

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Boxford Neighbourhood Plan

Scoping Report

Boxford Parish Council

October 2021

Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
V1	September 2021	First draft for internal review	Ishaq Khan	Environmental Consultant
V2	October 2021	First draft for client review	Hugh Phillips	NP Steering Group
V3	October 2021	Consultation report	Ishaq Khan	Environmental Consultant

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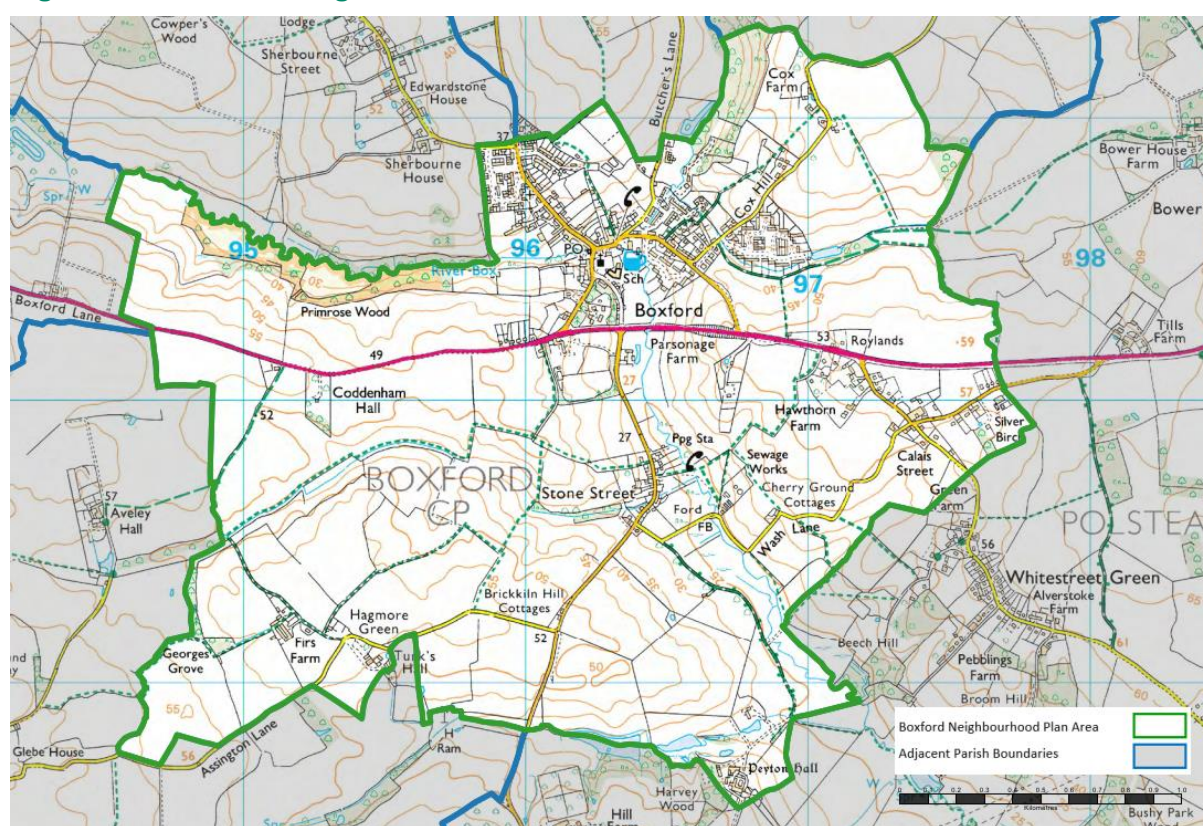
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1. AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Boxford Neighbourhood Plan (NP).
- 1.1.2. The Boxford NP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and in the context of the local plan of Babergh District Council.
- 1.1.3. The Plan area was designated in 2018 and is depicted in **Figure 1.1**.

Figure 1.1: Boxford Neighbourhood Plan area



1.2 Planning policy context

- 1.2.1. The Parish falls within the boundary of Babergh district. The adopted Babergh local planning framework consists of:
- The Core Strategy adopted in 2014; and
 - The saved policies of the 2006 Local Plan.
- 1.2.2. Babergh District Council are currently working with Mid Suffolk District Council to develop a Joint Local Plan (JLP). The JLP is at a relatively progressed stage of development, having been submitted for independent examination in March 2021. Examination hearings are currently in progress.
- 1.2.3. The Boxford NP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for Babergh, in line with footnote 18 of the National

Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).¹ Additionally, the NPPF states that “*local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans*” according to set criteria which includes its stage of preparation.² For the purposes of this SEA, focus is placed on the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP.

- 1.2.4. The JLP categorises Boxford as a ‘Core Village’ in the settlement hierarchy, which alongside the Ipswich Fringe settlements, Market Towns and Urban Areas will act as a focus for development (Policy SP03 – Settlement Hierarchy). Stone Street and Calais Street are separately classified as Hamlets. Under Policy SP04 (Housing Spatial Distribution), Table 4 identifies a housing need of 13 new homes in Boxford in the period up to 2037, and outstanding planning permissions are expected to deliver 8 of these homes. A residual requirement therefore remains for 5 homes, which is met through the allocation of the ‘Land south of Hadleigh Road’ for 5 new dwellings in Calais Street under Policy LS01.
- 1.2.5. A key constraint to further growth in Boxford is the lack of capacity at Boxford CEVC Primary School. The existing school site is constrained in terms of further expansion and the JLP recognises that development within the area will be required to secure a solution to primary school provision.

1.3 SEA explained

- 1.3.1. SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the Boxford NP seeks to maximise the emerging plan’s contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.3.2. SEA is undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).
- 1.3.3. The Boxford NP has been screened in as requiring SEA.³ This is predominantly because of the scope of the plan, which proposes to allocate land for additional homes with the potential to lead to a range of environmental effects. SEA is therefore required to assess the potential for significant environmental impacts.
- 1.3.4. The next stage of SEA (this report) seeks to establish a suggested scope for the SEA. A key procedural requirement of the SEA Regulations is to present this scope for the SEA, so that the designated authorities (Historic England, Natural England, and the Environment Agency) can provide timely comment.

¹ MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

² NPPF, Para 48

³ SEA screening was undertaken by LUC on behalf of Babergh District Council in September 2021. The Screening Determination can be accessed [here](#).

1.4 SEA scoping explained

1.4.1. Developing the draft scope for the SEA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:

- Exploring the policy context for the Boxford NP and SEA to summarise the key messages arising.
- Establishing the baseline for the SEA (i.e. the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the Boxford NP) to help identify the plan's likely significant effects.
- Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the SEA; and
- Considering this information, developing a SEA framework comprising SEA objectives and assessment questions, which can then be used as a guiding framework for the subsequent assessment.

1.4.2. The scope is explored and presented under a series of key environmental themes as follows:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity
- Climate change (including flood risk)
- Health and wellbeing
- Historic environment
- Land, soil, and water resources
- Landscape
- Population and communities
- Transportation and movement

1.4.3. The selected environmental themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive.⁴ These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects. The discussion of the scoping information for each theme is presented in **Chapters 2 to 10**, and the proposed SEA framework is brought together as a whole in **Chapter 11**. Each proposal within the emerging Boxford NP will be assessed consistently using this framework.

⁴ The SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on 'the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'

2. Air quality

Focus of theme:

The theme focuses on air pollution, in particular: sources of air pollution, air quality hotspots, and areas known to exceed objectives for air quality.

2.1 Policy Context

2.1.1. Table 2.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 2.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to air quality

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021	gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
The Clean Air Strategy	2019	gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019
UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations	2017	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633269/air-quality-plan-overview.pdf
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance	2018	laqm.defra.gov.uk/documents/LAQM-TG16-February-18-v1.pdf
Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies	2014	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/core-strategy/
Air Quality Annual Status Report for Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council	2020	babergh.gov.uk/assets/Environment/ASR-2020.pdf

2.1.2. The Boxford NP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which predominantly seeks early planning to reduce/ mitigate air quality impacts in development and to take advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures to improve air quality include traffic and travel management and green infrastructure provision. Strategic development is expected to be focused in locations that have or will be provided with high levels of accessibility; supporting both a reduced need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality.

- 2.1.3. To improve air quality across the UK, national strategies have in the last few decades focused on regulatory frameworks, investment by industry in cleaner processes and a shift in the fuel mix towards cleaner forms of energy (largely at point sources). Whilst there are dedicated strategies to reducing roadside emissions (as a significant source of nitrogen dioxide emissions), recent objectives outlined in the Clean Air Strategy seek to recognise wider sources (including smaller contributors and diffuse sources) that contribute to poor air quality. These includes power generation, heating our homes, producing food, manufacturing consumer goods and powering transport.
- 2.1.4. The Boxford NP will also be required to be in general conformity with the adopted Local Plan which contains polices relating to air quality, alongside the policies of the emerging Local Plan.
- 2.1.5. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) are declared in areas which exceed national objectives for levels of particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and/ or nitrogen oxides. The Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) for Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council demonstrates that poor air quality in the districts is mainly derived from road transport. An area encompassing part of Cross Street in Sudbury is declared as an AQMA due to high levels of nitrogen dioxide associated with road transport.

2.2 Baseline information

Summary of current baseline

- 2.2.1. There are currently no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within the NP area. The nearest AQMA is at Cross Street in Sudbury around 9km to the west of Boxford village. The Sudbury AQMA was declared in 2008 for exceedances in Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and applies to the narrowest stretch of Cross Street from its northern extent at Mill Hill to the junction with Church Street in the south.
- 2.2.2. According to the Annual Status Report for Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts (2020), the main pollutant of concern in Babergh district is Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂). Emissions from vehicles are the main source of NO₂ emissions. There are no air quality monitoring points within or in proximity to the NP area. However, monitoring locations across Babergh district but outside the Sudbury AQMA have shown a gradual reduction in NO₂ over the last 5 years, indicating a general improvement in air quality across the district.
- 2.2.3. In 2019, monitoring further suggests that the annual mean concentration of NO₂ in Babergh district outside the Sudbury AQMA were consistently below the national objective of 40µg/m³.

Summary of future baseline

- 2.2.4. Whilst no significant air quality issues currently exist in the NP area, new housing and employment provision may create adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants such as NO₂. These effects are likely to be more apparent at bottlenecks along main thoroughfares in the village.

2.2.5. It is likely that private car will continue to be the most common method of transport. The move towards hybrid and electric vehicles will likely offset some potential adverse effects on air quality.

2.2.6. It is not anticipated that future development within Boxford will lead to appreciable effects on the Sudbury AQMA.

2.3 Key headline issues

2.3.1. The key issues are as follows:

- Air quality in the NP area is generally good, with no significant issues identified. There are also no Air Quality Management Areas within or nearby the NP area.
- Housing and employment growth have the potential to increase emissions and deteriorate air quality in the NP area. However, as air pollution is at a low baseline and housing growth is likely to be modest, the potential effects on air quality are not likely to be significant.

2.4 Scoping outcome

2.4.1. The NP is intending to allocate housing sites and these are likely to generate more trips by private car than would be the case in the absence of the Plan. This has potential to generate increased particulates and nitrogen dioxide.

2.4.2. However, there are no AQMAs in or nearby the NP area, existing air pollution is at a low baseline and any proposed development is likely to be modest in scale and thus not likely to cause any significant changes to the existing baseline. Therefore, due to the absence of significant and tangible air quality issues in the NP area, air quality has been **SCOPED OUT** for the purposes of the SEA process. This means that the plan will not be assessed for its performance against air quality objectives (given that no significant issues or opportunities are expected to arise through the Boxford NP).

2.4.3. Nevertheless, positive planning could be beneficial for air quality through opportunities to improve accessibility, particularly in terms of active travel and encouraging more local journeys and sustainable connections. Therefore, opportunities which address issues such as accessibility and sustainable communities whilst also enhancing air quality are encouraged.

3. Biodiversity

Focus of theme:

This theme focuses on nature conservation designations, habitats and species within and surrounding the NP area.

3.1 Policy Context

3.1.1. Table 3.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 3.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to biodiversity

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021	gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
Biodiversity 2020 Strategy	2011	gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services
Environmental Bill 2020 Policy Statement	2020	gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-bill-2020/30-january-2020-environmental-bill-2020-policy-statement
Suffolk Local Biodiversity Action Plan	2012	suffolkbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/biodiversity/prioritiespecieshabitats/actionplans/Planning_BAP_Final%2018%20May%202012.pdf
Suffolk's Nature Strategy	2015	suffolk.gov.uk/assets/planning-waste-and-environment/suffolks-countryside-and-wildlife/Suffolks-Nature-Strategy-2015.pdf
Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies	2014	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/core-strategy/
Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2	2006	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/babergh-local-plan/
Babergh Green Infrastructure Framework	2012	midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/GIFramework-Aug2012.pdf

- 3.1.2. The Boxford NP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which provides significant emphasis on improving biodiversity and securing measurable net gains in development, alongside protection and conservation of designated sites and important species and habitats. This includes utilising a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure at the wider catchment or landscape scale. Support is given to establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures, particularly in consideration of climate change.
- 3.1.3. During the last decade, UK policy and guidance documents (such as Biodiversity 2020) have demonstrated a move from traditional approaches of protecting biodiversity, to a wider landscape approach of enhancing biodiversity, as part of the overall aims to halt biodiversity loss.
- 3.1.4. The 25 Year Environment Plan places emphasis on improvements to the natural environment; identifying the need to ‘replenish depleted soil, plant trees, support wetlands and peatlands, rid seas and rivers of rubbish, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of pollutants, develop cleaner, sustainable energy and protect threatened species and habitats’. Working at a landscape scale transformation is expected to connect habitats into larger corridors for wildlife.
- 3.1.5. The emerging Environment Bill will provide further provisions in relation to biodiversity when granted royal assent. The Bill will set parameters for biodiversity gain as a condition of planning permission, as well as biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. The Bill identifies a general duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Local nature recovery strategies will identify biodiversity priorities for the strategy area as well as a local habitat map. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are or could become of importance for biodiversity.
- 3.1.6. The Suffolk Local Biodiversity Action Plan sets out a strategy to protect and enhance biodiversity in the region. It identifies and seeks to protect key habitats and species. The Suffolk’s Nature Strategy sets out a vision for the natural environment in the county and a number of priorities, recommendations and actions for the environment, economic growth and health and wellbeing in relation to the natural environment.
- 3.1.7. The Boxford NP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the NP area which contain policies directly relating to biodiversity and geodiversity.

3.2 Baseline Information

Summary of current baseline

- 3.2.1. Babergh district supports a range of wildlife species and habitats. A number of these are protected sites; the designation of which helps to preserve the biodiversity and the character of these areas. Biodiversity designations in and around the NP area are set out and illustrated in Figure 3.1.
- 3.2.2. There are over 4,100 Sites of Specific Scientific Importance (SSSI) in England, which cover around 8% of the country’s land area. SSSIs are recognised as the country’s very best wildlife and geological sites.

- 3.2.3. There are no SSSIs within the NP area. However, the NP area is in proximity to a number of SSSIs, with potential for growth and development in the Plan area to have effects. The Edwardstone Woods SSSI is approximately 1.1km to the north west of the Boxford village built-up area. The other nearby SSSIs of relevance include Groton Wood SSSI to the north east and Cattawade Marshes SSSI to the south east.
- 3.2.4. The Edwardstone Woods SSSI comprises an inter-related diverse group of ancient woods which form a transition from mainly ash-maple-hazel woods of mid Suffolk to the lime of south Suffolk and includes areas of hornbeam. The woodland structure is predominantly coppice-with-standards, with the rides supporting a diverse ground flora dominated by bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* with bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*.
- 3.2.5. Table 3.2 below shows the condition of nearby SSSIs in comparison to national average. The Edwardstone Woods SSSI consists of 5 units. At the time of the last survey in 2014 and 2009, all units were classified as 'unfavourable recovering' and considered to be at high risk.

