

# **Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan Review 2025-2038**

**Preliminary Screening Strategic Environmental  
Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment  
March 2025**

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## Introduction

1. Hellesdon Parish Council is preparing a review of their existing Neighbourhood Plan for its parish known as HNP throughout this document. The planning period will be 2025-2038 and the designated area (**See Figure 1**) is located within Broadland District Council. [Collective Community Planning](#) has been appointed by the parish councils to consider whether there is a need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be undertaken on HNP. This is required under European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive), transposed into UK law through the SEA Regulations<sup>1</sup>.
2. SEA may be required for a Neighbourhood Plan if it is likely to have significant environmental effects. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is like an SEA but includes assessment of the likely significant effects of a plan or programme on economic and social factors, as well as environmental factors. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) clarifies that there is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to a SA, but that SA can be used to demonstrate how the plan will contribute to sustainable development.

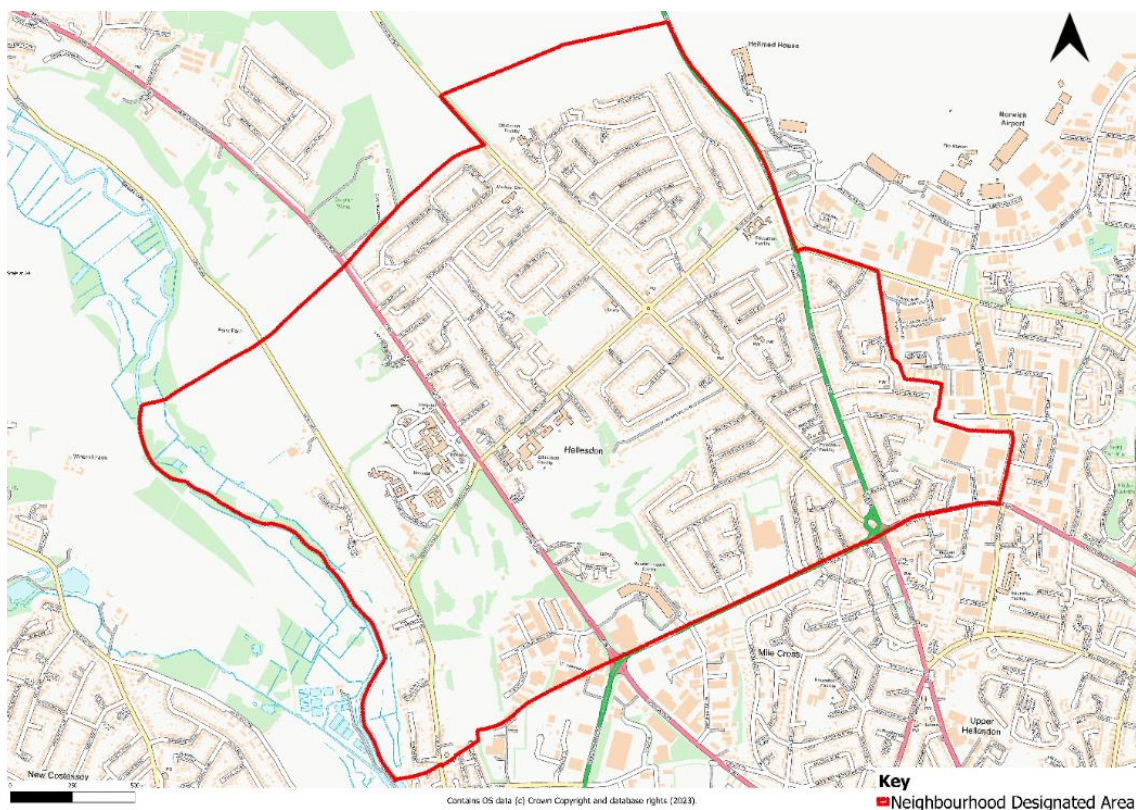


Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Area

<sup>1</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633), as amended by the Environmental Assessment and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232). It should be noted that the purpose of the amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the European Union. No substantive changes are made to the way the SEA regime operates.

## SEA Screening

### Scope of the Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan

3. A draft (Regulation 14) version of HNP is currently being prepared. It is intended that this is subject to public consultation in early 2025. HNP includes a vision for the long-term future of Hellesdon, along with aims to support delivery of this vision. The current draft vision is:

*Hellesdon: A green, peaceful and friendly suburb for people of all ages with a good range of community facilities; one step from a vibrant City and one step from the Norfolk countryside.*

4. The draft plan currently includes 5 specific objectives to deliver this vision:

*Objective 1: To protect and enhance existing and create new local green infrastructure*

*Objective 2: To preserve and enhance the suburban character of Hellesdon, both in terms of its buildings and layout*

*Objective 3: To improve conditions and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists moving through or around the Parish*

*Objective 4: To protect and enhance local amenities including shops, services, community facilities, play areas and open spaces*

*Objective 5: To promote and deliver sustainability in all areas and leave a positive legacy for future generations.*

5. HNP have a range of non-strategic planning policies to realise and deliver the above vision and aims. This includes ten policies, new and revised, as set out below:

- **POLICY 1: HELLESDON GREENGRID**

*This is a revision of Hellesdon Green Grid (Policy 1 in 2017)*

- **POLICY 2: THE HELLESDON COMMUNITY GRID**

*This is a revision of Hellesdon Community Grid (Policy 2 in 2017)*

- **POLICY 3: HIGH QUALITY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS**

*This is a revision of High-Quality Residential Neighbourhoods (Policy 3 in 2017)*

- **POLICY 4: VEHICLE PARKING**

*This is a new policy for this revised Neighbourhood Plan, although car parking was previously partly covered in Policy 3 of the 2017 plan.*

- **POLICY 5: ACCESSIBLE PLAY SPACES**

*This builds on Project 1 (Enhanced parks and open spaces) from the 2017 plan*

- **POLICY 6: HOUSING FOR PEOPLE**

*This builds on Policy 7 (Housing with Care) from the 2017 plan.*

- **POLICY 7: IMPORTANT VIEWS**

*This is a new policy for this revised Neighbourhood Plan*

- **POLICY 8: LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

*This is broadly a new policy for this revised Neighbourhood Plan, although it picks up on aspects from the 2017 plan, such as Policy 1 (Hellesdon Green Grid) and Project 1 (Enhanced parks and open spaces)*

- **POLICY 9: COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

*This is a new policy for this revised Neighbourhood Plan*

- **POLICY 10: BUILDINGS OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE**

*This policy updates Policy 6 of the 2017 plan. Including additional buildings.*

## **6. The plan does not allocate land for development.**

### **Baseline Information**

7. This section summarises baseline information for the HNP area, drawing on the Evidence Base which will accompany the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Context**

8. The parish of Hellesdon falls within Broadland District and is adjacent to South Norfolk District and Norwich City. It lies to the north-west of Norwich and it well-related to it, with the Norwich Outer Ring Road running along the southern boundary of the parish. Norwich International Airport lies just to the north. Away from the River Wensum, much of the parish is now built-up. It is a fairly sustainable location, with a number of local services and facilities, as well as jobs, but with good transport connections to a much wider availability of services and facilities in Norwich and at the airport.

### **Biodiversity, Flora, and fauna**

9. There is one International and National statutory designated site in the neighbourhood area which is the River Wensum. The River Wensum is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This designation falls into the west side of the boundary (**Figure 2**).
10. The River Wensum is an area size of 306.79ha. The Annex I habitat that is a primary selection for the River Wensum to be a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) include the water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation<sup>2</sup>. The Wensum represents sub-type 1 in lowland eastern England. Although the river is extensively regulated by weirs, *Ranunculus* vegetation occurs sporadically throughout much of the river's length. Stream water-crowfoot *R. penicillatus* ssp. *pseudofluitans* is the dominant *Ranunculus* species but thread-leaved water-crowfoot *R. trichophyllus* and fan-leaved water-crowfoot *R. circinatus* also occur. The general site character is:

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<sup>2</sup> [River Wensum - Special Areas of Conservation \(jncc.gov.uk\)](http://jncc.gov.uk)



- Inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (42%)
- Bogs, Marshes, Water fringed vegetation, Fens (12%)
- Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (40%)
- Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (6%)

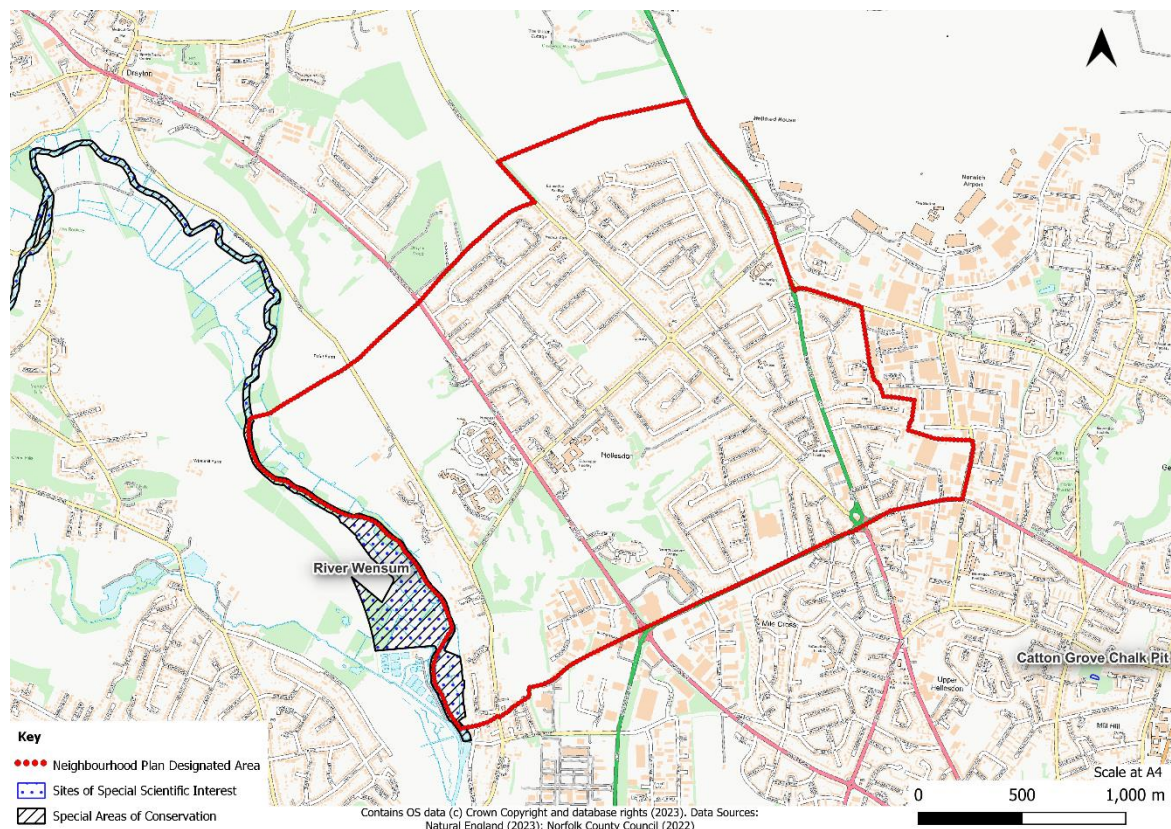


Figure 2-Wildlife Designations (Source: Natural England, 2025)

11. As stated by Natural England, the Wensum is a naturally enriched, calcareous lowland river. The upper reaches are fed by springs that rise from the chalk and by run-off from calcareous soils rich in plant nutrients. This gives rise to beds of submerged and emergent vegetation characteristic of a chalk stream. Lower down, the chalk is overlain with boulder clay and river gravels, resulting in aquatic plant communities more typical of a slow-flowing river on mixed substrate<sup>3</sup>.

12. Stream water-crowfoot *R. penicillatus* ssp. *pseudofluitans* is the dominant *Ranunculus* species but thread-leaved watercrowfoot *R. trichophyllus* and fan-leaved water-crowfoot *R. circinatus* also occur in association with the wide range of aquatic and emergent species that contribute to this vegetation type. The river should support an abundant and rich invertebrate fauna including the native freshwater crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* as well as a diverse fish community, including bullhead *Cottus gobio* and brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*. The site has an abundant and diverse mollusc fauna which includes Desmoulin's whorl-snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*, which is associated with aquatic vegetation at the river edge and adjacent fens.

