

**Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats
Regulations Assessment and Marine Plan
Screening Determination for Blacon
Neighbourhood Plan**

Prepared on behalf of Blacon Neighbourhood Alliance Neighbourhood Forum by
Cheshire West and Chester Council

November 2025

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1 Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), this document is the screening determination of the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan. This document also sets out the findings of the Habitats Regulations Assessment screening and identifies whether Appropriate Assessment is required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). It also identifies whether further work is required to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan takes full account of the relevant Marine Plans.

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 Development Plan Documents (DPDs), such as the Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies and Neighbourhood Plans will require SEA as they will contain planning policies that influence the above list of topics, and which will be used to determine planning applications.

However, the regulations state that an environmental assessment need not be carried out for a plan or programme which determines the use of a small area at a local level unless it has been determined that the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.

The regulations advise that a screening process is used 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 a SEA screening opinion, which is then sent to the statutory consultation 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.

Please note that under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, SEA will be replaced by Environmental Outcomes Reports (EOR). The Regulations relating to EOR have not yet been introduced and as such, the existing SEA process has been followed in this document and will continue to be used until further Regulations and guidance are issued.

This screening determination has been based upon the policies set out in the draft Blacon Community Neighbourhood Plan Submission Version (October 2025).

A draft screening opinion was produced in March 2025. The Council has a duty to consult Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency. The

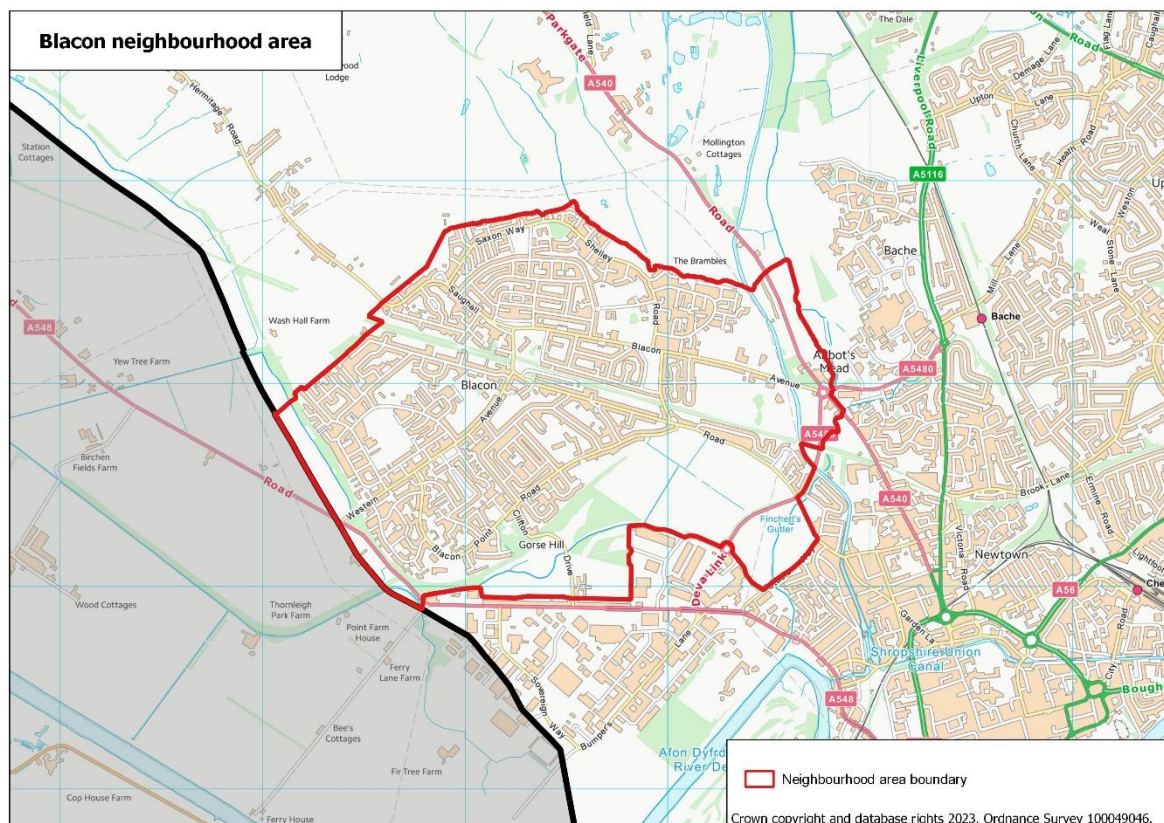
statutory environmental bodies were consulted on 6 March 2025. Details of the bodies consulted, and the responses received on SEA and HRA are provided in Appendix 7. Responses were received from Natural England and Historic England, who agreed with the outcome of the initial screening exercise, that SEA is not required.

Location and geographical scope of the Blacon

The Blacon Neighbourhood Area covers the urban area of Blacon and is bounded by:

- the commercial area of Sealand Road and Greyhound Retail Park to the South;
- the Welsh border to the West;
- the boundary with Saughall and Mollington Ward, Upton Ward and Chester City and The Garden Quarter Ward along the North and East.

Blacon is a predominantly residential area forming a suburb of Chester. The properties were mainly built between 1950 and 1980.



Relationship to other plans and programmes

Once made the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of development plan for Cheshire West and Chester. The policy framework once made will not work in isolation. The Neighbourhood Plan will work alongside the adopted Local Plan policies in place at the time it is made.

The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to national policy; be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan; must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and meet EU obligations and human rights requirements.

The current adopted Local Plan for the area is Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies (adopted January 2015) and the Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies (adopted July 2019). The Part One plan sets out the overall vision, strategic objectives, spatial strategy and strategic planning policies for the borough to 2030, with supporting policies in Part Two.

The Local Plan policy framework has been taken into account when carrying out the screening exercise. This forms the baseline for the SEA and HRA screening assessment. It has considered the potential effects of the Neighbourhood Plan over and above the current adopted Local Plan (Part One) and the Local Plan (Part Two).

Scope of Neighbourhood Plan

The vision for the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan is:

“By 2040 the residents of Blacon will have benefited for a decade or more from a range of successful and accessible community facilities, which are the envy of other parts of the city. The community is healthier and happier as people no longer need to travel long distances to access them. The local shops have survived and thrived by continuing to meet every-day needs that most people can walk to. All its local green spaces have been kept to provide residents with local play and recreation spaces and places to enjoy in the hotter summer days”.

The objectives set within the Neighbourhood Plan are:

1. Build a new Indoor Sports facility and Community Hub to make Blacon more self-sufficient in its local services
2. Prevent the loss of existing community facilities and widen their accessibility
3. Prevent the loss of any local shops that meet the day to day needs of the local community
4. Protect important green spaces for the enjoyment of local residents

The vision and objectives have been translated into plan policies covering the following topic areas:

- A site for a new indoor sports and community hub building with associated children's play area and parking, whilst retaining two of the existing football pitches.
- Protection of existing community facilities
- Defining and protecting the Western Avenue local retail centre
- Designating and protecting Local Green Spaces

The Blacon Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared so that it is mainly in general conformity with the strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan (Part One and Part Two). The proposals involve the loss of one pitch and re-siting of two pitches and as such, they may not be in general conformity with the strategic policy SOC 6.

