



**Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan Review  
(Pre-submission Draft)**

**Habitats Regulations Assessment  
Screening Report**

**Updated October 2024**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report has been undertaken by Broadland District Council in order to support the emerging Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan Review which has been produced by a working group on behalf of Rackheath 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 Review (i.e. the civil parish of Rackheath).
- 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).*

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

(1) *Where a land use plan –*

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

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

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

2.5 Regulation 106 of the CHSR requires that:

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

2.6 As the 'competent authority' for these purposes, Broadland District Council 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 Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan Review 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 Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan Review area. The nearest EU designated sites are Crostwick Marsh, approx 4km north of Rackheath and Salhouse Broad (approx.4.5km east), both of which qualify as Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas, and Special Areas of Conservation.

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Designation Name</b>	<b>Designation Type</b>
Crostwick Marsh	Broadland	Ramsar site
	Broadland	Special Protection Area
	The Broads	Special Area of Conservation
Salhouse Broad	Broadland	Ramsar site
	Broadland	Special Protection Area
	The Broads	Special Area of Conservation

All other EU designated sites are further than 8km from the Rackheath Neighbourhood Area. A map showing the location of the above designation in relation to Rackheath 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 sites are in relatively close proximity to the Rackheath neighbourhood area, the fact that the Neighbourhood Plan Review 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 Review policies.

## 4. Assessment

- 4.1 The table below sets out a summary of the proposed policies within the pre-submission draft Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan Review 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 Review, produced in August 2024.

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>HOU1: Design of new development</b></p> <p>New development should seek to enhance the overall quality of design in the parish, reflecting the rural character and the local distinctiveness of existing development where this provides a positive design contribution.</p> <p>Proposals for all new development in the parish should be in accordance with the relevant design guidance and codes as set out in the Rackheath Design Guidance and Codes 2024 (See Appendix X) and where relevant, principles within Building for a Healthy Life, 2023<sup>1</sup> and Streets for All, 2018<sup>2</sup>. Proposals will need to demonstrate how they have had regard to the relevant guidance.</p> <p>All new development in the parish irrespective of scale or use, should deliver high quality and inclusive design and contribute to maintaining a green and rural village This can be achieved by :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Designing development layouts to reflect existing residential densities in the locality of the scheme.</li> <li>2) Including, where possible, the principles of dementia friendly communities</li> <li>3) Ensuring the massing, height, layout, orientation, scale, spacing and location of any proposed development does not result in an unacceptable loss of light or overshadowing, or other adverse amenity impacts, including privacy, on existing residents.</li> <li>4) Ensuring that blocks of flats or apartments relate well to their surroundings, by centrally locating them within the development, adjacent to community or commercial activity and not exceeding 3-storeys in height unless</li> </ol>	<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>

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>surrounded by a shared green space, where these should not exceed 4-storeys. (See Design Guidance and Codes C1)</p> <p>5) Designing the layout and construction of new roads to Norfolk County Council Highways Authority adoptable standard and minimising the potential disturbance to neighbouring occupiers, including avoiding locating new roads where they immediately abut existing dwellings and gardens.</p>		
<p><b>HOU2: Mixed type and tenure of housing</b></p> <p>In any new development there will be provision of mixed type and tenure of housing, appropriately located to ensure exclusive enclaves do not occur.</p> <p>Proposals for new residential development should not include large scale amounts of flatted accommodation to contribute to a rural village feel.</p> <p>To meet housing need and enable social diversity, the mix of the housing across the parish should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starter homes of 1-2 bedrooms,</li> <li>• Family homes, with a range of garden sizes.</li> <li>• Affordable housing for rent, including social and affordable rented housing.</li> <li>• Housing for older people and the disabled, such as single storey accommodation, suitable for independent living and for community living</li> <li>• Supported housing (a range of housing types for people with support needs).</li> <li>• Bungalows.</li> </ul>	<p>This policy looks to provide a suitable housing mix to meet housing needs. 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>

