

**Strategic Environmental Assessment**  
**Screening Determination**  
**Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone**  
**Joint Neighbourhood Plan**  
**April 2016**



# Neighbourhood Planning 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 Development Plan (or 'Neighbourhood Plan') takes into account SEA is an important legal requirement. The Independent Examiner appointed to consider the Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Joint Neighbourhood Plan (JNP) 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 JNP is compatible with European Union obligations. This includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. This directive is transposed into UK law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004)<sup>2</sup>. A Neighbourhood Plan must be compatible with European Union obligations, as incorporated into UK law, in order to be legally compliant.
- 1.3. The legislative background set out below outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise. The Screening Opinion request has been sent to the three statutory consultees of the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England to seek their views on its contents.

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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/uksi/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. The Government published 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive'<sup>4</sup>, which provides more detailed guidance on how an SEA should be carried out.
- 2.2. In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9(1)), the 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, Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverstone Parish Councils (the qualifying body) has requested Breckland District Council (BDC), 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 an 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.
- 2.5. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations, which implements the requirements of the SEA Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Sustainability Appraisals ensure that the potential environmental effects are given full consideration together with social and economic issues. The Government has stated that a Sustainability Appraisal is not legally required for Neighbourhood Plans, but has said that it must be demonstrated how the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in the area. It is down

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

<sup>4</sup> [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)

to the qualifying body to demonstrate how its Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development. It is considered best practice to incorporate requirements of the SEA Directive into a SA. Further guidance is contained within the Appendices of this report.

- 2.6. Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012<sup>5</sup> refers to the Habitats Directive. The Regulations require Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening to be undertaken to identify if a Neighbourhood Plan would have a significant impact on nature conservation sites that are of European importance, also referred to as Natura 2000 sites. Article 6 (3) of the EU habitats Directive<sup>6</sup> and Regulation 61 of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010<sup>7</sup> (as amended) requires that an Appropriate Assessment is carried out on any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European site.
- 2.7. To fulfil the legal requirements to identify if likely significant effects will occur on European sites with the implementation of the JNP, a HRA Screening Assessment should be undertaken. Details of the internationally designated sites need to be assessed to see if there is the potential for the implementation of the JNP to have an impact on the site. The Regulations state that the making of a Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on a site designated at European level for its biodiversity, however, this needs to be ascertained and this can be done at the time the screening opinion is being sought.
- 2.8. The legislation requires that where there is a 'risk' of a significant effect on a European site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, then there will be a requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to progress from HRA screening to Appropriate Assessment. This is known as the precautionary principle.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/pdfs/uksi\\_20120637\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/pdfs/uksi_20120637_en.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made>

### 3. Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Joint Neighbourhood Plan

3.1. The JNP is in its early stages of preparation. The information provided in the SEA Screening Opinion Request, stated with certainty that:

#### Vision

- The JNP area covers the 2 Parish Council areas of the 3 parishes of Croxton, Brettenham & Kilverstone.
- JNP area includes the previously identified Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), which is subject to the adopted Thetford Area Action Plan.
- Overarching need to integrate the SUE into the life of the residents of the 2 parish council areas.
- Key objective to enable the maintenance, protection and enhancement of rural character of the parishes albeit acknowledging the SUE development.
- No allocations to be made for housing development.
- Conservation led plan.
- Focus on cultural, historical and natural character of the two parish council areas.
- Key objective to maintain the individual identity of each parish.
- However recognition of the need for “social, cultural integration” with SUE, with “physical integration” being seen as transport links to the SUE.
- Plan period up to 2036.
- Residents see their parishes as pleasant and safe places to live and wish to retain their rural character.
- Residents wish to see the “semi-rural” character of the parishes acknowledged within any development with the adoption of appropriate building styles, choice of local materials and appropriate densities and levels of green infrastructure which reflect local character.

## **Housing**

- Policies will focus on infill with specific emphasis on design, local materials and scale.
- Policies will be underpinned by a conservation area style appraisal – general policy – then site specific and parish one.
- Policies to look at and suggest enhancements – planting, materials, landscaping.
- Housing requirement for both parish council areas considered to be satisfied with allocations already made (SUE).
- Affordable housing requirement considered to be satisfied within the SUE. However within Brettenham and Kilverstone there is a desire for more Alms houses – only 2 currently; 4-5 new ones might be appropriate under an exceptions policy.

## **Environment**

- Policy focus on Importance of undeveloped areas in the conservation area.
- Policy focus on identifying areas for enhancement – e.g. hard or soft landscaping, planting.
- Policy to be underpinned by Conservation Area style appraisal.

## **Community Facilities**

- Acknowledgement that increase in population arising from the SUE will drive the need for additional primary care, education, social (GP practice, schools and community centres/play areas etc.) but the new facility locations within the parish council areas needs to be considered.
- Policy Focus on open space provision – formal and informal.

## **Transport**

- Acknowledgement that within both parish council areas there is already heavy car reliance.
- Policy focus on the need to integrate bus/public transport routes to and from the SUE to the 2 rural parish council areas.
- Rat-runs in the parishes are of concern and will investigate if there are any policy options around this. – can we deal with this in a JNP?

- Policy focus for a reduced speed limit control to safeguard cycle route defined in Thetford Area Action Plan between Croxton & Thetford – emphasis on safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Policy focus on low impact footpaths to give better pedestrian accessibility with Brettenham & Kilverstone.

### **Employment**

- Acknowledgement that SUE will accommodate the strategic employment needs of the parishes.
- Policy focus – some support for small potential for small business.
- Minor development in B&K at Kilverstone Estate; garden centre.

