

# Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the  
Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan for  
Regulation 14 consultation

Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

March 2020

## Quality information

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# Non-Technical Summary

## What is Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan. This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to help avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan, and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

## What is the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan?

The Castle Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan

It is anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk for subsequent independent examination later in 2020.

## Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (October 2019), which includes information about Castle Acre's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues for the area;
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan;
- The likely significant effects of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan; and
- The next steps for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying SEA process.

## Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan

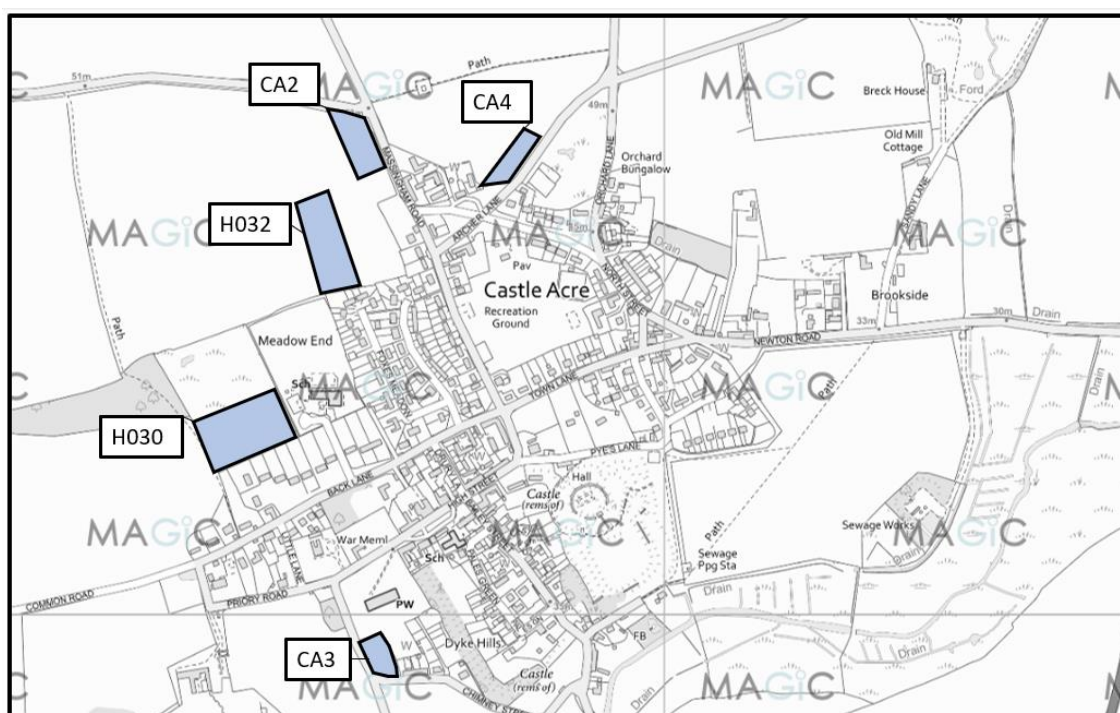
Castle Acre is identified in the Local Plan as a Key Rural Service Centre, which has the potential to accommodate growth to sustain the wider rural community.

The Local Plan and Local Plan Review allocates land west of Massingham Road for residential development of at least 15 dwellings. The site also received planning permission for 15 dwellings in 2017 and 2019. In addition, Appendix D of the draft Local Plan Review 'The Distribution of Housing between settlements in the Rural Area' indicates that Castle Acre is required to deliver five homes through the Neighbourhood Plan.

To support the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan, a site assessment of sites potentially available in Castle Acre for development was undertaken in early 2019. This considered five sites in the immediate vicinity of Castle Acre village, which ranged in size from 0.24ha to 0.79ha. The findings of the site assessment are presented in the Site Assessment Report, which is available alongside the Neighbourhood Plan for consultation.<sup>1</sup>

To support the consideration of the suitability of these sites for a potential allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has undertaken a separate appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the sites and has considered the potential effects that may arise as a result of small-scale housing development at these locations.

The location of these sites in Castle Acre are below.



**Figure NTS.1: Location of sites proposed in Castle Acre**

### Assessment of the sites through the SEA process

The sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping (Chapter 3 of the Environmental Report) and the baseline information. This SEA-led assessment was undertaken separately to the Neighbourhood Plan site assessment.

Tables 4.1 to 4.5 in the main body of the Environmental Report present the findings of the assessment. A summary of the appraisal findings is provided below:

<sup>1</sup> AECOM (January 2019) Site Options and Assessment for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan

**Table NTS.1: Summary of SEA site appraisal findings**

Site	Biodiversity	Climate Change	Landscape	Historic Env	Land, Soil and Water Resources	Population and Community	Health and Wellbeing	Transport
Site H030								
Site H032								
Site CA2								
Site CA3								
Site CA4								

Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects	

## Preferred approach in the Neighbourhood Plan in light of appraisal findings

### Choice of site allocations taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan

Following consideration of these sites, the Pre-Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan allocates two sites for housing. These are as follows:

- 1) Site CA2: Land to the west of Massingham Road and north of the emerging site G.22.1 (7 dwellings)
- 2) Site CA3: Land at The Church Glebe, off South Acre Road (4 dwellings)

In terms of the Neighbourhood Plan's reasons for allocating these sites, Site CA2 is seen as a natural extension to the new development area to the west of Massingham Road taken forward through the Local Plan for 15 homes (and which has gained planning permission). In terms of Site CA3, this is seen as an opportunity to deliver small units provided by a landowner prepared to deliver low cost housing as a priority to meet the village need, and as an opportunity to deliver the provision of additional car parking spaces for the church to accommodate periods of high demand.

## Assessment of the Pre-Submission Version of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan

The Pre-Submission Version of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan presents 14 planning policies for guiding development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process assessed the policies put forward through the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Environmental Report has presented the findings of the assessment under the following SEA Themes:

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Climate Change;
- Landscape
- Historic Environment;
- Land, Soil and Water Resources;
- Population and Community;

- Health and Wellbeing; and
- Transportation.

The assessment has concluded that the current Pre-Submission Version of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant long-term positive effects in relation to the 'Population and Community' and 'Health and Wellbeing' SEA themes. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on providing new housing to meet local needs, its support for community vitality, the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure networks in the area and the protection and enhancement of the quality of the public realm and neighbourhood distinctiveness.

The allocations taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan are in locations of sensitivity for the historic environment. However, a combination of the type / scale of development proposed at the sites and the Neighbourhood Plan policies will help limit the significance of potential effects. In this respect, the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan have a close focus on conserving and enhancing the fabric and setting of the historic environment, and on protecting landscape and villagescape character. Overall therefore, no significant negative effects have been identified in relation to the 'Historic Environment' theme relating to these allocations, with positive effects likely to take place with regards to the conservation and enhancement of the wider historic environment of Castle Acre. The Neighbourhood Plan's close focus on protecting and enhancing local character and distinctiveness will also bring positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape' SEA theme.

New development has the potential to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land in the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, given the lack of detailed land classification undertaken in the parish, it is unclear as to what extent this will lead to the loss of areas of the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. As such, the overall significance of impacts in relation to the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme is uncertain. It should be noted though that the significance of impacts on productive agricultural land is likely to be reduced by the limited size of the allocations proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

In terms of the 'Biodiversity', 'Climate Change' and 'Transportation' SEA themes, the Neighbourhood Plan will initiate a number of beneficial approaches which will help limit negative effects and facilitate enhancements. These are not though considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and the scale of proposals.

## Next steps

This Environmental Report accompanies the Pre-Submission Version of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan for 'Regulation 14' consultation.

Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and the Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, for subsequent independent examination.

At independent examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan.

If independent examination is favourable, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the development plan for Castle Acre Parish.



# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of Castle Acre's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan.
- 1.3 This SEA Environmental Report accompanies the Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan for Regulation 14 consultation. It is currently anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk in mid-2020 for subsequent independent examination.
- 1.4 Key information relating to the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan is presented in **Table 1.1**.

**Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan**

Name of Responsible Authority	Castle Acre Parish Council
Title of Plan	Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	<p>The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the King's Lynn &amp; West Norfolk Local Plan.</p> <p>The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>
Timescale	To 2036
Area covered by the plan	The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan area covers the parish of Castle Acre in Norfolk ( <b>Figure 1.1</b> ).
Summary of content	The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy and range of development policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Plan contact point	Martin Tate, Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group <a href="mailto:martintate55@gmail.com">martintate55@gmail.com</a>

## SEA explained

- 1.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a mechanism for considering and communicating the impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative impacts. Through this approach, the SEA for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maximise the developing plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.6 SEA is undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive<sup>2</sup>. It also widens the scope of the assessment from focussing on environmental issues to further consider social and economic issues.
- 1.7 The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan has been screened in by the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk as requiring an SEA. To meet this requirement, the Neighbourhood Plan is undergoing an SEA process which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive.
- 1.8 The SEA will be undertaken to meet specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).
- 1.9 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:
  1. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
  2. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for alongside the Draft Plan (i.e. the Regulation 14 consultation Pre-Submission Version of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

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<sup>2</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC

## Structure of this SEA Environmental Report

1.10 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed below with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

**Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the SEA Environmental Report in order to meet the regulatory<sup>3</sup> requirements**

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... <sup>4</sup>
<b>What's the scope of the SEA?</b>	What is the plan seeking to achieve?
	What is the sustainability 'context'?
	What is the sustainability 'baseline'?
	What are the key issues & objectives?
<b>What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?</b>	
<b>What are the assessment findings at this stage?</b>	
<b>What happens next?</b>	

<sup>3</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>4</sup> NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

## 2. Local Plan context and vision for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan

### Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The Local Plan for King's Lynn and West Norfolk currently comprises the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan.
- 2.2 The overarching document for the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan, *the Core Strategy*<sup>5</sup> was adopted in July 2011 and covers the period between 2011 and 2036. The King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan also consists of a *Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan*<sup>6</sup> which was adopted in September 2016. This complements the Core Strategy and allocates land to deliver the development requirements of the Core Strategy. Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for the Borough, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. The Local Plan seeks to give communities a solid framework within which appropriate community-led planning policy documents, including neighbourhood plans, can be brought forward. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.
- 2.3 Castle Acre is identified in the Core Strategy of the Local Plan as a key rural service centre which helps to sustain the wider rural community by providing a range of services that can meet basic day-to-day needs, and a level of public transport that can enable access to and from the settlement. Policy CS02 'The Settlement Hierarchy' states that decisions on investment in services and facilities and on the location and scale of new development will be taken on the basis of the borough settlement hierarchy and that for key rural service centres, there should be limited growth of a scale and nature appropriate to secure the sustainability of each settlement. Policy CS06 'Development in Rural Areas' states that part of the strategy for rural areas is to focus new development in key rural service centres selected from the Settlement Hierarchy Policy.
- 2.4 The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan allocates land to deliver the development requirements of the core strategy. There has been one site allocation for Castle Acre which is covered under Policy G22.1 'Castle Acre – Land west of Massingham Road'. This policy proposes residential development of at least 15 dwellings.
- 2.5 The current Local Plan will be replaced, when adopted, by the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan Review (2016 – 2036). The Local Plan Review underwent Regulation 18 consultation on the draft plan in March/April 2019.

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<sup>5</sup> Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk (2019): 'Local Development Framework- Core Strategy', [online] available at: < [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20219/core\\_strategy/112/core\\_strategy\\_explained](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20219/core_strategy/112/core_strategy_explained) > [accessed 14/10/19]

<sup>6</sup> Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk (2019): 'Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan', [online] available at: < [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20220/site\\_allocations\\_and\\_development\\_management\\_policies\\_plan/514/adopted\\_plan](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20220/site_allocations_and_development_management_policies_plan/514/adopted_plan) > [accessed 14/10/19]

## Vision, aims and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.6 The vision statement for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan, which is an overarching statement describing what Castle Acre should be like at the end of the Plan period i.e. in 2036, is as follows:

“

*Castle Acre will continue to be a rural parish and historic village rejoicing in its community, history and natural surroundings. Future development will meet local needs and provide sustainable homes which respect the special identity and character of Castle Acre and its surrounding landscape.*

**Vision statement for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan**

”

- 2.7 To support the vision statement, the Neighbourhood Plan outlines eleven key objectives:

- 1) Protect and enhance this rare example of a fortified Norman town, its surrounding historic landscape and hitherto undiscovered and unexplored historic sites and landscape features;
- 2) Protect and conserve views to and from the village and retain its scenic, historic and visual character;
- 3) Provide a framework for new development within the Conservation Area;
- 4) Protect and enhance the natural environment and wildlife habitats of the village as well as provide a framework within which the natural environment of Castle Acre may be improved without negative impact by future development;
- 5) Deliver the number of new homes required to meet local housing need;
- 6) Encourage dwellings of a size, type and tenure that meet the existing and future needs of villagers;
- 7) Promote well designed, high quality standards of building design which enhance the character of the area, respect the rural context, and meet the requirements of modern, sustainable living;
- 8) Manage through traffic and car parking in the centre of the village to improve pedestrian safety, reduce the visual dominance and physical impacts of parking in the village;
- 9) Restrict vehicle access to South Acre Ford;
- 10) Safeguard existing tourism assets, visitor and community facilities and encourage ‘low impact’ tourism; and
- 11) Encourage local enterprise and local businesses to flourish.

## 3. What is the scope of the SEA?

### SEA Scoping Report

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: “*When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.<sup>7</sup> These authorities were consulted on the scope of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan SEA in October 2019.
- 3.2 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional and local plans and strategies relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan;
  - Baseline data against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed;
  - The key sustainability issues for the Neighbourhood Plan; and
  - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
- 3.3 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they were addressed, have been summarised below.

**Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report**

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<b>Natural England</b> <i>Louise Oliver, Lead Adviser – Norfolk &amp; Suffolk Team (email response received on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019)</i>	
<p>We welcome the efforts made in preparing the Scoping Report. We are satisfied at present that the SEA of the Castle Area Neighbourhood Plan is proceeding in a proper, logical and comprehensive manner.</p> <p>The document clearly sets out the method that will be used in the SEA process and recognises that water and biodiversity are key issues as well as climate change and landscape.</p> <p>Natural England is satisfied that the proposed SEA objectives are appropriate, are relevant and that they cover the key sustainability issues in the neighbourhood plan.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<b>Environment Agency</b> <i>No response.</i>	
<b>Historic England</b> <i>Edward James, Historic Places Adviser, East of England (email response received on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019)</i>	

<sup>7</sup> In-line with Article 6(3).of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘*by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities,[they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme*’.

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>We are pleased to note that the Scoping Report makes reference to our advice in Historic England Advice Note 8: <i>Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment</i>, which can be found here: <a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/">https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/</a> This advice sets out the historic environment factors which need to be considered during the Strategic Environmental Assessment or Sustainability Appraisal process, and our recommendations for information you should include. We are also pleased to note that other key advice documents on Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, as well as the advice regarding undertaking a staged approach to understanding significance and avoiding any negative impacts upon it, which is set out in our GPA3: Setting of Heritage Assets.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>We note that the Scoping Report includes reference to the Norfolk HER, which we welcome, but that the data has been obtained via the Heritage Gateway, the Historic England hosted resource. Although useful for an informal overview, the Heritage Gateway is not an appropriate source of information to be used as part of this assessment process owing to the fact that it does not reflect an up-to-date record, nor provides the level of detail necessary to properly interrogate the records, should it be necessary. The assessment should instead procure the information from the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, which is hosted by Norfolk County Council.</p>	<p>Comment noted. Norfolk Heritage Explorer (<a href="http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/map-search">http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/map-search</a>) has been used as the key source of information for the Norfolk HER throughout the assessment.</p>
<p>We welcome the existing assessment questions set out under the Historic Environment section of the Scoping Report, but recommend that an additional question is added along the lines of <i>“Will the option/proposal help to...support high quality design that will function well, is sympathetic to Castle Acre’s local character and history and maintains its sense of place through the use of appropriate built form and locally distinctive materials”</i></p>	<p>An assessment question has been added to reflect this.</p>
<p>Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local planning authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), which should be consulted as part of the SEA process. In addition, they will be able to advise how any site allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.</p> <p>To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance) where we consider that, despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.</p>	<p>Comment noted. Norfolk County Council will be consulted on this Environmental Report alongside the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

- 3.4 Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in **Appendix A**. The key sustainability issues and SEA Framework are presented below.

## Key Sustainability Issues

### Air Quality

- There are no exceedances or anticipated exceedances of national air quality objectives.
- Traffic and congestion arising from planned new development within and surrounding the area have the potential to increase emissions; however, this is unlikely to lead to exceedances of air quality objectives within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Given the lack of air quality issues in the Neighbourhood Plan area, air quality was scoped out of the SEA process.

### Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- Castle Acre Common and River Nar Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) are both located within the Neighbourhood Plan area. IRZs for the SSSIs cover the built up part of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Castle Acre Castle County Wildlife Site is located within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- There are numerous Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats present in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

### Climate Change

- Any increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area (including associated with the delivery of new housing and employment land) has the potential to increase overall greenhouse gas emissions in the parish.
- King's Lynn and West Norfolk has seen a 29.8% reduction in the percentage of total emissions per capita between 2005 and 2016, lower than the reductions for Norfolk (34.1%) and England (37.6%).
- The areas at highest risk of fluvial flooding (Flood Zone 3) in the Neighbourhood Plan area are those adjacent to the River Nar.
- Within Castle Acre, there are areas of land at low-medium risk of surface water flooding (also surrounding the River Nar).
- The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan should seek to increase the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the effects of climate change by supporting and encouraging adaptation strategies.

### Landscape

- The Neighbourhood Plan area lies across three NCAs which all have unique landscape characteristics.
- A local landscape character assessment has identified that the Neighbourhood Plan area lies within two landscape character areas.
- The potential effects of development proposed through the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan may have implications for the overall character and appearance of landscape and villagescape character Castle Acre in the future.

### Historic Environment

- The historic core of Castle Acre village has an exceptionally rich historic environment resource.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area contains five Grade I, one Grade II\* and 17 Grade II nationally designated listed buildings which are protected through the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.
- There are two scheduled monuments located within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- A conservation area covers much of Castle Acre village. A Conservation Area Character Statement has been prepared which highlights the special qualities that underpin the character of the conservation area, justifying its designation. However a Conservation Area Appraisal has not been undertaken for the conservation area.
- A range of features in Castle Acre are listed on the Historic Environment Record.

### Land, Soil and Water Resources

- There is a lack of evidence to ascertain agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area. National provisional quality datasets indicate that the majority of land within the Neighbourhood Plan



area is Grade 3; as part of a precautionary approach it is noted that there is the potential for loss of high quality (Grade 3a 'best and most versatile') agricultural land.

- The Neighbourhood Plan area lies within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.
- The Nar upstream of Abbey Far, has an overall water quality classification of 'good'.

## Population and Community

- The population of Castle Acre increased by 6.13% between 2001 and 2011, lower than the increases for King's Lynn and West Norfolk, the East of England and England averages.
- Generally, there is a higher proportion of residents within the 60+ age category within the Neighbourhood Plan area (40.4%) in comparison to the total for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (30.6%), the East of England (23.9%) and England (22.3%).
- The proportion of residents with the 60+ age category is likely to continue to increase.
- The LSOA which covers the Neighbourhood Plan area is within the 30% least deprived neighbourhoods in England.
- 66.7% of residents either own their home outright or with a mortgage, lower than the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (69.4%), the East of England (67.6%) but higher than the totals for England (63.3%).
- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a range of local community facilities which serve the needs of the local community and play a vital role in supporting the Parish's sense of identity.

## Health and Wellbeing

- 74.9% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health', lower than the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (78%), the East of England (82.5%) and England (81.4%).
- A higher proportion of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area report that their activities are limited in some way compared to regional and national averages.

## Transportation

- There is no rail station located within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The nearest railway station is King's Lynn (approximately 22km north west of the Neighbourhood Plan area).
- The Neighbourhood Plan area is well linked to the surrounding road network, with access to the A1065, the A47 and a network of country roads.
- Residents have access to a good network of footpaths and local cycle routes within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- New development taken forward through recent Local Plan allocations has the potential increase traffic in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

## SEA Framework

- 3.5 The SEA Framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard 'tests'. Each proposal within the submission version of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan will be assessed consistently using the framework.

