



**Necton Neighbourhood Plan**  
**Strategic Environmental Assessment**  
**Screening Report**  
**June 2023**

# **Strategic Environmental Assessment: Screening Report**

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# 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 Necton Neighbourhood Plan (NNP) 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 NNP is compatible with European Union obligations.
- 1.3. This screening report is designed to determine whether or not the contents of the NNP 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 Necton Neighbourhood Plan 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 be subject to consultation with the statutory consultees of the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. In addition to this Norfolk County Council were consulted.
- 1.7. The results of the screening process following must be detailed in a Screening Report and made 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-draftneighbourhood-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, Necton Parish Council (the qualifying body) has requested Breckland Council, as the responsible authority, to consider whether an environmental assessment of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan 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 on Strategic Environmental Assessment, 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. Necton Neighbourhood Plan Designation and Policies**

- 3.1. Necton Neighbourhood Plan is at the pre-submission consultation stage (Reg.14). 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 20km away) or National Parks (the Broads over 30km away). There are also no Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area or Ramsar Sites within the Parish, with more detailed screening of the potential effects of the Necton Neighbourhood Plan on these areas undertaken through a parallel HRA screening. There are no Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the parish. The parish has three County Wildlife Sites wholly within, or partially within, its boundaries. This information is summarised in the table below.

<b>Environmental assets</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Details</b>
Internationally designated sites	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
	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	None within the NP area
	Registered Ancient Woodland	Necton Wood is within the northeast of the Boundary. Sporle Wood and Great Wood is outside the NP area however is on the northwest and east boundary respectively. Sporle Wood is Ancient Replanted Woodland and Great Wood is a mix of Ancient and Replanted Woodland.
Local sites	County Wildlife Sites (CWS)	Necton Wood to the east, Fox Covert and Necton Old Common to the south.
	Geodiversity Sites	None within the NP area
	Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)	None within the NP area
Common land	Registered Common Land	None within the NP area
	Registered Village Green	None within the NP area
Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	Public Footpaths, bridleways and Restricted byways.	There is two designated public right of Way within the Neighbourhood Plan Area (FP 1 and FP 2)).
	Norfolk Trails	None within the NP area
Agricultural Land	Grades 1-5	Areas of Grade 2, 3 and 4.
Flooding and Water Resource	Flood Zones SPZ/Aquifers	Area of Floodzone 2 and 3 along watercourses. This is located across the southern boundary.  Parts of the area are within Source Protection Zone 3 and a Principal Aquifer.
Heritage Assets	Scheduled Monuments Listed Buildings Conservation Areas	1 Scheduled Monuments 1 Grade 1 listed Building 5 Grade 2 Buildings

		1 Grade 2* Building Necton Conservation Area
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3.3. NP policies (Reg.14) to be considered in the SEA Screening Opinion are:

**Policy NTN1 - Housing Mix**

In all housing developments of ten or more homes, the housing mix in terms of number of bedrooms shall be in accordance with the Necton Housing Needs Assessment 2022, 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 information for the Plan area identify a need for a different mix.

**Policy NTN 2 - Protecting Necton’s Landscape Character**

Proposals must, proportionate to the development, demonstrate how the landscape characteristics of the site and its vicinity have been considered in preparing the scheme and having regard to the guidance contained in the Necton Landscape Assessment 2022. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location and to ensure that they conserve the essential landscape, heritage and rural character of the parish, development proposals should demonstrate how they: i. have regard to, and conserve, or enhance, the landscape character and the setting of the parish, as referenced in the Necton Landscape Assessment; and ii. will ensure that there is no unacceptable impact on the key features of the important views identified on the Policies Map.

**Policy NTN 3 - Local Green Spaces**

The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the Policies Map: 1. The churchyard 2. War memorial and cemetery 3. Folly View amenity open space 4. Masons Drive / Hale Road amenity open space 5. Briar Close amenity open space 6. Jubilee Way amenity open spaces 7. Elizabeth Drive amenity open space 8. Queen Elizabeth Memorial Wood, (formerly the Marl Pit) between Ketts Hill and St

Andrews Lane Development in the Local Green Spaces will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts.

