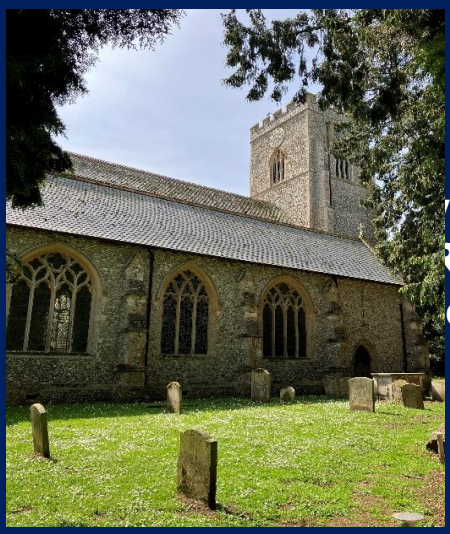
Docking Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2039

Preliminary Screening Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment 2024

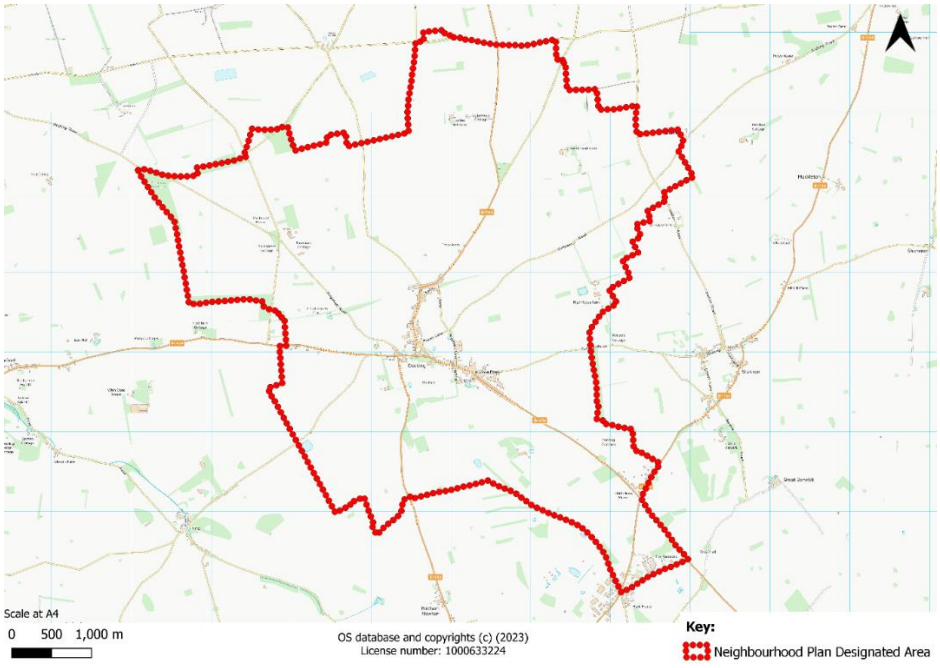


Contents

Introduction

1. Docking Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for its village known as DNP throughout this document. The planning period will be 2023-2039 and the designated area (See Figure 1) is located within Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. Collective Community Planning has been appointed by the parish councils to consider whether there is a need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be undertaken on DNP. This is required under European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive), transposed into UK law through the SEA Regulations[1].

2. SEA may be required for a Neighbourhood Plan if it is likely to have significant environmental effects. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is like an SEA but includes assessment of the likely significant effects of a plan or programme on economic and social factors, as well as environmental factors. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) clarifies that there is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to a SA, but that SA can be used to demonstrate how the plan will contribute to sustainable development.



[1] The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633), as amended by the Environmental Assessment and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232). It should be noted that the purpose of the amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the European Union. No substantive changes are made to the way the SEA regime operates.

Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Area

SEA Screening

Scope of the Docking Neighbourhood Plan

3. A draft (Regulation 14) version of DNP is currently being prepared. It is intended that this is subject to public consultation in late 2024/early 2025. DNP includes a vision for the long-term future of Docking, along with aims to support delivery of this vision. The current draft vision is:

Our vision for Docking village is that any development coming forward in the next 15 years should strengthen the community by achieving a good balance of housing stock to meet local need and be of a high-quality design whilst respecting our local character and identity.

The plan will protect and highlight our beloved local environment including our natural and historical built assets by designating a few local green spaces, important views, safeguarding green corridors to promote wildlife enhancements and emphasising the historic core of the area.

The plan supports the local businesses and community facilities present in the village and wishes to retain and support any further economic or community facilities which will benefit the residents.

4. The draft plan currently includes 5 specific objectives to deliver this vision:

A. *Protect and enhance Docking's natural environment including locally important green spaces and views, trees, hedgerows, and areas which play a role for the local wildlife.*

B. *Protect and enhance the local character of Docking, ensuring that new development is of a high-quality design and sensitively located in line with our local design codes and distinctive character areas.*

C. *Ensure future housing development, including the tenure, mix and number of bedrooms, meets the needs of the local population to help retain residents in Docking.*

D. *Protect existing community facilities that meet the needs of the resident population and encourage further community services, and businesses to come forward to enhance opportunities and quality of life while remaining appropriate to the rural location.*

E. *Ensure future development helps to improve the connectivity and access within the parish by creating accessible, safe and direct links to existing footpaths or by creating new footpaths which have natural surveillance and easy to locate. Aswell as this explore opportunities for the community to have access to circular routes to improve connectivity within the surrounding countryside and to more isolated parts of the parish not served easily by the village centre.*

5. DNP will have a range of non-strategic planning policies to realise and deliver the above vision and aims. This includes policies:

- Protect the natural environment such as trees/hedgerows and green spaces and biodiversity by providing criteria for biodiversity net gain and established green corridors for habitat enhancement;
- Tackling light pollution through an appropriate dark skies policy;
- To achieve high quality design with the input of Docking design codes/guide, that reinforces and complements local distinctiveness;
- To ensure the housing mix, including affordable housing, on new development sites meets local need;
- To protect the loss of community facilities for the vitality of the parish and support appropriate employment services in the area;
- Ensure access and movement is considered in line with Dockings design guidelines

6. The plan does not allocate land for development.

Baseline Information

7. This section summarises baseline information for the DNP area, drawing on the Evidence Base which will accompany the Neighbourhood Plan.

Context

8. Docking is situated in West Norfolk between the towns Hunstanton and Fakenham. Docking is about 8 miles from Hunstanton (15 min drive) and around 12.5 miles from Fakenham (20min drive). The parish has a population of 1,100 and numerous facilities/services to support the local area including but not limited to Bayfield surgery, Docking Primary and Nursery School, St Mary's Church, Docking House (Assisted Living Residence), allotments, playing field/play park, village hall, post office, Spar village shop, angling fishing club, and the Bus Service (33, 33A and 414).

Biodiversity, Flora, and fauna

9. There are no European statutory designated sites in the neighbourhood area, though there are a number of important European designations within approximately 20km to Docking. This includes:

    - Dersingham Bog and Roydon Common- Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar Site
    - The Greater Wash and North Norfolk Coast - Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar Site
    - River Wensum- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

10. Dersingham Bog is approximately 158ha in area size. It is a National Nature Reserve, and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is East Anglia's largest remaining example of a pure acid valley mire grading into dry heathland. The site includes extensive bog, wet heath, and transition communities over peat, fed by groundwater springs and seepage. In addition to its internationally important plant communities, the site supports important assemblages of birds and numerous nationally important invertebrate species. Human activities on site includes tourism, cutting of vegetation, and livestock grazing[2].

11. Roydon Common is approximately 194ha in area size. It is a mixed valley mire exhibiting a classic sequence of vegetation types, linked to the varying hydrological characteristics of the site and influenced by the nutrient quality of the water. Several vulnerable or nationally scarce plant and invertebrate species are supported. The site provides nesting habitat for Caprimulgus europaeus, winter roosting sites for raptors Circus cyaneus and Falco columbarius[3].

[2] Dersingham Bog | Ramsar Sites Information Service

[3] Roydon Common | Ramsar Sites Information Service

12. The Annex I habitats that are a primary selection for Dersingham Bog and Roydon Common to be a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) include the Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix and the depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion[4]. The Erica tetralix vegetation community is part of a lowland mixed valley mire, a complex series of plant communities grading from wet acid heath through valley mire to calcareous fen. This gradation is of outstanding interest. The mire is extremely diverse and supports many rare plants, birds and insects, including the dragonfly *Sympetrum scoticum*, a northern species with a very local distribution in south-east England. Birds protected at European level occurring in the heathland at this site include European nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*, hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* and merlin *Falco columbarius*. Dersingham Bog represents Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* in eastern England. There are examples of this habitat type present in natural bog pools of patterned valley mire, in flushes on the margins of valley mire and locally in disturbed areas associated with trackways and paths in mire and wet heath. Mosaics containing this habitat type are important for bog orchid *Hammarbya paludosa*.

13. The Greater Wash this is the UK's largest estuary system which contains extensive saltmarshes. The intertidal flats of The Wash form one of the largest intertidal areas in Britain, supporting high concentrations of marine invertebrates which in turn provide a food source for over 300,000 wintering wildfowl[5]. The Wash has been given multiple statutory designations by Natural England because of its importance for wildlife and geology. These designations are:

    - National nature reserve (NNR)
    - Ramsar site
    - Special area of conservation (SAC)
    - Special protection area (SPA)
    - Site of special scientific interest (SSSI)

14. The Special Area of Conservation designation recognises the importance of The Wash's coastal saltmarsh, sand and mudflats habitat for wildlife including Common Seals, breeding birds and wintering passage birds. Ramsar sites are wetland areas of international significance for waterfowl. The Wash area has Ramsar status in part due to the number of qualifying species of wildlife found in the area, in particular wintering passage and breeding birdlife. Natural England describes the whole area as being "of exceptional biological interest", hence its multiple designations. They describe the intertidal mudflats and saltmarshes as one of Britain's most important winter-feeding

[4] Roydon Common and Dersingham Bog - Special Areas of Conservation (jncc.gov.uk)

[5] JNCC Ramsar Information Sheet UK11072 untitled (jncc.gov.uk) – accessed 01/12/2021

areas for waders and wildfowl outside of the breeding season. The saltmarsh and shingle habitats are of considerable botanical interest and the Wash is also significant as a breeding ground for Common Seals. This designation sits to the north of the plan area.

15. The North Norfolk Coast has multiple designations including UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve, SSSI, National Landscape and Heritage Coast. The area size spans over 7,887ha and it is a stretch of coastline consisting of shingle beaches, dunes, saltmarsh, intertidal mud and sand flats, brackish lagoons, reedbeds, and grazing marshes. The site supports nationally and internationally important numbers of various species of breeding or wintering waterbirds. It also includes several important botanical areas and is a centre for tourism and general recreation; a visitors' centre, trails and hides are available[6].

16. The River Wensum is an area size of 306.79ha. The Annex I habitat that is a primary selection for the River Wensum to be a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) include the water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation[7]. The Wensum represents sub-type 1 in lowland eastern England. Although the river is extensively regulated by weirs, *Ranunculus* vegetation occurs sporadically throughout much of the river's length. Stream water-crowfoot *R. penicillatus* ssp. *pseudofluitans* is the dominant *Ranunculus* species but thread-leaved water-crowfoot *R. trichophyllus* and fan-leaved water-crowfoot *R. circinatus* also occur. The general site character is:

- Inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (42%)
- Bogs, Marshes, Water fringed vegetation, Fens (12%)
- Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (40%)
- Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (6%)

National and Local Designations

1. A small part of the parish, north of Burnham Rd, falls within the Norfolk Coast National Landscape, see Figure 2. This part of the parish that falls in the designation currently is arable land and is not near the built-up settlement. The Norfolk Coast National Landscape, formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), was designated in 1968 and includes the greater part of the remaining unspoiled coastal areas between the Wash and Great Yarmouth. The

[6] North Norfolk Coast | Ramsar Sites Information Service

[7] River Wensum - Special Areas of Conservation (jncc.gov.uk)

Norfolk Coast landscape displays a striking diversity of scenery, embracing a rich mix of coastal features and contrasting inland agricultural landscapes, of which are influenced by the proximity of the sea. Much of the character and quality of the National Landscape can be attributed to the contrasts which arise from its diversity.

