impacts on the integrity of a European site, potential avoidance/mitigation measures or alternative options should be identified.</p> <p>If suitable avoidance/mitigation or alternative options are identified, that result in there being no adverse impacts from the project or plan on European sites, the project or plan can proceed.</p> <p>If no suitable avoidance/mitigation or alternative options are identified, as a rule the project or plan should not proceed. However, in exceptional circumstances, if there is an 'imperative reason of overriding public interest' for the implementation of the project or plan, consideration can be given to proceeding in the absence of alternative solutions. In these cases compensatory measures must have to be put in place to offset negative impacts.</p>

A.3.2 HRA Task 1 Screening - Methodology

The following section details the methodology of the screening assessment undertaken to identify the likely impacts of the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan upon European sites, and to determine whether these impacts are likely to be significant and whether an Appropriate Assessment, and mitigation and assessment of alternatives (HRA Task 2 and 3) are required.

Methodology

In order to complete the screening assessment it is necessary to:

- Identify the European sites within and outside the plan area likely to be affected, reasons for their designation and their conservation objectives.
- Describe the plan and its aims and objectives and also those of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential to impact upon the European sites.
- Identify the potential effects on the European sites.
- Assess the significance of these potential effects on the European sites.

The Precautionary Principle

If there is uncertainty, and it is not possible, based on the information available, to confidently determine that there will be no significant effects on a site then the precautionary principle will be applied, and the plan will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment (HRA Task 2).

Consultation

It is a requirement of the Habitat Regulations to consult the appropriate nature conservation statutory body. Consultation on the approach to this HRA screening and the information on European sites considered will be undertaken with Natural England as required.

A.4 European Sites

European sites are often collectively known as Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 is an EU-wide network of nature protection areas established under the Habitats Directive. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened habitats and species.

Natura 2000 consists of:

- **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** - these are designated under the UK Regulations made under the Habitats Directive to protect those habitat types and species that are considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level (excluding birds).
- **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** - these are designated under the UK Regulations under the Birds Directive to protect rare and vulnerable birds, and also regularly occurring migratory species
- **Ramsar sites** - these are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Although not included in the European legislation, as a matter of policy, Ramsar sites in England and Wales are protected as European sites. The vast majority are also classified as SPAs and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). All SPAs and terrestrial SACs in England and Wales are also designated as SSSIs under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.

A.4.3 European Sites in and around Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Parishes

Best practice guidance suggests that sites occurring within a wider proximity of approximately 10km to 15km from the boundary of the area directly affected by a plan should be identified and assessed as part of the HRA screening process, in addition to those sites located within the plan area. However, it is important to consider the possibility of impacts for any European site which might be affected, whatever their location, given the activities included in the plan and their range of influence. This may extend some distance from the area within the immediate influence of a plan. For the Neighbourhood Plan, a buffer of 10km has been applied given the relatively small size of the parishes and it is considered that no pathways, including hydrological connections, exist that would impact upon any European sites beyond this extent.

There are no SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites located within Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes.

There are two SACs and one SPA located within 10km of Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes. These sites are listed in Table A-2 and shown on Figure A-7-1. These sites are composed of a series of separate areas that form the SAC/ SPA.

Table A-2: European Sites within and adjacent to Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest parishes

Designation	Site	Distance and Direction at Closest Point to Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parish Boundaries
SAC	Ingleborough Complex	7.0 km north
SAC	North Pennine Dales Meadows	2.9 km west
SPA	Bowland Fells	3.9 km west