SEA Objective	Assessment questions
<b>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>	
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the status of the nationally and locally designated sites within and within proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area including Castle Acre Common SSSI and River Nar SSSI?</li> <li>• Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?</li> <li>• Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of ecological networks to the likely effects of climate change?</li> </ul>

SEA Objective	Assessment questions
<b>Climate change</b>	
Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan area	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of journeys made?</li> <li>• Reduce the need to travel?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> </ul>
Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing surface water runoff (either within the plan area or downstream)?</li> <li>• Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape</b>	
Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and villagescapes.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance locally important landscape and villagescape features within the Neighbourhood Plan area?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local diversity and character?</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Environment</b>	
Protect, conserve and enhance heritage assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings?</li> <li>• Support the integrity of the historic setting of key buildings of cultural heritage interest as listed on the HER?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the environment?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, including historic landscapes?</li> <li>• Support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?</li> </ul>
<b>Land, Soil and Water Resources</b>	
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the use of previously developed land?</li> <li>• Avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, which in the parish may comprise 3a agricultural land?</li> <li>• Protect the integrity of mineral safeguarding areas?</li> </ul>
Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the amount of waste produced?</li> <li>• Support the minimisation, reuse and recycling of waste?</li> <li>• Maximise opportunities for local management of waste in order to minimise export of waste to areas outside?</li> <li>• Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?</li> </ul>

SEA Objective	Assessment questions
Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support improvements to water quality?</li> <li>• Minimise water consumption?</li> <li>• Protect surface water resources?</li> </ul>
<b>Population and Community</b>	
Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Minimise fuel poverty?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?</li> <li>• Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?</li> </ul>
Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the provision of land for allotments and cemeteries?</li> <li>• Provide additional community infrastructure to meet existing and future deficits?</li> </ul>
Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?</li> <li>• Support enhancements to the current housing stock?</li> <li>• Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?</li> <li>• Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?</li> <li>• Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?</li> <li>• Support high quality design that will function well, is sympathetic to Castle Acre's local character and history and maintains its sense of place through the use of appropriate built form and locally distinctive materials?</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	
Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?</li> <li>• Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards?</li> <li>• Promote the use of healthier modes of travel?</li> <li>• Improve access to the countryside for recreational use?</li> <li>• Avoiding any negative impacts to the quality and extent of existing recreational assets, such as formal or informal footpaths?</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	
Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel?</li> <li>• Facilitate working from home and remote working?</li> <li>• Improve road safety?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?</li> </ul>

## 4. What has plan making / SEA involved up to this point?

### Introduction

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include...
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
  - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. The following sections therefore describe how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan area and potential locations for development. Specifically, this chapter explains how the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan's development strategy has been shaped through considering alternative approaches for the location of housing in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

### Overview of plan making / SEA work undertaken to date

- 4.3 Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan's development began in 2016, initiated by Castle Acre Parish Council. It has been led by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which includes representatives of the Parish Council and volunteers from the local community.
- 4.4 Significant public consultation has been carried out to date to support the Neighbourhood Plan. This has gathered local views and opinions, with a view to engaging local people throughout the Neighbourhood Plan's development process. This has included events, engagement workshops, community questionnaires, exhibitions and publicity exercises.
- 4.5 The Statement of Consultation which will accompany the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan at submission will describe in detail how the community has been involved during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.6 A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA Regulations<sup>8</sup> are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the Environmental Report should present an appraisal of the '*plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan*'.
- 4.7 The following sections therefore describe how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan area and potential locations for housing development. Specifically, this chapter explains how the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan's development strategy has been shaped through considering alternative approaches for the location of non-strategic scale development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

### Assessment of potential sites for site allocations

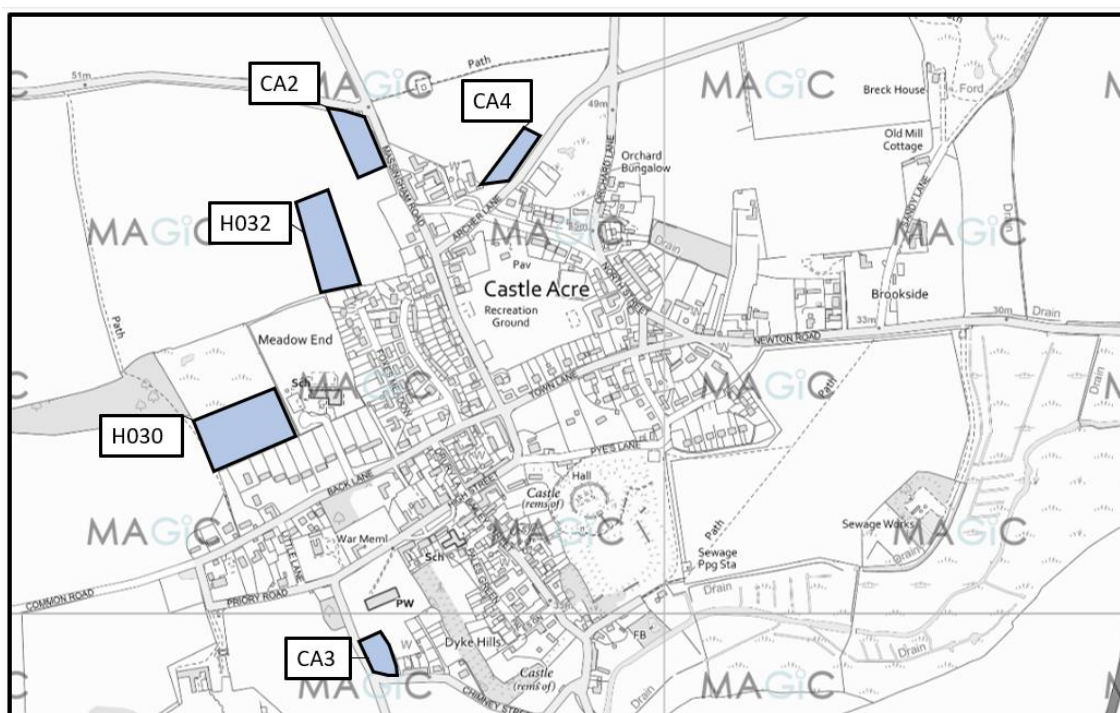
- 4.8 The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Local Development Plan of King's Lynn and West Norfolk which is made up of the Core Strategy (2011), the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMPP) (2016), and the Norfolk County Council Mineral and Waste Plan. This framework guides development and sets out the long-term plans of how housing need

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<sup>8</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

will be met in the borough up to 2026. It is also being prepared having due regard to the emerging Local Plan Review.

- 4.9 Castle Acre is identified in the Local Plan as a Key Rural Service Centre, which has the potential to accommodate growth to sustain the wider rural community. The Local Plan sets provision for a total of at least 2,880 new homes within or adjacent to selected Key Rural Service Centres.
- 4.10 In terms of allocations, the Local Plan and latest version of the Local Plan Review allocates land west of Massingham Road for residential development of at least 15 dwellings. The site also received permission for 15 dwellings in 2017 and 2019.
- 4.11 The Local Plan Review, in combination with Neighbourhood Plans, will seek to make allocations for a Local Housing Need of 1,685 dwellings, which will be part met over the plan period through neighbourhood plan site allocations for 543 homes. Appendix D of the draft Local Plan Review 'The Distribution of Housing between settlements in the Rural Area' indicates that Castle Acre is required to deliver 5 homes through the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.12 To support the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan, a site assessment of sites potentially available in Castle Acre for development was undertaken in early 2019. This considered five sites in the immediate vicinity of Castle Acre village, which ranged in size from 0.24ha to 0.79ha. The findings of the site assessment are presented in the Site Assessment Report, which is available alongside the Neighbourhood Plan for Regulation 14 consultation.<sup>9</sup>
- 4.13 To support the consideration of the suitability of these sites for a potential allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has undertaken a separate appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the sites. This has considered the potential effects that may arise as a result of small-scale housing development at these locations.
- 4.14 The location of these sites in Castle Acre are below.



**Figure 4.1: Location of sites proposed in Castle Acre**

- 4.15 In this context the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping (Chapter 3) and the baseline information.

<sup>9</sup> AECOM (January 2019) Site Options and Assessment for the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan

4.16 The tables which follow present a summary of this assessment and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the eight SEA themes.

### SEA site appraisal findings

**Table 4.1: Site H030, Site rear of Back Lane, adjacent to Primary School, Castle Acre**

SEA theme	Commentary, Site H030: Site rear of Back Lane, adjacent to Primary School, Castle Acre
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The site does not contain significant biodiversity constraints.</p> <p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent or close to the boundary of the site.</p> <p>The site is within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential development of 100 units or more and any residential development of 50 or more houses outside existing urban areas. This relates to the Castle Acre Common SSSI and the River Nar SSSI. However, given the capacity of the site is less than 50 homes, significant adverse effects on these SSSIs are unlikely.</p> <p>Whilst the site itself does not have significant biodiversity constraints, the site is bounded by mature field boundaries incorporating trees and hedgerows which form important components of local ecological networks. It is likely though that the majority of these features can be kept in situ.</p>
Climate Change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Castle Acre and an intensification of uses at this location, although these are unlikely to be significant given the size of the site and the scale of likely development.</p> <p>The site is in close proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre. The site is approximately 350m from the village centre, 300m from the bus stop at Costcutter, 40m from New Castle Acre Church of England VC Primary School and 500m from St James' Green and playing fields. However, there will be a need to travel by car to most services and facilities, with implications for greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding.</p>
Landscape	<p>The site has limited exposure to the landscape as it is screened from the open countryside to the north by vegetation.</p> <p>Development lies to the south of the site and a school lies to the east and would therefore contribute to a linear pattern of development. The site will be partly screened from the properties that lie to the south by existing tree although there is still potential for short views in.</p>
Historic Environment	<p>The site is outside and is not within the setting of the Castle Acre Conservation Area.</p> <p>There are no features of historic environment interest in close proximity to the site that development at this location would impact the setting of. The closest is a feature (Site of brick kiln) listed on the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, which is located approximately 50m south west of the site. However, effects on this feature are not anticipated from development at this location.</p>
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>As the site is a greenfield location, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p> <p>A detailed Agricultural Land Classification for this site has not been undertaken and there is therefore a need to rely on the national 'Provisional Agricultural Land Quality' dataset. The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset shows that the site is predominantly covered by Grade 3 agricultural land. However, without the subset grading (3a or 3b) it is not possible to tell at this stage whether the agricultural land is considered to be 'best and most versatile'. It is also important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution, and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality at this location.</p> <p>The site is also located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.</p>



SEA theme		Commentary, Site H030: Site rear of Back Lane, adjacent to Primary School, Castle Acre	
Population and Community	<p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs, including potentially through the delivery of affordable housing. The delivery of new housing is also likely to contribute to the vitality of Castle Acre through supporting local services and facilities.</p> <p>The site is located in good proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre (the site is located approximately 350m from the village centre, 300m from Costcutter bus stop, 40m from New Castle Acre Church of England VC Primary School and 500m from St James' Green and playing fields) which will limit the need for residents to travel for the amenities provided here. However, for most services and facilities, there will be a need to travel further afield.</p>		
Health and Wellbeing	<p>Development of this site is not likely to directly impact the health and wellbeing of residents. The site is accessible to the local public right of way network.</p>		
Transportation	<p>The site is located in good proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre. However, there will be a need to travel to most services and facilities.</p> <p>The site is located approximately 400m from Costcutter bus stop with infrequent services to Swaffham, King's Lynn and Mileham. The nearest railway station is at King's Lynn, approximately 22km away.</p>		
Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects	

**Table 4.2: Site H032, Phase 2 Massingham Road, Castle Acre**


SEA theme	Commentary, Site H032: Phase 2 Massingham Road, Castle Acre	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The site does not contain significant biodiversity constraints.</p> <p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent or close to the boundary of the site.</p> <p>The site is within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential development of 100 units or more and any residential development of 50 or more houses outside existing urban areas. This relates to the Castle Acre Common SSSI and the River Nar SSSI. However, given the capacity of the site is less than 50 homes, significant adverse effects on these SSSIs are unlikely.</p> <p>Whilst the site itself does not have significant biodiversity constraints, the site is bounded to the south by trees and shrubs which form important components of local ecological networks. However, it is likely that the majority of these features can be kept in situ.</p>	
Climate Change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Castle Acre and an intensification of uses at this location, although these are unlikely to be significant given the size of the site and the scale of likely development.</p> <p>The site is in close proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre. The site is approximately 350m from the village centre, 300m from Costcutter bus stop, 150m from New Castle Acre Church of England VC Primary School and 140m from St James' Green and playing fields. However, there will be a need to travel by car to most services and facilities, with implications for greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding.</p>	
Landscape	<p>The site has a strong visual relationship with the open countryside to the north and west of the site. There will also be some short views in from existing properties which lie to the south of the site.</p> <p>The site's existing openness has an important role in preserving the rural character of the northern extent of the village.</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>The site is outside and is not within the setting of the Castle Acre Conservation Area.</p> <p>There are no features of historic environment interest in close proximity to the site that development at this location would impact the setting of.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>As the site is a greenfield location, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p> <p>A detailed Agricultural Land Classification for this site has not been undertaken and there is therefore a need to rely on the national 'Provisional Agricultural Land Quality' dataset. The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset shows that the site is predominantly covered by Grade 3 agricultural land. However, without the subset grading (3a or 3b) it is not possible to tell at this stage whether the agricultural land is considered to be 'best and most versatile'. It is also important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution, and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>The site is also located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs, including potentially through the delivery of affordable housing. The delivery of new housing is also likely to contribute to the vitality of Castle Acre through supporting local services and facilities.</p> <p>The site is located in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre (350m from the village centre, 300m from Costcutter bus stop, 150m from New Castle Acre Church and 140m from St James' Green and playing fields) which will limit the need for residents to travel for the amenities provided here. However, for most services and facilities, there will be a need to travel further afield.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>Development of this site is not likely to directly impact the health and wellbeing of residents. The site is accessible to the local public right of way network.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre. However, there will be a need to travel to most services and facilities</p> <p>The site is located approximately 300m from Costcutter bus stop with infrequent services to Swaffham, King's Lynn and Mileham. The nearest railway station is at King's Lynn approximately 22km away.</p>	



SEA theme	Commentary, Site H032: Phase 2 Massingham Road, Castle Acre		
Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects	

**Table 4.3: Site CA2, Land west of Massingham Road and south of West Acre Road, Castle Acre**

SEA theme		Commentary, Site CA2: Land west of Massingham Road and south of West Acre Road, Castle Acre	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	The site does not contain significant biodiversity constraints. There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent or close to the boundary of the site. The site is within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential development of 100 units or more and any residential development of 50 or more houses outside existing urban areas. This relates to the Castle Acre Common SSSI and the River Nar SSSI. However, given the capacity of the site is less than 50 homes, significant adverse effects on these SSSIs are unlikely. Whilst the site itself does not have significant biodiversity constraints, the site is bounded to the north and east with established hedgerow with potential to contain habitats and priority species.		
	Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the village and an intensification of uses at this location, although these are unlikely to be significant given the size of the site and the scale of likely development. The site is in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre. The site is approximately 450m from the village centre, 400m from Costcutter bus stop, 800m from New Castle Acre Church of England VC Primary School and 200m from St James' Green and playing fields. However, there will be a need to travel by car to most services and facilities, with implications for greenhouse gas emissions. In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is at low risk from fluvial and surface water flooding.		
Climate Change			
Landscape		The site has limited exposure to the landscape as it is screened by the existing street scene of the village to the south and from the road by hedgerows on the north and eastern boundary. Whilst significant impacts on landscape character are not anticipated, the site is exposed to open countryside to the west. There are also short views in from properties which lie to the south and south east of the site including a Grade II Listed Building.	

SEA theme	Commentary, Site CA2: Land west of Massingham Road and south of West Acre Road, Castle Acre		
Historic Environment	<p>The site lies adjacent to Castle Acre Conservation Area.</p> <p>Key historic environment features which are likely to be affected from development at this site are presented in the table below:</p>		
	<p><b>Heritage assets affected</b></p> <p>The Stone Barn (Grade II Listed Building): The Barn was built in C18 and is made up of coursed flint and clunch rubble, red brick dressings, red pantiles.</p>	<p><b>What contribution does the site make to the significance of the heritage asset(s)?</b></p> <p>The Barn lies approximately 40m from the site and is within the setting of the Listed Building. Due to a lack of screening, there are direct views from the Barn into the site.</p>  <p><b>Figure 4.2: View of the Stone Barn from the site</b></p>	<p><b>Assess the potential impact of development on significance</b></p> <p>Development would not impact upon the fabric of the heritage asset. However, development which takes place on the site would be visible from the listed building and has the potential to impact on the historic setting of it.</p>
	<p>A “ditch of unknown date” identified on the Norfolk Historic Environment Record is located approximately 30m east of the site.</p>		
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>As the site is a greenfield location, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p> <p>A detailed Agricultural Land Classification for this site has not been undertaken and there is therefore a need to rely on the national ‘Provisional Agricultural Land Quality’ dataset. The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset shows that the site is predominantly covered by Grade 3 agricultural land. However, without the subset grading (3a or 3b) it is not possible to tell at this stage whether the agricultural land is considered to be ‘best and most versatile’. It is also important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution, and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality at this location.</p> <p>The site is also located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.</p>		
Population and Community	<p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs, including potentially through the delivery of affordable housing. The delivery of new housing is also likely to contribute to the vitality of Castle Acre through supporting local services and facilities.</p> <p>The site is located in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre (450m from the village centre, 400m from Costcutter bus stop, 800m from New Castle Acre Church and 200m from St James’ Green and playing fields) which will limit the need for residents to travel for the amenities provided here. However, for most services and facilities, there will be a need to travel further afield.</p>		
Health and Wellbeing	<p>Development of this site is not likely to directly impact on the health and wellbeing of residents. The site is accessible to the local public right of way network.</p>		

SEA theme	Commentary, Site CA2: Land west of Massingham Road and south of West Acre Road, Castle Acre		
Transportation	The site is located in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre. However, there will be a need to travel to most services and facilities		
	The site is located approximately 400m from Costcutter bus stop with infrequent services to Swaffham, King's Lynn and Mileham. The nearest railway station is at King's Lynn, approximately 22km away.		
Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects	

**Table 4.4: Site CA3, Land at the Church Glebe, off South Acre Road**



SEA theme	Commentary, Site CA3: Land at the Church Glebe, off South Acre Road		
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent or close to the boundary of the site.</p> <p>The site lies approximately 210m north of the River Nar SSSI and is within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential development of 100 units or more and any residential development of 50 or more houses outside existing urban areas. However, given the capacity of the site is less than 50 homes, significant adverse effects on the SSSI are unlikely.</p> <p>The site is approximately 10m from an area of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh which is a BAP Priority Habitat.</p> <p>Whilst the site itself does not have significant biodiversity constraints, the site is bounded by mature hedgerows which have potential to contain habitats that support priority species. However, it is likely that the majority of these features can be kept in situ.</p>		
Climate Change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the village and an intensification of uses at this location, although these are unlikely to be significant given the size of the site and the scale of likely development.</p> <p>The site is in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre. The site is approximately 500m from the village centre, 600m from Costcutter bus stop, 700m from New Castle Acre Church of England VC Primary School, 35m from St James the Great Church and adjacent to the Priory. However, there will be a need to travel by car to most services and facilities, with implications for greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is at low risk from fluvial and surface water flooding.</p>		
Landscape	<p>The site is considered to be sensitive within the villagescape due to views in and out from the Grade I listed Church of St James and some limited views in and out of Castle Acre Priory (a scheduled monument). However, the site is screened by hedgerows from long views in from the open countryside to the south, which will limit impacts on landscape character.</p>		

**SEA theme**      **Commentary, Site CA3: Land at the Church Glebe, off South Acre Road**

The site is within the Castle Acre Conservation Area.

