

Breckland Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document  
November 2014



## 1 Foreword

As part of Breckland Councils ongoing commitment to public participation in the plan making process, I am pleased to present our first stage of consultation on the Districts new Local Plan. This Issues and Options Local Plan Document sets out our vision, objectives and approaches to development around what the Council consider to be the most relevant key issues affecting Breckland. The document presents initial policy options that the Council could pursue to address them and **invites you to comment**. You can also suggest any reasonable alternatives or issues and options that you feel should be considered. Once adopted, the Local Plan will replace the Councils existing suite of planning policy documents. This includes the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD, the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD and the Thetford Area Action Plan DPD.

There have been a number of key changes to the planning system since the previous suite of planning documents was prepared. Key changes have included the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies and the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework and new Planning Policy Guidance. This is therefore an ideal time to begin preparing a new Local Plan for Breckland.

The Local Plan will consider the housing target for the District and this is the first time that the Council have had the opportunity to set our own target. In addition to this the document also considers how this housing growth is spatially distributed across Breckland. It also considers employment, retail, the natural and historic environment and how to approach Breckland's countryside.

The Issues and Options consultation seeks your views on the level of growth proposed for the District, the location of this growth and how the district should develop. Although you are welcome to comment on individual issues it is recommended that the document is viewed as a whole to consider the policy context and options.

This is an opportunity for you to have your say on planning in the District and we look forward to hearing your views at this Issues and Options Stage of the new Local Plan.

**Councillor Mark Kiddle-Morris**

**Executive Member for Assets and Strategic Development**

### Consultation Procedure

All comments on this Issues and Options should be sent to the Planning Policy Team at Breckland. Where possible we would appreciate the comments being submitted online using the Council's specially designed webpage, but comments can also be emailed or posted to us.

Online: The document is available online at <http://consult.breckland.gov.uk>

By post: Planning Policy Team, Breckland Council, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1EE

By email: [planningpolicyteam@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicyteam@breckland.gov.uk)

Responses must be received no later than 4pm on 9th January 2015

Please note that all comments will be placed on the Council's webpage and as such will be publicly viewable.

If you have any questions regarding any of the issues raised in this document, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01362 656 873

Introduction	
2. Introduction	4
3. Spatial Portrait	10
4. Vision and Objectives	13
Strategic Themes and Issues	
5. Housing	18
5.1 Housing Strategy	18
5.2 Affordable Housing	24
5.3 Gypsies and Travellers	29
6. Economy	39
6.1 Breckland's Economy	39
6.2 General Economic Strategies	40
6.3 Rural Economy	46
6.4 Town Centre and Retail Strategy	49
6.5 Transport Strategies	56
7. Natural and Historic Environment	57
8. Spatial Strategy	63
8.1 Spatial Strategy	63
8.2 Market Towns	71
8.2.1 Attleborough	71
8.2.2 Dereham	94
8.2.3 Swaffham	102
8.2.4 Thetford	110
8.2.5 Watton	121
8.3 Service Centres	128
8.4 Rural Settlements and Countryside	139
9. Implementation and Viability	144



10. Call For Sites	149
Appendices	
11. Glossary	150
12. Evidence Base List	157
13. Local Service Centre Analysis	162

## 2 Introduction

### Context

**2.1** Local Authorities are required by Government to produce an up-to-date Local Plan for their area, to guide the future spatial development.

**2.2** On 8 January 2013, the Council resolved to prepare a new Local Plan for Breckland. The new Breckland Local Plan will be a key document for the district to guide future development and help preserve the natural and historical environment, whilst promoting quality of life. Once adopted, it will replace the existing suite of Development Plan Documents developed under the previous Local Development Framework (LDF), including the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies, Site Specific Policies and Proposals, and Thetford Area Action Plan. The Local Plan preparation must have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was published by the Government in March 2012. The Local Plan sets out the issues that the district is facing over the next 15 - 20 years and sets out the potential options for dealing with these issues. We are seeking your views on these in order to shape the new Local Plan and plan positively for the future of the district. Planning is important as it affects everyone from all walks of life, it not only directs and shapes development, but seeks to protect and enhance our natural and built environment. As we develop the Local Plan it is therefore important that it is prepared with extensive consultations with the general public, statutory and non-statutory bodies and other interested groups.

**2.3** The Council's resolution to prepare a new Local Plan for the district follows the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS's) within England. The RSS previously addressed a number of key issues, such as the designation of housing targets for individual Local Authorities. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Localism Act (2011) now require these planning issues to be addressed at local level.

**2.4** The Local Plan will set out the development strategy, strategic policies and site allocations for the district within a single document. There is the potential for some of the policies and allocations to be supported by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to provide further guidance and details. In addition to the planning documents prepared by the Council, communities also have opportunities to prepare plans for their local area, which are called Neighbourhood Plans. A diagram showing relationships between the Local Plan and other planning policy documents is set out below in Figure 2.1 'Relationship between the Local Plan and other planning policy documents'.



**Figure 2.1 Relationship between the Local Plan and other planning policy documents**

**2.5** A Local Plan must achieve sustainable development for the area it covers. As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life. The Local Plan aims to:

- set a spatial vision for the Breckland area with clear economic, social and environmental objectives;
- consider the needs and aspirations of Breckland residents; and
- achieve an integrated approach to regeneration and delivery of needed development.

**2.6** The Local Plan is at an early stage of development. This Issues and Options document aims to provide initial discussions on the spatial issues, and sets out the challenges Breckland faces. Once fully developed, the Local Plan will contain the following elements:

- A Spatial Portrait setting out the conditions that exist in Breckland, highlighting the issues to be addressed within the document;
- A set of Issues and Challenges, derived from the evidence base, that will need to be addressed by the Spatial Vision and Strategy. These issues will provide a brief snapshot of the issues and challenges that are driving change in Breckland;
- An overall Spatial Vision setting out what the area will be like in the future and a broad overview of how this will be achieved;
- A set of Spatial Objectives outlining the main policy topics that will be pursued in order to achieve the vision;
- A Spatial Strategy that will set out how the Council plans to deal with the key issues and Spatial Objectives that have been identified, and how the Council envisages the different parts of the district developing in relation to these issues in order to realise the Spatial Vision;
- A key diagram illustrating the Spatial Strategy;
- A series of core policies for delivering the vision and objectives (these will provide a strategic framework for informing and coordinating investment and making decisions about specific development proposals);
- A set of development management policies that will be used to guide development in a sustainable way;
- Sites that are allocated for development and the specific policies related to them;
- A set of indicators and targets to provide a framework for monitoring the plan's implementation.

### **Duty to Co-operate**

**2.7** The Localism Act (2011) sets out a new 'Duty to Co-operate' which applies to all Local Planning Authorities, County Councils, National Park Authorities and a number of public bodies including the Environment Agency, Highways Agency, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

**2.8** The Act states that Local Planning Authorities and other public bodies are required to:

*'engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to develop strategic policies to make plans for their areas to meet the current and future needs of its community'.*

**2.9** Plans should be positively prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements. Local Planning Authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination. It is important that cooperation is a continuous process of engagement. This is all the more important as, in the past, strategic cross-boundary issues were considered through the now revoked Regional Plan process, but this responsibility now rests at the local level.

**2.10** In response to the challenge of fulfilling the Duty to Co-operate, Local Planning Authorities in Norfolk are seeking to establish a formal Duty to Cooperate structure which seeks to engage at both Political and Officer level. This structure will also draw in representatives from Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), outside the County and other designated Duty to Co-operate bodies.

### **Relationship to National Planning Policy**

**2.11** The Local Plan must be consistent with the policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published by the Government in March 2012, and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) published in June 2014. The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change. It also sets out the requirement of a "sound" Local Plan, which should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption

in favour of sustainable development and Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. When adopted, Breckland's Local Plan will guide how the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied with the district. Importantly, the Local Plan will set out the strategic development needs of the district, including policies for housing and economic development. It will also plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in the district outside of the strategic elements.

**2.12** The Local Plan will only elaborate on national planning policy where this is considered necessary to meet local objectives and achieve local distinctiveness. Otherwise, cross-references are made to national policy and this will be applied in addition to the policies in the Local Plan.

### **What is Sustainable Development?**

**2.13** There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, each are mutually dependent on each other. The NPPF states that in order to achieve sustainable development, gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. At the heart of the NPPF for both plan-making and decision-taking there is a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". This means that the Local Authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the district. Local Plans should meet objective needs based on robust evidence, and that they should be able to be applied in a flexible manner to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits, or specific policies indicate development should be restricted.

**2.14** For decision-making it is important to have an up-to-date Local Plan, as the presumption in favour of sustainable development means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly outweigh the benefits.

**2.15** The definition is based upon the broad principle set out in the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 24/187: meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**2.16** Following on from the United Nations General Assembly, defining sustainable development and applying it within the local context of Breckland is a consideration for the Local Plan. Breckland district contains a predominantly rural character with areas that contain Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Area and National Nature Reserve designated land. The main towns for social and economic activity are dispersed to the north east (Dereham), north west (Swaffham), south east (Attleborough) and south west (Thetford) with Watton in the centre. There are currently 14 service centre villages throughout the district, some of which are close to main towns and some are not.

**2.17** The existing hierarchy directs growth to Market Towns and Local Service Centres, because this is where the majority of services, facilities and job opportunities exist, it is also recognised that because the majority of Breckland is predominantly rural (e.g. the remaining villages and hinterlands) often public transport is limited, subsequently in more rural areas this allows the private vehicle to dominate movement patterns. Therefore, where rural settlements and countryside settlements are further away from main settlements with limited services and facilities to support their habitation, it could be expected that environmental policies to prevail development policies in line with the expectation of the NPPF. However, in achieving a balance between the three aspects of sustainable development, consideration should be given to the importance of social and economic benefits in rural society.

**2.18** Plans and decisions need to reflect local circumstances, so that they can respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas of the district.

## Relationship to Sustainability Appraisal

**2.19** The Local Plan seeks to achieve each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and net gains across all three. The NPPF states in paragraph 152 that "significant adverse impacts should be avoided, and wherever possible alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, measures to mitigate the impact should be considered". The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) is therefore a key component of the development of a Local Plan. The Local Plan will be the subject of ongoing sustainability appraisal during this process. The sustainability appraisal includes assessment of social, economic and environmental impacts. The scoping report, which sets out the framework and approach to be adopted was consulted on last year and an interim SA report will accompany this Issues and Options report, setting out the findings to-date. An initial sustainability assessment has also been undertaken against the emerging options and reported in the appropriate sections of this Issues and Options report. Comments received at consultation stage will help to inform a detailed sustainability appraisal to accompany the preferred options. The purpose of this is to ensure that as the policies are developed in the Local Plan, they are in keeping with the principles and aims of sustainable development. We would encourage you to comment on this document.

## Relationship to Habitats Regulations

**2.20** Regulation 85B of the Habitats Regulations requires plan-making authorities to determine whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect upon any European site. In considering the implications of the Breckland Local Plan for European sites, an Appropriate Assessment will be undertaken in order to comply with the Habitats Regulations.

**2.21** The findings of the Habitats Regulations Assessment might mean it is necessary to include mitigation measures to remove any significant effects or likely significant effects that the plan may have on European sites. Mitigation measures can include amendments made to policies to remove elements that could have an effect, or to require other actions that can eliminate any effects. Any policies developed in the Local Plan that have an effect on European sites will have to be amended to ensure that the qualifying features are not harmed, as well as considering other measures that will be necessary. These mitigation measures will be incorporated into the document where necessary. In some cases, the mitigation measures may have a significant role in shaping the final direction of the strategy.

## Where we are now and what happens next

**2.22** The Local Plan will be prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Council is at early stages of the plan-making process, whilst there are extensive evidence needs to be gathered and background studies being commissioned.

**2.23** The plan will undergo two stages of public consultations when the views from the specific and general consultation bodies, the public and other interest groups, along with statutory Duty to Cooperate consultees, will have opportunities to express their views and contribute to the plan. The plan will then be published and representations on the soundness of the proposed submission plan will be invited. In order to be judged sound, a plan must be:

- positively prepared
- justified
- effective
- consistent with national policy

**2.24** Comments received through the pre-submission publication will be considered at the subsequent public examination against a number of soundness tests. The Inspector will take representations received from the soundness consultation into consideration and decide whether the plan is sound or should be amended to make it meet the soundness criteria.

**2.25** Once found sound by the Inspector, the Local Plan will be considered for adoption by the Council and will form a key part of the development strategy for the Council. The key stages are set out below.

	Stages	Timescale
	Evidence gathering & prepare Issues and Options document	January 2013 - March 2014
We are here	Public consultation on Issues and Options	November 2014
	Public consultation on Preferred Options document	Summer 2015
	Pre-submission consultation (soundness consultation)	Winter 2015/16
	Submission	Spring 2016
	Independent Public Examination	Summer 2016
	Adoption	Winter 2016

**Table 2.1 Local Plan Key Stages**



## 3 Spatial Portrait

**3.1** In developing a strategy for future development in Breckland, it is important to understand the context and the main attributes of the district in terms of its geography, economy, environment and social characteristics. The Spatial Portrait below is expanded in more detail in the baseline assessment of the scoping report for the sustainability appraisal that accompanies this document.

### Geography

**3.2** Breckland is a geographically large rural district in central Norfolk, covering an area of over 500 square miles. Just over half of the population live in the many dispersed villages and hamlets found in the 108 rural parishes, with the remaining 49% of the population living in the district's 5 towns of Thetford, Dereham, Attleborough, Swaffham and Watton. Thetford, which is Norfolk's fourth largest settlement, is the principal retail, service and employment centre in the south of the district. Dereham and Attleborough are the second and third largest towns in the district, which serve as administration and service centres, but are also a focus for retail and employment. Elsewhere, Swaffham and Watton are similarly sized market towns and provide a good range of services for day-to-day needs. There are a number of larger villages in the district which have a range of services, however there are a number of rural parishes with very few or no services, including some wards which are amongst the most deprived in Norfolk in terms of access to services.

**3.3** The regional centre of Norwich exerts a sphere of influence over the east of the district. To a lesser extent the sub-regional centres of King's Lynn and Bury St. Edmunds have a relationship with parts of the west and south of the district respectively. Communities in Breckland look to these 3 centres for higher order retail, transport and service provision, such as hospitals. Increasingly, the south of the district looks to growth and investment emanating from other regional centres, such as Cambridge, Stansted and the M11 Corridor. Thetford in particular displays a good balance of homes and jobs and as such was identified in the previous Local Development Framework for significant growth.

### Transport Links

**3.4** Given the rural nature and dispersed pattern of settlement, movement in the district is primarily by private car. Two trunk road routes run across the district. The A47 links Dereham and Swaffham with Norwich in the east and King's Lynn in the west, while the A11 links Attleborough and Thetford with Norwich to the north and Newmarket and Cambridge in the south-west. The A11 is programmed to be completely dualled during the period of this Plan and on this basis will sustain further economic growth. Despite congestion, the A47 is not programmed for improvements to its capacity during the period of this Plan. The remaining parts of Breckland are served by a network of non-trunk "A" category roads, secondary and minor roads, which are unlikely to be improved significantly during the period of this Plan. Thetford and Attleborough are connected to the national rail network with regular services to Norwich and Cambridge, and beyond to the Midlands and north of England. Public transport services in the district are principally provided by bus and focus on linking the district's market towns with shopping and employment destinations at Norwich, King's Lynn and Bury St. Edmunds. There are more infrequent services in the rural areas linking villages with their local town, principally on market days.

### Population

**3.5** Breckland has a diverse community of over 131,009 people (Census, 2011) which is forecast to increase to 160,676 by 2031 (CLG 2008 based projection). Generally, quality of life is good with official crime rates being low and generally decreasing. However there are pockets of health and disability related deprivation, notably in some of the Thetford wards. Additionally, the average age of Breckland residents is increasing and this raises issues for health and service provision, as well as the economy and housing market. Traditionally, Gypsy and Travelling Communities have been a significant ethnic group in Breckland. More recently, migrant workers from the European Union have become established as a significant new community with numbers estimated between 6,000 and 15,000.



## The Economy

**3.6** The growth of the Breckland population has led to growth in the working age population. This has been driven to a significant extent by high levels of in-migration from overseas. The number of people with higher level qualifications is low, however the number of people with other qualifications is comparable with other areas of the region and the country.

**3.7** Wages are also relatively low in comparison with the national and regional averages. This reflects the lower level of qualifications of people in the district and the low level of skills required by many of the available jobs. Although there is a high number of people who live and work in the district, many higher qualified workers are travelling out of the district to access higher paid and higher skilled work. Unemployment in the district is very low and has been consistently below both the national and county figures, however there is no complacency and the Council recognises the need to improve the efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability of the local economy. Jobs growth has been very high at 21.8% for the period from 1991 to 2011 compared with Norfolk at 8.7%. Although the employment level has decreased since 2006, it is projected to continue to recover and grow during the plan period, with at least 4,500 net new jobs forecast for the district up to 2031. <sup>(1)</sup>

**3.8** The local economy has undergone significant change in recent years with the general manufacturing sector continuing to decline as it is generally unable to compete with lower cost imports. However, there remains strength in the sector with a concentration of small and medium sized companies in specialist manufacturing predominantly in Thetford and Attleborough. There is a strong distribution sector in the district mostly based on regional and local distribution rather than a strategic market and is based mainly in Thetford and Snetterton, capitalising on the connectivity of the A11 corridor. This sector is likely to grow significantly over the plan period. The banking, finance and insurance sector is currently under-represented in the district, although there is a significant local presence in Dereham and Swaffham. This sector is one of the strongest growing in the district and will represent a significant increase in town centre based employment over the plan period. The farming and related food preparation sectors have and continue to undergo restructuring but remain strong, particularly in the rural parts of the district for the production of meat products including poultry. These sectors are however unlikely to grow over the plan period, the consequences of which the Local Plan will need to be sufficiently flexible to respond to. The jobs growth in the district is therefore likely to be made up of some decline in traditional industrial and manufacturing jobs that is more than made up for by growth in service and office based work and growth in sectors that do not occupy traditional B Class employment space such as the retail, health, leisure and tourism sectors.

**3.9** The commercial property market in Breckland is concentrated around Thetford which benefits from good accessibility from its position on the A11 and its rail links to Norwich and Cambridge but with lower land values than these two regional centres. Attleborough and Snetterton also benefit from good accessibility from the A11 and have active commercial property markets. Strategic improvements to the A11 will enhance accessibility from Thetford, Attleborough and Snetterton, with full dualling of the road within the plan period. Dereham benefits from its proximity to Norwich, its central location in Norfolk and good east/west accessibility from the A47. It is consequently an attractive location for local and regional firms serving the Norwich and Norfolk markets. Swaffham and Watton do not enjoy the same levels of accessibility or proximity to Norwich and therefore there is less demand for commercial space in these two towns, however there is demand mainly from small local firms wishing to expand.

## Housing

**3.10** Closely linked to the economy, Breckland's housing market has seen house prices rise much faster than incomes. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment was undertaken in 2013 and set out a number of mechanisms for achieving a balanced housing market in Breckland. Since the abolishment of the East of England Plan, Local Authorities are required to develop their own housing target, reflecting the objectively assessed local housing needs. The housing target for the district is currently being developed and further information is available within the 5 'Housing' section.

---

1 East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM) 2013 baseline forecast

**3.11** It should be acknowledged that in determining objectively assessed housing needs for each district, it is likely that Housing Market Areas may extend beyond a districts boundary. As a result, a wider Strategic Housing Market Assessment is currently being prepared in co-operation with other Norfolk authorities, in order to understand the impact of any significant inter-dependencies within adjacent market areas and how Breckland could respond to this.

## **Environment**

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

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

**3.14** Breckland is one of the driest areas of the country and availability of water resources is an issue with the increasing pressure for development. Climate change has been identified as the most significant challenge that we currently face. The release of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide, is the main contributing factor and human activity is a direct cause. We can expect warmer wetter winters and drier hotter summers; reduced water resources and more extreme weather events.

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

**3.16** Road traffic is a significant source of carbon dioxide. There is a high level of commuting by car, and congestion at peak times in the market towns. Breckland has one of the highest rates of commuting to work by car in Norfolk.

---

## 4 Vision and Objectives

**4.1** National guidance promotes a Local Plan which reflects a collective vision incorporating priorities from neighbourhoods, business and local organisation which should reflect the strategic priorities for the area. It is important to develop a vision that sets out our aspirations for the future of Breckland. This will guide how the district will look in the future.

**4.2** It is our aim that a vision should:

- Be grounded in the issues and challenges that emerge as we progress towards a new Local Plan, and
- Align with other key strategies and plans, produced by the Council, key partners and the wider community.

**4.3** Whilst the vision within the adopted Core Strategy has served us well and much progress has been made in delivering those aspirations, the Local Plan presents the opportunity to develop a new vision that encompasses all the elements that should now act as key drivers for the growth and continued success of the district. Growth not only presents challenges, it also presents opportunities to support and enhance the wider development of Breckland and sustainable development priorities.

**4.4** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that Local Planning Authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area covered by the Local Plan. It explains that these are strategic policies to deliver homes, jobs, retail, leisure, infrastructure, community and cultural infrastructure, and environmental conservation and enhancement, all of which contributes towards the health and wellbeing of people and communities. These main priority areas are set out within this Issues and Options as Strategic Themes and Issues. In exercising the plan-making function this must do so with the objective of contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development.

**4.5** To support a vision, it is also important that the Local Plan sets out strategic objectives for the district. The strategic objectives facilitate delivery of the districts strategic priorities which reflect the requirements of the NPPF and local aspirations.

**4.6** Once we have considered these along with the findings of our evidence studies and the feedback from this consultation we can start on making choices around the vision and the strategic objectives which will help shape Breckland in the years to come.

**4.7** We will develop a detailed draft vision and set of objectives which will be included in the next consultation on the plan. This will provide you with the opportunity to have your say.

**4.8** As referenced in the introduction Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, and are the key to delivering sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities.

### Question 1

What do you think Sustainable Development means for Breckland?

### Spatial Vision Context

**4.9** Breckland's settlements and its wider rural area will continue to develop as a dynamic, prosperous and self-sustaining community through the delivery of housing and significant employment growth, supported by necessary facilities, services and infrastructure, this creates healthy inclusive communities for all to enjoy and is what develops society for better resources creating wellbeing from a social, economic and environmental perspective.

Options 3 – 6 within this document seek to establish and determine an exact overall housing provision figure. New housing will have been integrated with new and existing facilities and will comprise of an appropriate tenure, type and mix to address issues of affordability and social inclusion. In response to the challenges of delivering sustainable development in a predominantly rural area, the **majority of development will have been directed to key settlements**, providing services and facilities to their hinterlands. This development in the key settlements will be supported by appropriate development in villages and in rural areas where it addresses local need or is a sustainable response to an advantage offered by a location. The jobs, housing and other services and facilities will be located and of a scale and balance to deliver self-contained settlements reducing the need to travel and maximise opportunities for delivery of sustainable transport provision.

**4.10 Along the A11 corridor significant employment growth** will be achieved in advanced engineering, motor sport, research and development and logistics, building on the emerging employment base and taking advantage of the excellent highway network and linkages to other centres of business. In the rest of Breckland, employment will meet local needs with the important cultural, heritage, landscape and natural assets forming the basis for tourism, leisure and recreation.

**4.11 Continuing to move Thetford forward** will be the main focus for development in Breckland. Thetford is the principal retail, service and employment centre in the south of the district. It contains a good balance of homes and jobs with a well-developed market for industrial and distribution properties; and because of the well-connected infrastructure networks including rail and road it offers opportunities to develop existing and new industry focus. Subsequently making Thetford the most sustainable town in the district.

**4.12** Elsewhere on the A11 corridor and railway, **Attleborough will develop as a location for substantial housing and employment growth**. There will be sustainable connections to employment locations at Snetterton and the greater Norwich area. The environment and function of the town will have been enhanced by further retail provision and a new link road from the London Road to the B1077.

**4.13 The distribution of growth including housing, employment, services and facilities will have been delivered in the market towns** of Dereham, Swaffham and Watton. The particular attributes of the market towns will define the scale and direction of growth, but the aim for all will be, as a minimum, to reinforce their position within the settlement hierarchy. Where opportunities are identified in the towns, growth plans will be put in place to ensure their development and enhancement as centres for living and working and to improve the services and facilities they offer. This enhancement will improve their sustainability as self-contained settlements and provide wider benefits to their hinterland.

**4.14 The natural, built and historic environment of the district will be comprehensively protected and enhanced**, as appropriate, to ensure that the inherent environmental and visual qualities are retained. In particular the special landscape quality of the Brecks, internationally important habitats and species and areas of scientific interest and wildlife benefits will be protected from harm. All development will be within the environmental limits placed on Breckland, particularly with respect to the district being located in the driest region of the country and the extensive areas that are designated as European Habitats. The quality of the built environment, building on the district's heritage and archaeological values, will be protected with high quality design being a key principle of all development.

## Question 2

Do you have any views which should be included in our vision? If so, how do you think Breckland should develop?

## Strategic Objectives

**4.15** In addition to the vision, the new Local Plan must also include a clear set of strategic objectives. Objectives are a way of translating ideas and aspirations into reality. The following objectives will help narrow the focus onto the most practical methods of achieving the vision.

**4.16** Here are the strategic objectives proposed to include in the new Local Plan. We would welcome your feedback on any or all of these. All are linked to later sections of this document and to separate chapters in the main Issues and Options document.

### Option 1

#### Proposed Strategic Objectives

##### Social

1. To deliver housing need to the most sustainable locations to reduce carbon emission and ensure sustainability, subsequently improving health;
2. To ensure the issues and challenges of affordable housing and social exclusion are addressed through strategic sustainable planning, ensuring good accessibility for all jobs, facilities and services in Breckland, creating quality of life and social cohesion.
3. To direct new major development to the most sustainable settlements to ensure housing need is delivered and the services, facilities and infrastructure provision needed is balanced to accommodate for new growth, allowing sustainable development and simultaneously conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
4. Working with local people to identify and address needs and priorities throughout the district, helping to advance local need and local distinctiveness through the mechanism of the Localism agenda;

##### Economic

5. To ensure Thetford continues to develop as the principal town of Breckland acting as the key strategic centre and gateway to the Brecks and delivering sustainable development;
6. To ensure the A11 corridor continues to grow to bring prosperity for new and existing development and employment advancing existing engineering, motor sports, research, development and logistics in and around the locality and the connection to other high order sustainable settlements;

##### Environmental

7. To ensure protection and enhancement of the natural environment regarding the quality and distinctiveness of Breckland's biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape character.
8. To ensure more biodiversity due to Breckland's predominantly rural nature ensuring infrastructure and green infrastructure delivery keeps pace with the levels of growth, and subsequently improving health, wellbeing and standards of living;
9. To require high quality design that meets high environmental standards and to enhance and protect local distinctiveness and the tourism industry.

### Question 3

These proposed nine objectives are based on the existing adopted Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (2009), Breckland's Corporate Plan (2011-2015) and supporting evidence base material.

Do you think these objectives are still relevant? If not, please explain why and how you think they could be improved.

### Local Plan Time Period

**4.17** The NPPF requires that the Local Plan covers an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15 year time horizon and be kept up to date.

**4.18** The present anticipated adoption date of the Local Plan is 2016, allowing for 15 years from adoption, one option is to set the plan period to 2031. This would comply with the minimum requirements of the NPPF, and match the Council's existing evidence base for housing and employment. The disadvantage of this approach is that it does not allow much flexibility in the time line to account for market variations and for the incorporation of changes in National Policy should these occur, and that the Council's evidence base may ultimately be out of alignment with its neighbouring planning authorities.

**4.19** A second option would be to align the plan period to the anticipated timeline of neighbouring authorities in Norfolk for the update of their Strategic Planning Documents. The current county-wide approach for the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is to gather evidence up into 2036, and the second option for the Local Plan end date is to synchronise evidence gathering to coincide with these wider area initiatives. The main advantage of this option would be the alignment of evidence gathering which would allow for more effective cross-boundary co-operation on strategic issues through the identification and direct comparisons of evidence with the potential of greater strategic planning across the district. Similarly it will allow greater flexibility in the timeline should changes in national planning policy occur without revisiting some of the evidence base and aid in the soundness of the plan.

**4.20** The disadvantage of this option would be that existing work on housing and employment targets would have to be revisited to cover the longer time frame and further evidence base work would be required, also further land would have to be identified and released in order to positively plan for the longer time period, though the NPPF does allow for Local Plans to identify broad locations rather than specific deliverable and or developable sites in the latter stages of the plan period.

**4.21** The Council's preference is that the Local Plan should align with the anticipated timeline of neighbouring authorities in Norfolk and cover the period up to 2036.

### Option 2

Set the plan period to 2031, in order to align with the 15 years required in the NPPF.

### Option 3

Set the plan period to 2036, in order to align the evidence base with neighbouring authorities and enable more effective cross-boundary co-operation.

**Question 4**

Which option do you think is the most appropriate for the Council to choose and why?

---



## 5 Housing

### 5.1 Housing Strategy

**5.1** Previously the Council worked to housing targets set at a regional level through the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The scale of new housing needed to meet the RSS requirements equated to an average of 780 homes each year, and this is reflected in the current adopted Core Strategy requirement of 19,100 new homes for the period 2001-2026.

**5.2** Changes brought about through the Localism Act (2011), now require Local Authorities to be responsible for setting their own level of housing and employment provision. In preparing Local Plans, Local Authorities are required by the NPPF to objectively assess the development needs for their area and plan to meet these needs in full.

**5.3** These changes mean that alongside establishing where future development should go the Council needs to establish an appropriate level of housing provision for the new plan period. The setting of this target must be in the context of the NPPF and be based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community. The NPPF requires that Local Planning Authorities positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs in their area. Every effort should be made to identify, meet and respond positively to the wider opportunities for growth. In addition the process of setting a target must include consideration of cross-boundary issues and include a collaborative approach with neighbouring authorities and appropriate bodies across the Housing Market Area. A failure to set a housing target that seeks to meet the objectively assessed development needs of the district, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development, may not be considered sound.

**5.4** Planning for an appropriate level of housing provision and the setting of a target requires consideration of a range of forecasts for population, homes and jobs. The Council commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to undertake some preliminary modelling to help inform the objectively assessed housing and employment needs from future population and employment growth. These technical reports form part of the background documents used to inform the development of options. In addition the Council undertook a Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2013 (SHMA). This looked at the future housing market for Breckland district and also the wider study areas with a significant border with Breckland i.e where there was significant movement of population or other strong economic factors. The 2013 SHMA, identified a demand for between 720 -780 dwellings a year. In 2014 the Council was invited to take part in a wider SHMA with neighbouring authorities and the Greater Norwich Development Partnership through the Duty to Co-Operate requirements of plan-making. This option was not available to the Council in 2013 and is more in line with the requirements of the NPPF where paragraph 159 states that a SHMA should be worked up with neighbouring authorities where housing markets areas cross administrative boundaries. As a consequence further work through an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment is in progress with neighbouring authorities and the findings will also have to be considered.

**5.5** There is no national guidance available on assessing development needs in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirements and therefore these technical papers explore a number of different demographic and economic forecasts and scenarios based on a wide range of national, sub-national and local data. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) advises that the starting point for estimating need should be the latest population and household projections. The different scenarios are presented reflecting demographic led, economic led and supply-side led growth through separate forecasting models and represent an overview of population change and economic performance for the period 2011-2031. The East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM) is primarily a forecast tool based on economic led growth and an understanding of the relationship between employment and housing, while the POPGroup model is based on demographic derived forecasts.

**5.6** Current evidence suggests that the Plan will need to deliver 634-699 dwellings per year to meet local housing need based on population forecasts and up to 770 dwellings per year when future economic and employment growth is factored in and translated into dwelling requirements.



**5.7** A figure of 634 dwellings per annum is suggested based on a continuation of long term migration trends, both domestic and international over the past 10 years for the district, utilising the Mid Year Estimates Series for 2001-2011. This also equates to the level of housing required to support jobs growth within the 2013 East of England Forecasting scenario. This indicates growth of 3,957 jobs between 2011 and 2031 and projects an average housing demand of 634 dwellings per annum. This is called the economic baseline position. A higher figure of 699 dwellings per annum is suggested based on a continuation of current population changes utilising the 2011-based interim sub-national population projections, which are the most up-to-date figures. In addition to the suggested dwelling range which represents the objectively assessed housing need, a higher figure of 770 dwellings per annum is also suggested if economic growth is higher than the East of England Forecasting Model. This is based on key policy priorities, regeneration and investment opportunities for the district and the assumptions that growth is maximised. These scenarios translate into dwelling numbers as per the table below.

## Issue 1

### Growth Scenarios

Growth Scenarios	Annualised Housing Growth (dwellings)	Overall housing numbers to 2011-2031	Overall dwelling numbers to 2011-2036
Base line	634	12,680	15,850
2011 Sub-national Population Projections	699	13,980	17,475
Economic growth (maximised)	770	15,400	19,250
Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014, (emerging)*	To be published	N/A	N/A

**Table 5.1 Growth Scenarios**

\* Note further work through an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment is in progress through a joint approach with Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk district authorities. This is expected to report late October 2014. At this stage it is unknown when detailed information on updated travel to work patterns will be released by ONS and it is anticipated that further work on travel to work data may need to be undertaken.

**5.8** These Growth Scenarios set out different levels of housing provision for the plan period, which can be compared to the currently committed and planned comments. Although this may be useful context in setting a housing target it should be noted that a more positive outlook associated with economic development could be judged more in line with the requirements of the NPPF. In order to positively set housing growth, it must be at a level that is supportive in promoting economic growth and infrastructure requirements and in line with other elements of the Local Plan and national policy. In addition, it should reflect a balanced housing market, in terms of dwelling type, size, tenure, to support the workforce that is fundamental to the growth of local economy.

## Land Supply

**5.9** Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, sites have been identified to deliver the planned growth through to 2026. These are identified in the 2012 adopted Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD and the adopted Thetford Area Action Plan, as well as being progressed through the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan, which is now being progressed through this Local Plan. Table 5.2 below shows the existing completed, committed and planned for baseline position.

Completed and Committed	Dwellings
<b>Dwellings already completed</b> (April 2011 - March 2014)	1100
<b>Dwellings with Planning permission</b> as of 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thetford Strategic Urban Extension (SUE)</li> <li>Other Sites</li> </ul>	5,000*
	2,023
<b>Allocated sites (without permission)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attleborough</li> <li>Other sites</li> </ul>	4,000**
	1,049
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,172</b>

**Table 5.2 Completed, Committed and Planned Dwelling Numbers**

\*Resolution to grant planning permission subject to section 106 agreement 4th April 2014.

\*\*Attleborough 4000 is a strategic allocation through the Core Strategy.

**5.10** The 13,172 dwellings currently committed or planned for is broadly equivalent to the lower end of the expected range of objectively assessed needs (634 dwellings per year between 2011 and 2031). In contrast, additional land would need to be found to provide for 6,078 dwellings if the higher end of the expected range is applied (770 dwellings per year between 2011 and 2036). These figures are further expanded on in the table below:

Growth Scenario & Dwellings/year	Committed/planned for dwellings April 2011 -	Additional land/dwelling requirement 2011-2031	Additional land/dwelling requirement 2011-2036
<i>Existing Development Strategy, 780 *</i>	13,172	2,428	6,328
Base Line, 634	13,172	0 (-492)	2,678
Sub-national Population Projections, 699	13,172	808	4,303

Growth Scenario & Dwellings/year	Committed/planned for dwellings April 2011 -	Additional land/dwelling requirement 2011-2031	Additional land/dwelling requirement 2011-2036
Economic Growth 'Policy-On' Scenario, 770	13,172	2,228	6,078
SHMA (2013), 720-780*	13,172	1,228-2,428	4,828-6,328

**Table 5.3 Growth Scenarios and Land Requirements**

\* These are for illustrative purpose only and do not form part of the options presented .

**5.11** The Local Plan, through the setting of the spatial strategy provides the Council with the opportunity to look again at the scale and distribution of allocations. (See chapter 8)

**5.12** The NPPF, (paragraph 159), requires that the Council prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period. An updated study is currently underway and will form part of the background evidence when complete.

**5.13** Deciding on how many new homes (and jobs) should be provided, and where these are best located is a step by step process, beginning with this “Issues and Options” consultation. The Growth Scenarios set out below offer different levels and form different options for the level of housing provision for the plan period. Comments received on these levels will inform any decisions the Council takes as it develops the Local Plan. It is worth noting that whilst the need to provide more homes to meet identified needs is paramount the target has to be set in line with the NPPF. Setting a housing target at the lower levels could undermine other elements of the overall strategy if other elements of the strategy seek to promote economic growth.

#### Option 4

634 new dwellings per year

**5.14** This option is based on the lower end of the objectively assessed needs range, utilising the jobs growth at the number of jobs within the 2013 East of England Forecasting Model Baseline projection, as adopted in the Breckland Economic Growth Study 2013. It would mean land for an additional 67 dwellings between 2011 & 2031 and 3,103 dwellings if the plan period is extended to 2036 once currently committed or planned for dwellings are taken into account.

#### Option 5

699 new dwellings per year

**5.15** This option is based on a continuation of current population changes utilising the 2011-based interim sub-national population projections. It would mean land for an additional 1,233 dwellings between 2011 & 2031 and 4,728 dwellings if the plan period is extended to 2036 once currently committed or planned for dwellings are taken into account.

### Option 6

770 new dwellings per year.

**5.16** This option is based on the maximisation of economic growth within Breckland. This level of housing growth reflects a 'policy on' scenario, whereby it would only occur if the key policy priorities around regeneration and investment opportunities for the district are achieved. This level of housing growth would be above the objectively assessed housing need level and instead reflects the housing requirement in relation to the maximum growth that can be achieved through economic growth. It would mean land for an additional 2,653 dwellings between 2011 & 2031 and 6,503 dwellings if the plan period is extended to 2036 once currently committed or planned for dwellings are taken into account.

### Option 7

Growth levels indicated from the emerging Norfolk-wide SHMA, (taking into account the wider housing market area and cross-boundary issues).

**5.17** The 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment study identified a demand for between 720 -780 dwellings a year. Additional work is currently being undertaken with neighbouring authorities over the wider Housing Market Areas. The future findings of this yet to be published SHMA will also have to be considered and subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. The new joint SHMA is being prepared and currently expected to be available in due course.

**5.18** Based on updated 2012 population figures and the recognition of Greater Norwich's influence on the wider housing market areas, there is a potential risk that the new figures might significantly deviate from the options above.

### Question 5

Bearing in mind the target has to be set in line with the requirements of the NPPF. Which level of housing growth should the Local Plan provide for?

Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered at this stage?

### Sustainability Assessment

**5.19** The provision of new housing is likely to have a positive impact on housing need in the district including affordability, and increased variety of size and tenure. Overall, higher targets are likely to have more positive impact upon those objectives relating to socio-economic considerations and a negative impact on those objectives relating to environmental protection. For example, higher housing numbers may result in increased levels of housing, affordable housing which is intrinsically linked to job opportunities. However, there will be increased demand for water resources and impacts upon biodiversity, the natural environment and pollution levels. Conversely, lower targets tend to have a more positive impact on environmental considerations and neutral or negative impacts on socio-economic criteria.

### Call for Sites

**5.20** As part of the current consultation we are seeking information on sites in private ownership that may be considered suitable for residential sites. Are you aware of any sites with potential for housing? If yes, please put the sites forward using the "Call for Sites" form as specified in 10 'Call For Sites'.

## 5.2 Affordable Housing

### Issue 2

#### Affordable Housing and Other Forms of Housing Needs

**5.21** A sufficient supply of housing of all tenures, including affordable housing is essential to meet the objective of the Local Plan and to meet the wide range of housing needs that will be experienced in the district over the plan period. The 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified that there is a requirement for affordable dwellings in all areas of the district, with the most acute needs in Dereham and the north-east.

**5.22** Affordable housing is housing provided to those that are unable to meet their housing in the private sector. This includes rented housing, low cost for sale products, such as shared ownership and shared equity and specialist housing requiring support. To be eligible for affordable housing, a local connection to the district must be established as set out in the Council's adopted allocations policy. In order to purchase an affordable dwelling, the purchaser must prove that they do not have the financial means to purchase a house on the open market. Affordable rented properties are either Social-rented or Affordable Rent, which determines the level of rent chargeable. The Council's adopted Tenancy Strategy supports the charging of Affordable Rent levels up to 80% of the local areas market rent for an equivalent property. In Breckland, affordable housing is delivered and managed across the district through partnership work with Registered Providers.

**5.23** The Current Local Plan requires 40% affordable housing provision on all schemes over 5 or more dwellings or of an area of 0.17 ha or larger. Since adoption in 2009 on average a 26% approval rate for affordable housing provision has been achieved, with 717 affordable dwellings being approved to date (1st April 2009 - 20th March 2014).

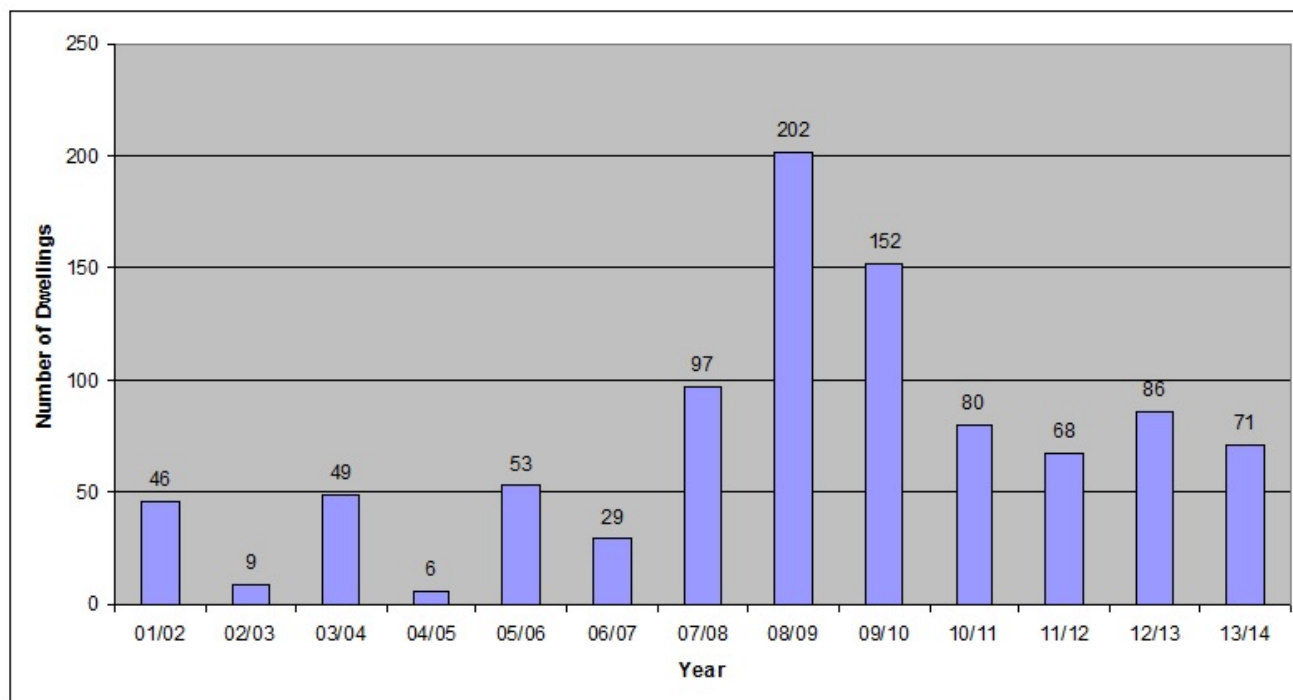
**5.24** This difference can be explained in a number of ways. Not all sites are capable of delivering 40% affordable housing because of physical constraints and or exceptional costs or challenging market conditions has meant that the viability cushion has been reduced. In determining planning applications a balance has to be made between the viability of a development and the cumulative policy requirements at that point in time. Similarly some applications are for 100% affordable housing. Each application is therefore judged on its own individual merits. It remains fundamental that in assessing the policy requirement for affordable housing in the new Local Plan that viability is an essential consideration and further work needs to be undertaken to assess this threshold and the viability cushion in the current market conditions.

**5.25** The 2013 SHMA identified that the need for affordable housing remains strong and that there is a continuing requirement for affordable housing in all areas across the district. The most acute needs are in Dereham and the north-east of the district.

**5.26** The SHMA concluded that there was a need for 398 new additional affordable housing units per annum over the next five years, and that in terms of need alone this would justify a 40-45% affordable housing requirement. In terms of overall housing need it identified an annualised requirement for 720-780 dwellings a year between 2011-2031. If the full affordable housing requirements were delivered this would equate to 51-55% of the housing need. However given the historical completion rates below, it is clear that there is a shortfall between delivery and identified need that will not be addressed solely through the planning system. The SHMA concluded that there was sufficient evidence to continue to seek 40% affordable housing contribution or consider an increase to 45%-50%.

**5.27** Housing need has to be balanced against the amount of affordable homes that developers can provide in viability terms. The NPPF seeks affordable housing targets set at a level that does not affect overall viability and deliverability. Therefore a viability study will be part of the key evidence base and will be developed to inform the detailed policies at Preferred Options stage.

**5.28** Further evidence will be collected to determine a viable affordable housing requirement and threshold, and it is likely that a compromise has to be made between the affordable housing need and the general viability of development to avoid stifling development.



**Figure 5.1 Affordable Housing Completions 2001 - 2014**

### Type and Tenure

**5.29** In 2011 the Government introduced Affordable Rent as the principle element of the new supply offer. Affordable Rent homes will be made available to tenants up to a maximum of 80% of market rent and allocated in the same way as social housing is at the moment through housing providers and flexible tenancies. Affordable Rent forms the principle element of the supply offer from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and allows providers a more flexible approach, helping to reduce the amount of public funding needed in the delivery of affordable housing.

**5.30** The 2013 SHMA also considered that the evidence is sufficient to recommend a split of 65% affordable rented and 35% intermediate or shared equity housing. However, it stressed that these findings will be tested as part of the wider viability work of the Local Plan process which will be crucial in determining a deliverable affordable housing requirement.

**5.31** The NPPF says that we should deliver a wide choice of types and sizes for a balanced community. This means providing the right mix of flats, houses, bungalows to meet the needs of all age groups and providing the right combination of smaller and larger properties for each type. The 2013 SHMA considered the need for different dwelling mix and property size. The assessment shows a need for properties of all sizes, albeit a lower level of need for 1-bedroom properties. The council has a preference for new properties to be 2-3 bed housing as this is where the overall identified need is required. However it adopts a flexible approach in order to help address local need and assesses applications on an individual basis. An alternative approach would be to develop policies which actively seek to address shortages per type.

## Policy Options

**5.32** In setting an affordable housing target (subject to viability testing):

### Option 8

One option would be to seek:

The continuation of the approach set out in the current Core Strategy, and subject to new viability testing retain the existing 40% affordable housing target.

### Sustainability Appraisal Outcome

A continued approach as set out in the current Core Strategy reflects the requirement from the NPPF to allow developers to make reasonable profit to encourage housing development. Providing new affordable homes is a key priority for the Council. Whilst the council recognises the importance that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home that is suitable for their needs, it also has to be realistic about what can be achieved. The potential recommended target will need to take these considerations into account.

### Option 9

An alternative approach would be to seek higher contributions of between 45%-50%. This approach would seek to meet affordable needs, but may impact greater on the viability of schemes. The result may lead to other compromises and the setting of policy priorities.

### Sustainability Assessment Outcome

**5.33** A higher proportion of affordable housing would help to ensure that residents of Breckland had access to the housing that they need, which in turn would support their health and wellbeing. It would help ensure that workers who might otherwise not be able to afford market prices could live near their jobs. However, it might make some housing sites non-viable because of the combined cost of providing affordable housing and (for instance) providing necessary new infrastructure, cleaning up contamination, or dealing with other site constraints. Therefore, this approach carries potential risk of stifling development, thus preventing developers bringing sites forward and may impact on the implementation of other policy aspirations such as local design options. Additionally, this might mean that greenfield sites are developed over more expensive brownfield sites, which is not a good use of land and is likely to increase the need to travel by car. Additionally, the provision of high levels of affordable housing may impact on other areas such as provision of services & facilities, open space, Green Infrastructure, design, landscape, biodiversity & geodiversity improvements etc.

