



7 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy TH 1

National Planning Policy Framework - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- i. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- ii. Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.



8 Town Centre and Retail

Policy TH 2

Approach to the Town Centre

The primary shopping area as identified on the Policies Map will be the focus for new comparison and convenience retail and commercial leisure uses. Complementary office, cultural, educational and community-related uses will be appropriate given the need to strengthen Thetford town centre.

Within this core area the priorities include maintaining vibrant high street activity and giving priority to pedestrian and cycling permeability.

The key sites for development and change in the primary shopping area are:

- the Carnegie Room;
- Tanner Street Car Park;
- Riverside Walk;
- Minstergate; and
- the Riverside Regeneration Area (Bridge Street Car Park).

Proposals to redevelop or enhance the Riverside Walk development and the relationship of the site to the waterfront and the Riverside Regeneration Area will be dealt with positively.

Elsewhere within the town centre a further key site is the Thetford Retail Park. This will be an area where the intensification of retail activity and new commercial leisure will be permitted as well as improved walking and cycling links.

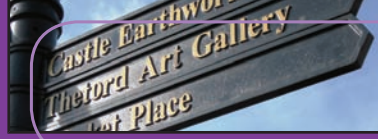
The public realm across the town centre will be improved through a consistent approach of creating a clear sense of place and a better defined street hierarchy with enhanced linkages which improve shopper and visitor circulation around the town. Development proposals together with activities of various agencies and utilities will be expected to contribute towards a general de-cluttering of the streetscene together with improved signage and street furniture which enhances the experience of being in the historic Thetford town centre.

Across the town centre, car parking provision will be provided in a way which seeks to increase the relative proportion of short-stay spaces and providing these in concentrated, specific centralised locations which result in positive changes to the movement of town centre visitors on foot.

Town Centre - Guiding Principles

The following key planning objectives will apply to all development proposals within the town centre as defined on the Policies Map. These objectives complement the more general objectives in the Core Strategy.

- a. Create a balance and mix of uses within key sites around the town centre as a whole that helps to generate a varied and interesting urban environment;
- b. Create attractive and vibrant primary frontages, including appropriate building forms fronting these streets, with active ground floor frontages and proportionate heights;
- c. Allow for ease of access by sustainable modes of transport including bus priority measures and walking and cycling network improvements including the provision of safe and conveniently located cycle parking across the town centre;
- d. Create a network of public spaces in the town centre, including protection and enhancement of the river corridor;



- e. Deliver an attractive and safe urban environment with a strong sense of place through the high quality design of buildings and public spaces;
- f. Protect resident's quality of life and create new living environments of lasting quality;
- g. Design out crime; and
- h. Preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic and natural assets which exist in the town centre.

To help achieve these overarching objectives a Town Centre Masterplan/neighbourhood plan will be produced covering the area defined as the Town Centre on the Policies Map. The masterplan will be accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment of the approach to the town centre proposed in the masterplan.

Any Town Centre Masterplan/neighbourhood plan or town centre proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they will inform and/or respond to the town-wide surface-water management plan.

Reasoned Justification

8.1 At the broadest scale, Thetford town centre is now in direct competition with web-based retail and consumer services, larger out-of-town stores and other regional towns and cities all of which are vying for a finite supply of shoppers and visitors. At the more local level there are a number of physical issues such as the ageing of poor quality buildings and public spaces creating a difficult environment to attract shoppers and visitors. Notwithstanding these challenges the town centre will remain the starting point for accommodating the new retail, commercial leisure and cultural investment which will underpin the regeneration of the town.

8.2 Breckland Council, Norfolk County Council, Thetford Town Council and their partners (MTF) will produce a Town Centre Masterplan/neighbourhood plan to act as a catalyst in regenerating the town centre. The content of the masterplan will include reviewing car parking provision, consideration of surface-water management and informing innovative approaches to regenerating the riverside areas as well as providing assessment of the key redevelopment opportunities already identified in existing evidence reports. In setting out guiding principles for the town centre and a commitment to preparing a masterplan, the Area Action Plan will help to reverse the decline in the historic heart of the town and create a sustainable retail, leisure and residential environment for future generations.

8.3 The overarching strategy for the town centre is to halt the slow drift of activity away from the town centre by creating a series of anchors and concentrating footfall along the major shopping routes, notably King Street, White Hart Street, Minstergate, the Market Place, Well Street and the Riverside Walk (see Map 8.1 'Town Centre Opportunity Areas'). In these locations the focus will be on vibrant activity, public realm improvements and ensuring these are environments which are safe, attractive and appealing for people. This will require the use of planning policies in the Core Strategy which seek to protect existing retail activity as well as encouraging physical measures which will revitalise this core area, such as enhanced market provision, street cafés and improvements to public spaces. Changes would also seek to improve the evening economy offer in the town.

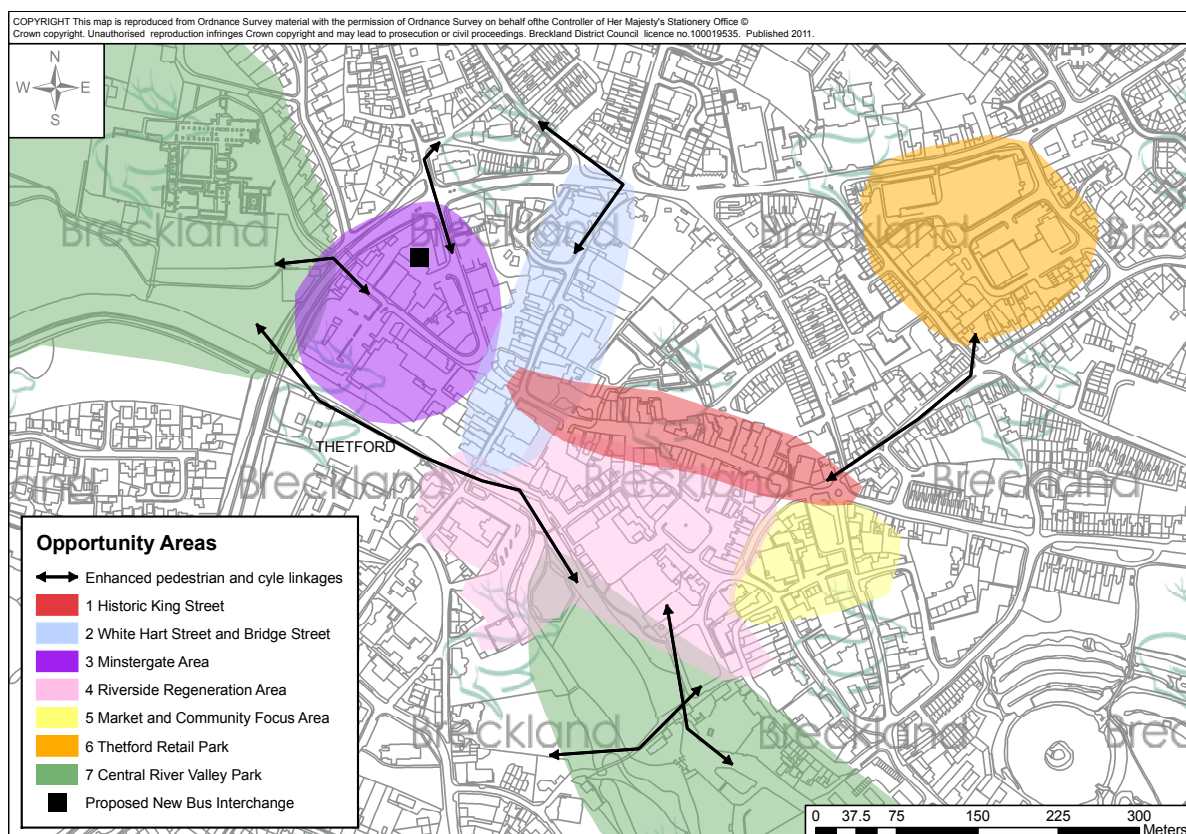
8.4 To the west of the town centre, the Minstergate area will accommodate the new bus interchange including the sensitive redevelopment and repair of the listed building on St Nicholas Street. Elsewhere within the Minstergate area there are other Listed Buildings and the retention and wider use of these buildings as a focus for cultural and commercial uses will be encouraged. In particular, with the increased footfall from the bus interchange facility, the intensification of existing retail properties will be favourably considered. To the north east of the town centre the Thetford Retail Park provides a location for a variety of uses including a small-scale supermarket, non-food retail and other commercial activities. Some parts of the site are vacant and others underused and further retail and commercial leisure activity could be accommodated. Pedestrian and cycling linkages to the core of the town centre would need to be improved.



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8.5 In other parts of the town centre, notably, Earls Street, Raymond Street, Guildhall Street, Castle Street and Magdalen Street, a more flexible approach to the town centre will be considered. In these areas, residential uses are already dominant with retail and office uses being ancillary. Further residential development in these locations will be considered favourably. The Local Planning Authority also recognises the potential of these areas to accommodate those uses which are encouraged to accessible locations but which may not increase footfall in the core areas of the town centre, but would be acceptable in predominantly residential areas, such as health facilities, vets, some financial businesses and office premises.

8.6 The Town Centre Masterplan/neighbourhood plan will be influenced by the adopted policies of the Breckland LDF, SFRA 2 (Scott Wilson, 2010), the draft Thetford Prospectus (Urban Delivery, 2010) and Breckland Retail and Town Centre Study (Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, 2010). The Masterplan/neighbourhood plan will also be expected to utilise other relevant local documents produced by the Town Council, Breckland Council Moving Thetford Forward and Norfolk County Council. The fundamental aim of the Town Centre Masterplan/neighbourhood plan will be to produce an implementable plan to rejuvenate and reinvigorate the town centre, improving the public realm, access, parking and retail and leisure offer. The Masterplan/neighbourhood plan will expand on the guiding principles identified in the policy above as they relate to the specific opportunity areas. The Town Centre Masterplan/neighbourhood plan could form a Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).



Map 8.1 Town Centre Opportunity Areas

Car Parking

8.7 There are nearly 800 off-street public car-parking spaces in Thetford town centre. Observations show that demand currently approximates to capacity on weekdays and exceeds capacity at weekends, which leads to various issues. A car-parking strategy is required for the town centre which could form part of a future Town Centre Masterplan. It is proposed that the strategy should have the following objectives:



- Remove traffic from sensitive streets.
- Provide parking directly off approach roads: 'drive to, not through'.
- Provide preferential access to public transport (PT).
- Be numerically justified in relation to the PT accessibility of the retail area and the retail floor area.
- Provide for mobility impaired, bicycles, powered two wheelers, taxis and freight.
- Be affordable.

Surface-Water Management in the Town Centre

8.8 The Town Centre Masterplan will be prepared and considered against a Surface-Water Management Plan for Thetford, produced under the guidance of Norfolk County Council.

8.9 The geology and soils underlying sites in the town centre have the potential to be conducive for infiltration methods⁽²¹⁾. However, the presence of naturally high groundwater and thin clay layers could be a significant constraint. Given the limited area of the sites, it is likely that small-scale source control SuDS (Sustainable Drainage System) methods (e.g. soakaways) would be most appropriate. In the event that infiltration is not possible, source control and attenuation could be provided by green roofs, permeable paving reservoirs and/or water recycling. The proximity of the sites to the Little Ouse River should allow connection to the watercourse as long as the run-off rate is controlled to that of current conditions.

8.10 Thetford Town Centre is also located within a Source Protection Zone (SPZ), an area that recharges existing public water supply wells. The SuDS design will need to prevent possible groundwater contamination within the SPZ, by preventing infiltration of contaminated run-off. Therefore, SuDS attenuation techniques should be used, with a discharge (no greater than the rates prior to the proposed development) to the nearest surface water receptor (River Thet/Little Ouse). Due to the large roof areas associated with the development type proposed within Thetford Town Centre additional attenuation and water capture can be achieved effectively using source control measures such as rainwater harvesting and green roofs. These techniques should not be relied upon as stand-alone systems, but should be viewed as additional storage to ensure run-off control. It should be noted that proposals should be compliant and consistent with any future national SuDS standards and Norfolk SuDs guidance and the Interim Code of Practice for SuDS⁽²²⁾ or an appropriate successor document. SuDS design should be discussed with the relevant SuDS adoption agency.

8.11 If development proposals come forward in advance of a town-wide Surface-Water Management Plan, applications must provide evidence of meeting PPS25 requirement with their proposals. If development proposals come forward when a Surface-Water Management Plan for the Town Centre is in place, proposals must show how they meet the requirement of the SWMP and are consistent with Norfolk's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy when adopted.

Primary and Secondary Frontages

8.12 The Core Strategy, at Policy DC9, sets out Breckland Council's approach to protecting town centres. The Town Centre Inset Policies Map that accompanies this AAP shows the Primary and Secondary Frontages to which DC9 will be applied.

8.13 If, as a result of the Town Centre Masterplan, it is proposed to change the frontages in Thetford town centre, BDC will undertake a review of the Policies Map in accordance with policy DC9 of the adopted Core Strategy.

21 Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Scott-Wilson (2010)

22 http://www.ciria.org.uk/suds/pdf/nswg_icop_for_suds_0704.pdf



Policy TH 3

New Retail Development

In the period up to 2016, additional convenience floorspace capacity (around 330m² net) will be directed to sites within the town centre.

Breckland Council will consider the need to identify sites to meet Thetford's medium to long-term retail needs in accordance with the sequential approach. The identification of any sites to meet this long-term need will be considered through future reviews of this AAP. Other retail proposals in Thetford will be considered against the policies contained within the adopted Core Strategy and the requirements of national planning policy.

Out-of-centre retail proposals that jeopardise the potential to provide the shopping provision identified within the urban extension and/or undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre will not be permitted.

Reasoned Justification

8.14 The Core Strategy identifies Thetford for 7,000 - 7,500m² (net) comparison goods floorspace to 2018, which was based upon the findings of Breckland Council's Retail and Town Centre Study⁽²³⁾. However, the latest information contained in the 2010 Retail and Town Centre Study⁽²⁴⁾ indicates a range of lower capacity figures which mean that there is no need for Breckland Council to plan for further comparison goods floorspace in Thetford until after 2016. The latest retail study (2010) indicates that there is a projected floorspace requirement for approximately 3,800m² (net) of comparison goods floorspace by the year 2021. However, it should be noted that projections this far into the future are much less reliable than the short term projections (up to 5 years), and as such, this long-term potential to 2021 will require a careful assessment of its impact on the town centre. This will be considered through future reviews of this document. Therefore, beyond 2016 further comparison floorspace will be directed to town centre opportunities. Further information from the future Town Centre Masterplan will help inform the sites selection.