The Blacon Neighbourhood Area is predominantly located within the Chester settlement area. A small section in the east of the Neighbourhood Area is within Green Belt. Sealand Basin within the south east of the Neighbourhood Area is a flood storage area.

Policy BLACON1 is not specifically identified as an allocated site, but the policy states that community-led development proposals on the Cairns Crescent site to deliver a sports and community hub will be supported, provided that certain criteria are met. The Neighbourhood Plan does not refer to 'excluded development' such as minerals or waste. There are also policies relating to community facilities, local retail Centres and local Green Spaces.

The Neighbourhood Plan provides local level guidance on how the community would like future development, as set and restricted by the Local Plan and national planning policy, to come forward.

This screening determination only considers the likelihood of significant environmental effects resulting from the draft policies, rather than assessing general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan, which is a matter for the Examination.

2 Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

Legislative background and methodology

European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) required a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be carried out for certain plans and programmes to assess their effects on the environment. This Directive was transposed in law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

The Blacon Neighbourhood Plans fall within the scope of this legislation as it is a plan prepared for town and country planning or land use and will set the framework for future development consent of projects, in accordance with Part 3(2) of the SEA Directive. However, Neighbourhood Plans are land use planning documents prepared at the local level to determine land use in a small area.

Under Part 5(6) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, SEA is only required for documents that determine land use of a small area at local level and minor modifications to plans and programmes where it is considered that it is likely to have significant environmental effects. Assessment of whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects is carried out through the screening process.

If SEA is required, the assessment is usually incorporated into a Sustainability Appraisal, which includes environmental factors as required under the SEA Directive, along with social and economic factors.

Screening methodology

The role of the screening exercise is to determine whether the implementation of a plan or programme is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

The criteria for assessing whether a plan or programme is likely to have a significant environmental effect are set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

The assessment criteria used to determine whether a plan or programme will have significant environmental effects are separated into two categories:

- those relating to the characteristics of the plan; and
- those relating to the characteristics of the plan's effects and of the area likely to be affected.

In order to undertake the identification of the likely significance of effects, an assessment has been undertaken of each policy of the Neighbourhood Plan, its potential effects and its relationship to Local Plan (Part One) strategic policies and the policies in the Local Plan (Part Two). This helps to assess the impact that the Neighbourhood Plan will have above and beyond the impact of existing Local Plan policies. This assessment is set out in the table in Appendix 1.

The assessment of the significant environmental effects of the draft Neighbourhood Plan is set out in Appendix 2. The characteristics of the plan's effects and the area likely to be affected are set out in Appendix 3.

Conclusion

In accordance with Part 2(9) of the environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, as a result of the SEA screening assessment, Cheshire West and Chester Council consider that it is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan. As such, a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan is not required.

3 Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

Legislative background

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transposed the requirements of the European Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC into UK law. The Habitats Directive and Regulations afford protection to plants, animals and habitats that are rare and vulnerable in a European context.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a systematic process through which the performance of a plan or project can be assessed for its likely impact on the integrity of a European Site. European sites, also referred to as Natura 2000 sites, consist of Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); Potential Special Protection Areas and candidate Special Areas of Conservation (pSPA and cSAC); and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect on it, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, should be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

The first stage of HRA is to screen a plan or programme to identify if there are likely to be any significant effects on the European sites. This will indicate whether a full Appropriate Assessment is required. The regulations require that the impacts and effects of any land use plan being assessed, are considered in combination with other plans and projects that may also be affecting the relevant European site(s).

Inter-relationship with the Local Plan HRA

The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies has already been through the HRA process, and the results detailed in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Publication Draft (Part 1) Strategic Policies Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report.

The HRA for the Local Plan (Part One) identified 12 European sites to include within the HRA:

- Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC;
- Dee Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar;
- Liverpool Bay SPA;
- Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar;
- Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar and SPA;
- Midlands Meres and Mosses Ramsar site;
- Oak Mere SAC;
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site;
- River Dee and Bala Lake SAC;
- River Eden SAC;
- Sefton Coast SAC; and
- West Midlands Mosses SAC.

Information about all of these sites, the reasons for designation, pressures and pathways of impacts are provided in the HRA for the Local Plan (Part One and Part Two).

In addition, the HRA screening for the Local Plan Issues and Options in 2025 identified additional sites that are outside the CW&C borough boundary, but could potentially be impacted by policies in the Local Plan:

- Alyn Valley Woods SAC;
- Brown Moss SAC;
- Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites SAC;
- Fenn's, Whixhall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses SAC
- Halkyn Mountain SAC;
- Johnstown Newt Sites SAC;
- Manchester Mosses SAC;
- Rixton Clay Pits SAC; and

- Rostherne Mere Ramsar.

Information about sites relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan is summarised in Appendix 4.

Map 2 shows the European sites that are within 15km of the Neighbourhood Plan area. All of the other European sites have been screened out from this assessment as impacts would not occur due to the distance or would be so small and insignificant in scale that they would not have a Likely Significant Effect, even when combined with other plans or projects.

The following sites have been screened out as they are outside the 15km radius for the Blacon Neighbourhood Area:

- Alyn Valley Woods SAC;
- Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC;
- Brown Moss SAC;
- Fenn's, Whixhall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses SAC
- Halkyn Mountain SAC;
- Johnstown Newt Sites SAC;
- Liverpool Bay SPA;
- Manchester Mosses SAC;
- Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar and SPA;
- Oak Mere SAC;
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site;
- River Eden SAC
- Rixton Clay Pits SAC;
- Rostherne Mere Ramsar;
- Sefton Coast SAC; and
- West Midlands Mosses SAC.

