



Breckland
COUNCIL

**Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Review
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Screening Report
October 2024**

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1. Introduction

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation of plans and programmes prior to their final adoption. SEA is a tool used internationally to improve environmental performance of plans so that they can better contribute to sustainable development.
- Establishing whether a Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to a SEA is an important legal requirement. The Independent Examiner appointed to consider the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Review (YNPR) will check it meets the 'Basic Conditions' set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹. One of the Basic Conditions is whether the YNP is compatible with European Union obligations.
- This screening report is designed to determine whether or not the contents of the YNPR require a SEA in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC and the associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004)².
- The legislative background, which is set out in section 2, outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise.
- The policies of the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Review are set out in section 3.
- To assess whether a SEA is required, a screening process must be undertaken based on a standard set of criteria. This must be subject to consultation with the statutory consultees of the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England.
- The result of the screening process following must be detailed in a Screening Report and made available to the public.

2. Legislative Background

- The basis for SEA legislation is European Union Directive 2001/24/EC³ which requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken for certain

¹ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/the-basic-conditions-that-a-draftneighbourhood-plan-or-order-must-meet-if-it-is-to-proceed-to-referendum/>

² <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/the-basic-conditions-that-a-draftneighbourhood-plan-or-order-must-meet-if-it-is-to-proceed-to-referendum/>

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>

types of plan or programmes that would have a significant environmental effect. This was transposed into English Law by the Environmental Assessment of Plan and Programmes Regulations 2004, commonly referred to as SEA regulations.

- In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9(1)), Breckland Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. Where the Council determines that a SEA is not required, then the Council must, under Regulation 9(3), prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination.
- In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Yaxham Parish Council and Yaxham Working Group (the qualifying body) has requested Breckland Council, as the responsible authority, to consider whether an environmental assessment of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan is required due to significant environmental effects.
- Whether a neighbourhood plan requires a SEA, and if so, the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft neighbourhood plan (see PPG on Strategic Environmental Assessment, Paragraph 046). The PPG suggests that a SEA may be required, for example, where:
 - A neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development;
 - The neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan; and
 - The neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan (LP).

3. Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Designation and Policies

- 3.1 Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Review is at a pre-submission consultation stage (Reg 14). The Review considers and updates the Neighbourhood Plan that was made in 2017. This Plan was the subject of a SEA and HRA Screening Assessment that concluded that no Assessment was required⁴.

⁴ <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning/yaxham>

3.2 The changes being proposed in the Review can be summarised as follows:

- Policy HOU2: Housing Density – deletion of the first sentence.
- Policy HOU7: Affordable Homes for Local People – reworded to enable people with a local connection to the parish of Yaxham to have priority in accessing Affordable Homes.
- Policy ENV3: Green Infrastructure – one new area for designation as Local Green Space has been identified - Land to the East of St Peter’s Close and adjacent to the existing footpath leading to Mill Lane.
- Other updates and corrections: Mainly attributed to the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adoption of the Breckland Local Plan.
- The remaining policies of the NP4Yaxham will be ‘saved policies’ and remain unaltered.

The information provided for the SEA Screening Opinion Request, identifies that: In term of environmental assets, the Neighbourhood Plan area does not encompass any Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the nearest AONB is the Norfolk Coast over 20km away) or National Parks (the Broad over 15km away). There are also no Special Area’s of Conservation, Special Protection Area’s or Ramsar Sites within the Parish, with more detailed screening of the potential effects of the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Review on these areas undertaken through a parallel HRA screening.

- In terms of environmental assets, the area does not encompass any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Park, Special Protection Area, Ramsar site, or. It is, however, immediately adjacent to the Norfolk Valley Fens - Badley Moor Special Area of Conservation/Special Site of Scientific Interest, as well as two County Wildlife Sites. There is an area of ancient woodland (Yaxham Wood) to the south of the Plan area. The area also includes a Conservation Area at Church of St Peter along Norwich Road, and several Listed Buildings (Including Grade I listed Church of St Peter). A small portion of the northern Plan area is considered to be Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. This information is summarised in the table below.

