Public Notice

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

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

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

Broadland District Council / South Norfolk Council /Norwich City Council

Hereby gives notice of its decision not to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) nor Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) for the Draft Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on the basis that the parent policy GNLP 3 has been subject to SEA and HRA.

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

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

Place Shaping Team - Broadland District Council T: (01603) 430567 or email: localplan.bdc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

Place Shaping Team - South Norfolk Council T: (01508) 533805 or email:

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Draft Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report

2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 The **Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (draft)** relates to the Greater Norwich GI Strategy and Delivery Plan commissioned to Chris Blandford Associates (2025) by the Greater Norwich Growth Board on behalf of Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council and Norfolk County Council. The SPD will be supplementary to GNLP Policies 2,3, 4, 6 and 7 and will apply to the whole of the Broadland District, Norwich and South Norfolk Council areas, excluding the Broads National Park, for which the Broads Authority is the local planning authority.

1.2 The purpose of the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy SPD(Draft) is to give greater planning weight to the GI Strategy and clearly explain how this key evidence base should be used to direct the right GI to the right places. This driven by the Habitat Directive to provide suitable alternative natural green space to visiting protected European Sites to help off-set potential visitor pressure arising from planned growth as set out in policy 3. It also has a wider remit for general GI provision to ensure well-designed, sustainable development that meets the needs of residents that promotes healthy lifestyles. The relevant GNLP policies as referred to in the **Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy.**

1.3 This screening report reviews the Green Infrastructure Strategy SPD (DRAFT) for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Councils and is designed to test whether or not the contents of the draft SPD require:

(a) a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The legislative background to SEA is set out in Section 2 below and Section 5 provides a screening assessment of the likely significant effects of the SPD and whether there is need for a full SEA.

(b) a full Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). The legislative background to HRA is set out in Section 3 below and Section 5 provides a screening assessment to highlight if there are any risks of the SPD having a significant effect on protected Habitat sites, either on its own or in combination with other proposals. The protected sites covered by this report are:

Habitats Site
Breckland SPA
Breckland SAC
The Wash SPA
The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC
The Wash Ramsar
North Norfolk Coast SAC
North Norfolk Coast SPA
North Norfolk Coast Ramsar
Norfolk Valley Fens SAC
Winterton – Horsey Dunes SAC
Great Yarmouth North Denes SPA
Broadland SPA

Broadland Ramsar
Breydon Water SPA
The Broads SAC
Redgrave & South Lopham Fens Ramsar
Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC

2. The need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening

2.1 Para 008 of the Planning Practice Guidance state that 'Supplementary planning documents do not require a sustainability appraisal but may in exceptional circumstances require a strategic environmental assessment if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already have been assessed during the preparation of the relevant strategic policies. A strategic environmental assessment is unlikely to be required where a supplementary planning document deals only with a small area at a local level (see regulation 5(6) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004), unless it is considered that there are likely to be significant environmental effects. Before deciding whether significant environment effects are likely, the local planning authority will need to take into account the criteria specified in schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and consult the consultation bodies'.

2.2 Therefore, the purpose of this document is to screen the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (DRAFT) for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Councils to determine whether there are likely to be any significant environmental effects, which would require an SEA.

3. The need for Habitats and Species Regulation (HRA) Screening

3.1 In addition, the requirement to undertake Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of plans and projects is set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended). Regulation 105 of the Habitats Regulations requires consideration to be given to whether a Plan will have an effect on protected Habitats sites either alone, or in combination with other plans or projects. As per the Habitat regulations assessment guidance the process can have up to 3 stages: the first of which is Screening to check if the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the site's conservation objectives. If no significant effect is identified there is no need to go through the subsequent stages of Appropriate Assessment or Derogation. The GNLP was subject to full Habitat Regulations Assessment. Where screening identified a likely significant effect, Appropriate Assessment was undertaken and the mitigation measures identified were incorporated within the Plan, resulting in the conclusion that the GNLP would not lead to any adverse effects on Habitat sites within the Greater Norwich area.

3.2 Therefore, the purpose of this document is to screen the **Greater Norwich Infrastructure Strategy SPD (Draft)** to ensure that it will not lead to any adverse effects on protected Habitats sites not already identified and mitigated for by the wider GNLP HRA.