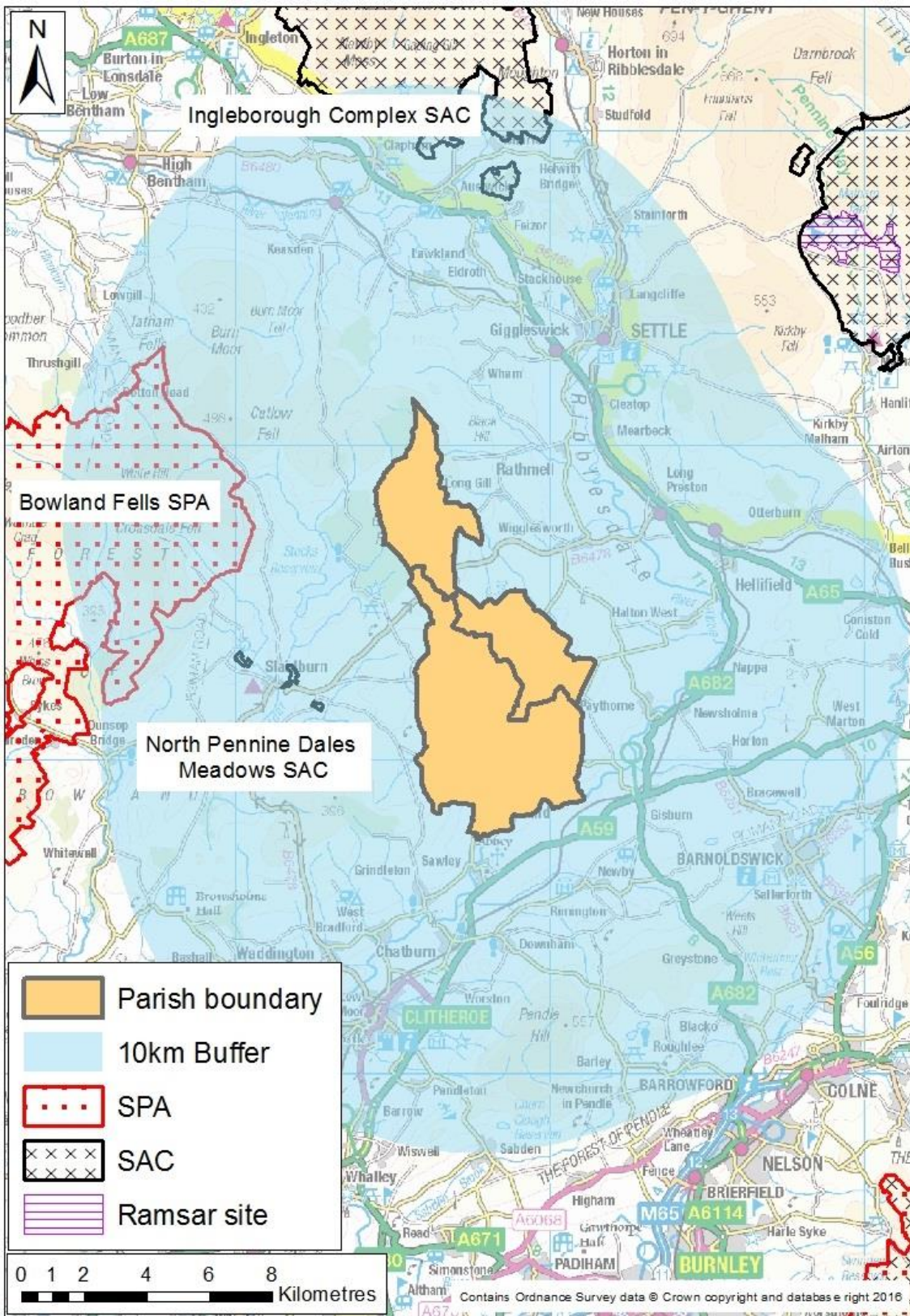


Figure A-7-1: Location of European Sites within 10km Buffer around Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes

Detailed information on these sites, including their qualifying features and conservation objectives are provided in Table A-3.

Table A-3: Details of European Sites within 10km buffer around Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes (Information from JNCC, 2015 and Natural England, 2015)

European Site	Qualifying Feature (Broad Habitat/ Species Groupings)	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Site Vulnerability
Ingleborough Complex SAC		5130: <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands		
	Dry heathland habitats	6210: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection)		
	Dry grassland			
	Dry woodlands and scrub	6410: <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) (present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection)	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;	- Over/under grazing
	Fens and wet habitats (not sensitive to acidification)	7130: Blanket bogs (present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection)	- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats	- Hydrological changes/ drainage
	Bogs and wet habitats (sensitive to acidification)	7220: Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) (present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection)	- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and	- Air pollution
	Riverine habitats and running waters	7230: Alkaline fens	- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely	- Disease
	Upland	8210: Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation		- Changes in land management
		8240: Limestone pavements		- Invasive species
	9180: <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines (present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection)		- Deer	

European Site	Qualifying Feature (Broad Habitat/ Species Groupings)	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Site Vulnerability
North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC	Fens and wet habitats (not sensitive to acidification) Upland	6410: <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) (present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection) 6520: Mountain hay meadows	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; - The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats - The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and - The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely	- Agricultural intensification/ improvement, over/under grazing, fertilisation and abandonment of pastoral system - Inappropriate cutting/ mowing regimes - Inappropriate agri-environment scheme prescriptions - Hydrological changes/ drainage - Inappropriate weed control - Invasive species - Air pollution - Artificial planting - Habitat fragmentation - Climate change
Bowland Fells SPA	Birds of uplands	This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting breeding populations of European importance of the following species: - Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> - site supports 1.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Three year mean 1995-1997) - Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> - site supports 1.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Three year mean, 1994-1996) This site qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting breeding populations of European importance of the	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring; - The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features - The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features - The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely - The population of each of the qualifying features, and, - The distribution of the qualifying features within the site	- Inappropriate grazing regimes - Unsympathetic burning practices - Insensitive water catchment land management practices - Afforestation, habitat loss and deterioration - Illegal killing; particularly on grouse moors. - Farming practices (pesticide contamination) - Public access/disturbance - Invasive species - Air pollution

European Site	Qualifying Feature (Broad Habitat/ Species Groupings)	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Site Vulnerability
		following species: - Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> - site supports 7.6% the breeding Western Europe/ Mediterranean/ Western Africa population (Count, as at 1992)		

A.5 Potential Hazards to European Sites

Neighbourhood Plans, with the spatial planning policies they contain, can potentially have adverse impacts on the habitats and species for which European sites are designated. These impacts can be direct such as habitat loss, fragmentation or degradation, or indirect such as disturbance from recreational activities or pollution from construction and new infrastructure.

This section identifies the potential hazards to European sites within the 10km buffer around Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes which may arise as a result of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan, and then goes on to identify the types of hazards to which the qualifying features present within the sites are particularly sensitive.

A.5.4 Hazards to Sites

The three European sites within the 10km buffer around Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes consist of dry grassland/meadow/woodland habitats, wetland/bog/heath habitats and have considerable bird interest. Potential hazards to the interest features are identified in Table A-4 below.