<sup>3</sup> <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/search?q=river+wensum&num=100>

13. The reason the River Wensum has got European designation is due to the following features:

- H3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with *R. fluitantis*
- S1016 Desmoulin's whorl snail, *Vertigo moulinsiana*
- S1092 Freshwater crayfish, *Austropotamobius pallipes*
- S1096 Brook lamprey, *Lampetra planeri*
- S1163 Bullhead, *Cottus gobio*

14. There is one County Wildlife Site that falls within the neighbourhood area, Wensum Mount Farm shown in **Figure 3**. As well as this there are several County Wildlife Sites adjacent or in close proximity including Drayton Wood, Low Road Meadow, Marriot's Way, Wensum Meadow, Red Bridge, Hellesdon Mill Meadow, Land South of River Tud, Canham's Hill, and Fiddle Wood & Night Plantation (**Figure 3**). These wildlife sites are not designated on a statutory basis, though they do receive a degree of protection through the planning process and are often recognised in district local plans. In this context, site protection relies on the commitment of local authorities and public bodies.

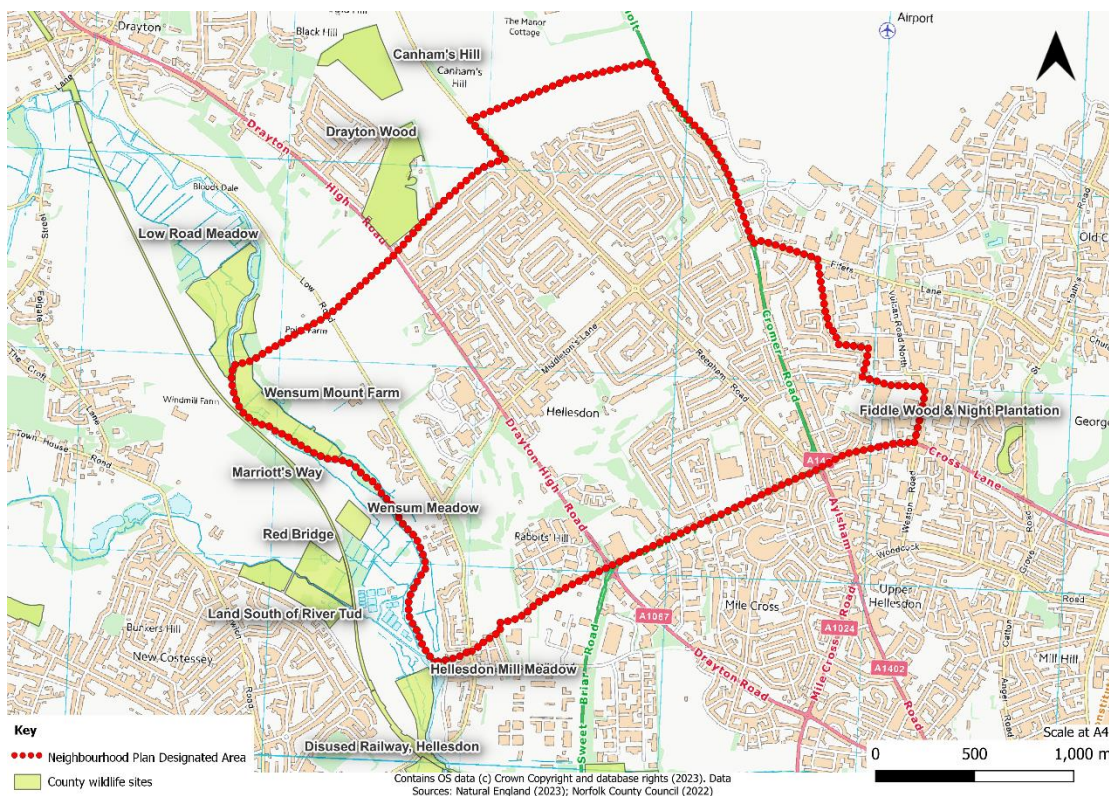


Figure 3-County Wildlife Site within the parish (Source: Natural England, 2023)

15. The neighbourhood area, particularly to the west and close to Drayton High Road, contains priority habitat also known as Habitats of Principle Importance for biodiversity conservation. These are habitats which are most threatened, in greatest decline, or where the UK holds a significant proportion of the world's total population. There are four main types of priority habitat in the parish (see **Figure 4**)



coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; deciduous woodland; lowland fens and lowland meadows. There are also a few sites which are identified as no main habitat but additional habitats present. Not all of these will be protected under national designation, though they can be sensitive to development and should be considered when growth is being planned to avoid negative impacts.

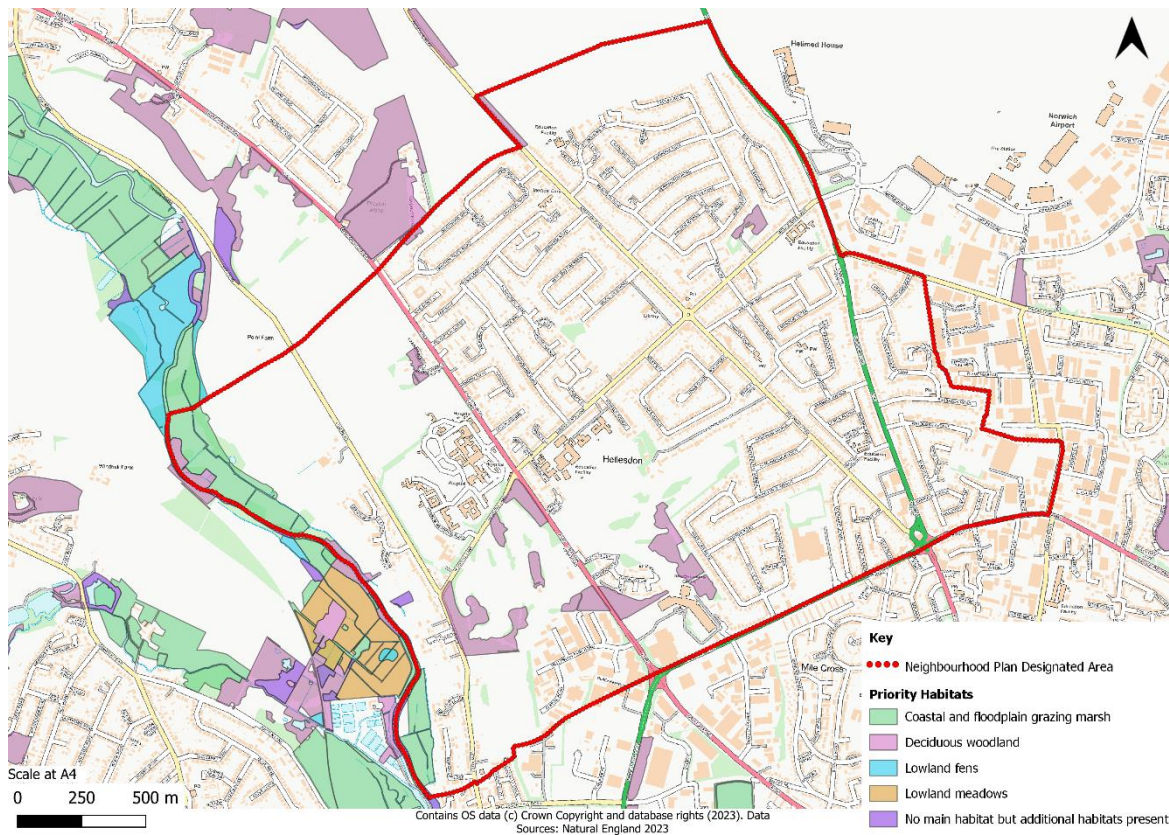


Figure 4-Priority Habitats (Source: Natural England, 2023)

## Population

16. The total usual resident population of Helleston is 11,100 according to the Census 2021<sup>4</sup> compared to 10,957 in 2011<sup>5</sup>, showing a small change. The parish is small in comparison to the 131,700 people residing in Broadland District, 916,100 in Norfolk County and 56,490,000 in England.
17. In 2011, the census data shows that the ratio of females and males was nearly a 50:50 split with males making up 48.7% of the parish and females 51.3%. In 2021 this has remained similar with males 48.6% and females 51.4%<sup>6</sup>. According to census data a high proportion of the population is of working age. In 2011, the mean age was 47.3 years old, and the median was 49. As shown in **Figure 5** the age

<sup>4</sup> Census 2021. Population. Source: [Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS](#)

<sup>5</sup> Census 2011. Nomis Local Area Report for Helleston. Source: [Local Area Report for areas in England and Wales - Nomis \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> Census 2021. Gender. Source: [Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS](#)

profile of the population has remained fairly static over the last ten years. There has been a more notable decline in the 15-24yrs category and a slight increase in 75+ years.

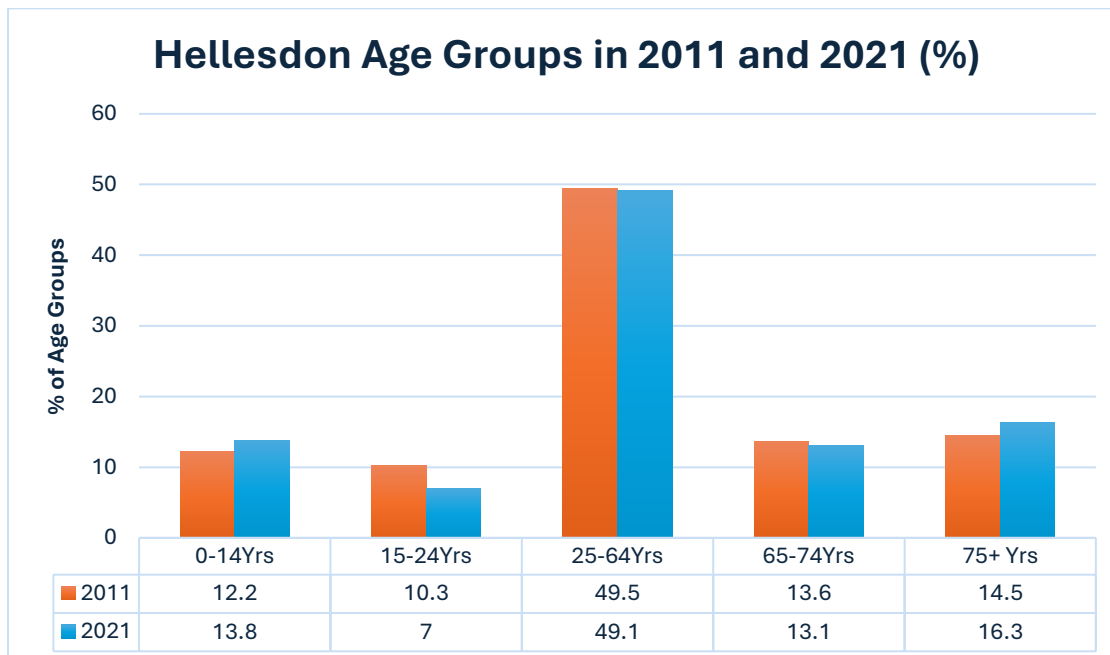


Figure 5-Hellesdon Age Groups 2011 and 2021 (Census 2011;2021)

## Human Health

18. Provision of age-related services is likely to become an increasing consideration for the neighbourhood plan area as the proportion of over 65s according to the Census 2021 makes up 29.4% of the NPA.

## Soil

19. Regarding soil, the parish contains predominantly Grade 3 agricultural land urban land, as identified by the Agricultural Land Classification Scale (**Figure 6**). Grade 3 is considered to be good to moderate land capable of producing yields of crops. There could be moderate limitations which affect the choice of crop. There is no Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land in the parish which is considered to be of very good to excellent quality.