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>HOU3: High quality public realm</b></p> <p>All new development will be expected to deliver the very highest quality in public realm design which is consistent throughout the parish and contributes to the creation of a rural village feel, in accordance with the Rackheath Design Guidance and Codes 2024. Proposals should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycle parking.</li> <li>• High quality street furniture,</li> <li>• Seating and benches in suitable locations for older people or those with a mobility impairment</li> <li>• Suitable waste store so that bins for household refuse and recycling are discreetly housed, preferably to the side or rear of properties, and do not encroach onto public space</li> </ul> <p>Pedestrian routes should remain open and uncluttered in order to retain a sense of pride in the area. Where possible pavements at the frontage of the site should be linked together or crossings provided so as to facilitate sustainable walking routes around the parish.</p>	<p>This policy seeks to ensure that suitable public realm enhancements are provided within future developments. It 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><b>ENV1: Fresh water supply and Drainage</b></p> <p>New development must not cause new or contribute to the exacerbation of existing flooding, pollution or drainage issues, either within the parish or outside of it.</p> <p>New major or large estate scale developments must provide a foul drainage strategy at the planning application stage, which will be implemented prior to occupation. This strategy must consider the drainage of the site in the context of other future developments and existing communities, including the cumulative impacts of multiple drainage solutions and include firm plans for the future maintenance of any proposed flooding or drainage solutions.</p> <p>Surface and foul water drainage systems should remain separate to prevent rainwater entering sewers, overwhelming treatment works and leading to the discharge of effluent into watercourses.</p> <p>Any wastewater treatment plant included in a development proposal must be fully enclosed and of the highest specification such that there is no odour detectable in any nearby dwelling, commercial space or community facility, either inside or outside.</p> <p>Any fresh water supply or wastewater treatment plant must be completed and connected prior to first occupancy in the earliest phase of the development programme and should service dwellings, commercial space and community facilities and include allowance for future growth on the site, for example through future extensions to dwellings.</p> <p>The retrofitting of measures elsewhere in the parish, such as swales, tree pits and rain gardens next to roads to prevent highway run off from entering combined systems is supported.</p> <p>Permeable materials must be used on freestanding areas, such as parking bays, vehicle laybys, and new play areas, as appropriate.</p> <p><b>Localised Flooding</b></p> <p>Identified localised flooding areas include (figure 16), but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green Lane West in front of the old school-house site.</li> <li>Green Lane West, outside the entrance to the Stracey Sports Park car park.</li> <li>Green Lane West, Mahoney Green Industrial Estate entrance.</li> <li>Sole and Heel roundabout.</li> </ol>	<p>This is a detailed policy that seeks to manage and prevent flooding, pollution and drainage issues that might otherwise arise from future development within the neighbourhood area. It identifies localised flooding areas within the parish and sets out requirements in terms of the design of SuDS as part of new developments. It is not expected that this policy will have any significant effects on EU designated sites within the wider area.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>
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<p>e. Vera Close.</p> <p>f. Salhouse Road, cul-de-sac before the railway line.(Sam Smith's Way)</p> <p>g. Muck Lane, at various points along the road, particularly at dips.</p> <p>h. Salhouse Road , between the Broadland Northway and the Rackheath/Sprowston Boundary</p> <p>i. Close to the pond opposite Church Farmhouse on Dobb's Lane</p> <p>j. Adjacent to the railway line and under the railway bridges at Station Road and Stonehouse Road</p> <p>k. Winter Lake at Home Farm, Rackheath Park</p> <p><b>Design of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)</b></p> <p>All new development (including development such as extensions and new areas of hard surfacing) is required to use appropriate sustainable drainage methods (including SuDs and drainage lagoons), wetland and water features to prevent localised flooding, protect against pollution and provide wider amenity, recreational and biodiversity benefits</p> <p>Sustainable Drainage Systems of an appropriate size relative to the planned development and with an appropriate discharge location, subject to feasibility must be incorporated into any proposal.</p> <p>Any proposals for the design of SuDs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Include priority use of source control SuDS such as permeable surfaces, rainwater harvesting, stormwater harvesting and storage or green roofs and walls. Other SuDS components which convey or store surface water can also be considered.</li> <li>ii. Include mitigation against the creation of additional impermeable surfaces, attenuation of greenfield surface water runoff rates and runoff volumes within the development site boundary; and provision of clear maintenance and management proposals of structures within the development, including Sustainable Drainage Systems elements, riparian ownership of ordinary watercourses or coverts, and their associated funding mechanisms,</li> <li>iii. Contain features which appear natural, with a meadow feel and which are able to be colonised by the local fauna and flora, whilst still maintaining their design purpose.</li> <li>iv. not impact on the Norwich Airport flight path</li> </ul>		
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Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>v. be 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.</p> <p>vi. be sensitively and safely located within new developments, for example away from children’s play areas.</p> <p>vii. Be excluded from the open space calculation for the site, unless it can be practically and safely used for recreation in its own right.</p> <p>All development will be expected to demonstrate how it can mitigate its own flooding and drainage impacts, avoid increase of flooding elsewhere and seek to achieve lower than greenfield runoff rates. All proposals for new development within the 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). All development proposals will be required to secure the necessary consents and approvals from those bodies at an appropriate and early stage. The Community Council will not adopt any SuDs, swales or drainage operations.</p>		
<p><b>ENV2: Climate change</b></p> <p>Developers will be encouraged to build business premises and community buildings that are designed to anticipate climate change. They should be capable of being upgraded and adapted to minimise resources used in both their construction and operation, and to cut down on pollution.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan supports cost effective and efficient passive solar gain and solar PV panels on residential, industrial, commercial and community premises.</p> <p>Management and maintenance plans must promote sustainability utilising ecofriendly systems throughout the whole lifespan of completed development proposal.</p> <p>See Appendix X Rackheath Design Guidance and Codes 2024</p>	<p>This policy encourages development proposals to include features to increase energy efficiency and to reduce carbon emissions, particularly focusing on cost effective solar harvesting methods. The policy is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

