

Worlington Neighbourhood Plan

**Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats
Regulations Assessment Screening Opinion**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This screening report is to determine whether the content of the Worlington Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2040 (pre-submission draft April 2023) requires a strategic environmental assessment in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.2. This report also contains a habitats regulations assessment (HRA) screening to determine whether the plan would have a likely significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects as required by the Habitats Directive.
- 1.3. This draft has been prepared to inform consultation with the statutory consultees, Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency.
- 1.4. Worlington is defined in the existing development plan (Core Strategy 2010 former Forest Heath District Council area) as a secondary village – these provide nominal housing and employment growth during the plan period where local capacity allows and key local services and facilities are protected. It lies south of the River Lark and is located in West Suffolk one mile south-west of Mildenhall and six miles north of Newmarket. The Worlington Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by Worlington Parish Council (a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011).
- 1.5. The plan is in the pre-submission consultation stage and this screening is based on the information within the neighbourhood plan and accompanying documents on pre-submission consultation and as requested by the neighbourhood plan group in their email of 11 April 2023. The information on the plan is in section two.
- 1.6. The legislative background, set out in section three, outlines the regulations that require this screening exercise. Section five provides a screening assessment of the significant environmental effects of the neighbourhood plan, section six is the habitats regulations assessment (HRA) screening and section seven is the screening outcome.

2. Key information on the emerging neighbourhood plan

Vision, aims and objectives of neighbourhood plan

- 2.1. The vision for Worlington is set out in 4.1 of the neighbourhood plan it encompasses the aims and objectives of the residents and is as follows:

In 2040, Worlington will continue to be a self-contained village with a high quality natural and historic environment.

Limited sustainable development may have taken place that respects and maintains the character of the village and its surrounding countryside.

Separation from existing boundaries of surrounding settlements will have been maintained, and existing services and facilities protected and improved for residents.

- 2.2. To deliver the vision, the neighbourhood plan has the following objectives in six themes that have provided a benchmark for the preparation of its planning policies.

Housing	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensure that new housing development is of a scale and location to minimise impact on the character of the village and its services and facilities.2. Support the delivery of housing that meets identified local needs of the village.
Natural environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Minimise the impact of development on the natural environment and improve biodiversity.4. Protect and enhance the rural setting of the village.
Historic environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Ensure new development is appropriate to the historic character of the village.6. Recognise and protect the historic importance of buildings, features and character areas.
Development design	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Maintain and enhance a strong rural identity and sense of place for the parish, through environmentally sustainable and sensitive small-scale development.8. Ensure new development is designed to reflect local character and incorporates measures that reduce environmental impact.
Services and facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">9. Retain existing facilities and encourage the provision of new services and facilities.

Transport and travel	<p>10.Reduce the impact of through traffic on the village.</p> <p>11.Improve safety and routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.</p>
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Neighbourhood area

- 2.3. The Worlington Neighbourhood Plan area was originally designated by West Suffolk Council in July 2021. The boundary was amended in April 2023 to remove the area south of the A11 at Red Lodge from the parish as a result of a community governance review. The amended neighbourhood plan area, which reflects the new parish boundary of Worlington can be seen in appendix three.
- 2.4. This is the area that the neighbourhood plan covers. The plan area includes the whole of the parish of Worlington defined by the parish boundary and should be shown in the plan.

Approach to development

- 2.5. The neighbourhood plan for Worlington does not seek to allocate land for development but recognises that there may be a limited amount of new development in compliance with existing and emerging development plan policies. As additional sites come forward they could be supported in principle within the housing settlement boundary subject to according with other policies within the development plan. The plan seeks to ensure that new housing development is of a scale and in locations to minimise the impact on the character of the village and its services, facilities and infrastructure in addition to safeguarding the countryside.

Policies

- 2.6. The neighbourhood plan includes 14 draft policies as set out in table 1 below. All the policies address the types of development that would be supported, and the mitigation or enhancement measures required to protect the character and environment of the parish.

Table 1: summary of policies in the Worlington Pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan

Policy	Summary
Policy WTN1 Spatial strategy	New development in line with the adopted local plan settlement hierarchy will be supported for small developments where they are appropriately designed and there is no detrimental impact on residential amenity, the natural and historic environment, infrastructure and highways.

