

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report

Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

July 2022

Quality information

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Table of Contents

Non-Technical Summary	i-xiii
1. Introduction	1
2. What is the DDNP seeking to achieve?	3
3. What is the scope of the SEA?	7
Part 1: What has plan-making / SEA involved to this point?	14
4. Introduction (to Part 1)	15
5. Establishing reasonable alternatives.....	16
6. Assessing reasonable alternatives.....	35
7. Developing the preferred approach.....	65
Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?	67
8. Introduction (to Part 2)	68
9. Appraisal of the DDNP	70
10. Conclusions and recommendations	82
Part 3: What are the next steps?	84
11. Next steps	85
Appendix A Regulatory requirements	86
Appendix B Scoping information.....	91

Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan (DDNP).

SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. SEA of the DDNP is a legal requirement.¹

The DDNP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and in the context of the local development frameworks of South Norfolk District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council.

The SEA Environmental Report, including this NTS, accompanies the ‘submission’ version of the plan in Regulation 16 consultation.

Structure of the Environmental Report

SEA reporting essentially involves answering the following questions in turn:

1. What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
 - including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
2. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e., in relation to the draft plan.
3. What happens next?

Each of these questions is answered in turn within a discrete ‘part’ of the Environmental Report and summarised within this NTS. However, firstly there is a need to set the scene further by answering the questions ‘What is the Plan seeking to achieve?’ and ‘What’s the scope of the SEA?’

What is the plan seeking to achieve?

A vision has been established for the DDNP for “*a vibrant community around a thriving market town*”, which is underpinned by the following ten aims:

1. Allocate the required housing growth in sustainable locations across the neighbourhood plan area, ensuring it’s the right mix to meet the needs of current and future residents.
2. Ensure that new buildings, especially housing, are designed to a high standard and have a positive impact on Diss and the villages, retaining the individuality of each community within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
3. Align growth with the required infrastructure and make sure future development will deliver the infrastructure needed for our communities and businesses.

¹ Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a ‘screening’ process completed in accordance with Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (‘the SEA Regulations’). The DDNP was screened in as requiring SEA by Collective Community Planning in 2020.

4. Make a positive impact on ecology and ensure everyone across the Plan area has an opportunity to enjoy and support local wildlife.
5. Help people choose sustainable ways of getting around in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
6. Ensure adequate sports and leisure facilities for the whole community are provided.
7. Provide digital connectivity that supports and benefits all businesses and homes across the Neighbourhood Plan area.
8. Improve the Diss Town Centre experience for residents and visitors.
9. Protect and preserve those special qualities and features that are valued by the community.
10. Ensure that the need to address climate change runs through all aspects of the Plan.

What is the scope of the SEA?

The scope of the SEA is reflected in a list of themes, objectives, and assessment questions, which, taken together indicate the parameters of the SEA and provide a methodological ‘framework’ for assessment. A summary framework is presented here, and a full framework which includes assessment questions is provided within the main Environmental Report (**Table 3.1**).

SEA theme	SEA objective
Biodiversity	To maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity and geodiversity sites and networks within and surrounding the Plan area.
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities in the Plan area.
	Support the resilience of the Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the DDNP area.
Historic environment	To protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the DDNP area.
Land, soil and water resources	To ensure the efficient and effective use of land
	To protect and enhance water quality, and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner
Landscape	To protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including the river corridor and strategic GI links.
Population and communities	Ensure growth in the Plan area is aligned with the needs of all residents and in suitably connected places, supported by the appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure to enable cohesive and inclusive communities.
Transportation and movement	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

Plan-making / SEA up to this point

An important element of the required SEA process involves assessing ‘reasonable alternatives’ in time to inform development of the draft proposals, and then publishing information on reasonable alternatives for consultation alongside the draft proposals.

As such, Part 1 of the Environmental Report explains how work was undertaken to develop and assess a ‘reasonable’ range of alternative approaches for the DDNP.

Specifically, Part 1 of the report:

1. Explains the process of establishing the reasonable alternatives.
2. Presents the outcomes of assessing the reasonable alternatives; and
3. Explains reasons for developing a preferred option, considering the assessment.

Establishing the reasonable alternatives

Part 1 of the Environmental Report explores both the strategic parameters provided by the Local Plan and the available site options to establish alternatives to the preferred approach for housing development. Alternative options were established for the settlements of Burston, Diss, Roydon, Scole, and Brome and Oakley as follows:

Table 1: Alternatives for Burston

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
GNLP0349: Land west of Gissing Road	20	-	25	-
GNLP1028: Land east of Mill Road, Crown Farm Barn	5	5	-	-
GNLP0386: Land at Rectory Road	-	23	-	25
Total homes	25	28	25	25

Table 2: Alternatives for Diss

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7
GNLP0102: Land at Frontier Agriculture Ltd, Sandy Lane (GNLP allocation)	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Completions (since 2018)	137	137	137	137	137	137	137
Additional permissions (since 2018)	211	211	211	211	211	211	211
Site 1: Current Leisure Centre (brownfield site)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
DIS0003 The Old School, Causeway Close (brownfield site)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
GNLP1045: Land west of Nelson Rd and east of Station Rd (brownfield site)	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Sub-total (constants)	563						
DIS1/ GNLP0185: Land north of Vince's Road	14	-	14*	-	-	-	-
DIS2 & DIS7: Park Road	-	-	30	-	30	-	-
DIS3: Land off Denmark Lane	-	42	-	-	42	-	-
GNLP0112: Frenze Hall Lane	8	-	8*	-	8	-	-
GNLP0119 & GNLP0250 & GNLP0291 & GNLP0342: Heywood Rd and Shelfanger Rd	179	-	-	-	179	-	-
GNLP0362: Sturgeons Farm	-	-	-	-	-	-	210
GNLP0599: Walcot Rd and Walcot Green	-	80	80	80*	80*	-	-
GNLP1044: Walcot Green	-	-	-	130	130	-	-
GNLP4049: Land south of Burston Rd	-	80	80	80*	80*	-	-
Total homes	764	765	761-767	773	773	822	773
No. of dwellings above or below overall need (763 homes)	+1	+2	-2 to +4	+10	+10	+59	+10

*Either/or

Table 3: Alternatives for Roydon

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Site 5: Land at Manor Farmhouse	10	-	-	-
Site 6: South of A1066	-	24	-	-
Site 7: Land opposite the school off Old High Street	-	-	25	-
GNLP0104: Sandstone Way	10	-	-	-
SN0526REV: South of High Road	-	-	-	25
Total homes	20	24	25	25

Table 4: Alternatives for Scole

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Permissions (Land west of Norwich Rd and the Former Scole Engineering Site)	24	24	24	24	24
Sub-total (constants)	24	24	24	24	24
SN4022/ GNLP0511: East of Norwich Road	75	-	-	-	-
GNLP0339: Street Farm, west of Low Rd	-	15	-	-	-
GNLP0527: Land south of Bungay Road	-	-	26	-	-
GNLP2066: 1 Bridge Rd	-	-	-	11	-
251: The Laurels	-	-	-	-	4
Total homes	99	39	50	35	28

Table 5: Alternatives for Brome and Oakley

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
SS0542 & SS1012/ Site 10: Lower Oakley Plot 2 (west)	12	-	12
Site 12d: Brome	-	13	13
Total homes	12	13	25

Assessing reasonable alternatives

The full assessment of the options for each settlement are presented in Part 1 of the Environmental Report. The summary findings for each settlement are presented below.

Table 6: Summary appraisal findings for options at Burston

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	1	2
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	1	3
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	=	=	=	=
Historic environment	Significant effect?	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	No
	Rank	3	2	2	1
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	=	=	=	=
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes – positive	Yes – positive	Yes – positive	Yes – positive
	Rank	1	2	1	2
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	1	2
Transportation	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	1	3

Table 7: Summary appraisal findings for options at Diss

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No						
	Rank	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
Climate change	Significant effect?	No						
	Rank	1	2	1	2	1	2	2
Landscape	Significant effect?	No						
	Rank	1	2	2	2	2	2	1
Historic environment	Significant effect?	No	Yes – negative	No				
	Rank	2	3	3	3	3	3	1
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	Yes – negative						
	Rank	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes – positive						
	Rank	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No						
	Rank	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
Transportation	Significant effect?	Yes – negative						
	Rank	1	2	2	2	2	2	2

Table 8: Summary appraisal findings for options at Roydon

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2	2
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	1	2	3
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	1	1
Historic environment	Significant effect?	Yes – negative	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	1	1
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2	2
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes – positive	Yes – positive	Yes – positive	Yes – positive
	Rank	2	1	1	1
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	1	2	1
Transportation	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	1	2	1

Table 9: Summary appraisal findings for options at Scole

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	2	2	1
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	2	4	4	1
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	2	1	1	2
Historic environment	Significant effect?	No	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative
	Rank	1	2	3	3	3
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
	Rank	3	2	1	2	1
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes – positive				
	Rank	1	4	3	2	2
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2	2	2
Transportation	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	2	3	1	1	3

Table 10: Summary appraisal findings for options at Brome and Oakley

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	1	1
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	3
Historic environment	Significant effect?	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	1	1	2
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	3
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive
	Rank	2	1	1
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	=	=	=
Transportation	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2

Developing the preferred approach

The DDNP Steering Group have provided the following reasons for developing the preferred approach considering the alternatives assessment:

Burston

Option 3 will be taken forward. This performs well across most of the SEA themes. It is close to the settlement centre and services including the school, park and bus stops. It is considered to be the most sustainable location for growth of 25 homes in Burston. This site was one of those with the greatest level of support from the community during consultation exercises.

Option 1 includes land east of Mill Road, a small site with potential for significant effects on heritage assets. Feedback from the highway authority also indicates this site has access constraints.

Options 2 & 4 involve allocation of GNLP0386 – Land at Rectory Road. Delivery of this site could have landscape impacts and would lead to coalescence, or closing of the gap, between Burston and Audley End. The site was not the preferred option for the community.

Diss

The housing requirement for Diss requires there to be at least one site delivering a significant number of new homes. The assessment of reasonable alternatives provides a good narrative on the options in relation to where this significant growth goes. Options 1 and 6 include an allocation that would deliver significant growth north of the cemetery, Options 2,3,4 and 6 would deliver this around Walcot Green/Burston Road and Option 7 to the north-west of Diss.

Option 7 is not considered favourable as it extends the settlement significantly into the countryside, taking productive agricultural land. It is also not well located in relation to the town centre and available services.

The Options that involve Walcot Green/Burston Road would erode the narrow landscape gap between Diss and Walcot Green. There is also concern that development in the Walcot Green area will affect green spaces that are special to the community. Walcot Hall Green is designated a Local Green Space within the Plan. In addition, the road/footway network around this part of the parish is narrow or non-existent. This is identified in the assessment of alternatives and a concern raised by the community and highway authority in relation to development in this area.

Sites have been chosen that are closely related to the settlement, which offers greater opportunities to promote active travel to jobs and services. Additional traffic congestion is a key concern of the community, so this is important. The link road that will be delivered as part of sites north of the cemetery are also an opportunity to help address this.

Roydon

Option 3 is the preferred location for growth in Roydon. This site will accommodate the entire housing requirement of 25 homes. It is the site with the greatest level of community support, mainly because it is perceived to have least impact on the landscape setting of the Waveney Valley and Roydon Fen – though it is noted that the assessment identifies each of the options could have an impact on the

landscape. Option 3 is also well located in terms of access to the primary school and other services.

Scole

DDNP has chosen to allocate additional housing growth in Scole over and above the indicative requirement. Option 1, which includes land east of Norwich Road, will enable infrastructure improvements, including traffic calming measures along Norwich Road. This will have a significant community benefit, as identified in the assessment of alternatives. This site is well located, adjacent the existing SNLP allocation, and within close proximity of services in the village centre. The size of this site will also enable a greater amount of affordable housing provision to be delivered. For these reasons this site is seen as a preference to the alternatives, including land south of Bungay Road (Option 3). The constraints, including potential impact on nearby scheduled monument and listed buildings, is also noted for this option.

Brome and Oakley

The preferred approach for Brome & Oakley includes allocating both sites that have been assessed, but with revised site boundaries and for fewer homes. The assessment of reasonable alternatives identifies there is very little between the two sites in relation to impact on key themes. It gives confidence in allocating both sites.

Assessment findings at this stage

Part 2 of the Environmental Report presents an assessment of the draft DDNP. Assessment findings are presented as a series of narratives under the 'SEA framework' theme headings. The following overall conclusions and recommendations are reached:

Significant long-term positive effects are predicted in relation to the population and communities SEA topic, as the DDNP delivers housing to meet the required need, targeting an appropriate mix of housing, alongside additional community benefits and support for improved accessibility. Whilst residents are expected to be supported by relatively good access to healthcare, green infrastructure, recreational areas, walking and cycling routes, and the surrounding countryside in future development, only minor long-term positive effects are considered likely for the health and wellbeing SEA topic as there is scope to enhance positive effects by identifying an appropriate relocation site for the leisure centre through the planning framework.

Minor long-term positive effects are also predicted for the biodiversity and climate change SEA topics. In terms of biodiversity, this is due to the promotion for active consideration and enhancement of biodiversity, as well as the support for enhanced ecological connections provided by the identified green corridors in the Plan area. In terms of climate change, the DDNP provides good support for a shift towards more sustainable forms of local travel, particularly through the development of green infrastructure supporting attractive walking/ cycle routes, as well as surface water management through targeted and site allocation policies. However, it is recognised that there is scope to raise the expected sustainability performance of major development proposals at Diss.

Uncertainty is noted for the historic environment SEA topic, as there are currently no detailed design and layout schemes at the proposed development sites, however, no significant effects are considered likely. The provisions of the DDNP supplement the policy provisions of the Local Plans and the NPPF, particularly by adding local

context in terms of non-designated assets. In this respect, the policy provisions reduce the impacts of the proposed spatial strategy, which will inevitably see development in sensitive historic locations.

Conversely, residual minor long-term negative effects are predicted for the landscape SEA topic due to the development of greenfield land at edge of settlement locations. Minor long-term negative effects are also anticipated for the land, soil and water resources SEA topic as there remains an element of uncertainty regarding the precise grade of agricultural land that will be lost to development. Despite this, it is recognised that the Plan prioritises brownfield land opportunities and supports the remediation of contaminated land.

The transport and movement SEA topic is also considered likely to lead to long-term negative effects due to increased congestion resulting from growth in Diss and settlements along the A1066. However, the extra policy provisions provided by the DDNP supplement the Local Plan and provide further support in enhancing local access, particularly through the identified walking/ cycling network within and surrounding the Plan area. The coordination of site allocations north of Diss enable a new link road which, although it is known that this will not sufficiently address road capacity issues, will reduce the extent of the negative impacts arising from growth. The supplementary provisions of the DDNP are thus considered for the positive effects of reducing the impacts of future growth (the level of which has been determined through the Local Plan).

In terms of cumulative effects, overall, the provisions of the DDNP supplement the provisions of the Local Plan, to provide additional local protections for assets, features and characteristics of value, and identify opportunities for development to address known issues or deliver community benefits. As a result, overall positive cumulative effects are considered likely.

Recommendations

The appraisal of the draft DDNP does not identify any recommendations; although the DDNP will lead to negative effects for several SEA topics, this is largely unavoidable given the nature of the Plan area (e.g., low availability of brownfield land and limits to curbing private car usage). Whilst opportunities have been identified to raise sustainability performance, these are factors which are more widely determined, including through other aspects of the evidence base such as viability testing, and a level of appropriateness will be determined by the group.

Next steps

Part 3 of the report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of plan-making and SEA.

Plan finalisation

Following submission, the plan and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the Neighbourhood Plan will then be subject to a referendum, organised by the Local Planning Authority. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be ‘made’. Once ‘made’, the DDNP will become part of the local planning frameworks for South Norfolk and Mid Suffolk, covering the defined Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Monitoring

The SEA regulations require “*measures envisaged concerning monitoring*” to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by South Norfolk and Mid Suffolk Council, as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No additional monitoring measures have been identified at this stage.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan (DDNP).
- 1.2 The DDNP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and in the context of the local development frameworks of South Norfolk District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council.
- 1.3 Once ‘made’ the DDNP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications, alongside the current South Norfolk and Mid Suffolk local development frameworks.
- 1.4 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. SEA of the DDNP is a legal requirement.²

SEA explained

- 1.5 It is a requirement that SEA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which transposed into national law EU Directive 2001/42/EC on SEA.
- 1.6 In-line with the Regulations, a report (known as the Environmental Report) must be published for consultation alongside the draft Plan that “*identifies, describes and evaluates*” the likely significant effects of implementing “*the plan, and reasonable alternatives*”.³ The report must be considered, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.7 More specifically, the Report must answer the following three questions:
 1. What has plan-making/ SEA involved up to this point?
 - including in relation to ‘reasonable alternatives’.
 2. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e., in relation to the draft plan
 3. What happens next?

² Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a ‘screening’ process completed in accordance with Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (‘the SEA Regulations’). The DDNP was screened in as requiring SEA by Collective Community Planning in 2020.

³ v

This Environmental Report

- 1.8 This report is the Environmental Report for the DDNP. It is published alongside the 'submission' version of the plan, under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended).
- 1.9 This report essentially answers questions 1, 2 and 3 in turn (para 1.7), to provide the required information.⁴ Each question is answered within a discrete 'part' of the report.
- 1.10 However, before answering Q1, two initial questions are answered to further set the scene; what is the plan seeking to achieve? And what is the scope of the SEA?

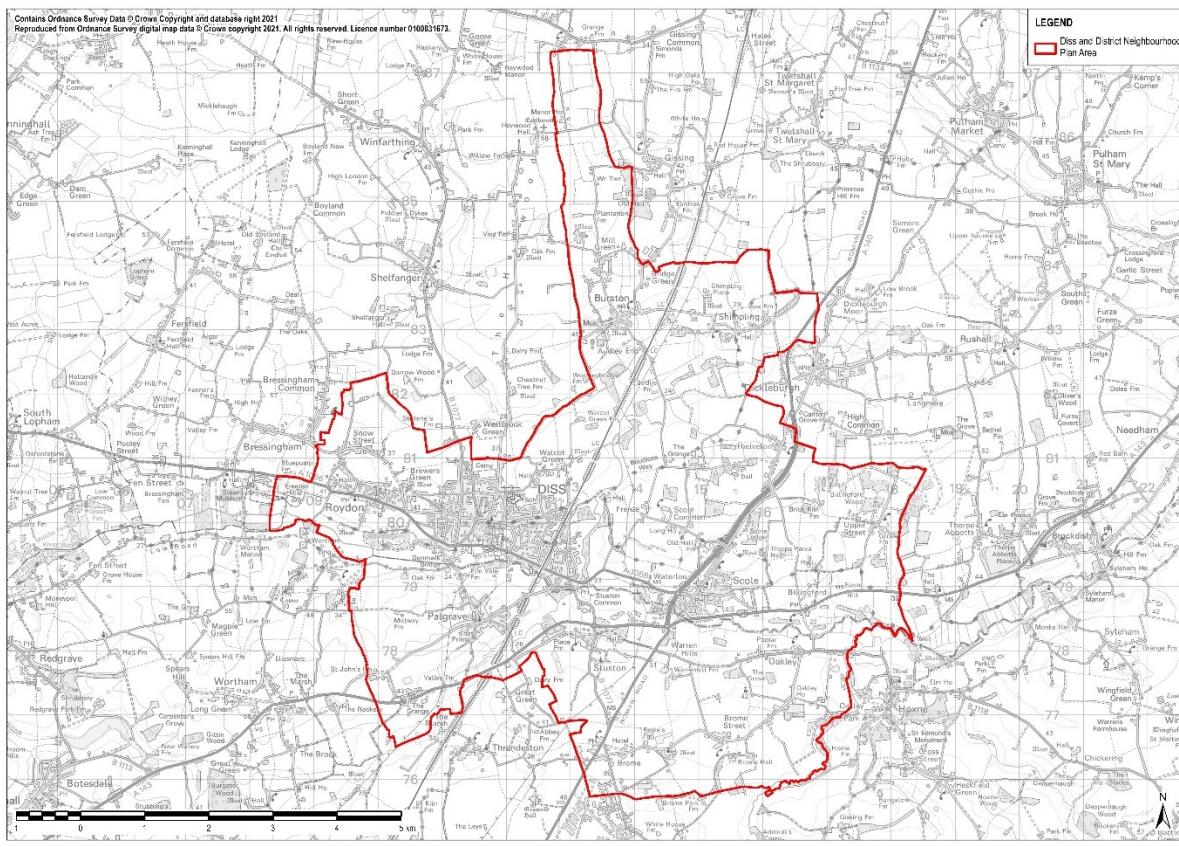
⁴ See **Appendix A** for further explanation of the regulatory basis for answering certain questions within the Environmental Report, and a 'checklist' explaining more precisely the regulatory basis for presenting certain information.

2. What is the DDNP seeking to achieve?

Introduction

- 2.1 This section considers the strategic planning policy context provided by the adopted and emerging local development frameworks of South Norfolk District Council and Mid-Suffolk District Council. It then goes on to present the DDNP vision and objectives. **Figure 2.1** below presents the neighbourhood area.

Figure 2.1 Diss and District neighbourhood area



Strategic planning policy context

- 2.2 The Plan area crosses two local planning authority areas (South Norfolk and Mid-Suffolk). The local planning frameworks of both areas will need to be taken into consideration in the development of the DDNP.
- 2.3 The parishes of Diss, Roydon, Burston and Shimpling, and Scole fall with the boundary of **South Norfolk**, where the adopted local development framework consists of:
- The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk adopted in 2011 and amended in 2014.
 - The Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document adopted in 2015; and
 - The Development Management Policies Document adopted in 2015.

- 2.4 The JCS is currently under review through work on a new Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). The GNLP is at a progressed stage of plan-making having been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in July 2021. Examination hearings commenced in February 2022 and are currently ongoing.
- 2.5 5.5% of the GNLP growth is assigned to the 'Village Clusters' in South Norfolk and South Norfolk District Council are progressing a new South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan (VCHAP) to address these needs. The VCHAP is a housing allocations document that will shape development within the South Norfolk villages, identifying land for a minimum of 1,200 new homes. A Regulation 18 version of the VCHAP was consulted on in 2021. The consultation version of the VCHAP does not identify sites within the Diss and District villages (Burston & Shimpling, Roydon, and Scole) recognising that this is being done through the development of the DDNP.
- 2.6 The Parishes of Palgrave, Stuston, and Brome and Oakley fall within the boundary of **Mid Suffolk**.
- 2.7 The adopted Mid Suffolk local planning framework consists of:
- The Core Strategy Focused Review Document adopted in 2012; and
 - The saved policies of the 1998 Local Plan.
- 2.8 Mid Suffolk District Council are currently working with Babergh District Council to develop a Joint Local Plan (JLP). The Joint Local Plan is at a progressed stage of development, having been submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination in March 2021. The JLP will replace the Core Strategy and saved policies of the 1998 Local Plan.
- 2.9 In December 2021, correspondence between Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and the Inspectors (document G09⁵ and G10⁶) indicate that the emerging JLP will be divided into two parts, in which the housing allocation policies would be deleted from the emerging plan and the settlement boundaries in the adopted 1998 Mid Suffolk Local Plan and 2008 Core Strategy (as opposed to proposed) policies map would be retained. A review of the settlement hierarchy is also likely to be undertaken.
- 2.10 Certain spatial elements of the submitted plan are considered unsound at present and would require further review with a more up-to-date and robust evidence base. They are thus likely be considered in the preparation and adoption of a 'Part 2' JLP which is expected to start as soon as possible after the adoption of 'Part 1' of the emerging JLP.

Housing numbers to be delivered in the DDNP area

- 2.11 The DDNP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plan, as per footnote 18 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021). Additionally, NPPF Para 48 states that "*local*

⁵ Available at: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/JLPExamination/CoreDocLibrary/G-ExaminationCorrespondence/G09-Letter-Inspectors-to-BMSDC.pdf>

⁶ Available at : <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/JLPExamination/CoreDocLibrary/G-ExaminationCorrespondence/G10-Letter-BMSDC-to-Inspectors.pdf>

planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans" according to set criteria which includes its stage of preparation.

- 2.12 In this respect, the emerging GNLP, VCHAP and Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP provide the main strategic context for the DDNP, forecasting the housing and employment needs across the districts over the plan period of the DDNP.
- 2.13 In **South Norfolk**, the GNLP identifies Diss as a 'Main Town' in South Norfolk in the second tier of the settlement hierarchy. Policy 7.2 identifies a total housing commitment for **Diss at 763 dwellings over the period 2018 to 2038**. The GNLP includes one strategic allocation in Diss (Policy GNLP0102) at the 'Land at Frontier Agriculture Ltd, Sandy Lane' where 150 new homes are anticipated. These 150 homes will contribute to the requirement for 763 dwellings, alongside existing permissions (for 95 additional dwellings) and completions (137 dwellings) since April 2018. Together these sources contribute a total of 382 dwellings, leaving a **residual need to identify land for 381 homes in Diss through new allocations in the DDNP**.
- 2.14 The South Norfolk GNLP and VCHAP identify **Burston, Roydon, and Scole as village clusters where a minimum of 25 new homes in each cluster are expected to be planned for through the DDNP**.
- 2.15 In **Mid Suffolk**, The Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP (submission version) Policy SP03 defines the settlement hierarchy, with Table 3 identifying Brome, Palgrave, and Stuston as 'Hinterland Villages' and Oakley as a 'Hamlet Village'. Policy SP04 goes on to identify the spatial distribution of housing across the settlement hierarchy, supported by Table 4 which outlines minimum housing requirements for neighbourhood plan areas. Table 4 identifies that the Mid Suffolk parishes forming part of the DDNP are required to deliver a total of **64 homes in the period up to 2037**, 49 of which have already received planning permission. The residual need for 15 homes has been met through the allocations proposed in Policy LS01, which allocates the following sites in Oakley:
- Land south of B1118 for 5 dwellings; and
 - Land north of B1118 for 10 dwellings.
- 2.16 The strategic directions of the submitted JLP **do not require further development in the Mid Suffolk parishes of the DDNP area** over the plan period. However, two factors are recognised through the current examination process:
1. Certain spatial elements of the submitted plan are considered unsound at present and it is likely that housing allocation policies will be deleted from the emerging plan and dealt with separately following its adoption. Therefore, **the indicative residual housing need and site allocation policies to meet these needs no longer hold any material weight**.
 2. It is likely that the proposed settlement hierarchy will be revisited, this could result in different levels of growth being assigned to some areas of the district.

DDNP vision and objectives

2.17 A vision has been established for the DDNP for “*a vibrant community around a thriving market town*”, which is underpinned by ten identified aims as follows:

1. Sustainable Growth: Allocate the required housing growth in sustainable locations across the neighbourhood plan area, ensuring it's the right mix to meet the needs of current and future residents.
2. Design and Character: Ensure that new buildings, especially housing, are designed to a high standard and have a positive impact on Diss and the villages, retaining the individuality of each community within the neighbourhood plan area.
3. Growth and Infrastructure: Align growth with the required infrastructure and make sure future development will deliver the infrastructure needed for our communities and businesses.
4. Ecology and Habitat: Make a positive impact on ecology and ensure everyone across the Plan area has an opportunity to enjoy and support local wildlife.
5. Traffic and Transport: Help people choose sustainable ways of getting around in the neighbourhood plan area.
6. Sports and Leisure: Ensure adequate sports and leisure facilities for the whole community are provided.
7. Digital Connectivity: Provide digital connectivity that supports and benefits all businesses and homes across the area.
8. Diss Town Centre: Improve the Diss town centre experience for residents and visitors.
9. Community Character: Protect and preserve those special qualities and features that are valued by the community.
10. Addressing Local Climate Change Issues: Ensure that the need to address climate change runs through all aspects of the Plan.

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Introduction

- 3.1 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SEA, i.e., the sustainability issues/ objectives that should be a focus of (and provide a methodological framework for) SEA. To understand and arrive at the key sustainability issues and objectives in focus, the scoping process has set out:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and local plans and strategies relevant to the neighbourhood plan.
 - Baseline data against which the neighbourhood plan can be assessed; and
 - The future baseline in the absence of the neighbourhood plan.
- 3.2 This scoping information is presented in **Appendix B**.

Consultation

- 3.3 The SEA Regulation require that “*when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England.⁷ As such, these authorities were consulted in 2021. Consultation responses are presented in **Appendix B**.

Key issues

- 3.4 The scoping information has identified eight themes that remain a focus for the SEA. The key issues identified against each of these themes are presented below.

Biodiversity

- Any larger-scale development proposals in Palgrave and Roydon (50+ homes outside of the settlement or 100+ homes in the settlement areas) will require further consultation with Natural England in relation to potential impacts upon nationally designated SSSIs.
- Development in the Plan area should consider the likely additional recreational needs arising, and plan for good access to open and green spaces which reduce recreational pressures on nearby designated biodiversity sites.
- Whilst the designated sites are sensitive to changes in water levels, water companies will continue to manage abstraction to meet local needs, and the proposals of the DDNP are unlikely to lead to significant effects in this respect. However, if the proposals of the DDNP significantly exceed the growth planned for in the Local Development Frameworks, additional consultation with water companies may be required.

⁷ These consultation bodies were selected “*by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes*” (SEA Directive, Article 6(3)).

- Development in areas south of the A1066 (particularly in the western approach to Diss) has the potential to affect the Roydon Fen LNR, particularly because of increased recreational disturbance, but also due to the effects of noise, light and air pollution.
- Growth in the DDNP area should seek to avoid the loss or fragmentation of Priority Habitat. Instead, the DDNP provides an opportunity to set out both site-specific mitigation (e.g., mitigation to reduce the effects of light pollution) and targeted habitat enhancement/ creation in development, guided by the identified Network Enhancement and Expansion Zones.

Climate change (including flood risk)

- The DDNP area is partially affected by areas of high and medium fluvial and surface water flood risk. The DDNP provides the opportunity to direct growth away from areas of current, or potentially future flood risk. In areas of surface water flood risk, development which provides improved drainage could also reduce flood risk in the long-term. Furthermore, it will be important for any development in the vicinity of the floodplain to ensure that suitable drainage is provided which ensures development will not lead to adverse effects on water quality.
- As a rural area, the transport sector continues to be a key challenge in terms of reducing emissions. The DDNP provides opportunities to guide development towards the most accessible locations in the Plan area and require local infrastructure (including walking and cycling infrastructure) improvements where appropriate.
- The DDNP should seek to maximise opportunities for local renewable energy and electric vehicle infrastructure development, as well as new green infrastructure and improved ecological links, to complement the existing district, county, and regional climate change plans.

Landscape

- Whilst there are no protected landscapes in the DDNP area, the area is well recognised as part of the river corridor and its special landscape setting, with strategic green infrastructure links and rich habitats. The area south of the Waverley is designated as a Special Landscape Area in the saved policies of the 1998 Mid Suffolk Local Plan. Despite growth in settlement areas, the overall rural character has been retained, along with a building vernacular (prevalence of functional buildings e.g., farmhouses) in some areas. Insensitive development ultimately has the potential to affect this setting and the character of certain areas. The DDNP provides opportunities to avoid/ mitigate significant landscape impacts, including by protecting the overall settlement pattern and directing growth so as to minimise the loss of landscape features.
- The DDNP provides opportunities for enhanced landscape protections, e.g., through policy provisions which identify and protect valued local views and vistas, as well as direct landscape improvements, e.g., through new Green Infrastructure (GI) requirements and/ or the proposed regeneration of derelict or despoiled areas.

Historic environment

- With a wealth of designated and non-designated assets (including archaeological assets) in the DDNP area, it will be important to ensure that future development avoids/ minimises impacts upon the historic environment and maximises opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure, to the indirect benefit of heritage settings.
- Opportunities to support the reinstatement/ restoration and long-term management of heritage ‘at risk’ should be sought where they exist.
- Assets acknowledged for their local heritage value could benefit from additional policy protections and provisions within the DDNP.

Land, soil, and water resources

- The precise Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is unknown for much of the DDNP area and so the extent and significance of potential effects in development may be more difficult to ascertain in the absence of site level investigations. Despite this, it is predicted that higher quality agricultural land exists around Stuston and Brome and Oakley, and the DDNP provides opportunities to avoid/ minimise the loss of agricultural land in these areas.
- The DDNP will need to consider the potential development requirements for further consultation as part of a Minerals Consultation Area, and ultimately the spatial strategy should not undermine the integrity of key waste infrastructure situated within and surrounding the Plan area.
- As part of a riparian environment (relating to or situated on the banks of the river), it will be important for future development to ensure that it avoids any detrimental impacts on water quality both on and off-site. This equally applies to road infrastructure impacts on water quality in the Plan area. Furthermore, the DDNP should seek to capitalise on any potential opportunities to improve water quality, particularly chemical quality (such as improved transport drainage).
- The DDNP could also seek to support extended measures to improve the resilience of water supplies, including through local water recycling schemes and opportunities to increase efficiency in water use.

Population and communities

- The DDNP provides the opportunity for enhanced policy provisions which seek to deliver the right mix of housing types, tenures, and sizes according to local needs, in suitably connected places.
- The DDNP also provides the opportunity to address certain aspects of deprivation in development, in particular the domains of the living environment and barriers to housing and services in the areas outside of Diss, Roydon and Scote.

Health and wellbeing

- There is a lack of accessible green space across the DDNP area, and the DDNP provides the opportunity to require appropriate development contributions to addressing these shortfalls. Planning can also support the interconnectivity of open and recreational spaces, maximising their access by sustainable modes (e.g., walking and cycling).
- The DDNP could also seek improvements to the public realm which maximise social inclusion and address any existing infrastructure/ mobility issues for more vulnerable residents.

