

**Babergh and Mid Suffolk District
Councils**

Joint Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Final report

Prepared by LUC
January 2026

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

Joint Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

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12747

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 LUC was appointed in January 2024 to carry out Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 2 ('the Part 2 JLP'). At the time, the Part 2 JLP was intended to be prepared following adoption of the Part 1 JLP in November 2023. However, since publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024, the Councils decided to proceed instead with a full Joint Local Plan review ('the JLP Review') and LUC will be undertaking the SA/SEA throughout the plan-making process.

1.2 SA is an assessment of a plan's environmental, social and economic impacts and aims to promote sustainable development. SEA is a legally required assessment of significant environmental effects, mandated by the SEA Directive (transposed into UK law through the SEA Regulations).

1.3 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both using a single appraisal process (as advocated in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance)¹, whereby users can comply with the requirements of the SEA Regulations through a single integrated SA/SEA process. This is the process that is being undertaken for the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP Review and within this report the term 'SA' should be taken to mean 'SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Regulations'.

Environmental Outcomes Reports

1.4 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 sets out in detail the Government's proposals for reforming the current system by replacing SA with Environmental Outcomes Reports (EORs). The specific requirements will be set out in forthcoming legislation, but it is likely EORs will focus specifically on environmental effects – similar to SEA. As EORs have not formally been introduced, SA incorporating SEA (i.e. SA) continued to be undertaken.

1.5 SA is an assessment process designed to consider and report upon the significant sustainability issues and effects of emerging plans and policies, including their reasonable alternatives. SA iteratively informs the plan-making process by

¹ MHCLG (2020). Planning Practice Guidance. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>)

helping to refine the contents of such documents, so that they maximise the benefits of sustainable development and avoid, or at least minimise, the potential for adverse effects.

SA Scoping Report

1.6 The purpose of this SA Scoping Report is to provide the context for and determine the scope of the SA of the JLP Review and to set out the assessment framework for undertaking the later stages of the SA.

1.7 The Scoping Report contains chapters on a number of sustainability topics, each of which starts by setting out the policy context for the JLP Review, before describing the current and likely future environmental, social and economic conditions in the plan area. This contextual information has been used to identify the key sustainability issues and opportunities for the JLP Review to address them.

1.8 The purpose of this Scoping consultation is to seek views on the proposed approach to the SA, in particular:

- Whether there are any additional plans, policies or programmes that are relevant to the SA that should be included.
- Whether the baseline information provided is robust and comprehensive and provides a suitable baseline for the SA of the JLP Review.
- Whether there are any additional key sustainability issues relevant to the plan area that should be included.
- Whether the proposed SA framework (**Chapter 11**) is appropriate and includes a suitable set of SA objectives.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Review

1.9 Babergh and Mid Suffolk are predominantly rural districts covering the centre of Suffolk, running from the boundary with Essex in the south to the boundary with Norfolk in the north. The districts cover a combined area of over 1,400 square kilometres (540 square miles), with 234 parish and town councils and thriving market towns.

1.10 The two district council areas have a lot in common, such as the proportion of residents living in urban and rural areas and other social and economic characteristics. As such, they face similar challenges and opportunities. These challenges and opportunities have drawn both authorities together administratively and since 2011, the authorities have worked together to deliver council services in response to the challenges facing local government.

1.11 In December 2024, the Government announced new housing requirements for every district and borough council in the country. At the time, this increased the figure for Babergh

to 775 homes a year (up 86%), and for Mid Suffolk to 734 (up 37%). The Government updates these requirements annually through the publication of revised affordability ratio and housing stock figures. As at December 2025, the revised figure for Babergh was 779 homes per year and for Mid Suffolk was 748 homes per year. To ensure the housing figures can be met when the adopted Part 1 JLP becomes five years old in November 2028, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are preparing the JLP Review, which will plan to the mid-2040s. Until November 2028, the housing requirement remains that set out in the adopted Part 1 JLP, which is 416 homes a year in Babergh and 535 homes a year in Mid Suffolk. At present both councils can demonstrate a five-year housing land supply with 5.34 years in Babergh and 7.70 years in Mid Suffolk.

1.12 If the councils cannot demonstrate a five-year land supply, there is a risk that national planning policies would start to take priority over the Joint Local Plan – and the councils may find themselves in a position where they are required to approve planning applications on sites contrary to the development plan.

1.13 Under the latest guidance, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils must commence plan-making during 2026, publishing their notice of intention to commence local plan preparation by 30th June 2026 and reaching Gateway 1 (self-assessment of readiness for local plan preparation) by 31st October 2026. The Councils are therefore acting promptly to respond to this guidance.

1.14 The location and extent of the plan area, which incorporates both council areas, is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

Extant plans for Babergh District

1.15 The current Development Plan for Babergh consists of:

- Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 (2023).
- Saved policies of the Core Strategy (2014) (the majority of the policies in the Core Strategy have been superseded by the JLP Part 1, however, five policies are 'saved').
- Saved policies of the Babergh Local Plan (2006) (the majority of the policies in the Local Plan have been superseded by the JLP Part 1, however, four policies are 'saved').
- Adopted Neighbourhood Plans.

Extant plans for Mid Suffolk District

1.16 For Mid Suffolk, the Development Plan consists of:

- Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 (2023).

- Saved policies of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan (2013) (the majority of the policies in the Area Action Plan have been superseded by the JLP Part 1, however, 24 policies are 'saved').
- Adopted Neighbourhood Plans.

1.17 The JLP Review will replace the Part 1 JLP and the Saved Policies for both districts.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.18 Under the amended Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004², SA is mandatory for Development Plan Documents. SA is designed to ensure that the plan preparation process maximises the contribution that a plan makes to sustainable development and minimises any potential adverse impacts. The SA process involves appraising the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the policies and proposals within a plan from the outset of its development.

1.19 For these documents it is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633), as amended by The Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232)³. As set out in the explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Brexit amendments, they are necessary to ensure the law functions correctly following the UK's exit from the EU. No substantive changes are being made by this instrument to the way the SEA regime operates. Therefore, the SEA Regulations remain in force and it is a legal requirement for Babergh and Mid Suffolk's Joint Local Plan Review to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation. Furthermore, following the UK's exit from the EU, there were also a wide range of other EU Directives relating to issues such as water quality, waste and air quality, most of which are transposed into UK law through Acts, Regulations and national-level policy. The UK has now fully left the EU and therefore EU Directives no longer apply to the UK.

1.20 The SA process comprises a number of stages, with scoping being Stage A as shown below.

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.

Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects.

Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

Stage D: Consulting on the Local Plan and the SA Report.

Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan.

1.21 On 26 October 2023, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill received Royal Assent and became an Act of Parliament. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act sets out in detail the Government's proposals for reforming the planning system. Amongst other things, the Act sets the stage for the reform of the current system of strategic environmental assessments, which will be replaced by "Environmental Outcomes Reports" (EORs) designed to streamline the process for identifying and assessing the environmental impacts of plans and projects. The specific requirements will be set out in forthcoming legislation, along with information about transition arrangements but for now, the requirement for SEA remains, as set out in existing legislation. Any changes to the legal framework for carrying out SA/SEA will be addressed as appropriate as the JLP Review is prepared.

Habitats Regulations Assessments

1.22 The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of land-use plans was confirmed by the amendments to The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007⁴. The currently applicable version is The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019⁵ (hereafter referred to as the "Habitats Regulations"). When preparing a land-use plan, the competent authority is therefore required by law to carry out an HRA. The competent authority can commission consultants to undertake HRA work on its behalf which is then reported to and considered by the competent authority.

1.23 The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European Site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the

² The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 was amended under the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (EU Exit) Regulations 2018

³ *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633), as amended by The Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232)*

⁴ The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (2007) SI No. 2007/1843. TSO (The Stationery Office), London

⁵ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (2017) SI No. 2017/1012, as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/579), TSO (The Stationery Office), London

integrity of that site. The competent authority will consider the HRA and may only progress the land-use plan if it considers that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site or have a significant effect on qualifying habitats or species for which the European sites are designated, or if Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) are identified.

1.24 The HRA for the JLP Review will be undertaken separately but the findings will be taken into account in the SA where relevant (for example to inform judgements about the likely effects of potential development locations on biodiversity).

Approach to Scoping

1.25 There are five tasks involved at the Scoping Stage:

Stage A1: Setting out the policy context for the SA of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP Review (i.e. key government policies and strategies that influence what the Local Plan and the SA needs to consider).

Stage A2: Setting out the baseline for the SA of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP Review (i.e. the current and likely future environmental, social and economic conditions in Babergh and Mid Suffolk).

Stage A3: Drawing on A1 and A2, identify the particular sustainability problems and/or opportunities ('issues') that the JLP Review and the SA should address.

Stage A4: Drawing on A1, A2 and A3, develop a framework of SA objectives and assessment criteria to appraise the constituent parts of the JLP Review in isolation and in combination.

Stage A5: Consultation on the scope of the SA.

1.26 This Scoping Report fulfils the requirements set out above with a view to establishing the likely significant effects of constituent parts of the JLP Review in isolation and in combination. In accordance with national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), published online by the Government, the Scoping Report should be proportionate and relevant to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP Review, focussing on what is needed to identify and assess the likely significant effects.

Meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations

1.27 **Table 1.1** below signposts the relevant sections of the Scoping Report that are considered to meet the SEA Regulations requirements (the remainder will be met during subsequent stages of the SA of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP Review). This table will be included in the SA Report at

each stage of plan-making to show how the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met through the SA process.

Structure of the Scoping Report

1.28 This chapter describes the background to the review of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP and the requirement to undertake SA and other assessment processes. The remainder of this Scoping Report is structured around a set of SA topic areas designed to draw out the full range of possible sustainability effects generated by the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP Review, including all the SEA topics listed in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations.

1.29 **Chapter 2** provides further background on the context for the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP Review, describing the relationship between the JLP Review and other plans and programmes. Each of the subsequent chapters set out the policy context and baseline for each SA subject area. The subject area chapters are as follows:

- **Chapter 3:** Community, health and wellbeing, housing and accessibility.
- **Chapter 4:** Economy and employment.
- **Chapter 5:** Transport and pollution.
- **Chapter 6:** Natural resources.
- **Chapter 7:** Climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- **Chapter 8:** Biodiversity.
- **Chapter 9:** Historic environment.
- **Chapter 10:** Landscape.

1.30 **Chapters 3 to 10** highlight the key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk under each subject area and also set out their likely evolution without the JLP Review.

1.31 **Chapter 11** sets out the SA framework and the proposed method for the appraisal.

1.32 **Chapter 12** summarises the consultation questions on the SA Scoping Report and sets out next steps.

Table 1.1 Meeting the Requirements of the SEA Regulations

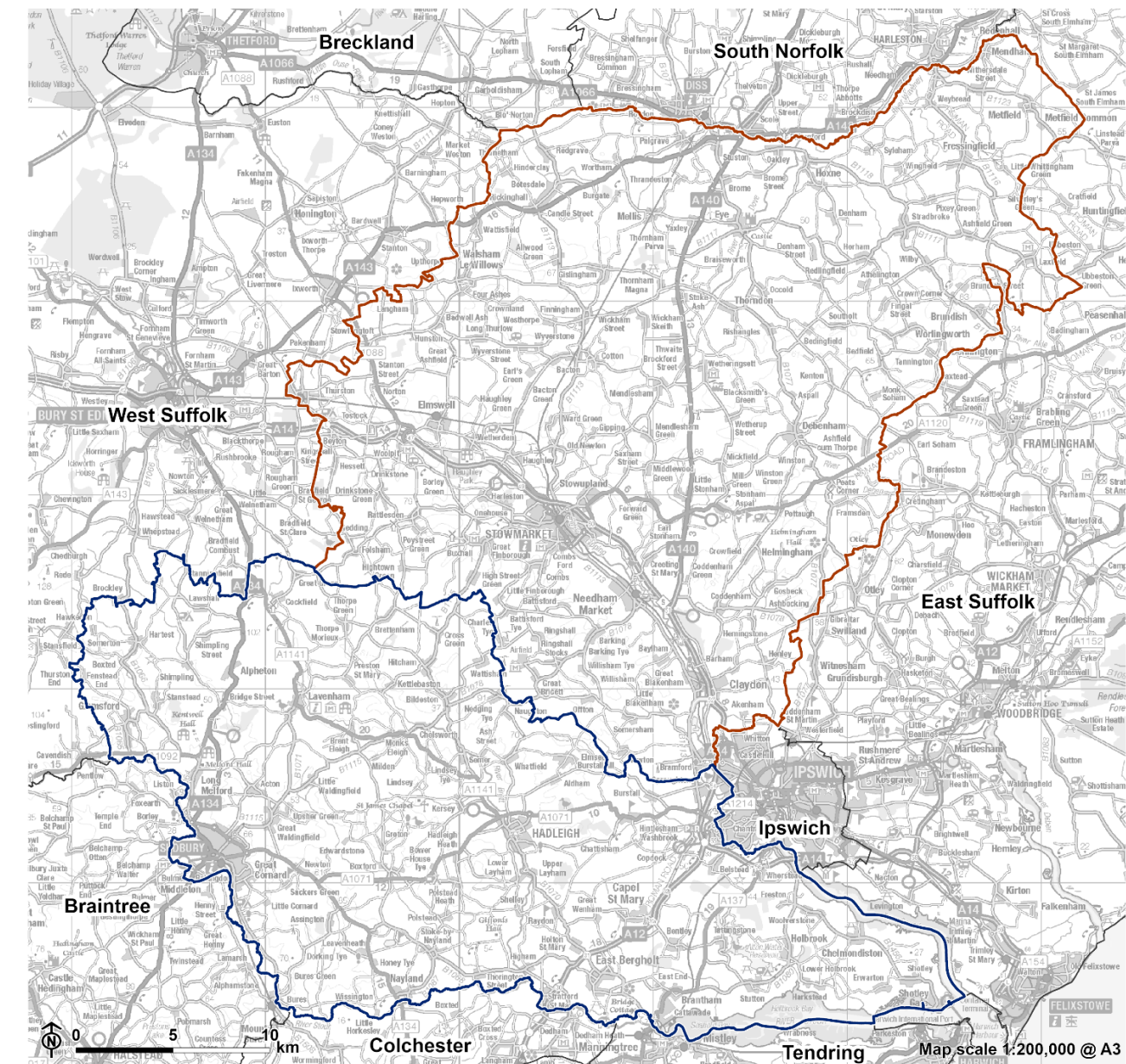
SEA Regulations' Requirements	Covered in this Scoping Report?
Environmental Report	
<p>Where an environmental assessment is required by any provision of Part 2 of these Regulations, the responsible authority shall prepare, or secure the preparation of, an environmental report in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of this regulation. The report shall identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ implementing the plan or programme; and ■ reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme. <p>(Regulation 12(1) and (2) and Schedule 2).</p>	<p>The full SA Report produced to accompany Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' (BMSDC's) Joint Local Plan Review will constitute the 'environmental report' as well and will be produced at a later stage in the SA process.</p>
An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.	<p>These requirements are addressed in Chapters 3-10 of this SA Scoping Report.</p>
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.	
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and the Habitats Directive.	
The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	
<p>The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) biodiversity; (b) population; (c) human health; (d) fauna; (e) flora; (f) soil; (g) water; (h) air; (i) climatic factors; (j) material assets; (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; (l) landscape; and 	<p>Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process. This SA Scoping Report describes the method by which significant effects will be identified.</p>

SEA Regulations' Requirements	Covered in this Scoping Report?
(m) the interrelationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (l).	
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with regulation 17.	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 9.	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
<p>The report shall include such of the information referred to in Schedule 2 to these Regulations as may reasonably be required, taking account of:</p> <p>current knowledge and methods of assessment;</p> <p>the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme;</p> <p>the stage of the plan or programme in the decision-making process; and</p> <p>the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (3))</p>	This SA Scoping Report and the Environmental Report will adhere to this requirement.
Consultation	
<p>When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the environmental report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies.</p> <p>(Regulation 12(5))</p>	This SA Scoping Report will be published for consultation with the three statutory bodies (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England).
<p>Every draft plan or programme for which an environmental report has been prepared in accordance with regulation 12 and its accompanying report ("the relevant documents") shall be made available for the purposes of consultation in accordance with the following provisions of this regulation.</p> <p>As soon as reasonably practical after the preparation of the relevant documents, the responsible authority shall:</p> <p>send a copy of those documents to each consultation body;</p> <p>take such steps as it considers appropriate to bring the preparation of the relevant documents to the attention of the persons who, in the authority's opinion, are affected or likely to be affected by, or have an interest in the decisions involved in the assessment and adoption of the plan or programme concerned, required under the Environmental</p>	Public consultation on the Joint Local Review and accompanying SA Reports will take place as the Joint Local Plan Review develops.

SEA Regulations' Requirements	Covered in this Scoping Report?
<p>Assessment of Plans and Programmes Directive ("the public consultees");</p> <p>inform the public consultees of the address (which may include a website) at which a copy of the relevant documents may be viewed, and the period within which, opinions must be sent.</p> <p>The period referred to in paragraph (2) (d) must be of such length as will ensure that the consultation bodies and the public consultees are given an effective opportunity to express their opinion on the relevant documents.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1), (2), and (3))</p>	
<p>Where a responsible authority, other than the Secretary of State, is of the opinion that a plan or programme for which it is the responsible authority is likely to have significant effects on the environment of another Member State, it shall, as soon as reasonably practicable after forming that opinion:</p> <p>notify the Secretary of State of its opinion and of the reasons for it; and</p> <p>supply the Secretary of State with a copy of the plan or programme concerned, and of the accompanying environmental report.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1))</p>	<p>Unlikely to be relevant to the Joint Local Plan Review, as there will be no effects beyond the UK.</p>
<p>Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (relevant extracts of Regulation 16)</p>	
<p>As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme for which an environmental assessment has been carried out under these Regulations, the responsible authority shall:</p> <p>make a copy of the plan or programme and its accompanying environmental report available at its principal office for inspection by the public at all reasonable times and free of charge.</p> <p>(Regulation 16(1))</p>	<p>Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.</p>
<p>As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme:</p> <p>the responsible authority shall inform (i) the consultation bodies; (ii) the persons who, in relation to the plan or programme, were public consultees for the purposes of regulation 13; and (iii) where the responsible authority is not the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State,</p> <p>that the plan or programme has been adopted, and a statement containing the following particulars:</p> <p>how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;</p> <p>how the environmental report has been taken into account;</p> <p>how opinions expressed in response to: (i) the invitation in regulation 13(2)(d); (ii) action taken by the responsible</p>	<p>Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.</p>

SEA Regulations' Requirements	Covered in this Scoping Report?
<p>authority in accordance with regulation 13(4), have been taken into account;</p> <p>how the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;</p> <p>the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</p> <p>the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.</p>	
Monitoring	
<p>The responsible authority shall monitor the significant effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action.</p> <p>(Regulation 17(1))</p>	Requirement will be met after adoption of the Joint Local Plan Review.

Figure 1.1 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Review area



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Figure 1.1: Location of Babergh and Mid Suffolk plan area

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority

Chapter 2

Context for the Joint Local Plan Review

Relationship of the Joint Local Plan Review with other plans and programmes

2.1 It is a requirement of the SEA Regulations to describe the relationship of the plan to be subject to SA/SEA with other relevant plans and programmes.

2.2 This section therefore describes, firstly, other plans that will form part of the development plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk, and, secondly, the current status of other plans and programmes that may combine with the JLP Review to give rise to cumulative effects, such as the Local Plans of neighbouring authorities and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. Topic-specific plans and policies relevant to the JLP Review are summarised in **Chapters 3-10**.

Neighbourhood Development Plans

2.3 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs), once adopted, form part of the development plan for a local authority area.

2.4 As of December 2025, there are 50 'made' (adopted) NDPs within Babergh and Mid Suffolk. These are as follows:

- **Acton Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037 (2024):** New development will be focused within the existing defined settlement boundaries for Acton and Newman's Green, and new development will only be supported where it satisfies identified local needs and is of a scale that is compatible with the level of services and facilities in the village.
- **Aldham Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 (2020):** Provision has been made for around 15 dwellings. The Neighbourhood Plan also contains a policy on recreational disturbance mitigation, to avoid adverse in-combination recreational disturbance effects on European sites. The Neighbourhood Plan is currently under review.
- **Assington Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out that a minimum of 38 new homes, including outstanding planning permissions, will be built in Assington between 2018 and 2036. The plan seeks to prioritise to smaller units and affordable housing. The Neighbourhood Plan states that the Parish Council will work with Babergh and Mid Suffolk District

Councils to establish a Conservation Area, which will mirror the Assington Special Character Area.

- **Baylham Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2037 (2025):** The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to focus new development within the defined settlement boundary where the principle of development is accepted. Proposals for development outside of the defined settlement boundary will only be permitted where they are in accordance with national, district and neighbourhood level policies and where they would not have a detrimental impact on heritage and landscape designations.
- **Bentley Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037 (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan states that residential development proposals will be permitted subject to them maintaining and enhancing the quiet and tranquil character of the village and its setting.
- **Beyton Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2037 (2024):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for around 37 additional dwellings between 2018 and 2037. The plan specifically allocates two sites to help deliver this number of dwellings (some will be met through existing planning permissions and windfall sites). In addition, proposals for the conversion of redundant or disused agricultural barns outside the Settlement Boundary into dwellings will be supported in certain circumstances.
- **Botesdale & Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2036 (2020):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for a minimum of 200 dwellings to be developed up to 2036. The Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies relating to the design of development.
- **Boxford Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2037 (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out that a minimum of 13 dwellings will be accommodated over the plan period in Boxford. New development in Boxford is to be focused within the defined settlement boundaries of Boxford village, Stone Street and Calais Street. Land has been allocated for approximately seven new dwellings and a new car park at Stone Street Road. It also includes policies that address the design of new development in the plan area.
- **Brettenham Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2037 (2024):** The Neighbourhood Plan supports new development within the settlement boundaries. Where development is proposed outside of settlement boundaries, proposals will only be permitted where they are in accordance with national, district and neighbourhood level policies. Development outside the settlement boundaries will need to be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- **Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2037 (2025):** Development must be commensurate with the settlement hierarchy defined in the adopted Local Plan. The focus for new development will be within the settlement boundary where the principle of development is accepted. Development outside the settlement boundary will only be permitted where it is in accordance with national, district and neighbourhood level policies, and where they would not have a detrimental impact on the landscape.
- **Chelmondiston Neighbourhood Plan (Chelpin Plan) 2020-2036 (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out that new development in Chelmondiston will be focused in the defined settlement boundaries for Chelmondiston, Pin Mill and Lings Lane. All new development must respond positively to the key attributes of the neighbourhood area and the key local design features of the settlement within which it is located.
- **The Copdock & Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2037 (2025):** Development must be commensurate with Copdock and Washbrook's designation in the settlement hierarchy of the adopted Local Plan and the focus for new development will be within the settlement boundaries. Proposals for development outside the settlement boundaries will only be supported where they are in accordance with national and district level policies and where they would not have a detrimental impact on heritage and landscape designations, and highway safety, and would not undermine important gaps between settlements.
- **Debenham Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2036 (2019):** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out that around 316 new dwellings can be developed in Debenham at the below listed sites. The Neighbourhood Plan also identifies an anticipated windfall allowance of 54 dwellings. It is currently under review.
 - Land north of Ipswich Road (60-140 dwellings).
 - Land south of Low Road (15-35 dwellings).
 - Land east of Aspoll Road (37-87 dwellings).
- **Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2038 (2023):** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out that during the Plan period around 434 new homes will be developed across Diss and District. With regard to the Suffolk part of the neighbourhood area, the minimum housing requirement is set at 64 new homes. The plan includes proposals for the regeneration of the Waveney Quarter, promoting the growth of leisure and community facilities.
- **Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 (2020):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for ten additional

dwelling to be built in the period 2016 to 2036. The following sites are allocated for housing development:

- Land west of The Street (one dwelling);
- Abbots Lodge (one dwelling);
- Adjacent to Greyfriars, Rattlesden (one dwelling);
- Briar Cottage, Gedding Road (one dwelling); and
- Land West of Shortgate, Beyton Road (two dwellings).

■ **East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030 (2016):**

A minimum of 86 new homes will be developed in East Bergholt, within or immediately adjacent to the village Built Up Area Boundaries. The plan seeks to establish a Community Land Trust as a means of delivering homes, including affordable homes, with up to one third of new homes being designed to meet the needs of older people. The East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan is currently under review.

■ **Edwardstone Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2037 (2024):**

The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for new housing where there are located within the existing defined settlement boundaries of Mill Green or Sherbourne Street, and meet the criteria outlined in Policy EDW1: Location and scale of new housing development. Development outside the defined settlement boundaries will only be supported in certain circumstances, as also outlined in Policy EDW1.

■ **Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037 (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan does not provide details on the amount and future location of any further housing growth in Elmswell. However, it identifies nine Local Green Spaces to be safeguarded as well as setting out policy relating to a number of topic areas including the protection of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities. The plan also includes policy for the protection of important identified views that must not be adversely affected by development. The plan is currently under review.

■ **Elmswell Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037 (2023):** The Neighbourhood Area will accommodate development commensurate with its designation as a Key Service Centre in the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy and a Core Village in the Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan. The focus for new development will be within the Settlement Boundaries, as defined on the Policies Map. The Neighbourhood Plan also supports the retention and development of existing employment and other business uses.

■ **Eye Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 (2021):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for around 716 homes to be developed in the plan area between 2018 and 2036. Residential development sites in the plan area are to provide for 163 affordable homes and 70 sheltered homes. Policy is included in the plan to require that within the settlement boundary, development proposals should conserve and where possible enhance the conservation area and its setting and should respect local distinctiveness. This plan is currently under review.

■ **Fressingfield Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 (2020):**

The Neighbourhood Plan is set out to address a minimum housing figure of 56 dwellings, with committed development already totalling 51 dwellings. The focus of additional new development will be expected to take place within the settlement boundary. Encouragement will be given to a wide range of types of housing that meet local needs to enable a mixed and inclusive community. Support is provided through the Neighbourhood Plan for the development of the 'Fressingfield Hub' within the parish during the plan period, to provide a multi-purpose facility for the community. This plan is currently under review.

■ **Great Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037 (2023):**

The Neighbourhood Plan includes policy that sets out a general presumption in favour of housing development in the form of small brownfield "windfall" sites and infill plots of one or two dwellings to ensure that housing meets specific needs. It also includes policies to address a number of topic areas including the natural environment, historic environment, design, services and facilities, highways and movement and employment and business.

■ **Hadleigh Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2037 (2025):**

According to this Neighbourhood Plan, development will meet the requirements set out in the Part 1 JLP and co-housing schemes will be strongly supported. These schemes should provide a range of shared facilities and common spaces that meet the needs of prospective residents.

■ **Haughley Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2036 (2019):**

Three sites have been identified in the plan for residential development, as listed below. Commercial and industrial developments will also be supported within the Neighbourhood Plan area, where they are situated on brownfield sites. Policies are also included in the plan on the design of new development, in addition to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

- Land east of King George V Playing Field (98 new homes)

- Land at Station Road, east of Millfields (18-31 new homes)
- Land west of Fishponds Way (25-50 new homes)
- **Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan (2025):** The Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with the designation of Hitcham in the adopted settlement hierarchy, taking into account the rural character of the parish. Within the defined settlement boundary, proposals for small windfall sites consisting of individual dwellings or small groups of up to six dwellings will only be supported where they are physically connected to the existing built-up area and would enhance its form, character and setting.
- **Holbrook Neighbourhood Plan (2023):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for a minimum of 65 new dwellings over the plan period to 2037. The edges of the Parish have a number of significant constraints and landscape sensitivities which require development to be focused within the settlement boundaries. As such, small infill developments are considered to be the most appropriate method to ensure sustainable development.
- **Hoxne Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037 (2024):** The Neighbourhood Plan for around 66 new dwellings over the plan period, which includes 13 dwellings already granted planning permission, but which are yet to be completed. According to the plan, all new development proposals will be expected to deliver a mix of house types and sizes.
- **Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031 (2016):** This Neighbourhood Plan states that residential development proposals will be permitted subject to them being located within or adjacent to the built-up area of Lavenham, and that development must respect views in and out of the village. A change of use to the existing school site to meet local retirement and care home needs will be supported, and a number of open spaces and recreation areas have been safeguarded. The Retail Core Area will also be protected and enhanced. The Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan is currently under review.
- **Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2037 (2024):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for around 26 additional dwellings to be developed between 2021 and 2037. This growth will be met through the completion of existing planning permissions and the development of small brownfield windfall sites and infill plots of one of two dwellings within the Settlement Boundaries.
- **Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for around 110 additional dwellings to be developed in the plan area between 2018 and 2036. This level of housing development is to be met partly through the allocation of Land off Cullingford Close. The plan sets out a community action to establish a Community Land Trust as a means of delivering homes, including affordable homes.
- **Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037 (2023):** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out that a minimum of 40 new homes will be provided up to 2037. Housing development will be supported within or immediately adjacent to the settlement boundaries of Harrow Street, High Road and Honey Tye.
- **Little Cornard Neighbourhood Plan (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out that the area of Cornard Mere and Great Cornard Country Park is one of the most important environmental assets in the wider area. It also identifies that the Mere is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is therefore of national importance. These areas are protected by policy in the Neighbourhood Plan, and acceptable development proposals should maintain and enhance pedestrian connectivity between Cornard Mere and Great Cornard Country Park. Furthermore, all development proposals are expected by policy in the plan, to conserve the scenic beauty of the parish.
- **Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood 2018-2037 (2022):** This plan provides for around 10 additional dwellings to be developed in the plan area between 2018 and 2036. Two sites have been identified for housing development. These are:
 - Land adjoining The Swan PH, The Street (one dwelling and one conversion - Babergh DC ref DC/19/01283);
 - Land at The Grange, The Street (one dwelling - Babergh ref DC/20/00899).
- **Long Melford Neighbourhood Plan (2022):** The plan provides for around 444 dwellings to be built over the period 2018 to 2037, although it is currently under review. The plan has identified a number of sites to be allocated:
 - Two brownfield sites in the centre of the village and one further central residential site;
 - A site at the southern end of the village potentially suited to a mixed development.
 - A greenfield site at the north end of the village, and
 - A greenfield site at the south of the village that will complement existing linear development.
- **Mendlesham Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037 (2022):** A minimum of 161 new homes are to be provided up to

2037. The plan is clear that any significant increase on this figure will need to demonstrate that existing local services infrastructure will be able to cope or, if not, that appropriate measures will be provided as part of development proposals. The Neighbourhood Plan requires development to include a suitable contribution of, or contribution towards, functional green areas for recreational purposes.

- **Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2037 (2022):** The Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan supports the delivery of a minimum of 512 homes during the plan period up to 2037 in accordance with requirements of the emerging JLP. It sets out policies to support the provision of an appropriate mix of housing the plan area, the achievement of good design and layout at new developments, the successful functioning of the town centre, the provision of required levels of infrastructure and protection of the natural environment. Policy to focus employment generating development towards the Lion Barn Estate is also included. This plan is currently under review.
- **Newton Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037 (2021):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for at least 23 new homes by 2037. Within the settlement boundary, there is a general presumption in favour of residential development in the form of infill and redevelopment sites. Four Local Green Spaces have been safeguarded.
- **Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037 (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for at least 11 new homes by 2037. A site of approximately 0.53 hectares at Churchway is allocated for new housing development of approximately eight dwellings. Furthermore, The Neighbourhood Plan requires that new housing development will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that sufficient supporting infrastructure (physical, medical, educational, green and digital) is available to meet the needs of that development.
- **Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037 (2023):** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out the spatial strategy for Sproughton whereby development proposals within the settlement boundaries will be supported in principle. Policy is included to require that in all housing developments of ten or more homes, at least 60% shall be three-bedroomed homes unless it can be demonstrated that this is not possible. The plan also supports high-quality and eco-friendly development design and seeks to reduce the environmental impact of new buildings. This plan is currently under review.
- **Stowupland Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2036 (2019):** This Neighbourhood Plan provides for at least 203 new homes by 2036. Within the settlement boundaries for Stowupland and Saxham Street, there is a general presumption in favour of residential development in the form of infill and redevelopment sites, and small groups of approximately ten dwellings. Proposals for development on sites of one hectare or more on the best and most versatile agricultural land will not be supported, unless it cannot be demonstrated that land of a poorer quality is not available. Green and blue infrastructure will be protected and strengthened.
- **Stradbroke Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2036 (2019):** This Neighbourhood Plan provides for a minimum of 219 dwellings to be built in the period 2016 to 2036 and the below listed sites are allocated for development. The Neighbourhood Plan also sets out detailed design principles and encourages the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The expansion of education and health capacity within the village is also promoted. The Neighbourhood Plan is currently under review.
 - Land north of Laxfield Road (32-45 dwellings)
 - Land east of Farriers Close (25-35 dwellings)
 - Land south of New Street (43-60 dwellings)
 - Land south of Mill Lane (approximately 75 dwellings)
 - Land at Grove Farm (44 dwellings)
- **Stutton Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037 (2023):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for at least 65 new homes up to 2037. The majority of these will be delivered within the settlement boundary. The plan emphasises the importance of and prioritises affordable housing provision. Policy is also included to set out the approach to the design of new development and a Stutton specific Design Checklist is included in support of this.
- **Thorndon Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for a minimum of 55 dwellings to be developed up to 2036. The Neighbourhood Plan also sets out policy to address the design of new development.
- **Thurston Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2036 (2019):** New development in Thurston Parish shall be focused within the settlement boundary of Thurston Village. All housing proposals of five or more units must reflect Thurston's needs across all tenures, including the needs of older people. This plan is currently under review.
- **Walsham le Willows Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2037 (2023):** The Neighbourhood Plan requires that new development in Walsham le Willows must respect the local distinctiveness and character of the parish and

seek to enhance its quality. The plan sets out a small number of housing allocations. These are:

- LA091 – Allocation: Land west of Wattisfield Road, Walsham le Willows Size of site – 2.7ha (approximately 60 dwellings with associated infrastructure).
- LA092 – Allocation: Land east of Wattisfield Road, Walsham le Willows Site Size 0.53 (approximately 22 dwellings with associated infrastructure).

- **Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037 (2024):** According to the Neighbourhood Plan, the scale of new housing within the parish during the plan period will reflect its position within the adopted Local Plan settlement hierarchy. The focus for new development will be the defined settlement boundaries at Wetheringsett (Church), Brockford Street and Wetherup Street/Park Green. New infill or windfall development within these defined settlement boundaries will be small scale and proposals should maintain the area's form, character and setting.
- **Whatfield Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037 (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan accords with the total housing requirement for Whatfield of one dwelling, as set out in the JLP. The plan states that within the defined settlement boundary for Whatfield, development proposals for windfall development in the form of individual dwellings or small groups of houses up to five dwellings will be supported, subject to a number of criteria being met. The Neighbourhood Plan contains additional policies relating to the protection of landscape setting, community facilities and housing mix. It also contains an area specific Design Guide, prescribing design styles, materials and layouts for new developments.
- **Wherstead Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037 (2023):** The spatial strategy set out in the Neighbourhood Plan states new development will be supported in principle within the settlement boundaries, Wherstead Park Strategic Employment Site, existing employment sites or land with planning permission for major development. A large extent of the Parish is within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Landscape. The plan is clear that new development should have regard to the character and setting of the National Landscape. The plan therefore includes a number of policies to protect the National Landscape, important views and dark skies as well as habitats and corridors.
- **Wilby Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 (2021):** The Neighbourhood Plan provides for around 16 dwellings to be developed in the plan area between April 2018 and

March 2036 of which 11 dwellings are already committed. To help meet this target to the plan allocates a site for five dwellings at the Land East of Stradbroke Road. Policy in the plan requires that all new housing developments should reflect Wilby's local distinctiveness and character and should seek to enhance its quality.

- **Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan (2022):** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out that development is to be supported in Woolpit where it is within the capacity of the existing infrastructure and road layout of the village or provides the necessary additional capacity; is well related to the existing pattern of development; and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in the village. The plan also includes policy that identifies the Land south of Old Stowmarket Road as an existing commitment for up to 120 homes.

2.5 As of December 2025, there are 26 Neighbourhood Development Plans in progress within Babergh and Mid Suffolk:

- Aldham;
- Bacton;
- Badwell Ash;
- Battisford;
- Bildeston;
- Brantham;
- Bures;
- Chilton;
- Debenham;
- East Bergholt;
- Elmsett;
- Glemsford;
- Great Cornard;
- Groton;
- Hartest;
- Hessest;
- Hintlesham & Chattisham;
- Lavenham;
- Occold;
- Old Newton & Dagworth;
- Onehouse;

- Shimpling;
- Stanstead;
- Stradbroke;
- Stoke by Nayland; and
- Tattingstone.

Suffolk County Council

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

2.6 The Suffolk Minerals & Waste Local Plan (SWMLP) was adopted by Suffolk County Council in July 2020. The SWMLP allocates nine sites for the extraction of sand and gravel sufficient to supply 9.300 Mt over the plan period to the end of 2036. The Plan also states that the County Council will seek to maintain a landbank of permitted reserves of at least seven years based upon the average of the last ten years' sales.

2.7 Although there are significant quantities of Local Authority Collected Waste, Commercial & Industrial Waste, Construction, Demolition & Excavation Waste, and Hazardous Waste managed within Suffolk, the Suffolk Waste Study concluded that there is no immediate shortfall in waste management capacity for these waste streams. Therefore, the SWMLP states that applications for new facilities would be considered in the normal way.

Local Transport Plan

2.8 Suffolk Local Transport Plan covers the period 2025 to 2040. It is in two parts:

- Part 1: 15-year strategy.
- Part 2: implementation plans.

2.9 Part 1 comprises four priority themes:

- Decarbonisation of transport;
- A strong, sustainable and fair economy;
- Health, wellbeing and social inclusion; and
- Creating better places.

2.10 Part 2 comprises 15 implementation plans, five of which are relevant to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk plan area: Hadleigh, Ipswich, Stowmarket, Sudbury and Thurston. These implementation plans indicate how Suffolk County Council is proposing to address the issues in these areas, as identified within Part 1.

Neighbouring authorities' local plans

2.11 Development in the BMSDC area will not be delivered in isolation from those areas around them. The effect of new

development and supporting infrastructure on neighbouring authority areas must therefore be considered as part of the SA. The BMSDC area is bordered by the following local authority areas, for which the below mentioned Local Plan documents are adopted or in preparation.

The North Essex Authorities

2.12 Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Braintree District Council have been working together on the strategic cross boundary issues present in North Essex. As a result, all three Local Plans share an identical Section 1 Local Plan, which includes policies on housing numbers and infrastructure, in addition to proposals for three new Garden Communities. The North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan was adopted by the three local councils in early 2021.

2.13 As set out in the Section 1 Local Plan, existing settlements will be the principal focus for additional growth across North Essex within the period 2013-2033. Development will be accommodated within or adjacent to settlements according to their scale, sustainability and existing role both within each individual district and, where relevant, across the wider strategic area. The identified total minimum housing supply for each council area over the period 2013-2033 is as follows:

- **Tendring:** 11,000 (550 per annum)
- **Colchester:** 18,400 (920 per annum)
- **Braintree:** 14,320 (716 per annum)

2.14 A proportion of this housing will be delivered through a new Garden Community:

- **Tendring/Colchester border:** a new garden community will deliver 2,500 new homes within the plan period (as part of an overall total of between 7,000 and 9,000 homes to be delivered beyond 2033).

2.15 A strong, sustainable and diverse economy will be promoted across North Essex, with each council pursuing a flexible approach to economic sectors showing growth potential across the plan period. The Section 1 Local Plan sets out a range of employment floorspace to be met in each local authority area:

- Braintree – 20.9 to 43.4ha
- Colchester – 22.0 to 30.0ha
- Tendring – 12.0 to 20.0ha

2.16 The Section 2 Local Plans of each local authority area will allocate employment land to ensure that provision is made within the ranges identified.

Tendring District Council

2.17 As mentioned previously, Section 1 of Tendring District Council's Local Plan was adopted in January 2021.

2.18 Section 2 of Tendring District Council's Local Plan has been prepared by Tendring District Council and contains policies and site allocations relating solely to the District. Section 2 was submitted for examination alongside Section 1 of the Publication Draft Local Plan in October 2017. Section 2 of the Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond was formally adopted in January 2022.

2.19 Section 2 of the Local Plan identifies some of the main challenges faced by the district and sets out the vision of this plan to be achieved by 2033. The plan identifies strategic priorities for achieving sustainable development in the plan area. The strategic priorities also set out the approach for economic growth in Tendring, meeting the social needs of a growing population and protecting places that make Tendring an attractive place to live, work and visit.

2.20 Section 2 of the plan also includes site specific policies that allocate strategic mixed-use sites, strategic housing sites for between 100 and 300 homes, medium sites to deliver between 10 and 100 homes, and strategic employment sites.

Colchester City Council

2.21 Section 1 of Colchester City Council's Local Plan was adopted in February 2021.

2.22 Section 2 of Colchester City Council's Local Plan was submitted for Examination at the same time as Section 1, in October 2017. It was adopted by Colchester City Council in July 2022.

2.23 The Section 2 Local Plan includes policies and maps for considering planning applications, and site allocations for new development for housing, employment, and infrastructure within Colchester only.

2.24 The Section 2 Local Plan sets out that at least 14,720 new homes are to be delivered in Colchester Borough between 2017 and 2033. The focus of growth is to be Colchester Urban Area, followed by Tendring / Colchester Borders Garden Community and the higher order settlements (i.e. the Sustainable Settlements) identified through the plan. The plan also allocates 32 ha of land to plan for the delivery of employment land up to 2033. An additional 3.5 hectares of employment land is expected to come forward in Colchester within the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community with a further 25 hectares to be allocated in the overall Garden Community for development post-2033.

2.25 Development within the Tendring / Colchester Garden Community, which straddles the boundary of the two districts, is to be guided by the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden

Community Development Plan Document (DPD). The DPD was submitted for examination in September 2023.