Table A-4: Potential Hazards to the European Sites within the 10km buffer around Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes

Potential Hazard	Description
Habitat loss	This is a loss of habitat within the designated boundaries of a European site – it is expected that there would be no direct habitat loss as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan implementation as all European statutory designated sites are located >2.9 km outside of the boundaries of the Parishes.
Habitat fragmentation	This is where activities result in the separation of available habitats or split extensive areas of suitable habitat. This hazard is most likely to affect species by disrupting movement corridors, such as bird migration routes.
Changes in physical regime	These are changes to physical processes that will alter the present characteristics of the European site e.g. fluvial and geomorphological processes, erosion processes, deposition.
Physical damage	This can include recreational pressures such as trampling and erosion, and where sites are close to urban areas, other damaging activities may occur such as rubbish tipping, vandalism, arson, and predation (particularly by cats).
Habitat/community simplification	Changes to environmental conditions, due to human activities, that result in a reduction and fragmentation of habitats that will reduce biodiversity.
Disturbance (noise, visual)	Activities which result in disturbance, causing sensitive fauna to deviate from their normal, preferred behaviour. These can be caused by construction activities, recreational/amenity use of an area, increased traffic etc.
Competition from non-native species	Activities may cause the introduction or spread of non-native animals and plants which could result in changes to community composition and even to the complete loss of native communities.
Change in water levels or table	Activities which may affect surface and groundwater levels, such as land drainage and abstraction, may have adverse impacts on water dependant habitats and species.
Changes in water quality	Activities which may impact upon water quality, such as accidental pollution spills, run-off from urban areas, nutrient enrichment from agriculture, and discharge from sewage works, may adversely affect a range of habitats and species.
Changes to surface water flooding	Activities may result in a reduction or increase in the frequency and extent of surface water flooding which may affect, in particular, riverine, floodplain and other wetland habitats.
Turbidity and Siltation	Increases in turbidity within water environments can impact upon aquatic plants, fish and wildfowl due to sedimentation and reduction in penetrable light.
Pollution	Certain activities may lead to the release of pollutants to the air such as oxides of nitrogen, oxides of sulphur or ammonia, or pollutants deposited on the ground through acidification or terrestrial eutrophication via soil (deposition of nitrogen).

A.5.5 Qualifying Features and Sensitivity to Hazards

Table A-5 below, shows the qualifying features of the European sites within the 10km buffer around Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes and identifies the hazards to which they are potentially sensitive (see Table A-5).

It must be noted that during the assessment of the potential impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan on a European site, all of the potential hazards will be considered.

Table A-5: Sensitivity of European Sites to Potential Hazards

	Potential Hazards											
	Habitat loss	Habitat fragmentation	Changes in physical regime	Physical damage	Habitat/community simplification	Disturbance (noise, visual)	Competition from non-native species	Change in water levels or table	Changes in water quality	Changes to surface water flooding	Turbidity and siltation	Pollution
Ingleborough Complex SAC												
Dry heathland habitats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓
Dry woodlands and scrub	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓
Dry grassland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓
Fens and wet habitats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bogs and wet heaths	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Riverine habitats and running waters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Upland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓
North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC												
Fens and wet habitats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Upland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓
Bowland Fells SPA												
Birds of uplands	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓

A.6 Description of the Neighbourhood Plan Strategies

This section provides a summary of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. The draft plan contains six Specific Objectives as described in Table A-6.

The Habitat Regulations also require the cumulative effects with other plans or projects to be considered at the screening stage. This section therefore also identifies the other plans and projects that it is considered could potentially act “in combination” with the draft Neighbourhood Plan to have “significant effects” on European sites. These are identified in the following section.

Table A-6: Specific Objectives of the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan

Specific Objectives	Objective and Summary
Objective 1 - Housing Growth	<p>To support a level of housing growth that is proportionate to the size and function of the designated area, its villages and hamlets and to ensure that new housing in the area is provided in a suitable range of tenures, types and sizes so that local people of all ages can continue to live in the area in a suitable home, families are attracted to the area, and local housing needs are met.</p> <p>-Suitable housing to be provided to retain younger residents and address issues</p>

Specific Objectives	Objective and Summary
	<p>of an ageing population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Preferred housing sites have been identified in Bolton by Bowland and Tosside. In Bolton by Bowland each development on each site will be up to 6 dwellings. -Development should seek to preserve and enhance the traditional character of the environment. -Developments outside of main settlement areas are seen as small additions to existing farmsteads (e.g. conversions to traditional farm buildings) with new buildings being considered in very exceptional circumstances.
<p>Objective 2 - Maintaining Character</p>	<p>To maintain the existing character and building styles of the area whilst allowing appropriate limited development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In relation to all heritage assets, all development proposals shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
<p>Objective 3 - Transport / Infrastructure</p>	<p>To protect and improve existing transport facilities, infrastructure and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Support improvements to public and community transport in the area. -Support improvements to roads to promote safe pedestrian/cycle use and traffic calming. -Support improvements and creation of roadside footpaths in villages. -Support development of new high speed broadband and mobile infrastructure where it is sympathetically designed.
<p>Objective 4 - Promoting Employment</p>	<p>To promote local employment and ensure future development supports existing strengths of the area to enhance the rural economy and improve tourism facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Protect and support existing sources of local employment. -New local employment opportunities will be promoted where they do not have a detrimental impact on the parishes (i.e. in terms of their character, open space, traffic). -Proposals to change existing holiday accommodation to residential use will be resisted unless specific criteria are met -Tourism development should also be sympathetic to attracting non seasonal businesses which would provide fulltime jobs, particularly for the young. -Location of new businesses should be influenced by accessibility and be sited near to main roads whilst at the same time being suitably landscaped for minimum environmental impact. -Continue to support all measures which will enhance the appeal of settlements as tourist destinations and tap into financial benefits to be gained by them. -Developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies will be supported in principle. -Proposals that result in the loss of existing employment sites to other forms of development will need to demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact upon local economy.
<p>Objective 5 - Community Facilities</p>	<p>To protect, improve and enhance existing community facilities and local Green Spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Support and encourage existing amenities i.e. churches and chapels, schools, village halls, pubs and shops. -Encourage greater involvement in existing organisations by a wider cross section and especially greater participation by younger people. -Identified areas of Local Green Space will be protected and an additional area at the croft between Church and Hellifield Road will be explored as a new site to open for public access. -The re-use of local community facilitates for health and community type uses will be presumed and change of use will not be permitted unless there are demonstrable benefits. -New, and improvements to existing, community facilities will be supported in line with specified criteria.
<p>Objective 6 - Natural Environment</p>	<p>To ensure that the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan promotes sustainable development for this and future generations by protecting key environmental assets (e.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and natural landscapes) and taking into account of constraints (e.g. flooding).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and