4. Policy Context

4.1 The Green Infrastructure Strategy will be supplementary to the following Policies in the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP):

- Policy 2: Sustainable Communities
- Policy 3 - Environmental Protection and Enhancement
- Policy 4 - Strategic Infrastructure
- Policy 6 - The Economy
- Policy 7 - Strategy for the Growth Areas

4.2 The Greater Norwich GI Strategy SPD (DRAFT) contains:

- Introduction
- Our mission and vision
- What is green infrastructure?
- What our evidence tell us
- What our strategy looks like
- How we will deliver our strategy
- Maps

4.3 The SPD provides guidance on how to implement policies that are material considerations in the determination of planning applications and inform Development Management decisions. The SPD provides further guidance to all parties seeking to comply with the Local Plan policies and will therefore be of particular use to developers, architects and agents looking to bring forward development.

5. Methodology

Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

5.1 The SPD is supplementary to policy 2, 3,4,6 and 7 in the GNLP which have undergone full Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment. Therefore, there is no need to further assess these policies against the SA Objectives.

Strategic Environmental Assessment – Regulatory Requirements

5.2 To assess whether an SEA is required the local authority must undertake a screening process based on a standard set of criteria. This screening must be subject to consultation with Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Following consultation, the results of the screening process must be detailed in a Screening Statement, which is required to be made available to the public.

5.3 Using the criteria, detailed in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment, the following assessments have been made in Table 1 -2 below:

Table 1-2 SEA Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects on the Environment by the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy SPD

Criteria	Assessment	Likely significant environmental effect (Yes / No)
a) The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The SPD is intended to be supplementary to the GNLP policies 2,3,4,6 and 7. No policy requirement is deferred to the SPD but it will provide useful explanation of prioritisation of GI projects.	No
b) The degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	It is intended that the scope of the SPD will be to provide additional practical guidance to policies that have already been scrutinised and consulted upon through the GNLP plan making process including SA/ SEA.	No
c) The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	The GI Strategy SPD is intended to provide more detailed guidance on prioritising GI and thus informing the requirements of GNLP Policy 3 in practice. This will help to provide the mitigation identified as being necessary within the Habitat Regulations Assessment and promote healthy lifestyles. The policies in the GNLP policies have already been scrutinised and consulted upon through the plan making process including SA/ SEA/HRA.	No

(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	The SPD is intended to be supplementary to the GNLP Policies 2, 3,4,6,7 to protect and enhance biodiversity and habitats including the mitigation of the impacts of recreational disturbance associated with visitor pressure upon internationally designated sites. The GNLP policies have already been scrutinised and consulted upon through the plan making process including SA/ SEA/HRA. and it was anticipated that this will result in a positive environmental impact.	No
e) The relevance of the plan for the implementation of [European] Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).	The mitigation strategy in Policy 3 has been identified as being necessary to accord with the Habitat Regulations. The effects of the GNLP policies have already been scrutinised and consulted upon through the plan making process. The SPD does not propose new or different policy to the GNLP but provides additional practical guidance for implementation.	No

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected having regard, in particular to:		
Criteria	**Assessment**	**Likely significant environmental effect (Yes / No)**

(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	The SPD is not expected to give rise to any significant environmental effects. The SPD seeks to ensure the effective and consistent delivery of GNLP policies 2,3,4,6 and 7 with respect to protecting the natural environment.	No
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	The SPD is not considered to have any cumulative effects.	No
(c) The transboundary nature of the effects	The SPD is not expected to give rise to transboundary effects.	No
(d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	There are no likely risks to health or to the environment as a result of additional guidance to supplement the GNLP Policies 2,3,4,6,7.	No
(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Implementation of additional guidance with regards to green infrastructure will only be of benefit for the population and the natural environment by providing Ssuitable alternative natural greenspace (SANGs) / GI in new developments as an alternative to visiting protected European sites.	No
(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; iii) Intensive land use.	The SPD is not anticipated to adversely affect any special natural characteristic or cultural heritage. Nor would the SPD be expected to lead to exceeded environmental quality standards or result in intensive land use.	No
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	The SPD is not expected to have any adverse effects on areas with national community or international protection. On the contrary it is intended to mitigate potential impacts arising from recreational pressure by providing (SANGS)	No

HRA Screening Assessment

5.4 To assess whether an Appropriate Assessment as a part of the HRA is required the local authority must undertake a screening process based on a standard set of criteria. This must be subject to consultation with Natural England. Table 3 below considers each relevant section of the **Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Draft)** in relation to whether there is potential for a likely significant effect on protected Habitat sites. This constitutes Stage 1 Screening as set out under paragraph 3.1 above. Consideration is given to the characteristics and location of the protected sites. The relevant sections are considered within the context of the GNLP policy 3 from which it primarily supplements, and which has itself been subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment, as set out in section 3 above.