Transportation and movement

- There is a significant need for early planning in relation to transport and movement in development in the DDNP area, particularly planning should seek to maximise opportunities to reduce the need to travel and access a choice of sustainable transport modes. Appropriate consideration will also need to be given early on to potential development requirements in terms of mitigating impacts on road capacity and access.
- Opportunities to improve and/ or extend active travel connections, alongside public realm improvements and urban greening within the plan are should also be sought.

SEA framework

3.5 Informed by the scoping information and development of key issues, the SEA scope is summarised in a list of themes, objectives and assessment questions known as the SEA framework. **Table 3.1** presents the DDNP SEA framework as broadly agreed in 2021.

Table 3.1 SEA framework for the DDNP

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (Would the option/ proposal help to...)
Biodiversity	To maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity and geodiversity sites and networks within and surrounding the Plan area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance European, nationally, and locally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and the links between them? • Support the delivery of biodiversity net gains? • Support habitat restoration or new habitat creation within the identified Network Enhancement or Expansion Zones? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks and the network of open spaces which reduce recreational pressures on designated sites?
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities in the Plan area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made by polluting vehicles? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Improve or extend local footpaths, cycle paths or strategic GI routes? • Increase the number of new development meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Support the transition to electric vehicles?
	Support the resilience of the Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the Plan area? • Sustainably manage water runoff? • Increase the resilience of the local built and natural environment? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are duly considered in the design of new development in the Plan area?
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the DDNP area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health, and community facilities, for all age groups? • Provide and enhance community access to open green spaces? • Promote the use of healthier modes of travel, including active travel networks? • Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? • Avoid negative impacts to the quality and/ or extent of existing recreational assets, including formal and informal footpaths? • Contribute to reducing social isolation?
Historic environment	To protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings?

	surrounding the DDNP area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings? • Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Suffolk and Norfolk HERs? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the DDNP area?
Land, soil, and water resources	To ensure the efficient and effective use of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? • Avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of, or hindering of access to mineral resources in the Plan area? • Affect the integrity of waste infrastructure within and surrounding the Plan area? • Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant/ underutilised land?
	To protect and enhance water quality, and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid impacts on water quality? • Support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? • Protect waterbodies from pollution? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling? • Improve the resilience of water supplies?
Landscape	To protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including the river corridor and strategic GI links.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and/ or enhance local landscape character and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character? • Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place? • Protect and extend/ enhance strategic and local GI corridors? • Protect visual amenity and where appropriate, building vernacular? • Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the river setting, or rural setting, including trees and hedgerows?
Population and communities	Ensure growth in the Plan area is aligned with the needs of all residents and in suitably connected places, supported by the appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure to enable cohesive and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local needs? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's changing needs? • Improve the availability and/ or accessibility of local services and facilities? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Contribute to improving levels or aspects of deprivation in the Plan area? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing and future residents?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Transportation and movement | Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage more use of sustainable transport modes?• Encourage the uptake of active travel opportunities?• Extend or improve active travel networks?• Enable sustainable transport infrastructure improvements?• Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development?• Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working?• Improve road safety?• Reduce impacts on residents from the road network?• Improve parking facilities? |
|-----------------------------|--|---|

Part 1: What has plan-making / SEA involved to this point?

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

Overview

- 4.1 Whilst work on the DDNP has been underway for some time, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of work to date, but rather to explain work undertaken to develop and appraise reasonable alternatives.
- 4.2 More specifically, this part of the report presents information on the consideration given to reasonable alternative approaches to addressing a particular issue that is of central importance to the Plan, namely the allocation of land for housing, or alternative sites.

Why focus on sites?

- 4.3 The decision was taken to develop and assess reasonable alternatives in relation to the matter of allocating land for housing development, given the following considerations:
 - DDNP objectives which seek to influence both the location and design of new residential development.
 - Housing growth is known to be a matter of key interest amongst residents and other stakeholders; and
 - The delivery of new homes is most likely to have a significant effect compared to other proposals within the Plan. National Planning Practice Guidance is clear that SEA should focus on matters likely to give rise to significant effects.

Structure of this part of the report

- 4.4 This part of the report is structured as follows:
 - **Chapter 5** – explains the process of establishing reasonable alternatives.
 - **Chapter 6** – presents the outcomes of appraising reasonable alternatives; and
 - **Chapter 7** – explains reasons for selecting the preferred option, considering the appraisal.

5. Establishing reasonable alternatives

Introduction

- 5.1 The aim here is to explain the process that led to the establishment of alternatives and thereby present “*an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with*”.⁸
- 5.2 Specifically, there is a need to explain the strategic parameters that have a bearing on the establishment of options (in relation to the level and distribution of growth) and the work that has been undertaken to date to examine site options (i.e., sites potentially in contention for allocation in the DDNP). These parameters are then drawn together in order to arrive at ‘reasonable alternatives’.
- 5.3 Given the complexity of the neighbourhood area, and the varying housing requirements, this section is structured around each of the settlement areas. The strategic parameters and site options are explored in the South Norfolk settlements of Burston and Shimpling, Diss, Roydon, and Scole, and the Mid Suffolk settlements of Brome and Oakley, Palgrave, and Stuston, before establishing alternatives.
- 5.4 The evidence in relation to site options is underpinned by the Site Options and Assessment (SOA) work undertaken by AECOM on behalf of the group.⁹ This has sought to align with the evidence bases of the emerging GNLP and JLP, factoring in all sites identified by the Local Planning Authorities as well as the Town Council.
- 5.5 The SOA has assessed all available sites to identify whether they are suitable as a potential allocation in the DDNP using a Red/ Amber/ Green (RAG) rating system. All green rated sites are considered suitable as an allocation site, and amber rated sites are considered potentially suitable as an allocation site, subject to the delivery of suitable mitigation. Amber and green sites are the focus for this section and the development of alternatives. All sites given a red rating were not considered suitable as an allocation site in the DDNP and are not considered further through the SEA, except for one site (DIS0003). This reflects updated evidence being provided by the group to demonstrate that DIS0003 has been vacant for a significant period and is not anticipated to be bought back into educational use.

⁸ Schedule 2(8) of the SEA Regulations.

⁹ Submitted alongside the DDNP

Burston and Shimpling (South Norfolk)

- 5.6 As explored in **Chapter 2**, Burston is recognised as a ‘village cluster’ with a strategic requirement to deliver 25 new homes over the plan period.
- 5.7 Four sites in Burston are identified through the SOA work as potentially suitable for allocation in the DDNP (amber sites). These sites are identified in **Table 5.1** and **Figure 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Sites found potentially suitable through the SOA in Burston (South Norfolk)

Site reference	Site name	Site size (ha)	Potential capacity
GNLPS0005	Land southeast of Diss Road	0.1	2
GNLP0349	Land west of Gissing Road	1.54	40-45*
GNLP0386	Land at Rectory Road	2.44	46*
GNLP1028	Land east of Mill Road, Crown Farm Barn	0.3	5

*Indicative figure for full site pre-mitigation, actual capacity likely to be lower

Figure 5.1: Sites found potentially suitable through the SOA in Burston (South Norfolk)



Establishing reasonable alternatives at Burston

5.8 With regards to the available sites:

- Site GNLPS0005 (Land southeast of Diss Road) – the site is a very small site capable of delivering only 2 homes. Any development at this site is considered to constitute additional ‘windfall’ development and the site is not progressed as a reasonable alternative for the purposes of the SEA.
- Site GNLP0349 (Land west of Gissing Road) – at this greenfield site the SOA has identified notable constraints in relation access and road infrastructure requirements, biodiversity, heritage, and the provision of sewerage infrastructure. As a result, the SOA recommends that the site is only progressed in part with a reduced capacity. With the SOA recommendations in mind and for the purposes of the SEA, half capacity at the site has been progressed for consideration in the formulation of alternatives.
- Site GNLP1028 (Land east of Mill Road, Crown Farm Barn) – the site is a small-scale site that is only capable of delivering up 5 homes. Whilst the site is progressed for consideration in formulation of alternatives, it is recognised that the site would need to be considered in conjunction with another site to meet the residual housing requirement.
- Site GNLP0386 (Land at Rectory Road) – the large greenfield site if developed in full would lead to coalescence with Audley End. There are also notable access, biodiversity, and heritage constraints. As a result, the SOA only recommends allocation in part at this site, focused in the north-eastern end of the site adjoining the settlement area, with a reduced capacity (half capacity suggested for the purposes of the SEA).

5.9 Considering the above, three sites are progressed as potential alternatives using the capacities identified in **Table 5.2**.

Table 5.2: Progression of sites in Burston

Site reference	Site name	Revised capacity	Progression as an alternative
GNLPS0005	Land southeast of Diss Road	-	Not progressed
GNLP0349	Land west of Gissing Road	20	Progressed
GNLP1028	Land east of Mill Road, Crown Farm Barn	5	Progressed
GNLP0386	Land at Rectory Road	23	Progressed

5.10 With a minimum target of 25 homes, **Table 5.3** identifies the two options formed from the three sites. It is recognised that the full housing requirement may be able to be met individually by Sites GNLP0349 or GNLP0386 by delivering a few more homes than the suggested half capacity.

Table 5.3: Alternatives for Burston

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
GNLP0349: Land west of Gissing Road	20	-	25	-
GNLP1028: Land east of Mill Road, Crown Farm Barn	5	5	-	-
GNLP0386: Land at Rectory Road	-	23	-	25
Total homes	25	28	25	25

Diss (South Norfolk)

- 5.11 As explored in **Chapter 2**, Diss is recognised as a ‘Main Town’ with an identified housing requirement for 763 dwellings over the period 2018 to 2038.
- 5.12 The GNLP includes one strategic allocation in Diss (Policy GNLP0102) at the ‘Land at Frontier Agriculture Ltd, Sandy Lane’ where 150 new homes are anticipated. These 150 homes will contribute to the requirement for 763 dwellings, alongside existing permissions (for 95 additional dwellings) and completions (137 dwellings) since April 2018. Together these sources contribute a total of 382 dwellings, leaving a residual need to identify land for 381 homes in Diss through new allocations in the DDNP.
- 5.13 Additional permissions which have been more recently granted but not included within the GNLP calculation above include:
- Land south of Thatcher’s Needle; contributing 73 retirement homes. This is also the adopted JCS allocation site DIS6 (also known as the Former Hamlin’s Factory Site, Park Road).
 - Land north of Nelson Road, Diss; (extra care homes) contributing the equivalent of 43 dwellings (South Norfolk Council’s calculation of equivalent dwellings at this site).
- 5.14 Considering the additional permissions for 116 homes the residual need is reduced to **265 homes**.
- 5.15 Three sites are identified through the SOA as suitable for allocation in the DDNP (green sites) at Diss (DIS1, DIS3, and Site 1). A further fourteen sites are identified as potentially suitable for allocation (amber sites).
- 5.16 However, two amber sites (GNLP2067 and DIS9) are recognised as employment locations (existing or potential extension areas) and are not being progressed by the DDNP Steering Group as housing options.
- 5.17 Furthermore, Site DIS0003 was found unsuitable for allocation in the DDNP (a red site) through the supporting SOA. However, the main reason for this relates to a potential loss of educational facilities, but the DDNP Steering Group recognise that this site has been vacant since the 1980s. With no proposals to bring this site back into educational use known or anticipated within or immediately beyond the plan period, it is being prioritised as a potential brownfield redevelopment site.
- 5.18 On this basis, **Table 5.4** and **Figure 5.2** identify the 16 sites under consideration (three green, twelve amber, and one red).

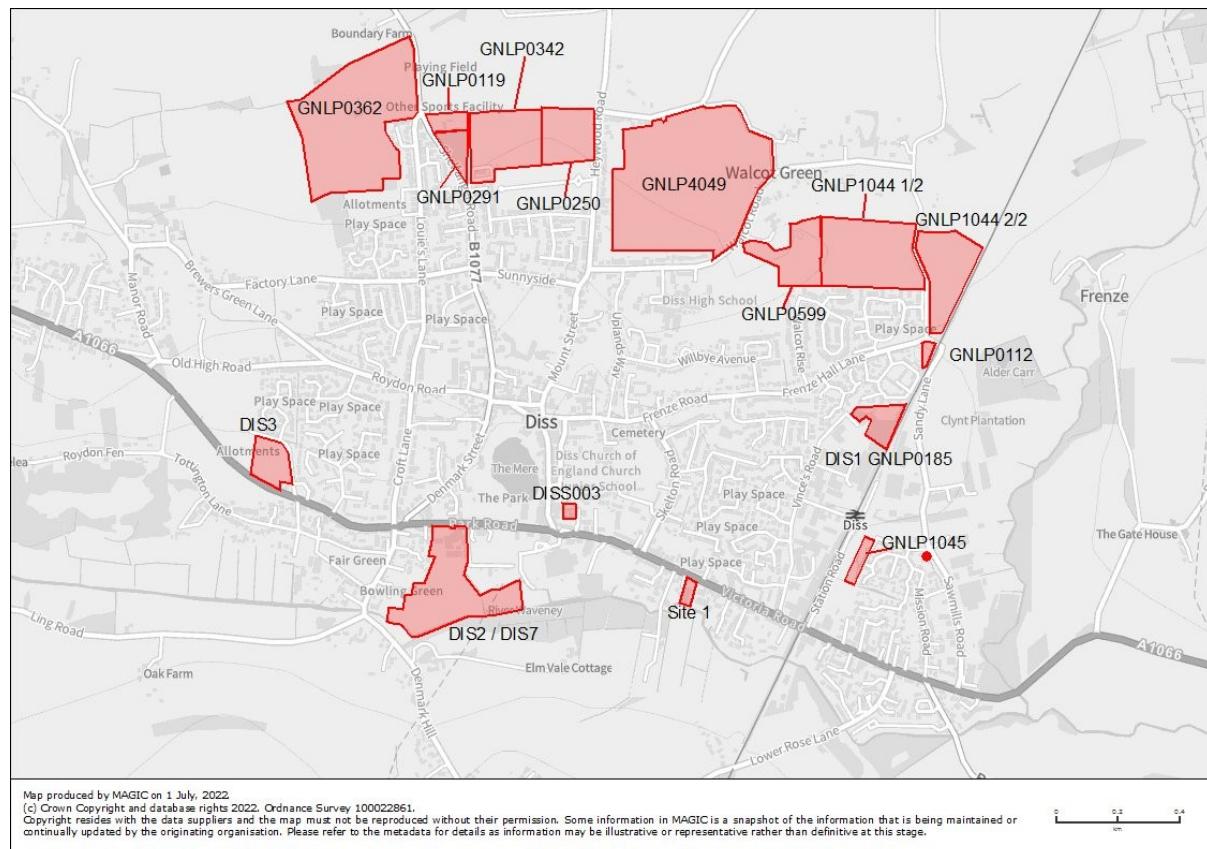
Table 5.4: Sites identified in Diss (South Norfolk)

Site reference	Site name	Approx. site size (ha)	Potential capacity
Site 1	Current Leisure Centre	0.31	20
DIS0003	The Old School, Causeway Close	0.18	10
DIS1/ GNLP0185	Land north of Vince's Road	1.18	14
DIS2	Land off Park Road	4.6	20-30 (including DIS7)
DIS3	Land off Denmark Lane (Roydon Parish)	1.6	42
DIS7	Feather Mills site, Park Road	2.21	20-30 (including DIS2)
GNLP0112	Frenze Hall Lane	0.23	4-8
GNLP0119	Shelfanger Road	0.68	
GNLP0250	Heywood Road	3.00	200
GNLP0291	Land north of Shelfanger Road	0.93	
GNLP0342	Land east of Shelfanger Road	4.76	
GNLP0362	Sturgeons Farm, Louie's Lane, Shelfanger Road	13.81	413*
GNLP0599	Walcot Road and Walcot Green	3.29	80
GNLP1044	Walcot Green	11.0	130
GNLP1045	Land west of Nelson Road and east of Station Road	0.94	35
GNLP4049	Land south of Burston Road	20.49	80

* Partial development is recommended through the SOA which would reduce this figure

**Estimated capacity

Figure 5.2: Sites identified in Diss (South Norfolk)



Establishing reasonable alternatives at Diss

5.19 With regards to the available sites:

- Two suitable/ potentially suitable brownfield sites exist within the Diss settlement boundary that are prioritised in the future growth strategy for Diss. Higher densities are sought at these two sites (Site 1 and GNLP1045) which will contribute a combined total of 55 homes and further reduce the residual need to 210 homes. Site 1 (Current Leisure Centre) is now anticipated to become available in the plan period, with strategic plans to relocate the leisure centre in Diss and provide for extended facilities.
- As noted previously, given the length of time that DIS0003 has been a vacant site, it is now being prioritised as a brownfield redevelopment site that could contribute up to 10 new homes.
- DIS1/ GNLP0185 (Land north of Vince's Road) is a greenfield site adjacent to the railway line. Tree coverage in the southeast of the site is likely to reduce the developable area of the site (as identified through the SOA) and a capacity for 14 dwellings is progressed as reasonable.
- DIS2 (Land off Park Road) and DIS7 (Feather Mills site, Park Road) have a single landowner and are planned to be developed/ progressed as one scheme delivering up to 30 new homes. It is particularly important that the site is progressed as a single site as DIS7 is required to enable access to DIS2, and DIS2 is restricted by areas of medium and high flood risk onsite. DIS7 is a partially brownfield site. Feedback through consultation has highlighted the importance of the regeneration of the south side of Park Road, establishing a new 'Waveney Quarter' along the River Waveney.

This is a longstanding ambition that has yet to be realised that will enhance the attractiveness of this area and the town centre. Development is sought in this part brownfield location which includes improved green infrastructure, leisure facilities (a new leisure centre) and enabling housing development (estimated need for at least 20 enabling homes). A new riverside walk is anticipated to enhance connectivity from Diss Park and Mere. It is formed of the DIS2 and DIS7 rolled over allocation sites, as well as the recently permitted development at the 'Land South of Thatcher's Needle'.

- DIS3 (Land off Denmark Lane) is a greenfield site with no significant constraints. The site is progressed with a potential capacity for 42 homes.
- DIS9 (Land at Sandy Lane) is identified as potential employment land/ expansion space. As the only identified potential employment development site in Diss, the site and is not progressed as a reasonable alternative for housing development.
- GNLP0112 (Frenze Hall Lane) is a greenfield site with constraints in relation to sewerage, noise impacts, biodiversity, and achieving appropriate access (as identified through the SOA). The site is progressed with a potential capacity for up to 8 homes.
- GNLP0250 (Heywood Road), GNLP0291 (Land north of Shelfanger Road), and GNLP0342 (Land east of Shelfanger Road) are subject to a pending planning application for 179 dwellings. The sites adjoin GNLP0119 (Shelfanger Road) and provide the potential for a comprehensive scheme that could include new cemetery expansion space. The sites are therefore progressed as a single scheme delivering 200 dwellings.
- GNLP0362 (Sturgeons Farm, Louie's Lane, Shelfanger Road) falls within Roydon but relates better to the Diss settlement area in the northwest. The site has a capacity for up to 413 dwellings, however the SOA recommends that partial development of the site is considered. The site is therefore progressed as a large-scale option that could deliver against residual housing needs alone.
- An application for outline planning permission has recently been submitted at site GNLP0599 (Walcot Road and Walcot Green) for the development of 80 new dwellings. Notably the site contributes to the settlement gap between Walcott Green and Diss, despite this, it is progressed as an alternative.
- GNLP1044 (Walcot Green) is a greenfield site with constraints in relation to highways, noise, wastewater, heritage, ecology, flood risk and landscape (as identified through the SOA). Notably, the site also contributes significantly to the settlement gap between Walcott Green and Diss, despite this, it is progressed as an alternative for up to 130 homes.
- GNLP2067 (Victoria Road) is located wholly within Flood Zone 2 therefore requiring a sequential approach to its consideration as an allocation in the DDNP. Given the range of potential alternatives identified above, a sequential approach prevents further progression of this site.
- An application for outline planning permission has recently been submitted at site GNLP4049 (Land south of Burston Road) for the development of up

to 80 homes presenting an option for growth in the north of Diss. This large site is also promoted to deliver new education provisions and a new country park.

5.20 Considering the above, twelve sites/ schemes are identified as reasonable alternatives, see **Table 5.5**.

Table 5.5: Progression of sites in Diss

Site reference	Site name	Capacity	Progression as an alternative
Site 1	Current Leisure Centre	20	Progressed
DIS0003	The Old School, Causeway Close	10	Progressed
DIS1/ GNLP0185	Land north of Vince's Road	14	Progressed
DIS2 & DIS7	Park Road	30	Progressed
DIS3	Land off Denmark Lane	42	Progressed
GNLP0112	Frenze Hall Lane	8	Progressed
GNLP0119 & GNLP0250 & GNLP0291 & GNLP0342	Heywood Road and Shelfanger Road	179	Progressed
GNLP0362	Sturgeons Farm, Louie's Lane, Shelfanger Road	210	Progressed
GNLP0599	Walcot Road and Walcot Green	80	Progressed
GNLP1044	Walcot Green	130	Progressed
GNLP1045	Land west of Nelson Road and east of Station Road	35	Progressed
GNLP4049	Land south of Burston Road	80	Progressed

5.21 As noted, the overall target for Diss is 763 dwellings and there are identified housing supply streams which will count towards meeting this need (a GNLP allocation site, completions, and permissions). A residual need for 265 homes is therefore identified for which the DDNP will allocate land for.

5.22 Wholly brownfield sites will be prioritised as part of any future growth strategy in Diss, and the three brownfield sites identified as available (Site 1, DIS0003, and GNLP1045) contribute a combined total of 65 homes.

5.23 From the remaining available sites, seven options are formed to meet the residual housing needs for 200 homes. These represent choices related to large scale sites supported by smaller scale sites, or the progression of large sites alone. It is recognised that a multitude of hybrid options exist, however, for conciseness, the seven options outlined in **Table 5.6** are progressed for appraisal.

Table 5.6: Alternatives for Diss

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7
GNLP0102: Land at Frontier Agriculture Ltd, Sandy Lane (GNLP allocation)	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Completions (since 2018)	137	137	137	137	137	137	137
Additional permissions (since 2018)	211	211	211	211	211	211	211
Site 1: Current Leisure Centre (brownfield site)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
DIS0003 The Old School, Causeway Close (brownfield site)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
GNLP1045: Land west of Nelson Rd and east of Station Rd (brownfield site)	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Sub-total (constants)	563						
DIS1/ GNLP0185: Land north of Vince's Road	14	-	14*	-	-	-	-
DIS2 & DIS7: Park Road	-	-	30	-	30	-	-
DIS3: Land off Denmark Lane	-	42	-	-	42	-	-
GNLP0112: Frenze Hall Lane	8	-	8*	-	8	-	-
GNLP0119 & GNLP0250 & GNLP0291 & GNLP0342: Heywood Rd and Shelfanger Rd	179	-	-	-	179	-	-
GNLP0362: Sturgeons Farm	-	-	-	-	-	-	210
GNLP0599: Walcot Rd and Walcot Green	-	80	80	80*	80*	-	-
GNLP1044: Walcot Green	-	-	-	130	130	-	-
GNLP4049: Land south of Burston Rd	-	80	80	80*	80*	-	-
Total homes	764	765	761-767	773	773	822	773
No. of dwellings above or below overall need (763 homes)	+1	+2	-2 to +4	+10	+10	+59	+10

*Either/ or

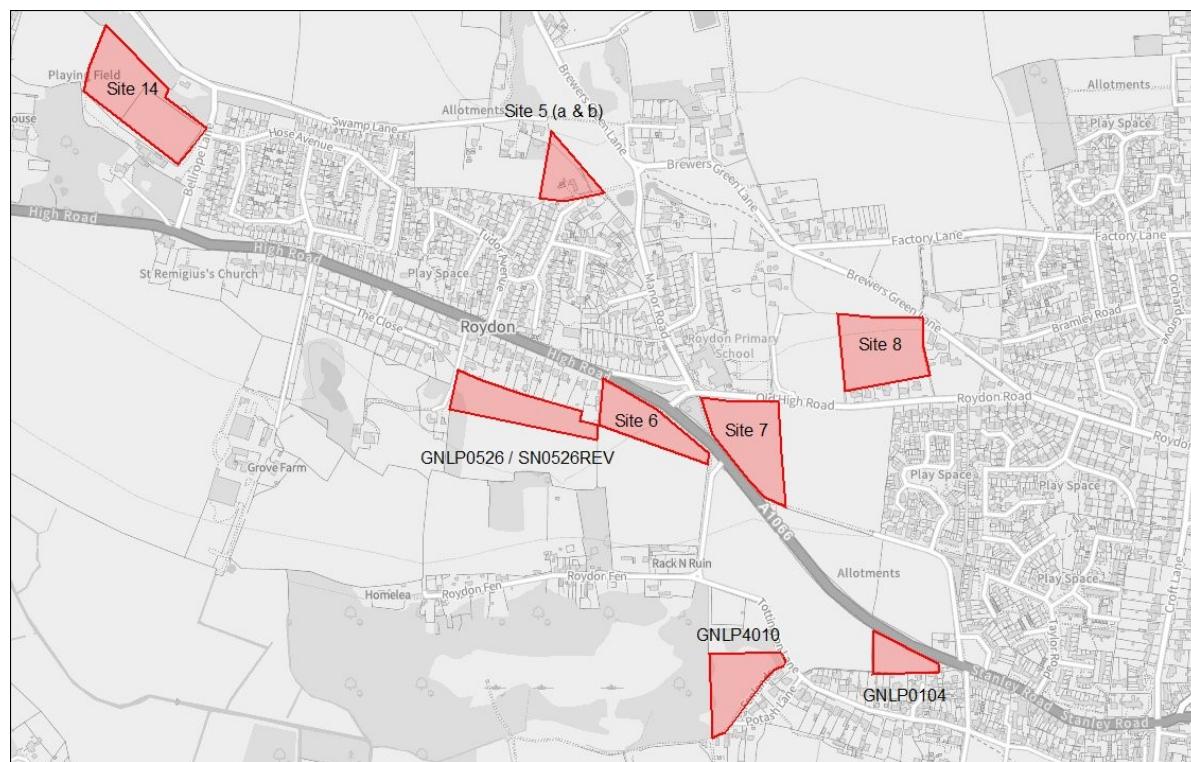
Roydon (South Norfolk)

- 5.24 As explored in **Chapter 2**, Roydon is recognised as a ‘village cluster’ with a strategic requirement to deliver 25 new homes over the plan period.
- 5.25 Ten sites in Roydon are identified through the SOA work as potentially suitable for allocation in the DDNP (amber sites). These sites are identified in **Table 5.7** and **Figure 5.3**.

Table 5.7: Sites found potentially suitable through the SOA in Roydon (South Norfolk)

Site reference	Site name	Approx. site size (ha)	Potential capacity
Site 5 (a&b)	Land at Manor Farmhouse	0.45	10
Site 6	South of the A1066	1.15	24
Site 7	Land opposite the school off Old High Street	1.2	25
Site 8	Brewers Green Lane	1.5	25
Site 14	Diss Rugby Club	2.49	47
GNLP0104	Sandstone Way	0.48	6-10
GNLP0526/ SN0526REV	South of High Road	3.66	25
GNLP4010	Tottington Lane	1.07	10

Figure 5.3: Sites found potentially suitable through the SOA in Roydon (South Norfolk)



Establishing reasonable alternatives at Roydon

5.26 With regards to the available sites:

- Site 5 (a & b) (Land at Manor Farmhouse) is a mix of brownfield and greenfield land. Notably, the site contains the Grade II thatched Manor Farmhouse as a key constraint to development. Despite this, it is progressed as an option to deliver 10 new homes but would need to be considered in conjunction with other allocation site(s) to deliver against the identified housing requirement.
- Both Sites 6 (South of the A1066) and 7 (Land opposite the school off Old High Street) are greenfield sites in a sensitive landscape area. Both sites are progressed for further consideration through the SEA in the formulation of alternatives delivering 24/ 25 homes each.
- Site 8 (Brewers Green Lane) falls entirely within a ‘strategic gap’ between Diss and Roydon being proposed through the DDNP. Sites within the strategic gap are not considered as suitable sites for consideration through the SEA, given the direct conflict with the DDNP aims to avoid further development/ coalescence in this area.
- Site 14 (Diss Rugby Club) is a mixed brownfield and greenfield site potential of delivering up to 47 homes. However, development of the site would result in the potential loss of a community facility (with no relocation potential identified) and there are identified access constraints. On this basis, the site is not considered as suitable as an alternative given the direct conflict with DDNP aims to retain community facilities.
- GNLP0104 (Sandstone Way) is a greenfield site progressed as an option to deliver up to 10 new homes. It would need to be considered in conjunction with other allocation site(s) to deliver against the identified housing requirement.
- Site SN0526REV (Land south of High Road) is a revised submission and reduced site boundary of the larger greenfield site option GNLP0526 (South of High Road), which could accommodate the required 25 homes at the settlement edge. On this basis, the larger site option (GNLP0526) is not considered reasonable for the purposes of the SEA, but the revised site (GNLP0526REV) is.
- Site GNLP4010 (Tottington Lane) falls entirely within a ‘strategic gap’ between Diss and Roydon being proposed through the DDNP. Sites within the strategic gap are not considered as suitable sites for consideration through the SEA, given the direct conflict with the DDNP aims to avoid further development/ coalescence in this area.

5.27 Considering the above, five sites are identified as reasonable alternatives, see **Table 5.8**.

Table 5.8: Progression of sites in Roydon

Site reference	Site name	Capacity	Progression as an alternative
Site 5 (a&b)	Land at Manor Farmhouse	10	Progressed
Site 6	South of the A1066	24	Progressed
Site 7	Land opposite the school off Old High Street	25	Progressed
Site 8	Brewers Green Lane	25	Not progressed
Site 14	Diss Rugby Club	47	Not progressed
GNLP0104	Sandstone Way	10	Progressed
GNLP0526/ SN0526REV	South of High Road	25	Progressed
GNLP4010	Tottington Lane	10	Not progressed

5.28 With a minimum target of 25 homes, **Table 5.9** identifies the four options formed from the five sites progressed.

Table 5.9: Alternatives for Roydon

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Site 5: Land at Manor Farmhouse	10	-	-	-
Site 6: South of A1066	-	24	-	-
Site 7: Land opposite the school off Old High Street	-	-	25	-
GNLP0104: Sandstone Way	10	-	-	-
SN0526REV: South of High Road	-	-	-	25
Total homes	20	24	25	25

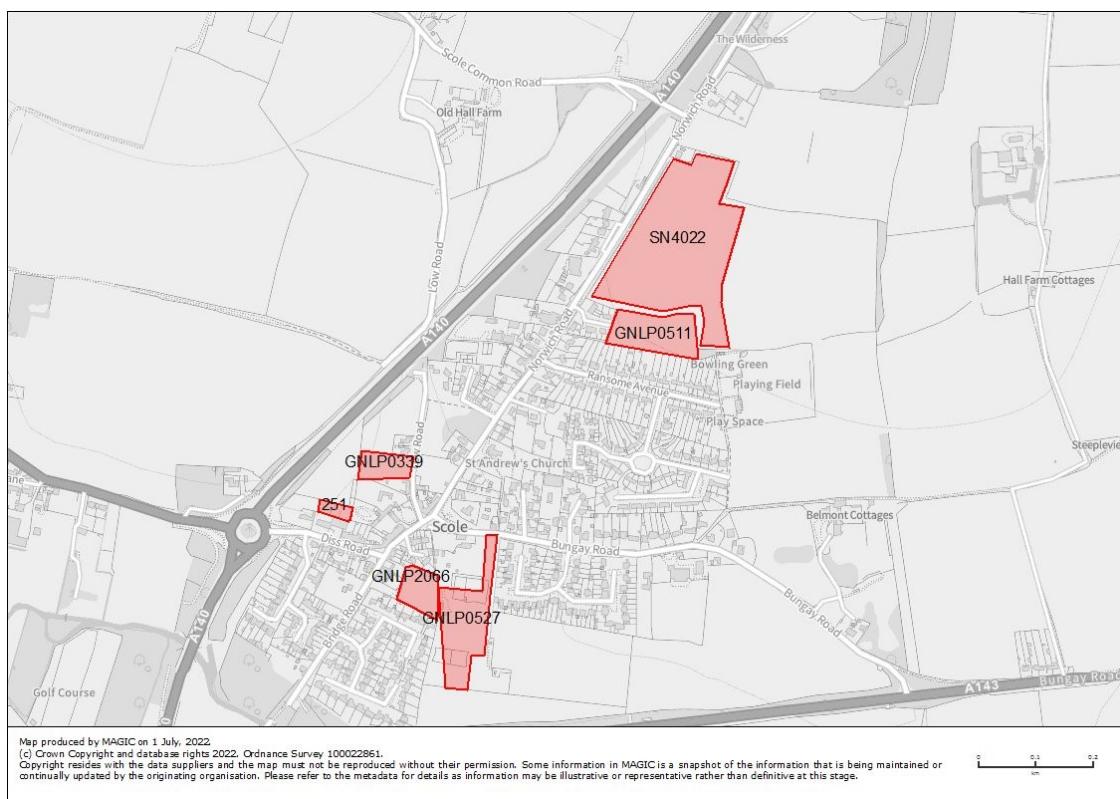
Scole (South Norfolk)

- 5.29 As explored in **Chapter 2**, Scole is recognised as a ‘village cluster’ with a strategic requirement to deliver 25 new homes over the plan period.
- 5.30 Additional permissions have been more recently granted at Land west of Norwich Road for 18 homes and at the Former Scole Engineering Site for 6 homes. These permissions will count towards the requirements for 25 homes, reducing the residual need to **1 home**.
- 5.31 One site is identified through the SOA as suitable for allocation in the DDNP (a green site) at Scole (GNLP0511). A further six sites are identified as potentially suitable for allocation (amber sites). These sites are identified in **Table 5.10** and **Figure 5.4**.

