



Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-submission Draft)

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Screening Report

Updated August 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report has been undertaken by South Norfolk Council in order to support the emerging Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan which has been produced by a working group on behalf of Newton Flotman Parish 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 Newton Flotman).
- 1.3 This updated version of the report has been produced following consultation with Natural England on the screening conclusion. The response from Natural England is included as Appendix 3 to this report and the report conclusion has been updated accordingly.

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, South Norfolk Council has 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 Newton Flotman 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 Newton Flotman. The nearest EU designated site is located approximately 3km west of the parish (Norfolk Valley Fen SAC):

Designation Name	Designation Type
Norfolk Valley Fen	SAC

- 3.3 All other EU designated sites are further than 15km from the Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Area. A map showing the location of the above designation in relation to Newton Flotman parish can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this report. Full details of the particular European designation, including conservation objectives, can be found in Appendix 2.
- 3.4 Whilst the aforementioned site is in relatively close proximity to the Newton Flotman neighbourhood area, the fact that the Neighbourhood Plan is not seeking to allocate any sites for future development means it is not expected that there would be any significant impacts on EU designated sites as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

4. Assessment

- 4.1 The table below sets out a summary of the proposed policies within the pre-submission draft Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan and provides an assessment as to whether there is likely to be a significant impact from these policies on EU designated sites.
- 4.2 This assessment has been carried out in relation to the proposed draft policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, produced in July 2024.

Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>POLICY NF1: Design</p> <p>The design of all new development in Newton Flotman parish should reflect the local distinctiveness and character of the area (as outlined in the Character Appraisal, of the Newton Flotman Design Guidelines and Codes) and be physically integrated where possible.</p> <p>As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals for new development should accord with guidelines and codes set out in the Newton Flotman Design Guidelines and Codes.</p>	<p>This policy looks to influence the design of development in the parish, reflecting local distinctiveness and character referring to the design guidelines and codes document. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>POLICY NF2: Housing mix (size, type and tenure)</p> <p>Proposals for new housing must provide for and contribute to a mix of housing that meets local needs (both now and in the future) and enables the creation of a mixed and balanced community. Proposals for new housing must take into account the findings of the Newton Flotman Housing Needs Assessment.</p> <p>New development must comprise of mainly 3-bedroom dwellings, with some 2-bedroom and 1 bedroom dwellings. Variety will be sought to provide for newly forming households on lower budgets, family housing and older households looking to downsize.</p> <p>Affordable home ownership products such as First Homes and shared ownership should be at a minimum discount of 40 per cent.</p> <p>Specialist housing for older people in Newton Flotman is also encouraged, including accessible homes, bungalows and Life Time Homes.</p>	<p>This policy looks to provide a suitable housing mix to meet the housing needs in line with the HNA. This is a generic development management policy and, as such, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

<p>POLICY NF3: Land off Alan Avenue (NEW1), additional requirements</p> <p>In addition to the requirements of the South Norfolk Village Cluster Housing Allocation Plan, and other relevant policies within the Neighbourhood Plan, the development of land off Alan Avenue for residential purposes should incorporate the following matters:</p> <p>Housing mix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mixed type and tenure of housing, including Affordable Housing. b. 8 Affordable Homes as a minimum (delivered in line with the Greater Norwich Local Plan policy for 33 per cent Affordable Housing). <p>Layout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Layout to enable a natural, functional and visual transition between the sites, NEW2 (31 homes) and NEW1 (25 homes). d. A southwest access point from the site to any future site. <p>Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Vehicular access from the south (off Alan Avenue) to serve the site, but that does not provide a vehicular link to through NEW2. f. Pedestrian and cycle access to enable a walkable community, linking to key village amenities (Village Centre, recreation area, school, allotments and bus stops): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. From the northwest corner of the site onto Alan Avenue (north end) where there is a vehicle access point for NEW2 	<p>This policy looks to add additional requirements to an emerging Local Plan allocation. As this policy looks to influence design on a site that will have been assessed as part of a separate process and plan production, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>
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Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>ii. From the northeast corner of the site onto Alan Avenue (south end).</p> <p>Design</p> <p>g. Cohesive design between the two sites.</p> <p>Amenity space</p> <p>h. New public open green space will be provided, as a wildlife area with outdoor seating. This is to be separate to any SuDS provision.</p> <p>Biodiversity net gain</p> <p>i. Biodiversity net gain of minimum of 10 percent on site. This is to be achieved through the planting of native trees and climate resilient planting, hedges and a wildlife area.</p> <p>Detailed consideration should also be given to the Newton Flotman Design Guidance and Codes (2024).</p>		

Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>POLICY NF4: Location and scale of further housing development</p> <p>The focus of new development will be within the settlement boundary of Newton Flotman parish, where it can best integrate with existing development and is located near community facilities.</p> <p>In addition to the allocated sites, within the settlement boundary, proposals for small windfall and infill development, consisting of individual or small groups of dwellings, will be supported where they enhance the form, character and setting of the location.</p> <p>Outside the identified settlement boundary, proposals for new housing development, including the conversion of existing buildings, such as barns and farm buildings, and replacement dwellings, will only be permitted where they accord with national and district level policies.</p>	<p>This policy is a general development management policy that seeks to reflect and reinforce existing Development Plan policies. As such it is not considered that it will have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

<p>POLICY NF5: Heritage assets</p> <p>In addition to the Listed Buildings in Newton Flotman, the following are heritage assets that are considered to be locally important to Newton Flotman in terms of their architectural, historical, or cultural significance and these will be treated as Non-designated Heritage Assets:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ARTS Dance School 2. Aswad barn 3. Railway cottages 4. Chandlers 5. Cranes Farm 6. Church Farm 7. Flordon Road cottages (1-4)* 8. Holland House, Ipswich Road 9. Lammas Cottage 10. Mile post on the old bridge over the River Tas 11. Properties on Old Street* 12. Rosemary Cottages* 13. Rush Meadow 14. Properties on Short Street* 15. Newton Flotman village sign 16. Bus shelter, junction of St Mary's Close and Flordon Road 17. Ex-council properties on Lime Bank* <p>* Groupings of properties.</p> <p>Development proposals should conserve these heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Proposals affecting a Non-designated Heritage Asset should give consideration to:</p>	<p>This policy identifies several non-designated heritage assets for protection as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>
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Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The character, distinctiveness and important features of the heritage asset; b. The setting of the heritage asset and its relationship to its immediate surroundings; <p>The contribution that the heritage asset makes to the character of the area.</p>		
<p>POLICY NF6: Business development</p> <p>Proposals for new businesses and extensions to existing businesses, must be sensitively designed and not have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the area, the historic environment, adjoining uses, or the amenity of local residents, through either their built form, proposed use, or traffic generated.</p> <p>Premises for a nursery school, a pub, a café, a small shop, a Post Office, or small business units are supported in principle. Such proposals should include provision for high-speed broadband connections and adequate parking and servicing for visitors, including deliveries and couriers.</p> <p>Where possible, space for homeworking should be designed into new dwellings.</p>	<p>This policy looks to support new or expanded business and employment uses where those proposals are sensitive to the character, heritage and public amenity within the area. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

<p>POLICY NF7: Existing and new community infrastructure</p> <p>The Plan identifies the following existing community infrastructure that meets the needs of Newton Flotman residents (as shown on figure X):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newton Flotman Village Centre and Alan King playing field 2. Newton Flotman allotments 3. St. Mary's Church 4. Kings Green 5. Newton Flotman Primary Academy 6. Newton Flotman Surgery (Long Stratton Medical Partnership) 7. Play area on Alan Avenue 8. Bus shelter, junction of St Mary's Close and Flordon Road 9. Bus shelter, Ipswich Road (A140) 10. Newton Flotman village shop <p>Proposals for the improvement, adaptation or extension of existing community infrastructure will be supported where they comply with other development plan policies.</p> <p>Proposals for change of use, involving a potential loss of existing community infrastructure, will only be supported where,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. an improved or equivalent facility can be located in an equally or more accessible location in the parish, ii. or where it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of continued viable use. 	<p>This policy looks to support improvements to existing community infrastructure and new infrastructure when supported as in line with other policies in the development plan. It also looks to avoid loss of such facilities. This is a generic development management policy and, as such, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>
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Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>Proposals for the following new community infrastructure will be supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Additional allotments b. Children's play equipment c. Additional children's play space d. Wildlife area/nature reserve e. Green space for informal recreation f. Dog run area g. Skatepark <p>Recreation/sports areas, e.g. outside gym and tennis court</p>		
<p>POLICY NF8: Newton Flotman old bridge – site for community use</p> <p>The old bridge in Newton Flotman is identified as a site for visual, environmental and amenity enhancement (including hard and soft landscaping improvements), to enable community use. Proposals that positively contribute to improving the overall character of the area will be supported.</p> <p>Where permission is required, particular support shall be given for improved pedestrian and cycle access to and across the bridge, seating, planters, public open space.</p>	<p>This policy seeks to protect and enhance the character of this important local site, supporting various specified public realm improvements. As such, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>POLICY NF9: Pedestrian and cycle connectivity</p> <p>As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, the design of any new residential developments should include opportunities to enhance and join up networks of footpaths (including Public Rights of Way), pavements and cycleways that are suitable for all users, within their designs and layouts. New provision should encourage alternatives to using private cars, enabling a walkable neighbourhood. Footpaths and cycle ways should be visible and separate from roads where possible.</p> <p>The provision of new pavements, footpaths and cycleways will be supported, in particular where there are opportunities to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Make connections through developments and enable a cohesive village network. b. Connect to other surrounding parishes. c. Link to existing community infrastructure. d. Enable access to open countryside. 	<p>This policy looks to contribute to an enhanced and joined up network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways to improve access to village amenities, the countryside and within the settlement. This is a generic development management policy and, as such, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>POLICY NF10: A140 access, traffic calming and community parking</p> <p>Development proposals that improve safe access to and from the A140 in both directions, for vehicles and pedestrians, will be supported.</p> <p>New appropriate traffic calming measures will be supported on Flordon Road.</p> <p>New designated parking arrangements for the following areas will be supported: Newton Flotman CofE Primary Academy (School Road), Flordon Road (near access to A140) and St Mary's Church (School Road and Church Road).</p>	<p>This policy seeks to support measures that result in safer access to the A140, that passes through the parish, and to support designated parking arrangements for particular locations within the parish. As such, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

