

# Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan

Scoping Report

October 2020

**Quality information**

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# Non-technical Summary

AECOM has been commissioned by South Norfolk Council (SNC) to lead on Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the emerging Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP)

The VCHAP, once adopted, will allocate sites to deliver on the requirement of Policy 1 of the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan. Specifically, Policy 1 of the “Draft Strategy” consultation document (January 2020) proposes that allocations for a minimum of 1,200 homes should be provided for through the VCHAP. The Greater Norwich Local Plan is subject to change; however, the remit and scope of the VCHAP is clear.

SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to minimising adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA is a legal requirement for Local Plans.

As a first step in the Local Plan SA process there is a need to establish the ‘scope’ of issues and objectives that should be a focus of subsequent appraisal stages.

**As such, a draft of the SA Scoping Report underwent statutory consultation and has been updated to reflect representations received. The scoping consultation ran from 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and representations were received from the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority.**

This report is structured under a series of topic headings that aim to capture the breadth of sustainability issues locally. Each topic-specific chapter presents a review of evidence before arriving at a shortlist of key issues that should be a focus of future assessment work, with the list of key issues then distilled to one or more objectives.

The list of topics and objectives is collectively known as the SA framework, and is presented in the table below. The SA framework will be used to guide and focus forthcoming appraisal work.

## The SA framework

Topic	Objective
Accessibility	Support good access to existing and planned services, facilities and community infrastructure, including green infrastructure, for new and existing residents, mindful of the potential for community needs to change over time.
Biodiversity	Avoid harm to South Norfolk’s rich diversity of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites of biodiversity significance, as well as to sites in adjacent Local Plan areas, whilst seeking to deliver a biodiversity net gain and enhancement of habitats and habitat connectivity in all but exceptional cases.
Climate change adaptation	Support the resilience of South Norfolk to the potential effects of climate change, including by directing development away from areas at greatest risk of fluvial and surface water flooding.
Climate change mitigation	Continue to reduce CO <sub>2</sub> emissions from all sources by achieving high standards of energy efficiency in new development, by supporting decentralised energy generation, by providing attractive opportunities for sustainable travel, by locating residential development a short distance from key services and by protecting land suitable for renewable and low carbon energy generation, including community schemes, whilst recognising the changing nature of private cars with the Government’s current aim of phasing out all sales of internal combustion engine cars within the lifetime of this plan.
Communities	Support the continued healthy and sustainable growth of South Norfolk, narrowing the gap between the areas of the district with strongest and least strong health and social outcomes. Helping to maintain local services and facilitates in more rural locations, to the benefit of existing and future residents.
Economy	Support the continued provision of, and vitality of, local employment opportunities across the district whilst seeking to take advantage where possible of new strategic opportunities, such as those associated with the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor. To support a range of housebuilding opportunities, particularly for small and medium sized builders,
Historic environment	Protect, conserve and enhance designated, non-designated and as-yet undiscovered heritage assets and their settings, and contribute to maintaining and enhancing South Norfolk’s historic character through design, layout and setting of new development..

Topic	Objective
Housing	Support timely delivery of an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures to ensure supply of high-quality housing across the village clusters which meets the needs of South Norfolk residents and diversify the housing market to help maintain delivery.
Land and soils	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land by avoiding unnecessary development on best and most versatile agricultural land and maintaining the integrity of mineral extraction sites and safeguarding areas.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character, quality and diversity of the district's rural landscapes, townscapes and river valleys through appropriate design and layout of new development, including protecting the setting of The Broads Authority areas.
Transport	Ensure that provision of transport infrastructure reflects local population and demographic needs within and between the village clusters, promotes sustainable modes of travel, connects new housing to employment, education, health and local services and maximises accessibility for all.
Water	Promote sustainable forms of development which minimise pressure on water resources, whilst maintaining and enhancing where possible the quality of the district's rivers, lakes and other water bodies.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 AECOM has been commissioned by South Norfolk Council (SNC) to lead on Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the emerging Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP).
- 1.1.2 The VCHAP, once adopted, will allocate sites to deliver on the requirement of Policy 1 of the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan. Specifically, Policy 1 of the “Draft Strategy” consultation document (January 2020) proposes that allocations for a minimum of 1,200 homes should be provided for through the VCHAP. The Greater Norwich Local Plan is subject to change; however, the remit and scope of the VCHAP is clear.
- 1.1.3 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to minimising adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA is a legal requirement for Local Plans.

## 1.2 The SA process

- 1.2.1 SA must be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements set out by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (‘SEA’) Regulations 2004. The process involves four steps:

SA Stage	Description
1) Scoping	Establish the key issues/objectives that will (and will not) be a focus of the appraisal stages.
2) Establish and appraise reasonable alternatives	Explore alternative ways of achieving plan objectives in time to inform the preparation of the Draft Plan.
3) Assess the emerging Draft Plan	Scrutinise the performance of the emerging plan in respect of the framework of issues/objectives established at the scoping stage and make recommendations to the plan-maker.
4) Publish the SA Report	Publish a report alongside the Draft Plan that presents a range of required information, but most fundamentally an assessment of ‘the plan and reasonable alternatives’.

### This Scoping Report

- 1.2.2 As a first step in the SA process there is a need to establish the ‘scope’ of issues and objectives that should be a focus of the subsequent appraisal.
- 1.2.3 As such, this draft of the SA Scoping Report has undergone statutory consultation and has been updated to reflect representations received. The scoping consultation ran from 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and representations were received from the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority. A summary of key messages from these responses and how they have been addresses is included in Appendix A of this report.
- 1.2.4 This report is structured under a series of topic headings that aim to capture the breadth of sustainability issues locally. Each topic-specific chapter presents a review of evidence before arriving at a shortlist of key issues that should be a focus of future assessment work, with the list of key issues then distilled to one or more objectives. The resulting list of topics and objectives, which is collectively known as the SA framework, will be used to guide and focus forthcoming appraisal work, once finalised.

## 1.3 The Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan

- 1.3.1 Paragraph 26 of the Greater Norwich Local Plan “Draft Strategy” consultation document (January 2020) explains:

*“South Norfolk Council intends to prepare a village clusters plan covering sites for small-scale housing in the rural parishes of South Norfolk that collectively form primary school clusters... The aim is to progress this South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Site Allocations document as quickly as possible with an aspiration for every village cluster to have new development and a focus on smaller sites in accordance with the overarching GNLP strategy that identifies that sites for a minimum of 1,200 additional homes (on top of the existing commitment of 1,349 homes) will be allocated in this South Norfolk cluster plan.”*

- 1.3.2 The consultation document also notably explains (paragraph 104) that: *“The approach to village clusters is innovative. It reflects the way people access services in rural areas and enhances social sustainability by promoting appropriate growth in smaller villages. It will support local services, whilst at the same time protecting the character of the villages.”*

- 1.3.3 Village clusters are the bottom tier of the settlement hierarchy proposed by Policy 1 of the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan. Specifically, Policy 1 proposes the following hierarchy:

1. Norwich urban area (including the Norwich Fringe)<sup>1</sup>
2. Main towns
3. Key service centres
4. Village clusters

- 1.3.4 South Norfolk includes elements of the Norwich Fringe as well as four main towns (Wymondham, Long Stratton, Harleston and Diss) and four key service centres (Hethersett, Hingham, Loddon / Chedgrave and Poringland / Framingham Earl). In order to deliver a specified growth quantum, new allocations, or increases in density on existing allocations, have been proposed at the majority of these higher tier locations through the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan,. Two of these locations (Costessey and Wymondham) have also been identified as a possible location for a large scale ‘contingency’ site in the GNLP. It is important to be clear that planning for these settlements is not part of the VCHAP; however, there are clearly close inter-linkages, recognising that all village clusters will relate to a nearby higher order centres (plus there is a need to recall that the SEA legislation requires consideration of ‘cumulative effects’, i.e. the effects of plans acting in combination).

- 1.3.5 Figure 1.1, which is the key diagram presented within the Greater Norwich Local Plan “Draft Strategy” consultation document (January 2020), shows proposed growth at main towns and service centres, and also sets out that 4,025 homes should come forward at village clusters across the area. It is important to be clear that this figure includes homes to be delivered in village clusters within both Broadland and South Norfolk, and also includes homes already delivered since the start of the plan period (‘completions’) and homes that are set to come forward at sites that are already allocated in existing plans, or already have planning permission, and are considered likely to deliver in the GNLP timeframe (‘commitments’). In South Norfolk there were 1,349 completions and commitments within village clusters as of March 2019, and an updated figure is forthcoming for March 2020.

- 1.3.6 Further detail on the proposed approach at village clusters in Broadland is presented in the supporting text Policy 7.4 of the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan, a number of these principles will also be used for the VCHAP:

- Village clusters are based on primary school catchments, which provide a proxy for social sustainability.
- Directing the proposed level of growth to village clusters aims to promote social sustainability by supporting rural life and services.
- A focus on relatively small allocation sites is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and also has the benefit of supporting small-scale builders, providing choice for the market and helping to ensure the delivery of housing in popular village locations.

<sup>1</sup> The South Norfolk element of the Norwich fringe comprises the built up parts of the parishes of Colney, Costessey, Cringleford, Easton and Trowse.

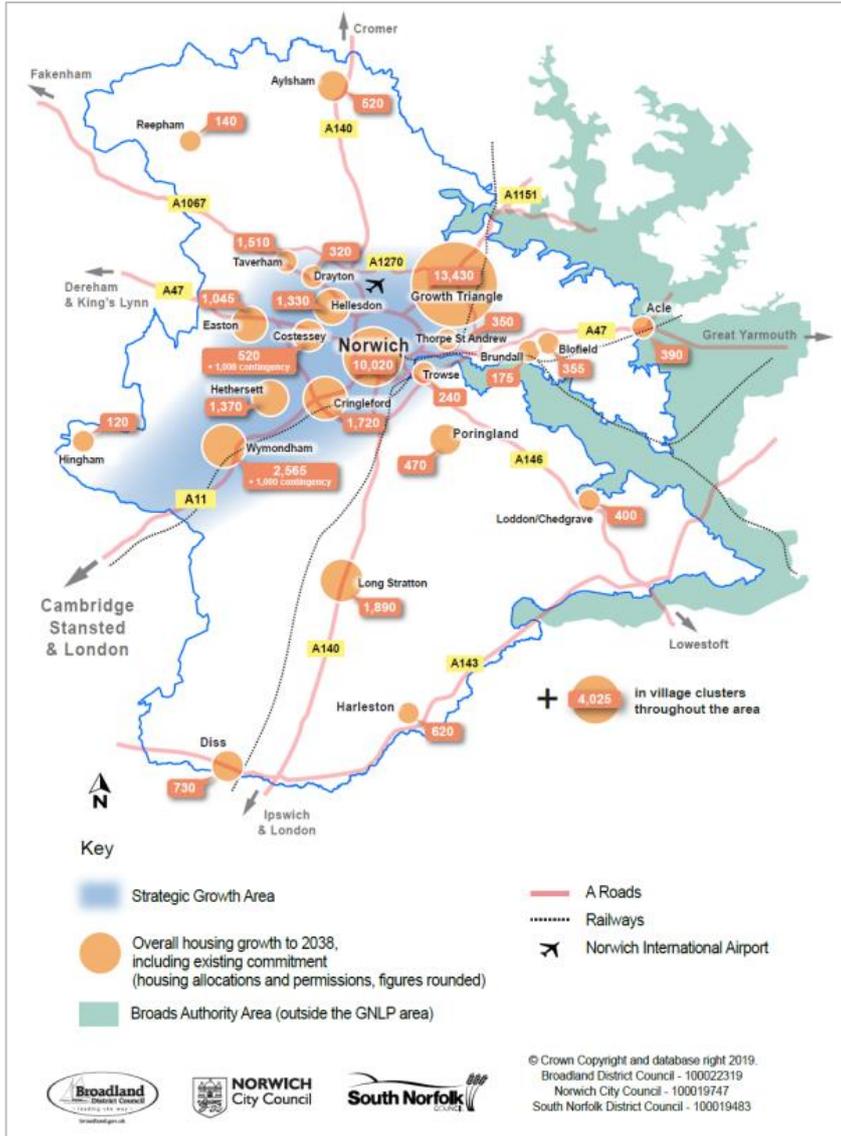
- The policy also aims to provide a range of sizes and tenures of new homes to meet needs in village clusters, based on the most up to date evidence available.
  - Some smaller settlements within village clusters are clustered with towns and villages higher in the settlement hierarchy. This is where the larger settlement provides the local primary school.
  - Policies 1 and 7.4 also support windfall development for affordable housing in village clusters, with some market housing permitted where it supports viability, including self/custom-build. The policies also allow for windfall infill and small extensions in those parts of village clusters which have a settlement boundary.
- 1.3.7 For Broadland District the Greater Norwich Local Plan consultation document goes on to identify a potential capacity for each village cluster (see Appendix 5), and the methodology applied (when read alongside consultation responses received) provides an important starting-point for the VCHAP. However, there will also need to be recognition of the different character of South Norfolk, with a far smaller element of urban fringe and a significantly greater number of more dispersed rural parishes.
- 1.3.8 The VCHAP is at an early stage of development, although there has been a “Call for Sites” and also early engagement with Councillors, through the Council’s Regulation and Planning Policy Committee, with reports taken to the Committee in February and May 2020.<sup>2</sup> As set out on the VCHAP webpage,<sup>3</sup> a list of 48 village clusters has been established, and the direction has been provided that:
- “Due to the rural characteristic of the South Norfolk villages, sites allocated through the plan will normally be smaller in size. Typically sites will be between 0.5 and 1 hectare in size and will accommodate between 12 – 25 dwellings. Sites larger than these typical sizes may be considered where their development would result in particular benefits being delivered to a village or community that could not be achieved through the development of a smaller site.*
- 1.3.9 It is important to note that the VCHAP will deliver development consistent with the broad strategy in the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan and, by delivering development at the lowest tier of the proposed settlement hierarchy, will help sustain the vitality of rural settlements in the district. Therefore, the principle of directing some growth to the village clusters is already established. The VCHAP will seek to ensure that this is achieved in the most sustainable way possible in the context of the village clusters, recognising that rural locations and smaller settlements do not always offer the same degree of access to services and facilities that can be available at higher tier settlements.
- 1.3.10 It is recognised that in order to do so, it will be important to maximise the potential for directing development to locations from which access to key services and facilities can be achieved via sustainable travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport as far as possible. It will therefore be of key importance that the Sustainability Appraisal tests a range of dispersal options to ensure that the most sustainable dispersal of growth across the village clusters is delivered through the VCHAP.

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/about-us/councillors-and-committees/committee-details-agendas-and-minutes/regulation-and-planning>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan-and-new-evidence/village-clusters>

Figure 1.1: Emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (Draft Plan, 2020) key diagram



## 2 Accessibility

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Distribution of community services and facilities
- Accessibility to community services, facilities and infrastructure

### 2.2 Policy context

#### National

2.2.1 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>4</sup> (NPPF) include that planning policies should:

- Provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship, whilst guarding against the unnecessary loss of community facilities and services.
- Retain and develop accessible local services and community facilities in rural areas, including facilitating development in one settlement which will help support the facilitates and services in nearby settlements.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Enable and support health lifestyles through provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' and taking a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.

#### Local

2.2.2 The **South Norfolk Community Assets Strategy**<sup>5</sup> (2016) sets out the ways in which the Council intend to manage and maintain community assets in order to enable the delivery of the Council's corporate vision which is *"to retain and improve the quality of life and prosperity of South Norfolk, for now and future generations, to make it one of the best places to live and work in the country"*.

### 2.3 Baseline summary

2.3.1 Key community infrastructure includes such services and facilities as local primary healthcare, schools, outdoor recreation facilities and local retail. Accessibility to such services is key to ensuring the ongoing vitality of communities and the wellbeing of residents, particularly access via sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. Taking each of these features in turn, South Norfolk's community infrastructure is explored below:

#### Healthcare

2.3.2 Data from South Norfolk Council indicates that there are around 20 primary healthcare facilities within the district, ranging from large town centre medical centres such as those at Diss and Wymondham to small rural practices such as the Heathgate surgery at Rockland St Mary. This distribution of healthcare is broad

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<sup>4</sup> MHCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/South%20Norfolk%20Council%20Community%20Assets%20Strategy%20%282016%29.pdf>

and does not appear to be geographically clustered, helping minimise travel distance and ensure that primary healthcare is relatively accessible to residents across the rural areas of the district.

### Schools

2.3.3 There are a total of 71 public – i.e. non fee-paying – schools in South Norfolk itself, though it is likely that the catchments of schools in adjacent districts extend into South Norfolk and therefore some pupils who are resident in South Norfolk will attend schools elsewhere. The total pool of schools in the district comprises:

- 3 x Infant schools (i.e. pupils aged 3-7 years)
- 3 x Junior schools (i.e. pupils aged 7-11 years)
- 56 x Primary schools (i.e. pupils aged 4-11 years)
- 9 x Secondary schools (i.e. pupils aged 11-16 (5 x schools) and 11-18 years (4 x schools))

2.3.4 A broad distribution of schools throughout the district is evident from the fact that these 71 schools are dispersed across a total of 54 parishes, indicating a broad network of schools serving a wide range of small, medium and large settlements across South Norfolk. This suggests that travel distance to local schools is potentially low for many residents, subject to available school capacity, and that accessibility to schools is reasonable at a district-wide scale including via sustainable modes of travel.

### Recreation

2.3.5 Sports pitches, village halls and locally equipped areas of play make important contributions to local communities. South Norfolk Council's Asset Management Strategy identifies that the Council maintains up to 62 equipped playgrounds and recreational spaces across the district, serving at least 20 settlements.<sup>6</sup> There are further areas of play within some more recent housing developments which are not maintained by the Council and will be in addition to this total. Similarly, many town and parish councils maintain local recreation facilities themselves, whilst others are provided direct by specific sports clubs.

### Local shops

2.3.6 Local village shops and post offices are evident at settlements across the district and these play a key role in sustaining the vitality of many rural settlements. Whilst accessibility to such facilities is an important determinant in the extent to which residents can meet some basic day-to-day needs locally, it is likely that many needs must be met at larger centres. Therefore, the key retail and service centres in the district, which will have an important role to play in supporting the village clusters, are the town centres of Hingham and Wymondham in the west of the district, Long Stratton in the centre and Diss and Harleston in the south, supplemented by village centre services at Hethersett, Poringland and Loddon. Major 'out of centre' provision is also available in the Norwich fringe and parishes in the south east of the district will look to facilities in the Waveney Valley towns of Beccles and Bungay.

2.3.7 Key community facilities are mapped in Figure 2.1 overleaf.

## 2.4 Key sustainability issues and objectives

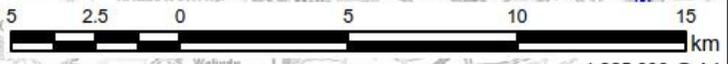
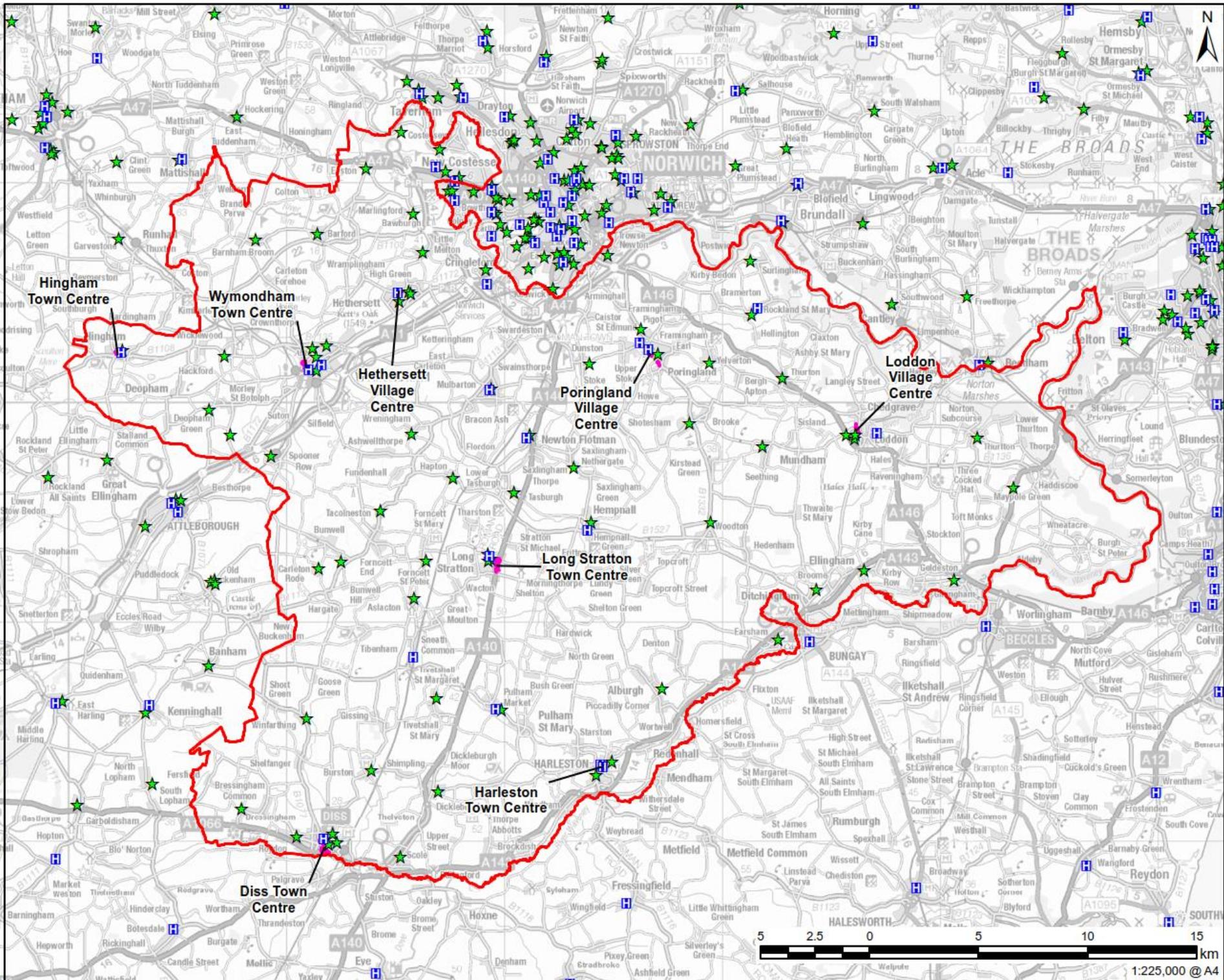
2.4.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- South Norfolk has a good network of community facilities, with settlements across the district able to support access to local healthcare, schools, recreation and essential retail.
- A hierarchy of services is apparent, with larger settlements offering a broader range of services supported by local services suitable for meeting day-to-day needs at smaller settlements.

