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1 Introduction

Introduction

What is this Document?

1.1 This document is the draft of the Breckland Local Plan that will be submitted to the Government for independent examination. It contains the strategy and policies that the Council considers to be 'sound' and that will deliver sustainable development in Breckland over the plan period up until the year 2036. The Council has arrived at the strategy and policies contained within this Draft Local Plan having taken into account comments received from previous rounds of consultation and are based on a comprehensive evidence base.

1.2 Prior to the submission of this document for examination, there is now a period from **21st August until 4pm on 2nd October** during which representations can be made on the strategy and policies contained within this document. Any representations received during this period will be forwarded with the final submission version of the Local Plan together with supporting evidence base documents to be considered by the Planning Inspectorate as part of the examination in public. The timings of the examination process are subject to the Planning Inspectorate's time-frames and resources, however it is currently anticipated that the examination stage will be undertaken during Autumn 2017. If the Inspector's report finds the Breckland District Local Plan to be "sound" the Council will then be able to proceed to formally adopt the Local Plan.

1.3 Please note that the current 6 week period allowed for representations is not an additional stage of public consultation in the preparation of the Local Plan. The Council maintains that the document as published is sound and is the most appropriate strategy to meet the development needs of the District over the plan period. At this stage of the plan's preparation any representations made should primarily be concerned with compliance with legal requirements and the 'soundness' of the document.

How to Comment on this Document

1.4 In order to comply with Government guidance and to help ensure that representations are submitted in a format the Inspector can easily use, representations made in response to the publication of the proposed submission document must:

- Be made on the appropriate form (this is available online using the consultation portal and on the Council's website. Paper copies can also be provided from the Council office);
- Clearly identify the policy, paragraph or other content (e.g. table, map, statement) to which the representation relates to;
- Identify which test of 'soundness' or legal requirement the representation relates to;
- State whether the Plan is considered 'sound' or 'unsound'. If unsound explain what needs to be amended and why, providing any supporting information or evidence, in order to make the Plan sound; and
- State whether the issue has been raised at the previous consultation stages, if not the representation must explain why the issue had not been raised previously.

1.5 Completing this form correctly will ensure your representation is 'duly made'. Preferably, representations should be made using the on-line interactive consultation system. The system is free to use, more efficient and allows for greater accuracy, ensuring your comment is made and recorded against the part of the document you intended. The online consultation system can be found at <http://consult.breckland.gov.uk>. The form is also available at the Council's offices at Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1EE and Breckland House, St Nicholas Street, Thetford, IP24 1BT and is available to download from the Council's website.

1.6 Please be aware that representations made on this document cannot be treated as confidential.

1.7 Representations cannot be considered if they are received after 4pm on 2nd October the closing date of the representations period.

What Happens Next?

1.8 Following the closing date of the period allowed for representations the Council will summarise all the representations received. If there are no fundamental issues raised the Council will submit the plan, supporting documentation, all duly made representations together with a summary of them to the Secretary of State to enable the appointment of an independent Inspector to conduct an Examination in Public.

1.9 The Inspector will examine this draft of the plan and in doing so take account of all the representations made on legal compliance and soundness issues. Whilst it is anticipated that the appointed Inspector will consider the majority of representations by way of written representations submitted during the formal period, for some matters the Inspector may decide that representations need to be presented orally at the public examination. It should however be noted that written representations are treated with equal importance to examination appearances.

1.10 Following the examination the Inspector will decide whether or not the plan is 'sound'. In reaching this decision the Inspector will take into account the representations received and consider the plan against the tests of soundness outlined in the Legal and Conformity Requirements and Soundness Requirements. If the plan is found 'sound' it may still be subject to minor changes as may be detailed in the Inspector's Report. If the Inspector finds the plan 'unsound' the Council will have to undertake the preparation of the plan again.

1.11 Once the Council has received the Inspector's Report and implemented any changes required, the Council will then make the decision whether to adopt the document. On adoption the Council will produce an adoption statement that will be advertised in the local press and the adopted document, sustainability appraisal and adoption statement will be made available for inspection at the Council offices.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.12 Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) is a key component of the Local Plan process and the preparation of this document has been informed by a Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR) which assesses the social, economic and environmental impacts of policies and proposals. The SAR draws together an assessment of these conditions and their effects and identifies key spatial issues that the Local Plan needs to address. These issues are carried through the Local Plan and will be addressed through its objectives and policies.

1.13 The findings of the SAR have been an important influence on the proposed content of the Local Plan.

1.14 The version of the SAR prepared for the Preferred Directions and Interim Consultation stages contains a detailed analysis of preferred options and alternative options. The latest version of the SAR which accompanies this document tests the sustainability of the proposed submission strategy and policies.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

1.15 Regulation 102 of the Habitats Regulations requires plan making authorities to determine whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect upon any European site. In considering the implications of the Local Plan document for European sites, an Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken in order to comply with the Habitats Regulations 2010.

Duty to Co-operate

1.16 The Localism Act (2011) introduced the 'Duty to Co-operate' which is a legal requirement that applies to all Local Planning Authorities, County Councils, National Park Authorities and a number of public bodies including the Environment Agency, Highways England, Historic England, Natural England and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

1.17 Local Planning Authorities are expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively co-operated with key partners on cross-boundary strategic policy impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination. It is important that co-operation is a continuous process of engagement. This requirement has become more important than previously when strategic cross-boundary issues were considered through the now revoked Regional Plan process, with this responsibility now resting at the local level.

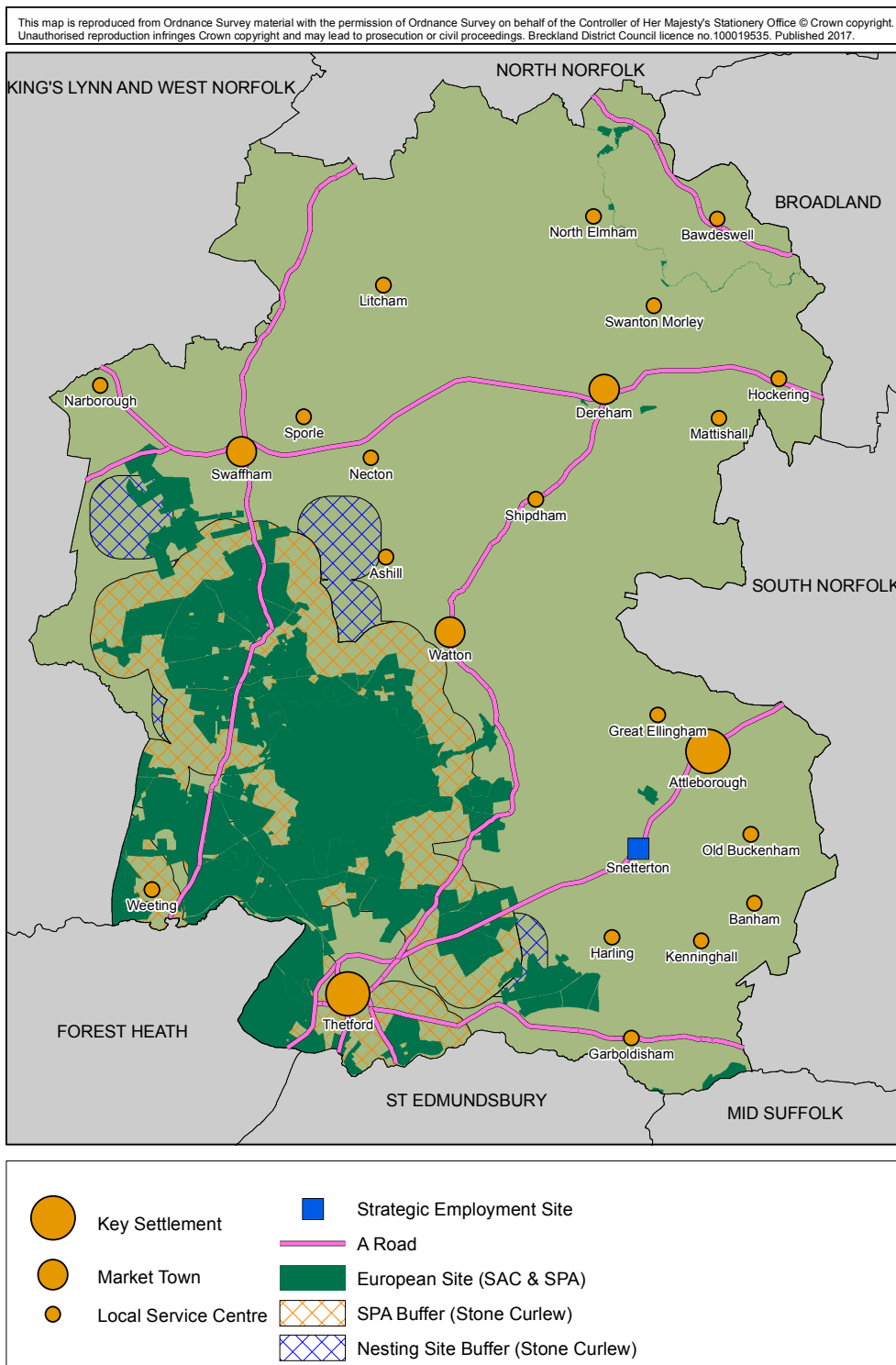
1.18 Breckland Council is a member of a Norfolk wide Duty to Co-operate Forum and has engaged with its neighbouring authorities and other relevant organisations in the preparation of this plan to ensure that the strategic and cross boundary implications of the Local Plan have been carefully considered. In particular, the Council has worked jointly across Norfolk and with adjacent authorities and has sought to pro-actively engage with partners and statutory bodies on the prescribed Duty to Co-operate list. A significant outcome from the Duty to Co-operate Forum has been the production of the Joint Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

1.19 The Council will continue to work closely with its neighbours and partners where appropriate in finalising and then implementing this Plan. Further details on meeting the Duty to Cooperate are set out in the Duty to Cooperate Statement (2017) which accompanies the Local Plan.


A Spatial Portrait for Breckland

1.20 Spanning over 500 square miles Breckland is a geographically large rural District located in the heart of Norfolk. As depicted on the key diagram below, the District is characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern of market towns, villages and hamlets. There are five market towns, a network of local service centres, and numerous small villages and hamlets. Approximately half the current population live in one of the five market towns of Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffham, Thetford and Watton with the remaining population dispersed across the District. The area is represented through 112 town and parish councils, and the District Council.

Figure 1.1 Breckland Key Diagram



1.21 Over the Local Plan period the population is set to grow from 131,857 in 2012 to 153,678 by 2036 (ONS 2014 based sub-national population projections 2012-2036). In the main quality of life is good with official crime rates being low and is generally decreasing. However, there are pockets of health and disability related deprivation,



notably in some of the Thetford wards. The average age of Breckland residents is increasing and this raises issues for health and the level and distribution of appropriate service provision, as well as the economy and housing market.

1.22 Thetford, which is Norfolk's fourth largest settlement, and Attleborough are major towns and key areas for growth. Dereham, Swaffham and Watton are medium sized towns, which serve as administration and service centres, but are also a focus for retail where they provide a good range of services for day-to-day needs of local residents, and the rural hinterlands, as well as employment. There are a number of larger villages in the District which have a range of services, however there are a number of rural parishes with very few or no services, including some wards which are amongst the most deprived in Norfolk in terms of access to services.

1.23 The regional centre of Norwich exerts a sphere of influence over much of the District. To a lesser extent the sub-regional centres of King's Lynn and Bury St. Edmunds have a relationship with parts of the west and south of the District respectively. Communities in Breckland look primarily towards the Norwich urban area for employment, higher order retail, transport and service provision, such as hospitals. Increasingly, the south of the District, along with settlements along the A11 corridor, which traverses the District connecting Thetford to Attleborough and onwards to Norwich, looks for investment emanating from the growth of Norwich and other regional centres, such as Cambridge and the M11 Corridor. Thetford and Attleborough are key areas for future housing and business growth. Agriculture, advanced engineering and manufacturing logistics along with forestry are the dominant business sectors with professional, scientific and technical and food processing not far behind. The proportion of B Class jobs (i.e offices, industrial and warehousing activities) in the District has remained relatively constant over the last 22 years, representing 39% - 46% of all jobs in Breckland. Industrial employment provides the majority of B class jobs in the District, although office jobs represent an increasing contribution (Breckland Employment Growth Study, 2013).

1.24 Given the rural nature and dispersed pattern of settlement, movement in the District is primarily by private car. With a high level of interdependency on higher order centres Breckland, like many other rural authorities, has a high rate of commuting to work. Two trunk road routes run across the District and Breckland's strategic position is emphasised by good road communications offered by the A47 and A11. The A47 links Dereham and Swaffham with Norwich in the east and King's Lynn in the west and further afield to Peterborough and the A1(M), while the A11 links Attleborough and Thetford with Norwich and the Norwich Research Park to the north east and Newmarket, Cambridge and the M11 in the south-west. Major infrastructure improvements and improved transport links such as the completion of the A11 duelling are already attracting new businesses as well as enabling existing ones to flourish through increased connectivity. Further improvements are planned for the A47 trunk road. Around Norwich outside the District, major investment programmes are planned such as the Northern Distributor Road (NDR), which is set to improve linkages to Norwich international airport, offering a quicker and more convenient route for a range of shorter journeys and increasing access to existing and planned business and housing areas.

1.25 The remaining parts of Breckland are served by a network of non-trunk "A" category, secondary and minor roads. Rail investment is a regional commitment. Thetford and Attleborough are connected to the national rail network with regular services to Norwich and Cambridge, and beyond to London, the Midlands and north of England. Public transport services in the District are principally provided by bus and focus on linking the District's market towns with shopping and employment destinations at Norwich, King's Lynn and Bury St. Edmunds. There are more infrequent services in the rural areas linking villages with their local town, principally on market days.

1.26 Wages are relatively low in comparison with the national and regional averages. This reflects the low level of qualifications of people in the District and the low level of skills required by many of the available jobs. Although there is a high proportion of people living and working in the District, many higher qualified workers are travelling out of the District to access higher paid and higher skilled work - 77% of the working age population are in employment, compared to 80% across the East of England and an average of 77.8% Great Britain. Unemployment in the District is very low and has been consistently below both the national and county figures. Breckland recorded 50,980 workforce jobs in 2013 (Breckland Employment Growth Study, November 2013), representing an increase of 22.8% from its 1991 level, significantly outpacing growth across both the East of England Region(18.7%) and

UK (13.9%). Over the period 1991-2011 jobs growth has been very high at 21.8% compared with a Norfolk average of 8.7%. During the recessionary period of 2007 – 2010, Breckland recorded a net loss of 2,470 workplace jobs, but since then employment has grown. Jobs growth is projected to continue to recover and grow during the plan period, with at least 4,000 net new jobs forecast for the District up to 2031 (East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM) 2013 baseline forecast).

1.27 The functional linkages between where people live and work help to define the housing market for Breckland which cuts across various local planning authority administrative boundaries. The 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessments, (SHMA, 2015), identified a three stage Central Norfolk Housing Market Area, (CNHMA), concluding that the CNHMA includes significant parts of Breckland, including four out of the five market towns. 91% of workers that live in the CNHMA also worked in the CNHMA and 93% of movers currently living in the CNHMA moved from another address inside the CNHMA.

1.28 Typically, local housing market areas are considered to exist in an area with at least 65% self containment. Many of the settlements in the surrounding areas to Norwich and especially those to the west and south west of the District have low levels of self-containment and are not able to define their own housing market. These settlements have wider links throughout the region and are therefore part of the wider CNHMA. The extent of the CNHMA demonstrates that it is the most appropriate functional housing market for the District to align to.

1.29 Breckland is a diverse District for biodiversity, landscape and heritage. It takes its name from The Brecks, which is a nationally unique landscape and habitat of sandy heath, forest and arable farmland found in the west and south of the District. This habitat contains a number of nationally important bird species such as Stone Curlew, Woodlark and Nightjar and large swathes of The Brecks are protected by National and European designations. Breckland contains 13% of all SSSIs found in the East of England. Elsewhere the character of Breckland is clay farmland, punctuated with woodland, occasional river valleys and dispersed settlement. The historic character of Breckland's settlements is recognised by 50 separate Conservation Areas and over 1,500 Listed Buildings.

1.30 Breckland also has an interesting geodiversity; it is an area of lowland glacial landscape overlying chalk bedrock. Its special landforms include pingos, patterned ground and fluctuating meres. Many of these features are recognised as being of regional and national importance.

1.31 The District is one of the driest areas of the country and availability of water resources is an issue with the increasing pressure for development. Climate change remains a significant challenge over the longer term with the expectation of warmer wetter winters and drier hotter summers; reduced water resources and more extreme weather events. The release of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide, is the main contributing factor towards climate change. Human activity is a direct cause with road traffic a significant source of carbon dioxide.

1.32 Breckland's location means that it is not vulnerable to sea level changes. However, many parts of the District have a high clay content and consequently inadequate drainage, which can lead to localised problems of flash flooding.

Breckland's Spatial Vision

1.33 National guidance promotes a Local Plan which reflects a collective vision incorporating priorities from neighbourhoods, businesses and local organisations which should reflect the strategic priorities for the area. It is important that the vision for Breckland sets out the Council's aspirations for the future of the District and is one that will guide how the District will look in the future.

1.34 It is the Council's aim that the vision for Breckland should:

- Reflect local circumstances and that plans be prepared with the objective of achieving sustainable development in the context of Breckland's rural nature reflecting the aspirations of local communities, and
- Align with other key strategies and plans, produced by the Council, key partners and the wider community.

1.35 To support a vision, it is also important that the Local Plan sets out the strategic objectives for the District. The strategic objectives facilitate delivery of the District's strategic priorities which reflect the requirements of the NPPF as well as local aspirations.

1.36 The Local Plan presents an opportunity to develop a high level vision that encompasses all the elements that should now act as key drivers for the growth and continued success of the District. It also offers the opportunity to detail a plan that is specific to Breckland, seeks to address the specific rural nature, but at the same time aligns with the requirements of national policy. It is the long-term spatial vision that will create the framework for the development of policies and proposals to be included in the Local Plan. This vision emphasises local distinctiveness, with a focus upon delivery, in line with the context of positive growth that is put forward in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), wherein it is highlighted that sustainable development is about making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. It gives expression to other strategies and programmes, including economic development, education, housing, health, environmental protection and culture.

1.37 The vision has been derived from the challenges, issues, opportunities and aspirations expressed by neighbourhoods, businesses and local organisations through stakeholder consultation, reflecting and supporting the priorities established in Breckland Council's 2015 Corporate Plan.

1.38 The 2015 Corporate Plan sets a number of commitments around the following priorities:

- Supporting Breckland to develop and thrive;
- Providing the right services, at the right time and the right way;
- Developing the local economy to be vibrant with continued growth;
- Enabling stronger, more independent communities.

1.39 The Strategic Vision for Breckland aims to articulate where the Council wishes to be by the end of the plan period in 2036.

Breckland's Strategic Vision

By 2036 Breckland's settlements and its wider rural area will have developed in a sustainable manner appropriate for the rural nature of the District; building on its achievements and strengths to deliver an improved quality of life for its next generation of residents, an improved experience for its visitors, and will be better placed to attract investment and jobs into the District. Breckland's communities will be more sustainable, prosperous, safe, healthy and vibrant. The economy will be diversified and well connected, with a growing number of skilled workforce and population.

New development will be directed to locations that are co-ordinated with transport provision, have good access to support existing services, community facilities and open space. Outside the strategic growth locations of Attleborough and Thetford, a more balanced approach to housing development between rural and urban areas will have taken place allowing for improved housing land supply from rural areas to help in facilitating planned growth and the infrastructure required to support development so that communities can grow in a sustainable and cohesive manner.

New employment will not only be located to take advantage of the improved transport links offered by the A11 and A47 corridors and partnership work with adjacent local authorities, but be directed to the most sustainable locations where they assist in providing the right balance between the local rural economy and that of the wider District and that of Greater Norwich. Local distinctiveness will be reflected through positive approaches towards the rural economy where appropriate development will be helping to sustain local services and identities, allowing them to grow and assist in helping rural communities adapt and thrive.

Services and facilities will be supported and prized in rural villages. A sense of local community and belonging will be maintained and reinforced, with decisions made at community level reflected in development proposals through the consideration of Neighbourhood Planning.

Breckland will continue to cherish the natural and built assets which make the District unique, and will protect them not only for their own sake, but also as a means of attracting investment and visitors to the area. Breckland's towns and villages will have retained the characteristics that provide their character.

Through working with stakeholders and partners, strong working relationships will be delivering improved health care and wellbeing to meet the needs of the communities.

Strategic Objectives

1.40 In order to implement and deliver the Local Plan's vision, the following set of strategic objectives has been identified. These provide more specific direction to the spatial strategy and core policies that are developed in the following sections.

1.41 The 18 strategic objectives for the implementation of this Local Plan require all new development to:

Development in the Right Place

1. Contribute to sustainable development through the reflection of the vision and aspirations of the local communities for Breckland;
2. Assist in the creation and maintenance of inclusive, environmentally sustainable communities making the best and most efficient use of already developed land, buildings and natural resources;
3. Make sure the majority of development is focused into areas where services are available, and where facilities can be supported;

Meeting the Housing Need

4. Deliver housing that meets the needs of the community and local economy through the concentration of development in the Strategic Urban Extensions of Attleborough and Thetford and where services and facilities can be supported within or adjacent to the market towns of Dereham, Swaffham and Watton and the local service centres, whilst giving recognition to the need for small scale and appropriate development in rural areas to support rural communities and services;
5. Support the development and maintenance of a balanced housing market and a variety of decent, affordable housing which meets the needs of all local people and supports economic and community development;
6. To encourage high quality, sustainable and safe design for places and spaces, in both the private and public realm, and which respects the character and local distinctiveness of Breckland's communities;

A Strong Economy

7. Promote and support economic growth in sustainable and accessible locations in a flexible manner, diversifying the urban and rural economic base of the District to enable a prosperous mix where investment is encouraged, skills are developed and retained and new and existing businesses are supported;
8. Enable the full potential of the A11 gateway and A47 corridor to contribute to economic growth of the District through investment, partnership work with neighbouring authorities and inward investment;
9. Develop the local economy and meet local employment needs by providing a sufficient number and variety of employment locations and opportunities, at the same time ensuring the specific qualities of the local environment are not damaged;
10. Promote the vitality and viability of town centres, including the night time economy and support the retention of existing rural services;
11. Provide for improved broadband connections, especially in rural areas;

A Rich Environment

12. Contribute to the positive management of change in the historic environment, protecting, enhancing and maintaining the unique qualities and character of Breckland, the wider landscape and setting, and its designated and un-designated heritage assets for the future;
13. Promote a safe and healthy environment, and high quality design minimising the impacts of development and ensuring quality of life and sense of place;
14. Protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment, valuing green infrastructure for the many functions it performs;
15. Ensure the ongoing protection of key habitats for protected species;

Thriving Communities

16. To improve the health and well-being of our communities by reducing health inequalities, promoting healthy living and supporting locally accessible, high quality health care;

17. To protect and enhance community facilities and services and maximise accessibility to them; and

18. To encourage and facilitate a sense of community and belonging, and make sure decisions are made at community level as far as possible (through implementation of this plan and through Neighbourhood Planning).

2 General Policies

Sustainable Development

2.1 At the heart of the NPPF for both plan-making and decision-taking there is a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". This means that Local Authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their Districts. National Policy, (NPPF paragraph 6), advises that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development, and that through the planning system gains should be sought jointly through the three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. Sustainable development is about facilitating the creation of jobs and homes, improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure, creating the conditions for better design and achieving gains in nature.

2.2 This involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment as well as in people's quality of life. In developing the Local Plan it is important not only to have regard to national policy but also to reflect and interpret policy with regard to the rural nature of the District and the aspirations of the local community. Local Plans should meet objective needs based on robust evidence, and they should be able to be applied in a flexible manner to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits, or specific policies indicate development should be restricted. They should also reflect local distinctiveness.

2.3 The presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly outweigh the benefits.

2.4 Plans must be prepared with the objective of achieving sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities, reflecting local circumstances. As a predominantly rural, sparsely populated District, the dispersed nature of its population presents many challenges both for residents and for the delivery and provision of services. Difficulty in accessing services, limited communications network, (including broadband), reliance on the private car, the potential of social isolation and increased household costs are issues that whilst not exclusively rural, can be exacerbated by Breckland's rural characteristics.

Whilst planning cannot overcome market forces and personal behaviour, it can help to ensure that rural communities and settlements do not stagnate and decline but instead meet the needs of all generations of their communities, particularly the needs of younger households and those on lower wages. It can also assist in improving the appropriate provision of services and facilities, as well as helping to strengthen community cohesion, parish and family ties.

The NPPF advises that to boost the supply of housing, LPAs should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area. With regard specifically to rural areas, the NPPF advises that authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs in a sustainable manner. Paragraph 55 clearly sets out that to promote positive development 'housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities' and 'should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances'. However, it should be recognised that travel by car will still be an essential option for many people living in remote rural areas.

GEN 1 - Sustainable Development in Breckland

The Local Plan will seek and enable development that improves the economic, social and environmental objectives of Breckland through the application of the following national and locally distinctive sustainable development principles:

- Mitigate and adapt to climate change;
- Protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment;
- Allocate and facilitate developable land that seeks to provide access to homes, employment, retail, leisure and other facilities;
- Assist in the creation and maintenance of inclusive, environmentally sustainable communities making the best and most efficient use of previously developed land, buildings and natural resources;
- Support Breckland's wider rural economy helping to sustain local services and assist in helping rural communities adapt and grow proportionately to enhance their social and economic sustainability;
- Direct jobs and growth towards the most sustainable locations contributing towards the economy and jobs in rural areas, helping to achieve the right balance throughout the District; and
- Co-ordinate development with transport provision ensuring good access to existing community facilities, services and open space, together with new facilities and services where necessary.

Where there are no Local Plan policies relevant to the application, or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework, or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be refused.

2.5 The value of good design is recognised at the national level in the NPPF, which states (paragraph 56) that "the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people." Design quality is a very important aspect of any new development. It is about how new development functions, as well as how it looks, and is broader than just the appearance of buildings. Well-designed development improves the functionality of places, creating high quality environments to be enjoyed by all residents in the District now and in the future. Good design is therefore instrumental to new development integrating within its surroundings to create successful places.

2.6 Securing high quality design is important as it can help achieve many wider aims and objectives such as improving health outcomes and quality of life. High quality design reinforces or creates a sense of place; making Breckland a better place in which to live, work and spend time. The Council understands that the places where people live and work have a profound effect on their quality of life. Good design plays a key role in this regard and has been shown to result in more sustainable environments which residents can have much pride in. Well-designed places encourage social integration, equal access to opportunities, services and facilities, whilst reducing opportunities for crime and promoting management and maintenance of open spaces and the public realm through natural surveillance.

2.7 The challenge for Breckland is accommodating development in a sustainable way whilst protecting and reinforcing the character of the District. The Council will raise the standard of design in the District and improve the urban environment. The quality of the public realm, comprising a series of connected spaces that help define the character of an area, can have a significant influence on the quality of life. This is because it affects people's sense of place, security and belonging as well as having an influence on a range of health and social factors.

Development should provide a range of choice that will promote and instil vitality into an area. This might be interpreted as a mix of uses within a town centre development, or a mixture of tenure and housing types within residential development.

2.8 Development in rural settlements, particularly extensions to the built form of a settlement, should be of a scale and design that respects the character and rural setting of the settlement. Communities, through neighbourhood plans and village design statements, will be encouraged to identify those features that contribute to character. Proposals should demonstrate good design that is sympathetic to the local area and existing settlements.

2.9 All design proposals must conserve or enhance the existing character of an area. Particular regard should be given to reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture and complementing existing buildings.

2.10 The continuity of street frontages is particularly important in the market town centres and all new development should provide a natural demarcation of public and private spaces, without the need for excessive or artificial barriers. Public spaces should be designed to ensure that access routes are attractive, maintainable, secure, well lit and surveyed, easily accessible to all members of the community and free from unnecessary screens, barriers, signage or other street furniture.

2.11 Interdependent places and locations, such as town centres and transport interchanges or residential development and open space, should be well connected along routes that promote a choice of transport modes. These routes should be clearly legible so that it is easy to navigate from one place to another. Priority should be given to sustainable modes of transport.

GEN 2 Promoting High Quality Design

The Council will require high quality design in all development within the District that:

- respects and is sensitive to the character of the surrounding area and makes a positive architectural and urban design contribution to its context and location;
- contributes positively to the public realm and public spaces, protecting the high levels of amenity and quality of life making Breckland an attractive, successful and vibrant place for residents, workers and visitors;
- creates high quality, safe and sustainably designed buildings, places and streets; and
- maximises connectivity within and through a development and to the surrounding areas, including the provision of high quality and safe pedestrian and cycle routes.

Innovative and contemporary design where it enhances sustainability will be encouraged and promoted across the District. Development of poor design, that does not improve the character and quality of the area and the way the area functions, will be refused planning permission.

The Council will produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Design to provide detailed guidance for new development.

Settlement Hierarchy

2.12 A key purpose of the Local Plan is to set out the strategic distribution of development. Determining how much, and where, development is allocated is essential in delivering sustainable development and essential community infrastructure. The locational strategy sets out the broad approach to development within the District.

2.13 The core principle of the NPPF, as set out in paragraph 17, requires that *“Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.”* Also paragraph 55 advocates that, *“to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.”*

Identification of Local Service Centres and Smaller Villages

2.14 The Local Plan identifies local service centres where they satisfy all of the following 5 qualifying criteria, with villages with settlement boundaries identified as having 3 of the 5 criteria:

- Public Transport – An assessment of the level of public transport access within the village. This included consideration of the frequency of services and whether it is possible to reach the destination during normal working hours.
- Community Facility - This can include a number of different facilities such as a village hall, public house, restaurant or café.
- Employment – The assessment has considered the level of employment available within the village including whether there is a business park and also the size of the businesses within the settlement.
- Shop/Post Office
- School

2.15 The assessment has had regard to the distance of services and facilities from the designated settlement boundary/village core – and should only be considered to be available where they are within a recognised acceptable walking distance. Based on these criteria, an assessment has been made as to the availability of services within each village.

GEN 03 - Settlement Hierarchy

Most new development needs will be met through the proposed sustainable settlement hierarchy.

Key Settlements: Attleborough and Thetford.

Market Towns: Dereham, Swaffham and Watton.

Local Services Centres: Ashill, Banham, Bawdeswell, Garboldisham, Great Ellingham, Harling, Hockering, Kenninghall, Litcham, Mattishall, Narborough, Necton, North Elmham, Old Buckenham, Shipdham, Sporle, Swanton Morley, Weeting.

Villages with Boundaries: Beeston, Beetley, Carbrooke, Caston, Gressenhall, Griston, Hockham, Lyng, Mundford, North Lopham, Rocklands, Saham Toney, Thompson, Weasenham, Shropham, Eccles Road (Quidenham), Clint Green and Yaxham.

The hierarchy is based upon the utilisation of existing infrastructure and resources, the prioritisation of new infrastructure and allowing jobs, homes and other facilities to provide for choice.

The strategy in relation to areas outside the development hierarchy is set out in: 'Development Outside of the Boundaries of Local Service Centres' (Policy HOU 03); 'Rural Settlements With Boundaries' (Policy HOU 04); and 'Small Villages and Hamlets Outside of Settlement Boundaries' (Policy HOU 05).

Attleborough

2.16 Attleborough is identified as one of the key settlements within Breckland. Policy HOU 2 sets out the proportion of growth intended to be delivered in the Key Settlement of Attleborough with 2,650 dwellings to be allocated within the plan period (to 2036). The majority of this growth for Attleborough is to be delivered through the provision of a Strategic Urban Extension (SUE) and provides for the net addition of 4000 new dwellings, both during the plan period to 2036 and beyond.

2.17 Land to the south west of Attleborough offers the opportunity to expand the community of Attleborough through a comprehensive development which includes new residential areas, parks, local facilities, allotments and a new link road.

Strategic Urban Extension – South West of Attleborough

2.18 The allocation of a strategic site at Attleborough is required to help meet the District's need for future housing and employment land. Evidence demonstrates that the land to the south west is the most suitable and supported location for this development.

Site Context and Constraints

2.19 The land is adjacent to the existing town to the north which forms a defined boundary while the eastern edge of the site is partly formed by the B1077 which connects to the town and wider afield. The eastern boundary also abuts the employment area at Bunns Bank.

2.20 The strategic site comprises 296 hectares of predominantly agricultural land, divided into small to medium sized arable fields and is of sufficient size to accommodate all the proposed dwellings. The site does not lie within a designated landscape and it is assessed as having a moderate sensitivity to change. Overall land to the south west of the town has a lower elevation than land to the south east and as such development would be less prominent in the landscape and less sensitive to change than land on the east of the B1077.

2.21 The Historic Characterisation Study identifies limited designated and non-designated assets within and surrounding the boundary of the SUE. Significant heritage assets include the Scheduled Ancient Monument (Bunn's Bank) and the Grade II listed Besthorpe Old Hall. A Heritage Asset Statement will be required to address the impact of the development on the historic environment and potential additional surveys may be required following consultation with Historic England.

2.22 The Council's Indoor Sports Assessment identifies demand for a new sports hall in Attleborough to replace the existing centre. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan contains further aspirations and policies for sports provision in the town. This is supported by the findings of the Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities Study, 2017, which highlighted that there is sufficient demand to justify the provision of a new sports hall in Attleborough to replace the existing centre. The scale of the new sports hall from the assessment is for a 6 badminton court size sports hall of 34m x 27m.

2.23 For a development of this scale, new residents should have the opportunity to be active and lead healthy lifestyles through the design of the development and provision of on-site recreational facilities including green infrastructure, children's play facilities and allotments. This will help to reduce additional recreational pressure on surrounding areas, particularly more sensitive environmentally designated areas such as The Brecks and the Norfolk Valley Fens.

2.24 The preferred route chosen for construction of a link road is a diversionary route between London Road and the B1077 which would remove traffic from the centre of Attleborough and is shown on the map below.

2.25 Most of the area within the SUE boundary is predominantly in Flood Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of flooding. A small area of the site in the south west corner and a linear area alongside the stream running from the south west to the north east corner of the site is designated Flood Zone 2a and 3a fluvial flood risk. These areas are not required for development and will be factored in as part of the masterplan for the site, utilised as SuDs and open space for the linear park.

Development Requirements

2.26 Housing

2.27 The housing delivery on the SUE is to be phased in line with the delivery of infrastructure as detailed in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The housing trajectory (appendix 1) indicates 2,650 of the 4,000 dwellings will be delivered during the Local Plan period (up to 2036). The remainder of the dwellings are expected to be delivered beyond that time.

2.28 The SUE fulfils the housing requirement for Attleborough within the plan period. Therefore, no additional residential allocations, beyond the SUE, are proposed for Attleborough through the Local Plan.

2.29 Employment

2.30 Attleborough is positioned on the A11 corridor; a key focus for the delivery of growth and investment across the region. The vision for Attleborough requires development that will create an attractive south-western edge to the town. This will require careful consideration of, amongst other things, what forms of employment development might be appropriate in different parts of the urban extension and in those sites closely related. The employment options show potential sites close to the A11 as well as opportunities to provide for the extension of the employment zone at Bunn's Bank and some small scale employment within the SUE itself. Closer to the town centre, there

remains the opportunity of redevelopment at the existing Banham Poultry site which currently has existing retail permission. Any additional provision within the SUE would only be supported if it would not prejudice residential amenity. For example, the ground floor of buildings adjacent to the main access may be suitable for small-scale retail and commercial use as well as other sociable uses.

2.31 It is considered that the employment site provided at Snetterton Heath offers the opportunity to help deliver the strategic employment needs of the District, while smaller sites towards Attleborough have the potential to provide for small to medium enterprises and to assist in providing more local employment for the town. Given that the potential sites form part of the entry into the historic market town they are key gateway sites and must be sensitively designed.

2.32 A strategic employment site of 10 hectares for Attleborough is proposed in the Submission Draft for Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan which is allocated in the Local Plan in the section on employment sites LP[002]029 and LP[002]007.

2.33 Design

2.34 The use of Design Codes help to deliver quality in development and are a useful tool for large development proposals which are set to be phased over a long period. Design codes coordinate design outcomes across large or complex sites to deliver a coherent design vision and masterplan. The NPPF supports the use of design codes, where appropriate; 'Local Planning Authorities should consider using design codes where they could help deliver high quality outcomes' (NPPF, paragraph 59, page 15). The policy for Attleborough sets a requirement for the applicant to produce design codes for the Attleborough SUE in order to achieve a comprehensive development.

2.35 Infrastructure and phasing

2.36 An urban extension of this scale will be phased over the plan period in line with known infrastructure delivery and the market capacity for annual delivery as detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. A number of transport studies have been undertaken for Attleborough and the provision of the necessary infrastructure to support development is critical for the delivery of the Attleborough urban extension. The scale of development proposed necessitates substantial improvements to the transport infrastructure in the town, particularly the highways network and associated infrastructure improvements. This includes addressing the following but not exhaustive list:

- Congestion and delay in relation to the existing gyratory system for traffic around the town centre;
- Level crossing on the B1077 which can cause blocking back on to the gyratory system;
- Transport issues in Attleborough in relation to traffic passing through the town centre, in particular HGVs;
- The barrier of the railway line and how this needs to be overcome to integrate the growth area with the existing town;
- Accommodating the transport impact of additional housing and employment growth in the town; and
- The need to deliver a link road and new road bridge over the railway to serve development.

2.37 In terms of connectivity it is important to ensure balanced provision of transport infrastructure and facilities, for pedestrians and cyclists, public transport and other vehicles to achieve a sustainable future for Attleborough town centre.

2.38 There is a requirement to work in partnership to enable a detailed infrastructure phasing to support the delivery of the urban extension, with Norfolk County Council, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and the emerging Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan in order to develop policies to support the production of the masterplan. This is likely to include reconfiguring the following junctions on the traffic gyratory to provide two-way general traffic flows on both Surrogate Street and Connaught Road. The individual schemes would be:

- Introduce two-way traffic on Connaught Road and Surrogate Street;
- Reconfiguring the Church Street/Surrogate Street junction (with possible closure of Church Street);

- Reconfiguring the Surrogate Street/Connaught Road junction; and
- Reconfiguring the High Street/Connaught Road/Exchange Street junction.

2.39 Phasing of future town centre improvements such as HGV bans on some of these town centre roads will not be possible until the link road is in place. A key requirement is to provide a new road crossing over the railway line and to acquire the required land to the west. Breckland Council have resolved to acquire this land and can use Compulsory Purchase powers if required to facilitate this.

2.40 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan details the trajectory of housing delivery on site which is projected to deliver 160 dwellings a year. Key requirements for the link road are triggered on completion of 1200 dwellings, and strategic improvements to Attleborough Waste Water Treatment Works are triggered on the development of 1800 dwellings. The policy for the SUE requires the developer to have regard to the phasing of infrastructure provision as set out in Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan and any subsequent updates.

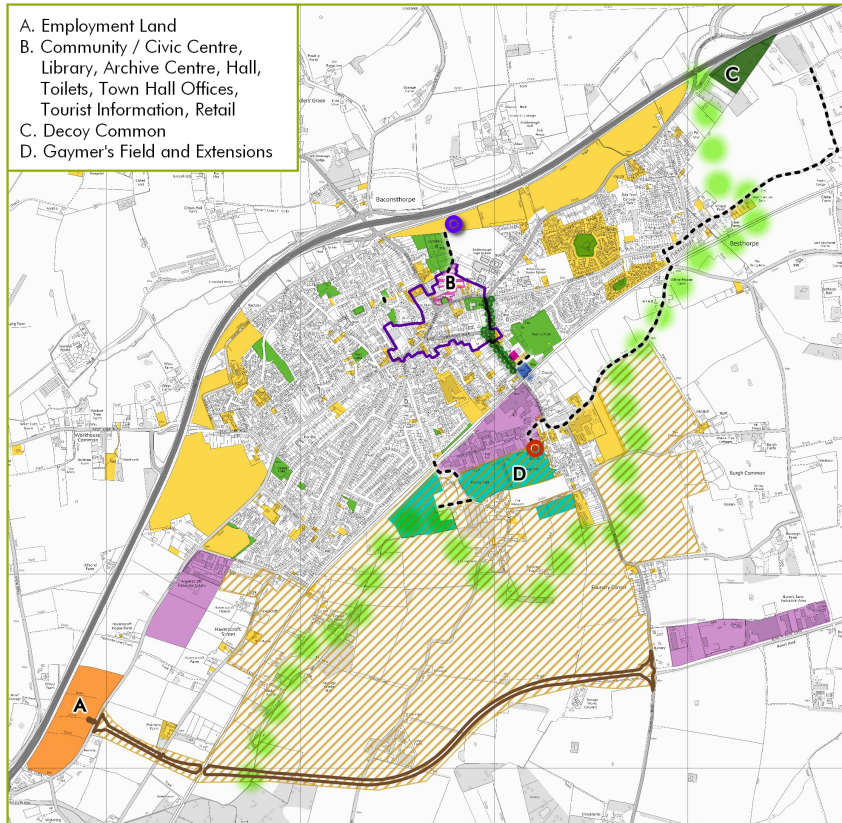
Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan

2.41 A neighbourhood plan is being prepared for Attleborough. The Council recognises the role of Neighbourhood Planning and is committed to working with the Town Council and partners to deliver the collective vision. Policy GEN 3 of the Local Plan provides the strategic context for development in Attleborough. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to provide a set of more locally detailed policies, which will help inform the strategic Masterplan and employment allocation for the SUE.

2.42 The Submission Draft for Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan (as of March 2017) focuses on 7 themes:





- The Local Economy
- Housing
- Transport and Communications
- Education and Learning
- Health and Social Care
- Sports, Leisure and Community Facilities
- Environment Sustainability and Design

Map 2.1 Emerging Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map



Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan

Policies Map 1
 February 2017

-  Town Centre
-  Preferred Growth Location (SUE) in Local Plan
-  Site B
-  Link Road (indicative)
-  Outdoor Sports Hub
-  Pavilion and Car Park
-  Area of Search for Indoor Sports Hub and Parking for Town Centre
-  Open Space in Local Plan
-  Significant Tree Avenues
-  Linear Park
-  Local Open Space
-  Employment Sites Existing and Permissions
-  Existing Housing Permissions
-  Area of Search for Employment Land
-  Footpath Links



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Vision for the Strategic Urban Extension

2.43 The Council has set out a proposed vision on how development will look and function and will inform the design principles and required Masterplan Framework.

Proposed Strategic Site Vision

1. Development of the land south-west of Attleborough presents an opportunity to create a new and attractive strategic urban extension for Attleborough. This vision statement describes the ultimate ambition for the place. The development will sit comfortably within the gently undulating landform, successfully incorporating significant trees and hedgerows within green corridors and improved pedestrian and cycling linkages to the town centre. In its town planning, the development will reflect the built environment of Attleborough and its communities. All buildings will exhibit high architectural quality, making optimum use of modern systems internally. The external appearance will complement the historic town, preserving contact with the best local building traditions, not least in the use of high quality materials. The built environment will strike a successful balance between variety and harmony. As in the best historic townscapes the scale, massing and detailing of particular buildings will respond to the character and role of the street they address. Within the layout, focal points and landmarks will be highlighted with distinctive buildings and spaces. A carefully planned network of green infrastructure will serve to connect the neighbourhoods, helping to create defined open spaces and create recognisable neighbourhoods within the development and a strong sense of place. As a consequence, the layout will be easy to understand and navigate. Integration with existing streets and paths in the vicinity, which will be enhanced where necessary, will ensure this new part of Attleborough is well connected to the town and the railway station, the rest of the town, and the countryside beyond.

2. The mix of homes and tenure types will reflect the needs and ambition of the local community. Homes will provide ample space for living and storage. Residents will have convenient access to community facilities such as schools, shops, healthcare and play areas. All properties will have convenient access to public transport and to a network of safe and direct walking and cycling routes, linking people to schools, and services, both within the development and beyond. Ready access to high speed broadband will enable home working and help reduce the number of journeys by private car. Public spaces will be well designed, with suitable management and maintenance arrangements in place to ensure their continued upkeep.

3. This new part of Attleborough will include low carbon energy generation, SuDS, and convenient access to recycling facilities. Allotments and gardens will provide opportunities for residents to grow their own food. The development will promote innovation in residential, commercial and infrastructure design with a view to achieving more sustainable ways of living and a place that is future-proof. Essential infrastructure and services will be integrated in the design of the place from the outset and delivered in phases with the building work.

GEN 4 - Development Requirements of Attleborough Strategic Urban Extension (SUE)

Development Requirements of Attleborough Strategic Urban Extension (SUE)

Land to the south west of Attleborough amounting to approximately 296ha, as shown on the policies map is allocated for a Strategic Urban Extension of a total of at least 2,650 net new dwellings with a further 1,350 dwellings anticipated beyond the plan period within the SUE boundary. The SUE will be phased over the plan period together with appropriate community infrastructure to support new development (see separate policies in this document), suitable local shopping centre, green infrastructure and identified local employment land. The delivery will be aided by the provision of a new link road located to the south of the urban extension.

To help ensure that there is a sufficient economically active population to support the local economy, any proposal for housing development (open market and affordable) should include an appropriate mix of housing types.

Retail proposals within the SUE will be supported where they provide for local need across A1-A5 Use classes up to the identified capacity of 1,900 sq m gross as detailed in the separate retail policies in this document.

Provision will be required for sport and recreation facilities in the SUE as part of any development proposals in line with current and emerging evidence and policies in this document. This should be accessible from the existing town by a variety of modes of travel as well as from within the SUE itself.

Any proposal will have to consider the findings of the Historic Characterisation Study and carry out further assessment work into the historic landscape to the south of Attleborough to the satisfaction of the Council and Historic England.

Development must make provision for the retention and protection of hedgerows and trees and provide green corridors connecting development sites, adjacent residential and employment areas, the town centre and open countryside as well as appropriate links to the railway station.

Provision of green infrastructure, play facilities and allotments within the SUE boundary should be of a sufficient scale and design to enable recreational opportunities for local residents close to where they live.

A Travel Plan is required as well as financial contributions towards public transport to serve the SUE as well as additional transport improvements to the town centre to mitigate the impact of additional development.

A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought. Ongoing discussion between the Council, the developer and Anglian Water Services to determine an appropriate, deliverable solution for Wastewater Treatment Work (WwTW) improvements required following the development of 1,800 homes.

In line with Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Policy CS16, future development on this site will be subject to the submission of information that satisfies Norfolk County Council that:

- the applicant has carried out investigations to identify whether the resource (sand and gravel) is viable for mineral extraction, and
- if the mineral resource is viable, that the applicant has considered whether it could be extracted economically prior to development taking place; and
- if the mineral resource can be extracted economically, whether (or not) there are opportunities to use the onsite resource during the construction phase of development.”

The Council supports Attleborough Town Council's intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan which could help to shape growth in Attleborough subject to the Plan passing a local referendum.

Design and Landscape of a quality that reflects the importance of this key site, the policies in the Local Plan and the aspirations of the community.

Masterplan

A masterplan is required to provide a comprehensive development strategy for the SUE. The masterplan should accord with the phasing of infrastructure provision, as set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan and subsequent updates. The masterplan will address the following strategic development requirements which will apply within the SUE boundary:

1. Indicative design, layout and phasing requirements for 4,000 dwellings;
2. A mix of dwelling types to be spread across the SUE area, with a proportion of housing to comprise affordable home ownership products. Opportunities for self build dwellings will be considered;
3. A new link road between London Road and the B1077 Attleborough Road to be delivered prior to the completion of 1200 dwellings;
4. Connectivity from the SUE to the town centre and existing development for both vehicular and pedestrian and cycle movements to enable several points of access helping to integrate the new and existing residential areas and improve social cohesion;
5. Provision of two new primary schools within the SUE area;
6. A local centre which acts as the focal point for the community comprising local facilities for new residents to be located within easy walking and cycling access to the majority of new residents;
7. Further neighbourhood centres to provide limited local facilities to serve the immediate neighbourhood;
8. Any retail or employment provision should not prejudice residential amenity or be of a scale or use type which would directly compete with the role of Attleborough town centre;
9. Consideration of fluvial and surface water flood risk in a Flood Risk Assessment;
10. Provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems to provide surface water attenuation. This should be planned on an integrated and strategic scale across the SUE area, and where possible should form part of the landscaping scheme;
11. Consideration of the promotion and use of water efficiency measures in line with recommendations in the Water Cycle Study;

12. Provision of a wide range of green infrastructure to include:
 - A linear park functioning as a green corridor running through the development to promote walking and cycling helping to enable healthy lifestyles;
 - A network of open spaces and formal and informal children's play spaces in accordance with Policy ENV04;
 - Landscaping to integrate the development with the surrounding landscape and to prevent a hard urban edge to development;
 - Retention of existing, and incorporation of new native tree and hedgerow species, where appropriate with regard to the proposed layout and design of development; and
 - Provision of allotments
13. Consideration of measures to mitigate potential adverse recreational impacts on designated nature conservation sites (SPAs, SACs, Ramsar) outside the growth area;
14. The Masterplan should consider the presence of the underground gas pipeline in developing the layout of the site;
15. The applicant will be required to develop design codes to the satisfaction of the Council which will inform the detailed planning application for the SUE.

Thetford

2.44 Thetford was designated as the Key Centre for Development and Change within the former Core Strategy. The town acts as the principal retail, service and employment centre for the south of the District. The Core Strategy's Spatial Portrait described the town as having a good balance of homes and jobs with a well developed market for industrial and distribution property. It has connections to the national rail network and is located on the A11 between Norwich and Cambridge. The spatial strategy of the Local Plan document continues Thetford's role as a key area for growth.

2.45 The Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP) adopted in July 2012 covered the whole of the Parish of Thetford and parts of the Parishes of Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverstone.

2.46 The TAAP was produced to guide the significant housing and employment growth apportioned to Thetford, primarily delivered through the Thetford Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). Thetford was appointed growth point status in 2006 and under the TAAP the town will deliver 5000 dwellings, 22ha of employment land and 500 net new jobs. The TAAP was part of the old Local Development Framework (LDF) system; it was intended to be read alongside the adopted Core Strategy. As discussed in the introduction of this document, when the new Local Plan is adopted all of the previous LDF documents will be replaced.

