



Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan

Habitat Regulation Assessment

Screening Determination

October 2018

Habitat Regulation Assessment: Screening Determination

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1. Introduction and Legislative Background

1.1 This Habitat Regulations Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) which is being produced by the Swaffham Town Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

1.2 The aim of this Screening Report is to assess whether there are likely to be significant effects on European Sites as a result of the emerging policies set out in the pre-submission draft Neighbourhood Plan that would necessitate the production of a full Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), also known as an Appropriate Assessment.

1.3 This report assesses, as far as practical, whether there are likely to be any significant effects on the qualifying features of European Designated Sites within or relatively proximate to the approved Neighbourhood Plan area, which comprises the civil parish of Swaffham (Stage 1 of the HRA process).

1.4 A response from Natural England was received on 28th September 2018, a copy of which can be found in Appendix 2.

1.5 This assessment has been undertaken by officers from the Natural Environment Team at Norfolk County Council under the terms of the Service Level Agreement between Capita/ Breckland District Council and Norfolk County Council.

Legislative background

1.6 Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive states that:

Any plan or project not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

1.7 The purpose of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is therefore to ensure the protection of European Designated Sites (Natura 2000) wherever practicable. European Designated Sites are designed to form an ecologically coherent network of designated spaces across Europe.

1.8 European Designated Sites, (Natura 2000) include **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** and **Special Areas for Conservation (SAC)**. As a matter of policy the government also expects authorities to treat **Ramsar sites, candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC)**

and **proposed Special Protection Areas (pSPA)** as if they are European Designated Sites for the purpose of considering development proposals that may affect them.

Definitions (taken from the DEFRA- Joint Nature Conservation Committee)

- **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species.
- **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** are strictly protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive. Article 3 of the Habitats Directive requires the establishment of a European network of important high-quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving the 189 habitat types and 788 species. The listed habitat types and species are those considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level (excluding birds).
- **Ramsar sites** are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

1.9 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which include the need to undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

2. Identification of Designations

2.1 The first step in producing this Screening Report involves the identification of European Designated Sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area itself or in close proximity to it. European Designation Sites were identified using open-source software provided by DEFRA (Magic). The relevant European Designated Site identified is as follows:

- (Part of) The Breckland Special Protection Area (site reference UK9009201)

2.2 In considering potential effects of this plan regard has been given to whether the implementation of the policies will ensure the conservation objectives for the European Sites are achieved and whether any significant effects are likely.

2.3 No other European Protected Sites have been considered in this assessment, including the Breckland Special area of Conservation, as the nearest component units of which are considered sufficiently distant that no likely significant effects are likely to occur from the policies of the SNP (Great Cressingham Fen SSSI, Field Barn Heaths, Hilborough, and Gooderstone Warren, all more than 5km from the southern boundary of the parish).

2.4 Below is a map showing the locations of the component units of the Breckland SPA (Figure 1). The features for which the sites are designated and their conservation objectives are appended at Appendix 1.