#### **Policy NTN 4 - Local Heritage Assets**

Local Heritage Assets, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest must be protected.

The following properties and buildings (and as shown on the Policies Map) are identified as Local Heritage Assets:

1. Library and Reading Rooms, School Road
2. Old Post Office, 2 School Road
3. Former farmhouse and dairy building, 9-11 School Road
4. Swiss Cottage, Tuns Road
5. Old Blacksmith's building, Church Farm, Tuns Road
6. Plaque identifying the location of the Community Coal House, Eastgate Park
7. Old Rectory, St Andrews Lane
8. Former Necton Mill, Mill Street
9. Necton Mill buildings, Mill Street
10. Old Butcher's building, Mill Street
11. Former Methodist Chapel, 52 Chantry Lane
12. Old Good woman public house, Chantry Lane
13. Pear Tree Cottage, Chapel Road
14. West Cottage, Chapel Road
15. Former Baptist Chapel, Chapel Road
16. Mother of Necton's cottage remains, Little Drift
17. Old Carpenters Arms public house, Ivy Todd

Development proposals should be designed to respect the integrity and appearance of Local Heritage Assets. Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of or substantial harm to a Local Heritage Asset should be supported by an appropriate analysis of the significance of the asset together with an explanation of the wider public benefits of the proposal.

## **Policy NTN 5 - Development Design**

Proposals for all new development must reflect the local characteristics and circumstances of the site by creating and contributing to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment. Planning applications should demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Design Checklist in Appendix 4 of this Plan and, as appropriate to the proposal:

1. integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
2. reinforce or enhance the established village character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
3. include boundary treatments that reflect the character and materials of the local vicinity;
4. 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 the locality;
5. 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;
6. 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;
7. produce designs, in accordance with standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network and seek 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;
8. where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and dedicated cycle storage in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards;
9. include suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and
10. provide one electric vehicle charging point per new off-street parking place created.

Where new off-highway car parking provision is created for non-residential uses or public car parking, ducting and cabling shall be laid to enable charging points to be provided at every space and the minimum number of charging points shall be provided in accordance with adopted standards at the time of the application.

#### **Policy NTN 6 - Sustainable Construction Practices**

For all appropriate development, proposals that incorporate current best practice in energy conservation will be supported where such measures are designed to be integral to the building design and minimise any detrimental impact on the building or its surroundings. Development proposals should demonstrate how they:

- a. maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings;
- b. incorporate best practice in energy conservation and be designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency;
- c. avoid fossil fuel-based heating systems;
- d. incorporate current sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures, such as, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar panels, thermal and pV systems; and
- e. make provision for grey water/rainwater, and/or surface water harvesting and recycling.

#### **Policy NTN 7 - Renewable Energy**

Renewable energy generation schemes, including those that form part of wider development proposals, will be supported where their scale, siting and cumulative effects would not have a significant adverse impact on:

- i. neighbouring uses or amenity;
- ii. visual amenity, particularly from sensitive viewpoints;
- iii. environmental and heritage assets;
- iv. the best and most versatile agricultural land; and
- v. highway safety.

Where development is permitted, mitigation measures, such as landscaping, may be required to minimise any potential negative visual amenity and/or highway impacts

**Policy NTN 8 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage**

Proposals for all new development will be required to submit schemes appropriate to the scale of the proposal detailing how on-site drainage and water resources will be managed so as not to cause or exacerbate surface water and fluvial flooding elsewhere. Proposals should, as appropriate include the use of above ground open Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). These could include:

- wetland and other water features, which can help reduce flood risk whilst offering other benefits including water quality, amenity/recreational areas, and biodiversity benefits; and
- rainwater and stormwater harvesting and recycling; and other natural drainage systems where easily accessible maintenance can be achieved.

