

Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan

Habitat Regulations

Assessment - Screening Report

September 2016

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Habitat Regulations Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan which is being produced by the Attleborough Town Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (general) Regulations 2012.
- 1.2 The aim of this Screening Report is to assess whether there are likely to be significant effects on European Sites as a result of the emerging policies set out in the pre-submission draft Neighbourhood Plan that would necessitate the production of a full Habitat Regulations Assessment.
- 1.3 This report assesses, as far as practical, whether there are likely to be any significant effects on the qualifying features of European Designated Sites within or relatively proximate to the approved Neighbourhood Plan area, which comprises the civil parish of Attleborough.
- 1.4 A response from Natural England was received on 13th September, a copy of which can be found in Appendix 5.

Legislative basis

- 1.5 Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive states that:

Any plan or project not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

- 1.6 The purpose of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is therefore to ensure the protection of European Designated Sites (Natura 2000) wherever practicable. European Designated Sites are designed to form an ecologically coherent network of designated spaces across Europe.
- 1.7 European Designated Sites, (Natura 2000) include **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** and **Special Areas for Conservation (SAC)**. As a matter of policy the government also expects authorities to treat **Ramsar sites**, **candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC)** and **proposed Special Protection Areas (pSPA)** as if they are European Designated Sites for the purpose of considering development proposals that may affect them.

Definitions (taken from the DEFRA- Joint Nature Conservation Committee)

- **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species.
- **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** are strictly protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive. Article 3 of the Habitats Directive requires the establishment of a European network of important high-quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving the 189 habitat types and 788 species. The listed habitat types and species are those considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level (excluding birds).
- **Ramsar sites** are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

1.8 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which include the need to undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