Table 3.2: SSSI condition (Source: Natural England⁵)

Area	% area meeting PSA target	% area favourable	% area unfavourable recovering	% area unfavourable no change	% area unfavourable declining	% area destroyed / part destroyed
Edwardstone Woods SSSI	100	0	100	0	0	0
Groton Wood SSSI	100	100	0	0	0	0
Cattawade Marshes SSSI	100	53.77	46.23	0	0	0
England	90.37	38.12	52.25	5.15	4.14	0.05

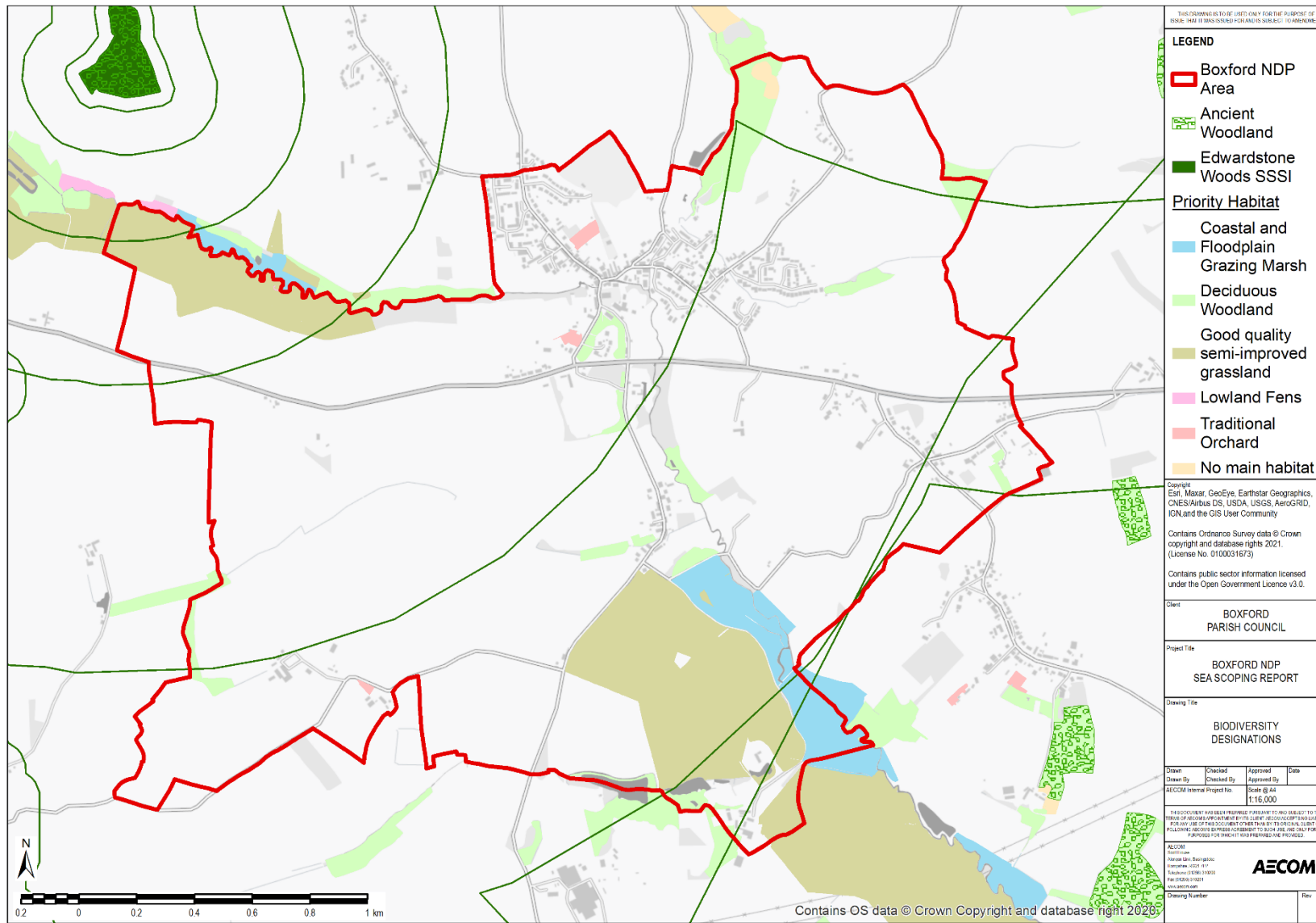
3.2.6. With SSSIs being fairly close to the NP area, depending on the proximity and the scale of development, consultation with Natural England may be required on the likely risks of development. However, with the exception of small areas to the north west and south east which do not relate to the built extent of Boxford village, residential development in the NP area does not require consultation.

3.2.7. There is a total of 225 National Nature Reserves (NNRs) across England. Their purpose is to help manage habitats, species, and significant geology. Most reserves also offer the opportunity for the public to experience England's national heritage. There are no NNRs within the NP area or within a 15km radius. There are also no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), possible SPAs, Ramsar within or in proximity to the NP area.

⁵ Information in relation to the condition of SSSIs throughout the area has been taken from the Natural England website. Accessed from <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/ssi/default.aspx>

3.2.8. Within the NP area itself, the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers the area to the south east (explored further under the 'landscape' theme). The NP area also contains the Primrose Wood County Wildlife Site and Priority Habitats consisting of: Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh; Deciduous Woodland; Good quality semi-improved grassland; Lowland Fens; Traditional Orchards; and [other] no main habitat areas. The spatial context of these habitats is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Biodiversity Designations in and nearby the NP area



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LEGEND

- Boxford NDP Area
- Ancient Woodland
- Edwardstone Woods SSSI
- Priority Habitat**
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Deciduous Woodland
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland Fens
- Traditional Orchard
- No main habitat

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Client
BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Project Title
BOXFORD NDP SEA SCOPING REPORT

Drawing Title
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Summary of future baseline

- 3.2.9. Increased development in the NP area will place increased pressure on habitats and species including areas of biodiversity value due to land take for development and an increase in population. Land take for development may include a loss of habitats and impacts on ecological networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. This has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.
- 3.2.10. An increase in population is likely to lead to an increase in leisure and recreational pressure and increased demand for natural resources such as water. New development may lead to an increase in disturbance through human activity, loss of habitat, increased predation (e.g. from domestic pets), atmospheric, land and water-based pollution.
- 3.2.11. Atmospheric pollution (such as acid precipitation and nitrogen deposition) and increased flood risk that may arise as a result of climate change, could also pose a risk to the habitats and species present within the NP area.
- 3.2.12. On the contrary, habitats and species are likely to continue to be afforded protection through higher level planning policy and whilst these areas face increasing pressures from future development, planning policy should safeguard the most valued areas and protect ecological networks.

3.3 Key headline issues

3.3.1. The key issues are as follows:

- The Edwardstone Woods, Groton Wood and Cattawade Marshes SSSIs are in close proximity to the NP area.
- There are no NNR, SACs, SPAs, pSPAs or Ramsar sites within or in the vicinity of the NP area.
- The NP area contains Priority Habitat areas of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh; Deciduous Woodland; Good quality semi-improved grassland; Lowland Fens; Traditional Orchards; and no main habitat areas.
- There is potential for future development and climate change to have adverse effects on habitats and species, although they are likely to continue to be afforded protection through existing planning policy.

3.4 Scoping outcome

- 3.4.1. The SEA topic 'biodiversity' has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA.
- 3.4.2. There is potential for localised effects at sites that could be identified for development. It will also be important to ensure that there are no significant effects upon SSSIs and other habitats within and in proximity to the NP area.
- 3.4.3. The NP presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species and designated sites within and in proximity to the area at an early stage of planning for future growth. The Plan further presents opportunities to coordinate new development to ensure growth enhances ecological networks across the area and supports ecological connectivity with SSSIs, priority habitats and other habitats including green spaces. It will also be important to ensure that species do not rely upon habitats outside of designated habitat areas.

3.5 What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the biodiversity SEA theme?

- 3.5.1. The SEA topic 'biodiversity' has been scoped in for further SEA. Table 3.3 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan and its proposals in relation to this theme.

Table 3.3: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Biodiversity

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Protect, maintain and enhance the quality, function and connectivity of biodiversity habitats and species; achieving a net environmental gain and stronger ecological networks.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid impacts on the Edwardstone Woods, Groton Wood and Cattawade Marshes SSSIs? • Protect and where possible enhance Priority Habitats and other habitats and species? • Support connections between habitats within and beyond the NP area? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the NP area to the effects of climate change?

4. Climate change and flood risk

Focus of theme:

This theme focuses on activities in the NP area that contribute to climate change and climate change mitigation, as well as the effects of climate change, including flood risk, and climate change adaptation.

4.1 Policy Context

4.1.1. Table 4.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 4.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021	gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
Clean Air Strategy	2019	gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019
Clean Growth Strategy	2017	gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment	2017	theccc.org.uk/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017/
Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge	2020	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/932122/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf
UK (second) National Adaptation Programme 2018 to 2023	2018	gov.uk/government/publications/climate-change-second-national-adaptation-programme-2018-to-2023
National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy	2020	gov.uk/government/publications/national-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-strategy-for-england--2
The National Design Guide	2021	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962113/National_design_guide.pdf
Summary of Climate Change Risks for England Report	2017	theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/UK-CCRA-2017-England-National-Summary-1.pdf
Anglian Water Resources Management Plan 2019	2019	www.anglianwater.co.uk/about-us/our-strategies-and-plans/water-resources-management-plan/

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
Anglian Water's Climate Change Adaptation Report 2020	2020	anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/in-the-community/climate-change-adaptation-report-2020.pdf
The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan	2021	greensuffolk.org/app/uploads/2021/07/Suffolk-Climate-Emergency-Plan.pdf
Suffolk Climate Action Plan 2	2012	greensuffolk.org/app/uploads/2021/05/Suffolk-Climate-Action-Plan-2-FINAL.pdf
Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies	2014	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/core-strategy/
Boxford Outline Benefit Assessment Report	2020	greensuffolk.org/flooding/surface-water-management-plans/

- 4.1.2. The Boxford NP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which requires proactive planning to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and deliver long-term resilience, including through reuse, regeneration and conversion.
- 4.1.3. The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the 25-year Environment Plan are a suite of documents which seek to progress the government's commitment under the UK Climate Change Act to becoming net zero by 2050. The documents set out detailed proposals on how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution, whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25-year Environment Plan, which further seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. The documents also interlink with the government's commitment to decarbonising transport, a recognised challenge that needs more work in a timely manner if government are to achieve net zero targets. Furthermore, the decarbonisation plan recognises the twinned need to undertake action to adapt the transport sector and increase resilience to climate change risks; and this challenge is more directly addressed through the UK's National Adaptation Programme
- 4.1.4. The Anglian Water's Resource Management and Climate Change Adaption reports set out the water resource challenges being faced in the region including in relation to water scarcity, climate change vulnerability, national environment and population growth. These reports further outline strategies to address identified challenges.

- 4.1.5. The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan sets out a number of goals and priority actions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. The Suffolk Climate Action Plan sets out the ambition to reduce carbon emissions by 60% by 2025, alongside strategies for a “credible pathway” for achieving this.
- 4.1.6. The Boxford NP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan covering the area which contain policies relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation, including flood risk, green infrastructure development, resource efficiency, air quality, water quality, sustainable transport and accessibility.

4.2 Baseline Information

Summary of current baseline

- 4.2.1. In 2019, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council declared a climate emergency alongside other Suffolk local authorities and jointly committed under the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP) to be carbon neutral by 2030. In order to achieve this, the SCCP has produced a Climate Emergency Plan (2021) which sets out a number of goals and priority actions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. These goals and actions relate to community and other stakeholder action, transition towards sustainable homes, industrial and commercial energy use and clean regional energy generation.

Climate Change mitigation

- 4.2.2. In relation to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, source data shows that Babergh district has lower per capita emissions compared to the rest of the Suffolk region, but the decline in emissions since 2005 in comparison to England has been slower (Table 4.2). The highest contributors to GHG emissions in Babergh arise from the transport sector. Domestic emissions align closely with the regional and national estimates. The figures also show a trend of decreasing per capita emissions from all sources, with transport emissions plateauing.

Table 4.2: Per capita local CO² emission estimates; industry, domestic and transport sectors (kt CO²)⁶

	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Babergh								
Industrial & Commercial	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.2	1.7	1.6	1.4
Domestic	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.2	2.2	1.8	1.6	1.5
Transport	2.9	2.9	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.5
Total per capita	8.1	7.7	7.0	6.6	6.8	6.0	5.7	5.3

⁶ National Statistics UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2019
<https://data.gov.uk/dataset/723c243d-2f1a-4d27-8b61-cdb93e5b10ff/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2019>

Suffolk

Industrial & Commercial	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.3	2.0	2.0
Domestic	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.5	1.4
Transport	2.2	2.2	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.9
Total per capita	8.5	8.1	7.5	7.1	7.2	6.4	5.7	5.5

England

Industrial & Commercial	3.4	3.2	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.0	1.7	1.5
Domestic	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.4	1.4
Transport	2.3	2.2	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
Total per capita	8.6	8.2	7.1	6.6	6.7	5.8	5.2	4.9

4.2.3. Electric vehicles do not burn fuel and create almost no noise. They are battery powered and have the potential to be zero carbon-emission vehicles if powered by renewable electricity. As of April 2021, there were 19 public electric charging devices in Babergh district, 4 of which are rapid charging⁷, equating to 20.6 charging devices per 100,000 population. In Suffolk county, there were 207 electric charging devices. There are no electric charging devices within the NP area. However, there are fast and rapid charging devices in nearby Sudbury and Hadleigh.

4.2.4. In terms of renewable energy, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy publishes annual statistics on renewable energy generation, disaggregated by Local Authority⁸. The most recent data (2019) shows that Babergh has a total of 3,328 renewable energy (electricity) installations. These mainly consist of photovoltaics (3,319), but the borough also includes 5 onshore wind installations, 3 anaerobic digestion and 1 landfill gas installation.

Climate Change adaptation

4.2.5. Climate change projections for the United Kingdom published as part of the UKCP18⁹ programme provide the most up to date climate observations and probabilistic projections of climate change out to 2100. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

⁷ Department for Transport (2021) Electric vehicle charging device statistics: April 2021 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/electric-vehicle-charging-device-statistics-april-2021>

⁸ DBEIS (2020) Regional Renewable Statistics - Renewable electricity by local authority 2014 to 2019 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics>

⁹ Further information on the UKCP18 programme is available from: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/collaboration/ukcp>.

4.2.6. The effects of climate change for the East of England by 2050 in a 'medium emissions' scenario is projected to be as follows:

- An increase in winter mean temperature of 2.2 °C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.8 °C;
- A change in winter mean precipitation greater than +10% and summer mean precipitation greater than -10%.

4.2.7. These projected changes to the climate present the following potential risks for the East of England including the NP area:

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

Flood risk

4.2.8. Flood Zone 1 is defined as having a 'Low Probability' of flooding (from fluvial sources) and incorporates areas where the annual probability of flooding is lower than 0.1% (a 1 in 1000-year flood event). Flood Zone 2 is defined as having a 'Medium Probability' of flooding, with an annual probability of flooding between 0.1% and 1.0% for fluvial flooding (between a 1 in 1000 year and 1 in 100 year flood event) or 0.1% and 0.5% for tidal and coastal flooding (between a 1 in 1000-year and 1 in 100-year flood event). Flood Zone 3 is defined as having a 'High Probability' of flooding, with an annual probability of beyond 1.0% for fluvial floods and beyond 0.5% for tidal and coastal floods.