Environmental assets	Designation	Details
Internationally designated sites	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	None within the YP area. To the North of Yaxham is the Norfolk Valley Fens (SAC).
	Special Protection Areas (SPA)	None within the YP area
	Ramsar Wetlands	None within the YP area
	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	There are two SSSI’s to the Northeast of Yaxham,

Environmental assets	Designation	Details
		<p>between Clint Green and Mattishall; Mattishall Moor SSSI and Rosie Curston's Meadow, Mattishall SSSI.</p> <p>To the north of Yaxham in Dereham is Badley Moor SSSI approximately 0.8 km away.</p>
	Registered Ancient Woodland	Yaxham Wood CWS, to the south of the village.
Local sites	County Wildlife Sites (CWS)	<p>Located within the village of Yaxham.</p> <p>Two CWS sites located to the North and Northeast of Yaxham Village.</p> <p>Yaxham Wood CWS, to the south of the village.</p>
	Geodiversity Sites	None within the YP area
	Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)	None within the YP area
Common land	Registered Common Land	None within the YP area
	Registered Village Green	None within the YP area
Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	Public Footpaths, bridleways and Restricted byways.	<p>There are multiple Public Rights of Way within the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Area.</p> <p>(Yaxham FP2, FP3, FP4, FP5, FP7, RB8, RB9, RB10). (Garvestone RB1). (N.B RB1 is along parish border line)</p>
	Norfolk Trails	None within the YP area
Agricultural Land	Grades 1-5	Area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land.
Flooding and Water Resource	Flood Zones	Area of Flood zone 1 in Northwest corner, and Flood zone 2 and 3 around watercourses. This is located along the northern boundary.

Environmental assets	Designation	Details
	SPZ/Aquifers	None within the YP area
Heritage Assets	Schedules Monuments Listed Buildings Conservation Areas	No scheduled Monuments 7 Listed buildings 1 Grade 1 Listed Building 1 Grade 2* Listed Buildings 5 Grade 2 Listed Buildings Yaxham Conservation Area

- The Plan will not propose a higher level of development than is already identified within Breckland’s Local Plan.
- The Plan will not allocate land in and above that identified within the Breckland Local Plan.
- The policy topics likely to be covered within the plan are not likely to lead to any major new development or infrastructure, nor are they likely to have any likely significant adverse effects on any SEA topic area.

3.2. The Screening Opinion Request set out that the key topics to be covered by policies within the Plan are likely to include:

- Strategic Gap
- Housing (type, scale, density, form and character, amenity)
- Environment (dark skies, surface water drainage and sewerage, sustainable energy and materials)
- Community Benefits and Actions

3.3 YNPR Policies (Reg. 14) to be considered in this new SEA Screening Opinion are:

Policy: HOU2 – Housing Density
Changes
The first sentence “New residential development should have a density that is consistent and compatible with the existing prevailing density in the immediate

area in order to reflect the local character and appearance.” has been removed and deleted from Policy HOU2.

Policy Wording

In keeping with the generally low density within the parish, the density of new residential development will not normally exceed approximately 20 dwellings per hectare, unless there are material considerations which clearly justify a higher density, which may include the need for the development to be viable or the quality of the design of the proposal. The need for an appropriate density is particularly important for proposals which are within or abutting the Conservation Area

POLICY HOU7: Affordable Homes for Local People

Changes

The rewording of this policy now creates the opportunity for people with a local connection to the parish of Yaxham to have priority in accessing some Affordable Homes as they become available in the Yaxham Neighbourhood Area

Policy Wording

In order to meet the housing needs of the parish all new housing developments providing Affordable Homes will make provision, by way of a s106 agreement, for the Affordable Homes to be made available first to eligible households on the Breckland District Council Housing Register with a local connection to the Parish of Yaxham for the lifetime of the development using the following cascade criteria in order of priority is defined as;

1. Resident of the Parish of Yaxham;
2. People who need to move to the Parish of Yaxham to give or receive support to or from close family*;
3. People who work in the Parish of Yaxham; and
4. People who were a former resident of the Parish of Yaxham.

* Close family is defined for this policy as – parent, spouse, civil partner, sibling, child, grandchild, or grandparent.

If at the time of letting there are no eligible households with a local connection, and/or the pool of eligible applicants with a local connection has been exhausted, allocations will be made in accordance with the local housing authority’s prevailing housing allocation policy and associated district-wide local connection criteria.

ENV3 – GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE:

Changes

A new area has come forward for designation as Local Green Space, as defined in the NPPF6 , Land to the East of St Peter’s Close and adjacent to the existing footpath leading to Mill Lane

Listed below is each of the existing NP4Yaxham Policies, which remain unchanged from the 'made' Neighbourhood Plan, with an Intent Statement added to aid the understanding, decision making and implementation of each Policy.

