

# Breckland Strategic Infrastructure Plan (BSIP)

**July 2024** 



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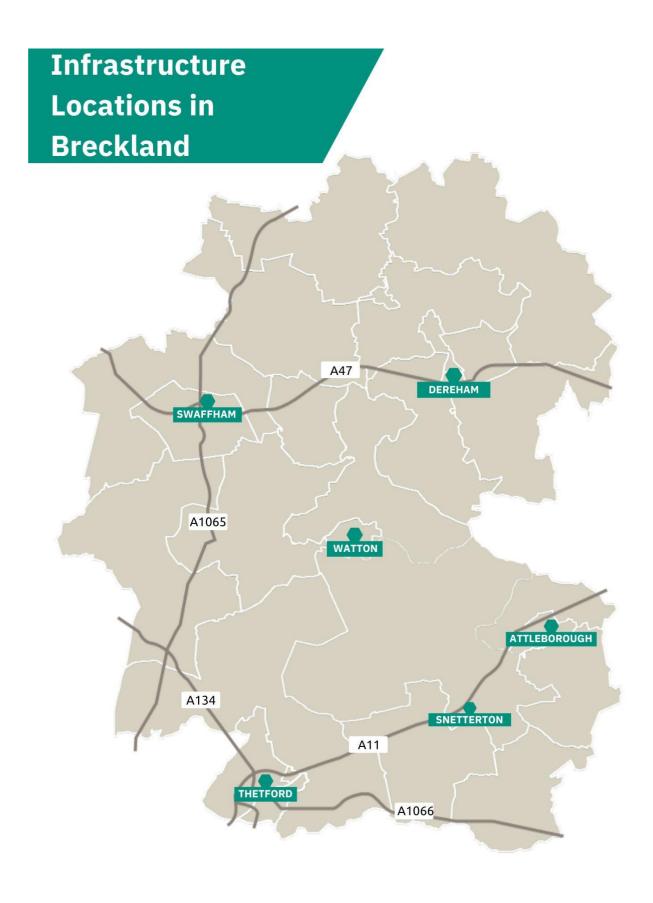




Project	Status
Attleborough Link Road	Planned
Attleborough Primary Substation	Planned
Attleborough Train Sation Innovation Hub	Feasibility stage
Attleborough Active Travel	Planned
Dereham Sustainable Travel	Planned
Dereham Marketplace Improvements	Planned
Dereham Northern Bypass	Planned
Swanton Morley Highway Scheme	Planned
Snetterton Power Infrastructure	Underway
Snetterton Manufacturing Enterprise Park (MEP)	Feasibility stage
Snetterton Mains Sewer Connection	Planned
Snetterton Sustainable Travel	Underway
Swaffham Relief Road or Bypass	Viability Assessment
Swaffham Marketplace	Feasibility Stage
Swaffham Active Travel	Viability Assessment
Gateway Thetford	Feasibility Stage
Thetford Primary Substation (Thetford North)	Underway
Thetford A11 Junctions	Viability Assessment
Thetford Sustainable Travel	Viability Assessment
Thetford Pinch Points and Key Junctions	Planned
Watton Town Centre Bypass	Viability Assessment
Watton Middle Street	Options Appraisal
Reclaim the Rain Project	Underway
Ely Area Rail Capacity Enhancements	Awaiting funding
Broadband	Underway
5G Mobile Connectivity	Underway
Nutrient Neutrality Mitigation	Underway
A47 Improvements	Underway
A11 Fiveways Junction	Paused
Norwich to Tilbury Project	Consultation
Norfolk Water Strategy Programme (NWSP)	Underway
Reservoirs	Consultation











# Introduction

The Breckland Strategic Infrastructure Plan (BSIP) represents a consolidation of various strategic infrastructure priorities that are relevant to the Breckland district. It is not a static document, but rather an iterative one, which will be refreshed annually and updated/expanded/adapted appropriately as further growth is planned, committed or completed throughout Breckland and indeed the wider area. On this basis, the content of the document as it exists will likely evolve over time.

The BSIP identifies specific projects/enabling works required to facilitate long-term, sustainable committed, or planned, growth. It is necessary to support positive and proactive strategic planning decision-making and capitalise upon funding opportunities as they become available.

The BSIP is intended to be as succinct as possible with a tight focus which will enable the Council and relevant partners to identify and respond to future funding opportunities, coordinate implementation of activity, and act decisively to expedite high impact projects. It broadly aligns itself with the Breckland Corporate Plan, Breckland Local Plan (including the documents that comprise its evidence base, such as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan) and subsequent updates to this document, Future Breckland: Thriving People & Places (and its various town delivery plans), the Norfolk Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan (NSIDP), any completed Network Improvement Studies and the emerging Norfolk-wide Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP). Due to the symbiotic, and often overlapping nature of this document and those listed above, there may be some duplication. However, the intention is to keep this to a minimum.

The BSIP is not intended as a comprehensive list of every item of infrastructure required on every individual development site in Breckland, nor is it intended to include purely aspirational projects that are not referenced in other plans and strategies. The document is ambitious, but the projects contained within it have a reasonable prospect of occurring. It is also not a delivery plan, but rather a collation of planned projects that the Council believes will have positive economic growth implications for the district.

The first section of this document focusses upon strategic infrastructure projects in a specific growth location (Attleborough, Dereham, Snetterton, Swaffham, Thetford and Watton). The second section identifies wider infrastructure projects.

# Section 1 – Market Towns and Snetterton

# Attleborough

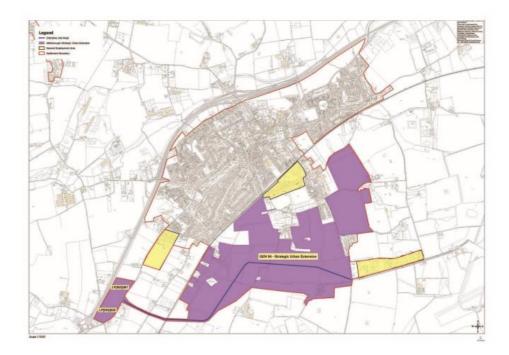
New housing development is either complete or underway at a number of sites in Attleborough. These include Carvers Meadow, Symphony Gardens, Saxon Heath and The Gables. In addition to these sites, considerable residential growth has been committed to in the form of a Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). The SUE will be located at what is now the southernmost part of the town and will consist of approximately 4,000 new homes, divided into three new neighbourhoods which are connected by a linear park. At the heart of each new neighbourhood, and within walking distance of all homes, there will be a cluster of local facilities designed to minimise the need for car use. The park will provide a variety of interconnected green spaces including informal recreational routes, parkland, wetland and woodland habitats, natural play areas, allotments, and sports pitches.