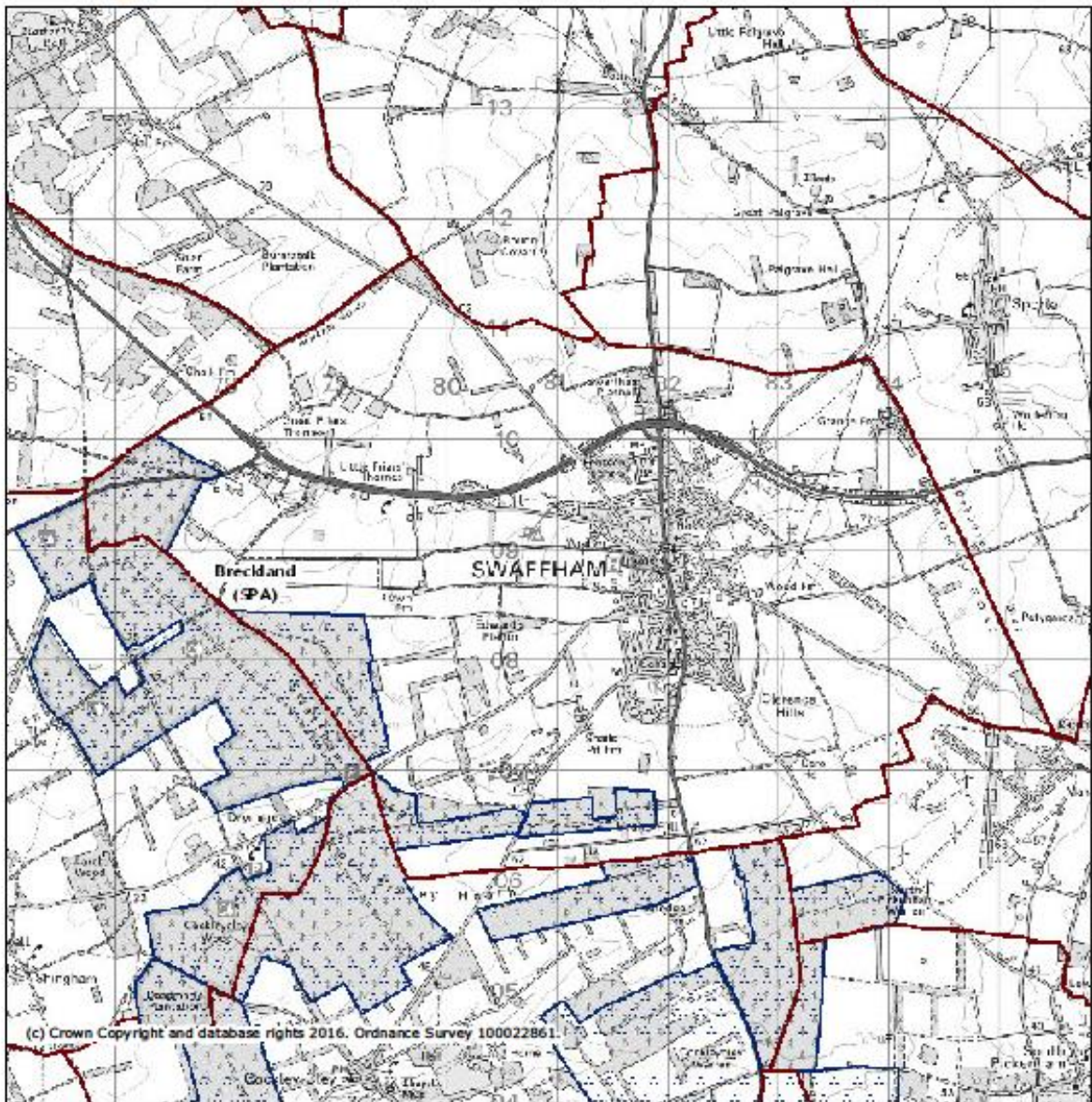
2.5 For clarity it is confirmed here that the Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan is not directly connected with, or necessary to, the conservation management of the European Sites.

2.6 The next step in the assessment is to undertake an appraisal as to whether the proposed policies could have a significant effect on the European Designated Sites. Specifically the assessment considers potential effects that the policies may have on the 'qualifying features' of each European Designated Site. The 'qualifying features' for the identified European Designated Sites are provided at Appendix 1.

Figure 1: Swaffham Parish in relation to relevant European Designated Sites

MAGIC

Swaffham Parish



Legend

- Parishes (GB)
- Ramsar Sites (England)
- Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Special Protection Areas (England)

Projection = OSGB36
 xmin = 571800
 ymin = 302600
 xmax = 590000
 ymax = 315300
 Map produced by MAGIC on 6 June, 2016.
 Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission.
 Some information in MAGIC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or continually updated by the originating organisation. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.