2.47 However, the growth and development of Thetford as a sustainable location is still a key component of the new Local Plan. The town remains a key area for growth and the SUE is currently progressing through the planning process. Although the site has outline planning consent a number of reserved matters applications will have to come forward over the Plan period to build out the site.

2.48 The TAAP contains a number of policies specifically related to development within Thetford and importantly to the SUE. These policies have been developed to respond to key pieces of evidence base for the local area. They are relatively recently adopted and in conformity with the NPPF. The policies have been designed to help frame the development of Thetford and the regeneration of existing areas and have been subject to a considerable level of public consultation and relatively recent examination, (2012).

2.49 The over arching vision for Thetford as put forward in the adopted TAAP still remains:

Overarching Vision for Thetford

To deliver a thriving 21st century market town at the centre of life in the East of England by implementing the sustainable growth and comprehensive social, economic and environmental regeneration of Thetford.

By 2026 Thetford will become a well planned, self-contained sustainable town where people feel part of the community and where they continue to enjoy living and working. It will be a place people will be attracted to for its renowned natural and historic environment qualities.

Thetford will be an important town for jobs, shops, services, schools and tourism, and will continue to be the fourth largest town in Norfolk. Thetford will be known as a town where healthy lifestyles are at the heart of what people, communities and businesses do.

Thetford's reputation will be improved.

2.50 Following analysis of the relevance of each policy (in the context of the Local Plan) it was considered that the below policies from the TAAP should be rolled forward into the new Plan to ensure that the planning framework for this area is clear and consistent.

- Policy TH 2 Approach to the Town Centre

- Policy TH 4 Transport - Achieving Modal Shift
- Policy TH 5 The Impact of Change on Pedestrians, Cyclists and Buses
- Policy TH 6 Thetford Bus Interchange
- Policy TH 7 Thetford Railway Station
- Policy TH 9 Monitoring and management of Key Biodiversity Sites
- Policy TH 11 Joe Blunt's Lane
- Policy TH 12 The Thetford Loops
- Policy TH 18 Archaeology
- Policy TH 20 Thetford Urban Extension Strategic Design Principles
- Policy TH 21 Locally Distinctive Features of the Landscape
- Policy TH 22 Gallows Hill Scheduled Monument
- Policy TH 23 Existing Buildings in the Thetford Urban Extension
- Policy TH 25 Walking and Cycling
- Policy TH 26 Buses
- Policy TH 27 A New Railway Station in the Urban Extension
- Policy TH 28 Changes to the A11 Trunk Road
- Policy TH 29 Improvements to the Local Road Network
- Policy TH 30 New Employment Land
- Policy TH 31 New Local Centre(s) in the Urban Extension
- Policy TH 32 Connecting to a Decentralised Energy Supply
- Policy TH 33 Education Provision in the Thetford Urban Extension
- Policy TH 34 New Health Facility in the Urban Extension
- Policy TH 35 Community Buildings
- Policy TH 37 Regeneration Proposals in Existing Residential Areas

2.51 The following policies will be replaced by District wide policies and will not be rolled forward into the Thetford Area Strategy section of the new Local Plan.

Table 2.1 Replaced Thetford AAP Policies

Policy to be lost/superseded	Relevant replacement policy
Policy TH 1 NPPF - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	Policy STRAT 1
Policy TH 3 New Retail Development	Policy EC 05
Policy TH 8 Healthy Lifestyles	Policy COM 02
Policy TH 10 Allotments	ENV 04, INF 02
Policy TH 13 Indoor Sports Facilities	ENV 04, COM 04
Policy TH 14 Energy and Carbon - TAAP Wide	National policy
Policy TH 15 Energy/Multi Service(s) Company Development (ESCo/MuSCo)	National policy
Policy TH 16 Water and Drainage	ENV 09

Policy to be lost/superseded	Relevant replacement policy
Policy TH 17 Development in Flood Zones	ENV 09
Policy TH 19 Sustainable Construction Standards for Non-Residential Development	National Policy
Policy TH 24 Surface-Water Management	ENV 09
Policy TH 36 New Bring Recycling Facilities	National policy
Policy TH 38 Existing Employment Areas	Policy EC 03
Policy TH 39 Thetford Settlement Boundary	Policy GEN 05

Settlement Boundaries

2.52 Settlement boundaries have been defined on the Policies Map for each of the higher tier settlements (from Key Settlements to Local Service Centres). The purpose of settlement boundaries is to define the area which is acceptable, in principal, for further development. Beyond the settlement boundaries the wider area is largely defined as the countryside which is subject to a greater degree of protection to preserve the rural character of the District.

Policy GEN 05 Settlement Boundaries

Within the defined settlement boundaries and the boundary for Attleborough SUE (as shown on the Policies Map) proposals for new development are acceptable, subject to compliance with National and other Local Plan policies.

Outside the defined settlement boundaries, development is restricted to preserve the countryside. Development outside the defined settlement boundaries will only be acceptable where it is compliant with one or more of the following policies set out within the Local Plan including:

- Policy HOU 03 - Development Outside of the Boundaries of Local Service Centres
- Policy HOU 04 - Rural Settlements with Boundaries
- Policy HOU 05 - Small Villages and Hamlets Outside of Settlement Boundaries
- Policy HOU 08 - Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- Policy HOU 12 - Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside
- Policy HOU 13 - Agricultural Workers Exceptions
- Policy HOU 14 - Affordable Housing Exceptions
- Policy ENV 03 - The Brecks Protected Habitats and Species
- Policy EC 04 - Employment Development Outside General Employment Areas
- Policy EC 06 - Farm Diversification
- Policy EC 07 - Tourism Related Development

3 Housing

Development Requirements

3.1 A key purpose of the Local Plan is to set out the required number of new homes that will be provided to meet the identified need. Local Authorities are required by the NPPF to objectively assess the development needs for their area and plan to meet these needs in full. This is both a technical and a policy issue. The additional homes figure for Breckland District over the plan period is a strategic decision reached having taken account of different demographic, economic and housing need considerations together with the assumptions that underlie them. Paragraph 159 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, states that local planning authorities in preparing the Local Plan should meet objectively assessed needs, unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF or be contrary to specific NPPF policies.

3.2 The Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2015 was jointly commissioned by five central Norfolk local authorities (Norwich City, Broadland, Breckland, North Norfolk and South Norfolk, together with the Broads Authority) through the Duty to Co-operate Forum. It has identified the Central Norfolk Housing Market Area as the functional Housing Market area that Breckland best aligns to and established the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing across the central Norfolk area.

3.3 The SHMA was subject to an update in 2017 to reflect the most recent Government projections, including the 2014 sub national populations projections. The 2014 sub national population projections suggest that the population will increase to 153,700 by 2036. The SHMA update states that the full objectively assessed need for housing between 2011 and 2036 is **15298**. This equates to an annualised target of 612 per annum. The housing trajectory is included at 'Appendix 1 - Housing Trajectory'. The housing trajectory includes a stepped approach to housing delivery, reflecting the delivery time lines of the two Sustainable Urban Extensions in Thetford and Attleborough.

3.4 It is considered that the OAN identified through the Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment represents the most up to date and robust evidence base on which to plan for residential growth in the District. The approach of considering existing unmet market and affordable housing needs as part of the calculation ensures that any potential accumulated backlog from under delivery in the previous Plan period will have been accounted for as part of the assessment of need.

Policy HOU 01- Development Requirements (Minimum)

To enable the District to meet future housing needs the Local Plan will provide for no less than 15,298 new homes between 2011 and 2036, an average of 612 dwellings per annum.

The annualised level of new housing provision will increase during the plan period, from 584 per year from 2017/18 - 2021/22 to 622 per year from 2021/22, as reflected in the housing trajectory

Level and Location of Growth

3.5 The distribution of housing is one of the most significant issues that the Local Plan must address through the allocation of land and the setting of policies to guide development. The future direction of growth is required to follow the settlement hierarchy outlined within the policies in this Local Plan.

3.6 The Local Plan seeks to deliver the most sustainable approach to development outside the strategic urban extensions (SUEs) of Attleborough and Thetford for distributing growth across the sustainable settlements in the District and achieving a more balanced approach in housing development between rural and urban areas in line with the Strategic Vision, local and market demands. In meeting the requirements of providing 15,298 homes over the plan period between 2011 and 2036 a stepped approach has been taken in the housing trajectory (appendix 1) to reflect an increase in delivery to coincide with commencement of SUE delivery.

3.7 Informed by the sustainability appraisal (SA) process, the Council has identified as an important element of the settlement hierarchy a desire for a level of growth across a network of Local Service Centres in the rural areas. Having regard to this figure, the rest of the housing target is directed to the larger market towns of Thetford, Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffham and Watton. In essence this reflects a bottom up approach considered to support “sustainable development” in the District providing the desired balance between economic, environmental and social factors.

3.8 It is important to note that there will still be significant development on the two SUEs in those locations beyond the plan period. At 3100 units beyond plan period, even under the current housing target (612) this would equate to around 5 years housing supply if no development took place elsewhere to continue to support growth associated with the A11 corridor.

3.9 For the local service centres (LSCs) it has been assumed that each settlement will see new allocations at a level broadly equivalent to 10% of the estimated number of households from a base date of 2011. This figure was derived from the population information in the 2011 census and applying a householder multiple figure which assumed 2.3 people per household. This approach helps to ensure a supply of housing over the plan period.

3.10 A 7% allowance for rural areas is identified as being consistent with the approach within Policy HOU 04, which allows for some development within and immediately adjacent to settlement boundaries up to a cumulative limit of development for each village, so as to be commensurate with the position in the settlement hierarchy. The deliverability of this figure can be evidenced through representations from landowners and developers which demonstrate that sites are available and developable. A figure greater than 7% for development in the rural areas has been disregarded because such development is required to be treated as windfall.

3.11 The Local Plan, through providing individual settlement targets, gives utility providers and other infrastructure providers greater certainty in the areas for investment. Also, for communities that are either progressing or considering developing a neighbourhood plan, providing new homes targets in each of the settlements in the settlement hierarchy gives certainty on their minimum housing requirements.

3.12 Taking account of completions and commitments also informs the residual amount of growth needing to be delivered and the actual requirement for new allocations. Completions is the term used to describe the number of dwellings that have been built out following the granting of planning permission, whilst commitments account for developments, which have already been given planning permission, but not yet been built out.

Policy HOU 02 - Level and Location of Growth

Housing growth will be distributed in line with the following individual settlements targets:

Tier of Hierarchy	Percentage of Growth	Settlement	Completions / Commitments (2011- March 2017) and saved allocations	Housing Target for additional dwellings to 2036 ^	Housing Allocations included within the Local Plan	Total (Completions and Commitments 2011-March 2017 + Housing Target)
Key Settlements	50%	Attleborough	1,808	2,650	2,650	4,458
		Thetford	3,668	0	0	3,668
Market Towns	28%	Dereham	797	750	750	1,547
		Swaffham	1007	605	600	1,612
		Watton	1,130	175	205	1,335

Tier of Hierarchy	Percentage of Growth	Settlement	Completions / Commitments (2011- March 2017) and saved allocations	Housing Target for additional dwellings to 2036 ^	Housing Allocations included within the Local Plan	Total (Completions and Commitments 2011-March 2017 + Housing Target)
Local Service Centres	15%	Ashill	71	20	20	91
		Banham	69	42	42	111
		Bawdeswell	6	36	36	42
		Garboldisham	9	35	35	44
		Great Ellingham	184	0	0	184
		Harling	157	85	85	242
		Hockering	63	25	25	88
		Kenninghall	33	35	15*	68
		Litcham	5	22	0*	27
		Mattishall	99	42	0*	141
		Narborough	107	40	40	147
		Necton	229	79	55*	301
		North Elmham	50	41	27*	91
		Old Buckenham	32	37	20*	69
		Shipdham	205	80	80	285
		Sporle	32	35	35	67
Swanton Morley	95	85	85	180		
Weeting	100	0	0	100		

Tier of Hierarchy	Percentage of Growth	Settlement	Completions / Commitments (2011- March 2017) and saved allocations	Housing Target for additional dwellings to 2036 ^	Housing Allocations included within the Local Plan	Total (Completions and Commitments 2011-March 2017 + Housing Target)
Villages with Boundaries	7%	Beeston, Beetley, Carbrooke, Caston, Gressenhall, Griston, Hockham, Lyng, Mundford, North Lopham, Rocklands, Saham Toney, Thompson, Weasenham, Shropham, Eccles Road (Quidenham), Clint Green and Yaxham	902	150	0†	1,052
	100%		10,858	5,069		15,950

*Housing Allocations unable to meet Local Plan Housing Target. Policy HOU 03 applies to these villages

† Policy HOU 04 applies to these villages

^ Neighbourhood Plans can seek to exceed housing targets

3.13 In some LSCs the Council is not seeking a positive allocation based on the current available land supply, environmental and heritage constraints and / or the level of recent planning permissions.

3.14 Where the total housing identified for a settlement is not provided for by way of existing permissions and proposed allocations, criteria based policies will be used to assess planning applications. Policy HOU 03 sets out the criteria proposed to determine sites outside the development boundaries of Local Service Centres.

Policy HOU 03

Development Outside of the Boundaries of Local Service Centres

Development outside of the boundaries of the Local Service Centres will normally be resisted where the Local Plan housing target (as set in Policy HOU 02) is provided for unless supported by other policies within the Local Plan. Where the Local Plan does not identify sufficient sites to achieve the housing target, then further development will be allowed subject to being supported by other policies within the Local Plan and meeting all of the following criteria:

1. It is immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary;
2. It would not lead to the number of dwellings in the settlement exceeding the housing target;
3. the design contributes to conserving, and where possible enhancing, the historic nature and connectivity of communities; and
4. the development avoids coalescence of settlements.

Opportunities for self build dwellings which meet the criteria set out above will be considered in accordance with national guidance.

Reasoned Justification

3.15 Where it has not been possible to identify a suitable, available and deliverable allocation for a settlement defined as a Local Service Centre, development that meets the criteria outlined in Policy HOU 03 will be permitted in order to meet the identified housing target for the plan period (2036). The policy enables an element of flexibility in the housing delivery for the larger rural settlements and helps to support and sustain their services and facilities.

Approach to Development in the Rural Areas

3.16 Breckland is a diverse District, up to 20% of the population live outside the top three tiers of the settlement hierarchy (Key Settlements, the Market Towns and Local Service Centres), in the rural areas characterised by a large number of smaller dispersed villages and hamlets. In accordance with the spatial locational strategy these settlements would not be appropriate for the allocation of larger scale market developments which would normally be expected to deliver a proportion of affordable housing. It is, however, highly likely that there will continue to be a need for the provision of affordable homes in these communities and specifically in relation to rural areas. The NPPF advises that authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing developments to reflect local needs in a sustainable manner.

3.17 Policy HOU 04 therefore seeks to capture the need to direct growth to the most sustainable locations, support local services, balance residential needs and employment opportunities and seeks to enhance the rural economy, thereby helping to maintain the vitality of rural communities. In line with the locally distinctive approach to sustainable development, rather than seeking to restrict all development outside the sustainable settlement hierarchy and inside of the settlement boundaries of the existing rural settlements where there are limited opportunities, this policy seeks to present a sensitive approach to rural housing that is responsive to local circumstances; striking a balance with employment needs and the countryside.

Policy HOU 04 - Rural Settlements With Boundaries

The following rural settlements have settlement boundaries (as defined on the policies maps):

Beeston, Beetley, Carbrooke, Caston, Gressenhall, Griston, Hockham, Lyng, Mundford, North Lopham, Rocklands, Saham Toney, Thompson, Weasenham, Shropham, Eccles Road (Quidenham), Clint Green and Yaxham

Appropriate development will be allowed immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary, subject to being supported by other policies within the Local Plan* and where all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. It is minor development of an appropriate scale and design to the settlement of up to 5 dwellings;
2. It would not lead to the number of dwellings in the settlement increasing by more than 5% from the date of adoption of the Plan. The settlement refers to the number of dwellings inside the defined settlement boundary;
3. Development provides a significant community benefit;
4. The design contributes to preserving, and where possible enhancing, the historic nature and connectivity of communities; and
5. The development avoids coalescence of settlements.

Opportunities for self build dwellings which meet the criteria set out above will be considered in accordance with national guidance.

*with the exception of Policy GEN 05 Settlement Boundaries

Reasoned Justification

3.18 In line with the Spatial Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy, the level of new development permitted in settlements defined in the policy will be restricted, consistent with the rural character of these villages and reflective of the more limited service provision and infrastructure available.

3.19 Development which facilitates self-build dwellings will be considered favourably, subject to meeting the criteria set out within the policy.

3.20 Planning applications will be expected to be accompanied by a supporting statement. The supporting statement will be treated as any other planning application document and subject to publication. The statement will seek to address the following key areas:

Justification that the proposal will provide a significant community benefit.

3.21 Applicants should demonstrate in their statement that there is clear evidence that development will provide a community benefit by meeting an identified local need, delivering community aspirations or by virtue of local support for a scheme. This can be done in many ways and the scale of evidence necessary will generally depend on the size and scale of the proposal and its potential impacts. Where the developer can demonstrate that there is appropriate support by the parish council, this will be a material consideration in favour of the scheme.

3.22 Evidence could comprise:

- Demonstration of local support e.g.
 - the views of the parish council
 - robust surveys of local opinion prepared independently;

- Demonstration of conformity with a policy/policies in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan or delivering a community aspiration identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan;
- Provision of a community facility, asset or financial contributions towards such facilities which meet an identified need established in documentation such as a Parish or Neighbourhood Plan;
- Demonstration of local social or economic need e.g.
 - a local housing needs assessment
 - an employment needs assessment.

3.23 Development proposals which fail to demonstrate a significant benefit to the local community will not be permitted.

Justification that the applicant can demonstrate to the Council that the proposal is of appropriate scale and design.

3.24 Proposals must be of a size, design and scale that seek to meet an identified need and respects the setting. Careful siting, massing, use of surrounding landscape features and screening are important as is the enhancement of existing local characteristics. The statement should demonstrate how the site is connected to the surrounding settlement. In areas of greater landscape visibility sensitive design and landscaping is particularly important. The Council's development management service will be able to provide further guidance and comment on emerging schemes.

Policy HOU 05 - Small Villages and Hamlets Outside of Settlement Boundaries

Development in smaller villages and hamlets outside of defined settlement boundaries will be limited apart from in exceptional circumstances where planning permission may be granted subject to being supported by other policies within the Local Plan* and if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The development comprises of sensitive infilling and rounding off of a cluster of dwellings with access to an existing highway;
2. It is minor development of an appropriate scale and design to the settlement of up to 3 units;
3. It can be demonstrated that there is appropriate support by the parish council;
4. The design contributes to enhancing the historic nature and connectivity of communities; and
5. The proposal does not harm or undermine a visually important gap that contributes to the character and distinctiveness of the rural scene.

Opportunities for self build dwellings which meet the criteria set out above will be considered in accordance with national guidance.

Farmsteads and sporadic small scale groups of dwellings are considered as lying in the open countryside and are not classed as small villages and hamlets. These, and isolated locations in the countryside, are unlikely to be considered acceptable.

*with the exception of Policy GEN 05 Settlement Boundaries

Reasoned Justification

3.25 Breckland is a large, rural district which contains a high number of small villages and hamlets with little or no service provision. For those areas with 2 or fewer of the services / facilities, settlement boundaries have been removed on the basis that this limits development in locations where it is unsustainable for additional growth. However, having regard to local distinctiveness, it must be recognised that in areas outside of the settlement hierarchy, i.e. the areas regarded as open countryside, there are living and working communities whose social and economic viability must be addressed.

3.26 Policy HOU 05 seeks to address the development needs of these communities whilst minimising the impact on the countryside by allowing clearly identified and evidenced appropriate small scale development to meet local needs through criteria based policy. Development will be carefully managed in line with this policy in a manner which is more restrictive than for those named settlements with boundaries.

3.27 Planning applications will be expected to be accompanied by a supporting statement. The supporting statement will be treated as any other planning application document and subject to publication. The statement will seek to address the following key areas:

Justification that the proposal represents either infill or rounding off.

3.28 Infill is defined as: building taking place on a vacant plot in an otherwise built-up street frontage.

3.29 To be considered infill, a development will generally have built development along the road on either side of the site and be similar to adjacent properties in terms of its visual impact, plot size, dwelling size, floor levels and scale.

3.30 Rounding off is defined as: the completion of an incomplete group of buildings on land which is already partially developed and in such a way which will either complete the local road pattern or define and complete the boundaries of the group. Such rounding off should not change or distort the character or tradition of the group or the settlement in any undesirable way.

3.31 To be considered as rounding off the statement must address:

- Whether the perimeter of the site is already built up;
- Whether development would represent an outward expansion of the settlement;
- The strength and durability of boundary features to the open countryside; and
- The relationship with the existing settlement in terms of size, scale and density and its impact on local views.

3.32 It is important to note that not all sites which satisfy the above definitions of infill and rounding off will be suitable for development. Other factors which may affect the impacts of new dwellings include highways and access, landscape, flood risk, biodiversity, impacts on the SPA and impact on built heritage such as listed buildings and these, and other material considerations remain as part of the assessment process.

Principles of New Housing

3.33 It is important to consider, as set out in national planning policy, the needs of different groups within the community. This is to ensure that the right size and type of new homes is provided across the District to meet the needs of existing and future residents and to ensure the creation of mixed and balanced communities. This includes those with specialist housing requirements and those who wish to build their own homes.

3.34 The revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) sets out the type and size of new housing needed both across the Central Norfolk SHMA area and within the District over the plan period. However, there is a need to consider the appropriate location and the type and size of properties to be provided in different areas. The Locational Strategy defines the settlement hierarchy, whose purpose is to deliver sustainable development across the District in line with the Vision and Strategic Objectives. In particular:

Development in the Right Place

1. Contribute to sustainable development through the reflection of the vision and aspirations of the local communities for Breckland;
2. Assist in the creation and maintenance of inclusive, environmentally sustainable communities making the best and most efficient use of already developed land, buildings and natural resources;
3. Ensure that the majority of development is focused into areas where services are available, and where facilities can be supported;

Meeting the Housing Need

4. Deliver housing that meets the needs of the community and local economy through the concentration of development in the Strategic Urban Extensions of Attleborough and Thetford and where services and facilities can be supported within or adjacent to the market towns of Dereham, Swaffham and Watton and the local service centres, whilst recognising the need for small scale and appropriate development in rural areas to support rural communities and services;
5. Support the development and maintenance of a balanced housing market and a variety of decent, affordable housing which meets the needs of all local people and supports economic and community development; and
6. Encourage high quality, sustainable and safe design for places and spaces, in both the private and public realm, and which respects the character and local distinctiveness of Breckland's communities.

3.35 In line with sustainability principles, housing development should be directed to those settlements that are identified as having good access to services and facilities and consistent with the wider aims of sustainability within the context of the rural requirements of Breckland. The Key Towns, Market Towns and Local Service Centres identified in the Locational Strategy align best with this approach.

3.36 It is recognised that the design and character of housing is important to the community and new housing should reflect the local character. Where higher density development is being proposed the accompanying Design and Access Statement should set out why a higher density is appropriate and its likely impacts in terms of design, character and sustainability for the locality.

3.37 Typically in smaller rural settlements residential development can be of a lower density, in the interests of efficient use of land, character and wider sustainability issues, proposed density levels should be justified, through an accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Parking Provision

3.38 Government policy seeks to restrict levels of parking associated with new development in order to reduce the use of the private car and promote other more sustainable forms of transport. The provision of car parking can also affect the appearance of a development and result in an inefficient use of land. The NPPF, allows planning authorities to set local parking standards taking into account of local circumstances. It is considered essential that an appropriate amount of parking is provided in new developments given the rural nature of Breckland and the current level of public transport provision within the District. In particular, adequate parking should be provided as part of residential developments.

3.39 In terms of trip destination and commercial development there is more scope to manage travel patterns and reduce parking vehicle provision. Here the accessibility by other modes of transport and potential travel planning measures can support a reduced parking provision and enable a more efficient use of land.

3.40 However, at both the home and point of destination, insufficient or inappropriately located parking can lead to problems of overspill parking from the development site onto surrounding streets and verges creating highway safety problems and unsightly environments.

3.41 In considering appropriate levels of parking, reference will be given to the parking provision standards as detailed in appendix 2 of this document which are based on the existing adopted requirements in the Core Strategy. Residential parking standards will be taken into account where necessary to manage the local road network and to avoid inappropriate on street parking. However, they will be applied flexibly having regard to local circumstances and proposals should reflect how they are to provide adequate off road parking.

3.42 Regard will also be given to the circumstances of the site, relevant advice on the design and integration of parking provision into development and the highways network and place-making. Parking requirements may be adjusted to help achieve good design objectives at locations with very good walking access to public transport and essential services, and to help protect heritage assets in conservation areas and listed buildings.

Self-Build and Design Quality Exceptions

3.43 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities to keep a register of individuals and community groups who have expressed an interest in acquiring land to bring forward self-build and custom-build projects. Also, to take account of, and make provision for, the interests of those on such registers in developing their housing initiatives and their local plans; allowing volume house builders to include self-build and custom-build projects as contributing towards their affordable housing obligations, when in partnership for this purpose with a Registered Provider.

3.44 The Council is supportive of self-build housing. The term 'self-build' can be used to refer to a wide range of approaches to creating a bespoke home, the level of input from the individual can range from a complete DIY project to employing contractors to build to your specification. The Council would like to see larger development sites incorporating plots / serviced plots for self-build housing, but also recognises that self-build plots represent a unique approach to supporting rural communities. The Council will support provision of self-build in line with national guidance, policies in this plan and through Neighbourhood Planning.

3.45 Using information from the Self Build Portal's 'Need a Plot', the 2015 Central Norfolk SHMA identified a relatively low number of purchasers looking for a site in Central Norfolk. This is confirmed by the feedback given on the Council's emerging register.

Policy HOU 06 - Principle of New Housing

The design and layout will optimise the density of the development to a level which is appropriate and justified for the locality. Higher density proposals will be sought at appropriate locations, including town centres, areas with good public transport accessibility and sustainable urban extensions.

In rural locations and at the edges of settlements proposals for lower density development will be supported where it can be demonstrated that this is justified having regard to local character and wider sustainability issues.

Proposals for housing must take appropriate account of need identified in the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment with particular regards to size, type and tenure of dwellings. These needs include appropriate provision for all groups in the community such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own home.

Planning permission will be granted where appropriate parking provision is provided by the developer to serve the needs of the proposed development. Development should provide sufficient parking spaces to avoid inappropriate on street parking, highway safety problems and to protect living and working conditions locally. The appropriate parking provision for a development will be determined using the parking standards in Appendix 2 as a 'starting point' which may be varied to reflect local conditions such as the availability of public parking, sustainable travel modes, Travel Plan provisions and design and conservation objectives.

Affordable Housing

3.46 A sufficient supply of housing of all tenures, including affordable housing, is essential to meet the objectives of the Local Plan and to meeting the wide range of housing needs that will be experienced in the District over the plan period.

3.47 Affordable housing is housing provided to those that are unable to meet their housing needs in the private sector. Government policy as set out in the NPPF defines affordable housing as 'social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market'. Intermediate housing provides the opportunity for local people, who are unable to afford open market prices, to access the housing market. Eligibility for affordable housing will be in line with the Council's allocation policies and Housing Strategy. Intermediate products such as housing for sale and rent at a cost above social rent, but below market levels, can include shared equity schemes and shared ownership and other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.

3.48 In line with the requirements of the NPPF, affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for any subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. Affordable rented properties are either Social-Rented or Affordable Rent, which determines the level of rent chargeable. The Council's adopted Tenancy Strategy supports the charging of Affordable Rent levels up to 80% of the local area's market rent for an equivalent property. In Breckland, affordable housing is delivered and managed across the District through partnership work with Registered Providers.

3.49 The jointly produced Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment (CNSHMA), originally published in 2015 and subsequently updated in 2017, is a key part of the evidence base that underpins the Local Plan. The CNSHMA provides evidence of local housing needs across the housing market area for the plan period. The general housing needs information is used to set the housing targets for the District as a whole (as set out in Policy HOU 02). The CNSHMA also collates information on affordable housing need across the Central Norfolk Housing

Market Area and the District; it considers both the current unmet affordable housing need and the projected future affordable housing need in the context of the existing affordable housing stock. The approach of considering existing unmet affordable housing needs as part of the calculation ensures that any potential accumulated backlog from under delivery in the previous Plan period will have been accounted for as part of the assessment of need.

3.50 The proposed affordable housing policy set out below is based on the findings of the CNSHMA which takes existing unmet affordable housing need and projected future affordable housing need together. It concludes that there is a need to provide additional affordable housing across the housing market area over the period 2012 - 2036. The overall need across the Central Norfolk Housing Market Area is found to be 31.7%. Once the impacts of the City Deal are factored in for Norwich, Broadland and South Norfolk and the fact that more market housing is required in those authorities, the overall percentage across the Central Norfolk Housing Market Area falls to 26%. The study goes on to identify an individual District target of 35.7% for Breckland, this is equivalent to 220 dwellings per year. The CNSHMA may be subject to further updates and therefore the policy states that affordable housing will be sought in line with the current CNSHMA (the most up to date version).

3.51 The Government continues to promote a range of affordable housing products to address the shortage of homes available to first time buyers and those on low to middle incomes and is proposing to create a new definition of affordable housing in the NPPF. The Council notes the Government's stated intention in the Housing White Paper (March 2017) to make clear that starter homes should be made available to households who are first time buyers requiring a mortgage and with an income of less than £80,000. Also, in seeking delivery of a range of affordable homes to buy, that the NPPF be amended to introduce a policy expectation that housing sites deliver a minimum of 10% affordable home ownership units and provide clarification that starter homes with appropriate local connection tests, can be acceptable on rural exception sites. The policy refers to affordable housing as defined in national policy, which will take into account any subsequent changes to the definition.

3.52 The Local Plan CIL Viability Assessment (2017) provides the context for the formulation of the affordable housing policy. The study models a range of example housing site types with varying affordable housing thresholds and financial contributions to infrastructure. The results of the study highlight the challenges of Breckland's housing market, which is in the lowest third across England and Wales. The report recommends a target of 25% affordable housing in the Local Plan, which reflects the viability modelling work including consideration of financial contributions to infrastructure. Whilst below the target need identified in the CNSHMA, it is considered that the higher target cannot consistently be achieved due to implications on viability and deliverability and this is demonstrated by historical completions records in the District.

3.53 Proposals for affordable housing are not exempt from any requirement to provide mitigation measures for European sites (even if exempt from paying any other levy) in line with the Habitats Regulations 2010, and Policies ENV 02 and ENV 03 in the Plan.

3.54 Implementation

3.55 For the purposes of the policy the definition of residential development includes residential park homes and caravans where they are not subject to occupancy restrictions.

3.56 Where an existing dwelling (or dwellings) is to be demolished and replaced with substantially the same type of dwelling, provided it is not eligible for vacant building credit, no affordable housing contribution will be sought. Essentially no 'additional' development is being created, and therefore no development uplift will be created.

3.57 When considering fractions of affordable units, on sites of more than 10 dwellings all points differences will be calculated as a financial sum. For example 12.4 dwellings would equate to 12 affordable dwellings and 0.4 dwelling financial sum equivalent.

3.58 In line with the NPPF, affordable housing will be delivered on site. Where evidence is provided that the site is not viable if provision is made on site in line with the requirements set out in the policy, a commuted sum will be sought at £50,000 per equivalent whole dwelling as recommended by the Council's Local Plan CIL Viability Assessment.

Policy HOU 07 - Affordable Housing

- i. Residential development proposals capable of delivering 11 or more units (or exceeding a Gross Internal Area of 1000 sq m) will be expected to deliver a proportion of the development as affordable housing on-site to help meet existing and future affordable housing needs of the District as set out in the current Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment (CNSHMA);
- ii. 25% of qualifying developments should be affordable housing;
- iii. The size, mix, type and tenure of affordable homes as defined in national policy, will meet the identified housing need of Breckland as established by the CNSHMA and agreed by Breckland District Council;
- iv. The affordable rented housing provided on-site should be maintained as affordable housing in perpetuity. Provision will be provided through planning obligations in order to provide the affordable housing and to ensure its availability to initial and successive occupiers;
- v. The Council will seek for affordable housing to be distributed across a development as single units or small clusters, rather than in a single area. The Council will consider exceptions if an applicant can demonstrate that it is necessary for the long term management or viability of the affordable housing. Their appearance should be indistinguishable from that of open market homes, reflecting local distinctiveness and design policies in the Local Plan and in subsequent neighbourhood plans; and
- vi. The applicant will be required to submit an open book viability assessment where schemes do not meet the above policy requirements. In such cases the Council will commission an independent review of the viability study, for which the applicant will bear the cost.

Commuted Sums

In exceptional circumstances, off-site contributions in lieu of built units on site will be considered where evidence is provided to the Council's satisfaction that the site is not otherwise viable. The applicant will be required to submit an open book viability assessment in accordance with clause vi of this policy.

Vacant Building Credit

In seeking a vacant building credit in respect of the affordable housing on brownfield land, an application will only be considered on the following basis:

- Where the building has not been vacated for the sole purpose of redevelopment;
- Where the existing building(s) has not been abandoned; and
- Where specific information on the floorspace of the proposed residential development and the calculation of the claimed offset has been provided.

Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

3.59 The Planning Policy for Travellers Sites (PPTS 2015) defines the travelling community as comprising Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpersons. Gypsies and Travellers are defined in the PPTS as 'Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependents' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such'. Travelling Showpersons are defined in the PPTS as 'Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above'.

3.60 In determining whether persons are 'Gypsies and Travellers' for the purposes of this policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:

- a. Whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life;
- b. The reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life;
- c. Whether there is an intention to living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.

3.61 The Council is required to plan for the future needs of Travellers in the District over the plan period up until 2036. In respect of those Gypsies and Travellers who do not lead a nomadic lifestyle, Breckland Council will continue to assess and plan to meet their needs as part of its wider responsibilities to plan to meet the accommodation needs of its settled community.

3.62 The needs assessment for the purposes of decision making is the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (or successor document). The document covers the period 2012-2036. This document forms the main evidence base for the Local Plan. The study covers the needs of Gypsies (including English, Scottish, Welsh and Romany Gypsies), Irish Travellers, New (Age) Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. There are 25 sites in total in the Breckland Council area. The GTANA has sought to establish the accommodation needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in the study area (Breckland Council Area) through a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder interviews and engagement with members of the travelling community living on all known sites.

3.63 The study identified the following requirements:

Table 3.1 Need for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation in Breckland

Year	Need for Gypsy and Traveller Pitches	Need for Travelling Showpeople Plots
2016-21	7	0
2021-26	1	0
2026-34	1	1
2031-36	1	1
Total	10	2

3.64 The GTANA shows that the need for 10 additional pitches for households that meet the new definition is made up of 1 unauthorised pitch, 3 concealed adult households, 2 older teenage children in need of a pitch of their own in the next 5 years, and 4 from new household formation.

3.65 The study identifies that transit sites should be used for temporary stopping only. They are useful particularly in circumstances where the authorities are re-directing travellers from inappropriate unauthorised encampments. It is important to understand that provision should be used to accommodate only travellers who are genuinely leading a nomadic lifestyle (evidenced by transient employment activities). It is not appropriate to use such sites as low cost provision for those with a permanent pitch elsewhere or are travelling to visit friends, family or en route to a holiday or festival destination.

3.66 It is considered that a criteria based policy approach is a reasonable, pragmatic and proportionate response to the current situation for the Local Plan. It can provide an appropriate response to any proposals received to address the modest level of need identified. Needs assessments are reviewed periodically. There will be a need to monitor the plan and review it as necessary to take account of more up to date evidence.

3.67 National policy sets out a range of issues to consider when assessing applications for Traveller site development. In assessing new sites, the site should be in a sustainable location and should be in reasonable proximity to local services and facilities. Community infrastructure needs will include health, education and transport links. In order to deliver sustainable communities, and quality place making, development proposals will be required to consider the amenity of new residents and impacts on surrounding communities or other neighbours/neighbouring land uses such as businesses and open space in line with relevant spatial and design policies. In doing so, regard will be had to community cohesion and good design principles such as integration, ensuring no adverse impacts arise from new development. Residential housing mitigation requirements for European sites are also applicable to plots and pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

3.68 To ensure that the levels of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation are maintained, the Council will resist the loss of existing sites, including the conversion to permanent dwellings. Existing Traveller sites will therefore be safeguarded to meet the continuing housing needs of these communities ensuring that sites are not lost to competing uses. Unrestricted means not subject to conditions restricting the time of occupancy such as temporary or personal planning permission. The following policy will apply to any new permission granted as well as to existing sites.

Policy HOU 08 - Provision for Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The Local Plan supports the provision of the following:

1. 10 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households, of which 7 should be provided in the first five years of the plan;
2. 2 additional plots for Travelling Showpeople, to be delivered in years 11-15 of the Local Plan.

These additional pitches / plots (and any additional requirements associated with newly confirmed need from unknown households) will be secured via:

3. Support for the expansion of existing sites; and / or
4. The provision of new sites where the criteria below are met.

The provision of pitches and plots on new sites will be supported in accordance with the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment where:

1. The site is otherwise suitable for residential development and the associated necessary infrastructure requirements will be made available as part of the development proposal;
2. The site will have safe access to the highway and will not result in any unacceptable impact on the capacity and environment of the highway network;
3. The site is in a sustainable location in reasonable proximity to relevant services and facilities including but not limited to transport, education, healthcare and other community infrastructure provision;
4. The ability to achieve neighbourliness can be demonstrated in relation to the living conditions of current or future residents of the site and interaction with immediate neighbours and the wider settled community neighbourhood; and
5. The site is sensitive to local character and does not have an adverse visual impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape.

Preference will be given to brownfield locations and those that can readily be serviced. Transit sites should be in close proximity to the main established travelling routes in the area.

Sites that have unrestricted planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople use are safeguarded for this use. Planning permission for alternative development or changes of use will not be permitted.

Specialist Housing

3.69 It is important that a proportion of new homes can provide for the needs of those with, or who may develop, accessibility needs through the design of those homes. The NPPF states that a mix of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community should be planned for, including older people and people with disabilities. In common with many parts of the country, and local authorities in the region, Breckland has an ageing population. Most older people are likely to prefer to remain in their own homes and some will require support to enable them to do so. National policy is to support people living at home for as long as possible. Specialist housing is intended to enable people to live as independently as possible, but is designed so that support can be provided.

3.70 The Council considers that specialist provision for the elderly and people with disabilities forms an important part of the housing mix within the District. As established in the spatial principles section of this Local Plan, it is more sustainable for future growth to take place within key settlements to ensure residents have access to a range of facilities and services and can lead more sustainable lives. The same principles arguably apply even more so to specialist housing provision. Specialist housing for the elderly or anyone in need of care or health support must be located close to medical or care services, shops and suitable transport, therefore it should be located within higher order settlements. In Breckland this includes the Key Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centre villages as defined within Policy GEN 02. It may be provided as part of a larger residential or mixed use scheme, where this is the case it is important that specialist housing be as integrated as possible into wider development in an area to ensure community cohesion.

3.71 Specialist housing for older people covers a broad spectrum of accommodation, from sheltered housing to care homes. Whilst there is a growing need for care, there is also a desire, supported by the Council, to move away from providing care in an institutional setting as this fails to promote independence and dignity, and because of the high cost of providing care in these settings. Personalised care budgets are also giving older people more choice over how their care is provided, the option that is delivered to them in their own home is increasingly favourable. Sheltered housing does not typically offer 24 hour care on site and in many ways is not very different to the mainstream housing stock, whilst residential and nursing care homes are not always associated with older people maintaining their independence. Housing with care – known as extra care - when delivered by registered providers and/or the public sector, or assisted living accommodation when provided by commercial developers is increasingly seen as a model which can allow older people to live independently for longer whilst receiving the care and support they need.

3.72 Accommodation is moving towards more flexible forms of living and support which seek to maintain people's independence and control of their lives. Mainstream housing needs to be suitable to meet the needs of older people, both through adaptation to the existing stock and by ensuring new housing is built with the flexibility to adapt to meet occupants' changing needs over time. Improving housing standards to strengthen local communities and reduce the need for residential care by enabling vulnerable people to remain in their homes, or be able to choose to move into a new home, is important as part of improving the overall housing mix within the District. Policy HOU 09 seeks to ensure that a proportion of new dwellings remain as accessible and adaptable dwellings and complies with the national technical design standards.

3.73 There are several models of care provision available where residents can enjoy their own self-contained home within a site offering extra facilities. These include retirement homes/villages, and extra care housing, where varying levels of care and support are provided in the home. These models often include a restaurant or dining room, health and fitness facilities and hobby rooms on site. Other forms of accommodation include care or nursing homes, which comprise single rooms within a residential setting where residents receive varying levels of care. Care can range from primarily personal care to nursing care for those who are bedridden, very frail or have a medical condition or illness.

3.74 The 2015 Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment (CNSHMA) identifies an average population projection increase of 16.8% across the Central Norfolk Area. The over 60s population percentage growth is set to increase significantly across the Central Housing Market Area the over 60s population is set to increase from 179,272 to 258,587 between 2012 and 2036, representing an increase of 79,315 or 44% in this age cohort. Over the same period the over 85s population is set to increase even more markedly from 19,281 to 49,076, an increase of 29,795 or 155%. From this increase the draft CNSHMA, identifies that there will be a requirement for 4,551 communal places in residential care/communal establishments across the Central Norfolk Housing Market Area.

3.75 New supply for older people is a complex issue; many older people wish to remain in their own homes, as envisaged by the Government's recent reforms of Health and Adult Social Care. Therefore, despite the ageing population, current Government policy means that the number of care homes and nursing homes may actually decline, as people are supported to continue living in their own homes for longer.

Policy HOU 09 - Specialist Housing

To meet the anticipated levels of varied needs of an ageing population for supported and affordable provision, developments that provide housing solutions for older residents, or anyone in need of care or health support, will be encouraged by:

- a. Resisting development that would lead to a reduction in the number of extra care or care premises unless it can be demonstrated that a replacement facility will be provided or that such a use was not viable;
- b. Ensuring that new specialist housing is located within a higher order settlement;
- c. Ensuring the design and scale of schemes is appropriate to the setting and surroundings with no adverse impact on local character and amenity; and
- d. Ensuring that proposals include a mix of on-site affordable and market dwellings in line with policies in this Plan.

Technical Design Standards for New Homes

3.76 In the pursuit of sustainable development, paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out a set of core land-use planning principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking, including that “planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”.

3.77 In March 2015, the Government set out in a Written Ministerial Statement New Technical Housing Standards in England explaining how these would be applied through planning policy. The aim of the national set of standards is to enhance residential quality whilst reducing the administrative burden on new housing developments by simplifying and rationalising the wide variety of standards that local authorities across England apply to new homes. The Housing Standards Review prevents LPAs from influencing the design of the building fabric in terms of energy efficiency as the Government moved away from the Code for Sustainable Homes, leaving Building Regulations Part L as the sole energy efficiency delivery mechanism. The industry as a whole is challenged to close the performance gap and improve compliance with the 2013 Part L standard. However, national standards for some issues that can be applied by planning authorities.

3.78 LPAs have the option through the Local Plan to set technical requirements in addition to those required by Building Regulations in respect of access and water efficiency, and a Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS). In this context access relates to how people access and use a dwelling and its facilities and for space, relate to the internal space of a dwelling. The intention is that no other standards relating to housing should be set locally.

3.79 National Planning Practice Guidance sets out information on the application of the Optional Housing Technical Standards, stating that LPAs will need to gather evidence to determine whether there is a need for additional standards in their area, and justify setting appropriate policies in their Local Plans. In addition it is necessary to consider the impact of applying any standards as part of their Local Plan viability assessment.

3.80 The evidence to support the approach to the policy is set out in the ‘Optional Technical Standards’ topic paper, part of the suite of documents that provide the evidence base supporting the Local Plan.

3.81 In terms of the optional standards relating to access and internal space there is evidence to support a policy applying the national standards. The evidence relating to access and space is also reflected in the supporting text for policy HOU 09 Specialist Housing which helps inform this policy setting out Breckland Council’s requirements.

Water

3.82 Breckland sits within a much larger area covered by the Anglian Water Company. The Environment Agency report: Water Stressed Areas - Final Classification July 2013, shows that the area as a whole is classified as an area of serious water stress. Breckland itself is predominantly an area of low water stress with only pockets of moderate water stress.

3.83 Part G of the Building Regulations includes requirements for water efficiency in residential properties. The baseline requirement is a maximum water consumption rate of 125 litres per person per day. The new optional housing technical standard for water efficiency is 110 litres per person per day, set out in the Building Regulations. This figure includes 5 litres per person per day allowance for external water use. The higher standard would be met through either a fittings-based approach, which imposes maximum consumption rates for various fittings such as WCs, basin taps, and showers, or calculating the whole house water consumption using a 'water efficiency calculator' for new dwellings.

3.84 The Water Cycle Study Update 2017 considers the feasibility of attaining a 'water neutral' position in the District. Whilst the study concludes that this aspiration is unlikely to be a feasible option for the District the study provides a 'pathway'. The study recommends that new development be built to the optional Building Regulations for water efficiency. The policy recommendation sets out that new housing development should be built at a standard of 110 l/h/d and that non-domestic buildings should, as a minimum, reach 'good' BREEAM status.

Access

3.85 National Planning Practice Guidance highlights; firstly, the aspiration for most older people to live independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible; secondly that 'supporting independent living can help to reduce the costs to health and social services'. The NPPG also acknowledges that 'many older people may not want or need specialist accommodation or care and may wish to stay or move to general housing that is already suitable, such as bungalows, or homes which can be adapted to meet a change in their needs'.

3.86 As noted in paragraph 3.71 above, Breckland's older population is increasing and as people age so does the prevalence of illness and disability. The 2015 Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment (CNSHMA) states that across the Central Market Area between 2012 and 2036 the over 60's population will increase by 44% in this age cohort and the over 85s is set to increase 155%. For Breckland specifically, the CNSHMA states that in 2012 10.47% of the population were aged 75 and over increasing to 18.22% of the population by 2036, an increase of 7.75% over the 24 year period.

3.87 Approximately 5% of Breckland's population are living with a disability based on Norfolk County Council's latest statistical profile of the District (proportion of total DLA claimants as at February 2015 to total population of the District). Breckland also, (as at November 2014), has the highest number of attendance allowance claimants of any of the Central Norfolk authorities with over 3,500 and the highest number of applications for Disabled Facilities Grants (Local Authority Records), with over 200 applications in 2012/13. The NPPG states that applications for DFGs 'will provide an indication of levels of expressed need, although this could underestimate total need'.

3.88 Meeting the needs of our ageing population and those living with a disability presents challenges for housing provision, which is already evidenced by the funding being spent on adapting homes to meet need and the impact on public services of treating people who fall in the home. Providing more accessible homes will ensure that the District's housing stock is more easily adaptable and will help people to maintain their independence for longer.

3.89 The Council will implement the nationally described optional accessibility standards as defined by Building Regulations and which cover accessibility and adaptability of dwellings. Requirements M4(2) and M4(3) are optional and defined by Building Regulations. Both Standards cover accessibility and adaptability of dwellings.

3.90 It is the Government's view that optional requirement M4(2) will be met where a new dwelling makes reasonable provision for most people to access the dwelling and incorporates features that make it potentially suitable for a whole range of occupants, including older people, those with reduced mobility and some wheelchair users. Reasonable provision is made if the dwelling complies with the following key aims:

- Step free access to dwelling, car park space and communal areas;
- Step free access to WC and other accommodation within entrance storey and to private outdoor space connected directly to the entrance storey;
- A wider range of people including the elderly, disabled people and some wheelchair users can use the accommodation and its facilities; and
- Able to be adapted in the future.

3.91 Requirement M4(3) will be met where a new dwelling makes reasonable provision, either at completion or at a point following completion, for a wheelchair user to live in the dwelling and use associated private and outdoor space, parking and communal facilities that may be provided for the use of occupants. Reasonable provision is made if the dwelling complies with the following key aims:

- Within the curtilage of the dwelling (or building containing the dwelling) a step free approach to:
 - The dwelling;
 - Every private entrance door, any private outdoor space, car parking space, and any communal facility for occupants' use;
 - Internal WC at entrance storey;
 - Other accommodation required on entrance storey;
 - The dwelling is to be adaptable for future wheelchair access; and
 - Services are accessible by people with reduced reach.

3.92 The specific technical requirements are contained in the Approved Document M of the Building Regulations.

Internal Space

3.93 The amount of space in a home influences how people live, impacting on the occupant's health and wellbeing. Providing homes of sufficient size to allow residents and families 'room to grow' is a critical part of delivering sustainable communities. A survey of new homes built in Breckland will be undertaken to establish whether they are generally being built to the optional Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) set by the Government. The NDSS reflects the need for rooms to be able to accommodate a basic set of furniture, fittings, activity and circulation space appropriate to the function of each room. The overall objective is to ensure that all homes are highly functional in terms of meeting typical day to day needs at a given level of occupation.

3.94 The standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for application across all tenures. It sets out requirements for the gross internal floor area (GIA) of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height (2.3m for 75% of the dwelling). These are minimum standards which developers are encouraged to exceed.

3.95 The Council will implement the nationally described space standards and successors to new dwellings. This means that developers should state the number of bedspaces / occupiers a home is designed to accommodate rather than simply stating the number of bedrooms. The following policy only applies to new dwellings and therefore is not applicable to either an extension to a dwelling or material change of use.

Policy HOU 10 - Technical Design Standards for New Homes

To ensure that new homes provide quality living environments for residents both now and in the future and to help delivery sustainable communities, the following standards will apply, subject to viability:

Water efficiency

All new housing must meet Building Regulation requirement of 110 l/h/d.

Non-domestic buildings should as a minimum reach 'Good' BREEAM status.

Internal Space in a Home

All new homes across all tenures will meet the Government's Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS).