2.4.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:

- Support good access to existing and planned services, facilities and community infrastructure, including green infrastructure, for new and existing residents, mindful of the potential for community needs to change over time.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/residents/communities/play-areas-open-spaces-and-public-assets>



## 3 Biodiversity

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Key Habitats
- Nature conservation designations.
- Condition of designated sites

### 3.2 Policy context

#### National

3.2.1 Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** in relation to Biodiversity include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF to ‘contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment’ including by ‘helping to improve biodiversity’.
- Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value [...], take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.
- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with the statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
  - Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
  - Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
  - Take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, considering the long-term implications for biodiversity.
  - The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined.

3.2.2 The Government’s **25 Year Environment Plan** (2018) sets out a strategy for managing and enhancing the natural environment, embedding ‘net gain’ principles as key to environmental considerations.

3.2.3 The **UK Biodiversity Action Plan** (BAP) identifies priority species and habitats requiring conservation action. Although the UK BAP has been superseded, BAP priority species and habitats have been used to draw up statutory lists of priority species and habitats in England.

#### Regional

3.2.4 The **Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Greater Norwich Local Plan**<sup>7</sup> (GNLP) was undertaken in 2019 to identify European sites within and near the Greater Norwich Local Plan Area along

<sup>7</sup> <https://gnlp.oc2.uk/docfiles/46/GNLP%20Reg%2018%20HRA%20Final.pdf>

with their qualifying features and to determine if these would be directly or indirectly affected by the emerging Local Plan and to help ensure that significant adverse effects on European designated sites, including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, are avoided. A separate HRA of the VCHAP will also be undertaken.

### 3.3 Baseline summary

#### Current baseline

- 3.3.1 South Norfolk's proximity to the wetlands of the Broads National Park gives the northeast and east of the district notable sensitivity in relation to a number of internationally significant biodiversity designations, many of which overlap. First, several small areas of the non-contiguous Broadland Ramsar site extend into the district.
- 3.3.2 The largest of these is at Surlingham Broad south east of Norwich, with smaller areas evident north of the River Chet at Loddon and along the River Waveney at Geldeston and at Gillingham. However, the Broadland Ramsar site is more extensive along the northern side of the administrative boundary with Broadland district and development on the South Norfolk side of the boundary could therefore have potential for effects in relation to parts of the Ramsar site which lie outside the district. It is noted that an additional Ramsar site lies just beyond the far south west of the district at Redgrave and South Lopham Fens (RSLF). Development on the South Norfolk side of the boundary here could again have potential to affect the RSLF Ramsar site just over the boundary in Breckland.
- 3.3.3 The entire extent of the Broadland Ramsar site within and adjacent to South Norfolk is also dual-designated as both a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA), indicating its exceptional biodiversity value and sensitivity.
- 3.3.4 There are several small localised SACs elsewhere within or adjacent to South Norfolk, listed below:
- Norfolk Valley Fens SAC;
  - River Wensum SAC;
  - Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC (adjacent to South Norfolk boundary but in Breckland district).
- 3.3.5 There are no SPAs elsewhere in the plan area, and a 3km mitigation buffer zone around the Breckland SPA in adjacent Breckland district does not extend into South Norfolk.
- 3.3.6 At a nationally significant scale, South Norfolk has a large quantity and wide distribution of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), with a total of 27 SSSIs falling either wholly or partly within the district, summarised below:

*Table 3.1 South Norfolk SSSIs condition summary*

SSSI name	Size (ha)	Condition	SSSI name	Size (ha)	Condition
Aslacton Parish Land	4.4	Unfavourable – Recovering (100%)	Leet Hill, Kirby Cane SSSI	6.5	Unfavourable – Declining (100%)
Bramerton Pits SSSI	0.7	Favourable (100%)	Lower Wood, Ashwellthorpe SSSI	37.9	Unfavourable – Recovering (100%)
Breydon Water SSSI	514.4	Favourable (100%)	Poplar Farm Meadows, Langley SSSI	7.5	Favourable (100%)
Broome Heath Pit SSSI	1.2	Unfavourable - No change (100%)	Pulham Market Big Wood SSSI	4.7	Favourable (100%)
Caistor St. Edmund Chalk Pit SSSI	23.6	Favourable (100%)	River Wensum SSSI	386	Favourable (11%); Unfavourable – Recovering (48%); Unfavourable –

SSSI name	Size (ha)	Condition	SSSI name	Size (ha)	Condition
					No change (41%)
Coston Fen, Runhall SSSI	7.1	Unfavourable - No change (100%)	Sea Mere, Hingham SSSI	36.3	Unfavourable – Recovering (100%)
Ducan's Marsh, Claxton SSSI	3.6	Unfavourable – Recovering (100%)	Sexton Wood SSSI	39	Unfavourable – Recovering (100%)
Flordon Common SSSI	9.9	Unfavourable – Recovering (81%); Favourable (19%)	Shelfanger Meadows SSSI	10.3	Favourable (100%)
Fornsett Meadows SSSI	5.2	Favourable (100%)	Shotesham Common SSSI	21.6	Favourable (74%); Unfavourable – Recovering (26%)
Fritton Common SSSI	20.5	Favourable (100%)	Shotesham-Woodton Hornbeam Woods SSSI	40.4	Unfavourable – No change (18%); Unfavourable – Recovering (82%)
Gawdyhall Big Wood, Harleston SSSI	29.8	Unfavourable - Recovering (83%); Favourable (17%)	Stanley and Alder Carrs, Aldeby SSSI	42.7	Unfavourable – Recovering (100%)
Geldeston Meadows SSSI	14	Unfavourable - No change (97%); Unfavourable – Declining (3%)	Tindall Wood, Ditchingham SSSI	42.2	Unfavourable – Recovering (100%)
Hardley Flood SSSI	49.8	Favourable	Yare Broads and Marshes SSSI	744.5	Favourable (39%); Unfavourable Recovering (11%); Unfavourable – No change (48%); Unfavourable – Declining (2%)
Hedenham Wood SSSI	23.4	Unfavourable - Recovering			

3.3.7 In contrast to the abundance of SSSIs, there is only one National Nature Reserve (NNR) within the district. This is at the far north of the district, where Mid-Yare NNR falls across both sides of the South Norfolk/Broadland district boundary.

3.3.8 At the local scale, there are a number of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and County Wildlife Sites (CWS) within South Norfolk. Unlike many of the higher-order designations, many of the locally designated sites are located more centrally within the district, a greater distance from the Broads National Park. This reflects the high degree of recognition that sites associated with the Broads National Park receive at national and international scale, indicating there is no need to additionally recognise them further through local designations.

3.3.9 These features are mapped in **Figures 3.1** and **3.2** at the end of this chapter.

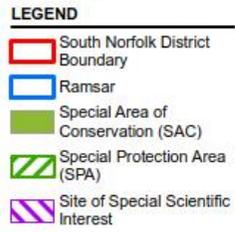
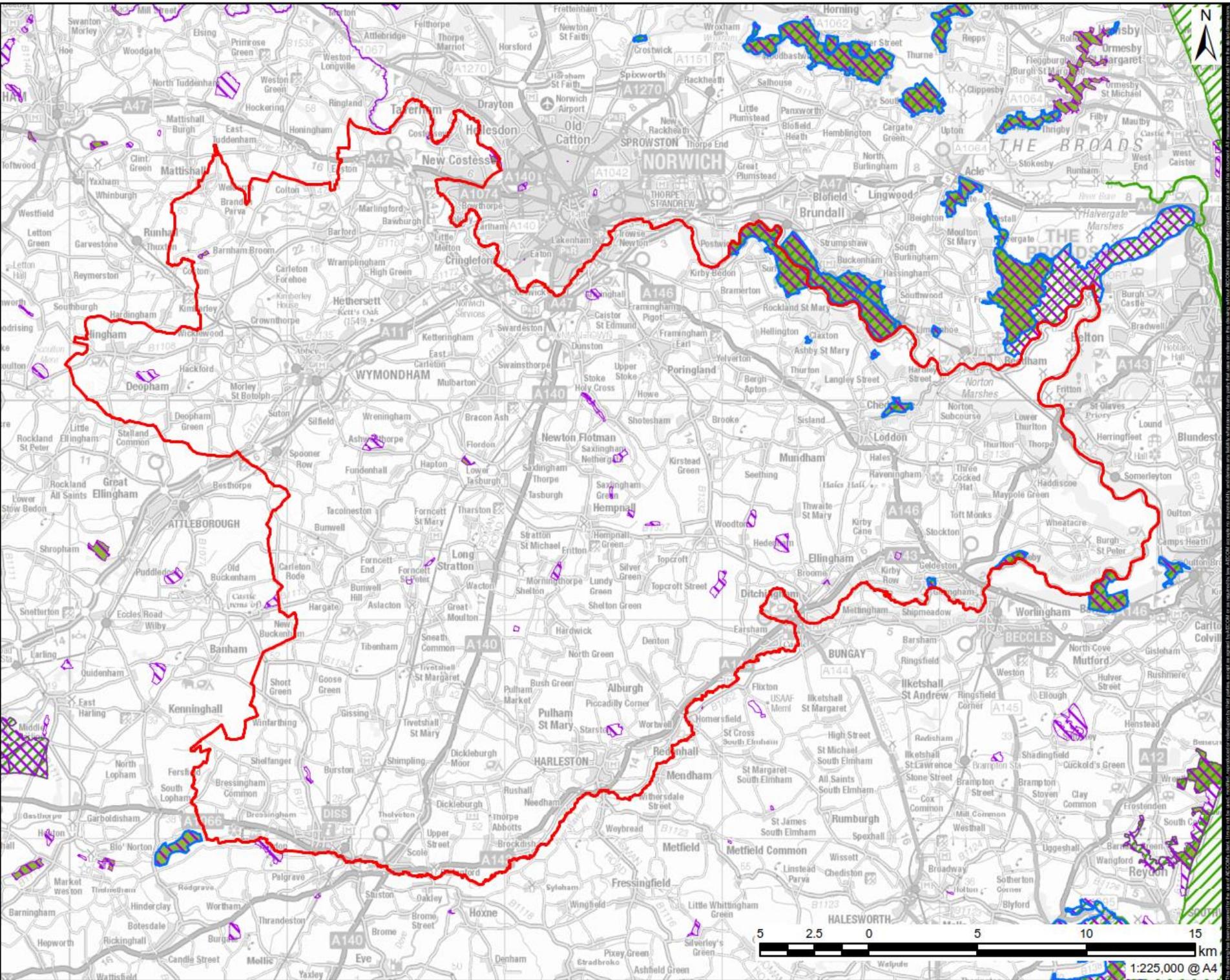
## Future baseline

- 3.3.10 There is potential for future development in the north and east of the plan area to lead to additional recreational pressure on the Broadland Ramsar site and SPA, whilst future development in the south of the plan area could lead to similar pressure on Redgrave & South Lopham Fens Ramsar site. However, existing mitigation strategies are likely to help avoid unnecessary harm where possible.
- 3.3.11 There are likely to be opportunities to deliver or enhance habitat connectivity through future developments through the delivery of local and strategic green infrastructure, particularly in locations identified as 'Core Areas' for biodiversity enhancement through the Greater Norwich Local Plan.
- 3.3.12 Increased use of natural capital metrics could help ensure support for ecological networks and habitat connectivity is achieved through the development process.

## 3.4 Key sustainability issues and objectives

- 3.4.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:
- South Norfolk has areas of significant biodiversity sensitivity, including in relation to the internationally designated Broadland Ramsar site and Redgrave & South Lopham Fens Ramsar site, as well as the Broadland Special Protection Area (SPA) and four separate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).
  - There is a widespread distribution of nationally designated biodiversity sites throughout the district, including a total of 27 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and one National Nature Reserve (NNR) along with a variety of locally designated sites.
  - The Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) identifies a number of 'Core Areas' for biodiversity enhancement within South Norfolk, as well as areas suitable for 'extending and linking fragmented habitats'. These areas could be suitable to target for biodiversity net gain measures in future.
- 3.4.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:
- Avoid harm to South Norfolk's rich diversity of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites of biodiversity significance, as well as to sites in adjacent Local Plan areas, whilst seeking to deliver a biodiversity net gain and enhancement of habitats and habitat connectivity in all but exceptional cases.

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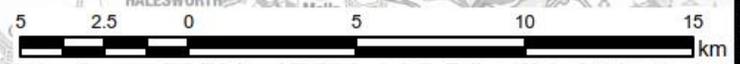
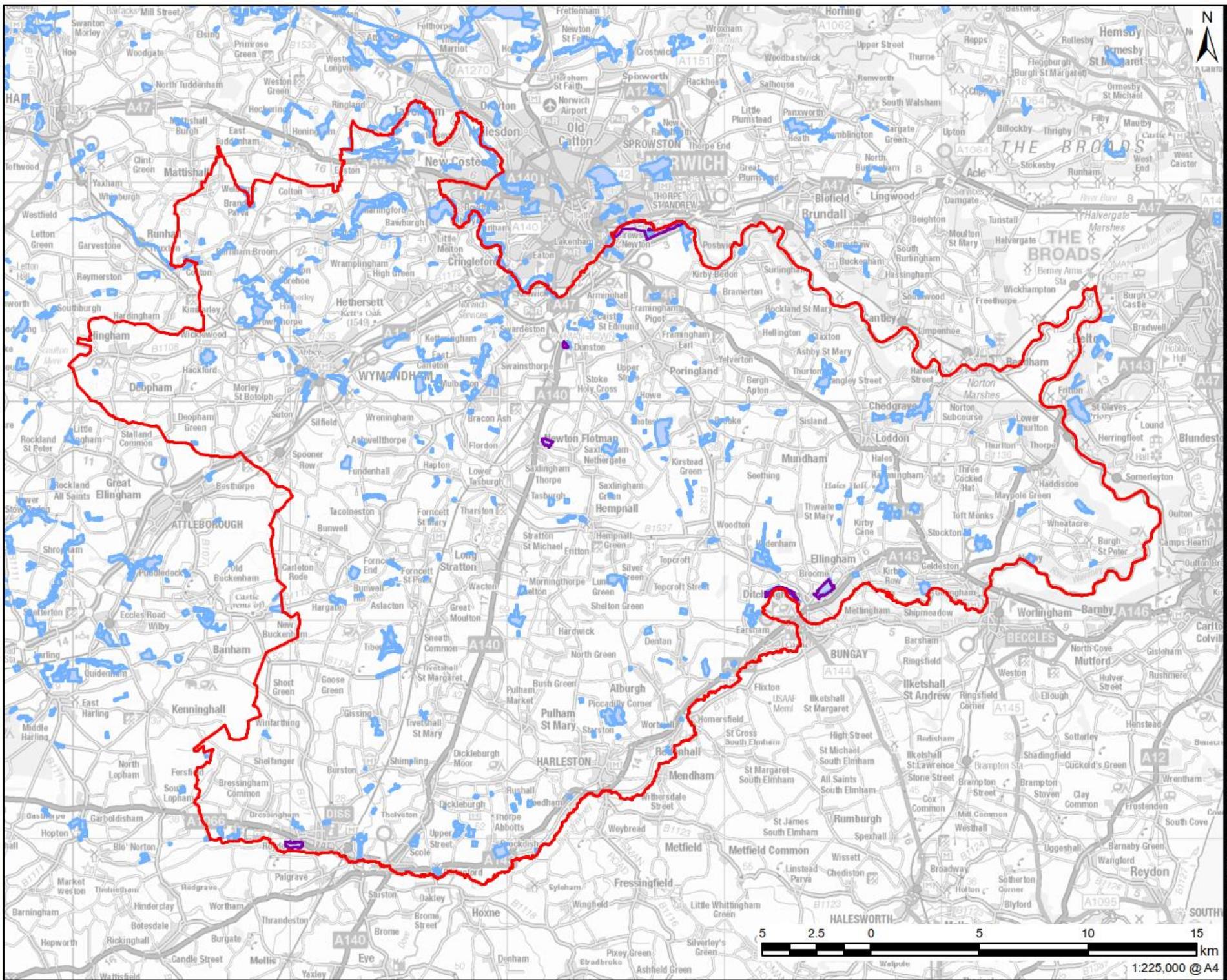


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**ISSUE PURPOSE**  
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**PROJECT NUMBER**  
60637110  
**SHEET TITLE**  
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DESIGNATED BIODIVERSITY SITES  
**SHEET NUMBER**  
Figure 3.1





# 4 Climate change adaptation

## 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Fluvial flood risk
- Surface water flood risk
- Heating and urban heat islands

## 4.2 Policy context

### National

4.2.1 Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework**<sup>13</sup> (NPPF) include:

- Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.
- Inappropriate development in areas at high risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas of highest risk (whether existing or future).
- Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources.
- Plans should take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, considering a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.
- Plans should reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbate the impacts of physical changes to the coast.

4.2.2 The **Flood and Water Management Act (2010)**<sup>14</sup> sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding, not just rivers and seas, are managed more effectively. This includes: incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

4.2.3 The **UK Climate Change Risk Assessment** is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report<sup>17</sup> containing six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years:

- Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;
- Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures;
- Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;
- Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;
- Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and

- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals

## Regional

- 4.2.4 The **Greater Norwich Area Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1** (2017) was prepared by JBA Consulting on behalf of seven planning authorities in Norfolk, including South Norfolk. The SFRA provides a strategic overview of areas of risk and potential mitigations in the districts, without drilling down to site specific exception and sequential testing.

## 4.3 Baseline summary

### Current baseline

- 4.3.1 As shown in Figure 4.1 at the end of Chapter 4, fluvial flood risk within the Plan area is greatest (land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding) in the north east of the district, following the large flood corridors of the River Yare. Other notable high risk areas include land in close proximity to the River Waveney in the south and south east part of the Plan area, the flood corridors aligned with the River Yare in the north west, and the River Tas, which flows through the centre of the district. Additionally, some parts of the Plan area are present within Flood Zone 2 (land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding), including land running parallel to the River Waveney in the south part of the Plan area. Although not all fluvial flood zones are necessarily absolute constraints to development, any development within a flood zone must be compatible with that flood zone (e.g. by directing non-residential uses to ground floor units) and must follow a sequential approach.
- 4.3.2 Surface water flood risk is much more extensive within the district, with corridors of risk evident along the course of a large number of both major and minor waterways. This creates a network of channels of surface water flood risk throughout South Norfolk, though in most instances the areas of risk are very narrow and tightly follow the alignment of water courses. More widespread areas of risk are evident at larger watercourses.
- 4.3.3 The Greater Norwich JCS identifies that there is an “urban heat island effect in Norwich”, meaning that the built area and hard surfacing of the city and its surrounds is sufficiently extensive for heat to be retained longer and amplified higher during warm weather, leading to temperatures “significantly warmer than the countryside surrounding it”. Whilst a small portion of the District falls within the contiguous built area of Greater Norwich, in practice the majority of the District does not appear to currently be susceptible to a notable heat island effect.

### Future baseline

- 4.3.4 The impact of climate change over the plan period on flooding is likely to be detrimental to susceptible areas through incremental changes to maximum water levels, flood extents and flow paths. Future development that falls within the broad flooding hotspots identified above therefore has the potential to put people and properties within the natural and built environment at risk of costly flooding events.
- 4.3.5 Additionally, it is anticipated that the effects of climate change will include warmer, drier summers which could lead to an increased ‘heat island’ effect in built up areas or areas of extensive hard surfacing.
- 4.3.6 However, development also provides the opportunity to enhance communities to better adapt to climatic changes such as flood risk and heating through the production of robust, sustainable infrastructure in the Plan area. For example, the implementation of sustainable drainage systems to alleviate surface water runoff, or delivering urban greening and widespread planting to reduce a potential increased heat island effect in built areas.