Phase 1 of the SUE has been secured by Homes England, who are in the process of discharging pre-commencement conditions and preparing a Reserved Matters submission.

They are also in negotiations with the promoter regarding possible acquisition of further land.

In addition, proposals have also been submitted for both employment and residential development through the 'call for sites' associated with the production of a new Breckland Local Plan.

The extract below, taken from the Breckland Local Plan (2019), illustrates the location and distribution of allocated growth at Attleborough:



## 1. Attleborough Link Road:

A link road between the B1077 (near Bunns Bank) and London Road (near to the A11 junction) is a key transport priority for Attleborough that is necessary to facilitate delivery of the Attleborough Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), comprising 4,000 new homes. The link road will distribute new and existing traffic away from the town centre and enable traffic management measures to be implemented within the town centre, such as HGV restrictions. It will also incorporate cycling infrastructure, which links with Attleborough's wider active travel ambitions.

Delivery of the link road is a planning requirement of the wider SUE scheme and will be phased so that up to 1,200 homes can be built before the link road is required to be opened in full. Discussions are ongoing with development interests and key partners to bring forward the full completion of the road before the requirements of the planning obligations are triggered.

A Strategic Outline Business Case for the road has been completed. Preliminary design work remains ongoing.

The table below summarises progression of the project.





Description of stage	Construction phase
Estimated Cost	Currently estimated to be approximately £25m.
Delivery method	Developer led.

## 2. Attleborough Primary Substation

The increased rate of growth in Attleborough, primarily as a result of the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), will place pressure on the town's existing utilities provision. In particular, it is predicted that electricity provision will be insufficient. To explore options to meet this increased demand, feasibility work has begun to establish how capacity can be increased.

A feasibility study commissioned by UK Power Network (UKPN) has identified that there are three principal options for increasing power capacity at Attleborough primary substation. The study also estimates the cost of delivering the three solutions. All of these options are focussed upon the 33kv network, and all involve building a new third transformer at Attleborough primary substation. It is understood that the developer/landowner is leading discussions with UK Power Networks (UKPN) surrounding necessary power upgrades.

The table below summarises progression of the project.

Description of stage	Delivery of power infrastructure sufficient to meet the needs of Attleborough SUE Phase I	Delivery of power infrastructure sufficient to meet the needs of Attleborough SUE Phases II and III
Estimated Cost	Current estimate is approximately £22m.	Current estimate is approximately £22m.
Delivery method	Developer led.	

# 3. Attleborough Train Station Innovation Hub

The renovation and repurposing of the Grade II listed Attleborough Train Station forms a key part of Future Breckland Attleborough Town Delivery Plan and will deliver a modern and versatile new innovation hub for the town. The project aims to enhance office space availability, provide 5G infrastructure to facilitate business growth, transform the current site into a gateway to Attleborough, and connect the northern and southern segments of the town.

The project addresses an identified lack of office space but will also enable the operator and tenants to host webinars and facilitate networking events by integrating 5G facilities and multi-use spaces into the building. It will also contribute towards Attleborough's ambition to expand its active travel infrastructure by incorporating walkways and cycleways across the railway line. Furthermore, the new space will provide a link between the 4,000 new homes that are being built as part of the Attleborough SUE and the existing town.

Initial feasibility/Strategic Outline Business Case work has commenced on the project.

Description of Stage | Deployment phase





Estimated Cost	Current estimate is approximately £600,000.
Delivery method	Developer led.

## 4. Attleborough Active Travel

As part of the Council's efforts to expand active travel within and between the five Breckland market towns, several initiatives are proposed for Attleborough, including:

- Enhancing walking and cycling crossings over the railway line at Connaught Road, Flowers Lane, and Leys Lane.
- Improving footways along Station Road and introducing new pathways where gaps currently exist.
- Establishing a route from London Road to Norwich Road.
- Linking the SUE with key employment zones, transportation facilities and central services via Buckenham Road and Station Road.
- Creating a route connecting the SUE with employment areas and the town centre via Flowers Lane, Hargham Road and Leys Lane.

The new active travel infrastructure will link previously disconnected areas with the town centre and key employment locations and will help to integrate the new SUE development with the existing infrastructure in Attleborough. The need and demand for this work was identified in the Future Breckland Attleborough Town Delivery Plan and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

The table below summarises progression of the project.

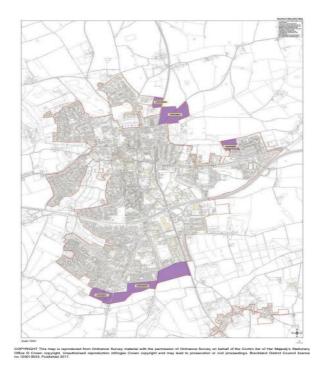
Description of Stage	Construction phase
Estimated Cost	Current estimate is approximately £1.25m.

# **Dereham**

New housing development has either been completed or is currently underway at various sites throughout Dereham. These include Etling Grove, Mill View and Foxley Park. In addition to these residential developments, Breckland's current Local Plan allocates land for approximately 700 additional houses at three other sites, as shown in the diagram below.







In addition to the above, and as set out in the Future Breckland Dereham Town Delivery Plan, further growth and regeneration is planned. Furthermore, land to the southwest of Dereham has been promoted for housing through the 'call for sites' associated with the production of the new Breckland Local Plan.

#### 5. Dereham Sustainable Travel:

The Dereham Network Improvement Study (2019) identifies that there is a relatively low baseline level of cycling in Dereham. Driving, on the other hand, accounts for the majority of journeys, particularly for commuting. A large portion (40%) of commuting trips are under 3 miles and thus could be made by bicycle. It is clear that there is a significant opportunity to expand active forms of travel for Dereham's residents.

In line with the Department for Transport's £2bn Gear Change initiative and £338m Active Travel Fund, this initiative is aimed at enabling town centre re-configuration and connectivity, which will have positive knock-on effects such as promoting healthy lifestyle choices, improving the flow of traffic, and reducing air pollution.

In a Dereham context, this involves enabling the construction of:

- 1. A £3.7m connection from Norwich Road in the east to the town centre via the mid-Norfolk Railway and Norwich Street.
- 2. A £2.4m East-West Cycle Link, which will be via the Yaxham Road/Tavern Lane Junction and Norwich Road.
- 3. A £5.6m link to connect southern employment areas and upcoming housing developments to the town centre.
- 4. A £10.9m investment to link residential and employment areas (Shipdham Road, Southend, Baxter Row, etc.) in the south to the town centre.
- 5. A £3.7m connection from residential areas in the west to the town centre and additional cycle routes.
- 6. Wider connectivity to surrounding areas.





