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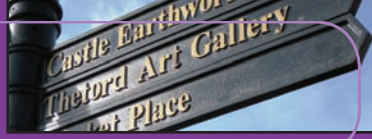
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1 About this document

What is the Thetford Area Action Plan Document?

1.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) for Breckland will replace the existing Local Plan which was adopted in September 1999. The LDF is being prepared under the relevant legislation for development plans in England. The LDF comprises a number of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that set out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the district. The first DPDs cover the period to 2026. The adopted Breckland LDF Core Strategy (2009) includes a Spatial Vision for the future of Breckland as well as objectives and targets which developments must meet to secure that vision. The Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP) Document has been prepared in accordance with the Core Strategy.

1.2 The TAAP:

- Takes account of national, regional and strategic planning policies;
- Identifies sites for, and requirements of, major developments to deliver the adopted Spatial Strategy and Core Strategy policy;
- Provides the framework of policies for assessing planning applications on allocated sites;
- Enables infrastructure and service providers to bring forward their services when needed by new development;
- Enables the public to be fully involved in developing local policies and proposals; and
- Is accompanied by an updated Policies Map including a revised Settlement Boundary for Thetford in accordance with the adopted Core Strategy.

1.3 The TAAP covers the whole of the Parish of Thetford and parts of the parishes of Croxton and Brettenham and Kilverstone.

Community Involvement

1.4 The TAAP has been prepared following a programme of consultation and public participation. Consultation with the community on the Area Action Plan began in the Summer of 2008 with the publication of an Issues and Options document. This Issues and Options consultation took place over a 6 week period. This was followed by a 6 week Preferred Options consultation in Spring 2009. Following the adoption of the Core Strategy in December 2009, the Council proceeded in January 2011 to carry out a consultation on a Draft Final document which gave people the opportunity to comment on how the local planning authority should approach the final content of the document.

1.5 The Pre-Submission document was published in August 2011 and was subject to a six-week long publication period, allowing people to make representations which were considered through the Examination process. The DPD was then submitted to the Secretary of State in November 2011.

1.6 Further information on the plan preparation process can be found on the Council's website: www.breckland.gov.uk.

1.7 A glossary of technical and other terms is to be found at the back of this document.



2 Introduction

Key Facts

2.1 The Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP) will;

- Provide an urban extension of 5,000 dwellings⁽¹⁾ on greenfield land to the north of the town;
- Allocate 22Ha of new employment land (in addition to the 18Ha at the Thetford Enterprise Park (TEP) which already has planning permission);
- Provide for 5,000 net new jobs;
- Seek to regenerate the town centre and existing employment and residential estates;
- Seek to improve education and health;
- Encourage modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport; and,
- Ultimately, improve the town's reputation.

Thetford Area Action Plan

2.2 The TAAP will provide a policy framework that steers significant change so it is delivered in a way that protects and enhances the environment, boosts the economy of the town and provides for the needs of the existing and new communities.

2.3 The Thetford Area Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Breckland Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (Core Strategy) which contains policies and land allocations which cover all of the district of Breckland. The TAAP has regard to and is in overall conformity with the Core Strategy (more detail on this is included in Appendix C 'How the TAAP conforms with the Breckland Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD').

2.4 The policies and land allocations are supported by considerable background evidence. All this evidence is free to download and available on the LDF pages of the Breckland Council Website (www.breckland.gov.uk) and can also be reached from the Moving Thetford Forward website (www.movingthetfordforward.com).

Thetford – a Growth Point

2.5 Thetford was awarded Growth Point Status in 2006. Growth Points are locations that are pursuing large-scale, sustainable housing growth through a partnership between local organisations and central government.

2.6 Growth Points are an example of an initiative that has been promoted by local tiers of Government (County, District, Town), with central government encouraging and supporting proposals from those local partners. In 2006, 20 local authorities and partnerships were named as first round Growth Points, with a wide regional spread covering the east (including Thetford), south east and south west of England as well as the Midlands.

2.7 Growth Point Status is a national designation, which only growing towns and cities receive. The main benefit of such a status is the extra funding from Government of around £6.4m for Thetford during 2008-11 to help enable growth and regeneration to happen.

2.8 The overall housing requirements for Breckland, including specific housing targets for Thetford, were included and consulted on as part of the East of England Plan or Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) from late 2003 to 2005. Both BDC and Thetford Town Council supported the proposed levels of growth for Thetford in their consultation responses to the RSS recognising that growth could create the critical mass for wider regeneration of the whole

1 Please note that whilst the Core Strategy allocates 6,000 dwellings to Thetford, the TAAP plans for 5,000 dwellings. Please see section 18 'Housing' and the accompanying Housing Topic Paper which discuss this in more detail.



Adopted Thetford Area Action Plan DPD: Historic Past, Healthy Future

town. As a result of the RSS process the Government invited BDC, Thetford Town Council and Norfolk County Council (NCC) to bid for Growth Point Status (including funding) to help these authorities deliver the identified growth.

Historic Past, Healthy Future

2.9 The tag line of the TAAP seeks to emphasise the importance of Thetford's historic past and the potential for a healthy future in the widest sense.

- **Thetford - An Historic Town**

2.10 Thetford possesses a remarkable range of heritage assets – an Iron Age site of at least national importance with probable connections to Boudicca, an iconic British figure; very important Viking Age remnants; major Norman and medieval assets; one of the world's great democratic thinkers, Thomas Paine; important milestones in the cosmopolitan development of England; industrial revolution pioneers; landmark events associated with both World Wars and major social migration programmes.

- **Thetford – A Healthy Town.**

2.11 Healthy Town status has been awarded to nine towns and cities across England, and will result in £1.8m of initiatives taking place in Thetford during 2009-11 to encourage healthy eating and tackle obesity issues. The projects and aims are centred around healthy travel, healthy food and healthy living and seek to leave a long lasting legacy in the town.

Moving Thetford Forward.

2.12 The Moving Thetford Forward Partnership is dedicated to the delivery of the Thetford Growth Point Initiative. The aims of the Moving Thetford Forward (MTF) Partnership are to:

- Facilitate and accelerate the delivery of growth and economic development of Thetford
- Assist the regeneration and renaissance of Thetford for all its residents, existing and new
- Positively engage with all those with an interest in Thetford, including the public, local businesses, landowners and public bodies
- Positively communicate the benefits and potential of Thetford, in order to raise its profile and encourage investment in the town

2.13 More information can be found at www.movingthetfordforward.com

Local Planning Context

2.14 The Local Planning context for the preparation of the Thetford Area Action Plan is to be found in the adopted Breckland Core Strategy and Development Control Policies document. Policy SS1 of that document reads:

2.15 *'(Thetford) will provide 6000 homes⁽²⁾ over the period between 2001 and 2021 and between 1,500 and 2000 new homes between 2021 and 2026. In addition, up to 5,000 net new jobs to the end of the plan period will have been delivered. This jobs growth will include the allocation of a new business park. The centre of the town*

2 Please note that the TAAP plans for 5,000 dwellings See section 18 'Housing' and accompanying Housing Topic Paper for more information.



will be the subject of major regeneration and with expanded retail, leisure, cultural and educational facilities will become a civic hub bringing together existing and new communities. Total food and non-food retailing floorspace will expand by approximately 9,400m²³⁾ over the plan period in connection with this town centre regeneration.'

2.16 Since the adoption of the Core Strategy at the end of 2009 a considerable volume of work has been undertaken on housing delivery in Thetford. In particular examination has focused on the environmental capacity of the proposed urban extension to the north of the town and the impact of a reduced development area on the density of development. At this early part of the document it is useful to put into context housing numbers being planned for in Thetford as part of the Area Action Plan.