## Key sustainability issues and objectives

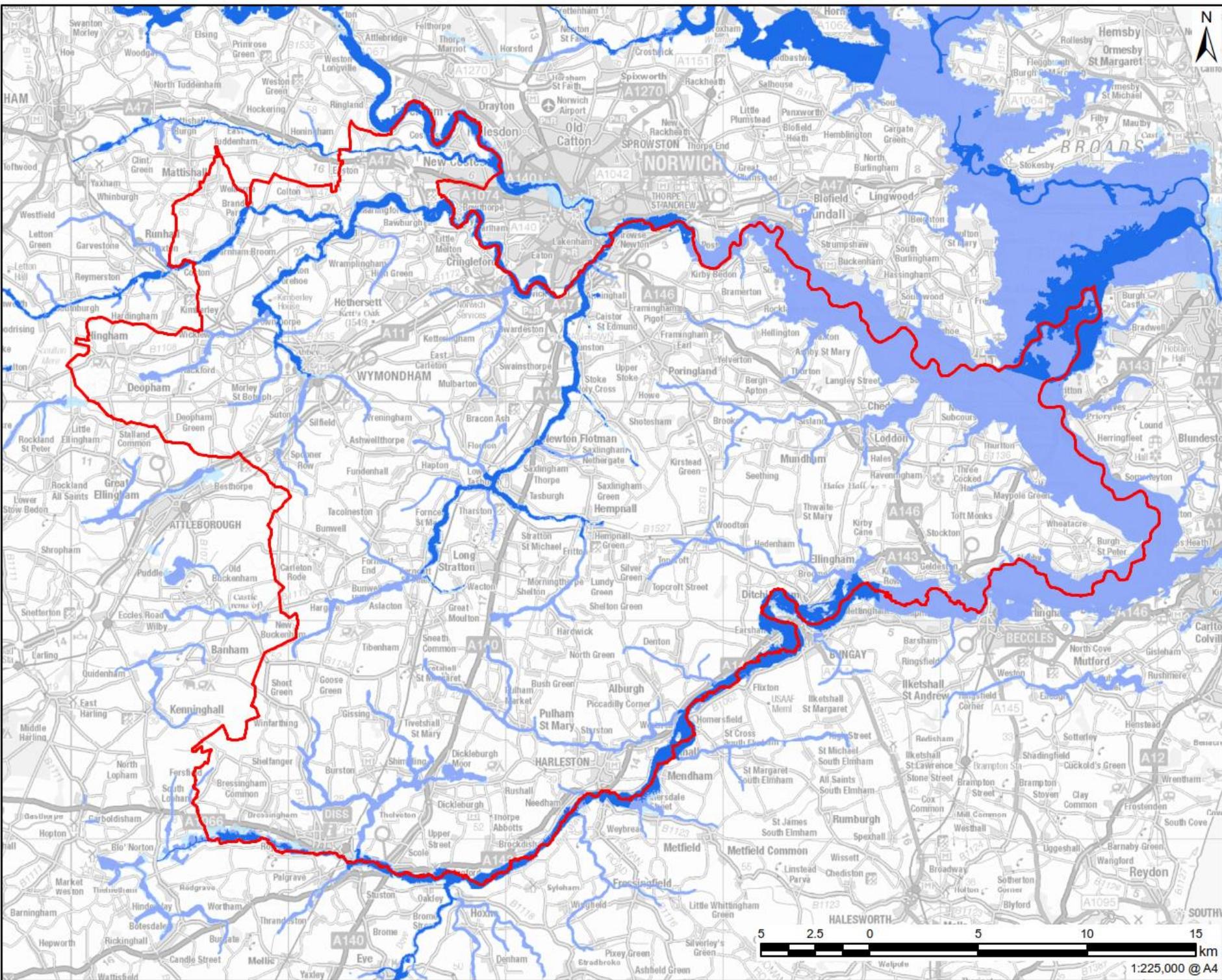
4.3.7 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- Areas of high fluvial flood risk (Flood Zone 3) broadly follow the flood corridors of the River Yare (north west and north east part of the Plan area), River Waveney (south west and south part of the Plan area) and River Tas (central part of the Plan area).
- Surface water flood risk in the Plan area is extensive, though in most instances the areas of risk are very narrow and tightly follow the alignment of water courses. Areas of more widespread risk are connected to larger watercourses.
- Proposed development should seek to avoid building on flooding hotspots in order to better safeguard future residents and their properties against flood risk and not increase the risk to existing residents and properties.

4.3.8 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:

- Support the resilience of South Norfolk to the potential effects of climate change, including by directing development away from areas at greatest risk of fluvial and surface water flooding.

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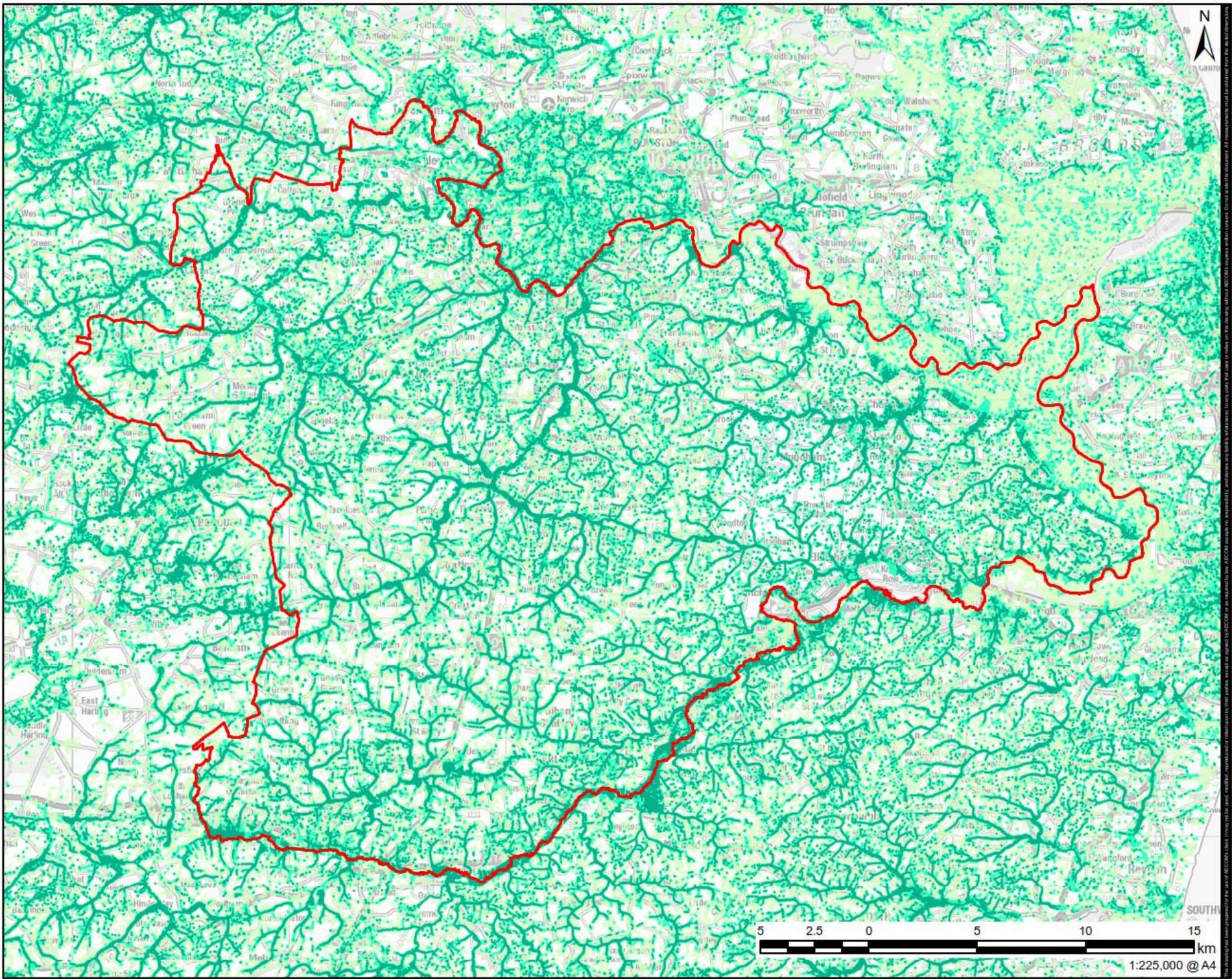
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LEGEND  
South Norfolk District Boundary  
Flood Zone 2  
Flood Zone 3a  
Flood Zone 3b

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FLUVIAL FLOOD ZONES

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Figure 4.1



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## 5 Climate change mitigation

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Emissions from the built environment
- Emissions from transport

### 5.2 Policy context

#### National

5.2.1 Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** in relation to climate change mitigation include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to ‘contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment’ including by ‘mitigating and adapting to climate change’ and ‘moving to a low carbon economy.’ ‘The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
- Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.

5.2.2 The **UK Climate Change Risk Assessment** is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report <sup>8</sup> containing six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years:

- Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;
- Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures;
- Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;
- Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;
- Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals

5.2.3 The **UK Climate Change Act**<sup>9</sup> was passed in 2008 and established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. It also highlighted the role it would take in contributing to collective action to tackle climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, and more recently as part of the UN-led Paris Agreement.

5.2.4 The Department for Transport published **Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)**<sup>20</sup> sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions

<sup>8</sup> DEFRA (2017): ‘UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report January 2017’, [online] available to download from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017>

<sup>9</sup> HM Government (2008): ‘Climate Change Act 2008’, [online] accessible via <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting the UK on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050.

- 5.2.5 The Committee of Climate Change published a 2012 report entitled '**How Local Authorities can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk**'<sup>10</sup> which emphasises the crucial role councils have in helping the UK meet its carbon targets and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It outlines specific opportunities for reducing emissions and highlights good practice examples from a number of local authorities.
- 5.2.6 The **Clean Air Strategy**<sup>18</sup> released in 2019 sets out the Government plans for dealing with all sources of air pollution. The strategy sets out proposals in detail and indicates how devolved administrations intend to make their share of emissions reductions, and complements the Industrial Strategy, Clean Growth Strategy and 25 Year Environment Plan.

## Local

- 5.2.7 The **South Norfolk and Broadland Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)** monitors harmful emissions across South Norfolk and Broadland districts on an annual basis to identify any potential exceedances in relation to air quality objectives and set out remedial action if required. The most recent ASR dates from 2019.

## 5.3 Baseline summary

### Current baseline

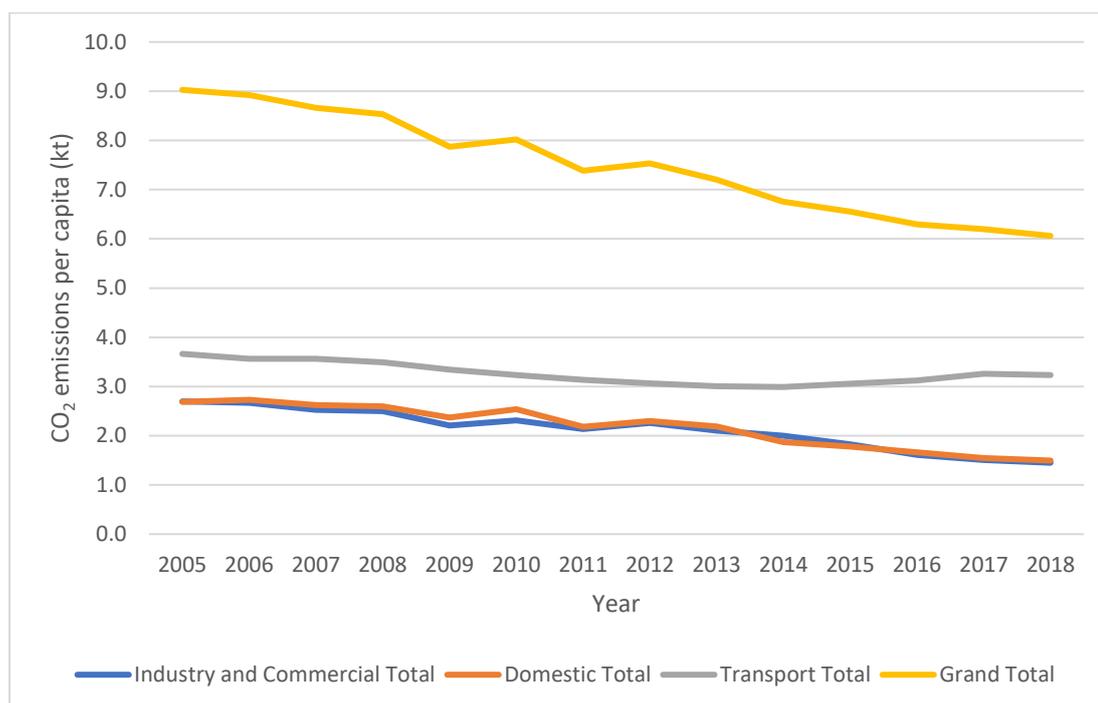
#### Emissions from all sources

- 5.3.1 Reducing greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions is widely acknowledged as a key element of climate change mitigation. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in particular are associated with a changing climate. In this context, emissions are monitored and recorded at Local Authority level to enable high-emitting areas to identify and mitigate sources of emissions.
- 5.3.2 The 2019 South Norfolk and Broadland ASR concludes that "*Air Quality in South Norfolk is generally good with no recorded exceedance of air quality objectives*". There are no declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the district and although the main pollutant of local concern is nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) arising from road traffic and stationary combustion sources, levels of emissions are within acceptable levels.
- 5.3.3 Emissions from all sources, i.e. the built environment and from transport, are monitored and reported on by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS). This data for South Norfolk is presented in Figure 5.1 below:

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<sup>10</sup> CCC (2012), 'How local authorities can reduce emissions and manage climate risks', [online]; available from: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/how-local-authorities-can-reduce-emissions-and-manage-climate-risks/>

Figure 5.1 South Norfolk per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions estimates within the scope of influence of Local Authorities 2005-2018 (kt CO<sub>2</sub>)<sup>11</sup>



- 5.3.4 Figure 5.1 shows that overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have fallen steadily within South Norfolk since 2005, though within this overall decline the data indicates a recent uptick in emissions from transport sources since 2014. The fall in overall emissions reflects a wider trend evident at regional and national levels, though the recent increase in transport emissions is slightly greater than the national trend which have not seen such a marked uptick over the same period.
- 5.3.5 It is notable that South Norfolk's per capita emissions from all sources were 6.1 kilotons (kt) of CO<sub>2</sub>, substantially higher than the East of England per capita figure of 5.2kt and the per capita figure of 5.0kt for England as a whole. This is likely to reflect that South Norfolk is a largely rural district with greater car-dependency than more urban areas.
- 5.3.6 The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS) also publishes annual statistics on renewable energy generation, disaggregated by Local Authority. The most recently published data is for 2018 and shows that South Norfolk has a total renewable energy installed capacity of **78.9 megawatts (MW)**. Around 85% of this total is generated from photovoltaics (i.e. solar panels), with the remaining 15% generated from a combination of onshore wind, anaerobic digestion, sewage gas, landfill gas and plant biomass. This puts South Norfolk at 19<sup>th</sup> place in terms of overall renewable energy installed capacity out of the 47 local authority areas in the East of England region, though this increases to 13<sup>th</sup> place when looking at installed capacity from photovoltaics alone.<sup>12</sup>
- 5.3.7 DBEIS data indicates that total installed capacity from photovoltaics in South Norfolk increased rapidly between 2014 and 2016, rising from 13.9 MW to 67.5 MW. However, installed capacity has since plateaued, and at 2018 remained at 68.2MW.

<sup>11</sup> Dept of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2018) 'UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2018 [online], available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2018>

<sup>12</sup> DBEIS (2018), 'Renewable electricity by local authority' [online], available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics>

## Ultra-low emissions vehicles (ULEVs)

- 5.3.8 Ultra-low emissions vehicles have potential to play a key role in reducing overall emissions and can become an increasingly important instrument by which to mitigate the effects of climate change. It is therefore important to understand South Norfolk's current baseline in relation to ULEVs in order to gain a better understanding of their potential going forwards.
- 5.3.9 The Department for Transport (DfT) and DVLA release statistics on the number of licensed ultra-low emissions vehicles on a quarterly basis. The Q2 2020 data, i.e. the most recently available, shows that there has been an exponential increase in the number of ULEVs in South Norfolk since 2012. The number of licensed ULEVs also hugely increased across Norfolk and across England as a whole, though Table 5.1 below illustrates that the overall rate of increase in South Norfolk has outpaced that at regional or national scale.

*Table 5.1 Number of licensed ULEVs 2012 – 2020<sup>13</sup>*

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b>England</b>	283,588	200,299	150,679	104,653	67,219	37,599	16,547	11,654	9,555
<b>Norfolk</b>	2,211	1,619	1,230	840	542	343	159	112	85
<b>S. Norfolk</b>	496	371	287	172	108	62	31	16	11

- 5.3.10 This illustrates that South Norfolk district now accounts for around 22% of all ULEVs in Norfolk, compared with around 13% just eight years ago. Take up of ULEVs in the district is therefore growing both in absolute terms and also in relative terms to its near neighbours. This suggests that if this exponential rate of growth continues, ULEVs could provide a potentially significant proportion of private vehicles in South Norfolk over the longer term and potentially even within the plan period.
- 5.3.11 The (DfT) also releases statistics on the number of electric charging devices available in each local authority area in the UK. The most recent data relates to July 2020 and reveals that South Norfolk has a total of 23 public charging devices, equating to 16.3 devices per 100,000 population.<sup>14</sup> This is significantly fewer than the UK average of 27.7 devices per 100,000 population, though this may partly reflect that South Norfolk's population is dispersed between a number of relatively small settlements across the district this does not necessarily indicate that all residents enjoy similar levels of access to these devices and it is likely that charging devices are concentrated at the larger settlements in the district.

## Future baseline

- 5.3.12 Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the district, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) estimate that under a medium emissions scenario, the central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is an increase of 16%, while there is estimated to be an average drop in summer precipitation of 19%. This is likely to increase the risk of flooding in winter months and increase water shortages during summer months with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.
- 5.3.13 Per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in South Norfolk are likely to continue to decrease as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies become more widely adopted. A recent uptick in transport emissions may be addressed through increased take-up of more energy efficient vehicles and electric vehicles over time. Changing work patterns, with increasing remote/home working also has the potential to significantly reduce the level of transport-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but will be reliant on the provision of suitable infrastructure to facilitate this.
- 5.3.14 Exponential increases in the number of ultra-low emissions vehicles in the district are likely to continue based on current trends, particularly as a greater range of options become affordable to ever more consumers over time. This could eventually have a profound effect on the level of emissions generated by private vehicles in the district.

<sup>13</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/917208/veh0132.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/917208/veh0132.ods)

<sup>14</sup> Department of Transport (2020) Electric vehicle charging device statistics: July 2020 [online], available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/electric-vehicle-charging-device-statistics-july-2020>

## 5.4 Key sustainability issues and objectives

5.4.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- South Norfolk has relatively high per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions when compared with equivalent data at regional and national levels.
- The district ranks 13<sup>th</sup> of the 47 East of England local authority areas in terms of installed capacity from photovoltaics (solar panels), though the rate at which installed capacity is increasing has plateaued since 2016.
- Emissions from transport show signs of recent gradual increase, making it important to protect community services facilities and prevent significant increases in journeys being made by existing residents to facilities a greater distance away.
- However, ownership of ultra-low emissions vehicles is rising exponentially in South Norfolk, reflecting wider trends across the country.

5.4.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:

- Continue to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from all sources by achieving high standards of energy efficiency in new development, by supporting decentralised energy generation, by providing attractive opportunities for sustainable travel, by locating residential development a short distance from key services and by protecting land suitable for renewable and low carbon energy generation, including community schemes, whilst recognising the changing nature of private cars with the Government's current aim of phasing out all sales of internal combustion engine cars within the lifetime of this plan.

## 6 Communities

### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Population data
- Household deprivation
- Health and wellbeing indicators

### 6.2 Policy context

#### National

6.2.1 Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework**<sup>15</sup> (NPPF) include that planning policies should:

- Provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship, whilst guarding against the unnecessary loss of community facilities and services.
- Retain and develop accessible local services and community facilities in rural areas.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Enable and support health lifestyles through provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' and taking a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.

6.2.2 The **Equality Act** (2010) was brought in to reduce inequality and discrimination and ensure all members of the community are provided with equal opportunities. The Act covers nine protected characteristics - age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. The public sector equality duty, set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act, requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to: promote equality of opportunity; tackle unfair discrimination and to promote good relations between different groups.

6.2.3 The Government's **Integrated Communities Strategy** (2019) focuses on improving community cohesion through tackling inequalities experienced through education and employment and supporting cultural sharing and cohesion. In order to address discrimination, disparity between sections of the community must be addressed<sup>16</sup>. This is supported by the Local Government Association's guidance document to local authorities 'Building cohesive communities'.<sup>17</sup>

6.2.4 **Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On**<sup>18</sup> (2020) has been produced by the Institute of Health Equity and commissioned by the Health Foundation to mark 10 years on from the landmark study 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' (known as the Marmot Review).

<sup>15</sup> MHCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government (2019) Integrated Communities Strategy green paper [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>

<sup>17</sup> LGA (2019) Building cohesive communities [online] available at: [https://local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/10.31%20Community%20cohesion%20guidance\\_04.2.pdf](https://local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/10.31%20Community%20cohesion%20guidance_04.2.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years on (2020) <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on>

- 6.2.5 NHS guidance on healthy urban development focuses on four key themes: healthy housing, active travel, healthy environment and vibrant neighbourhoods.<sup>19</sup>

## Local

- 6.2.6 The **South Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy** (covering the period 2018-2021) provides a vision and policy framework for South Norfolk Council to improve the overall health and wellbeing of its residents. Additionally, the Strategy outlines the contribution of local services and key trends with regards to the mental and physical health of the resident population.

## 6.3 Baseline summary

### Current baseline

- 6.3.1 Census data and mid-year statistics provide a statistical baseline for developing an understanding of the headline characteristics of the South Norfolk population. This is explored below.

### Population

*Table 6.1 Population and population growth in South Norfolk 2001 – 2019*

Year/source	South Norfolk	East of England	England
2001 census	110,710	5,388,140	49,138,831
2011 census	124,012	5,846,965	53,012,456
2019 mid-year population estimate	140,880	6,236,072	56,286,961
<b>% population change 2001- 2019</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>

- 6.3.2 Table 6.1 illustrates that the rate of population growth in South Norfolk has far outpaced that at regional and national levels, with growth totalling 27.3% in the district between 2001 and 2019. This is particularly notable given that absence of any major cities within the district, though is partly attributable to recent strategic development at locations which are functionally part of the Norwich urban area but fall within the administrative boundary of South Norfolk, such as Costessey and Cringleford, as well as other identified growth locations in the A11 Corridor at Hethersett and Wymondham..

### Household deprivation

- 6.3.3 Census statistics measure deprivation across four 'dimensions' of deprivation, summarised below:
- Employment: Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick.
  - Education: No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.
  - Health and disability: Any person in the household that has generally 'bad' or 'very bad' health, or has a long term health problem.
  - Housing: The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.
- 6.3.4 As illustrated by Table 6.2 below, South Norfolk stands out as having lower instances of household deprivation in any dimension relative to the East of England region and England as a whole.