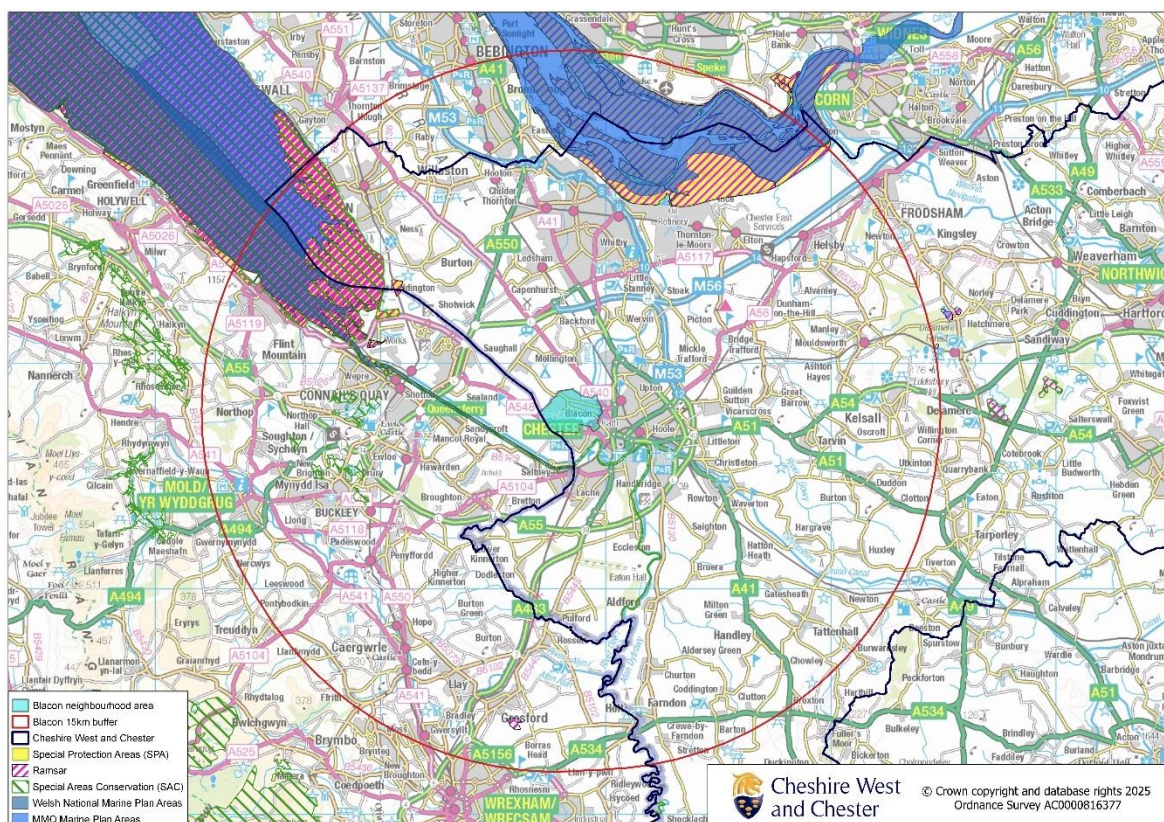
Due to the distance and scale of anticipated development proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan, it is not considered relevant to include these sites in the HRA Screening of the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan.

Appendix 5 identifies whether there could be potential impacts arising from the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, on the European protected site and their reasons for designation.

The conservation objectives of the European sites will be taken into account. These include maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

The HRA undertaken for the Local Plan (Part One) and (Part Two) forms part of the baseline for the HRA screening assessment of the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan. The potential effects of the Neighbourhood Plan over and above those already assessed for the Local Plan have been considered. The Local Plan (Part One) was identified through the HRA process, as not leading to a Likely Significant Effect on European Sites. The HRA of the Local Plan (Part Two) concluded that, in the context of the over-arching strategic policies contained within the Local Plan (Part One) comprises a sufficient policy framework to enable the subsequent delivery of necessary measures that would avoid or adequately mitigate adverse effects on internationally designated sites and thus enable a conclusion of no adverse effect on integrity.



The European sites are also subject to certain pressures that are outside the scope of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans and therefore have not been included in the table in Appendix 4. Table 1 below identifies the potential pressures (which may be relevant to one or several of the European sites) and explains why it is not considered relevant to the HRA of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 1: Potential pressures outside the scope of the HRA

Pressure	Reasons outside scope of this HRA
Disturbance of sediment releasing legacy heavy metal pollution that is bound into the sediment.	The policies within the Neighbourhood Plan relate to land-based uses and operations, which will not disturb sediment within European sites.
Pollution via commercial shipping by chemical or noise pollution and dumping of litter at sea	The policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will not have a significant impact on commercial shipping.
Navigational / aggregate dredging resulting in physical loss and alteration of coastal processes or damage of marine benthic habitat	The policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will not have a significant impact on navigational or aggregate dredging.

Fisheries and overfishing of particular species	Fishing levels are not controlled through Neighbourhood Plans.
Livestock grazing	Grazing levels are not controlled through Neighbourhood Plans.
Damage of marine benthic habitat directly from fishing methods	Commercial fishing methods and levels are not controlled through Neighbourhood Plans.
The need to manage continuing coastal erosion at protected sites outside CW&C	Neighbourhood Plans within CW&C will not impact on management of coastal erosion in areas outside CW&C.
The need to develop and maintain management practices which sustain the conservation value of the area for protected sites outside CW&C.	Neighbourhood Plans cannot influence management practices for protected sites outside CW&C.
Loss or damage of habitat as a result of increasing off-shore exploration and production activity associated with oil and natural gas on protected sites outside CW&C.	Neighbourhood Plans within CW&C cannot control oil and gas exploration and production activity outside CW&C.
Coastal squeeze from land reclamation and coastal flood defences and drainage in European sites outside CW&C.	Neighbourhood Plans within CW&C will not have a significant impact on coastal squeeze resulting from land reclamation, coastal flood defences and drainage in areas outside CW&C.
Scrub encroachment, fire, siltation, heather management, peat digging, heather beetle, game management / hunting, quarrying and changes in species distributions.	Neighbourhood Plans within CW&C are unlikely to have a significant impact on scrub encroachment, risk of fire, siltation, heather management, peat digging, heather beetle, game management / hunting, quarrying or changes in species distributions.

HRA screening

The Neighbourhood Plan is not directly connected with, or necessary to the management of a European site for nature conservation and therefore needs to be assessed for Likely Significant Effects.

It is considered that as long as the proposed policies of a Neighbourhood Plan do not alter the strategic policy framework assessed in the Local Plan (Part One and Part Two) HRA Screening Report and do not have Likely Significant Effects beyond this, then Appropriate Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan will not be required. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development, which makes it less likely to have significant effects resulting from specific development supported through the Plan. It does however, identify that development of a sports and community on a specific site would be supported, subject to certain criteria.

In March 2022, Natural England issued advice to Local Authorities about the adverse effect that nutrient pollution is having on habitats sites. Nutrient neutrality advice requires that competent authorities under the Habitats Regulations carefully consider the nutrient impacts of any new plans and projects on habitats sites and whether those impacts may have an adverse effect on the integrity of a protected site. Within CW&C, Oakmere and the West Midlands Meres and Mosses are identified as potentially affected sites.

Oak Mere is outside the 15km boundary and has therefore been screened out. The assessment in Appendix 5 identifies that there are unlikely to be any direct or indirect significant impacts on the West Midlands Meres and Mosses. This is due to the nature of the policies, the distance between the Neighbourhood Area and the protected areas and the anticipated small scale of any future development in the area (due to the built-up nature of the area and flood risk zones or Green Belt restrictions and other local and national policies). The Plan does support development on a specific site, but this is a small scale community use, so will not generate additional residents or significant growth. The proposals are within overall levels of growth established through the Local Plan. It is unlikely to create a significant source of water pollution and there is no hydrological connectivity between the protected sites and the Blacon Neighbourhood Area.. It is therefore not necessary to apply the nutrient neutrality methodology to the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan.