Specific Objectives	Objective and Summary
	character of the Forest of Bowland AONB will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced -Strict planning constraints to ensure any development preserve the traditional character of the environment, including landscape. -New development should be designed to maximise the retention and surface water on the development site and to minimise run-off -The Parish Council support and encourage the installation of renewable energy systems to provide power to heat and light to an individual, group of houses or settlements subject to minimising the impact on the Forest of Bowland AONB. -Collective action to reduce, purchase and manage energy is supported to save money and reduce our carbon footprint.

A.7 Other Relevant Plans and Projects that might act In-combination

A series of individually modest effects may in combination produce effects that are likely to adversely affect the integrity of one or more European sites. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive tries to address this by taking into account the combination of effects from other plans or projects. The Directive does not explicitly define which other plans and projects are within the scope of the combination provision. Guidance in section 4.4.3 of 'Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC', published by the European Commission, states:

'When determining likely significant effects, the combination of other plans or projects should also be considered to take account of cumulative impacts. It would seem appropriate to restrict the combination provision to other plans or projects which have been actually proposed'.

Table A-7 below lists the relevant plans and projects that have been identified as having the potential to result in adverse effects on European sites in-combination with the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan.

Table A-7: Other Plans and Projects

Plan/Project	Potential In-combination Effects
Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan	This Local Plan (Ribble Valley Borough Council, 1998) details a number of policies relating to housing, employment, transport, recreation/tourism and the environment. The completion and later implementation of the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan will likely form part of the emerging Local Plan for Ribble Valley. The Ribble Valley Districtwide Plan contains a Development Control policy (G1) which states that developments should not damage SSSI's, County Heritage Sites, Local Nature Reserves or other sites of nature conservation importance. Furthermore, Policy ENV2 states that the landscape and character of those areas immediately adjacent to the Forest of Bowland AONB will be protected, conserved and wherever possible enhanced. The environmental effects of proposals will be a major consideration and the design, materials, scale, massing and landscaping of development will be important factors in deciding planning applications.
Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan	Bowland Fells SPA comprises nearly one fifth of the Forest of Bowland AONB designation. Objective 1.7 of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan (Forest of Bowland, 2014) states the intention to "Influence development planning policy and decision-making to ensure the statutory purpose of AONB designation, to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape, is upheld". This is reflected to a lesser extent within Objective 6 of the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan which seeks to protect and conserve the landscape character of the AONB and those areas that contribute to the setting and character.

A.7.6 Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan

In relation to landscape and visual impact, this analysis does assume that any development proposed for the housing sites outlined in the Neighbourhood plan (Sites 1, 2 & 3) adequately considers (and ultimately mitigate) the likely impact. The following three key measures for measuring changes in landscape character should be followed when proposing any potentially visually detrimental developments:

1. An assessment of the site and wider landscape's sensitivity/capacity to accommodate change (drawn from the AONB Landscape Character Assessment)
2. Identification (in consultation with the LPA and AONB) of a range of key visual receptors
3. Photomontages of existing views of the proposed development site from selected viewpoints

The AONB LCA identifies some key concerns with development pressures in the area:

- Tall vertical developments within or at the edges of the AONB, including wind farms or telecommunications masts, which can be visually intrusive and impact upon the landscape character of the area;
- Increasing traffic pressures on minor rural road corridors associated with increased visitor numbers, potentially resulting in increased signage or road improvements;
- Noise and movement of passenger and freight traffic associated with the towns of Clitheroe and Whalley (and their associated industries), which may result in pressure for road widening, impacting on overall sense of tranquillity;
- Lighting within and at the boundaries of the AONB, impacting upon dark night skies;
- Wind turbine/farm developments within or at the periphery of the AONB, which introduce tall vertical elements into the landscape. Taking into account their cumulative visual impact, this type of development could potentially impact on the wider setting of the AONB, the current landscape character and overall sense of tranquillity;
- Small-scale cumulative development (e.g. building extensions, residential boundary treatment, roadside concrete curbing and signage) resulting in erosion of integrity and quality;
- Suburbanisation of rural buildings, such as the conversion of farm buildings and the introduction of diversification activities such as horticulture;
- Introduction of new overhead transmission lines. There is, however, potential for the undergrounding of overhead electricity lines within the AONB to reduce their visual impact.
- Development of infrastructure associated with the water supply industry which has potential landscape and visual impacts;
- Suburbanisation of the landscape around villages and towns, as a result of small-scale extensions to existing urban areas.

A.8 Screening Assessment

This section considers the objectives and policies identified in the draft Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan that are considered to have an impact on European Sites and identifies whether or not they are likely to have significant effects on site integrity, either alone or in-combination with other plans and/or projects, detailed in Table A-7.