Braintree District Council

2.26 Section 1 of Braintree's Local Plan was adopted in February 2021.

2.27 Section 2 of Braintree District Council's Local Plan was submitted for examination in October 2017. Section 2 of the Local Plan was adopted in July 2022.

2.28 Section 2 of the Braintree Local Plan contains policies, maps and sites for development, housing, employment, regeneration within Braintree only.

2.29 The Section 2 Local Plan sets out that a minimum of 14,320 new homes will be delivered in Braintree between 2013 and 2033. Homes will be located primarily in the Main Towns and Key Service Villages. Strategic growth locations are identified at:

- East of Great Notley (in Black Notley Parish) (1,750 homes);
- Land East of Broad Road, Braintree (1,000 homes);
- Former Towerlands Park site, Braintree (575 homes);
- Land at Feering (795 homes);
- Wood End Farm, Witham (400 homes); and
- North West Braintree – Panfield Lane (825 homes).

2.30 According to Section 1 of the Local Plan, Braintree should deliver between 20.9 and 43.3ha of new employment land. The Section 2 Local Plan identifies 42.1ha of employment land through new strategic allocations.

West Suffolk Council

2.31 Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were replaced by a single district council on 1st April 2019, called West Suffolk Council. In July 2025, the new West Suffolk Local Plan 2024-2041 was adopted.

2.32 According to the adopted Local Plan, new homes will be directed towards the more sustainable settlements (Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket) in the settlement hierarchy where infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints allow. Provision of employment land will also be focused at these settlements, in addition to the towns and key service centres, and adjacent to existing rural employment areas. Provision is made for at least 13,005 new homes (765 homes per annum) and 90ha employment land.

Breckland Council

2.33 The Breckland Local Plan was adopted in November 2019. In order to meet future housing needs, the Local Plan seeks to provide no less than 15,289 new homes between 2011 and 2036, at an average of 612 dwellings per annum. The annualised level of new housing provision will increase during the plan period, from 584 per year from 2017/18-2021/22 to 622 per year from 2021/22. Housing growth will be distributed in line with the following individual settlement targets:

- **Key Settlements:** 50% (Attleborough and Thetford).
- **Market Towns:** 28% (Dereham, Swaffham and Watton).
- **Local Service Centres:** 15% (Ashill, Banham, Bawdeswell, Garboldisham, Great Ellingham, Harling, Hockering, Kenninghall, Litcham, Mattishall, Narborough, Necton, North Elmham, Old Buckenham, Shipdham, Sporle, Swanton Morley and Weeting).
- **Villages with Boundaries:** 7% (Beeston, Beetley, Carbrooke, Caston, Gressenhall, Griston, Hockham, Lyng, Mundford, North Lopham, Rocklands, Saham Toney, Thompson, Weasenham, Shopham, Eccles Road, Clint Green and Yaxham).

2.34 With regard to economic development, 64 hectares of employment land will be allocated for the period 2011-2036, at the following locations:

- **Attleborough:** at least 10 hectares;
- **Dereham:** at least 3 hectares;
- **Swaffham:** at least 8 hectares;
- **Thetford:** at least 22 hectares; and
- **Snetterton:** at least 20 hectares.

South Norfolk Council

2.35 South Norfolk Council has worked with Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council to develop the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), which was adopted in March 2024. The Local Plan provides for around 45,000 new homes and around 280ha of employment land. The majority of this new growth is to be focused towards the Norwich urban area.

East Suffolk Council

2.36 Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council were replaced by a single district council on 1 April 2019 called East Suffolk Council. There are two parts to the Local Plan in East Suffolk, the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and the Waveney Local Plan.

2.37 The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan covers the former Suffolk Coastal District area and was adopted in September 2020. The plan covers the period 2018-2036. The Local Plan supports the provision of 37,328 dwellings across the wider Ipswich Housing Market Area over the period 2018-2036. Additionally, it contributes towards the creation of at least 30,320 jobs through the provision of at least 49.8ha of employment land across the Ipswich Functional Economic Area. Within the plan area, provision is made for at least 9,756 houses and 11.7ha of land for employment uses over the period 2018-2036. Much of the growth for the plan area is focused at the communities related to the A12 (including at Saxmundham) as well as at Felixstowe (including Trimleys). The plan includes the delivery of new Garden Neighbourhoods at North Felixstowe and South Saxmundham.

2.38 The Waveney Local Plan was adopted in March 2019 and applies to the part of East Suffolk formerly covered by the Waveney local planning authority area. The Local Plan makes provision for the delivery of 8,223 dwellings in Waveney (374 per year) over the period 2014-2036. This new residential development will be distributed across the district as follows:

- **Lowestoft Area:** 56% of housing growth;
- **Beccles and Worlingham:** 16% of housing growth;
- **Halesworth and Holton:** 8% of housing growth;
- **Bungay:** 6% of housing growth;
- **Southwold and Reydon:** 4% of housing growth; and
- **Rural Area:** 10% of housing growth.

2.39 The Local Plan also seeks to maximise economic growth through the creation of 5,000 additional jobs in Waveney. To deliver this, provision has been made for 43 hectares of employment land for B1, B2 and B8 uses, and 2,200m² of convenience and 11,000m² of comparison retail floorspace. Employment land development will be focused mainly in Lowestoft and Beccles and distributed approximately as follows:

- **Lowestoft Area:** 60% of employment land development;
- **Beccles:** 25% of employment land development; and
- **Other Market Towns and Rural Areas:** 15% of employment land development.

2.40 60-70% of retail and leisure development will be focused in Lowestoft Town Centre, with 15% in Beccles. The remaining proportion of development should come from within District Centres, Local Centres and Market Towns.

2.41 East Suffolk Council is about to start work on a new Local Plan, which will set out how and where development, including new homes, employment land and infrastructure should take place up until at least 2044.

Ipswich Borough Council

2.42 The Ipswich Local Plan Review 2018-2036 was adopted in March 2022 and comprises the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review, in addition to the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document Review (Incorporating IP-One Area Action Plan).

2.43 According to the 2022 Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review, the council has a housing requirement of at least 8,280 dwellings for the period 2018-2036. The plan commits the council to the delivery of at least 460 dwellings per year across the plan period to meet need arising from Ipswich. The council will additionally allocate land to provide for at least 4,431 dwellings in the Borough. The Ipswich Garden Suburb development will contribute significantly to meeting the housing needs of the Borough throughout the plan period.

2.44 Sites are identified through the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document in accordance with the spatial strategy in the Core Strategy, in addition to the land allocated at the Ipswich Garden Suburb and the northern end of Humber Doucy Lane. 650 dwellings are expected to be delivered on small windfall sites between 2022 and 2036. The housing land supply for the plan period (2018-2036) will consist of:

- **Ipswich Garden Suburb (3,500 minus 205 completions expected late 2036 and 1,915 granted planning permission in January 2020): 1,380**
- **Northern end of Humber Doucy Lane allocated through Policy ISPA4: 449**
- **Site Allocations through the IP-One Area Action Plan: 2,880**
- **Windfall sites (2022-2036): 650 (50 per annum).**

2.45 With regard to employment, Ipswich Borough Council will encourage the provision of approximately 9,500 jobs in the Borough between 2018 and 2036 by allocating a range and choice of sites amounting to at least 23.2ha of land for employment development (in use classes B1, B2 and B8). The council will also protect existing employment land for employment use.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

2.46 Development in BMSDC could have an effect on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). NSIPs within and outside of BMSDC that may affect or be affected by development are set out below.

Bramford to Twinstead

2.47 Bramford to Twinstead will see the construction and operation of a new double circuit electricity transmission network reinforcement of around 29km, consisting of overhead lines, underground cables, a grid supply substation and associated development. The application was granted consent by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero in September 2024.

2.48 This project will strengthen the electricity transmission network and deliver cleaner and greener electricity, supporting the UK's move to net zero. There is potential for some adverse effects on the landscape where overhead lines are located.

Progress Power Station

2.49 A rapid response gas-fired power plant referred to as Progress Power, was granted planning permission on 23 July 2015 by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. The power station will be located in the north of BMSDC, 1km north west of the village of Eye, 4km south of the town of Diss and adjacent to the A140, which links Ipswich to Norwich.

2.50 The power station site covers an area of approximately 10ha and is located within the Eye Airfield business and industrial estates. There will be one stack (chimney) at the power station, up to 35 metres in height. A plume consisting mainly of water vapour may be visible from the stack under certain environmental conditions but will not cause harm to people or the environment. The emissions will be strictly limited by the Environment Agency as part of an operational Environmental Permit.

2.51 The noise produced during the power station's operation will be strictly limited by both the Development Consent Order issued by the Secretary of State and limits set by the Environment Agency as part of the operational Environmental Permit. The combustion of natural gas in a power station does not produce any noticeable odour.

2.52 There will be HGV traffic during the construction phase, but it would be routed to minimise congestion, noise and dirt away from Eye, Mellis and Yaxley, and other places. Once operational, there will be a negligible increase in traffic movements.

Bury St Edmunds to Colchester Pipeline

2.53 Anglian Water's proposals for a 69km pipeline between Bury St Edmunds and Colchester were submitted in late December 2022 and approved on 18th September. Main works on the project are expected to start in early 2024.

2.54 The Bury St Edmunds to Colchester Pipeline will run for 68km and includes new above-ground assets in seven

locations, including pumping stations. It is part of Anglian Water's Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) which looks 25 years ahead to manage and secure the water resources by safe-guarding against the potential future impacts of water scarcity, climate change and growth, while protecting the environment. The construction of the pipeline will require road closures in some locations, however, any impacts on traffic are expected to be temporary. Furthermore, Anglian Water acts as the water and wastewater provider for Babergh and Mid Suffolk and the delivery of the new pipeline is likely to support a higher quality of service for new and existing residents.

Norwich to Tilbury Grid Reinforcement Scheme

2.55 National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury Grid Reinforcement Scheme is a proposal for a high-voltage power line project aimed at reinforcing the energy network between Norwich, Bramford, and Tilbury. This will include 184km of new electricity transmission reinforcement made up of both overhead lines and pylons with some underground cables as well as a new 400km substation. The project is at the pre-examination stage.

Chapter 3

Community, health and wellbeing, housing and accessibility

Policy context

3.1 The Government is currently consulting on a new version of the NPPF, together with other changes to the planning system. The consultation began on 16th December 2025 and will end on 10th March 2026. While Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils will be working under the new plan-making system and the new NPPF once published, at the time of writing it remains a consultation draft and so this SA Scoping Report refers to the current (December 2024) NPPF.

National

3.2 The Government published the most recent NPPF in December 2024, which was updated in February 2025. The NPPF includes a new standard method for assessing housing needs, which is much more ambitious than its predecessor. The **NPPF (2024)**⁶ includes as part of its social objective the promotion of “strong, vibrant and healthy communities” by:

“ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural wellbeing.”

3.3 The document states that strategic policies should set out the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for “homes (including affordable housing) ... community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure).”

3.4 To help to diversify opportunities for builders, promote a better mix of site sizes and increase the number of schemes that can be built-out quickly to meet housing need, the NPPF states that local authorities should identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved;

3.5 The document also promotes a theme of enhancing healthy and safe communities which is to be achieved by

⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024, last updated in 2025). National Planning Policy Framework. (see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

creating places which “*promote social interaction... are safe and accessible... enable and support healthy lives.*”

3.6 As part of this approach social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that the community needs should be provided, guided by planning policies and decisions which:

- “*plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- *take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- *guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- *ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- *ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.”*

3.7 Plan-making through the guidance of the NPPF recognises the important role of access to open spaces and other facilities which provide opportunities for sport and physical activity has in terms of health and wellbeing of communities. The importance of delivering a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities is also recognised in the document and local planning authorities should take a “*proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education*”.

3.8 The NPPF also sets out that the standard method provided in national planning guidance should be used to undertake a local housing need assessment identifying the

minimum number of homes needed. The **Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book (2024)**⁷ provides this standard method allowing for calculation of objectively assessed housing need using government household forecasts adjusted for local house prices and local earnings. Unmet need from neighbouring areas will also need to be taken into account as part of the calculation.

3.9 The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Housing needs of different groups (2021)**⁸ provides advice on planning for affordable, private rented, self-build, student and rural housing needs.
- **Healthy and safe communities (2019)**⁹ provides guidance on achieving healthy, safe and inclusive communities, estate regeneration and school place provision.
- **Housing supply and delivery (2019, last updated 2024)**¹⁰ sets out guidance on five-year land supply and Housing Delivery Test.
- **Housing for older and disabled people (2019)**¹¹ provides guidance on preparing planning policies for accessible and adaptable housing and inclusive design.
- **Noise (2019)**¹² advises on how planning can manage potential noise impacts in new development.
- **Light pollution (2019)**¹³ advises on how to consider artificial light within the planning system.
- **Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space (2014)**¹⁴ provides key advice on open space, sports, recreation, public rights of way, National Trails and Local Green Space designation.

⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024). Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-measurement-rule-book/housing-delivery-test-measurement-rule-book>)

⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021). Housing needs of different groups. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-needs-of-different-groups#addressing-the-need-for-different-types-of-housing>)

⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Healthy and Safe communities. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>)

¹⁰ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Housing supply and delivery. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-supply-and-delivery>)

¹¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Housing for older and disabled people. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people>)

¹² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Noise. (see : <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/noise--2>)

¹³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Light Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013). Ready for Ageing? (see <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldselect/ldpublic/140/140.pdf>)

¹⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2014). Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>)

3.10 Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change Report: Ready for Ageing?¹⁵: warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report states that “longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises”. The report highlights the under provision of specialist housing for older people and the need to plan for the housing needs of the older population as well as younger people.

3.11 Fair Society, Healthy Lives¹⁶: Investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is “overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities”.

3.12 Health Equity in England: Marmot Review 10 Years On¹⁷. Revisits Fair Society, Healthy Lives. It found that, since 2010, life expectancy in England has stalled, which suggests society has stopped improving. In addition, there are marked regional differences in life expectancy – the more deprived the area, the shorter the life expectancy. Mortality rates are increasing in those aged 45-49, child poverty has increased and there is a housing crisis and rise in homelessness.

3.13 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites¹⁸: Sets out the Government’s planning policy for traveller sites, replacing the older version published in March 2012. The Government’s overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

3.14 Laying the foundations: a housing strategy for England¹⁹: Aims to provide support to deliver new homes and improve social mobility.

3.15 Public Health England Strategy 2020-2025²⁰: Identifies PHE’s priorities upon which to focus over this five-year period to protect people and help people to live longer in good health.

3.16 Environmental Improvement Plan 2023²¹: The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan. It builds on the vision of 25 Year Environment Plan with a new plan setting out how Defra will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of its goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Under the plan the Government will protect 30% of England’s land and sea for nature. The document identifies ten goals upon which action will be focused. The goals of most relevance to the topics of population growth, health and wellbeing are:

- Goal 2: Clean air;
- Goal 3: Clean and plentiful water;
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Goal 9: Enhancing biosecurity; and
- Goal 10: Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

3.17 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023²²: sets out the direction for planning, making provisions to support the levelling-up agenda. As part of this, it seeks to streamline the planning process, including through a reform of existing EU-generated systems of SA/SEA, Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which will eventually be replaced by a simpler process known as 'Environmental Outcomes Reports'. However, secondary legislation is required to introduce the new regime and at present the requirement to undertake SEA remains in force.

3.18 National Design Guide (2021)²³: sets out the Government’s priorities for well-designed places in the form of

¹⁵ Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013). Ready for Ageing? (see <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldselect/ldpublic/140/140.pdf>)

¹⁶ The Marmot Review (2011). Fair Society, Healthy Lives. (see <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/fair-society-healthy-lives-full-report.pdf>).

¹⁷ Institute of Health Equity (2020). Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On. (see <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/marmot-review-10-years-on>)

¹⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government (2024). Planning policy for traveller sites. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites>)

¹⁹ HM Government (2011). Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England. (see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7532/2033676.pdf)

²⁰ Public Health England (2019). Public Health England (2019). PHE Strategy 2020-25. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831562/PHE_Strategy_2020-25.pdf)

²¹ HM Government (2023). Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>)

²² Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55/enacted>)

²³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021). National Design Guid. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>)

ten characteristics: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.

3.19 Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care (2021, updated in 2024)²⁴ sets out the government's new plan for health and social care. It provides an overview of how this plan will tackle the elective backlog in the NHS and put the NHS on a sustainable footing. It sets out details of the plan for adult social care in England, including a cap on social care costs and how financial assistance will work for those without substantial assets. It covers wider support that the government will provide for the social care system, and how the government will improve the integration of health and social care. It explains the government's plan to introduce a new Health and Social Care Levy.

3.20 COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan (2021)²⁵ sets out the Government's plan to prevent, mitigate and respond to the mental health impacts of the pandemic during 2021 and 2022. Its main objectives are to support the general population to take action and look after their own mental wellbeing; to take action to address factors which play a crucial role in shaping mental health and wellbeing outcomes; and, to support services to meet the need for specialist support.

3.21 A fairer private rented sector White Paper (2022)²⁶ aims to build upon the vision of the Levelling Up White Paper and reform the Private Rented Sector and improve housing quality. It outlines that everyone deserves a secure and decent home and outlines measures to improve the experience of renters in the Private Rented Sector.

3.22 The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020)²⁷ sets out the Government's actions to ensure residents in social housing are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes and have access to redress when things go wrong.

3.23 Using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments²⁸ (2020), **Addendum (2021)**²⁹ provides a framework and starting point for local authorities to clearly set out in local planning guidance how best to achieve healthy weight environments based on local evidence and needs, by focusing on environments that enable healthier eating and help promote more physical activity as the default. The Addendum provides updates on the implications for planning for a healthier food environment, specifically on the hot food takeaways retail uses, and sets out recommended actions in light of changes to the Use Class Order (UCO) in England from 1 September 2020.

3.24 The Plan for Change (2024)³⁰ outlines the UK Government's framework for long-term policy delivery across five priority areas: economic growth, healthcare, public safety, opportunity, and clean energy. It sets out specific targets within this Parliament, underpinned by aims to ensure economic stability, reform public services, and implement a more mission-focused approach to governance

Sub-national

3.25 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Economic Land Needs Assessment (2024)³¹: Provides an assessment of the districts' economy and investigates the economic potential of the districts based on economic forecasting and modelling scenarios for future growth. It determines the future employment land requirements in the districts to support the identified growth for 2023-2037 and 2043 in respect of population projections.

3.26 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Joint Homes and Housing Strategy (2024)³²: Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have produced their joint Homes and Housing strategy to provide focus and show their ongoing commitment to meet and address the housing challenges

²⁴ Department of Health and Social Care (2021, updated September 2024). Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-health-and-social-care>)

²⁵ Department for Health and Social Care and Cabinet Office (2021). COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-recovery-action-plan>)

²⁶ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022). A fairer private rented sector. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-fairer-private-rented-sector/a-fairer-private-rented-sector#executive-summary>).

²⁷ Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government (2020). The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper#full-publication-update-history>)

²⁸ Public Health England (2020). Guidance and supplementary planning document template for local authority public health and

planning teams. (see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-weight-environments-using-the-planning-system>)

²⁹ Public Health England (2021). Addendum: Hot food takeaways use in the new Use Class Order. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-weight-environments-using-the-planning-system/addendum-hot-food-takeaways-use-in-the-new-use-class-order>)

³⁰ The Plan for Change (2024) (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6751af4719e0c816d18d1df3/Plan_for_Change.pdf)

³¹ Lambert Smith Hampton (2024). Economic Land Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessmentreport-june-2024>)

³² BMSDC (2024). Joint homes and housing strategy. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/joint-homes-and-housing-strategy-2024-v2-pdf>)

across the districts. The Joint Homes and Housing Strategy has nine strategic aims:

- The housing market functions effectively, providing homes which are as affordable as possible; to meet the needs of residents and support the local economy.
- There is a wide and varied choice of good quality, sustainable homes of different sizes, types and tenures, to meet the needs of a wide range of different households.
- Homelessness is prevented and our services provide positive and planned interventions.
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk is an effective social landlord known for delivering quality services.
- Homes are in high quality, sustainable environments, served by jobs and community facilities, appropriate green spaces, effective transport links and other necessary infrastructure.
- Best use is made of private sector land and private accommodation across the districts.
- People live in vibrant and well-connected communities; and homes and communities continue to meet the changing needs of residents.
- Everyone has a suitable home, and residents are able to live as healthily, safely and independently as possible within sustainable communities.
- Both councils have strong relationships with residents, developers and other partners that enable them to deliver housing, infrastructure and services effectively, and to innovate where appropriate.

3.27 Suffolk Design: Streets Guide (2022)³³. The Guide provides guidance on creating well-designed streets that are safe, accessible, and sustainable, particularly in relation to new residential developments. The purpose of the guidance is to assist the delivery of well-designed places in line with the National Design Guide as well as the National Model Design Code, and as part of the Suffolk Design initiative, enabling a positive contribution to the spaces and places of Suffolk.

3.28 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2021)³⁴. The strategy establishes a robust policy position and a clear set of strategic priorities for how the Joint Councils will support the delivery of sport and physical activity services in the future. It set out what the councils will continue to do, building on success of the past; what they will support and enable through new ways of working; and what they will no longer do, promoting self-reliance where appropriate. The strategy highlights and fully embraces a strategic shift towards supporting wider health and wellbeing outcomes across the districts and identifies physical inactivity, particularly amongst specific groups as a key challenge for the councils and their partners to address.

3.29 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2020)³⁵. Aims to consider all infrastructure needs to enable sustainable development and growth supporting residents, businesses, communities, the environment and individuals. A key objective is prioritising investment into strategic services and infrastructure. The report also considers collaboration of organisations to provide funding and the phasing of infrastructure may occur depending on the degree of growth.

3.30 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (2019)³⁶. Provides an audit of the quantity and quality of existing provision in the districts and assesses the need for future provision.

3.31 Joint Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy³⁷. This Strategy covers the period 2024-2029 and sets out what BMSDC will do to prevent or relieve homelessness.

3.32 Joint Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy Refresh 2024-2029³⁸. The strategy sets 'a small number of key strategic priorities for action', where there is an opportunity for partners working through the Health and Wellbeing Board to 'have a real impact' through local initiatives and activities that lead to an improvement in health and wellbeing outcomes and a reduction in health inequalities.

3.33 Transforming Suffolk, Suffolk's Community Strategy 2008 to 2028³⁹. Sets out ambitions for Suffolk to be recognised for its outstanding environment and quality of life for all. The strategy aims to help make Suffolk the greenest

³³ Suffolk County Council (2022). Suffolk Design Streets Guide 2022 Edition. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/imported/5647-21-Suffolk-Design-Street-Guide-v26.pdf>)

³⁴ BMSDC (2021). Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. (see <https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s23553/Appendix%20A%20SPA%20Strategy%20Update%20Report%20-%20Final%20Ver%202.0.pdf>)

³⁵ BMSDC (2020). Infrastructure Delivery Plan. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Infrastructure2020/BMSDC-IDP-Sept-2020.pdf>)

³⁶ Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (2019) (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/open-space-assessment>)

³⁷ BMSDC (2024). Joint Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/homelessness-prevention-and-rough-sleeping-strategy-2024-2029>)

³⁸ Health and Wellbeing Suffolk (2022). Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2027. (see <https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/asset-library/Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-22-27.pdf>)

³⁹ Suffolk Strategic Partnership (2008). Transforming Suffolk, Suffolk's Community Strategy 2008-2028 (see

county by enhancing the natural environment while also being an exemplar when tackling climate change. The aim is also to create a prosperous and vibrant economy; learning and skills for the Future; and safe, healthy and inclusive communities.

3.34 Suffolk's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2024-2029⁴⁰: This Strategy outlines the priorities Suffolk CC are working towards to improve SEND Services in Suffolk and informs the direction of all their programmes of work. It addresses the wider improvements that parents, carers and professionals have raised as being important to ensure better outcomes for children and young people.

3.35 Suffolk Green Access Strategy, Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2020-2030⁴¹: The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires each highway authority to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). This plan contains a statement of the actions proposed for the management of public rights of way and for securing an improved network of routes in Suffolk. It also addresses open access sites, informal access arrangements, and access for walking and cycling on the wider highway network.

3.36 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Communities Strategy 2019-2036⁴²: This Strategy seeks to bring volunteers, community leaders and publicly funded services together to plan and provide the most sustainable support so that BMSDC communities are resilient and connected places for people to live and work. The Strategy sets out both the opportunities and challenges this presents as well as tactics for delivering change and improvements. The vision is for "communities to thrive" now and in the future, built on a balanced and targeted range of services and support, equally accessible to all residents and their future generations. The strategic aim is to provide guidance, support and inspiration to BMSDC communities and the objectives are for all communities to be attractive, successful and connected.

3.37 Ipswich Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Market Assessment - Partial Part 2 update⁴³ The Ipswich

and Waveney Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was prepared in 2017 on behalf of Ipswich, Babergh, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney councils. The SHMA identified two housing market areas (HMA): Ipswich HMA (comprising Ipswich, Babergh, Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal) and Waveney HMA (comprising Waveney), and findings were reported separately for each HMA. The update of the Part 2 of the SHMA reflects changes to the NPPF and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in relation to the standard method for assessing local housing need (LHN). It sets results for the type and tenure of future housing needed for each of the local authority areas.

Current baseline

Community, health and wellbeing

Population

3.38 The latest statistics found that in 2024, Babergh District had a population of 97,033 people, with 55,276 of these residents aged 16-64⁴⁴. Mid Suffolk District had a population of 110,775 people in 2024, with 64,850 residents aged 16-64⁴⁵. Babergh District's population is expected to grow to 111,687 people by 2047⁴⁶ and Mid Suffolk District's population is projected to reach 131,400 people by 2047⁴⁷.

3.39 Babergh has two main towns. These are the market town of Sudbury in the west and the town of Hadleigh in the centre of the district. Mid Suffolk has three market towns being Stowmarket and Needham Market in the south of the district, and Eye in the north. Both districts have many rural villages and open countryside where in Babergh 69% and in Mid Suffolk 75% of the population live. Overall, Babergh District has around 1.63 persons per hectare while Mid Suffolk District has a slightly lower population density at around 1.27 hectares

https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/scd07_-_suffolk_community_strategy.pdf

⁴⁰ Suffolk County Council (2024). Suffolk's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2024-2029. (see <https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/asset-library/suffolk-send-strategy-24-29-final.pdf>)

⁴¹ Suffolk County Council (2020). Suffolk Green Access Strategy Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2020-2030. (see https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/suffolk/enterprise/files/send_strategy_2021-2023_one_page_summary.pdf and <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/green-access-strategy/>)

⁴² Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (2019). Communities Strategy. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/54707/69193/Communities+Strategy+2019.pdf/29c165d9-5456-cc94-df63-2d724893faf0?t=1684939534709>)

⁴³ Prett Brett Associates (2019) Ipswich Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Market Assessment - Partial Part 2 update (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/shma-part-2-update-2019>)

⁴⁴ Suffolk Observatory (2024). Population Report for Babergh (see <https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/population/reports/#/view-report/9925e741b4b449c090dd87016ce0eae9/E07000200/G2>)

⁴⁵ Suffolk Observatory (2024). Population Report for Mid Suffolk (see <https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/population/reports/#/view-report/9925e741b4b449c090dd87016ce0eae9/E07000203/G2>)

⁴⁶ Population Projections Babergh. (see <https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/population/reports/#/view-report/9925e741b4b449c090dd87016ce0eae9/E07000200/G2>)

⁴⁷ Population Projections Mid Suffolk. (see <https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/population/reports/#/view-report/9925e741b4b449c090dd87016ce0eae9/E07000203/G2>)

per person⁴⁸. This is much lower than Suffolk as a whole, which has a population density of 2.05 persons per hectare⁴⁹, and England, which has a population density of 4.45 persons per hectare⁵⁰.

3.40 According to BMSDC's Joint Authority Monitoring Report⁵¹, both districts have similar demography with fewer younger people and an aging population.

The 2021 Census found that ethnic minorities constituted 3.3% of Babergh District's population, marking a 1.1% increase from 2011. The largest ethnic minority group was the mixed/multiple ethnic groups which made up 1.5% of the population, followed by Asian/Asian British/ Asian Welsh at 0.9%⁵².

3.41 For Mid Suffolk District, the 2021 Census showed that ethnic minorities constituted 3.1% of the total population, indicating a 1% increase from 2011. The largest ethnic minority group was the mixed/multiple ethnic groups which made up 1.4%, followed by Asian/ Asian British / Asian Welsh at 0.8%⁵³.

Education

3.42 Around 20.0% of the population across Babergh and Mid Suffolk are aged 0-19 years old. Around 16.4% of the population of Babergh are school children and full-time students (14,487), whilst in Mid Suffolk 15.8% of the population are school children and full-time students (15,546).

3.43 These figures are significantly lower than the national average of 20.4%⁵⁴.

3.44 The 2021 Census showed the proportion of 16-64 year old residents without qualifications to be 9.6% in Babergh and

9.4% in Mid Suffolk. 6.8% of those in Babergh were completing apprenticeships, a comparable proportion to 6.9% in Mid Suffolk. In Babergh, individuals with Level 1 qualifications were reported to be at 12%, compared to 11.4% in Mid Suffolk. Those with Level 4 and above qualifications represented 31.9% of the population in Babergh and 32.7% in Mid Suffolk^{55, 56}.

3.45 The location of education facilities in the districts is shown in **Figure 3.1**.

Deprivation

3.46 In 2025 Babergh ranked 184 out of 296 local authorities in England (1 being the most deprived)⁵⁷, compared with a ranking of 212 out of 317 in 2019⁵⁸. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) uses Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) to measure deprivation at local authority and county level. As of 2021 there were 27 LSOAs in Babergh. Around Sudbury and Great Cornard there are pockets of deprivation, and some rural areas are particularly deprived in terms of access to housing and other services. Babergh 008A is located on the edge of Sudbury and is the most deprived area within the district and ranked 6,915 out of 33,755 LSOAs in England- a drop from its previous ranking of 7,697 in 2019. This area is amongst the top 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

3.47 In 2025 Mid Suffolk ranked 191 out of 296 local authorities in England where 1 is the most deprived⁵⁹, compared to the ranking of 229 out of 317 in 2019⁶⁰. There are 38 LSOAs in Mid Suffolk. The district's most deprived areas are around Stowmarket, with Mid Suffolk 008C being ranked 2,930 out of 33,755 LSOAs in England. In 2019, this area was ranked 3,344 out of 32,844. Therefore, compared to

⁴⁸ Local Government Association (2023). Population density, persons per hectare in England (see <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=176&mod-area=E07000203&mod-group=E07000200&mod-type=area>)

⁴⁹ LG Inform (2023). Population density, persons per hectare in Suffolk (see <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=176&mod-area=E10000029&mod-group=E07000203&mod-type=area>)

⁵⁰ LG Inform (2023). Population density, persons per hectare in England (see <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=176&mod-area=E10000029&mod-group=E92000001&mod-type=area>)

⁵¹ BMSDC (2024-25). Authority Monitoring Report. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/2023-24-b-msdc-amr>)

⁵² ONS (2023). How life has changed in Babergh Census 2021 – Ethnic groups in Babergh (see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000200/>)

⁵³ ONS (2023). How life has changed in Mid Suffolk Census 2021 – Ethnic groups in Mid Suffolk (see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000203/>)

⁵⁴ Suffolk Observatory (2023). Children and Young People Report (see <https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/children-and-young-people/reports/#/view-report/d925042f961344548f01582a1f85574a/E07000203/G2>)

⁵⁵ Babergh District Council South Suffolk (2024). Babergh State of the District Report 2024 (see https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2024_v1-0-1-pdf)

⁵⁶ Mid Suffolk District (2024). Mid Suffolk State of the District Report 2024 (see <https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s35544/Appendix%20A%20-%20State%20of%20the%20District%20Report.pdf>)

⁵⁷ MHCLG (2025). English Indices of Deprivation 2025 File 10: Local Authority District summaries – lower tier (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025>)

⁵⁸ DCLG (N.d.). Indices of Deprivation. (see http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html#)

⁵⁹ MHCLG (2025). English Indices of Deprivation 2025 File 10: Local Authority District summaries – lower tier (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025>)

⁶⁰ DCLG (N.d.). Indices of Deprivation. (see http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html#)

2019, this area was reported to be more deprived in 2025 relative to other LSOA areas in England. This area is amongst the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

3.48 2021 Census data found that over half of properties in Babergh (55.1%) used mains gas as a single source of heating, although this was lower than the proportion across Suffolk (61.9%) and England (74.0%). A higher proportion of properties in Babergh instead used oil as a single source of heating (19.6% compared with 13.2% in Suffolk and 3.2% in England), with electric heating the third most common type of heating (used by 8.9% of households as a single source of heating)⁶¹. In Mid Suffolk, a lower-than average proportion of properties (42.1%) used mains gas as a single source of heating. Instead, 30.3% used oil as a single source of heating, with electric and 9.0% electric⁶².

3.49 Based on the latest available data, 4,771 or 11.4% of households in Babergh⁶³ and 4,810 or 10.5% of households in Mid Suffolk⁶⁴ were classed as being in fuel poverty in 2023. This was similar to the figure seen in 2022 and above the regional (East of England) average of 9.7%.

3.50 In 2023/24, 2,645 children aged under 16 (17.2% of this age group) in Babergh⁶⁵ and 2,610 (15.0% of this age group) in Mid Suffolk⁶⁶ were considered to be living in relative low-income families. This compared with 17.8% in the East of England and 21.8% across the UK. A lower number, 2,191 or 14.2% in Babergh and 2,184 or 12.6% in Mid Suffolk were considered to be living in absolute low-income families before housing costs (compared with 15.2% in the East of England and 18.7% across the United Kingdom).

3.51 The distribution of deprivation across the districts is shown in **Figure 3.2**.

Health

3.52 Health is a cross-cutting topic and as such many topic areas explored in this Scoping Report influence health either

directly or indirectly. The 2021 Census statistics suggest that health in Babergh is generally good with 84.5% of the population reporting themselves to be in very good or good health, a 2.1% increase from 2011. Some 11.7% state that they are in fair health, with only 3% and 0.8% in bad or very bad health, respectively. Similarly, the 2021 Census statistics displayed that health in Mid Suffolk is generally good with 84.8% reporting themselves as in very good or good health. Some 13.1% state that they are in fair health, and 4% and 0.7% in bad or very bad health, respectively⁶⁷. However, it should be noted that the 2021 Census was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this may have influenced how people perceived their health status and activity limitations and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.

3.53 The 2021 Census found that 84.1% of the population in Babergh and 84.2% in Mid Suffolk state that their day-to-day activities are not limited by their health. In Babergh, 10.1% said they are limited a little, whilst 5.9% said that they are limited a lot. For Mid-Suffolk, 10% say they are limited a little whilst 5.8% said they are limited a lot.

3.54 The 2021 Census data found that 4.7% of the population (3,268) of Babergh, and 4.9% of the population (3,838) of Mid Suffolk, provide 1 to 19 hours of unpaid care a week. The number of individuals providing 50 hours or more of unpaid care per week has notably declined between 2011 and 2021. In Babergh, 639 people, and in Mid Suffolk, 692 people, are now providing such extended periods of unpaid care⁶⁸.

3.55 Life expectancy in Babergh is 81.6 for males and 84.6 for females⁶⁹, while in Mid Suffolk life expectancy is 80.8 for males and 85.1 for females⁷⁰. Differences in life expectancy between the least and most deprived areas within Babergh were calculated as 6.0 years for males and 3.2 years for

⁶¹ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁶² Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025 (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

⁶³ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁶⁴ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025 (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

⁶⁵ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁶⁶ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025 (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

⁶⁷ Public Health and Communities (2023). 2021 Census Topic Summary: Health, disability, and unpaid care (see <https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/asset-library/Census-2021/health-disability-and-unpaid-care-2021-census-topic-summary-final.pdf>)

⁶⁸ ONS (2023). Unpaid care, England and Wales: Census 2021. (see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/unpaidcareenglandandwales/census2021>)

⁶⁹ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁷⁰ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025 (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

females⁷¹. In Mid Suffolk, it was 1.0 years for males and 0.4 years for females⁷². The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain of the IMD measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Babergh is ranked 257 on the health and disability rank, whilst Mid Suffolk is ranked 285 out of 317 local authorities in this regard⁷³.

3.56 The Health Index for England is a measure of the health of the nation, employing a broad definition to yield a single value indicating health trends over time. This index comprises three distinct health domains:

- Healthy People;
- Healthy Lives; and
- Healthy Places.

3.57 The Health Index is comprised of 56 indicators, summarised into 14 subdomains, 3 domains, and subsequently an overall score for each geographical area. Overall, health in Babergh has improved from a score of 107.4 in 2015 to 114.1 in 2021. Similarly, health as based on the index has improved in Mid Suffolk, from a score of 112.9 in 2015 to 119.8 in 2021. This is better than the nationwide 2021 score of 100.8⁷⁴.

3.58 The distribution of health facilities in the districts is shown in **Figure 3.1**.

3.59 In 2023/24, 63.8% of adults in Babergh⁷⁵ and 71.3% of adults in Mid Suffolk⁷⁶ were classed as overweight or living with obesity, just below the regional and national figures (65.9% across the East of England and 64.5% across

England). This represents an increase from 2015/16, reflecting an increase in prevalence seen nationally during the same period.

3.60 The proportion of Year 6 children (aged 10 to 11 years) classed as overweight or living with obesity was again below the national average in 2023/24 (33.1% in Babergh⁷⁷ and 35.1% in Mid Suffolk⁷⁸) compared with 33.2% across the East of England and 35.8% in England. Since 2007/08, prevalence has increased by several percentage points, broadly in line with the trend seen nationally and regionally.

3.61 In terms of physical activity, both districts have seen a greater increase in the proportion of physically active adults since 2015/16 than nationally (67.4%) and regionally (68.2%), at 71.0% in Babergh⁷⁹ and 71.9% in Mid Suffolk⁸⁰ in 2023/24. The percentage of adults aged 19 and over who were classed as 'physically inactive' stood at 18.4% in Babergh and 16.6% in Mid Suffolk in 2023/24, compared with 20.3% across the East of England and 22.0% across England.

3.62 In 2023/24, 46.4% of children in Babergh⁸¹ and 45.2% in Mid Suffolk⁸² aged 5 to 16 were classed as physically active, just below the figures for the East of England (49.8%) and England (47.8%).

3.63 Data from the Office for National Statistics (via their Annual Population Survey) for the period 2021-23 suggests that around one-in-eight adults (aged 18) in Babergh (12.9%)⁸³ and one-in-ten adults in Mid Suffolk (10.5%)⁸⁴ were current smokers. This is close to the proportions seen regionally and nationally (12.5% across the East of England

⁷¹ Babergh District (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁷² Mid Suffolk District (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

⁷³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). IoD2019 Interactive Dashboard – Local Authority Focus (see <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiaOTdJYzlyNTMtMTcxNi00YmQ2LWI1YzgtMTUyYzIxOWQ3NzQ2liwidCI6ImJmMzQ2ODEwLTljN2Q2NDNkZS1hODcyLTl0YTJlZjZiM5OTVhOCJ9>).

⁷⁴ Office for National Statistics (2023). All data related to Health in England: 2015 to 2021 (see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/healthinengland/latest/relateddata>)

⁷⁵ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁷⁶ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

⁷⁷ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁷⁸ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

⁷⁹ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁸⁰ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

⁸¹ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁸² Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

⁸³ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁸⁴ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

and 12.4% across England), but higher in Babergh and lower in Mid Suffolk.

3.64 Data from NHS England's GP Patient Surveys in 2022/23 suggests broadly similar proportions, with 11.7% of adults in Babergh⁸⁵ and 11.0% of adults in Mid Suffolk⁸⁶ classified as a regular or occasional smoker, compared with 12.5% across the East of England and 13.6% across England. Furthermore, it indicates a downward trend in smoking prevalence, also seen nationally, with 13.9% and 14.2%

having been classified as a regular or occasional smoker in 2014/15, respectively.

Open spaces, sports and recreation

3.65 The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Spaces Assessment⁸⁷ assessed the quality of 519 open spaces in the districts using criteria set out in the Green Flag Award. The study was a technical assessment that calculated the amount of existing open space for a range of different use. A review of this assessment is currently ongoing.

Table 3.1 Summary of open spaces in Babergh and Mid Suffolk

Typology	Existing (ha)	Per 1,000 people (ha)	Quantity Standards per 1,000 people (ha)
Accessible Natural Greenspace	900.6	4.88	ANGSI*
Amenity Greenspace	233.62	1.27	1.0
Parks and Recreation Grounds	163.16	0.93	1.0
Parks and Recreation Grounds including Outdoor Sport	170.68	0.88	1.0
Open Space for Children	11.35	0.06	0.06
Open Space for Youth	2.48	0.01	0.04
Sports Club Space	68.39	0.37	N/A

*Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards

3.66 Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSI) are:

- at least one accessible 20-hectare site within two kilometres of home;
- one accessible 100-hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500-hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home.

3.67 The table shows that there is more than the set quantity standard of amenity greenspace⁸⁸ per 1,000 of the population. However, parks and recreation grounds are under the set quantity standard even when outdoor sport is included.

3.68 As part of the assessment, a survey with BMSDC parishes was undertaken, which saw 75 responses from 199 parishes. Results found that 68% of Town/Parish Councils were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and outdoor recreational facilities and 64% of local councils noted a need for additional or improved open space, play and outdoor recreation facilities. Other results found there is not enough space for teenagers (e.g. skateparks and

⁸⁵ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

⁸⁶ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

⁸⁷ BMSDC (2019). Open Space Assessment. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-open-space-assessment-may-2019->)

⁸⁸ Amenity greenspace includes open to free land that is not laid out a certain way or does not have a specific function, such as a park or public playing field

shelters) and there is a need for additional multi-use games areas (MUGAs).