Policy	Summary
	Outside the settlement boundary priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the countryside and only appropriate development will be supported that meets specific criteria listed in the plan.
Policy WTN 2 Housing design	<p>New dwellings should be appropriately design and comply with latest nationally described space standards.</p> <p>They should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make provision for storage of wheelie bins, bikes and other items. • Provide suitable ducting for superfast broadband. • Provide electric charging points. • Be built to lifetime homes standards.
Policy WTN 3 Protecting the Worlington landscape character	<p>Development proposals must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate how landscape characteristics have been considered. • Conserve or enhance landscape character and setting of the parish with regard to the Worlington Landscape Appraisal. • Protect important views identified on the policies map.
Policy WTN 4 Biodiversity and habitats	<p>Development proposals must avoid loss of tree, hedgerows and other natural features wherever possible.</p> <p>Developments will be supported where biodiversity net gain is an outcome.</p> <p>If loss is unavoidable, the benefits of development must clearly outweigh the impacts.</p> <p>Mitigation measures must provide biodiversity net gain and be integral to the design concept.</p>
Policy WTN 5 Local green spaces	<p>Sixteen local green spaces have been designated and identified on the policies map.</p> <p>Development proposals in these areas will only be supported in very special circumstances.</p>
Policy WTN 6 Mildenhall Road special character area	A special character area has been identified around the Mildenhall Road where there are significant heritage assets.

Policy	Summary
	Development proposals which would cause unacceptable harm to this area will not be supported.
Policy WTN 7 Development design considerations	<p>All new development must reflect the local characteristics and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.</p> <p>A development design checklist is included within the plan, and design considerations are set out.</p> <p>Designs will take account of local green spaces, views, landscape features, topography and include new open space and biodiversity.</p>
Policy WTN 8 Sustainable construction practices	All new developments should incorporate current best practice in terms of sustainability and energy conservation measures including building layout and orientation, energy efficiency, heating systems, construction and renewable energy and water.
Policy WTN 9 Flooding and sustainable drainage	<p>New development in flood zones two or three will only be supported if National Planning Policy Framework flood risk assessment requirements are met.</p> <p>All other development should aim to include above ground sustainable drainage systems as appropriate.</p>
Policy WTN 10 Dark skies	New developments should minimise light pollution, having regard to security, and impacts on the local environment and wildlife.
Policy WTN 11 Community facilities	The loss of existing community facilities is to be avoided unless the current use is financially unviable for over 12 months, there is no local demand for other social, community or leisure facilities, or alternative facilities are available in a location accessible by the community.
Policy WTN 12 Farm diversification	<p>Diversification will be supported where redundant traditional farm buildings are no longer viable or needed for farming.</p> <p>Reuse for community or economic development is preferred.</p> <p>Support will not be given if development would cause detriment to interests of acknowledged importance.</p>

Policy	Summary
Policy WTN 13 Sport and recreation facilities	The recreation ground and golf course are important community assets which will be safeguarded and improved where appropriate.
Policy WTN 14 Public rights of way	Improvements to public rights of way will be supported where their value as biodiversity corridors are safeguarded and enhanced and where the extension is fit for purpose.

3. Legislative background

- 3.1. The basis for strategic environmental assessment (SEA) legislation is European Union Directive 2001/42/EC which requires a strategic environmental assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that could have a significant environmental effect. This was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, commonly referred to as the SEA regulations.
- 3.2. To decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation nine of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies.
- 3.3. Where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared. A copy of the statement must be submitted with the neighbourhood plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner.
- 3.4. If likely significant environmental effects are identified, a strategic environmental assessment needs to be carried out and an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs two and three of Regulation 12 of those regulations.
- 3.5. In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Worlington Parish Council (the qualifying body) has requested West Suffolk District Council to consider whether a strategic environmental assessment of the emerging neighbourhood plan is required due to significant environmental effects.
- 3.6. Sustainability appraisal is not legally required for neighbourhood plans, but it must be demonstrated how the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in the area. It is down to the qualifying body to demonstrate how its neighbourhood plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development.
- 3.7. Strategic environmental assessment is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental effects of a plan before it is made. A habitats regulations assessment identifies whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This assessment must determine whether significant effects on a European site can be ruled out based on objective information.
- 3.8. European sites are defined in Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 and include special areas of conservation and special protection areas, potential special protection

areas, and possible special areas of conservation. The National Planning Policy Framework requires decision makers to apply the same protection and process to listed or proposed Ramsar sites. The sites collectively are referred to as habitats sites in this document.