Three corridor options were developed with the aim of connecting residential areas, employment areas, schools and the town centre while creating a joined up Dereham cycle network. Of the three options, option two (East-West), with a high-level costing of £1.5m to complete all improvements, was given the highest ranking of importance and will likely be taken forward for further assessment.

The table below summarises progression of the project.

Description of stage	SOBC/Feasibility	Design/Pre- construction phase	Construction phase
Estimated Cost	Current estimate is approximately £20,000 -	Current estimate is approximately	Current estimate is approximately
	50,000	£200,000 - £250,000.	£26m.

In addition to this work within Dereham, feasibility work is currently underway at Norfolk County Council as part of the Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to boost interconnectivity through active travel between Dereham and Swaffham, and further to Downham Market and Norwich respectively. Work is also underway to scope schemes in the rest of our district.

#### 6. Dereham Marketplace Improvements

Dereham marketplace has the potential to be the visual gateway to the town but is currently underperforming due to a traffic dominated environment and a lack of pedestrianised space. Additionally, it has a number of architectural assets that are not highlighted and is congested with buses due to the presence of bus stops on both sides of the road. The centre of the town requires investment to improve its quality, appearance, and accessibility.

A proposal is identified within the Future Breckland Dereham Town Delivery Plan to improve the function and appearance of the marketplace, thereby renewing it as a key focal point for the town. This likely involves reconfiguring traffic routes and altering the road layout, pedestrianising the current parking areas and installing practical and attractive street furniture, 'greening' the area, and reconfiguring/rerouting bus routes to ease congestion, along with other measures. Interventions of this nature are intended to encourage footfall, increase the 'dwell-time' of visitors, and improve functionality for Dereham's weekly market.

The table below summarises the stages of the project.

Description of stage	Construction	
Estimated Cost	Current estimate is approximately £5m-12m.	

# 7. Dereham Northern Bypass:

Most people living to the north of Dereham access the A47 by travelling through the town centre to the entry/exit points close to the Yaxham Road. This creates congestion in the town centre and at these junctions, particularly during peak times. Others use narrow country lanes and travel through villages to join via other junctions, including near North Tuddenham and Drayton Hall Lane.

The Dereham Network Improvement Strategy and Future Breckland Dereham Town Delivery Plan both propose a project to build a bypass to the north of the town that links



with the A47 near North Tuddenham. This would improve journey times for drivers whilst also reducing traffic in Dereham and surrounding villages. This would also potentially improve highway connectivity between the soon-to-be-dualled A47 and locations such as Swanton Morley.

Public sector partners will explore the feasibility of this project by undertaking options appraisals and traffic modelling as a first step.

# 8. Swanton Morley Highway Scheme

The potential change of use surrounding Robertsons Barracks near Swanton Morley, which has been promoted through the refresh of the Breckland Local Plan, would likely necessitate highway improvement works in some form to alleviate the impacts of the increased volume of traffic.

The project has not yet been scoped and a business case has not been prepared. Details of any upgrades necessary will emerge and be added to this document as the scheme detail progresses.

# Snetterton

Snetterton and its surrounding areas will be a key growth centre and an important regional hub in forthcoming years. Snetterton Commercial Hub is Breckland's largest employment site, which occupies a prominent position within the Cambridge Norwich Technology Corridor. It represents a key strategic employment location within the region and a critical component of the Breckland District Economic Growth Strategy. Spatially, the core vision encompasses a primary area of approximately 40 hectares of already developed land along with a further 90 hectares of land allocated for employment purposes within the adopted Local Plan. An additional 60+ hectares has been promoted for development through the 'call for sites' associated with the production of a new Local Plan. The wider vision and connectivity for Snetterton Commercial Hub, however, extends to the adjacent employment and residential areas, particularly at Attleborough (4,000 new homes) and Thetford (5,000 new homes), the positive relationship between other key Breckland employment and residential areas, and the Cambridge to Norwich Technology Corridor.

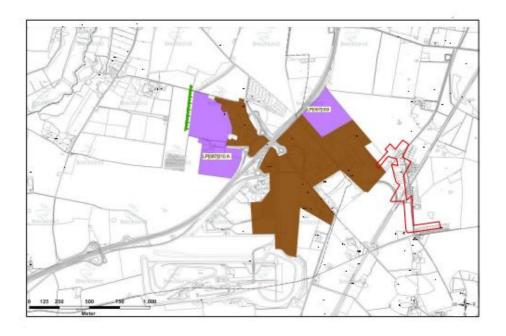
Snetterton Commercial Hub (SCH) is a cooperative of landowners, each with existing developments and opportunities for new facilities. The site is well suited to accommodate a variety of occupants - from smaller professional services and office space to larger premises such as manufacturing and light industry, agri-food and clean energy - on a freehold or leasehold basis.

An area-wide masterplan has been agreed with the various landowners, as has an approach for progressing offerings within this.

The extract below, taken from the Breckland Local Plan (2019), illustrates the distribution of allocated growth at Snetterton, with brown sections representing already allocated land and purple newly allocated land:







#### 9. Snetterton Power infrastructure

Snetterton's demand for electricity is increasing and infrastructure needs to keep pace with this demand.

Construction of a new primary substation (PSS) is now complete, delivering initial capacity of 6 megavolt-amperes (MVA). The design of this facility has been future proofed to ensure that it can accommodate up to two further 6MVA/15MVA transformers. The cost of delivering a second 6MVA transformer is currently estimated at approximately £1.5m while a 15MVA transformer is currently estimated at £1.8m. Upgrading the capacity of the new Snetterton PSS will necessitate reasonably extensive off-site network reinforcement. However, due to a recent change of regulations this cost now falls to the Distribution Network Operators (DNOs). The timescale for delivery is at their discretion.

Work has commenced with landowners to understand the longer-term power needs of the area and consider the options for delivering sufficient power capacity to meet the requirement, including maximising the role of renewables and demand reduction measures.

In addition to this work, feasibility work for Phase 1 of a distribution ring serving Snetterton Commercial Hub has been concluded. This has identified the options for delivery of the project, recommended a way forward, and provided indicative costs. Design work has commenced via Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNO), with the completion timeframe for this work estimated to be around 6 months. Upon completion of the design work, details surrounding the route, crossing of the A11, number of ducts and cables, costs, and timeframe for delivery will be finalised.

