

# Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan

Options Appraisal

Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

June 2022

## Quality information

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of Barrow cum Denham's emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The neighbourhood area covers the parish of Barrow cum Denham, in West Suffolk (as shown in the figure below).
- 1.2 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. Through this approach, the SEA for the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

## Purpose of this Options Appraisal

- 1.3 This Options Appraisal is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (June 2020), which included information about the neighbourhood area's environment and community and set out the proposed approach to the SEA process<sup>1</sup>. The Scoping Report was released for consultation with the statutory consultees for SEA (the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England) for a period of five weeks.
- 1.4 The purpose of this Options Appraisal is to:
  - Provide an outline of the spatial strategy options that have been developed as 'reasonable alternatives' for the purposes of the SEA;
  - Appraise the potential effects and relative sustainability merits of these spatial strategy options;
  - Provide a sustainability context for different spatial approaches that can be taken for the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan; and
  - Inform the development of the preferred spatial strategy for the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan.

## Local Plan context for the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.5 In April 2019, Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) merged to form West Suffolk Council. The adopted West Suffolk Local Plan (consisting of the former FHDC area and former SEBC area Local Plan documents) sets out the long-term planning and land use policies within West Suffolk. The adopted West Suffolk Local Plan includes

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<sup>1</sup> The Scoping Report was released for consultation with the statutory consultees for SEA (Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency) for a period of five weeks between June and July 2020. Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they have been addressed, shall be presented in the full SEA Environmental Report (incorporating this options appraisal and the appraisal of the draft plan) and will accompany the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan at Regulation 14 consultation.

documents previously referred to as the Local Development Framework. This includes<sup>2</sup>:

- Forest Heath Core Strategy (adopted 2010);
- Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Joint Development Management Policies Document (adopted 2015);
- Site Allocations Local Plan (2019);
- St Edmundsbury Core Strategy (adopted 2010); and
- St Edmundsbury's Vision 2031; consisting of three Local Plans; Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, Haverhill Vision 2031, and Rural Vision 2031 (adopted 2014).

1.6 Following the amalgamation of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Councils to West Suffolk Council, a Local Plan Review was commenced. Once adopted, the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan will establish a spatial strategy in relation to housing, employment, social and community needs for the period to 2040 (balancing growth and development with protecting and enhancing the natural environment) and allocate sites to deliver that strategy. West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options (Regulation 18) consultation<sup>3</sup> is currently underway and is set to close in July 2022. Comments received from the consultation will inform and influence the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan as it develops<sup>4</sup>. Reflecting the most recent Local Development Scheme timeline (published in January 2022)<sup>5</sup>, consultation on the pre-submission plan (Regulation 19) is scheduled to take place between May and June 2023. The adoption of the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan is expected in July 2024.

1.7 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for West Suffolk, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan is required to be in general conformity with the adopted West Suffolk Local Plan (with due regard given to the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan) and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in West Suffolk, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

## Housing numbers to deliver through the Neighbourhood Plan

1.8 A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) was completed in 2019 to contribute to the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan<sup>6</sup>. In terms of housing numbers, the HNA suggested a target of 154 dwellings for the neighbourhood area. At the time of completing the HNA, engagement with West Suffolk Council suggested a higher target of 225 dwellings. Given a total of 77 dwellings had already been secured through existing completions and commitments within the neighbourhood area, it was anticipated that a residual target of between 77

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<sup>2</sup> West Suffolk Council (2022): 'West Suffolk Local Plan (consisting of the former Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury areas)', [online] available to access [here](#)

<sup>3</sup> West Suffolk Council (2022): 'West Suffolk Local Plan Review', [online] available to access [here](#)

<sup>4</sup> West Suffolk Council (2022): 'West Suffolk Local Plan (Regulation 18) Preferred Options', [online] available to access [here](#)

<sup>5</sup> West Suffolk Council (2022): 'Local Development Scheme timeline (updated January 2022)', [online] available to access [here](#)

<sup>6</sup> The HNA will accompany the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan at Regulation 14 consultation.