Key historic environment features which are likely to be affected from development at this site are presented in the table below:

Historic  
Environment

Heritage assets affected	What contribution does the site make to the significance of the heritage asset(s)?	Assess the potential impact of development on significance
Church of St James (Grade I Listed Building): The Parish Church is largely C14 and C15, with some c.1300 details, restored by Ewan Christian, architect. It has rubble flint with squared knapped flint and cut stone dressings, leaded aisle, green slate nave and chancel roofs.	<p>The church lies approximately 30m from the site and the site is within the setting of this Grade I Listed Building. There are currently direct views into the site from the church.</p>  <p><b>Figure 4.3: View of Church of St James from the site</b></p>	<p>Development which takes place on the site would be highly visible from the Grade I Listed church. As such, development on the site has the potential to lead to significant effects on the historic setting of this key heritage feature.</p>
Castle Acre Priory scheduled monument: The monument includes the standing and buried remains of monastic buildings and various associated earthworks within a precinct which is defined on the north east, east and south east sides by the remains of a medieval boundary wall.	<p>The grounds of the Castle Acre Priory scheduled monument lie on the other side of South Acre Road, approximately 15m from the site.</p>  <p><b>Figure 4.4: View of the Castle Acre Priory from the site (through hedgerows/trees)</b></p>	<p>Due to the presence of the road and screening from trees, development on the site would have limited impact upon the setting of the scheduled monument. However there are some limited views in from the Priory.</p>

SEA theme	Commentary, Site CA3: Land at the Church Glebe, off South Acre Road	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>As the site is a greenfield location, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p> <p>A detailed Agricultural Land Classification for this site has not been undertaken and there is therefore a need to rely on the national 'Provisional Agricultural Land Quality' dataset. The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset shows that the site is predominantly covered by Grade 3 agricultural land. However, without the subset grading (3a or 3b), it is not possible to tell at this stage whether the agricultural land is considered to be 'best and most versatile'. It is also important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution, and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>The site is also located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs, including potentially through the delivery of affordable housing. The delivery of new housing is also likely to contribute to the vitality of Castle Acre through supporting local services and facilities.</p> <p>The site is located in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre (approximately 500m from the village centre, 600m from Costcutter bus stop, 700m from New Castle Acre Church of England VC Primary School, 35m from St James the Great Church and adjacent to the Priory) which will limit the need for residents to travel for the amenities provided here. However, for most services and facilities, there will be a need to travel further afield.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>Development of this site is not likely to directly impact the health and wellbeing of residents. The site is accessible to the local public right of way network.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre. However, there will be a need to travel to most services and facilities</p> <p>The site is located approximately 600m from Costcutter bus stop with infrequent services to Swaffham, King's Lynn and Mileham. The nearest railway station is at King's Lynn approximately 22km away.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects



**Table 4.5: Site CA4, Land to west of Archer Lane**

SEA theme	Commentary, Site CA4: Land to west of Archer Lane								
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The site does not contain significant biodiversity constraints.</p> <p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent or close to the boundary of the site.</p> <p>The site is within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential development of 100 units or more and any residential development of 50 or more houses outside existing urban areas. This relates to the Castle Acre Common SSSI and the River Nar SSSI. However, given the capacity of the site is less than 50 homes, significant adverse effects on these SSSIs are unlikely.</p> <p>Whilst the site itself does not have significant biodiversity constraints, there are a group of trees adjacent to the southern corner of the site which have potential to contain habitats and priority species.</p>								
Climate Change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the village and an intensification of uses at this location, although these are unlikely to be significant given the size of the site and the scale of likely development.</p> <p>The site is in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre. The site is approximately 450m from the village centre, 350m from Costcutter bus stop, 700m to New Castle Acre Church of England VC Primary School and 400m from St. James Green and playing fields. However, there will be a need to travel by car to most services and facilities, with implications for greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is at low risk from fluvial and surface water flooding.</p>								
Landscape	<p>The site is considered to be sensitive within the landscape as despite being bounded by development to the south, it has a strong visual relationship with the open countryside to the north and east. The site's existing openness is considered to play an important role in preserving the rural character of the northern extent of the village.</p>								
Historic Environment	<p>The site lies adjacent to the Castle Acre Conservation Area.</p> <p>Key historic environment features which are likely to be affected from development at this site are presented in the table below:</p> <table><tr><th>Heritage assets affected</th><th>What contribution does the site make to the significance of the heritage asset(s)?</th><th>Assess the potential impact of development on significance</th></tr><tr><td>15 and 16, St James's Green (Grade II Listed Building): The pair of cottages are c.1600 to south and C19 to north. Cottage to south consists of knapped, squared flint, to north flint rubble, brick dressings, red pantiled roofs and is two storeys. Cottage to north has one ground floor 3-light and two first floor 2-light C19 cast iron casements with glazing bars.</td><td>The Cottages are adjacent to the site and are within the setting of the Listed Building. Although there is some screening from existing trees, there are views from the Cottages onto the site.</td><td>Development would not impact upon the fabric of the heritage asset. However, development which takes place on the site would be visible from the listed building and has the potential to impact on the historic setting of it.</td></tr></table> <p>There is a locally important building (17 and 18 St James' Green) approximately 60m south west of the site which has been identified on the Norfolk Heritage Explorer.</p>			Heritage assets affected	What contribution does the site make to the significance of the heritage asset(s)?	Assess the potential impact of development on significance	15 and 16, St James's Green (Grade II Listed Building): The pair of cottages are c.1600 to south and C19 to north. Cottage to south consists of knapped, squared flint, to north flint rubble, brick dressings, red pantiled roofs and is two storeys. Cottage to north has one ground floor 3-light and two first floor 2-light C19 cast iron casements with glazing bars.	The Cottages are adjacent to the site and are within the setting of the Listed Building. Although there is some screening from existing trees, there are views from the Cottages onto the site.	Development would not impact upon the fabric of the heritage asset. However, development which takes place on the site would be visible from the listed building and has the potential to impact on the historic setting of it.
Heritage assets affected	What contribution does the site make to the significance of the heritage asset(s)?	Assess the potential impact of development on significance							
15 and 16, St James's Green (Grade II Listed Building): The pair of cottages are c.1600 to south and C19 to north. Cottage to south consists of knapped, squared flint, to north flint rubble, brick dressings, red pantiled roofs and is two storeys. Cottage to north has one ground floor 3-light and two first floor 2-light C19 cast iron casements with glazing bars.	The Cottages are adjacent to the site and are within the setting of the Listed Building. Although there is some screening from existing trees, there are views from the Cottages onto the site.	Development would not impact upon the fabric of the heritage asset. However, development which takes place on the site would be visible from the listed building and has the potential to impact on the historic setting of it.							

SEA theme		Commentary, Site CA4: Land to west of Archer Lane	
Land, Soil and Water Resources		<p>As the site is a greenfield location, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p> <p>A detailed Agricultural Land Classification for this site has not been undertaken and there is therefore a need to rely on the national 'Provisional Agricultural Land Quality' dataset. The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset shows that the site is predominantly covered by Grade 3 agricultural land, however; without the subset grading (3a or 3b) it is not possible to tell at this stage whether the agricultural land is considered to be 'best and most versatile'. It is also important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution, and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>The site is also located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.</p>	
Population and Community		<p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs, including potentially through the delivery of affordable housing. The delivery of new housing is also likely to contribute to the vitality of Castle Acre through supporting local services and facilities.</p> <p>The site is located in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre (approximately 450m from the village centre, 350m from Costcutter bus stop, 700m to New Castle Acre Church of England VC Primary School and 400m from St. James Green and playing fields) which will limit the need for residents to travel for the amenities provided here. However, for most services and facilities, there will be a need to travel further afield.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing		<p>Development of this site is not likely to directly impact the health and wellbeing of residents. The site is accessible to the local public right of way network.</p>	
Transportation		<p>The site is located in relative proximity to some services and facilities in Castle Acre. However, there will be a need to travel to most services and facilities</p> <p>The site is located approximately 350m from Costcutter bus stop with infrequent services to Swaffham, King's Lynn and Mileham. The nearest railway station is at King's Lynn, approximately 22km away.</p>	
Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects	

## Summary of SEA site appraisal findings

4.17 The following table presents a summary of the findings of the site appraisal undertaken through the SEA process.

**Table 4.4: Summary of SEA site appraisal findings**

Site	Biodiversity	Climate Change	Landscape	Historic Env	Land, Soil and Water Resources	Population and Community	Health and Wellbeing	Transport
Site H030								
Site H032								
Site CA2								
Site CA3								
Site CA4								

### Key

Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)

Likely positive effect

Neutral/no effect

Uncertain effects

## Preferred approach in the Neighbourhood Plan in light of appraisal findings

### Choice of site allocations taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan

4.18 The Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan allocates two sites for housing. These are as follows:

- 3) Site CA2: Land to the west of Massingham Road and north of the emerging site G.22.1 (Site 7 dwellings)
- 4) Site CA3: Land at The Church Glebe, off South Acre Road (4 dwellings)

4.19 In terms of the Neighbourhood Plan's reasons for taking forward these sites, Site CA2 is seen as a natural extension to the new development area to the west of Massingham Road taken forward through the Local Plan for 15 homes (and which has also gained planning permission). In terms of Site CA3, this is seen as an opportunity to deliver small units provided by a landowner prepared to deliver low cost housing as a priority to meet the village need, and as an opportunity to deliver the provision of additional car parking spaces for the church to accommodate periods of high demand.



## Neighbourhood Plan policies

4.20 To support the implementation of the vision for the Neighbourhood Plan discussed in Section 2.6, the current Pre-Submission Version of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan puts forward 14 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering.

4.21 The policies presented in the Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

**Table 4.5: Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan policies**

Policies
HE.1: Protecting Historic Assets
HE.2: Conservation Area
HE.3: Local Character and Vernacular Architecture
HE.4: Important Views
NE.1: Protection of Landscape Setting
NE.2: Habitats and Natural Features
NE.3: Local Green Spaces
NE.4: Dark Skies
HD.1: Housing Provision
HD.2: Housing Size, Type and Tenure
HD.3: Design
TT.1: Visitor Car Parking
TO.1: Protecting existing tourism and community facilities
BU.1: Business Development

4.22 The next chapter presents the findings of the assessment of these policies.

## 5. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

### Introduction

- 5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current Pre-Submission Version of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan. This chapter presents:
- An appraisal of the Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan under the eight SEA theme headings; and
  - The overall conclusions at this current stage.

### Approach to this appraisal

- 5.2 The appraisal is structured under the eight SEA themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA.
- 5.3 For each theme, 'significant effects' of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.
- 5.4 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

### Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.5 In terms of the allocations proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan, the site allocations in Castle Acre are not in locations with significant sensitivity for biodiversity or geodiversity.
- 5.6 Both of the sites allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan are within SSSI impact risk zones for residential development of 100 units or more and any residential development of 50 or more houses outside existing settlements urban areas. These impact risk zones are associated with the River Nar SSSI and the Castle Acre Common SSSI. However, given the scale of development being put forward through the Neighbourhood Plan at these sites (seven dwellings at Site CA.2 and four dwellings at Site CA.3, which are within the thresholds set out by the impact risk zones), significant effects on the SSSI are not anticipated.
- 5.7 An area of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh BAP Priority Habitat is located approximately 10m away from Site CA.3. Whilst direct impacts on this habitat from landtake and fragmentation are not anticipated, disturbance may take place from new development at this location from noise, light pollution or trampling from enhanced access. However, given the habitat is on the other side of South Acre Road, and development at the site is unlikely to readily increase access to the habitat, negative effects are not anticipated. Site CA.2 is bounded to the south by trees and shrubs which form important components of local ecological networks and Site CA.3 is bounded by mature hedgerows which have potential to contain habitats that support priority species. However, it is likely that the majority of these features can be kept in situ. As such, no significant impacts on these habitats are anticipated by new allocations at these location.
- 5.8 Further precluding negative effects, the Neighbourhood Plan policies have a close focus on protecting and enhancement habitats and ecological networks. A key Neighbourhood Plan policy in this regard is Policy NE.2 (Habitats and Natural Features). This seeks to ensure that all development proposals retain existing features of landscape and biodiversity value (including ponds, trees, woodland, hedgerows and verges) and, where practical to do so, provide a net gain in biodiversity. The policy also states that where a new access is created, or an existing access is widened through an existing hedgerow, a new hedgerow shall

be planted to maintain the appearance and continuity of hedgerows in the vicinity. Additionally, the policy prohibits vehicles from using part of South Acre Road from 50 metres below the junction with Blind Lane, across South Acre ford and onto Church Farm. This is with a view to protecting the integrity of the River Nar SSSI, including through protecting the gravel riverbed from engine pollution and damage to fish spawning.

- 5.9 A number of further policies will also have direct and indirect positive effects for ecological networks. For example, Policy NE.3 (Local Green Spaces) supports the protection of key areas of open space, through designating them as Local Green Spaces. Policy HD.1 (Housing Provision) highlights that development at Site CA.2 will include a new hedgerow and tree-line planted along the western boundary, and development at Site CA.3 will retain existing trees and hedgerows on the site. Similarly, Policy HD.3 (Design) seeks to encourage the use of traditional materials, especially those sourced locally (supporting geodiversity) and of low ecological impact, as well as incorporating measures designed to attract and benefit wildlife including the provision of new habitats.
- 5.10 Ecological networks within the Neighbourhood Plan area are further supported by Policy NE.4 (Dark Skies) which supports measures that address light spillage and eliminate all unnecessary forms of artificial outdoor lighting, by ensuring that good lighting management and design are applied throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area. This will help limit impacts from light pollution on key species, including nocturnal species of amphibians, birds, mammals, insects and plants.
- 5.11 As such, the provision of these policies will ensure that ecological sensitivities are appropriately considered during the planning, construction and operational phases for new development proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan area as well as effectively supporting national and Local Plan policy provisions with regards to biodiversity.
- 5.12 To accompany the Neighbourhood Plan, a Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken.<sup>10</sup> This concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan will not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of any internationally designated biodiversity sites either alone or in combination. This includes relating to the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC, the Breckland SPA and the River Wensum SAC, with regards to potential effects from recreational pressure and on water quality and resources.

## Climate Change

- 5.13 The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan presents a number of policies which have direct relevance to climate change considerations. The assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan's performance with regard to climate change is outlined below, with discussions relating to climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation.

### Climate change mitigation

- 5.14 In terms of climate change contribution, per capita greenhouse gas emissions generated in the Neighbourhood Plan area may continue to decrease with the wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies (including electric cars). However, increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5.15 Whilst the delivery of homes through the Neighbourhood Plan will increase greenhouse gas emissions either directly through construction, or indirectly through an increase in population, the built footprint of the area and associated travel and consumption behaviours, this level of housing would likely be mirrored by the approval of planning applications. As such the level of development proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan will not lead to significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions over and above that would be seen otherwise.
- 5.16 The allocated sites on Massingham Road (CA.2) and Glebe Land off South Acre Road (CA.3) are in relative proximity to the services and facilities present in Castle Acre and the bus stop. This will help reduce the need for residents to travel for some day-to-day facilities and support the use of sustainable

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<sup>10</sup> AECOM (December 2019) Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft Plan (August 2019) Habitats Regulations Assessment

transport modes, helping to limit emissions from road transport. There will however still be a need to travel by car to many services and facilities, with implications for greenhouse gas emissions.

- 5.17 The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to apply energy efficiency standards within new development. In this context the Code for Sustainable Homes was formally withdrawn in a Ministerial Statement published on 25th March 2015, which outlined the Government's new national planning policy on the setting of technical standards for new dwellings and Local Plan making. In addition to this, the Deregulation Act also brought in a clause which amended the Planning and Energy Act 2008 to prevent local authorities from requiring higher levels of energy efficiency than existing Building Regulations. On this basis, it would not be appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to set specific targets for energy efficiency as part of a design policy.
- 5.18 A number of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will though support climate change mitigation. For example Policy HE.3 (Castle Acre's Local Character and Vernacular Architecture) seeks to use sustainable materials and HD.2 (Housing Size, Type and Tenure) encourages developers to provide eco-friendly homes which are environmentally low-impact home designed and built using materials and technology that reduces its carbon footprint and lowers its energy needs. Alongside, Policy BU.1 (Business Development) is likely to encourage home working and running a business from home, which will reduce the need to travel to an office outside of Castle Acre. Additionally Policy TO.1 (Protecting Existing Tourism and Community Facilities) states that proposals for change of use involving a potential loss of an existing tourism or community facility or business, will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that there are adequate other facilities offering the same service exist within a reasonable walking distance of the majority of residents, to meet visitor and local needs. These policies will therefore support a limitation of greenhouse gas emissions.

### Climate change adaptation

- 5.19 In relation to the sites allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan, they are not constrained by significant flood risk issues; both are at low risk from fluvial and surface water flooding.
- 5.20 As highlighted by the NPPF, well planned green infrastructure can help an area adapt to, and manage the risks of climate change (including extreme weather events). Enabling and providing for green infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan area is therefore a key way in which the Neighbourhood Plan can help to promote climate change adaptation measures. Responding to this, Policy NE.3 (Local Green Spaces) designates three areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area as Local Green Space. Alongside, Policy NE.2 (Habitats and Natural Features) seeks to retain existing features of landscape and biodiversity value. This will help support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the effects of climate change including extreme weather events. Key landscape features in this regard include trees, woodland, hedgerows and verges. As such, the Neighbourhood Plan sets out a number of provisions which will support positive gains with regard to climate change adaptation measures within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

## Landscape

- 5.21 The allocated Site CA.2 The site is screened by the existing street scene of the village to the south and from the road by hedgerows on the north and eastern boundary. Whilst significant impacts on landscape character are not anticipated, the site is exposed to the open countryside to the west. This is recognised by the policy for the site, which seeks to ensure that a new hedgerow and tree-line is planted along the western boundary. Potential impacts on landscape and villagescape character from the allocation should also be seen in the context of the adjacent site allocated through the Local Plan for 15 homes.
- 5.22 The allocated Site CA.3 is screened by hedgerows from long views in from the open countryside to the south, which will limit impacts on landscape character. In this regard, the policy for the site allocation seeks to retain existing trees and hedgerows on the site.
- 5.23 The views across the parish are an important consideration in the planning process, as the scale, height and mass of a development can ultimately impact important views if they are not considered and assessed through the process. Changes, such as development and landscape change, can see these views degraded over time. In this respect, Policy HE.4 'Important Views' states that proposals for development that would be visible within or would affect an important view should ensure that they respect and take account of the view concerned. Developments which would have an unacceptable adverse

impact on the landscape or character of the view or vista will not be supported. The important views identified through the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

- View from the Castle looking south west, and towards St James Tower;
- Views from St James Church out over the Priory and across the valley;
- Views along Bailey Street, to and from the Bailey Gate;
- Views from Chimney Street towards the river and across Castle Meadow;
- Views from East Green across open countryside;
- View from South Acre Ford across the meadow to the Priory; and
- Views into the village from the north across Further Pond Close.

- 5.24 Potential impacts on landscape character are also recognised by Policy NE.1 (Protection of Landscape Setting). The policy seeks to ensure that the visual scenic value of the landscape and countryside in the Neighbourhood Plan area outside the defined settlement boundary will be protected from development that may adversely affect its visual appearance or harm sensitive features typical of the Rolling Open Farmland Landscape Character Area. Policy NE.2 (Habitats and Natural Features) also seeks to protect natural features and retain existing features of landscape and biodiversity value.
- 5.25 Policy HD.3 (Design) further supports this by highlighting that all new development should be high quality, well designed and enhance the form and character of Castle Acre. Careful consideration should be given to the form, character and setting of new development to reduce the risk of over dominance by new development. Policy NE.4 (Dark Skies) also seeks to support proposals that address light spillage and eliminate all unnecessary forms of artificial outdoor lighting, by ensuring that good lighting management and design are applied throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area. This will support tranquillity in the parish.
- 5.26 Potential impacts on villagescape character are recognised by the four policies within The 'Historic Environment, the Historic Landscape and Vernacular Architecture' chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan. Specifically, Policy HE.2 (Conservation Area) seeks to ensure that new development is sympathetic to the special qualities and character of the Conservation Area. Additionally, Policy HE.3 (Castle Acre's Local Character and Vernacular Architecture) states that all new development irrespective of scale should reflect Castle Acre's local distinctiveness and seek to enhance the existing visual character of the village. New housing should respect the scale, materials and character of existing and surrounding buildings, reinforce local development patterns and be compatible with the form, scale, massing and character of adjacent properties where this provides a positive contribution.
- 5.27 These policies therefore take a proactive and positive approach to protecting and enhancing landscape and villagescape character of the Neighbourhood Plan area and visual amenity.

## Historic Environment

- 5.28 The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich historic environment resource, recognised through the diversity of features and areas within or within proximity to Castle Acre that are nationally and locally designated for their cultural heritage interest. This includes five Grade I, one Grade II\*, 17 Grade II listed buildings, two scheduled monuments, the coverage of the Castle Acre Conservation Area over much of the village and numerous records of structures and archaeological finds listed on the Norfolk Historic Environment Record.
- 5.29 In part reflecting these sensitivities, the two allocations proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan are located in sensitive areas in relation to the historic environment.
- 5.30 With regard to allocated Site CA2 – Land to west of Massingham Road, the Grade II listed Stone Barn is located approximately 40m south east of the site. Due to a lack of existing screening, there are direct views from the barn into the site. As such, development of the site for has the potential to affect the setting of this feature. Potential impacts on the setting of the barn from the allocation should however be seen in the context of the site allocated (and subsequently granted planning permission) through the Local

Plan west of Massingham Road; this new development for 15 homes is located adjacent to the Site CA2 and is located directly opposite the listed barn.

