



Acle Neighbourhood Plan

(Neighbourhood Plan Review Pre-submission Draft)

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

Updated December 2025

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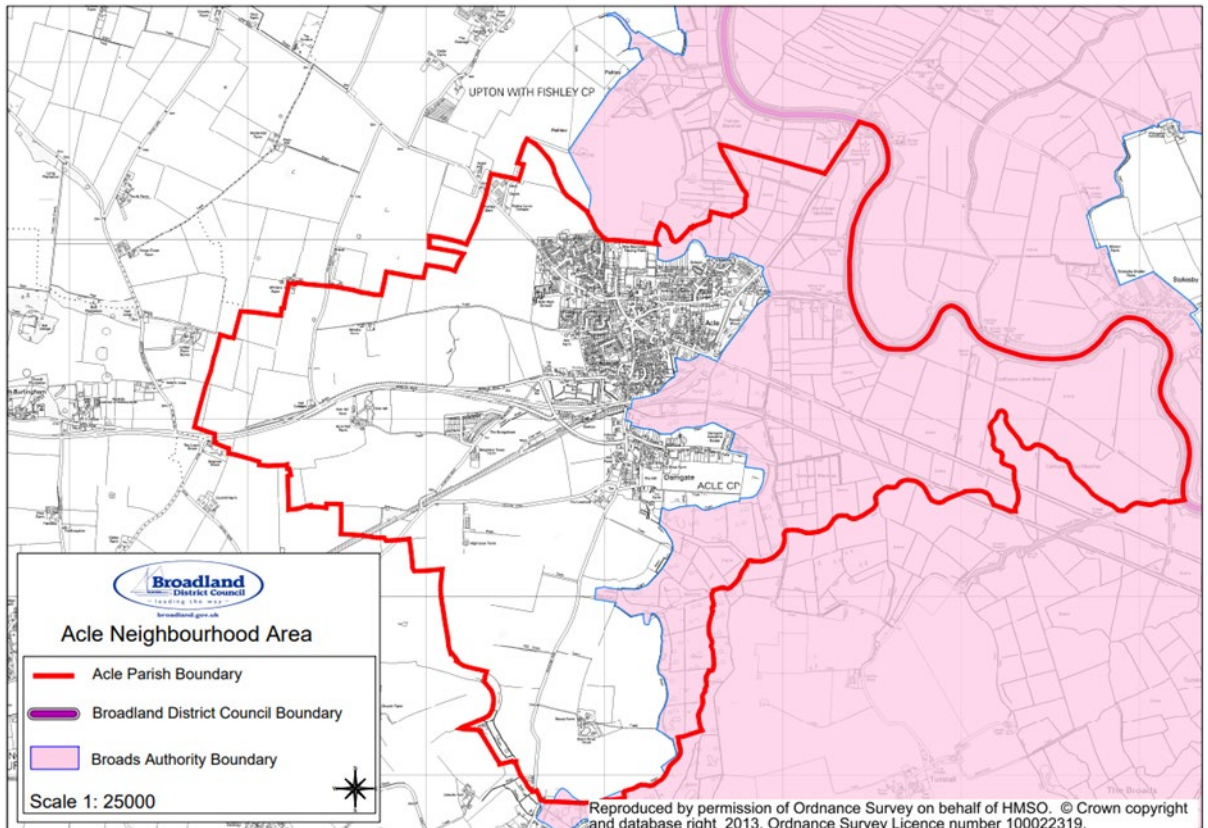
1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to determine if the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review requires Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) through a process known as SEA screening.
- 1.2 The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review has been commissioned by Acle Parish Council and developed by a Steering Group of residents. The first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan Review is being prepared for 'pre-submission consultation' in November 2025. Should the draft policies change in a significant way, the SEA screening process will be repeated. The draft policies used in this screening are dated 16.09.2025. The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review will have an end date of 2038.
- 1.3 This report fulfils the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment and Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended.
- 1.4 This report provides details of the draft pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan Review policies and explains the legislative background to SEA screening, before providing an account of the SEA screening exercise for the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review.

2. The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review

- 2.1 The Acle Neighbourhood Plan was fully adopted by Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority on 17 February 2015 following an 85% Yes vote by Acle residents.
- 2.2 Acle Parish Council is reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan and has established a Steering Group to undertake the review.

Figure 1 below: Map showing the Acle Neighbourhood Plan boundary.
Source: South Norfolk and Broadland District Council website.¹ Map obtained 02.07.2025.



2.3 Acle parish is located within Broadland District Council and the eastern area of the parish is within the Broads Authority. The Broads Authority is responsible for planning (and navigation) in the Broads National Park.

¹¹ <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/future-development/neighbourhood-plans/adopted-neighbourhood-plans-broadland/acle-neighbourhood-plan/acle-neighbourhood-plan>. Information obtained 03.07.2025.