Table 5.10: Sites found suitable or potentially suitable through the SOA in Scole (South Norfolk)

Site reference	Site name	Approx. site size (ha)	Potential capacity
SN4022	East of Norwich Road	5.2	130
SN4023/ GNLP0338/ GNLP0338R	South of Bungay Road	8.22 / 0.59 ®	206/ 20 ®
GNLP0339	Land at Street Farm, west of Low Road	0.34	15
GNLP0511	Land to the east of Norwich Road, south of Ransom Avenue	1.02	35
GNLP0527	Land south of Bungay Road	1.75	53
GNLP2066	1 Bridge Road	0.5	11
251	The Laurels	0.17	4

Figure 5.4: Sites found suitable or potentially suitable through the SOA in Scole (South Norfolk)



Establishing reasonable alternatives at Scole

5.32 With regards to the available sites:

- Site SN4022 (East of Norwich Road) would deliver significant growth in the north of the settlement impacting upon the character of the settlement, and on this basis, the SOA has recommended only partial allocation of the site with a reduced capacity. The boundary of the site has been extended in the south to accommodate access (to include site GNLP0511). The site is considered as an alternative as one scheme (though recognising the sites are in separate ownership) at half capacity (75 homes) which still significantly exceeds the housing requirement.
- Development at site SN4023 (South of Bungay Road) would significantly extend the settlement south-east within the 'River Valleys Extents', a sensitive landscape area. Like Site SN4022, the likely impacts upon landscape character mean that the site is only considered suitable for allocation in part with a reduced capacity. Site GNLP0338R (Land at Rose Farm off Bungay Road) is a revised submission for the site, which includes the farmhouse and areas of previously developed land. However, more recently the site has been withdrawn by the landowner and will no longer be available over the plan period. The site is therefore not progressed as part of the alternatives.
- Sites GNLP0339 (Land at Street Farm, west of Low Road) and GNLP2066 (1 Bridge Road) are small greenfield sites which are progressed for consideration in the formulation of alternatives.

- The SOA recommends partial allocation of Site GNLP0527 (Land south of Bungay Road) to reduce the impacts on settlement character. With the SOA recommendations in mind and for the purposes of the SEA, half capacity (26 homes) at the site has been progressed for consideration in the formulation of alternatives. It is also recognised that access to the site is less than ideal.
- Site 251 (The Laurels) is a small brownfield site (garage) capable of delivering up to 6 homes. Whilst brownfield land is normally prioritised as part of the DDNP strategy, it is recognised that there have been contentious responses to a planning application for this site, which is expected to be refused planning permission by South Norfolk Council. Given this context, the site is not prioritised as part of the strategy but is still considered as an alternative.

5.33 Considering the above, six sites are identified as reasonable alternatives, see **Table 5.11**.

Table 5.11: Progression of sites in Scole

Site reference	Site name	Capacity	Progression as an alternative
SN4022/ GNLP0511	East of Norwich Road	75	Progressed
SN4023/ GNLP0338/ GNLP0338R	South of Bungay Road	20	Not progressed.
GNLP0339	Land at Street Farm, west of Low Road	15	Progressed
GNLP0527	Land south of Bungay Road	26	Progressed
GNLP2066	1 Bridge Road	11	Progressed
251	The Laurels	4	Progressed

5.34 As noted, the overall target for Scole is 25 dwellings and there are identified housing supply streams which will count towards meeting this need (permissions for 24 homes).

5.35 Existing permissions will largely deliver against the housing requirement for Scole, however, the DDNP Steering Group are considering additional allocation sites to support identified local needs with higher levels of growth. **Table 5.12** identifies the four options formed from the five sites progressed.

Table 5.12: Alternatives for Scole

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Permissions (Land west of Norwich Rd and the Former Scole Engineering Site)	24	24	24	24	24
<i>Sub-total (constants)</i>	24	24	24	24	24
SN4022/ GNLP0511: East of Norwich Road	75	-	-	-	-
GNLP0339: Street Farm, west of Low Rd	-	15	-	-	-
GNLP0527: Land south of Bungay Road	-	-	26	-	-
GNLP2066: 1 Bridge Rd	-	-	-	11	-
251: The Laurels	-	-	-	-	4
Total homes	99	39	50	35	28

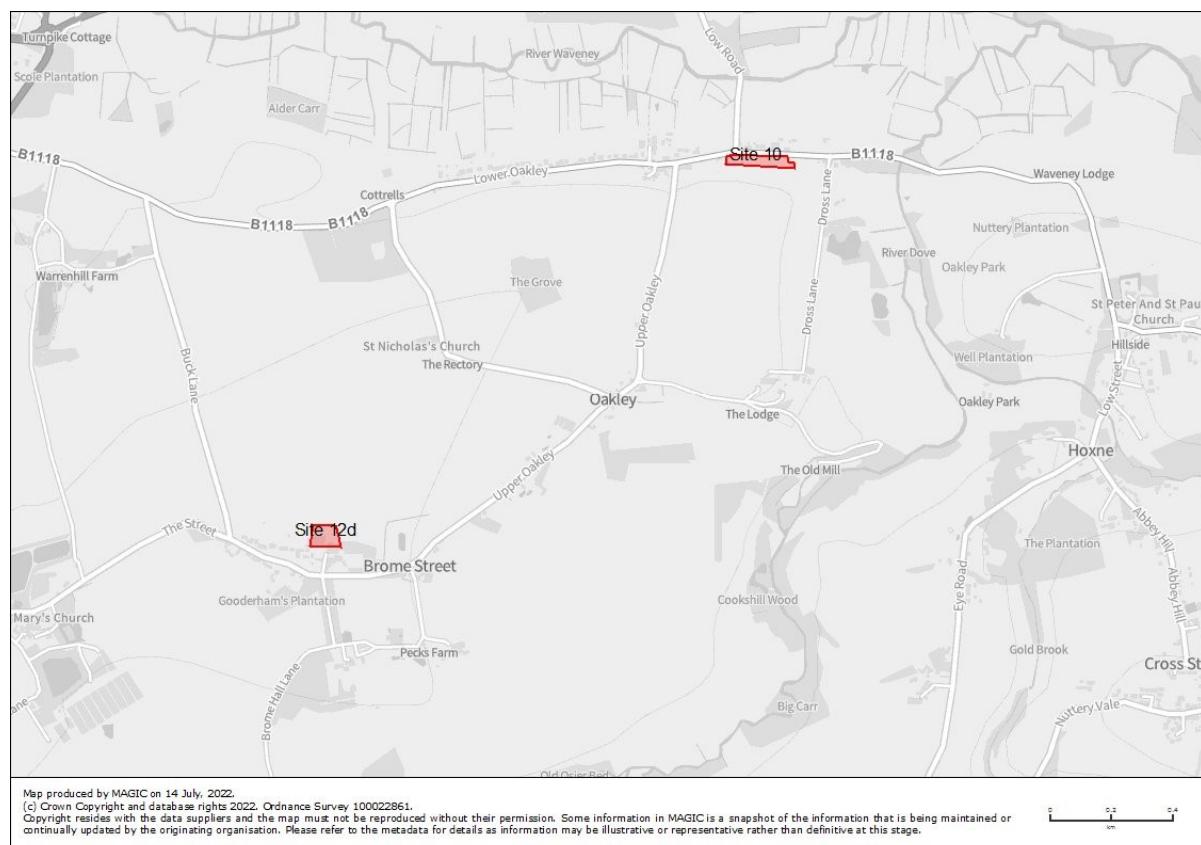
Brome and Oakley (Mid Suffolk)

- 5.36 Recognising the status of the emerging JLP at examination, there is no material requirement to deliver additional homes within Brome and Oakley at this stage (though recognising this may change).
- 5.37 Two sites (SS0542 & SS1012/ Site 10 and Site 12d) have been identified as suitable/ potentially suitable for development within the Parish through the SOA, see **Table 5.13** and **Figure 5.5**.

Table 5.13: Sites identified in Brome and Oakley (Mid Suffolk)

Site reference	Site name	Approx. site size (ha)	Potential capacity
SS0542 & SS1012/ Site 10	Lower Oakley, Plot B (western part)	0.69	12
Site 12d	Brome	0.61	13

Figure 5.5: Sites identified in Brome and Oakley (Mid Suffolk)



Establishing reasonable alternatives at Brome and Oakley

5.38 Both sites identified are progressed to form three alternative options for development in Brome and Oakley.

Table 5.14: Alternatives for Brome and Oakley

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
SS0542 & SS1012/ Site 10: Lower Oakley Plot 2 (west)	12	-	12
Site 12d: Brome	-	13	13
Total homes	12	13	25

Palgrave (Mid Suffolk)

5.39 As for Brome and Oakley, there is no strategic requirement to deliver additional homes within Palgrave at this stage. Furthermore, only one site has been identified as potentially suitable within the Parish, see **Table 5.14**. On this basis, no alternative options are identified in relation to development at Palgrave. The potential progression of Site PAL01 will be informed by the findings of the SOA.

Table 5.15: Sites found suitable or potentially suitable in the updated SOA in Palgrave (Mid Suffolk)

Site reference	Site name	Approx. site size (ha)	Potential capacity
PAL01	Land to the east of Priory Road	0.67	8

Stuston (Mid Suffolk)

5.40 As above, there is no strategic requirement to deliver additional homes within Stuston at this stage. Furthermore, no sites have been identified as available/ suitable/ potentially suitable within the Parish. On this basis, no alternative options are identified in relation to development at Stuston.

6. Assessing reasonable alternatives

- 6.1 This chapter provides the assessment of the four sets of alternative options (at Diss, Roydon, Burston and Scole) established in the previous chapter.

Methodology

- 6.2 For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability themes and objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3.1**) as a methodological framework. **Green** is used to indicate significant positive effects, whilst **red** is used to indicate significant negative effects. Where appropriate uncertainty will also be noted.
- 6.3 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.
- 6.4 Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects based on reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate **a rank of preference**. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. Numbers are used to highlight the option or options that are preferred from an SEA perspective with 1 performing the best.
- 6.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Regulations.¹⁰ So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects.

¹⁰ Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for Burston

6.6 **Table 6.1** identifies the options established for Burston.

Table 6.1: Alternatives for Burston

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
GNLP0349: Land west of Gissing Road	20	-	25	-
GNLP1028: Land east of Mill Road, Crown Farm Barn	5	5	-	-
GNLP0386: Land at Rectory Road	-	23	-	25
Total homes	25	28	25	25

6.7 **Table 6.2** presents summary findings for the appraisal of these options, supported by narrative in relation to each SEA theme.

Table 6.2: Summary appraisal findings for options at Burston

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	1	2
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	1	3
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	=	=	=	=
Historic environment	Significant effect?	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes - negative	No
	Rank	3	2	2	1
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	=	=	=	=
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes – positive	Yes – positive	Yes – positive	Yes - positive
	Rank	1	2	1	2
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	1	2
Transportation	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	1	3

Biodiversity

- 6.8 There are no Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) overlapping or in proximity to the three sites considered for Burston. Additionally, there is no overlap with SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the type of development likely to be brought forward through the neighbourhood plan. There are no further biodiversity designations overlapping or within proximity to any of the proposed sites.
- 6.9 In terms of habitat type, the Living England Habitat Map¹¹ identifies sites GNLP0349 (Options 1 and 3) and GNLP0386 (Options 2 and 4) are mainly acid, calcareous and/or neutral grassland, with dwarf shrub heath located in the southern part of GNLP0386. GNLP1028 (Options 1 and 2) is broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland. None of the sites have Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats present within their perimeters or in proximity. Only site GNLP0386 overlaps with a National Habitat Network classification – the Network Expansion Zone type overlaps with most of the site, demonstrating the site's potential to expand and link biodiversity networks across the landscape.
- 6.10 Considering the above, all four options perform broadly similar in relation to the theme of biodiversity and are all considered to have minor negative effects due to the potential for habitat loss on site. No significant effects are deemed likely for any of the options. As site GNLP0386 has the potential to link biodiversity networks, Options 2 and 4 are ranked lower than Options 1 and 3 due their inclusion of this site (and potential loss of habitat) though it is recognised that this could be overcome with suitable onsite mitigation. It is noted that measures included within development plans to enhance biodiversity on this site, as well as the others, would be beneficial.

Climate change

- 6.11 In terms of flood risk, all three sites at Burston are within Flood Zone 1. Small areas of sites GNLP0349 (Options 1 and 3) and GNLP1028 (Options 1 and 2) are at low risk of surface water flooding, and the southern part of GNLP0386 (Options 2 and 4) is also at low risk of surface water flooding. However, development at GNLP0386 will be focused on the north-eastern part of the site, avoiding this area of risk. The incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in areas with an increased risk of surface water flooding will play an essential role in mitigating the risk of flooding at these sites.
- 6.12 In respect of climate mitigation, sites GNLP0349 (Options 1 and 3) and GNLP1028 (Options 1 and 2) are better connected to existing active travel routes connecting with the village core, and GNLP0349 (Options 1 and 3) connects well with bus route/ service 1 (connecting with Diss and Norwich).
- 6.13 No significant effects are anticipated under any option. No significant differences can be drawn in relation to adaptation. However, in respect of mitigation, marginal further benefits are associated with Options 1, 2, and 3 by means of active travel opportunities, enhanced under Options 1 and 3 by good connections with existing bus services. Options 1 and 3 are thus ranked

¹¹ DEFRA [Magic Map application](#)

slightly more preferably overall, followed by Option 2, with Option 4 ranked least favourably.

Landscape

- 6.14 None of the sites under the options are within or in proximity to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Park, nor is there any greenbelt land. As such, the parish is not constrained by policies protecting these designations.
- 6.15 Sites GNLP0349 (Options 1 and 3) and GNLP1028 (Options 1 and 2) have a similar elevation to the main settlement of Burston and are gradually inclining towards the north. Site GNLP0386 (Options 2 and 4) is also at a similar elevation to the existing settlement, gradually declining to the south. Additionally, all sites are within proximity to the existing settlement.
- 6.16 Considering this information, each site has the potential to have a negative impact on the landscape and setting on Burston. However, given the scale of development proposed, alongside a lack of designated landscapes or areas of known high sensitivity, no significant effects are anticipated. All three options perform similarly and are therefore ranked broadly on par.

Historic environment

- 6.17 None of the sites have listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks or gardens or registered battlefield designations overlapping the site perimeter. Site GNLP0349 (Options 1 and 3) has one listed building in proximity to it – Grade II listed Manor House Farmhouse. Site GNLP1028 (Options 1 and 2) has three listed buildings in proximity to it – Grade II listed Crown Farmhouse, Grade II listed Red House and Grade II listed The Crown Public House. Development at these sites could impact the setting and significance of these historic environment assets. Additionally, site GNLP1028 is within the Burston Conservation Area where development has the potential to affect designated heritage settings.
- 6.18 Through considering the above information, it is clear there is the potential for significant negative effects to occur through development at sites GNLP0349 and GNLP1028 (Options 1, 2, and 3). Therefore, Option 4 is ranked most favourably as it is deemed to have good potential to avoid significant effects/ sensitive heritage settings. Option 1 is ranked least favourably due to the cumulative effects of development at both sites GNLP0349 and GNLP1028.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 6.19 All three sites are within the River Waveney Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), though significant effects are not anticipated because of housing development (with effects more closely relating to agricultural uses). It is unclear whether the sites overlap with policies outlined in the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy due to the resolution of the map, however, the small-scale development proposed under each option is not considered likely to lead to significant effects by way of hindering future access to mineral resources. No objection to the sites in this respect have been raised through consultation to date.

- 6.20 In the absence of a formal, in-depth land assessment, the provisional agricultural land classification (ALC) places all three sites within Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land, with a moderate likelihood of being 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land. All three sites are greenfield. The sites all fall within the Frenze Beck waterbody catchment, which was awarded a moderate ecological and a failed chemical status upon its last examination in 2019.
- 6.21 The small-scale development proposed is not considered likely to lead to significant effects in respect of land or water resources, though minor negative effects can be anticipated because of greenfield development. There is little to differentiate between the options which are all ranked broadly on par.

Population and communities

- 6.22 Each option is considered to lead to significant positive effects for the population and community through providing additional land for housing.
- 6.23 Site GNLP0349 (Options 1 and 3) has the potential for 20-25 homes. It offers good access to the road network and is located within proximity to existing housing. It is also located close to bus stops and within a good distance of Burston Park and Burston Primary School.
- 6.24 Site GNLP1028 (Options 1 and 2) has the potential for five homes. It offers good access to the road network and is located within proximity to existing housing. It is not positioned close to bus stops and is further from Burston Park and Burston Primary School than GNLP0349 but is still a walkable distance.
- 6.25 Site GNLP0386 (Options 2 and 4) has the potential for 23-25 homes. It offers good access to the road network and is located within proximity to existing housing. It is not located close to any bus stops and is a distance from the Burston Primary School but is located next to Burston Park.
- 6.26 Based on this information, Options 1 and 3 are ranked more favourably due to their inclusion of site GNLP0349 which is located closest to the school, the park and bus stops to allow for sustainable travel out of the area. The housing contribute under any option is also considered likely to lead to significant positive effects.

Health and wellbeing

- 6.27 Notably, Sites GNLP0349 (Options 1 and 3) and GNLP1028 (Options 1 and 2) provide direct access to adjacent public rights of way connecting with the village core which promote active travel opportunities. Additionally, Site GNLP0349 is also located close to Burston Park (as a leisure and recreational area) and Burston Primary School, again providing good opportunities for active travel. Whilst not directly adjacent GNLP0386 does still provide good access to public footpaths.
- 6.28 Whilst there is little differentiating the options, and no significant effects are anticipated under any option, Options 1 and 3 are ranked most favourably given the greater opportunities to promote active travel and the good access provided to Burston Park.

Transportation

- 6.29 All options are likely to lead to increases in vehicular usage on the local road network and minor negative effects would be anticipated (given the scale of development proposed under each option).
- 6.30 Sites GNLP0349 (Options 1 and 3) and GNLP1028 (Options 1 and 2) provide better access to public rights of way connecting with the village core, which could promote active travel journeys to and from the centre of the settlement. Additionally, site GNLP0349 is located close to bus stops that allow access to Route Service 1 by KonectBus, which provides connections to both Diss and Norwich.
- 6.31 Considering the above, Options 1 and 3 are ranked most favourably due to their inclusion of site GNLP0349 that is in proximity to a bus route. Option 2 is ranked as the next most favourable due to the proximity of GNLP1028 to a public right of way. No significant effects are anticipated under any option.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for Diss

6.32 **Table 6.3** identifies the options established for Diss.

Table 6.3: Alternatives for Diss

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7
GNLP0102: Land at Frontier Agriculture Ltd, Sandy Lane (GNLP allocation)	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Completions (since 2018)	137	137	137	137	137	137	137
Additional permissions (since 2018)	211	211	211	211	211	211	211
Site 1: Current Leisure Centre (brownfield site)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
DIS0003 The Old School, Causeway Close (brownfield site)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
GNLP1045: Land west of Nelson Rd and east of Station Rd (brownfield site)	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Sub-total (constants)	563	563	563	563	563	563	563
DIS1/ GNLP0185: Land north of Vince's Road	14	-	14*	-	-	-	-
DIS2 & DIS7: Park Road	-	-	30	-	30	-	-
DIS3: Land off Denmark Lane	-	42	-	-	42	-	-
GNLP0112: Frenze Hall Lane	8	-	8*	-	8	-	-
GNLP0119 & GNLP0250 & GNLP0291 & GNLP0342: Heywood Rd and Shelfanger Rd	179	-	-	-	179	-	-
GNLP0362: Sturgeons Farm	-	-	-	-	-	-	210
GNLP0599: Walcot Rd and Walcot Green	-	80	80	80*	80*	80*	-
GNLP1044: Walcot Green	-	-	-	130	130	-	-
GNLP4049: Land south of Burston Rd	-	80	80	80*	80*	80*	-
Total homes	764	765	761-767	773	773	822	773
No. of dwellings above or below overall need (763 homes)	+1	+2	-2 to +4	+10	+10	+59	+10

*Either/ or

6.33 **Table 6.4** presents summary findings for the appraisal of these options, supported by narrative in relation to each SEA theme.

Table 6.4: Summary appraisal findings for options at Diss

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No						
	Rank	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
Climate change	Significant effect?	No						
	Rank	1	2	1	2	1	2	2
Landscape	Significant effect?	No						
	Rank	1	2	2	2	2	2	1
Historic environment	Significant effect?	No	Yes - negative	No				
	Rank	2	3	3	3	3	3	1
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	Yes - negative						
	Rank	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes - positive						
	Rank	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No						
	Rank	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
Transportation	Significant effect?	Yes - negative						
	Rank	1	2	2	2	2	2	2

Biodiversity

- 6.34 In respect of biodiversity, growth to the southwest of Diss is constrained by the presence of Royden Fen Local Nature Reserve and just beyond this, Wortham Ling Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). DIS3 (under Options 2 and 5) lies closest to these designated sites, though the site is not captured within its identified SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ). Two roads lie between DIS3 and the designated LNR (the A1066 and Tottington Lane) and no significant impacts are anticipated in relation to designated habitats.
- 6.35 Growth in the north/ northwest around Shelfanger Road (Options 1, 6, and 7) falls within the identified IRZ of Shelfanger Meadows SSSI further north, though the housing development being proposed is not captured as development that requires further consultation. On this basis, no significant effects are deemed likely, however, minor negative effects could be associated with increased traffic flow along Shelfanger Road adjacent to the SSSI.
- 6.36 All remaining sites fall within the IRZs of the nearby SSSIs; however, housing development is not captured as a type of development that requires further consultation and impacts in relation to SSSIs are considered likely to be avoided.
- 6.37 Sites DIS3 (Options 2 and 5), and GNLP0362 (Option 7) also lie adjacent to allotment sites, where suitable buffer land should be provided to minimise impacts for species and habitats.
- 6.38 The Living England Habitat Map¹² identifies:
- Sites DIS3 (Options 2 and 5), GNLP0342 (Options 1 and 6), GNLP0362 (Option 7), GNLP0250 (Options 1 and 6), GNLP4049 (Options 2, 3, 4, and 6), and GNLP1044 (Options 4 and 5) are predominantly formed of Arable and Horticultural habitat.
 - Sites DIS2/ 7 in part (Options 3 and 5), GNLP0119 (Options 1 and 6), GNLP0291 (Options 1 and 6), and GNLP0599 (Options 2, 3, 4, and 6) are formed of acid, calcareous, neutral grassland.
 - Sites GNLP0112 (Options 1, 3, and 5), and DIS1/ GNLP0185 (Options 1 and 3) are formed of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland.
 - Site DIS2/ 7 (Options 3 and 5) also falls partly within the urban ‘built-up’ area.
- 6.39 Despite this, none of the sites are known to contain Priority Habitats. Site GNLP0362 (Option 7) does lie adjacent to an area of traditional orchard habitat, however, onsite mitigation is likely to ensure no residual negative effects. On the contrary, habitat enhancement here could lead to minor positive effects.
- 6.40 Overall, no significant effects are anticipated under any option. Given the proximity of Shelfanger Meadows SSSI to Options 1, 6, and 7, additional traffic on Shelfanger Road could lead to minor impacts and these options are ranked least favourably accordingly. No further significant differences are drawn between the remaining options.

¹² DEFRA [Magic Map application](#)

Climate change

- 6.41 High and medium fluvial flood risk areas follow the corridors of the River Waveney in the south, east, and north of the settlement. Site DIS2/ 7 (Options 3 and 5) is the only site identified as intersecting an area of fluvial flood risk, though it is noted that there is an expectation that vulnerable development would be avoided in this area in the south of the site and that is reflected in the number of homes being promoted at the site. On this basis, no significant effects are anticipated under any of the options.
- 6.42 All sites under consideration are affected by areas of high, medium, and/ or low surface water flood risk to some degree. The effective application of sustainable drainage systems is likely to ensure no residual significant impacts in this respect, and the sites are not differentiated on this basis.
- 6.43 In respect of mitigation, all sites connect reasonably well with the settlement area. Notably Sites DIS1/ GNLP0185 (Options 1 and 3) and GNLP0112 (Options 1, 3, and 5) connect relatively well with the train station. All options include an element of growth in the north of the settlement, which is deemed less accessible (to the settlement offer) than the south or east of the town.
- 6.44 Overall, no significant effects are anticipated under any option. Options 1, 3, and 5 are marginally preferred overall due to the inclusion of development in proximity to the train station.

Landscape

- 6.45 Diss is strongly associated with a ridge of raised land to the north of the Waveney Valley and as such, there is a strong argument for containing the extent of the town within the Waveney valley and avoiding expansion downhill to the north. This is a particular constraint for all options, given each includes a large-scale development site in the north of the town.
- 6.46 Further of note, development at Site GNLP4049 (Options 2, 3, 4, and 6), and to a lesser extent at Sites GNLP0599 (Options 2, 3, 4, and 6) and GNLP1044 (Options 4 and 5), would erode the narrow landscape gap between Diss and Walcot Green. There is also a suggestion that development could serve to soften the existing unattractive 'hard edge' to Diss at Walcot Rise/ Falcon Avenue/ Peregrine Close (GNLP0599); however, it is not clear that this is necessarily an issue/ opportunity, given very limited public views across the site.
- 6.47 Development at the grouped sites off Shelfanger Road (Options 1 and 6) would need to consider the risk of impacts to long distance views northwards from the cemetery, impacts to the bridleway passing through the site and views into the site from the adjacent footpath. Furthermore, development at Site GNLP0362 (Option 7) is open to the wider landscape on two of its four sides, and there is a need to consider views into the site from the adjacent footpath.
- 6.48 Overall, significant negative effects are not predicted, given limited or no risk to a locally designated landscape. With constraints identified across the sites and an overall loss of greenfield land at the settlement edge under any option, residual minor long-term negative effects are anticipated. By avoiding an erosion of the landscape gap between Diss and Walcot Green, Options 1 and 7 are marginally preferred.

Historic environment

- 6.49 It is judged appropriate to highlight heritage issues in the north of the settlement which have been examined closely through a planning application for up to 90 homes at Walcot Road. For the purposes of this appraisal, it is fair to highlight Walcot Road as relatively constrained on account of the site comprising something of a landscape gap between the edge of Diss and Walcot Green, which is a historic settlement associated with a loose cluster of five grade 2 listed buildings, albeit without a designated conservation area and with a notable detracting feature, in the form of the industrial uses at Walcot Hall Farm.¹³ The likelihood of archaeological constraint is also of note, albeit it is typically possible to address archaeology through the development process (at a cost). These issues are considered to apply predominantly to Site GNLP4049 (Options 2, 3, 4, and 6), and to a lesser extent at Sites GNLP0599 (Options 2, 3, 4, and 6) and GNLP1044 (Options 4 and 5).
- 6.50 With regards to the grouped sites off Shelfanger Road (Options 1 and 6), the adjacent cemetery itself is a locally important heritage asset, and there is a concern regarding housing impacting on the rural setting of the cemetery (including view across the river valley to the north). The site also contains the non-designated building, Royal Observer Corps. Post. Appropriate consideration would need to be given to incorporation of the building into any scheme.
- 6.51 All sites/ options are also considered constrained in respect of traffic through Diss Conservation Area.
- 6.52 In conclusion, all sites are constrained by the historic setting of Diss to some extent. Given the issues arising for development around Walcot Green, it is considered appropriate to flag a potential for significant negative effects under Options 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 at this stage. These options are also ranked least preferably accordingly. Whilst there is potential to avoid significant impacts arising under Option 1 through an appropriate/ sensitive design scheme, the need for mitigation is highlighted. Option 7 is concluded to perform best in relation to this SEA theme, given a greater potential to avoid affecting designated heritage settings.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 6.53 All sites are within the River Waveney Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), though significant effects are not anticipated because of housing development (with effects more closely relating to agricultural uses). It is unclear whether the sites overlap with policies outlined in the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy due to the resolution of the map, however, the settlement edge development proposed under each option is not considered likely to lead to significant effects by way of hindering future access to mineral resources. No objection to the sites in this respect have been raised through consultation to date.
- 6.54 The great majority of agricultural land surrounding Diss is shown to be 'grade 3' quality land by the nationally available dataset, which is very low resolution and

¹³ A report on 'Heritage Matters' submitted by the planning applicant in December 2019 state that "Walcot Green is not an adopted Conservation Area and as such it is not a heritage asset." However, it is not clear that this is the case, noting paragraph 184 of the NPPF, which explains "Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance... which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value."

does not differentiate between grade 3a (which is classed as best and most versatile) and grade 3b (which is not classed as best and most versatile). The only lower grade agricultural land is found to the south of the town, associated with the river valley. None of the agricultural land surrounding Diss has been surveyed in detail. Natural England indicate a moderate likelihood of 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land.¹⁴

- 6.55 In respect of water quality, the sites all fall within the Frenze Beck/ Waveney u/s of Frenze Beck waterbody catchments, which were awarded a moderate ecological and a failed chemical status upon last examination in 2019. The grouped sites off Shelfanger Road (Options 1 and 6), DIS2/ 7 (Options 3 and 5) and GNLP0362 (Options Option 7) intersect waterbodies onsite where the appropriate application of sustainable drainage will be required to avoid further impacts on water quality. This is a particular issue for Site DIS2/ 7 which lies within the floodplain of the River Waveney.
- 6.56 In conclusion, significant negative effects are anticipated through the cumulative or large-scale loss of greenfield/ agricultural land at the settlement edge under all options. These effects are largely unavoidable noting that all available and suitable brownfield sites have been prioritised as part of any future growth strategy in Diss. There is little to differentiate between the options, however, the notable constraints of the River Waveney floodplain at Site DIS2/ 7 under Options 3 and 5, and the requirement for significant mitigation in this respect, make these options rank least preferably overall.

Population and communities

- 6.57 All options have good potential to meet the forecasting housing needs in full over the plan period and on this basis, significant positive effects are anticipated under all options. Notably, Option 6, and to a lesser extent Options 4, 5, and 7, exceed the indicative requirement and provide additional flexibility in delivery and the potential to secure more affordable homes.
- 6.58 A second consideration is the matter of supporting new and upgraded community infrastructure, or delivery of wider infrastructure to the benefit of the community. In this respect, a key point to note is that the grouped sites off Shelfanger Road (Options 1 and 6) propose a cemetery extension delivering additional cemetery space, as well as a new link road (linking Shelfanger Road and Heywood Road). Site GNLP4049 (Options 2, 3, 4, and 6) is also proposed to deliver a new country park south of Burston Road. It is not clear that the other sites in question would deliver community benefits of note, but it is also important to note that the avoidance of development at Walcot Road (achieved under Options 1 and 7) could enable the designation of new Local Green Space.
- 6.59 Overall, whilst significant positive effects are anticipated under all options, Option 6 performs notably well by exceeding the housing requirement (providing greater flexibility in delivery and the potential to secure more affordable homes) and through the inclusion of community benefits (new cemetery space and a new link road). The remaining options are also noted for

¹⁴ Natural England (2017) [Predictive BMV Land Assessment](#)

similar benefits but to a lesser extent, making Option 6 only marginally preferred.

Health and wellbeing

- 6.60 Having already discussed a range of relevant matters above, the focus here is on ensuring good access to accessible open / green space and the open countryside. All sites are settlement edge locations linking to open spaces within the town and the countryside surrounding Diss. Of note, the grouped sites off Shelfanger Road (under Options 1 and 6) propose additional cemetery space, and both Sites DIS3 (Options 2 and 5) and GNLP0362 (Option 7) lie adjacent to allotments, GNLP0362 also lies adjacent to play space. Sites around Walcot Green also connect well with existing play spaces.
- 6.61 Overall, all sites are relatively well connected to the settlement offer, and no significant effects are anticipated in relation to health and wellbeing. The convenient access to nearby natural spaces at Options 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7 are considered to make these options marginally preferable.

Transportation

- 6.62 A range of transport-related matters have already been discussed above. A key benefit of the grouped sites off Shelfanger Road (under Options 1 and 6) is delivery of the new link road, which presumably will serve to reduce pressure on the problematic B1077.
- 6.63 Development at GNLP0362 (Option 7) would lead to increased traffic along Louie's Lane, which is narrow in parts, and already serves a large housing area. Furthermore, Diss Town Council have raised significant objections to the planning application for 90 homes at Walcot Road, with concerns focused on Frenze Road / Frenze Hall Lane, which serves a large and recently expanded housing area. These concerns extend to Options 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.
- 6.64 Sites GNLP0112 (Options 1, 3, and 5) and DIS1/ GNLP0185 (Options 1 and 3) are located close to the train station and would enable good access for future residents. Sites in the south; DIS3 (Options 2 and 5) and DIS2/ 7 (Options 3 and 5) provide better access to the settlement offer with greater opportunities to promote active travel in this respect.
- 6.65 In conclusion, it fair to highlight a risk of significant negative effects under all options, noting the following statement within the GNLP (2021): "*There are particular vehicular pressures on the A1066 Victoria Road and B1077 Denmark Street as they pass through the town, with congestion considered a barrier to more significant growth.*" Option 1 is judged to perform better than the remaining options by avoiding areas of key traffic concern, and by locating some future residents close to the train station.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for Roydon

6.66 **Table 6.5** identifies the options established for Roydon.