The table below summarises progression of the project.

Description of stage	Installation of second	Installation of third	Distribution Ring
	transformer	transformer	Phase 1





Estimated On-Site Cost	Approximately £1.5m - £1.8m	Estimated to be between £1.5m and £1.8m	Approximately £1.5m.
Indicative Timeframe/Start date	Approximately 2.5 years to complete. Start date dependent on partners.	Approximately 2.5 years to complete. Start date dependent on partners.	Predicted start date in 2025.
Delivery method	Private sector led.	Private sector led.	Private sector led.

#### 10. Snetterton Manufacturing Enterprise Park (MEP)

The MEP concept provides an opportunity to strengthen the high value advanced manufacturing sector in Breckland. Working with several private sector partners, Breckland Council is seeking to establish a new 'Manufacturing Enterprise Park' at Snetterton, adjacent to the A11. This will enable the location to fit seamlessly within the Cambridge to Norwich Technology Corridor vision and will allow for the location to form mutually beneficial links, both within Snetterton and Breckland, but also to other high growth areas within the Corridor at large.

The project remains at concept stage currently, but the broad ambition is that the park would comprise approximately 50,000 square metres of new commercial and associated premises. The intention in providing this facility is to help focus and accelerate the development of a specialist manufacturing cluster at the location and catalyse further expansion and development of the wider c.90ha site.

An initial Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) has been produced and more detail will be added to this document as the project progresses.

#### 11. Snetterton Mains Sewer Connection

The accelerated pace of development at Snetterton necessitates increasing the capacity of essential infrastructure. As such, a need to increase sewerage capacity has been identified.

Feasibility work has been undertaken in conjunction with Anglian Water to determine the options for securing a mains sewer connection at the site. This work has determined that two new pumping stations are required, along with a piped connection extending northwards to Attleborough.

The feasibility work estimates the cost of delivering the solution as follows.

Description of stage	Construction phase	
Estimated Cost	Current estimate is approximately £3.75m.	
Delivery method	Private sector led.	

#### 12. Snetterton Sustainable Travel

A Transport Assessment has been completed by Aecom on behalf of Breckland Council. This has revealed plentiful capacity in the highway network serving the location. Upgrades to any junctions are a considerable way off being required. However, the Council is monitoring completion of development as it occurs, and it is likely that further work will require to be undertaken on this matter by 2030. This work did, however, note the need and ability to improve the accessibility of Snetterton to non-car users, for example through cycling, walking and public transport.

Cycling connectivity to nearby towns (for example, Attleborough, Thetford and Watton) is highlighted through the emerging Norfolk-wide LCWIP. The proximity of Snetterton to Attleborough, along with road closures associated with the development of the SUE, make this option particularly attractive.

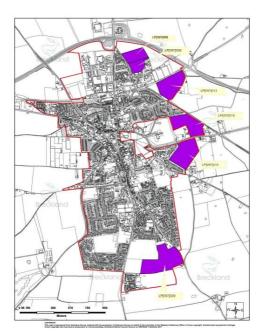
A new bus service between Thetford and Norwich, stopping at Snetterton and Attleborough, is currently being trialled by Norfolk County Council.

One of the larger landholdings that makes up the overall Snetterton Commercial Hub area, Johnstons Quarter, features an under-utilised rail asset in the form of a track and rail head. Furthermore, the nearby stations of Eccles Road and Harling Road are currently request-only stops as they are presently under-utilised. It appears, therefore, that there may be an opportunity to improve the accessibility of Snetterton Commercial Hub to rail users.

Work will continue to be done in this area and this section will be expanded as the detail of these projects becomes clearer.

# **Swaffham**

New housing development has either been completed or is currently underway at various sites throughout Swaffham. These include Pedlars Meadow, Ceres Rise, and Nelsons Quarter. In addition to these residential developments, the adopted Local Plan allocates further land for approximately 250 additional houses on three other sites, as shown in the diagram below.



As a result of the road networks that run through the town centre, Swaffham can become congested with traffic, which is not conducive to a good visitor experience on the High Street. It is also clear from analysis by Norfolk County Council that Swaffham is poorly connected for cyclists and walkers, particularly between the main shopping area and the town's residential and employment areas.

# 13. Swaffham Relief Road or Bypass:





The A1065, which goes through Swaffham Town Centre, has experienced long-term growth in traffic volumes. This trend is expected to continue given the scale of housing developments coming forward in the town. Analysis from Norfolk County Council also shows that 45% of vehicles that drive through Swaffham town centre are travelling to other places to the north and south of the town. This creates high levels of traffic and congestion, particularly at peak times. The Swaffham Network Improvement Strategy and the Future Breckland Swaffham Town Delivery Plan both identify that one option which could help to alleviate these pressures is to build a bypass for through traffic.

Analysis from Norfolk County Council indicates that any bypass should be to the west of the town to serve north and south traffic, but also the significant number of trips made west towards King's Lynn. The project remains in its early stages and public sector partners will continue to explore the feasibility of this by undertaking options appraisals and traffic modelling as a first step.

# 14. Swaffham Marketplace

The centre of Swaffham is currently overly dominated by traffic, with cars and lorries creating noise pollution, adversely affecting air quality, and making the visitor experience to the town less enjoyable. Additionally, Swaffham's historic market is not being utilised to its full potential because the space in which it is held is no longer fit for purpose.

The Future Breckland Swaffham Town Delivery Plan and Swaffham Masterplan Enhancement Scheme, comprising part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) project in Swaffham, outline a number of possible proposals to improve Swaffham marketplace to make it more accessible, attractive and functional. These include measures to make the traffic flow on the town more efficient, 'greening' and public realm improvements, improved wayfinding, and accessibility improvements. A preferred course of action has not been settled upon, but work has already been completed to upgrade the town's street furniture and introduce more greenery.

#### 15. Swaffham Active Travel

The Watton and Swaffham Railway, also known as the Crab and Winkle line, used to connect Swaffham and Watton to Thetford and beyond. It opened in 1875 and operated for around 90 years before closing. It has remained unused. The aim of this intervention is to re-purpose and reactivate the line for walking, running, and cycling, in line with the Council's ambitions to improve active travel provision within and between Breckland's market towns.

Active travel connectivity between Swaffham and Dereham was also highlighted through the LCWIP.

The project is yet to be costed and fully scoped. This section will be updated as the project progresses.