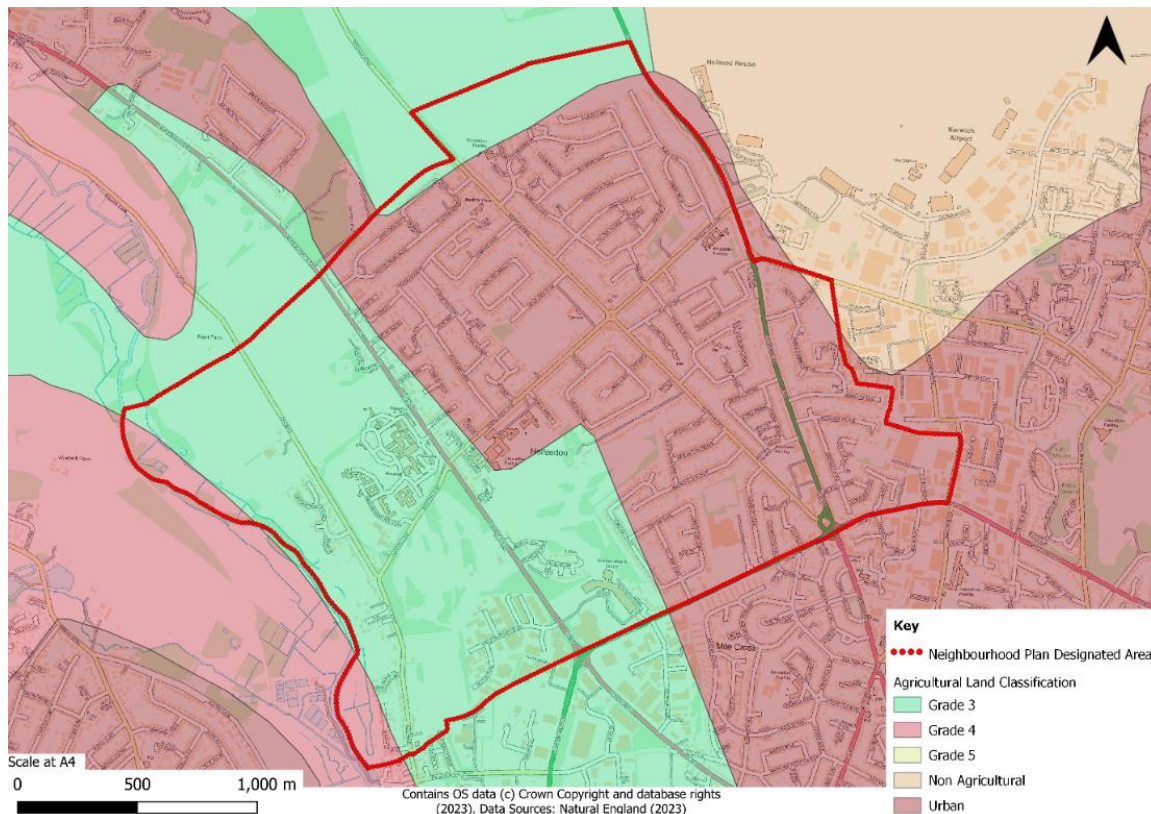


Figure 6-Agricultural Land Classification (Source: Natural England, 2024)

## Water

20. According to Environment Agency the majority of the parish falls within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk), particularly the more built-up parts of the settlement, which means there is a low risk of flooding from rivers (or the sea). However, parts of the parish to the west of Low Road falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and are in close proximity to the River Wensum (**Figure 7**). National policy is to locate development in areas least likely to flood. Based on current mapping, this is unlikely to be a constraint on development in much of the plan area.



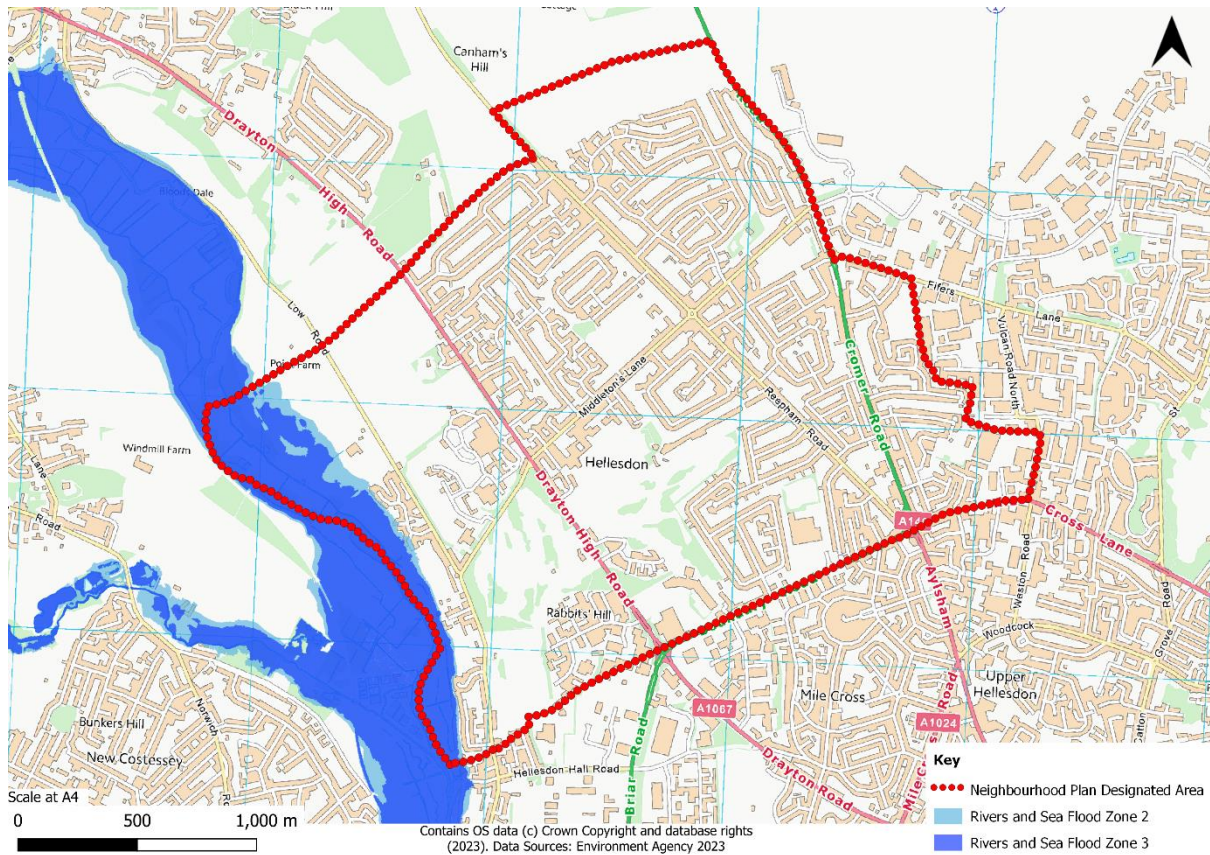


Figure 7- Flood risk from rivers and sea in Hellesdon (Source: Environment Agency, 2023)

21. The Environment Agency future flood risk modelling shows that there are a number of areas within the built-up settlement which are at a medium to high risk from surface water flooding (ponding), see **Figures 8 and 9**. Surface water flooding (also known as pluvial flooding) is defined as flooding resulting from runoff from high intensity rainfall events which cause water to pond or flow over the ground surface before entering the drainage network or watercourse.
22. The mapping indicates that high flood risk is present within residential estates, roads and open green space such as along Middleton's Lane, Kinsale Avenue, Reephams Road, Flis Road, Gowing Road, Meadows Close, Broom Avenue, Lilian Close, Drayton Wood Road, Plantation Road and Berrington Road.



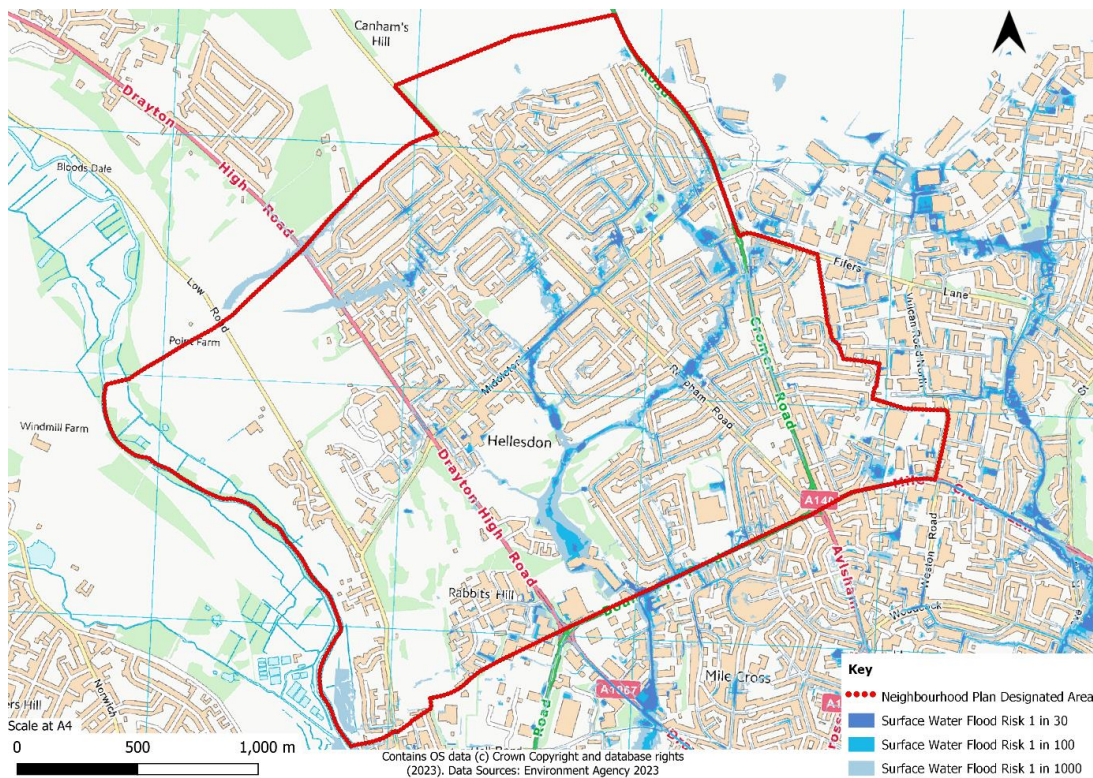


Figure 8-Surface Water Flood Risk within Helleston (Source: Environment Agency, 2023)

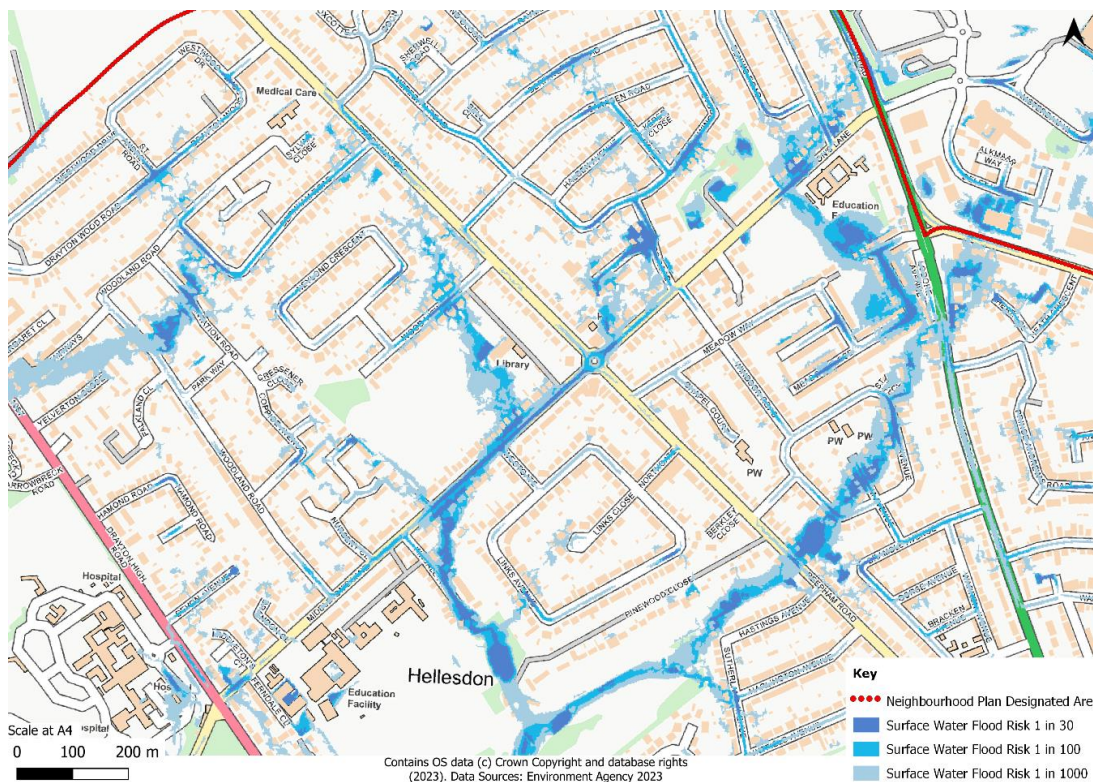


Figure 9-Surface Water Flood Risk within the built-up area (Source: Environment Agency, 2023)