<p><b>ENV3: Biodiversity, Tree belts and wildlife habitats</b></p> <p>All development proposals will be expected to protect, improve and enhance existing ecological networks, wildlife corridors and priority species in the parish.</p> <p>Using national policy guidance and DEFRA metrics, development proposals will be expected to provide a minimum of 10 per cent net gain in biodiversity and optimally a 20 per cent net gain in areas which have been intensively farmed prior to development, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the creation of new, and the restoration and enhancement of existing natural habitats.</li> <li>b) This will include the planting of additional trees and hedgerows to restore, connect and repair fragmented biodiversity networks and create new wildlife corridors and habitat areas.</li> </ul> <p>Where possible existing strategic tree belts and green corridors (shown in figure 18) should be protected, extended and linked to other existing tree belts, creating circular routes within the parish. Any development that contains tree belts should facilitate access to and through them with footpaths, cycle ways and/or bridleways for both wildlife and people to connect with open spaces and the surrounding countryside, wherever possible, in order to maintain and enhance the rural character.</p> <p>Development proposals should conform to the mitigation hierarchy and seek initially to retain existing features and avoid loss or damage of biodiversity. Development proposals should seek to retain mature or significant trees, groups of trees, orchards, hedgerows and woodland to sustain the rural character of Rackheath. Development that damages or results in the loss of ancient trees or trees of good aboricultural or amenity value will not be supported unless (i) justified by a professionally prepared tree survey and aboricultural statement and (ii) by replacing trees of similar amenity value within the Parish where removal of trees of recognised importance can be justified. Where loss of damage 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.</p>	<p>This policy looks to reflect and reinforce biodiversity net gain requirements and enhance green corridors and other natural assets within the neighbourhood area. It is a development management policy and is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>
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Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>Offsite biodiversity enhancements should be directed to areas identified in any Local Nature Recovery Strategy within the parish.</p> <p><b>New Tree planting</b></p> <p>New tree planting should be of a scale, location and type which adds value, and with a view to optimising benefits to wildlife. New and replacement planting should be of an appropriate species, with landscape maintenance and long term management plans included within proposals. All landscape schemes should be implemented no later than the first planting season following occupation.</p> <p>Planting plans should take account of the expected eventual size of the tree including future shading, water requirements, the impact of root growth, leaf fall and berries on surrounding features such as buildings, pavements and car parking areas and the relationship with surrounding buildings. Tree 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.</p> <p><b>Wildlife measures</b></p> <p>Where practical, 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 swift bricks, hedgehog doors 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.</p> <p>See Appendix X and the advice in the Rackheath Design Guidance and Codes 2024.</p>		

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<p><b>ENV4: Landscape Buffers</b></p> <p>Where a site boundary is between (a) residential housing and (b) commercial or communal buildings or infrastructure, then consideration must be given to suitable screening to protect the visual, olfactory, and auditory amenity of residents, which may include bunds, tree planting and separation distances.</p> <p>Dwellings should not be built in close proximity to commercial operations or communal facilities without an assessment of the noise impact and amenity of future residents having been carried out and any required mitigation measures having been implemented.</p> <p><b>Green Infrastructure Buffers</b></p> <p>The identified Landscape buffers identified in the Growth Triangle Area Action Plan (GTAAP), to the south of the parish at Rackheath Park, which provide the landscape setting for the parish between the Broadland Northway and the built up area of Norwich will be maintained.</p> <p>Primary Green Infrastructure corridors as identified within the parish to the west of Salhouse Road and Rackheath Park will be maintained and enhanced.</p>	<p>This is a development management policy which seeks to protect the public amenity of residents adjacent to commercial or communal facilities, through the development of suitable landscape buffers; as well as re-inforcing the landscape buffers and GI corridors, set out within the Growth Triangle Area Action Plan. It is not expected to have any significant effect on EU sites within the vicinity.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