2.17 The adopted Core Strategy at Policy CP1 refers to a total delivery of 7,877 homes in Thetford between 2001 and 2026. This factored in 1,104 homes which had been built between 2001 and 2009 and a further 273 homes with planning permission at 1st April 2009. Importantly, the Core Strategy was based on an allocation of 6,500 homes. The additional work since 2009 has affected the allocation figure for Thetford which is now reduced to 5,000 homes. This reduction is as a consequence of a better understanding of the developable area to the north of Thetford and previous commitments not to allocate development north of the A11. Latest evidence indicates a developable area of 202 hectares of which a maximum of 135 hectares is for residential. Accommodating 6,500 homes on 135 hectares would result in densities in excess of 48 homes to the hectare; accordingly 5,000 homes on 135 hectares is a density of 37 homes to the hectare which is similar to recent developments. Breckland Council is keen that the new approach and character to an expanded town is not a hard, dense urban edge which does not respond to the rural character. More detail around the housing numbers is contained in a separate Housing Topic Paper published alongside this document.

The TAAP and the Core Strategy

2.18 The Core Strategy sets out the approach to growth and change in the Breckland district. For Thetford, it sets out the broad direction of growth as well as certain issues the TAAP must address. These are set out in detail in Appendix C 'How the TAAP conforms with the Breckland Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD'.

2.19 The Core Strategy was consulted on as part of its production. It underwent an Examination in Public in Summer 2009 and was adopted in December 2009. The growth strategy for Thetford has therefore been determined through the Core Strategy production process. It is for the TAAP to take the strategic guidance from the Core Strategy and produce more detailed land allocations and policies to guide the growth and regeneration of Thetford.

2.20 The Council intends to review its Core Strategy on a five yearly basis as set out in the adopted Local Development Scheme. Given the timeframe needed for reviewing a Core Strategy as well as the imminent changes to the planning system, the review process for the Core Strategy will commence around the adoption of this DPD. The Core Strategy Review will focus on housing delivery over a longer timeframe (2031-36). It will also respond to the contents of the National Planning Policy Framework and new technical evidence which informs the Spatial Vision and Strategy. Much of the Core Strategy remains robust and as such a review process is likely to be targeted on particular policies rather than a comprehensive review. This will enable the process to move forward expediently and provide certainty that housing delivery and infrastructure investment will be maintained. This process will enable the Core Strategy to remain responsive to new circumstances such as changes to national guidelines.

2.21 It is anticipated that this Area Action Plan will be reviewed on an at least three yearly basis. However, assessment through the Local Annual Monitoring Report could result in a need to review the adopted Core Strategy, or its successor document, which would be another trigger point for a review of related documents, such as this Area Action Plan.

3 This figure is taken from the 2007 Retail Study. The TAAP reflects the retail need as identified in the more recent 2010 Retail Study.



Documents and Initiatives influencing the TAAP

2.22 The following diagram shows which documents have directly influenced the Theford Area Action Plan⁽⁴⁾.

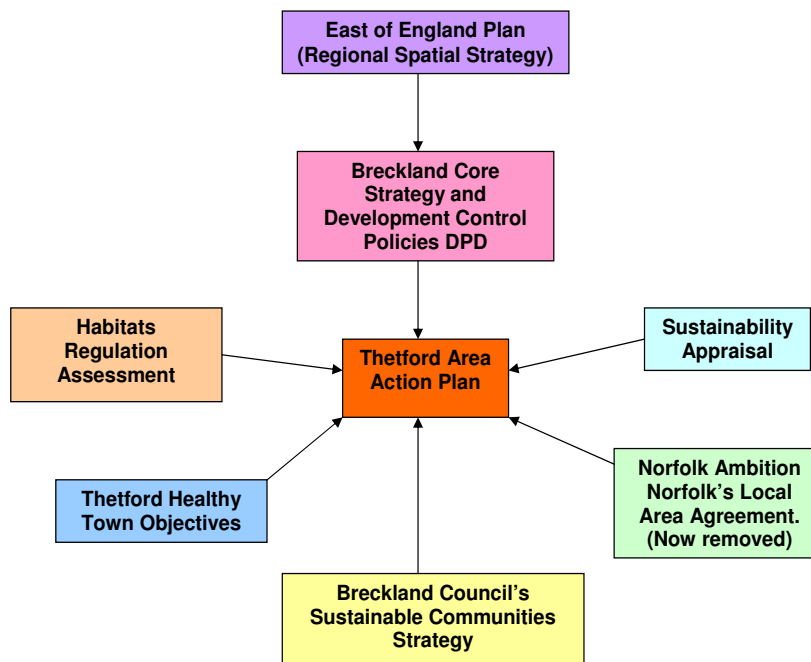


Figure 2.1 How the TAAP is influenced by other documents.

Sustainability Appraisal

2.23 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) is a systematic process undertaken during the preparation of the TAAP, to assess the extent to which the emerging policies and proposals will help to achieve relevant environmental, social and economic objectives. In doing so, it will provide an opportunity to consider ways in which the TAAP can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions as well as a means of identifying and addressing any adverse effects that policies and proposals might have which are subsequently addressed and the plan improved.

2.24 The Sustainability Appraisal Report (SA) prepared for the Preferred Options and Draft Final versions of the TAAP contained detailed analysis of Preferred Alternative options. The SA that accompanies this version of the TAAP updates the SA and reflects the contents of this version of the TAAP.

4 The East of England Plan was part of the Development Plan for the preparation of the Core Strategy and early drafts of the TAAP. On 6 July 2010 the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, announced the revocation of Regional Strategies with immediate effect. The same letter also included guidance that the evidence informing the RSS could be treated as a material consideration in preparation of the Local DPDs. The revocation was subject to a legal challenge which was successful on 10 November 2010. The results of which means that Regional Plans have been reinstated but are likely to be removed in the forthcoming Localism Bill.



Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

2.25 The European Habitats and Birds Directives protect sites of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within Europe. Currently these consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Thetford has areas under both of these designations in close proximity.

2.26 Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive requires an 'appropriate assessment' of any plans or projects likely to have a significant effect on a feature of a European Site. The intention is that a plan or project should only be approved after determining that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site. The requirements of the Directive were incorporated into UK legislation by way of 'The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations' 2010 (otherwise known as the 'Habitats Regulations').

2.27 Breckland Council has prepared an Appropriate Assessment (AA) under the Habitats Regulations for its Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (2009). For Thetford, the Breckland Core Strategy HRA is extremely important to inform what development, in broad terms, can be taken forward in Thetford and where. However, because the Thetford Area Action Plan will be more specific in terms of land allocations, and because of the sensitive habitats that are close to Thetford's urban edge, there is a need for a separate HRA to be prepared alongside the Thetford Area Action Plan, testing its detailed policies and land allocations for effects on European habitats and species.

2.28 Natural England is the statutory nature conservation body responsible for providing advice on AA and has been involved throughout the HRA of the Breckland Core Strategy. Breckland Council has also consulted with and involved the RSPB, with particular reference to the Breckland SPA and the growth promoted in Thetford through this Area Action Plan.

Key Challenges and Opportunities facing Thetford

2.29 The following issues and challenges have been identified in the Sustainability Appraisal as a result of the literature review and assessment of the baseline indicators (evidence and information) and confirmed through previous consultation. It is right that the challenges are recognised so that they can be appropriately addressed but there is also a need to emphasise the opportunities arising from growth and regeneration for both existing and new communities.