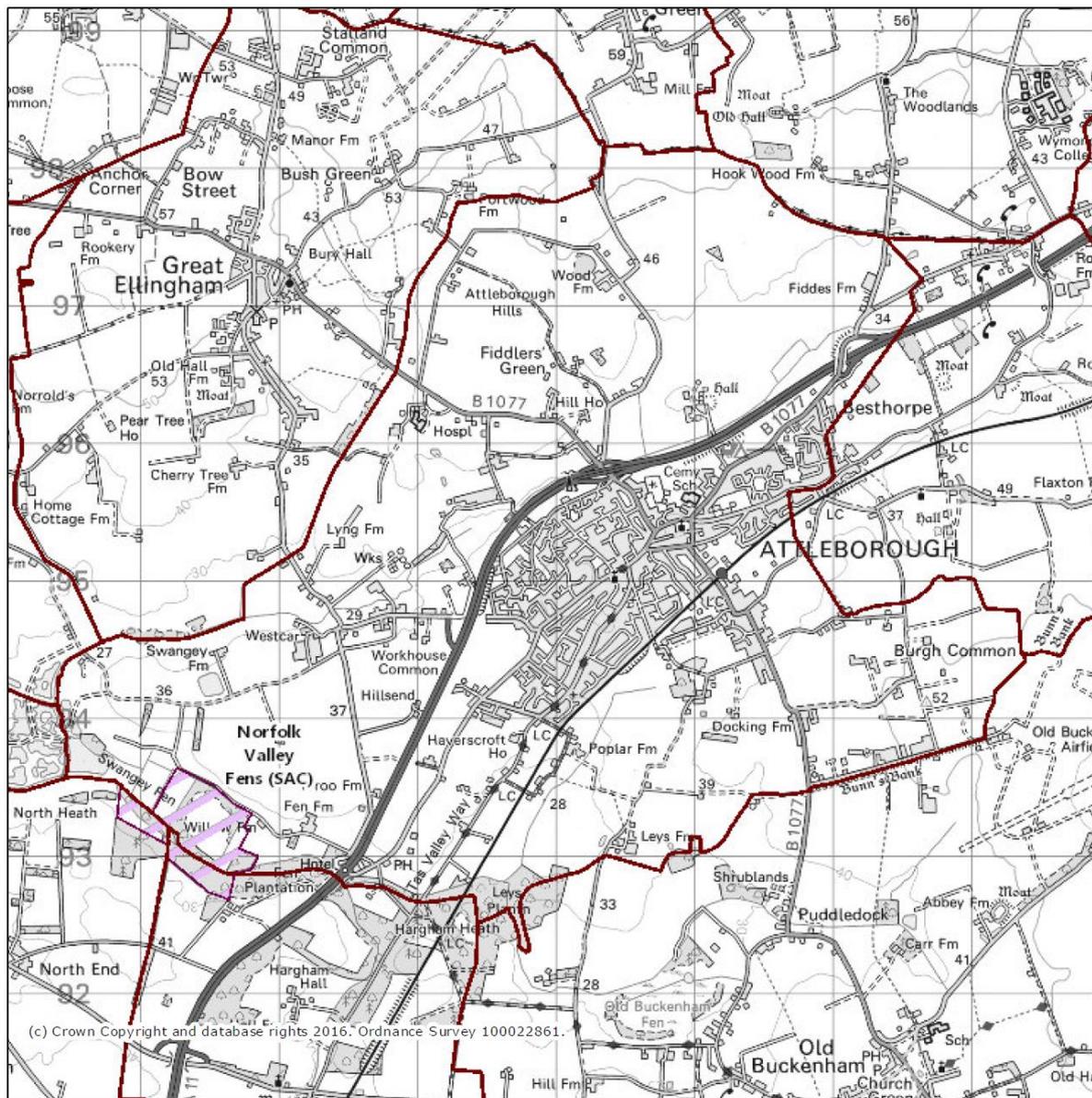
2. Approach

- 2.1 The first step in producing this Screening Report involves the identification of European Designated Sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area itself or in close proximity to it. European Designation Sites were identified using open-source software provided by DEFRA (Magic). The relevant European Designated Sites identified are as follows:
- a) Norfolk Valley Fens SAC (part of and adjoining)
 - b) Norfolk Valley Fens SAC- Thompson (6.5km)
 - c) Breckland SPA (5.5km and further distances)
 - d) Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/SSSI/Ramsar (12km).
- 2.2 In considering potential effects of this plan regard has been given to whether the implementation of the policies will ensure the conservation objectives for the European Sites are achieved and whether any significant effects are likely.
- 2.3 No other European Protected Sites have been considered in this assessment as The Broads SAC/SSSI/Ramsar are 26km away and are considered sufficiently distant that no likely significant effects are likely to occur from the policies of the Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.4 Below is an outline of the qualifying features of each European Site and the impacts likely to affect the integrity of the protected sites. The features for which the sites are designated and their conservation objectives are appended at Appendix 2, 3 and 4.

Figure 1: Attleborough parish in relation to relevant European Designated Sites

MAGiC

Attleborough Parish



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Legend

- Parishes (GB)
- Ramsar Sites (England)
- Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Special Protection Areas (England)

Projection = OSGB36

xmin = 596700

ymin = 290100

xmax = 611200

ymax = 300200

Map produced by MAGiC on 6 June, 2016.

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Norfolk Valley Fens SAC

- 2.5 The nearest component of the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC lies within and adjacent to the parish boundary in the south west of the borough from Attleborough (as shown in the map above). The protected site lies west of the A11, Attleborough by-pass, predominantly surrounded by agricultural land.
- 2.6 The features for which the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC is designated are listed at Appendix 2 along with the conservation objectives for the site.
- a. Norfolk Valley Fens is one of two sites selected in East Anglia, where the main concentration of lowland Alkaline fens occurs. This site comprises a series of valley-head spring-fed fens. Such spring-fed flush fens are very rare in the lowlands. Most of the vegetation at this site is of the small sedge fen type, mainly referable to M13 *Schoenus nigricans* – *Juncus subnodulosus* mire, but there are transitions to reedswamp and other fen and wet grassland types. Six other Annex I habitats are present as qualifying features, but are not a primary reason for the selection of this site. Two Annex II species are present, narrow-mouthed whorl snail and Desmoulin's whorl snail are also a primary reason for the selection of the site. (Natural England SIP 2014).
 - b. The Norfolk Valley Fens SAC is in this location underpinned by the designation of the site in UK legislation as Swangey Fen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This shares the same boundary.
 - c. The designated site is sensitive to impacts from:
 - Changes in water levels
 - Hydrological changes
 - Water pollution
 - Water abstraction
 - Inappropriate management i.e. leading to scrub encroachment, inappropriate cutting/mowing regime, under or over grazing,
 - Colonisation and dominance of non-native invasive species (namely Himalayan balsam, orange balsam and *Crassula helmsii*)
 - Air pollution
 - Recreational pressure
- 2.7 Many of the above impacts are likely to result from agricultural management of the site and the surrounding areas which can affect the site from diffuse pollution. Part of the site is also common and open access land which can make management of impacts resulting from increases in recreational pressure difficult.