Accessibility of Homes:

Market Housing

A minimum of 20 % of all new major housing developments are to meet building regulation M4(2) – 'Accessible and adaptable dwellings'

Affordable Homes

1. A minimum of 20 % of all new housing developments, excluding low-rise non-lift serviced flats , should meet building regulation M4(2) – 'Accessible and adaptable dwellings'.
2. A minimum of 5 % of all new affordable housing developments should meet building regulation M4(3) (2) (b) – 'Wheelchair user dwellings' standards. When providing for wheelchair user housing, early discussion with the Council is required to obtain the most up-to-date information on specific need in the local area. Where there is no specific need identified, then M4 (3) (2) (a) will apply, to allow the adaptation of the dwelling to meet the need of occupants who use wheelchairs.

Sufficient space should be provided in the curtilage of the site to provide parking standards to meet Building Regulations and BS8300.

3.96 Residential Replacement, Extensions and Alterations

3.97 As a predominantly rural District, Breckland has a large amount of housing stock located in the rural area. Although these houses are not in the most sustainable locations, they nevertheless form an important part of the housing stock. Whilst the spatial strategy does not seek significant growth in the rural area it is recognised that replacement, extensions and alterations to existing rural dwellings may be appropriate to ensure the stock remains viable and safe.

3.98 However, replacing and extending homes in the countryside could create an oversupply of large properties which could ultimately result in a limited choice of house types in rural areas. The policy below aims to allow moderate change to properties in rural locations but also to retain an appropriate range and mix in terms of size and tenure of housing types in the countryside to ensure choice and variety.

3.99 In rural areas, it is vital to ensure that any replacements, alterations and extensions to residential properties do not adversely impact the character of the countryside. Proposals must therefore have particular regard to the Council's design policies, GEN 02 and COM 01. Additionally proposals will be subject to consideration of any potential impact on European sites in line with the Habitats Regulations 2010 and Policies ENV 02 and ENV 03.

Policy HOU 11 - Residential Replacement, Extension and Alteration

Proposals for replacement, extension or alteration of rural dwellings must be contained within the existing curtilage. The building must be in residential use and not classed as abandoned.

Replacement

Replacement dwellings must be of a scale and design sensitive to the countryside setting, with a height and size similar to that of the original dwelling. If an alternative height or scale is proposed, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate that the scheme exhibits exceptionally high quality of design and enhances the character and appearance of the locality.

Extension or alteration

Extensions or alterations to existing residential properties will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- A. The extension or alteration is not disproportionate in size in relation to the original dwelling/plot and does not alter substantially the character of the dwelling.
- B. The extended or altered dwelling respects the character of the existing dwelling.
- C. The design remains in keeping with the existing dwelling and building materials.
- D. The extension or alteration will not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring property.

Extensions or alterations that adversely affect the setting of a Listed Building or a group of Listed Buildings will be refused.

3.100 The original dwelling is taken to be the house as it stood at 1st July 1948 (or as originally built if constructed after this date).

Barn Conversions

3.101 This policy relates to the re-use and replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside, such as barns and other agricultural buildings. The General Permitted Development Order 2015 at class Q allows the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwelling houses subject to a number of criteria, including the number of dwellings to be converted and the size of the building proposed for conversion. Outside of the exemptions set out within class Q, the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use in rural areas will be strictly controlled. Re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building.

3.102 The Council recognises that to sustain an active rural economy and support rural living, conversion of redundant buildings should be supported where appropriate. Proposals for the conversion of redundant farm buildings to retail, residential, leisure, office, industrial and storage uses will be considered against the policy below.

Policy HOU 12 - Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

The sustainable re-use of appropriately located and constructed buildings in the countryside for economic purposes will be supported.

The re-use of existing buildings in the countryside for residential purposes will be permitted where the commercial use of the building has been shown to not be viable. The building proposed to be converted should be substantially intact and capable of conversion without significant extension or re-building and of value to the landscape of the District. The residential re-use of modern agricultural or industrial buildings considered to be of no aesthetic value, regardless of their location, will not be considered appropriate

For the conversion of buildings in the countryside, regard will be had to the following criteria:

1. The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the landscape and the quality of design. Development will be resisted where a proposal fails to take the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the appearance of the locality;
2. Access to the highway and the ability of the highway network to accommodate the demands resulting from the proposed development; and
3. Consideration of potential conservation and biodiversity issues, in line with Policy ENV 03 and national regulations.

For residential conversions, it is often the case that buildings require substantial works to enable them to be re-used, in order to meet Building Regulations and the demands of the new use. Therefore, in order to be acceptable in planning terms, a building should be capable of residential conversion without the need for significant rebuilding or extension. This restriction will mainly apply to modern buildings which are limited in their suitability for re-use due to their modular and/or temporary construction. The policy limits residential re-use to buildings that are predominately constructed using traditional local techniques as these buildings are more suited to residential re-use.

Agricultural Workers Exceptions

3.103 As a rural district, Breckland is home to a significant number of rural enterprises. The needs of these businesses are different to an urban office based business and may require staff to be located in close proximity to their place of work. The following policy sets out how proposals for dwellings in the countryside catering for rural workers will be assessed.

Policy HOU 13 - Agricultural Workers Exceptions

Proposals for permanent dwellings in the countryside for full-time workers in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and other rural activities will be permitted where:

- d. It can be demonstrated that the dwelling is essential to the functional needs of the business i.e. there is a need for one or more full time workers to be readily available on-site at most times;
- e. It can be demonstrated that the enterprise has been established for at least three years and is, and should remain, financially viable;
- f. There is no other accommodation within the site/holding or within the surrounding area which is currently suitable and available, or could be made available;
- g. A dwelling or building suitable for conversion to a dwelling within the site/holding has not been sold on the open housing market without an agricultural or other occupancy condition in the last five years;
- h. The proposed dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the functional needs of the enterprise, nor would it be unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income that the enterprise could sustain;
- i. The proposed dwelling is sensitively designed and in keeping with its rural surroundings and will not adversely affect the setting of any heritage asset;
- j. The proposed dwelling will have satisfactory access;
- k. The proposed dwelling is well landscaped, is sited to minimise visual intrusion and is in close proximity to existing buildings to meet the functional need of the business; and
- l. Where the proposal involves a new business that cannot yet demonstrate financial soundness, a temporary dwelling (in the form of a caravan, mobile home or wooden structure that can easily be dismantled and removed from the site) may be acceptable provided all the other criteria outlined above are met.

Where a new dwelling is permitted, the occupancy will be restricted by condition to ensure that it is occupied by a person, or persons currently or last employed in local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and other rural activities, or their surviving partner or dependant(s). Applications for the removal of an occupancy condition related to rural workers will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- There is no longer a need for accommodation on the holding/business and in the local area
- The property has been marketed for a reasonable period (at least 1 year) and at a price which reflects the existence of the occupancy condition. The applicant will be required to submit an independent valuation to justify the market price, for which the applicant will bear the cost; and
- The dwelling has been made available to a minimum of three Registered Providers operating locally on terms which would prioritise its occupation by a rural worker as an affordable dwelling - and that option has been refused.

Affordable Housing Exceptions

3.104 In rural areas national planning policy states that local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan to reflect local needs, particularly affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Para 54 of the NPPF allows an element of market housing on rural exception sites to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing.

3.105 The Council proposes to maintain a rural exceptions policy to help address local housing needs and ensure sufficient provision of affordable housing in the District.

Policy HOU 14 - Affordable Housing Exceptions

In rural locations where residential development would not normally be considered in line with Policies HOU 04 and HOU 05, the Council will support 'rural exception sites' provided that the following criteria are met:

- a. The scheme delivers 100% affordable housing for local people who are unable to obtain accommodation on the open market (as defined in the definition of affordable housing in the NPPF and Breckland District Council's Housing Allocations Policy);
- b. The affordable housing is justified by a Local Housing Needs Assessment;
- c. Proposals should be either adjacent, or well related, to existing settlements;
- d. The dwelling will remain as affordable housing in perpetuity (secured through s106 and a Local Connection Criteria as per the Council's Housing Allocation Policy will apply);
- e. The scheme is of a style appropriate to its immediate surroundings and scale proportionate to existing development;
- f. There is clear evidence of the viability of the scheme;
- g. The scheme demonstrates good design that is sympathetic to the local area and existing settlement; and
- h. The scheme provides an element of specialist housing, subject to local need.

"Local need" is a need for affordable housing arising from current residents within the parish and adjoining parishes, those who have an existing family or employment connections, or those who have had to leave the parish due to a lack of suitable affordable housing.

There may be circumstances where an element of market housing is essential to bring forward affordable housing to meet an identified local housing need otherwise this need would go unmet. In such circumstances, the Council will permit an element of open market housing to cross-subsidise the scheme; the principal use of the site being for affordable housing and not open market.

In such cases independent third party valuation expertise will be requested at the developer's expense in order to, through the production of open and transparent viability evidence, justify such an exception. In principle all schemes are affordable housing schemes and the Council expects that the market housing component should be the minimum needed to bring forward the delivery of the site and that all other funding options have been exhausted. Development of the site must be part of a comprehensive scheme, where development is brought forward as a whole.

3.106 This Policy will enable affordable housing to come forward where a proven affordable housing need is identified. It is expected that rural exception sites will come forward on agricultural land value and in the most suitable locations identified following a sequential approach.

3.107 In order to assist in the justification of such development from the locational strategy and assessment of suitability for applications with regard to the above policy, applicants must provide supporting justification. This includes a supporting statement around how the proposal as set out would justify the departure from the settlement hierarchy and supports sustainable development.

3.108 Criteria as set out in the policy above is not an exhaustive list and may be updated in line with Planning Committee requirements. The statement should also provide reasoned argument of how the proposal as set out is: the most suitable location; well related to the settlement and follows a sequential approach.

3.109 Proposals must be of a size, design and scale that seek to meet the identified local affordable housing need and the setting. Careful siting, massing, use of surrounding landscape features and screening are important as are the enhancement of existing local characteristics. The statement should also demonstrate how the site is connected to the surrounding settlement; in areas of greater landscape visibility, sensitive design and landscaping are particularly important. The Council's development management service will be able to provide further guidance and comment on emerging schemes.

3.110 Local need is based on the geographical areas and is defined in this case as that in the parish and surrounding parishes. An application would be expected to be supported by an assessment appraisal which clearly demonstrates that there is a local housing need.

3.111 The Local Plan also supports the development of Community Land Trusts (CLTs), Neighbourhood Plans and other Community Led Affordable Housing vehicles for the delivery of affordable housing.

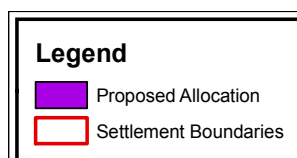
Site Allocations

3.112 This section of the Plan provides more detail on the key areas of housing growth in the District set out as individual site allocations.

3.113 As set out in the locational strategy, development will be focused around the three tiers of the sustainable settlement hierarchy established in Policy GEN 03:

- **Key Settlements:** Attleborough and Thetford
- **Market Towns:** Dereham, Swaffham and Watton
- **Local Services Centres:** Banham, Bawdeswell, Garboldisham, Great Ellingham, Harling, Hockering, Kenninghall, Litcham, Mattishall, Narborough, Necton, North Elmham, Old Buckenham, Shipdham, Sporle, Swanton Morley and Weeting.
- The approach to development in smaller villages and hamlets outside the sustainable hierarchy of Key Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres is set out in Policy HOU 4 and HOU 5 - outlining the approach to rural areas. Through this policy no allocations have been made in these areas and the limits of growth for these rural settlements are defined within each section of the policy.

Figure 3.1 Key for Site Allocation Maps



Dereham

3.114 Dereham is identified as a market town through the locational strategy. The town will provide an additional 1554 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 1554 dwellings, 804 dwellings have either been completed or are committed developments since 2011. This means that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan period to 2036 is 750 dwellings.

3.115 The 2011 census showed that the town had a population of 18,609 and is currently the second largest town in Breckland. The town was previously allocated for development through the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (DPD) across 3 sites, 2 of which now have the benefit of planning permission. The housing allocations from the Core Strategy have been included within the committed and completed growth figures for the town and have impacted upon the housing target through the Local Plan.

3.116 Dereham has a rich historic environment with an extensive Conservation Area, historic market place and a number of Listed Buildings in the centre of the town. The key gateways entering the market place and high street have a historic value along with the Church and Bishop Bonners Cottage to the west of the town. The Dereham stream (a tributary of the River Wensum) flows through the town and is culverted through a large part of the urban area. To the south of the town, the River Tud flows west to east onto Badley Moor which is a European protected site. There are a number of areas to the west of the town (towards Scarning Parish) that are at risk of fluvial flooding.

3.117 Breckland Council commissioned a study to consider the transport impacts of the potential land use developments in Dereham and the surrounding area, including Yaxham and Mattishall. It is a technical highway engineering study intended to inform the local plan making process, in terms of providing an understanding of the current position and the impact of different levels of housing growth on the local highways network. In relation to the current position, the study identifies that the existing highways network is already over capacity in the peak hours at the Tavern Lane/Yaxham Road signalised junction.

3.118 The study considered four growth scenarios, of which scenario 3 is most closely aligned to the current proposed development approach (proposed growth level of 1493 dwellings against the emerging target of 1554). When considering this growth scenario alongside expected traffic growth over the next 20 years, the study demonstrates that 7 of the 9 junctions assessed would be over capacity.

3.119 In terms of the locational impact of development, the study concluded that based on an assessment of trip generation data (where people travel to and from), there was no discernible benefit to focusing development in a particular location around the town. Based on current patterns, it is assumed that 23% of trips would be into the centre. Trips out of Dereham were split with 27% going south, 35% going east/west and 15% going north. As a consequence, any development strategy is likely to have a similar impact upon localised traffic and the junctions assessed, and require mitigation measures. The individual allocation policies require improvements in line with the requirements of the transport study.

3.120 The Landscape Character Assessment settlement fringe study shows that the majority of the land surrounding the town has moderate to high sensitivity to change, and the area to the southeast of the town (Old Hall Tributary Farmland) identified as moderate sensitivity to built development. Dereham also has a number of important green corridors that run through the town. The majority of the land surrounding the town is grade 3 agricultural, however there are some areas of grade 2 agricultural land.

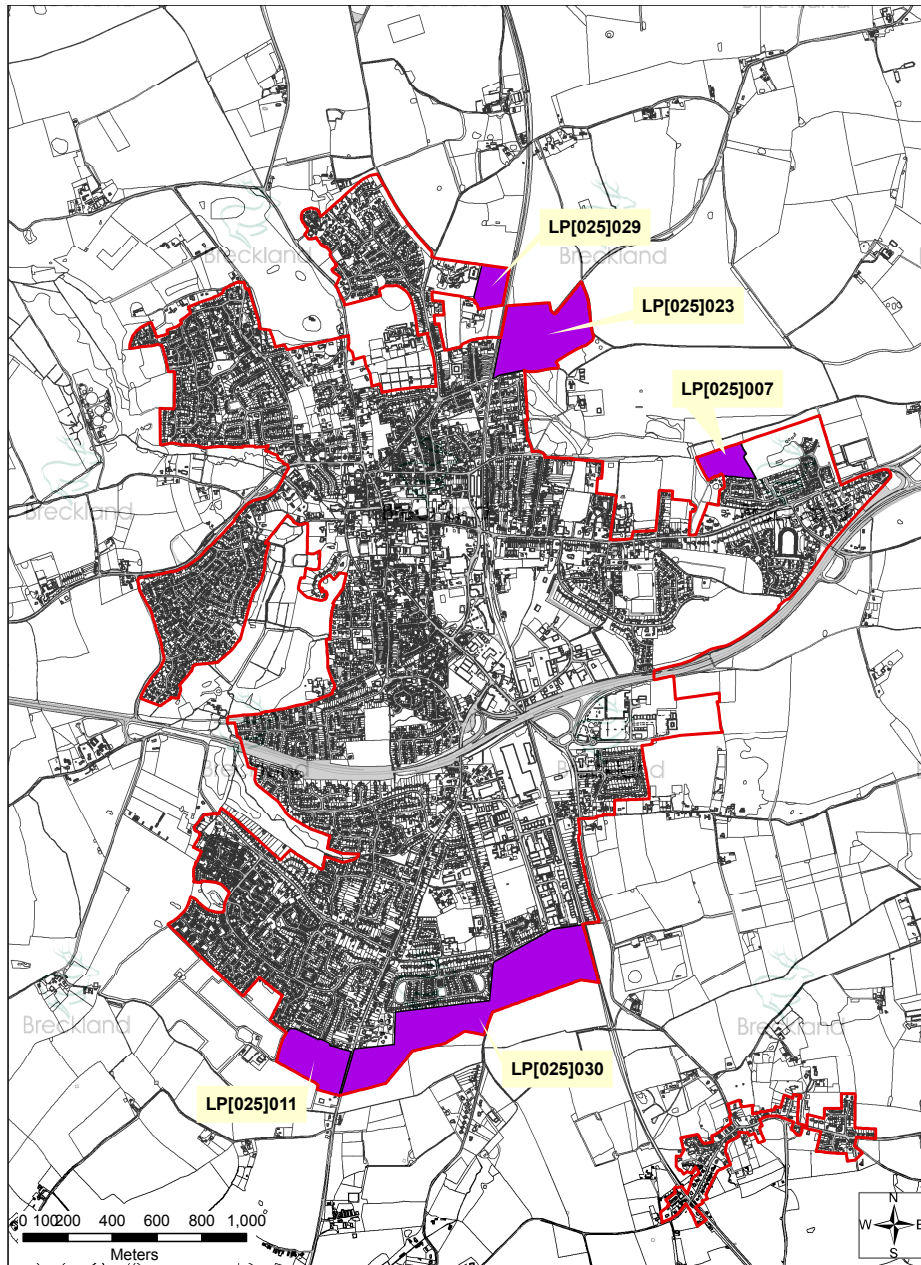
3.121 Dereham Town Council are currently preparing a neighbourhood plan for the town.

3.122 The following sites will provide for the allocated 750 dwellings over the remainder of the plan period:

Table 3.2 Residential Allocations

Site Reference	Number of Dwellings
LP[025]007: Land to the west of Etling View	60
LP[025]011: Land to the west of Shipdham Road	130
LP[025]023: Land off Swanton Road	210
LP[025]029: Land to the rear of Dereham Hospital	60
LP[025]030: Land to the east of Shipdham Road	290
TOTAL	750

Map 3.1 Summary of the Dereham Allocations.



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Dereham Housing Allocation 1

Land to the west of Etling View (LP[025]007)

Land amounting to approximately 2.3 hectares is allocated for a residential development of approximately 60 dwellings. Development will be permitted subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. The principal access to the site is provided through Etling View;
2. The development should provide a minimum of two Local Areas for Play (LAPs). The open space requirements should be set out in a manner which maximises opportunities to enhance biodiversity corridors including the setting of Shilling Lane;
3. Retention and enhancement of native hedgerows and trees on the outer edge of the site boundary;
4. Development should contribute towards required highways improvements in Dereham having regard to the Dereham Transport Study;
5. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to treat wastewater from the proposal. Furthermore the pre-application enquiry should also consider whether there is sufficient capacity available to transfer wastewater for treatment and to demonstrate where a developer needs to financially contribute to that provision;
6. Development should consider use and promotion of water efficiency measures.

3.123 The site comprises of 2.3 hectares of agricultural land and is located between the existing development on Etling View and Windmill Avenue. The site is located to the east of the town, and is bordered by residential development to the south and east. A mature woodland is located to the west of the site known as the Little Neatherd. The allocation site is generally open and level comprising rough grassland scrubland with a mature hedgerow running north to south. To the north of the site is the historic Shilling Lane and the Neatherd Moor. Shillings Lane is recognised within the Dereham Green Infrastructure Study as an important green infrastructure corridor between the Neatherd and Etling Green. Development should not only protect this corridor but also enhance it by securing appropriate green space to the north of the site.

3.124 The principal access to the site should be provided through the development site at Etling View. The site is well related to services and facilities within the town. Neatherd High School is located to the west of the site, whilst Dereham Football Club is located to the east.

3.125 The historic characterisation study has indicated that the development should seek the retention of important boundary trees. Furthermore, it notes that development proposals must demonstrate a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. Any design proposal should have regard to the established pattern of adjacent development.

3.126 The water cycle study has identified the requirement that all development sites within Dereham are accompanied by a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to treat wastewater from the proposal. Furthermore, the pre-application enquiry should also have considered that there is sufficient capacity available to transfer wastewater for treatment and to demonstrate where a developer needs to financially contribute to that provision.

Dereham Housing Allocation 2

Land to the west of Shipdham Road (LP[025]011)

Land amounting to approximately 5.7 hectares is allocated for a residential development of approximately 130 dwellings. Development will be permitted subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Provision of safe highways access from Shipdham Road. Secondary access should be provided to Colleen Close;
2. Landscaping to the south of the site should be provided and important boundary trees should be retained;
3. Development should contribute towards required highways improvements in Dereham having regard to the Dereham Transport Study;
4. Design of the scheme should have regard to and respect the gateway location of the site;
5. Development should provide a minimum of 1 Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP); and
6. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to treat wastewater from the proposal. Furthermore the pre-application enquiry should also consider whether there is sufficient capacity available to transfer wastewater for treatment and to demonstrate where a developer needs to financially contribute to that provision.

3.127 The full extent of the site is 5.7 hectares and includes both previously developed land and greenfield land. The site is currently occupied by Toftwood Garden Centre and Randells Garden Machinery. The western section of the site is greenfield arable land. The site is predominantly occupied by glass houses associated with the garden centre. The western edge of the site is arable fields, whilst it also comprises three residential properties. To the north of the site there is residential development.

3.128 The site is located to the south of the town with access from Shipdham Road. It is a gateway location from the south of the District. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Scarning Fen Tributary Farmland character area which has a moderate to high sensitivity to change. The historic characterisation study notes that development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. In this case the established pattern of adjacent mixed development will be an additional factor in the formation of the proposal, as will the site's prominent gateway position.

3.129 The site's location on the southern edge of the town means that it is distant from the town centre, which is approximately 2km away. The site is however well related to the Rashes Green General Employment Area and the schools in Toftwood.

3.130 Highways improvements will be needed to form a suitable access from Shipdham Road. In relation to the provision of a suitable access point, this should have regard to the allocation of site LP[025]030, opposite. Furthermore, the Dereham Transport Study indicates the requirement for this development alongside other developments within Dereham to mitigate the impact upon the Tavern Lane/Yaxham Road junction.

3.131 The water cycle study has identified the requirement that all development sites within Dereham are accompanied by a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to treat wastewater from the proposal. Furthermore the pre-application enquiry should also consider whether there is sufficient capacity available to transfer wastewater for treatment and to demonstrate where a developer needs to financially contribute to that provision.

Dereham Housing Allocation 3

Land off Swanton Road (LP[025]023)

Land amounting to approximately 10.5 hectares is allocated for residential development of approximately 210 dwellings. Development will be permitted subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. The principal highways access should be provided from Swanton Road;
2. Development should contribute towards required highways improvements in Dereham having regard to the Dereham Transport Study;
3. Development should provide highways improvements to the Mid-Norfolk Railway level crossing;
4. Pedestrian and cycle facilities should be included within the development and along Swanton Road. The development should also provide improvements for pedestrian facilities at Theatre Street/Kings Street junction;
5. Retention and enhancement of native hedgerows and trees. Suitable screening should be agreed within the application;
6. The site specific flood risk assessment included with the planning application shall address the existing surface water flooding risk on the site. Given the existing drainage issues downstream of this site in Dereham Town Centre and the surrounding area it should be demonstrated how any proposed mitigation to achieve flood free development does not worsen flooding elsewhere. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures should be included as part of the landscaping scheme;
7. Development should provide a minimum of 2 Locally Equipped Areas for Play and an Outdoor Sport Area;
8. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to treat wastewater from the proposal. Furthermore the pre-application enquiry should also consider whether there is sufficient capacity available to transfer wastewater for treatment and to demonstrate where a developer needs to financially contribute to that provision; and
9. Development should consider use and promotion of water efficiency measures

3.132 This allocation is located to the northeast of Dereham with access from Swanton Road which dissects the centre of the site, and should provide the principal access point. The site is currently greenfield land in agricultural use. It is classified as grade 2 agricultural land. The western edge of the site is separated from development within the town by the Mid-Norfolk railway line. The Neatherd Moor runs to the south of the site. To the north-east of the site is open countryside. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Northall green Open Arable Plateau character area which has a moderate to high sensitivity to change. The site is visually detached from the town by the railway line and there are open views from the southwest of the site towards Swanton Morley. Appropriate screening would need to be provided with this site to mitigate any impact.

3.133 The site's location to the northeast of the town means that it is well related to Northgate High School and King's Park Infant School. The site is within 500m of Dereham's defined town centre and the services and facilities contained within it.

3.134 Highways improvements will be needed for Swanton Road, in the form a roundabout. This will have the affect of slowing traffic whilst also serving as the access point to the development. The Dereham Transport Study indicates the requirement for this development alongside other developments within Dereham to mitigate impact upon the Tavern Lane/Yaxham Road junction. Other improvements are also required to the Mid-Norfolk Railway crossing and to the pedestrian facilities at the Theatre Street/Kings Road junction.

3.135 The historic characterisation study has noted that development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. The established pattern of adjacent mixed development will be an additional factor in the formation of the proposal.

3.136 The water cycle study has identified the requirement that all development sites within Dereham are accompanied by a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to treat wastewater from the proposal. Furthermore the pre-application enquiry should also consider whether there is sufficient capacity available to transfer wastewater for treatment and to demonstrate where a developer needs to financially contribute to that provision.

3.137 There is a small area of the site located within flood zone 3a for fluvial flooding, on the southern and eastern boundary. The majority of the site is located within flood zone 1. Development should be directed away from those areas at higher risk of flooding. There is a larger area of surface water flooding to the south west of the site. A site specific flood risk assessment should be included with any application. This should address identified issues and the use of SUDs should be implemented to manage increased run off from new development.

Dereham Housing Allocation 4

Land to the rear of Dereham Hospital (LP[025]029)

Land amounting to 2.4 hectares is allocated for a residential development of approximately 60 dwellings. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Provision of safe highways access from Northgate;
2. A masterplan is required for the site in conjunction with the re-organisation of Dereham Hospital;
3. Development should have regard to the main Dereham Hospital building as a non-designated heritage asset;
4. Retention and enhancement of native hedgerows and trees. Suitable screening should be agreed within the application;
5. Development should provide a minimum of 2 Local Areas for Play (LAPs);
6. Development should contribute towards required highways improvements in Dereham having regard to the Dereham Transport Study;
7. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to treat wastewater from the proposal. Furthermore the pre-application enquiry should also consider whether there is sufficient capacity available to transfer wastewater for treatment and to demonstrate where a developer needs to financially contribute to that provision; and
8. Development should consider use and promotion of water efficiency measures.

3.138 This is a greenfield allocation which is currently in arable use. The allocation is located on grade 2 agricultural land. The land is promoted in conjunction with land at Dereham Hospital. The access to the site is proposed through the hospital and it will be subject to a re-organisation of the hospital site. The site size is 2.4 hectares, however the required re-organisation of the hospital may alter this. The policy includes the requirement for a masterplan of this site, setting out how it will be developed alongside the hospital.

3.139 The site's location to the north of the town means that it is well related to Northgate High School and King's Park infant school. The site is 800m from the designated town centre and has good access to the services and facilities within it. Due to the size of the site it would be expected to provide at least 2 Local Areas for Play.

3.140 The principal access to the allocation is from Northgate. The Dereham Transport Study indicates the requirement for this development alongside other developments within Dereham to mitigate impact upon the Tavern Lane/Yaxham Road junction.

3.141 The historic characterisation study notes that the main Dereham Hospital building should be classified as a non-designated heritage asset. It is an Edwardian hospital building, in a prominent gateway location into the town from the north. Access to the land behind the hospital should have regard to the setting of the hospital building. The historic characterisation study also notes that development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. The established pattern of adjacent mixed development will be an additional factor in the formation of the proposal.

3.142 The water cycle study has identified the requirement that all development sites within Dereham are accompanied by a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to treat wastewater from the proposal. Furthermore the pre-application enquiry should also consider whether there is sufficient capacity available to transfer wastewater for treatment and to demonstrate where a developer needs to financially contribute to that provision.

Dereham Housing Allocation 5

Land to the east of Shipdham Road (LP[025]030)

Land amounting to approximately 22.17 hectares is allocated for a residential development of approximately 290 dwellings. Development is subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. The principal access to the site will be from Shipdham Road. Secondary access to the site should be provided from Westfield Lane;
2. An access link should be provided from Shipdham Road to Westfield Lane;
3. Development proposals should include upgrades to the railway bridge over the Mid-Norfolk railway line and the provision of a new footbridge;
4. Development should contribute towards required highways improvements in Dereham having regard to the Dereham Transport Study;
5. Appropriate landscaping to the south of the development. Development should avoid coalescence with Westfield;
6. Development proposals should have regard to and respect the gateway location of this site, as identified through the Breckland Historic Characterisation Study;
7. Development should provide a minimum of 2 Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and an outdoor sport area;
8. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to treat wastewater from the proposal. Furthermore the pre-application enquiry should also consider whether there is sufficient capacity available to transfer wastewater for treatment and to demonstrate where a developer needs to financially contribute to that provision;
9. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures are provided within the site, and where possible included as part of the agreed landscaping scheme;
10. Development proposals should respond to the density of the surrounding area. Lower density development would be more appropriate to the south of the site to reflect the rural edge; and
11. Development should consider use and promotion of water efficiency measures.

3.143 The allocation is located to the south of Dereham between Shipdham Road and Yaxham Road. The allocation is dissected by Westfield Lane. The allocation site is located on a greenfield site which is currently in arable use. The site is classified as grade 3 arable land. To the north of the site is residential development, whilst the Mid Norfolk railway line represents the eastern boundary of the site. Shipdham Road represents the western boundary of the site, whilst the River Tud is located to the south of the site.

3.144 The site's location to the south of the town means that it is distant from the town centre and the associated services and facilities within it. However, this site is well related to the Rashes Green General Employment Area. It is also well related to Toftwood Infant and Junior School. There are currently bus stops located along the northern edge of the site. Due to the size of the site it would be expected to provide onsite open space.

3.145 The principal access to the site will be achieved from Shipdham Road. The development should have regard to the adjacent allocation LP[025]011 which will also require access from Shipdham Road. A secondary access point should be provided from Westfield Lane. A railway bridge over the Mid- Norfolk railway line currently connects Westfield Lane to Yaxham Road. Development of this allocation will be expected to provide upgrades to the bridge. Furthermore a footbridge should also be provided adjacent to it. The Dereham Transport Study indicates the requirement for this development alongside other developments within Dereham to mitigate impact upon the Tavern Lane/Yaxham Road junction.

3.146 The historic characterisation study notes that development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. The established pattern of adjacent mixed development and the site's gateway location will be important factors in the formation of the proposal. The historic characterisation study goes on to note that development should avoid the coalescence of Dereham and Westfield and maintain the visual break between the settlements.

3.147 The water cycle study has identified the requirement that all development sites within Dereham are accompanied by a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to treat wastewater from the proposal. Furthermore the pre-application enquiry should also consider whether there is sufficient capacity available to transfer wastewater for treatment and to demonstrate where a developer needs to financially contribute to that provision.

Swaffham

3.148 Swaffham is identified as a market town. The town is located to the west of Breckland and is bounded to the north by the A47. The town will provide an additional 1612 new dwellings over the plan period. Of these 1612 dwellings, 1007 have either already been completed or are committed, leaving 605 dwellings. It is proposed to allocate 600 additional dwellings, of which there are 525 dwellings proposed through planning applications with decision to grant subject to Section 106 agreements.

3.149 Swaffham at the 2011 census had a population of 7,258. The town is entirely contained within the Swaffham parish boundary. The town was previously allocated a single site for residential development through the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD for 250 dwellings. This site is located to the south of the town, to the east of Brandon Road, and is currently under construction. The housing allocations from the Core Strategy have been included within the committed and completed growth figures for the town and have impacted upon the housing target through the Local Plan.

3.150 The town's employment areas are concentrated to the north of the town, with the principle location being the Green Britain employment area. This employment area has good links to the A47 which provides a regular bus service between Peterborough and Lowestoft. There are two saved employment allocations in Swaffham from the Site Specifics, one of which is located to the north of the Green Britain employment area, and the other is to the west. The Local Plan intends to save these areas for future employment use.

3.151 Swaffham has a rich historic environment with a Conservation Area, historic market place and a significant number of listed buildings in the centre of the town. The key gateways on Norwich Road and North Pickenham Road have a historical value with the Manor House and grounds on Norwich Road and a couple of listed farmhouses on North Pickenham Road. The town is bordered by three landscape character areas as identified in the Breckland Landscape Character Assessment. To the northwest of the town is Plateau Farmland, to the west is the Brecks Landscape Character and to the east and south the landscape character consists of Settled Tributary Farmland. The Plateau Farmland and the Brecks Landscape Character areas are identified in the settlement fringe assessment as having the greater sensitivity to change.

3.152 Swaffham Town Council is currently in the early stages of preparing a neighbourhood plan for the town which will guide future planning applications.

3.153 There have been a number of major planning applications considered in Swaffham recently. Where decisions have now been made on sites that were previously preferred sites these allocations have been included to ensure that policy requirements are met on these sites. The following table summarises the status of each of the allocations within the settlement.

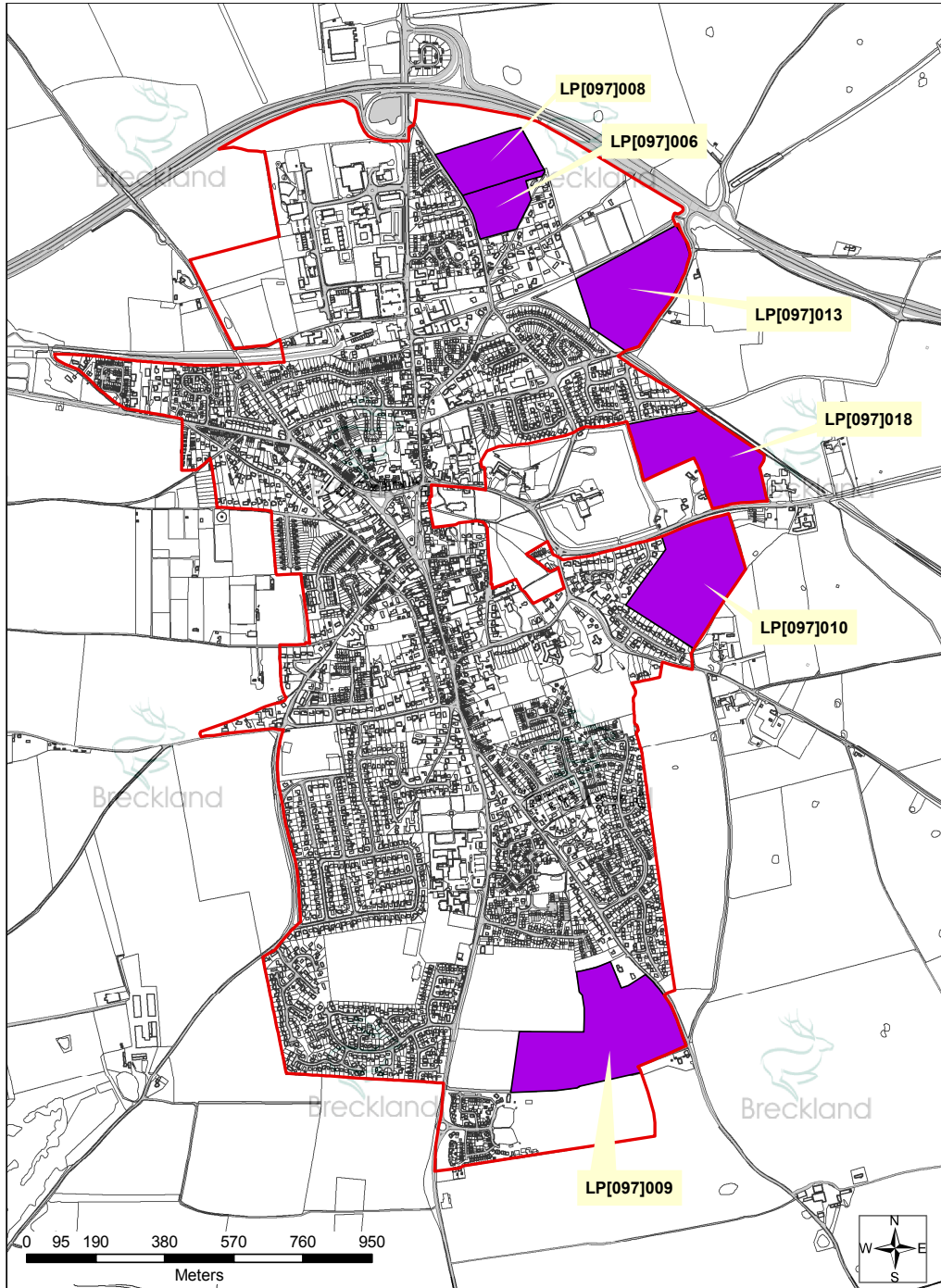
Table 3.3 Swaffham Proposed Site Allocations

Local Plan Reference	Number of dwellings proposed	Current status
LP[097]006	51	Outline planning permission (counted as part of completions and commitments)
LP[097]008	75	Proposed Allocation
LP[097]009	175	Proposed Allocation (Planning application has decision to grant subject to S.106)
LP[097]010	185	Proposed Allocation (Planning application has decision to grant subject to S.106)

Local Plan Reference	Number of dwellings proposed	Current status
LP[097]013	130	Outline planning permission (counted as part of completions and commitments)
LP[097]018	165	Proposed Allocation (Planning application has decision to grant subject to S.106)
	Total : 781 (Of which 181 are already included within completions and commitments)	

3.154 All proposed allocations within Swaffham are within 1500m and 3km of the Brecks SPA. The Breckland Local Plan Submission HRA identifies that there is a likely significant effect on European sites through the screening of allocations in the Local Plan. Due to a lack of data it is not possible to rule out the potential impact of development on functionally linked land for Stone Curlews. All allocations will be required to be supported by a project level HRA, which may consist of additional survey work and will determine site specific mitigation measures.

Map 3.2 Summary of the Swaffham Allocations.



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Swaffham Allocation 1

Land off New Sporle Road (South) (LP[097]006)

Land amounting to approximately 2 hectares is allocated for residential development of at least 51 dwellings. A minimum of 1 Local Equipped Area for Play (LAP) will be provided on site. Residential development will be permitted subject to compliance with adopted policies in the Local Plan and the following criteria:

1. Principal highway access is provided from New Sporle Road;
2. The layout and design of the site will provide an appropriate response to the established pattern of development along the west of New Sporle Road and respect the site's location as a key gateway into Swaffham;
3. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought;
4. Submission of a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment to determine the impact of proposed development on Breckland SPA/SAC and to assess habitat suitability, the need for additional survey work and mitigation strategies where required.

3.155 This is a greenfield site on grade 3 agricultural land. The site has access from New Sporle Road and Norfolk County Council Highways have indicated that whilst there are some highways constraints associated with the site these can be mitigated against. There is residential development to the west, south and east of the site with an arable field to the north and a residential planning permission beyond this. The site itself currently has outline planning permission for 51 dwellings.

3.156 The site's location to the north of the town makes it within close proximity to the general employment areas which are located to the north and the town centre. The site is connected to the town with existing footpaths. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Clarence Hills Open Tributary Farmland character area which has a moderate sensitivity to change. It should be noted that this is the lowest sensitivity of any of the character areas surrounding Swaffham.

3.157 The site has few constraints; however, the Historic Characterisation Study (2017) states that "Development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, respecting the site's location on the edge of the settlement, the surrounding character and form of existing development and the site being a prominent gateway into the village will be additional factors in the formation of proposals".

Swaffham Allocation 2

Land off New Sporle Road (North) (LP[097]008)

Land amounting to approximately 3 hectares is allocated for residential development of at least 75 dwellings. A minimum of 1 Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) will be provided on site. Residential development will be permitted subject to compliance with adopted policies in the Local Plan and the following criteria:

1. Principal highway access is provided from New Sporle Road;
2. The layout and design of the site will provide an appropriate response to the established pattern of development along the west of New Sporle Road and respect the site's location as a key gateway into Swaffham;
3. Appropriate noise attenuation measures are provided at the border of the site with the A47 trunk road if required;
4. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought; and
5. Submission of a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment to determine the impact of proposed development on Breckland SPA/SAC and to assess habitat suitability, the need for additional survey work and mitigation strategies where required.

3.158 This is a greenfield site on grade 3 agricultural land. The site has access from New Sporle Road and Norfolk County Council Highways have indicated that whilst there are some highways constraints associated with the site these can be mitigated against. Land to the north and south of the site has planning permission for residential development, whilst there is also residential development to the west.

3.159 The site's location to the north of the town makes it within close proximity to the general employment areas which are located to the north and the town centre. The site is connected to the town with existing footpaths. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Clarence Hills Open Tributary Farmland character area which has a moderate sensitivity to change. It should be noted that this is the lowest sensitivity of any of the character areas surrounding Swaffham.

3.160 The site has few constraints; however, the Historic Characterisation Study (2017) states that "Development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, respecting the site's location on the edge of the settlement and the site being a prominent gateway into the village will be additional factors in the formation of proposals".

Swaffham Allocation 3

Land to the east of Brandon Road (LP[097]009)

Land amounting to approximately 9.5 hectares is allocated for residential development of at least 175 dwellings. A minimum of 1 Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) will be provided on site. Residential development will be permitted subject to compliance with adopted policies in the Local Plan and the following criteria:

1. Principal highway access is provided from Brandon Road;
2. Retention and enhancement of perimeter hedgerows and trees;
3. Provision of adequate planting and landscaping on the eastern boundary;
4. The layout and design of the site will provide an appropriate response to the established pattern of development along Norwich Road and respect the site's location as a key gateway into Swaffham;
5. The site specific flood risk assessment included with the planning application shall address the significant overland flow path running through the site. If the flow path cannot be avoided then it should be demonstrated how any proposed mitigation to achieve flood free development does not worsen flooding elsewhere. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures should be included as part of the landscaping scheme;
6. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought; and
7. Submission of a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment to determine the impact of proposed development on Breckland SPA/SAC and to assess habitat suitability, the need for additional survey work and mitigation strategies where required.

3.161 This is a greenfield site to the south of Swaffham, situated upon grade 3 agricultural land. The site is currently the subject of an outline planning application which has the decision to grant planning permission subject to the agreement of the section 106. The site is bordered on three sides by residential development and this would form an extension to the Abel Homes development which is currently under construction. The access to the site would be through this development from Brandon Road. Norfolk County Council highways have not provided any objections subject to planning conditions to the development of the site.

3.162 The sites location to the south of the town makes it distant from the general employment areas which are located to the north and the town centre. However it is within close proximity of the high school and junior school. The site is connected to the town with existing footpaths. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Clarence Hills Open Tributary Farmland character area which has a moderate sensitivity to change. It should be noted that this is the lowest sensitivity of any of the character areas surrounding Swaffham. There are currently open views to the east of the site from an existing residential development, however appropriate design of the scheme would ensure that there is not an impact on adjoining residential amenity.

3.163 The site benefits from limited constraints; however, the Historic Characterisation Study (2017) sets out that development proposals "must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, respecting the site's location on the edge of the settlement, the site being a prominent gateway into the village and respecting the landscape character sensitivity will be additional factors in the formation of proposals".

3.164 the Sequential Test (2017) highlighted that approximately 10% of the site is subject to 1 in 30, 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 year flood event surface water flooding. As a result of this the Sustainability Appraisal has been updated to reflect this and that a site specific flood risk assessment should address identified issues and the SuDS be implemented, where appropriate, to manage increased run off from new development.

Swaffham Allocation 4

Land to the south of Norwich Road (LP[097]010)

Land amounting to approximately 6.8 hectares is allocated for residential development of at least 185 dwellings. A minimum of 1 Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) will be provided on site. Residential development will be permitted subject to compliance with adopted policies in the Local Plan and the following criteria:

1. Principal highway access is provided from Norwich Road;
2. Suitable improvements to pedestrian and cycle links from the site to the village along Norwich Road are provided;
3. The layout and design of the site will provide an appropriate response to the established pattern of development along Norwich Road and respect the site's location as a key gateway into Swaffham;
4. The scheme design, whilst preserving and enhancing, is complementary to the special interest of the existing designated heritage assets and conservation area. The scheme design proposal will be informed via a detailed appraisal of the assets' significance;
5. The site specific flood risk assessment included with the planning application shall address the significant overland flow paths running through the site. If the flow paths cannot be avoided then it should be demonstrated how any proposed mitigation to achieve flood free development does not worsen flooding elsewhere. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures should be included as part of the landscaping scheme;
6. Important boundary trees are retained within the detailed site design;
7. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought; and
8. Submission of a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment to determine the impact of proposed development on Breckland SPA/SAC and to assess habitat suitability, the need for additional survey work and mitigation strategies where required.

3.165 This is a greenfield site located to the south of Norwich Road in Swaffham. The site is located on grade 3 agricultural land and is currently the subject of an outline planning application for 185 dwellings. The planning application has the decision to grant approval subject to section 106 agreement. Comments have been provided by Norfolk County Council highways in regards to this site, which indicate that access can be achieved subject to improvements to the footway and cycleway along Norwich Road.

3.166 Whilst this site is located outside of the town's settlement boundary it is bordered by residential development to the west and south west. There is low density residential to the north. The proposal would therefore be well related to the built development of the town. Wood Farmhouse is located to the south of the site, which is a grade II listed building. The farmhouse can be seen from the north of the site. In addition to this the Swaffham conservation

area and open grounds of the grade II* manor house are located to the northwest, with the Church of St Peter and St Paul located further to the west along Norwich Road. The impact upon these designated heritage assets have been considered through the planning application for the site.

3.167 Further to this, the Historic Character Study (2017) sets out that development proposals regarding the site "must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, respecting the site's location on the edge of the settlement and the site being a prominent gateway into the village and respecting the setting of the nearby listed buildings, in particular Wood Farm, will be additional factors in the formation of proposals".

3.168 The site is reasonably well located to the town centre, however it is further from other services and facilities within the town. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Clarence Hills Open Tributary Farmland character area which has a moderate sensitivity to change. It should be noted that this character area is the lowest sensitivity of the character areas surrounding Swaffham. The Norwich Road does form a key gateway into Swaffham and the design of the development should reflect this.

3.169 The site has few constraints, however, the Sequential Test (2017) highlighted that approximately 30% of the site is subject to 1 in 30, 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 year flood event surface water flooding. As a result of this the Sustainability Appraisal has been updated to reflect this and the developable area of the site should be reduced in order to ensure that new development would be free from the risk of flooding and that there would not be an increased risk of flooding elsewhere.

Swaffham Allocation 5

Land off Sporle Road (LP[097]013)

Land amounting to approximately 6 hectares is allocated for residential development of at least 78 dwellings. A minimum area of on site open space of 0.64 hectares will be provided on site. Residential development will be permitted subject to compliance with adopted policies in the Local Plan and the following criteria:

1. The dwellings shall be no greater than two storeys in height;
2. Appropriate footpaths and cycleways are provided linking the site with existing footways at Sporle Road;
3. Important boundary trees are retained within the detailed site design;
4. The layout and design of the site will provide an appropriate response to the established pattern of development along Sporle Road and respect the site's location as a key gateway into Swaffham;
5. Existing boundary screening is retained and enhanced to include new structural landscaping to minimise the visual impact of development and extent of new build development into the open countryside;
6. Appropriate noise attenuation measures are provided at the border of the site with the A47 trunk road, if required;
7. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought; and
8. Submission of a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment to determine the impact of proposed development on Breckland SPA/SAC and to assess habitat suitability, the need for additional survey work and mitigation strategies where required.

3.170 The site is situated upon agricultural land of grade 3 agricultural quality to the east of the dismantled railway. There are open fields to the south of the site and the A47 lies to the east with further arable land beyond. The site has access from Sporle Road and Norfolk County Council Highways have indicated that whilst there are some highways constraints associated with the site these can be mitigated against.

3.171 The site's location to the north of the town makes it within close proximity to the general employment areas which are located to the north and the town centre. The site is connected to the town with existing footpaths. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Clarence Hills Open Tributary Farmland character area which has a moderate sensitivity to change. It should be noted that this is the lowest sensitivity of any of the character areas surrounding Swaffham.

3.172 The Historic Characterisation Study (2017) states that "Development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, respecting the site's location on the edge of the settlement and the site being a prominent gateway into the village and preserving native trees where possible, will be additional factors in the formation of proposals".

Swaffham Allocation 6

Land to the north of Norwich Road (LP[097]018)

Land amounting to approximately 5.8 hectares is allocated for residential development of at least 165 dwellings. A minimum of 1 Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) will be provided on site. Residential development will be permitted subject to compliance with adopted policies in the Local Plan and the following criteria:

1. Principal highway access is provided from Norwich Road;
2. Suitable improvements to pedestrian and cycle links from the site to the village along Norwich Road are provided;
3. The scheme design, whilst preserving and enhancing, is complementary to the special interest of the existing designated and non-designated heritage assets and conservation area. The scheme design proposal will be informed via a detailed appraisal of the assets' significance;
4. Important boundary trees, particularly to the west of the site, are retained within the detailed site design;
5. The layout and design of the site will provide an appropriate response to the established pattern of development along Norwich Road and respect the site's location as a key gateway into Swaffham;
6. The site specific flood risk assessment included with the planning application shall address the issue of lack of connectivity to the wider drainage network should infiltration be unfeasible for this site. It should be noted that there have been reports of historic flooding in close vicinity of this site. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures should be included as part of the landscaping scheme;
7. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought; and
8. Submission of a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment to determine the impact of proposed development on Breckland SPA/SAC and to assess habitat suitability, the need for additional survey work and mitigation strategies where required.

3.173 This site is currently the subject of an outline planning application, which has received the decision to grant planning permission subject to the completion of the section 106 agreement. The outline planning permission is for up to 165 dwellings.