23. A review of the Greater Norwich Area Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA, 2017) states that in Hellesdon there have been 3 recorded flood incidents over the years. The SFRA suggests that specific flood risk reduction measures would vary in scale and purpose and could be delivered through new strategic-scale initiatives or individual project proposals such as resolving surface water drainage issues identified within the Norwich Surface Water Management Plan to provide new multifunctional spaces to existing areas of poor or over-capacity drainage; or they might be smaller and delivered by individual projects such as continuing to ensure that appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are provided through new development. The Norwich Surface Water Management Plan (2011<sup>7</sup>) included Hellesdon in their study area. However, there was no set action plan for Hellesdon taken forward as a priority.
24. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) datasets show a number of report/investigations of flooding in the parish over recent years<sup>8</sup>. As shown in Broadland 2013-2017 flood reports<sup>9</sup>, in June 2016 there were numerous reports of internal flooding in residential properties along Hawthorne Avenue, Middletons Lane, Woods Close, Drayton High Road, Nursery Road, Lilian Close and Coldershaw Road. This led to the fire and rescue service having to respond and pump out overflow water during the incident. The causes of the flooding were due to significant rainfall. Due to some of these historical flooding events in Hellesdon, two actions were taken forward by the risk management authorities in the parish between 2013-2016<sup>10</sup> including:
- Hawthorne Avenue, Hellesdon – A new surface water system was installed within the highways as part of the Greater Norwich Area Surface Water Drainage Scheme. This included the installation of the road gullies to increase the capture of highway surface water into the surface water system. Norfolk County Council, as part of the Greater Norwich Area Surface Water Drainage Scheme, investigated the potential to install a positive system but this was not feasible as the levels would not allow a gravity system to operate. Other options were also reviewed e.g. thrust boring and these would need to be looked at as part of a future programme of works and would be dependent on funding becoming available.
  - Woods Close, Hellesdon- Norfolk County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority became a statutory consultee to the planning process for local flood risk in April 2015. Broadland District Council have approved development within the upstream catchment against the advice of the LLFA which had concerns about the flood risk both on site and elsewhere. The LLFA have requested modelling to quantify flood risk onsite and off-site based on known flood events at this location.

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<sup>7</sup> The Norwich Surface Water Management Plan 2011. Source: [Norwich Urban Area SWMP - Norfolk County Council](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Flood investigations - Norfolk County Council](#)

<sup>9</sup> Broadland 2013-2017 flood report. Source: [Flood Investigation Report \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> Broadland Investigation Report into the Flooding in Broadland District in 2013- 2016 – Addendum (FIR/037A). Source: [Flood Investigation Report \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)



25. After this in the Broadland Winter flood event 2020-2021<sup>11</sup> there was one property affected by internal flooding along Low Road. The property had flooded in December 2020 and again in July 2021. Problems and causes of flooding included high intensity rainfall and this was concentrated on the highway. Vehicles using the highway passed through the flood water causing it to wash towards the affected property. Surface run-off from rainfall made its way onto the highway and flowed along the road network and onto the accesses of affected properties that were situated lower than these features. These are factors to consider for future flood risk in the parish and NCC stated it will consider options that would prevent water flowing from the highway towards properties.

### Air and Climatic Factors

26. As part of the National Air Quality Strategy all local authorities are obliged to establish air quality levels in their area that meet national air quality objectives. If an area does not meet these objectives Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared. The Broadland District Council Air Quality Annual Status Report (2024) confirms that South Norfolk and Broadland Councils currently do not have any declared AQMAs<sup>12</sup>. This would suggest that air quality is generally not of a concern in the HNP area, and indeed the report confirms that air quality could be improved but a number of measures have been put in place to improve local air quality.

### Material Assets and Connectivity

27. Hellesdon has a wide range of facilities/services within the parish. This includes core services such as:

- ASDA supermarket/pharmacy/petrol station
- The Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School, Heather Avenue Infant and Primary School and Hellesdon High School
- Hellesdon community centre
- Castle and Costa Dentist, Hellesdon dental care and Together Dental Norwich
- Hellesdon parish hall
- Kingfisher Mother and Baby Unity Hospital
- St Pauls Hellesdon Parish Church
- Total Care Pharmacy
- The Limes Assisted living residence.
- Woodland care home.

28. There are also a range of businesses and commercial units in the parish as detailed In the Hellesdon Evidence Base Paper 2024 and limited access to green open space which are accessible to the public.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/rubbish-recycling-planning/flood-and-water-management/flood-investigation-reports/fir066-broadland-flood-event-2020-21.pdf>

<sup>12</sup>Broadland District Council Air Quality Annual Status Report (2024) Available at: [South Norfolk and Broadland ASR 2024](#)

29. Hellesdon is within close proximity of Norwich, with Norwich city centre being less than 5 miles away. The A140 runs along the eastern and southern boundary of the parish and is a busy road leading onto other A Roads and towards large settlements outside of the district including Cromer, Great Yarmouth, and Lowestoft. Journeys by private car should take around 15 minutes to reach Norwich city centre (such as the Castle Quarter) and 45 minutes- 1 hour to other towns including Cromer, Great Yarmouth, and Lowestoft. However, journey times can be unpredictable for various reasons including restricted usage, rural roads, heavy traffic on the A47 including road works or seasonal congestion especially during the summer holidays.
30. There are a number of public bus services which run through the parish including First Bus Service<sup>13</sup>, Lowestoft Bus, Konect Bus<sup>14</sup> and Sanders Coaches<sup>15</sup>. There are many bus stops, including along the A1067, Boundary Rd, Cromer Rd, Reepham Rd, Hercules Rd, Middleton Ln, Samon Rd and Woodland Rd. Further detail can be read within the Hellesdon Evidence Base Paper 2024.
31. In terms of walking and cycling infrastructure, there are no national cycle routes running through the parish. However, Marriotts Way runs to the western boundary of the designated area. This is a 26-mile footpath, bridleway and cycle route which follows the routes of two disused railway lines, running between Aylsham and Norwich. The part of the route adjacent to the parish is traffic free<sup>16</sup>. According to Norfolk County Council open data there are a limited number of public footpaths within the parish, as shown in **Figure 10**. These footpaths can offer a quicker route between properties and estates, avoiding the residential and main roads. The footpaths shown in **Figure 10** include:
- A path running between Samson Road and Mountfield Avenue to the west of Mountfield Park.
  - A path running between Woodland Road and Yelverton Close
  - A path running between Woodland Road and Drayton Wood Road
  - A path running between Friers Lane and Heath Crescent
  - A path running between Reepham Road and Links Avenue
  - A path crossing Reepham Road and Cromer Road across the roundabout which is operated via a traffic light system. Pedestrians and cyclists can also cross the busy roads towards Aylsham Road and other areas which fall outside of the designated boundary.
32. As a whole the parish has a multitude of kebed footways running on both sides, or at least one side, of the residential streets and main roads which is common for a built up urban fringe area.

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<sup>13</sup> Services include 36 and 37. Source: [Route maps | First Bus](#) and [0001 Purple Line 36 37 38 39 - Bus Times from 29-10-23 FINAL 0.pdf \(firstbus.co.uk\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> Services include 512 and 515. Source: [Timetables & maps - konectbus](#)

<sup>15</sup> Services include 24, 43A and 45. Source: [Timetables | Sanders Coaches](#)

<sup>16</sup> [About Marriotts Way - Norfolk County Council](#)



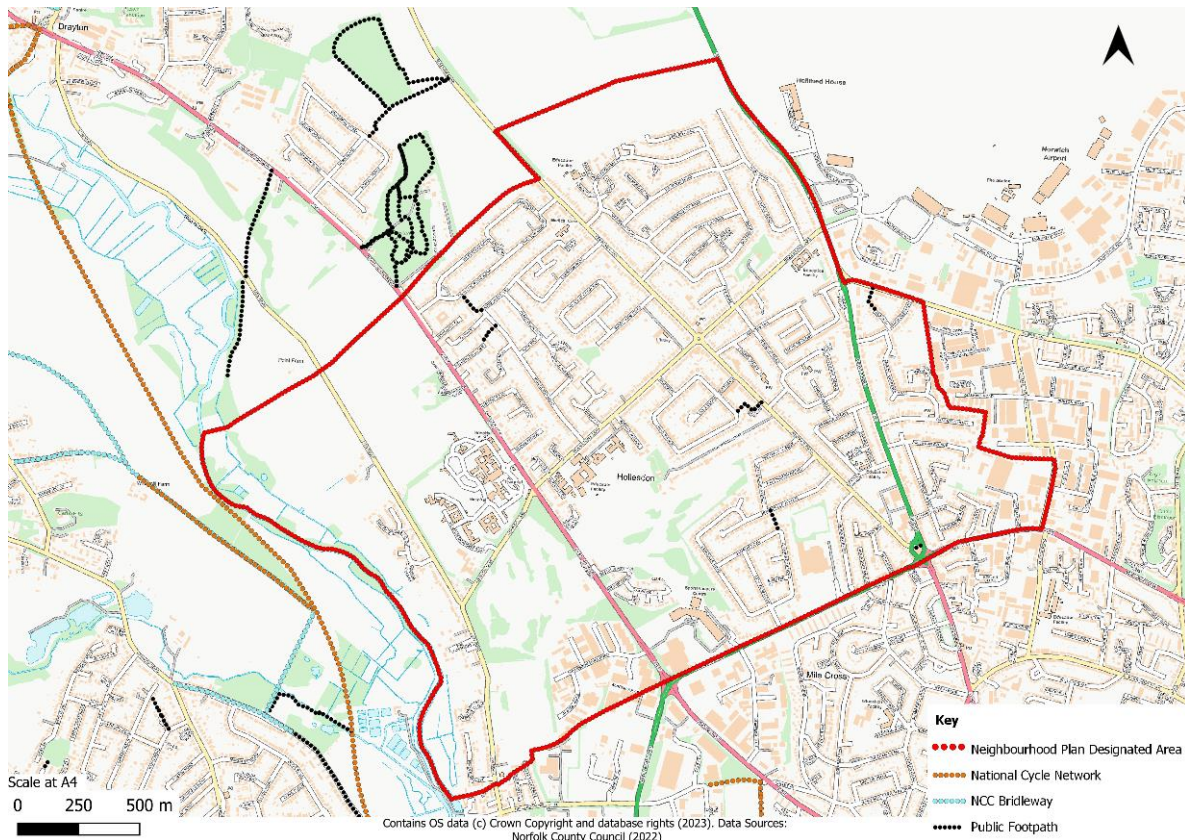


Figure 10-Public Rights of Way within Hellesdon (Source: Norfolk County Council, 2023)

33. The parish is also in close proximity to Marriotts Way (National Cycle Network) and the River Wensum which also offer walking/cycling routes for recreational use. The Norwich Pedalways includes a yellow route from the city centre to the Aviation Academy at the airport and this skirts the eastern edge of Hellesdon, though it lies entirely outside of the parish and so not in the neighbourhood plan area.