Taking into account the location of the European sites in relation to Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes and the identified potential hazards associated with the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan, an assessment has been made as to whether the Neighbourhood Plan, alone and in-combination with other plans and/or projects, will have likely significant effects on any European sites. This assessment is detailed in Table A-8. Full wording of the policies and proposals can be found within the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Table A-8: Assessment of Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan objectives on European Sites.

Objectives and Policies		Policy Summary	Assessment of likelihood of significant effects	Significant effects
Objective 1 - Housing growth	Policy BBGF1 - Scale and Type of New Housing Development	<p>Over the plan period, within the defined settlement boundaries of Bolton by Bowland, Tosside and Holden, proposals for new small scale housing development will only be permitted where it meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is located on the preferred sites shown on the proposals map for Bolton by Bowland (see Neighbourhood Plan for the proposals map); or - It is located on the preferred site shown on the map for Tosside (see Neighbourhood Plan for the proposals map); or. - It would not lead to the loss of open space, shops or other local facilities; and - It has appropriate access; and - Contributes to character and amenity of village; and - Is in accordance with all other relevant policies within this plan. <p>Development in Bolton by Bowland on the preferred sites will be up to six dwellings on each site allocated to a maximum of 12 dwellings in total. Development in Tosside on the preferred site will be limited to an appropriate density consistent with a viable community led project.</p>	<p>This policy intends to apply control measures to new developments by ensuring that they are both necessary and of a proportionate scale. Policy BBGF1 indicates three target areas for proposed small scale developments. The locations of these areas are away from the parish boundaries and maintain a distance of between 5.9km and 6.5km from the nearest statutory designation - i.e. North Pennine Meadows SAC. This is determined to be a sufficient distance for minimising any direct adverse impacts. Furthermore, given the low number of housing developments that are proposed (i.e. a maximum of 12 sites across two sites in Bolton by Bowland and one other site identified in Tosside) and other policies which promote alternative amenity assets (e.g. BBGF7, BBGF11, BBGF12), indirect impacts from increased recreational pressures associated with an increase in population from residential developments will be minimised.</p> <p>For these reasons, there are no adverse impacts expected on any European designated sites as a result of implementing Policy BBGF1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	None
	Policy BBGF2 - Housing in Existing Countryside Settlements and Farmsteads	<p>The presumption is in favour of the retention of existing traditional buildings in the countryside, where appropriate. New housing development will only be permitted in existing countryside settlements and farmsteads in accordance with the relevant policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and subject to the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The conversion of traditional agricultural buildings to dwellings will be permitted providing: 	<p>There is incentive within the Neighbourhood Plan to provide residential developments within rural areas located outside of settlements. Policy BBGF2 gives willingness to permit new developments within existing countryside buildings and farmsteads provided that the specified criteria is followed.</p> <p>At its closest point, the boundary of Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes is located 2.9 km east of the North Pennine Meadows SAC, 3.9 km east of Bowland Fell SPA and 6.9km south of the Ingleborough Complex SAC.</p>	None

Objectives and Policies		Policy Summary	Assessment of likelihood of significant effects	Significant effects
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The building forms part of an existing group of buildings and is not in an isolated location (visually and physically); and - There is no detrimental effect on the form, design, character and setting of the building; and - The building is capable of conversion without significant extension; and - The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction; and - The conversion will not have a detrimental impact on the appearance or character of the landscape; and - The conversion is in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, feature and building materials; and - The conversion would not be detrimental to the continued agricultural operation of the site as a whole. <p>2. The rebuilding or replacement of existing dwellings is acceptable subject to the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The residential use of the property should not have been abandoned. - There would be no adverse impact on the landscape in relation to the setting, design or character of new dwelling. <p>3. The development meets all other relevant policies within this plan and the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.</p>	<p>Although the scale of any new residential development within rural areas is not specified within this policy, it is expected that development works relating to the retention/conversion and restoration of existing buildings are likely to be small in scale and consequently, given the distance to the European sites, no direct adverse impacts from these residential developments at existing rural sites is anticipated. Furthermore, other policies which promote alternative amenity assets (e.g. BBGF7, BBGF11, BBGF12) will help to ensure that indirect impacts from increased recreational pressures associated with an increase in population from residential developments are minimised.</p> <p>This is further reflected within development control policies detailed within the Ribble Valley Districtwide Core Strategy which states that development should not damage sites of nature conservation importance. Policy BBGF2 requires that development meets the relevant policies within this overarching Local Plan, and, for this reason, no adverse impacts expected on any European designated sites as a result of implementing this policy.</p>	

Objectives and Policies		Policy Summary	Assessment of likelihood of significant effects	Significant effects
Objective 2 - Maintaining character	Policy BBGF3 - Protecting Heritage Assets	<p>All new development within the Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area and/or within the setting of a listed building will be expected to conserve and enhance the positive attributes of the designated heritage asset.</p> <p>Development will not be permitted where it has a detrimental impact on the character of the conservation area, the setting of a listed building or on the identified open spaces within the conservation area.</p> <p>This policy specifies that new development is expected to adhere to the criteria of Conservation Areas, such as continuity in building character and aesthetics (see Neighbourhood Plan for the full list of criteria).</p>	<p>Policy BBGF3 is principally concerned with the conservation and enhancement of designated heritage assets, namely the Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area and listed buildings. Therefore, no adverse impacts are expected on any European designated sites as a result of implementing Policy BBGF3 of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	None
	Policy BBGF4 - General Design Principles	<p>This policy specifies criteria which new development within the Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area must adhere to. It specifies that brownfield sites should be prioritised and that developments should not have a detrimental effect on the character of the surrounding landscape. There is also a requirement for new development to include energy efficiency and conservation measures, and to incorporate SuDS where appropriate.</p>	<p>This policy outlines control measures for new developments within Conservation Areas. It gives priority to brownfield sites to avoid the development of new sites. This is likely to minimise the risk of new development works impacting upon the integrity of interest features associated with SACs and the SPA identified within Table A-2 and A-3 of this report. Furthermore, Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area is over 5.5km from the closest European site (the North Pennine Meadows SAC); consequently, no direct adverse impacts are anticipated as a result of implementing this policy.</p> <p>Although this policy does not make direct reference to the overarching Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan, it will need to adhere to relevant policies within the Plan, such as the Development Control Policy (G1) which states that development should not damage sites of nature conservation importance. For this reason, no adverse impacts are expected on European designated sites as a result of implementing this policy.</p>	None
	Policy BBGF5 -	This policy states that developer contributions	Policy BBGF5 is concerned with the provision and	To be