8.15 The latest retail study indicates limited need for further convenience goods (food) floorspace in Thetford until beyond 2016, principally due to existing stores and recent planning permissions granted. The Policy TH 31 'New Local Centre(s) in the Urban Extension', identifies the majority of new convenience goods floorspace to the Urban Extension so that a small foodstore as part of each Local Centre can serve the new population to the north of the town (i.e. up to one small foodstore per Local Centre). The remaining balance of convenience floorspace (around 330m² net) to 2016 could be met within Thetford town centre by further reducing retail vacancy or through reuse/redevelopment of other sites.

8.16 The draft Thetford Vision and Prospectus (undertaken by consultants Urban Delivery in 2010) identified a number of opportunities in the town centre for redevelopment/intensification that could accommodate further retail development as part of mixed-use schemes. The draft Prospectus indicates that these areas could make a contribution to improving the retail offer in the town centre and are suitable and viable for retail use.

8.17 The Council is also supportive of high quality commercial leisure schemes in the defined town centre where these would support the vitality and viability of the centre and regeneration initiatives.

23 Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (2007)

24 Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (2010)



9 Transport

Policy TH 4

Transport - Achieving Modal Shift

All new development (excluding minor householder applications) in Thetford will be required to contribute proportionally to a raft of measures necessary to achieve the modal shift from single occupancy car journeys to other forms of movement. Development which fails to contribute to relevant measures identified in this policy or directly prevents their implementation will not be permitted.

Early discussion should be had with the Local Planning Authority (BDC) and the Local Highways Authority (NCC) and the approach detailed in planning applications.

Promoters and developers are expected to look beyond their development and consider how the community access their site.

Thetford's modal shift will be achieved through the following measures:

- The delivery of a safe, convenient and direct walking and cycling network;
- The establishment and operation of a Smarter Travel Thetford Team to promote, deliver and monitor modal shift;
- The implementation of priority measures for pedestrians, cycles and buses within the highway network;
- The introduction of technology within new and existing residential and commercial development to increase awareness of public transport;
- Enhancements to the frequency, routing and facilities for local bus provision within Thetford;
- Enhancements to bus services to and from nearby settlements such as Attleborough, Bury St. Edmunds and Brandon; and
- Excellent integration between all modes of transport.

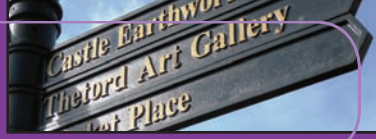
All new development (excluding minor householder applications) will be assessed in terms of its ability to contribute to the achievement of modal shift (including pedestrian and cycle accessibility and access to public transport), its impact on the road network and the environmental impact of traffic generated. Breckland Council will require mitigation measures to be provided to the satisfaction of the Local Transport Authority and Highways Agency where appropriate. The Council will also consult with neighbouring transport authorities where proposals have a demonstrable and significant cross-boundary impact.

Developers will either make direct provision of the necessary modal shift measures relating to their site or will contribute to an overall fund for the provision of these measures through forthcoming CIL (or S106 agreements prior to 2014) mechanisms. A mixture of the two approaches may also be acceptable.

Reasoned Justification

9.1 The policies in the TAAP seek to ultimately reduce the overall mileage travelled, cut unnecessary journeys and attain modal shift from single occupancy car use to more sustainable modes of transport.

9.2 The adopted Breckland Core Strategy at Policy CP4 recognised the transport implications arising from the growth and that development itself will have a primary role in directly delivering and funding wider transport improvements. The detailed Thetford Transport Study (Mott MacDonald, 2010) emphasises that a modal shift from single occupancy car use to more sustainable forms of transport will be required to achieve the following:



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- potentially save an individual money;
- improve health;
- reduce emissions from motor vehicles. This can help to address local air pollution and reduce contributions to climate change;
- accommodate the growth and regeneration proposals in the TAAP and consequentially ensure that transport infrastructure upgrades are at a scale and cost which will be viable and environmentally acceptable; and
- reduce motor traffic in the town. This could contribute to creating a more pleasant environment to live and work in.

9.3 The overall modal shift from single occupancy car journeys to other means of movement is ambitious and achievement is dependent on a sustained and coordinated approach involving measures to increase walking and cycling. The detailed Thetford Transport Study has identified a raft of measures which are identified in the policy and places great emphasis on improving the quality of bus provision in Thetford as being central to achieving local modal shift.

9.4 It is acknowledged that Thetford has certain characteristics that result in key challenges for instigating travel behaviour change. Specifically, these challenges are its relatively rural location and comparative lack of existing public transport infrastructure. However, there are also certain opportunities which must be exploited in the TAAP:

- The relatively compact geographical nature of the area;
- The high proportion of current car based trips under 10km which are an ideal target market for promoting walking and cycling and frequent bus provision; and
- The development of major housing and employment schemes which provide an opportunity to design in sustainable travel for some 11,000 new inhabitants and 5,000 employees (the majority of whom will also live in Thetford).

Walking and Cycling

9.5 The starting point to modal shift is walking and cycling. Map 9.1 'Walking and Cycling Network' identifies a critical walking and cycling network, referred to in the policy, which must be protected and enhancements delivered. These will provide safe and convenient routes for travel to work, schools and leisure and be integrated with public transport hubs and routes. Extensions to the network will be directly delivered through the major areas of change such as the Urban Extension, town centre regeneration, employment estate regeneration and residential estates regeneration. Elsewhere improvements will be secured through a combination of on-site delivery and financial contributions as part of planning proposals. Local authorities will also maintain, and where practicable, enhance the network through their own maintenance and asset investment programmes.

9.6 Norfolk County Council, have indicated the production of local cycling standards that combine the many standards already in existence from different organisations. Development of the cycling network will be expected to meet those standards.

Bus

9.7 In addition to the delivery of an improved walking and cycling network, the growth and regeneration of Thetford will deliver an enhanced level of bus provision for the town. Moving Thetford Forward are leading on the relocation and expansion of the bus interchange in the town centre by 2013 and this will be a catalyst for improved bus services. Modal shift to buses will be central to the successful transport strategy for the Urban Extension and policies elsewhere in this document outline site-specific measures for buses. Across the town a coordinated approach will be taken towards ensuring consistent improvements to bus infrastructure such as upgraded bus stops, enhanced frequency of bus provision and presentation of bus services. Where practicable this will be secured as part of a development. Elsewhere financial contributions will be sought including through forthcoming CIL (or S106 agreements prior to 2014) mechanisms.



9.8 In the early part of this Plan period (by 2016) a review will look into the frequency and routes of the existing bus services to surrounding settlements as well as potentially the affordability. The focus of this Review will be services to Bury St Edmunds, Brandon, Croxton Village, Diss, Attleborough and Snetterton Heath and if proved viable, even as far as Norwich (for education, health and shopping). In particular, given the provision of hospital and higher education facilities as well as shopping offer in Bury St Edmunds (although see Town Centre section) attention will particularly focus on evening services and the time of the last bus in either direction in a way that would avoid undermining the viability of existing bus services within Bury St Edmunds. The Review will also assess improving routes to include the Urban Extension as well as the new Bus Interchange in a logical order and also to stop on the radial routes out of town. Any review will include the bus operators and the cross boundary cooperation of local planning and transport authorities to ensure that public transport integrates well with planned growth and other local priorities such as enhancing rural activity.

9.9 A new bus service from Thetford to Attleborough and Snetterton Heath would naturally pass through the Urban Extension to the north of Thetford and the potential for such a service to connect to the new development needs to be maximised. The delivery of internal bus service improvements could be secured through subsidised services funded by the Urban Extension development as well as commercially-driven improved services reflecting the wider policies and activities aimed at securing modal shift. Residential and commercial developments in the Urban Extension are required by the policy to include the provision of such technologies that will enable residents and employees to access real-time information on local bus services. The TAAP does not prescribe a particular form of technology. The Masterplan and subsequent application for the Urban Extension are expected to include details on how this aspect of the policy will be achieved and how this will be operational from the occupation of the first dwellings and commercial premises. Such technology could be retrofitted to the rest of the town in order to aid modal shift towards the bus.

9.10 With regards to bus facilities, Breckland Council and partners will seek to facilitate the improvement of the existing bus facilities in the town to the required standard of the Urban Extension as detailed in Policy TH 26 'Buses' and the supporting text.

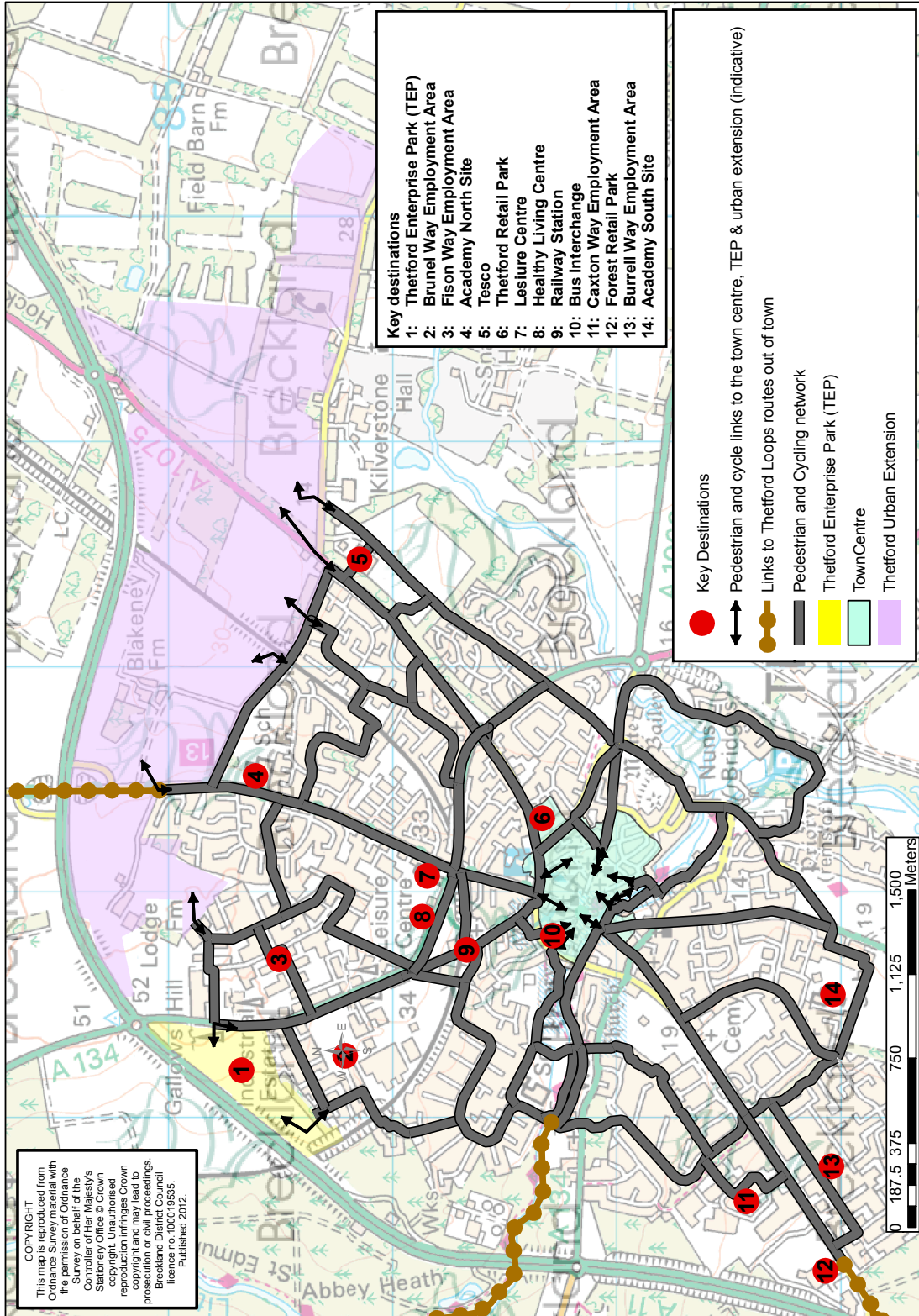
Smarter Travel Thetford

9.11 The efforts on walking, cycling and buses need to be underpinned by a well-designed smarter travel programme so as to fully deliver significant modal shift and achieve wider benefits on carbon emission reductions, decreased congestion and health. The detailed Thetford Transport Study recommends, as part of an approach to smarter travel choices, the establishment of a Smarter Travel Thetford (STT) programme based on the concept of delivering smarter travel initiatives which best meet and/or have propensity to influence local community travel needs. Such initiatives could include car sharing and car clubs as well as promoting walking and cycling.

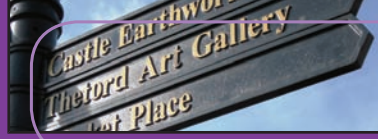
9.12 A well developed, fully integrated STT programme can deliver real benefits in bringing about lasting behaviour change. Such a programme could not only help accommodate the proposals in this TAAP but could also improve travel options and overall connectivity for the wider area. Smarter travel programmes have already demonstrated good results both in the UK and further afield.



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Map 9.1 Walking and Cycling Network



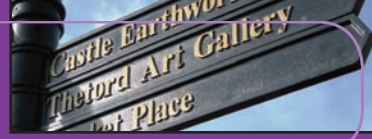
9.13 The overarching responsibility of the STT is to coordinate town-wide smarter travel measures. Particular attention will be given to assessing the travel plans of the Urban Extension and other major developments to ensure there is a coordinated approach in travel planning activity between the specific measures for these schemes as well as the wider promotion of travel planning especially within destinations such as employers, retail and service providers. The STT will be responsible for the overarching communications and awareness campaign to promote the smarter choices measures on a town-wide basis. The STT will also be responsible for ongoing monitoring of the delivery and impact of the programme. Smarter travel is resource intensive and therefore provision for a dedicated, proactive, community-orientated team to work on the smarter travel measures will be essential. The engagement of the local community within this programme is critical to its success and this will only be possible with the input from a strong and dedicated team. There is also a significant number of key stakeholders within the area that are vital for successful implementation of a Smarter Travel Thetford programme. These include local community groups and resident's associations as well as the business community.