<p><b>ENV5: Local landscape and heritage assets</b></p> <p>All developments will be required to demonstrate how local landscape and heritage assets including listed buildings and features of local significance (as identified in Broadland District Council's Landscape Character Assessment) have been considered and have been used to influence the development's layout and design.</p> <p>Proposals requiring consent, which affect any of the buildings and structures of historic interest (as identified below) must take account of their significance and, where possible, avoid loss or harm. The renovation or alteration of the buildings or structures below should be designed sensitively and with careful regard to the heritage asset's historical and architectural interest and setting.</p> <p>Where the proposal would result in the loss of or significant harm to one of these buildings or structures the harm should be weighed against the potential benefits in terms of sustainable development of the proposals.</p> <p>The following locally important Local Heritage Assets (figure 20) should be protected from loss or significant harm:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The old airfield runway and associated former WW2 structures (identified and defined by the tree belt), and the Turning Circle.</li> <li>2. The Old Scout Hut (Colonel Showers).</li> <li>3. Sole and Heel public house,</li> <li>4. The Green Man public house.</li> <li>5. Village sign.</li> <li>6. Memorial Gates at Holy Trinity Church.</li> <li>7. USAAF War Memorial on the Rackheath Industrial Estate.</li> <li>8. Entrance lodges to Rackheath Park at Wroxham Road and Salhouse Road</li> <li>9. Keepers Cottage, Rackheath Park, Wroxham Road</li> <li>10. Walled Garden at Rackheath Park</li> <li>11. Home Farm (and associated buildings)</li> <li>12. Area identified by Historic England west of the Broadland Northway- Rackheath Park</li> <li>13. The Old School, off Green Lane West</li> </ol>	<p>This policy identifies several non-designated heritage assets for protection as part of the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as seeking more broadly to protect key landscape characteristics. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>
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Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>14. Control Tower and other buildings and structures associated with the WWII Airfield (including ancillary buildings such as Mess Hall, barracks and gymnasium)</p> <p>15. Rackheath Grange (formerly the rectory of All Saints Church)</p> <p>16. Church Farm, House, Dobbs Lane</p> <p>17. Church Barn, Swash Lane</p> <p>18. Mousehold Farm, Norwich Road</p> <p>19. Green Farm, Green Lane West</p> <p>20. Beech Tree House</p> <p>See Appendix X for full assessments of each heritage asset</p>		
<p><b>ENV6: Views and vistas across the parish</b></p> <p>The following views and vistas as shown in figure 20 are identified as important public views. Development within these views that would be the detriment of the view as a whole, will not be supported.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The following views are considered particularly important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The view from Stone Hill looking Northwest towards All Saints Church</li> <li>b) Within Rackheath Park, in all directions along the drive between the listed Gateway to Rackheath Park through the historic parkland to Rackheath Hall and the listed Bridge</li> <li>c) along the former 03/21 WWII runway at Rackheath Airfield, and associated tree belts</li> </ul> <p>Where new settlement edges are to be created by new development, to maintain and enable a rural feel, views and vistas along streets and/or open spaces to the surrounding countryside should be kept and created within new developments where there are opportunities to do so.</p>	<p>This policy seeks to ensure that development proposals respect their landscape setting including the identified important local views, as well as protecting vistas within development to the surrounding countryside. 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><b>ENV7: Green space</b></p> <p>Proposals for new housing developments should include quality outdoor green amenity space. Detailed proposals for the area identified in the Growth Triangle Area Action Plan as GT16 North Rackheath should include a green space, large enough to function as a village green and possibly a cricket pitch, which is centrally located (see figure 13 and related text) within the settlement of Rackheath and provides a focal point for the Parish.</p> <p>Where new developments provide elements of green infrastructure (such as open space, natural green space, recreational areas, allotments, community woodland and orchards) the developer will be required to demonstrate an effective and sustainable management programme for them by having:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an effective transition to the Local Authority ownership; or</li> <li>an effective transition to the Community Council ownership with suitable funding grant to cover projected future upkeep costs for at least the next twenty years; or</li> <li>management by an established management company with a viable business case and operating model to cover projected costs for at least the next twenty years, this will be legally underwritten through the provision of a bond by the Developer.</li> </ol> <p><b>Local Green Spaces</b></p> <p>New green spaces delivered on development sites as part of the open space contribution for that development will be protected as though they were Local Green Spaces.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following as Local Green Spaces (as shown in figure 21):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newman Woods.</li> <li>Jubilee Park.</li> <li>Stracey Sports Park.</li> <li>the community park to be delivered as part of the GT16 North Rackheath development, at the northern end of the site</li> <li>The Landings</li> <li>Princes Park</li> </ol>	<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. It also makes requirements for green space as part of significant, proposed development, as well as management requirements for new elements of green infrastructure provided through development. On this basis, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated site.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>
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Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>g) Liberty Park</p> <p>In these spaces development will not be permitted unless it is compatible with their Character and function as Local Green Spaces.</p>		
<p><b>ENV8: Approaches to Rackheath and village landscape</b></p> <p>New developments located at the village entrances will be encouraged to enhance the approaches to Rackheath, for example through the provision of signage, tree, shrub and flower planting.</p> <p>Within developments, new junctions, roundabouts, footpaths, car parks and arrival points should have high quality landscaping to create a village feel. Where there are existing or new community green spaces, the Neighbourhood Plan encourages houses to look out onto them.</p>	<p>This policy seeks environmental and aesthetic enhancements to the gateways to the village, through any developments within the vicinity. As such, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>
<p><b>ENV9: Dark Skies</b></p> <p>Development proposals must take account of Rackheath forming part of Norfolk County Council's Rural Dark Landscapes.<sup>7</sup> New street lighting should not be located at the edge of the settlement. In new and existing developments, 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 and energy efficient bulbs and restricting hours of lighting (for example through the use of motion detectors).</p> <p>Proposals including lighting likely to cause disturbance or risk to nocturnal wildlife should seek to mitigate such disturbance or risk. Proposals including prominent lighting visible from the surrounding landscape will not be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that such lighting is required in the interests of safety and security.</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>
<p><b>COM1: Linked community</b></p> <p>Developments should contribute to an enhanced and joined-up movement network of roads, footpaths, pavements, tree belt routes, cycle ways and bridleways to connect Rackheath as one parish and to connect it to adjoining parishes.</p>	<p>This is seeking increased connectivity, via a range of potential movement corridors, within the parish, and from the parish to other nearby settlements. It is not likely to have any significant effect on EU designated sites within the vicinity.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>COM2: New play areas and community spaces</b></p> <p>All developments are expected to include new landscaped play areas and parks. Rackheath seeks to have a small number of large play areas or parks, as well as pocket play areas throughout developments with good approach routes on pavements (with allowance for pushchairs and mobility scooters), footpaths and cycleways (and cycle parking), all of which should benefit from natural surveillance.</p> <p>Larger play and park provision should have sufficient parking, and where possible, be located near community buildings. All play areas and parks should have good road access, be near family housing and benefit from natural surveillance. In addition to the provision of play equipment for children of all ages, facilities must be provided for teenagers and adults, which is inclusive and able to be used by those with physical impairments.</p> <p>All new major or large estate scale developments, and smaller developments which are more than 1 mile walk from one of the Local Green Spaces are expected to include smaller areas with play equipment within the open space provision on their site. Such spaces should have cycle parking and natural surveillance from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the residential dwellings on that site, and</li> <li>b) seating provision near the play areas</li> </ul> <p>Discussion with the Community Council in respect of the proposed facilities is encouraged at an early stage, to ensure that a range of play options can be incorporated throughout the parish for all age groups, including from small children to older people.</p> <p>Prior to the installation of new play equipment on development sites, consultation with the Community Council should take place to establish the details of provision and future maintenance.</p> <p>See also Rackheath Design Guidance and Codes 2024.</p>	<p>This is a development management policy which seeks to ensure that the provision of accessible and well-designed play spaces and parks is built into appropriate residential development. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>COM3: Community safety</b></p> <p>New developments should be designed with good natural surveillance, active frontage, permeable routes and buildings that face onto the public realm and open spaces/play areas. Development proposals will be expected to meet the requirements of 'Secured by Design' unless they can demonstrate a clear justification for any departure or an alternative approach that would not compromise community safety. Particular consideration should be given to the safety and security of users including children.</p>	<p>This policy seeks to ensure that new development is designed to contribute to safe and secure neighbourhoods. It is not expected to have any significant effect on EU designated sites within the vicinity.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect</p>