## Cultural Heritage

34. According to Norfolk Heritage Explorer<sup>17</sup> there are 104 records within Hellesdon including historic artefacts, structures, buildings, structures and markings in the landscape such as crop marks and ditches. This includes assets from multiple time periods including the Prehistoric age, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Roman, Medieval, 19th century such as numerous finds related to World War Two. Finds have included axe heads, coins, flint flakes, copper and metal objects, ring ditches and sites of historic buildings including mills, water tanks, air raid shelters, Hellesdon Hospital, St Marys Church, and Site of Hellesdon National School.
35. Despite this ancient history, Hellesdon is a relatively new community with most of the buildings not being especially old. There is one listed building (**Figure 11**); this is the Grade II\* listed Church of St Mary<sup>18</sup>. There are no conservation areas, scheduled monuments, battlefields, or other historic designations within the

<sup>17</sup> Norfolk Heritage Explorer. Hellesdon. Source: [Your Search Results - Norfolk Heritage Explorer](#)

<sup>18</sup> [The List Search Results for postwick with witton | Historic England](#)

neighbourhood area. There are however one or two other buildings that could be of interest from a perspective of recent history, such as The Bull public house and the village hall on Low Road.

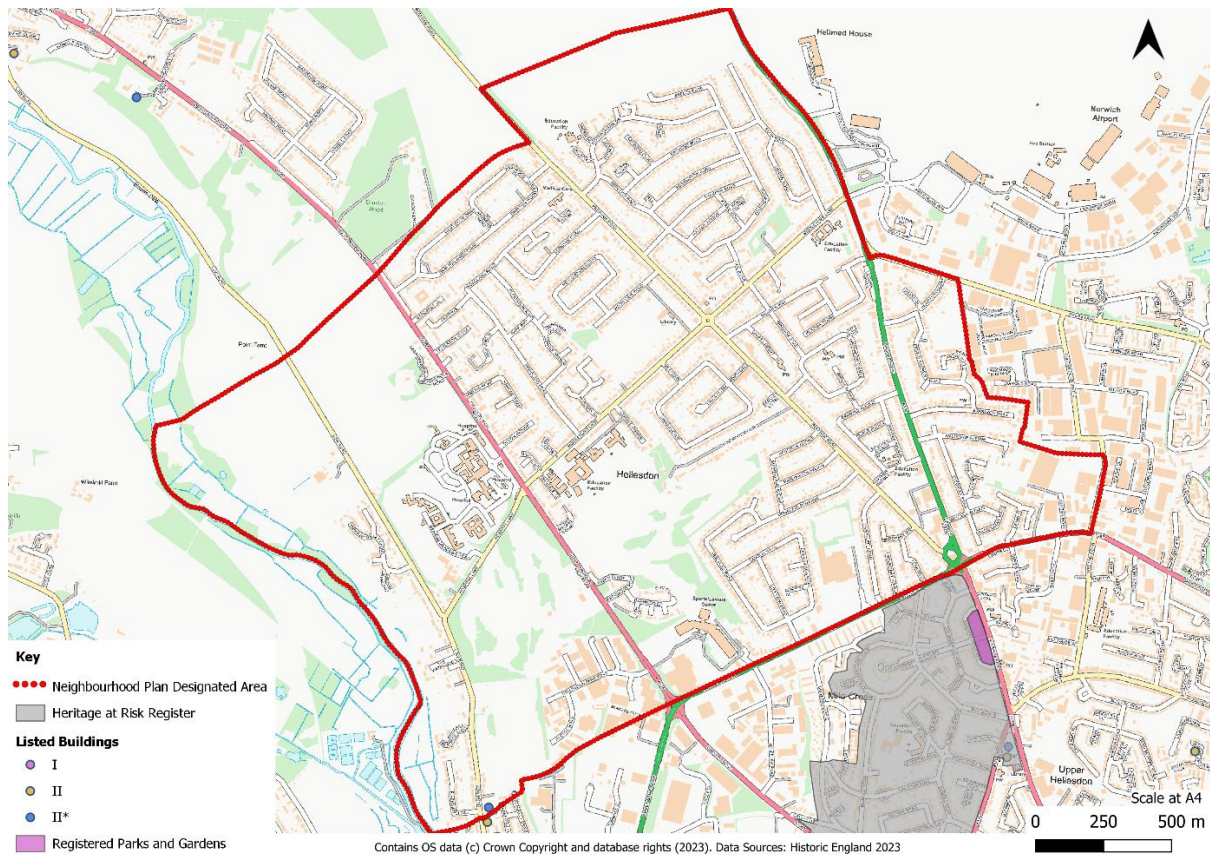


Figure 11- Listed Buildings within Hellesdon

## Landscape

36. The parish falls into one character area within the Broadland Landscape Character Assessment, Urban CA. **Figure 12** marks with a red X where the neighbourhood area is within the context of the Broadland Landscape Character areas<sup>19</sup>. As stated in the assessment, the pressures of built development are a result of locally generated needs for requirements such as a strong housing market, jobs, and transport. Urban development has placed an increasing pressure on all aspects of the landscape, over the last fifty years in particular. This has resulted in urban expansion into undeveloped rural areas, redevelopment, and intensification of urban areas, increasing urbanisation and development of rural villages.

37. The urban fringe is often used to locate access roads, sewage works, waste disposal facilities and intensive recreation uses. However, the urban fringe also provides a setting for urban areas, and often contains important landscape features and/or habitats. Relatively high levels of development have been

<sup>19</sup> Broadland District Council, Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2013. Source: <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/downloads/file/286/landscape-character-assessment-supplementary-planning-document-part-1->



absorbed by Norwich and the other smaller towns in the Study Area, but there is a constant need for the provision of new houses and services. The key issues affecting landscape character include:

- Quality of built environment;
- Loss/erosion of urban open spaces and of tree cover (such as the golf course locally);
- Loss of night-time remoteness by lighting at urban fringes and street lights;
- Planting of non-native species;
- Decline in the condition of landscapes in the urban fringe, with problems such as lack of management of hedgerows/trees, poorly managed horse paddocks and fly-tipping;
- Loss of domestic gardens and hedges;
- Housing growth at the periphery of towns can extend the urban character of these areas into the landscape, as increased noise and light pollution and development leads to an urbanising effect on the rural landscape and loss of tranquillity;
- New strategic initiatives to maintain and enhance existing green spaces and corridors while creating a new provision of green infrastructure, as an integral part of new development.

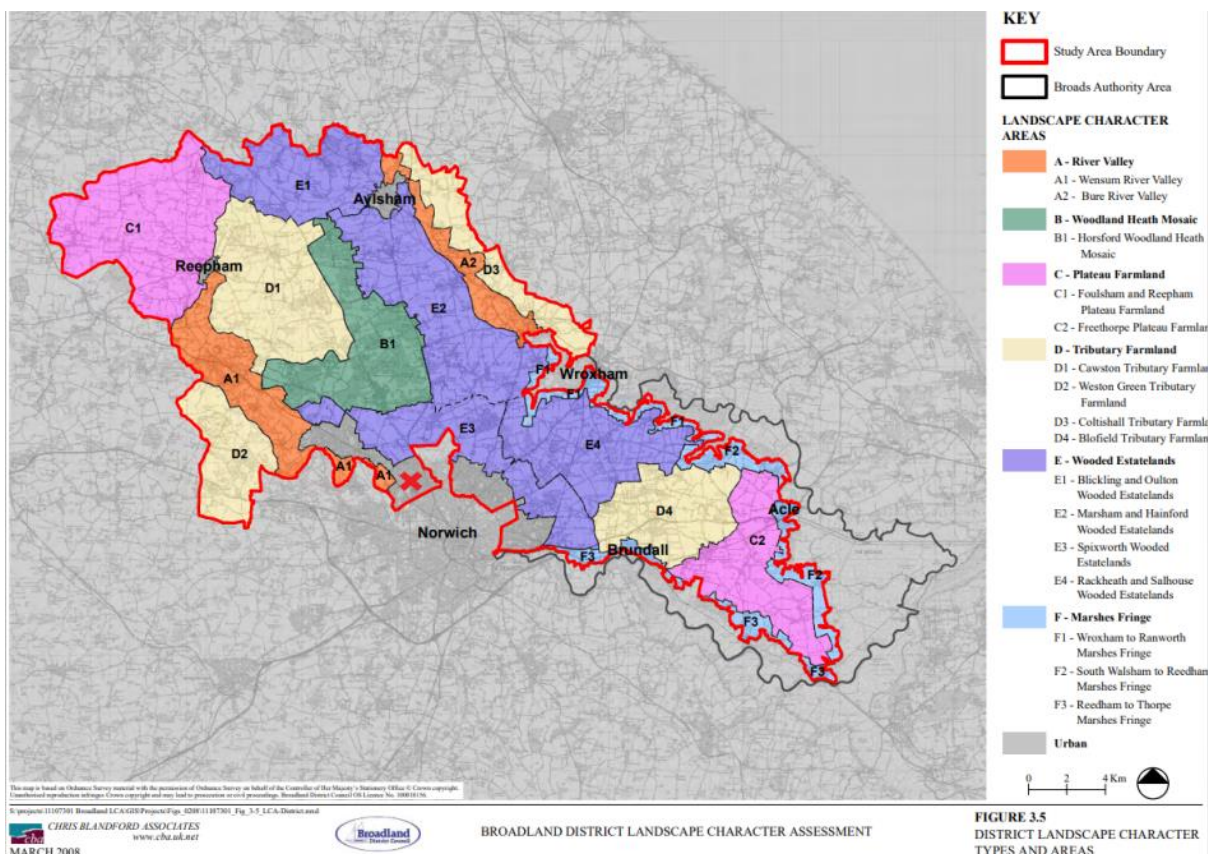


Figure 12-Hellesdon location within the urban character area of Broadlands Landscape Character Assessment (Source: Broadland District Council, Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2013)

### Legislative Background

38. The European Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>20</sup> is the basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation, which was transposed into English secondary legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 otherwise known as the SEA Regulations. A SEA would be required if the implementation of the contents of the Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan are likely to cause significant environmental effects.
39. The assessment undertaken will follow and answer specific questions using criteria drawn from the European SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 when determining the likely significance of effects as shown in **Figure 13**<sup>21</sup>.
40. **Figure 14** presents the flow diagram entitled Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes which is taken from the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, published in September 2005<sup>22</sup>. **Figure 15** below assesses whether HNP will require a full SEA. The questions in the first column are drawn from **Figure 14** which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.
41. An assessment has been undertaken to determine whether the draft HNP requires SEA in accordance with the SEA Regulations. Where the results can be viewed below.

