Postwick with Witton Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040

Preliminary Screening Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment 2024

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION **4**

SEA SCREENING **5**

SCOPE OF THE POSTWICK WITH WITTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 5

BASELINE INFORMATION **8**

CONTEXT 8
BIODIVERSITY, FLORA AND FAUNA 8
POPULATION 14
HUMAN HEALTH 14
SOIL 15
WATER 16
AIR AND CLIMATIC FACTORS 18
MATERIAL ASSETS 19
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT 22

SEA SCREENING **26**

HRA SCREENING ASSESSMENT **37**

HRA SCREENING CONCLUSION **44**

List of figures:

Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Area 5
Figure 2-Wildlife Designations (Source: Natural England, 2023) 9
Figure 3- County Wildlife Site within the parish (Source: Natural England, 2023) ... 12
Figure 4- Priority Habitats (Source: Natural England, 2023) 13
Figure 5- Habitat Networks (Source: Natural England, 2023) 13
Figure 6-Postwick and Witton Age Groups 2011 and 2021 (Census 2011;2021) 14
Figure 7-Agricultural Land Classification. Source: Natural England, 2023 15
Figure 8-Flood risk from rivers and sea in Postwick and Witton (Source: Environment Agency, 2023) 16
Figure 9- Surface Water Flood Risk within the Parish (Source: Environment Agency, 2023) 17
Figure 10-Surface Water Flood Risk within Postwick (Source: Environment Agency, 2023) 17
Figure 11-Surface Water Flood Risk within Witton (Source: Environment Agency, 2023) 18
Figure 12-Public Rights of Way within Postwick and Witton (Source: Norfolk County Council, 2022) 21
Figure 13-Listed buildings within Postwick and Witton (Source: Historic England, 2023) 22
Figure 14- Listed buildings within Postwick (Source: Historic England, 2023) 23
Figure 15- Listed buildings within Witton (Source: Historic England, 2023) 23

Figure 16-Postwick and Witton location within the character areas of Broadlands Landscape Character Assessment (Source: Broadland District Council, Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2013)..... 24
Figure 17-Schedule 1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. Source: UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 27
Figure 18-Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes. Source: Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, published in September 2005 28
Figure 19-Application of SEA Directive to PWWNP. Source: UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 29
Figure 20-Likely Significant Effects 32
Figure 21-Table of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of PWWNP..... 40
Figure 22-Map of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of PWWNP..... 40
Figure 23-HRA Screening Assessment 42

Introduction

1. Postwick with Witton Parish Council are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, known as PWWNP throughout this document. The planning period will be 2025-2040. The designated area (**See Figure 1**) is located within Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority area. 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 PWWNP. 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.

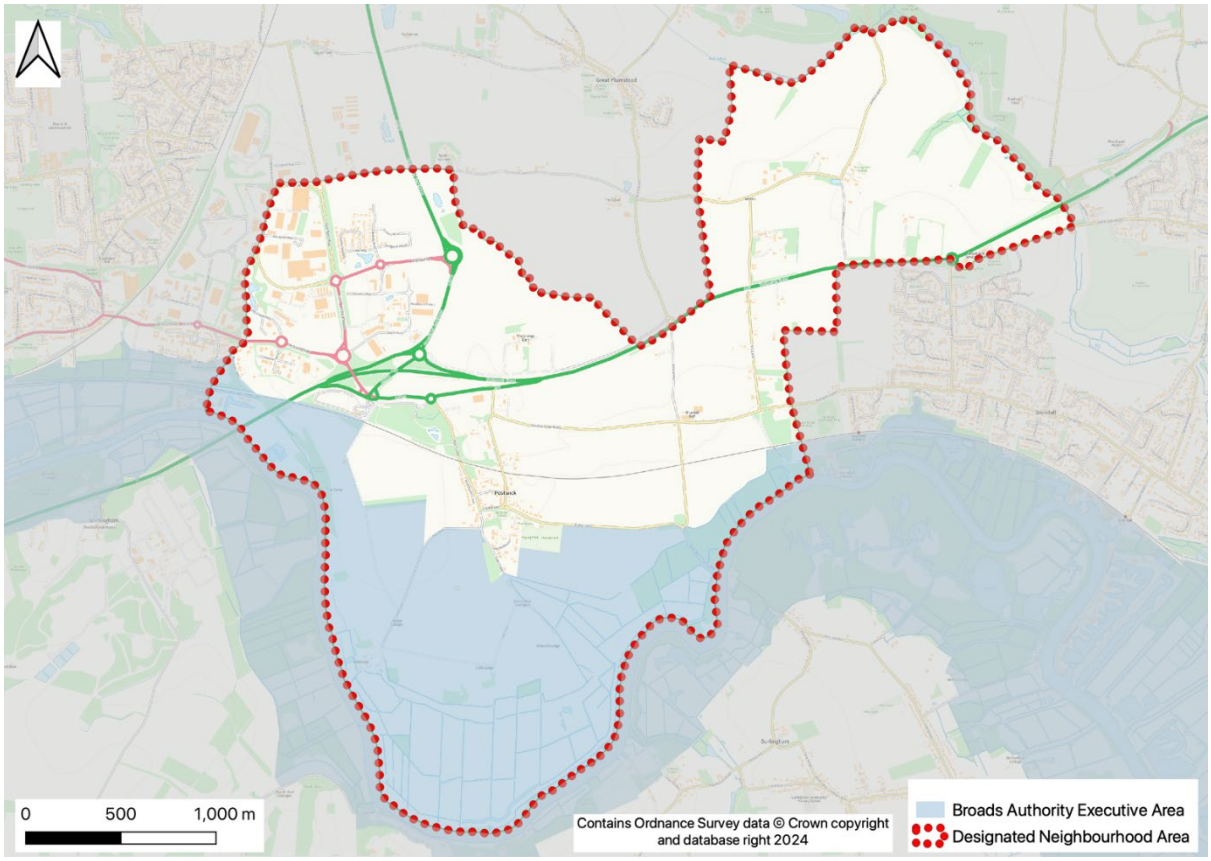
3. This report will also determine whether or not the contents of the Neighbourhood Plan require a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive[2] and with Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017[3]. A HRA would be required when the implementation of the contents of the Neighbourhood Plan are likely to cause significant negative effects on a designated protected European Site (Natura 2000 sites).

[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.

[2] EUR-Lex - 31992L0043 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

[3] The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (legislation.gov.uk)

Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Area



SEA Screening

Scope of the Postwick with Witton Neighbourhood Plan

4. A draft (Regulation 14) version of PWWNP is currently being prepared. It is intended that this is subject to public consultation in late 2024.

5. PWWNP includes a vision for the long-term future of Postwick with Witton , along with aims to support delivery of this vision. The current draft vision is:

Postwick is a major centre of economic activity and housing growth in key locations on the edge of Norwich, but the character of the village of Postwick and the scattered hamlet of Witton to the east of Broadland Northway, and south of the A47 has seen much less change. Both the settlements of Postwick and Witton have largely retained their respective rural characters, especially the area bordered by the River Yare partly within the Broads Authority area, characterised by arable farming and livestock.

The vision is to protect the rural character of Postwick village and the hamlet of Witton whilst supporting proportional housing growth at The Oaks with associated community services and facilities. Support the appropriate economic activity within the boundaries of the existing Business Parks.

We will look to significantly improve connectivity through the delivery of new and improved public transport, walking and cycling links. These will provide better connectivity within the parish, access to essential services, employment opportunities and into the countryside for recreational benefits.

6. The draft plan currently includes six specific aims/ key development priorities to deliver this vision:

A. Support major planned growth and economic activity in key locations, at Broadland Business Park and as part of the Norwich growth triangle at The Oaks
B. Establish new and improved cycling routes between the key settlement areas, with Brundall and towards Norwich
C. Improve the provision of public footpaths to enhance access to the Broads for recreational benefit
D. Ensure biodiversity and wildlife connectivity, particularly in key corridors of movement, is a key consideration in all planning decisions.
E. Protect and enhance valued green spaces and the unspoiled nature of the parish around the Broads
F. Ensure development is designed to a high standard that is appropriate to its location.

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

- Which requires all development proposals to consider the key priorities of the neighbourhood plan, so that our development strategy has been considered, ideally at an early stage of proposals being developed (Policy 1);
- Which supports commercial development within existing, allocated key employment locations identified within the Greater Norwich Local Plan are supported in line with relevant policy (Policy 2);
- Which supports proposals for mixed use development of Land South of Smee Lane in line with certain criteria such as detailed in the Growth Triangle Area Action Plan (Policy 3);
- Which states opportunities should be taken to enhance and create new cycle links between the key settlement areas within the parish and to Norwich and Brundall (Policy 4);
- Which states development proposals for sites that include Public Rights of Way or are adjacent to them, should protect and incorporate them into the scheme (Policy 5);
- Which states all development should contribute towards nature recovery, opportunities for improving wildlife connectivity, protecting priority habitats, enhancing sites in the parish for BNG (Policy 6) and considering/protecting trees in the design process (Policy 7);
- Which identifies green corridors (Policy 8);
- Which protect local green spaces within the plan area for future enjoyment (Policy 9);

- Which requires proposals to help conserve and enhance the character, appearance and setting of the parish and demonstrate how the design and layout of the development helps to retain, enhance and restore key landscape features (Policy 10);
- Which identifies important local views (Policy 11);
- Which sets out criteria for reducing light pollution (Policy 12);
- Which sets out detail to achieve high quality design with the input of the Postwick with Witton design codes/guide, that reinforces and complements local distinctiveness (Policy 13).

8. **The plan does not allocate land for development.**

Baseline Information

9. This section summarises baseline information for the PWWNP area, drawing on the Evidence Base.

Context

10. The parish of Postwick with Witton falls within Broadland District and the Broads Authority Executive Area (**Figure 1**). It is situated between Norwich and Great Yarmouth, with Norwich city centre just 5 miles north-west of the parish. It comprises the village of Postwick, the smaller hamlet of Witton and a new community called The Oaks, which forms part of the Greater Norwich Growth Triangle.

11. As stated in the Norfolk Heritage Explorer parish summary[4], the name Postwick is derived from the Old English words 'Poss wic', and translates as 'Poss's farm', or 'dairy farm'. Witton means 'wood farm/settlement'. The area has four listed buildings and 197 records of historic artefacts, structures, buildings, and markings in the landscape such as crop marks and ditches within the neighbourhood area (Source: Norfolk Heritage Explorer).

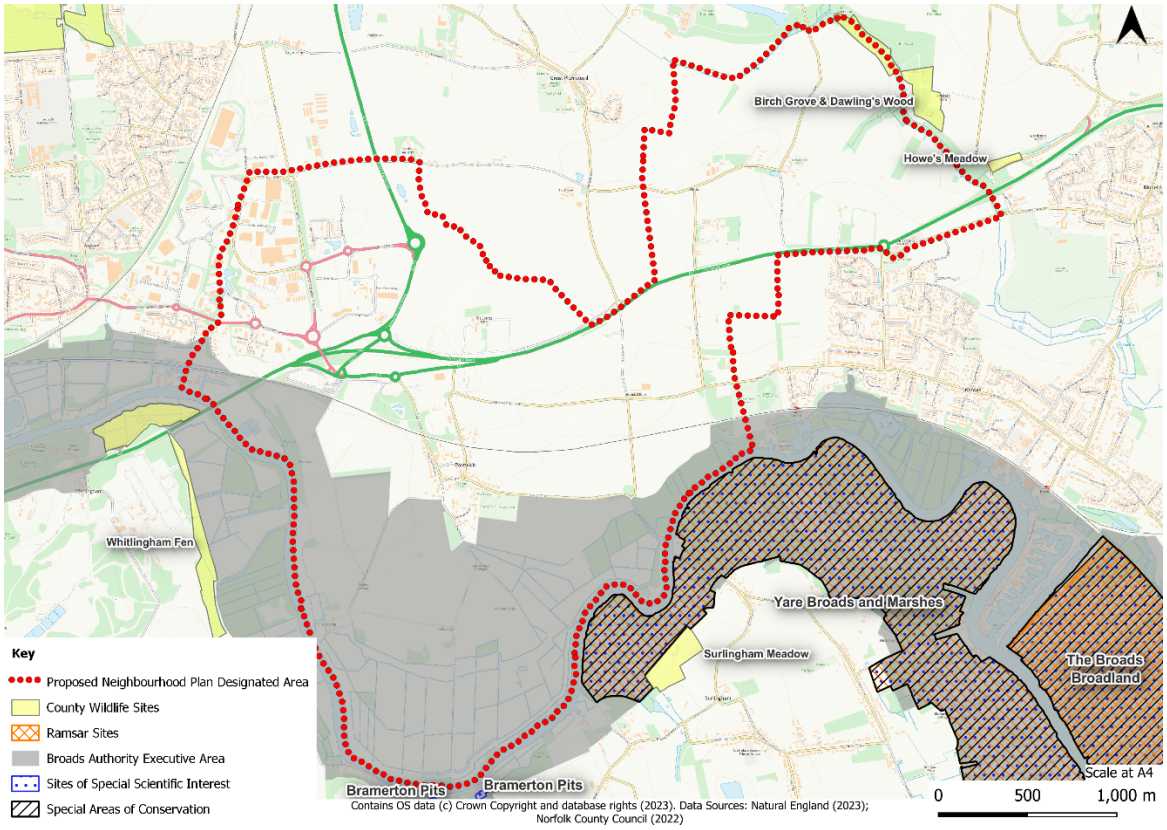
12. The Broads Executive Area covers a large proportion of the parish to the south - the flood plain and marshlands of the River Yare. The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads is Britain's largest protected wetland and third largest inland waterway, with the equivalent status of a national park. It is a unique mosaic of gentle landscape, lakes and rivers covering a total of 303 square kilometres and the length of the navigable waterways (rivers and broads) are more than 125 miles long. The Broads is also home to some of the rarest plants and animals in the UK including the crane, bittern, and marsh harrier (birds), fennel-leaved pondweed, stonewort's (plants) and the Swallowtail butterfly and Norfolk hawker dragonfly (insects) and more[5]. Whilst the parish does not include any of the European or Nationally designated wildlife sites, it still hosts landscapes and habitats that are highly valued. The Broads landscape also plays a large part in recreational and tourism activity and the interests of visitors from further afield, although direct access to this resource in Postwick is limited.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

13. There are no Natural England statutory designated sites in the neighbourhood area itself, although there are a few designations within 2km, this includes:
    - The Broads Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
    - Broadland Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA)
    - Yare Broads and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
    - Bramerton Pits SSSI

[4] Parish-Summary-Postwick-(Parish-Summary) - Norfolk Heritage Explorer
[5] Facts and figures (broads-authority.gov.uk)

Figure 2-Wildlife Designations (Source: Natural England, 2023)



14. **The Broads (SAC)** are a series of flooded medieval peat cuttings. They lie within the floodplains of five principal river systems, known as Broadland. The Broads predominantly sit central to the east of the parish. The area includes the river valley systems of the Bure, Yare and Waveney and their major tributaries. The distinctive open landscape comprises a complex and interlinked mosaic of wetland habitats including open water, reedbeds, carr woodland, grazing marsh, tall herb fen, transition mire and fen meadow, forming one of the finest marshland complexes in the UK6. The differing types of management of the vegetation for reed, sedge, and marsh hay, coupled with variations in hydrology and substrate, support an extremely diverse range of plant communities. The area is of international importance for a variety of wintering and breeding raptors and waterbirds associated with extensive lowland marshes.

15. **The Broads** contain several examples of naturally nutrient-rich lakes. Although artificial, having been created by peat digging in medieval times, these lakes and the ditches in areas of fen and drained marshlands support relict vegetation of the original Fenland flora, and collectively this site contains one of the richest assemblages of rare and local aquatic species in the UK[7]. For this site Natural

[6] JNCC.2008. Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands mentioned Broadland and The Broads. Source: untitled (jncc.gov.uk)

[7] Natural England. 2014. EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Source the-broads-sac-documents.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

England also set out a number of conservation objectives regarding maintaining or restoring the achievement of the Favourable Conservation Status for the qualifying features listed below[8]:

- H3140. Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp.; Calcium-rich nutrient-poor lakes, lochs and pools
- H3150. Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation; Naturally nutrient-rich lakes or lochs which are often dominated by pondweed
- H6410. Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae); Purple moor-grass meadows
- H7140. Transition mires and quaking bogs; Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface
- H7210. Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae; Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge)*
- H7230. Alkaline fens; Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens
- H91E0. Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae); Alder woodland on floodplains*
- S1016. Vertigo moulinsiana; Desmoulin`s whorl snail
- S1355. Lutra lutra; Otter
- S1903. Liparis loeselii; Fen orchid
- S4056. Anisus vorticulus; Little whorlpool ram's-horn snail

16. **Broadland** (**SPA/Ramsar/SSSI/NNR)** is a low-lying wetland complex straddling the boundaries between east Norfolk and northern Suffolk in eastern England. As stated in the Ramsar overview, it is an area of "*low-lying wetland complex composed of the Bure, Yare, Thurne, and Waveney river systems of the Norfolk Broads. The mosaic of wetland habitats includes open water, reedbeds, carr woodland, grazing marsh, and fen meadow, with an extensive complex of flooded medieval peat diggings. Outstanding assemblages of rare plants and invertebrates occur at the site -- amongst a rich insect fauna are nationally rare dragonflies, spiders, moths, and butterflies, and the area is a stronghold for the butterfly Papilio machaon brittanica as well as a number of nationally rare breeding birds, including Botaurus stellaris and Circus aeruginosus. Several species of waterbirds winter there and include internationally important numbers of Bewick's swan, Cygnus columbianus bewickii. The region is important for recreation, tourism, agriculture, and wildlife, and there is a large conservation education centre*[9]*."* For this site Natural England also set out a number of conservation objectives regarding maintaining or restoring the achievement of Wild Birds Directive for the qualifying features listed below[10]*:*

- A021 Botaurus stellaris; Great bittern (Breeding)
- A037 Cygnus columbianus bewickii; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)

[8] Natural England. 2018. European Site Conservation Objectives. Source European Site Conservation Objectives for The Broads SAC - UK0013577 (naturalengland.org.uk)
[9] Broadland | Ramsar Sites Information Service
[10] European Site Conservation Objectives for Broadland SPA - UK9009253 (naturalengland.org.uk)

- A038 Cygnus cygnus; Whooper swan (Non-breeding)
- A050 Anas penelope; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)
- A051 Anas strepera; Gadwall (Non-breeding)
- A056 Anas clypeata; Northern shoveler (Non-breeding)
- A081 Circus aeruginosus; Eurasian marsh harrier (Breeding)
- A082 Circus cyaneus; Hen harrier (Non-breeding)
- A151 Philomachus pugnax; Ruff (Non-breeding)

17. The 2022 evidence pack also says Broadland Ramsar is designated for the following features which are not listed above:

- Floodplain alder woodland
- Floodplain fen
- Wetland invertebrate and plant assemblage
- Wigeon, Mareca penelope – Wintering

18. **Yare Broads and Marshes** is a SSSI and according to Natural England[11] has a number of breeding and non-breeding birds present including other plant species:

- Aggregations of breeding birds - Cetti's warbler, Cettia cetti
- Aggregations of breeding birds - Gadwall, Anas strepera
- Aggregations of breeding birds - Marsh harrier, Circus aeruginosus
- Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Bean goose, Anser fabalis
- Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Hen harrier, Circus cyaneus
- Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Wigeon, Anas penelope • Assemblages of breeding birds - Lowland open waters and their margins
- Ditches
- Eutrophic lakes
- Floodplain fen (lowland)
- Invert. assemblage W313 moss & tussock fen
- Invert. assemblage W314 reed-fen & pools
- Lowland mire grassland and rush pasture
- Vascular plant assemblage
- Wet woodland

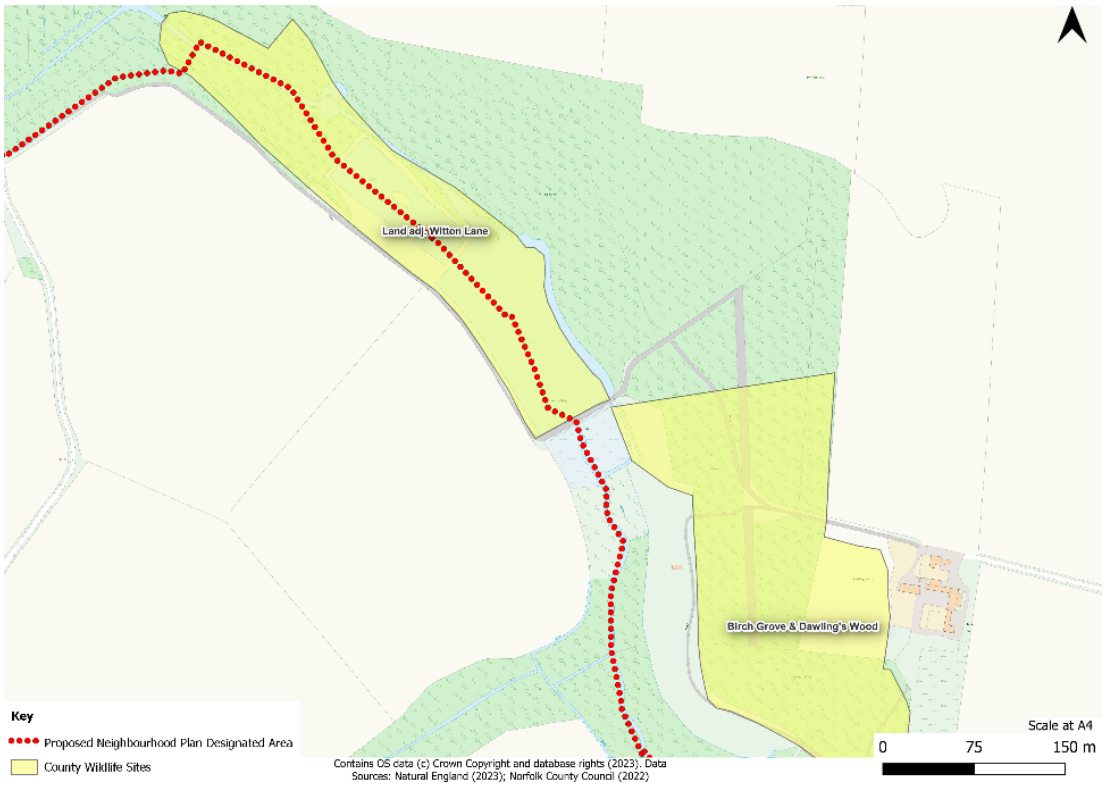
19. **Bramerton Pits (SSSI)** is a disused gravel and sand pit that is critical to the interpretation of the Crag deposits of the Broads National Character Area (NCA) and region. It is the reference (type) locality for the temperate Norwich Crag and contains a marine and unique vertebrate fossil fauna. It is known nationally for its geological interest[12].

[11] The Broads Special Area of Conservation/Broadland Ramsar Evidence Pack. 2022. Source: Natural England Access to Evidence - Search Results page 1

[12] Natural England. 2009. Responding to the impacts of climate change on the natural environment: The Broads. Source: Natural England Access to Evidence - Search Results

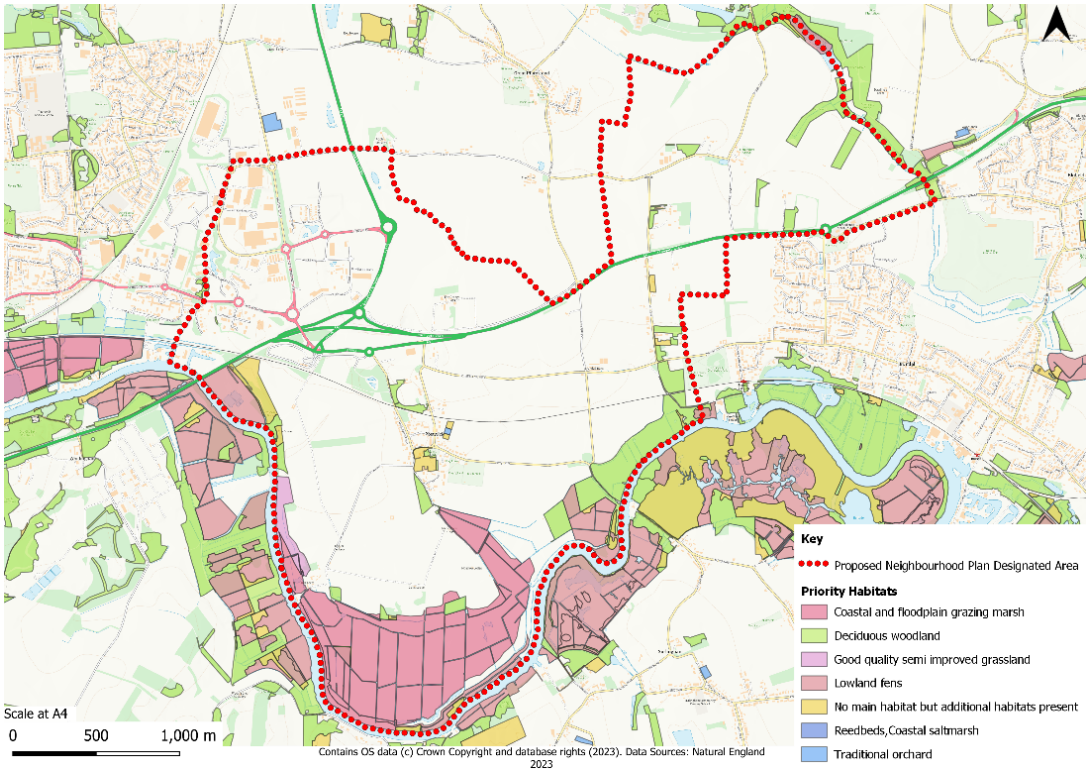
20. There is one County Wildlife Site that falls within the neighbourhood area to the north-east called Land adjacent Witton Lane (CWS 1421) shown on the map below (**Figure 3**). As well as this there are several County Wildlife Sites adjacent or in close proximity to the designated area including Birch Grove & Dawling's Wood, Howes Meadow, Surlingham Meadow, Whitlingham Marsh and Whitlingham Fen.

Figure 3- County Wildlife Site within the parish (Source: Natural England, 2023*)*



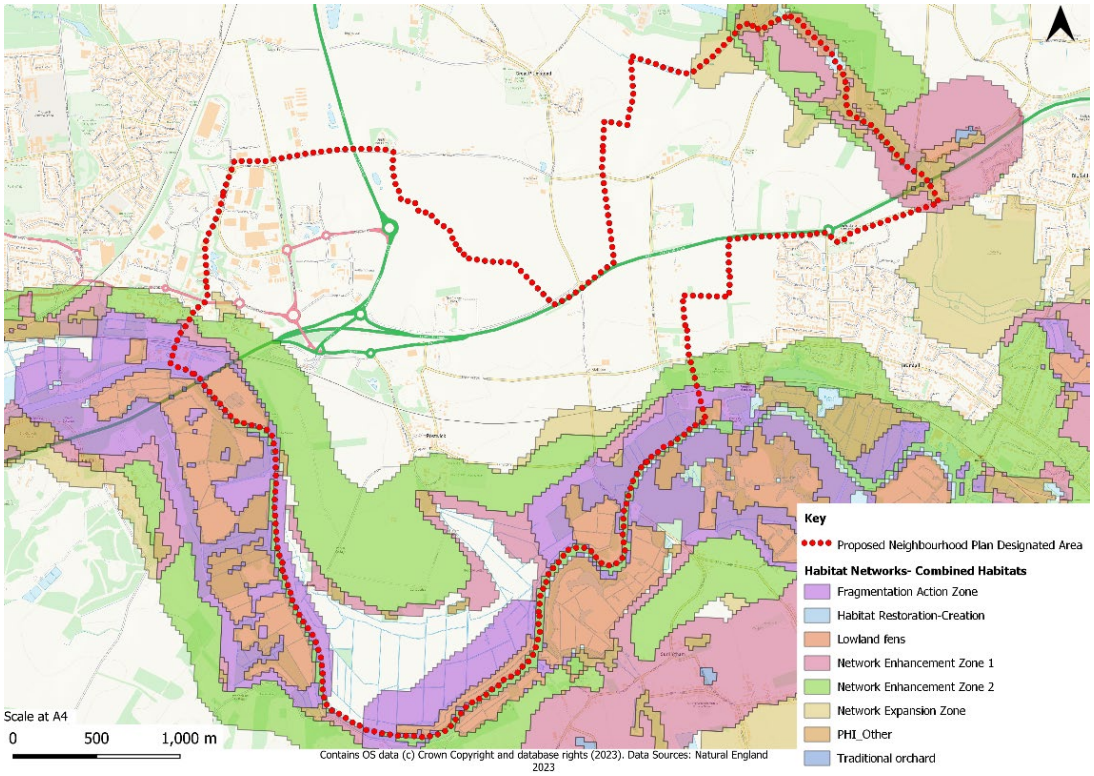
21. The neighbourhood area, particularly to the south, contains priority habitat also known as Habitats of Principle Importance for biodiversity conservation. These are habitats which are most threatened, in greatest decline, or where the UK holds a significant proportion of the world's total population. There are four main types of priority habitat in the parish (see map below) coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; deciduous woodland; good quality semi-improved grassland and traditional orchard (**Figure 4**). There are also a few sites which are identified as no main habitat but additional habitats present. Not all of these will be protected under national designation, though they can be sensitive to development and should be considered when growth is being planned to avoid negative impacts.

Figure 4- Priority Habitats (Source: Natural England, 2023)



22. As shown in the map below, parts of the parish contain network enhancement zones. These habitat networks are within relatively close proximity to areas that are suitable for habitat creation.

Figure 5- Habitat Networks (Source: Natural England, 2023)

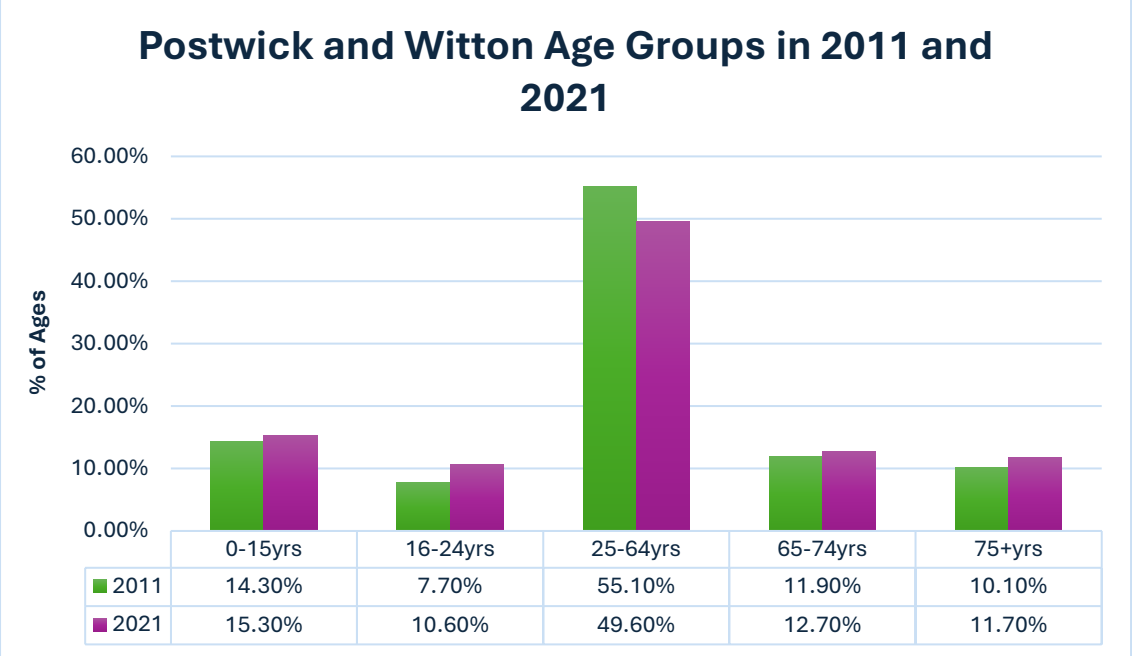


Population

23. The total resident population of Postwick and Witton is 400 according to the Census 2021[13] compared to 404 in 2011[14], showing little change. The parish is small in comparison to the 916,1000 people residing in Norfolk and 56,490,000 in England. In 2011, the census data shows that the ratio of females and males was nearly a 50:50 split with males making up 51.2% of the parish and females 48.8%. In 2021 this has remained similar with males increasing slightly to 52.6% and females dropping slightly to 47.4%[15].

24. According to census data a high proportion of the population is of working age. In 2011, the mean age was 45 years old, and the median was 48. As shown in the figure below, the age profile of the population has remained fairly static over the last ten years. There has been a slight decline in the 25-64 category and increase in other age groups. Interestingly for a rural area the amount of younger people (0-24yrs) makes up around 25% of the parish according to the Census 2021 data.

Figure 6-Postwick and Witton Age Groups 2011 and 2021 (Census 2011;2021)



	0-15yrs	16-24yrs	25-64yrs	65-74yrs	75+yrs
2011	14.30%	7.70%	55.10%	11.90%	10.10%
2021	15.30%	10.60%	49.60%	12.70%	11.70%

Human Health

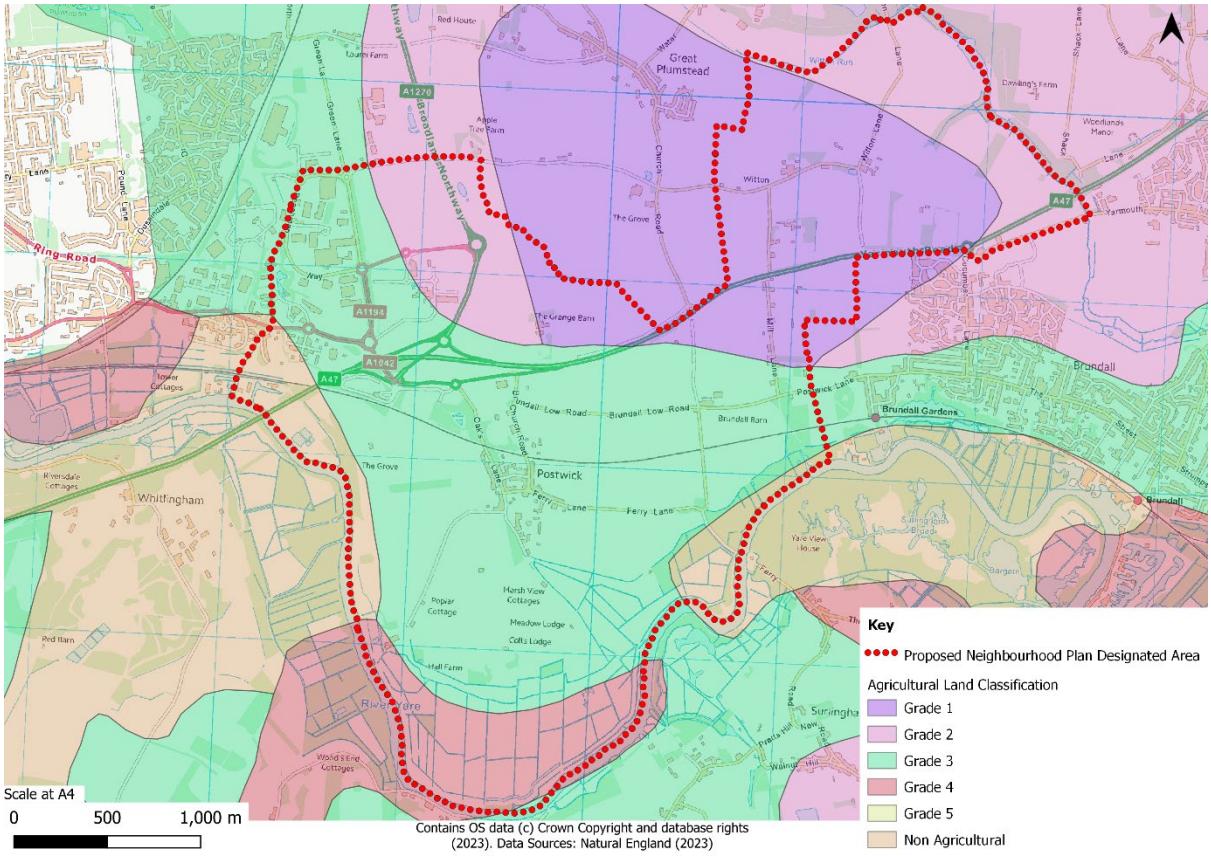
25. Provision of age-related services is likely to become an increasing consideration for the neighbourhood plan area over time as the proportion of over 65s is growing.

[13] Census 2021. Population. Source: Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS
[14] Census 2011. Nomis Local Area Report for Postwick and Witton. Source: Local Area Report for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk)
[15] Census 2021. Gender. Source: Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS

Soil

26. The north of the parish falls into the most valuable categories for agricultural land, this includes a large part of Witton being Grade 1and Grade 2 on the Agricultural Land Classification Scale (**Figure 7**). A large proportion of the area falls within Grade 3 including the built-up area of Postwick. The south of the parish falls into Grade 4 within the Broads Authority Executive Area which is of a less valuable status. Protecting high quality soils remains important both for supporting agriculture and shaping the rural landscape character. National policy is to retain high value land such as this for its economic and other benefits. Where land of this quality is in active farming use, it could constrain future growth within the parish.

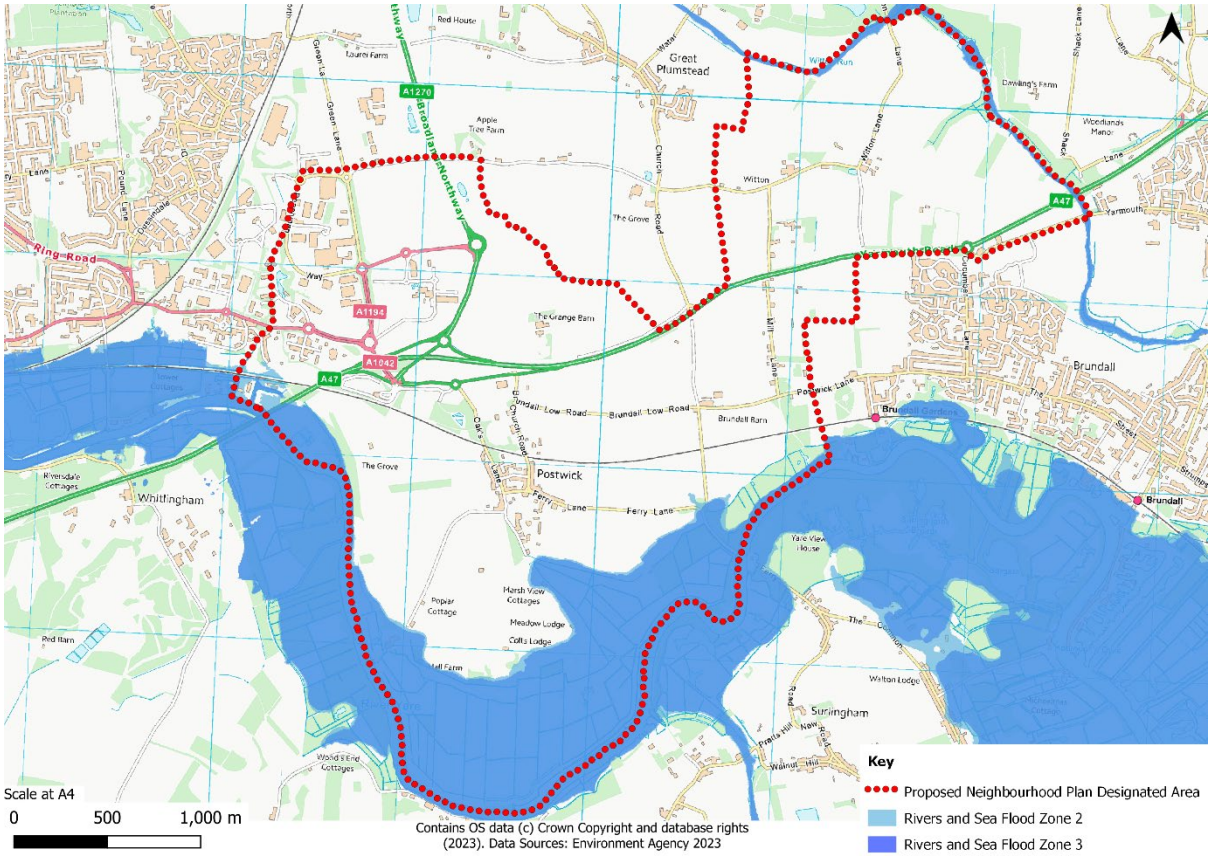
Figure 7-Agricultural Land Classification. Source: Natural England, 2023



Water

27. According to Environment Agency the parish falls predominantly within Flood Zone 1, particularly the more built-up parts of the settlement, which means there is a low risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. 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 much of the plan area. The nearest high risk flood area (Flood Zone 2 and 3) from rivers or the sea is to the south and northeast of the parish boundary along the River Yare and the ponds/waterbodies close to Dawling's Wood and Witton Lane - this aligns closely with the Broads Authority area which has few dwellings and is unlikely to encourage or allow any new development.

Figure 8-Flood risk from rivers and sea in Postwick and Witton (Source: Environment Agency, 2023)



28. The Environment Agency future flood risk modelling shows that there is medium and high risk of surface water flooding (ponding) in parts of the parish, including around roads within the built-up parts of Postwick and Witton, shown on the maps below**.** The mapping indicates this mainly affects agricultural land, areas where water sources may be present such as ponds or even ghost ponds. It may also affect the highway such as along Oaks Lane, James Adams Close, Leeder Hill and Hall Road.

Figure 9- Surface Water Flood Risk within the Parish (Source: Environment Agency, 2023)

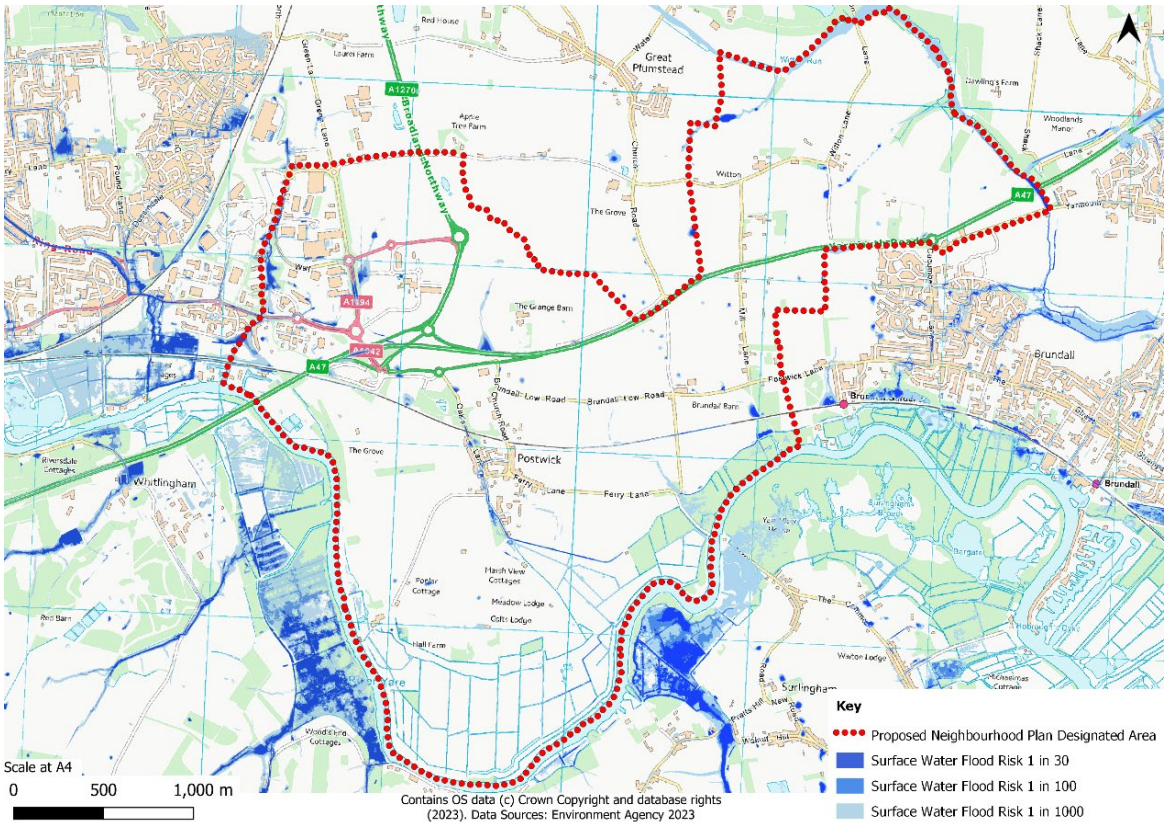


Figure 10-Surface Water Flood Risk within Postwick (Source: Environment Agency, 2023)

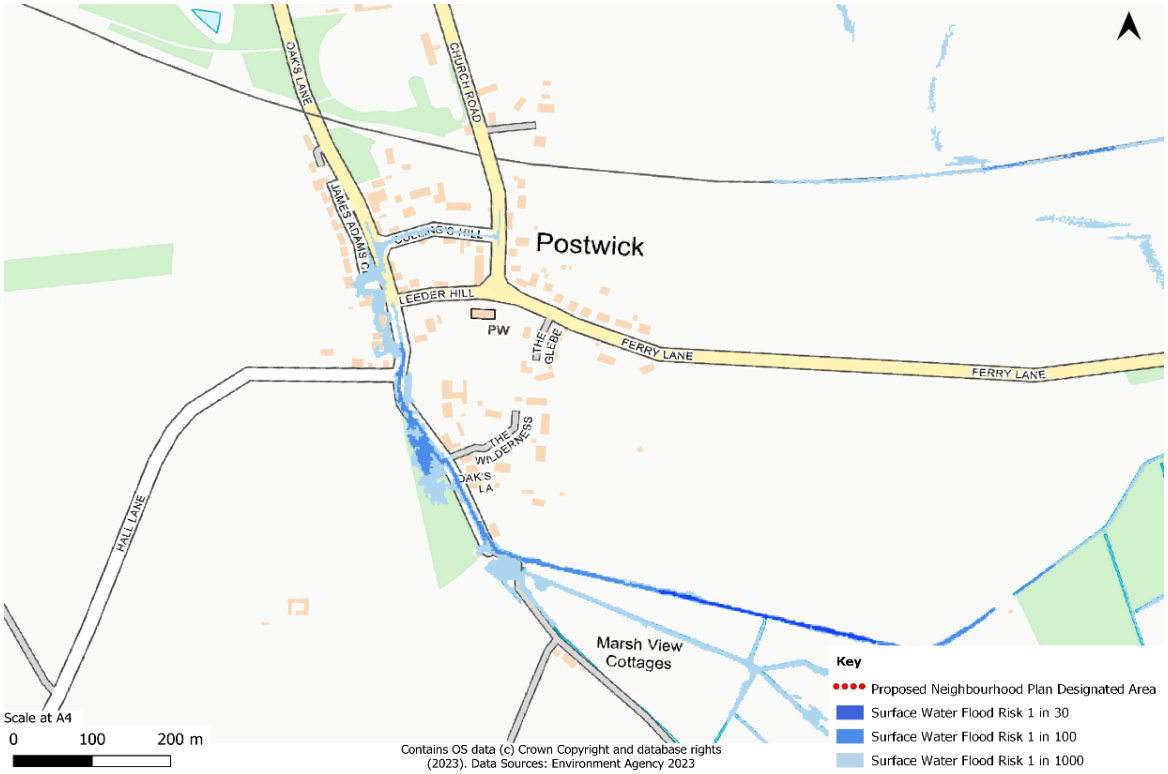
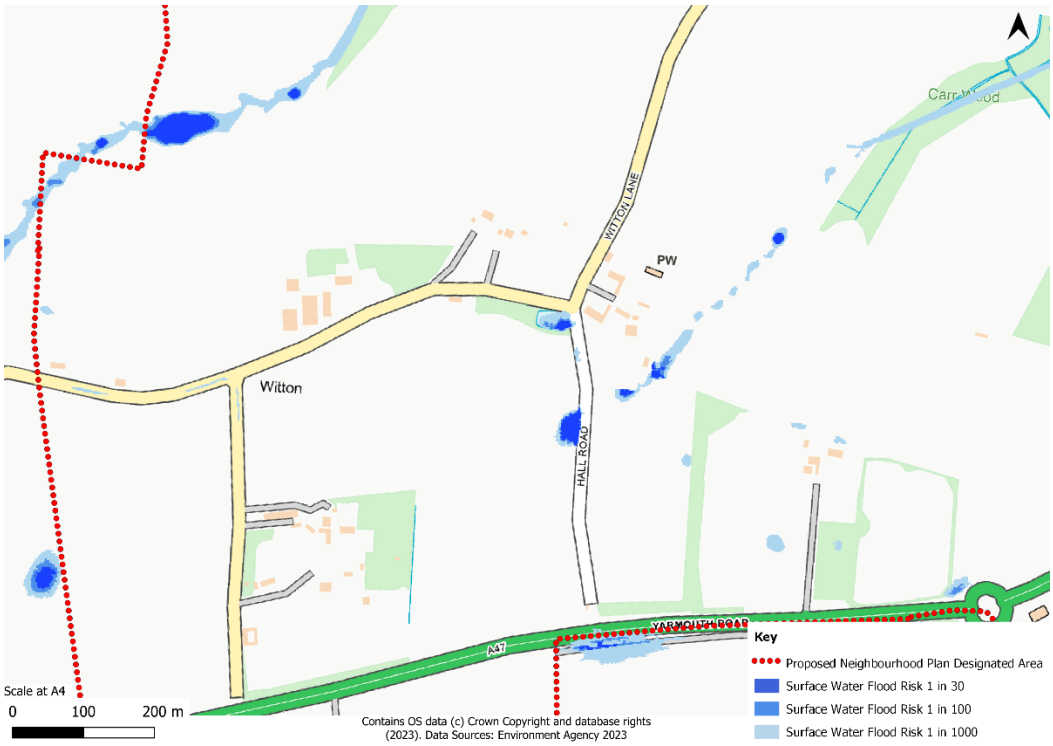


Figure 11-Surface Water Flood Risk within Witton (Source: Environment Agency, 2023)



29. A review of the Greater Norwich Area Strategic Flood Risk (2017[16]) historical flood risk records indicates that tidal surges have affected the parish. This was first recorded in February 1983 when the Rivers Yare, Bure and Waveney were all affected by a surge which then impacted Postwick village. In November 2006 another tidal surge affected Postwick Marshes causing flooding and two sections of the flood bank being breached. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) datasets show no report/investigation of flooding in the parish over recent years[17]. Anecdotally, there has been flooding recently to the gardens of the new bungalows on Oaks Lane, Postwick.

Air and Climatic Factors

30. 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 Joint Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils Air Quality Annual Status Report (2024) confirms that there are no declared Air Quality Management Areas in either districts[18]. This would suggest that air quality is generally not of a concern in the PWWNP 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.

[16] Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. 2017. Source: Greater Norwich Local Plan - Stage A Evidence Base (oc2.uk)

[17] Flood investigations - Norfolk County Council

[18] Joint Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils Air Quality Annual Status Report (2024). Source: https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/asset-library/south-norfolk-and-broadland-asr-2024.pdf

Material Assets

31. The parish as a whole has quite a wide range of local services, including three business parks which are BBP, Broadland Gate and Meridian located off the A47/Postwick Interchange. The business parks are also well connected by walking/cycling routes and local bus services. There is also a McDonalds and Shell BP filling station within the neighbourhood area at the eastern end, just south of the A47 accessed by the roundabout that serves Brundall and Blofield.

32. In Postwick village and the hamlet of Witton, services are much more limited and include churches and village hall/meeting places.

33. At present, higher order services, local schools and medical facilities need to be accessed elsewhere. This could change as the planning application (Ref/20181601) at land south of Smee Lane currently includes provision for a Primary School (D1); Creche, Community Hall, Day Nursery (D1); Outdoor/Indoor Sports Facilities (D2); A Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), Nursing Home Care Facilities (C2). (Further details in the Appendix A spreadsheet). Once completed there will be further community facilities located within the overall neighbourhood designated area to support current and new residents particularly ones with children or wishing to start families and elderly residents needing retirement accommodation or care (see figures below).

34. The Fame database provides key indicators and financial information for UK businesses including detailed company information such as addresses and company accounts. Information from the Fame database comes with caveats: a single address can include several subsidiaries of the same business and some businesses (e.g. accountancy firms) may be the registered address for other businesses that are not actually based at or employing people from that address. According to the Fame database there are approximately 377 businesses registered to postcodes in Postwick and of these 308 are confirmed as SMEs. The databases records approximately 2,264 employees working for businesses registered at postcodes in Postwick (data extracted in December 2023). The majority of these businesses are at addresses on the business parks. A non-exhaustive list, based on Google maps data[19]is provided below:

    - Broadland District and South Norfolk Council
    - Broadland Business Park on Memorial Way which includes businesses such as Start-Rite Shoes, Rivus Fleet Repair Shop, Catering Supplier, Courer Services and Wholesaler.
    - Meridian Business Park which includes services such as Norwich Audi, St John Ambulance First Aid Training, Busy Bee Nursery School, HMLA Medical Centre, Accountancy, Barter Hill Partnership Ltd and Rossi Long Consulting, IT Services, Estate Agency and Chartered Surveyor.
    - Broadland Gate which includes…

[19] Google Maps. Source: Postwick with Witton - Google Maps Accessed: 25/09/2023

- Reed House (Corporate House)
- Lidl
- Inchcape Land Rover Norwich
- Pest Off Pest Control Norwich
- Jane Hancy Electrolysis and Skin Blemish
- Fieldfare pub
- Premier Inn Norwich East
- Postwick Park and Ride
- PBCC Norwich Meeting Hall (Church)
- Brethens Meeting Room
- Manor House Pool
- All Saints Church
- Postwick Transmitting Station
- Marine Power Ltd
- Postwick Village Hall and Social Club
- Heron Lea (assisted living residence)
- McDonalds and Shell BP (just south of the A47- Yarmouth Road)
- St Margaret's Church, Witton
- Cherry Tree Farm, Witton
- Witton Self Storage, Witton
- Great Oak Equestrian, Witton
- Black Paws dog grooming and spa

35. Postwick with Witton is situated between Norwich and Great Yarmouth, with Norwich city centre around 5 miles away. The A47 effectively cuts the parish in half, running linear through the northern and central part of the parish. Journeys by private car should take around 15 minutes to reach the city centre and 40 minutes to Great Yarmouth. However, journey times can be unpredictable due to numerous reasons including restricted usage, rural roads, heavy traffic on the A47 including road works or seasonal congestion especially during the summer holidays.

36. There is currently no public bus service serving Postwick village or Witton. The No.15 bus service does stop on Yarmouth Rd, close to the Costa coffee. However, it is over 30 minutes walk for village residents and of limited value. The Park and Ride recently re-opened on a trial basis for 4 months. The Konect bus service 503[20].5travels towards Norwich City Centre, every 20 minutes between 7.50am to 18.10pm. The service is useful for commuters, shoppers and leisure users who may wish to visit Norwich city centre for the day. However, it travels along the A47 towards County Hall, missing (for eg the railway station). It is also of no use to shift workers or those wishing to enjoyevening activites in the city. It is possible to walk or cycle from Postwick village to the Park and Ride site, via Oaks Lane, with this taking approximately 16 minutes (0.7 miles) to walk or around 5 mins to cycle.

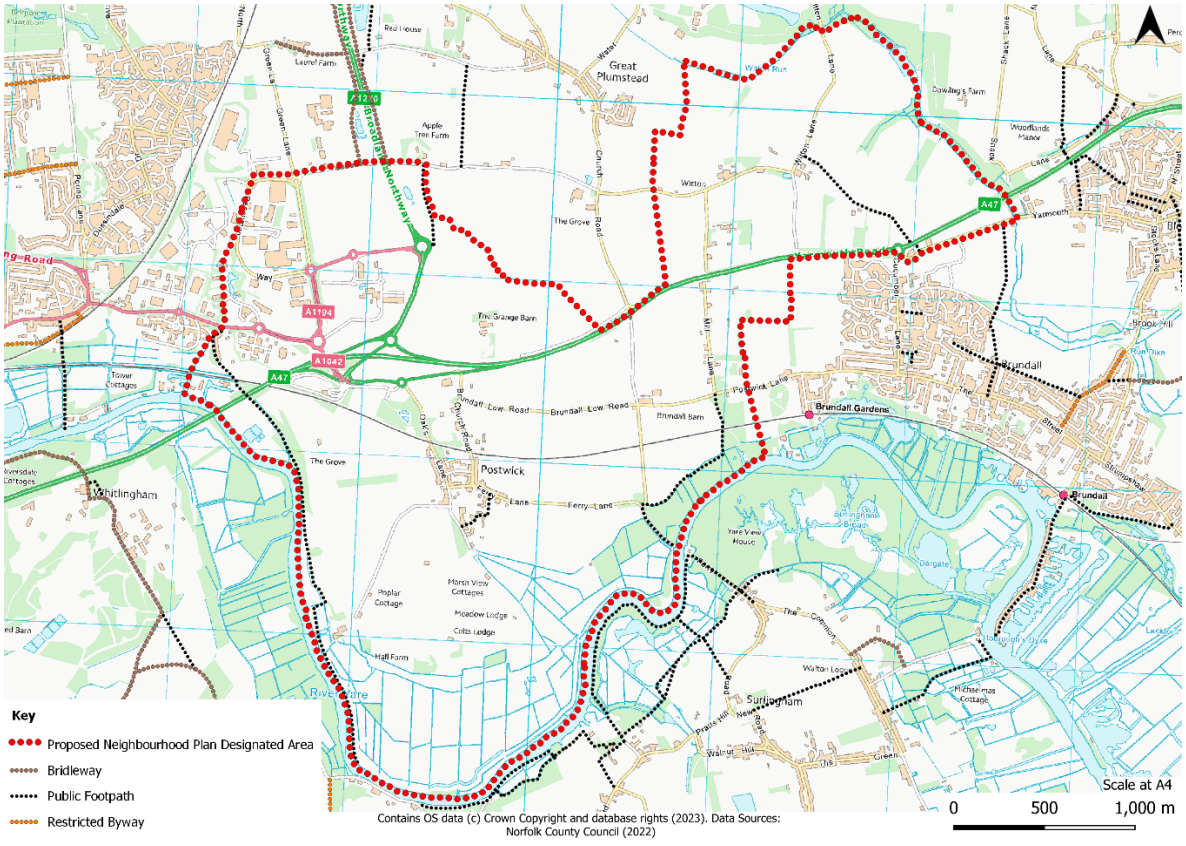
[20] 503 - Postwick Park and Ride to Norwich City Centre | konectbus

37. In terms of walking and cycling infrastructure, there is very limited access into the countryside via public rights of way. The maps below show that there is one public footpath from Witton going south-east from Witton Lane across arable land towards the A47. Within Postwick village there are a few footpaths, one between Oaks Lane and Ferry Lane, a continuous footpath which can be joined from Ferry Lane or Postwick Lane going south towards the River Yare, Postwick Lane to Brundall and also a footpath just south of Hall Farm going north of the River past Postwick Grove towards the A1042. Most of the footpaths are fragmented with dead ends. . There are no circular walks.

38. Some cycling infrastructure was added when the Postwick Hub was created. However, it is not fully integrated but is nonetheless well used by people working or visiting there or travelling through. This infrastructure will likely be extended to serve new housing development at The Oaks.

39. There is no cycle infrastructure in Witton or Postwick village, cycling is instead on road. For those travelling into Norwich from Postwick village, it is currently possible to cycle via Whitlingham Lane and Trowse although it involves riding both east and west bound on the service path of the east bound carriageway. of the A47. This is a widely used route, although it is not formally recognised.

Figure 12-Public Rights of Way within Postwick and Witton (Source: Norfolk County Council, 2022)

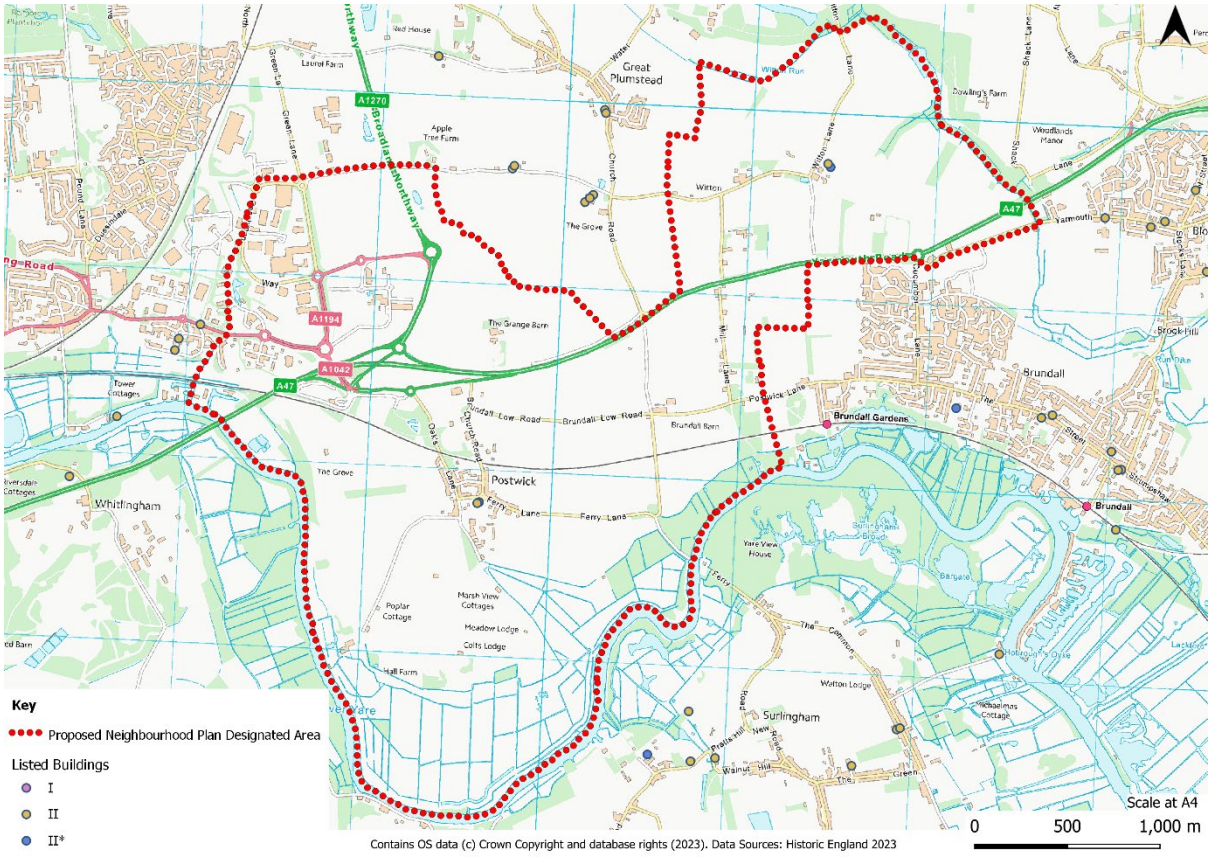


Historic Environment

40. According to Norfolk Heritage Explorer[21] there are 197 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 Prehistoric age, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Middle and Late Saxon, Roman, Medieval, and post-medieval, 14th to 20th century such as World War Two. Finds have included axe heads, coins, flint flakes, copper and metal objects, ring ditches and sites of historic buildings/huts/mills.

41. There are four listed buildings within the area as identified in the maps below; 2 within Witton and 2 within Postwick these are the Church of St Margaret and Church of All Saints both Grade II* listed and Postwick War Memorial Cross and Witton War Memorial Cross both Grade II listed[22]. There are no conservation areas, scheduled monuments, battlefields, or other historic designations within the neighbourhood area.

Figure 13-Listed buildings within Postwick and Witton (Source: Historic England, 2023)



[21] Your Search Results - Norfolk Heritage Explorer

[22] The List Search Results for postwick with witton | Historic England

Figure 14- Listed buildings within Postwick (Source: Historic England, 2023)

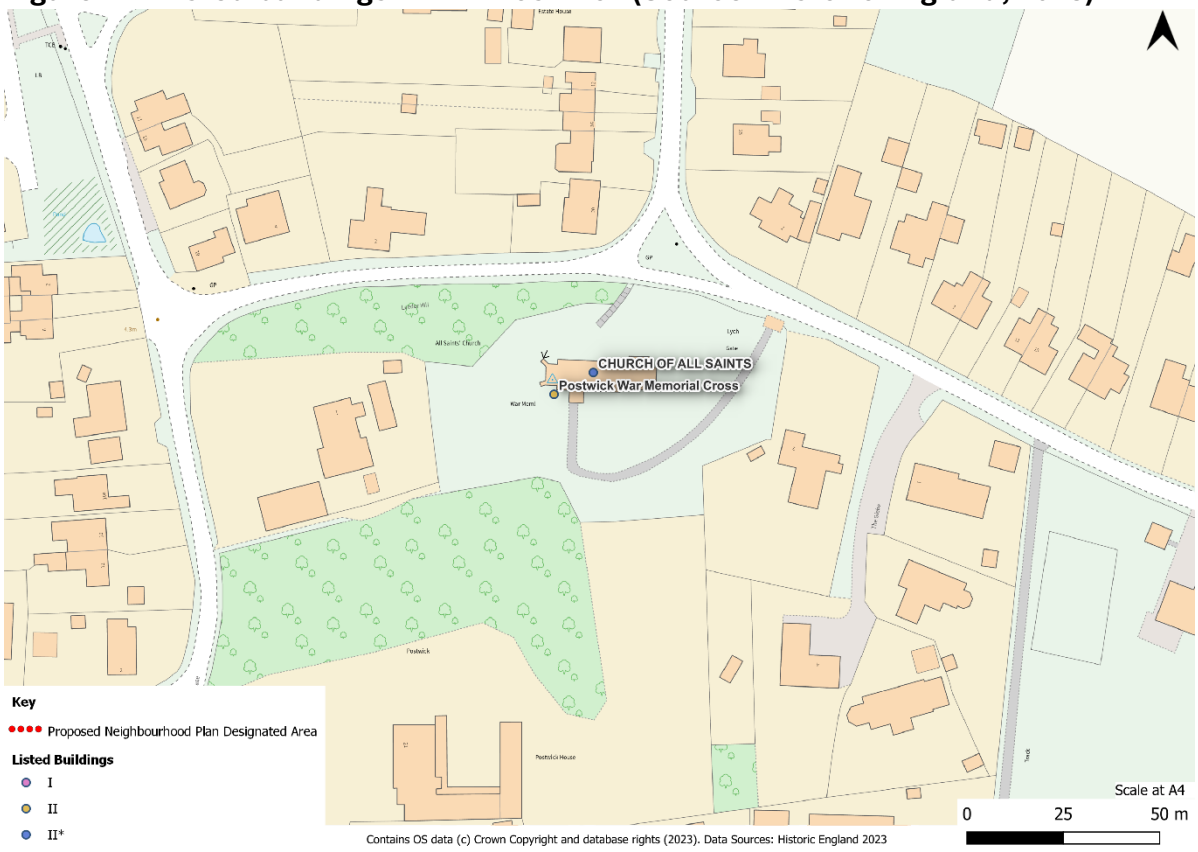
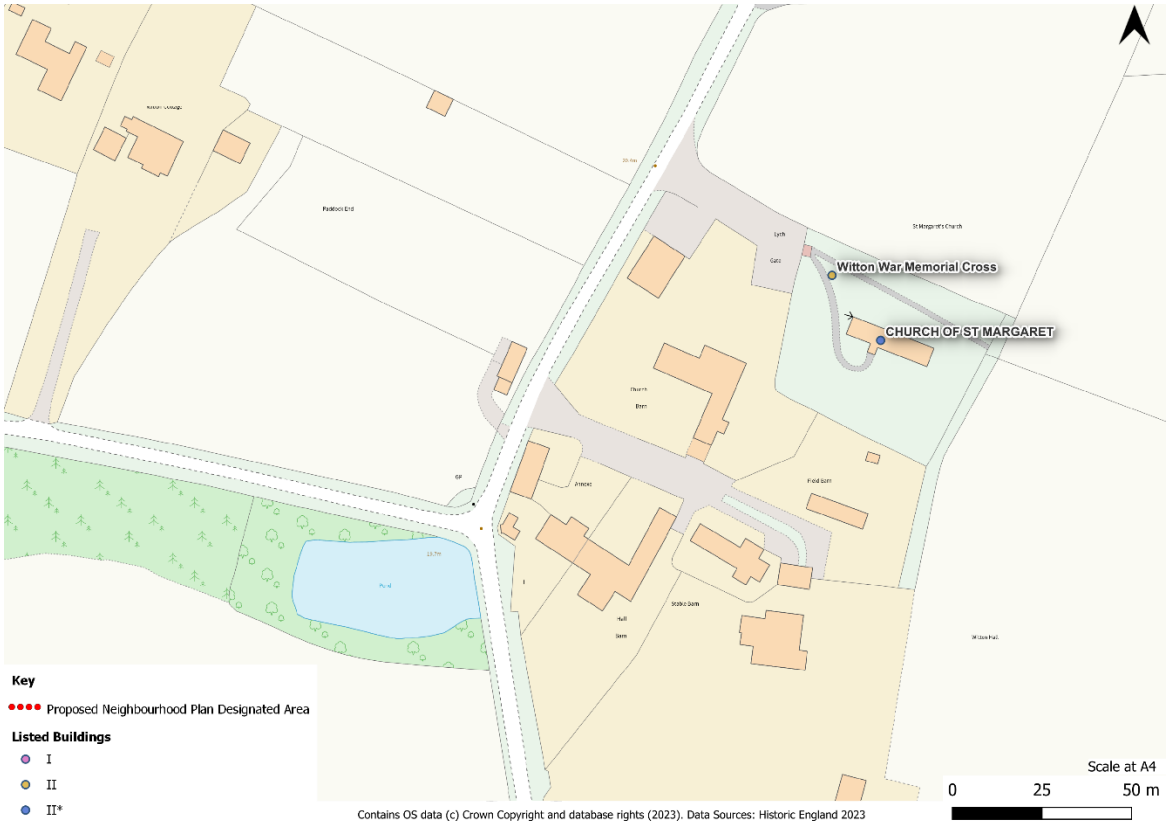


Figure 15- Listed buildings within Witton (Source: Historic England, 2023)



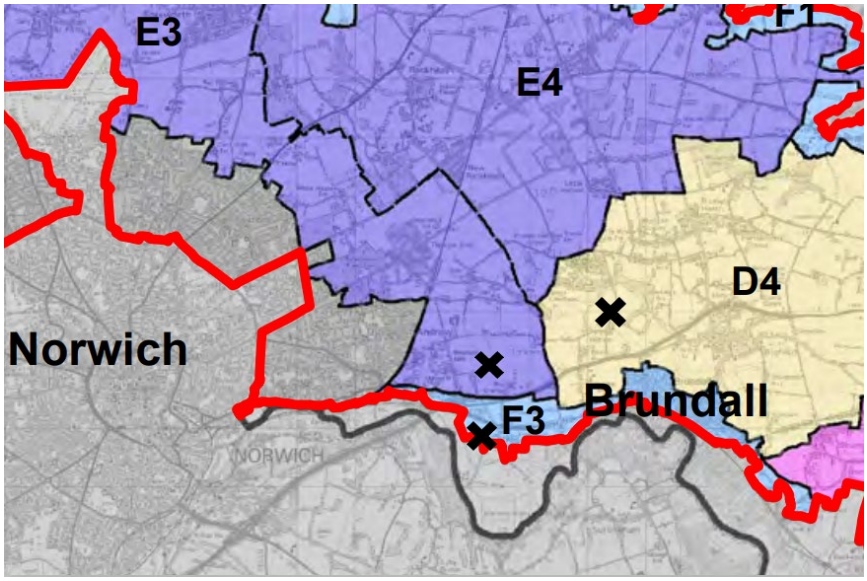
42. As stated in the Norfolk Heritage Explorer parish summary[23] for Postwick with Witton, the name Postwick is derived from the Old English words 'Poss wic', and translates as 'Poss's farm', or 'dairy farm'. The name Postwick is still pronounced with a silent 't'. Evidence for settlement, or at least occupation on a seasonal basis, is evident from the plentiful scatters of worked flint and potboilers that have been recovered. Just east of Postwick Grove (NHER 12624) over eighty flakes, blades and arrowheads have been found, and just a quarter of a kilometre from that another two hundred have been retrieved (NHER 22030). Prehistoric activity is so numerous that worked flint has been recovered from just under a third of sites in this parish.

Landscape

43. The parish falls also falls into three-character areas within the Broadland Landscape Character Assessment, including:
    - Tributary Farmland (D4- Blofield Tributary Farmland)
    - Wooded Estatelands (E3- Spixworth Wooded Estatelands) and
    - Marshes Fringe (F3- Reedham to Thorpe Marshes Fringe).

44. The maps below show marks with three X's where the neighbourhood area is within the context of the Broadland Landscape Character areas[24]. As well as the character areas listed above part of the NPA falls within the Broads Authority Executive Area south of the red line boundary below F3 up to the River Yare.

Figure 16-Postwick and Witton location within the character areas of Broadlands Landscape Character Assessment (Source: Broadland District Council, Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2013)



[23] Parish-Summary-Postwick-(Parish-Summary) - Norfolk Heritage Explorer

[24] Broadland District Council, Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2013. Source: https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/downloads/file/286/landscape-character-assessment-supplementary-planning-document-part-1- and Broadland District Council Landscape Character Assessment SPD (southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk)

45. The **Tributary Farmland (D4- Blofield Tributary Farmland)** area extends between the Yare and Bure River Valleys and is dominated by arable farmland with varying field sizes. There has been limited removal of hedgerows. Isolated churches, historic halls and farmsteads located along rural lanes, often amid woodland, are a distinct and repeated feature. Church towers and woodland create memorable features in views. Most settlements have been engulfed by the rapid expansion in modern suburban housing. These developments have for the most part remained contained as individual linear or nucleated developments, such as Blofield. There is often an abrupt transition between the housing development and surrounding agricultural land. The A47 is a major transport route, which effectively sub-divides the area.

46. A small part of the parish falls within the **Wooded Estatelands (E3- Spixworth Wooded Estatelands)** character area which forms a narrow belt of land abutting the settlement edge of Norwich. The land within this area forms part of an extensive area of sands and gravels that rises gently northwards towards the centre of the district. Its simple geology is broken up by areas of loam, which coincides with higher quality agricultural land. Although land use within the area is influenced by its close proximity to Norwich, a large proportion of the area is still in arable cultivation, especially in western parts. Other more urban fringe uses have developed on converted farmland in central and western parts, such sporting fields.

47. The **Marshes Fringe (F3- Reedham to Thorpe Marshes Fringe) follows** the partly wooded slopes of the lower reaches of the River Yare, this character area encompasses a linear strip of land, defined by the 10m contour, forming a fringe to the lower-lying flat landscapes of the Broads. Land becomes increasingly undulating where minor tributaries incise the area, forming shallow valleys. The land use is strongly influenced by adjacent agricultural land to the north and the Broads with interspersed pockets of pasture in places, forming a continuation of plateau and tributary farmland for the west.

48. The hedgerow structure within the area has been substantially fragmented. Remnant hedge boundaries and mature isolated hedgerow trees assume greater significant in views across arable fields. Large blocks of carr woodland that often define the Broads landscape enclose northerly and easterly views, often evoking a sense of intimacy by the strong wooded horizon. Copses and belts of woodland (coniferous and deciduous) and mature trees further enclose the area, adding interest and contribute to a gradual transition between farmland and woodland. Pockets of carr woodland are also interesting landscape features.

49. The settlement pattern reflects a long history of development, scattered with historic halls, villages, and isolated farmsteads. Settlements within this area have generally evolved from a linear settlement core, forming a series of small and large nucleated villages at the edge of the Broads. The linear historic core still holds a fairly rural setting and some areas including Postwick compromises a fairly

complex road network including where the railway passes, A roads including the A47, A1042 and A1270, numerous roundabouts, and B roads.

50. Many of the inherent sensitivities and landscape guidelines which should be followed in the character areas cross over and this includes but not limited to the importance of conserving the rural character of Postwick and Witton, including the settlement of historic churches and buildings, promoting the use of local materials and sensitive location of development.

SEA Screening

Legislative Background

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

51. The European Directive 2001/42/EC[25] 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 Postwick with Witton Neighbourhood Plan are likely to cause significant environmental effects.

52. 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 17**[26].

53. **Figure 18** 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[27]. **Figure 19** below assesses whether PWWNP will require a full SEA. The questions in the first column are drawn from **Figure 18** which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)

54. It is required by Article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive and by regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended 2017) that an appropriate assessment is carried out with regard to the Conservation Objectives of the European Sites and with reference to other plans and projects to identify if any significant effect is likely for any European Site.

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

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

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

55. To fulfil the legal requirements if likely significant effects will occur with the implementation of a neighbourhood plan upon the European Sites (Natura 2000 sites) a screening assessment has been undertaken.

56. An assessment has been undertaken to determine whether the draft PWWNP requires an SEA or HRA in accordance with the above regulations. The results can be viewed below.

Figure 17-Schedule 1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. Source: UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

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 18-Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes. Source: Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, published in September 2005

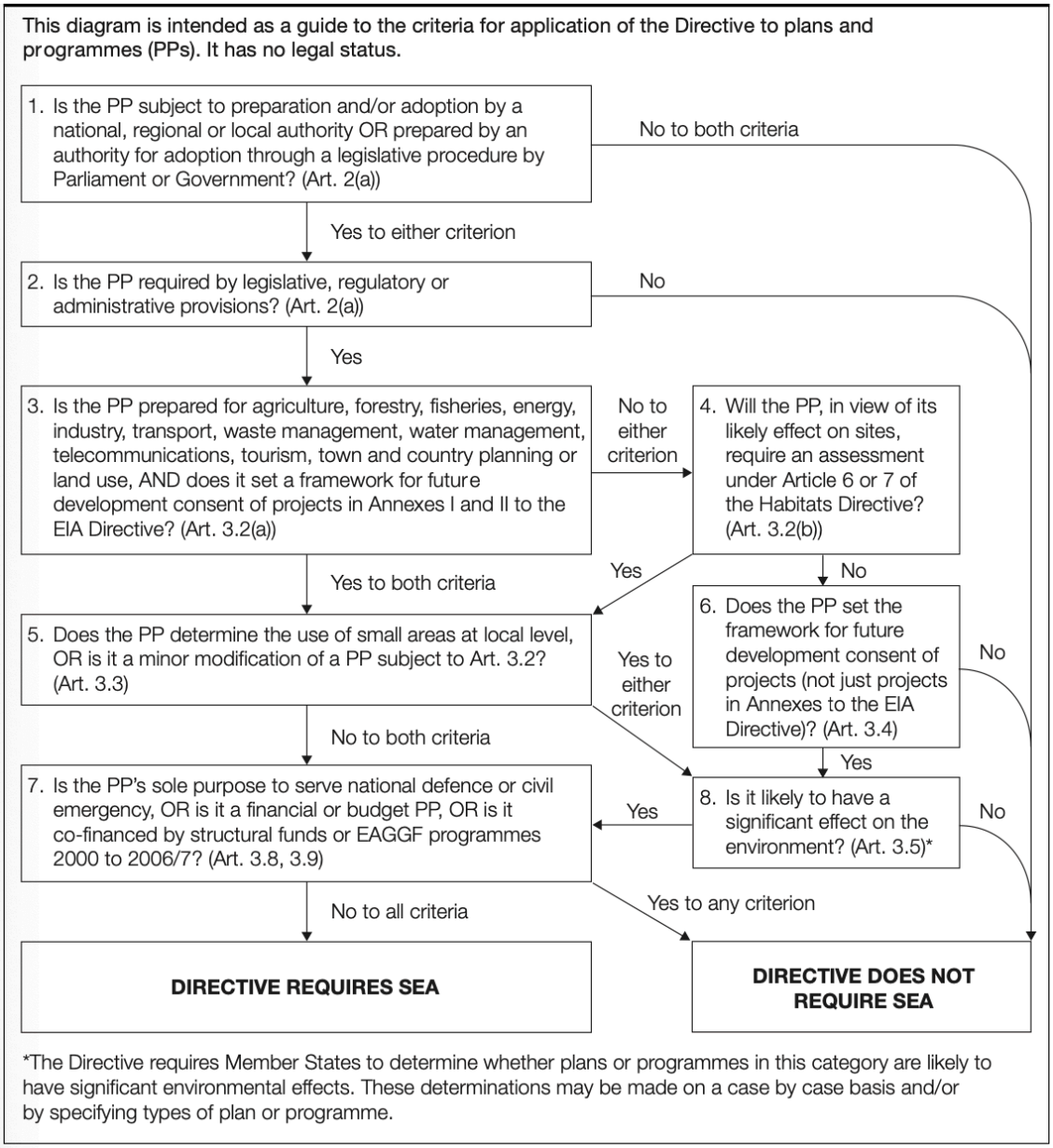


Figure 19-Application of SEA Directive to PWWNP. Source: UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

PP in this instance refers to Neighbourhood Plan

	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 Postwick with Witton Parish Council who are producing a neighbourhood plan. The plan will be made by Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority, subject to the plan passing an independent examination and local community referendum. Preparation of the Postwick with Witton 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 are 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 2017 **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 Broadland District Council and Broads Authority. These authorities are directed by legislative processes, and it is important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant

	Stage	Y/N	Justification
			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/N	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 Postwick with Witton 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 within the parish of Postwick with Witton . Its intention is to complement the higher order strategic framework that already exists for land use planning across the Broadland District and Broads Authority Executive Area. 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 Postwick with Witton . **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)	N	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**

	Stage	Y/N	Justification
5	Does the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Y	A Neighbourhood Plan can determine the use of small areas at a local level. The Postwick with Witton Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for development. However, proposes to include a variety of polices to create sustainable development through location, design, and environmental protections such as designating Local Green Spaces.
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)	Y	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 19– PLAN DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA**

57. Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. These are listed in **Figure 20** below along with comments on the extent to which the PWWNP meets these criteria.

Figure 20-Likely Significant Effects[28]

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
1. 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, PWWNP will become part of the statutory development plan and will guide the delivery of development within the designated plan area. The parish falls within the district of Broadland and the Broads Authority Executive Area. As well as this the parish falls within the Norwich Policy Area (NPA), which is the focus for major growth and development in the Greater Norwich area. Whilst there are no allocations for Postwick village in the current local plan, or in the Local Plan for the Broads, the north-west of the parish is part of The Norwich Growth Triangle and one allocation GT11: Land East of Broadland Business Park falls in the neighbourhood designated area and is known as The Oaks. This area is north of the A1042 around Peachman Way, Smee Lane and east of Green Lane. 520 new homes, a new school and creche, community hall, day nursery, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, a continuing retirement community and nursing home and public open space are planned for this area. Full planning permission was granted for phases 1 and 2 of the development in 2018 which included 315 dwellings. A proportion of the homes have been built and are now occupied, with the remaining currently under construction. At the time of writing, an application detailing	**N**

[28] . Source: Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Accessed: EUR-Lex - 32001L0042 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
	the appearance, layout, landscaping and scale for the construction for the remaining 205 dwellings, alongside new areas of public open space, landscaping, drainage and associated infrastructure is being considered by Broadland District Council. **The local authority has indicated that the Postwick with Witton Neighbourhood Plan can allocate in addition to this, but the steering group has chosen not to. In terms of the degree to which PWWNP sets a framework, it does not allocate land for development.**	
b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The Postwick with Witton Neighbourhood Plan will, subject to a successful referendum, be adopted alongside the higher order adopted Local Plans and National Planning Policy Framework and form part of the District Council's Development Plan and the Broads Authority Local Development Plan. 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 PWWNP will form part of the statutory development plan for Postwick with Witton 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	One of the Basic Conditions which PWWNP must meet is to contribute towards sustainable development. Several policies within the plan will focus on environmental protection and mitigation, including the designation of Local Green Spaces. These aim to ensure 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
sustainable development	non-strategic nature of the PWWNP this does not have the potential to restrict the delivery of other plans or programmes.	
d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	**The plan itself will not specifically allocate land for development and will not exacerbate any significantly known environmental problems.** Baseline information relating to PWWNP was described earlier in this Screening Document. There are no statutory designated sites in the neighbourhood area. However, there are a few important designations within 2km: • The Broads Special Area of Conservation • Broadland Ramsar and Special Protection Area • Yare Broads and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) • Bramerton Pits SSSI The plan seeks to provide protection and achieve improvement by strengthening ecological connectivity to these areas and beyond in the parish through the establishment of a biodiversity policy and designating Local Green Spaces. The biodiversity policy will be the focus of conservation and biodiversity improvement.	**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	The implementation of community legislation is unlikely to be significantly compromised by the Neighbourhood Plan.	**N**

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
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	PWWNP 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 PWWNP will not lead to any cumulative effects in combination with existing or emerging plans.	**N**
c) Transboundary nature of effects	The emerging PWWNP provides supplementary policies of a local scale. 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)	PWWNP 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 PWWNP area has a total population of around 400 (Census 2021). This sits within the context of an estimated total population of 916,100 residing in Norfolk (Census 2021). PWWNP remains a non-strategic plan and the principle of development that will take place has already been established within the Broadland District Council and Broads Authority Local Plans.	**N**

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
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	**The emerging PWWNP does not include site allocations and therefore are not anticipated to have likely significant effects on the parish.** i) There are no statutory natural designations which fall within Postwick with Witton. As the plan does not allocate land for development it is not expected to have likely significant effects on the natural characteristics of the area. In addition, PWWNP has put forward environmental policies such as the biodiversity policy. The area has a few historic features, including 4 Listed Buildings, including the Church of St Margaret and Church of All Saints both Grade II* listed and Postwick War Memorial Cross and Witton War Memorial Cross both Grade II listed. The plan is not anticipated to have likely significant effects on heritage. ii) PWWNP is unlikely to result in an exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as those relating to air, water, and soil quality. iii) PWWNP is unlikely to bring forward development of an extent that would result in a significant intensification of Local land Use	**N**
g) The effects on areas of landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	**PWWNP is not anticipated to have likely significant environmental effects on areas of landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status. The plan does not allocate land for development.**	**N**

HRA Screening assessment

What is a Habitats Regulation Assessment?

58. 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?

59. There are three types of International Sites designations:

- **Ramsar:** Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands[29].
- **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

60. To fulfil the legal requirements if likely significant effects will occur with the implementation of the PWWNP 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[30].

61. The purpose of the Screening stage is to:

[29] 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.
[30] Habitats regulations assessments: protecting a European site - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- Identify all features of the PWWNP 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 PWWNP 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 PWWNP 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'

62. 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[31] (translated into Reg. 102 in the Habitats Regulations):

63. *"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)."*

64. As well as this another relevant opinion of Advocate General Sharpston (2012[32]) delivered to the Court of Justice of the European Union for Case C-258/11 Peter Sweetman v An Bord Pleanala stated:

65. *"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."*

[31] EUR-Lex - 62002CJ0127 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

[32]Case C-258/11 Peter Sweetman Ireland Attorney General Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government v An Bord Pleanala Source**:** CURIA - Documents (europa.eu)

66. 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 Postwick with Witton Neighbourhood Plan and its policies could have likely significant effects either alone or in combination.

Assessment

67. 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 PWWNP designated area as well as a distance of 20 kilometres (km) taken from the centre of PWWNP as shown in **Figure 21**. A distance of 20 kilometres from the centre point of the PWWNP area was used in the first instance because this has been agreed with Natural England for the relevant Local Plans HRAs in this region for popular coastal European Sites[33] 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.

68. 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[34].

69. Whilst the boundary of an 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 the key habitat that forms the designated area (SAC or SPA) that it

[33]Habitats Regulations Assessment of Greater Norwich Local Plan Issues and Options Stage for Greater Norwich Development Partnership December 2017 Source: https://oc2connect.gnlp.org.uk/docfiles/14/reg.18_gnlp_interim_hra.pdf

[34]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)

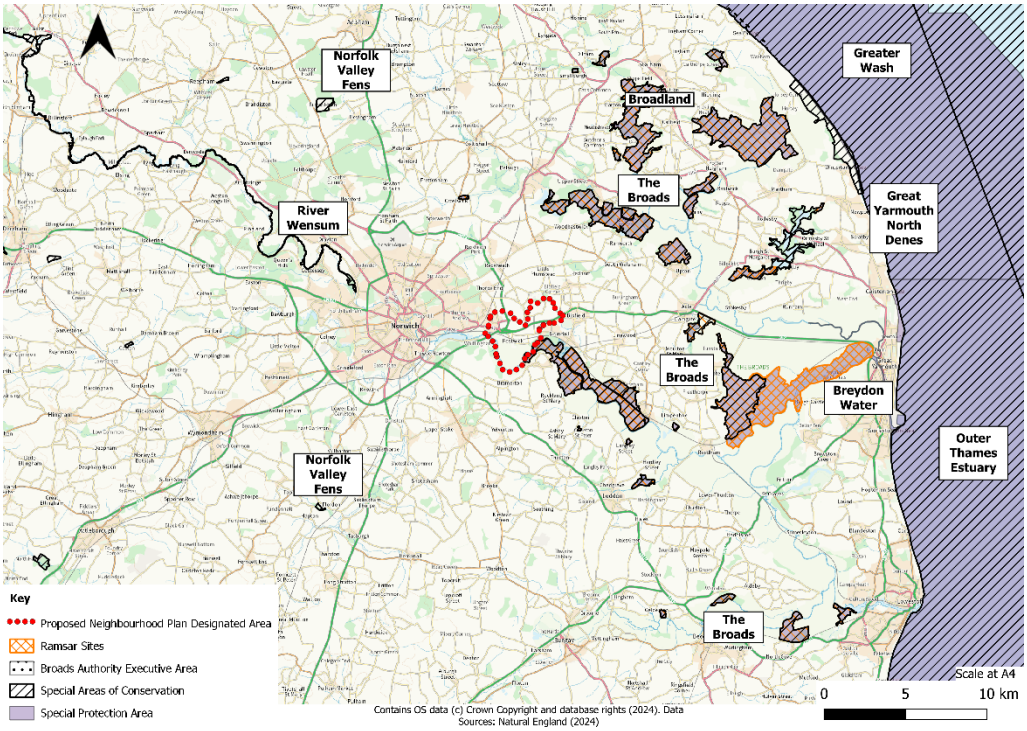
would be entirely impractical to attempt to designate or classify all of the land or sea that may conceivably be used by the species.

70. In the PWWNP 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 PWWNP area as an in-combination assessment (**Figure 21**). The point for measuring 20km has been taken from the centre of PWWNP as shown in **Figure 22**. A number of International Sites are shown to be located within 20km radius of the PWWNP area including:

Figure 21-Table of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of PWWNP

Special Areas of Conservation	Special Protection Areas	Ramsar Sites
• The Broads • Broadland • Great Yarmouth North Denes • Norfolk Valley Fens • The Greater Wash • Outer Thames Estuary	• The Broads • Broadland • The Greater Wash • Outer Thames Estuary	• Breydon Water • Broadland • The Broads

Figure 22-Map of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of PWWNP



71. 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[35].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[36].
72. 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. Each site also has a set of conservation objectives.

73. 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;
- Changes to hydrology, including water quantity and quality
- Urban effects

HRA Impacts Screening

74. PWWNP 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. An assessment of potential impacts of draft policy contained within PWWNP is provided in **Figure 23**.

[3535] 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').
[36] GOV. Para 009 . Source: Appropriate assessment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Figure 23-HRA Screening Assessment

Policy	Description	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)	Recommendation at Screening Stage
Policy PW1: Key considerations for all development proposals in Postwick with Witton	Encourages all development proposals to consider the key priorities of the neighbourhood plan, so that PWWNP development strategy has been considered, ideally at an early stage of proposals being developed.	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 PW2: Commercial Growth in Postwick with Witton	Supports commercial development within existing, allocated key employment locations identified within the Greater Norwich Local Plan are supported in line with relevant policy.	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 PW3: Development on land south of Smee Lane	Supports proposals for mixed use development of Land South of Smee Lane in line with certain criteria such as detailed in the Growth Triangle Area Action Plan.	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 PW4: Cycle Routes	States opportunities should be taken to enhance and create new cycle links between the key settlement areas within the parish and to Norwich and Brundall.	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 PW5: Protection and Enhancement of Public Rights of Way	States development proposals for sites that include Public Rights of Way or are adjacent to them, should protect and incorporate them into the scheme.	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 PW6: Biodiversity	States all development should contribute towards nature recovery,	No LSE – mitigation policy for growth	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an

Policy	Description	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)	Recommendation at Screening Stage
	opportunities for improving wildlife connectivity, protecting priority habitats, enhancing sites in the parish for BNG.		appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy PW7: Trees	Policy setting out detail/criteria on protecting existing trees 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 PW8: Green Corridors	Policy identifies green corridors. Development proposals adjacent to these should not have a detrimental impact on the green open nature, should improve habitat connectivity, avoid barriers to the movement of wildlife and where possible enhance public access.	No LSE – protective policy	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy PW9: 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 PW10: Landscape Character	All development proposals should help to conserve and enhance the character, appearance and setting of the parish. Proposals should demonstrate how the design and layout of the development helps to retain, enhance and restore key landscape features.	No LSE – protective policy	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 PW11: 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 PW12: 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 PW13: Design	Requiring high quality design that accords with the Postwick with Witton Design Codes/Guide Document.	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.

HRA Screening Conclusion

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