Appendix 5 identifies whether the Neighbourhood Plan alters the policy position for the area. It also assesses whether each policy has a Likely Significant Effect alone. If a Likely Significant Effect is identified, the policy would be taken forward for further investigation through Appropriate Assessment. If there is no Likely Significant Effect when considering the policy alone, the final column assesses whether the policy

could have a Likely Significant Effect when combined with the effects of other relevant policies, plans or projects.

Conclusion

The Neighbourhood Plan will not work in isolation and will be used alongside other development plan policies including the Local Plan (Part One) and Local Plan (Part Two) for determining planning applications for new development. The quantum of development to come forward in Blacon in the future will be set by Local Plan policy. The Neighbourhood Plan will help to guide how this should come forward locally.

There are no specific issues highlighted in the HRA of the emerging Local Plan in relation to Blacon, although there were other more general potential impacts resulting from the quantum and location of development proposed for the borough as a whole in the Local Plan (Part One and Part Two). However, this was considered within the HRAs for the Local Plan (Part One and Part Two) and the HRAs concluded that there were sufficient mitigation and control measures in the policy framework of the Local Plan (Part One and Part Two) to avoid and mitigate any of these adverse effects on the integrity of a European site in the emerging Local Plan. The policies and proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan will not add significantly to the impacts and will not prevent the mitigation and control measures from avoiding and mitigating the effects sufficiently.

Therefore, it is considered that any proposals coming forward for Blacon in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan would not result in a Likely Significant Effect on a European site than already identified and assessed through the Local Plan (Part One and Part Two) Habitats Regulation Assessment Report.

The Screening Determination made by Cheshire West and Chester Council is that the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have an adverse effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), alone or in combination with other plans and projects. As such, Appropriate Assessment is not considered to be required.

4 Marine Plan Screening

Marine planning ensures that the right activities happen in the right place, at the right time and in the right way in marine areas.

Marine plans provide guidance on things to promote or avoid in certain marine locations. As the marine planning authority for England, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is responsible for preparing marine plans in England for inshore and offshore waters.

The Marine Plans that are potentially relevant to neighbourhood planning in Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) are the draft North-West Marine Plan and the Welsh National Marine Plan. The diagram below shows the areas covered by these Marine Plans. Marine plans apply up to the mean high-water springs mark, which includes the tidal extent of any rivers, as shown on the map.

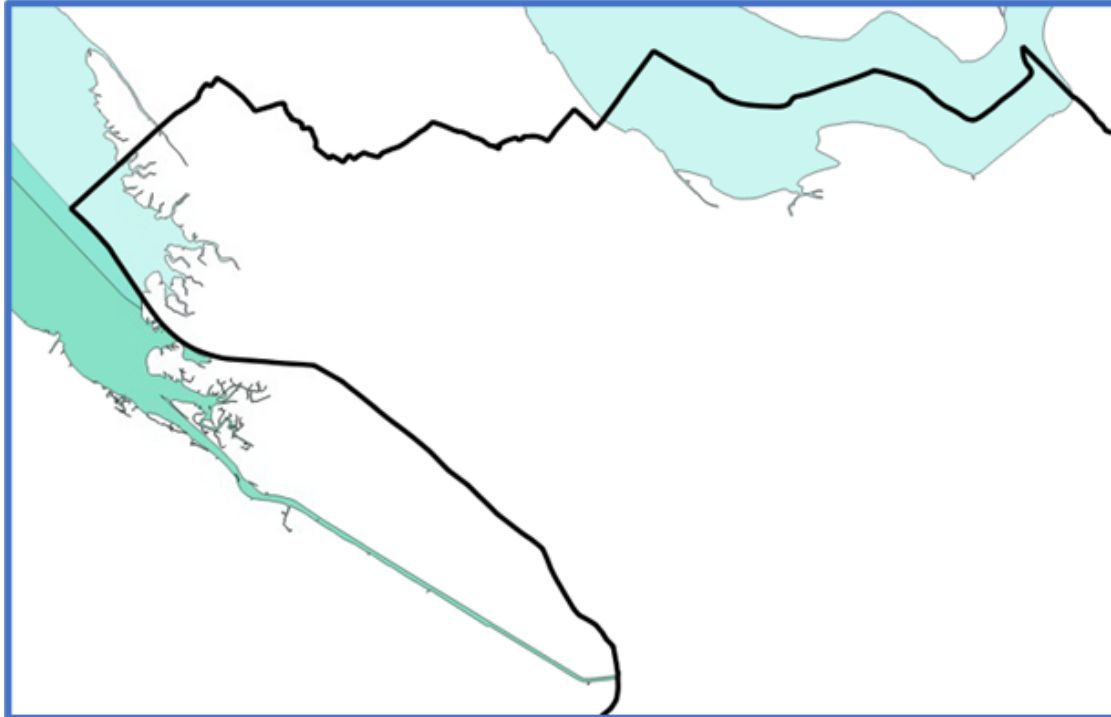
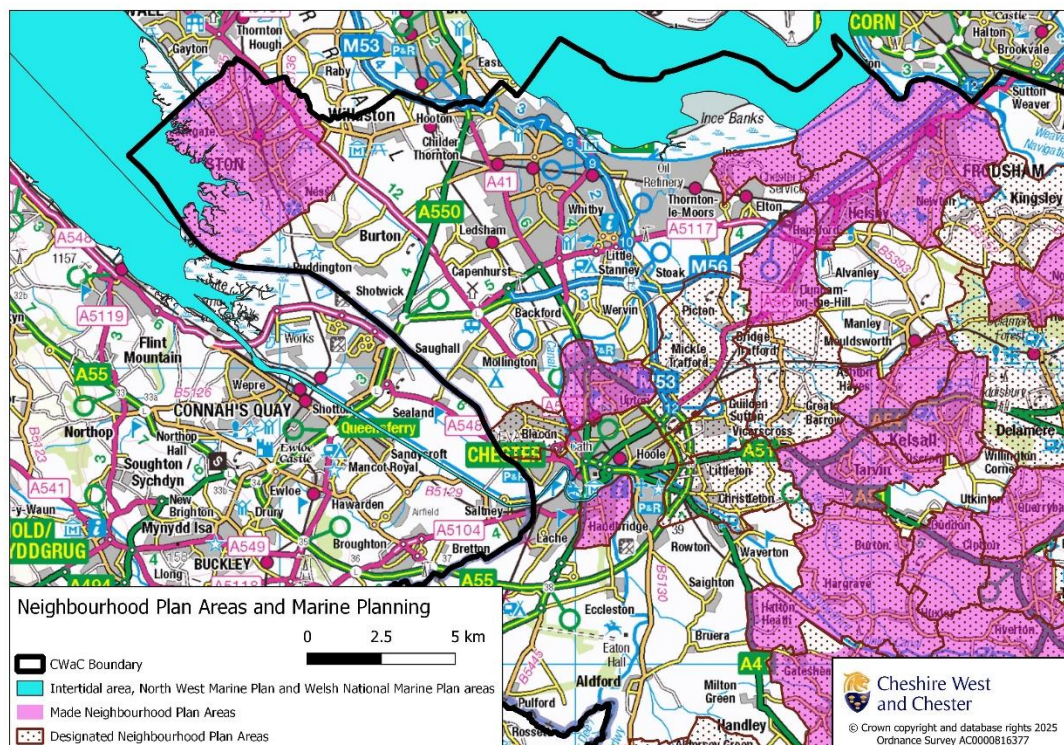


Figure showing CW&C boundary in black. The light blue is the area covered by the North-West Marine Plan, and the darker turquoise the area covered by the Welsh National Marine Plan.