<p>POLICY NF11: Natural assets and biodiversity</p> <p>The following are recognised as important natural assets of the parish due to their landscape and/or biodiversity value, which should be conserved and enhanced where possible (figure X):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Woodlands (figure X) 2. The River Tas 3. Ponds 4. Field hedgerows 5. Ditches (St Mary's Close, Newton Flotman Playing Field, Church Road, Flordon Road) 6. Ancient/veteran trees? <p>Enhancing biodiversity</p> <p>As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should retain existing features of biodiversity value (including hedgerow and field margins, trees, veteran trees, grass verges, ancient grasslands, ponds and drainage ditches). Development proposals should identify how they will provide a minimum 10 percent net gain in biodiversity (on site in the first instance), for example through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The creation of new natural habitats and improvements to, or connections between fragments of habitats identified above. b. The planting of additional native trees and hedgerows, for screening and landscaping purposes. c. Green areas between and in new developments. d. Soft site boundaries to new developments where adjacent to agricultural land, open 	<p>This policy identifies important natural assets due to their landscape and biodiversity value. It looks to reflect and reinforce biodiversity net gain requirements and mitigate against loss of natural assets. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>
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Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>spaces or settlement edge, through native hedgerows.</p> <p>e. Integrated bird boxes and bat boxes on the site.</p> <p>Loss of natural asset</p> <p>Where there is loss or damage, as a result of development, the proposal shall provide for appropriate replacement planting or appropriate natural features on site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting. Where this approach is not practicable, appropriate off-site mitigation/compensation should be incorporated into the development proposal. In either case, a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of the planting should be included in the proposal.</p>		

Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>POLICY NF12: Local Green Spaces</p> <p>The following areas are designated as Local Green Spaces for special protection:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alan Avenue green space. 2. Alan Avenue play area. 3. Grass area at the entrance to Clabburn Close. 4. Farm track/green lane running parallel to Grove Way. 5. Allotments between Blundville Manor and Olive Avenue, bordering the southern end of the playing fields. 6. Vehicle and pedestrian access to the allotments. 7. Pond to the left of Church Farm on Greenways. 8. Verges on Greenways from Newton Greenways towards Church Farm. 9. Kings Green. 10. Pathway down to the River Tas from Joy Avenue. 11. Playfield at Newton Flotman Village Centre. 12. Small triangle of grass with Beech tree opposite School on School Road. 13. Small triangle of grass with noticeboard beside the school gates. 14. Churchyard surrounding St Mary's Church. 15. Verges on St Mary's Close. <p>The creation of new public open green space is encouraged where possible.</p>	<p>This policy seeks to designate a series of sites as Local Green Spaces for special protection. Although this policy is site specific, it does not encourage development and instead relates to the protection of these areas. On this basis, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated site.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