4.2.9. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, most of the NP area falls in Flood Zone 1, with the exception of linear areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 which align with and represent the flood risk from watercourses and waterbodies, mostly concentrated along the River Box.

4.2.10. Surface water flooding occurs when excess water runs off across the surface of the land. Several areas of high and medium surface water flood risk exist in the NP area broadly aligned to waterbodies. Outside of the broad floodplains of watercourses, lower risk areas predominantly affect road infrastructure. Otherwise, the NP area predominantly consists of areas of very low flood risk.

Figure 4.1: Fluvial flood risk in the NP area

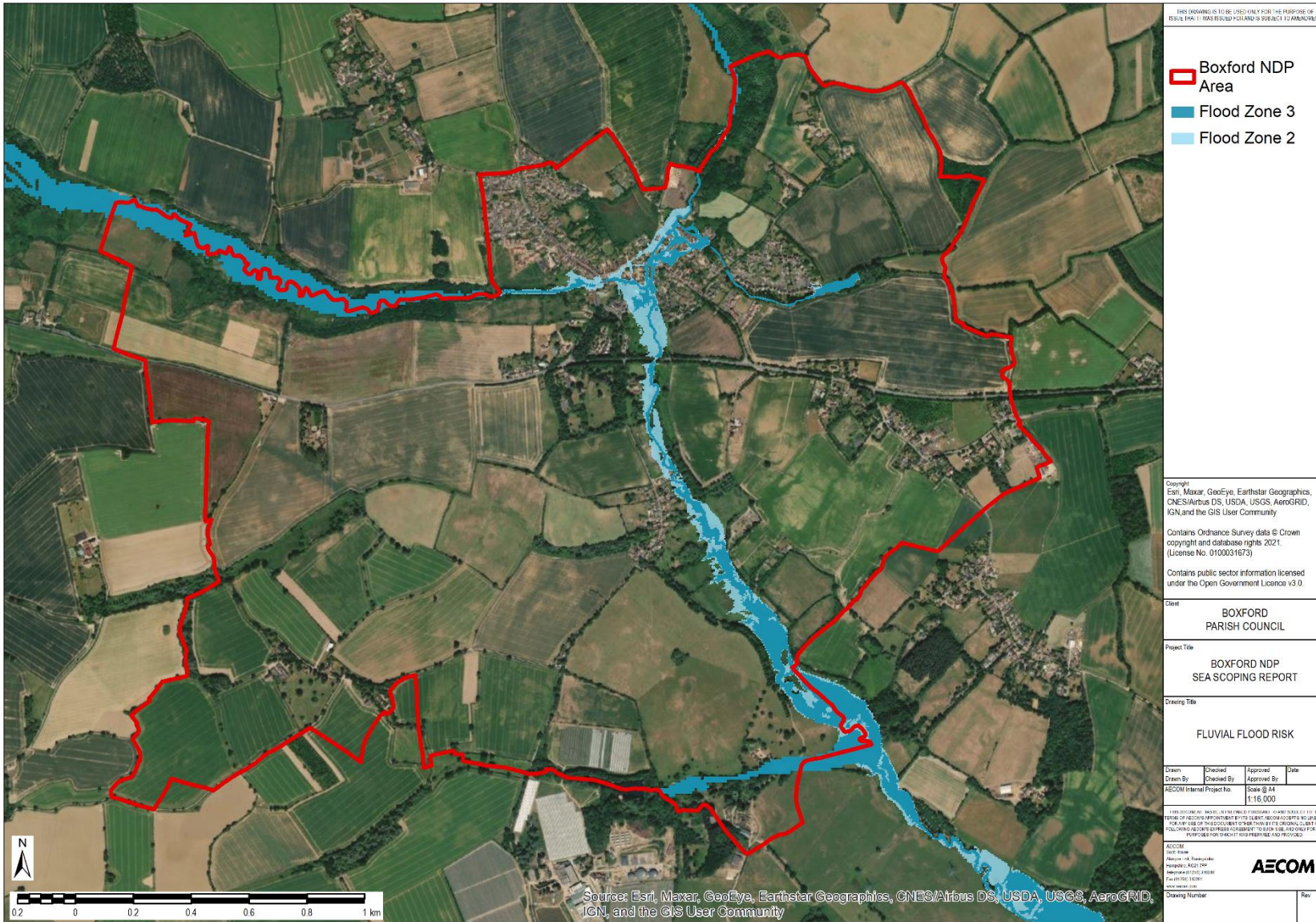
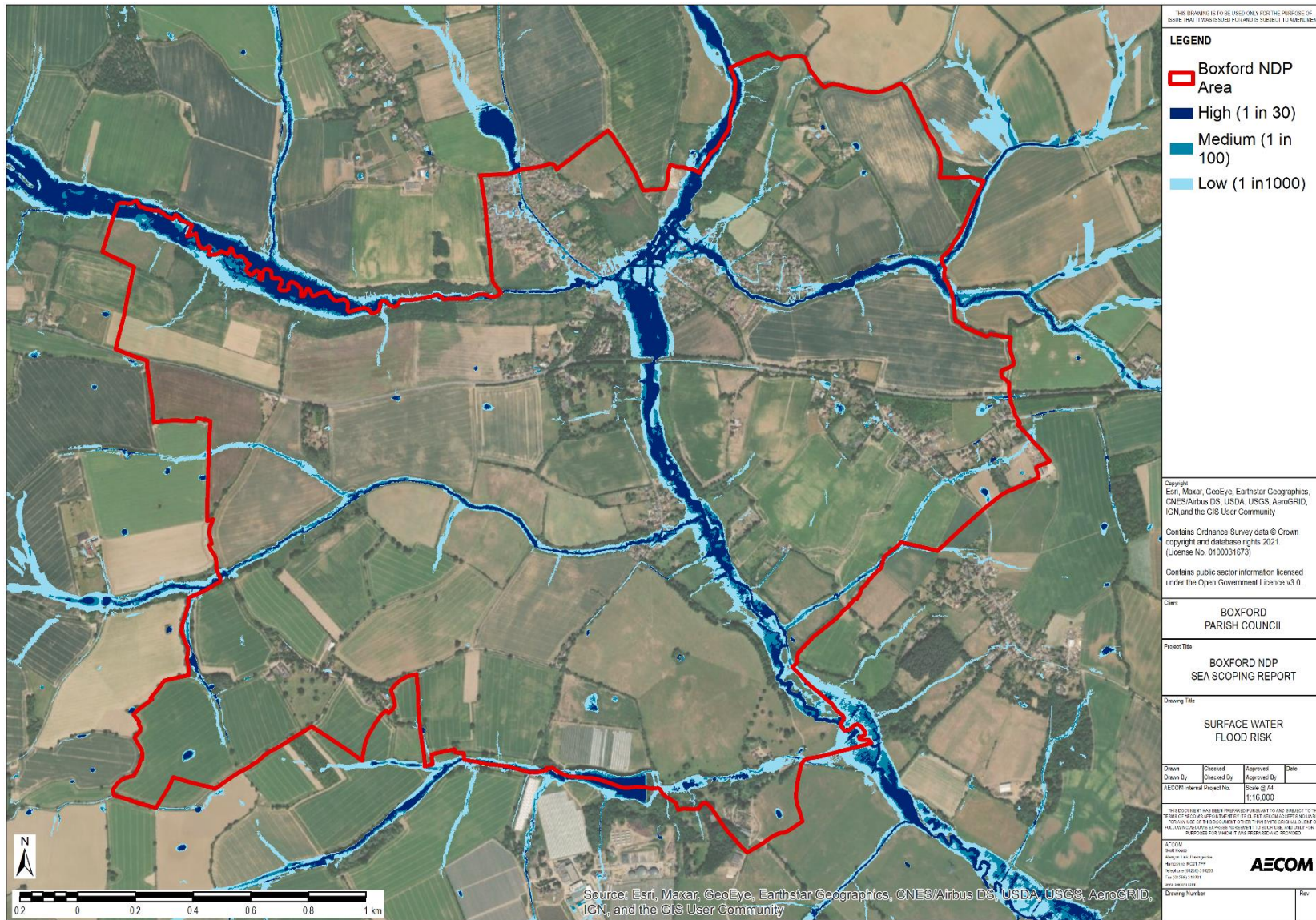


Figure 4.2: Surface water flood risk in the NP area



Summary of future baseline

- 4.2.11. There is potential for climate change to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the NP area. Such weather events are likely to increase the risks associated with climate change (including fluvial flooding) with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.
- 4.2.12. In terms of the exacerbation of climate change, GHG emissions could decrease through the adoption of energy efficient measures and cleaner energy (especially in transport, which is a key contributor, from the transition towards low and zero carbon emissions vehicles). However, increases in population and the number of households could undermine this slightly.
- 4.2.13. With regards to transport emissions, the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' Report (2018)¹⁰, it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade and aside from Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030.
- 4.2.14. Flood risk at any specific location may be influenced by local factors such as existing formal or informal flood defences and the capacity of existing drainage systems or road/rail culverts. The adoption of SUDs and introduction of Green Infrastructure within development schemes may reduce the speed of surface water run-off and have positive effects in terms of flood risk. Green Infrastructure presents opportunities to address multiple issues through multi-functional spaces.
- 4.2.15. Development in any instance has the potential to exacerbate flood risk within and in the vicinity of the NP area by increasing the volume of surface water run-off, or by introducing areas of hard standing which could increase the speed of surface water run-off. The risk would be most increased if development were to locate in proximity of Flood Zone 2 or 3 areas.

4.3 Key headline issues

4.3.1. The key issues are as follows:

- Average CO² emissions per capita are declining in Babergh district.
- Transport emissions are the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Babergh District, potentially reflecting the rural nature of much of the District and associated car dependency.
- There are areas at risk of flooding (fluvial and surface water flooding) within the NP area, principally along watercourses and waterbodies including River Box.

¹⁰ HM Gov (2018) The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739460/road-to-zero.pdf

- Development could exacerbate climate change and flooding from fluvial and non-fluvial sources. However, there are opportunities for mitigation.

4.4 Scoping outcome

- 4.4.1. With regards to climate change, it is unlikely that the NP will have significant effects on levels of GHG emissions given to the scale of growth likely to be involved. Furthermore, standards for energy and water efficiency are established nationally and at strategic level. The scope for the NP to deliver substantial improvements is therefore unlikely to be significant. Despite this, the context of a declared climate emergency is recognised, alongside an prevailing ambition to interlink carbon neutral objectives at the localised neighbourhood scale. On this basis, Climate change has been **SCOPED IN** of the SEA.
- 4.4.2. Parts of the NP area fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and further areas are at risk of surface water flooding, including large parts of Boxford village. Whilst any growth proposed is unlikely to be significant in scale and protection to mitigate flood risk is afforded through national and local planning policy, there is potential for development proposed through the NP to exacerbate flood risk. Therefore, flood risk (including future flood risk) and climate change adaptation has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA.

4.5 What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the climate change and flood risk SEA theme?

- 4.5.1. The SEA topic 'climate change and flood risk' has been scoped in to the SEA. Table 4.3 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 4.3: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Climate change and flood risk

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
At the neighbourhood scale, support wider district, national and global climate change initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and increase climate resilience.	<p>Will the option/ proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support 'walkable' neighbourhoods and active travel opportunities? • Reduce the number of journeys made? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria and resource efficiency standards? • Maximise opportunities for neighbourhood-scale renewable energy schemes and climate change mitigation interventions? • Support proposals for EV charging infrastructure?
Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the risks of climate change and flooding.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid development in areas at risk of fluvial flooding, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change? • Manage water run-off and drainage (where possible) through sustainable measures such as SuDS? • Reduce surface water runoff (both within the plan area and downstream)?

5. Health and wellbeing

Focus of theme:

This theme focuses on health indicators and deprivation, healthcare provision in the NP area and influences on resident health and wellbeing, including access to open space and the countryside.

5.1 Policy Context

5.1.1. Table 9.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 9.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to health and wellbeing

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021	gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On	2020	health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on
Suffolk Joint Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy Refresh 2019-2022	2019	suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/the-council-and-its-committees/health-wellbeing-board/JHWS-2019-2022.pdf
Suffolk Safety, Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 - 2022	2019	suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/our-aims-and-transformation-programmes/SHAW-Strategy-2019-22.pdf
Suffolk JSNA Annual Public Health Digital Report 2020	2020	healthysuffolk.org.uk/jsna/annual-public-health-report/aphr-2020-time-to-change
Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies	2014	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/core-strategy/
A Green Infrastructure Framework for Babergh District	2012	midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/GIFramework-Aug2012.pdf
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Communities Strategy	2019	babergh.gov.uk/assets/Communities/Communities-Strategy/Communities-Strategy-2019.pdf

- 5.1.2. The Boxford NP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to enable and support healthy lifestyles through provision of appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities.
- 5.1.3. This includes green infrastructure, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling. The NPPF recognises the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity which contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure is further reiterated through the 25-year Environment Plan.
- 5.1.4. The 2020 Health Equity in England report identifies that the health gap between less and more deprived areas has grown in the last decade, where more people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health, and where improvements to life expectancy have stalled, or even declined for the poorest 10% of women.
- 5.1.5. The Boxford NP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan covering the area, which contain policies directly relating to access to healthcare, green infrastructure and open spaces.
- 5.1.6. The Suffolk Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy Refresh, the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Communities Strategy and other county and district strategies identify local health challenges and disparities whilst recognising the role that leisure opportunities and other factors play in contributing to a wider range of health determinants.

5.2 Baseline Information

Summary of current baseline

Health indicators

- 5.2.1. According to the Babergh Health Profile 2019¹¹, the health of people in the district is varied when compared to the England average. Variations include:
- The life expectancy for both males and females and the under 75 mortality rates is better than the regional and significantly better than the England average.
 - Life expectancy is 6.5 years lower for men and 4.3 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Babergh than in the least deprived areas.
 - In School Year 6, 16.4% (143) of children are classified as obese, which is better than the regional (18%) and England (20.2%) averages. In the contrary, levels of GCSE attainment (average attainment 8 score) are worse than the national average.
 - The percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese (62.2%) is similar to regional (62.1%) and England (62%) average.

¹¹ Public Health England (2019) Broxtowe Local Authority Health Profile 2019 [online] available at: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles>

- The rate of alcohol-related harm hospital admissions are significantly lower than the regional and national averages. The rates of new sexually transmitted infections and new cases of tuberculosis are also significantly lower than the regional and national average.
- The rates of violent crime (hospital admissions for violence), under 75 mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases and under 75 mortality rate from cancer are significantly better than the regional and England average.
- Babergh has a significantly higher rate of hospital admissions as a result of intentional self-harm and a lower estimated diabetes diagnostic rate.

5.2.2. The closest hospital, Colchester Hospital, is located approximately 10 miles south of Boxford village and includes A&E services. There is also a medical centre, The Mill Surgery, located in the NP area. Health and wellbeing facilities within the NP area are illustrated in Figure 5.1.

5.2.3. Access to open space and green infrastructure is widely recognised to have a positive effect on health by encouraging and facilitating outdoor activity. Boxford includes several playing fields, open spaces and recreational facilities.

Figure 5.1: Key Health and Community Facilities



Deprivation

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

- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work.
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness / disability, or caring responsibilities.
- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the population.
- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, including the quality of housing stock, air quality and road traffic incidents.