It is a legal requirement for marine plans to be considered in all decisions that affect England's marine area, now and into the future. Section 58(3) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act requires that public authorities must have regard to marine plans when taking any decisions which relate to the exercise of any function capable of affecting the UK marine area. This can include decision making relating to Neighbourhood Plans.

The policies set out in marine plans apply only in their area (i.e. up to the mean high-water springs mark – which includes the tidal extent of any rivers), but if a proposed activity may affect the plan area, this should be acknowledged and considered.

There are not statutory requirements or guidelines for the screening of Neighbourhood Plans to assess likelihood of impacts on the marine plan or marine area. To do this we undertake a three-stage process, with the first stage to assess the distance of the Neighbourhood Plan area from the marine area.

Stage 1

If a Neighbourhood Plan extends into the marine plan area, it will definitely be screened in. If a Neighbourhood Plan is within 1km of a marine plan area it should proceed to the next stage, but it is likely that it will need to be screened in. As the distance from mean high-water springs mark increases, the likelihood of being screened in reduces, however further assessment is required at the next stage.

Blacon Neighbourhood Area is approximately 1.6 km from the River Dee and approximately 9km from the Mersey Estuary. There are no direct links to the Mersey Estuary. There may be some drains or minor watercourses that drain from the Blacon area to the River Dee. The North West Marine Plan and Welsh Marine Plan both cover part of the Dee Estuary. As such, the North West Marine Plan and Welsh National Marine Plan have been screened in for further investigation.

Stage 2

The second stage is to assess whether the plan includes proposed allocations and if so, whether these allocations have the potential to impact on the marine plan area. The potential for impacts will depend upon distance from the marine plan area, potential pathways of impact and scale and nature of the proposed allocation.

There are no specific sites identified as allocations within the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan, but policy BLACON1 supports development of a sports and community hub on a site at Cairns Crescent, subject to certain criteria. The policy has been assessed for impacts on the Marine Plans in Appendix 6 and this is described further in Stage 3 below.

Stage 3

The final stage is to assess whether the proposed policies have the potential to impact on the marine plan area.

The policies have been checked against the key policies in the marine plan using the [Explore Marine Plans](#) tool. When the tool was used, only the 'land' policies were relevant, which indicates no direct relationship with the marine plan area. It is possible

that there may be indirect impacts via watercourses. As such, further assessment has been undertaken in Appendix 6.

All North-West Marine Plan and Welsh National Marine Plan policies will need to be considered. However, the nature of the Blaon and the distance to the Marine Plan areas means that the key North-West Marine Plan policies that are likely to be most relevant are:

- NW-WQ-1 – Proposals that protect, enhance and restore water quality will be supported. Proposals that cause deterioration of water quality must demonstrate that they will avoid or minimise deterioration.
- NW-BIO-1 – Proposals that enhance the distribution of priority habitats and priority species will be supported.
- NW-BIO-2 – Proposals that enhance or facilitate native species or habitat adaptation or connectivity, or native species migration, will be supported.

The key Welsh National Marine Plan policies that are likely to be most relevant are:

- ENV_06: Air and water quality. Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered their potential air and water quality impacts and should avoid, minimise and/or mitigate adverse impacts.

Conclusion

The Blaon Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to impact significantly on the North-West Marine Plan or Welsh Marine Plan. Some policies have the potential for minor indirect negative impacts on flood risk, runoff and water pollution, but reference meeting drainage standards and some development is likely to be on sites that have previously been developed, so additional impacts are likely to be very small scale. There is the potential for positive impacts on flood risk, runoff and water pollution from the protection of existing Local Green Spaces.

The Neighbourhood Plan group will need to consider the impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan on the North-West Marine Plan area and Welsh Marine Plan area and should specifically consider the impacts of those policies that have been screened in. The impact of the Neighbourhood Plan will also need to be considered as a whole.

The Local Planning Authority will inform the neighbourhood plan group of the outcome of the screening assessment and identify additional work required.

Appendix 1: SEA Screening - Overview of policies and identified effects of the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy reference	Summary of policy	Identified potential effects of policy (taking into account SEA topics of biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape).	Relationship to Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies and Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies
BLACON1	Supports community-led development proposals to deliver a sports and community hub building on land at Cairns Crescent sports ground, subject to certain criteria.	Protecting landscape and townscape. Protecting local character. Population and human health. Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, flora and fauna. Climatic factors. Water. Soil. Air quality.	Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies: - STRAT 3 – Chester STRAT 10 – Transport and accessibility - STRAT 11 – Infrastructure - ECON 2 – Town centres - SOC 5 – Health and well-being - SOC6 – Open space, sport and recreation - ENV 1 – Flood risk and water management - ENV 2 – Landscape - ENV 3 – Green Infrastructure - ENV 4 – Biodiversity and geodiversity - ENV 6 – High quality design and sustainable construction Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies: - CH 1 – Chester settlement area - T 5 – Parking and access

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DM 1 – Development of previously developed land (not strategic) - DM 2 – Impact on residential amenity (not strategic) - DM 3 – Design, character and visual amenity (not strategic) - DM 29 – Health impacts of new development (not strategic) - DM 30 – Noise (not strategic) - DM 35 - Open space and new development (not strategic) - DM 36 - Provision for sport and recreation (not strategic) - DM 39 – Culture and community facilities (not strategic) - DM 40 – Development and flood risk (not strategic) - DM 41 – Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) (not strategic) - DM 43 – Water quality, supply and treatment (not strategic) - DM 44 – Protecting and enhancing the natural environment - DM 45 – Trees, woodland and hedgerows (not strategic)
BLACON2	Identifies 21 community facilities and states that proposals affecting a community facility will be considered against the policies of the development plan relating to culture and community facilities.	Protecting landscape and townscape. Population and human health. Supporting the economy (no direct SEA topic).	<p>Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ENV 2 - Landscape