- 2.4 Both Broadland District and South Norfolk Councils have worked with Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council to prepare the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). The GNLP plans for the housing and job needs of the area to 2038 and builds on the long-established joint working arrangement for Greater Norwich. It includes strategic policies to guide future development and plans to protect the environment. It looks to ensure that delivery of development is done in a way which promotes sustainability and the effective functioning of the whole area.
- 2.5 The GNLP was adopted by Broadland District Council at a Council meeting on 28 March 2024.
- 2.6 The Broads Authority is reviewing the Local Plan for the Broads. Whilst this is completed, the policies in the current Local Plan for the Broads are still in place. The emerging Local Plan will be at Regulation 19 stage from July 2025. Until this is completed, the policies in the current Local Plan for the Broads are still in place.
- 2.7 The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group has developed the draft aims, vision, objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan Review through community consultation.
- 2.8 A Data Profile for the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review has been completed, which contains information on community infrastructure, housing and the built-environment, transport and access and environment and landscape. Information from the data profile is used within this SEA screening.
- 2.9 The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review draft vision is:
- As the “Gateway to the Broads”, Acle will continue to flourish as a key service centre, whilst maintaining its rural village identity. Development will be sustainable, well designed, environmentally conscious and community focused. Acle will be a prosperous place for all generations to live, work and visit.**
- 2.10 The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review draft objectives and policies at 16.09.2025 are:

Objective 1 Housing and Development: To support development that is well designed, environmentally positive and sympathetic to the character of Acle.

Policy ACL1: The Design of New Development

The design of all new development in Acle should reflect the village's local distinctiveness and identity and seek to enhance the quality the built environment and Acle's overall character.

Proposals for new development, including residential and non-residential development should be of a high standard of design and have regard to the guidance set out in the **Acle Parish Design Guidance and Codes 2025**.

Development proposals should make reference to the relevant Character Area analysis alongside the guidance and codes to have a better understanding of Acle context. This applies to larger-scale development and small-scale development such as infill and extensions.

Proposals for new housing development, as appropriate to the scale of development proposed, should pay careful attention to the following design elements.

(DETAILED CRITERIA to be inserted)

1. Context and pattern of development
2. Vernacular and materials

Policy ACL2: New Housing in Acle

The location of new housing in Acle

The focus for new development in Acle over the plan period will be within the adopted settlement boundary, within specific allocations made in the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

New housing development should be located where it can best integrate with existing development and benefit from proximity to the existing community facilities.

Within the settlement boundary, proposals for small windfall and infill sites consisting of individual dwellings or small groups of dwellings will only be supported where they are well related to the existing built-up area, where their development would enhance its form, character and setting and where safe pedestrian and cycle connections to existing community facilities can be provided.

The mix of new housing in Acle

Proposals for new housing should seek to meet local needs (both current and future).

Size

Where new housing is to be provided, the focus should be on mid-sized 3 bedroomed dwellings, as both affordable and open market dwellings, which retains the current range and mix of housing available and maintains a balanced and inclusive community.

Affordable Housing⁸

Where affordable housing is to be provided, as part of a mixed development site, this should be delivered as a minimum of 1/3 of the total units on the site or in line with the relevant Adopted Local Plan policy, whichever is higher. The affordable units should be fully integrated with the open market housing and 'pepper-potted' around the site.

The mix of affordable housing should be provided in line with the recommendations of the Acle Housing Needs Assessment⁹ (or successor document) which currently recommends the following mix:

- a. 60% as social/affordable rent

b. 40% affordable routes to home ownership

Priority for affordable housing should be given to those who can prove a local connection to Acle parish¹⁰.

Specialist housing

New development should provide for a mix of housing type including those that can be adapted to meet the needs of older people, people with disabilities or limited mobility, such as bungalows.

In accordance with Adopted Local Plan policy, at least 20% of new homes on major¹¹ developments should meet Building Regulations M4 (2) standards of adaptability and accessibility.

Annexes and ancillary accommodation

Where a need for an annexe or ancillary accommodation is established, and care can be provided which allows for people to remain in their own homes for longer, this will be supported in principle, subject to compliance with other policies in this plan.

Policy ACL3: Residential Car parking

New residential developments should not be visually dominated by the car and sufficient and safe parking should be provided to meet the needs of the development.

Design

Householder parking should be provided on plot for new residential developments. Where garages, under-croft parking or car ports are to be provided, they should be of sufficient dimensions to allow access and egress from the vehicle and provision should also be made for electric charging facilities.

All forms of parking areas should be designed to minimise the visual impact of the car on the street scene and the amenity of residents. Parking associated with new dwellings should be well connected, not divorced from the dwelling, and appropriately lit to allow natural surveillance and safety.

Communal and visitor parking areas should be well landscaped to ensure their physical and physical integration into the wider development, whilst ensuring this does not impact upon access for emergency, service or delivery vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists or adversely affect traffic flow.

New roads should be designed to adoptable standards and to safely accommodate unallocated on-street parking.

Parking Provision

The quantity of parking should be provided in accordance with Norfolk County Council Parking Guidelines 2022 as a minimum. For residential dwellings this should be consistent with the size of the dwelling, as follows:

- a. 1 bedroom unit – 1 space
- b. 2-3 bedroom unit – 2 spaces
- c. 4 +bedroom unit – 3 spaces

Visitor parking should also be provided at a minimum of one space per 5 new dwellings.

See also Acle Design Guidance and Codes 2025

Objective 2 Business and Employment: To enhance the attractiveness, vitality and viability of Acle for employment, retail, tourism and commercial uses.

Policy ACL4: Village centre

Within the village centre, (as defined in the Adopted Greater Norwich Local Plan), proposals will be supported which contribute to achieving a vibrant and viable village centre comprising a mix of retail, service sector, business, hospitality, tourist, cultural and residential uses.

Development proposals which would assist with the diversification and retention of existing retail uses within the village centre will be supported. The retention of existing retail uses and 'active frontages'¹³ within the centre will be encouraged.

Proposals for residential development at first floor level above existing retail uses e.g. 'living over the shop' will be supported.