- 5.31 The historic environment constraints located in the vicinity of CA3 – Glebe Land off South Acre Road are more significant. This relates in particular to the presence of the Grade I listed Church of St James, which is located 30m to the north and has direct views into the site. Given the visibility of the church from the site, significant effects have the potential to take place on its setting. Site CA3 is also located on the other side of South Acre Road from the Castle Acre Priory scheduled monument. However, given the presence of the road and screening from trees/hedgerows, development on the site would have limited impact on the setting of the scheduled monument.
- 5.32 The allocation of the Site CA3 for a small terrace of four homes (which is significantly less than the site's potential capacity) has the potential to limit impacts on the setting of the church if sympathetic design is initiated. In addition, the northern part of the site (which is the section of the site located closest to the church) has been allocated for a new church car park off South Acre Road. With appropriate screening, the delivery of a car park on this part of the site will help limit potential impacts on the setting of the church, and help enhance access to this key village heritage asset.
- 5.33 Recognising and reflecting the significant sensitivities of the Neighbourhood Plan area and the location of proposed allocations in conjunction with Castle Acre's historic environment resource, the Neighbourhood Plan policies have a strong focus on conserving and enhancing the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, and their settings.
- 5.34 For example, Policy HE.1 (Protecting Historic Assets) states that proposals for new development, irrespective of scale, that could either directly or indirectly affect the historic significance of any of Castle Acre's designated historic assets will not be supported, unless the tests set out in national guidance can be met and clear and convincing justification can be given. Such proposals should be supported by a detailed assessment in the form of a Heritage Statement. Additionally, the policy states that proposals for new development on undeveloped sites where there is a reasonable prospect of unknown and unrecorded archaeological or historical assets being present should be accompanied by a detailed assessment of the potential impacts of the proposal on the unidentified asset to allow for an informed judgment to be made.
- 5.35 Likewise, Policy HE.2 (Conservation Area) highlights that the established special character of the Conservation Area and its setting should be protected and reinforced by:
- Encouraging the retention and maintenance of buildings which contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area;
  - Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to the special qualities and character of the Conservation Area; and
  - Protecting the setting of the Conservation Area from development which adversely affects views into or out of the area.
- 5.36 Additionally, Policy TT.1 (Visitor Car Parking) states that support will be given to proposals that help to relieve traffic congestion in the village centre and/or provide solutions to existing parking problems. Particular support is given for the creation of new designated visitor parking off Priory Road. This facility would free up parking spaces in the village centre and would help reduce the visual dominance of car parking on the historic village core and Conservation Area, which is identified as a key 'detractor' in the Conservation Area Character Statement.
- 5.37 There are also various policies within the Neighbourhood Plan which focus on the design elements of new development which will help mitigate the impact of new development on surrounding historic environment features. This includes Policy HE.3 (Castle Acre's Local Character and Vernacular Architecture) which encourages new development to use traditional materials such as flint, pantile, slate and render as well as the use of traditional detailing such as quoins, stone and brick lintels, brick bonds, roof lines, window and door types. Furthermore, Policy HD.3 (Design) states that all new development should be of high quality, well designed and enhance the form and character of Castle Acre. In this context the policy states that careful consideration should be given to the form, character and setting of new development to reduce the risk of over dominance by new development. The provisions of these policies will therefore provide opportunities for new development to positively contribute to the fabric and setting of heritage assets through high-quality design which reflects the historic character and special qualities of the parish.

- 5.38 In this respect, the policy provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan will limit the significance of potential negative effects from new development on the parish's rich historic environment resource, and facilitate enhancements. This includes through supporting the integrity of the Castle Acre Conservation Area, conserving and enhancing designated and non-designated heritage features and introducing provisions relating to landscape / villagescape character. As such, whilst the allocations taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan are in locations of sensitivity for the historic environment, the combination of the type / scale of development and the approaches taken forward through Neighbourhood Plan policies will help limit the significance of potential effects, and support longer term enhancements.

## Land, Soil and Water Resources

- 5.39 The proposed site allocations will take place on undeveloped land. In terms of agricultural land quality, recent land classification has not been undertaken at either of the allocated sites; as such there is a need to rely on the Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset. This indicates that Sites CA.2 and CA.3 are located within an area of Grade 3 agricultural land. However, without detailed classification establishing the subset grading (i.e. 3a or 3b), it is not possible to establish at this stage whether the agricultural land is considered to be the Best and Most Versatile. In terms of water resources, the site allocations are not located within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.
- 5.40 As previously discussed, a number of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan seek to protect key features of landscape and biodiversity interest, aim to protect designated sites, areas of landscape sensitivity and enhance green space. While these policies do not specifically seek to address land, soil and water resources, the policies will indirectly help promote and protect these resources, including through the promotion of high quality green networks in the Neighbourhood Plan area and the protection and enhancement of key landscape features. This will help support the capacity of the landscape and villagescape to regulate soil and water quality.

## Population and Community

- 5.41 The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan sets out a range of provisions which will support the quality of life of the parish's residents.
- 5.42 Through Policy HD.1 (Housing Provision), the Neighbourhood Plan provides for eleven new dwellings to be constructed between 2020 and 2036 in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This will be through the delivery of seven dwellings at Site CA.2 and four dwellings at Site CA.3. Housing needs will also be met through small 'windfall' sites and infill plots within the development boundary which will come forward during the plan period but are not identified in the plan, and conversions of existing buildings outside of the Castle Acre development boundary.
- 5.43 The Neighbourhood Plan also has a focus on ensuring that a significant proportion of new homes delivered in the parish are affordable, with priority given to local residents. In this respect Policy HD.1 states that the development of Site CA.2 will accommodate approximately seven dwellings in total, with 2-3 dwellings comprising open market housing on a 'cross subsidy' basis to help facilitate the provision of four dwellings available for shared equity purchase. The policy states that the open market housing will be of three or four bedrooms, and the shared equity houses will be of two bedrooms with priority given to residents and their families living nearby.
- 5.44 Policy HD.2 (Housing Size, Type and Tenure) further supports the delivery of housing appropriate for local people through explicitly seeking to deliver homes of a range of types that meet local needs to enable a mixed and inclusive community. In this respect, the policy highlights that developers should provide starter homes/first time buyers of 1 and 2 bedrooms that include:
- Adaptable, 'lifetime' homes;
  - Affordable housing, specifically social and affordable rented;
  - Housing for older people (e.g. Retirement living housing/supported/sheltered housing, bungalows and retirement complexes); and
  - Eco-friendly homes.



- 5.45 The policy also states that support is given for maximising the delivery of affordable housing on all qualifying sites in Castle Acre.
- 5.46 The Neighbourhood Plan also seeks to support the delivery of high quality design within housing. This includes through Policy HD.3 (Design), which encourages all new development to be of high quality, well designed and enhance the form and character of Castle Acre. The policy also refers to dwelling amenity and states that development proposals for new dwellings should provide:
- Sufficient private amenity space to meet the needs of new residents, such as garden space which should be at least equal to the cubic footprint of the dwelling;
  - Resident access to the rear garden without going through the house;
  - Off street vehicular parking for residents and visitors; and
  - Ancillary storage for refuse and recycling.
- 5.47 The policy also highlights that new development should not be harmful to the living conditions of the residents of adjacent properties and encourages the provision of high speed internet connection.
- 5.48 Accessibility to services and facilities is a key influence on the quality of life of residents and community cohesion. In relation to the proposed housing allocations taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan, Site CA.2 on Massingham Road and Site CA.3 on Glebe Land off South Acre Road are in relative proximity to the services and facilities present in Castle Acre and a bus stop. The allocated sites are also accessible to a comprehensive public rights of way network within the Neighbourhood Plan area, with footpaths linking key locations and connecting to the village centre. Accessibility will be further supported by the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on supporting the vitality of the village and new community provision. This includes through Policy TO.1 (Protecting Existing Tourism and Community Facilities), which supports proposals to improve existing tourism and community facilities. In this respect proposals for change of use involving a potential loss of an existing tourism or community facility or business, will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
- Adequate other facilities offering the same service exist within a reasonable walking distance of the majority of residents, to meet visitor and local needs, or
  - There is no reasonable prospect of continued viable use and this can be demonstrated.
- 5.49 The Neighbourhood Plan also sets out further provisions which will support the economic vitality of the Neighbourhood Plan area and support employment opportunities. In this respect Policy BU.1 (Business Development) supports a change of use to employment uses at Manor Farm. This includes through redevelopment which supports the provision of the following small-scale initiatives:
- Home based and live work units;
  - Small start-up or incubator units; and
  - Accommodation for office facilities or training facilities.
- 5.50 Overall therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to have significant positive effects in relation to the Population and Communities SEA theme through delivering housing which meets local needs, supporting community vitality and facilitating local employment provision.

## Health and Wellbeing

- 5.51 Housing is a key contributor to health and wellbeing. In this context the Neighbourhood Plan has a focus on delivering suitable housing for the different age groups and housing needs represented in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Recognising the trend of an ageing population within the parish area, the quality and availability of housing for older people is addressed through Policy HD.2 (Housing Size, Type and Tenure). This highlights that developers should provide housing for older people (e.g. retirement living housing/supported/sheltered housing, bungalows and retirement complexes).
- 5.52 In relation to the quality of life and the wellbeing of local residents, Policy HD.3 (Design) aims to ensure that new development is not harmful to the living conditions of the residents of adjacent properties. Policy TT.1 (Visitor Car Parking) states that support will be given to proposals that help to relieve traffic congestion in the village centre and/or provide solutions to existing parking problems. Policy TO.1



(Protecting Existing Tourism and Community Facilities) only supports proposals for change of use involving a potential loss of an existing tourism or community facility or business where it can be demonstrated that adequate other facilities offering the same service exist within a reasonable walking distance of the majority of residents, to meet visitor and local needs. Policy TO.1 also states that proposals should not detract from the amenity of local residents or result in an unacceptable increase in traffic generation or lead to an increase in on street parking. These policies are particularly important from a health and wellbeing perspective, in terms of enabling local residents to safely access local services and amenities and supporting road safety for vulnerable road users.

- 5.53 Improving footpaths allows for residents and pedestrians to move around the parish safely without the use of a car. This will promote active lifestyles and healthier modes of travel. Although there are a lack of policies which aim to enhance pedestrian and cycle provision within Castle Acre, supporting text in Chapter 8 states that new developments should allow for pedestrian convenience, include footways and footpaths to minimise conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. Additionally, there is a Community Action Project to manage visitor activity in a more sustainable manner through the promotion of green tourism and walking and cycling access.
- 5.54 There is now robust evidence that access to the natural environment improves people's health and wellbeing through encouraging healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation. The benefits to emotional wellbeing and mental health resulting from close contact with the natural environment are well-documented. Reflecting this, there is a drive to maintain and improve access to open spaces through the Neighbourhood Plan. In this context, Policy NE.3 (Local Green Spaces) designates three Local Green Spaces which will be safeguarded from development. This will promote recreational opportunities, with benefits for health and wellbeing.
- 5.55 Overall, the Neighbourhood Plan sets out a number of provisions which will enhance health and wellbeing within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

## Transportation

- 5.56 In terms of the proposed allocations taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan, Site CA.2 on Massingham Road and Site CA.3 on Glebe Land off South Acre Road are in relative proximity to the services and facilities present in Castle Acre. This will help reduce the need to travel to key village amenities. They are also accessible to local bus stops with services to Mileham, Beeston, Litcham, Great Dunham, Little Dunham, Newton, Swaffham, Pentney, Narborough and King's Lynn. The allocated sites are also accessible to a comprehensive public rights of way network within the Neighbourhood Plan area, with footpaths linking key locations and connecting to the village centre.
- 5.57 In terms of specific policies which will support sustainable transport use, Policy TO.1 (Protection Existing Tourism and Community Facilities) discourages proposals which involve a potential loss of existing tourism or community facility unless adequate other facilities offering the same service exist within a reasonable walking distance of the majority of residents. Policy TT.1 (Visitor Car Parking) supports proposals that help to relieve traffic congestion in the village centre and/or provide solutions to existing parking problems. Particular support is given for the creation of new designated visitor parking off Priory Road. This facility would help reduce the visual dominance of car parking on the historic village core and Conservation Area.

## Conclusions at this current stage

- 5.58 The assessment has concluded that the current Pre-Submission Version of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant long-term positive effects in relation to the 'Population and Community' and 'Health and Wellbeing' SEA themes. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on providing new housing to meet local needs, its support for community vitality, the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure networks in the area and the protection and enhancement of the quality of the public realm and neighbourhood distinctiveness.
- 5.59 The allocations taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan are in locations of significant sensitivity for the historic environment. However, a combination of the type / scale of development proposed at the sites and the Neighbourhood Plan policies will help limit the significance of potential effects. In this respect, the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan have a close focus on conserving and enhancing the fabric and setting of the historic environment, and on protecting landscape and villagescape character. Overall therefore, no

significant negative effects have been identified in relation to the 'Historic Environment' theme relating to these allocations, with positive effects likely to take place with regards to the conservation and enhancement of the wider historic environment of Castle Acre. The Neighbourhood Plan's close focus on protecting and enhancing local character and distinctiveness will also bring positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape' SEA theme.

- 5.60 New development has the potential to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land in the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, given the lack of detailed land classification undertaken in the parish, it is unclear as to what extent this will lead to the loss of areas of the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. As such, the overall significance of impacts in relation to the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme is uncertain. It should be noted though that the significance of impacts on productive agricultural land is likely to be reduced by the limited size of the allocations proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.61 In terms of the 'Biodiversity', 'Climate Change' and 'Transportation' SEA themes, the Neighbourhood Plan will initiate a number of beneficial approaches which will help limit negative effects and facilitate enhancements. These are not though considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and the scale of proposals.

## 6. What are the next steps?

- 6.1 This Environmental Report accompanies the Pre-Submission Version of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan for Regulation 14 consultation.
- 6.2 Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and the Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, for subsequent independent examination.
- 6.3 At independent examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan.
- 6.4 If independent examination is favourable, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the development plan for Castle Acre Parish.

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# Appendix A Context Review and Baseline

## A1 – Air Quality

### Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- *‘Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.’*
- *‘Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health.’*
- *New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.*

Published in January 2018 by the UK Government, ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’<sup>11</sup> sets out a number of goals and policies in order to help the natural world regain and retain good health. In this context, Goal 1 ‘Clean Air’ and the policies contained within ‘Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste’ within the 25 year plan directly relate to the air quality SEA theme.

In terms of the local context, Borough Council of King’s Lynn & West Norfolk is required under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995) to monitor air quality across the Borough, report regularly to DEFRA, and take action where nationally set levels are likely to be exceeded. Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), benzene (C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>6</sub>) and particulates (PM<sub>10</sub>). Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area.

Policy CS11 (Transport) from the Core Strategy relates to the Air Quality SEA theme.

### Summary of Current Baseline

As of July 2019, there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the Neighbourhood Plan area as highlighted in the 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report.<sup>12</sup>

There are no recent or anticipated exceedances of national air quality objectives in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

### Summary of Future Baseline

New housing and employment provision within the parish and the wider area, including through the King’s Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan Review, has the potential for adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants such as NO<sub>2</sub>. However, this is unlikely to lead to exceedances of air quality objectives in the Neighbourhood Plan area given the low air pollutant baseline which currently exists.

<sup>11</sup> HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [accessed 14/10/19]

<sup>12</sup> Borough Council of King’s Lynn & West Norfolk (2019) Borough Council of King’s Lynn & West Norfolk Annual Status Report 2019 [online] available at: < [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/download/346/air\\_quality\\_information\\_documents](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/download/346/air_quality_information_documents) > [accessed 14/10/19]

## A2 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

### Context Review

At the European level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy<sup>13</sup> was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver an established new Europe-wide target to *'halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020'*.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to *'contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment' including by 'helping to improve biodiversity.'*
- *'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value[...], take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.'*
- *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with the statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.'*
- *'To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:*
  - a) *Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and*
  - b) *Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.'*

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)<sup>14</sup> sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It was in part a response to the UK's failure to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2010 and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

Reflecting the commitments within the Natural Environment White Paper and the EU Biodiversity Strategy, 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' aims to *'halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'*<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> European Commission (2011) Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 [online] available at: <[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/EP\\_resolution\\_april2012.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/EP_resolution_april2012.pdf)> [accessed 14/10/19]

<sup>14</sup> Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: <<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>> [accessed 14/10/19]

<sup>15</sup> DEFRA (2011): 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services', [online] Available to download from: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services>> [accessed 14/10/19]

The recently published 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>16</sup> sets out the Government's environmental plan of action over the next quarter century, in the context of Brexit. The Plan aims to tackle the growing problems of waste and soil degradation, improving social justice through tackling pollution and promoting the mental and physical health benefits of the natural world. It also sets out how the Government will address the effects of climate change. These aims are supported by a range of policies which are focused on the following six key areas:

- Using and managing land sustainably;
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes;
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing;
- Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste;
- Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and
- Protecting and improving the global environment.

In this context, Goal 3 'Thriving plants and wildlife' and the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes' and Chapter 5 'Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans' directly relate to the Biodiversity and Geodiversity SEA theme.

At the local level, Policy CS12 (Environmental Assets) from the Core Strategy relates to the Biodiversity and Geodiversity SEA theme.

## Summary of Current Baseline

### European and Nationally designated sites

There are no European designated sites within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area. The closest European designated sites are as follows:

- Norfolk Valley Fens SAC, which is located at its closest 4.7 km northwest of the Neighbourhood Plan area;
- the Breckland SPA, which at its closest is 5.7 km south west of the Neighbourhood Plan area; and
- the River Wensum SAC, which at its closest 8.0 km north east of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

### Castle Acre Common SSSI

Castle Acre Common SSSI lies partly within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Notified in March 1990 'Castle Acre Common SSSI' is approximately 17.8 ha in size and is located in the south west corner of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The citation statement for the SSSI states the following<sup>17</sup>:

*'This site consists of a large area of unimproved grazing marsh on the banks of the River Nar. The grassland communities are exceptionally diverse and make this the most important valley grassland site in west Norfolk. Many different grassland types are present and these reflect underlying variations in soil acidity and wetness. Acidic flush communities are an unusual feature and occur where springs emerge from sands at the base of the valley sides. The marshy conditions provide suitable nesting sites for several species of wetland birds.'*

*The waterlogged soils in the valley-bottom support a marshy grassland flora dominated by a variety of species including marsh horsetail *Equisetum palustre*, bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*, marsh pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* and brown sedge *Carex disticha*. This rich community includes several other plants characteristic of such conditions, namely flat sedge *Blysmus compressus*, devil's bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* blunt-flowered rush *Juncus subnodulosus*. There is a gradation to tall fen vegetation on the wettest soils adjacent to the river and these areas are dominated by reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima*, common reed *Phragmites australis* or lesser pond sedge *Carex acutiformis*.*

*Damp, slightly acidic grassland occurs on the drier margins of the site. The rabbit-grazed short turf is dominated by sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, together with a variety of other grasses including creeping soft-*

<sup>16</sup> HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [accessed 14/10/19]

<sup>17</sup> Natural England (no date): 'Castle Acre Common Hill SSSI', [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1005965&SiteName=castle&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=> [accessed 14/10/19]



grass *Holcus mollis*, mat-grass *Nardus stricta* and sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*. Herb species are well-represented and notable species include meadow saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*.

The acidic flushes merge from the base of a bracken-covered slope and are marked by a narrow band of vegetation dominated by bog-mosses *Sphagnum* spp. Plants associated with this unusual community include marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*, common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and heath rush *Juncus squarrosus*.

Several pairs of snipe nest on the marshy areas and other breeding birds include lapwing, sedge warbler and cuckoo.'

The most recent condition assessments for the SSSI indicate that 100% of the SSSI is considered to be in a 'unfavourable - Recovering' condition.