3.69 The distribution of open space in the districts is shown in **Figure 3.3**.

Crime

3.70 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts have lower overall crime rates compared to the regional and national averages, as of August 2025. In Babergh, the overall crime count between September 2024 and August 2025 was 4,064. The highest recorded crime count for this period was for violence and sexual offences, totalling 2,057 incidents. All other crime categories had significantly lower counts, with criminal damage and arson ranking second highest at 418 incidents. Overall, Babergh exhibits a lower crime rate than Suffolk, with a rate of 3.7 per 1,000 as of August 2025. In comparison, Suffolk's rate stands at 4.8. In Mid Suffolk, the overall crime rate between September 2024 and September 2025 was 3,982. Much like Babergh, the highest recorded crime count in Mid Suffolk for this period was for violence and sexual offences, totalling 1,963. All other crime categories had significantly lower counts, with criminal damage and arson ranking second highest at 414 incidents. Overall, Mid Suffolk's crime rate is lower compared to Suffolk as a whole, with a rate of 3.1 per 1,000 as of August 2025^{89 90}.

Housing

Provision and affordability

3.71 In the past few years local house prices in BMSDC have steadily increased, experiencing a slight decrease in 2019 which contributed to improved affordability. Subsequently, they resumed a steady upward trend⁹¹.

3.72 The table below shows the housing affordability ratio across the districts which is calculated by dividing average house prices by average annual earnings to create a ratio. House prices are taken from House Price Statistics for Small Areas (HPSSAs). However, the statistics are also partially based on a survey sample of earnings data. Therefore, the data should be interpreted over a longer time series⁹². Typically, a ratio above 4% indicates significant affordability challenges, meaning that the median house price is significantly higher than the median earnings. Babergh and Mid-Suffolk display ratios of 10 and 8.32, respectively, demonstrating the relative unaffordability of homes within the districts. This is also reflected at the national level, with the housing affordability ratio for England in 2022 recorded as 8.3. In 1997, 89% of local authorities had an affordability ratio of less than five times workers' earnings, whereas only 8% had this level of affordability in 2024⁹³.

Table 3.2 Babergh and Mid Suffolk: Ratio of workplace-based median house price to median earnings ratio

Area	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Babergh	10.74	11.48	10.87	10.68	11.84	12.64	11.62	10
Mid Suffolk	10.20	9.44*	8.98	8.70	9.62	10.28	9.81	8.32
Suffolk	8.69	8.85	8.52	8.48	9.71	8.91	8.52	8.17
East of England	9.66	9.78	9.47	9.51	10.53	10.08	9.76	9.07

NB ratios marked with * have been calculated using annualised weekly earnings.

3.73 In 2024/25, the target in Babergh District was to build 416 new dwellings. This was exceeded with 577 new dwellings being built. 83% of these were on greenfield land, while 17% were on brownfield land. In Mid Suffolk, the target was 535 new dwellings but 1,341 were built. 80% of these were on greenfield land, while 20% were on brownfield land. Therefore, overall, in the latest year for which data are available, both Babergh District and Mid Suffolk District

exceeded their housing targets. It is important to note that despite the significant increase in new dwellings in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, this increase has not resulted in a decrease in house prices.

3.74 The two tables below show the percentage of affordable homes built in the districts over the last ten years. In 2024/25, 26% of homes built in Babergh were affordable, an increase

⁸⁹ Suffolk Observatory (2025) Crime Report (see [Crime - LTLA | Babergh | Report Builder for ArcGIS](#))

⁹⁰ Suffolk Observatory (2025). Crime Report (see [Crime - LTLA | Mid Suffolk | Report Builder for ArcGIS](#))

⁹¹ BMSDC (2026). Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Authority Monitoring Report 2024-2025. (see

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/b-msdc-amr-2024-25>)

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Office for National Statistics (2025). Housing affordability in England and Wales: 2024 (see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales/2024>)

from 21% in 2023/24. For Mid Suffolk in 2024/25, 22% of homes were affordable housing, compared to 29% in 2023/24. Therefore, the proportion of affordable homes built in the previous two years has increased in Babergh District but

decreased in Mid Suffolk District. The target for affordable housing is 25% or 35% depending on whether development takes place on brownfield or greenfield land and so both districts could go further in their delivery of affordable housing.

Table 3.3 Babergh net residential completions by annual monitoring report year

Babergh					
AMR Year	Net Completions (A)	Of which Affordable (B)	% Affordable (B as % of A)	No. of Windfall (C)	% Windfall (C as % of A)
2024/25	577	152	26%	372	64%
2023/24	604	124	21%	518	86%
2022/23	624	156	25%	568	83%
2021/22	758	130	17%	736	97%
2020/21	402	89	22%	346	86%
2019/20	293	114	39%	218	74%
2018/19	579	52	9%	456	79%
2017/18	331	71	21%	221	67%
2016/17	226	83	37%	168	74%
2015/16	157	27	18%	124	79%
Totals	4,551	998	-	3,727	-

Table 3.4 Mid Suffolk net residential completions by annual monitoring report year

Mid Suffolk					
AMR Year	Net Completions (A)	Of which Affordable (B)	% Affordable (B as % of A)	No. of Windfall (C)	% Windfall (C as % of A)
2024/25	1,341	300	22%	1,150	86%
2023/24	1,014	291	29%	890	88%
2022/23	1,234	299	24%	1,143	92%
2021/22	862	196	23%	710	82%
2020/21	672	193	29%	585	87%
2019/20	451	128	28%	442	98%
2018/19	690	118	17%	583	84%
2017/18	426	108	25%	292	69%
2016/17	305	111	36%	230	75%

Mid Suffolk					
2015/16	304	78	26%	240	79%
Totals	7,299	1,822	-	6,265	-

3.75 In August 2025, the mean price of dwellings in Babergh District and Mid Suffolk District was £337,464 and £319,540, respectively. This is above the national average of £272,995 but below the regional average of £289,203⁹⁴.

3.76 A suitable mix of housing is important to ensure all housing needs are met within the districts. The 2021 Census identified the housing stock within the districts as shown in the table below. The majority of the housing stock in both districts is detached houses, followed by semi-detached, then terraced houses and finally flats.

Table 3.5 Type of dwellings and number of households in Babergh and Mid Suffolk (excluding caravans and other mobile and temporary structures)

Type of Dwelling	Number of Households (2021)			
	Babergh	%	Mid Suffolk	%
Detached Houses	16,778	42%	20,822	47%
Semi-Detached Houses	12,119	31%	14,437	33%
Terraced Houses	8,293	21%	6,041	14%
Flats	2,184	5%	2,099	5%
Other Types	826	2%	944	2%

3.77 As set out in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1⁹⁵, there is a total local housing need requirement of 7,904 dwellings for Babergh and 10,165 dwellings for Mid Suffolk between 2018 and 2037. For Babergh, the committed supply is 4,939 dwellings, whilst in Mid Suffolk the committed supply is 7,882 dwellings. In 2021, 85% of the local demand for housing in Babergh was met by the available housing supply, whilst in Mid-Suffolk, 100% of the local housing need was met by the available housing supply. There is an identified shortfall of 1,191 dwellings in Babergh between 2018 and 2037, which highlights a gap between projected housing need and current supply.

3.78 As mentioned previously, both districts have an ageing population. According to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)⁹⁶, the average house price has increased

by 27% over the last five years. With rising average house prices, elderly residents may find it increasingly difficult to afford suitable housing or home improvements to accommodate their changing needs. Furthermore, 11.1%⁹⁷ of homes are in fuel poverty, which has potential to burdens elderly individuals who may already be on fixed incomes.

3.79 In addition to older people, other vulnerable people may also have specialist housing needs. Suffolk is currently significantly worse than the England average at meeting the need of residents with learning difficulties for secure and appropriate accommodation. According to the Suffolk Housing and Health Needs Assessment⁹⁸, the number of people with a learning difficulty is forecast to increase. As such, there will be an increased demand for housing that meets specialist needs.

⁹⁴ UK House Price Index (2025). House Price Statistics. (see <https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi>).

⁹⁵ BMSDC (2023). Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1 (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-joint-local-plan-part-1-nov-2023>)

⁹⁶ Healthy Suffolk (2022). The State of Suffolk August 2022 (see <https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/asset-library/SoS/state-of-suffolk-tiles-2022.pdf>)

⁹⁷ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero – Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2025 (2023 data) (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2025-2023-data>)

⁹⁸ Suffolk County Council (2018). Suffolk Housing and Health Needs Assessment.(see https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/uploads/Suffolk_Housing_and_Health_Final_Mar18HWB.pdf)

Homelessness

3.80 Table 3.6 shows an estimation of the number of rough sleepers recorded over the past five years in BMSDC⁹⁹. The number of people sleeping rough within the districts has

Table 3.6 Estimated rough sleeper count in BMSDC (Autumn)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Babergh	6	4	5	5	3
Mid Suffolk	1	1	2	1	0

3.81 During the 2023/24 financial year, there were 484 households in Babergh¹⁰⁰ and 431 households in Mid Suffolk¹⁰¹ assessed as being owed a statutory homelessness duty, including 170 with dependent children. This represented an increase from 346 and 344 households in 2022/23 and 296 and 260 households in 2021-22, respectively.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople

3.82 A report commissioned in part by BMSDC featured 100 surveys being completed over the whole study area by Gypsy and Traveller families between January 2020 and July 2023¹⁰². There were 49 surveys completed by those on authorised sites, six on unauthorised developments, zero on unauthorised encampments and seven families residing on sites with temporary planning permission. The majority of families had lived on site for more than five years and most were not intending to move in the future.

3.83 Those residing on local authority sites were concerned about the provision of sites with current sites being too small to accommodate the increasing number of growing families, leading to overcrowding. However, larger sites are harder to maintain and can lead to issues around community cohesion.

3.84 There are five permanent Travelling Showpeople plots in Mid Suffolk and there is a long history of Travelling Showpeople both living and working in the study area. Travelling Showpeople recorded fewer health issues, compared to Gypsies and Travellers. In 2023 all those

decreased, which may be related to the fact BMSDC were successful in jointly bidding with West Suffolk Councils through the 'Trailblazer' programme in 2016 for a Rough Sleeper Prevention and Support Worker.

residing on plots intended to leave the site permanently within the next five years out of choice or due to overcrowding .

3.85 To establish the number of households residing in boats, postal surveys were completed, and council tax records were established. There were 21 permanent boat moorings in Babergh; however, this could be an underestimate due to the difficulties in identifying the status and locations of houseboats.

3.86 Only one caravan was recorded in Babergh and 106 caravans in Mid Suffolk. Therefore, when population is taken into account, the density of caravans varies with Babergh having one caravan per 100,000 of the population and Mid Suffolk having 101 per 100,000 of the population. The average in England is around 42 caravans per 100,000 of the population and the regional average is 98¹⁰³.

3.87 A new assessment of need will be undertaken alongside development of the JLP Review. The work will supersede the Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment.

Future baseline and likely evolution without the Joint Local Plan Review

3.88 Babergh District's population is expected to grow to 108,789¹⁰⁴ and Mid Suffolk District's population is projected to reach 127,587 people by 2042¹⁰⁵. This is an increase of 15.4% and 20.7%, respectively, from 2022. Both districts

⁹⁹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (2024). Annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot in England: Autumn 2024 – live dashboard (see <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrJoiZWQ4ZTY3ZTEtZGE0Yi00Y2MOLtg3NjQtZjBhNGRhZjI5ZmJlIiwidCI6ImJmMzQ2ODEwLTljN2Q0tNjNkZS1hODcyLTl0YTJlZjM5OTVhOCJ9>)

¹⁰⁰ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

¹⁰¹ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

¹⁰² BMSDC in part (2024). Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment. (see

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Final-ANA-Report-May-2017.pdf>)

¹⁰³ BMSDC (2024). Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-gtaa-report-may-2024>)

¹⁰⁴ Babergh District Council (2025) Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

¹⁰⁵ Mid Suffolk District (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

display a similar demographic trend, characterised by a decline in younger people and a rise in the ageing population. By 2047, the number of people aged 80 and over is expected to double in both districts, with increases also likely in the 35-49 age group^{106, 107}. This growth in older population is likely to place additional pressure on housing and on the capacity of local services and facilities, such as GP surgeries and hospitals.

3.89 Both districts face challenges due to an ageing population, with a 27% increase in average house prices over the last five years. This rise in prices makes it harder for elderly residents to afford suitable housing or home improvements. Additionally, 14.5% of homes are in fuel poverty, adding to the burdens of elderly individuals on fixed incomes. Suffolk falls short of meeting the housing needs of residents with learning difficulties compared to the national average, with an increasing demand for specialised housing forecasted. Local house prices in BMSDC are likely to continue to increase, exacerbating the affordability crisis for residents, especially older people. While there has been an increase in the percentage of affordable homes built in the districts over the last two years, they may not be sufficient to meet the growing demand for affordable housing.

3.90 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts in Suffolk maintain lower overall crime rates compared to the regional and

national averages as of November 2023. Without the JLP Review in place, the trend of lower overall crime rates is at risk of changing, particularly due to challenges in addressing underlying socio-economic factors that contribute to crime.

3.91 Babergh has shifted from being the 212th most deprived out of 317 local authorities in 2019 (1 being the most deprived) (33% least deprived) to the 193rd of 296 (35% least deprived) in 2025. Mid Suffolk ranked 229 out of 317 local authorities in England in 2019 (28% least deprived), compared to the most recent ranking of 191 out of 296 (35% least deprived) in 2025¹⁰⁸. Whether these trends will continue is uncertain. Based on the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Spaces Assessment¹⁰⁹, there is more than the set quantity standard of amenity greenspace¹¹⁰ per 1,000 of the population. However, parks and recreation grounds are under the set quantity standard even when outdoor sport is included. Without the Local Plan, there is potential for the quality of open spaces to deteriorate, whilst access to open space will remain limited.

Key sustainability issues

3.92 The key sustainability issues for population, health and well-being, and the opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them are shown in **Table 3.7**.

Table 3.7: Key sustainability issues and opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
BMSDC has an ageing population, which has the potential to result in pressure on the capacity of local services and facilities, such as GP surgeries and hospitals. An ageing population also requires a mixture of housing that will meet the needs of older people, whilst also freeing up houses for younger residents. Current housing stock is predominantly old and inefficient to heat, and therefore unsuitable.	The JLP Review will set out the spatial distribution of development and so has the opportunity to locate residential development within close proximity of local services and facilities and in more rural areas, which may stimulate the development of new services and facilities. The plan will include housing requirement figures for Neighbourhood Plan areas, which will provide a clear understanding of the demand for housing within specific communities. The JLP Review will also identify suitable land for development through site allocations, which can help to encourage building new housing tailored to the needs of older	SA objectives 1, 3, 4.

¹⁰⁶ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

¹⁰⁷ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

¹⁰⁸ English Indices of Deprivation 2025 File 10: Local Authority District summaries – lower tier (see

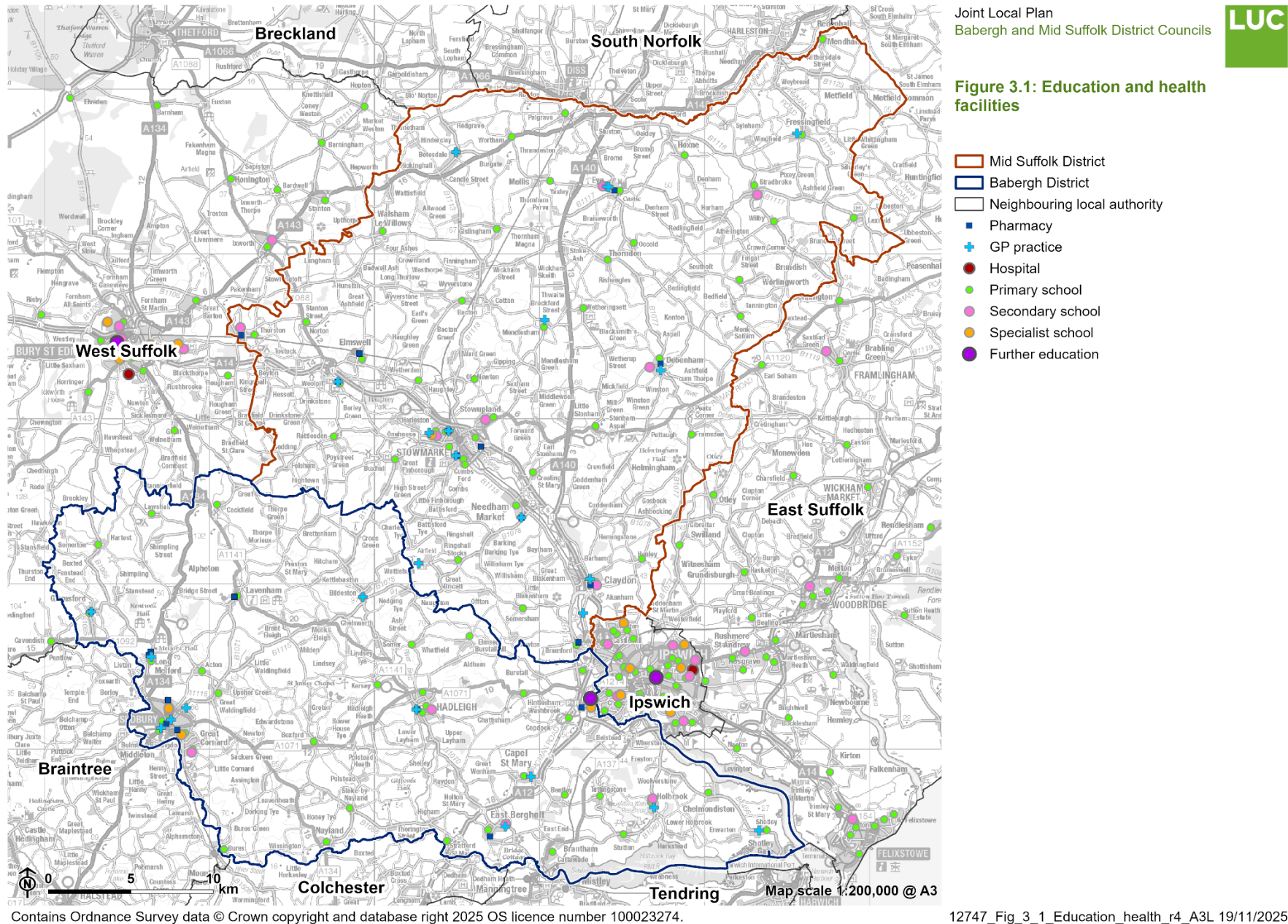
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025>)

¹⁰⁹ BMSDC (2019). Open Space Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Babergh-and-Mid-Suffolk-Open-Space-Study-May-2019.pdf>)

¹¹⁰ Amenity greenspace includes open to free land that is not laid out a certain way or does not have a specific function, such as a park or public playing field

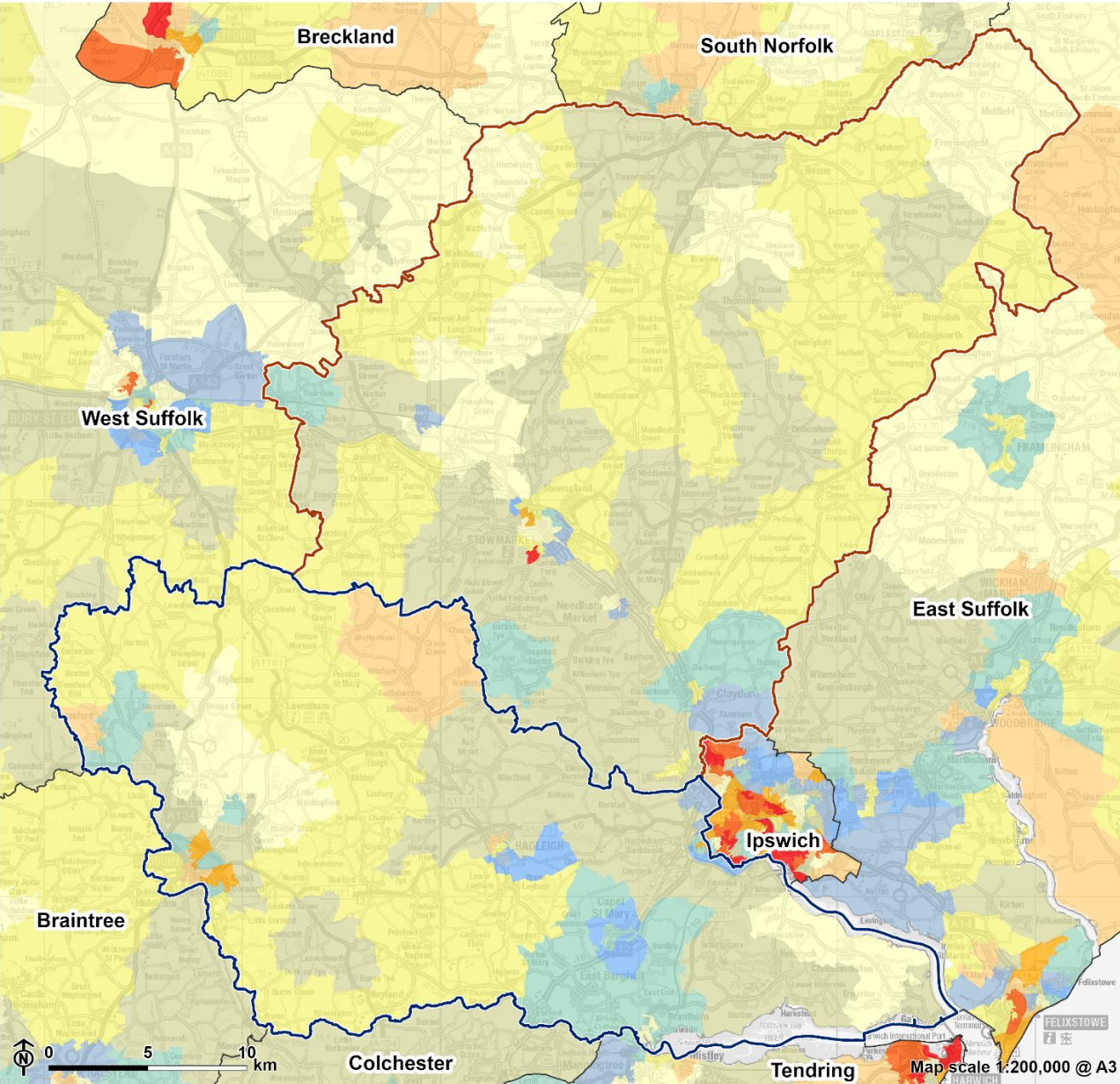
Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
	residents and prioritise the redevelopment of inefficient and outdated housing stock.	
There is a need for affordable housing in BMSDC because at present, the mean price of dwellings is higher than the national average and for Babergh and Mid Suffolk is also higher than the regional average.	The JLP Review provides an opportunity to facilitate and expedite the delivery of affordable housing through the spatial distribution of housing allocations, whilst also supporting the provision of a more appropriate mix of new homes to meet the needs of a growing population.	SA objective 4.
There are a number of vulnerable people, including people with learning difficulties, who have specialist housing needs (defined as sheltered, extra care, residential care or nursing care).	The JLP Review provides an opportunity to specify how much specialist housing is needed through the spatial distribution of housing allocations. An up-to-date settlement hierarchy will help to identify suitable locations for specialist housing facilities based on factors such as access to amenities, services, and transport links.	SA objective 4.
There are high percentages of residents within Babergh District and Mid Suffolk District who live in rural areas, comprising 69% of Babergh's population and 75% of Mid Suffolk's population. Villages and rural areas tend to have less in the way of jobs, services and facilities than the market towns, and continue to lose services and facilities (e.g. shops and pubs).	The JLP Review provides an opportunity to ensure that those living within rural areas are supported by infrastructure, services and facilities through site allocations, although it will continue to be a challenge to do so compared with more urban locations, due to viability.	SA objectives 1, 3 and 14.
The number of people who have a Level 4 qualification (Degree, Higher Degree, NWQ Level 4-5, Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma) and above is lower than the national average.	The JLP Review presents the opportunity to improve the accessibility and provision of high-quality education and training facilities in the districts. The JLP Review offers an opportunity to require large development sites to allocate space and resources for new educational facilities.	SA objective 2.
Although BMSDC is not generally deprived, pockets of deprivation exist across the area, with some rural areas being particularly deprived in terms of access to services and facilities.	The JLP Review presents an opportunity to address deprivation by ensuring equitable access to essential services, amenities, and opportunities for all residents, particularly through strategic site allocations. The JLP Review will thereby allow for changing circumstances in BMSDC to be more appropriately addressed.	SA objectives 1, 2, 3 and 14.
The provision of green space varies across BMSDC, with a deficiency in parks and recreation grounds identified and an identified need for improved open space, play and outdoor recreational facilities.	The JLP Review offers the opportunity to better address the changing circumstances in the plan area by designating specific areas as open spaces, with relevant development management policies, which will ensure the protection and enhancement of access to and quality of open space, but also facilitate the delivery of new open space provision as part of site allocations.	SA objective 1.

Figure 3.1 Education and health facilities



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Figure 3.2 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

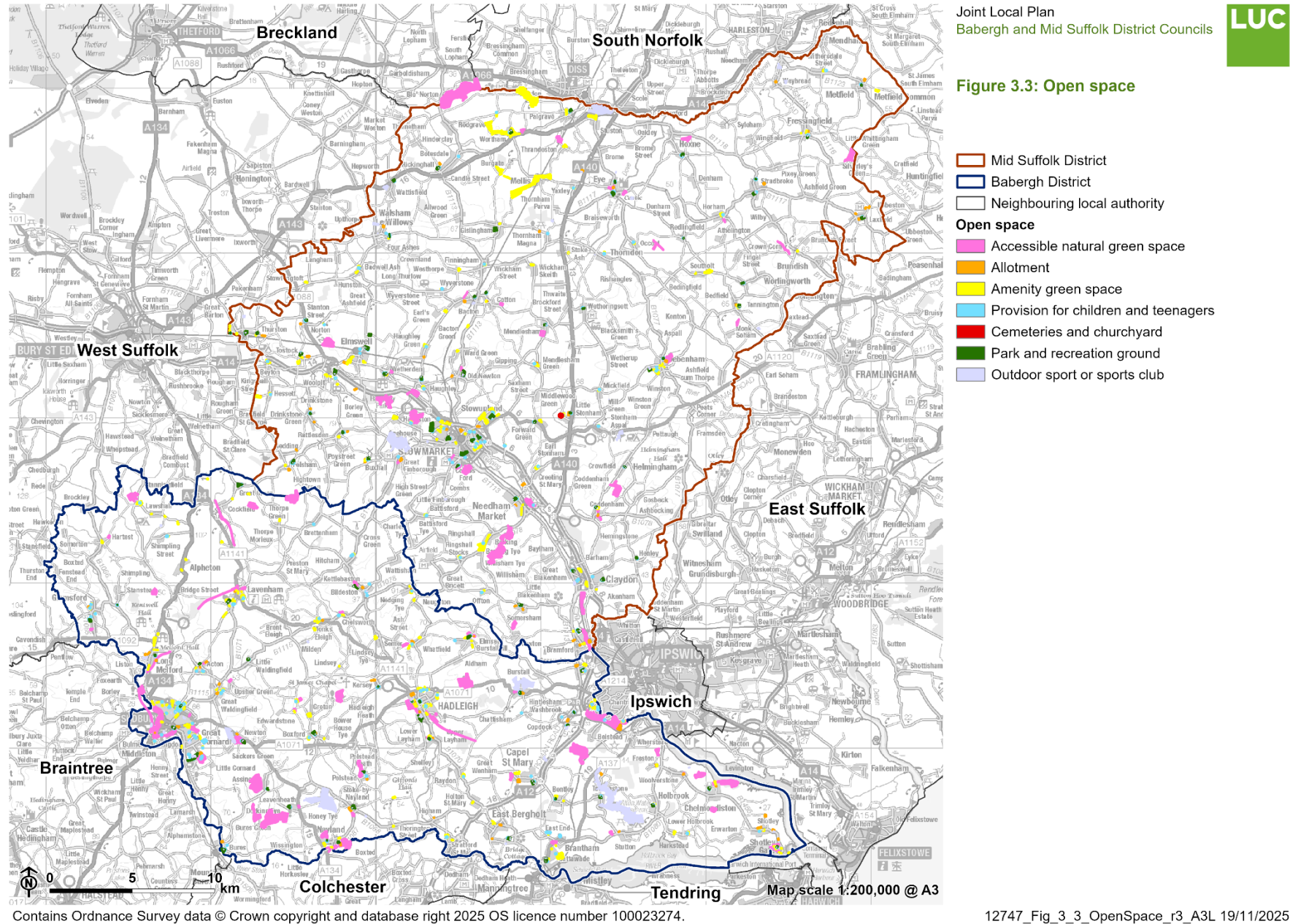


Figure 3.2: Indices of Deprivation 2025

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority
- Index of Multiple Deprivation (%)
- 0 - 10 (most deprived)
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 60
- 60 - 70
- 70 - 80
- 80 - 90
- 90 - 100 (least deprived)

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Figure 3.3 Open space



Chapter 4

Economy and employment

Policy context

National

4.1 The **NPPF (2024)**¹¹¹ contains an economic objective to *“help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.”*

4.2 It also requires that planning seeks to *“create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt”* with policies required to *“set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth”*. Policies addressing the economy should also seek *“to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment.”*

4.3 Of particular relevance is the requirement for planning policies to *“recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and infrastructure that are needed to support the growth of these industries (including data centres and grid connections).”*

4.4 Planning policies are also required specifically to address support for the rural economy. Sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas should be supported, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings, while the diversification of the rural economy and promotion of sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments is also supported.

4.5 The NPPF also supports the role of town centres as functioning at the heart of local communities. This support is required to provide for a *“positive approach to [town centres] growth, management and adaptation.”* Included within this support is a requirement to *“allocate a range of suitable sites*

¹¹¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024). National Planning Policy Framework. (see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

in town centres to meet the scale and type of development needed, looking at least ten years ahead.”

4.6 The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Town centres and retail (2020)**¹¹² provides guidance on planning for town centre vitality and viability, permitted development, change of use and out of town centre development.

4.7 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023¹¹³ On 26th October 2023, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill received Royal Assent. The Act sets out the direction for planning and makes provisions to support the levelling-up agenda. It seeks to streamline the planning process whilst attaching greater weight to development plans. It also aims to improve infrastructure delivery with a new levy system, improve alignment between plans to address cross-boundary issues, and will introduce added protection for heritage assets. The Act also sets the stage for the reform of current system for strategic environmental assessments by providing instead for EORs designed to streamline the process for identifying and assessing the environmental impact of plans and projects. However, for now, the requirement for SEA remains, as set out in existing legislation.

4.8 Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy (2025)¹¹⁴ sets out an integrated plan to transform economic, housing and social infrastructure over the next decade. It commits to at least £725 billion in public investment, supplemented by private financing via carefully targeted public-private partnership models and a new National Wealth Fund. The strategy introduces multiyear capital budgets (initially five-year, reviewed biennially) and establishes the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) to unify planning, improve project delivery, assure major schemes, and coordinate a transparent Infrastructure Pipeline launched in July 2025. It aims to boost growth, align infrastructure with government missions, including housing, clean energy, public services and net zero, reduce planning delays, build institutional capacity, support supply chains and skills development, and provide stability and clarity to investors.

4.9 The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (2025)¹¹⁵ outlines a 10 year plan to boost business investment and

elevate the UK's performance in eight designated growth driving sectors: advanced manufacturing; clean energy industries; creative industries; defence; digital and technologies; financial services; life sciences; and professional & business services. The strategy aims to provide long term stability and certainty to encourage both domestic and international investment, through sector plans, streamlined regulation, enhanced access to finance, including via the National Wealth Fund and British Business Bank, and by accelerating grid connections and infrastructure delivery. It includes regional and place-based initiatives, with targeted support for city regions, industrial clusters and Industrial Strategy Zones to drive inclusive growth across the UK. The strategy is also supported by a robust monitoring framework overseen by a newly established Industrial Strategy Advisory Council, and embeds vocabulary around long-termism, pro-business engagement, competition policy, skills development and innovation.

4.10 The Plan for Change (2024)¹¹⁶ outlines the UK Government's framework for long-term policy delivery across five priority areas: economic growth, healthcare, public safety, opportunity, and clean energy. It sets out specific targets within this Parliament, underpinned by aims to ensure economic stability, reform public services, and implement a more mission-focused approach to governance.

4.11 Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth (2021)¹¹⁷: Sets out a plan to 'build back better' tackling long-term problems to deliver growth that delivers high-quality jobs across the UK while supporting the transition to net zero. This will build on three core pillars of growth: infrastructure, skills and innovation.

4.12 National Planning Practice Guidance¹¹⁸: Reiterates the importance for Local Plans to include a positive strategy for town centres to enable sustainable economic growth and provide a wide range of social and environmental benefits.

¹¹² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020). Town centres and retail. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres>)

¹¹³ Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023

¹¹⁴ HM Treasury and National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (2025) UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-infrastructure-a-10-year-strategy>)

¹¹⁵ Department for Business and Trade (2025) Industrial Strategy. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy>)

¹¹⁶ HM Government (2024) Plan for Change (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6751af4719e0c816d18d1df3/Plan_for_Change.pdf)

¹¹⁷ HM Treasury (2021). Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth.html>)

¹¹⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government (2016). Planning Practice Guidance. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>)

4.13 The Local Growth White Paper (2010)¹¹⁹: Highlights the importance of economic policy that focusses on the delivery of strong, sustainable and balanced growth of income and employment over the long-term, growth which is broad-based industrially and geographically to provide equality of access and opportunity and build businesses that are competitive internationally.

4.14 Rural White Paper 2000 (Our Countryside: the future – A fair deal for rural England)¹²⁰: Sets out the Government's Rural Policy Objectives:

- To facilitate the development of dynamic, competitive and sustainable economies in the countryside, tackling poverty in rural areas.
- To maintain and stimulate communities and secure access to services which is equitable in all the circumstances, for those who live or work in the countryside.
- To conserve and enhance rural landscapes and the diversity and abundance of wildlife (including the habitats on which it depends).
- To promote government responsiveness to rural communities through better working together between central departments, local government, and government agencies and better co-operation with non-government bodies.

4.15 LEP Network Response to the Industrial Strategy Green Paper Consultation (2017)¹²¹: The aim of the document is to ensure that all relevant local action and investment is used in a way that maximises the impact it has across the Government's strategy. Consultation responses set out how the then 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) would work with Government using existing and additional resources to develop and implement a long-term Industrial Strategy.

4.16 Growth Plan 2022¹²²: This document makes growth the government's central economic mission, setting a target of reaching 2.5% trend rate. Sustainable growth will lead to

higher wages, greater opportunities and provide sustainable funding for public services.

4.17 Agriculture Act 2020¹²³: Sets out how farmers and land managers in England will be rewarded in the future with public money for "public goods" – such as better air and water quality, thriving wildlife, soil health, or measures to reduce flooding and tackle the effects of climate change, under the Environmental Land Management Scheme. These incentives will provide a vehicle for achieving the goals of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan and commitment to reach zero emissions by 2050. The Act will help farmers to stay competitive, increase productivity, invest in new technology and seek a fairer return from the marketplace.

4.18 Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024¹²⁴: Aims to drive competitiveness, increase productivity, reduce carbon emissions, and generate fairer returns across the agricultural industry. The Transition Plan introduces several new schemes to improve the environment, animal health and welfare, and farm resilience and productivity (e.g., grants will be available for sustainable farming practices, creating habitats for nature recovery and making landscape-scale changes such as establishing new woodland and other ecosystem services).

Sub-national

4.19 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Economic Strategy (2025)¹²⁵: Establishes the vision for a prosperous, resilient and sustainable future. The Strategy highlights the districts' strengths, opportunities and barriers to growth, and outlines the actions needed to support clean, inclusive and productive development. It focuses on five key opportunities: clean growth, the circular economy and supply chains, enabling infrastructure, the food and drink sector, and freeports, while also recognising three fundamental pillars of a thriving economy: developing skilled and adaptable people, fostering business prosperity through innovation and resilience, and strengthening place by addressing rural challenges, ensuring access to utilities, and supporting attractive, sustainable town centres.

¹¹⁹ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2010). Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-growth-realising-every-places-potential-hc-7961>)

¹²⁰ HM Government (2000). Rural White Paper (Our Countryside: the future – A fair deal for rural England). (see <http://www.tourisminsights.info/ONLINEPUB/DEFRA/DEFRA%20PDFS/RURAL%20WHITE%20PAPER%20-%20FULL%20REPORT.pdf>)

¹²¹ LEP Network (2017). Response to the Industrial Strategy Green Paper Consultation. (see <https://www.lepnetwork.net/media/1470/lep-network-industrial-strategy-response-april-2017-final.pdf>)

¹²² HM Treasury (2022). The Growth Plan 2022. (see [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-growth-plan-2022-](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-growth-plan-2022-documents/the-growth-plan-2022-)

[documents/the-growth-plan-2022-](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-growth-plan-2022-documents/the-growth-plan-2022-)
[html#:~:text=The%20Growth%20Plan%202022%20makes,a%20period%20of%20high%20inflation](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-growth-plan-2022-documents/the-growth-plan-2022-))

¹²³ UK Parliament (2020). Agriculture Act 2020. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/21/contents/enacted/data.htm>)

¹²⁴ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2020). Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-transition-plan-2021-to-2024>)

¹²⁵ BMSDC (2025). Babergh & Mid Suffolk Economic Strategy (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/ed-strategy-final-pdf>)

4.20 Our Plan for Babergh 2023-2027 (2024)¹²⁶: Sets out Babergh District Council's priorities in the period 2023 to 2027. The overall vision is "To help to create a resilient, more sustainable future, with and for, all the residents and communities of Babergh" and this is supported by numerous priorities grouped into the following three themes: Revitalised and improved environment; Thriving economy; and Resilient communities.

4.21 The Mid Suffolk Plan 2023-2027 (2024)¹²⁷: Sets out Mid Suffolk District Council's priorities for the period 2023 to 2027. The vision is "To help to create a resilient, more sustainable future, with and for, all the residents and communities of Mid Suffolk" and is supported by numerous priorities grouped into the following four themes: Housing & Infrastructure; Resilience; Community Wellbeing; and Environmental Sustainability.

4.22 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Economic Land Needs Assessment (2024)¹²⁸: Provides an assessment of the districts' economy and investigates the economic potential of the districts based on economic forecasting and modelling scenarios for future growth. It determines the future employment land requirements in the districts to support the identified growth for 2023-2037 and 2043 in respect of population projections.

4.23 Babergh & Mid Suffolk Town Centres & Retail Study (2015)¹²⁹: Includes information regarding shopping habits, the assessment of retail and other town centre uses and health checks of the main towns. The study offers advice on the strengths and weaknesses of centres within the districts and their ability to accommodate retail, leisure and other town centre uses, including the identification of potentially suitable centres. Advice is also given regarding the level and type of retail, leisure and other town centre uses that would be appropriate for the districts considering national and local economic trends. The study provides recommendations of definitions retail related primary and secondary frontages, and primary shopping areas for the centres, as well as a hierarchy of town centres.

4.24 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Economy Recovery Plan (2022)¹³⁰: The plan focuses on building resilience and future growth in the business community. The aim of the recovery plan is to provide a direction for the councils to support businesses and communities, post COVID-19, to:

- stimulate innovation
- attract inward investment
- encourage strong economic growth

4.25 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2020)¹³¹: Aims to consider all infrastructure needs to enable sustainable development and growth supporting residents, businesses, communities, the environment and individuals. A key objective is prioritising investment into strategic services and infrastructure. The report also considers collaboration of organisations to provide funding and the phasing of infrastructure may occur depending on the degree of growth.

4.26 New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Economic Strategy (2017)¹³²: The Economic Strategy looks ahead to 2036 but focuses on the actions that the then New Anglia LEP needed to take over the following four years to secure long term success. According to the Strategy, the LEP would work across all local authorities to integrate inward investment, whilst also attracting highly skilled people. The LEP would also work with the Government to ensure that the unique contribution of the energy sector is well understood and supported.

4.27 New Anglia Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy (2022)¹³³: The Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy outlines ambitious plans for future growth across Norfolk and Suffolk. Bringing together public and private sector partners with education and the VCSE sector, it sets out New Anglia's then Local Enterprise Partnership's ambition for Norfolk and Suffolk. The strategy aims to make Norfolk and Suffolk:

- A higher-performing, clean, productive and inclusive economy.

¹²⁶ Babergh District Council (2024). Our Plan for Babergh 2023-2027. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/our-plan-for-babergh>)

¹²⁷ Mid Suffolk District Council (2024). The Mid Suffolk Plan. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/the-mid-suffolk-plan>)

¹²⁸ Lambert Smith Hampton (2024). Economic Land Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024>)

¹²⁹ Carter Jonas (2015). Joint Town Centres & Retail Study. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/29-10-15-BaberghMid-Suffolk-TCRSFinal-Report.Final-Version-29.10.15.pdf>)

¹³⁰ BMSDC (2022). Recovery Plan 2022. (see <https://hos.lg-cms.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Recovery-Plan-2022.pdf>)

¹³¹ BMSDC (2020). Infrastructure Delivery Plan. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Infrastructure2020/BMSDC-IDP-Sept-2020.pdf>)

¹³² Norfolk & Suffolk Unlimited (2017). Economic Strategy. (see <https://newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/New-Anglia-Norfolk-Suffolk-Unlimited-Economic-Strategy-Brochure-1-1.pdf>)

¹³³ Norfolk & Suffolk Unlimited (2022). Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy. (see <https://newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FINAL-Norfolk-and-Suffolk-economic-strategy-Jan-2022.pdf>)

- An inclusive economy with an appropriate and highly skilled workforce, where everyone benefits from clean economic growth.
- The place where high-growth businesses with aspirations choose to be.
- A well-connected place, locally, nationally and internationally.
- An international-facing economy with high-value exports.
- A centre for the UK's clean energy sector.
- A place with a clear, defined, ambitious offer to the world.