### **Croxton**

- Conservation area appraisal for the existing conservation area.
- Extend the Conservation Area Appraisal style approach to rest of parish.
- Identify important features, buildings, spaces and opportunities for improvement.
- Possible policy focus on existing Play area – into the future – maintenance.
- Policy focus on the important landscape Break, between Croxton and Thetford.
- Policy focus on gateways and entrances to the parish.
- Identification of buildings of cultural, historical or architectural value in addition to those already recognised.
- Specific policy about density.

### **Brettenham & Kilverstone**

- Policies to be underpinned by Conservation Area Appraisal style survey for whole of parish outside of the SUE.
- Consideration of the implications of the only settlement boundary [in Brettenham] around Arlington Way.
- Specific policies to identify important undeveloped area, areas for opportunities for improvement or enhancement (landscaping, planting).
- Identification of buildings of cultural, historical or architectural value.
- Policy focus on the potential for developing new almshouses.

- Policy focus on enabling informal kick-about area.
- Specific policy about density.
- Policy focus on gateways to the parish.

## 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:

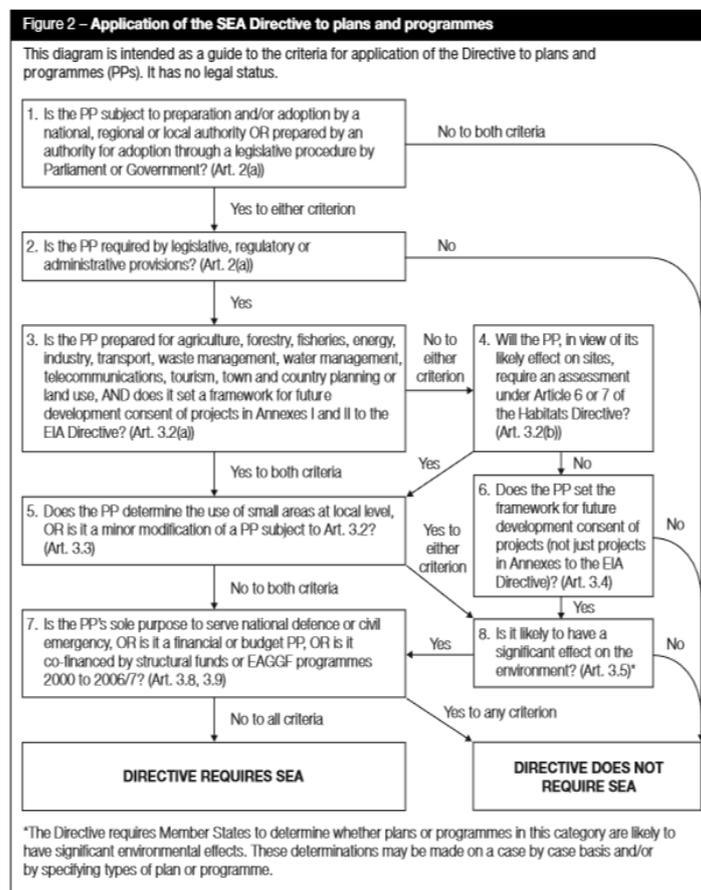
### **Figure 1: Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects.**

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.

## 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>8</sup>. The second part of the assessment considers whether the JNP 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>9</sup>.

5.2. The process shown has been undertaken and the findings can be viewed in the figure below and in Table 1 which follows. This sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.



(Source: Annex 11 of SEA Directive)

**Table 1: Application of the SEA Directive to the Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Neighbourhood Plan**

<sup>8</sup> [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>9</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)

### Assessment 1: Establishing the need for SEA

STAGE	Y/N	REASON
<p>1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan 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))</p>	Y	<p>The preparation and adoption of the JNP is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The JNP is being prepared by Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverstone Parish Councils (as the “relevant bodies”) and will be “made” by Breckland District Council as the Local authority subject to passing an independent examination and community referendum. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans are subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012, and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.</p>
<p>2. Is the Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art.2(a))</p>	Y	<p>Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is not a requirement of the Town and Country Planning Act as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will be “made” and eventually 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.</p>
<p>3. Is the Neighbourhood Plan 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))</p>	Y	<p>A Neighbourhood Plan 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 Neighbourhood Plans (as set out in Section 61(k) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)).</p> <p>The JNP is prepared to set out a framework for town and country planning and land use within the parishes of Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverstone. The strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan of the Breckland District Council. The JNP seeks to align and be in general conformity with this.</p> <p>The JNP 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.</p>
<p>4. Will the Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely</p>	N	<p>A Neighbourhood Plan could potentially have impacts on</p>

effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the habitats Directive?(Art.3.2(b))		<p>sites covered by the Habitats Regulations.</p> <p>XX</p> <p>A Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report (2013) and the Assessment of the Breckland Local Plan at Preferred Directions stage (2015) were carried out as part of Breckland District Council's emerging Local Plan.</p>
5. Does the Neighbourhood Plans 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 Neighbourhood Plan can determine the use of small areas at a local level. The JNP proposes to include policies relating to the location of sustainable development, but does not propose to specifically allocate land for development.
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 Neighbourhood Plan 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 co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? ( Art.3.8,3.9)	N	The Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with these categories.
8.Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment	N	The Neighbourhood Plan seeks general conformity with the adopted Core Strategy and regard to the emerging Local Plan. No specific development is proposed through the plan, nor is land allocated for development through the plan. It is therefore considered that the plan would not have a significant effect on heritage assets, landscape, biodiversity interests or areas of flood risk.

The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England were consulted on the requirement for SEA for the JNP. The responses received are attached in Appendix 3.