### River Nar SSSI

The River Nar SSSI partly covers the south western boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Notified in March 1992 'River Nar SSSI' is approximately 212.4 ha in size. The citation statement for the SSSI states the following<sup>18</sup>:

*'The River Nar originates as a spring-fed stream, west of Mileham in Norfolk and flows for 42 km before joining the River Great Ouse at Kings Lynn, where a sluice prevents the penetration of seawater at high tide. The River combines the characteristics of a southern chalk stream and an East Anglian fen river. Together with the adjacent terrestrial habitats, the Nar is an outstanding river system of its type.'*

*The solid geology of the catchment is dominated by chalk of the Upper Cretaceous, which is overlain by glacial drift deposits of varying thickness. The source of the Nar lies in an area of clays, sands and gravels, though near Castle Acre this gives way to exposed chalk. At West Acre the Nar flows over the river valley gravels and then over alluvial silt from Narborough through the fens. The river water is base-rich, alkaline and recharged by clear springs flowing from the underlying chalk.*

*The upper Nar has a wide range of natural physical features incorporating riffles, pools, gravel beds and meanders, whilst the lower reaches below Narborough are embanked and steep sided with water flowing sluggishly through a predominantly arable flood plain. The variation in physical features and the influence of the underlying chalk give rise to a rich and diverse flora. Amongst the 78 species of riverine and bankside plants are many eutrophic and mesotrophic species, including 5 pondweeds and 8 bryophytes.*

*The flora of the first 10 km of the river, to West Lexham, is typical of a calcareous, lowland ditch community with an abundance of starwort *Callitriche* spp. and reed sweetgrass, *Glyceria maxima*. The next 12 km of the River, to Narborough Mill, is fast flowing over stoney substrates and is rich in chalk stream plants including narrow-leaved waterparsnip, *Berula erecta*; mare's-tail, *Hippuris vulgaris*; greater tussock-sedge, *Carex paniculata*; water crowfoot, *Ranunculus pseudofluitans* var. *vertumnus* and opposite-leaved pondweed, *Groenlandia densa*. The wet margins, with a constantly high water table typical of chalk streams, support a wide range of emergent plants. The final 18.5 m is embanked and although less physically diverse than the upper reaches, it possesses a contrasting flora with several species not found in the upper river. These plants are characteristic of sluggish flows and include 3 pondweeds, *Potamogeton* spp.; 2 water crowfoots, *Ranunculus* spp.; hornwort, *Ceratophyllum demersum*; water-milfoil, *Myriophyllum spicatum*; and river water-dropwort, *Oenanthe aquatica*.*

*The Nar is well-known locally for its brown trout, *Salmo trutta*. Since 1985, trout numbers have increased steadily; pike, *Esox lucius*, numbers have remained fairly stable whilst roach, *Rutilus*, and eel, *Anguilla*, have continued to be the dominant species in the river. A further 11 species have been recorded in the Nar although they contribute only a small amount to the total fish biomass e.g.: chubb, *Leuciscus cephalus*; tench, *Tinca*; gudgeon, *Gobio*; rudd, *Scardinius erythrophthalmus*; bullhead, *Cottus gobio*; rainbow trout, *Salmo gairdneri*; spined loach, *Cobitis taenia*; and roach x bream, *Abramis brama*, hybrids.*

*The chalk acts as a natural aquifer and thus maintains flows throughout the year, peaking in the spring with frequent flooding of adjacent land. This has led to the development of a range of adjacent semi-natural inundation communities and wetland habitats. Many have their water-tables intricately linked to and therefore dependent on the river whilst others are dependent on seasonal inundation. In the upper reaches of the river*

<sup>18</sup> Natural England (no date): 'River Nar SSSI', [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1006323&SiteName=river> [accessed 14/10/19]

*extensive areas of traditionally managed unimproved pasture survive. A combination of summer cattle grazing and hay making have encouraged the establishment of a variety of wetland species, including southern marsh orchid, *Dactylorhiza majalis* subsp. *praetermissa*; yellow rattle, *Rhinanthus minor*, and bogbean, *Menyanthes trifoliata*.*

*Where land adjacent to the river is seasonally flooded and has not been reclaimed as pasture, areas of rough fen and unmanaged scrub remain. Further downstream this scrub has developed into mature wet woodland, dominated by alder carr. The result is a river corridor of considerable importance to wildlife. Although the river channel can be regarded as nationally important in its own right, the quality and type of adjacent habitats increases its value for fauna which use both the river and floodplain. Breeding birds include snipe, lapwing, redshank, sedge and grasshopper warblers.*

*The variations in river profile including slope, width and depth are important factors in the provision of nesting sites for kingfishers and sand martins, and the combination of water meadow, fen, scrub and woodland in the upper Nar provides feeding and resting grounds for a number of other birds including grey wagtail, reed warblers, teal, marsh harriers, willow and marsh tits. Entomological studies are incomplete but 12 different species of dragonfly were recorded in 1991 at several locations along the Nar; this represents an outstanding assemblage for the UK.'*

The most recent condition assessments for the SSSI indicate that 56.68% of the SSSI is considered to be in a 'favourable' condition, 28.41% is considered to be in an 'unfavourable – recovering' condition and 12.91% is considered to be in an 'unfavourable- no change' condition.

### SSSI Impact Risk Zones

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, including residential, rural-residential and rural non-residential. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs.

The south eastern and south western part of the Neighbourhood Plan area that surround Castle Acre Common SSSI and River Nar SSSI are within an SSSI IRZ for 'Large non-residential developments outside existing settlements/urban areas where net additional gross internal floorspace is > 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or footprint exceeds 0.2ha', 'Residential development of 50 units or more' and 'Any residential development of 10 or more houses outside existing settlements/urban areas'. This includes the main built up part of Castle Acre.

### Priority Habitats

There are a variety of BAP Priority Habitats located within and/or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area, predominantly areas of deciduous woodland, lowland heathland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and lowland calcareous grassland. These are predominantly located around the SSSI's towards the south of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

**Figure 3.1** below shows the designated wildlife sites and BAP priority habitats located within and adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area.

### Summary of Future Baseline

Habitats and species are likely to continue to be offered protection through the higher level planning framework, however; they will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the Neighbourhood Plan area with the potential for negative effects on the wider ecological network, which can be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. The Neighbourhood Plan presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species, undesignated sites, and connections between designated sites and undesignated sites at a localised scale, and at an early stage of planning for future growth. This is particularly relevant in the siting of new small scale housing development.



## A3 – Climate Change

### Context Review

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report aiming to understand the current and future climate risks and opportunities. The evidence report contains six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years, see below<sup>19</sup> :

- Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;
- Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures;
- Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;
- Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;
- Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals.

The UK Climate Change Act<sup>20</sup> was passed in 2008 and established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. It also highlighted the role it would take in contributing to collective action to tackle climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, and more recently as part of the UN-led Paris Agreement.

The Climate Change Act includes the following:

- 2050 Target. The Act commits the UK to reducing emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels.
- Carbon Budgets. The Act requires the Government to set legally binding 'carbon budgets'. A carbon budget is a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period. The carbon budgets are designed to reflect the cost-effective path to achieving the UK's long-term objectives. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.
- The Committee on Climate Change was set up to advise the Government on emissions targets, and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The National Adaptation Programme requires the Government to assess the risks to the UK from climate change, prepare a strategy to address them, and encourage key organisations to do the same. For more detail, visit the UK adaptation policy page 21.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to '*contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment*' including by '*mitigating and adapting to climate change*' and '*moving to a low carbon economy.*' *'The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.'*
- '*Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.'*

<sup>19</sup> GOV.UK: 'UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report January 2017', [online] available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017>> [accessed 15/10/19]

<sup>20</sup> GOV.UK (2008): 'Climate Change Act 2008', [online] available at: <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>> [accessed 15/10/19]

<sup>21</sup> Committee on Climate Change (2017): 'UK Adaptation Policy' [online] available at @ <<https://www.theccc.org.uk/tackling-climate-change/preparing-for-climate-change/uk-adaptation-policy/>> [accessed 15/10/19]



- *'Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.'*
- *'Direct development away from areas at highest risk of flooding (whether existing or future). 'Where development is necessary, it should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.'*

The Flood and Water Management Act<sup>22</sup> highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings);
- Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water;
- Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and
- Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).<sup>23</sup>

At the local level, policies in the Core Strategy that relate to the Climate Change SEA theme include:

- CS08 (Sustainable Development);
- CS12 (Environmental Assets); and
- CS14 (Infrastructure Provision).

## Summary of Current Baseline

### *Contribution to climate change*

In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that King's Lynn and West Norfolk has higher per capita emissions in comparison to Norfolk and England as a whole since 2005 (see **Table 4.1**). King's Lynn and West Norfolk has also seen a 29.8% reduction in the percentage of total emissions per capita between 2005 and 2016, lower than the reductions for Norfolk (34.1%) and England (37.6%).

**Table 4.1: Carbon dioxide emissions and sources, plus emissions per capita, 2005-2016<sup>24</sup>**

	Industrial and Commercial (t CO <sub>2</sub> )	Domestic (t CO <sub>2</sub> )	Transport (t CO <sub>2</sub> )	Total (t CO <sub>2</sub> )
<b>King's Lynn and West Norfolk</b>				
2005	5.2	2.9	3.0	11.4
2006	5.3	2.9	2.9	11.5
2007	5.4	2.8	2.9	11.5
2008	6.2	2.7	2.8	12.1
2009	6.2	2.5	2.7	11.8
2010	7.1	2.7	2.7	12.8

<sup>22</sup> Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>> [accessed 15/10/19]

<sup>23</sup> N.B. The provision of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 came into force on the 1st of October 2012 and makes it mandatory for any development in England or Wales to incorporate SuDs.

<sup>24</sup> Department of Energy and Climate Change (2018) 2005 to 2016 UK local and regional CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – data tables [online] available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2016>> [accessed 18/09/19]

	Industrial and Commercial (t CO <sub>2</sub> )	Domestic (t CO <sub>2</sub> )	Transport (t CO <sub>2</sub> )	Total (t CO <sub>2</sub> )
2011	6.4	2.3	2.6	11.7
2012	6.4	2.4	2.6	11.8
2013	6.3	2.3	2.6	11.6
2014	4.5	2.0	2.6	9.5
2015	4.9	1.9	2.6	9.8
2016	3.2	1.7	2.7	8.0
<b>Norfolk</b>				
2005	3.2	3.2	2.5	8.4
2006	3.2	3.2	2.4	8.3
2007	3.1	3.1	2.3	8.1
2008	3.4	3.4	2.3	8.0
2009	3.0	3.0	2.2	7.6
2010	3.1	3.1	2.2	8.0
2011	3.0	3.0	2.1	7.2
2012	2.5	2.5	2.1	7.4
2013	2.4	2.4	2.2	7.2
2014	1.9	1.9	2.2	6.4
2015	3.2	3.2	2.5	6.2
2016	3.2	3.2	2.4	5.7
<b>England</b>				
2005	3.8	2.5	2.3	8.5
2006	3.8	2.5	2.2	8.4
2007	3.6	2.4	2.2	8.1
2008	3.5	2.4	2.1	7.8
2009	3.0	2.1	2.0	7.0
2010	3.0	2.3	2.0	7.2
2011	2.7	2.0	1.9	6.5
2012	2.9	2.1	1.9	6.8
2013	2.8	2.0	1.9	6.6
2014	2.4	1.7	1.9	5.9
2015	2.3	1.6	1.9	5.7

	Industrial and Commercial (t CO <sub>2</sub> )	Domestic (t CO <sub>2</sub> )	Transport (t CO <sub>2</sub> )	Total (t CO <sub>2</sub> )
2016	2.0	1.5	1.9	5.3

### *Potential effects of climate change*

Following the success of the UK Climate Projections released in 2009 (UKCP09), the Met Office recently released the UK Climate Projections for 2018 (UKCP18).<sup>25</sup> UKCP18 provides the most up to date climate observations and projections out to 2100, using cutting-edge climate science. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the median estimate for effects of climate change on the East by 2040-2059 are as follows<sup>26</sup>:

- Increases in mean summer temperature of 1.5-2.5°C, and mean winter temperature increases of 1-2°C; and
- Decreases in mean summer precipitation of up to 30%, and increases in mean winter precipitation of up to 30%.

Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Neighbourhood Plan area, including:

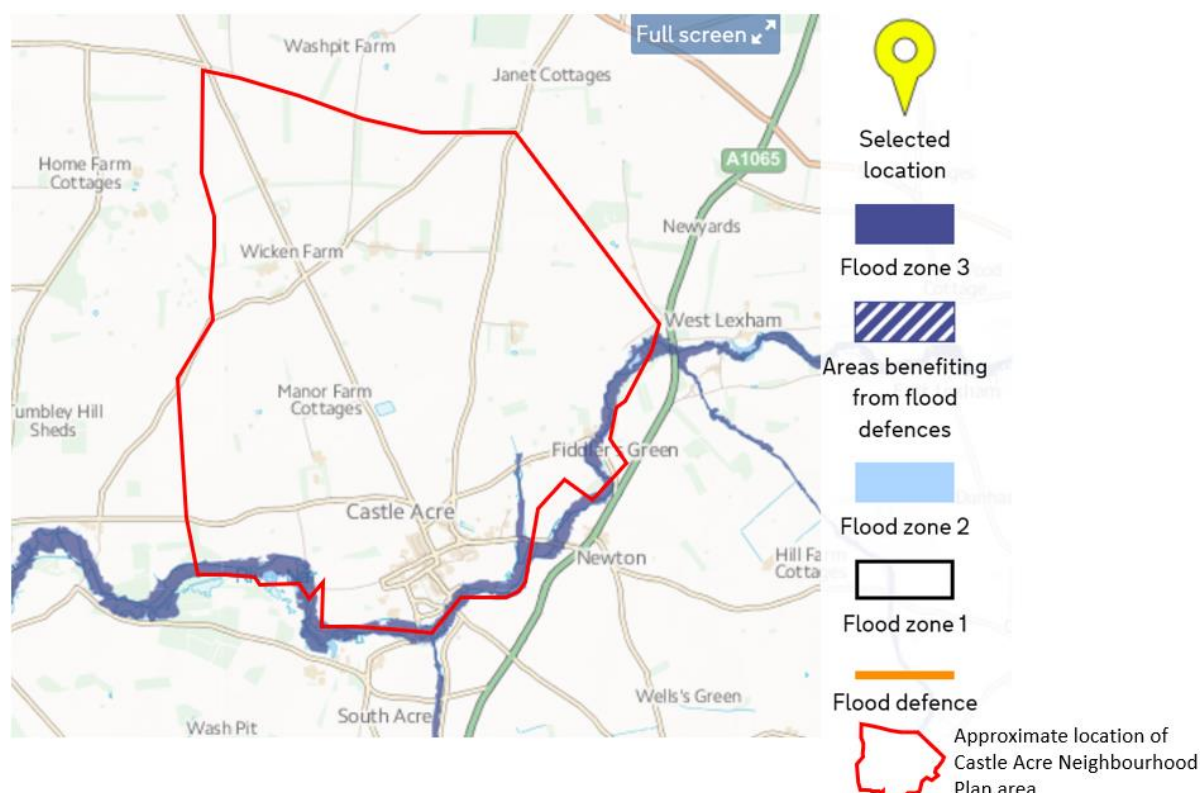
- Effects on water resources from climate change;
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for extraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

<sup>25</sup> Data released 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 [online] available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/collaboration/ukcp> [accessed 18/09/19]

<sup>26</sup> Met Office (2019) Land Projection Maps: Probabilistic Projections [online] available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/land-projection-maps> [accessed 21/10/19]



## Flood risk



**Figure 4.1: Fluvial flood risk within the Neighbourhood Plan area<sup>27</sup>**

As shown in **Figure 4.1**, the majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within Flood Zone 1, showing that there is a <0.1% chance (1 in 1000) of river flooding in any given year. There are areas of land adjacent to the River Nar (southern and eastern borders of the Neighbourhood Plan area) which are located within Flood Risk Zone 3, and have a >1% chance of being flooded each year.

Completed in 2018, the most recent Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)<sup>28</sup> for King's Lynn and West Norfolk highlights that the River Nar poses a significant risk for fluvial flooding in places. However, modelling indicates that the River Nar is relatively insensitive to the effects of climate change and the impacts of climate change are not shown to increase flood extents significantly along this water course.

Some areas of land surrounding the River Nar within the Neighbourhood Plan area are also at low/medium risk from surface water flooding, as depicted in **Figure 4.2**.

<sup>27</sup> GOV UK (2019): 'Flood Map for Planning', [online] available at: <<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>> [accessed 15/10/19]

<sup>28</sup> JBA Consulting (2018): 'King's Lynn and West Norfolk Strategic Flood Risk Assessment' [online] available at: <[https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/file/5300/strategic\\_flood\\_risk\\_assessment\\_final\\_report](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/file/5300/strategic_flood_risk_assessment_final_report)> [accessed 15/10/19]

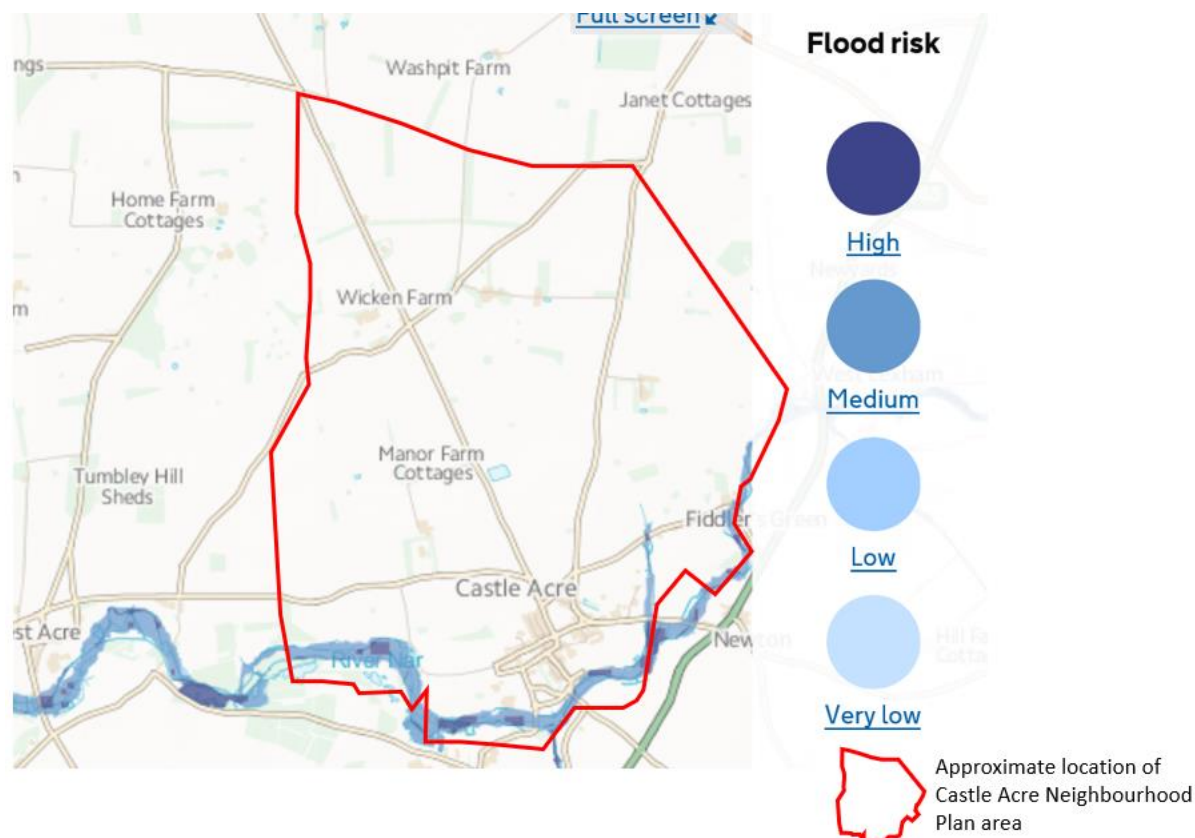


Figure 4.2: Surface water flood risk within the Neighbourhood Plan area<sup>29</sup>

## Summary of Future Baseline

Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the Neighbourhood Plan area, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change, with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.

In terms of climate change contribution, per capita greenhouse gas emissions generated in the Neighbourhood Plan area may continue to decrease with wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies, including electric cars and buses. However, increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

<sup>29</sup> GOV UK (2017): 'Long term flood risk assessment for locations in England', [online] available to access from: <<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/>> [accessed 15/10/19]

## A4 - Landscape

### Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- *'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [...]. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.'*
- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for *'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.'*
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments *'are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).'*
- *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
  - i. *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils*
  - ii. *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and*
  - iii. *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.'*

At the local level, policies in Core Strategy that relate to the Landscape SEA theme include:

- CS08 (Sustainable Development); and
- CS12 (Environmental Assets).

## Baseline Summary

### Summary of Current Baseline

#### National Character Areas

National Character Areas (NCAs) are landscape areas which share similar characteristics, following natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. Developed by Natural England, NCA profiles describe the natural and cultural features that shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to their character. The southern part of the Neighbourhood Plan area is within the 'The Brecks' NCA<sup>30</sup> and the northern part of the Neighbourhood Plan area is within 'North West Norfolk' NCA<sup>31</sup>. A small part of the eastern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area also lies within 'Mid Norfolk' NCA<sup>32</sup>.

The Brecks NCA has an underlying chalk geology which has produced a low, gently undulating plateau, largely covered with sandy soils of glacial origin. The Brecks is among the warmest and driest parts of the United Kingdom, with a markedly less maritime climate than other parts of England. This aspect, combined with its free-draining soils, has greatly influenced the landscape character and led to the development of dry heath and grassland communities. Key characteristics of this NCA include:

- A largely open, gently undulating landscape with a low-lying, dry plateau that rises to the north. Subtle long slopes lead to alluvial flats containing shallow, meandering wooded river valleys.
- The chalk solid geology lies close to the surface and is covered by thin deposits of sand and flint. The effects of repeated freeze and thaw in the tundra-like climate of the last ice age have produced intricate ground patterns, with patches of calcium-rich soils interspersed with acidic conditions.