# **Thetford**

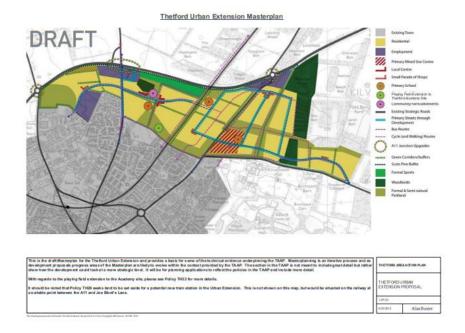
Thetford is Breckland's largest market town and is set to expand further in coming years. Considerable residential and employment growth, set out within the adopted Local Plan, has been committed to in the town in the form of:

- A Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) at the northeastern extent of the town consisting of 5,000 new homes and 22ha of employment land. The scheme is



- planned to be delivered in five phases over a 25+ year period following outline planning permission being granted in 2015. Stage 1 is currently underway and subphases are at varying stages of construction/completion.
- Thetford Enterprise Park is 18ha of land allocated within the adopted Local Plan for employment uses at the northern extent of the town and to the west of the SUE. It is currently an undeveloped site large enough to accommodate a variety of business uses, with office and light industrial location sizes from 8,000 sq. ft up to 50,000 sq. ft and above possible.

The extract below, taken from the Breckland Local Plan (2019), illustrates the location and distribution of allocated growth at Thetford:



In addition to the above, and as set out in Future Breckland Thetford Town Delivery Plan, there is further growth planned for the town. In particular, Breckland Council is seeking to redevelop 10,700 square metres of riverfront space into a mixed-use development across three blocks. The development will introduce a new type of housing into the town centre and create new and modernised retail units, which will increase footfall. The development will also feature leisure space as well as new walking paths and cycle routes by the river, which are intended to improve health outcomes in the area. As it sits at the heart of Thetford, this project will spearhead a change in the types of retailers, restaurants and cafes as footfall traffic grows.

There is also a regeneration programme on the Abbey Estate, which is led by Flagship Group and supported by Breckland Council and Norfolk County Council. The project will breathe new life into the area, which experiences significant levels of deprivation as well as issues such as anti-social behaviour and fly tipping, by reconfiguring the dispersal of housing and creating new, more user-friendly communal spaces.

Furthermore, proposals have been submitted through the 'call for sites' process for new residential and commercial developments to the southeast and northeast of Thetford.

## 16. Gateway Thetford





This key regeneration initiative for Thetford aims to repurpose and develop the immediate surrounds of the train station to accommodate flexible commercial space that stimulates growth within the town and, in doing so, provides for an upgraded railway station offer. The project will also provide additional car parking and improve access to the area.

Gateway Thetford aligns with broader policies including the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, Breckland Council's Corporate Plan and Breckland Council's Local Plan, national and regional industrial strategies, as well as priority investment areas identified as part of the Government's recent regeneration funding pots (Future High Street Fund, Stronger Towns Fund and Levelling Up Fund).

Along with improving the amenity of the area, Gateway Thetford will also potentially provide new spaces for business activity, particularly for small businesses and start-ups.

Initial feasibility work, undertaken by TTPP on behalf of Greater Anglia, has recently been completed.

The table below summarises progression of the project.

Description of stage	Pre-construction phase	Construction phase
Estimated Cost	Current estimate is up to	Current estimate is approximately
	£5m, depending upon the	£82m.
	full extent/nature of the	
	project.	

## 17. Thetford Primary Substation (Thetford North)

Due to the high rate of growth in Thetford as a result of the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) and other projects, a requirement for additional power capacity has been identified for the town.

Feasibility work has been undertaken by UK Power Networks (UKPN) to consider the options for increasing power capacity within Thetford, which concluded that a new Thetford North primary substation was required to serve the growth needs of Thetford. Construction of the project is now underway, with UK power networks installing new transformers at the site.

The table below summarises progression of the project:

Description of stage	Construction phase
Estimated Cost	Current estimate is approximately £6.5m.
Indicative Timeframe/Start	It is estimated this work will take approximately 18 months to
date	complete.
Delivery method	Developer/partner led.

#### 18. Thetford A11 Junctions

The Thetford Network Improvement Strategy states that several of the A11 junctions around Thetford will exceed their theoretical capacity by 2026, with the Mundford Road (A134) junction experiencing the worst congestion. This will be exacerbated by the Thetford SUE. As a result, junctions on the A11 bypass around Thetford will need to be upgraded. To enable this work, a financial contribution towards highway improvements has been secured via the section 106 agreement associated with the SUE scheme.





A masterplan for this work has been developed and improvements will be made to meet standards agreed with National Highways. Work will commence in stages at certain trigger points that are dictated by the number of houses that are built. It is likely that the work will include traffic signals on the roundabouts and revised speed limits on the A11. There is a balance to be struck in this regard between the strategic function of the A11, the needs of motorists, and the needs of Thetford residents, and any solution is unlikely to be an optimum solution for any one of these parties.

Work continues with partners – particularly National Highways and Norfolk County Council – to bring forward measures that do not diminish the strategic status of the route. Ultimately, this might require grade separation of junctions.

Indicative costs are yet to be determined, but preliminary timescales are outlined below.

Description of stage	Construction phase
Indicative	Estimated to begin between 2025-2030.
Timeframe/Start date	
Delivery method	Developer led.

#### 19. Thetford Sustainable Travel:

The Thetford Network Improvement Strategy and the Future Breckland Thetford Town Delivery Plan both note that there is a lack of dedicated active travel infrastructure- in Thetford. This means that town centre facilities and neighbourhoods in the town lack interconnection for those who wish to cycle or walk. As a result, there is an overreliance on cars to move about the town, which contributes to congestion and air pollution. The lack of active travel is a missed opportunity, as Thetford faces a number of health inequalities and would benefit from a healthy travel alternative. Studies have shown that encouraging walking and cycling supports healthy lifestyles and can improve health outcomes. Furthermore, there is a missed opportunity to connect visitors to Thetford Forest with the town centre via walking and cycling routes.

As a result of these positive benefits, the Council has identified the scheme as a future delivery priority. The project's aims are to improve the walking and cycling network within Thetford and to create convenient and attractive paths for pedestrians and cyclists to move around the town. Particular consideration will be given to connecting Thetford's public services with residential areas, and residential areas with employment areas. The routes should also improve access for Thetford's residents to the surrounding countryside.

The project will capture current planned schemes (including Thetford Loops), schemes identified by the forthcoming Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP), as well as new routes identified by stakeholders. The project should drive local demand for cycling and walking by making more routes available, providing health and wellbeing benefits, and improving access to services and leisure/heritage assets for all residents. It is also hoped that the project will place Thetford at the forefront of active travel innovation in the region.