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>COM4: New and Existing community facilities</b></p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan supports the provision of further community infrastructure for the parish providing focal points which encourage a strong sense of community identity.</p> <p>A new community hub building which complements and enhances existing provision as part of the North Rackheath Masterplan will be supported. This should be located near the proposed secondary school on GT16 and include provision for car parking facilities (with Electric Vehicle charging facilities), cycle parking and ready access to the Wroxham Road. The hub may include leisure facilities and an option for hospitality to foster social engagement within the community. The site location should be identified in the North Rackheath masterplan and should be protected from changes which dilute its size or change its function as a community asset.</p> <p>Such a facility should be built as early as possible within the first phases of the overall development and any leisure and community facilities should offer affordable access for local residents and be well connected to the parish and surrounding areas by public transport, footpaths and cycleways</p> <p>The uses and management of such a building should be determined in consultation with the Community Council.</p> <p><b>Existing facilities</b></p> <p>The enhancement and expansion of existing community facilities, in particular Rackheath Village Hall, Jubilee Park, Stracey Sports Park and the Pavilion, Holy Trinity Church/Centre and Newman Woods (figure 23) is encouraged and proposals which would result in their loss will not be supported unless:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It can be demonstrated that the facilities are no longer needed or viable</li> <li>It can be demonstrated that suitable alternative provision exists; or</li> <li>Suitable alternative provision will be delivered by new development.</li> </ol> <p>The construction methods and furnishing of community buildings will be encouraged to minimise energy and water use and promote the use of alternative energy sources.</p>	<p>This policy looks to support improvements to, and to protect existing community infrastructure and new infrastructure when provided as part of development (including a new community hub to be provided as part of significant planned development). 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>	

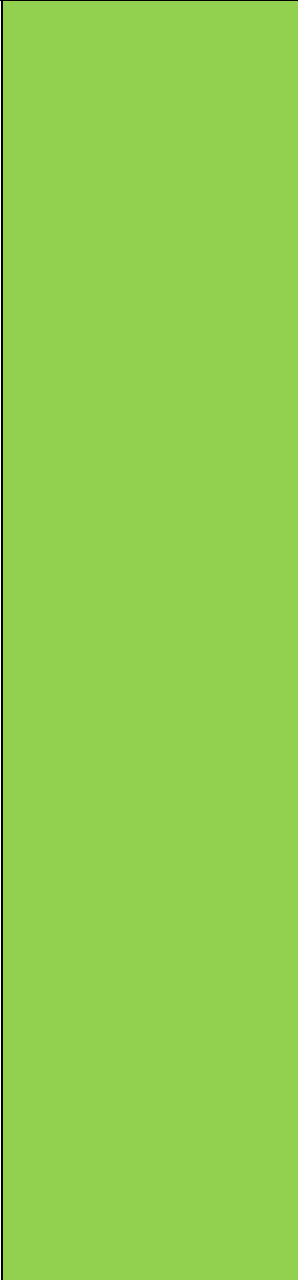
Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>COM5: New sports facilities</b></p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan encourages the provision of new inclusive indoor and outdoor sports facilities, which should be genuinely accessible to the community both physically and financially. Such facilities should be suitable for a wide range of ages, particularly those suitable for young people and older people. There is particular support for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Football pitch(es).</li> <li>b) Cricket pitch.</li> <li>c) Multipurpose courts or hard courts e.g. suitable for tennis, football and basketball</li> <li>d) Pavilions with changing rooms.</li> </ul> <p>New sports facilities should be located within reasonable distance of main link roads, cycleways and footpaths and public transport, as well as providing sufficient parking provision.</p>	<p>This is a development management policy which encourages the provision of inclusive indoor and outdoor sports facilities in appropriate residential development. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	
<p><b>COM6: Allotments</b></p> <p>Major and large scale estate developments should make appropriate provision for allotments. Proposals for allotments that are near to the gas pipeline or the railway line, or provide a buffer for residential development, will be supported. The delivery of allotments in Site GT16 should be brought forward from Phase 5 and delivered at the earliest opportunity. Once implemented the allotments will be protected from future development as Local Green Space.</p>	<p>This looks to ensure that allotments are provided for the community through major development proposals. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>BUS1: New and expanding businesses</b></p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan supports the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) land for light industry and offices, which enable local employment and/or training and apprenticeships.</li> <li>b) A range of retail units (which may have living-space at first floor level)</li> </ul> <p>Any new or expanding business must provide adequate off-road parking for use by customers and staff.</p> <p>The following should be incorporated into the design of business and employment units, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) high speed broadband</li> <li>b) electric vehicle charging points</li> <li>c) low carbon technologies for heating and energy sources</li> <li>d) rainwater harvesting</li> </ul> <p>The development of new businesses should be located within easy reach of public transport facilities and/or main link roads. Traffic movements should be designed to avoid country lanes and residential areas and have convenient access onto the Broadland Northway. Buildings should be no more than 3 residential storeys to assimilate easily into the rural landscape.</p> <p>Proposals for heavy, noisy, odorous or polluting industry (such as chemical treatment and potentially contaminative land uses) will not be supported.</p> <p>Proposals that seek to retain commercial premises in Rackheath will be supported. The loss of existing retail premises on Salhouse Road and Vera Road will be resisted, unless the current use is demonstrably no longer viable.</p>	<p>This policy looks to support new or expanded business and employment uses where those proposals meet the various conditions within the policy. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	
<p><b>BUS2: Buffer between residential and industrial</b></p> <p>A significant and effective landscape or acoustic buffer must be provided between all residential development and all existing or proposed industrial uses other than B1 uses in order to protect residential amenity from the potential impacts of industrial uses and processes.</p>	<p>This policy seeks to protect residential amenity by ensuring that appropriate landscape buffers are provided between residential development and industrial uses. It is not expected to have a significant impact on EU sites.</p>	