- 3.9. If the conclusion of the habitats regulations assessment screening is that the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site then an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan for the site, in view of the conservation objectives of the site, must be undertaken. If a plan is one which has been determined to require an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive, then it will normally also require a strategic environmental assessment.

4. Screening process

- 4.1. The environmental constraints of the site are set out in appendix one of this document.
- 4.2. The criteria from schedule one of the strategic environmental assessment regulations have been used in the consideration of environmental effects.

5. Screening assessment

- 5.1. A neighbourhood plan may have a significant effect on the environment depending on the proposals within it and a case-by-case assessment is required. The criteria for undertaking this assessment are drawn from Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC (Annex 11) and Schedule 1 of the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 as set out in table two below:

Table two: consideration of likely significant effects, using the criteria from schedule one of the strategic environmental assessment regulations

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	<p>The Worlington Neighbourhood Plan contains a spatial strategy for development to be assessed against. It supports the delivery of appropriately designed and scaled housing to meet identified local needs within the settlement boundary.</p> <p>It provides a framework for the consideration of proposals affecting the countryside, wider landscape setting and protected species; in addition to consideration of climate change, sports, recreation, infrastructure, water, services, transport and maintaining a dark sky.</p> <p>Detailed design considerations are provided for all development.</p>
The degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The neighbourhood plan provides policies for the plan area, relevant to a local level only. The Worlington Neighbourhood Plan must be in conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan for the former Forest Heath area of West Suffolk. It does not influence other plans but will become a development plan document if made.
The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	A neighbourhood plan requires development proposals to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The plan includes a strong emphasis on increasing biodiversity and protecting the existing

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
	<p>natural environment and habitats. A landscape character and dark skies policy will help protect and enhance the rural setting of the village and potentially help to buffer it from possible future developments such as the Sunnica Solar Farm scheme in the south and from the strategic local plan allocated site at land west of Mildenhall to the north. The neighbourhood plan seeks to prevent settlement coalescence and safeguard areas of the parish that are considered historic assets. Other policies seek to promote community facilities, sustainable construction, including renewable energy and energy efficiency as well as consideration of sustainable drainage and safeguarding against flood risk. Policy WTN14 aims to enable public rights of way in the parish to be improved, allowing greater opportunities for local leisure and recreation, and reaffirming possibilities to enhance green corridors and biodiversity.</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan.</p>	<p>The environmental impact of the proposals within Worlington Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be minimal due to the scale of development that would come forward in line with existing and emerging policy. The location and form of any development will be restricted by the settlement boundary.</p> <p>Any potential environmental problems associated with air pollution are likely to be of a local scale and could be tackled through the implementation of the plan. The policy content of the adopted local plan will additionally apply to any proposals within the neighbourhood plan area. These policies have been or will be subject to</p>

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
	sustainability appraisal and habitats regulations assessment screening.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (for example plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).	The neighbourhood plan is in conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan. The local plan has had regard to European community legislation on the environment.
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Development that could come forward through the plan would in general be of such a small scale that any effects are unlikely to be significant in terms of duration, frequency, and reversibility. No allocations for development have been made in the plan.
The cumulative nature of the effects	Other plans and projects in the vicinity of the plan area have been reviewed. Policy themes in the plan and policies in other local plan documents that would continue to be relevant protect local environmental assets; cumulative effects are unlikely to be significant. The neighbourhood plan policies seek to safeguard the plan area from inappropriate development, individually and in combination.
The transboundary nature of the effects	The plan will not lead to transboundary effects. No allocations for development are proposed and any proposals that arise as windfall development or incidentally will not lead to transboundary effects on interests of acknowledged importance.
The risks to human health or the environment (for example due to accidents)	The plan does not propose additional development and is unlikely to lead to additional risks to human health or the environment.
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area)	The potential development that could occur as a result of the plan is limited