4.28 South East Inshore Marine Plan (2021)¹³⁴: This document introduces a strategic approach to planning within the inshore waters between Felixstowe, in Suffolk and near Dover, in Kent. It provides an evidence-based approach to inform decision-making by marine users and regulators on where activities might take place within the inshore marine plan area. The plan will help to enhance and protect the marine environment and achieve sustainable economic growth, whilst respecting local communities both within and adjacent to the marine plan area. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District overlaps the South East Inshore Marine Plan area. In the case of Babergh, the overlap includes the tidal extent of the Rivers Stour and Orwell.

East¹³⁵. Furthermore, 99.6% of registered businesses in the wider County of Suffolk are Small or Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) with survival rates consistently better than the UK average¹³⁶.

4.30 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts are made up mainly of rural areas with a range of market and smaller towns, along with some industrial and enterprise sites. Therefore, the districts contain a range of businesses such as agriculture, construction, technology and retail. The table below shows the breakdown of business stock in the districts, which is predominantly characterised by Business and Professional Services and Construction in both districts.

Current baseline

Business sectors and employment

4.29 The Office for National Statistics found a growth rate of 4.3% in 2023 for businesses in the East of England, which is the joint fifth highest region in the UK, alongside the North

Table 4.1 Business stock by sector in 2025¹³⁷

	Babergh				Mid Suffolk			
	Number of companies	%	Total employees	%	Number of companies	%	Total employees	%
Agriculture	125	3	1,762	5	209	5	1,205	3
Business and Professional Services	1,131	31	5,632	18	1,226	30	7,124	19

¹³⁴ HM Government (2021). South East Inshore Marine Plan. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004493/FINAL_South_East_Marine_Plan_1.pdf)

¹³⁵ Office for National Statistics (2024). Business Demography UK 202 - High-growth rates by region UK, 2023. (see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/bulletins/businessdemography/2023>)

¹³⁶ BMSDC (n.d.). Open for Business Strategy: Where and how do the District Councils make a difference. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Economic-Development/OpenForBusiness-Strategy-with-links.pdf>)

¹³⁷ Lichfields (2017). Ipswich Economic Area Sector Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/ipswich/files/m-files/ipswich-economic-area-sector-needs-assessment-september-2017.pdf>)

	Babergh				Mid Suffolk			
	Number of companies	%	Total employees	%	Number of companies	%	Total employees	%
Computing and Technology	141	4	1,092	3	168	4	748	2
Construction	537	15	1,705	5	669	16	4,893	13
Education	100	3	3,273	10	123	3	2,907	8
Energy, Waste and Utilities	31	1	354	1	44	1	505	1
Health and Care	221	6	3,147	10	229	6	4,064	11
Hospitality and Leisure	320	9	3,319	10	325	8	2,605	7
Manufacturing	251	7	4,183	13	268	7	5,289	14
Transport and Logistics	110	3	1,144	4	145	4	2,584	7
Wholesale and Retail	505	14	5,879	18	511	12	4,757	13
Other	122	3	596	2	172	4	543	1

4.31 As of 2023, Babergh has around 59,000sqm of office floorspace and Mid Suffolk around 64,000sqm. These are the lowest levels of provision of all the Suffolk authorities, with Babergh contributing 8% and Mid Suffolk 9% of the total stock. Between 2013 and 2023, Babergh experienced a net loss of 16% of office floorspace, which is higher than the regional level of 7% loss. Conversely, Mid Suffolk is the only district in Suffolk to have experienced positive growth in office stock in this period (+5%). In terms of take-up, both districts have slightly negative net absorption of office floorspace over the ten-year period, with office vacancy rates trending slightly above and slightly below the Suffolk average of 3.5% for Babergh and Mid Suffolk respectively¹³⁸.

4.32 Both districts have seen a net gain in industrial floorspace between 2013 and 2023. Babergh saw increase of 47,000sqm (+8%) and Mid Suffolk 49,000sqm (+6%), representing the highest and second highest growth in industrial stock levels of any of the Suffolk authorities over this period. There has been a strong take up of industrial floorspace in both districts in the ten-year period¹³⁹.

4.33 Babergh and Mid Suffolk have economies that support 38,300 and 42,600 jobs respectively, representing the smallest economies of the Suffolk authorities¹⁴⁰.

4.34 As of June 2025, 79.5% (40,900) of the residents in Babergh District were economically active compared to 79.3% (50,600) in Mid Suffolk. The regional average at the time was 81.6% and the national average was 79.1%¹⁴¹. In Babergh, 16.9% of the economically active residents were self-employed compared to 17.1% in Mid Suffolk. In 2023, 69.8% of total employees were full-time and 30.2% were part-time in Babergh, whilst 68.1% were full-time and 31.9% were part-time in Mid Suffolk. The most recent unemployment data for Babergh and Mid Suffolk from the 2021 census showed that 2.1% (1,601) of Babergh residents were unemployed and 1.7% (1,476) of Mid Suffolk residents. This was lower than the regional (2.5%) and national averages (2.9%) at the time.

4.35 In 2024, gross weekly pay for full-time workers in Babergh was around £594.20 compared to £602.10 in Mid Suffolk. The average for the East of England is £634.20 and

¹³⁸ Lambert Smith Hampton (2024) Babergh and Mid Suffolk Economic Land Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024>)

¹³⁹ Ibid

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ Office for National Statistics (2025). Labour Market Profile for Babergh and Mid Suffolk, Jul 2024-Jun 2025 (see <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/apsnew>)

the national average was £618.70. Therefore, pay in both Babergh and Mid-Suffolk is below the national average¹⁴².

4.36 The table below shows that, in terms of numbers of jobs, the most significant occupations in the districts are in

manufacturing, wholesale and retail, accommodation and food service activities, professional scientific and technical activities, education, and human health and social work activities. In Mid Suffolk, administrative and support service activities are also an important source of employment.

Table 4.2 Employee jobs by industry¹⁴³

	Babergh		Mid Suffolk	
	Employee jobs		Employee jobs	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1,500	4%	2,500	6%
Mining and Quarrying	10	0%	10	0%
Manufacturing	4,500	14.1%	5,000	14.3%
Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	10	0%	150	0.4%
Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities	250	0.8%	450	1.3%
Construction	2,000	6.2%	5,000	14.3%
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	6,000	18.8%	5,000	14.3%
Transportation and Storage	1,250	3.9%	2,500	7.1%
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	3,000	9.4%	2,250	6.4%
Information and Communication	1000	3.1%	700	2.0%
Financial and Insurance Activities	400	1.2%	250	0.7%
Real Estate Activities	450	1.4%	400	1.1%
Professional Scientific and Technical Activities	2,500	7.8%	2,250	6.4%
Administrative and Support Service Activities	2,000	6.2%	3,2,250	6.4%
Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security	250	0.8%	800	2.3%
Education	3,500	10.9%	3,000	8.6%
Human Health and Social Work Activities	3,500	10.9%	3,500	10.0%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	800	2.5%	900	2.6%

¹⁴²Office for National Statistics (2024) annual survey of hours and earnings (see <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=30>)

¹⁴³ NOMIS (2021). Employee Jobs by Industry. (see <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157239/report.aspx?town=Babergh#tabempunemp>)

	Babergh		Mid Suffolk	
	Employee jobs		Employee jobs	
Other Services Activities	450	1.4%	500	1.4%

Economic growth challenges and priorities

4.37 Babergh and Mid Suffolk released their new Economic Strategy in 2025¹⁴⁴ which communicates the districts' approach in supporting economic growth and helping businesses, communities and their broad network of partners. The report aims to encourage collaboration when tackling both short-term and long-term aspirations.

4.38 The priority in Babergh is to "foster economic prosperity while ensuring environmental sustainability and social well-being". In Mid Suffolk, the priority is to "create a resilient, more sustainable future for all the residents and communities of Mid Suffolk".

4.39 The former Local Enterprise Partnership for Norfolk and Suffolk, New Anglia, comprises ten enterprise zones, two of which are in Babergh and Mid Suffolk¹⁴⁵. These are Stowmarket Enterprise Park, Mill Lane and Sproughton Enterprise Park, Sproughton. A Food Enterprise Zone known as Jimmy's Farm site is also present within BMSDC.

4.40 The main employment sites and enterprise zones are shown in **Figure 4.1**.

4.41 The main issues impacting on growth in Babergh and Mid Suffolk are as follows¹⁴⁶:

- Historically lower wages
- Limited workspace provision in rural areas
- Higher house prices compared to national averages

- Out commuting and emissions due to a lack of employment hubs
- Transitioning to a Net Zero economy
- Greater number of Business deaths compared to Business births in a year in Babergh (IDBR 2022)
- Town centre vacancy retail rates in Babergh was 7% in October 2024. This is below the Q4 2023 average for the East of England of 13.3%
- Town centre vacancy retail rates in Stowmarket for Oct 2024 was 9% which is below the Q4 2023 average for the East of England of 13.3%
- Only 53.1% of Mid Suffolk have gigabit-capable broadband availability compared with 83.3% across England (ThinkBroadband)

Town centres and retail

4.42 The current Town Centre and Retail Study for Babergh and Mid Suffolk was published in September 2015. According to the study, there has been a decline in shopping centre consumer patterns¹⁴⁷.

4.43 BMSDC have been collecting data on shop occupancy and vacancy rates in their key towns and service centres for some years. The results are set out in the below table and shows highest vacancy rates to be in Needham Market, followed by Eye then Sudbury¹⁴⁸.

Table 4.3 Town Centre Vacancy Rates

Town Centre	No. of Shops		
	Total	Vacant	% vacant
Sudbury (Oct 2025)	274	23	8.39%
Hadleigh (Oct 2025)	107	8	7.48%

¹⁴⁴ BMSDC (2025). Babergh & Mid Suffolk Economic Strategy (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/ed-strategy-final-pdf>)

¹⁴⁵ BMSDC (n.d.). Enterprise Zones. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/business/economic-development/space-to-innovate-enterprise-zones/>)

¹⁴⁶ Babergh & Mid Suffolk Economic Strategy 2025 (see <https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s37456/Appendix%20C%20-%20ED%20Strategy.pdf>)

¹⁴⁷ Carter Jonas (2015). Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils: Joint Town Centres & Retail Study (see <https://hadleightowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Neighbourhood-Plan-Documents/Supporting-Documents/2015-Town-Centre-Healthcheck-Hadleigh-Excerpt.pdf>)

¹⁴⁸ BMSDC (2026). Client data

Town Centre	No. of Shops		
	Total	Vacant	% vacant
Stowmarket (Oct 2025)	166	6	3.61%
Needham Market (Oct 2025)	74	11	14.86%
Eye (Oct 2025)	44	4	9.09%

Patterns of working

4.44 Homeworking has been steadily rising in recent decades. However, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this shift. ONS data from 2020 shows that Babergh and Mid Suffolk have higher levels of home working compared to UK levels, as shown in **Table 4.4**. It should be noted that this data is taken from a 2020 ONS dataset and therefore is likely to start showing the impacts of COVID-19.

Table 4.4 Percentage of work from home status¹⁴⁹

	Never	Mainly	Recently	Occasionally
UK	64.1%	8.3%	17.8%	9.8%
Babergh	58.0%	10.0%	14.2%	17.8%
Mid Suffolk	54.7%	9.4%	19.8%	16.1%

4.45 More recent ONS data (September 2022 to January 2023) shows that at a national level, the overall levels of homeworking have only increased slightly on pre-pandemic levels. However, the biggest increase has been the proportions of hybrid workers. The balance of hybrid working is still something many businesses are exploring and working practices will have an impact on determining future floorspace requirements across various sectors.

4.46 An occupier survey¹⁵⁰ carried out across the country in 2023 indicated that while there has been a rising trend in returning to the office in recent years, hybrid working patterns remain entrenched. While there is an overall reduction in office floorspace requirements of 15-20% at a national level, there are differing trends based on the size of businesses. Smaller companies are less likely to move or report a need to move. As Babergh and Mid Suffolk have an office base of predominantly smaller businesses, there is likely to be less impact on office floorspace requirements than at national level.

Future baseline and likely evolution without the Joint Local Plan Review

4.47 It is uncertain how the job market will change without the JLP Review. The degree of change in local circumstances will be influenced by economic issues at the national and international level. This includes the uncertainties following the UK's exit from the EU.

Key sustainability issues

4.48 The key sustainability issues for the economy, and the opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them are shown in **Table 4.5**

Table 4.5 Key sustainability issues and opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
There are a number of barriers to economic growth within BMSDC, including educational attainment and a lack of suitable premises for SMEs.	The JLP Review offers the opportunity to create and safeguard jobs through targeted allocation of employment sites, including for office and industrial spaces and the promotion of the rural economy, as well as promoting access and opportunity for all. Furthermore, the spatial	SA objectives 1, 2, 14 and 15.

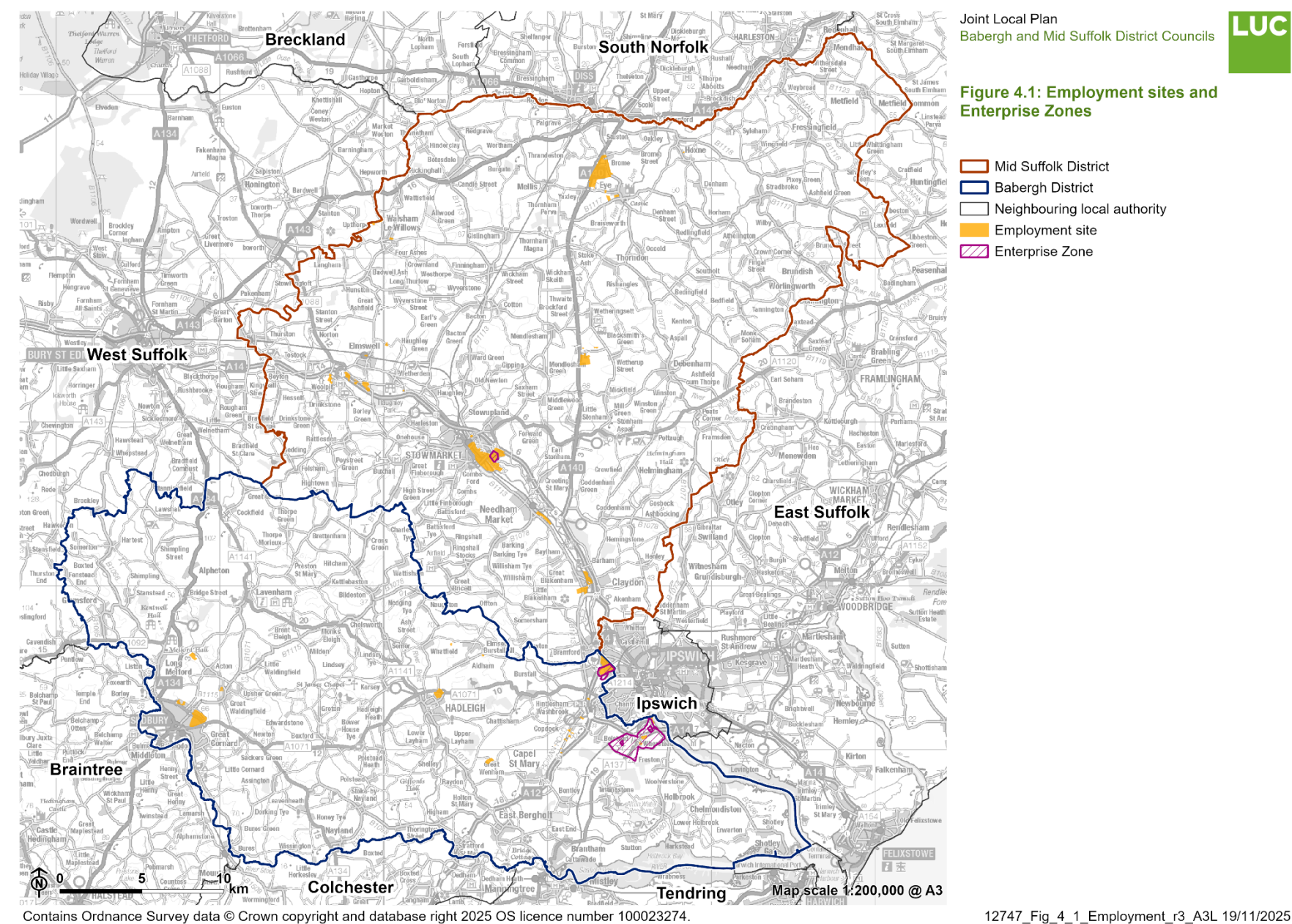
¹⁴⁹ ONS (2020) as in Lambert Smith Hampton (2024) Babergh and Mid Suffolk Economic Land Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library->

[54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024))

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
	distribution of housing allocations will help to identify where population growth is expected, which will help to inform decisions about where to invest in educational facilities and infrastructure to support business growth,	
There has been a decline in shopping consumer patterns, with a number of vacant units present in key towns and service centres.	The JLP Review presents an opportunity to protect and promote the High Street in the key towns and service centres through designating specific areas within these towns and centres for commercial and retail development, and incentivising adaptive reuse of existing units in key towns and centres for commercial purposes.	SA objectives 14 and 15.
Babergh is not identified as a known destination for business growth, partly because of its geographical location between Ipswich, Colchester and Bury St Edmunds, which has led to high levels of outward commuting, particularly as both authorities also fall within the Ipswich Travel to Work Area. Also, in both districts, the number of economically active residents is lower than the regional and national averages.	The JLP Review presents an opportunity to develop Babergh's reputation as a business growth destination and provide employment development where needed through site allocations, although it will continue to face competition from other areas with more established reputations, networks and infrastructure.	SA objectives 14 and 15.
There is an uneven distribution of services throughout BMSDC and limited infrastructure in place to support economic development.	The JLP Review offers an opportunity to address infrastructure issues across BMSDC through updating the settlement hierarchy to give priority to areas with potential for economic development and therefore supporting economic development.	SA objectives 2, 14, 15 and 16.

Figure 4.1 Employment sites and Enterprise Zones



Chapter 5

Transport and pollution

Policy context

National

5.1 The **NPPF (2024)**¹⁵¹ requires that “*transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making*”. This should involve “*realising opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure*”. To help reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health the planning system should focus significant development “*on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes*.” The framework also requires that planning policies support an appropriate mix of uses across an area to further help reduce the need to travel as well as the provision of high-quality walking and cycling network.

5.2 While the framework promotes the use and development of sustainable transport networks it also requires that “*where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development*” should be identified and protected.

5.3 The NPPF also states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued soil and the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Policies should also prevent new and existing development from “*contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability*.”

5.4 The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking (2015)**¹⁵²: Provides guidance to help local authorities assess and reflect transport needs in Local Plan making.

¹⁵¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024). National Planning Policy Framework. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

¹⁵² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2015). Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transport-evidence-bases-in-plan-making-and-decision-taking>)

- **Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements (2014)**¹⁵³: Provides advice on when Transport Assessments and Transport Statements are required, and what they should contain.
- A target on ambient PM2.5 concentrations.
- **Air quality (2019)**¹⁵⁴ provides guidance on air quality considerations planning needs to take into account.

5.5 National Planning Practice Guidance¹⁵⁵: Reiterates the requirement for local planning authorities to undertake an assessment of the transport implications of reviewing their Local Plan.

5.6 Environment Agency, Meeting our future water needs: a national framework for water resources (2020)¹⁵⁶ sets the strategic direction for long term regional water resources planning. The framework is built on a shared vision to leave the environment in a better state than we found it and improve the nation's resilience to drought and minimise interruptions to all water users.

5.7 The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland¹⁵⁷: Sets out a way forward for work and planning on air quality issues by setting out the air quality standards and objectives to be achieved. It introduces a new policy framework for tackling fine particles and identifies potential new national policy measures which modelling indicates could give further health benefits and move closer towards meeting the Strategy's objectives. The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Further improve air quality in the UK from today and long term.
- Provide benefits to health quality of life and the environment.

5.8 The Air quality strategy for England (2023)¹⁵⁸: Sets out Defra's framework for local authorities to make best use of their powers and make air quality improvements for their

communities. It also sets out the actions expected of local authorities in support of the government's long-term air quality goals, including new PM2.5 targets.

5.9 Future of Transport: supporting rural transport innovation (2023)¹⁵⁹: Shows how innovative and emerging transport technologies could address some of the major challenges in rural communities. It highlights the importance of transport to everyday life rural life and provides guiding principles for the introduction of new technologies and services.

5.10 Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)¹⁶⁰: The Transport Decarbonisation Plan sets out actions for government, businesses and society to significantly reduce carbon emissions from across every single mode of transport by 2050. Six strategic priorities for the Transport Decarbonisation Plan include:

- Accelerating modal shift to public and active transport;
- Decarbonisation of road vehicles;
- Decarbonising how we get our goods;
- Place-based solutions;
- UK as a hub for green transport technology and innovation; and
- Reducing carbon in a global economy.

5.11 Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (2021)¹⁶¹: Sets out the Government's commitments in relation to and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. The document follows on from the Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge report published in 2020. It commits the UK to phasing out the sale of new diesel and petrol heavy goods vehicles by 2040, subject to consultation, in addition to phasing out the sale of polluting cars and vans by 2035. The document also sets out how the government will improve public transport and increase

¹⁵³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2014). Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-plans-transport-assessments-and-statements>)

¹⁵⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Air quality. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/air-quality--3>)

¹⁵⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (last updated 1 October 2019). Planning Practice Guidance. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>).

¹⁵⁶ Environment Agency (2025) National Framework for Water Resources 2025: Water for growth, nature and a resilient future. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-framework-for-water-resources-2025-water-for-growth-nature-and-a-resilient-future>)

¹⁵⁷ Defra (2011). The air quality strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: Volume 1. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-air-quality-strategy-for-england-scotland-wales-and-northern-ireland-volume-1>)

¹⁵⁸ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2023) The air quality strategy for England (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-air-quality-strategy-for-england>)

¹⁵⁹ Department for Transport (2023) Future of Transport: supporting rural transport innovation (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-transport-supporting-rural-transport-innovation>)

¹⁶⁰ Department for Transport (2020). Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/932122/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf)

¹⁶¹ Department for Transport (2021). Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009448/decarbonising-transport-a-better-greener-britain.pdf)

support for active travel, as well as creating a net zero rail network by 2050, ensuring net zero domestic aviation emissions by 2040, and a transition to green shipping.

5.12 The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Report to Parliament (2022)¹⁶²: Sets out the objectives and financial resources for cycling and walking infrastructure. It states the Government's long-term ambition is to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys. The report also highlights the Government's objectives to be achieved by 2025 of doubling cycling activities, increasing walking activity and increasing the percentage of children that usually walk to school.

5.13 Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development (2022)¹⁶³: Sets out relevant policies and providing guidance on what should be considered for planning any development proposals, which may impact on the Strategic Road Network. The document also sets out the way in which the company will engage with the development industry, public bodies and communities to assist the delivery of sustainable development.

5.14 Department for Transport, The Road to Zero (2018)¹⁶⁴: Sets out new measures towards cleaner road transport, aiming to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles. It explains how cleaner air, a better environment, zero emission vehicles and a strong, clean economy will be achieved. One of the main aims of the document is for all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2040.

5.15 Transport Investment Strategy (2017)¹⁶⁵: Sets the strategy for investment in transport infrastructure in the UK. It includes four objectives that the strategy aims to achieve:

- Create a more reliable, less congested, and better connected transport network that works for the users who rely on it;
- Build a stronger, more balanced economy by enhancing productivity and responding to local growth priorities;

- Enhance our global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to trade and invest; and
- Support the creation of new housing.

5.16 Department for Transport, Road Investment Strategy 2: 2020-2025¹⁶⁶: The second Road Investment Strategy sets a long-term strategic vision for the network. It specifies the performance standards Highways England must meet, lists planned enhancement schemes expected to be built and states the funding that will be made available by the DfT during the second Road Period, which covers 2020/21 to 2024/25.

5.17 Highways England Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan (2017)¹⁶⁷: The strategy is designed to communicate the Highways England's approach and priorities for sustainable development to its key stakeholders. Highways England aims to ensure its action in the future will further reduce the impact of its activities seeking a long-term and sustainable benefit to the environment and the communities it serves. The action plan describes actions that will enable the company to deliver sustainable development and to help protect and improve the environment.

5.18 Environmental Improvement Plan 2023¹⁶⁸: The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan. It builds on the vision of 25 Year Environment Plan with a new plan setting out how Defra will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of its goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Under the plan the Government will protect 30% of England's land and sea for nature. The document identifies ten goals upon which action will be focused. Of the goals included in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, those of relevance in terms of the protection of air quality are: Goal 2: clean air.

5.19 UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations¹⁶⁹: Sets out the Government's ambition and actions for delivering a better environment and cleaner air,

¹⁶² Secretary for Transport (2022). Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Report to Parliament 2022. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1087944/Cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy-report-to-Parliament-2022-web.pdf)

¹⁶³ Department for Transport and National Highways (2022). Strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development#the-role-of-this-document>)

¹⁶⁴ Department for Transport (2018). The Road to Zero. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739460/road-to-zero.pdf)

¹⁶⁵ Department for Transport (2017). Transport Investment Strategy. (see

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/918490/Transport_investment_strategy.pdf)

¹⁶⁶ Department for Transport and Highways England (2022). Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2): 2020 to 2025. (see

¹⁶⁷ Highways England (2017). Highways England Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-investment-strategy-2-ris2-2020-to-2025>)

¹⁶⁸ HM Government (2023). Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>)

¹⁶⁹ Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Transport (2017). UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations. (see

including £1 billion investment in ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs), a £290 million National Productivity Investment Fund, a £11 million Air Quality Grant Fund and £255 million Implementation Fund to help local authorities to prepare Air Quality Action Plans and improve air quality, an £89 million Green Bus Fund, £1.2 billion Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and £100 million to help improve air quality on the National road network.

5.20 The Air Quality Standards Regulations (2016)¹⁷⁰: Set out limits on concentrations of outdoor air pollutants that impact public health, most notably particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). It also sets out the procedure and requirements for the designation of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

5.21 Clean Air Strategy 2019¹⁷¹: Sets out the comprehensive action that is required from across all parts of government and society to meet these goals. This will be underpinned by new England-wide powers to control major sources of air pollution, in line with the risk they pose to public health and the environment, plus new local powers to take action in areas with an air pollution problem. These will support the creation of Clean Air Zones to lower emissions from all sources of air pollution, backed up with clear enforcement mechanisms. The UK has set stringent targets to cut emissions by 2020 and 2030.

5.22 The Environment Act 2021¹⁷² sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also establishes the Office for Environmental Protection which will act as an impartial and objective body for the protection and improvement of the environment. The Act sets out legislation which covers:

- Resource efficiency, producer responsibility, and the management, enforcement and regulation of waste;
- Local air quality management frameworks and the recall of motor vehicles etc; and
- Plans and proposals for water resources, drainage and sewerage management, storm overflows, water quality and land drainage.

5.23 Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT) (2022)¹⁷³ sets out a new framework that aims to improve industrial emissions and protect the environment through the introduction of a UK BAT regime. It aims to set up a new structure of governance with a new independent body in the form of Standards Council and the Regulators Group, consisting of government officials and expert regulators from all UK nations. It aims to also establish a new UK Air Quality Governance Group to oversee the work of the Standards Council and the delivery of the requirements under this new framework. It is anticipated that the BATC for the first four industry sectors will be published in the second half of 2023.

5.24 Inclusive Mobility A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure (2021)¹⁷⁴ is a guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure. The document describes features that need to be considered in the provision of an inclusive environment and issues related to disabling barriers, the use of technology, maintenance, awareness of the needs of disabled people, and engagement.

5.25 Cycle Infrastructure Design Local Transport Note 1/20¹⁷⁵ provides guidance to local authorities on delivering high quality, cycle infrastructure including:

- planning for cycling
- space for cycling within highways
- transitions between carriageways, cycle lanes and cycle tracks
- junctions and crossings
- cycle parking and other equipment
- planning and designing for commercial cycling
- traffic signs and road markings
- construction and maintenance.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633269/air-quality-plan-overview.pdf

¹⁷⁰ The Air Quality Standards (Amendment) Regulations 2016

¹⁷¹ DEFRA (2019). Clean Air Strategy 2019. (see

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770715/clean-air-strategy-2019.pdf)

¹⁷² HM Government (2021). Environment Act 2021. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>)

¹⁷³ DEFRA (2022). Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT). (see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-the-best->

[available-techniques-for-the-uk-uk-bat/establishing-the-best-available-techniques-for-the-uk-uk-bat#current-situation](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-the-best-available-techniques-for-the-uk-uk-bat/establishing-the-best-available-techniques-for-the-uk-uk-bat#current-situation)).

¹⁷⁴ Department for Transport (2021). Inclusive Mobility A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure.

(<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/61d32bb7d3bf7f1f72b5ffd2/inclusive-mobility-a-guide-to-best-practice-on-access-to-pedestrian-and-transport-infrastructure.pdf>)

¹⁷⁵ Department for Transport (2020). Cycle Infrastructure Design Local Transport Note 1/20. (see

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ffa1f96d3bf7f65d9e35825/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf>)

5.26 The Environmental Noise Regulations (2018)¹⁷⁶ apply to environmental noise, mainly from transport. The regulations require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require the preparation of Noise Action Plans to provide a framework to manage environmental noise and its effects. These Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately.

Sub-national

5.27 Suffolk's Local Transport Plan 2025-2040 (2025)¹⁷⁷: The Local Transport Plan is a two-part plan. Part 1 sets out the County Council's 15-year strategy to develop and improve the transport network. Part 2 comprises 15 implementation plans, five of which are relevant to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk plan area: Hadleigh, Ipswich, Stowmarket, Sudbury and Thurston. These implementation plans set out the ways in which the County Council will address issues identified within Part 1 of the Local Transport Plan.

5.28 Suffolk County Council Residential Travel Plan Guidance (2025)¹⁷⁸: promotes best practice in residential travel planning and consistency across Suffolk in support of national and local policy requirements. The guidance provides clarity to both stakeholders and developers involved in the planning process.

5.29 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Economic Land Needs Assessment (2024)¹⁷⁹: Provides an assessment of the districts' economy and investigates the economic potential of the districts based on economic forecasting and modelling scenarios for future growth. It determines the future employment land requirements in the districts to support the identified growth for 2023-2037 and 2043 in respect of population projections.

5.30 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2020)¹⁸⁰: Aims to consider all infrastructure needs to enable sustainable development and growth supporting residents, businesses, communities, the environment and individuals. A key objective is prioritising investment into strategic services and infrastructure. The report also considers collaboration of organisations to provide funding and the phasing of infrastructure may occur depending on the degree of growth.

5.31 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2021)¹⁸¹: The plan focuses specifically on active travel infrastructure, identifying cycling and walking infrastructure improvements needed. It sets out to ensure that consideration is given to cycling and walking within both local planning and transport policies and strategies and make the case for future funding for walking and cycling infrastructure.

5.32 Suffolk County Council Transport Mitigation Strategy for the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (2019)¹⁸²: The Strategy outlines measures to address transport-related challenges in the region. It focuses on mitigation within Ipswich as it addresses the cumulative impact of the ISPA local plans within the county town, seeking to deliver a modal shift in Ipswich. Key priorities over the years 2020/22 include commencement of the Smarter Choices programme and reviewing the parking and parking charges in Ipswich.

5.33 Suffolk Cycling Strategy (2014-2031)¹⁸³: Reviews Suffolk's cycling landscape, sets 6 key strategies and outlines actions to help meet these strategies to achieve proposed outcomes. The report also outlines the delivery approach and governance of the strategy.

5.34 Suffolk Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan 2021¹⁸⁴: This plan sets out a series of measures to achieve a transformational change in the levels of cycling and walking across the county.

¹⁷⁶ HM Government (2018). The Environmental Noise (England) Regulations. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/1089/contents/made>)

¹⁷⁷ Suffolk County Council (2025). Local Transport Plan 2025-2040. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport-planning/suffolks-local-transport-plan-2025-2040>)

¹⁷⁸ Suffolk County Council (2025). Suffolk County Council Residential Travel Plan Guidance. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/scc-residential-travel-plan-guidance-20251.pdf>)

¹⁷⁹ Lambert Smith Hampton (2024). Economic Land Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024>)

¹⁸⁰ BMSDC (2020). Infrastructure Delivery Plan. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Infrastructure2020/BMSDC-IDP-Sept-2020.pdf>)

¹⁸¹ Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (2021). Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-methodology-report>)

¹⁸² Suffolk County Council (2019). Transport Mitigation Strategy for the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/imported/ispa-transport-mitigation-v13f.pdf>)

¹⁸³ Suffolk County Council (2014). Suffolk Cycling Strategy (2014-2031). (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/20140619-Cycling-Strategy-booklet.pdf>)

¹⁸⁴ Suffolk County Council (2021). Suffolk Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-for-suffolk.pdf>)

Current baseline

5.35 The transport network of Babergh and Mid Suffolk is shown in **Figure 5.4**.

Transport

Road network

5.36 The key components of the road network of Babergh and Mid Suffolk are:

- The A14, which is an important corridor for moving goods as it connects the port of Felixstowe with the Midlands and the A1, via Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge, and Huntingdon. Stowmarket and Needham Market are located just to the south of this route, which acts as a bypass to these two towns.
- The A12, which connects London with Chelmsford, Colchester and Ipswich and on to the coastal towns of Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth. The A12 passes through the south eastern part of Babergh but does not connect into any of the market towns in the district.
- The A140, which connects the A14 just north of Ipswich with Norwich via Diss. Eye is located just to the east of this route.
- The A134, which connects Colchester and Braintree (the latter via the A131) with Bury St Edmunds, via Sudbury.
- Hadleigh does not lie on the strategic road network, although it is on the A1071, which links Sudbury with Ipswich, and the A1141 to Bury St Edmunds. In addition, the A1120 links Stowmarket and Needham Market with the A12 to the east as a cross-country route rather than going via the A14 around Ipswich.

5.37 The remainder of the road network in the two districts comprises primarily B roads and rural roads.

Traffic growth and road projects

5.38 A modelling report¹⁸⁵ tested the councils' core set of development assumptions across the districts made in the Local Plan. The modelling shows future traffic growth for 2026 and 2036, as a result of changing patterns of travel behaviour and predicting future traffic impacts. The growth assumptions for the modelling consider population growth and specific

development locations, as well as car ownership and relative vehicle operating costs.

5.39 The results show that many junctions may be close to or exceed capacity in 2026 and 2036, which include the A1071 / B1113 (Beagle roundabout), A140/A1120 Junction, and the north approach of the B1115 / Combs Lane junction. However, there are also many parts of the network that will operate well within their theoretical capacity. In particular, Sudbury is shown to generally operate within capacity within the town itself in both forecast years. For junctions where the volume to capacity is shown to approach or exceed operational capacity, the individual development proposals assessed within the model would, as part of their planning applications, need to consider additional measures to help mitigate any impact.

5.40 The issues identified on highways capacity in and around Ipswich are identified as a result of growth in the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA)¹⁸⁶. This area aligns with the Ipswich Housing Market Area and Ipswich Functional Economic Area, covering Ipswich Borough, Babergh, Mid Suffolk, and the eastern part of East Suffolk (formerly Suffolk Coastal District). In particular, the A14 faces capacity challenges due to its role in supporting strategic employment and port-related developments. Growth in employment needs along the A14 is influenced by the Port of Felixstowe. Key employment sites along the A14, such as the Sroughton Enterprise Park in Babergh District and Gateway 14 in Mid Suffolk District, further emphasise the corridor's role in supporting economic growth. In relation to Felixstowe, modelling shows that the majority of locations are shown to operate within capacity in 2026 and 2036¹⁸⁷. However, the Candlet Road approach to the A14 Dockspur roundabout is shown to be over-capacity in 2036, as well as access links to / from the A14 adjacent to Innocence Farm.

5.41 In Babergh District and to the south-west of Ipswich, the Beagle roundabout (A1071/B1113/Swan Hill) is shown to have overall capacity issues, with multiple arms over-capacity in both 2026 and 2036. The A1071/Hadleigh Road signalised junction is highlighted as having capacity issues in both forecast years. Sudbury is shown to generally operate within capacity within the town itself in both forecast years. However, the southern A131 approach to/from Sudbury and A134/A1071 junction shows capacity issues in both forecast years, going over capacity in 2036. Brantham is shown to

¹⁸⁵ WSP (2020). Ipswich Strategic Planning Area Local Plan Modelling. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/ipswich-strategic-planning-area-local-plan-modelling-forecasting-report-oct-2020>)

¹⁸⁶ Babergh District Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council (2021). Statement of Common Ground in relation to Strategic Cross Boundary Planning Matters in the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area.

(see https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/ipswich/files/m-files/ispa_statement_of_common_ground_v7_march_2021_final_signed.pdf)

¹⁸⁷ WSP (2019). ISPA LOCAL PLAN MODELLING Forecasting Report – Updated 2026 and 2036 forecasts with demand adjustments. (see https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/d38.2_-_ipswich_strategic_planning_area_local_plan_modelling_forecasting_report_august_2019.pdf)

have capacity issues in both forecast years, with the A137 over capacity in both forecast years.

5.42 In Mid Suffolk District, the A140 corridor is shown to have capacity issues at multiple locations including the A140/A1120 staggered crossroads and A140/Workhouse Road/Stoke Road junction. Stowmarket is shown to generally operate within capacity in both forecast years, though isolated link approaches to Gipping Way and Ipswich Road are shown to have capacity issues in both forecast years.

5.43 The highway schemes outlined below are due to be in place in BMSDC by 2026 and 2036, which will help reduce congestion across both districts:

- **Chilton Woods access road:** access road between A134 Springlands Way (new roundabout) and Acton Lane (new priority junction).
- **A1071/Swan Hill roundabout:** capacity improvements.
- **A1071/Hadleigh Road signals:** capacity improvements.
- **A1071/Poplar Lane:** signalisation as part of access arrangements for Wolsey Grange.
- **A1214 London Road:** new signalised junction part of access arrangements for Wolsey Grange.

Public transport network

5.44 Public transport is limited in the districts. However, there are buses and trains that operate. Suffolk County Council has a bus and train network map which shows all possible routes¹⁸⁸.

5.45 In Babergh, trains go from Sudbury out of the district to Marks Tey. Marks Tey railway station is on the Great Eastern Main Line and is a junction for the Sudbury Branch Line to Sudbury. Passengers can change at Marks Tey to go to London Liverpool Street. Trains can also be taken from Ipswich railway station into London Liverpool Street.

5.46 In Mid Suffolk, trains go from Ipswich to Needham Market, Stowmarket, Elmswell, Thurston and Diss, and on to either Norwich or Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge. Direct trains to London are limited to Stowmarket only.

5.47 There are also bus services which provide a range of routes and connect the main towns, villages and centres within the districts. However, these services are often irregular and limited¹⁸⁹.

5.48 The councils support a "Connecting Communities" initiative that collects residents from their homes and connects them with appropriate bus or train services¹⁹⁰.

Commuting patterns and travel behaviour

5.49 The districts' residents rely heavily on cars to get around and access employment, education, amenities and services, partly as a result of living in more isolated rural areas. There are many different commuting routes within the districts and individuals commute in and out of the districts from surrounding areas.

5.50 Many residents that live in Mid Suffolk commute into Ipswich. Residents from all over Babergh and Mid Suffolk, including Ipswich Town commute, into London¹⁹¹.

5.51 As set out in **Figure 5.1** and **Table 5.1**, around 9,086 individuals commute into Babergh District, whilst 12,243 commute out of the district. There is a net outflow of 3,157 commuters meaning that outflows are 35% higher than inflows¹⁹². Notably, Ipswich and Mid Suffolk are exceptions and have minor net commuting inflows to Babergh, as shown in **Table 5.1**.

5.52 According to the 2021 Census, 30.7% (13,171) of the resident population in employment in Babergh work mainly from home, although the most common method used to travel to work was driving a car or a van, at 54.8% (23,542). The commuting figures show the strong relationship that Babergh has with Ipswich in particular, both for commuting inwards and outwards, although there has been a noticeable shift toward working from home in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁹³. A lower proportion of residents in Babergh travel less than 10km (25.3%) than the proportion at the English level (35.4%)¹⁹⁴ demonstrating the rural nature of the district and potential need for out commuting among the resident population.

5.53 According to **Figure 5.2** and **Table 5.2**, Mid Suffolk is similar with 11,192 individuals commuting into the district and

¹⁸⁸ Suffolk County Council (2024). Public Transport Map. (see <https://www.suffolkonboard.com/buses/timetables/>)

¹⁸⁹ Suffolk County Council (2022). Bus timetables. (see <https://www.suffolkonboard.com/buses/timetables/>)

¹⁹⁰ Suffolk County Council (2022). Connecting Communities. (see <https://communities.suffolkonboard.com/my-area/mid-suffolk/>)

¹⁹¹ DataShine Commute (2011). (see <https://commute.datashine.org.uk/#mode=train&direction=both&msoa=E02004447&zoom=11&lon=0.8279&lat=52.0588>)

¹⁹² Lambert Smith Hampton (2024). Economic Land Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset->

[library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024))

¹⁹³ Public Health and Communities (2022). 2021 Census Topic Summary 4: Labour market and travel to work (see <https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/asset-library/Census-2021/2021-census-labour-market-and-travel-to-work.pdf>)

¹⁹⁴ ONS (2021) Census 2021: Babergh custom profile. (see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/#E07000200>)

15,156 commuting out of the district. Overall, there is a net outflow of 3,964 commuters meaning, like Babergh, outflows are 35% higher than inflows¹⁹⁵. Mid Suffolk also has a strong relationship with Ipswich, but the district to which most people commute is West Suffolk (which contains Bury St Edmunds).

5.54 However, based on the 2021 Census, Mid Suffolk also displays a trend towards working from home, with 31% of the working population (15,527) reported working mainly at or from home¹⁹⁶. Similar to Babergh, a lower proportion of residents in Mid Suffolk travel less than 10km (22.4%) than the proportion at the English level (35.4%)¹⁹⁷. This demonstrates the nature of the district and the likelihood of residents needing to commute out of the district.