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<sup>20</sup> [EUR-Lex - 32001L0042 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>21</sup> [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>22</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7657/practical\\_guidesea.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practical_guidesea.pdf)



## SCHEDULE 1- CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:
  - a) 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;
  - b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
  - c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
  - d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
  - e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of [F1retained EU law] on the environment (for example, 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:
  - a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
  - b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
  - c) the transboundary nature of the effects;
  - d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);
  - e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
  - f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—
    - (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
    - (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
    - (iii) intensive land-use; and
  - g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

Figure 13-Schedule 1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects

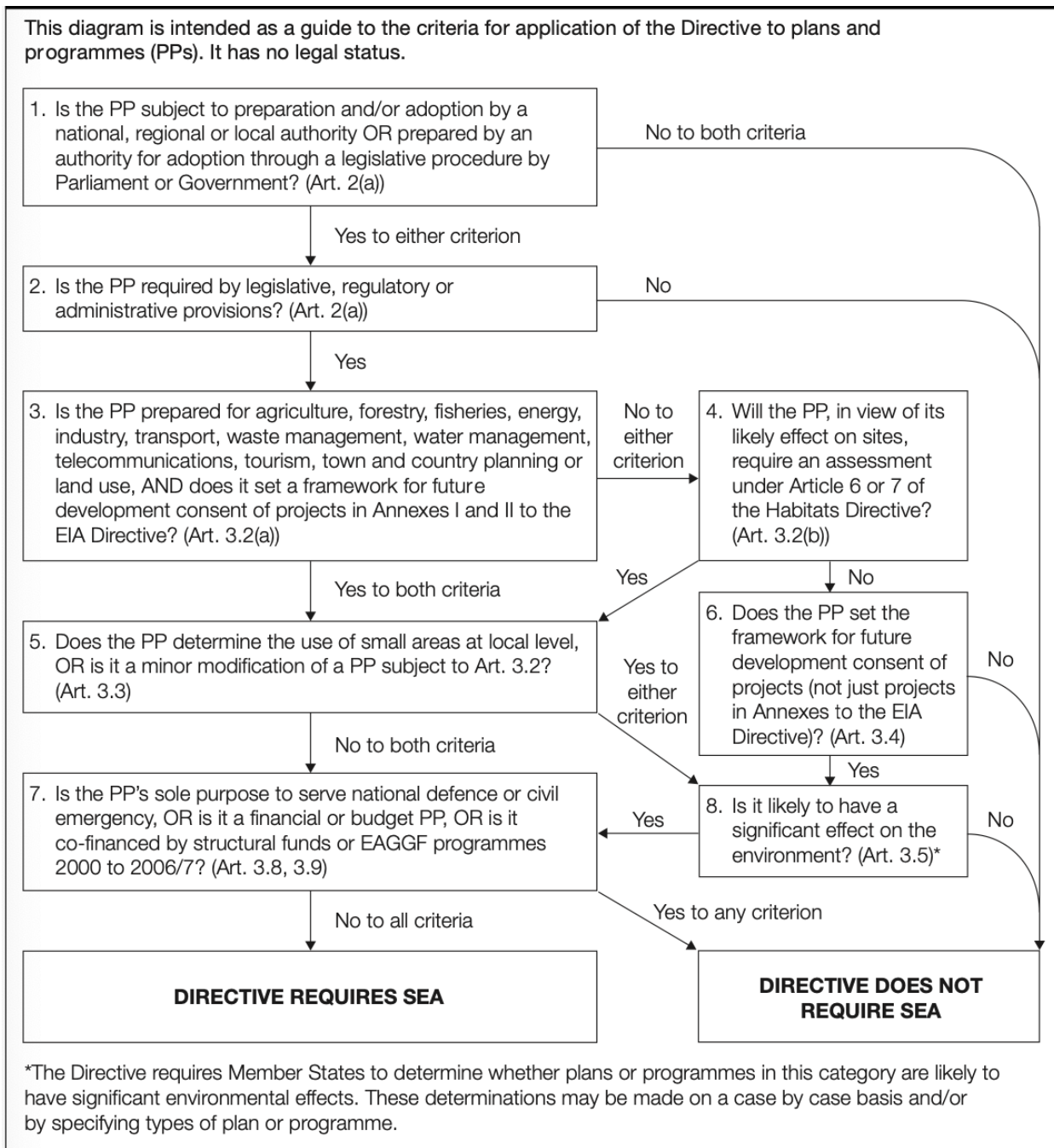


Figure 14-Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes

	Stage	Y/N	Justification
1	Is the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) 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	<p>The NP is being prepared by Hellesdon parish council (as the “relevant qualifying body”) and will be made Broadland District Council, subject to Hellesdon passing an independent examination and successful local community referendum.</p> <p>The preparation of the Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan is allowed under primary legislation: The Town and Country Planning Act (1990) as amended by the Localism Act (2011).</p> <p>The preparation of NP’s is subject to several relevant regulations as shown below (not intend to be a complete list):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012,</li> <li>• the Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012</li> <li>• the Neighbourhood Planning (General)(Amendment) Regulations 2015</li> <li>• the Neighbourhood Planning (General)and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016</li> <li>• the Neighbourhood Planning (General)and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2012</li> </ul> <p><b>GO TO QUESTION 2</b></p>
2	Is the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	<p>Whilst it is not a requirement for a parish to create a Neighbourhood Plan under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and Localism Act (2011), the NP will eventually be “made” and form part of the Development Plan for Broadland District Council. These authorities are directed by legislative processes, and it is important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant</p>

	Stage	Y/N	Justification
			<p>environmental effects and hence whether an SEA is required under the Directive.</p> <p><b>GO TO QUESTION 3</b></p>
3	Is the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) 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))	Y	<p>Developments that fall within Annex I are 'excluded' development for Neighbourhood Plans (as set out in Section 61(k) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as subsequently amended)<sup>23</sup> and the Localism Act 2011 Schedule 9 Part 2 Para 7 Section 38 B (1)(b),(6)<sup>24</sup>.</p> <p>A Neighbourhood Plan is prepared for Town and Country Planning and Land use. The Hellesdon neighbourhood plan can include at a neighbourhood level, through different policy areas, the framework for development that would fall within Annex II of the EIA Directive.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared to set out a framework for town and country planning and land use within the parish of Hellesdon. Its intention is to complement the higher order strategic framework that already exists for land use planning across the Broadland District. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to align and be in general conformity with the strategic framework.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating any development itself but anticipates being one of the key tools to manage future development with Hellesdon.</p> <p><b>GO TO QUESTION 4</b></p>

<sup>23</sup> [Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/61)

<sup>24</sup> [Localism Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/22)



	Stage	Y/N	Justification
4	Will the Neighbourhood Plan (PP), in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.3)		A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening of the Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken in the next section and has concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site, either alone or in combination.  <b>GO TO QUESTION 6</b>
6	Does the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)		Although the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development, it includes non-strategic policies which proposals for development within the parish will be assessed against when materially relevant.  <b>GO TO QUESTION 8</b>
8	Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	<b>SEE FIGURE 13 AND 14 – PLAN DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA.</b>

Figure 15-Application of SEA Directive to HNP

*\*PP in this instance refers to Neighbourhood Plan*

42. Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. These are listed in **Figure 16** below along with comments on the extent to which the HNP meets these criteria.

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
<b>Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard in particular, to:</b>		
<p>a) 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</p>	<p>Once made, HNP will become part of the statutory development plan and will guide the delivery of development within the designated plan area.</p> <p>As set out in Policy 1 of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) Part A for Broadland, Norwich, and South Norfolk (2024)<sup>25</sup> Hellesdon falls within the Norwich Urban Area under the defined settlement hierarchy.</p> <p>In the GNLP (2024) Part B<sup>26</sup> Hellesdon has one strategic site allocated for residential development and open space uses under Policy STR.09 known as Land at the Royal Norwich Golf Club, either side of Drayton High Road, Hellesdon (approx. 48.1Ha). This site will accommodate approximately 1000 homes.</p> <p>In the GNLP (2024) Part B Hellesdon has two urban fringe sites allocated these are Policy B.HD.1 Land at Hospital Grounds, south-west of Drayton Road and Policy B.HD.2 Land adjacent to the existing burial ground, north-east of St. Mary's Church. Policy B.HD.1 is allocated for mixed uses including residential and employment uses. The site will accommodate approximately 300 homes, and E(g) employment uses (14.7ha). Policy B.HD.2 is allocated for an extension to the existing burial ground (1.3ha).</p>	<b>N</b>

<sup>25</sup> [Adopted GNLP 2024 STRATEGY final 24-10-18 0.pdf](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Adopted GNLP 2024 SITES PLAN final 24-08-02-compressed.pdf](#)

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
	<b>In terms of the degree to which HNP sets a framework, it does not allocate land for development.</b>	
b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	<p>The Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted alongside the higher order adopted Local Plans and National Planning Policy Framework and form part of the District Council's Development Plans. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity to the strategic framework and will expand upon some of the Local Plan policies, providing supplementary information on a local scale.</p> <p>It does not have an influence over other plans. However, once made HNP will form part of the statutory development plans for Hellesdon and will be used in conjunction with the current development plans to determine planning applications.</p>	<b>N</b>
c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	<p>One of the Basic Conditions which HNP must meet is to contribute towards sustainable development. Some of the policies within the plan will focus on environmental protection including designating local green spaces and establishing a green grid for enhancing biodiversity and protecting trees. These policies aim to ensure the effects on the environment are minimised within the plan area and promote positive action. Given the non-strategic nature of the HNP this does not have the potential to restrict the delivery of other plans or programmes.</p>	<b>N</b>



SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>Baseline information relating to HNP was described earlier in this Screening Document. There is one European statutory designated site in the neighbourhood area called the River Wensum. There are also several European Sites within approximately 20km in all directions. These include Broadland, The Broads and Norfolk Valley Fens which falls outside of the West Norfolk District boundary.</p> <p><b>The plan itself will not specifically allocate land for development and will not exacerbate any significant known environmental problems.</b></p>	<b>N</b>
e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (eg 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.	<b>N</b>
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to</b>		
a) The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects	HNP does not contain any site-specific development proposals that will result in complex, widespread, long lasting, or serious environmental effects.	<b>N</b>
b) The cumulative nature of the effects	As it will not allocate land for development HNP will not lead to any cumulative effects in combination with existing or emerging plans.	<b>N</b>
c) Transboundary nature of effects	The HNP area provides supplementary policy areas on a local scale such as design, The impacts for	<b>N</b>

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
	transboundary effects beyond the parish are unlikely to be significant.	
d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	HNP is unlikely to produce any significant effects to human health or the environment.	<b>N</b>
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The HNP area has a total population of around 11,000 (Census 2021). This sits within the context of a total population of 131,700 Broadland district. HNP remains a non-strategic plan and the principle of development that will take place has already been established within the Broadland Local Plan.	<b>N</b>
f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</li> <li>ii. Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</li> <li>iii. Intensive land-use</li> </ul>	<p>i) There Is one national statutory natural designations which falls within Hellesdon. Regarding cultural heritage, there Is one statutory listed buildings within the neighbourhood plan area according to the latest data on the Historic England website. As the plan does not allocate land for development it is not anticipated to have likely significant effects on the natural and cultural characteristics of the area. Policies have also been put in place to afford protection in areas of natural and historical importance either through local green space designations, design and non-designated heritage assets.</p> <p>ii) HNP is unlikely to result in exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as</p>	<b>N</b>

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
	<p>those relating to air, water, and soil quality.</p> <p>iii) HNP is unlikely to bring forward development of an extent that would result in a significant intensification of Local land Use.</p> <p><b>The emerging HNP does not include site allocations and therefore are not anticipated to have likely significant effects on the parish.</b></p>	
g) The effects on areas of landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan Area has a few recognised international, national, or local protection status. The international status is the River Wensum.</p> <p>HNP is not anticipated to have likely significant effects on designated landscapes, it will not allocate land for development, and it contains a few protective polices.</p> <p>The environmental effects on areas of international and national status have been considered and examined through the Local Plan.</p>	<b>N</b>

Figure 16-Likely Significant Effects

#### SEA Screening Conclusion

43. A Screening Assessment has been undertaken by applying the criteria from the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations to determine whether or not the HNP is likely to have significant environmental effects when assessed against the topics listed in the SEA Regulations.
44. HNP will set out a vision and non-strategic planning policies to shape development in Hellesdon up to 2038. The plan does not allocate sites for development but does to contain policies that protect locally important assets and promotes environmental improvement. Such mitigating policies will compliment those set



out in the local plans. The assessment concludes that this will not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

- 45. On this basis, it is considered that HNP does not have the potential to have significant environmental impacts, and SEA is not required.**

### What is a Habitats Regulation Assessment?

46. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is the process by which a ‘competent authority’ is required to assess the potential impacts of plans and projects (such as Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans or development proposals put forward in planning applications) on International Sites in accordance with Article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Regulation 61 of the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 \(as amended\)](#). A competent authority, such as the Local Planning Authority, must determine if a plan or project may affect the protected features set out in the Conservation Objectives of an International habitat site before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise it.

### What are the International (European) Designated Sites?

47. There are three types of International Sites designations:

- **Ramsar:** Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands<sup>27</sup>.
- **Special Area of Conservation (SAC):** Areas which have been given special protection for a variety of wild animals, plants and habitats.
- **Special Protection Area (SPA):** Identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within EU countries.