### Option 10

A further approach would be to seek a lower contribution than the current Core Strategy and the recommendations of the 2013 SHMA.

### Sustainability Assessment Outcome



**5.34** A lower proportion of affordable housing would allow more housing sites to be viable, including brownfield sites and/or sites nearer services and public transport. However, although this is likely to lead to higher rates of house-building overall, these dwellings may not be the kind needed by local residents and result in considerable quantities of unmet need and it could affect the soundness of the plan. This could further exacerbate existing inequalities such as overcrowding, poor housing quality and therefore health and wellbeing. Employers may not find it easy to recruit local residents because of difficulties that the residents face in living near their jobs. The NPPF requires where affordable housing is required, local plans should set policies that meet local needs.

### Question 6

What level of affordable housing provision do you think can achieve a better balance between affordable housing provision and other priorities?

Are there any other reasonable alternatives to be considered at this stage?

### Specified type and tenure mix

#### Option 11

One option would be to develop a policy that specifies the tenure mix to be achieved by all development and provide a starting point in assisting to meet the identified needs in relation to type and size.

#### Option 12

A second option would be to continue with the current approach provided through the 2013 SHMA.

**5.35** Whilst the approach to setting a policy through option 10 would have some merits, it may become outdated quickly and difficult to apply over the plan period. It may also not allow for flexibility to adapt to changes in housing requirements on a local basis.

**5.36** Option 11 allows greater flexibility on a case by case basis with regard to local need and viability assessments.

### Question 7

Which option on type and tenure do you prefer?

Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

### Specialist Housing

**5.37** A sufficient supply of housing of all tenures is essential to meet the objectives of the Local Plan and to meet the wide range of housing needs that will be experienced in the district over the plan period. Apart from the provision of additional affordable housing units, there are other types of accommodation that are needed, such as specialist forms of housing, in particular for housing with care, older people's accommodation and custom build. Specialist

housing is intended to enable people to live as independently as possible, but is designed so that support can be provided. Extra care housing for older people, where there is access to care and support on site but residents have their own front door is one example. The location of this type of housing needs careful consideration and should be in accordance with locally identified need. Whilst not affordable housing, other forms of specialist housing can include self-build. The 2013 SHMA also concludes that it was not necessary to have a specific policy or allocation for self-build in the local authority, as this need could be met by amendments to settlement boundaries or specific "trial sites" on public sector land.

### 5.38 When assessing the suitability of extra care and other specialist housing

#### Option 13

One option could be to develop a policy which requires sites to be accessed by good levels of local transport, have convenient access to local shops and a safe environment. Consideration should also be given to the provision of health care.

#### Option 14

A second option could be not to develop a policy in this area at all and allow proposals to come forward in accordance with local need and the market.

#### Question 8

Should the Local Plan support the delivery of specialist housing over and above the requirements of the NPPF? e.g through the direct allocation and or development of policies? If so, what types of specialised housing are required in particular in the district and where?

## 5.3 Gypsies and Travellers

### Issue 3

#### Gypsies and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Provision

**5.39** The Council has a legal duty to consider the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the same way as all other sectors of the community. A Norfolk-wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) was undertaken by the Norfolk Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Group in 2006. The document established the accommodation and travelling needs for Gypsies and Travellers across the county and fed into the East of England Plan revision regarding the provision of permanent and transit sites. Breckland's identified need for permanent pitch provision based on its own evidence at that time was for an additional 12 pitches. Shortly after this, the East of England Regional Assembly published its East of England Plan revision around the provision of permanent and transit sites within the region. After consultation on the Plan, it was decided to redistribute site provision across the region which resulted in a requirement for 15 new permanent pitches to be sited in Breckland over the period 2006-11.

**5.40** Policy CP2 of the adopted Breckland Core Strategy (2009) covers the Gypsy and Travelling community. The Policy takes the appropriate scale of pitch provision up to 2011 (of 15 additional pitches), as set out in the single issue review of the Regional Spatial Strategy around Gypsies and Travellers. The main geographic position for sites is identified along the A11 corridor, with Thetford and Attleborough viewed as the most sustainable locations. The allocation of any specific permanent site was to be made in either the Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document, or the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan, depending on the location identified for such a site. Any provision of short stay stopping places would not be seen as contributing to the 15 permanent pitches.

**5.41** The NPPF and accompanying policy statement <sup>(2)</sup> places a statutory responsibility on Local Authorities to objectively assess the housing needs of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community in their areas and to plan to meet those needs. The Government seeks to ensure that authorities make their own assessment of need based on analysis of various data sources reflecting their local circumstances, and providing evidence for a 5 year supply of deliverable sites. There is also the requirement to identify a supply of developable sites or broad locations for growth, for the first 6-10 years and where possible for years 11-15.

**5.42** In May 2013, the Council appointed Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) together with Cambridgeshire Research Group (CRG) to produce a Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). The GTAA report provides a projected requirement for both permanent and transit pitches over the future 15 year periods 2013/14 -2017/18, 2018/19 - 2023/24 and 2023/24 -2027/28. It also identifies broad locations where the need would be best met, whilst recommending criteria for determining specific locations for sites.

**5.43** It should be noted that the current evidence base for Gypsy and Traveller need is up to 2028. The plan options detailed earlier are to set the plan period to 2031 or 2036. Planning Policy for Traveller sites, DCLG 2012, states that there is a requirement to identify a supply of developable sites or broad locations for growth, for the first 6-10 years and where possible for the years 11-15. The NPPF requires that Local Plans cover an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15 year time horizon and be kept up-to-date. There will be a requirement to update an element of need to allow for the NPPF requirement of at least identified 15 years from adoption. In order to be robust it will be necessary to review household formations and future need based on the local population make-up rather than on a predict and provide basis through an extrapolation of the existing figures.

#### Future Pitch and Plot Need

---

2 DCLG (2012) Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

**5.44** The study reveals that the Gypsy & Traveller population within the district is relatively stable and that any movement into the district is currently adequately met by a combination of the short-stay stopping site in Thetford and the various private sites across Breckland. It concludes that the majority of anticipated growth is expected to come from the existing Gypsy and Traveller Community currently residing in the district.

**5.45** The study concludes that there shall be a need of an additional 33 permanent pitches across the district over the next 15 years, of which 22 pitches are needed in the next 5 years. In terms of transit provision, the study suggests that 3-5 additional transit pitches are provided over the next 5 year period, with a total of between 11-13 pitches being provided between now and 2028. Finally, analysis has shown there to be no current need for additional plot provision for Travelling Showpeople over the assessment period. Table 5.4 'Summary of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation and pitch need (2013-2028)' illustrates the pitch and plot needs provision in more detail over the five year periods.

	Gypsy and Traveller Residential Need (pitches)	Gypsy and Traveller Transit Need (pitches)	Travelling Showpeople Need (plots)
Current authorised residential provision	51	8	5
<b>Gross Anticipated Need 2013/14 - 2017/18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>0</b>
Further Need 2018/19 - 2013/24	8	0	0
Additional Need 2023/24 - 2027-28	9	8	0
<b>Total net additional need 2013-2028</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>11-13</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 5.4 Summary of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation and pitch need (2013-2028)**

#### Site Size

**5.46** Government policy does not advise on the most appropriate design solution that would be considered conducive in providing an appropriate living environment for the Gypsy or Traveller community. However, paragraph 4.7 of the Good Practice Guide for Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites<sup>(3)</sup> suggests that a maximum of 15 pitches is conducive to providing a comfortable environment.

*'There is no one ideal size of site or number of pitches although experience of site managers and residents alike suggest that a maximum of 15 pitches is conducive to providing a comfortable environment which is easy to manage. However, smaller sites of three-four pitches can also be successful, particularly where designed for one extended family. These can be advantageous in making good use of small plots of land, whilst retaining the qualities described in this guidance and expected by families on modern sites'.*

**5.47** Additionally, paragraph 4.8 suggests that:

*'Sites should ideally consist of up to 15 pitches in capacity unless there is clear evidence to suggest that a larger site is preferable by the local Gypsy or Traveller community. Nevertheless, where a larger site is unavoidable, or where one exists already, in few cases smaller "closers" have been created within the site for extended families, thereby retaining the sense of community and creating defensible space'.*

3 DCLG (2008) Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide

**5.48** In determining site sizes, consideration needs to be given to the need to:

- Provide sufficient sites to allow those who wish to live together in groups and those who wish to live separately from other groups.
- Ensure site size will take into account the specific site circumstances, including the surrounding population and density.
- Consider the effect of family make up and potential family growth on site size options to prevent overcrowding and potential displacement.

**5.49** In terms of the ethnic background of existing Gypsy and Traveller population, the 2013 GTAA identifies that the local population is mainly 82% Romany Gypsy with a smaller range of other groups - Irish (5.6%), Welsh (4.5%) and Scottish (3.3%). Additionally, the existing Gypsy and Traveller community in Breckland is estimated to include 113 households made up of 425 Individuals, where 174 (41.4%) of these are recorded to be within the 0-16 age group, of which 72 (41%) are within the 11-16 yrs range.

**5.50** Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and pitch needs will vary from district to district. In Breckland, the study suggests that the majority of anticipated growth will come from the existing Gypsy and Traveller community. This is highlighted by the analysis of pitch need which identifies that the highest need requirement (10 households/pitches) comes from the households living on private pitches with temporary planning permission that comes to an end by 2018. Additionally, the 5 unauthorised (but tolerated) developments were considered long term residents and in need of accommodation. Finally, the combined need for permanent residential accommodation from unauthorised encampments and transit site occupants total six pitches where the households reviewed for the study expressed a desire for permanent residential accommodation in Breckland.

**5.51** Household formation rates are an important component of accommodation assessment for Gypsy and Travellers. However, the 2013 GTAA concluded that there was not a need for additional pitches up to 2018 as a result of increased household formation. Those that require additional living accommodation could be achieved by amendments to existing planning consents to facilitate this. However, one pitch was required to alleviate overcrowding.

**5.52** The need for pitches from 2018 onwards has been derived from household growth projections, based on a 3% per annum compound rate of household growth. This figure is then applied to the projected number of pitches which should be available by 2017, minus an assumed ratio of 1:0.75 used to account for any potential pitch sharing<sup>(4)</sup>

**5.53** In ensuring that sites meet Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople needs, the following options have been identified:

#### Option 15

Sites generally to have no more than 15 pitches.

#### Option 16

Take a flexible approach to the mixture of site sizes in order to accommodate individual families and groups?

4 A pitch sharing rate of 1:0.75 was recommended for use in the South East Examination in Public Panel.

### Question 9

Which option or options do you consider to be the most appropriate? Are there any other reasonable alternatives?

#### Site tenure

**5.54** The socio-economic situation of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople will vary. Different forms of tenure on sites may be suitable for different groups, and it is important to recognise that not all members of the travelling community will be able to provide for their own needs. Whilst some will be able to afford to purchase or rent pitches at market rates, others will require additional support to access safe and secure accommodation in line with their cultural needs.

**5.55** The study reveals that the majority of respondents generally feel that a private authorised site would be the best type of accommodation to meet their households needs. However, many respondents reported that they could not afford to purchase land or a private pitch. In relation to the tenure of the pitches to be required, the study suggests that the Splashes socially rented site in Swaffham is currently meeting the need for socially rented pitches in the district. However, this need will need to be closely assessed with subsequent reviews to the GTAA.

**5.56** The 2013 GTAA identified that there could be a requirement of up to 33 additional pitches in Breckland up to 2028. The forms of tenure that may be provided include:

- Privately owned and managed to be rented
- Privately owned for owner occupation
- Publicly owned and managed by Local Authority or Registered Provider

### Question 10

What sort of tenures do you consider would best suit the needs of the Gypsy and Travellers community in Breckland? Should a mix of sites with different tenures be planned for?

#### Mixed Use Sites

**5.57** Guidance <sup>(5)</sup> suggest that Local Authorities should consider where ever possible traveller sites suitable for mixed residential and business use, having regard to the safety and amenity of residents and neighbouring residents. If mixed use sites are not practical then the guidance recommends that Local Authorities should consider the scope for identifying separate sites for residential and for business use in close proximity to each other.

**5.58** Whilst the 2013 GTAA, did not report that respondents wanted more space for business needs, it is an important consideration for future provision.

---

5 DCLG, (2012), Planning for Traveller Sites - Policy F

## Question 11

Should the Local Authority plan to allocate sites suitable for mixed use which can accommodate both residential and business use?

### Accommodating Future Need

**5.59** The NPPF stipulates that Traveller sites should be sustainable, economically, socially and environmentally located. Selecting the right location for a site is a key element in supporting good community relations and maximising its success. As with any form of housing, poorly located sites will have a detrimental effect and the inhabitant's ability to access services such as education, health and shopping, and consideration needs to be given to ensuring that proposals to develop sites link in with other broader strategies.

**5.60** Planning Policy for Gypsies and Travellers says in paragraph 10 that:

*...criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers whilst respecting the interests of the settled community.*

**5.61** Section 11 of the <sup>(6)</sup> provides further guidance. Local Planning Authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. Local Planning Authorities should, therefore, ensure that their policies:

- a. Promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community
- b. Promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services
- c. Ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis
- d. Provide a settled base that reduces the need for long-distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment
- e. Provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and wellbeing of any travellers that may locate there or on others as a result of new development
- f. Avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services
- g. Do not locate sites in areas at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplains, given the particular vulnerability of caravans
- h. Reflect the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability

**5.62** The following criteria will form the background for selecting the most appropriate sites:

1. **Location in or near to settlements / proximity to local services.** Sites in or near to existing settlements are prioritised. Such sites are generally more sustainable than those in remote areas, with better access to services and in particular education and health. Given high land values and competition it is unlikely that many sites will be made available within settlement boundaries. The reality then would be for sites to be adjacent to settlements with access to local health and educational facilities. The Council's preference would

---

6 DCLG, (2012), Planning for Traveller Sites



be for well related sites located in and near to settlements classed as local service centres and above in the settlement hierarchy. The priority will be that access to services can be reasonably obtained so as to meet the day to day needs of the occupiers, recognising the differences in lifestyles and working patterns and transport preferences.

2. **Access to vehicular considerations.** Sites are required to have safe and convenient vehicular access and provide adequate car parking space. The development should avoid significant impacts on local roads and be well located to major routes.
3. **Previously used land.** National planning policy encourages planning policies and decisions to encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. There is recognition that there is a lack of brownfield sites in the district and they will not necessarily be available for Gypsy and Traveller sites. Therefore, although important, realistically there may be limited alternatives to greenfield land.
4. **Visual impact.** The local topography and form of the landscape will affect the visibility of a Gypsy and Traveller site and will affect its ability to integrate into its surroundings. Some sites will be highly visible, and others more visually contained. Sites should respect the scale of the environment, be of a scale proportionate to the local community and be capable of visual and acoustic privacy. Sites which allow appropriate natural screening will be considered more favourably.
5. **Infrastructure.** Sites will not be chosen if they place undue pressure on local infrastructure and services. Sites should be capable of being served by appropriate service infrastructure.
6. **International, national and local land designations.** The district has a wealth of environmental assets. Site locations must not compromise the objectives of any potential designations.
7. **Flood Risk.** Caravans and mobile homes are highly vulnerable to flooding. National and local policies dictate not to allocate sites in areas of high risk of flooding, including that of functional flood plans. It is not proposed to deviate from this requirement in the selection of sites.
8. **Health and safety and hazards.** In order to ensure sites provide a healthy and safe environment for residents sites should not be located on contaminated land and avoid areas of unsuitable noise, air quality and major hazards such as pipelines.

### Question 12

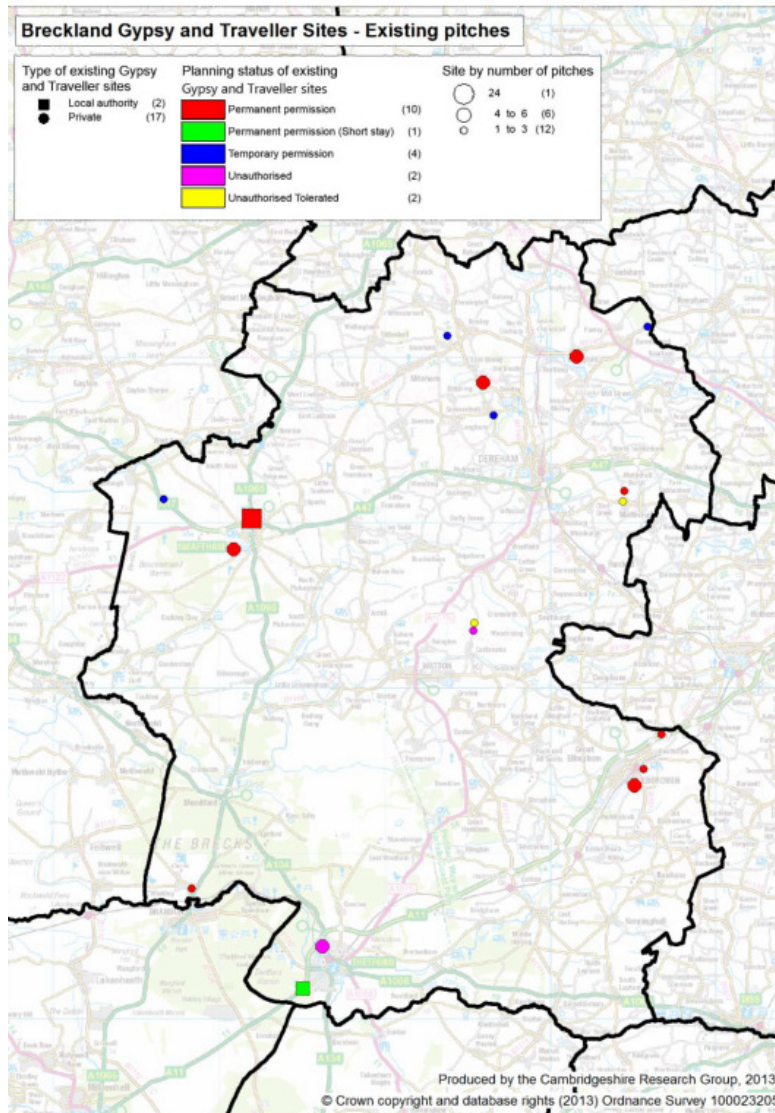
Do you agree with the criteria 1-8? Please give a detailed answer explaining any reasoning.

Alternatively are there any additional criteria which should be considered in selecting the best locations and sites for Gypsies and Travellers?

## Strategic Approach

**5.63** In terms of meeting needs within the district, the Gypsy and Traveller population appears relatively stable with a small number of unauthorised encampments each year. Additionally, updated evidence from the 2013 GTAA indicates that there is no direct evidence of a strong preference for the A11 corridor compared with that of A47, which is contrary to the locational principles as set out in the adopted Core Strategy. (This however, is not the same as suggesting that sites would not be considered suitable in these locations). The spatial distribution of different types of sites within the district are identified on Figure 5.2 'Existing Gypsy and Traveller Sites'.





**Figure 5.2 Existing Gypsy and Traveller Sites**

**5.64** It is likely that the combination of the official short stay and private sites in Breckland are catering for visitors to the area. This means that the accommodation needs arising, in the main are from Gypsy and Traveller residents of the district as opposed to those from outside the area. The 2013 GTAA suggests that a significant proportion of the accommodation need within the district can be met in the first five years by regularising the existing sites without permanent planning permission. Table 5.4 'Summary of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation and pitch need (2013-2028)' illustrates the potential scenarios for meeting the identified need without undertaking significant new searches for land. However, this would require determination of whether the existing temporary sites are in appropriate locations. If this policy approach was adopted, the required need within the first 5 years illustrated in table below.

		Remaining Need 2013/14 - 2017/18
	Total Pitch Need (2013/14-2017/18 (gross))	22
Scenario 1	If permanent planning permission is granted to the 10 pitches with temporary permission.	12
Scenario 2	If permanent planning permission is granted to the 10 pitches with temporary permission and the five pitches on unauthorised developments.	7
Scenario 3	If permanent planning permission is granted to the 10 pitches with temporary permission and the five pitches on unauthorised developments. With the vacant site at Woods End being developed into a fully occupied site.	1

**Table 5.5 Potential scenarios for meeting the identified need**

**5.65** To ensure that sites are located in the most suitable location, the study provides three broad options by which additional pitches could be provided within the district. It suggests that a combination of three criteria, which includes land availability, proximity to existing services and locations of existing demand, should be used in assessing locations for Gypsy and Traveller provision. The options below illustrate the assessment of these options to meet future need within the Breckland district.

## Option 17

### Land Availability

Rationale	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>This approach would be based on seeking to provide sites that are put forward by developers or which are in Breckland Council ownership. This would ensure that the approach put forward is both viable and deliverable in terms of site allocations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having a willing land owner in place is likely to increase the chance of the site being brought forward within the required timescale to meet Gypsy and Traveller needs.</li> <li>Potential sites would need to be judged against criteria to ensure that they have access to an appropriate range of services and amenities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This could raise challenges of sites not being in the right locations to meet the needs and demands of existing Gypsy and Traveller communities.</li> </ul>

## Option 18

### Proximity to Existing Services

Rationale	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>This approach is based on allocating pitches between the settlements in the district in accordance with those settlements that have a higher proportion of services. By adopting such an approach it would appear likely that sites put forward would be more likely to benefit from access to services and amenities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could be considered to align with broader policy emphasis.</li> <li>• Would focus the population into those larger settlements where there is a greater concentration of services and amenities. This would enable these communities to access these resources.</li> <li>• As part of this sequential approach the existing distribution of pitches would be considered to develop a sustainable approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may be questions raised if it is appropriate to use the same policy approach for the Gypsy and Traveller community as with the settled community.</li> <li>• This may not focus the additional pitches where Gypsy and Traveller community want them to be</li> </ul>

## Option 19

### Focusing on Areas where there is existing demand

Rationale	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>This approach is predicated on the fact that the main driver of demand for additional pitches in the district is private sites with temporary planning permission and unauthorised developments. Therefore within this approach additional pitches should be sought in proximity to existing Gypsy and Traveller communities in the district.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This approach would mean that additional pitches would be provided where these communities are already established.</li> <li>• Being in such proximity could be beneficial for families and extended families by causing less disruption.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential insufficient capacity to provide additional pitches on the existing socially rented site to meet overall needs.</li> <li>• This may not be well received by the non Gypsy and Traveller communities in these areas.</li> </ul>

### Question 13

In determining the suitability of sites what are your views on the following options to meet future Gypsy and Traveller need within the Breckland district?

- Land availability
- Proximity to existing services and facilities
- Focusing in areas where there is an existing demand

#### Sustainability Appraisal outcome

**5.66** The sustainability appraisal illustrates clear linkages between the principle of sustainable development and sites being located near locations with existing services and facilities. By allocating pitches near settlements in the district that have a higher proportion of services and facilities would result in less journeys by the private car and would focus the population in to or near settlements which had a greater concentration of services and amenities such as schools and health care. Additionally, this may also offer a greater range of employment opportunities for those seeking work which could increase health, social and wellbeing needs. Alternatively, the needs of the Gypsy and Travelling community should be taken into consideration, considering an approach to focus development where there is already an existing need could be beneficial for existing families. However, this may not be the most sustainable solution and sites may be located in unsuitable areas for long term requirements and does not appear as preferable when assessed against a number of sustainability criterion's.

#### Call for Sites

**5.67** As part of the current consultation we are seeking information on sites in private ownership that may be considered suitable for allocation as Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites. Are you aware of any sites with potential for gypsy and traveller provision? If yes, please put the sites forward using the "Call for Sites" form as specified in 10 'Call For Sites'.

---

## 6 Economy

### 6.1 Breckland's Economy

**6.1** The size and dispersed nature of the area's population presents significant challenges for the Council in delivering balanced economic growth. Breckland's strategic position is emphasised by the good road communications offered by the A47 and A11, the latter of which will soon receive major improvements providing a complete dualled road linking Norfolk to the rest of the country for the first time. The five market towns, Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffham, Thetford and Watton, are an essential component of the economic and social structure, acting as service centres to their rural hinterlands. The area has seen a rapid population growth, increasing pay levels and low rates of unemployment and there is a trend for the overall number of jobs to increase. However, average wages remain relatively low in comparison with regional and national levels due to lower level of qualifications of people in the district and low level of skills required by many of the available jobs.

**6.2** The local economy has undergone significant changes in recent years. However the rural nature of the district means agriculture and food processing related sectors still remain strong whilst some sectors, such as the manufacturing sectors are undergoing future decline. The challenge remains to effectively respond to economic signals and providing policies to guide and support the growth in a flexible way.

**6.3** The local economy reflects the wider economic climate which has changed significantly over the last few years. The period since late 2007 has been dominated by global banking crisis and subsequent credit crunch. Although it seems that the wider UK economy is out of recession, the UK faces ongoing challenges in re-establishing economic growth and reducing a very substantial national budget deficit. There is a strong emphasis nationally from the coalition government on removing barriers to economic growth and incentivising businesses.

## 6.2 General Economic Strategies

### Issue 4

#### General Economic Strategies

**6.4** Closely linked to housing growth, it is widely recognised that the local economy has the potential to provide sufficient jobs to support the level of required housing growth. On the other hand jobs growth will also depend on housing growth. Jobs and employment potential should be the key priorities when considering any form of development, especially rural development. A fine balance will need to be achieved between job growth and housing growth. If housing growth cannot match the level of job growth, the job market will be constrained or it will lead to higher in-commuting from beyond the district thus being unsustainable. Vice versa, if there are not enough jobs for local workforce, then the area may suffer from a higher unemployment rate or unsustainable commuting beyond the district.

**6.5** To achieve balanced growth for the district, the existing Core Strategy sets out a General Economic Strategy which aims to:

- promote sustainable growth - plan for population growth and keep a fine balance with the development of wider economy;
- facilitate its job growth potential with a target set for additional jobs delivery;
- increase the proportion of higher value added jobs whilst ensuring opportunities for all types and levels of jobs are available in all sectors of the economy and for all the workforce.

**6.6** The NPPF requires LPA's to develop a clear understanding of the business needs and markets operating in their areas. It also seeks evidence to understand the need for land and floorspace, existing and future supply of land for economic needs as well as understanding suitability. An Employment Growth Study and Employment Land Review for Breckland was undertaken by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) to help address these issues as identified in the NPPF. The study utilised a number of demographic and economic models as well as involving local stakeholders to map out possible growth scenarios for the district.

**6.7** At strategic level, the study identifies a number of key policy issues which include:

- the need to maintain a diversified and resilient economy that is open to growth and new economic opportunities
- the economic and other outcomes if some businesses are displaced or constrained from expanding
- the need to encourage growth of high quality jobs within the district
- balancing the trade-off between seeking more intensive use of employment sites which leads to higher job creation and the identified business needs in the district
- maintaining a delivery trajectory for employment space over the short, medium and long term.

### Question 14

Do you agree with the key policy issues identified within the Employment Growth Study?

**6.8** The Employment Growth Study has shown that Breckland has a steady demand for employment space, focused upon small scale industrial accommodation. The baseline job growth revealed through the East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM), shows a job growth of 3,952 jobs. The study recommends that Breckland should aim to at least fully meet Breckland's employment space needs so that the district's economy is not constrained to

facilitate the forecast job growth of 6,186 jobs between 2011 and 2031. The floorspace requirements associated with this level of growth indicate a demand for up to 84,760 sq.m of industrial space and 29,850 sq.m of office space over the plan period.

**6.9** Three scenarios were undertaken, based on different demographic and economic assumptions. The EEFM was utilised to project economic, demographic and housing trends in a consistent manner across the East of England region and sub-regions. Such forecasts tend to be most reliable at national and regional scales and consequently less so at the local economy level. As a result, in addition to the baseline scenario, an alternative "Policy on" scenario was produced taking into account key policy priorities, regeneration and investment opportunities for the district through stakeholder involvement to reflect a more actual picture of Breckland. The demographic-led scenario considers how many jobs would be needed to broadly match forecast growth of the district's resident workforce. This scenario indicates the amount of new jobs needed to take-up this future supply of workers to minimise local unemployment.

**6.10** The above scenarios were developed to provide a framework for the Employment Growth Study to consider future economic growth needs and B Class employment space requirements in Breckland over the period to 2031. A summary of the relationship between job growth/employment space requirement and housing growth is provided below.

Growth Scenarios	Overall Housing Growth 2011-2031 (dwellings)	Annualised Housing Growth (dwellings)	Job Growth options (jobs)	Employment Space Requirement 2011-2031 (m <sup>2</sup> )
East of England Forecasting Model Baseline	12,680	634	3,952	Office (B1a/b): 29,270 Industrial (B1c/B2/B8): 35,695
East of England Forecasting Model "Policy on"	15,440	770	6,186	Office (B1a/b): 29,850 Industrial ( B1c/B2/B8): 84,760
2011 Sub-National Population Projections	13,974	699	4,059	Office (B1a/b): 7,460

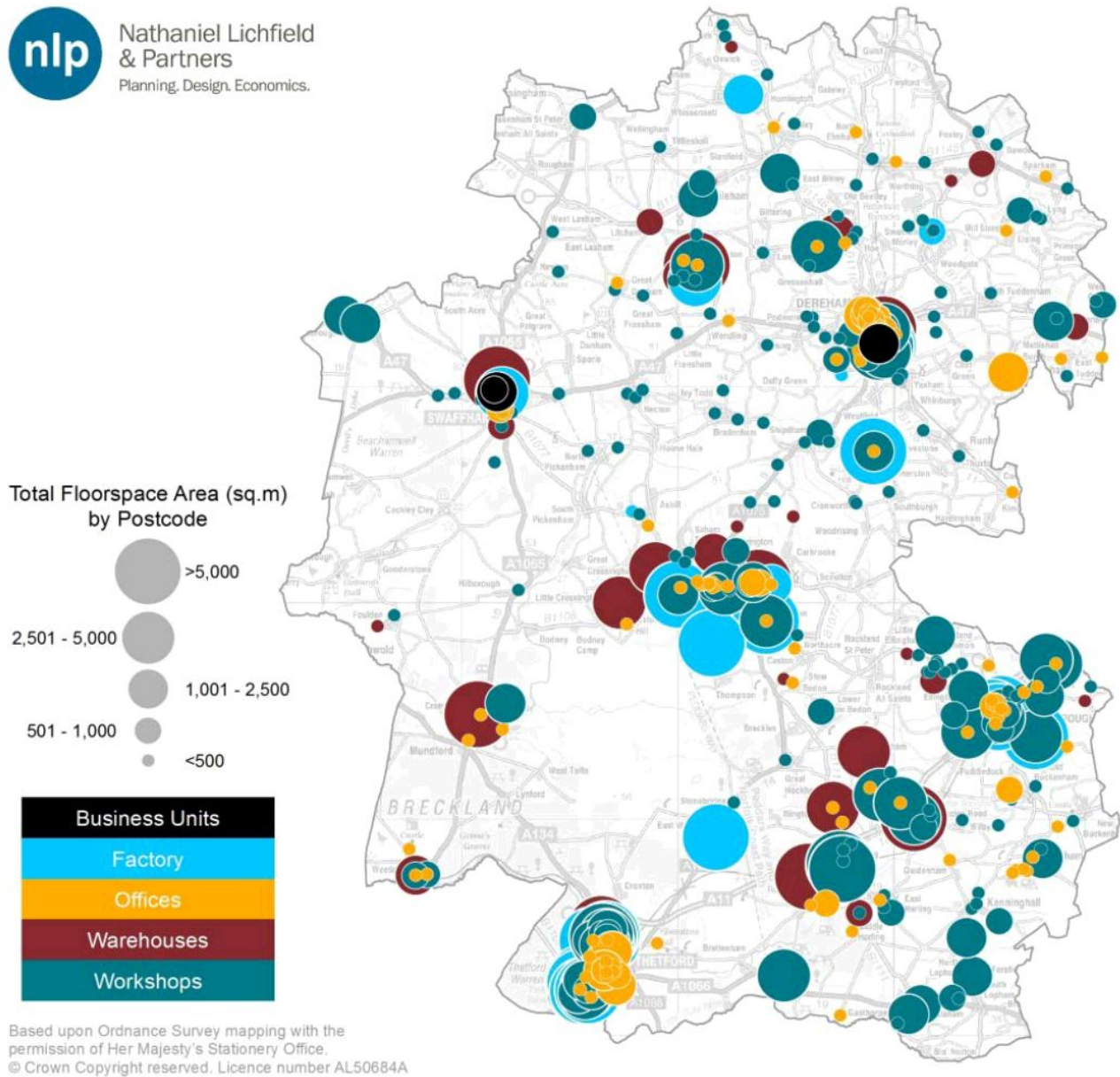
**Table 6.1 Growth Scenarios**

### Question 15

Which scenario do you think could best reflect the future employment need of the district?

**6.11** Employment space within Breckland is predominantly focused around the district's five market towns. However, despite being mainly small and micro businesses, Breckland's rural economy accommodates important hubs of economic activity, particularly with regards to small scale office and workshop space. The spatial distribution of existing employment space is shown in the diagram below:





Source: VOA 2010 / NLP analysis

**Figure 6.1 Spatial Distribution of Employment Areas**

Location	Number of sites	Total Site Area (ha)	% of total site area
Attleborough	4	33.6	7%
Dereham	5	50.0	11%
Snetterton Heath	2	73.9	16%



Location	Number of sites	Total Site Area (ha)	% of total site area
Swaffham	5	25.2	5%
Thetford	7	173.8	36%
Watton	4	30.1	6%
Weeting	2	33.4	7%
Rural locations	7	58.5	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6.2 Distribution of Employment Sites**

**6.12** A demand and supply analysis of the quantitative employment land requirement was also undertaken as part of the Employment Study. A calculation drawn on the requirement of employment space indicates a need of employment land between 31.6 ha and 74.7 ha until 2031. A further investigation into the existing and pipeline supply of employment land, by comparing estimated demand for B Class uses, reveals that Breckland would have sufficient employment space in quantitative terms up to 2031 to meet the needs arising from all scenarios as discussed earlier.

**6.13** Further research into the qualitative need of industrial space indicated that the relatively low levels of vacancy reflect a limited supply of good quality, modern industrial space and a relatively tight industrial market in general. However, the study concludes that due to the severity of recession, alongside relatively low rental values and the secondary nature of Breckland as an industrial location, it is difficult to justify any significant additional allocations of land for employment use.

**6.14** Similarly, the demand for office uses is also relatively low and difficult to justify retaining remaining undeveloped employment allocations. However, it suggests that any new provision of office accommodation should be similar to an enterprise centre model so as to meet market demand in the district. It is also important that there is sufficient move on space for these firms as they expand and require larger premises, in order to retain this activity within the district.

**6.15** The implications for each settlement are summarised below and illustrated in Comparison of Employment Land Supply and Demand to 2031 by Settlement:

- **Attleborough and Snetterton Heath area** has strong market location due to its good access onto the A11. Significant employment pipeline from undeveloped sites. Currently sufficient land available to meet needs up to 2031;
- **Dereham** has the second largest commercial property market in the district. Two new employment sites were allocated through the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD, adopted in 2012. The study considers that employment space should be rationalised within the town, especially around Rashes Green;
- **Thetford** accommodates the majority of the commercial property market within the district. The town benefits from its good location on the A11. Whilst there are significant employment allocations for future growth, the employment growth study considers these to be appropriate;
- The commercial property market within the **Watton** area predominantly focuses on light industry and engineering. The office market within the town is very small. Currently the demand/supply balance is relatively well matched, with no identified need for additional employment space within the town.

Location / Settlement	Existing Employment Land Supply (ha)	Gross Past Take-Up (2007-2013) sq.m	Share of District's Employment Space (VOA)	Reported Level of Market Demand	Demand / Supply Balance to 2031
Attleborough and Snetterton	18.0 (16%)	36,590	15.4	High	↔
Dereham	13.5 (12%)	3,170	8.9	Moderate	↔
Swaffham	13.4 (12%)	2,640	2.7	Low	↑
Thetford	52.7 (45%)	7,850	35.6	High	↔
Watton	2.4 (2%)	8,010	6.4	Moderate/Low	↔
Rural/other	16.4 (14%)	20,160	30.9	Moderate/Low	↑
<b>Total</b>	<b>116.4 (100%)</b>	<b>78,420</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	

KEY      ↔ = adequate supply      ↑ = over-supply

Note: Proportions of existing supply by location based on analysis of a sample of monitoring data by General Employment Area (GEA) and non GEA

**Figure 6.2 Comparison of Employment Land Supply and Demand to 2031 by Settlement**

### Question 16

Do you agree with the view of employment space supply and demand as discussed? Do you consider any area could benefit from a particular form of employment development?

**6.16** The emerging vision includes directing economic growth to Thetford and the key A11 corridor in order to bring prosperity, promoting existing engineering, motor sports, research and development and logistics in and around these locations and the connections to other higher order sustainable settlements.

### **Question 17**

Do you agree with this approach?

Are there any other reasonable options that the Council should consider?

### **Sustainability Appraisal Outcome**

**6.17** A higher jobs growth may provide increased opportunities for a number of sustainability objectives associated with the socio-economic needs of the district. A higher range of figures provides increased opportunities for local employment. There is a positive link between housing needs and employment growth to maintain a high economic activity rate and labour supply. A higher economic growth will create more economic opportunities in the district and takes into account key priorities for the district as identified in the emerging Local Plan. Whilst the 'business as usual' scenario will continue to create opportunities for the district, this is limited to the existing situation of past development trends and potential labour supply factors. This scenario points to a lower level of future economic growth in Breckland than the district has achieved in the recent past, partly reflecting a more pessimistic post-recession economic outlook. Additionally, a lower jobs growth figure may reduce local skills levels and local labour supply and increase out-commuting, reducing the currently high local economic activity rate, and potentially increasing currently low levels of unemployment in the district. Therefore, the lower jobs growth figure is in conflict with a number of socio-economic sustainability objectives.

### 6.3 Rural Economy

#### Issue 5

#### Rural Economy

**6.18** The performance of Breckland's economy is largely dependent on a healthy rural economy. Whilst larger scale employment space is dominated by industrial uses and tends to be concentrated around Breckland's larger towns, the rural economy accommodates important hubs of economic activity, particularly with regards to small scale office and workshop space as well as providing a key employment sector in the district. As might be expected agricultural business' are scattered across the rural area of the district and with it brings challenges for delivering balanced economic growth.

**6.19** The current approach for rural economy is set out in the Sustainable Rural Communities Policy of the Core Strategy. The existing policy seeks to diversify existing rural enterprises and the development of new enterprises where a rural location is either environmentally or operationally justified, provided there are no significant detrimental environmental, landscape, conservation or highway impacts. Whilst acknowledging the importance of rural economic development (including rural tourism), the policy also gives strong emphasis of protecting the countryside and the environment, and promote sustainable modes of transport.

**6.20** The NPPF (paragraph 28), requires planning policies to positively support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity. It has put a strong emphasis on promoting the rural economy and to support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas. It also states that the Local Plan should support diversification of agriculture and other land-use based rural businesses, as well as rural tourism and promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

**6.21** Rural business is now increasingly driven by technology. With employment in the more traditional elements of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing predicted to decline, by -23.3% between 2011-2031, (Appendix 8 Breckland Employment Growth Study 2013), creating jobs and prosperity needs wider recognition of the trend of the agriculture sector. There has been significant growth and development in the agri-science sector which has been continuously driving efficiency and innovation of agriculture businesses. The overspill of high-tech research activities in this region has been enjoyed by a wide range of rural businesses in Breckland. Small and medium scale rural enterprises represent a significant portion of the economic activities in Breckland due to the rural nature of the district. Therefore, diverse and thriving rural enterprises contribute significantly to the prosperity of the district, thus creating more opportunities for jobs.

**6.22** The NPPF goes on to state in paragraph 69 that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social integration and creating healthy and inclusive communities. Community facilities such as public houses and local shops can play a crucial social role in supporting local community interaction and activities to help maintain sustainable neighbourhoods. They also provide an economic role in contributing to the vibrancy and vitality in rural communities creating a strong sense of place. From an environmental perspective they often bring intrinsic value to the cultural and historic heritage of local areas.

**6.23** In particular, paragraph 70 deals with community facilities and services including public houses. It recommends that planning policies and decisions should:

- plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

- guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
- ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and
- ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.”

**6.24** There are a number of ways the Local Plan could help to promote Breckland's rural economy. The Council could investigate the following options:

#### Option 20

The re-use of rural buildings, encouraging new places for work.

#### Option 21

Supporting the diversification of businesses in rural areas, including agriculture.

#### Option 22

Promoting improvements to communications infrastructure, such as better broadband.

#### Option 23

Including planning policies for the support and development of key sectors such as tourism.

**6.25** It should be noted that in May 2013 the Government introduced measures to increase the scope of works that can be undertaken as permitted development. This included the potential to convert to dwellings from offices, and of particular interest to Breckland, to convert agricultural buildings to bring old agricultural buildings back into use in order to revitalise rural areas. However the PD right is subject to "prior approval" and still can be refused if the location of the property is impractical or undesirable for such a change of use to occur.

#### Question 18

Do you support the investigation of the above options to promote Breckland's rural economy? Please reference which option you refer to.

Are there any other alternative options you think we should be aware of?

**6.26** With regard to the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services the Council could develop policies that go some additional way to protect rural public houses, services and local shops. However, it would be important to retain an element of flexibility to be in accord with the NPPF as a whole, and any policies would have to ensure

that redevelopment or change of use remained possible subject to a set of criteria being met. It is envisaged that these would be along the lines of a sustained period of marketing, no longer any demonstrable need and viability reasons.

#### **Option 24**

One option is to include policies on the encouragement and protection of rural facilities and services.

#### **Option 25**

An alternative option is to rely on market forces to provide for rural settlements and have little control over the retention and promotion of services in these locations

#### **Question 19**

Should the Council develop policies towards providing protection to the rural economy and community facilities such as public houses and local shops and valued facilities?

## 6.4 Town Centre and Retail Strategy

### Issue 6

#### Town Centre and Retail Strategy

**6.27** Supporting the vitality and viability of town centres remains a key objective of national retail policy. Town centres are the heart of the community and provide for a range of community, shopping, employment and leisure uses. Our town centres are also places to live as well as key transport and service hubs and act as key interchanges between the market towns and their rural hinterlands. The Council also recognises the importance of retail development in contributing to sustainable development, customer choice, helping to retain expenditure in local communities and reducing the need to travel.

#### Hierarchy

**6.28** National retail policy requires that Local Plans establish a hierarchy of centres in the district and that new retail development is commensurate with the position of the centre in the hierarchy and the future economic changes.

**6.29** The 2010 Breckland Retail and Town Centre Study showed that Thetford and Dereham remain the main centres within the district for retail and service provision, while Attleborough, Swaffham and Watton remain smaller centres serving wide rural catchments. Local centres are important in providing for communities daily needs within settlements and the dispersed rural areas without having to travel to larger district and regional centres. It is important that these centres are supported and continue to prosper.

**6.30** The evidence contained in the 2010 Retail and Town Centre study indicates that it is appropriate to retain a similar retail hierarchy as that contained in the Core Strategy:

- Thetford - Key Centre for Development and Change
- Dereham - Key Centre and Administrative Centre serving mid-Norfolk
- Attleborough - Medium town centre for substantial growth, serving a wide rural catchment
- Swaffham & Watton - Medium town centres, providing a range of services for local residents and their rural catchments
- Service Centre Villages - provide for basic or everyday local needs for their immediate rural catchment.

**6.31** Policies will maintain the hierarchy whilst maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of individual centres, creating choice and individuality. Retail and other town centre development of a scale suitable to these roles and in sustainable locations will be supported, with major retail proposals directed to Thetford, Dereham and Attleborough as a centre for growth, provided that development respects the historic character of the districts centres and their heritage assets in maintaining their existing retail function.

### Question 20

Does the retail hierarchy reflect the proposed role and function of each of the towns in Breckland? If not, where should the towns be placed in the hierarchy?

## Understanding Retail Requirements

**6.32** The NPPF requires that Local Planning Authorities should use up to date evidence to assess needs for economic development and retail floorspace, including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for all types of economic activity over the plan period. A key issue for the Local Plan will be to identify and positively plan for the full objectively assessed additional retail floorspace, to support the increase in population expenditure and capacity, setting policies for the management of growth for the plan period, whilst supporting the viability and vitality of existing centres.

**6.33** Local service centres are important in providing for communities' daily needs without having to travel to higher order centres and in Breckland they serve a wider rural community than the local service centre in which they are located in. It remains important to identify and support those centres where there is already a good level of service provision and understand how these services may support other villages.

**6.34** The 2010 Retail and Town Centre study provided an assessment of the need for new floorspace for both comparison and convenience goods up to 2026 which is detailed below. These figures are projections based on an established and robust methodology. Since the study was carried out in 2010, a number of planning permissions have been granted for retail schemes in the main towns which will be developed in the next few years. This combined with new population forecasts, expenditure growth figures and changing retail spending patterns means that the amount of additional retail floorspace required to be planned for is likely to differ from the below projections. Nevertheless they provide a useful baseline to understand the approximate future level of need in association with growth levels of the district.

Settlement	Net Convenience Floorspace sq.m	Net Comparison Floorspace sq.m
Thetford	1,547	8,363
Dereham	1,929	8,508
Attleborough	1,536	2,261
Swaffham	N/a	1,062
Watton	N/a	1,545
Local Shops	92	N/a

**Table 6.3 Floorspace Retail Projections 2010 - 2026**

**6.35** Since 2010 two major convenience schemes have come forward in the district and when fully developed will account for approximately 3,437 sq.m net floor space in Thetford and 1,970 sq.m in Swaffham. A further mixed use scheme in Attleborough is proposed containing a 3,902 sq.m GEA foodstore and a further 2000 sq.m GEA bulky goods.

**6.36** In order to enable the use of the most up-to-date evidence and inform the plan-making process the Council has commissioned a new retail study. The table below identifies the emerging draft findings.

Settlement	Net Convenience Retail Floorspace	Net comparison Floorspace sq m
Thetford	1,793	5,394



Settlement	Net Convenience Retail Floorspace	Net comparison Floorspace sq m
Dereham	1,599	3,275
Attleborough	1,166	1,504
Swaffham	0	409
Watton	215	768
Other Breckland	86	65

**Table 6.4 Draft Floorspace Projections 2014 - 2036**

**6.37** These emerging figures suggest that there is scope for new retail development in the district over and above the planned commitments. However this is limited in some settlements. In terms of Swaffham, with the opening of the new Tesco there is currently an excellent range of choice in convenience goods however there is now over provision in the convenience sector in terms of floorspace for the foreseeable future. The emerging convenience retail figures would suggest that there is limited expenditure capacity in Watton, and for the remaining district outside of the 5 main centres. In terms of comparison goods the main centres for additional floorspace remain Thetford and Dereham.

### Impact

**6.38** The scale of some retail proposals outside town centres has the potential to affect the vitality and viability of town centres, potentially diverting trade away from these areas affecting customer choice, and potentially committed, existing and planned private investment in centres. To help understand what the effects of new retail development outside town centres might have and guide application decisions, the government requires impact assessments be provided for applications for retail, leisure and office development over 2,500 sq.m or a proportionately locally set floor space threshold. Where an application is likely to have significant adverse impacts on these criteria above applications should be refused.

**6.39** The Council, through the provisions of the NPPF has the opportunity to set a proportionate locally defined threshold above which impact assessments will be required. The Council's Retail and Town Centre study (2010) considered the potential for a locally defined threshold and based upon the scale and role of centres and that the retail projections within the report it is considered that the impact of smaller development proposals could raise concerns and potentially have significant impacts in some locations. A development of 2,500 sq.m gross could exceed or account for a significant proportion of the projected capacity for retail floor space in many of the town centres. It is recommended that any proposals in Thetford and Dereham for over 1,000 sq.m gross of retail, leisure or office space should be subject to an assessment. In the other towns in the district, the study indicated a threshold of 500 sq.m gross be used. This is due to the fact that in many cases, this scale of town centre developments would exceed floorspace projections and it is important to ensure that significant impacts on these centres are avoided. These impact threshold values are also endorsed by the emerging 2014 retail study.