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>BUS3: Local Centre with a rural village feel</b></p> <p>Within GT16 North Rackheath, the Plan supports the creation of a new Local Centre, which is mixed-use (homes, shops and businesses), centrally located along main movement routes and within walking distance of homes. Where retail units or facilities are near schools, parking facilities should be available for use by the schools at drop off and collection times.</p>	<p>The policy seeks to ensure that a new local centre is provided as part of the proposed GT16 allocation development, in line with the Area Action Plan. It is not expected to have any significant effect on EU designated sites.</p>	
<p><b>SER1: School and Pre-school provision</b></p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan supports the provision of a secondary school as well as additional primary schools and preschool nurseries in Rackheath. The development of North Rackheath in accordance with policy GT16 North Rackheath should be phased to ensure that land is made available in time for schools to be completed when they are needed. Such schools must have easily accessible pedestrian and cycle way access from existing areas of Rackheath as well as from new developments.</p> <p>School facilities should be no more than 2 storeys high and allow sufficient land for future expansion.</p> <p>Where possible, the location of schools should be linked with community sports, leisure and other facilities, and such facilities should allow additional parking which is available for use by the school at peak times. Adequate parking provision for staff and visitors as well as convenient arrangements for dropping off and collecting students should be demonstrated. Laybys to allow school collection and drop off without impeding traffic flow must be provided near school entrances.</p> <p>(See also Appendix X Rackheath Design Guidance and Codes 2024)</p>	<p>This seeks to ensure that nursery, primary and secondary education facilities are provided, in line with the requirements of the GT16 allocation, and that they accessible, well-designed, and linked with other community and recreation facilities. As such, it is not expected to have any significant effect on EU designated sites.</p>	

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>SER2: Health Care</b></p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan supports future enhancements to medical and dental services, both on site at the Rackheath Medical Centre and Healthcare Hub and at a new facility should one come forward in development proposals.</p> <p>Any new facilities must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) be centrally located</li> <li>b) be easily accessible on foot or by public transport ,and</li> <li>c) have adequate car parking for staff and visitors, taking into account that some users will be less mobile and have need of generous sized parking spaces</li> <li>d) be surrounded by sufficient space to allow for future expansion of the facilities (including car parking).</li> <li>e) have suitable lay-bys for users to be dropped off and picked up without impeding the flow of traffic.</li> </ul>	<p>The policy supports enhancements to local healthcare provision, should they come forward within development proposals. It is not expected to have any significant effect on EU designated sites.</p>	
<p><b>SER3: Utilities</b></p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that there will need to be significant infrastructure improvement for utilities such as electricity (especially with the move away from fossil fuels for all households), fresh and foul water, broadband etc in the local area such as GT16, North Rackheath, as they are developed.</p> <p>Where the opportunity arises, services should be extended and capacity allowance made to upgrade the utilities for the existing Rackheath community (both residential and commercial) at the same time.</p> <p>Utilities structures should be discrete and grouped in locations so as to minimise the visual impact on the built environment. Such facilities should not be located in green spaces and should be shielded with shrubs to maintain a rural feel.</p>	<p>The policy seeks to ensure that sufficient extensions and enhancements are provided to local utilities infrastructure as part of major development, locally, and that any future utilities infrastructure is designed to be discrete and does not harm residential amenity. It is not expected to have any significant effect on EU designated sites.</p>	

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>TRA1: Public transport</b></p> <p>Road infrastructure must be developed to allow bus provision between Rackheath residential and employment areas and the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Norwich</li> <li>b) key services, leisure areas and employment areas in nearby parishes and towns</li> <li>c) Salhouse Station.</li> </ul> <p>Salhouse station must be easily accessible by footpath and cycle way and must have nearby car parking and bike storage facilities, with such car parking being directly accessible from and conveniently located in Rackheath in the event that Station Road is closed to vehicular traffic.</p>	<p>The policy seeks to ensure that new road infrastructure is designed to facilitate bus provision between Rackheath and the locations specified. It is not expected to have any significant effect on EU designated sites.</p>	

