



**Watton Neighbourhood Plan**  
**Strategic Environmental Assessment**  
**Screening Report**  
**May 22**

# **Strategic Environmental Assessment: Screening Report**

## **Contents**

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Legislative Background</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Watton Neighbourhood Plan Policies</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. SEA Screening</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5. Assessment</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6. Conclusions</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Statutory Consultee Responses</b>	<b>31</b>

# 1. Introduction

1.1. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation of plans and programmes prior to their final adoption. SEA is a tool used internationally to improve the environmental performance of plans so that they can better contribute to sustainable development.

1.2. Establishing whether a Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to a SEA is an important legal requirement. The Independent Examiner appointed to consider the Watton Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) will check that it meets the 'Basic Conditions' set out in national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>1</sup>. One of the Basic Conditions is whether the WNP is compatible with European Union obligations.

1.3. This screening report is designed to determine whether or not the contents of the WNP require a SEA in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and the associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004)<sup>2</sup>.

1.4. The legislative background, which is set out in section 2, outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise.

1.5. The policies of the WNP are set out in section 3.

1.6. To assess whether a SEA is required, a screening process must be undertaken based on a standard set of criteria. This must also be subject to consultation with the three statutory consultees of the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. In addition to Norfolk County Council being consulted.

1.7. The results of the screening process must be detailed in a Screening Report, available to the public.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/the-basic-conditions-that-a-draft-neighbourhood-plan-or-order-must-meet-if-it-is-to-proceed-to-referendum/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/contents/made>

## 2. Legislative Background

2.1. The basis for SEA legislation is European Union Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>3</sup> which requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that would have a significant environmental effect. This was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, commonly referred to as the SEA Regulations.

2.2. In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9(1)), Breckland Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. Where the Council determines that SEA is not required, then the Council must, under Regulation 9(3), prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination.

2.3. In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Watton Town Council (the qualifying body) has requested Breckland Council, as the responsible authority, to consider whether an environmental assessment of the emerging NP is required due to significant environmental effects.

2.4. Whether a neighbourhood plan requires a SEA, and if so, the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft neighbourhood plan (see PPG Paragraph 046). The PPG suggests that SEA may be required, for example, where:

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

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<sup>3</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>

### 3. Watton Neighbourhood Plan Policies

3.1. WNP is at the pre-submission consultation stage (Reg.14 version). The information provided for the SEA Screening Opinion Request, identifies that:

3.2. In terms of environmental assets, the Neighbourhood Plan area does not encompass any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the nearest AONB is the Norfolk Coast over 40km away) or National Parks (the Broads over 20km away). There are no Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area or Ramsar Sites within the Parish, although a more detailed screening of the potential effects of the Neighbourhood Plan on nearby sites is undertaken through a parallel HRA screening. There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the parish, Wayland Wood SSSI. The parish has two County Wildlife Sites wholly within, or partially within, its boundaries. This information is summarised in the table below.

This information is summarised in Table 1. below.









**Table 1: Summary of Environmental and Heritage assets (*\*all distances measured from the closest point*)**

Environmental assets	Designation	Details
<b>Internationally designated sites</b>	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	None within the NP area
	Special Protection Areas (SPA)	None within the NP area
	Ramsar wetlands	None within the NP area
<b>Nationally designated sites</b>	Area Outstanding of National Beauty (AONB)	None within the NP area
	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Wayland Wood SSSI within the Neighbourhood Plan Area
	National Nature Reserves (NNR)	None within the NP area
	Registered Ancient Woodland	None within the NP area
<b>Local sites</b>	Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	None within the NP area
	County Wildlife Sites (CWS)	Two County Wildlife Sites within the NP area, CWS 975 - East of Watton Fen and CWS 845 - New Plantation, Merton Road.
	Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)	
	Geodiversity Sites	
<b>Common land</b>	Registered Common Land	None within the NP area
	Registered Village Green	None within the NP area
<b>Public Rights of Way (PRoW)</b>	Public Footpaths, bridleways	BR1, RB2, FB2-10, RB11, RB12 & FP13-15 <a href="http://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/#">http://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/#</a>

