



**Thorpe St. Andrew Neighbourhood Plan  
(Pre-submission Draft – November 2019)**

**Habitats Regulations Assessment  
Screening Report  
November 2019**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report has been undertaken by Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority in order to support the emerging Thorpe St. Andrew Neighbourhood Plan which has been produced by Thorpe St. Andrew Town Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 1.2 The aim of this screening is to assess whether there will be any likely significant impacts on designated European sites either within or in relative proximity to the designated neighbourhood area of the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. the civil parish of Thorpe St. Andrew).

## 2. Legislative Basis

- 2.1 Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive states that:

*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*

- 2.2 The purpose of the Habitat Regulations Assessment is therefore to ensure the protection of European (Natura 2000) sites. These sites are designed to form an ecologically coherent network of designated sites across the whole of Europe. Referred to as 'European Designated Sites', Natura 2000 sites include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas for Conservation (SAC). As a matter of policy the Government also expect authorities to treat Ramsar sites, candidate SAC (cSAC) and proposed SPAs (pSPA) as if they are European sites for the purpose of considering development proposals that may affect them.
- 2.3 One of the basic conditions of Neighbourhood Plans, prescribed by Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) is that the plan:

*...is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).*

2.4 Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (CHSR) puts into effect the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (see 2.1 above) and requires that:

*(1) Where a land use plan –*

*(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*

*(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site,*

*the plan-making authority must before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.*

2.5 Regulation 106 of the CHSR requires that:

*A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment under regulation 102 or to enable them to determine whether that assessment is required.*

2.6 As the 'competent authority' for these purposes, Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority have produced this screening report to determine whether a full Habitats Regulations Assessment is required.

### 3. Screening Approach

- 3.1 The first step of the screening process involves the identification of European Sites that are either within or in close proximity to the Thorpe St. Andrew Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 3.2 A long list of Natura 2000 sites was compiled as part of the HRA Screening Report that was produced in support of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (adopted 2014). This list includes designated sites within 15 kilometres of the potential zone of influence around the JCS area, and was subsequently agreed by Natural England.
- 3.3 There are no designated sites within the Thorpe St. Andrew Neighbourhood Area. However, part of the boundary of 'The Broads / Broadland' EU designations lies approximately 4km to the south east of the neighbourhood area. The precise EU designations in question are as follows:

<b>Designation Name</b>	<b>Designation Type</b>
Broadland	Special Protection Area
Broadland	Ramsar
The Broads	Special Area of Conservation

- 3.3 A map showing the location of these designations in relation to Thorpe St. Andrew parish can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this report. Full details of these particular European designations, including conservation objectives, can be found in Appendix 2.

### 3. Assessment

- 4.1 The table below sets out a summary of the policies within the proposed Thorpe St. Andrew Neighbourhood Plan (enclosed) and provides an assessment as to whether there is a likely significant impact from these policies on either of the Natura 2000 sites listed above.
- 4.2 This assessment has been carried out in relation to the pre-submission draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, produced in October 2019.

Thorpe St. Andrew NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect		
		Broadland SPA	Broads SAC	Broadland RAMSAR
Policy 1: Protecting and enhancing the natural environment	This policy seeks to minimise disruption of habitats and conserve and enhance existing environmentally important sites. It sets out a list of locally important green spaces that should be protected from overly intrusive development. As such, it is not considered that it is likely to have any significant negative effect on the identified Natura 2000 designations.	No likely significant effect		
Policy 2: Creating a strong sense of place	This policy seeks to ensure that development is well designed and fits in with the settlement, creating a strong sense of place. The policy specifically references three particular character areas of the community. It also encourages the use of traditional and sustainable materials, as well as tree planting along streets. It is not considered that the policy will have any significant negative effect on the identified Natura 2000 designations.	No likely significant effect		
Policy 3: Connectivity and Ensuring Adequate Car Parking	This policy aims to encourage rear on-plot parking and cycling/walking friendly neighbourhoods. It also sets out a series of parking standards for new residential properties. This is a generic, development management policy which will affect all future proposals and, as such, it is not considered likely to have any significant negative effect on the identified Natura 2000 designations.	No likely significant effect		
Policy 4: Protecting Resident Amenity	This policy looks to protect and preserve the residential amenity for current and future householders. Elements of the policy address issues such as the height of new buildings/extensions, and maintaining the 'open' feel of streets. Again, this is a general policy which will affect any future proposal and it is not	No likely significant effect		