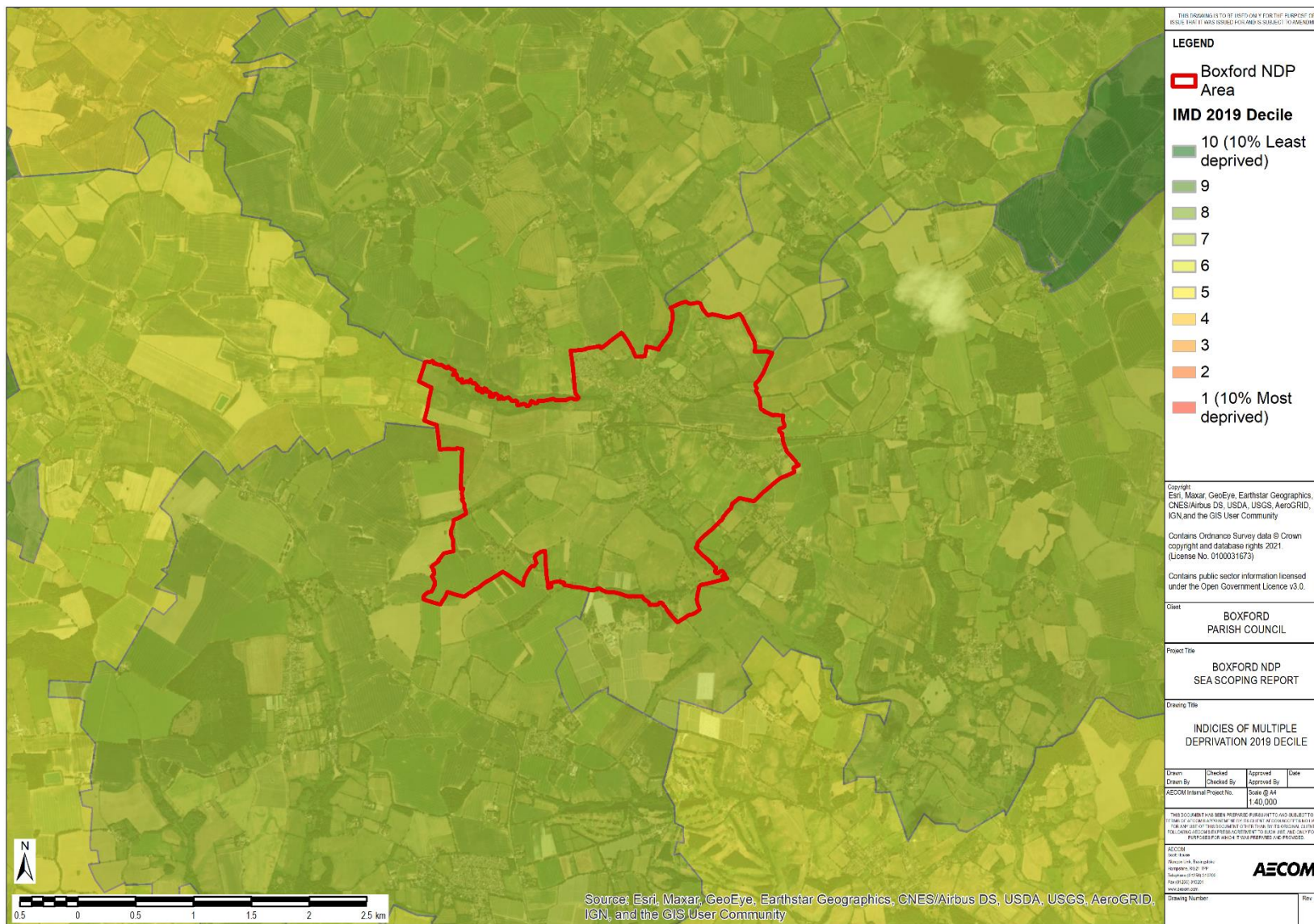
Two indices, subsets of the Income deprivation domain, are also included:

- **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index:** The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
- **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index:** The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

5.2.5. As illustrated in Figure 5.2 below, the NP area and wider area falls within the least deprived areas in England, with the whole of Boxford falling within the 70% least deprived areas.

5.2.6. As there is a strong correlation between deprivation and health, the low levels of deprivation across the NP area corroborates the findings of the Health Profiles and suggests a higher than average level of health and wellbeing for most people.

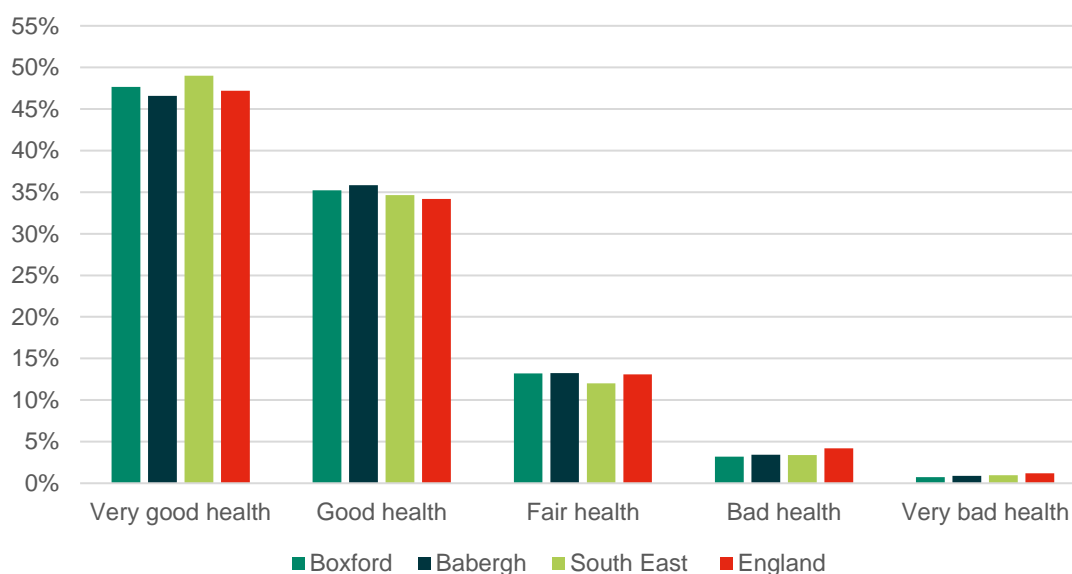
Figure 5.2: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 in the NP area



5.2.7. A self-assessment of health by residents in the NP area indicates that most residents in the NP area consider themselves to be in very good health (47.7%), followed by good health (35.2%), and that only 4.3% of residents consider their health to be bad or very bad.

5.2.8. These trends are similar to the Babergh district and national patterns with the distinction being that a lower proportion of people in the NP area consider themselves to be of poor and very poor health when compared to the national percentage. This aligns with other health indicators which suggest a higher than average level of health and wellbeing.

Figure 5.3: Residents General Health (Census 2011: KS301EW)



Summary of future baseline

5.2.9. It is likely that with increased population growth there will be a higher demand for health, fitness and leisure facilities and open space provision within and nearby the NP area. This could support additional facilities but could equally add further strain to existing facilities and open spaces in the local area.

5.3 Key headline issues

5.3.1. The key issues are as follows:

- Babergh district has a broadly healthy population with higher than national average life expectancy.
- The NP area has lower than average levels of deprivation when compared to areas nationally.
- There are several health and recreational facilities and open spaces within the NP area.
- Increased population growth will require additional provision for health and recreational facilities. Additional provision could be delivered through developer contributions.

5.4 Scoping outcome

- 5.4.1. The SEA topic 'health and wellbeing' has been **SCOPED IN** of the SEA.
- 5.4.2. The NP proposes to allocate sites for housing which would increase demand for local health and recreational facilities. The NP area has relatively good provision of health, wellbeing and recreational facilities but there are opportunities for further enhancement through the NP from further protection to existing and improved provision and accessibility to existing and new provision. As such the SEA could help to address the extent to which improvements could be made (as well as the location).

5.5 What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the health and Wellbeing SEA theme?

- 5.5.1. The SEA topic 'health and wellbeing' has been scoped in for further SEA. Table 5.2 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 5.2: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Health and Wellbeing

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Protect and improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Boxford by enhancing the quality and accessibility to open space and facilities for recreation and health.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote accessibility and availability to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all community groups? Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards? Promote healthy and active lifestyles? Improve access to the countryside for recreational use?

6. Historic environment

Focus of theme:

This theme focuses on designated and non-designated heritage assets and features (including archaeology) and their setting.

6.1 Policy Context

6.1.1. Table 5.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 5.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to historic environment

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021	www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
The National Design Guide	2021	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962113/National design guide.pdf
Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management	2019	historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/
Historic England Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets	2017	historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/
Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	2016	historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/
Historic England Advice Note 11: Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment	2018	historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment	2018	https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base/current-evidence/bmsdc-heritage-and-settlement-sensitivity-assessment/
Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies	2014	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/core-strategy/

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
Boxford Design Guidelines and Codes	2021	boxfordsuffolk.com/ files/NP/BoxfordDesignCode.pdf
Boxford Conservation Area Appraisal	2011	babergh.gov.uk/assets/Conservation-Area-Appraisals/Boxford2011CAA.pdf

- 6.1.2. The Boxford NP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions which are sympathetic to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change. Planning Practice Guidance expands on the NPPF recognising the proactive rather than passive nature of conservation.
- 6.1.3. The role of the historic environment, as part of healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes and cultural values, including settlement identity, is reiterated through the key messages of the 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide.
- 6.1.4. Historic England's Advice Notes provide further guidance in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of particular relevance for the Boxford NP is the emphasis on the importance of:
- Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin designations, as well as how settings and/ or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets;
 - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
 - Appropriate evidence gathering, including clearly identifying those issues that threaten an area or assets character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.
- 6.1.5. The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment was prepared as part of the joint evidence base of the emerging Joint Local Plan and provides a detailed appraisal of heritage assets across Babergh and Mid Suffolk, including a focussed appraisal of Boxford.
- 6.1.6. The Boxford NP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan which contains policies directly relating to the historic environment. The plan would also need to consider the character appraisal of the Boxford Conservation Area which identifies features of historic importance, issues and threats to its significance.

6.2 Baseline Information

Summary of current baseline

- 6.2.1. Boxford, under its original name of Koddenham, is mentioned in the 11th century Domesday book. The name is perpetuated in Coddenham Hall, a post-medieval farmhouse built near the site of an earlier Tudor mansion bearing the same name on the outskirts of the village. Otherwise, little is known about the history of Boxford during the following centuries other than the village being an important centre for the woollen industry between the 15th and 19th century.
- 6.2.2. The Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment 2018 (HSSA) and the Boxford Design Guide and Codes 2021 provide a detailed characterisation of Boxford village and the historic significance of the townscape and heritage assets.
- 6.2.3. The HSSA considers the village core, Sherbourne Street and Stone Street to be of high value with a large number of listed buildings and historic street pattern. These areas are considered to be susceptible to infill development, development which may cause coalescence and inappropriate alterations to buildings. On the contrary, the eastern and northern edges of Boxford village which comprise modern development are considered to be of lower value and to be less susceptible to development.

Designated heritage assets

- 6.2.4. The NP area has a rich historical environment, containing numerous features, with many recognised through designations, including the statutory listed buildings which are nationally designated, and a conservation area designated at the local level (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2).
- 6.2.5. Buildings that hold special historic or architectural interest for the community or provide insight into the history of an area are protected as statutory listed buildings by Historic England. Those with exceptional interest are categorised as Grade I (2.5% of all listed buildings), followed by Grade II* (5.8%) and Grade II which form the majority (91.7%) of all listed buildings.
- 6.2.6. The NP area includes 87 listed buildings, with approximately 63 listed buildings within the village built up area and 13 within a cluster along Stone Street. These consists of mostly Grade II listed buildings with the exception of Grade I listed Church of St Mary and the Grade II* listed Fleece Hotel.
- 6.2.7. The Church of St Mary is an early 15th century flint church with stone dressings. The west tower and north porch is considered to be 14th century and parts of a previous church known to be on the site in 1190 may also have been incorporated in the present building. The church was first listed in 1958 for its architectural, historical and topographical interest. To the north of the church, The Fleece Hotel is a timber-framed building probably of 16th century with an 18th century stucco front.
- 6.2.8. There are no scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens or registered battlefields within the NP area. The area is also not designated as a world heritage site.

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

Boxford Conservation Area

6.2.10. The Conservation Area was originally designated by West Suffolk Country Council in 1973 and inherited by Babergh District Council in 1974. The area covers the main historic built up area of Boxford and extends south along Stone Street. The conservation area contains 87 nationally listed buildings including the Grade I listed Church of St Mary and the Grade II* The Fleece Hotel.

6.2.11. The most recent Conservation Area appraisal was issued in 2011 and it identifies key historic features and seeks to preserve the historic character of the area. The appraisal sets out that the Conservation Area 'remains fairly intact and has suffered no major negative effects, but rather more of a gentle erosion at the edges'. The appraisal also sets out opportunities for enhancements including the use of sensitive materials for buildings and the undergrounding of infrastructure near St Mary's Church and Swan Street.

Locally identified building and features

6.2.12. There is no known list of locally identified or designated building or features of historic interest compiled by Babergh district council.

6.2.13. The NP Steering Group undertook a public consultation exercise in December 2020 and January 2021 to identify policy ideas. This process has identified the following local buildings and features of merit considered worthy of some form of local protection:

- The Sarsen boulders around the village;
- The Village 'Pump';
- The Village Pump House;
- The Village Sign; and
- Ashley House.

Heritage at Risk

6.2.14. Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights some of the Grade I, Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, wreck sites and registered parks and gardens in England deemed to be 'at risk'. There are no heritage assets identified in the Heritage at Risk Register within the NP area. However, as the Register does not cover all Grade II listed buildings, buildings in conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets, it is possible that some heritage assets may be at risk.

Archaeology and other historic records

6.2.15. Several archaeological studies and watching briefs have been undertaken within the NP area, with the following findings noted¹²:

- Little Orchard, Butchers Lane: two undated pits and residual found.
- Land at Rogers Farm: evaluation recorded two substantial Roman quarry pits and remains of medieval and post-medieval field systems.
- Land at Sand Hill: nine 30 metre trenches evacuated and two possible medieval ditches, and a post medieval colluvial layer were recorded.

6.2.16. A search of the Historic Environment Record has been undertaken by Suffolk County Council and the findings will help to inform the appraisal of the NP (and any reasonable alternatives). The Suffolk HER identifies 52 monuments in the NP area (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2).

¹² Source: Archaeology Data Service.