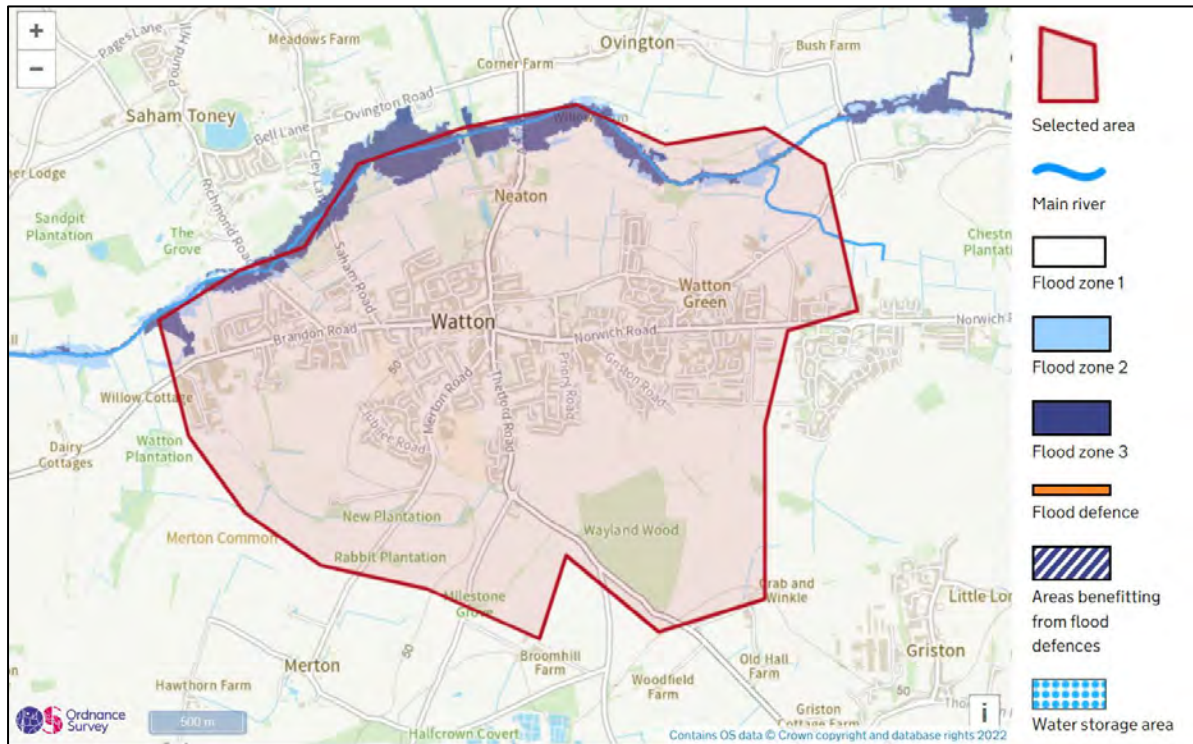
	Restricted byways	None within the NP area
	Norfolk Trails	None within the NP area
<b>Agricultural Land</b>	Grades 1-5	Areas of Grade 3 & 4
<b>Flood Zones</b>	1, 2 and 3a & b	Areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 around the watercourse
<b>Heritage assets</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Internationally designated sites</b>	World Heritage Site	None within the NP area
<b>Nationally designated sites</b>	Registered Historic Parks and Gardens	None within the NP area
	Scheduled Ancient Monuments	None within the NP area
<b>Local sites</b>	Conservation Areas	One Conservation Area in Watton, around the historic core of the town centre
	Listed Buildings	29 listed buildings; 1 Grade 2* and 28 Grade 2