3.174 This is a greenfield site located to the east of Swaffham. The site is located on grade 3 agricultural land. The site borders residential development to the north. To the south there is low density residential development. The development is located to the east of Swaffham conservation area and is directly adjacent to the grounds of the grade II listed manor house. The impact upon the designated heritage assets has been considered through the assessment of the planning application. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Clarence Hills Open Tributary Farmland character area which has a moderate sensitivity to change.

It should be noted that this is the lowest sensitivity to change of any of the land surrounding Swaffham. Norwich Road forms a key gateway into Swaffham and this should be taken into consideration through the detailed planning application.

3.175 Norfolk County Council highways have provided comments on the planning application. Subject to appropriate conditions being secured through the planning permission, they have not objected to the development of the site on highways grounds. Highways conditions include the requirements for footpaths and cycle ways to the town.

3.176 The site benefits from limited constraints; however, the Historic Characterisation Study (2017) sets out that development proposals "must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, respecting the site's location on the edge of the settlement and the site being a prominent gateway into the village, preserving trees that act as screening for the site and respecting the setting of the nearby listed buildings and non-designated asset, will be additional factors in the formation of proposals".

3.177 The site is well located in relation to the town centre, however it is distant from the schools and the general employment area which are located to the south and north of the town respectively.

Watton

3.178 Watton is a mid-size market town located in the centre of Breckland. The town's settlement boundary includes land within not only Watton parish, but also Carbrooke and Griston to the east and Little Cressingham to the west. The town has been identified through the Local Plan for 1,305 dwellings over the plan period from 2011 to 2036. Of these dwellings 1,130 are currently either committed or completed, this leaves a further 175 for consideration through the Local Plan.

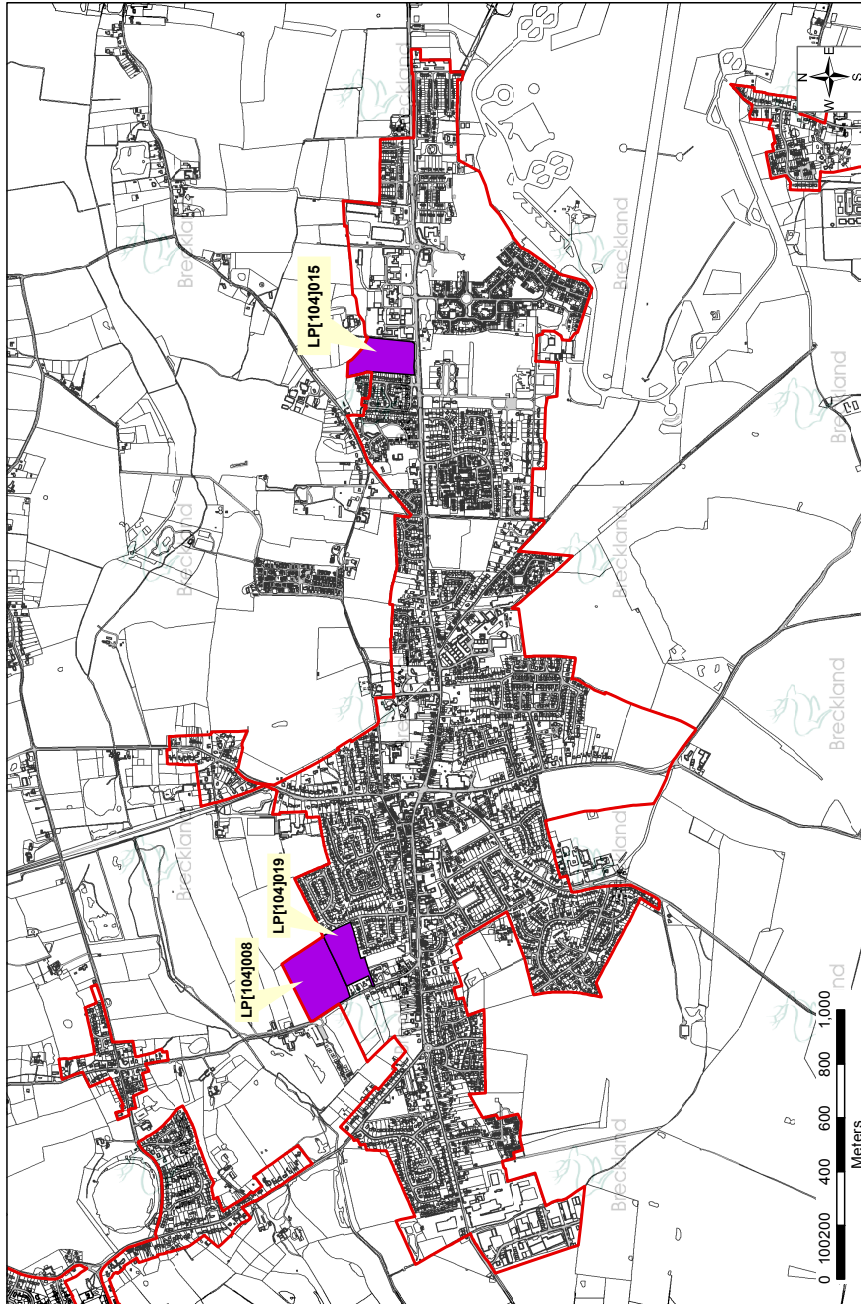
3.179 Watton previously had site allocations through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD. This allocated four sites within the town for residential development. The housing provision on these sites has been taken into account in the committed development figures. Watton has seen significant development in recent years both along the Norwich Road and more recently the Thetford Road. Development to the east of the town along Norwich Road has included land on the former RAF Watton, this includes the former technical site, the officers mess site and the radar site.

3.180 The landscape character assessment settlement fringe study shows that there are three character areas surrounding Watton. Land to the north of the town is included within the Watton Brooke Tributary Farmland character, which has a moderate to high sensitivity to change. The Watton Brook runs to the north of the town and there are high flood risk areas in this vicinity. The western extent of the town forms part of the distinctive heathland and plantation landscape which has a moderate sensitivity to change. The final landscape area is to the south of the town which is the Watton Airfield Plateau which has a low sensitivity to change. Within the character area is Wayland Wood which is an ancient woodland and also a SSSI, which is sensitive to change.

3.181 Land to the south west of the town is located within 1500m of the Breckland Farmland Special Protection Area, which is designated for the special interest feature Stone Curlews. Evidence has shown that development up to 1500m from the site can impact upon Stone Curlew. A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken to assess the impact upon the Breckland Special Protection Area. All proposed allocations within Watton are within 1500m and 3km of the Brecks SPA. The Breckland Local Plan Submission HRA identifies that there is a likely significant effect on European sites through the screening of allocations in the Local Plan. Due to a lack of data it is not possible to rule out the potential impact of development on functionally linked land for Stone Curlews. All allocations will be required to be supported by a project level HRA, which may consist of additional survey work and will determine site specific mitigation measures.

3.182 Watton town centre is located to the west of the town and forms the historic core of the town. The majority of the the town centre is included within a conservation area, and this is the focus for the town's listed buildings.

Picture 3.1 Summary of Watton Allocations



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Watton Housing Allocation 1

Land off Saham Road (LP[104]008 & LP[104]019)

Land amounting to 6.6ha is allocated for residential development of at least 160 dwellings. Development will be permitted subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Vehicular access to the site is provided from Saham Road with a link road through to a further vehicular access off Sharman Avenue;
2. Implementation of a package of transport mitigation measures to the satisfaction of Norfolk County Council Highway Authority;
3. Appropriate density to respond to the surrounding development with lower density development located on site 019 to reflect the edge of settlement rural location;
4. Retention and enhancement of native hedgerow and trees on the outer edge of the site boundary. A landscaping buffer should be provided at the north and east boundary of the site to respond to the rural setting;
5. Provision of 1 Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP);
6. Consideration of the gas pipeline on the site frontage adjacent to Saham Road;
7. Submission of a coordinated scheme for the design and layout of the entire site;
8. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures are provided, and where possible included as part of landscaping schemes;
9. a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought;
10. Any development proposal should protect and enhance the wider setting of the Conservation Area, listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets. The scheme design proposal will be informed by a detailed appraisal of the assets' significance; and
11. Submission of a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment to determine the impact of proposed development on Breckland SPA/SAC and to assess habitat suitability, the need for additional survey work and mitigation strategies where required.

3.183 The site comprises two adjoining sites currently undeveloped and categorised as grade 3 agricultural land. The site is to the north west of Watton and has access onto Saham Road and Sharman Avenue. The site presents the opportunity to create a comprehensive development incorporating a link road and has good pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre.

3.184 The site is in relatively close proximity to the services and facilities within the town, including the town centre, schools and general employment areas. The site is located within a character area with a moderate to high sensitivity to change. The rural edge of settlement location should be taken into account in the design and layout of the scheme, and in the density of development. Retention of native boundary hedgerow and trees in addition to a further landscape buffer on the north and east boundary of the site will help to protect the rural character of this area of Watton.

3.185 NCC highways have indicated that improvements to the B1108 and Saham Road junction will be required and therefore a package of transport mitigation measures will be sought. Furthermore there is also a gas pipeline located at the front of the site which would need to be taken into consideration.

3.186 Development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, respecting the nearby non designated heritage assets and conservation area will be additional factors in the formation of proposals.

Watton Housing Allocation 2

Land north of Norwich Road, Watton (LP[104]015)

Land amounting to 2.7ha is allocated for residential development of at least 45 dwellings and at least 60 bed care home. Development will be permitted subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Vehicular access to the site is provided from Norwich Road;
2. Implementation of transport mitigation measures to the satisfaction of Norfolk County Council Highway Authority;
3. Appropriate density to respond to the surrounding development;
4. Retention and enhancement of native hedgerow and trees on the north-east site boundary to form a landscaping buffer which responds to the rural setting and protects the setting of the adjacent listed building;
5. A further landscaping buffer is required on the eastern boundary of the site to provide screening from the adjacent business park. Additional mitigation measures may be required to ensure the protection of residential amenity from the adjacent business park, in line with Policy COM 03;
6. Provision of 1 Local Area for Play (LAP);
7. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures are provided, and where possible included as part of landscaping schemes;
8. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought; and
9. Any development proposal should protect and enhance the setting of the Grade II listed building: Rokeles Hall. The scheme design proposal will be informed by a detailed appraisal of the assets' significance.
10. Submission of a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment to determine the impact of proposed development on Breckland SPA/SAC and to assess habitat suitability, the need for additional survey work and mitigation strategies where required.

3.187 The site comprises agricultural land which is sited between existing residential areas to the west and north and a small business park to the east. The site has good access to Norwich Road and is accessible to the town centre and associated facilities.

3.188 The demography of the District supports the need for consideration of other forms of housing to support an ageing population as detailed in the CNSHMA. This site offers the opportunity to deliver a new care home in a sustainable location in one of Breckland's Market Towns, helping to provide choice for older people and to meet identified need within the Central Norfolk Housing Market Area.

3.189 The site would constitute infill development, providing a natural extension to the north of Norwich Road. Due to the existing mature vegetation on the site boundary, development of the site would have a minimal impact on the wider countryside.

3.190 The location of the business park to the east of the site requires consideration in any development proposal to ensure that adjacent uses don't have an adverse impact on the amenity of new residents.

3.191 Development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, respecting the nearby designated heritage asset: Rokeles Hall is an additional factor in the formation of proposals.

Ashill

3.192 Ashill is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period to 2036, providing an additional 90 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of this 90 there are currently 22 completions and 49 commitments (including a decision to grant subject to S.106), meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 20.

3.193 Planning Permission has recently been granted (November 2016) for residential development on land adjacent to the community centre along Hale Road. A further planning application at the Willows on Hale Road has decision to grant subject to a Section 106 agreement. These are now reflected by a change to the settlement boundary instead of allocations.

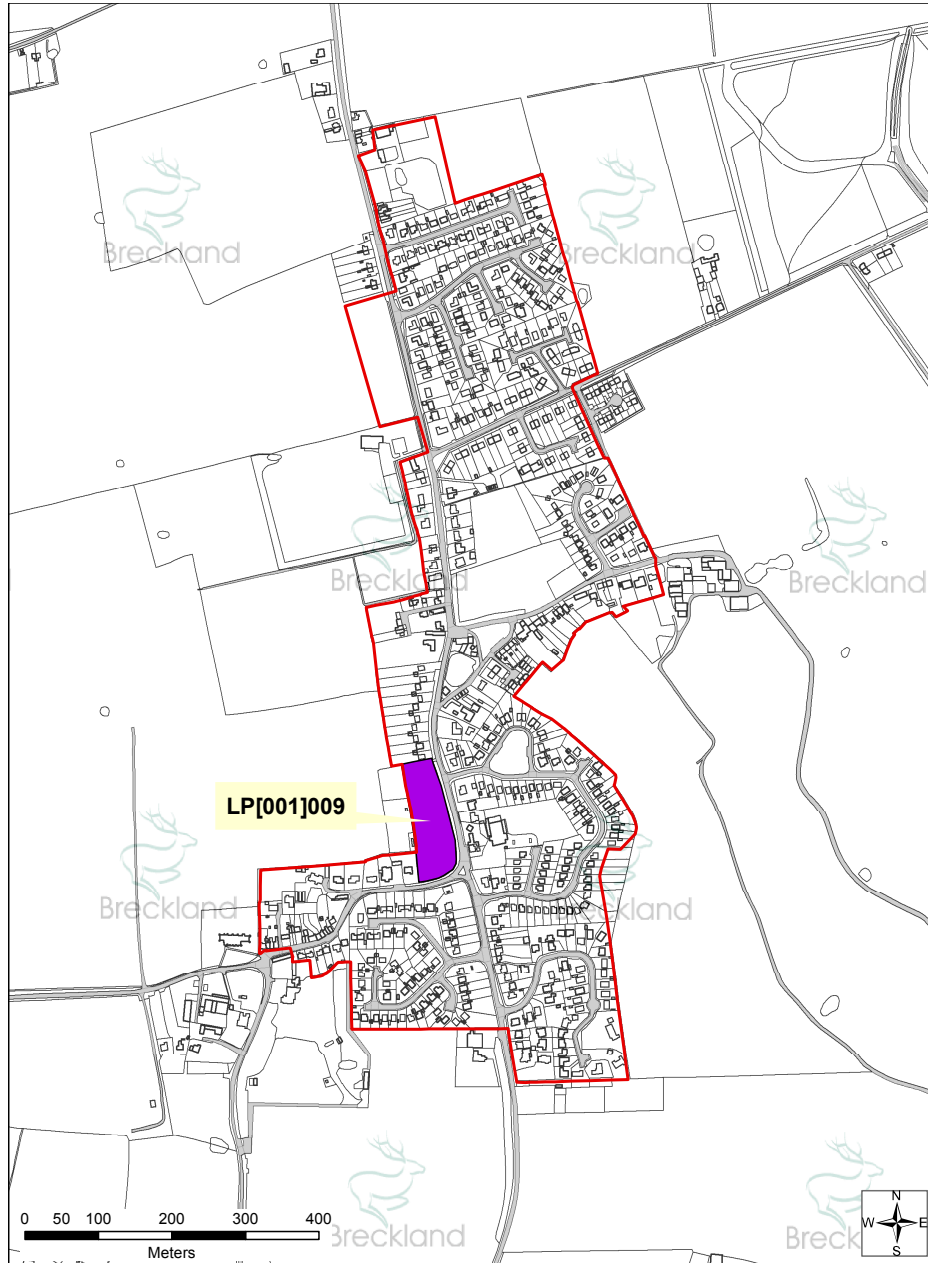
3.194 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 1411. Ashill was identified as a Local Service Centre through the Core Strategy and continues to be identified as a Local Service Centre village through the Local Plan as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Ashill VC Primary School;
- Ashill Food and Wine Newsagents;
- McTaggarts Freehouse and Ashill Community Centre;
- Regular bus service to Swaffham and Watton; and
- From IDBR (2016) shows that there are 22 registered businesses within the parish.

3.195 The Breckland Landscape Character Assessment shows that most of the land surrounding the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'Shipdham Plateau'.

3.196 The land surrounding Ashill is of grade 3 agricultural quality.

Map 3.3 Summary of Ashill Allocations



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Ashill Housing Allocation 1

Land between Church Street and Hale Road (LP[001]009)

Land amounting to approximately 0.8 hectares is allocated for a residential development of at least 20 dwellings (average density 25 dwellings per hectare). Development will be subject to compliance with adopted Local Plan policies and:

1. Development should provide equivalent sized allotment land that is both suitable and accessible;
2. The scheme design, whilst preserving and enhancing, is complementary to the special interest of the existing designated and non-designated heritage assets. The scheme design proposal will be informed via a detailed appraisal of the assets' significance;
3. Facilitate a safe crossing point on Hale Road;
4. Provision of safe highway access from Hale Road; and
5. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.197 The site is situated upon 0.8 hectares of Grade 3 allotment land within the existing settlement boundary. The site is located within the centre of Ashill and, as such, has good access to the local shop, primary school, public transport and community facilities. The southern boundary of the site fronts onto Church street while the eastern boundary fronts onto Hale Road. There is existing linear development to the north and south of the site with Ashill VC Primary school to the east between cul-de-sac development. Natural screening to the west of the site is good due to mature trees and hedging.

3.198 The site has very few constraints. The site is currently situated on allotment land, which would need to be re-provided in a suitable and accessible location.

3.199 The Historic Characterisation Study, 2017, indicated that development proposals must respect the setting of the nearby non-designated heritage asset and respect the views to the Grade I listed Church of St. Nicholas. A non-designated heritage asset is defined in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance as 'buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by local planning authorities as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated'. The 19th Century school with attached master's house is identified within the study as a non-designated heritage asset. Due to the location of this site in relation to designated and non-designated heritage assets, the scheme design proposal will need to be informed via a detailed appraisal of the asset's significance.

Banham

3.200 Banham is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period, providing an additional 118 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of this 118 there are currently 16 completions and 60 commitments, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 42.

3.201 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 1481. Banham is identified as a Local Service Centre village through the Local Plan as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Banham Community Primary School;
- Post Office;
- Banham Barrel, Village Hall, Shop;
- Bus service to Norwich, Diss and Quidenham; and
- The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows 45 businesses within the parish. Larger employers include Banham Zoo.

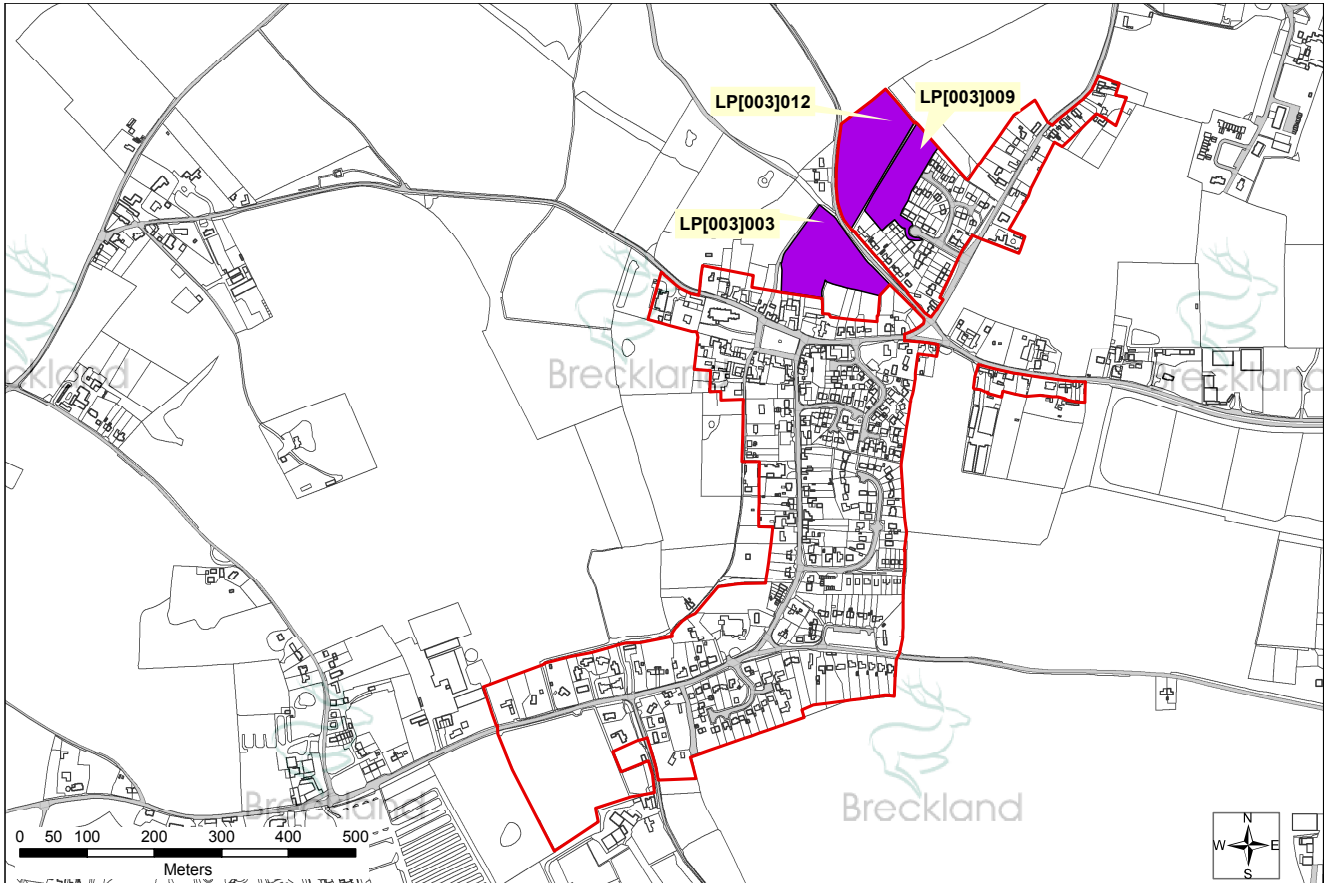
3.202 Banham has a rich historic environment with an extensive conservation area with a number of listed buildings.

3.203 The Breckland Landscape Character Fringe Assessment shows that the land surrounding the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'The Buckenhams Tributary Farmland' and of Moderate/High Landscape sensitivity.

3.204 The majority of the settlement is situated upon Grade 3 Agricultural Land with a small area of Grade 2 to the north of the settlement and a small area of Grade 4 Agricultural Land to the north west.

3.205 Banham Zoo operates as a significant tourist attraction and local employer within the Parish. Applications for non-operational 'enabling' development which supports the retention, enhancement or expansion of these facilities will be considered in line with relevant strategic policies in this plan.

Map 3.4 Summary of Banham Allocations.



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Banham Housing Allocation 1

Land adjacent to Gaymer Close and to the south of Greyhound Lane (LP[003]003, LP[003]009 & LP[003]012)

Land amounting to 3.2 ha is allocated for a residential development of at least 42 dwellings. A minimum of 1 ha of open space including a children's play facility will be provided on land to the south of Greyhound Lane (LP[003]003). Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Access to residential development to be provided from Wayland Way including associated improvements to the local highway and footway provision to the satisfaction of Norfolk County Council as Highway Authority, including a footpath link from the housing development to Greyhound Lane;
2. Appropriate density to reflect and respect existing development;
3. Appropriate use of height and scale to ensure the site's position as a gateway to the settlement;
4. Retention of native hedgerow and trees on the site boundary, where appropriate, with further natural screening to be provided on the north west boundary of the residential site;
5. Development proposals should seek to protect and enhance the setting of Banham Conservation Area;
6. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures are provided, and where possible included as part of landscaping schemes;
7. Subject to provision of equivalent replacement new open space of a minimum of 0.75ha including a Local Area for Play (LAP) on land south of Greyhound Lane (LP[003]003). The risk of surface water flood and fluvial flood risk is required to be addressed in the planning application, and appropriate solutions implemented to improve drainage and ground conditions to enable the open space and LAP to be in use throughout the year; and
8. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.206 The site comprises three parcels of land which total approximately 3.2ha. All parts of the site are within 800m (10 minutes walking distance) to key services, meaning that the site is sustainable and will limit the use of personal car journeys.

3.207 Land adjacent to Gaymer Close is located adjacent to existing development on Wayland Way which forms the access to the site. The eastern part of the site (0.75ha) is currently used as open space. At present there is no physical infrastructure or child play equipment on site.

3.208 Land to the south of Greyhound Lane is situated upon 1.2 hectares of Grade 2 agricultural land to the north west of the existing settlement boundary. There is existing development to the north, south and east of the site with agricultural land to the west. This site is within Banham Conservation Area. The site is subject to constraints in terms of access, fluvial flood risk (partly within zone 3a) and surface water flood risk and therefore is considered unsuitable for residential development.

3.209 A landowner agreement for the three parcels of land has presented the opportunity to improve the open space and play facilities for the village by relocating the equivalent area of open space on the land to the south of Greyhound Lane. The existing open space and adjacent undeveloped agricultural land is suitable for a development of 42 dwellings. A footpath link from the proposed new housing development to the new open space on Greyhound Lane will ensure new residents have good access to open space.

3.210 Development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken as to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, the setting of the conservation area will be an additional factor in the formation of proposals.

Bawdeswell

3.211 Bawdeswell is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period, providing an additional 36 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 36, there are currently 6 completions, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 30.

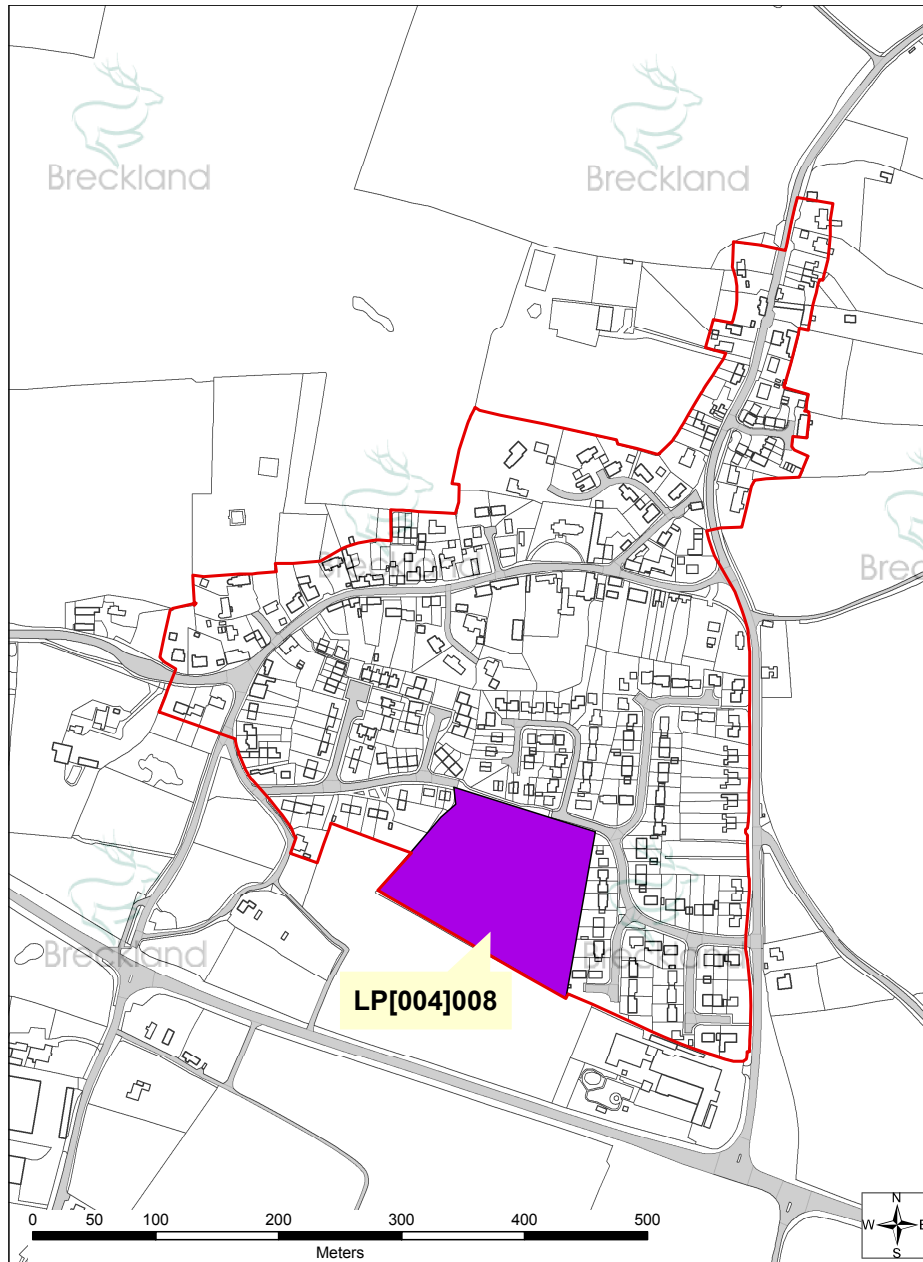
3.212 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 828. Bawdeswell is identified as a new Local Service Centre village as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Bawdeswell Community Primary School;
- McColls Shop;
- The Old Workhouse & Village Hall;
- X29 bus service with two hourly journeys between Norwich and Fakenham; and
- The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows 23 businesses within the parish. Larger employers within the parish include Bawdeswell Garden Centre, including the Bluebell Square Shopping Centre.

3.213 Bawdeswell has a rich historic environment with an extensive conservation area and a number of listed buildings around the church.

3.214 The Breckland Landscape Character Assessment shows that the settlement is located within the character area 'Wensum and Tud Settled Tributary Farmland', where development will have to be taken into consideration. The majority of the settlement is situated upon Grade 3 Agricultural Land with Grade 2 Agricultural land to the south, east and west.

Map 3.5 Summary of Bawdeswell Allocations.



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Bawdeswell Housing Allocation 1

Land off Hall Road (LP[004]008)

Land amounting to 1.7 hectares is allocated for a residential development of at least 36 dwellings. A Local Area for Play (LAP) should be provided on the site along with related landscaping. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Provision of safe highways access from Hall Road;
2. Appropriate density and scale to reflect and respect existing development; and
3. Retention of important trees and hedgerows. Screening should be provided to the south of the site.

3.215 This is a greenfield site located to the south of Bawdeswell. The site is located adjacent to existing residential development off Hall Road and Paradise Lane. The site is therefore closely related to the built form of the village. The site itself is well related to the services and facilities within Bawdeswell. The school, public house, convenience shop, garden centre, cafe, shop and community facilities are all within walking distance. In addition the site is well related to the bus stops.

3.216 To the south of the site is Fakenham Road (A1067), which is the main road between Fakenham and Norwich. The site would be visible from the A1067, however it would be separated from it by other fields. Appropriate native screening should be provided on this boundary.

3.217 The site benefits from very limited constraints. The historic characterisation study highlights that development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. Furthermore, a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

Garboldisham

3.218 Garboldisham is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period, providing an additional 43 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 43 there are currently 6 completions and 3 commitments, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 35.

3.219 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 969. Garboldisham is identified as a Local Service Centre village through the Local Plan as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

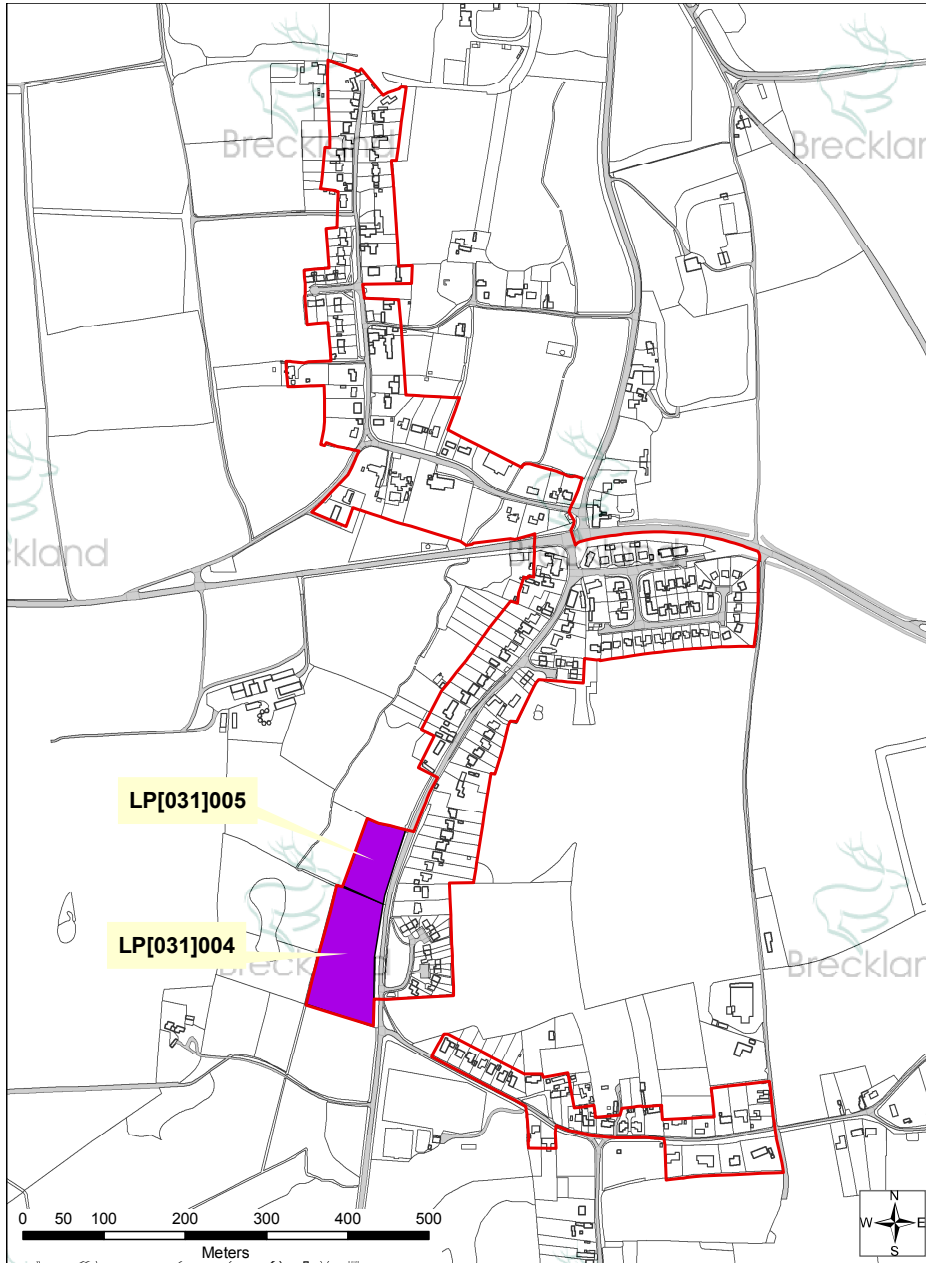
- Garboldisham CE VC Primary School;
- Shop and Post Office;
- Village Hall;
- The Fox Public House - recently re-opened as an asset of community value, currently operating friday-sunday.
- Bus service to Bury St Edmunds; and
- There are 25 businesses in the inter-departmental business register 2016. The largest employer within the village is Mervyn Lambert Plant Hire.

3.220 Garboldisham has a rich historic environment with an extensive conservation area with several listed buildings.

3.221 The Breckland Landscape Character Fringe Assessment shows that the land to the north and south of the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'The Brecks – Heathland with Plantation,' a small section of land to the north east is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'North Lopham Plateau' and the west and south west of the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'Little Ouse Tributary.'

3.222 The Water Cycle Study (WCS) has indicated that the Waste Water Treatment Works which serve the village do not currently have available flow headroom at the discharge point into the Little Ouse, to accommodate the growth proposed within the Local Plan. Improvements would therefore be needed to the treatment works. The WCS has indicated that a technically feasible engineering solution can be delivered to accommodate all of the growth proposed. The upgrades are within the limit of conventional treatment and should be included within Anglian Water's business plan going forward.

Map 3.6 Summary of Garboldisham Allocations



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Garboldisham Housing Allocation 1

Land to the west of Hopton Road (LP[031]004 and LP[031]005)

Land amounting to approximately 1.45 hectare is allocated for residential development of at least 35 dwellings. A minimum of 1 Local Area for Play (LAP) will be provided within the site, alongside related landscaping and facilities. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Provision of safe highways access from Hopton Road;
2. Provision of improvements to the footpath network to provide safe pedestrian access on Hopton Road;
3. Appropriate density to reflect and respect existing development;
4. A masterplan approach should be included to ensure a cohesive development, with particular regard to respecting site levels and landscape;
5. A site specific flood risk assessment should be included with the planning application. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures should be provided within the site. Where possible this should be included as part of the landscaping scheme;
6. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought;
7. The site is underlain by a defined Mineral Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel. Any future development on this site will need to address the requirements of Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Policy CS16 - 'safeguarding' in relation to mineral resources; and
8. Appropriate use of height and scale to ensure the site's position as a key gateway to the settlement.

3.223 This is a greenfield site, located on grade 4 agricultural land to the south of Garboldisham on Hopton Road. The site is situated within a gateway location into Garboldisham from Suffolk. The Development along Hopton Road is predominantly linear in nature, and characterised by detached dwellings. This site is opposite Thomas Bole Close, which includes terraced properties around a central area of open space. Land to the west and south of the site is in agricultural use. The site is closely related to the recreation ground within Garboldisham. The other services and facilities within the village are located within walking distance of this site.

3.224 The principal highways and pedestrian access to the site will be provided from Hopton Road. Improvements will be required to ensure suitable viability splays and connection to the footpath network along Hopton Road.

3.225 The historic characterisation study has indicated that development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken to inform an appropriate design response. This site will need to be designed and developed in tandem with site LP[031]005 due to shared complexities relating to site levels and landscape impact. A masterplan approach to the development is therefore required.

3.226 The water cycle study has indicated the need for improvements to the Garboldisham Waste Water Treatment Works in order to accommodate the growth levels proposed. The study has stated that these improvements are within conventional treatments. In relation to the waste water network a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.227 The sequential test has indicated that the western boundary of this site is subject to 1 in 1000 and, to a lesser extent, 1 in 100 year flood events. A site specific flood risk assessment should be included with any application to address issues of surface water flooding and appropriate mitigation requirements. The extent and location of the surface water flooding along the western boundary will need to be taken into consideration through the layout of the scheme. The use of SUDs should be implemented to manage increased run off from new development.

Great Ellingham

3.228 Great Ellingham is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period, providing an additional 88 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. There are currently 19 completions and 165 commitments (including 75 with decision to grant subject to a Section 106 legal agreement), meaning that Great Ellingham has already exceeded the numbers required over the plan period and, as a result, it is not proposed to allocate further sites through this plan.

3.229 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 1132. Great Ellingham is identified as a Local Service Centre village through the Local Plan as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

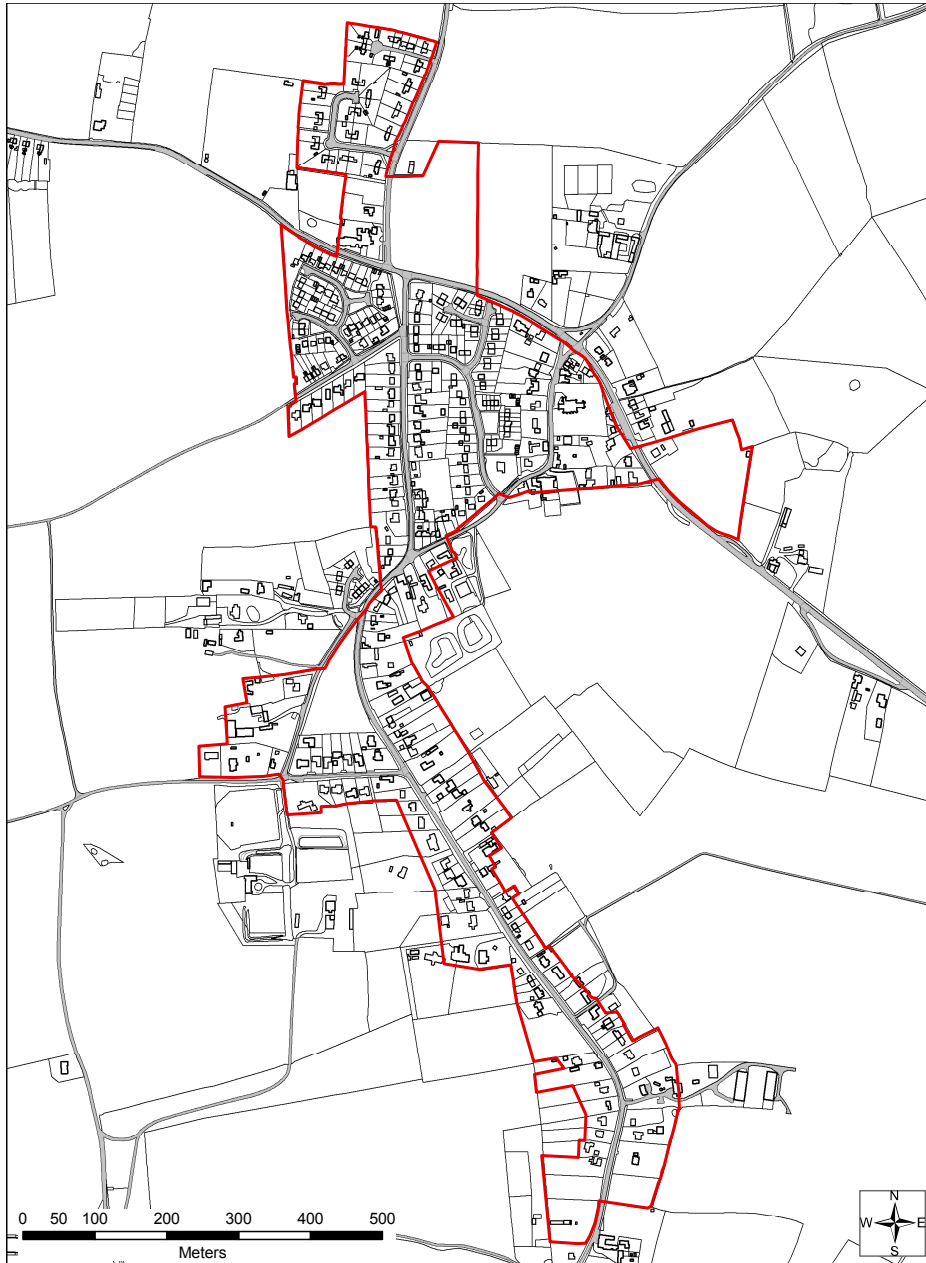
- Great Ellingham Primary School;
- Great Ellingham Village Stores and Post Office;
- The Crown Public House, Village Hall;
- Bus service to Attleborough and Norwich; and
- From IDBR Data (2016) there are 55 registered businesses.

3.230 Great Ellingham has several listed buildings within and around the settlement.

3.231 The Breckland Landscape Character Fringe Assessment shows that the north of village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'Watton Ridge Plateau' and the south of the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'River Thet Tributary Farmland.' Both are of moderate sensitivity.

3.232 Land to the south of the settlement is predominantly of Grade 3 quality agricultural land while most of the area to the north is of Grade 2 quality.

Map 3.7 Great Ellingham Settlement Boundary



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Harling

3.233 Harling is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period to 2036. The village will provide an additional 242 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 242, there are currently 97 completions and 60 commitments, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 85.

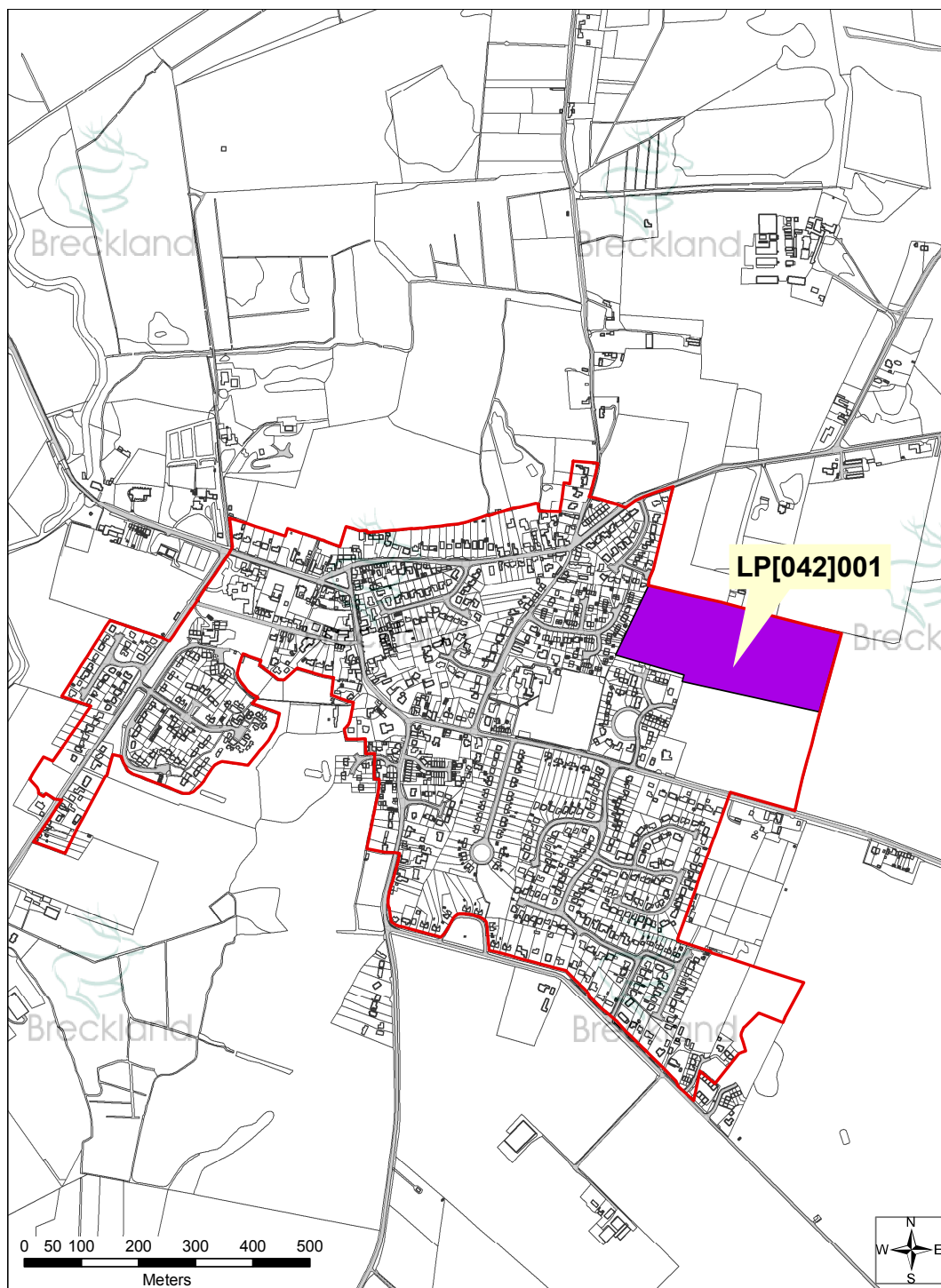
3.234 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 2142. East Harling was previously allocated for development through the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD with a single site for 50 dwellings which has the benefit of planning permission and is now being built out. East Harling is identified as a Local Service Centre village as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- East Harling Primary School and Nursery;
- East Harling Shopper, Butchers, Fish and Chip Shop;
- The George & Dragon Public House, the Old Swan Public House, Doctors and Village Hall;
- No.10a bus service between Harling and Norwich; and
- The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows there are 85 registered businesses in Harling. Additionally there is significant employment at Roudham (less than 2km from East Harling village).

3.235 The Breckland Landscape Character Assessment Fringe Study shows that most of the land surrounding the village is of moderate sensitivity (East Harling Heathlands). There is an area of moderate-high sensitivity to the west/south west (Middle Harling Valley Floor) and an area of high landscape sensitivity to the north of the settlement (East Harling Fen).

3.236 The land to the east of Harling is predominantly Grade 3 agricultural land with the land to the west being Grade 4 agricultural land.

Figure 3.2 Summary of the Harling Allocations.



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Harling Housing Allocation 1

Land off Kenninghall Road (LP[042]001)

Land amounting to approximately 5.3 hectares is allocated for a residential development for at least 85 dwellings. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. The provision of safe access to the site from Kenninghall Road. Access should be provided through the existing development to the south of the site;
2. Retention and enhancement of trees and hedgerows to provide screening;
3. The layout and design of the site will have regard to adjoining development, particularly in regard to density, massing and scale;
4. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought; and
5. The development will provide a Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) on site along with related landscaping and facilities.

3.237 The site is an arable field which is classified as grade 3 agricultural land. The site is well related to the built extent of Harling, existing residential development is located to the west and south-west. The primary school is also located to the south-west of the site. Land directly to the south of the site has planning permission under application 3PL/2014/0620/F for 37 dwellings. Access to the site will be required to be met through the existing development to the south of the site, off Kenninghall Road.

3.238 The site benefits from very limited constraints. The site is considered to be in a sustainable location, with good access to services and facilities within the village. The Breckland Historic Characterisation Study noted that the development proposal for the site should demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. Development of the site should have regard to the surrounding densities.

3.239 Due to the size of the site it would be expected to provide onsite open space facilities. This should include as a minimum, a Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP).