9.14 The objectives of the STT are neatly aligned with those of Sustrans' *Call for Action*⁽²⁵⁾ - upping the pace to achieve a cost-effective transition to sustainable local travel by 2020. The objectives which are relevant are:

- Encourage people to change their travel behaviour;
- Create safer and attractive walking and cycling conditions;
- Increase public transport usage by improving and integrating services;
- Ensure that planning policy and practice reduce the need to travel; and
- Increase spending on sustainable travel.

9.15 The STT will be established in the first phase of this Area Action Plan (by 2016) so as to coincide with the occupation of the first new homes and businesses. Norfolk County Council, Breckland Council, Thetford Town Council and the NHS will all be involved and contribute to the setting up and running of this team although the significant majority of the funding for STT will be secured from development through either a S106 agreement or successor CIL arrangements.

25 <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/about-sustrans/call-to-action-for-2020>



Policy TH 5

The Impact of Change on Pedestrians, Cyclists and Buses

Any type of development which adversely affects the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport will not be permitted.

All traffic management schemes, residential development over 5 dwellings and commercial development over 500m² will be required to identify, as part of their planning application, how all types of pedestrians, cyclists and buses are affected by the scheme and how they access or leave the scheme to determine if the provision is adequate and beneficial to these sustainable modes of travel.

Reasoned Justification

9.16 The Transport evidence base for Thetford (Mott Macdonald, 2009 and 2010) highlights the transport-related issues the town is likely to experience, even without the proposed growth. Thetford is identified as a "Healthy Town" and there is an emphasis to get people to move more and live a healthier lifestyle. However, there is high single occupancy car use in the town and as a consequence significant effort is required to get modal shift to more healthy and environmentally acceptable modes of transport.

9.17 The town of Thetford will undergo many changes over the coming years ranging from small scale residential development to the construction of entire neighbourhoods, town centre regeneration and wider improvements to the internal highway network. Pedestrians and cyclists and buses must not be adversely affected by any changes that happen in Thetford. Consideration must be given to these modes of transport early on in any design process.

9.18 Examples of adverse impacts which the assessment seeks to avoid include:

- i. Considering the movement of pedestrians and cyclists in areas of new traffic management schemes in Thetford (for example those identified in Policy TH 29 'Improvements to the Local Road Network');
- ii. Avoiding obstacles in the way of pedestrians and cyclists (for example inappropriate barrier arrangements); and
- iii. Protecting permeability by pedestrians and cyclists as areas change (such as existing residential estates, existing employment areas and the Town Centre).

9.19 The effect of these schemes on how pedestrians, cyclists and buses move now and how they move, arrive and leave after the scheme is completed needs to be understood in order to not deter such modes of travel. The transport strategy for the TAAP is predicated on challenging levels of modal shift; therefore, a specific policy response to maintain the attractiveness of walking, cycling and public transport during a period of significant development and change in the town is required.

9.20 The Local Planning Authority encourages the assessment to be undertaken after the preliminary design stage. Suitable mitigation against any negative effects and maximising the positive effects can then be identified and incorporated into subsequent stages of design work in order to improve on the preliminary design. Evidence of such an assessment and how the findings have informed the final design should be provided as part of the design and access statement accompanying the Planning Application.

9.21 Such improvements could see the provision of bus, cycle or pedestrian priority measures at junctions, such as advanced cycle stop lines.

9.22 The term pedestrian is to be interpreted in its widest extent and applies to such members of the community as able bodied, people with pushchairs or young children, disabled people or those using mobility scooters.



Policy TH 6

Thetford Bus Interchange

Land is identified between St Nicholas Street, Minstergate and London Road on the Policies Map for a new Thetford Bus Interchange.

Subject to statutory approvals the bus interchange will provide for 5 bays with covered waiting areas, public toilets, real-time public transport information and automated ticket vending.

The former warehouse of Charles Burrell (more recently used by Cosy Carpets) which is a Listed Building currently in a derelict state will be refurbished and brought back into beneficial use with occupiers compatible with its Town Centre location adjacent to a significant transport node, although not necessarily used as a function of the bus interchange.

Access to the proposed Bus Interchange will seek to minimise pedestrian, cyclist and vehicle conflicts, in particular along Minstergate which has a significant number of pedestrian movements to and between the adjacent retail units, the town centre and London Road subway. The traffic light junction at London Road will be improved to cater for the additional pedestrian and vehicular demands that will arise.

Reasoned Justification

9.23 It has been a long term aspiration to improve the bus station facilities in Thetford. The existing site is constrained by adjacent buildings (one of which is listed), flood zones (along the river frontage) and by the presence of a Scheduled Monument. If building demolitions occurred to achieve a suitable site assembly for an improved bus interchange at the riverside regeneration area, the regeneration potential of this important town centre site and the opportunity it provides to significantly enhance the river frontage and wider revival of the town centre would be compromised.

9.24 The proposed site for the new bus interchange between Minstergate and St Nicholas Street is an appropriate and sustainable location close to existing services and facilities, with adequate space to accommodate all existing and proposed buses that service Thetford. A planning application that includes technical evidence to demonstrate the deliverability of this scheme is due for submission in 2011 and the earliest a new bus station/interchange could open is during the 2012/13 financial year. Whilst the proposed site is not wholly within public ownership, discussions are progressing with the owner(s) with a view to securing ownership. If this can not be achieved through mutual agreement, then consideration will be given to the Compulsory Purchase of the site.

9.25 The former warehouse of Charles Burrell will be repaired and improved as part of the bus interchange project. Whilst it is unlikely that the building will be needed as part of the functioning of the new bus interchange, its end use will be compatible with that of a town centre location with the building's conservation providing a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the local environment. It is expected that any redevelopment of this site will preserve and/or enhance the historic assets of the area, including the listed buildings, Conservation Area and archaeological deposits. The new bus interchange is a destination on the walking and cycling map as shown at Map 9.1 'Walking and Cycling Network'



Policy TH 7

Thetford Railway Station

Proposals for increased use and improvements to Thetford Railway Station will be promoted and supported whilst respecting the amenity of nearby residents.

(a) Main Station Buildings

Proposals for the main station buildings will be permitted where these:

- i. result in the active use of the existing vacant station buildings;
- ii. promote appropriate conservation and repair of listed buildings including curtilage listed buildings and structures;
- iii. deliver viable, new and improved access between platforms for all users;
- iv. improve essential railway station services and facilities (waiting rooms, toilets, hours of opening etc);
- v. improve walking, cycling and bus connections to the station from around the town, especially between the proposed new bus interchange and the railway station;
- vi. consider any impact on Station Road;
- vii. increase the amount of cycle parking; and
- viii. consider an increase in car and taxi parking provision if the need is proven, within the zone of search identified on (Map 9.2 'Area of Search for Parking at Thetford Railway Station').

Proposals for development within classes A1 (shops), A3 (restaurants and cafés) and B1 (offices) of the Use Class Order (as amended), will be permitted if they result in the active use of the station buildings.

(b) Ancillary Building to the West of the Main Station Buildings

Proposals for the ancillary building to the west of the main station buildings will be permitted where these:

- i. result in the active use of this building;
- ii. promote appropriate conservation and repair of this curtilage listed building;
- iii. contribute proportionately to the delivery of a viable, new and improved access between platforms for all users;
- iv. consider any impact on Station Road;
- v. will not be affected by railway operations or designed in such a way so as to not be affected; and
- vi. do not impact on the workings of the station, including the car park and taxi rank.

Proposals for development within classes C3 (Residential), A1 (shops), A3 (restaurants and cafés) and B1 (offices) of the Use Class Order (as amended), will be permitted where they result in the active use of this station building.

Reasoned Justification

9.26 Thetford Railway Station is a grade II listed building, which includes curtilage listed buildings and structures, some of which are vacant and underused. The provision of appropriate conservation, repair and re-use of these buildings is encouraged to provide a positive contribution to Thetford's local character and the distinctiveness of its historic environment. Furthermore, the enhancement of the historic environment together with the provision of ancillary retail or leisure proposals would be positively supported providing that conflict does not arise with the retail policies of the Thetford Area Action Plan, the adopted Core Strategy and National Planning Policy.



9.27 Thetford Railway Station will be a key destination and origin in the walking and cycling network as well as on the public transportation route. Improvements to these networks will aid access to the railway station from around the town. However, to secure the objective of significant modal shift, there is a need to enhance facilities such as cycle parking at key public transport connections such as the railway station.



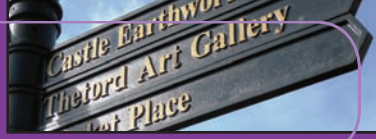
Picture 9.1 Thetford Railway Station

9.28 Thetford Railway Station's catchment is split into two main types, a walk-up element comprising some 44% of demand originating within 1.2 km of the station, and a substantial drive-up element, many of whom travel substantial distances, often more than 15 km to park at the station and catch the train to their destinations. Whilst evidence suggests that car parking at the station is not currently at capacity, as the town grows demand could increase⁽²⁶⁾. The zone of search as illustrated in Map 9.2 'Area of Search for Parking at Thetford Railway Station' identifies the area within which Breckland Council (in conjunction with partners) will investigate opportunities for a review of car parking provision if a need is proven. If increased car and taxi parking provision are required resulting in the loss of existing important uses (e.g. a business or allotment land), Breckland Council will work with the occupiers and site owners to find an alternative site of at least equal quality, quantity and convenience. Any proposals for such a change in land use will require full justification, evidence of liaison with those potentially affected as well as the identification of an alternative site. Any potential improvements will be subject to an appropriate transport assessment. With regards to allotments, proposals will be assessed in accordance with Core Strategy Policy DC11 on Open Space.

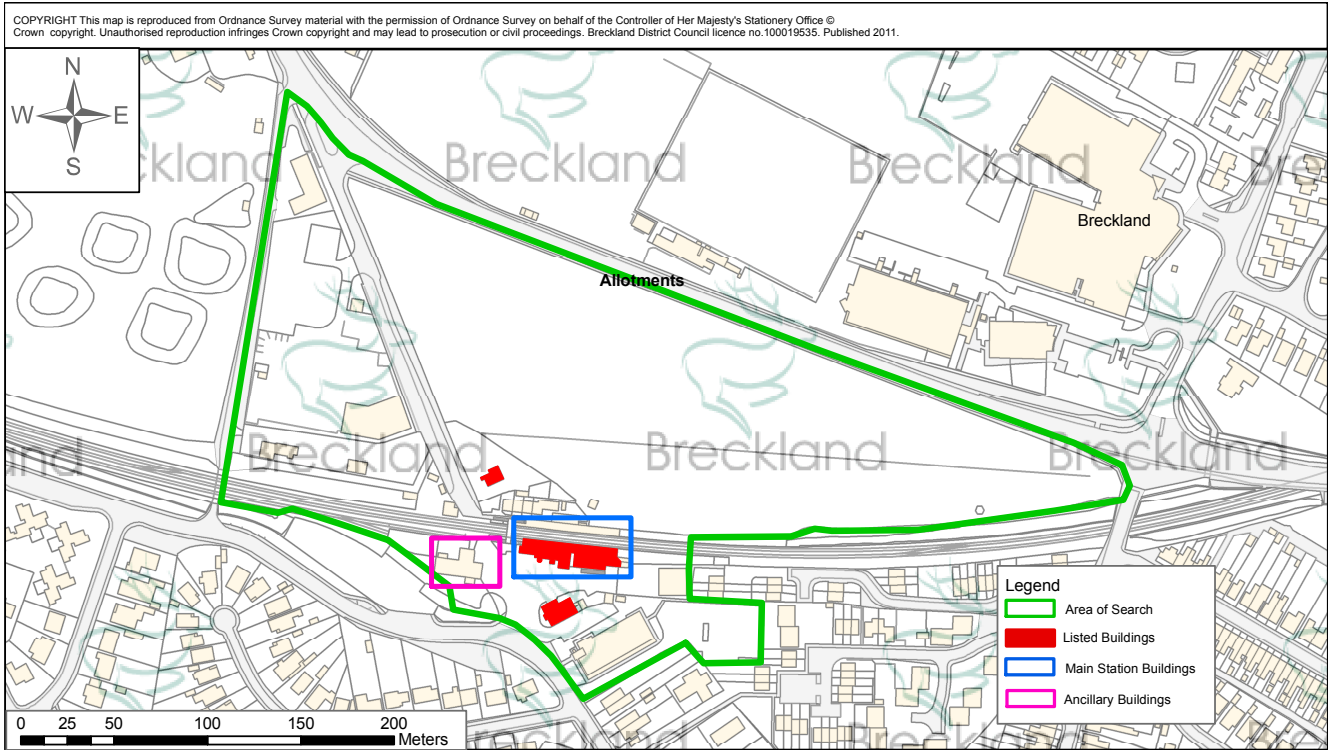
9.29 Thetford Railway Station is used more for journeys originating from the town other than for incoming journeys to Thetford as a destination. The most important destination is Norwich, to which there appears to be a significant commuter flow, though other destinations which can be reached without a change of train from Thetford includes places such as Cambridge and Ely. There is also demand for longer-distance journeys, other than London that can be reached without interchange.

9.30 Improvements to the access between platforms and facilities at the station need to consider and provide for all disabled users. Additionally, a review of hours the facilities are open to the public is needed to ensure the railway station meets the needs of the growing town.

9.31 The Local Transport and Planning Authorities will continue to work with all applicable bodies to secure improvements to all of the rail services from the Thetford Railway Station and to ensure any enhancements for all users are delivered over the plan period to create a transport gateway to the town which meets modern expectations whilst respecting its historic context.



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Map 9.2 Area of Search for Parking at Thetford Railway Station



10 Healthy Lifestyles

Policy TH 8

Healthy Lifestyles

All net new development (excluding minor household applications) will be expected:

- to demonstrate that appropriate steps have been taken through its design and construction and implementation to avoid or mitigate potential negative effects on the health of the population;
- to facilitate enhanced health and well-being through the provision of conditions supportive of good physical and mental health (such as enabling physical activity); and
- to reduce, where possible, disparities in health between different parts of Thetford by addressing detrimental environmental social and economic conditions.

Developers will be expected to complete and submit the following with planning applications:

- i. Health Impact Assessment for large and complex proposals;
- ii. A Healthy Urban Planning Checklist for development of 5 dwellings/1,000m² non residential or more.

