



Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan 2017 - 2036

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA):

Screening Report – June 2019





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Erratum

In light of scrutiny at Examination, a factual error was spotted. It is now established that all of the site allocations in the Plan fall within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) for the Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Redgrave and South Lopham Fen Ramsar. Unfortunately the previous version of this SEA / HRA Screening Report indicated that the site allocations did not fall within the ZOIs. Whilst all of the sites subject to the site allocation policies have now received planning permission, the Examiner considered it is necessary for this to be addressed. Therefore the Screening Report and/or the Screening Determinations has been revised & re-issued with the assessment redone. Further consultation with Natural England will also take place.



1. Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of This Report

This screening report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2036 Pre-Submission Draft requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/ EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations. A SEA is required if the Neighbourhood Development Plan is deemed to have a likely significant effect on the environment.

This report will also screen to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. A HRA is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites or 'Habitats Sites') as a result of the implementation of a plan/project.

1.2 The Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 Pre-Submission Plan

The Neighbourhood Development Plan will set out planning policies for Botesdale & Rickinghall and within the confines of the Botesdale & Rickinghall Plan area. Once formally adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan carries the same legal weight as Local Development Plans adopted up by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in this case Mid Suffolk District Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan includes a number of Vision Statements for the Plan area. These are as follows:

'In 2036 Botesdale and Rickinghall will have maintained its significant historic built and natural environment while accommodating sustainable growth that meets the needs of the Parishes and their hinterland and ensures that appropriate levels of infrastructure and services are retained and improved.'

To deliver this Vision, the following Policies have been established for the Plan:

Policies	
Historic and Natural Environment Objectives	
1	Conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Botesdale and Rickinghall
2	Protect and improve the features which contribute to historic character.
3	Maintain the villages' rural setting.
4	Protect the important green spaces, woodland and countryside and public rights of way.
5	Protect important views and links to the wider countryside.



Policies	
6	Promote the inclusion of native planting in and around existing and new developments.
Housing and Development Objectives	
7	Ensure that the amount of new housing growth in Botesdale and Rickinghall, collectively a Core Village, is appropriate and of a scale that the local infrastructure can support.
8	Deliver housing that is tailored to the needs of local residents, and specifically includes affordable housing provision.
9	Ensure all development is of a high-quality design, eco-friendly and of a scale and nature that reinforces local character.
10	Deliver development that is permeable by pedestrians and cyclists and has improved access to rights of way in and around the villages.
Jobs, Services and Facilities Objectives	
11	Protect and improve the range of existing community facilities and services.
12	Ensure that the broadband and mobile connectivity throughout the Plan Area meets the domestic, social and business needs of the community.
13	Support small-scale business creation and retention.
Transport and Travel Objectives	
14	Support and encourage safe and sustainable transport, including walking, cycling and public transport.
15	Improve bus services to enable access to services, secondary and tertiary education and employment.

1.3 The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) & Focused Review (2012)

The adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) & Focused Review (2012) contain current strategic planning policy for the District and thus Botesdale & Rickinghall. The Core Strategy was originally adopted in 2008 and includes a number of policies related to a strategy for growth in the District, the delivery of growth and the provision of infrastructure. A Sustainability Appraisal was carried out for the Core Strategy as well as 'Appropriate Assessment' in accordance with the Habitats Directive and Regulations.

The Core Strategy categorised the settlements of Botesdale & Rickinghall as a 'Key Service Centre'. It establishes that towns should be the main focus for development in the District, and that Key Service Centres are the main focus for development outside of the towns. Policy CS1 Settlement Hierarchy of the Core Strategy states that,

'The majority of new development (including retail, employment and housing allocations) will be directed to towns and key service centres'

Policy CS8 of the Core Strategy provides the outline for housing distribution across Mid-Suffolk. Housing numbers for the 2010-2025 period are provided within the policy table. A total of 3,830 homes were proposed for the 15 year period, with 500 of these being located within Key Service Centres.

1.4 The Emerging Mid Suffolk Local Plan

Work has been underway for a new Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. At the time of writing, a Regulation 18 stage consultation had most recently closed on the 10th November 2017. This was accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal.

The Regulation 18 stage Local Plan identifies Botesdale & Rickinghall as a Core Village. A number of strategic options were explored relevant to Core Villages. These were:

- County Town Focus – 20% district growth in Core Villages
- Market town / rural area balance – 20%-25% district growth in Core Villages
- Transport corridor focus – 30% district growth in Core Villages
- New Settlement focus – 15% district growth in Core Villages

The emerging Local Plan has reviewed Settlement Boundaries. The Plan states that,

'The Councils have taken the approach that Urban Areas, Market Towns and Core Villages will have new growth identified and allocated in the new Local Plan through the allocation of new housing sites... Maps identifying 'committed boundaries' and potential SHELAA sites can be viewed in Appendix 3 and 4'

Within Appendix 1, there is included a map of Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan area. The map shows three potential development sites, all of which are adjacent to the existing settlement boundary of the village.

Since then, approximately eight further sites have been submitted for consideration as potential allocations within the emerging Local Plan (through the Regulation 18 consultation) in the Neighbourhood Plan area. An approximate total of 11 sites have therefore been identified for development purposes within the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan area.

Of Neighbourhood Plans, the emerging Local Plan states that,

'Neighbourhood plans can be brought forward at any time and can be developed before or at the same time as the local planning authority is producing its Local Plan. It is for the local planning authority to work closely with neighbourhood planning groups to minimise any conflicts between policies in the neighbourhood plan and the emerging Local Plan.'

'There is an opportunity for local communities to bring forward sites for development in neighbourhood plans in parallel with the developing local plan process and in accordance with the emerging level of growth agreed with the local planning authority and share evidence the evidence being prepared by the Local Planning Authority and vice versa.'

The Local Plan at the current stage of process (at the time of writing) outlines high level options with initial preference for approaches included, however there is currently an absence of draft policy wording at this stage. With this in mind, the emerging Local Plan is unlikely to have any identifiable conflict with any of the content within the emerging Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan regarding the principle of development. Indeed, the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared at a comparably



advanced stage to that of the Local Plan and its evidence base.

2. Legislative Background

2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment states that,

‘Environmental assessment is an important tool for integrating environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(10) All plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors and which set a framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment(7), and all plans and programmes which have been determined to require assessment pursuant to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna(8), are likely to have significant effects on the environment, and should as a rule be made subject to systematic environmental assessment. When they determine the use of small areas at local level or are minor modifications to the above plans or programmes, they should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(11) Other plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects may not have significant effects on the environment in all cases and should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have such effects.’

The Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan may influence frameworks for future development, or become used ancillary to those plans and programmes that do set such a framework, and as such it has been determined that the principle of the Neighbourhood Plan should be screened for the necessary application of the SEA Directive.

The Report from the Commission to The Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions states, on the application and effectiveness of the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Directive 2001/42/EC), that

‘the following P&P, and modifications to them, are covered when prepared and/or adopted by an authority[2] and required pursuant to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions:

- P&P prepared for certain sectors and which set the framework for future development consent in respect of projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment-EIA-Directive.*
- P&P requiring an assessment under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).*
- P&P setting the framework for development consent in respect of projects (not*



limited to those listed in the EIA Directive; see above) and determined by "screening" as being likely to have significant environmental effects.'

This report represents this screening process in regard to the content and influence of the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan.

2.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Under the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and translated into English law by the Habitats Regulations (*The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site, in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

HRA is the screening assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of European sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites.

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Development Plan which is being produced by Botesdale & Rickinghall Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA.

In line with the recent Court judgement (CJEU *People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17*), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats Site.