Hockering

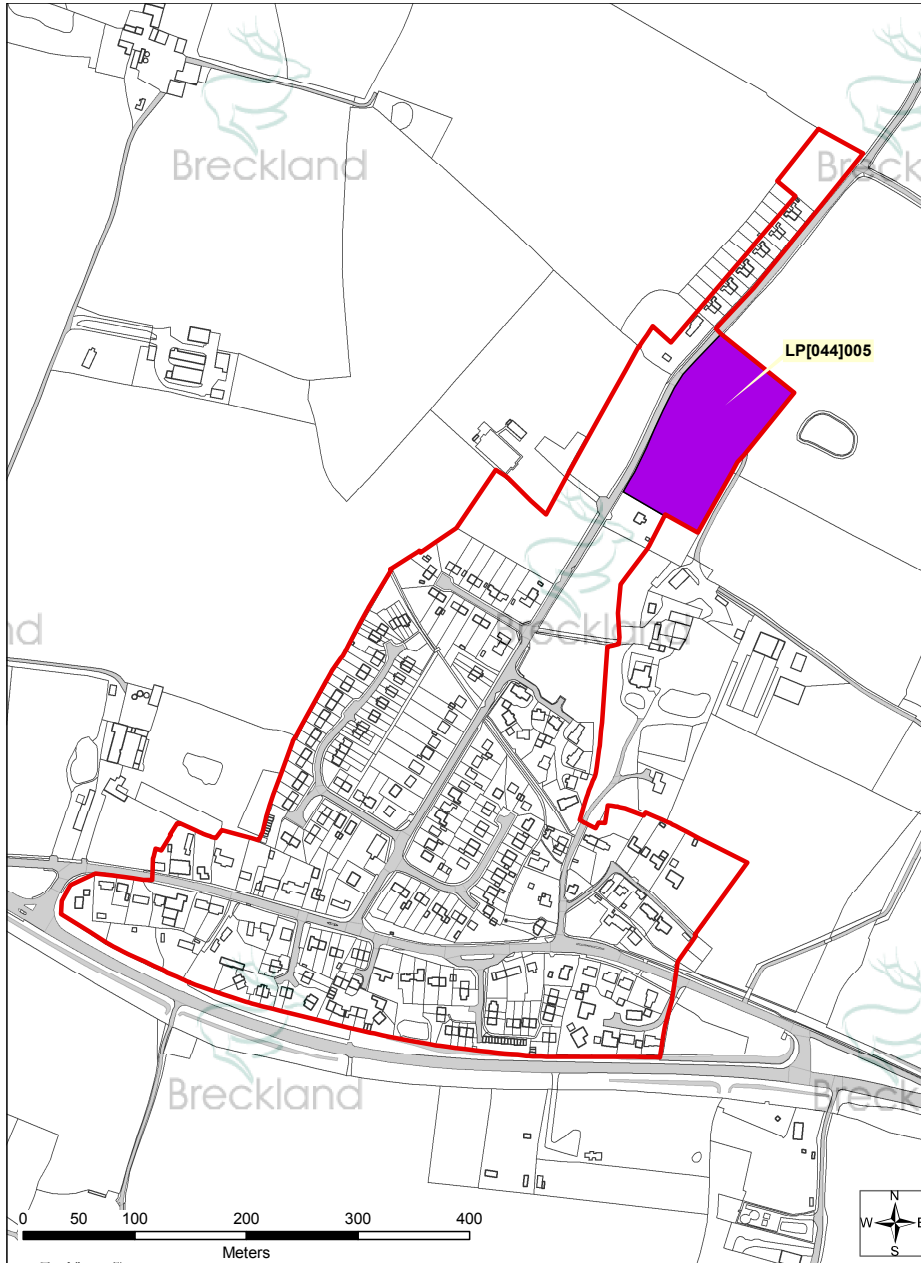
3.240 Hockering is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period 2036. The village will provide an additional 68 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 88 there are currently 6 completions and 57 commitments, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan period to 2036 is 25.

3.241 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 711. Hockering is identified as a Local Service Centre village through the Local Plan as it meets the five criteria by having the following services:

- Hockering Primary School;
- Shop and Post Office;
- The Victoria Public House, Village Hall;
- The village is located on the X1 bus route, which provides an hourly service between Dereham and Norwich; and
- The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows 19 businesses within the parish.

3.242 The Breckland Landscape Character Assessment shows that the entire village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'River Tud'. Hockering Wood, situated to the north west of the settlement, is an ancient woodland and a designated SSSI.

Map 3.8 Summary of the Hockering Allocations.



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Hockering Residential Allocation 1

Residential Allocation - Land to the east of Heath Road (LP[044]005)

Land amounting to approximately 1.2 ha is allocated for a residential development of at least 25 dwellings. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Access to the site is from Heath Road;
2. Retention of existing boundary native hedgerow and trees, where possible, to act as screening from the wider landscape and for ecological benefit;
3. Appropriate density to reflect and respect existing development;
4. Appropriate use of height and scale to ensure the site's position as a key gateway to the settlement;
5. a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.243 The site is situated upon 0.8 hectares of agricultural land of Grade 3 quality. This site was originally submitted as part of a significantly larger site, however this has been reduced to reflect the housing target within the village. The site is located to the north of Hockering with access onto Heath Road. Planning approvals have recently been granted on land to the west of Heath Road.

3.244 The site is located on a gateway into the village from the north and the scale of the development should reflect this location. Adjacent to the site is the playing field and there are good links into the village from the site.

3.245 Development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, respecting the topography of the land and the views of the landscape to the west will be additional factors in the formation of proposals.

3.246 No fundamental constraints to the delivery of the site were identified through the site assessments.

Kenninghall

3.247 Kenninghall is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period 2036. The village will provide an additional 68 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 68, there are currently 25 completions and 7 commitments, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 36. Due to constraints regarding alternative sites, particularly around the historic environment, it is proposed that only 15 dwellings will be allocated through the Local Plan.

3.248 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 941. Kenninghall is identified as a Local Service Centre village through the Local Plan as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

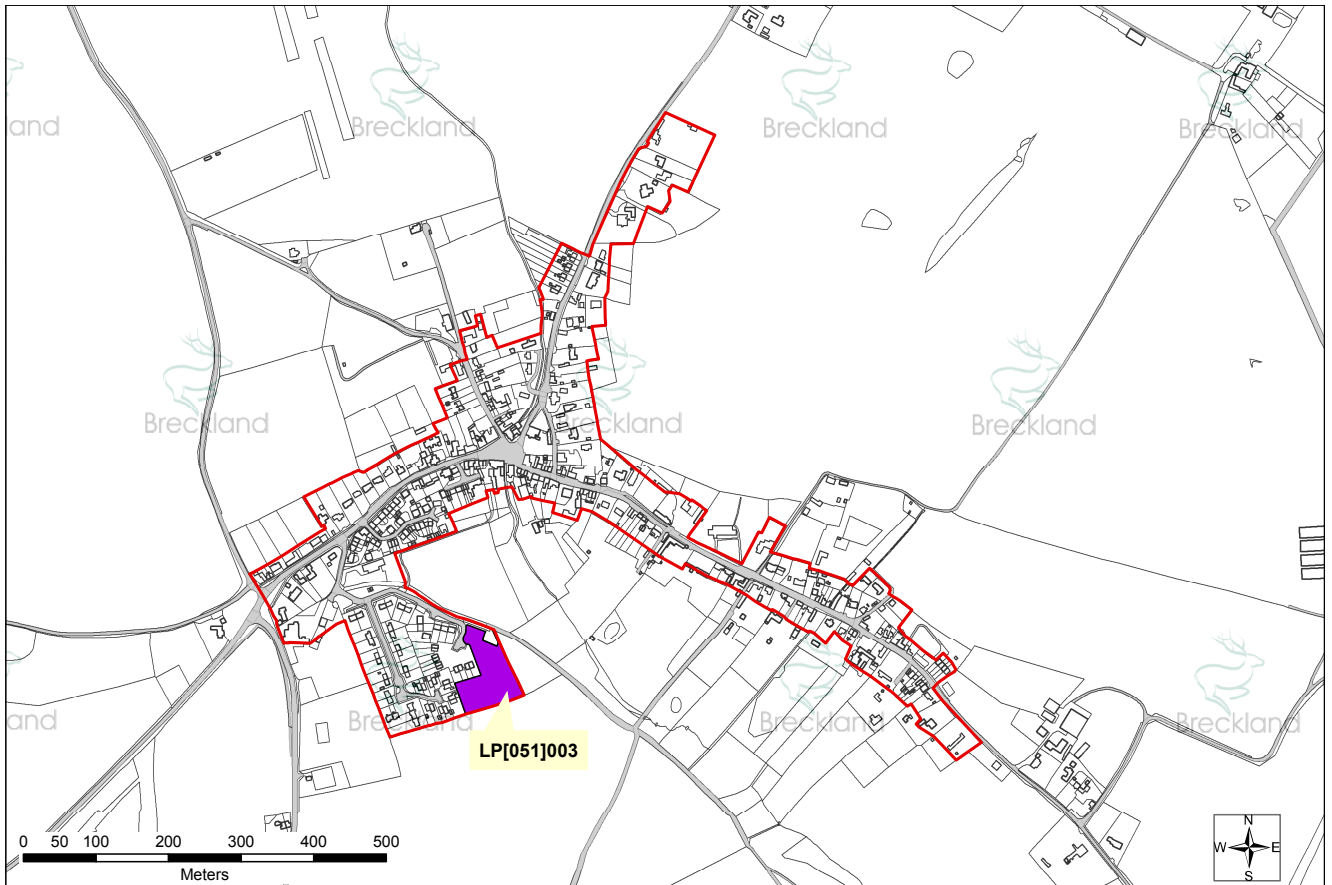
- Kenninghall Primary School;
- Kenninghall Store and Post Office;
- The Red Lion Public House, The White Horse Public House (Closed), Village Hall, Doctors Surgery;
- Bus service to Norwich; and
- From IDBR (2016) there are 38 registered businesses.

3.249 Kenninghall has a rich historic environment with an extensive conservation area with a number of listed buildings.

3.250 The Breckland Landscape Character Fringe Assessment shows that the land to the south and east of the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'The Buckenham Tributary Farmland,' and land to the north and west of the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'The Brecks – Heathland with Plantation.'

3.251 The majority of the land surrounding Kenninghall is of grade 3 agricultural quality, with an area of grade 4 land encompassing the east of the settlement.

Map 3.9 Summary of the Kenninghall Allocations.



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Kenninghall Housing Allocation 1

Land off Powell Close (LP[051]003)

Land amounting to approximately 0.6 hectares is allocated for a residential development of at least 15 dwellings. Development will be subject to compliance with adopted Local Plan policies and:

1. The scheme design, whilst preserving and enhancing, is complementary to the special interest of the designated heritage assets and the conservation area. The scheme design proposal will be informed via a detailed appraisal of the assets' significance;
2. Provision of safe highway access onto Powell Close;
3. The layout and design of the site will provide an appropriate response to the established pattern of development at Powell Close;
4. The site is underlain by a defined Mineral Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel. As the site is under 1hectare it is exempt from the requirements of Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Policy CS16 – 'safeguarding', in relation to mineral resources. If the site area is amended in the future to make the area over 1 hectare CS16 will apply; and
5. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.252 The site is situated upon 0.6 hectares of Grade 3 agricultural land to the south of the existing settlement boundary. There is existing development to the north and west of the site with agricultural land to the south and the east. The site also adjoins the conservation area. Norfolk County Council Highways, through consultation, raised no objection to the site subject to a safe access and adequate visibility.

3.253 The site itself is within 800m (10 minutes walking distance) to key services within the village: Primary school, shop & post office, doctors surgery, village hall and bus stop.

3.254 The site benefits from limited constraints; however, the Historic Characterisation Study (2017) sets out that development proposals "must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, the existing pattern of established development will be an additional factor in the formation of proposals".

Litcham

3.255 Litcham is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period, providing an additional 27 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 27, there are currently 3 commitments and 2 completions, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 22.

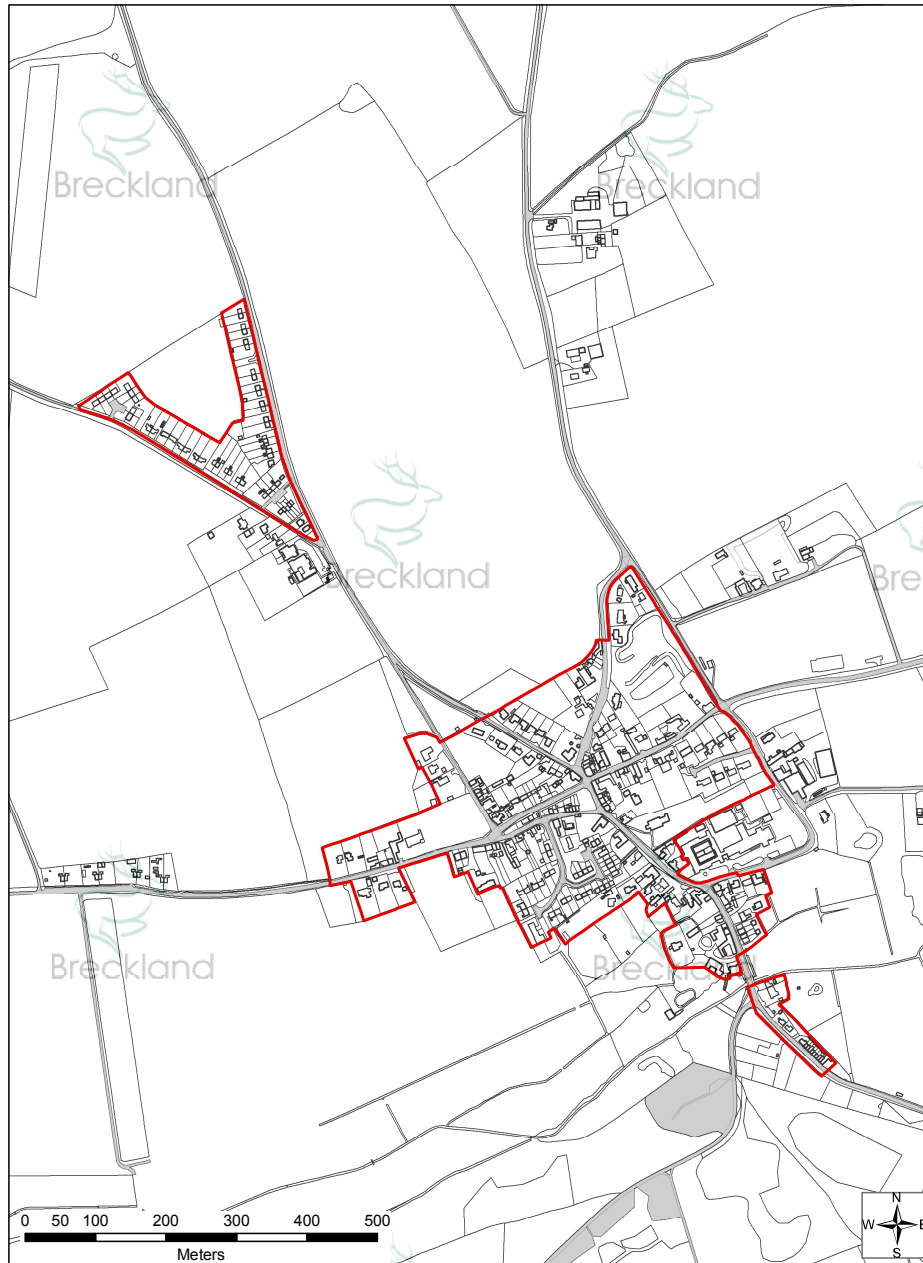
3.256 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 618. Litcham was identified as a Local Service Centre through the Core Strategy and continues to be identified as a Local Service Centre village through the Local Plan as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Primary school and High School;
- Post Office and General Store;
- The Bull Public House and Restaurant, Village Hall and Litcham Health Centre;
- Good range of bus services; and
- The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows 22 businesses within the parish.

3.257 Litcham has a rich historic environment with an extensive conservation area and a number of grade II listed buildings along with the 12th century grade I listed church. The Breckland Landscape Character Assessment shows that most of the land surrounding the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'River Nar Tributary Farmland'. The majority of the land to the north of Litcham is Grade 2 agricultural land with the land to the south being of Grade 3 agricultural quality.

3.258 As part of the preparation of the Local Plan, earlier iterations have assessed sites for inclusion within the settlement boundary. There are no suitable sites which have been put forward. As such no allocation is included within the Local Plan, but the need is to be met through a criteria based policy, HOU 03.

Map 3.10 Litcham Settlement Boundary.



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Mattishall

3.259 Mattishall is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period, providing an additional 141 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 141, there are currently 21 completions and 55 commitments, with a further 23 with decision to grant subject to a section 106, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 42.

3.260 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 2617. Mattishall is identified as a Local Service Centre village as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Mattishall Primary school;
- Post Office, 2 shops, butchers and a pharmacy;
- Village Hall, Swan Inn, Fish and Chip Shop and Mattishall Sports and Social Club;
- Konnect bus 4 to Norwich, Konnect bus 13a to Easton College; and
- The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows 79 businesses within the parish.

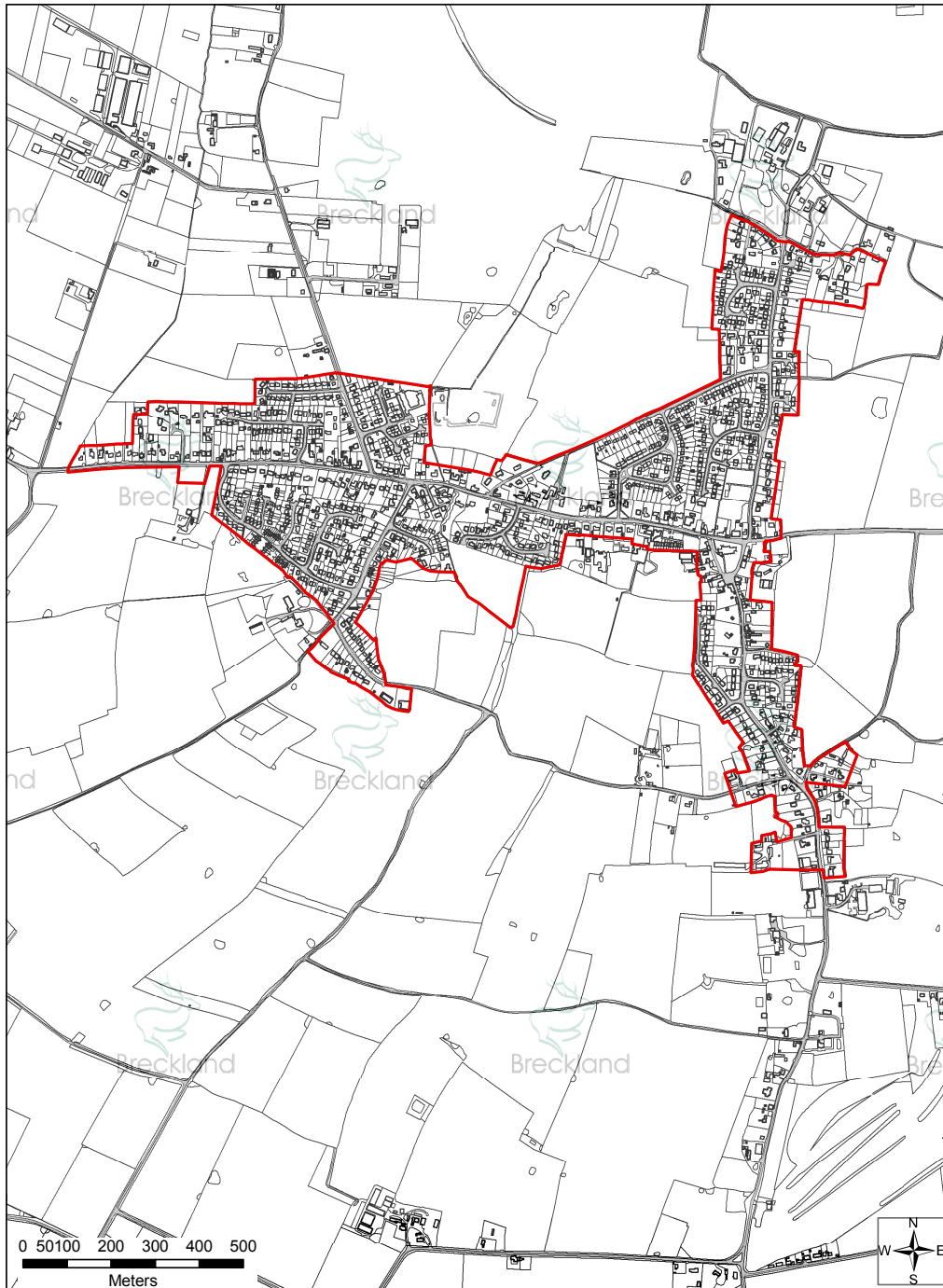
3.261 Mattishall has a rich historic environment with two separate conservation areas with a number of listed buildings.

3.262 The Breckland Landscape Character Fringe Assessment shows that most of the land surrounding the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'Mattishall Hall Small Scale Plateau', which is of Moderate/High Landscape sensitivity. The land to the east of the settlement is located within the Landscape Character Area 'Mattishall Burgh Large Scale Plateau Farmland', which is of Moderate Landscape Sensitivity.

3.263 The majority of the land surrounding Mattishall is of Grade 3 Agricultural quality.

3.264 As part of the preparation of the Local Plan, earlier iterations have assessed sites for inclusion within the settlement boundary. There are no suitable sites which have been put forward. As such no allocation is included within the Local Plan, but the need is to be met through a criteria based policy, HOU 03.

Map 3.11 Summary of the Mattishall Allocations.



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Narborough

3.265 Narborough is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period to 2036. The village is located to the west of Breckland and is in close proximity to the market town of Swaffham. The housing distribution sets out that the village will provide an additional 147 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these, there are currently 9 completions and 98 commitments. The new allocation for Narborough is therefore 40 dwellings over the remainder of the Local Plan period to 2036.

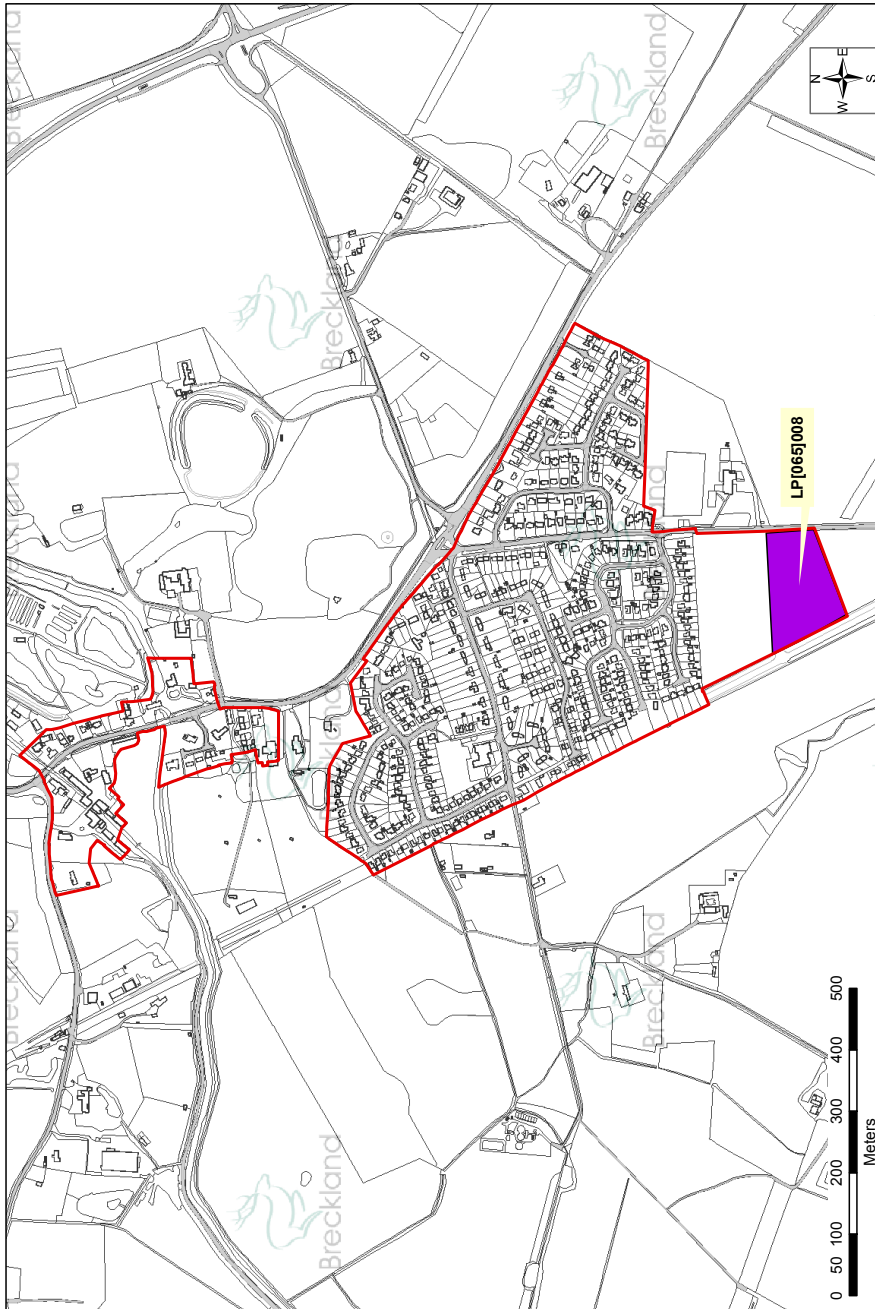
3.266 The 2011 Census showed that the village had a population of 1094. Narborough was previously identified as a local service centre village through the Local Development Framework and was allocated 50 dwellings, on a single site to the south of the village off Chalk Lane. The village is closely related to the A47 trunk road.

3.267 Narborough is identified as a Local Service Centre village as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Narborough Primary School;
- Post office;
- Community facilities in the form of a community centre, The Ship Inn Chinese restaurant and a doctors surgery;
- The village has a regular bus service and is located on the X1 route between Peterborough and Lowestoft; and
- There are a good range of businesses and employment opportunities within the village.

3.268 The River Nar is located on the north of the village. This area is included within the Narborough Estate Valley Floor character area which had a high sensitivity to change as set out within the settlement fringe landscape character area. This area also incorporates a conservation area. The majority of the village falls within the Narborough Farmland and Plantation character area which has a moderate sensitivity to change.

Map 3.12 Summary of the Narborough Allocations.



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Narborough Housing Allocation 1

Land to the south of Chalk Lane (LP[065]008)

Land amounting to approximately 1.7 hectares is allocated for a residential development of at least 40 dwellings. A minimum of 0.8 hectares of 1 Local Area for Play (LAP) will be provided. Development will be subject to compliance with adopted Local Plan policies and the following criteria:

1. The principle access is provided from Chalk Lane;
2. New structural landscaping is provided on the southern boundary of the site to minimise the impact of the new settlement edge formed by the development;
3. Important boundary trees are retained within the detailed site design;
4. Suitable improvements to Chalk Lane;
5. Suitable improvements to pedestrian and cycle links from the site to the village along Chalk Lane are provided;
6. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought;
7. Submission of a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment to determine the impact of proposed development on Breckland SPA/SAC and to assess habitat suitability, the need for additional survey work and mitigation strategies where required; and

The precise provision of open space shall be considered having regard to the proximity of the site to the village playing field. The Council will consider flexibility of the open space provision where this would result in qualitative and quantitative benefits to the community.

3.269 The site is situated upon 1.7 hectares of greenfield land with an agricultural land grade of 3. The site is well related to the Narborough built form. It is adjacent to the settlement boundary, with the land to the north of the site currently under construction for 55 new dwellings. The northern site was allocated previously through the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD. The site is within 800m of Narborough Primary School and approximately 600m from a bus stop. The site is also located to the west of the community centre, children's play area and playing fields.

3.270 There are limited constraints regarding the site; however, it is noted that the site is within relatively close proximity to the Railway Embankment SSSI, but not adjacent to it. As a result of the distance from the SSSI, it is considered that there are unlikely to be any detrimental effects on the SSSI as a result of the identification of the site. The remaining part of the former railway line backs on to the site and is of some biodiversity interest, although it is considered that this is not an overriding constraint to development provided that the detailed site design has regard to this important feature. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Narborough Farmland and Plantation Character Area which has a moderate sensitivity to change. The site is located on a minor gateway into the village and this should be considered through any application. There is screening at the western edge of the site, adjacent to the dismantled railway line, however there is no screening to the east or north of the site.

3.271 The proposed allocation is within 1500m and 3km of the Brecks SPA. The Breckland Local Plan Submission HRA identifies that there is a likely significant effect on European sites through the screening of allocations in the Local Plan. Due to a lack of data it is not possible to rule out the potential impact of development on functionally linked land for Stone Curlews. The policy requires a project level HRA, which may consist of additional survey work and will determine site specific mitigation measures.

3.272 The Historic Characterisation Study, 2017, indicated that the site would have limited impact upon the historic environment, but that "Development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. Preserving trees on the site, respecting the site's location on the edge of the settlement and the site being a prominent gateway into the village will be additional factors in the formation of proposals."

Necton

3.273 Necton is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period to 2036. The village is located between Dereham and Swaffham and has access from the A47. The housing distribution sets out that the village will provide an additional 301 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these, 74 are currently completed and a further 155 are committed. The new allocation for Necton is for 72 dwellings over the remainder of the Local Plan period to 2036.

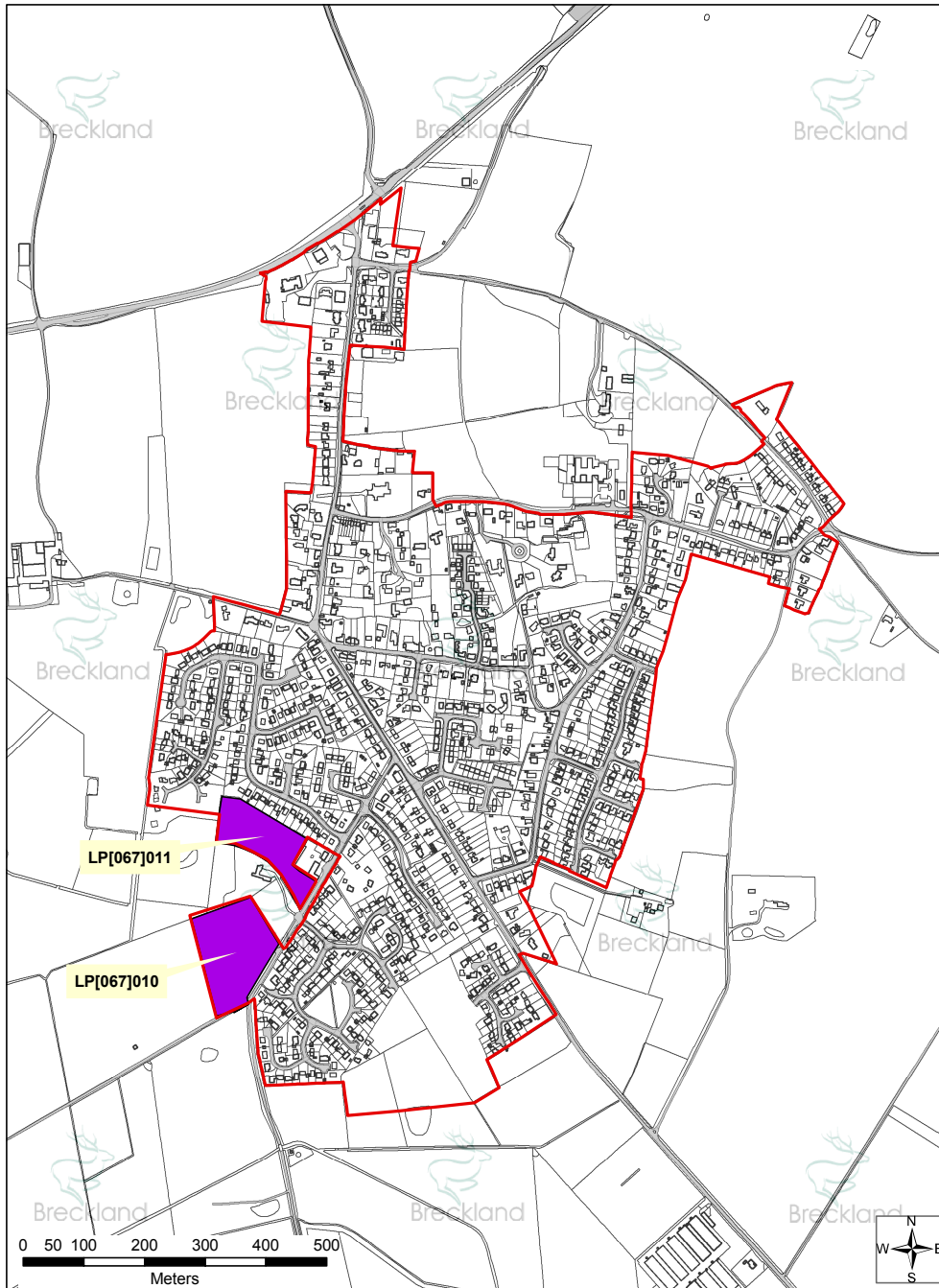
3.274 Necton was previously identified as a local service centre village through the Local Development Framework, however it did not receive an allocation due to the level of committed development within the village. The village is closely related to the A47 trunk road and has a population of 1923 (as of the 2011 census).

3.275 Necton is identified as a Local Service Centre village as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Necton Primary School;
- Sherwood Stores and Post Office;
- Community facilities in the form of a community centre, the Windmill Inn Pub and doctors surgery;
- The village has a regular bus service and is located on the X1 route between Peterborough and Lowestoft; and
- The IDBR (2016) shows 39 businesses within the parish.

3.276 The Settlement Fringe Landscape Character area includes the majority of the village within the Holme Hale Small Scale Tributary Farmland which has a moderate to high sensitivity to change. This is a slightly higher sensitivity than the land to the north and north-east of the village, which falls within the Sparham Hall Open Tributary Farmland which has a moderate sensitivity to change.

Map 3.13 Summary of the Necton Allocations.



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Necton Housing Allocation 2

Land off North Pickenham Road (LP[067]010)

Land amounting to 1.7 hectares is allocated for residential development of at least 40 dwellings. Development will be permitted subject to compliance with adopted policies in the Local Plan and the following criteria:

1. Principal highway access is provided from North Pickenham Road;
2. Suitable improvements to pedestrian and cycle links from the site to the village along Chalk Lane are provided;
3. The scheme design, whilst preserving and enhancing, is complementary to the special interest of the existing non-designated heritage assets. The scheme design proposal will be informed via a detailed appraisal of the asset's significance;
4. Important boundary trees are retained within the detailed site design;
5. New structural landscaping is provided to the south boundary of the site to minimise the impact of the new settlement edge formed by the development;
6. The site is underlain by a defined Mineral Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel. Any future development on this site will need to address the requirements of Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Policy CS16 - 'safeguarding' in relation to mineral resources; and
7. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.277 This site currently includes buildings and land associated with Erne Farm. The land representation for this site also included land south of Brown's Lane with a view that this would be used to provide open space. Norfolk County Council highways have not raised any objections to the site.

3.278 The site is located within flood zone 1, there are higher areas of flood risk located to the south, but not on the site itself. The site is adjacent to the settlement boundary to the east of North Pickenham Road, however it is detached from the settlement boundary to the north which finishes at Mason's Drive. To the north of the site is the property Greensleeves, and there is a tree preservation order on the woodland at the front of the property.

3.279 The site has reasonably good access to the services and facilities within the village. However it is distant from the primary school, village hall and playing fields.

3.280 The historic characterisation study highlights the importance of Erne Farm and associated barn, which date from around 1817 and are constructed from shuttered clay, which is rarer than clay lump. These buildings are considered to be non-designated heritage assets and are worthy of retention. The study states that "Development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. Preserving the site as a key gateway into the village, retaining the trees on site that are subject to TPOs and considering the impact upon the non-designated heritage assets will be additional factors in the formation of proposals." This has informed the proposed density of the site which has been reduced in order to conserve and protect the non-designated heritage asset.

Necton Housing Allocation 3

Land between North Pickenham Road and Masons Drive (LP[067]011)

Land amounting to 1.1 hectares is allocated for residential development of approximately 15 dwellings. Development will be permitted subject to compliance with adopted policies in the Local Plan and the following criteria:

1. Principal highway access is provided from North Pickenham Road;
2. Suitable improvements to pedestrian and cycle links from the site to the village along Chalk Lane are provided;
3. The scheme design, whilst preserving and enhancing, is complementary to the special interest of the existing non-designated heritage assets. The scheme design proposal will be informed via a detailed appraisal of the assets' significance;
4. Important trees are retained, including the mixed deciduous woodland to the rear of the site protected under TPO 2006 No.2;
5. The site is underlain by a defined Mineral Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel. Any future development on this site will need to address the requirements of Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Policy CS16 - 'safeguarding' in relation to mineral resources; and
6. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.281 This site is located to the south of the village and directly adjoins the settlement boundary at Masons Drive. The site is accessed via North Pickenham Road, and NCC highways through their consultation comments, have not raised any objections to the development of the site. The site is well related to the services and facilities within Necton.

3.282 The site is greenfield land with an agricultural land grade of 3. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Holme Hale Small Scale Tributary Farmland character area which has a moderate to high sensitivity to change. The site is located on a key gateway into the village and this will need to be considered through the planning application stage. The rear section of the site includes a woodland which is protected under a tree preservation order, this restricts the site area. There are also a significant number of trees at the front of the site which restrict visibility into the site.

3.283 The site benefits from few constrains; however, the Historic Characterisation Study (2017) outlined that development proposed must "demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. In this particular instance, preserving the site as a key gateway into the village, retaining the trees on site that are subject to TPOs and considering the impact upon the non designated heritage assets will be additional factors in the formation of proposals."

North Elmham

3.284 North Elmham is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period to 2036. The village is located to the north of Breckland and is in close proximity to the market town of Dereham. The housing distribution sets out that the village will provide an additional 91 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these, 50 are currently either completed or committed. The new allocation for North Elmham is therefore 41 dwellings over the remainder of the Local Plan period to 2036. The appraisal of sites through the Local Plan has indicated that there are not enough suitable sites within the village to provide the full 41 dwellings allocation. The Local Plan is only able to allocate land for 27 dwellings.

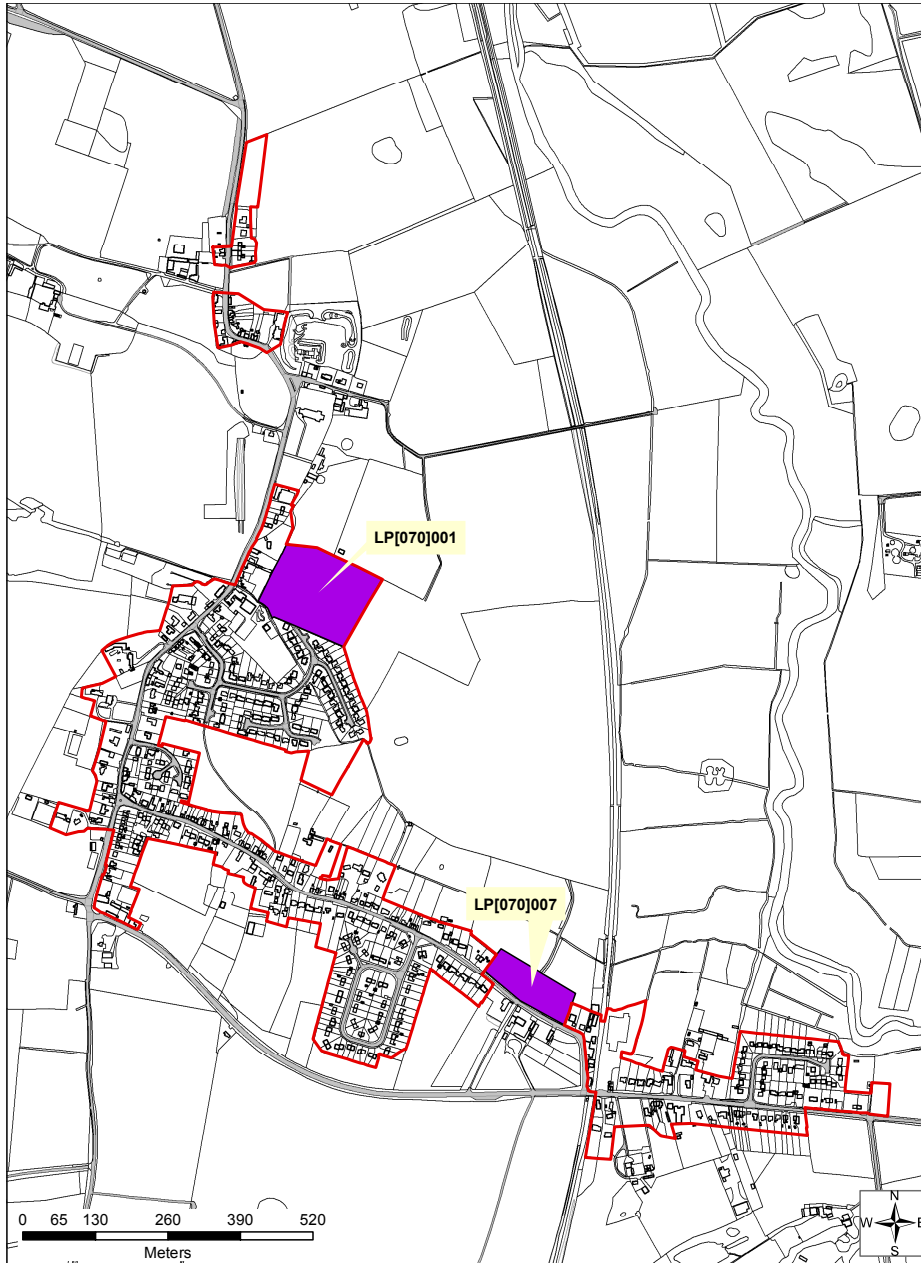
3.285 The 2011 Census showed that the village had a population of 1433. North Elmham was previously identified as a local service centre village through the Local Development Framework however it was not allocated for development but instead for the protection and enhancement of services and facilities.

3.286 North Elmham is identified as a Local Service Centre village as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- North Elmham Primary School;
- Shop and Post Office;
- Community facilities in the form of a village hall, two public houses the Kings Head and the Railway Tavern, a cafe, takeaway and a doctors surgery;
- The village has a regular bus service; and
- There are a good range of businesses and employment opportunities within the village. The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows 41 businesses within the parish.

3.287 The settlement fringe landscape character assessment notes that there are two main landscape character areas surrounding the village. Land to the west is included within the Elmham Park Tributary Farmland character area which has a high sensitivity to change. This character area includes Elmham Park which is listed on the historic parks and gardens register. To the east is the County School Station Valley Floor character area which has a moderate sensitivity to change. The village contains two conservation areas. The River Wensum runs to the east of the village and is a special area of conservation.

Map 3.14 Summary of the North Elmham Allocations.



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North Elmham Housing Allocation 1

Land at Holt Road (LP[070]001)

Land amounting to approximately 2.4 hectares is allocated for a residential development of at least 16 dwellings. Development will be permitted subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Principal highways access will be provided from Holt Road;
2. Public car parking for local facilities provided within the site;
3. Provision of public footpaths to the primary school, Cathedral Drive and the adjacent community woodland;
4. Development proposals should respect the setting of designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the site;
5. Retention of boundary trees and appropriate screening should be provided with the development;
6. A site specific flood risk assessment should be included with the planning application. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures should be provided within the site. Where possible, these should be provided as part of a landscaping scheme;
7. The site is underlain by a defined Mineral Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel. Any future development on this site will need to address the requirements of Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Policy CS16 - 'safeguarding' in relation to mineral resources; and
8. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.288 This site is predominantly greenfield land however there are some buildings on Holt Road which would be demolished in order to form safe access. The allocation site adjoins the main built up area of North Elmham, it is close to the village centre and is bounded on two sides by existing development. This site would be located within walking distance of the main services and facilities within the village, which includes a primary school, doctors surgery, public houses, village hall, shop and post office.

3.289 The boundary of this site which adjoins Holt Road is within one of North Elmham's conservation areas. The predominant form and character of the area along Holt Road is linear development, however there are areas where this isn't the case. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Elmham Park Tributary Farmland character area which has a high sensitivity to change. The assessment notes the intact nature of the conservation area. The site is also in close proximity to North Elmham park which is a designated historic park and garden. The historic characterisation study notes that development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response.

3.290 The sequential test indicates that approximately 15% of the site is situated within an area of 1 in 1000 year flood event and, to a lesser extent, 1 in 100 year and 1 in 30 year flood event in relation to surface water. Furthermore, approximately 10% of the site is situated within flood zone 2 and 3a. The areas of fluvial and surface water flooding are located on the southern boundary of the site. A site specific flood risk assessment should be submitted with any planning application. The use of SUDs may be appropriate within this site to manage increased run off from new development.

3.291 There is currently congestion from on-street car parking along Holt Road. Development of this site offers the opportunity to alleviate this congestion due to the location of the primary school, doctors surgery and village hall. This is currently included within the planning application on the site and offers a benefit to the community.

North Elmham Housing Allocation 2

Land to the north of Eastgate Street (LP[070]007)

Land amounting to approximately 0.7 hectares is allocated for a residential development of 11 dwellings. Development will be permitted subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Provision of safe highways and pedestrian access from Eastgate Street;
2. Retention of views through the site, respecting setting of the conservation area and wider landscape character;
3. Development should respect the setting of adjacent listed buildings;
4. An archaeological assessment is required to support the application;
5. The site is underlain by a defined Mineral Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel. As the site is under 1 hectare it is exempt from the requirements of Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Policy CS16 – ‘safeguarding’, in relation to mineral resources. If the site area is amended in the future to make the area over 1 hectare CS16 will apply; and
6. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.292 This site is greenfield pasture land located on Eastgate Street within North Elmham. The allocation site adjoins the built development to the east, west and south. To the north of the site is open countryside. The provision of safe highways and pedestrian access should be achieved from Eastgate Street. The site is located within recognised walking distances of services and facilities within North Elmham.

3.293 This site forms a significant undeveloped gap in the street scene which contributes to the open rural character of this part of Eastgate Street. The site falls within the North Elmham Conservation Area and is located in close proximity to a number of listed buildings. The site creates a break between the main body of the village to the west and development to the east on Station Road. The historic characterisation study notes that development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. The historic characterisation study goes on to note that development should seek to retain views through the site as part of the conservation area towards the valley floor.

3.294 The site is bisected by Old Hall Lane, which was, in the medieval period, one of the principal roads running through North Elmham. There is the potential that significant buried archaeological remains will be present in the area proposed. Any application will need to provide suitable archaeological evidence as part of its determination.

Old Buckenham

3.295 Old Buckenham is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period to 2036. The village will provide an additional 69 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 69, there are currently 16 completions and 16 commitments, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 37.

3.296 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 1270. Old Buckenham is identified as a Local Service Centre village through the Local Plan as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

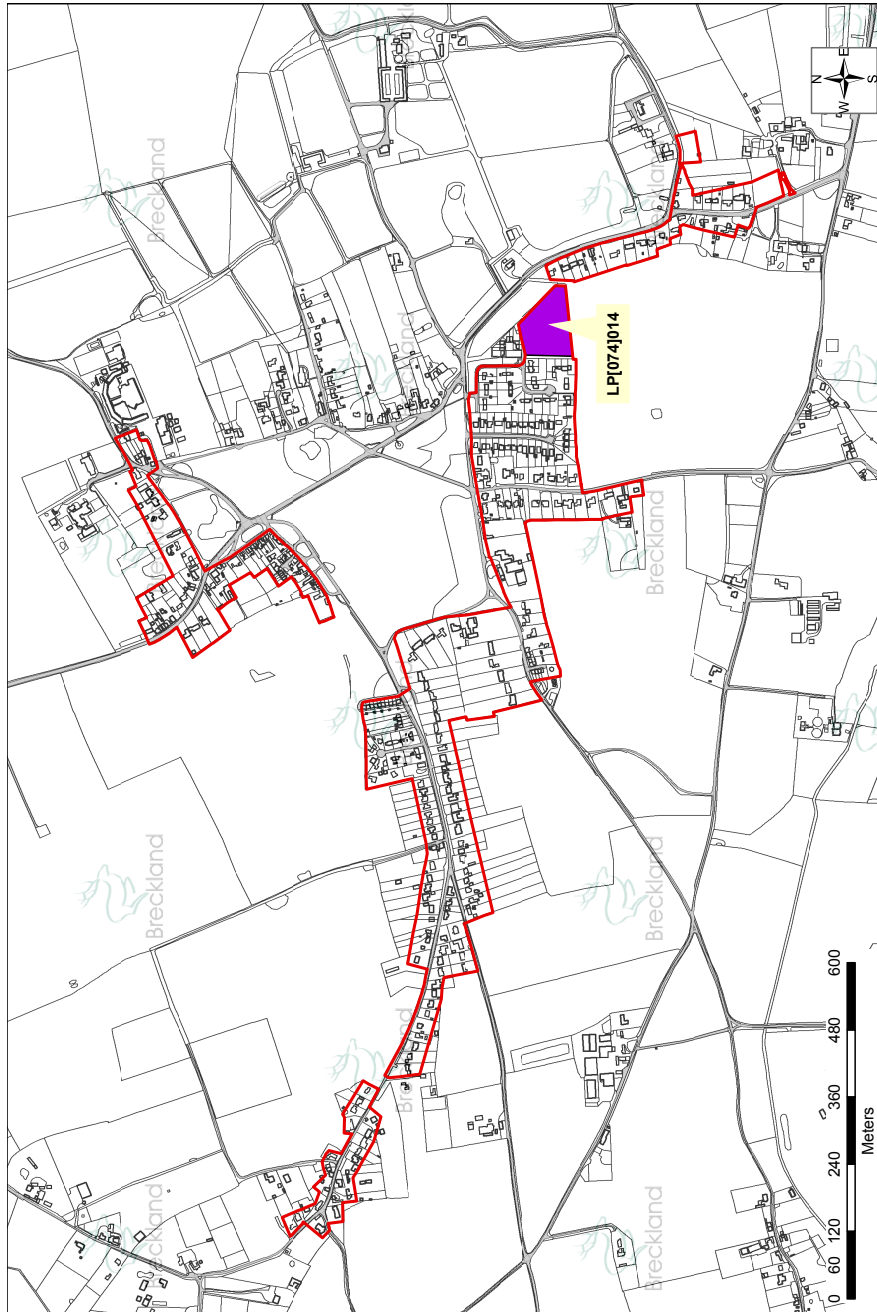
- Primary School and High School;
- Shop and Post Office;
- Village Hall, Ox & Plough Public House;
- Regular bus service to Norwich and Diss; and
- The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows 49 businesses within the parish.

3.297 Old Buckenham has a rich historic environment with an extensive conservation area with a number of listed buildings.