Reasoned Justification

10.1 Thetford is recognised within the Norfolk Joint Strategic Needs Assessment as being an area of relatively poor health in relation to county and national norms. The area demonstrates higher incidences of illnesses such as diabetes, coronary heart disease and mental health problems which are commonly associated with higher levels of social deprivation. Accordingly, NHS Norfolk and Breckland Council made a successful bid to the Department of Health for Thetford's inclusion within the national "Healthy Towns" programme: a £1.8m programme aimed at tackling high levels of obesity through improvements to the planned environment, as well as services aimed at promoting physical activity and improving diet.

10.2 Improving the health and well-being of the community is a priority of Breckland Council's Sustainable Community Strategy and Thetford Healthy Town. Health is influenced by social, economic and environmental conditions and planning policies have a significant role to play in creating the conditions for improving health. Accordingly, proposals for development will be screened to ensure insofar as is possible, they will contribute to improved health outcomes for all and that negative effects are avoided.

10.3 Major development will be subject to the most comprehensive screening which, in the case of particularly large complex development and those that have clear health implications, may take the form of a formal Health Impact Assessment (whether or not such an application also requires an EIA). In such cases the developer will be required to commission such an assessment from an independent and reputable body.

10.4 Health Impact Assessment is a well-established and widely used range of techniques. The purpose of HIA is essentially to systematically check that a policy or project will not have unforeseen and negative effects. Approaches to HIA may range from a quantitative emphasis, relying heavily on epidemiological analysis to a qualitative analysis, drawing on community or stakeholder perceptions, or a combination. The methodology should be agreed with the NHS Norfolk/NCC Public Health at an early stage.

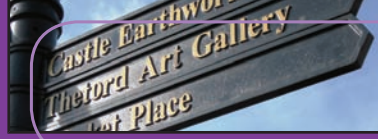
10.5 The Thetford Urban Extension, improvements to the town centre, changes to existing residential estates and changes to existing employment areas will result in *significant change*. As such, Breckland Council requires a HIA to accompany applications for such large and complex proposals.



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

10.6 In other cases development will be appraised using the Healthy Urban Planning Checklist that encompasses all the potential health implications of development. This is to be part of the local validation list as this will allow for changes to the check list in the future without needing to change the TAAP as experience of using the checklist changes with time.

10.7 The HIA/checklist can be completed at both the outline and detailed planning application stage, however applicants will have to prepare sufficient detail at the outline stage to enable health impacts to be assessed.



11 Emergency Services

Police Facilities

11.1 The Thetford Police Station provides a current base for the Thetford Safer Neighbourhood Team. The Police Station has recently been extended and is expected to cater for the town's growing demand over the next 10 years. The Custody Suite is being moved to Bury St. Edmunds as part of a joint Private Finance Initiative (PFI). As such, there could potentially be enough space to accommodate the growth with a 2 storey extension. Parking for personal and service vehicles could be an issue, but travel planning presents a solution given the relatively central location of the Norwich Road Police Station.

The Police Response Team for Thetford

11.2 The Police Response team (answering 999's) for Thetford and much of the Breckland area will grow as a result of the growth in the area and with potential increased vehicular usage from the new development and Town centre, this function would be better located on a new site near the A11, on an employment site.

11.3 Breckland Council prefers locating the Police Response Team for Thetford in an existing employment area as this has the potential to bring into use a vacant unit and could act as a catalyst for change in the area.

11.4 This approach could be seen to not necessarily be in accordance with the Core Strategy Policy DC6; however, Breckland Council sees such a land use as complementary to an Employment Area and therefore promotes this land use as an acceptable one in Employment Areas in Thetford.

Existing Thetford Police Station

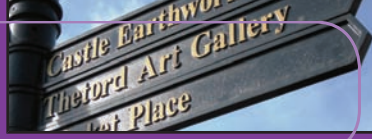
11.5 The Police would want the front desk function of the station to be located in the centre of Thetford. Due to the estimated number of dwellings in the Thetford Urban Extension and growth of and potential changes to the town centre, the Police expect the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) and Protective Services functions to grow and take up more space and car parking at the existing Thetford Police Station.

11.6 As the SNT is managed as one team for the whole of Thetford, the Police would wish for Officers to continue to be deployed from the existing Thetford Police Station located on Norwich Road. This has benefits for town centre access and the management resource required to supervise the team. The future changes to the site give the opportunity to improve the design and environmental performance of the Police station.

11.7 The delivery section of this document sets out the funding situation and the role/potential for developer contributions. Existing deficiencies with the police station will need to be remedied from existing revenue sources. However, with an expanding population, additional service provision and facility capacity will be required and in accordance with policy CP4 of the Core strategy, a developer contribution will be sought.

Fire and Ambulance

11.8 The planned expansion of Thetford will have a significant impact on the number of emergency calls. The existing Fire Station, which has a full time crew Monday to Friday and is covered by retained staff at the weekend and at night, is outdated and not ideally situated to accommodate the planned expansion, which is predominantly to the north of the town. This will have an impact on the ability to respond efficiently due to its central location. All the Emergency Services are in discussion over the possibility of relocating to a single site to best accommodate the planned growth in Thetford. The Fire Service will be working collaboratively with the other emergency services in order to deliver the above scenario.



12 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

Policy TH 9

Monitoring and Management of Key Biodiversity Sites

(a) Sustainable management of key biodiversity sites

Breckland Council will work with relevant agencies and bodies to continue to commit resources and effort to the management of key biodiversity sites, with priority given to those within 7.5km of Thetford with public access.

(b) Managing the potential urban effects on key biodiversity sites

All net new development (excluding minor household applications) will be required to make appropriate contributions through CIL (or S106 agreements prior to 2014), towards mitigating urban effects on key biodiversity sites. Breckland Council will seek contributions towards the following measures:

- the review of management plans as a result of the proposed growth;
- the monitoring of the impact of recreation and urban effects resulting from the changes in Thetford on the qualifying features of key sites; and
- the management of key sites in response to visitor pressure and urban effects.

Reasoned Justification

12.1 Breckland Council's overarching approach to the natural environment is contained within Policy CP10 of the adopted Core Strategy, which this policy should be read alongside. Thetford is surrounded by habitats of local, national and international importance, many of which have public access. The key biodiversity sites to which this policy refers include Breckland Forest, Breckland Farmland, Barnham Cross Common, Thetford Heath, Thetford Golf Course and Marsh, East Wretham Heath, Bridgham and Brettenham Heath and Elm Road Field. It is essential that these sites are protected from any potential adverse effects the growth and regeneration in Thetford may cause. Breckland Council is supportive of the principle of working collaboratively with those adjoining planning authorities in the SPA. Furthermore Breckland Council is willing to work in partnership, preferably through an independent management body, to coordinate development contributions in respect of biodiversity management and implement appropriate mitigation. Evidence⁽²⁷⁾ indicates that Thetford Forest and heathland areas are regularly used by local communities as their local greenspace and further population increase may result in further 'urban effects' on those sites in proximity to the town.

12.2 Urban effects can include a range of impacts such as eutrophication (e.g. from dog fouling), trampling, increased fire risk, habitat damage from recreational impacts (such as biking, off-road vehicles, etc), introduction of alien plants, litter, fly-tipping, air pollution from traffic and cat predation. Proximity to urban centres and high population pressure means these impacts are all exacerbated and as a result particular management measures are often required. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) considered the need for the Council to exercise caution as part of the TAAP as there is the potential for future disturbance effects from visitors located up to 7.5km from Breckland SPA forest components with Woodlark and Nightjar. Therefore, the policy seeks to reflect the fact that agencies will need to work together to monitor and manage key biodiversity sites as an early warning system to ensure that no adverse effects occur in future as the town develops.

27 Visitor Survey Results from Breckland SPA (Footprint Ecology) (2010)



12.3 At present the understanding of the extent of any impact from recreational disturbance is not complete and therefore a precautionary approach is required. It is important that increased visitor numbers and general urban effects do not adversely affect these sites. This may require a range of counteracting measures including reduced or more highly managed access and the provision of alternative areas for local greenspace. In the first instance further monitoring is required to understand any impacts arising from recreational access levels, particularly whether Woodlark and Nightjar bird species are avoiding suitable habitat which experiences frequent visitor numbers.

12.4 Thetford is not the only area of growth likely to have an effect on the key sites listed below and therefore coordinated monitoring is required to address the cumulative impacts on these sites. Where it is shown that development is having, or likely to be leading to, an adverse effect then appropriate and reasonable action must be taken to mitigate these effects. The scale and scope of mitigation and site management will be informed by monitoring work and is likely to focus on methods to deflect visitor numbers. A specific Bird Access and Monitoring Framework is provided which will set out a programme of monitoring to act as an 'early warning system' to ensure adverse effects do not occur and trigger any necessary mitigation.

12.5 Mitigation measures could take a number of forms specific to the issues associated with the site. In general, managing urban effects is likely to require one or more of the following:

- Mobile wardens/ranger staff with a remit focused on access management and promoting responsible access;
- Close work with local conservation staff and the local emergency services to ensure rapid response to fires and to any illegal activity;
- Provision of dog bins at suitable locations around the Thetford sites;
- The provision of suitable areas for dog walking and recreational use (walks, etc) for communities living in Thetford (particularly near Barnham Cross);
- Control of parking availability and limiting parking away from official car parks on designated sites;
- Access infrastructure as necessary to limit access by off-road vehicles to sensitive locations;
- Education programmes, promotion of nature conservation and responsible access with local communities. Potentially promotion of suitable areas for dog walking and other types of access;
- Seek ways to ensure access is focused away from open habitats, during periods likely to adversely impact the designated species or habitat, for example by promoting way-marked routes for dog walkers, cyclists, etc;
- Create permanent areas of habitat suitable for Woodlark and Nightjar in areas with low levels of access.

Green Infrastructure (GI)

12.6 The provision of new green infrastructure and the protection and enhancement of existing landscape and environmental assets to ensure they are not compromised by new growth is essential.

12.7 Green infrastructure is multi functional and can provide a range of environmental, social and economic functions, including positive health benefits and aid social cohesion as well as acting as wildlife corridors aiding the movement of wildlife. Access to and regular use of green infrastructure is strongly associated with both physical and mental health benefits.

12.8 This section identifies a number of Thetford specific projects which should be regarded in the context of Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy.

12.9 Any proposals for GI will have due regard to the historic environment, including archaeological remains and landscape character.

12.10 Please note that this section refers to town-wide elements of GI embedded in the TAAP. In the Thetford Urban Extension section, there are area-specific GI elements directly associated with the Urban Extension.



Policy TH 10

Allotments

(a) Amount of Allotment Provision

All significantly sized new development in the plan area is required to provide new allotment provision of at least 5,000m²/0.5ha (approx 20 full or 40 half-sized plots) per 500 new dwellings.

(b) Allotment Design Guidance

Planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the land:

- i. is located on land which is suitable for the growing of crops or is made suitable prior to occupation (in terms of drainage, contamination and landscaping for example);
- ii. is well related to new and/or existing residential areas;
- iii. is secure;
- iv. has good access by foot and cycle;
- v. has suitable provision for vehicle and cycle parking;
- vi. contributes to a linked network of open spaces or green corridors; and,
- vii. avoids archaeologically sensitive sites.

(c) Allotment Transfer

Breckland Council will seek a legal agreement to transfer the prepared allotments to the appropriate Town/Parish Council (or other appropriate body) at nil cost whereby it will then likely be legally classified as allotment land for the purposes of the allotment act(s).

Reasoned Justification

12.11 Allotments provide the opportunity for residents to grow their own vegetables and flowers, and are especially valuable to those people who have small or no gardens. Allotments can contribute to a healthy lifestyle meeting the aims of Thetford's Healthy Town Status and have the potential to boost local biodiversity and green infrastructure networks within the town. Growing local food can also reduce carbon emissions.

12.12 Significantly sized developments include the Urban Extension as well as potentially the existing estate residential regeneration schemes, depending on the scale of change. Typically a significantly sized development would be one in excess of 100 dwellings. The provision of allotments in the Urban Extension should be located in a place that is easily accessible by both the existing residents and the new residents as this could assist with social cohesion and integration. Parking should be provided at a rate of approximately 10 car spaces and 10 Sheffield Stands for cycle parking per 100 allotment plots. Cycle parking should be spread across the site.

12.13 In order to meet criterion (ii) in the policy, Breckland Council does not anticipate allotment provision in the Urban Extension to be provided as one concentration of allotments, but rather provided in pace with development and at locations that will also assist in the delivery of criterion (iv).



12.14 Land that is known or suspected to be contaminated will only be considered for allotment use if it can be demonstrated through investigation that the site will not present an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment as a result of its previous use.

Community Gardens

12.15 The principle behind community gardens is supported by Breckland Council. Proposals would be assessed on a case-by-case basis but are likely to be required to meet the guidelines as set out in the previous allotment policy.

12.16 Community gardens are community-managed projects working with people, animals and plants. They range from tiny wildlife gardens to fruit and vegetable plots on housing estates, from community polytunnels to large city farms. They aim to encourage strong community relationships and an awareness of gardening and farming. Most projects provide food-growing activities, training courses, school visits, community allotments and community businesses. In addition, some provide play facilities and sports facilities, and after school and holiday schemes.



Policy TH 11

Joe Blunt's Lane

The existing route of Joe Blunt's Lane will be protected and enhanced as a green route to the north of Thetford.

Development (including roads and buildings) will not be permitted where it interrupts the integrity of Joe Blunt's Lane or encroaches onto the lane.

Limited pedestrian/cycle path connections will be permitted in locations where there is minimal harm to the vegetation and character of the lane. The details of such connections and mitigation/compensation will be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

A guided bus route which only utilises the railway underpass will be accepted subject to the following criteria which will be set by legal condition:

- i. The need is fully justified and other solutions to the identified transport issue the proposal is set to resolve have been fully explored;
- ii. The infrastructure is minimal and appropriately designed to reflect the location and rural character;
- iii. Pedestrians and cyclists have priority;
- iv. Buses only operate for school use and for no other purposes;
- v. Buses operate in term time only and not at weekends, on bank holidays nor outside of term times and for a limited time at the start and end of the school day;
- vi. The area is maintained and managed in terms of any associated effects of such a use (such as litter, effect on vegetation and effect on amenity of existing land uses such as residential); and
- vii. The use of this link would not compromise the delivery of public bus, pedestrian and cycle route to be provided by means of a bridge over the railway as detailed in Policy TH 26 'Buses'.