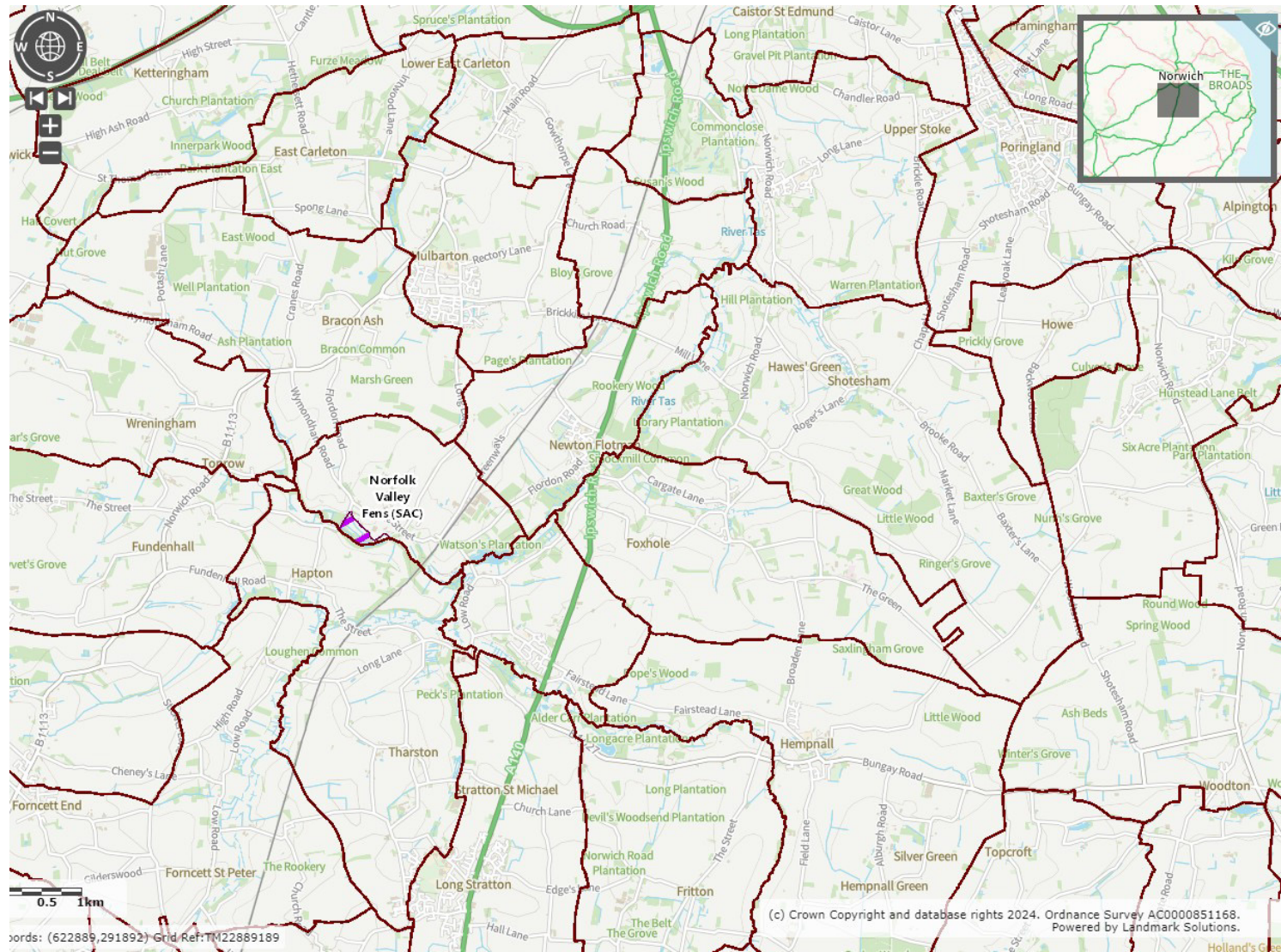
Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>POLICY NF13: Important local views</p> <p>Development proposals should respect their landscape setting including any identified important local views within which they are located, or which they affect. The following views are identified as important in Newton Flotman parish:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From Cranes Farm looking north 2. From track near Barley View looking towards Stoke Holy Cross 3. From Ipswich Road looking south towards St. Mary's Church 4. From Newton Flotman Village Centre site looking southwest <p>Development proposals within or affecting an important local view should demonstrate how they have responded positively to the view concerned and safeguarded its integrity and local importance.</p>	<p>This policy seeks to ensure that any development proposals respect their landscape setting including the identified important local views. This is a generic development management policy and, as such, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>
<p>POLICY NF14: Dark skies</p> <p>Development proposals must take account of the existing dark skies in Newton Flotman parish and limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light. Street lighting will not be permitted on any new development, unless it is necessary for security or safety. Any necessary lighting must be designed to minimise the impact on dark skies by, for example, minimal light spillage, use of downlighting, movement sensitive lighting and restricting hours of lighting. Lighting likely to cause disturbance or risk to wildlife will not be supported.</p>	<p>This policy looks to limit the impact on the night sky from street lighting with exception of necessary security or safety reasons. This is a generic development management policy and, as such, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