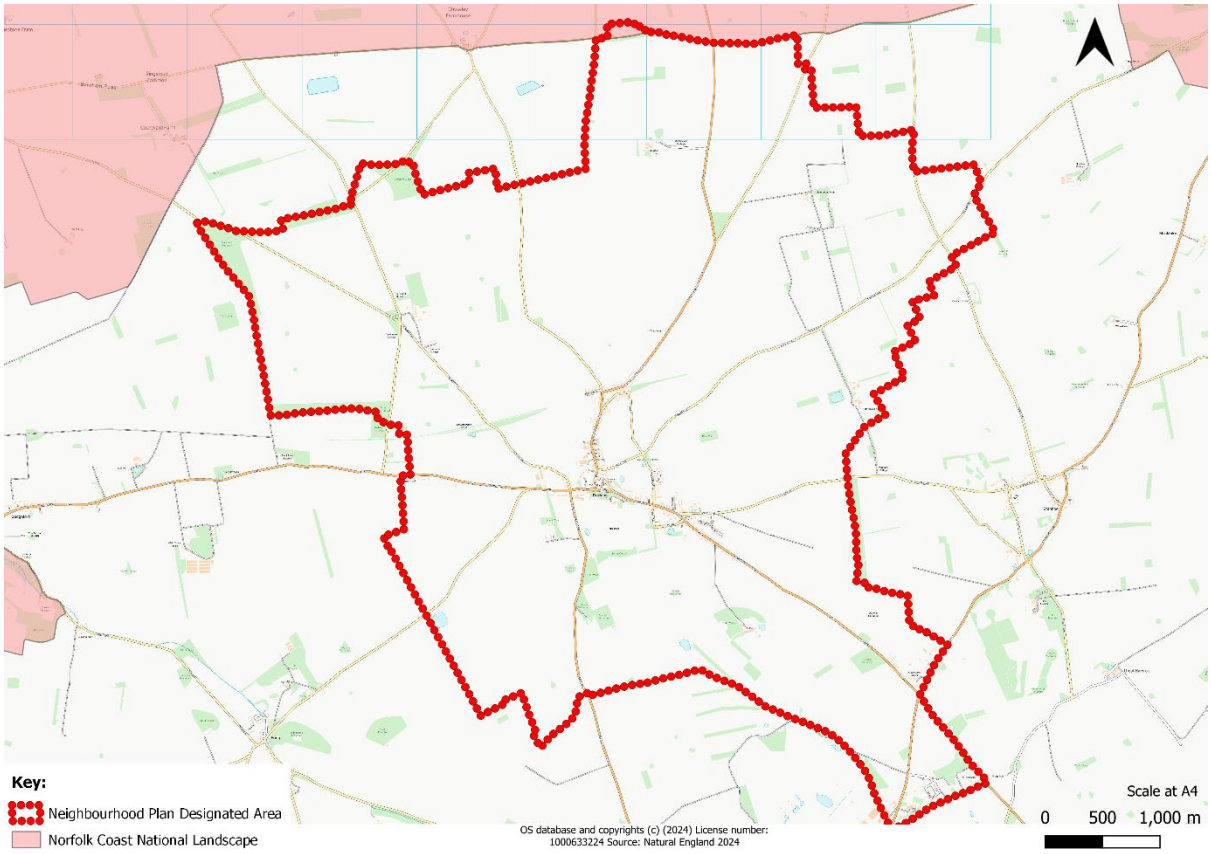


Figure 2-Norfolk Coast National Landscape

13. There is one County Wildlife Site, Docking Borrow Pit, in the southeast. As well as this there are three County Wildlife Sites within 2km to the parish including Birch Newton Heath, Land nr Brancaster Hall (known as Barrow Common[8]) and Ringstead Common (Figure 3). These wildlife sites are not designated on a statutory basis, though they do receive a degree of protection through the planning process and are often recognised in district local plans. In this context, site protection relies on the commitment of local authorities and public bodies.

[8] Barrow Common (CWS 570) - Norfolk Wildlife Trust

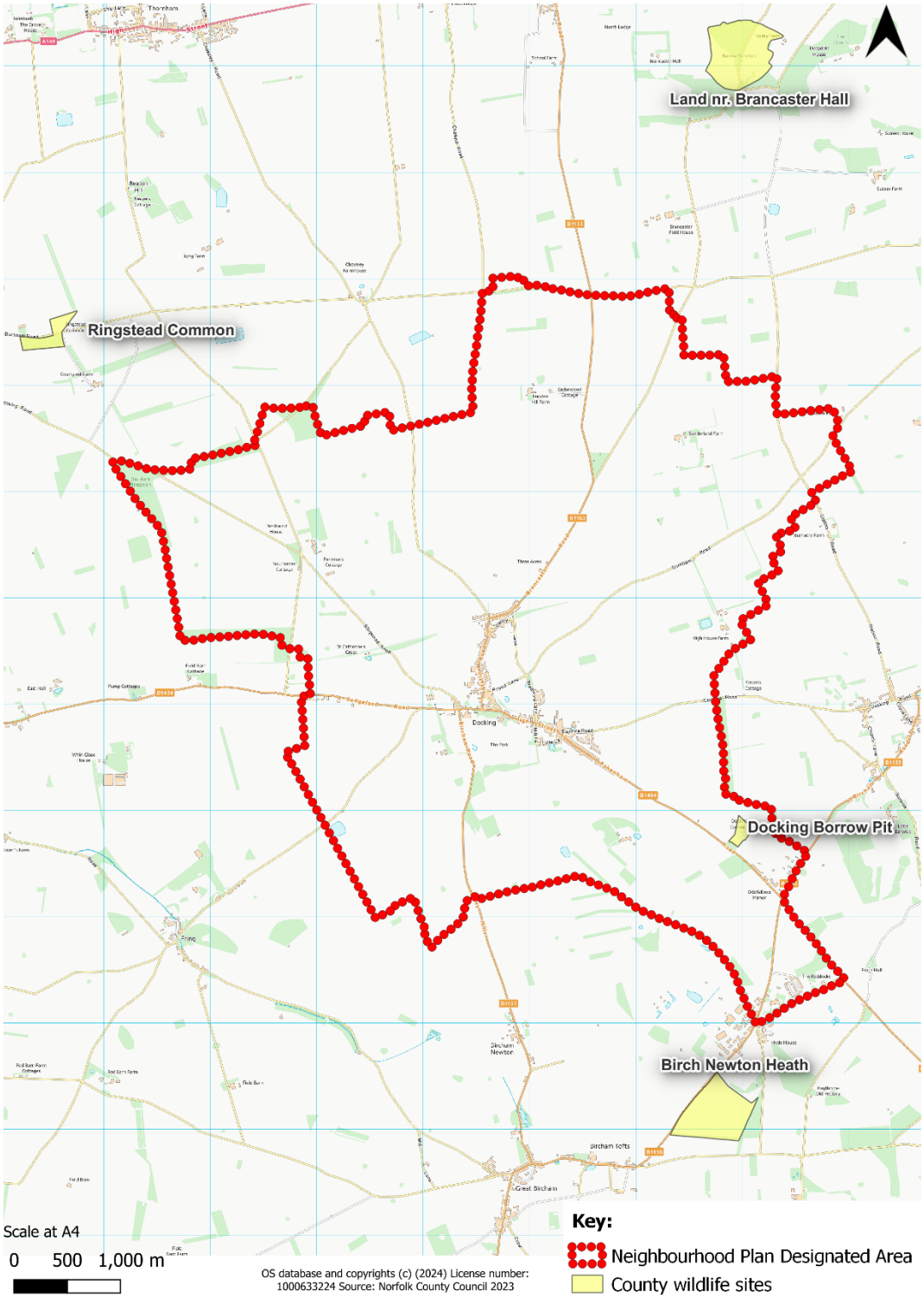


Figure 3- County Wildlife Sites (Source Suffolk County Council, 2024)

14. The parish contains priority habitat also known as Habitats of Principle Importance for biodiversity conservation. These are habitats which are most threatened, in greatest decline, or where the UK holds a significant proportion of the world's total population. There are three main types of priority habitat in the parish (see Figure 4) deciduous woodland; good quality semi-improved grassland and traditional orchard.

There is also one site which is known as no main habitat but additional habitats present. Deciduous woodland accounts for 39% of the total priority habitats resource in England[9], the largest proportion of any habitat group, and this is the most apparent priority habitat in Docking's built-up settlement.

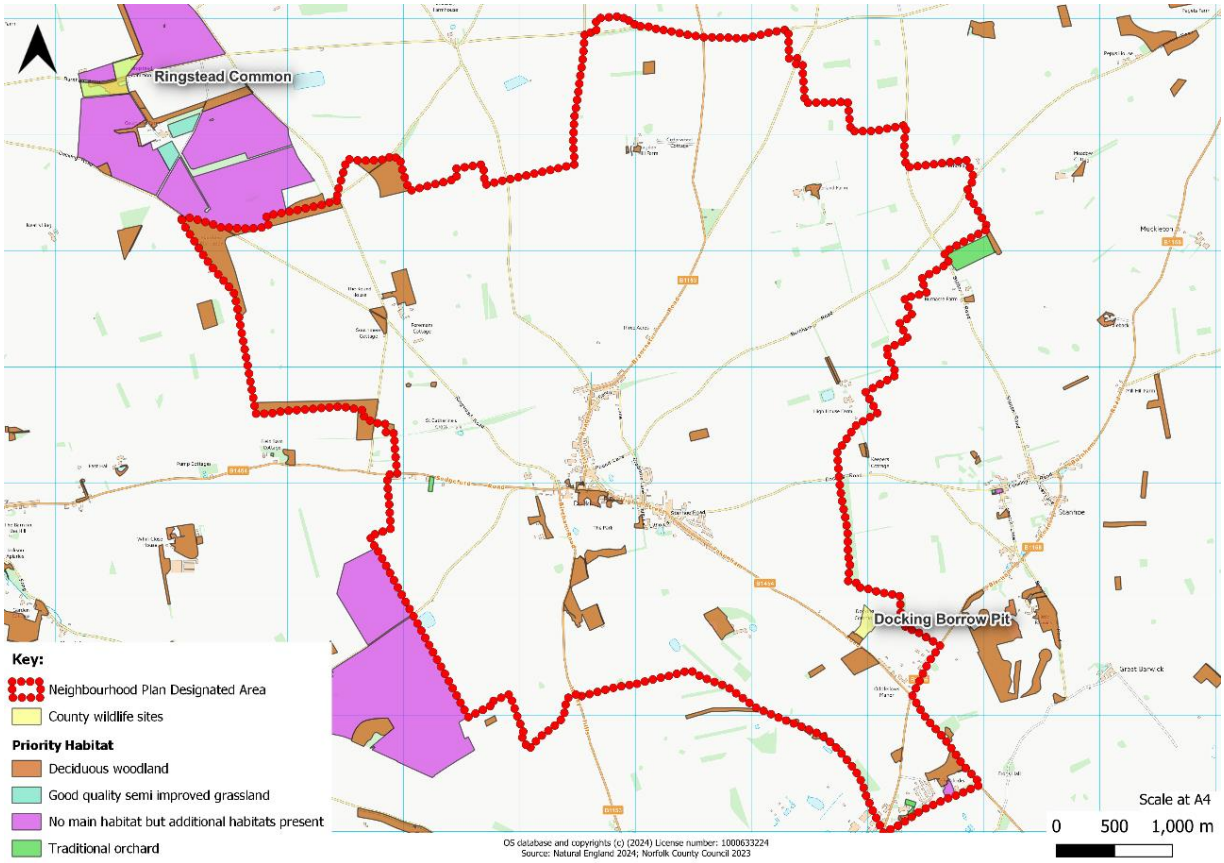


Figure 4- Priority Habitats (Source: Natural England, 2024)

Population

15. The total usual resident population in Docking is around 1,100 (to the nearest 100) according to the Census 2021[10] compared to 1,200 in 2011[11], showing a small decrease. This apparent decrease could be because of rounding within the Census data, or it could be that the number of homes within the parish not lived in by villagers (permanent residents) has increased. The parish is small in comparison to the 154,300 people residing in King's Lynn and West Norfolk and 56,490,000 in England.

[9] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/654df579c0e06800101b2d2b/2a_Extent_and_condition_of_priority_habitats.pdf

[10] Census 2021. Population. Source: Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS

[11] Census 2011. Nomis Local Area Report for Docking. Source: Local Area Report for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk)

16. According to census data a high proportion of the usual resident population is of working age. As shown in Figure 6 the age profile of the population has remained fairly static over the last ten years. There has been a slight decline in most of the age groups. Notably, there has been an increase in the proportion of people aged 75+ and the proportion of younger people (0-24yrs) is around 25% of the parish according to the Census 2021 data.