Objectives and Policies		Policy Summary	Assessment of likelihood of significant effects	Significant effects
Objective 3 - Transport / Infrastructure	Transport Improvements	<p>and Community Infrastructure Levy payments will be sought towards the following within the parish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highway improvement schemes to promote the safety of pedestrians and cycle users. - Traffic calming measures, pedestrian priority schemes and the reduction in traffic speeds on routes through the village centre. - Increasing public and community transport to and from the designated areas. <p>All proposed transport improvements will be expected to conserve and enhance landscape character and designated area.</p> <p>The parish council will work with and encourage providers of public transport to provide as full a service as is needed to support future development in the village.</p>	<p>improvement of transport infrastructure. This policy suggests relatively minor improvements to existing infrastructure, including pedestrian / cyclist safety and traffic calming measures, and it does not propose any large scale projects, such as the construction of new road schemes, or similar. The implementation of these small scale proposals is, therefore, likely to result in negligible impacts to European designated sites identified within this HRA, although this would need to be confirmed following project level HRA assessment for individual proposals.</p> <p>Proposed increases in housing development (Objective 1 and associated policies) and employment opportunities (Objective 4 and associated policies), including tourism, could result in increased road traffic volume and, consequently, elevated levels of air pollution. However, Policy BBGF5 encourages community transport and increased public transport facilities, including full services to villages, which could offset individual car emissions. No adverse impacts are expected on any European designated sites as a result of implementing this policy.</p>	determined following project level HRA
	Policy BBGF6 - Supporting Development of Communications Infrastructure	<p>The development of new, high speed broadband infrastructure and mobile infrastructure to serve the Parish will be supported where it is sympathetically designed and significant landscapes and visual effects have been adequately mitigated.</p> <p>All new development will be required to make provision for high speed broadband.</p>	<p>This policy supports the enhancement of broadband and mobile communications within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The development of associated infrastructure is likely to be small in scale and incur relatively low environmental impacts which will not impact upon the European designated sites which at their closest point are 2.9km from the parish boundary. The implementation of this policy is, therefore, likely to result in negligible impacts to the European designated sites identified within this HRA.</p>	To be determined following project level HRA
	Policy BBGF7 - Footpaths/Connectivity	<p>Proposals for the enhancement and improvement of existing footpath networks within the designated area will be supported.</p> <p>Proposals for improved linkages and accessibility within the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest and to the areas beyond will be supported.</p>	<p>Works to existing footpaths and proposals for new footpaths is likely to incur relatively low environmental impact, which will not impact upon the European designated sites which at their closest point are 2.9km from the parish boundary. The implementation of this policy is, therefore, likely to result in negligible impacts to European designated sites identified within close proximity to the neighbourhood plan area.</p>	None

Objectives and Policies		Policy Summary	Assessment of likelihood of significant effects	Significant effects
		<p>The policy encourages enhancements that will support local biodiversity, such as provision of new areas of woodland, new hedgerows, grassland and wetland habitats.</p>	<p>The promotion of new footpaths, alongside the promotion of biodiversity conservation along the routes, may have benefits to the European designated sites by improving connectivity of habitats in the wider landscape.</p>	
Objective 4 - Promoting employment	Policy BBGF8 - Supporting Existing Local Employment	<p>Existing sources of local employment will be protected, wherever possible.</p> <p>Development or change of use of existing employment premises to alternative uses will only be permitted when the premises have been empty for a period of six months or more and during that time actively management without securing a viable alternative employment use, and it is in accordance with the relevant policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.</p>	<p>Given that this policy focuses on maintenance or improvement of existing employment premises only, it will not result in adversely impact on SACs and the SPA.</p>	None
	Policy BBGF9 - New Local Employment Opportunities	<p>The development of new local employment opportunities will be permitted within the Neighbourhood Plan area providing that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not have detrimental impact on surrounding residential amenity. - Do not lead to the loss of open space or green infrastructure. - Are located close to existing highways and do not have an unacceptable impact on traffic. - Are sustainable and are in accordance with all other relevant policies of this plan and the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. 	<p>This policy lists conditions for permitting new local employment opportunities within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The provision of additional employment may result in the development/construction of associated premises and buildings and bring increased numbers of people and traffic to the Parishes which could then indirectly impact on the SACs and the SPA through increased visitor pressures and pollution.</p> <p>However, this policy does not suggest the development of any new significant employment opportunities and associated infrastructure such as new highways, and the distance between the sites and the Parishes (i.e. at its closest point, the boundaries of Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes are located 2.9 km east of the North Pennine Meadows SAC, 3.9 km east of Bowland Fell SPA and 6.9km south of the Ingleborough Complex SAC) means that significant adverse impacts are not anticipated.</p> <p>This policy is also reflected within development control policies detailed within the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local</p>	None