Proposals in the village centre will be expected to be of a high quality design consistent with Policy ACL1. Proposals within the village centre should be designed with an emphasis on improving public realm, creating social and community spaces whilst contributing to enhancing the visual appearance of the area through the provision of high quality public realm, street furniture and signage.

See also Acle Design Guidance and Codes 2025

Policy ACL5: Mixed Uses and Brownfield Land

Proposals for the mixed use or redevelopment or re-use of underused or vacant brownfield land will be supported where:

- a. The site is located either within or adjacent to the village centre,
- b. The proposal includes a mix of uses such as office or business uses, tourist facilities or accommodation, cultural, retail or commercial uses.
- c. Any housing proposed is ancillary to the other proposed uses on the site or includes live/work units.
- d. Appropriate safe vehicular access to and from the site can be achieved.
- e. Sufficient off-street parking to serve the proposed uses can be provided on the site.
- f. The proposal provides safe pedestrian and cycle connections to the village centre and other important community facilities.
- g. The proposed mix of uses will not cause adverse impacts on the amenity of adjoining users.
- h. The proposal will provide a visual enhancement to the character of the area.

Where the proposed development site is located within or immediately adjacent to the village centre ¹⁴ and has a site frontage to either Norwich Road, The Street, New Road, Old Road and Reedham Road, retail uses, including food retail, will be encouraged on the site frontage. Other uses such as parking, employment and housing, either behind or above, will be supported where they would maintain or improve the vitality and viability of the village centre.

See also Acle Design Guidance and Codes 2025

Objective 3 Community and Leisure: To ensure that Acle has sufficient and appropriate social, leisure, tourism and educational facilities to support the local area.

Policy ACL6: Acle Bridge Improvements

The area at Acle Bridge (shown on Map X) shall be safeguarded for high quality leisure and tourism uses, including food and drink premises, marinas and moorings which are consistent with its location in the Broads, (an internationally important wetland and nationally protected landscape).

Proposals for improvements to the facilities in the area should seek to create a high quality visual gateway to the village. This would include improvements to the environment, access road, public realm, interpretation and signage promoting footpath and cycle links to Acle village which support wellbeing and tourism.

Any development proposals should refer to Policy DM2 of the Broads Local Plan (2019) and to appropriate national and local technical guidance regarding flood risk which will be used to assess the suitability of proposals in this area.

Any new development should respect the setting of the St Mary's Priory scheduled monument which is located on adjacent land.

Where appropriate archaeological investigations may be required as part of any work in this area.

Policy ACL7: Education Provision

Acle Academy

Proposals for the enhancement and extension of Acle Academy within its existing site, including the provision of new high quality sports facilities for students and the wider community, will be supported .

The design and layout of proposals for new housing on the sites allocated in the Greater Norwich Local Plan which are adjacent to the Acle Academy – that is sites *ACL1,GNLP0378R* and *GNLP2139R: (Land west of Acle, north of Norwich Road, south of South Walsham Road)* should ensure that they do not compromise any future expansion of the academy or any future proposals involving the co-location or consolidation of the Academy with the primary school and the pre-school, which may be required to accommodate the planned levels of new growth.

The development of allocated sites should be aided by a strategic masterplan, produced through community collaboration, which guides the development of the sites in a comprehensive manner to ensure the safeguarding of land for education uses.

Developers of these sites will be expected to liaise with Acle Academy, Acle Primary School and Acle Pre-School to ensure the schools' potential future growth needs will not be compromised.

Primary and Pre-School Provision

Proposals which would result in the provision of enhanced and multi-purpose buildings/spaces will be supported where these allow for physical and social integration with the existing primary school, in order to create an improved learning environment.

Objective 4 Movement and Transport: To encourage safe, convenient and accessible pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access within Acle and beyond.

Policy ACL8: Improving Health, Accessibility and Connectivity

Proposals which would contribute to making the parish safer and more accessible for residents, including pedestrians and cyclists, and would contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents, will be supported.

All new development should create opportunities to encourage the use of sustainable transport through the provision of public transport infrastructure such as bus stops and shelters. Pedestrian and cycle connections should be provided, both within the site, and also linking the site to the existing network to create continuous footway links, in particular where these link to schools, public transport, community facilities and recreational spaces.

This will be achieved by :

- a. Providing safe, attractive and convenient pedestrian routes, cycle ways and bridleways. Routes must follow “desire lines” and link with potential destinations, particularly bus stops, schools, the village centre, community facilities, and access to the countryside.
- b. Providing crossing points at the intersection with roads to enable safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists within Acle.
- c. Ensuring footways, crossing points and parking bays are designed to safely accommodate the needs of people with mobility difficulties or pushchairs.
- d. Ensuring that footways, crossing points and parking bays are designed with adequate drainage to prevent creating areas of standing surface water:

New Routes and Connections

This Neighbourhood Plan provides support, in principle, for the following new routes

- i. Connections between Leffins Lane and the village centre
- ii. New pedestrian route between The Windle and North Burlingham (and on to Lingwood) via the former A47 layby.
- iii. New connection between South Walsham Road and Mill Lane track.
- iv. Improved connections between the Village Centre and Acle Bridge
- v. Improved connections between the Village Centre and the railway station.