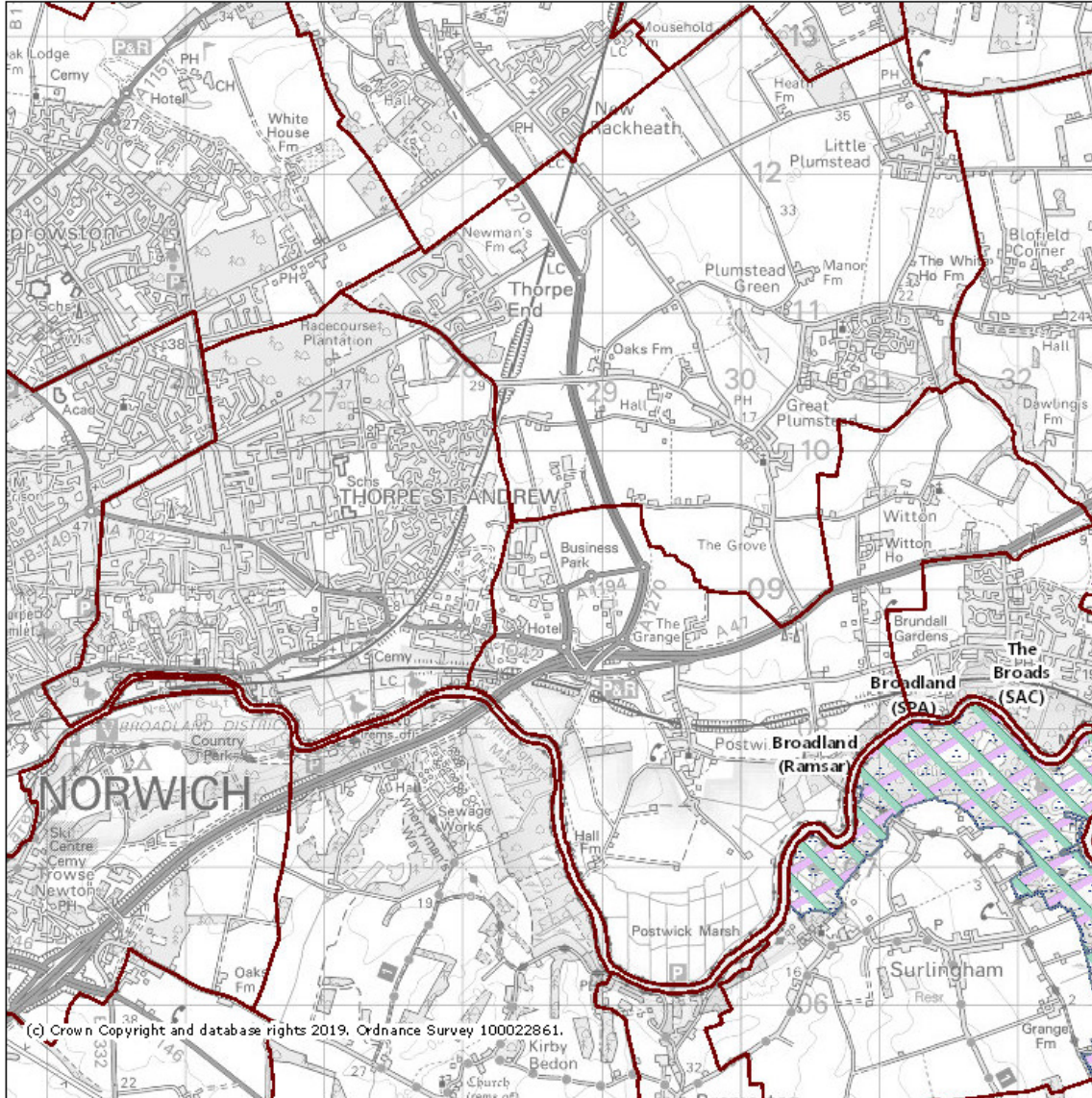
	likely to have a significant negative effect on the identified Natura 2000 designations.	
Policy 5: Residential Mooring	This policy seeks to ensure that new moorings and other infrastructure associated with riverside moorings meet certain specified standards, in terms of impact on the environment and character, road access, and car parking. It is not considered that the policy will have any significant negative impact on the identified Natura 2000 designations.	No likely significant effect
Policy 6: Promoting and Protecting Employment	This policy seeks to retain and expand (where appropriate) existing employment areas, with three specific business centres highlighted. The policy also seeks to encourage mixed use development in general, ensuring that, where possible, businesses are included within residential schemes. It is a general development management policy that incorporates site specific elements, but which does not allocate any land for new development. As such it is not likely to have a significant negative effect on the identified Natura 2000 designations.	No likely significant effect
Policy 7: Retaining and Creating Community Facilities	This policy supports the improvement and extension of existing community facilities in the parish. It also seeks to prevent the loss of any facilities unless certain specified conditions are supported. The policy also seeks to maximise the sustainability credentials of new community buildings, and requires new play areas and public spaces to be located close to community hubs. It is a general development management policy and it is not likely to have a significant negative effect on the identified Natura 2000 designations.	No likely significant effect
Policy 8: Protecting the Historic Environment	This policy aims to ensure that any new development minimises impact on important heritage buildings and features. It is not likely to have a significant negative effect on the identified Natura 2000 designations.	No likely significant effect