### Option 26

In order to protect the vitality and viability of town centres, the Council would require

1. An impact assessment for retail, leisure or office schemes greater than 1,000 sq.m gross in Thetford and Dereham.
2. Impact assessments would be required in Attleborough, Watton and Swaffham on schemes of over 500 sq.m gross.

### Option 27

An alternative option would be for the Council to rely on the default threshold for retail impact assessments as set out in the NPPF (i.e. proposals greater than 2,500 sq.m).

### Question 21

Should the Council implement the local threshold requirements or rely on the generic thresholds contained in the NPPF?

Are there any other locally important impacts that should be considered when assessing retail applications?

## Town Centre Boundary

**6.40** National government policies indicate that site selection for most retail and other main town centre uses should be in line with the sequential approach. Where possible town centres should be prioritised followed by edge of town centres, and only if suitable sites are not available should well connected out of centre sites be considered. Due to the historical nature of many of the districts town centres it may be that there are limited available sites to accommodate new retail development. In order to judge the sequential location of a site the proximity to the Primary Shopping Area and the Town Centre Boundaries becomes important.

**6.41** The NPPF sets out that Councils should define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas "*based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated town centres and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations*". The current boundaries are detailed in the market town sections of this Issues and Options document, and the Retail and Town Centre Study (2010) confirms that the existing primary and secondary frontages remained relative at the time, and in the most broadly reflect the primary shopping areas. However, the frontages and town centre boundaries are generous to encourage wider retail development and the Council may consider it appropriate to review frontage in specific areas in light of new development and through the preparation of future planning policy to ensure they remain appropriate to inform development and retail management policies.

**6.42** As such it is recommended that the retail frontage approach be retained for the main market towns, while in lower order centres it would be inappropriate to have primary frontage policy as it is important to provide a flexible framework for future uses to encourage diversity and sustainable provision.

**6.43** The following definitions are proposed:

- Town Centre – Defined area, including the primary shopping area and areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area;
- Primary Shopping Area – Defined area where retail development is concentrated, (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are contiguous and closely related to the primary shopping frontage);
- Primary Frontage – Primary frontages are areas of mainly shops (Use Class A1).
- Secondary Frontage – Secondary frontage provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses.

## Question 22

Do you agree with this approach and definitions?

### Retail frontages

**6.44** The current Local Plan through DC9 seeks to maintain a high proportion (75%) of Class A1 use within the primary shopping frontages and allow up to 50% non A1 use in secondary frontages. This position was based on the existing position in 2006.

**6.45** There is growing evidence to suggest that in some centres these percentages and concentration levels of A1 uses are no longer relevant. The council's preferred approach would be to review the existing percentages in line with updated evidence and set new supporting targets to guide development management decisions. This retail frontage approach would seek to positively support retail development and town centres and maintain a mix of town centre uses which does not allow for the dilution of main town centre uses in core areas by permitting inappropriate uses which may damage the longer term viability and amenity of the centres. The existing primary and secondary frontages are referenced for each market town in the specific market town sections.

**6.46** We also need to recognise that Breckland centres play more than just a retail role, and retaining an unreasonably high proportion of shops may prevent other essential services from being introduced. There may be a case for reducing the proportion, or looking at different ways of protecting retail uses without preventing other beneficial change.

**6.47** Whilst some temporary flexibility exists within town centres over permitted development rights this remains at this point only a temporary position therefore the policy position option reflects a long-term approach to town centre management in seeking to maintain the viability and health of the town centre by protecting important frontages for town centre uses and, in primary frontages, retail uses only.

**6.48** In considering these approaches the strategic policy is to direct growth to the Primary Shopping Areas in the first instance, while other town centre uses should be focused within the town centre boundary.

## Question 23

Is it reasonable to continue to identify and set policies to maintain the proportion of A1 Uses in town centre policies?

## Shopping in Town Centres

**6.49** Maintenance of existing retail diversity and the support for further retail diversity in all of the centres within the retail hierarchy is also a key issue in the district. The NPPF requires that Local Plans promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres. The NPPF is also supportive of retaining and enhancing existing markets.

**6.50** One of the ways in which planning policy can encourage retail diversity is to make sure there is a range of sites and shop sizes available and by setting policies that allow for a mixture of small to large retail units. Given the restrictions on town centre sites this could include policies allowing the amalgamation of units to produce larger units, though caution is advised as this may reduce the availability of smaller units suitable for independent traders and impact on the vibrancy and choice.

**6.51** Food and drink uses add to the vitality of a centre, though their concentration can detract from the environmental quality and if not controlled can undermine the retail function of primary shopping areas.

**6.52** Large scale edge of centre developments should be well related to the town centre.

**6.53** Potential policy options are outlined below. In some cases there is the opportunity to apply different approaches in addressing the same issue and we would welcome your comments on these.

### Option 28

One approach would be to develop policies which seek to direct retail development through the:

- Continuation of the approach set out in the current Core Strategy positively supporting retail development and town centres by controlling the percentage amount of retail in the primary and secondary frontages;
- Consideration of a policy controlling the amalgamation of smaller units to form larger more appropriate units suitable for modern retailing purposes, where the evidence suggests this would not harm the vitality and viability of centres;
- Requirement of new large scale retail proposal to provide a proportion of additional smaller shops (uses A1-A4), adding to the retail mix. This would go some way of adding to a sense of place and adding to the vitality and viability of any sequential development;

### Option 29

Another approach would be to develop a more flexible approach through the consideration of:

- The amount of retail frontage in association with the overall length of the frontage;
- Greater clustering of Use Classes;
- The benefits to wider town centre as a whole;
- Support for residential uses to locate in town centres.

## Question 24

Which if any of the policy approaches do you prefer?

Are there any other reasonable alternatives to be considered at this stage?

### Neighbourhood Shops and New Centres

**6.54 Strategic Urban Extensions** are planned in Thetford and Attleborough and as the Local Plan develops further options may be considered.

**6.55** Retail development should in these cases be of a scale appropriate to the proposal, and be distributed in a number of parades/centres being well connected to ensure all residents have access to shops within walking distances. Local centres would allow residents to meet their needs locally. Any commercial development should also be phased with the completion of residential units.

**6.56** The 2010 retail study considered how strategic urban centres could help meet the identified capacity in the district and recommended floorspace amounts for A class goods serving the local catchment only. Further updates of the Council's retail evidence will be required as the Local Plan progresses in order to review the overall capacity that could be accommodated, inform updated floorspace amounts and set policies.

**6.57** There is also scope for extensions to provide for more than local need if town centre sites are not secured and are sequentially better in the medium to long term.

## 6.5 Transport Strategies

### Issue 7

#### Transport Strategies

**6.58** Achieving the full economic potential of the area is dependent on improved connectivity, including the implementation of the priorities set out in the transport policy, maintaining and enhancing the environment and quality of life in the area. The concept of sustainable development remains at the heart of the planning system. Transport policies also have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and can contribute to wider sustainability and health objectives.

**6.59** The dispersed settlement pattern of Breckland and the high dependency on rural employment means that ensuring sustainable access to services is amongst the most challenging spatial issues that the Council and other service providers must address. The settlement pattern has resulted in a high dependency on travel by car, exacerbated in part by difficulties of providing effective public transport services in rural catchment areas.

**6.60** Existing policies in the adopted Core Strategy have been responding to delivering sustainable development in a rural area by directing the majority of development to key settlements, which provide services and facilities to their hinterlands helping to reduce the need to travel and maximising the opportunities for the delivery of sustainable transport provision.

**6.61** The NPPF sets the principle of sustainable transport and promotes sustainable transport in a number of ways, including identifying and protecting sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choices. Reflecting the guidance in NPPF and the local circumstances, the key consideration of delivering sustainable transport is to set a policy based approach encompassing the following key areas:

- Enhancing the role of market towns, increasing their retail/service function to support the rural hinterland;
- Reducing the need to travel in the first place;
- Reduce car dependency;
- Promote a sustainable pattern of development;
- Facilitate the use of smart technologies.

**6.62** Breckland has produced an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which includes key transport investment priorities for the district. The investment priorities reflected the growth levels set out within the Core Strategy and included:

- Improvements to Attleborough's town centre (including the gyratory)
- Provision of a link road in Attleborough between the B1077 and London Road
- Improvements and alterations to the A11 junctions around Thetford
- Relocation of Thetford bus station
- Improving rural transport options

### Question 25

Are the transport investment priorities listed above appropriate to facilitate sustainable development? Is there anything else we should consider?

## 7 Natural and Historic Environment

**7.1** The NPPF encourages the planning system to contribute to, and enhance, the local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and geological conservation interests. It states that plan-makers should recognise the 'intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'.

**7.2** Breckland is a diverse district for biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape qualities. The district is characterised by mixed landscape characters of 'settled' and 'plateau' farmland to the north. The landscape changes to the west and south of the district, where the Brecks contains extensive areas of heathland within a forest and arable context. A significant proportion of the Brecks is designated as a European protected site, forming the largest terrestrial protected area in Norfolk. The heathland serves as an important habitat designated for its suitability to support internationally important bird species, particularly stone curlew, woodlark and nightjar.

**7.3** Breckland contains a wealth of other protected areas such as Redgrave and South Lopham Fen which is one of only four sites within Norfolk designated under the Ramsar Convention of Wetlands of International Importance. Breckland is also home to four sites of international importance for biodiversity known as Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which are the most important sites for wildlife in the country. These are the Norfolk Valley Fens, River Wensum and Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens. Within Breckland, there are three Local Nature Reserves (LNR), at Litcham Common (area of varied heathland), Great Eastern Pingo Trail situated between Stow Bedon and Hockham (a mix of wetlands, woodlands and grasslands) and grass heathland at Barnham Cross Common in Thetford. The latter is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), SAC and located within the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA).

**7.4** Parts of the district are characterised by river valleys including the Wensum, Norfolk Valley Fens, Waveney and the Little Ouse Valley Fens which have extensive areas of wetland habitats, comprised mainly of grazing marsh with areas of fen and reedbed. Many of these rivers are recognised as chalk streams where some of these habitats are European protected sites and identified as a SAC. Furthermore, the district contains arable landscape features, comprising of distinctive Scots Pine shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and field margins. These features are key components of the ecological network at a local scale, and collectively they amount to a significant biodiversity resource.

**7.5** The Brecks is a significant tourist attraction due to its multiple uses for recreation and wildlife conservation. Thetford Forest forms the largest area of lowland woodland in England and is considered of high recreation value. Thetford Forest has the capacity to increase its contribution as a regional, national and local recreation resource, which as a result, may reduce the levels of tranquillity and is at risk of causing disturbance and damage to the important habitats.


**7.6** The natural environment is constantly evolving through natural and man-made interventions and it is important that such change is managed in a way that maintains and enhances biodiversity and the landscape's unique and special qualities.

---

### Issue 8

#### Protection of habitats and species

**7.7** Covering 39,141 ha of heathland, forest and arable farmland, the Brecks is of International and European value to birdlife. The Brecks habitat is important for a range of characteristic ground-nesting birds such as stone curlew, woodlark and nightjar. The site was designated as a SPA under the European Council's Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. The East of England supports 65% of the UK's breeding pairs of stone curlew where



most breeding is located within the Brecks. The rich biodiversity of the Brecks is also recognised by many other statutory conservation designations which include four SAC, numerous SSSI and National Nature Reserves (NNR), where the latter (NNRs and SSSIs) which make up 40% of the total area.

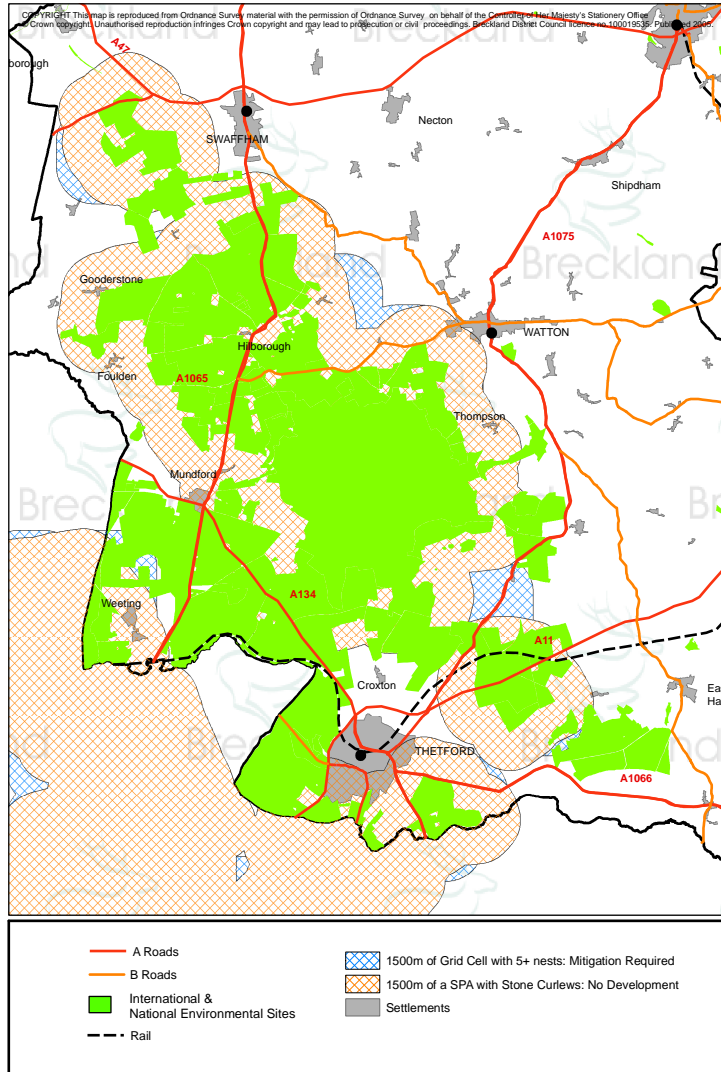
**7.8** Evidence to support the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2009 resulted in research which examined the effects of housing and roads on the distribution of stone curlew in the Brecks. The research was required to inform the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Core Strategy, which subject to the imposition of suitable policy mitigation, enabled the Core Strategy to be progressed through to adoption.

**7.9** The adopted policy mitigation required that new development will only be permitted within 1,500m of the SPA that are suitable for stone curlew if can be demonstrated through an appropriate assessment, under the Habitat Regulations, that there will be no adverse impact on the qualifying features. In applying this policy, the Council defined a buffer zone (orange hatch) on Map 7.1 '1500m Buffers around Special Protection Areas with Stone Curlews' that extends 1,500m from the edge of those parts of the SPA that are capable of supporting stone curlew. Beyond the SPA boundary, there are areas where there are concentrations of stone curlew (5 or more nests recorded) and these areas have been identified (blue hatch) on Map 7.1 '1500m Buffers around Special Protection Areas with Stone Curlews'. In the blue hatched area, development may be acceptable providing alternative land outside the SPA can be secured to mitigate the potential affects.

**7.10** Further research undertaken in 2013 confirms that the 1,500m stone curlew buffer zone (as per the adopted Core Strategy) remains a valid policy response. Furthermore, this research found an increase in the number of nests recorded outside of the SPA. As a result, the Local Plan may need to revise the (blue constraint zone) on future Local Plan Policies map. The 2013 research also suggests that the planting of woodland/screening as a mitigation measure is unlikely to be effective and that the effect of nest density is strongest as a result of the amount of buildings rather than type.

**7.11** One of the key aims of the research was to differentiate the effects of nest density due to different building classes. Due to the sample size and number of buildings identified there needs to be an element of caution applied to the results, however, the research indicates that there was no evidence of a negative impact of agricultural or commercial buildings. As such, the analysis suggests an element of flexibility could be applied for non-residential development in the SPA buffer zones.





**Map 7.1 1500m Buffers around Special Protection Areas with Stone Curlews**

**Question 26**

The Council will need to ensure the strategy in the Local Plan avoids harm to European sites but evidence could indicate a more flexible approach to non-residential development. How might the Council respond to this challenge?

## Issue 9

### Protection of non-statutory sites

**7.12** Non-statutory heritage assets and areas for nature conservation play an essential role in reinforcing a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the historic environment, and complement national and international designated sites. Within Breckland, there are over 400 County Wildlife Sites (CWS) considered to be of value for wildlife in a county context. Breckland also contains one County Geodiversity Site (CGS) at Newton by Castle Acre Chalk Pit which is designated for its geodiversity value. The district also contains a number of ancient woodlands and individual veteran trees. These areas support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife, and many sites will contain habitats and species that are priorities under the County or UK Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP). Additionally, whilst many heritage assets within Breckland have statutory protection, there are a number of other heritage assets which play an essential role in reinforcing a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the historic environment.

**7.13** Breckland includes extensive parts of the nationally and regionally significant Brecks heaths and woodland in the south and west of the district, whose importance has been reinforced by the Brecks Landscape Character Assessment (LCA, 2013). The LCA identified eight distinct, and sensitive, valued character areas within the Brecks, with the core landscape types being the Brecks Arable Heathland Mosaic, the Brecks Plantation and the River Valleys. These areas range from conserving the natural wild character of the heathland landscape of the Brecks Arable Heathland Mosaic, to understanding that the river valley is vulnerable to change. The report reaffirms the approach adopted within the Council's existing policy on landscape (namely CP11), but also builds upon the existing district-wide LCA (2007). The study also provides guidance for managing change in the district and will also have relevance to development management decisions in the area.

**7.14** Elsewhere, the district is generally characterised by river valleys with their associated tributary farmland ranging from the Lophams in the south-east, up to Colkirk in the north-west of the district. The landscape provides a 'sense of place' for Breckland which is rich in natural and man-made features such as heaths, woodlands, rivers, streams, and other topographical features. These landscape assets are also considered to make an important contribution to biodiversity in the district and act as green infrastructure corridors. Evidence to support the Local Plan suggests that high protection should be given to the Brecks landscape, River Valleys and Chalk Rivers due to their landscape qualities.

**7.15** Development that takes place outside settlements or in the wider landscape can introduce urban elements into a predominantly rural landscape, risking the loss of local landscape features such as trees, field ponds and hedgerow patterns. Additionally, development can threaten the function of the landscape, undiscovered or undesignated heritage assets and can be a threat to biodiversity. Overall, such development is likely to change the character of the landscape. In a local context, Breckland has seen an increasing number of planning applications for commercial scale new renewable energy schemes in recent years. These particularly relate to photovoltaic solar farms and wind turbines.

**7.16** The NPPF states that Local Plans should provide a positive strategy where policies should :

- Make distinctions between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites so that protection is commensurate with their status.
- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- Maximise and support renewable and low carbon energy.

**7.17** Understanding the quality of and contribution of Breckland's non-statutory assets will enable informed decisions to be made to development proposals effecting natural and historic qualities and guide planning and management of the district.

### Question 27

Are there any non-designated sites which require protection through local policy?

## Open Space

**7.18** Open space, sport and recreation facilities can include (for example) common land, parks and gardens, sports pitches, children's play areas, allotments, town squares and village greens. These natural green open spaces are important to our quality of life. They provide a wide range of benefits for people and the environment. Access to open space for fresh air and exercise has benefits for both physical and mental health. This can have direct health benefits in terms of reductions in levels of heart disease, obesity and depression where people live close to open space. Also this benefit can be for more than those who live close to open space, people may be willing to travel to access open space, particularly a good facility. Overall, the lack of quantity and quality of open space can have negative impacts on people and their environment. In addition to the ecological value of open space, it also contributes to the adaption of climate through its role in reducing the risk of flooding and by cooling the local environment. Where trees are present they also act as filters for air pollution. Nature nearby is good for people, good for wildlife and good for the environment.

**7.19** Breckland published an Open Space Assessment in 2007 which was used to support Policy DC11 'Open Space' within the adopted Core Strategy and Development and Control Policies (2009). The approach to Policy DC11 was to protect existing facilities and requiring development of new facilities through planning. The Open Space Assessment was updated in 2010 to support Core Strategy Policy, however following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 27th March 2012 there have been changes to national planning policy. Furthermore, the planning of open space is an iterative process as it will need to take into account population projections, new open space provided as part of development and any changes in national benchmarking standards.

**7.20** In order to support the Breckland Local Plan, the Council are commencing a new Open Space Assessment that will take account of national and local changes and will evaluate the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and recreational land provision in the district. The assessment will recommend standards and effective mechanisms in order for appropriate provision to be secured to meet future needs.

**7.21** Under the promoting healthy communities theme of the NPPF, it is set out that planning policies should be based on robust and **up-to-date assessments** of the needs for **open space, sports and recreation facilities** and opportunities for **new provision**. The assessments should identify specific needs and **quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses** of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the area should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreation provision is required'.

**7.22** The NPPF also states that open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- *An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *Replacement by equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and quantity in a suitable location; or*
- *The need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss.*

**7.23** Overall, the NPPF recognises the role that access to high quality open space and opportunities for sport and recreation plays in the health and wellbeing of communities. It sets out the need for planning policies to protect open spaces to be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open spaces, sports and recreation facilities.

**7.24** To support a new Open Space Assessment, it is important that the views of the local community are sought, particularly regarding the appropriate protection and provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities within their parish or district as a whole. Consultation with Parish Councils has already commenced and we are seeking community views on current provision and future need and demand of open space within Breckland.

### Question 28

What are your views on the current provision and future need and demand of open space within the parish in which you live? Do these facilities best address the open space needs of the parish? Please provide additional details including any site(s) identified on a map.

**7.25** The NPPF has introduced a new designation of Local Green Space to identify and protect areas of green space of particular importance to a local community. An issue for the Open Space Assessment and Local Plan is to identify Local Green Space and the Issues and Options consultation is an opportunity for local communities to suggest where such spaces should be identified that meet the tests in the NPPF which state that the designation should be:

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

### Question 29

Are there any sites that you would like the Council to consider as Local Green Designation? If so, please provide details including any site(s) identified on a map.

## 8 Spatial Strategy

### 8.1 Spatial Strategy

#### Issue 10

#### Spatial Strategy

**8.1** A key element of the Local Plan is defining the spatial strategy and where the focus of development should be. The existing strategy in the Core Strategy is based on a hierarchical approach and focuses development in the market towns and 4 of the service centre villages with strategic extensions in Thetford and Attleborough.

**8.2** The distribution of future housing development is a critical element of the spatial strategy, and is the major contributing factor in determining the extent to which settlements need to grow. The current housing strategy - in CP1 of the Core Strategy - sets out the general indicative pattern of housing distributions across the district between 2001 and 2026. The growth planned was primarily centred around Attleborough and Thetford, which were identified for nearly two thirds of the growth between 2001 and 2026. The three remaining market towns provide for around 20% of the growth. Apart from the supply of existing completions and permissions, new development within the local service centres was limited to allocations in 4 of the 14 Local Service Centre Villages, which could now be viewed as contrary to the positive emphasis contained in the NPPF. There was no growth planned for unsustainable rural settlements.

Town/Settlement	STATUS	Existing strategy for housing growth distribution	Percentage of total growth
Thetford	The Key Centre for Development and Change	7,877	39.8%
Attleborough	The Market Town for Substantial Growth	4,623	23.4%
Dereham	Market Town	2,010	10.2%
Swaffham	Market Town	1,022	5.2%
Watton	Market Town	995	5%
Harling	Local Service Centre Village	134	0.7%
Narborough	Local Service Centre Village	86	0.4%
Shipdham	Local Service Centre Village	217	1.1%
Swanton Morley	Local Service Centre Village	97	0.5%

Town/Settlement	STATUS	Existing strategy for housing growth distribution	Percentage of total growth
All Other Parishes	Other Areas	2,716	13.7%

**Table 8.1 Existing Distribution of Growth (Housing)**

**8.3** As well as setting out the number of homes and other developments, the Local Plan will need to identify where these should be directed and when. Preparation of a new Local Plan provides an opportunity to review the existing spatial strategy and consider where the focus of development should be. However it is important to note that consideration needs to be given to the existing spatial development emphasis and commitments such as the 5000 homes already committed for the Strategic Urban Extension (SUE) at Thetford as well as the progress made on the identification of a SUE in Attleborough. Further information can be seen in the Housing section and Table 5.2 'Completed, Committed and Planned Dwelling Numbers'.

**8.4** Utilising the Vision and Objectives, a number of key local spatial considerations which help underpin the spatial approach in Breckland remain:

- Sustainable Development - At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), is the presumption in favour of sustainable development <sup>(7)</sup> and planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area.
  - Attleborough will develop as a location for substantial housing and employment growth.
  - Distribution of growth will aim to reinforce the settlement hierarchy in order to ensure development continues to provide opportunities to enhance centres and improve access to services.
- Economic Prosperity - continued emphasis on Thetford as a key strategic centre and gateway to Breckland and sustainable employment and housing growth along the A11 corridor.
- Environment and Climate - supporting the transition to a low carbon future, conserving and enhancing the natural environment, addressing flood risk and building a network of Green infrastructure, reducing the need to travel, subsequently improving health and wellbeing and standards of living.

**8.5** There are a number of options the Council can choose to distribute growth under a new strategy, which are set out in detail below.

- The first option is for a **Focused development pattern** - concentrating primarily on Thetford and Attleborough and to a lesser extent on Dereham, Swaffham and Watton, (the 5 Market Towns), with very limited growth in other areas which is similar to the current strategy as set out above. However because of the potential need for more housing land to be identified to meet objectively assessed need up to 2031/36, the ability to deliver this option could be constrained by the lack of available land over and above that which has already been identified in Attleborough and Thetford.
- The second option is for a **Dispersed/Scattered development pattern** - with growth occurring in a greater number of settlements. This would allow for growth within all of the Local Service Centre Villages (at present only 4 have housing allocations) and some other rural settlements.
- The third option is for a **Balanced development pattern** - which would aim to strike a balance between the two options set out above. It would allow for proportionate development in some, but not necessarily all, of

<sup>7</sup> see what is sustainable development in chapter 2.

the Local Service Centre Villages and a greater level of development in the 3 Market Towns of Dereham and Swaffham and Watton.

- The fourth option is for the **Development of new settlement or upgrading existing settlement** - this could be combined with any of the options above, but would also seek to deliver major development in the form of a new settlement or substantial growth in a lower-tier settlement (Local Service Centre Village or rural settlement) to allow it to function at a higher level in the spatial strategy.

**8.6** The distribution of future development is influenced by the existing committed development in Thetford and the Council's current focus to bring forward development in Attleborough. The principle established under the current strategy for the urban extension at Attleborough and Thetford in any case will form a significant portion of growth. The options presented will help to identify ways to deliver the additional growth beyond the current strategy.

**8.7** The specific options presented below constitute the first stage of consultation. Consultation feedback will be used, alongside a detailed sustainability appraisal process, to inform the development of the spatial strategy for the Local Plan. This will then be the subject of further consultation.

**8.8** The detailed options are:

### Option 30

#### Focused development pattern

Key features:

- Urban-focused growth strategy centred around major urban extensions to Thetford and Attleborough;
- Small proportions of growth in and around other towns and local service centres;
- Limited growth in rural areas.

Advantages:

- Reduce the need of travel and enable sustainable modes of travel, e.g. walking, cycling and public transport;
- Support existing local services and facilitate regeneration of existing centres;
- Focused effort on infrastructure provision and economy of scale;
- Reduce the pressure on rural environment.
- Reinforce existing development hierarchy.

Disadvantages:

- Increased congestion in urban areas;
- May affect the viability and vitality of service centres at lower levels;
- Does not address local need and accessibility of rural locations;
- Slower delivery time scales to allow for necessary infrastructure provision.

#### Sustainability Appraisal Outcome

**8.9** A focused development pattern repeats the approach undertaken through the adopted Core Strategy where the focus for growth is centred around major urban extensions and a small number of service centre villages. More concentrated development has a positive impact upon contributions to climate change as this focuses new development on existing settlements which already have a good level of services and facilities and should limit the overall need to travel by car, to shops and schools. It also provides the opportunity to access increased level



of employment opportunities closer to home. This would be a positive effect on the self-containment / sustainability of settlements. Conversely, by concentrating development in this way it may leave a gap in helping to improve services and facilities in the remaining rural areas. Additionally, the ability to deliver this option could be constrained by the lack of available land over and above that which has already been identified in Attleborough and Thetford.

### Option 31

#### Dispersed/Scattered development pattern

Key features:

- Catering additional growth outside the urban extensions of Thetford and Attleborough;
- Relatively more dispersed growth strategy across the district;
- Allocations within all Local Service Centre Villages and some other rural settlements.

Advantages:

- Helps to sustain rural services;
- Less pressure on existing towns in terms of infrastructure, e.g. road, school, health care, open space etc;
- Help target growth to meet local need, such as local affordable need;
- Provide more choice for developers and residents;
- Help address infrastructure needs in rural locations;
- Potential quicker delivery, spread over a greater number of sites.

Disadvantages:

- Greater reliance on cars, although improved rural network might help improve rural public transport;
- Possible threat on quality of rural environment in high value areas if not managed well;
- Risk of non-delivery of infrastructure in some areas.

#### Sustainability Appraisal Outcome

**8.10** A more dispersed development pattern may result in conflict with a number of sustainability objectives associated with the wider environment. A more dispersed pattern would result in increased level of car journeys in more rural areas and therefore contribute to higher pollution levels. This may lead to out-commuting/trips to larger settlements and this potentially could increase traffic flows to better served settlements nearby (eg. Secondary School). However, a dispersed pattern of development provides a more positive approach to the social elements within the sustainability appraisal such as improving the quality, range and accessibility to essential services and facilities for current gaps in the district.



## Option 32

### Balanced development pattern

#### Key features:

- Catering for additional growth outside the urban extensions of Thetford and Attleborough;
- Balanced development between urban and rural areas;
- Greater level of development in the 3 Market Towns of Dereham, Swaffham and Watton.
- Proportionate development across Local Service Centre Villages.
- Limited growth in rural areas.

#### Advantages:

- Protect existing centres and help address the regeneration needs of urban areas whilst catering for local service needs;
- Helps balance environmental impacts with community needs by offering greater range of choices;
- Still being able to utilise focused effort on infrastructure provision in urban areas and economy of scale;
- Support existing local services and facilitate regeneration of existing centres.

#### Disadvantages:

- Potential unmet need in some local service centres and rural settlements;
- Lower levels of development.
- Potential constraints to delivery of additional development in market towns (education / utility capacity in Dereham).

### Sustainability Appraisal Outcome

**8.11** A balanced development pattern where development is concentrated in more sustainable locations has less impact upon contributions to climate change, as this focuses new development on existing settlements which already have a good level of services and facilities, and should limit the overall need to travel by car to shops and schools. It also provides the opportunity to access increased level of employment opportunities closer to home. This would be a positive effect on the self-containment / sustainability of an increased number of settlements.

### Option 33

**Development of new settlement or upgrading existing settlement** in combination with other options above.

Key features:

- Possibly create a new settlement to deliver additional growth; or
- Significant expansion of a service centre to accommodate greater growth and function at a higher level in the settlement hierarchy.

This option could be pursued in conjunction with other option(s) presented above. The scale of such an approach might have significant implications on wider cooperation issues with neighbouring authorities.

Advantages:

- Being able to ease the pressure of existing facilities and focus more on creating new capacity;
- Focused effort on infrastructure delivery.

Disadvantages:

- Dependent on market interest and availability of suitable development options.
- Slow delivery - wouldn't help to address short-term requirements;
- Need for significant strategic infrastructure;
- Potential viability impacts;
- Uncertain willingness and capacity of Development Industry to deliver this along with existing committed schemes.

### Sustainability Appraisal Outcome

**8.12** A new settlement is more complex to assess as any impacts would be subject to its exact location within the district. However, there are some obvious issues that have come about from the assessment with the sustainability objectives. A new settlement may be slow to deliver strategic infrastructure required to support a sustainable community such as schools, health care, employment, transport etc. Additionally, there would need to be market interest to bring/deliver the level of services and facilities needed. The slow delivery of essential services and facilities may result in increased out-commuting to larger settlements and this potentially could increase traffic flows to better served settlements nearby. Alternatively, a new settlement may result in unmet needs of market towns and larger Rural Service Centres.

### Question 30

What options should the spatial strategy for the district consider?

Are there any other reasonable alternatives?

## Land Availability

**8.13** A key message from the NPPF is that planning should "boost significantly the supply of housing". Local Planning Authorities are required to establish an up-to-date evidence base and ensure that Local Plans meet the "full, objectively assessed need" for market and affordable housing in the housing market area. The NPPF seeks to achieve a step-change in housing delivery through a more responsive and flexible supply of housing land. It requires Local Authorities to assess and demonstrate the extent to which *existing* plans fulfil the requirement to identify and maintain a rolling 5 year supply of deliverable land for housing.

**8.14** In addition to the requirement to maintain a 5 year supply of land for housing, Local Planning Authorities should set out in their Local Development Documents (LDDs) policies and strategies that will allow the continuous delivery of housing, at the appropriate level, for at least 15 years. Local Planning Authorities should identify sufficient specific **deliverable** sites to deliver housing in years 0-5, and **developable** sites in years 6-10 and where possible years 11-15. Where it is not possible to identify specific **developable** sites for years 11-15, then broad locations for future growth should be indicated.

**8.15** The 2014 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a theoretical exploration of the residential capacity of sites that agents and landowners have put forward. This study concluded theoretical land availability as per the table below. Nearly half of the land availability is in Attleborough. 21.5% of the theoretical land capacity is in Thetford, however this is taken up through existing commitments. It should be noted that the upper level of development of 5,000 dwellings is the expected maximum that can likely be delivered at a density that would be compatible with the location given the environmental constraints. Outline permission has been resolved to be granted subject to s106 agreement for the 5,000 dwellings and this is comparable with the available land supply.

Settlement	Total commitments and completions 2011 - 2014	Land capacity (SHLAA) - non commitment	Total land capacity + commitments 2011-36	Percentage of development based on theoretical land availability and commitments
Attleborough	612	11,465	12,077	49.28%
Dereham	526	938	1,464	5.97%
Swaffham	739	1,421	2,160	8.81%
Thetford	5,265	0	5,265	21.48%
Watton	446	1,037	1,483	6.05%
Harling	105	265	370	1.51%
Narborough	56	312	368	1.50%
Shipdham	91	69	160	0.65%
Swanton Morley	26	227	253	1.03%
Banham	6	8	14	0.06%

Settlement	Total commitments and completions 2011 - 2014	Land capacity (SHLAA) - non commitment	Total land capacity + commitments 2011-36	Percentage of development based on theoretical land availability and commitments
Great Ellingham	11	181	192	0.78%
Litcham	0	46	46	0.19%
Mattishall	8	31	39	0.16%
Mundford	21	0	21	0.09%
Necton	183	180	363	1.48%
North Elmham	5	30	35	0.14%
Old Buckenham	17	10	27	0.11%
Saham Toney	36	51	87	0.35%
Weeting	84	0	84	0.34%
<b>TOTAL LSC</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>1,410</b>	<b>2,059</b>	<b>8.40 %</b>
All other Parishes	755	N/a	N/a	N/a
<b>Overall Total</b>			<b>24,508</b>	

**Table 8.2 Theoretical Land Availability**

**8.16** The following tables illustrate an indicative position for the options with regard to the theoretical land availability as of the 2014 SHLAA and the Growth Scenarios presented earlier

**8.17** It can be seen that of focused growth utilising the committed SUE at Thetford and additional sites at Attleborough is potentially the most deliverable / developable option in terms of the current theoretical land supply identified in the 2014 SHLAA.

## 8.2 Market Towns

### 8.2.1 Attleborough

**8.18** Attleborough is identified as a Market Town for Substantial Growth within the Core Strategy, with a strategic growth allocation for 4,000 dwellings. The vision emphasises the importance of Attleborough due to its good location on the A11 and with access to the Norwich to London railway. The town also has strong connections to Snetterton with its employment opportunities. Development within Attleborough was initially considered as part of an Area Action Plan for both the town and Snetterton Heath employment area. An Issues and Options consultation as part of the Area Action Plan was carried out in 2010. Following the initial consultation and having regard to the publication of the NPPF, and the need to prepare further evidence base, the Council determined that producing a single Local Plan for the whole district, incorporating the proposed growth at Attleborough alongside that of the rest of the district would be more appropriate.

**8.19** To reflect the Issues and Options consultation which has already occurred within Attleborough and Snetterton Heath, and the recently updated evidence base, this section aims to provide more detailed policies and options for the town. The Core Strategy identified the location of growth to be to the south of the railway line and also specified the requirements for a link road. However this section of the Local Plan will look specifically at the location of housing growth and the location of the link road in relation to the urban extension. This section will also consider retail and employment provision, the natural environment and social infrastructure. Importantly this section will also highlight the role of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan in the development of the area.



**Figure 8.1 Attleborough Town Sign**

## Issue 11

### Neighbourhood Plan

**8.20** The Localism Act (2011) introduced Neighbourhood Plans as a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. Parish Councils are the responsible body for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, however Breckland Council has a duty to support Parish Councils preparing plans. Attleborough Town Council applied to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with Besthorpe Parish Council, covering the whole of Attleborough parish and the parts of Besthorpe parish which are contained within the built up extent of Attleborough. The Neighbourhood Plan area was designated by the Council on 11th November 2013. The Neighbourhood Plan, once adopted, following a successful examination and referendum, forms the planning framework for the area. Neighbourhood Plans have to be in conformity with the districts strategic planning policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

**8.21** Breckland Council is currently in discussion with Attleborough Town Council and Besthorpe Parish Council in regards to the information which will be provided within the Neighbourhood Plan and the information which will be included within the Local Plan. The Councils are currently preparing a memorandum of understanding, which

when agreed will set out the key policy areas to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and those policy areas which will be the remit of the Local Plan. The current policy areas proposed to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan are:

1. Proposals for the key area of change at the former Gaymers Cider works
2. Social infrastructure with specific regard to health and social care
3. Sports and leisure provision

**8.22** Work on the Neighbourhood Plan remains at a relatively early stage, however the Parish Councils have set up a working group to drive the plan forward.

## Issue 12

### Housing Growth

**8.23** The adopted Core Strategy states that housing allocations in Attleborough will consist of urban extensions to the south of the A11. The A11 acts as a physical boundary to the town, with land to the north of the A11 having a higher environmental/landscape sensitivity, including flood risk. Road access to the town centre and employment areas is limited from the land to the north of the A11. The NPPF has re-iterated that urban extensions remain a valid policy approach for delivering larger scale development. A key issue for this document will be pinpointing a preferred growth location.

**8.24** Since the Core Strategy was adopted in 2009 a number of residential developments have been permitted within Attleborough on land outside of the town's settlement boundary. Policy CP1 Housing within the adopted Core Strategy states that land permitted outside of the defined settlement boundary which is for 10 or more dwellings will contribute to the planned allocations for that settlement. The following table shows the permission and completion between April 2010 and March 2014, which have been granted outside of the town's settlement boundary. It is noted that further development has occurred within the town's settlement boundary over this time period, however this has not been included within the table.

Core Strategy Allocation	Dwellings Permitted	Dwellings Completed
4000	463	60

**Table 8.3 Housing Development within Attleborough**

**8.25** There is currently no land allocated for the growth requirement as set out in the Core Strategy for Attleborough. As part of looking again at housing numbers across Breckland Council within the Local Plan, it may be necessary to re-consider the level of growth within Attleborough. It is also important to note that the NPPF requires Local Authorities to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land. In the absence of a five year supply, this means that adopted policies in regards to housing supply cannot be considered up-to-date. When this occurs housing applications need to be assessed against the criteria for sustainable development.

**8.26** The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was updated in 2014 and reviewed housing land availability within Attleborough. The study considers the theoretical land availability within the district and the associated level of housing growth which individual towns could accommodate. In total the SHLAA indicated a theoretical constrained capacity for 12,021 dwellings. The constrained capacity indicated within the SHLAA is significantly above the level of development which was allocated from the Core Strategy. It does indicate however that a significant amount of land which is available and deliverable for housing is located within the town.



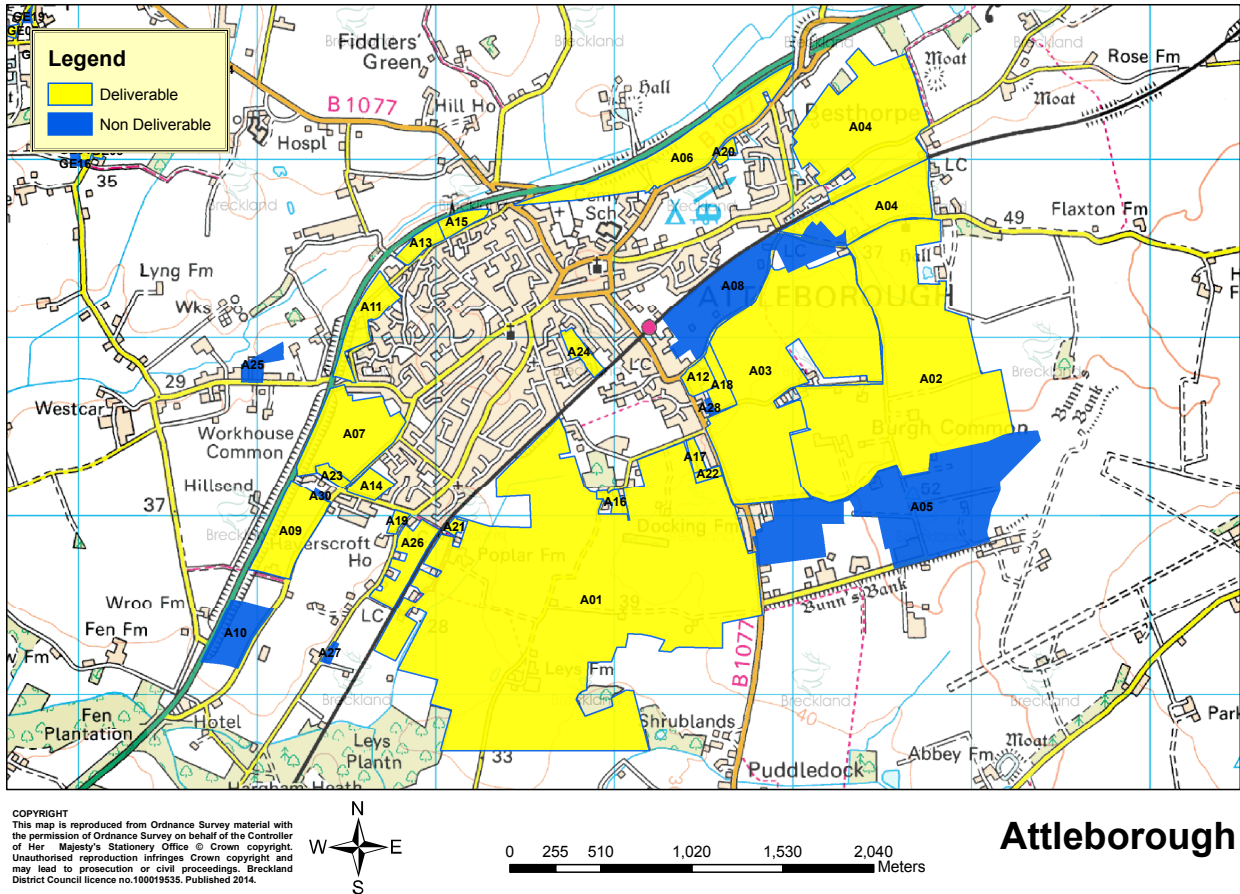


Figure 8.2 SHLAA sites in Attleborough

8.27 It is important to note that at this stage the SHLAA is a theoretical study and it does not represent policy.

### Issue 13

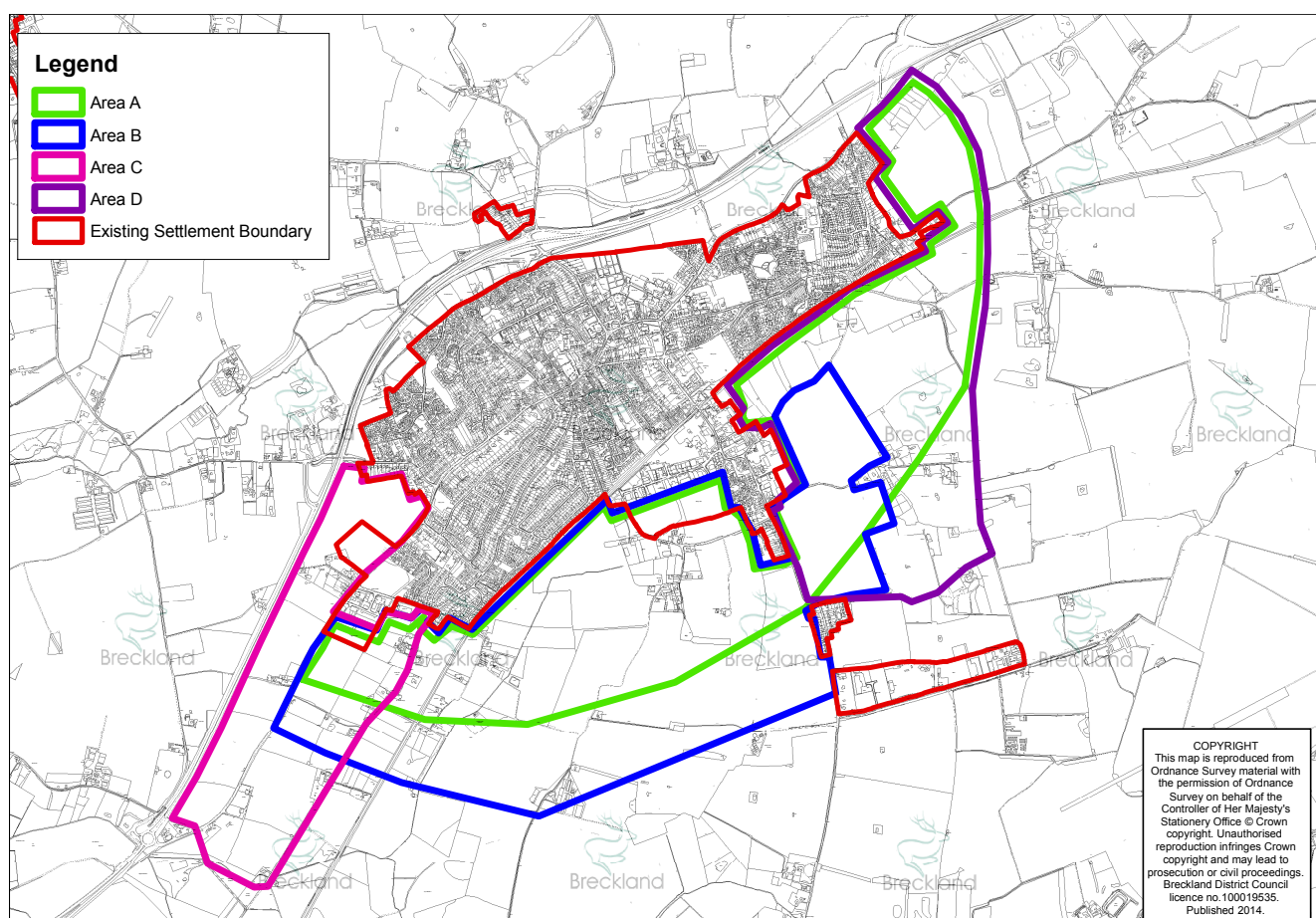
#### Principles of the Urban Extension

Key principles that will need to be addressed through the delivery of the Urban Extension include:

- Location of new housing
- Phasing of housing delivery
- Design principles/masterplan
- Local centres
- Infrastructure requirements

## Location of New Housing

**8.28** The Issues and Options consultation for the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan (ASHAAP) consulted on 4 options for the direction of growth of the Urban Extension. Having regard to the Core Strategies direction of growth for the town to the south of the railway line. Consideration for the direction of growth for the urban extension has taken into account the responses received during the consultation and also evidence on matters such as landscape, ecology habitats and transport. Furthermore, it also needs to look at the deliverability of the site in regards to the provision of infrastructure to support the development. The following four options were presented within the ASHAAP Issues and Options consultations:



**Map 8.1 Attleborough Growth Locations**

### **Area A: Immediately south of the railway line and east and west of the Buckenham Road**

**8.29** This site has a total gross area of 235 hectares, which is a sufficient land area to accommodate the towns full growth requirement of 4,000 dwellings. The site would provide a balanced distribution of housing growth on either side of the B1077 Buckenham Road. The development would be closer to the existing built area than other options, which could see the potential to maximise walking and cycling opportunities to the town centre. This site is also well related to the railway station.