- vi. Improved routes from Acle to Upton and Fishley.
- vii. Connection between Acle and Moulton St Mary
- viii. Connection between Acle and Beighton

Existing Public Rights of Way

Development which is likely to affect an existing Public Right of Way must take its route into account and incorporate it into the scheme. Where Public Rights of Way are impacted, appropriate diversions or new routes should be provided that are more, or at least equally, safe, accessible, and convenient for users.

Objective 5 Natural Environment: To protect, enhance and develop the natural environment of Acle.

Policy New ACL9: Floodrisk

All new development should be directed away from areas at risk of flooding from the river, the Broads and other waterways.

New development should not create new, or exacerbate existing, surface water flooding issues and should take into account the known and expected impacts of climate change.

New development will be expected to demonstrate how it can mitigate its own flooding and drainage impacts, avoid the increase of flooding elsewhere and seek to achieve lower than greenfield runoff rates.¹⁶ All proposals for new development within the Neighbourhood Plan area must take account of the advice and guidance on surface water drainage and the mitigation of flood risk obtainable from Norfolk County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority) and the relevant Internal Drainage Board (as statutory Drainage Board for the Plan area).

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

All new development is required to use proportional and appropriate sustainable drainage methods (for example, drainage lagoons), wetland and water features to prevent localised flooding, protect against pollution (particularly in proximity to The Broads) and provide wider amenity, recreational and biodiversity benefits.

Where SUDs are proposed they should be :

- a. well designed to ensure that they are integrated into the landscape and, if located at the entrance to the development, care should be taken over their visual appearance, with planting of native species to reduce flooding, where appropriate.
- b. sensitively and safely located within new developments, for example away from children's play areas.
- c. excluded from the open space calculation for the site, unless it can be practically and safely used for recreation in its own right.

See also Acle Design Guidance and Codes 2025

Policy ACL10: Light pollution and Dark Skies

Development proposals which include new lighting must take account of Acle's proximity to the Broads and the area's intrinsically dark skies.

New street-lighting should not be located at the edge of the settlement. Both residential and commercial lighting may be provided where necessary for security or safety but must be designed to minimise the impact on dark skies and the environment by having minimal light spillage, using downlighting, LED bulbs and restricting hours of lighting (for example through the use of motion detectors and timers). Within the domestic curtilage of new dwellings located on the edge of a development outward facing lights are discouraged.

Proposals including lighting likely to cause disturbance or risk to nocturnal wildlife should seek to reduce and mitigate such disturbance or risk.

Development proposals should demonstrate compliance with best practice guidance for avoiding artificial lighting impacts on bats and other wildlife species through avoiding the use of blue lighting. Where lighting cannot be avoided altogether in proposals then it must be designed to avoid light spill onto wildlife roosts, foraging habitat, and commuting routes for bats, birds, and other species.

Proposals including prominent lighting visible from the surrounding protected landscape will not be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that such lighting is required in the interests of safety and security.

See also Acle Design Guidance and Codes 2025

Policy ACL11 New and existing green spaces

Local Green Spaces

The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following as Local Green Spaces:

1. Daisy Way Estate - Play Area and surrounding green space
2. Daisy Way Estate - Gated seating area
3. Daisy Way Estate – Visibility Splays at Leffins Lane junction
4. Railway Footpaths – 2 x Pedestrian access routes from Reedham Road to Great Yarmouth and Norwich platforms
5. Jolly's Lane – Roadside verges
6. The Green
7. Mill Lane - Green space to rear of Acle Academy
8. Mill Lane - Footpath leading to Jubilee Woods
9. Mill Lane – Visibility Splays at Glebe Road junction
10. Mill Lane - Green space beside sheltered housing bungalows
11. Mill Crescent – Roadside verges
12. Glover Road Estate - Attenuation lagoons
13. Glover Road Estate – Visibility Splays at Norwich Road junction
14. Glover Road Estate – Green space along the footpath linking to Mill Lane
15. Glover Road Estate – Central open green
16. Glover Road Estate - Play Area
17. Leffins Lane - Land west of Norwich Road mini-roundabout
18. St Peters Avenue – Visibility Splays at Norwich Road junction
19. Land west of Norwich Road (adjacent to Acle Garden Machinery)
20. Land south of Acle Garden Machinery
21. Old Track to Railway
22. Bighton Road - Play Area
23. Market Manor Estate – Pavement-side green verge to the left at the estate entrance
24. New Close – Central open green within cul-de-sac
25. New Road – Visibility Splays at New Close junction
26. New Road – Visibility Splays at Broadland Way junction
27. New Road – Pavement-side green verge opposite the Chip Shop
28. New Road – Visibility Splays at Fuel Station junction
29. New Road – Visibility Splays at A47 junction of roundabout
30. New Road – Visibility Splays at A1064 junction of roundabout
31. Hermitage Close – Visibility Splays at A1064 junction
32. Old Road – Visibility Splays on A1064 junction (including green space with established trees)
33. Jubilee Woods
34. Roman Wood
35. Farrow's Wood

These Local Green Spaces will receive special protection in accordance with national policy.

New green spaces

Proposals for new housing development should include quality outdoor green amenity space. Where new developments provide elements of green infrastructure (such as open space, natural green space, recreational areas, allotments, community woodland and orchards) these should be located where they can best serve the needs of both the new development and the existing community. New green spaces should be safe, secure, and accessible.

Appropriately sized informal amenity areas, play areas and natural features should be provided for developments should be phased to occur every 25 dwellings.