Figure 6.1: Historic Environment Designations in the Boxford NP area (includes Suffolk County Council HER data)

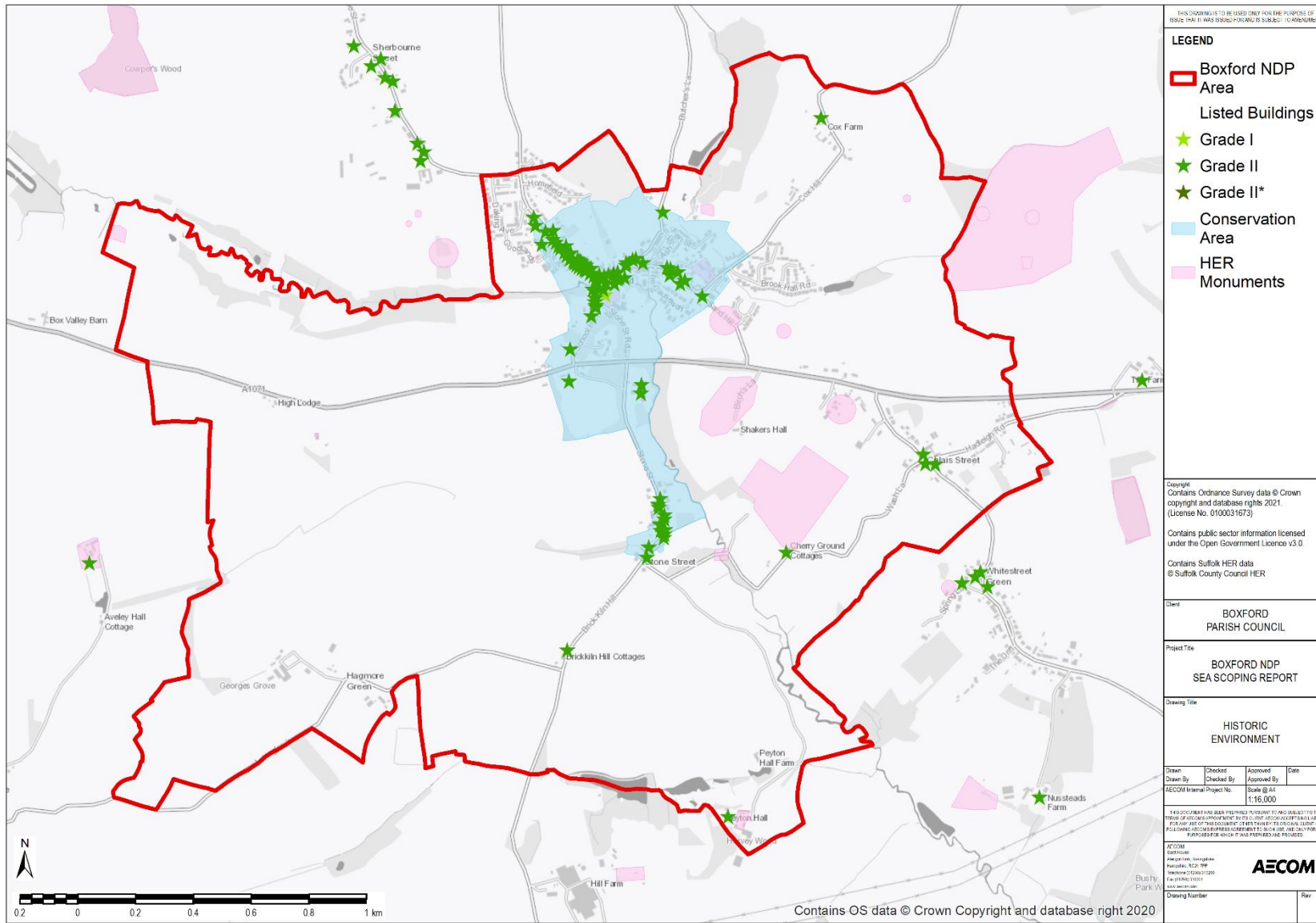
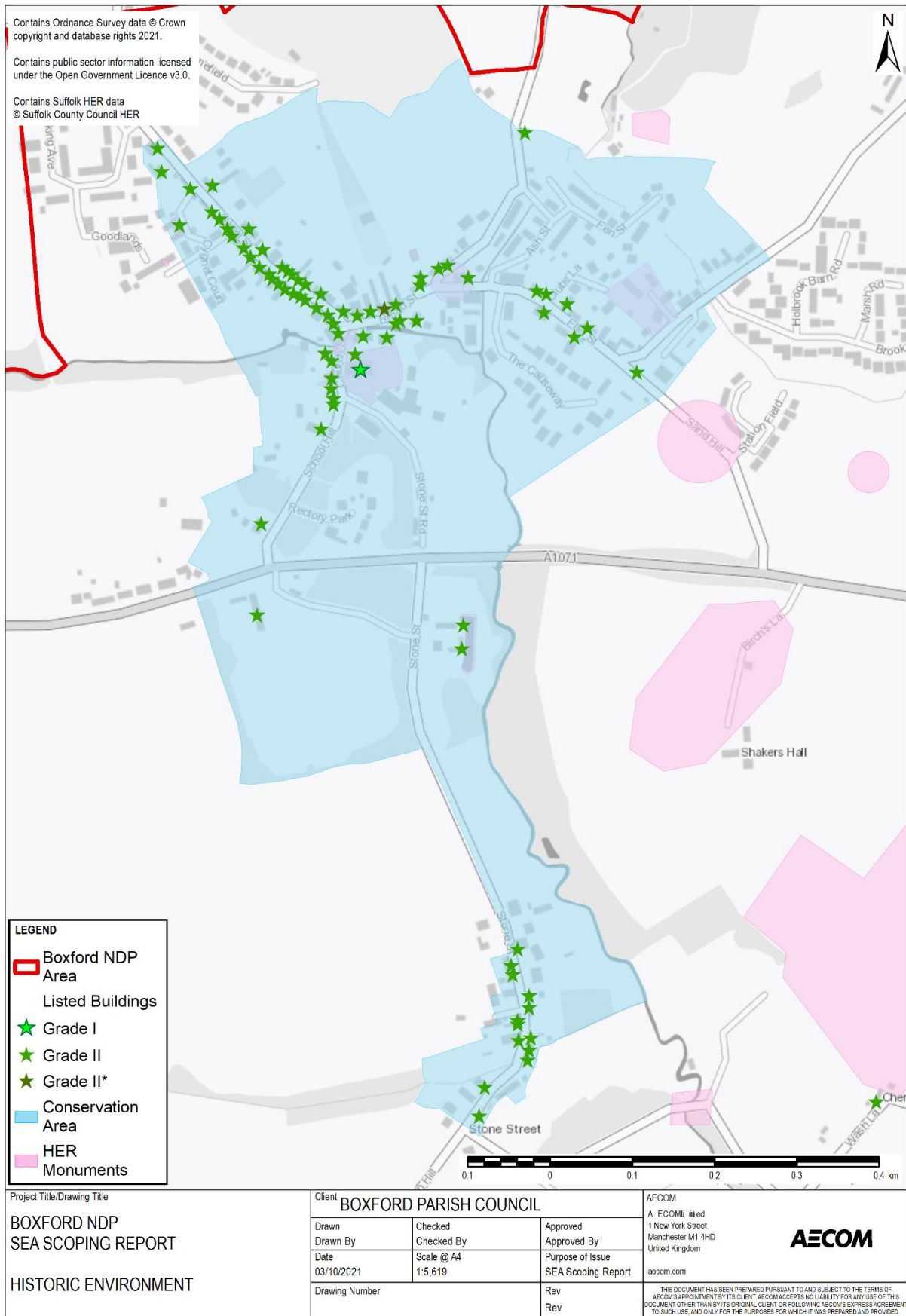


Figure 6.2: Historic Environment Designations in the Boxford NP area (includes Suffolk County Council HER data)



Summary of future baseline

- 6.2.17. The historic area of Boxford is identified as having a high susceptibility to change in terms of potential effects on its historic environment, meaning there could be a high potential for negative effects from inappropriate development.
- 6.2.18. New development in the NP area has the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of heritage assets and upon the character of the townscape. This may incur negative effects, such as the adoption of unsympathetic design and material choice, or positive effects through targeted redevelopment of derelict and underused land and buildings.
- 6.2.19. It should be noted that existing historic environment designations and historic environment based policies within the NPPF and the Development Plan will offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings.

6.3 Key headline issues

6.3.1. The key issues are as follows:

- The NP area has a rich historical environment and contains a high number of heritage assets and features including statutory listed buildings, a conservation area and locally identified heritage assets. These could be affected by policies and proposals within the plan (either positively or negatively).
- An unsensitive approach that does not seek to conserve and enhance heritage assets could result in the erosion of the townscape quality.

6.4 Scoping outcome

6.4.1. Historic environment has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA, as there is potential for significant effects upon the setting of heritage assets and the character of the built and natural environment.

6.5 What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the historic environment SEA theme?

6.5.1. The SEA topic 'historic environment' has been scoped in for further SEA. Table 6.2 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 6.2: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Historic Environment

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and setting of heritage assets and the built environment of Boxford.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Conserve and enhance the character of Boxford Conservation Area? • Conserve and enhance the special interest and character of locally important features and their settings? • Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of interest as listed in the Suffolk HER? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the NP area?

7. Land, soil, and water resources

Focus of theme:

This theme focuses on the quality of soil resources, the extent of mineral resources, water supply resources and water quality in the NP area.

7.1 Policy Context

7.1.1. Table 7.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 7.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to land, soil and water resources

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021	gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England	2009	gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england
Future Water: The government's water strategy for England	2011	gov.uk/government/publications/future-water-the-government-s-water-strategy-for-england
Water for Life	2011	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228861/8230.pdf
The National Waste Management Plan	2013	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265810/pb14100-waste-management-plan-20131213.pdf
Anglian Water Resources Management Plan 2019	2019	anglianwater.co.uk/about-us/our-strategies-and-plans/water-resources-management-plan/
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Water Cycle Study	2020	babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/WCS2020/BMSDC-WCS-Report-Oct20.pdf
Suffolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan	2020	suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/minerals-and-waste-policy/suffolk-minerals-and-waste-development-scheme/
Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies	2014	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/core-strategy/

- 7.1.2. The Boxford NP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to protect high quality soil resources and improve the water environment, recognising the wider benefits of natural capital are derived from ecosystem services. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the need to take account of the long-term implications of climate change and build resilience. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains.
- 7.1.3. The 25-year Environment Plan presents a focus for environmental improvement with aims to achieve clean air, clean and plentiful water and reduced risk from environmental hazards. This includes measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. This leads on from and supports the soil strategy for England (Safeguarding our soils) which seeks to ensure that all England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully by 2030, as well as the national water strategies which seek to secure sustainable and resilient water resources and improve the quality of waterbodies, and the national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a zero waste economy.
- 7.1.4. Anglian Water's WRMP further highlights the acute stresses that the catchment faces in the coming years and the challenges faced in terms of securing water resources into the future and managing the forecasted interlinked challenges of climate change, environmental protection, population growth and risk of drought. The plan outlines how Anglian Water aim to confront and manage these issues to ensure the timely provision of clean water to all residents over a 25-year period. The Water Cycle Study provide further insight to the constraints associated with planned development in terms of water supply capacity, wastewater capacity and associated environmental capacity.
- 7.1.5. The Boxford NP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Suffolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan, which form part of the Development Plan for the NP area. This identifies and safeguards sites and resources important to the continued sustainable management of mineral extractions and waste arisings.
- 7.1.6. Furthermore, the Boxford NP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan covering the NP area, which contain policies specifically relating to efficient land use, the sustainable use of resources, the efficient use of water, and protection for water quality.

7.2 Baseline Information

Summary of current baseline

Agricultural land

- 7.2.1. The Agricultural Land Classification classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality.
- 7.2.2. The NP area consists of mainly Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land (as illustrated in Figure 7.1 below). Although it is unclear whether the Grade 3 land is amongst the best and most versatile, most of the area does fall within this status.

Land contamination

- 7.2.3. The NP area does not have a history of heavy industrial land use and is considered unlikely to have areas of significant contamination based on past uses. This does not preclude the potential for localised soil or groundwater contamination to be present, particularly on land surrounding the built-up area or as a result of agricultural activities.

Mineral resources

- 7.2.4. Suffolk County Council's Minerals and Waste Local Plan identifies that the entire Plan area lies within a Minerals Consultation Area. Furthermore, the [17] Waste Water Treatment Plan (and associated Safeguard Area).

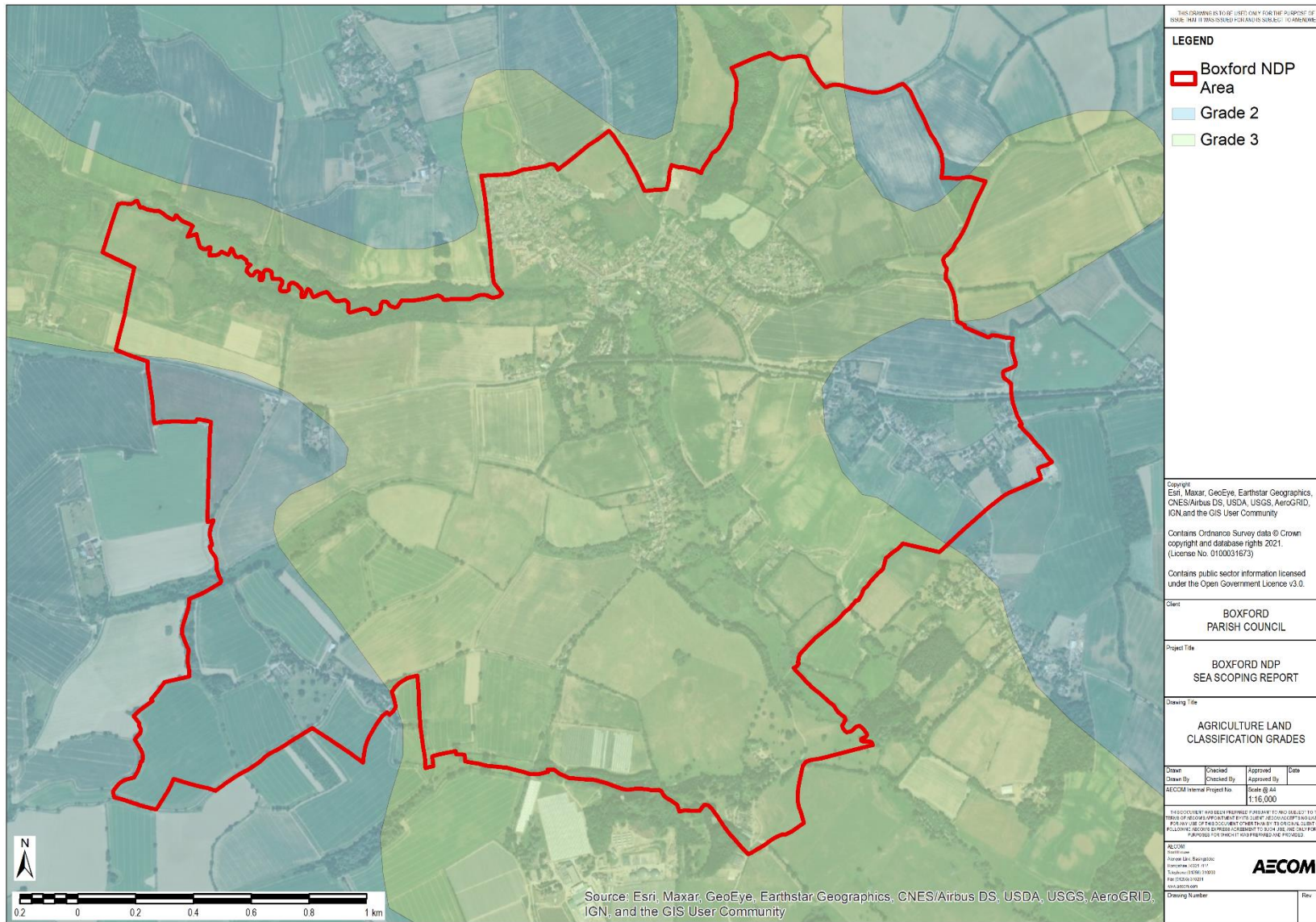
Water features and safeguarding

- 7.2.5. The NP area includes a number of water features. The River Box flows to the south of the NP area, intersecting the plan area from the north west before flowing through the village centre. The NP area also includes a number of unnamed streams and water bodies to the north east and along the southern boundary.
- 7.2.6. In terms of water quality, the River Box is considered in its latest assessment (2019) to be of moderate ecological quality (notably high-quality in terms of invertebrates, ammonia levels, and pH levels) supporting a good hydrological regime. The river has failed its chemical status however, due to levels of mercury and its compounds, and polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE) (as priority hazardous substances).
- 7.2.7. Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been designated by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. The zones show the risk of contamination from activities that might cause groundwater pollution in the area. There are no such zones designated by the Environment Agency in the NP area.
- 7.2.8. Drinking Water Safeguard Zones are designated areas in which the use of certain substances must be carefully managed to prevent the pollution of raw water sources that are used to provide drinking water. The NP area falls within a surface water Drinking Water Safeguard Zones to prevent pollution from Pesticide Clopyralid and Pesticide Metaldehyde.