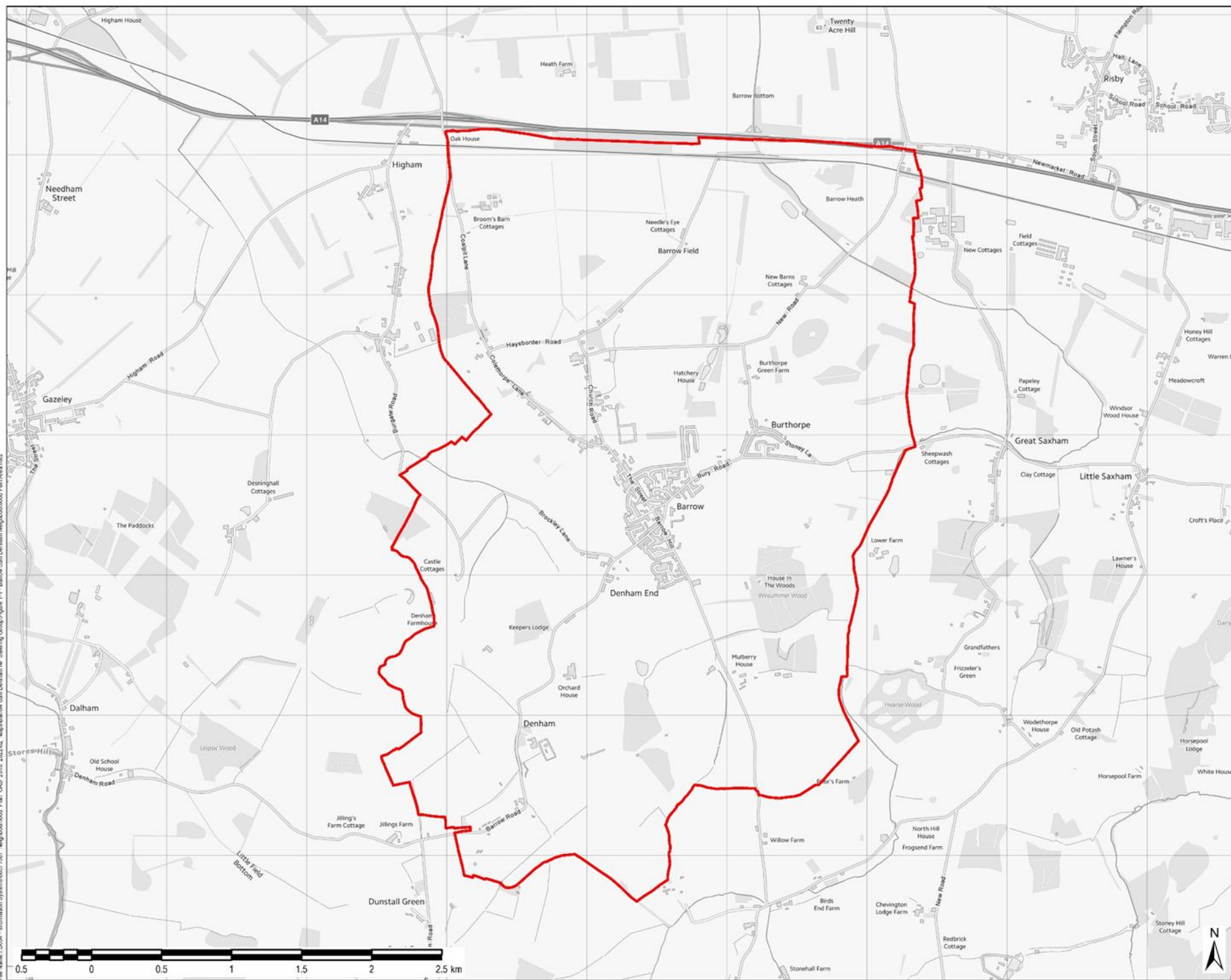
dwellings (based on the conclusions of the HNA) and 148 dwellings (based on the engagement with West Suffolk) would be delivered during the plan period.

- 1.9 Since the completion of the HNA, the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan has continued to develop, including further engagement between West Suffolk Council and the Barrow cum Denham Parish Council regarding housing numbers. The latest position, as reflected in 'Part Three: Site Allocations' within the West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options consultation document<sup>7</sup>, provides an indicative target of 170 new dwellings for the neighbourhood area.

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<sup>7</sup> West Suffolk Council (2022): 'West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options – Part Three: Site Allocations', [online] available to access [here](#)

File Name: I:\5004 - Information Systems\60571087 Neighbourhood Plan\_CRS 2018 202202 Map\Barrow cum Denham NP Steering Group\Figure 1.1 Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan Area.mxd



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## LEGEND

- Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan Area

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Purpose of Issue  
**FINAL**

Client  
**BARROW CUM DENHAM  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
STEERING GROUP**

Project Title  
**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL  
ASSESSMENT FOR THE BARROW  
CUM DENHAM  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title  
**BARROW CUM DENHAM  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA**

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Date
CN	JW	NP	24/05/2020

AECOM Internal Project No:  
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## 2. Spatial strategy options considered through the SEA

### Initial shortlisting of sites

- 2.1 During the earlier stages of the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan's development, there was a recognition that the Neighbourhood Plan would potentially need to allocate sites for development.
- 2.2 In recognition of this, Barrow cum Denham Parish Council completed a local call for sites in October 2020, along with a consideration of sites which were included in West Suffolk's Issues and Options Site Submission Review<sup>8</sup>. This was with a view to identifying sites which could be considered as potential allocations for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (with support from an independent planning consultancy) has subsequently undertaken assessments of the various sites<sup>9</sup> in the parish in terms of their suitability, availability, and achievability for the purposes of a potential Neighbourhood Plan allocation.
- 2.4 A total of 15 sites were assessed. Following this process, eight sites were given a 'red' rating (i.e., unsuitable for development). Reasons listed within the site assessment report include access issues, relative distance from Barrow village centre (encroaching into the open countryside, contrary to local policy provisions), potential coalescence between settlements, concerns regarding impacts to the setting of designated heritage assets, and adverse impacts to the character of the built form within the village.
- 2.5 A total of seven sites were identified as potentially appropriate locations to consider as possible allocations for the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan. One site was given a 'green' rating (i.e., suitable without constraints) and six sites were given an 'amber' rating (i.e., potentially suitable, with some minor constraints). The sites are listed in **Table 2.1** below.

**Table 2.1: Sites taken forward for further consideration through the SEA**

SEA ID	Name of site, address	Size (Ha) <sup>10</sup>
BD1	Land south of Stoney Lane	0.39
BD6	Land east of Barrow Hill	8.60
BD8	Land south of Barrow Forge	1.41
BD9	Land south of Denham Lane	0.66
BD10	Old Bakehouse Site	0.13
BD12	Land west of Barrow Hill	3.50
BD13	Land south of Bury Road	10.0

<sup>8</sup> Forming part of an issues and options consultation which was completed between October and December 2020 to inform the development of the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan.

<sup>9</sup> The initial site assessment report, prepared by AECOM in December 2021, contributes to the evidence base for the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan and will accompany the Neighbourhood Plan at Regulation 14 consultation.

<sup>10</sup> Represents total site size and not necessarily total developable area.