3. SEA Screening

3.1 When is SEA Required?

Planning Practice Guidance – Strategic environmental assessment requirements for neighbourhood plans (Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 11-026-20140306) states that,

‘In some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a “screening” assessment and the requirements are set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of those Regulations.

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).

To decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan’s preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies.

Each consultation body will be able to advise on particular topics relevant to its specific area of expertise and responsibility, and the specific information that it holds.

Where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared. A copy of the statement must be submitted with the neighbourhood plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner.’

Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive set out the circumstances in which an SEA is required. Table 1 sets out the assessment of whether the principle of the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan will require a ‘full SEA’, culminating in a SEA Environmental Report.

Table 1: Exploring whether the Principle of the Plan would warrant SEA

Q	Criteria	Response	Outcome	Commentary
1	Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative procedure by Parliament or Government	Yes	Go to question 2	The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for adoption through legislative procedure.
2	Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or <u>administrative provision</u> Typical characteristics of "administrative provisions" are that they are publicly available, prepared in a formal way, probably involving consultation with interested parties. The administrative provision must have sufficient formality such that it counts as a "provision" and it must also use language that plainly requires rather than just encourages a Plan to be prepared.	Yes	Go to question 3	The Neighbourhood Plan would be considered as falling within the category of an 'administrative provision'.
		No	DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA	
3	Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive?	Yes to both criteria	Go to question 5	The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.
		No to either criteria	Go to question 4	
4	Will the Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?	Yes	Go to question 5	N/A
		No	Go to question 6	
5	Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a Plan likely to require assessment under the Habitats Directive?	Yes to either criteria	Go to question 8	The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at a local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.
		No to both criteria	Go to question 7	



Q	Criteria	Response	Outcome	Commentary
6	Does the Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in the Annexes of the EIA Directive)?	Yes	Go to question 8	N/A
		No	DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA	
7	Is the Plans sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget Plan, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7	Yes to any criteria	DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA	N/A
		No to all criteria	REQUIRES SEA	
8	Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?	Yes	REQUIRES SEA	Likely significant effects are explored in more detail elsewhere in this Screening Report.
		No	DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA	

The following section looks at the criteria for assessing the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan and the identified effects of the Neighbourhood Plan in line with the criteria. Crucially, it will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on the environment.



3.2 Criteria for Assessing the Effects of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

Criteria for determining the likely significant effects on the environment, referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below.

Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to
 - the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
 - the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
 - the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
 - environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
 - the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to
 - the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
 - the cumulative nature of the effects,
 - the transboundary nature of the effects,
 - the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
 - the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
 - the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - * special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
 - * exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
 - * intensive land-use,
 - * the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

3.3 Likely Significant Effects on the Environment resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan

The following assessment will consider the likelihood of the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft (at the time of writing) to have significant effects on the environment.

Table 2: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on the Environment

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p>	<p>The Plan sets out relevant policies which will be used to determine proposals for development within the Neighbourhood Plan area once adopted.</p> <p>Policy B&R 1 – Spatial Strategy identifies broad locations within which development shall be focused and specifies under which locational circumstances any forthcoming proposals would be supported. There are numerous policies that respond to housing allocations within the Plan area. The status of these allocations is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy B&R 3 – Land at Back Hills (outline planning permission granted) • Policy B&R 4 – Land north of Garden House Lane (outline planning permission granted) • Policy B&R 5 – Land east of Rectory Hill (outline planning permission granted) • Policy B&R 6 – Land to the rear of Willowmere, Garden House Lane (outline planning permission granted) • Policy B&R 7 – Land south of Diss Road (outline planning permission granted) <p>The principle of development within the Neighbourhood Plan area is supported by the District Council through their categorisation of Botesdale & Rickinghall as a Core Village within the settlement hierarchy of their emerging Local Plan. The Local Plan is not yet at a stage to identify a quantum of development or sites for development within the Neighbourhood Plan area; however the Neighbourhood Plan only allocates sites which have planning permission in the Plan area. As such, the degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects is low. Alone, the allocation of sites within the Neighbourhood Plan would not warrant the application of the SEA Directive in the form of a SEA Environmental Report.</p>
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan provides policies for the Plan area, relevant to a local level only. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan influence the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan in so far as there is an intention for it to be 'made' prior to the adoption of the</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>Local Plan, which is currently at the Regulation 18 stage.</p> <p>The Plan is however in general conformity to policies CS1, CS5 and CS9 of the Mid Suffolk adopted Core Strategy.</p> <p>The emerging Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Local Plan recognises that many of the settlements (within Babergh Mid Suffolk) have already expanded beyond defined settlement boundaries and that these have been / are being reviewed through the plan-making process. Further, the Councils establish a need for Core Villages to accommodate new growth as espoused in the emerging Local Plan. The stance of the Neighbourhood Plan in allocating land for development purposes could be seen to influence the emerging Local Plan, however planning permission has been granted for all of the Plan’s allocations.</p>
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Plans are required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to ensure environmental considerations are taken into account. The Neighbourhood Plan is compatible and does not conflict with adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy policies CS5 and CS9 which have been subject to a thorough process of plan preparation and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal.</p> <p>The following policies exist within the Neighbourhood Plan relevant to environmental protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy B&R 12 – Area of Landscape Sensitivity • Policy B&R 13 – Local Green Spaces • Policy B&R 14 – Local Heritage Assets • Policy B&R 15 – Protection of Local Heritage Assets • Policy B&R 16 – Design Considerations <p>Although many of the Plan’s policies focus on the built environment and social aspects of the environment, the policies contained within the Plan in addition to those adopted and emerging within the District Council’s Core Strategy / Local Plan are considered to be sufficient to ensure that effects on the environment are minimised.</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan reflects a small area. The policy content of the adopted MSDC Core Strategy will additionally apply to any proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area. These policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal And Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening within the context of the Core Strategy. The potential environmental problems relevant to the Neighbourhood development Plan area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land to the north of the settlement within the river valley and including Redgrave Park landscape is designated a Special Landscape Area (SLA). This is a local designation reflecting attractive combinations of landscape elements, such as river valleys with traditional grazing meadows, areas of Breckland