7.2.9. Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas where groundwaters have nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or are thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. Action plans are required in these areas in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination, however, notably this relates predominantly to agricultural activities. The NP area falls within the following NVZ:

- Lower Stour surface water (424) NVZ; and
- Sandlings and Chelmsford ground water (78) NVZ.

Figure 7.1: Agricultural Land Classification



Summary of future baseline

- 7.2.10. With regard to agricultural land and soil resources, it is unlikely that large amounts of agricultural land would be lost to development, as there are restrictions to growth in the countryside. However, it might be possible that higher grades of land are affected with un-planned, ad hoc growth.
- 7.2.11. In terms of water quality, the safeguarding of areas with nitrate concentrations or considered at risk of nitrate contamination is likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses in the wider area. Water quality could also be affected by pollution incidents in the area, the presence of non-native species and physical modifications to water bodies.
- 7.2.12. Water availability in the area may be affected by increases in population and an increased occurrence of drought exacerbated by the effects of climate change, but this is likely to be negligible.
- 7.2.13. Development which requires sewage treatment may, if not designed correctly or located appropriately, result in an increased risk of pollution to groundwater and surface water. Development will therefore need to have due consideration to the capacity of sewage works.

7.3 Key headline issues

7.3.1. The key issues are as follows:

- The NP area consists of mainly Grade 3 agricultural land. However, there is a sizable area of Grade 2 land. It is unknown if the Grade 3 land is categorised as the best and most versatile.
- River Box flows to the south of the NP area after flowing through the village centre and intersects the area from the north west.
- The NP area falls within the Lower Stour surface water (424) NVZ and the Sandlings and Chelmsford ground water (78) NVZ. The NP area also falls within the Drinking Water Safeguard Zones (Surface Water).
- Development planned in the NP area would result in loss of soil resources and could adversely affect water quality. However, the NP is unlikely to significantly change the quantum or quality of soil resources or water quality.

7.4 Scoping outcome

- 7.4.1. The topic of 'land, soil and water resources' has been **SCOPED IN** of the SEA, as the NP is allocating land for development which could ultimately lead to effects on soil / agricultural land and water quality.
- 7.4.2. There are important soil resources in the NP area that ought to be protected. However, the total loss of land is unlikely to exceed 10ha (given the scale of growth likely to be involved in any site allocations), and so a significant effect upon soil resources is considered unlikely in any event. Nevertheless, the plan should aim to protect higher quality agricultural land and such principles will need to be addressed through the site assessment process.

7.5 What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the land, soil and water resources SEA theme?

7.5.1. The SEA topic 'land, soil, and water resources' has been scoped in for further SEA. Table 7.2 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 7.2: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Historic Environment

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.	<p>Will the option/ proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? • Avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of, or hindering of access to mineral resources in the Plan area? • Affect the integrity of waste infrastructure within and surrounding the Plan area? • Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant/ underutilised land?
Protect and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	<p>Will the option/ proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid impacts on water quality? • Support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? • Protect waterbodies from pollution, including NVZs? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling? • Improve the resilience of water supplies?

8. Landscape

Focus of theme:

This theme focuses on designated and protected landscapes within or near to the NP area, as well as landscape character, landscape quality and visual amenity.

8.1 Policy Context

8.1.1. Table 8.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 8.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to landscape

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021	gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
The National Design Guide	2021	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962113/National_design_guide.pdf
The Dedham Vale Landscape AONB (Countryside Commission)	1997	dedhamvalestourvalley.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Dedham-Vale-Landscape-Assessment.pdf
Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan 2016-2021	No date	dedhamvalestourvalley.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/AONB-DV-Management-Plan-2016-21.pdf
Dedham Vale AONB Stour Valley Project Area - State of the AONB Report 2018	2019	dedhamvalestourvalley.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Dedham-Vale-and-Stour-Valley-State-of-the-AONB-Report-2018.pdf
National Character Area Profiles	2014	gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles
Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment	2011	suffolklandscape.org.uk/
Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Landscape Character Guidance	2015	babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Joint-Landscape-Guidance-Aug-2015.pdf
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment	2018	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base/current-evidence/bmsdc-heritage-and-settlement-sensitivity-assessment/

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies	2014	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/core-strategy/
Babergh Local Plan (2006) saved policies	2006	babergh.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/saved-policies/

- 8.1.2. The Boxford NP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, as well as landscape character and scenic beauty. The NPPF recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the importance of designated biodiversity sites, habitats, woodland, historic features, agricultural land and cultural landscapes. The positive contribution that land remediation can make in terms of addressing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land is also recognised.
- 8.1.3. The 25-year Environment Plan and National Design Guide complement each other with their aims for a cleaner, greener country which puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats. Design is focused on beautiful, enduring and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality green open spaces.
- 8.1.4. Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan sets out a vision for the protected area and provides guidance on how the area should be managed. The State of the AONB report provides a detailed account on the condition of the AONB and provides a robust evidence base to inform Management Plan policies.
- 8.1.5. The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment identifies areas of distinct landscape character across the county. These areas are described in detail with regard to geology, topography, soils, biodiversity, woodland, human and historic influences, landform, land use and built form. It further sets out specific guidelines for the management of each of the landscape character areas presented. The Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment provides a detailed appraisal of townscape character and landscape qualities in Boxford and across the Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts.
- 8.1.6. The Boxford NP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan covering the NP area, which contains policies specifically relating to the preservation of Dedham AONB, valued landscapes, landscape character, settlement identity, green infrastructure, and design.

8.2 Baseline Information

Summary of current baseline

Landscape designations

- 8.2.1. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are nationally protected landscapes which are designated to ensure the natural beauty and special qualities of the area are conserved and enhanced for future generations.
- 8.2.2. The southern part of the NP area forms part of the Dedham Vale AONB. The spatial context of this area is illustrated in Figure 8.1. The Countryside Commission's Dedham Vale AONB report summarises the designated area as 'important because of its unspoilt rural character' and states that the area 'has remained remarkably free from the intrusion of modern development'.
- 8.2.3. The report further characterises the AONB as "*rich agricultural landscapes and woods are complemented by the consistent use of local building materials and colours in the villages and isolated cottages. The visual harmony gives the AONB its strong sense of unity, which is vital to its aesthetic appeal and sense of place. Within this overall character, the landscape is greatly enhanced by rich contrasts in scenery and characteristic details*".
- 8.2.4. A recent account on the condition of the Dedham AONB is provided in the State of the AONB report which identifies:
- Changes to the agricultural landscape character of the AONB have been minor in recent years, although changes to agri-environment schemes following Brexit will be a key force for change in the future.
 - The AONB is characterised by low levels of light pollution and dark night skies.
- 8.2.5. Most of the NP area also falls within the Local Plan Box Valley Special Landscape Area and accompanying Local Plan policies require development proposals to protect and enhance its intrinsic qualities. This designation will cease to exist following the formal adoption of the emerging Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan which is currently undergoing examination.

National landscape character

- 8.2.6. National Character Areas (NCAs) are landscape areas which share similar characteristics, following natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. Developed by Natural England, NCA profiles describe the natural and cultural features that shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character.
- 8.2.7. The NP area lies within the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA. The key characteristics of this area of particular relevance to the NP area include:
- The landscape is one of wooded arable countryside of gently undulating character.

- There is a network of species rich hedgerows, ancient woods and parklands, meadows with streams and rivers.
- Arable farming is a significant influence on the landscape, with traditional field patterns still evident in places alongside modern land management practices.

Regional and local landscape character

- 8.2.8. The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment and Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Landscape Character Guidance sets out that Boxford lies within three landscape typologies. The area along watercourses and covering the village comprises an area of 'Rolling valley farmlands'. A small area either side of the River Box in the south east of the NP area is identified as 'Valley meadowlands'. The remaining NP area comprises an area of 'Ancient rolling farmlands'. The spatial context of these landscape typologies is illustrated in Figure 8.2.
- 8.2.9. The Ancient rolling farmlands is characterised by a rolling arable landscape which is dissected widely, and sometimes deeply, by river valleys. The area comprises field patterns of ancient random enclosure and regular fields associated with areas of heathland enclosure. The area is also scattered with ancient woodland clusters containing a mix of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash and holly.
- 8.2.10. The Rolling valley farmlands character type consists of gentle valley sides with some complex and steep slopes, organic field patterns with distinct areas of regular field patterns and small ancient woodlands. The Valley meadowlands is characterised by flat landscapes consisting of grassland divided by a network of wet ditches.
- 8.2.11. The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment identifies Boxford as a linear settlement which falls within the valley and around the ford of River Box. The village is surrounded by several dispersed farmsteads and smaller linear settlements in an agricultural landscape.

Figure 8.1: National Character Areas and AONB covering the NP area

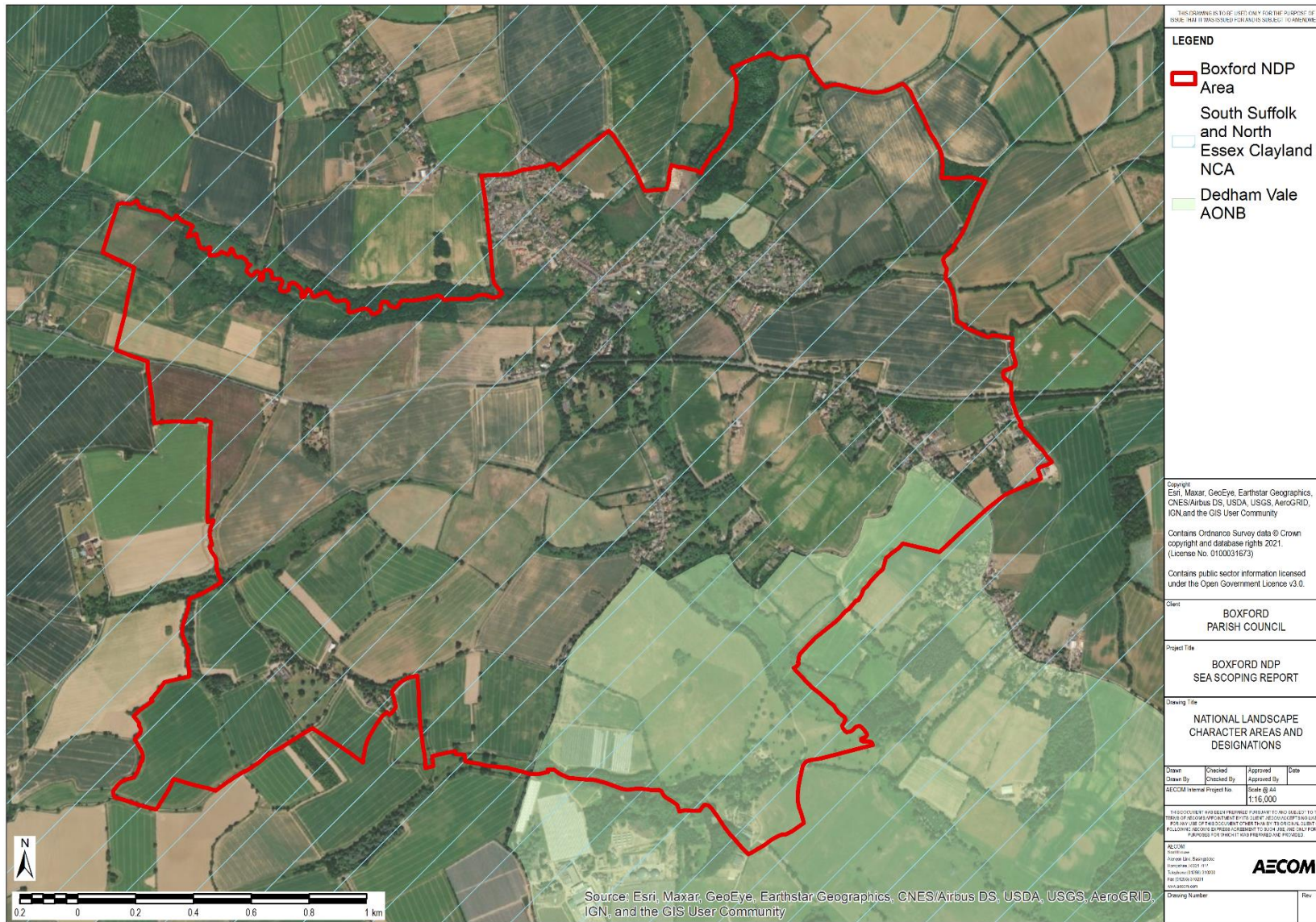
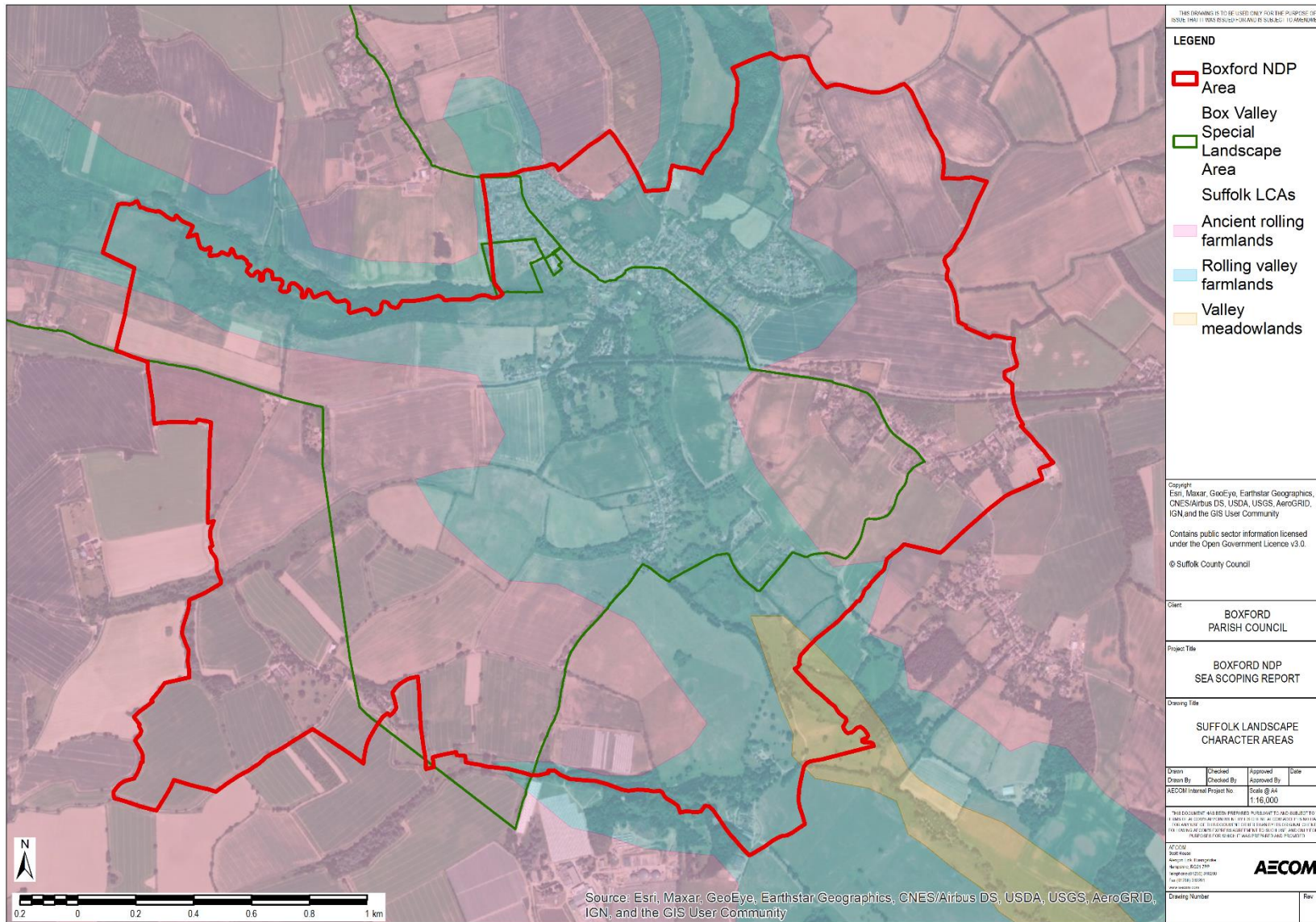


Figure 8.2: Suffolk Landscape Character Areas covering the NP area



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LEGEND

- Boxford NDP Area
- Box Valley Special Landscape Area
- Suffolk LCAs
 - Ancient rolling farmlands
 - Rolling valley farmlands
 - Valley meadowlands

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Project Title:
BOXFORD NDP SEA SCOPING REPORT

Drawing Title:
SUFFOLK LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

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Summary of future baseline

- 8.2.13. New development in the NP area has the potential to impact on the landscape setting and townscape character of Boxford. Depending on the scale and nature of development, a lack of vision and framework could result in the delivery of different development styles, layouts, and material choices. This could have a disruptive impact on the landscape through the lack of cohesive development.
- 8.2.14. However, national, and local planning policy offer some protection to landscape assets, character and features and their settings. There is also potential for the redevelopment of poor-quality sites to improve the character of the built environment, support the integration of new locally sensitive landscape features and enhance the setting of Boxford within the wider landscape.
- 8.2.15. Insensitive development could also result in the loss of landscape features and visual impact. In contrary, sensitive development presents an opportunity to enhance the existing townscape character of the NP area whilst respecting the key characteristics of the landscape.