**Map 1: Environmental designations in the Neighbourhood Plan Area**

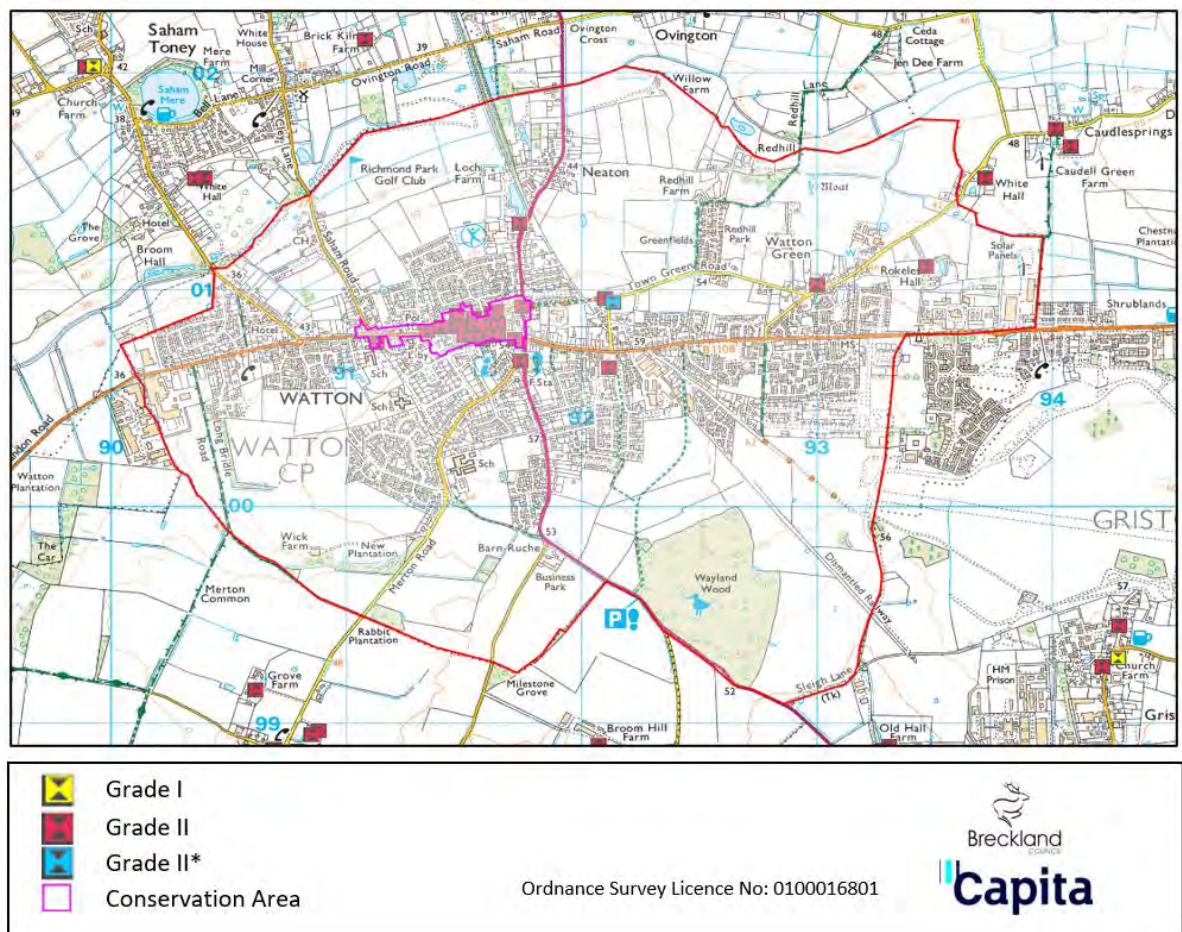


	Ramsar Site		Ancient Woodland	Ordnance Survey Licence No: 0100016801	 
	Site of Special Scientific Interest		Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat		
	Special Area of Conservation				
	Special Protection Area				

**Map 2: Flood Risk in the Neighbourhood Plan Area**



**Map 3: Heritage designations in the Neighbourhood Plan Area**



3.2 The WNP policies (Reg.14 version) to be considered in the SEA Screening Opinion are found in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Watton Neighbourhood Plan policies**

<b>INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES</b>
<p><b>Policy WTN1 - Managing Flood Risk</b></p> <p>When assessing planning applications for flood risk, consideration will be given to the latest published Government Flood Map for fluvial and surface water flooding.</p> <p>In addition to meeting the policy requirements set out in Policy ENV 09 of the adopted Local Plan and having regard to paragraphs 159 to 168 of the NPPF (July 2021), proposals for major development will need to demonstrate, through a site-specific Surface Water Drainage Strategy, that the development will not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere by the installation of a site-specific sustainable drainage scheme.</p> <p>For minor development, applicants will be expected to provide, through proportionate information, details of its surface water drainage proposals.</p> <p>All schemes shall justify the appropriateness of the proposals which shall include an allowance for climate change, in accordance with the most up to date Environment Agency advice.</p> <p>Surface water run off mitigation measures shall address any identified risk of flooding, and based on the Lead local Flood Authority's order of priority; namely Assess, Avoid, Manage and Mitigate.</p> <p>Proposals for appropriate on-site storage and run off rates will be expected to meet the standards set in technical guidance issued by Norfolk County Council as LLFA and as set out in DEFRA's Non-Statutory Standards for Sustainable Drainage, the CIRIA SuDS Manual and other relevant codes of practice.</p> <p>Any additional run off, apart from in exceedance events, should include measures to protect the sensitivities of the receiving water bodies including protected aquifer or the Breckland Special Protection Area and the Breckland Special Area of Conservation.</p>
<p><b>Policy WTN2 – Infrastructure Provision</b></p> <p>Proposals will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that adequate capacity exists for relevant infrastructure or where that capacity can be made available by the time the development is brought into use.</p>
<b>Development Design</b>
<p><b>Policy WTN 3 – Design Considerations</b></p> <p>Proposals for new development must reflect the local characteristics and circumstances in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, including those identified in the Watton Character Appraisal, and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment. They should also demonstrate regard to the National Model Design Code (July 2021). In addition, proposals will only be supported where they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area and, where necessary, prepare a landscape character appraisal to demonstrate this;</li> <li>ii. maintain the town's sense of place and/or local character and respect the character, scale and density of the locality;</li> <li>iii. do not involve the loss or partial loss of gardens, important open, green or landscaped areas, which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the town;</li> </ul>



