



Public Notice

As required by European Directive 2001/42/EC (Strategic Environmental Assessment) and the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Statutory Instrument 2004 No.1633) and

The European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (the Habitats Directive)

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended)

Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council

Hereby gives notice of its decision not to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) nor Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) for the South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code (Draft) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on the basis that the Design Code does not allocate new sites or resources and the parent policy (GNLP 2) has been subject to SEA and HRA.

The South Norfolk and Broadland (Draft) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is not likely to cause significant environmental effects. This determination is based on the (SEA) criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment as part of screening report. In addition, it will not have an effect on protected Habitats sites either alone, or in combination with other plans or projects based on the HRA criteria.

The decision has been taken by the Place Shaping Manager following consideration of a detailed screening report and has been subject to formal consultation with the Environment Agency, English Heritage, and Natural England. Members of the public wishing to find out more should contact:

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South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and Habitats and Species Regulation Screening

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Introduction

The South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code

1. The South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code is being developed as a supplementary planning document to provide detailed design guidance for future residential schemes across both districts.
2. It operates within the framework of the adopted Local Plan and aims to establish clear expectations for high-quality, sustainable, and contextually appropriate development. The Local Plan framework includes the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), the Broadland Development Management DPD and the South Norfolk Development Management DPD.
3. It will apply to all new residential developments between 1 – 500 homes in scale, with developments at the upper end of this threshold being subject to the requirements set out in Policy 2 of the GNLP (Sustainable Communities).
4. The Design Code outlines principles for good design, connectivity, sustainability, and integration with the local context. It will serve as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, ensuring that new developments contribute positively to the character and quality of the area.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment process

5. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive is a European Union requirement for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed plans or programmes to ensure they are fully considered and integrated at the earliest stages of decision-making.
6. The aim is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that environmental considerations are taken into account during the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes.
7. The SEA process for the South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code is conducted in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which transposes the European Directive 2001/42/EC into English law. This legislation requires consideration of the likely significant environmental effects of certain plans and programmes in order to determine whether a strategic environmental assessment is required. The consultation bodies for this purpose are: Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England.
8. Table 1 and Table 2 below relate to the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment process

9. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a requirement under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which transposes the European Union Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) into English law. The HRA process ensures that plans or projects do not have adverse effects on the integrity of protected habitats and species sites, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
10. The HRA process aims to safeguard biodiversity and promote sustainable development by ensuring that environmental considerations are integrated into planning decisions at an early stage. The principal consultation body for the Design Code will be Natural England.
11. The assessment involves up to three stages, including the screening of plans or projects based on a standard set of criteria, the preparation of an Appropriate Assessment (AA) if significant effects are identified, and identification of mitigation to minimize any adverse impacts.
12. Table 3 below is the HRA screening for the South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code.

Tables 1 and 2: SEA Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects on the Environment by the South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code SPD

Table 1: The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:

Criteria	Assessment of the Design Code SPD
a) The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	The Design Code for South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council operates within the framework of the adopted Local Plan, providing supplementary design requirements for residential schemes across the districts. It will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Its provisions relate generally to the location and size of future schemes, establishing clear expectations for good design, connectivity, sustainability, and integration with the local context. The Design Code does not allocate new sites or resources but sets out the codes against which developments are assessed.

b) The degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The Design Code itself does not directly influence other plans or establish a hierarchy; rather, it sits beneath the Local Plan and supports its implementation by providing additional detail to ensure high-quality and sustainable development outcomes.
c) The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	The Design Code promotes sustainable development and the integration of environmental considerations, supporting wide-ranging sustainability principles throughout the document and at all scales of development. These provide further guidance to substantiate the existing adopted Local Plan policies for each authority.
d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	The principal environmental issue addressed by the Design Code is the quality of design within the Districts, including addressing its role in shaping sustainable, healthy, and resilient communities. The Code's approach aims to mitigate these problems by elevating design quality and embedding a high standard of design in the development process.
e) The relevance of the plan for the implementation of [European] Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	The Code supports, but does not directly implement, legislative requirements. The Code supports the existing Local Plans of the Councils.