<sup>30</sup> Natural England (2014): 'NCA Profile 85: The Brecks (NE385)', [online] available at: <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4282581>> [accessed 15/10/19]

<sup>31</sup> Natural England (2014): 'NCA Profile 76: North West Norfolk (NE520)', [online] available at: <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5300920728420352>> [accessed 15/10/19]

<sup>32</sup> Natural England (2014): 'NCA Profile 84: Mid Norfolk (NE523)', [online] available at: <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4560839075954688>> [accessed 15/10/19]

- Vast commercial conifer plantations form a forest landscape, unique in lowland England. The regular geometric shape and form and the repeated occurrence of plantations and shelterbelts unify the land cover pattern, forming wooded horizons and framing views into adjacent landscapes.
- Predominantly agricultural land use focused on arable production, with planned courtyard farmsteads and large, regular 18th- and 19th-century enclosure fields often clearly defined by Scots pine and beech shelterbelts or neat hawthorn hedges, indicative of large estate enclosure. The regular field layouts combine with long, straight, undulating roads to create a geometric landscape character.
- Free-draining geology and soils with naturally low fertility support internationally important lowland heathland and mosaics of lowland acid and calcareous grassland that bring colour and textural variation to the landscape and provide a biodiversity-rich resource.
- A high concentration of important archaeological features, resulting from a long continuity of human settlement, include Neolithic flint mines, medieval churches, priories and rabbit warrens, 18th- and 19th-century designed parklands and estate villages, Second World War defence features and 20th-century abandoned settlements in the military training area known as the Stanford Training Area (STANTA).
- Traditional knapped flint, clunch (a form of impure chalk) and 'white' brick are characteristic building materials.

The North West Norfolk NCA has a very open, rolling topography which contrasts with the surrounding coastal, fenland and other lowland NCAs. This NCA is very important for agriculture with a large-scale arable and grassland landscape comprising extensive arable cropping and some areas of mixed farming, – the dominant livestock type is pigs. Key characteristics of this NCA include:

- Open, rolling arable landscape, accentuated by the large geometric field pattern of the 18th century and offering frequent long views.
- Extensive arable cropping and some areas of mixed farming. Fertile and versatile light soils known as the 'Good Sands' in the east. The arable habitats support nationally important assemblages of farmland birds, including grey partridge and turtle dove.
- The shallow dip slope of a low Chalk escarpment containing important aquifers slopes west to east, separated from the coastal strip along The Wash by a distinctive scarp slope.
- Significant belts of mixed woodland and plantation and some remnant heath on the Greensand in the west.
- Woodland is found primarily on the steeper slopes of the scarp, valley sides and areas of the dip slope capped with clay-with-flints. Well wooded hedgerows and shaws are an important component of the field boundaries, contributing to a strongly wooded character. Much of the woodland is ancient.
- Dominant pattern of large-scale rectangular fields, with well-trimmed hawthorn hedges and mature hedgerow trees (predominantly oak and beech) away from the northern area. Scots pine rows are striking field boundary features in the west.
- Rivers are prominent in the west and north of the area where they contribute to a more intimate, pastoral character, with small areas of flood plain grazing marsh.
- Small villages and outlying farms with flint, usually clay-tiled, buildings but some built from distinctive orange sandstone (carstone) and sometimes chalk on the western escarpment, with clunch – an impure variety of chalk – sometimes used further east.
- There is a dispersed settlement pattern, often clustered around a green, common or pond, and linked by a few roads, straight and often with very wide verges, especially in the northern part of the area. Some of the villages attract large numbers of tourists and, in the case of Walsingham, pilgrims.

The Mid Norfolk NCA is a broadly flat, rural landscape which occupies the northern section of the East Anglian Plain. This is ancient countryside with a long-settled agricultural character, where arable land is enclosed by winding lanes and hedgerows, interspersed with woodland and heath and dissected by lush pastoral river valleys. Key characteristics of this NCA include:

- Broadly flat, glacial till plateau dissected by river valleys which create a more intricate landscape to the west of Norwich.
- Chalk bedrock overlain by gravels, sands and glacial till left behind by the retreating ice of Anglian glaciations, and the resulting complexity of soils, determine natural vegetation patterns.
- Underlying chalk aquifer; small, fast-flowing chalk streams and biodiversity-rich, wide, lush river valleys with wooded valley slopes, including the internationally important chalk-fed River Wensum.
- Tranquil agricultural landscape with extensive areas of arable land, dominated by cereals with break-cropping of sugar beet and oilseed rape, and some pastures along valley floors.

- Ancient countryside, much of it enclosed in the 14th century, with a sporadically rationalised patchwork field system, sinuous lanes and mixed hedges with hedgerow oaks.
- Large number of 18th-century estates with their associated parkland, and a great density and stylistic variety of churches which are prominent features in the landscape.
- A mix of villages and many isolated farmsteads within a complex minor road network, with a traditional pattern of market towns connected by main roads, and the city of Norwich providing a centre for cultural and economic activity.

### Local Landscape Character

A landscape character assessment was carried out in 2007 for the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. The borough is broken down into 11 landscape character types and 61 landscape character areas. The Neighbourhood Plan area lies predominantly within 'Little Massingham and Castle Acre' character area and parts of it are within 'Great Massingham' character area.<sup>33</sup>

'Little Massingham and Castle Acre' character area is described in the landscape character assessment as:

*Situated to the east of the Borough, this area of open farmland is characterised by strongly rolling topography. The landscape consists of predominantly arable farmland with a large regular field pattern broken up by belts and copses of mixed and coniferous woodland and plantations. Generally mature intact hedgerows with oak hedgerow trees demarcate field boundaries. Narrow country lanes cross the rural landscape providing access to the villages and isolated dwellings. The roads are often lined with mature trees that form canopies across the roads creating a sense of enclosure. Amongst the patchwork of fields lie scattered farmsteads and cottages. Settlement is concentrated in the southeastern corner of the area in Castle Acre with other villages in the area including the edge of Little Massington in the northeast and Gayton Thorpe in the southwest. The buildings in the villages are often in local vernacular style with chalk and flint facing to the walls. Key landscape features within the landscape include the mature parkland south of Home Farm with mature decaying pastureland and scattered trees and the circular marl pits with beech trees. Just to the south of the character area, the valley of the River Nar meanders across the landscape. Water meadows associated with the river corridors also contribute to distinctive character. The area has a very strong sense of tranquillity and sense of isolation.*

The inherent landscape sensitivities of this character area consist of:

- Mature landscape structure including belts and copses, woodland, mature trees and patches of intact hedgerow.
- Landscape setting of the villages.
- Distinctive combinations of traditional building materials within small village settlements.
- Strong sense of tranquillity and isolation throughout the area.
- Strong sense of openness, with open views over the farmland.
- Strong recognisable sense of place.
- Mature corridor of the River Nar (to the south of the character area) and associated habitats.

Landscape planning guidelines should:

- Seek to conserve and enhance the existing belts and copses of plantation woodland and other tall vegetation within the area and conserve the landscape setting of Massingham and West Acre.
- Seek to conserve the generally undeveloped, rural character of the area and related strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Seek to conserve the scarce settlement pattern, which is characteristic of the area. • Ensure that any new appropriate development responds to historic settlement pattern and is well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Seek to ensure the sensitive location of development involving tall structures (such as telecommunications masts and wind turbines for example) in relation to prominent skyline locations both within the character area and within adjacent character areas.
- Seek to promote the use of local materials within villages.

<sup>33</sup> King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council (2007): 'King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Landscape Character Assessment' [online], available at: < [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/download/77/landscape\\_character\\_assessment](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/download/77/landscape_character_assessment) > [accessed 15/10/19]

'Great Massingham' character area is described in the landscape character assessment as:

*Situated to the east of the Borough, this area of farmland plateau is centred on the village of Great Massingham. The area is characterised by flat medium to large, mainly regular arable fields generally separated by mature, generally intact hedgerows with mature oak hedgerow trees. Woodland copses, and tree belts intersperse the arable farmland and in places limit views across the area. Hedgerows with mature oak hedgerow trees also line the narrow single-lane roads. Settlement pattern predominantly consists of the village of Great Massingham, which has narrow country lanes radiating out from the village centre. The village is centred on a large pond and village green, which contributes to the character of the area. The older buildings in the village are faced with chalk and flint dressings. The southern half of the village forms ribbon development along the roads entering the village. To the east of Great Massingham, a private airfield (with associated small industrial units), dominates the character of the area. To the southwest of the area, a small area of parkland associated with High House (with associated mixed deciduous and coniferous trees set in an area of grassland) contributes to localised sense of place. There is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity apparent throughout the area.*

The inherent landscape sensitivities of this character area consist of:

- Wide, panoramic views across farmland.
- Landscape setting of the village of Great Massingham.
- Striking built character (combination of brickwork, chalk clunch and flint).
- Coherent and recognisable small-scale settlement density and pattern.
- Relatively strong sense of tranquillity and isolation throughout the area.

Landscape planning guidelines should:

- Seek to conserve and enhance the existing belts and copses of (plantation) woodland, other tall vegetation and parkland within the area. Seek to conserve the generally undeveloped, rural character of the area and related strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Seek to conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Seek to conserve panoramic views across the area and adjacent areas.
- Seek to conserve the sparse and relatively isolated settlement pattern, which is characteristic of the area.
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of Great Massingham.
- Seek to ensure that potential new small-scale development within Great Massingham is consistent with existing settlement pattern, density and traditional built form.
- Seek to promote the use of local materials, appropriate to existing built character and form.
- Seek to conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.

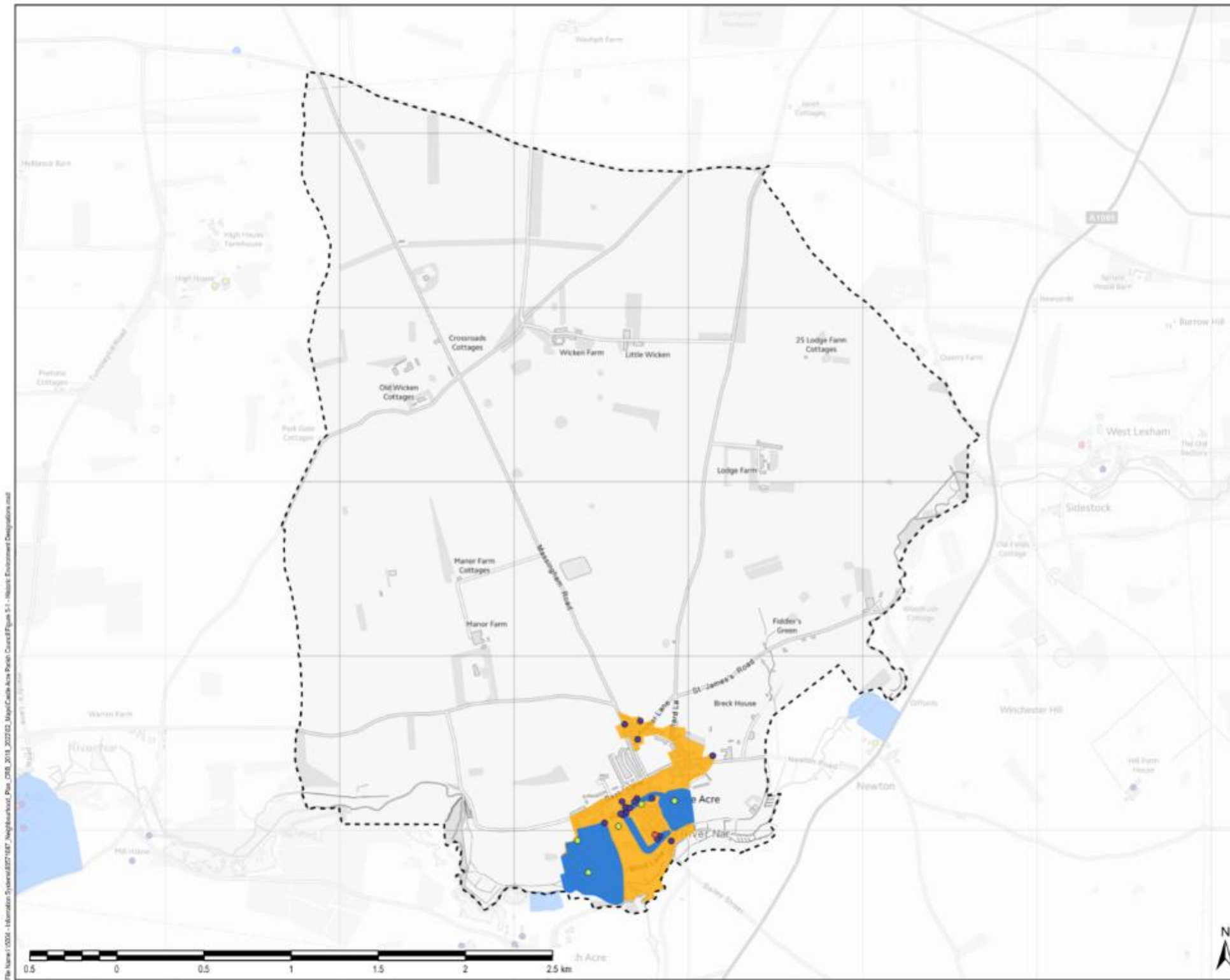
## Summary of Future Baseline

New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape and villagescape character and quality in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes from the loss of landscape features and areas with an important visual amenity value.

Inappropriate levels of development within the open countryside could negatively impact upon the landscape features.



File Name: I:\0006 - Information Systems\007187 - Neighbourhood Plan\_2503\_2018\_202302\_Maps\Castle Acre Parish Council\Figure 5.1 - Historic Environment Designations.mxd



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ISSUE TAKING IT INTO CONSIDERATION AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT

**LEGEND**

- Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Conservation Area
- Record of Scheduled Monument
- Listed Building**
  - Grade I
  - Grade II\*
  - Grade II

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**Purpose of Issue:** DRAFT

**Client:** CASTLE ACRE PARISH COUNCIL

**Project Title:** CASTLE ACRE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

**Drawing Title:** HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DESIGNATIONS

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Date
CN	JW	TS	15/10/2018

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**Geometric Datum:** FIGURE 5.1

**Rev:** 01



## A5 – Historic Environment

### Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Heritage assets should be recognised as an *'irreplaceable resource'* that should be conserved in a *'manner appropriate to their significance'*, taking account of *'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits'* of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Plans should set out a *'positive strategy'* for the *'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment'*, including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- *'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'*

The policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes' and Goal 6 'Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment' of the Government's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" directly relates to the Landscape and Historic Environment SEA theme.

The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England<sup>34</sup> sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.

Historic England is the statutory body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment. Guidance and advice notes provide essential information for local planning authorities, neighbourhood groups, developers, consultants, landowners and other interested parties on historic environment considerations, and are regularly reviewed and updated in light of legislative changes. The following guidance and advice notes are particularly relevant and should be read in conjunction with the others.

Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (February 2016)<sup>35</sup> outlines ways to manage change that conserves and enhances historic areas in order to positively contribute to sustainable development. Principally, the advice note emphasises the importance of:

- Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin the designations; and
- Recognising the value of implementing controls through the appraisal and/or management plan which positively contribute to the significance and value of conservation areas.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA): Historic England Advice Note 8 (December 2016)<sup>36</sup> provides support to all stakeholders involved in assessing the effects of certain plans and programmes on the historic environment. It offers advice on heritage considerations during each stage of the SA/SEA process and helps to establish the basis for robust and comprehensive assessments.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (December 2017)<sup>37</sup> provides general advice on understanding setting, and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets and allow that significance to be appreciated, as well as advice on how views can contribute to setting. Specifically, Part 2 of the advice note outlines a five stepped approach to conducting a broad assessment of setting:

<sup>34</sup> HM Government (2010) The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England [online] available at: <[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/6763.asp](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.asp)> [accessed 16/10/19]

<sup>35</sup> Historic England (2016): 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Advice Note 1', [online] available at: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/>> [accessed 16/10/19]

<sup>36</sup> Historic England (2016): 'SA and SEA: Advice Note 8' [online] available at: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>> [accessed 16/10/19]

<sup>37</sup> Historic England (2017): 'Setting of Heritage Assets: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition', [online] available to download via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/>> [accessed 16/10/19]

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic England Advice Note 11 (October 2018)<sup>38</sup> outlines the importance of considering the historic environment whilst preparing the plan (section 1), which culminates in a checklist of relevant issues to consider, followed by an overview of what this means in terms of evidence gathering (section 2). Sections 3 to 5 of the advice note focus on how to translate evidence into policy, understand the SEA process and Historic England's role in neighbourhood planning.

At the local level, policies in the Core Strategy that relate to the Historic Environment SEA theme include:

- CS08 (Sustainable Development);
- CS12 (Environmental Assets); and
- CS14 (Infrastructure Provision).

## Baseline Summary

### Summary of Current Baseline

The Neighbourhood Plan area has an exceptionally rich historic environment resource, focused on the historic core of the village. **Figure 5.1** identifies the designated heritage assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms.

The Neighbourhood Plan area contains five Grade I, one Grade II\* and 17 Grade II listed buildings. These listed buildings are all located within the Castle Acre conservation area (see below).

The Grade I listed buildings are as follows:

- Bailey Gate
- Remains of Gatehouse of Cluniac Benedictine Priory of St Mary and St Peter And St Paul
- Castle Acre Castle
- Church of St James
- Remains of Cluniac Benedictine Priory of St Mary and St Peter and St Paul

The Grade II\* listed building is as follows:

- Tudor Lodgings and Attached Service Wing/Cottage, Pales Green

None of the listed buildings within the Neighbourhood Plan area are identified as 'at risk' on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register<sup>39</sup>.

The Neighbourhood Plan area contains two scheduled monuments: 'Castle Acre Castle, town defences and Bailey Gate' (located near the southern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area within the built up area of Castle Acre) and 'Castle Acre Priory' (also located on the southern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, next to Castle Acre Castle).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Historic England (2018): 'Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment', [online] available at: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/>> [accessed 16/10/19]

<sup>39</sup> Historic England (2019) Heritage at Risk Register [online] available at: <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/> [accessed 20/09/19]

<sup>40</sup> Historic England (2019): 'Castle Acre Priory', [online] available at: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1015870>> [accessed 16/10/19]

The Castle Acre Castle monument includes the earthworks and other structural remains of Castle Acre Castle, the remains of the defensive works which enclosed the area of the Norman town to the west of the castle, and the gatehouse which guarded the northern entry to the town. These features are located in the southern part of the modern village of Castle Acre, on the northern slope of the valley of the River Nar, above the point where the river is crossed by the Peddars Way.<sup>41</sup>

Castle Acre Priory includes the standing and buried remains of monastic buildings and various associated earthworks within a precinct which is defined on the north east, east and south east sides by the remains of a medieval boundary wall. It is considered to include some of the finest and most impressive surviving monastic remains in Norfolk and the core of the monument, which is maintained for display to the public, is a valuable educational and recreational amenity. The architectural and decorative details preserved in the upstanding ruins of the church and claustral buildings, and most notably in the west front of the church, provide a striking example of the elaborate style characteristic of Cluniac monasteries, and the wide range of building remains and earthworks surviving within the known boundaries of the monastic precinct illustrates much of the layout of the monastery as a whole and the way in which the life of the monastic community was organised.

Conservation areas are designated because of their special architectural and historic interest<sup>42</sup>. Conservation area appraisals are a tool to demonstrate the area's special interest, explaining the reasons for designation and providing a greater understanding and articulation of its character - mentioned within the 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' advice note by Historic England. Ideally, appraisals should be regularly reviewed as part of the management of the conservation area and can be developed into a management plan.

A conservation area covers a significant part of the built-up area of Castle Acre, where a cluster of listed buildings are present. However, a conservation area appraisal has not been prepared for this conservation area at present. There is however a Conservation Area Character Statement which highlights the special qualities that underpin the character of the conservation area, justifying its designation.<sup>43</sup>

The Castle Acre Conservation Area was first designated in 1971, the first to be designated in Norfolk, and extended to include the area of St James' Green in 1990.