Table 6.5: Alternatives for Roydon

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Site 5: Land at Manor Farmhouse	10	-	-	-
Site 6: South of A1066	-	24	-	-
Site 7: Land opposite the school off Old High Street	-	-	25	-
GNLP0104: Sandstone Way	10	-	-	-
SN0526REV: South of High Road	-	-	-	25
Total homes	20	24	25	25

6.67 **Table 6.6** presents summary findings for the appraisal of these options, supported by narrative in relation to each SEA theme.

Table 6.6: Summary appraisal findings for options at Roydon

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2	2
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	1	2	3
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	1	1
Historic environment	Significant effect?	Yes – negative	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	1	1
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2	2
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes – positive	Yes – positive	Yes – positive	Yes - positive
	Rank	2	1	1	1
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	1	2	1
Transportation	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	1	2	1

Biodiversity

- 6.68 There are no Ramsar sites, SACs or SPAs overlapping or in proximity to the sites. Wortham Ling SSSI is located to the south-west of the settlement and is within 1km of all sites but Site 5 (Option 1). As such, all sites but Site 5 overlap with SSSI IRZs for the type of development likely to be brought forward through the neighbourhood plan and further consultation may be required. Additionally, all sites are within 1km of the Roydon Fen Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- 6.69 The Living England Habitat Map¹⁵ identifies GNLP0104 (Option 1) and Site 7 (Option 3) are a mix of arable and horticultural land and dwarf shrub heath. Sites 6 (Option 2) and SN0526REV (Option 4) also have these two habitat types, with the addition of acid, calcareous and/or neutral grassland. Site 5 (Option 1) is completely acid, calcareous and/or neutral grassland. None of the sites have BAP Priority Habitats present within their perimeters, but Site 5 is in proximity to an area of deciduous woodland to the north. All sites but Site 5 (Option 1) overlap with the National Habitat Network classification Network Enhancement Zone 2, which indicates the potential of these sites to improve

¹⁵ DEFRA [Magic Map application](#)

biodiversity value through land management changes and/or green infrastructure provision.

- 6.70 Considering the above, all four options perform similarly for the theme of biodiversity and are all considered to have potential for minor negative effects due to the potential for habitat loss on site. No significant effects are deemed likely for any of the options. As Site 5 does not overlap with a National Habitat Network, Option 1 is considered to rank more favourably due to its inclusion. The other three options are ranked equally. It is noted, however, that measures included within development plans to enhance biodiversity on this site, as well as the others, would be beneficial.

Climate change

- 6.71 In terms of flood risk, all five sites at Roydon are within Flood Zone 1. Site 6 (Option 2) and GNLP0104 (Option 1) have no surface water flood risk constraints on site but are located adjacent to areas at varying risk of surface water flooding associated with the A1066. Site 7 (Option 3) has an area to the east of the site that is at low risk of surface water flooding, and Site 5 (Option 1) and SN0526REV (Option 4) are at varying risk (high, medium, and low) of surface water flooding across the sites. The incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in areas with an increased risk of surface water flooding will play an essential role in mitigating the risk of flooding at these sites.
- 6.72 In respect of mitigation, all sites but Site 7 (Option 3) have a public right of way adjacent or near it. These public rights of way will allow for active travel opportunities in and around Roydon.
- 6.73 Overall, the effective application of sustainable drainage systems under any option is considered likely to ensure that residual negative effects in relation to flood risk are avoided. Whilst no significant effects are anticipated under any option, Option 2 is ranked most favourably due to no surface flood risk being present on site. With a need for more extensive mitigation under Options 1 and 4, these options are ranked least favourably.

Landscape

- 6.74 None of the sites are within or in proximity to a designated landscape, nor is there any greenbelt land. As such, the parish is not constrained by such policy protections.
- 6.75 Site 5 (Option 1) is at the same elevation as the existing Roydon settlement; sites SN0526REV (Option 4), Site 6 (Option 2) and Site 7 (Option 3) are at slightly lower elevations in comparison to the existing settlement and are gently declining to the south, and Site GNLP0104 (Option 1) is at a much lower elevation. All sites but GNLP0104 are in proximity to the existing settlement and infrastructure.
- 6.76 Considering this information, each site has the potential to have a negative impact on the landscape and setting on Roydon. However, no significant effects are anticipated in the absence of landscape designations or areas of known high sensitivity. As Site GNLP0104 is located furthest away from the existing Roydon settlement, Option 1 is ranked the least favourably. The other three options perform similarly and are ranked broadly on par.

Historic environment

- 6.77 None of the sites have scheduled monuments, registered parks or gardens or registered battlefield designations overlapping the site perimeter or in proximity. All sites but Site 5 (Option 1) are removed from listed buildings; Site 5 has the Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse on site and the Grade II listed Rose Villa in proximity to the site perimeter.
- 6.78 Through considering the above information, it is clear there is the potential for significant negative effects to occur through development at Site 5. Therefore, Option 1 is ranked least favourably as it involves development at this site. Options 2, 3 and 4 are not considered likely to lead to any significant effects and considered to perform broadly on par with each other.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 6.79 All sites lie within the River Waveney Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). It is unclear whether the sites overlap with policies outlined in the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy due to the resolution of the map.
- 6.80 In the absence of a formal, in-depth land assessment, the provisional national data places the three sites south of the A1066 (SN0526REV, Site 6 and GNLP0104 under Options 1, 2, and 4) in Grade 4 ‘Poor’ agricultural land, with the remaining sites north of the A1066 (under Options 1 and 3) in Grade 3 ‘Good to Moderate’ agricultural land.
- 6.81 Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land assessments identify that Site 5 and GNLP0104 (both forming Option 1) fall within the ‘urban’ BMV land classification, and Site 6 (Option 2), Site 7 (Option 3), and SN0526REV (Option 4) have a moderate likelihood of being underlain with BMV land. All sites but Site 5 (Option 1) are greenfield – Site 5 is a mix of brownfield and greenfield.
- 6.82 The sites fall within the Waveney (u/s Frenze Beck) waterbody catchment, which was awarded a moderate ecological and a failed chemical status upon its last examination in 2019.
- 6.83 Based on this information, there is a potential for negative effects through the inevitable development of greenfield land that has the potential to be underlain with Grade 3 ‘Good to Moderate’ ALC land in areas, however, given the scale of development proposed under any option, the effects are not considered likely to be significant. Option 1 includes an area of brownfield land and land that is within the ‘urban’ BMV classification and is ranked most preferably as a result.

Population and communities

- 6.84 Each option is considered to lead to significant positive effects for the population and community through providing additional land for housing.
- 6.85 Site 5 (Option 1) has the potential for ten homes. It does not offer good access to the road network or any services and facilities, nor is there access to a bus stop.
- 6.86 Site SN0526REV (Option 4) has the potential for 25 homes. It offers good access to the road network and is within walking distance of some services like the Roydon Village Hall and Roydon Primary School. Additionally, there are bus stops located within walking distance of this site.

- 6.87 Site 6 (Option 2) has the potential for 24 homes. It offers good access to the road network and is within walking distance of some services like the Roydon Village Hall and Roydon Primary School. Additionally, there are bus stops located within walking distance of this site.
- 6.88 Site 7 (Option 3) has the potential for 25 homes. It offers good access to the road network and is within walking distance of some services like the Roydon Village Hall and Roydon Primary School. Bus stops are located a bit further from this site but are still accessible.
- 6.89 Site GNLP0104 (Option 1) has the potential for ten homes. It offers good access to the road network but is not located near the existing Roydon settlement; rather it is on the outskirts of Diss. Due to its distance from the settlement, services and facilities are more accessible at Diss. Furthermore, there are bus stops but they are situated further away than other sites.
- 6.90 Whilst significant positive effects are anticipated under all options, Option 1 is ranked the least favourably due to the lack of access to facilities and services and sustainable transport at the sites.

Health and wellbeing

- 6.91 All sites but Site 7 (under Option 3) have a public right of way adjacent to the site or in proximity. These allow for safe and sustainable travel throughout Roydon that promotes health and wellbeing.
- 6.92 The settlement of Roydon has a few services, including a primary school, a pub, a church, and a veterinary clinic, but it is lacking in shops and medical infrastructure. These are more widely available in Diss.
- 6.93 Considering the facilities that are within Roydon, Sites 6 and SN0526REV are positioned the closest, therefore Options 2 and 4 are ranked more favourably. Site 7 (Option 3) is located nearest the facilities after these sites and is ranked next despite a lack of public rights of way. Sites 5 and GNLP0104 (forming Option 1) are located a distance from the facilities and as such Option 1 is ranked least favourably.

Transportation

- 6.94 All options are likely to lead to increases in vehicular usage on the local road network, therefore minor negative effects can be anticipated. All sites but Site 7 (Option 3) have a public right of way adjacent or near it. These public rights of way will allow for more sustainable journeys in and around Roydon. Sites 6 (Option 2), 7 (Option 3) and SN0526REV (Option 4) have accessible bus stops in proximity to them. These bus services provide access to bus services 2, 37A, 338, SE1, 17 and 337, which connect Roydon to locations including East Harling, Diss, and Pulham Market.
- 6.95 Considering the above, Options 2 and 4 are ranked most favourably due to their proximity to bus services, followed by Option 3 which is in proximity to bus stops but has no public rights of way access. Option 1 is ranked least favourably due to the distance from the sites to bus routes. No significant effects are anticipated.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for Scole

6.96 **Table 6.7** identifies the options established for Scole.

Table 6.7: Alternatives for Scole

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Permissions (Land west of Norwich Rd and the Former Scole Engineering Site)	24	24	24	24	24
Sub-total (constants)	24	24	24	24	24
SN4022/ GNLP0511: East of Norwich Road	75	-	-	-	-
GNLP0339: Street Farm, west of Low Rd	-	15	-	-	-
GNLP0527: Land south of Bungay Road	-	-	26	-	-
GNLP2066: 1 Bridge Rd	-	-	-	11	-
251: The Laurels	-	-	-	-	4
Total homes	99	39	50	35	28

6.97 **Table 6.8** presents summary findings for the appraisal of these options, supported by narrative in relation to each SEA theme.

Table 6.8: Summary appraisal findings for options at Scole

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	2	2	1
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	2	4	4	1
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	2	1	1	2
Historic environment	Significant effect?	No	Yes - negative	Yes - negative	Yes - negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	1	2	3	3	3
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	2	1	2	1
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes – positive				
	Rank	1	4	3	2	2
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2	2	2
Transportation	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	2	3	1	1	3

Biodiversity

- 6.98 There are no Ramsar sites, SACs, SPAs or SSSIs overlapping or in proximity to the sites considered for Scole. Additionally, there is no overlap with SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the type of development likely to be brought forward through the neighbourhood plan. There are no further biodiversity designations overlapping or within proximity to any of the proposed sites. In this respect, none of the options are likely to impact upon the integrity of any internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity.
- 6.99 In terms of habitat type, GNLP0339, Site 251, GNLP2066, GNLP0527 and GNLP0511 are acid, calcareous and/or neutral grassland. SN4022 is a mix of acid, calcareous and/or neutral grassland, dwarf shrub heath and arable and horticultural land. None of the sites have BAP Priority Habitats present within their perimeters, or in proximity to them. Site 251 and GNLP0339 do not overlap with a National Habitat Network classification; GNLP2066 and GNLP0527 overlap with Network Enhancement Zone 2 – which indicates the potential of these sites to improve biodiversity value through land management changes and/or green infrastructure provision. Additionally, SN4022 and GNLP0511 overlap with Network Expansion Zone -

demonstrating the site's potential to expand and link biodiversity networks across the landscape. Reflecting the above, Option 1, Option 4 and Option 5 are perhaps the most sensitive options given the potential value and contribution of these sites within the Network Enhancement Zones. Nonetheless, sensitive development at these locations (which incorporate appropriate design and landscaping, including net gains) has the potential to positively contribute to wider ecological objectives (including through the provision or buffer zones, and enhancing connectivity between habitats).

- 6.100 Considering the above, all five options perform similarly for the theme of biodiversity and are all considered to have minor negative effects due to the potential for habitat loss on site. No significant effects are deemed likely for any of the options. As Site 251 and GNLP0339 do not overlap with a National Habitat Network, Options 2 and 5 are considered more favourable. The other three options are ranked equally. It is noted, however, that measures included within development plans to enhance biodiversity on this site, as well as the others, would be beneficial.

Climate change

- 6.101 In terms of climate change mitigation, road transport is a significant contribution to emissions within South Norfolk. Therefore, development within proximity to village centres (i.e., locations within the neighbourhood area with the greatest variety of services and facilities) will, to an extent, help limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport through encouraging new development in locations with proximity to the key amenities and public transport networks. In this respect, the sites proposed through all options are adjacent to the Scole village boundary, which will positively contribute to climate change mitigation efforts by limiting emissions from transport.
- 6.102 In terms of flood risk, all the sites at Scole are within Flood Zone 1. GNLP0527 and GNLP2066 are at varying levels of surface water flood risk across the whole of each site. GNLP0511 and SN4022 are also at risk of surface water flooding, but not across the whole site – small isolated areas on the site boundaries and in the middle of GNLP0511. GNLP0339 is adjacent to an area susceptible to surface water flooding associated with Low Road. Site 251 has no surface flood risk associated with it.
- 6.103 The incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in areas with an increased risk of surface water flooding will play an essential role in mitigating the risk of flooding at these sites. It is anticipated that surface water flood risks could largely be contained within the site boundaries via the inclusion of appropriate drainage measures through design. Alongside local and national policy with respect to tackling flood risk concerns (including via the sequential and exception tests), flood risks are not anticipated to be a significant constraint to development at all locations. Nevertheless, Option 5 is ranked most favourably due to no surface flood risk being present on site. Option 2 follows as it is not at flood risk on site but is adjacent to an area at risk. Option 1 is ranked third due to the low amount of surface flood risk on the sites, and Options 3 and 4 are ranked the least favourably due to the existing flood risks on site.

Landscape

- 6.104 None of the sites are within or in proximity to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Park, nor is there any greenbelt land. As such, it is not anticipated that any of the options would impact upon the integrity of a nationally protected landscape.
- 6.105 GNLP2066 and GNLP0527 are situated on a similar elevation as the existing Scole settlement, with GNLP0527 slightly declining towards the south-west. These sites are located close to the centre of the existing settlement, with housing adjacent to them.
- 6.106 GNLP0339 and Site 251 are also situated on a similar elevation as the existing Scole settlement. Although situated next to and behind existing housing, the positioning of these sites places them on the outskirts of Scole.
- 6.107 GNLP5011 and SN4022 are situated on a similar elevation as Scole, inclining gently to the north. These sites are located on the outskirts of Scole with limited housing or infrastructure around them.
- 6.108 Considering this information, each site has the potential to have a negative impact on the landscape and setting on Scole. However, no significant effects are anticipated. As GNLP0527 and GNLP2066 are located closest to the centre of Scole and have housing adjacent to them, Options 3 and 4 are ranked more favourably as there will be less of visual impact on the landscape and character of the area. Options 2 and 5 are ranked second most favourably due to the proximity to the centre of the Scole settlement, though they will have an impact on the landscape and character due to a lack of infrastructure around them. Option 1 is ranked least favourably due to its distance and the impact development will have on the landscape and character of the area.

Historic environment

- 6.109 None of the sites have scheduled monuments, registered parks or gardens or registered battlefield designations overlapping the site area, however Site 251, GNLP0339 and GNLP2066 are approximately 200m from the Scole Roman settlement scheduled monument.
- 6.110 GNLP0527 is within proximity to a listed building: Grade II listed St Edmunds Lodge. Additionally, GNLP2066 is within proximity to the Grade II listed Crossways Restaurant and Gable End, Beam Ends and Three Ways; Site 251 is in proximity to Grade II listed Stables immediately north-west of Scole Inn and SN4022 is within proximity to Grade II listed High House. Development at these sites will impact the setting and significance of these historic environment assets.
- 6.111 Additionally, all sites but GNLP0511 and SN4022 are wholly or partially within the Scole conservation area. Therefore, Option 1 is the most favourable option with respect to protecting the special characteristics of this area.
- 6.112 Through considering the above information, it is clear there is the potential for significant negative effects to occur through development at Site 251 (Option 5), GNLP0527 (Option 3) and GNLP2066 (Option 4) due to their proximity to the scheduled monument and the listed buildings. Additionally, all sites but

SN4022 and GNLP0511 (Option 1) overlap with the Scole conservation area. Therefore, Options 3, 4 and 5 are ranked the least favourably, followed by Option 2 and the potential for negative effects of significance are identified under these options. Option 1 is ranked most favourably and is considered more likely to avoid significant effects arising.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 6.113 All sites are within the River Waveney Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). Additionally, SN4022 and GNLP0511 (Option 1) are within Source Protection Zone (SPZ) III – Total Catchment. It is unclear whether the sites overlap with policies outlined in the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy due to the resolution of the map.
- 6.114 In the absence of a formal, in-depth land assessment, the provisional ALC places GNLP0527 (Option 3) and GNLP2066 (Option 4) in Grade 4 ‘Poor’ agricultural land, with the remaining sites north of the A1066 within Grade 3 ‘Good to Moderate’ agricultural land.
- 6.115 Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land assessments identify that Sites 251 (Option 5), GNLP0527 (Option 3), GNLP2066 (Option 4) and GNLP0399 (Option 2) are within the ‘urban’ BMV land classification, and site SN4022 and GNLP0511 (Option 1) has a moderate likelihood of being underlain with BMV land. Sites GNLP0339 (Option 2) and GNLP2066 (Option 4) are small greenfield sites, and Site 251 (Option 5) is a small brownfield site.
- 6.116 The sites fall within the Waveney (Frenze Beck to Dove) waterbody catchment, which was awarded a moderate ecological and a failed chemical status upon its last examination in 2019.
- 6.117 Based on this information, there is a potential for negative effects through development of greenfield land and land that has the potential to be underlain with Grade 3 ‘Good to Moderate’ ALC land, though effects are not considered likely to be significant. Options 3 and 5 are ranked most favourable due to their exclusion of sites on Grade 3 ‘Good to Moderate’ ALC land and greenfield sites. Option 1 is ranked least favourably due to the ALC and BMV classifications, SPZ status, and higher level of growth proposed overall.

Population and communities

- 6.118 Each option is considered to lead to significant positive effects for the population and community through providing additional land for housing.
- 6.119 Site SN4022 and GNLP0511 (Option 1) have the potential for 60 homes between them. There is good access to the road network; there are bus stops in proximity to the sites and there is pedestrian infrastructure on the roads. has the potential for ten homes. The sites are located close to Scole Primary School, the bowling green, playing field and play space.
- 6.120 Site GNLP0339 (Option 2) has the potential for 15 homes. It is located adjacent to a road, but it does not have safe pedestrian access, nor does it have good access to bus stops. It is situated close to allotments.
- 6.121 Site 251 (Option 5) has the potential for four homes. It is not located next to a road, but the nearest road does have pedestrian access and bus stops. Like

Site GNLP0339 it is close to allotments and is also close to the Crossways Inn and Scole Village Stores.

- 6.122 Site GNLP2066 (Option 4) has the potential for eleven homes. It is not located adjacent to a road however; the nearest road has pedestrian infrastructure in place to allow for safe travel. It is within walking distance of a bus stop. It is close to the Crossways Inn and Scole Village Stores.
- 6.123 Site GNLP0527 (Option 3) has the potential for 26 homes. Part of the site is located adjacent to a road that has pedestrian access and there are bus stops within walking distance of the site. It is not positioned close to any community services or facilities.
- 6.124 Based on this information, Option 1 is ranked the most favourably due to the proximity to community services, the road network, and the pedestrian access available. Options 4 and 5 are the next most preferable for the same reasons, only less favourable due to their distance from a road. Option 3 is next due to its proximity to a road and bus stops and its provision of safe pedestrian access. However, it is important to acknowledge that all sites are located adjacent to the existing village boundary, within relative proximity to the services and facilities within Scole village. In this respect, all options have the potential to lead to positive effects with respect to the community wellbeing SEA theme. Nonetheless, given the relatively large size and potential capacity of Site SN4022 and GNLP0511 (as proposed through Option 1), this has the potential to generate developer contributions which could provide additional (or expand the existing) services and facilities offer within the neighbourhood area, positively contributing to community vitality and wellbeing. Development of larger sites also increases the viability of providing housing of an appropriate type and tenure (including affordable housing) to meet local needs. Therefore, as mentioned above, Option 1 is the most favourable option with regards to the population and community SEA theme.

Health and wellbeing

- 6.125 All sites but Site SN4022 and GNLP0511 (Option 1) do not have a public right of way on site or in proximity to them; Site SN4022/ GNLP0511 has a public footpath running alongside its southern boundary. This allows for safe and sustainable travel into and through the main settlement of Scole, promoting health and wellbeing.
- 6.126 The settlement of Scole has a few services, including a primary school, a village store, a church, and a park. It is lacking in shops and medical infrastructure. These are more widely available in the neighbouring settlement of Diss.
- 6.127 Considering the facilities that are within Scole, Option 1 performs the best in terms of health and wellbeing due to Site SN4022/ GNLP0511 being positioned adjacent to a public right of way and both sites being located close to Scole Park. The rest of the sites are ranked equally, and no significant effects are anticipated. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the sites proposed through the remaining options are all within proximity to the village boundary and the existing services and facilities within the settlement. Therefore, providing pedestrian connectivity can be established between the

sites and the villages, this has the potential to encourage active travel into the settlement and positively impact upon health and wellbeing objectives.

Transportation

- 6.128 All options are likely to lead to increases in vehicular usage on the local road network, therefore minor negative effects can be anticipated. Site SN4022 and GNLP0511 (Option 1) is close to bus stops that services 2 and 584 stop at, providing access to locations including Pulham Market, Diss, and Norwich.
- 6.129 Sites GNLP2066 (Option 4) and GNLP0527 (Option 3) are located within walking distance of bus stops for bus services 170 and 581, that stop at locations including Diss, Harleston, Bungay, Beccles, Eye, Framlingham, Woodbridge, and Felixstowe.
- 6.130 Considering the above, Options 3 and 4 are ranked most favourably due to the proximity of the sites to bus stops which support services to a variety of destinations within and surrounding the neighbourhood area. Option 1 is ranked second most favourably due to access to the bus stops and the locations the bus services offer. Options 2 and 5 are ranked least favourably due to not being located close to bus stops to encourage sustainable transport. No significant effects are anticipated. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that all sites are adjacent to the existing village boundary, and therefore are located within relatively accessible locations with respect to local services and facilities. This has the potential to reduce the reliance on private vehicles associated from new development but is perhaps more readily achievable through some of the options given the proximity to public transport networks (as discussed).

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for Brome and Oakley

6.131 **Table 6.9** identifies the options established for Brome and Oakley.

Table 6.9: Alternatives for Brome and Oakley

Site reference	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
SS0542 & SS1012/ Site 10: Lower Oakley Plot 2 (west)	12	-	12
Site 12d: Brome	-	13	13
Total homes	12	13	25

6.132 **Table 6.10** presents summary findings for the appraisal of these options, supported by narrative in relation to each SEA theme.

Table 6.10: Summary appraisal findings for options at Brome and Oakley

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	1	1
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	3
Historic environment	Significant effect?	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	1	1	2
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	3
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive
	Rank	2	1	1
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	=	=	=
Transportation	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2

Biodiversity

6.133 There are no Ramsar sites, SACs, SPAs or SSSIs overlapping or in proximity to the sites considered for Brome and Oakley. Additionally, there is no overlap with SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the type of development likely to be

brought forward through the neighbourhood plan. There are no further biodiversity designations overlapping or within proximity to any of the proposed sites. In this respect, none of the options are likely to adversely impact any internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity.

- 6.134 In terms of habitat type, Site 10 is in proximity to coastal and floodplain grazing marsh to the north-west of the site and Site 12d is in proximity to deciduous woodland to the south-east. Site 12d does not overlap with a National Habitat Network classification, but Site 10 overlaps with Network Enhancement Zone 2 - which indicates the potential of this site to improve biodiversity value through land management change and/or green infrastructure provision.
- 6.135 Considering the above, both sites perform similarly for the theme of biodiversity, and are all considered to have minor negative effects due to the potential for habitat loss on site. However, in line with local and national requirements with respects to delivering net gains, it is anticipated that new development areas proposed on both sites would result in no net loss of habitats. Additionally, sensitively designed development has the potential to enhance local ecological networks, including through enhancing connections between areas and strengthening the resilience of habitats through incorporating natural and green buffer zones. This is perhaps more readily achievable through Site 12d, given the larger size of the site area. Nevertheless, this is dependent on the design of the scheme.

Climate change

- 6.136 In terms of climate change mitigation, road transport is a significant contribution to emissions within Mid Suffolk. Therefore, development within proximity to village centres (i.e., locations within the neighbourhood area with the greatest variety of services and facilities) will, to an extent, help limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport through encouraging new development in locations with proximity to the key amenities and public transport networks. In this respect, Brome and Oakley are less well served with respect to services and facilities. Therefore, development though all options is not likely to reduce the reliance on private vehicles for undertaking some day-to-day activities within the neighbourhood area.
- 6.137 In terms of flood risk, both sites are within Flood Zone 1. Site 12d itself is not at risk of surface water flooding but is adjacent to areas at varying risk located around its whole perimeter. Site 10 has no surface flood risk associated with it. It is anticipated that surface water flood risks could largely be contained within the site boundaries via the inclusion of appropriate drainage measures through design. Alongside local and national policy with respect to tackling flood risk concerns (including via the sequential and exception tests), flood risks are not anticipated to be a significant constraint to development at all locations. Nonetheless, it is concluded that there could be negative effects following development on Site 12d given its proximity to areas at risk of surface water flooding. Given this, Option 1 is considered the most favourable as it excludes Site 12d. Options 2 and 3 are ranked equally.

Landscape

- 6.138 None of the sites are within or in proximity to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Park, nor is there any greenbelt land. As such, it

is not anticipated that any of the options would impact upon the integrity of a nationally protected landscape.

- 6.139 Site 10 is located on the outskirts of Oakley. It is at a similar elevation to the existing structures at Oakley. Site 12d is located adjacent to existing structures that make up Brome's existing settlement. It is at the same elevation as the existing settlement.
- 6.140 As greenfield development, each site has the potential to have a negative impact on the landscape and setting. However, these impacts are not likely to be significant. Impacts associated with Site 12d (Options 2 and 3) are likely to be more pronounced given the relative size of this site in comparison to Site 10 (Options 1 and 3), and through the allocation of both sites, impacts under Option 3 are likely to be greater. This is reflected in the ranking of options. It is important to recognise that proposals for larger development areas (as potentially might come forward at Site 12d) have the potential to positively contribute to wider landscape objectives through sensitive design. For example, delivering net gains in biodiversity and green infrastructure enhancements have the potential to help conserve and enhance landscape and villagescape character, including its special qualities and sense of place. For example, enhanced habitats (trees, hedgerows, grass, shrub, etc.,) can form important parts of the landscape, and provide a role in landscape buffering and planting, providing screening to restrict undesirable views. They can also play a role in contributing towards local distinctiveness and a sense of place.

Historic environment

- 6.141 Neither of the sites have scheduled monuments, registered parks or gardens or registered battlefield designations overlapping the site area.
- 6.142 Both sites are within proximity to listed buildings; Site 12d is in proximity to Grade II listed Ivy House, Grade II listed Cornwallis Cottages, Grade II listed The Old Post Office and Grade II listed The Magnolias. Site 10 is in proximity to Grade II listed Weaver's Cottage. Site 10 is located closer to the nearby listed building than Site 12d. Development at these sites will impact the setting and significance of these historic environment assets.
- 6.143 Through considering the above information, it is clear there is the potential for significant negative effects to occur through development at both sites due to the proximity to listed buildings. In this respect, mitigation developed in consultation with Historic England is encouraged to ensure that development proposals at both sites seek to implement sensitive design which respects and enhances the setting of nearby heritage assets. Effects could ultimately be exacerbated through the allocation of both sites, and on this basis, Option 3 is ranked least preferably.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 6.144 Both sites are within the River Waveney Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). Additionally, both sites are within Source Protection Zone (SPZ) III – Total Catchment. Both sites are within a Minerals Consultation Area outlined in the Suffolk Minerals and Waste Plan.

- 6.145 In the absence of a formal, in-depth land assessment, the provisional ALC places Site 12d in Grade 2 'Very Good' and Site 10 in Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land. Site 12d overlaps with the 'urban' BMV land classification and part of an area with a high likelihood of BMV land; Site 10 has a low likelihood of BMV land.
- 6.146 The sites fall within the Waveney (Frenze Beck to Dove) waterbody catchment, which was awarded a moderate ecological and a failed chemical status upon its last examination in 2019.
- 6.147 Based on this information, there is a potential for negative effects through development of land considered to be Grade 2 'Very Good' and Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' ALC land, though given the scale of growth proposed these effects are not likely to be significant. Option 1 is the most favourable due to there being a low likelihood of BMV land on Site 10. Option 2 and Option 3 are less favourable options as development of the whole of Site 12d will result in the loss of greenfield land (which is also potentially some of the best and most versatile land for agricultural purposes).

Population and communities

- 6.148 Each option is considered to lead to significant positive effects for the population and community through providing additional land for housing.
- 6.149 Site 12d has the potential for 13 homes. It is in proximity to Brome and Oakley Village Hall. There are no additional services in the area other than a local coffee shop and a candle shop. Site 10 has the potential for twelve homes and is located on the outskirts of Oakley. There are no community services in the area.
- 6.150 Based on this information, Options 2 and 3 are ranked more favourably than Option 1 due to the inclusion of Site 12d, which is positioned close to the Brome and Oakley Village Hall. Therefore Option 1 is ranked least favourably. However, it is important to note that Brome and Oakley are less well served by services and facilities in comparison to other settlements within the neighbourhood area (such as Diss). Nevertheless, new development has the potential to positively contribute to community vitality, with larger sites (such as Site 12d) having the potential to generate developer contributions which could provide additional (or expand the existing) services and facilities offer within the neighbourhood area. Development of larger sites also increases the viability of providing housing of an appropriate type and tenure (including affordable housing) to meet local needs.

Health and wellbeing

- 6.151 Neither of the sites have a public right of way on site or in proximity to them to allow for safe and sustainable travel around Brome and Oakley. However, Brome has pedestrian access along the roads in proximity to Site 12d – the B1118 adjacent to Site 10 does not have safe pedestrian access.
- 6.152 Neither site is close to any health and wellbeing facilities – these are widely available in Diss. Brome does offer a coffee shop and a candle shop, but there are no additional shops for items like food. Nor are there any shops or facilities in Oakley.

6.153 Considering the above information, all options are ranked equally due to a lack of facilities and services linked to health and wellbeing. No significant effects are anticipated with low levels of growth proposed.

Transportation

6.154 All options are likely to lead to increases in vehicular usage on the local road network, with the scale of growth proposed under the options minor negative effects can be anticipated. There are no bus stops in the area around both sites. Looking at the road network alone, Site 10 is situated adjacent to a B road – specifically B1118, which allows access to the A140 to the west and the A143 to the north. Site 12d is located on a road that links to the B1077 and the A140 to the west. Considering this information, Option 1 is ranked most favourably. No significant effects are anticipated.

7. Developing the preferred approach

- 7.1 The DDNP Steering Group have provided the following reasons for developing the preferred approach considering the alternatives assessment:

Burston

Option 3 will be taken forward. This performs well across most of the SEA themes. It is close to the settlement centre and services including the school, park and bus stops. It is considered to be the most sustainable location for growth of 25 homes in Burston. This site was one of those with the greatest level of support from the community during consultation exercises.

Option 1 includes land east of Mill Road, a small site with potential for significant effects on heritage assets. Feedback from the highway authority also indicates this site has access constraints.

Options 2 & 4 involve allocation of GNLP0386 – Land at Rectory Road. Delivery of this site could have landscape impacts and would lead to coalescence, or closing of the gap, between Burston and Audley End. The site was not the preferred option for the community.

Diss

The housing requirement for Diss requires there to be at least one site delivering a significant number of new homes. The assessment of reasonable alternatives provides a good narrative on the options in relation to where this significant growth goes. Options 1 and 6 include an allocation that would deliver significant growth north of the cemetery, Options 2,3,4 and 6 would deliver this around Walcot Green/Burston Road and Option 7 to the north-west of Diss.

Option 7 is not considered favourable as it extends the settlement significantly into the countryside, taking productive agricultural land. It is also not well located in relation to the town centre and available services.

The Options that involve Walcot Green/Burston Road would erode the narrow landscape gap between Diss and Walcot Green. There is also concern that development in the Walcot Green area will affect green spaces that are special to the community. Walcot Hall Green is designated a Local Green Space within the Plan. In addition, the road/footway network around this part of the parish is narrow or non-existent. This is identified in the assessment of alternatives and a concern raised by the community and highway authority in relation to development in this area.

Sites have been chosen that are closely related to the settlement, which offers greater opportunities to promote active travel to jobs and services. Additional traffic congestion is a key concern of the community, so this is important. The link road that will be delivered as part of sites north of the cemetery are also an opportunity to help address this.

Roydon

Option 3 is the preferred location for growth in Roydon. This site will accommodate the entire housing requirement of 25 homes. It is the site with the greatest level of community support, mainly because it is perceived to have least impact on the landscape setting of the Waveney Valley and Roydon Fen – though it is noted that the assessment identifies each of the options could have an impact on the landscape. Option 3 is also well located in terms of access to the primary school and other services.