			<p>- ENV6 – High quality design and sustainable construction</p> <p>- STRAT 9 – Greenbelt and countryside</p> <p>Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies:</p> <p>- GBC 2 – Protection of landscape</p> <p>- DM 1 – Development of previously developed land (not strategic)</p> <p>- DM 2 – Impact on residential amenity (not strategic)</p> <p>DM 3 – Design, character and visual amenity (not strategic)</p> <p>- DM 30 – Noise (not strategic)</p> <p>- DM 39 – Culture and community facilities (not strategic)</p> <p>- DM 44 – Protecting and enhancing the natural environment</p> <p>- DM 45 – Trees, woodland and hedgerows (not strategic)</p>
BLACON3	The policy identifies land at Western Avenue as a Local Retail Centre. Proposals affecting land within the Local Retail Centre will be considered against the policies of the development plan relating to local retail centres.	Protecting landscape and townscape. Protecting local character. Population and human health. Supporting the economy (no direct SEA topic).	<p>Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies:</p> <p>- STRAT 1 – Sustainable development</p> <p>- ENV 5 – Historic environment</p> <p>Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DM 1 – Development of previously developed land (not strategic) - DM 3 – Design, character and visual amenity (not strategic) - DM 15 – District and local retail centres (not strategic) - DM 39 – Culture and community facilities (not strategic) -
BLACON4	Designates 15 Local Green Spaces and identifies that development in a Local Green Space will only be supported in very special circumstances.	Protecting landscape and townscape. Protecting local character. Population and human health. Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, flora and fauna. Climatic factors. Water. Soil. Air quality.	Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - STRAT 1 – Sustainable development Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GBC 2 – Protection of landscape - DM 35 - Open space and new development (not strategic) - DM 36 - Provision for sport and recreation (not strategic) - DM 40 – Development and flood risk (not strategic) - DM 42 – Flood water storage (not strategic) - DM 44 – Protecting and enhancing the natural environment - DM 45 – Trees, woodland and hedgerows (not strategic)

Appendix 2: SEA Screening – Assessment of significant environmental effects of the Blacon Neighbourhood Plan

SEA Directive	Characteristics of the plan	Significant environmental effect?
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	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is a local level land use planning document to determine land use in a small area. Once made, it will work within the planning policy framework of the Local Plan for the borough.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan will provide a local planning policy framework for Blacon that will become part of the development plan for Cheshire West and Chester. It is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The Blacon Neighbourhood Plan will not impact on the strategic location, nature, size and operating conditions of new development over and above that set by the adopted Local Plan for the borough.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan policies will work alongside the strategic policies in the development plan; other development management measures and environmental protection legislation.</p>	No
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The Neighbourhood Plan has to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan and must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It will therefore have limited influence over changing the policies in plans at the higher strategic level or lead to the development of further plans below it.	No
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	The Neighbourhood Plan is required, as one of the basic condition tests, to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Whether this basic condition is met will be tested during the examination of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the framework for the promotion of sustainable development is set by the National Planning Policy Framework and the policies in the adopted Local Plan for the borough. The Neighbourhood Plan will have limited influence over changing the sustainable development policies in plans and policies at the higher strategic level.	No

Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>The Sustainability Appraisal scoping reports for the Local Plan (Part One and Part Two) provide a comprehensive overview of the issues in Cheshire West and Chester. There are no specific additional environmental problems identified for the Blacon area.</p> <p>Some of the environmental issues and problems for Blacon include the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect important green spaces for the enjoyment of local residents. • Make Blacon more self-sufficient in its local services and prevent the loss of local shops and community facilities, to reduce the need to travel. <p>The Neighbourhood Plan will seek to address these issues.</p>	<p>No</p>
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection)	<p>The Neighbourhood Development Plan will have no direct role in the delivery of community legislation on the environment. It does include policies on these matters. The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to Habitats Regulation Assessment screening as set out in part 2 of this document.</p>	<p>No</p>

Appendix 3: SEA Screening – Characteristics of the plan's effects and of the area likely to be affected

Identified effects of the proposed policies	Probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Cumulative nature of the effects	Trans-boundary nature of the effects ¹	Risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	Magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on environmental quality standards or limit values	Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effect on intensity of land-use	Effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	Significant environmental effect?
Protecting landscape and townscape	High probability as policies support the protection of Local Green Spaces and community facilities forming part of the landscape and townscape. They also support new development on a specific site, which will impact on landscape and townscape. Long term, over the Plan period.	Potential small scale positive cumulative effect.	None	None	Local small-scale impact at the neighbourhood area level as the sites and Local Green Spaces are small in scale and located within Blacon.	None – policies aim to protect and enhance landscape and townscape. The site proposed for development are small in scale and do not contain heritage or environmental designations.	No relevant quality standards or limit values.	Minor impact only as the site is mainly small scale and within the urban area.	None identified.	No
Protecting local character	High probability as policies support the protection of Local Green Spaces and community facilities forming part of the existing character. Support development of a sports hub which may impact on character on the site. Long term, over the Plan period.	Potential small-scale positive cumulative effect.	None	None	Local small-scale impact at the neighbourhood level as the sites and Local Green Spaces are small in scale and located within Blacon.	None – policies aim to protect and enhance local character. The site proposed for development is small in scale and does not contain heritage or environmental designations.	No relevant quality standards or limit values.	Minor impact only as the site is mainly small scale and within the urban area.	None identified.	No

¹ The assessment here has considered whether the effect of the policy goes beyond the UK and impacts upon other EU territories. Given scale and nature of Neighbourhood Plan the effects are not considered to be transboundary.

Population and human health	Medium probability as policies may impact on health through provision of sports facilities, protection of local community facilities and protection of areas for outdoor recreation. Medium to long term.	Potential small-scale positive cumulative effect on health.	None	None	Local small-scale impact at the neighbourhood level. Potential for minor impacts beyond this if the sports hub draw people from further away – but it is designed to provide a facility for the local community.	None. The site proposed for development is small in scale and does not contain heritage or environmental designations.	No relevant quality standards or limit values.	Minor impact only as the site is small scale and within the urban area.	None identified.	No
Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, flora and fauna	Medium probability of positive effects as policies protect Local Green Spaces. Low and small scale probability of negative effects resulting from development of part of the site that currently includes green areas, but the biodiversity value on these sites will be relatively low as they are mainly grass areas. Medium to long term, over the plan period.	Potential small-scale positive cumulative effect. Some minor potential for very small scale negative effects.	None	None	Local small-scale positive impact at the wider than neighbourhood level, as could connect to neighbouring biodiversity corridors. Any negative impacts would be very localised and small scale.	None – The site proposed for development is small in scale and do not contain heritage or environmental designations.	No relevant quality standards or limit values.	Minor impact only as the site is mainly small scale and within the urban area.	None identified.	No

Climatic factors	Low to medium probability as the policies do not focus on climatic factors and any impacts would be indirect. Medium to long term.	Potential small-scale positive cumulative effect as policies protect Local Green Spaces and protect or provide local facilities for the local community. The policy relating to the sports hub building refer to sustainable construction.	None	None	Local small-scale impact at the wider than neighbourhood level.	None – policies protect Local Green Spaces and community facilities.	No relevant quality standards or limit values.	Minor impact only as the site is small scale and within the urban area.	None identified.	No
Water	Low to medium probability as the policies do not focus on water and any impacts would be indirect. Medium to long term.	Potential small-scale positive cumulative effect as policies protect Local Green Spaces. The policy relating to the sports hub refer to meeting drainage standards.	None	None	Local small-scale impact at the wider than neighbourhood level, as could reduce runoff and water quality issues in neighbouring areas as well as within Blacon.	None – policies protect Local Green Spaces and community facilities.	No relevant quality standards or limit values.	Minor impact only as the site is small scale and within the urban area.	None identified.	No