3.298 Old Buckenham is reputed to have the largest village green in Britain.

3.299 The Breckland Landscape Character Fringe Assessment shows that the land surrounding the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'The Buckenhams Tributary Farmland,' which is of High Landscape sensitivity.

Map 3.15 Summary of the Old Buckenham Allocations.



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Old Buckenham Residential Allocation 1

Land off St. Andrew's Close (LP[074]014)

Land amounting to 0.9 hectares is allocated for a residential development of at least 20 dwellings. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Appropriate density to reflect and respect existing development;
2. Appropriate use of height and scale to ensure the site's position as a key gateway to the settlement;
3. Access on to St Andrews Close;
4. Retain appropriate screening between the site and the B1077; and
5. a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.300 The site is situated upon 0.9 hectares of Grade 3 greenfield land to the east of the St Andrews Close. The site adjoins the existing settlement boundary to the east and south west of the site, with agricultural land to the south of the site.

3.301 The site itself is within 800m (10 minutes walking distance) to key services, meaning that the site is sustainable and will limit the use of personal car journeys.

3.302 The site is situated with the 'Buckenham Settled Tributary Farmland' Landscape Type where development considerations include conserving the small scale rural road pattern, ensuring that new development within the settlements reflects the use of local materials; and monitors development and boundary treatments to the settlement edges.

3.303 The Historic Characterisation Study determined that development of the site would have limited impact on the historic environment. Development proposals must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. The existing pattern of development to St. Andrews Close will be an additional factor in the formulation of proposals.

Shipdham

3.304 Shipdham is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period, providing an additional 285 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 260, there are currently 69 completions and 136 commitments, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 80.

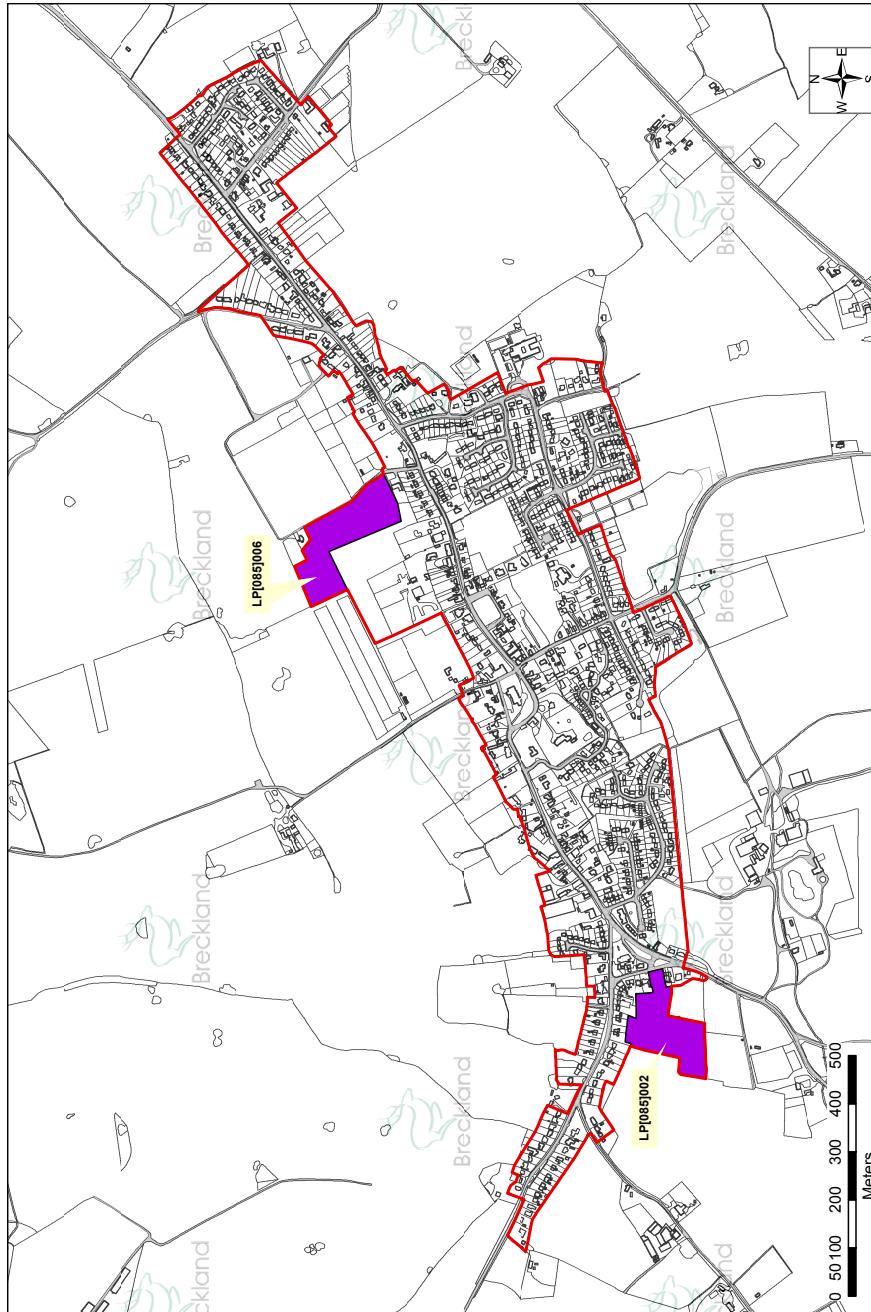
3.305 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 2057. Shipdham is identified as a Local Service Centre village as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Thomas Bullock Primary School;
- 2 Shops and Post Office;
- Village Hall, Golden Dog Public House, The Millwright Arms, Doctors Surgery; King's Cafe, Bullock Park Pavilion;
- Regular bus service to Dereham, Swaffham and Watton; and
- The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows 69 businesses within the parish.

3.306 Shipdham has a rich historic environment with an extensive conservation area and a number of listed buildings, predominantly around the church.

3.307 The Breckland Landscape Character Fringe Assessment shows that most of the land surrounding the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'Crows Hill and Thorpe Row Arable Plateau', which is an area of moderate/high sensitivity.

Map 3.16 Summary of the Shipdham Allocations.



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Shipdham Residential Allocation 1

Old Nursery, Land behind Old Post Office Street (LP[085]002)

Land amounting to 1.1 ha is allocated for a residential development of at least 25 dwellings. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Retention of existing access point from Old Post Office Street with implementation of additional off-site highway improvements to improve the safety of the Watton Road/Old Post Office Street junction to the satisfaction of Norfolk County Council as Highway Authority;
2. Appropriate density and design to reflect and respect existing development;
3. Retention of existing boundary trees and hedges, where appropriate;
4. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures are provided; and
5. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.308 The site is situated upon 1 hectare of Grade 3 agricultural land to the southwest of the existing settlement boundary. There is existing development to the north of the site and the east. Agricultural land is located to the south and the west. This site currently has the decision to grant planning permission for 23 dwellings (planning reference 3PL/2015/1267/O) and is currently awaiting the completion of a section 106 agreement.

3.309 No known fundamental constraints regarding the site. The Historic Characterisation Study determined that development of the site would have limited impact on the historic environment.

3.310 The Breckland Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment indicated that the site is situated within the Crows Hill and Thorpe Row Arable Plateau which is a landscape that is classified as having Moderate/High sensitivity to change.

Shipdham Residential Allocation 2

Land west of Brick Kiln Lane (LP[085]006)

Land amounting to 2.4 ha is allocated for a residential development of at least 55 dwellings. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Access to be obtained from Chapel Street through permitted development site: Old Coal Yard, Chapel Street including associated highway and footway improvements;
2. Appropriate density and design to reflect and respect existing development;
3. Retention of existing boundary trees and hedges, where appropriate;
4. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures are provided; and
5. a pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.311 The site is situated upon 2.4 hectares of Grade 3 agricultural land to the north of the existing settlement boundary. There is existing development to the south of the site with agricultural land to the east. To the west of the site there is an outline planning permission on the Old Coal Yard site, previously an allocated site (SH1) through the Adopted Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan document, and this would allow for appropriate access onto the preferred site.

3.312 The site itself is within 800m (10 minutes walking distance) to key services, meaning that the site is sustainable and will limit the use of personal car journeys.

3.313 The Breckland Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment indicated that the site is situated within the Crows Hill and Thorpe Row Arable Plateau which is a landscape that is classified as having Moderate/ High sensitivity to change.

3.314 No known fundamental constraints regarding the site. The Historic Characterisation Study determined that development of the site would have limited impact on the historic environment.

Sporle

3.315 Sporle is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period, providing an additional 67 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. There are currently 16 completions and 16 commitments. The proposed allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan Period to 2036 is 35.

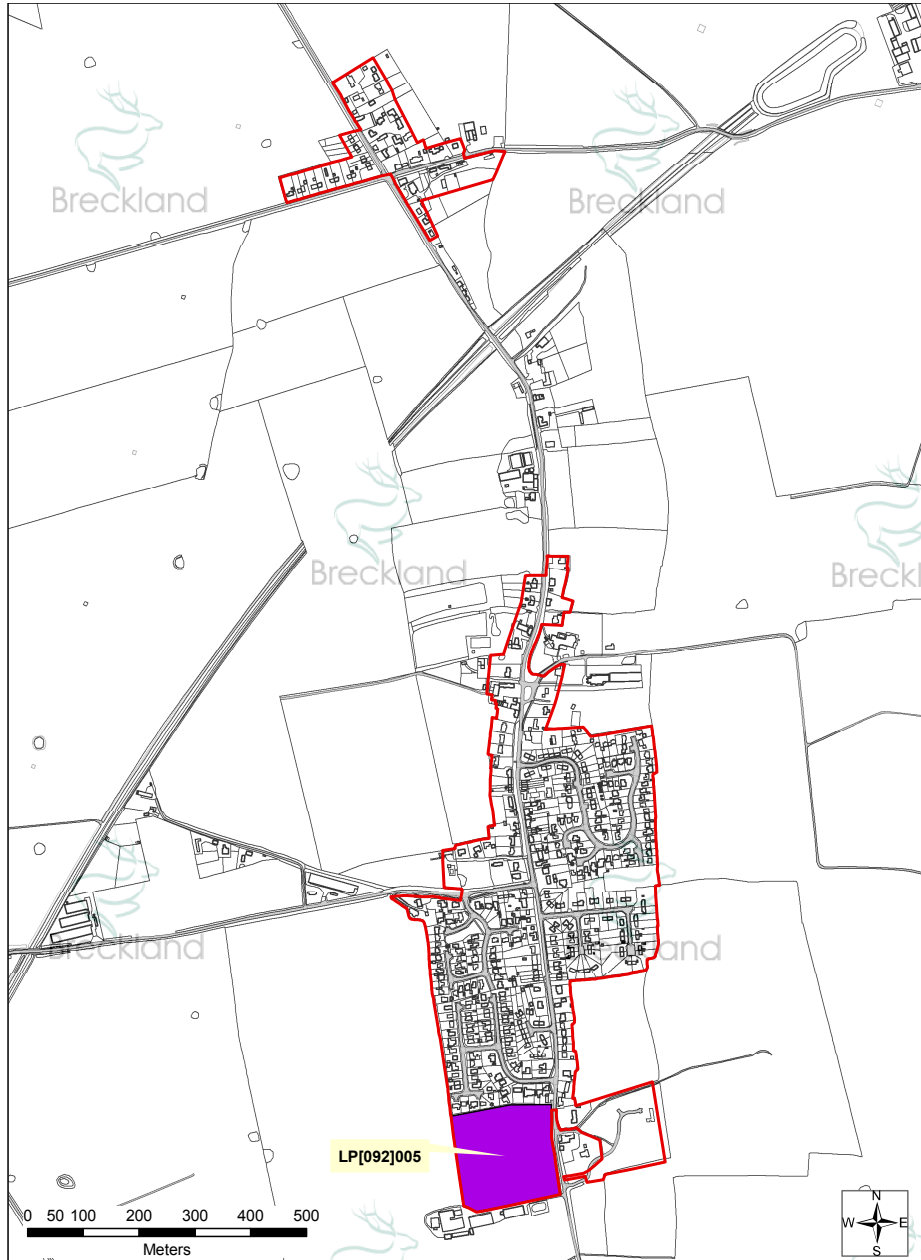
3.316 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 1011. Sporle is identified as a Local Service Centre village as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Sporle Church of England Primary School;
- Shop and post office;
- Village Hall, Peddars Inn Public House;
- Frequent bus service; and
- The IDBR (2016) shows that there are 22 businesses within the parish.

3.317 The Breckland Landscape Character Assessment shows that most of the land surrounding the village is situated within the Landscape Character Area 'River Wissey settled tributary farmland'.

3.318 The land to the north and east of the settlement is predominantly agricultural land of grade 3 quality, while the area to the west and south of the settlement is grade 2.

Map 3.17 Summary of the Sporle Allocations.



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Sporle Residential Allocation 1

Land to the north of Essex Farm (LP[092]005)

Land amounting to approximately 2.1 hectares is allocated for a residential development of at least 35 dwellings. A minimum of 1 Local Area for Play (LAP) shall be provided. Development will be subject to compliance with adopted Local Plan policies and the following criteria:

1. The principle access is provided from The Street;
2. New structural landscape is provided on the southern boundary of the site to minimise the impact of the new settlement edge formed by the development;
3. Suitable improvements to pedestrian and cycle links from the site to the village along The Street are provided;
4. The site specific flood risk assessment included with the planning application shall address the significant overland flow path running through the site. If the flow path cannot be avoided then it should be demonstrated how any proposed mitigation to achieve flood free development does not worsen flooding elsewhere. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures should be included as part of the landscaping scheme;
5. The scheme design, whilst preserving and enhancing, is complementary to the special interest of the designated heritage assets. The scheme design proposal will be informed via a detailed appraisal of the assets' significance; and
6. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought.

3.319 The site is situated upon 2.1 hectares of Grade 2 agricultural land to the south of the existing settlement boundary. There is existing development to the north and east of the site. Essex Farm is located to the south of the site and agricultural land is located to the west.

3.320 The site adjoins the existing settlement boundary and is within 800m (10 minutes walking distance) of key facilities, but just outside of 800m of the school.

3.321 The site is located within the 'River Wissey settled tributary farmland' and development guidelines in this area include ensuring important views are maintained.

3.322 The Historic Characterisation Study, 2017, indicated that development proposals must respect the setting of the nearby heritage asset, the Grade II Listed Wolferton House. Due to the location of this site in relation to the designated heritage asset, the scheme design proposal will need to be informed via a detailed appraisal of the asset's significance.

Swanton Morley

3.323 Swanton Morley is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy and it will see 10% growth through the plan period, providing an additional 180 dwellings over the plan period to 2036. Of these 180, there are currently 80 completions and 15 commitments, meaning that the new allocation for the remainder of the Local Plan period to 2036 is 85*.

3.324 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 2100. Swanton Morley was previously identified as a local service centre village through the Local Development Framework and was allocated 50 dwellings, on a single site to the north of the village. This site is now under construction. The village contains Robertson Barracks which is the base for 1st The Queens Dragoon Guards.

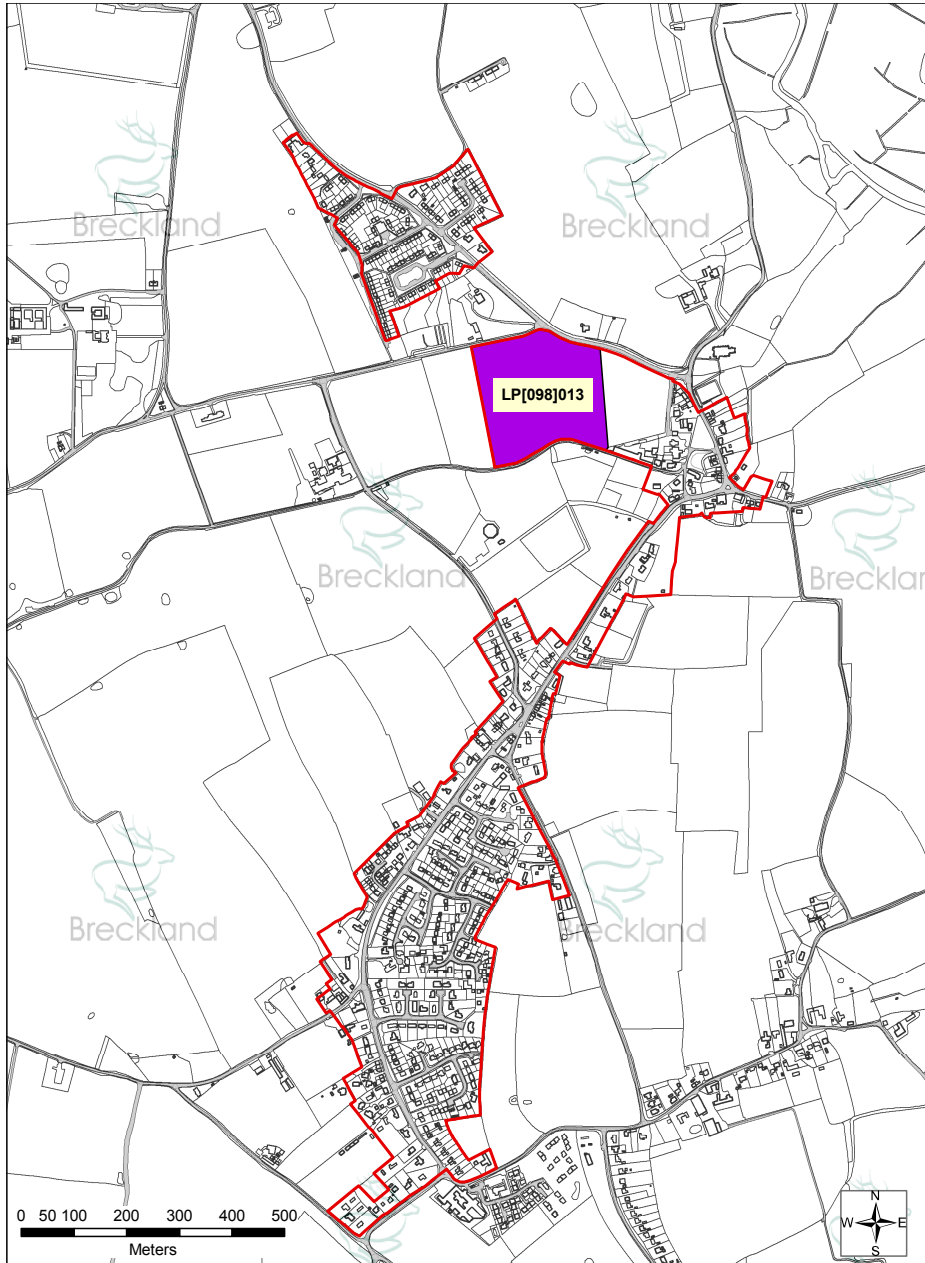
3.325 Swanton Morley is identified as a Local Service Centre village as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Swanton Morley Primary School;
- Village shop and post office; butchers;
- Community facilities in the form of public houses Darby's and The Angel, village hall and doctors surgery;
- The village has a regular bus service to Norwich; and
- There are a good range of businesses and employment opportunities. The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows 52 businesses within the parish.

3.326 The River Wensum runs to the north-east of the village and the settlement fringe landscape character area classifies this as the most sensitive area of the village in relation to landscape change. The majority of the village lies within the Northall Green Enclosed Arable Farmland character area which has a moderate sensitivity to change. The hamlet of Woodgate is located to the south east of Swanton Morley and incorporated within the parish boundary. The landscape character assessments notes the importance in landscape terms of avoiding the coalescence of these two settlements.

3.327 Swanton Morley parish council is currently preparing a neighbourhood plan, when adopted this will form part of the development plan for the area. *The neighbourhood plan provides the opportunity to meet the parish's aspirations for further growth.

Map 3.18 Summary of the Swanton Morley Allocations.



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Swanton Morley Residential Allocation 1

Land off Rectory Road (LP[098]013)

Land amounting to 4.9 hectares is allocated for a residential development of at least 85 dwellings. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Provision of safe highways access to the site from Rectory Road;
2. Retention of important boundary trees and hedgerows to provide appropriate screening for the site;
3. Provision of suitable pedestrian access to Harkers Lane public right of way;
4. The layout and design of the site will provide an appropriate response to the established pattern of development in the area, including with regard to density;
5. Development should provide a minimum of a Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) on site along with related landscaping and facilities;
6. A pre-application enquiry with Anglian Water Services is required for this site in accordance with the Water Cycle Study to demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available to transfer wastewater for treatment. Where insufficient capacity within the wastewater network is identified, financial contributions may be sought;
7. A site specific flood risk assessment should be provided with the application. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures may need to be provided within the site, and where possible included as part of a landscaping scheme; and
8. Layout of the scheme should not prejudice future development on adjoining land.

3.328 This site forms an extension of the Hopkins Homes site on Rectory Road which is currently under construction. The site which is currently under construction was allocated through the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD. The preferred allocation is a greenfield site, with an agricultural land grade of 3. The principal access to the site should be achieved from Rectory Road. Hoe Road East is not suitable for vehicular access without significant improvement.

3.329 The site is well located to services and facilities within the development. To the rear of the site is Harkers Lane which is a public right of way and provides a walking route to the primary school. The development should provide suitable access to Harkers Lane. The settlement fringe landscape character assessment includes this site within the Northall Green Enclosed Arable Farmland character area which has a moderate sensitivity to change. The junction of Rectory Road with Town Street represents a key gateway within Swanton Morley.

3.330 The site has limited constraints. The historic characterisation study has indicated that development proposals for the site must demonstrate that a full analysis of the immediate and wider context of the site has been undertaken so as to inform an appropriate design response. Development should respect the form and character of the surrounding area, including the lower densities on Hoe Road East.

Weeting

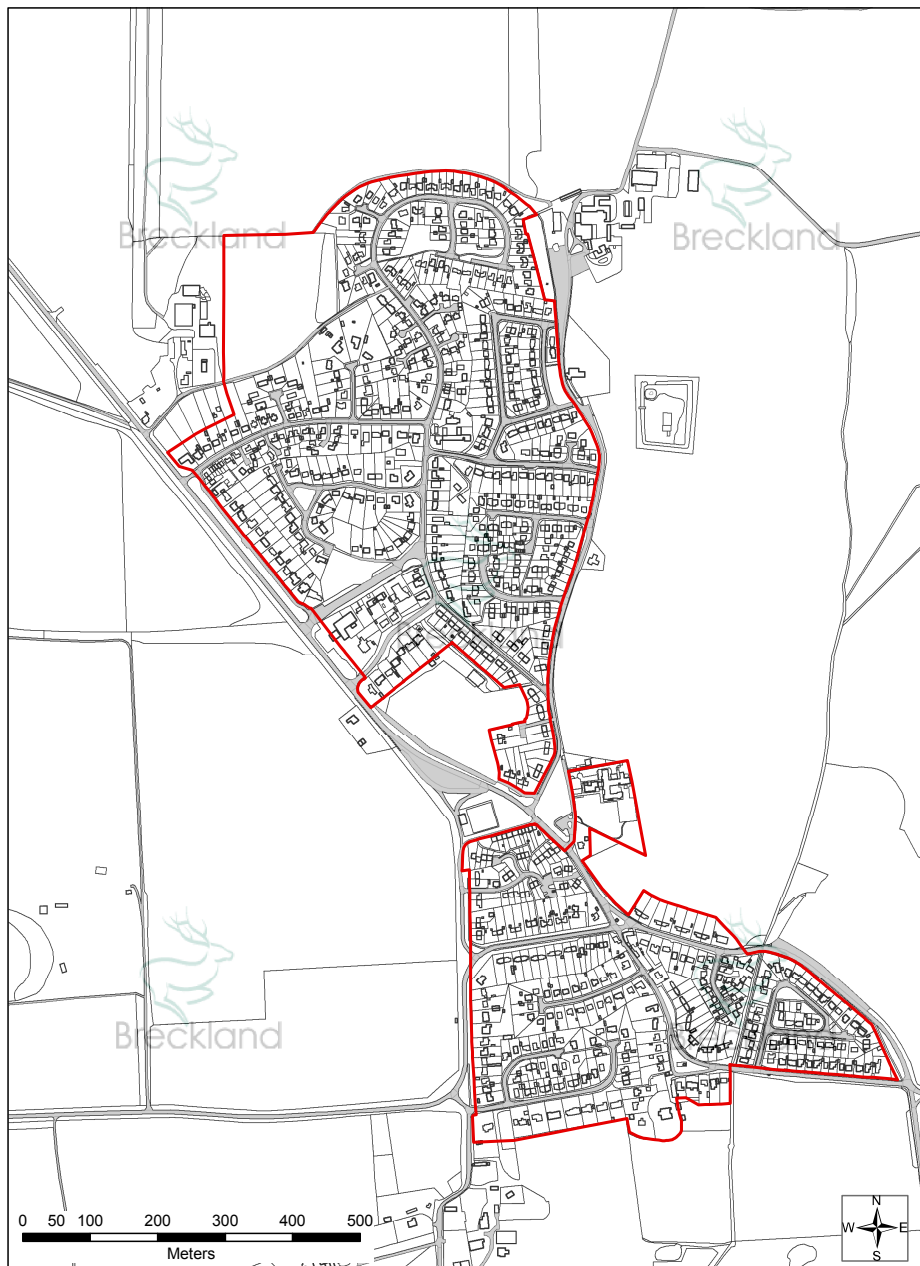
3.331 Weeting is identified as a Local Service Centre through the locational strategy, however it is not proposed for housing growth and is instead allocated solely for services protection and enhancement. The village is located within close proximity of the Breckland Farmland Special Protection Area (SPA) and is covered by the 1500m buffer zone which is designated for the protection of the Stone Curlew which is the special interest feature of the SPA. Due to the environmental constraints surrounding the village it is not considered that an allocation is appropriate.

3.332 The 2011 Census showed that there was a population of 1839. Weeting was previously identified as a local service centre village through the Local Development Framework and for the reasons set out above, it was not designated for growth.

3.333 Weeting is identified as a Local Service Centre village as it meets the criteria by having the following services:

- Weeting Primary School;
- Village shop and post office;
- Community facilities in the form of the Saxon public house, a village hall and a fish and chip takeaway;
- The village has a regular bus service between Kings Lynn and Thetford. There is also a rail service in the neighbouring town of Brandon; and
- There are a good range of businesses and employment opportunities. There are two employment areas within the village at Fengate Drove and to the east of Mundford Road.

Map 3.19 Weeting Settlement Boundary



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4 Transport

Transport

4.1 This chapter sets out the Council's approach to managing growth in car travel and its linked impacts on the local economy, the environment and communities. Norfolk's third Local Transport Plan, 'Connecting Norfolk' sets out a vision that by 2026 Norfolk will have a transport system that allows residents and visitors a range of low carbon options to meet their transport needs and attracts and retains business investment in the county.

4.2 The District's economy is such that there are high levels of out commuting and commuting to and from the District's key settlements and market towns which puts pressure on the road network during peak periods. In addition, within Breckland services such as health and education tend to also be sited within the key settlements and market towns. This means that significant numbers of people must travel relatively long distances to access everyday facilities, often with the added challenge of variable quality public transport.

4.3 Two strategic vehicular routes run through the District. The A11 connects Norwich with Cambridge connecting the strategic growth areas of Attleborough, Thetford and Snetterton Employment Area. Following a high profile campaign, the remaining single carriageway section of the A11 between Thetford and Barton Mills was dualled during 2013 and 2014. This completes the dualling of the A11 between the M11 and Norwich.

4.4 The A47 runs west to east from Birmingham to Lowestoft connecting Swaffham and Dereham but at present is not fully dualled. The A47 Alliance comprises local authorities, local enterprise partnerships (LEP's), the business community, MPs and stakeholders stretching from Lowestoft to Peterborough. This body has presented a clear business case and lobbied Central Government to commit funding for improvements to the A47. The Government has committed to investment of over £300m for improvements along the A47 for delivery in the early 2020s.

4.5 Strategic road improvements must not be at the expense of environmental quality and significantly must not result in an adverse impact to the integrity of Breckland SPA, unless it can be demonstrated that there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) in accordance with the Habitats Directive. Early evidence gathering in relation to the SPA interest is required for strategic transport improvements which impact on The Brecks, in order to inform the appraisal of options and project design. Road improvements will not be promoted within 200m of Breckland SAC and within 1500m of Breckland SPA unless IROPI can be demonstrated.

4.6 Public transport services in the District are principally provided by the bus due to the rural nature of the District. Bus services focus on linking the District's market towns with shopping and employment destinations at Norwich, King's Lynn and Bury St. Edmunds. Infrequent services link rural areas with market towns, principally on market days. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan details a number of the allocated development sites in the Plan which present the opportunity to divert existing bus routes to serve new residents and improve overall connectivity, funded by developer contributions.

4.7 Reducing the reliance on the private car and promoting active lifestyles are mutually beneficial aims which can be achieved by supporting sustainable travel options. However, it should be recognised that for some communities public transport, walking and cycling are not realistic options, and therefore travel by car will remain an essential option for many people living in more remote rural areas. Recognising that there is a need to manage the growth in car travel, the Council seeks to widen sustainable transport choices and, particularly for shorter local journeys, encourage a reduction in car use. Additionally, to assist in reducing the need for longer distance travel, the Council will focus on retaining rural employment and local facilities in smaller settlements and encouraging home working.

4.8 The District, in common with many other places, has an ageing population where the car will, over time as people get older and live longer, become a less feasible method of transport for an increasing number of residents. The 2011 Census shows that 15.5% of the households within Breckland do not have access to a car. This figure illustrates a general trend within the East of England, with an average of 18.5%, and reflects the rural nature of the District.

4.9 Sustainable transport policy TR 01 therefore seeks to widen the choice of travel opportunities using public transport, walking and cycling. In accordance with the principles of housing policy, parking standards may need to be reviewed over time to provide for new initiatives in line with climate change and low carbon objectives. This might include: provision of dedicated spaces with charging points for electric vehicles; small and low-carbon vehicles; shared community 'pool' vehicles, and local delivery vehicles.

4.10 Norfolk County Council's Cycling and Walking Action Plan (2016) seeks to encourage walking and cycling within the District illustrating the advantages to productivity, health and wellbeing, reducing carbon emissions and encouraging tourism. The Action Plan highlights the following cycling trails within the District: Peddars Way; Little Ouse Way; Nar Valley Way; Wensum Way; and Angles Way.

4.11 Sustrans, a leading charity enables people to travel on foot and by bicycle, promotes a number of circulars within Breckland including: The Thetford Circular; the Swaffham Loop; and Route 13, which runs from Fakenham to London and passes through the market towns of Dereham and Watton and also connects the District to the north Norfolk coast.

4.12 To encourage the use of low emission vehicles to support improvements in air quality, the Council will be working in partnership with Norfolk County Council to achieve the appropriate provision of electric vehicle charging points, particularly for large scale housing, retail and commercial developments.

Policy TR 01 Sustainable Transport Network

The Council will work in partnership to promote a safe, efficient and convenient sustainable transport system. This will be achieved through:

- a. supporting improvements to the road and rail connections both within the District and to the wider area;
- b. locating development so as to ensure wherever possible, new development is close to access points such as bus stops and that proposals include provision for improved public transport;
- c. promoting improved access to, and interchange between, all modes of transport to key settlements and town centres;
- d. reducing the need to travel by private car in towns and villages and increasing the proportion of shorter journeys made on foot or cycle; thereby providing a genuine alternative to the car and helping to facilitate a modal shift and commensurate reduction in carbon emissions; and
- e. promoting and improving safety, security and healthy lifestyles by encouraging walking and cycling, creating and improving links to existing routes and, for new developments, ensuring the provision of facilities such as secure, accessible bicycle parking with changing facilities on site.

Development should:

- seek to minimise the need to travel;
- promote opportunities for sustainable transport modes;
- not adversely impact on the operation or safety of the strategic road network;
- improve accessibility to services; and
- support the transition to a low carbon future.

Major development proposals should include an assessment of the impacts of new development on the existing transport network. Where potential transport impacts are identified, developers will be expected to produce Transport Assessments to assess the impacts and identify appropriate mitigation, together with Travel Plans where appropriate.

Policy TR 02 Transport Requirements

Developments should be of high quality, sustainable in design, construction and layout as well as offering maximum flexibility in the choice of travel modes for all potential users. Proposals will be permitted that:

- integrate satisfactorily into existing transport networks;
- mitigate impacts on the local or strategic highway networks arising from the development itself, or the cumulative effects of development, through the provision of, or contributions towards, any relevant transport improvement deemed to be necessary, including those secured by legal agreement;
- protect, and where possible enhance, access to public rights of way;
- provide safe, suitable and convenient access for all users, including appropriate parking and servicing provision in terms of amount, design and layout; and
- avoid inappropriate traffic generation and compromising highway safety.

Development proposals that are likely to generate a significant number of heavy goods vehicle movements will be required to demonstrate by way of a Routing Management Plan that no severe impacts will be caused to the efficient and safe operation of the road network and no material harm caused to the living conditions of residents.

Development proposals should include an assessment of the impacts of new development on the existing transport network. Where potential transport impacts are identified, developers will be expected to produce Transport Assessments to assess the impacts and identify appropriate mitigation, together with Travel Plans where appropriate.

5 Environment

5.1 This section relating to protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment of the District covers policy issues that include the protection of specific environmental or conservation assets, and more widely the general landscape of the District.

5.2 Breckland is a diverse District for biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape quality, characterised by mixed landscape character areas including 'settled' and 'plateau' farmland to the north. The landscape changes to the west and south of the District, where the Brecks contains extensive areas of heathland within a forest and arable context. A significant proportion of the Brecks is designated as a European Special Protected Area (SPA) site, forming the largest terrestrial protected area in Norfolk. The heathland serves as an important habitat designated for its suitability to support internationally important bird species, particularly Stone Curlew, Woodlark and Nightjar.

5.3 Breckland contains a wealth of other protected areas such as Redgrave and South Lopham Fen which is one of only four sites within Norfolk designated under the Ramsar Convention of Wetlands of International Importance. Breckland also has a number of internationally important sites for biodiversity known as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) which are the most important sites for wildlife in the country. These include Norfolk Valley Fens, River Wensum and Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens.

5.4 Within Breckland, there are four Local Nature Reserves (LNR), at Litcham Common (an area of varied heathland), the Great Eastern Pingo Trail situated between Stow Bedon and Hockham (a mix of wetlands, woodlands and grasslands), land west of Weeting and grass heathland at Barnham Cross Common in Thetford. The latter is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and located within the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA).

5.5 Aside from the many designated environmental assets Breckland also has a vast area of tranquil countryside. The wider rural area shapes the character of the District and provides a scenic backdrop to the scattered market towns.

5.6 The settlements within Breckland are diverse in both size and type and embrace a wide range of building forms, architectural styles and building materials. District wide there are over 1,500 Listed Buildings as well as numerous buildings within the 50 Conservation Areas that cover 45 different parishes. The rich and diverse built heritage of the District contributes to its distinctive and individual characteristics.

5.7 The planned levels of growth could impact on the District's natural and historic environment. The policies in this section aim to ensure that natural and historic environmental quality of Breckland is maintained and, where possible, enhanced.

Green Infrastructure

5.8 The NPPF requires Local Authorities to plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure. Green infrastructure is the network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Recognising the value of all green space, not just protected landscapes, green infrastructure is a term used to cover all types of green space, large or small, public or private; including water bodies such as river corridors.

5.9 Green infrastructure performs many functions and plays a significant role in helping to attract people, employment and investment to the District. Green infrastructure also helps in meeting social and environmental goals, such as encouraging active, healthy lifestyles and helping the District to be resilient to more frequent occurrence of extreme weather events resulting from climate change.

5.10 As a predominantly rural District, Breckland has a vast green infrastructure network, stretching from the protected European sites, through to hedgerows and trees across the northern farmlands, to back gardens and local parks. Although there is no District wide green infrastructure study the value of the green infrastructure network is nevertheless well understood and recognised. Rather than identify key green linkages for protection, the Council is seeking in its policy to recognise the value of all green infrastructure and the contribution it makes to the local area in which it is located.

5.11 The green infrastructure policy requires developers to recognise the intrinsic value of green infrastructure and ensure that proposed development does not harm the green infrastructure network within the District. The policy assists the plan strategy and the objective of achieving sustainable development through the protection and enhancement of the key environmental assets of the District. Standards for the protection and provision of recreational open space and trees and landscape are dealt with under separate policies in the Plan.

5.12 The HRA identifies the need for further green infrastructure and open space as part of a suite of measures to prevent additional recreational pressure for development at Thetford, Mundford and Swaffham and to prevent urban effects on sensitive heathland sites including Barnham Cross Common, Thetford Heath, Thetford Golf Club and Marsh and at East Wretham and Brettenham. For larger development sites allocated through the Local Plan specific green infrastructure requirements are set out in relevant site allocation policies.

Policy ENV 01 Green Infrastructure

The network of green infrastructure in the District, including water bodies, should be safeguarded, retained and, where opportunities arise, enhanced. Enhancement of the green infrastructure network will be sought through the promotion of positive action, and the development management process.

New developments will be expected to exploit opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure and enhance existing connectivity; recognising the intrinsic value of the green infrastructure network and ensuring that the functionality of the network is not undermined as a result of development.

Through its layout and design, new development should respond to the location of existing green infrastructure and support appropriate uses and functions. Where it is considered that the development will have a detrimental effect on the quantity or function of existing green infrastructure, applications will be expected to demonstrate how the green infrastructure network will be enhanced as a result of the development. Developments that fail to exploit opportunities to integrate and enhance the existing local green infrastructure network will not be favourably considered.

Sites, habitats and species of European, National and Local Nature Conservation Importance

5.13 The planning system has an important part to play in meeting the UK's national and international commitments for habitats and species. In considering sustainable development proposals, the Council will have regard for the relevant biodiversity legislation and policy. Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The National Planning Policy Framework states that the planning system should contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, seeking net gains where possible and establishing coherent ecological networks. Regard should also be had to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. A key purpose of biodiversity legislation and policy is to embed biodiversity protection, restoration and enhancement as an integral part of policy making.

5.14 Breckland has a wide range of sites which are protected for their biodiversity or geological interest. The ecological network in the District is inherently connected to the wider Norfolk area and should be viewed as a component part of a much wider network which stretches beyond the District's boundaries. There are a range of protected sites in the District, arguably the most famous being The Brecks, an extensive area of largely conifer plantation and arable farmland but with extensive areas of heathland within the forest and arable landscape. The Brecks also includes fen, grazing marsh and naturally fluctuating waterbodies (meres and pingos).

5.15 A significant proportion of The Brecks, including arable farmland, is designated as European protected sites, forming the largest terrestrial protected area in Norfolk. These are designated for their suitability to support internationally important bird species, particularly Stone Curlews, Woodlark and Nightjar. **5.16** The District also contains a number of river valleys, including the Wensum, Waveney, Yare/Blackwater, Nar, Whitewater, Tud, Wissey, Little Ouse and Thet. These have extensive areas of wetland habitats, comprised mainly of grazing marsh with areas of fen and reedbed; many of the rivers are recognised as chalk streams. Some of these habitats are European protected sites. **5.17** Other key ecological features of the District include extensive areas of woodland and shelter-belts, often associated with large estates, and arable landscape features, comprising Scots pine shelter-belts, hedgerows, mature trees, copses, ponds and field margins. Some of these areas are designated as County Wildlife Sites, of which Breckland has more than any other District in Norfolk. Designated or not, these areas are key components of the ecological network at a local scale and collectively, when viewed as part of the green infrastructure network, amount to a significant biodiversity resource.

5.16 From The Brecks to the Norfolk Valley Fens, the range of sites with conservation and environmental interest is broad. Protected sites in Breckland as shown on the policies map comprise: Internationally designated sites Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); Ramsar sites; Nationally designated sites Ancient Woodland; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; National Nature Reserve; Locally designated sites Local Nature Reserves; Roadside Nature Reserves; Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites; County Wildlife Sites.

5.17 The sites designated under the protections listed above are the key biodiversity sites and geological features in the District. The different sites benefit from varying degrees of protection based on the rarity of the habitat and the diversity of species that they support. The range and quality of these sites is crucial not only for the wildlife they support but also as an educational and cultural resource and in supporting the overall quality of life in Breckland. As such, these areas are key components of the aspiration of achieving successful and sustainable development in Breckland.

5.18 When preparing applications applicants should consider the potential effects of the application on biodiversity demonstrating that potential effects have been avoided, and where this is not possible, adequately mitigated for. Biodiversity net gains and contribution to ecological networks should be sought wherever possible. If, when considered alone or with existing and known future projects, an application is likely to affect a European site the applicant must provide a report accompanying the application showing the site(s) that may be affected together

with sufficient information to enable the Council if necessary to undertake an appropriate assessment. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the whole process of assessment, including - where one is required - the appropriate assessment stage.

Policy ENV 02 Sites of International, European, National & Local Nature Conservation Importance

The highest level of protection will be given to European Sites, with development only permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effect (either directly or indirectly) on the integrity of any European site (either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects).

Where measures to mitigate for potential adverse effects are identified, the proposed mitigation measures must be justified as fit for purpose with appropriate evidence.

If it cannot be ascertained that no adverse effect on European site integrity will result, the proposed development will only be permitted where there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

Development likely to have an adverse effect (either directly or indirectly) on a site of national, regional or local biodiversity, or geological interest, as identified on the Policies Map, will not be permitted unless:

- a. it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal that outweigh the need to safeguard the special ecological / geological interest of the site, and;
- b. it has been demonstrated, where development would result in significant harm, that it cannot be reasonably located on an alternative site that would result in less or no harm, and;
- c. residual harm, after all measures to prevent and adequately mitigate will be adequately compensated for.

Where the Council considers that a designated site, protected species or any species or habitat of principal importance for conservation may be affected by a development proposal, an environmental impact assessment (EIA) will be required to be submitted with the planning application to assess effects on European sites and effects on flora and fauna. Whilst the EIA and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) are separate and distinct elements, the EIA information is likely to inform the Council's HRA where an appropriate assessment is required.

In accordance with the stepwise approach to protecting biodiversity, all development with the potential to affect biodiversity should demonstrate how such effects have been considered firstly, how effects that cannot be avoided have been minimised, and how net gains for biodiversity are being secured as part of the development.

Where development is permitted, the authority will consider the need for conditions or planning obligations to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation and / or geological interest. Where development is likely to have an impact upon a species that is not protected by other legislation, and in particular where a habitat or species is listed as a Priority Habitat or Species under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), there will be an expectation that the development proposal will be accompanied by an impact study commensurate with the scale of the impact and the importance of the species. Wherever a proposed development may have a detrimental impact upon a designated site or protected species, appropriate conditions and/or planning obligations will be used to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are utilised.

Policy ENV03 outlines specific requirements that apply to The Brecks SPA.

The Brecks Special Protection Area

5.19 Covering 39,141ha of heathland, forest and arable farmland, The Brecks is of International and European value to birdlife. Designated in 2006 as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the European Council's Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds, The Brecks habitat is important for a range of ground-nesting birds including the Stone Curlew, Woodlark and Nightjar. The East of England supports 65% of the UK's breeding pairs of Stone Curlew where most breeding is located within the Brecks. The rich biodiversity of The Brecks is also recognised through other statutory conservation designations including four Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), numerous SSSI and National Nature Reserves (NNR), where the latter (NNRs and SSSIs) make up 40% of the total area.

5.20 Evidence used to support the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2009 included research to inform the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Core Strategy which examined the effects of housing and roads on the distribution of the Stone Curlew in The Brecks. The adopted mitigation policy required that any new development which may impact on the SPA must be subject to Appropriate Assessment. New development is not permitted within 1,500m of the edge of the SPA unless it can be demonstrated by an appropriate assessment that the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA. Such circumstances may include the use of existing buildings and development where completely masked from the SPA by existing development.

5.21 Stone Curlews are also found outside the SPA; these birds are clearly part of the SPA population and functionally linked. Accordingly, areas have been identified where there are concentrations of Stone Curlew (using data gathered over the periods 1995-2006, and 2007-2015).

5.22 In 2013 a "Further Assessments of the Relationship between Buildings and Stone Curlew Distribution" study was carried out to update previous work on the effect of buildings and roads on Stone Curlews in The Brecks. Including new analysis and using additional survey data, this study report focused on the effects of buildings on the distribution of breeding Stone Curlew in The Brecks. The report provides strong support for the continuation of a 1500m zone around the areas capable of supporting Stone Curlews. Within this zone additional development is likely to have a significant effect on the SPA.

5.23 The 2013 research also suggests that the planting of woodland/screening as a mitigation measure is unlikely to be effective and that the effect of nest density is strongest as a result of the amount of buildings rather than type. One of the key aims of the research was to differentiate the effects of nest density due to different building classes. Due to the sample size and number of buildings identified there needs to be an element of caution applied to the results, however, the research indicates that there was no evidence of a negative impact of agricultural or commercial buildings. As such, the analysis suggests that project level HRA for non-residential development in the SPA buffer zones may be able to demonstrate that adverse effects can be ruled out.

5.24 A draft protocol entitled 'Agricultural Buildings and the Breckland Special Protection Area stone curlew constraint zone' was produced by Natural England (2013) with input from stakeholders. Natural England suggested that Breckland Council may wish to update and formally adopt this protocol to take account of the most recent Footprint Ecology report and expand it to include commercial buildings, and this has therefore been taken into account in the Local Plan HRA. For non-residential developments which meet certain criteria, this should result in a simplified Habitats Regulations Assessment. This has been reflected in the policy wording.

5.25 A report providing a comprehensive analysis of current and projected visitor patterns to European protected sites across Norfolk was commissioned by Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership on behalf of Local Authorities and completed in 2017. The report entitled 'Visitor surveys at European protected sites across Norfolk during 2015 and 2016' highlights that whilst survey areas in The Brecks received a much lower number of visitors than other survey sites such as those on the Norfolk coast, the proportion of local visitors (with Norfolk postcodes) was significantly higher to sites in The Brecks. The report presents evidence that of all designated sites included in the survey, Breckland SPA had the highest proportion of local visitors to the Brecks, from the

settlements of Thetford, Mildenhall, Swaffham, Mundford, Brandon (of which Mildenhall and Brandon are outside the District within Suffolk). There is therefore evidential support for mitigation strategies to apply to new development in those settlements.

5.26 The Thetford SUE represents the largest area of planned growth within the District which would result in increased recreational pressure in The Brecks. A number of strategic mitigation measures were accepted as part of the adopted Thetford Area Action Plan in July 2012 which have been saved through this Local Plan. Further measures have been incorporated within a number of site allocation policies within the plan to ensure that mitigation is provided to reduce the impact of recreational pressure on designated sites.

Policy ENV 03 The Brecks Protected Habitats & Species

The Council requires that a Habitats Regulations Assessment is undertaken on all proposals for development that are likely to have a significant effect on The Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) which is classified for its populations of Stone Curlew, Woodlark and Nightjar, and/or Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is designated for its heathland habitats. Development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA or the SAC.

Stone Curlew

Plan level Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken to identify where built development is likely to significantly affect the Breckland SPA. Map 5.1 identifies a 1,500m buffer zone from the edge of those parts of the SPA that support, or are capable of supporting, Stone Curlew, where new built development would be likely to significantly affect the SPA population. The plan level Habitats Regulations Assessment also identifies areas that have a functional link to the SPA, because they support Stone Curlew outside, but in close proximity to the SPA boundary. These areas also have a 1500m buffer zone, within which new built development would be likely to significantly affect the SPA population.

Development within the SPA boundary, or located less than 1500m away from the SPA boundary or identified areas that have a functional link (see Map 5.1) will not normally be permitted.

Where a proposed building is outside the SPA but within 1500m of the SPA boundary or identified areas that have a functional link (see Map 5.1), there may be circumstances where a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment is able to demonstrate that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA. Applicants must provide evidence to show how their proposal meets the criteria listed in Natural England's "Agricultural Buildings and the Breckland SPA Stone Curlew constraint zone" advice note, or successor document. Circumstances where the proposal is able to conclusively demonstrate that it will not result in an adverse effect on Breckland SPA may include where the proposal is:

- More than 1500m away from potential stone curlew nesting sites inside the SPA (these are those parts of the SPA that are also designated as Breckland Farmland SSSI);
- A new building that will be completely masked from the SPA by existing built development;
- A proposed re-development of an existing building that would not alter its footprint or increase its potential impact;
- A new agricultural building of less than 120 sqm;
- An extension to existing agricultural buildings of less than 120 sqm or 100% of the original, whichever is less. -

Woodlark and Nightjar

Development within 400m of the SPA that support, or are capable of supporting Woodlark and/or Nightjar will not normally be permitted.

The Council will consider the need for a Habitats Regulations Assessment to determine the implications of development on Nightjar and Woodlark on a case by case basis, depending on the location and nature of the proposal.