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste</p>	<p>and heathland, as well as historic parks and gardens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are extensive areas of Flood Risk Zone 3 surrounding the settlement boundary, particularly to the east and north associated with a stream to the north of the main street. This flood plain of ditches makes its way north towards the Little Ouse / Waveney Rivers. • The Suffolk County Historic Environment Record (HER) lists over 70 sites of archaeological interest from all periods in the parishes of Botesdale and Rickinghall. • The three parishes comprising Botesdale and the Rickinghalls contain 101 listed buildings, the majority of which are within the Conservation Area. • Listed Buildings include the Grade I Listed Church of St Mary and the Grade II* Listed: Hamblyn House; St Catherines; Chapel of St Botolph; The Priory (with attached outbuildings and garden walls); and the Street Farmhouse (with attached outbuildings). • There are also two Scheduled Monuments adjacent to the Plan area, however these are distanced from the settlement boundary and any allocations identified within the Plan. • The Plan area is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zones of Burgate Wood SSSI, Westhall Wood and Meadow SSSI, Redgrave & Lopham Fen SSSI/NNR and Thelnetham Fen SSSI and therefore within the Zone of Influence for Waveney & Lt Ouse Valley Fens SAC and Redgrave & Lopham Fen Ramsar site; however residential development of any size is not identified as a land use that would require statutory consultation with Natural England (as identified on MAGIC Map - https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx). • The Plan area contains a large number of scattered priority habitats. These include coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, deciduous woodland, broadleaved woodland, young tree woodland, wood-pasture and parkland, and ancient and semi-natural woodland at Calke Wood to the west. • Adjacent to the settlement boundary of Botesdale & Rickinghall to the south east lays a Source Protection Zone (Zone I – inner protection zone). Land within Zone II – outer protection zone radiates out from Zone I further to the south east away from the settlement boundary. <p>The content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not in conflict with those relevant planning documents within the wider district and county area related to waste management or water protection.</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)		Likelihood and summary of significant effects
management or water protection).	The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects on the following factors:	The following impacts have been identified within this Screening Assessment:
Sustainability Theme	- Biodiversity	<p>The Plan area contains a number of scattered priority habitats around the settlement boundary. The Plan area is within the Impact Risk Zones of numerous SSSIs; however there are no identified incompatibilities with any development relevant to Neighbourhood Planning in and around the settlement of Botesdale & Rickinghall identified by Natural England.</p> <p>Of the Plan’s five residential site allocations, none of them would lead to the loss of any priority habitats, and all have planning permission.</p> <p>The HRA Screening element of this Report determines that the Plan area is within the Zones of Influence for two Habitats (European) Sites although consultation with Natural England from residential development is not triggered in those areas where residential development is proposed / allocated. Significant effects that would warrant the application of the SEA Directive can therefore be ruled out</p>
	- Population	The Neighbourhood Plan allocates five sites for residential development however all have planning permission. There is therefore expected to be no direct impact on the general population resulting from the Plan.
	- Human health	<p>The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes that could have any implications regarding human health. The Plan seeks to safeguard all local green spaces within the Plan area in Policy B&R 13 - Local Green Spaces in order to ensure that this space is preserved for the purposes of health and well-being. Additionally Policy B&R 22 seeks the retention or suitable diversion of Public Rights of Way and Policy B&R 21 directly regards the retention and improvement of open space, sport and recreation facilities within the Plan area.</p> <p>It can be considered that no significant effects will occur upon Human health in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Any potential impacts regarding contamination of any future proposals are best addressed at the ‘project level’, through the development management process and in adherence to relevant policies at the LPA level.</p>
	- Fauna	The impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan on fauna are not considered significant. It is possible that developments that could be forthcoming within the Plan area could have negative impacts on protected species; however these cannot be identified as strategically



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>significant to warrant Strategic Environmental Assessment at the Plan level. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case application basis at the development management stage in consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan policies and relevant policies contained within Mid Suffolk’s adopted Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan (commensurate to the level of weight those policies would have at the time of application).</p>
- Flora	<p>Although Priority Habitats exist in close proximity to the Botesdale & Rickingham development boundary, Policy B&R 13 - Local Green Spaces ensures that such existing spaces will be retained and Policy B&R 16 – Design Standards seeks further protection of habitats, species and features of ecological interest. Further protection in regard to flora exists within relevant policies contained within Mid Suffolk’s adopted Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan (commensurate to the level of weight those policies would have at the time of application). There is not considered to be any likely effects on Flora that would be of a significance that would warrant the application of the SEA Directive.</p>
- Soil	<p>The Plan area contains exclusively Grade 3 (good to moderate) and agricultural land (ALC), which is not defined as the “best and most versatile agricultural land” within the wider District. All of the Plan’s greenfield allocations are on Grade 3 ALC. Although the Plan does not directly seek the protection of soils through any policy approach, no significant effects on soil can be expected as a result of the Plan content.</p>
- Water	<p>Adjacent to the settlement boundary of Botesdale & Rickingham to the south east lays a Source Protection Zone (Zone I – inner protection zone). Land within Zone II – outer protection zone radiates out from Zone I away from the settlement boundary. Source Protection Zones (SPZs) respond to sources such as wells, boreholes and springs used for public drinking water supply. These zones show the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for residential development purposes; however such uses are not considered to give rise to ground water pollutants (e.g. give rise to hazardous substances such as pesticides, oils, petrol and diesel, solvents, arsenic, mercury or chromium VI; or non-hazardous substances such as ammonia or nitrates).</p> <p>The HRA Screening element of this report determines that Botesdale & Rickingham Neighbourhood Plan area is within the Zones of Influence of two Habitats sites. Consultation with Natural England is not triggered for residential development in this location in regards to any significant impacts on the designated features of the wetland including impacts on water quantity and quality.</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
- Air	No AQMAs or other identified air quality issues exist within or in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area. As such, no significant effects on air quality have been deemed likely.
- Climatic factors	The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is within Flood Zone 1 however significant areas of land are identified within Flood Risk Zones 2 or 3 bound the settlement boundary, associated with a network of drains and streams associated with the Little Ouse / Waveney rivers. As such, no significant effects have been identified.
- Material assets	The site is within a Minerals Consultation Area, indicating that potential mineral deposits are present. Despite this, the content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not considered to have any significant impacts on material assets due to the extent / size of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within Mid Suffolk’s adopted Core Strategy and adopted Minerals & Waste Local Plan policies at the County level.
- Cultural heritage	<p>There are a large amount of listed buildings in Botesdale & Rickinghall, predominantly associated with the Conservation Area. Due to this, it can be considered inevitable that schemes coming forward within the Plan area would need to strongly consider the historic environment; however none of the Plan’s allocations have been identified as having such an impact as per their status as all having planning permission. Regarding non-Plan-led growth that could come forward over the Plan period, the Plan includes protection through numerous thematic policies (Policy B&R 14 – Local Heritage Assets, Policy B&R 15 – Protection of Heritage Assets, and Policy B&R 16 – Design Considerations).</p> <p>Irrespective of the adequacy of the Plan’s policies in regard to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, further policy can be found in relevant policies at the LPA level. As a result, significant effects on cultural heritage / the historic environment can be ruled out.</p>
- Landscape	<p>The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment includes the parish of Botesdale & Rickinghall within four Landscape types: wooded valley meadowlands & fens; the Rolling Valley Farmlands; Ancient Plateau Claylands; and Plateau Claylands. These character types includes the following key characteristics and recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ancient Plateau Claylands contain an important array of moated sites and farmsteads, both multi-period collections of buildings and some planned estate-type farmsteads