Objectives and Policies	Policy Summary	Assessment of likelihood of significant effects	Significant effects
		<p>Plan which states that development should not damage sites of nature conservation importance. Policy BBGF9 requires that development meets the relevant policies within this overarching Local Plan, and, for this reason, no adverse impacts expected on any European designated sites as a result of implementing this policy.</p>	
	<p>Policy BBGF10 - Rural Enterprise and Farm Diversification</p> <p>This policy sets out the criteria for permitting new employment development within existing countryside settlements and farmsteads. One of the conditions states that the conversion should not have a detrimental impact on the appearance or character of the landscape. Furthermore, new employment developments are to be located within existing building(s) and not in a new isolated location.</p> <p>This policy also states that planning decisions will adhere to relevant policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.</p>	<p>Although the scale of any new employment development opportunities within rural areas is not specified within this policy, it is expected that development works relating to the retention/conversion and restoration of existing buildings are likely to be small in scale and will therefore not impact upon any European designated sites which at their closest point are 2.9km from the parish boundary.</p> <p>This is further reflected within development control policies detailed within the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan which states that development should not damage sites of nature conservation importance. Policy BBGF10 requires that development meets the relevant policies within this overarching Local Plan, and, for this reason, no adverse impacts expected on any European designated sites as a result of implementing this policy.</p>	None
	<p>Policy BBGF11 - Tourism Development</p> <p>Proposals that contribute to the visitor economy and new visitor accommodation will be encouraged by the Neighbourhood Plan subject to criteria within Policy DMB3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.</p> <p>Proposals to change the use of existing holiday accommodation to residential will be resisted unless the development satisfies a number of criteria (see Neighbourhood Plan for list of criteria).</p>	<p>The first criteria of policy DMB3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that planning permission for recreation and tourism development would be granted provided that "the proposal does not conflict with other policies of this plan". One such policy which could present conflict, and is therefore necessary to implement when determining the outcome of the planning permission, is Policy DME3 on site and species protection and conservation. This policy states that development proposals that are likely to adversely affect SACs and SPAs will not be granted planning permission (subject to exceptional circumstances where any harm must be mitigated). This should be taken into full consideration during any planning decisions, as expected in fulfilment of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, through completion of project level HRAs for individual proposals relating to</p>	To be determined following project level HRA

Objectives and Policies	Policy Summary	Assessment of likelihood of significant effects	Significant effects	
		<p>tourism.</p> <p>Furthermore, other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan which promote alternative amenity assets (e.g. BBGF7, BBGF12) will help to ensure that indirect impacts from increased recreational pressures arising from implementation of this policy are minimised.</p>		
<p>Objective 5 - Community facilities</p>	<p>Policy BBGF12 - Protection of Local Green Spaces</p>	<p>The following local green spaces are protected from development in accordance with Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village Green - Stocks Green - War memorial and garden - Cricket field/adjoining sports area - Croft between church and Hellifield Road - Parkland towards King Henry Mews <p>New development which impacts adversely on the openness of these sites will not be permitted.</p>	<p>This policy is concerned with controlling the size/scale/extent of new developments occurring within and adjacent to local green spaces to ensure that their degree of openness is not comprised. The implementation of this policy is likely to encourage relatively modest and locally sensitive developments, which are unlikely to adversely impact upon any European designated sites as a result. The protection and development of these local green spaces may help minimise potential adverse impacts on the SACs and the SPA arising from implementation of other Neighbourhood Policies (e.g. BBGF1) by providing alternative amenity assets to reduce visitor pressure within the sites themselves.</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>Policy BBGF13 - Protection of Local Community Facilities</p>	<p>This policy states there will be a presumption in favour of the re-use of local community facilities for health and community type uses.</p> <p>It sets out conditions for the change of use of existing facilities to other uses. This policy also promotes proposals for new, and improvements to existing, community facilities and sets out conditions for permitting these developments, including the requirement to mitigate any detrimental impacts on traffic flow.</p>	<p>This policy is predominantly concerned with the re-use of existing building and infrastructure to provide health and community facilities. However, development works to provide new community facilities is also encouraged. However, given the distance between the sites and the Parishes (i.e. at their closest point, the boundaries of Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Parishes are located 2.9 km east of the North Pennine Meadows SAC, 3.9 km east of Bowland Fell SPA and 6.9km south of the Ingleborough Complex SAC) means that significant adverse impacts are not anticipated.</p> <p>Although this policy does not make direct reference to the overarching Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan, it will need to adhere to relevant policies within the Plan, such as the Development Control Policy (G1) which states that development should not damage sites of nature conservation</p>	<p>None</p>