Recreation pressure and urban effects

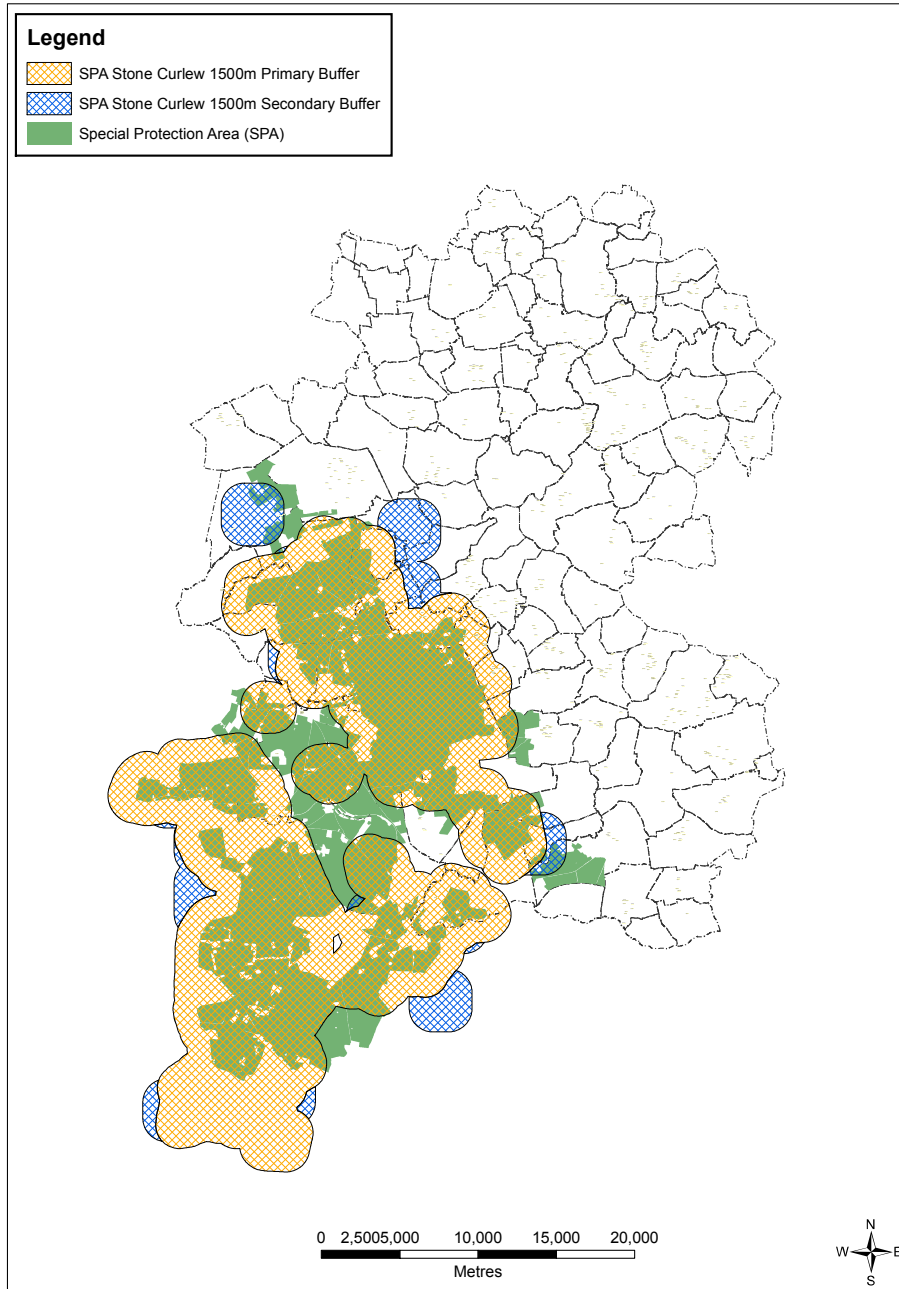
Plan level Habitats Regulations Assessment has identified the potential for increased disturbance to Nightjar, Woodlark and Stone Curlew as a result of recreation, and the potential for other urban effects such as increased fire, litter and eutrophication to significantly affect Breckland SPA and SAC.

The Council will work with partners to develop a framework of measures that manage and monitor access. Proposals for development in Thetford, Swaffham and Mundford will be required to demonstrate the inclusion of mitigation measures that contribute to the framework to address the potential impact of increased recreational pressure on Breckland SPA. This should comprise:

- new on-site recreational areas in accordance with other policy requirements in this plan, and/or;
- other measures that contribute to managing recreation pressure, such as educational/information materials, staff resources, managing car parking and projects targeting dog walking.

The Council will work with partners to develop a framework for managing and monitoring urban effects. Proposals for development where urban heaths at Thetford (Barnham Cross Common, Thetford Heath, Thetford Golf Club and Marsh), East Wretham or Brettenham are likely to be used as local greenspace will need to demonstrate the inclusion of mitigation measures that contribute to the framework to address the potential impact urban effects on Breckland SPA.

Map 5.1 SPA Primary and Secondary Buffers



Open Space, Sport and Recreation

5.27 Open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as 'land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground'. Allotments are also included under the definition of open space. Open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.

5.28 The NPPF at paragraph 73 states that policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments is then used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.

5.29 In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities. An audit of all open space provision within Breckland District, excluding Thetford Forest⁽¹⁾, was undertaken in 2015. The Open Space Assessment evaluated the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and recreational land provision in the Breckland District (excluding Thetford Forest) and recommended standards and effective mechanisms in order for appropriate provision to be secured to meet future needs. The assessment shows that Breckland District has a deficit, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in outdoor playing space provision.

5.30 The study shows that when assessing overall playing space in the District at a Fields in Trust (FIT) standard of 2.56 ha per 1000 population, 70% of the parishes in the District do not meet the FIT standard. The five market towns of Attleborough, Thetford, Dereham, Swaffham and Watton have the largest deficiencies in total playing space provision for their populations compared to the FIT standard, with Thetford having the largest deficiency of any parish in the District.

5.31 Furthermore, 70% of the parishes in the District do not meet the FIT standard for children's play area provision. The 5 market towns of Attleborough, Thetford, Dereham, Swaffham and Watton have the highest proportion of children in addition to the highest deficiency of provision in children's play compared with the FIT standard. Thetford has the highest percentage of children compared to the other four market towns, but also has the highest deficiency of children's play areas against the FIT standard.

5.32 Only 30% of the parishes in Breckland meet the FIT outdoor sports standard. The five market towns have an average or above quality score, despite having a deficiency in the amount of space. Whereas the majority of the rural parishes have an average or below sports quality score, despite having lower FIT standards. A similar pattern was found following the 2010 assessment and consequently the policy focus is to improve the quality, rather than quantity, of rural sports pitches.

5.33 The Accessible Natural Green Space Standard (ANGST) requires that sites of at least 2ha in size, of accessible green space, are available per 1000 people based on no one living more than 300m from the nearest area of natural green space. It also recommends that no one should live 2km from at least one accessible site of at least 20ha; 5 km from at least one accessible site of at least 200ha; and 10km from at least one accessible site of 500ha.

5.34 In conclusion, the Breckland Open Space, Sport and Recreation study recommended that:

1 Thetford Forest was excluded from the audit because not all of the forest is publicly accessible. Large areas remain a working forest managed by the Forestry Commission and an important supplier of timber. Thetford Forest also extends into Suffolk. It was considered that the inclusion of such a large area would compromise the open space figure for Breckland and show a disproportionate surplus and/or deficiency.

- The local standards of 2.56 ha of open space (0.8 ha for children's play and 1.76 ha for outdoor sport) per 1000 population should be used as a local standard for open space provision;
- There should be a greater focus on provision of new facilities to address quantitative deficits, which will be delivered through new housing development;
- The Local Plan should allocate additional areas of open space;
- All new children's play and outdoor sports areas should be designed in accordance with FIT and Sport England standards to ensure the highest quality of open space area is provided; and
- In terms of outdoor sports, all dwellings in major housing areas must be within 1.2km of outdoor sports areas as recommended by FIT. Outdoor sport areas should be located near to public transport routes, have good provision for car parking and have easy access for pedestrians and cycles. In terms of children's play areas, all dwellings in housing areas should be within 100m of a local area of play (LAP), 400m of a local equipped area for play (LEAP) and 1000m of a neighbourhood equipped area for play (NEAP) as recommended by FIT.

5.35 Planning obligations sought need to be in accordance with regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010) requiring the provision of infrastructure necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, reasonable in scale and kind and directly related to the development. Developers cannot be required to meet existing shortfalls in infrastructure provision.

5.36 The HRA identifies the need for further open space as part of a suite of measures to prevent additional recreational pressure for development at Thetford, Mundford and Swaffham and to prevent urban effects on sensitive heathland sites including Barnham Cross Common, Thetford Heath, Thetford Golf Club and Marsh and at East Wretham and Brettenham. Project level HRA's may identify requirements for additional open space or the specific provision of open space as part of the mitigation measures to protect European sites.

Policy ENV 04 Open Space, Sport & Recreation

Existing Provision

Development that would result in the loss of existing designated open space will only be permitted if:

(a) it can be demonstrated (through a local assessment) that there is an excess of recreational or amenity open space in the settlement and the proposed loss will not result in a current or likely shortfall during the plan period; or

(b) recreational facilities within the open space will be enhanced by the proposed development on an appropriate portion of the open space; or

(c) the community would gain greater benefit from the developer providing a suitable alternative recreational or amenity open space in an equally accessible and convenient location.

The development of existing open space with an ecological value (a known biodiversity or nature conservation interest) will not be permitted.

New Provision

All new residential development is expected to provide a contribution towards outdoor playing space equivalent to 2.56 hectares per 1,000 population*, which equates to 25.6m² of outdoor playing space per person. As set out in the Open Space Assessment (2015), this 25.6m² is broken down to 17.6m² of outdoor sport area and 8m² of children's play space.

There is a presumption that for developments comprising of 25 dwellings or more that open space, sport and recreation facilities will be provided within the development site. Where on-site provision is provided, the space should be of an appropriate type to serve the needs of the development, well related to the proposed residential properties and in accordance with relevant standards.

Within a residential development of 25 or more dwellings priority should be given to the provision of children's play areas since the facility is most likely to be required within an easy reach of dwellings and will be required to conform to the 0.8ha per 1000 people standard in provision of children's play area in accordance with the NPFA standard.

- On sites of 25 dwellings and above - Minimum of 1 Local Area for Play (LAP)
- On sites of 50 dwellings and above - Minimum of 2 LAPs (or equivalent provision if provided as 1 large LAP)
- On sites of 80 dwellings and above - Minimum of 1 Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)
- On sites of 200 dwellings and above - Minimum of 2 LEAPs and an Outdoor Sport Area
- On sites of 400 dwellings and above - Minimum of 1 Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) and an Outdoor Sport Area

It is recognised that there may be cases where the direct provision of open space on-site is not the preferred option. It may be that open space does not represent an efficient use of land in the context of the site location or that there is a deliverable opportunity to secure a more meaningful area of open space that better serves the whole community in close proximity to the application site. Contributions in lieu of on-site provision will be the exception and will need to be supported by robust evidence from the applicant that on-site provision is not preferable. Any contribution will need to be towards a specific deliverable scheme in consultation with the relevant parish council and the developer contributions policy in this document. The contribution will be required to name a specific scheme.

Major development sites comprising more than 10 dwellings but less than 25 dwellings will be expected to make proportionate off site contributions towards open space, sports and recreational facilities.

In addition to the on-site and off-site contributions, a contribution will be required for 10 years maintenance of the facility. The contribution will be proportional to the type of facility provided and will be calculated in accordance with the criteria set out in the Breckland Open Space Assessment (2015) which will be reviewed periodically.

* The population resulting from a particular development is calculated using the occupancy rates set out below. Using these occupancy rates it is possible to calculate the level of outdoor playing space needs for any given development.

Table 5.1 Occupancy rates

1 bedroom	1.5 persons
2 bedrooms	2.0 persons
3 bedrooms	2.5 persons
4 bedrooms	3.0 persons
5 bedrooms or more	3.5 persons

5.37 Contributions in line with the standards will be required for all additional new residential units. This includes most specialised types of housing including agricultural dwellings, affordable housing and staff accommodation.

5.38 Replacement dwellings will not be required to make a provision unless additional units are being created. If additional units are being created then the net gain of units will be subject to providing a contribution.

5.39 Extensions to dwellings will not be subject to making a provision unless where new units of accommodation are being created. This is applied whether or not the unit is tied by condition to the main house, for example staff accommodation. Provision will not be sought where the unit is for a dependant relative, and a specific planning condition or obligation is attached, limiting the occupation's use to that purpose.

5.40 Permissions for temporary mobile homes will not be expected to provide open space.

5.41 It is accepted that certain development will not create demand for all elements of open space requirements. For example the occupants of a sheltered housing scheme, nursing homes, hostel accommodation, where the occupancy is controlled, would not be expected to use all children's play areas. In these cases it would not be appropriate for the Council to apply that element of the standard. However, it is worth noting that although children's play areas may not be appropriate, there is an element of amenity area or communal space that could benefit residents of the new proposal. Such cases will be considered individually on their own merits.

Table 5.2 Summary of exceptions to open space contributions

Developments where the Council will seek to apply the play and outdoor sports space standard.	Development that is likely to be considered exceptions to the play and outdoor playing space standards
All new dwellings	Replacement dwellings (on a one for one basis) i.e. no new additional units

Dwelling gains resulting from new development	Extensions and annexes within the curtilage of a main property for dependent relatives
Conversion or part conversions creating additional independent residential units with separate facilities	Sheltered housing schemes, nursing homes, controlled hostel accommodation
Bedsit accommodation with shared facilities	Temporary permission for mobile homes
Permanent permission for mobile homes	

Local Green Space

5.42 The NPPF introduced a new designation of “Local Green Space” as a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. Paragraph 76 of the NPPF says that ‘By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.’

5.43 National policy also states the designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

5.44 The 2015 Open Space Assessment reviewed sites submitted to the Council by Parish Councils at the time of the study and the recommendations have been carried forward into the Local Plan. The following are designated as areas of Local Green Space that are in conformity with the NPPF criteria:

Table 5.3 Local Green Space designations

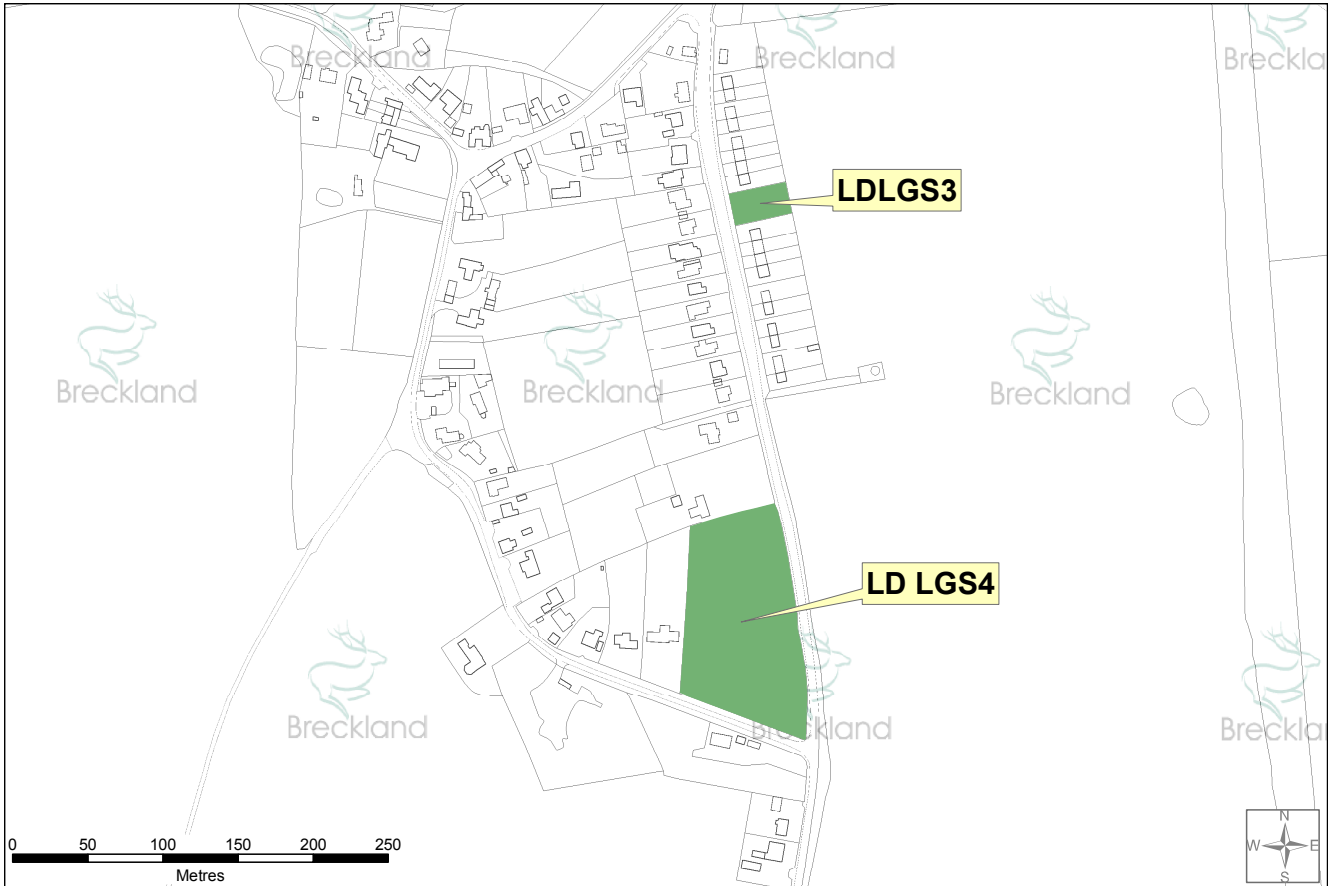
LDLGS3	Little Dunham
LDLGS4	Little Dunham
TLGS9	Thetford

Figure 5.1 Key to Local Green Space Maps

Legend
 Local Green Space Designation

Little Dunham

Map 5.2 Little Dunham Local Green Space



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Thetford

Map 5.3 Thetford Local Green Space



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Landscape Character

5.45 Breckland includes extensive tracts of the nationally and regionally significant Brecks heaths and woodland in the south and west of the district. The importance of these areas has been recognised in The Brecks Landscape Character Assessment (LCA, 2013). The LCA identified eight distinct, and sensitive, valued character areas within the Brecks, with the core landscape types being the Brecks Arable Heathland Mosaic, the Brecks Plantation and the River Valleys.

5.46 The Brecks Landscape Character Assessment (2013) covers only The Brecks area of the District (south and west). A District wide LCA was produced in 2007, which states that the rest of the District is generally characterised by river valleys with their associated tributary farmland rising up to the clay plateau farmland which stretches from the Lophams in the south-east to Colkirk in the north-west.

5.47 The different sub types of landscape identified by the LCAs have a varying capacity to accommodate new development, depending on their nature and location. Development will not be permitted where it would be significantly detrimental to the landscape's characteristics or defining features.

5.48 In determining proposals for new development, regard shall be had to the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, ensuring that all proposals respect the key visual sensitivities of the landscape that are a fundamental part of its character. The integration of new development into the existing landscape will be expected to be achieved in all development proposals without causing harm to the features that define them. The Council will give high protection to the River Valleys and Chalk Rivers from development that would harm their defining landscape characteristics.

5.49 The entire landscape is considered through both the Landscape Character Assessment and the Settlement Fringe study, both of which form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.

5.50 Breckland's Landscape Character Assessment has previously identified river valleys as areas which should have high protection from development due to their important environmental quality. It is considered that this approach should continue within the Local Plan.

Policy ENV 05 Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape

The landscape of the District will be protected for the sake of its own intrinsic beauty, its benefit to the rural character and in the interests of biodiversity, geodiversity and historic conservation. Development should have particular regard to maintaining the aesthetic and biodiversity qualities of natural and man-made features within the landscape, including a consideration of individual or groups of natural features such as trees, hedges and woodland or rivers, streams or other topographical features.

Release of land in Breckland will have regard to the findings of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment to ensure land is only released in areas where the impact on the landscape is minimal. Development should also be designed to be sympathetic to landscape character, and informed by the LCA.

High protection will be given to The Brecks landscape, reflecting its role as a regionally significant green infrastructure asset. Proposals within The Brecks Landscape Character Areas will not be permitted where these would result in harm to key visual features of the landscape type, other valued components of the landscape, or where proposals would result in a change in the landscape character.

High protection will also be given to the river valleys and chalk rivers in Breckland as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, recognising their defining natural features, rich biodiversity and the undeveloped character of their shallow valleys.

Trees and Hedgerows

5.51 Trees, hedgerows and other natural features form an essential part of Breckland's landscape character, enhancing the aesthetics of an area, the quality of the environment and providing a habitat for a range of wildlife. They can also help to reduce noise and prove beneficial in terms of atmospheric pollution and flood mitigation.

5.52 Where new development is proposed the preference will always be to incorporate existing natural features into the development. However, there may be instances where the loss of important natural features is unavoidable, for example to enable a scheme to fulfil important objectives such as economic development or the provision of housing. Where the loss of such features is demonstrably unavoidable adequate replacement provision, preferably by native British species, of the same or greater value will be sought.

5.53 Some trees in the District have protected status, mainly under the designation of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or those located in a conservation area. A TPO is an order made by a LPA in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage and wilful destruction of trees without the LPA's prior written consent.

Policy ENV 06 Trees, Hedgerows and Development

Trees and significant hedge and shrub masses form part of the green infrastructure network and should be retained as an integral part of the design of development except where their long-term survival would be compromised by their age or physical condition, or there are exceptional and overriding benefits in accepting their loss.

Development requiring the loss of a protected tree or hedgerow (including preserved trees, protected hedgerows, trees in Conservation Areas, ancient trees, aged and veteran trees and trees classified as being of categories A or B in value (BS5837:2012)) will only be permitted where:

- a) the removal of a tree or hedgerow will enhance the survival or growth of other protected trees or hedgerows, or;
- b) it would allow for a substantially improved overall approach to the design and landscaping of the development that would outweigh the loss of any tree or hedgerow.

Where the loss of trees is accepted in these circumstances, developers will be required to retain enough space to ensure that at least one tree of a similar ultimate size to that removed is planted with sufficient room to reach maturity without future pressure for pruning or removal.

Development Affecting Trees and Hedgerows

Where a proposed development retains existing trees and hedgerows on-site, or where development occurs within a tree root protection area, provision must be made for their care and protection throughout the duration of the development with mitigation measures being put in place to ensure that development works do not have a harmful impact on existing trees. To ensure that tree cover and habitat is retained, it is important that both the short term and long term impacts that a development may have on trees is evaluated at the earliest opportunity. Accordingly the Council may require that a Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan and Method Statement be undertaken by a suitably qualified professional in accordance with BS5837:2012.

The Historic Environment & Heritage Assets

5.54 Paragraph 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that: "local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment". The NPPF also states that local plans should include strategic policies to deliver the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment (paragraph 156) and should identify land where development is inappropriate because of its environmental or historic significance (paragraph 157).

5.55 The historic environment of Breckland is recognised as a unique and irreplaceable resource. Breckland District is fortunate to possess a rich and diverse architectural heritage, displaying the use of a wide range of materials, dictated prior to industrialism by the immediate geology and landscape of the surrounding area. Typically, the use of brick, flint, chalk, clay lump and timber framing for walling with thatch; clay tiles and, in later years following industrialism, slates for roofing.

5.56 The District also contains numerous designated heritage assets: over 1,500 Listed Buildings and a wealth of other important non-designated buildings that contribute to both the urban and rural contexts and the historic environment as a whole. Breckland also has 50 Conservation Areas, 200 scheduled monuments and 9 Historic Parks and Gardens included on the Historic England Register, designated to assist in the conservation and enhancement of particular features of historic or architectural interest.

5.57 The character of these areas is defined by the combination of elements such as the mixture and style of buildings, the extent and form of open spaces, the quality and relationship of buildings, prevalent building materials and the amount of trees or other green features. These features contribute to the overall character of the area and need to be recognised and respected in proposals for new development.

5.58 There are many types of heritage asset within the District, some of which are protected through national or local designations, others which have no formal designation or protection. The Council has developed two separate policies to deal with the different types of assets.

Designated Heritage Assets

5.59 There are a total of 50 Conservation Areas in the District, most based on historic village centres. It is important that the nature of conservation areas and historic buildings is maintained to ensure their protection for future generations and their continued contribution to the economic prosperity of the District. Social, environmental and cultural benefits are derived from this link to the past and it helps to reinforce a sense of place, quality of life, local identity and character.

5.60 Known individual heritage assets are identified in Norfolk County Council's Historic Environment Record, whilst a number of existing documents analyse particular aspects of the heritage significance of the District.

5.61 There are 1,536 Listed Buildings in the District, including 113 Grade I and 102 Grade II*. Whilst the majority of the listed buildings in the District are in good or reasonable repair, a number of buildings are in severe disrepair. There are 25 Grade I or Grade II* Listed Buildings at Risk as registered by English Heritage.

5.62 There are also 9 Registered Parks and Gardens (all Grade II), 130 scheduled monuments, plus three shared with adjoining Local Authorities.

5.63 Breckland Council understands that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and the policy below aims to conserve designated heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Policy ENV 07 Designated Heritage Assets

The significance of designated heritage assets, including nationally protected listed buildings and their settings, scheduled monuments, archaeological sites, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and their settings, will be conserved and enhanced and given the highest level of protection. Proposals that would affect the significance of a designated heritage asset will be required to provide sufficient information to enable any impact to be assessed.

Development that will affect any designated heritage asset will be subject to comprehensive assessment and will be expected to conserve and, wherever possible, enhance the character, appearance and setting of Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and other designated areas of historic interest. Where a proposed development will affect the character or setting of a Listed Building, particular regard will need to be given to the protection, conservation and potential enhancement of any features of historic or architectural interest; this includes internal features, floor plans and spaces or any object or structure within the curtilage of a listed building that predates 1st July 1948.

The conversion of buildings of particular architectural or historic interest for economic or residential purposes in locations that would otherwise be unacceptable will be considered where this would ensure the retention and ongoing conservation of the building. Proposals will be considered having regard to national policy and relevant guidance.

Where it is considered appropriate in cases where development coincides with the location of a known or suspected archaeological interest, an archaeological field evaluation will be required. Where appropriate, archaeological remains can be left *in situ* following further design/engineering work. If the benefits of a particular development are considered to outweigh the importance of retaining archaeological remains *in situ* satisfactory excavation and recording of remains will be required before development is begun.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

5.64 Alongside the designated heritage assets of the District, Breckland also has a range of non-designated historic assets which contribute to the character of the countryside, such as a variety of traditional dwelling types, domestic and agricultural ancillary buildings, chapels, commercial and industrial buildings, railway structures and structures associated with wartime use. Many of the known non-designated heritage assets are listed in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, and regard should be had to this if proposals may affect a non-designated asset. In addition to this there will be a number of currently unknown heritage assets of, as yet, undefined significance. These assets play an essential role in reinforcing a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the locality. Regard should be had to all heritage assets when designing development.

5.65 The Council will protect and improve the built environment, paying special regard to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment through positive action and partnership working. The historic environment makes a significant contribution to sustainable communities through sustaining economic vitality, providing social and cultural links to the past and ensuring a dynamic and varied built environment. New development must make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of the historic environment.

Other heritage assets and locally important parks and gardens will be conserved and where possible enhanced. In conjunction with Policy ENV06, landscapes that form the setting to the built and historic environment will also be conserved and enhanced.

Policy ENV 08 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Development will be expected to conserve and wherever possible enhance the character, appearance and setting of non-designated historic assets. Proposals that could affect previously unrecognised heritage assets will be expected, through agreement with the Council, to undergo an appropriate assessment in line with the significance of the asset. The assessment must provide sufficient information for any impact to be assessed.

The conversion of non-designated buildings of particular architectural or historic merit for economic or residential purposes in locations that would otherwise be unacceptable will be considered where this would ensure the retention of the building. Proposals will be considered having regard to relevant national policy and relevant guidance.

In the case of traditional dwellings which positively contribute to the character of Breckland, applications for replacement will be expected to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which includes a structural survey that demonstrates that the demolition is necessary and that there is no alternative and viable solution of renovation to provide an acceptable standard of accommodation.

Flood Risk & Surface Water Drainage

5.66 All new development should be located so as to minimise flood risk and increased flood risk resulting from that development. The policy approach is to steer development towards areas of low flood risk, Flood Zone 1. National policy requires that a sequential and exception test be applied by reference to identified flood zones.

5.67 Flood risk across Breckland is not as widespread compared to many areas of Norfolk; flooding usually occurs adjacent to rivers and other watercourses or in low-lying areas. However, it can also occur elsewhere, such as surface water flooding, groundwater flooding caused by springs, or where buildings or other structures affect the natural drainage of the land. Evidence on flood risk is contained within the latest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Sequential Test, completed in 2017.

5.68 Norfolk County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) with responsibility for managing local flood risk and surface water flooding and the take up of sustainable drainage systems and is tasked with coordinating the management of local flood risk and the provision of advice to LPAs on drainage for new major development.

5.69 The Water Cycle Study, SFRA and any subsequent Surface Water Management Plan will inform the level of detail required to accompany planning applications identified in any designated groundwater protection zones and/or critical drainage catchments, or other areas where there is evidence that there is likely to be an increased risk of surface water flooding (e.g. as a result of specific topography with catchment areas feeding into identified flood-vulnerable areas).

5.70 This policy requires surface water drainage issues to be addressed in planning applications, both to ensure that such issues and associated flood risk are considered, and to ensure that the impact of drainage measures on the form and visual appearance of developments is properly taken into account in the assessment of new development. Where necessary the Council will seek to impose Grampian conditions to ensure that appropriate upgrades are completed to the sewerage network in advance of new development taking place.

5.71 The use of soft landscaping and permeable surface materials should be maximised. On-site rainwater storage (ponds, basins and swales), living roofs and walls (where appropriate) will be required unless the developer can provide justification to demonstrate that this would not be practicable or feasible within the constraints or configuration of the site and would compromise wider regeneration objectives.

Policy ENV 09 Flood Risk & Surface Water Drainage

All new development will:

- be located to minimise the risk of flooding, mitigating any such risk through design and implementing sustainable drainage (SuDS) principles.
- incorporate appropriate surface water drainage mitigation measures to minimise its own risk of flooding and should not materially increase the flood risk to other areas. Particular care will be required in relation to habitats designated as being of international importance in the area and beyond which are water sensitive, as well as habitats designated of regional or local importance.

Developers will be required to show that the proposed development would:

- i) not increase green field run off rates and vulnerability of the site, or the wider catchment, to flooding from surface water run-off from existing or predicted water flows;
- ii) wherever practicable, have a positive impact on the risk of surface water flooding in the surrounding area adjacent to the development; and
- iii) address potential impact of infiltration upon groundwater Source Protection Zones and/or Critical Drainage Catchments.

This will be minimised through the installation of infiltration and attenuation measures to dispose of surface water in accordance with sustainable drainage system (SuDS) principles and the refinements to, and evolution of, the technical evidence base and guidance (as may be updated and superseded over the life of this Plan).

Proposals for vulnerable development in medium and higher flood risk areas must be accompanied by a site-specific flood risk assessment, clearly identifying whether the development will be safe for its lifetime, taking account of the vulnerability of its users, and whether there may be any potential increase or reduction in flood risk elsewhere. In line with the sequential test, areas of functional floodplain should be protected from development. Where possible, through proposals for re-development, opportunities to reinstate areas of functional flood plain should be taken (e.g. reducing building footprints or relocating to lower flood risk zones).

Consideration should be given to assessing opportunities to undertake river restoration and enhancement as part of a development to make space for water. Enhancement opportunities for renewing assets will be encouraged, where viable (e.g. de-converting, the use of bio-engineered river walls, raising bridge soffits to take into account climate change). Any proposals for enhancement and restoration of the river corridor should be subject to consultation with Norfolk County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, and in relevant cases with neighbouring authorities.

In the case of major development on unallocated sites, wider sustainability benefits should not remove the need to consider flood risk or surface water management, or the need to mitigate accordingly. Development will need to provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that clearly outweigh the flood risk.

All applications should reflect best practice and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) guidance, and any updated version (currently April 2017) providing the appropriate information required to assist in the determination of such application as issued by the LLFA. This includes the requirement to provide details of means of adoption and maintenance of the systems over the lifetime of the development at the pre-application stage.

Renewable Energy

5.72 The NPPF supports the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and encourages the use of renewable resources, including the development of renewable energy. National policy as a whole supports and encourages the development of renewable energy sources. As a result of EU Directive 2009/28/EC, the UK committed to a legally binding target to achieve 15% of all energy generated from renewable resources, including electricity, heat and transport, by 2020. The 2006 Energy Review has an aspiration that 20% of electricity is to be from renewable resources by 2020. The overarching strategy to reduce carbon emissions to meet the requirements of the Directive and the Climate Change Act is contained in the UK Renewable Energy Strategy and the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan.

5.73 Renewable energy is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. In meeting the challenge and to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, the Council recognises the need to have a positive strategy to promote renewable energy generation, whilst at the same time ensuring that the adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including the cumulative landscape and visual impacts.

5.74 There are many different types of renewable energy choices, from solar energy, wind and biomass through to energy efficient installations such as combined heat and power and ground source heating. All of these technologies and methods of construction have a role to play in meeting Government targets and are seen as positive outcomes for the District. The Council will therefore support and encourage the generation of energy from renewable sources. These will be permitted unless there are unacceptable site specific or other impacts that could not be outweighed by wider environmental, social, economic and other benefits.

5.75 As a rural District, Breckland is particularly suited to solar farms. The Government's solar Photovoltaic (PV) strategy was published in 2014. The aim is to create more financial certainty and investor confidence in order to realise the long term potential for solar PV in the UK at a large and small scale. There is no cap on capacity. It is the Government's ambition to see "*more ambitious deployment, perhaps approaching 20 Gigawatts (GW) early in the next decade*". The past four years has seen a growth in the delivery of such facilities and their associated energy production capacity, but as at June 2013, the capacity of PV was 2.4 GW, forecast to reach 10 GW by 2020.

5.76 Whilst large scale facilities provide an opportunity for greater energy production (as well as potential enhancement to biodiversity), it is also of importance that they are carefully planned and screened to ensure any amenity and visual impacts are minimised. The NPPF states that applicants for energy development should not have to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and that applications should be approved if their impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

5.77 Whilst large scale ground-mounted PV solar farms developments can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively.

Solar Farm Planning Considerations / Assessment Criteria

5.78 The effective use of land by focusing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non agricultural land, will be encouraged provided that it is not of high environmental value.

5.79 Particular factors that the Council will need to consider where a proposal involves greenfield land include:

- the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and
- that the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays.

5.80 The Government's NPPG makes specific reference to a Ministerial speech in April 2013 encouraging development on brownfield land, low grade agricultural land and on buildings; and to a Written Statement to Parliament in March 2015. The guidance notes:

- That solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use;
- The proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and glare and on neighbouring uses and aircraft safety;
- The need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing;
- Great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence, but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large scale solar farms on such assets. Depending on their scale, design and prominence, a large scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset;
- The potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges; and
- The energy generating potential, which can vary for a number of reasons including latitude and aspect.

5.81 The guidance also advises that the approach to assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of large scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing the impact of wind turbines. However, in the case of ground mounted solar panels, it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography the area of a zone of visual influence could be zero.

Government Aims on Solar Energy

5.82 The Written Statement to Parliament in March 2015 sets out the Government's aims on solar energy development and highlights concerns about the unjustified use of high quality agricultural land making it clear that any proposal for a solar farm involving the best and most versatile agricultural land would need to be justified by the most compelling evidence.

Anaerobic Digestion Considerations /Assessment Criteria

Anaerobic digestion (AD) is a natural process in which micro-organisms break down the organic matter found in wet biomass waste (such as sewage sludge, animal manure and slurry and waste food) in the absence of oxygen, to produce biogas (mainly a mixture of around 60% methane and 40% carbon dioxide) and digestate (a nitrogen rich fertiliser). The National Non-Food Crops Centre (NNFCC) runs the Government's Anaerobic Digestion Portal (<http://www.biogas-info.co.uk/>) – a gateway to information on anaerobic digestion, biogas and digestate. Reference should also be made to 'The Anaerobic digestion strategy and action plan', published by government on 14 June 2011 and an update on progress on detailed actions published in July 2012. Anaerobic Digestion proposals are regarded as waste treatment facilities, where feedstock is classified as waste under relevant legislation and so relevant related national and county best practice guidance and policies will apply.

Anaerobic Digestion proposals raise a number of planning issues including visual and landscape impacts arising from industrial scale plant / buildings; location concerns (in sustainability terms relative to the source of biomass and where relevant combined heat and power (CHP); electricity and/or gas grid connection), potential odour impacts, air emissions, noise impacts, protection of the water environment and traffic impacts. Failure to supply adequate environmental information to accompany planning applications for anaerobic digestion projects can be a key cause of delay in determining a planning application. Breckland Council therefore encourages early pre-application engagement on all renewable energy projects to optimise project assessment and delivery.

All Renewable Energy Environmental Concerns

5.83 In relation to all renewable or low carbon energy development the Government's NPPG also states that: the need for renewable or low carbon energy does not automatically override environmental protections; cumulative impacts require particular attention, especially the increasing impact that wind turbines and large scale solar farms can have on landscape and local amenity as the number of turbines and solar arrays in an area increases; local topography is an important factor in assessing whether wind turbines and large scale solar farms could have a damaging effect on landscape and recognise that the impact can be as great in predominately flat landscapes as in hilly or mountainous areas; also, that great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting.

Policy ENV 10 Renewable Energy Development

Proposals for renewable energy development including the landward infrastructure for offshore renewable schemes requiring planning permission will be assessed to determine whether the benefits they bring in terms of the volume and usability of energy generated outweigh any adverse impacts. Proposals will be considered having regard to the extent to which there are:

- i. adverse impacts on the local landscape, townscape or designated and undesignated heritage assets, particularly listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens;
- ii. adverse effects on residential amenity by virtue of outlook / overbearing impact, traffic generation, noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker, glare or any other associated detrimental emissions, during construction, operation and decommissioning; and
- iii. adverse impacts upon designated wildlife sites; nature conservation interests; and biodiversity.

Permission will be granted where there are no significant adverse impacts and effects or where any identified adverse effects and impacts are demonstrably outweighed by the benefits. When attributing weight to any harm, in addition to other relevant policies in the Local Plan, regard will be given to national policy and guidance, statutory duty and legislation which seeks protection and enhancement of the landscape; designated and non-statutory heritage assets.

Where appropriate the authority will consider the need for planning conditions requiring the decommissioning and removal of all plant and ancillary equipment, and if necessary the restoration of land, on the cessation of use.

6 Economy and Employment

Economic Development

6.1 The size and dispersed nature of the area's population presents significant challenges for the Council in delivering balanced economic growth. Breckland's strategic position is emphasised by the good road communications offered by the A47 and A11, the latter of which has recently benefited from major improvements providing a complete dualled road linking Norfolk to the rest of the country for the first time. The five market towns, Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffham, Thetford and Watton, are an essential component of the economic and social structure, acting as service centres to their rural hinterlands. The area has seen a rapid population growth, increasing pay levels and low rates of unemployment and there is a trend for the overall number of jobs to increase. However, average wages remain relatively low in comparison with regional and national levels due to a lower level of qualifications of people in the District and a low level of skills required by many of the available jobs.

6.2 The Employment Growth Study and Employment Land Review 2013 for Breckland, identifies that Breckland has a relatively successful economy recording significant job growth over the last two decades. The business base is dominated by small and medium-sized businesses but with below average levels of business start-ups and self-employment. Workforce productivity is relatively low which may in part reflect a slight mis-match in the local economy between lower skilled jobs available, and a more highly qualified resident workforce, many of which commute out of the District to higher paid employment elsewhere.

6.3 Employment space in the District is dominated by industrial uses and tends to be concentrated around Breckland's larger towns. The rural economy also accommodates important hubs of economic activity, particularly with regards to small scale office and workshop space. The District has seen moderate levels of new development over the past eight years, the majority for B1c/B2 manufacturing uses and B8 warehousing.

6.4 Demand for employment space remains steady, focused upon small scale industrial accommodation. The majority of commercial property market activity is concentrated within the settlements of Thetford and Dereham and, to a lesser extent Attleborough, with very limited activity occurring outside of these key areas. Some of the District's stock is dated and/or poorly specified with evidence that this issue has been constraining industrial activity – specifically in the past in terms of attracting new industrial occupiers.

6.5 Within this context, the Employment Growth Study and Employment Land Review 2013 identified a number of policy issues for consideration:

- Consider rationalising existing and future supply of industrial space by seeking to concentrate this space in the District's key locations and areas of strongest market demand (such as Thetford and Attleborough). This would help support critical mass of development on fewer sites, provide a clearer signal to potential investors and also support any necessary upfront infrastructure works. Future development of employment space in the District should also build upon, and take advantage of, significant infrastructure improvements associated with the duelling of the A11 from Fiveways to Thetford as well as the proposed Thetford SUE which will also provide a key driver of economic growth within the District over the plan period.
- In the more peripheral areas of the District where demand levels are weaker, it may be necessary to adopt a flexible approach to bringing forward employment sites by allowing the development of other higher value non-B uses on part of allocated sites, in order to unlock the site's potential and fund any associated infrastructure works.
- At the same time, the Council could consider releasing some of the District's poorer quality and poorer performing sites in more peripheral locations characterised by relatively low market demand and that suffer from constraints to (re)development (such as proximity to residential uses). This would help to ensure an appropriate distribution of employment space across the District in accordance with market demand.

- Over the longer term (i.e. 20 year plan period), it is recommended that any new provision of office space follows an enterprise centre type model, with small units for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and local start-ups and shared workspace and networking opportunities. It is also recommended that any new office space is focused upon Breckland's town centres, benefiting from a more attractive working environment and range of facilities for staff.
- Given the rural nature of much of the District, it is also important that the Local Plan continues to recognise the important role of rural settlements in providing employment space and opportunities for local residents. This is unlikely to justify specific land allocations, however the provision of a positive policy framework (e.g. re-use of buildings) that encourages rural enterprise and diversification schemes represents the most appropriate way of ensuring that rural needs can be met.

6.6 The NPPF requires LPAs to develop a clear understanding of the business needs and markets operating in their areas. It also sets out the need for evidence to be assembled to understand the need for land and floorspace, existing and future supply of land for economic needs as well as understanding the qualitative issues associated with existing employment provision.

6.7 The Employment Growth Study and Employment Land Review 2013 for Breckland, considered the requirements from the NPPF. The study also utilised a number of demographic and economic models as well as involving local stakeholders to map out possible growth scenarios for the District. Four different scenarios of future employment space requirements were considered for the period up to 2031; these were based on a number of approaches which reflect economic growth, past development trends and potential labour supply factors. The majority of these scenarios point to a lower level of future economic growth in Breckland than the District has achieved in the recent past, partly reflecting a more pessimistic post-recession economic outlook. The overall space requirements relating to these scenarios range from 134,235 sq.m to 310,180 sq.m of all types of employment space, implying in broad terms a need for between 31.6 ha and 74.7 ha of employment land. The majority of this spatial requirement relates to industrial (B1c/B2/B8) uses.

6.8 The Local Plan seeks to deliver 64 Hectares of employment land over the plan period. This figure sits between the 'Policy on' job growth scenario, which takes account of planned investment and intelligences about future sector/site based potential as an uplift on East of England Forecasting Model projections and the past trends in completions of employments space scenario. The Employment Growth Study and Employment Land Review 2013 recommended that allocating at least the baseline job growth requirement whilst providing capacity within the District to meet the slightly higher alternative 'policy-on' requirement.

6.9 The completions data has been assessed between 2012-2016 to ensure that the data used within the 2013 study is still accurate. Whilst the level of completions over the period has increased slightly when averaged over the 12 year period this would not result in a dramatic increase in the amount of employment land required. The baseline projections of employment growth and scenarios accounting for planned investment are also still considered to be up to date as of 2017.

6.10 The emerging SHMA has considered an approach to "balance out" the need for new dwellings with the expected level of new jobs forecast for the Central Norfolk Housing Market Area (HMA), utilising the latest information from the East of England Forecasting Model. For Breckland, an uplift is applied to the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for the District to account for the growth in jobs.

6.11 The Local Plan seeks to save policies in Dereham, Swaffham and Thetford totalling at least 34 hectares of employment land. At least 10 hectares of employment land in Attleborough and at least 20 hectares of employment land in Snetterton has been allocated through the Local Plan. It is considered that this increase in employment provides a balanced approach across the District over the plan period.

6.12 Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan moved to the Submission Draft Plan stage in February 2017. Throughout the Neighbourhood Plan making process, the Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan has sought to allocate the 10 hectares of employment land and has actively sought to highlight an area of search for employment land. Due to the progression of the Local Plan and the need for certainty around the provision of employment land in the area, the Local Plan has sought to allocate the area that the Neighbourhood Plan has identified.

6.13 Located in the centre of the District, Watton accommodates a reasonable amount of industrial space (with a focus on light industry and engineering) and a steady flow of industrial requirements from local occupiers. The office market is very small in scale, with very limited accommodation for office users. Available supply of employment space comprises just over 2ha made up of small pockets of undeveloped land and outstanding planning permissions across the town's existing sites (including at Norwich Road Industrial Estate, Threxton Road Industrial Estate). This demand / supply balance appears to be relatively well matched, with no identified need for additional employment space in Watton.

Policy EC 01 Economic Development

For the period 2011 – 2036, 64 Hectares of employment land will be allocated to allow for a range and choice of employment sites to meet economic need and demand.

The distribution of these new employment allocations will reflect sustainability principles, the overall spatial strategy and the development needs of local communities. The spatial distribution will be as follows:

Attleborough – at least 10Ha

Dereham - at least 3Ha (consisting of the specific allocations identified in the Sites Specific Policies and Proposals DPD - Policies D5 – which has been identified as a saved policy for this Local Plan)

Swaffham – at least 9Ha (consisting of the specific allocations identified in the Sites Specific Policies and Proposals DPD– Policies SW2 and SW3 - which have been identified as saved policies for this Local Plan)

Thetford – at least 22Ha (consisting of the specific allocation identified in the Thetford Area Action Plan - Policy TH30 - which has been identified as a saved policy for this Local Plan)

Snetterton – at least 20Ha







6.14 Policy EC 01 sets out the amount of employment land to be allocated within the Local Plan. It proposed that for the period 2011 - 2036, 67 hectares of employment land would be allocated to allow for a range and choice of employment sites to meet economic need and demand. The distribution of the new employment allocations proposed was as follows:

- **Attleborough** - at least 10 hectares
- **Dereham** - at least 3 hectares (consisting of the specific allocations identified in the site specific policies and proposals DPD - Policies D4 and D5 - which have been identified as saved policies for the Local Plan)
- **Swaffham** - at least 9 hectares (consisting of the specific allocations identified in the site specific policies and proposals DPD - Policies SW2 and SW3 - which have been identified as saved policies for the Local Plan)
- **Thetford** - at least 22 hectares (consisting of the specific allocations identified in the Thetford AAP - Policy TH30 - which has been identified as saved policies for the Local Plan)
- **Snetterton** - at least 20 hectares

6.15 The approach to Dereham, Swaffham and Thetford is to carry forward allocations identified within both the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD and Thetford Area Action Plan. It is not therefore proposed to allocate new sites through the Local Plan.

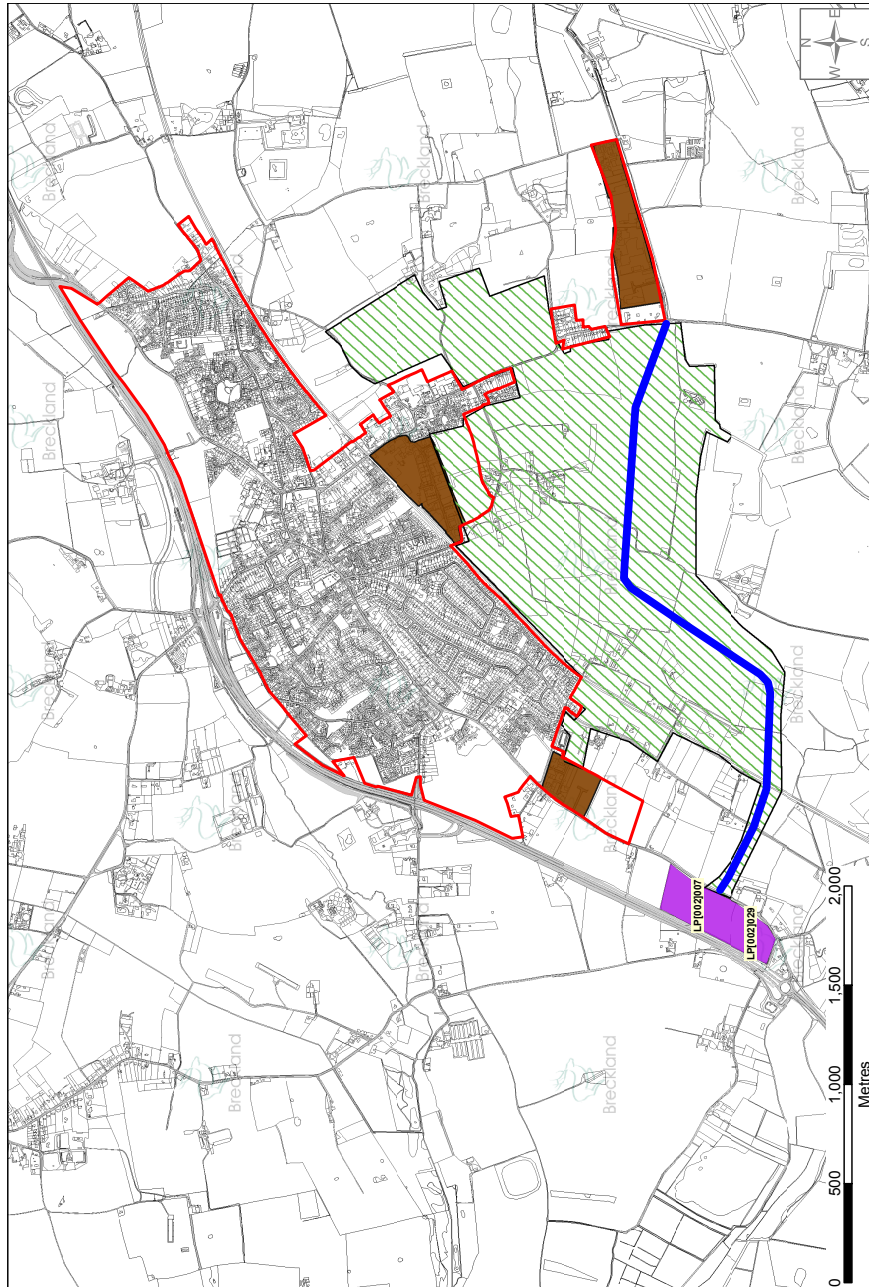
6.16 In line with the Employment Growth Study the Local Plan seeks to allocate 20 additional hectares of employment land at Snetterton Heath and 10 hectares of employment land at Attleborough. The 10 hectares of employment land at Attleborough has been identified through the Neighbourhood Plan, but has been formally allocated through the Local Plan in order to ensure that the requirements of the Employment Growth Study are fulfilled through the lifetime of the plan.