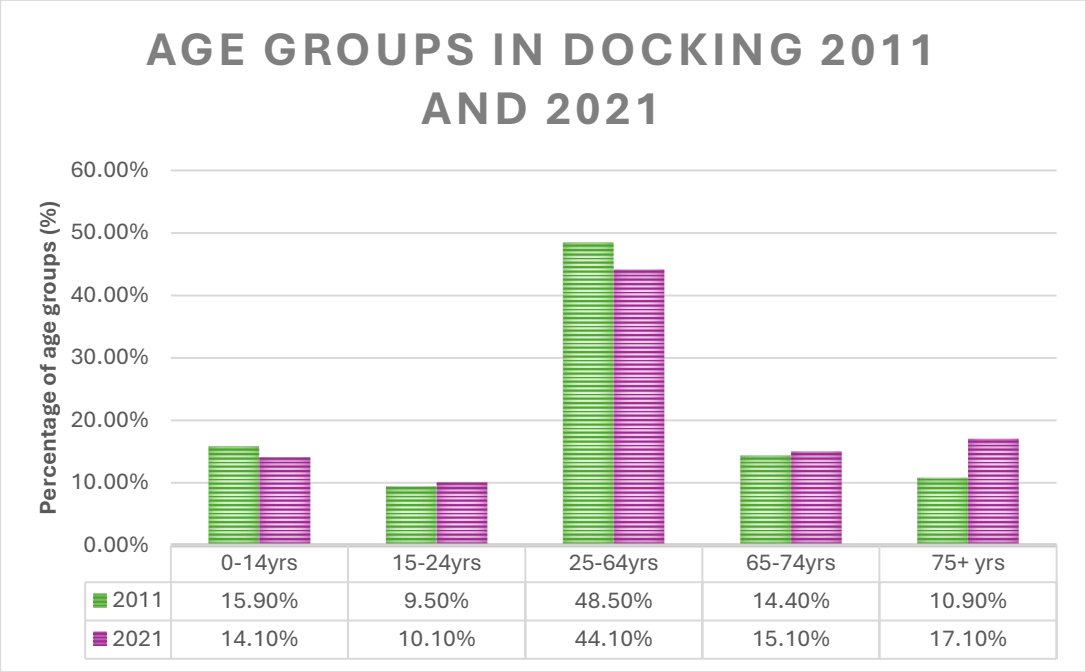


Figure 5- Age Groups in Docking 2011 and 2021 (Census)

Human Health

17. Provision of age-related services is likely to become an increasing consideration for the neighbourhood plan area as the proportion of over 65s according to the Census 2021 makes up 32.2% of the NPA.

Soil

18. The whole of the parish is made up of Grade 3 Land, as identified by the Agricultural Land Classification Scale, see Figure 7.

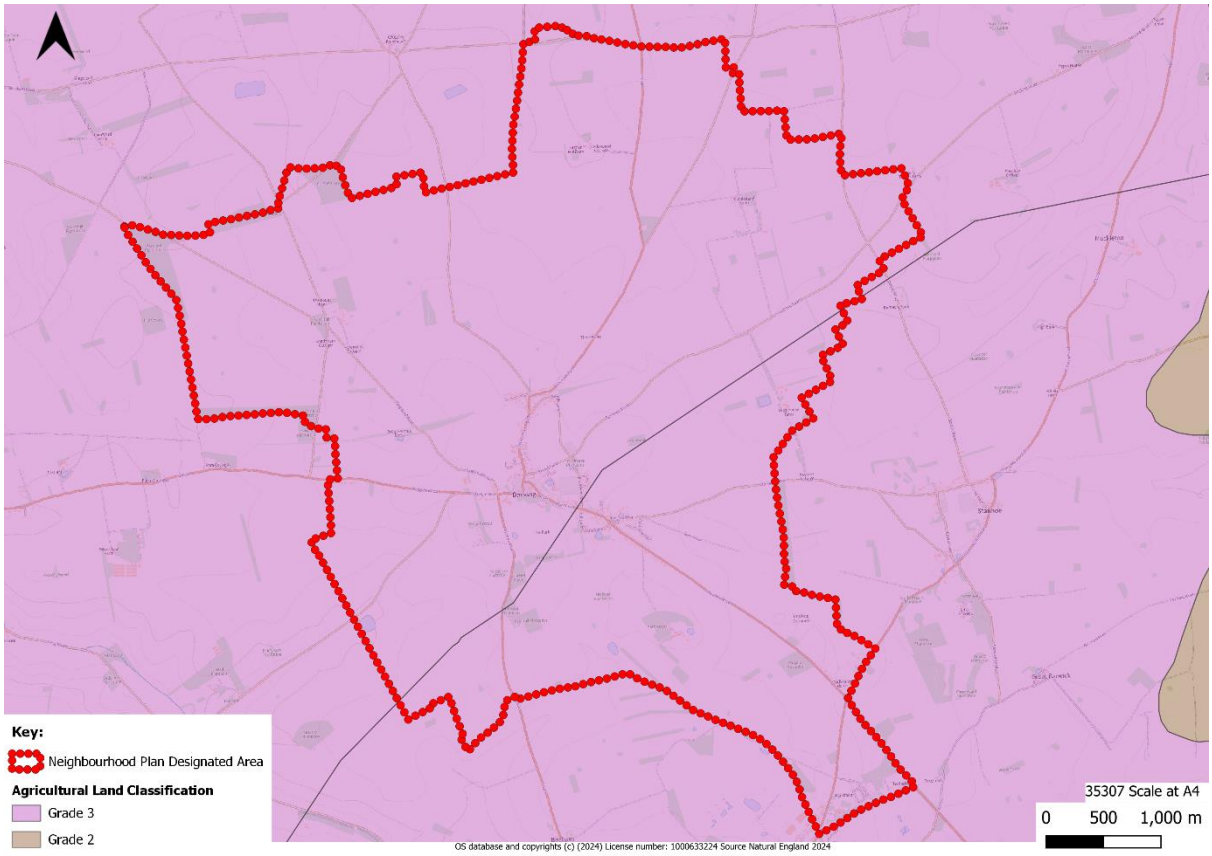


Figure 6-Agricultural Land Classification (Source: Natural England, 2024)

Water

19. According to Environment Agency the parish falls within Flood Zone 1 which means there is a low risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. The nearest Flood Zone 2 and 3 area is south of the parish in Fring. National policy is to locate development in areas least likely to flood. Based on current mapping, this is unlikely to be a constraint on development in the plan area (Figure 8).

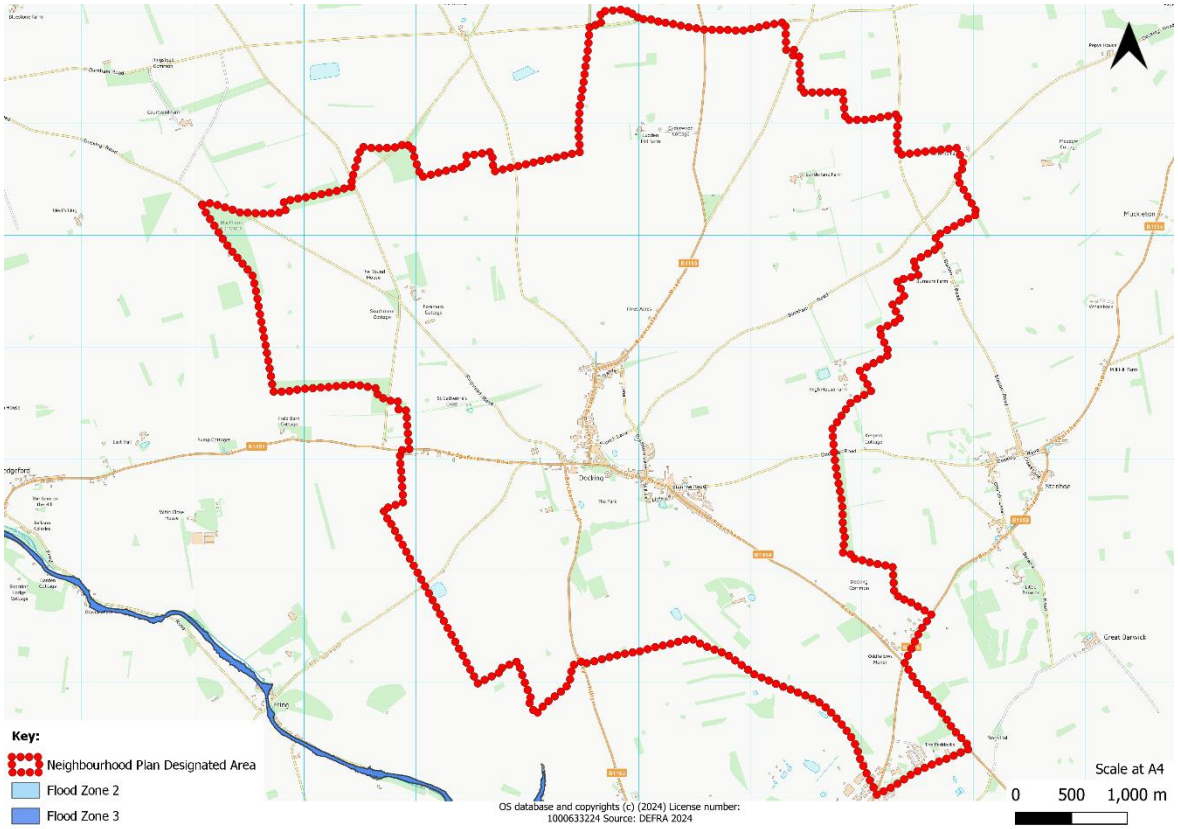


Figure 7-Flood risk from rivers and sea in Docking (Source: DEFRA, 2024)

20. The Environment Agency future flood risk modelling shows that there is a low, medium, and high risk of surface water flooding (ponding) in areas of the parish, including around existing buildings, roads, gardens, open landscape, and waterbodies Figures 8 to 9 indicates this mainly affects agricultural land, wooded areas, or where water sources may be present such as drainage ditches, ponds or even ghost ponds. However, residential properties and road networks in the built-up area along the High St, Stanhoe Road, Fakenham Rd, Church Place and Pound Lane are still at medium-high risk of surface water flooding.

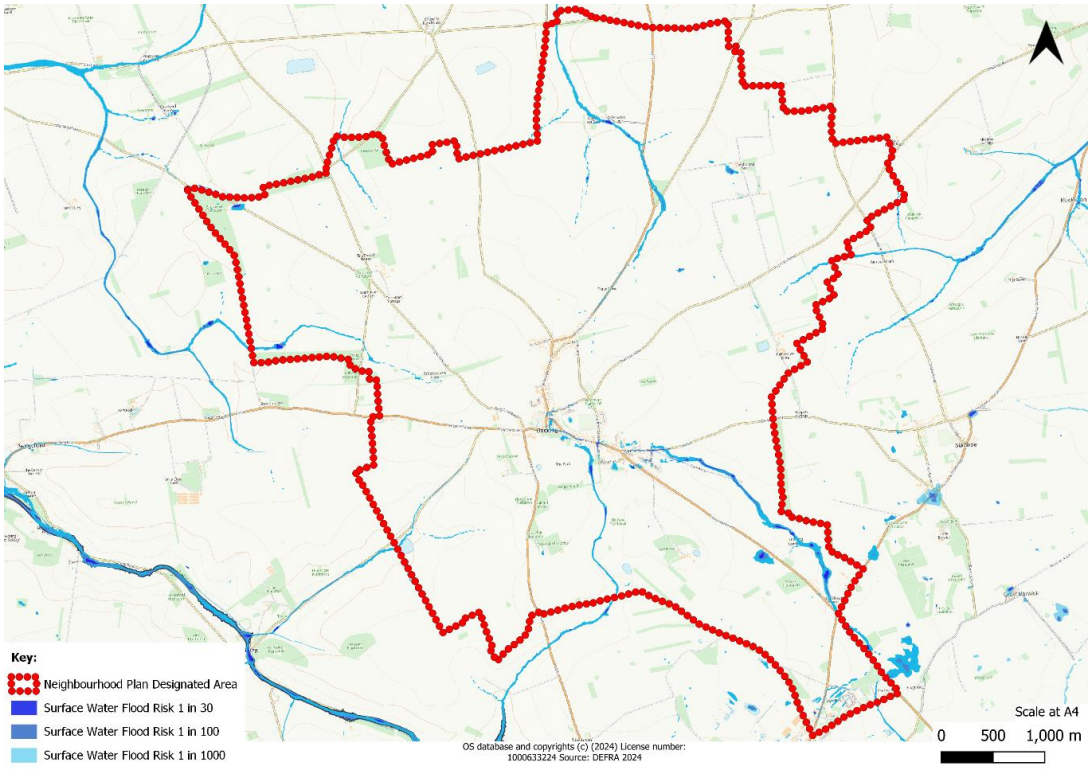


Figure 8- Surface Water Flood Risk within the whole parish (Source: DEFRA, 2024)

Figure 9-Surface Water Flood Risk within the built-up area of Docking (Source: DEFRA, 2024)

21. Docking is not mentioned specifically in the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) Level 1 (2018) and Level 2 (2019) Reports[12]. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) datasets show a number of reports and investigation of flooding incidents in the parish[13]. For example, in the winter flood event 2020/2021 there was 1 incident of internal flooding reported along Chequers Street. In the report the causes of flooding were due to damage of the highway surface water drainage system, and this caused water to make its way in to affected property via the cellar. Unusually seasonably high groundwater levels in the area increased the level of risk of water inundation to underground structures such as cellars and basements.