Breckland SPA

- 2.8 The nearest point of Breckland SPA lies 5.5km from Attleborough. The features for which Breckland SPA is designated are listed at Appendix 2 along with the conservation objectives for the site.

- a) The SPA holds internationally important breeding populations of Stone Curlew, Nightjar and Woodlark. Stone Curlew establishes nests on open ground provided by arable cultivation in the spring, while Woodlark and Nightjar breed in recently felled areas and open heath areas within the conifer plantations.
- 2.9 The heaths include the best preserved systems of inland sand dune vegetation, which is in part characterised by the nationally rare grey hair-grass *Corynephorus canescens*, and sand sedge *Carex arenaria*. The CG7 *Festuca ovina* – *Hieracium pilosella* – *Thymus praecox* grassland type is rich in rare species and is more typical of the steppe vegetation associated with central Europe. It can be found in mosaics with heath/acid grassland, giving rise to patterned ground that formed under peri-glacial conditions, and which reflects differences in substrate composition. The dry acidic heath is represented by H1 *Calluna vulgaris* – *Festuca ovina* heath.
- 2.10 The open Breckland landscape provides ideal conditions for early successional rare/scarce plants and invertebrates, and supports internationally important populations of Annex 1 grounding nesting birds, namely stone curlew, woodlark and nightjar.
- b) Breckland SPA is underpinned by the designation of the site in UK legislation as Breckland Forest SSSI for the component of the SPA nearest Attleborough. This shares the same boundary in this location.
- c) The designated sites are sensitive to impacts from:
- Inappropriate management i.e. undergrazing, lack of bare ground, forestry and woodland management, scrub control, cutting/mowing regimes
 - Habitat fragmentation
 - Development pressure/disturbance
 - Air pollution
 - Public access/disturbance
 - Climate change
 - Predation

Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/SSSI/Ramsar

- 2.11 Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens lies 12 km from Attleborough. It is also an internationally important wetland site recognised by its designation under the Ramsar Convention.
- a) The Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC consists of extensive areas of valley fens in the the headwaters of both rivers on the Norfolk-Suffolk county boundary. It includes the Redgrave and South Lopham Fens Ramsar site. The SAC is composed of three component SSSIs and supports two Annex I habitats:
- Purple moor-grass meadows, and
 - calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge).

- b) Weston Fen SSSI also supports the Annex II species Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*. The diverse geology and hydrology of the sites contributes to the diverse nature of the habitats.

The designated site is sensitive to impacts from:

- Inappropriate management i.e. leading to scrub encroachment
- Changes in water levels
- Hydrological changes
- Water pollution
- Air pollution

2.12 The next step in the assessment is to undertake an appraisal of the extent to which the proposed policies could have a significant effect on the European Designated Sites. Specifically the assessment considers any potential effect that the policies may have on the 'qualifying features' of each European Designated Site. The 'qualifying features' for the identified European Designated Sites were set out in the Appropriate Assessment produced in support of Breckland Council's adopted Core Strategy (2009) and these are provided at Appendix 1.

3. Screening Assessment

3.1 The table below provides an assessment of any likely significant effect of each Neighbourhood Plan policy on the European Designated Sites. For the purposes of this assessment the policies appraised are those that were issued in the Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan Draft Plan for Regulation 14 Consultation (July 2014).