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
and size of the population likely to be affected)	in its geographical area; any effects are likely to be local and are unlikely to be significant.
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>special natural characteristics or cultural heritage exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values intensive land-use</p>	<p>The environmental sensitivities in the plan area and immediate vicinity are listed in appendix one. The plan proposes to include policies that protect and enhance local environmental assets; other local plan documents would also continue to be relevant. The environmental effects arising from the plan are unlikely to be significant.</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>Local, national and internationally designated nature conservation sites are listed in appendix one. Whilst none of these actually form part of the plan area, the Brecks Special Protection Area influences the character of the landscape within the Worlington Neighbourhood Plan area – as such the plan seeks to enhance these landscape characteristics by maintaining and improving them. There would be no direct effects on these sites, policies in the plan and in the local plan protect landscape features, and the level of development is unlikely to pose a risk to these sites. Habitats regulations assessment screening below has screened out likely significant effects on any international sites. There are no designated landscapes in the vicinity of the plan area.</p>

6. Habitats regulations assessment screening

- 6.1. There are no Natura 2000 (European Sites) sites within the Worlington Neighbourhood Plan area. Sites outside of the neighbourhood plan area but within 15 kilometres include Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA), Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Rex Graham SAC, Fenland SAC, Devil's Dyke SAC, Chippenham Fen Ramsar and Wicken Fen Ramsar.
- 6.2. Recent habitats regulations assessment (HRA) work in West Suffolk (West Suffolk Issues and Options Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment September 2020) has highlighted possible effects associated with the international sites as follows:
 - Direct loss or physical damage due to construction.
 - Disturbance and other urban edge effects from construction or occupation of buildings.
 - Disturbance from construction or operation of roads.
 - Recreational pressure.
 - Water quantity.
 - Water quality.
 - Air quality.
- 6.3. Since the Worlington Neighbourhood Plan does not in itself intend to allocate any sites for development, there are no likely potential pathways for impacts on the habitats sites that are all located a significant distance from the plan boundary. The plan area is over two kilometres from Breckland SPA and does not propose development within the 1500 metres buffers around Breckland SPA or 400 metres of Breckland SPA components. If small-scale development is later proposed within 1500 metres of a one kilometre grid square that has a functional link to the SPA because they support stone curlew outside the SPA, a project level HRA would be required.
- 6.4. In addition the potential for effects to occur in combination with the development in the local plan and with other projects has been considered. However, it is judged that the scale of additional development likely to occur as a result of the plan is unlikely to lead to in-combination effects.
- 6.5. It is concluded that likely significant effect on any European site can be screened out.

7. Screening outcome

- 7.1. This report contains the detail of the assessment of the need for the Worlington Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to strategic environmental assessment as required by Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) and appropriate assessment as required by the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The assessment for both these requirements has been undertaken on the basis of the low level of growth set out in the local plan and summarised in section two of this report. Based on the environmental information, and the scope of the policies in the Worlington Neighbourhood Plan, the preliminary outcome of the assessment is:
- In respect of strategic environmental assessment, significant environmental effects can be screened out (section five).
 - In respect to habitats regulations assessment, likely significant effects can be screened out (section six).
- 7.2. This report has been prepared to inform consultation with statutory consultees; The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. Following consultation, the screening will be reviewed in light of any comments received.

Appendix 1 – environmental constraints

Biodiversity

There are no internationally important sites within the plan area. The closest habitats site to the plan boundary, including special areas of conservation (SAC), special protection area (SPA) and Ramsar sites are listed in the table below.