The rural character of the lane will be maintained.

Breckland Council and partners will change the status of the lane to legally allow cycling.

Reasoned Justification

Background

12.17 Joe Blunt's Lane is a well used, direct and uninterrupted lane to the north of the existing town. It is currently used by pedestrians and cyclists for many types of journeys including school and work journeys. It is currently a footpath and forms the Parish boundary between Thetford and Croxton. The lane is shown as being in existence on an early printed map of 1826 published by Andrew Bryant as is the parish boundary running along its length.

Future Use

12.18 The need to attain modal shift away from single occupancy car use is essential for transport and health related issues and Breckland Council wishes to protect the integrity of this route from encroachment of any kind.

12.19 The lane is an integral part of the Thetford Loops (see Map 12.1 'The Thetford Loops.')

and also part of the wider cycle network (see Map 9.1 'Walking and Cycling Network'). It will become a route serving the existing and the future population of Thetford.



12.20 Joe Blunt's Lane occupies a strategic location sandwiched between the urban extension and the existing town; however Breckland Council will protect the undeveloped/rural character of the lane. Any development near to the lane will be expected to face the lane and any surfacing or lighting should be appropriate to maintaining the rural nature of the lane.

12.21 The vegetation on either side of the lane is subject to Policy TH 21 'Locally Distinctive Features of the Landscape' to improve this lane as a green/wildlife corridor.

Guided Busway

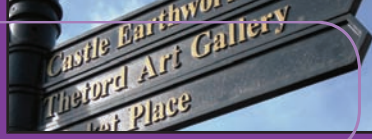
12.22 The existing rail underpass could provide a solution to traversing the railway line near to the proposed school expansion to help make buses an attractive option for the school run, however such proposals are required to be fully justified and other potential solutions proven to be investigated. This information should accompany any planning application.

12.23 Pedestrians and cyclists are required to always have priority to reflect the strategic location of the lane and its potential for assisting in modal shift to walking and cycling, for all kinds of journeys.

12.24 Breckland Council wishes to maintain the rural character of the lane. As such, only guided busways, designed in an appropriate way and scale, rather than a fully tarmaked road will be accepted. Use by buses will only be permitted for the minimum length required for buses to access the underpass and pass under it. Rather than being used by buses frequently throughout the day, if permitted, use will only be for the school run and times of use by those buses will be limited to appropriate times of day and times of the year.

12.25 The congregation of public transport users waiting for the bus or alighting from the bus has the potential to result in litter, damaged trees and hedges and negative impact on existing uses. As such, appropriate management is required, detailed in any planning application. This could be through supervision and subsequent litter removal at the start and end of the day.

12.26 Breckland Council considers that the delivery of a sustainable transport link through the development is critical to the overall success of the Urban Extension and will be included in the masterplan. The initial use of the underpass at Joe Blunt's Lane to facilitate school bus usage is seen as a necessary compromise to deliver modal shift in the early stages. Breckland Council will consider time limiting the use of the underpass to ensure that the over-bridge will be delivered.



Policy TH 12

The Thetford Loops

The Thetford Loops as illustrated on the Policies Map will be multi purpose, high quality routes for pedestrians and cyclists for leisure and utility trips.

Proposals/schemes for areas where parts of the Loops network runs through or are directly adjacent, will provide the Loops as part of the proposal/scheme. Breckland Council will seek a legal agreement to enable the subsequent handing over at nil charge to Norfolk County Council or another relevant approved body for maintenance.

Financial contributions (through CIL (or S106 agreements prior to 2014)) towards the provision of the Loops will only be considered where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that this is a more appropriate option than direct provision.

The design and implementation of the Loops will ensure impacts from recreational use to the European Protected Sites surrounding Thetford are avoided. The provisional routes set out in this plan will be subject to a detailed plan outlining sensitive features and measures necessary to protect them. This will include fencing, screening, signage and alternative temporary routes.

The use of alternative routes will have regard to relevant plans for the forest (such as felling), as well as the need for seasonal restrictions to avoid adverse effects on European habitats.

Reasoned Justification

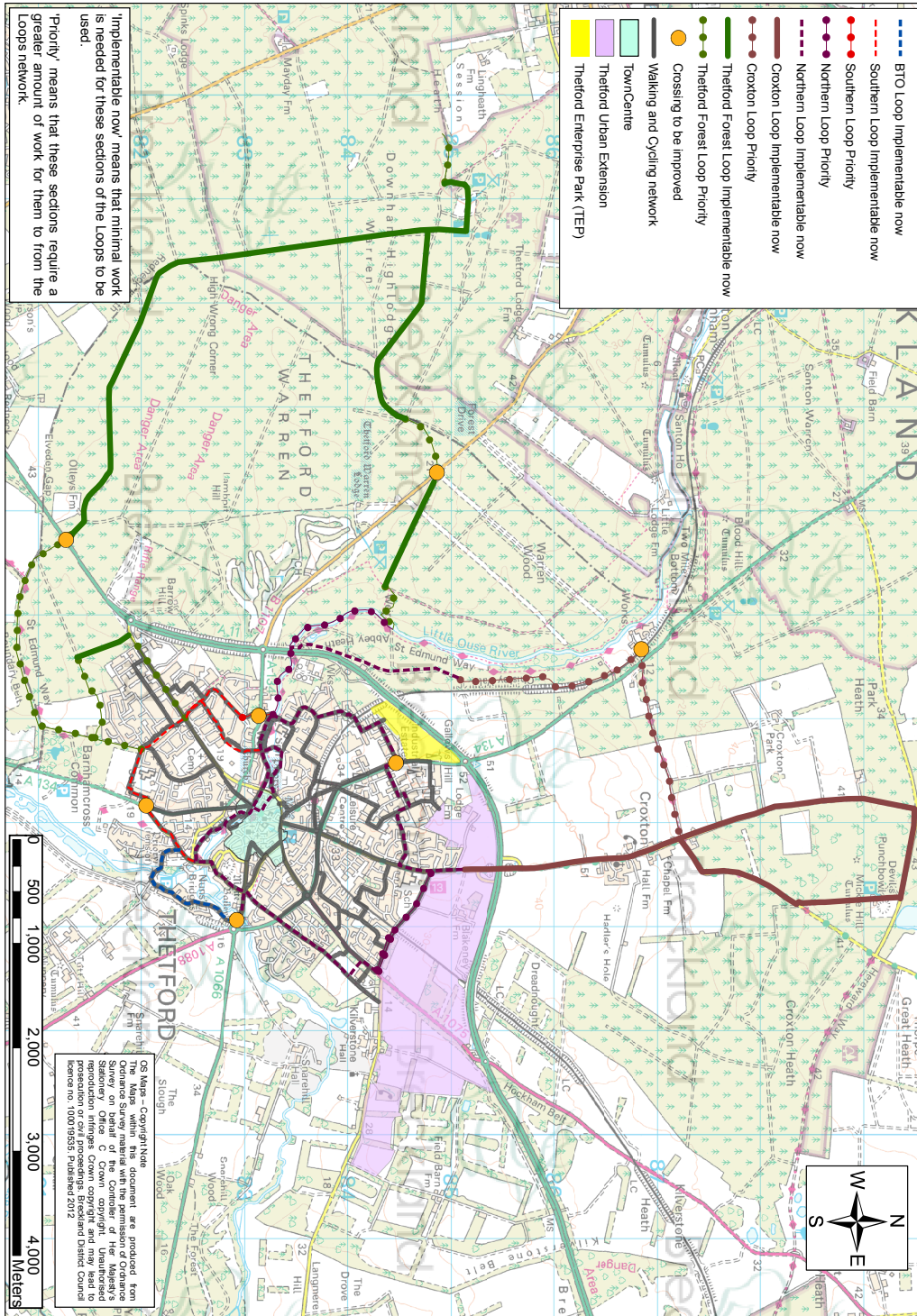
12.27 The Thetford Loops offer considerable potential to enhance the walking and cycling network (Map 9.1 'Walking and Cycling Network') by providing convenient and attractive paths for pedestrians and cyclists to move around the town and improve access to the surrounding countryside.

12.28 Map 12.1 'The Thetford Loops.' shows the proposed routes of the Loops. Within the A11, the Loops will be provided through improvements and enhancements to the Walking and Cycling network. The relevant parts of this network that make up the Loops will be signed and branded accordingly, but serve a utility trip purpose in the main. As such, Map 12.1 'The Thetford Loops.' includes the Walking and Cycling Network.

12.29 The Loops are largely based on existing networks, but some improvements to most sections are required, although some will be limited to improving surfacing or changes to the status of the route and ongoing maintenance. All sections of the Loops will be provided in accordance with the available technical evidence (Thetford Loops Reports⁽²⁸⁾) in the first instance.

12.30 Key features along the Loops will include: the new growth locations to the north; Gallows Hill Scheduled Monument; the forest; the river valley; the Priory; Barnham Cross Common; Croxton Village and the town centre. Additional features could be added in due course, including public art and interpretation boards relating to the history of the area as well as the nature and wildlife. As part of the detailed planning and delivery of the Loops, consideration could be given to extending the Loops to take in other destinations; for example the Southern Loop could be extended to include the village of Barnham.

28 Stage 1 by Capita Symonds (2010), and Stage 2 by Transport Initiatives et al (2010)



Map 12.1 The Thetford Loops.



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12.31 The cycling network within the Urban Extension and the Thetford Enterprise Park will be provided as part of that development as per Policy TH 25 'Walking and Cycling'.

12.32 The cycling network as it goes through the town centre will be provided as part of the delivery of the Masterplan as per Map 8.1 'Town Centre Opportunity Areas'.

The Loops

12.33 The Northern Loop, Southern Loop and the BTO Loop mainly utilise existing routes and enhance connectivity to the town centre from surrounding residential and commercial areas and where possible enhance linkages to open areas close to the town. The Northern Loop takes in many of the attractions within the town itself and provides the link to the other 4 Loops which will be signed off it.

12.34 With regards to the Thetford Forest Loop, the Forestry Commission actively promotes public access throughout most of this area and paths of varying quality and 'rideability' are in place already. The High Lodge visitor centre provides excellent facilities and serves as a focus for making better use of the forest amenities.

12.35 The Croxton Village Loop is located to the north of the town and provides access to Croxton Village, Croxton Heath and the Devil's Punch Bowl (an interesting geological feature). The Loops also pick up the signed National Cycle Route 13 and the Two Rivers Regional Cycle Route 30, both of which make use of the quiet roads in the area. The Hereward Way (a National Trail) is also adjacent to the Loop proposals and available for walkers.

12.36 As part of the detailed planning and delivery of the Loops, consideration could be given to extending the Loops to take in other destinations; for example the Southern Loop could be extended to include the village of Barnham subject to future detailed assessment.

Delivery and Design

12.37 The Riverside route and the vital link to High Lodge should be the first priority, followed by maximising opportunities to enhance and improve the more urban network. The Priority 1 recommendations are:

- Riverside route – Nuns' Bridges to High Lodge (several links);
- BTO route – Nunnery Place via Arlington Way to Green Lane;
- Croxton on-road route – Croxton village via Devil's Punch Bowl.

12.38 Breckland Council, Norfolk County Council and MTF will consider how they can contribute to delivery of the Loops, although it is anticipated that some sections will be directly provided as part of developments be it directly by the developer or as a result of legal agreements or the provision of funding. The Loops should be designed and implemented so that they are:

- Traffic-free where practicable;
- Useable and available all year round (however see following section on Habitats);
- Of an adequate standard that encourages walking and cycling by those of all abilities;
- Provided with accessible, safe crossings of roads, railways and waterways;
- General presumption against barriers, unless there is a proven need. Barriers should be designed in a way to not inconvenience legitimate users;
- Connected, with useful local links to places of interest and to where people live and work;
- Signed and 'legible' making them easy to follow;
- Provided with resting and sheltering provision where possible;
- Supported by route maps, information boards and other promotional events and activities;
- Designed from the outset with low maintenance requirements, and thereafter adequately maintained; and
- Conceived, designed and implemented with the 'travelling landscape' in mind.



12.39 Further detailed design guidance is contained within the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Loops reports.

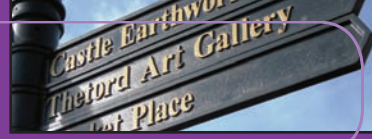
Habitats

12.40 The Thetford Loops will enhance and encourage access into the surrounding forest and countryside for recreation. However, encouraging people into the Forest (which is part of the Breckland SPA) has the potential to result in increased disturbance to protected Annex I birds (Woodlark and Nightjar) from the intensification of recreational use of sites.

12.41 Therefore, it is recognised that there are potential conflicts relating to promoting access and the nature conservation interest of the surrounding area (i.e. Thetford Forest and Barnham Cross Common). As such, a number of mitigation measures will be required as part of the implementation of the Loops to avoid any adverse impacts arising from them. Such mitigation is likely to require routes through the forest to change to reflect the Forestry Commission's felling cycle, not only for safety of users, but also to reflect that some bird species use areas of the forest at different stages of growth to nest and fledge. It is also likely that changes will be required to the Loops signage to direct users away from sensitive areas at particular times. Further work is therefore required to determine the level of use of the Loops, the types of activity they will provide for and the extent to which the Loops may increase access to sensitive areas. The exact mitigation measures will be informed by such work.



Picture 12.1 The Cycle Routes in Thetford Forest. The Thetford Forest Loop seeks to link the town to the Forest in a way that is acceptable to biodiversity.



Other Green Infrastructure Projects

12.42 The following are green infrastructure projects that would benefit the town and its setting in the Brecks.

River Valley Park Concept (RVP)

12.43 Thetford is unique in Norfolk in having a freshwater river flowing through the heart of the town. It contributes significantly to the environmental quality of the town centre, the Abbey and the recent developments at Cloverfields. The RVP concept includes river and wetland habitat restoration and landscape enhancement projects and multifunctional routes connecting within Thetford and out to the wider GI of the region. The aim would be that the river corridor becomes a focus for recreation within Thetford and access out from Thetford to surrounding countryside sites as well as providing a 'green lung'/biodiversity function.

12.44 The River Valley Park will fulfil many functions of a Country Park and due to its central location has the advantage of integrating existing and new communities. It will potentially alleviate visitor pressures on Barnham Cross Common SPA through enhanced links and links to Nunnery Lakes, in addition to potential new links to the disused railway line at Arlington Way. It will also be accessible from the potential growth area at the Thetford Urban Extension.