#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The screening assessment suggests that there will be no likely significant effect of the proposed Thorpe St. Andrew Neighbourhood Plan on the highlighted European designations to the south east of the parish, and therefore a full Appropriate Assessment is not required.
- 4.2 None of the policies within the draft Neighbourhood Plan allocates any sites for future development in the parish, which possibly would have a negative impact. Only two policies are site specific (Policies 1 and 6), but these, respectively, seek to protect identified green spaces of local importance from future development, and enhance current employment areas, where appropriate.
- 4.3 This screening assessment has been performed in relation to the draft version of the Plan which is intended to be subject to Reg. 14 pre-submission consultation. Once the final draft of the Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority, the authorities will review the policies therein to see if there have been any significant changes. If so, then the local planning authorities may decide to update this assessment at that time.
- 4.4 This assessment report will be sent to Natural England for comments, as the appropriate nature conservation body specified by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Appendix 1: European Designated Sites in relation to Thorpe St. Andrew Parish

**MAGiC** European Designated Sites



<p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Parishes (GB)</li> <li><span style="background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Ramsar Sites (England)</li> <li><span style="background-color: #FFB6C1; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Special Areas of Conservation (England)</li> <li><span style="background-color: #ADD8E6; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Special Protection Areas (England)</li> </ul>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>0 1 2 km</p> </div> <p>Projection = OSGB36  xmin = 621900  ymin = 304500  xmax = 635400  ymax = 314100</p> <p>Map produced by MAGiC on 12 November 2019.  Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission. Some information in MAGiC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or continually updated by the originating organisation. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.</p>
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## Appendix 2: Details of relevant European Sites

This information has been taken from the Appropriate Assessment – Task 1 report produced in support of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (adopted 2014).

### **Broadland SPA**

#### **(i) Site Description & Qualifying Features**

Broadland is a low-lying wetland complex straddling the boundaries between east Norfolk and northern Suffolk in eastern England. The Broads are a series of flooded medieval peat cuttings. The area includes the river valley systems of the Bure, Yare and Waveney and their major tributaries. The distinctive open landscape comprises a complex and interlinked mosaic of wetland habitats including open water, reedbeds, carr woodland, grazing marsh and fen meadow, forming one of the finest marshland complexes in the UK. The differing types of management of the vegetation for reed, sedge and marsh hay, coupled with variations in hydrology and substrate, support an extremely diverse range of plant communities.

#### **Broadland SPA Qualifying Features**

<b>Article 4.1</b>	<b>Breeding</b>	<b>Over winter</b>	<b>Passage</b>
Bewick's swan		X	
Whooper swan		X	
Bittern	X		
Marsh harrier	X		
Hen harrier		X	
Ruff		X	
<i>Noteworthy: Gadwall</i>			

#### **(ii) Conservation Objectives**

To restore to favourable condition, if the feature is not currently in favourable condition, the habitats for the populations of Annex1 bird species of European importance (Bewick's swan, whooper swan, bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, marsh harrier, hen harrier, ruff), migratory bird species of European importance (pink-footed goose, gadwall, shoveler) and populations of waterfowl that contribute to the wintering waterfowl assemblage of European importance with particular reference to:

- Open water
- Swamp
- Fen
- ReedBed
- Fen meadow with ditches and water bodies, and
- Lowland wet grassland with ditches and water bodies.

#### **(iii) Vulnerability**

The site has suffered from management neglect and natural succession during this century. Sea level rise and reduced summer flows in the river Bure brought about by abstraction are resulting in increasing saline intrusion into the site and generally drier summer conditions. The site also suffers from eutrophication, brought through the build up of nutrients over a long period, primarily through sewage outfalls and, to a lesser degree, agriculture. The region as a whole is a centre for tourism and recreation, however this pressure is now starting to be brought

under control by the Broads Authority via the Broads Plan. Efficient drainage within much of the reclaimed parts of the wetland has reduced the wildlife value.

## **Broadland RAMSAR**

### **(i) Site Description & Qualifying Features**

Broadland is a low-lying wetland complex straddling the boundaries between east Norfolk and northern Suffolk. The area includes the river valley systems of the Bure, Yare and Waveney and their major tributaries. The open distinctive landscape comprises a complex and interlinked mosaic of wetland habitats including open water, reedbeds, carr woodland, grazing marsh and fen meadow. The region is important for recreation, tourism, agriculture and wildlife.