<sup>19</sup> NHS (2017) Healthy Urban Planning Checklist [online] available at: <https://www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Healthy-Urban-Planning-Checklist-3rd-edition-April-2017.pdf>

Table 6.2 Relative household deprivation dimensions (2011 census)

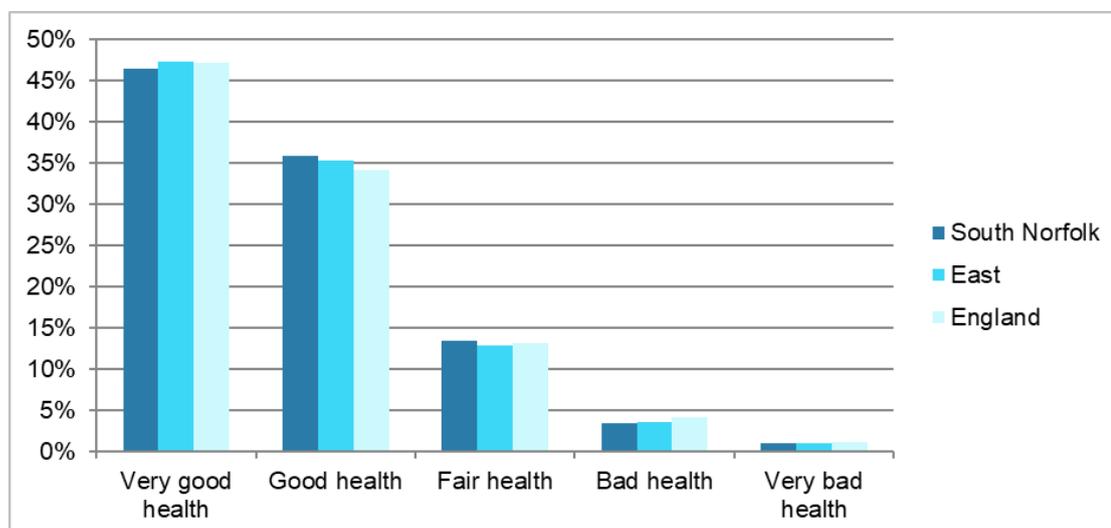
	South Norfolk	East of England	England
Household not deprived	47.6%	44.8%	42.5%
Deprived in 1 dimension	32.8%	32.9%	32.7%
Deprived in 2 dimensions	16.7%	17.9%	19.1%
Deprived in 3 dimensions	2.7%	4.0%	5.1%
Deprived in 4 dimensions	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%

- 6.3.5 However, these headline figures conceal that there is contrast within the district and the JCS notes that although South Norfolk “*is generally affluent, deprivation is dispersed across rural parts of the area*”. This suggests that although overall deprivation in the district is low, adequate access to employment, education, healthcare and housing may be greater in the urban areas of the district than the rural areas.

### Health and wellbeing

- 6.3.6 Health is a cross-cutting topic and there are clear synergies between health and wellbeing and the SA themes of accessibility and of transport, as a poor public transport offer or a lack of green infrastructure will have flow on effects on residents’ ability to access healthcare facilities and outdoor recreation. Therefore, access to healthcare is discussed in Chapter 2 of this report under the accessibility SA theme. However, baseline data on health in South Norfolk is presented below:

Figure 6.1 General Health (2011 census)



- 6.3.7 Figure 6.1 (above) shows that general health outcomes in the district are broadly on a par with outcomes at regional and national levels. Overall, 82.2% of South Norfolk residents reported being in ‘good’ or ‘very good’ health at the 2011 census, compared with 82.5% in the East of England and 81.4% across England as a whole.
- 6.3.8 Table 6.3 (below) shows that South Norfolk is again broadly on par with the East of England region and England as a whole in terms of the extent to which long term health limits the day-to-day activities of residents.

*Table 6.3 Long term health category (2011 census)*

	South Norfolk	East of England	England
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	7.45%	7.43%	8.30%
Day-to-day activities limited a little	10.48%	9.28%	9.30%
Day-to-day activities not limited	82.07%	83.30%	82.40%

- 6.3.9 Average life expectancy at birth (LEB) in South Norfolk was 81.6 year in 2013 (the most recently available data), compared with 80.5 years for the East of England and 81.1 for England as a whole. LEB in the district is therefore relatively strong. However, this headline figure conceals significant disparities in LEB between the 36 wards of the district, with a 16.1 year LEB gap between the highest and lowest performing wards, as outlined in Table 6.4 below:

*Table 6.4 Summary of ward-level life expectancy at birth (2013)<sup>20</sup>*

Metric	Data
Average life expectancy at birth across all wards (LEB)	<b>81.6</b> (across all 36 wards)
Lowest LEB	<b>75.5</b> (Hingham and Deopham)
Highest LEB	<b>89.6</b> (Easton)

## Future baseline

- 6.3.10 Recent rapid population growth may be challenging to sustain over the long term, and may only be sustainable if the pipeline of available sites and the degree to which services and facilities can be provided continues to support population growth.
- 6.3.11 The trend for relatively positive health outcomes overall in relation to regional and national averages is considered likely to continue, though entrenched inequalities within the district itself, as indicated by a 16 year difference between highest and lowest life expectancy, may be challenging to meaningfully alter in the short term.

## 6.4 Key sustainability issues and objectives

- 6.4.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:
- The rate of population growth since 2001 in South Norfolk is high at around 27%, nearly twice the rate of growth seen at regional and national level.
  - Overall levels of deprivation in the district appear relatively low and health outcomes are generally strong. However, within the headline data there are notable discrepancies, including significant variations in life expectancy at birth between different wards in the district.
- 6.4.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:
- Support the continued healthy and sustainable growth of South Norfolk, narrowing the gap between the areas of the district with strongest and least strong health and social outcomes, helping to maintain local services and facilitates in more rural locations, to the benefit of existing and future residents.

<sup>20</sup> ONS (2018) 'Health state life expectancy by 2011 Census wards in England and Wales' [online], available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/datasets/healthstatelifeexpectancyby2011censuswardsinenglandandwales>

# 7 Economy

## 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Economic provision
- Education and skills
- Occupation bands

## 7.2 Policy context

### National

7.2.1 Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** in relation to economy and employment include:

- Planning policies should help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- Local plans should:
  - a. Encourage sustainable economic growth within their clear economic vision and strategy.
  - b. Set criteria and identify sites for local investment to match the community needs.
  - c. Address investment barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, services/housing or poor environment.
  - d. Incorporate flexibility to account for unanticipated circumstances, allow new working practices and enable rapid responses to economic changes.

7.2.2 The **Local Growth White Paper (2010)**<sup>21</sup> notes that government interventions should support investment that will have a long-term impact on growth, working with markets rather than seeking to create artificial and unsustainable growth. The White Paper identifies that economic policy should be judged on the degree to which it delivers strong, sustainable and balanced growth of income and employment over the long-term. More specifically, growth should be: broad-based industrially and geographically, ensuring everyone has access to the opportunities that growth brings (including future generations), whilst also focused on businesses that compete with the best internationally.

### Regional

7.2.3 South Norfolk is within the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which covers the majority of Norfolk and Suffolk, capturing 11 local planning authorities in total. New Anglia LEP released the draft **Local Industrial Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk** in January 2020, setting out a vision for the region to become “*the UK’s clean growth region*” through focussing on growing the renewable energy sector. The Strategy seeks to “*show how Norfolk and Suffolk is going to continue to collaborate across disciplines and boundaries to provide new solutions and the infrastructure that its communities and businesses need*”.

7.2.4 The **Greater Norwich Employment Baseline Assessment (2016)**<sup>22</sup> was prepared by GVA in order to identify future needs and opportunities for retail, office, industrial and warehousing floorspace across the three Greater Norwich local authority areas. It also explores town centres and identifies key interventions required to maintain and enhance their viability and vitality.

<sup>21</sup> Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2010, Local Growth: Realising Every Place’s Potential [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-growth-realising-every-places-potential-hc-7961>

<sup>22</sup> [https://gnlp.oc2.uk/docfiles/46/greater\\_norwich\\_employment\\_baseline\\_final.pdf](https://gnlp.oc2.uk/docfiles/46/greater_norwich_employment_baseline_final.pdf)

## Local

- 7.2.5 The **South Norfolk Economic Growth Strategy 2016-2021**<sup>23</sup> presents how the Council will seek to address key economic and labour market issues in South Norfolk, create more employment opportunities, leverage funding and investment and maximise the economic benefits of growth.

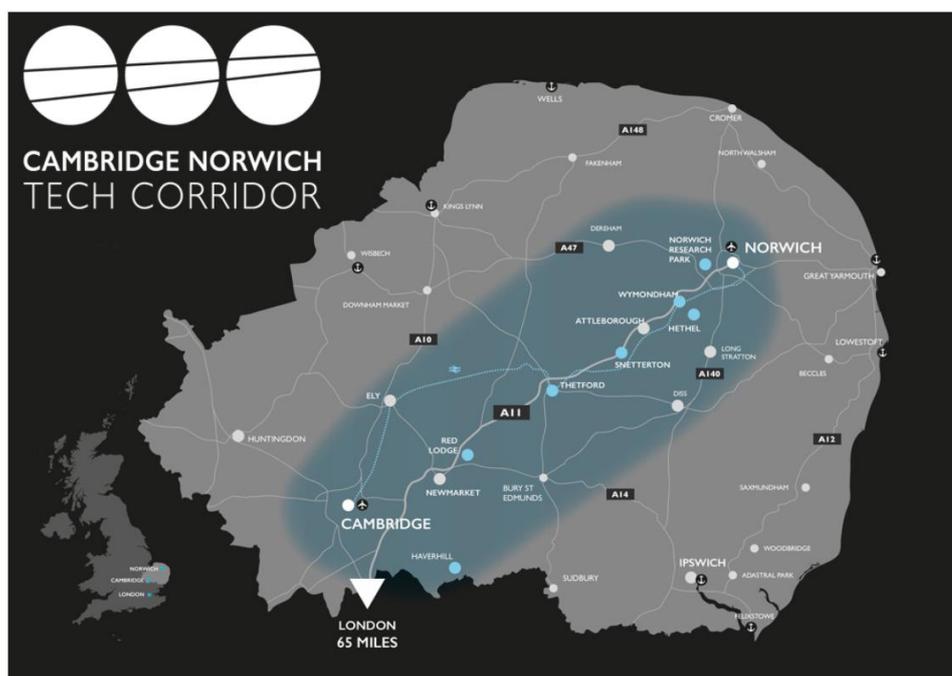
## 7.3 Baseline summary

### Current baseline

#### Employment

- 7.3.1 The 2016 Greater Norwich Employment Baseline Assessment (EBA) identifies that a significant proportion of South Norfolk residents are employed outside of the district, with Norwich attracting the majority of outbound commuters. The EBA finds that South Norfolk's 'containment rate', or the proportion of the workforce retained in the district, is around 40%, indicating that over half of the district's workers commute elsewhere. The Strategy Advice in the Greater Norwich Employment Town Centre and Retail Study (2017) identifies three key locations in South Norfolk: Norwich Research Park; Wymondham and Hethel; and Diss. The latter two in particular serve significant rural areas covered by the VCHAP, with Hethel Engineering Centre and neighbouring Lotus Cars being within a cluster parish.
- 7.3.2 South Norfolk falls partly within the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor, a joint regional initiative between four district councils, two LEPs and both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils to attract technology and research businesses to the area to build technology-based clusters between Cambridge and Norwich. Once fully developed the initiative aims to deliver:
- Up to 15,000 new jobs in engineering, agri-tech and other LEP target sectors, as well as wider sectors of importance to the economy
  - £900 million private sector investment in construction activity
  - 20,000 new homes along the corridor.
- 7.3.3 There could be particular opportunities in relation to the Tech Corridor at locations within South Norfolk which already have a cluster of knowledge employers, such as the Norwich Research Park near the University of East Anglia in Colney, south of Norwich, which is a major regional employer.

Figure 7.1 The Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor<sup>24</sup>



<sup>23</sup> [https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Economic\\_Growth\\_Strategy\\_Summary\\_2016-2021.pdf](https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Economic_Growth_Strategy_Summary_2016-2021.pdf)

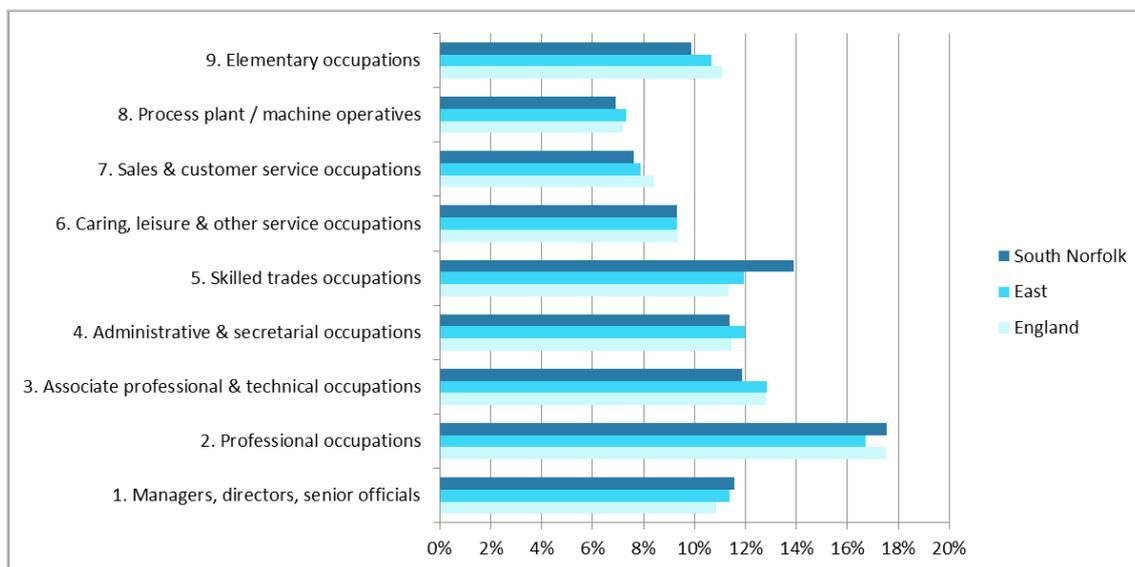
<sup>24</sup> <https://www.techcorridor.co.uk/>

7.3.4 Employment opportunities in the village clusters centre on the larger village and town centres serving the rural areas. Key centres serving the village clusters will include Hethersett, Hingham and Wymondham in the west, Loddon in the east, Poringland and Long Stratton in the district’s centre and Diss and Harleston in the south. Wymondham, Hingham, Long Stratton, Loddon, Harleston and Diss all received new employment land allocations through the adopted 2015 Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document and the accompanying Area Action Plans for Long Stratton and Wymondham.<sup>25</sup> However, continued employment provision, whether new purpose built space such as that at Poringland, or through diversification, remains important across the rural area.

7.3.5 Additionally, the South Norfolk Economic Growth Strategy recognises that tourism and the visitor economy has a role in South Norfolk, particularly in relation to visitors to the Broads National Park and the jobs this directly and indirectly supports within the District.

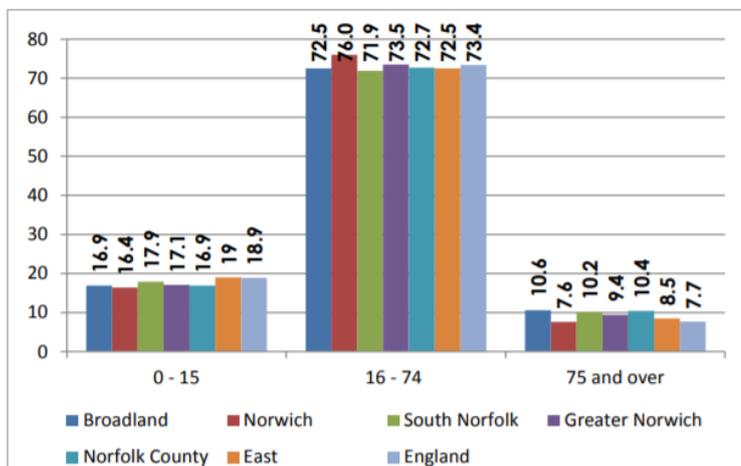
7.3.6 Figure 7.2, below, shows that the district has a greater proportion of people in employment in professional occupations and managerial positions than is evident at regional or national level. Correspondingly, a smaller proportion of South Norfolk workers are employed in elementary occupations and other low skilled bands.

Figure 7.2 Occupation band (2011 census)



7.3.7 Figure 7.3, below, shows that South Norfolk’s population has the smallest proportion of working age residents of any of the Greater Norwich authorities, and is also lower than for the East of the England region or England as a whole.

Figure 7.3 Working age population comparison<sup>26</sup>



<sup>25</sup> [https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Key\\_Diagram\\_Policies\\_Maps\\_Appendix\\_1.pdf](https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Key_Diagram_Policies_Maps_Appendix_1.pdf)

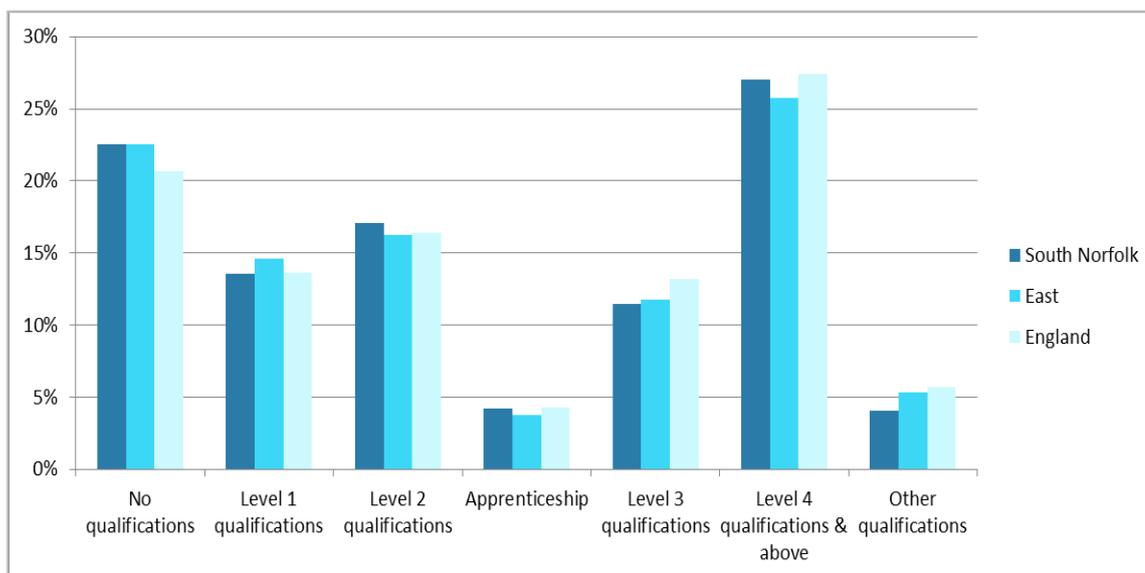
<sup>26</sup> [https://gnlp.oc2.uk/docfiles/46/greater\\_norwich\\_employment\\_baseline\\_final.pdf](https://gnlp.oc2.uk/docfiles/46/greater_norwich_employment_baseline_final.pdf)

### Education

7.3.8 Skills and education are a key factor in driving economic growth. As per Figure 7.4, below, the 2011 census indicates that the proportion of residents achieving level 4 qualifications or above is around 31%, in line with the average for the East of England (also 31%) though slightly lower than for England as a whole (33%). Conversely, the proportion of residents achieving no qualifications at GCSE or above was found to be again in line with the East of England average, though slightly higher than for England as a whole. The eight qualification levels in England are summarised below for context: The most recognisable qualifications in England at each of the eight qualification levels are summarised below:

- Level 1 includes GCSE grades 3 to 1 or D to G;
- Level 2 includes GCSE grades 9 to 4 or grades A\* to C;
- Level 3 includes AS levels and A levels;
- Levels 4 and 5 include NVQs at Level 4 and Level 5 respectively;
- Level 6 includes bachelor degrees;
- Level 7 includes masters degrees;
- Level 8 includes doctoral degrees.

Figure 7.4 Highest level of qualification (2011 census)



### Future baseline

7.3.9 It is likely that established patterns in relation to prevailing occupation band and educational achievement will continue into the medium term, though opportunities associated with the Tech Corridor may increase the proportion of highly skilled knowledge economy employment within the district over the longer term.

7.3.10 The village clusters are likely to continue to be served by established employment sites within and beyond the network of local centres across the district, though recent trends towards greater home working in response to Covid-19 may have potential to endure into the medium and longer term. This could necessitate increased local broadband capacity to enable more people to work remotely from rural settlements in the district and may also help contribute to a diversification of the rural economy over the longer term.

## 7.4 Key sustainability issues and objectives

7.4.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- A significant proportion, around 60%, of South Norfolk workers commute outside the district for employment, with most travelling to Norwich.
- However, a Covid-related uptick in home working is likely to have reduced the overall volume of out-commuting and could be supported as a long term behaviour shift through provision of high speed broadband and mobile coverage.
- South Norfolk is within the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor which could boost high skilled knowledge employment in the district, although this is likely to be most apparent for existing knowledge clusters at the Norwich Research Park, this may also be felt directly within the village clusters, at locations like Hethel.
- Local employment for residents of the village clusters is provided in part by a network of local centres across the district.
- Educational attainment across the district is broadly in line with that of the East of England with 31% of residents achieving Level 4 qualifications and above, though this is slightly below average attainment at a national level.

7.4.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:

- Support the continued provision and vitality of local employment opportunities across the district whilst seeking to take advantage where possible of new strategic opportunities, such as those associated with the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor. Support a range of housebuilding opportunities, particularly for small and medium sized builders.

## 8 Historic environment

### 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Designated and non-designated heritage assets
- Heritage at risk

### 8.2 Policy context

#### National

8.2.1 Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** include:

- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for ‘conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments ‘are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an ‘irreplaceable resource’ that should be conserved in a ‘manner appropriate to their significance’, taking account of ‘the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits’ of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Plans should set out a ‘positive strategy’ for the ‘conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment’, including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss of less than substantial harm to its significance.