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY STR1 – THE GAPS BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS

Policy Intent Statement:

This policy seeks to keep Yaxham and Clint Green as individual settlements, in their appearance, character and with their own identity. It aims to stop Yaxham and Clint Green joining up with each other and becoming a suburb of Dereham or adjoining Mattishall.

HOU1 – LOCATION OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Policy Intent Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to prompt development to within the existing settlement boundary.

HOU3 – SCALE OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Policy Intent Statement:

Seeks to see the growth of the neighbourhood of Yaxham proportionate to the needs of a rural parish.

HOU4 – EXISTING LAND USE

Policy Intent Statement:

Seeks to guide the use of land, giving priority and support to the use of 'brownfield' sites first.

HOU5 – HOUSING MIX

Policy Intent Statement:

Aiming for a mix of housing types that focusses on local needs while being supportive for the needs of the wider District.

HOU6 – DESIGN

Policy Intent Statement:

This policy seeks the use of good, sustainable design principles to facilitate high quality and well designed development, promoting satisfaction and wellbeing to its residents. It is also focused on the infrastructure of multiple or single new developments meets high standards.

ENV1 - DARK SKIES

Policy Intent Statement:

Seeking to avoid light pollution by maintaining dark skies which characterise the parish of Yaxham through the implementation of good design principles in the planning process.

ENV2 – CONSERVATION AREA & HERITAGE ASSETS

Policy Intent Statement:

Recognising the importance of Yaxham’s heritage and conservation areas, this policy aims to protect and enhance these valuable assets for future generations. Seeking to prevent development negatively impacting on these heritage assets and their settings.

ENV3 – GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE:

Policy Intent Statement:

This policy seeks to recognise the importance of green space, footpaths and hedgerows in and around the parish of Yaxham as areas of recreational, natural and visual value that promote good mental health and well-being.

ENV4 – SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT PLANS

Policy Intent Statement:

This policy seeks to ensure that developers recognise the need for effective surface water design and management, and that any development does not cause flood related problems within the parish of Yaxham.

ENV5 – SEWERAGE PROVISION

Policy Intent Statement:

This policy seeks to ensure the provision for the treatment and disposal of foul water is accommodated in future planning applications and development with the implementation prior to occupation of a new home.

ECN1 - NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Policy Intent Statement:

This policy seeks to encourage the creation of local employment that is appropriate in size and impact to the Parish of Yaxham to strengthen the local economy and improve the sustainability of village life.

TRA1 – TRAFFIC AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Policy Intent Statement:

This policy is focused on generating practical solutions to improve road safety throughout the Parish of Yaxham by seeking to reduce the negative impacts of traffic and speeding and to ensure that future developments do not cause congestion. To promote and facilitate walking and cycling wherever possible.

TRA2 – PARKING PROVISION

Policy Intent Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to minimise the practical impacts of parked vehicles and to maximise security for homeowners.

17. COM1 – EXISTING PARISH-BASED COMMUNITY SERVICES

Policy Intent Statement:

The aim of this policy is to generate support for existing community facilities and amenities, both indoor and outdoor, which improves village life for residents of all ages and abilities.

18. COM2 – DEVELOPER FUNDING PRIORITIES

Policy Intent Statement:

This policy seeks the provision of additional facilities and amenities that support village life for all residents.

4. SEA Screening

- The process for determining whether or not a SEA is required is called screening. In order to screen, it is necessary to determine if a plan will have a significant environmental effect using the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule I of the SEA Regulations. A determination

cannot be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted: The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.