Key

- No likely significant effect (NLSE) on the site’s qualifying features
- Likely significant effect (LSE) on the site’s qualifying features
- Uncertain whether it is NSLE or LSE

Policy LE.P1

Support allocation of a minimum of 10 ha site on London Road for a business park development for SME-sized employment users, in use classes B1 and B2, with access from London Road, subject to the following criteria:

- Would not have significant harmful impacts on the surrounding landscape and the wider setting of the town
- Would not have any significant harmful impacts on the ecological setting of the site
- HGV traffic generation would not have an unacceptable traffic impact on the wider town and the capacity and operation of its highway network
- No detrimental impact on surface water runoff in the town’s surface water catchment area or entirely self-sufficient in its ability to manage surface water run-off

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
<p>This policy aims to support employment development where it would not have a significant negative affect in relation to the landscape, ecology or negative impact in relation to the highway network or surface water run-off.</p> <p>Norfolk Valley Fens SAC is less than 1 km west of the proposed employment land at its nearest point as indicated in the proposals map in the draft plan. The risk of implementing this policy would be in surface and ground water run-off to the SAC affecting the species and habitats for which it is designated.</p> <p>Providing the policy criteria are observed in considering the scheme design of projects coming forward under this policy and observance of Habitats Regulations Assessments for each project in permitting them, this will avoid impacts to surrounding ecologically important sites.</p>	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy LE.P2

Redevelop Queen’s Square car park site for uses that support town centre retail and other community uses, and seek both replacement and additional car parking capacity. A brief to redevelop the site will be prepared with the relevant landowners.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support redevelopment of the site. Although no criteria has been outlined to consider any development against them, the development will be within the town centre and not at risk of affecting the European Sites.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy LE.P3

Planning permissions would be resisted which would result in the loss of existing local shopping facilities within the defined town centre boundary.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to prevent the loss of retail development and has no likely effect on European Sites.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy LE.P4

Expand the retail provision as the town grows provided that it does not lead to a significant adverse impact on the town centre, on the environment, or the transport network. Uses that complement the town centre will be supported in the SUE.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support retail development where it would not have a significant negative affect in relation to the environment or transport network.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy LE.P5

Primary retail frontages should be changed in Attleborough to allow both sides of Exchange Street to fall into prime frontage, as should the retail units on Queens Road opposite the car park and Lidl, as shown in the ANP Proposals Map town centre inset.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse

			Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support a change of use of in retail unit types.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy LE.P6

Support will be given to planning applications for improving town centre premises located in older buildings such as around Queen’s Square, in Defiant Precinct and other yards, and the converted houses on Connaught Road and High Street, where these are in employment use already.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support redevelopment of older buildings, although no criteria has been outlined to consider any development proposals against them, the development will be within the town centre and sufficiently distant from European Sites to have any effect.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy H.P1

Windfall housing applications would be supported on appropriate sites within the existing town boundary.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support windfall development within the town boundary.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy H.P2

Seek timely infrastructure provision to serve the new housing developments to ensure they are well integrated in the town. Housing proposals would only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there is also sufficient infrastructure, services and community facilities available, or to be provided using funding that is agreed to be given within appropriate timescales to support the new development.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the timely delivery of infrastructure within the town boundary.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy H.P3

Set up in the Town Council a register of those local residents interested in self-build opportunities.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This Policy does not seek to deliver new development.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy H.P4

House builders making planning applications on all sites of 10 homes or more would normally be expected to undertake a “Building for Life” dialogue process to improve local place-making.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This Policy seeks to address design issues and does not seek to deliver new development.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy TC.P1

To develop and implement a sustainable transport and parking strategy and implementation plan for Attleborough.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy seeks to produce a sustainable transport and parking strategy.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy TC.P2

To support the provision of new pedestrian and cycling links (including new links over the rail line) that demonstrate they are implementing designs that promote safety for all. A transport hub at the rail station will be supported.

