



Tasburgh Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-submission Draft)

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Screening Report

February 2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report has been undertaken by South Norfolk Council in order to support the emerging Tasburgh Neighbourhood Plan which has been produced by a working group on behalf of Tasburgh 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 Tasburgh).

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 Tasburgh 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 Tasburgh. The nearest EU designated site is located approximately 2km north-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 Tasburgh Neighbourhood Area. A map showing the location of the above designation in relation to Tasburgh 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 Tasburgh 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 Tasburgh 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 February 2023.

Tivetshalls NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
TAS1: Natural Assets	This policy identifies important natural assets due to their landscape and biodiversity value. It looks to achieve biodiversity net gain for ongoing care and maintenance. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.	No likely significant effect
TAS2: Local Green Spaces	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.	No likely significant effect
TAS3: Important Local Views	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.	No likely significant effect
TAS4: Climate change, flood risk and surface water drainage issues	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. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.	No likely significant effect
TAS5: Dark Skies	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.	No likely significant effect

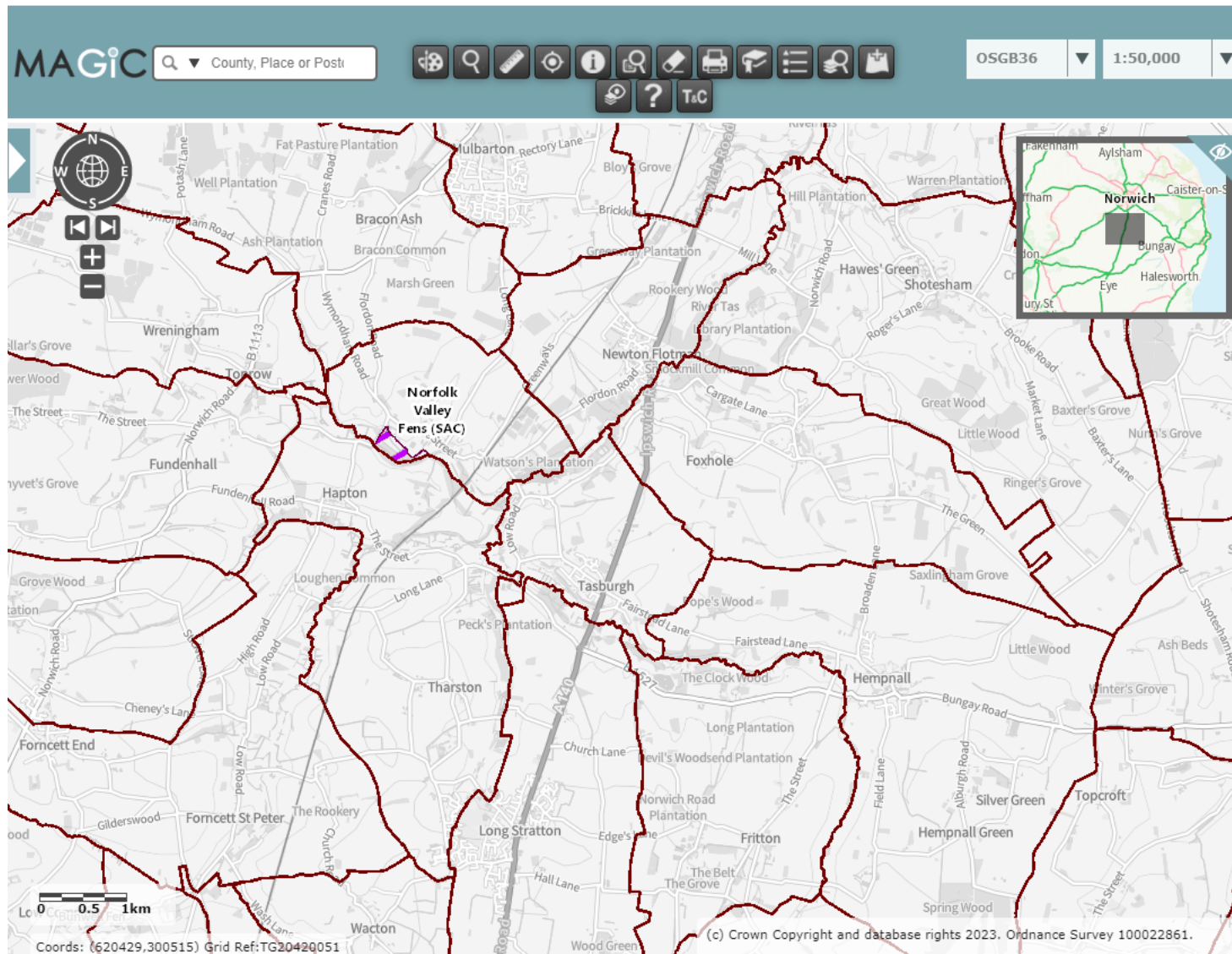
Tivetshalls NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
TAS6: Design guidelines and codes	This policy looks to influence the design of development in the parish, reflecting local distinctiveness and character referring to the design guidelines and codes document. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.	No likely significant effect
TAS7: Housing location, pattern and scale.	This policy looks to support new housing development to be located in areas where it can best integrate with existing development whilst enhancing the form and character of the village. This is a generic development management policy and is not looking to allocate development and, as such, it is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.	No likely significant effect
TAS8: Housing Mix	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.	No likely significant effect
TAS9: Land north of Church Road and west of Tasburgh School	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.	No likely significant effect
TAS10: Business Development	This policy looks to support new or expanded business and employment uses where those proposals have taken account of the design guide and code. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.	No likely significant effect
TAS11: Historic Core and Non-designated Heritage Assets	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.	No likely significant effect
TAS12: Public Rights of Way, footpaths and cycleways	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.	No likely significant effect

Tivetshalls NP Policy	Analysis	Likely significant effect
TAS13: Existing and new community infrastructure	This policy looks to support improvements to existing community infrastructure and new infrastructure when supported as in line with other policies in the 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.	No likely significant effect
TAS14: The village hall site	This policy looks to support proposals for the redevelopment of the village hall on principle either as extension or new building to enable further community or business use. Where possible any redevelopment should meet the highest environmental standards. It is not expected to have any significant effects on EU designated sites.	No likely significant effect

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The screening assessment suggests that there will be no likely significant effect of the proposed Tasburgh 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 Space, deal appropriately with flooding issues, 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 Tasburgh neighbourhood area. The closest being approximately 2km north 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 will be sent to Natural England for comments, as the appropriate nature conservation body specified by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Appendix 1: European Designated Sites in relation to Tasburgh
(source Magic Map <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> February 2023)



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.