2.30 The following table shows issues that could result from the growth and how such issues can be addressed.

Potential issue to result from the growth	How issue to be addressed.
Loss of agricultural land	Land around Thetford is lower grade. This is an unavoidable consequence of meeting the housing need as set out in the Core Strategy.
Tensions between water demand and supply in Breckland	Water policies look to address this by going further than the building regulations. BREEAM requirements (environmental assessment method and rating system for buildings).
Increased contamination of water and soil resources	Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) policy gives some guidance.
Development in certain areas may be subject to fluvial flooding and the effects of climate change	Adoption of SFRA2 flood zones, PPS25, Surface Water Management Plans, SuDS
Reduced air quality	Modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport emphasised in the TAAP and related detailed transport policies.
Increased traffic congestion and increased dependency on forms of transport that contribute to climate change	Modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport emphasised in the TAAP and related detailed transport policies.



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Potential issue to result from the growth	How issue to be addressed.
Energy supply issues.	Energy Service Company (ESCo) and energy policies. BREEAM requirements.
Reductions in biodiversity and natural and semi-natural habitats as well as adverse effects on species as a result of development and the associated recreation pressure the increase in population will bring.	Gallows Hill Policy seeks to create habitat. TAAP seeks to protect locally distinctive features of the landscape and promotes tree planting. The TAAP has had a Habitats Regulation Assessment completed which has informed it. River Valley Park project. Access and Bird Monitoring Framework.
Loss of heritage assets and impact on historical character.	Gallows Hill addressed in TAAP. Existing buildings in Urban Extension addressed. Town Centre policy highlights historical importance. TAAP contains archaeological policies.
Pressures on landscape from new development	Locally distinctive features are protected and enhanced. Green roof requirement. Gallows Hill addressed in the TAAP. Structural Tree Planting.
The need for good quality design	The TAAP sets out design principles. The policies in the TAAP combine to result in good quality design.
Integration of the new and existing residents	The TAAP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages use of existing community facilities; Includes the regeneration of the town centre and bus interchanges; Promotes strong connectivity across the town by foot, cycle and bus; and, Promotes the rejuvenation of residential and employment areas.

Table 2.1 Potential issues arising from the growth and how issues are to be addressed.

2.31 The following issues currently exist in the town:

Issues in town	How issues to be addressed.
Loss and continued shortfalls in the provision of public open space.	Core Strategy policies still apply to Thetford and set open space requirements. Play equipment section.
Inequalities in health.	Thetford has Healthy Town Status and the Thetford Healthy Town Programme seeks to address inequalities in health. Healthy Town officers have been involved in the production of the TAAP. NHS Norfolk has helped identify the health needs of Thetford.
Higher crime rates in Thetford.	Police requirements are addressed in the TAAP. The Police Architectural Liaison Officer has been involved in the TAAP. The importance of addressing crime and the fear of crime is emphasised in some of the policies, for example Policy TH 38 'Existing Employment Areas'.
Ageing population	NHS Norfolk has helped identify the health needs of Thetford. Thetford is a Healthy Town.
Pressure placed on healthcare infrastructure.	NHS Norfolk has helped identify the health needs of Thetford. Thetford is a Healthy Town. Access to West Suffolk Hospital is a destination in the bus policy.
High incidence of limiting long term illnesses.	Thetford is a Healthy Town and its programme seeks to address this issue. Healthy Town officers have been involved in the production of the TAAP. NHS Norfolk have helped identify the health needs of Thetford.
Lack of affordable housing	Core Strategy policies still apply to Thetford and set affordable housing requirement at 40%. TAAP includes guidance on the existing residential estates. MTF are addressing the existing residential estates.
Deprivation and low paid economy	TAAP includes guidance on the existing residential estates. MTF are addressing the existing residential estates. TAAP seeks to address existing employment estates and also allocates employment land. NCC and Thetford Academy looking to improve education attainment in the town.



Issues in town	How issues to be addressed.
Poor education attainment	NCC and Thetford Academy are looking to improve education attainment in the town. TAAP sets out the primary and secondary school requirement.
Vulnerable and constrained economy	TAAP seeks to address existing employment estates and also allocates employment land. Rural Enterprise Valley (REV) programme seeks to promote area for businesses. Thetford Enterprise Park employment land has planning permission. Town Centre to be improved, including preparation of Masterplan. Employment Topic Paper.
Higher order shopping centres outside the district attract shoppers from Thetford which results in a leakage of expenditure away from Thetford and Breckland.	Town Centre to be improved, including preparation of Masterplan. TAAP identifies retail floorspace figures and directs retail to the town centre.
There are a number of heritage assets on English Heritage's "Heritage at Risk" (HAR) Register and Norfolk County Council's "Building at Risk" (BAR) Register.	Bus Interchange includes the renovation of the Cosy Carpets building. Train Station policy promotes improvements to the station. Town Centre masterplan recommended. Other MTF projects could help address this issue.

Table 2.2 Potential issues in the town and how issues are to be addressed.

2.32 The aim of the TAAP is to provide the planning framework to address these issues and challenges. The right planning policy framework can also help make the most of the opportunities already available in Thetford as well as deliver new successes and investment going forward.

Thetford - Opportunities and Successes

2.33 Thetford's opportunities result from its location, which in turn are influenced by the environment and reflected in the heritage. The proximity of the town to Thetford Forest and surrounding Brecks provides a superb area for leisure and tourism. There are significant green areas in and immediately around the town, not least the river, which provides a town centre waterside which is rare in market towns in the East of England. Moreover the town benefits from an historic core which is now being revitalised and promoted through the Thetford 13 project⁽⁵⁾

2.34 As well as the high environmental quality, Thetford's location and connections provide good access to regional cities, the national rail network, to London and to Stansted Airport. The dualling of the A11 has been confirmed recently with work due to start in 2015. This scheme will have positive effects for safety and congestion along the key route as well as the economy of the town and the whole of Norfolk. To support the local economy Breckland Council has been proactively supporting local businesses and encouraging inward investment through the REV⁽⁶⁾ and REV-ACTIVE⁽⁷⁾ programmes. Despite recent restructuring in the local economy, new employers have been secured and existing businesses have expanded.

2.35 In terms of successes, Thetford is fortunate in that it has been awarded both Growth Point and Healthy Town status by central government. This means the government recognises the challenges and opportunities faced in Thetford and has been willing to help achieve the local vision and aims through £millions of investment.

5 The 'Discovering Thetford' scoping study, which can be viewed at www.movingthetfordforward.com, recognises the importance of the town's heritage offer to tourists and residents alike.

6 REV phase 1 provided support, advice and financial assistance to the advanced engineering and motorsport sector, leading to over 400 businesses along the A11 and in Norfolk being supported. www.revproject.com

7 REV ACTIVE is a project developed by Breckland Council to support regeneration and economic growth predominantly along the A11 reaching from Thetford to Norwich in Norfolk as a part of its REV programme. The project provides direct, hands-on assistance for businesses to cut costs through utilities management and improved efficiency. www.revactive.co.uk/



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Compared to other Growth Point towns Thetford has done very well in securing more money per head of population from this fund. Additionally, Thetford is the only community in the East of England to have received the Healthy Town funding.

2.36 Moving Thetford Forward is also now well established as a local delivery vehicle to coordinate and deliver the ambitious plans. Going forward the local delivery vehicle could be a platform to creating other delivery groups and mechanisms which can make local authority assets and developer contributions work harder for Thetford.

2.37 The growth and regeneration framework set out in this document is intended to leave a positive legacy. A key strand to the vision is about improving the reputation of Thetford as a place to live and for businesses to invest in. A good legacy will be achieved by addressing the challenges identified previously, whilst recognising, protecting and revitalising the many positive aspects of Thetford. This legacy is about the quality of new development going forward, its environmental footprint and the ability of the town to respond to events in the next 20 years of its history. Most of all, the legacy is about maintaining the community of Thetford. This document must ensure growth and regeneration takes place simultaneously in a way which fosters and maintains one community

Integration of the new and existing residents.