See also Acle Design Guidance and Codes 2025

Policy ACL12: Biodiversity and Ecological Corridors

All development proposals will be expected to protect, improve and enhance existing ecological networks, wildlife corridors and priority species in the parish.

Using national policy guidance and DEFRA metrics, development proposals will be expected to provide a minimum of 10 per cent net gain in biodiversity. Encouragement is given for a 20 per cent net gain where this can be satisfactorily achieved.

Net gains should be achieved through the creation of new, and the restoration and enhancement of existing natural habitats, such as:

- a. the planting of additional trees and hedgerows,
- b. the creation of new ponds, restoration of former ponds,
- c. the restoration, connection and repair of existing fragmented biodiversity networks, and
- d. the creation of new wildlife corridors and habitat areas.

Net gain should preferably be achieved on site but where off site net gain can be justified in line with national policy, this should be preferably located elsewhere in the parish, consistent with the relevant Nature Recovery Strategy.

Priorities for biodiversity net gain and enhancement within the parish include the existing strategic tree belts and green corridors which will be protected, extended and linked to other existing tree belts, creating circular routes and ecological routes for wildlife within the parish.

Any development site which contains tree belts should facilitate access to and through them with footpaths and cycleways, as appropriate, for both wildlife and people to connect with open spaces, the Broads and the surrounding countryside, wherever possible, in order to maintain and enhance the rural character.

Development proposals should conform to the mitigation hierarchy²¹ and seek to retain existing features and avoid loss or damage to biodiversity. Development proposals should seek to retain mature or significant trees, groups of trees, orchards, hedgerows and woodland to sustain the rural character of Acle.

Trees and hedges

Development that damages or results in the loss of ancient trees or hedges, trees with a veteran feature or trees with a good aboricultural or amenity value will not be supported unless it can justified by a professionally prepared tree survey and aboricultural statement.

Where loss or damage to trees or hedges is unavoidable, the benefits of the development must clearly outweigh the impacts, and the development shall provide for mitigation in the form of equivalent or better replacement or replanting or appropriate natural feature on site before offsetting elsewhere within the parish will be considered. Off-site biodiversity enhancements should be directed to areas identified in any Local Nature Recovery Strategy within the parish.

New tree and hedge planting should be of a scale, location and type which adds value, and with a view to optimising benefits to wildlife with long-term management plans included within proposals.

Planting plans should take account of the expected eventual size of the tree or hedge including future shading, water requirements, the impact of root growth, and leaf fall on surrounding features such as buildings, pavements and car parking areas and the relationship with surrounding buildings.

Species selection should take into account the changing climate and tree disease and seek to include a mix of native and climate-resilient species whilst avoiding invasive species.

Wildlife measures

Proposals for new buildings (including non-residential development) should incorporate measures to protect and enhance wildlife species including the incorporation of wildlife friendly measures such as green roofs, swift bricks, hedgehog access gaps and insect bricks, new garden hedgerows and trees which include a variety of nectar and pollen producing plants which are in flower across the seasons.

See also Acle Design Guidance and Codes

Policy ACL13: Landscape and Important Views

Proposals should be accompanied by a statement, appropriate to the scale of the proposal, which demonstrates how the view has been taken into consideration. Any proposal that would have a significant adverse impact on the landscape or character of the view concerned will not be supported.

The following views are considered particularly important:

1. View along the Mill Lane track from west of the Acle Academy
2. View from the sundial in Jubilee Wood east towards Acle
3. View from Jolly's Lane looking north
4. View from Jolly's Lane looking south
5. View from Bensley Close towards Fishley Church
6. View from Reedham Road going north into Acle,
7. Views both east and west across marshes from allotments and Roman Wood
8. View from riverside footpath towards Acle bridge
9. Views from new cemetery site

New settlement edges

Where new edges to the settlement of Acle are to be created by new development, these should reflect the characteristics of the specific landscape character type in which they are located and maintain and enable a rural feel, whilst providing for views and vistas over the surrounding countryside and The Broads.

Policy ACL14: Responding to Climate Change

Proposals for new developments in Acle should seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all development types, promote renewable and low-carbon energy infrastructure and enhance climate resilience through sustainable design and nature-based solutions.

Where new development is proposed, (residential, agricultural and industrial buildings), provision should be made for the incorporation of low carbon/sustainability measures such as encouraging ground/air source heat pumps, roof mounted solar panels and water management measures. Where planning permission is required for the retrofitting of energy efficiency and low carbon measures to existing buildings, both residential and non-residential, these will be supported in principle.

Large-Scale Energy Developments

Where large-scale renewable or other energy developments are proposed (including associated development such as cables, fencing, overhead wires, ancillary buildings etc), these will only be supported where the proposal:

- a. Would not have an adverse impact upon biodiversity interests including nationally, internationally or locally designated sites or protected habitats and species and the proposal would contribute to a measurable net gain in biodiversity in accordance with Policy ACL12,
- b. Is located outside of The Broads nationally protected landscape and would not have an adverse impact upon the landscape character of the parish more generally,
- c. Is located outside of the views identified in Policy ACL13
- d. Would not adversely impact upon the heritage significance of the Halvergate Conservation Area, other designated assets or Non- Designated Heritage Assets as identified in Policy ACL15,
- e. Would not have adverse impacts upon residential amenity in terms of noise, glare or dust,
- f. Can be safely accessed from the highway without detriment to the above criteria.

Fire breaks

Where the site boundary of a new development is between (a) residential housing or commercial/communal buildings and (b) agricultural land, then a Fire Risk Assessment should be undertaken

which takes into account the provision of suitable areas of land within the proposed development to be used as fire breaks.