**8.30** The Landscape Character Assessment 2007 indicates that the eastern section of the site has a higher landscape sensitivity than land to the west. It includes two County Wildlife Sites in the form of Decoy Common and Henry's Wood. Land in this area has a higher elevation than other parts of Attleborough, therefore development



would be more visually intrusive on the landscape. This area also has a number of listed buildings at both Burgh Common and within Besthorpe which could be affected. There is also the Scheduled Monument at Bunns Bank. This is a linear earthwork feature dating from the medieval period. The presence of this feature reinforces the potential impact on a significant historic landscape. The site includes two key gateway locations into Attleborough at Norwich Road and Bunns Bank. The landscape within either of these areas is likely to be sensitive to change.

**8.31** The development would require a combined eastern and western link road, which would have significant cost implications. A combined link road would also require an additional crossing over the railway line.

### **Area B: South West Attleborough**

**8.32** This site has a total land area of 296 hectares which is a sufficient size to accommodate all new dwellings, associated infrastructure, employment land and open spaces. The Landscape Character Assessment 2007 has assessed the site as having a moderate sensitivity to change, and development would impact upon the rural setting of the area. Due to the rural nature of Breckland and the requirement for the expansion beyond the existing town boundaries, it is likely that all growth directions would impact upon the rural setting. Overall land in this area is considered to be less sensitive to change than land to the east of the B1077. Land to the south-west of the town has a lower elevation than land to the south-east and as such it would be less prominent on the landscape, however there are some small areas of flood risk contained within the site. If the area was developed this would need to be taken into consideration.

**8.33** The extent of the development proposed would require a new link road. During the Issues and Options consultation on the ASHAAP, Norfolk County Council as the Transport Authority and the Highways Agency indicated that they favoured this growth location as the option would require a lesser amount of infrastructure. The site is well related to the Breckland Lodge Roundabout, which provides both northbound and southbound access onto the A11. Further information for the requirements of a distributor road in this area will be provided within the transport section.

**8.34** Land within this area is in multiple ownerships; however it is being promoted collectively by Attleborough Land Ltd (part of Ptarmigan Land Ltd). The single promotion of the majority of land within the area shows deliverability of the scheme. Please note that this site includes a small area of land to the north of the railway line which has not been promoted to the Council at present. As can be seen in SHLAA sites in Attleborough not all of the land required to deliver the route had been promoted through the Local Plan process, further detailed information can be seen in Figure 8.2 'SHLAA sites in Attleborough'. Other benefits of this site area are that it is well related to the existing strategic sewer network and access to the waste water treatment works. The growth location does include a number of existing houses off Poplar Road, Hargham Road and Leys Lane. The development and design of the urban extension will need to be sensitive of this.

### **Area C: London Road**

**8.35** This site has a total gross area of 90 hectares and is the smallest of the four sites. Overall, the site area is too small to accommodate the full extent of the urban extension and could only accommodate in the region of 2,000 dwellings. As such it would require part of an additional option to meet the full housing requirement. The site would not however need a link road between the A11 and the B1077 Buckenham Road. It is well related to the Breckland Lodge Roundabout on the A11. However the development would need to include a noise attenuation scheme, to reduce the noise from the A11.

**8.36** The section of London Road located within the site forms a key gateway location in Attleborough, and is also one of the main vehicular routes. The Landscape Character Assessment 2007 indicates that the area would be sensitive to change. However, the site is bounded by the A11 so this would limit the impact on the landscape. It should be noted that the site includes a small area of flood risk near to the Breckland Lodge Roundabout. There is also a County Wildlife Site located directly to the south of the site.

**8.37** Part of the land included within this area already has planning permission for a housing development and is currently under construction.

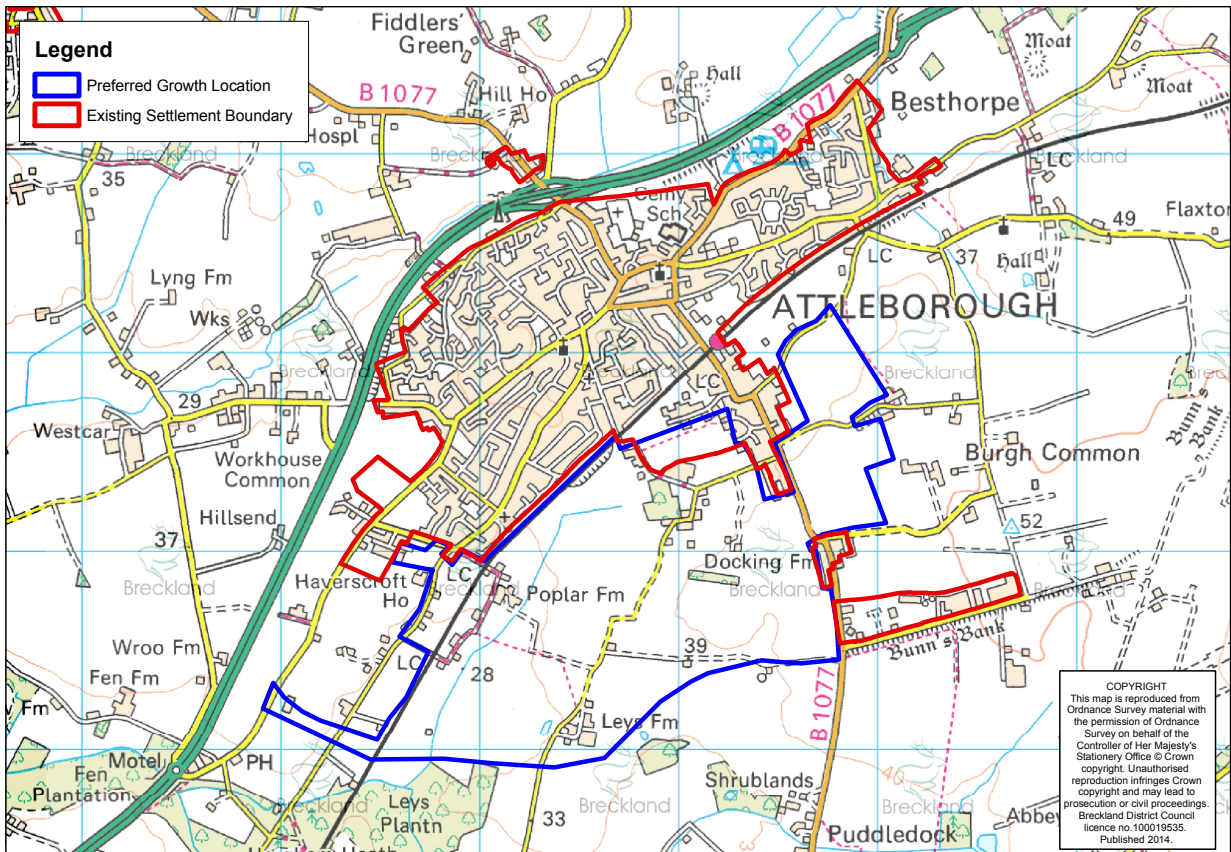
#### **Area D: Besthorpe and Burgh Common**

**8.38** This site option includes enough land to accommodate all of the proposed growth for the town and has a gross site area of 187 hectares. Similarly to the other three sites proposed, it is a greenfield site. Parts of this site are well related to the town centre, which could provide the opportunity for improved walking and cycling links. The Landscape Character Assessment 2007 and Settlement Fringe Study, indicate that land to the east of the town is likely to be more sensitive to change. Norwich Road represents a key gateway location into Attleborough and development in this area is likely to be sensitive to change. The elevation at the south-east of this site (near Bunns Bank) is higher than the surrounding area. Development in this area is likely to be visually intrusive on the landscape. There are a number of listed buildings within this option. These include Besthorpe Old Hall and Borough Farmhouse. Adjoining the site is All Saints Church, Besthorpe Hall and a number of other properties along Silver Street. If this option is developed then there is the potential for the setting of these listed buildings to be impacted upon. To the north-west of the site is Decoy Common and Henry's Wood which form a County Wildlife Site. The site also adjoins the County Wildlife Site West Moor.

**8.39** Land to the east of the B1077 would require a link road between the B1077 and the A11 to the north. Currently the Norwich Road junction onto the A11 only allows traffic to join in the northbound direction. Alterations to the junction to allow two way access onto the A11 would significantly increase the cost of the link road. Furthermore, due to the higher elevation of the land in this part of the town, a bridge over the railway line is likely to be more prominent.

#### **Preferred Housing Location**

Land to the south-west of Attleborough, predominantly between London Road and the B1077 to be allocated for 4,000 new dwellings.



**Picture 8.1 Attleborough Preferred Growth Location**

## Justification

**8.40** Having reviewed the consultation responses from the ASHAAP Issues and Options consultation and the new evidence base which has been developed since the consultation occurred, Area B to the south-west of the town is considered to have a number of preferable characteristics. The area has a lower landscape sensitivity than other parts of Attleborough, and is well related to key pieces of infrastructure within the town. A link road would need to be provided with this site, however the access to the link road would be from the Breckland Lodge Roundabout. This would allow both northbound and southbound access to the A11.

**8.41** The sustainability appraisal has also assessed this preferred growth location and the alternative options. Whilst at this stage a number of the impacts of the proposed growth are uncertain and will require further investigation, this site is considered favourably through this assessment in comparison to the other locations. This particularly relates to the impact on the landscape and heritage assets within the area. Due to the size of the development proposed there will be impacts on the landscape of the area, however these are considered to be lower than other areas.

## Question 31

Please provide your views on the preferred approach

## Phasing of Housing Delivery

**8.42** To effectively and sustainably deliver the growth proposed in Attleborough it will be necessary to phase the delivery of the Urban Extension over the next fifteen years. The phasing of the Urban Extension provides the opportunity to ensure it is delivered in line with the delivery of key pieces of infrastructure. The initial phases will be influenced by existing infrastructure availability and the ability to deliver incremental infrastructure upgrades as the Urban Extension progresses. For instance any development will need to occur within a timetable suitable for the delivery of housing.

**8.43** It would be beneficial for certain elements of the social and community infrastructure to be delivered earlier in the overall programme. The intention is that early delivery of these components is a means of releasing tangible benefits to the wider community as well as fostering a sense of community by providing a focal point for the new residents and neighbourhoods to the south of the railway line.

**8.44** The Local Plan will include a policy on residential phasing requirements. The intention of any policy would be to ensure that development should be phased so as to ensure the optimum relationship between the demand for education, health, retail facilities, public transport and the incoming populations. It will also be necessary to ensure that disruption to residents is minimised during the construction phase. Other facilities such as cycle routes and open spaces should be front loaded as far as possible to ensure that early occupants can take advantage of them.

## Design Principles and Masterplan

**8.45** Ensuring the retention of the character of Attleborough will be essential to producing an integrated development and community. Within the existing town, Attleborough's conservation area contains a number of listed and historic buildings. It has also retained the town centre's historic street pattern. Due to the extent of the conservation area (extending down towards the railway station) there is the potential for the Urban Extension to impact upon its setting. Beyond direct and visual impacts the Conservation Area could also be affected by the overall growth of Attleborough in terms of increased traffic movement and demand for services. This will need to be carefully managed.

**8.46** Masterplans offer the opportunity to map an overall development concept including past and future land use, urban design and landscaping, built form, infrastructure, circulation and service provision. A masterplan would ensure that development:

- Provides the appropriate physical environment to support strong communities.
- Supports a rich and pleasurable quality of life for inhabitants and visitors.
- Connects people and places by providing ease of movement within and through developments.
- Creates places of distinction and enduring quality.

**8.47** In order to accommodate the growth levels proposed within the Urban Extension and to ensure the new development is correctly planned, the developers for the Urban Extension will be required to submit a masterplan. The Urban Extension will need to maintain appropriate links to the existing town and town centre to ensure that it is both integrated into and complimentary to the existing town. It is important the Urban Extension and its residents improves the vitality of the whole town.

**8.48** The preferred option represents a set of design principles which could be used to guide the masterplan.

### Preferred Option: Design Principles for the Urban Extension

The Councils preferred approach is to require the developers of the Urban Extension to prepare and submit a masterplan as part of any planning application. A masterplan would frame the delivery of the planned growth to the south of the town and the Council will work with the developers to prepare this.

To supplement and guide the masterplan in order to achieve the satisfactory delivery of the planned growth, the Council could include a policy on design options. The policy could take into account the following key principles:

- Ensuring integration into the existing town, preventing further elongation of the settlement away from the centre, reducing travel distances to new and existing services and amenities and integrating the new and existing communities.
- Protect, and where possible, enhance the character of the town centre.
- Protect land with high environmental and landscape sensitivity.
- Located in areas at least risk of flooding.
- Makes efficient use of greenfield land.
- Incorporates a new distributor road.
- Enhances pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre.
- Enhance and create new connections between green spaces within the town. It will also be necessary for the Urban Extension to provide new open spaces.

**8.49** The benefits of including a policy option on the provision of a masterplan to accompany an application is that they can provide a co-ordinated and cohesive approach to the planning of the town as a whole. A masterplan also offers the opportunity for early engagement between developers and key stakeholders. In addition to these, masterplanning can also:

- Help shape the three-dimensional physical form that responds to local economic and social dynamics.
- Build consensus about the future of an area and identify priorities for action.
- Increase land values, making schemes more viable.
- Attract investment.
- Provide clarity to the roles and responsibilities of organisations.
- Help to stitch new developments seamlessly into an existing community and heritage.
- Help co-ordinate the activities of different services in an area.

### Question 32

Do you consider these principles are appropriate to help guide the masterplan and shape the development of the town? Are there any other principles you think we should consider for inclusion within the policy?

### Local Centres

**8.50** Local centres located within the Urban Extension would allow the opportunity for a limited level of local shopping facilities and services within walking distance of the new residential development. Local centres would allow residents to meet their needs locally and the approach is considered suitable due to the size of the development proposed. The Retail and Town Centre Study 2010 considered the role of the Urban Extension for the provision

of increased comparison and convenience floorspace. The Study suggests that, should retail provision not be able to be accommodated within the town centre, then a local centre could be sequentially preferable. Local centres can be used to provide a range of everyday services including but not limited to:

- Cafes, Restaurants and Public Houses
- Retail development
- Bring recycling facilities
- Community buildings and facilities
- Children's play
- Health provision

**8.51** The need for this form of facility within the Urban Extension was recognised through the responses to the Issues and Options consultation for the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan and it is considered important to help to deliver a sustainable pattern of development. In order to help to facilitate sustainable development any facility should be accessible by modes other than single occupancy car use i.e. cycling and walking. The delivery of any local centre would need to be phased in accordance with residential development. It will however be important to ensure that the facilities included within a local centre do not harm the vitality and viability of the town centre. Furthermore any planning application for a local centre would need to demonstrate that the development proposed is appropriate in terms of its scale and position within the development, the context of the surrounding area, and whether it is likely to be of interest to retailers and the community. The Local Plan will investigate this type of facility, and the appropriate size of such a facility, and it will be guided by the findings of the Retail and Town Centre Study 2014.

## Issue 14

### Transport

**8.52** Transport is an essential element to planning the development of Attleborough and particularly the Urban Extension. The requirements for a link road to service the development of an Urban Extension within the town were highlighted through the Core Strategy. In addition to the link road, other transport works were also likely to be needed around the town centre. Since the Issues and Options consultation for the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan was carried out, significant pieces of evidence base have been completed looking at the transport requirements and solutions for the town. Three individual studies were prepared by Capita Property and Infrastructure Ltd and completed in 2013 which looked at the following topics:

- Smarter Choices: promoting modes of travel other than single-occupancy car use.
- Town Centre Study: examined the current town centre highway network including the gyratory.
- Link Road Study: considered the technical feasibility of the proposed link road routes.

**8.53** This section highlights the key findings of the individual reports, and the options they present for Attleborough.

#### Smarter Choices Study

**8.54** The study looked at a range of options for Attleborough and is set around a Smarter Choices Mode Hierarchy. This hierarchy is based on the concepts of reducing the need to travel in the first place and promoting other options of travel including walking, cycling and public transport measures. A key element of promoting sustainable transport options is the promotion of use of the railway and particularly Eccles Road Station. The study looks at providing safe walking routes from Eccles Road Station to the Snetterton Heath Employment Area. In order to achieve this, improvements to the Norwich to Cambridge rail service are likely to be needed.



**8.55** The study also looked at opportunities for walking and cycling improvements in the town centre. The intention of these improvements was to compliment the more substantive highway interventions proposed through the town centre report. A full list of interventions is included within the Smarter Choices report, however some of the key improvements recommended within the study include:

- New cycle link across Gaymer's Meadow, and conversion to a bridleway.
- New pedestrian and cycle bridge over the railway, linking the town with the Urban Extension.
- New footway south of London Road.
- New foot/cycleway linking Eccles Road Station to Snetterton Heath.
- Resurfacing to improve attractiveness of links.
- Improved signage to highlight cyclists.
- Better maintenance of existing routes.

### **Town Centre Study**

**8.56** The Town Centre Study provides a holistic look at both Attleborough's gyratory system and also its travelling environment. The study examines the existing state of the network and proposes a range of potential interventions to aid capacity and traffic flow. The Link Road Study modelled a number of different scenarios to consider the impact of the growth levels on the town centre environment and this was fed back into the Town Centre Study. The town centre environment has a number of physical constraints imposed by buildings and on-street parking provision which restrict the flow of traffic around the town. In addition to this, there are also historic landmarks situated at some junction intersections which restrict potential interventions in these areas.

**8.57** The Town Centre Study indicates that if no improvements are made to the town centre, there is capacity for approximately a further 225 dwellings without detriment to the highway network. However, any planning application would need to provide detailed evidence of the lack of detriment to the highway network through Transport Assessments. In order to allow for further growth in Attleborough, the study recommends the provision of signalised junctions at the following junctions:

- Surrogate St/Station Rd/Connaught Rd,
- Norwich Rd/Besthorpe Rd/Surrogate St/Church St and
- Surrogate St/Thieves Lane/Station Rd/Connaught Rd

**8.58** The study recommends that the use of signalised junctions would deliver significant improvements to the town centre, greater than what could be achieved through roundabouts or priority junctions. This preferred approach of providing signalised junctions has an anticipated cost of £932,000, which is greater than the cost of either roundabouts or priority junctions. It would be expected that these costs would be met by developers, as they would be required to mitigate the effects of the increased traffic from new residential and employment developments. As Part of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership growth deal the New Anglia LEP has secured £173.3m from the Government's Local Growth Fund to support economic growth in the area. In partnership with local partners and private developers this fund will bring forward further additional investment. The Growth Deal supports a package of projects that will help enable the development of key growth locations across the region and includes the provisional allocation of £4.6m in 2016/17 and beyond for the Attleborough Sustainable Transport project.

**8.59** In addition to the signalisation of junctions, the Town Centre Study also notes the need for further improvements. A key element of this would be altering the existing parts of the gyratory system which are one-way for two-way traffic. This would mean that streets such as Surrogate Street would be widened to cater for two-way traffic. Furthermore, if these improvements were implemented in conjunction with a link road, the study recommends that HGV restrictions are enforced for the town centre. The impact of a HGV restriction would be two-fold, firstly it would aid traffic movements within the town centre, and secondly it would also reduce concerns about the dominance of HGV's within the town centre environment.

## Link Road Study

**8.60** The provision of a link road to service the Urban Extension was included within the requirements for Attleborough set out within the Core Strategy. The link road is a critical piece of infrastructure which will unlock the planned growth identified for the town. The study identifies the potential of three routes between the Buckenham Road and London Road. The three routes were based around differed road types and the merits of these. They included a street type road with low speed limits, a bypass road on the edge of the potential development and a combination of the two

**8.61** Each of the link road route / type was assessed against their ability to meet the following transport objectives:

- To cater for traffic generated by the proposed development south of the railway.
- To reduce traffic impact in the town centre.
- To act as a diversionary route for traffic between London Road and the B1077.
- To provide more appropriate access to and from Bunns Bank and Gaymer's industrial estate in relation to the wider highway network.
- To function as an integrated public transport route.
- To provide street-like characteristics to the east and link road characteristics to the west.

**8.62** In addition to the objectives listed above, the study also considered a range of physical factors such as ecology, archaeology and the landscape. Following these studies the Council subsequently commissioned a study to review the costs of bringing forward the three technically deliverable routes. The Attleborough Link Road report by Savills focused on the delivery of the routes and understanding in greater detail the legal and land acquisition costs, impact on residential property, businesses, and potentially compensation payments for these formally blighted or affected by the proposed link road. The advice contained in this further report was the third route was the least expensive, in terms of land acquisition costs and potential compensation costs and that the least number of residents and businesses would be affected.

**8.63** The following text summarises the preferred route and the justification in light of the alternatives.

### Link Road Route 1

**8.64** Although this is the shortest and potentially the least expensive route in terms of physical infrastructure costs, its location would mean that it would pass through the central section of the residential development. Here the route would predominantly serve a mixture of through traffic and traffic from the Urban Extension. It would not be suited to serve traffic from HGV's which was one of the original intentions of the link road in order to remove them from the town centre gyratory.

**8.65** At its western edge this route would go through an area of sporadic development and as such has the potential to impact upon properties both during the construction and operational stage. Due to the roads location, central within the development and based upon the level of traffic using the road, the route has the potential to cause severance between the northern and southern sections of the Urban Extension. It will require bridges over the railway and Poplar Road and these will be close to existing properties. The route however is not likely to have a major impact upon the ecology and landscape of the area.

### Link Road Route 2

**8.66** This route is further south than route 1; however it would still be located within the Urban Extension. Due to the roads location, it contains a number of street-like characteristics, and parts of the route will need to contain a reduced speed limit. This would however impact upon the roads ability to act as a diversionary route, and there is the potential it may not be suitable for HGVs.



**8.67** Similar to route 1; at its western edge the route goes through an area of sporadic development and as such has the potential to impact upon properties both during the construction and operational stage. It will require bridges over the railway and Poplar Road. Apart from at the western edge, the option is not likely to have a major impact upon the landscape of the area. The route is not likely to have a major impact upon the ecology of the area.

**8.68** Due to the roads location, central within the development and based upon the level of traffic using the road, it has the potential to cause severance between the northern and southern sections of the Urban Extension. In terms of previous stakeholder comments, of particular relevance were comments made by Network Rail who raised concerns in respect of route 2 due to a potential effect of a bridge crossing on signalling on this section of track.

**8.69** Whilst being technically deliverable in highway terms routes 1 and 2 are less preferable when considered against the Link Road Study's objectives and a significant number of residents and businesses would likely be affected. Therefore, in considering a preferred route in both transport and delivery terms in the round, the transport benefits and reduced impact on residents and businesses in the area indicate that route 3 is preferable.

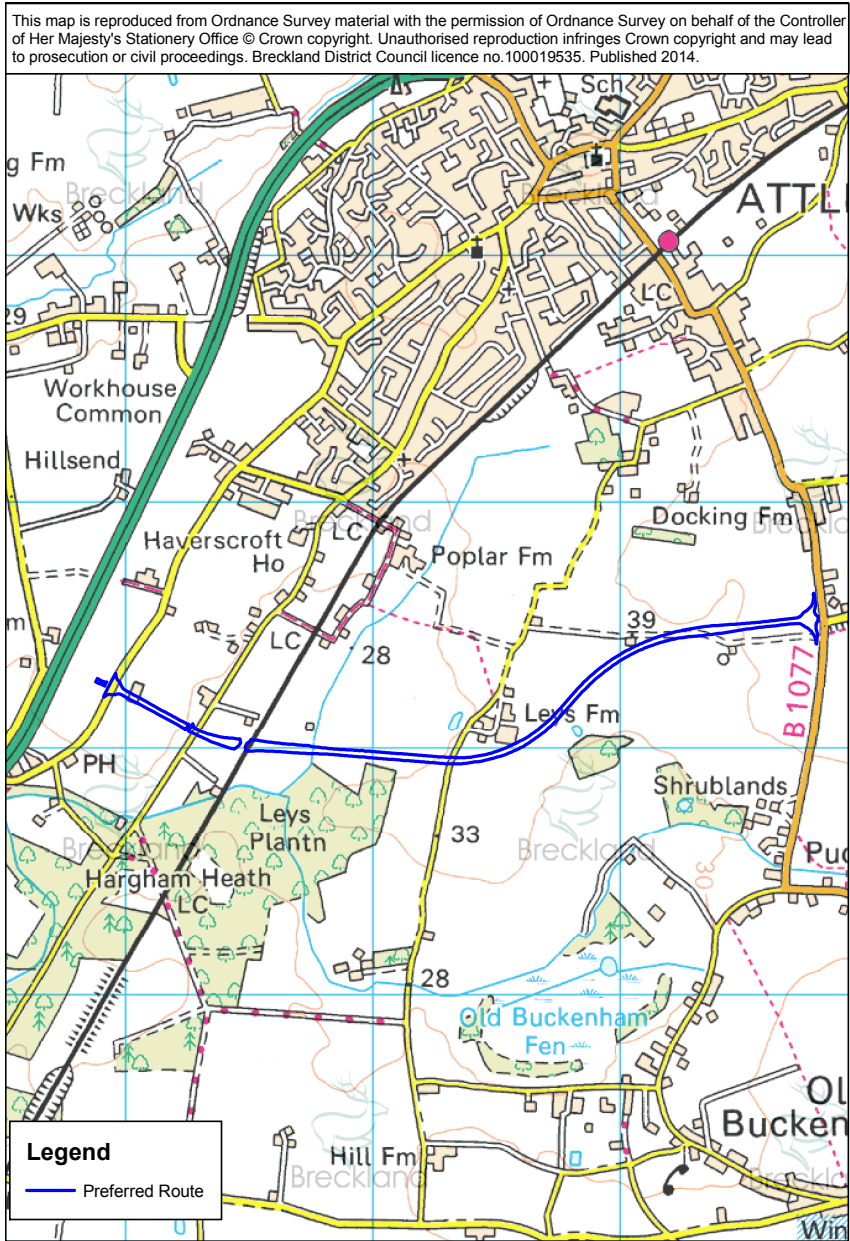
### **Link Road Route 3 - Preferred Route**

**8.70** The third route is located to the south of the Urban Extension and is the preferred route identified within the study. The indicative route can be seen on the map below. The road will act as a diversionary route between London Road and the B1077 and due to its lack of street-like characteristics it will be suitable for HGVs. Overall this route offers the best diversionary impact, removing traffic from the centre of Attleborough. As the longest route it is however potentially the most expensive in terms of the overall cost of the highways infrastructure itself.

**8.71** The location of route 3 means that it passes close to a much smaller number of properties than the alternatives. There will however still be visual and other environment impacts due in part to the bridge over the railway. The increased distance between this route and the properties are such that the visual impacts will be reduced. The eastern edge of route 3 has archaeological potential and this would need to be considered during construction. There are no known issues with ecology.

**8.72** Each of these routes has been subject to a sustainability appraisal which has considered the individual routes abilities to impact on climate change and air pollutions, particularly through their abilities to reduce localised air pollution. The sustainability appraisal has also considered the routes abilities to impact on the landscape of Attleborough and key economic goals such as improving the efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability. Being less integral with the development and further away from the town centre, route 3 has the most potential to aid the removal of traffic from the town centre and reduced localised air pollution. The eastern edge of the road joins the Buckenham Road near Bunns Bank, whilst the western edge is closest to the Buckenham Lodge Roundabout on the A11. This route is also able to take HGV's which should create an important diversion away from the town centre.

**8.73** The Link Road Study shows that the three routes are all technically deliverable; however it indicated that route 3 could be preferred to the alternatives. One of the fundamental reasons behind the new road is to aid in the removal of through traffic from the town centre of Attleborough and unlock the planned growth. Route 3 as the preferred route has the potential to provide the greatest diversionary effect, which was a fundamental reason behind the new road. In considering the further financial evidence on the delivery of the routes in terms of land acquisition and potential compensation costs the Savills report concludes that the third route is the least expensive, and that in order to deliver routes 1 and 2 a significant number of residents and businesses would be affected. For these reasons the preference is not to take forward routes 1 and 2. Route 3 is the preferred option.



**Figure 8.3 Attleborough Link Road - Preferred Route**

### Question 33

Please give us your views on the preferred approach to transport in Attleborough

## Issue 15

### Employment

**8.74** The vision for the district retains the A11 as the key growth area for both housing and employment uses. The dualling of the A11 will enhance this focus with the potential for a growth corridor from Thetford in the south to Norwich, with Attleborough retain its central location within this. The Council has commissioned an Employment Growth Study which considers the employment needs and existing employment sites over the plan period to 2031. The Core Strategy had indicated the requirement for 10ha of employment land needed to be allocated within Attleborough and a further 20ha of employment land at Snetterton Heath. The full outcomes of the Employment Growth Study are considered within the Economy section, however this section will update the issue in relation to Attleborough.

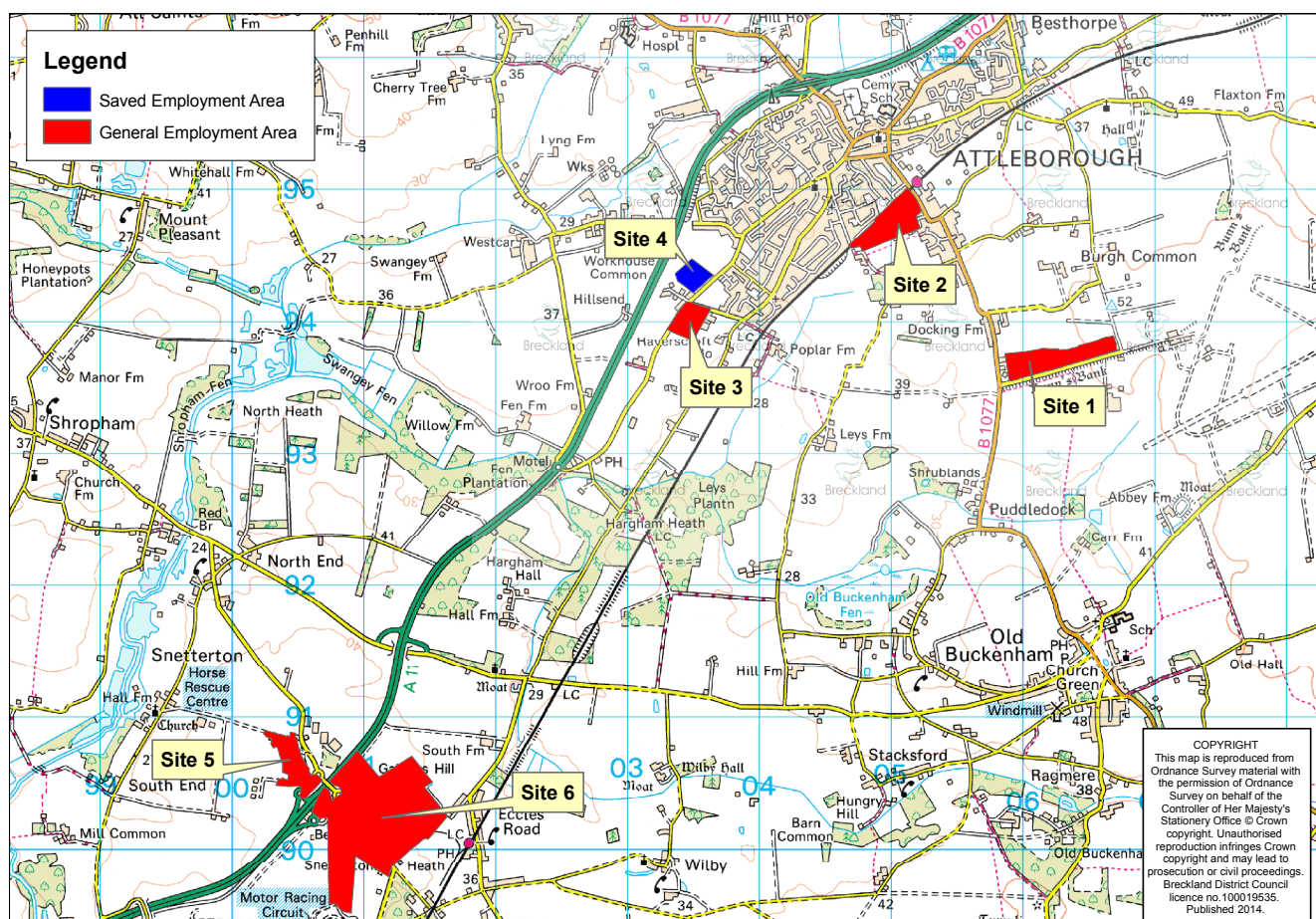
**8.75** The Employment Growth Study indicates that the commercial property market within Attleborough is predominantly focused around the industrial sector. The study notes that the town has good access to the A11 and local agents indicate that vacancy rates are relatively low. Demand for units is mainly from local businesses and the requirements are predominantly for smaller units. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the level of development activity at Snetterton Heath, which has resulted in it having more employment space than Attleborough. With its connection to motor racing and exceptionally good access onto the A11, the employment area appeals to firms in either distribution or engineering industries. There remains a significant quantum of undeveloped employment land at Snetterton.

**8.76** Overall, the Employment Growth Study indicates that Attleborough and Snetterton Heath represents some of the districts strongest commercial market locations due to their good access to the A11. The majority of the employment site pipeline comes from undeveloped land on existing employment estates. In addition to this, there is also a saved employment allocation to the west of Attleborough. Whilst Attleborough and Snetterton Heath continue to attract demand from local occupiers, the view amongst local property market agents is that the existing available supply would be sufficient to meet future demand with no additional employment land needed. This differs from the approach which had been indicated through the Core Strategy, which sought further employment land allocations.

**8.77** The Employment Growth Study also reviewed the existing general employment areas within Attleborough and Snetterton and considered its strategic location, proximity to labour and services, adjoining land uses, development constraints and also the sites attractiveness to the market. The following summarises the findings for the individual sites:

- **Site 1: Bunns Bank Industrial Estate:** This site represents the largest employment area within Attleborough, transport links to the site are currently poor with access currently via Attleborough's gyratory system. Once the link road is completed this will improve access to Bunns Bank from the A11. The site is also contained to the south by Bunns Bank Scheduled Monument.
- **Site 2: Gaymer Industrial Estate:** Site is located next to the station and is within walking distance of the town centre. It represents the second largest employment space within Attleborough, however a planning application has now been submitted for part of the site for retail uses. The estate suffers due to poor transport connections, however similarly to Bunns Bank this will improve with the provision of a link road. Whilst some of the units are dated and have a low specification on the site, vacancy rates remain low.
- **Site 3: Havercroft Industrial Estate:** The site is located to the south of Attleborough off London Road and has good access to transport links. The Employment Growth Study considers this to be a good quality employment site.

- **Site 4: Land of London Road:** This is a saved allocation from the Local Plan, it has good access to the towns transport network. The undeveloped nature of the site means that it is assessed as being of average quality within the study. Significant residential development is now occurring on land around the site.
- **Site 5: Snetterton North:** The site has been fully developed and currently only one unit is available to let. The site has good access onto the A11 trunk road, and overall the Employment Growth Study considered it to perform well against the assessment criteria.
- **Site 6: Snetterton South:** This represents one of the larger employment areas within the district amounting to 64.7 hectares of land, approximately half of which is currently developed. The site has good accessibility to the A11 however there are energy capacity concerns which may constrain the development of the site.



**Figure 8.4 General Employment Areas in Attleborough and Snetterton Heath**

**8.78** The National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 22 seeks to avoid the long-term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. However, the Council's preferred approach is to retain the existing general employment areas. All of these sites are currently in employment use, with the exception of saved employment land on Norwich Road. The existing sites have all been assessed through the Employment Growth Study and have scored well within the assessment. The existing employment land within the town provides a sufficient quantity to meet the needs of the area up to 2031. The majority of the capacity for employment land within Attleborough comes from land allocated at Snetterton Heath South. If this land does not become available it may be necessary to allocate further land in the future.



### Question 34

Do you consider the Council's preferred approach to retain the existing employment areas within Attleborough and Snetterton Heath remains appropriate?

### Issue 16

#### Social Infrastructure

**8.79** The delivery of the urban extension will need to be supported by social infrastructure to meet the needs that will arise from the residents of the urban extension. These services include library provision, primary health services, multi-purpose community buildings, education and the emergency services. The EDAW Growth and Infrastructure Study 2009 lists the requirements for community infrastructure. The following table summarises the key social infrastructure requirements for Attleborough:

Social Infrastructure Type	Requirements
Education	<p>Primary Schools and Nursery Provision - Two 420 place (two form entry) primary schools and one 210 place (single form entry) will be needed. New nursery provision extending to 336 places is also required. It would be expected that the nursery provision should be co-located within the new primary schools.</p> <p>Secondary Schools - The development will require additional secondary school places for up to 560 pupils (aged 11-16) and 180 sixth form places (ages 16-19)</p> <p>Chapel Road Complex Needs School - The existing school in Attleborough is no longer fit for purpose and is unable to expand. Norfolk County Council are currently investigating the relocation of the school to Old Buckenham parish on land adjoining the High School and Primary School.</p>
Health Care	<p>A primary care centre should be provided within the urban extension. This centre should include the provision for 3-4 GP's and also a dentists.</p>
Community Buildings	<p>New multi-purpose community facilities will be needed to support the community as it develops. This should be in the form of 2 x 300m<sup>2</sup> facilities which are capable of supporting the provision of a satellite library, information and learning resources to support the new community.</p>

**Table 8.4 Social Infrastructure Requirements**

**8.80** There will be an ongoing dialogue with Norfolk County Council, as both the education and library providers, as to the range and scope of facilities needed to meet the growth requirements of the town. In addition to this, there will also be an ongoing dialogue with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in regards to health provision.

## Issue 17

### Town Centre Strategy

**8.81** The recently published Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) places emphasis on developing strategies for town centres that are appropriate and realistic to the role of centres in the hierarchy. Although each centre is unique the challenge generally across the district will be to capitalise on expenditure growth by securing investment and maintain each centres market-share in face of growing competition within the sub-region.

**8.82** Town centre strategies should seek to support the town centre vitality and viability and be based on the current state of a centre and set strategies to meet the identified need in full. The Council have commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to carry out an updated assessment of the core retail evidence base in the district and this emerging evidence will help inform the development of appropriate strategies for the five market towns around the level of identified need in the plan period.

**8.83** Overall Breckland has good access to surrounding regional and sub-regional centres and the outflow of comparison goods expenditure is significant. In comparison, retention rates for convenience expenditure are high, partly due to the rural nature of the district and the availability of choice. Within Attleborough independent retailers make up the majority of occupiers.

**8.84** As reflected in chapter 6, food store and bulky good commitments will absorb much of the 2010 identified expenditure capacity in Attleborough and it is expected that the revised projections from the 2014 study will continue to reflect this trend. In developing an appropriate strategy the challenge will be to capitalise on growth by securing investment. The continued emphasis should be for Attleborough to take advantage of investment opportunities through the continued scope to diversify the town centre in order to attract investment from the evening economy, leisure and entertainment whilst maintaining a focus on maintaining market share in convenience expenditure and increasing comparison floorspace in order to aid higher retention rates.

**8.85** Planned retail commitments in the town (Banham Poultry site) should help the town increase its market share and increase retention rates. However some retail development will be necessary to maintain existing market share.

**8.86** Attleborough town centre generally comprises of independent retailers, there is a limited selection of comparison shops such as clothing, a good range of service provision and a lower than average proportion of restaurants and cafés. The centre suffers from congestion.

**8.87** For development out of the town centre the NPPF sets a threshold for the assessment of impacts on town centres for proposals over 2,500 sq m gross where there is no local threshold set. There is the potential for a single development to exceed the floorspace projections and therefore impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. As part of the town centre strategy / overall retail strategy it is considered that a local impact threshold should be proposed for Attleborough and this is detailed in the main retail section of this document.

**8.88** The preferred approach for a retail strategy in Attleborough is to set policies to:

- Help maintain and improve market share of the centre.
- Public realm improvements to help attract investment.
- Aid diversity of uses.
- Provide for choice and flexibility.

### Question 35

Do you agree with what the development of a town centre strategy and vision should focus on?

### Town Centre Boundaries

**8.89** The existing town centre boundary reflects the proposed definition in the main retail section. The Retail and Town Centre Study 2010 confirmed that the existing primary and secondary frontages remain relative at the time. The following figure shows the frontages within the town and also the primary shopping area and the town centre boundary.

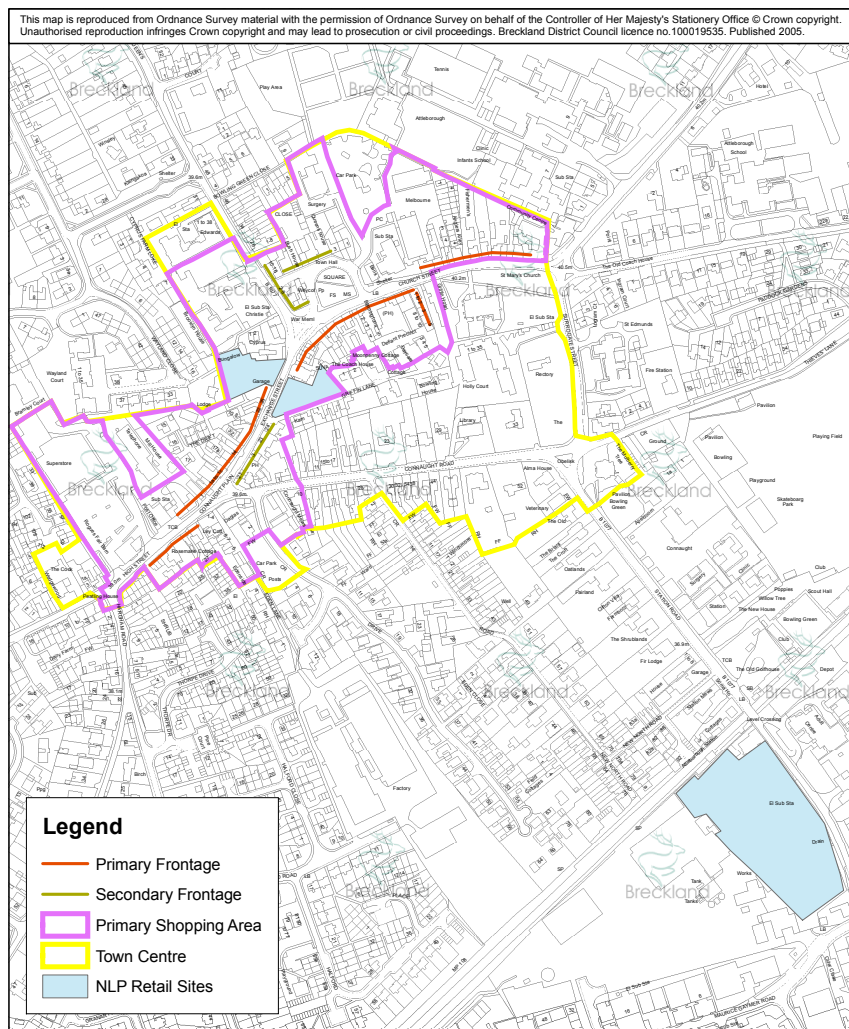


Figure 8.5 Attleborough Retail

### Question 36

Do you consider the existing town centre boundary, primary and secondary frontages remain appropriate?

## Sites

**8.90** The NPPF (paragraph 23) indicated that Local Plans, should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure and other development needed in town centres and that this should be through a sequential test.

**8.91** The Retail and Town Centre Study 2010 included sites within Attleborough as having potential for redevelopment opportunities. The former Gaymer's Cider Works was originally included, however this site has already been considered.

**8.92** The other sites are:

- Petrol station on Exchange Street - this is a small site of 0.2 ha and could accommodate a development up to 1,000 sq m gross. The site is within the existing primary shopping area and could accommodate up to three units. The 2010 retail study considers the site to have a reasonable development prospect and is available within the short to medium term.
- Land at the corner of Griffin Land and Exchange Street – This site is located adjacent to the petrol station site. It is relatively small and could provide up to 500 sq m gross floorspace. The study assesses it as having good development prospects within the short term.

### Question 37

In order to provide choice and flexibility are there any other sites in and around Attleborough town centre which the Council should consider?

## Issue 18

### Natural and Historic Environment

**8.93** As Attleborough develops it will be important to protect its natural and historic environment. The Landscape Character Assessment Settlement Fringe Study (2007) has classified the landscape around Attleborough as having a moderate sensitivity to change. The study does however show that significant variations exist in the landscape character around Attleborough. It is characterised by tributary farmland, river valleys, higher areas of plateau farmland and heathland. Land to the north and east of the town retains parkland features which were associated with Attleborough Hall. These landscapes have varying capacities to accommodate new development without it being detrimental to the landscape.

**8.94** Key landscape features would need to be protected as part of the development process, as these help to form the intrinsic character of the area. These key features include the field boundaries, hedgerows and woodlands blocks within the area being considered for the urban extension. These key features afford rich habitats for wildlife, whilst also providing a sense of place within the Urban Extension. The integration of key landscape features into the new development will help to minimise loss of biodiversity. Part of this would be considered within the design principles for the Urban Extension.



**8.95** Rivers and streams are identified as a national Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), habitat and water courses surrounding the town (particularly areas designated as Norfolk Valley Fens) contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the area. Around Attleborough, the water courses include sites designated nationally and internationally in the case of Swangey Fen. The protection of these areas will encourage new and protect existing biodiversity.

**8.96** Alongside the natural environment, consideration needs to be given to Attleborough's historic environment. Attleborough contains a number of listed buildings and scheduled monuments in addition to the town's conservation area which was designated in 1975. Further work is needed to understand the impact on the historic landscape character of the preferred growth location.

### Question 38

Do you agree with the analysis on landscape sensitivity? If you do not agree, please explain the issues we should further consider.