### **Broadland Ramsar Qualifying Features**

<b>Criterion 6</b>	<b>Breeding</b>	<b>Over winter</b>	<b>Passage</b>
Bewick's Swan		<b>X</b>	
Wigeon		<b>X</b>	
Gadwall		<b>X</b>	
Shoveler		<b>X</b>	
<i>Noteworthy: Bean goose (fabalis), white-fronted goose (albifrons), teal, Pochard, smew, cormorant (carbo), bittern, marsh harrier, hen harrier, water rail, coot, ruff.</i>			

### **Ramsar criteria for designation:**

*Criterion 2:* The site supports a number of rare species and habitats within the biogeographical zone context, including the following Habitats Directive Annex I features: H7210 Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*; Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge); H7230 Alkaline fens Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens; H91E0 Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnionincanae*, *Salicion albae*) and Alder woodland on floodplains. It includes also the Annex II species: S1016 *Vertigo moulinsiana* Desmoulin's whorl snail; S1355 *Lutra lutra* Otter; S1903 *Liparis loeselii* Fen orchid. The site supports outstanding assemblages of rare plants and invertebrates including nine British Red Data Book plants and 136 British Red Data Book invertebrates.

*Criterion 6:* – the site supports bird species/populations at levels of international importance

### **(ii) Vulnerability**

Broadland Ramsar vulnerability are similar to The Broads SAC (please see below).

## **The Broads SAC**

### **(i) Site Description & Qualifying Features**

The Broads SAC covers roughly the same area as the Broadland SPA and Ramsar sites. The Broads SAC is the richest area for charophytes in Britain. The core of this interest is the Thurne Broads and particularly Hickling Broad which is the richest site in the UK. Sixteen species have been recorded within Hickling Broad, a large shallow brackish lake. Within the Broads examples of *Chara* vegetation are also found within fen pools (turf ponds) and fen and marsh ditch systems.

The Broads also contain several examples of southern natural eutrophic lakes for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. The lakes are artificial and originated from peat digging in medieval times support relict vegetation of the original Fenland flora, and collectively this site contains one of the richest assemblages of rare and local aquatic species in the UK.

This flood plain mire site in East Anglia has the largest example of calcareous fens in the UK and possibly the largest occurrence in the EU outside Sweden. The *Cladium* habitat occurs in a diverse set of conditions that maintain its species-richness and forms a large-scale mosaics with other fen types, open water and woodland, and important associated plant species including the fen orchid, *Liparis loeselii*.

The Broads is one of two sites selected for alkaline fens in East Anglia, where a main concentration of lowland fen occurs. The fens are principally of the flood plain mire type. The site contains a range of rare and local plant species, including the Annex II fen orchid *Liparis loeselii*, lesser tussock-sedge *Carex diandra*, and slender sedge *C. lasiocarpa*.

The complex of sites in the Broads of East Anglia contains the largest blocks of alder *Alnus glutinosa* wood in England containing a complex complete successional sequence from open water through reedswamp to alder woodland, which has developed on fen peat.

The Broads is the main stronghold of Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* in East Anglia and is one of several sites selected in this part of its range. Several large populations are known, associated with standing and flowing water and ditch systems. This is a very important area for its wetland invertebrate fauna, and many Red Data Book and Nationally Scarce species occur here.

Also present in the Broads with significant numbers is the otter, *Lutra lutra*.

#### *SAC Qualifying features- Habitats*

- Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp.;
- Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition*-type vegetation;
- Transition mires and quaking bogs;
- Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*, Priority feature;
- Alkaline fens;
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) Priority feature, and;
- *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*).

### SAC Qualifying features- Species

- Desmoulin`s whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*, and;
- Otter *Lutra lutra*.

### (ii) Conservation Objectives

The conservation objectives are to maintain, in favourable condition, the habitat features of the designation, and to maintain, in favourable condition, the habitats for the populations of the qualifying species, with particular reference to:

- Open water;
- Swamp, and;
- Fen.

### (iii) Vulnerability

The Broads are most vulnerable to sea level rise and reduced summer flows, due to abstraction in the northern rivers and drier summer conditions. The major consequence of these pressures is the saline intrusion into the site.

Eutrophication due to nutrients increase from sewage outfalls and agriculture is also considered a problem. Measures to reverse trophic state include phosphate striping in some of the sewage works and mud-pumping to remove enriched material from lakes, followed by biomanipulation.

Pressure from tourism and recreation is being considered by the Broads Authority through the Broads Plan. Water levels are being addressed through the Water Level Management Plans and the Environmentally Sensitive Area scheme. Appropriate standards of flood defence are necessary for the wetland, and works are currently proceeding under the Environment Agency Broads Strategy.