**Figure 6.1 Key for
Employment maps**

Legend	
	Settlement Boundary
	Proposed Allocation
	Landscape Buffer
	General Employment Area
	Attleborough SUE
	Attleborough SUE Indicative Link Road

Attleborough Allocations

Picture 6.1 Summary of Attleborough Allocation



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6.17 The allocation, proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan, totals approximately 12.5 hectares; however, in line with government guidance, a 20% reduction has been applied to convert from gross to net resulting in approximately 10 hectares net internal employment land.

6.18 The emerging policy LE. P1 in the Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan Submission Draft February 2017 seeks to allocate land to the west of London Road for 10 ha of employment land as a result of evidence undertaken to support both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan. This Local Plan policy provides the strategic context for the allocation with the intention that the Neighbourhood Plan will provide detailed policy criteria to shape the development of the employment site. As the Neighbourhood Plan is in its final submission stage (as of February 2017) and has not yet been subject to examination or referendum only limited weight can be applied to the draft Neighbourhood Plan policies. However, the emerging policy LE. P1 has been formed by evidence, is in conformity with the Council's strategic policy direction and has been subject to public consultation and therefore the policy in the Local Plan provides a link to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan policy.

Attleborough Employment Allocation 1

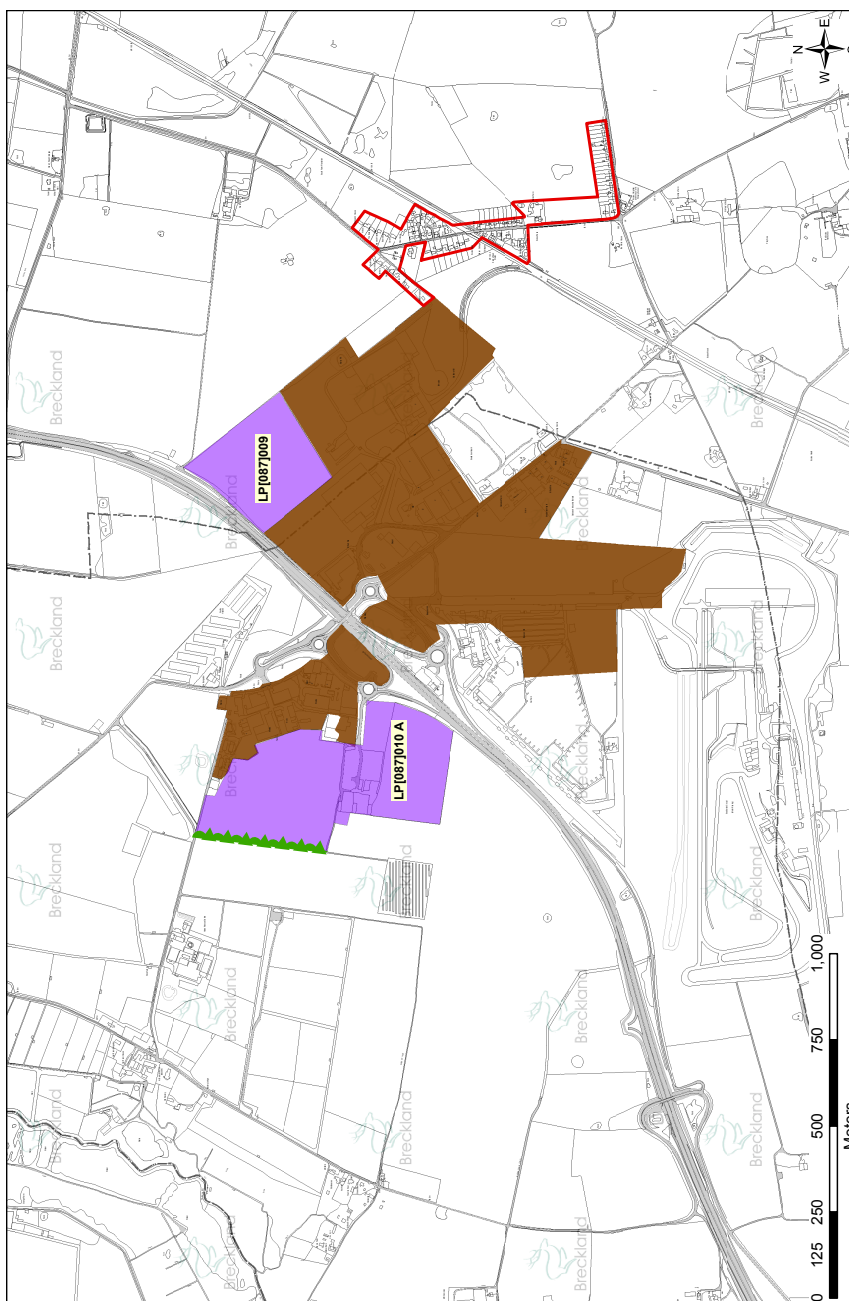
Land to the west of London Road (LP[002]029 & LP[002]007)

Land amounting to 10 hectares (net) is allocated for employment use (within Classes B1 and B2 of the Use Classes Order) to the west of London Road. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Provision of safe highway access from London Road;
2. Appropriate design, layout and landscaping in keeping with the site's location as a key gateway into Attleborough from the A11; and
3. The planning application will have regard to emerging Policy LE. P1 in the Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan Submission Draft February 2017 or the final Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan, if brought into force.

Snetterton Heath Allocations

Map 6.1 Summary of Snetterton Heath Allocations



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6.19 The two allocated sites provide a total of 28.82 hectares, however in line with government guidance, a 20% reduction has been applied to convert from gross to net with a further 10% reduction applied to allow for appropriate landscape screening, layout and design, resulting in a total of 20 hectares net internal employment land from the two preferred sites.

6.20 Further to this, a change to the General Employment Area (GEA) is proposed by removing the landfill site from the GEA (SNE 01) and reallocating this to the area to the north of site LP[087]011 (SNE 02). This change seeks to reflect the existing uses on the GEA. The proposed area of landfill to be removed is 7.8 hectares, and the extension proposed to the GEA, as shown on the maps, is 11.1, however when the 30% gross to net multiplier and 10% landscaping multiplier is applied this comes to 7.77 hectares.

Snetterton Employment Allocation 1

Land to the north west of the General Employment Area (LP[087]010A)

Land amounting to 14 hectares (net) is allocated for employment use (within Classes B1 and B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order) to the north west of Snetterton North General Employment Area. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Development is laid out in a manner that does not preclude the potential for future development in the vicinity;
2. Proposals for employment development within class B1 and B2 of the Use Classes Order (as amended) will be preferred;
3. Provision of safe highway access from Chalk Lane;
4. Suitable noise attenuation measures (which could include building design measures, screening, fencing or bunding) are provided to avoid harm to nearby residential amenity;
5. Provision of new structural landscaping to the western boundary of the site.

6.21 The site is situated upon 20 hectares of grade 3 agricultural land with the A11 to the south of the site and the existing General Employment Area to the east. The site frontages onto the A11 and has access to the existing general Employment Area through Chalk Lane. Norfolk County Council Highways, through consultation responses, have not raised any objections regarding the site.

6.22 The site has very few constraints; however, it is noted that the site is within close proximity (1.3km) to the village of Snetterton North End. However; due to the topography of the landscape and appropriate screening it is not anticipated to have a significant impact upon the existing residential properties.

Snetterton Employment Allocation 2

Land to the east of the General Employment Area (LP[087]009)

Land amounting to approximately 6 hectares (net) is allocated for employment use (Within Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order) to the east of the Snetterton South General Employment Area. Development will be subject to compliance with the following criteria:

1. Provision of safe highway access from Harling Road;
2. Proposals for employment development within class B8 of the Use Classes Order (as amended) will be preferred;
3. Appropriate design and layout in keeping with the site's location as a key gateway with frontage onto the A11; and
4. Appropriate noise attenuation measures are provided at the northern border of the site with the A11 trunk road, if required.

6.23 The site is situated upon 8.8 hectares of Grade 3 agricultural land to the north of the existing General Employment Area. The site frontages onto the A11 to the north and has access to the existing General Employment Area through Harling Road. Norfolk County Council Highways, through consultation responses, have not raised any objections regarding the site.

6.24 The site is currently subject to a live planning application (3PL/2013/0727/D) comprising a mix of B1, B2 and B8 uses. The permission proposes access to Harling Road, which has been completed.

6.25 No fundamental constraints to the development of the site have been identified.

Policy EC 02 - Snetterton Heath

All proposals at Snetterton Heath will be determined subject to criteria a) to e) of Policy EC 03 General Employment Areas.

The distribution of employment development across the site is subject to the following:

1. Within area LP[087]010 as defined on the policies map, 20ha of land is allocated for B1 and B2 use. The layout of any development should not prejudice future expansion of the site;
2. Within the southern extent of the Snetterton General Employment Area as defined on the policies map, proposals for employment use within classes B1 and B2 of the Use Classes Order (as amended) will be preferred. Proposals that are associated with motorsport, automotive and advanced engineering will be encouraged;
3. Within the eastern extent of Snetterton General Employment Area as defined on the policies map, proposals for employment development within class B8 of the Use Classes Order (as amended) will be preferred; and
4. Proposals that create a new edge to the employment area shall be expected to provide appropriate boundary treatment to minimise the impact on the landscape, having regard to the principles of the Landscape Character Assessment.

Reasoned Justification

6.26 Draft Strategic Policy PD06 that was subject to consultation in January/ February 2016 identifies Snetterton Heath for an allocation of at least 20ha of new employment land over the plan period. The existing area is characterised by a number of different types of employment use that have developed as distinct clusters of activity which have established over time. This policy seeks to reflect the findings of the Cambridge to Norwich Technology corridor study and previous work under the auspices of the Rural Enterprise Valley (REV) by promoting motorsport and advanced engineering associated with the race track, as well as building on the area's successes within the distribution and manufacturing sectors. The policy seeks to direct particular types of activity within the 'B use classes' to specific areas of the site to promote clustering and capitalise on the inter-relationships between the activities carried out across the site.

6.27 The northern extent of Snetterton Heath, north of the trunk road, has a mixed character with a range of general industrial uses and planning permission was granted on 19th January 2016 for a new general industrial operator. In this area, proposals for new general industrial development would be acceptable having regard to the nature of the existing development.

6.28 The southern extent of Snetterton Heath, south of the trunk road and west of Heath Road, is characterised by the motor racing track and former Snetterton Park and comprises a range of existing buildings and established land uses. This area has excellent visibility from the A11 and provides the opportunity to direct the development and intensification of motorsport and advanced manufacturing uses, building on the proximity of this part of the site to the race track. The area provides opportunities for co-location and access to the track for automotive testing and related activity.

6.29 The eastern extent of the site (south of the A11 and north-east of Heath Road) contains a range of principally storage and distribution uses, including a rail head. Therefore, to ensure the delivery of the overall vision for the site, it is appropriate to direct new uses falling within Class B8 of the Use Classes Order to this location. Such uses

do not require such close relationship to the track and due to their higher land take and lower employment density, such uses are therefore best directed towards this area of the site. This area offers potential opportunities to support the transshipment of goods to road from rail.

6.30 The General Employment Area boundary for Snetterton Heath is proposed to be amended to exclude an existing landfill site that does not provide deliverable opportunities for employment development within the plan period. An additional area of brownfield land at the former Snetterton Park is proposed to be included in the designation in order to provide an opportunity to support re-development for B class employment development to this part of the site. This approach will help to support the wider vision for the site.

6.31 The above strategic approach to the use of the site will ensure that the greatest opportunities for clustering and maximising higher job density uses in key locations are maximised.

Saved Employment Allocations

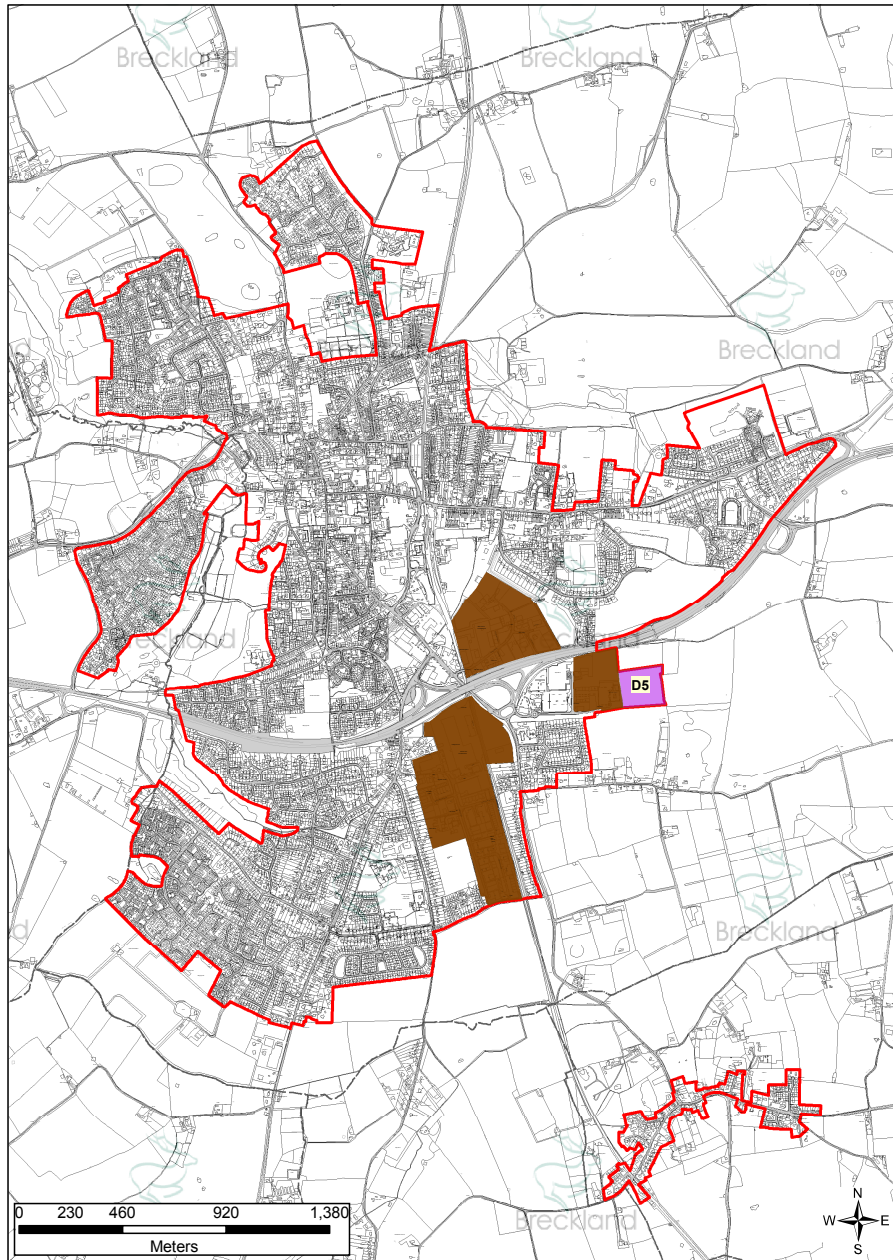
6.32 The following allocations have been taken forward from the adopted Site Specific Policies & Proposals Development Plan Document (2012). The suitability of the sites have been re-appraised in the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which forms part of the evidence base for the employment allocations. The sites were determined to be suitable and available for economic development with no overriding constraints to delivery and therefore have been selected for allocation in the Local Plan. The following policies listed in Table 6.2 will be saved to form part of this Local Plan. Saved employment allocations are shown on the Policies Maps.

Table 6.1

Saved Policy	Area	Location
Policy D5 Land at Dereham Business Park	3.1ha	Dereham
Policy SW2 Land to the North of the Eco-Tech Centre	3ha	Swaffham
Policy SW3 Land to the West to the Eco-Tech Employment Area	5.8ha	Swaffham
Policy TH 30 New Employment Land	22ha	Thetford

Dereham Saved Employment Allocations

Map 6.2 Dereham Saved Employment Allocations



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Land at Dereham Business Park

Saved Policy - Policy D5

Land east of Dereham Business Park

Land amounting to 3.1 hectares is allocated for employment use (within Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order, as amended) to the east of Dereham Business Park. Development will be permitted subject to compliance with adopted policies in the Core Strategy and the following criteria:

- a. Vehicular access is provided via Kingston Road/ Walpole Loke, and should include the provision of necessary highway improvements to ensure highway safety;
- b. Appropriate footpaths and cycleways are provided linking the site with existing footways at Yaxham Road as well as a footway to the north through to Cherry Lane;
- c. Suitable noise attenuation measures (which could include building design measures, screening, fencing or bunding) are provided to avoid harm to surrounding residential amenity;
- d. Important boundary trees are retained as part of detailed landscaping schemes;
- e. Existing boundary screening is retained and enhanced to include new structural landscaping to minimise the visual impact of development and extent of new build development into the open countryside;
- f. Development is laid out in a manner that does not preclude the potential for future development in the vicinity; and
- g. Appropriate sustainable surface water attenuation measures are provided, and where possible included as part of landscaping schemes.

The Council will consider the need to impose appropriate conditions limiting the hours of operation of businesses to ensure the amenity of any proximate residential development is not harmed.

Reasoned Justification

6.33 This site comprises an area of agricultural land located to the east of Dereham, east of the existing Dereham Business Park. The site is bordered by existing development at Walpole Loke, including the Breckland Council Offices. The site has limited screening at the eastern boundary and development would represent a new edge to the built form of Dereham.

6.34 Proposals for development on this site within Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) will be permitted subject to the above policy and the provisions of the adopted Core Strategy to meet part of the strategic requirement for new employment land in Dereham.

6.35 The site is to be accessed via Kingston Road/ Walpole Loke and the Local Planning Authority will, in conjunction with the Highway Authority, seek appropriate contributions for enhancements to the local highway network should these be required. The development should also provide suitable footpath and cycle provision to link the site to Yaxham Road to enable greater opportunities to access the site by these modes. Detailed proposals should also make appropriate provision of a footway/cycle link from the development north to Cherry Lane. This will enable enhanced opportunities for sustainable movements between new employment allocations and residential development to the east of Dereham.

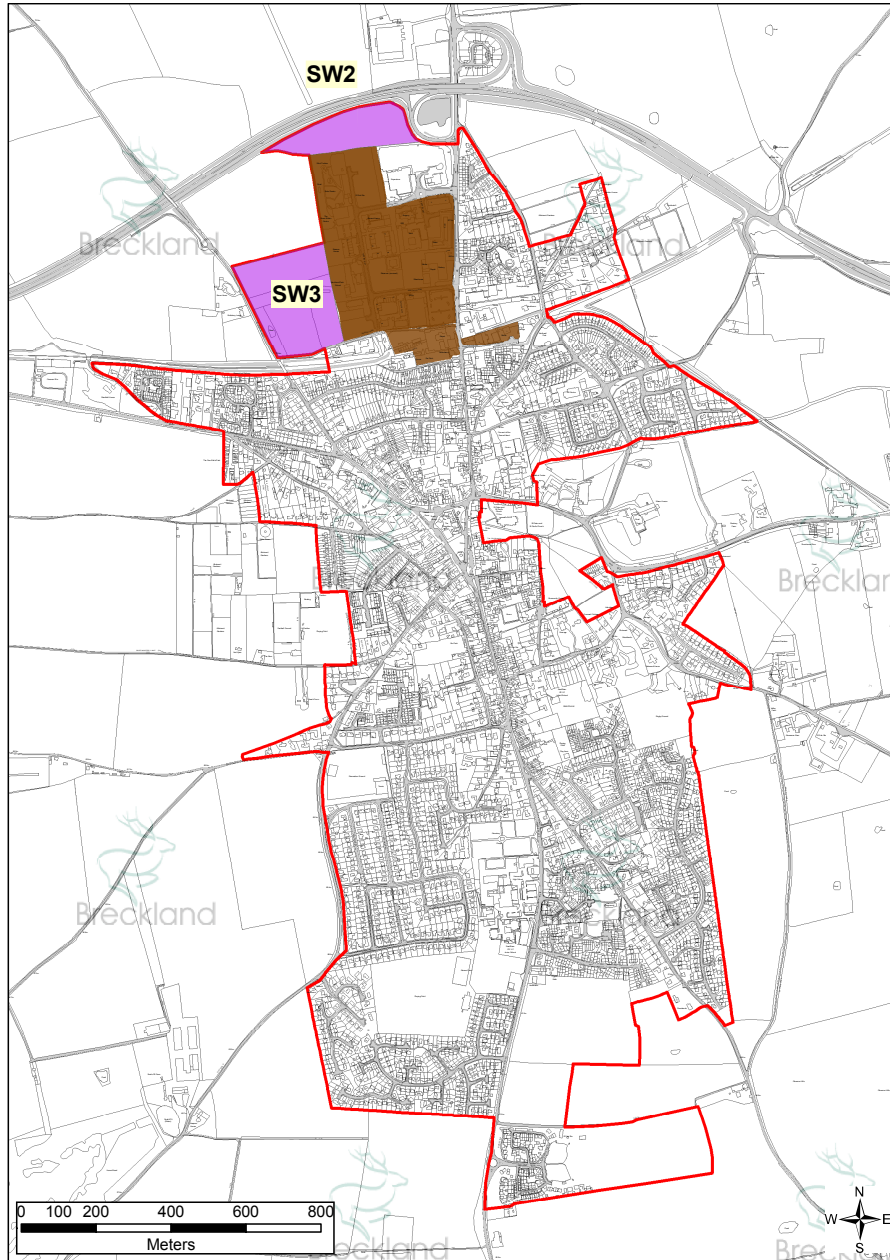
6.36 New structural landscaping shall be provided to the eastern boundary of the site in order to minimise the visual impact of new built development on the open countryside. This is essential as the site will form a new edge to the settlement, which can currently be viewed from a number of important routes to the east of the town. A

structural landscaping scheme shall be provided as part of any detailed proposal and delivered prior to the completion of any commercial units. This will ensure that visual impact is minimised, but could also form part of a sustainable drainage scheme.

6.37 In order to ensure that the amenity of surrounding residential development is not adversely affected by the development of this allocation for employment use, the Local Planning Authority will consider the need to impose conditions on subsequent Planning Applications so that proposals include appropriate noise attenuation mitigation measures if required. These measures could include building design measures, screening, fencing or bunding which can control noise, although this will depend on the precise uses proposed.

Swaffham Saved Employment Allocations

Map 6.3 Swaffham Saved Employment Allocations



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Saved Policy - Policy SW2

Land to the North of the Eco-Tech Centre

Land amounting to approximately 3 hectares is allocated for employment development. The development will provide a mix of B class units only. Development will be subject to compliance with adopted Core Strategy policies and:

- a. Access provided only from the Eco-Tech Employment Area;
- b. Provision of a landscape buffer between the development and the A47 trunk road; and
- c. Development will not commence until vacant, developable land in the existing Eco-Tech centre has been developed.

Reasoned Justification

6.38 The site is a small arable field, between the Eco-Tech Employment Area and the A47 trunk road. The site is screened by trees and hedges on the western, eastern and southern boundaries. The development of the site would form a natural extension to the existing employment area. The site is approximately 3 hectares in size and will contribute to the employment needs for Swaffham as identified in the Core Strategy. The Eco-Tech employment area is served by a local bus service.

6.39 The site is of an irregular shape which will limit opportunities for large industrial units. Although employment uses are not regarded as noise sensitive developments in PPG24, in the interests of amenity a landscape buffer of planting should screen the development from the A47 trunk road.

6.40 There are currently a number of trees on the southern boundary of the site where the only safe point of access is located. Some of these trees will need to be removed in order to achieve a suitable access. The only safe point of access is through the existing employment area. This would involve road construction over Breckland Council and potentially third party land. These ownership constraints could affect the delivery of the site. However, they are not seen as insurmountable. There are still a number of vacant lots in the existing employment area. It is important to ensure that these lots are brought forward prior to the release of this site for employment land.

6.41 The site is well related to the A47 and the location was concluded by Breckland Council's Employment Land Review (2006) as being attractive to the market.

Saved Policy - Policy SW3

Land to the West of the Eco-Tech Employment Area

Land amounting to approximately 5.8 hectares is allocated for employment development. The development will provide a mix of B class units only. Development will be subject to compliance with adopted Core Strategy policies and:

- a. Access is provided only from the Eco-Tech Employment Area;
- b. Provision of adequate planting and landscaping on exposed boundaries of the site;
- c. The layout and design of the site will have regard to the potential of adjoining land to the north of the site providing a long term option for employment development beyond 2026;
- d. Provision of pedestrian/cycle access from West Acre Road;
- e. Investigation and remediation of possible ground contamination; and
- f. Development will not commence until the land allocated by Policy SW2 has been implemented.

Reasoned Justification

6.42 The site consists of part of a larger arable field to the west of the Eco-Tech Employment Area. The site also covers a smaller field to the south-east corner of the allocation. The site is bounded by some dispersed residential development to the south on Bears Lane and to the west on West Acre Road but is otherwise located between employment development at Eco-tech and the A47 bypass. Careful consideration will be given to the proposed employment uses on this site where they abut adjoining residential properties and regard will be given to amenity in the context of Core Strategy policy and the content of PPS23 'Pollution' and PPG24 'Noise'.

6.43 Access to the site will need to be secured through the existing Eco-tech site as the highway network from West Acre Road and Bears Lane is unacceptable for the potential traffic generated. Access onto both Bears Lane and West Acre Road will be limited to pedestrian and cycle access, given the benefit of providing a direct and attractive route from the site to the town centre.

6.44 The boundary between the site and the employment area consists of trees, hedges and fencing. The site has hedges on its boundary against West Acre Road and Bears Lane. There are also a number of small trees and hedging on the boundaries of the smaller field within the site. There is no planting or physical boundary to the site to the north. Therefore, as part of any development proposal, landscaping and planting on the northern boundary would be required. However, the landscaping should not sterilise the potential for future expansion of the employment area to the north of the site. To the north and west of the site are arable fields. To the south of the site beyond Bears Lane is the dismantled railway line which provides a physical buffer to the residential estates to the south.

6.45 The development of the site would form an extension to the existing employment area. The site is approximately 5.8 hectares in size and will contribute to the employment needs for Swaffham identified in the Core Strategy.

6.46 The Breckland Landscape Character Assessment states that the land in this area, between the north of the town and the A47, has lower sensitivity to change than the rest of the character area due to the urbanising influence of adjacent employment areas. Therefore, with appropriate screening to the north, impact on the landscape will be minimal. There are a number of trees on the site and on the boundary. Some of these may have to be removed to achieve access to the site. However, any mature or valuable trees should be maintained as part of detailed proposals.

6.47 The detailed Water Cycle Study (2010) identifies that there is a lack of strategic sewer provision in this part of the town. This could be a constraint to the type of industry that could be developed on the site and detailed discussions with Anglian Water are encouraged prior to the submission of any Planning Application. There are no known energy constraints in bringing this site forward.

6.48 The ultimate delivery of the site will be dependant upon market conditions. In order to ensure the unnecessary early loss of undeveloped land, development will not commence on this site until the land allocated for employment under Policy SW2 has been brought forward by virtue of a detailed Planning Application. If there are material reasons why development cannot take place on SW2 first, development on this site will be considered for early release.

6.49 Part of the site is on a potentially backfilled quarry. Before planning permission can be granted a desk study and full site investigation, including gas monitoring, will be needed.

6.50 The site is well related to the A47 and the location is concluded by the Employment Land Review (2006) as being attractive to the market.

Saved Policy - Policy TH30

New Employment Land

(a) Amount of Employment Land and Location

Land amounting to at least 22 hectares for new employment development shall be provided within the Thetford Urban Extension. This shall be in locations which provide good access to the A11 trunk road and the land should be provided as appropriately serviced. This shall include mains services such as water, electricity and gas brought to site in order to ensure timely supply and delivery of land to the commercial market. The provision of the 22 hectares of employment land in the urban extension should be phased for delivery as indicated in the table below:

Table 6.2 Location of Employment Development

Location	Area
Near Tesco	4.0Ha
Lodge Way	14.5Ha
Off Croxton Road	2.5Ha
Off Norwich Road	7.2Ha

The saved employment allocation (E.1)⁽²⁾ adjacent to the Gallows Hill Scheduled Monument will be replaced by the Lodge Way allocation (in table above), in the same broad location, for employment development subject to the following:

- i. It is accessed by business related traffic from Wyatt Way and Lodge Way only, with secondary access from Croxton Road for public transport only;
- ii. The actual shape of the allocation is amended to reflect the Scheduled Monument;
- iii. Appropriate screening is provided which enhances the setting of the Scheduled Monument and acts as a buffer to existing residential development;
- iv. The site is allocated for B1 (business) and B8 (storage and distribution) use; and
- v. The design allows for ease of access by buses and walking and cycling.

(b) Layout and Design Principles

Planning applications for employment land should have regard to the following principles in order to make the new employment areas in Thetford attractive, integrated into the town, quality places and attract a wide range of tenants:

- i. Convenient access by walking, cycling and public transport;
- ii. Well connected to the rest of the town;
- iii. Screening from the existing and future neighbouring residential uses;
- iv. Ensure appropriate and sympathetic boundary treatments to key road frontages within employment areas using native hedgerow planting with fencing set behind;
- v. Ensure car parking and service yards are clear of road frontages, particularly to the A1066;

2 Saved from the Breckland Local Plan (1999)

- vi. Quality tree planting and landscaping;
- vii. Efficient use of land;
- viii. Provide for a wide range of land uses in order to attract a wide range of tenants;
- ix. Designed to provide a quality working environment and image, including the gateways into the site;
- x. Innovative waste and recycling infrastructure;
- xi. Design out crime; and
- xii. Potential for biodiversity to be provided for.

Reasoned Justification

6.51 Thetford is identified as a key employment location along the A11 corridor and is the focus for significant jobs growth in the Breckland Adopted Core Strategy. The Core Strategy identifies at Policy CP3 the need to plan for some 30-40 hectares of strategic employment land at Thetford within the A11 to deliver 5,000 new jobs to 2026. The amount of new employment land proposed and Thetford Enterprise Park with Planning Permission, along with a high jobs growth target, seeks to ensure that the town not only continues to be an important economic location, but also improves the balance between jobs and new homes contributing to the objective of self containment i.e. people living and working in Thetford. Delivery of jobs is also critical to the transport strategy for Thetford. Breckland Council will expect a range of new employment sites to be delivered across Thetford's Urban Extension in accordance with the above policy.

6.52 Thetford is also a key location within the Rural Enterprise Valley (REV) and Breckland Council has placed significant emphasis on delivering quality and high value employment opportunities in the finance, ICT, research and advanced engineering and manufacturing sectors. There are already a number of these types of businesses in the Thetford area, and the continued growth of motorsport-related industry along the A11 can help to ensure the town benefits from economic growth in this sector, consistent with the REV objectives.

6.53 The Thetford Enterprise Park (TEP) is a key employment site in close proximity to the A11. The site has the benefit of outline Planning Permission and is currently being serviced in order to aid the delivery of new employment development in the short to medium term. This site will make an important contribution to delivering new jobs; however this will not be sufficient on its own to deliver the requirement and further sites will be needed. The Employment Land Review (2006) recommended that a new business park be developed along with the Thetford Enterprise Park in order to bring forward inward investment to the town and the preferred policy approach seeks to ensure suitable employment provision in the urban extension. The policy seeks to ensure that the additional employment land proposed in Thetford as part of the Thetford Urban Extension comes forward in a timely manner to help deliver the significant jobs growth target along with housing growth in the town. Ensuring such land is serviced by the developers will make sure land is ready to be developed when the commercial market is in a position to expand.

6.54 In deciding where to locate employment and how the allocations are built out, Core Strategy Policy DC1 is of importance with regards to the effect of differing land uses on each other, needs to be considered. For example the juxtaposition of residential and light employment could result in amenity issues for residents in terms of noise.

6.55 Further to the above, and to reflect the Lodge Way allocation being adjacent to Gallows Hill Scheduled Monument, Breckland Council would encourage plans for well designed offices or warehouses of a scale that reflects the sensitive location.

Existing Employment Allocation

6.56 Since this allocation was recommended to be saved as part of the Core Strategy, some of its area has since been scheduled as part of the Scheduled Monument at Gallows Hill. The general location of this allocation remains, next to the existing Wyatt Way Industrial Estate. The only vehicular access to this employment area

should utilise Wyatt Way and Lodge Way (with the footways continued and adequate provisions for cyclists). Walking and cycling routes should be provided to access the site in a well designed way from Amelia Opei Way. Other walking and cycling routes should be provided from the north of the allocation.

Design Principles

6.57 The design principles as set out in the policy seek to ensure that new employment areas learn from the successes and mistakes of the design of existing employment estates. They have been produced in liaison with CABE expert design enablers using elements of the evidence base produced to support the TAAP, namely the Thetford Green Infrastructure Study, Thetford Transport Study and the Employment Land Review.

6.58 The criteria seeks to ensure the issues that the TAAP address are taken into account as part of the design, for example transport issues as well as setting a good image for the new employment areas and creating a good working environment for workers.

6.59 In terms of new employment proposals, continuous engineered bunding/banking should be avoided as this would be harmful to landform and landscape character. It is more desirable in landscape terms to have a bund which includes landform variation and is not continuously banked with different planting types and densities to 'foil' rather than screen development. This would provide some Breckland Character to the development.

Economy

6.60 In accordance with the NPPF this chapter includes policies that support sustainable economic growth within Breckland, through the creation of jobs and prosperity to meet the development needs of business. As a predominantly rural area, economic policies should be tailored to ensure they are flexible enough to accommodate needs, to respond rapidly to changes in economic circumstances, whilst facilitating flexible working practices.

6.61 The NPPF (paragraph 28), requires planning policies to positively support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity. It has put a strong emphasis on promoting the rural economy and to support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas. It also states that the Local Plan should:

- promote diversification of agriculture and other land-use based rural businesses;
- support rural tourism; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

6.62 The performance of Breckland's economy is largely dependent on a healthy rural economy. Whilst larger scale employment space is dominated by industrial uses, and tends to be concentrated around Breckland's larger towns, the rural economy accommodates important hubs of economic activity, particularly with regards to small scale office and workshop space, as well as being a key employment sector in the District. Agricultural businesses are scattered across the rural area of the District which presents challenges for delivering balanced economic growth.

6.63 Rural business is now increasingly driven by technology. There has been significant growth and development in the agri-science sector which has been continuously driving efficiency and innovation of agriculture businesses. The overspill of high-tech research activities in this region has benefited from a wide range of rural businesses in Breckland. Small and medium scale rural enterprises represent a significant portion of the economic activities in Breckland due to the rural nature of the District. Therefore, diverse and thriving rural enterprises contribute significantly to prosperity and the creation of more opportunities for jobs across the District.

General Employment Areas

6.64 As identified on the Policies Map, there are a significant number of employment areas across the District, each of which makes a contribution towards the local economy and provides an important source of local employment.

6.65 Employment uses are traditionally defined as Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. However the diversification of the economy means that employment opportunities now emanate from a wider range of uses. These can be complementary to existing industrial uses and provide valuable supporting services such as cafes and nurseries. However, the intensification of individual uses or the cumulative impact of a number of non B1, B2, B8 uses in the same vicinity can reduce the functionality of employment areas for industrial based employers.

6.66 Proposals will be expected to complement their surroundings and not result in any unacceptable impacts on amenity or a severe impact on the local highways network. Proposals will also be encouraged to contribute towards the identified need to make provision for both small and start-up businesses.

6.67 The policy incorporates proposals for mixed use developments to address an issue raised in the Employment Growth Study, suggesting the need for a flexible approach to bring forward employment sites by allowing the development of other higher value non-B uses on part of allocated sites, in order to unlock the site's potential and fund any associated infrastructure works. Appropriate proposals to diversify and ensure the long term sustainability of existing employment areas will therefore be supported where they contain a significant employment element; contribute positively to the viability of the employment land and would not undermine, and are otherwise compatible with, existing employment uses.

Policy EC 03 General Employment Areas

Sites that are identified as General Employment Areas on the Policies Map will be protected for employment use. Proposals to accommodate new employment development (B1, B2 and B8 uses) will be permitted on General Employment Areas where the following criteria apply:

- a. It is not a town centre use, unless the location is sequentially preferable and need has been demonstrated;
- b. It will not undermine the function of the wider employment area;
- c. The scale, bulk and appearance of the development is compatible with the character of its surroundings;
- d. There is no significant detrimental health impacts, (assessed through a health impact assessment where appropriate), on the amenity of neighbouring land uses and the character of the area by virtue of increased levels of noise, odour, emissions, or dust and impacts on light; and
- e. The traffic generated does not have a severe adverse impact on local amenity, highway safety or the operation of the highways network.

Proposals for mixed-use development in identified employment areas will be supported provided that they:

- Incorporate a significant employment element;
- Are compatible with existing employment uses;
- Support the improvement of an employment area that is in need of upgrading;
- Do not constrain the operations of adjoining businesses; and
- Are capable of reinstatement for business and industrial use.

Employment Development Outside of General Employment Areas

6.68 The majority of employment development will be provided for in the strategic employment allocations outlined in Policy EC 01 and on established employment areas as outlined in Policy EC 03. However, in a rural District such as Breckland there will be a need to provide for those businesses which support the rural economy and improve opportunities for rural communities to live and work in close proximity. It is recognised that the changes made over recent years to the permitted development rights for the change of use of agricultural buildings are relevant to the operation of this policy (see Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015).

6.69 Proposals for the expansion of existing rural businesses, new businesses which are either related to rural activities (such as agriculture and forestry) or where there are clear sustainability advantages for businesses being located close to the market they serve, will generally be supported. The demonstration of sustainability advantages should include evidence of reduced need to travel, re-use of previously developed land or existing buildings and enhanced opportunities for rural communities to access employment in their locality. Such evidence should be professionally prepared and provided in a sustainability statement accompanying the proposal.

6.70 Additionally, there are a number of businesses which, due to the nature of their activities, cannot reasonably be expected to locate on established employment areas which are often within, or on the edge of, built up areas. Such uses include those activities which would be detrimental to local amenity and therefore need to be located some distance from residential areas. A number of employment sites are provided for in the rural areas away from settlements, including Shipdham Airfield (Cranworth), Snetterton and Roudham and available land within these areas should be investigated in the first instance.

6.71 In order to ensure that business development in the rural areas is sustainable, proposals will be expected to make best use of previously developed sites or the replacement of existing rural buildings. In the case of replacement buildings, the policy applies to large modern agricultural buildings which can be intrusive in landscape terms because their design and construction has been a specific response to agricultural requirements. The clear and substantial improvement in terms of size and scale requires that replacement buildings will have a significantly reduced volume and a reduced visual impact. Design and Access Statements accompanying replacement rural buildings for business use should address criteria (d) to (f) inclusive and the requirements of planning policy relating to design, amenity and accessibility.

6.72 Proposals for employment development within close proximity to Breckland SPA will be restricted and assessed in accordance with Policies ENV 02 and ENV 03.

Policy EC 04 Employment Development Outside General Employment Areas

Proposals for employment uses outside of the identified General Employment Areas and allocated sites will be permitted where:

- a. It is demonstrated that there are no other suitable sites available on identified or allocated employment sites; and/or
- b. There are particular reasons for the development not being located on an established or allocated employment site including:
 1. The expansion of an existing business;
 2. Businesses that are based on agriculture, forestry or other industry where there are sustainability advantages to being located in close proximity to the market they serve; or
 3. Industries and / or businesses which would be detrimental to local amenity if located in settlements, including general employment areas.
- c. The development of the site would not adversely affect the type and volume of traffic generated.

Replacement of Rural Buildings

The replacement of rural buildings for B Use Classes as defined in the Use Classes Order may be considered acceptable where the proposal:

- d. Involves the removal of a building that is substantially intact but is not a traditional building of clear architectural or historic interest;
- e. Represents a clear and substantial improvement in terms of size, scale, impact and design from the original; and
- f. The replacement buildings are well located to the existing buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative location would be visually less prominent.

The Council will consider the need for appropriate measures in order to maintain the visual appearance and architectural character of buildings and prevent the proliferation of buildings in the countryside.

Retail & Town Centres

6.73 An objective of the Local Plan is to promote the vitality and viability of town centres, including the night time economy, and support the retention of existing rural services. Policies in the Local Plan must also accord with the NPPF which requires LPAs to use up to date evidence to assess needs for retail floorspace, including both the qualitative and quantitative needs over the plan period. The scale of some retail proposals outside town centres has the ability to affect the vitality and viability of town centres, divert trade away from these areas affecting customer choice and potentially committed, existing and planned private investment in centres. In order to understand the potential effects on a town centre from an out of town retail proposal the NPPF allows LPAs to propose locally set floorspace thresholds above which any application must provide an impact assessment. A sequential test should also be applied to applications that are not in the designated town centre.

Retail Hierarchy

6.74 National policy requires that development plans establish a hierarchy of centres in the District, and that new development is proportionate with the position of the centre in the retail hierarchy. The Local Plan encourages vibrant town centres in the District, which attract people and investment so as to maintain and develop the town centres for residents, businesses and visitors. The policy seeks to underpin the town centre first approach, ensuring that the District's town centres are the main focus for retail and leisure development and are not undermined by inappropriate out of centre ad-hoc development. It also seeks to support longer term regeneration strategies such as the Riverside regeneration scheme at Thetford and provide the foundations for growth and investment and the development of Council action plans such as the emerging "Open for Business" Strategy.

6.75 The key settlements, market towns and local service centres of the District consist of a range of centres of different sizes and characteristics. The vitality of all these is seen as essential for economic prosperity and through linked trips within town centres reduce carbon emissions as well as providing the potential to support sustainable transport initiatives. The 2014 Retail Study recommended that the Local Plan policies should continue to seek to maintain and enhance the existing shopping hierarchy. The study concluded that Thetford and Dereham town centres should be classified as main centres. Thetford as a key centre for development and change and Dereham as the main administrative centre serving a wide hinterland of mid Norfolk. The remaining centres of Attleborough, Swaffham and Watton were identified as generally being at the same level of provision and therefore should be classed as such.

6.76 Consideration has been given to the enhancement of Attleborough in the retail hierarchy due to the proposed residential growth. However, in considering the available capacity for retail development as identified in the 2014 Retail Study which included assumptions on the planned growth levels, it is not considered appropriate to elevate the town in the retail hierarchy. The range, scale and nature of retail service facilities as well as the extent of the rural catchments for the three market towns remain very similar.

Additional Retail Floor Space

6.77 National guidance advises that Local Plans should identify the scale of need for main town centre uses.

6.78 In 2017, the Council commissioned an addendum to the 2014 Retail Study to reassess the quantitative scope for new retail and food and beverage floorspace in Breckland up until 2036. It identified that, in terms of convenience retail floorspace, there was some potential capacity over and above planned commitments in the District. However, the provision should be carefully directed. Swaffham had an over provision of convenience floorspace for the foreseeable future; Watton had very limited capacity to support new development, whilst Attleborough, Dereham and Thetford all had some limited capacity once commitments are taken into consideration. There is also limited capacity indicated for the remaining District outside of the 5 main centres.

6.79 In terms of comparison goods Breckland's market share of expenditure is estimated at less than 43% and there are high levels of "leakage" outside of the District to higher order centres. The 2017 Addendum reinforces this finding with levels of leakage from the market town catchment areas to outside of the District ranging from 65% within Attleborough to 42.5% in Watton.

6.80 In the face of increasing competition from nearby higher order centres the 2014 Retail Study concluded that it would be appropriate and realistic to plan to maintain market shares across the District whilst maintaining the vitality and viability of the town centres.

Table 6.3 Summary of Comparison and Convenience Floorspace Projections 2017-2036

Settlement	Net Convenience Retail Floorspace sq m	Net Comparison Floorspace sq m	Gross Food and Beverage Floorspace sq m
Thetford	862	3669	925
Dereham	1950	5220	849
Attleborough	1025	1242	820
Swaffham	0	804	220
Watton	491	1172	181
Other Breckland	141	92	506
Total	2783	12199	3502

Impact Assessment Thresholds

6.81 In assessing the appropriate thresholds for any locally defined impact assessment it is also considered appropriate to follow the 2014 Retail Study recommendations. Generally relying on the NPPF threshold of 2,500 sq m gross is considered inappropriate for the retail centres of Breckland as development smaller than 2,500 sq m could have significant adverse impacts on the town centres. In some smaller towns projections suggest that less than 500 sq m gross comparison and convenience goods retail floorspace is required. The retail study by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP), recommended that a reduced threshold of 500 sq m gross is appropriate for Attleborough, Swaffham and Watton. In Dereham and Thetford the floorspace projections are generally higher, the centres larger and capable of absorbing more trade diversion and impact. In these centres the 2014 Retail Study recommends that policy should be set requiring an impact threshold of 1,000 sq m gross.

Town Centre Boundaries

6.82 The NPPF requires Councils to define the extent of the town centres and primary shopping areas based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated town centres. Policy EC 02 defines these boundaries using set definitions which are based upon those used in the NPPF.

6.83 Evidence suggests that in some centres policies that seek to maintain a proportion of A1 use – retail within the primary and secondary shopping frontages are no longer relevant. As town centres evolve the role of policy must change to support the vitality and viability of the centre by supporting the delivery of a greater range of services. Changes in recent years to the General Permitted Development Order, (GDPO) also have the potential to impact on the retail composition of the high street. Current measures allow for greater flexibility for changes of use e.g Class A uses to C3 - residential use and Class A1 - retail shops to A2 use - financial services. It is important to recognise that the town centres in Breckland act as more than just a retail role but also act as wider service centres for their rural hinterlands. Although it is important to seek to maintain and improve the centres retail offer, policies that seek to retain an unreasonable high proportion of shops may prevent other essential services from being introduced and could prevent the expansion / evolution of the centre. The Local Plan therefore seeks to support retail development by directing it to the Primary Shopping areas in a flexible manner.

Local Centres and Future Provision in the Proposed Urban Extensions

6.84 Local centres are important in providing for daily needs without having to travel to larger, higher order centres. In Breckland they can serve a wider rural community than the local service centre they are located in. It is important that these centres are supported and provision enhanced. The retention of rural shops and community facilities, and the provision of new facilities at an appropriate scale to the settlement, will be supported.

6.85 Two large scale urban extensions are envisaged over the life time of the Local Plan and it is important to plan for the local needs of these developments. The 2014 Retail Study advised that provision of local shopping facilities would be appropriate in these developments at the appropriate scale to ensure that residents have access to day to day shops and services within walking distance of their home. It is essential, however, to ensure that any local centre remains commercially viable and capable of delivery.

6.86 The Local Plan seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the five main town centres in Breckland and maintain the local shopping facilities within smaller villages. The strategy is to focus retail and leisure development within town centres in the primary shopping areas and restrict retail and leisure development outside these defined centres where it fails the sequential and /or impact tests, except where it serves a local need in a smaller village.

Policy EC 05 Town Centre and Retail Strategy

Policies in the Local Plan will seek to support and enhance the vitality of the District's hierarchy of centres and seek to direct floorspace requirements in line with the breakdown in the 2017 retail study projections over the plan period.

Town	Hierarchy	Convenience Requirement (net sq m)	Comparison Requirement (net sq m)	Gross Food and Beverage Floorspace sq m
Thetford	Key Centre for development and change	862	3669	925
Dereham	Main Town Centre for administration	1950	5220	849
Attleborough	Medium Town Centres	1025	1242	820
Swaffham		0	804	220
Watton		491	1172	181

These centres will be the preferred location for retail, food and non food, office, leisure and cultural facilities and other town centre uses as defined by national policy. Retail and other town centre development will be supported, provided that it is of an appropriate scale that reflects the size and role of the centre, respects the character of the centre, including any special architectural and historic interest and contributes to maintaining and enhancing its existing retail function.

An impact assessment for retail, leisure and/or office schemes will be required on schemes of 1,000 sq m gross and over in Thetford and Dereham and 500 sq m gross and over in Attleborough, Swaffham and Watton. Support will also be dependent on how it reflects need as identified in the 2014 retail study and other evidence. Site selection for retail and other town centre functions should follow the sequential test and prevailing national policies and guidance.

The following definitions apply to the District's retail areas, as shown on the policies maps:

- Town Centre – Defined area, including the primary shopping area and areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area.
- Primary Shopping Area – Defined area where retail development is concentrated, (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are contiguous and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).
- Primary Frontage – Primary frontages are areas of mainly shops (Use Class A1).
- Secondary Frontage – Secondary frontage provides greater opportunities for a diversity of uses.

The Local Plan will seek to enhance local provision through focusing retail and leisure proposals within town centres, with retail uses focused within the Primary Shopping Areas. The development of additional retail floorspace outside of defined centres will be restricted where it fails the sequential and impact tests (except where it serves local need). Retail frontages and town centre boundaries will be defined on the policies maps.

The retail role of local service centres will be maintained. The importance of rural shops and facilities will be a material consideration in any application that would result in their loss. Proposals that seek to preserve and enhance the settlement's vitality and viability, or implement environmental improvements, will be supported. Extensions of rural shops and facilities as well as proposals for conversion into shops that are designed to enhance viability will also be supported.

Retail proposals for the strategic urban extensions in Thetford and Attleborough will be supported where they seek to deliver up to 2,400 sq m gross floorspace A1-A5 use in Thetford and up to 1,900 sq m gross A1-A5 use in Attleborough in a local parade format. Proposals should be well connected to the local catchment, providing pedestrian and cycling links and seek to cater for local shopping needs through the delivery of small units as defined under the Sunday Trading Act (280 sq m gross) capable of serving top-up convenience needs.

In addition, the Local Plan town centre and retail strategy seeks to:

- Support the diversity of main town centre uses in order to enhance their continued vitality and viability with regard to retail, business, cultural and leisure services;
- Allow the appropriate provision (in line with needs) of larger retail units (over 200 sq m) in town centres through the amalgamation of units in order to attract those retailers requiring larger modern shop units as long as the overall retail mix is enhanced;
- Deliver improvements to the built environment, including public realm, and streetscape. Encourage innovative design and improvements in local design quality. Both of which can contribute to developing a strong local identity and sense of place.
- Work with partners to support the active management of the larger town centres; and
- Promote better accessibility through improvements in pedestrian and cycle environment and the designation and management of car parking where it is demonstrated it will bring a positive improvement.

Figure 6.2 Key to Town Centre Maps