**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**

Table 2 below sets out the assessment against the Strategic Environmental Assessment criteria for the JNP. 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 2: 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?
(1) Characteristics of the plan 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 strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan of Breckland District Council. The JNP 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 Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted alongside the higher order Local Plan and form part of the District’s Development Plan. The JNP will expand upon some of the emerging Local Plan policies, providing supplementary 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 JNP will be subject to environmental considerations of the Core Strategy and the Local Plan when adopted. 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 JNP may include policies which provide additional environmental protection.	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 JNP.	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 JNP is a long-term plan up to 2036. It does not necessarily seek to allocate sites for growth. However, potential for additional residential development opportunities are likely in relation to a proposed Brettenham Settlement boundary and for the development of further Alms houses through an exceptions policy which would introduce further housing development opportunities. There are also proposals for the location of education and care facilities that have the potential for effects. Such policies would have a very high probability of residential development which would have potential permanent effects.	Yes
The cumulative nature of the effects;	It is considered unlikely that the degree of development proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan in combination with the Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan will introduce significant environmental effects. Whilst both documents are being written, the Local Plan will be subject to full SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment. A Sustainability Appraisal is recommended as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process.	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 JNP is unlikely 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 Neighbourhood Plan covers the parishes of Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverstone with a population of 1,000 (Census 2011). The spatial extent and the magnitude of the population affected are not considered significant for the purpose of the SEA.	No
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</p> <p>ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</p> <p>iii) Intensive land use</p>	<p>i) The Neighbourhood Plan area and adjacent areas contain a number of environmental designations. The Neighbourhood Plan will however conform to the Local Plan, which provides protection to these environmental characteristics to ensure that they are not vulnerable to significant impacts from development. However, there are potential effects from other policy proposals that are not covered in detail in the Local Plan.</p> <p>ii) The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as those relating to air, water, and soil quality.</p> <p>iii) The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to bring forward development of an extent that would result in a significant intensification of Local land Use.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The Neighbourhood 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.	No

## 6. Screening Outcome

- 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 JNP.
- 6.2. The Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England have responded to the Screening Opinion request and their responses are contained in Appendix 3. Their responses are based on the information provided on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 in the Screening Opinion request dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016.
- 6.3. Historic England and the Environment Agency do not consider that an SEA will be required. Natural England has responded stating that they consider an SEA would be required in view of the proximity to the proximity of three SSSI's, the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) and Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 6.4. Having reviewed the criteria, the Council has concluded that the emerging JNP is likely to have a significant environmental effect and accordingly will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The main reasons for this conclusion are:
  - The proximity of sites protected sites and the plans' proposed consideration of locations for education and care facilities across the parishes.
  - The potential for density policies across the plan area and changes to residential settlement boundaries and Alms House development in relation to Brettenham.
- 6.5. This report is based on the Screening Opinion request of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The Neighbourhood Plan at this stage is emerging. Should the contents differ from that described in the Screening Opinion Request of 20<sup>th</sup> March, there may be a requirement to revisit this Screening Opinion.
- 6.6. This report has been issued to the Parish Councils, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. A copy of the report will be available for inspection at Breckland Council Offices, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1EE.

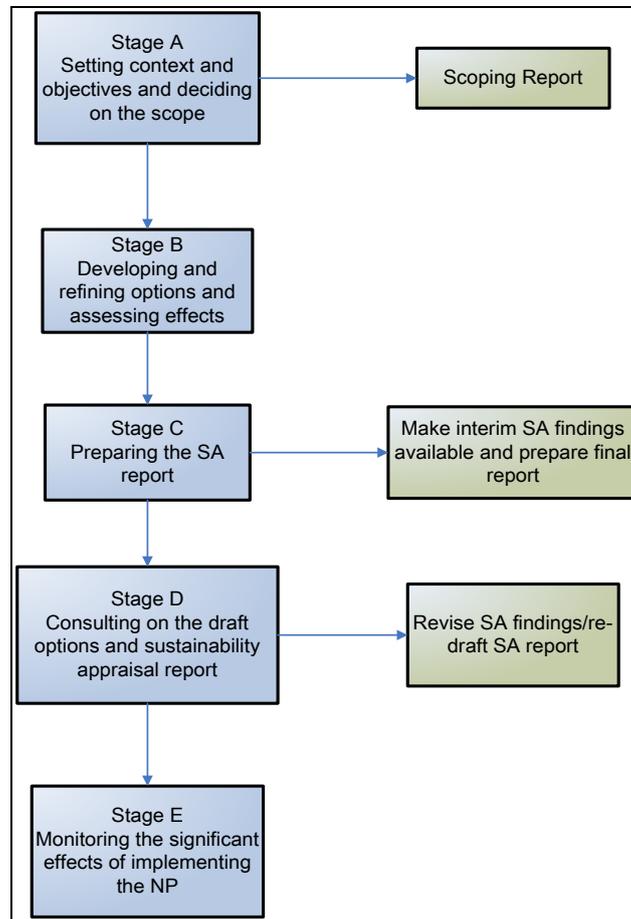
## Appendix 1

### Breckland District Council – Neighbourhood Plan Sustainability Appraisal/Scoping Report Guidance

One of the documents that the council recommends Neighbourhood Planning groups produce in support of Neighbourhood Plans is a Sustainability Appraisal. A Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process undertaken during the preparation of a plan or strategy, as required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (S19[5]). There is also a requirement for Development Plan Documents to undergo an environmental assessment, (known as a Strategic Environmental Assessment) under European Directive 2001/42/EC (transposed into UK legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004). It is intended that the Sustainability Appraisal incorporates the Strategic Environmental Assessment in accordance with the Act and Regulations. This means that in addition to environmental issues, on which a Strategic Environmental Assessment focuses, social and economic matters will also be addressed as part of the overall assessment of sustainability, within a single joint appraisal.