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settlement extension in a valley side landscape is likely to have a significant visual impact and adversely affect the character of the landscape, including that of the adjoining valley floor. A comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is essential to identify the risks and the options for mitigation. <p>Objectives related to these Landscape Character Areas, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce the historic pattern of sinuous field boundaries. Recognise localised areas of late enclosure hedges when restoring and planting hedgerows. Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees. Maintain and restore greens and commons Increase the area of woodland cover; siting should be based on information from the Historic Landscape Characterisation and in consultation with the Archaeological Service. Maintain and restore the stock of moats and ponds in this landscape <p>These objectives are largely reiterated within relevant policies of the Plan.</p> <p>Land to the north of the settlement within the river valley and including Redgrave Park landscape is designated a Special Landscape Area (SLA). This is a local designation reflecting attractive combinations of landscape elements, such as river valleys with traditional grazing meadows, areas of Breckland and heathland, as well as historic parks and gardens.</p> <p>The Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment for Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts (March, 2018) states of Botesdale & Rickinghall, <i>'whilst historically two settlements, the two have been conjoined as a single later settlement since the later nineteenth century. The historic core of the single settlement is of high value, particularly the central core of Botesdale which includes a group of high quality listed buildings at the crest of the hill. Modern development on the south eastern side of the settlement has divorced the conservation area from the agricultural landscape and has reduced the overall value of the settlement. The historic core and northern side of the settlement is of high susceptibility, whilst the south eastern side is of low susceptibility.'</i></p> <p>This Assessment also identifies key views towards, through, across and away from the settlement. These are: the view looking north east from Bury Road; the view looking north east along The Street; the view looking south west along The Street; views from Mill Lane to the northern side of the settlement; and the view from the footpath off Rectory Hill. As the Plan's allocations have planning permission, none of these views are likely to be affected by any of the Plan's content.</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>The cumulative nature of the effects.</p> <p>The trans boundary nature of the effects.</p> <p>The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).</p> <p>The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</p>	<p>Policy B&R 12: Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity ensures that development proposals within the Botesdale & Rickinghall Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity (extending along the settlement boundary to the west, expanding north and further to the east) will seek to protect and enhance, and be designed and sited so as to harmonise with the landscape setting. To this extent, the Plan ensures that potential landscape implications of proposals are suitably considered and significant effects minimised.</p> <p>The Plan allocates land for development purposes and therefore cumulative effects have not been formally identified and assessed to date. Despite this, the Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes that does not have planning permission. As such, it is not considered that the Plan need any full assessment of proposals and alternative approaches in line with the requirements of the SEA Directive.</p> <p>The findings of the HRA Screening element of this Report do not indicate any trans boundary effects.</p> <p>There is limited risk to human health or the environment as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is in consideration of the above screening requirements related to sustainability themes. The Neighbourhood Plan is primarily focused on ensuring appropriate residential development through any forthcoming non plan-led schemes that may come forward within the Plan period, whilst retaining the character of Botesdale & Rickinghall. This land use is unlikely to give rise to any accidents that can be considered to have a significant risk to human health or the environment.</p> <p>The magnitude of effects can be considered small in the wider District context; however they could be considered significant in the local context given the quantum of development identified within the Plan area. Despite this, the Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes that does not have planning permission. As such the magnitude of the Plan's content is not considered significant to the extent that the SEA Directive should be applied.</p>
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage - exceeded environmental quality standards 	<p>As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has not been assessed as having potential significant effects on environmental quality standards that would warrant further assessment through SEA.</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>- intensive land use</p> <p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed as not having any significant effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>

4. HRA Screening

4.1 Habitat Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

This section forms a plan level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) as required by Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Under the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and translated into English law by the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site, in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

HRA is the screening assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of European sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites.

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan which is being produced by Botesdale & Rickinghall Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The area covered by the Plan is shown in Appendix 1.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA.

This section of this Report aims to:

- Identify the Habitats sites within 20km of Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Summarise the reasons for designation and Conservation Objectives for each site to be considered in this assessment.
- Screen the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan for its potential to impact upon a Habitats site.
- Assess the potential for in combination effects from other projects and plans in the area.
- Identify if there are any outstanding issues that need further investigation.

4.2 Habitats (European) Sites

Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature and biodiversity policy. It is an EU wide network of nature protection areas. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

The sites are designated under the European Union (EU) Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) and the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora).

The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. The Habitats Directive similarly requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) are also part of the Natura 2000 network. This is because all SPAs and SACs are comprised of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all Ramsar sites in England are SSSIs. Together, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites make up the Natura 200 network in England.

4.2.1 Explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within EU countries. Example: Breckland SPA is internationally important for Stone Curlew, Nightjar and Woodlark. Legislation: EU Birds Directive.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

SACs are areas designated to protect habitat types that are in danger of disappearance, have a small natural range, or are highly characteristic of the region; and to protect species that are endangered, vulnerable, rare, or endemic. Example: Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens for calcareous fens, *Molinia* meadows and Desmoulin's whorl snail. Legislation: EU Habitats Directive.

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)

Ramsar Sites are designated to protect the biological and physical features of wetlands, especially for waterfowl habitats. For example, Redgrave and South Lopham Fens is an extensive example of lowland base-rich valley, remarkable for its lack of fragmentation which supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius*. Ramsar sites often overlap with SACs and SPAs and UK planning policy determines that they should be accorded the same importance when developments are proposed. Legislation: Ramsar Convention (1971) – Wetlands of International Importance.

4.2.2 Habitats Sites to be considered

There are four Habitats sites which lie within 20 km of Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan area.

Table 3: Habitats Sites within 20km of the development

SPA	SAC	Ramsar
Breckland	Waveney & Lt Ouse Valley Fens Norfolk Valley Fens	Redgrave & South Lopham Fens

The locations and boundaries of the above Habitats sites are shown on the map in Appendix 1.

The Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan area contains land within the Zones of Influence of two of the Habitats sites listed above; Redgrave & Lopham Fen Ramsar and Waveney & Lt ouse Valley Fens SAC.

There are therefore these two Habitats sites to be considered to be within scope for this assessment.

4.3 Method and Approach

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the ‘basic conditions’ set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA screening report; this is necessary to ensure the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Habitats (European) site or a European offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

There are currently only two stages for HRA of Neighbourhood Plans as the CJEU ruling means that mitigation measures cannot be considered at HRA screening. The outcomes of the two stages are described in more detail in the following table. This document relates only to Stage 1 of the HRA process.

Table 4: Stages of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process for Neighbourhood Plans

Stage	Tasks	Outcome
Stage 1 HRA Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the policies or projects • Identification of potential effects on a European site • Assessing the effects on a European site either alone or in 	<p>Where effects are unlikely, prepare a ‘finding of no significant effect’ report.</p> <p>Where effects judged likely, or lack of information to prove otherwise, go to Stage 2.</p>

Stage	Tasks	Outcome
Stage 2 Revision of the plan to remove likely significant effects	<p>combination with other plans or projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If impacts considered to affect qualifying features, those policies (and projects) that are likely to result in significant effects on any European site should be removed from the plan. 	<p>Approve the plan.</p> <p>If effects remain after alternative solutions been considered, the plan cannot be made.</p> <p><i>People over Wind CJEU ruling (April 2018) means that it is not possible to consider mitigation measures when screening for impacts.</i></p>

4.3.1 Stage 1: HRA Screening

The screening stage identifies if alternatives are needed because any policies or projects will have an impact on a Habitats Site, amendments need to be made in Neighbourhood Development Plans. Table 6 identifies the different categories assigned to each policy in the plan: Category A identifies those policies or projects that may not result in a Likely Significant Effect and are considered to have No Negative Effect. Category B identifies those policies or projects that will have No Likely Significant Effect. Category C identifies those policies or projects that might have Likely Significant Effect and thus upon a European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Section 4 considers each policy or projects and the results of the screening exercise recorded.

Table 5: Screening categorisation

<p>Category A : No negative effect</p> <p>Policies or projects that will not be likely to have any negative effect on a Habitats site.</p>
<p>Category B : No Likely Significant Effect</p> <p>Policies or projects that could have an effect but would not be likely to have a <i>significant</i> negative effect on a European site alone or in combination. This conclusion could only be reached if the effects, even in combination and taking the precautionary principle into account, are considered trivial.</p>
<p>Category C : Likely Significant Effect</p> <p>Policies or projects which are predicted to have a likely significant effect on their own or in combination with other plans and projects.</p>

4.3.2 Potential impacts of Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan on Habitats sites

There are a wide range of impacts and these can be summarised as -

- Land take by developments;

- Impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying interest species within the European site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for an identified species.
- Increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;
- Changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas;
- Changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial developments, quarries and waste management facilities.

In line with the HRA for Mid Suffolk District Council Core Strategy, each policy will be assessed against the criteria in the table below.