Scole

DDNP has chosen to allocate additional housing growth in Scole over and above the indicative requirement. Option 1, which includes land east of Norwich Road, will enable infrastructure improvements, including traffic calming measures along Norwich Road. This will have a significant community benefit, as identified in the assessment of alternatives. This site is well located, adjacent the existing SNLP allocation, and within close proximity of services in the village centre. The size of this site will also enable a greater amount of affordable housing provision to be delivered. For these reasons this site is seen as a preference to the alternatives, including land south of Bungay Road (Option 3). The constraints, including potential impact on nearby scheduled monument and listed buildings, is also noted for this option.

Brome and Oakley

The preferred approach for Brome & Oakley includes allocating both sites that have been assessed, but with revised site boundaries and for fewer homes. The assessment of reasonable alternatives identifies there is very little between the two sites in relation to impact on key themes. It gives confidence in allocating both sites.

Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?

8. Introduction (to Part 2)

- 8.1 The aim of this section is to present findings and recommendations in relation to the current Regulation 14 consultation draft of the DDNP. This section of the report presents:
- An appraisal of the current version of the DDNP under the eight SEA theme headings establishing through scoping (see **Chapter 3**).
 - An overview of the likely cumulative effects; and
 - The overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

Methodology

- 8.2 The appraisal is structured under the eight SEA themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA and that are linked to the SEA objectives (see **Table 3.1**).
- 8.3 For each theme ‘significant effects’ of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e., the potential for the DDNP to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes and projects. These effect ‘characteristics’ are described within the assessment as appropriate.
- 8.4 Every effort is made to identify/ evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

DDNP policies

- 8.5 To supplement the implementation of the vision for the DDNP (discussed in **Chapter 2**), the current version of the Plan put forward 32 policies to guide future development in the Plan area (19 of which are site allocation policies). The policies, which were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering, are set out in **Table 8.1**.

Table 8.1 DDNP policies

Policy reference	Policy name
Delivering Growth	
Policy 1	Scale and Location of Housing Growth
DDNP1	Land east of Shelfanger Road and west of Heywood Road, Diss (including part of Roydon parish)
DDNP2	Site of derelict Victorian Infant School, the Causeway, Diss

Policy reference	Policy name
DDNP3	Site of the existing leisure centre, Victoria Road, Diss
DDNP4	Land west of Nelson Road and east of Station Road, Diss
DDNP5	Land north of Nelson Road, Diss
DDNP6	Land off Denmark Lane, Diss (including part of Roydon parish)
DDNP7	Land north of Vince's Road, Diss
DDNP8	Land south of Roydon Primary School, Roydon
DDNP9	Land west of Gissing Road, Burston
DDNP10	Flowerdew Meadow, Norwich Road, Scole
DDNP11	Land east of Norwich Road, Scole
DDNP12	Former Scole Engineering Site, Scole
DDNP13	Land north-east of Ivy House, Brome
DDNP14	Land south of B1118, Lower Oakley
Policy 2	Regeneration of the Waveney Quarter
DDNP15	Land off Park Road, Diss
DDNP16	The Feather Mills site, Park Road, Diss
DDNP17	Land at Sandy Lane (north of Diss Business Park), Diss
Policy 3	Diss Business Park
Policy 4	Housing Mix
Policy 5	Affordable Housing
Policy 6	Design
Growth and Infrastructure Policies	
Policy 7	Surface Water Management
Policy 8	Green Corridors and Biodiversity Enhancement
Policy 9	Road Traffic Improvements
Policy 10	Walking and Cycling Network
Policy 11	Diss Leisure Centre
Policy 12	Broadband
Policy 13	Funding and Delivery of Infrastructure
Protection Policies	
Policy 14	Strategic Gap Between Diss and Roydon
Policy 15	Local Green Space
Policy 16	Protection of Important Local Views
Policy 17	Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets

9. Appraisal of the DDNP

Biodiversity

- 9.1 In relation to internationally designated biodiversity sites outside of the Plan area, the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) produced for the DDNP identifies impact pathways in relation to Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA), Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and Redgrave and South Lopham Fens Ramsar site. However, the HRA concludes that the DDNP provides a sufficient policy framework to ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of international designated sites will occur in isolation or in combination with other projects and plans.
- 9.2 The main biodiversity constraints in the Plan area relate to the designated Roydon Fen Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and areas of Priority Habitat. Site allocations DDNP6 (Land off Denmark Lane, Diss) and DDNP8 (Land south of Roydon Primary School) are located to the northeast of Roydon Fen LNR. In addition to this, site allocation DDNP1 (Land east of Shelfanger Road and west of Heywood Road) lies adjacent to the cemetery which is designated as a County Wildlife Site (CWS). The proposal for DDNP1 seeks a cemetery extension north of the existing cemetery space, providing a significant buffer between development and the designated area, and providing the opportunity for habitat enhancement in this area. The site is expected to act as informal recreation land until the extension is required.
- 9.3 The western extent of site DDNP1 is recognised as a 'Habitat Network Expansion Zone'. The zone surrounds areas of Priority Habitat; both 'traditional orchards' and 'deciduous woodland' and the land within this zone is deemed suitable for habitat re-creation and identifying opportunities to connect or link-up networks across the landscape. This context is reflected in proposed Policy DDNP1, which requires that development delivers "biodiversity net gain which includes habitat enhancement or creation to link with the nearby green corridors". Green corridors are identified in proposed Policy 8 (Green Corridors), highlighting the opportunity for development to support enhancement of and access to Green Corridor '13' traversing the site in the north-south direction to encompass the Cemetery, the Parish Fields, and The Mere.
- 9.4 As brownfield sites, DDNP2 (Site of derelict Victorian Infant School, the Causeway, Diss), DDNP3 (Site of the existing leisure centre, Victoria Road, Diss) and DDNP4 (Land west of Nelson Road and east of Station Road, Diss) provide opportunities for biodiversity net gain and habitat enhancement. This is particularly relevant to DDNP2 given its location between areas of dense tree coverage and The Mere. This could be better reflected through the site-specific policy; to identify the potential habitat connections surrounding the site and capitalising on opportunities to connect with the identified green corridors. However, it is recognised that Policy 8 (Green Corridors) requires that all "new development proposals must recognise the identified green corridors", and that proposals within or adjacent to a green corridor "*must deliver measurable net gains in biodiversity which exceed national or local policy requirements or deliver qualitative improvement to the corridor*".

- 9.5 The permitted development and rolled over allocations sites from the adopted Local Plan (DDNP5 (Land north of Nelson Road, Diss), DDNP7 (Land north of Vince's Road, Diss), DDNP15 (Land off Park Road, Diss), DDNP6 (Land off Denmark Lane, Diss), and DDNP16 (The Feather Mills Site, Park Road, Diss)) have all been found sound in principle as development sites, and no significant effects are considered likely on this premise.
- 9.6 At Roydon, DDNP8 (Lane south of Roydon Primary School) lies at the fringe of the Habitat Network Enhancement Zone 2 with the potential to support ecological connectivity of the land surrounding Roydon Fen Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Residents at this site would be provided with direct access to the LNR via Tottington Lane and there is good tree coverage west of the site. The site allocation Policy DDNP6 (Land south of Roydon Primary School) seeks to ensure that development retains and enhances existing trees and hedgerows, provides a 10 -metre landscape belt, protects dark skies, and provides pedestrian and cycle access to Roydon Lake (whilst minimising disturbance to identified green corridors). This is likely to ensure that long-term negative effects are avoided.
- 9.7 At Burston, the allocation site (DDNP9 (Land west of Gissing Road)) avoids any significant impacts in relation to biodiversity, avoiding designated and identified priority habitats. However, DDNP9 is approximately 100 metres northwest of a 'Network Expansion Zone'.
- 9.8 At Scole, allocation site DDNP12 (Former Scole Engineering Site) avoids any significant impacts in relation to biodiversity. However, DDNP10 (Flowerdew Meadow, Norwich Road) and DDNP11 (Land east of Norwich Road) are both within the National Habitat Network, specifically a 'Network Expansion Zone'. The corresponding site allocation policies (DDNP10 and DDNP11) could identify a preference for development which seeks to enhance ecological linkages in this area, recognising that the settlement is less connected to the identified green corridor network across the Plan area (and thus development is less likely to be captured by the provisions of Policy 8).
- 9.9 Regarding Brome and Oakley, site allocation DDNP14 (Land south of B1118) falls within 'Network Enhancement Zone 2' and is adjacent to 'Restorable Habitat' to the north. It is worth noting that all Lower Oakley is within one of these two features within the National Habitat Network.
- 9.10 The provisions of Policy 8 (Green Corridors) and Policy 15 (Local Green Space) seek to support the retention and long-term protection of key habitats in the Plan area in future development. Biodiversity net gain is a requirement within two of the site allocation policies, and under Policy 8 (Green Corridors) it is a requirement for development within or adjacent to green corridors. Furthermore, the provisions of Policy 6 (Design) seek to ensure that good design is demonstrated in development proposals through significant biodiversity enhancements.
- 9.11 Policy 3 (Diss Business Park) supports Policy 8 (Green Corridors) by reducing pressures on nearby green corridors and the Frenze Beck County Wildlife site. In addition to this, Policy 7 (Surface Water Management) is likely to indirectly benefit biodiversity by supporting natural drainage systems including attenuation ponds, green roofs and planning.

9.12 Overall, the spatial strategy of the DDNP is deemed likely to lead to minor long-term positive effects. This is due to the promotion for active consideration and enhancement of biodiversity. Moreover, the identified green corridors in the Plan area are likely to provide long-term support for enhanced ecological connections extending the Plan area.

Climate change

- 9.13 In relation to climate change mitigation, a primary consideration is the ability for development to support changes in travel patterns and a shift towards more sustainable forms of travel (i.e., public transport, walking, cycling and electric vehicles). The spatial strategy of the DDNP is in line with the strategic directions of the Local Plan, which includes larger scale growth within Diss as a ‘Main Town’ in the settlement hierarchy. This supports the aim to reduce the need to travel, by locating most development within the most accessible areas of the Plan area and wider District.
- 9.14 Development at Site DDNP1 (Land east of Shelfanger Road and west of Heywood Road, Diss) is anticipated to deliver a new link road connecting Heywood Road and Shelfanger Road. Masterplanning of the site is required, which should seek to maximise opportunities for enhanced walking routes and cycle network connections. Furthermore, the proposed change of use at the ‘Land west of Nelson Road and east of Station Road, Diss’ (DDNP4) from employment to housing development (as a rolled over allocation site from the Local Plan) will provide new residents with excellent access to the railway station, with a new road connection required from Nelson Road to the station forecourt.
- 9.15 Additional measures which seek to enhance and connect more areas with identified ‘green corridors’ in the Plan area (Policy 8) and deliver an extended riverside walking route at the ‘Land off Park Road, Diss’ (Policy DDNP15) should further promote walking locally. This is supported by the fact that many of the proposed development sites adjoin existing Public Rights of Way (PRoWs). The performance of the spatial strategy in relation to movement is explored further under the ‘transportation’ SEA theme.
- 9.16 A secondary consideration is the need to support delivery of low carbon infrastructure (e.g., a ground source heat network; or solar PV with battery storage) and/or high standards of sustainable design and construction, such that the development can achieve net zero or, at least, CO₂ emissions standards that exceed the requirements of Building Regulations. It is recognised that the DDNP does not directly address this issue through the policy framework, despite the identified aim to “ensure that the need to address climate change runs through all aspects of the Plan”.
- 9.17 By promoting large-scale growth at a single site in Diss, it is recognised that through economies of scale, development has far greater potential to realise sustainability improvements over and above that set by Building Regulations where feasible. In this respect, it is recommended that the potential sustainability standards in major development proposals are explored in greater detail, and where appropriate supported by additional policy provisions, prior to finalisation of the DDNP.

- 9.18 In relation to climate change adaptation, a key consideration is existing and future flood risk. Fluvial flood risk in the Plan area follows the River Waveney and Frenze Beck, with extensive areas of high risk in the land between Diss and Scole. Of the sites allocated in the DDNP, the rolled over site allocation DDNP15 (Land off Park Road, Diss) is in an area of low fluvial flood risk, and under Policy DDNP15 development in Flood Zone 1 is identified as acceptable in principle at the site.
- 9.19 Whilst not identified as an area of flood risk, it is recognised that DDNP3 (Site of the existing leisure centre, Victoria Road, Diss) is located adjacent to the River Waveney, where development should give due consideration to future flood risk. Furthermore, small waterbodies intersect both DDNP1 (Land east of Shelfanger Road and west of Heywood Road, Diss) and DDNP13 (Land north-east of Ivy House, Brome) where appropriate flood risk assessment should be undertaken. These requirements will be captured by the NPPF and Local Plans.
- 9.20 Surface water flood risk is more extensive across the Plan area and most of the allocation sites at least intersect an area of low surface water flood risk. Most notably, sites DDNP4 (Land west of Nelson Road and east of Station Road, Diss) and DDNP15 (Land off Park Road, Diss) contain extensive areas of low, medium and high surface water flood risk, where the appropriate application of sustainable drainage systems will be crucial to reducing risks to people and property.
- 9.21 A need to address surface water flood risk constraints are identified under some of the allocation site policies. This is supported by Policy 7 (Surface Water Management) which will ensure necessary mitigation is provided in any future development within the neighbourhood area, ensuring long-term safe and secure access for future residents, and potentially reducing impacts for existing residents.
- 9.22 Overall, the DDNP provides good support for a shift towards more sustainable forms of local travel, particularly through the development of green infrastructure supporting attractive walking/ cycle routes. The DDNP also supports surface water management through targeted policy, as well as through the site allocation policies. Minor long-term positive effects are anticipated in this respect. Despite this, it is recognised that there is potentially scope to raise the expected sustainability performance of major development proposals at Diss.

Landscape

- 9.23 The landscape of the Plan area is largely shaped by the River Waveney and maintains a strong rural character. Most growth is directed to Diss (in line with the Local Plan requirements), and notably this includes the large development site in the north of the settlement; DDNP1 (Land east of Shelfanger Road and west of Heywood Road, Diss).
- 9.24 Diss is strongly associated with a high ridge of raised land to the north of the Waveney Valley. The location of DDNP1 means development has the potential to affect long distance views northwards from the cemetery, impact the bridleway passing through the site, and impact views into the site from the adjacent footpath. Development of the greenfield site will ultimately encroach

upon the surrounding countryside, and long-term minor negative effects are considered likely as a result.

- 9.25 The site allocation policy (Policy DDNP1) seeks masterplanning of the large site, delivering a coordinated landscape approach incorporating biodiversity net gain and habitat enhancement or creation to strengthen the links with the identified green corridors across the Plan area (as identified in Policy 8). Supported by the provisions of Policy 6 (Design), which seeks development that reinforces local distinctiveness, this should serve to minimise negative effects. Policy 6 recognises the need for development to consider where applicable its edge of settlement location and transition to the open countryside.
- 9.26 The DDNP also seeks to utilise brownfield land opportunities where these are available, including at; DDNP2 (Site of derelict Victorian Infant School, the Causeway, Diss), DDNP3 (Site of the existing leisure centre, Victoria Road, Diss) and DDNP4 (Land west of Nelson Road and east of Station Road, Diss) to deliver a proportion of the required housing. Brownfield development will ultimately reduce impacts on the countryside; but will need to be designed to contribute to the townscape setting and historic settlement character. In this respect, the provisions of Policy 6 (Design) should ensure that development integrates with the settlement form by expecting a sensitive response to local characteristics and materials, demonstrating an understanding of local design character and density. This includes the higher density residential development found in and around Diss town centre. Ultimately, Policy 6 states that “*design of poor quality will not be supported*”.
- 9.27 With the permitted development at DDNP5 (Land north of Nelson Road, Diss) and with DDNP6, DDNP7, DDNP15 and DDNP16 being rolled over allocations from the local plan, no significant landscape impacts are anticipated in development, given that development of the sites has already been found acceptable in principle. Despite this, the relevant site allocation policies seek to ensure that development provides appropriate landscaping and boundary treatment and seeks to protect and enhance green infrastructure links and assets.
- 9.28 At Roydon, development is focused south of Roydon Primary School (Policy DDNP8) between Old High Road and the A1066. The site provides a good opportunity for screening which could minimise the landscape impacts of development; however, development in this location will contribute to coalescence with Diss. Despite this, the site avoids the proposed ‘strategic open gap’ between Diss and Roydon and supported by the provisions of Policy DDNP8 which seeks to ensure “*adequate separation, in accordance with the strategic gap identified in Policy 14, is maintained between the development and Long Meadow properties*”, no significant effects are considered likely.
- 9.29 At Burston, the proposed allocation at the ‘Land west of Gissing Road’ (Policy DDNP9) is expected to deliver open green space alongside housing development to connect with the adjacent green corridor, as well as landscaping which minimises impacts on heritage settings. Supported by the provisions of Policy 6 (Design) no significant negative effects are considered likely in development.
- 9.30 At Scole, the proposed development is relatively contained in the river valley and includes development of brownfield land opportunities. However, site

allocation DDNP11 (Land east of Norwich Road) is located on higher ground in the settlement, ultimately increasing the potential for impacts on long-distance views and visual amenity. Despite this, development effects are likely to relate more predominantly to the historic townscape.

- 9.31 The landscape south of the Waveney is recognised in saved Local Plan policies as a ‘Special Landscape Area’ (though this is soon to be replaced by the provisions of the emerging JLP). Despite this, the small-scale allocation sites in Brome and Oakley are not considered likely to lead to any significant effects, delivering 10 or less homes at the individual sites.
- 9.32 Landscape considerations are embedded further through the proposed policies of the DDNP. Notably, Policy 16 seeks to identify and protect important local views which add to landscape character and visual amenity. Additionally, the provisions of Policies 8 (Green Corridors) and 15 (Local Green Space) seek to extend and enhance green infrastructure networks in the Plan area. Furthermore, the proposed strategic open gap between Diss and Roydon will provide long-term support in retaining countryside access and the rural character of the settlements.
- 9.33 Overall, the policy provisions of the DDNP seek to reduce the impact of the proposed spatial strategy (i.e., allocation sites). Despite this, the development of greenfield land at edge of settlement locations is considered likely to lead to residual minor long-term negative effects.

Historic environment

- 9.34 The Plan area contains a rich variety of both designated and non-designated heritage assets, and each settlement has its own identity and historic values. In relation to the allocation sites, many are constrained by designated heritage assets. At Diss, site allocation DDNP2 (Site of derelict Victorian Infant School, the Causeway) lies within the Diss Conservation Area, and adjacent to the Listed Buildings which line Mere Street to the west. Mere Street leads directly north to the Diss Heritage Triangle. Policy DDNP2 identifies that the old school building is to be retained and development “*will need to be sensitive to the historic character of the area*”.
- 9.35 Furthermore, site allocations DDNP3 (Site of the existing leisure centre, Victoria Road, Diss), DDNP15 (Land off Park Road, Diss) and DDNP16 (The Feather Mills site, Park Road) lie close to Diss Conservation Area. Moreover, DDNP15 and DDNP16 are located east of several listed buildings along Denmark Street.
- 9.36 The Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies non-designated assets in Diss, and in this respect, site allocation DDNP1 (Land east of Shelfanger Road and west of Heywood Road) contains non-designated asset the ‘Royal Observer Corps. post building’. Site DDNP5 (Land north of Nelson Road) lies within an identified ‘Archaeology Area’, with Site DDNP4 (Land west of Nelson Road and east of Station Road, Diss) lying adjacent to this same area. Site DDNP6 (Land off Denmark lane, Diss) lies opposite an ‘Archaeology Area’; with multi-period finds including probable Iron Age defended settlement.
- 9.37 The site allocated within Roydon (DDNP8 (Land south of Roydon Primary School) is not constrained by designated heritage assets. However, it is

recognised that the Norfolk HER identifies Roydon Primary School as a non-designated asset.

- 9.38 At Burston, site allocation DDNP9 (Land west of Gissing Road) lies adjacent to Grade II listed Manor House Farmhouse to the south, where appropriate screening and consideration to the heritage setting will be required.
- 9.39 At Scole, site DDNP12 (Former Scole Engineering Site) lies within the Scole Conservation Area, opposite the large Scheduled Monument ‘Scole Roman Settlement’ and an identified ‘Archaeology Area’. Sites DDNP10 (Flowerdew Meadow, Norwich Road) and DDNP11 (Land east of Norwich Road) are near the Scole Conservation Area, Grade II listed Thatchet, where access to the site has the potential to affect its setting, and an identified ‘Archaeological Area’.
- 9.40 The allocated site at Brome (DDNP13 (Land north-east of Ivy House)) lies behind the listed buildings that line The Street, with Ivy House being Grade II listed. The whole farmstead is further recognised as a non-designated asset in the Norfolk HER. At Lower Oakley, allocated site (DDNP14 (Land south of B1118) will see development surround the Grade II listed Weaver’s Cottage to the west.
- 9.41 Whilst some of the corresponding site allocation policies identify designated assets, Policy 17 (Heritage Assets) and its supporting text provide the main context for development in relation to the historic values of the Plan area. Non-designated assets at each of the settlements are identified in the supporting text, and Policy 17 seeks development which protects and where possible, enhances, “the character, integrity and appearance of existing heritage assets”. Furthermore, development *“affecting listed buildings should not harm the significance of the heritage asset and should preserve its character and appearance”*. The policy identifies that development should avoid harm to non-designated assets, having regard to their “character, important features, setting and relationship with surrounding buildings or uses”. Works to an existing designated or non-designated are further required to be supported by a Heritage Statement detailing any proposed mitigation. Additionally, proposals adjacent to non-designated assets are required to demonstrate due consideration of the asset, distinctive historic features, positive elements of its setting that contribute to the significance of the asset, and the contribution that the asset and its setting makes to the character of the local area.
- 9.42 Overall, the provisions of the DDNP supplement the policy provisions of the Local Plans and the NPPF, particularly by adding local context in terms of non-designated assets. In this respect, the policy provisions reduce the impacts of the proposed spatial strategy, which will inevitably see development in sensitive historic locations. Whilst the overall effects remain uncertain in the absence of detailed design and layout schemes at the proposed development sites, no significant effects are considered likely.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 9.43 Given a lack of detailed land classification surveying in the Plan area, there is a need to rely on provisional national datasets to inform the judgements made in relation to effects on soil resources. In this respect, the national data indicates that most of the land surrounding the settlements in the Plan area is ‘grade 3’ quality land. However, the dataset is very low resolution and does not

differentiate between grade 3a (which is classed as best and most versatile) and grade 3b (which is not classed as best and most versatile). The only lower grade agricultural land is associated with the river. Despite this, many of the proposed allocation sites appear to be in agricultural use, and the loss of such resources to housing development is inevitably considered likely to lead to long-term minor negative effects.

- 9.44 Despite this, it is recognised that the DDNP includes an element of brownfield development in both Diss and Scole, positively supporting the efficient use of land and prioritising development at lower quality land resources. In some areas, the potential for contaminated land is identified (e.g., Policy DDNP5) and under the site allocation policies appropriate remediation is required. The remediation of contaminated land is considered for long-term positive effects in relation to land and soil resources.
- 9.45 Furthermore, parts of the Plan area contain safeguarded mineral resources, and the site allocation policies (e.g., Policy DDNP4) identify the need for development to comply with the relevant minerals planning policies. In this respect, it is considered likely that significant effects will be avoided.
- 9.46 Two site allocations (DDNP1 (Land east of Shelfanger Road and west of Heywood Road, Diss) and DDNP13 (Land north-east of Ivy House, Brome)) either contain or lie adjacent to waterbodies, where appropriate consideration and mitigation of development impacts on water quality should be fully established prior to development. It is recognised that these constraints could be better reflected in the relevant site allocation policies. Nevertheless, Policy 7 (Surface Water Management) will assist in reducing the impacts of surface water flooding on water quality.
- 9.47 The DDNP area is served by Anglian Water Services (AWS). The Environment Agency have identified areas of relative water stress and the whole of AWS' supply area is shown as an area of 'Serious' water stress, based upon the amount of water available per person both now and in the future¹⁶.
- 9.48 Anglian Water's Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)¹⁷ identifies that the supply-demand balance is under significant pressure from population growth, climate change, sustainability reductions and the need to increase resilience to severe drought. These challenges are acute in the East of England region given low rainfall combined with a significant proportion of wetland sites of conservation interest. An additional 294 Ml/d is required by 2045; the equivalent of more than a quarter of the average daily distribution input in 2017 to 2018. Furthermore, a significant proportion of these needs will be required by 2025. The Plan prioritises demand management, whilst also investing in supply, with particular focus on the period up to 2025. The planned new infrastructure and improvements to the existing supply chain will manage the long-term impacts on water resources associated with growth. Most notably, the growth strategy of the DDNP does not significantly exceed that planned for in the emerging Local Plans and consulted upon with AWS.
- 9.49 Overall, whilst there remains an element of uncertainty in relation to the precise grade of agricultural land lost to development, minor long-term negative effects are anticipated. Despite this, it is recognised that the Plan prioritises brownfield

¹⁶ Environment Agency (2013): 'Water stressed areas – final classification', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

¹⁷ Anglian Water (2019): 'Water Resources Management Plan 2019', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

land opportunities where these exist and provides support for the remediation of contaminated land.

Population and communities

- 9.50 In relation to housing delivery, the DDNP provides an element of flexibility by slightly exceeding the housing requirement for 428 homes in Diss and identifying land for 478 dwellings. This is particularly relevant given the current uncertainty in relation to DDNP3 (Site of existing leisure centre, Victoria Road, Diss), where it is recognised that a suitable relocation site has yet to be found before any development at the site can take place. The leisure centre site is rightfully prioritised as a brownfield land opportunity, recognising the strategic commitment in place to relocate and extend the provision offer. However, inevitably there is an element of risk in relation to the site being made available within the Plan period. As a result, the additional flexibility provided ensures sufficient provision of land to avoid any significant effects arising in this respect.
- 9.51 With much of the growth directed to one large site in Diss, the Plan is recognised for the potential to capture a decent proportion of affordable housing in future growth. Local Plan policy requires 33% of the 180 homes at the 'Land east of Shelfanger Road and west of Heywood Road, Diss' to be affordable. Furthermore, Policy 5 (Affordable Housing) (of the DDNP) recognises the relatively high need for Social Rented homes in the Plan area and seeks to ensure this feature is part of the tenure mix of affordable housing. The policy outlines further tenure preferences to guide future development.
- 9.52 The allocations are supported by the provisions of Policy 4 (Housing Mix) which seeks to ensure that development provides a mix of housing types and sizes or show that they are meeting specific housing needs. This includes supporting the need for one- and three-bedroom homes, homes for the elderly, and homes suitable for younger generations.
- 9.53 With most growth located in Diss, future residents will be supported with relatively good access to a range of services and facilities, with Diss recognised as a 'Main Town' in the settlement hierarchy. Growth in the surrounding settlements is relatively small-scale, meeting local needs and supported by the provisions at Diss. Furthermore, the DDNP provides notable support for the development of walking and cycling networks as well as green infrastructure corridors which extend the Plan area. Policies 8 (Green Corridors) and 10 (Walking and Cycling Networks) recognise an identified network of routes which are subsequently prioritised for future investment.
- 9.54 Additional benefits for local communities are expected through the provision of new cemetery space within Diss (Policy DDNP1), areas of new open space being delivered alongside development at many of the allocation sites, and a new link road in the north of Diss (Policy DDNP1).
- 9.55 Furthermore, the proposed 'strategic open gap' between Diss and Roydon (Policy 14) will ultimately serve to retain the distinct and separate settlement and community identities. Supported by high quality design (Policy 6), the protection of important views (Policy 16) and protection of the historic values of each settlement; residents are likely to continue to be supported by a high-quality living environment.

9.56 Overall, the delivery of housing, and its targeted mix, alongside additional community benefits and support for improved accessibility promoted through the DDNP is considered likely to lead to significant long-term positive effects in relation to this SEA theme.

Health and wellbeing

- 9.57 With most growth focused in Diss the growing population are provided with relatively good access to existing healthcare facilities. These facilities extend support to the residents of surrounding settlements. Hospital services are also relatively well located just outside of the Plan area at Eye.
- 9.58 Recognisable health benefits for residents are also identified through the provisions of the DDNP, which, under Policy 15, identifies and protects areas of Local Green Space supporting recreational needs. Furthermore, the policy seeks to enhance the accessibility of these areas, particularly through linking sites as part of identified accessible 'green corridors' (Policy 8) integrating both people and nature to provide attractive walking and cycling routes.
- 9.59 Further support for active lifestyles is provided through the promotion of a walking and cycling network across the Plan area, identified through Policy 10, with development contributions and future investment targeted at improving this network.
- 9.60 The Plan area has retained its rural character and supported by the provisions of Policy 6 (Design) development is expected to integrate and respond sensitively to character traits which include access to the surrounding countryside and the existing network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW). Notably, the proposed sites, overall, connect well with the existing PRoW network.
- 9.61 Whilst the site of the existing leisure centre is allocated for redevelopment, it is recognised that there are long-term strategic plans to relocate this facility in Diss. Policy 11 (Diss Leisure Centre) identifies the priority for a new location which provides "*good access for people choosing to walk or cycle*" as well as accommodating vehicle parking needs. Identification of an appropriate relocation site would ultimately enhance the potential for long-term positive effects, and the DDNP may wish to further consider the potential to identify an appropriate site as part of the planning framework; perhaps even as a reserve site if it is not considered likely to be made available within the Plan period.
- 9.62 Policy 2 (Regeneration of Waveney Quarter) outlines the development expectations for growth of leisure and community facilities, as well as enhanced active travel connections, including a new riverside walk. In addition to this, Policy 3 (Diss Business Park) builds on opportunities to enhance active travel connections with existing and new employment areas, whilst protecting the function of the nearby Green Corridor network.
- 9.63 Also relevant to health and wellbeing, the provisions outlined in Policy 7 (Surface Water Management) seek to reduce the impacts of surface water flooding, to ultimately reduce its impact locally on homes, employment areas and road infrastructure.
- 9.64 Overall, residents are expected to be supported by relatively good access to healthcare, green infrastructure, recreational areas, walking and cycling routes, and the surrounding countryside in future development (as proposed through

the DDNP). On this basis, minor long-term positive effects are considered likely. It is recognised that there is the potential to enhance positive effects, by identifying an appropriate relocation site for the leisure centre through the planning framework.

Transportation and movement

- 9.65 The known road network capacity and congestion issues along the A1066 and Vince's Road in Diss are ultimately expected to be exacerbated by the strategic level of growth proposed through the DDNP (and set by the emerging GNLP). The Diss Network Improvement Strategy¹⁸ identifies that even with the provision of a new link road in the north or south of Diss, traffic conditions within the town are expected to worsen. Long-term negative effects are anticipated in this respect, with or without the DDNP.
- 9.66 The new allocations proposed in Diss through the DDNP equate to a total of 478 homes, delivering 50 more dwellings than the residual requirement, and potentially exacerbating effects further in this respect. Growth in Scole will also slightly exceed the identified need for new homes, and cumulatively add to congestion effects on the A1066 further east. Similarly, growth in Roydon is expected to add to congestion effects on the A1066 west. This is considered alongside the recognised fact that residents of the surrounding settlements will continue to drive to Diss to access a wider range of goods and services.
- 9.67 To combat the expected effects on the road network in the Plan area, Policy 9 recognises the need for “*engineering solutions to improve capacity at key junctions*” prior to significant growth. Furthermore, the DDNP seeks a new link road in the north of Diss (Policy DDNP1) linking Heywood Road and Shelfanger Road. Masterplanning of the large site proposed in the north of Diss is required, which should seek to maximise opportunities for enhanced walking routes and cycle network connections.
- 9.68 Furthermore, the proposed change of use at the ‘Land west of Nelson Road and east of Station Road, Diss’ (DDNP4) from employment to housing development (as a rolled over allocation site from the Local Plan) will provide new residents with excellent access to the railway station, with a new road connection required from Nelson Road to the station forecourt. This is supported by the provisions of Policy 10 (Walking and Cycling Network) which target development contributions and future investment at an identified network of walking and cycling routes extending the Plan area. Policy 8 provides further support in enhancing public access to a network of identified green corridors, promoting a network of attractive walking and cycling routes which integrate people and nature. Policy 2 (Regeneration of Waveney Quarter) also seeks to enhance active travel connections, particularly through a new riverside walk and enhanced green infrastructure corridors.
- 9.69 Overall, long-term negative effects are anticipated with any growth in Diss and settlements along the A1066 as part of the future baseline (i.e., with or without the DDNP). The extra policy provisions provided by the DDNP are thus considered for their potential to supplement the Local Plan, and provide further support in enhancing local access, particularly through the identified walking/cycling network within and surrounding the Plan area. The coordination of site

¹⁸ Norfolk County Council (2020): ‘Diss Network Improvement Strategy’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

allocations north of Diss enable a new link road which, although it is known that this will not sufficiently address road capacity issues, will reduce the extent of the negative impacts arising in further growth of the town. The supplementary provisions of the DDNP are thus considered for the positive effects of reducing the impacts of future growth (the level of which has been determined through the Local Plan).