Such areas would act as a buffer between agricultural land and new development in the event of an agricultural fire. Fire breaks should be a minimum of (15m in width) and may include bunds, tree planting, green screens, sustainable drainage schemes, water features and separation distances which should be incorporated into phases of development.

See also Acle Design Guidance and Codes

New ACL15: Heritage

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

The following have been identified by the Broads Authority as Non-Designated Heritage Assets and are included on their Local List:

1. Bridge Stores, Waterside Chalet
2. Charlies Waters Drainage Mill.

Proposals for the alteration or extension of buildings or structures which could potentially fall into the following categories should be designed to take into account the effect of the proposal on the buildings heritage significance and contribution to local character:

- a. WWII Buildings and Structures
- b. Traditional Shopfronts in the village centre
- c. Residential Villas at the entrance to the village centre or at Damgate Lane

Halvergate Conservation Area

Development proposals which may affect the character, significance and setting of the Halvergate Conservation Area, including any archaeological assets, will be considered carefully. The impact of proposals on the significance of the Conservation Area, the contribution made to its setting and the wider landscape, views into, within and out of the Conservation Area will be assessed.

Any proposals would need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the designated heritage asset (Halvergate Conservation Area) and of the wider context in which the heritage asset sits, whilst providing clear justification, in a heritage statement, for any harm to its significance.

Site Specific Policies

Policy ACL16: Cemetery Provision

Where a need for new cemetery provision is established in Acle, proposals for a new cemetery which meet the following criteria will be supported:

1. The proposal meets an identified need for new cemetery provision and is of sufficient size and scale to meet the identified need.
2. The proposed location is outside of any known areas of archaeological importance and an archaeological evaluation/assessment of the site is undertaken prior to permission being granted.
3. The site is located outside of any areas of floodrisk including areas of surface water flooding.
4. The proposal is supported by a groundwater protection risk assessment in accordance with Environment Agency Guidance: Assessing Groundwater Pollution for Cemetery Developments (or successor document or advice).
5. The proposal can be integrated into the wider surroundings by a landscaping scheme, including boundary hedge and tree planting.
6. The proposal is supported by a management plan that addresses how the site will be managed to benefit biodiversity.
7. The proposal is designed to minimise light pollution in accordance with Policy ACL10 above.

3. Legislative Background

- 3.1 European Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment ('SEA Directive') introduces the need to undertake a strategic environmental assessment ('SEA') during the development of some plans and programmes. The main purpose of SEA, according to Article 1 of the SEA Directive, is:
- 'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.'
- 3.2 The SEA Directive is transcribed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which establishes the requirement to undertake a sustainability appraisal (SA) for some documents used for planning purposes. The SA process incorporates the requirement for SEA, but typically has a broader scope and considers the social and economic issues in addition to the environmental effects.
- 3.3 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 amends the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2013 to provide clarification on the SEA related documents which must be submitted alongside neighbourhood planning proposals. Regulation 2(4) of the amendment regulations 2015 adds to the list of documents that a neighbourhood planning group must submit to a local planning authority with a proposal for a neighbourhood plan, which is presented in regulation 6 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The additional document which must be submitted is either an environmental report, should SEA be required, or a statement of reasons why an environmental assessment is not required.
- 3.4 The UK left the EU on 31st January 2020. Under the UK-EU withdrawal agreement, a transition period ended on 31st December 2020, during which time all EU law continued to apply to the UK. During the transition period the UK needed to continue following domestic law that implements EU law, or directly applicable EU law that is given effect through the EUWA 2018. Beyond the transition period, the SEA Regulations, which previously implemented the requirements of the SEA Directive in England, will continue to apply as before unless and until new legislation is introduced.²

² www.neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/understand-plan-requires-strategic-environmental-assessment-sea/ Information obtained 02.07.2024.

4. An overview of the screening assessment

- 4.1 Figure 3 overleaf is taken from 'A practical guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' and illustrates the process for screening a Neighbourhood Plan to ascertain whether a full SEA is required (Article numbers relate to European Directive 2001/42/EC).
- 4.2 The screening for the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review is highlighted in orange. To carry out the screening process it is necessary to consider each of the criteria set out in Figure 2, this is done in Table 1 on the following page.
- 4.3 Table 2 addresses criteria 8 by considering if the pre-submission draft Neighbourhood Plan Review is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This is done by considering the Plan against the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in the Directive³. The criteria are listed in Table 2 of this document.
- 4.4 Once the process set out in Figure 2 has been completed, a screening outcome can be reached and the conclusion can be found in section 5.