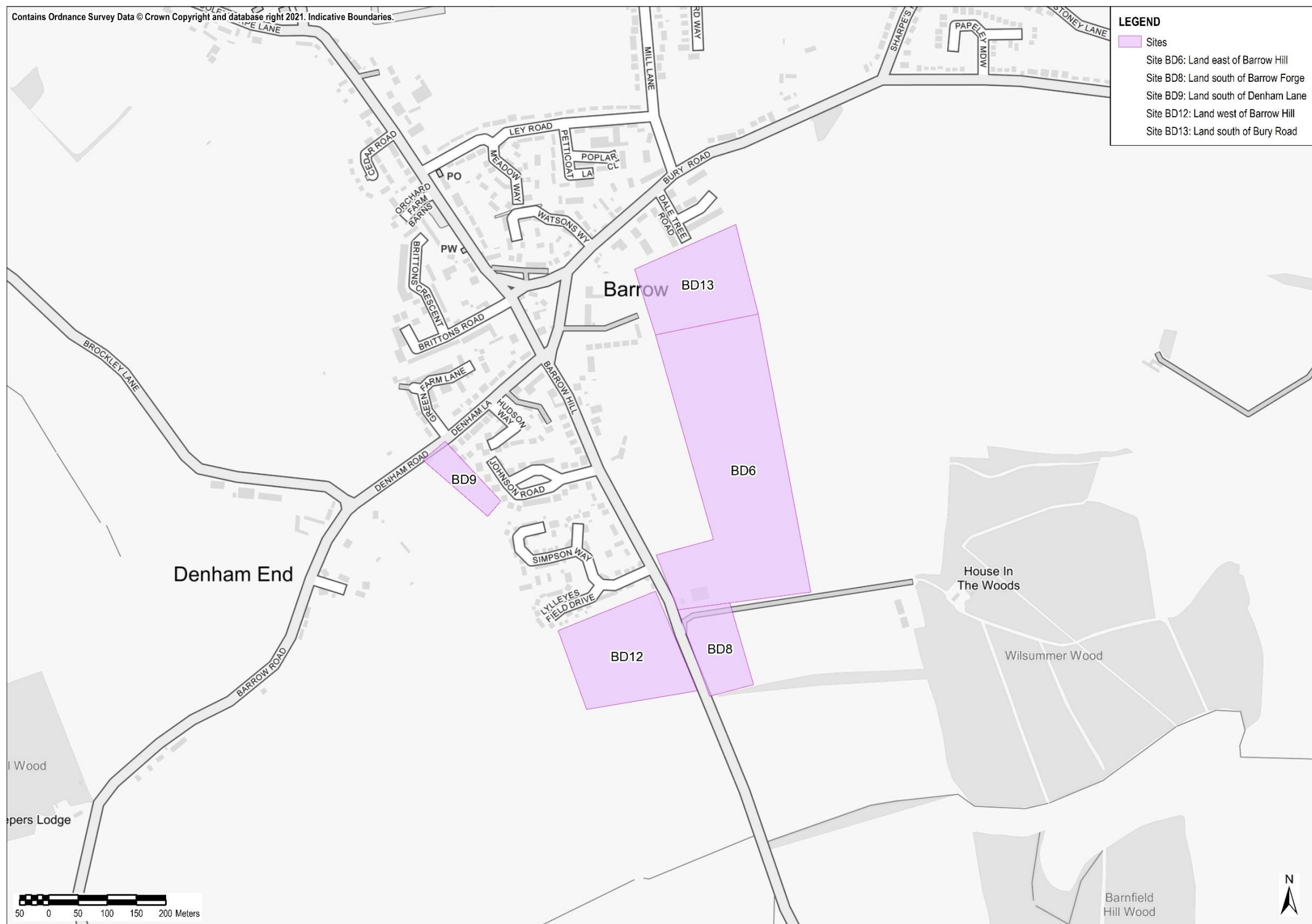


2.6 With respect to the seven sites, Site BD10 has since been delivered (an infill site providing one dwelling). Site BD1 has also been excluded at this stage in light of:

- The relatively small size of the site, and the availability of alternative larger sites which can positively contribute to local housing requirements and potentially unlock a greater percentage of affordable dwellings.
- Further reflection on some of the site constraints, with access identified as a key concern; and
- The location of the site within Burthorpe, to the west of the main settlement of Barrow village (i.e., the preferred location of growth as per local policy provisions, with Barrow village identified as a 'key service centre').

2.7 Nevertheless, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group recognises the potential of Site BD1 (reflecting the findings of the site assessment process) and acknowledges that the site may come forward during the lifetime of the plan period (just not specifically as a Neighbourhood Plan allocation).

2.8 The remaining five 'amber' sites are the focus for the SEA. The site locations and areas are shown in the figure below, located on land which is situated within or adjacent to Barrow village.



## Consideration of spatial strategy options

2.9 As discussed within Chapter 1, the current indicative housing requirement for Barrow cum Denham is 170 new dwellings during the plan period.

2.10 To support the choice of a development strategy for the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has assessed a number of spatial strategy options as reasonable alternatives. These spatial strategy options comprise packages of the sites identified above, which are summarised below<sup>11</sup>.

- **Option A:** Delivery of new housing through an allocation at Site BD12.
- **Option B:** Delivery of new housing through an allocation at Site BD13.
- **Option C:** Delivery of new housing through allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12. Specifically, the sections of the sites which, when combined, create a neat edge to the southern part of the village.
- **Option D:** Delivery of new housing through allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8, Site BD9 and Site BD12. All four sites are identified as having direct access to the existing road network.
- **Option E:** Delivery of new housing through allocations at Site BD9 and Site BD13. These sites are identified as the preferred site options within the West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options consultation document<sup>12</sup>.