Objectives and Policies	Policy Summary	Policy Summary	Assessment of likelihood of significant effects	Significant effects
			importance. For this reason, no adverse impacts are expected on European designated sites as a result of implementing this policy.	
Objective 6 - Natural Environment	Policy BBG14 - Protecting and Enhancing Local Landscape Character	All development proposals will have to show regard to the distinctive landscape character of the Forest of Bowland AONB. New developments will be required to demonstrate consideration of the following landscape design principles in addition to all other relevant policies: - Outside the identified settlements boundaries, retaining the development form of scattered hamlets and farmsteads within the wide setting of the area. - Retaining existing field pattern and boundaries, including low hedgerows and tree cover; - Protecting and enhancing areas of woodland. - Using appropriate local building materials, which respect the building vernacular of existing settlements.	This policy is concerned with new development having regard to protecting some of the natural interest features of the Forest of Bowland AONB and is not expected to result in adverse impacts to the SACs or the SPA located within close proximity to the AONB designated area - particularly Bowland Fell SPA which contributes to one fifth of the AONB and is situated 3.9 km west of the Parish boundary at its closest point.	None
	Policy BBG15 - Water Management and surface water run-off	This policy states that new development should be designed to maximise the retention of surface water on the development site and to minimise runoff. It also suggests that SuDS are implemented wherever possible. This policy also requests that water flow along existing routes are managed as part of new building infrastructure and that water attenuation facilities are provided.	The Ingleborough Complex SAC is located in a separate hydrological catchment to the Parishes and therefore this policy will have no impact on these sites as there is no hydrological connection between them. The implementation of SuDS schemes is likely to reduce potential hydrological impacts to the North Pennine Meadows SAC and Bowland Fells SPA as a result of promoting beneficial water management strategies such as SuDS, water attenuation facilities and sustainable design of buildings and hard standing. This policy is therefore unlikely to result in adverse impacts to this SAC and SPA which have a hydrological connection to the Parishes.	None
	Policy BBG16 - Renewable Energy	This policy states that, where appropriate, micro and small scale wind energy and micro hydro power development may be accommodated, particularly in locations which would contribute to strong functional relationships, such as existing	There is a possibility that the development of renewable energy infrastructure could impact upon the integrity of interest features at statutory designated nature conservation sites. In particular, Bowland Fells SPA which is designated for its important assemblages of avifauna, could be adversely	To be determined following project level HRA

Objectives and Policies	Policy Summary	Assessment of likelihood of significant effects	Significant effects
		<p>farm builds. Views of it would be constrained by the topography is likely to be the most appropriate form of wind energy for the AONB, provided that they do not cause unacceptable harm to the natural beauty and special quality of the landscape. In all instances, micro and small scale wind energy development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be of a form and design that is appropriate for the landscape and visual characteristics of the location. - Be an appropriate scale for the location; and - Not be significant cumulative impacts with operational or consented wind energy development; and - Be located away from remote and wilder areas; and - Be within existing built areas - e.g. farmstead or settlement - where a strong functional relationship would be established rather than in isolated locations away from other built structures. <p>A micro hydro scheme will only be acceptable where it satisfies the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It appears as a minor, isolated feature within a large scale landscape or locations where there is a direct relationship with existing development such as settlements or access routes; - Buildings or other associated development are of an appropriate scale, carefully sited and sympathetic to the local vernacular; and <p>Mitigation of landscape and visual impact.</p>	<p>impacted by the operation of wind energy developments (albeit on a micro and small scale) resulting in potential migration route severance, changes in population distribution and bird strike. However, the likelihood and severity of impacts would be dependent on the location and size/scale of wind energy developments, and this can only be determined from assessing individual projects on a site by site basis and consequently further HRAs will likely be required once individual projects are developed at later stages of the Neighbourhood Plan implementation.</p> <p>Furthermore, embedded within policy BBGF16 is wording to ensure that micro and small scale wind energy developments are appropriate for the landscape and location, and do not have a significant cumulative impacts with other operational or consented wind energy developments. Consequently, given this inbuilt protection within the wording of policy BBGF16 and the uncertainties over the location and scale of any wind energy developments at this stage, the effects of implementing Policy BBGF16 of the Neighbourhood Plan are will require project level HRAs will be conducted for those sites with the potential to impact on the Bowland Fells SPA.</p>

A.9 Screening Statement and Conclusions

This Screening Assessment has examined the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Forest Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies for any impacts on the European sites that fall within the Parish and/or within a 10 km radius of the parish boundary. The assessment further takes into account any in-combination effects with other relevant plans and strategies.

There are no European sites within the Bolton by Bowland and Gisburn Parish Forest although three European sites (which include two SACs and one SPA) were identified within a 10km radius of the parish boundary.

The Plan comprises six specific objectives relating to housing growth, maintaining character, transport/ infrastructure, promoting employment, community facilities and the natural environment - including renewable energy development. Within these objectives, sixteen policies were formed. With the exception of Policy BBGF16, an assessment of all remaining policies determined that there would likely be no significant impacts upon European designated sites as a result of their implementation. This was largely contributed to by the distance of the sites from the Parish boundaries and the majority of policies referring to development control criteria contained within the overarching Ribble Valley Core Strategy, which puts safeguarding in place to prevent new developments from adversely impacting upon European sites.

Policy BBGF16 promotes renewable energy within the Neighbourhood Plan area and encourages wind energy schemes (albeit small/micro in scale) which could result in adverse impacts to the avifauna (particularly raptors) which contributes to the interest features of Bowland Fell SPA. However, the likelihood and severity of such impacts would be dependent on the location and size/scale of wind energy developments, which can only be determined from assessing individual projects on a site-by-site basis; consequently, any individual projects arising from implementation of this Neighbourhood Plan will likely need to be subject to further HRA at the project level. Furthermore, wording within policy BBGF16 will help to ensure that any wind energy developments are appropriate. Therefore, at this stage, it is not considered that significant adverse effects of implementing Policy BBGF16 of the Neighbourhood Plan will arise. A project level HRA of any development-related strategies undertaken under the Neighbourhood Plan will be more effective at addressing potential impacts on European sites.

A.10 References

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BD23 3AE

t:+44(0)1756 799919

e:info@jbaconsulting.com

Jeremy Benn Associates Ltd

Registered in England

3246693



Visit our website

www.jbaconsulting.com