Newton Flotman Draft NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>POLICY NF15: Localised flooding</p> <p>Development proposals within the immediate locality of the areas identified below as having surface water drainage issues, should take account of all relevant evidence of flooding. Development must not cause or contribute to new flooding or drainage issues and should mitigate its own flooding and drainage impacts.</p> <p>There are a number of locations that have surface water drainage issues. The following locations within the parish are identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joy Avenue 2. Dell Close 3. Church Road 4. Brightons Road down to the bus stop 5. Alan Avenue, onto Flordon Road 6. Flordon Road coming off field track 7. Waterside Gardens <p>All new development including minor development, is required to use an appropriate Sustainable urban Drainage System (SuDS) which will mitigate and protect against pollution, provide drainage and wider amenity, recreational and biodiversity benefits commensurate with the size of the development (see Newton Flotman Design Guidance and Codes).</p>	<p>This policy seeks to ensure all development can demonstrate how it can mitigate its own flooding and drainage impacts avoiding an increase in flooding or runoff rates, reflecting and reinforcing development plan policies. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The screening assessment suggests that there will be no likely significant effect of the proposed Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan on European designated sites, and therefore that a full Appropriate Assessment is not required.
- 5.2 None of the proposed policies within the draft Neighbourhood Plan allocates any sites for future development in the parish. The majority of the policies are development management policies that seek to shape and influence future proposals. Those policies that do relate to specific sites are those that seek to protect Local Green Spaces, deal appropriately with flooding issues, enhance the character of a particular location within the parish, and preserve important views and heritage features.
- 5.3 In addition, as explained in section 3, there are no European designated sites that are within the Newton Flotman neighbourhood area. The closest being approximately 3km west of the parish - the Norfolk Valley Fen SAC).
- 5.3 This screening assessment has been performed in relation to the draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan policies, which are intended to be subject to Reg. 14 pre-submission consultation. Once the final draft of the Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to South Norfolk Council, the authority will review the policies therein to see if there have been any significant changes. If so, then the local planning authority may decide to update this assessment at that time.
- 5.4 This assessment report has been sent to Natural England for comments, as the appropriate nature conservation body specified by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The response from Natural England, dated 20th August 2024, is that the organisation agrees there is not likely to be any significant effect from the proposed policies within the Neighbourhood Plan on European designated sites. The response letter is included as Appendix 3 to this report.
- 5.5 On the basis of this screening report, and the response from Natural England, South Norfolk Council determines that a Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required in relation to the emerging Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan.

Appendix 1: European Designated Sites in relation to Newton Flotman (source Magic Map <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> July 2024)



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).

Norfolk Valley Fens SAC

(i) Site Description & Qualifying Features

Norfolk Valley Fens comprises a series of valley-head spring-fed fens which are very rare in the lowlands (Figures A.8a and 8b). Most of the vegetation at this site is of the small sedge fen type, but with transitions to reedswamp and other fen and wet grassland types. The individual fens vary in their structure according to intensity of management and provide a wide range of variation. There is a rich flora associated with these fens.

The site is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom for the narrow-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo angustior*, and the desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*.

SAC Qualifying Features - Habitats

- Alkaline fens;
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*;
- European dry heaths;
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*);
- Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-siltladen soils (*Molinion caeruleae*);
- Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*, and;
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae* and *Salicion albae*).

SAC Qualifying Features - Species

- Narrow-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo angustior*, and;
- Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*.

(ii) Conservation Objectives

The conservation objectives are to maintain in favourable condition the qualifying features of the designation. Management agreements, Countryside Stewardship and ESA payments help towards the reintroduction or promotion of the continued use of traditional management. Improved understanding of the water needs of these wetlands is required and is the subject of work by the Environment Agency and

Natural England. Any effects of groundwater abstraction which are identified will be addressed through appropriate licensing regimes, and the Environment Agency Review of Consents and Asset Management Plans.

(iii) Vulnerability

These alkaline fens are very vulnerable to reductions on the water table and to a decrease in the volume of spring flows arising from groundwater abstraction.

The cessation of traditional cutting and grazing management has contributed to the spread of scrub and woodland leading to the drying-out of the fens.

APPENDIX 3 - Response from Natural England

Date: 20 August 2024
Our ref: 482773
Your ref: Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan



Mr Richard Squires
Broadland and South Norfolk Council

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Dear Mr Squires

Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 19 July 2024.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team