### Screening

48. To fulfil the legal requirements if likely significant effects will occur with the implementation of the HNP upon the International Sites (Natura 2000 sites) an initial screening assessment has been undertaken which is the first stage of the HRA process. If any likely significant effects on International Sites will occur then the screening is followed by an appropriate assessment (second stage of the HRA process) which needs to consider these impacts in more detail and what mitigation measures, if any, can be achieved to address these<sup>28</sup>.

49. The purpose of the Screening stage is to:

- Identify all features of the HNP that would have **no effect** on an International/European site. These features can be eliminated from further consideration in respect of this and other plans.
- Identify all aspects of the HNP that would **not be likely to have a significant effect** on an International/European site (i.e. would have some effect because of

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<sup>27</sup> The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the Convention was signed in 1971. It came into force in 1975.

<sup>28</sup> [Habitats regulations assessments: protecting a European site - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

links/connectivity but the effect is not significant), either alone or in combination with other aspects of the same plan or other plans or projects. These do not require 'Appropriate Assessment'.

- Identify those aspects of the HNP where it is **not possible to rule out the risk of significant effects** on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This provides a clear scope for the parts of the plan that will require Appropriate Assessment.

### Case Law and the Interpretation of 'likely significant effects'

50. Before undergoing the assessment, it is useful to reflect on relevant case law to help interpret when effects should be considered as a likely significant effect, when carrying out HRA of a neighbourhood plan. In the Waddenzee case<sup>29</sup> the European Court of Justice ruled on the interpretation of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (translated into Reg. 105 in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017<sup>30</sup>):

*"An effect should be considered 'likely', 'if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on the site" (paragraph 45). An effect should be considered 'significant', "if it undermines the conservation objectives" (paragraph 48). Where a plan or project has an effect on a site "but is not likely to undermine its conservation objectives, it cannot be considered likely to have a significant effect on the site concerned" (paragraph 47)."*

51. As well as this another relevant opinion delivered to the Court of Justice of the European Union stated: *"The requirement that an effect in question be 'significant' exists in order to lay down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on the site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by Article 6(3), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill (Paragraph 48)l."*<sup>31</sup>

52. This opinion on the interpretation of significant effects in the 'Sweetman' case allows for the authorisation of plans and projects whose possible effects, alone or in combination, can be considered 'trivial' or de minimis; referring to such cases as those "that have no appreciable effect on the site". In practice such effects could be screened out as having no likely significant effect – they would be 'insignificant'. The HRA Screening assessment therefore considers whether the

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<sup>29</sup> Case C-127/02 Landelijke Vereniging tot Behoud van de Waddenzee and Nederlandse Vereniging tot Bescherming van Vogels v Staatssecretaris van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Visserij. Directive 92/43/EEC – Conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna – Concept of 'plan' or 'project' – Assessment of the implications of certain plans or projects for the protected site

Source: [EUR-Lex - 62002CJ0127 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

<sup>30</sup> [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)

<sup>31</sup> Case C-258/11 Peter Sweetman Ireland Attorney General Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government v An Bord Pleanála (Reference for a preliminary ruling from the Supreme Court (Ireland)) (Environment – Special conservation areas – Assessment of the impact of a plan or project on a protected site – Adverse effect on the integrity of the site). Source: [CURIA - Documents](#)



Pre-Submission Draft of Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan and its policies could have likely significant effects either alone or in combination.

## Assessment

53. Firstly, it is established practice in HRA to identify any International/European Sites that could possibly be affected within the area covered by the plan proposal or project and other sites that may be affected beyond this area. In this screening assessment the area screened was the HNP designated area as well as a distance of 20 kilometres (km) taken from the centre of HNP as shown in **Figure 18**. A distance of 20 kilometres from the centre point of the HNP area was used in the first instance because this has been agreed with Natural England for the relevant Local Plans HRAs in this region<sup>32</sup> and is considered precautionary. In line with HRA requirements, the application of a 20-kilometre buffer is considered a highly precautionary distance with relation to potential impacts to the surrounding area.
54. The assessment also considers areas that may be functionally linked to the International/European sites. The term ‘functional linkage’ refers to the role or ‘function’ that land or sea beyond the boundary of a European site might fulfil in terms of ecologically supporting the populations for which the site was designated or classified. Such land is therefore ‘linked’ to the European site in question because it provides an important role in maintaining or restoring the population of qualifying species at favourable conservation status<sup>33</sup>.
55. Whilst the boundary of an International/European site will usually be drawn to include key supporting habitat for a qualifying species, this cannot always be the case where the population for which a site is designated or classified is particularly mobile. Individuals of the population will not necessarily remain in the site all the time. The mobility of qualifying species is considerable and may extend so far from the key habitat that forms the designated area (SAC or SPA) that it would be entirely impractical to attempt to designate or classify all of the land or sea that may conceivably be used by the species.
56. In the HNP area it was found that there was one designated International/European sites. This screening assessment has also considered the impact on International Sites within a 20km radius of the HNP area as an in-combination assessment (**Figure 17**). The point for measuring 20km has been taken from the centre of HNP as shown in **Figure 18**. A number of International Sites are shown to be located within 20km radius of the HNP area including:

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<sup>32</sup>Greater Norwich Local Plan HRA Interim Report 2018. Source. [Microsoft Word - E16845 GNLP Interim HRA of GNLP Issues and Options v3 2017-12-06 issue](#)

<sup>33</sup> [Functional linkage: How areas that are functionally linked to European sites have been considered when they may be affected by plans and projects - a review of authoritative decisions - NECR207 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)

Special Areas of Conservation	Special Protection Areas	Ramsar Sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadland</li> <li>• The Broads</li> <li>• Norfolk Valley Fens</li> <li>• River Wensum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadland</li> <li>• The Broads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadland</li> <li>• The Broads</li> </ul>

Figure 17- Table of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of HNP

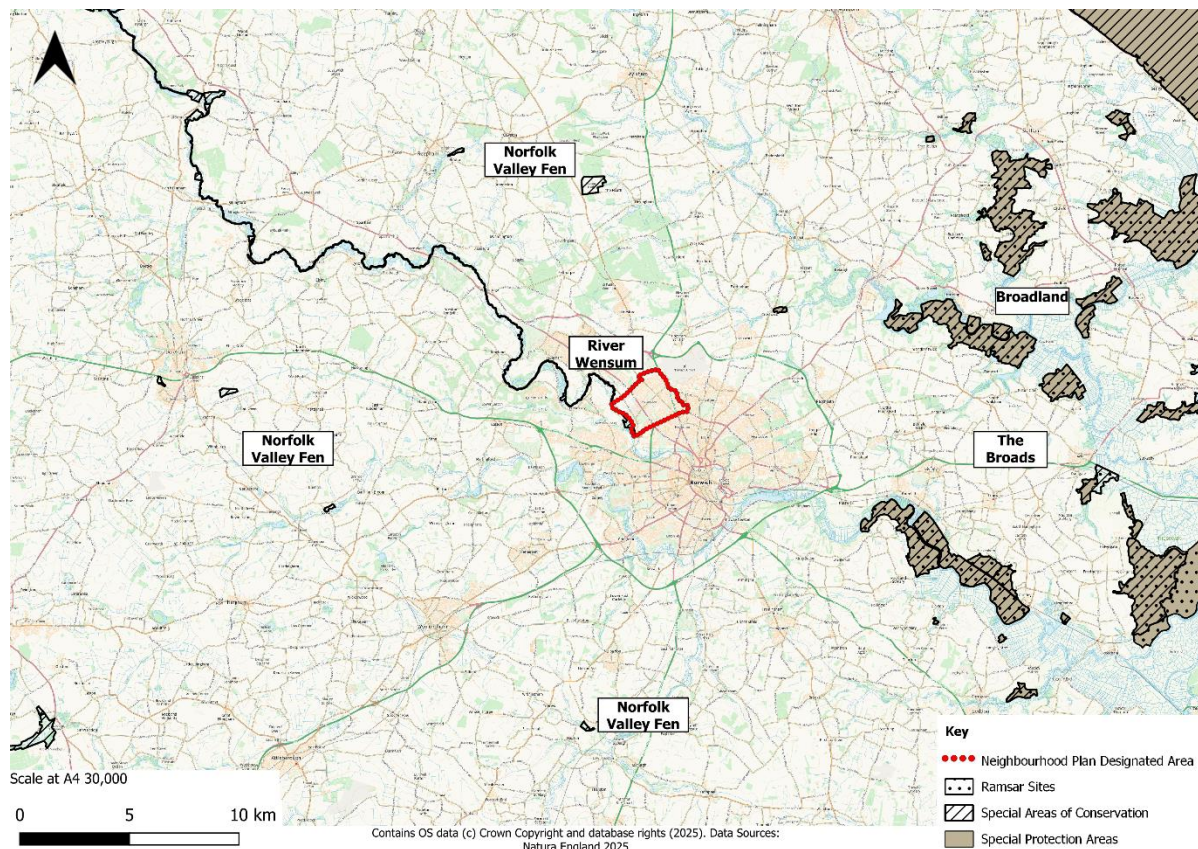


Figure 18- Map of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of HNP

57. Natural England provides detailed information about the European Sites with reference to Standard Data Forms for the SPA sites and Natural England's Site Improvement Plans<sup>34</sup>. Natural England's conservation objectives<sup>35</sup> for the SPA sites have also been reviewed when writing this report. These state that site integrity must be maintained or restored by maintaining or restoring the habitats of qualifying features, the supporting processes on which they rely, and populations of qualifying species.

58. As required under Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), an assessment has been undertaken of the potential 'likely significant effects' of the plan. The assessment has been prepared in order to identify which policies would be likely to have a significant effect on

<sup>34</sup> [Natural England Access to Evidence - Site Improvement Plans: East of England](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Natural England Access to Evidence - Conservation Objectives for European Sites](#)

European sites. The Screening assessment has been conducted without taking mitigation into account, in accordance with the ‘People Over Wind’ judgment which took place in April 2018<sup>36</sup>. The judgment clarified that when making screening decisions for the purposes of deciding whether an appropriate assessment is required, competent authorities cannot take into account any mitigation measures in neighbourhood plans, permissions in principle and certain development orders<sup>37</sup>.

59. Each European site has a set of interest features which are the ecological features for which the site is designated or classified, and the features for which Member States should ensure the site is maintained or where necessary restored. European sites are at risk if there are possible means by which any aspect of a plan or project can, when being taken forward for implementation, pose a potential threat to the wildlife interest of the sites. This is often referred to as the ‘impact pathway’. Potential impact pathways causing significant effects are:

- Physical loss or damage to habitat;
- Non-physical disturbance (noise, vibration and light pollution);
- Pollution Impacts (Air, Non-toxic contamination, Wastewater) ;
- Recreational pressure;
- Increased pressure on water resources
- Urban effects

### HRA Impacts Screening

60. A risk-based approach involving the application of the precautionary principle was adopted in the assessment, such that a conclusion of ‘no likely significant effect’ (LSE) would only be reached where it was considered unlikely, based on current knowledge and the information available, that a HNP policy would have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site. HNP does not allocate land for development and therefore will not directly result in an increase in the number of new dwellings within the vicinity of European Sites. A summary of findings linked to potential impact pathways are considered in **Figure 19** and an assessment of potential impacts of the draft policies contained within HNP is provided in **Figure 20**.

Impact Pathway	Findings
<b>Physical loss or damage to habitat</b>	Habitat loss from development in areas outside of the European site boundaries may result in likely significant effects where that habitat contributes towards maintaining the interest feature for which the European site is designated. This includes land which may provide offsite movement corridors such as sheltering

<sup>36</sup> The Court of Justice of the European Union delivered its judgment in [Case C-323/17 People Over Wind & Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta](#) (‘People over Wind’).