Table 6: Assessment of potential impacts

Nature of potential impact	How the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and project) could affect a Habitats site?	Why these effects are not considered significant?
Land take by development	Botesdale & Rickinghall plan area is outside the boundaries of any Habitats sites	N/A
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	Botesdale & Rickinghall plan area is within the Zone of Influence of the Waveney Valley Fens SAC and Redgrave & Lopham Fen Ramsar site.	The land within the plan area does not act as Functionally Linked Land for any designated features of the wetland Habitats sites within scope.
Recreational pressure and disturbance	Botesdale & Rickinghall plan area is within the Zone of Influence of the Waveney Valley Fens SAC and Redgrave & Lopham Fen Ramsar site.	The Plan allocations are within the ZOI but residential development does not trigger consultation with Natural England with regard to any significant impacts on the designated features of the wetland Habitats sites within scope.
Water quantity and quality	Botesdale & Rickinghall plan area is within the Zone of Influence of the Waveney Valley Fens SAC and Redgrave & Lopham Fen Ramsar site.	The Plan allocations are within the ZOI but residential development does not trigger consultation with Natural England with regard to any significant impacts on the designated features of the wetland Habitats sites within scope.
Changes in pollution levels	Botesdale & Rickinghall plan area is within the Zone of Influence of the Waveney Valley Fens SAC and Redgrave & Lopham Fen Ramsar	The Plan allocations are within the ZOI but residential development does not trigger consultation with Natural England with regard to any significant impacts on the



Nature of potential impact	How the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and project) could affect a Habitats site?	Why these effects are not considered significant?
	site.	designated features of the wetland Habitats sites within scope.

4.4 Results from HRA Screening of Draft Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The Screening exercise explores whether there will be any Likely Significant Effect resulting from the Plan's policies. These Policies are:

- Policy 1: Botesdale & Rickinghall Spatial Strategy
- Policy 2: Meeting Botesdale & Rickinghall's Housing Needs
- Policy 3: Meeting Specialist Care Needs
- Policy 4: Retaining and Enhancing Botesdale & Rickinghall Character through Residential Design
- Policy 5: Community Facilities
- Policy 6: Key Movement Routes
- Policy 7: Highway Capacity at Key Road Junctions
- Policy 8: Parking provision
- Policy 9: Landscaping and Environmental Features
- Policy 10: Local Green Spaces
- Policy 11: Provision for Wildlife in New Development
- Policy 12: Minimising Light Pollution

Each of the policies in the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan has been screened to identify whether they would have any impact on a Habitats Site. This assessment can be found in the following table.