2.11 The map below visually presents these five options.






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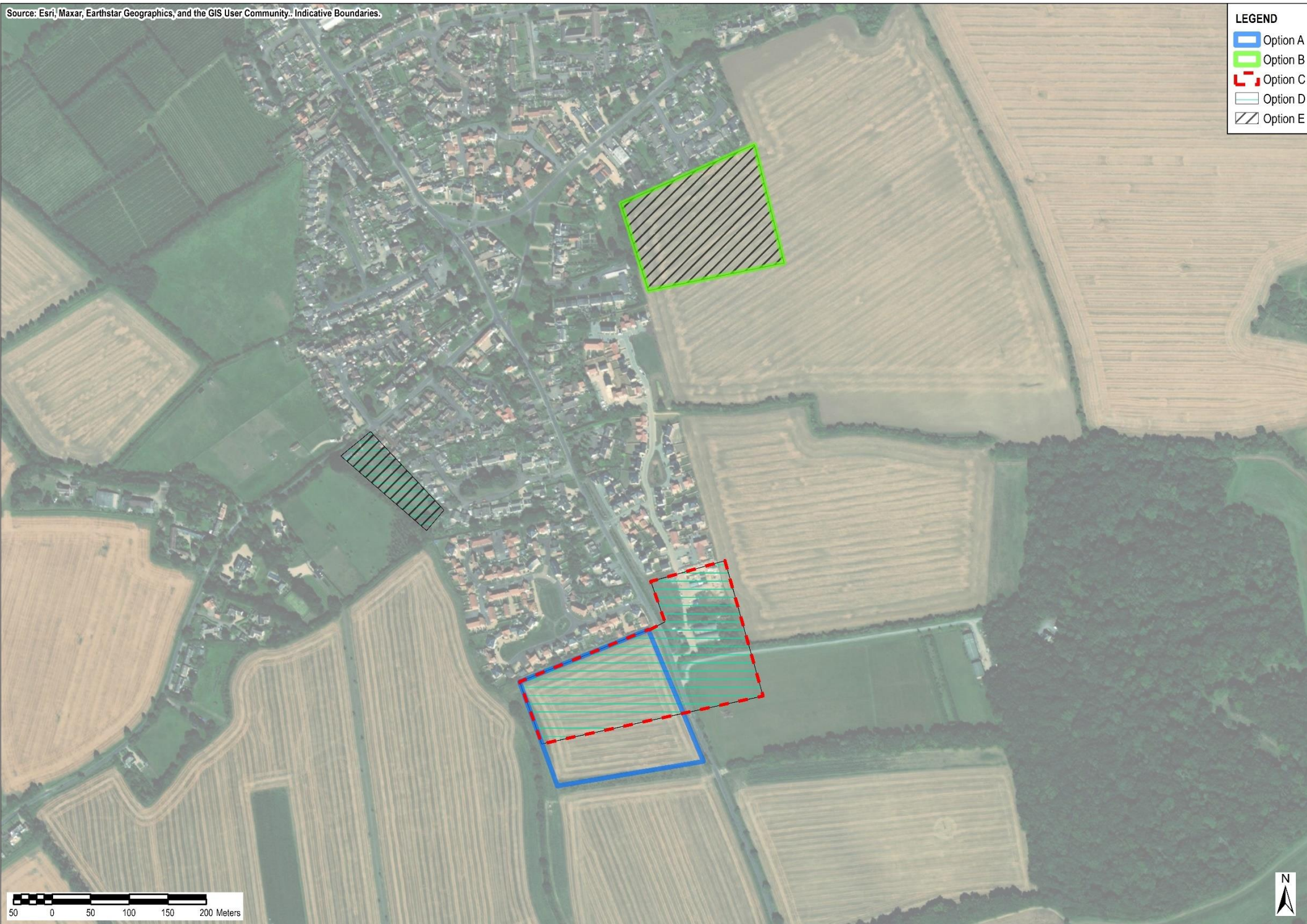
<sup>11</sup> The full areas of the sites (as put forward through the 'call for sites', and West Suffolk's Issues and Options Site Submission Review) have been considered within the site assessment process. For the purposes of the SEA, the areas of the sites which have been included within the options appraisal reflect the locations which are considered the most suitable areas to take forward for new development (i.e., the least constrained parts of the sites). This reflects the conclusions of the site assessment process, and community preferences with regards to the potential location of new development within the neighbourhood area.

<sup>12</sup> Within the Preferred Options consultation document, the area proposed for Site BD13 reflects the total area of the site (as considered within the site assessment process). It is recognised that the area of the site proposed through the SEA options appraisal (which is a reduced area, reflecting the site assessment conclusions) might not be large enough to meet the housing target of 170 dwellings. Therefore, for some of the options, additional sections of the site(s) (i.e., those identified as the more constrained areas reflecting the site assessment conclusions) may also need to come forward to meet the housing target.



LEGEND

-  Option A
-  Option B
-  Option C
-  Option D
-  Option E





## 3. Appraisal findings

### Approach to the appraisal

- 3.1 Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the appraisal has been presented through eight SEA Themes, as follows:
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity
  - Climatic Factors (including flood risk)
  - Landscape
  - Historic Environment
  - Land, Soil and Water Resources
  - Population and Community
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Transportation
- 3.2 The appraisal considers the relative sustainability merits of each of the five spatial strategy options. Findings are presented as a commentary on effects. To support the appraisal findings, the options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant SEA Theme. It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the relative performance of the five options in relation to each theme considered.
- 3.3 Sources of information to support the appraisal has included (amongst others): Ordnance Survey maps, MAGIC Interactive Map<sup>13</sup>, the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps for England<sup>14</sup>, Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification maps<sup>15</sup>, Google Earth<sup>16</sup>, reports and interactive mapping layers available on West Suffolk Council's webpages<sup>17</sup>, the Suffolk Historic Environment Record<sup>18</sup>, and baseline studies provided by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (including the Parish Plan, and Design Code).
- 3.4 **Table 3.1** to **Table 3.8** below present the findings of the appraisal of the five spatial strategy options for each of the SEA Themes.