22. During winter 2023/2024 there have been a number of separate occasions where surface water flooding along Fakenham Rd has caused road closures between Docking and Bircham Newton. This is as a result of significant rainfall and an inability for the drainage system to cope with capacity. This is the same location as the 2018 flood incident, run-off from an adjacent agricultural field has left the road unpassable, resulting in a diversion through Stanhoe.

Air and Climatic Factors

23. As part of the National Air Quality Strategy all local authorities are obliged to establish air quality levels in their area that meet national air quality objectives. If an area does not meet these objectives Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared. The King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council Air Quality Annual Status Report (2023) confirms that there are two Air Quality Management Areas in the borough these are within King's Lynn at Gaywood Clock and Railway Road. Gaywood Clock and Railway Road AQMAs are approximately 20 miles southwest of the DNP area[14]. This would suggest that air quality is generally not of a concern in the DNP area, and indeed the report confirms that air quality could be improved but a number of measures have been put in place to improve local air quality.

Material Assets

24. Docking has a number of facilities/services within the parish include but are not limited to Bayfield surgery, Docking Primary and Nursery School, St Mary's Church,

[12] Flood risk assessment - Level 2 | Flood risk assessment - Level 2 | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk (west-norfolk.gov.uk)

[13] Flood investigations - Norfolk County Council

[14]Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk Air Quality Annual Status Report (2023) Available at: Air quality annual status report 2023 | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk (west-norfolk.gov.uk)

Docking House (Assisted Living Residence), allotments, playing field/play park, village hall, post office, Spar village shop, angling fishing club, and the Bus Service (33, 33A and 414). The three bus services (33, 33A and 414) travel through the parish from King's Lynn to Hunstanton. 33 and 33A services are part of Lynx Bus and allow residents/visitors to travel to nearby villages and towns including Kings Lynn, Hillington, Great Bircham, Sedgeford and Hunstanton. The 33A and 414 do not run at the weekends and the 33 does not run on Sundays. This limits accessibility for local residents and visitors.

25. There are also a range of businesses in the parish as detailed In the Docking Evidence Base Paper 2024 and several existing green spaces which are accessible or viewed by the public. These include the allotments and cemetery north of Pound Lane, St Mary's Church Religious Grounds north of Chequers Street, Bowls Green north of High St, the playing field, play area and tennis courts West of Bradmere Lane, Bayfield north of the High Street, The Park at Docking Hall, Grove field on Mill Lane and the fishing pond on Little Lane.

26. Docking is relatively poorly served by its public rights of way network and therefore there is little connectivity to the wider countryside. Although there are National Trail routes nearby (8km to Norfolk Coast Path and 4km to the Peddars Way) there are no public rights of way linking them to Docking. Looking at the data available via Norfolk County Council (Figures10 and11) there are two public rights of way within the parish, south of the built-up area. This includes:

- One bridleway route going south of Mill Lane and then west towards Bircham Road (B1153) once reaching the Halfway Plantation.
- One public footpath route going south of Bircham Rd adjacent to Mill Hill Wood towards Bircham Newton Parish.

27. The bridleway on Mill Lane can only be accessed by walking down narrow lanes with no pavements. This bridle path is only 1.6km in length, is not circular and ends at the main road between Docking and Bircham with no onward connectivity. The second right of way can be accessed by walking 0.5km along the main Docking to Bircham road which has no pavement. This footpath is 1.2km in length and not circular. The only alternative to the bridle path for village dog walkers is to walk down the quieter lanes which have no pavements and often have 60mph speed limits. These lanes are becoming increasingly busier and more dangerous as development encroaches on these spaces.

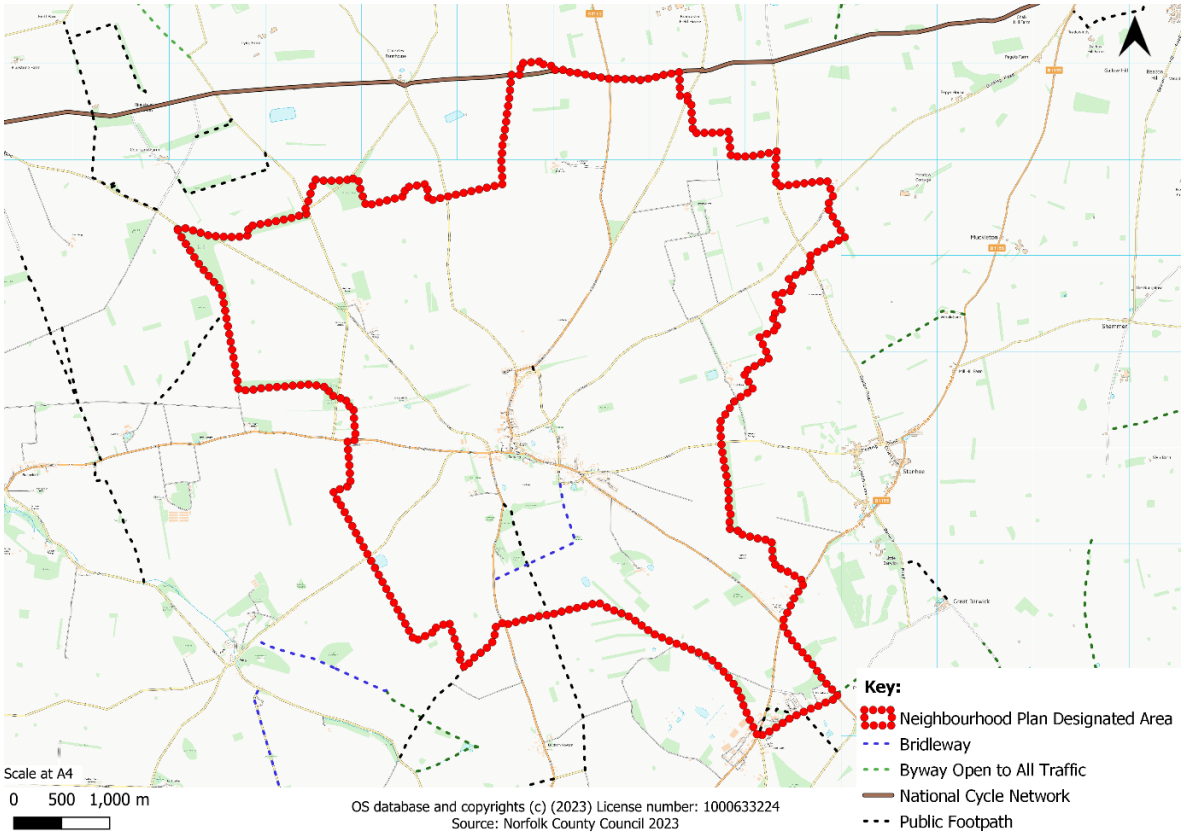


Figure 10-Public Rights of Way within Docking (Source: Norfolk County Council, 2023)

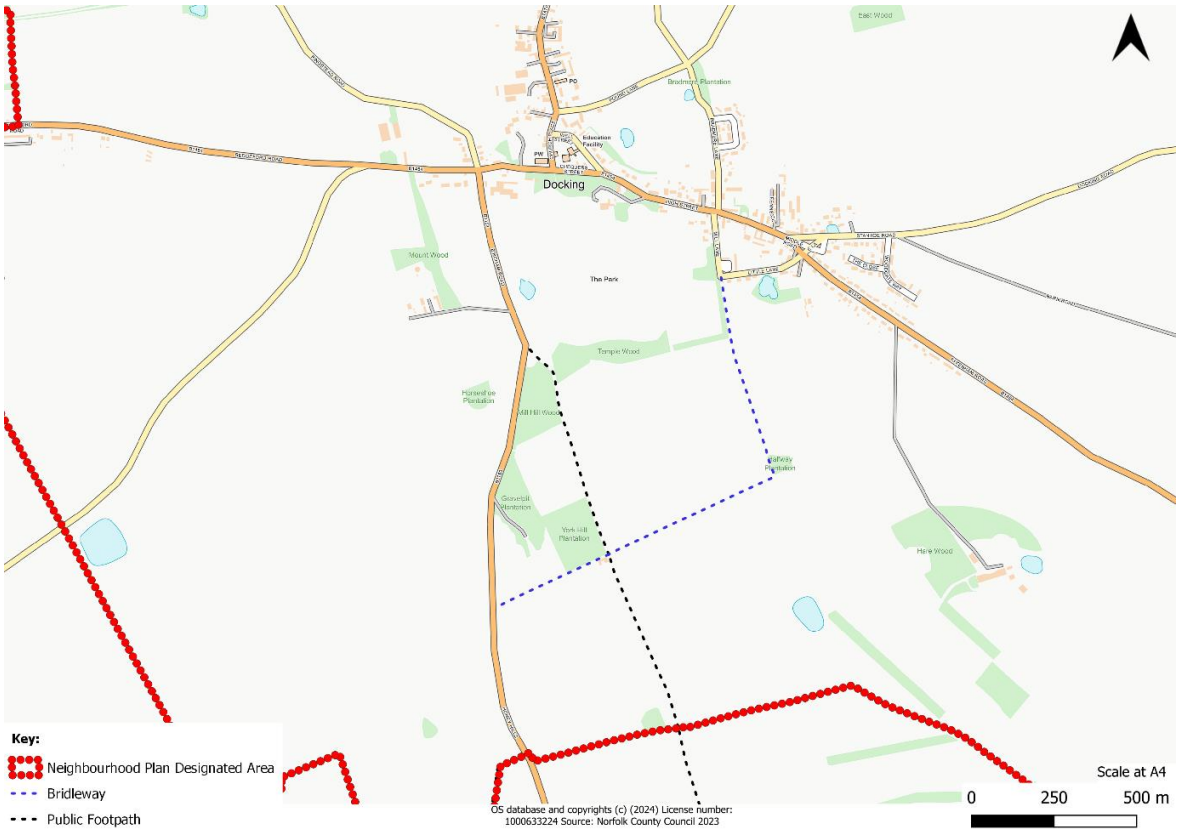


Figure 11-Public Rights of Way within the built-up settlement (Source: Norfolk County Council, 2023)

Cultural Heritage

27. The NPA has a wealth of historic value including a conservation area, 15 listed buildings (Grade I to II*) and one scheduled monument which is a Lovat Scouts' First World War training trenches north of Monks Close. The majority of the listed buildings are Grade II and many of these are situated around Chequers Street and Church Place. There is one Grade II* building which is St Mary's Church. There are no Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens, World Heritage Sites, or other historic designations within the neighbourhood area.

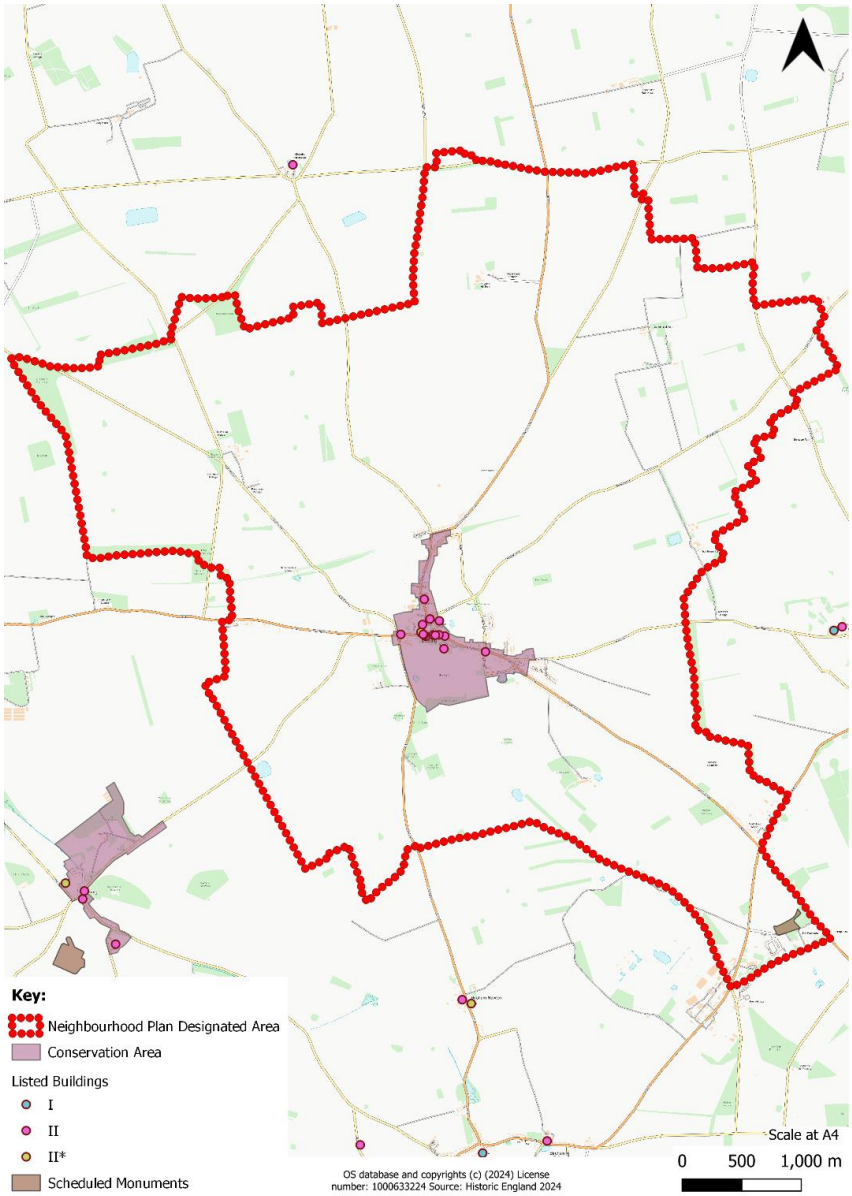


Figure 12- Heritage Assets

28. According to Norfolk Heritage Explorer[15] there are 145 records of historic artefacts, structures, buildings, and marking in the landscape such as crop marks and ditches within the neighbourhood area. These include assets from multiple time periods including the Neolithic Age, Bronze Age, Middle and Late Saxon, Roman, Medieval, and post-medieval, 20th century such as World War One and World War Two. Finds have included but are not limited to axe heads, coins, flint flakes, copper and metal objects, pottery, walls, WWI/WWII pillboxes and sites of historic buildings such as Avalon Cottage, Docking Hall, Docking Primary School, and Docking Priory (Figure 13).