Schemes will be supported for designs for the town centre roads to ensure congestion does not worsen in the town centre or on links to town from the SUE, from recreation grounds, from employment sites and from schools.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy seeks to support provision of various sustainable transport schemes which could have positive effects in reduction of air pollution in the area.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy TC.P3

All new development should include provision for fibre-optic connectivity.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy seeks to support provision of fibre-optic connectivity.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy EDP.P1

Support an allocation in the Attleborough Academy Masterplan for a dedicated facility that jointly provides adult training and a Sixth Form Enterprise Academy.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the delivery of an education facility that is likely to be on an existing developed site to the north east of the town centre and not likely to cause significant effects to European Sites.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy HSC.P1

Support provision of a dual registered care facility for around 65 beds.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the delivery of a care facility. Consideration of location in permitting the final schemes will need to consider likely significant effects to European Sites, but this would only be likely if the location for the care facility was in close proximity to Norfolk Valley Fens SAC.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy HSC.P2

Support a new joint GP surgery and primary care provision.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the delivery of a medical facility. Consideration of location in permitting the final schemes will need to consider likely significant effects to European Sites, but this would only be likely if the location for the medical facility was in close proximity to Norfolk Valley Fens SAC.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy SLC.P1

Seek a site for a new indoor sports hub, with an area of search on or near the Academy.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the delivery of a sports facility. Consideration of location in permitting the final schemes will need to consider likely significant effects to European Sites, but this would only be likely if the location for the sports facility was in close proximity to Norfolk Valley Fens SAC.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy SLC.P2

Allocate a new outdoor sports hub at Gaymer’s Field with a new pavilion incorporating changing, storage, parking and social facilities, and an Artificial Games Pitch (AGP).

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the delivery of a sports facility sufficiently far from the European Sites not to cause a significant effect.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy SLC.P3

Allocate an adjoining field to the south of Gaymer’s Field as an extension to the facilities here.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the delivery of a Local Open Space.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy SLC.P4

Specify the required outdoor play facilities (NEAP+ and for young and old adults) at the recreation ground on Station Road to be implemented once formal sporting uses relocate.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the delivery of an outdoor play facility at an existing recreation ground.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy SLC.P5

Approval will be given to the provision of, and contribution to maintenance, from the developers for a new linear park running east to west to meet the following objectives:

1. Create an accessible open space in which to promote outdoor informal recreation and the enjoyment of nature
2. Provide sustainable travel options and encouraging healthy living and social interaction by providing attractive walking and cycling links from the existing town centre to the new developments, making use of the linear park.

The linear park route along the Attleborough stream south of the rail is indicated very approximately as a linked series of green spaces on the proposals map. Its extent will be approved in the SUE masterplan and other developer documents.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the delivery of a linear park east of the A11 which along with the A11 separates it from the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC. There are opportunities to incorporate habitats within the linear park to complement Norfolk Valley Fens SAC and provide landscape scale habitat connectivity.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy SLC.P6

Seek site allocations for allotments in new developments.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the delivery of allotments. Consideration of location in permitting the final schemes will need to consider likely significant effects to European Sites, but this would only be likely if the location for the allotments and of access to them was in close proximity to Norfolk Valley Fens SAC.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy SLC.P7

The ATC will seek a suitable new cemetery site to meet the needs as the town grows in population.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support the delivery of a cemetery. Consideration of location in permitting the final schemes will need to consider likely significant effects to European Sites, but this would only be likely if the location for the cemetery and access are in close proximity to Norfolk Valley Fens SAC.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy SLC.P8

Work with landowners of the red line site shown in the town centre inset proposals map at Queen’s Square and car park to provide a new co-located venue for a Town Hall, Civic Centre and Heritage Centre, including a new library. This could form a part of the redevelopment of Queen’s Square car park site, for which a development brief will be prepared, as in policy LE.P2.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy aims to support redevelopment of the site that is sufficiently distant from the European Sites to cause any direct significant effects. Although no criteria has been outlined to consider any development proposals against them, the development will be within the town centre. Any development proposals would need to consider an increase in transport, access or air pollution to assess if any indirect effects on the European Sites is likely.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy ESD.P1