Feasibility work for the project is yet to be undertaken. This document will be updated accordingly when it is complete.

#### 20. Thetford Pinch Points and Key Junctions:





The Thetford Network Improvement Strategy identifies the impact of current traffic, as well as future development and population growth, on various junctions and determines what high level transport infrastructure is required. In particular, it identifies current and future capacity and network issues at network pinch points and key junctions, particularly at the A134 Brandon Road/London Road/A134 Bury Road signalised junction but also at the London Road/Station Road junction. The document proposes a number of potential interventions, over the short, medium and long term, to alleviate pressure on Thetford's roads. This includes widening certain sections of roads (the A134 Brandon Road arm), converting the signalised junction into a roundabout, and constructing a right-turn lane at the London Road junction.

The document also predicts that, due to the increased rate of development, Nuns' Bridges Road will become congested in coming years. The road is spatially constrained so cannot be widened, so an alternative route to bypass Nuns' Bridges Road could be considered, to connect the A1066 to the east with the A134, possibly via the A1088.

The proposals listed above have not been agreed and costed and will likely be staggered to match the pace of development at the SUE and elsewhere.

The table below summarises progression of the project.

Description of stage	Construction phase
Estimated Cost	Current estimate is approximately £5m.
Delivery method	Developer led.

# **Watton**

Watton is the smallest of Breckland's five market towns and sits at the crossroads of two important and busy roads, the A1075 between Dereham and Thetford and the B1108, which provides a cut through between the A47 and the A11. The town has several important leisure and community facilities which are hugely beneficial to local residents, including the Queen's Hall, the Sports Association and Social Club, Loch Neaton, and Wayland House. However, most of these facilities are dated or ill-suited for the needs of users. Therefore, there is an opportunity to make better use of these assets, improving provision for the town's residents and visitors alike.

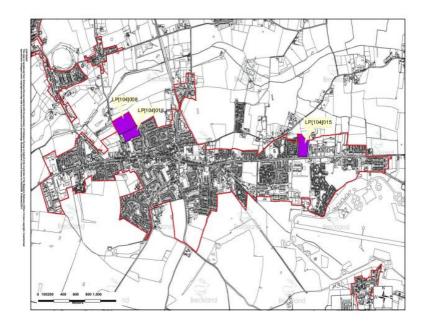
The town is home to a number of key anchor businesses that support many jobs and make a significant contribution to the local economy, such as Cranswick Country Foods. However, the size, value, and diversity of Watton's economy is being held back by a range of factors, namely a limited labour market, low skill levels, poor public transport connectivity and a constrained commercial property market.

New housing development has either been completed or is currently underway at various sites throughout Watton. These include Wayland Fields, Rokeles Green, Hazel Grove, and Heritage Park. In addition to the sites listed above, proposals have also been submitted for residential development through the 'call for sites' associated with the production of Breckland's new Local Plan.





The extract below, taken from the Breckland Local Plan (2019), illustrates the location and distribution of allocated growth at Watton:



# 21. Watton Town Centre Bypass

The B1108, of which Watton High Street forms a part, which passes through Watton town centre, intersects with the A1075 to create a major link between the A11 and the A47. The B1108, therefore, has experienced long-term growth in traffic volumes over the last decade. Furthermore, heavy goods vehicles which need to access nearby industry travel through the centre of the town and come dangerously close to pedestrians and parked cars on either side of the high street. In addition to the safety issue that this issue poses, this traffic creates high levels of congestion and pollution in the town centre, particularly at peak times.

The Watton Network Improvement Strategy and the Future Breckland Watton Town Delivery Plan both identify that one option that could help alleviate these pressures is to build a bypass for through traffic. This would improve journey times for drivers whilst also reducing heavy traffic in the town and surrounding villages, thereby benefitting both visitors, residents, and motorists.

Partners will work together to assess the feasibility of this project over forthcoming years, which will include exploring different options and routes.

#### 22. Watton Middle Street

A proposal has been put forward for a new 'Heritage Quarter' in Watton, centred around Middle Street and a portion of Dereham Road, that will significantly improve the amenity and function of Watton's town centre. Currently used as a connecting street between the High Street (B1108) and Harvey Street, as well as an area for parking cars, the current space around Middle Street and the north-south element of Dereham Road is utilitarian, but not an attractive centrepiece for the town. Foot paths, in particular those on Middle Street, are narrow and not adequately suited for pedestrians or events such as the town's





weekly market. Improvements to the space will enable its use for gatherings and events that will expand the town's social calendar and will improve its spaces for both residents and visitors.

Originally proposed by Watton Town Council and included in the Future Breckland Watton Town Delivery Plan as a concept, the idea has now been taken forward by Norfolk County Council (NCC) who have completed a feasibility study and a concept design. Two options have been proposed, one requiring minimal alignment works to improve the look of the space and the other requiring more physical changes and carriageway reconstruction (including raising the road surface, heritage-style paving, shared use spaces and changes to traffic movement). The latter (preferred) option is contingent upon funding opportunities that become available.

The project will be managed by Norfolk County Council, with Breckland and other partners (such as the Town Council) acting as project partners and enablers. If Breckland were to secure funding for the scheme, the Council would play a more active role but would nevertheless defer to NCC as managers for the delivery of the project.

NCC have provided indicative costings for both options, but as it has not been decided which option will be taken forward, these have not yet been included in this document.

#### 23. Reclaim the Rain Project

Reclaim the Rain is a project run by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils that looks to work with rural communities to find innovative ways to mitigate the risk of flooding and make better use of water resources. Watton and its surrounding settlements of Merton and Thompson have been selected from the initial batch of applicants to be among the first communities to receive support as part of the scheme. The project coordinators will tap into local knowledge and spread awareness, using this as a starting point to develop solutions that will influence broader flood planning.

By working in partnership, the project will look to utilise Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce the risk posed by surface runoff and flood water, use water capture to increase water security for agriculture, industry and the local community, and engage with, learn from, and raise awareness in the local community through workshops and drop-in sessions.

Along with boosting resilience for the communities chosen, the project is intended to produce an evidence base to inform national policy and similar initiatives elsewhere.

As this project is less focussed on the delivery of tangible assets, no cost estimates are provided below.

# Section 2 – District-wide Key Infrastructure

This section of the BSIP outlines a number of key projects that will impact Breckland district wide. Most, although not all, are being progressed with limited or no Breckland Council involvement, but nevertheless have an impact on the economy and people of the district. They are, therefore, worthy of note in this document.