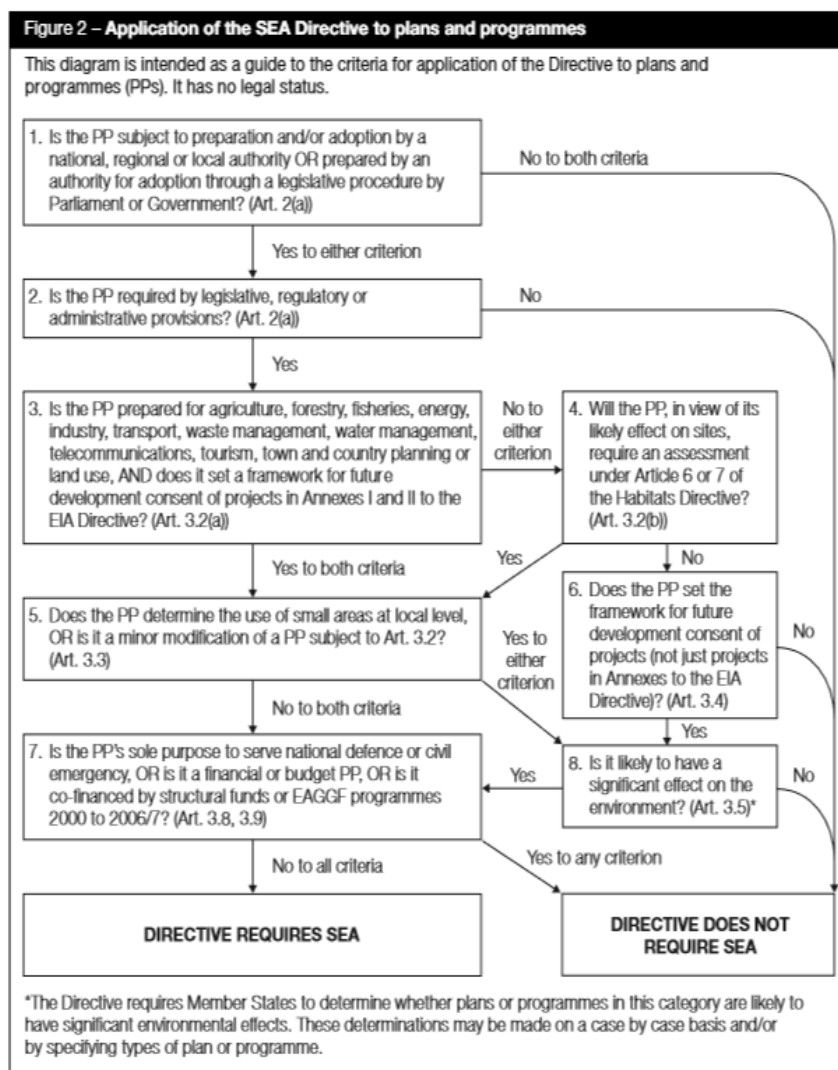
- Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3 (5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,- The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,- The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,- Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,- The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,- The cumulative nature of the effects,- The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)/- The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),- The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,- Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,- Intensive land-use,- The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

Source: Annex 11 of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

5. Assessment

- The SEA screening is a two-stage process. The first part considers the Neighbourhood Plan against the SEA assessment criteria set out in the national guidance, 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive'⁵. The second part of the assessment considers whether the MP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, using criteria drawn from Schedule 1 of the EU SEA Directive and the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004⁶.
- Figure 2 below sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied with steps 1 to 5 encompassed within Stage 1 of the SEA screening process and step 8 undertaken through Stage 2.



(Source: Annex 11 of SEA Directive)

⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf

⁶ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/pdfs/ukxi_20041633_en.pdf

SEA Screening Stage 1: SEA Directive Article 2(a), 3.2(a), 3.2(b), 3.3, 3.4, 3.8 and 3.9

Table 2: Application of the SEA Directive to the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan

Assessment1: Establishing the need for SEA

Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan (NPR) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The preparation and making of the NPR is permitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The NPR is being prepared by the Yaxham Parish Council and Yaxham Working Group (as the "relevant bodies") and will be "made" (adopted) by Breckland Council as the Local Authority subject to passing an independent examination and community referendum. The preparation of the NPR is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and the Neighbourhoods Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.
2. Is the Neighbourhood Plan Review required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art.2(a))	Y	The NPR is not a requirement of the Town and Country Planning Act as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it will be "made" and form part of the Development Plan for the District. These are directed by legislative processes and it is important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.
3. Is the NPR prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, and does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	N	A NP can include these policy areas and could provide, at a Neighbourhoods Area level, the framework for development that would fall within Annex II of the EIA Directive. Developments that fall within Annex I are 'excluded' development for NPs (as set out in Section 61(k) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)).