2.38 This plan guides Thetford through a period of great change. The effect on the community of this change needs to be considered through this plan and the strategies and actions of other partner organisations.

2.39 Early occupiers of major new housing areas can experience isolation and disruption and may be unable to access services which may lag behind the population growth. New communities can face significant issues in the early periods of development in relation to access to services, isolation and lack of knowledge about the local situation. This can lead to adverse effects on mental wellbeing in particular which can be severe.

2.40 The provision of community development support can help in overcoming these problems and give new residents a channel through which to seek information and reassurance. In time this support may lead to greater social cohesion and greater health and well being for instance. The support may take the form of facilities such as community space or services tailored to meet diverse needs of young families and elderly people.

2.41 It is essential that adequate steps are taken to offer the fullest support to new residents. The scope of this will range from activities to simply providing information. Such support should be responsive and tailored to needs and be sustained until such time as the community has matured. Breckland Council and its partners will prepare for the development with the aim of integrating the extension with the existing town.

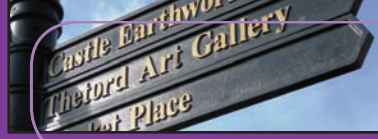
2.42 Breckland Council realises the importance of the Thetford Urban Extension forming part of Thetford, rather than being a separate entity. Community coherence and capacity together with wellbeing will mean that the Thetford Urban Extension will be more likely to be a success both commercially and as a place to live and enable it to contribute to the community of Thetford as a whole.

How to use this document

2.43 The TAAP is a statutory planning document which is part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). It holds the policies and land allocations specific to Thetford. The policies (in purple boxes) within this document:

- are additional to the policies in the Core Strategy;
- apply to the area within the boundary of the Thetford Area Action Plan Area (see Map 6.1 'Boundary of the Thetford Area Action Plan.');
- should be read in conjunction with each other.

2.44 There are three sections containing policies in this document. Look at the bottom of the page you are on to check which section you are in:



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1. TAAP-wide section - these policies apply to the whole area within the boundary of the Thetford Area Action Plan Area.
 2. Thetford Urban Extension section - the policies and supporting text in this section only apply to the Urban Extension as shown on the Policies Map. The TAAP-wide policies also apply.
 3. Area Intervention section - these policies and supporting text refer to the existing residential or employment areas in Thetford. The TAAP-wide policies also apply.
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3 Spatial Portrait of Thetford

Location

3.1 Thetford is located about 80 miles north east of London, and has grown at the confluence of the River Thet and the Little Ouse River, a tributary of the River Great Ouse. It is located in Norfolk in the East of England. The nearest major urban centres are the cities of Norwich (32 miles) and Cambridge (35 miles) and the towns of Bury St Edmunds (12 miles) and Newmarket (20 miles). The town serves a wide rural catchment including a number of scattered small villages and hamlets. The area surrounding Thetford is relatively sparsely developed, consisting largely of Thetford Forest, military and open agricultural land, and with few nearby villages. The A11 bypass connecting Cambridge and Norwich borders the town to the north and west.

History⁽⁸⁾

3.2 Thetford's history stretches back to prehistoric occupation. The town has undergone several shifts and changes in its status of identity. It emerged as one of the most important late Saxon Towns in East Anglia, becoming the sixth largest town in early medieval period where for a very short time it held cathedral status. The town has survived many Danish invasions and was established as an important religious centre in the medieval period. The dissolution of England's monastic and ecclesiastical buildings in the 16th century, resulted in the decline of the town's economic importance.

3.3 The 18th and 19th centuries saw a revival in the town's industrial prowess where at the end of the 19th century, the town became a manufacturing centre for steam engines until the late 1920s. The industrial centre of the 19th and early 20th century disappeared resulting in a town with high unemployment. As a consequence, the Borough of Thetford approached the London County Council (LCC) in the 1950s to become a destination for relocating jobs and businesses from bomb-damaged London.

3.4 The second half of the 20th Century saw rapid growth and expansion of light industry on the town's periphery. Planned residential expansion in the 1950-70s brought an influx of new residents from the London area, housed in large new social housing estates, designed in Radburn⁽⁹⁾ based layouts typical of the period which unfortunately now exhibit signs of stress. Recent residential developments based around a low density cul-de-sac arrangement have consolidated growth on the northern periphery in land leading up to the bypass, and also extended beyond the River Thet creating new development to the east, into the parish of Brettenham in the 1990s. Thetford is developed in a very distinct 'zoned' way, with two large employment areas off London Road and Mundford Road and also residential zones.

3.5 The town has a historic core with a street pattern documented to have existed from the medieval period. As a result, Thetford is commonly described as containing a medieval street arrangement. However archaeological evidence provides conformation of Saxon occupation north of the river, consequently, many of the streets are said to be based on earlier Saxon trackways.

3.6 The town contains a number of sites of archaeological significance, both listed and of historic importance such as the Castle Mound, Priory and Gallows Hill. Thetford contains 182 listed buildings and obtained Conservation Area Status in 1973.

8 Thetford Historic Environment Assessment (BDC 2009) and Thetford Historic Environment Survey (NAU Archaeology 2009)

9 The primary innovation of Radburn was the separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. This was accomplished by doing away with the traditional grid-iron street pattern and replacing it with an innovation called the superblock. The superblock is a large block of land surrounded by main roads. The houses are grouped around small culs-de-sac, each of which has an access road coming from the main roads. The remaining land inside the superblock is park area, the backbone of the neighbourhood. The living and sleeping sections of the houses face toward the garden and park areas, while the service rooms face the access road.



3.7 The following plans illustrate the growth of the town.



Thetford before major growth.



London Overspill and more.



Highlighting the existing Industrial Estates.



More recent growth.

Landscape Context⁽¹⁰⁾

3.8 The town benefits from a unique natural landscape setting in the valleys of the Little Ouse and Thet. It is on the edge of Thetford Forest, a large man-planted lowland coniferous forest which has colonised former Breck Heath. The town has a rich built heritage and distinctive townscape reflecting the local geology in the vernacular, notably flint and chalk. These natural and built heritage assets combine to make the town an important destination for tourism and recreation.

3.9 Thetford is surrounded by significant landscape and environmental assets, including the culturally and archaeologically important landscape of the Brecks and sites of European importance for Nature Conservation, including the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

3.10 Breckland SPA is designated due to its internationally significant populations of rare bird species (Woodlark, Nightjar and Stone Curlew), whilst the SAC is designated to ensure the extensive tracts of lowland heath, semi-natural dry grasslands, marshes, bogs and ancient woodland are protected. The Brecks is therefore a significant area for its landscape and natural heritage value and for its visitor value.

10 Thetford green Infrastructure Study (LUC 2007), Breckland Settlement Fringe Study (LUC 2007) and Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment (LUC 2007)



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3.11 The landscape context of Thetford is a large scale landscape of coniferous plantation, arable fields and remnant heathland. It is a landscape of simple elements with an open, exposed quality, although localised variety, interest and microclimate is created by plantation blocks and locally distinctive twisted scots pine windbreaks.

Economy⁽¹¹⁾

3.12 Thetford is a major employment centre providing an estimated 17,000 jobs, many of which are in manufacturing including several established multi-national companies (Jeyes, Baxter Healthcare) with a higher proportion employed in this sector compared with the national average. In addition, the Rural Enterprise Valley (REV) programme has been set up to establish Thetford as a centre for advanced engineering along the A11 corridor as a nationally significant employment cluster. The town is also a significant retail, service and administrative centre for South-West Norfolk and North-West Suffolk.