# **Rail Projects**

## 24. Ely Area Rail Capacity Enhancements

Ely's train station is a key location for regional rail connections, with numerous services (including those that pass through Breckland) connecting through the station. These include the Norwich to Cambridge service and Norwich to Peterborough service, which both pass through Attleborough and Thetford. Studies have shown that major infrastructure improvements are required to meet capacity and future proof the service.

Network Rail has completed an Outline Business Case (OBC) using funding from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and Strategic Freight Network, and more recently funding from the Department for Transport, and is looking to move ahead with improvement work. The project will allow more trains to pass through Ely, which will improve connectivity and deliver significant economic benefits. Network Rail is awaiting a decision from government regarding approval and funding for the next steps.

This project will link to the government's planned East-West Rail programme, part of the Cambridge to Oxford "High Tech Arc", which will extend via Ely through Breckland and to Norwich.

# **Digital Projects**

#### 25. Broadband

Norfolk will receive significant investment as part of the government's Project Gigabit, which will deliver faster gigabit-capable broadband to 'hard-to-reach' communities in rural areas. Building Digital UK and Norfolk County Council will work closely with the appointed supplier, CityFibre, to deliver over £114m worth of new broadband infrastructure to the county, including in Breckland.

The map below shows the areas due to be upgraded as part of the Norfolk scheme, including areas around all of our five major market towns.







Work has commenced and will be rolled out in phases, with the first connections expected to take place this year.

This initiative builds on various programmes to improve digital connectivity throughout Norfolk and has synergies with other proposed projects such as the Smart Emerging Technology Institute and Testbed (SETI) and the Wayland Digital and Creative Media Centre (DCMC), both of which have received funding to complete business cases.

## 26. 5G mobile connectivity

5G is the latest and fastest form of mobile connectivity. As residents and businesses become increasingly reliant on data and the internet, 5G presents an important opportunity for Norfolk, and by extension Breckland, to take advantage of the benefits provided by digitisation.

The Government's Future Telecoms and Infrastructure Review set out the UK's ambition to roll out full fibre and 5G and stated that the majority of people in the UK will have access to 5G by 2027. 5G in Norfolk is being rolled out by the four main Mobile Network Operators (MNOs); EE, Three, O2 and Vodafone. Norfolk County Council has been working closely with them these providers to highlight areas or poor or no coverage, known as 'not spots' and has lobbied these companies to expedite the roll out.

A number of challenges remain and roll-out has been slower than hoped for, due mostly to a lack of commercial appetite for providing coverage to rural areas with fewer people. It is hoped that the Shared Rural Network (SRN) project, a £1bn investment from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, Building Digital UK and the MNOs slated to conclude by the end of 2025, will accelerate progress, although Norfolk County Council have stated that there is limited evidence of material improvements to coverage thus far.

This section will be updated with developments as they occur.

# **Nutrient Neutrality**

# 27. Nutrient Neutrality Mitigation

Natural England's nutrient neutrality directive to councils in March 2022 has placed significant pressure affected planning authorities to get development moving again in a way that does not harm the environment. In Breckland there are two catchment areas affected - the River Wensum and the River Yare.

The Nutrient Mitigation Fund (Norfolk) <a href="https://www.nmfnorfolk.co.uk/">https://www.nmfnorfolk.co.uk/</a> provides a source of finance to support nutrient mitigation projects. £200,000 is available to support feasibility works to speed up project development. £9.6m is available to help deliver nutrient mitigation projects.

To apply for funding projects need to be in either the Broads catchments or Wensum catchments. Projects also need to be in an area where nutrient mitigation is needed - in





the Yare anywhere in the catchment will suffice, in the Wensum mitigation is required upstream of housing development.

The scheme is primarily aimed at permanent solutions i.e. those that can be secured for at least 80 years. However, temporary or bridging solutions will also be considered. Projects should provide ideally phosphorus and nitrogen mitigation.

The focus is on solutions that will provide nutrient mitigation for many homes, if you are a single homeowner with a septic tank for example then there may be a local project you can join.

Norfolk Environmental Credits – <a href="https://www.norfolkenvironmentalcredits.co.uk/">https://www.norfolkenvironmentalcredits.co.uk/</a> – is a collaboration between Breckland Council, Broadland District Council, North Norfolk Council, and South Norfolk Council. It is a platform which seeks to match development to the best Nutrient Neutrality mitigation solution(s) which enable the scheme to progress.

# **Road Projects**

#### 28. A47 Improvements

Work has started to convert a section of the A47 between North Tuddenham and Easton from a single carriageway into a dual carriageway. As the A47 is part of the Strategic Road Network, this work will be undertaken by National Highways, with support from districts and Norfolk County Council. The majority of this stretch of the road is within Breckland, but elements also fall within the Broadland and South Norfolk Districts.

The A47 is one of two nationally significant A-roads that passes through Breckland (the other being the A11) and links our district to Norwich and Great Yarmouth in the East and King's Lynn, Peterborough, and the Midlands to the West. It brings millions of pounds of commerce to Breckland and is a key component of our ambition to grow our local economy. Whilst roughly half of the A47 is dual carriageway, large sections of the road remain single carriageway and are, therefore, ill-suited for the large volume of traffic that they experience. This work forms part of a larger programme of works to improve the road, which was first outlined in the Government's Road Investment Strategy in 2014. These works include:

- Upgrading the A47 between Wansford and Sutton to make it a dual carriageway.
- Upgrading the A47 between Blofield and North Burlingham to make it a dual carriageway.
- Constructing two new link roads at the A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction.
- Improving the Harfreys and Vauxhall roundabouts in Great Yarmouth.

The scheme is expected to ease congestion, thereby improving journey times, and is also predicted to improve the road's safety record, which in some sections (including the North Tuddenham to Easton section) remains poor.

National Highways has completed several rounds of public consultation, feasibility work, and designs and has begun site clearance work in preparation for works to begin in earnest later this year.

In addition to the planned work above, other improvements have been planned locally, including improvements to junctions at A47/Elm High Road roundabout and A47/Broad End Road, upgrades to the A47/Cromwell Road roundabout, and relocation of A47/Elm





High Road roundabout. Future priorities for the road include Tilney to East Winch dualling and Acle Straight dualling, but these works have not yet been scheduled.

#### 29. A11 Fiveways Junction

National Highways has deferred a decision on whether improvements to the A11 Fiveways Junction, on the outskirts of Mildenhall and Barton Mills and to the south-west of Thetford, will be included in the national Road Investment Strategy (RIS) 4, which outlines key national projects to be delivered between 2030 and 2035.