Table 2: Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected having regard, in particular to:

Criteria	Assessment of the Design Code SPD
a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	The Design Code's effects are ongoing and long-term, relating to the design and delivery of the built environment. They are positive - reinforcing the expectations for good design quality as well as the adoption of sustainable, healthy, and resilient development patterns. The Code's influence is intended to be continuous throughout the lifecycle of developments. Most effects—such as improved biodiversity, amenity, energy

	efficiency, and flood resilience— will remain in place for the duration of the development.
b) The cumulative nature of the effects	The cumulative impact of the Design Code is to uplift the standard of design and sustainability across all developments. By setting a high benchmark, it reduces the risk of cumulative negative impacts from poorly designed schemes, and instead fosters positive cumulative effects—such as improved green infrastructure, increased biodiversity, better water management, and healthier, more active communities.
c) The transboundary nature of the effects	The district borders multiple administrative areas and includes the Broads Authority, a protected landscape. The Design Code recognises the transboundary nature of environmental effects, particularly in relation to landscape character, biodiversity corridors, water management, and movement networks. By setting a consistent approach to high-quality design the Code ensures that potential transboundary impacts are positively managed.
d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	The Design Code does not introduce risks to human health or the environment. Its purpose is to guide the creation of healthy, safe, and inclusive environments, with principles for active travel, access to nature, noise and air quality mitigation, safety, and climate resilience. Key elements, such as natural surveillance, traffic calming, SuDS, and green infrastructure, reduce environmental risks and support public health outcomes.
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The Code applies across the entirety of both the Broadland District Council area and the South Norfolk Council administrative area, covering urban, semi-rural, rural, and dispersed settlement contexts. It is relevant to all new residential and associated developments (from single units to schemes of up to 500 dwellings). The spatial extent includes towns, villages and rural settlements.

f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: i. Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii. Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; and iii. Intensive land use.	Both districts have intrinsic value and vulnerability due to their rich heritage assets, designated landscapes, and natural features (including the Broads). The Code requires specific analysis and mitigation regarding the protection of heritage, landscape character, and biodiversity value and is supported by Character Assessments for each authority area which recognise the special attributes of each District. Design considerations will be positively influenced by the use of the Design Code, thereby offering an additional protection to the areas.
g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status	The Code covers areas with special protection status, including the Broads (with National Park equivalence), as well designated heritage assets (such as Conservation Areas) and areas that benefit from environmental protection. It provides detailed guidance to ensure that development is sensitive to, and wherever possible enhances, these protected landscapes and areas.

Table 3: HRA Screening for Likely significant effects of the South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code SPD

Chapter	Assessment of Potential Impact Habitat sites	Habitat sites that could be impacted	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed (Y/N)
Chapter 1: Introduction	This chapter outlines the sets out the scope of the Design Code, as well as the planning policy context for development in Broadland and South Norfolk, and the process by which the Design Code has been prepared.	None	No	No
Chapter 2: Creating a Place	This chapter outlines the vision and coding priorities for the Design Code area. It also identifies four-character areas throughout Broadland and South Norfolk administrative areas throughout which the Design Code will be applicable. The Design Code is not allocating, or identifying, land for new development; rather, it is supporting the existing adopted Local Plans for each authority and providing updated design requirements for new residential development within these authority areas. In addressing fundamental design principles the Design Code seeks to improve the quality of residential schemes throughout the two authority areas, without introducing new policy detail or requirements to the existing Local Plan.	None	No	No
Chapter 3: Neighbourhood	This chapter sets out the key principles for designing schemes at a neighbourhood level	None	No	No

	and includes topics such as connectivity, public open spaces and biodiversity and housing mix. The Design Code seeks to successfully integrate new development into the wider area providing places that are attractive, legible and sustainable. It promotes the retention of existing landscape and ecological features of value from the very start of the site evaluation and design process, highlighting the many benefits this approach will have on the final scheme.			
Chapter 4: Street	This chapter recognises the importance of design at a street level, including how they can provide opportunities to include interconnecting corridors for wildlife to navigate, alongside residents and visitors. The aim is to integrate opportunities for nature and biodiversity to thrive within new developments, including by preserving existing natural features within sites to retain their ecological value. The consideration to be given to the planting schemes for new development at this level is a key theme throughout this chapter.	None	No	No
Chapter 5: Homes	The final chapter sets out the design expectations at an individual property scale. This requires a consideration of the long-term functionality of the home, as well matters such as natural daylight and	None	No	No

	ventilation. It also covers topics such as privacy and security, as well as materials and optimising climate responsive design approaches (including conserving water and the integration of water harvesting into new development where possible).			
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Conclusion

13. Based on this screening exercise, the Council(s) consider that the preparation of the Design Code is unlikely to have a significant environmental effect and therefore does not result in the need for a full Strategic Environmental Assessment. However, the Council(s) will consult on this screening opinion with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency as per the SEA regulations before the screening opinion is confirmed. At such time, the determination notice will be published on the Council(s) website.
14. The Council(s) have also concluded that an Appropriate Assessment is unlikely to be necessary for the Design Code. However, the Council will consult with Natural England to confirm this finding, and will publish the determination notice in due course on the relevant Council webpages.