3.13 The town centre has a mix of uses including retail and office areas as well as residential and recreational areas. The principal retail areas in the centre are at Minstergate, Riverside Walk and King Street.

Population and Community⁽¹²⁾

3.14 Thetford is currently Norfolk's fourth largest settlement with a diverse population of 24,220 (Mid 2009 population estimates). The town has a significant proportion of young people with over a fifth of the population under the age of 16. More recently, the town has attracted many immigrants to the area, mainly Portuguese, Latvian, Polish and Lithuanian.

3.15 The Thetford-Abbey ward in Thetford is in the most deprived ten per cent nationally (Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010). See Map 3.1 '2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation - Norfolk'.

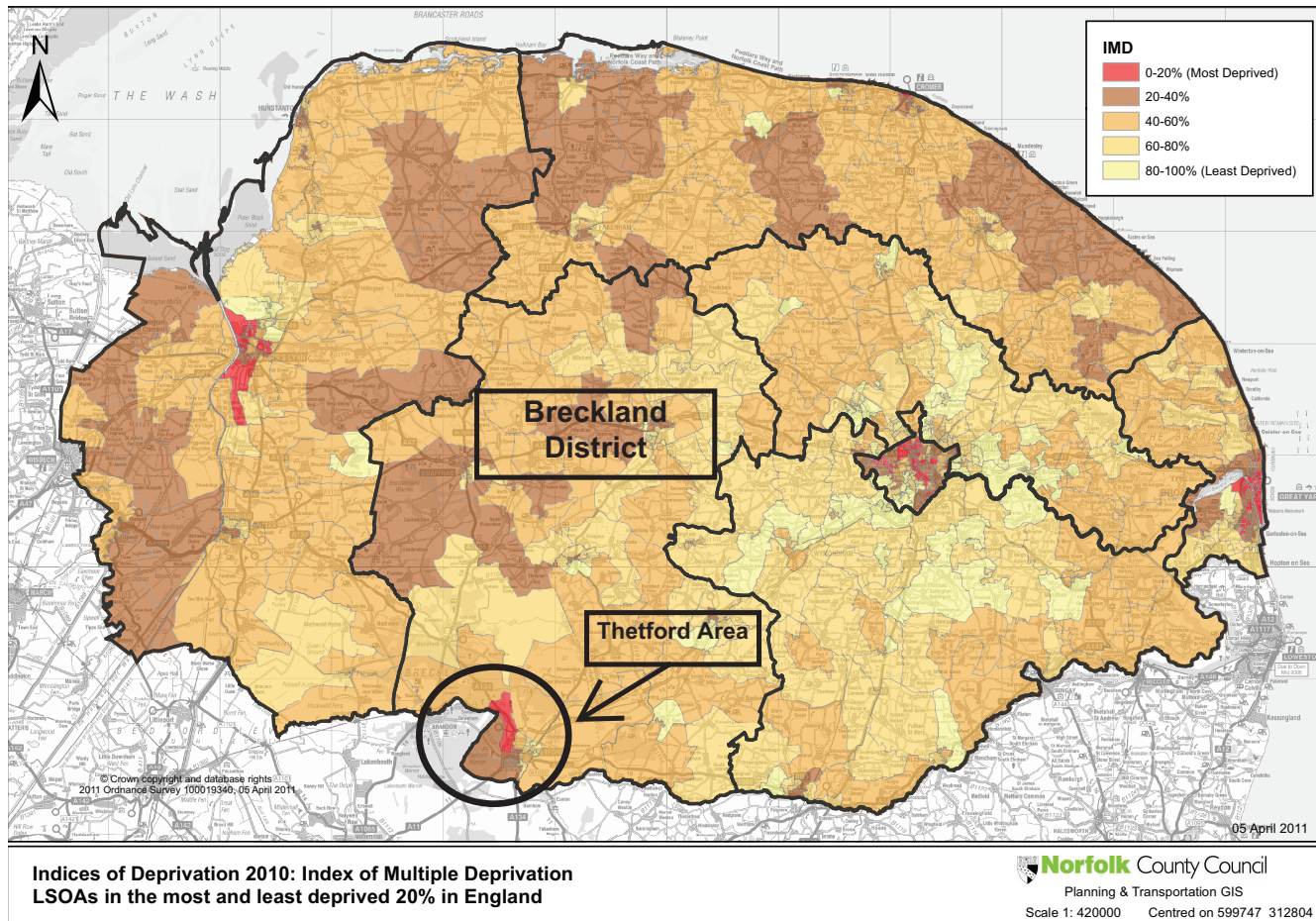
3.16 Child health is a major concern as it has the highest number of children on the Child Protection Register for its size of population in the whole of Norfolk. There is a high rate of teenage pregnancy and anecdotally, there are said to be large problems associated with substance misuse.

3.17 With regards to health, in recognition of high adult obesity rates, Thetford was awarded Healthy Town Status in 2008/9. The town received £900,000 of funding from the Department of Health for healthy lifestyle projects in the town.

3.18 In terms of education provision and attainment, Thetford's secondary education provision operates as an Academy and has two campuses, South Site (formerly Charles Burrell) (542 pupils 11-16) and North Site (formerly Rosemary Musker) (697 pupils 11-16), with the shared Thomas Paine Sixth Form (200 students). Both schools have been getting help from National Challenge, a government programme to make sure that over 30% of young people get at least five GCSEs, including English and Maths, by 2011. Proposals are being considered to amalgamate and integrate provision.

11 Employment Land Review (Roger Tym and Partners 2006) and Breckland Retail and Town Centre Study (Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners 2010)

12 Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010, NCC Education Data, NCC Mid 2009 Population Estimates, Thetford Healthy Town



Map 3.1 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation - Norfolk

Transport Links⁽¹³⁾

3.19 Thetford lies on the main railway line between Norwich and Cambridge. Two trains an hour stop at Thetford Station. One of the services provides a direct line to Manchester and Liverpool. London stations can be reached by changing at either Ely or Norwich. Some residents drive to Diss to then use the train to Liverpool Street. There is an internal bus service around Thetford and additional bus links to nearby towns and villages, including links to Bury St Edmunds. At present there is no direct bus connection to Norwich other than National Express. Thetford is also on the National Cycle Network Route 13⁽¹⁴⁾.

3.20 The town provides necessary service and retail provision to outlying villages and hamlets. In particular the town supports higher order services to towns and villages to the west and north-east including Brandon, Mundford, Harling and Hockham. However, the retail catchment area of Thetford is reduced by the proximity to Bury St Edmunds to the south and the sparsely populated Brecks to the south west and north of the town. Thetford in turn looks to Norwich, Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds for services not provided in the town.

13 Transport Studies (Mott Macdonald 2008 and 2010)

14 <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/national-cycle-network/route-numbering-system/route-13>



3.21 The A11 bypasses the town and is dualled between Norwich and Thetford with a single carriageway through Elveden and onto Barton Mills. This single carriageway stretch is proposed to be dualled by 2015.

Transport and Accessibility

3.22 The following table shows the travel to work data for Thetford, from the 2001 Census.

Mode	Share
Walking and Cycling	22%
Bus	2%
Homeworking	6%
Train, Taxi and motor cycle	3%
Car driver	60%
Car passenger	7%

Table 3.1 Thetford Travel to Work data - Census 2001.