8.3 Key headline issues

8.3.1. The key issues are as follows:

- The NP area mainly consists of gently rolling countryside with an organic field pattern.
- The southern part of the NP area falls within the Dedham Vale AONB.
- Development in the NP area has potential to cause harm or result in the loss of important landscape features.
- Existing national and local planning policy offer a degree of protection to landscape assets and their settings, but insensitive development could have a disruptive impact on landscape.

8.4 Scoping outcome

8.4.1. Landscape has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA as there is potential for significant effects upon the character of landscapes, which also contributes to the rural setting of the village.

8.5 What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the landscape SEA theme?

8.5.1. The SEA topic 'landscape' has been scoped in for further SEA. Table 8.2 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 8.2: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Landscape

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and better reveal the significance of Dedham Vale AONB? • Conserve, better reveal the significance and enhance landscape assets? • Contribute to better management of landscape assets? • Identify and protect/enhance features of local importance? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the surrounding landscape? • Improve linkages to open space and the countryside? • Seek to minimise a sense of coalescence between built-up areas?

9. Population and communities

Focus of theme:

This theme focuses on the demographics and households of the population and housing types, needs and affordability in the NP area.

9.1 Policy Context

9.1.1. Table 9.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 8.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to population and housing

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021	gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies	2014	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/core-strategy/
Ipswich and Waveney Housing Market Areas SHMA	2017	babergh.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base/current-evidence/shma/
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	2020	babergh.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base/current-evidence/shelaa/
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Homes and Housing Strategy 2019 - 2024	2019	babergh.gov.uk/assets/Housing-and-Homelessness/Housing-Strategy/Home-Housing-Strategy-Final-21032019-.pdf
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Communities Strategy	2019	babergh.gov.uk/assets/Communities/Communities-Strategy/Communities-Strategy-2019.pdf
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2024	2019	babergh.gov.uk/assets/Housing-and-Homelessness/Housing-Strategy/HRRSS-2019-2024-Final.pdf
Boxford Housing Needs Assessment	2020	boxfordsuffolk.com/_files/NP/BoxfordHousingNeedsAssessment.pdf

9.1.2. The Boxford NP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities, including health facilities, educational facilities and open space. The framework further seeks to protect settlement and community identities, Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities, in safe environments where crime and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life of residents.

- 9.1.3. The Boxford NP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan which contain policies specifically relating to housing, community services and facilities, accessibility and infrastructure requirements.
- 9.1.4. The housing, homelessness and community assessments and strategies each seek to support the appropriate delivery of housing and community infrastructure. The strategies recognise the importance of targeting resources at those most at risk/ most vulnerable and supporting all residents needs for affordable, safe and good quality housing in the right places. Furthermore, the strategies recognise the need to create choice in terms of securing a long-term stable home and create adaptable and accessible homes.

9.2 Baseline Information

Summary of current baseline

- 9.2.1. In 2020, the population of the NP area was estimated as 1,370, having grown by 12.2% since 2011 (1,221)¹³. In comparison, Babergh district has seen a 5.69% increase in population since 2011.
- 9.2.2. Table 9.2 shows the age structure of the local population in comparison with the district and national averages. Similar to Babergh district, the NP area has a notably higher proportion of people over 45 years old suggesting an elderly and ageing population. The proportion of people aged 0-14 years aligns with the national average, but Boxford has a considerably lower proportion of 15-24 and reasonably lower 25-44 year old population. This suggests a potential emigration of the young economically active aged population.

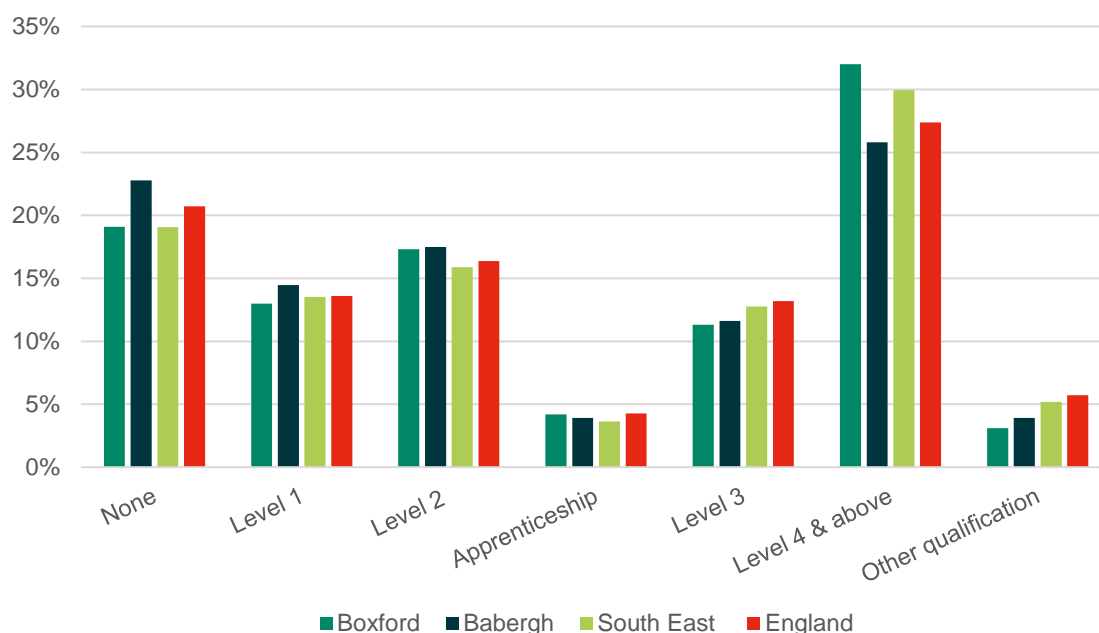
Table 9.2: Age Structure in 2020 (ONS Population Estimates) ¹⁴

	Boxford NP area	Babergh district	England
0-14	18.3%	15.6%	18.1%
15-24	8.1%	9.6%	11.6%
25-44	19.1%	19.6%	26.3%
45-64	28.6%	28.8%	25.7%
65-84	22.7%	22.8%	16.1%
85+	3.3%	3.7%	2.5%
Total population	1,370	92,735	56,550,000

- 9.2.3. In regard to education, as shown in Figure 9.1, 19.1% of the NP area residents have no qualifications and 13% have Level 1 qualifications such as 1-4 GCSEs. The majority of residents in the NP area have Level 4 and above qualifications such as a University degree (32%), which is notably higher than the district (25.8%) and national (27.4%) averages.

¹³ ONS Population Estimates 2020. Census 2011. Suffolk Observatory calculations.

¹⁴ ONS Population Estimates 2020. Suffolk Observatory calculations.

Figure 9.1: Highest level of qualification (Source: Census 2011)

9.2.4. With regards to housing delivery, Table 9.3 shows that between 2016 and 2020 there has been a total of 1,098 net housing completions in Babergh district. This equates to approximately 357 dwellings per annum, which is reasonably higher than the 325 dwellings requirement for this period in the Local Plan¹⁵. Since 2011, 2,527 dwellings have been delivered and 4,834 dwellings either have planning permission or are under construction. With a significant amount of housing in the pipeline and average completion rates since 2011 meeting and recently exceeding the housing requirement in the Local Plan, the 6,000 homes target for the period up to 2031 appears achievable.

9.2.5. In the contrary, a recalculation of housing need in Babergh using the recent government housing methodology calculates an annual housing need for the district of 416 dwellings¹⁶, and average net housing completions fall short of this requirement.

Table 9.3: Net Housing Completions in Babergh district (Source: Babergh District Council)

	2011/12	2013/14	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Completions (net)	259	291	157	226	331	579	293
Housing requirements¹	220	220	220	325	325	325	325
Supply	+39	+71	-63	-99	+6	+254	-32

¹ Babergh district housing requirement established in the Babergh Core Strategy, target of 220 dwellings per annum between 2011-2016 and 325 dwellings per annum from 2016 onwards.

¹⁵ Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Annual Monitoring Report 2019 - 2020.

¹⁶ Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Annual Monitoring Report 2019 - 2020.

9.2.6. With regards to housing tenure, the NP area has a higher number of owned households compared to the district average and the rest of England (see Table 9.4). Subsequently, there are fewer households which were classified under socially rented and private rented.

Table 9.4: Housing Tenure in 2011 (ONS Housing Tenure)

	Boxford NP area (numbers)	(%)	Babergh borough (%)	England (%)
All Categories	512	-	-	-
Owned (Total)	409	79.3%	71.9%	63.3%
Shared Ownership	1	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%
Socially Rented	58	11.2%	13.1%	17.7%
Private Rented	40	7.8%	12.6%	16.8%
Living Rent Free	8	1.6%	2%	1.3%

9.2.7. The average house price over a year period ending December 2020 in the NP and surrounding area (comprising the parishes of Boxford, Edwardstone, Groton, Milden and Lindsey) was £429,074, an 9.07% decrease from December 2019 (£471,896), but an 34.6% increase over a 10-year period (£318,748)¹⁷. As illustrated in Figure 9.2, the average house price is significantly higher than the district average and has followed a similar level of growth, although with greater fluctuations due to a lower number of total transactions. This broader pattern of house price growth also correlates with national growth in house prices.

9.2.8. The average house price in Babergh district over a year period ending December 2020 (£342,087) showed a 5.2% increase on December 2019 and a more modest but significant 39.5% increase since December 2010 (see Figure 9.2)¹⁸. The average house price in the district align closely with the national average.

9.2.9. The average detached house price in Babergh district over a year period ending December 2020 was £447,929, a 3% annual increase from £434,874. The average semi-detached house price over a year period ending December 2020 was £278,677, the average terrace was £233,915, and average flat or maisonette £184,334.

¹⁷ ONS HPSSA data and AECOM calculations.

¹⁸ HM Land Registry house price data.

Figure 9.2: Year ending average house price paid for all property types January 2000 to December 2020 (Source: ONS HPSSA and AECOM calculations)

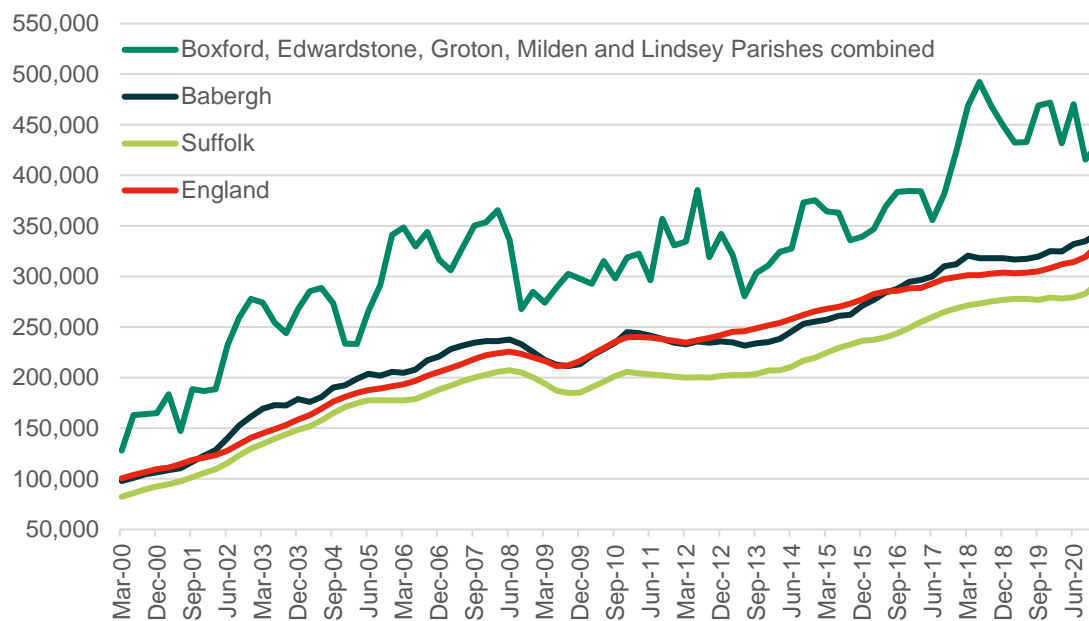
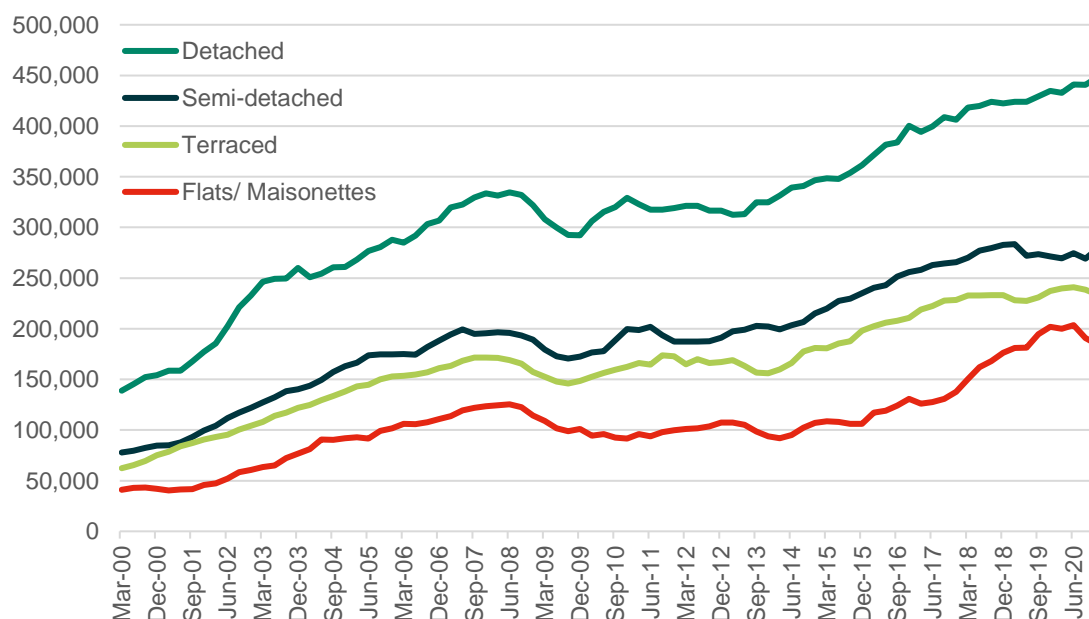


Figure 9.3: Average house prices breakdown by house type for Babergh district, January 2000 to December 2020 (Source: UK HPI)



Summary of future baseline

9.2.10. Population trends in the NP area indicate an elderly and aging population. This is evident through the higher than average proportion of people aged over 45 years. However, a higher than average proportion of people aged 14 and below also indicate a long-term growth of a working age population.