**Policy NTN 9 - Community Facilities**

Proposals that will result in the loss of the following existing community facilities:  
Community Centre

- Sports and Social Club
- Primary School
- Post Office
- Necton Stores
- Butchers
- Dispensing surgeries
- Petrol filling station with food store
- Vehicle electric charging points
- Drive-through coffee shop
- Service / repair garage and MOT station
- All Saints' Church • Windmill pub / restaurant (closed at present); will only be permitted where:
  - a. it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and
  - b. it can be demonstrated that there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or

c. alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking

**Policy NTN 10 - Sport and Recreation Facilities**

The Plan identifies the following facilities (as shown on the Policies Map) as important sport and recreational facilities:

- The Playing Field, and
- The Primary School Playing Field

Proposals for development at these locations will be determined in accordance with Policy ENV 4 of the adopted Local Plan or subsequent replacement policy.

**Policy NTN 11 - Public Rights of Way**

Measures to improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way and bridleways will be supported where their value as biodiversity corridors is safeguarded. Where practicable development proposals should incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity within the improved or extended public right of way.

## 4. SEA Screening

- 4.1. The process for determining whether or not an 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.
- 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 Table 1 below:

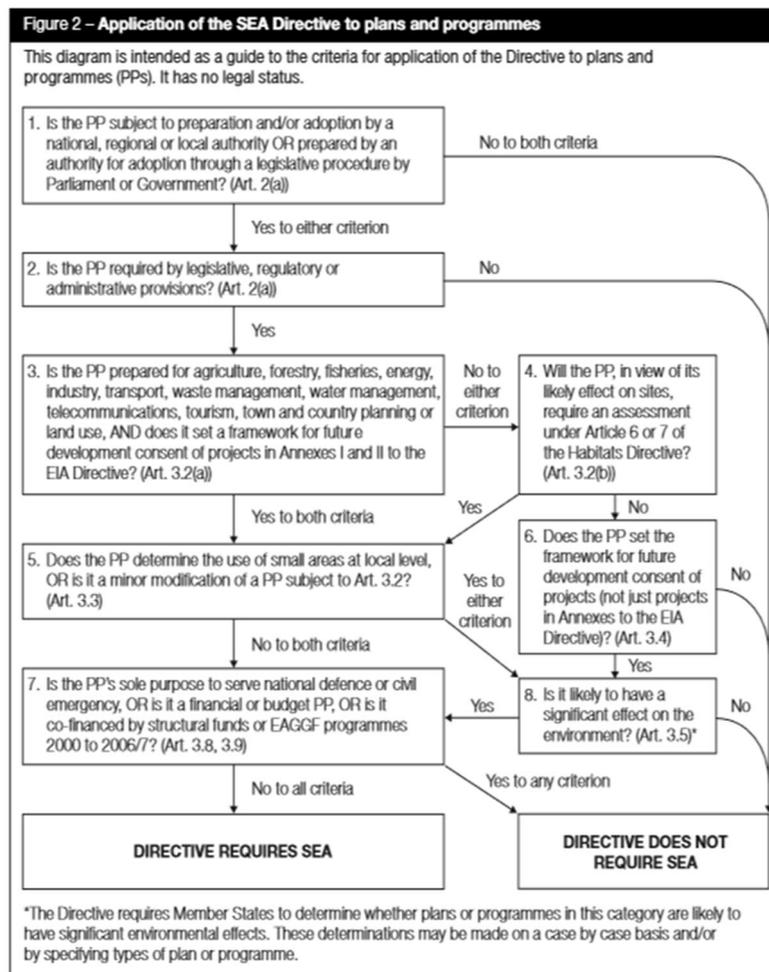
**Table 1: Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects.**

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)

<sup>4</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7657/practicalguide\\_sea.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguide_sea.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/pdfs/ukxi\\_20041633\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/pdfs/ukxi_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**

**Table 2: Application of the SEA Directive to the Necton Neighbourhood Plan**

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

Stage	Y/N	Reason
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 Necton Parish 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 Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art.2(a))	Y	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	<p>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)).</p> <p>The NP sets out a framework for town and country planning and land use within the parish of Necton. The strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Breckland Local Plan. The NP seeks to align and be in general conformity with this.</p>