Prepare a strategy for Green Infrastructure:

- a) Along the proposed linear park;
- b) Waymarked paths and greened links from the town centre to Gaymer’s Field, and from the linear park to the recreation ground along marked public footpaths
- c) Provide a continuing link of green infrastructure through to Decoy Common in the North East and to Hargham Woods in the South West
- d) Provide green gateways on the main entrance roads to Attleborough.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy seeks to produce a Green Infrastructure strategy. There are opportunities to incorporate habitats as green infrastructure to complement Norfolk Valley Fens SAC and provide landscape scale habitat connectivity.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy ESD.P2

For every tree felled, replacement planting by at least five trees, of various sizes, will be sought either on the same site or as close as is feasible.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy seeks to address the issues of replacing trees.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy ESD.P3

To designate the following “Significant Tree Avenues” in Attleborough and to work with landowners to protect, maintain and renew them:

- a) Station Road alongside Connaught Hall site
- b) Rectory Gardens alongside Surrogate Street

Loss of these trees would be strongly opposed.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy seeks to protect trees in specific locations.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy ESD.P4

Designate, (or if they are included in the Breckland Local Plan endorse) the following local open spaces.

1. Queen’s Square
Reason: Heart of the town centre, informal green used for seating
2. St Mary’s Churchyard
Reason: Trees are mature add to character of the conservation area and town centre high street experience
3. The recreation ground Station Road
Reason: Recreational value
4. Gaymer’s Field and proposed extension (Site D)
Reason: Recreational value
5. The Rec London Road
Reason: Recreational value
6. Decoy Common (Site C)
Reason: Richness in wildlife

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This policy seeks to designate Local Open Spaces.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy ESD.P5

All new development should seek to be of the highest sustainable and innovative design quality in terms of both architecture and landscape. Independent Design Review would be sought for sites over 1 ha, all major developments, and for sites in sensitive locations.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse

			Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This Policy seeks to address the approach to design issues. There are opportunities to incorporate habitat creation within developments to increase their sustainability and create landscape scale habitat connectivity.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Policy ESD.P6

Prepare a Design Guide jointly with the developers for the SUE and other new major developments that will also cover aspects such as road infrastructure and open spaces.

Comments	Likely effect in identified sites		
	Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Breckland SPA/SAC RAMSAR	Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/Ramsar
This Policy seeks to address design issues.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The assessment suggests that there are likely to be no significant negative effects on the European Designated Sites resulting from the Policies detailed within the draft Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.2 Therefore, based on the submitted draft, a full Habitat Regulations Assessment is not required.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Details of relevant European Sites

Site	Reason for designation, trends in key species (where known)	Condition	Threats and Reasons for adverse condition	Notes/other issues
Breckland SPA	Stone curlew, nightjar and woodlarks. Increasing stone curlew populations (on arable land but not heathland), recent declines in nightjars and woodlarks. <u>Within Breckland District</u>		Agricultural operations; disturbance to Annex 1 birds; high nitrogen loads causing undesirable habitat change; development pressures and infrastructure; egg collecting.	The Chalk aquifer is in hydraulic continuity with Breckland SAC/SPA
Relevant component SSSIs Breckland Forest SSSI	Breeding woodlark and nightjar (recent declines), rare plants and invertebrates, geology	100% favourable		
Breckland Farmland SSSI	Stone curlew population (increasing)	100% favourable	Nutrient deposition, run-off, scrub invasion and inappropriate recreation	See below
Heathland sites (various individual SSSIs)	Stone curlew (population declining), nightjar and woodlark. Grassland and heath habitats (see Breckland SAC details)	Various (see below)		
Norfolk Valley Fens SAC	Alkaline fens with two rare species of snail.		Reductions in water table and water abstraction. Spread of scrub and woodland as sites have dried out.	Upper Wissey, Thet Chalk and Blackwater/Wending Beck aquifers are in hydraulic continuity with Norfolk Valley Fens (the former, specifically with Great Cressingham Fen)