Housing⁽¹⁵⁾

3.23 The proportion of affordable housing stock in Thetford is high relative to nearby towns. The condition of some of that stock and the neighbourhoods in which the stock stand is poor, with many homes coming to the end of their useful life at a uniform point in time. There are also some housing needs not being met such as smaller housing units and other specialist accommodation for the elderly and disabled.

15 Breckland District Housing Team



4 Overarching Vision for Thetford

A Vision for the Sustainable Growth and Regeneration of Thetford

Overarching Vision for Thetford

To deliver a thriving 21st century market town at the centre of life in the East of England by implementing the sustainable growth and comprehensive social, economic and environmental regeneration of Thetford.

By 2026 Thetford will become a well planned, self-contained sustainable town where people feel part of the community and where they continue to enjoy living and working. It will be a place people will be attracted to for its renowned natural and historic environment qualities.

Thetford will be an important town for jobs, shops, services, schools and tourism, and will continue to be the fourth largest town in Norfolk. Thetford will be known as a town where healthy lifestyles are at the heart of what people, communities and businesses do.

Thetford's reputation will be improved.

4.1 The principal vision for Thetford and Breckland can be found in the Core Strategy and is therefore not repeated here. The over-arching vision for Thetford is broken down into themed mini visions. These mini visions show how Thetford will be in the future, not only through the policies within this Area Action Plan, but also as a result of the work of Moving Thetford Forward . Moving Thetford Forward is an informal local delivery vehicle, made up of partners from many local organisations working together to support and advise the growth and regeneration of Thetford and its environs. The themed mini-visions (in orange boxes) are as follows:

Climate Change and promoting efficient use of resources.

Alongside the growth, Thetford and its surrounding area will shift away from heavy reliance on the car towards more sustainable forms of travel, especially to walking, cycling and buses (with new bus interchange provided by around 2012/13) and improvements to the train station.

All the new development will comprise high quality design, high environmental performance and take advantage of all opportunities to maximise energy and water efficiency and energy coming from renewable resources.

The existing development will not be forgotten – owners and occupiers will have been offered help with retrofitting water and energy efficiency devices.

Measures will have been taken to not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also to mitigate and adapt to any challenges that climate change could bring.

4.2 Thetford contributes to 50% of the growth in Breckland between 2009 and 2026. It is critical that such a large proportion of the District's growth is delivered in a way which minimises effects on climate change.



4.3 The scientific evidence is now overwhelming: climate change presents very serious global risks, and it demands urgent local responses across the globe. The stocks of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxides and a number of gases that arise from industrial processes) are rising as a result of human activity. Other than the effect on the climate, changing behaviour can benefit everyone on an individual basis by improving health or saving money⁽¹⁶⁾.

Biodiversity and the Historic Environment

Thetford's considerable natural and heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced where appropriate. In particular, all new development will protect the internationally important wildlife sites and respect the significant national and local biodiversity and geodiversity, historic, architectural and archaeological assets both within and surrounding the town.

A comprehensive network of accessible green spaces, corridors and other green areas will be put in place or improved, focused on the River Thet and Little Ouse corridors providing a viable network within, to and from surrounding areas such as Thetford Forest.

The biodiversity interest of Breckland SPA and Breckland SAC will be protected whilst recognising the recreation value/interest of Thetford Forest, Barnham Cross Common and other surrounding natural areas.

4.4 Thetford is well known for its historic and natural assets. It is important that these are recognised, protected and managed. These assets are core to the local distinctiveness and many are of international and national value. Part of the purpose of the TAAP is to manage change in such a sensitive location.⁽¹⁷⁾

4.5 Thetford is set against the backdrop of the Brecks, a landscape of significant cultural and ecological importance. Thetford Forest Park which surrounds the town is a major recreational resource for the Brecks⁽¹⁸⁾.

Housing

Thetford will increase in size by at least 5,000 dwellings between 2001 and 2026 including a significant amount of affordable housing. The majority of these new dwellings will be located on greenfield land to the north and north-east of the town. Infrastructure will be delivered in a timely manner to keep pace with the rate of development.

All new development and regeneration projects will be appropriately co-ordinated and managed to ensure the integration between new and existing housing areas to promote a sustainable community across the town

4.6 The table below sets out how this strategic requirement will be met over the plan period.

Already built (April 2001 to 31 March 2011)	Currently permitted (1 April 2011)	New allocations (to 2026)	Total (2001 to 2026)
1,223	280	5,000	6,503

Table 4.1 Showing Thetford's housing delivery over the plan period from 2001 to 2026.

16 STERN REVIEW: The Economics of Climate Change, www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/stern_review_report.htm
 17 Thetford Historic Environment Assessment (2009) and the Thetford Historic Environment Survey (2009) are key pieces of background evidence.
 18 Thetford Green Infrastructure Study, Land Use Consultants, September 2007



4.7 The majority of the allocation will be on an urban extension to the north and north east of Thetford, inside the A11. Other important contributors to housing growth will be estate regeneration and town centre redevelopment opportunities.

4.8 In order to avoid adverse impact of development on the Breckland Special Protected Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) work for the Core Strategy limited the direction of growth of Thetford. The outcome of the HRA process has been the protection of the qualifying features of the Breckland SPA whilst simultaneously enabling growth to occur, provided this takes place via a single urban extension to the north of the town. If evidence comes forward to demonstrate that it is possible to mitigate the adverse effects on the Stone Curlew, then additional windfall development may come forward to contribute to the overall development numbers, provided there is sufficient infrastructure capacity. This approach would be in accordance with Policy CP10 of the adopted Core Strategy.

Thetford Urban Extension

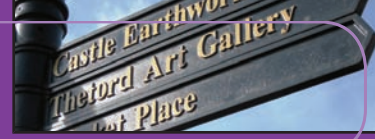
Thetford Urban Extension will have positive, tangible impacts for all who live in Thetford, and its adjoining communities, enhancing its status as a destination of choice and contribute to the revitalisation of Thetford town centre. It will create a unique environment for residents and businesses building on the riverside shopping district, the important and diverse heritage of the town combined with excellent access to the leisure and recreational opportunities provided by its intimate proximity to the forest. It will create a highly desirable location to live work and play. It will act as a catalyst for change, will improve social cohesion and contribute to Thetford's Healthy Town Status. The development will promote the use of public transport and a healthier lifestyle with the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes to the town and surrounding countryside.

The development will respect the local distinctive character of Thetford (including heritage assets and existing green infrastructure) and will have the potential to come forward in a manner that has an organic feel. It will be well designed and deliver a place that maximises the locational advantages, particularly relating to landscape and green infrastructure and its location as a gateway into the town.

The site should provide distinct places and new communities which are also "of Thetford" and evolve with the town. The development will result in neighbourhoods whose delivery will be gradually phased to reflect local infrastructure capacity and the delivery of employment areas and will ensure integration with existing communities.

4.9 It is intended that the urban extension is designed and developed in a way that benefits the rest of the town, brings communities together as well as reflects the existing landscape feature and preserves and enhances heritage assets within and adjoining the urban extension area (including Gallows Hill Scheduled Monument and the listed buildings at Kilverstone Hall, but also undesignated heritage assets). More details on the Thetford Urban Extension are given later in this document.

4.10 The growth to the north of Thetford takes place in an area with sensitive habitats which are afforded high level of protection. As such, due regard needs to be given to the effect of the growth on these areas. There is a need for a package of mitigation measures, as outlined in the Core Strategy HRA to prevent disturbance to SPA birds. Furthermore, recreation will be managed in a way that ensures that the SPA is not adversely affected, and if possible enhanced.