<sup>37</sup> GOV. Para 009 . Source: [Appropriate assessment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



Impact Pathway	Findings
	<p>habitat for mobile species Including birds, bats and fish. European sites susceptible to the indirect effects of habitat loss are restricted to those with qualifying species that rely on offsite habitat.</p> <p>As HNP is not allocating any sites for development in the area it is considered there will be no likely significant effects of physical loss or damage to a habitat and is screened out of the assessment.</p>
<b>Non-physical disturbance (noise, vibration and light pollution)</b>	<p>Non-physical disturbance effects such as noise and vibration are most likely to disturb bird species and thus are a key consideration with respect to potential effects on European sites where birds are the qualifying features. Light pollution from artificial lighting at night also has the potential to affect species where it occurs in close proximity to key habitat areas, such as key roosting sites of SPA birds.</p> <p>It has been assumed that the effects of non-physical disturbances are most likely to be significant within a distance of 500 metres from the source.</p> <p>The River Wensum (SAC) falls within the Neighbourhood Area. However, the other SAC/SPA/Ramsar Sites are located significantly more than 500 metres from the Neighbourhood Plan area and therefore is not considered susceptible to non-physical disturbance from development in the HNP area.</p> <p>As HNP is not allocating any sites for development in the area it is considered there will be no likely significant effects of non-physical disturbance to a habitat and is screened out of the assessment.</p>
<b>Non-toxic contamination</b>	<p>A non-toxic environment is understood to be an environment that is free from chemical pollution and of exposures to hazardous chemicals at levels that are harmful to human health and to the environment. An example of non-toxic contamination in the environment is the creation of dust from human activities such as road transport, construction and industry<sup>38</sup>. Dust can smother terrestrial habitats, preventing natural processes, and an increased sediment can potentially affect the aquatic habitats/species.</p>

<sup>38</sup> [Monitoring ambient air: particulate matter - GOV.UK](#)

Impact Pathway	Findings
	<p>As HNP is not allocating any sites for development in the area it is considered there will be no likely significant effects of non-contamination and is screened out of the assessment.</p>
<p><b>Air pollution</b></p>	<p>There are number of atmospheric pollutants which can result in direct or indirect impacts to Habitats sites. These impacts are usually caused when the qualifying features are plants, soils and wetland habitats. However, some species may also be indirectly impacted from air pollution causing changes in habitat composition.</p> <p>Around the world the primary contributors to atmospheric pollution is transport and industry related activities<sup>39</sup>. The main pollutants to atmospheric pollution are considered to be oxides of nitrogen (NOx) or sulphur dioxide (SO2)<sup>40</sup>. In England, road transport is a major source of emissions of nitrogen oxides contributing to 30% of emissions in 2022 alone. It has been stated that excess deposition of nitrogen (NOx) compounds may lead to a cascade of environmental problems including both soil and freshwater acidification, the reduction of biodiversity (Zhang et al; 2021<sup>41</sup>) and cause eutrophication of soils and water affecting nutrient levels and reducing the diversity of species in sensitive environments<sup>42</sup>.</p> <p>Based on the 2019 Highways England Design Manual for Road and Bridges (DMRB) LA 105 Air quality<sup>43</sup> (which sets out the requirements for assessing and reporting the effects of highway projects on air quality), the report states that an assessment of the impact of pollutant concentrations on sensitive receptors should be done within 200m from the road itself.</p> <p>As HNP is not allocating any sites for development in the area it is considered there will be no likely significant effects of air pollution on the European Sites and is screened out of the assessment.</p>
<p><b>Recreational pressure</b></p>	<p>Recreational activities can result in significant effects on European sites. European sites with qualifying bird species are likely to be particularly susceptible to recreational disturbances from walking, dog walking, angling, off-road vehicles and motorbikes, wildfowling, and water sports. In addition, recreation</p>

<sup>39</sup> [Air quality, energy and health](#)

<sup>40</sup> [Emissions of air pollutants in the UK - Summary - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>41</sup> [Atmospheric nitrogen deposition: A review of quantification methods and its spatial pattern derived from the global monitoring networks - ScienceDirect](#)

<sup>42</sup> [Emissions of air pollutants in the UK - Background - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>43</sup> [LA 105 - Air quality \(standardsforhighways.co.uk\)](#)

Impact Pathway	Findings
	<p>can physically damage habitat as a result of trampling, fire or vandalism and also through erosion associated with terrestrial activities.</p> <p>Each European site will typically have a 'Zone of Influence' (ZOI) within which increases in population would be expected to result in likely significant effects. Zones of influence are areas from within which it is deemed there will be likely significant effects arising from additional residents living within the zone and travelling to European sites for recreation. This determines where new development may result in changes in recreation and therefore where mitigation will be necessary.</p> <p>ZOIs were developed for the Greater Norwich Growth Area by setting a series of distance bands around European sites based upon the distance beyond the site boundary which might conceivably be impacted by development within the distributional alternatives, through three main pathways. The ZOI for the European Sites were set at a 1km, 8km and 20km distance In the GNLP HRA. The sites within 20km to the HNP Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadland</li> <li>• The Broads</li> <li>• Norfolk Valley Fens</li> </ul> <p>HNP is not allocating any sites so a full HRA should be ruled out at this stage.</p>
<p><b>Changes to hydrology, including water quantity and quality</b></p>	<p>An increase in demand for water abstraction and treatment resulting from any growth proposed in the HNP area could result in changes in hydrology at European sites. Depending on the qualifying features and particular vulnerabilities of the European sites, this could result in likely significant effects, for example, due to changes in environmental or biotic conditions, water chemistry and the extent and distribution of preferred habitat conditions.</p> <p>The HNP does not allocate any development and does not have influence over any development outside of the HNP designated area. Therefore, no likely significant effects will occur from HNP as a result of changes to hydrology either alone or in-combination with other plans and policies.</p>

Figure 19-Summary of Impact Pathways

Policy	Description	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)	Recommendation at Screening Stage
<b>Policy 1: Hellesdon Greengrid</b>	<p>Policy setting out biodiversity enhancements.</p> <p>Policy setting out detail/criteria on protecting existing trees and hedgerows in the parish, replacement trees and new tree planting.</p>	No LSE – protective policy	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
<b>Policy 2: The Hellesdon Community Grid</b>	. Policy focusing on walking and cycling. Development proposals should have particular regard to Improved safety and Hellesdon Design Guide.	No LSE – policy is qualitative and does not promote development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
<b>Policy 3: High-Quality Residential Neighbourhoods</b>	<p>Policy ensures that new residential development in the Plan area incorporates characteristics that local people feel strongly about and that will help to create high quality neighbourhoods. It seeks to ensure that the high quality of life enjoyed by existing and future residents can be maintained through intelligent and sympathetic urban design and architecture.</p> <p>Developers need to have a regard to Hellesdon Design Guide.</p>	No LSE – policy is qualitative and does not promote development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken.
<b>Policy 4: Vehicle Parking</b>	The policy is to ensure that sufficient parking is available as part of new residential developments and avoid the issue of people having to park their cars in such a way as to impede the flow of traffic or by parking on the grass verges.	No LSE – policy is qualitative and does not promote development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken.



<b>Policy</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effects (LSE)</b>	<b>Recommendation at Screening Stage</b>
<b>Policy 5: Accessible Play Spaces</b>	Policy is to ensure that all children, regardless of circumstances or ability, has the opportunity to use and enjoy the play areas in the parish and mix with other children.	No LSE – does not promote development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
<b>Policy 6: Housing for People</b>	Policy is to help meet the housing needs of local people and widen choice, especially for those hoping to get on the housing ladder and for the older population in the parish.	No LSE – does not promote development but relates to qualitative criteria for development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
<b>Policy 7: Important Views</b>	Protection of important local views means proposals must demonstrate that development is sited and designed to be of a form and scale which avoids harm to the views.	No LSE – protective policy	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
<b>Policy 8: Local Green Spaces</b>	Protection of green spaces of local importance from future development.	No LSE – supports retention of green open spaces, conserving the natural environment	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
<b>Policy 9: Community Facilities</b>	Policy protects several community facilities.	No LSE – does not promote development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
<b>Policy 10: Buildings of Local Importance</b>	Policy protects a number of buildings and structures of local importance that are valued for their historic significance, architectural distinctiveness and social / cultural value.	No LSE – policy is qualitative and does not promote development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken.

Figure 20- HRA Screening Assessment

## HRA Screening Conclusion

61. Broadland and South Norfolk District Council ran the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Consultation with the Statutory Environmental Bodies (SEBs) between 14<sup>th</sup> February and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The statutory environmental bodies responses (SEBS) can be read in full in **Appendix A**. In conclusion, the District Council and SEBS agree that a full SEA and HRA is not required for the Hellesdon NP.



Richard Squires  
South Norfolk and Broadland Council  
Horizon Business Centre Peachman  
Way, Broadland Business Park  
Norwich  
NR7 0WF

**Our ref:** AE/2025/130327/01-L01  
**Your ref:** Hellesdon NHP  
**Date:** 12 March 2025

Dear Richard

**HELLEDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE - SEA & HRA SCREENING  
REPORT**

**MIDDLETONS LANE, NORWICH NR6 5SR**

Thank you for consulting us on the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan. This plan does not allocate any sites for development.

**Flood Risk**

Based on a review of environmental constraints for which we are a statutory consultee, we find that there are areas of fluvial flood risk and watercourses within the neighbourhood plan area. In particular, we note that the boundary does extend into areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 of the designated main River Wensum.

On the basis that future development is steered away from the sensitive aspects of the environment highlighted, we do not consider there to be potential significant environmental effects relating to these environmental constraints. Nevertheless, we recommend the inclusion of relevant policies to cover the management of flood risk. Allocation of any sites and any windfall development delivered through the Plan period should follow the sequential approach. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 172-174 sets this out.

**Water Quality**

We have identified that the Plan area boundary includes the Whitlingham Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW) which are currently operating close to or exceeding its permitted capacity.

Providing the plan does not allocate sites for growth development across the Plan period, we do not have any significant concerns. We would still expect to see consideration for any windfall developments captured in a relevant policy for Water Quality in the catchment of the Plan Area and serving WRC.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

On 12 February 2024, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory under [Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021\)](#). This means that unless exempt, Developers must deliver a net gain in biodiversity of at least 10%. Consequently, a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.

When a development seeks planning permission from the Local Authority, it needs to confirm whether the development is exempt from BNG.

If it is not exempt, the developer will need to provide information about how it is intended to meet the BNG target, including details of proposed significant on-site enhancements.

There are 3 ways a developer can achieve BNG.

1. They can create biodiversity on-site (within the red line boundary of a development site).
2. If developers cannot achieve all of their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Developers can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site, or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.
3. If developers cannot achieve on-site or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government. This should be a last resort. The government will use the revenue to invest in habitat creation in England.

Where development falls within 10m of a watercourse, a watercourse metric should be applied to the assessment.

We note that this Neighbourhood Plan does not have any allocated sites for development, however the above advice should still be considered for any planning applications submitted.

For further information on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), such as when developments are exempt, there are details available on [Understanding biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK](#).

### **Other Constraints**

The Parish should also be aware that it's boundary is also in close proximity to the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) site.

### **Informative**

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](#)



We trust this advice is useful.

Yours sincerely

**Mr Jack Saunders**  
**Sustainable Places - Planning Advisor**

## Historic England

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**From:** [James, Edward](#)  
**To:** [Neighbourhood Plans](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan update - SEA & HRA screening report  
**Date:** 21 March 2025 17:45:11  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Outlook-szmef2un.png](#)

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Dear Richard,

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore we welcome this opportunity to review the Screening Report for this plan. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied with the Screening Opinion.

The Screening Report indicates that the Council considers that the plan will not have any significant effects on the historic environment. We note that the plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development.

On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan) where we consider that, despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

Please note that I am leaving my current role on the 16th March. Please contact [eastplanningpolicy@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:eastplanningpolicy@historicengland.org.uk) if you have any queries.

Kind regards,

Edward

Edward James  
Historic Places Adviser – East of England

Date: 21 March 2025  
Our ref: 503230  
Your ref: Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan

Mr Richard Squires  
South Norfolk & Broadland Councils

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

[neighbourhoodplans@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodplans@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk)



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Dear Mr Squires

**Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2038 - SEA & HRA Screening Report Consultation**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 14 February 2025.

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 sites<sup>1</sup>, 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

<sup>1</sup> 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](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle  
Consultations Team