Soil.	Low probability as no specific policies relating to soil. Some potential indirect impacts, but levels of development likely to be low. Medium to long term.	Potential small-scale positive cumulative effect as policies protect Local Green Spaces. Potential for very small scale negative effects resulting from building work in relation to the proposed sports hub.	None	None	Local small-scale impact at the neighbourhood level.	None – policies protect Local Green Spaces and community facilities.	No relevant quality standards or limit values.	Minor impact only as the site is small scale and within the urban area.	None identified.	No
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Air quality.	Low to medium probability as the policies do not focus on climatic factors and any impacts would be indirect. Medium to long term.	Potential small-scale positive cumulative effect as policies protect Local Green Spaces and protect or provide local facilities for the local community. The policies relating to the sports hub refer to sustainable construction.	None	None	Local small-scale impact at the wider than neighbourhood level.	None – policies protect Local Green Spaces and community facilities.	No relevant quality standards or limit values.	Minor impact only as the site is small scale and within the urban area.	None identified.	No
Supporting the economy (no direct SEA topic).	Low probability as no specific policies relating to the economy. Some potential indirect positive impacts due to protection of community facilities and identification and protection of local centres. Short to medium term.	Potential small-scale positive cumulative effect due to protection of community facilities and identification and protection of local centres.	None	None	Local small-scale impact at the neighbourhood level.	None – policies protect community facilities and local centres.	No relevant quality standards or limit values.	Minor impact only as the site is small scale and within the urban area	None identified.	No

Appendix 4 – HRA Screening - European sites relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan

European site	Reason for inclusion	Reason for designation	Existing pressures and potential impacts	Relevance to the Neighbourhood Area
Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites SAC	Located within the 15km radius of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.	<p>With regard to the SAC, the site is designated under article 4.2 of the EC Directive 79/409 as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H91AO Old sessile woodland with Ilex and Blechnum. <p>5.36</p> <p>With regard to the SAC, the site is designated under article 4.2 of the EC Directive 79/409 as it hosts the following species listed in Annex I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S1166 Great crested newt Triturus cristatus. 	<p>With regards to the Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites SAC66, the following are listed as environmental vulnerabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Water quality; •Invasive species; •Predation; •Obstacles to movement; and •Recreational use. 	The Deeside and Buckley Newt SAC falls within the 15km radius of the Blaenau Neighbourhood Area. However, it is a significant distance from the Neighbourhood Area and is unlikely to be directly affected by the policies in the plan. Indirect effects via air quality, abstraction and disturbance are also unlikely due to the distance and the small scale of the area, the anticipated small scale of any developments. The environmental vulnerabilities of this SAC are localised.
Midlands Meres and Mosses Ramsar site	Located within Cheshire West and Chester	<p>Series of open water and peatland sites supporting a diverse range of habitats from open water to raised bog. This includes natural dystrophic lakes and ponds and transition mires and quaking bogs with floating bog moss. Site supports a number of rare plant species associated with wetlands and an assemblage of rare wetland invertebrates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water pollution / enrichment. - Hydrological changes. - Despite number of visitors to some of the meres and mosses, interest features are resilient to recreational pressure and off-track trampling is not a significant issue due to the hazardous nature of the sites away from designated tracks and boardwalks. - Due to distance to major roads, changes in local air 	Potential impacts assessed in Appendix 5.

			quality are not an issue requiring investigation.	
River Dee and Bala Lake SAC	Located partly within Cheshire West and Chester. Identified as a source of potable water for Cheshire West and Chester and also the receiving watercourse for wastewater treatment works discharge	<p>The site contains the following Annex 1 habitats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Renunculon fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation <p>The site contains the following Annex II species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) - Floating water-plaintain (<i>Luronium natans</i>) - Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) - Brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) - Bullhead (<i>Cottus gobio</i>) - Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recreational activities, specifically fishing. - Risk of excessive abstraction resulting in a decrease in freshwater flows and an increase in sediment loading of water such that dehydration of interest features may occur. - Fish entrainment associated with abstraction. - Deterioration in water quality and changes in flow rates due to ex-industrial runoff, discharge of treated sewage effluent and agricultural runoff. - Introduction of invasive species. 	The River Dee and Bala Lake SAC falls within the 15km radius of the Blaenau Neighbourhood Area. However, it is a significant distance from the Neighbourhood Area and is unlikely to be directly affected by the policies in the plan. Indirect effects via abstraction and water quality / flow are also unlikely due to the distance and the small scale of the area, the anticipated small scale of any developments (due to Green Belt restrictions as well as the policies) and the lack of pathways of impact.
Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar	Located partially within Cheshire West and Chester	<p>Designated for over-wintering and on passage birds.</p> <p>Over winter – Golden plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>), Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>), Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>), Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>), Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>), Eurasian teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>), Wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>), Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>), Grey plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>), Great crested grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>), Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>).</p> <p>On passage – Ringed plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>).</p> <p>It also contains internationally important populations of Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>), Black-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>), Redshank</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recreational disturbance from abrasion (boating, anchoring, trampling). - Selective extraction of species (harvesting, bait digging, recreational fishing) - Visual presence of recreational activity. - Disturbance to birds from increased recreational pressure and wildfowling. - Coastal squeeze and loss of supporting habitat. - Deterioration in water quality. 	Potential impacts assessed in Appendix 5.

		<p>(<i>Tringa tetanus</i>), Eurasian teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>), Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) and Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>).</p> <p>It also has a 5 year peak mean (1998/99-2002/3) of 89,576 waterfowl.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deterioration in air quality. - Introduction of non-native species. 	
Dee Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar	<p>Downstream of the River Dee which is identified as a source of potable water for Cheshire West and Chester. Development in the Borough also creates potential water quality pathways.</p>	<p>The site includes the following Annex I habitats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Renunculon Fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation. - Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide. - <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand. - Atlantic salt meadows. <p>The site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex II habitats and species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Estuaries - Annual vegetation of drift lines - Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts - Embryonic shifting dunes - Shifting dunes along the shoreline with marram - Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation - Humid dune slacks - Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) - River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) - Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>) <p>It also supports:</p> <p>During the breeding season –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) - Common tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) <p>On passage –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sandwich tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) <p>Over winter –</p> <p>Bar-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recreational disturbance from abrasion from recreational pressures on the upper shore, dredging operations and fisheries. - Disturbance from commercial / industrial developments. - Selective extraction of species (bait digging and shellfishing). - Deterioration in water quality. - Coastal squeeze from land reclamation, coastal flood defences and drainage. - Air quality. - Excessive abstraction resulting in decrease in freshwater flows into the estuary. - Introduction of non-native species. 	<p>The Dee Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar falls within the 15km radius of the Blacon Neighbourhood Area. However, it is a significant distance from the Neighbourhood Area and is unlikely to be directly affected by the policies in the plan. Indirect effects via air quality, abstraction and disturbance are also unlikely due to the distance and the small scale of the area, the anticipated small scale of any developments (due to Green Belt restrictions as well as the policies) and the lack of pathways of impact.</p>

		<p>The site also supports populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Black-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>) - Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) - Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) - Grey plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) - Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) - Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) - Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) - Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) - Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) - Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) <p>The estuary also regularly supports 130,408 individual waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1995-99).</p> <p>It also meets several Ramsar criteria as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extensive intertidal mud and sand flats with large expanses of saltmarsh towards the head of the estuary. - Supporting an overall bird assemblage of international importance. - Supporting the following species at levels of international importance: Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>), Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>), Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>), Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>), Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>), Pintail (<i>Anas Acuta</i>), Grey plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>), Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>), Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>), Bar-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>), Black-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>) and Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>). 		
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Appendix 5: HRA Screening – Screening of Neighbourhood Plan policies for Likely Significant Effect

Policy	Comment	Likely Significant Effect (LSE) alone?	LSE in combination?
BLACON1	Supports community-led development proposals to deliver a sports and community hub building on land at Cairns Crescent sports ground, subject to certain criteria.	Very small scale site and a significant distance from any protected sites. Policy mentions meeting drainage standards, so unlikely to have negative impacts on water quality, hydrology or runoff. Provision of a local facility may reduce the need to travel and thereby improve air quality. Provides an alternative recreational facility and will not increase recreational pressures on protected sites. Could potentially impact on abstraction, but individual building only on a small site, so would be a very minor impact. No impact on invasive species. No LSE.	No LSE.
BLACON2	The policy identifies 21 community facilities and states that proposals affecting a community facility will be considered against the policies of the development plan relating to the culture and community facilities.	Protects existing facilities, so no major impacts. Supports extensions or redevelopment of sites in particular circumstances, so potential for impacts on water quality, hydrology or runoff. However, these are small scale sites that are a significant distance from the protected sites, with no main pathways of impact. Protection of community facilities may reduce the need to travel and thereby improve air quality. Some of the facilities provide alternative sites for recreation, so will not increase recreational pressure on protected sites. No impact on invasive species. No LSE.	No LSE.
BLACON3	The policy identifies land at Western Avenue as a Local Retail Centre. Proposals affecting the land within the Local Retail Centre will be considered against the policies of the development plan relating to town centres and local retail centres.	Identifies and protects existing local centres, so no major impacts. Supports mixed use schemes in particular circumstances so potential for impacts on water quality, hydrology or runoff. However, these are small scale sites that are a significant distance from the protected sites, with no main pathways of impact. Protection of local centres may reduce the need to travel and thereby improve air quality. No impact on recreational pressures or invasive species. No LSE.	No LSE.
BLACON4	Designates 15 Local Green Spaces and identifies that development in a Local Green Space will only be supported in very special circumstances.	Generally positive impacts on water quality, hydrology, runoff and air pollution through protection of green spaces. Greater use of existing green spaces in the Neighbourhood Area would reduce pressure on other sites including coastal areas and meres. The green spaces already have some protection through open space policies in the NPPF and Local Plan. No impact on abstraction or invasive species. No LSE.	No LSE.

Appendix 6: Marine Plan Screening – Assessment of potential to impact on the North-West Marine Plan area and Welsh Marine Plan area

Policy	Key features of the policy	Potential pathways of impact	Assessment of potential to impact on the marine plan area
BLACON1	Supports community-led development proposals to deliver a sports and community hub building on land at Cairns Crescent sports ground, subject to certain criteria.	Potential indirect negative impacts on flood risk, runoff and water pollution, but the policy includes reference to meeting drainage standards, so this should be prevented. Potential indirect impacts on biodiversity, but the site is currently grass, so biodiversity is likely to be low.	Due to the distance to the marine plan areas, the lack of direct drainage links and the very small scale of the site, the potential to impact the marine plan area is very low and small-scale.
BLACON2	Identifies 21 community facilities and states that proposals affecting a community facility will be considered against the policies of the development plan relating to culture and community facilities.	Protection of existing facilities will not result in any additional impacts. Replacement or extended community facilities could have the potential for negative impacts on flood risk, runoff and water pollution, but this would be on existing developed sites and any additional impacts are likely to be very minor.	Due to the distance to the marine plan areas, the lack of direct drainage links and the small scale of the sites, the potential to impact the marine plan area is very low and small-scale.
BLACON3	The policy identifies land at Western Avenue as a Local Retail Centre. Proposals affecting land within the Local Retail Centre will be considered against the policies of the development plan relating to town cent	Protection of existing local centres will not result in any additional impacts. New mixed-use schemes could have the potential for negative impacts on flood risk, runoff and water pollution, but this would be on existing developed sites and any additional impacts are likely to be very minor.	Due to the distance to the marine plan areas, the lack of direct drainage links and the small scale of the sites, the potential to impact the marine plan area is very low and small-scale.
BLACON4	Designates 15 Local Green Spaces and identifies that development in a Local Green Space will only be supported in very special circumstances.	Potential positive impacts on flood risk, runoff and water pollution. Protection of existing Local Green Spaces could reduce the need for recreational use of coastal areas, but as they provide different types of recreational facilities, the impacts are likely to be very minor.	Due to the distance to the marine plan areas, the lack of direct drainage links and the relatively small scale of the sites, the potential to impact the marine plan area is very low and small-scale.

Appendix 7: Comments received during consultation on initial screening opinion

Statutory environmental consultee	Date Consulted	Response
Environment Agency	6 March 2025	N/A
Historic England	6 March 2025	See correspondence below
Natural England	6 March 2025	See correspondence below

Historic England Response – 3 April 2025

Blacon Neighbourhood Plan –

SEA Screening Opinion We write in response to your e-mail of 6th March 2025 seeking a formal screening opinion from Historic England on the need to prepare a SEA for Blacon Neighbourhood Plan.

Historic England has produced a document that you might find helpful in providing guidance on the effective assessment of the historic environment in Strategic Environmental Assessments. This can be found at: <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine the advice given to the question, “Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?”, in respect to our area of concern, cultural heritage.

In the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 [Annex II of SEA Directive], and on the basis of the information supplied, we concur that the draft plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects upon the historic environment, and so Historic England are of the view that SEA is unlikely to be required.

We would like to stress that this opinion is based on the further information made available in your email dated 6th March 2025. To avoid any doubt, this decision does not preclude Historic England providing further advice on later stages of the SEA process, should this be required, nor objecting to specific proposals that may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance), where we consider that these would have an adverse effect upon the historic environment. We note that the views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for SEA is made.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of Cheshire West & Chester Council and Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service are closely involved in the development of the plan. They are best placed to how the policies or proposals can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic

environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of historic assets.

Thank you for consulting Historic England. We request that you please send us a copy of the determination as required by Reg 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Yours sincerely,

Pippa Brown - Historic Places Adviser

Natural England Response – 28 March 2025

Dear Ms Morgetroyd

Blacon Neighbourhood Plan – SEA, HRA & Marine Plan Screening Opinion Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 6 March 2025.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- **significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,**
- **significant effects on Habitats sites, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.**

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#) . This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle - Consultations Team