### Issue 19

#### Attleborough Settlement Boundary

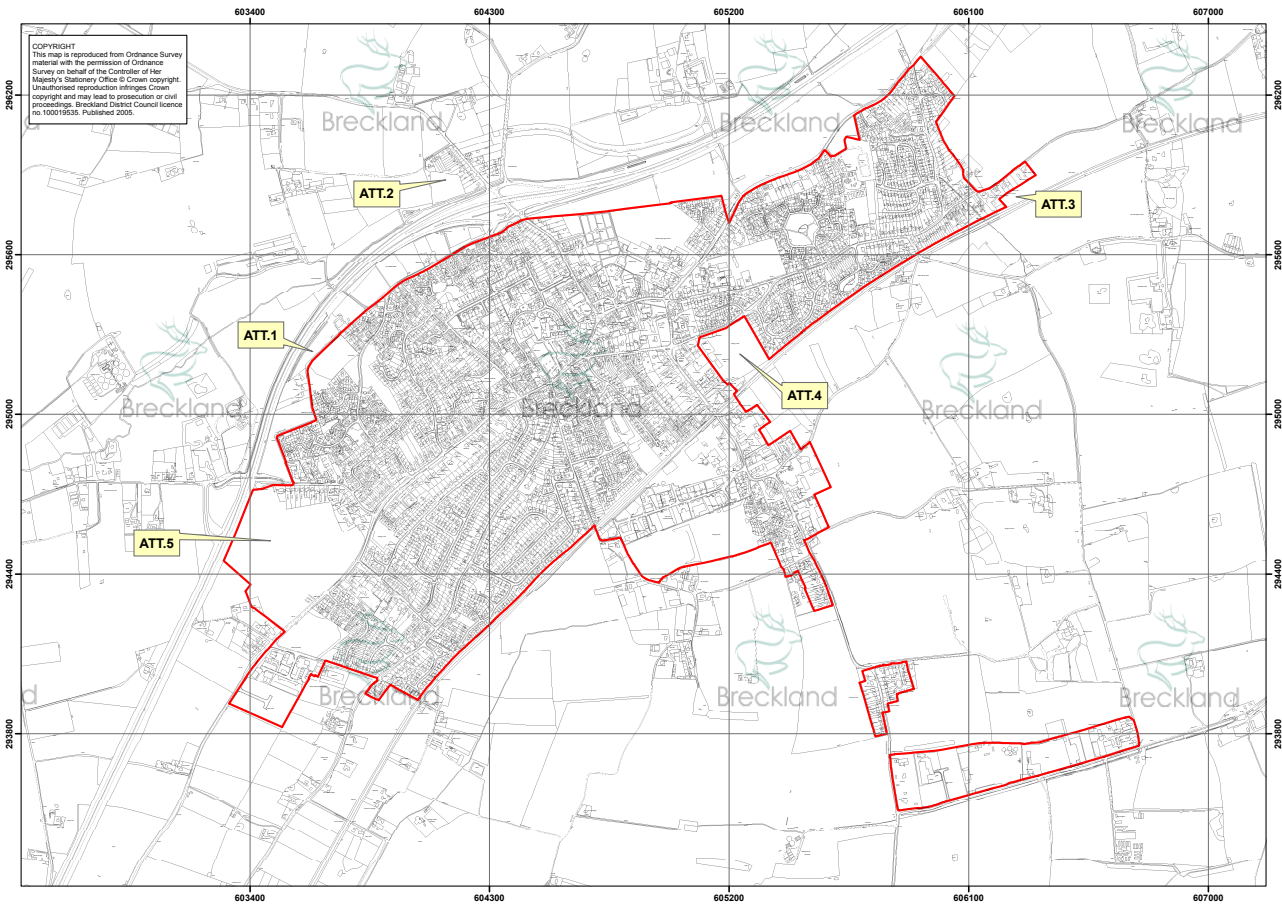
**8.97** Due to the cessation of the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan, the settlement boundaries within that plan area have not been reviewed since the last Local Plan was adopted in 1999, as they were rolled forward into the Proposals Map for the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD. Settlement boundaries for the rest of the district were reviewed through either the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD or the Thetford Area Action Plan DPD, both of which were adopted in 2012. Essentially this relates to the settlement boundaries of Attleborough, Besthorpe, Eccles Road (Quidenham) and Snetterton North End.

**8.98** Due to the review of settlement boundaries discussed within section 8.4 'Rural Settlements and Countryside' the only settlement boundary reviewed here is Attleborough's. The settlement boundary surrounding Attleborough reflects the built extent at the 1999 Local Plan and as such it no longer reflects the development on the ground. It is therefore proposed to amend the settlement boundary, to reflect existing permissions and also to incorporate the Urban Extension. There is a further settlement boundary to the north of the A11 on the Ellingham Road in an area known as Baconsthorpe. The following amendments are proposed:

Reference	Amendment	Reason
ATT.1	Extend the settlement boundary to include the Norfolk Homes development at Carvers Lane 3PL/2010/1041/F	This extension will incorporate the existing planning permission which is currently under construction. The extension to the settlement boundary in this area will reflect the extent of existing development
ATT.2	Remove settlement boundary from the area known as Baconsthorpe on the Ellingham Road.	This area contains a small settlement boundary around the existing development at Baconsthorpe. There is no space inside the existing boundary for further development without harm to the form and character of the area. This area represents the only settlement boundary to the north of the A11, with the A11 creating both a physical and visual barrier between

Reference	Amendment	Reason
		Baconsthorpe and the town. The Landscape Character Assessment notes that this area to the north of the A11 is more sensitive to change.
ATT.3	Extend the settlement boundary to the rear of the properties on Silver Street Besthorpe.	The existing settlement boundary in this part of Besthorpe does not follow any identifiable feature on the ground. Furthermore the settlement boundary currently dissects the properties known as Church View. Moving the settlement boundary in this area will create a more logical defensible settlement boundary.
ATT.4	Tighten the settlement boundary to exclude the playing field at Thieves Lane.	This area of land is currently designated open space. Due to the sites location, at the edge of the settlement boundary, it is possible to remove the settlement boundary to provide greater protection to the open space. There is currently a shortage of open space within Attleborough. This approach has been taken within the other market towns in the District.
ATT.5	Extend the settlement boundary around the development at London Road	This extension will incorporate the existing planning permission which is currently under construction. The extension to the settlement boundary in this area will reflect the extent of the existing approved development.
Future Change	Extend the settlement boundary to include the land designated for the Urban Extension.	Extending the settlement boundary around the allocation for the Urban Extension, will provide a logical boundary which reflects the full extent of future development within the town. Please note that this change is not currently shown on the map as the exact land uses within the Urban Extension are not currently known.

**Table 8.5 Amendments to Attleborough Settlement Boundary**



**Figure 8.6 Proposed changes to Attleborough Settlement Boundary**

**Question 39**

Do you agree with the proposed alterations to Attleborough's settlement boundary?

## 8.2.2 Dereham

**8.99** The Core Strategy defined Dereham as a Market Town which will experience significant employment growth coupled with housing growth over the plan period. Growth within the town was intended to support its position as the administrative and service centre of mid-Norfolk. The town has good transportation links with access onto the A47, which has helped to boost its economic base. Dereham has a good range of retail and service uses including convenience and comparison shopping, services, entertainment and community facilities. The Core Strategy allocated 600 new homes within the town which were allocated through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD on three sites. The Core Strategy limited further potential growth within Dereham due to constraints around both education and utility capacity.

**8.100** In addition to housing growth, the Core Strategy also sought the release of 5-10ha of employment land with the intention for the delivery of 900 -1,800 net additional jobs by 2021. The Site Specifics allocated two sites for employment development. Dereham has the second largest retail offer within the district after Thetford. The Core Strategy identified the need to allocate further comparison and convenience floorspace within the town, which occurred through the Site Specifics on land at Georges Road/Nunn's Way and Cowper Road.



Figure 8.7 Dereham Windmill

### Issue 20

#### Housing Growth

**8.101** The Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD allocated the residential development for 600 homes which had been set out within the Core Strategy. The new residential dwellings were allocated across three sites within the town all of which were accessed off Norwich Road. The following table summarises the status of each of these allocations.

Site Reference	Number of Dwellings	Planning Status
D1: The Old Maltings	180	No application submitted
D2: Land off Greenfields Road	220	Outline planning application submitted. Site currently has the decision to grant planning permission subject to the agreement of the section 106.

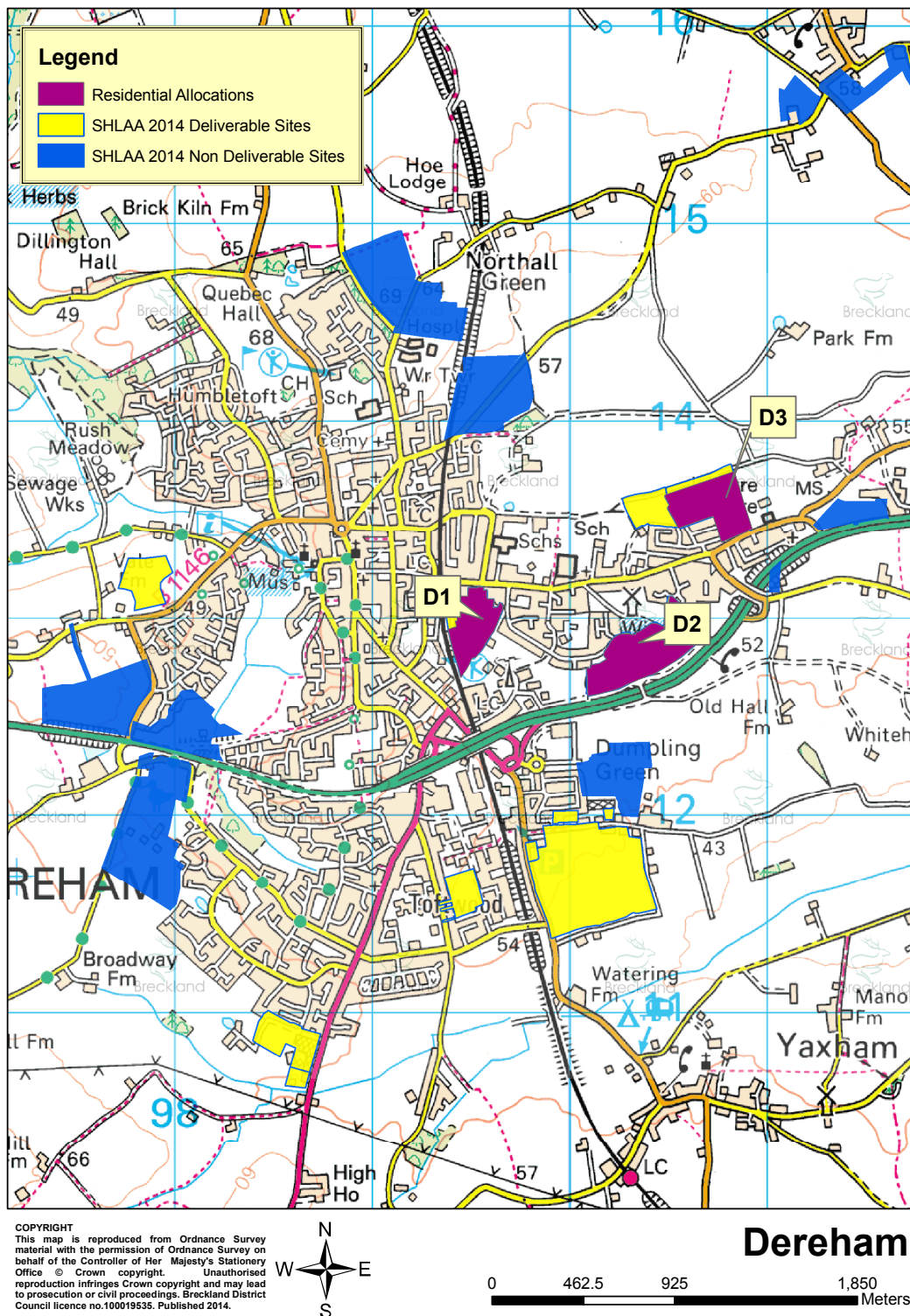
Site Reference	Number of Dwellings	Planning Status
D3: Land East of Windmill Avenue	200	Planning permission granted. Site is in the ownership of Taylor Wimpey and is currently under construction.

**Table 8.6 Site Allocations in Dereham**

**8.102** The housing allocations for Dereham which were included within the Core Strategy were constrained due to issues of infrastructure capacity. This particularly referred to secondary education and the treatment of waste water. Secondary education within Dereham is provided through two high schools, Northgate and Neatherd. Both of these schools are landlocked and as such there is limited ability for further expansion of either school to increase capacity. In relation to waste water there is capacity constraints within the Dereham treatment works, however Anglian Water have recently upgraded the Mattishall treatment works which has helped to relieve this constraint.

**8.103** The Council have recently updated their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The study looks at the development potential of the land within the town and identifies constraints which might prevent land from coming forward. The 2014 SHLAA identified within Dereham a constrained capacity for 1,767 dwellings. In order to meet the Council's housing requirements over the plan period, Dereham may need to see further housing allocations. The sites allocated through the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD met the requirements of the Core Strategy and will all include an element of affordable housing provision. The Council 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies a significant affordable housing need within Dereham. The housing need equates to 59 net new affordable dwellings to be completed within the town each year. In addition to this, the rural areas surrounding Dereham also have a high affordable housing need. The following map identifies the housing allocations and the SHLAA sites.





**Figure 8.8 Dereham Residential Land Allocations and SHLAA sites**

**8.104** The allocations from the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD focused development within Dereham on sites located to the east of the town along Norwich Road. These sites are well related to the town and its services and facilities. Two of these sites already have the benefit of planning permission and there is limited remaining space along Norwich Road which is available for development.

#### Question 40

Do you have a preferred location /direction for growth in Dereham? Please specify any reasoning and justification.

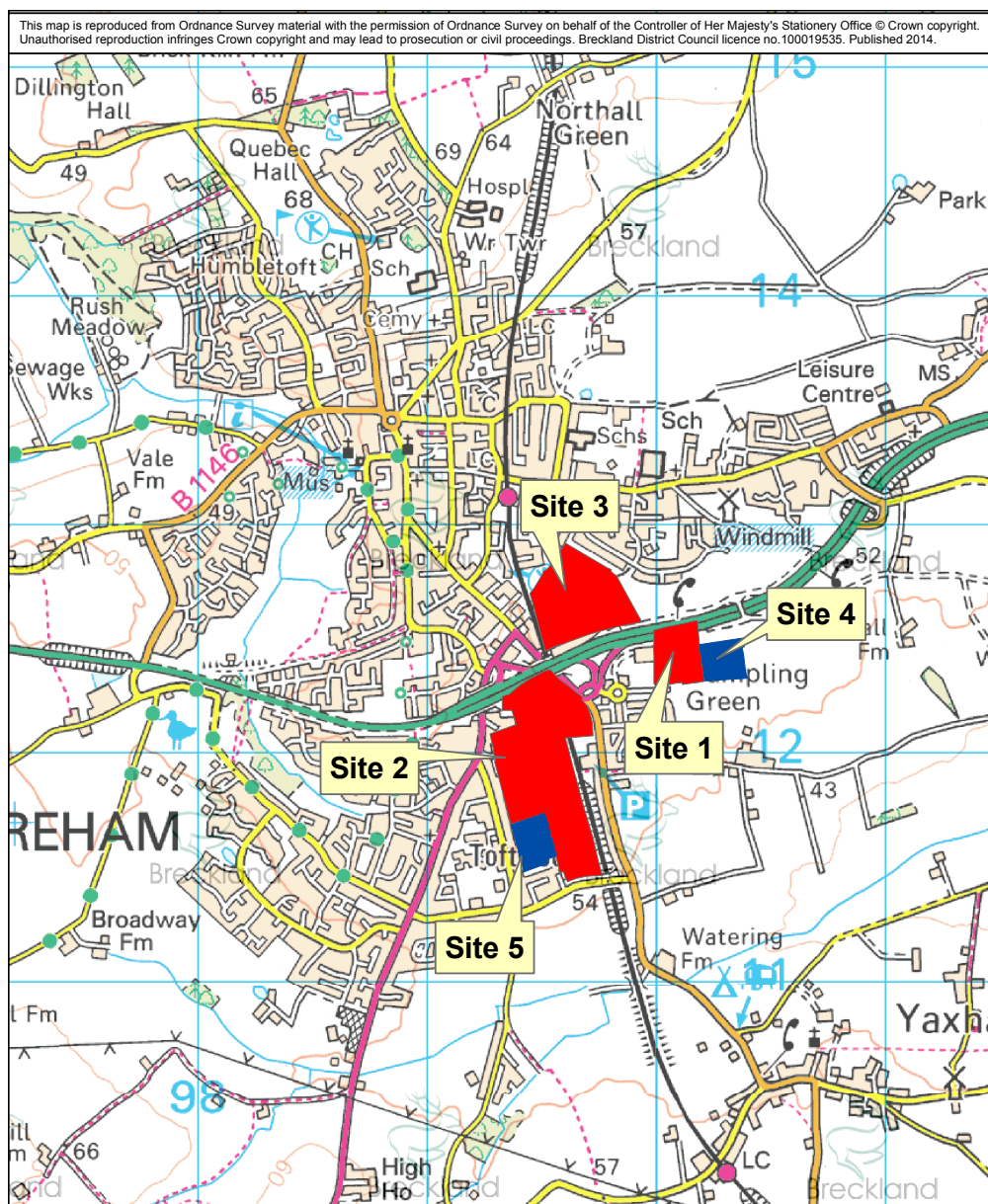
**8.105** If you have any further land that you would like the Council to consider, further information is available in Call For Sites.

#### Issue 21

##### Employment

**8.106** Dereham has the second largest level of employment stock in the district after Thetford. An Employment Growth Study was completed in 2013 and considered the existing employment stock within the town and future requirements for employment space up to 2031. The Employment Growth Study notes that the requirements for office space within the town is limited, this is likely to be due to the proximity of the town to Norwich, where a greater variety of office space is provided. Overall, the Employment Growth Study observes there to be a moderate level of demand within Dereham. Within Dereham there are three existing employment areas, and two further sites which were allocated through the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD.

- **Site 1: Dereham Business Park** - This site is considered to be a very good employment site, the site has good access onto the A47 trunk road, and there is relatively undeveloped land remaining on the site. Additionally the build quality of the business park is high.
- **Site 2: Rashes Green Industrial Estate** - This is the largest employment area within Dereham and it comprises warehousing, light industrial and office units. The site is fully developed. It has good access to the A47 trunk road, overall the site is considered to be a relatively good employment area.
- **Site 3: Yaxham Road Industrial Estate** - This site is located next to the A47 junction and has excellent access to local services and the strategic road network. The industrial estate is nearly fully developed.
- **Site 4: Allocation at Dereham Business Park** - The site was allocated through the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD and forms an extension to the east of Dereham Business Park. The site is currently in agricultural use.
- **Site 5: Allocation at Rashes Green Industrial Estate** - This site forms a southerly extension to the Rashes Green Industrial Estate. It is surrounded by houses which could delimit industrial development. The site would need further infrastructure improvements prior to being developed.



**Figure 8.9 Dereham General Employment Areas**

**8.107** As demonstrated within Figure 8.9 'Dereham General Employment Areas' the town has a range of employment sites which currently serve the towns employment needs. Furthermore the majority of the sites are at least partially developed and in use. The existing employment sites were all assessed through the Employment Growth Study, the majority of which scored reasonably well against the assessment criteria. Most of the sites have good access onto the A47 trunk road. The retention of these employment sites in an employment use is therefore the preferred approach. The two new employment sites which were allocated through the Site Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD were also assessed within the Employment Growth Study. Neither of these sites are currently developed, and the study suggested that the extension to the Rashes Green employment area does not score as well due to its location near existing residential development. The NPPF at paragraph 22 states that planning policies should avoid the long-term protection of sites allocated for employment uses where there is no reasonable



prospect of a site being used for that purpose. The Local Plan could therefore consider the deallocation of employment land if it is not considered likely that it will come forward. However if sites are deallocated this could impact upon the level of supply within the town.

### Question 41

Do you consider the existing employment areas remain appropriate? Is there any other information you consider we should be aware of to inform future employment growth decision in Dereham?

### Issue 22

#### Town Centre Strategy

**8.108** The recently published Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) places emphasis on developing strategies for town centres that are appropriate and realistic to the role of centres in the hierarchy. Although each centre is unique, the challenge generally across the district will be to capitalise on expenditure growth by securing investment and maintain each centres market share in face of growing competition within the sub-region.

**8.109** Town centre strategies should seek to support the town centre vitality and viability and be based on the current state of a centre and set strategies to meet the identified need in full. The Council have commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to carry out an updated assessment of the core retail evidence base in the district and this emerging evidence will help inform the development of appropriate strategies for the five market towns around the level of identified need in the plan period.

**8.110** Overall Breckland has good access to surrounding regional and sub-regional centres and the outflow of comparison goods expenditure is significant. In comparison, retention rates for convenience expenditure are high, partly due to the rural nature of the district and the availability of choice. Dereham is the largest shopping centre in the north of the district, the centre is served by a number of car parks and all facilities / retail outlets are within walking distance. There is a good mix of national retailers and smaller independent shops. However there is a shortage of larger more modern premises and as recognised by the Retail and Town Centre Study 2010, it is perceived that there is a lack of a natural shopping circuit within the town.

**8.111** The NPPF sets a threshold for the assessment of impacts on town centres for proposals over 2,500 sq m gross where there is no local threshold set. There is the potential for a single development to exceed the floorspace projections for Dereham and therefore impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. As part of the town centre strategy / overall retail strategy it is considered that a local impact threshold should be proposed for Dereham and this is detailed in the main retail section of this document.

**8.112** In developing an appropriate town centre strategy consideration needs to be given to the current role in the hierarchy. Although one of the largest town centres in the district the town is located with good access onto the A47 and as such there is potential for high levels of leakage. With increased competition in surrounding towns the aim of the strategy should be to maintain market-share as expenditure levels increase. In a town centre strategy in Dereham the Council could develop policies to:

- Help maintain market-share of the centre.
- Public realm improvements to help attract investment.

- Aid diversity of uses.
- Provide for choice and flexibility including those to aid amalgamation of smaller units to form larger premises more appropriate to modern retailers needs.

## Question 42

Do you agree with what the development of a town centre strategy and vision should focus on?

### Town Centre Boundaries

**8.113** The existing town centre boundary reflects the proposed definition in the main retail section. The Retail and Town Centre Study 2010 confirmed that the existing primary and secondary frontages remain relative at the time. The following figure shows the frontages within the town and also the primary shopping area and the town centre boundary.

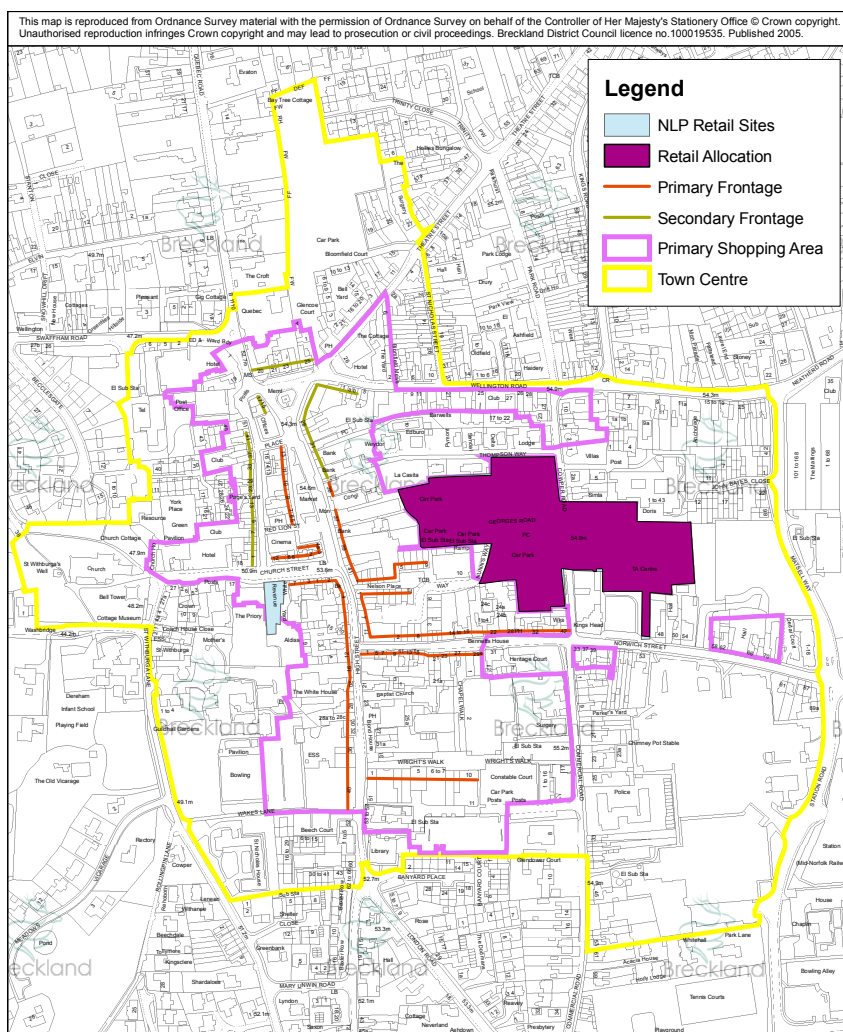


Figure 8.10 Dereham Retail

### Question 43

Do you consider the existing town centre boundary, primary and secondary frontages remain appropriate?

#### Sites

**8.114** The NPPF (paragraph 23) indicated that Local Plans, should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure and other development needed in town centres and that this should be through a sequential test.

**8.115** The 2010 Retail and Town Centre Study included three sites for potential redevelopment opportunities. Two of these, land north of Georges Road and TA Centre, were subsequently allocated for retail use through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD. The final site included within the Retail and Town Centre Study 2010 was the Inland Revenue Building located off Church Street. The building offers the opportunity for a small scale unit of approximately 200 sq m. This is a prime location in Dereham town centre and could offer the opportunity for an extension to the Aldiss Court Arcade.

### Question 44

In order to provide choice and flexibility are there any other sites in and around Dereham town centre which the Council should consider?

### Issue 23

#### Natural Environment

**8.116** The Landscape Character Assessment Settlement Fringe Study 2007 classifies the majority of the land surrounding Dereham as being of moderate-high sensitivity to change. To the north of the town is Neatherd Moor, a County Wildlife Site which has constrained growth in this area of the town. It forms part of the Dereham plateau and the land has a higher elevation in this area. To the west of Dereham (within Scarning parish) the landscape has a much smaller scale, defined by agricultural fields bounded by mixed hedgerows and ditches. In this area it is worth noting that sensitivity would be locally lower in the areas around the A47 corridor.

**8.117** Land to the south and south-east of Dereham has been classified as having a moderate sensitivity to change, this is based around the comparatively small distribution of significant landscape features and the eroded quality of much of the landscape. This is the least sensitive environment surrounding Dereham. However due to its open character, the Settlement Fringe Study considered that there is limited capacity to accommodate new development.

### Question 45

Do you agree with the analysis on landscape sensitivity? If you do not agree, please explain the issues we should further consider.

### 8.2.3 Swaffham

**8.118** Swaffham was defined as a Market Town within the settlement hierarchy contained within the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD. The settlement hierarchy considers Swaffham to be a mid-sized market town, with limited potential for future economic growth within the town. The town was considered to provide a good range of services and facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of its population. The Core Strategy allocated 250 new residential dwellings to the town, this reflected the levels of existing planning permissions which were extant at the point of the Core Strategies adoption. The largest of the extant planning permissions is on the old Redlands Tile site to the south of the town of Brandon Road for 335 dwellings. Construction has now started on this scheme.

**8.119** Swaffham has good transport links off the A47 which runs to the north of the town. The Core Strategy allocated a further 5ha of employment land for the town, which was included within the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD. The employment allocations are to the north of the town surrounding the Green Britain Centre. No further retail provision was included within the adopted policies.



Figure 8.11 Market Cross Swaffham

#### Issue 24

#### Housing Growth

**8.120** The Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD allocated the residential development for 250 homes which had been set out within the Core Strategy. The new residential dwellings were on a single site to the south of the town. The following table summarises the status of this allocation

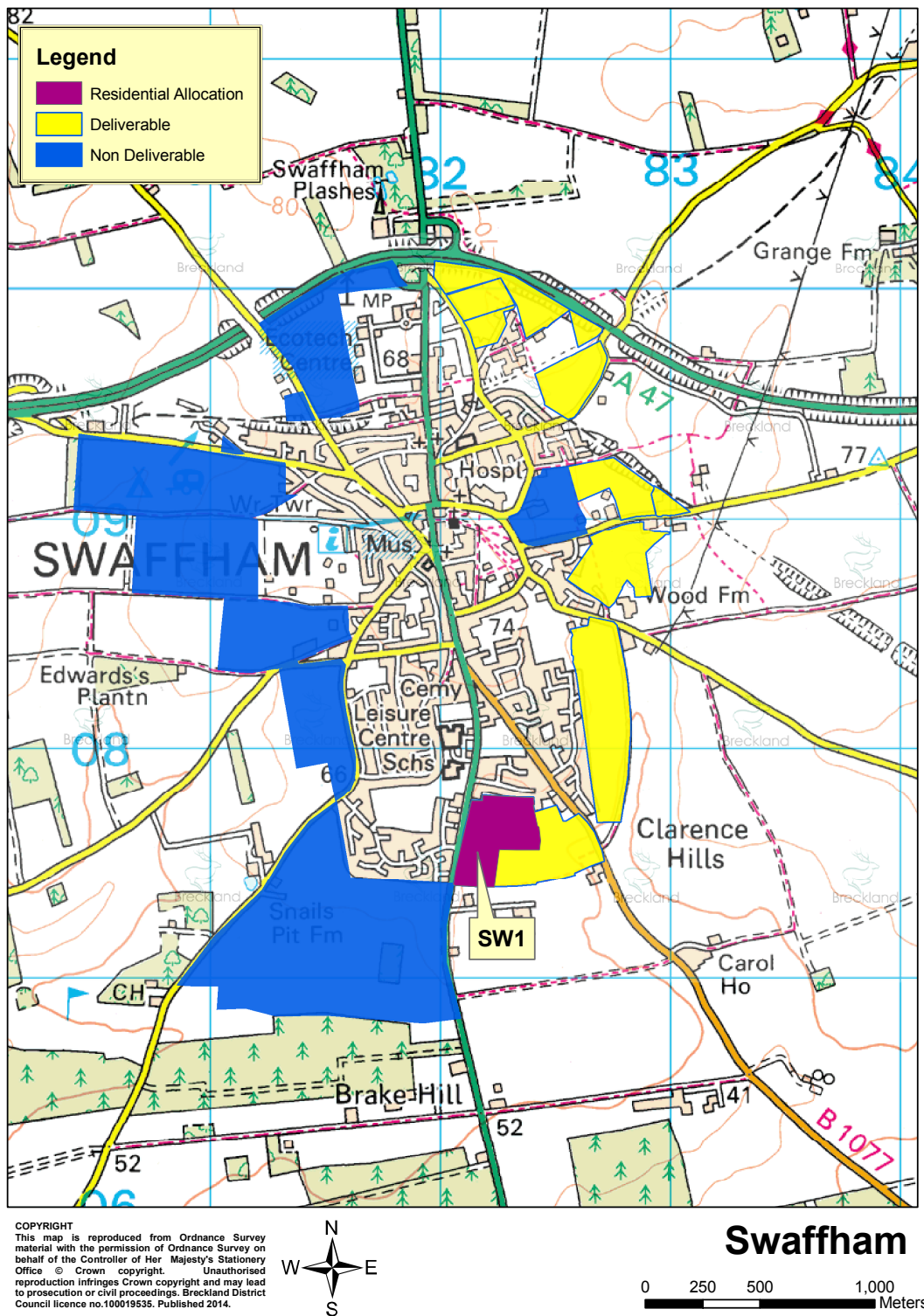
Site Reference	Number of Dwellings	Planning Status
SW1: Land to the east of Brandon Road and north of the former Redland Tiles site	250	The residential allocations were adopted through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD. A single site was allocated for all of the 250 dwellings to the south of the town off the Brandon Road. The allocation has received the decision to grant planning permission subject to the satisfactory resolution of the section 106 agreement.

Table 8.7 Site Allocations in Swaffham

**8.121** To meet the housing targets set out over the Local Plan period it may be necessary to allocate further land for residential development within Swaffham. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified an annual housing need for 36 net new dwellings within the town. The affordable housing need is lower than other towns within the district, however last year within Swaffham only 22 dwellings were completed across all tenures, and only two of these were affordable.

**8.122** The Council's most recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was completed in 2014. This study looked at the development potential of land within the town and identify any potential constraints. The document also assesses when sites are likely to be developed. The 2014 SHLAA identified within Swaffham the potential for 1,671 residential dwellings. All of the deliverable sites which had been identified through the SHLAA are located to the east of the town.





**Figure 8.12 Swaffham Residential Land Allocation and SHLAA Site**



## Question 46

Do you have a preferred location /direction for growth in Swaffham? Please specify any reasoning and justification.

**8.123** If you have any further land that you would like the Council to consider, further information is available in Call For Sites.

## Issue 25

### Employment

**8.124** The Employment Growth Study assessed the quality of the existing employment land within Swaffham. Swaffham's employment areas are concentrated to the north of the town with the principle location being the Green Britain Business Park (**reference Site 1 on map**). The Employment Growth Study considers this site to be a good site with good access to the A47. The Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD allocated two additional employment sites within Swaffham on land adjoining the north and west of the Green Britain Business Park. The Employment Growth Study indicates that these sites are unlikely to be required in the short to medium term (**Sites 2 and 3**).

**8.125** There are an additional two employment sites within the town, both of which are accessed from Castle Acre Road. Tower Meadows (**Site 4**) is a small employment area which is fully developed. Station Yard (**Site 5**) is on the opposite site of Castle Acre Road to Tower Meadows. It is a slightly larger employment area and is fully developed. Both of these employment sites were assessed as performing well within the current market.

**8.126** The Employment Growth Study also considered the future requirements for future employment land within Swaffham. The study indicated that whilst the Green Britain Business Park was a good employment area, it would be difficult justifying the retention of the two adjoining sites which were allocated through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD due to relatively low levels of demand.

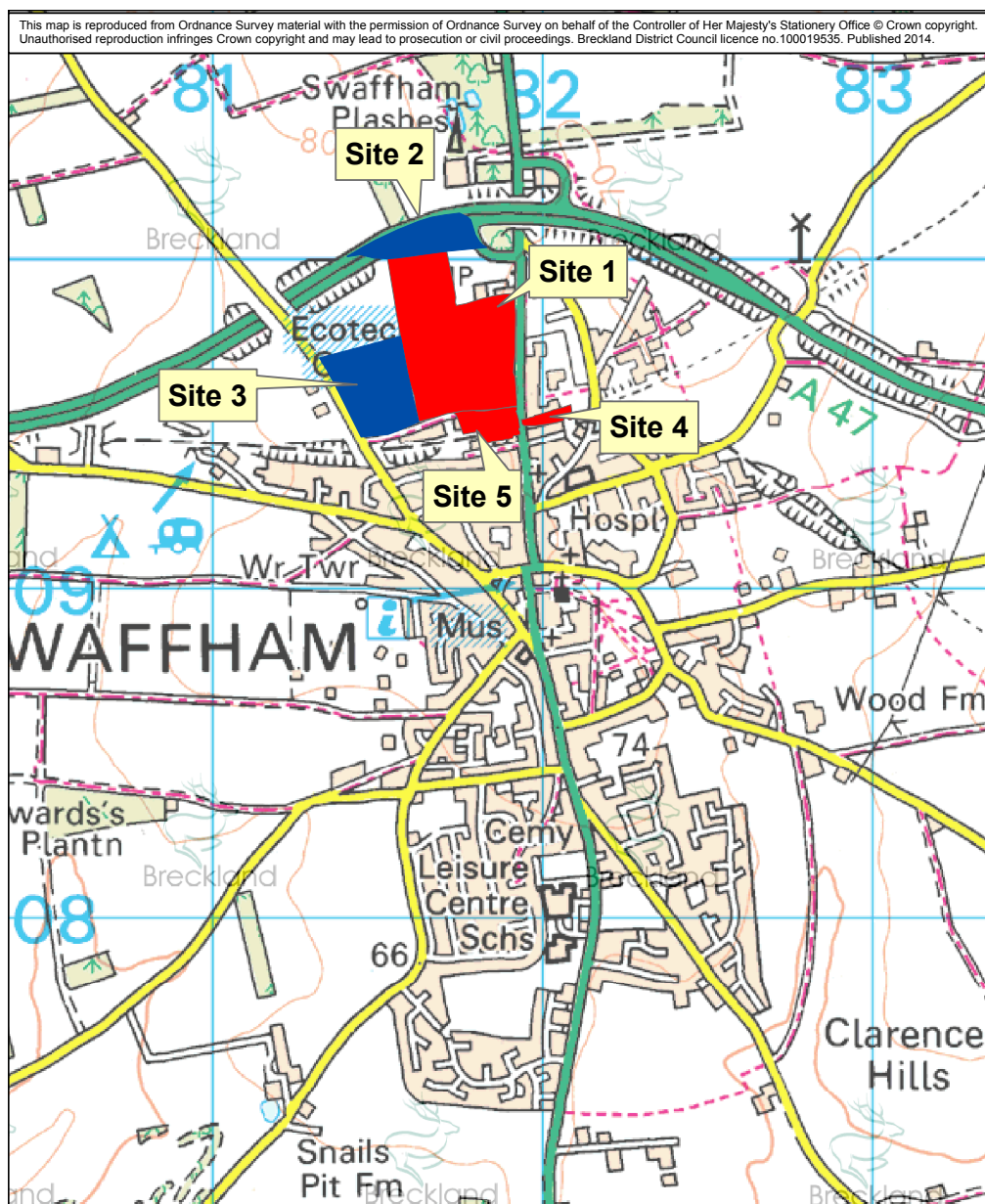


Figure 8.13 Swaffham General Employment Area

#### Question 47

Do you consider the existing employment areas remain appropriate? Is there any other information you consider we should be aware of to inform future employment growth decisions in Swaffham?

## Issue 26

### Town Centre Strategy

**8.127** The recently published Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) places emphasis on developing strategies for town centres that are appropriate and realistic to the role of centres in the hierarchy. Although each centre is unique, the challenge generally across the district will be to capitalise on expenditure growth by securing investment and maintain each centres market-share in face of growing competition within the sub-region.

**8.128** Town centre strategies should seek to support the town centre vitality and viability and be based on the current state of a centre and set strategies to meet the identified need in full. The Council have commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to carry out an updated assessment of the core retail evidence base in the district and this emerging evidence will help inform the development of appropriate strategies for the five market towns around the level of identified need in the plan period.

**8.129** Overall Breckland has good access to surrounding regional and sub-regional centres and the outflow of comparison goods expenditure is significant. In comparison, retention rates for convenience expenditure are high, partly due to the rural nature of the district and the availability of choice. With a thriving market, Swaffham town centre primarily serves the day-to-day needs of the towns local residents. The high quality public realm around the Market Place provides a quality environment and focus for the town centre. Swaffham has a reasonable selection of comparison shops, however the representation of major national retailers and the depth of choice remain limited. The Retail and Town Centre Study 2010 identified only a limited amount of comparison floorspace was needed between 2010 and 2016. Since then, a 1,970 sq m out-of-town convenience store has been developed. It is expected that the 2014 Study will identify a significant over-provision of convenience goods sales floorspace in Swaffham. This may benefit choice and increase retention rates in the town as the new store develops its consumer base and increases the town's market-share, and there is the potential for benefits from linked trips to the centre. Planning permission for mixed-use development, including an antique and craft emporium, has recently been given for the former Post Office Site and Sixth Form Centre on Lynn Street. Should this be developed, it is expected that any remaining comparison floorspace capacity will be absorbed through the take up of vacant units. There remains limited scope for future convenience and comparison development in the town centre and wider area.

**8.130** In developing an appropriate town centre strategy consideration needs to be given to the current role in the hierarchy and potential limited development opportunities. The focus for the retail strategy and vision should therefore be:

- On the retention and promotion of comparison shops to ensure market share is maintained in the face of increasing competition.
- Aid diversity of uses.
- Provide for choice and flexibility.

### Question 48

Do you agree with what the development of a town centre strategy and vision should focus on?

### Town Centre Boundaries

**8.131** The existing town centre boundary reflects the proposed definition in the main retail section. The following figure shows the frontages within the town and also the primary shopping area and the town centre boundary.

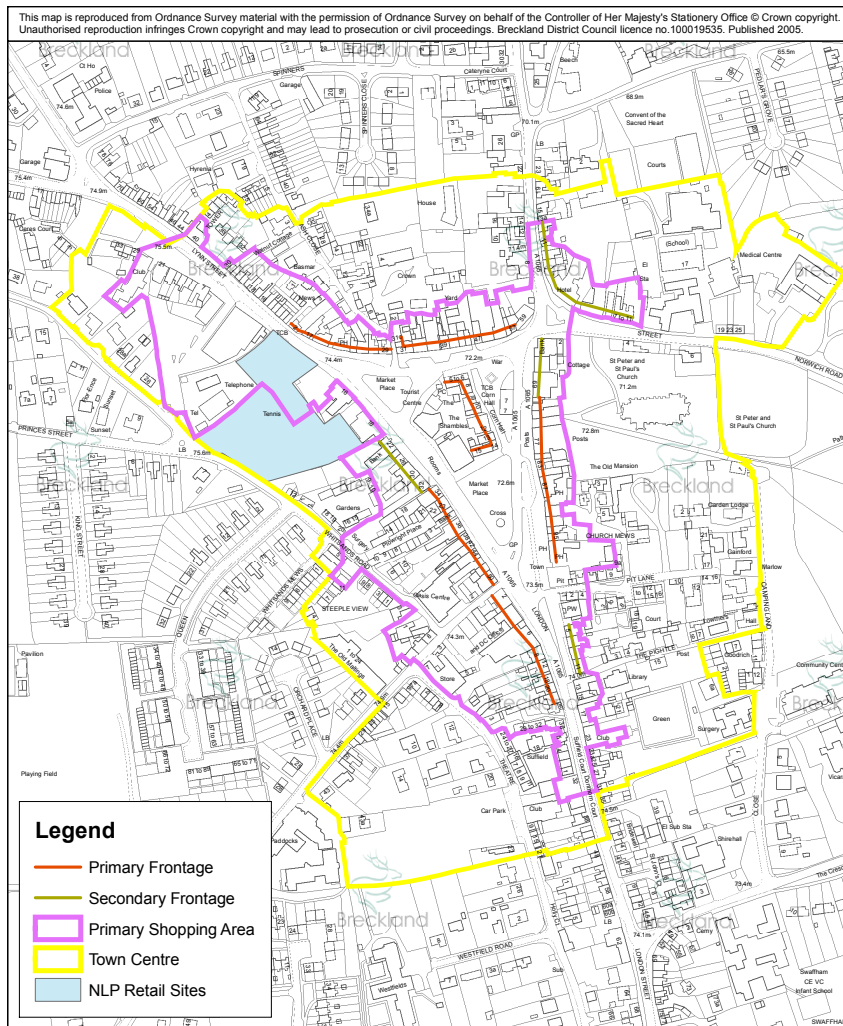


Figure 8.14 Swaffham Retail

### Question 49

Do you consider the existing town centre boundary, primary and secondary frontages remain appropriate?

#### Sites

**8.132** The Retail and Town Centre Study 2010 only included one additional site with development potential within Swaffham. This site was the Post Office and former Sixth Form Centre on Lynn Street. This site has been subject to two planning applications, which will see the site developed into a number of flats and also a mixed-use scheme which will include an antique and craft emporium.

**8.133** The NPPF sets a threshold for the assessment of impacts on town centres for proposals over 2,500 sq m gross where there is no local threshold set. As part of the town centre strategy / overall retail strategy it is considered that a lower local impact threshold should be proposed for Swaffham partly to the propensity to impact on town centre vitality and viability from out-of-centre development, and this is detailed in the main retail section of this document.

### **Question 50**

In order to provide choice and flexibility are there any sites in and around Swaffham town centre which the Council should consider?

### **Issue 27**

#### **Natural Environment**

**8.134** The Landscape Character Assessment Settlement Fringe Study 2007 classifies the majority of the land around Swaffham as having a moderate to high sensitivity to change. The landscape to the west of the town has a higher elevation and a more open aspect. Within this character area however, the land within the A47 corridor is considered to have a moderate to low sensitivity to change, due to its more urbanised character.

**8.135** The land immediately to the east of Swaffham, where it directly adjoins the town, is viewed through the Settlement Fringe Study as being less sensitive than the landscape to the west of Swaffham. This land is classified as having a moderate sensitivity to development and change. This moderate sensitivity is based on the existing settlement edge and the medium to large scale surrounding fields. The more sensitive part of this landscape is surrounding the manor house and also the church.

### **Question 51**

Do you agree with the analysis on landscape sensitivity? If you do not agree, please explain the issues we should further consider.



## 8.2.4 Thetford

**8.136** Thetford was designated as the Key Centre for Development and Change within the Core Strategy. The town acts as the principal retail, service and employment centre for the south of the district. The Core Strategy's Spatial Portrait described the town as having a good balance of homes and jobs with a well developed market for industrial and distribution property, it has connections to the national rail network and is located on the A11 between Norwich and Cambridge.

**8.137** Local planning priorities for Thetford were considered previously through the Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP) Development Plan Document which was adopted July 2012. The TAAP includes a residential allocation for 5,000 dwellings on land to the north of the town, known as the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). This represents an under-allocation in relation to the number of dwellings that were proposed within the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD which was for 6,500 new homes. The under-allocation of dwellings reflected the detailed environmental evidence particularly in relation to the Breckland SPA which arose following the adoption of the Core Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy



**Figure 8.15 Ancient House Museum Thetford**

### Issue 28

#### **Thetford Area Action Plan Policies and the Sustainable Urban Extension**

**8.138** The TAAP contains a number of policies specifically related to development within Thetford and importantly the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). The adoption of the Local Plan will supercede the TAAP and all policies within it. Some of these policies are likely to be district-wide and as such the policies within the Local Plan including the development management policies would cover this. However, a number of the policies are Thetford specific and have been developed to respond to key pieces of evidence base. Furthermore, the policies are recently adopted and in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. The policies have been designed to help frame the development of Thetford and the regeneration of existing areas and have been subject to a considerable level of public consultation. There are a number of options to consider how these policies should be reviewed as part of the Local Plan.

**8.139** The retention of locally specific policies could be beneficial to the Local Plan. These policies have been developed in support of and to mitigate against the significant development within the town. Importantly they have been assessed and examined against the requirements of the NPPF. The policies have also been used to determine the outline planning application for the Sustainable Urban Extension and until such a stage as this Local Plan is adopted it will remain as the planning framework for the area. The following policies from the TAAP are considered to be site specific and remain relevant and supported by evidence.

- Policy TH2 Approach to the Town Centre
- Policy TH4 Transport - Achieving Modal Shift
- Policy TH5 The Impact of Change on Pedestrians, Cyclists and Buses
- Policy TH6 Thetford Bus Interchange



- Policy TH7 Thetford Railway Station
- Policy TH11 Joe Blunt's Lane
- Policy TH12 The Thetford Loops
- Policy TH18 Archaeology
- Policy TH20 Thetford Urban Extension Strategic Design Principles
- Policy TH21 Locally Distinctive Features of the Landscape
- Policy TH22 Gallows Hill Scheduled Monument
- Policy TH23 Existing Buildings in the Thetford Urban Extension
- Policy TH25 Walking and Cycling
- Policy TH26 Buses
- Policy TH27 A New Railway Station in the Urban Extension
- Policy TH28 Changes to the A11 Trunk Road
- Policy TH29 Improvements to the Local Road Network
- Policy TH30 New Employment Land
- Policy TH31 New Local Centre(s) in the Urban Extension
- Policy TH32 Connecting to a Decentralised Energy Supply
- Policy TH33 Education provision in the Thetford Urban Extension
- Policy TH34 New Health Facility in the Urban Extension
- Policy TH35 Community Buildings
- Policy TH37 Regeneration Proposal in Existing Residential Areas.

**8.140** Other policies within the Thetford Area Action Plan are:

- Policy TH3 New Retail Development
- Policy TH8 Healthy Lifestyles
- Policy TH9 Monitoring and Management of Key Biodiversity Sites
- Policy TH10 Allotments
- Policy TH13 Indoor Sports Facilities
- Policy TH14 Energy and Carbon - TAAP Wide
- Policy TH15 Energy/Multi Service(s) Company Development (ESCo/MuSCo)
- Policy TH16 Water and Drainage
- Policy TH17 Development in Flood Zones
- Policy TH19 Sustainable Construction Standards for Non-Residential Development
- Policy TH24 Surface Water Management
- Policy TH36 New Bring Recycling Facilities
- Policy TH38 Existing Employment Areas
- Policy TH39 Thetford Settlement Boundary

**8.141** These policies have an equally important role to the planning and development of Thetford. However it is considered that a number of these policies are also applicable across a wider area. For instance the Council is likely to want to include a policy on healthy lifestyles or allotments for the whole district.

**8.142** Some of these policies also represent key infrastructure projects within the district, for instance the provision of the bus interchange. Information is also included in this regard within section 9 'Implementation and Viability'.

### Question 52

The Council's approach would be to review the evidence base with the aim to retain locally specific relevant policies. Do you agree with the approach?