Cumulative effects

- 9.70 The strategic growth in Diss is likely to provide support to some degree for the surrounding settlement areas. For example, through improved access, including access by 'green corridors' and further inward investment in the infrastructure of the Main Town. Minor long-term positive cumulative effects can be anticipated in this respect. The promotion of biodiversity enhancement across the development sites are also considered for the potential to lead to overall net gain and positive cumulative effects in this respect.
- 9.71 Despite this, it is recognised that there will a negative cumulative impact in relation to landscape, through the cumulative loss of greenfield land and encroachment upon the countryside. Cumulatively, designated and non-designated heritage settings are likely to come under pressure from development in the settlements, however, the policy provisions of the NPPF, Local Plan and DDNP are considered likely to ensure that any cumulative effects are not of significance.
- 9.72 Overall, the provisions of the DDNP supplement the provisions of the local plans, to provide additional local protections for assets, features and characteristics of value, and identify opportunities for development to address known issues or deliver community benefits. As a result, overall positive cumulative effects are considered likely.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

- 10.1 Significant long-term positive effects are predicted in relation to the population and communities SEA topic, as the DDNP delivers housing to meet the required need, targeting an appropriate mix of housing, alongside additional community benefits and support for improved accessibility. Whilst residents are expected to be supported by relatively good access to healthcare, green infrastructure, recreational areas, walking and cycling routes, and the surrounding countryside in future development, only minor long-term positive effects are considered likely for the health and wellbeing SEA topic as there is scope to enhance positive effects by identifying an appropriate relocation site for the leisure centre through the planning framework.
- 10.2 Minor long-term positive effects are also predicted for the biodiversity and climate change SEA topics. In terms of biodiversity, this is due to the promotion for active consideration and enhancement of biodiversity, as well as the support for enhanced ecological connections provided by the identified green corridors in the Plan area. In terms of climate change, the DDNP provides good support for a shift towards more sustainable forms of local travel, particularly through the development of green infrastructure supporting attractive walking/ cycle routes, as well as surface water management through targeted and site allocation policies. However, it is recognised that there is scope to raise the expected sustainability performance of major development proposals at Diss.
- 10.3 Uncertainty is noted for the historic environment SEA topic, as there are currently no detailed design and layout schemes at the proposed development sites, however, no significant effects are considered likely. The provisions of the DDNP supplement the policy provisions of the Local Plans and the NPPF, particularly by adding local context in terms of non-designated assets. In this respect, the policy provisions reduce the impacts of the proposed spatial strategy, which will inevitably see development in sensitive historic locations.
- 10.4 Conversely, residual minor long-term negative effects are predicted for the landscape SEA topic due to the development of greenfield land at edge of settlement locations. Minor long-term negative effects are also anticipated for the land, soil and water resources SEA topic as there remains an element of uncertainty regarding the precise grade of agricultural land that will be lost to development. Despite this, it is recognised that the Plan prioritises brownfield land opportunities and supports the remediation of contaminated land.
- 10.5 The transport and movement SEA topic is also considered likely to lead to long-term negative effects due to increased congestion resulting from growth in Diss and settlements along the A1066. However, the extra policy provisions provided by the DDNP supplement the Local Plan and provide further support in enhancing local access, particularly through the identified walking/ cycling network within and surrounding the Plan area. The coordination of site allocations north of Diss enable a new link road which, although it is known that this will not sufficiently address road capacity issues, will reduce the extent of the negative impacts arising from growth. The supplementary provisions of the DDNP are thus considered for the positive effects of reducing the impacts of future growth (the level of which has been determined through the Local Plan).

10.6 In terms of cumulative effects, overall, the provisions of the DDNP supplement the provisions of the Local Plan, to provide additional local protections for assets, features and characteristics of value, and identify opportunities for development to address known issues or deliver community benefits. As a result, overall positive cumulative effects are considered likely.

Recommendations

10.7 The appraisal of the draft DDNP does not identify any recommendations; although the DDNP will lead to negative effects for several SEA topics, this is largely unavoidable given the nature of the Plan area (e.g., low availability of brownfield land and limits to curbing private car usage). Whilst opportunities have been identified to raise sustainability performance, these are factors which are more widely determined, including through other aspects of the evidence base such as viability testing, and a level of appropriateness will be determined by the group.

Part 3: What are the next steps?

11. Next steps

11.1 This part of the report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of plan-making and SEA.

Plan finalisation

- 11.2 Following submission, the plan and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.
- 11.3 If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the Neighbourhood Plan will then be subject to a referendum, organised by the Local Planning Authority. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be ‘made’. Once ‘made’, the DDNP will become part of the local planning frameworks for South Norfolk and Mid Suffolk, covering the defined Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Monitoring

- 11.4 The SEA regulations require “*measures envisaged concerning monitoring*” to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.
- 11.5 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by South Norfolk and Mid Suffolk Council, as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No additional monitoring measures have been identified at this stage.

Appendix A Regulatory requirements

11.6 As discussed in **Chapter 1**, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) explains the information that must be contained in the Environmental Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. **Table AA.1** overleaf links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements, whilst **Table AA.2** explains this interpretation. **Table AA.3** identifies how and where within the Environmental Report the regulatory requirements have/ will be met.

Table AA.1 Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

	Questions answered	As per regulations... the environmental report must include...
Introduction	What's the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
	What's the SEA scope? What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
	What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
	What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment
Part 1	What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) The likely significant effects associated with alternatives Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan
Part 2	What are the SEA findings at this current stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
Part 3	What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A description of the monitoring measures envisaged

Table AA.1 Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with regulatory requirements

<u>Schedule 2</u>	<u>Interpretation of Schedule 2</u>	
<i>The report must include...</i>	<i>The report must include...</i>	
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the plan seeking to achieve?</i>
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues & objectives?</i>
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;	Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal	
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach')	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> [Part 1 of the Report]
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.	
	The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the assessment findings at this current stage?</i> [Part 2 of the Report]
	A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> [Part 3 of the Report]

Table AA.2 ‘Checklist’ of how (throughout the SEA process) and where (within this report) regulatory requirements have been, are and will be met.

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the SA Report	
1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapter 2 ('What is the plan seeking to achieve') presents this information.
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters have been considered in detail through scoping work, which has involved dedicated consultation on a Scoping Report. The ‘SEA framework’ – the outcome of scoping – is presented within Chapter 3 ('What is the scope of the SEA?'). More detailed messages, established through a context and baseline review are also presented in Appendix B of this Environmental Report.
3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	
4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	
5. The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The SEA framework is presented within Chapter 3 ('What is the scope of the SEA'). Also, Chapter 3 presents key messages from the context review. With regards to explaining “how...considerations have been taken into account”, Chapter 7 explains the Steering Group’s ‘reasons for supporting the preferred approach’, i.e., explains how/ why the preferred approach is justified considering alternatives appraisal.
6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Chapter 6 presents alternatives appraisal findings (in relation to housing and employment growth, which is a ‘stand-out’ plan policy area). Chapters 9 presents an appraisal of the plan. With regards to assessment methodology, Chapter 8 explains the role of the SEA framework/scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/ dimensions, e.g., timescale.
7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	The assessment seeks to highlight where certain tensions between competing objectives may exist, which might potentially be actioned by the Examiner, when finalising the plan. Specific recommendations are made in Chapter 10.
8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapters 4 and 5 deal with ‘reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with’, in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues and options. Also, Chapter 7 explains the Steering Group’s ‘reasons for selecting the preferred option’ (in-light of alternatives assessment).

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
9. Description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 11 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring.
10. A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	The NTS is provided at the beginning of this Environmental Report.

The SA Report must be published alongside the Draft Plan, in accordance with the following regulations

authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the Draft Plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)	At the current time, this Environmental Report is published alongside the 'submission' version of the DDNP, with a view to informing Regulation 16 consultation.
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The SA must be considered, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.

The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.	Assessment findings and consultation responses received have been fed back to the Steering Group to inform plan finalisation.
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Appendix B Scoping information

B.1 Biodiversity

Policy context

Table B1.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the DDNP SEA.

Table B1.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to biodiversity

Document Title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
Suffolk's Nature Strategy	2015
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' Draft GNLP	2021
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' draft Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DDNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which provides significant emphasis on improving biodiversity and securing measurable net gains in development, alongside protection and conservation of designated sites and important species and habitats. This includes utilising a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure at the wider catchment or landscape scale. Support is given to establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures, particularly in consideration of climate change.
- Over the past decade policy (e.g., The Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity 2020) has demonstrated a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity, to a wider landscape approach to enhancing biodiversity, as part of the overall aims to halt biodiversity loss. The 25 Year Environment Plan places emphasis on improvements to the natural environment; identifying the need to “replenish depleted soil, plant trees, support wetlands and peatlands, rid seas and rivers of rubbish, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of pollutants, develop cleaner, sustainable energy and protect threatened species and habitats.” Working at a landscape scale transformation is expected to connect habitats into larger corridors for wildlife.
- The emerging Environment Bill will provide further provisions in relation to biodiversity when granted royal assent. The Bill will set parameters for biodiversity gain as a condition of planning permission, as well as biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. The Bill identifies a general duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Local nature recovery strategies will identify biodiversity priorities for the strategy area as well as a local habitat map. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to

- include recovery and enhancement areas which are or could become of importance for biodiversity.
- Suffolk's Nature Strategy identifies nature priorities in relation to the natural environment, economic growth and health and wellbeing. Recommendations and actions are identified under these broad themes, relating specifically to protected sites, landscapes, habitats and species, green spaces, woodland and forestry, climate change, infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, water management, education and neighbourhood plans. Specifically, Recommendation 26 identifies the opportunity for neighbourhood plans to conserve, enhance and link Suffolk's green and natural spaces.
- The DDNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the DDNP area which contain policies directly relating to biodiversity and geodiversity.

Baseline review

There are no internationally or nationally designated sites within the Plan area, however there are many sensitive sites surrounding the parishes (as depicted in **Figure B1.1** at the end of the baseline summary).

With regards to internationally designated sites, of note is the Redgrave and South Lopham Fens Ramsar site, and the Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation (SAC); which cover the same site area west of Roydon. This area (roughly 3.6km from the closest edge of Roydon as the crow flies) is also nationally designated as the Redgrave and Lopham Fens Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Redgrave and Lopham Fens National Nature Reserve (NNR).¹⁹ The multiple designations indicate the high values associated with the site, in terms of supporting biodiversity and providing access to nature.

The site is over 127ha in size and an extensive example of lowland base-rich valley fen; remarkable for its lack of fragmentation. The spring-fed valley fen lies in the headwaters of the River Waveney and is the largest fen in lowland England. A variety of habitats exist here, including dry birch woodland, scrub and carr, floristically-rich fen grassland, mixed fen, wet heath, reed, and internationally important saw sedge beds and purple-moor grassland. The habitats support many rare and scarce invertebrates; providing the only British locality for the Fen Raft Spider. The whole site is considered to be in an 'unfavourable – recovering' condition.²⁰

Closer to the Plan area, the nationally designated Wortham Ling SSSI lies adjacent to the western boundary; intersecting both Roydon and Palgrave parishes. The site provides over 50ha of lowland dry heath and acid grassland habitats, with damper areas providing further examples of purple moor-grass. The site also supports a good population of characteristic open heathland butterflies. The whole area is in a 'favourable' condition.²¹

Also adjacent to the Plan area is the Gypsy Camp Meadows, Thrandeston SSSI south of Palgrave. The site covers an area of around 2.4ha and represents one of the few remaining wet meadow sites in Suffolk. There are also areas of drier

¹⁹ DEFRA (2021): 'Magic Map Application', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

²⁰ Natural England (2021): 'Designated Sites Viewer', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

²¹ Ibid.

grassland and additional habitats for plants and invertebrates are provided by hedgerows within the site. Whilst 13.83% of the site is in a ‘unfavourable – recovering’ condition, the majority of the site (86.17%) is considering to be in an ‘unfavourable – no change’ condition.²²

The sites referred to above are particularly sensitive to changing water levels (particularly from abstraction) and recreational activities likely to damage or disturb features of interest.²³

Slightly further from the Plan area boundary in the east also lies the Hoxne Brick Pit SSSI. At around 1.26ha the area provides a world-famous geological site where research dates back to the 18th Century, demonstrating one of the most important Pleistocene sites in Britain. The upper series of largely fluvial deposits at the site contain abundant vertebrate material attributable to late Hoxnian and Wolstonian Stages. Finds include fishes, voles, Norway lemming, extinct beaver, horse, several deer and a macaque. The majority of the site (69.38%) is in a ‘favourable’ condition, however; notably 30.62% of the site is in an ‘unfavourable – declining’ condition.²⁴ Given its distance from the main settlement areas, the geological site is not considered likely to be affected by the proposals of the DDNP.

Impact Risks Zones (IRZs) have been identified in the areas surrounding designated SSSIs, and these encompass most of the settlement areas in the DDNP area. The settlement area at Scole is the least constrained, with only the south eastern extent of the built-up area falling within an IRZ. At most settlements that fall within an IRZ, residential development is not an identified trigger for impacts which requires further consultation. However, in areas of Roydon and Palgrave, residential development of 100 or more homes within the settlement, or 50 homes or more at the rural edge/ in the countryside; are identified as proposals which would require further consultation with Natural England.

Within the Plan area itself, the Roydon Fen Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Local Wildlife Site (LWS) lies south of the Roydon main settlement area, and east of Diss settlement area (adjoining it at Tottington Lane). The site provides roughly 20ha of extensive wetland with identified walking trails. The western end is dominated by woodland, whilst mown fen areas are maintained in the east. Classic fen species can be found which include marsh helleborine, marsh fragrant orchid and saw sedge, as well as ragged robin, quaking grass, yellow rattle and glow-worms.²⁵

A range of grassland, wetland, woodland and other Priority Habitats also exist within the DDNP area, as follows:

- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh.
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland.
- Good quality semi-improved grassland (non-priority).
- Lowland Fens.
- Deciduous Woodland (including areas of Ancient Woodland).
- Woodpasture and Parkland; and

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Suffolk Wildlife Trust (2021): ‘Royden Fen Nature Reserve’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

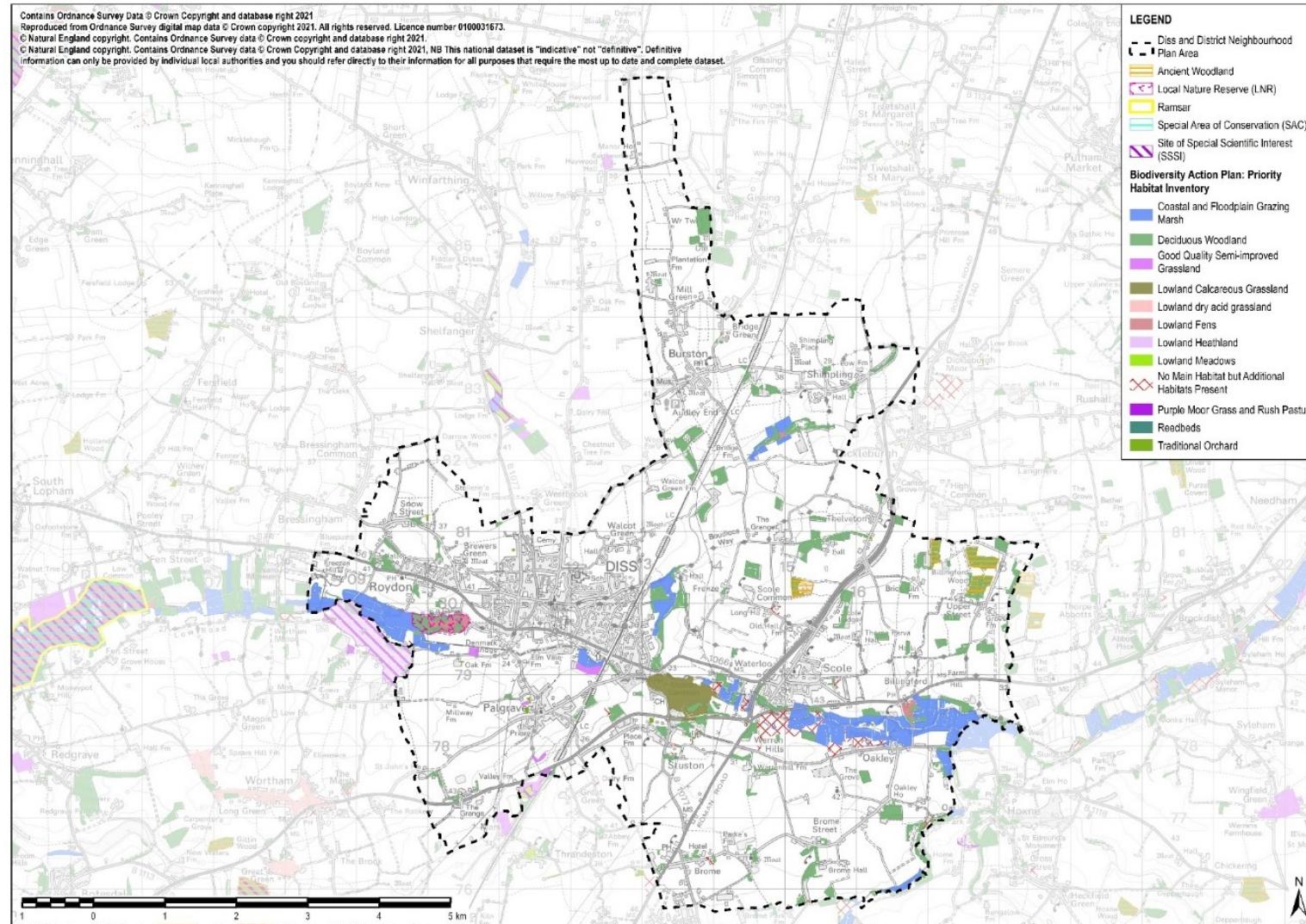
- Open Mosaic Habitat.

Much of the Palgrave, Roydon, and Scole parishes, as well as smaller parts of Diss, Stuston and Brome and Oakley parishes, also contain areas identified as part of a Habitat Network Enhancement/ Expansion Zone (Zones 1 and 2). These zones are identified as areas likely to be suitable for habitat recreation supporting nearby Priority Habitats, or new habitat creation (including suitable green infrastructure). With the network created tightly around existing patches of habitat, biodiversity enhancement in these areas is aimed at building greater ecological resilience across the wider landscape.

Future baseline

All designated sites will continue to be afforded protection through the NPPF and Local Development Frameworks. Locally designated sites and important habitats are those most likely to come under pressure in future development in the DDNP area. The DDNP provides the opportunity to ensure that future growth over the Plan period minimises direct effects such as habitat fragmentation, and indirect effects such as recreational pressures, noise, light and air pollution. Furthermore, the Plan provides scope to identify opportunities for enhancement. These could be measures that the local community support, measures to target areas identified as part of a Network Enhancement or Expansion Zone, and measures which address the effects of climate change and support ecological resilience.

Figure B1.1 Biodiversity designations



B.2 Climate change

Policy context

Table B2.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the DDNP SEA.

Table B2.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change

Document Title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019
Clean Air Strategy	2019
Clean Growth Strategy	2017
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge	2020
UK (second) National Adaptation Programme 2018 to 2023	2018
Local Energy East Strategy	2019
Tomorrow's Norfolk, Today's Challenge: A Climate Change Strategy for Norfolk	(no date)
Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan	2020
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' Draft GNLP	2021
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' draft Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan	2020
South Norfolk Environmental Strategy	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DDNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which requires proactive planning to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and deliver long-term resilience; including through reuse, regeneration and conversion.
- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the 25-year Environment Plan are a suite of documents which seek to progress the government's commitment under the UK Climate Change Act to becoming net zero by 2050. The documents set out detailed proposals on how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution, whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25-year Environment Plan, which further seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. The documents also interlink with the government's commitment to decarbonising transport, a recognised challenge that needs more work in a timely manner if government are to

achieve net zero targets. Furthermore, the decarbonisation plan recognises the twinned need to undertake action to adapt the transport sector and increase resilience to climate change risks; and this challenge is more directly addressed through the UK's National Adaptation Programme.

- The Local Energy East Strategy recognises the East region as one of the most important energy producing areas in the UK and a leading area for renewable energy. Collective actions are identified which seek to; grow the local energy sector, support the delivery of new smart grid systems which underpin housing and commercial development, increase energy efficiency, improve energy affordability and reduce fuel poverty, and support the transition to electric vehicles.
- The county climate change strategies provide information in relation to key impact sectors, indicative emissions reduction pathways, and those areas most likely to benefit from targeted future action. Within Suffolk, policy options and actions are highlighted which will help the Council achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.
- The DDNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the area which contain policies relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation, including flood risk, green infrastructure development, resource efficiency, air quality, water quality, sustainable transport and accessibility.
- Additionally, the South Norfolk Environmental Strategy sets more localised key targets to reduce per capita emissions against 2017 levels, implement carbon offsetting measures (including solar generation and tree planting), and engage with local residents and businesses to support energy generation and carbon sequestration measures.

Baseline review

In 2019, both Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council declared a climate emergency, committing to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan²⁶ commits all councils in Suffolk to reducing their own carbon emissions and working with partners across the county and region towards becoming carbon neutral. The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP) also continues county-wide climate change project work by all councils which has been ongoing since 2007.

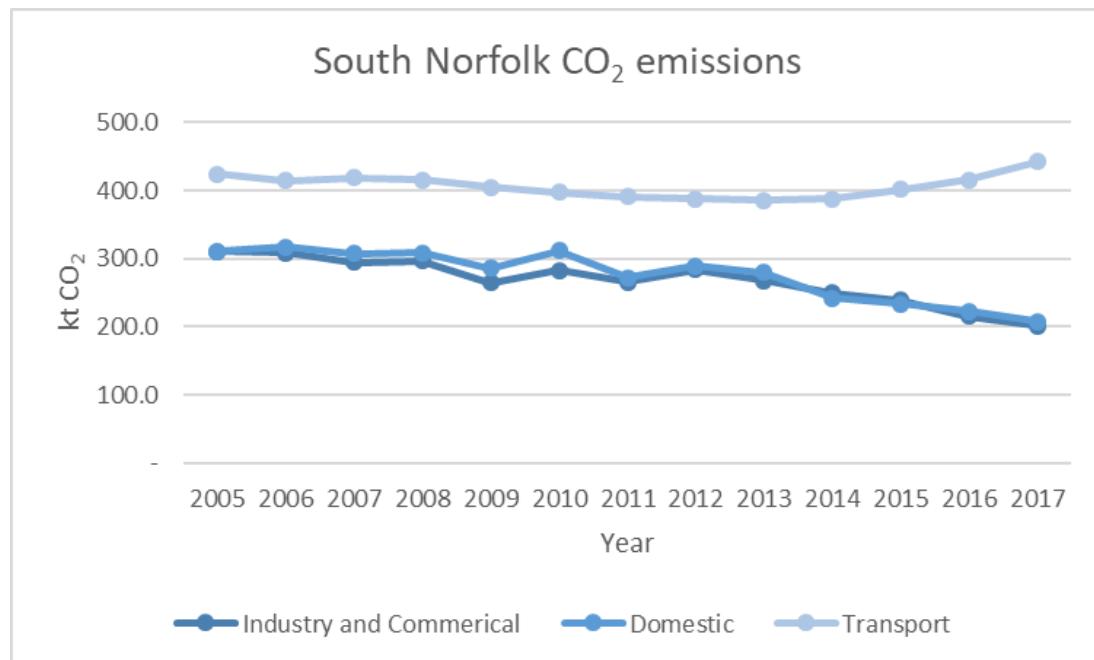
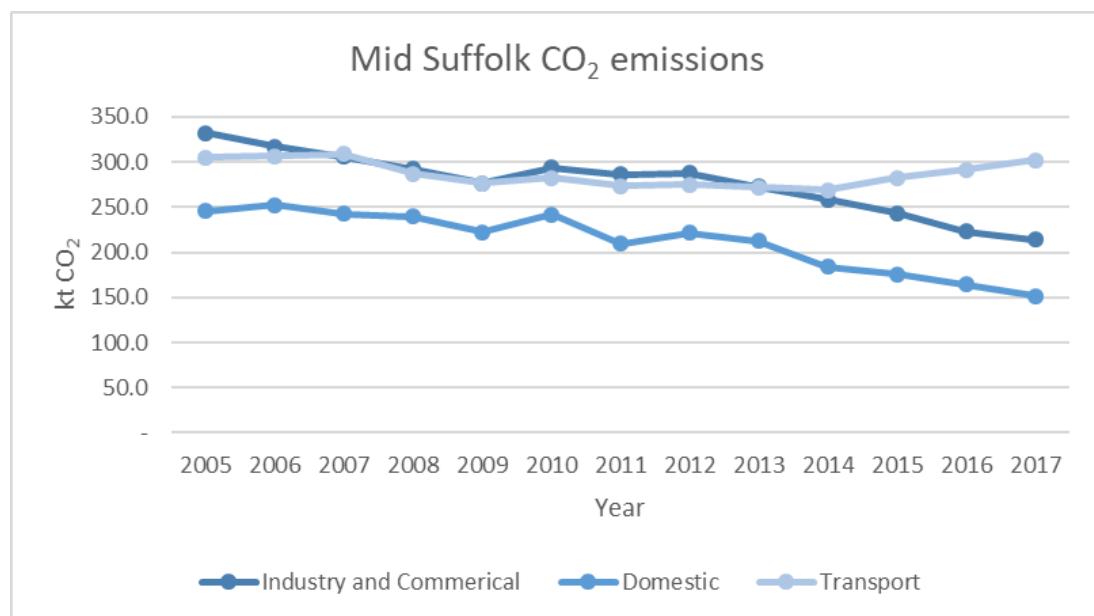
Whilst South Norfolk Council have recently published an Environmental Strategy, which seeks to progress action in terms of climate change, no climate emergency has yet been declared across Norfolk, and the Councils have not yet committed to a target date to become carbon neutral by.

Climate change mitigation

CO2 emissions by sector are shown in **Figure B2.1** and **Figure B2.2** for both South Norfolk and Mid Suffolk.²⁷

²⁶ Ricardo (2020): 'Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan, Technical Report', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

²⁷ DBeIS (2019): '2005 to 2017 UK local and regional CO2 emissions – data tables', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Figure B2.1 CO₂ emissions by sector in South Norfolk**Figure B2.2 CO₂ emissions by sector in Mid Suffolk**

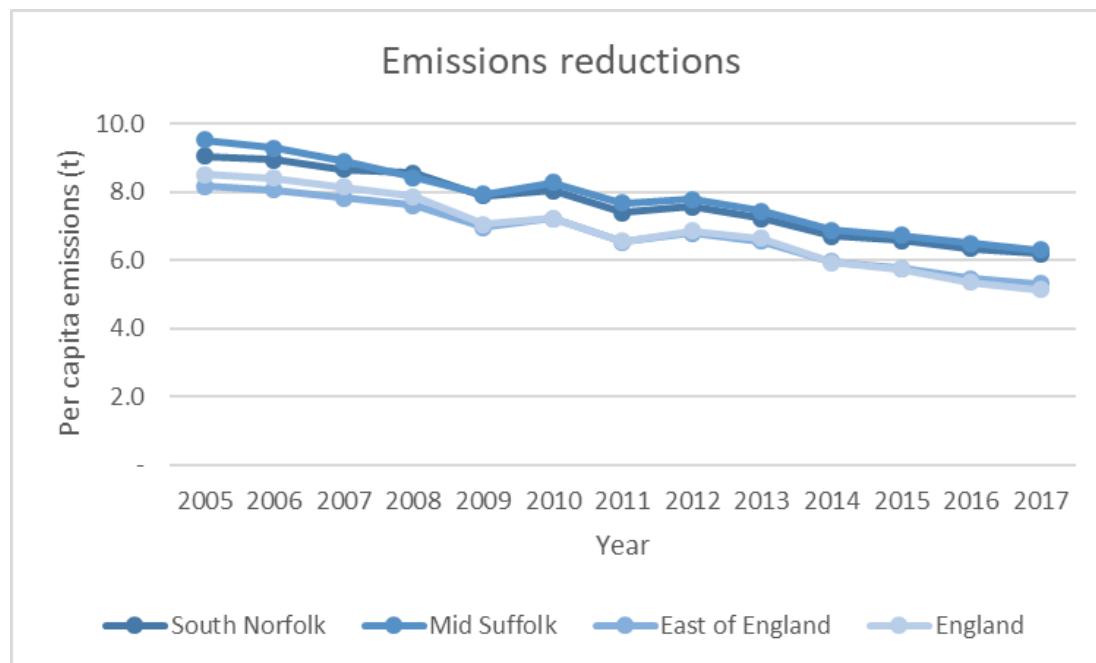
In both areas, the transport sector continues to be the biggest contributing sector. Within this sector, the main sources in both district areas are emissions from A-roads, followed by emissions from minor roads. These emissions have not significantly changed since 2005, with a minor overall increase experienced in South Norfolk.

In the domestic sector, electricity use has historically been the biggest contributing source; however, in recent years in South Norfolk, emissions from electricity have broadly aligned with emissions from gas.

Figure B2.3 depicts emissions reductions since 2005 and in both District areas per capita emissions are slightly higher than the average for the East of England and

England. However, the general downward trend largely matches that experienced at the national level²⁸.

Figure B2.3 Per capita emissions reductions since 2005



With regards to transport emissions, the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' Report (2018)²⁹, it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade and aside from Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030.

Electric Vehicles (EVs) do not burn fuel and create almost no noise. They are battery powered and have the potential to be 'zero-emission vehicles' (ZEVs) if powered by renewable electricity. As of April 2020, there were 23 public electric charging devices in South Norfolk, four of which are rapid charging, equating to 2.9 rapid devices per 100,000 population. In Mid Suffolk, there were a total of nine public charging devices, one of which is rapid charging, equating to 1 rapid device per 100,000 population.³⁰ Within the Plan area, electric charging points exist at Weavers Court in Diss (fast), and SF Connect in Scole (rapid).³¹

In terms of renewable energy, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy publishes annual statistics on renewable energy generation, disaggregated by Local Authority.³² The most recent data (2019) shows that South Norfolk has a total of 4,776 renewable energy (electricity) installations and Mid Suffolk has 3,562. Most of these installations are photovoltaics, followed by onshore wind. The installations amount to a total renewable electricity capacity of 79.6MW in South Norfolk and 91.9MW in Mid Suffolk.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ HM Gov (2018): 'The Road to Zero – Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

³⁰ Department for Transport (2020): 'Electric vehicle charging device statistics: April 2020', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

³¹ Zap Map (2021), [online] available to access via [this link](#)

³² DBEIS (2020): 'Regional Renewable Statistics – Renewable electricity by local authority 2014 to 2019', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Climate change adaptation

Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) team. UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the East of England by 2050 in a 'medium emissions' scenario are likely to be as follows:

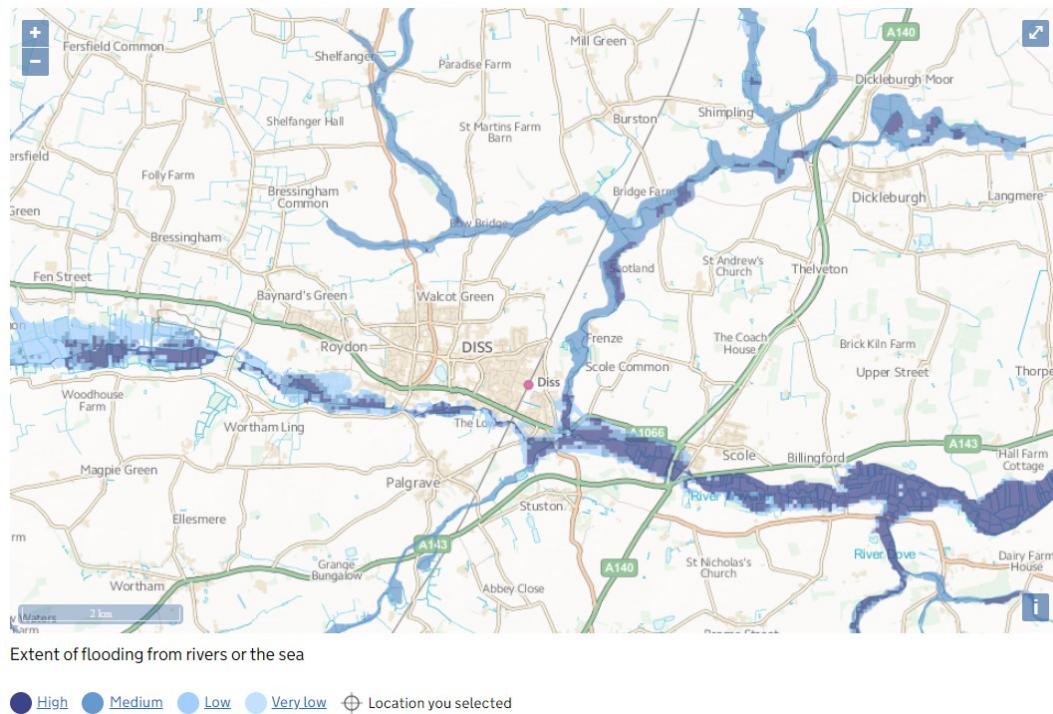
- An increase in winter mean temperature of 2.2oC and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.8oC; and
- A change in winter mean precipitation greater than +10% and summer mean precipitation greater than -10%.

Resulting from these changes, a range of risks exist for the Plan area, including:

- Effects on water resources, such as a reduction in availability of groundwater for extraction and a need to increase capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers.
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain.
- Increased risk of flooding and a need to upgrade flood defences.
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding.
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution and spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution.
- Increased demand for air-conditioning; and
- Heat stress related issues with infrastructure due to increased temperature.

Flood risk

Fluvial flood risk in the Plan area follows the River Waveney and its tributaries, as depicted in **Figure B2.4** below. Surface water flood risk follows a similar course but extends further across the Plan area, as shown in **Figure B2.5**.

Figure B2.4 Fluvial flood risk**Figure B2.5 Surface water flood risk**

Future baseline

In line with UK trends and national commitments, emissions are likely to continue to fall as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy take-up and new technologies, such as EVs and solar PV, become more widely adopted. Notably, the Government has consulted on changes to England's Building Regulations introducing a 'Future Homes Standard' and the Department for Transport recently published

'Decarbonising Transport; setting the challenge' a first step towards publishing a full transport decarbonisation plan.