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<sup>13</sup> MAGIC (2021): 'Interactive Map', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

<sup>14</sup> Environment Agency (2021): 'Flood Map for Planning', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

<sup>15</sup> Natural England (2021): 'Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps and Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Land', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

<sup>16</sup> Google (2021): 'Google Earth', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

<sup>17</sup> West Suffolk Council (2022): 'Environmental Services', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

<sup>18</sup> Suffolk Council (2022): 'Suffolk HER – Heritage Explorer', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

**Table 3.1: Appraisal findings: Biodiversity and Geodiversity****Option A:** Allocation at Site BD12**Option B:** Allocation at Site BD13**Option C:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12**Option D:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8, Site BD9 and Site BD12**Option E:** Allocations at Site BD9 and Site BD13

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>There are no internationally or nationally designated sites directly within the neighbourhood area. In the wider context, the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) and Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are located to the north of the neighbourhood area (north of the A14 trunk road). These sites contain habitats and species listed in the annexes of both the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). It is important to highlight that the potential site allocations considered through all options fall within the 12km buffer zone for the Breckland SPA and Breckland SAC. As such, development through all options has the potential to impact the integrity of these internationally designated sites in the absence of mitigation measures.</p> <p>Although there are no nationally designated sites within the neighbourhood area, there are several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within proximity, including Cavenham SSSI; Lackford Lakes SSSI; West Stow Heath SSSI; Red Lodge Heath SSSI; and Barton Mills SSSI. In this respect, the whole of the neighbourhood area overlaps with either one or multiple SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) for the types of development likely to be taken forward during the plan period. With reference to the potential site allocations, the SSSI IRZ threshold is associated with 'any residential developments of 100 units or more'. As the indicative housing requirement for the neighbourhood area totals 170 new dwellings, consultation with Natural England may be required to determine whether the applications will have any significant impacts to the integrity of these sites.</p> <p>Outside of areas with statutory protection, County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are some of the most important areas for wildlife in Suffolk and can support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife species and habitats. In this regard, Site BD6, Site BD8, and Site BD12 (as proposed through Option A, Option C and Option D) are part of larger agricultural fields that extend eastwards to the adjacent Wilsummer Wood CWS (which comprises areas of deciduous woodland and ancient woodland priority habitats). Therefore, new development areas at these locations have the potential to impact Wilsummer Wood CWS (i.e., through enhanced access, disturbance and trampling). Nevertheless, sensitive design at these locations also has the potential to strengthen the integrity of the CWS, including through the provision of green buffers or corridors between the CWS and development areas.</p> <p>Proposals for larger sites have the potential to be designed incorporate green infrastructure enhancements at a scale which can positively contribute to local networks, linking areas together and positively contributing to biodiversity objectives. In this context, all options have the potential to enhance ecological networks through new development areas, providing proposals are designed to deliver measurable, proportionate, and appropriate biodiversity net gains in line with national and local policy.</p> <p>In conclusion, all options have the potential to impact upon the integrity of internationally and nationally designated sites for biodiversity, as the number of new dwellings to come forward (totalling up to 170 dwellings) may exceed SSSI IRZ thresholds. However, given the relative distance of the Site BD9 and Site BD13 from Wilsummer Wood CWS, Option B and Option E are more favourable options in relation to the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme.</p>	3	1	3	3	1

**Table 3.2: Appraisal findings: Climate Change****Option A:** Allocation at Site BD12**Option B:** Allocation at Site BD13**Option C:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12**Option D:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8, Site BD9 and Site BD12**Option E:** Allocations at Site BD9 and Site BD13

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>In response to the UK Government's commitment to tackling the climate crisis, West Suffolk Council declared a Climate Emergency in September 2019 and at the same time, are committed to making the authority net-zero carbon by 2030. In the context of this, it will be important for the Barrow cum Denham Neighbourhood Plan to encourage proposals which seek to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>In terms of climate change mitigation, road transport is a significant contribution to emissions within West Suffolk. Therefore, development within proximity to Barrow village centre (i.e., locations within the neighbourhood area with the greatest variety of services and facilities) will, to an extent, help limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport through encouraging new development in locations with proximity to the key amenities and public transport networks. Whilst all the sites are adjacent to the existing built-up areas of Barrow village, Site BD13 is the closest and (along with Site BD9) benefits from pedestrian connectivity. Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12 are located to the south of the village, at further distance from the centre, and do not currently benefit from pedestrian access. In this respect, Option B and Option E are more favourable options in terms of limiting emissions from transport.</p> <p>New development areas have the potential to increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk. In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, Barrow village is wholly located within Flood Zone 1 which represents areas of England which have a low fluvial flood risk potential. Given that all potential site allocations are within Flood Zone 1, fluvial flood risk is unlikely to comprise a significant constraint to development through all options. It is also considered that the provisions of the NPPF and local policy (including relating to the sequential / exception test) will help guide development away from potential flood risk areas and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.</p> <p>Regarding surface water flood risk issues, areas at 'medium' to 'high' risk within Barrow village are primarily located along the road network. The potential site allocations mostly comprise areas of 'very low' or 'low' risk. However, as all the sites are greenfield land, allocations at these locations are likely to increase areas of hardstanding and potentially increase the surface water flood risks to surrounding locations. Nonetheless, it is anticipated that surface water flood risk issues could largely be contained to all sites via the use of appropriate drainage systems which would minimise the risk of surface water run-off to surrounding areas. Overall, flood risk concerns are likely to be similar with respect to all options in the absence of any significant issues with the potential site allocations.</p> <p>Potential impacts relating to climate change are largely dependent on the extent to which mitigation and adaptation measures are incorporated into the design of new development areas. Therefore, if Option A, Option C, or Option D are taken forward, proposals should seek to improve connections to the village centre and maximise opportunities for active travel. This is further discussed within the 'transportation' appraisal section, presented in <b>Table 3.8</b> later in this Chapter.</p>	3	1	3	3	1



**Table 3.3: Appraisal findings: Landscape****Option A:** Allocation at Site BD12**Option B:** Allocation at Site BD13**Option C:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12**Option D:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8, Site BD9 and Site BD12**Option E:** Allocations at Site BD9 and Site BD13