Economic Development

5,000 new jobs will be created, especially on new employment areas and in a revitalised town centre, including high quality, high skilled jobs. The first phase of new jobs will be on the Thetford Enterprise Park to the north of the town. The A11 will be maintained as the key corridor of movement in the area encouraging new and growing businesses to locate in Thetford. The changes will help emphasise Thetford's important strategic position on the A11 for businesses. Serviced employment land (and consequently jobs) will be provided in line with housing growth.

4.11 Thetford benefits from good accessibility and a prominent location to the south of the A11 and lies on the mainline rail network. As such there is strong demand for industrial and distribution space from local, regional and national occupiers. The office market in Thetford is less developed than the industrial and distribution market. However, Thetford still has the most active market for this use within the administrative area of Breckland District Council. Thetford Enterprise Park is the key site that will kick start investment in the town.⁽¹⁹⁾

The Community

By 2026, all residents in Thetford and the surrounding area, whether new or long standing inhabitants, will feel they have benefited from the growth and investment that is to take place. New development areas will be planned in a way to make the communities inclusive and to contribute to a balance between houses, jobs, services and leisure facilities. In addition, the new communities will feel an inclusive part of Thetford as a whole. Changes to education and the provision of new jobs upskilling the workforce, will have a positive effect on household incomes.

Thetford will become proud of its high level of education provision for all ages, with schools forming the heart of new and existing communities. Education will be transformed in Thetford by making learning and success irresistible and accessible for all within the community and beyond.

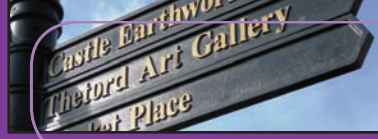
Health conditions will have improved and disparities reduced. This will be sustained by the opportunity for all the community to follow healthy lifestyles - a legacy of Thetford's Healthy Town Status.

4.12 With growth will be change. It is essential that this change benefits and includes the existing community. Furthermore, the new development should be an integral part of the town. It is important that when planning for services and facilities that town-wide opportunities are pursued. It does not automatically follow that new town services and facilities will be required to locate in the urban extension. The community in Thetford will benefit from equal access to improved and expanded services and facilities.

4.13 Up until August 2010 Thetford had two 11-18 secondary schools: Charles Burrell (542 pupils, ages 11-16), and Rosemary Musker (697 pupils ages 11-16). There was a shared Thomas Paine Sixth Form (200 students). From September 2010 both schools have been brought together as the Thetford Academy, under the sponsorship of Wymondham College, Norfolk County Council, Easton College and West Suffolk College. Further changes could see a new single site by 2013.

4.14 The way we live today means that lots of us have developed unhealthy lifestyles. This means all of us need to make small changes to eat well, move more and live longer. The Thetford Healthy Town programme is making it easier for Thetford residents to make these small changes that make a big difference. A number of projects and activities across the town will make it easy and fun for residents to participate in activities which will result in a

19 Breckland Employment Land Review, Roger Tymms and Partners, September 2006



healthier and happier future. The Healthy Town Programme aims to leave a legacy in healthy living, healthy travel and healthy food. Thetford is one of the most deprived communities in Norfolk and there are significant health issues and consequent health inequalities within the town. Improving health and reducing health inequalities requires a cross cutting approach tackling a wide range of social economic and environmental issues. The policies in the TAAP are designed to make a significant contribution to a healthier Thetford.

Regeneration

The balance between growth of new communities and the regeneration of existing communities is vital. Existing residential areas and employment areas will see significant benefits, with developers and public authorities contributing funding to projects which revitalise existing estates, the town centre and other important public areas. Wards where there is evidence of higher deprivation levels will be targeted first, with the aim of ensuring that the community is engaged in the regeneration process from the start. This regeneration will include environmental improvements, some new developments and improved community and social cohesion undertaken and managed in a holistic manner.

The town centre will be regenerated to become the focus of the community for leisure and shopping, unifying the existing and new areas of the town. Key town centre sites will be regenerated creating an attractive built environment for all.

4.15 The growth will also catalyse regeneration of the town. The new bus interchange and other town centre developments will also stimulate further town centre regeneration

4.16 Strategic plans are being produced for the four western neighbourhoods with involvement by the local community. Barnham Cross neighbourhood has been the first to benefit from such work.

4.17 Any regeneration and associated changes will have due regard to the historic environment of Thetford.



5 Objectives

5.1 The following objectives have been derived from the issues/challenges that face Thetford. The relevant policy/section is also identified.

5.2 These objectives complement those of the Core Strategy.

Issue/ Challenge	Higher Strategic Theme	Individual Strategic Objectives (SO)	Relevant TAAP Policy/Section
Housing, employment and regeneration	To deliver significant housing and employment growth in Thetford, supported by social, economic and environmental infrastructure.	Thetford SO1: To provide the environment capable of delivering up to 5,000 net new homes in Thetford between 2001 – 2026 of the right mix of housing to meet the needs of Thetford to ensure all residents have access to a decent affordable home. This new development will be integrated and meshed into the fabric of the town.	Thetford Urban Extension section, transport sections.
		Thetford SO2: To ensure high and stable levels of employment through restructuring the local economy providing the basis for a minimum of 5,000 net new jobs, especially high quality jobs, in Thetford in the period 2001-2026, so everyone can share in the prosperity of the District. To promote economic diversity and support economic growth.	New employment areas, existing employment areas, education section, retail section, transport sections.
		Thetford SO3: To address Thetford’s current infrastructure deficits, plan for new infrastructure and ensure it is delivered with growth and not after. This includes utilities, education, sport, police, health and green infrastructure.	Thetford Urban Extension section, green Infrastructure sections, water sections, energy and carbon sections, social infrastructure sections.
		Thetford SO4: To strengthen Thetford as a place for shopping, work, services and leisure. Balancing housing, employment and service growth to promote self-containment.	Retail section, town Centre section, indoor sports section, transport section.
		Thetford SO5: To regenerate the town centre as a focus for retail, services and leisure, including improving its evening economy offer.	Town centre section, retail section, transport section.



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		<p>Thetford SO6: To address the most severe pockets of deprivation in Thetford’s residential and employment estates, through physical, social and economic regeneration projects.</p>	Existing estate (employment and residential) section.
		<p>Thetford SO7: To ensure that all development contributes to the improvement of health and the reduction of disparities in health and that negative impacts on health are avoided or effectively mitigated.</p>	Healthy lifestyles section, health facilities section, walking and cycling section, allotments, indoor sports.
Environment	To protect and enhance, as appropriate, the natural and historic assets of the Thetford area.	<p>Thetford SO8: To conserve and enhance where appropriate the quality and distinctiveness of the biodiversity, geology and landscape setting of Thetford and ensure growth respects such features.</p>	Green infrastructure section, Gallows Hill section.
		<p>Thetford SO9: To protect and where appropriate enhance the heritage assets and townscape of Thetford and require new development to meet high quality design standards.</p>	Green infrastructure section, Gallows Hill section, town centre section, existing buildings section, design principles.
Natural resources	To make Thetford play its part in protecting the environment and in tackling climate change.	<p>Thetford SO10: Development to be an exemplar for efficient use of resources (eg energy, water, building materials).</p>	Energy section, water section, BREEAM section.
		<p>Thetford SO11: To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.</p>	Energy section, BREEAM section, transport sections, green Infrastructure, flood risk and SuDS sections.
Accessibility	To enhance accessibility to services to reduce need to travel and inequalities in access.	<p>Thetford SO12: To turn around Thetford’s current heavy reliance on the car to more sustainable forms of transport whilst ensuring good accessibility for all to jobs, facilities and services (including green infrastructure) in Thetford.</p>	Transport sections, design principles.