5.55 Whilst there is commuting between Babergh and Mid Suffolk, the overall numbers of journeys are not as high as they are between the two districts and Ipswich and West Suffolk.

5.56 Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) are a geography created to approximate labour market areas, useful to helping build an understanding of local labour markets. They describe an area whereby at least 75% of the area's resident workforce work in the area and at least 75% of the people who work in the area also live in the area. The most recent TTWAs for the UK were published by the ONS in 2016 and collated within the 2011 Census¹⁹⁸. **Figure 5.3** illustrates that Babergh is divided between three TTWAs (Bury St Edmunds TTWA, Ipswich TTWA and Colchester TTWA) and Mid Suffolk is also divided between three (Bury St Edmunds TTWA, Ipswich TTWA and Norwich TTWA).

¹⁹⁵ Lambert Smith Hampton (2024). Economic Land Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024>)

¹⁹⁶ Public Health and Communities (2022). 2021 Census Topic Summary 4: Labour market and travel to work. (see

<https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/asset-library/Census-2021/2021-census-labour-market-and-travel-to-work.pdf>)

¹⁹⁷ ONS (2021) Census 2021: Mid Suffolk custom profile. (see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/>)

¹⁹⁸ Although the 2021 Census has taken place, the data relating to TTWAs has not yet been released.

Figure 5.1 Babergh commuting flows¹⁹⁹

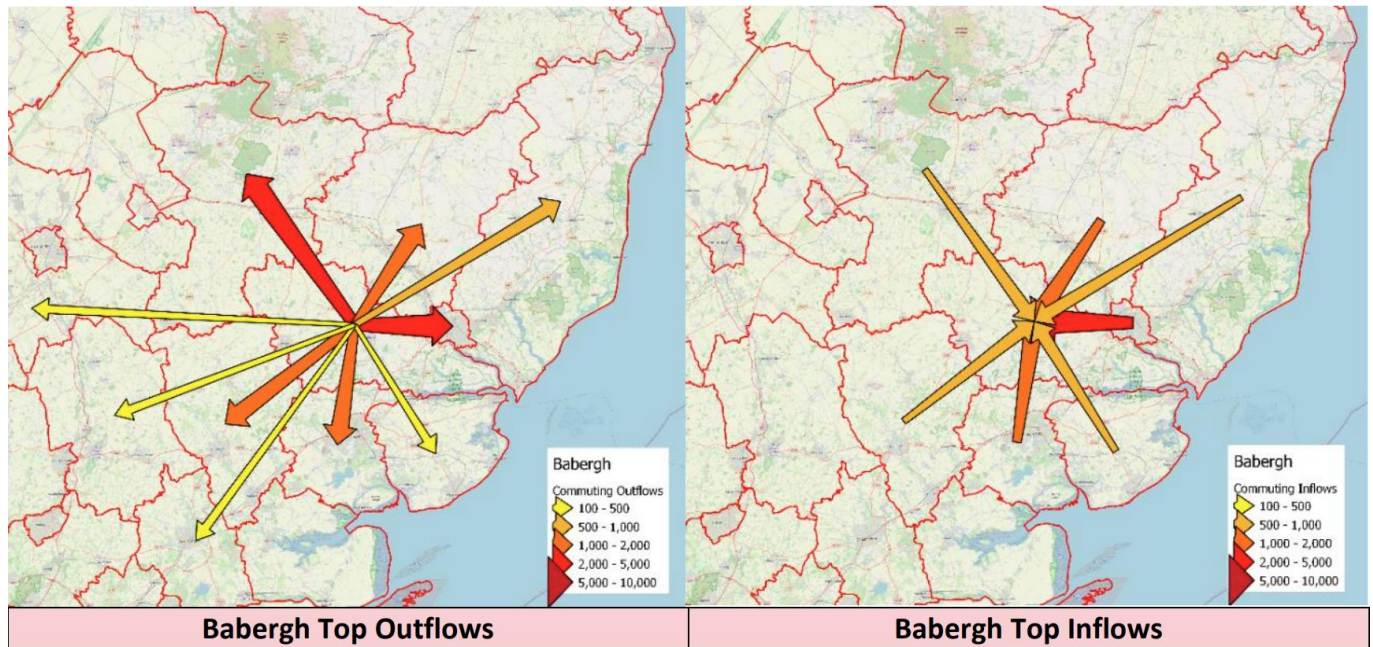


Table 5.1 Babergh commuting flows

Babergh top outflows (actual journeys)		Babergh top inflows (actual journeys)	
Ipswich	2,907	Ipswich	3,112
West Suffolk	2,214	Mid Suffolk	1,247
Colchester	1,797	Colchester	1,042
Braintree	1,101	Braintree	834
Mid Suffolk	1,091	East Suffolk	779
East Suffolk	927	West Suffolk	779
Tendring	497	Tendring	641
Chelmsford	202		
Uttlesford	166		
South Cambridgeshire	100		

¹⁹⁹ Lambert Smith Hampton (2024). Economic Land Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024>)

Figure 5.2 Mid Suffolk commuting flows²⁰⁰

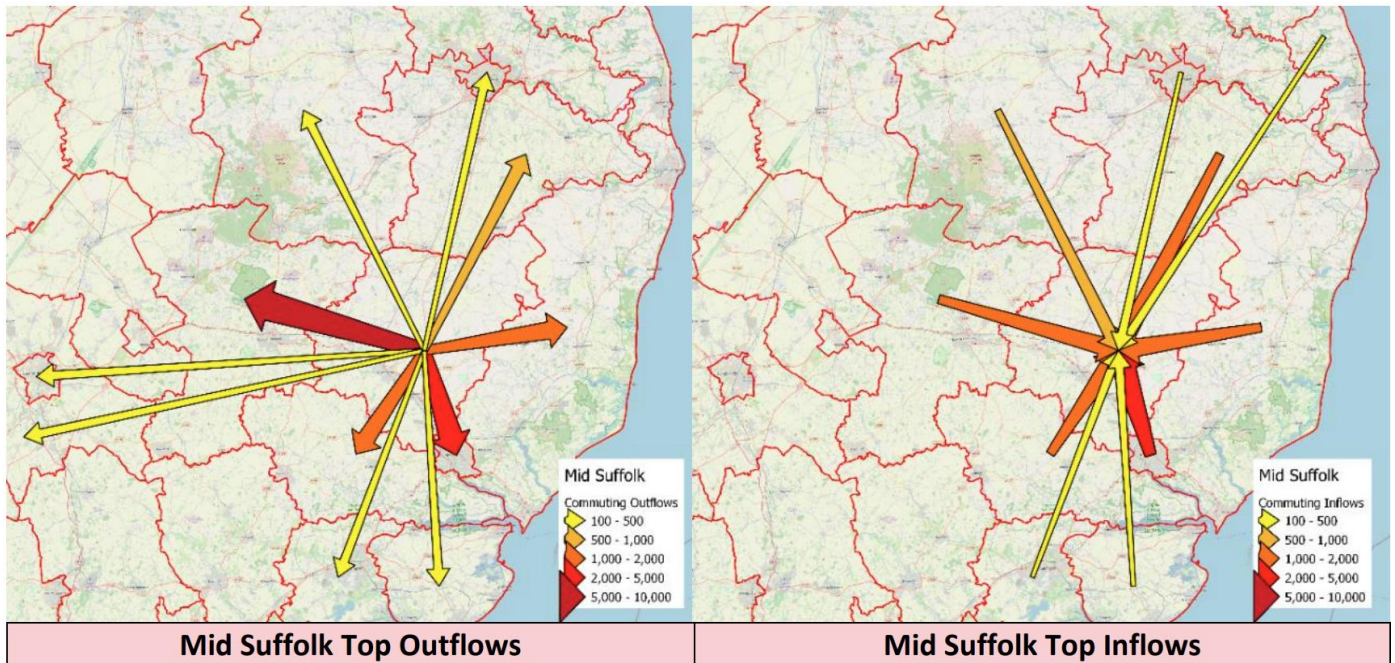
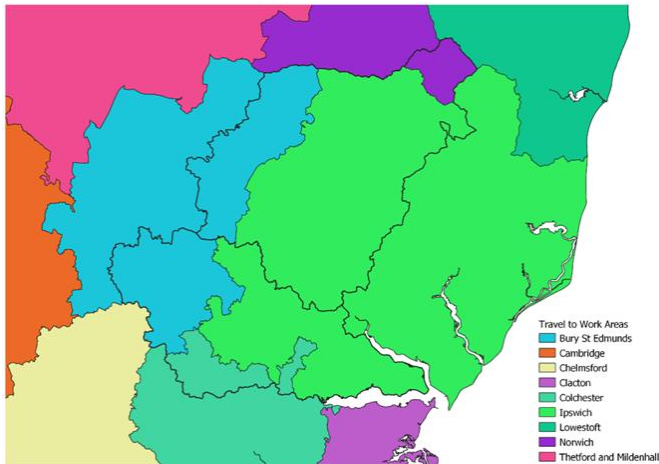


Table 5.2 Mid Suffolk commuting flows

Mid Suffolk top outflows (actual journeys)		Mid Suffolk top inflows (actual journeys)	
West Suffolk	5,298	Ipswich	3,215
Ipswich	3,294	South Norfolk	1,603
East Suffolk	1,944	West Suffolk	1,462
Babergh	1,247	East Suffolk	1,392
South Norfolk	1,000	Babergh	1,091
Breckland	361	Breckland	580
Colchester	320	Great Yarmouth	304
Cambridge	154	Colchester	238
South Cambridgeshire	144	Norwich	178
Norwich	114	Tendring	133
Outside the UK	108		
Tendring	106		

²⁰⁰ Ibid

Figure 5.3 Travel to Work Areas²⁰¹



5.57 However, TTWAs suggest very defined boundaries whereas in reality this is not the case. Further to this, commuting data from the 2021 Census provides a more up to date account of commuting patterns however corresponding TTWAs are not yet available. The 2021 Census has shown generally higher levels of home working and lower levels of overall commuting, with higher inflows from places further afield. This may be because hybrid working allows for fewer days commuting and therefore people are more willing to accept longer commutes.

²⁰¹ Lambert Smith Hampton (2024). Economic Land Needs Assessment. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset->

[library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-economic-land-needs-assessment-report-june-2024))

Pollution

Air quality

5.58 Industrial activity in the districts has very few large industrial processes and is therefore light in nature meaning it has relatively little impact on air quality. As of 2025, there were no new sources of significant industrial emissions in the districts and a number of small planning applications were assessed for air quality purposes, with no significant emissions predicted.

5.59 The most significant source of air pollution is from transport. Air quality is tested annually throughout the districts. The main pollutant of concern is Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) which comes from road traffic emissions and monitoring has been conducted to measure concentrations.

5.60 In Babergh District, results found that Cross Street, Sudbury had concentrations of NO₂ that are higher than the health based annual mean Air Quality Objective for NO₂ of 40µg/m³. As a result, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was designated in 2008 in this area. During 2024, there were no exceedances of the Air Quality Objective in Babergh or Mid Suffolk Districts. Results relating to this objective for 2019 were also significantly below the air quality objective. Following this, a significant reduction in NO₂ levels was reported in 2020, with slight increases reported from 2020 to 2021 and 2022. The majority of concentrations of NO₂ reported in 2024 were lower than the figures reported in 2023 both within and outside the AQMA. It is thought that this trend to lower levels of pollutants up to 2025 is because of reduced traffic flows, improved engine technology causing reduced emissions, an increase in electric vehicles, and the removal of on-street parking bays within the AQMA. The main roads within the districts (A12, A14 and A140) and the railway between London and Norwich have not been found to have significant poor air quality. No significant changes have been made to transport routes within either district during 2024²⁰².

5.61 Due to the high levels of NO₂ in Cross Street, an Air Quality Action Plan was produced to help reduce the concentration of NO₂. There were two parking bays along the street which allowed vehicles to park and when either bay was occupied cars had to slow down to allow cars to pass on the other side and often leading to a queue building up. Queuing and accelerating led to an increase in concentrations of NO₂. Babergh District worked with Suffolk County Council Highways Department to pursue experimental removal of on-street parking bays. In January 2020, two sets of on-street parking bays were removed from Cross Street, under an Experimental

Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). NO₂ concentrations fell on Cross Street throughout 2024. The TRO was made permanent due to benefits to air quality²⁰³. In Mid Suffolk, monitoring has not historically shown exceedances of the Air Quality Objective at exposure locations, (e.g. schools, hospitals, care homes and residential properties) and there are no designated AQMAs.

5.62 Traffic level results for Ballingdon Street, which connects with the southern end of the Cross Street, in the AQAP showed there to be slightly higher levels of traffic in 2024 compared to 2023, however results were still lower than pre-pandemic 2019 levels. As such there is no expectation that road traffic emissions will increase significantly in the next coming years. This has led to Babergh District Council intending to revoke the AQMA designation subject to Defra approval.

5.63 AQMAs are also present in the following neighbouring authority²⁰⁴:

- Ipswich Borough Council:
 - Ipswich AQMA No.2 – An area from the junction with Peel Street, extending along Crown Street, St Margarets Street and St Helens Street to the junction with Palmerston Road, and from St Margarets Street extending up Woodbridge Road to just beyond the junction with Argyle Street.
 - Ipswich AQMA No.3 – An area following the route of the Star Lane / Key Street / College Street gyratory clockwise from the junction with Lower Orwell Street, extending along Star Lane, Grimwade Street, Fore Street, Salthouse Street, Key Street and College Street, terminating at the junction with Bridge Street.
 - Ipswich AQMA No.5 – An area incorporating the land in or around St. Matthews Street / Norwich Road between the Civic Drive roundabout and Bramford Road.

5.64 It is recognised that air quality does not respect administrative or political boundaries and that there is potential for the occurrence of cross boundary impacts on neighbouring AQMAs. Development in BMSDC is likely to impact the AQMAs present in Ipswich Borough as a result of traffic growth— all of which have been designated as a result of NO₂ levels. The impact to the Ipswich AQMAs is substantial because a large number of people commute to/from Ipswich from Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts.

²⁰² BMSDC (2025). 2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR). (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/2025-air-quality-annual-status-report>)

²⁰³ Ibid

²⁰⁴ DEFRA (2025). List of Local Authorities with AQMAs. (see <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/list>)

5.65 Figures 5.5-5.7 show air quality in the two districts and surrounding areas, and where AQMAs have been designated for NO₂ pollution. These clearly show that air pollution follows the main road transport corridors, with concentrations in the urban areas, even though pollution thresholds are not exceeded in most locations.

Noise

5.66 Noise is a common problem arising from transport, and studies have shown it can have major negative direct and indirect effects on health and well-being, on quality of life and on wildlife. Exposure to noise can increase stress levels, disrupt communications and disturb sleep. There is scope for transport's noise emissions to be reduced, by cutting the number of cars on the road, low-noise road surfacing, noise barriers, and many other measures.

5.67 Noise pollution is not a major issue in Babergh and Mid Suffolk and again tends to be associated with the main transport corridors as shown in **Figure 5.8**.

Future baseline and likely evolution without the Joint Local Plan Review

5.68 Without the JLP Review, car dependency will continue to be high and sites may be in inaccessible locations with no easy access to public transport. The districts' residents rely heavily on cars to get around and access employment, education, amenities and services, partly as a result of living in more isolated rural areas. There are many different commuting routes within the districts, although public transport is limited. Without the JLP Review, development is more likely to come forward at less connected locations and locations where there is limited potential to support improvements for sustainable transport. This type of approach is likely to

entrench the existing propensity towards using cars for journeys in the districts.

5.69 The most significant source of air pollution in the districts is from transport. The main pollutant of concern is Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) which comes from road traffic emissions, and monitoring has been conducted to measure concentrations. Babergh District has an AQMA focused on Cross Street, Sudbury, which has been designated because the area exceeds the health based annual mean Air Quality Objective for NO₂ of 40µg/m³. In relation to this AQMA, an Air Quality Action Plan has been produced which will help reduce the concentration of NO₂. In Mid Suffolk there are no designated AQMAs. However, there are a number of AQMAs present in neighbouring Ipswich Borough.

5.70 How air quality will change in the absence of the JLP Review is partly unknown, given both districts are predominantly rural and many residents are therefore dependent on the private car. The absence of the JLP Review could mean that development may not be directed to the most sustainable locations, which would not reduce dependency on travel by car and limit the potential for improvements in air quality within the AQMA and at other locations in the district. There is also potential for new development to have impacts on air quality within AQMAs in neighbouring authorities. Further to this, the Government's commitment to ban the sale of all new petrol and diesel cars by 2035 and the subsequent increase in electric vehicles, could help reduce air pollution.

Key sustainability issues

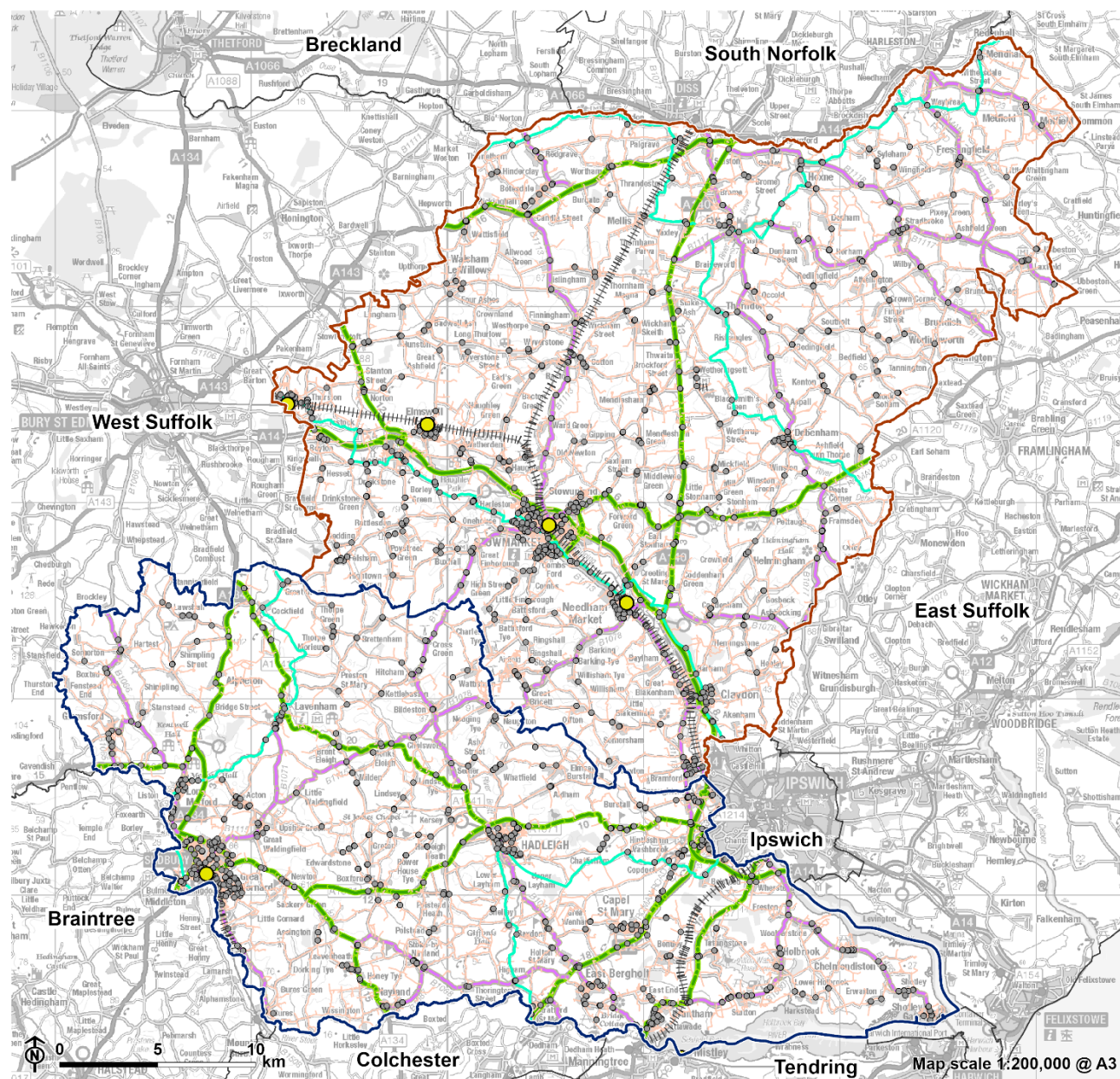
5.71 The key sustainability issues for transport, air quality and noise, and the opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them are shown in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3: Key sustainability issues and opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk benefit from some form of public transport provision. However, due to the districts being predominantly rural, a lot of residents are dependent on the private car.	The JLP Review presents an opportunity to address the issue of car dependency by promoting sustainable development locations, prioritising areas that are well-connected by transport infrastructure, and integrating new and more sustainable technologies as part of new development in BMSDC.	SA objectives 6 and 16.
Capacity issues have been identified at various junctions within BMSDC and although highway schemes to help mitigate congestion are set for implementation, capacity issues in other places will endure.	Without the JLP Review, there is still potential for congestion to continue to be an issue in BMSDC, particularly given that the growing population is likely to exacerbate this issue. The JLP Review presents the opportunity to address this by focusing on strategic site allocations, specifically identifying areas prone to congestion and prioritising infrastructure improvements through	SA objectives 6 and 16.

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
	site allocations. It also has the potential to direct new development to the most sustainable locations so as to minimise the need to travel by private vehicle on the local network. This approach can be used to complement measures taken by the Highways Authority to combat congestion on the strategic road network.	
BMSDC have one AQMA, which covers part of Cross Street in Sudbury, and there are three AQMAs designated in neighbouring Ipswich Borough. Additional development within BMSDC has potential to exacerbate air quality issues at these AQMAs. Similarly, there is potential for a cumulative impact of development in neighbouring authorities alongside development in BMSDC in terms of air quality.	Recent national policies, which include the phasing out the sale of new diesel and petrol heavy goods vehicles by 2040 and targets to cut emissions, as well as and the emergence of new technologies, such as electric vehicles, and hydrogen fuel cells, are likely to improve air quality, for example, through cleaner fuels/energy sources. Nonetheless, the JLP Review provides an opportunity to contribute to improve air quality in BMSDC through the sustainable siting of development, in line with national policy aspirations.	SA objectives 13 and 16.

Figure 5.4 Transport network



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



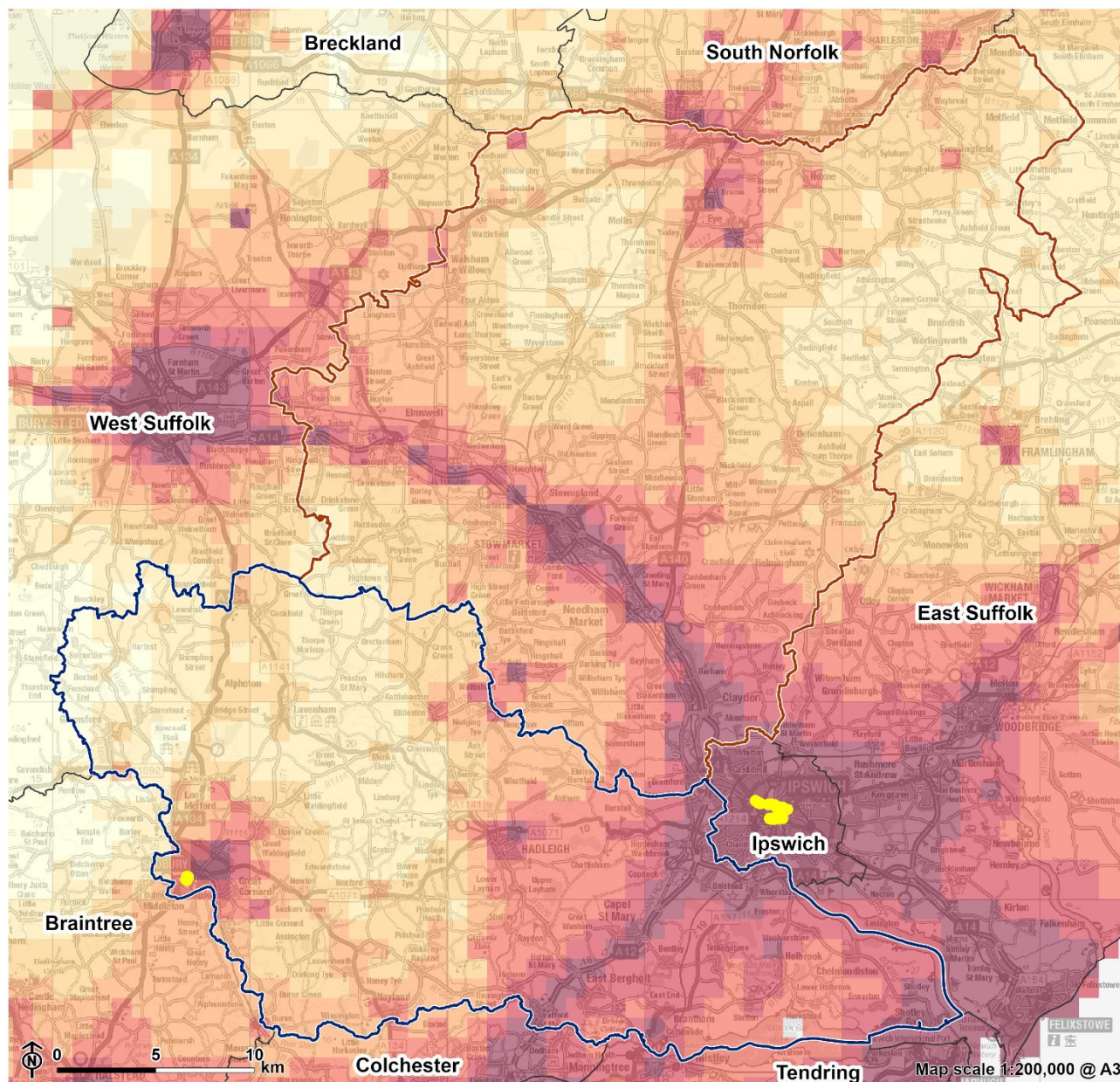
Figure 5.4: Transport network

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority
- Bus stop
- Railway station
- Railway
- A Road
- B Road
- Other road
- National cycle routes

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Figure 5.5 Air Quality - NO₂



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



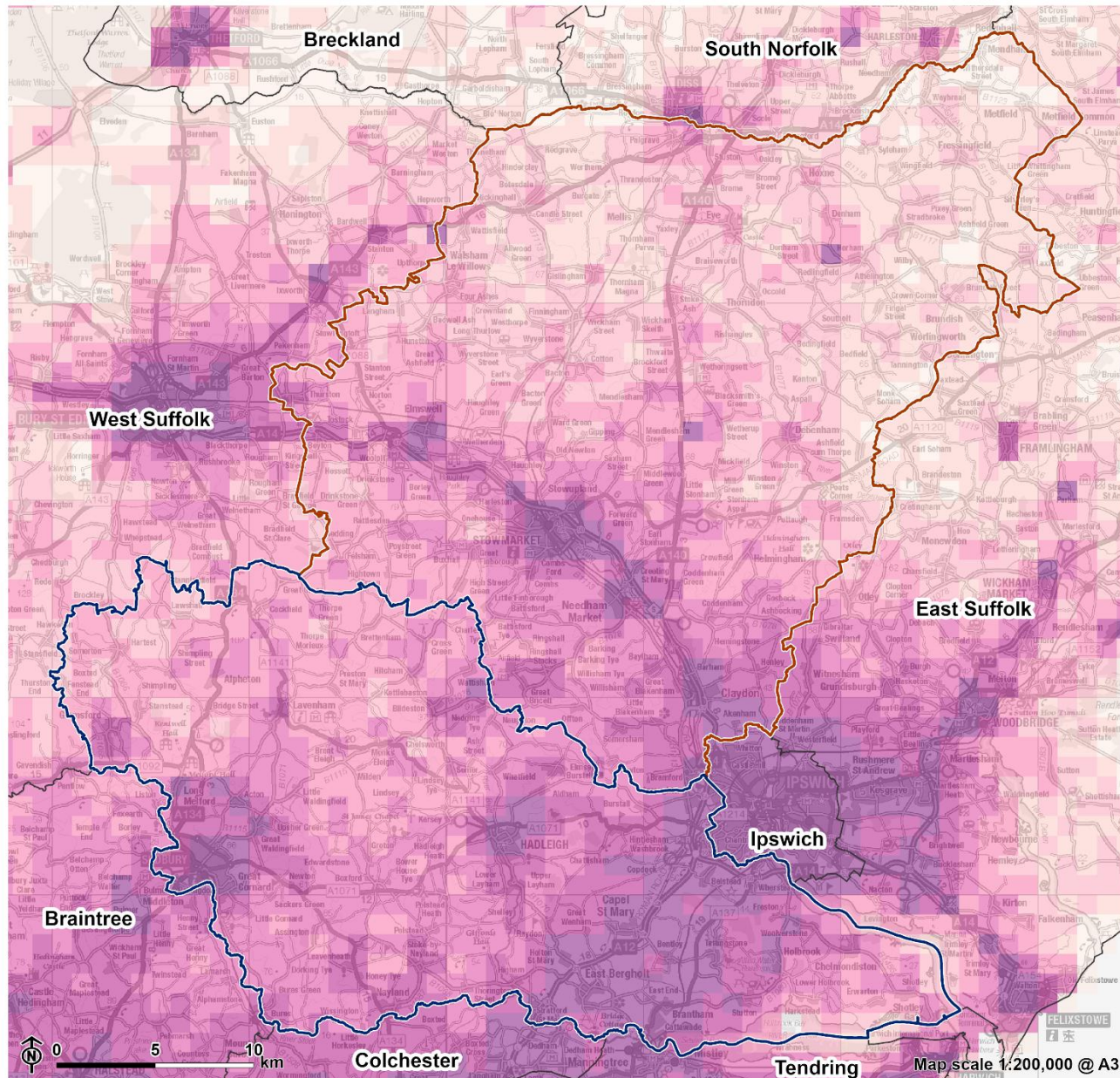
Figure 5.5: Air quality - NO₂

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority
- Air Quality Management Area
- NO₂ µg/m³ (2021 annual mean)*
 - 4.93 - 5.62
 - 5.62 - 5.82
 - 5.82 - 6.04
 - 6.034 - 6.34
 - 6.34 - 6.88
 - 6.88 - 7.53
 - 7.53 - 32.76

* Notes:
European Directive annual mean not to exceed 40 µg/m³. Estimated 2021 background air pollution maps (base year 2020). Total annual mean concentrations based on 1km x 1km grid squares are provided.

NO₂ concentration is displayed using quantile classification. Each class contains an equal number of features.

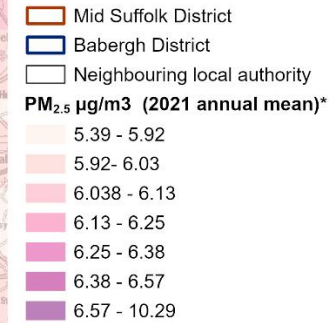
Figure 5.6 Air Quality - PM_{2.5}



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Figure 5.6: Air quality - PM_{2.5}



* Notes:

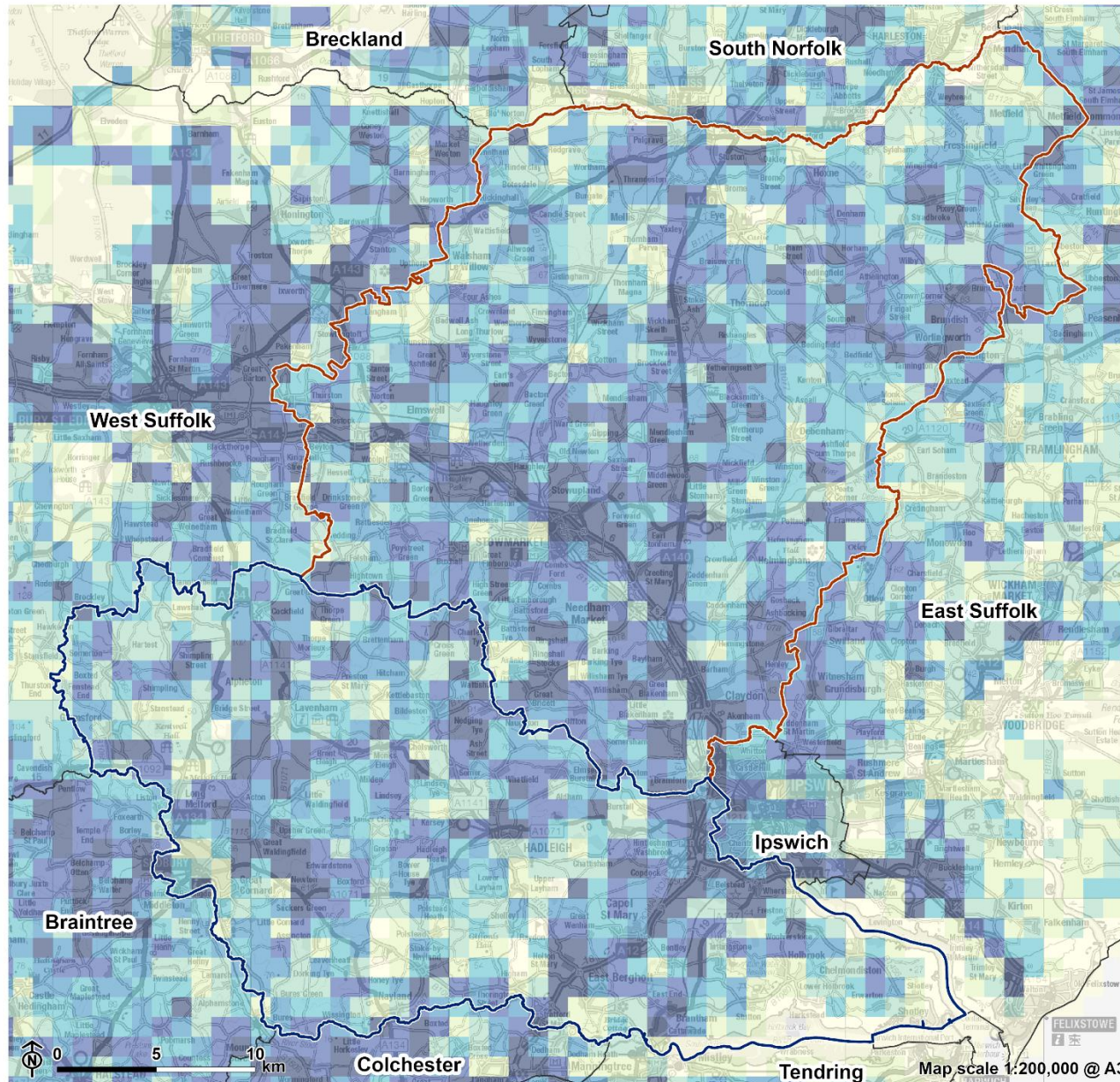
PM_{2.5} concentrations in gravimetric units. European Directive annual mean not to exceed 25 µg/m³. Estimated 2021 background air pollution maps (base year 2020). Total annual mean concentrations based on 1km x 1km grid squares are provided.

PM_{2.5} concentration is displayed using quantile classification. Each class contains an equal number of features.

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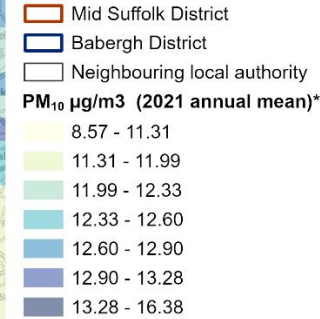
Figure 5.7 Air Quality - PM₁₀



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Figure 5.7: Air quality - PM₁₀

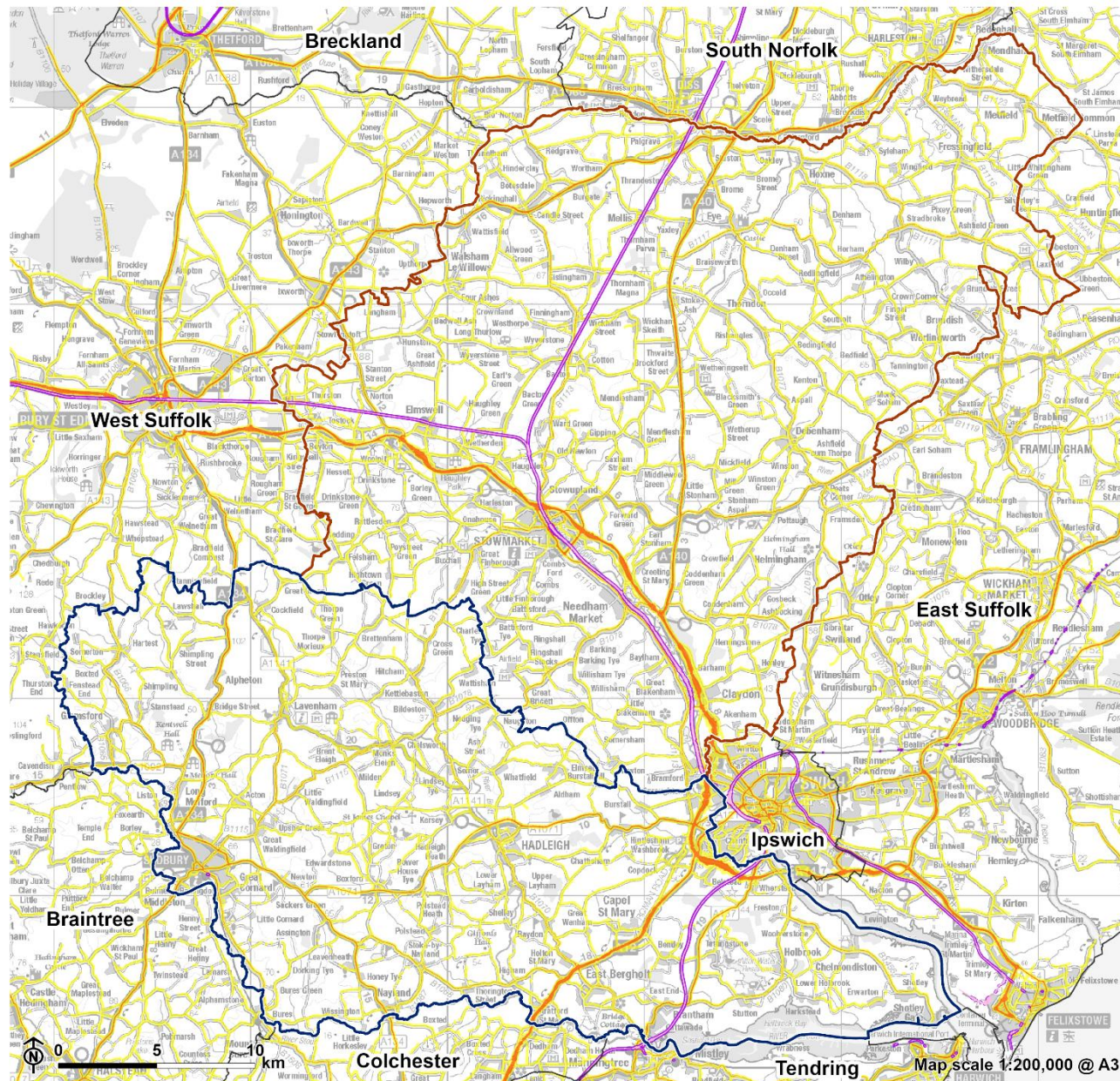


* Notes:

PM₁₀ concentrations in gravimetric units. European Directive annual mean not to exceed 40 µg/m³. Estimated 2021 background air pollution maps (base year 2020). Total annual mean concentrations based on 1km x 1km grid squares are provided.

PM₁₀ concentration is displayed using quantile classification. Each class contains an equal number of features.

Figure 5.8 Noise pollution



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Figure 5.8: Noise pollution

Mid Suffolk District
Babergh District
Neighbouring local authority

Road Noise

A-weighted equivalent continuous sound
level daytime - 16 hour (0700-2300)
exceeding 59.9 dB

A-weighted equivalent continuous sound
level at night (2300-0700) exceeding 54.9
dB

Rail Noise

A-weighted equivalent continuous sound
level daytime - 16 hour (0700-2300)
exceeding 59.9 dB

A-weighted equivalent continuous sound
level at night (2300-0700) exceeding 54.9
dB

Chapter 6

Natural resources

Policy context

National

6.1 The **NPPF (2024)**²⁰⁵ states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued soil, as well as the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Policies should also prevent new and existing development from “*contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected, by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.*”

6.2 The document also requires that strategic policies should seek to make the most effective use of land in meeting local requirements making as much use as possible of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land. Furthermore, policies should “*support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land*”.

6.3 The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Effective use of land (2019)**²⁰⁶ provides guidance on making effective use of land, including planning for higher density development.
- **Green Belt (2019)**²⁰⁷ provides advice on the role of the Green Belt in the planning system, removal of land from the Green Belt and compensatory improvements.
- **Land affected by contamination (2019)**²⁰⁸ outlines guiding principles on how planning can deal with land affected by contamination.
- **Land stability (2019)**²⁰⁹ sets out advice on how to ensure that development is suitable to its ground condition and how to avoid risks caused by unstable land or subsidence.

²⁰⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024). National Planning Policy Framework. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

²⁰⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Effective use of land. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/effective-use-of-land>)

²⁰⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Green Belt. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/green-belt>)

²⁰⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Land affected by contamination. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/land-affected-by-contamination>)

²⁰⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Land stability. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/land-stability>)

- **Natural environment (2019)**²¹⁰ highlights key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment, agricultural land, soils and brownfield land of environmental value, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes.
- **Water supply, wastewater and water quality (2019)**²¹¹ advises on how planning can ensure water quality and the delivery of adequate water and wastewater infrastructure.
- **Brownfield land registers (2017)**²¹² provides guidance on the purpose, preparation, publication and reviewing of brownfield land registers.
- **Minerals (2014)**²¹³ outlines guidance for planning for mineral extraction in the plan-making and application process.