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>The neighbourhood area is not within or within proximity to a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or any Green Belt land. In this context, none of the options would adversely impact the integrity of any nationally protected landscapes. At the local level, landscape and villagescape character plays an important part in understanding the relationship between people and place, identifying recognisable and distinct patterns which make one area different from another. Landscape and villagescape character can assist in the assessment of the likely significance of effects of change resulting from new development areas, both in visual and amenity terms. A summary of the sensitivities for each site is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Option A – Whilst an allocation at Site BD12 would be in keeping with the existing built-form and development patterns (i.e., containing development to the west of Barrow Hill), the development of the whole site area would extend the village approximately 250m to the south, into the open countryside. Although the site is relatively open in character, it is contained from views on three sides by trees and hedgerows (assisted in part by its flat topography). The site is overlooked by to the north by homes and gardens on Simpson Way, and forms part of the southern gateway into the village (via Barrow Hill).</li> <li>Option B – An allocation at Site BD13 would elongate the settlement to the east, which currently comprises areas of open countryside. Arguably, new development areas would be less in keeping with the existing built form and development patterns, but the design of the new development could link with the existing housing to the north and west. The site is relatively overlooked in this respect but is predominantly flat. Some longer views to the north east towards the neighbouring settlement of Burthorpe are possible, with the potential intervisibility between the site and Burthorpe an important consideration.</li> <li>Option C – Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12 would extend the village to the south by approximately 100m. However, the extent of development to the west of Barrow Hill, once complete, would align with the existing historic pattern to the east of Barrow Hill. The north eastern sections of the proposed site boundary are already in partial use, comprising areas of brownfield land which are perhaps less sensitive to new development (and more suited for redevelopment). However, the relationship between the sites, the properties along Simpson Way, Wilsummer Woods CWS, and the southern gateway in to the village (via Barrow Hill), are important considerations.</li> <li>Option D – While impacts are similar to those associated with Option C, the addition of Site BD9 would partially reduce the gap between Barrow and Denham End, contributing to the potential coalescence of these settlements. Nevertheless, Site BD9 is relatively screened from view due to the vegetation (tree corridor) along its western boundary. In this respect, development at this location is not necessarily likely to increase any perceived coalescence between these two settlements or change the character of any views between the settlements. However, there are likely to be some views into the northern and eastern sections of the site from properties located along Denham Lane and Johnson Road.</li> <li>Option E – Reflecting the potential coalescence concerns between Barrow and Denham End (as associated with Site BD9) and the contrast from the existing</li> </ul>	2	4	1	3	5

**Option A:** Allocation at Site BD12

**Option B:** Allocation at Site BD13

**Option C:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12

**Option D:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8, Site BD9 and Site BD12

**Option E:** Allocations at Site BD9 and Site BD13

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>development patterns (as associated with Site BD13), Option E is perhaps the most sensitive from a landscape and villagescape perspective.</p> <p>In summary, Option C is likely to perform most favourably in relation to the landscape SEA theme given the potential to create a neat edge to the south of the settlement (including within some areas of previously developed land). Comparatively, Option B and Option E are the least favourable options considering the potential coalescence concerns and departure from the existing built form. However, it is important to note that proposals for larger development areas (as proposed through all options) have the potential to positively contribute to wider landscape objectives through sensitive design. For example, delivering net gains in biodiversity and green infrastructure enhancements have the potential to help conserve and enhance landscape and villagescape character, including its special qualities and sense of place. For example, enhanced habitats (trees, hedgerows, grass, shrub, etc.,) can form important parts of the landscape, and also provide a role in landscape buffering and planting, providing screening to restrict undesirable views. They can also play a role in contributing towards local distinctiveness and a sense of place.</p>					

**Table 3.4: Appraisal findings: Historic Environment****Option A:** Allocation at Site BD12**Option B:** Allocation at Site BD13**Option C:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12**Option D:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8, Site BD9 and Site BD12**Option E:** Allocations at Site BD9 and Site BD13

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>In relation to historic environment constraints, the neighbourhood area contains one Grade I, one Grade II* and 30 Grade II nationally designated buildings, along with three scheduled monuments. Given the concentration of heritage assets within Barrow village, potential impacts to the historic environment are possible through options comprising sites within proximity to the existing village boundary. Whilst none of the sites contain any nationally designated heritage assets, an overview of the potential sensitivities is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site BD13 is potentially within the setting of the Grade II listed 'The Weeping Willow Public House' (to the north west) and the Grade II listed 'Barrow House and Carriage Gateway' (to the west).</li> <li>Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12 are all located over 400m to the south of the nearest nationally designated heritage assets. These heritage assets (listed buildings along Barrow Hill) are screened from view by the existing built-up areas within the village boundary.</li> <li>Site BD9 is approximately 150m to the north west of two Grade II listed buildings (within Denham End). Given the visual screening provided by vegetation along the western boundary of the site, an allocation at this location is not likely to impact upon the setting of these buildings.</li> </ul> <p>Reflecting the above, it is not anticipated that there would be any significant impacts to the integrity or setting of any nationally designated heritage assets as associated with Option A, Option C, and Option D. Consultation with Historic England is encouraged to ensure that development proposals at Site BD13 (as proposed through Option B and Option E) seek to implement sensitive design which respects and enhances the setting of nearby heritage assets.</p> <p>With reference to non-designated heritage assets and features, the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Suffolk contains a total of 71 locally important heritage features which contribute to the character and setting of the neighbourhood area. Available to view on the Suffolk Heritage Explorer (<a href="#">accessible here</a>), this online tool provides an indication as to whether any of the sites may include structures or features of archaeological importance. Following a high-level review of the Suffolk Heritage Explorer, Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12 perhaps have the greatest potential to contain undiscovered archaeological remains. Geophysical surveys and archaeological evaluations to date (as accessed on the Explorer), on land to the east and west of Barrow Hill, has recorded early Bronze Age features (including pottery fragments and animal bones), Roman tegula (roof tiles), and Medieval (late 12th - 13th century) remains. There are no monuments or events listed (or recorded) within Site BD9 and Site BD13, reflecting the information available on the Heritage Explorer. Nevertheless, this might be due to an absence of any surveys or evaluations at these locations to date. In the context of the above, applications for new development within the neighbourhood area (particularly associated with Option A, Option C, and Option D) should ensure that any archaeological finds (including details of their significance) are appropriately recorded in line with best practice guidance.</p>	1	4	1	1	4