³ Article 3.5 of European Directive 2001

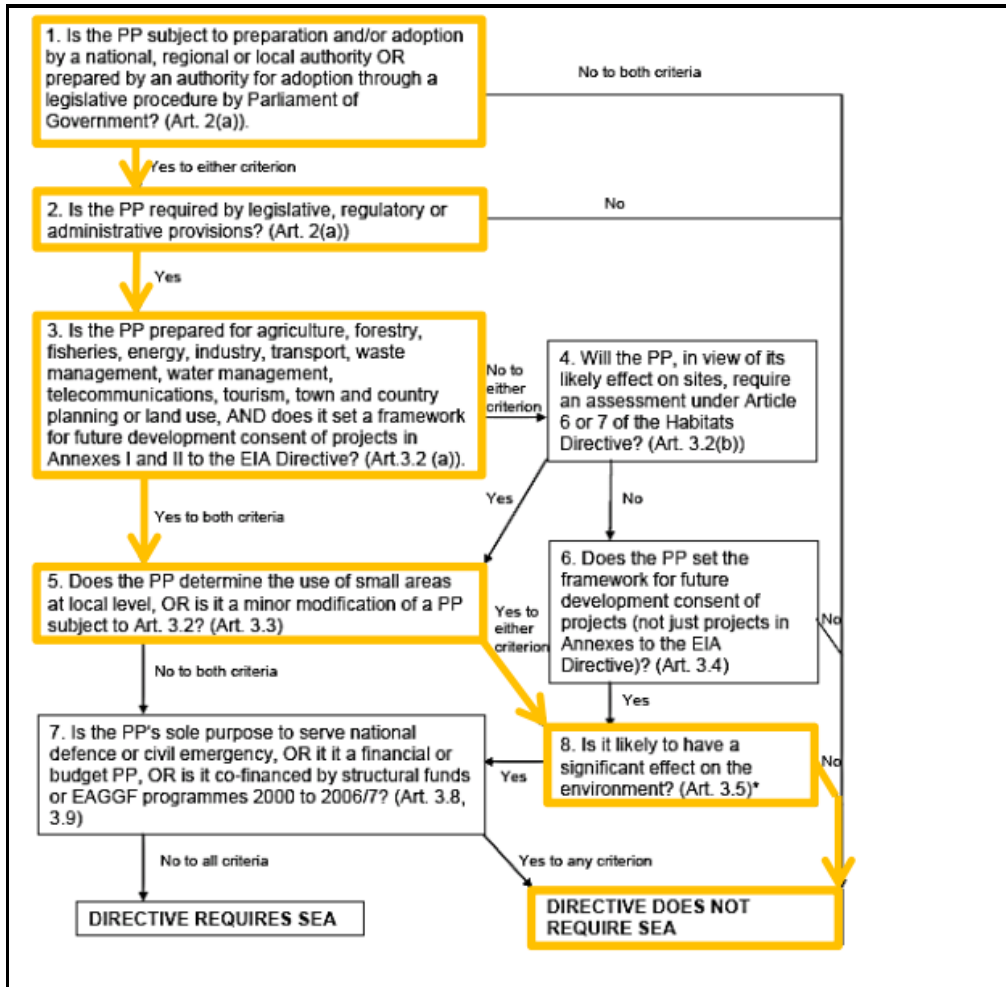


Figure 2 above: Application of the SEA Directive to Neighbourhood Plans.

5. The assessment of the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review

5.1 Table 1 below assesses the need for full SEA of the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review. The criteria in Table 1 are drawn from Figure 2 which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

Table 1: Assessment of the Need for SEA for the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review

Assessment Criteria	Assessment	Reason
1. Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a0))	Yes	The intention is for the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review to be adopted by Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority through a legislative procedure.
2. Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review is not a requirement but when adopted will be a statutory document, prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended.
3. Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIX Directive?	Yes	The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review is a document prepared for town and country planning purposes. It aims to influence and shape new development in line with the Greater Norwich Local Plan and the Broads Authority Local Plan.
5. Does the plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a Plan or Programme subject to Art. 3.2?	Yes	The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review will determine the use of small areas at a local level and contains no site allocations for development.

Assessment Criteria	Assessment	Reason
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment (Article 3.5)?	No	Justification is given for this decision in Table 2.

The final question in the SEA screening process for the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review was question 8: Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? In asking this question, the SEA Directive refers to Article 3.5, which states that the relevant criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive shall be considered when determining whether there are likely to be significant effects. Table 2 below, uses the criteria in Annex II to determine if the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review requires SEA.

Table 2: Determining the Likely Significant Effects of the of the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review on the Environment.

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Assessment	Is there a Significant Environmental effect?
<p>(1) Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard, in particular, to: The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p>	<p>The draft Neighbourhood Plan Review sets a framework for development within the parish in accordance with the Greater Norwich Local Plan and the Broads Authority Local Plan. The draft Neighbourhood Plan builds upon the existing framework by providing some additional details of the nature of development and supplements the existing policy on a local scale only. There are no site allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan. The focus for new development in Acle over the plan period will be within the adopted settlement boundary (within specific allocations made in the Greater Norwich Local Plan. New housing development should be located where it can best integrate with existing development and benefit from proximity to the existing community facilities. Proposals for the mixed use or redevelopment of underused or vacant brownfield land will be supported where conditions are met. The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review contains a criteria-based policy to determine</p>	No

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Assessment	Is there a Significant Environmental effect?
See above	relevant applications to support the provision of a new cemetery, but does not allocate a specific site for a new cemetery.	No
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review will be adopted alongside the Greater Norwich Local Plan and the Broads Authority Local Plan and provides supplementary information on a local scale rather than influencing the overall direction of the Local Plan.	No
The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan Review promote sustainable development through conserving and enhancing natural assets and biodiversity. All new development should be directed away from areas at risk of flooding from the river, the Broads and other waterways. New development should not create new, or exacerbate existing, surface water flooding issues and should take into account the known and expected impacts of climate change. New development will be expected to demonstrate how it can mitigate its own flooding and drainage impacts, avoid the increase of flooding elsewhere and seek to achieve lower than greenfield runoff rates. Local Green Spaces will be protected and the natural environment prioritised through protecting, improving and enhancing existing ecological networks, wildlife corridors and priority species in the parish.	No
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	Flood Risk and Biodiversity decline are both environmental problems relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan that are addressed through the policies.	No
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of	The Neighbourhood Plan Review is in conformity with the GNLP adopted by Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority Local Plan and is	No