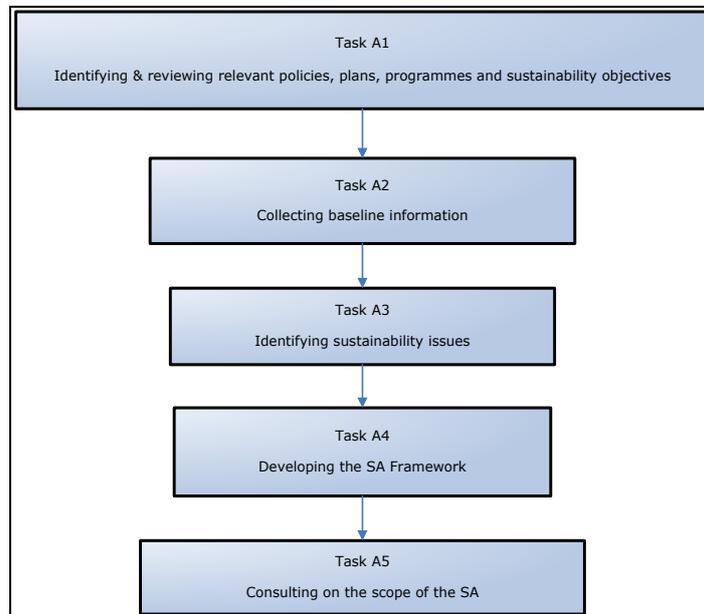
This can be approached in five stages as set out in Figure 1 below. The results of which will be two documents, a Scoping Report (produced at Stage A) and a Sustainability Appraisal Report (produced from Stage C onwards).

Figure 1 – Stages in producing a Sustainability Appraisal



Stage A in the SA process involves developing the framework for undertaking the appraisal – in this case the identification of a series of spatial areas and topics on which the appraisal will focus – together with an evidence base to inform the appraisal. The framework and evidence base are presented in a Scoping Report. The evidence base presented in the Scoping Report includes an analysis of the relevant policy context: a description of the current baseline situation; an analysis of how the current situation might evolve in the absence of the plan; and the identification of any problems which the plan may need to address. Stage A can be broken down into five further sections (see Figure 2) which once completed will produce the scoping report.

Figure 2: Stage A Scoping Tasks



Stage B in the SA process involves undertaking the appraisal itself. This involves identifying and evaluating the impacts of the different options to the plan makers as well as the preferred option/policies which together comprise the plan. The appraisal is organised around the framework developed in the Scoping Report. Mitigation measures for alleviating adverse impacts are also proposed at this stage together with potential indicators for monitoring the plan's implementation. Mitigation measures are generally in the form of recommendations for changes to the plan in order to improve its sustainability performance. Crucially, the appraisal should be undertaken in parallel with development of the plan and the appraisal findings should be fed into the emerging plan. In practice, this means undertaking several rounds – or iterations – of appraisal at different stages in the plan-making process.

Stage C in the SA process involves documenting the appraisal findings and preparing an SA Report (this incorporates the material required for inclusion in the 'Environmental Report' under the 'SEA Directive'). The full SA Report should be published for consultation alongside the 'pre-submission' version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Stage D in the SA process involves consulting on the 'pre-submission' version of the plan and the accompanying SA Report; however, as stated above, SA reports can be prepared to accompany consultation on earlier versions of the plan.

Stage E in the SA process involves monitoring the adopted plan including its sustainability impacts; this is done through the Local Plan and the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

**Please note it is advised that all Neighbourhood Plans created within Breckland District Council's administrative area are accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal.**

There is a requirement for certain information to be contained in the report that is the same across all SA's that are produced. There are also sections that need to be specific to the Neighbourhood Plan Area and Plan.

Some specific information will be included in the Council's Sustainability Appraisals, however for some of the information required to create the spatial portrait and update the information you will be required to search different sources to gain the information that you require. We have compiled a list that contains websites and resources that you will find useful. Please see below;

#### **Potential Information Sources for Sustainability Appraisal**

*Anglian Water* – [www.anglianwater.co.uk](http://www.anglianwater.co.uk)

*Audit Commission* – [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)

*Census 2001/2011* – [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)

*Defra* - <http://www.airquality.co.uk>

*Historic England* – [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

*Environment Agency* – [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

*Local Authority Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)* – *contact your local authority*

*Local Authority evidence base* – <http://www.breckland.gov.uk/content/document-library-publication>

*Natural England* – [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

*Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership* – [www.norfolkbiobiodiversity.org](http://www.norfolkbiobiodiversity.org)

*Norfolk Insight* – [www.norfolkinsight.org.uk](http://www.norfolkinsight.org.uk)

*NOMIS (official labour market statistics)* - <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk>

For every policy or emerging policy that is to be included within a neighbourhood plan, there is a requirement to assess the impacts that this is likely to have from an economic, environmental and social aspect. The framework should assist you to decide which policies should be taken forward and which, if any, should not be.

This information is intended as a guide, however each Neighbourhood Planning Group are free to develop their own approach. However, the advice is intended to help you structure the workload and help guide you through this process.