SAC	SPA	Ramsar
Breckland (3.6 kilometre (km)) Rex Graham (2.5 km) Fenland (3.8 km) Devil's Dyke (12.4 km)	Breckland (1.3 km)	Chippenham Fen (3.8 km) Wicken Fen (11 km)

There are no nationally important sites within the plan area. Nationally important sites in the vicinity include:

- Red Lodge Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (0.4 km)
- Cherry Hill and the Gallops SSSI (1.3 km)
- Breckland Forest SSSI (1.3 km)
- Breckland Farmland SSSI (2.2k m)
- Snailwell Poor's Fen SSSI (3.8 km)
- Chippenham Fen SSSI (3.8 km)
- Foxhole Heath, Eriswell SSSI (4.3 km)
- Brackland Rough SSSI (5.3 km)

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) risk zones of Natural England give an indication of the types and scale of development that might have an effect on these SSSI. The criteria listed are in the following table.

Development category	Description	Comment
All planning applications	All planning applications except householder applications	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan
All planning applications	All planning applications outside or extending outside existing settlements or urban areas affecting greenspace, farmland, semi natural habitats or landscape features such as trees, hedges, streams, rural buildings and structures.	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan
Infrastructure	Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan

Air pollution	Livestock and poultry units with floorspace more than 500 square metres (m ²), slurry lagoons more than 750 m ² and manure stores more than 3500 tonnes.	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan
Combustion	General combustion processes more than 50 megawatts energy input. Including energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis or gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration or combustion.	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan
Discharge	Any discharge of water or liquid waste of more than 20 cubic metres per day to ground (for example to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream (please note: This does not include discharges to mains sewer which are unlikely to pose a risk at this location).	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan

Designated county wildlife sites within the plan boundary are:

- Worlington Heath – acid grassland
- Joan’s Meadow – Breck grassland and scrub
- Royal Worlington and Newmarket Golf Course and surrounding habitat – Breck grassland
- Badlingham Lane – Breck grassland
- Worlington Chalk Pit – habitat mosaic

Ancient woodland

There are no sites of in the plan area

Soil

The land within the plan area is classified a mixture of grade 3 (towards the north-east) and grade 4 (towards the south-west) agricultural land.

Water

The River Lark forms the northern parish boundary and has associated flood zones two and three.

The plan area is within a source protection zone.

There are several ponds and connecting waterways within the plan area not connected to the river.

Air quality

There are no air quality management areas within the plan area.

Noise

The main sources of noise pollution in the plan area include RAF Mildenhall to the north and the traffic noise from the A11 to the south. There is also a quarry for sand and gravel at Bay Farm in the extreme south of the plan area.

Access and recreation

There are only a few public rights of way within the plan area but there is also an important public access route that runs south towards Badlingham along the Green Lane.

The recreation ground provides sport facilities (Worlington Cricket Club) and the Royal Worlington and Newmarket Golf Course is to the south-east of the village.

Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage

There are no scheduled ancient monuments in the plan area. The nearest is a bowl barrow on Chalk Hill adjacent to the A11 (300 metres) and in Mildenhall a market cross (650 metres) and the remains of a dovecote (375 metres).

An area of designated common land is registered within the plan area – this is a largely overgrown and wooded triangle of land on the edge of the village north of Green Lane.

There are a number of grade II listed buildings within the plan area concentrated along Mildenhall Road, The Street and Church Lane. The war memorial is also grade II listed. The Church of All Saints is grade I listed.

There are no buildings on the at risk register within the plan area.

There is no conservation area in the village, but the area has been rich in archaeological finds. There are over six known archaeological sites including a moat which is marked on old Ordnance Survey maps of the area. The line of the old railway can be seen on maps.

Landscape

The plan area is comprised of three different landscape character types (Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment) – rolling estate chalklands in the northern half and estate sandlands to the south. Along the boundary of the River Lark is a small area of valley meadow and fens. These landscapes have the following characteristics:

- Rolling estate chalklands – chalky soils, large regular fields with low hawthorn hedges, paddocks, shelterbelts. Gently rolling or flat with free draining loam soil. Large scale arable production. Open views. Clustered villages.
- Estate sandlands – large geometric fields, predominantly arable, plantation woodlands and remnant heathland and acid grassland. Flat or gently rolling plateau, free draining sandy soils over drift deposits. Few watercourses. Shelterbelts of characteristic 'Pine lines' in the Brecks area. Little ancient woodland. Large forestry coniferous plantations.
- Valley meadowlands and fens – flat narrow river valleys. Deep peaty soil and sandy deposits. Ancient meres, important fen sites. Small grass fields bounded by dykes. Sparse scarring of Alder Carr and plantation woodlands. Part of wider estate type landscape

Appendix 2 – Internationally designated sites

Worlington sits on the very western edge of Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). It is within 15 kilometres of other SCAs: Fenland, Rex Graham and Devil’s Dyke and also Chippenham Fen and Wicken Fen Ramsar sites.