12.45 In essence, it has four aspects:

- Improving access to various places and attractions, such as Thetford Forest.
- Water based recreation.
- Habitat restoration.
- Protecting this area from urbanisation.

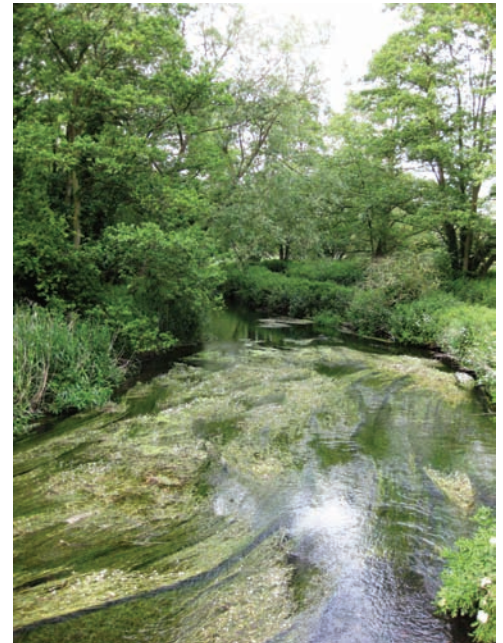
12.46 The concept is not a policy in itself, but one which the Area Action Plan can contribute to as some policies fall under the River Valley Park project. These are:

- The Thetford Loops.
- Adoption of the Flood Zones as shown on the Policies Map.
- Town Centre section.

12.47 Of relevance to the RVP is The Great Ouse Wetland Vision⁽²⁹⁾, which is a vision to restore and enhance river and flood plain habitat to benefit biodiversity. It is a joint Environment Agency and Natural England initiative to deliver an enhanced environment for fish and other wildlife. Its key objectives are:

- To protect and restore habitats locally and at a wider catchment scale;
- To provide green space for both people and wildlife;
- To provide a flexible framework for key stakeholders to deliver their aspirations for fish and other biodiversity in the catchment.

12.48 Options to explore the wider navigation of the river from Brandon to Thetford Town Centre will be investigated over the lifetime of this plan in conjunction with the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission.



Picture 12.2 The Little Ouse

29 The Great Ouse Wetland Vision, Environment Agency and Natural England, Background (2008)



12.49 More work will be needed on the RVP concept to bring the aspects of the RVP together, create synergies with the Great Ouse Wetland Vision and involve key stakeholders.

Gateways into Thetford Concept

12.50 The aim of this concept is to promote Thetford as an attractive place to work and visit, with a clear sense of identity and of place, of its relationship to its landscape setting and its past as well as the potential for its future. The Council wishes for the gateways into Thetford to be enhanced.

12.51 Such gateways could highlight Thetford's heritage and culture as well as it being the gateway to Suffolk and Norfolk and the centre of the Brecks. They could be linked to the Thetford 13 work⁽³⁰⁾. This work identifies that Thetford possesses remarkable heritage assets, for example an Iron Age site of national and probably international importance with probable connections to an iconic British figure, and one of the world's great democratic thinkers. The report concludes that there are 13 historic periods with which 13 characters are associated. As such, 13 potential gateways have been identified, in no particular order:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A11/London Road • A11/Brandon Road • A11/Mundford Road • A11/Croxton Road • A11/Norwich Road • Kilverstone Road • A1066 (to Diss) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1088 (to Ipswich) • Bury Road • Train Station • Bus Interchange • River/Little Ouse Path • Town Centre
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12.52 Gateways could be an integral part of the A11 junction improvements as set out in the Transport Section in order to recognise the new edge of Thetford and also to some extent to the South of Thetford where the edge will not change, but improvements to the gateway could be beneficial.

Greening Thetford Project⁽³¹⁾

12.53 One characteristic that makes Thetford unique when compared to other market towns is its setting within Thetford Forest and in particular the historic planting of the contorted scots pines along major routes and field boundaries. It is proposed in the draft Prospectus that 10,000 trees are planted in appropriate locations over the next ten years. The planting programme has the potential to extend beyond the urban area of the town to provide green linkages between pockets of woodland within the town and surrounding countryside.

12.54 The pines around Thetford, which form the distinctive Breckland pine belts and hedges come from an 'Elveden' strain. As such, stock should be used of the correct local provenance, it could be linked with local tree nurseries to cultivate the correct strain of pine. It is important to maintain local distinctiveness and the character of the tree stock. The planting of pines should not be at the expense of all other species however, as Beech lines and edges to plantations are also a local landscape feature on certain approaches to the town. Broadleaved species, such as Oak, should also form part of this project.

30 Discovering Thetford – A Feasibility Study & Business Case, Heritage Economic & Regeneration Trust (HEART), (2010)

31 The idea for this project has come from the Draft Thetford Prospectus Work (Urban Delivery, 2010) and the Green Infrastructure Study (Land Use Consultants, 2007) on behalf of Breckland Council.



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12.55 The project aims to 'green' Thetford's existing major transport routes such as the Norwich Road and Mundford Road and existing network of paths and bridleways and the Thetford Loops. It will create a continuous green network of pedestrian and cycle routes and help improve the environment along roads and pavements extending from the town centre and major transport hubs out into the countryside, Thetford Forest and the Brecks beyond. Trees could also be planted at car parks and open spaces.

12.56 By concentrating planting along these routes and the Loops, the project will contribute to making Thetford more visually attractive, help make it a more pleasant place to live and work and reinforce its uniqueness. Tree planting will help to reduce traffic noise, improve air quality, reduce light pollution and create a safer pedestrian environment without the need for less sensitive measures such as metal guard railing. As well as removing CO₂ from the atmosphere directly, green infrastructure and trees in urban areas have the potential to improve microclimate, reduce heat stress during the summer months by provision of direct shade for people and by reducing the urban heat-island effect.

12.57 The project will be led by Breckland Council but implemented with the support of a range of voluntary groups such as the BTCV and Thetford Green Gym (projects associated with Thetford's Healthy Town status). The project will seek to involve the local community, especially schools, to increase understanding and awareness of green infrastructure and interpretation of the local historic environment. Planting will be in appropriate locations, where the effect of the tree as it grows on surrounding land uses as well as the effect of the land uses on the tree will have been considered (for example archaeology or foundations of buildings).



13 Indoor Sports Facilities

Policy TH 13

Indoor Sports Facilities

(a) New Indoor Sports Facilities

Proposals to provide new indoor sports facilities will be supported in the town centre and other locations well related to the town centre to meet the following requirements:

Swimming Lanes	Indoor Sports Courts
2 lanes	3 courts

(b) The use of School Facilities

The use of school facilities is supported but this will account for only 24% of the provision as set out in (a) above.

(c) Existing Indoor Sports Facilities

The redevelopment of existing indoor sports facilities will only be appropriate where it is sufficiently demonstrated that alternative provision of no less quality and of appropriate scale is provided elsewhere within the area of the TAAP and where this would contribute to addressing inequalities.

Reasoned Justification

13.1 The main reason for the increase of sport provision in Thetford is as a result of the Thetford Urban Extension. The Thetford Healthy Town Programme aims to promote healthy lifestyles. The provision of new sports facilities to meet the demand of a growing and changing town are essential. It is also important to protect existing sports facilities from development.

13.2 In accordance with national policy, indoor sports provision should be encouraged within town centre locations and in locations accessible to the population, including those without access to the private car. Thetford and its surrounding area benefits from a good quality leisure centre and waterworld facility at Croxton Road which is well related to the town centre and the existing and future populations.

Existing Facilities Breckland Leisure Centre & Waterworld, Thetford.

13.3 Facilities in Thetford are currently run under a PFI⁽³²⁾ for 32 years (from 2005) with Breckland Leisure Limited and operated by Parkwood Leisure. The Breckland Leisure Centre and Waterworld offers the following facilities:

- 6 lane swimming pool,
- Teaching swimming pool,
- Leisure pool with wave machine and flume,

32 The private finance initiative (PFI) is a way of creating "public-private partnerships" (PPPs) by funding public infrastructure projects with private capital.



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- A 4 court sports hall that can accommodate 4 badminton courts, a volleyball court, five-a-side football, basketball, cricket nets, netball, short tennis, roller skating and trampolining,
- 4 squash courts,
- Dance studio,
- Grass football pitches,
- All weather pitch for hockey and football,
- 55 station fitness studio, and
- 6 rink indoor bowls hall.

13.4 Data from Thetford Waterworld shows that the site has a catchment area of Thetford, East Harling, Brandon, Mundford, Feltwell, Methwold and Watton, with almost no visitors from villages south of Thetford. The centre opens over expanded hours, seven days a week.

Other Indoor Sport Provision

13.5 Thetford has a second swimming pool which is available for community groups, at the Academy South Site, former Charles Burrell High School. At the time of writing, it is proposed that all secondary education offer in the town will be moved to the North Site. Uses for the South Site are yet to be agreed, but the swimming pool could be closed and the implications on capacity at the Waterworld facility will need to be assessed.

13.6 The schools and community halls around Thetford accommodate various sports and leisure past times ranging from martial arts to yoga.

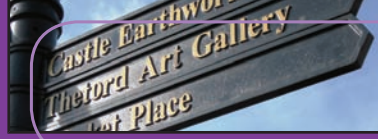
New Indoor Sports Facilities

13.7 The following table shows the current provision, the findings of the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator⁽³³⁾ and information provided by the Breckland District-Wide Infrastructure Needs, Funding and Delivery Study completed by EDAW (2009). The following table uses the terminology from the Sports Calculator.

	Pools/Lanes	Halls/Courts	Bowls Centre/Rinks	All Weather Pitch
Current Provision	1/6	1/4	1/6	1
Sport England Calculator (based on 40,000 people)	1.75/6.98	2.66/10.66	0.54/3.23	1.10
EDAW (2009) by 2026 ⁽³⁴⁾	Did not specify/3	Did not specify/4	Did not specify	Did not specify
Notes	With the swimming pool at the former Charles Burrell school potentially closing, Parkwood have indicated that they aim to accommodate the users of that pool. As such the provision of 2lanes would accommodate the growth as well as those who currently use the former Charles Burrell pool.	Due to reduction in housing numbers, there is a consequential reduction in the number of courts proposed.	Thetford is currently over provided with bowling provision and will be by 2026.	Thetford will be only slightly under provided by 2026/with 40,000 people

33 The calculator was run for 40,000 people with no usage data - i.e. At a very basic level. Population of 40,000 includes the existing population, plus the Thetford Urban Extension population.

34 Please note that the EDAW 2009 study based its findings on 6,848 dwellings (15,000 people) in the Urban Extension. The TAAP plans for 5,000 dwellings (11,000 people).



	Pools/Lanes	Halls/Courts	Bowls Centre/Rinks	All Weather Pitch
Changes	2 lanes	3 courts	No change.	No change.

Table 13.1 The current sport provision and proposed changes.

13.8 Breckland Council acknowledges that the area around the Breckland Leisure Centre and Waterworld is a relatively constrained site with the parking, Healthy Living Centre, adjoining sports pitches and potentially the new Skate Park. Early discussions with Parkwood (the operators of the Leisure Centre) indicate that by adjustments on site and the replacement of ageing equipment, the changes can be accommodated on site. However, if the Breckland Leisure Centre and Waterworld is extended to accommodate demand, Breckland Council will invoke the Core Strategy's adopted Open Space policy which requires compensatory provision elsewhere.

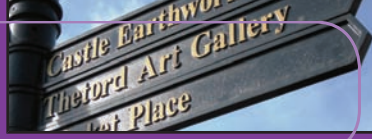
13.9 The actual type of provision will reflect current and predicted usage data and will be detailed in relevant planning applications.

Using School Facilities

13.10 Due to all the changes to education proposed in the town and with reference to policy Policy TH 35 'Community Buildings', there is potential for some of this demand to be met by usage of school sports facilities for example.

13.11 Using guidance associated with the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator, it should be noted that school facilities are not likely to be open to the public during school times. It is assumed that the sports centre is open to the public around 94.5 hours a week for around 50 weeks of the year or 4735 hours a year. Assuming a school day of 7 hours during term time, schools will not be available for 35 hours a week for around 33 weeks in a year or 1155 hours.

13.12 As such, the use of school facilities can only account for 24% of the requirements as set out in the policy.



14 Energy

Policy TH 14

Energy and Carbon - TAAP Wide

(a) Fabric Energy Efficiency Standards⁽³⁵⁾

All new residential development is required to utilise fabric measures to meet the Government's levels of carbon compliance.

(b) Carbon Offsetting

Depending on legislation, Breckland Council will consider the need to secure contributions towards a Carbon Offset Fund as part of CIL (or S106 agreements prior to 2014) to meet the remaining carbon compliance levels (of regulated emissions) not delivered as part of development proposals on site.

Reasoned Justification

Fabric Energy Efficiency Standards

14.1 In 2006, the Government announced a 10-year timetable towards a target that all new homes must be built to zero carbon standards from 2016, to be achieved through a step-by-step tightening of the Building Regulations. The following table illustrates the changes to the Building Regulations and their equivalents under the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH).

	Date		
	2010	2013	2016
Energy efficiency improvement of the dwelling compared to 2006 (Part L Building Regulations)	25%	44%	Zero carbon
Equivalent standard within the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH)	Level 3	Level 4	Level 6

Table 14.1 Improvements to the Building Regulations and equivalents under CSH

14.2 Energy efficiency is a key part of delivering the Government's vision for the achievement of zero carbon housing. The Government's preferred hierarchy for achieving zero carbon housing developments is:

1. the use of Fabric Energy Efficiency Standards (FEES);
2. on-site low and zero carbon technologies (up to 70% carbon compliance); and then
3. allowable solutions.

14.3 The Government has set out its approach to improving the fabric of buildings and tasked the Zero Carbon Hub with developing FEES for new homes. FEES sets out a number of potential design specifications for different dwelling types; however, adopting FEES will not itself secure net zero carbon on site (although this will depend on the Government's final definition, currently set at 70% regulated emissions on site).

35 FEES is a standard for limiting the energy demands of heating and cooling the dwelling and be limited to passive measures only-i.e. reduce energy demand of the dwelling in the first place.