<p><b>TRA2: Pedestrian, cycle and bridleways</b></p> <p>Developments will be expected to encourage sustainable transport and the health and wellbeing of residents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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, employment areas, shops, community facilities, the Rackheath Health Hub and access to the countryside.</li> <li>b) Providing crossing points at the intersection with roads to enable a safe passage for pedestrians within Rackheath and, in particular, to schools, taking into account good sight lines given the reduced noise from cycle and EV traffic; and</li> <li>c) Ensuring that footpaths and cycle ways should, where possible, always be separate from roads and well overlooked</li> <li>d) Ensuring footways, crossing points and parking bays are designed to accommodate the needs of people with mobility difficulties and pushchairs [eg dropped pavements at corners].</li> </ul> <p>Where the legal requirements for s106 agreements are met, developments will be encouraged to contribute to sustainable transport solutions outside the footprint of the development site.</p> <p>All new development should create opportunities to encourage the use of sustainable transport through the provision of footpath and cycle access within the site and which connects to the existing network of footpaths and cycleways, in particular where these link to schools, community facilities and recreational spaces.</p> <p>All major development proposals should be located where there is access to public transport services.</p> <p><b>New pedestrian and cycle routes</b></p> <p>This Neighbourhood Plan provides in principle support for the following new routes where they cross into the Neighbourhood Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Rackheath to Norwich via the railway line</li> <li>b) Pedestrian /cycle route to Norwich down GT16 runways, over the Newman Road bridge and on to the Salhouse Road to join up with pedestrian/cycle routes in Sprowston.</li> </ul>	<p>This policy looks to contribute to an enhanced and joined up network of footpaths and cycleways, and other sustainable transport solutions, in order to improve access to local amenities and services. This is a generic development management policy and, as such, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.</p>	
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Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p>c) Spixworth to Wroxham via Rackheath Lane                      d) Rackheath to Ranworth                      e) Rackheath to Wroxham via railway line                      f) Rackheath to Salhouse Station</p> <p><b>Existing Public Rights of Way</b></p> <p>Development which is likely to affect an existing Public Right of Way must take account of its route and incorporate it into the scheme, preferably in a wide and open green corridor. 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.</p>		

Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>TRA3: Layout and traffic calming</b></p> <p>Proposals for housing development of ten or more dwellings and for new commercial or recreational development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) quantify the level of traffic movements they are likely to generate and its cumulative effect with other developments in Rackheath and the adjoining area; and</li> <li>b) assess the potential impact of this traffic and include measures to mitigate any negative impacts on road safety, pedestrians, safe road crossings cyclists, parking and congestion within Rackheath.</li> </ul> <p>Where new developments abut 'A' roads, allowance should be made for any necessary future widening of the A road along the full length of the shared perimeter with the highway by including a verge of no less than 3m width.</p> <p>In order to retain a rural feel, development design and layouts should promote a street hierarchy which is sensitive to users' needs and which prioritises the safety of pedestrians, taking into account the reduced noise profile of electric cars and cycles. Development must demonstrate a high degree of permeability and maximise pedestrian access throughout. There should be more than one route in and out of major or large estate scale developments<sup>10</sup> and for all commercial developments of more than 1 hectare.</p> <p>Measures to ensure vehicles are driven at a safe and appropriate speed through Rackheath will be supported. Where traffic-calming measures are necessary to achieve this, they should be integral to highway design and include the use of road width restrictions and highway demarcations.</p> <p>Lay-bys should be designed into the street landscape in appropriate places and in particular at bus stops, retail areas (especially where there is limited off street parking available), and near school entrances.</p>	<p>This policy seeks to manage the impacts of future traffic levels arising from major development. It also considers street layouts within new development, seeking to ensure that development is permeable and that pedestrian access is maximised throughout. This is a development management policy and it is not expected to have any significant effect on EU designated sites.</p>	