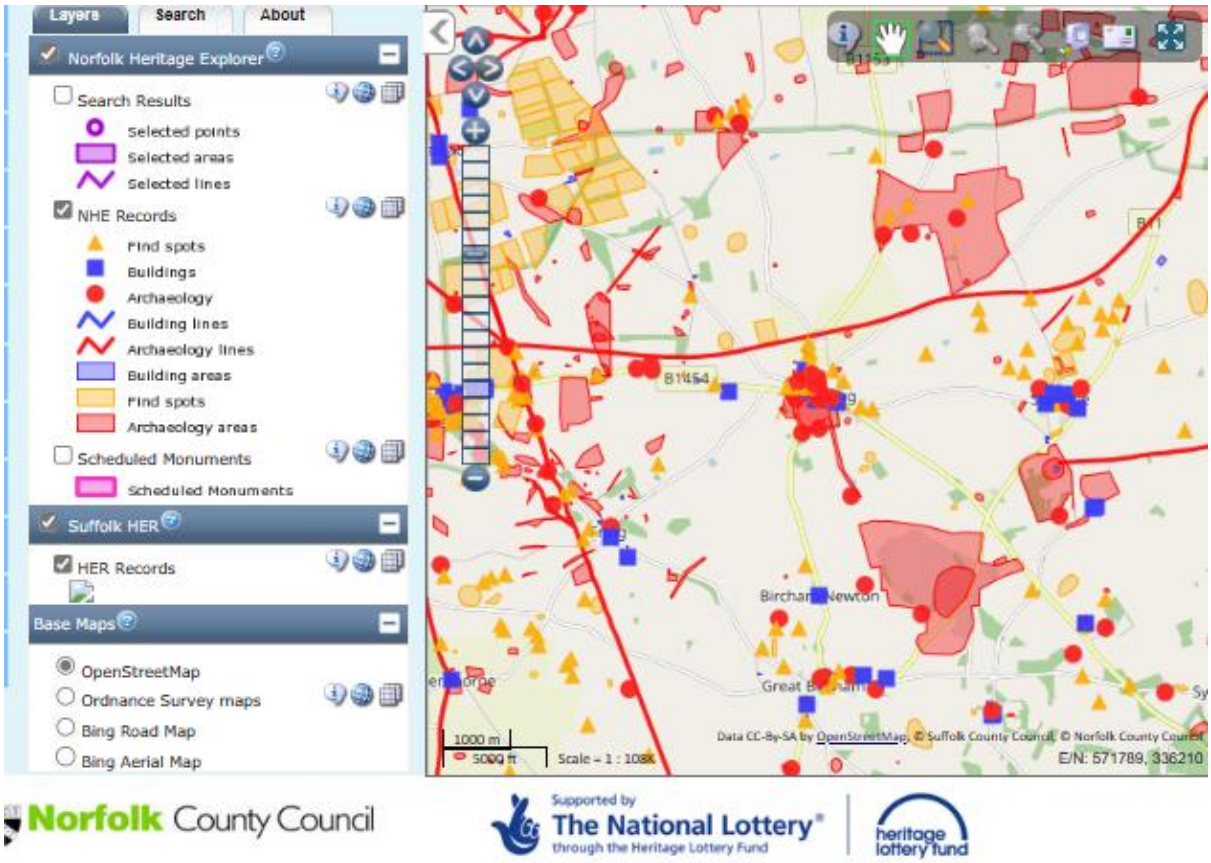


Figure 13- Historic Finds within Docking (Source: Norfolk Heritage Explorer, 2024)

4. LANDSCAPE

29. The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (2007)[16] identifies that the parish falls within the Plateau Farmland landscape character type (Figure 14).

[15] Your Search Results - Norfolk Heritage Explorer

[16] KLWN Landscape Character Assessment, Final Report March 2007, Chris Blandford Associates

J: PLATEAU FARMLAND

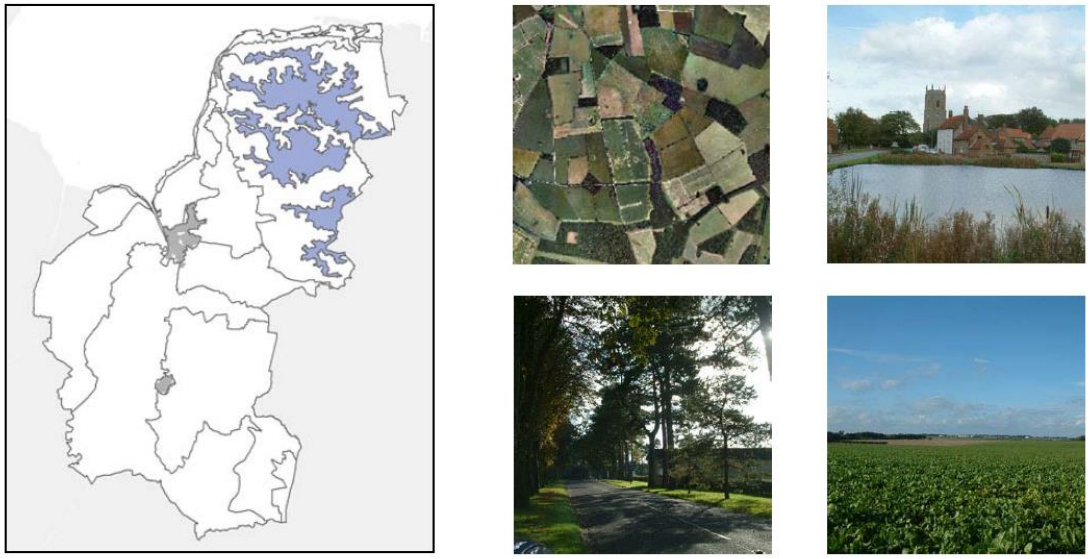


Figure 14-Plateau Farmland Map (Source: The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (2007)

30. Key characteristics of plateau farmland include landscape predominantly defined by extensive geometric fields under arable crop production. The landscape is characterised by flat terrain and geometric fields are typically bound by straight drainage ditches, short, flailed hedges, and shelterbelts. Docking is also one of the highest villages in Norfolk and the Church tower is the highest point in the County.

31. The summary of visual character in Docking states the village of Docking centres on the church with a landmark tower and village pond, Docking Hall, and its associated mature parkland landscape. Typical of the area are a series of roads (some of them fairly busy e.g. the B1454) radiating out from the villages. Farmland comprises generally large, regular shaped fields (separated by low to medium mature hedgerows), which are interspersed by small patches of woodland, plantations, and tree belts, which punctuate the skyline. The patches of woodland provide some localised sense of enclosure. Few tracks and footpaths cross the area. A strong sense of tranquillity, isolation and exposure is apparent throughout the open sparsely populated area. Long distance, panoramic and open views across farmland are characteristic of the area, contributing to the generally large-scale nature of this landscape character area.

32. Inherent landscape sensitivities which need to be considered for Docking:

- Intact mature landscape structure including belts and copses of (plantation) woodland, mature (parkland) trees and patches of intact hedgerow network.

- Landscape setting of Docking.
- Coherent and recognisable small-scale settlement density and pattern.
- Relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout the area.

33. The landscape planning guidelines for Docking include:

- 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 scarce settlement pattern characteristic of the area.
- Seek to conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of Docking.
- Seek to conserve the panoramic views across the area and adjacent areas.
- Seek to ensure that potential small-scale or incremental development within Docking, is in keeping with existing landscape and settlement character.
- Where appropriate, consider sensitive farm diversification, in keeping with local settlement pattern and character.

SEA Screening

Legislative Background

34. The European Directive 2001/42/EC[17] is the basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation, which was transposed into English secondary legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 otherwise known as the SEA Regulations. A SEA would be required if the implementation of the contents of the Docking Neighbourhood Plan are likely to cause significant environmental effects.

35. The assessment undertaken will follow and answer specific questions using criteria drawn from the European SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 when determining the likely significance of effects as shown in Figure 15[18].

36. Figure 16 presents the flow diagram entitled Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes which is taken from the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, published in September 2005[19]. Figure 17 below assesses whether DNP will require a full SEA. The questions in the first column are drawn from Figure 16 which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

37. An assessment has been undertaken to determine whether the draft DNP requires SEA in accordance with the SEA Regulations. Where the results can be viewed below.

[17] EUR-Lex - 32001L0042 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

[18] The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (legislation.gov.uk)

[19] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf

SCHEDULE 1- CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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

a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of [F1retained EU law] on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

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

a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
c) the transboundary nature of the effects;
d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);
e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—
(i)special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
(ii)exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
(iii)intensive land-use; and
g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

Figure 15-Schedule 1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects

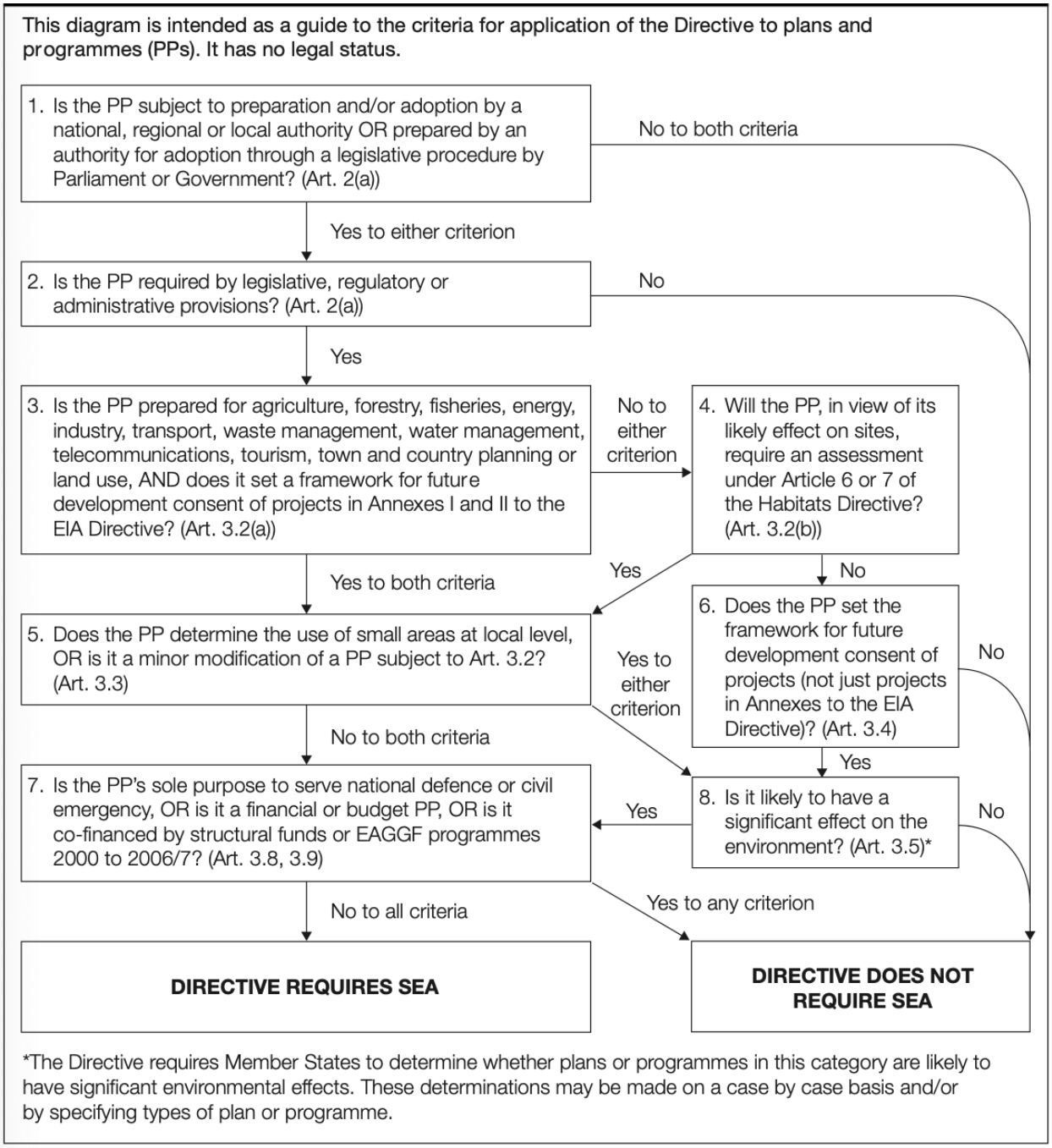


Figure 16-Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes

	Stage	Y/N	Justification
1	Is the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government (Art. 2(a))	Y	The NP is being prepared by Docking parish council (as the "relevant qualifying body") and will be made Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, subject to Docking passing an independent examination and successful local community referendum. The preparation of the Docking Neighbourhood Plan is allowed under primary legislation: The Town and Country Planning Act (1990) as amended by the Localism Act (2011). The preparation of NP's is subject to several relevant regulations as shown below (not intend to be a complete list): • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, • the Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012 • the Neighbourhood Planning (General)(Amendment) Regulations 2015 • the Neighbourhood Planning (General)and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • the Neighbourhood Planning (General)and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2012 GO TO QUESTION 2