14.4 Under the Government's current definition of Zero Carbon homes (CSH level 6), a range of 'allowable solutions' could be used to meet the remaining percentage of regulated emissions under the code. The definition of 'allowable solutions' is still being finalised but this could include off-site retrofitting of energy efficient/low carbon technologies to existing housing stock.

14.5 It is important to note that the Government is announcing the regulatory requirements for zero carbon homes, to apply from 2016. To ensure that it remains viable to build new houses the Government will hold housebuilders accountable only for those carbon dioxide emissions that are covered by Building Regulations, and will provide cost-effective means through which they can do this.

Carbon Offsetting

14.6 The energy components of the Code for Sustainable Homes levels are mandatory as they relate to the improvements to the Building Regulations, and have minimum requirements at each code level. However, in order to deliver net zero carbon developments, contributions to a carbon offset fund can be more cost effective than achieving full on-site zero carbon solutions. Breckland Council will consider whether to seek contributions towards a Carbon Offset Fund through CIL (or S106 agreements prior to 2014) developed as part of the national timetable for zero carbon developments by 2016.

14.7 Depending on legislation, Breckland Council will seek a greater than 70% carbon compliance level of regulated emissions in meeting its local definition of zero carbon. This is due to the fact that evidence contained in the A11 Energy study considers that it is not possible to offset the maximum 30% remaining compliance in Thetford due to the particular construction of large components of the existing housing stock. The precise compliance level is still to be determined but will need to have regard to the particular circumstances identified in the stock, but this could be around 20% remaining compliance. The remaining percentage that is subject to offsetting could in future be sought beyond Thetford (e.g. elsewhere in Breckland) although this will be dependent upon Government legislation.

14.8 The A11 Energy Study considers that options for off-setting are myriad and can include projects within the District (for instance at the small scale, replacing light bulbs with more energy efficient products), to other initiatives in the UK. In addition it is possible to be involved in actual off setting projects, to pay a company on Breckland Council's behalf to off set or to buy VERs (voluntary verified emission reductions) on the market. Each has a different level of cost and ease associated with it and also there are a number of issues regarding credibility that need to be taken into account. One of the cheapest offsetting methods is likely to include upgrades to existing building stock as well as awareness raising campaigns. Commercial buildings could also be addressed in a similar way to Breckland Council's REACTIVE project.

14.9 The off set programme could be run at a local level or alternatively another possibility could be that Breckland Council combines with all the other Norfolk district councils and a central Norfolk-wide carbon offset programme is established. Breckland Council will await guidance from the Government.



Policy TH 15

Energy/Multi Service(s) Company Development (ESCO/MUSCo)

Breckland Council will promote and encourage ESCOs/MUSCOs who wish to develop and supply energy within the TAAP area. In particular, the Council will support the principle of ESCo/MUSCo developments where these would secure the delivery of zero carbon homes by 2016 by supplying decentralised renewable energy .

Reasoned Justification

14.10 The A11 Energy Study also confirms that ESCo (Energy Service Company) or MUSCo (Multi-Utility Service Company) development is both feasible and viable in Thetford. Breckland Council will support and/or work with an ESCo or MUSCo to promote the delivery of decentralised and renewable energy solutions for all types of land use in Thetford. Where possible, infill and existing developments will be encouraged to source energy from any ESCo set up to deliver and manage decentralised renewable energy proposals in the town. Breckland Council would also support a MuSCo/ESCO set up on a basis of reducing carbon usage in the town.

14.11 Paragraph 28 of the PPS1 supplement considers that developments should not limit occupiers to any one energy supplier in perpetuity. However, to encourage an ESCo or MUSCo to develop in Thetford it may be necessary to expect potential future customers to source energy for a certain reasonable period, for example between 15-20 years. This can help to ensure that there is a level of demand (principally for heat supply) in order to minimise risk to the ESCo. In particular, the commitment of the public sector and/or public and private sector consortium to source energy from an ESCo could further aid the conditions for ESCo development.

14.12 This Policy does not directly relate to the provision of renewable energy generation/supply, rather potential for a company to be set up to develop and supply energy in the area. Core Strategy Policies CP12 and DC15 guide renewable energy generation and supply and such proposals will be subject to the usual Development Management process.



15 Water and Flood Risk

Policy TH 16

Water and Drainage

Water Resource

To ensure no adverse effect on integrity of European designated sites, the release of land for development will be dependent on there being sufficient water resource availability to meet the additional requirements arising from the new development and to ensure that water quality is protected or improved, with no significant detriment to areas of environmental importance.

This water infrastructure will be upgraded as required and be operational in time to meet the demands of any development.

In the case of major development proposals (10 dwellings and 1,000m² non residential), these will only be permitted where a developer has provided evidence to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that agreement has been reached with the water and wastewater provider that there is sufficient capacity in existing or future water services infrastructure (both supply and waste water) to accommodate the needs of the proposal.

Water Efficiency

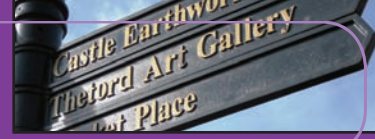
All new dwellings will be designed to have a water demand equivalent to at least levels 3 & 4 in the Code for Sustainable Homes (105 litres of water per person per day).

Site Drainage

All new development, including that on brownfield land, must be served by separate surface water and wastewater drainage. No new development will be permitted to discharge surface water run off to foul drainage connections. New development should also seek opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding (both strategic and local flood risk).

Reasoned Justification

15.1 Water resources are an important factor which need to be considered in developing a growth strategy for an area. The Breckland area has large quantities of groundwater held within the chalk aquifers which underlie large parts of the East Anglian region. These aquifers also provide important feeds to the baseflow of the region's rivers and numerous wetland areas. It is therefore important to take a regional perspective when assessing the water resources of an area. The East of England is one of the driest parts of the country (due to relatively lower rainfall) and this, combined with the high demand from its residents (both permanent and tourist populations) and industrial sources (including agriculture) means that despite the chalk aquifers, Breckland lies within an area of serious water stress. There are also hydrologically sensitive European sites in close proximity to Thetford which have the potential to be adversely affected if there is insufficient groundwater available.



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15.2 Initially Thetford will be reliant on the availability of spare groundwater sources (within their existing licence capacity) in order to supply the extra demand growth. Beyond the growth planned for in this document major growth in Thetford will require the development of a new groundwater source locally, plus potentially some Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)⁽³⁶⁾. The ecological impacts of any scheme would need to be understood.

15.3 For the purposes of the policy, non residential is defined as retail, hotel and B⁽³⁷⁾, C1 (Hotels), C2 (Residential Institutions) and D⁽³⁸⁾ Class land uses. The policy will also apply to Planning Applications for change of use to the above.

15.4 Evidence from the Water Cycle Study indicates that under the high water demand scenario, the additional growth forecast for Thetford will require extra groundwater to be abstracted from sources with spare licensed capacity (e.g. the Carbrooke borehole near Watton) up until 2019 (in AMP6 2015-2020⁽³⁹⁾), when a further additional resource development in the form of a new groundwater resource will be required. Because of rapid growth in Thetford (and without further water efficiency measures), an extension of this groundwater resource using an ASR scheme will also be required by 2024 in AMP7 (2020 to 2025).

15.5 Under the low water demand scenario, the extra groundwater to be abstracted from sources with spare licensed capacity will be sufficient to last through to end of the plan period (2025/26). Therefore, the introduction of at least levels 3 and 4 in the Code for Sustainable Homes is required to negate the need for costly and environmentally sensitive levels of water abstraction. Code Level 3 or 4 equates to 105 litres of water per person per day whereas the current Building Regulations part G require 125 litres per person per day. As such the requirement is beyond that of the Building Regulations at the time of writing. The Council will support any opportunity to retrofit water efficiency devices to the existing town.

Site Drainage

15.6 The Water Cycle Study has highlighted that sewer flooding and Combined Sewer Overflows are an existing concern in Thetford and that with climate change, capacity in the combined drainage network going forward will be limited. Therefore, the continued use and extension of the combined drainage network will not be permitted, in order to prevent exacerbation of existing problems.

15.7 In accordance with the Core Strategy, SuDS will be pursued as the primary site drainage mechanism in accordance with the relevant national standards on SuDS. The onus will be on developers to demonstrate the appropriateness of the particular SuDs option selected to address site drainage in consultation with the SuDS Approval Body (Norfolk County Council). Site drainage proposals should be prepared and will be considered in the context of any available Surface Water Management Plan for Thetford/Breckland prepared under the direction of Norfolk County Council.

Wastewater and the Water Framework Directive

15.8 The overall requirement of the EU Water Framework Directive is that all water bodies in the UK must achieve good status by 2015 unless there are grounds for deferring this until 2027. An increase to the volumetric and quality consents and/or an upgrade to Thetford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) may be required in order to treat wastewater from new development up to 2026 both in terms of volume and the treatment process to meet tighter consents on the quality of discharge. There is a particular issue with regards to meeting the Water Framework Directive (WFD) targets for phosphorus, which is likely to require a wider, catchment based approach. It is likely

36 An ASR scheme involves storing water underground in the winter and re using this water in the summer.

37 B1 Business, B2 General Industrial, B8 Storage and Distribution

38 D1 Non-residential institutions and D2 Assembly and Leisure

39 The water industry operates on five-yearly cycles called Asset Management Plan (AMP) periods.



that any upgrade or alteration in the short-medium term to the WwTW will be small-scale and designed to utilise the identified capacity within the flow consent. The recent review of the consents process has determined that Thetford WwTW at current licensed capacity is not impacting on any ecologically designated sites downstream.

Hydrologically Sensitive Habitats

15.9 Water resource schemes developed to meet water demand from new development have the potential to affect numerous hydrologically sensitive sites local to Thetford. There are seven nationally and/or internationally important sites that are linked to the underlying chalk aquifer that lie within 10km of Thetford, some of which (Thetford Golf Course & Marsh, Stanford Training Area) are immediately adjacent to Thetford:

- Thetford Golf Course & Marsh SSSI (Breckland SAC)
- Stanford Training Area SSSI (Breckland SAC)
- East Wretham Heath SSSI (Breckland SAC)
- Thompson Water Carr & Common SSSI (Norfolk Valley Fens SAC)
- Swangey Fen SSSI (part of Norfolk Valley Fens SAC)
- Weston Fen SSSI (Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC)
- Middle Harling Fen SSSI

15.10 Evidence from the Water Cycle Study indicates that there are sufficient water resources available to deliver around 5,000 dwellings to 2021. Further clarification as part of the Habitat Regulations Assessment have confirmed that these water resources are also sufficient to support 5,000 homes to 2016 subject to the provisions in Policy TH 16 'Water and Drainage'.



Policy TH 17

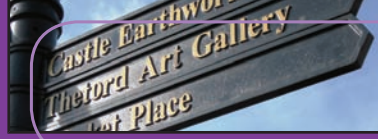
Development in Flood Zones

To facilitate the regeneration of Thetford and in particular the town centre, development proposals will be permitted in Flood Zones 3a and 2 where the proposed use is compatible with the sequential test and exceptions test set out in national planning policy (currently PPS25 or a successor document). In assessing development proposals in areas of identified flood risk in Thetford, the Local Planning Authority will require the following issues to be addressed within a site specific Flood Risk Assessment:

- a. Evidence that the development will be safe throughout its life. To achieve this, dry pedestrian egress and emergency vehicular access should be achievable above the 1 in 100 year flood level (flood zone 3a), when accounting for the anticipated effects of climate change;
- b. Where development is proposed within flood zones 2, 3a or 3b, a Flood Evacuation Plan should be prepared in liaison with the Environment Agency and Norfolk County Council emergency planners;
- c. Opportunities to increase biodiversity and improve amenity value (e.g. pedestrian/cycle routes along the river) will be sought in areas of higher risk directly adjacent to the river. This would contribute to the River Valley Park project;
- d. Compensation (level for level and volume for volume) for loss of floodplain storage in Flood Zone 3a/b in accordance with Environment Agency requirements and with no risk to existing third party developments and no environmental loss in terms of appearance or habitat value;
- e. A feasible SuDS solution designed to ensure that (i) the run-off from the site (post development) is either to greenfield run-off rates where the site is undeveloped at present or provide betterment (where possible) where the site is previously developed and (ii) that the underlying groundwater is adequately protected;
- f. Where underground car parking is proposed, it is necessary to ensure that access points and any venting or other penetrations are situated 300mm above the 1 in 100 year fluvial flood level (flood zone 3a) when accounting for the anticipated effects of climate change for the life of the development;
- g. Seek opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, (both Strategic & Local Flood Risk); and
- h. Development to be set back a distance of 9m from a watercourse to allow appropriate access for routine maintenance and emergency clearance.

Reasoned Justification

15.11 Thetford is centred on the confluence of the Rivers Little Ouse and Thet. The River Thet borders development to the east of the town, whilst the Little Ouse flows west from the town centre close to the Abbey Estate. The regeneration of Thetford will however require the use of previously developed land within the 1 in 100 year event with climate change flood extent as Flood Zone 3a as shown on the Policies Map. The regeneration of Thetford is widely supported to ensure the sustainability of the existing town centre into the future, and to maximise the reuse of the limited areas of previously developed land in the town.



15.12 In 2009 a detailed level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was prepared for Thetford. The flood risk areas (flood zones 3a plus climate change and 2) recommended within that assessment have thus been adopted and are shown on the Policies Maps. Flood zones 3b and 3a were calculated as part of the SFRA level 1 (Mott Macdonald 2007). Reference should also be made to the flood zones on the Environment Agency website⁽⁴⁰⁾ which are updated regularly. Breckland Council and developers will have regard to the Level 2 flood risk mapping to, where possible, sequentially locate development based on flood risk vulnerability classification⁽⁴¹⁾ to areas of lowest risk e.g. residential developments should be restricted to lowest risk areas and parking and open space areas can be placed on lower ground with a higher probability of flooding. This information provides further detailed assessment and calculations at a more detailed level than is shown on the Environment Agency website.

15.13 Sites within the TAAP have been subjected to both the Sequential Test and Exception Test (PPS 25). Where selected, sites are considered to have passed parts a) and b) of the exception test, that is:

- a) that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, and
- b) that the development is on developable previously-developed land, or if it is not on previously developed land, that there are no reasonable alternative sites on developable previously-developed land.

15.14 Notwithstanding the above, selected sites in the AAP area will have to also pass part c) of the Exception Test, i.e. a (site-specific) FRA must demonstrate (to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency) that the development will be safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

15.15 Some sites within the TAAP are located within two or more Flood Zones. In these locations it is expected that a sequential test will be applied at a site level to ensure that the more vulnerable uses are located on the lowest risk Flood Zones. To pass part c) of the Exception Test it is anticipated that in practical terms, appropriate mitigation measures must be put in place. Furthermore, it is likely that appropriate compensatory replacement floodplain storage may be required or other suitable flood risk management measures employed to ensure risk to others is not increased.

15.16 Land raising in the flood plain will not usually be regarded as an acceptable solution to enable development. Proposals involving land raising would normally be opposed by the Environment Agency as flood storage and flow paths may be lost, worsening flood conditions elsewhere. However, proposals to raise land and provide compensatory storage elsewhere may be acceptable providing they do not increase the risk of flooding on-site or elsewhere, and that there is no environmental loss in terms of appearance or habitat value. A site-specific FRA would have to demonstrate that raising ground levels or constructing a flood wall would not pose an increased flood risk to the development or to any existing buildings at risk from flooding

15.17 Subject to the sequential and exceptions test, where developing in flood risk areas is unavoidable, the most common method of mitigating flood risk to people is to ensure floor levels are raised above the 1 in 100 year plus climate change flood water level derived for the immediate vicinity within the site (i.e. relative to the extent of a site along a watercourse as flood levels are likely to vary with increasing distance downstream). Guidance in the level 2 SFRA considers that an additional freeboard allowance of 300mm should be included as a precautionary approach to take account of the uncertainty of climate change effects on peak river flows in the future. Additionally it is recommended that internal access is provided to upper floors to provide safe refuge in a flood event (it is appreciated that this may not always be possible where commercial properties are to be located underneath privately owned residential accommodation).

40 What's in Your Backyard? <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/37793.aspx>

41 PPS25 Table D.2



15.18 Some of the potential sites for change in the town centre are bounded by or have designated 'main' rivers running through or adjacent to them. Where this is the case, no built development will be allowed within nine meters of the top of the bank. Opportunities to remove existing buildings from close proximity to the riverbank are encouraged. Ancillary structures such as (bus, bike) shelters, park benches and refuse bins (and associated storage areas) located in areas with a high flood risk should be flood resilient and be firmly attached to the ground.

15.19 Developers should consult the Environment Agency and Breckland Council when considering feasible flood alleviation options.

Flood Risk Assessments

15.20 A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) aims to refine available information and minimise risks through site design, layout and where required, mitigation. In the preparation of a site specific flood risk assessment for developments located in a flood risk area the developer and/or their consultant should work in consultation and partnership with the Local Planning Authority and Environment Agency. The EA website provides standing advice on the requirement of FRAs for developers and LPAs and Appendix F 'Flood Risk Assessment' gives further guidance for relevant applications in Thetford.



16 Archaeology

Policy TH 18

Archaeology

(a) Area of Main Archaeological Interest

Within the Area of Main Archaeological Interest (as defined on the Policies Map and illustrated on Map 16.1 'Area of Main Archaeological Interest'), development will not be permitted which may disturb remains below ground, unless the proposal is supported by an appropriate archaeological assessment of the archaeological significance of the site and, if necessary, a programme of archaeological work in accordance with that assessment.

Planning permission will only be granted if this assessment demonstrates that:

- i. there is little likelihood of remains being found and the proposal (or an appropriate planning condition) allows for suitable monitoring of works under archaeological supervision during construction; or
- ii. remains which should be preserved in situ can be protected and preserved during construction where required and when the development is in use and includes an agreement for appropriate subsequent management; or
- iii. other remains which would not justify preservation in situ will be protected by an agreement covering an appropriate programme of archaeological work at the site, and allowing such remains to be removed to, and displayed in, an appropriate location and context.

Planning Permission will not be granted if the remains identified are of sufficient importance to be preserved in situ and cannot be so preserved in the context of the development proposed, taking account of the necessary construction techniques to be used.

In all other circumstances, where Planning Permission is to be granted Breckland Council may impose a condition allowing an appropriate contractor to monitor the works under archaeological supervision and control during the necessary stages of construction.

(b) Investigation Required in Other Locations of Archaeological Interest

In locations outside of the Area of Main Archaeological Interest and within the Thetford Area Action Plan Boundary, where it is apparent, either before or after archaeological investigation at the planning application stage that there is an overriding case for archaeological remains found to be preserved in situ, then the requirements of Policy TH 18 'Archaeology' part (A) Area of Main Archaeological Interest will apply.

Elsewhere, where there is no overriding case for any remains to be preserved in situ, Planning Permission for development which would destroy or disturb potential remains will be granted subject to an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation and recording being undertaken prior to the commencement of such development. Breckland Council will seek a Planning Obligation or condition with the developer to set out the following:

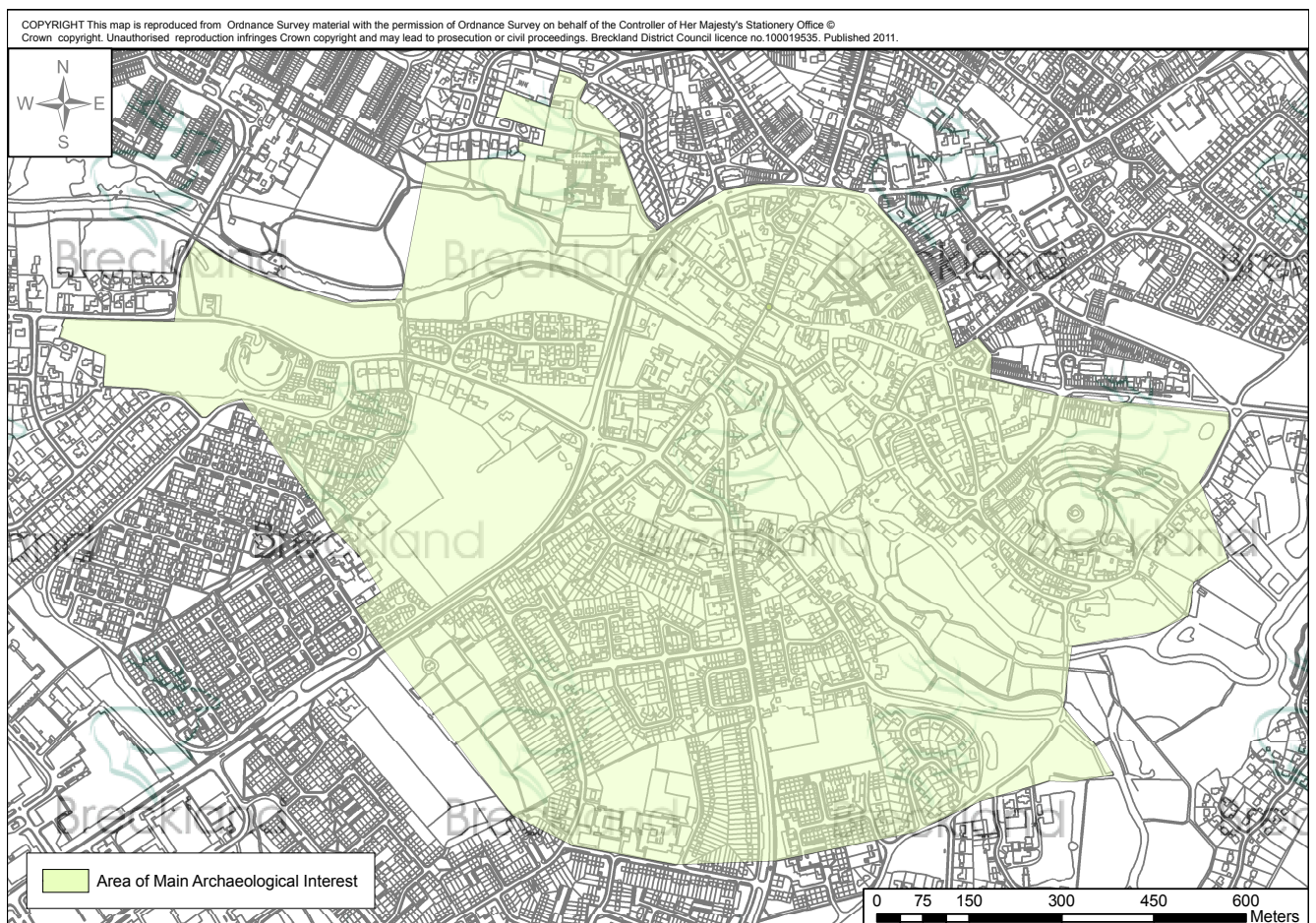
- i. the parties employed to carry out the investigation;
- ii. the extent and scope of the works and activities involved in the investigation; and
- iii. the extent and scope of any mitigatory work as may be required.



Reasoned Justification

16.1 The Thetford Historic Environment Survey (2010) defines areas of Thetford in which archaeology is a significant consideration. The Area of Main Archaeological Interest (AMAI) has been defined on Map 16.1 'Area of Main Archaeological Interest' illustrating the area in which the above policy will apply.

16.2 Breckland Council will, in consultation with Norfolk County Council's Historic Environment Service, require that any development in this area which may disturb remains below ground, should be subject to an archaeological assessment and agreement on a programme of works. The starting point for such an assessment will be the record contained in the Historic Environment Record (HER) for that area and the depth of assessment will reflect the interest identified in that record.



Map 16.1 Area of Main Archaeological Interest

16.3 Early pre-application consultation with Norfolk County Council's Historic Environment Service will be important, as it is likely that the results of any assessment will need to be submitted with applications for Planning Permission in this area. Should an archaeological assessment indicate that important remains may exist, then developers must make provision for a field evaluation, usually through an excavation of the site (or relevant part thereof) by an archaeological contractor, in line with a method statement approved by Norfolk County Council's Historic Environment Service. However, if the assessment suggests that remains may be found, but not of such



importance as to require retention in situ, then an appropriate programme of archaeological work will normally be expected to be agreed before permission is granted (although in some circumstances the use of a condition may be possible).

16.4 Archaeological finds can generate strong public interest. Where possible, allowance for public access or the presentation of results of archaeological finds should occur. Wherever a site produces archaeological finds, Breckland Council considers there should be provision for the post-excavation treatment and display of those finds and will seek a planning obligation or condition to secure such display.

16.5 There is likely to be archaeology present in other areas outside the Area of Main Archaeological Interest that may be affected by development. There may be some cases where the assessment of information contained within the Thetford Historic Environment Survey, or other archaeological records, suggests that archaeological deposits below ground may be discovered, but will not warrant preservation in situ; or where a field evaluation suggests a similar conclusion, an appropriate programme of archaeological work will be requested. Significant archaeological finds that should be preserved in situ will be dealt with under the relevant criterion in Policy TH 18 'Archaeology' part A.

16.6 Breckland Council will seek a Planning Obligation to ensure that an appropriate investigation as set out in Policy TH 18 'Archaeology' part B is carried out and any finds or archaeological remains are appropriately treated. The requirement for a Planning Obligation to secure a programme of archaeological investigation will only be triggered where development is proposed in other areas of interest and where it is not known whether there may be remains in the vicinity.

16.7 Breckland Council will consult Norfolk County Council's Historic Environment Service to confirm whether such interest warrants a full investigation and, therefore, whether a Planning Obligation should be sought. Any Planning Obligation will need to specify the parties to carry out the investigation, the funding of the investigation (normally by the developer) and the extent and scope of the works involved in the investigation. It should also provide for amendments in the event that significant finds are required to be retained on the site, although this is generally an exception in such areas of Thetford.



17 Sustainable Construction Standards for Non-Residential Development

Policy TH 19

Sustainable Construction Standards for Non-Residential Development

The Council will require all new and adapted non-residential development above 1,000sqm to be developed to BREEAM 'very good' standard until 31st March 2013 and after 31st March 2013 will be required to be developed to BREEAM 'excellent' standard unless such requirements would render a particular development economically unviable

The approach for meeting the required BREEAM standards should be detailed in planning applications and planning conditions will require post-construction BREEAM certificates, as appropriate.

Reasoned Justification

17.1 The growth and regeneration of Thetford will result in significant new commercial and other non-residential development. This will be focused in the regenerated town centre, developments on the existing general employment areas and in new employment and commercial areas throughout the Thetford Urban Extension. The Building Research Establishments Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) is a flexible and widely recognised quality assured scheme that independently assesses the environmental performance of buildings. Breckland Council has identified transport movements, energy, water and materials as key resource issues critical to growth in Thetford. Detailed Energy and Water Cycle Studies have highlighted that Thetford should move towards energy, waste and water-neutral development through both on-site and off-site measures and the adopted Core Strategy advocates this overall goal. Part of the justification for implementing BREEAM is to minimise the use of energy and consequently reduce carbon emissions. The evidence to justify the BREEAM standards in the policy is contained in the A11 Energy Study.

17.2 The current national programme requires all new non-residential development to be zero carbon by 2019. Therefore, in the interim, the Council will require all non-residential development over 1,000sqm to meet the relevant BREEAM assessment criteria. Whilst the importance of building environmentally sound developments is recognised, the Council does not want to make development unviable. The requirement to meet BREEAM may only be waived where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that the enhanced construction standards will result in extraordinary costs that the development could not reasonably be expected to bear.

17.3 Non-residential uses are those defined within Classes A (retail and food/drink), B (business and industrial) and D (non-residential institutions and leisure) as defined in the Use Classes Order 2006. It will also apply to other sui-generis uses on a case by case basis.

17.4 The application of BREEAM standards in relation to energy use has good alignment to the REACTIVE programme. This is a programme of activity being implemented by Breckland Council which in part aims to enhance the performance of businesses in Thetford and along the A11 in terms of their environmental efficiency. The REACTIVE programme will work with businesses to reduce their energy consumption through brokering new and existing products, and interventions such as environmental assessments of premises, grants and training. The project looks to assist businesses to recognise and implement resource efficiency improvements to reduce their carbon footprint and cost base.



17.5 However, BREEAM as a standard for sustainable construction is wider than energy use. At the 'very good' standard developments will be required to reduce water consumption, mitigate ecological impact and address microbial contamination. The introduction of excellent standard after 2013 is mainly aimed at reducing carbon emissions. A number of funding streams (such as healthcare provision) already require that new developments must be to the relevant BREEAM 'very good' or 'excellent' standards for that development.