6.4 National Planning Practice Guidance²¹⁴: Requires local planning authorities to demonstrate every effort has been made to prioritise the use of poorer quality agricultural land for development where it has been demonstrated that significant development is required on agricultural land. It also requires that plan making considers, among other issues: identifying suitable sites for new or enhanced water infrastructure; assessing whether new development is appropriate near to sites used for water infrastructure; and the phasing of new development so that such infrastructure will be in place when and where needed. The impact of water infrastructure on sites designated for biodiversity should also be considered.

6.5 Waste Management Plan for England²¹⁵: Provides an overview of waste management in England, superseding the previous version of the plan (2013).

6.6 The waste prevention programme for England: Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste (2023)²¹⁶: Sets out government's priorities for managing resources and waste, in line with the resources and waste strategy for England. The

programme aims to move to a circular economy by keeping goods in circulation for as long as possible and at their highest value. This includes increasing the reuse, repair and remanufacture of goods.

6.7 Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England (2018)²¹⁷: Sets out how the Government will preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy in England. The Strategy aims to increase resource productivity and eliminate avoidable waste by 2050. It sets out key targets which include: a 50% recycling rate for household waste by 2020, a 75% recycling rate for packaging by 2030, 65% recycling rate for municipal solid waste by 2035 and municipal waste to landfill 10% or less by 2035.

6.8 National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW)²¹⁸: Identifies key planning objectives, requiring planning authorities to:

- Help deliver sustainable development through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy.
- Ensure waste management is considered alongside other spatial planning concerns.
- Provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste.
- Help secure the recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment.
- Ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management.

6.9 Environmental Improvement Plan 2023²¹⁹: The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan. It builds on the vision of 25 Year Environment Plan with a new plan setting out how Defra will work with landowners, communities and

²¹⁰ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Natural Environment. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>)

²¹¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Water supply, wastewater and water quality. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/water-supply-wastewater-and-water-quality>)

²¹² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2017). Brownfield land registers. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/brownfield-land-registers>)

²¹³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2014). Minerals. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/minerals>)

²¹⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (last updated 1 October 2019). Planning Practice Guidance. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>)

²¹⁵ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2021). Waste management plan for England. (see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-management-plan-for-england-2021>)

²¹⁶ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2023) Waste prevention programme for England: Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-prevention-programme-for-england-maximising-resources-minimising-waste>)

²¹⁷ HM Government (2018). Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765914/resources-waste-strategy-dec-2018.pdf)

²¹⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government (2014). National Planning Policy for Waste. (see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/364759/141015_National_Planning_Policy_for_Waste.pdf)

²¹⁹ HM Government (2023). Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>)

businesses to deliver each of its goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Under the plan the Government will protect 30% of England's land and sea for nature. The document identifies ten goals upon which action will be focused. Of the goals included in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, those of relevance in terms of land and water resources are:

- Goal 3: Clean and plentiful water:
 - We will achieve clean and plentiful water by improving at least 75% of our waters to be close to their natural state as soon as is practicable.
- Goal 4: Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides:
 - We will make sure that chemicals are safely used and managed, and that the levels of harmful chemicals entering the environment (including through agriculture) are significantly reduced.

6.10 The document also notes that in order to deliver these goals, a new water efficiency labelling will be implemented. Additionally, the ten actions outlined in the 'Roadmap to Water Efficiency' will be delivered in new developments. One key measure includes introducing a water efficiency standard of 100 litres per person per day (l/p/d) for new homes in areas facing serious water stress.

6.11 Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England²²⁰: Sets out how England's soils will be managed sustainably. It highlights those areas which Defra will prioritise and focus attention on in tackling degradation threats, including better protection for agricultural soils; protecting and enhancing stores of soil carbon; building the resilience of soils to a changing climate; preventing soil pollution; effective soil protection during construction and; dealing with contaminated land.

6.12 Water White Paper²²¹: Sets out the Government's vision for the water sector including proposals on protecting water resources and reforming the water supply industry. It states outlines the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystem, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

6.13 Water for Life White Paper²²²: Sets out how to build resilience in the water sector. Objectives of the White Paper are to:

- Paint a clear vision of the future and create the conditions which enable the water sector and water users to prepare for it.
- Deliver benefits across society through an ambitious agenda for improving water quality, working with local communities to make early improvements in the health of our rivers by reducing pollution and tackling unsustainable abstraction.
- Keep short- and longer-term affordability for customers at the centre of decision making in the water sector.
- Protect the interest of taxpayers in the policy decisions that we take.
- Ensure a stable framework for the water sector which remains attractive to investors.
- Stimulate cultural change in the water sector by removing barriers to competition, fostering innovation and efficiency, and encouraging new entrants to the market to help improve the range and quality of services offered to customers and cut business costs.
- Work with water companies, regulators and other stakeholders to build understanding of the impact personal choices have on the water environment, water resources and costs.
- Set out roles and responsibilities – including where Government will take a stronger role in strategic direction setting and assessing resilience to future challenges, as well as clear expectations on the regulators.

6.14 Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England²²³: Sets out how the Government wants the water sector to look by 2030, providing an outline of steps which need to be taken to get there. These steps include improving the supply of water; agreeing on important new infrastructure such as reservoirs; proposals to time limit abstraction licences; and reducing leakage. The document also states that pollution to rivers will be tackled, whilst discharge from sewers will be reduced.

²²⁰ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2009). Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England. (see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69261/pb13297-soil-strategy-090910.pdf)

²²¹ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2012). The Water White Paper. (see <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmenvfru/374/374.pdf>)

²²² Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2011). Water for Life. (see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228861/8230.pdf)

²²³ HM Government (2008). Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England. (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69346/pb13562-future-water-080204.pdf)

6.15 The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations

(2016)²²⁴: The Regulations focus on the quality of water for drinking, washing, cooking and food preparation, and for food production. Their purpose is to protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring it is clean.

6.16 The Water Environment Regulations (2017)²²⁵ protect inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater, and outlines the associated river basin management process.

6.17 National Policy Statement for Waste Water (2012)²²⁶: sets out Government policy for the provision of major waste water infrastructure. The policy set out in this NPS is, for the most part, intended to make existing policy and practice in consenting nationally significant waste water infrastructure clearer and more transparent.

6.18 Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England (2008)²²⁷: sets out how the Government wants the water sector to look by 2030, providing an outline of steps which need to be taken to get there. These steps include improving the supply of water; agreeing on important new infrastructure such as reservoirs; proposals to time limit abstraction licences; and reducing leakage. The document also states that pollution to rivers will be tackled, while discharge from sewers will be reduced.

6.19 The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations (2015)²²⁸: Provides for the designation of land as nitrate vulnerable zones and imposes annual limits on the amount of nitrogen from organic manure that may be applied or spread in a holding in a nitrate vulnerable zone. The Regulations also specify the amount of nitrogen to be spread on a crop and how, where and when to spread nitrogen fertiliser, and how it should be stored. It also establishes closed periods during which the spreading of nitrogen fertiliser is prohibited.

6.20 The Environment Act 2021²²⁹ sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also establishes the Office for Environmental

Protection which will act as an impartial and objective body for the protection and improvement of the environment. The Act sets out legislation which covers:

- Resource efficiency, producer responsibility, and the management, enforcement and regulation of waste;
- Local air quality management frameworks and the recall of motor vehicles etc; and
- Plans and proposals for water resources, drainage and sewerage management, storm overflows, water quality and land drainage.

6.21 Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT) (2022)²³⁰ sets out a new framework that aims to improve industrial emissions and protect the environment through the introduction of a UK BAT regime. It aims to set up a new structure of governance with a new independent body in the form of Standards Council and the Regulators Group, consisting of government officials and expert regulators from all UK nations. It aims to also establish a new UK Air Quality Governance Group to oversee the work of the Standards Council and the delivery of the requirements under this new framework. It is anticipated that the BATC for the first four industry sectors will be published in the second half of 2023.

6.22 The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (2020)²³¹ amend a range of legislation to prevent waste generation and to monitor and assess the implementation of measures included in waste prevention programmes. They set out requirements to justify not separating waste streams close to source for re-use, recycling or other recovery operations, prohibit incineration and landfilling of waste unless such treatment process represent the best environmental outcome in accordance with the waste hierarchy. The Regulations set out when waste management plans and in waste prevention programmes are required. The Regulations focus on the circular economy as a means for businesses to maximise the value of waste and waste treatment.

²²⁴ HM Government (2016). The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2016/614/contents?view=plain>)

²²⁵ HM Government (2017). The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/407/contents/made>)

²²⁶ HM Government (2012). National Policy Statement for Waste Water. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69505/pb13709-waste-water-nps.pdf)

²²⁷ HM Government (2008). Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England (see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69346/pb13562-future-water-080204.pdf)

²²⁸ HM Government (2015). The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/668/contents/made>)

²²⁹ HM Government (2021). Environment Act 2021. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>)

²³⁰ DEFRA (2022) Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT). (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-the-best-available-techniques-for-the-uk-uk-bat/establishing-the-best-available-techniques-for-the-uk-uk-bat#current-situation>)

²³¹ HM Government (2020). The Waste (Circular Economy) Regulations. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/904/contents/made>)

Sub-national

6.23 Suffolk Minerals & Waste Local Plan (July 2020)²³²

The plan contains planning policies for determining planning applications for minerals and waste development. The plan allocates 10 sites for the extraction of sand and gravel sufficient to supply 9.300 Mt over the plan period to the end of 2036. The plan also has policies to maintain a landbank of permitted reserves of at least 7 years based upon the average of the last 10 years' sales.

6.24 Anglian River Basin District River Basin

Management Plan (2022)²³³: Under the obligations of the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000), River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) are prepared. The RBMP for the Anglian River Basin District sets out the current state of the water environment, pressures affecting the water environment, environmental objectives for protecting and improving the waters, a programme of measures and actions needed to achieve the objectives and progress.

6.25 Babergh District's Contaminated Land Strategy

(2009)²³⁴: Provides the strategy that the council will use to take action to prevent harm from occurring, as well as the strategy for inspecting contaminated land in the district and how the council will manage the information generated to ensure the polluter pays.

6.26 Mid Suffolk District's Statutory Contaminated Land Strategy (2006)²³⁵

The report details the contaminated land strategy including a description of the Mid Suffolk area and how particular characteristics may impact on inspection strategy. It also explains the strategy for the identification of contaminated sites and how sites are prioritised according to risk. The report details the strategy for obtaining further information on pollutant linkages and the risk assessment process. The strategy also covers written determination, liability and enforcement.

6.27 Sudbury and Great Cornard Surface Water

Management Plan (2019)²³⁶: This is a Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) for the towns of Sudbury and

Great Cornard which adheres to the four-stage approach set out in Defra's SWMP Technical Guidance Document (March 2010).

6.28 Anglian Water's Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (2024)²³⁷

Every five years, Anglian Water writes a Water Resources Management Plan, which sets out how Anglian Water will manage the water supplies in their region to meet current and future needs over a minimum of 25 years. The current plan, published in 2024, covers the period 2025-2050.

6.29 Essex and Suffolk Water's Water Resources

Management Plan 2024 (2022)²³⁸. Every five years, Essex and Suffolk Water writes a Water Resources Management Plan, which sets out how Essex and Suffolk Water will manage the water supplies in their region to meet current and future needs over a minimum of 25 years. The current plan, published in 2022, covers the period 2025-2050. The plan aligns with the Water Resources East (WRE) regional plan, as it is situated within the WRE regional planning area, and as such it allows for resource-sharing efficiencies. The plan seeks to ensure sustainable water supply while addressing future needs and environmental considerations.

6.30 Water Recycling Long-Term Plan (2018)²³⁹: This is Anglian Water's long-term plan for managing the supply of water recycling services to meet the demands of a growing population. It is used to inform investment and identify key indicators for change and transform Anglian Water's 'business as usual' practices. The plan promotes the efficient and effective use of available resources, seeks to improve the resilience of public water supplies, supports the delivery of Anglian Water's wider resilience strategy and enhances the environment by reducing abstraction in sensitive areas.

6.31 South East Inshore Marine Plan (2021)²⁴⁰: This document introduces a strategic approach to planning within the inshore waters between Felixstowe, in Suffolk and near Dover, in Kent. It provides an evidence-based approach to inform decision-making by marine users and regulators on where activities might take place within the inshore marine

²³² Suffolk County Council (2020) Suffolk Minerals & Waste Local Plan (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/minerals-and-waste-policy/suffolk-minerals-and-waste-development-scheme>)

²³³ Environment Agency (2022) Anglian river basin district river basin management plan: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/anglian-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022>

²³⁴ Babergh District Council (2009). Contaminated Land Strategy. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Contaminated-Land-Strategy-.pdf>)

²³⁵ Mid Suffolk District Council (2000). Statutory Contaminated Land Strategy. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Contaminated-Land-Strategy-Mid-Suffolk.pdf>)

²³⁶ BMT (2019). Sudbury and Great Cornard Surface Water Management Plan. (see [http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-](http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-County/Water--Coast/Surface-Water-Management-Plans/FINALSudburyandGreatCornardSWMPv3.pdf)

[County/Water--Coast/Surface-Water-Management-Plans/FINALSudburyandGreatCornardSWMPv3.pdf](http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-County/Water--Coast/Surface-Water-Management-Plans/FINALSudburyandGreatCornardSWMPv3.pdf))

²³⁷ Anglian Water (2024). Water Resources Management Plan. (see <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/corporate/wrmp24/wrmp24-main-report.pdf>)

²³⁸ Mott MacDonald (2022). Essex and Suffolk Water – Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (see <https://www.nwg.co.uk/globalassets/wrmp/esw/appendices/essex-suffolk-wrmp24---environmental-report---appendix-g.pdf>)

²³⁹ Anglian Water (2018). Water Recycling Long-Term Plan. (see <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/in-the-community/water-recycling-long-term-plan.pdf>)

²⁴⁰ HM Government (2021). South East Inshore Marine Plan. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004493/FINAL_South_East_Marine_Plan_1_.pdf)

plan area. The plan will help to enhance and protect the marine environment and achieve sustainable economic growth, whilst respecting local communities both within and adjacent to the marine plan area. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District overlaps the South East Inshore Marine Plan area. In the case of Babergh, the overlap includes the tidal extent of the Rivers Stour and Orwell.

6.32 Anglian Water Drought Plan (2022)²⁴¹: This drought plan covers the Babergh region of the plan area and is an update of the previously published revised draft Drought Plan 2022. It provides an overview on how Anglian Water propose to manage water resources during a drought to protect public water supplies, whilst minimising any environmental impacts that may arise as a result of activities.

6.33 Essex and Suffolk Water Drought Plan (2022)²⁴²: This report covers the Suffolk supply region of the plan area. ESW's supply areas are particularly prone to drought. The report has been prepared following the Environment Agency's 'Water Company Drought Plan Guidance' (2016) and identifies how the company intends to manage a future drought and what measures are available to support supplies when levels of service are compromised.

6.34 Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (May 2023)²⁴³: The plan sets out how wastewater systems, and the drainage networks that impact them, are to be maintained, improved and extended over the next 25 year, covering 2024-2050. The plan stipulates that it will be strategic to minimise the risks we all face, promoting the use of nature-based solutions, especially for surface water removal.

6.35 Regional Water Resources Plan for Eastern England (2023): The plan, developed by Water Resources East (WRE), addresses long-term water security, projecting needs and supply between 2025-2050. Given the region's serious water stress, the plan prioritises demand reduction across sectors, enhanced leak prevention, and construction of two major storage reservoirs. Additional sustainable supply measures aim to optimise and protect regional water resources.

6.36 Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2023)²⁴⁴: The Strategy provides a strategic framework within which the RMA's in Suffolk can work in effective and co-

ordinated ways to manage risk, improve resilience, and limit impacts caused by surface water runoff, groundwater and from watercourses. The Strategy sets out four objectives to deliver flood risk management in Suffolk:

- Objective 1: Understanding flood risks – Risk Management Authorities and Partners have a clear understanding of the risks and their roles and responsibilities;
- Objective 2: Reduce the risk of flooding and building resilience – Protection of people, business, and key infrastructure;
- Objective 3: Resilient growth, planning and development – Land use planning and development decision making takes account of flood risk and appropriately contributes to environmental net gain and flood resilience;
- Objective 4: Resilient communities – Suffolk communities are aware of flood risk and given support and access to information to enable them to take action and be more resilient to flood and its impacts.

6.37 Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Appendix A Sustainable Drainage Systems SuDS: A local Design Guide (2023)²⁴⁵ provides further guidance on SuDS in relation to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. The Guide outlines best practices for integrating SuDS into new developments and infrastructure projects, including ways in which the amenity and biodiversity value of SuDS features can be improved.

6.38 Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 8 (2010)²⁴⁶: This plan aims to identify the best ways to manage flood and erosion risk to people and to the developed, historic and natural environment. The strategy has two key aims:

- to reduce the threat of flooding and erosion to people and their property; and
- to benefit the environment, society and the economy as far as possible, in line with the Government's 'sustainable development principles':
 - Living with environmental limits

²⁴¹ Anglian Water Services (2022). Drought Plan 2022 Final Version. (see <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/about-us/aws-drought-plan-2022.pdf>).

²⁴² Essex and Suffolk Water (2022). Essex and Suffolk Water Drought Plan 2022. (<https://www.nwg.co.uk/globalassets/corporate/environment-pdfs/drought-plan/esw/esw-final-drought-plan---20may22---published-version.pdf>)

²⁴³ Anglian Water (2023). Our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (see <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/SysSiteAssets/household/about-us/dwmp/dwmp-1.pdf>)

²⁴⁴ Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership (2023). Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. (see <https://www.greensuffolk.org/app/uploads/2023/04/Final-Published-Suffolk-LFRM-Strategy-February-2023.pdf>)

²⁴⁵ Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership (2023). Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Appendix A Sustainable Drainage Systems SuDS: A local Design Guide. (see <https://www.greensuffolk.org/app/uploads/2023/04/Final-Published-Suffolk-LFRM-Strategy-February-2023.pdf>)

²⁴⁶ East Anglia Coastal Group (2010). Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 8. (see <https://www.eastangliacoastalgroup.org/assets/img/1441330.pdf>)

- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Using sound science responsibility
- promoting good governance.

Current baseline

Geology and minerals

6.39 The geology of Suffolk compared to other parts of the UK is relatively simple. The County has an extensive spread of till (boulder clay) which is underlain by chalk.

6.40 The principal mineral resource within Suffolk is sand and gravel. Sand and gravel deposits are distributed fairly evenly across the County, although there are particular concentrations in the river valleys, especially the Gipping valley (which runs from roughly the north-west of the county down to Ipswich and the coast).

6.41 The Suffolk Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) (2024)²⁴⁷ estimates the quantity of minerals across the County and plans for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates over the coming years to help meet housing and infrastructure needs. The report covers how the demand for construction aggregates is met within Suffolk. According to the assessment, the supply of aggregates to Suffolk is made up of sand and gravel imported from surrounding counties, along with imported crushed rock, marine dredged gravel and sand, indigenous and imported recycled construction, demolition and excavation waste.

6.42 According to the Suffolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan²⁴⁸, the most recent forecast and county apportionment for sand and gravel is 1.62Mt per annum. This is based on revised national guidelines. However, the intention now is that this will be based upon the average of the last ten years' sales in accordance with the NPPF and will be calculated in the annual LAA each year. Suffolk does not have an apportionment for any other mineral.

6.43 The total permitted and committed reserves at the end of 2017 was 111.822Mt. If the landbank of permitted reserves is divided by the average of the last ten years' sales, this would be equivalent to 10.63 years' sales. In theory if the average of sales was projected forwards, all of the presently permitted reserves of sand and gravel would run out in July 2028. To ensure a continuing supply of aggregate for the period of the plan up to 2036, a further 9.3Mt needs to be identified.

6.44 The existing and proposed minerals sites in the two districts are shown in **Figure 6.1**.

6.45 BMSDC has national and local designations for their geological significance, with one County Geological Site in each of the two districts:

- **Babergh District:** Harkstead cliff and shore – London clay cliffs with brickearth/channel deposit at the east end and contorted gravel above.
- **Mid Suffolk District:** Needham Lake Erratic – glacial erratic boulder.

6.46 A total of 87 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are present within BMSDC, five of which are designated for their geological significance:

- **Hoxne Brick Pit SSSI:** This SSSI is 1.3 hectares with flint hand axes dating back 400,000 years. Hoxnian Stage deposits have also been found at the site.
- **Hascot Hill Pit SSSI:** This SSSI is 0.3 hectares and the only known site to expose beach deposits from late Pliocene and early Pleistocene Red Crag Formation.
- **Sandy Lane Pit SSSI, Barham:** This SSSI is 11.1 hectares with deposits that span from the Beestonian stage through to the Cromerian Stage and then to the severe ice age of the Anglian Stage.
- **Creeping St Mary Pits SSSI:** This SSSI is 5.4 hectares with former quarries that are the 'type site' for Creeping Sands. Creeping Sands are intertidal and shallow marine deposits from early Pleistocene interglacial age.
- **Great Blakenham Pit SSSI:** This SSSI is 2.2 hectares and a key site for Pleistocene studies, with a range of early and middle Pleistocene deposits.

Soils

6.47 The underlying soils give rise to a mix of classified agricultural land, as shown in **Figure 6.2**. The majority of land within Babergh and Mid Suffolk is Agricultural Land Classification Grade 2 or 3. There are some small areas designated as Grade 4, urban and non-agricultural. Grade 1 and Grade 2 agricultural land represent the best and most versatile land for farming, along with Grade 3a agricultural land, but the national maps of agricultural land classification do not distinguish between Grade 3a and Grade 3b agricultural land.

²⁴⁷ Suffolk County Council (2024). Suffolk Local Aggregates Assessment 2021-2022. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/november-2024-suffolk-laa-2021-2022-data.pdf>)

²⁴⁸ SCC (2020). Suffolk Mineral and Waste Local Plan. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/imported/chapters-1-to-18-smwlp-adopted-july-2020.pdf>)

Contaminated land

6.48 For a site to meet the definition of contaminated land, a pollutant linkage must be established. A pollutant linkage consists of three parts: a source of contamination in, on or under the ground; a pathway by which the contaminant is causing significant harm or harm (or which presents a significant possibility of such harm being caused); and a receptor of a type specified in the regulations.

6.49 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are required to maintain a Public Register of Contaminated Land under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 however; there are currently no entries on the Register in either district. Over the next few years, the councils plan to inspect the districts for contaminated land to help prevent harm to the environment and human health. Babergh and Mid Suffolk have separate contaminated land strategies that provide further information about how the councils plan to examine the contaminated land.

Water

6.50 The districts are within the Anglian River Basin, the management plan of which aims to prevent physical modifications, negative effects of invasive non-native species, pollution from wastewater, towns, cities, rural areas and transport. Babergh is in the Combined Essex Catchment Partnership and Mid Suffolk is in the East Suffolk Catchment Partnership. The idea behind these partnerships is to engage a wide range of stakeholders and encourage local action to protect and enhance the water environment.

6.51 Anglian Water provides for Babergh District, while Essex and Suffolk Water provides for Mid Suffolk, and both districts are particularly prone to drought. Much of eastern England receives less than 700mm of rainfall per year and includes some of the driest areas in the UK²⁴⁹. Due to water being imported from elsewhere in the country, there must be effective and reliable water systems in place to reduce any harms associated with droughts, ranging from small-scale water inefficiencies to large-scale ones, in order to ensure a sustainable supply of water. Anglian Water and Essex and Suffolk Water's WRMPs show a supply-demand deficit if no action is taken^{250,251}. Specifically, Anglian Water anticipates that by 2050, there will be a shortfall of 593 megalitres of water a day. Further to this, the plan states that by 2050, there will be 38% less water to supply to customers, largely driven

by the implementation of further abstraction licence capping across the region, and adaptation to climate change.

6.52 Due to pressures from reduced water availability, climate change, and population growth, Anglian Water faces challenges in meeting rising non-household water demands, which increased by over 30 megalitres daily in 2023 alone. This demand strains flexibility in unplanned non-domestic connections not included in the WRMP. To help address this, Anglian Water will be asking businesses to submit a Water Resource Assessment as part of the planning process. Additionally, they are constructing a new strategic pipeline and have developed plans to build two new reservoirs to increase water supply. However, as these are longer-term plans, improving water efficiency across homes and businesses in the short-term is essential to meet Government targets and manage overall water demand.

6.53 The WRMP notes that modelling by Anglian Water found that by delaying drought resilience in Ruthamford North and South to 2040/41, a consistent surplus of 15MI/d was created that could be utilised between 2036 and 2040.

6.54 One of the Water Resource Zones within Essex and Suffolk Water, Hartismere, falls within the Mid Suffolk boundary. In the Hartismere Water Resource Zone, the supply surplus is predicted to be maintained across the plan period provided management controls are in place to maintain the surplus. Currently, Essex and Suffolk Water are currently operating a moratorium, preventing non-domestic users in the area from having mains supply, which will help to maintain the surplus.

6.55 According to the Water Cycle Study²⁵², most areas within both districts covered by Anglian Water require infrastructure and/or treatment upgrades to serve a growing population. In the Essex and Suffolk Water area, it is likely that larger development sites and those on the periphery of the network may require some network reinforcement. The same applies with regard to wastewater treatment flow capacity and foul sewerage network capacity.

6.56 There are Source Protection Zones (SPZs) scattered throughout the districts, as shown in **Figure 6.3**. However, SPZ 3 covers the majority of the districts which is the total catchment. Small areas across the districts make up the inner and outer catchments.

²⁴⁹ Met Office (2020). Eastern England: climate. (see <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/regional-climates/index>)

²⁵⁰ Mott MacDonald (2022). Essex and Suffolk Water – Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (see <https://www.nwg.co.uk/globalassets/wrmp/esw/appendices/essex-suffolk-wrmp24---environmental-report---appendix-g.pdf>)

²⁵¹ Anglian Water (2023). Our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (see <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/SysSiteAssets/household/about-us/dwmp/dwmp-1.pdf>)

²⁵² JBA Consulting (2020). Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council Water Cycle Study Final Report.

6.57 Drinking Water Safeguard Zones (Surface Water) are catchment areas that influence the water quality for their respective Drinking Water Protected Area (Surface Water), which are at risk of failing the drinking water protection objectives. These non-statutory Safeguard Zones are where action to address water contamination will be targeted, so that extra treatment by water companies can be avoided. Safeguard Zones are a joint initiative between the Environment Agency and water companies. Safeguard Zones are one of the main tools for delivering the drinking water protection objectives of the Water Framework Directive. This data includes what substances are causing the drinking water protected area to be 'at risk'. Safeguard Zones cover the majority of land in both districts.

6.58 The water quality within Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts has been assessed through their Water Cycle Study²⁵³. The majority of the water bodies have a moderate or poor ecological status, and in all of the water bodies that contain a Water Recycling Centre (WRC) serving growth, sewage discharge was cited as one of the "reasons for not achieving good status". The only water body within the catchment which has a bad ecological status is the Little Ouse (US Theltham) (Waterbody ID GB105033043060). The water body received bad ecological status for fish and dissolved oxygen. Also contributing to the good status not being achieved are diffuse sources of phosphate from agriculture (livestock and poor nutrient management), and in some cases from urban and transport sources. The River Basin Management Plan for the Anglian River Basin estimates that pollution from wastewater affects 50% of water bodies within this River Basin District. The Water Cycle Study found that a number of WRCs have limited headroom in their environmental permit, additional growth may require changes to their flow permit and accompanying changes to their environmental permit and/or upgrades to treatment performance.

6.59 Further to this, the Suffolk Coastal District Council and Ipswich Borough Council Cross Boundary Water Cycle Study²⁵⁴ notes that in the Environment Agency's Suffolk Coastal, Deben and Gipping management catchments some

water bodies did not reach good status under the WFD assessment due to continuous sewage discharge in the 2015 classification assessment.

6.60 Anglian Water's PR24 Business Plan 2025-2030²⁵⁵ acknowledges a need to improve water quality, stating that there will be a major investment in water recycling centres, and the most extensive Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) to date. These programmes will help to reduce nutrient pollution in rivers and minimise harmful storm overflow incidents. This is particularly important to address the challenges Anglian Water faces with sewage egress because of historical connections of surface water to the foul sewer, which can overwhelm the sewage system.

6.61 A stretch of the River Stour along Friars Meadow at Sudbury, Suffolk received official designation as a bathing water site in May 2024. Development within the catchment of this bathing water may impact on the level of water quality achievable if not carefully managed. To support safer conditions for swimmers, Anglian Water committed in their PR24 Business Plan 2023-2030 to upgrade the Sudbury sewage treatment works²⁵⁶. Additionally, in November 2023, Anglian Water finished works to upgrade their Water Recycling Centre (WRC) at Sudbury, installing new equipment to remove phosphorous from wastewater, which will help to improve river water quality nearby²⁵⁷.

Waste

6.62 Within Suffolk County, there are currently 100 active waste management facilities²⁵⁸, and only one active landfill site receiving non-hazardous waste²⁵⁹. Seventeen of these facilities are located in Babergh District and 34 are located in Mid Suffolk District. A growing population in BMSDC will place pressure on existing waste management facilities and as such, there will be a requirement to meet growing needs.

²⁵³ JBA Consulting (2020). Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council Water Cycle Study Final Report (see <https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/bmsdc-wcs-report-oct20>)

²⁵⁴ Suffolk Coastal District Council and Ipswich Borough Council (2019). Cross Boundary Water Cycle Study (see <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Suffolk-Coastal-Local-Plan/Cross-Boundary-Water-Cycle-Study.pdf>)

²⁵⁵ Anglian Water (2024). Our Plan 2025 to 2030 (see <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/corporate/strategies-and-plans/our-plan-2025-to-2030-pr24/>)

²⁵⁶ River Stour Trust (2024). Sudbury stretch awarded bathing water status. (see <https://www.riverstourtrust.org/news/sudbury-stretch-awarded-bathing-water->

[status/#:~:text=The%20River%20Stour%20Trust%20is,supported%20by%20Sudbury%20Town%20Council](https://www.riverstourtrust.org/news/sudbury-stretch-awarded-bathing-water-status/#:~:text=The%20River%20Stour%20Trust%20is,supported%20by%20Sudbury%20Town%20Council))

²⁵⁷ Anglian Water (2023). Anglian Water invests nearly £1.9 million to protect Sudbury's rivers. (see <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/news/anglian-water-invests-nearly-1.9-million-to-protect-sudburys-rivers/>)

²⁵⁸ Suffolk County Council (2015). Waste Policies: Monitoring Report 2014. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-applications/Minerals-and-Waste-Development-Planning/Annual-Monitoring-Reports/Waste-MR-Final-March-2015.pdf>)

²⁵⁹ Suffolk County Council (2024). Suffolk Waste Annual Monitoring Report (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/suffolk-amr-waste-data-report-feb-2025.pdf>)

6.63 According to both districts' Climate Change and Biodiversity Annual Reports^{260,261}, all kerbside waste, when it cannot be recycled, goes to the Suffolk Energy from Waste plant which powers more than 30,000 homes. Their recycling rate (reduction in waste sent to the energy from waste plant) for 2020/21 was 39.49% and their aim is to increase this to 65%.

6.64 Of the 69,504 tonnes of household waste produced in Mid Suffolk and Babergh Districts in 2022/23, 27,088 tonnes were sent for reuse, recycling or composting. Approximately 354.6kg of waste per person was collected during this period²⁶².

6.65 Within Babergh and Mid Suffolk (both districts combined), the 'household waste' recycling rate stood at 41.9% in 2023/24. This was below the average rate of 45.8% seen across the Eastern region²⁶³.

6.66 Although there are significant quantities of Local Authority Collected Waste, Commercial and Industrial Waste, Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste, and Hazardous Waste managed within Suffolk, the Suffolk Waste Study concluded that there is no immediate shortfall in waste management capacity for these waste streams.

Future baseline and likely evolution without the Joint Local Plan Review

6.67 The majority of land within Babergh and Mid Suffolk is Agricultural Land Classification Grade 2 or 3. There are some small areas designated as Grade 4, urban and non-agricultural. Without the JLP Review it is likely that development would, in some instances, take place on the best and most versatile agricultural land, compromising the higher

value agricultural soils in the districts as well as its safeguarded mineral resources.

6.68 Both districts are located within the Anglian River Basin, although Anglian Water provides for Babergh District, whilst Essex and Suffolk Water provides for Mid Suffolk. These are both prone to drought, and therefore both districts are within a water stressed area. The majority of the water bodies in the districts have a moderate or poor ecological status. There are Source Protection Zones (SPZs) scattered throughout the districts. Without the Joint Local Plan Review it is possible that development could be located in areas that will exacerbate existing water quality and stress issues and, despite existing safeguards, such as the EU Water Framework Directive, which provides some protection. Development that occurs within Source Protection Zones presents a risk of contamination from any activity that might cause pollution in an area.

6.69 In terms of waste management, there are multiple active waste management facilities in Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts. Although there are significant quantities of various waste types in the region, there is no immediate shortfall in waste management capacity for these waste streams. Without the JLP Review, it is likely that capacity for wastewater treatment will develop as Suffolk County Council is responsible for its provision. However, a growing population in BMSDC will place pressure on existing waste management facilities and as such, there will be a requirement to meet growing needs.

Key sustainability issues

6.70 The key sustainability issues for land and water resources, and the opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them are shown in **Table 6.1**.

Table 6.1: Key sustainability issues and opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
BMSDC contains safeguarded mineral resources which, where possible, should not be lost or compromised by future growth.	The JLP Review provides an opportunity to promote development on brownfield land, in addition to the safeguarding of minerals resources. The plan also provides an opportunity to safeguard soils as part of development, including on previously developed land.	SA objective 7.

²⁶⁰ Babergh District Council (2021). Climate Change and Biodiversity Annual Report. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Climate-change-and-biodiversity-annual-report-Babergh.pdf>)

²⁶¹ Mid Suffolk District Council (2021). Climate Change and Biodiversity Annual Report. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Climate-change-and-biodiversity-annual-report-Mid-Suffolk.pdf>)

²⁶² Defra (2023) Local Authority Collected Waste Statistics - Local Authority data. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env18-local-authority-collected-waste-annual-results-tables#full-publication-update-history>)

²⁶³ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
The majority of BMSDC comprises best and most versatile agricultural land with a mix of classified agricultural land (Grades 1, 2, and 3). New development should, where possible, be delivered as to avoid the loss of higher grades of agricultural land.	The JLP Review provides an opportunity to strengthen the approach and ensure these natural assets are not lost or compromised. This may involve the prioritisation of use of brownfield sites and lower quality agricultural land for development, through strategic site selection.	SA objectives 7 and 11.
Due to Babergh and Mid Suffolk having numerous rivers running through their areas (e.g. the River Gipping and River Brett), there is a need to ensure that not only the rivers are protected but that all water sources including groundwater are too. Most of BMSDC is covered by Source Protection Zones.	The JLP Review provides an opportunity to ensure that development is located and designed to take into account the sensitivity of the water environment, including sufficient waste water treatment capacity to accommodate growth.	SA objective 5.
Anglian Water provides for Babergh District, whilst Essex and Suffolk Water provides for Mid Suffolk – both of which are prone to drought. Due to water being imported from elsewhere in the country, there must be effective and reliable water systems in place to reduce any harm associated with droughts. The likelihood of droughts may increase as a result of climate change, and it should be noted that there is significant cross-over between water resource availability and water quality.	The JLP Review has the potential to secure long term sustainable development through prioritising development sites that have access to adequate water supplies and are not in areas at risk of drought. The JLP Review will also provide up-to-date settlement boundaries which can incorporate considerations of water source availability and vulnerability to drought to ensure that new development within settlement boundaries does not exacerbate water scarcity issues.	SA objectives 5 and 9.
A growing population and an increase in development will place pressure on wastewater treatment works (WwTWs). Seven WwTWs have been identified as not having available capacity to meet these needs.	The JLP Review provides an opportunity, through appropriate site allocations, to prioritise development sites that can accommodate wastewater treatment facilities. Updating the settlement boundaries also provides an opportunity to include areas where wastewater treatment infrastructure is needed, and this can be planned for future development.	SA objective 5.
A growing population will place increased pressure on waste management facilities and there will be a requirement to meet these growing needs.	The JLP Review provides an opportunity to promote waste minimisation and recycling initiatives by selecting sites which have access to recycling facilities and waste collection services.	SA objective 8.