**Table 3.5: Appraisal findings: Land, Soil, and Water Resources****Option A:** Allocation at Site BD12**Option B:** Allocation at Site BD13**Option C:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12**Option D:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8, Site BD9 and Site BD12**Option E:** Allocations at Site BD9 and Site BD13

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>Regarding the location of the best and most versatile land for agricultural purposes, a detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) assessment has not been undertaken within the neighbourhood area. The provisional ALC dataset provided by Natural England indicates that the undeveloped areas surrounding Barrow village are predominantly underlain by areas of Grade 2 agricultural land (which is some of the best and most versatile land for agricultural purposes). As all the proposed site allocations comprise areas of greenfield land, all options have the potential to result in the permanent loss of productive agricultural land which cannot be mitigated. However, as the north eastern section of the site area proposed through Option C and Option D (Site BD6) comprises a small area of previously developed land, these options are slightly more favourable in this respect.</p> <p>The water resources located within and within proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area include the Cavenham Stream (a tributary of the River Lark), alongside a network of drainage ditches and ponds. None of the potential site allocations contain or are within proximity to the Cavenham Stream, with limited impacts to the water environment associated with all options. However, all the potential site allocations are within the 'Ely Ouse and Cut-off channel' Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), the 'Anglian Chalk' Ground Water NVZ, and Source Protection Zone II 'Outer Protection'. In this respect, development proposals should be encouraged to deliver nitrate and water neutrality in line with latest guidance. However, this is a regional issue which is perhaps beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan to address.</p> <p>Adopted in July 2020, the Suffolk Minerals and Waste Plan (<a href="#">accessible here</a>) identifies areas for minerals and waste safeguarding. None of the potential site allocations are within a mineral consultation area (as shown on the safeguarding and proposals map). However, the map indicates that Site BD9 (as proposed through Option D and Option E) is within the boundary of a waste water treatment plants safeguarded area.</p>	3	3	1	2	5

**Table 3.6: Appraisal findings: Population and Community****Option A:** Allocation at Site BD12**Option B:** Allocation at Site BD13**Option C:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12**Option D:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8, Site BD9 and Site BD12**Option E:** Allocations at Site BD9 and Site BD13

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>Accessibility to services and facilities is a key determinant of residents' quality of life. With regards to community assets, Barrow village is generally well served by local service offer. This includes a primary school (although it is recognised that the school is at full capacity), play school, village hall, a doctor's surgery, two pubs, three village shops, recreation grounds, and sporting facilities. It also has a well-used post office which serves many of the surrounding villages.</p> <p>While all the sites are adjacent to the existing built-up areas of Barrow village, Site BD13 is the closest and (along with Site BD9) benefits from pedestrian connectivity to the village centre. Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12 are located to the south of the village, at further distance from the centre, and do not currently benefit from pedestrian connectivity. In this respect, Option B and Option E are more favourable options in terms of access to services and facilities.</p> <p>Proposals for larger sites have the potential to generate developer contributions which could provide additional (or expand the existing) services and facilities offer within the neighbourhood area, positively contributing to community vitality and wellbeing. Development of larger sites also increases the viability of providing housing of an appropriate type and tenure (including affordable housing) to meet local needs. In this respect, all options (which encompass sites with relatively large areas) have the potential to deliver wider benefits for the community. However, delivering a larger scheme is perhaps more challenging with respect to Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12 given the multiple land ownership issues at these locations. The site area proposed through Option C and Option D encompass sections of each of the three sites to create a neat edge to the south of the village. Therefore, an allocation at these locations would require cooperation between landowners to bring forward a masterplan for this area which could help to unlock the potential of the sites. Additionally, Site BD6 is provisionally allocated for employment uses within the West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options consultation document. This could potentially reduce the capacity for housing, contributing less to local targets.</p>	3	1	4	4	1

**Table 3.7: Appraisal findings: Health and Wellbeing****Option A:** Allocation at Site BD12**Option B:** Allocation at Site BD13**Option C:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12**Option D:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8, Site BD9 and Site BD12**Option E:** Allocations at Site BD9 and Site BD13

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>The benefits to wellbeing and mental health resulting from close contact with the natural environment are well-documented. In the context of the above, the performance of the options depends on the delivery of green infrastructure provision alongside new development. Proposals should therefore be encouraged to enhance green and blue infrastructure networks within the neighbourhood area. This could include via the incorporation of amenity greenspace, natural and semi-natural greenspaces, green corridors, and other outdoor areas (e.g., allotments, play spaces and community gardens).</p> <p>Proposals for larger sites have the potential to be sensitively and creatively designed to incorporate green and blue infrastructure enhancements at a scale which can positively contribute to local networks, linking areas together and positively contributing to biodiversity and landscape objectives (with indirect benefits to health and wellbeing). In this context, all options (which include relatively large sites) have the potential to deliver net gains in biodiversity and green infrastructure enhancements which can help conserve and enhance the special qualities of the neighbourhood area. This might be challenging for the areas proposed through Option C and Option D given the land ownership issues at these locations, and the potential difficulties associated with bringing forward a coordinated and master planned design across multiple site areas.</p> <p>Whilst all options are likely to encourage active lifestyles by facilitating development within proximity to Barrow village centre, Option B and Option E are likely to perform more favourably. This is given the relative proximity of the potential site allocations in these options to local services and facilities (including local green and blue areas such as Barrow Green and Barrow Lake), and the relative disjoint of Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12 from these amenities. Additionally, Site BD9 and Site BD13 (as proposed through Option B and Option E) are the only sites which currently benefit from pedestrian connectivity to the village centre.</p>	3	1	4	4	1