National Highways has conducted several rounds of public engagement to look at rectifying a number of issues, including difficulty with getting on to the roundabout which causes congestion, rat running through surrounding areas, and a higher-than-average accident rate. Two options were proposed, the first keeping much of the existing layout but creating additional lanes for the A11 and more signals and the second proposing the A11 bypassing the roundabout and raising the road surface.

A decision on the project has been postponed due to a lack of funding certainty and prioritisation of other projects. This section will be updated accordingly when updates are provided.

# **Utility and Water Management Projects**

## 30. Norwich to Tilbury Project

The East of England is fast becoming the UK's key region for driving a move to Net Zero and securing the country's long-term energy future. In particular, offshore wind off the coast of Norfolk and Suffolk, along with the upgrades proposed at Sizewell C nuclear power station, are making East Anglia a hub for renewable, low-cost energy. Production from the region is expected to increase significantly by 2030, meaning that infrastructure will have to be upgraded to cope with capacity.

The Norwich to Tilbury project, which forms part of National Grid's Great Grid Upgrade, will reinforce the region's transmission network by connecting existing substations in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex with new offshore wind power generation infrastructure. This project will incorporate 184km of overhead line, pylons, underground cables, and a new 400kV substation.

Norwich to Tilbury is currently in its statutory consultation phase, concluding on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2024. It will submit an application for a Development Consent Order to the planning inspectorate in 2025, with construction likely to go ahead from 2027. The project is scheduled to be fully operational from 2031.

## 31. Norfolk Water Strategy Programme (NWSP)

Norfolk County Council, Anglian Water, The Nature Conservancy, and Water Resources East have formed a partnership that seeks to address Norfolk's most pressing water challenges, including flooding, water scarcity and security, and habitat loss and pollution. This work, called the Norfolk Water Strategy Programme (NWSP), is seeking to attract £30m of investment from public and private sources to invest in Nature-based Solutions



(NbS) that will deliver not only environmental benefits, but also economic and social benefits as well. This will be known as the Norfolk Water Fund. The partnership published a business case in February of 2024 that provides details on the projects that could be delivered and states that through every £1 of investment £6.70 of benefits will be unlocked.

Norfolk faces a number of acute challenges with water. The quantity and quality of the region's water supply, as well as the frequent threat of flooding, poses a threat to residents and businesses which needs to be addressed in the long term. Predictions by the partnership indicate that Norfolk must take action to improve the efficiency of our water use. A number of areas in Breckland are particularly impacted by water issues (see *Reclaim the Rain* in the 'Watton' section, above). Much of the North-East of our district has been adversely impacted by the nutrient neutrality directive, which places an embargo on certain development in response to pollution in local watercourses. Therefore, this project has the potential to deliver real benefits that may help to mitigate water challenges locally.

This project prioritises Nature-based Solutions (NbS), which are actions that "protect, sustainably manage and restore" watercourses in a way that is more beneficial for the environment. In Norfolk, this would take the form of land-use change, measures to decrease surface runoff and increase infiltration through soil management and other measures, and the creation and restoration of natural 'buffers' that prevent polluting nutrients from entering watercourses. These measures are less obstructive than traditional water management practices and create more sustainable and long-term solutions.

Now that it has delivered a business case for this work, the partnership will move on to delivery-focused work through feasibility studies, pilot projects and initial implementation, before a more ambitious county-wide roll-out in 2025.

## 32. Reservoirs

East Anglia is the driest region in England and suffers from significant water scarcity challenges. Water Resources East highlighted in the Regional Water Resources Plan for Eastern England that scarcity is already creating barriers to building more housing and business growth, saying that "Where water resources are geographically constrained, new requests for more water from businesses and other NHH users may be refused until new supply options in the region become available" (WRE RWRPEA 2023).

In order to combat this issue, Anglian Water have announced a programme of reservoir building to increase supply to the region. Two new reservoirs will be built – one in Lincolnshire and one in the Fens (in partnership with Cambridge Water).

The Fens reservoir, situated north of the town of Chatteris, will be able to supply water to around a quarter of a million homes and will cover five square kilometres and hold 55 million cubic metres of water. The project will enter its second public consultation phase at the end of May 2024. If taken forward, Anglian Water plan to have the reservoir fully operational by 2040.

The Lincolnshire reservoir is also entering its second consultation at the end of May 2024. The site, which lies East of Sleaford and about halfway between Grantham and Boston, is similar in dimension and volume to the Fens reservoir and the projects will run in parallel to one another, slated to be operational at a similar time.





Both projects, along providing long-term water security to thousands of homes in the region, will also provide leisure opportunities for local people and new environments for wildlife.

# **Conclusion**

This document is not intended to be a comprehensive index of all major projects in Breckland. It will, however, provide a guide for both the Council and external partners to the large-scale initiatives that that are being prioritised in our area. As mentioned previously, this will be an evolving document and will be updated annually. This is to reflect the evolving nature of development in our district.

It is an exciting and dynamic time in this space and Breckland will continue to work with partners to deliver on an ambitious growth agenda that will deliver maximum benefit to residents, businesses, and visitors.





# Appendix A: key documents and links

- Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/4287/Attleborough-Neighbourhood-Plan
- Breckland adopted Local Plan https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/18011/Adoption
- Breckland emerging Local Plan https://brecklandlocalplan.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/brecklands-local-plan/step1
- Breckland housing land supply statement https://www.breckland.gov.uk/housing-land-supply
- Breckland Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) https://www.breckland.gov.uk/media/7546/Infrastructure-Delivery Plan/pdf/LP\_V\_1\_Infrastructure\_Delivery\_Plan\_November\_2017.pdf?m=1664545857697
- Dereham Network Improvement Strategy https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/roads-and-transport/dereham-network-improvement-strategy-march-2019.pdf
- Future Breckland https://www.breckland.gov.uk/business-growth/future-breckland
- Norfolk Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-doand-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/strategicplanning-and-infrastructure
- Norfolk Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP)—
   https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/39084/Local-Cycling-and-Walking-Infrastructure-Plans#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20LCWIP,alternatives%20to%20travelling%20by%20car.
- Thetford Area Action Plan https://www.breckland.gov.uk/media/1893/Thetford-Area-Action-Plan/pdf/Final Adopted TAAP reduced
- Thetford Network Improvement Strategy https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/roads-and-transport/draft-thetford-network-improvement-strategy.pdf
- Water Resources East Regional Water Resources Plan for Eastern England https://wre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/WRE-Regional-Water-Resources-Plan-for-Eastern-England.pdf