		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 Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive(Art.3.2(b))	?	<p>A NP could potentially have impacts on sites covered by the Habitats Regulations.</p> <p>A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report (2013) and the Assessment of the Breckland Local Plan at Submission stage (2017) were carried out as part of the Local Plans preparation.</p> <p>A HRA screening assessment on the Necton Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken (June 2023). This will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on Habitat Sites covered by the Habitats Regulations arising from the Necton Neighbourhood Plan (draft being prepared).</p>
5. Does the Neighbourhood Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, Or is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art 3.2? ( Art 3.3)	Y	<p>A NP can determine the use of small areas at a local level.</p> <p>The NP proposes to include policies relating to the management of sustainable development. The NNP does not specifically allocate land for additional housing or other growth</p>
6. Does the Neighbourhood Plan 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.
7. Is the Neighbourhood Plans sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it financial or budget PP, OR is it cofinanced 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	<p>The NP seeks general conformity with the strategic policies of the "adopted" Local Plan.</p> <p>There is no specific development proposed through the plan, nor is land allocated for development through the plan. Whilst there are</p>

		<p>no internationally designated or SSSI there are several heritage assets within its boundaries.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the plan would not have a significant effect on heritage assets, landscape, biodiversity interests or areas of flood risk.</p>
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**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**

5.3. Table 3 below sets out the assessment against the Strategic Environmental Assessment criteria for the NP. This is to determine whether the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan 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 3: SEA Screening Stage 2 - Assessment of the Likelihood of Significant Effects on the Environment**

<b>Criteria in Annex 11 of the SEA Directive</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Is there a significant effect?</b>
<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 Local Plan of Breckland District Council. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to align and be in general conformity with this as well as within the wider framework set by the National Planning Policy Framework.	No
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy;	Once “made” the Neighbourhood Plan would be implemented alongside the Local Plan and form part of the District’s Development Plan.	No

	The Neighbourhood Plan will expand upon some of the Local Plan policies, providing additional information at a local scale.	
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 Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to the environmental considerations of the adopted Local Plan. 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 Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan policies which provide additional environmental protection.  A HRA screening assessment on the Necton Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken (June 2023). This will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on Habitat Sites covered by the Habitats Regulations arising from the Necton Neighbourhood Plan (draft being prepared).	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 Neighbourhood Plan.	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 Neighbourhood Plan is a long-term plan up to 2036. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate sites for growth but supplements Local Plan policy with local matters of importance for consideration.	No
The cumulative nature of the effects;	No growth is proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan as such no cumulative effects arise in combination with the adopted Local Plan to introduce significant environmental effects.	No
The transboundary nature of the effects;	The impacts beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area are unlikely to be significant.	No
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);	The nature of the proposals establishing local criteria for consideration of development proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to produce 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 Necton and a population of approximately 2,143 (Census 2021). 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	i) The Neighbourhood Plan area does not contain nationally designated sites; however it does include designations which reflect the cultural and heritage value of the area such as listed buildings and conservation area. The NP will conform to the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan, which provides protection to these environmental characteristics to ensure that they are not vulnerable to significant impacts from development.	No  No  No

	<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>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>The Plan Area includes designations which reflect the cultural and Heritage value of the area such as listed buildings and conservation area. The environmental effects on areas of biodiversity designations have been considered through the emerging Local Plan.</p>	<p>No</p>

#### **5.4. Consultee responses**

- 5.5. Following the consultation process undertaken in June/July 2023 responses were received from Natural England, Norfolk County Council and Environment Agency.
- 5.6. Natural England stated that having reviewed the draft screening assessment the statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes and the Habitats sites, either alone or in combination, are unlikely to be significantly affected by the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.7. The Environmental Agency stated that on the basis that future development is steered away from the sensitive aspects of the environment highlighted, we do not consider there to be potential significant environmental effects relating to these environmental constraints. They recommend that the inclusion of relevant policies to cover the management of flood risk. Following this response, it is reasonable to regard the existing Breckland Local Plan, flood strategy and the NPPF to be sufficient. The Environmental Agency also states that growth or development located in Source Protection Zone 3 and a Principal Aquifer should consider the Groundwater Protection guidance.
- 5.8. Norfolk County Council stated that the screening report for the Necton Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects are supported and agreed.