8.2.2 These messages are supported by the national **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**<sup>27</sup> which itself includes the key message that local authorities should set out in their Local Plans a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment which recognises that conservation is not a passive exercise and that identifies specific opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

8.2.3 The **Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act (1979)** legislates to protect the archaeological heritage of England, Wales and Scotland.

8.2.4 The **Heritage Statement (2017)**<sup>28</sup> replaces the 2010 Statement on the Historic Environment for England and sets out the Government’s vision for supporting the heritage sector to help it to protect and care for heritage and the historic environment in the coming years, in order to maximise the economic and social impact of heritage and to ensure that everyone can enjoy and benefit from it.

#### Local

8.2.5 The **South Norfolk Place-Making Guide SPD (2012)**<sup>29</sup> sets out design principles for new development intended to ensure that recognises South Norfolk’s “rich and diverse architectural heritage” and ensures that “all new development is of high quality, sustainable, innovative and respects and reinforces the

<sup>27</sup> MHCLG (2019) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

<sup>28</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2017) Heritage Statement [online], available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/664657/Heritage\\_Statement\\_2017\\_final\\_-\\_web\\_version\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664657/Heritage_Statement_2017_final_-_web_version_.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/South\\_Norfolk\\_Place-Making\\_Guide\\_SPD\\_0.pdf](https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/South_Norfolk_Place-Making_Guide_SPD_0.pdf)

distinctive character of the locality where development is proposed”, recognising that heritage is important to reflect in design even outside of designated areas.

## 8.3 Baseline summary

### Current baseline

#### Designated assets

8.3.1 South Norfolk has a rich historic environment and there are a wide range of built heritage assets across the district, including the following headline features<sup>30</sup>:

- Six registered historic parks and gardens;
- 36 scheduled monuments
- 52 conservation areas;
- 2,048 statutorily listed buildings and structures

8.3.2 Of the total of 52 conservation areas in the district, 26 have an adopted conservation area appraisal and management plan undertaken by South Norfolk Council. A further four conservation areas in South Norfolk have an appraisal and management plan undertaken by the Broads Authority, and the Council has an ongoing programme to both add to these and keep them up to date. Historic England defines conservation area management plans as “*vehicles for reinforcing the positive character of a historic area as well as for avoiding, minimising and mitigating negative impacts identified as affecting the area*”, noting that this may also help to “*outline opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance, possibly through the location or design of new development*”.<sup>31</sup>

8.3.3 The district’s 2,048 listed buildings and structures include a large quantity of higher-order listings, i.e. at Grade II\* (buildings of special interest) and Grade I (buildings of exceptional interest). A total of 98 buildings and structures in South Norfolk are listed at Grade II\*, with a further 66 listed at Grade I. In broad terms, the dispersal of Grade II\* listings is slightly denser in the north and west of the district than elsewhere, whilst Grade I listings are dispersed widely but appear to largely comprise churches, particularly in the rural areas of the district.

#### Non-designated assets

8.3.4 It is also important that new development does not lead to avoidable harm to non-designated assets of historic merit. The Norfolk Heritage Explorer (NER) offers free access to an ‘abridged’ version of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (which is only accessible in exchange for a fee) and details a very large number of non-designated heritage assets in South Norfolk from the Palaeolithic era through to post-World War II.<sup>32</sup> Several thousand items are listed at a granular parish-by-parish scale, including a diverse range of ‘find sites’, earthworks, un-listed buildings and structures and other historical records of interest. The VCHAP should have regard for the Norfolk Historic Environment Record and/or the Norfolk Heritage Explorer as appropriate.

#### Unidentified assets

8.3.5 There is potential for sites of historic or archaeological interest to be present within the District which have not yet been identified and whose location is therefore unknown. This could potentially include small or isolated ‘find sites’ of individual historic items, through to larger undiscovered sites comprising clusters of objects or the remains of structures. Therefore, there could be potential for as yet unidentified heritage assets to be discovered through the development process. Should this occur, it will be important that appropriate steps are taken to record and preserve such assets as appropriate.

<sup>30</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/>

### Heritage at risk

- 8.3.6 Historic England maintains a nationwide Heritage at Risk (HAR) register, updated on an annual basis. The 2019 HAR register records 14 features considered to be at risk within the district, including the Grade I-listed former County Library at Wymondham, five Grade I-listed churches, a further three Grade II\*-listed churches and five scheduled monuments. Of these features, Grade I-listed Church of St Andrew at Deopham is recorded as Priority A, meaning it is at “*Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric*”.

### Heritage as opportunity

- 8.3.7 It is also important to recognise that the historic environment can make a significant contribution to the success of development and there may be opportunities to deliver an enhancement of the historic environment via sustainable development proposals.

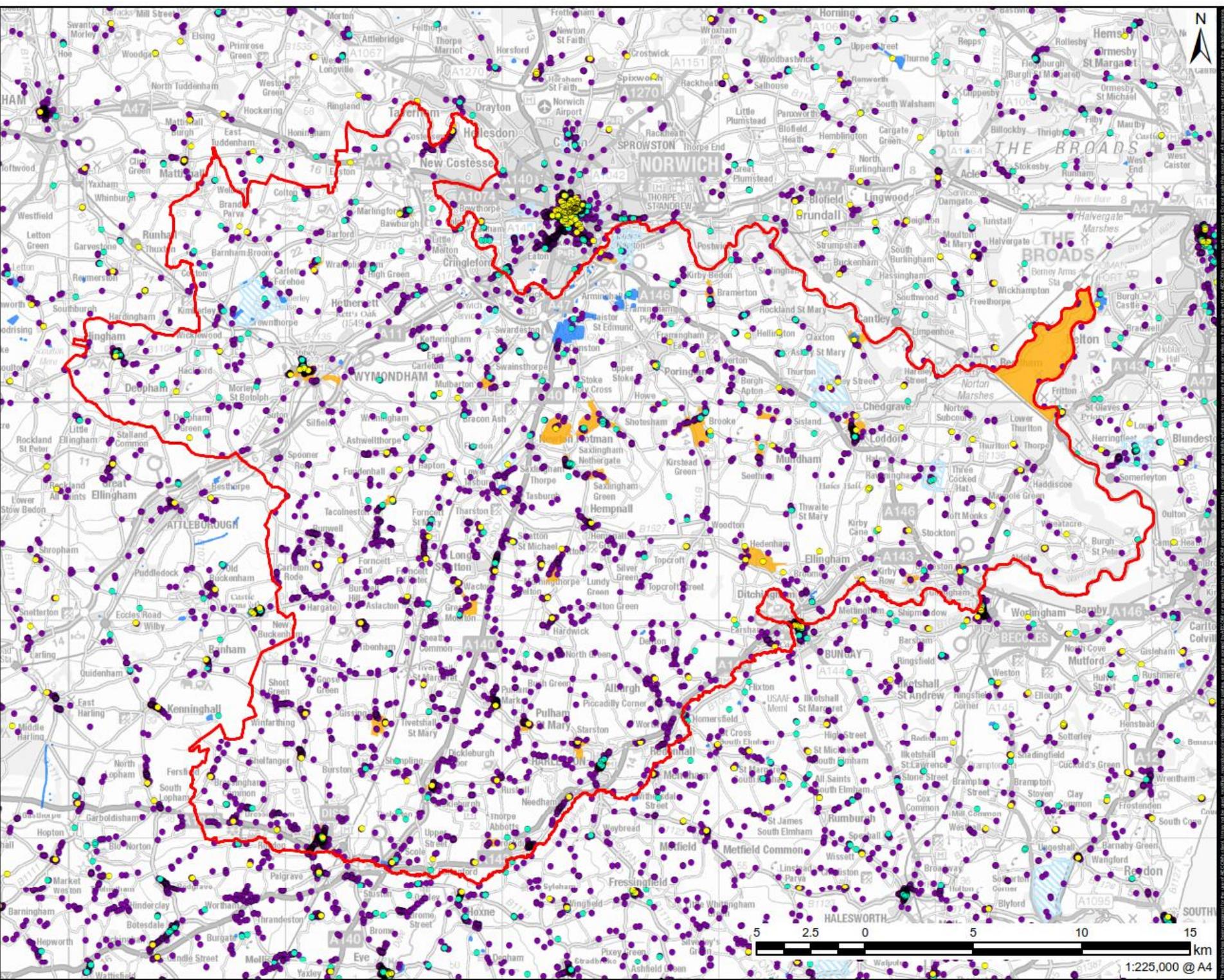
### Future baseline

- New development within the district has the potential to impact heritage assets and their settings through inappropriate location, design and layout. South Norfolk has a wide range of built heritage and this range of historic contexts presents potential for a variety of effects from inappropriate development.
- Equally, however, new development could theoretically offer opportunities for enhancing the quality of the district’s historic environment, either through regeneration of a specific asset, such as an ‘at-risk-structure, or through improvements to an asset’s setting and wider environment.
- Existing historic environment designations and the policies of the NPPF will continue to offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings.

## 8.4 Key sustainability issues and objectives

- 8.4.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:
- There are a broad range and significant quantity of individual heritage assets in South Norfolk, including a large number of higher-order listed buildings at Grade II\* and Grade I.
  - The underlying historic sensitivity of many of the district’s settlements is illustrated by the presence of 52 conservation areas at settlements of all scales across South Norfolk.
  - Only a relatively small number of heritage assets are considered to be ‘at risk’ by Historic England.
- 8.4.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:
- Protect, conserve and enhance designated, non-designated and as-yet undiscovered heritage assets and their settings, and contribute to maintaining and enhancing South Norfolk’s historic character through design, layout and setting of new development.

Filename: I:5004 - Information Systems\60637110\_South\_Norfolk\_SA\02\_Maps\Figure 8-1 - Designated Historic Assets.mxd  
Revision: 01  
Drawn: CM Checked: JW Approved: CM Date: 29/07/2020



- LEGEND
- South Norfolk District Boundary
  - Grade I
  - Grade II\*
  - Grade II
  - Conservation Area
  - Scheduled Monument
  - Registered Parks and Garden

NOTES

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ISSUE PURPOSE  
DRAFT  
PROJECT NUMBER  
60637110  
SHEET TITLE  
DESIGNATED HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ASSETS

SHEET NUMBER  
Figure 8.1

# 9 Housing

## 9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Housing need and housing delivery
- Housing market geography
- House prices and affordability.

## 9.2 Policy context

### National

9.2.1 Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework**<sup>33</sup> (NPPF) include that planning policies should:

- Support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing.
- Support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing via strategic policies which should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.
- Assess and reflect the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required and expect it to be met on-site where possible.
- Recognise the important contribution of small and medium sized development sites in meeting housing needs. Local Plans should identify land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, and neighbourhood planning groups should also consider the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites.
- In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.

9.2.2 The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report *Ready for Ageing?* (2013)<sup>34</sup> warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report says that '*longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises*'. The report says that the housing market is delivering much less specialist housing for older people than is needed. Central and local government, housing associations and house builders need urgently to plan how to ensure that the housing needs of the older population are better addressed and to give as much priority to promoting an adequate market and social housing for older people as is given to housing for younger people.

9.2.3 The UK 2070 Commission's final report on regional inequalities details the UK's need to dismantle the extremities of regional inequalities through large scale, long term and all-encompassing policies. The report recommends widespread commitments which would see areas outside of London and the South East benefitting from investment and exploiting cultural capital to realise their potential. The report sets out a 10-point framework for action which includes rethinking the housing crisis by viewing housing as a

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<sup>34</sup> Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) *Ready for Ageing?* [online] <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/>

part of national infrastructure and ensuring supply meets the needs of the economy.

- 9.2.4 The government's standard methodology for calculating housing need was introduced in 2017. The standard methodology centralises the process of identifying housing need, providing an annualised housing need figure for all local planning authorities in the UK.<sup>35</sup>

## Regional

- 9.2.5 The **Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** was prepared by consultancy ORS and published in January 2016. The SHMA sets out the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing in the local planning areas of Broadland, Breckland, North Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk together with the Broads Authority. As a joint document, the SHMA is a shared evidence base document used to inform the preparation of each of the commissioning authorities' respective Local Plans, including the proportion of affordable housing.
- 9.2.6 The **JCS for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2014)** sets out the housing requirements for the Greater Norwich Area to 2026, as well as a broad distribution of housing that encompasses five major growth locations in South Norfolk, in the Norwich fringe, the A11 Tech Corridor and at Long Stratton. The hierarchy also identified a network of Main Towns, Key Services Centres and Service Villages, suitable for differing sized allocations, as well as Other Villages for infill development.
- 9.2.7 Annual monitoring is in relation to the JCS, meaning that the **JCS Annual Monitoring Report<sup>36</sup> (AMR)** covers Broadland and Norwich in addition to South Norfolk.
- 9.2.8 The emerging **Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP)<sup>37</sup>** establishes a four-tier settlement hierarchy for the whole joint plan area. Village Clusters are at the bottom of the hierarchy at tier four. Collectively, the village clusters across the whole of the GNLP area are set a housing target of 4,025 homes to deliver over the plan period, though of this overall target, South Norfolk is expected to deliver 1,200 new dwellings in total.

## 9.3 Baseline summary

### Current baseline

#### Housing delivery

- 9.3.1 The emerging GNLP identifies that there have been 1,349 completions and commitments within the South Norfolk village clusters since the plan base date of 2018, though it is important to note that the 1,200 housing target at South Norfolk's village clusters is in *addition* to this total.
- 9.3.2 The most recently published JCS Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is for the 2018/19 monitoring period, and it notes strong housing delivery within the plan area, stating that for both Broadland and South Norfolk "*rates of delivery in rural areas overall remain significantly above target levels*".
- 9.3.3 This assessment reflects sustained high delivery of housing in the South Norfolk Rural Area in relation to a target of 132 dpa target, with an average annual delivery of 222 dpa over the period 2011/12 – 2018/19. This is illustrated by Figure 9.1 below:

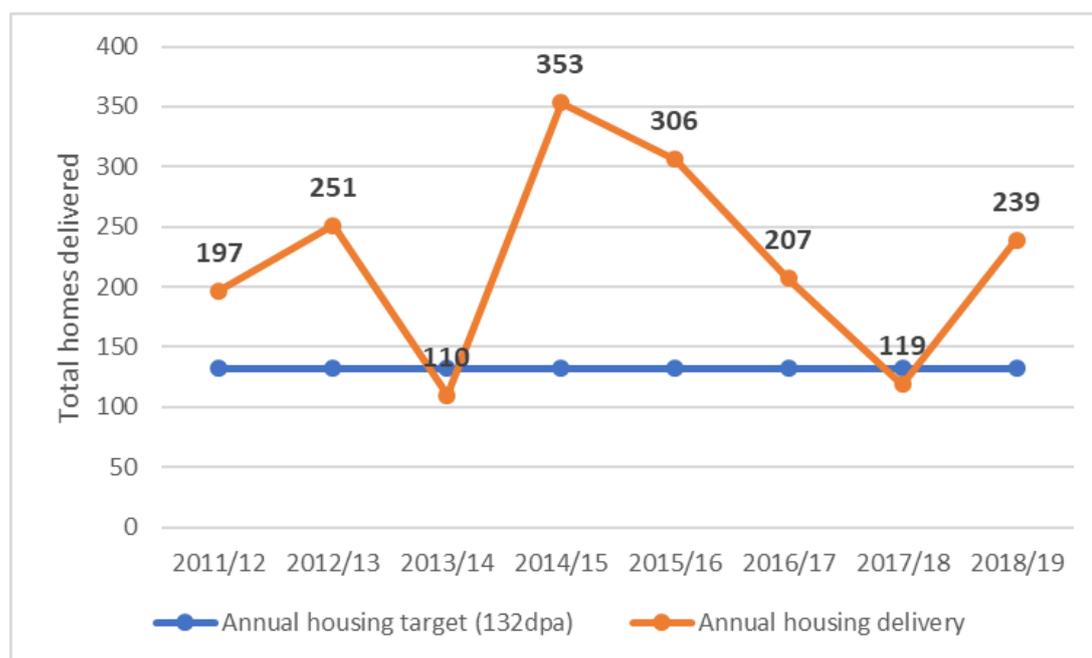
<sup>35</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728247/How\\_is\\_a\\_minimum\\_annual\\_local\\_housing\\_need\\_figure\\_calculated\\_using\\_the\\_standard\\_method.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728247/How_is_a_minimum_annual_local_housing_need_figure_calculated_using_the_standard_method.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/dmsdocument/2658>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.gnlp.org.uk/assets/Uploads/Reg-18-Final-Strategy-Document-20-02.pdf>

Figure 9.1 Housing delivery in the South Norfolk Rural Area 2011/12 – 2018/19 as per the most recently published AMR



9.3.4 In terms of affordable housing, the JCS AMR monitors *overall* delivery in each JCS authority, total affordable completions for South Norfolk are summarised in Table 9.1 below:

Table 9.1 Affordable housing completions in South Norfolk (combined NPA+RPA) 2011/12 – 2017/18

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Total housing completions	675	670	675	1,027	765	1,162	1,118	1,212
Total affordable completions	179	195	139	95	90	175	298	392
% of total as affordable	27%	29%	21%	9%	12%	15%	27%	32%

9.3.5 Table 9.1 indicates that South Norfolk as a whole averaged a rate of around 20% affordable housing delivery over the seven year period to 2017/18.

9.3.6 The most recent data in relation to South Norfolk's five year housing land supply (5HLS) is from April 2019, at which time the AMR indicated that the district as a whole had a 5.61 year housing land supply. This position is based on a total five year supply of 5,288 committed homes, representing a supply surplus of 578 homes.

9.3.7 The most recently published Housing Delivery Test (HDT) measurements are for 2019. The 2019 HDT measurement for South Norfolk was 140% (as part of the combined Greater Norwich figure), reflecting sustained high rates of housing completion in the district and wider Greater Norwich. Measurements of above 100% indicate that an authority is exceeding their housing target.

9.3.8 At the time of writing, the UK Government is processing representations to consultations on changes to the current planning system<sup>38</sup> and on the Planning White Paper (2020)<sup>39</sup>. Each of these consultation documents propose changes to the way in which housing need is calculated which could affect the overall understanding of housing need within South Norfolk and Greater Norwich.

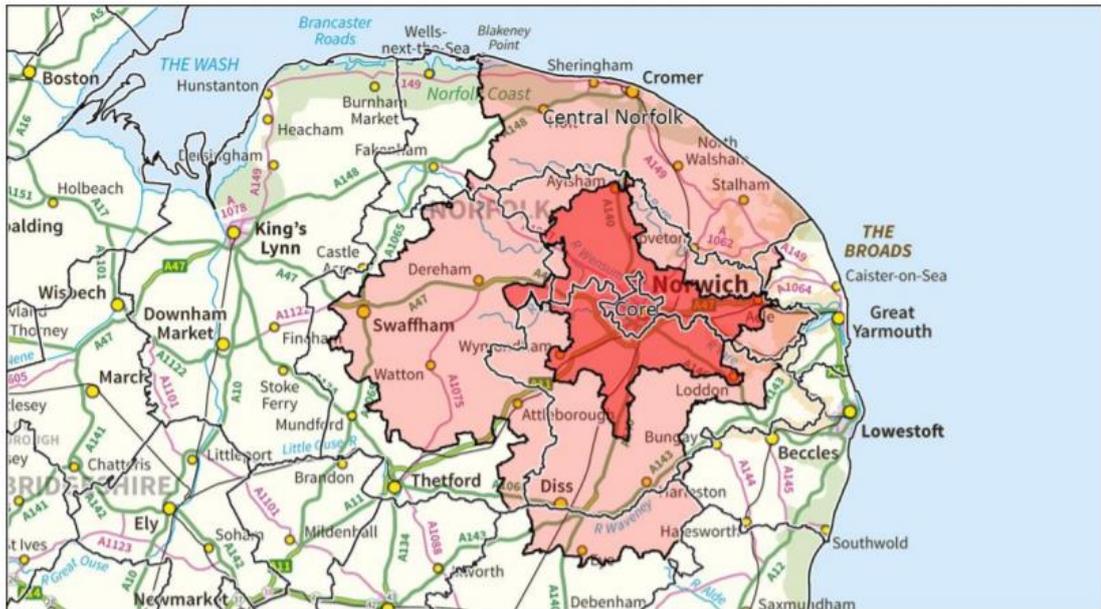
<sup>38</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

### Housing market geography

9.3.9 South Norfolk has functional linkages with other areas of Norfolk, though these are naturally particularly strong in relation to the key regional centre of Norwich. Proximity to Norwich is the key determinant of the wider region’s housing market geography, and the 2016 SHMA consequently locates South Norfolk within a ‘Central Norfolk’ Housing Market Area (HMA) with Norwich at its centre, along with most of the administrative boundaries of North Norfolk, Broadland, Breckland and Norwich itself. Although HMA geography is complex and rarely conforms precisely to administrative boundaries, as is the case with the Central Norfolk HMA, the SHMA notes that the functional HMA is “best fit to district boundaries i.e. all of Norwich, Broadland, South Norfolk, Breckland and North Norfolk”.