Table 7: Assessment of potential impacts

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
Policy B&R 1 – Spatial Strategy	In the period 2017 to 2036 the Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with the villages' designation as a Key Service Centre in the Local Plan settlement hierarchy. New development will be focused within the defined Settlement Boundary, through sites allocated in this Plan, as identified on the Policies Map, or in the form of small-scale windfall developments. Unless specifically identified elsewhere in the Plan, land outside the Settlement Boundary is	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>defined as countryside where development will only be allowed for that which is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other exceptional uses for which it can satisfactorily be demonstrated that it needs to be located in the countryside.</p>		
<p>Policy B&R 2 – Housing Development</p>	<p>This Plan provides for 200 dwellings to be developed in the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2017 and 2036. This growth will be met through:</p> <p>i) The allocation of the following sites for 10 or more new homes:</p> <p>a) Land at Back Hills (3.09 hectares – 40 homes) (Policy B&R 3);</p> <p>b) Land north of Garden House Lane (1.59 hectares – 42 homes) (Policy B&R 4);</p> <p>c) Land east of Rectory Hill (0.52 hectares – 10 homes) (Policy B&R 5);</p> <p>d) Land to The Rear of Willowmere, Garden House Lane (0.99 hectares – 10 homes) (Policy B&R 6); and</p> <p>e) South of Diss Road (3.53 hectares – 69 dwellings) (Policy B&R 7)</p> <p>as indicated on the Policies Map; and</p> <p>ii) small “windfall” sites of under 10 dwellings that come forward within the Settlement Boundary during the plan period and not identified elsewhere in the Plan.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p> <p>All of the allocated sites have consents for residential development already in place. The impact assessments for each application did not identify any impact pathways or likely significant effects on designated features.</p>
<p>Policy B&R 3 – Land at Back Hills</p>	<p>A site of 3.09 hectares south of Back Hills is allocated for:</p> <p>a) 40 dwellings comprising a mix of single and two storey dwellings and including 35% affordable housing;</p> <p>b) Public open space including an area of community woodland;</p> <p>c) Use by the pre-school and primary school to provide a woodland classroom; and</p> <p>d) The retention and improvement of the existing public footpath to provide an</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p> <p>All of the allocated sites have consents for residential development already in place. The impact assessment for this application did not identify any impact pathways or likely significant effects on designated features.</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	improved link to The Street.		
Policy B&R 4 – Land north of Garden House Lane	<p>A site of 1.59 hectares north of Garden House Lane is allocated for 42 dwellings including 35% affordable housing.</p> <p>The development of the site must make provision for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - direct links to adjoining public rights of way network; - a new and substantive tree and hedgerow screen using native species on the south-east and north-east boundaries of the site; and - play provision in accordance with the Fields in Trust recommended benchmark guidelines. 	No, Category A	<p>No specific recommendations</p> <p>All of the allocated sites have consents for residential development already in place. The impact assessment for this application did not identify any impact pathways or likely significant effects on designated features.</p>
Policy B&R 5 – Land east of Rectory Hill	<p>A site of 0.59 hectares East of Rectory Hill is allocated for 10 dwellings.</p> <p>The development of the site must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make provision for a new and substantive tree and hedgerow screen using native species on the boundaries of the site; and - only remove the absolute minimum hedgerow on the Rectory Hill frontage to provide a safe vehicle access to the site; and - provide a new footpath along Rectory Hill highway verge from the site frontage to a point just north of the entrance to The Laurels. 	No, Category A	<p>No specific recommendations</p> <p>All of the allocated sites have consents for residential development already in place. The impact assessment for this application did not identify any likely significant effects on designated features.</p>
Policy B&R 6 – Land to the rear of Willowmere, Garden House Lane	<p>A site of 0.99 hectares rear of Willowmere, Garden House Lane is allocated for 10 dwellings including 35% affordable housing;</p> <p>The development of the site must remain the existing trees and hedgerows that form the boundary of the site and make provision to reinforce this with new planting using native species in order to reduce the impact of the development on the surrounding open countryside.</p> <p>The development must also provide a connection to the adjoining footpath at the south-west corner of the site.</p>	No, Category A	<p>No specific recommendations</p> <p>All of the allocated sites have consents for residential development already in place. The impact assessment for this application did not identify any impact pathways or likely significant effects on designated features.</p>
Policy B&R 7 – Land south of	A site of 3.53 hectares south of Diss Road is allocated for:	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
Diss Road	<p>a) Up to 69 dwellings including 35% affordable housing; and</p> <p>b) Public open space including children's play provision in accordance with the Fields in Trust recommended benchmark guidelines.</p> <p>The development of the site must provide a footpath and cycle path link to Chapel Land and screen planting using native species to the boundary between the site and both Park View and Mill Road.</p>		All of the allocated sites have consents for residential development already in place. The impact assessment for this application did not identify any impact pathways or likely significant effects on designated features.
Policy B&R 8 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites	<p>Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites outside the Settlement Boundary, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need and provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Secure arrangements are made to ensure that initial and subsequent occupation of the dwellings can be restricted to those having an identified local need for affordable housing through the use of appropriate safeguards, including conditions or legal obligations; ii. The housing is for people that are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the villages at open-market prices; iii. The housing is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection. Where there is no need, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages. <p>These restrictions should be delivered through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing. Applications for such development will be considered in relation to the appearance and character of the</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>surrounding area, the potential impact on residential amenity and highway safety.</p> <p>To be acceptable, proposals should demonstrate that a local need exists which cannot be met by applying normal planning policy for the provision of affordable homes in association with market housing. Any application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by detailed need and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, a small number of market homes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That no other means of funding the construction of the affordable homes is available; and b) The market housing is subsidiary to the affordable housing element of the proposal and the amount of market housing required is, as demonstrated through a viability assessment, the minimum required to deliver the affordable housing. <p>Where sites for affordable housing in the countryside are brought forward with an element of market housing, both housing tenures should be built to the same design standards and contribute towards the character of the area.</p>		
Policy B&R 9 – Housing Mix	In all housing developments of ten or more homes, there shall be an emphasis on providing a higher proportion of three-bedroomed homes within the scheme, unless it can be demonstrated that the particular circumstances relating to the tenure of the housing dictate otherwise.	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy B&R 10 – Delivering homes to meet the needs of all potential occupants	<p>All proposals for new dwellings within the Neighbourhood Plan area shall be designed and built to the Lifetime Homes Standard. In addition, all new homes shall provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	ii) One electric vehicle charging point per off-street parking space		
Policy B&R 11 – Housing Space Standards	All new dwellings shall achieve appropriate internal space through adherence to the latest Nationally Described Space Standards. Dwellings should also make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and cycles, in accordance with the adopted cycle parking standards.	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy B&R 12 – Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity	Development proposals in the Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity, as identified on the Policies Map, will be permitted only where they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protect or enhance the special landscape qualities of the area, identified in the Landscape Character Assessment; and - are designed and sited so as to harmonise with the landscape setting. 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy B&R 13 – Local Green Spaces	The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the Policies Map. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The Horse Pond or Watering Triangle 2 Wood next to Primary School 3 Botesdale Knoll 4 Fen Lane and verges towards Broomhills 5 The Marl Pits 6 Millers Orchard, off Mill Road, Botesdale 7 Hedge and Verge, between Warren’s Lane and Seven Bells, The Street, Botesdale 8 Grass Verge adjoining and opposite Parkview Chapel, Botesdale 9 Grass Verge by Chapel of Ease, Crown Hill, Botesdale 10 Grass Verges by Toll House, Diss Road, Botesdale 11 Low Meadow, Rickinghall 12 Wherry Land, Rickinghall 13 Northfield Wood, off Mill Lane, Rickinghall 14 Green space by the Chestnuts, formerly 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>Accommodation Meadow, Rickinghall]</p> <p>15 Rickinghall Superior Triangle, Rickinghall</p> <p>16 Ryders Way Green Space, Rickinghall</p> <p>17 Snape Hill, Rickinghall</p> <p>18 Hinderclay Road grass verges, Rickinghall</p> <p>19 Hedges and grass verges on Rectory Hill, Rickinghall</p> <p>20 Green verge outside Rickinghall Street, Rickinghall</p> <p>21 Front of Jubilee House, The Street</p> <p>22 Junction of Rectory Hill and A143</p> <p>23 Churchyard, St Mary's Church, Rickinghall Inferior</p> <p>24 The graveyard St Mary's Church, Rickinghall Superior</p> <p>25 Wheatfields amenity space</p> <p>26 Allotments off Mill Lane, Rickinghall</p> <p>27 Churchyard of Chapel of Ease, Botesdale</p> <p>Development on these sites will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation.</p>		
<p>Policy B&R 14 – Local Heritage Assets</p>	<p>The retention and protection of local heritage assets and buildings of local significance, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest must be secured.</p> <p>Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of or substantial harm to a local heritage asset or a building of local significance should be supported by an appropriate analysis of the significance of the asset together with an explanation of the wider public benefits of the proposal.</p> <p>Appendix 3 identifies properties and structures of local significance which are also identified on the Policies Map.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy B&R 15 – Protection of Heritage</p>	<p>To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the villages' heritage assets, proposals must:</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the villages, their setting and the wider built environment, including views into, within and out of the conservation area as identified on the Policies Map; b. Retain buildings and spaces, the loss of which would cause harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area; c. Contribute to the villages local distinctiveness, built form and scale of its heritage assets, as described in the Landscape Character Appraisal, Built Environment Character Appraisal and the Botesdale and Rickinghall Conservation Area Appraisal, through the use of appropriate design and materials; d. Be of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, alignment and detailed design which respects the area’s character, appearance and setting; e. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the asset and the wider context in which the heritage asset sits, alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the development on the heritage asset and its context; and f. Provide clear justification, through the submission of a heritage statement, for any works that would lead to harm or substantial harm to a heritage asset yet to be of wider substantial public benefit, through detailed analysis of the asset and the proposal. <p>Proposals will not be supported where the harm caused as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme is not justified by the public benefits that would be provided.</p> <p>Where a planning proposal affects a heritage asset it must be accompanied by a Heritage</p>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	Statement identifying, as a minimum, the significance of the asset, the development proposal and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on heritage assets.		
Policy B&R 16 – Design Considerations	<p>Proposals for new development must reflect the local characteristics and circumstances in the Neighbourhood Plan area and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment. Planning applications should, as appropriate to the proposal, demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Design Checklist in Appendix 4 of this Plan and, as appropriate to the proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area and/or building as identified in the Character Assessment and, where necessary, prepare a landscape character appraisal to demonstrate this; b. Maintain or create the villages' sense of place and/or local character avoiding where possible, cul-de-sac developments which do not reflect the lane hierarchy and form of the settlement; c. Not involve the loss of gardens and important open, green or landscaped areas which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the village; d. Incorporate sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures including, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar panels and grey/rainwater harvesting; e. Taking mitigation measures into account, not affect adversely: (i) any historic character, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings, including 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>those locally identified heritage assets listed in Appendix 3; (ii) important landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographical features as set out in the Character Assessment; (iii) identified important views into, out of or within the village as identified on the Policies Map; (iv) sites, habitats, species and features of ecological interest; (v) the amenities of adjacent areas by reason of noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, other pollution (including light pollution), or volume or type of vehicular activity generated and/or residential amenity;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Not locate sensitive development where its users and nearby residents would be significantly and adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, or other forms of pollution from existing sources, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented; g. Produce designs that respect the character, scale, density of the locality; h. Produce designs, in accordance with standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network ensuring that all vehicle parking is provided within the plot and seek always to ensure permeability through new housing areas, connecting any new development into the heart of the existing settlement; i. Wherever possible ensure that development faces onto existing lanes retaining the rural character and creates cross streets or new back streets in keeping with the settlement’s hierarchy of routes; j. Not result in water run-off that would add-to or create surface water flooding. 		