2	Is the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	Whilst it is not a requirement for a parish to create a Neighbourhood Plan under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and Localism Act (2011), the NP will eventually be "made" and form part of the Development Plan for Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. These authorities are directed by legislative processes, and it is important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether an SEA is required under the Directive. GO TO QUESTION 3
3	Is the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))	Y	Developments that fall within Annex I are 'excluded' development for Neighbourhood Plans (as set out in Section 61(k) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as subsequently amended)[20] and the Localism Act 2011 Schedule 9 Part 2 Para 7 Section 38 B (1)(b),(6)[21]. A Neighbourhood Plan is prepared for Town and Country Planning and Land use. The Docking neighbourhood plan can include at a neighbourhood level, through different policy areas, the framework for development that would fall within Annex II of the EIA Directive. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared to set out a framework for town and country planning and land use

[20] Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (legislation.gov.uk)

[21] Localism Act 2011 (legislation.gov.uk)

			within the parish of Docking. Its intention is to complement the higher order strategic framework that already exists for land use planning across the Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to align and be in general conformity with the strategic framework. The Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating any development itself but anticipates being one of the key tools to manage future development with Docking. GO TO QUESTION 5
4	Will the Neighbourhood Plan (PP), in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.3)		A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening of the Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken in the next section and has concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site, either alone or in combination. GO TO QUESTION 6
6	Does the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)		Although the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development, it includes non-strategic policies which proposals for development within the parish will be assessed against when materially relevant. GO TO QUESTION 8
8	Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	SEE FIGURE 15 AND 16 – PLAN DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA.

Figure 17-Application of SEA Directive to DNP

**PP in this instance refers to Neighbourhood Plan*

38. Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. These are listed in Figure 18 below along with comments on the extent to which the DNP meets these criteria.

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard in particular, to:		
a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	Once made, DNP will become part of the statutory development plan and will guide the delivery of development within the designated plan area. The parish of Docking is located within Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough. The King's Lynn and West Norfolk 2011 Core Strategy as well as the emerging Local Plan designates Docking as a Key Rural Service Centre (KRSC). The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) allocated one site G30.1- Land situated off Pound Lane (Manor Pasture). The land amounted to 3.4 hectares and was allocated for residential development of at least 20 dwellings. The site subsequently achieved permission for 33 dwellings including 7 affordable units (16/00866/OM, 18/01960/RMM). Building work commenced in July 2022 (according to information provided by the borough council) and is due for completion in 2024 with units on the market. In terms of the degree to which DNP sets a framework, it does not allocate land for development.	N

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The Docking Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted alongside the higher order adopted Local Plans and National Planning Policy Framework and form part of the Borough Council's Development Plans. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity to the strategic framework and will expand upon some of the Local Plan policies, providing supplementary information on a local scale. It does not have influence over other plans. However, once made DNP will form part of the statutory development plans for Docking and will be used in conjunction with the current development plans to determine planning applications.	N
c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	One of the Basic Conditions which DNP must meet is to contribute towards sustainable development. Some of the policies within the plan will focus on environmental protection including designating local green spaces, important local views, creating green corridors for biodiversity/habitat enhancement, protecting existing trees/hedgerows, and avoiding unnecessary light pollution in a dark skies policy. These aim to ensure the effects on the environment are minimised within the plan area and promote positive action. Given the	N

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
	non-strategic nature of the DNP this does not have the potential to restrict the delivery of other plans or programmes.	
d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	Baseline information relating to DNP was described earlier in this Screening Document. There are no European statutory designated sites in the neighbourhood area, though there are a few important European designations within approximately 20km in all directions. These include The Greater Wash and North Norfolk Coast, Dersingham Bog, Roydon Common and the River Wensum which falls outside of the West Norfolk District boundary. The plan itself will not specifically allocate land for development and will not exacerbate any significant known environmental problems.	N
e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (eg plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	The implementation of community legislation is unlikely to be significantly compromised by the Neighbourhood Plan.	N
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be		

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
affected, having regard, in particular, to		
a) The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects	DNP does not contain any site-specific development proposals that will result in complex, widespread, long lasting, or serious environmental effects.	N
b) The cumulative nature of the effects	As it will not allocate land for development DNP will not lead to any cumulative effects in combination with existing or emerging plans.	N
c) Transboundary nature of effects	The emerging DNP area provides supplementary policy areas on a local scale such as design, The impacts for transboundary effects beyond the parish are unlikely to be significant.	N
d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	DNP is unlikely to produce any significant effects to human health or the environment.	N
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The DNP area has a total population of around 1100 (Census 2021). This sits within the context of a total population of 154,300 in King's Lynn & West Norfolk district. DNP remains a non-strategic plan and the principle of development that will take place has already been established within the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan.	N
f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to –	i) There are no national statutory natural designations which falls within Docking. Regarding cultural heritage, there are 15	N

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
i. Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii. Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or iii. Intensive land-use	statutory listed buildings and 1 scheduled monument within the neighbourhood plan area according to the latest data on the Historic England website. As the plan does not allocate land for development it is not anticipated to have likely significant effects on the natural and cultural characteristics of the area. Policies have also been put in place to afford protection in areas of natural and historical importance either through local green space designations, important local views, design or biodiversity. ii) DNP is unlikely to result in exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as those relating to air, water, and soil quality. iii) DNP is unlikely to bring forward development of an extent that would result in a significant intensification of Local land Use. The emerging DNP does not include site allocations and therefore are not anticipated to have likely significant effects on the parish.	

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
g) The effects on areas of landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	The Neighbourhood Plan Area does not have any recognised international, national, or local protection status. The nearest landscape of international status is the River Wensum which is 6km south of the parish/designated neighbourhood area followed by The Greater Wash and North Norfolk Coast, which is 10km north, Dersingham Bog, which is 15km southwest, and Roydon Common which is 17km southwest. DNP is not anticipated to have likely significant effects on designated landscapes given the plan cannot influence areas outside of the parish, it will not allocate land for development, and it contains a few protective polices such as dark skies, local green spaces, important local views and biodiversity and green ecological corridors. The environmental effects on areas of international and national status have been considered and examined through the Local Plan.	N

Figure 18-Likely Significant Effects

SEA Screening Conclusion

39. A Screening Assessment has been undertaken by applying the criteria from the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations to determine whether or not the DNP is likely to have significant environmental effects when assessed against the topics listed in the SEA Regulations.

40. DNP will set out a vision and non-strategic planning policies to shape development in Docking up to 2039. The plan does not allocate sites for development but does to contain policies that protect locally important assets (green spaces, heritage, important views) and promotes environmental improvement. Such mitigating policies will compliment those set out in the local plans. The assessment concludes that this will not result in likely significant effects on the environment.

41. On this basis, it is considered that DNP does not have the potential to have significant environmental impacts, and SEA is not required.

HRA Screening Assessment

What is a Habitats Regulation Assessment?

12. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is the process by which a 'competent authority' is required to assess the potential impacts of plans and projects (such as Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans or development proposals put forward in planning applications) on International Sites in accordance with Article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). A competent authority, such as the Local Planning Authority, must determine if a plan or project may affect the protected features set out in the Conservation Objectives of an International habitat site before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise it.

What are the International (European) Designated Sites?

13. There are three types of International Sites designations:

- Ramsar: Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands[22].
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC): Areas which have been given special protection for a variety of wild animals, plants and habitats.
- Special Protection Area (SPA): Identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within EU countries.

Screening

14. To fulfil the legal requirements if likely significant effects will occur with the implementation of the DNP upon the International Sites (Natura 2000 sites) an initial screening assessment has been undertaken which is the first stage of the HRA process. If any likely significant effects on International Sites will occur then the screening is followed by an appropriate assessment (second stage of the HRA process) which needs to consider these impacts in more detail and what mitigation measures, if any, can be achieved to address these[23].

[22] The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the Convention was signed in 1971. It came into force in 1975.
[23] Habitats regulations assessments: protecting a European site - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

15. The purpose of the Screening stage is to:

- Identify all features of the DNP that would have no effect on an International/ European site. These features can be eliminated from further consideration in respect of this and other plans.
- Identify all aspects of the DNP that would not be likely to have a significant effect on an International/European site (i.e. would have some effect because of links/connectivity but the effect is not significant), either alone or in combination with other aspects of the same plan or other plans or projects. These do not require 'Appropriate Assessment'.
- Identify those aspects of the DNP where it is not possible to rule out the risk of significant effects on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This provides a clear scope for the parts of the plan that will require Appropriate Assessment.

Case Law and the Interpretation of 'likely significant effects'

16. Before undergoing the assessment, it is useful to reflect on relevant case law to help interpret when effects should be considered as a likely significant effect, when carrying out HRA of a neighbourhood plan. In the Waddenzee case the European Court of Justice ruled on the interpretation of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (translated into Reg. 102 in the Habitats Regulations):

    "An effect should be considered 'likely', "if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on the site" (paragraph 44). An effect should be considered 'significant', "if it undermines the conservation objectives" (paragraph 48). Where a plan or project has an effect on a site "but is not likely to undermine its conservation objectives, it cannot be considered likely to have a significant effect on the site concerned" (paragraph 47)."

17. As well as this another relevant opinion delivered to the Court of Justice of the European Union stated:

    "The requirement that an effect in question be 'significant' exists in order to lay down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on the site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by Article 6(3), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill."

18. This opinion on the interpretation of significant effects in the 'Sweetman' case allows for the authorisation of plans and projects whose possible effects, alone or in combination, can be considered 'trivial' or de minimis; referring to such cases as those "that have no appreciable effect on the site". In practice such effects could be screened out as having no likely significant effect – they would be 'insignificant'. The HRA Screening assessment therefore considers whether the Pre-Submission Draft of Docking Neighbourhood Plan and its policies could have likely significant effects either alone or in combination.

Assessment

19. Firstly, it is established practice in HRA to identify any International/European Sites that could possibly be affected within the area covered by the plan proposal or project and other sites that may be affected beyond this area. In this screening assessment the area screened was the DNP designated area as well as a distance of 20 kilometres (km) taken from the centre of DNP as shown in Figure 20. A distance of 20 kilometres from the centre point of the DNP area was used in the first instance because this has been agreed with Natural England for the relevant Local Plans HRAs in this region[24] and is considered precautionary. In line with HRA requirements, the application of a 20-kilometre buffer is considered a highly precautionary distance with relation to potential impacts to the surrounding area.

20. The assessment also considers areas that may be functionally linked to the International/European sites. The term 'functional linkage' refers to the role or 'function' that land or sea beyond the boundary of a European site might fulfil in terms of ecologically supporting the populations for which the site was designated or classified. Such land is therefore 'linked' to the European site in question because it provides an important role in maintaining or restoring the population of qualifying species at favourable conservation status[25].