---

## Issue 29

### Neighbourhood Plan

**8.143** The Localism Act 2011 allows Parish Councils to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to guide future development within their parishes. Thetford parish is not at the present time subject to a Neighbourhood Plan designation. However, Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverstone Parish Councils have been designated as a joint Neighbourhood Plan area and are working together to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. This plan area will cover the majority of the Thetford Sustainable Urban Extension, and some parts of Croxton parish which are included within the built up extent of Thetford. The Parish Councils have indicated their intention to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan based on the following issues:

- Residential development in conjunction with local needs.
- To review requirement and provision of community facilities.
- To provide and maintain sustainable parishes and resilient villages.
- To protect landscape and nature conservation.
- To improve transport and infrastructure.
- Development of employment and business use within the parishes.

**8.144** The Neighbourhood Plan is lead by and will be prepared by the three parishes, however Breckland have a duty to support the preparation of the plan. Furthermore the Neighbourhood Plan is also required to be in broad conformity with Breckland's strategic planning policies.

---

## Issue 30

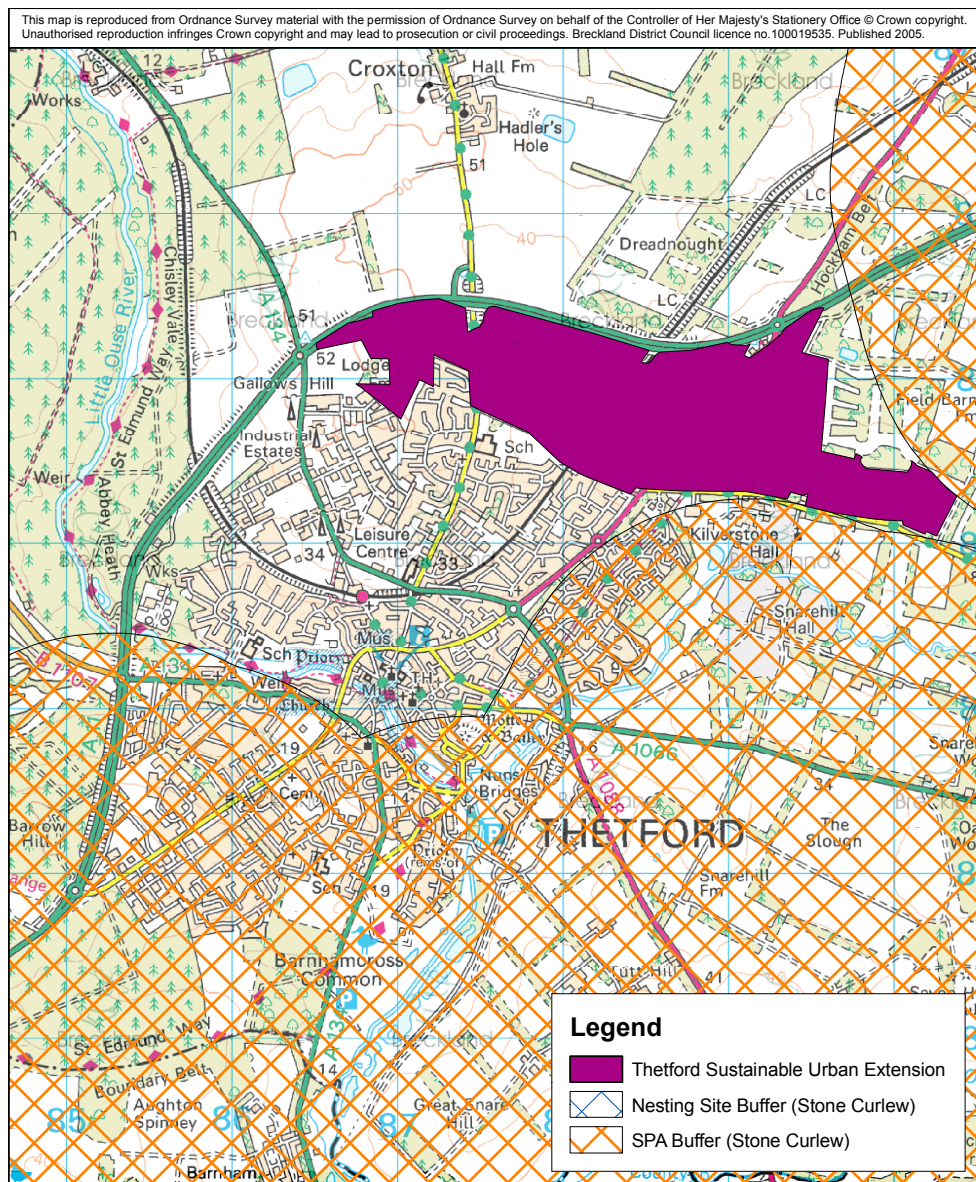
### Housing Growth

**8.145** The Sustainable Urban Extension represents the largest single allocation within Breckland and incorporates a mixed-use scheme for residential, employment and community uses. Consequently the Urban Extension will also contribute to the wider regeneration of the town and be connected to the existing town centre and services. An Urban Extension of the scale proposed within Thetford will need to be phased over at least the next 15 years in line with known infrastructure delivery and assessments of the market capability for annual delivery. An outline planning application has been received for the Sustainable Urban Extension for all 5,000 dwellings. It is currently anticipated that this application will be determined in Spring 2014.

**8.146** The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, completed in 2014, considered there to be capacity for 5,022 dwellings within the town. The capacity predominantly relates to the single site to the north of the town, known as the Thetford SUE, and for which the outline planning application has been submitted. Two other town centre sites were considered to have capacity for limited small scale growth, however the SHLAA considered all other sites to be non-deliverable. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment shows that there is a net need for new affordable dwellings within Thetford. This need equates to 25 new affordable dwellings to be completed within the town annually. Affordable housing supply within Thetford was particularly boosted in 2012/13 by the completion of an affordable housing scheme at Sweyn Close by Peddars Way Housing Association.

**8.147** Information from Breckland's housing team has indicated that the affordable housing need within Thetford is predominantly based around smaller units. The SHMA indicated that there was a need for 22% of properties to be for 1 and 2 bedroom units. However the primary research was undertaken before the removal of the spare room subsidy was removed (i.e. the bedroom tax). It is likely that this has significantly increased demand for small accommodation units within the town. Additionally as the largest town in Breckland, Thetford has a larger need for smaller units to meet its populations needs. The existing Thetford estates have a large proportion of three bed housing stock, so it is beneficial to increase the need of smaller units to balance the supply.

**8.148** The following map shows the location of Thetford's Urban Extension. No further sites were identified previously as deliverable for housing growth within Thetford. In addition the map also shows the location of the Stone Curlew buffer zone. Further details of the implications of the buffer zone are described in 7 'Natural and Historic Environment', however it does show the environmental constraints surrounding the town.



**Figure 8.16 Thetford Sustainable Urban Extension**

## Issue 31

### Employment

**8.149** As the largest town within the district and with its good location on the A11, Thetford has the largest commercial property market within Breckland. The completion of the dualling of the A11 between the Five Ways Roundabout at Barton Mills and Thetford, is also likely to boost the towns commercial property market. Furthermore the town forms a key part of the strategic growth corridor along the A11. The industrial and distribution market in Thetford is well developed and there is a steady demand for space within the town. The Employment Growth Study has been prepared by NLP and considers that the employment land allocations within Thetford are generally appropriate to meet the demand within the town.

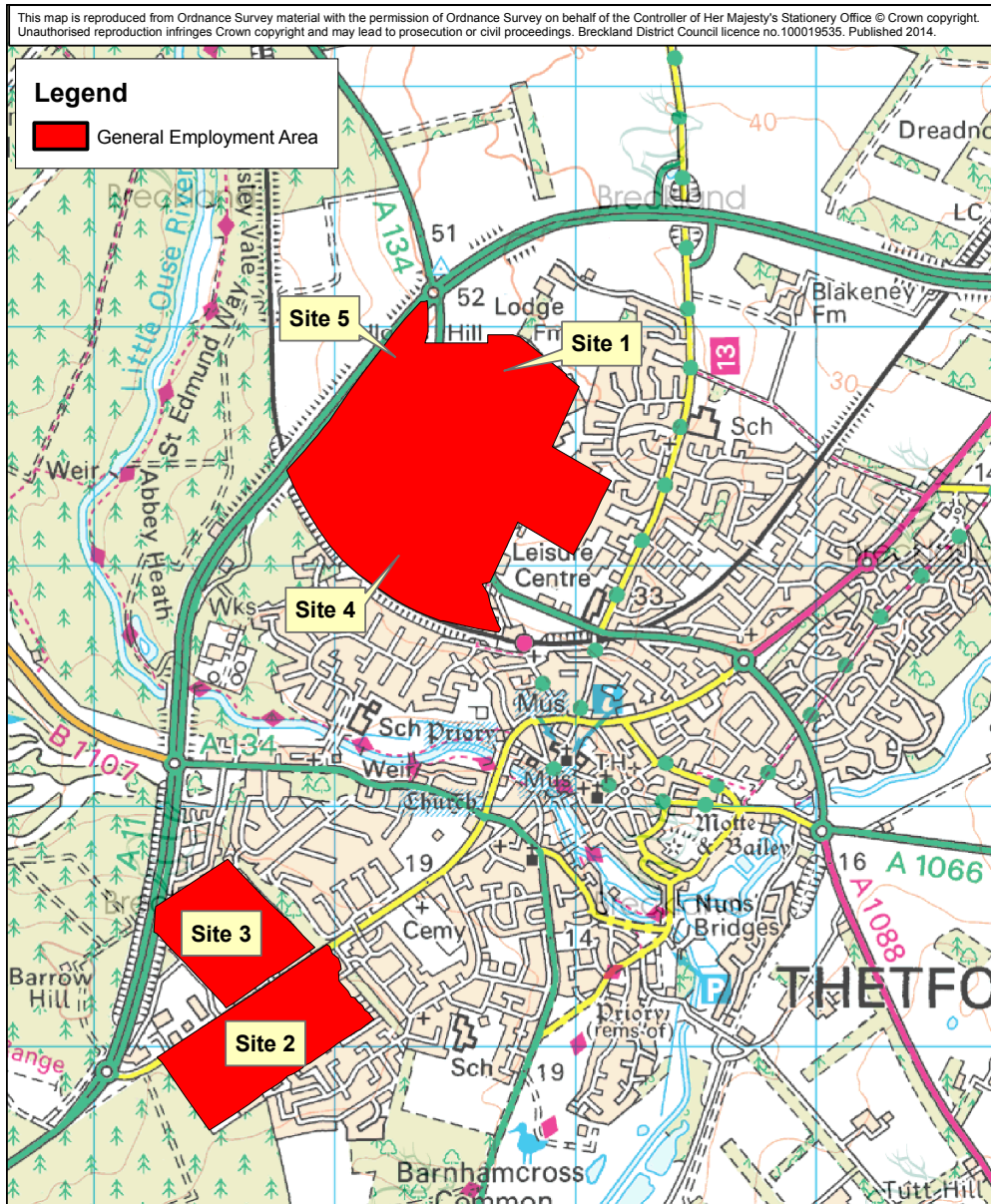
- **Site 1: Brunel Way Industrial Estate** - This is a long standing employment area, which is excellently located with access to the strategic road network. The site includes 38.7 hectares of land. The site predominantly comprises of warehouses and workshop units, though there is also some office space. The estate includes the Jeyes factory unit. Whilst some of the industrial stock on the unit is dated it is generally considered to be a good employment estate.
- **Site 2: Burrell Way Industrial Estate** - This is a large employment area within Thetford with 30.6 hectares of land. The estate is mainly light industrial and warehousing and has been developed in different stages since the 1970s, subsequently some of the stock is relatively dated.
- **Site 3: Caxton Way Industrial Estate** - This site is located directly opposite the Burrell Way Industrial Estate. There are a number of vacant units within the sites, following Tulip International ceasing production within the town. There has been significant marketing on the site.
- **Site 4: Fison Way Industrial Estate** - This is the largest existing employment area within the district and it comprises warehouses and light industrial units. It is an established distribution hub and occupiers in this respect notably include TNT Express, DHL and Brakes Bros Ltd.
- **Site 5: Thetford Enterprise Park** - The Thetford Enterprise Park which is located to the north-west of the town was considered to have very good potential. Part of this site has recently been granted planning permission for a supermarket. Whilst the supermarket permission sees the loss of an element of employment space, it has included a number of elements such as provision of the access route and a power supply, which will help to facilitate employment development on the site.

**8.150** The majority of the industrial space demand within Thetford is for smaller units of approximately 465 sq m which are suitable for B1c uses. However there is also a demand for larger units of approximately 4,645 sq m. There is a lack of modern high quality premises within the town.

**8.151** The office market within Thetford is not as well developed as the industrial property market. The Employment Growth Study confirms that the main demand for office space within Thetford comes from A2 users such as solicitors, financial advisors/consultants etc who by the nature of their work need to be close to customers. However, the demand for this form of office space remains relatively small. The low level of demand for office space is balanced against the limited supply of land. This means that vacancy rates for office space within the town are limited.

**8.152** The most successful recent scheme for office space within Thetford is the Keystone Innovation Centre. The centre was partially funded with support from the public sector and has been developed to provide flexible office space for small businesses.





**Figure 8.17 Thetford General Employment Areas**

**Question 53**

Do you consider the existing employment areas remain appropriate? Is there any other information you consider we should be aware of to inform future employment growth decisions in Thetford?

## Issue 32

### Town Centre Strategy

**8.153** The recently published Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) places emphasis on developing strategies for town centres that are appropriate and realistic to the role of centres in the hierarchy. Although each centre is unique, the challenge generally across the district will be to capitalise on expenditure growth by securing investment and maintain each centres market share in face of growing competition within the sub-region.

**8.154** Town centre strategies should seek to support the town centre vitality and viability and be based on the current state of a centre and set strategies to meet the identified need in full. The Council have commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to carry out an updated assessment of the core retail evidence base in the district and this emerging evidence will help inform the development of appropriate strategies for the five market towns around the level of identified need in the plan period.

**8.155** Overall Breckland has good access to surrounding regional and sub-regional centres and the outflow of comparison goods expenditure is significant. In comparison, retention rates for convenience expenditure are high, partly due to the rural nature of the district and the availability of choice. Thetford being located in the south of the district serves a catchment area which includes parts of neighbouring districts/boroughs, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury.

**8.156** Thetford has the largest retail offer within Breckland, The town has a good selection of national retailers however the depth of choice within each category of goods is limited. The Retail and Town centre Study 2010 considers the town's strengths to include its historic environment, including numerous listed buildings. The general shopping area is pedestrianised and provides a natural shopping circuit. There are several public car parks around the town centre which the Council maintain as free parking. The weaknesses of the town centre include Riverwalk, which was completed in the 1970s. The buildings are unattractive and detract from the town centre. There is also limited redevelopment potential in the core area due to the historic character of the town centre.

**8.157** Planning permission has recently been granted for the redevelopment of the former Anchor Hotel in Thetford. The redevelopment will include a cinema, hotel and a number of restaurant units. Should this opportunity come forward the development will improve the night-time economy within Thetford which will help in diversification and increase expenditure retention. Significant investment is also being put into the relocated bus station from Bridge Street to Minstergate.

**8.158** Thetford is an area for growth with outline permission granted for 5000 homes in the Urban Extension. Even with this expected growth over the plan period and as reflected in chapter 6, convenience store commitments will absorb much of the 2010 identified expenditure capacity in and around Thetford, should they come forward and it is expected that the revised projections from the updated 2014 study will reflect this trend. In developing an appropriate strategy the challenge will be to capitalise on expenditure growth, redevelopment potential and investment opportunities especially around the Riverside Walk area. The continued emphasis should be for Thetford to take advantage of investment opportunities through the continued scope to diversify the town centre in order to attract investment from the evening economy, leisure and entertainment. The town should maintain its market share in convenience expenditure and increase comparison floorspace in order to aid higher retention rates.

**8.159** The NPPF sets a threshold for the assessment of impacts on town centres for proposals over 2,500 sq m gross where there is no local threshold set. As part of the town centre strategy / overall retail strategy it is considered that a local impact threshold should be proposed for Thetford and this is detailed in the main retail section of this document.



**8.160** In developing an appropriate town centre strategy consideration needs to be given to the current role in the hierarchy and potential development opportunities. With increased competition in surrounding towns and the duelling of the A11 due to be completed in the near future, the aim of the strategy should be to maintain market share as expenditure levels increase and a continuation of the existing Thetford Area Action Plan priorities of investment. In developing policies for a town centre strategy in Thetford the Council could:

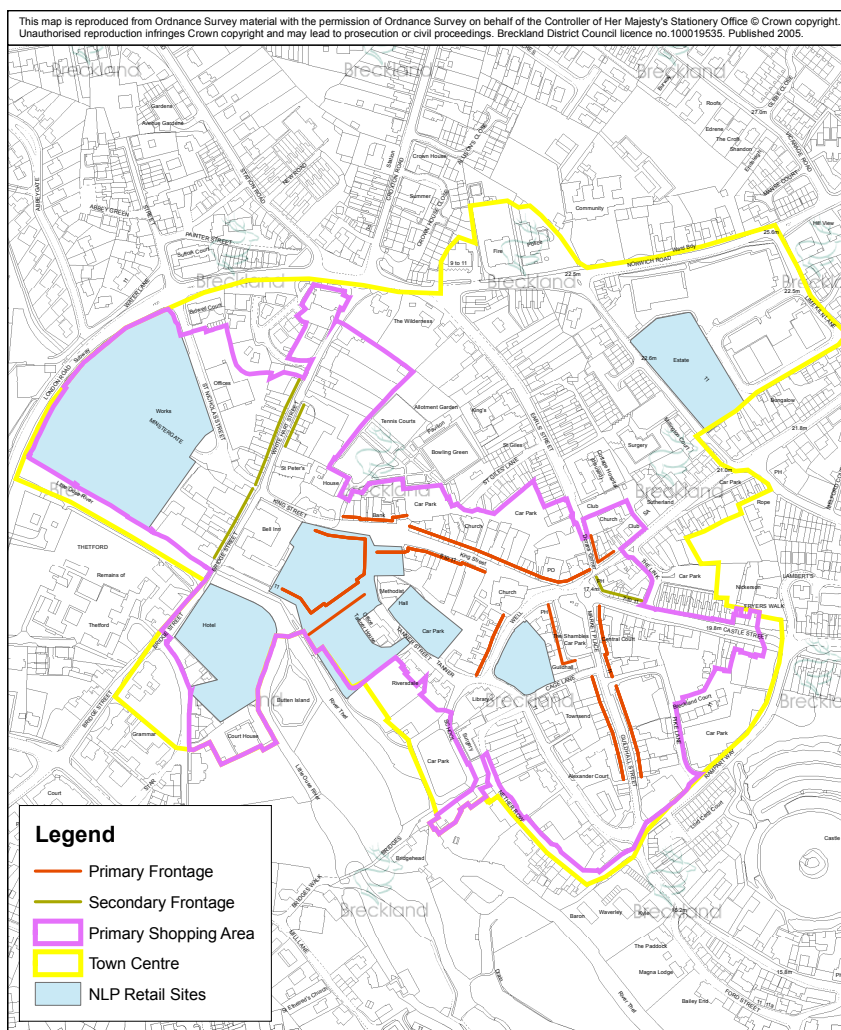
- Prioritise the Riverside Walk area.
- Public realm improvements to help attract investment.
- Aid diversity of uses.
- Provide for choice and flexibility.

#### **Question 54**

Do you agree with what the development of a town centre strategy and vision should focus on?

#### **Town Centre Boundaries**

**8.161** The existing town centre boundary reflects the proposed definition in the main retail section. The Retail and Town Centre Study 2010 confirmed that the existing primary and secondary frontages remain relative at the time. The following figure shows the frontages within the town and also the primary shopping area and the town centre boundary.



**Figure 8.18 Thetford Retail**

### Question 55

Do you consider the existing town centre boundary, primary and secondary frontages remain appropriate?

#### Sites

**8.162** The NPPF (paragraph 23) indicated that Local Plans, should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure and other development needed in town centres and that this should be through a sequential test.

**8.163** The 2010 Retail and Town Centre Study included a number of potential development sites within Thetford town centre which could be considered for future retail redevelopment uses. These included:

- Community Hall, Well Street Thetford - This site is currently occupied by the community centre and offers the opportunity for small scale development of up to 1,000 sq m gross. The site would be available in the medium term, however it would be constrained by the need to re-locate the community centre.
- Riverside Walk - The development is located in the centre of Thetford, however vacancy rates in this area are relatively high. The area offers a medium to long term opportunity for a comprehensive re-development of up to 2,000 sq m.
- Tanner Street Car Park - The car park offers the opportunity for a small scale development of up to 500 sq m. Any re-development would need to consider the loss of the car park. There is an alternative option to re-develop it into a multi-storey car park.
- Thetford Retail Park - Land to the south-west of the retail park (adjacent Aldi) is occupied by a vacant warehouse and out-buildings. A comprehensive redevelopment of up to 3,000 sq m. The site would suit a large format store or retail warehouse units

### Question 56

In order to provide choice and flexibility are there any other sites in and around Thetford town centre which the Council should consider?

### Issue 33

#### Natural Environment

**8.164** Thetford is located at the confluence of the River Thet and the River Little Ouse. The natural environment surrounding Thetford contains a number of areas of both International and National importance which have restricted the development direction of the town. Thetford Forest directly to the west of the town is designated as a Special Protection Area and supports Woodlark, Nightjar and Stone Curlew. In 2013 (following the adoptions of the TAAP) the Council undertook further research into the effect on Stone Curlew of buildings and roads. The latest research has reaffirmed the statistical evidence to show an impact on Stone Curlew of roads and buildings up to 1500m from the SPA. As such this has significant impacts on Thetford, where the majority of land to the west, south and east of the town fall within 1500m of the SPA. Effectively this constrains development options in these areas. The research did indicate that there was no evidence of a negative impact upon Stone Curlew from agricultural buildings or commercial. There is however a need to take a precautionary approach due to the limited statistical data.

**8.165** The Landscape Character Assessment Settlement Fringe Study 2007 considers this land to the west of the town as having a high sensitivity to change. The area is likely to be sensitive to even small scale encroachment. Land to the north of the town extending into Croxton and Kilverstone parishes has been judged as having a moderate sensitivity to change. These areas represent the least sensitive character areas surrounding Thetford. This partly reflects the nature of the area between the town and the A11. It does however include a number of woodland blocks which help to contain views out of the character area, which would be more sensitive to change. To the south-east of the town there are a variety of character areas. This includes the river valleys for the River Thet and the River Little Ouse. The landscape within this area is all judged to be of either high or moderate to high sensitivity to change. Significant land within this area is also included within the Breckland SPA.

**Question 57**

Do you agree with the analysis on landscape sensitivity? If you do not agree, please explain the issues we should further consider.

---

## 8.2.5 Watton

**8.166** Watton is centrally located within Breckland. The settlement hierarchy within the Core Strategy classified Watton as a mid-sized Market Town which had limited capacity for further expansion. The spatial strategy for the Core Strategy identifies Watton as providing for the day-to-day needs of its local population. At the time of the Core Strategy it was inferred that there was limited potential for economic growth within the town. The built up extent of Watton extends into Carbrooke parish.

**8.167** The residential allocations received through the Core Strategy, were reflective of the level of existing planning permissions within the town. Significant development has been undertaken on the former RAF Watton Technical Site now known as Blenheim Grange which is part of Carbrooke parish. Due to these developments, there was limited schools capacity for further expansion.

**8.168** Watton town centre is relatively constrained, with the shopping area predominantly limited to the High Street, the whole area of which is covered by a conservation area. The Core Strategy sought limited further retail expansion in the period up to 2026.



Figure 8.19 Watton Clock Tower

### Issue 34

#### Housing Growth

**8.169** The Core Strategy allocated 300 new homes to be built within Watton. Sites were formally allocated through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD, the number of dwellings allocated was slightly reduced than stated within the Core Strategy to take account of planning permissions granted between the adoption of the Core Strategy and the examination of the Site Specific. The following table summarises the current planning status of each of these allocations.

Site Reference	Number of Dwellings	Planning Status
W1: Land to the west of A1075 and adjacent Wayland High School	100	Hopkins Homes have submitted a full planning application for 110 dwellings on this site. The application has been approved and is currently awaiting agreement on its section 106 prior to being granted permission.
W2: Land to the south of Norwich Road - Former RAF Officers Mess	72	No planning application has been submitted on this site.
W3: Land to the north of Norwich Road and south of Watton Green	25	Full planning permission has been granted on this site for 33 dwellings. The site represents an extension to Abel

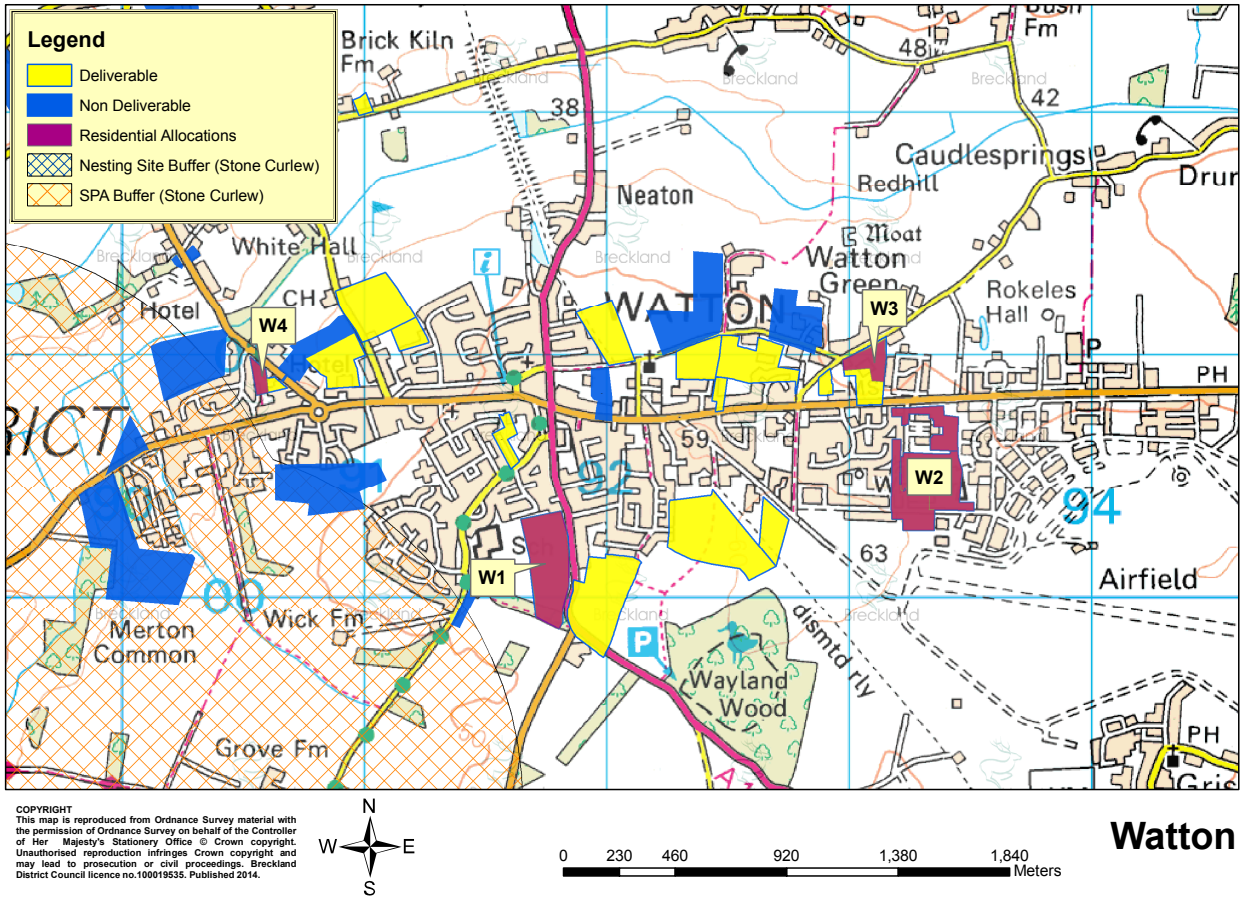
Site Reference	Number of Dwellings	Planning Status
		Homes existing scheme off Norwich Road and it is currently under construction.
W4: Land adjacent to Swaffham Road	17	No planning application has been submitted on this site.

**Table 8.8 Site Allocations in Watton**

**8.170** The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies sufficient land within Watton for the delivery of 1,357 new dwellings. The SHLAA suggests that the majority of these sites would be deliverable in the immediate five year period between 2014 and 2019. Of these deliverable sites, they are predominantly centrally located to the north and south of the town near the A1075. The sites to the far west of the town were all considered to be non-deliverable.

**8.171** Breckland's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was updated in 2013, it considers the housing need for the town, taking into account the existing housing stock, and those who are unlikely to be able to meet their needs within the private housing market. When considered over the five year period, for which the SHMA covers, there is a net housing need of 13 dwellings per annum. This represents a lower affordable housing need than the other towns within the District.





**Figure 8.20 Watton Residential Land Allocations and SHLAA Sites**

### Question 58

Do you have a preferred location /direction for growth in Watton? Please specify any reasoning and justification.

**8.172** If you have any further land that you would like the Council to consider, further information is available in Call For Sites.

### Issue 35

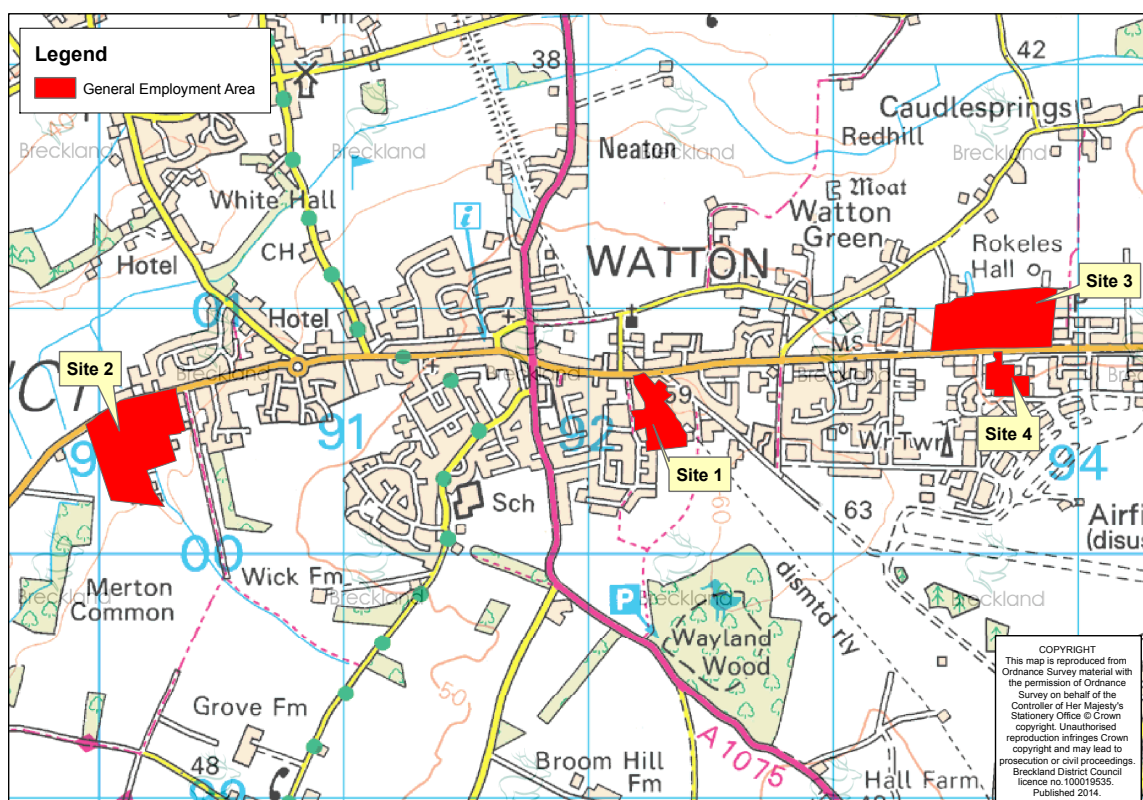
#### Employment

**8.173** The 2013 Employment Growth Study observed the current status of the commercial property market within Watton and also the future employment demand within the town. The study observes that there is limited demand for employment space within the town from either national or regional firms, which is due to the towns location

away from any major transport links. The employment market within the town is dominated by local businesses, and currently the supply and demand balance for industrial accommodation is well matched. Overall, the supply of commercial properties is considered to be adequate to meet the needs of the town.

**8.174** Within Watton there are four main industrial estates which are located on sites around the town.

- **Site 1 - The Griston Road Industrial Estate** is predominantly for local businesses. The Employment Growth Study concludes the site to be poor overall, due to the limited transportation links and the residential development adjoining the site restricting business uses.
- **Site 2 - The Thrextan Road Industrial Estate** is located on the western edge of the town. The Employment Growth Study notes that this employment area is close to capacity and there is strong local demand for accommodation on this estate. Overall, the employment area is considered to be good quality.
- **Site 3 - The Norwich Road Industrial Estate** is located to the east of the town and is the largest employment area within the town. The employment area has some capacity for additional development.
- **Site 4 - The RAF Technical Site** includes a small area of employment space within the new Blenheim Grange residential development. The site is situated on the southern side of Norwich Road, opposite the Norwich Road Industrial Estate. The site is currently vacant and other uses could be appropriate.



**Figure 8.21 Watton General Employment Areas**

## Question 59

Do you consider the existing employment areas remain appropriate? Is there any other information you consider we should be aware of to inform future employment growth decisions in Watton?

## Issue 36

### Town Centre Strategy

**8.175** The recently published Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) places emphasis on developing strategies for town centres that are appropriate and realistic to the role of centres in the hierarchy. Although each centre is unique, the challenge generally across the district will be to capitalise on expenditure growth by securing investment and maintain each centres market share in face of growing competition within the sub-region.

**8.176** Town centre strategies should seek to support the town centre vitality and viability and be based on the current state of a centre and set strategies to meet the identified need in full. The Council have commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to carry out an updated assessment of the core retail evidence base in the district and this emerging evidence will help inform the development of appropriate strategies for the five market towns around the level of identified need in the plan period.

**8.177** Overall Breckland has good access to surrounding regional and sub-regional centres and the outflow of comparison goods expenditure is significant. In comparison, retention rates for convenience expenditure are high, partly due to the rural nature of the district and the availability of choice. Within Watton convenience shopping is anchored by a Tesco and smaller Co-op store. There is a limited selection of comparison shops with the majority of retailers being independent. The town centre primarily serves the day-to-day needs of the towns local residents.

**8.178** The Retail and Town Centre Study 2010 identified only a limited amount of comparison floor space was needed between 2010 and 2026 and it is expected that the revised projections from the updated 2014 study will reflect this trend.

**8.179** The NPPF sets a threshold for the assessment of impacts on town centres for proposals over 2,500 sq m gross where there is no local threshold set. As part of the town centre strategy / overall retail strategy it is considered that a lower local impact threshold should be proposed for Watton partly to the propensity to impact on town centre vitality and viability from out-of-centre development and this is detailed in the main retail section of this document.

**8.180** In developing an appropriate town centre strategy consideration needs to be given to the current role in the hierarchy and potential limited development opportunities. The focus for the retail strategy and vision should therefore be:

- On the retention and promotion of comparison shops to ensure market share is maintained in the face of increasing competition.
- Aid diversity of uses.
- Provide for choice and flexibility.

## Question 60

Do you agree with what the development of a town centre strategy and vision should focus on?

### Town Centre Boundaries

**8.181** The existing town centre boundary reflects the proposed definition in the main retail section. The Retail and Town Centre Study 2010 confirmed that the existing primary and secondary frontages remain relative at the time. The following figure shows the frontages within the town and also the primary shopping area and the town centre boundary.

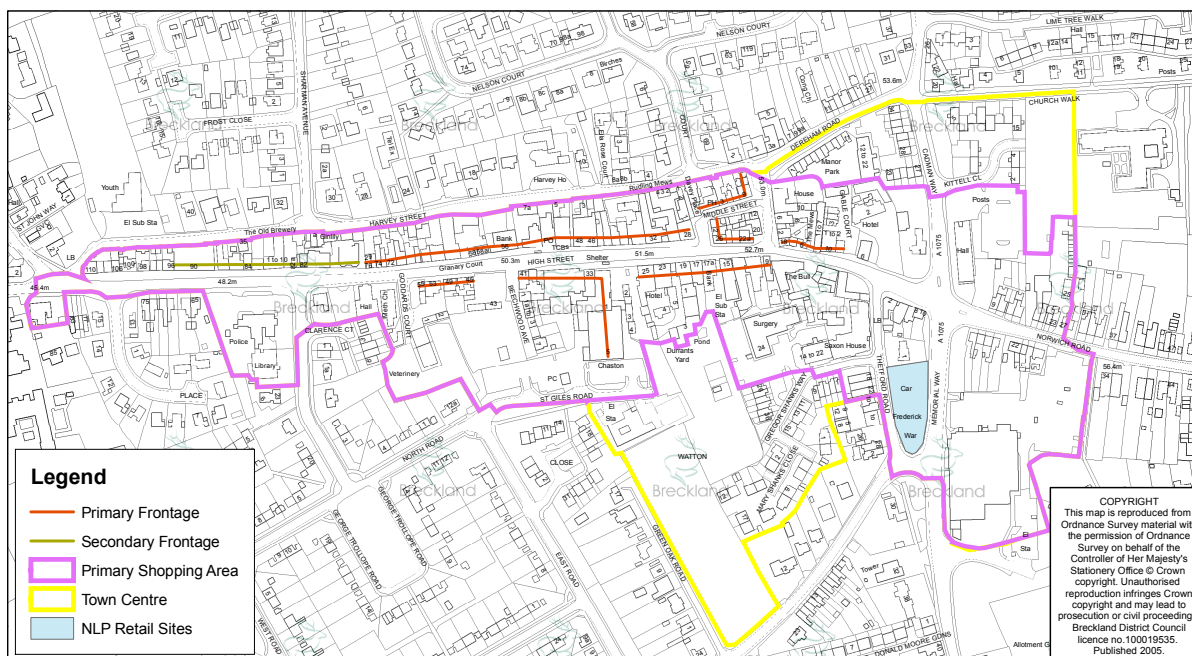


Figure 8.22 Watton Retail

## Question 61

Do you consider the existing town centre boundary, primary and secondary frontages remain appropriate?

### Sites

**8.182** The NPPF (paragraph 23) indicated that Local Plans, should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure and other development needed in town centres and that this should be through a sequential test.

**8.183** The 2010 Retail and Town Centre Study only considered one additional site as having development potential within Watton. The site was the car park off Memorial Way and amounts to approximately 0.2 ha. It would be available within the short to medium term for a small scale development of 500 sq m. Any development potential would need to be considered against the loss of car parking.

### Question 62

In order to provide choice and flexibility are there any sites in and around Watton town centre which the Council should consider?

### Issue 37

#### Natural Environment

**8.184** The Landscape Character Assessment Settlement Fringe Study 2007 considered the sensitivity of the land surrounding the town to change. Land to the south of the town is considered to have a low sensitivity to change. However within this area there are pockets of land which are more sensitive to change such as Wayland Wood. Much of the land to the south of the town formed part of the former RAF Watton and it is still within the control of the Ministry of Defence. The low sensitivity to change predominantly relates to the relatively harsh transition between the settlement edge and the landscape.

**8.185** The land to the west of the town has been classified as having a moderate sensitivity to change. Parts of the west of the town also fall within the stone curlew buffer zone and are located within 1,500m of the Breckland Special Protection Area. The Landscape Character Assessment considers that whilst there are relatively few sensitive features within the landscape, there is limited capacity to further extend the settlement to the west of the town.

**8.186** The final character area identified within the Settlement Fringe Study is to the north of the town. This area is considered to have a moderate to high sensitivity to change, the highest sensitivity of the character areas surrounding Watton. The land to the north of the town forms part of the tributary farmland associated with Watton Brook, significant areas of which fall within flood zones 3a and 3b. Particular areas of sensitivity in this landscape include the need to retain the separation between Watton and Saham Toney, and also to preserve the distinctiveness of Watton Green.

### Question 63

Do you agree with the analysis on landscape sensitivity? If you do not agree, please explain the issues we should further consider.



### 8.3 Service Centres

#### Issue 38

#### Review of Service Centre Villages

**8.187** It is important in a rural district such as Breckland that the sustainability of rural services is supported by appropriately located development. At the same time it is also necessary to ensure that the environment and landscape of the wider rural area is protected and issues around rural isolation, inaccessibility to services and reliance on the private car are not exacerbated.

**8.188** Policy SS1 of the adopted Core Strategy provides the strategic approach to the scale and distribution of development in the Breckland district and recognises that places within Breckland have different roles and that the scale and distribution of development will vary accordingly. The adopted approach focuses development in the Market Towns and 4 of the Service Centre Villages. Changes to National Policy continue to assist Local Planning Authorities who wish to support, protect, and enhance, the service role of their villages (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship). This means that development should be provided in areas with access to the wide range of essential services and facilities where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. The need to travel should be minimised, however, where there is a need to travel, it is important that a realistic choice of transport is available.

#### Existing Service Centre Villages

**8.189** The approach to determining Service Centre Villages was defined within the adopted Breckland Core Strategy (2009) and followed the provisions of draft policy SS9 in the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (now abolished). This methodology sought to identify villages that had a primary school within the settlement and a secondary school within the settlement or easily accessible by public transport, primary health care facilities, a range of retail and service provision capable of meeting day-to-day needs (in particular convenience shopping), local employment opportunities and frequent public transport to higher order settlements.

**8.190** The methodological approach also included a population threshold of 1,000 people which limited the number of Breckland villages put forward to 20. Litcham was also included as even though it did not have a population of 1,000, it had a number of services and facilities within the parish.

**8.191** In total 14 villages in Breckland either met or came close to meeting the five Regional Spatial Strategy criteria. Following consultation with these parishes a two-tier approach to Local Service Centres was established. Only 4 Service Centre Villages received a positive housing allocation. The other villages focused on protection and enhancement of services and facilities.

**8.192** The current rural Service Centre approach is set out within the Core Strategies Spatial Strategy and is repeated below. The location of these villages is shown within Figure 8.23 'Local Service Centres'

Category	Settlement	Current Core Strategy Policy
Rural Service Centres for Growth	Harling, Narborough, Shipdham, Swanton Morley	Policy SS1, Policy CP1



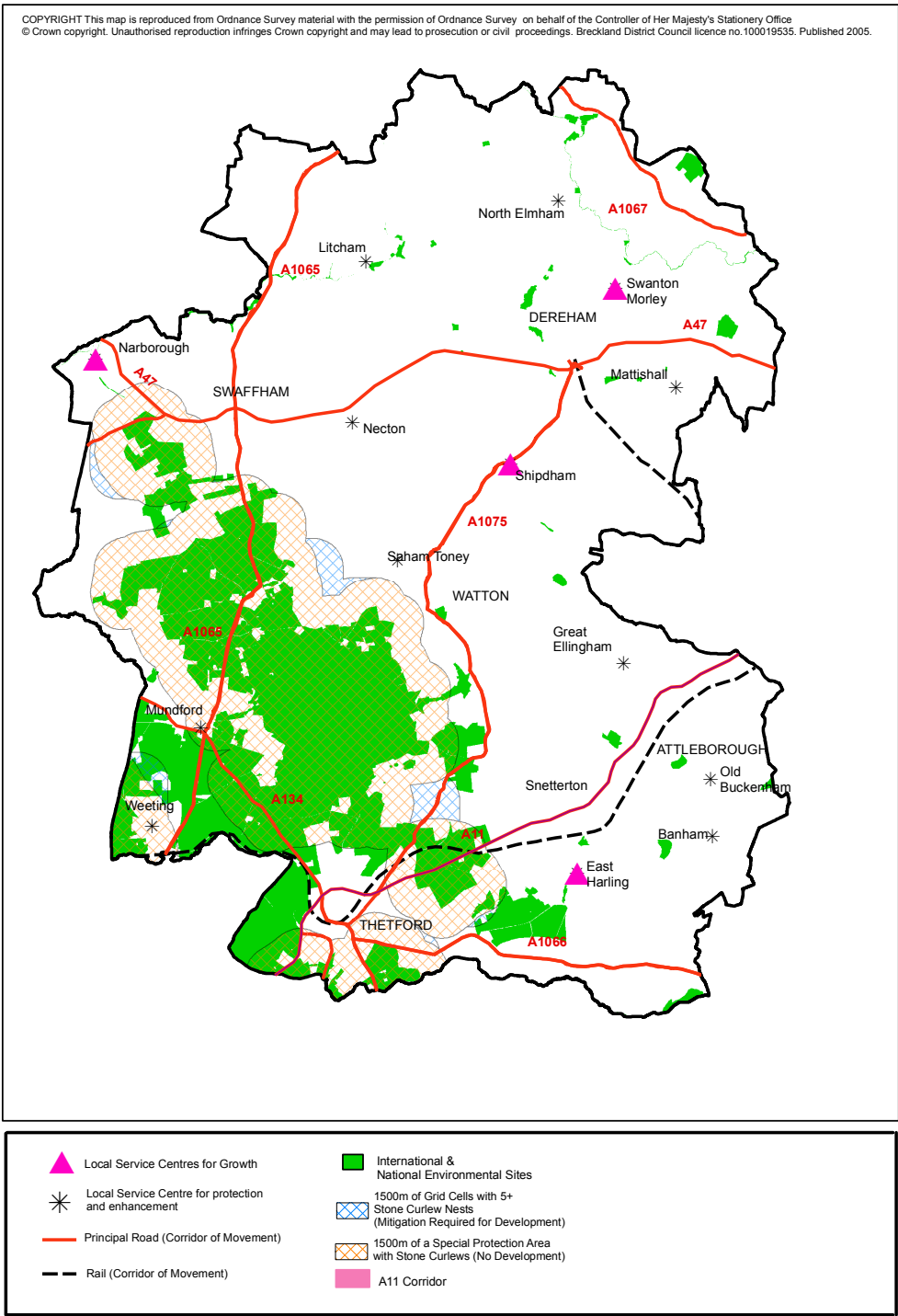
Category	Settlement	Current Core Strategy Policy
Rural Service Centres (service protection and enhancement)	Banham, Great Ellingham, Litcham, Mattishall, Mundford, Necton, North Elmham, Old Buckenham, Saham Toney and Weeting	Policy SS1, Policy CP1, Policy CP14, Policy DC18

**Table 8.9 Breckland adopted Core Strategy approach to Rural Service Centres**

**8.193** Policy CP1 of the adopted Core Strategy identifies that Harling, Narborough, Shipdham and Swanton Morley will see a positive housing allocation up to 2026. Land was allocated for 100 homes in Shipdham and 50 homes at Narborough and Swanton Morley through the Sites Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD. No positive allocation was made through the Sites Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD for Harling as the proposed figure of 50 was achieved in advance of the adoption of the Sites Specifics DPD.

**8.194** Policy CP14 ‘Sustainable Rural Communities’ states how village and countryside communities will be supported by appropriate development in order to make them more sustainable. Within such areas key local services will be supported and their enhancement or the provision of new services encouraged. Where necessary, key services will be protected from the pressures of development and where new services are proposed, if they fulfil a community need and can demonstrate reducing rural isolation, they will be supported.

**8.195** Policy DC18 ‘Community facilities, recreation and leisure’ states that development in Local Service Centre Villages, development will not be permitted where this would result in the total loss of a key service or facility that would undermine the strategic identification of that village as a Local Service Centre.