Stage	Y/N	Reason
		<p>The NPR sets out a framework for town and country planning and land use within the parish of Yaxham. The strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Breckland Local Plan. The NPR seeks to align and be in general conformity with this. The NPR does not anticipate being the tool to manage development of the scale and nature envisaged by Annex I and Annex II of the EIA Directive.</p>
<p>4. Will the Neighbourhood Plan Review, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (Art.3.2(b))</p>	<p>?</p>	<p>A NP could potentially have impacts on sites covered by the Habitats Regulations. A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report (2013) and the Assessment of the Breckland Local Plan at Submission stage (2017) were carried out as part of the Local Plans preparation.</p> <p>A HRA screening assessment on the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Review will be undertaken. This will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on Habitat Sites covered by the Habitats Regulations arising from the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
<p>5. Does the Neighbourhood Plan Review determine the use of small areas at local level, Or is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art 3.2? (Art 3.3)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>A NP can determine the use of small areas at a local level. The NP proposes to include policies relating to the management of sustainable development. The YNPR does not specifically allocate land for additional housing or other growth.</p>
<p>6. Does the Neighbourhood Plan Review set the framework for future development consent of Projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Once 'made', a NP forms part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used in the determination of planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area. Therefore,</p>

Stage	Y/N	Reason
		it sets the framework for future developments at a local level.
7. Is the Neighbourhood Plan Review's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it financial or budget PP, OR is it financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art.3.8,3.9)	N	The NPR does not deal with these categories.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment	N	The NPR seeks general conformity with the strategic policies of the "adopted" Local Plan. There is no specific development proposed through the plan, nor is land allocated for development through the plan. It is therefore considered that the plan would not have a significant effect on heritage assets, landscape, biodiversity interests or areas of flood risk.

SEA Screening Stage 2: SEA Directive Article 3(5) Annex II- Application of Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects of a Neighbourhood Plan

- Table 3 below sets out the assessment against the Strategic Environmental Assessment criteria for the NPR. This is to determine whether the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan will have a significant effect on the environment. This criteria against which the screening is carried out are taken directly from Annex II Of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (also known as the SEA Directive), as required by Article 3(4).

Table 3: SEA Screening Stage 2- Assessment of the likelihood of Significant Effects on the Environment

Criteria in Annex 11 of the SEA Directive	Response	Is there a significant effect?
(1) Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:		
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size, and	The strategic framework for development is set by the adopted Local Plan of Breckland District Council. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to align and be in general conformity with this as well as within	No

Criteria in Annex 11 of the SEA Directive	Response	Is there a significant effect?
operating conditions or by allocating resources;	the wider framework set by the National Planning Policy Framework.	
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy;	Once "made" the Neighbourhood Plan would be implemented alongside the Local Plan and form part of the District's Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will expand upon some of the Local Plan policies, providing additional information at a local scale.	No
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	Any development that comes forward through the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to the environmental considerations of the adopted Local Plan. These policies have been subject to sustainability appraisal and are in place to ensure that sustainable development is achieved.	No
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;	There are not considered to be any significant environmental problems which are specific to the area, above and beyond those considered and addressed in the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan policies which provide additional environmental protection. A HRA screening assessment on the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Review will be undertaken. This will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on Habitat Sites covered by the Habitats Regulations arising from the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan (draft being prepared).	No
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The implementation of community legislation is unlikely to be significantly compromised by the Neighbourhood Plan.	No

Criteria in Annex 11 of the SEA Directive	Response	Is there a significant effect?
(2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects;	The Neighbourhood Plan is a long-term plan up to 2036. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate sites for growth but supplements Local Plan policy with local matters of importance for consideration.	No
The cumulative nature of the effects;	No growth is proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan as such no cumulative effects arise in combination with the adopted Local Plan to introduce significant environmental effects.	No
The transboundary nature of the effects;	The impacts beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area are unlikely to be significant.	No
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);	The nature of the proposals establishing local criteria for consideration of development proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to produce any significant effects.	No
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The NP covers the Parish of Yaxham and a population of approximately 861 (Census 2021). The spatial extent and the magnitude of the population affected are not considered significant for the purpose of the SEA.	No
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</p> <p>ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</p> <p>iii) Intensive land use</p>	<p>i) The Neighbourhood Plan area does not contain nationally designated sites; however it does include designations which reflect the cultural and heritage value of the area such as listed buildings and conservation area.</p> <p>ii) The NPR will conform to the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan,</p>	No