3. Screening Assessment

3.1 The table below provides an assessment of any likely significant effect of each Neighbourhood Plan policy on the European Designated Sites. For the purposes of this assessment the policies appraised are those that were issued in the SNP Plan Reg. 14 version.

Key

- No likely significant effect (NLSE) on the site’s qualifying features
- Likely significant effect (LSE) on the site’s qualifying features
- Uncertain whether it is NSLE or LSE

HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
HBE1: Location of development	
<p>Development should be distributed to the east and west of the town, rather than the north or south, avoiding further ribbon development, and ensuring the town centre remains easily accessible from all parts of the town.</p> <p>Any new development should take account of the potential for a north/south relief road (see TRA2).</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites Breckland SPA
<p><i>The policy aims to inform development proposals to locations around the existing town centre, discouraging spread to the north or south. The NP does not allocate any sites outside of the Breckland Local Plan.</i></p>	<p>Most of the component units of the designated sites are to the south of the town, with some to the west. The Breckland Local Plan contains 6 residential allocations within the settlement all of which are to the east of the town. The policy will have a neutral impact on designated sites.</p>
HBE2: Mixed housing	
<p>In any new development there will be provision of mixed type and tenure of housing, located to ensure enclaves do not occur.</p> <p>The mix of housing should, where appropriate, include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Family housing. ii. Starter homes, including one-bedroom properties. iii. Affordable housing, including social rented. iv. Life-time homes, adaptable to the changing needs of its occupants. v. Housing for older people (supported housing, bungalows, smaller properties for downsizing). vi. Opportunities for self build within planning guidelines. <p>The emerging Breckland Local Plan (HOU07) States that 25 per cent of qualifying developments should be affordable housing. For Swaffham A greater percentage of affordable housing is encouraged.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites Breckland SPA

<i>This policy aims to ensure an appropriate housing mix.</i>	The policy does not propose development outside of locations in the Breckland Local Plan. As such it will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
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HBE3: Well-designed developments

All new development must be well-designed, reinforcing local distinctiveness and not adversely impacting on the appearance of the town. All design should have regard to local context and seek to enhance the character and quality of Swaffham.

All new development should

- i. Respect the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings, reinforcing local development patterns, form, scale, massing and character of adjacent properties (including building setbacks and arrangements of front gardens, walls, railings or hedges) where this provides a positive contribution (see Appendix B Character Appraisal).
- ii. Be of a density that is consistent and compatible with the existing prevailing density in the immediate area.
- iii. Have high regard for the Conservation Area and the setting of listed buildings in the parish (see HBE4).
- iv. Have soft well--landscaped boundary edges where adjacent to open countryside (in line with HOU06 of the emerging Breckland Local Plan).
- v. Integrate with the established neighbourhood, in terms of connectivity (footpaths and cycle ways), community infrastructure and design.
- vi. Include energy efficient measures, innovative technologies and sustainable low carbon construction.

Innovative and sensitive contemporary design is encouraged.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>This aim of this policy is to ensure developments are designed in a manner that is appropriate in the local context.</i>	The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.

HBE4: Attractive town centre and Conservation Area

Development proposals that respond positively to creating an attractive public realm, local townscape and enhance the town centre’s aesthetic qualities and Conservation Area will be supported.

This should include the following:

- i. High quality materials, paving and landscaping, which reflect the local character, or are of innovative and sensitive contemporary design.
- ii. Coordinated streetscape design, including signage, lighting, railings, litterbins, seating, bus shelters, bollards and cycle racks.
- iii. Pedestrian movements that follow natural desire lines.
- iv. Development that reflects and celebrates the Georgian heritage.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>This policy seeks to inform development design in relation to the town centre</i>	The town centre is distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites

HBE5: Non-designated heritage assets

Development that results in the loss of, or any harm to, the character, setting, accessibility or appearance, general quality or to amenity value of non-designated heritage assets should not be permitted.