**Figure 8.23 Local Service Centres**

## **Current Rural Service Centre Situation - adopted Core Strategy**

**8.196** In terms of what we know about the existing Local Service Centre Villages, Appendix 13 illustrates a detailed parish summary. The following provides a synopsis of this:

### **Banham**

**8.197** In the existing settlement hierarchy, Banham is identified as a rural service centre for protection and enhancement only. However, due to its level of services and facilities (School, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (Public House, Community Centre/Social Club), employment and public transport) it could have been considered as a rural service centre for growth. There are no European sites, SSSIs or CWS in the vicinity of Banham, and the Landscape Settlement Fringe Assessment (2007) identifies the area to have moderate to high character area sensitivity. The highest level of sensitivity is located on the meadow west of the church. However, elsewhere opportunities for development are also limited, with sensitivities noted both to further linear expansion along the rural road and to infilling and consolidation of settlement between roads.

### **Great Ellingham**

**8.198** In the existing settlement hierarchy, Great Ellingham is identified as a rural service centre for protection and enhancement only. However, due to its level of services and facilities (School, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (Public House/Village Hall), employment and public transport) it could have been considered as a rural service centre for growth. There are no European sites, SSSIs or CWS in the vicinity of Great Ellingham, and the Landscape Settlement Fringe Assessment (2007) identifies Attleborough Hills Tributary Farmland and Woodland to the south and east of Great Ellingham as having high character area sensitivity. The Bow Street arable plateau immediately surrounding the village and to the north-west is identified as having a moderate landscape character area sensitivity.

### **Harling**

**8.199** In the settlement hierarchy, Harling was adopted as a Local Service Centre to see a positive housing allocation for growth. However, the parish had received planning approval for over and above the proposed number of 50 prior to the adoption of the Sites Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD. Harling has a good level of services and facilities which include (Primary School and Nursery, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (Dentist, Doctors Surgery, 2 x Public House and a Fire Station), employment and public transport). The River Thet flows to the west of Harling where a 1 in 100 year flood risk to south and west of the village exists. The village is in close proximity to environmental designations of a SSSI, CWS and SPA to the north. The Landscape Settlement Fringe Assessment (2007) identifies East Harling Fen to the north of the village to have a high landscape character area sensitivity, in view of the intactness of the landscape elements and the intimate, small scale character of the landscape. This includes a number of historic features such as Harling Common and the local parkland adjacent to the church.

### **Litcham**

**8.200** In the settlement hierarchy, Litcham is identified as a rural service centre for protection and enhancement only. Litcham is unique in the fact that the village has a small population, but contains both a Primary, Secondary School and a Health Centre. Additional services and facilities consist of public transport and Post Office/Shop. However, there is limited employment. The River Nar is located to the south of the village. The village is in close proximity to environmental designations of Litcham Common and Nar Valley, these are identified as a SSSI and CWS site. Litcham was not included within the Landscape Settlement Fringe Assessment (2007), however the village is located within the Chalk Rivers (Nar) landscape type, with the northern extent of the village being identified as Nar Tributary Farmland.

## **Mattishall**

**8.201** In the existing settlement hierarchy, Mattishall is identified as a rural service centre for protection and enhancement only. However, due to its level of services and facilities (School, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (Butchers/Pharmacy), employment and public transport) it could have been considered as a rural service centre for growth. The village is in close proximity to environmental designation of a SSSI to the north. The Landscape Settlement Fringe Assessment (2007) considers that the overall sensitivity in this area is moderate although this Landscape Assessment would be locally higher in the more intact and small scale pastoral landscape at Mill Road.

## **Mundford**

**8.202** In the settlement hierarchy, Mundford is identified as a rural service centre for protection and enhancement only. The village contains a good level of services and facilities (School, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (Village Hall/Hotel, Surgery) and public transport). However, due to its limited employment and environmental designations of Breckland Forest SSSI, and the village being within 1500m of the SPA buffer zone, it was not considered suitable for growth. Land north of the village is identified as being within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 (River Wissey) and the village was not included within the Landscape Settlement Fringe Assessment (2007). The village has seen infill development over the course of the Core Strategies plan period from 2001, this has included 41 new dwellings being delivered.

## **Narborough**

**8.203** In the settlement hierarchy, Narborough was adopted as a Local Service Centre to see a positive housing allocation for growth. The Sites Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD allocated a site for 50 dwellings which has received planning permission for 55 dwellings in 2013. The village contains a good level of services and facilities (School, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (Surgery, Community Centre), employment and public transport). The village is located adjacent to the A47 providing good access to Swaffham and beyond to King's Lynn. The character of this area is judged to have moderate sensitivity to built development as identified through the Landscape Settlement Fringe Assessment (2007). The landscape surrounding Narborough forms part of the River Nar District character area. The overall sensitivity of this character area is considered to be high, although locally lower (moderate) due to the impact of recreational development on the urban edge of the village.

## **Necton**

**8.204** In the existing settlement hierarchy, Necton is identified as a rural service centre for protection and enhancement only. However, due to its level of services and facilities (School, Post Office, community facilities (Public House, Village Hall), employment and public transport) it could have been considered as a rural service centre for growth. The village is not subject to any environmental considerations, however, the River Wissey flows to the south of Necton and southern edge of village. The village is located adjacent to the A47 providing good access to Swaffham, Dereham and beyond. Overall sensitivity of this area is considered moderate, in spite of the relatively exposed visual character, and primarily in light of the eroded structure and quality of the landscape. Necton has significant committed planning applications in the village equating to 117 new dwellings awaiting development.

## **North Elmham**

**8.205** In the existing settlement hierarchy, North Elmham is identified as a rural service centre for protection and enhancement only. However, due to its level of services and facilities (School, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (Public House, Surgery), employment and public transport) it could have been considered as a rural service centre for growth. The River Wensum flows to the east of North Elmham and parts of the village are within flood risk as identified in Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2008). The Landscape Settlement Fringe Assessment (2007) considers that the overall sensitivity to be moderate, whilst this would be locally higher (moderate-high) in areas such as around Worthing Mill. In addition, Elmham Park Tributary Farmland covers a 1.5km radius from the western

edge of North Elmham including the historic parkland of Elmham Park. Overall sensitivity is judged to be high, in view of the generally intact character of much of the settlement edge and landscape structure of the character area.

### **Old Buckenham**

**8.206** In the existing settlement hierarchy, Old Buckenham is identified as a rural service centre for protection and enhancement only. However, due to its level of services and facilities (Primary and Secondary School, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (2 x Public House), employment and public transport) it could have been considered as a rural service centre for growth. The village is not located within an environmentally sensitive location. However, the sensitivity of the area is high based on the small scale of the settlement and its relationship with the central open green.

### **Saham Toney**

In the existing settlement hierarchy, Saham Toney is identified as a rural service centre for protection and enhancement only. However, the village contains a good level of services and facilities (School, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (Public House/Community Centre) and public transport). There is a low level of employment but Watton is less than 2 km away. Watton Brook flows to the south of the village and is flanked by areas of flood risk as identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2008). Saham Mere (CWS) located within Saham Toney to the south, however, there are no other European Sites or SSSIs in the vicinity of Saham Toney.

**8.207** The Landscape Settlement Fringe Assessment (2007) identifies land to the south-west of Saham Toney as having an overall high sensitivity. This relates to the role of tributary valley and parkland/pasture and woodland setting, which create a strong rural character to this edge of the village. The area identified to the north, west, east, is considered to have a high sensitivity and relates to the role of tributary valley landscape and pasture in providing a distinct setting to the settlement. Recent new developments in the village include permission for 29 dwellings on Cley Lane.

### **Shipdham**

**8.208** In the existing settlement hierarchy, Shipdham was adopted as a Local Service Centre to see a positive housing allocation for growth. The Sites Specifics Policies and Proposals allocated a site for 100 dwellings which has received planning permission for 90 dwellings in 2013. The village contains a good level of services and facilities (School, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (Surgery, 2 x Public House), employment and public transport). The village is located adjacent to the A1075 providing good access to Dereham, Watton and beyond. The Landscape Settlement Fringe Study (2007) identifies the Crows Hill and Thorpe Row Arable Plateau that predominantly surrounds the village as having moderate/high landscape character area sensitivity. This is in view of the elevated plateau landscape which is relatively exposed in character. It also identifies Letton Hall Arable Farmland with Parkland and Woodland, which is located to the south-western edge of the village. This is considered to have a moderate sensitivity in view of the containment provided by land form and field-boundary/settlement-edge vegetation.

### **Swanton Morley**

**8.209** In the existing settlement hierarchy, Swanton Morley was adopted as a Local Service Centre to see a positive housing allocation for growth. The Sites Specifics Policies and Proposals DPD allocated a site for 50 dwellings which has just received the decision to grant planning permission. The village has a good level of services and facilities (School, Post Office/Shop, community facilities (2 x Public House), employment and public transport). The village is accessed by the B1147 and is located close to Dereham. The River Wensum flows to the north-east of the village and is flanked by an area of flood risk as identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2008). Another area of flood risk lies to the east of the village beyond Park Farm and Frog's Hall. There are 2 small areas of flood risk surrounding Woodgate Stream and Church Stream. The village has a moderate sensitivity, due to the

filtered character of views and the relative lack of visibility to much of the settlement edge. Woodgate Enclosed Tributary Farmland lies to the east and north and is considered to have moderate-high landscape sensitivity. This is due to the intact landscape structure which has also survived to much of the settlement edge. Castle Farm Valley Floor lies to the north and is considered to have a high sensitivity. This is in view of the local character area's role in forming the setting of the historically important parish church, and the quality of the valley floor landscape. The Robertson Barracks are located to the north of the village at the former RAF Swanton Morley and is the current base for the Light Dragoons.

## Weeting

**8.210** In the existing settlement hierarchy, Weeting is identified as a rural service centre for protection and enhancement only. The village contains a good level of services and facilities (School, Post Office, community facilities (Public House), employment and public transport) it could have been considered as a rural Service centre for growth. However, due to its environmental designations within the 1500m SPA buffer zone, the village was not considered suitable for growth. The Landscape Settlement Fringe Assessment (2007) identifies all of the land surrounding Weeting as having high landscape character area sensitivity. The village currently has planning permission for 59 dwellings on land off Cromwell Close to the north of the village.

**8.211** A summary of essential services and facilities for Service Centre Villages as identified within Policy SS1 of the adopted Core Strategy is illustrated in Review of services and facilities in existing Service Centre Villages.

Parish	Sustainability Criteria					Meeting all 5 Sustainability Criteria
	1 School	2 Shop & Post Office	3 Community Facility	4 Employment	5 Public Transport	
Banham	√	√	√	√	√	√
Gt Ellingham	√	√	√	√	√	√
Harling	√	√	√	√	√	√
Litcham	√	√	√	<b>X</b>	√	<b>x</b>
Mattishall	√	√	√	√	√	√
Mundford	√	√	√	<b>X</b>	√	<b>X</b>
Narborough	√	√	√	√	√	√
Necton	√	√	√	√	√	√
N Elmham	√	√	√	√	√	√
Old Buckenham	√	√	√	√	√	√
Saham Toney	√	√	√	<b>?</b>	√	<b>?</b>
Shipdham	√	√	√	√	√	√
Swanton Morley	√	√	√	√	√	√



Parish	Sustainability Criteria					Meeting all 5 Sustainability Criteria
	1 School	2 Shop & Post Office	3 Community Facility	4 Employment	5 Public Transport	
Weeting	√	√	√	√	√	√

**Table 8.10 Review of services and facilities in existing Service Centre Villages**

### Reason for Reviewing Service Centre Villages

**8.212** The review of Service Centre Villages is being undertaken in response to a range of issues.

- **Changes in National Policy** - Service Centre Villages have been identified through the adopted Core Strategy, however due to the changes in National Planning Policy and the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategy, there is a requirement to look at these afresh. In particular, the NPPF, which emphasises that 'Local Planning Authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan' (paragraph 156). Furthermore, the NPPF provides further direction in respect of what Local Plans should do, including 'indicate broad locations for strategic development' (paragraph 157), i.e. those settlements or locations where new development is likely to be focused.
- **Changing Pattern of Local Service Centres** - In the national context, there has been a continuing fall in the number of services and facilities in rural areas. Access to services in rural Norfolk is becoming increasingly challenging, not just in comparison to the urban areas of Norfolk but also to the rest of rural England<sup>(8)</sup>. The Commission for Rural Communities has identified a decline in the number of NHS Dentists, Banks and Building Societies, Job Centres and Petrol Stations in rural areas in recent years. Furthermore, there are now an estimated 233,000 people in non-urban areas with no Bank, Post Office, or Cash-Point nearby<sup>(9)</sup>. The Norfolk Rural Development Strategy highlights a number of issues which need to be addressed to improve the sustainability of rural communities. The strategy further acknowledges the importance of an 'enabling' planning system which encourages and supports jobs growth in rural areas which will deliver sustainable growth<sup>(10)</sup>. The Norfolk Rural Development Strategy, Dataset (2013)<sup>(11)</sup> identifies at Figure 8.24 'Access to Key Services in Norfolk' the accessibility to services in Norfolk in comparison to rural England as a whole is significantly worse.

8 OCSI, Norfolk RCC (2011), Access to Services in Norfolk, Final Report. Available at: [http://www.norfolkrc.org.uk/wiki/index.php/OCSI\\_report\\_into\\_Deprivation\\_in\\_Rural\\_Norfolk](http://www.norfolkrc.org.uk/wiki/index.php/OCSI_report_into_Deprivation_in_Rural_Norfolk)

9 State of the Countryside (2007), Commission for Rural Communities. Available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/crc/documents/state-of-the-countryside-report/>

10 Norfolk Rural Development Strategy September (2013). Available at: [http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Business/Economic\\_intelligence/NCC126058](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Business/Economic_intelligence/NCC126058)

11 Norfolk Rural Development Strategy Dataset, (2013). Available at: [http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Business/Economic\\_Intelligence/NCC126058](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Business/Economic_Intelligence/NCC126058)

Service type	Rural Norfolk compared to Rural England	Percentage of households within the stated distance to the closest service provided	
		Rural Norfolk	Rural England
Bank or building society within 2km	Amber	34%	35%
Cashpoint within 2km	Red	60%	72%
Post Office within 2km	Amber	86%	85%
Dentist surgery within 2km	Red	37%	40%
GP surgery within 2km	Red	52%	58%
Principal GP surgery within 2km	Red	44%	51%
Primary school within 2km	Amber	86%	88%
Secondary school within 2km	Amber	32%	32%
Job centre within 2km	Green	12%	4%
Supermarket within 2km	Red	32%	43%
Petrol station within 2km	Red	49%	56%
Public house within 2km	Red	84%	91%
<b>Key:</b> <b>Green</b> = Significantly better than England Average; <b>Amber</b> = Not significantly different from England Average; <b>Red</b> = Significantly worse than England Average			

**Figure 8.24 Access to Key Services in Norfolk**

**8.213** The Norfolk Rural Development Strategy (2013) considers that planning policies have favoured urban-led economic growth. This is seen by many as leading to an unsustainable model of development, in which rural areas have a rapidly growing population many of whom commute to urban areas for work, education or to access services, leaving rural areas as dormitories which struggle to grow.

**8.214** Additionally, the 'Rural Challenge'<sup>(12)</sup> has an overriding objective to help achieve a lasting legacy of sustainable rural development. The document is directed at informing governance at national and local level on measures that need be taken to support rural communities, in order that they may withstand challenges and flourish. This includes creating communities in which people enjoy living and working; which are vibrant, distinctive and in keeping with the character of their surroundings, with a full range of good quality local services; and which enhance local landscapes, heritage and biodiversity while meeting the challenges of climate and economic change. One of the propositions by the Rural Coalition to meeting these objectives is that Local Authorities draw up Local Plans and strategies which are based on a thorough understanding of local rural economies and society including a genuine incorporation of community-led plans and aspirations.

12 The Rural Challenge – Available at: <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/planning/item/1883> - is a non statutory document published by the Rural Coalition (the Rural Coalition was formed to bring together a number of organisations with rural interests to highlight rural needs and issues).

## Approach to Local Service Centre Villages within the Local Plan

**8.215** The presumption in favour of sustainable development is the core principle underpinning the NPPF. Having a range of key facilities close at hand is seen as a more sustainable way of living by promoting good health and social, economic and environmental wellbeing by amongst other things, minimising the need to travel by car (thereby reducing carbon dioxide emissions and protecting the environment) and increasing opportunities to exercise and contribute to community life and social cohesion. It is also recognised that there are many other factors that are important in creating a sustainable rural community such as the availability of community activities and groups and access to the countryside.

**8.216** The adoption of the NPPF highlights the need to support economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development through promoting the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages. It also reinforces the need for promoting housing in locations where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. In a predominantly rural district like Breckland it is important to address issues such as access to services and significant local housing need that would promote sustainable development in rural areas.

**8.217** The Local Plan allows us to reconsider what defines a service centre. There is no specific guidance on how to define rural Service Centre Villages in the NPPF and therefore the issue remains open for us on whether we consider a more flexible approach to determining the sustainability of each settlement or apply a more rigid approach as taken through the adopted Core Strategy. The following options present a range of approaches to defining what makes a service centre.

### Option 34

#### **Retain definition of Local Service Centres used within the adopted Core Strategy.**

This approach would mean that Local Service Centre in Breckland would be defined as villages with over 1,000 population which contain the following services and facilities.

- Primary School
- Community Facility
- Employment Opportunities
- Public Transport
- Shop and Post Office

**8.218** This approach is likely to see only limited alterations to the 14 Local Service Centres as were defined through the Core Strategy. The advantage of this approach is that these villages are already designated and have previously supported the approach of Local Service Centres. By being required to have all 5 services and facilities within the village, these settlements meet a number of sustainability requirements and the policy option scores well against a number of the objectives within the sustainability appraisal. However, there are also a number of disadvantages to this approach, not least the limited number of Local Service Centre Villages it is likely to generate. Furthermore, when these Parish Councils were consulted in advance of the Core Strategy only 4 sought additional growth. This approach discounts smaller villages which may seek additional housing growth to support the vitality of their communities.

### Option 35

#### Define Local Service Centres around facilities regardless of population.

This approach would still require villages to have the 5 services and facilities which were presented within the previous option and are listed below. However, this option would not require villages to have a certain population size.

- Primary School
- Employment Opportunities
- Public Transport
- Shop and Post Office
- Community Facilities

**8.219** This option is very similar to the one previously presented except in regards to the requirements around population size. This option has been designed to acknowledge that smaller villages can represent thriving communities and have good levels of service provision. Classifying these villages as service centres would allow them to receive a level of housing growth which would sustain and support the retention of these services and facilities. This option has the potential to provide a greater number of Service Centre Villages within Breckland.

### Option 36

#### Define Local Service Centres based around schooling and health provision.

**8.220** This option considers the role of Primary Schools and health provision plays in promoting a sustainable community. This approach acknowledges the findings of the Employment Growth Study, which states that Breckland is a net exporter of labour and that the majority of residents are unlikely to work within the settlement that they live. However, the approach allows us to consider the role individual services within a village, and Primary Schools and Healthcare facilities are key services which if located within a village are likely to reduce the need to travel.

### Question 64

Which option do you consider the most appropriate in defining Local Service Centres?

Are there any other options for defining Local Service Centres you think we should consider as part of the Local Plan?

## 8.4 Rural Settlements and Countryside

### Issue 39

#### Strategy for Rural Settlements

**8.221** Breckland contains a good number of small rural villages that have few, or in some cases no, local services and facilities. The current strategy considers that these settlements are not capable of sustaining consequential growth as many are completely reliant on higher order settlements for services and facilities. There was only nominal housing and employment growth planned under the current strategy where capacity was identified.

**8.222** The current approach for rural settlements as adopted though the Core Strategy is identified in Table 8.11 'Breckland adopted Core Strategy approach to Rural Settlements'.

Category	Settlement	Current Core Strategy Policy
Rural Settlements (with settlement boundaries)	Ashill, Bawdeswell, Beeston, Beetley, Besthorpe, Bintree, Bradenham, Brisley, Carbrooke, Caston, Cockley Cley, Colkirk, Croxton, East Tuddenham, Foulden, Foxley, Garboldisham, Garvestone, Gooderstone, Great Dunham, Gressenhall, Griston, Guist, Hockering, Hockham, Ickburgh, Kenninghall, Little Cressingham, Longham, Lyng, Mileham, New Buckenham, North Lopham, North Pickenham, Rocklands, Quidenham, Scarning, Shropham, Snetterton, Sparham, Sporle, Stanfield, Stow Bedon, Thompson, Weasenham, Whissonsett, Yaxham.	Policy SS1, Policy CP1, Policy CP14, Policy DC18 (see policy synopsis in chapter 8.3).

**Table 8.11 Breckland adopted Core Strategy approach to Rural Settlements**

**8.223** These settlements currently all contain settlement boundaries which allow for the development of residential development within these boundaries. Outside of the settlement boundary, regardless of the proximity to the settlement boundary, new market housing development is restricted. Any new development within settlement boundaries has through the Core Strategy been considered to be windfall in nature.

**8.224** The Local Plan has the potential in the future to differ the approach to the smaller rural settlements within Breckland. A key issue which needs to be considered within the Local Plan is the role of settlement boundaries. As discussed, these have previously been used to designate where the principle of new private dwellings are acceptable. The Local Plan provides an opportunity to reconsider the role of settlement boundaries and whether the district wishes to retain them, or whether an approach of assessing houses individually is more acceptable. Importantly the Local Plan, as identified within the Spatial Strategy, offers the opportunity for a more dispersed pattern of growth. This could include increased growth levels within these settlements.

**8.225** The Local Plan allows the Council to reconsider the role of settlement boundaries within these villages. There are advantages and disadvantages to the retention of settlement boundaries within villages not designated as a Local Service Centre. Settlement boundaries may often be considered to give local communities a level of certainty as to the acceptability of the location of new market dwellings. They concentrate development in areas which have been assessed to be sustainable locations, this often includes places where there is a certain level of service provision to support the day-to-day needs of the population. A disadvantage of settlement boundaries is that they can often be considered to be an inflexible tool to define areas that are acceptable for the development of new market dwellings, and restrict the natural growth to meet local needs. However without them it could lead to incremental development on the edge of settlements.

**8.226** The NPPF says that "...Working with the support of their communities, Local Planning Authorities should consider whether the opportunities of extension to villages and towns provide the best way forward achieving sustainable development. In paragraph 55 the NPPF recognises the role of clusters of settlements within an area, stating " ...To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.... where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby." The Council could consider the role of functional areas in these smaller rural settlements. The Local Plan could review the functional areas of groups of villages and consider the way in which their functions support each other as a local service centre. For instance, a school in one parish may have been supported by housing development within nearby settlements. The advantages of this approach is that it allows a level of housing growth across a wider number of parishes, allows for greater flexibility in the role of rural settlements to accommodate growth. However, due to the geographical size of Breckland district, when considering clusters of settlements there is likely to be the need to drive between the individual settlements, and the grouping of settlements to act as one Local Service Centre could only happen if they are in reasonable distance to one another.

**8.227** Within Breckland, Beetley and Gressenhall could be an example of a settlement cluster. The 2 villages are located to the north of Dereham, and in some places there is less than 600m between the two settlement boundaries. In terms of services and facilities, Beetley contains a Primary School, community facilities, a Restaurant, public transport and local employment facilities. Gressenhall currently contains a Post Office, Shop, Public House and has public transport facilities. It will be important to consider the way in which these services and facilities work together to support housing development and vice versa. This approach would offer a very different option to growth than has previously been identified.

### Option 37

Continue to define settlement boundaries.

### Option 38

Take a more flexible approach to accommodate growth that would allow development proposals to be assessed against criteria-based policies, with no development boundaries.

### Option 39

Review and designate clusters of settlements which act as wider functional zones.

### Question 65

Do you consider settlement boundaries remain a relevant and appropriate option for delineating areas where new development is appropriate?



## Question 66

Do you consider rural settlement(s) could potentially contribute to future growth through the concept of functional areas and grouping of nearby villages?

If you are also submitting sites supporting your answer, please provide justifications.

### 8.228 Call for Sites

**8.229** As part of the current consultation we are seeking information on sites in private ownership that may be considered suitable for residential sites. Are you aware of any sites with potential for housing? If yes, please put the sites forward using the "Call for Sites" form as specified in Call For Sites.

## Issue 40

### Strategy for Countryside

**8.230** In addition to the rural settlements, Breckland contains a number of smaller villages and hamlets and large areas of predominantly undeveloped agriculture land. These settlements contain either very few or no services and facilities. The current strategy allows minimal development for these areas predominantly through the diversification of rural enterprises. It also allows some other employment uses in the countryside where rural location is necessary for the functioning of the businesses or it utilises a particular attribute and is a sustainable solution to an identified need. Table 8.12 'Breckland adopted Core Strategy approach to the Countryside' illustrates the parishes which are located within the wider countryside.

Category	Settlement	Current Core Strategy Policy
Rural Settlements (with no settlement boundary) Countryside	Beachamwell, Billingford, Blo' Norton, Brettenham, Bridgham, Bylaugh, Cranwich, Cranworth, Didlington, Elsing, Gateley, Great Cressingham, Hardingham, Hilborough, Hoe, Holme Hale, Horningtoft, Kempstone, Kilverstone, Lexham, Lt Dunham, Little Ellingham, Lynford, Merton, Narford, Newton by Castle Acre, North Tuddenham, Ovington, Oxborough, Quidenham, Riddlesworth, Roudham, Rougham, Scoulton, South Acre, South Lopham, South Pickenham, Stanford, Sturston, Tottington, Twyford, Wellingham, Wendling, Whinburgh, Wretham	Policy SS1, Policy CP1, Policy CP14, Policy DC18 (see policy synopsis in chapter 8.3).

**Table 8.12 Breckland adopted Core Strategy approach to the Countryside**

**8.231** In light of national and existing local policy about building in the countryside, new permanent dwellings are only likely to be permitted to support existing business and where essential need has been established. Within these parishes new residential development for market housing has been restricted. These villages do not have settlement boundaries and lack the key services and facilities to support sustainable development and use of private transport is a necessity in these areas. The current policy approach for any new residential development comprises replacement dwellings, conversion of redundant buildings, rural affordable housing exception sites and

dwellings required in association with rural enterprises. The Council's preference for rural workers accommodation is for such workers to reside in nearby towns or villages or in existing properties near to their place of work so avoiding new and potentially intrusive development in the countryside.

**8.232** In addition to exploring opportunities to promote the rural economy as detailed in the Rural Economy section of this document and the Spatial Strategy section, the Council would prefer to encourage more rural enterprise. Changes to technology such as improvements to rural broadband also means more opportunities for working in rural areas.

**8.233** The existing approach is based upon a one-size-fits-all strategy that restricts development in what are considered unsustainable locations, ignoring development on a more localised basis, however paragraph 54 of the NPPF advocates a more sensitive approach to rural housing, more responsive to local circumstances stating that;

- In rural areas, exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, Local Planning Authorities 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. Local Planning Authorities should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.

**8.234** Ruling out whole categories of villages as unsustainable ignores the potential for enhancing the social sustainability of many of Breckland's smaller communities. By utilising a sensitive approach to rural housing, policy could be developed that is more responsive to local circumstances, as per paragraph 54 of the NPPF. Given the importance of providing housing to accommodate local people (and increases in home working), in addition to the development of affordable housing policies, it could be considered that smaller villages should not be denied development and that there should be a focus on housing to meet the needs of people with local connections.

**8.235** The NPPF in paragraph 55 explicitly states that isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances such as:

- The essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near to their place of work in the countryside.

**8.236** It does not define rural worker, however this is traditionally taken to mean those associated with agricultural, forestry, and fishing. With this economic sector predicted to decline in the plan period the Council could look to review this area in order to support the diversification and new places to work as detailed in the Rural Economy section.

**8.237** There are a number of ways the Local Plan could help promote Breckland's countryside, the Council could:

#### Option 40

Continue with the current approach.

#### Option 41

Seek a more flexible approach around the approach to rural housing including clarifying the definition of rural worker based on a more local approach?

**8.238** In considering whether the countryside should play a more important role in terms of accommodating growth:

**Question 67**

Which option or options should the Council consider?

Are there any other reasonable alternative approaches?

## 9 Implementation and Viability

### Issue 41

#### Development funding and Implementation

**9.1** In order to deliver the full requirements of the Local Plan, including infrastructure such as schools, open space, roads, libraries and community facilities, it is necessary to consider an implementation strategy. The NPPF requires Local Plans to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect of any planned infrastructure required for the Plan to come forward within a timely manner. The Council currently has a significant amount of information relating to infrastructure implementation, which was used to support the Local Development Framework. These documents include an Integrated Delivery Programme (IDP), which includes a Local Investment Plan (LIP) and the EDAW Growth and Infrastructure Study.

**9.2** The IDP includes a list of 24 key projects within the district, which are shown below grouped together by type. A number of these projects are already underway, however it is considered that they will still help to meet the objectives of the Local Plan.

- Transport projects: Attleborough town centre, Attleborough distributor road, Thetford A11 junctions, rural transportation, Thetford bus station relocation.
- Housing projects: Estate regeneration in Thetford, improvements and adoptions to housing stock, rural affordable housing, bringing empty stock back into use, and the provision of a Gypsy and Traveller site.
- Energy projects: Snetterton energy supply, Thetford electricity.
- Education projects: Post-16 education in Thetford, Attleborough special-needs education.
- Communication projects: rural broadband.

### Question 68

Are there any other key projects you think are necessary to assist in the delivery of growth?

**9.3** Ensuring there are appropriate levels of funding available for infrastructure delivery will be key to the successful implementation of the Local Plan. In July 2014 the Council took the decision to halt the production of a Community Infrastructure Levy for Breckland for the present time. The intention is now to continue the use of section 106 agreements to fund certain forms of on and off site infrastructure. This includes the need to secure affordable housing through section 106 agreements.

### 9.4 Plan-wide viability

**9.5** In developing policies for the Local Plan it is important to consider viability. The duty to test in the NPPF is a high level one, stating that 'plans should be deliverable'. It is not a requirement that every site should be able to bear all of the Local Authority's policy requirements and be "financially viable"; there will be some sites that are unviable even with no policy of the Local Authority. A typical site in the Local Authority should be able to bear the policy requirements, and the Council should be able to show with a reasonable degree of confidence that the Local Plan is deliverable, providing a high level assurance that the policies within the plan are set in a way that is compatible and realistic in the likely economic climate.

**9.6** The NPPF includes the following requirements: *Ensuring Viability and Deliverability; Paragraph 173 -174*

- *Pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking. Plans should be deliverable. Therefore, the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.*
- *Local Planning Authorities should set out their policy on local standards in the Local Plan, including requirements for affordable housing. They should assess the likely cumulative impacts on development in their area of all existing and proposed local standards, supplementary planning documents and policies that support the development plan, when added to nationally required standards. In order to be appropriate, the cumulative impact of these standards and policies **should not put implementation of the plan at serious risk**, and should facilitate development throughout the economic cycle. Evidence supporting the assessment should be proportionate, using only appropriate available evidence.*

**9.7** As policies are developed in further iterations of the Local Plan they will therefore need to undergo viability testing to ensure they do not put the delivery of sites at serious risk.

**9.8** The primary role of a Local Plan viability assessment is to provide evidence to show that the requirements set out within the NPPF are met, i.e that the policy requirements for development set out within the Local Plan do not threaten the delivery / scale of development and that sites that the Local Plan will rely on can be developed viably.

**9.9** Where sites are not viable, developers have scope to make site-specific viability submissions at the planning applications stage; similarly some sites will be able to bear considerably more than the policy requirements.

**9.10** A viability study will run alongside the policy development within the Local Plan. This assessment can then be used to help consider the level of risk that the proposed policies place on delivery, and make a local judgement on striking a balance between the policy requirements that are seen as necessary in order to provide for sustainable development and the realities of economic viability. Evidence should be proportionate and reflect the range of different development; both residential and commercial, likely to come forward in an area and needed to underpin the vision and delivery of the plan.

#### Issue 42

The assessment is an important part of evidence that will be taken into account in the formation of policies. The purpose of the assessment is to help inform the preparation of the Local Plan so that the cumulative impact of policies does not inhibit the delivery of sites upon which the plan relies, helping to strike a balance between the three components of sustainable development that are at the heart of the planning system, (economic, social and environmental), and the vision and aspirations of the local communities, striking a balance between aspirational objectives with realistic and deliverable policies.

**9.11** Guidance on how to undertake plan-wide viability testing was published in June 2012 by the Local Housing Delivery Group chaired by Sir John Harman, and forms the basis of advice given by the DCLG funded Planning Advisory Service (PAS). "Viability Testing in Local Plans - Advice for Planning Practitioners" which has subsequently become known as the "Harman Guidance" advocates an approach based on Threshold Land Value for the testing of Local Plans. It is important to keep in mind that assessing the potential viability of plan policies will **not** take the same form nor share the same set of assumptions as a site-specific development appraisal.

**9.12** The Threshold Land value should represent the value at which a typical willing landowner is likely to release land for development.

**9.13** What is termed a competitive return( NPPF173/174 above) is subjective and has not been defined through the planning examination or legal process. It must be recognised that there are many reasons for a landowner to sell and it is clear that there needs to be a surplus which is sufficiently large to provide an incentive to the Land owner to release the site and cover appropriate costs, including planning policy costs, required to bring the site forward for development.

**9.14** The Harman Guidance recommends that the Threshold Land Value is based on a premium over current use values and credible alternative use values. It suggests that this is done through an iterative and collaborative approach in order to establish the threshold levels. The basic viability methodology involves preparing financial development appraisals for a representative range of sites utilising high level assumptions. It is stressed that this is a high level and broad brush approach that seeks to capture the generality rather than the specific. The purpose is to establish whether the sites within the Local Plan are generally viable. This information will help the Council to assess whether or not the sites are actually deliverable. Good quality information provided by Land owners/ Site promoters is vital to assist the testing of plan policy viability. The Harman Guidance states that:

- *Land owners and Site promoters should be prepared to provide sufficient and good quality information at an early stage, rather than waiting until the development management stage. This will allow an informed judgement by the Planning Authority regarding the inclusion or otherwise of sites based on their potential viability*

**9.15** Much work has already been done in this area as the Council investigated the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy. Assumptions and values have been tested through the consultation on the preliminary Draft Charging schedule in 2013. Many similar assumptions have been through examination by neighbouring authorities in the region in the recent past and it is considered that they remain relevant and proportionate, reflecting a range of different developments at this time. Following a comprehensive review of the process the Council in July 2014 took the decision to halt the production of a Community Infrastructure Levy for Breckland for the present time, and to keep a watching brief on the legislative process. The intention is now to continue the use of section 106 agreements to fund certain forms of on and off site infrastructure. This includes the need to secure affordable housing through section 106 agreements. It is therefor intended not to include a Cil rate in the viability assessment at this stage.

### Question 69

Do you have any reasoned and appropriate evidence that alternative assumptions including Threshold Values should be considered?

1. Threshold Value	Based on evidence prepared for the preliminary Draft Charging schedule in 2013. For Zone A £432,000/ha For Zone B £371,000/ha
2. Existing Use Value	£20,000 / ha for all typologies based on typical agricultural land values.
3. Developers Profit	20% GDV – based on previous agreed assumptions.



4. Developers Costs	
Build Costs	<p>The build costs are based upon median BCIS rates, adjusted for Breckland and Norfolk.</p> <p>On the smaller modelled sites an allowance of an additional 5% is proposed to reflect the higher specification that could be expected.</p>
Design	On smaller modelled sites an allowance of an additional 5% reflecting the normal higher specification.
Additional - Infrastructure Costs	<p>Sliding scale from large greenfield sites to small sites so as to reflect strategic costs. These will be reviewed against known requirements and should be broadly in alignment with range suggested for larger sites in appendix B of the Harman guidance.</p> <p>25% (500 + dwellings) 20% (200 dwellings +), 15% (50-200 dwellings), 10% (below 50 dwellings).</p>
Fees	<p>10% assumed for all typologies, broken down as:</p> <p>Architects 6%</p> <p>Planning consultants 1%</p> <p>Quantity surveying/project management costs 0.5%</p> <p>Others 2.5%</p>
Sales	<p>3.5%, broken down as:</p> <p>Agent and marketing costs 3%</p> <p>Legal 0.5%</p>
Site Acquisition	Assumed an allowance of 1.5% for acquisition agents and legal fees. Stamp duty is calculated at the prevailing rates.
S106 Contributions	£2, 500 per unit.
Contingency	2.5% - 5%
Interest Rates for Developer Finance	6.5%
5. CIL*	<p>Based on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule 2013 and in the event that CIL process is re-introduced by the Council . These rates are applied to all residential typologies:</p> <p>Zone A - £60m<sup>2</sup></p>

	<p>Zone B - £0m</p> <p>Zone A: The north and east of the district and includes the market towns of Dereham and Attleborough.</p> <p>Zone B: The south-west of the District and includes the market towns of Thetford, Swaffham and Watton.</p> <p>In addition the assumed rate used for on site S106 contributions is reduced to £1,000 per unit on developments greater than 4 unites, £750 per unit on developments less than 4 units. - as assumed in the draft CIL charging schedule evidence base.</p>
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Table 9.1 Summary of Assumptions**

\* CIL assumptions would only be in the event that CIL process is reintroduced.

### Question 70

Do you agree with the assumption proposed? If not please provide suitable existing and available evidence for your justification.

## 10 Call For Sites

### Call for Sites

**10.1** We would like to take this opportunity to carry out a formal call for sites which you would like to be considered as part of the Local Plan. We previously carried out a call for sites in Spring 2013, if you submitted land during this period, you do not need to re-submit it now.

**10.2** If you wish to put forward any land for consideration, please complete the site interest form, and submit this along with a map showing the extent of the site to the Council. Please use a separate form per site.

**10.3** Forms are available on the Council's website at: <http://www.breckland.gov.uk/content/consultations-contact-us>

**10.4** Alternatively they are also available from the Planning Policy Team at the following address:

Planning Policy Team

Breckland Council

Elizabeth House

Walpole Loke

Dereham

Norfolk

NR19 1EE

Email: [planningpolicyteam@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicyteam@breckland.gov.uk)

**10.5** We cannot guarantee that your land will be allocated as part of the Local Plan process. Following an assessment against certain criteria, the Council may not deem it suitable. We will ensure transparency in this process. Please note that any representations you make will be made public in the interest of ensuring a transparent planning process, but we will process your personal data in accordance with Data Protection policies.

---



## 11 Glossary

### **Affordable Housing**

Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

### **Allocation**

An area of land identified in a development plan. The allocation will indicate the Council's preferred use for the land.

### **Ancient Woodlands**

Woodland that is believed to have existed from at least medieval times.

### **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)**

A report produced each financial year to indicate the progress of production of the local development framework and effectiveness of policies contained within the plan. The report will outline action that may need to be taken to meet targets or if policies need to be replaced. Changes will be implemented through a revised local development scheme.

### **Area Action Plans (AAP)**

Plans for areas of change or conservation. Their purpose is to deliver planned growth, stimulate regeneration, and protect areas sensitive to change through conservation policies, make proposals for enhancement and resolve conflicting objectives in areas where there is significant development pressure. Area Action Plans are Development Plan Documents, which means they carry the full weight of the planning system in determining planning applications.

### **Biodiversity**

The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variation including plants and animals.

### **Brief / Planning Brief**

A planning brief can include site-specific development briefs, design briefs, development frameworks and master plans that seek to positively shape future development.

### **Brownfield Land or Site**

Brownfield land is another term for previously developed land.

### **Community Forest**

An area identified through the England Community Forest Programme to revitalise countryside and green space in and around major conurbations.

### **Community Strategy**

A strategy prepared by a community to help deliver local aspirations, under the Local Government Act 2000.

### **Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)**

An order issued by the Government or a Local Authority to acquire land or buildings for public interest purposes. For example the redevelopment of certain brownfield sites.

### **Conservation Area**

An area of special architectural or historic interest, designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, whose character and appearance it is desirable to preserve and enhance. There are special rules on some development in conservation areas.

### **Core Strategy**

The Core Strategy is one of the Development Plan Documents which formed part of the Local Authority's Local Development Framework. It set out the vision, spatial strategy and core policies for the spatial development of the area. The Local Plan will supercede the current adopted Core Strategy.

### **County Wildlife Site**

A site of important nature conservation value within a County context but which are not protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act

### **Density**

Measurement of the number of dwellings per hectare (dph).

### **Development**

Development is defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over, or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land." Most forms of development require planning permission (see also "permitted development").

### **Development Management**

The process whereby a Local Planning Authority manages, shapes, and considers the merits of a planning application and whether it should be given permission with regard to the Development Plan.

### **Development Plan (DP)**

This includes adopted Local Plans, and Neighbourhood Plans, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **Duty to Co-Operate**

Local Councils now have a duty to co-operate with their neighbouring Councils and a set of prescribed bodies as defined by the Localism Act 2011 on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to the strategic priorities.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

EIA is a procedure that must be followed for certain types of development before they are granted permission. The procedure requires the developer to compile an Environmental Statement (ES) describing the likely significant effects of the development on the environment and proposed mitigation measures.



## **General Conformity**

A process by a Development Plan Document is considered to align with the expectations of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **General Employment Areas**

Existing employment sites which have been identified to be protected for employment uses including business, general industrial and storage/distribution uses.

## **Greenfield Site**

Land that has not previously been used for urban development. It is usually land last used for agriculture and located next to or outside existing built-up areas of a settlement.

## **Habitat**

The natural home of an animal or plant, often designated as an area of nature conservation interest.

## **Historic Parks and Gardens**

Parks and Gardens which are of historic value and have been included on the national *Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England* based on an assessment by English Heritage.

## **Infrastructure**

The physical features (for example roads, rails, and stations) that make up the transport network.

## **Landscape Character Assessment**

A tool to identify and understand the factors that give character to the landscape and to help inform policy and decisions about how the landscape may change in the future.

## **Listed Building**

A building or other Structure of Special Architectural or Historic Interest included by the Government on a statutory list and assigned a grade (I, II\* or II).

## **Local Development Document (LDD)**

(1) Development Plan Documents (DPDs) – these are the statutory planning documents that the Council must produce under the legislation and include:

(2) Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) – documents that will provide additional and supporting detail for policies and proposals, where necessary. Whilst the community will be consulted on their content, these documents will not be subject to independent scrutiny.

## **Local Development Framework (LDF)**

The old-style portfolio or folder of Local Development Documents collectively setting out the Spatial Planning Strategy for a Local Planning Authority area. Local Plans have now replaced the Local Development Framework.

## **Local Development Scheme (LDS)**

A public statement setting out a project plan for how all parts of the Local Plan will come together. It lists the documents to be produced and the timetable for producing them.



### **Local Nature Reserve (LNR)**

Area designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as being of particular importance to nature conservation and where public understanding of nature conservation issues is encouraged.

### **Local Planning Authority (LPA)**

The Local Government body responsible for formulating Planning Policies (in a Local Development Framework), controlling development through determining planning applications and taking enforcement action when necessary. This is either a District Council, Unitary Authority, Metropolitan Council or National Park Authority. For the purposes of development concerned with minerals or waste, the County Council or Unitary Authority is normally the Local Planning Authority - and is also referred to as the Minerals Planning Authority or the Waste Planning Authority.

### **Local Transport Plan (LTP)**

A five-year integrated transport strategy, prepared by Local Authorities in partnership with the community, seeking funding to help provide local transport projects. The plan sets out the resources predicted for delivery of the targets identified in the strategy. Local Transport Plans should be consistent with the policies and priorities set out in the Regional Transport Strategy as an integral part of the RSS.

### **Material Consideration**

A matter that should be taken into account in deciding on a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.

### **Mixed Use (or Mixed Use Development)**

Provision of a mix of complementary uses, such as say residential, community and leisure uses, on a site or within a particular area.

### **Nature Conservation**

The protection, management and promotion of wildlife habitat for the benefit of wild species, as well as the communities that use and enjoy them.

### **National Nature Reserve (NNR)**

Area designated by Natural England to protect and conserve nationally important areas of wildlife habitat and geological formations and to promote scientific research.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The NPPF forms the national planning policies that Local Planning Authorities need to take into account when drawing up development plan documents, and other documents and making decisions on planning policies. The NPPF is published by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

A Plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).



## **Open Space**

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

## **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is the latest piece of planning legislation. It amends much of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In particular, the 2004 act has made major changes to the system of development plans and introduced sustainable development, as defined by Government policy, as an objective of the planning system.

## **Planning Obligations and Agreements**

A legal agreement between planning authority and a developer, or offered unilaterally by a developer ensuring certain works related to a development are undertaken or contributions made to the provision of infrastructure or facilities (sometimes called a Section 106 Agreement).

## **Planning Permission**

Formal approval sought from a Council, often granted with conditions, allowing a proposed development to proceed. Permission may be sought in principle through outline plans, or be sought in detail through full plans.

## **Previously Developed Land**

Land which is, or was, occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

## **Primary Shopping Area**

Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).

## **Primary and Secondary Frontages**

Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

## **Protected Species**

Plants and animal species afforded protection under certain Acts of Law and Regulations.

## **Ramsar Site**

Area identified under the internationally agreed Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (signed at Ramsar in Iran), focusing on the ecological importance of wetlands generally.

## **Regeneration**

The economic, social and environmental renewal and improvement of rural and urban areas.

## **Section 106 Agreement**

A legal agreement under Section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. See also: Planning Obligations and Agreements.

## **Sequential Approach / Sequential Test**

A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before the consideration of others. For example, ensuring land with no flood risk is developed before land with flood risk.

## **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

A Site of Special Scientific Interest is identified by English Nature under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as requiring protection from damaging development on account of its flora, fauna, geological and/or physiological features.

## **Sites of Archaeological & Historic Interest:**

This designation applies to a site at Mundford Road Thetford, which is widely regarded as being linked to Boudicca, Queen of the Iceni. The site is currently being considered for Scheduled Ancient Monument status by English Heritage.

## **Soundness**

A term referring to the justification of a Development Plan Document. A DPD is considered “sound” and based upon good evidence unless it can be shown to be unsound.

## **Spatial Planning**

Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. That will include policies which can impact on land use, for example by influencing the demands on, or needs for, development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting or refusal of planning permission and which may be implemented by other means.

## **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)**

Protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive.

## **Special Protection Area (SPAs)**

Protected sites classified under the EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds, the Birds Directive.

## **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

Every Local Planning Authority has to prepare a statement of community involvement. Its aim is to specify how the authority will try to achieve consensus on emerging Local Development Documents and major planning applications and how it will engage the public in the process.



## **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

An assessment of the environmental effects of a draft plan or programme, which is open to public consultation.

## **Sustainable Development**

Meeting peoples needs now, socially, environmentally and economically, without jeopardising the needs of future generations. There are three dimensions to sustainable development as seen in paragraph 7 of the NPPF: economic-contributing to a strong, competitive economy; social-supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and environmental-contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

## **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

To identify and evaluate what the effects of the strategy or plan are likely to be on social, environmental and economic conditions of the strategy or plan area.

## **Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA)**

An assessment of the effects upon the surrounding area by traffic as a result of a development, such as increased traffic flows that may require highway improvements.

## **Town Centre**

Area defined on the Local Authority's proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in Local Plans, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

## **Tree Preservation Order (TPO)**

A mechanism for securing the preservation of single or groups of trees of acknowledged amenity value. A tree subject to an order may not normally be topped, lopped or felled without the consent of the Local Planning Authority.

## 12 Evidence Base List

Breckland Council has assembled a range of information to inform and underpin the preparation of its Local Plan. This is known as the evidence base and provides an understanding of the needs, opportunities and constraints within the area. This ensures that up-to-date information, on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the district is available to enable the preparation of a sound spatial plan to meet the objectives of securing sustainable development. The development of the evidence base is a continuing process. Studies completed so far are listed below:

### **Sustainability Appraisal and Monitoring**

#### **Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2013/2014)**

This is a systematic and continuous assessment of the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategies and policies contained within the Development Plan Documents.

#### **Breckland Annual Monitoring Report**

A statutory document prepared by the Council as part of the Local Plan which provides a Monitoring Framework for the implementation of the Local Development Scheme, adopted planning policies and sets out the housing trajectory for Breckland.

#### **5 Year Housing Land Supply Statement (2014)**

This document assesses Breckland's supply of housing over the next 5 years. This document is updated annually.