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
<p>Policy B&R 17 – Retention of Existing Employment Sites</p>	<p>Proposals for non-employment uses on sites and premises currently or last used for such purposes and that are expected to have an adverse effect on employment f=generation, will only be permitted where one or more of the following criteria has been met (as appropriate to the site / premises and locations):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. There is a sufficient supply of alternative and suitable employment land available to meet local employment growth requirements; b. Evidence can be provided that genuine attempts have been made to sell/let the site in its current use, and that no suitable and viable alternative employment uses can be found or are likely to be found in the foreseeable future; c. The existing use has created overriding environmental problems (e.g. noise, odours or traffic) and permitting an alternative use would be a substantial environmental benefit that would outweigh the loss of an employment site; d. An alternative use or mix of uses would assist in urban regeneration and offer greater benefits to the community in meeting local business and employment needs; e. It is for an employment related support facility such as employment training / education, workplace crèche or café. f. An alternative use or mix of uses would provide other sustainability benefits that would outweigh the loss of an employment site. <p>The retention and intensification of employment uses at Rickinghall Business Centre on Finningham Road, as identified on the Policies Map, will be supported provided that proposals do not have a detrimental impact on the local landscape character, the</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	amenity of residents or will generate unacceptable levels of vehicular traffic on local roads.		
Policy B&R 18 – New Business and Employment	<p>Proposals for new business development will be supported where sites are located within the settlement boundary identified on the Policies Map, unless the proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Is located on land designated in the development plan for business uses; and/or it b. Relates to small scale leisure or tourism activities, or other forms of commercial / employment-related development or agriculture related development of a scale and nature appropriate to a countryside location and that can satisfactorily demonstrate a need to be located outside the settlement boundary. <p>Where possible, business developments should be sited in existing buildings or on areas of previously developed land and be of a size and scale that do not adversely affect the character, highways, infrastructure, residential amenity and environment of the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the important characteristics identified in the Landscape Character Appraisal and the Historic Character Appraisal.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy B&R 19 – Farm Diversification	Applications for new employment uses of redundant traditional farm buildings will be supported, providing it has been demonstrated that they are no longer viable or needed for farming. Re-use for economic development purposes is preferred, but proposals which harm the rural economy will not be supported.	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy B&R 20 – Protecting existing services and facilities	<p>Proposals that would result in the loss of valued facilities or services which support a local community (or premises last used for such purposes) will only be permitted where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. It can be demonstrated that the current use of not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. It can be demonstrated, through evidenced research, that there is no local demand for the use and that the building / site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or c. Alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking. 		
<p>Policy B&R 21 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities</p>	<p>Proposals for the provision, enhancement and/or expansion of amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will be permitted subject to compliance with other Policies in this and other adopted Local Plans. Development which will result in the loss of existing amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will not be allowed unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It can be demonstrated that the space or facility is surplus to requirement against the local planning authority's standards for the particular location, and the proposed loss will not result in a likely shortfall during the plan period; or b. Replacement for the space or facilities lost is made available, of at least equivalent quantity and quality, and in a suitable location to meet the needs of users of the existing space or facility. <p>Any replacement provision should take account of the needs of the settlement where the development is taking place, and the current standards of open space and sports facility provision adopted by the local planning authority.</p> <p>Where necessary to the acceptability of the</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>development, the local planning authority will require developers of new housing, office, retail and other commercial and mixed development to provide open space including play areas, formal sport/recreation areas, amenity areas and where appropriate, indoor sports facilities or to provide land and a financial contribution towards the cost and maintenance of existing or new facilities, as appropriate. These facilities will be secured through the use of conditions and / or planning obligations.</p> <p>Clubhouses, pavilions, car parking and ancillary facilities must be of a high standard of design and internal layout. The location of such facilities must be well related and sensitive to the topography, character and uses of the surrounding area, particularly when located in or close to residential areas. Proposals which give rise to intrusive floodlighting will not be permitted.</p>		
<p>Policy B&R 22 – Public Rights of Way</p>	<p>Development which would adversely affect the character or result in the loss of existing or proposed rights of way, will not be permitted unless alternative provision or diversions can be arranged which area at least as attractive, safe and convenient for public use. This will apply to rights of way for pedestrian, cyclist, or horse rider use. Improvements and additions to such rights of way shall be delivered as an integral part of new development to enable new or improved links to be created within the settlement, between settlements and / or providing access to the countryside or green infrastructure sites as appropriate.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

4.4.3 Recommendations

There are no recommendations for the site allocation policies in this draft Neighbourhood Plan as they have all been assigned to Category A. As such there is no requirement to progress to Appropriate Assessment. However there will be a need for any development subsequently coming forward to be subject to a project level HRA and secure sufficient mitigation measures, to avoid a Likely Significant Effect on any Habitats sites at planning application stage.

The in-combination effects from other plans and projects are considered in the following section.

4.5 Other Plans and Projects – In-combination Effects

There are no relevant Plan level HRAs that have been carried out by Babergh & Mid Suffolk DCs or other organisations and none were found to have a likely significant effect on the European sites being assessed. However now that People over Wind ruling means that mitigation cannot be considered at HRA screening stage, it is important to revisit the in-combination assessment without mitigation.

In the context of this HRA, the relevant other plans to be considered are listed below in combination with Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan HRA.

Table 8: Other plans or projects considered for in combination effects

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
Mid Suffolk District Council	Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) October 2007)	The HRA found no likely significant effects from the Plan on the Breckland SAC/SPA and Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC.	The Plan allocations are within the ZOI for Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC (includes Redgrave & South Lopham Fens Ramsar) but residential development does not trigger consultation with Natural England for any likely significant effects on any designated features.
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	Core Strategy HRA screening (2010)	The HRA found no potential for in combination effects as no other current plans or projects that are likely to lead to significant effects on the Breckland SAC/SPA or the Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC have been identified, or where impacts have been identified they have been adequately mitigated.	The Plan allocations are within the ZOI for Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC (includes Redgrave & South Lopham Fens Ramsar) but residential development does not trigger consultation with Natural England for any likely significant effects on any designated features..
Babergh District Council	Habitat Regulations Assessment of Core Strategy 2011	The Core Strategy aims to minimise impacts on the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA & Ramsar, a European-designated site which	The Plan allocations are not within the ZOI for Stour & Orwell Estuaries SPA & Ramsar..

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
		supports species that are susceptible to disturbance. The principal potential impact on the European sites as a result of development proposed under the Core Strategy relates to increased recreational pressure. The Strategy therefore sets out a series of measures to ensure that the policies will not have a significant effect on the European sites.	
Suffolk Coastal District Council	Suffolk Coastal Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document HRA (2011)	N/A	The Plan allocations are not within the ZOI for any Habitats site within Suffolk Coastal District (now part of East Suffolk).

Although the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the 5km Zone of Influence for the Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC (and Redgrave & South Lopham Fens Ramsar), the plan allocations do not trigger consultations with Natural England for likely significant effects on designated features.

As there are no impact pathways for impacts, this HRA screening can therefore conclude that it is possible to rule out likely significant effects, either alone or in combination. There is therefore no need for further assessment.

References

- Atkins (2011) Habitats Regulations Assessment for Babergh District Council Core Strategy
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) for Mid Suffolk District Council Core Strategy(2007)
- Atkins (2010) St. Edmundsbury Borough Council Core Strategy HRA screening
- Babergh District Council (2014) Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies
- Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 Pre-Submission Version Draft 6 (May 2018)
- Natural England Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England Website
- The Landscape Partnership (2011) Suffolk Coastal District Council Habitats Regulations Assessment for Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document



5. Conclusions

5.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development consent. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

Planning Practice Guidance on SEA of Neighbourhood Plans indicates that a strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where 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; or the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

The Plan allocates sites for development in advance of the emerging Babergh & Mid Suffolk Local Plan however they all have planning permission. The status of these sites can not be altered by any of the Plan's content.