21. Whilst the boundary of a International/European site will usually be drawn to include key supporting habitat for a qualifying species, this cannot always be the case where the population for which a site is designated or classified is particularly mobile. Individuals of the population will not necessarily remain in the site all the time. The mobility of qualifying species is considerable and may extend so far from

[24]Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. Source Footprint Ecology. https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6634/kings_lynn_and_west_norfolk_habitats_regulations_assessment_draft_document_270521.pdf

[25] Functional linkage: How areas that are functionally linked to European sites have been considered when they may be affected by plans and projects - a review of authoritative decisions - NECR207 (naturalengland.org.uk)

the key habitat that forms the designated area (SAC or SPA) that it would be entirely impractical to attempt to designate or classify all of the land or sea that may conceivably be used by the species.

22. In the DNP area it was found that there are no designated International/European sites. This screening assessment has also considered the impact on International Sites within a 20km radius of the DNP area as an in-combination assessment (Figure 19). The point for measuring 20km has been taken from the centre of DNP as shown in Figure 20. A number of International Sites are shown to be located within 20km radius of the DNP area including:

Special Areas of Conservation	Special Protection Areas	Ramsar Sites
• Roydon Common & Dersingham Bog • The Greater Wash & North Norfolk Coast • River Wensum	• The Greater Wash & North Norfolk Coast	• Roydon Common & Dersingham Bog • The Greater Wash & North Norfolk Coast

Figure 19- Table of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of DNP

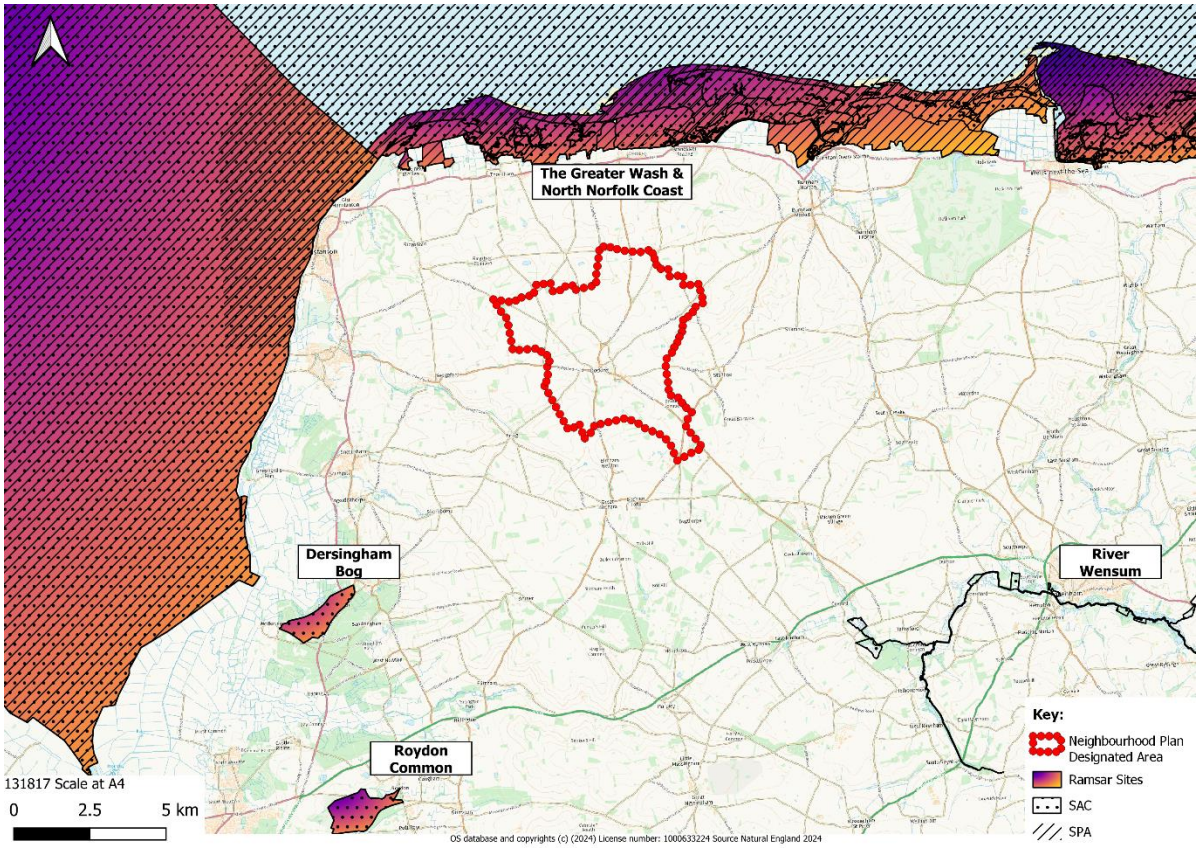


Figure 20- Map of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of DNP

23. Appendix A provides detailed information about the European Sites described with reference to Standard Data Forms for the SPA sites and Natural England's Site Improvement Plans[26]. Natural England's conservation objectives[27] for the SPA sites have also been reviewed. These state that site integrity must be maintained or restored by maintaining or restoring the habitats of qualifying features, the supporting processes on which they rely, and populations of qualifying species.

24. As required under Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), an assessment has been undertaken of the potential 'likely significant effects' of the plan. The assessment has been prepared in order to identify which policies would be likely to have a significant effect on European sites. The Screening assessment has been conducted without taking mitigation into account, in accordance with the 'People Over Wind' judgment which took place in April 2018[28].The judgment clarified that when making screening decisions for the purposes of deciding whether an appropriate assessment is required, competent authorities cannot take into account any mitigation measures in neighbourhood plans, permissions in principle and certain development orders[29].

25. Each European site has a set of interest features which are the ecological features for which the site is designated or classified, and the features for which Member States should ensure the site is maintained or where necessary restored (as set out in Appendix A). European sites are at risk if there are possible means by which any aspect of a plan or project can, when being taken forward for implementation, pose a potential threat to the wildlife interest of the sites. This is often referred to as the 'impact pathway'. Potential impact pathways which have been considered in this assessment for significant effects are:

    - Physical loss or damage to habitat;
    - Non-physical disturbance (noise, vibration and light pollution);
    - Non-toxic contamination;
    - Air pollution;
    - Recreational pressure;

[26] Natural England Access to Evidence - Site Improvement Plans: East of England

[27] Natural England Access to Evidence - Conservation Objectives for European Sites

[2828] The Court of Justice of the European Union delivered its judgment in Case C-323/17 People Over Wind & Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta ('People over Wind').

[29] GOV. Para 009 . Source: Appropriate assessment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- Changes to hydrology, including water quantity and quality
- Urban effects

26. Where the plan is likely to have an effect on its own (due to impact pathways being present), but it is not likely to be significant, the in-combination assessment at Screening stage needs to determine whether there may also be the same types of effect from other plans or projects that could combine with the plan to produce a significant effect. If so, this likely significant effect arising from the plan in combination with other plans or projects, would then need to be considered through the Appropriate Assessment stage to determine if the impact pathway would have an adverse effect on integrity of the relevant European site. Where the Screening assessment has concluded that there is no impact pathway between development proposed in the plan and the conditions necessary to maintain qualifying features of a European site, then there will be no in-combination effects to assess at the Screening or Appropriate Assessment stage.

27. The potential for in-combination impacts will therefore focus on plans prepared by local authorities that overlap with European sites that are within the scope of this HRA. The findings of any associated HRA work for those plans will be reviewed where available. Where relevant, any strategic projects in the area that could have in-combination effects with the plan will also be identified and reviewed. The online HRA Handbook suggests that proposals in draft plans may be relevant to consider as part of the in-combination assessment.

HRA Impacts Screening

28. A risk-based approach involving the application of the precautionary principle was adopted in the assessment, such that a conclusion of 'no likely significant effect' (LSE) would only be reached where it was considered unlikely, based on current knowledge and the information available, that a DNP policy would have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site. DNP does not allocate land for development and therefore will not directly result in an increase in the number of new dwellings within the vicinity of European Sites. A summary of findings is presented in Figure 21 with regard to the different impact pathways and an assessment of potential impacts of the draft policies contained within DNP is provided in Figure 22.

Impact Pathway	Findings
Physical loss or damage to habitat	Habitat loss from development in areas outside of the European site boundaries may result in likely significant effects where that habitat contributes towards maintaining the interest feature for which the European site is designated. This includes land which may provide offsite movement corridors or foraging and sheltering habitat for mobile species such as birds, bats and fish. European sites susceptible to the indirect effects of habitat loss are restricted to those with qualifying species that rely on offsite habitat. Natural England has advised that its recognised distance for the consideration of offsite functionally linked land for wintering birds is generally 2km. As the DNP area is approximately 20 kilometres from SAC/SPA/Ramsar Sites, no likely significant effect is predicted in relation to this site. The DNP also does not have influence over any development outside of the DNP designated area. Therefore, no likely significant effects will occur from DNP as a result of physical damage and loss to offsite habitat, either alone or in-combination with other plans and policies.
Non-physical disturbance (noise, vibration and light pollution)	Non-physical disturbance effects such as noise and vibration are most likely to disturb bird species and thus are a key consideration with respect to potential effects on European sites where birds are the qualifying features. Light pollution from artificial lighting at night also has the potential to affect species where it occurs in close proximity to key habitat areas, such as key roosting sites of SPA birds. It has been assumed that the effects of non-physical disturbances are most likely to be significant within a distance of 500 metres from the source. The SAC/SPA/Ramsar Sites are located significantly more than 500 metres from the Neighbourhood Plan area and therefore is not considered susceptible to non-physical disturbance from development in the DNP area. Offsite impacts can also be screened out, due to the 20km distance of the SPAs from the DNP area.
Non-toxic contamination	A non-toxic environment is understood to be an environment that is free from chemical pollution and of exposures to hazardous

Impact Pathway	Findings
	chemicals at levels that are harmful to human health and to the environment. An example of non-toxic contamination in the environment is the creation of dust. Dust can smother terrestrial habitats, preventing natural processes, and an increased sediment can potentially affect the aquatic habitats/species. As DNP is not allocating any sites for development in the area it is considered there will be no likely significant effects of non-contamination and is screened out of the assessment.
Air pollution	There are number of atmospheric pollutants which can result in direct or indirect impacts to Habitats sites. These impacts are usually caused when the qualifying features are plants, soils and wetland habitats. However, some species may also be indirectly impacted from air pollution causing changes in habitat composition. The primary contributor to atmospheric pollution is transport related activities. Therefore, the main pollutants to atmospheric pollution are considered to be oxides of nitrogen (NOx) or sulphur dioxide (SO2) from traffic emissions. s. Deposition of nitrogen compounds may lead to both soil and freshwater acidification, and NOx can cause eutrophication of soils and water. Based on the 2019 Highways England Design Manual for Road and Bridges (DMRB) LA 105 Air quality[30] (which sets out the requirements for assessing and reporting the effects of highway projects on air quality), the report states that an assessment of the impact of pollutant concentrations on sensitive receptors should be done within 200m from the road itself. It can be assumed that air pollution from roads is unlikely to be significant beyond 200 metres from the road itself. As DNP is not allocating any sites for development in the area it is considered there will be no likely significant effects of air pollution on the

[30] LA 105 - Air quality (standardsforhighways.co.uk)

Impact Pathway	Findings
	European Sites which are 20km away and is screened out of the assessment.
Recreational pressure	Recreational activities and human presence can result in significant effects on European sites. European sites with qualifying bird species are likely to be particularly susceptible to recreational disturbances from walking, dog walking, angling, off-road vehicles and motorbikes, wildfowling, and water sports. In addition, recreation can physically damage habitat as a result of trampling, fire or vandalism and also through erosion associated with terrestrial activities. Each European site will typically have a 'Zone of Influence' (ZOI) within which increases in population would be expected to result in likely significant effects. Zones of influence are areas from within which it is deemed there will be likely significant effects arising from additional residents living within the zone and travelling to European sites for recreation. This determines where new development may result in changes in recreation and therefore where mitigation will be necessary. ZOIs in the Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan HRA have resulted from the 2016 visitor surveys[31] and the findings are therefore typically specific to each European site (and often to specific areas within a European site). The ZOI for the three SPAs within 20km distance of DNP are: • Roydon Common and Dersingham Bog- 12km • The Wash & North Norfolk Coast- 61km The DNP is further than 12 kilometres from Roydon Common and Dersingham Bog and it is likely that significant effects on these sites as a result of recreation can therefore be ruled out at this stage. The DNP area does fall within 61km from The Wash & North

[31] Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. Source Footprint Ecology. https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6634/kings_lynn_and_west_norfolk_habitats_regulations_assessment_draft_document_270521.pdf

Impact Pathway	Findings
	Norfolk Coast. However, the DNP is not allocating any sites so a full HRA should be ruled out at this stage.
Changes to hydrology, including water quantity and quality	An increase in demand for water abstraction and treatment resulting from any growth proposed in the DNP area could result in changes in hydrology at European sites. Depending on the qualifying features and particular vulnerabilities of the European sites, this could result in likely significant effects, for example, due to changes in environmental or biotic conditions, water chemistry and the extent and distribution of preferred habitat conditions. The DNP does not have influence over any development outside of the DNP designated area. Therefore, no likely significant effects will occur from DNP as a result of changes to hydrology either alone or in-combination with other plans and policies.