In the future, new development could have the potential to increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk. It is further recognised that climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events. This has the potential to put residents, property and development at a high risk of flood exposure. However, in line with the NPPF (2019) sequential testing is likely to ensure that development within areas at highest risk of flooding is largely avoided, and development is likely to deliver mitigation such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

B.3 Landscape

Policy context

Table B3.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the DDNP SEA.

Table B3.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to landscape

Document Title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
The National Design Guide	2019
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' Draft GNLP	2021
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' draft Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DDNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, as well as landscape character and scenic beauty. The NPPF recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the importance of designated biodiversity sites, habitats, woodland, historic features, agricultural land and cultural landscapes. The positive contribution that land remediation can make in terms of addressing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land is also recognised.
- The 25-year Environment Plan and National Design Guide complement each other with their aims for a cleaner, greener country which puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats. Design is focused on beautiful, enduring and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality green open spaces.
- The DDNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the DDNP area, which contains policies specifically relating to valued landscapes, landscape character, settlement identity, green infrastructure and design.

Baseline review

The landscape of the Plan area is not nationally designated. The entire area lies within the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands National Character Area.³³ The high and predominantly flat clay plateau dominates the character of the NCA, which is incised by numerous small-scale wooded river valleys.

The landscape holds both confined/ enclosed areas with intimate views and open areas with a sense of exposure. The underlying geology is chalk, which forms a principal aquifer, and the rivers are mostly small and slow flowing which contributes to the character of the landscape. The Waveney is the largest river in this area and forms a physical division between the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. The river valleys contain an important mosaic of small-scale pasture, wet heath, reedbeds and woodland that provide ecological connectivity into the heart of the claylands.

Woodland generally forms narrow bands on the edges of the plateau and views are frequently open, only sometimes confined by hedges, hedgerow trees and scattered smaller woodlands.

Much of the land area supports arable crops, with a historic link to farming and a strong utilitarian and rural character demonstrated through ancient irregular field patterns that are still discernible over much of the area. It is a long-settled landscape, with mixed settlement patterns; including nucleated villages, dispersed hamlets and moated farmsteads. Large, often interconnected village greens or commons are also a key feature of the landscape, along with long distance footpaths, country estates and parklands.

The main pressures for the NCA are change posed by the need to accommodate development in and around traditional centres and main transport routes.

The ecosystem services provided by the landscape, and which should be protected include food provision, water availability, genetic diversity, regulating water quality, sense of place/ inspiration, sense of history, tranquillity and recreation. Of note for the DDNP, identified opportunities include:

- Measures to conserve and enhance the characteristic historic settlement patterns (including notable village commons and greens) and historic features (including moated farmsteads).
- Measures to protect and enhance/ extend the area's woodlands, copses, river valley plantations, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and ecological connectivity; and
- Improved opportunities for people to access, enjoy and understand rural and historic landscape assets, including recreational areas and tranquil areas

The area south of the Waverley is designated as a Special Landscape Area in the saved policies of the 1998 Mid Suffolk Local Plan.

The Norfolk Green Infrastructure Mapping Report³⁴ identifies that the DDNP area falls broadly within a 'wetland core area' and a 'woodland core area', with key connections to Norfolk Trails and Strategic Green Infrastructure (GI) Corridors. The trails and GI corridors largely follow the River Waveney and extend north through the

³³ Natural England (2014): 'NCA Profile: 83 South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands (NE544)', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

³⁴ Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership (2017): 'Green Infrastructure Mapping Report', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Plan area to connect with Norwich as well as north and east to connect with designated coastal landscapes (The Broads National Park, Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB).

At a more local level, the South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment³⁵ identifies that the northern extent of the DDNP area is characterised by two landscape types: the 'Waveney Rural River Valley' and 'Waveney Tributary Farmland'. The landscape types highlight the key landscape connections to the river corridor. The key characteristics of the Rural River Valley type are summarised as:

- Distinct valley landform.
- Semi-enclosed landscape.
- Perceived presence of a river that is often not actually visible within the landscape.
- Willow pollards and lines of poplar.
- Attractive river crossings.
- Areas of pastoral floodplain.
- Historic quality to areas within the valley landscape.
- Settlements predominantly small and nucleated of strong vernacular character with scattered farmsteads.
- Characteristic vernacular architecture; and
- Presence of characteristic ecological assemblages.

The key characteristics of the Tributary Farmland type as summarised as:

- Shelving and gently undulating landform.
- Transitional landscape.
- Tamed and peaceful farmland.
- Dispersed but evenly distributed settlement pattern.
- An intricate network of narrow, winding rural lanes.
- Elusive tributaries.
- Medium to large-scale arable farmland.
- Remnant parkland.
- Mixed architectural character; and
- High proportion of important ecological assemblages.

The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment³⁶ characterises the south of the DDNP area more distinctly with four landscape character types. The key characteristics for each of these landscape types are identified in **Table B3.2** below.

³⁵ LUC (2001): 'South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (including the Chris Blandford Associates 2012 Review)', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

³⁶ Suffolk County Council (2021): 'Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Table B3.2 Suffolk County Landscape Character Types in the DDNP area

Suffolk Landscape Character Type	Key characteristics
Wooded valley meadowlands and fens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat valley bottom • Extensive peat deposits • Cattle grazed pasture • Network of drainage ditches • Areas of unenclosed “wild” fenland • Widespread plantation and carr woodland • Important sites for nature conservation • Localised settlement on the valley floor “islands” • Sense of quiet and rural isolation in many places
Rolling valley farmlands and furze	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valleys with prominent river terraces of sandy soil • Small areas of gorse heathland in a clayland setting • Straight boundaries associated with late enclosure • Co-axial field systems • Mixed hedgerow of hawthorn, dogwood and blackthorn with oak, ash and field maple • Fragmentary cover of woodland • Sand and gravel extraction • Golf courses • Focus for larger settlements
Rolling valley claylands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gently sloping valleys on medium clay soils • Occasional notable steeper slopes • Fields often smaller than on surrounding plateau • Localised influence of landscape parks • Focus of settlement • Few large greens or commons • Ancient woodland on the upper fringes of the valley sides
Ancient plateau claylands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat or gently rolling arable landscape of clay soils dissected by small river valleys • Field pattern of ancient enclosure – random patterns in the south but often co-axial in the north. Small patches of straight-edged fields associated with the late enclosure of woods and greens • Dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages, hamlets, and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin • Villages often associated with medieval greens or tyes • Farmstead buildings are predominantly timber-framed, the houses colour-washed and the barns blackened with tar. Roofs are frequently tiled, though thatched houses can be locally significant • Scattered ancient woodland parcels containing a mix of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash and holly • Hedges of hawthorn and elm with oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees • Substantial open areas created for WWII airfields and by 20th century agricultural changes • Network of winding lanes and paths often associated with hedges create visual intimacy

Future baseline

New development, including infrastructure development, has the potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape quality within and surrounding the DDNP area. This could place increased pressures on the surrounding countryside and local settings. Development could also lead to the physical loss of landscape features (such as trees) and has the potential to disrupt key views.

Coordinated delivery of green infrastructure, new recreational opportunities and any regeneration opportunities could support landscape enhancements. The DDNP provides the opportunity to spatial plan for further development, in a way which minimises landscape impacts and seeks ultimately to enhance the landscape or settlement setting.

B.4 Historic environment

Policy context

Table B4.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the DDNP SEA.

Table B4.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the historic environment

Document Title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
The National Design Guide	2019
Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management	2019
Historic England Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets	2017
Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	2016
Historic England Advice Note 11: Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment	2018
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' Draft GNLP	2021
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' draft Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key high-level principles for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are as follows:
 - The historic environment is a shared resource.
 - Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment.
 - Understanding the significance of places is vital.
 - Significant places should be managed to sustain their values.

- Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent; and
- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential³⁷.
- The significance of places is the key element which underpins the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building an archaeological site or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape
- The DDNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which ultimately seeks to conserve and enhance historic environment assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions which are sympathetic to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change. Planning Practice Guidance expands on the NPPF recognising the proactive rather than passive nature of conservation.
- The role of the historic environment, as part of healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes and cultural values, including settlement identity, is reiterated through the key messages of the 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide.
- Historic England's Advice Notes provide further guidance in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of relevance for the DDNP is the emphasis on the importance of:
 - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin designations, as well as how settings and/ or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets.
 - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
 - Appropriate evidence gathering, including clearly identifying those issues that threaten an area or assets character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.
- The DDNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the DDNP area which contain policies directly relating to the historic environment.
- In addition to conserving the historic environment, the DDNP should seek to identify opportunities to enhance the fabric and setting of the historic environment. It should also seek to rejuvenate features and areas which are at risk of neglect and decay.

Baseline review

The DDNP holds rich historic values, some of which, such as historic landscape values, have already been demonstrated in other scoping themes.

³⁷ Historic England: Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance

Designated heritage assets

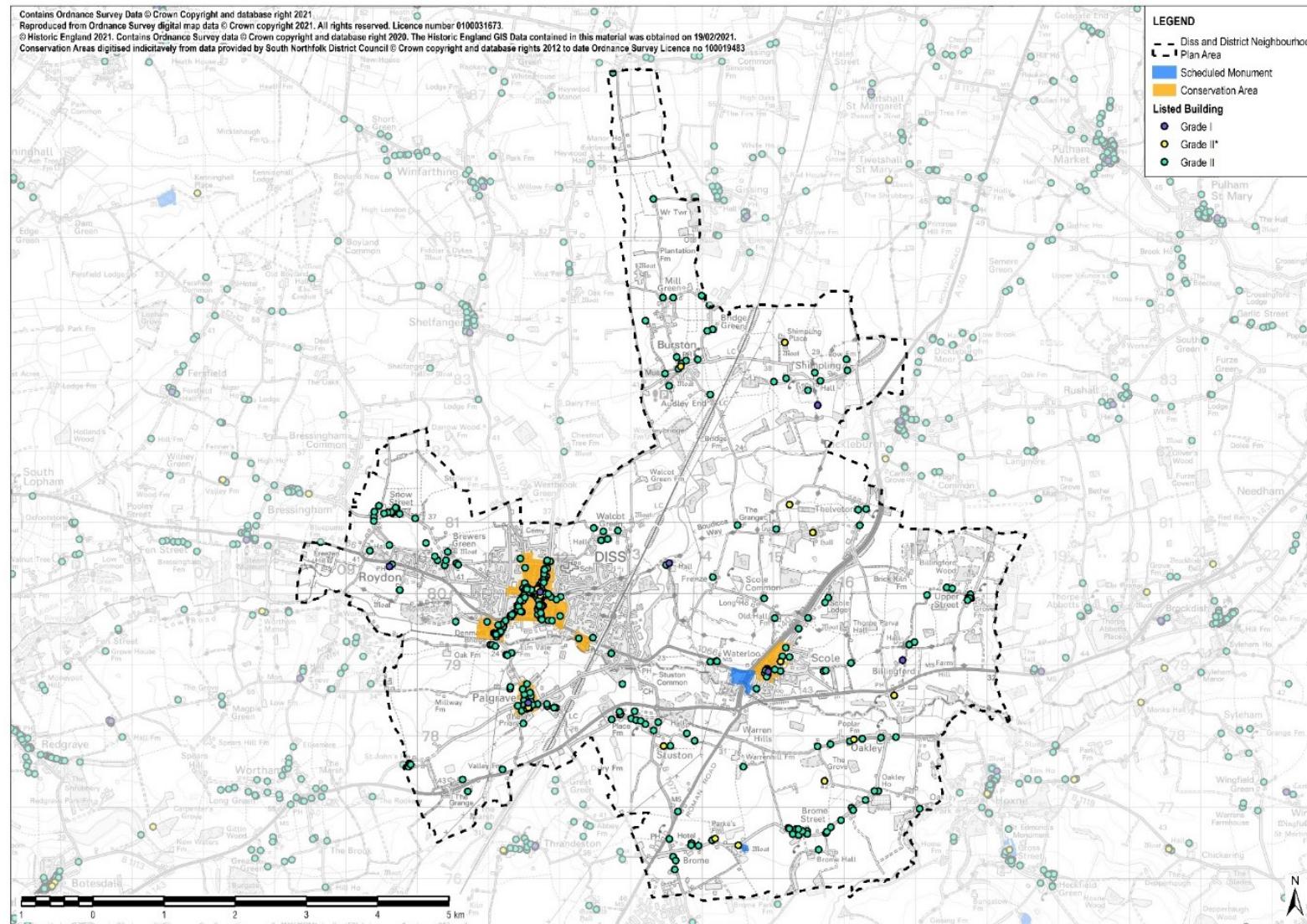
In terms of nationally designated assets, the assets across the parishes are identified in **Table B4.2** below and located in **Figure B4.1** at the end of the baseline summary.

Table B4.2 Designated heritage assets³⁸

Parish	No. of designated assets
Diss	191 records: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grade I; 3• Grade II*; 3• Grade II; 184• Park & Garden Grade II; 1
Roydon	31 records: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grade I; 1• Grade II; 30
Scole	57 records: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grade I; 4• Grade II*; 4• Grade II; 48• Scheduled monument; 1
Burston and Shimpling	26 records: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grade I; 1• Grade II*; 2• Grade II; 23
Palgrave	44 records: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grade I; 1• Grade II*; 1• Grade II; 42
Stuston	18 records: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grade II*; 1• Grade II; 16• Scheduled monument; 1
Brome and Oakley	41 records: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grade II*; 4• Grade II; 36• Scheduled monument; 1

³⁸ Historic England (2021): 'The National Heritage List for England', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Figure B4.1 Designated heritage assets



The Heritage at Risk Register³⁹ identifies designated assets which are at most risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. In the DDNP area, assets identified as 'at risk' include the Church of All Saints, Church Lane in Stuston and Poplar Farmhouse at Brome and Oakley.

Four of the seven parishes contain designated conservation areas, each of which are discussed in turn below.

Diss Conservation Area⁴⁰

In the Domesday Book, Diss is noted as a royal manor, and by the end of the 12th century, its commercial importance was firmly established. The market dates from 1135 and a charter for the great annual fair was granted in 1195. Historically, Diss has benefitted from a location with good communications in all directions and a good supply of water.

The Middle Ages saw the rise of the wool and linen trades and merchants used their wealth to build fine houses, warehouses and guild halls, and to build and add to the parish church. This prosperity was consolidated in the 16th and 17th centuries and a large proportion of the buildings in the centre of Diss survive from this period.

Whilst the wool and weaving industries later declined, Diss remained as a significant local market town, with additional fine Georgian houses and smaller cottages added in later periods. The town was noted for brewers and other associated professionals who lived close to their workplaces, and many of their buildings survive.

The arrival of the railway in the 19th century led to the growth of various industries and housing along Victoria Road and helped the town to prosper without physically affecting the centre.

In more recent times, the population of Diss has increased substantially, though the River Waveney continues to provide a natural boundary, with most growth occurring to the north, east and west of the town, including into the neighbouring parish of Roydon.

The town rises from the flood plain of the river, and the rising ground has created some important viewpoints and townscapes within the streets and across to the Mere and park. The trees along Park Road are a significant element in the views from the north, while the church tower still dominates the view from the south.

The Diss Conservation Area can be characterised into three main areas: the central core, the Mere and the area outside the core. The Market Place, the church, Market Hill, St Nicholas Street and a network of alleys, passages and yards comprise what is thought to be the original core of the town and has been described as the Diss Heritage Triangle. The Mere has helped to determine the shape of the town and provides a venue for recreational activities. The panoramic view from the park, over the Mere to the church tower beyond is unparalleled in the district, but from the main streets, the Mere is rarely visible except from occasional glimpses. In the area outside of the core a number of Streets are noted for historic values, including Mere Street, and Mount Street (including the park), and to a lesser extent Upper Denmark Street, Church Street, Chapel Street and Fair Green.

³⁹ Historic England (2021): 'Heritage at Risk Register', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁴⁰ South Norfolk Council (2012): 'Diss Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Trees and open spaces are also identified as of value to the heritage setting. The main open spaces include The Mere and Park fields, Fair Green, The Cedars and The Lawn (Parish Fields), Rectory playing fields and meadows, and St Marys Churchyard. Smaller spaces that are also known to contribute to character include the plains and yards along Market Hill, The Market Place, Mere's Mouth, North of Navire House, The yards off St Nicholas Street, and Madgett's Walk.

Scole Conservation Area⁴¹

While the parish of Scole comprises five historic settlements (Frenze, Thorpe Parva, Billingford, Thelveton and Scole), Scole provides the location of the conservation area. The parish of Scole was known as "Osmundeston" (Osmund's Settlement) and is recorded as such in the Domesday Book. The name Scole does not appear until 1191. The historic core of the village developed on the main Norwich to Ipswich Road where it meets the road from Bury to Harleston. Here the Scole Inn still dominates the centre with the Church of St Andrew to the north set above the street, with the bypass easing the pressure on this ancient crossroads.

The key characteristics of the Scole Conservation Area are summarised as:

- Concentration of built form at historic crossroads dominated by the Scole Inn.
- Important C14 church (despite damage in the 1960s) on raised platform.
- Key contribution of trees and open spaces/ recreation areas to the south; and
- Modern expansion and development to the east and south.

There is evidence of Roman occupation in Scole and a small town developed where the major Roman Road from London crossed the River Waveney. Excavations in advance of the construction of the bypass revealed the remains of buildings, wells, industrial activities and burials. Coins were also found when a wall was built opposite the Scole Inn.

Today, much of the character to the south is dominated by the landscape of the Waveney Valley with the A143 providing a platform from where extensive views can be enjoyed both to the north and south including, at one point, a good view of Scole Inn. Notable roads include Low Road, Norwich Road and Diss Road. Furthermore, trees and hedges are also considered to play an important visual role.

Burston Conservation Area⁴²

Burston has developed mainly along Diss Road, Crown Green and Station Road and is centred around two village greens. The western half of the settlement comprises relatively modern detached dwellings in contrast to the eastern side which is mainly semi-detached ribbon development. Crown Green, Church Green and the open areas leading into Higdon Close form an attractive centre to Burston. The Conservation Area extends along Diss Road and Mill Road, encompassing several notable old buildings. A draft Conservation Area Appraisal has recently been made available.

⁴¹ South Norfolk Council (2017): 'Scole Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁴² South Norfolk Council (2015): 'Burston (Rural Area)', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Palgrave Conservation Area⁴³

Palgrave sits on a spur of slightly higher ground between the southern bank of the River Waveney and a tributary joining the river from a south-westerly direction.

Archaeological sites exist from all periods in the Parish and significant finds include Neolithic flint axes, Iron Age pottery, and Roman potsherds (broken ceramics), bone and coins. Medieval sites include the parish churchyard and the site of the former St. John's Chapel. There is also some Post Medieval interest represented by the sites of a windmill and two bridges over the Waveney. Around half of the designated assets in the parish lie within the Palgrave Conservation Area which includes the Grade I listed Church of St Peter.

The Conservation Area is centred on the Village Green, and the most prominent trees in Palgrave are located here. Although often not visible, the area is valued for its short distance connections to the surrounding countryside.

Non-designated heritage assets

It is recognised that not all historic environment features are protected under statutory designation, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people enjoy as part of the setting and character of areas. For example, open spaces and distinctive non-listed buildings are often of local value. Historic Environment Records (HERs) provide comprehensive records of non-designated features, including areas of known archaeological activity.

The Norfolk Heritage Explorer⁴⁴ provides access to the Norfolk HER and identifies 256 records within Diss, 76 records in Roydon, 180 records in Scole, and 71 records in Burston and Shimpling. These comprise monuments, buildings, and finds from all periods.

The Suffolk Heritage Explorer⁴⁵ provides access to the Suffolk HER and identifies 66 records within Palgrave, 61 records in Stuston and 81 records in Brome and Oakley. This includes monuments, find spots, farmsteads and buildings from a range of periods, including Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Prehistoric, Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval.

Future baseline

Whilst designated assets, and non-designated assets will continue to be afforded protection under the provisions of the NPPF and Local Development Frameworks, it is recognised that future development has the potential to negatively affect historic character and settings, detract from historic settlement qualities and disrupt valued viewpoints; being susceptible to insensitive design and layout in new development.

Planning for future growth through the DDNP will support the minimisation of impacts. It can also seek opportunities for public realm improvements, and accessibility improvements which can indirectly benefit access to and enjoyment of the historic environment.

⁴³ Mid Suffolk Council (2008): 'Palgrave Conservation Area Appraisal', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁴⁴ Norfolk County Council (2021): 'Norfolk Heritage Explorer', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁴⁵ Suffolk County Council (2021): 'Suffolk Heritage Explorer', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

B.5 Land, soil and water resources

Policy context

Table B5.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the DDNP SEA.

Table B5.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to land, soil and water resources

Document Title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England	2009
Future Water: The government's water strategy for England	2011
Water for Life	2011
The National Waste Management Plan	2013
Anglian Water's Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)	2019
Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan Review – Preferred Options Consultation Document	2019
Suffolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan (SMWLP)	2020
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' Draft GNLP	2021
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' draft Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan	2020
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Water Cycle Study	2020
Greater Norwich Water Cycle Study	2021

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DDNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to protect high quality soil resources, and improve the water environment; recognising the wider benefits of natural capital and derived from ecosystem services. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the need to take account of the long-term implications of climate change and build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains.
- The 25-year Environment Plan presents a focus for environmental improvement in the next couple decades, with aims to achieve clean air, clean and plentiful water, and reduced risk from environmental hazards. This includes measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. This leads on from and supports the soil strategy for England (Safeguarding our soils) which seeks to ensure that all England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully by 2030, as well as the national water strategies which seek to secure sustainable and resilient water resources and improve the quality of waterbodies, and the national

waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a zero waste economy.

- Anglian Water's WRMP further highlights the acute stresses that the catchment faces in the coming years and the challenges we face in terms of securing water resources into the future in one of the driest regions in England. The Plan outlines how Anglian Water aim to confront and manage these issues to ensure the timely provision of clean water to all residents in the period up to 2045.
- The DDNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Norfolk and Suffolk Minerals and Waste Local Plans, which form part of the Local Development Frameworks for each county. These plans identify and safeguard sites and resources important to the continued sustainable management of mineral extractions and waste arisings.
- Furthermore, the DDNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the DDNP area, which contain policies specifically relating to efficient land use, the sustainable use of resources, soil protection, the efficient use of water, and protection for water quality.
- The district Water Cycle Studies provide further insight to the constraints associated with planned development in each area, in terms of water supply capacity, wastewater capacity and associated environmental capacity. This identifies the relevant water quality issues, water infrastructure upgrade requirements and further constraints to development across the Plan areas. The studies demonstrate those Water Recycling Centres (WRCs) which are likely to require infrastructure upgrades to accommodate future development, and this need is more acute in South Norfolk than in Mid Suffolk. Despite this, the DDNP area is not an area most affected by short-term supply issues.

Baseline review

Geology, minerals and waste

The bedrock geology of the DDNP area is Chalk formed during the Cretaceous Period. Superficial deposits in the immediate vicinity of the River Waveney include Alluvium (Clay, Silt and Sand) and Glacial Sand and Gravel. Moving further out from the River Waveney, superficial deposits are predominantly Till (Diamicton (unsorted to poorly sorted particles ranging in size from clay to boulders and suspended in a matrix of mud or sand)).⁴⁶

North of the River Waveney, the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Document⁴⁷ does not propose any new minerals extraction sites within the DDNP area. There are also no safeguarded minerals, waste or waste-water areas within this part of the DDNP area.

South of the River Waveney, the Suffolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan (SMWLP)⁴⁸ does not propose any new minerals or waste sites within the Plan area. However, the whole area falls within a Minerals Consultation Area, and the Diss, Stowmarket and Norton Waste-Water Treatment Plants are safeguarded within the Plan area.

⁴⁶ British Geological Survey (2021): 'Geology of Britain viewer', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁴⁷ Norfolk County Council (2019): 'Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan Review Preferred Options consultation document', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁴⁸ Suffolk County Council (2020): 'Suffolk Minerals & Waste Local Plan (SMWLP)', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Furthermore, an area of land just south of the Brome and Oakley border (outside of the DDNP area) between Yaxley and Brome is safeguarded for the Eye Power Station (Incinerators with Energy Recovery).

Soil resources

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus ‘non-agricultural’ and ‘urban’), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the ‘best and most versatile’ land (BMV) and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. In this regard, the DDNP area is predominantly underlain by Grade 3 land, with smaller areas of Grade 4.⁴⁹ However, the provisional dataset does not determine whether this is grade 3a or 3b, and thus it is uncertain whether the majority of land in the plan area is considered BMV.

The ‘Predictive BMV Land Assessment’⁵⁰ indicates that the northern extent of the DDNP area (north of the River Waveney) has a moderate likelihood of BMV land (20 – 60%), whereas the land in the south of the DDNP area (south of the River Waveney) has areas of both moderate and high likelihood (>60%). Areas of high likelihood are largely concentrated in Stuston and Brome and Oakley.

Water resources

The DDNP area is served by Anglian Water Services (AWS). The Environment Agency have identified areas of relative water stress and the whole of AWS’ supply area is shown as an area of ‘Serious’ water stress, based upon the amount of water available per person both now and in the future.⁵¹

Anglian Water’s Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)⁵² identifies that the supply-demand balance is under significant pressure from population growth, climate change, sustainability reductions and the need to increase resilience to severe drought. These challenges are acute in the East of England region given low rainfall combined with a significant proportion of wetland sites of conservation interest. An additional 294 Ml/d is required by 2045; the equivalent of more than a quarter of the average daily distribution input in 2017-18. Furthermore, a significant proportion of these needs will be required by 2025. The Plan prioritises demand management, whilst also investing in supply, with particular focus on the period up to 2025. However, the Plan does not result in any significant changes or new infrastructure within or near the DDNP area.

Water quality

The main waterbody in the DDNP area is the River Waveney (upstream of the Frenze Beck, and Frenze Beck to Dove). Tributaries that also fall within the DDNP area include; Frenze Beck, Dickleburgh Stream and the Tributary of Upper Waveney. The River Dove also borders the Plan area in the east (east of Oakley).

The waterbodies fall within the Waveney Operational Catchment. The source of the river Waveney is in the Redgrave and Lopham Fen National Nature Reserve (NNR), from where it travels east through Diss and past Burgh Castle into Breydon Water, joining the River Yare to reach the sea at Great Yarmouth. The River Waveney also forms the boundary between the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. Most waterbodies

⁴⁹ DEFRA (2021): ‘Magic Map application’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁵⁰ Natural England (2017); ‘Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁵¹ Environment Agency (2013): ‘Water stressed areas – final classification’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁵² Anglian Water (2019): ‘Water Resources Management Plan 2019’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

in this catchment are considered of ‘moderate’ ecological quality but fail in terms of their chemical status.

All of the waterbodies which fall within and adjacent to the DDNP area have consistently achieved a ‘moderate’ ecological status since 2013 and had good chemical status between 2013 and 2016. However, in 2019, they all failed in terms of their chemical status. Reasons for not achieving good status across the waterbodies include drought, poor nutrient and soil management, private sewage treatment and sewage discharge, groundwater abstraction, arable land use, and transport drainage.

Furthermore, the whole DDNP area lies within a Drinking Water (Surface Water) Safeguard Zone.⁵³ These are areas identified as at risk of failing national drinking water protection objectives. Whilst non-statutory designations, action is taken within these areas to address water contamination; with the aim of avoiding extra treatment by water companies.

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) denote areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution and much of the East of England, including the whole of the DDNP area, is identified as an NVZ.⁵⁴ NVZs identify rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures as well as a requirement to prevent water pollution from farm areas. Additional agricultural use/ development is not being proposed through the DDNP, and effects in relation to NVZs are therefore not considered likely.

Future baseline

Future development has significant potential to affect soil and mineral resources in the Plan area, including through the direct loss of (potentially) high quality agricultural land. The DDNP provides the opportunity to direct future growth away from areas of highest quality agricultural land, thereby minimising the likely impacts on soil resources.

Future development also has the potential to affect water quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, and modification. It is considered that AWS will continue to address any water supply and wastewater management issues over the plan period, in line with the WRMP 2019 (which plans for the period up to 2045). Furthermore, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, as transposed into national legislation, are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the DDNP and wider area. However, it will be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality, and support demand management measures by contributing to reduced consumption and improved efficiency.

B.6 Population and communities

Policy context

Table B6.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the DDNP SEA.

⁵³ DEFRA (2021): ‘Magic Map application’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁵⁴ DEFRA (2021): ‘Magic Map application’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Table B6.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to population and communities

Document Title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' Draft GNLP	2021
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' draft Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan	2020
Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2015 - 2020	2015
Mid Suffolk Homes and Housing Strategy 2019 - 2024	2019
Mid Suffolk Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2024	2019
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Communities Strategy 2019 - 2036	2019

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DDNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which on the whole seeks to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities, including health facilities, educational facilities and open space. The NPPF recognises the benefits of a range of local provisions supporting community needs, including in rural areas. The framework seeks to protect settlement and community identities, including through the protection and retention of Green Belt land. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities, in safe environments where crime and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life of residents.
- The DDNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the DDNP which contain policies specifically relating to housing, community services and facilities, accessibility and infrastructure requirements.
- The district housing, homelessness and community strategies each seek to support the appropriate delivery of housing and community infrastructure. The strategies recognise the importance of targeting resources at those most at risk/ most vulnerable and supporting all residents needs for affordable, safe and good quality housing in the right places. Furthermore, the strategies recognise the need to create choice in terms of securing a long-term stable home and create adaptable homes supported by high levels of accessibility.

Baseline review

The DDNP area is formed of the seven parishes of:

- Diss.
- Roydon.
- Scole.
- Burston and Shimpling.
- Palgrave.
- Stuston; and

- Brome and Oakley.

Diss, Roydon, Scole and Burston and Shimpling lie within the boundaries of South Norfolk, whereas Palgrave, Stuston and Brome and Oakley lie within the boundaries of Mid Suffolk.

The latest population estimates for each parish (based on best-fitting output areas⁵⁵) are identified in Table AB.10 below, which totals 14,892 residents across the whole DDNP area in mid-2019. Table AB.10 further identifies the population percentage increase for each area, and the DDNP area (as a whole) between the period 2001 and 2019.

Diss, Palgrave and Brome and Oakley have experienced the highest rates of growth since 2001. At Diss, this is broadly in-line with the average rate of growth for the District (South Norfolk), however at Palgrave and Brome and Oakley the growth experienced is slightly higher than that experienced at the District level (Mid Suffolk). At Roydon, Scole, Burston and Shimpling, and Stuston, growth has been relatively low when compared to the average rate of growth for the District.

Overall, growth within the DDNP area, South Norfolk and Mid Suffolk is slightly higher than the estimated average growth for the East of England and England over the period 2001 – 2019.