### **Adopted Breckland DPD's**

#### **Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (2009)**

The Core Strategy contains the spatial strategy and development control policies to manage change within the district up to 2026. The document was prepared as part of the Local Development Framework and will ultimately be superseded by the Local Plan.

#### **Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD (2012)**

The Site Specific DPD sets out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the district to 2026.

#### **Thetford Area Action Plan (2012)**

The Thetford Area Action Plan provides a policy framework for significant change in Thetford area

### **Housing, Employment and Regeneration**

#### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2013): Prepared by Breckland Council**

This report is an assessment which will provide a robust evidence base on how the housing market operates in Breckland and what measures need to be followed in terms of strategic housing and planning in order to balance the local housing market in Breckland. The Assessment has been prepared in accordance with SHMA Practice Guidance from CLG.

**Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2013): Prepared by Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) together with Cambridgeshire Research Group for Breckland Council**

This report is to assist in the provision of evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. It looks to project residential requirements over a 15 year period and consider broad areas of search for future provision.

**Thetford Growth Framework and Infrastructure Study (2007): Prepared by EDAW for Thetford Growth Point Partnership**

The study was commissioned as part of the Growth Point initiative for Thetford to enhance the evidence base around the sustainable growth options for the town in light of the housing and employment figures provided in the Regional Plan. The study also outlines the infrastructure requirements.

**Breckland Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2014)**

The study assesses land availability for housing over the plan period. It includes unimplemented planning permissions, greenfield and previously developed land with potential for housing development.

**Employment Growth Study (2013): Prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners on behalf of Breckland Council**

This reviews existing allocated employment land to assess its suitability in light of changing needs of businesses and the local economy. It also considers the level of employment growth to be planned for up to 2031.

**Sub-District Employment Projections (December 2006): Prepared by Roger Tym & Partners on behalf of Breckland Council**

This analysis provides a spatial breakdown of the 6,000 jobs figure for Breckland in the Draft RSS to Ward level, based on a number of policy scenarios and market factors.

**Breckland Retail and Town Centre Study (2010): Prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners on behalf of Breckland Council**

This study provides a review and update of the Retail and Town Centre Study in 2004 and the subsequent update of the study in 2007. The study focuses on future need and residual capacity, existing supply and demand, review of existing hierarchy, implication for growth scale and impact of future growth up to 2026.

**Breckland Core Strategy Infrastructure Study (2008): Prepared by EDAW on behalf of Breckland Council**

The study looks at the infrastructure needs of planned economic and residential development and to test the district-wide effects of developer contributions required by the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD on financial viability of employment and residential development.

**A11 Energy Study**

The study looked at the energy infrastructure requirements of Thetford, Snetterton and Attleborough arising from the growth agenda along the corridor. There is sufficient energy to meet the needs arising from growth in Attleborough. There are localised energy constraints in Thetford which are not insurmountable, but are now more fully understood and can be resolved through the planned growth of the town. Whilst Snetterton has strategic energy constraints these too can be overcome, and it remains important for this LDF to promote the location as a strategic employment allocation to provide clarity and confidence for further investment.



### **Economic Impact of 4,000 homes in Attleborough (2008): Prepared by PACEC on behalf of Breckland Council**

To re-evaluate the economic impact of 4,000 additional homes in Attleborough, compared to previously consulted figures of 1,000 homes which informed earlier Employment Land Assessments.

### **Draft Housing Technical Paper (2013): Prepared by Breckland Council**

This technical paper examines the issues around the identification of “objectively assessed” local housing need as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will be necessary to identify a housing target in the draft Local Plan which can be realistically delivered.

## **Environment**

### **Breckland Water Cycle Study: Stage 1 – Outline Study (2008): Prepared by Scott-Wilson on behalf of Breckland Council**

The study tests the overall water infrastructure needs including waste water treatment, and test the environmental capacity for growth in terms of water resources. The study will also investigate water efficiency measures and provide guidance for the implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems through new developments.

### **Breckland Water Cycle Study: Stage 2 – Detailed Study (2010): Prepared by Scott-Wilson on behalf of Breckland Council**

The Stage 2 Detailed Study continued on from the Stage 1 Study and was undertaken for growth across the district, including Thetford. It has taken the findings of the Outline Study and determined the detailed solutions required to deliver growth for the specific identified preferred development allocations including detailed information on the cost of the infrastructure and the policy required to deliver it.

### **Open Space Assessment (2010) Breckland Council**

The Assessment sets out a picture of existing provision, quality and future need for open space in Breckland, based on the open space typologies in PPG17. The Assessment advises on standards for the amount and accessibility of different types of open space giving a picture of where there is adequate provision or not enough open space.

### **Breckland Landscape Character Assessment (2007): Prepared by Land Use Consultants on behalf of Breckland Council**

This provides a comprehensive Breckland-wide assessment of landscape character to inform land use planning and land management decisions.

### **Breckland Landscape Character Assessment Fringe Study (2007): Prepared by Land Use Consultants on behalf of Breckland Council**

This Study provides a detailed assessment of the landscape character on the fringes of the five towns and 12 Local Service Centre villages in Breckland to inform land use planning and land management decisions at the Core Strategy and Site Specific stages of the LDF.

### **Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks Landscape Character Assessment (2013): Prepared by Sheils Flynn**

This study provides a detailed assessment of the entirety of the Brecks national character area. It extends further than Breckland District boundaries and incorporates all of the land known as the Brecks.

**Thetford Green Infrastructure Study (2007): Prepared by Land Use Consultants on behalf of Breckland Council**

The study was commissioned as part of the Growth Point initiative for Thetford to enhance the evidence base around the Green Infrastructure requirements resulting from the significant growth of Thetford to 2021 and beyond.

**Breckland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2007): Prepared by Mott MacDonald on behalf of Breckland Council**

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provides a detailed and robust assessment of flood risk in the district and its implications for land-use planning. It is therefore a technical background document to the LDF process and its output is intended for planning consultation purposes only. The principal output of the study is mapping of the towns and larger villages in Breckland at a 1:10,000 scale showing the appropriate PPG25 flood risk zones. The SFRA was 'signed off' by the Environment Agency in June 2005. Please note that in 2007 an update of the SFRA was prepared by Mott MacDonald to incorporate PPS25 policy advice and revised climate change predictions. This update was signed off by the Environment Agency in February 2008.

**Dereham Green Infrastructure Study (2008): Prepared by Ecology, Land and People (ELP) on behalf of Dereham Town Council, Breckland Council and Norfolk County Council**

A Green Infrastructure Study and accompanying Implementation Strategy for the market town of Dereham. The study provides detailed evidence to underpin the emerging Breckland Core Strategy in relation to the delivery of new green infrastructure, as well as recommending opportunities for the enhancement of the existing. The assistance in the production of a Green Infrastructure Study is also a year 1 action point set out in the Council's adopted Environment Strategy.

**The Effect of Development and Roads on the Distribution of Stone Curlews in the Breckland (2008): Prepared by Footprint Ecology for Breckland Council**

The research was commissioned in order to determine the effect of new housing and road traffic increases on stone curlews. The approach looked across the whole SPA on stone curlew nest locations, data on new housing and road traffic data.

**Further Assessments of the relationship between buildings and stone curlew distribution (2013): Prepared by Footprint Ecology for Breckland Council**

This report has been commissioned to update the 2008 research. The research aims were to compare different types of buildings and explore other factors on field size and land use.

**Building in Biodiversity: Published by Breckland Council**

A short paper which provides an understanding and recommendation to building in biodiversity in new and existing buildings.

**Accessibility**

**Thetford Transport Study (2006): Prepared by Mott MacDonald for Norfolk County Council and Breckland Council**

The study analyses the transport situation in Thetford and provides a strategy for enhancing accessibility and addressing the transport implications of future growth.

### **Attleborough Transport Study (2007): Prepared by Mott MacDonald for Norfolk County Council and Breckland Council**

The study analyses the transport situation in Attleborough and provides a strategy for enhancing accessibility and addressing the transport implications of future growth.

Full copies or summaries of these documents are available on [www.breckland.gov.uk](http://www.breckland.gov.uk) via the Local Development Framework quick link on the homepage.

### **Attleborough Proposed Link Road Solutions. Route Identification Study (2008): Prepared by Mott Macdonald**

The study examined four possible options for a link road over the railway to service land to the south of the town whilst providing a direct route from Bunns Bank to the A11 avoiding the need to congest the town centre. The study concludes that a link road to serve a sustainable urban extension to the south of Attleborough is technically deliverable. All four link road options examined can be engineered to a standard acceptable to the Highways Authority and Network Rail, and are viable.

### **Attleborough Town Centre Study (2013): Prepared by Capita**

The aim of this report is to identify a successful and balanced provision of transport infrastructure and facilities, for pedestrians and cyclists, public transport and other vehicles, to achieve a sustainable future for Attleborough town centre.

### **Attleborough Link Road Study (2013): Prepared by Capita**

This report further develops concept design options to provide a Link Road between London Road and the B1077 Attleborough Road, to the south of the town.

### **Attleborough Smarter Choices (2013): Prepared by Capita**

The report examines how smarter choices can contribute to reducing local traffic congestion, enhance accessibility, make road and rail crossings safer, and improve local environmental quality. The report will contain an implementation and delivery section which will set out how the measures can be delivered, approximate costs and identify prospective delivery bodies, including developers.

---

## 13 Local Service Centre Analysis

### Key Local Service Centres identified within the Core Strategy

#### Banham

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,443
Population (2011 Census)	1,481
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	65
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	5
2014 SHLAA capacity	3 sites were identified but were considered undeliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	8
Primary School	Banham Community Primary School: capacity is limited and school has no room to expand
Primary Health Care Facilities	None, nearest Doctor's Surgery is in Kenninghall
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 49 registered businesses in Banham, across 13 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.10A, H Semmence &amp; Co</li> <li>- East Harling - Banham - Norwich: Mon-Fri 2 AM services, and no service Saturday/Sunday</li> <li>- Norwich - Banham - East Harling: Mon-Fri 3 PM services, and no service Saturday/Sunday</li> <li>- No.1, Turner &amp; Butcher</li> <li>- Quidenham - Banham - Diss: Saturday 1 AM service</li> <li>- Diss - Banham - Quidenham: Saturday 1 Midday service</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	<p>Shop</p> <p>Post Office</p>
Other Facilities	<p>Public House</p> <p>Community Centre/Social Club</p>
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	Ordinary watercourse to west and north west of village (Wash Farm and Church Farm stream). Small area of 1 in 100 year flood risk area adjacent ordinary watercourses to west and north west of village
Local Road Network	Village is accessed from the B1113
Biodiversity	No European sites, SSSIs or CWS in vicinity of Banham

Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies the area to have moderate-high character area sensitivity. Sensitivity is highest on the meadow landscape west of the church. However, elsewhere opportunities for development are also limited, with sensitivities noted both to further linear expansion along the rural road and to infilling and consolidation of settlement between roads
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy Banham is identified as a Local Service Centre Village but will not see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period

**Table 13.1**

**Great Ellingham**

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,108
Population (2011 Census)	1,132
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	44
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	7
2014 SHLAA capacity	19 sites identified with 9 achievable and 10 non-deliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	181
Primary School	Great Ellingham Primary School: school has been expanded and has capacity for growth
Primary Health Care Facilities	None, Doctor's Surgery and Dentist in nearby Attleborough
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 40 registered businesses in Great Ellingham, across 13 classifications
Public Transport	- No.X6/6A, Konectbus (Attleborough - Norwich) - AM to PM to meet commuter need - Norwich - Great Ellingham - Watton: Mon-Sat 2 PM services (1 to Great Ellingham and 1 to Watton) and no service on Sunday - Great Ellingham - Norwich: Mon-Fri 3 AM services, Saturday 2 AM services, and no service on Sunday
Local Shopping Facilities	Post Office & Store
Other Facilities	Public House Recreation Centre/Village Hall
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	1 in 100 year flood risk area to the east of the village. Localised flooding events have regularly been recorded on Long Street
Local Road Network	The village is on the B1077 Attleborough to Watton road and has good links to the A11 Hingham Road to the north of the village is a busy local link from Attleborough to Dereham
Biodiversity	No European Sites, SSSIs or CWS in vicinity of Great Ellingham

Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies the Attleborough Hills Tributary Farmland and Woodland to the south and east of Great Ellingham as having high character area sensitivity. The Bow Street arable plateau immediately surrounding the village and to the north-west is identified as having a moderate landscape character area sensitivity
Status in the Local Development Framework	Great Ellingham is identified within the adopted Core Strategy as a Local Service Centre Village but does not have a positive housing allocation

**Table 13.2**

### Harling

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	2,201
Population (2011 Census)	2,142
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	121
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	57
2014 SHLAA capacity	Identified 13 sites with 6 achievable and 5 non-deliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	6643
Primary School	East Harling Primary School and Nursery
Primary Health Care Facilities	Dentist  Doctor's Surgery
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 41 registered businesses in Harling, across 12 classifications. Additionally there is significant employment at Roudham (less than 2km from East Harling village)
Public Transport	- East Harling - Norwich: Mon-Fri 2 AM services, and no service Saturday and Sunday - Norwich - East Harling: Mon-Fri 3 PM services, and no service Saturday and Sunday - No.66, Coach Services - East Harling - Norwich: 1 AM service on a Thursday - Norwich - East Harling: 1 PM service on a Thursday - Quidenham - East Harling - Diss: 1 AM service only on a Saturday - Diss - East Harling - Quidenham: 1 AM service only on a Saturday
Local Shopping Facilities	Shop  Post Office  Chemist



Other Facilities	Fast Food Restaurant 2 Public Houses Fire Station
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	River Thet flows to the west of East Harling, areas of 1 in 100 year flood risk to south and west of village
Local Road Network	Village is accessed by the B1111 which provides a good access onto the A11. Local issue about HGVs through the village
Biodiversity	There is a SSSI, CWS and SPA to the south of East Harling and CWS to the north
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies East Harling Fen to the north of the village has a high landscape character area sensitivity, in view of the intactness of the landscape elements and the intimate, small scale character of the landscape, which includes a number of historic features such as Harling Common and the local parkland adjacent to the church  The Middle Harling Open Valley Floor has moderate-high landscape sensitivity, in the view of the relatively wide, open views and the comparatively sparse landcover  East Harling Heathlands that immediately surrounds most of the village and extends to the east has moderate landscape character area sensitivity
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy Harling is identified as a Local Service Centre Village which will see a positive housing allocation for the plan period. Land will be allocated for 50 homes. In addition to this strategic allocation, at least 70 homes from existing commitments will be built between the Local Service Centre villages which will see a positive housing allocation

**Table 13.3**

### Litcham

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	592
Population (2011 Census)	618
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	9
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	0
2014 SHLAA capacity	7 sites were identified with 4 being achievable and 3 un-deliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	46
Primary School	Litcham School (Primary)  Litcham High School

Primary Health Care Facilities	Litcham Health Centre
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 14 registered businesses in Litcham, across 11 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.32, Freestone Coaches</li> <li>- King's Lynn - Swaffham - Litcham - Longham: Mon-Sat 1 PM service to Longham, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- Longham - Litcham - Swaffham - King's Lynn: Mon-Fri 1 AM service to Swaffham and 2 AM services to King's Lynn, Saturday 2 AM services to King's Lynn, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- No.4, Peelings Coaches</li> <li>- Harpley - Litcham - Fakenham: 1 AM service only on a Thursday</li> <li>- Fakenham - Litcham - Harpley: 1 PM service only on a Thursday</li> <li>- No.1, Peelings Coaches</li> <li>- King's Lynn - Litcham - Fakenham: 1 PM service on a Tuesday and Thursday</li> <li>- Hempton - Litcham - King's Lynn: 1 AM service on a Tuesday and Thursday</li> <li>- No.1, Carters Coaches of Litcham</li> <li>- Mileham - Litcham - Dereham: 1 AM service on a Friday</li> <li>- Dereham - Litcham - Mileham: 1 PM service on a Friday</li> <li>- No.2, Carters Coaches of Litcham</li> <li>- Mileham - Litcham - Dereham: 1 AM service on a Tuesday</li> <li>- Dereham - Litcham - Mileham: 1 AM service on a Tuesday</li> <li>- No.8, Carters Coaches of Litcham</li> <li>- Norwich - Litcham: 1 PM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- Litcham - Norwich: 1 AM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- No.13C, Freestone Coaches</li> <li>- Swaffham - Litcham - Easton College: 1 AM service only on college days</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	Post Office and General Store
Other Facilities	Takeaway
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	Area of flood risk identified to the south of the village (River Nar)
Local Road Network	Village is accessed by the B1145 which provides access to the A1065 to the west and the B1146 to the east
Biodiversity	Litcham Common and Nar Valley identified as a SSSI and CWS site identified south of River Nar

Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies Litcham as being within the Chalk Rivers (Nar) landscape type, with the northern extent of the village being identified as Nar Tributary Farmland. Litcham was not included within the settlement fringe assessment
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy Litcham is identified as a Local Service Centre Village but will not see a positive housing allocation

**Table 13.4**

**Mattishall**

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	2631
Population (2011 Census)	2617
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	66
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	4
2014 SHLAA capacity	18 sites were identified with 2 being achievable and 16 being un-deliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	31
Primary School	Mattishall Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	None?
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 32 registered businesses in Mattishall, across 12 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.4/4A, Konectbus</li> <li>- Swanton Morley - Mattishall - Norwich: hourly service throughout Mon-Sat, and service every two hours on Sunday</li> <li>- Norwich - Mattishall - Swanton Morley: hourly service throughout Mon-Sat, and service every two hours on Sunday</li> <li>- No.13A, Konectbus</li> <li>- Dereham - Mattishall - Easton College: 1 AM service on college days</li> <li>- Easton College - Mattishall - Dereham: 1 PM service on college days</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	Post Office  2 Shops  Butchers  Pharmacy
Other Facilities	Fast Food

Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	Small area of 1 in 100 year flood risk east of Daffodil Way, area to north-west in and around Castleton Farm and to the north adjacent to the Occupation Road Drain
Local Road Network	Access onto the A47 has improved with a roundabout being installed at the Mattishall Road junction
Biodiversity	There is a SSSI to the north of Mattishall
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies Clippings Green Small Scale Tributary Farmland in a 1.5km radius from the northern edge of Mattishall. The overall sensitivity in this area is moderate, although this would be locally higher in the more intact and small scale pastoral landscape at Mill Road. It also identifies Mattishall Hall Small Scale Tributary Farmland in a radius of 1.5km extending from the south western settlement edge of Mattishall. Sensitivity in this area is moderate-high, in the view of the intactness of the landcover and field boundary pattern and presence of elements such as Mattishall Hall. There is also the Mattishall Burgh Large Scale Plateau Farmland in a 1.5km radius extending from the northern and eastern edges of Mattishall and Matishall Burgh. Sensitivity in this area is judged to be moderate
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy Mattishall is identified as a Local Service Centre Village, which will not see a positive housing allocation in the remainder of the plan period

**Table 13.5**

## Mundford

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1591
Population (2011 Census)	1526
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	41
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	3
2014 SHLAA capacity	Mundford not contained within SHLAA
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	N/A
Primary School	Mundford Church of England Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	Mundford Surgery
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008), there are 10 registered businesses in Mundford, across 6 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.12, Coach Services</li> <li>- King's Lynn - Mundford - Foulton: 1 PM service on a Tuesday</li> <li>- Foulton - Mundford - King's Lynn: 1 AM service on a Tuesday</li> <li>- No.012, National Express Shuttle</li> <li>- London - Cambridge - Dereham: 1 PM service pre-booked through National Express</li> </ul>

	<p>- Dereham - Cambridge - London: 1 AM service commencing 01/11/2013 pre-booked through National Express</p> <p>- No.40, Coach Services</p> <p>- King's Lynn - Mundford - Thetford: restricted service on college days (AM &amp; PM) and non-college days (PM), and 1 PM service on a Saturday</p> <p>- Thetford - Mundford - King's Lynn: restricted service on college days (AM) and non-college days (AM), and 1 AM service on a Saturday</p>
Local Shopping Facilities	<p>Post Office</p> <p>Shop</p> <p>Newsagents</p>
Other Facilities	<p>Crown Hotel</p> <p>Village Hall</p>
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	Land north of the village is identified as being within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 (Wissey)
Local Road Network	Mundford is accessed from the A1065 and the A134
Biodiversity	Breckland Forest SSSI, SPA and surrounding the village to the south, east and west. County Wildlife to north. SAC to east and west
Landscape Assessment	Mundford is located within the Brecks – plantations landscape type in the district-wide Landscape Character Assessment. The village was not examined in the settlement fringe analysis
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy Mundford is identified as a Local Service Centre Village, which will not see a positive housing allocation in the remainder of the plan period

**Table 13.6**

### Narborough

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1095
Population (2011 Census)	1094
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	38
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	55
2014 SHLAA capacity	10 sites were identified with 4 sites being achievable and 6 sites being undeliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	312
Primary School	Narborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Primary Health Care Facilities	Narborough Surgery
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 45 registered businesses in Narborough, across 11 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.13D, Konectbus</li> <li>- Narborough - Swaffham: 1 AM service on college days only</li> <li>- Swaffham - Narborough: 1 PM service on college days only</li> <li>- No.32, Freestone Coaches</li> <li>- King's Lynn - Narborough - Litcham/Longham: Mon-Fri 1 AM &amp; PM from King's Lynn and 1 PM from Swaffham, 2 services (1 AM &amp; 1 PM) on Saturday, and no Sunday service</li> <li>- Longham/Litcham - Narborough - King's Lynn: Mon-Fri 3 AM services, Saturday 2 AM services, and no Sunday service</li> <li>- No.X1, First in Suffolk &amp; Norfolk</li> <li>- Lowestoft - Great Yarmouth - Norwich - Narborough - King's Lynn - Peterborough: Mon-Sat half hourly services throughout day, and PM hourly services to King's Lynn, and hourly service throughout day on a Sunday</li> <li>- Peterborough - King's Lynn - Narborough - Norwich - Great Yarmouth - Lowestoft: Mon-Sat half hourly services throughout day and PM hourly services, and Sunday hourly services throughout day</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	Post Office and Village Store
Other Facilities	<p>The Ship Inn Chinese Restaurant</p> <p>Community Centre</p>
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	River Nar flows to the north of the village and is surrounded by an area of 1 in 100 year flood risk. Further small areas of flood risk to the west of the village adjacent to the Allotment and Butlers Drain
Local Road Network	A47 provides good access to Swaffham and beyond, and King's Lynn
Biodiversity	A SSSI is located to the immediate north of Narborough and there is a second SSSI further to the south of the village
Landscape Assessment	Narborough Farmland and Plantation forms a section of Swaffham Heath surrounding the nucleated village of Narborough. The character of this area is judged to have moderate sensitivity to built development. Narborough Estate Valley Floor forms part of the River Nar District character area. The overall sensitivity of this character area is considered to be high, although locally lower (moderate) where affected by urban edge recreational development, such as at the trout lakes
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy Narborough is identified as a Local Service Centre Village, which will see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period. Land will be allocated for 50 homes. In addition to this strategic allocation, at least 70 homes from existing commitments will be built between the Local Service Centre villages which will see a positive housing allocation

**Table 13.7**



## Necton

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,895
Population (2011 Census)	1,923
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	114
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	135
2014 SHLAA capacity	13 sites were identified with 5 being considered suitable and achievable and 8 being considered non-deliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	180
Primary School	Necton VA Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	Satellite Surgery at Hale Road (still there?)
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 17 registered businesses in Necton, across 12 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.1, Konectbus</li> <li>- King's Lynn - Necton - Watton: Mon-Sat hourly throughout day, and no service on a Sunday</li> <li>- Watton - Necton - King's Lynn: Mon-Sat hourly throughout day, and no service on a Sunday</li> <li>- No.16, Konectbus</li> <li>- Swaffham - Necton - Dereham: 1 AM service on school days</li> <li>- Dereham - Necton - Swaffham: 1 PM service on school days</li> <li>- No.20, Konectbus</li> <li>- Dereham - Necton: 2 PM services on school days</li> <li>- Necton - Dereham: 1 AM service on school days</li> <li>- No.51, Eagles Coaches</li> <li>- Norwich - Necton - Downham Market: 1 PM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- Downham Market - Necton - Norwich: 1 AM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- No.X1, First in Suffolk &amp; Norfolk</li> <li>- Lowestoft - Great Yarmouth - Norwich - Necton - King's Lynn - Peterborough: Mon-Sat half hourly services throughout day and PM hourly services to King's Lynn, and hourly service throughout day on a Sunday</li> <li>- Peterborough - King's Lynn - Necton - Norwich - Great Yarmouth - Lowestoft: Mon-Sat half hourly services throughout day and PM hourly services, and hourly services throughout day on a Sunday</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	Post Office

	Co-Op Butchers
Other Facilities	Windmill Inn Pub Village Hall
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	River Wissey flows to the south of Necton and southern edge of village is within flood risk as identified in SFRA. Small areas of flood risk adjacent to Necton Drains and Necton Brook to north, south and west of village. Additional small, localised flooding events within other parts of the village, caused by poor drainage, have been recorded and attended to by Breckland Council since 2001
Local Road Network	Access onto A47 is a significant local issue, particularly during peak hours when queues form to turn left from Tuns Road. Local campaign for a roundabout at the A47 / Tuns Road junction
Biodiversity	No European sites, SSSIs or CWS in vicinity of Necton
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies the Sparham Hall Open Tributary, which is an area extending 1.5km from the northern edge of the village. The local character area is defined by open, large scale arable farmland interspersed only occasionally with field boundary hedgerows. Overall sensitivity of this area is considered moderate, in spite of the relatively exposed visual character and primarily in light of the eroded structure and quality of the landscape. The Holme Hale Small Scale Tributary Farmland which is an area extending 1.5km from the edge of Necton, is considered to have a moderate-high sensitivity. This is in view of the relatively high quality and the range of landscape elements displayed within the area
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Necton is identified as a Local Service Centre Village, but will not see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period. Over the remainder of the plan period, 140 homes will be built in the village of Necton and these will be developed entirely from existing commitments

**Table 13.8**

## North Elmham

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,428
Population (2011 Census)	1,433
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	45
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	3
2014 SHLAA capacity	11 sites were identified with 3 being considered suitable and achievable and 8 being considered non-deliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	30
Primary School	North Elmham Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Primary Health Care Facilities	Elmham Surgery and Swanton Morley Surgery
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 38 registered businesses in North Elmham, across 12 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.9, Carters Coaches of Litcham</li> <li>- Norwich - North Elmham - Tittleshall: 1 PM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- Tittleshall - North Elmham - Norwich: 1 AM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- No.21, Konectbus</li> <li>- Dereham - North Elmham - Fakenham: Mon-Fri services throughout day with certain PM services on non-school/school days, Saturday services throughout day, and no Sunday service</li> <li>- Fakenham - North Elmham - Dereham: Mon-Fri services throughout day till early afternoon with certain AM services on non-school/school days, Saturday services throughout day till early afternoon</li> <li>- No.22, Konectbus</li> <li>- Dereham - North Elmham - Broom Green: 1 PM service on school days</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	<p>Post Office</p> <p>Shop</p>
Other Facilities	<p>Public Houses</p> <p>Fish and Chips Takeaway</p>
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	River Wensum flows to the east of North Elmham and parts of the village are within flood risk as identified in SFRA. Small areas of flood risk lie adjacent to the street harm Drain and Town Beck along the north of the village
Local Road Network	North Elmham is at the junction of the B1110 and B1145, neither are principal roads but nonetheless provide a good road access to the village
Biodiversity	There is a SSSI to the immediate north and east of the village
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies the County School Station Valley Floor which has a 1.5km radius from the eastern and southern edges of North Elmham. The overall sensitivity is considered to be moderate, whilst this would be locally higher (moderate-high) in areas such as around Worthing Mill. Elmham Park Tributary Farmland covers a 1.5km radius from the western edge of North Elmham and including the historic parkland of Elmham Park. Overall sensitivity is judged to be high, in view of the generally intact character of much of the settlement edge and landscape structure of the character area
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, North Elmham is identified as a Local Service Centre Village but will not see a positive housing allocation for the plan period

**Table 13.9**

## Old Buckenham

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,294
Population (2011 Census)	1,270
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	32
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	16
2014 SHLAA capacity	12 sites were identified with 2 sites being considered suitable and achievable and 10 sites being considered un-deliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	10
Primary School	Old Buckenham Community Primary School Old Buckenham High School
Primary Health Care Facilities	None, Doctors and Dentist in nearby Attleborough
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 15 registered businesses in Old Buckenham, across 11 classifications
Public Transport	- No.1, Turner & Butcher - Quidenham - Old Buckenham - Diss: 1 AM service on a Saturday - Diss - Old Buckenham - Quidenham: 1 Midday service on a Saturday - No.10A, H Semmence & Co - East Harling - Old Buckenham - Norwich: Mon-Fri 2 AM services, and no service on Saturday and Sunday - Norwich - Old Buckenham - East Harling: Mon-Fri 3 PM services, and no service on Saturday and Sunday
Local Shopping Facilities	Old Buckenham Stores and Post Office
Other Facilities	2 Public Houses
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	Area of flood risk derived from EA flood zone maps lies to the south and north west of the village
Local Road Network	Old Buckenham is on the B1077 Attleborough to Diss road. It is also close to the B1113 road to Norwich
Biodiversity	There is a SSSI and a SAC to the north west of Old Buckenham
Landscape Assessment	Old Buckenham is a small village set around a large central green and is located in The Buckenham's Settle Tributary Farmland. Overall the sensitivity of the area is high based on the small scale of the settlement and its relationship with the central open green

Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Old Buckenham is identified as a Local Service Centre Village but will not see a positive housing for the remainder of the plan period
-------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Table 13.10**

**Saham Toney**

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,565
Population (2011 Census)	1,507
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	45
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	32
2014 SHLAA capacity	21 sites were identified with 6 being considered suitable and achievable and 15 being considered un-deliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	90
Primary School	Parker's Church of England Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	None, Doctors and Dentist in nearby Watton (less than 2km)
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 15 registered businesses in Saham Toney, across 7 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.1, Konectbus</li> <li>- King's Lynn - Saham Toney - Watton: Mon-Sat hourly services throughout day, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- Watton - Saham Toney - King's Lynn: Mon-Sat hourly services throughout day, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- No.6, Konectbus</li> <li>- Norwich - Saham Toney - Ashill: Mon-Sat 1 PM service, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- Ashill - Saham Toney - Norwich: Mon-Sat 1 AM service, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- No.15, Konectbus</li> <li>- Little Cressingham - Saham Toney - Watton: 1 AM service on school days</li> <li>- Watton - Saham Toney - Little Cressingham: 1 PM service on school days</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	Post Office
Other Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public House</li> <li>Community Centre</li> </ul>

Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	Watton Brook flows to the south of the village and is flanked by areas of flood risk as identified in the SFRA. There are other small areas of flood risk to the west, north and north-east of the village adjacent to the Richmond Road Drain, Saham Toney Drain and Meadow Farm
Local Road Network	Village is not on any 'A' or 'B' road network. The former B1077 links the village to Watton and Swaffham
Biodiversity	Saham Mere (CWS) located within Saham Toney to the south. No other European Sites or SSSIs in vicinity of Saham Toney
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies that Saham Toney lies within a tributary valley of the Wissey. The area identified as Saham Toney South West overall has been given an overall high sensitivity. This relates to the role of tributary valley and parkland/pasture and woodland setting, which create a strong rural character to this edge of the village. The area identified as Saham Toney North, West, East is considered to have a high sensitivity and relates to the role of tributary valley landscape and pasture in providing a distinct setting to the settlement
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Saham Toney is identified as a Local Service Centre Village, but will not see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period

**Table 13.11**

### Shipdham

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	2,145
Population (2011 Census)	2,057
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	94
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	56
2014 SHLAA capacity	33 sites were identified with 7 being considered suitable and achievable and 26 being un-deliverable
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	193
Primary School	Thomas Bullock Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	Doctors Surgery
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 69 registered businesses in Shipdham, across 14 classifications. This includes the nearby Shipdham Airfield Industrial Area (in Cranworth Parish)
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.3, Konectbus</li> <li>- Norwich - Shipdham - Watton: Mon-Sat 2 PM services to Shipdham, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- Shipdham - Watton - Norwich: Mon-Fri 2 AM services, 1 AM service on Saturday, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- No.6, Konectbus</li> <li>- Norwich - Shipdham - Ashill: Mon-Sat 2 PM services to Shipdham, and no service on Sunday</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shipdham - Watton - Norwich: 1 AM service on Saturday, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- No.11, Konectbus</li> <li>- Watton - Shipdham - Dereham: Mon-Sat hourly service throughout day, and slightly reduced schedule on Sunday</li> <li>- Dereham - Shipdham - Watton: Mon-Sat hourly service throughout day, and slightly reduced schedule on Sunday</li> <li>- No.15, H Semmence &amp; Co</li> <li>- Norwich - Shipdham: 1 PM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- Shipdham - Norwich: 1 AM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- No.17, Konectbus</li> <li>- West Bradenham - Shipdham - Dereham: 1 AM service on a Tuesday and Friday</li> <li>- Dereham - Shipdham - West Bradenham: 1 PM service on a Tuesday and Friday</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	<p>Post Office</p> <p>Shop</p>
Other Facilities	<p>Fish and Chips Takeaway</p> <p>2 Public Houses</p>
Water and Utilities	There are no known capacity issues
Flood Risk	The Blackwater River flows to the south west of the village and is flanked by areas of flood risk as identified in the SFRA. There are other small areas of flood risk adjacent to the Parkland Stream and Watery Lane Drain
Local Road Network	A1075 provides links to Dereham and Watton
Biodiversity	There are no European sites, SSSIs or CWS in vicinity of Shipdham
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies the Crows Hill and Thorpe Row Arable Plateau that predominantly surrounds the village as having moderate/high landscape character area sensitivity. This is in view of the elevate plateau landscape which is relatively exposed in character. It also identifies Letton Hall Arable Farmland with Parkland and Woodland, which is located to the south-western edge of the village. This is considered to have a moderate sensitivity in view of the containment provided by landform and field boundary/settlement edge vegetation
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the Core Strategy, Shipdham is identified as a Local Service Centre Village, which will see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period. Land will be allocated for 100 homes in Shipdham. In addition to this strategic allocation, at least 70 homes from existing commitments will be built between the positive housing allocation Local Service Centre villages

**Table 13.12**

**Swanton Morley**

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
------------------------	---------------------------------



Population (2001 Census)	2,415
Population (2011 Census)	2,100
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	48
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	5
2014 SHLAA capacity	13 sites were identified in Swanton Morley with 4 being considered as suitable and achievable and 9 being considered un-deliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	277
Primary School	Swanton Morley Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	Swanton Morley Surgery Swanton Morley Medical Centre (Robertson Barracks)
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 22 registered businesses in Swanton Morley, across 10 classifications
Public Transport	- No.4/4A, Konectbus - Swanton Morley - Norwich: Mon-Sat hourly service throughout day, and no service on Sunday - Norwich - Swanton Morley: Mon-Sat hourly service throughout day, and no service on Sunday
Local Shopping Facilities	Post Office Swanton Morley Stores
Other Facilities	2 Public Houses
Water and Utilities	There are no known capacity issues
Flood Risk	The River Wensum flows to the north-east of the village and is flanked by an area of flood risk as identified in the SFRA. Another area of flood risk lies to the east of the village beyond Park Farm and Frog's Hall. There are two small areas of flood risk surrounding Woodgate Stream and Church Stream
Local Road Network	Village accessed by B1147
Biodiversity	Swanton Morley Meadow to the north is designated a CWS. There is also a SSSI and SAC to the north-east.
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies Northall Green Enclosed Arable Farmland, which lies to the west and extending 1.5km from the settlement edge. It is considered to have moderate sensitivity, due to the filtered character of views and the relative lack of visibility to much of the settlement edge. Woodgate Enclosed Tributary Farmland lies to the east and north as is considered to have moderate-high landscape sensitivity. This is due to the intact landscape structure which has also survived to much of the settlement edge. Castle Farm Valley Floor lies to the north and is considered to have a high sensitivity. This is in view of the local character area's role in forming the setting of the historically important Parish Church, and the quality of the valley floor landscape

Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Swanton Morley is identified as a Local Service Centre Village, which will see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period. Land will also be allocated for 50 homes
-------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Table 13.13**

**Weeting**

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,751
Population (2011 Census)	1,839
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	56
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	82
2014 SHLAA capacity	10 sites identified with 1 being considered achievable and suitable and 9 being considered un-deliverable.
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	35
Primary School	Weeting Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	None
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 32 registered businesses in Weeting, across 17 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.40, Coach Services</li> <li>- King's Lynn - Weeting - Thetford: Mon-Fri services throughout day but restricted to college/non-college and school days, 1 PM service on Saturday, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- Thetford - Weeting - King's Lynn: Mon-Fri services throughout day but restricted to college/non-college and school days, 1 AM service on Saturday, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- Suffolk Links Brecks The Voluntary Network: bookable service</li> <li>- Railway Station: at Brandon in Weeting Parish less than 2 km from village</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	Post Office
Other Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fish and Chips takeaway</li> <li>Public House</li> <li>Garage</li> </ul>
Water and Utilities	There are no known capacity issues
Flood Risk	A linear area of flood risk lies to the east of the village running from north to south and covering the eastern-most tip of Peppers Close and South Park
Local Road Network	A1065 skirts to the east of the village. Plans for a Brandon Bypass have been put on hold by Suffolk County Council. Former B1106 links village to Brandon

Biodiversity	Within SPA Stone Curlew Buffer Zone. Breckland SAC to West. Breckland SPA to West. SSSI to West and East. Concerns over impact of future development on the integrity of European Habitats and Species
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies all of the land surrounding Weeting as having high landscape character area sensitivity. Weeting Castle Plantation and Farmland has a 1.5km radius from the edge of Weeting and is considered to have moderate-high sensitivity. This is in view of the proximity of the settlement to the SSSI's to the west and the sensitive historic elements of the village. Fengate Woodland and Wetland lies to the south of the village and is considered to have moderate-high sensitivity. This is particularly in the western part of the area, and in the areas of more intact wetland meadow and floodplain pasture associated within the course of the Ouse in the southern part of the character area
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Weeting is identified as a Local Service Centre Village, but will not see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period

**Table 13.14**

**Villages not identified as Local Service Centre Village through the adopted Core Strategy but with a population of over 1000**

**Beetley**

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,465
Population (2011 Census)	1,396
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	41
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	2
2014 SHLAA capacity	N/A
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	N/A
Primary School	St Mary's Community Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	None
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 26 registered businesses in Beetley, across 4 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.1, Carters Coaches of Litcham</li> <li>- Mileham - Beetley - Dereham: 1 AM service on a Friday</li> <li>- Dereham - Beetley - Mileham: 1 PM service on a Friday</li> <li>- No.8, Carters Coaches of Litcham</li> <li>- Norwich - Beetley - Litcham: 1 PM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- Litcham - Beetley - Norwich: 1 AM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- No.13C, Konectbus</li> <li>- Swaffham - Beetley - Easton College: 1 AM service on college days</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easton College - Beetley - Swaffham: 1 PM service on college days</li> <li>- No.18, Konectbus</li> <li>- Dereham - Beetley - Dereham: 1 AM and 1 PM service on a Friday</li> <li>- No.21, Konectbus</li> <li>- Dereham - Beetley - Fakenham: Mon-Sat services throughout day, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- Fakenham - Beetley - Dereham: Mon-Sat services throughout day, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- No.25, Sanders Coaches</li> <li>- Dereham - Beetley - Fakenham: 1 PM service on a Friday</li> <li>- Fakenham - Beetley - Dereham: 1 AM service on a Friday</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	None
Other Facilities	The New Inn Thai Restaurant
Water and Utilities	There are no known capacity issues
Flood Risk	An area of flood risk lies to the south and south-west of the village
Local Road Network	B1146 runs through the centre of the village
Biodiversity	CWS to the south and south-west of the village
Landscape Assessment	Not assessed within the Landscape Character Assessment
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Beetley is not identified as a Local Service Centre Village or a village for service protection or enhancement, and will not see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period

**Table 13.15**

**Carbrooke (proximity to Watton)**

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,300
Population (2011 Census)	2,073
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	494
Number of houses built with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	215
2014 SHLAA capacity	N/A
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	N/A
Primary School	St Peter and St Paul Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	None, but facilities located within nearby Watton

Employment	
Public Transport	<p>- No.3, Konectbus</p> <p>- Norwich - Carbrooke - Watton: Mon-Sat hourly service throughout day, and 4 services on a Sunday</p> <p>- Watton - Carbrooke - Norwich: Mon-Sat hourly service throughout day, and 4 services on a Sunday</p>
Local Shopping Facilities	None, but facilities located within nearby Watton
Other Facilities	None, but facilities located within nearby Watton
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	An area of flood risk runs centrally through the village from east to west along Broadmoor Road
Local Road Network	Carbrooke can be accessed by the B1108
Biodiversity	CWS to the west
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies that Carbrooke falls within the Watton Brook Tributary Farmland, which is a typical rural landscape of arable fields. Overall this area is considered to be moderate-high sensitivity, but there are some areas where small residential extensions may be appropriate
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Carbrooke village is not identified as a Local Service Centre Village or a village for service protection or enhancement, and will not see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period. However, elements of Carbrooke Parish are located adjacent to Watton

**Table 13.16**

### Gressenhall

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,050
Population (2011 Census)	1,050
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	16
Number of houses built with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	2
2014 SHLAA capacity	N/A
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	N/A
Primary School	None
Primary Health Care Facilities	None
Employment	
Public Transport	- No.1, Carters Coaches of Litcham

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mileham - Gressenhall - Dereham: 1 AM service on a Friday</li> <li>- Dereham - Gressenhall - Mileham: 1 PM service on a Friday</li> <li>- No.2, Carters Coaches of Litcham</li> <li>- Mileham - Gressenhall - Dereham: 1 AM service on a Tuesday</li> <li>- Dereham - Gressenhall - Mileham: 1 AM service on a Tuesday</li> <li>- No.8, Carters Coaches of Litcham</li> <li>- Norwich - Gressenhall - Litcham: 1 PM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- Litcham - Gressenhall - Norwich: 1 AM service on a Wednesday</li> <li>- No.21, Konectbus</li> <li>- Dereham - Gressenhall - Fakenham: Services throughout day restricted to non-school/school days, Saturday services approximately every 2 hours throughout day, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- Fakenham - Gressenhall - Dereham: Services throughout day restricted to non-school/school days, Saturday services approximately every 2 hours throughout day, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- No.25, Sanders Coaches</li> <li>- Dereham - Gressenhall - Fakenham: 1 Midday service on a Friday</li> <li>- Fakenham - Gressenhall - Dereham: 1 AM service on a Friday</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	<p>Post Office</p> <p>Shop</p>
Other Facilities	Public House
Water and Utilities	There are no known capacity issues?
Flood Risk	Flood risk is situated to the south of the village
Local Road Network	Village accessed by the B1146 via Litcham Road
Biodiversity	CWS to the east of the village
Landscape Assessment	Gressenhall was not assessed within the Landscape Assessment document
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Gressenhall is not identified as a Local Service Centre Village or a village for service protection or enhancement, and will not see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period

**Table 13.17**

**Griston**

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,170 (high population due to prison)
Population (2011 Census)	1,540 (high population due to prison)

Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	22
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	7
2014 SHLAA capacity	N/A
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	N/A
Primary School	None
Primary Health Care Facilities	None, but facilities located within nearby Watton
Employment	
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.81, Coach Services</li> <li>- Watton - Griston - Thetford: Mon-Fri services approximately every 2 hours throughout day, and no service on Saturday and Sunday</li> <li>- Thetford - Griston - Watton: Mon-Fri services approximately every 2 hours throughout day, and no service on Saturday and Sunday</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	None, but facilities located within nearby Watton
Other Facilities	Public House
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues
Flood Risk	No areas of flood risk in the vicinity
Local Road Network	Close to the A1075 from Watton
Biodiversity	Wayland Wood to the west
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment identifies that Griston is encompassed by the Watton Airfield Plateau, which is a large scale open arable landscape with dominant features including Wayland Prison at Griston. The overall sensitivity is considered low due to lack of individual sensitive features
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Griston is not identified as a Local Service Centre Village

**Table 13.18**

**Scarning (proximity to Dereham)**

Key Service Indicators	Information as at?
Population (2001 Census)	2,540
Population (2011 Census)	2,906
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	59
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	7



2014 SHLAA capacity	N/A
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	N/A
Primary School	Scarning Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	None, but facilities located within Dereham
Employment	
Public Transport	<p>- No.16, Konectbus</p> <p>- Swaffham - Scarning - Dereham: 1 AM service on school days</p> <p>- No.20, Konectbus</p> <p>- Dereham - Scarning - Necton: Mon-Fri service approximately every 2 hours (with some restricted to school days only), 2 services (1 AM &amp; 1 PM) on Saturday, and 1 AM service to Wendling on Sunday</p> <p>- Necton - Scarning - Dereham: Mon-Fri service approximately every 2 hours (with some restricted to school days only), 3 services (1 AM &amp; 1 PM) on Saturday, and no service on Sunday</p>
Local Shopping Facilities	None, but range of facilities located within Dereham
Other Facilities	None, but range of facilities located within Dereham
Water and Utilities	?
Flood Risk	Area of flood risk around Scarning Meadows (adjacent to Dereham)
Local Road Network	A47 in close proximity
Biodiversity	CWS is located to the north of the village; however there are other CWS in the wider parish which are located in the built up area of Dereham
Landscape Assessment	Does it fall within Scarning Fen Tributary Farmland?
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Scarning is not identified as a Local Service Centre Village or a village for service protection or enhancement, and will not see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period. Scarning however falls adjacent to Dereham

**Table 13.19**

### Sporle

Key Service Indicators	Information as of November 2013
Population (2001 Census)	1,025
Population (2011 Census)	1,011
Number of houses built 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2001 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	35
Number of houses with planning permission @ 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	16

2014 SHLAA capacity	N/A
2014 SHLAA total of constrained capacity	N/A
Primary School	Sporle Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Primary Health Care Facilities	None
Employment	From NNDR Data (2008) there are 10 registered businesses in Sporle, across 4 classifications
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No.32, Freestone Coaches</li> <li>- King's Lynn - Sporle - Longham: Mon-Fri 1 AM and 1 PM to Litcham and 1 PM to Longham, 1 Midday service to Litcham on Saturday, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- Longham - Sporle - King's Lynn: Mon-Fri 3 AM services, 2 AM services on Saturday, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- No.1, Konectbus</li> <li>- King's Lynn - Sporle - Watton: Mon-Fri regular hourly services until 15:28, slightly less regular services on Saturday, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- Watton - Sporle - King's Lynn: Mon-Fri regular hourly services until 13:12, services every 2 hours on Saturday, and no service on Sunday</li> <li>- No.10, Carters Coaches of Litcham</li> <li>- Sporle - Dereham: 1 AM service on a Friday</li> <li>- Dereham - Sporle: 1 PM service on a Friday</li> <li>- No.13C, Konectbus</li> <li>- Swaffham - Sporle - Easton College: 1 AM service on college days</li> <li>- Easton College - Sporle - Swaffham: 1 PM service on college days</li> <li>- No.16, Konectbus</li> <li>- Swaffham - Sporle - Dereham: 1 AM service on school days</li> <li>- Dereham - Sporle - Swaffham: 1 PM service on school days</li> </ul>
Local Shopping Facilities	<p>Threeway Stores</p> <p>Post Office</p>
Other Facilities	Public House
Water and Utilities	There are no known capacity issues
Flood Risk	An area of flood risk lies to the south of the village approximately 300 m from the southern tip of the settlement boundary running south easterly to Necton
Local Road Network	Village accessed by the A47 via The Street
Biodiversity	No European Sites, SSSIs or CWS in vicinity of Sporle

Landscape Assessment	Not assessed within the Landscape Character Assessment
Status in the Local Development Framework	Within the adopted Core Strategy, Sporle is not identified as a Local Service Centre Village or a village for service protection or enhancement, and will not see a positive housing allocation for the remainder of the plan period

**Table 13.20**