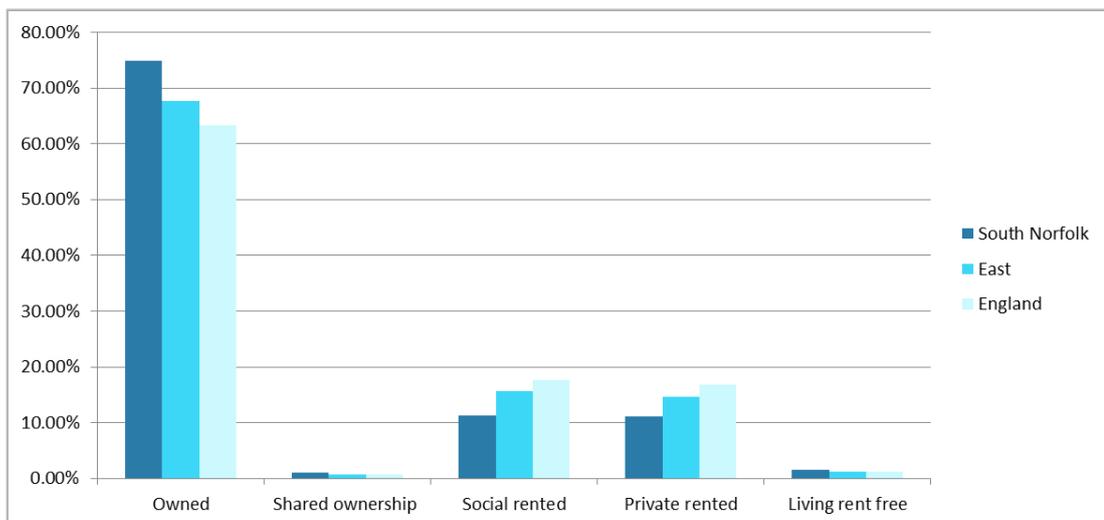
Figure 9.2 Central Norfolk Housing Market Area (HMA)<sup>40</sup>



### Housing tenure

9.3.10 Housing tenure can be indicative of broader trends related to housing affordability and supply, with low ownership likely to indicate affordability constraints whilst high rates of home ownership likely to suggest the opposite. The 2011 census includes data on housing tenure, summarised in Figure 9.3 below:

Figure 9.3 Housing tenure in South Norfolk (2011 census)



<sup>40</sup> <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Strategic%20Housing%20Market%20Assessment%20%282017%29.pdf>

- 9.3.11 Figure 9.3 shows that home ownership in South Norfolk is high at around 75%, far exceeding the national average of around 62%. Corresponding, the proportion of private and socially rented tenures are notably lower than the national average. This could reflect the relative affordability of parts of the district, though could also indicate that the district is relatively affluent.

### Future baseline

- 9.3.12 Recent high rates of housing delivery across the rural areas of the district could be likely to be sustained given the consistency of recent delivery and the healthy housing land supply position as recorded by the most recently published AMR.

## 9.4 Key sustainability issues and objectives

- 9.4.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:
- The Village Clusters are set a total net housing target of 1,200 dwellings by the emerging GNLP over the plan period.
  - Housing delivery in the South Norfolk Rural Area has been consistently strong over several years, averaging 222 dwellings per annum (dpa) between 2011/12 and 2018/19 in relation to the JCS target of 132 dpa.
  - Rates of home ownership are high across South Norfolk, with correspondingly low rates of private and socially rented tenures.
- 9.4.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:
- Support timely delivery of an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures to ensure supply of high quality housing across the village clusters which meets the needs of South Norfolk residents, and diversify the housing market to help maintain delivery.

# 10 Land and soils

## 10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Soil / agricultural land
- Land Use
- Minerals

## 10.2 Policy context

### National

10.2.1 Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework**<sup>41</sup> (NPPF) include planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils;
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.
- Prevent new or existing development from being ‘adversely affected’ by the presence of ‘unacceptable levels’ of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate ‘despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate’.
- Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.
- Encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains.
- Planning policies and decisions should ‘give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs’, and ‘promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.’
- Taking a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for water supply.
- Prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution.
- The government attaches great importance to Green Belts, whose fundamental aim is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The general extent of Green Belts is established and can only be altered in exceptional circumstances through preparation or review of a Local Plan.

10.2.2 The Government’s **25 Year Environment Plan** was published in 2018 and presents the ‘goals for improving the environment within a generation, and leaving it in a better state than we found it’.<sup>42</sup>

10.2.3 **Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England**<sup>43</sup> sets out a vision for soil use in England which includes better protection for agricultural soils, protecting stores of soil carbon, improving the resilience of soils to climate change and preventing soil pollution. The essential message in relation to development is that

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<sup>41</sup> MHCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf) [accessed 03/08/18]

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

<sup>43</sup> Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england> [last accessed 29/03/18]

pressure on soils is likely to increase in line with development pressure and the planning system should seek to mitigate this.

## Regional

- 10.2.4 The emerging **Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan Review** will replace the existing suite of minerals DPDs and once adopted will contain the policies used to determine planning applications for mineral extraction and associated development across Norfolk.

## Local

- 10.3 As of December 2017 all local planning authorities have been required to publish a **Brownfield Land Register** (BLR) identifying previously developed sites which have potential to be suitable, available and achievable for redevelopment, reducing the overall land take necessary to deliver growth. South Norfolk's most recent BLR was published in December 2018.<sup>44</sup>

## 10.4 Baseline summary

### Current baseline

#### Agricultural land

- 10.4.1 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land and Grades 3b to 5 of poorer quality. In this context, there is a need to avoid loss of higher quality 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.
- 10.4.2 In this regard, the ALC for the East<sup>45</sup> there are several small ribbons of land within the Plan area which are underlain by 'very good' quality agricultural land (Grade 2). These areas include:
- **East:** Bramerton-Kirby Bedon, Yelverton and Maypole Green.
  - **Central:** Netwon-Flotman, Howe, parts of Wreningham, Forncett St Mary.
  - **West:** Barnham St Broom, Kimberley, Deopham Green, the Great Ellingham area.
- 10.4.3 The district is otherwise predominantly underlain by Grade 3 'good to moderate' land, which presents a risk of loss of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land in the Plan area, particularly in the central part of the district. ALC in South Norfolk is mapped in Figure 10.3 at the end of this chapter.
- 10.4.4 However, the results of the 'Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment'<sup>46</sup> for the East of England indicates that the northernmost part of the plan area demonstrates a high likelihood of being underlain by BMV land (>60% area bmv). The majority of the remaining land demonstrates a moderate likelihood of being underlain by BMV land (20-60% area bmv).

#### Minerals

- 10.4.5 Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or, in the case of aggregates, bodies of rock that are, or may become, of potential economic interest due to their inherent properties. They make an essential contribution to the country's prosperity and quality of life. Since minerals are a non-renewable resource, minerals safeguarding is the process of ensuring that non-minerals development does not needlessly prevent the future extraction of mineral resources, of local and national importance. In this regard, the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan identifies mineral safeguarding areas, shown in **Figure 10.2.1, overleaf**). Sand and Gravel resources are present in the central part of the plan area. The plan notes: "*Sand and gravel is used in the construction of roads and buildings and it is a key ingredient in the production of concrete and mortar, asphalt coating for roads, as*

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building/brownfield-register>

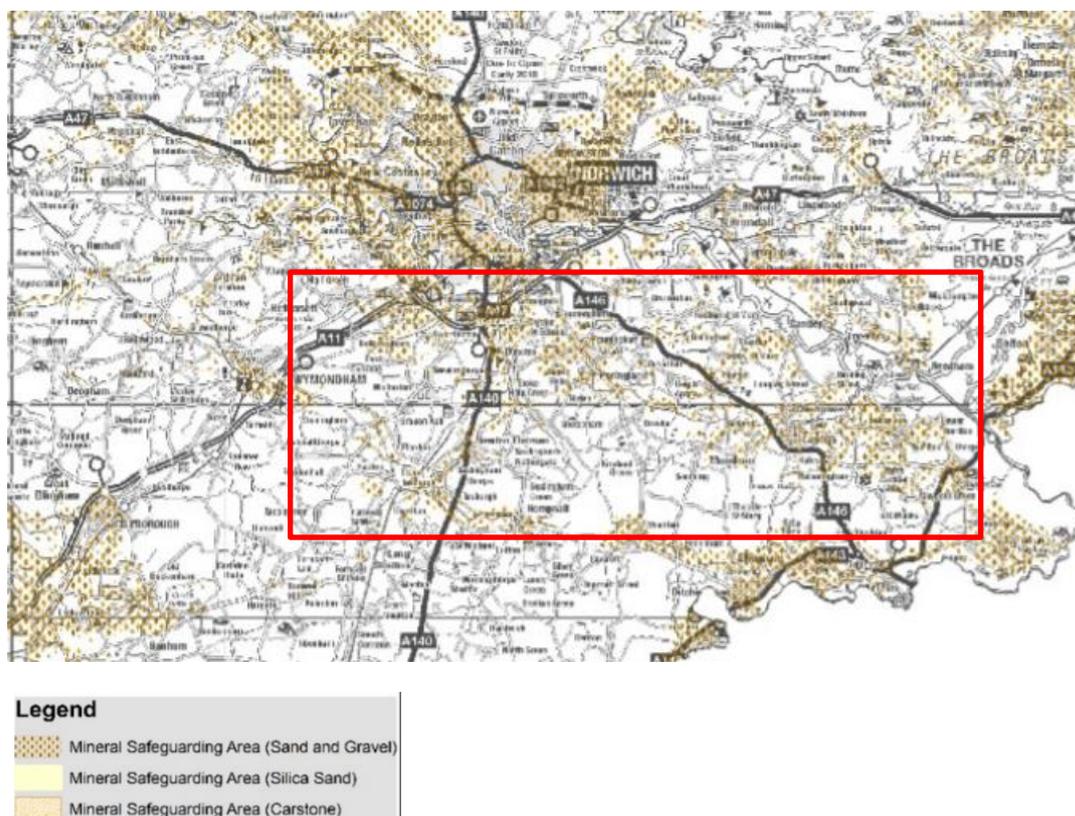
<sup>45</sup> Natural England (2017): Agricultural Land Classification - Strategic scale map Eastern Region [online] available from: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/127056?category=5954148537204736>

<sup>46</sup> Natural England (2017): Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land - Strategic scale map Eastern Region (ALC020) [online] available from: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6205542189498368?category=5208993007403008>

a drainage medium and in the construction of embankments and foundations” (page 18).

- 10.4.6 Additionally, sand and gravel resources are commonly found in river valleys and many of Norfolk’s river valleys. Therefore, this has led to many large bodies of open water left on restoration of past mineral workings which are not in keeping with the general character of Norfolk’s river valleys. Although not formally designated, safeguarding the Core River Valleys will help preserve the unique and rich quality of Norfolk’s landscape and natural heritage.

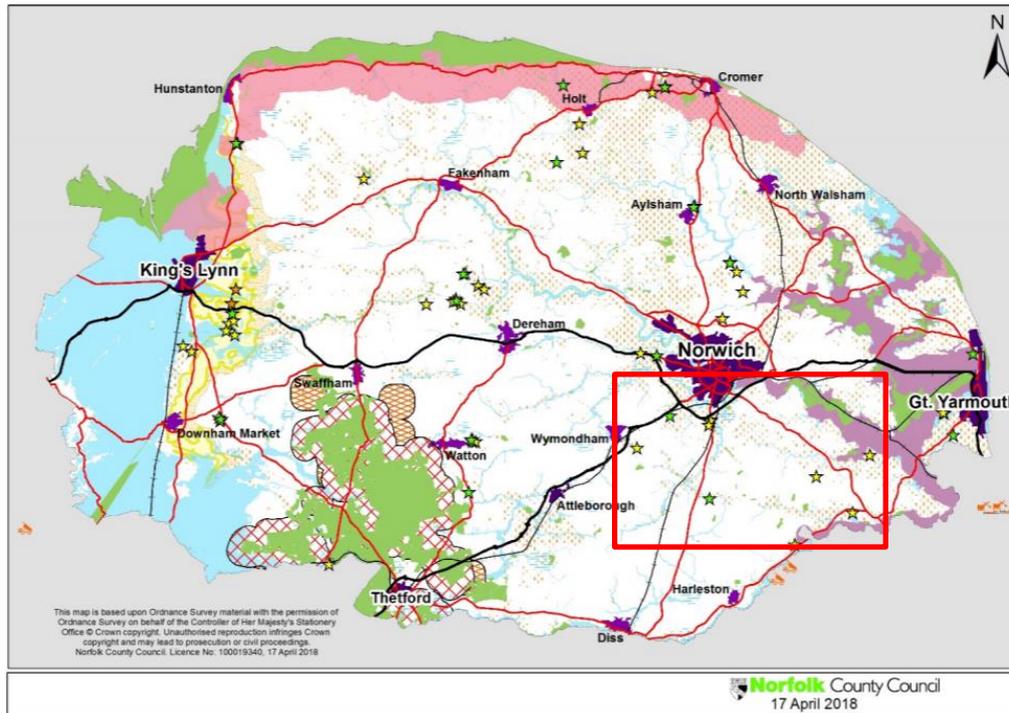
Figure 10.1 Mineral Safeguarding Areas (approximate Plan area shown in red)



- 10.4.7 Additionally, there are a number of active extraction sites present within the Plan area identified in the Minerals and Waste Plan (shown in **Figure 10.2.1**), including:

- Active sand and gravel workings
- Active recycled aggregate sites

Figure 10.2 Active extraction sites (2017) (approximate Plan area shown in red)



**Legend**

★ Active Recycled Aggregate Sites	<b>Settlements and other designations</b>
<b>Active extraction sites (May 2017)</b>	■ Major Settlements
★ Active Sand and Gravel workings	■ Service Centres Market Towns
★ Active Silica sand workings	■ Broads Authority executive area
★ Active Carstone working	■ AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
★ Active mineral infrastructure	■ Heritage coast
<b>Mineral Sites in close proximity to Norfolk</b>	■ Environmental Designations (SSSI, SAC, SPA, Ramsar)
■ Mineral Extraction	■ Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1
■ Marine Landing point	■ EA Flood Map Zone 2 and 3
<b>Transport Network</b>	<b>Mineral Safeguarding Areas</b>
— Trunk Roads	■ Mineral Safeguarding Areas (Silica sand)
— A Roads	■ Mineral Safeguarding Areas (Carstone)
— Rail lines	■ Mineral Safeguarding Areas (Sand & Gravel)
<b>Buffer zones for Stone Curlews</b>	
■ Protection Zone	
■ Mitigation Zone	

**Previously developed land**

10.4.8 The South Norfolk Brownfield Land Register (BLR) details the identified previously developed sites in the Plan area. The most recent update to the BLR (December 2018)<sup>47</sup> identifies 23 brownfield sites across the district, of which 13 already have planning permission. Of this total the majority are in the district's larger settlements. There appears to be limited potential for development at previously developed sites within the district's villages.

**Future baseline**

10.4.9 Due to the prevalence of potential BMV agricultural land in the rural areas of the district, new development at the edge of existing settlements could result in the loss of high quality, productive agricultural land.

10.4.10 Mineral resources underly much of South Norfolk and it will be important that winnable resources are not sterilised by future development. Development could increase demand at minerals extraction sites.

10.4.11 The small number of identified brownfield sites suggests that future development will likely come forward on greenfield sites across the district.

<sup>47</sup> South Norfolk Council (2018): Brownfield Register [online] available from: <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building/brownfield-register>

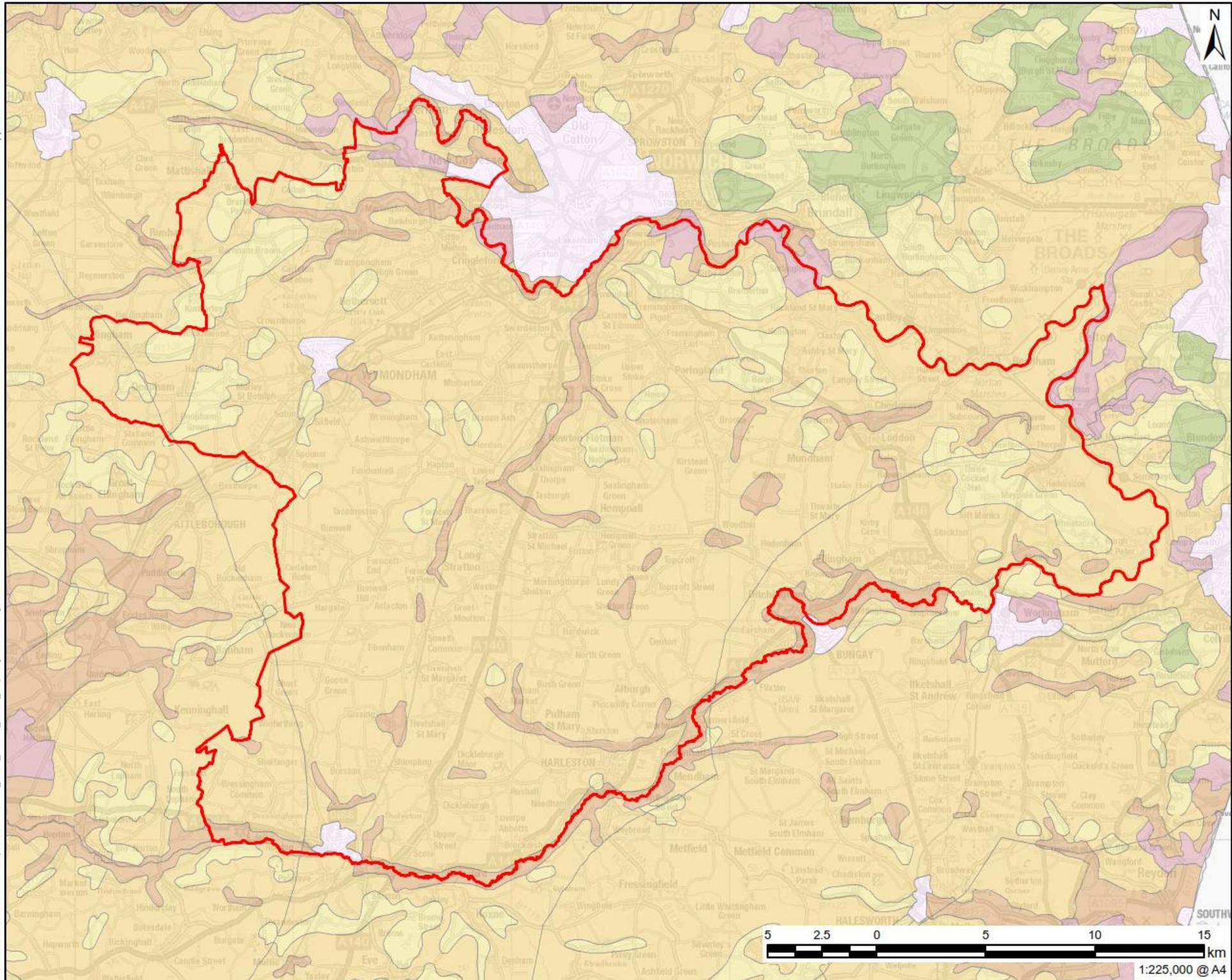
## 10.5 Key sustainability issues and objectives

10.5.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- There are several small, concentrated parts of the Plan area which are underlain by Grade 2 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land. The majority of the rest of the Plan area is underlain by (Grade 3) agricultural land, though it is not always clear where this is subdivided into Grade 3a (i.e. BMV land) or Grade 3b (i.e. poorer quality land).
- With regards to mineral safeguarding areas, sand and gravel resources are present in the central part of the plan area, and along the valley of several of the rivers in South Norfolk.
- There are 23 brownfield land sites across the district, of which 13 already have planning permission, however few of these are in Village Cluster locations.

10.5.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:

- Ensure the efficient and effective use of land by avoiding unnecessary development on best and most versatile agricultural land and maintaining the integrity of mineral extraction sites and safeguarding areas.



**LEGEND**

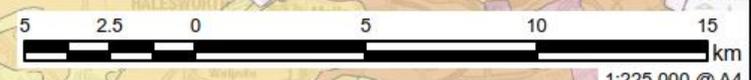
- South Norfolk District Boundary
- Agricultural Land Classification Grade**
- Exclusion
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Non Agricultural
- Urban

**NOTES**

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**ISSUE PURPOSE**  
 DRAFT  
**PROJECT NUMBER**  
 60637110  
**SHEET TITLE**  
 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

**SHEET NUMBER**  
 Figure 10.3



# 11 Landscape

## 11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- National Landscape Character Areas
- Local and national protective landscape designations

## 11.2 Policy context

### National

11.2.1 Key messages from the NPPF in relation to landscape include:

- Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [...]. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.
- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for ‘conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments ‘are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).
- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
  - a. protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils
  - b. recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and
  - c. remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

11.2.2 National Character Area (NCA) Profiles are published by Natural England and divide England in 159 distinct natural areas based on their landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic, cultural and economic characteristics.<sup>48</sup> NCAs follow natural features in the landscape and are not aligned with administrative boundaries. NCA profiles describe the features which shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character. The Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan states the intention to work with relevant authorities to deliver environmental enhancements within all 159 NCAs across England.

### Regional

11.2.3 The **Broads Authority Landscape Character Assessment**<sup>49</sup> (2006) divides the Broads National Park into 31 character areas, providing a detailed assessment of each. 11 of these character areas are within or partially within South Norfolk, though they remain outside the Plan area.

<sup>48</sup> Natural England (2012) ‘National Character Area profiles’ [online], available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape-character-assessments>

## Local

- 11.2.4 The **South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment**<sup>50</sup> (2001) was undertaken in stages, with different volumes of the assessment pertaining to different areas within the district.
- 11.2.5 The **South Norfolk Local Landscape Designations Review**<sup>51</sup> (2012) updates the range of local landscape designations in the district to “*take account of potential changes in landscape character where there has been significant new development*” with particular focus on river valley landscapes, strategic gaps and the South Norwich Bypass Landscape Protection Zone.
- 11.2.6 Policy DM4.5 (Landscape Character and River Valleys) of the **Development Management Policies Document** (2015) sets out policy protection for the identified river valleys and landscape character features. Similarly, Policy DM 4.6 (Landscape Setting of Norwich) sets out that development proposals within the Norwich Southern Bypass Landscape Protection Zone (NSBLZ) must enhance the landscape setting of the southern bypass corridor.
- 11.2.7 The **South Norfolk Place-Making Guide SPD** (2012)<sup>52</sup> sets out design principles intended to ensure that new development recognises South Norfolk’s attractive and distinctive landscape character and that “all new development is of high quality, sustainable, innovative and respects and reinforces the distinctive character of the locality where development is proposed”, recognising that landscape character and sensitivity is important to reflect in both designated and non-designated areas.