## Appendix 2: Sustainability Framework

The Council has an adopted Local Plan (2009) and is advanced in the production of a new Single Local Plan. Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan. As such the accompanying SA is in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The strategies and policies were tested against 17 sustainability objectives (and accompanying questions) as published in the 2009 SA

As part of the emerging Local Plan a Scoping Report (2013) was required as part of the SA process which involved setting the context for the appraisal by considering environmental, social and economic baseline information, and relevant plans and programmes. These were refined in the interim SA Report (2014) and this included the identified key sustainability issues and characteristics and outlined the SA framework, which will be used in appraising the Local Plan. The emerging SA framework consists of 19 objectives that aim to meet the key social, environmental and economic issues for the District. These key issues, characteristics and SA objectives are grouped under sustainability topics and listed below:

### Sustainability Appraisal Framework - Core Strategy (adopted).

Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Detailed Site Specific Appraisal Questions?
1. Minimise the irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings.	Will it use land that has been previously developed?	Is the land mostly brownfield/previously developed? (yes=+, no=-)
	Will it use land efficiently?	n/a dependent on type and design of development not location
	Will it protect and enhance the best and most versatile agricultural land?	Is the site on high grade land (1,2,3)? (yes=-, no =+)
2. Limit water consumption to the capacity of natural processes and storage systems.	Will it reduce water consumption?	n/a dependent on type and design of development not location
	Will it conserve groundwater resources?	Would the development of the site have the possibility to harm a protected aquifer? (y=-, n=+)
3. Reduce contributions to climate change.	Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources?	n/a dependent on type and design of development not location
	Will it reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption?	n/a dependent on type and design of development not location. Reduction of greenhouse gases and energy consumption by limiting travel is highlighted below
	Will it improve air quality?	Is it in a AQMA (y=-, n=0)  (does not apply to open space allocation proposals)
	Will it reduce traffic volumes?	Is the site within 800m of a school? (y=+, n=-) (Residential allocations only)  Is the site within 300m of convenience shopping? (y=+, n=-) (Residential allocations only) (figure from PPS6)  Is the site within 800m of employment opportunities? (y=+, n=-) (Residential

Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Detailed Site Specific Appraisal Questions?
		allocations only)
		Is the site within 800m of primary health care facilities? (y=+, n=-) (Residential allocations only)
		Is the site within 800m of residential areas? (y=+, n=-) (not applicable to residential allocation proposals)
		Is the site connected by cycle links? (y=+, n=-)
	Will it support travel by means other than the car?	Is the site accessible by regular (daily) public transport? (y=+, n=-)
		Is the site within 30 minutes public transport time of retail provision, employment areas, and primary health care facilities? (Residential allocations only) (y=+,n=-)
4. Minimise waste production and support the recycling of waste.	Will it reduce household waste?	n/a dependent on type and design of development not location
	Will it increase waste recovery and recycling?	Is the site 2km from a household waste recycling plant? (y=+, n=0)
5. To avoid, reduce and manage flood risk.	Will it be at risk of flooding?	Is the site within EA flood zone 2 or 3 or a SFRA defined flood zone (1 in 100yr risk)? (y=-, n=+)
	Will it contribute to a higher risk elsewhere?	Is the site within EA flood zone 2 or 3 or a SFRA defined flood zone (1 in 100yr risk)? (y=-, n=+)
		Is the site within or adjacent to EA flood zone 2 or 3 or a SFRA defined flood zone (1 in a 100yr risk)? (y=-, n=+)
6. Protect, conserve, enhance and expand biodiversity.	Will it protect, maintain and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest?	Would it result in a direct loss of all or part of the designated site? (y=-, n=0)(for SPA,SAC and Ramsar designations, HRA applies)
		Is the site adjacent to a designated site? (y=-, n=0) (for SPA,SAC and Ramsar, HRA applies)
	Will it conserve and enhance species, diversity and avoid harm to protected species?	Will it involve the loss of trees and hedgerows? (y=-, n=0)
		Will it involve the loss of a Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan habit? (y=-,n=0)
		Will it enhance connectivity of habitats (consistent with Norfolk Econets project)? (y=+,n=0)
7. Maintain, enhance and preserve the distinctiveness and diversity of landscape and townscape character.	Will it maintain and enhance the distinctiveness of landscape and townscape and character?	Is the site within a landscape that has moderate-high or high sensitivity to change as defined in the Breckland Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment ? (y=-, n=+)

Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Detailed Site Specific Appraisal Questions?
		Will it damage the character of the landscape/ <b>townscape</b> ? (y=-, n=+)
	Will it maintain and enhance the character of settlements?	Does it involve the re-use or re-development of derelict buildings? (y=+, n=-)
	Will it protect and enhance open spaces of amenity and recreational value?	Would it involve the loss of designated open space?(y=-, n=+)
8. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment.*	Will it protect or enhance sites, features of historical, archaeological, or cultural interest  (Including Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Ancient Monuments)?	Will it result in a loss of or damage to a listed building or damage to a setting of a listed building? (y=-, n=+)
		Would it lead to a loss or damage to a historic park and garden or damage to the setting of a historic park and garden? (y=-, n=+)
		Would it fail to preserve or enhance a conservation area or the setting of a conservation area? (y=-/? , n=0)
		Would it result in a loss of, or damage to a Scheduled Ancient Monument or the setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument? (y=-, n=0)
		Would it lead to a loss of or damage to a designated geological site? (RIGS) (y=-, n=0)
		Would it lead to loss of or damage to a potential archaeological site? (y=-, n=0)
9. Improve the health and well being of the population.	Will it increase life expectancy?	Is the site within a AQMA? (y=-, n=0)
		Is it within or adjacent to a Hazardous Installation Consultation Area? (y=-, n=0)
		Is the site within 1200m of outdoor playing space or sports facilities? (y=+, n=-) (NPFA standards)
	Will it improve access to essential services such as health facilities?	Is the site within 30 minutes public transport time or walking time of a primary health care facility? (y=+, n=0) (Norfolk LTP)
	Will it encourage healthy lifestyles, including travel choices?	Would it result in a loss of outdoor playing space or sport facility? (y=-, n=0)
		Would it lead to an increase in outdoor playing space or sport facility? (y=+, n=0)
Is the site within walking distance of a school or place of employment (1000m max)? (y=+, n=-) (residential allocation proposals only)		

Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Detailed Site Specific Appraisal Questions?
10. Reduce and prevent crime, and reduce the fear of crime.	Will it reduce actual levels of crime?	n/a dependent on type and design of development not location
	Will it reduce fear of crime?	n/a dependent on type and design of development not location
11. Improve the quality and quantity of accessible open space.	Will it improve accessibility to open space?	Is it within 1200m of a residential area? (for outdoor playing space allocation proposals only) (y=+,n=-)
		Is it within 1200m of outdoor playing space? (for residential allocation proposals only) (y=+,n=-)
	Will it improve the quality and quantity of accessible open space?	Would it involve an increase in open space provision? (y=+, n=0)
		Would it involve a decrease in open space provision? (y=-, n=+)
12. Improve the quality, range and accessibility of essential services and facilities.	Will it improve accessibility to key local services and facilities, including health, education, leisure, (village shops, post offices pubs)?	Is it within walking distance (1000m) or 75 minute public transport of a high school ? (y=+,n=-)
		Is it within walking distance (1000m) or 30 minute public transport of a doctors surgery? (y=+,n=-)
		Is it within 1000m of a primary school? (y=+, n=-)
		Will it increase provision of local services? (y=+,n=-)
	Will it improve accessibility to shopping facilities?	Is it within walking distance (300m) or 30 minutes public transport of a convenience store? (y=+, n=-) (residential allocation proposals only)
		Is it within walking distance (300m) or 30 minutes public transport of a town centre? (y=+, n=-) (residential allocation proposals only)
		Is it in the town centre? (y=+, n=-) (retail allocations only)
		Is it connected to public transport and within 30 minutes public transport time of retail provision, and employment? (y=+, n=-)
13. Redress inequalities related to age, gender, disability, race, faith, location and income.	Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion in those areas most affected?	Will it increase services in a ward within the 20% most deprived wards in England? (y=+, n=0)
		Will it improve affordability to essential
	Will it improve affordability to essential	n/a

	services and facilities at home?	
	Will it improve relations between people from different backgrounds and social group?	n/a
14. Ensure all groups have access to affordable, decent and appropriate housing.*	Will it support the range of housing types and sizes, including affordable to meet the needs of all sectors in the community?	Is it an allocation for housing? (y=+,n=0)
	Will it reduce the number of unfit homes?	Will it involve the redevelopment of unfit homes? (y=+,n=0)
	Will it reduce housing need?	Is the allocation proposal for housing? (y=+,n=0)
	Will it meet the needs of the travelling community?	Is the allocation for a gypsy and traveller site? (y=+,n=0)
15. Increase the vitality and viability of existing town centres.	Will it increase vitality of existing town centres?	Is it in the town centre? (y=+,n=0)
	Will it increase viability of existing town centres?	Is it in the town centre? (retail and leisure allocations only) (y=+,n=-)
		Is it within 300m or 30 minute public transport time of the town centre? (residential allocation proposals only) (y=+,n=0)
16. Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence.	Will it support and improve education?	Is the allocation for an educational establishment? (y=+, n=0)
	Will it encourage employment and reduce unemployment overall?	Is the allocation proposal for employment land? (y=+, n=0)
	Will it improve access to employment/ access to employment by means other than car?	Is the site within 800m or 30 minute public transport time of residential areas? (for employment use allocation proposals only) (y=+,n=-)
		Is the site within 800m or 30 minute public transport time of residential areas? (for residential) allocation proposals only) (y=+,n=-)
17. Improve the efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability of the local economy.	Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness?	Is it in an area with a deficiency of employment land ? (for employment use allocation proposals only) (y=+,n=0)
	Will it make land and property available for business development?	Is the allocation proposal for employment land? (y=+, n=0)
		Would it result in a loss of employment land? (y=-,n=+)
	Will it support sustainable tourism?	Is the allocation proposal within a town or local service centre or accessible by public transport? (y=+,n=-)

Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Detailed Site Specific Appraisal Questions?
	Will it encourage rural economy and diversification?	Is the allocation in the rural area? (employment and tourism proposals only) (y=+,n=0)

Sustainability Appraisal Framework Emerging Local Plan (Winter 2015).

SEA/SA Topic	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Decision making criteria	
Land, water and Soil Resources	1. Minimise the irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings and encourage the recycling/reuse of on site resources to minimise the impacts on the environment and safeguard resources for the future generations.	Will it use land that has been previously developed?	Site includes a house or garden/previous use (y=+, n=0)	
		Will it use land efficiently?	Close to the settlement boundary/ brownfield/ not	
		Will it protect and enhance the best and most versatile agricultural land?	Grade 1,2,3 (y=-, n=+)	
		Will it use brownfield land?	NPPF definition (exclude garden) (y=+, n=0)	
		Will it recycle on site resources?	Dependent on type and design of development, not	
	2. Limit water consumption to the capacity of natural processes and storage systems and maintain and enhance water quality.	Will it reduce water consumption?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.	
		Will it conserve groundwater resources?	Would the development of the site have the possibility to harm a protected aquifer (y=-, n=+)	
		Will it maintain or enhance water quality?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.	
	3. Ensure the sustainable reuse of water to accommodate additional growth and development with minimal impacts on water quality.	Will it reduce water consumption?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.	
		Will it conserve groundwater resources?	Would the development of the site have the possibility to harm a protected aquifer (y=-, n=+)	
		Will it maintain or enhance water quality?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.	
	Climate change and air pollution	4: Minimise the production of waste and support the recycling of waste.	Will it reduce waste?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.
			Will it re-use waste?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.