Figure 21-Summary of Impact Pathways

Policy	Description	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)	Recommendation at Screening Stage
Policy 1: Biodiversity and Green Ecological Corridors	Requirement to deliver a greater net gain than 10% in ecological value will be supported. Development should not have an adverse impact on important wildlife habitats and species in Docking. Green ecological corridors have been mapped out with local natural features in mind which proposed developments within or adjacent to the corridors should have regard to enhance or restore habitat connectivity.	No LSE – mitigation policy for growth	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy 2: Trees and Hedgerows	Policy setting out detail/criteria on protecting existing trees and hedgerows in the parish, replacement trees and new tree planting.	No LSE – protective policy	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy 3: Local Green Spaces	Protection of green spaces of local importance from future development.	No LSE – supports retention of green open spaces, conserving the natural environment	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken

Policy	Description	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)	Recommendation at Screening Stage
Policy 4: Protection of Important Local Views	Protection of important local views means proposals must demonstrate that development is sited and designed to be of a form and scale which avoids harm to the views.	No LSE – protective policy	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy 5: Dark Skies	Policy to protect unnecessary light pollution from new developments	No LSE – protective policy	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy 6: Design	Requiring high quality design that accords with the Docking Design Codes/Guide Document 2024.	No LSE – policy is qualitative and does not promote development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken.
Policy 7: Housing Mix	This policy addresses housing mix with specific regard to the results from the Docking Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) 2024 including requirements that ensure future housing development meets the needs of local people.	No LSE – does not promote development but relates to qualitative criteria for development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken

Policy	Description	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)	Recommendation at Screening Stage
Policy 8: Affordable Housing	This policy addresses affordable housing with set detail on ensuring this remains in perpetuity.	No LSE – does not promote development but relates to qualitative criteria for development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy 9: Principle Residence Requirement	Policy restricts new housing to have a principle residency occupancy.	No LSE – does not promote development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy 10: Community Facilities and Employment Services	Policy protects several community facilities. It also sets out that expanding or new employment services will be supported if they conform with Policy 10 and other relevant NDP polices.	No LSE – does not promote development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy 11: Access and Movement	New built development within the existing footway network, or adjacent, will be expected to provide new or improved links to the network which are safe, accessible for all and appropriate for all weather conditions.	No LSE – policy is qualitative and does not promote development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken

Figure 22- HRA Screening Assessment

HRA Screening Conclusion

The HRA Screening Assessment concludes that no significant effects are likely to occur with regards to the integrity of European Wildlife Sites within 20km. As such a full HRA and Appropriate Assessment is not required at this point and is screened out.

Appendix A- Conservation Objectives of the European Sites

This appendix contains information on the European sites that are within 20km to DNP area. The site area and designated features are drawn from Natural England's website. Site conservation objectives are drawn from Natural England's website too and are only available for SACs and SPAs. Site Improvement Plans which have been published for the SPA/Ramsar Sites have been reviewed and included for information purposes.

It must be noted this information has been gathered from Natural England. This document should be read in conjunction with Supplementary Advice documents provided by the Statutory Body, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Conservation Objectives.

Dersingham Bog and Roydon Common

Site location overview[32]

Roydon Common and Dersingham Bog represent the largest and best examples of crossleaved heath – bog-moss (Erica tetralix – Sphagnum compactum) wet heath in East Anglia. This vegetation community is part of a lowland mixed valley mire, a complex series of plant communities grading from wet acid heath through valley mire to calcareous fen. This gradation is of outstanding interest. The mire is extremely diverse and supports many rare plants, birds and insects, including the black darter dragonfly Sympetrum scoticum, a northern species with a very local distribution in south-east England. The site also contains an area of dry heathland, which is dominated by heather Calluna vulgaris, gorse Ulex europaeus and young silver birch Betula pendula, and has areas of bracken around the margins. There are examples of depressions on peat substrates in natural bog pools of patterned valley mire, in flushes on the margins of valley mire and locally in disturbed areas associated with trackways and paths in mire and wet heath. Mosaics containing this habitat type are important for bog orchid Hammarbya paludosa.

Qualifying features

The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion

[32] European Site Conservation Objectives for Roydon Common & Dersingham Bog SAC - UK0012801 (naturalengland.org.uk)

- European dry heaths
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix. (Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath)

Conservation objectives[33]

- Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;
- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

Key vulnerabilities

Reviewing the Site Improvement Plan (2015) there were a number of prioritised issues for the site and the features they affect. Measures were set out to address these.[34] These can be considered as key vulnerabilities and are listed below:

- Hydrological changes
- Inappropriate ditch management
- Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Under grazing
- Water pollution

River Wensum

Site location overview

The Wensum is a naturally enriched, calcareous lowland river. The upper reaches are fed by springs that rise from the chalk and by run-off from calcareous soils rich in plant nutrients. This gives rise to beds of submerged and emergent vegetation characteristic of a chalk stream. Lower down, the chalk is overlain with boulder clay and river gravels, resulting in aquatic plant communities more typical of a slow-flowing river on mixed substrate. Much of the adjacent land is managed for hay crops and by grazing, and the resulting mosaic of meadow and marsh habitats, provides niches for a wide variety of specialised plants and animals. Ranunculus vegetation occurs throughout much of the

[33] Natural England Access to Evidence - Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England
[34] Natural England Access to Evidence - Site Improvement Plans: East of England

river's length. Stream water-crowfoot R. penicillatus ssp. pseudofluitans is the dominant Ranunculus species but thread-leaved watercrowfoot R. trichophyllus and fan-leaved water-crowfoot R. circinatus also occur in association with the wide range of aquatic and emergent species that contribute to this vegetation type. The river supports an abundant and rich invertebrate fauna including the native freshwater crayfish Austropotamobius pallipes as well as a diverse fish community, including bullhead Cottus gobio and brook lamprey Lampetra planeri. The site has an abundant and diverse mollusc fauna which includes Desmoulin's whorl-snail Vertigo moulinsiana, which is associated with aquatic vegetation at the river edge and adjacent fens.

Qualifying features

The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

• Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and CallitrichoBatrachion vegetation. (Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by water-crowfoot)

Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II:

• White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish Austropotamobius pallipes
• Bullhead Cottus gobio
• Brook lamprey Lampetra planeri
• Desmoulin's whorl snail Vertigo moulinsiana

Conservation objectives

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Key vulnerabilities

Reviewing the Site Improvement Plan (2015) there were a number of prioritised issues for the site and the features they affect. Measures were set out to address these.[35] These can be considered as key vulnerabilities and are listed below:

- Physical modification
- Inappropriate weirs dams and other structures
- Siltation
- Invasive species
- Water Pollution
- Water abstraction

Non-qualifying habitats and/or species in which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend

In general, the qualifying species all rely on the sites ecosystem as a whole and areas of shallow wetland habitat and freshwater for waterfowl. The species will rely on the maintenance of populations of species in which they feed on and potentially off-site habitat foraging for these species. The diet of qualifying species includes:

- White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish Austropotamobius pallipes - eats Insects
- Bullhead Cottus gobio - consuming small invertebrates such as insect larvae, crustaceans, and worms
- Brook lamprey Lampetra planeri - detritus, however they do not feed as adults
- Desmoulin's whorl snail Vertigo moulinsiana - primarily feeds on microflora found on the stems and leaves of tall wetland plants. In the UK, it typically lives on reed-grasses and sedges, such as reed sweet-grass (Glyceria maxima), greater pond-sedge (Carex riparia), and lesser pond-sedge (Carex acutiformis)

The Greater Wash and North Norfolk Coast

Site location overview

The Wash is the largest embayment in the UK. It is connected via sediment transfer systems to the north Norfolk coast. Together, the Wash and North Norfolk Coast form one of the most important marine areas in the UK and European North Sea coast, and

[35] Natural England Access to Evidence - Site Improvement Plans: East of England)

include extensive areas of varying, but predominantly sandy, sediments subject to a range of conditions. Communities in the intertidal include those characterised by large numbers of polychaetes, bivalve and crustaceans. Subtidal communities cover a diverse range from the shallow to the deeper parts of the embayments and include dense brittlestar beds and areas of an abundant reef-building worm ('ross worm') Sabellaria spinulosa.

The embayment supports a variety of mobile species, including a range of fish, otter Lutra lutra and common seal Phoca vitulina. The extensive intertidal flats provide ideal conditions for common seal breeding and hauling-out. Sandy sediments occupy most of the subtidal area, resulting in one of the largest expanses of subtidal sandbanks in the UK. The subtidal sandbanks vary in composition and include coarse sand through to mixed sediment at the mouth of the embayment. Communities present include large dense beds of brittlestars Ophiothrix fragilis. Species include the sand-mason worm Lanice conchilega and the tellin Angulus tenuis. Benthic communities on sandflats in the deeper, central part of the Wash are particularly diverse.

The subtidal sandbanks provide important nursery grounds for young commercial fish species, including plaice Pleuronectes platessa, cod Gadus morhua and sole Solea solea. In the tide-swept approaches to the Wash, with a high loading of suspended sand, the relatively common tube-dwelling polychaete worm Sabellaria spinulosa forms areas of biogenic reef. These structures are varied in nature, and include reefs which stand up to 30 cm proud of the seabed and which extend for hundreds of metres. The reefs extend into The Wash where super-abundant S. spinulosa occurs and where reef-like structures such as concretions and crusts have been recorded. The reefs are diverse and productive habitats which support many associated species that would not otherwise be found in predominantly sedimentary areas. Associated motile species include large numbers of polychaetes, mysid shrimps, the pink shrimp Pandalus montagui, and crabs.

Sandy flats predominate in the intertidal zone with some soft mudflats in the areas sheltered by barrier beaches and islands along the north Norfolk coast. The biota includes especially large numbers of polychaetes, mysid shrimps, the pink shrimp and crabs. Salinity ranges from that of the open coast in most of the area (supporting rich invertebrate communities) to estuarine close to the rivers. Smaller, sheltered and diverse areas of intertidal sediment, with a The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC UK0017075 Compilation date: May 2005 Version: 1 Designation citation Page 2 of 2 rich variety of communities, including some eelgrass Zostera spp. beds and large shallow pools, are protected by the north Norfolk barrier islands and sand spits. The site contains the largest single area of saltmarsh in the UK and is one of the few areas in the UK where saltmarshes are generally accreting. The proportion of the total saltmarsh vegetation

represented by glasswort Salicornia and other colonising annuals is high because of the extensive enclosure of marsh in this site and is also unusual in that it forms a pioneer community with common cord-grass Spartina anglica. There are large ungrazed saltmarshes on the North Norfolk Coast and traditionally grazed saltmarshes around the Wash.

Saltmarsh swards dominated by sea-lavenders Limonium spp. are particularly well-represented. In North Norfolk, in addition to typical lower and middle saltmarsh communities, there are transitions from upper marsh to tidal reedswamp, sand dunes (which are largely within the adjacent North Norfolk Coast SAC), shingle beaches and mud/sandflats. Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub vegetation is dominated by a shrubby cover up to 1 metre high of bushes of shrubby sea-blite Suaeda vera and sea-purslane Atriplex portulacoides, with a patchy cover of herbaceous plants and bryophytes. This scrub vegetation often forms an important feature of the upper saltmarshes, and extensive examples occur where the drift-line slopes gradually and provides a transition to dune, shingle or reclaimed sections of the coast. At a number of locations on this coast perennial glasswort Sarcocornia perennis forms an open mosaic with other species at the lower limit of the sea-purslane community.

Qualifying features

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae)
- Coastal lagoons*
- Large shallow inlets and bays
- Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (Sarcocornetea fruticosi). (Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub)
- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide. (Intertidal mudflats and sandflats)
- Reefs
- Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand. (Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand)
- Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time. (Subtidal sandbanks)

Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II:

- Common seal Phoca vitulina
- Otter Lutra lutra

Conservation Objectives

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Key vulnerabilities

Reviewing the Site Improvement Plan (2015) there were a number of prioritised issues for the site and the features they affect. Measures were set out to address these. These can be considered as key vulnerabilities and are listed below:

- Inappropriate water levels
- Public access/disturbance
- Siltation
- Fisheries: Recreational marine and estuarine
- Invasive species
- Inappropriate coastal management
- Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine
- Predation

Non-qualifying habitats and/or species in which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend

In general, the qualifying species all rely on the sites ecosystem as a whole and areas of freshwater for waterfowl. The species will rely on the maintenance of populations of species in which they feed on and potentially off-site habitat foraging for these species. The diet of qualifying species includes

- Common seal Phoca vitulina - known to eat a wide variety of fish, including herring, sand eels, whiting and flatfish. Shrimps and squid are also sometimes eaten.

- Otter Lutra lutra - fish, amphibians, birds, eggs, insects