Site	Reason for designation, trends in key species (where known)	Condition	Threats and Reasons for adverse condition	Notes/other issues
Constituent SSSIs Badley Moor	<u>(within 20km of Breckland District)</u> Spring fed valley fen	100% unfavourable declining	Water abstraction, under-grazing	and Thompson Water Carr & Common)
Swangey Fen	Spring fed fen	47.6% favourable; 38.7% unfavourable recovering; 13.7% unfavourable no change	Scrub removal and lack of grazing Attleborough WWTW drains into a watercourse that connects to Swangey Fen	Breeding snipe
Foulden Common	Open water and rich fen with acid grassland and woodland	24.7% favourable; 26.6% unfavourable recovering; 48.7% unfavourable no change	Scrub removal, fencing and grazing- further assessment necessary	Part owned by Otter Trust
Great Cressingham Fen	Calcareous spring-fed valley fen	100% unfavourable no change	Site well managed and grazed but changes in plant communities unexplained and could be due to water abstraction	
Potter and Scarning Fens	Calcareous valley fen on shallow peat	100% unfavourable declining	Water abstraction; scrub clearance and grazing (rather than mowing) needed	Part owned by Norfolk Wildlife Trust
Thompson Water, Carr and Common	Open water and wet grassland, woodland and scrub. Nationally important invertebrate communities. Breeding and wintering wildfowl.	38.1% favourable; 49.5% unfavourable recovering; 12.4% unfavourable no change	Inappropriate scrub control and cutting/mowing	Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve

Site	Reason for designation, trends in key species (where known)	Condition	Threats and Reasons for adverse condition	Notes/other issues
Booton Common	Wet calcareous fen grassland, and acid heath	100% unfavourable declining	Water abstraction	Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve. Breeding snipe
Buxton Heath	Heath with fen	100% unfavourable declining	Water abstraction	
Coston Fen	Spring line fen with calcareous mire	100% unfavourable no change	Scrub encroachment, extend grazing, eutrophication of surface water	
East Walton and Adcock's Common	Species rich grassland and basin mires	100% unfavourable declining	Water abstraction	
Flordon Common	Spring fed calcareous fen and unimproved grassland	20% favourable; 80% unfavourable no change	Water abstraction	
Holt Lowes	Dry heathland with alkaline valley mire	100% unfavourable declining	Scrub encroachment	Breeding snipe
Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC/SSSI Relevant component SSSIs Redgrave and Lopham Fens RAMSAR/SSSI	Molinea meadows, calcareous fen. A rare snail Spring fed base-rich valley fen with Molinia grasslands, sedge and reed dominated fen. Many rare and scarce invertebrates including a rare spider.	100% unfavourable recovering	Declines in management, water abstraction, land drainage, scrub encroachment. Eutrophication, dredging, pollution with agricultural fertilisers and pollution from pesticides and agricultural run-off.	Owned by Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Appendix 2: Conservation Objectives for Norfolk Valley Fens SAC



European Site Conservation Objectives for Norfolk Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation Site Code: UK0012892

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- **The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species**
- **The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats**
- **The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species**
- **The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely**
- **The populations of qualifying species, and,**
- **The distribution of qualifying species within the site.**

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

Qualifying Features:

H4010. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath

H4030. European dry heaths

H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone

H6410. *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*); Purple moor-grass meadows

H7210. Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*; Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge)*

H7230. Alkaline fens; Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens

H91E0. Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*); Alder woodland on floodplains*

S1014. *Vertigo angustior*; Narrow-mouthed whorl snail

S1016. *Vertigo moulinsiana*; Desmoulin's whorl snail

* denotes a priority natural habitat or species (supporting explanatory text on following page)

*** Priority natural habitats or species**

Some of the natural habitats and species listed in the Habitats Directive and for which SACs have been selected are considered to be particular priorities for conservation at a European scale and are subject to special provisions in the Directive and the Habitats Regulations. These priority natural habitats and species are denoted by an asterisk (*) in Annex I and II of the Directive. The term 'priority' is also used in other contexts, for example with reference to particular habitats or species that are prioritised in UK Biodiversity Action Plans. It is important to note however that these are not necessarily the priority natural habitats or species within the meaning of the Habitats Directive or the Habitats Regulations.