- iv. taking mitigation measures into account, do not affect adversely:
  - a. any historic, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings; and
  - b. important landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographic features; and
  - c. important views into, out of, or within the town;
- v. do not locate sensitive development where its users and nearby residents would be significantly and adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, or other forms of pollution from existing sources, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented;
- vi. produce designs, in accordance with standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network and seeking to ensure permeability through new housing areas, taking opportunities to connect new development into the heart of the existing settlement by sustainable modes of travel;
- vii. where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and dedicated cycle storage;
- viii. include suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and
- ix. provide one electric vehicle charging point per new off-street parking place created.

#### **Development Design**

#### **Policy WTN 4 – Residential Amenity Space**

Proposals that include shared amenity space and / or landscaping will only be supported where they:

- i. utilise and enhance existing planting and topography, and contribute to local biodiversity through new planting; are integrated into the overall design in order to create natural boundaries, variety, colour and texture;
- ii. are of a useable size and configuration relative to the needs of the building’s occupants;
- iii. contribute to an attractive and functional development; and v. are properly maintained with arrangements in place for the maintenance of communal garden space or landscaped areas.

All new residential units will be expected to have direct access to an area of private amenity space. The form of private amenity space will be dependent on the form of housing and could include a private garden, balcony, or ground-level patio with defensible space from any shared amenity areas. In providing amenity space, development should:

- a. consider the location and context of the development, including the character of the surrounding area;
- b. take into account the orientation of the amenity space in relation to the sun at different times of year;
- c. address issues of overlooking and enclosure, which may otherwise impact detrimentally on the proposed dwelling and any neighbouring dwellings; and
- d. design the amenity space to be of a shape, size and location to allow effective and practical use of the space by residents.

#### **Housing**

#### **Policy WTN 5 - Housing Mix**

In all housing developments in excess of ten dwellings there shall be an emphasis on providing a mix of dwellings in accordance with the needs identified in the Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017) unless it can be demonstrated that:

- i. the particular circumstances relating to the tenure of the housing dictate otherwise; or

ii. the latest publicly available housing needs for the Neighbourhood Plan Area identify a need for a different mix.

**Policy WTN 6 - Housing in Multiple Occupation**

Proposals for large houses in multiple occupation (sui generis) as defined The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), will be supported, where the proposal:

- i. does not create an over-concentration of such a use in the local area, or cause harm to residential amenity or the surrounding area; and
  - ii. the building or site (including any outbuildings) is suitable for use as housing in multiple occupation, with provision made, for example, for appropriate refuse and recycling storage, cycle and car parking and drying areas; and
  - iii. will be accessible to sustainable modes of transport, shops and other local services.
- Appropriate management arrangements should be put in place in order to monitor and minimise antisocial behaviour and adverse impact on local residents. A condition to this effect may be applied to any planning consent.

**Natural Environment**

**Policy WTN 7 - Country Park**

Proposals for a new country park to serve Watton and the wider area will be supported where:

- i. it can be accessed by safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes from Watton;
- ii. it provides enhanced dog walking measures including circular dog walks and dedicated “dogs’ off lead” areas; and
- iii. satisfactory vehicular access can be achieved without creating a detrimental impact on the local highways network.

**Policy WTN 8 - Local Green Spaces**

The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the maps in Appendix 2.

1. George Trollope Road
2. South of South Road
3. Merton Road crescent
4. Memorial Green, Memorial Way
5. Open space at Ventura House
6. Langmere Road
7. Stokes Avenue
8. Bridle Road
9. Heron Way
10. Youth and Community Centre
11. Between Queensway and Edinburgh Close
12. Jubilee Road
13. Allotment Gardens off Thetford Road
14. Play area, Bowes Close
15. Open Spaces, Bowes Close/Byfords Way
16. Balancing pond, Byfords Way
17. Vicarage Walk / Chestnut Road
18. Whitebeam Crescent
19. Dye Road
20. Lovell Gardens Play Area
21. Lovell Gardens Open Space

22. Lovell Gardens Amenity Spaces
23. Akrotiri Square Amenity Space
24. Shire Horse Way / Horse Shoe Close Amenity Spaces
25. Harvest Road / Blenheim Way Open Space
26. Badger Drive Open Space
27. Wheatcroft Drive Open Space
28. Cemetery
29. Allotments
30. Loch Neaton
31. Field Maple Road
32. Church Walk

### **Town Centre and the Economy**

#### **Policy WTN 9 – Watton Town Centre**

Proposals in the Town Centre, as defined on the Local Plan Policies Map, should have regard to and demonstrate how they accord with the design guidance for the area set out in the Watton Town Centre Design Code (May 2020). Proposals which depart from the guidance should justify why such a departure is appropriate to the development. Proposals to alter an existing shop front or create a new shop front, including the installation of external security measures, advertisements or canopies, or advertisements, must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the building or location of which it forms a part, and the street scene in which the proposal is located, and must not adversely affect amenity and/or public safety.

### **Built Heritage**

#### **Policy WTN 10 – Buildings of Local Significance**

The retention and protection of local heritage assets and buildings of local significance, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest, must be appropriately secured.

Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of, or substantial harm to, a building of local significance should be supported by an appropriate analysis of the significance of the asset to enable a balanced judgement to be made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Appendix 3 describes the significance of the Buildings of Local Significance and their locations.

## 4. SEA Screening

4.1. The process for determining whether or not a SEA is required is called 'screening'. In order to screen, it is necessary to determine if a plan will have significant environmental effects using the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule I of the SEA Regulations. A determination cannot be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted: The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. The responses received are attached in Appendix 1.

4.2. Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1: Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects.**

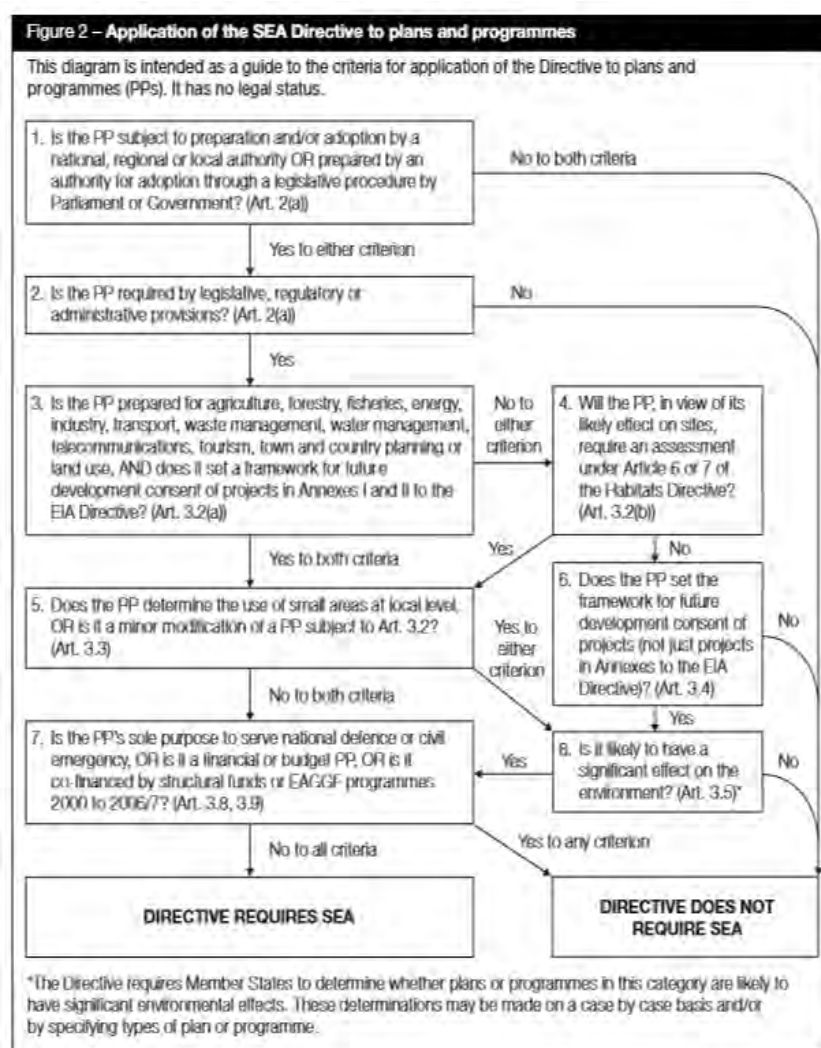
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to
  - the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
  - the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
  - the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
  - environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
  - the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to
  - the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
  - the cumulative nature of the effects,
  - the trans-boundary nature of the effects,
  - the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
  - the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
  - the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
    - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
    - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
    - intensive land-use,
    - the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

Source: Annex 11 of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

## 5. Assessment

5.1. The SEA screening is a two-stage process. The first part considers the Neighbourhood Plan against the SEA assessment criteria set out in the national guidance, 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive'<sup>4</sup>. The second part of the assessment considers whether the NP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, using criteria drawn from Schedule 1 of the EU SEA Directive and the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004<sup>5</sup>.

5.2 Figure 2 below sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied with steps 1 to 5 encompassed within Stage 1 of the SEA screening process and step 8 undertaken through Stage 2.



Source: Annex 11 of SEA Directive

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[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/pdfs/uksi\\_20041633\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/pdfs/uksi_20041633_en.pdf)

**SEA Screening Stage 1: SEA Directive Article 2(a), 3.2(a), 3.2(b) 3.3, 3.4, 3.8 and 3.9**

**Assessment 1: Establishing the need for SEA**

5.3 Table 3 below sets out an initial assessment of the Watton Neighbourhood Plan in response to the criteria for SEA set out within the directive.

**Table 3: Application of the SEA Directive to the Watton Neighbourhood Plan**

<b>STAGE</b>	<b>Y/N</b>	<b>REASON</b>
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The preparation and making of the NP is permitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The NP is being prepared by Watton Town Council (as the “relevant bodies”) and will be “made” (adopted) by Breckland Council as the Local Authority subject to passing an independent examination and community referendum. The preparation of the NP is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.
2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art.2(a))	N	Whilst the NP is not a requirement of the Town and Country Planning Act as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will be “made” and form part of the Development Plan for the District. These are directed by legislative processes and it is important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.
3. Is the NP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, and does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	N	A NP can include these policy areas and could provide, at a Neighbourhood Area level, the framework for development that would fall within Annex II of the EIA Directive. Developments that fall within Annex I are ‘excluded’ development for NPs (as set out in Section 61(k) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The NP sets out a framework for town and country planning and land use within the parish of Watton. The strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Breckland LP. The NP seeks to align and be in general conformity with this. The NP does not anticipate being the tool to manage development of the scale and nature envisaged by Annex I and Annex II of the EIA Directive.
4. Will the NP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of	Y	A NP could potentially have impacts on sites covered by the Habitats Regulations. A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report (2013) and the Assessment of the Breckland LP at Preferred Directions stage (2015) were carried out as part of the Local Plans preparation.

the habitats Directive? (Art.3.2(b))		A further HRA including a full Appropriate Assessment on the WNP has also been undertaken (April 2022). This concluded there are no likely significant effects on Habitat Sites covered by the Habitats Regulations.
5. Does the NP determine the use of small areas at local level, or is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art 3.2? (Art3.3)	Y	A NP can determine the use of small areas at a local level. The NP proposes to include policies relating to the location of sustainable development but does not propose to specifically allocate land for development or other growth.
6. Does the NP set the framework for future development consent of Projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Y	Once 'made', a NP forms part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used in the determination of planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area. Therefore, it sets the framework for future developments at a local level.
Is the NP sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it financial or budget PP, or is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art.3.8,3.9)	N	The NP does not deal with these categories.
8.Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment	N	The NP seeks general conformity with the strategic policies of the "adopted" LP. There is no specific development is proposed through the plan, nor is land allocated for development through the plan. Whilst there are no internationally designated within the boundary there is one SSSI and several heritage assets within its boundaries. It is therefore considered that the plan would not have a significant effect on heritage assets, landscape, biodiversity interests or areas of flood risk.

**SEA Screening Stage 2: SEA Directive Article 3(5) Annex II – Application of Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects of a Neighbourhood Plan**

5.5 Table 4 below sets out the assessment against the Strategic Environmental Assessment criteria for the NP. This is to determine whether the implementation of the NP will have a significant effect on the environment. This criteria against which the screening is carried out are taken directly from Annex II of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (also known as the SEA Directive), as required by Article 3(4).

**Table 4: SEA Screening Stage 2 - Assessment of the Likelihood of Significant Effects on the Environment**

Criteria in Annex 11 of the SEA Directive	Response	Is there a significant effect?
<b>(1) Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size, and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	The strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Breckland LP. The NP seeks to align and be in general conformity with this.	No
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The NP will be adopted alongside the LP and form part of the District’s Development Plan. The NP will expand upon some of the emerging LP policies, providing additional information on a local scale.	No
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	Any development that comes forward through the NP will be subject to environmental considerations of the adopted LP. These policies have been subject to sustainability appraisal and are in place to ensure that sustainable development is achieved.	No
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;	There are not considered to be any significant environmental problems which are specific to the area, above and beyond those considered and addressed in the LP. The NP includes policies which provide additional environmental protection. The WNP has also been subject to a ‘Screening’, which concluded there are no likely significant effects on Habitat Sites covered by the Habitats Regulations.	No



The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The implementation of community legislation is unlikely to be significantly compromised by the NP.	No
<b>(2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects;	The NP is a long-term plan up to 2036. The NP does not seek to allocate sites for growth.	No
The cumulative nature of the effects;	It is considered unlikely that the degree of development or growth proposed through the NP when combined with the adopted LP will introduce significant environmental effects.	No
The transboundary nature of the effects;	The impacts beyond the parish are unlikely to be significant.	No
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);	The NP is unlikely to produce a Watton any significant effects.	No
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The NP covers the Parish of Watton with a population of 8,592 (2020 mid-year estimate). The spatial extent and the magnitude of the population affected are not considered significant for the purpose of the SEA.	No
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values iii) Intensive land use	<p>i) The NP area and adjacent areas does (not) contains <del>any internationally designated or</del> nationally designated sites. It <del>does (not)</del> includes designations which reflect the cultural and heritage value of the area such as listed buildings and a conservation area. The NP will however conform to the strategic policies of the adopted LP, which provides protection to these environmental characteristics to ensure that they are not vulnerable to significant impacts from development.</p> <p>ii) The NP is unlikely to result in exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as those relating to air, water, and soil quality.</p> <p>iii) The NP is unlikely to bring forward development of an extent that would result in a significant intensification of Local land Use.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>

<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>The NP Area <del>does (not)</del> includes any landscape designations. However, the NP is not proposing development so it is considered that the environmental effects on these designations has been considered through the adopted LP. Any residual environmental effects on areas of biodiversity designations have been considered through the adopted LP.</p>	<p>No</p>
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## 6. Conclusion

6.1. The assessment shown above identifies that, based on the information available to date, there are unlikely to be any significant environmental effects from the implementation of the proposals in the emerging WNP. The WNP will not allocate land that is in or above that identified within the Breckland Local Plan 2019. Whilst the area does contain sensitive natural or heritage assets (in the form of a SSSI and listed buildings) they are not expected to be additionally affected by the proposals in the plan. As such the draft Neighbourhood Plan does not have any significant environmental effects that have not already been addressed by a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

6.2. The Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, as well as Norfolk County Council, have responded to the Screening Opinion request and their responses are contained in Appendix 1. They conclude that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

6.3. In light of this, Breckland Council has concluded that the emerging WNP is not likely to have any significant environmental effect and accordingly will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The main reasons for this conclusion are:

- The NP does not allocate any sites for development that have not already been appraised through the sustainability appraisal of the Breckland Local Plan
- The NP area does not contain sensitive environmental assets that may be affected by the policies and proposals in the NP
- The proposed policies in the WNP do not seek to avoid or minimise environmental effects when determining development proposals and are unlikely to result in any additional environmental impacts

6.4. This report is based on the Screening Opinion request on the Regulation 14 version of the WNP. Should the contents of the plan subsequently differ from this version, there may be a requirement to revisit this Screening Opinion.

6.5. A copy of this report will be available online on the Breckland Council Neighbourhood Plan website and for inspection at Breckland Council Offices, Elizabeth House, Wolpole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1EE.

## **APPENDIX 1 – Responses from Statutory Consultees**

### **Historic England**

#### SEA Screening Consultation

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore we welcome this opportunity to review the Screening Report for this plan. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Watton Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion.

The Screening Report indicates that the Council considers that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We note that the plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development.

On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan) where we consider that, despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

Please do contact me, either via email or the number below, if you have any queries.

Kind regards,

Edward James

Historic Places Adviser - East of England

## Natural England

Hornbeam House

Crewe Business Park

Electra Way

Crewe

Cheshire

CW1 6GJ

Dear Mr D'Arcy

Watton Neighbourhood Plan – SEA and HRA screening report consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 11 April 2022 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

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

Where Neighbourhood Plans could have significant environmental effects, they may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended). Further guidance on deciding whether the proposals are likely to have significant environmental effects and the requirements for consulting Natural England on SEA are set out in the planning practice guidance.

Planning practice guidance also outlines that if an appropriate assessment is required for your neighbourhood plan this will also engage the need for a SEA. One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European obligations, including those under the SEA Directive. Where a SEA is required it should be prepared in accordance with regulation 12 of the SEA Regulations.

Where a neighbourhood plan could potentially affect a 'habitats site', it will be necessary to screen the plan in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations'). Where likely significant effects are identified, it will be necessary to undertake an appropriate assessment of the neighbourhood plan and, if needed, identify and secure appropriate mitigation measures to ensure the plan does not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of the habitats site.

Natural England welcomes the Screening Reports which assess the requirement for SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Watton Neighbourhood Plan. I can confirm that Natural England agrees with the conclusions of the reports that it is not likely there will be significant environmental effects arising from the policies in the plan, which have not already been accounted for within the adopted local plan. Therefore, the Watton Neighbourhood Plan does not require a SEA to be

undertaken. Natural England also agrees that the Plan would be unlikely to result in any significant effect to European Sites, either alone or in combination, and therefore an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations is not required.

Aside from this, Natural England have no specific comments at this stage. We would be happy to comment further should the need arise. For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact..... For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to

consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Richard Hack

Richard Hack

Norfolk & Suffolk Team

## **Environment Agency**

Dear Andy

We agree with the conclusions that have been reached.

Kind regards

Neville Benn

Sustainable Places

East Anglia Area (West)

Environment Agency, Bromholme Lane, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE28 4NE

## **Norfolk County Council**

### **Lead Local Flood Authority**

Dear Mr D'Arcy,

SEA screening of the Watton Neighbourhood Plan for Watton.

Thank you for your screening consultation on the above Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Watton received on 26 April 2022. Whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required, we, the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), have reviewed the request as submitted and wish to make the following comments:

The applicant has provided a report requesting a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion from you, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) (Watton Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report (draft) | Breckland Council | Ref: N/A | Rev: N/A | Dated: April 2022).

We welcome references to flood risk within the report, including the consideration of fluvial and surface water flood risk when assessing planning applications. The Parish of Watton is known to have surface water flood risk (both flow paths and ponding) according to Environment Agency (EA) data.

We welcome the inclusion of Policy WTN1 - 'Managing Flood Risk' within the report.

References to drainage within the report are few. There are minimal specific references to both 'sustainable drainage' as a whole and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The use of SuDS provides opportunity to reduce the environmental impacts of flooding with specific reference to ordinary watercourses, surface water and groundwater flood risk.

We welcome the inclusion of allowances for climate change within Policy WTN1.

There are no references to water quality measures within the report. In terms of sustainable drainage, water quality is a fundamental component of the SuDS philosophy and acts as one of four key pillars in their use and application.

The LLFA expect the neighbourhood plan to limit or, more importantly, better the environmental impacts of flood risk for future developments with a clear focus on sustainability within the named Parish. Flood risk should not be increased as a consequence of any development scope.

We would advise that the benefits of a SEA will only support the Plan development and far outweigh the loss of not doing so, but ultimately, we recognise that it is the responsibility of the LPA to decide whether a full SEA is required or not.

The LLFA have no comments to make regarding the Habitat Regulations Assessment.

Further guidance on the information required by the LLFA from applicants can be found [here](#) and information on consent for work on Ordinary Watercourses can be found [here](#).

If you have any specific concerns with the consultation or questions regarding this response, please contact the LLFA by email at [llfa@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:llfa@norfolk.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Assistant Flood Risk Officer

Lead Local Flood Authority