

# Strategic Environmental Assessment

## Initial Screening Determination on the Local Plan

Prepared by Chesterfield Borough Council June 2026

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Chesterfield Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan, under the system set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. The Council published its Notice to Commence Preparation on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026.
- 1.2. Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the responsible authority (i.e. the local planning authority) must carry out an environmental assessment for any plan or programme that is prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, which sets the framework for future development consents of certain projects. It is likely that the new Local Plan will require SEA as it will contain planning policies that influence the above list of topics, and which will be used to determine planning applications.
- 1.3. The Local Plan was previously prepared and adopted with the benefit of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) that incorporated the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004.
- 1.4. The first stage in the SEA process is for the Council to determine whether or not a plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This process should use a specified set of criteria (set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations). The results of this process must be summarised in an SEA screening opinion, which is then sent to the statutory bodies for comment. Once comments have been taken into account a screening determination is prepared setting out whether SEA is required and reasons for the decision and this must be made publicly available.
- 1.5. The Chesterfield Borough Council resolved to prepare a new Local Plan following a review and a regulation 18 consultation was undertaken in 2025. The Plan is now progressing under the new plan making system introduced in March 2026. It was recognised that there would be a need to amend and add new strategic objectives and policies to the Local Plan. It was also

recognised that new strategic allocations and designations would be likely to be needed and would need to be shown on a new policies map. At this stage the precise nature and number of changes is unknown but the nature and level of changes to strategy and policies is likely to be significant and will affect the whole borough.

1.6. The preparation of a new Local Plan falls within the scope of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations on the basis that:

- The new Local Plan is a plan which is subject to preparation and adoption by an authority at a local level and is required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions, as defined in Regulation 2;
- The new Local Plan is prepared for town and country planning and land use and will set the framework for the future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II of European Council Directive 2011/92/EU; and
- The new Local Plan will apply to a wider area than a small area at local level and is not a minor modification to an existing plan or programme.

1.7. A determination under Regulation 9 is, therefore, required as to whether the Local Plan Update is likely to have significant environmental effects.

## 2. Assessment of the significant environmental effects of a new Local Plan

2.1. The screening process set out in Regulation 9 and Schedule 1 of the regulations includes two sets of characteristics for determining the likely significance of the effects on the environment. These relate firstly to the characteristics of a new Local Plan and secondly to the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected. There are a number of criteria relating to each of these characteristics, and the table set out below shows an opinion against these.

Table 1: SEA initial assessment of significant environmental effects

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Significant environmental effect likely? (yes/no)	Assessment and Justification
1. The characteristics of the plans and programmes, having regard in particular to:		
(a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	Yes	The new Local Plan will set a new policy framework. This will set the strategic context for Chesterfield Borough Council's (CBC's) projects and activities in terms of the location of new development and the nature, size and operating conditions of such developments.
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	Yes	The new Local Plan sets the overarching vision for the other documents that make up the Council's Local Development Framework. It will set strategic policies and any future Neighbourhood Plans will need to be in general conformity with these strategic policies. It also sets the context for Supplementary Planning Documents which may either be topic based or site specific in nature.
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	Yes	Section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires CBC's Local Plan to have the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	Yes	The new Local Plan will seek to address environmental problems that are relevant to the Council's statutory development plan.
(e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment	Yes	The new Local Plan Update is relevant to the implementation of the land use elements of the CBC Council Plan.

(for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).		
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to:		
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects.	Yes	The new Local Plan will set a long-term vision, objectives and strategy for the spatial framework for new development within CBC. Individual policies will have a different probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects, but generally the policies as a whole will have medium to high probability and medium to long-term duration effects. The effects are likely to be frequent within the borough boundary and some effects will be reversible, but others will be more difficult or potentially impossible to reverse.
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects.	Yes	There are likely to be cumulative affects arising from and between the different policies within the new Local Plan. There could also be cumulative effects with other Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans.
(c) The transboundary nature of the effects.	No	There are no transboundary effects arising from the Local Plan Update.
(d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents).	No	There are unlikely to be significant risks to human health or the environment arising from the new Local Plan.
(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	Yes	The new Local Plan will apply to new development in the Chesterfield Borough Council geographical area. This has an area of nearly 6600 hectares and a population of 103,600 people (according to population estimates from the 2021 Census).
(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to;	Yes	The new Local Plan will cover the whole of Chesterfield Borough, which is valued in terms of its built, natural and archaeological heritage. There may be the potential for the value and vulnerability of the area to be affected as a result of the new Local Plan.

<p>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</p> <p>(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values or</p> <p>(ii) intensive land use</p>		<p>The borough has traffic congestion and air quality problems including a declared air quality management area and the plan could lead to exceedance of air quality standards.</p>
<p>(g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The new Local Plan will apply to all landscape types in the borough, and includes those landscape types which have a recognised national, community or international protection status where they form landscape types which provide the setting of the Peak District National Park. The setting of the Grade I Listed St Marys and All Saints could be affected.</p>

### 3. Conclusion

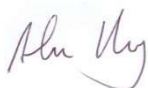
In accordance with Part 2(9) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), the Council, as the responsible authority, consider that the intended new Local Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and accordingly will require a SEA.

Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 requires local planning authorities to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal of all DPDs including the new Local Plan. The requirements of the SEA will be incorporated into the Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Plan.

Date of initial determination: 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2026

Written by: Antony Wallace (Principal Planning Officer)

Delegated decision made by:



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 Chesterfield Borough Council