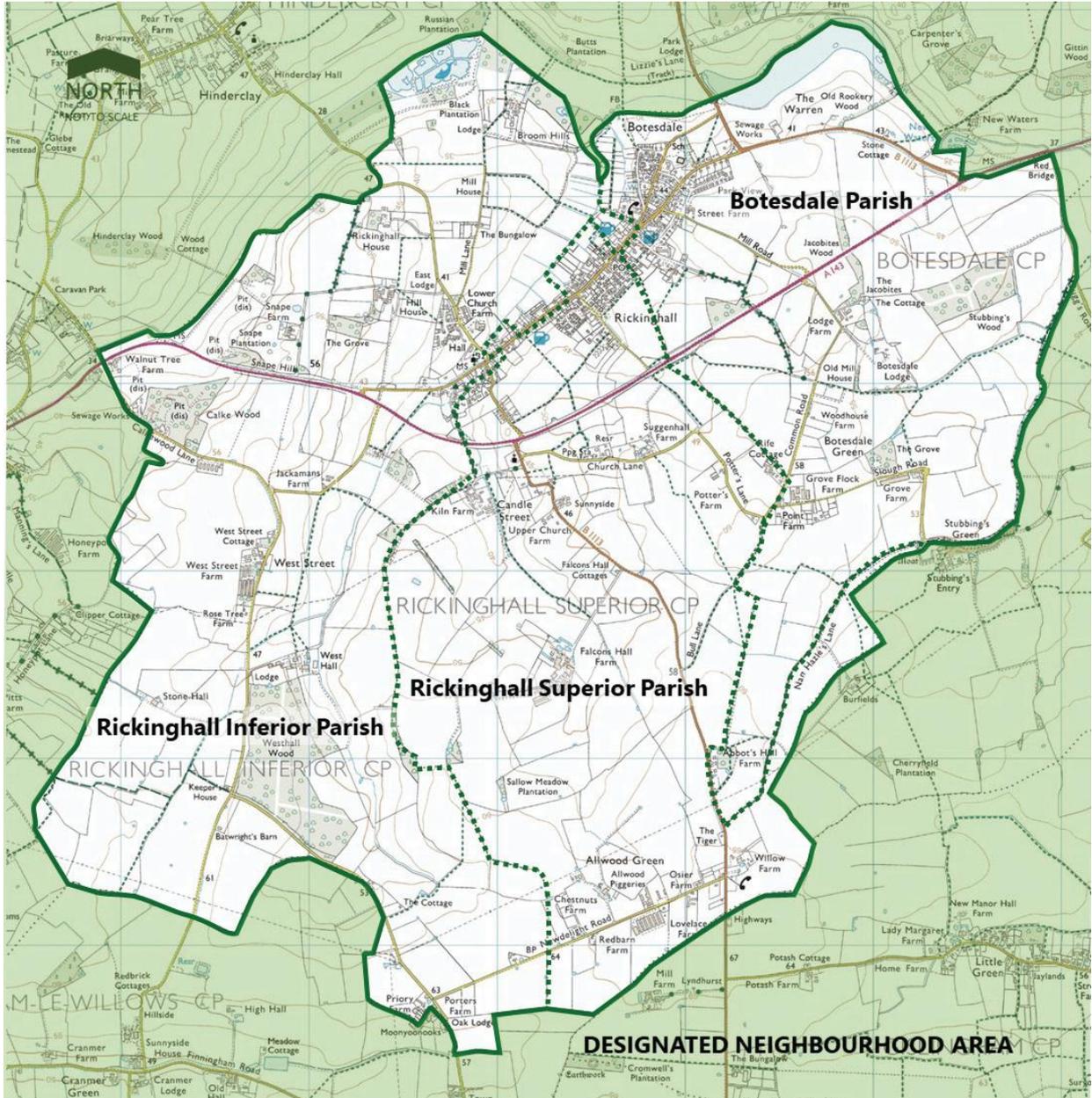
As such, the content of the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan has therefore been **screened out** for its requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

5.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA screening report indicates that the Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have a likely significant effects on a Habitats site. The requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the Habitats Regulations 2017 is therefore **screened out** when the Regulations allow this process to be undertaken.

Appendix 1

Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan Area

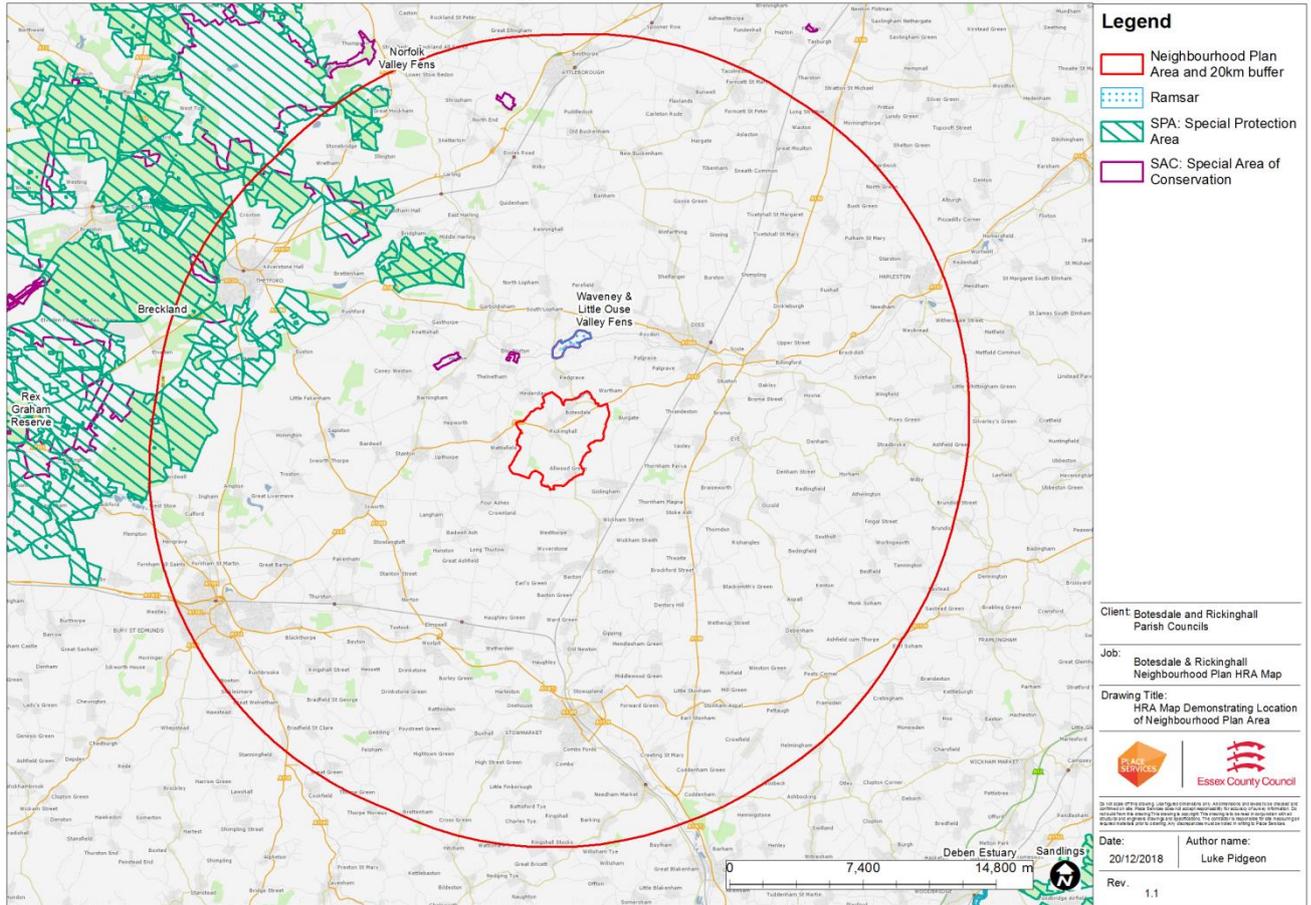


Source: Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission 2017-2036



Appendix 2

Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan area and Habitats Sites within 20km



Source: Place Services, 2018



Place Services

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