Table 3: HRA Screening for Likely significant effects of the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy SPD (DRAFT)

Chapter	Assessment of potential impact on Habitat sites	Habitat sites that could possibly be affected	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed?
1. Introduction	This section sets outlines the vision and objectives for enhancing the Green Infrastructure within the Greater Norwich area. It emphasizes the importance of creating a network of green spaces that support biodiversity, improve the quality of life for residents, and contribute to the sustainability of the region. The aim is to integrate GI into planning, ensuring habitats are preserved and enhanced and that residents have access to recreational spaces and natural environments. It also highlights the role of GI in mitigating the effects of climate change and promoting environmental resilience.	None	None	No

2. Our mission and vision.	This section outlines the mission is to provide accessible green spaces and links to support people's physical health and mental wellbeing, as well as nature-rich habitats to support nature recovery and strengthen climate resilience. The vision is to enhance access to nature, promote active travel, and support adoption of healthy lifestyles and behaviours. Additionally, the strategy aims to support a network of bigger, better, and more joined-up habitats, provide nature-based solutions, and protect valuable wildlife sites. The guidance aims to support applicants and does not in itself promote new development and will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
3. What is Green Infrastructure?	This section defines the range of green spaces and assets that can provide wider benefits. It also explains what GI can include, the different scales of GI such as at ones doorsteps, neighborhood & local centres and countryside and rural areas. Furthermore, it references the key policy drivers that supports and underpins the strategy as well as the approach to delivery GI. The guidance aims to support applicants and does not in itself promote new development and	None	None	No

	will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.			
4. What our evidence tells us	This section provides up to date evidence and stakeholder engagement and partnership-based approach on who has access to GI and what people value. The guidance aims to support applicants and does not in itself promote new development and will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
5. What our strategy looks like	Chapter 5 of the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy: Strategic Delivery Plan 2025-2030 outlines the strategic approach to enhancing and expanding green infrastructure (GI) across Greater Norwich. The chapter emphasizes collaboration among various stakeholders to achieve the shared vision and objectives for GI. Key initiatives include enhancing Strategic GI Corridors like Bure Valley and Yare Valley, creating new country parks and enhancing existing ones, and supporting nature recovery priorities within Strategic GI Zones. The strategy also includes initiatives for active travel routes, connected greenspaces, countryside access, inclusive green spaces, community food growing, urban tree canopy cover, local nature	None	None	No

	reserves, biodiversity net gain, nutrient neutrality, and water resource management. Implementation and monitoring will be led by the Green Infrastructure Programme Team (GIPT), with progress reported in the annual Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan. The guidance aims to support applicants and does not in itself promote new development and will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.			
6. How we will deliver our strategy	This chapter outlines the approach to GI project prioritization and delivery, emphasizing the importance of strategic priorities and initiatives for GI. The GI Area Profiles and interactive GI opportunity mapping available on the online Greater Norwich GI Story Map will inform the targeting, prioritization, and selection of GI projects. The project partners will develop an approach to assist with the prioritization of GI projects, considering factors such as the project's support for GI Strategy objectives and outcomes, relevance to national and local priorities, stakeholder engagement, and eligibility for funding. The guidance aims to support applicants and does not in itself promote new development and will therefore not lead to likely significant	None	None	No

	effects on Habitat Sites.			
7. Appendices 1: GNLP GI Policy References, 2: Supporting GI Strategy Evidence Reports, 3: Strategy Links,	These appendices references: 1. The relevant GNLP policy supplemented by the SPD, 2. The Active Places Evidence, Natural places, Mapping and Stakeholder engagement. 3. The relevant plans and programmes within Norfolk, and Greater Norwich. The guidance aims to support applicants and does not in itself promote new development and will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No

6. Conclusion

6.1 The **Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy SPD (Draft)** does not introduce new policies or proposals outside the scope of the adopted Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). Instead, it supplements policies in the GNLP by providing further detailed and specific guidance relating to the provision of SANGS/ Informal Open Space /GI as a form of mitigation to offset potential recreational pressures arising from residential development and general GI provision to ensure the delivery of well-designed sustainable places. Policies 2,3,4,6 and 7 in the GNLP which consider the provision of GI have already been subject to HRA and SA/SEA as part of the plan-making process.