Figure 6.1 Minerals and waste sites

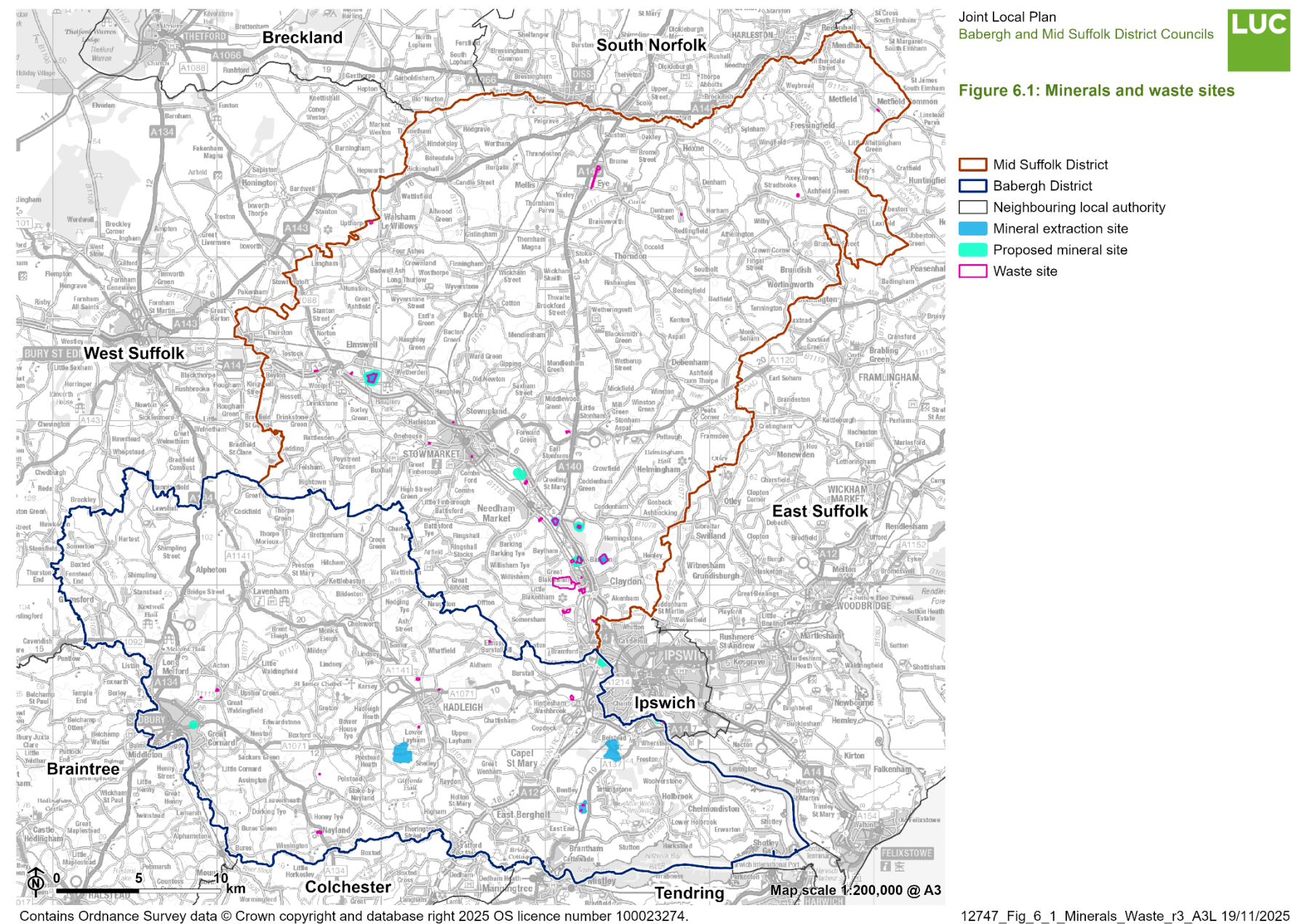
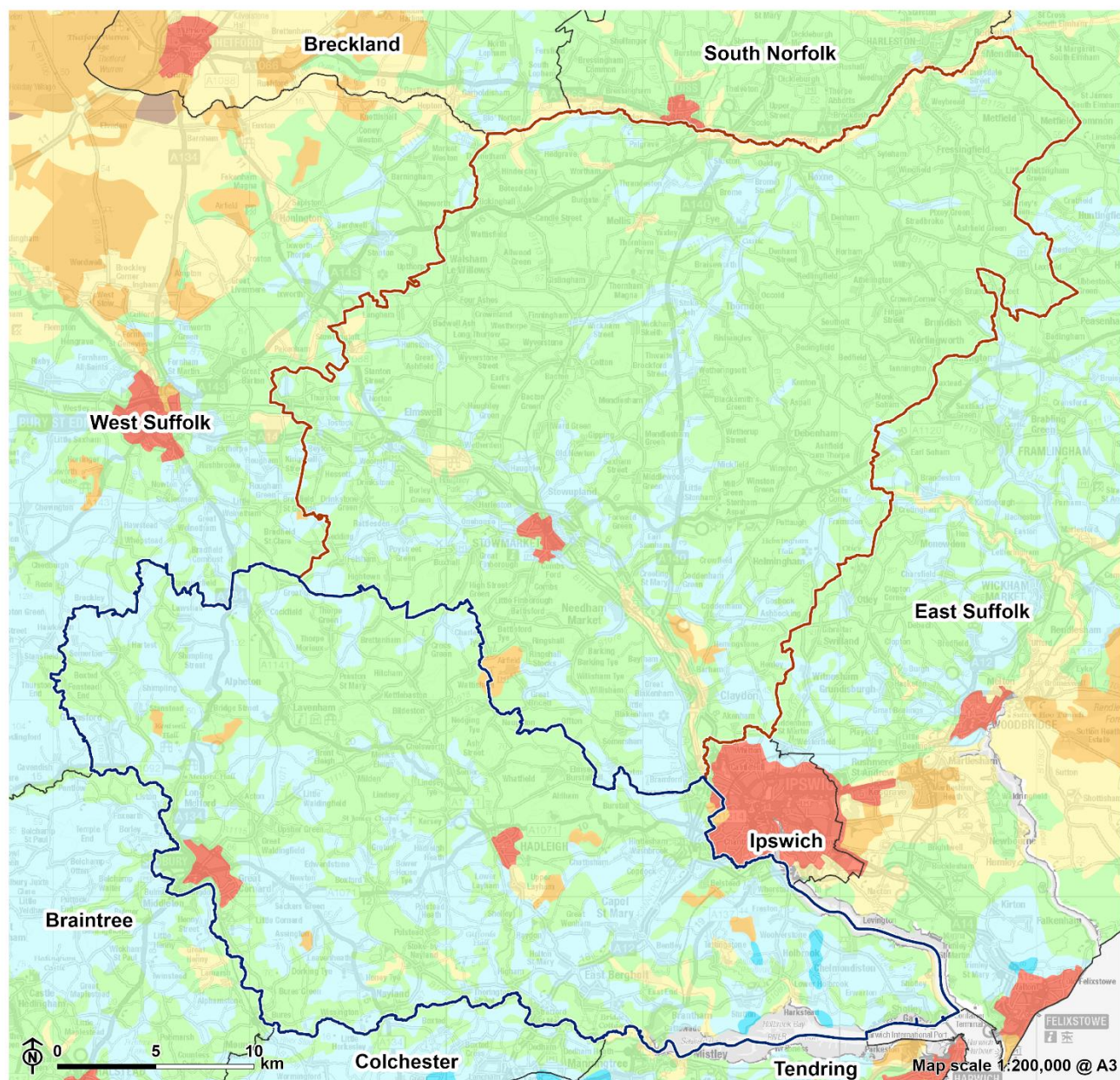


Figure 6.2 Agricultural Land Classification



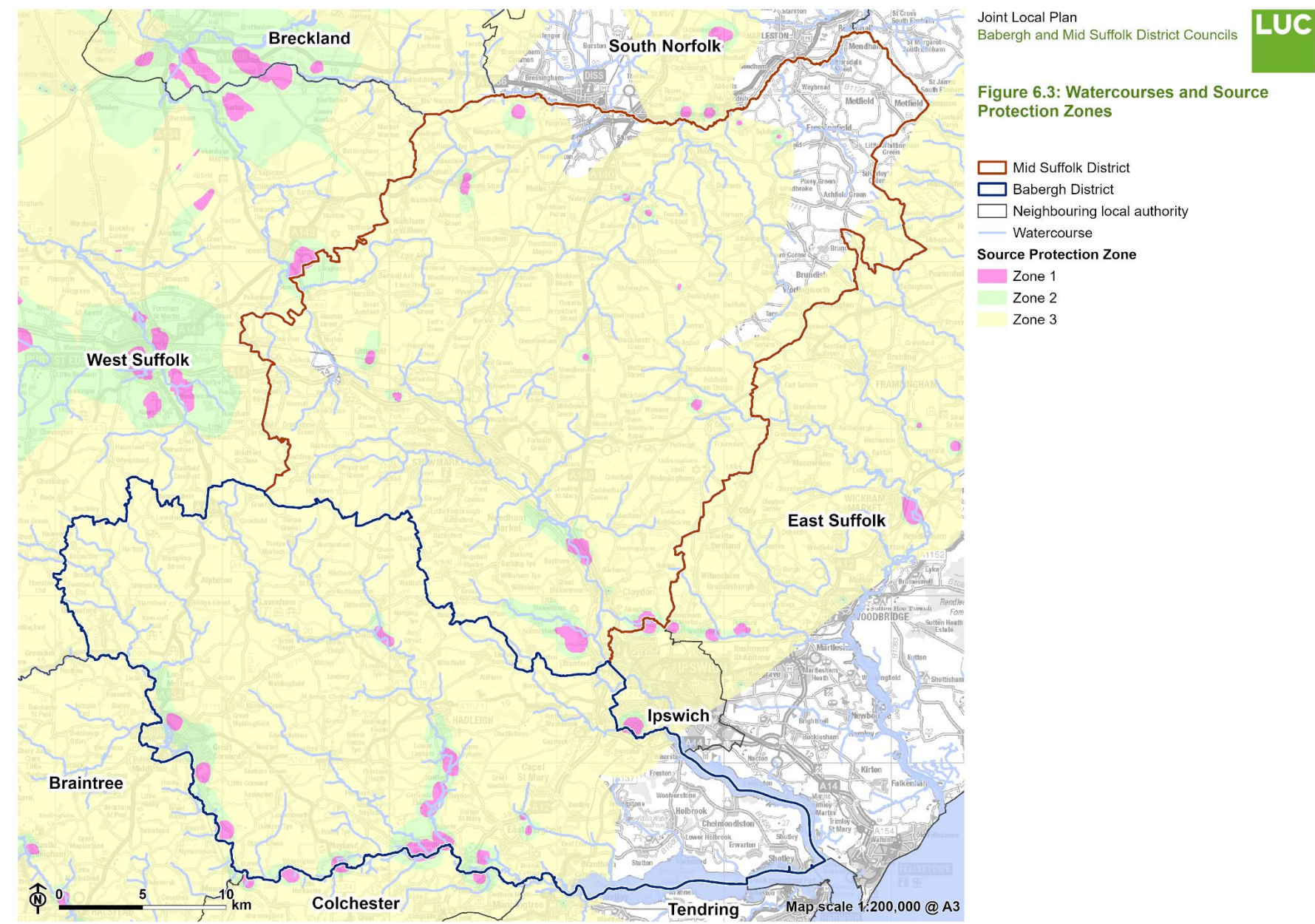
Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Figure 6.2: Agricultural Land Classification

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority
- Agricultural Land Classification**
 - Grade 1
 - Grade 2
 - Grade 3
 - Grade 4
 - Grade 5
 - Non Agricultural
 - Urban

Figure 6.3 Watercourses and Source Protection Zones



Chapter 7

Climate change adaption and mitigation

Policy context

National

7.1 The **NPPF (2024)**²⁶⁴ contains as part of its environmental objective a requirement to mitigate and adapt to climate change, *“including moving to a low carbon economy”*. The document also states that the *“planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change.”* To achieve these aims new development should be planned to ensure appropriate adaptation measures are included (including green infrastructure) and should be designed, located and orientated as to help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To ensure that new development is planned to avoid flood risk, appropriate mitigation measures such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and green infrastructure should be incorporated to further enhance flood resilience as well as contribute to climate adaptation.

7.2 The framework also requires that development be directed away from areas which are at highest existing or future risk of flooding. Where development is required in such areas, the *“development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.”*

7.3 According to paragraph 1671 of the NPPF, *“Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, and should manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards.”*

7.4 In relation to coastal change in England planning policies and decisions should take account of the UK Marine Policy Statement and marine plans. Furthermore, plans should *“reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbating the impacts of physical changes to the coast”*.

²⁶⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024). National Planning Policy Framework. (see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

7.5 The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Flood risk and coastal change (2022)**²⁶⁵ provides guidance on how the planning process can assess, avoid, manage and mitigate the risks associated with flooding and coastal change. Generally, development should be directed away from all areas of flooding, not just areas at highest risk – paragraph 003 of the PPF confirms that new development should start with “assessing and then avoiding flood risk”.
- **Climate change (2019)**²⁶⁶ advises how to identify suitable mitigation and adaptation measures in the planning process to address the impacts of climate change.
- **Renewable and low carbon energy (2015)**²⁶⁷ outlines guidance for developing a strategy for renewable and low carbon energy, and particular planning considerations for hydropower, solar technology, solar farms and wind turbines.

7.6 National Planning Practice Guidance²⁶⁸: Supports the content of the NPPF by promoting low carbon and renewable energy generation, including decentralised energy, the energy efficiency of existing and new buildings and sustainable transport. The PPG also considers the impact of and promotes design responses to flood risk and coastal change for the lifetime of a development.

7.7 The Environment Act 2021²⁶⁹ sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. The Environment Act will deliver:

- Long-term targets to improve air quality biodiversity, water, and waste reduction and resource efficiency.
- A target on ambient PM2.5 concentrations.
- A target to halt the decline of nature by 2030.
- Environmental Improvement Plans, including interim targets.
- A cycle of environmental monitoring and reporting.

- Environmental Principles embedded in domestic policy making.
- Office for Environmental Protection to uphold environmental law.

7.8 The Clean Energy Industries Sector Plan (2025)²⁷⁰ is the UK government's strategic initiative, under the Modern Industrial Strategy, to position the nation as a global leader in frontier clean energy technologies by 2035. The Plan sets out an ambition to double investment across key clean energy industries, such as wind (onshore, offshore, floating), nuclear fission, fusion, hydrogen, carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS), greenhouse gas removals, and heat pumps, to over £30 billion per year, while continuing to support other vital technologies like solar, long-duration energy storage and bioenergy. It aims to catalyse private sector engagement by deploying targeted public investment, including more than £8.3 billion through Great British Energy and Great British Energy-Nuclear up to 2029 and a Clean Energy Supply Chain Fund, and by reducing barriers to investment, thereby providing industry certainty and encouraging deployment and innovation.

7.9 The Hydrogen Update to the Market (2025)²⁷¹ provides a detailed overview of the UK's hydrogen sector progress in the first half of 2025 and outlines forthcoming opportunities as part of the government's Clean Energy Superpower and Growth Missions. It reports substantial milestones, including the shortlist of 27 projects advancing to Hydrogen Allocation Round 2 (HAR 2), with HAR 3 and HAR 4 scheduled from 2026 and 2028 respectively; HAR 1 winners have begun construction, unlocking over 700 skilled jobs across industrial regions. Significant investment commitments include over £500 million allocated toward developing the first regional hydrogen transport and storage network, aiming for operation by 2031, supported by a forthcoming Hydrogen to Power Business Model in 2026. The report highlights plans to abolish Climate Change Levy charges on electricity used in hydrogen electrolysis, regulatory and sector development initiatives, including skills and infrastructure planning, and signals the intent to publish a comprehensive UK Hydrogen Strategy.

²⁶⁵ Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (2022). Flood risk and coastal change. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change>)

²⁶⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Climate change. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/climate-change>)

²⁶⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2015). Renewable and low carbon energy. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy>)

²⁶⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (last updated 1 October 2019). Planning Practice Guidance. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf)

²⁶⁹ HM Government (2021) Environment Act 2021. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>)

²⁷⁰ Department for Business and Trade and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025) Clean Energy Industries Sector Plan. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-energy-industries-sector-plan>)

²⁷¹ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025) Hydrogen update to the market: July 2025. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hydrogen-update-to-the-market-july-2025>)

7.10 The Onshore Wind Strategy (2025)²⁷² presents the country's first dedicated strategy to accelerate onshore wind deployment as a key component of its Clean Power 2030 mission. The strategy sets a target of deploying 27-29 GW of onshore wind capacity across Great Britain by 2030, significantly increasing from existing capacity of over 16 GW, and backed by over 40 actions to tackle barriers such as planning delays, aviation and defence conflicts, grid access, and community engagement. New measures include the creation of an Onshore Wind Council to oversee implementation, potential expansion of the Clean Industry Bonus to support UK-based supply chains, workforce and skills development initiatives, and a programme to repower ageing turbines while smoothing the consenting and survey process for new projects. The strategy also outlines mechanisms to ensure community benefit through up to £70 million annually (£5,000 per MW) in local investment, while projecting creation of up to 45,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2030. The overarching aim is to deliver affordable, home grown renewable energy, reduce reliance on volatile gas markets, and bolster energy security through rapid onshore wind expansion.

7.11 The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan (2024)²⁷³ aims to secure a fully clean electricity system by 2030, enhancing energy security, reducing fossil fuel reliance, and cutting emissions. It focuses on expanding renewables, improving grid infrastructure, accelerating planning, and fostering investment through Great British Energy. Flexible energy solutions like battery storage and hydrogen aim to support stability, while regulatory reforms aim to lower consumer bills. With £40 billion in annual investment, the plan aims to drive economic growth, job creation, and long-term sustainability, as well as position the UK as a leader in renewable energy and advancing the net-zero transition.

7.12 The Policy Statement on Onshore Wind (2024)²⁷⁴ outlines a commitment to double onshore wind energy capacity by 2030. To achieve this, the policy removes previous planning restrictions specific to onshore wind projects in England, placing them on equal footing with other energy developments within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This change aims to boost Britain's energy

independence, reduce energy bills, support high-skilled jobs, and address the climate crisis. The government also plans to consult on incorporating large onshore wind proposals into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime to expedite their approval process.

7.13 State of the UK Climate (2024)²⁷⁵ – the tenth in the annual series of reports that provide a summary of the UK weather and climate through the calendar year 2023, alongside the historical context for a number of essential climate variables. It provides an accessible, authoritative and up-to-date assessment of UK climate trends, variations and extremes based on the most up to date observational datasets of climate quality.

7.14 The Biomass Strategy 2023²⁷⁶: Builds on the 2021 Biomass policy statement and the Powering up Britain strategy which emphasise the important role that biomass will play in Britain's fully decarbonised power system by 2035. It sets out steps the Government intends to take to strengthen biomass sustainability and the opportunities for the use of sustainable biomass across multiple sectors of the economy in support of achieving the UK's net zero target.

7.15 Powering up Britain (2023)²⁷⁷: The strategy comprises several policy documents relating to climate change, setting out the department's approach to energy security and net zero. In particular, Powering up Britain is focused on four key areas of action:

- decarbonising electricity generation;
- improving energy efficiency;
- electrifying transport; and
- developing low-carbon heating.

7.16 The Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (2023)²⁷⁸: Sets out the approach for how the government intends to meet its legally-binding climate goals. The plan includes a package of quantified and unquantified proposals and policies, and associated timescales and delivery risks to support the achievement of these goals.

²⁷² Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025) Onshore wind strategy. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/onshore-wind-strategy>)

²⁷³ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2024) 2030 Action Plan. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-power-2030-action-plan>)

²⁷⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, HM Treasury, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2024) Policy statement on onshore wind. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policy-statement-on-onshore-wind/policy-statement-on-onshore-wind>)

²⁷⁵ Met office (2024) State of the UK Climate. (see <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/about/state-of-climate>)

²⁷⁶ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) Biomass Strategy 2023 (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biomass-strategy>)

²⁷⁷ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) Powering up Britain (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/powering-up-britain>)

²⁷⁸ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carbon-budget-delivery-plan>)

7.17 The Energy Security Plan (2023)²⁷⁹ Sets out how the UK will enhance its energy security, setting out plans for future deployment of wind, new nuclear, solar and hydrogen, and for supporting the production of domestic oil and gas in the nearer term. Key commitments include:

- Looking at the role gas storage and other sources of flexibility can play in gas security.
- Delivery of energy efficiency upgrades through the Great British Insulation Scheme.
- Extension of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme to 2028.
- Setting up Great British Nuclear to lead delivery of the new nuclear programme.
- Launching a competitive process to select the best Small Modular Reactor technologies.
- Launching the Floating Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme, to provide up to £160 million investment in port infrastructure projects.
- Publishing action plans on reducing the development time for transmission network projects and on accelerating electricity network connections.
- Announcing the Track-1 negotiation project list of carbon capture usage and storage (CCUS) projects; launching a process to expand Track-1 clusters; and establishing two further (Track-2) CCUS clusters.
- Announcing a shortlist of projects for the first electrolytic hydrogen production allocation round.
- Announcing successful applicants of the first competition window for Strands 1 and 2 of the Net Zero Hydrogen Fund (development and capital co-funding) and launching a second competition window.
- Consulting on revised energy National Policy Statements which underline the national need for new energy infrastructure with the intention of expediting planning processes.

7.18 The Net Zero Growth Plan (2023)²⁸⁰: Outlines the Government's plans to reach net zero and unlock the financial benefits that this can bring.

7.19 The British energy security strategy (2022)²⁸¹: Sets out how the UK will enhance its energy security, setting out plans for future deployment of wind, new nuclear, solar and hydrogen, and for supporting the production of domestic oil

and gas in the nearer term. The strategy builds on the Prime Minister's 'Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution', and the 'Net zero strategy'. Key aims and commitments include:

- New commitments to supercharge clean energy and accelerate deployment, which could see 95% of Great Britain's electricity set to be low carbon by 2030.
- Supporting over 40,000 more jobs in clean industries, totalling 480,000 jobs by 2030.
- Accelerated expansion of nuclear, wind, solar, hydrogen, oil and gas, including delivering the equivalent to one nuclear reactor a year instead of one a decade.
- Offshore wind – aim of providing up to 50GW by 2030, of which 5GW is planned to be from floating offshore wind in deeper seas. This is aimed to be underpinned by new planning reforms to cut the approval times for new offshore wind farms from 4 years to 1 year and an overall streamlining which will aim to reduce the time it takes for new projects to reach construction stages while improving the environment.
- Oil and gas - a licensing round for new North Sea oil and gas projects is planned to launch in Autumn, with a new taskforce providing bespoke support to new developments.
- Onshore wind – The Government plan to consult on developing partnerships with a limited number of supportive communities who wish to host new onshore wind infrastructure in return for guaranteed lower energy bills.
- Heat pump manufacturing: The Government aim to run a Heat Pump Investment Accelerator Competition in 2022 worth up to £30 million to make British heat pumps, with hopes to reduce demand for gas.

7.20 The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021)²⁸²: Sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet net zero targets by 2050. It sets out strategies to keep the UK on track with carbon budgets, outlines the National Determined Contribution (NDC) and sets out the vision for a decarbonised economy in 2050. Its focus includes:

- Policies and proposals for reducing emissions across the economy in key sectors (power, fuel supply and hydrogen, industry, heat and buildings, transport, natural gas and waste); and

²⁷⁹ Ibid

²⁸⁰ Ibid

²⁸¹ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street (2022). British energy security

strategy. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-energy-security-strategy>)

²⁸² Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2021). Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy>)

- Policies and proposals for supporting transition across the economy through innovation, green investment, green jobs, embedding net-zero in government, local climate action, empowering people and businesses, and international leadership and collaboration.

7.21 The UK Hydrogen Strategy (2021)²⁸³: Sets out the Government's approach to developing a thriving low carbon hydrogen sector in the UK, with the ambition for 5GW of capacity by 2030. The Strategy outlines the role of hydrogen in meeting net zero targets, the existing opportunity within the UK, a strategic framework, a roadmap for the economy, and the UK Government's commitments for a hydrogen economy.

7.22 The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy (2021)²⁸⁴: Aims to support existing industry to decarbonise and encourage the growth of new, low carbon industries to protect and create skilled jobs and businesses in the UK encouraging long-term investment in home-grown decarbonisation technology. The strategy builds in the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and sets out the government's vision for the manufacturing and construction sector and is part of the government's path to net zero by 2050.

7.23 The strategy aims to reduce emissions by two-thirds in just 15 years and support up to 80,000 jobs over the next thirty years and includes measures to produce 20 terawatt hours of the UK industry's energy supply from low carbon alternatives by 2030. It also aims to introduce new rules on measuring the energy and carbon performance of the UK's largest commercial and industrial buildings, providing potential savings to businesses of around £2 billion per year in energy costs in 2030 and aiming to reduce annual carbon emissions by over 2 million tonnes - approximately 10% of their current emissions.

7.24 Other key commitments within the Strategy include:

- The use of carbon pricing to drive changes in industry to focus on emissions in business and investment decisions;
- To establish a policy framework to accelerate the switch from fossil fuels to low carbon alternatives such as hydrogen, electricity, or biomass;
- New product standards, enabling manufacturers to clearly distinguish their products from high carbon competitors;

- To ensure the land planning regime is fit for building low carbon infrastructure;
- Support the skills transition so that the UK workforce benefits from the creation of new green jobs;
- An expectation that at least 3 megatons of CO₂ is captured within industry per year by 2030;
- That by 2050, there will be zero avoidable waste of materials across heavy industries.

7.25 The Heat and Buildings Strategy (2021)²⁸⁵: Sets out the government's plan to significantly cut carbon emissions from the UK's 30 million homes and workplaces. This strategy aims to provide a clear direction of travel for the 2020s, set out the strategic decisions that need to be taken this decade, and demonstrate how the UK plans to meet its carbon targets and remain on track for net zero by 2050.

7.26 Key aims of the strategy include:

- Reduce direct emissions from public sector buildings by 75% against a 2017 baseline by the end of carbon budget 6.
- Significantly reduce energy consumption of commercial, and industrial buildings by 2030.
- Phase out the installation of new natural gas boilers beyond 2035.
- Significantly grow the supply chain for heat pumps to 2028: from installing around 35,000 hydronic heat pumps a year to a minimum market capacity of 600,000 per year by 2028.
- Reduce the costs of installing a heat pump by at least 25-50% by 2025 and to ensure heat pumps are no more expensive to buy and run than gas boilers by 2030.
- Achieve 30-fold increase in heat pumps manufactured and sold within the UK by the end of the decade.
- Grow the market for heat pumps notably via a £450 million Boiler Upgrade Scheme to support households who want to switch with £5,000 grants.
- Improve heat pump appeal by continuing to invest in research and innovation, with the £60 million Net Zero Innovation Portfolio 'Heat Pump Ready' Programme supporting the development of innovation across the sector.

²⁸³ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2022). UK Hydrogen Paper. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-hydrogen-strategy>)

²⁸⁴ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2021). Industrial decarbonisation strategy. (see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-decarbonisation-strategy>)

²⁸⁵ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2021). Heat and buildings strategy. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-and-buildings-strategy>)

- Ensure all new buildings in England are ready for Net Zero from 2025. To enable this, new standards will be introduced through legislation to ensure new homes and buildings will be fitted with low-carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency.
- Establish large-scale trials of hydrogen for heating, including a neighbourhood trial by 2023.
- Ensure as many fuel poor homes in England, as reasonably practicable, achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of band C by the end of 2030.
- Support social housing, low income and fuel poor households via boosting funding for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and Home Upgrade Grant, which aim to improve the energy performance of low income households' homes, support low carbon heat installations and build the green retrofitting sector to benefit all homeowners.
- Scale up low-carbon heat network deployment and to enable local areas to deploy heat network zoning- Heat Network Transformation Programme of £338 million (over 2022/23 to 2024/25).

7.27 The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations (2021)²⁸⁶: Seek to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, reducing their carbon emissions and lessening the impact of climate change. The Regulations require the adoption of a standard methodology for calculating energy performance and minimum requirements for energy performance, reported through Energy Performance Certificates and Display Energy Certificates.

7.28 The Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future (2020)²⁸⁷: Builds on the Prime Minister's Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution. The white paper addresses the transformation of the UK's energy system, promoting high-skilled jobs and clean, resilient economic growth during its transition to net-zero emissions by 2050.

7.29 Key aims of the paper include:

- Supporting green jobs - The government aims to support up to 220,000 jobs in the next 10 years. Several will be supported via a "major programme" that will see the retrofitting of homes for improved energy efficiency and clean heat.
- Transforming the energy system - To transform its electricity grid for net-zero, the white paper highlights how this will involve changing the way the country heats

its homes, how people travel, doubling the electricity use, and harnessing renewable energy supplies.

- Keeping bills affordable - The government aims to do this by making the energy retail market "truly competitive". This will include offering people a simple method of switching to a cheaper energy tariff and testing automatically switching consumers to fairer deals to tackle "loyalty penalties".
- Generating emission-free electricity by 2050 - The government aims to have "overwhelmingly decarbonised power" in the 2030s in order to generate emission-free electricity by 2050.
- Establishing UK Emissions Trading Scheme - The government aims to establish a UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) from 1 January 2021 to replace the current EU ETS at the end of the Brexit Transition Period.
- Exploring new nuclear financing options - The government said it is continuing to explore a range of financing options for new nuclear with developers including the Regulated Asset Base (RAB) funding model.
- Further commitments to offshore wind - The white paper lays out plans to scale up its offshore wind fleet to 40 gigawatts (GW) by 2030, including 1GW of floating wind, enough to power every home in the country.
- Carbon capture and storage investments - Including £1bn worth of investments in state-of-the-art CCS in four industrial clusters by 2030. With four low-carbon clusters set up by 2030, and at least one fully net-zero cluster by 2040.
- Kick-starting the hydrogen economy - The government plans to work with industry to aim for 5GW of production by 2030, backed up by a new £240m net-zero Hydrogen Fund for low-carbon hydrogen production.
- Investing in electric vehicle charge points- The government plans to invest £1.3bn to accelerate the rollout of charge points for electric vehicles as well as up to £1bn to support the electrification of cars, including for the mass-production of the batteries needed for electric vehicles.
- Supporting the lowest paid with their bills - The government aims to support those with lower incomes through a £6.7bn package of measures that could save

²⁸⁶ HM Government (2021). The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/3118/contents/made>)

²⁸⁷ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2020). Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-white-paper-powering-our-net-zero-future>)

families in old inefficient homes up to £400. This includes extending the Warm Home Discount Scheme to 2026 to cover an extra three quarters of a million households and giving eligible households £150 off their electricity bills each winter.

- Moving away from fossil fuel boilers - The government aims, by the mid-2030s, for all newly installed heating systems to be low-carbon or to be appliances that it is confident can be converted to a clean fuel supply.
- Supporting North Sea oil and gas transition - The white paper notes the importance of supporting the North Sea oil and gas transition for the people and communities most affected by the move away from fossil fuels. The government aims to achieve this by ensuring that the expertise of the oil and gas sector be drawn on in developing CCS and hydrogen production to provide new green jobs for the future.

7.30 Planning Act 2008²⁸⁸: The Planning Act 2008 was amended under the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (EU Exit) Regulations 2018. Section 182 places a legal duty on local planning authorities to ensure that their development plan documents include policies to ensure that development and use of land in their area contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

7.31 Planning and Energy Act (2008)²⁸⁹: enables local planning authorities to set requirements for carbon reduction and renewable energy provision. It should be noted that while the Housing Standards Review proposed to repeal some of these provisions, at the time of writing there have been no amendments to the Planning and Energy Act.

7.32 Climate Change Act 2008²⁹⁰: Sets targets for UK greenhouse gas emission reductions of at least 100% by 2050 and CO₂ emission reductions of at least 26% by 2015, against a 1990 baseline (in 2008 the target was set at 80%, however the target has recently been amended in 2019 by Statutory Instrument No.1056 to 100%).

7.33 The Flood and Water Management Act (2010)²⁹¹: The Act aims to reduce the flood risk associated with extreme weather. It provides for better, more comprehensive management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses, helps safeguard community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges, and protects water supplies to the consumer.

7.34 The Flood and Water Regulations (2019)²⁹²: Sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding is managed more effectively. This includes incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; rolling back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

7.35 Environment Act, Government Legislation (1995)²⁹³: The act notes the establishment of the Environment Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. It provides guidance on these agencies and sets environmental management standards.

7.36 The UK Renewable Energy Strategy²⁹⁴: Sets out the ways in which we will tackle climate change by reducing our CO₂ emissions through the generation of a renewable electricity, heat and transport technologies.

7.37 The Energy Efficiency Strategy: The Energy Efficiency Opportunity in the UK²⁹⁵: Aims to realise the wider energy efficiency potential that is available in the UK economy by maximising the potential of existing dwellings by implementing 21st century energy management initiatives on 19th century homes.

7.38 The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting: Making the country resilient to a changing climate²⁹⁶: Sets out visions for the following sectors:

- People and the Built Environment – “to promote the development of a healthy, equitable and resilient

²⁸⁸ HM Government (2008). Planning Act 2008. (see <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/contents>)

²⁸⁹ HM Government (2008). Planning and Energy Act 2008. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/21>)

²⁹⁰ HM Government (2008). Climate Change Act 2008. (see https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/pdfs/ukpga_20080027_en.pdf)

²⁹¹ HM Government (2010). Flood and Water Management Act 2010. (see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/pdfs/ukpga_20100029_en.pdf)

²⁹² HM Government (2019). The Flood and Water Regulations. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/978011176283/contents>)

²⁹³ HM Government (1995). Environment Act. (see <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/25/contents>)

²⁹⁴ HM Government (2009). The UK Renewable Energy Strategy. (see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228866/7686.pdf)

²⁹⁵ Department of Energy & Climate Change (2012). The Energy Efficiency Strategy: The Energy Efficiency Opportunity in the UK. (see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/65602/6927-energy-efficiency-strategy--the-energy-efficiency.pdf)

²⁹⁶ HM Government (2018). The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting: Making the country resilient to a changing climate. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/727252/national-adaptation-programme-2018.pdf)

population, well placed to reduce the harmful health impacts of climate change...buildings and places (including built heritage) and the people who live and work in them are resilient and organisations in the built environment sector have an increased capacity to address the risks and make the most of the opportunities of a changing climate.”

- Infrastructure – “an infrastructure network that is resilient to today’s natural hazards and prepared for the future changing climate.”
- Natural Environment – “the natural environment, with diverse and healthy ecosystems, is resilient to climate change, able to accommodate change and valued for the adaptation services it provides.”
- Business and Industry – “UK businesses are resilient to extreme weather and prepared for future risks and opportunities from climate change.”
- Local Government – “Local government plays a central role in leading and supporting local places to become more resilient to a range of future risks and to be prepared for the opportunities from a changing climate.”

7.39 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017²⁹⁷: Sets out six priority areas needing urgent further action over the next five years in order to minimise risk from the effects of climate change. These priority areas include flooding and coastal change risk to communities, businesses and infrastructure; risks to health, wellbeing and productivity from high temperatures; risk of shortages in the public water supply and for agriculture, energy generation and industry; risks to natural capital; risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and new and emerging pests and diseases and invasive species.

7.40 Understanding the risks, empowering communities, building resilience: The national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England²⁹⁸: This Strategy sets out the national framework for managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. It sets out the roles for risk management authorities and communities to help them understand their responsibilities. The strategic aims and objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Manage the risk to people and their property.

- Facilitate decision-making and action at the appropriate level – individual, community or local authority, river catchment, coastal cell or national.
- Achieve environmental, social and economic benefits, consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

7.41 Environmental Improvement Plan 2023²⁹⁹: The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan. It builds on the vision of 25 Year Environment Plan with a new plan setting out how Defra will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of its goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Under the plan the Government will protect 30% of England’s land and sea for nature. The document identifies ten goals upon which action will be focused. Goals of most relevance in terms of responding to climate change are maximise our resources, minimise our waste; mitigating and adapting to climate change; and reduced risk from environmental hazards. The Environmental Improvement Plan elaborates on these goals as follows:

- Maximise our resources, minimise our waste:
 - We will minimise waste, reuse materials as much as we can and manage materials at the end of their life to minimise the impact on the environment.
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change:
 - Take all possible action to mitigate climate change, while adapting to reduce its impact.
- Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards:
 - We will reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment and the economy from natural hazards including flooding, drought, and coastal erosion.

7.42 The national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England (2011)³⁰⁰: This Strategy builds on existing approaches to flood and coastal risk management and promotes the use of a wide range of measures to manage risk. The strategy forms the framework within which communities have a greater role in local risk management decisions and sets out the Environment

²⁹⁷ HM Government (2017). UK Climate Change Risk Assessment. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584281/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017.pdf)

²⁹⁸ HM Government (2011). Understanding the risks, empowering communities, building resilience: The national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England. (see

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228898/9780108510366.pdf)

²⁹⁹ HM Government (2023). Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>).

³⁰⁰ Environment Agency (2011). Understanding the risks, empowering communities, building resilience. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228898/9780108510366.pdf).

Agency's strategic overview role in flood and coastal erosion risk management.

7.43 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management: Policy Statement (2020)³⁰¹: This Policy Statement sets out the government's long-term ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk, and in doing so, reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment and the economy. The Policy Statement sets out five policy areas which will drive this ambition. These are:

- Upgrading and expanding national flood defences and infrastructure.
- Managing the flow of water more effectively.
- Harnessing the power of nature to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk and achieve multiple benefits.
- Better preparing our communities.
- Enabling more resilient places through a catchment-based approach.

7.44 Suffolk Climate Action Plan (2017)³⁰²: This is the third 'Suffolk Climate Action Plan' produced by the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership. The plan presents the Partners' commitment to facilitate a reduction in absolute carbon emissions in Suffolk of 25% on 2010 levels by 2025 and 75% by 2050, in line with the UK Climate Change Act 2008.

Sub-national

7.45 Anglian river basin district Flood Risk Management Plan 2021-27³⁰³: The plan determines the risk of flooding from rivers, the sea, surface water, groundwater and reservoirs in the Anglian river basin district. Risk management authorities can use the plan to manage flood and coastal erosion risk.

7.46 Transforming Suffolk, Suffolk's Community Strategy 2008 to 2028³⁰⁴: Sets out ambitions for Suffolk to be

recognised for its outstanding environment and quality of life for all. The strategy aims to help make Suffolk the greenest county by enhancing the natural environment while also being an exemplar when tackling climate change.

7.47 Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan (2021)³⁰⁵: This plan has been agreed by Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders and will support a commitment to a green economic recovery in Suffolk as well as addressing the urgent need to deal with the climate emergency.

7.48 Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy (2016)³⁰⁶: Aims to impact the activities of all flood risk management authorities and is an important tool to help everyone manage flood risk. The relevant companies and bodies have a duty with regards to the strategy. The strategy focuses on local flooding from surface water, ground water or ordinary water course such as ditches and streams.

7.49 East Suffolk Catchment Flood Management Plan 2009³⁰⁷: The plan has assessed inland flood risk from rivers, ground water, surface water and tidal flooding within East Suffolk. The plan establishes flood risk management policies which will deliver sustainable flood risk management.

7.50 Great Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan 2011³⁰⁸: The plan has assessed inland flood risk from rivers, ground water, surface water and tidal flooding within Great Ouse. The plan establishes flood risk management policies which will deliver sustainable flood risk management.

7.51 North Essex Catchment Flood Management Plan 2009³⁰⁹: The plan has assessed inland flood risk from rivers, ground water, surface water and tidal flooding within North Essex. The plan establishes flood risk management policies which will deliver sustainable flood risk management.

7.52 Broadland Rivers Catchment Flood Management Plan 2009³¹⁰: The plan has assessed inland flood risk from

³⁰¹ HM Government (2020). Flood and coastal erosion risk management: Policy Statement. (see <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f1adc7dd3bf7f596b135ac8/flood-coastal-erosion-policy-statement.pdf>)

³⁰² Suffolk County Council (2017). Suffolk Climate Action Plan. (see <http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-County/SCCP/Climate-Change/Suffolk-Climate-Action-Plan-3.pdf>)

³⁰³ Environment Agency (2022). Anglian river basin district Flood Risk Management Plan. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1118190/Anglian-FRMP-2021-2027.pdf)

³⁰⁴ Suffolk Strategic Partnership (2008). Transforming Suffolk 2008-2028. (see https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/scd07_-_suffolk_community_strategy.pdf)

³⁰⁵ Suffolk County Council (2021). The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/imported/suffolk-climate-emergency-plan.pdf>)

³⁰⁶ Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership (2018). Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy. (see <http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-County/Water-->

[Coast/Suffolk-Flood-Partnership/2018-Strategy-Documents/2016-04-Suffolk-Flood-Risk-Management-Strategy-v12.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/288886/East_Suffolk_Catchment_Flood_Management_Plan.pdf))

³⁰⁷ Environment Agency (2009). East Suffolk Catchment Flood Management Plan. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/288886/East_Suffolk_Catchment_Flood_Management_Plan.pdf)

³⁰⁸ Environment Agency (2011). Great Ouse Catchment Management Plan. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/288877/Great_Ouse_Catchment_Flood_Management_Plan.pdf)

³⁰⁹ Environment Agency (2009). North Essex Catchment Flood Management Plan. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/288888/North_Essex_Catchment_Flood_Management_Plan.pdf)

³¹⁰ Environment Agency (2009). Broadland Rivers Catchment Flood Management Plan: Broadland Rivers Catchment Flood Management

rivers, ground water, surface water and tidal flooding within Broadland Rivers. The plan establishes flood risk management policies which will deliver sustainable flood risk management.

7.53 Sudbury and Great Cornard Surface Water

Management Plan 2019³¹¹: The plan is a study to understand the flood risk in the local area, identify a range of options to manage the risk and then implement and review the action plan.

7.54 Local Energy East Strategy (2018)³¹²: The three Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Hertfordshire and New Anglia joined together to create a tri-LEP area project. The Strategy set out the tri-LEP's collective ambitions to 2030 based on the following themes: (1) clean economic growth; (2) housing growth and commercial site infrastructure; (3) secure, local, affordable, low-carbon consumption; and (4) clean transport networks.

7.55 Carbon Reduction Management Plan (2020)³¹³: The plan comprises a number of proposals that set the foundations for how Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils will conduct their work going forwards. The plan has key actions that will take place in the short term, with the ability to start work immediately on longer term aspirations so that they can be timetabled into later versions of the plan. There are clear actions around energy, fuel and working remotely that will see the councils working very differently. Some actions require a change in culture, such as removing paper and working more virtually.

7.56 Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management

Plan 8 (2010)³¹⁴: This plan aims to identify the best ways to manage flood and erosion risk to people and to the developed, historic and natural environment. The strategy has two key aims:

- to reduce the threat of flooding and erosion to people and their property; and
- to benefit the environment, society and the economy as far as possible, in line with the Government's 'sustainable development principles':
 - Living with environmental limits

- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Using sound science responsibility
- promoting good governance.

Current baseline

7.57 In Suffolk, climate change poses particular serious risks as the county is characterised by its long, low-lying coastline. The ageing population, alongside children, will be particularly at risk from climate change as rising temperatures in the summer coupled with milder temperatures during winter months will become increasingly detrimental. There will be an increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events as a result of climate change.

7.58 The Tyndall Centre provides 'carbon budgets' for local authorities relating to carbon emission limits authorities will need to achieve to support the "well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C" global temperature target and equity principles in the United Nations Paris Agreement.

7.59 For Babergh to make its 'fair' contribution towards the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the following recommendations are made:

- Stay within a maximum cumulative carbon dioxide emissions budget of 7.2 million tonnes (MtCO₂) for the period of 2020 to 2100. At 2017 CO₂ emission levels, Babergh would use this entire budget within 6 years from 2020.
- Initiate an immediate programme of CO₂ mitigation to deliver cuts in emissions averaging a minimum of - 13.9% per year to deliver a Paris aligned carbon budget. These annual reductions in emissions require national and local action and could be part of a wider collaboration with other local authorities.
- Reach zero or near zero carbon no later than 2041.

7.60 For Mid Suffolk to make its 'fair' contribution towards the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the following recommendations are made:

Plan 2009. (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/288882/Broadland_Rivers_Catchment_Flood_Management_Plan.pdf)

³¹¹ BMT (2019). Sudbury and Great Cornard Surface Water Management Plan. (see <http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-County/Water--Coast/Surface-Water-Management-Plans/FINALSudburyandGreatCornardSWMPv3.pdf>)

³¹² Tri-LEP (2018). Local Energy East Strategy. (see <https://www.energyhub.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/LEE-Energy-Strategy.pdf>)

³¹³ BMSDC (2020). Appendix A – Carbon Reduction Management Plan. (see <https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s19374/Appendix%20A%20-%20Carbon%20Reduction%20Management%20Plan.pdf>)

³¹⁴ East Anglia Coastal Group (2010). Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 8. (see <https://www.eastangliacoastalgroup.org/assets/img/1441330.pdf>)

- Stay within a maximum cumulative carbon dioxide emissions budget of 4.0 million tonnes (MtCO₂) for the period of 2020 to 2100. At 2017 CO₂ emission levels, would use this entire budget within 6 years from 2020.
- Initiate an immediate programme of CO₂ mitigation to deliver cuts in emissions averaging a minimum of -13.8% per year to deliver a Paris aligned carbon budget. These annual reductions in emissions require national and local action and could be part of a wider collaboration with other local authorities.
- Reach zero or near zero carbon no later than 2041³¹⁵.

Climate emergency

7.61 In July 2019, BMSDC declared a Climate Emergency. The Environment and Climate Change Task Force was subsequently set up to look at the climate challenge being faced in both districts, and to explore ways the councils can work towards their ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. Following engagement with environmental experts, the task force presented their recommendations to cabinets in July 2020, the proposals of which were unanimously approved, forming the two councils' first Carbon Reduction Management Plan³¹⁶.

Climate change mitigation

7.62 Between 2005 and 2021 in Babergh District, per capita carbon emissions fell from 8.1 tonnes to 6.1. In Mid Suffolk District, per capita emissions are higher and fell from 9.5 to 7.5 tonnes over the same period, which is above the county, regional, and national averages. As of 2021, the average for

Suffolk County was 6.2 tonnes per capita, and the national average was 5.5 tonnes per capita. Therefore, both districts are underperforming against the county and national averages.

7.63 As set out in **Table 7.1**, both Babergh and Mid Suffolk achieved overall reductions in carbon emissions between 2005 and 2021, at 48% and 36% respectively. In both cases, these reductions were mostly due to progress in reducing emissions from industrial and commercial sectors, closely followed by domestic sources, with minimal progress on transport emissions. Transport makes the largest contribution to carbon emissions in both districts.

7.64 The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, which consists of Suffolk's local authorities and the Environment Agency, working with other organisations locally, published a Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan Summer in 2021 and updated it in 2023. According to this document, the overall reduction in carbon emissions that could be achieved via the specified goals is roughly 81% by 2030. No data has yet been published on the current reduction against the 2030 goal³¹⁷.

7.65 The proportion of emissions in the East of England in comparison to other regions was approximately 9.5% in 2021, which made the East of England the fourth highest emitter behind the North West and South East (both 11%), Scotland (10.2%), and Yorkshire and the Humber (9.7%)³¹⁸.