9.2.11. Considering the ongoing pandemic, homeworking is likely to become a more prevalent trend, and this is likely to alter the housing need, commuting patterns and access trends of residents into the future. Whilst uncertainty remains, the NP provides opportunities to guide development which accommodates for changing working patterns and lifestyles, and places greater emphasis on access to local services, facilities and employment options and strategic connectivity.

9.3 Key headline issues

9.3.1. The key issues are as follows:

- The population of the NP area has increased by 12.2% between 2011 and 2020 to 1,370 people.
- Net completion trends in Babergh district slightly exceed the housing target (325 dwellings per annum) set in the Local Plan.
- Average house prices in the NP area are significantly higher than the Babergh district and national average.
- The NP area is undergoing change due to the pandemic. This is likely to alter the local population and housing need.

9.4 Scoping outcome

9.4.1. The SEA topic 'population and housing' has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA, as the Plan will influence housing delivery and the delivery of other infrastructure and services that are required to deliver and sustain sustainable communities.

9.5 What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the population and communities SEA theme?

9.5.1. The SEA topic 'population and communities' has been scoped in for further SEA. Table 9.5 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 9.5: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Population and communities

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Support the creation of thriving communities while ensuring housing growth is aligned with the needs of all residents in the NP area and is supported by the appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of housing types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local need? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's changing needs? • Create sustainable new communities with good access to a range of local services and facilities?

10. Transportation and movement

Focus of theme:

This theme focuses on transport infrastructure, transport usage, traffic flows and congestion, and accessibility levels in the NP area.

10.1 Policy Context

10.1.1. Table 10.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 10.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021	www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead	2017	www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-investment-strategy
The Department for Transport’s Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy	2016	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512895/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy.pdf
Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge	2020	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/932122/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf
Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2031	2011	suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport-planning/transport-planning-strategy-and-plans/
Suffolk Rail Prospectus	2015	suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-transport-and-transport-planning/Suffolk-Rail-Prospectus.pdf
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan	2019	babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/BMSDC-IDP-July-2019-.pdf
Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies	2014	midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/babergh-district-council/core-strategy/

10.1.2. The Boxford NP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks the consideration of transport issues from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals to address any known issues and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport. Larger developments are expected to be delivered in areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.

- 10.1.3. National transport strategies set out investment priorities which ultimately all seek to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport networks, whilst reducing impacts on the natural environment (including through decarbonisation). Furthermore, they place great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. This includes investment in new and upgraded infrastructure, changing perceptions, and increasing safety.
- 10.1.4. The Local Transport Plan and other regional transport strategies sets out priorities and strategies for the improvement of transport infrastructure throughout Suffolk. These ultimately complement the aims of the national strategies discussed above and include supporting economic growth, supporting a low carbon and sustainable transport network, improving access to jobs and services, and promoting healthier travel opportunities. Alongside the transport and access policies of the Local Plans covering the NP area, the Boxford NP will be required to be in general conformity with the strategic policy aims.

10.2 Baseline Information

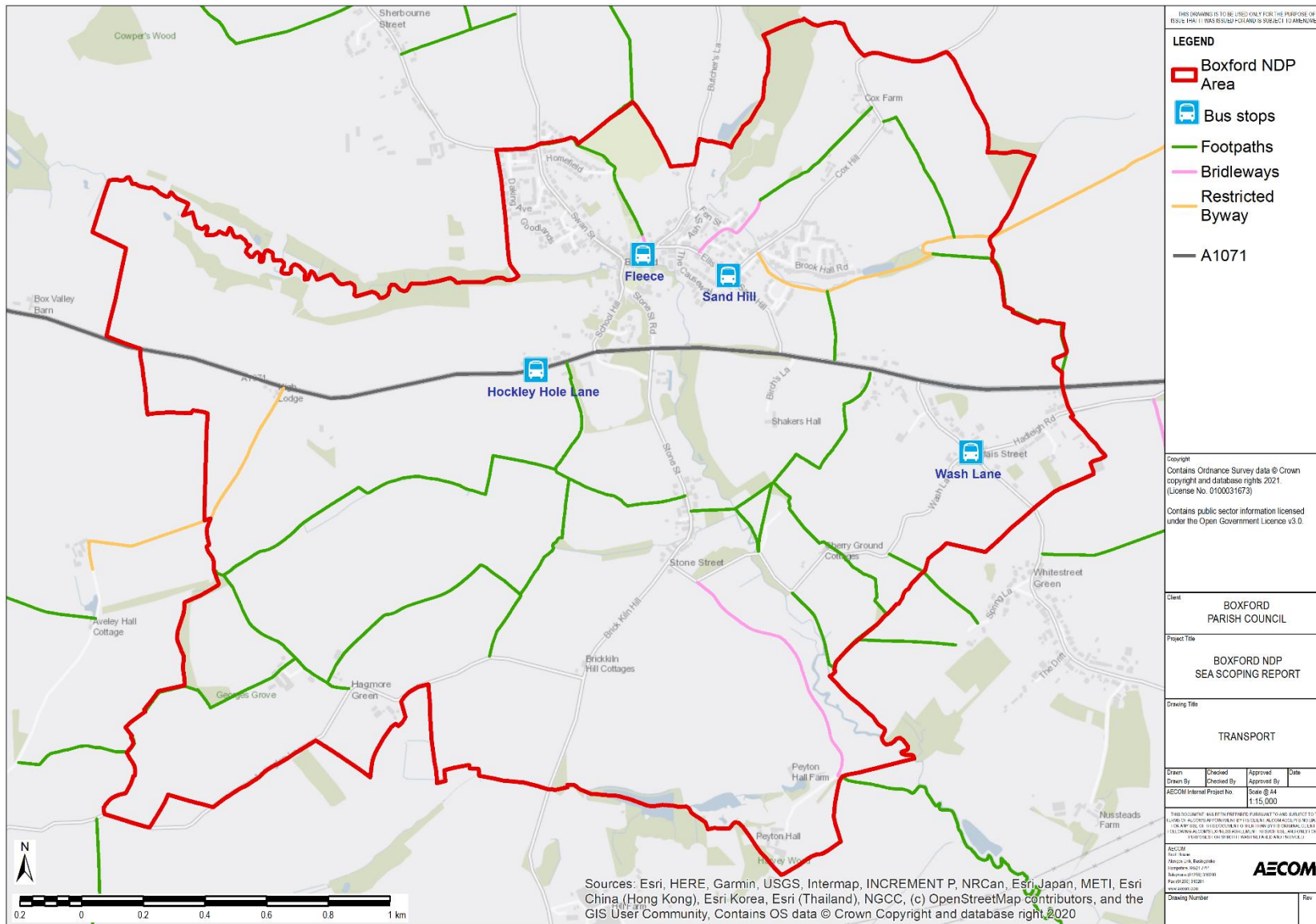
Summary of current baseline

- 10.2.1. The NP area is served by a network of highways that run through and connect the area to nearby settlements. This includes the A1071 (Boxford Lane/ Hadleigh Road) which intersects to the south of Boxford village and provides accessibility to Sudbury and Hadleigh. The main highway and public transport network serving the NP area is illustrated in Figure 10.1.
- 10.2.2. Whilst the NP area does not include a train station, Sudbury station approximately 6.3 miles to the west of Boxford provides regional connectivity and Colchester station, approximately 11 miles to the south, provides frequent national connectivity including direct services to London and Norwich.
- 10.2.3. There are no direct public transport connections between Boxford and Colchester train station, but Sudbury station is connected by a direct bus service operating once every two hours (although bus and rail arrival and departure times do not align). This bus service (Route 91) further provides public transport accessibility to Sudbury town centre, Ipswich (including the train station) and Hadleigh (including the high school). The spatial distribution of bus stops throughout the NP area is illustrated in Figure 10.1. The NP area is also inter and intra connected with a number of walking routes including Public Right of Ways (PRoWs).
- 10.2.4. According to Census 2011 data, local residents in the NP area are less likely to travel to work by sustainable modes of transport such as public transport (see Table 10.2) when compared with the national average. A greater proportion of people tend to work from home, which can be considered to be highly sustainable in that it avoids the need for transportation. However, this and the significantly higher proportion of residents travelling to work driving a car or a van highlights the poor local access to employment and provision of public and active transport modes.

Table 10.2: Methods of travel to work for all residents aged 16 to 74 and in employment (Census 2011)

	NP area	England	Difference
Work mainly from home	12.9%	5.4%	+7.5%
Underground, metro, light rail or tram	0.4%	4.1%	-3.7%
Train	6%	5.3%	+0.7%
Bus, minibus or coach	1.4%	7.5%	+6.1%
Taxi	0%	0.5%	-0.5%
Motocycle, scooter or moped	0.7%	0.8%	-0.1%
Driving a car or a van	67.2%	57.0%	+10.2%
Passenger in a car or a van	3.8%	5.0%	-1.2%
Bicycle	0.9%	3.0%	-2.1%
On foot	6%	10.7%	-4.7%
Other	0.7%	0.6%	+0.1%

Figure 10.1: Public Rights of Way and Bus Connectivity



Summary of future baseline

10.2.5. New development proposed in the NP area is likely to result in higher amounts of traffic along the local road network and on key thoroughfares that connect the plan area to nearby settlements. A greater local population and subsequent demand for public transport could provide opportunities to increase bus provision. However, Boxford is unlikely to experience significant amounts of growth that would add significant congestion to the local road network or make major improvements to public transport provision viable.

10.3 Key headline issues

10.3.1. The key issues are as follows:

- The NP area is served by a network of highways that connect it to nearby settlements and the national highway network.
- Boxford does not have a railway station and has limited bus connectivity.
- Local residents in the NDP area are significantly more likely to travel by car than people nationally.
- New development is likely to increase traffic and improve the viability of public transport, but this is unlikely to be significant.

10.4 Scoping outcome

10.4.1. The SEA topic 'transportation' has been **SCOPED IN** of the SEA. Whilst policies and proposals in the Plan are not likely to generate significant levels of additional traffic and movement in the Neighbourhood Plan area, it is recognised that there are opportunities to support walkable neighbourhoods, a reduced need to travel and active travel opportunities. This includes measures such as home and remote working and improving local public and active transport provision. This can improve local transportation options and improve sustainable transport provision. The NP should further seek to ensure new development has adequate access, seeks to improve road safety, and does not have adverse impacts on residents or the existing transport network.

10.5 What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the transportation SEA theme?

10.5.1. The SEA topic 'transportation' has been scoped in for further SEA. Table 10.5 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 10.5: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Transportation

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<p>Will the option/ proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the key objectives within the Suffolk Local Transport Plan to encourage more sustainable transport? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development? • Promote improved local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce the impact on residents from the road network? • Improve parking facilities?

11. The SEA Framework and Methodologies

11.1 The SEA Framework

- 11.1.1. The SEA framework has been established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise. This draws upon the baseline position and policy context that has been prepared for a range of SEA topics (as set out in Chapters 2-10).
- 11.1.2. The framework consists of a set of headline objectives and ancillary questions, which will be used to appraise the environmental effects of the draft Neighbourhood Plan (and any reasonable alternatives).
- 11.1.3. Table 11.1 below outlines the full SEA Framework, which brings together the objectives and questions that have been set out at the end of each SEA topic chapter. The Framework focuses on those issues that have been identified as the most important to consider in the preparation of the NP; but acknowledging the limited influence that the Plan can have in some areas.

Table 11.1: The SEA Framework

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the option/proposal help to:)
<p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Protect, maintain and enhance the quality, function and connectivity of biodiversity habitats and species; achieving a net environmental gain and stronger ecological networks.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid impacts on the Edwardstone Woods, Groton Wood and Cattawade Marshes SSSIs? • Protect and where possible enhance Priority Habitats and other habitats and species? • Support connections between habitats within and beyond the NP area? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the NP area to the effects of climate change?
<p>Climate change</p> <p>At the neighbourhood scale, support wider district, national and global climate change initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and increase climate resilience.</p>	<p>Will the option/ proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support 'walkable' neighbourhoods and active travel opportunities? • Reduce the number of journeys made? • Increase the number of new development meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria and resource efficiency standards? • Maximise opportunities for neighbourhood-scale renewable energy schemes and climate change mitigation interventions? • Support proposals for EV charging infrastructure?
<p>Flood risk</p> <p>Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the risks of flooding.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid development in areas at risk of fluvial flooding, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change? • Manage water run-off and drainage (where possible) through sustainable measures such as SuDS?

- Reduce surface water runoff (both within the plan area and downstream)?

Health and wellbeing

Protect and improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Boxford by enhancing the quality and accessibility to open space and facilities for recreation and health.

Will the option/proposal help to:

- Promote accessibility and availability to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all community groups?
- Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards?
- Promote healthy and active lifestyles?
- Improve access to the countryside for recreational use?

Historic environment

Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and setting of heritage assets and the built environment of Boxford.

Will the option/proposal help to:

- Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings?
- Conserve and enhance the character of Boxford Conservation Area?
- Conserve and enhance the special interest and character of locally important features and their settings?
- Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of interest as listed in the Suffolk HER?
- Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?
- Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the NP area?

Land and soil resources

Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.

Will the option/ proposal help to:

- Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources?
- Avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of, or hindering of access to mineral resources in the Plan area?
- Affect the integrity of waste infrastructure within and surrounding the Plan area?
- Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant/ underutilised land?

Water resources and water quality

Protect and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.

Will the option/ proposal help to:

- Avoid impacts on water quality?
- Support improvements to water quality?
- Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development?
- Protect waterbodies from pollution, including NVZs?
- Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling?
- Improve the resilience of water supplies?

Landscape

Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes.

Will the option/proposal help to:

- Conserve and better reveal the significance of Dedham Vale AONB?
- Conserve, better reveal the significance and enhance landscape assets?
- Contribute to better management of landscape assets?

- Identify and protect/enhance features of local importance?
- Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the surrounding landscape?
- Improve linkages to open space and the countryside?
- Seek to minimise a sense of coalescence between built-up areas?

Population and communities

Support the creation of thriving communities while ensuring housing growth is aligned with the needs of all residents in the NP area and is supported by the appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure.

Will the option/proposal help to:

- Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing?
- Support the provision of a range of housing types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local need?
- Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's changing needs?
- Create sustainable new communities with good access to a range of local services and facilities?

Transportation

Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

Will the option/ proposal help to:

- Support the key objectives within the Suffolk Local Transport Plan to encourage more sustainable transport?
- Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements?
- Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development?
- Promote improved local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement?
- Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working?
- Improve road safety?
- Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?
- Improve parking facilities?

12. Next steps

12.1 Subsequent stages for the SEA process

12.1.1. The next stage will involve exploring reasonable alternatives for the Boxford Neighbourhood Plan. This will consider alternative policy approaches for the Plan. The findings of this work will be fed back to the Parish Council so that they might be taken into consideration when finalising the Neighbourhood Plan. The draft Plan will then be subject to appraisal, and the Environmental Report will be prepared for consultation alongside the Plan.

12.2 Consultation on the Scoping Report

12.1.2. Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA process. At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public.

12.1.3. The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The Scoping Report has been released to these three statutory consultees.

12.1.4. Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report, particularly the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues and the proposed SEA framework.

12.1.5. The consultation period runs from 25th October to 28th November 2021. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:

Cheryl Beattie, AECOM Ltd, 3rd Floor, Portwall Place, Portwall Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol BS1 6NA

Email address: cheryl.beattie@aecom.com

12.1.6. All comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SEA where appropriate.