SEA/SA Topic	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Decision making criteria
		Will it enable composting of waste?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.
		Will it enable recycling of waste?	Is the site 2km from a household waste recycling plant? (y=+, n=0)
		Will waste be recovered in other ways for other uses?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.
		Will it increase waste going to landfill?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.
		Will it encourage the re-use and recycling of aggregates?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.
	5. Reduce contributions to climate change and localised air pollution.	Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.
		Will it reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.
		Will it improve air quality?	Is it in a AQMA (y=-, n=0)
		Will it reduce traffic volumes?	Is it within 300m of convenience shopping ? Is it within 800m of a school? (y=+, n=0)
		Will it support travel by means other than single occupancy car?	Is the site within 800m of a bus stop (y=+, n=0)
6. To adapt to climate change and avoid, reduce and manage flood risk.	Will it increase risk of flooding?	Is the site within an EA flood zone 2 or 3 or a SFRA defined flood zone (1 in 100yr risk)? (y=-, n=+)	

SEA/SA Topic	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Decision making criteria
		Will it contribute to a higher risk elsewhere?	Is the site adjacent to an EA flood zone 2 or 3 or a SFRA defined flood zone (1 in 100yr risk)? (y=-, n=+)
		Will it attenuate the flow and run off of water?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.
Biodiversity	7. Protect, conserve, enhance and expand biodiversity and promote and conserve geodiversity.	Will it protect, maintain and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest?	Would it result in the direct loss of all or part of the designated site ? Is the site adjacent to a designated site ? (SPA, SAC, Ramsar, HRA) (y=-, n=+)
		Will it conserve and enhance species, diversity and green infrastructure and avoid harm to protected species?	Will it involve the loss of a Norfolk Action Plan Habitat (County Wildlife n=+)
		Will it promote and conserve geodiversity?	Will it involve the loss of trees and hedgerows ? (y=-, n=+)
	8. Protect, enhance and increase Green Infrastructure in the District.	Will it protect the district's infrastructure?	Will it interfere with connectivity of habitats (consistent with Norfolk Econets project) (y=-, n=0)
		Will it enhance the district's infrastructure?	Will it enhance connectivity of habitats (consistent with Norfolk Econets project) (y=+, n=-)
		Will it facilitate the creation of new Green Infrastructure which will improve links and corridors between open space?	Dependent on type and design of development, not location.
Cultural heritage and landscape	9. Maintain, enhance and preserve the distinctiveness, diversity and quality of landscape and townscape character.	Will it maintain and enhance the distinctiveness of landscape and townscape character?	Is the site within a landscape that has moderate-high or high sensitivity to change as defined in the Breckland Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment (y=-, n=+)

SEA/SA Topic	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Decision making criteria
		Will it maintain and enhance the character of settlements?	Does it involve the re-use or re-development of derelict buildings? (y=+, n=-)
		Will it protect and enhance open spaces of amenity and recreational value?	Would it involve the loss of designated open space (y=-, n=+)
	10. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment.	Will it protect or enhance (designated) heritage assets?	Will it result in the direct loss or damage to a listed building/ conservation area or damage to the setting of a listed building/ conservation area?
		Will it protect or enhance the significance and setting of (designated) heritage assets?	Will it result in impact upon the setting of a listed building/conservation area? (y=-, n=+)
Population and human health	11. Improve the health and well being of the population.	Will it reduce early death rates?	Is the site within a AQMA/ within or adjacent to a Hazardous installation Consultation Area? (y=-, n=0)
		Will it increase life expectancy?	Is the site within 1200m of outdoor playing space or sports facilities (y=+, n=-) (NFRA standards) / Would it result in a loss of outdoor playing space or sports facilities? (y=-, n=0)
		Will it improve access to essential services such as health facilities?	Is the site within 30 minutes public transport time or walking time of a primary health care facility? (Norfolk LTP) (y=+, n=0)
		Will it encourage healthy lifestyles, including travel and food choices? Will it help the population to move more, eat well and live longer?	Summary of 5d, 5e, 11c

SEA/SA Topic	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Decision making criteria
	16. Ensure all groups have access to affordable, decent and appropriate housing that meets their needs.	Will it support the range of housing types and sizes, including affordable to meet the needs of all sectors in the community?	Is it an allocation for housing ? (y=+, n=0)
		Will it reduce the number of unfit homes?	Will it involve the redevelopment of unfit homes?
		Will it reduce housing need?	Is the allocation proposal for housing? (y=+, n=0)
		Will it meet the needs of the travelling community?	Is the allocation for a gypsy and traveller site?
Economic Activity	17. Increase the vitality and viability of existing town centres.	Will it increase vitality of existing town centres?	Is it in the town centre? (y=+, n=-)
		Will it increase viability of existing town centres?	Is it in the town centre? (retail and leisure allocations only) (y=+, n=-)
		Will it provide for the needs of the local community?	What
	18. Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence.	Will it support and improve education?	Is the allocation for an educational establishment? (y=+, n=-)
		Will it encourage employment and reduce employment overall?	Is the allocation proposal for employment land ? (y=+, n=0)
		Will it improve access to employment?	Is the site within 800m or 30 minute public transport time of residential areas? (for residential and employment
		Will it improve access to employment by	Is the site within 800m or 30 minute public transport time of residential areas? (for residential and employment use allocations only) (y=+, n=-)

SEA/SA Topic	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Decision making (Appraisal) questions	Decision making criteria
		means other than single occupancy car?	
	19. Improve the efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability of the local economy.	Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness?	Is it in an area with a deficiency of employment land? (for employment use allocation proposals only) (y=+, n=0)
		Will it make land and property available for business development?	Is the allocation proposal for employment land? (y=+, n=0)
		Will it support sustainable tourism?	Is the allocation proposal within a town or local service centre or accessible by public transport? (y=+, n=0)

## APPENDIX 3

### Responses from Statutory Consultees

**From:** Mugova, Elizabeth [mailto:[elizabeth.mugova@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.mugova@environment-agency.gov.uk)]  
**Sent:** 15 April 2016 11:13  
**To:** Wright, Josephine  
**Subject:** RE: Screening Opinion Request - Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverston Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Jo

Thank you for your email seeking a screen opinion.