The following list identifies assets that are locally important in terms of their architectural, historical or cultural significance (as shown on figure 10 and 11):

1. Railway complex
2. Green Britain Centre
3. Shambles
4. 19c Magazine
5. Ash Close
6. WW2 military defence
7. Campingland
8. The Antinghams
9. Corbel on Poundstretcher's
10. St Guthlac's chapel site
11. Baptist church cemetery
12. Town Pit (Richmond Plain)
13. Jubilee Cottage Hospital
14. Cemetery chapel
15. Crescent, White Cross Road
16. The Pightle
17. Silver Drift
18. Plowright Place
19. Maltings behind Market Place east
20. Settlement Stone
21. Brewery Cottages and maltings, Cley Road
22. Tollhouse, Shoemaker's Lane and Watton Road
23. The Paddocks Saxon cemetery site
24. Drill Hall
25. Milestones/posts

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy relates to the protection and enhancement of non-designated heritage assets.</i>	The non-designated heritage assets are distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites

HBE6: Entrances and gateways to Swaffham

New development located at the town entrances must enhance the visual approach or gateway to Swaffham, for example through the provision of

- i. Hard or soft landscaping measures.
- ii. Signage.
- iii. Tree, shrub and flower planting (with a preference for native species).
- iv. Hedgerows.
- v. Buildings in character with Swaffham.

All public realm proposals should enhance the overall appearance and public use of the

space. Approaches should maintain visual connections with the countryside and The Brecks. Development that could have an adverse impact on The Brecks landscape will not be supported.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy is intended to inform design proposals in relation to the gateways to the town.</i>	The town is distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites

HBE7: Community safety

All new residential development must create a safe environment, taking account of best practice in designing out crime. New developments should have:

- i. Good natural surveillance.
- ii. Active frontages (street frontages where there is an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floors of buildings).
- iii. Access routes through developments.
- iv. Buildings that face onto the public realm.
- v. Open spaces/play areas. Development proposals will be expected to meet the requirements of ‘Secured by Design’ unless they can demonstrate that an alternative approach would not compromise community safety.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy aims to ensure new residential development provides a safe environment.</i>	The proposed development locations are distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

TRA1: Traffic volume

Measures will be supported to reduce traffic volume through Swaffham Town Centre and the associated air pollution. New residential or business development should not significantly contribute to an increase in traffic volume within the town centre.

All new developments should produce a statement or assessment, that:

- i. Quantifies the level of traffic movements they are likely to generate.
- ii. Includes measures to mitigate any negative impacts of congestion, road safety, parking, pollution and Heavy Goods Vehicles.
- iii. Demonstrates how sustainable transport options will be encouraged, for example electric car charging points, car sharing and new public transport provision.

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the delivery of an appropriate future north/south relief road for Swaffham.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy relates to supporting reduced impacts from traffic in the town centre. The policy refers to supporting a north-south relief road, but does not suggest locations or provide any policy context for the delivery of such a road.</i>	The proposed measures in the policy to reduce traffic movements in the town centre resulting from the allocations in the Breckland Local Plan, will have a neutral effect on designated sites. A north-south relief road has the potential to

	result in impacts on the designated sites, if it is located to the west of the town. However, the policy does no more than support the idea of a relief road. If such a proposal was to come forward in the future outside of the NP, it would be subject to the usual regulatory process including a specific HRA, and it is not required to consider it here.
TRA2: Traffic flow	
<p>Initiatives to facilitate better flow of traffic through and around Swaffham Market Place will be supported, for example through the provision of new one-way or two-way traffic schemes, new roundabouts and further improvements to signage.</p> <p>New routes should connect well into existing routes and movement patterns. The design of new public transport infrastructure, such as bus pull-ins and laybys, should be an integral part of the street layout to prevent congestion and improve the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>This policy intends to facilitate better traffic movements within the town centre.</i>	The town centre is distant from the designated sites and so the policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
TRA3: Walking and cycling	
<p>New residential development must incorporate opportunities for walking and cycling. New footpaths and cycle ways should connect to town services, existing routes and the surrounding area, including the Swaefas Way and Peddars Way. New footpaths and cycle ways should form part of a coherent network (see figure 12) and aim to encourage alternatives to use of private cars.</p> <p>Footpaths and cycle ways should, where possible, always be visible and separate from roads. The design of new development must incorporate safe access to and from the site by pedestrians and cyclists, for example, through crossing points.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>This policy intends to facilitate better provision for cycling and walking, including to the Peddars Way.</i>	The network of footpaths and cycleways within the parish is good. The Peddars Way is east of the town (the opposite side to the designated sites) and improving access to the National Trail may encourage residents from existing and new developments to head away from the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
TRA4: Private parking	
<p>All new development, including individual dwellings, should provide sufficient parking for the intended use, so as not to create road obstructions or highway safety problems, and to ensure safety for pedestrians, whilst seeking to minimise the visual impact of the car. Parking should be discreet, accessible, and appropriate to the character of the proposed development.</p> <p>Provision should be made for</p>	

<p>i. Sufficient private car parking spaces per dwelling on residential developments.</p> <p>ii. Some on-street parking for visitors and deliveries on residential developments.</p> <p>iii. Electric car charging points.</p> <p>iv. Bicycle, motorcycle and scooter parking.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy relates to parking in new development.</i>	The allocated sites are distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
TRA5: Public parking	
Public parking outside the town centre is supported, for longer stay and commuter use, to release car parking in the town centre for other uses. The provision of electric car charging points will be supported.	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy intends to inform locations for longer stay visitor parking</i>	The town centre is distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE	
ENV1: Air pollution	
<p>To address the issue of poor air quality the following should be given high priority:</p> <p>i. New community facilities and amenities should be located away from areas of poor air quality.</p> <p>ii. All developments should have significant tree planting, with a maintenance plan.</p> <p>iii. All major developments should demonstrate how they will contribute to improving poor air quality.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy aims to minimise air pollution from new development.</i>	Site allocations are distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
ENV2: Climate change	
<p>All developments must be designed to anticipate climate change. They should be capable of being upgraded and adapted to minimise resources used in both their construction and operation, and to cut down on pollution, whilst also being sensitive to the historic environment.</p> <p>Support will be given to buildings that have cost effective and efficient passive solar gain, solar PV panels, use grey water where possible and have electric car charging points.</p> <p>The layout and massing of development should take account of local climatic conditions, including daylight and sunlight, wind, temperature and frost pockets.</p> <p>Renewable energy developments, including wind and solar options, will be supported, where they do not adversely impact on the landscape character.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy aims to ensure that all developments must be designed to</i>	Site allocations are distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on

<i>anticipate climate change.</i>	designated sites.
ENV3: Localised flooding areas	
<p>All development should take advantage of modern drainage methods to prevent and where necessary alleviate localised flooding. Future development must not cause or contribute to new flooding or drainage issues or exacerbate existing issues, or cause water pollution. Existing Identified localised flooding areas include (figure 14), but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crossroads of New Sporle Road and Sporle Road. 2. Longfields. 3. Mill Lane. 4. Norwich Road, east of Captains Close. 5. West Acre Road. <p>Sustainable drainage systems associated with any planned development should appear natural and be able to be colonised by the local fauna and flora whilst still maintaining their design purpose. Such systems must not be used as, or contribute to, the requirements for public open space or play areas.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy aims to ensure that all developments minimise flooding risk.</i>	Site allocations are distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
ENV4: Important local views and vistas	
<p>Any development within the following views and vistas that does not adversely impact upon the landscape or character of the area will be supported:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The view of the townscape of Swaffham from the approach to Swaffham from the east, along the Norwich Road. 2. The view from the A47 coming from the west, towards the town centre. 3. The view of the church and townscape from the Sporle Road, where it crosses the by-pass. 4. The vista of the Market Place from the south along London Street. 5. The vista down Mangate Street towards Manor House. 6. Looking west from Southlands estate. <p>To connect to the countryside, views and vistas along streets and/or open spaces to the surrounding Brecks landscape should be maintained and created within new development where there are opportunities to do so.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy aims to protect important views.</i>	The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
ENV5: Dark skies	
<p>All street lighting and the lighting of residential dwellings or businesses should be environmentally efficient, sympathetic in design (for example, down lighting) and limited where adjacent to the countryside.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy is intended to inform lighting design.</i>	The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
ENV6: Designated Local Green Space	

In addition to those listed in the Breckland Local Plan (Campingland, Orford Road playing field, Football Club, Cricket Club, Rugby Club, cemeteries and burial ground, Haspalls Road recreation ground), the following areas are designated as Local Green Space for special protection (as shown in figure 17):

1. The Antinghams.
2. Heathlands.
3. Merryweather play area.
4. Oaklands play area.
5. Community orchard, Tumbler Hill allotments.
6. Admiral Wilson Way.
7. Manor House grounds.
8. Railway line for access.
9. Magazine field allotments.
10. Four Acres field allotments.
11. Shouldham Lane allotments.
12. Tumbler Hill allotments.
13. Myers playing field.
14. Swaffham CE VC Infant School playing field.
15. Swaffham CE Junior Academy playing field.
16. The Nicholas Hamond Academy playing field.
17. Sacred Heart School and pre-school playing field.
18. Shepherd's Fold.

Development that results in the loss of Local Green Space or that results in any harm to their character, setting, accessibility or appearance, general quality or to amenity value will only be permitted if the community would find equivalent benefit from provision of a suitable replacement. The exception will be the expansion of school premises.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy designates local green spaces within the town.</i>	The town centre is distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.

BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

BUS1: Green credentials

Business development that has an environmental focus will be particularly encouraged:

- i. Those that sell or manufacture environmental products and services.
- ii. Those that have a low carbon footprint (see ENV3), for example they seek to reduce their water and energy consumption and minimise waste output.

New heavy or polluting businesses will be discouraged.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy intends to inform the types of business and their environmental impact.</i>	The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.

BUS2: New businesses

To meet the needs of the local population with a range of business sizes and types in the town, the following new business units are encouraged:

- i. Home-based and live-work units.

<p>ii. Start up/incubator units. iii. Office facilities. iv. Training facilities. All new businesses need to demonstrate how their size and design respects the immediate surroundings, are appropriate to the character of Swaffham, and do not add to the issues of traffic volume, pollution and congestion (see TRA1). Businesses that add to the range of tourist or visitor attractions or facilities, adding a positive visitor experience for Swaffham, will be supported.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy intends to inform the types of business and their environmental impact.</i>	The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
BUS3: Shops in new development areas	
Convenience shops are encouraged where they serve the day-to-day needs of residents in new development areas.	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy intends to inform shops in development areas.</i>	Site allocations are distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
BUS4: Town centre retail	
<p>In order to keep Swaffham town centre viable and attractive for local residents and visitors, a mix of retail opportunities will be encouraged, in particular more class A1 (shops and retail outlets), A2 (professional services) and A3 (food and drink). Where it can be demonstrated that a town centre premises is no longer required for retail use, first preference will be for a leisure or community re-use on the ground floor.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy intends to inform the mix of retail opportunities.</i>	The town centre is distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
BUS5: Attractive town centre	
<p>Business development proposals that respond positively to maintaining an attractive local townscape for residents, other businesses and visitors, and that enhance the town's aesthetic qualities will be supported. In particular visual enhancements to the following will be considered: i. Reducing the visual impact of car parking within the town centre. ii. Enhancements to the Market Place and Buttercross.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy intends to inform business opportunities in the town centre.</i>	The town centre is distant to the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
BUS6: Telecommunications	
In accordance with policy INFO1 of the emerging Breckland Local Plan, new business	

development should have fast internet connections. Improvements to internet and mobile phone coverage will be supported.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy supports improved telecommunications</i>	The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.

COMMUNITY AND SERVICES

COM1: Sports and leisure facilities

The provision of new and improved sports and leisure facilities are encouraged within Swaffham, in particular, but not exclusively the following:

- i. An improved or new indoor sports and leisure centre.
- ii. A swimming pool.
- iii. An additional recreation ground.
- iv. New all weather sports pitches.
- v. New walking and cycling opportunities (see TRA3).
- vi. Cinema and theatre capacity.

New sports and leisure facilities should be located within reasonable distance (see paragraph 38 of NPPF) of main link roads, cycle and footpaths and public transport, as well as providing sufficient parking.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy encourages the provision of new and improved sports and leisure facilities</i>	The sports facilities will be near the town and away from the designated sites. The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.

COM2: Informal meeting places, play spaces and parks

Swaffham seeks to have larger play areas or parks, as well as pocket play areas throughout new developments. Where a sustainable drainage option is to be used on a development site, this must not form part of the overall contribution.

All informal meeting places, play spaces and parks should

- i. Contain equipment for a range of age groups.
- ii. Be accessible and/or in a central location within any new development.
- iii. Have good natural surveillance.
- iv. Have provision for waste disposal.
- v. Have a management plan in place for maintenance.

As well as play spaces and parks, social spaces for stopping and sitting should be planned into developments.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy encourages the provision of new and improved play spaces and parks within development and the town centre.</i>	The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.

COM3: Community buildings

New community buildings are encouraged to enable an increase in the number of activities able to be delivered, in particular, but not exclusively, for youth groups. Improvements to current community buildings will be supported where appropriate.

Proposals that would result in any loss of community amenities will not be supported unless:

<p>i. It can be demonstrated that the facilities are no longer needed or viable;</p> <p>ii. It can be demonstrated that suitable alternative provision exists; or</p> <p>iii. Suitable alternative provision will be delivered by new development.</p>	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The aim of the policy is to protect existing and encourage new community buildings.</i>	The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
COM4: Health care and social care	
Further provision of facilities for doctors, dentists and social care is supported. Any new facility should have adequate car parking and be easily accessible on foot or by public transport.	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy encourages further provision of facilities for doctors, dentists and social care is supported.</i>	The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.
COM5: School and preschool provision	
Where required, the expansion of existing school properties will be supported. Planning applications for facilities that seek to address a shortfall in preschool provision will be supported.	
Comments	Likely effect in identified sites
	Breckland SPA
<i>The policy encourages further provision of school facilities.</i>	The policy will have a neutral effect on designated sites.

4 Conclusion

4.1 The assessment suggests that there are likely to be no significant negative effects on the European Designated Sites resulting from the Policies detailed within the SNP. herefore, based on the submitted draft, a full Appropriate Assessment (Habitat Regulations Assessment) is not required.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Details of relevant European Sites

**European Site Conservation Objectives for Breckland Special Protection Area
Site Code: UK9009201 (Natural England dated 30 June 014 (revision 2)).**

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

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.

Qualifying Features:

A133 *Burhinus oedicanus*; Stone-curlew (Breeding)

A224 *Caprimulgus europaeus*; European nightjar (Breeding)

A246 *Lullula arborea*; Woodlark (Breeding)

Appendix 2: Response from Natural England

Date: 28 September 2018
Our ref: 258893



Breckland Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

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

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Dear Sir/Madam

SWAFFHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – SCREENING FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 18 September 2018.

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests are concerned (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans in light of the SEA Directive is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

- 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.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all

potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours faithfully
Dawn Kinrade
Consultations Team