The Conservation Area Character Statement provides the following description:

*Castle Acre was a Roman settlement situated on the Peddars Way Roman Road at the point where it crosses the River Nar. The Romans withdrew in the early part of the 5th Century but finds from an early pagan burial ground, and a later cremation cemetery, suggest that the Anglo Saxons took over the settlement. This part of Norfolk was called The Field 'Acre'; the area with the castle therefore became Castle Acre.*

*Castle Acre looks out over an agricultural setting of large arable fields on the distant higher ground and smaller scale pastures in its immediate vicinity. It dominates the skyline when viewed from the valley bottom through which flows the clear chalk watercourse of the River Nar. One of the best views of Castle Acre can be gained from the A1065 Swaffham to Fakenham road, to the east of the village where the Castle, Priory, church and village rooftops are clearly seen nestled amongst the mature trees on the valley side.*

*Castle Acre is a village of contrast with old cottages, open village greens, mature trees, enclosed spaces, narrow streets and sunken lanes. It's antiquity is very evident in the way that the village fabric is imposed onto and around the 12th Century castle precinct, with the remains of the Cluniac Benedictine Priory standing a short distance away, beside the river on the side of the valley. These two great scheduled ancient monuments, cared for by English Heritage, contribute significantly to Castle Acre's outstanding conservation area.*

*The core of the village is contained within or beside the defensive earthworks. The Bailey Gate and some of the walls remain. Sited on the steep valley side, the abrupt changes in level of Castle Acre add considerable interest and provide dramatic outward views between the buildings to the countryside beyond. The character of the old village derives from its compact and historic form and from the high proportion of old buildings which exhibit continuity in scale, materials and detailing.*

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<sup>41</sup> Historic England (2019): 'Castle Acre Castle, town defences and Bailey Gate', [online] available at: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1017909>> [accessed 16/10/19]

<sup>42</sup> Historic England (2019): 'Conservation Areas', [online] available at: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/conservation-areas/>> [accessed 20/09/19]

<sup>43</sup> Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk (2019): 'Castle Acre Conservation Area Character Statement', [online] available at: <[https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20081/conservation\\_and\\_listed\\_buildings/139/conservation\\_areas](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20081/conservation_and_listed_buildings/139/conservation_areas)> [accessed 16/10/19]

*The centre of village life is found at Stocks Green and High Street. There is one pub, a tea room and an antiques shop situated around the village green with its large lime trees. The village is a popular location for visitors and walkers and is especially busy at weekends. Close by is the village shop, post office and fish and chip shop and a hairdressers. There is a Village Hall which accommodates a number of cultural and community events as well as providing a meeting space for formal meetings. The facility is also available for hire for weddings and social events, etc. There is large Playing Field which is the 'home' of the village football, cricket and bowls clubs as well as a venue for the village fete and summer ball.*

*Castle Acre Conservation Area has a series of distinct areas: the Castle, the old planned town of Bailey Street and Pales Green; Stocks Green; St James's Church and the pastures to the south of the village incorporating the site of the Priory; and St James Green/North Street to the northeast. These areas are connected by a number of interesting lanes.*

*The site of the Castle is elevated and has commanding views over the Nar valley. Its setting is one of undulating grass banks interspersed with the remnants of chalk and flint walls. The shell keep castle is a masonry enclosure, extending around the top of an earlier motte which has steep banks. From the castle grounds, St James's Church tower can be seen together with the rooftops of properties along Bailey Street, amongst tree canopies. Trees provide a backdrop for the ruins and the area around the village hall provides a viewpoint for the castle walls, the River Nar and its surrounding countryside.*

It should be noted that not all the area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are important by local communities. For example, open spaces and key distinctive buildings in the area are likely to be of value for local people.

The Castle Acre Conservation Area statement recognises that the character of Castle Acre conservation area benefits from a wealth of listed buildings and the prominence of nationally renowned scheduled ancient monuments. However, a good deal of the townscape character rests on the vernacular styles of its unlisted historic buildings. 173 of these historic buildings have been identified, representing 63 per cent of the total number of buildings in the conservation area. These important unlisted buildings have been identified because of their prominent position, use of traditional materials, their character is substantially intact, and because they often relate to other historic buildings close by.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) is the principal record of the historic environment in Norfolk, going beyond the national heritage list to record many non-designated heritage assets. This is identified in both the NPPF and NPPG as an important information source for the historic environment that should be used in planning decisions. The Norfolk HER provides a report detailing all the heritage records within the parish. The figure below denotes the locations of the listings on the HER in association with Castle Acre village.

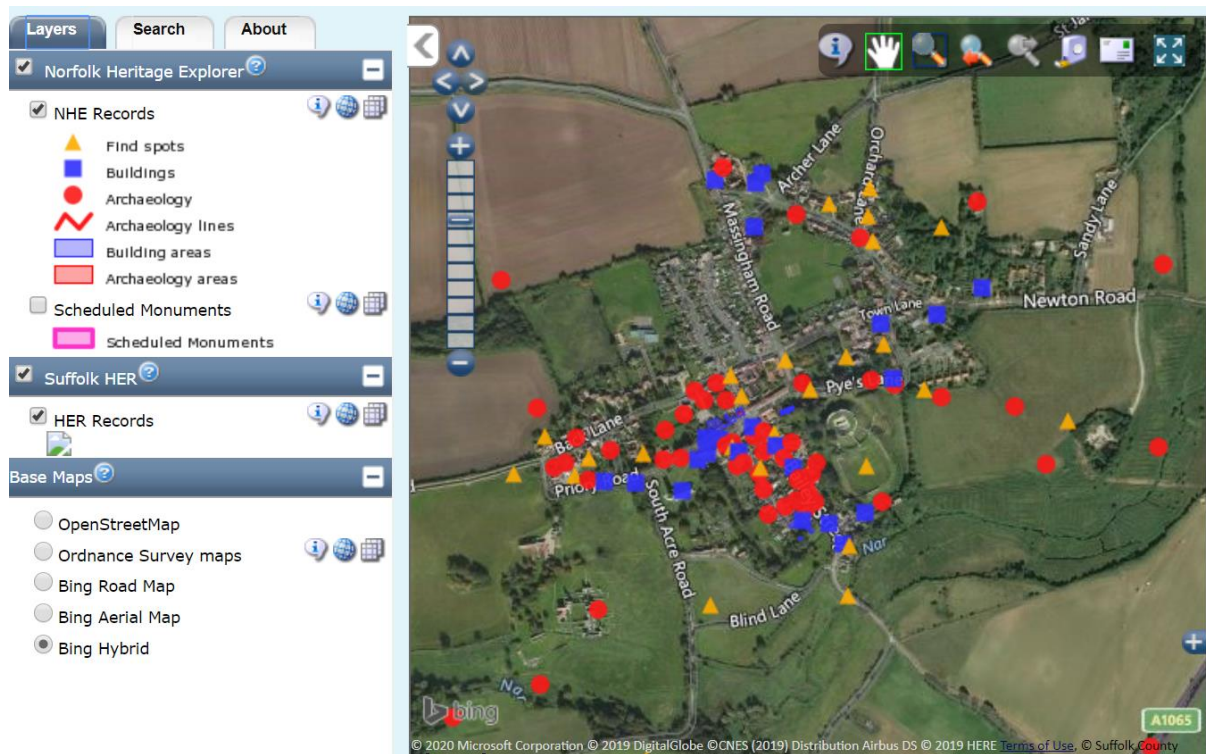


Figure: HER records present in the vicinity of Castle Acre village. <sup>44</sup>

## Summary of Future Baseline

New development areas in the Neighbourhood Plan area have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of heritage assets; for example, through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings.

Alongside, new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset, and in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area there may be opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the village and better reveal assets' heritage significance.

<sup>44</sup> Norfolk Heritage Explorer (2020): Search Records, [online] available at: <<http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/map-search>> [accessed 27/01/20]



## A6 – Land, Soil and Water Resources

### Context Review

The EU's Soil Thematic Strategy<sup>45</sup> presents a strategy for protecting soil resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety.

Adopted in October 2000, the purpose of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater, driving a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra's intention is to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management' across England. The Environment Agency is establishing 'Significant Water Management Issues' and recently presented second River Basin Management Plans to ministers. The plans seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority' and 'priority hazardous' substances;
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution; and
- Contribute to achieving 'good' water quality status for as many waterbodies as possible by 2027.

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
  - i. *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils; and*
  - ii. *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'*
- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.
- *'Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.'*
- *'Encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains.'*
- Planning policies and decisions should 'give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs', and 'promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.'
- Taking a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for water supply.
- Prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution.
- The government has produced a separate plan that specifically deals with planning policy in relation to waste management; this should be read in conjunction with the NPPF.

Along with the policies contained within Chapter 1 'Using and managing land sustainably' and Chapter 4 'Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste', Goal 2 'Clean and plentiful water', Goal 5 'Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently' and Goal 8 'Minimising waste' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' directly relates to the Land, Soil and Water Resources SEA theme.

<sup>45</sup> European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: <[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm)> [accessed 16/10/19]

Other key documents at the national level include Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England<sup>46</sup>, which sets out a vision for soil use in England, and the Water White Paper<sup>47</sup>, which sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. In terms of waste management, the Government Review of Waste Policy in England<sup>48</sup> recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.

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The National Waste Management Plan<sup>50</sup> provides an analysis of the current waste management situation in England and evaluates how it will support the implementation of the objectives and provisions of the revised Waste Framework Directive<sup>51</sup>. This includes an assessment of the need for new collection schemes, additional waste infrastructure and investment channels, as well as providing general or strategic waste management policies.

At the local level, policies in the Core Strategy that relate to the Land, Soil and Water Resources SEA theme include:

- CS08 (Sustainable Development);
- CS12 (Environmental Assets); and
- CS14 (Infrastructure Provision).

## Baseline Summary

### Summary of Current Baseline

#### *Soil Resources*

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into size grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 of poorer quality. In this context, there is a need to avoid loss of higher quality 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.

In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has been undertaken in a small patch of land north east within the Neighbourhood Plan area. This patch of land has been classified as Grade 3a and Grade 3b. The area of Grade 3a land is therefore land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Elsewhere, a detailed classification has not been undertaken for the majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area. As such, there is a need to rely on the national 'Provisional Agricultural Land Quality' dataset. The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset<sup>52</sup> shows that the Neighbourhood Plan area is predominantly covered by Grade 3 agricultural land with a strip of Grade 4 agricultural land along the southern boundary, however; without the subset grading (3a or 3b) it is not possible to tell at this stage whether the agricultural land is considered to be

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<sup>46</sup> Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england> [accessed 19/09/19]

<sup>47</sup> Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf> [accessed 19/09/19]

<sup>48</sup> Defra (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf> [accessed 19/09/19]

<sup>49</sup> DEFRA (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69401/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69401/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf) [accessed 19/09/19]

<sup>50</sup> DEFRA (2013) Waste Management Plan for England [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/265810/pb14100-waste-management-plan-20131213.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265810/pb14100-waste-management-plan-20131213.pdf) [accessed 19/09/19]

<sup>51</sup> Directive 2008/98/EC

<sup>52</sup> Natural England (2018) Agricultural Land Classification map London and the South East (ALC007) [online] available at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/141047?category=5954148537204736> [accessed 16/10/19]



'best and most versatile'. It is also important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution, and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

### Water Resources

The main watercourse flowing through the Neighbourhood Plan area is the River Nar. The River Nar is a tributary of the River Great Ouse. It flows west through Castle Acre and joins the Ouse at King's Lynn. and its tributaries.

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwater have nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or are thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. Areas associated with such groundwater are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) within which, Member States are required to establish Action Programmes to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. In this regard the Neighbourhood Plan area overlaps with the 'Nar upstream of Abbey' NVZ.

Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. The Neighbourhood Plan area is not within an SPZ.

### Water Quality

Castle Acre is located within the Anglian River Basin District, overlapping with the 'North West Norfolk' Management Catchment and the "North West Norfolk Rivers' Operational Catchment. There are nine water bodies within the Operational Catchment which include the 'Nar upstream of Abbey Farm' which passes along the southern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Based on the most recently completed water quality assessments undertaken in 2016, the Environment Agency's Catchment Data Explorer<sup>53</sup> classifies Nar upstream of Abbey Farm<sup>54</sup> as having a 'good' chemical status and 'good' ecological status. The overall classification for the waterbody in 2016 was 'good'.

## Summary of Future Baseline

Future development has the potential to affect water quality through diffuse pollution, waste water discharges, water run-off, and modification. However, water companies are likely to maintain adequate water supply and wastewater management over the plan period, and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area and wider area.

In the absence of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification assessment for the majority of the Parish, it remains uncertain whether new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area will lead to losses of higher quality (best and most versatile) agricultural land.

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<sup>53</sup> Environment Agency (2019): 'Catchment Data Explorer', [online] available to access via: <<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/>> [accessed 19/09/19]

<sup>54</sup> Environment Agency (2019): 'Catchment Data Explorer – Nar upstream of Abbey Farm', [online] available at: <<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB105033047791>> [accessed 16/10/19]

## A7 – Population and Community

### Context Review

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is a social objective to; *‘support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural wellbeing.’*
- To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing, strategic policies *‘should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.’*
- The size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site where possible.
- Recognise the important contribution of small and medium sized development sites in meeting housing needs. Local Plans should identify land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, and neighbourhood planning groups should also consider the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites.
- In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high-quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Ensuring that there is a *‘sufficient choice of school places’* and taking a *‘proactive, positive and collaborative approach’* to bringing forward *‘development that will widen choice in education’*.

The ‘Ready for Ageing?’ report, published by the Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change<sup>55</sup> warns that society is underprepared for an ageing population. The report states that *‘longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises’*. The report recognises that the supply of specialist housing for the older generation is insufficient for the demand. There is a need for central and local Government, housing associations, and house builders to ensure that these housing needs are better addressed, giving as much priority to promoting an adequate market of social housing for the older generation as is given to the younger generation.

At the local level, policies in the Core Strategy that relate to the Population and Community SEA theme include:

- CS02 (The Settlement Hierarchy);
- CS06 (Development in Rural Areas);
- CS08 (Sustainable Development);
- CS09 (Housing Distribution);
- CS10 (The Economy);
- CS12 (Environmental Assets);
- CS13 (Community & Culture); and
- CS14 (Infrastructure Provision).

<sup>55</sup> Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) Ready for Ageing? [online] available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/> [accessed 19/09/19]

## Baseline Summary

### Summary of Current Baseline

#### Population

**Table 8.1: Population growth 2001-2011<sup>56</sup>**

Date	Castle Acre	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	East	England
2001	799	135,345	5,388,140	49,138,831
2011	848	147,451	5,846,965	53,012,456
<b>Population Change 2001-2011</b>	+6.13%	+8.94%	+8.52%	+7.9%

As shown in **Table 8.1**, the population of Castle Acre increased by 6.13% between 2001 and 2011, lower than the increases seen for King's Lynn and West Norfolk, the East of England and England averages.

#### Age Structure

**Table 8.2: Age Structure (2011)<sup>57</sup>**

	Castle Acre	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	East	England
<b>0-15</b>	13.4%	16.8%	19.0%	18.9%
<b>16-24</b>	7.1%	9.9%	10.9%	11.9%
<b>25-44</b>	17.0%	23.0%	26.5%	27.5%
<b>45-59</b>	22.1%	19.7%	19.8%	19.4%
<b>60+</b>	40.4%	30.6%	23.9%	22.3%
<b>Total Population</b>	848	147,451	5,846,965	53,012,456

There is a significantly higher proportion of residents within the 60+ age category within the Neighbourhood Plan area (40.4%) in comparison to the total for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (30.6%), the East of England (23.9%) and England (22.3%), as shown in **Table 8.2**.

A lower proportion of residents are within the working age categories (25-44 and 45-59) in the Neighbourhood Plan area (39.1%) in comparison to the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (42.7%), the East of England (46.3%) and England (46.9%).

Additionally, 20.5% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the younger age categories (0-15 and 16-24), lower than the proportions for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (26.7%), the East of England (29.9%) and England (30.8%).

#### Household Deprivation

Census statistics measure deprivation across four 'dimensions' of deprivation, summarized below:

- **Employment:** Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick.
- **Education:** No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.

<sup>56</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: Population Density 2011 (Table QS102EW); Population Density 2001 (Table UV02)

<sup>57</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: Age Structure 2011 (Table KS102EW)

- **Health and Disability:** Any person in the household that has generally 'bad' or 'very bad' health, or has a long term health problem.
- **Housing:** The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

**Table 8.3: Relative household deprivation dimensions<sup>58</sup>**

	Castle Acre	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	East	England
<b>Household not deprived</b>	41.2%	38.5%	44.8%	42.5%
<b>Deprived in 1 dimension</b>	33.1%	34.7%	33.0%	32.7%
<b>Deprived in 2 dimensions</b>	21.7%	21.7%	17.9%	19.1%
<b>Deprived in 3 dimensions</b>	4.0%	4.7%	4.0%	5.1%
<b>Deprived in 4 dimensions</b>	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%

Based on the information presented in **Table 8.3**, more households are deprived in one or more dimensions within the Neighbourhood Plan area (58.8%) in comparison to the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (61.5%) and the East of England (55.2%). However, the total for the Neighbourhood Plan area is similar to the total for England (57.5%). Out of the 58.8% of households which are deprived in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the majority are deprived in one or two dimensions, which is similar to the regional and national trends.

### *Index of Multiple Deprivation*

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

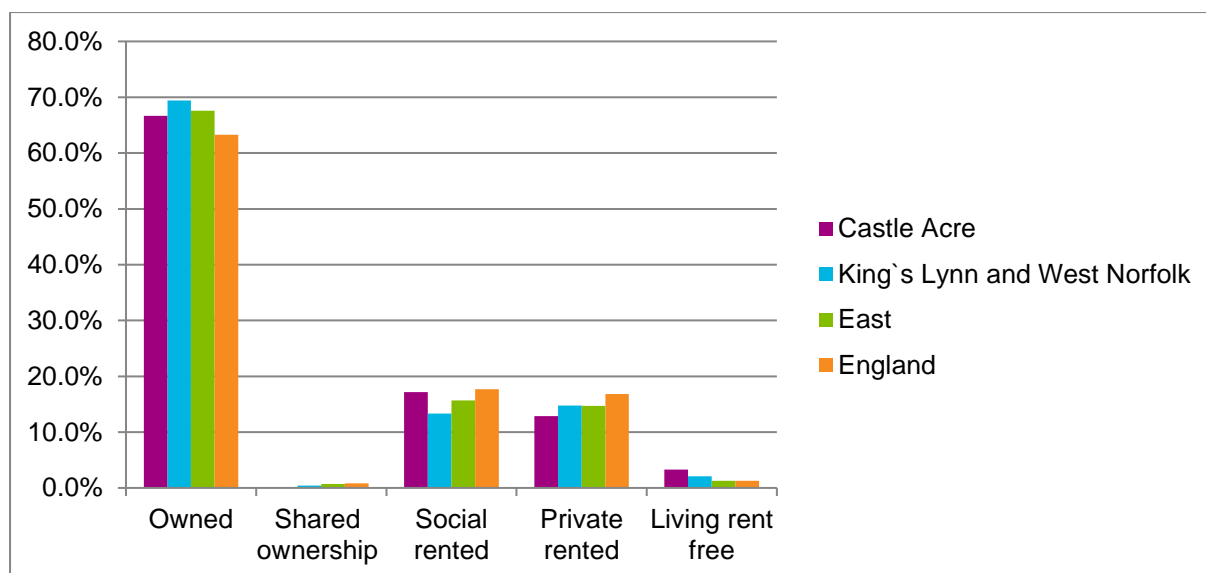
- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.
- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
  - a. 'Geographical Barriers': relating to the physical proximity of local services
  - b. 'Wider Barriers': relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.
  - c. 'Indoors Living Environment' measures the quality of housing.
  - d. 'Outdoors Living Environment' measures air quality and road traffic accidents.
- Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:
  1. Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index: The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
  2. Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index: The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

<sup>58</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Households by Deprivation Dimensions 2011 (Table QS119EW)

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)<sup>59</sup> are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2015, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalized into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales.

The Neighbourhood Plan area lies within one LSOA: King's Lynn and West Norfolk 012D. This LSOA is within the 30% least deprived neighbourhood within England.

### Housing Tenure



**Figure 8.1: 'Tenure by Household'**<sup>60</sup>

Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, 66.7% of residents either own their home outright or with a mortgage, lower than the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (69.4%), the East of England (67.6%) but higher than the totals for England (63.3%).