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment', including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

These Conservation Objectives and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where available) will also provide a framework to inform the measures needed to conserve or restore the European Site and the prevention of deterioration or significant disturbance of its qualifying features as required by the provisions of Article 6(1) and 6(2) of the Directive.

These Conservation Objectives are set for each habitat or species of a [Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving Favourable Conservation Status for that species or habitat type at a UK level. The term 'favourable conservation status' is defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive.

Publication date: 30 June 2014 – version 2. This document updates and replaces an earlier version dated 29 May 2012 to reflect Natural England's Strategic Standard on European Site Conservation Objectives 2014.

Appendix 3: Conservation Objectives for Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation



European Site Conservation Objectives for Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation Site Code: UK0012882

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- **The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species**
- **The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats**
- **The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species**
- **The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely**
- **The populations of qualifying species, and,**
- **The distribution of qualifying species within the site.**

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

Qualifying Features:

H6410. *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*); Purple moor-grass meadows

H7210. Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*; Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge)*

S1016. *Vertigo moulinsiana*; Desmoulin's whorl snail

* denotes a priority natural habitat or species (supporting explanatory text on following page)

*** Priority natural habitats or species**

Some of the natural habitats and species listed in the Habitats Directive and for which SACs have been selected are considered to be particular priorities for conservation at a European scale and are subject to special provisions in the Directive and the Habitats Regulations. These priority natural habitats and species are denoted by an asterisk (*) in Annex I and II of the Directive. The term 'priority' is also used in other contexts, for example with reference to particular habitats or species that are prioritised in UK Biodiversity Action Plans. It is important to note however that these are not necessarily the priority natural habitats or species within the meaning of the Habitats Directive or the Habitats Regulations.

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment', including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

These Conservation Objectives and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where available) will also provide a framework to inform the measures needed to conserve or restore the European Site and the prevention of deterioration or significant disturbance of its qualifying features as required by the provisions of Article 6(1) and 6(2) of the Directive.

These Conservation Objectives are set for each habitat or species of a [Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving Favourable Conservation Status for that species or habitat type at a UK level. The term 'favourable conservation status' is defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive.

Publication date: 30 June 2014 – version 2. This document updates and replaces an earlier version dated 29 May 2012 to reflect Natural England's Strategic Standard on European Site Conservation Objectives 2014.

Appendix 4: Conservation Objectives for Breckland Special Protection Area



European Site Conservation Objectives for Breckland Special Protection Area Site Code: UK9009201

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- **The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features**
- **The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features**
- **The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely**
- **The population of each of the qualifying features, and,**
- **The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.**

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

Qualifying Features:

- A133 *Burhinus oedicanus*; Stone-curlew (Breeding)
- A224 *Caprimulgus europaeus*; European nightjar (Breeding)
- A246 *Lullula arborea*; Woodlark (Breeding)

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the “Habitats Regulations”) and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a ‘Habitats Regulations Assessment’ including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

These Conservation Objectives and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where this is available) will also provide a framework to inform the management of the European Site under the provisions of Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the Wild Birds Directive, and the prevention of deterioration of habitats and significant disturbance of its qualifying features required under Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive.

These Conservation Objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive.

Appendix 5: Response from Natural England

From: Plan Cons Area Team (Norfolk, Suffolk) (NE)
[<mailto:PlanConsAreaTeamNorfolkSuffolk@naturalengland.org.uk>]
Sent: 13 September 2016 14:55
To: Heinrich, Susan <Susan.Heinrich@breckland.gov.uk>
Subject: 195480 Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan HRA (Breckalnd DC)

Dear Susan

Thank you for consulting Natural England on the Habitats Regulations Screening Report for the Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan. I can confirm that we agree with the conclusions of the HRA report and do not consider that the report requires any amendments.

Kind regards
Francesca

Francesca Shapland
Lead Adviser, Planning & Conservation
Norfolk & Suffolk Team
Tel: 0208 0265792

www.naturalengland.org.uk

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