**Table 3.8: Appraisal findings: Transportation****Option A:** Allocation at Site BD12**Option B:** Allocation at Site BD13**Option C:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12**Option D:** Allocations at Site BD6, Site BD8, Site BD9 and Site BD12**Option E:** Allocations at Site BD9 and Site BD13

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>With reference to local public transport networks, the neighbourhood area is not connected to the national rail network. Although there are bus routes which pass through Barrow village centre and connect to neighbouring settlements, service frequency is recognised as a key barrier to public transport use. Reflecting the above, there is a high dependency on private vehicles. Options which do more to reduce the dependence on private vehicles for undertaking some day-to-day activities within the neighbourhood area are better performing in relation to this SEA theme. In this respect, new development areas should be encouraged to provide connectivity and accessibility to local public transport networks and maximise opportunities for safe walking and cycling to local services and facilities. Delivering new development at Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12 (as proposed through Option A, Option C and Option D) is perhaps less likely to reduce the reliance on private vehicles within the neighbourhood area. This is given their location to the south of the village, relative inaccessibility from local bus stops (which are predominantly contained within the village centre, and along Bury Road), and lack of pedestrian connections to the village centre from these locations.</p> <p>Regarding site access, most of the sites are connected to the existing highways network. Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12 are accessible via a turning from Barrow Hill, and Site BD12 is accessible via a turning from Denham Road. While some of these entry points might need to be widened and upgraded to accommodate additional traffic, this is likely to be possible at these locations. Comparatively, Site BD13 is not currently connected to the existing highways network. However, there is potential to establish access into the northern section of the site (via a continuation of Dale Tree Road) or into the eastern section of the site (via the relatively narrow Lion Green). Access via Lion Green would require the removal of privately owned garages and is perhaps a less viable option the Dale Tree Road (which is wider, more suited for two-way traffic, and benefits from pedestrian connectivity to public transport options along Bury Road). Reflecting the above, site access is not likely to be problematic for Site BD13.</p>	3	1	3	3	1



## 4. Conclusions at this current stage

### Summary of appraisal findings

- 4.1 The table below summarises the rankings of the options with regards to their relative performance in relation to each SEA Theme.

**Table 4.11 Development strategy options: summary of rankings by SEA Theme**

SEA Theme	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	=3	=1	=3	=3	=1
Climate Change	=3	=1	=3	=3	=1
Landscape	2	4	1	3	5
Historic Environment	=1	=4	=1	=1	=4
Land, Soil and Water Resources	=3	=3	1	2	5
Population and Community	3	=1	=4	=4	=1
Health and Wellbeing	3	=1	=4	=4	=1
Transportation	=3	=1	=3	=3	=1

- 4.2 In conclusion, all options have the potential to impact upon the integrity of internationally and nationally designated sites for biodiversity, as the number of new dwellings to come forward (totalling up to 170 dwellings) may exceed SSSI IRZ thresholds. However, given the relative distance of the Site BD9 and Site BD13 from Wilsummer Wood CWS, Option B and Option E are somewhat more favourable options in relation to the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme.
- 4.3 While all the sites are adjacent to the existing built-up areas of Barrow village, Site BD13 is the closest to village amenities and (along with Site BD9) benefits from pedestrian connectivity to these amenities. Site BD6, Site BD8 and Site BD12 are located to the south of the village, at further distance from the centre, and do not currently benefit from pedestrian access. In this respect, Option B and Option E are more favourable in relation to the climate change, population and community, health and wellbeing, and transportation SEA themes. If Option A, Option C, or Option D are taken forward, proposals should seek to improve connections to the village centre and maximise opportunities for active travel.
- 4.4 From a landscape character perspective, Option C is likely to perform most favourably given the potential to create a neat edge to the south of Barrow village. Comparatively, Option B and Option E are the least favourable options considering the potential coalescence concerns and departure from the existing built form.
- 4.5 With respect to the historic environment SEA theme, it is not anticipated that there would be any significant impacts to the integrity or setting of any nationally designated heritage assets as associated with Option A, Option C,

and Option D. Consultation with Historic England is encouraged to ensure that development proposals at Site BD13 (as proposed through Option B and Option E) seek to implement sensitive design techniques which respect and enhance the setting of the two listed buildings within proximity to the site. Regarding non-designated heritage assets, applications for new development within the neighbourhood area (particularly associated with Option A, Option C, and Option D) should ensure that archaeological finds (including details of their significance) are appropriately recorded in line with best practice guidance.

- 4.6 As the proposed site allocations comprise areas of greenfield land (identified as Grade 2 land within the predictive ALC assessment), all options have the potential to result in the permanent loss of productive agricultural land which cannot be mitigated. However, as the north eastern section of the site area proposed through Option C comprises a small area of previously developed land, this option is slightly more favourable with regards to the land, soil, and water resources SEA theme.
- 4.7 The development of larger sites increases the viability of providing housing of an appropriate type and tenure (including affordable housing) to meet local needs. Larger sites also have the potential to be sensitively and creatively designed to incorporate green and blue infrastructure enhancements at a scale which can positively contribute to local networks, linking areas together and positively contributing to biodiversity and landscape objectives (with indirect benefits to health and wellbeing). In this respect, all options (which encompass sites with relatively large areas) have the potential to deliver wider benefits for the community. However, this might be challenging for the areas proposed through Option C and Option D (Site BD6, Site BD8, and Site BD12) given the land ownership issues at these locations, and the potential difficulties associated with bringing forward a coordinated and master planned design across multiple site areas. Additionally, Site BD6 is provisionally allocated for employment uses within the West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options consultation document. This could potentially reduce the capacity for housing, contributing less to local targets.