## 11.3 Baseline summary

### Current baseline

#### Landscape character

- 11.3.1 The overwhelming majority of the district falls within National Character Area (NCA) 83, ‘South Norfolk & High Suffolk Claylands’, characterised by the “*high and predominantly flat clay plateau that dominates the character of the NCA, incised by numerous small-scale wooded river valleys with complex slopes that in places are much unexpected for East Anglia*”.<sup>53</sup> A very small part of the district’s north west falls within the adjacent ‘Mid Norfolk’ NCA.
- 11.3.2 A more granular understanding of the district’s landscape character is provided by the 2001 South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) which identifies a total of seven character types, as per Figure 11.1 below. The dominant character type in terms of total area is ‘Tributary Farmland’, with characteristics including a “*shelving and gently undulating landform*”, “*medium to large-scale arable farmland*” and a “*dispersed but evenly distributed settlement pattern of small farmsteads and small, nucleated villages*”.

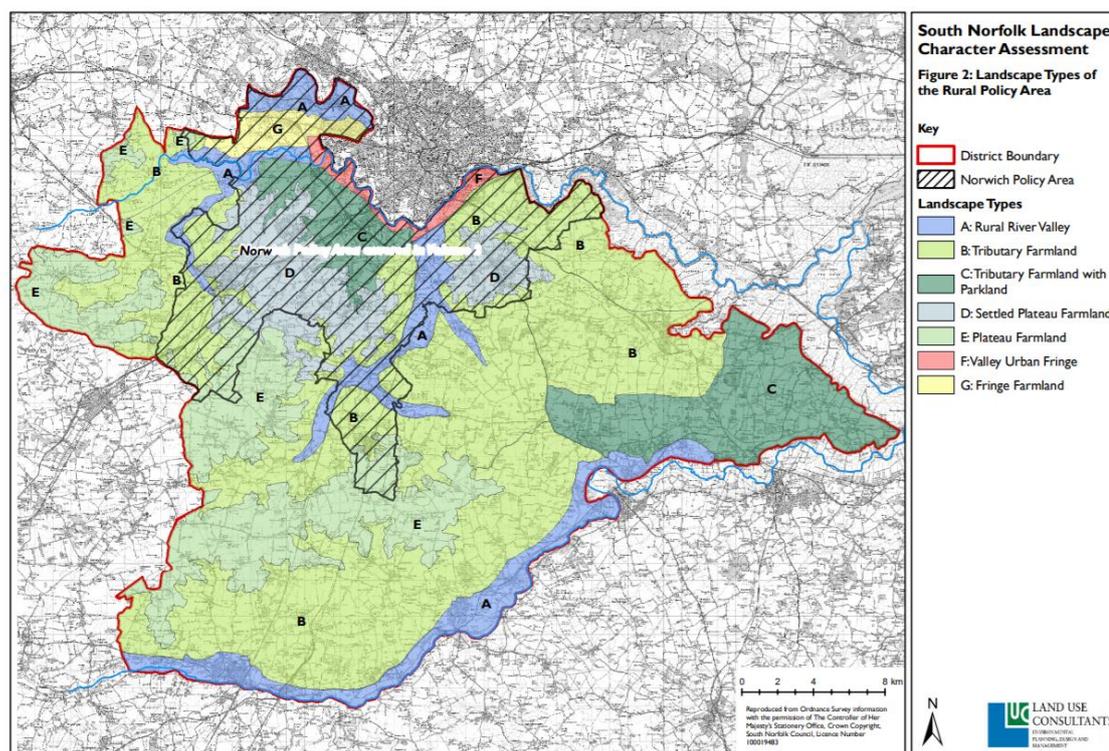
<sup>50</sup> [https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/LUC\\_2001\\_Landscape\\_Assesment\\_Volume\\_4\\_Introduction.pdf](https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/LUC_2001_Landscape_Assesment_Volume_4_Introduction.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> [https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Chris\\_Blandford\\_June\\_2012\\_South\\_Norfolk\\_Local\\_Landscape\\_Designations\\_Review.pdf](https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Chris_Blandford_June_2012_South_Norfolk_Local_Landscape_Designations_Review.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> [https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/South\\_Norfolk\\_Place-Making\\_Guide\\_SPD\\_0.pdf](https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/South_Norfolk_Place-Making_Guide_SPD_0.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5427224945623040>

Figure 11.1 landscape character areas within South Norfolk (from the 2001 Landscape Character Assessment)



### Landscape designations

- 11.3.3 South Norfolk partly intersects with the Broads National Park at the district's north and east. Although these areas are outside the South Norfolk Local Plan area, falling instead with the Broads Authority Local Plan area, the Broads National Park is a key landscape designation in the context of South Norfolk and indicates that the north and east of the district likely have potential for particular landscape sensitivity.
- 11.3.4 There are five locally designated 'rural river valleys' in the plan area, noted by the 2012 Landscape Character Review as being "very important in providing spatial definition to and creating variety within the South Norfolk Landscape". The designation attracts policy protection through the adopted Local Plan and relates to the River Tas, Rivers Yare/Tiffey, River Tud, River Wensum and River Waveney.
- 11.3.5 The district has two locally designated 'strategic gaps' at the settlement of Hethersett which lies equidistant between the Norwich urban area to the east and Wymondham to the west. The strategic gap designation is intended to prevent sprawl between the three settlements, preserving their distinct and separate identities.
- 11.3.6 Similarly, the locally designated South Norwich Bypass Landscape Protection Zone (LPZ) is designated to ensure the remaining rural character along the route of the bypass is protected from the urbanising effect of development and will effect a small number of VCHAP settlements. A suite of other landscape polices are designated to protect undeveloped approaches to Norwich (by road and rail), gateways to the city, and viewing cones for longer distance views towards the city. All of these have the potential to affect a small number of VCHAP settlements.
- 11.3.7 These key landscape designations are mapped in Figure 11.2 at the end of this chapter.

### Future baseline

- 11.3.8 Future development at settlements such as those in the Village Cluster centred on Loddon, as well Ellingham and Geldeston and a number of other settlements in the east of the district could have potential to affect the landscape setting of the Broads Authority area.
- 11.3.9 More generally, new development across the district could have potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape and townscape quality in and around the district, particularly if located on greenfield sites at

the edges of the existing built area. This could potentially lead to the loss of some landscape features or adverse effects on the landscape character of rural settlements.

## 11.4 Key sustainability issues and objectives

11.4.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- The district partially intersects with the Broads Authority area in the district's north and east, giving rise to potential landscape sensitivity in these areas.
- Outside the Norwich fringe, the district is rural in character with many small settlements dispersed widely across a gently undulating landscape which features several characterful river valleys running through it.

11.4.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:

- Protect and enhance the character, quality and diversity of the district's rural landscapes, townscapes and river valleys through appropriate design and layout of new development, including protecting the setting of the Broads Authority area.

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-  South Norfolk District Boundary
-  River Valleys
-  Norwich Southern Bypass Landscape Protection Zone
-  Strategic Gaps
-  The Broads National Park

NOTES

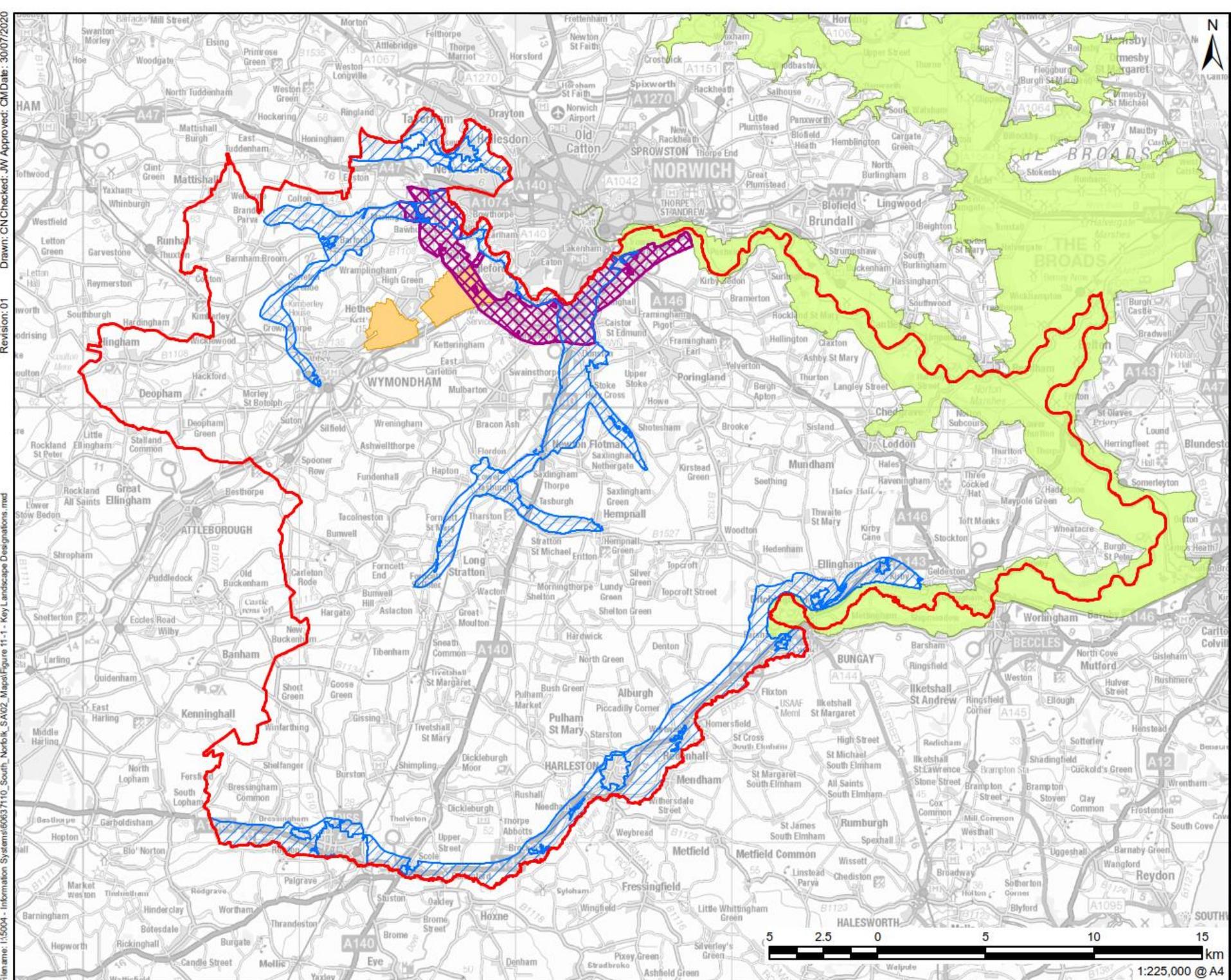
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ISSUE PURPOSE

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Figure 11.2



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# 12 Transport

## 12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Key transport infrastructure
- Public transport
- Active transport

## 12.2 Policy context

### National

12.2.1 Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework**<sup>54</sup> (NPPF) include:

- Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:
  - a. The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
  - b. Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised;
  - c. Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
  - d. The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account; and
  - e. Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.
- Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

12.2.2 **National Planning Practice Guidance** (NPPG)<sup>55</sup> identifies that it is important for local planning authorities to undertake an assessment of the transport implications in developing or reviewing their Local Plan so that a robust transport evidence base may be developed to support the preparation and/or review of that Plan.

12.2.3 **The Transport Investment Strategy - Moving Britain Ahead** (2017)<sup>56</sup> sets out the Department for Transport's approach for future investment decisions and priorities. At the local level, the strategy relies on devolved decision-making where local communities have the power and will be backed by funding. Investment aims to achieve a transport network that is reliable, well-managed, safe, and works for everyone. The transport system should also provide smooth, fast and comfortable journeys, and have the right connections in the right places.

12.2.4 The **UK 2070 Commission's final report** on regional inequalities details the UK's need to dismantle the extremities of regional inequalities through large scale, long term and all-encompassing policies. The report recommends widespread commitments which see areas outside of London and the South East

<sup>54</sup> MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/779764/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

<sup>56</sup> Department for Transport (2017) Transport Investment Strategy - Moving Britain Ahead [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-investment-strategy>

benefitting from investment and exploiting cultural capital to realise their potential. The report sets out a 10-point framework for action which includes delivering a connectivity revolution by creating a transformed public transport network between, within and beyond cities. It also recommends implementing a comprehensive framework for inclusive devolution by allowing places to 'step-up' via appropriate levels of devolution according to local ambition, need and capacity. A levelling up of the playing field with fairer access to funds and spatial priorities is also included.

- 12.2.5 Department for Transport (2020) **Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge** (2020)<sup>57</sup> sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050.
- 12.2.6 In February 2020, the government announced a new £5 billion 5-year funding package to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London.<sup>58</sup> This builds on the Government's determination to make buses work better for their passengers. The details of these programmes will be announced in the upcoming National Bus Strategy, to be published later in 2020, and follows the allocation of £170 million to support more electric buses, increase rural mobility and trial new 'Superbus' services. Cycle routes will also see a major boost across the country with over 250 miles of new, high-quality separated cycle routes and safe junctions in towns and cities to be constructed across England, as part of the multibillion pound package announced.

## Regional

- 12.2.7 The **Norfolk Cycling and Walking Strategy**<sup>59</sup> (2016) published by Norfolk County Council sets a county-wide vision for active travel in Norfolk which, by 2025, seeks to increase the number of people who walk and cycle to get to work and education, remove barriers to active travel, delivery high quality active travel facilities and make it easier to transfer between active travel and other modes of sustainable transport.
- 12.2.8 The **Norfolk Local Transport Plan** (2011- 2026) sets out the County Council's strategy and policy framework for transport and is used as a guide for investment priorities as well as being considered by other agencies when determining their planning or delivery decisions. The transport vision for the plan is to deliver 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*".
- 12.2.9 Six strategic aims underpin the vision: maintaining and managing the highway network; delivering sustainable growth; enhancing strategic connections; reducing emissions; improving road safety; and improving accessibility.
- 12.2.10 Norfolk County Council published a preliminary '**Greenway Feasibility Study**' in 2019/2020 with the aim of developing a county-wide active travel network based on an existing 'greenway' concept with particular focus on extending the walking and cycling provision across Norfolk, linking into the Norfolk Trails network of promoted walking and cycling routes.
- 12.2.11 The **Integrated Transport Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk**<sup>60</sup> (2018), finds that among other issues for the region, speeds for regional journeys are much slower than for major national centres, only 6% of residents of Norfolk travel by public transport and regional commuting patterns focus on the A14 Norwich-Ipswich corridor.
- 12.2.12 The **Norfolk Access Improvement Plan** is published by Norfolk County Council, setting out a 10 year plan for "increasing public use and enjoyment of Norfolk's public rights of way network".<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Department for Transport (2020) Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge [online] available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/876251/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876251/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> Department for Transport (2020) Major boost for bus services as PM outlines new vision for local transport [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-boost-for-bus-services-as-pm-outlines-new-vision-for-local-transport>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/roads-and-transport/alternative-ways-to-travel/norfolk-cycling-and-walking-strategy-large.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> Norfolk County Council (2018): 'Integrated Transport Strategy For Norfolk And Suffolk: A Strategy for Growth and Opportunity' [online] available from: [https://newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/70035741\\_EITS\\_Brochure\\_v9.pdf](https://newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/70035741_EITS_Brochure_v9.pdf)

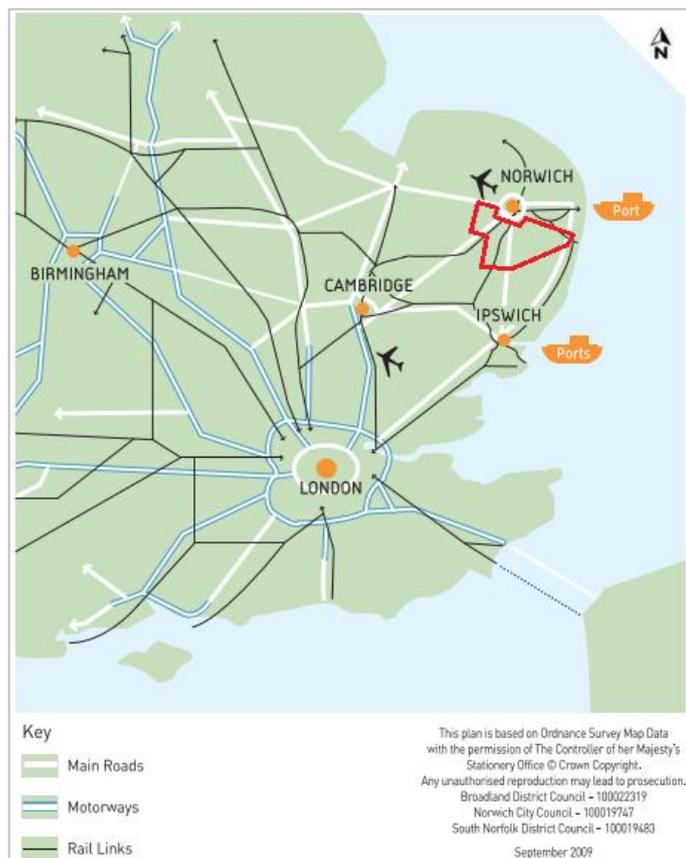
<sup>61</sup> <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/out-and-about/public-rights-of-way/norfolk-access-improvement-plan.pdf?la=en&hash=2D76BC708A9200D64EEDFE09124FA39A5772C3CB>

## 12.3 Baseline summary

### Current baseline

12.3.1 The key strategic transport links of South Norfolk and the wider region are illustrated in Figure 12.1, below:

*Figure 12.1 Strategic transport links within the region (approximate plan area shown in red)*



### Strategic road network

12.3.2 There are no motorways in South Norfolk but the following strategic roads are the key arteries and pass through a number of Village Clusters:

- **A11** - a trunk road that forms part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) running through the west of the Plan area, which provides connectivity to London, Cambridge, Stanstead as well as to the Midlands, the North and the rest of the country.
- **A47** - a trunk road that forms part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), running east/west as a southern bypass for Norwich, connecting to King's Lynn, Peterborough and the Midlands. The A11 and A47 intersect in South Norfolk at the Thickthorn Junction.
- **A140** - a key transport corridor running through the centre of the Plan area, connecting the south and north of the Plan area to Norwich city centre. The A road also provides strategic access to Ipswich and beyond, with other local links to Diss and Harleston.
- **A146** - a key link road for the rural south east of the Plan area, from Norwich, to Beccles, and Lowestoft in Waveney.
- **A143** - a key corridor along the northern side of the Waveney Valley in South Norfolk, linking Great Yarmouth to Bury St Edmunds,

**Rail network**

12.3.3 As noted in the Transport Growth Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk<sup>62</sup>, Norfolk has important strategic rail connections with London, Cambridge, Peterborough and beyond, with key rail routes including the Great Eastern Main Line (GEML), the West Anglia Main Line (WAML), and the Felixstowe to Peterborough route which connects into the East Coast Main Line.

**Walking and cycling network**

12.3.4 Norfolk County Council are testing feasibility of developing a ‘greenway’ network across the county, aiming to ultimately deliver an integrated network of walking and cycling routes which function both as long distance paths and local recreation and functional transport options. The initial focus will be to deliver three greenways on disused railways in the north of the county, though South Norfolk will likely benefit in the longer term as the project is expanded.

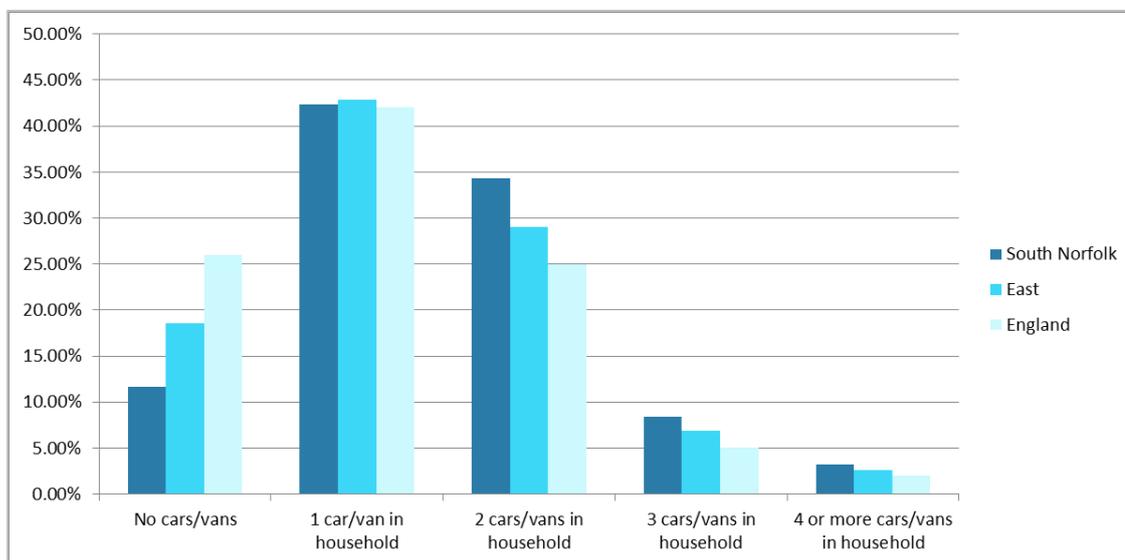
12.3.5 National Cycle route 1 runs from Norwich to Beccles, running through the eastern part of the Plan area. South Norfolk also has a number of walking trails, outlined in the Norfolk Cycling and Walking Strategy. The most notable existing long distance trails include the following:

- **Boudicca Way** runs through the centre of the Plan area. Named after the Queen of Iceni (who once inhabited that area), the Boudicca Way runs between Norwich and Diss, passing through the gently undulating countryside in South Norfolk.
- **Wherryman’s Way** runs along the eastern border of the Plan area, meandering 37.5 mile walking trail, running between Norwich and Great Yarmouth. Wherryman’s Way runs through the heart of the Broads National Park, winding along the banks of the River Yare..<sup>63</sup>

**Car and van ownership**

12.3.6 Car ownership is high in South Norfolk, reflecting that it is a rural location with significant commuting outflows. Figure 12.2, below, indicates that the majority of residents in the Plan area own at least one car (88.3%), compared to 81.5% for the East of England and 74% for England as a whole.