Table B6.2 Population estimates, 2001 to 2019⁵⁶

	2001 population estimate	2011 population estimate	Mid-2019 population estimate	Population increase mid- 2001 to mid- 2019
Diss	6,815	7,592	8,604	+26.3%
Roydon	2,306	2,452	2,595	+12.5%
Scole	1,339	1,365	1,432	+6.9%
Burston and Shimpling	525	572	564	+7.4%
Palgrave	743	902	937	+26.1%
Stuston	181	195	201	+11%
Brome and Oakley	428	477	559	+30.6%
DDNP area	12,337	13,555	14,892	+20.7%
South Norfolk	110,710	124,012	140,880	+27.3%
Mid Suffolk	86,837	96,731	103,895	+19.6%
East of England	5,388,140	5,846,965	6,236,072	+15.7%
England	49,138,831	53,012,456	56,286,961	+14.5%

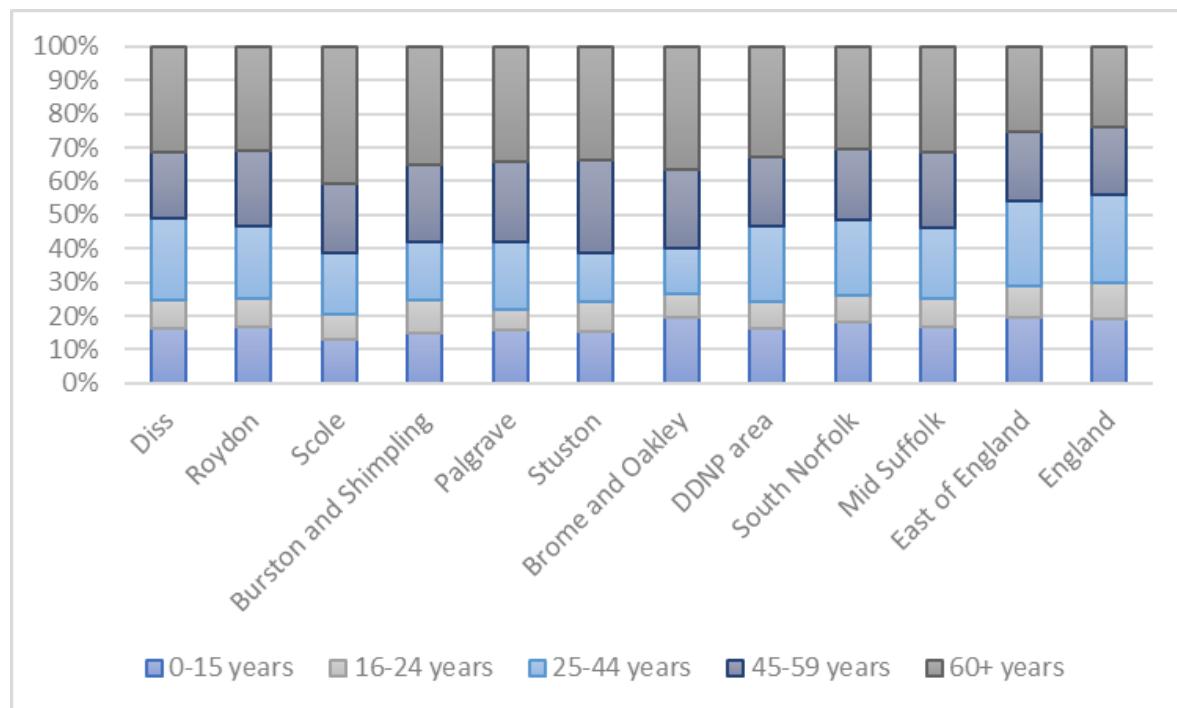
The age structure for residents in each parish area in mid-2019 is depicted in **Figure B6.1**. Most residents in the DDNP area are aged over 60 years and in all parishes, this is proportionately higher than found at the district, regional and national scale. With a proportionately higher level of elderly residents, there is a contrasting lower

⁵⁵ ONS (2020): 'Parish population estimates for mid-2001 to mid-2019 based on best-fitting of output areas to parishes', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁵⁶ Nomis (2020): 'Census Statistics (2011 Data Catalogue and 2001 Data Catalogue)', [online] available to access via [this link](#) and ONS (2020): 'Parish population estimates for mid-2001 to mid-2019 based on best-fitting of output areas to parishes', [online] available to access via [this link](#) and AECOM calculations

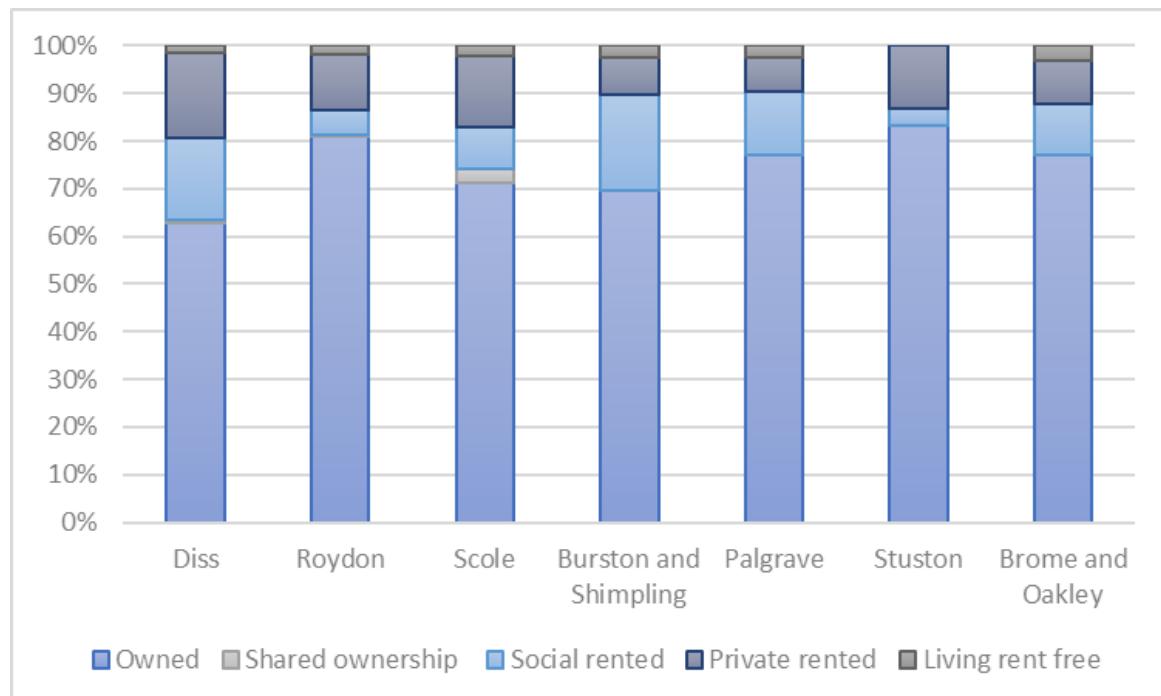
proportion of younger residents in the DDNP, in the 0-15 years, and 16-24 years age groups.

Figure B6.1 Age structure (mid-2019)⁵⁷



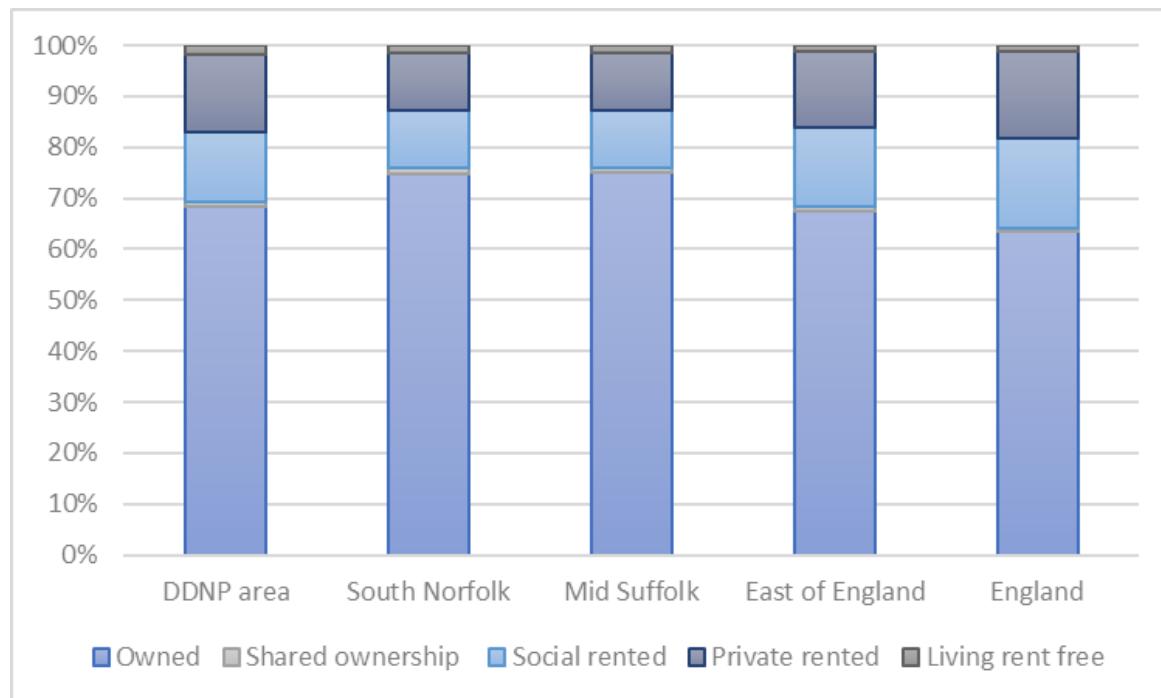
Housing tenure across the parish areas as captured in the 2011 census, is depicted in **Figure B6.2**. In all parishes, the predominant tenure is home ownership, and within this band, there is a higher proportion of outright ownership than ownership with a mortgage. There are limited shared ownership schemes across the DDNP area. In Diss, Roydon, Scole and Stuston, there is a higher proportion of private renting when compared to social renting, whereas the opposite is apparent in Palgrave, Brome and Oakley and Burston and Shimpling. There is a particularly higher proportion of social rented housing in Burston and Shimpling when compared to the other parish areas.

⁵⁷ ONS (2019) Mid-Year Population Estimates, AECOM calculations

Figure B6.2 Housing tenure in the DDNP area⁵⁸

The tenures across the DDNP area are contrasted with relative proportions for the district areas, region and England in **Figure B6.3**. This shows that whilst home ownership levels in the DDNP are proportionately higher than found in the East or in England, this level is slightly lower than experienced at the district scale. Levels of private renting are generally aligned with the findings for the East and for England, however, this contrasts with relative proportions in the district areas. Social renting levels in the DDNP area is also proportionately higher than that experienced at the district scale.

⁵⁸ ONS (2011) Census data, AECOM calculations

Figure B6.3 Housing tenure comparisons⁵⁹

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD)⁶⁰ is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights. The seven deprivation domains span aspects of; income, employment, education, skills and training, health deprivation and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment. Supplementary indices are also provided in relation to income deprivation affecting children and older people.

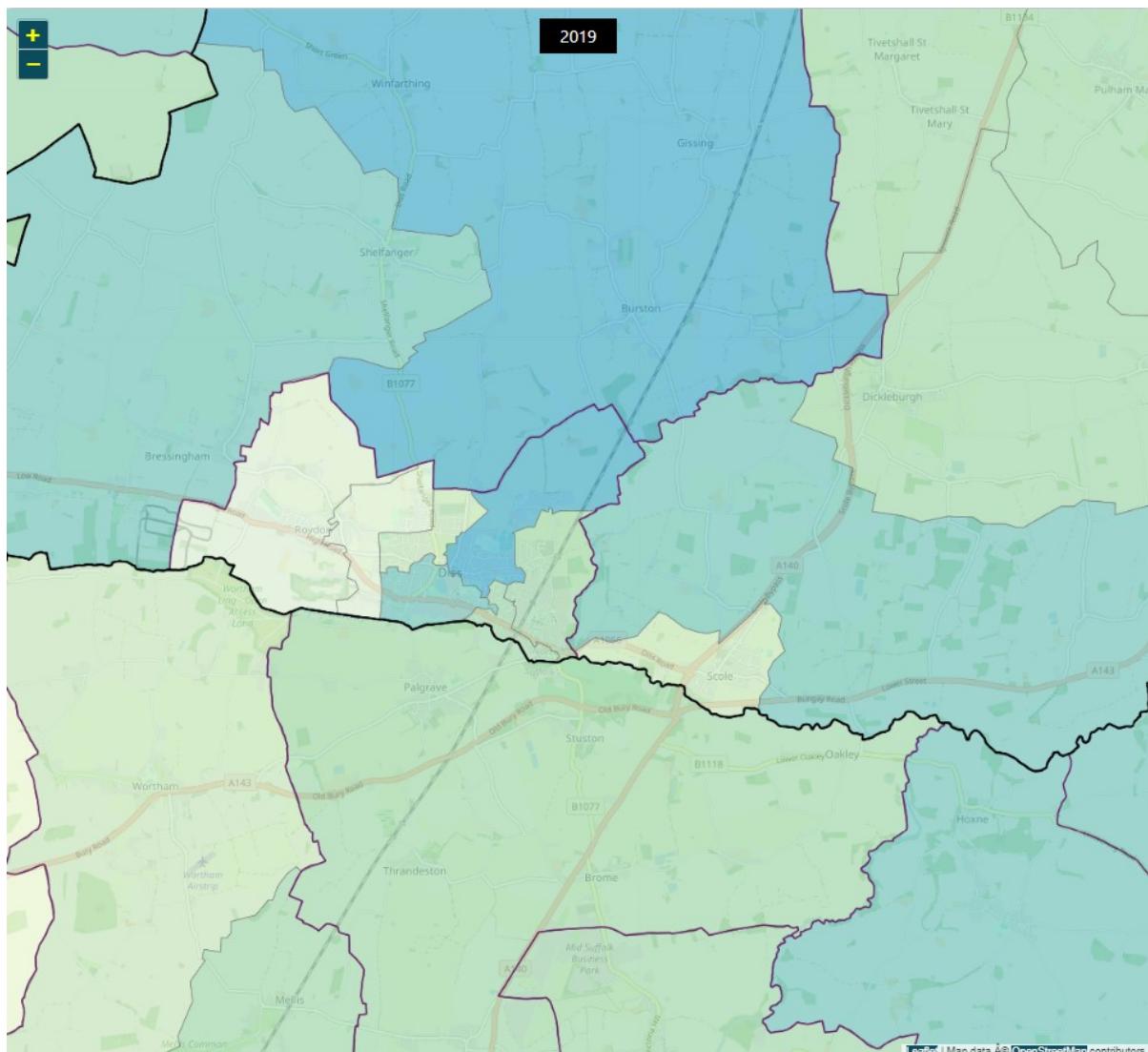
The IMD provides findings for Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). LSOAs are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2019, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived.

As depicted in **Figure B6.4**, the DDNP area is formed of the following eleven LSOAs which vary in terms of their overall rank in the 2019 IMD:

- South Norfolk 014B, 014E, 014F, 015A, 015B, 015D, 015E, 015F, 015G, 015H
- Mid Suffolk 001C

⁵⁹ ONS (2011) Census data, AECOM calculations

⁶⁰ DCLG (2019): 'Indices of Deprivation Explorer', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Figure B6.4 IMD, 2019⁶¹

The areas of highest deprivation cover Burston and Shimpling and extend into areas of Diss, these areas fall within the 40% most deprived areas in the country. Areas in the south of Diss and in Scote also fall within the 50% most deprived areas. In contrast, the settlement areas of Scote and Roydon fall within the 30% least deprived areas in the country.

Within the areas of highest deprivation, income deprivation is relatively high and affects children more than the elderly. Employment, health deprivation and education, skills and training deprivation is also relatively high. However, these LSOAs perform better in relation to the barriers to housing and services, crime and the living environment domains.

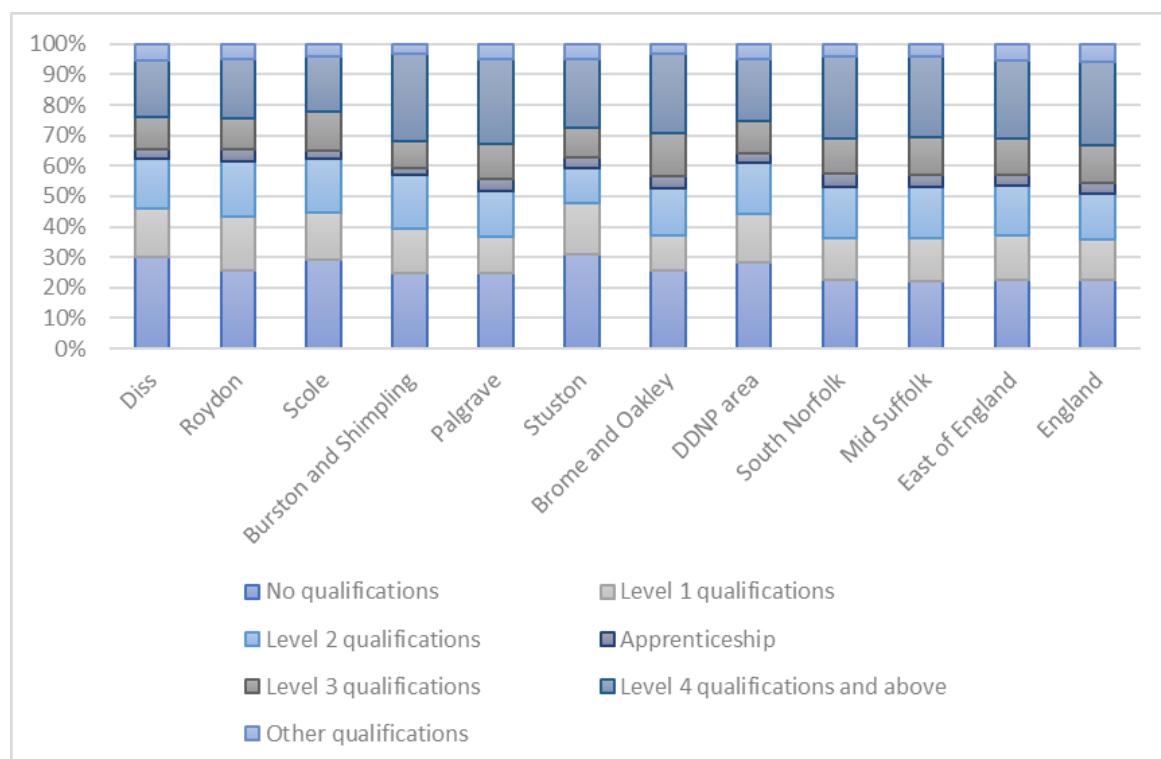
Of note, outside of Diss and Roydon the remaining area is notably deprived in terms of the living environment domain. Areas outside of Diss, Roydon and Scote are also notably deprived in terms of barriers to housing and services. However, Roydon does experience higher levels of deprivation in relation to the education, skills and training domain.

⁶¹ Ibid.

In terms of access to education, there are primary schools and pre-schools/ day care facilities in the DDNP area, located in Diss, Roydon, Scole, Burston and Palgrave. Further primary schools are in the immediate surrounds of the Plan area, including at Dickleburgh, Bressingham, Wortham, Mellis, and Eye. There is only one senior school serving DDNP residents; located in Diss.⁶²

2011 Census data indicates that there are a higher proportion of residents in the DDNP area with no qualifications when compared to relative proportions at the district level and in the East of England and England. This is paralleled with a lower proportion of residents in the DDNP area with Level 4 qualifications and above. Higher levels of residents with no qualifications is particularly pronounced within the parishes of Diss, Scole and Stuston; see **Figure B6.5**.

Figure B6.5 Level of qualification (Census 2011)⁶³



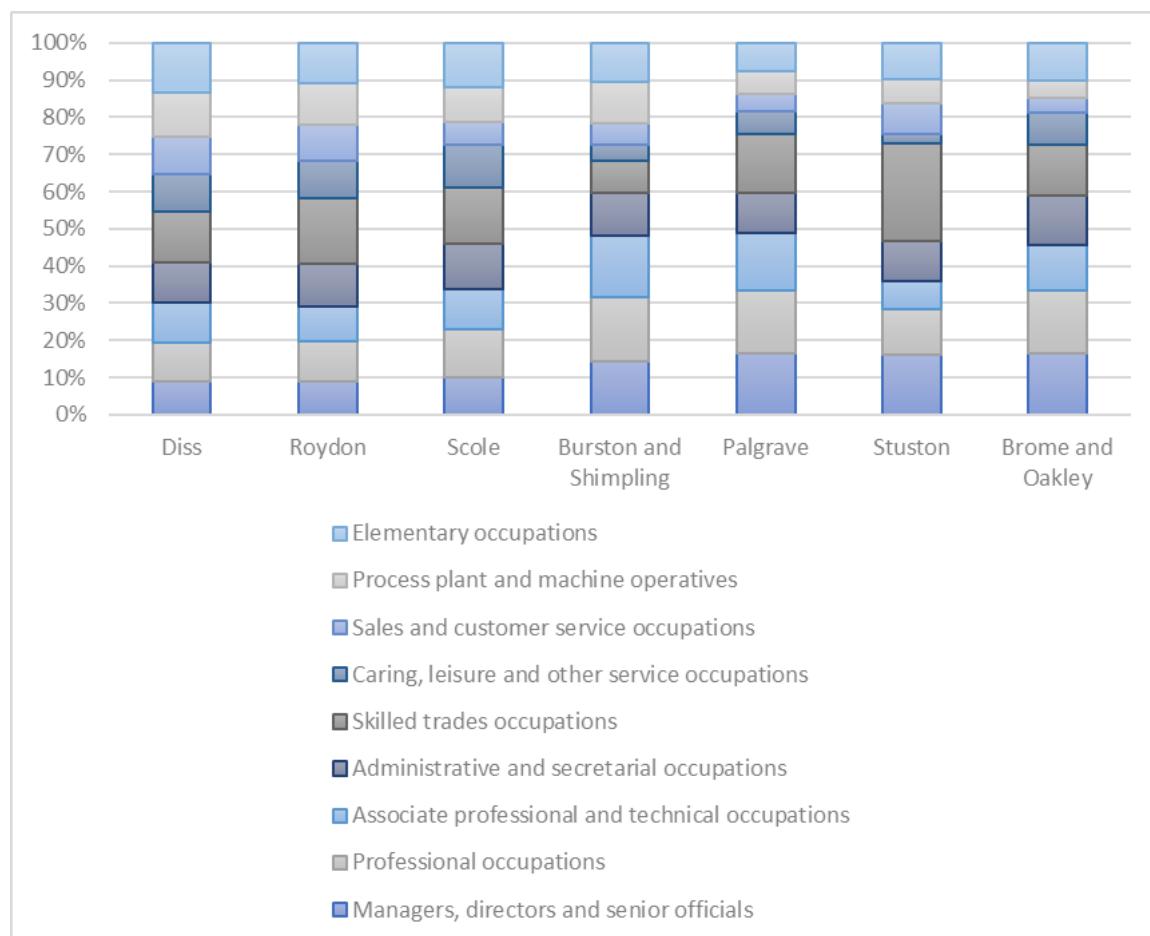
In terms of access to employment, whilst there are a number of local employers within the DDNP area, most are located within and surrounding Diss, including at Diss Business Park. The DDNP also has strategic road connections with Norwich, Thetford, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich which provide further employment opportunities. Diss train station also provides direct rail access to Norwich, Stowmarket and Ipswich.

2011 Census data indicates that most DDNP residents aged 16 to 74 in employment are in the skilled trades occupations, followed by elementary occupations, professional occupations, associate professional and technical occupations, and administrative and secretarial occupations respectively. Burston and Shimpling diverges from this trend the most, with far fewer skilled trades occupations and a greater number of residents in associate professional and technical occupations; see **Figure B6.6**.

⁶² Google maps

⁶³ ONS (2011) Census data, AECOM calculations

Figure B6.6 Occupation of usual DDNP residents aged 16 to 74 in employment⁶⁴



In terms of access to services and facilities, the DDNP area contains a comprehensive range of facilities within Diss, situated around both Diss train station and Diss Mere. A more limited offer is also provided in Scole and Palgrave. Residents at Roydon, Burston and Shimpling, Stuston and Brome and Oakley are more reliant on access to the surrounding settlements, particularly Diss. Despite this, it is likely that residents will still travel to larger settlements such as Thetford, Bury St Edmunds, Norwich and Ipswich to access a wider range of services and facilities.

Future baseline

The population will continue to grow with or without the DDNP, however, with an ageing population and a higher proportion of elderly residents, it will be important for future development to address changing needs. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of delivering the right mix of housing types, tenures and sizes in suitably connected places. Continued development of housing types and tenures of market preference may introduce or exacerbate a housing imbalance and fail to meet any local needs for smaller homes to downsize into, or more affordable homes to retain and attract younger residents.

Considering the ongoing pandemic, homeworking is likely to become a more prevalent trend, and this is likely to alter the commuting patterns and access trends of residents into the future. Whilst uncertainty remains, the DDNP provides

⁶⁴ ONS (2011) Census data, AECOM calculations

opportunities to guide development which accommodates for changing working patterns and lifestyles, and places greater emphasis on access to local services, facilities and employment options and strategic connectivity.

B.7 Health and wellbeing

Policy context

Table B7.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the DDNP SEA.

Table B7.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to health and wellbeing

Document Title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On	2020
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' Draft GNLP	2021
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' draft Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan	2020
South Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy	2018
South Norfolk Leisure Strategy 2018-2021	2018
Mid Suffolk Leisure Strategy	2017

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DDNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to enable and support healthy lifestyles through provision of appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities, including; green infrastructure, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling. The NPPF recognises the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity which contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure is further reiterated through the 25-year Environment Plan.
- The 2020 Health Equity in England report identifies that the health gap between less and more deprived areas has grown in the last decade, where more people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health, and where improvements to life expectancy have stalled, or even declined for the poorest 10% of women.
- The DDNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the area, which contain policies directly relating to access to healthcare, green infrastructure and open spaces, and design that supports active travel opportunities.
- The South Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the district leisure strategies identify local health challenges, particularly those presented to communities in a rural district area. This includes an ageing population

with an array of challenges related to frailty, mobility, social isolation and illness. The strategies also recognise the role that leisure opportunities play in contributing to a wider range of health determinants. Diss is recognised for the strategic contribution its leisure centre plays in community access to recreational opportunities.

Baseline review

The 2019 Health Profiles for South Norfolk⁶⁵ and Mid Suffolk⁶⁶ identify that the health of people in both districts is generally better than the England average. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average. Whilst there are around 3,800 children (across both district areas) who live in low-income families, there are lower than average levels of childhood obesity, and in South Norfolk levels of teenage pregnancy and GCSE attainment are better than the England average.

In South Norfolk, health indicators performing significantly worse than the England average are:

- Killed and seriously injured (KSI) rate on England's roads.
- Estimated diabetes diagnosis rate; and
- Estimated dementia diagnosis rate.

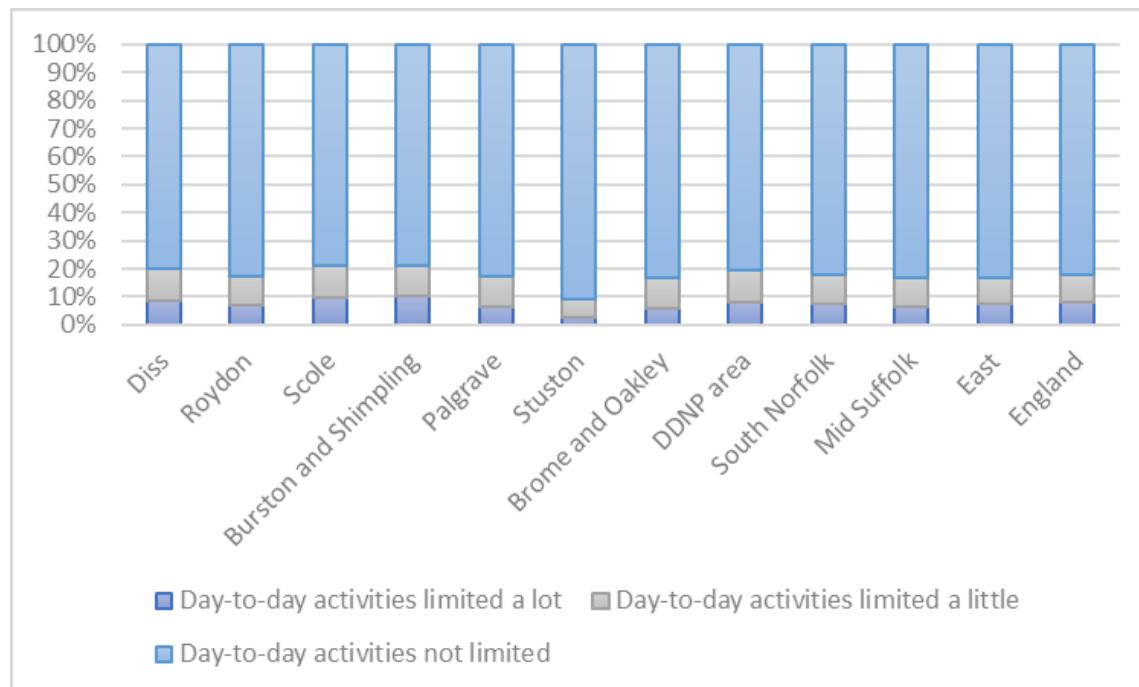
In Mid Suffolk, health indicators performing significantly worse than the England average are:

- Estimated diabetes diagnosis rate; and
- Percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese.

2011 Census data indicates that over 80% of residents with disabilities in the DDNP area do not consider themselves to be limited in their day-to-day activities. Disabled residents who consider their activities are limited a lot are more prevalent in Scole and Burston and Shimpling, and to a slightly lesser extent in Diss and Roydon; see **Figure B7.1**.

⁶⁵ Public Health England (2020): 'South Norfolk Local Authority Health Profile 2019', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁶⁶ Public Health England (2020): 'Mid Suffolk Local Authority Health Profile 2019', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Figure B7.1 Disability

Research into hidden needs in Suffolk highlights additional challenges facing rural communities in the county, such as higher domestic fuel costs, extra transport costs, social isolation, poor broadband and mobile phone network connectivity, and reduced accessibility to healthcare services, education services and employment opportunities.⁶⁷

In terms of access to healthcare, the closest hospital to the DDNP area is Hartismere Hospital at Eye (just outside of the Plan area, south of Brome). There are also GP surgeries and dental practices located at Diss, and mental health practices in both Roydon and Burston.⁶⁸

The Norfolk Green Infrastructure Mapping Report⁶⁹ identifies that the DDNP connects to both Norfolk Trail routes and Strategic Green Infrastructure (GI) Corridors; providing strategic active travel connections and recreational opportunities. The trails and GI corridors largely follow the River Waveney and extend north through the Plan area to connect with Norwich as well as north and east to connect with designated coastal landscapes (The Broads National Park, Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB).

Despite this connectivity, the Norfolk Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) Maps⁷⁰ identify that Shimpling is an area that does not meet the standards for access (within 300m) to greenspace of 2ha or more. All settlements in the north of the Plan area (that fall within the South Norfolk boundary) are further identified as lacking access to greenspace of 20ha or more (within 2km) and 100ha or more (within 5km). This indicates the importance of local green spaces in the context of existing strategic provisions.

⁶⁷ Healthy Suffolk (2019): 'State of Suffolk Report 2019', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁶⁸ Google maps

⁶⁹ Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership (2017): 'Green Infrastructure Mapping Report'. [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁷⁰ Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership (2018): 'Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) Maps', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment⁷¹ identify both the River Waveney and the River Dove as contributors to recreational landscapes, including the water meadows surrounding the River Dove. The assessment identifies the provisions of; amenity greenspace, playspace and cemeteries and churchyards in Palgrave, a larger provision of amenity greenspace in Stuston and cemeteries and churchyards only in Brome and Oakley. Despite these provisions, in each parish shortfalls are identified for allotment space, parks and recreation grounds, and play space. Shortfalls in amenity greenspace provisions are also identified in Palgrave and Brome and Oakley.

Future baseline

With an ageing population and higher proportion of elderly residents, the accessibility of development will be particularly important in terms of supporting resident health and wellbeing. The important of local services and facilities, and access to open green spaces and recreational areas has been further highlighted through the ongoing pandemic. Furthermore, as a rural area, residents are more susceptible to social isolation. These factors are more likely to be appropriately considered and addressed through planned development rather than unplanned development.

B.8 Transportation

Policy context

Table B8.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the DDNP SEA.

Table B8.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation

Document Title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019
The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead	2017
The Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy	2016
Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge	2020
Norfolk Local Transport Plan 4 (2020-2036) – Consultation Document	2020
Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2031	2011
Norfolk Cycling and Walking Strategy	2015
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' Draft GNLP	2021
Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission' draft Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan	2020
Diss Network Improvement Strategy	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DDNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks the consideration of transport issues from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals to address any known issues and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility, particularly by

⁷¹ Ethos Environmental Planning (2019): 'Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment 2016 – 2036', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

walking, cycling and public transport. Larger developments are expected to be delivered in areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments.

- National transport strategies set out investment priorities which ultimately all seek to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport networks, whilst reducing impacts on the natural environment (including through decarbonisation). Furthermore, they place great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journeys. This includes investment in new and upgraded infrastructure, changing perceptions and increasing safety.
- The Local Transport Plans identify the transport investment priorities and policies at a more localised scale, but ultimately complement the aims of the national strategies discussed above. Alongside the transport and access policies of the Local Plans covering the DDNP area, the DDNP will be required to be in general conformity with the strategic policy aims.
- Of relevance is the Diss Network Improvement Strategy which identifies potential measures to help address existing transport network constraints and potential transport improvements to facilitate growth in the DDNP area (as explored further through the baseline).

Baseline review

The DDNP area is connected by the A140, A1066 and A143 strategic road connections. Regular rail services on the Norwich to London railway line are also provided via Diss train station. Diss provides a range of services and facilities, with 160 town centre retail and business units captured in the 2019 Norfolk Market Town Centre Report⁷²; enabling nearby residents with high levels of accessibility in this respect. Bus accessibility is concentrated along key routes such as the A143 and A1066 linking Palgrave, Roydon, Diss, Scole and Stuston, as well as Burston and Shimpling and Brome and Oakley; albeit with less frequent services here.

In terms of walking routes, as well as linking with Norfolk Trails (see Strategic Green Infrastructure connections in Chapter 5), the DDNP area contains a significant number of public footpaths. These are particularly prevalent within Burston and Shimpling.⁷³

Congestion is a known issue in Diss, along the A1066 and Vince's Road. The Diss Network Improvement Strategy⁷⁴ (DNIS) identifies that 17% of the traffic within Diss is through traffic. Furthermore, given existing congestion issues, any large-scale growth either to the north or south of Diss, even if it were to provide a link road, would worsen traffic conditions within the town.

The DNIS identifies key opportunities to encourage short trips to be made on foot or by cycle through small infrastructure improvements, including improved signage. Additionally, the strategy identifies that the Morrisons Roundabout junction should be the focus of improvement on the A1066. Short-term, medium-term and long-term actions are identified to address the traffic issues observed in Diss, and this includes

⁷² Norfolk County Council (2019): 'Norfolk Market Town Centre Report', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁷³ Rights of Way maps [online] available at: <https://www.ROWmaps.com/>

⁷⁴ Norfolk County Council (2020): 'Diss Network Improvement Strategy', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

junction capacity improvements, footpath and cycle route improvements and extensions, new pedestrian crossings, additional cycle parking provisions and new signage.

The DNIS interrogates 2011 Census data, demonstrating that in the most accessible part of the DDNP area, over 75.7% of households still have access to at least one car or van, and that most travel to work journeys were made by car in 2011. However, it is recognised that the ongoing pandemic has created a large shift towards homeworking and has ultimately affected commuting patterns across England. These new trends are also likely to prevail to some degree.

Future baseline

Diss market town centre is particularly susceptible to development in the DDNP area in terms of increased traffic and congestion. Evidence suggests that even strategic intervention (such as a bypass) is unlikely to sufficiently address the likely increases in congestion. Planned development which maximises sustainable transport connections, reduces the need to travel, and delivers appropriate infrastructure capacity upgrades will ultimately be crucial to addressing these constraints.

However, homeworking is likely to continue to be a more prevalent trend as we emerge from the current pandemic, which can continue to support reduced impacts in terms of traffic and congestion.