6.2 The overall conclusions of the HRA undertaken for the adopted GNLP (supported by the results of the screening undertaken for the SPD in this document) state that the plan is not likely to have adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites (Natura 2000 and Ramsar site(s), either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. Therefore in accordance with Regulation 105 of the Habitats Regulations further 'Appropriate Assessment as per stage 2 of the HRA is not considered necessary or required for the SPD (draft).

6.3 Furthermore, the SA/SEA undertaken for the policies in the adopted GNLP (supported by the results of the screening undertaken for the SPD) state that the plan is unlikely to have a significant environmental effect. Therefore, Broadland District /South Norfolk Council(s) and Norwich City Council, as the competent authorities consider that the SPD does not require a further Strategic Environmental Assessment as per Part 2(9) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as Amended including through EU exit legislation or SEA Regulations).

6.4 The Council(s) have consulted on this screening opinion with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency from 26 June until 1 August, 2025 as per the HRA/ SEA regulations before the screening opinion is confirmed final. Therefore, this determination notice will be published on our website alongside the SPD consultation.

Isabel Appleyard
South Norfolk District Council
Planning Policy
South Norfolk House Swan Lane
Long Stratton
Norwich
NR15 2XE

Our ref: AE/2025/130680/01-L01

Date: 29 July 2025

Dear Isabel

CONSULTATION ON GREATER NORWICH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) (INITIAL DRAFT) – SEA /HRA SCREENING REPORT

Thank you for consulting us on the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening and Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening for the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). We have reviewed the screening report document and do not disagree with the conclusion reached.

We look forward to being consulted on the draft Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy SPD in due course.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Mr Alasdair Hain-Cole
Planning Officer

Direct dial 02030 255475
Direct e-mail planning.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk

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Iceni House Cobham Road, Ipswich, IP3 9JD.
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End

Historic England

Isabel Appleyard
Senior Planning Officer
localplan.bdc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

Our ref: PL00799315
Your ref:

Telephone 01223 582775

Dear Isabel

Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure SPD
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and HRA Screening Opinion

Thank you for consulting Historic England about the above Screening Opinion.

SEA Screening
In terms of our area of interest, given the nature of the SPD, we would concur with your assessment that the document is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects and will simply provide additional guidance on existing Policies contained within an Adopted Development Plan Document which has already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. As a result, we would endorse the Authority's conclusions that it is not necessary to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment of this particular SPD.

The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

HRA Screening
We defer to the other statutory consultees in relation to the HRA Screening.

If you have any queries about this matter or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Mack
Historic Environment Planning Advisor
Debbie.Mack@HistoricEngland.org.uk

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Date: 30th July 2025
Our ref: 517366
Your ref: South Norfolk & Broadland Council – SEA & HRA Screening for the Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy SPD

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Dear Ms Appleyard

SEA & HRA Screening for the Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the South Norfolk & Broadland Council

Thank you for your consultation request on the above dated and received by Natural England on 21st July 2025.

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

Our remit includes protected sites and landscapes, biodiversity, geodiversity, soils, protected species, landscape character, green infrastructure and access to and enjoyment of nature.

Natural England does not have any specific comments on the SEA & HRA Screening Report for the Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy for South Norfolk and Broadland Local Plan.

The lack of comment from Natural England should not be interpreted as a statement that there are no impacts on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may wish to make comments that might help the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to fully take account of any environmental risks and opportunities relating to this document.

Strategic Environmental Assessment/Habitats Regulations Assessment
A SPD requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment only in exceptional circumstances as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance here. While SPDs are unlikely to give rise to likely significant effects on European Sites, they should be considered as a plan under the Habitats Regulations in the same way as any other plan or project. If your SPD requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment or Habitats Regulation Assessment, you are required to consult us at certain stages as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance.

If you disagree with our assessment of this proposal as low risk, or should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment, then in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, please consult Natural England again.

For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Sharon Jenkins
Consultation Team
Natural England