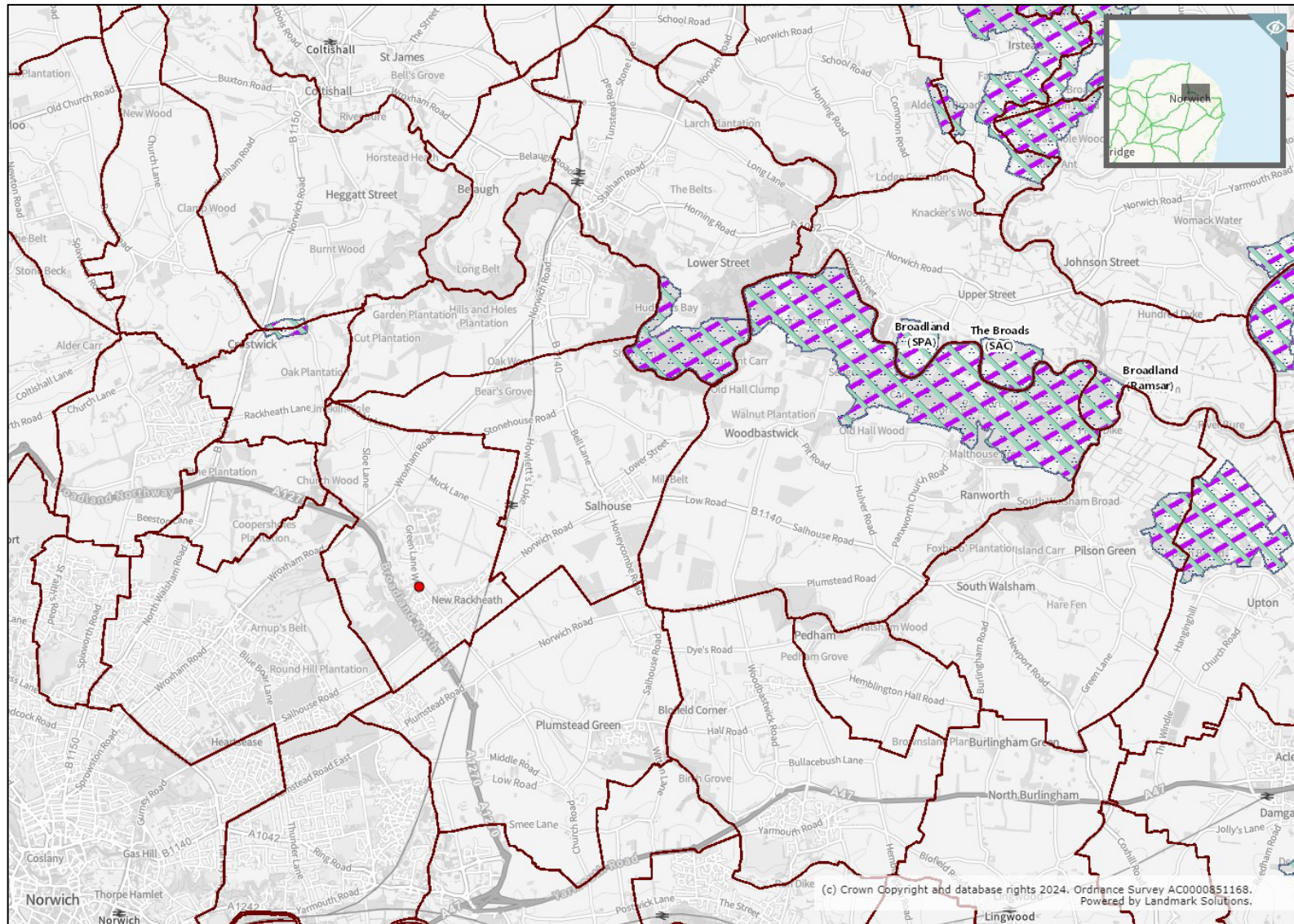
Rackheath Draft NP Review Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
<p><b>TRA4: Residential car parking for new developments</b></p> <p>Car Parking provision should be of a high quality design so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) any garages, car ports, other semi-enclosed facility or driveway is visually integrated into the building landscape and can accommodate wider SUV and electric vehicles and includes electric vehicle charging facilities.</li> <li>b) unallocated on-street parking can be accommodated without (i) impeding access for service vehicles or (ii) adversely impacting traffic flow</li> <li>c) indiscriminate parking or any obstruction of footpaths, cycleways and pavements at all times is prevented.</li> <li>d) conflict between vehicles and pedestrians is minimised, particularly to safeguard children in areas where they walk and play.</li> </ul> <p>Electric charging points must be provided in communal parking areas, both within a residential or commercial development or within car park areas linked to new community buildings or facilities. Where parking facilities are to be covered, these should be well designed and where practical, include solar panels on the roof.</p> <p>All forms of parking areas should be designed to minimise the visual impact of the car on the street scene and on the amenity of residents. Communal car parking areas should be well landscaped to ensure their visual and physical integration.</p> <p>Whilst recognising that on-street parking will occur, streets should be designed to safely accommodate unallocated on-street parking. The level of provision should be such that indiscriminate parking and the obstruction of footways and carriageways are avoided.</p>	<p>This policy makes requirements of new development in terms of residential car parking, ensuring that it is to a high design quality, and that it meets the specific design criteria as set out. It is not expected to have any significant effect on EU designated sites.</p>	

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The screening assessment suggests that there will be no likely significant effect of the proposed Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan Review 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 Review 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 Rackheath neighbourhood area (the closest being approximately 4km north of the parish, at Crostwick Marsh).
- 5.3 This screening assessment has been performed in relation to the draft version of the updated Neighbourhood Plan policies, which are intended to be subject to Reg. 14 pre-submission consultation. Once the final draft of the updated Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to Broadland District 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 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024, is that the organisation agrees there is not likely to be any significant effect from the proposed policies within the updated 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, Broadland District Council determines that a Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required in relation to the emerging Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan Review.

### Appendix 1: European Designated Sites in relation to Rackheath

(source Magic Map <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> September 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).

### Broadland SPA

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

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

#### Broadland SPA Qualifying Features

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

#### (ii) Conservation Objectives

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

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

#### (iii) Vulnerability

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

## Broadland RAMSAR

### (i) Site Description & Qualifying Features

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

### Broadland Ramsar Qualifying Features

Criterion 6	Breeding	Over winter	Passage
Bewick's Swan		X	
Wigeon		X	
Gadwall		X	
Shoveler		X	

*Noteworthy: Bean goose (fabalis), white-fronted goose (albifrons), teal, Pochard, smew, cormorant (carbo), bittern, marsh harrier, hen harrier, water rail, coot, ruff.*

### Ramsar criteria for designation:

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

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

### (ii) Vulnerability

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

## The Broads SAC

### (i) Site Description & Qualifying Features

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### SAC Qualifying features- Habitats

- Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp.;
- Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition*-type vegetation;
- Transition mires and quaking bogs;
- Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*, Priority feature;

- Alkaline fens;
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) Priority feature, and;
- *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*).

#### *SAC Qualifying features- Species*

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

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

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

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

### **(iii) Vulnerability**

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

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

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

### Appendix 3: Response from Natural England

Date: 08 October 2024  
 Our ref: 487435  
 Your ref: Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan



Mr Richard Squires  
 South Norfolk & Broadland Councils

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Hornbeam House  
 Crewe Business Park  
 Electra Way  
 Crewe  
 Cheshire  
 CW1 6GJ

Dear Mr Squires

#### **Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan Review - SEA/HRA Screening Consultation**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 9 September 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 sites<sup>1</sup>, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

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