Table 5.1 Objectives of the Thetford Area Action Plan



6 Plan Area

Boundary of the Thetford Area Action Plan

6.1 The boundary of the TAAP identifies areas to which the policies and land allocations contained in this document apply. It is a requirement of Area Action Plans to set a boundary. The boundary is shown over the page.

6.2 This does not mean that the whole area will be developed or that every area within that boundary will see development. Some areas are protected and development in others is not promoted through this Plan for a variety of reasons. The area proposed for development is shown on the Policies Map.

6.3 The TAAP boundary covers parts of parishes other than Thetford (including Croxton, Kilverstone and Brettenham). The settlement boundary and TAAP boundary are different. The boundary of the TAAP is larger because some proposals in the TAAP (such as the Thetford Loops and some green infrastructure proposals) extend beyond the settlement boundary within which housing and employment are to be located.

6.4 It is important that Thetford is seen to lie within and as an integral part of its surrounding landscapes, environment and communities.

Policies Maps

6.5 The Policies Maps show land allocations made in this document, the settlement boundary, plus any saved policies from the outgoing Local Plan which remain relevant, and highlights other areas discussed in the TAAP. The policies maps can be found on the LDF pages of www.breckland.gov.uk and include:

- a town wide map;
- a separate town centre inset map;
- the Breckland Proposals Map; and,
- the legend.

Settlement Boundary

6.6 Settlement boundaries are a policy which delineate in plan form coherent and established built up areas. The purpose of the settlement boundary is to consolidate development around existing built up communities where further development, if properly designed and constructed, would be incongruous nor intrusive because of the size of the settlement.

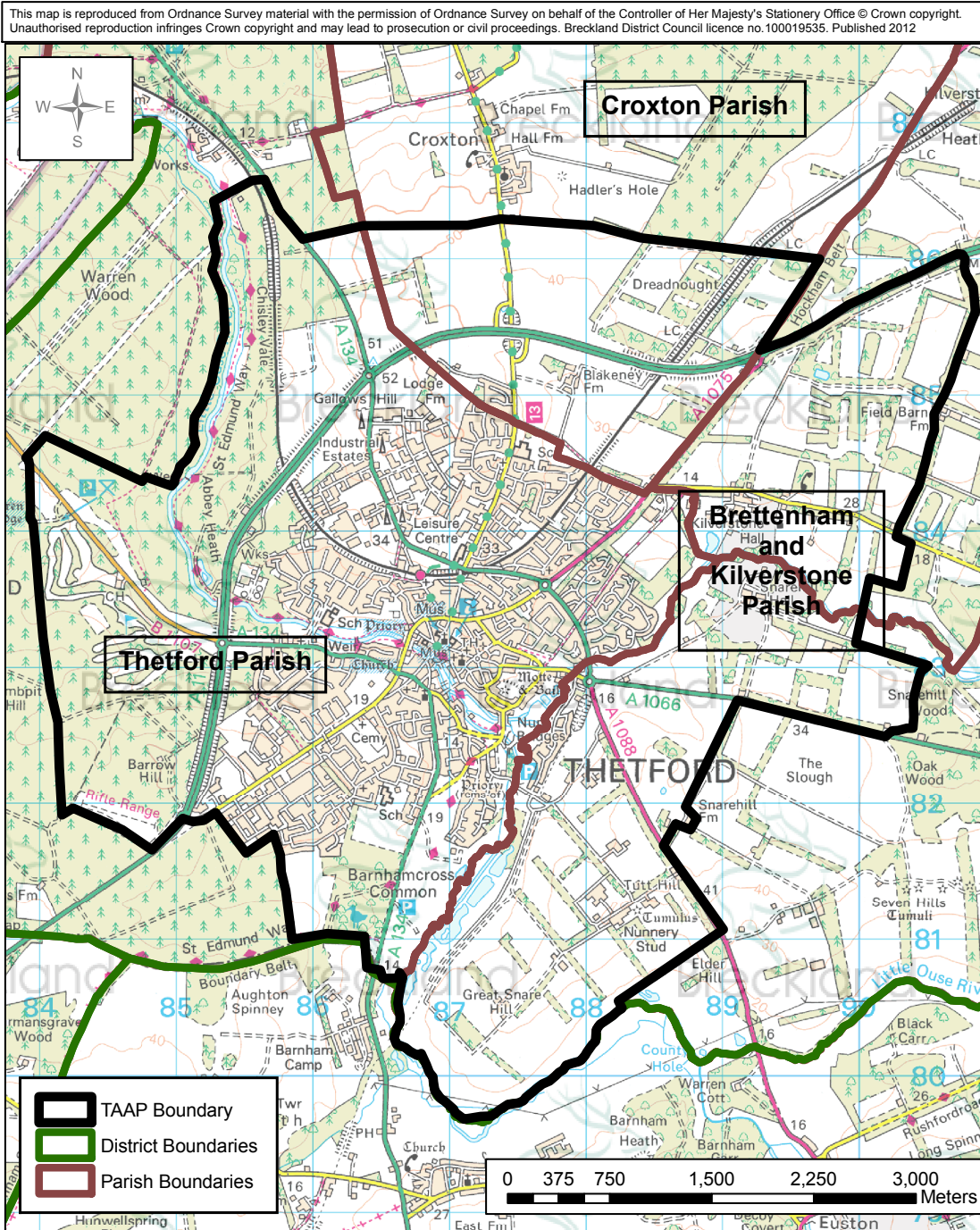
6.7 The Core Strategy rolled forward the settlement boundary from the outgoing district-wide Local Plan but acknowledged that this would be reviewed through subsequent DPDs. In this case, the revised Thetford settlement boundary is included within the TAAP.

6.8 The settlement boundary for nearby Croxton village will be set out in the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD that is being prepared separately by Breckland Council. There is no separate settlement boundary for Kilverstone or the settlements of Brettenham and Rushford.

6.9 Please see 28 'Settlement Boundary' for the Settlement Boundary policy.



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Map 6.1 Boundary of the Thetford Area Action Plan.



Development North of the A11

6.10 At this stage, Breckland Council remains of the view that allocations for residential, retail and employment development to the north of the A11 will not form part of the TAAP proposals. This is set out clearly in the adopted Core Strategy and endorsed by Inspectors considering that document. There has been no material change in the justifying reasons to consider land north of the A11 for built development in this TAAP.

6.11 The reasons include (in no order of priority):

- A key national site for the beetle *Ophonus laticollis* is near Gallows Hill, Thetford (Croxton Hall Farms), north of the A11 where the beetle lives on ESA arable margins and in the adjacent uncultivated field edges. On the basis of decline, the species became a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan process;⁽²⁰⁾
- Transport: Housing and employment development to the north of the A11 would inevitably encourage greater car use, contrary to national and local policies and harming the strategic function of the A11;
- The A11 would also act as a potential barrier to encouraging sustainable modes of travel;
- Croxton Village: Potential issues regarding coalescence of Thetford and Croxton village;
- Housing/employment to the north of the A11 would be likely to result in an isolated satellite development not well connected physically or as part of the community of Thetford;
- Landscape and views: The Green Infrastructure Study (Land Use Consultants, 2007) highlighted the landscape of the area around Croxton village as rural and tranquil in nature. It recommended that development should respect existing skylines and elevated views, most notably from Croxton and the A1066, and the horizon/skyline features of these views, such as woodland blocks and scots pine windbreaks, in addition to the lowland valley location and context of Thetford. Housing/employment north of the A11 would be contrary to this advice; and,
- Breckland SPA: housing and employment development to the north of the A11 is likely to be near to the Breckland SPA.

20 MONITORING OPHONUS LATICOLLIS AT GALLOWES HILL, THETFORD, Dr. Mark G. Telfer, February 2009