Site	Conservation objectives of the international site
Breckland Special Protection Area	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features. • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features. • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely. • The population of each of the qualifying features. • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site. <p>Qualifying features: A133 <i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>; Stone curlew (breeding). A224 <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>; European nightjar (breeding). A246 <i>Lullula arborea</i>; Woodlark (breeding).</p>
Breckland Special Area of Conservation	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species. • The distribution of qualifying species within the site. <p>Qualifying Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H2330. Inland dunes with open <i>Corynephorus</i> and <i>Agrostis</i> grasslands; Open grassland with grey-hair grass and common bent grass of inland dunes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H3150. Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation; Naturally nutrient-rich lakes or lochs which are often dominated by pondweed. • H4030. European dry heaths. • H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone. • H91E0. Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae); Alder woodland on floodplains. (Important orchid site.) • S1166. <i>Triturus cristatus</i>; Great crested newt.
<p>Rex Graham Reserve Special Area of Conservation</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats. <p>Qualifying Features: Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H6210 Semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (important orchid site.) <p>Environmental Vulnerabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in species distribution. • Air pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition. • Habitat fragmentation. • Deer • Invasive species. • Public access and disturbance.
<p>Fenland Special Area of Conservation</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species. • The distribution of qualifying species within the site. <p>Qualifying Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H6410. Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae); Purple moor-grass meadows. • H7210. Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae; Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge) (Important orchid sites.) • S1149. Cobitis taenia; Spined loach. • S1166. Triturus cristatus; Great crested newt. <p>Qualifying Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criterion 1 One of the most outstanding remnants of the East Anglian peat fens. The area is one of the few which has not been drained. Traditional management has created a mosaic of habitats from open water to sedge and litter fields. • Criterion 2 The site supports one species of British Red Data Book plant, fen violet <i>Viola persicifolia</i>, which survives at only two other sites in Britain. It also contains eight nationally scarce plants and 121 British Red Data Book invertebrates. <p>Environmental Vulnerabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water pollution. • Hydrological changes. • Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition.
Devil's Dyke Special Area of Conservation	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <p>The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats. The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.</p> <p>Qualifying Features: Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H6210 Semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (Important orchid sites) <p>Environmental Vulnerabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate scrub control. • Air: pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition.
<p>Chippenham Fen Ramsar site (Part of Fenland SAC)</p>	<p>Based on its designation as a part of the Fenland Special Area of Conservation the conservation objectives are as follows:</p> <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species. • The distribution of qualifying species within the site. <p>Qualifying features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H6410. Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae); Purple moor-grass meadows. • H7210. Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae; Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge). • S1149. Cobitis taenia; Spined loach. • S1166. Triturus cristatus; Great crested newt. <p>With regards to the qualification of the site as a Ramsar it is designated under the following criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criterion 1 – A spring-fed calcareous basin mire with a long history of management, which is partly reflected in the diversity of present-day vegetation. • Criterion 2 – The invertebrate fauna is very rich, partly due to its transitional position between Fenland and Breckland. The species list is very long, including many rare and scarce invertebrates, characteristic of ancient Fenland sites in Britain.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criterion 3 – The site supports diverse vegetation types, rare and scarce plants. The site is a strong hold of Cambridge milk parsley <i>Selinum carvifolia</i>.
<p>Wicken Fen Ramsar site (part of Fenland SAC)</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely. <p>Qualifying Features: Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>). • Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davalliana</i>. <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spined loach <i>Cobitis taenia</i>. • Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>. <p>Environmental Vulnerabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water pollution. • Hydrological changes. • Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition.

Appendix 3 – plan area