Figure 12.2 Car ownership (2011 census)

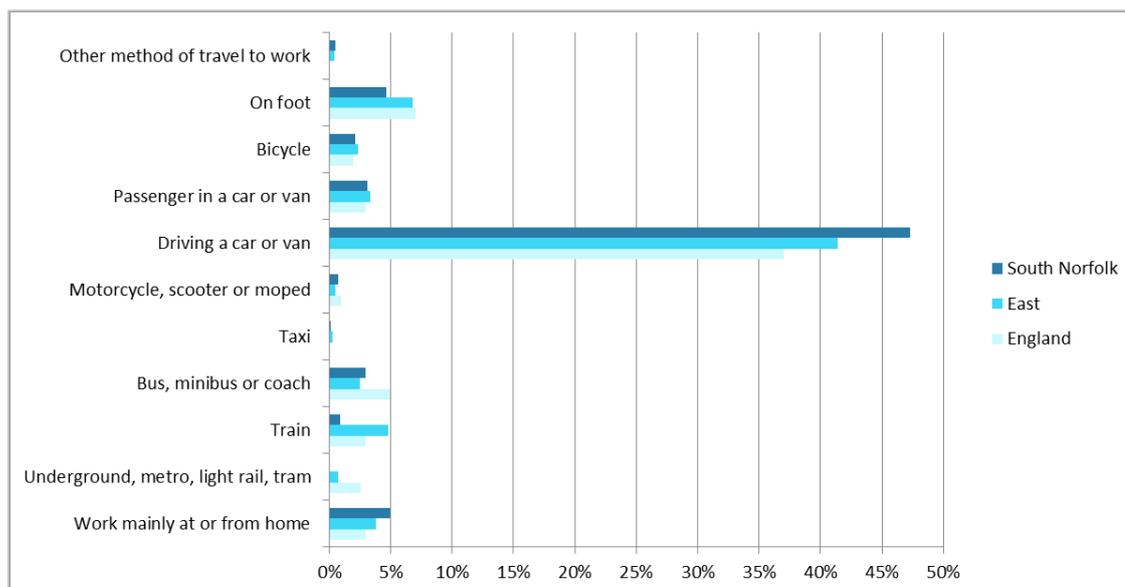


12.3.7 Figure 12.3, below, indicates that car dependency in South Norfolk is high, with correspondingly low public transport use. This appears consistent with the identified high rates of car ownership in the district.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Norfolk County Council (n.d.): ‘About Wherryman’s Way’ [online] available from: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/out-and-about-in-norfolk/norfolk-trails/long-distance-trails/wherrymans-way/about-wherrymans-way>

Figure 12.3 Method of travel to work (2011 census)



## Future baseline

- 12.3.10 High car dependency in the Plan area could mean that development has the potential to increase traffic and lead to additional localised congestion issues, particularly on the strategic A11 road, which in turn may reduce road safety.
- 12.3.11 However, there could potentially be opportunities for new development to deliver localised positive effects through supporting small-scale infrastructure improvements and active travel opportunities that seeks to maximise pedestrian movement, using recent models such as the Norwich cycle network ‘the Pedleways’ which already extend into South Norfolk.
- 12.3.12 Greater take-up of electric vehicles at a macro level over time will likely be reflected at a local level in South Norfolk, with electric cars becoming an increasing proportion of the district’s vehicles overall. Future development will likely reflect this anticipated increase in electric vehicle ownership, with charging points installed in greater numbers in residential developments and in public spaces.

## 12.4 Key sustainability issues and objectives

12.4.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- The plan area is reasonably well connected to mainline railway network and the strategic road network, though there are no motorways in the district.
- Car dependency is high in relation to the regional and national averages, reflecting South Norfolk’s rural context and dispersed settlement pattern.
- There could be longer term opportunities to expand and improve active transport corridors throughout the district in particular where connectivity with the proposed ‘greenways’ scheme is achievable.

12.4.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:

- Ensure that provision of transport infrastructure reflects local population and demographic needs within and between the village clusters, promotes sustainable modes of travel, connects new housing to employment, education, health and local services and maximises accessibility for all.

# 13 Water

## 13.1 Introduction

13.1.1 This section provides a strategic review of the policy context and baseline position in relation to the following factors.

- Water catchment areas
- Water resources
- Water quality

## 13.2 Policy context

### National

13.2.1 Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework**<sup>64</sup> (NPPF) include:

- Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.
- Development should remediate, mitigate, despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

13.2.2 **The Environmental Bill 2020**<sup>65</sup> policy statement states that the new bill will help secure long – term, resilient water and wastewater services, making for a greener and more resilient country for the next generation within its 25-year environmental plan. Key elements to help reform the 25-year plan include:

- Extraction and trying to reform waterbodies to as close to their natural state.
- Ensures regulations protecting water quality will not become ‘frozen’ due to the loss of the European communities at 1972 section 2.
- The bill amends the land drainage act 1991, to enable valuation calculations to be provided for in secondary legislation.

13.2.3 The **Water Framework Directive** (2000) requires a management plan to be prepared for water catchment areas to inform planning and help meet objectives and obligations in areas such as water efficiency and sustainable drainage.

13.2.4 The **Water White Paper 2011**<sup>66</sup> sets out the Government’s vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

13.2.5 The Government’s **Water Strategy for England**<sup>67</sup> (2008) provides strategy for the water sector up until 2030, which aims to sustainably deliver secure water supplies and an improved and protected water environment. It sets out actions within the following areas:

- Water demand;
- Water supply;
- Water quality;

<sup>64</sup> MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/779764/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_w eb.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_w eb.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-bill-2020/30-january-2020-environment-bill-2020-policy-statement>

<sup>66</sup> Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> Defra (2011) Future Water: the Government’s Water Strategy for England [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-water-the-government-s-water-strategy-for-england>

- Surface water drainage;
- River and coastal flooding;
- Greenhouse gas emissions;
- Charging for water; and
- Regulatory framework, competition and innovation.

13.2.6 **Water for life**<sup>68</sup> (2011) sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

## Regional

13.2.7 Water Resource Management Plans (WRMP) are prepared by water companies to ensure supply continues to meet demand into the future, even under water stressed conditions. WRMPs cover 25-year planning periods to ensure that long term needs, trends and changes are considered appropriately at a strategic level. South Norfolk is covered by the **Anglian Water WRMP 2015–2040**.

13.2.8 South Norfolk falls within the plan area of the **Anglian Basin District River Basin Management Plan (RBMP)**<sup>69</sup> (2015). RBMPs are published by the Environment Agency and set out a framework for how all river basin stakeholders, including water companies and local communities, can help improve the quality of the water environment to comply with the Water Framework Directive, based on current status and reasons for failures. There are eight RBMPs in England which all have a harmonised plan period of 2015-2021.

13.2.9 The **Greater Norwich Outline Water Cycle Study**<sup>70</sup> (2020) has been prepared by AECOM to support the preparation of the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). The Water Cycle Study forms an important part of the evidence base that will help the Greater Norwich Authorities determine the most appropriate options for development within the study area (with respect to water infrastructure and the water environment) and will be updated to take account of the emerging VCHAP sites, and their in-combination effects with the GNLP allocations.

## Local

13.2.10 The **Broadland Rivers Catchment Plan**<sup>71</sup> (2014) is prepared by the Broadland Catchment Partnership, comprising a range of organisations, groups and businesses and co-led by the Broads Authority and the Norfolk Rivers Trust. The Plan sets seven thematic goals to achieve by 2027, targeting improved land management, waste water management, water management, flood risk management, floodplain management, recreation and understanding and investment.

## 13.3 Baseline summary

### Current baseline

#### Water catchment

13.3.1 The Anglian River Basin District RBMP identifies that South Norfolk is within the 'Broadland Rivers' catchment, where priority river basin management issues include diffuse pollution from rural areas, physical modification of rivers and lakes and pollution from wastewater.

#### Water quality

13.3.2 The quality of water is measured for a range of waterbodies including rivers, surface water, groundwater and bathing water (where applicable). Quality is generally classified according to the characteristics of the waterbodies using chemical status and ecological status as proxies for quality. There are a total of 81

<sup>68</sup> Defra (2011) Water for life [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/718327/Anglian\\_RBD\\_Part\\_1\\_river\\_basin\\_management\\_plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718327/Anglian_RBD_Part_1_river_basin_management_plan.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> [https://gnlp.oc2.uk/docfiles/46/Greater%20Norwich%20Water%20Cycle%20Study%20Draft%20for%20consultation1\\_FINAL\\_05022020.pdf](https://gnlp.oc2.uk/docfiles/46/Greater%20Norwich%20Water%20Cycle%20Study%20Draft%20for%20consultation1_FINAL_05022020.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> <https://broadlandcatchmentpartnership.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Catchment-Plan-website-final.pdf>

water bodies in the Broadland Rivers catchment, comprising rivers, canals, surface water transfers and lakes. Their chemical status as per the most recently available data (from 2016) is presented in Figure 13.1 below:

*Figure 13.1 Ecological and chemical classification for surface waters in the Broadland Rivers catchment<sup>72</sup>*

Number of water bodies	Ecological status or potential					Chemical status	
	Bad	Poor	Moderate	Good	High	Fail	Good
81	1	18	59	3	0	1	80

- 13.3.3 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution, in accordance with the 2015 Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations. Waters are defined as polluted if they contain nitrate concentrations greater than 50mg/l. South Norfolk is affected by several NVZs, which collectively cover the majority of the district. The only exception is the area around Newton Flotman at the centre of the district which is not within a NVZ.
- 13.3.4 Drinking Water Safeguard Zones (DWSZs) are designated at locations where pollution control measures are required to prevent potential contamination of drinking water supplies. The only DWSZ in South Norfolk is immediately south of Norwich, where the Bixley (Trowse Newton) DWSZ is declared in relation to nitrate pressures.

### Water resources

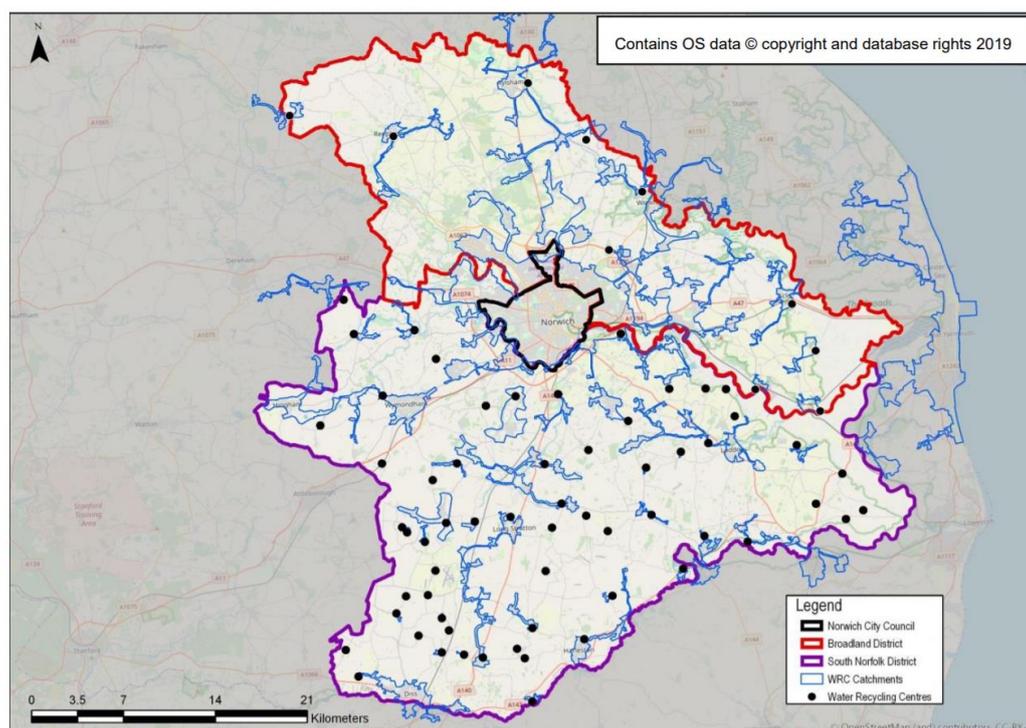
- 13.3.5 Collectively, the Broadland Rivers catchment represents a very significant natural water resource not just for South Norfolk, but of regional and national importance too. The Environment Agency describe the Broadland Rivers as follows:

*“The Broadland Rivers catchment is an iconic landscape. The upper reaches of the rivers, including the river Wensum, one of the most important chalk river habitats in the country, and the river Waveney, a classic lowland river, contrast with the low lying reaches further down the catchment where the land is mostly at or below sea level. Amongst these slow flowing rivers lie the Broads, an area of interconnected lakes and wetlands. The ecology of these lower reaches is affected by tidal surges from the North Sea as well as what happens upstream”.*

- 13.3.6 The Environment Agency advise that water stress is impacting chalk streams and other water dependent habitats in the Greater Norwich area, including within South Norfolk.
- 13.3.7 In terms of utilities, Anglian Water is the sole public sewerage provider in South Norfolk, and the wider catchment, and also provides public drinking water supply to much of the district’s population as the statutory undertaker. Drinking water for a small part of the south of the district is supplied by Essex and Suffolk Water.
- 13.3.8 The 2020 Outline Water Cycle Study identifies a total of 61 Water Recycling Centres (WRC) in the district, though anticipates that only 19 of these are likely to be affected by future growth across the Greater Norwich area. The distribution of WRCs is illustrated in Figure 13.2 overleaf.
- 13.3.9 Of these affected 19, only the WRCs at Diss and at Whitlingham Trowse, south of Norwich, are of a strategic scale, whilst the majority of the rest serve small or very small local catchments across the district. The Water Cycle Study finds that 15 of the 19 affected WRCs have sufficient headroom capacity to accommodate anticipated growth. However, the remaining 4 WRCs are found to have no available permitted headroom capacity meaning that they would “exceed their maximum permitted Dry Weather Flow (DWF) under their existing discharge permits”. It is notable that this includes the strategic-scale Whitlingham Trowse facility and the Long Stratton facility.

<sup>72</sup> <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ManagementCatchment/3008/Summary>

Figure 13.2 Distribution of Water Recycling Centres across the Greater Norwich Local Plan area as per the 2020 Outline Water Cycle Study (indicated by black dots)



## Future baseline

- 13.3.10 South Norfolk falls within the Broadland Rivers catchment area, suggesting that new development in the district could have potential to affect sensitive downstream waterbodies.
- 13.3.11 Growth within the region in the longer term is likely to add pressure on existing water resources by placing more demand on infrastructure. Without intervention, this pressure is likely to be particularly pronounced at four of the district's Water Recycling Centres, including the strategic Whitlingham Trowse WRC south of Norwich. Risks to the water environment from new development come primarily from increased discharge volumes from wastewater discharges at WRCs meaning new development could lead to increased risk from higher volumes of discharges.
- 13.3.12 Future greenfield development could have potential for effects upon surface water nitrates on the basis that much of the district is within Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, with the notable exception of the district's centre around Newton Flotman.

## 13.4 Key sustainability issues and objectives

13.4.1 The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- South Norfolk falls within the Broadland Rivers catchment area, which includes a total of 81 waterbodies and is upstream from the sensitive Broads National Park.
- The district has an extensive network of mostly rural, small scale Water Recycling Centres, the majority of which are anticipated to have capacity to absorb future growth. However, the strategic scale Whitlingham Trowse WRC is anticipated to receive flows from a significant scale of new development for which it does not currently have sufficient headroom capacity.
- Much of the district falls within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.

13.4.2 In light of the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SA framework should include the following objective:

- Promote sustainable forms of development which minimise pressure on water resources, whilst maintaining and enhancing where possible the quality of the district's rivers, lakes and other water bodies.

# 14 Conclusion and next steps

14.1.1 A review of evidence presented under 12 twelve topic headings has led to a discrete list of objectives (and supporting key issues / opportunities) that should be taken forward as a framework to guide the forthcoming appraisal stages of the VCHAP SA process. This framework was consulted on via the scoping consultation and has been updated to reflect comments received. The SA framework is presented below.

Figure 14.1: The draft SA framework

Topic	Objective
Accessibility	Support good access to existing and planned services, facilities and community infrastructure, including green infrastructure, for new and existing residents, mindful of the potential for community needs to change over time.
Biodiversity	Avoid harm to South Norfolk's rich diversity of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites of biodiversity significance, as well as to sites in adjacent Local Plan areas, whilst seeking to deliver a biodiversity net gain and enhancement of habitats and habitat connectivity in all but exceptional cases.
Climate change adaptation	Support the resilience of South Norfolk to the potential effects of climate change, including by directing development away from areas at greatest risk of fluvial and surface water flooding.
Climate change mitigation	Continue to reduce CO <sub>2</sub> emissions from all sources by achieving high standards of energy efficiency in new development, by supporting decentralised energy generation, by providing attractive opportunities for sustainable travel, by locating residential development a short distance from key services and by protecting land suitable for renewable and low carbon energy generation, including community schemes, whilst recognising the changing nature of private cars with the Government's current aim of phasing out all sales of internal combustion engine cars within the lifetime of this plan.
Communities	Support the continued healthy and sustainable growth of South Norfolk, narrowing the gap between the areas of the district with strongest and least strong health and social outcomes. Helping to maintain local services and facilitates in more rural locations, to the benefit of existing and future residents.
Economy	Support the continued provision of, and vitality of, local employment opportunities across the district whilst seeking to take advantage where possible of new strategic opportunities, such as those associated with the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor. To support a range of housebuilding opportunities, particularly for small and medium sized builders,
Historic environment	Protect, conserve and enhance designated, non-designated and as-yet undiscovered heritage assets and their settings, and contribute to maintaining and enhancing South Norfolk's historic character through design, layout and setting of new development..
Housing	Support timely delivery of an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures to ensure supply of high quality housing across the village clusters which meets the needs of South Norfolk residents and diversify the housing market to help maintain delivery.
Land and soils	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land by avoiding unnecessary development on best and most versatile agricultural land and maintaining the integrity of mineral extraction sites and safeguarding areas.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character, quality and diversity of the district's rural landscapes, townscapes and river valleys through appropriate design and layout of new development, including protecting the setting of The Broads Authority areas.
Transport	Ensure that provision of transport infrastructure reflects local population and demographic needs within and between the village clusters, promotes sustainable modes of travel, connects new housing to employment, education, health and local services and maximises accessibility for all.
Water	Promote sustainable forms of development which minimise pressure on water resources, whilst maintaining and enhancing where possible the quality of the district's rivers, lakes and other water bodies.

## Next steps

- 14.1.2 As outlined, the SA scope has now been finalised, taking into account all comments received.
- 14.1.3 Consequently, the Council (working with AECOM) is now in a position to begin appraisal work.
- 14.1.4 Specifically, the aim is to develop and appraise 'reasonable alternatives' and then the emerging draft plan. In the context of the VCHAP, it is envisaged that appraisal of reasonable alternatives will involve appraisal of alternatives approaches to growth (i.e. alternative combinations of site allocations) at select village clusters (i.e. those clusters, out of the total list of 48, where there is a strategic choice).
- 14.1.5 Once appraisal work has been complete, then the Council will be in a position to prepare and publish a draft version of the VCHAP for consultation. An Interim SA Report will be published alongside that presents the information required of the SA Report. Fundamentally, this means presenting an appraisal of "the plan and reasonable alternatives", although the report will also present an up-to-date discussion of the SA scope, including explanation of how scoping consultation responses have been taken into account.
- 14.1.6 Following the draft plan consultation (under Regulation 18 of the Local Planning Regulations), the final draft ('Proposed Submission') version of the plan will be prepared and published (under Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations). The legally required SA Report will be published alongside.

# Appendix I - Summary of responses to the statutory scoping consultation

The SA scoping report underwent statutory consultation between September 10<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Responses were received from the Broads Authority, the Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England, Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council.

The key messages from these responses with a bearing on the SA scoping report, and how these have been addressed, are set out in Table AI.1 below. Responses identifying issues of a cosmetic nature or which signpost to additional policy context have all been addressed in this updated draft and are not listed individually below.

Additionally, responses which substantively repeat messages already included in the response of another consultee are not listed below. Similarly, responses which relate specifically to the plan-making process and not to Sustainability Appraisal are not listed below as they did not necessitate any action in relation to the SA scoping report.

*Table AI.1 Summary of key messages from the scoping consultation relating specifically to the SA*

Consultee	No.	Summary of key messages	How response was considered and addressed
<b>Broads Authority</b>	1	Economy chapter should identify importance of tourism.	Amended accordingly
	2	Climate change adaptation chapter should discuss risks from heat as well as flooding.	Amended accordingly
	3	Climate change mitigation chapter should give additional consideration to potential of electric vehicles to reduce emissions.	Amended accordingly
	4	Transport objective should be strengthened by removing 'where possible' caveat.	Amended accordingly
<b>Environment Agency</b>	6	Climate change adaptation chapter should include reference to sequential approach to development in flood zones.	Amended accordingly
	7	Water resources discussion should identify impact of water stress on chalk streams and highlight risk from development to water environment from increased discharge at Water Recycling Centres.	Amended accordingly
<b>Historic England</b>	9	Historic Environment chapter should reference unknown/unidentified heritage assets and recognition of potential opportunities for the historic environment to contribute to the success of sustainable development.	Amended accordingly
<b>Natural England</b>	10	Biodiversity chapter – objective should seek net gain in all but the most exceptional of cases, should include references to habitat connectivity and should recognise potential of natural capital to underpin policy.	Amended accordingly
<b>Norfolk County Council</b>	11	Climate change adaptation chapter should signpost to Norfolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Preliminary FRA.	Amended accordingly
<b>Norwich City Council</b>	12	Accessibility chapter should more clearly recognise importance of locations which have services accessible by modes other than private car.	Amended accordingly
	13	Climate change adaptation chapter - objective should more clearly seek to locate development away from areas at risk of flooding.	Amended accordingly
	14	Climate change mitigation chapter – objective should seek delivery of decentralised and renewable energy generation.	Amended accordingly
	15	Economy chapter should recognise the likely rise in home working in the near and longer term future.	Amended accordingly
	16	Housing chapter should acknowledge the recent Housing White Paper.	Amended accordingly