Criteria in Annex 11 of the SEA Directive	Response	Is there a significant effect?
	<p>which provides protection to these environmental characteristics to ensure that they are not vulnerable to significant impacts from development.</p> <p>iii) The NPR is unlikely to result in exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as those relating to air, water, and soil quality.</p> <p>iv) The NPR is unlikely to bring forward development of an extent that would result in a significant intensification of local land Use.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The Plan Area includes designations which reflect the cultural and Heritage value of the area such as listed buildings and conservation area. The environmental effects on areas of biodiversity designations have been considered through the emerging Local Plan.	No

6. Consultee Responses

- Following the consultation process undertaken through October and November 2024 responses were received from Natural England, Norfolk County Council and the Environment Agency, included in Appendix 1.
- Norfolk County Council agrees with the conclusion of the draft screening assessment that the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan will not have any significant environmental effects. Therefore, it does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- Natural England stated on the basis of the material supplied, significant effects on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely, and significant effects on Habitats Sites, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.
- The Environment Agency stated they have no comments to make at this stage.

7. Conclusion

- This screening assessment suggests that it is unlikely that there would be significant negative effects on the European Designated Sites on the majority of the policies.
- The Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Review does not seek to increase does not seek to increase dwelling numbers and where development is proposed often the policy outlines that it should be appropriate in character, scale and design to Yaxham and only where the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the risks. Therefore, the number of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders should remain relatively similar to the current number, and the need for provision of public parking is unlikely to increase. In conclusion, it is considered that there is unlikely to be significant effects on the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC, The Broads SAC or the River Wensum. Based upon the submitted draft, a full Appropriate Assessment (Habitat Regulations Assessment) is not required.
- In light of this assessment, it is concluded that the emerging Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Review is not likely to have significant environmental effects and accordingly will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The main reasons for this conclusion are as follows:
 - The YNP Review does not seek to increase dwelling numbers, and subsequently the population of the area
 - The YNP Review only seeks to increase public parking where it is necessary for increased development and to reduce on road parking.
 - The YNP Review policies add detail to strategic policies within the Breckland Local Plan. These strategic policies have been subjected to a HRA screening.
 - This report is bases on the Screening Assessment request on the Regulation 14 version of the YNP review. Should the contents of the plan subsequently differ from this version, there may be a requirement to revisit this Screening Assessment.
 - A copy of this report will be available online on the Breckland District Council website, and for inspection at the Breckland District Council Offices, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1EE.

8. Appendix 1

Natural England

Date: 26 November 2024
Our ref: 490768
Your ref: Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Reviewed



Mr James Faulkner
Breckland Council

BY EMAIL ONLY
Planning.PolicyTeam@breckland.gov.uk

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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Faulkner

Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Reviewed - SEA Screening & HRA Assessment Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 16 October 2024.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- **significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,**
- **significant effects on Habitats sites¹, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.**

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected

¹ Habitats sites are those referred to in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team

Norfolk County Council



Norfolk County Council

Norfolk County Council Comments on the: Draft Screening Assessment Reports for the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan 09 December 2024

1. Preface

- 1.1. The officer-level comments below are made without prejudice, the County Council reserves the right to make to any further comments the County Council may have on future iterations of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2. The County Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and recognises the considerable amount of work and effort which has been put into developing the Plan to date.

2. Natural Environment

- 2.1. One minor comment in the Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Report October 2024, paragraph 4.1.: "The Review considers and updates the Neighbourhood Plan that was made in 2027". Should this be 2017?
- 2.2. One minor comment re the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report October 2024, paragraph 3.1.: "The Review considers and updates the Neighbourhood Plan that was made in 2027". Should this be 2017?
- 2.3. Should you have any queries with the above comments please contact the Natural Environment Team at neti@norfolk.gov.uk.

3. Public Health

- 3.1. Public Health are in agreement that the NP doesn't require an SEA as it's unlikely there will be any direct health impacts. However, we request that those developing the plan follow our published guidance on [Health in Neighbourhood Planning](#).
- 3.2. This guidance sets out the evidence base for developing healthy neighbourhood plans and includes examples of good practice which can be adapted.
- 3.3. Should you have any queries with the above comments please contact Public Health at phplanning@norfolk.gov.uk

Environment Agency

Good afternoon,

Thank you for consulting us on the above Neighbourhood Plan Review. We have no comments to make at this stage.

We encourage you to seek ways in which your neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment. For your information, together with Natural England, Historic England and Forestry Commission we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: [How to consider the environment in Neighbourhood plans - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)

Kind regards,

Neve

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