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Assessment	Is there a Significant Environmental effect?
community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	therefore not directly relevant to the implementation of other European legislation. The Acle Design Guidance and Codes contributes to combatting water shortage through rain capture, rain gardens and swales.	No
(2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, to: The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects.	The overall impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan Review will be in accordance with the GNLP adopted by Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority Local Plan and will contribute to positive effects in the parish of Acle through locally specific policies.	No
The cumulative nature of the effects.	The Neighbourhood Plan review will lead to cumulative positive effects in the parish of Acle.	No
The transboundary nature of the effects.	Policies within the Neighbourhood Plan Review are likely protect water quality in the river running through the parish through measures such as rain gardens, which contain native drought tolerant plants, which will release water gradually and filter pollutants.	No
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	The Neighbourhood Plan Review is unlikely to introduce significant risks to human health or the environment.	No
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected.)	The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the civil parish of Acle. The usual resident population of Acle parish was 2,788 usual residents on Census day 2021. The Neighbourhood Plan policies are unlikely to have a significant impact on a wider geographical area or population. There are no site allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan.	No
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the plan due to:	The Neighbourhood Plan policies should protect and enhance the natural assets and biodiversity of the parish and heritage assets. The Neighbourhood Plan does not include any site	No

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Assessment	Is there a Significant Environmental effect?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage - Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values - Intensive land use - The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status. 	<p>allocations and should contribute to achieving sustainable development in the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan does not negatively impact the Broads, the Broads Special Area of Conservation, the Broadland Special Protection Area or the Broadland Ramsar within Acle parish. Development proposals which may affect the character, significance and setting of the Halvergate Conservation Area, including any archaeological assets, will be considered carefully.</p>	<p>See above</p>

5. Screening Outcome

As a result of the findings in Table 1 and Table 2, it is concluded that the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review is not likely to have significant environmental effects and full SEA is not required. There are no site allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan.

The three statutory consultation bodies, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency were consulted regarding the screening outcomes of this report within a 5 week consultation period in November / December 2025, in accordance with regulation 9(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Responses were received from Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency in agreement that full SEA is not required. The responses can be seen in Appendix A.

Based on the assessment undertaken in the SEA Screening Report and the responses received from the consultation bodies, Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority consider that it is unlikely that significant environmental effects and/or significant effects on European sites will arise from implementation of the Acle Neighbourhood Plan, and therefore that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. The Determination Statement from Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority can be seen in Appendix B.

Appendix A: Consultation responses from Statutory Bodies

Sources: Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Historic England response dated 07 November 2025

Dear Vicky,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise

on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

Please do contact me, either via email or the number below, if you have any queries.

Kind regards,

Ross

Ross McGivern

Historic Places Adviser | Partnerships Team | East of England

Historic England, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BU

Natural England response dated 05 December 2025

Dear Ms West

Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review - SEA & HRA Screening Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 30 October 2025.

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

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

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

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites¹, either alone or in combination, are unlikely. The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

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

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

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's standing advice on protected species.

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

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

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages. Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team

Environment Agency Response dated 21 November 2025

Dear Vicky

**ACLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT**

Thank you for consulting us on the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review. We have reviewed the report, as submitted, and do not disagree with the conclusion that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

Yours sincerely

Mr Alasdair Hain-Cole
Planning Officer
Direct dial 02030 255475
Direct e-mail planning.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk

Appendix B: Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority SEA and HRA Determination Statement

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) - Determination Statement

Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review

This determination statement has been produced by Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority, as the “responsible authorities”, to meet the requirements of Regulations 9 and 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The regulations implement European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

As the “competent authority” in respect of the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017, Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority are also required to determine whether the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination). This statement also provides a determination in respect of this requirement.

SEA & HRA Screening Assessment of Acle Neighbourhood Plan Review

Acle Parish Council is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan review for the parish. Preliminary SEA and HRA Screening Assessments were undertaken for the draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan, and subsequent reports were produced in October 2025. These were preliminary draft SEA and HRA Screening Assessments, subject to consultation with the statutory environmental bodies.

Consultation with Statutory Bodies

The draft SEA and HRA Screening Reports, detailing the results of the initial screening assessment of the plan and the preliminary conclusion shared by Broadland Council, the Broads Authority and the Qualifying Body (that the plan is not likely to result in significant environmental effects and is unlikely to have significant effects on European sites), was circulated to the statutory bodies - namely the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The statutory bodies were invited to provide comments on the Screening Report within a 5 week consultation period over November / December 2025.

Responses were received from all three bodies. Details of these responses can be found in the updated SEA and HRA Screening Reports.

In summary:

- The Environment Agency supports the conclusion that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.
- Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required, based on the information provided.
- Natural England supports the conclusion of the draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report, that significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely and that significant effects on Habitat sites, either alone or in combination, are also unlikely.

Conclusion

Based on the assessment undertaken in the SEA and HRA Screening Reports and the responses received from the consultation bodies, Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority consider that it is unlikely that significant environmental effects and/or significant effects on European sites will arise from implementation of the Acle Neighbourhood Plan, and therefore that a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment are not required.

Broadland District Council & Broads Authority, December 2025