According to the submitted 'Summary and Structure of Draft Plan'; it is our view that a Strategic Environmental Assessment would not be required for the Joint Neighbourhood Plan.

Paragraph 46 of the NPPF Practice Guidance, states that a strategic environmental assessment may be required for a neighbourhood plan which allocates sites for development. In this case, the Plan is not proposing to allocate additional housing and employment sites.

We hope that this information is of assistance to you. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards

Elizabeth

**Elizabeth Mugova**

**Sustainable Places Planning Advisor**

**Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Area**

Direct dial: 020 3025 5999

Internal: 55999

Email: [elizabeth.mugova@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.mugova@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Josephine Wright  
Neighbourhood Plan and Growth Officer  
Breckland Council  
Elizabeth House  
Walpole Loke  
Dereham  
NR19 1EE

Our ref: 2016 04 26  
Croxtan  
Brettenham &  
Kilverstone Joint  
NP Screening.

Telephone 01223 582775

By email only to: [Josephine.Wright@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:Josephine.Wright@breckland.gov.uk)

26<sup>th</sup> April 2016

Dear Ms Wright

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion for the Croxtan, Brettenham and Kilverston Neighbourhood Plan.**

Thank you for email dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and submission of papers dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016 which set out the summary and structure of the draft plan and following an initial scoping workshop session on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine our advice to the question, "Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?" in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage. Our comments are based on the information supplied in the email attachments, including the details following the initial scoping workshop session as reported and held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016. It is for the Council to make the final decision in terms of whether SEA is required.

From our reading of the scoping workshop sessions it would appear that the joint Neighbourhood Plan focuses on shaping how development comes forward with particular reference to a 'policy focus'. These papers also confirm '*no allocations to be made for housing development*'.

The initial scoping workshop in setting out a vision stated that the Joint Neighbourhood Plan area '*includes the previously identified Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), which is subject to the adopted Thetford Area Action Plan*'. We are aware that the Thetford Area Action Plan (AAP) Development Plan Document was adopted 2012 and was the subject of a sustainability appraisal. The AAP itself contains both policy objectives, policies and allocates land.

The details contained in the screening request deal predominantly with a policy focus and it appears the case that the Joint Neighbourhood Plan will not allocate land.



Historic England, Brooklands, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BU  
Telephone 01223 58 2749 [HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



If the Joint Neighbourhood Plan does not propose to allocate land or contains policies likely to have an impact on the historic environment then a SEA will not be required to evaluate the impact upon the historic environment. There is some doubt here regarding the point on almshouses as set out in the housing policies. It is unclear if this is a policy matter or is seeking to allocate land. Looking at the general direction of the papers we have assumed that this is a policy matter but if that is not the case then a sustainability appraisal may be required.

On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations, 'CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT' [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], and the assessment duties in the Regulations Part 2 (5)(6), Historic England would take the view that an SEA is not required.

The views of other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made. I would be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by Regulation 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 in the file attachments to your email of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 (which contains the summary notes following the initial scoping workshop session dated 11<sup>th</sup> February (*Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Joint Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – summary and structure of draft plan following initial scoping workshop session 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016*).

To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SA/SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise in the Neighbourhood Plan where we consider that, despite the absence of SA/SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the historic environment.

We hope that the above comments are of assistance.

Yours sincerely



**Michael Stubbs**

Historic Environment Planning Adviser

e-mail: [Michael.Stubbs@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:Michael.Stubbs@HistoricEngland.org.uk)



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Date: 12 May 2016  
Our ref: 182430



Ms Josephine Wright  
Neighbourhood Plan & Growth Officer  
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CW1 6GJ

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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Josephine

The Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverston Neighbourhood Development Plan – SEA Screening Opinion Request

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 31 March 2016 requesting a screening opinion on the above.

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.

Natural England considers that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required. This is due to the fact that the three settlements are very close to several SSSIs associated with Breckland SPA and Breckland SAC, including Breckland Forest SSSI, Bridgham and Brettenham Heaths SSSI, East Wreatham Heath SSSI and Breckland Farmland SSSI. Although the plan will not include any further allocations due to the housing requirements being satisfied by the Thetford SUE, the plan will need to consider locations for additional school and care facilities throughout the parish following this development. As well as this there is likely to be development of new small housing developments and small business improvements and opportunities. Without being aware of the exact locations it is difficult to assess whether there may be any effects on designated sites due to these developments. A specific policy on density is also proposed for all settlements, as well as a review of the change in settlement boundary at Brettenham, so it is pertinent to consider the environmental implications of these policies. Therefore although there are no allocated sites within this neighbourhood plan, due to the proximity of the designated sites and lack of firm locations for we consider that an SEA is required.

I hope this letter has been helpful. For clarification of any points in this letter, please contact me on 0208 0265792 or for any further consultations on your plan, please contact: [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

Francesca Shapland  
Lead Adviser, Planning & Conservation