#### **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 Necton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.2. In light of the above assessment, Breckland Council has concluded that the emerging NNP is not likely to have a significant environmental effect and accordingly will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The main reasons for this conclusion are:
- The NNP does not allocate any sites for development that have not already been appraised through the sustainability appraisal of the Breckland Local Plan.
  - The NNP does not contain sensitive environmental assets or would result in any significant environmental effects beyond those already assessed as part of the preparation of the Breckland Local Plan.

- The proposed policies in the NNP seek to avoid or minimise environmental effects when determining development proposals and are unlikely to result in any additional environmental impacts.
- 6.3. This report is based on the Screening Opinion request on the Regulation 14 version of the NNP. Should the contents of the plan subsequently differ from this version, there may be a requirement to revisit this Screening Opinion.
- 6.4. A copy of the final 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



Andrew Darcy  
Elizabeth House,  
Walpole Loke,  
Dereham  
NR19 1EE

**Our ref:** AE/2023/128557/01-L01  
**Your ref:** SEA Screening  
**Date:** 17 July 2023

Dear Andrew,

## **NECTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

### **NECTON**

Thank you for consulting us on the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the Necton Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **Flood Risk**

Based on a review of environmental constraints for which we are a statutory consultee, we find that there are areas of fluvial flood risk and watercourses within the neighbourhood plan area. We note that the boundary does extend into areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3.

On the basis that future development is steered away from the sensitive aspects of the environment highlighted, we do not consider there to be potential significant environmental effects relating to these environmental constraints. Nevertheless, we recommend the inclusion of relevant policies to cover the management of flood risk. Allocation of any sites and any windfall development delivered through the Plan period should follow the sequential approach. [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) paragraph 161 sets this out.

#### **SPZs/Aquifers**

Your plan includes areas which are located within Source Protection Zone 3 and a Principal Aquifer. These should be considered within your plan if growth or development is proposed here. The relevance of the designation and the potential implication upon development proposals should be considered with reference to our Groundwater Protection guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

#### **Informative**

We encourage you to seek ways in which your neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment. For your information, together with Natural England, Historic England and Forestry Commission we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on

Environment Agency  
Iceni House Cobham Road, Ipswich, IP3 9JD.  
Customer services line: 03708 506 506  
[www.gov.uk/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/environment-agency)  
Cont/d..

incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: [How to consider the environment in Neighbourhood plans - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)

We trust this advice is useful.

Yours sincerely,

**Miss Neve Cooper**  
**Planning Officer**

Direct e-mail [planning.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:planning.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Date: 29 June 2023  
Our ref: 437985 & 437986  
Your ref: N/A

Mr Andrew Darcy  
Breckland Council  
[Andrew.darcy@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.darcy@breckland.gov.uk)

**BY EMAIL ONLY**



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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Darcy

### **Necton Neighbourhood Plan SEA & HRA Screening Reports**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 13 June 2023 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.

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

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

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites<sup>1</sup>, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Habitats sites are those referred to in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

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

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

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

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

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

Joe Thompsett  
Lead Advisor - Norfolk & Suffolk Team

Dear Mr Howarth,

Thank you for consulting Norfolk County Council (NCC) on the above draft SEA and HRA Screening reports for Necton Neighbourhood Plan.

Apologies for the delayed response, but we received a comment from our Natural Environment team below:

The conclusions set out in both the draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report, and draft Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report that the Necton Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects are supported and agreed.

If you have any questions regarding the above comment, please don't hesitate to respond to myself or to the Natural Environment team directly at [NETI@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:NETI@norfolk.gov.uk)

Kind regards,

Joe

Joe Wyatt, Strategic Planning Apprentice  
Community and Environmental Services  
County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH