

A47 Blofield to North Burlingham Dualling

Scheme Number: TR010040

Volume 6

6.2 Environmental Statement Appendices **Appendix 7.1 – Planning Policy Context**

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed
Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

December 2020

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning
(Applications: Prescribed Forms and
Procedure) Regulations 2009**

A47 Blofield to North Burlingham
Development Consent Order 202[x]

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT APPENDICES
Appendix 7.1 Planning Policy Context

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7. Planning Policy Context

7.1. Introduction

- 7.1.1. The following provides a summary of relevant landscape related County and Local Plan policy and supplementary planning guidance’.

7.2. European Policy

- 7.2.1. The UK is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which seeks to achieve improved approaches to the planning, management and protection of landscapes throughout Europe. The ELC and its definition of landscape underpins the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3, 2013) which have contributed to the approach of this assessment.

7.3. National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these are applied. Part 15 of the NPPF sets out the framework with respect to conserving the natural environment. Paragraph 170 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.

National Networks National Planning Policy Statement

- 7.3.2. The National Policy Statement for National Networks (NNNPS) sets out the government’s policies to deliver development of nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIP) on the national road network in England. The Secretary of State (SoS) uses the NNNPS as the primary basis for making decisions on such development consent applications.
- 7.3.3. The NNNPS requires that where a development is subject to an environmental impact assessment (EIA), an assessment of any likely significant landscape and visual impacts should be undertaken (paragraph 5.144). The assessment should consider any relevant local development plan policies, significant effects during construction and operation, and visibility and conspicuousness (paragraphs 5.146-148). The NNNPS states that where a local development document in England has policies based on landscape character assessment, these will be given particular consideration. More specifically, local designations will be given consideration in decision making by the SoS but not be used in themselves to refuse consent (paragraph 5.156). In taking decisions, the SoS will consider whether the Proposed Scheme has been designed carefully, taking account of

environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to avoid adverse effects on landscape or to minimise harm to the landscape, including by reasonable mitigation (paragraph 5.157). The SoS will also judge whether visual effects on sensitive receptors outweigh the benefits of the development (paragraph 5.158).

- 7.3.4. This assessment of the Proposed Scheme considers the matters raised by the NNNPS and provides the relevant landscape and visual information that is required by it to enable appropriate decision making.

7.4. Highways England Policy

Highways England Licence

- 7.4.1. The Highways England Licence (2015) outlines the commitments, duties and obligations of Highways England to the Department of Transport. Environmental commitments related to the LVIA are detailed in section 5.23:

- 7.4.2. *“In complying with 4.2(g) and its general duty under section 5(2) of the Infrastructure Act 2015 to have regard to the environment, the Licence holder should:*

- a. Ensure that protecting and enhancing the environment is embedded into its business decision-making processes and is considered at all levels of operations;*
- b. Ensure the best practicable environmental outcomes across its activities, while working in the context of sustainable development and delivering value for money;*
- c. Consider the cumulative environmental impact of its activities across its network and identify holistic approaches to mitigate such impacts and improve environmental performance;*
- d. Where appropriate, work with others to develop solutions that can provide increased environmental benefits over those that the Licence holder can achieve alone, where this delivers value for money;*
- e. Calculate and consider the carbon impact of road projects and factor carbon into design decisions, and seek to minimise carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases from its operations;*
- f. Adapt its network to operate in a changing climate, including assessing, managing, and mitigating the potential risks posed by climate change to the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the network;*

- g. Develop approaches to the construction, maintenance and operation of the Licence holder's network that are consistent with the government's plans for a low carbon future;*
- h. Take opportunities to influence road users to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from their journey choices."*

Highways England Delivery Plan 2015-2020

- 7.4.3. Section 6.1.5 'Landscape' of Highways England's Delivery Plan 2015-2020 identifies key areas of focus for enhancement of the character and quality of the built and natural landscape. One of the 3 key areas of focus directly related to the Proposed Scheme is *"Promoting schemes that are better integrated with the surrounding environment at a landscape scale, which also deliver associated ecosystem service benefits. We will do this in-line with National Character Area profiles."*

7.5. County Policy

Norfolk County Council

Norfolk County Council's Environmental Policy - Norfolk County Council (2019), approved November 2019

- 7.5.1. The Council's environmental policy sets out a number of high level environmental 'goals' embodied in key policy aims, including:
- Using and managing land sustainably
 - Embedding an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure
 - Improving soil health
 - Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes
 - Recognising that Norfolk is losing biodiversity, particularly insect populations
 - Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing
 - Planting more trees to improve biodiversity and as a potential mitigation measure for climate change in appropriate locations

Norfolk's Transport Plan for 2026 - Norfolk County Council (2011), published April 2011

- 7.5.2. The Norfolk Transport Plan for 2026 sets out the strategy and policy framework for transport within the County and is to be used as a guide when determining planning or delivery decisions. Policy 4 of the Norfolk Transport Plan for 2026 is relevant to this assessment.

Policy 4: Protecting the Environment

7.5.3. “Transport decisions should take account of the character of the historic environment, landscape and local biodiversity. In particular:

- *Negative impacts should be mitigated*
- *Reasonable opportunities for creating habitats taken*
- *Due regard should be given to ecological networks and European designated sites*
- *Impact assessments should be undertaken where necessary.”*

7.5.4. Supporting information provided alongside Policy 4 includes the following relevant to this assessment:

“All new streets will be designed so as to consistently achieve high standards and reflect how the space is used. Good design, particularly in sensitive historic and environmental areas, will not only encourage more efficient movement and result in more attractive public spaces, but can reduce future maintenance costs if materials are selected on the basis of whole life costing. We will make existing highway environments more liveable by: Learning lessons from work we did with government to trial innovative measures on rural roads such as strategic planting.” (Norfolk Transport Plan for 2026, paragraph 3.17)

7.6. District Policy

South Norfolk Council

7.6.1. South Norfolk Council has published a Joint Core Strategy for Broadland Norwich and South Norfolk which includes a number of relevant policies:

Joint Core Strategy for Broadland Norwich and South Norfolk – Greater Norwich Development Partnership (2014), adopted March 2011, amendments adopted January 2014.

Policy 1: Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets

7.6.2. Extracts from Policy 1 relevant to this assessment:

“To address climate change and promote sustainability, all development will be located and designed to use resources efficiently, minimise greenhouse gas emissions and be adapted to a changing climate and more extreme weather.

“In areas not protected through international or national designations, development will:

- *minimise fragmentation of habitats and seek to conserve and enhance existing environmental assets of acknowledged regional or local importance.*

Where harm is unavoidable, it will provide for appropriate mitigation or replacement with the objective of achieving a long-term maintenance or enhancement of the local biodiversity baseline

- *contribute to providing a multifunctional green infrastructure network, including provision of areas of open space, wildlife resources and links between them, both off site and as an integral part of the development*
- *help to make provision for the long-term maintenance of the green infrastructure network”*

Policy 2: Promoting good design

7.6.3. Extracts from Policy 2 relevant to this assessment:

“All development will be designed to the highest possible standards, creating a strong sense of place.”

“In particular development proposals will respect local distinctiveness including as appropriate...

- *the landscape setting of settlements including the urban/rural transition and the treatment of ‘gateways’...*
- *the landscape character and historic environment, taking account of conservation area appraisals and including the wider countryside and the Broads area”*

Broadland District Council

7.6.4. The Broadland District Council Local Plan is made up of several documents, the Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD), adopted August 2015 and of relevance to this assessment.

Development Management DPD – Broadland District Council, adopted August 2015.

7.6.5. Relevant policies:

Policy GC4 - Design

7.6.6. Extracts from Policy GC4 relevant to this assessment:

“Development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design and avoid any significant detrimental impact Schemes which are of an innovative nature or which reduce reliance on centralised, non-renewable energy sources will be particularly encouraged”.

“Proposals should pay adequate regard to:

The environment, character and appearance of an area;

Reinforcing local distinctiveness through careful consideration of the treatment of space throughout the development, the appearance of new development, the scale of new development and landscaping.

Policy EN1 Biodiversity and Habitats

7.6.7. Extracts from Policy EN1 relevant to this assessment:

“Development proposals will be expected to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the district, avoid fragmentation of habitats, and support the delivery of a co-ordinated green infrastructure network throughout the district.

Where harmful impacts may occur, it should be adequately demonstrated that:

- i. The development cannot be located where it would cause less or no harm; and*
- ii. That adequate mitigation is incorporated, including specific mitigation requirements to address impacts upon international wildlife sites (Natura 2000 sites); and*
- iii. That the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impacts.”*

Policy EN2 Landscape

7.6.8. Extract from Policy EN2 relevant to this assessment:

“In order to protect the character of the area, development proposals should have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document and, in particular, consider any impact upon as well as seek to protect and enhance where appropriate:

- i. Gaps between settlements;*
- ii. Visually sensitive skylines, hillsides and valley sides and important views including the setting of the Broads Area;*
- iii. Nocturnal character,*
- iv. Conservation Areas;*
- v. Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and*
- vi. Historic Parks and Gardens; and*

vii. Green spaces including natural and semi-natural features as well as geological/geomorphological features which make a significant contribution towards defining the character of an area.”

Policy EN3 – Green Infrastructure

7.6.9. Extract from Policy EN3 relevant to this assessment:

“All development will be expected to maximise opportunities for the creation of a well-managed network of wildlife habitats... Development will also be expected to make adequate arrangements for the management and maintenance of green infrastructure.”

7.7. Parish Policy **Blofield Parish Council**

Blofield Parish Neighbourhood Plan – Blofield Parish Council, adopted July 2016.

7.7.1. The Neighbourhood Plan Vision:

“The nature and character of our rural village will be preserved and retained, in order to meet the various needs of residents, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice.

This will be achieved in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social inclusion and supports the local economy.”

7.7.2. Environment objectives:

“Objective 3: To protect and enhance the countryside, including wildlife habitats and open spaces.

Objective 4: To create cleaner, safer and greener neighbourhoods and maintain pleasant public spaces.”

7.7.3. Relevant environment objectives policies:

ENV2: Soft site boundaries and trees

“New development site boundary edges should be soft, using trees and native hedgerows where adjacent to the countryside, giving a rural edge. Development proposals should seek to retain mature or significant trees, groups of trees or woodland on site. Where removal of a tree(s) of recognised importance is proposed, a replacement of similar amenity value should be provided on site.”

ENV5: Dark skies

“In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 125) any new developments should limit impact on dark skies. This includes restricting streetlights and lighting of commercial structures.”

ENV6: Distinct villages

“The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to retain a physical separation between the settlements of Blofield, Blofield Heath and Brundall. Developments that reduce the separation of the settlements should not be permitted.”

ENV7: Approaches to Blofield and Blofield Heath

“New developments located at the village entrances will be encouraged to enhance the approaches to Blofield and Blofield Heath, for example through the provision of signage, tree, shrub and flower planting. Village approaches are shown in figure 14” (refer to Figure 1-1).

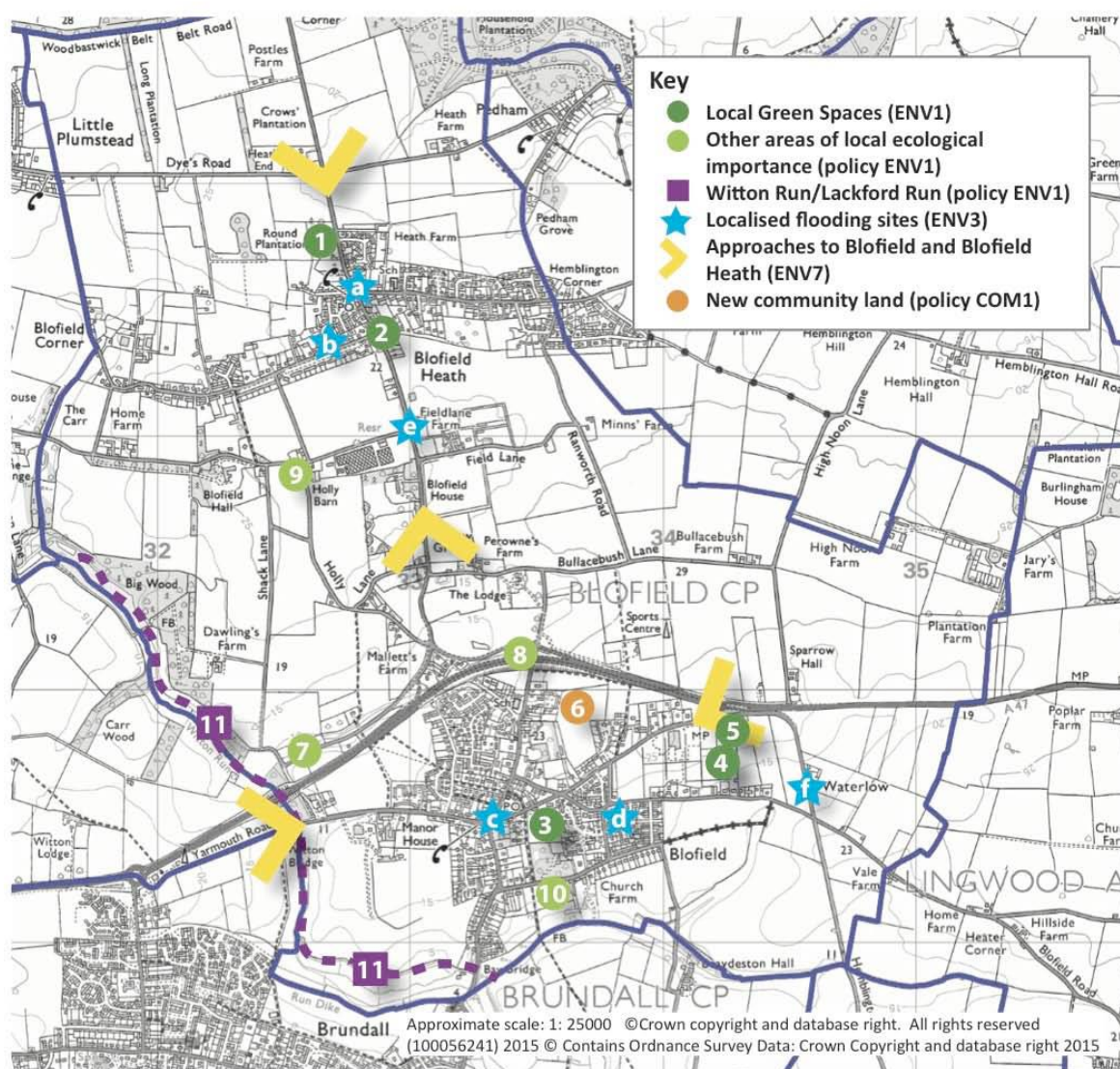


Figure 7-1 : Extract from Blofield Parish Neighbourhood Plan Figure 14

Source: Blofield Parish Neighbourhood Plan

ENV8: Important views and vistas

“The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect views across the parish that are of particular community importance. Development within these views that are overly intrusive, unsightly or prominent, to the detriment of the view and vistas as a whole, will not be permitted.

The following views and vistas are considered particularly important (as shown in figure 16): (Extracted copy of figure below)

- *Approaching Blofield from the west, view towards the east looking at the church tower.*
- *Approaching Blofield from the east on Lingwood Road.*

- Views to Braydeston generally from the north.
- View from Woodbastwick Road, north of Blofield Heath, looking west

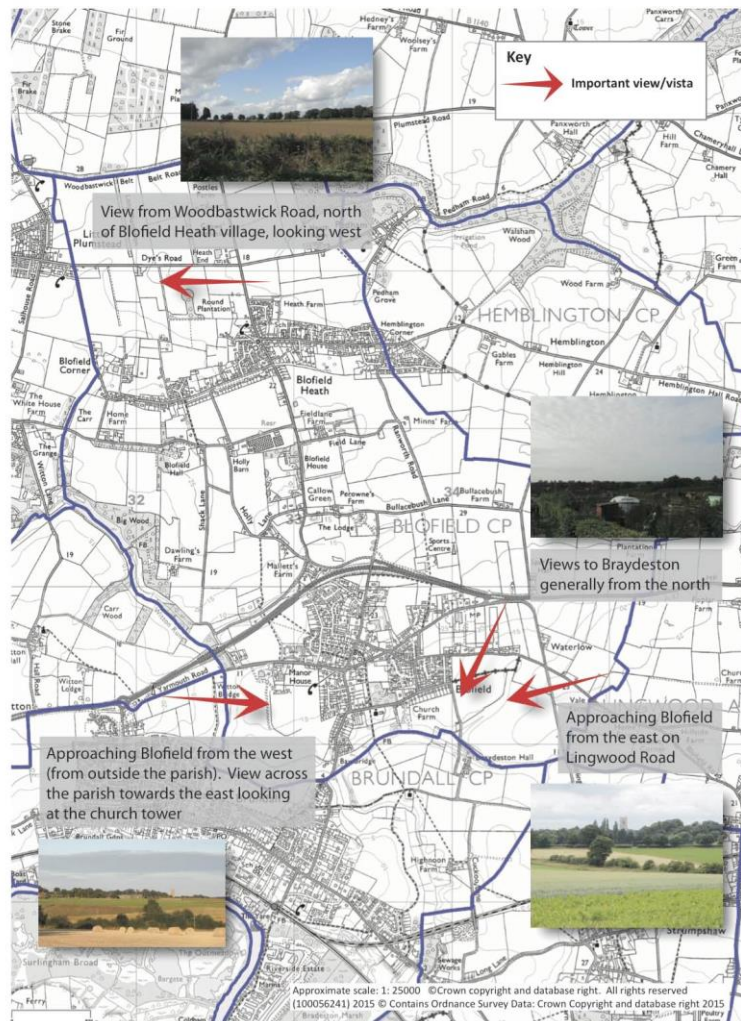


Figure 7-2 : Extract from Blofield Parish Neighbourhood Plan Figure 16

Source: Blofield Parish Neighbourhood Plan

7.8. Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 7.8.1. The following landscape related supplementary planning documents have been considered to inform the content of the assessment and Proposed Scheme design.

Greater Norwich Development Partnership: Green Infrastructure Strategy (November 2007)

- 7.8.2. The Greater Norwich Development Partnership: Green Infrastructure Strategy (November 2007) supplementary planning guidance provides information in relation to associated local plan policies. The document was developed around four principal aims which are:

- sustaining and enhancing the character and local distinctiveness of riverscapes, landscapes and townscape
- making space for wildlife
- providing a high quality, multi-functional and connected network of accessible greenspaces for people
- adapting to climate change through sustainable planning and design

Broadland District Council Place Shaping: A Guide to undertaking development in Broadland (2012)

7.8.3. This document is a reference guide and the primary focus of the document is upon buildings within the built environment. However, the document also contains guidance regarding the consideration and assessment of landscape character which is of relevance to development within the wider built environment.

Broadland District Council Design Guide (July 1997)

7.8.4. The Broadland District Council Design Guide (July 1997) supplementary planning guide contains principles considered in the determination of planning applications against local planning policies. The predominate focus of the document is upon buildings within the built environment however, the document also contains guidance regarding the design of boundary treatments and soft landscape features such as trees, hedgerows, which is of relevance to development within the wider built environment.

7.9. References

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