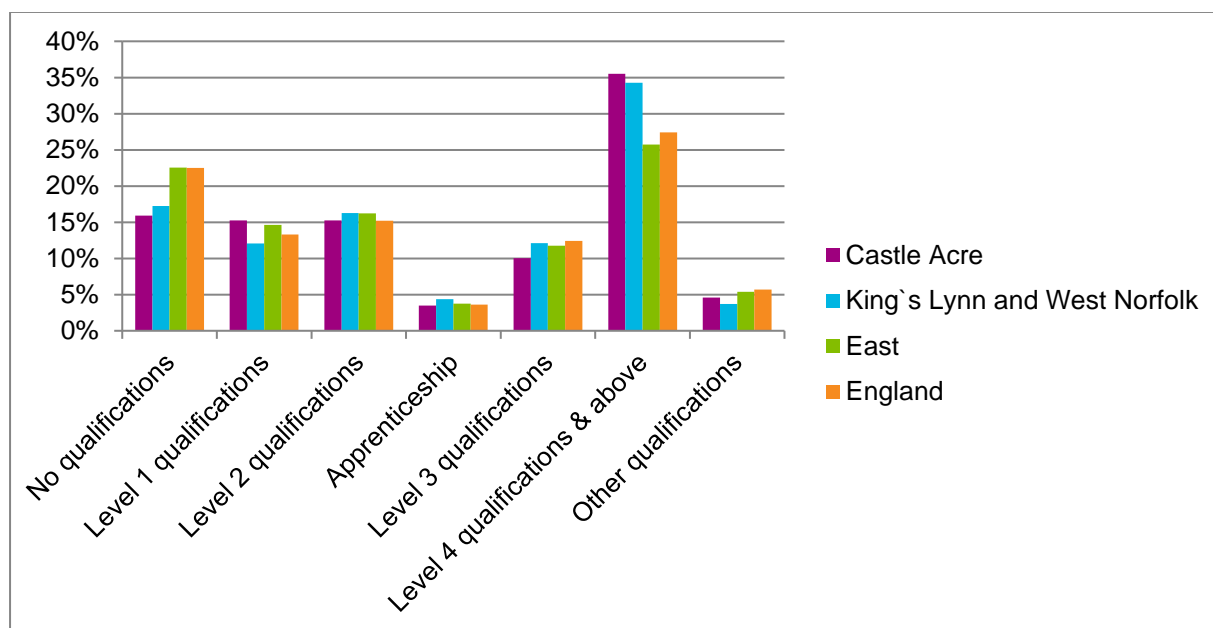
A lower proportion of residents live within privately rented housing in the Neighbourhood Plan area in comparison to the regional and national figures.

A higher percentage of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area live in rent-free accommodation or shared ownership accommodation in comparison to the regional and national trends shown in Figure 8.1.

<sup>59</sup> DCLG (2015): Indices of Deprivation Explorer', [online] available at: <<http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html>> [accessed 18/09/19]

<sup>60</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: Tenure-Households 2011 (Table QS405EW)

## Education



**Figure 8.2: 'Highest level of Qualification' <sup>61</sup>**

Based on the 2011 census data presented in Figure 8.2, 15.9% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area have no qualifications, lower than the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (17.2%), the East of England (19.1%) and England (22.5%).

Comparatively, 35.5% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area have a Level 4 qualification or above, which broadly aligns to the total for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (34.3%) but is higher than the totals for the East of England (29.9%) and England (27.4%).

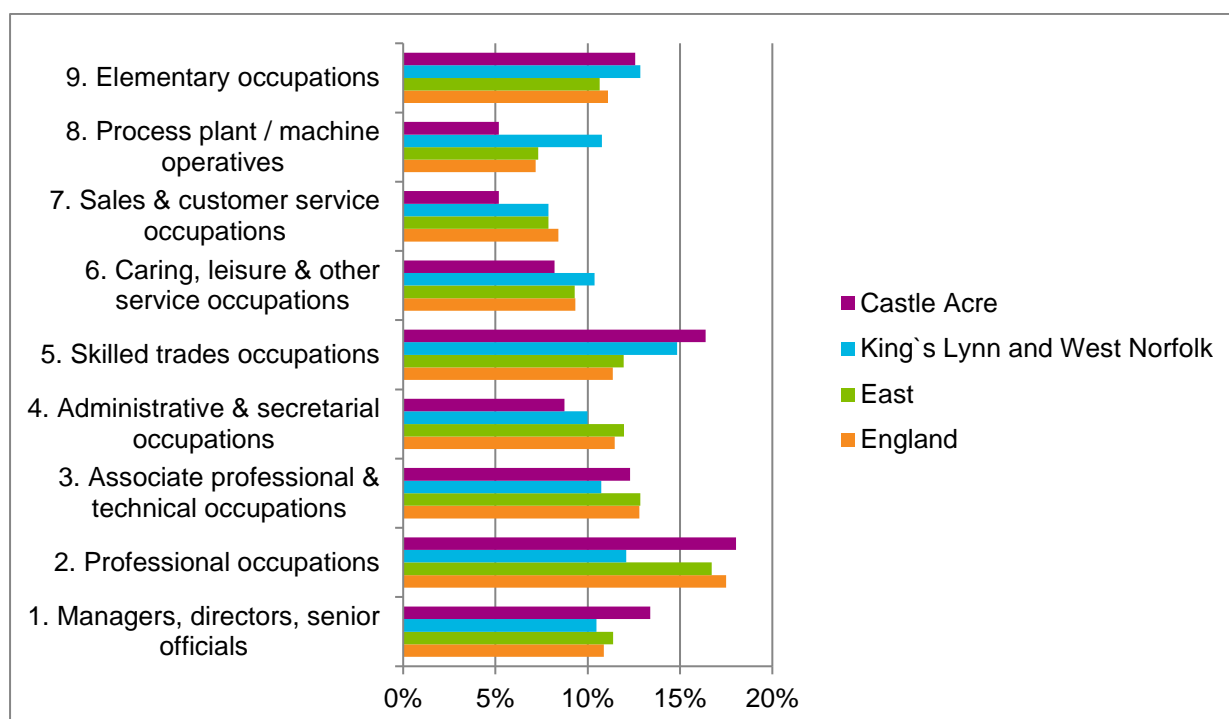
## Employment

Regarding employment within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the following three occupation categories support the most residents:

- Professional occupations (18.0%);
- Skilled trade occupations (16.4%); and
- Managers, directors, senior officials (13.4%).

Overall, 47.8% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area are employed in one of the above three occupation categories, greater than the total for King's Lynn and West Norfolk, the East of England (40%) and England (39.7%). This is highlighted in **Figure 8.3** below.

<sup>61</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: Highest Level of Qualification 2011 (Table QS501EW)



**Figure 8.3: 'Occupation of usual residents aged 16 to 74 in employment'<sup>62</sup>**

### Community Assets

The centre of village life is found at Stocks Green and High Street. There is one pub, a tea room and an antiques shop situated around the village green with its large lime trees. The village is a popular location for visitors and walkers and is especially busy at weekends. Close by is the village shop, post office and fish and chip shop and a hairdressers. There is a Village Hall which accommodates a number of cultural and community events as well as providing a meeting space for formal meetings. The facility is also available for hire for weddings and social events, etc. There is large Playing Field which is the 'home' of the village football, cricket and bowls clubs as well as a venue for the village fete and summer ball.

### Summary of Future Baseline

As the population of the Neighbourhood Plan area continues to age, this could potentially negatively impact upon the future vitality of the local community of the Neighbourhood Plan area, whilst also placing additional pressures on existing services and facilities. The suitability (e.g. size and design) and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.

<sup>62</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Occupation 2011' (Table KS608EW)



## A8 – Health and Wellbeing

### Context Review

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is a social objective to; *‘support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural wellbeing.* ‘
- *‘Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and wellbeing needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.’*
- Policies and decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities. Development should avoid building on existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields.
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

In relation to other key national messages in relation to health, Fair Society, Healthy Lives<sup>63</sup> (‘The Marmot Review’) investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them.

Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: “overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities”.

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in providing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

At the local level, policies from the Core Strategy that relate to the Health and Wellbeing SEA theme include:

- CS08 (Sustainable Development);
- CS13 (Community & Culture); and
- CS14 (Infrastructure Provision).

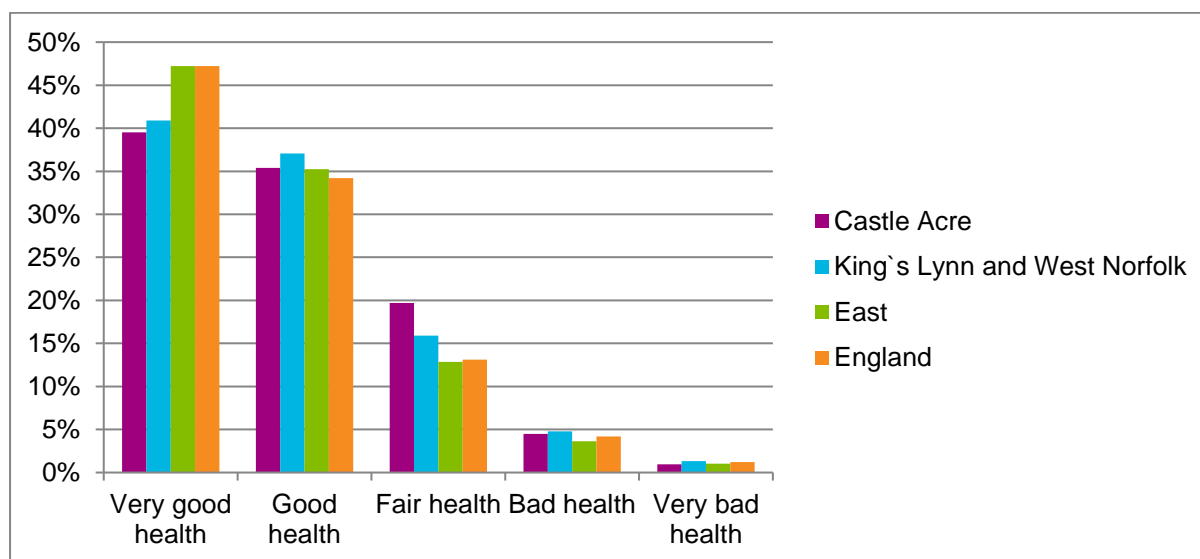
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<sup>63</sup> The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at: < <https://www.nice.org.uk/media/default/About/what-we-do/NICE-guidance/NICE-guidelines/Public-health-guidelines/Additional-publications/Spatial-planning/the-marmot-review-implications-for-spatial-planning.pdf> > [accessed 16/10/19]

## Baseline Summary

### Summary of Current Baseline

#### Health indicators and deprivation



**Figure: 'General Health'**<sup>64</sup>

Deprivation is a significant contributor to poor health and can have adverse effects on wellbeing, with elements related to poor housing quality, living environment, income and employment previously discussed in detail in Chapter 8. As highlighted in **Figure 9.1**, 74.9% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health', lower than the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (78%), the East of England (82.5%) and England (81.4%).

Additionally, 5.4% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves to have 'bad health' or 'very bad health', lower than the total for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (6.1%), greater than the East of England (4.7%) and the same as England (5.4%).

The total percentage of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area who report that their activities are limited 'a lot' is greater than the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk, the East of England and England, shown in **Table 9.1** below.

77.5% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area confirm that their activities are 'not limited'. This is lower than the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (78.7%), the East of England (83.3%) and England (82.4%).

<sup>64</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'General Health 2011' (Table QS302EW)

**Table 9.1: Disability<sup>65</sup>**

	Castle Acre	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	East	England
<b>Activities limited 'a lot'</b>	9.9%	9.8%	7.4%	8.3%
<b>Activities limited 'a little'</b>	12.6%	11.5%	9.3%	9.3%
<b>Activities 'not limited'</b>	77.5%	78.7%	83.3%	82.4%

## Summary of Future Baseline

As the population continues to age, this has the potential to place pressures on existing services and facilities within the timeframe of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Obesity is also seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, including increasing the risk of a range of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

## A9 – Transportation

### Context Review

European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth.

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- *'Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*
  - i. *The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed*
  - ii. *Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised*
  - iii. *Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued*
  - iv. *The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account*
  - v. *Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.'*
- *'Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.'*

At the local level, each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to produce and adopt a Local Transport Plan through the Local Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008.<sup>66</sup> Norfolk's Transport Plan for 2026<sup>67</sup> highlights Norfolk's transport vision as 'A transport system that allows residents and visitors a range of low carbon options to meet their transport needs and attracts and retains business investment in the county'. This will be achieved by:

- Making the best use of what we have to facilitate reliable journeys;

<sup>65</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Long-term Health Problem or Disability 2011' (Table QS303EW)

<sup>66</sup> Local Transport Act 2008 [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/26/contents> [accessed 16/10/19]

<sup>67</sup> Norfolk County Council (2011) Connecting Norfolk: Norfolk's Transport Plan for 2026 [online] available at: <  
<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/roads-and-travel-policies/local-transport-plan>> [accessed 17/10/19]

- Reducing the need to travel;
- Influencing others and ensuring transport is integrated into development plans;
- Working with communities and our partners to seek new solutions and new ways of delivering; and
- Lobbying for and pursuing improvements to Norfolk's strategic transport network.

At the local level, policies from the Core Strategy that relate to the Transportation SEA theme include:

- CS11 (Transport); and
- CS14 (Infrastructure Provision).

## Baseline Summary

### Summary of Current Baseline

#### *Rail network*

There is no railway station located within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The nearest mainline railway station is King's Lynn (approximately 22km west of the Neighbourhood Plan area) which links Ely, Cambridge and London Kings Cross. Journey times from King's Lynn to London Kings Cross are approximately 110 minutes.

#### *Bus network*

Regarding the bus network, there is one main route through Castle Acre which is operated by West Norfolk Community Transport. West Norfolk Community Transport provide services to Mileham, Beeston, Litcham, Great Dunham, Little Dunham, Newton, Swaffham, Pentney, Narborough and King's Lynn.

#### *Road network and congestion*

The Neighbourhood Plan area is relatively well connected to the road network. The A1065 runs to the east of the Neighbourhood Plan area and provides a route to the north to Fakenham and to the south to Swaffham. The A47 which provides a route west to King's Lynn and east to Norwich is accessible to Swaffham. Additionally, a network of country roads is also present in the Neighbourhood Plan area, providing local access routes.

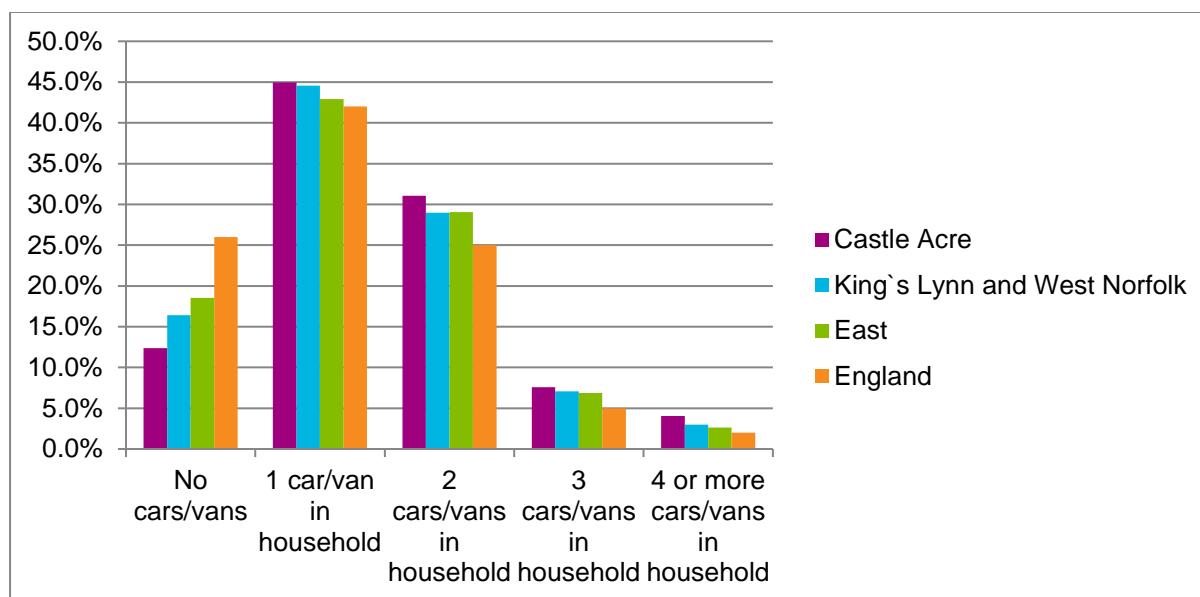
#### *Cycle and footpath network*

There are no National Cycle Networks within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. However, there are a number of local cycle routes passing through the Neighbourhood Plan area which have been identified on Route You.<sup>68</sup> There is also a comprehensive public rights of way network within the Neighbourhood Plan area, with numerous footpaths linking key locations and connecting to the village centre.

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<sup>68</sup> Route You (2019) Castle Acre – Overview of all cycle routes [online] available at: < <https://www.routeyou.com/en-gb/location/bike/47299029/cycling-in-castle-acre-overview-of-all-cycle-routes> > [accessed 21/10/19]

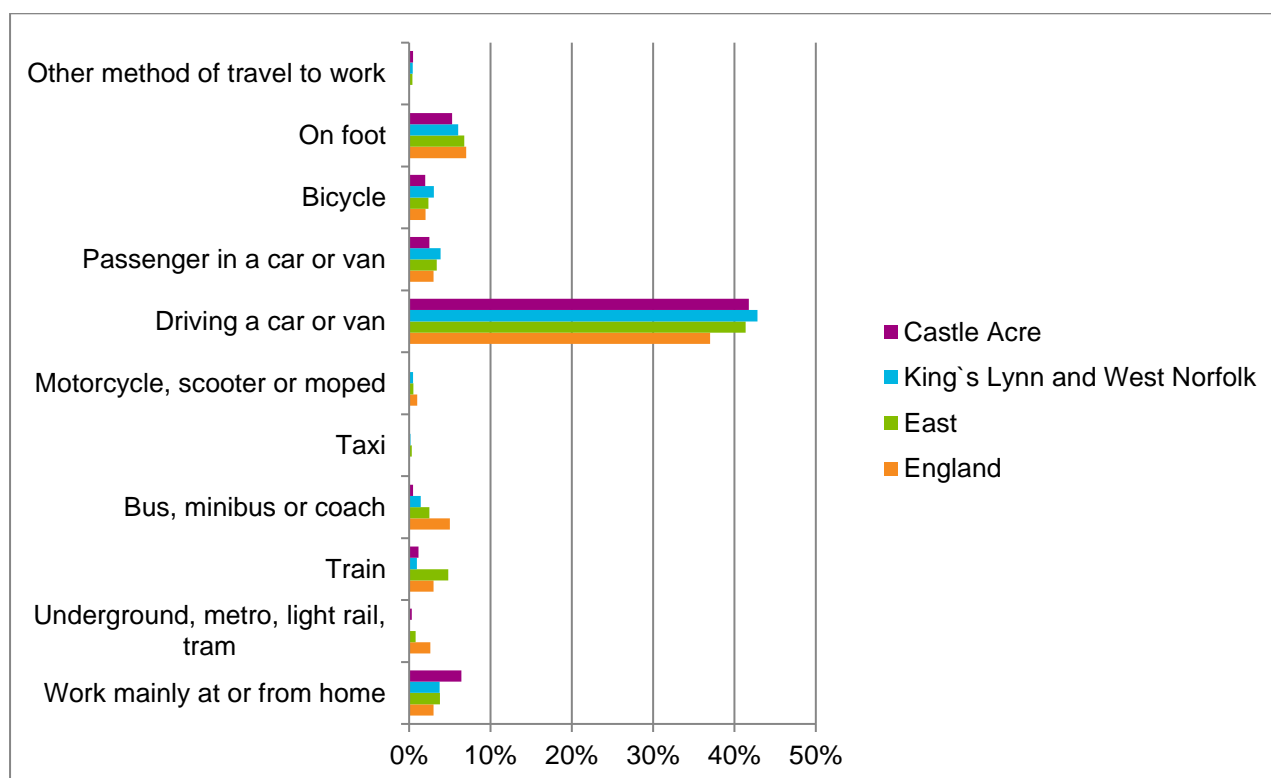
### Availability of cars and vans



**Figure 10.1: 'Car and van ownership'**<sup>69</sup>

Based on the 2011 census data presented in **Figure 10.1**, 87.6% of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to at least one car or van, which is greater than the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (83.6%), the East (81.5%) and England (74.2%). The total number of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area with access to at least two cars or vans is also higher than the regional and national trends.

### Travel to work



**Figure 10.2: 'Method of Travel to Work'**<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> ONS (no date): 'Car or Van Availability 2011', (Table QS416EW)

<sup>70</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Method of Travel to Work 2011' (Table QS701EW)

As shown in **Figure 10.2**, the most popular method of travelling to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area is via driving a car or van (41.7%) which is similar to the totals for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (42.8%) and the East of England (41.4%), but greater than England (37.0%).

6.9% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area either catch a train, bus, minibus, coach or walk to work. This is lower than the percentage for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (8.4%), the East of England (14.1%) and England (15.0%).

## Summary of Future Baseline

New development has the potential to increase traffic within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

There will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by private car.