7.66 Between 2005 and 2023, the East of England has seen a percentage decrease of 38% in total CO₂ emissions. In 2005, total emissions were 57 Mt CO₂ (Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide) and in 2021 total emission were 35 Mt CO₂³¹⁹

Table 7.1 Carbon dioxide emissions in Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts (shown as kilo tonnes)

Year	Industrial and Commercial	Domestic	Transport	Total
Babergh				
2005	231.80	227.80	257.50	904.20
2021	104.7	140.3	225.9	470.9
% of total (2021)	22%	30%	48%	

³¹⁵ Tyndall Centre and University of Manchester (2024) Quantifying the implications of the United Nations Paris Agreement (see <https://carbonbudget.manchester.ac.uk/reports/>)

³¹⁶ BMSDC (2020). Appendix A – Carbon Reduction Management Plan. (see <https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s19374/Appendix%20A%20-%20Carbon%20Reduction%20Management%20Plan.pdf>)

³¹⁷ Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan Summer 23 (2023) (see at https://sustainablesuffolk.org.uk/public_resources/suffolk-climate-emergency-plan-summer-23/)

³¹⁸ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2023). UK local authority carbon dioxide emission estimates 2021. (see <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64a67cc37a4c230013bba230/2005-21-local-authority-ghg-emissions-statistical-release-update-060723.pdf>)

³¹⁹ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2025). UK local authority carbon dioxide emission estimates 2023. (see <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686538ace6c3cc924228943a/2023-local-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics-statistical-release.pdf>)

Year	Industrial and Commercial	Domestic	Transport	Total
Change (2005-2021)	-55%	-38%	-12%	-48%
Mid Suffolk				
2005	332.20	245.90	305.10	863.70
2021	134.5	152	267.8	554.3
% of total (2021)	24%	27%	48%	
Change (2005-2021)	-60%	-38%	-12%	-36%

7.67 According to both councils' Climate Change and Biodiversity Annual Reports^{320, 321}, the councils' two largest carbon emitters were their leisure centres and waste vehicles. In response to this Babergh and Mid Suffolk have become the first rural UK councils to switch its fleet to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, which is expected to result in a 90% reduction in emissions. Further to this, the councils' two leisure centres have transferred to certified low carbon tariffs for electricity use.

7.68 With regard to renewable energy generation, 1,100 Babergh owned homes and 900 Mid Suffolk owned homes have had solar panels installed to generate electricity. In 2022-23, approximately 100 schemes involving renewable energy were approved in the district. These are primarily photovoltaic solar energy projects (including roof mounted solar panels) but also included five householder wind turbines³²². Authorities through the Suffolk Solar Together scheme offer residents discounted rates for the installation of solar panels for their homes. Between April 2019 and November 2021 Babergh and Mid Suffolk installed 135 and 114 Air Source Heat Pumps in council owned homes, respectively. A number of these have been funded through the Warm Homes Fund^{323, 324}. Between 2020 and 2022, Babergh

installed 85 Air Source Heat Pumps in council-owned homes³²⁵. In 2023, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils finished building solar carports over more than 110 of their existing car parking spaces to help power their leisure centres. Babergh and Mid Suffolk among the UK's first rural local authorities to trial the technology, which will reduce the centres' reliance on the grid and cut carbon emissions. 70 solar carports are located at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre in Stowmarket, providing up to almost 24% of the centre's annual electricity demand. The remaining 40 are located at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury, providing over 16% of its annual electricity demand. The carports, installed by East Anglia-based Polysolar, will generate a combined 292,000 kilowatts (kWh) a year. This equates to a combined annual reduction of 62 tonnes of carbon emissions (CO₂e) produced by the centres³²⁶.

Climate change adaptation

7.69 The Met Office has released the UK Climate Projections: Headline Findings in 2022³²⁷ (UKCP), which provides up to date information on how the climate of the UK is expected to change in the period to the end of the 21st Century. In the highest emissions scenario, summer temperatures in the UK

³²⁰ Babergh District Council (2021). Climate Change and Biodiversity Annual Report. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/climate-change-and-biodiversity-annual-report-babergh>)

³²¹ Mid Suffolk District Council (2021). Climate Change and Biodiversity Annual Report. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/climate-change-and-biodiversity-annual-report-mid-suffolk>)

³²² BMSDC (2023). Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Authority Monitoring Report. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/2023-24-b-msdc-amr>)

³²³ Babergh District Council (2021). Climate Change and Biodiversity Annual Report. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/climate-change-and-biodiversity-annual-report-babergh>)

³²⁴ Mid Suffolk District Council (2021). Climate Change and Biodiversity Annual Report. (see

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/climate-change-and-biodiversity-annual-report-mid-suffolk>)

³²⁵ BDC (2022). Public Document Pack (see <https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g3163/Public%20reports%20pack%2007th-Mar-2022%2014.00%20Babergh%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>)

³²⁶ New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership for Norfolk and Suffolk (2023). Pioneering Councils complete £2.8m carbon-cutting solar investment (see <https://newanglia.co.uk/pioneering-councils-complete-2-8m-carbon-cutting-solar-investment/>)

³²⁷ Met Office (2022). UK Climate Projections: Headline Findings August 2022 (see https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp18_headline_findings_v4_aug22.pdf).

could be 6.8°C warmer by 2070 than the average summer between 1981 and 2000. Average summer rainfall would fall by 47% in this scenario, along with an increase in the frequency of hot spells. Winters could be up to 3.8°C warmer, with up to 25% more rainfall by 2070. With regard to future precipitation change, rainfall patterns across the UK are not uniform, and vary on seasonal and regional scales and will continue to vary in the future.

7.70 Changes to the climate will bring new challenges to BMSDC's natural environments. Hotter, drier summers may have adverse health impacts and may exacerbate the adverse environmental effects of air and water pollution. Fluvial and surface water flooding is significant within Babergh and Mid Suffolk and prevalent across both districts. Significant rivers and tributaries that contribute towards flood risk within the districts include, but are not limited to, the Stour, Gipping, Waveney, Brett, Dove and Deben Rivers. In addition, rainwater frequently drains into underground sewer systems, which can become overwhelmed during storm events and become blocked, resulting in flooding of the surrounding area. Anglian Water is, however, investing in storm overflows, which will address the potential for environmental harm and public health which can result from discharges from storm overflows. There are also plans to increase the capacity of their networks and improve management of surface water flooding.

7.71 Warmer, wetter winters and more intense rainfall could lead to more frequent and severe flooding events, both from watercourses breaching their banks and from surface water run-off and rising groundwater. There are several rivers in the plan area that are tidally influenced. In the south east corner of Babergh District, there is a risk of tidal flooding from the Stour and Orwell estuaries. Tidal flooding should be considered for the present as well as the future, due to predicted increases in sea level³²⁸. There are extensive low-lying areas of coastline at high risk of tidal flooding and expected future sea level rise will have significant implications for new and existing development situated in these areas³²⁹.

7.72 According to a recent study commissioned by the Met Office³³⁰, in a pre-industrial climate, rainfall from storms as intense as the 2023/24 season has an estimated return period of 1 in 50 years. However, in today's climate, with 1.2°C of global warming, similarly intense storm rainfall is expected to occur more often, about once every five years. Climate

change has also increased the amount of rainfall from these storms, making them about 20% more intense.

7.73 According to Anglian Water's Thriving East Report³³¹, in 2022, 0.6% of people and 1.2% of properties in Suffolk were at risk from flooding. This is higher than estimates for the Anglian Water region as a whole, where 0.5% of people (and 1.2% of properties) are at risk.

7.74 Figure 7.1 shows Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 in the districts, which are those areas at greatest risk of flooding from either rivers or the sea.

7.75 A changing climate may place pressure on some native species and create conditions suitable for new species, including invasive non-native species. Protection and enhancement of the natural landscape is critical to mitigating and adapting to climate change given its significant role in carbon sequestration, flood storage/management and maintaining water quality. Encouraging local communities to engage with biodiversity projects could help to create a stronger link between biodiversity and everyday life, showing people how protecting local wildlife can benefit their wellbeing and help with climate resilience.

Future baseline and likely evolution without the Joint Local Plan Review

7.76 There is potential for the districts to be subject to more frequent extreme weather events as well as increasing potential for flood risk as a result of climate change. Without the JLP Review, sites for development may be located in areas that are prone to the effects of climate change, such as in areas with a higher chance of flooding. The siting of new development in sustainable and resilient locations is therefore imperative.

7.77 Without the JLP Review, development sites may be located in inaccessible locations that increase reliance on private vehicles, although the shift to electric vehicles may help reduce emissions associated with private vehicles. Carbon emissions associated with buildings may be reduced, in response to the amended Building Regulations 2010 and implementation of the Future Buildings Standard from 2025 that require CO₂ emissions from new build homes and other buildings, including offices and shops, to be 30% lower than current standards. This will be achieved through the installation of low carbon technology, such as solar panels and

³²⁸ JBA Consulting (2020). Babergh & Mid Suffolk Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Final Report (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/sfra-level-2-october-2020->)

³²⁹ Suffolk Coastal District Council and Ipswich Borough Council (2019). Cross Boundary Water Cycle Study. (see https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cross-boundary-water-cycle-study_jan_2019.pdf)

³³⁰ Kew, S. F. et al. (n.d.). Autumn and Winter storms over UK and Ireland are becoming wetter due to climate change. (see <https://spiral.imperial.ac.uk/entities/publication/f3e86904-6053-4241-a5fc-39213fe75924>)

³³¹ Anglian Water (2023). Thriving East. (see <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/SysSiteAssets/household/about-us/our-strategies-and-plans/thriving-east/thriving-east-report-final.pdf>)

heat pumps, and using materials in a more energy efficient way to keep in heat.

7.78 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils will continue to have an obligation to reduce carbon emissions with or without the Local Plan. BMSDC's commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 as provided for through the declaration of the climate emergency, will also continue to apply.

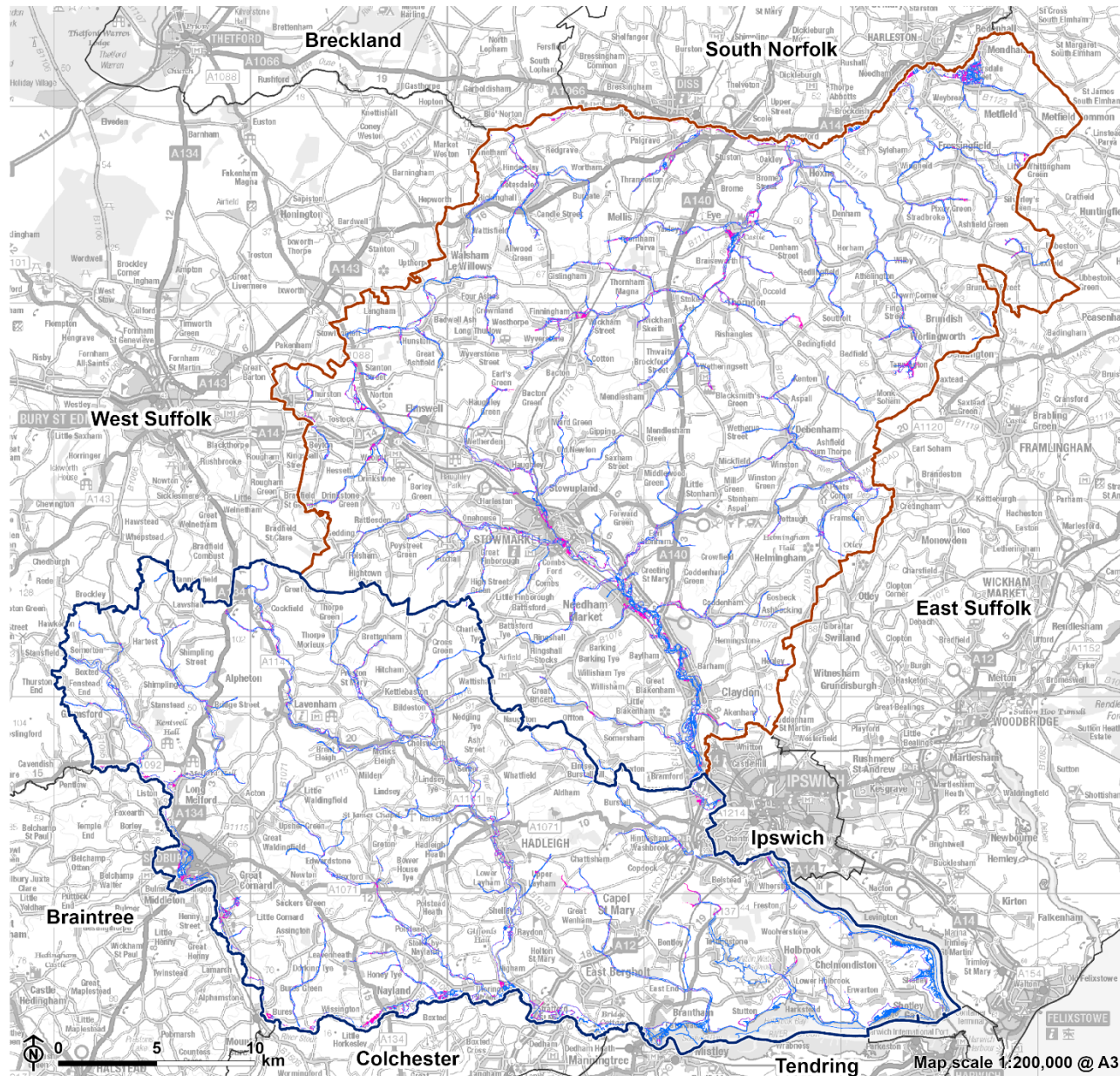
Key sustainability issues

7.79 The key sustainability issues for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them are shown in **Table 7.2**.

Table 7.2 Key sustainability issues and opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
While carbon emissions from all sectors have fallen in both districts since 2005, BMSDC's emissions are still above the national and regional averages. There has also been very little progress on transport emissions. Both councils have committed to meeting net zero by 2030 at the latest, and to meet this will need to make significant shifts in energy efficiency of new and existing buildings, transport trends, and the further deployment of a range of renewables infrastructure.	The JLP Review provides an opportunity to prioritise the appropriate siting and design of new development, through strategic site allocations, which can facilitate the integration of mixed-use developments with accessible transportation options.	SA objectives 9 and 16.
The effects of climate change in BMSDC are likely to result in extreme weather events (e.g. intense rainfall, prolonged high temperatures and drought) becoming more common and more intense.	The JLP Review provides an opportunity through strategically distributed housing allocations, to prioritise development in areas with existing infrastructure and amenities, which will minimise the need for commuting and minimise the need for new transport infrastructure, thereby decreasing carbon emissions from transport. Also, designating open spaces within and around urban areas will have numerous climate change mitigation benefits. The preservation and enhancement of biodiversity, particularly in relation to open spaces can directly contribute to mitigating climate impacts like flooding and extreme heat through carbon sequestration, and climate regulation.	SA objective 9.
BMSDC will need to become more resilient to the increased risk of flooding as a result of climate change.	The JLP Review provides an opportunity, alongside national measures, to mitigate the effects of potential future flooding through appropriate siting of development in sustainable and resilient locations, as well as incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to mitigate surface water flood risk.	SA objectives 9 and 10.

Figure 7.1 Flood Risk



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Figure 7.1: Flood risk

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3

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Chapter 8

Biodiversity

Policy context

National

8.1 A requirement of the **NPPF's (2024)**³³² environmental objective is that the planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural environment including helping to improve biodiversity and using natural resources prudently. In support of this aim the framework states that local plans should “*identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks*” and should also “*promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.*”

8.2 The framework requires that plans should take a strategic approach in terms of “*maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries*”.

8.3 The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Natural environment (2019)**³³³ highlights key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment, agricultural land, soils and brownfield land of environmental value, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes.

8.4 National Planning Practice Guidance³³⁴: Supports the NPPF by requiring local plans to include strategic policies that conserve and enhance the natural environment through sustainable development.

8.5 The Environment Act 2021³³⁵ sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. Biodiversity elements in the Act include:

³³² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024) National Planning Policy Framework. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

³³³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Natural Environment. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>)

³³⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (last updated 1 October 2019). Planning Practice Guidance. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>)

³³⁵ HM Government (2021). Environment Act 2021. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>)

- Strengthened biodiversity duty. Both onsite and offsite enhancements must be maintained for at least 30 years after completion of a development.
- Biodiversity net gain to ensure developments deliver at least 10% increase in biodiversity.
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies to support a Nature Recovery Network.
- Duty upon Local Authorities to consult on street tree felling.
- Strengthen woodland protection enforcement measures.
- Conservation Covenants.
- Protected Site Strategies and Species Conservation Strategies to support the design and delivery of strategic approaches to deliver better outcomes for nature.
- Prohibit larger UK businesses from using commodities associated with wide-scale deforestation.
- Requires regulated businesses to establish a system of due diligence for each regulated commodity used in their supply chain, requires regulated businesses to report on their due diligence, introduces a due diligence enforcement system.

8.6 Climate and Nature Bill (2024)³³⁶. This is a proposed piece of legislation aimed at addressing the climate and ecological crises by setting legally binding targets to limit global heating and restore nature. It seeks to ensure that the UK does its fair share in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with the most up-to-date science, aiming to keep global temperature rises below 1.5°C. The bill also emphasises protecting and restoring biodiversity, requiring the government to develop and implement a strategy for nature recovery. A key aspect is the inclusion of a citizens' assembly to guide decision-making, ensuring public involvement in shaping climate and nature policies. The bill proposes stricter accountability measures, obliging the government to take action beyond existing net-zero commitments and biodiversity targets. It has gained support from environmental groups, scientists, and some MPs, though it has not yet been passed into law.

8.7 Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services³³⁷. Guides conservation efforts in

England up to 2020 by requiring a national halt to biodiversity loss, supporting healthy ecosystems and establishing ecological networks. The Strategy includes 22 priorities which include actions for the following sectors: Agriculture, Forestry, Planning & Development, Water Management, Marine Management, Fisheries, Air Pollution and Invasive Non-Native Species.

8.8 Biodiversity offsetting in England Green Paper³³⁸.

Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities designed to compensate for residual losses. The Green Paper sets out a framework for offsetting.

8.9 Environmental Improvement Plan 2023³³⁹. The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan. It builds on the vision of 25 Year Environment Plan with a new plan setting out how Defra will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of its goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Under the plan the Government will protect 30% of England's land and sea for nature. The goals included in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 of most relevance in terms of the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity are thriving plants and wildlife; using resources from nature sustainably; and enhancing biosecurity. The Environmental Improvement Plan elaborates on these goals as follows:

- Thriving plants and wildlife:
 - We will achieve a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife.
- Using resources from nature sustainably:
 - Use resources from nature, such as timber, fish and food, more sustainably and efficiently.
- Enhancing biosecurity:
 - We will enhance biosecurity to protect our wildlife and livestock and boost the resilience of plants and trees.

Sub-national

8.10 Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)³⁴⁰: 48 Local Nature Recovery Strategies developed across England

³³⁶ <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3707>

³³⁷ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2011). Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem. (see

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf)

³³⁸ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2013).

Biodiversity offsetting in England Green Paper. (see https://consult.defra.gov.uk/biodiversity/biodiversity_offsetting/supporti

ng_documents/20130903Biodiversity%20offsetting%20green%20paper.pdf)

³³⁹ HM Government (2023). Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>)

³⁴⁰ Suffolk County Council (2025). Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/suffolk-local-nature-recovery-strategy-20mb.pdf>)

will collectively form a national Nature Recovery Network. Also referred to as the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and the associated mapping tool, referred to as the Local Habitat Map, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is designed to reverse biodiversity loss by focusing practical, coordinated local action in key areas, in line with national and international biodiversity commitments.

8.11 Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Councils' Biodiversity Action Plan (2020)³⁴¹: sets out how BMSDC aims to protect and strengthen plant life and local wildlife in the district. This includes proposals of environment mapping, tree and hedge planting, meadow planting, a green burial site, an SPD, and bio-diversity campaigning.

8.12 Habitats Regulations Assessment Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy – Technical Report (2019)³⁴²: Sets out a strategy for sustainable housing growth whilst also adequately protecting European wildlife sites from harm.

8.13 Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (2021)³⁴³: This Strategy provides a guide to implementing the Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance And Mitigation Strategy. This Supplementary Planning Document, summarises the requirements of Suffolk Coast RAMS, including the per-dwelling tariff, and provides a framework for implementing those provisions.

8.14 Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (2020)³⁴⁴: This Strategy set out a tariff based approach to mitigating the impact of recreational disturbance on European Sites resulting from increased housing development across the Local Authority areas (East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council and BMSDC). The strategy facilitates development, whilst at the same time adequately protecting European Sites from harm.

8.15 Suffolk's Nature Strategy (2015)³⁴⁵: This Strategy describes the challenges and opportunities the natural environment presents. It outlines the key natural environment

priorities for the County, whilst also setting out how the landscapes and wildlife in Suffolk contribute to economic growth and health and wellbeing.

8.16 In July 2019 Mid Suffolk District pledged to help protect existing wildlife and biodiversity in the district³⁴⁶. This will start with a review of existing potential wildlife corridors in the district and examining ways in which the corridors can be enhanced, working as part of the climate change taskforce.

8.17 In September 2019 Babergh District pledged to protect wildlife, biodiversity and natural habitats which included wildflower verges and free trees for families, in addition to producing a map showing Babergh's wildlife networks³⁴⁷.

8.18 The Climate Change Task Force mentioned earlier focuses biodiversity, as well as climate change mitigation. The Task Force considers ways in which both the councils and partnerships can protect and improve the environment and biodiversity. This includes considering actions through their own operations and key stakeholders or partners.

8.19 Babergh and Mid Suffolk also provide details of national ecological guidance on their website, such as construction near protected areas and wildlife and protected species guidance.

8.20 A Green Infrastructure Framework for Babergh District (August 2012)³⁴⁸: This Framework identifies key opportunities for the enhancement of Green Infrastructure and future provision/connections in a number of areas, including Ipswich, Hadleigh and Sudbury/Great Cornard/Chilton.

8.21 Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 8 (2010)³⁴⁹: This plan aims to identify the best ways to manage flood and erosion risk to people and to the developed, historic and natural environment. The strategy has two key aims:

- to reduce the threat of flooding and erosion to people and their property; and

³⁴¹ BMSDC (2020). Biodiversity Action Plan. (see <https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s20689/Appendix%20A%20-%20Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan.pdf>)

³⁴² Footprint Ecology (2019). Habitats Regulations Assessment Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy. (see <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Section-106/Habitat-mitigation/Suffolk-HRA-RAMS-Strategy.pdf>)

³⁴³ East Suffolk Council (2021) Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). (see (<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Supplementary-documents/Recreational-Disturbance-Avoidance/Suffolk-Coast-RAMS-SPD-final-May-2021.pdf>))

³⁴⁴ Ipswich Borough Council (2020). Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance And Mitigation Strategy. (see https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/suffolk_coast_rams.pdf)

³⁴⁵ Suffolk County Council (2015). Suffolk's Nature Strategy. (see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/planning-waste-and-environment/suffolks-countryside-and-wildlife/Suffolks-Nature-Strategy-2015.pdf>)

³⁴⁶ BMSDC (2019). Council takes steps to protect wildlife. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/news/council-takes-steps-to-protect-wildlife/>).

³⁴⁷ BMSDC (2019). (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/news/babergh-pledges-to-protect-wildlife/>)

³⁴⁸ Babergh District Council (August 2012). A Green Infrastructure Framework for Babergh District. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/GIFramework-Aug2012.pdf>)

³⁴⁹ East Anglia Coastal Group (2010). Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 8. (see <https://www.eastangliacoastalgroup.org/assets/img/1441330.pdf>)

- to benefit the environment, society and the economy as far as possible, in line with the Government's 'sustainable development principles':

- Living with environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Using sound science responsibility
- promoting good governance.

Current baseline

8.22 There is a need to maintain and develop BMSDC's network of high-quality habitats. In Babergh District, there are the Orwell and Stour estuaries, which are found on the eastern and south-eastern sides of the district. They have valued wildlife habitats and a distinct character. Both estuaries are Ramsar sites, designated for their international importance as wetlands under the Ramsar Convention and also Special Protection Areas which are European designations, with respect to internationally important populations of birds.

8.23 Babergh contains 51 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), whilst across Mid Suffolk, there are 36 Sites of Special Scientific Interest as well as one National Nature Reserve (Redgrave & Lopham Fen in Mid Suffolk District). Both districts contain numerous County Wildlife Sites³⁵⁰ and Local Nature Reserves^{351,352,353}. The designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites are shown in **Figure 8.1**. Ancient Woodland is also present across both districts (**Figure 8.2**).

8.24 In the past year, Babergh and Mid Suffolk have planted 281 trees and 4,690 hedgerow plants have been distributed to town and parish councils for planting and care. At 10 years old, the carbon sequestered from the 291 trees planted will equate to 7,025kg a year, increasingly annually as the trees grow larger^{354,355}.

Future baseline and likely evolution without the Joint Local Plan Review

8.25 At the UK level, the publication of the State of Nature Report³⁵⁶ provides an overview of the health of the country's wildlife and how human impacts are driving sweeping changes in the UK. It considers 50 years of monitoring to see how nature has changed since the 1970s. At the national level during this period, there has been a reported 19% decline in the average abundance of wildlife in the UK, with key drivers for change being agricultural productivity, climate change and increasing average temperatures, urbanisation and hydrological changes. The report finds that on average, metrics suggest that decline in species abundance and distribution of species has continued in the UK throughout the most recent decade. Babergh and Mid Suffolk both contain a number of high-quality habitats, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and Ramsar sites, although the trend of declining biodiversity is reported at the local level. These trends are likely to continue in the absence of concerted action given the need for growth in the districts. The Environment Act 2021 will, however, help address habitat loss and fragmentation through biodiversity net gain.

8.26 Even without the JLP Review, some important habitats and biodiversity sites will continue to receive statutory protection. However, without the JLP Review it is possible that development could be sited inappropriately and adversely impact biodiversity sites.

Key sustainability issues

8.27 The key sustainability issues for biodiversity, and the opportunities for the JLP Review to address them are shown in **Table 8.1**.

³⁵⁰ County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) have been identified throughout Suffolk and range from small meadows, green lanes, dykes and hedges to much larger areas of ancient woodland, heathland, greens, commons and marsh. CWSs complement statutorily protected areas and nature reserves (such as SSSIs and Local and National Nature Reserves) by helping to maintain habitat links between these sites.

³⁵¹ The Local Nature Reserves are statutory designations which have wildlife or geological features that are of special interest to the local area.

³⁵² Babergh District Council (2024). Babergh State of the District Report 2024 (see https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2024_v1-0-1-pdf)

³⁵³ Mid Suffolk District Council (2024). Mid Suffolk State of the District Report 2024 (see <https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s35544/Appendix%20A%20-%20State%20of%20the%20District%20Report.pdf>)

³⁵⁴ Babergh District Council (2021). Climate Change and Biodiversity Annual Report. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Climate-change-and-biodiversity-annual-report-Babergh.pdf>)

³⁵⁵ Mid Suffolk District Council (2021). Climate Change and Biodiversity Annual Report. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Climate-change-and-biodiversity-annual-report-Mid-Suffolk.pdf>)

³⁵⁶ State of Nature (2023). State of Nature Report (see <https://stateofnature.org.uk/>)

Table 8.1: Key sustainability issues and opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
BMSDC contains and is in close proximity to a number of both designated and non-designated natural habitats and biodiversity. This includes those designated for their national and international importance. Not all SSSIs are in favourable condition.	The JLP Review presents an opportunity for new development to come forward at the most appropriate locations in order to avoid detrimental impacts on biodiversity assets.	SA objective11.
Although designated sites represent the most valued habitats in the plan area, the overall ecological network is also important for biodiversity as a whole and helps to support the health of designated sites, allowing species to migrate in response to climate change. The fragmentation and erosion of habitats and the wider ecological network in BMSDC is an ongoing threat to biodiversity.	The JLP Review provides the opportunity to avoid sensitive areas through the careful distribution of housing allocations. Furthermore, open space designations and relevant development management policies will promote biodiversity gain and to improve the overall ecological network.	SA objective 11.

Figure 8.1 Designated biodiversity and geodiversity assets

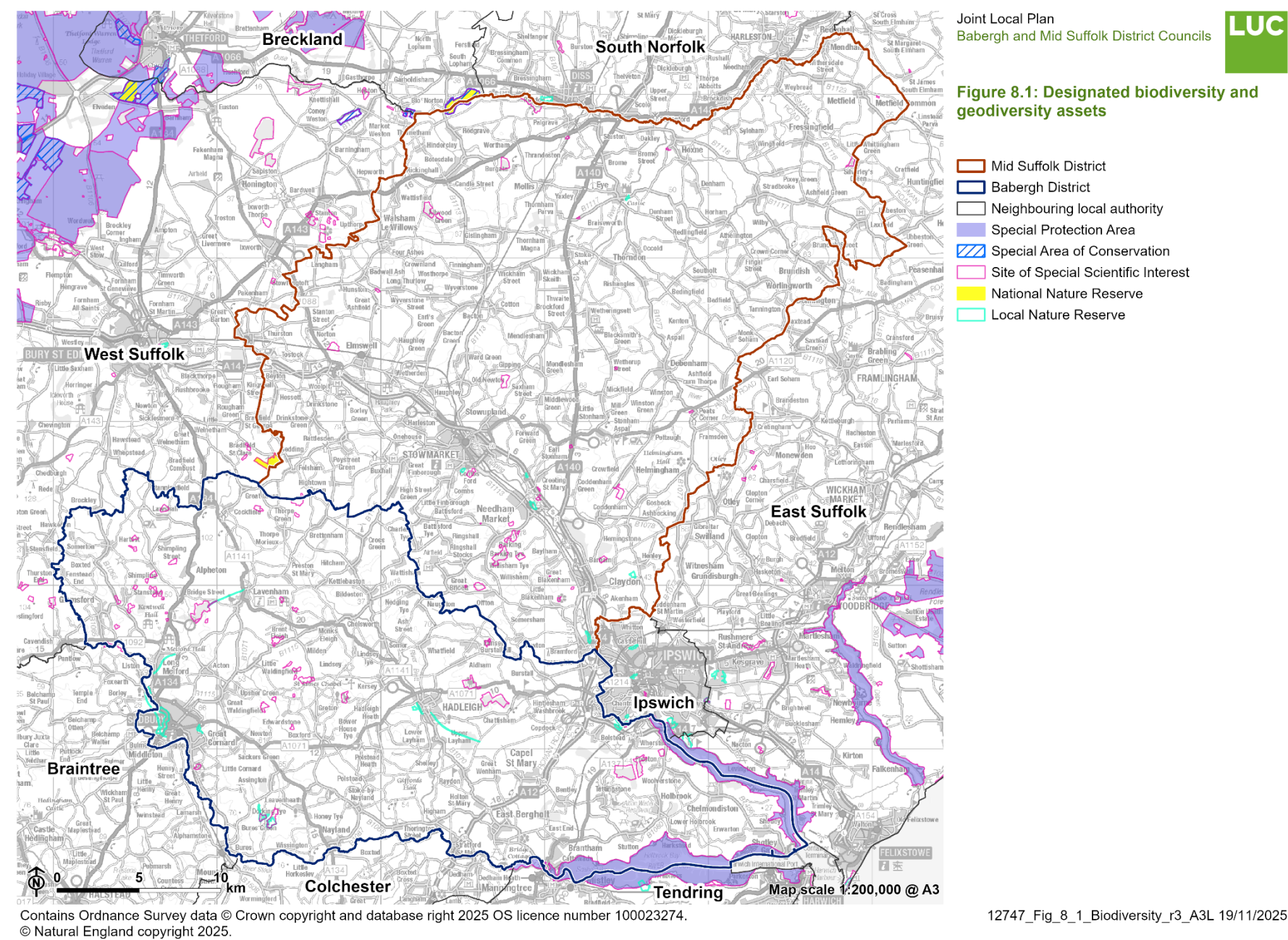
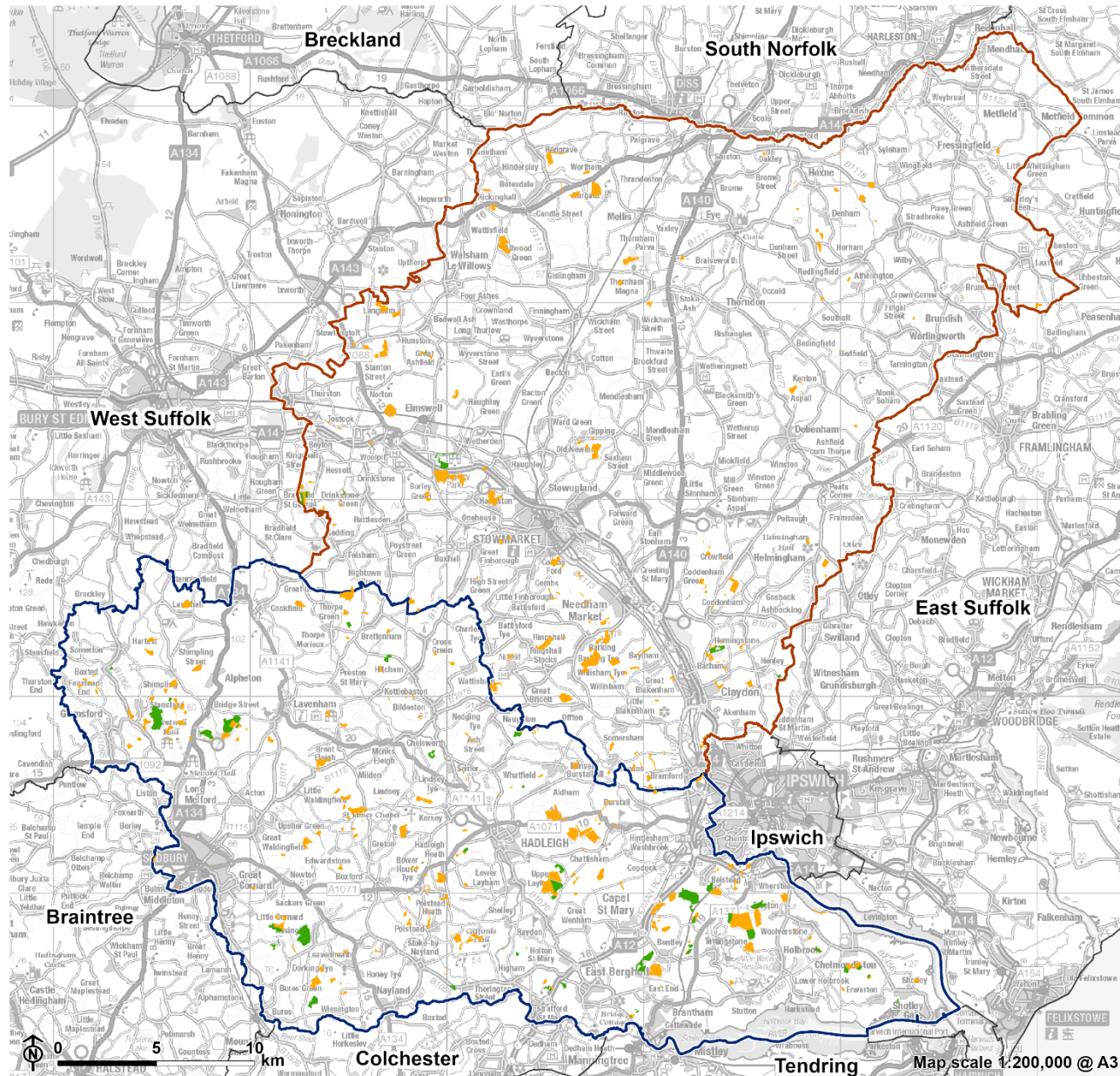


Figure 8.2 Ancient Woodland Inventory



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Figure 8.2: Ancient Woodland Inventory

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority
- Ancient Woodland Inventory**
- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland

Chapter 9

Historic environment

Policy context

National

9.1 Of relevance to the approach of the planning system to the historic environment the **NPPF (2024)**³⁵⁷ contains an environmental objective to contribute to the protection and enhancement of the built and historic environment. The document also sets out a strategy to seek “*the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay and other threats.*” Such a strategy is required to take into consideration the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses.

9.2 It should also be considerate of the wider benefits of conserving the historic environment, the contribution new development can make in terms of character and distinctiveness and the opportunity for the historic environment to contribute to this character and distinctiveness. Local authorities should also maintain or have access to a historic environment record which contains up-to-date evidence.

9.3 The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Historic environment (2019)**³⁵⁸ advises on enhancing and conserving the historic environment through planning, decision-making, designation, listed building consent processes and consultation.

9.4 National Planning Practice Guidance³⁵⁹: Supports the NPPF by requiring that local plans include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, including a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. It also states that local planning authorities should identify specific opportunities for conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

9.5 The Environment Act 2021³⁶⁰ sets out the UK’s new framework for environmental protection. It includes the creation of Conservation Covenant agreements between a

³⁵⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024) National Planning Policy Framework. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

³⁵⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Historic Environment. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>)

³⁵⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (last updated 1 October 2019). Planning Practice Guidance (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>)

³⁶⁰ HM Government (2021). Environment Act 2021. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>)

landowner and a responsible body for the purposes of conservation. This can include to preserve land as a place of ‘archaeological, architectural artistic, cultural or historic interest.’

9.6 Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979³⁶¹: a law passed by the UK government to protect the archaeological heritage of England & Wales and Scotland. Under this Act, the Secretary of State has a duty to compile and maintain a schedule of ancient monuments of national importance, in order to help preserve them. It also creates criminal offences for unauthorised works to, or damage of, these monuments.

9.7 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990³⁶²: An Act of Parliament that changed the laws for granting of planning permission for building works, with a particular focus on listed buildings and conservation areas.

9.8 The Government’s Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010³⁶³: Sets out the Government’s vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life. Includes reference to promoting the role of the historic environment within the Government’s response to climate change and the wider sustainable development agenda.

9.9 The Heritage Statement 2017³⁶⁴: Sets out how the Government will support the heritage sector and help it to protect and care for our heritage and historic environment, in order to maximise the economic and social impact of heritage and to ensure that everyone can enjoy and benefit from it.

9.10 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Historic England Advice Note 8³⁶⁵: Sets out Historic England’s guidance and expectations for the consideration and appraisal of effects on the historic environment as part of the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment process.

Current baseline

Heritage assets

9.11 The districts have a range of unique historic assets which include Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and a range of Listed Buildings (Grades I, II and II*), as shown in **Figures 9.1 and 9.2**. A number of non-designated heritage assets are also located across both districts.

9.12 In Babergh District, there are 3,005 listed buildings, 26 conservation areas, 35 scheduled monuments³⁶⁶ and seven registered parks and gardens³⁶⁷.

9.13 In Mid Suffolk, there are 3,465 listed buildings, 31 conservation areas, 36 scheduled monuments³⁶⁸ and four Registered Parks and Gardens³⁶⁹.

9.14 A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to “preserve or enhance”³⁷⁰. It usually consists of a historic core with a number of listed buildings. There are 60 conservation areas altogether in both districts. The councils have produced Conservation Area Appraisals, which have been adopted by the councils³⁷¹.

9.15 BMSDC’s Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment (2018)³⁷² provides details on the historic landscape of the districts. The document assesses 42

³⁶¹ HM Government (1979). Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act. (see <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/engagement/bostonbarriertwao/results/b.21---ancient-monuments-and-archaeological-areas-act-1979.pdf>)

³⁶² HM Government (2002). Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act (1990). (see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/pdfs/ukpga_19900009_en.pdf)

³⁶³ HM Government (2010). The Government’s Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-governments-statement-on-the-historic-environment-for-england>)

³⁶⁴ Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport (2017). Heritage Statement 2017. (see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664657/Heritage_Statement_2017_final_-_web_version_.pdf)

³⁶⁵ Historic England (2016). Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment: Historic England Advice Note 8. (see <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/heag036-sustainability-appraisal-strategic-environmental-assessment.pdf/>)

[environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/heag036-sustainability-appraisal-strategic-environmental-assessment.pdf/](https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/heag036-sustainability-appraisal-strategic-environmental-assessment.pdf/))

³⁶⁶ Babergh District Council (2025). Babergh: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-1-pdf-1>)

³⁶⁷ BMSDC (2024-25). Authority Monitoring Report. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/b-msdc-amr-2024-25>)

³⁶⁸ Mid Suffolk District Council (2025). Mid Suffolk: State of the District Report 2025. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>)

³⁶⁹ BMSDC (2024-25). Authority Monitoring Report. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/b-msdc-amr-2024-25>)

³⁷⁰ BMSDC (N.d.). Living in a Conservation Area. (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/conservation-areas>)

³⁷¹ Ibid

³⁷² BMSDC (2018). Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment. (<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base/current-evidence/bmsdc-heritage-and-settlement-sensitivity-assessment/>)

settlements which have been identified as potential areas of residential expansion. Eight of these settlements are identified as being of cumulatively high value, specifically: Boxford, Debenham, East Bergholt, Eye, Hoxne, Lavenham, Long Melford and Nayland. The JLP Historic Environment Appraisals (2020)³⁷³ provides a more detailed analysis of the potential impact on individual assets of developing the sites that were at that time preferred for inclusion in the JLP.

Heritage assets at risk

9.16 Historic England has a Heritage at Risk Register³⁷⁴ which includes historic buildings, sites and conservation areas at risk of being lost through neglect, deterioration or decay³⁷⁵. The Register aims to highlight those places and buildings in greatest need of repair.

9.17 In Babergh, there are two Grade I Listed Buildings that are at risk:

- **Barn north east of Bentley Hall, Bente:** very bad condition.
- **Church of St Mary, Church Lane, Stoke-by-Nayland :** poor condition.

9.18 There are also three Scheduled Monuments in the district that are at risk:

- **Roman villa north east of Rodbridge House, Long Melford:** extensive significant problems.
- **Wissington ring ditch cluster. Nayland-with-Wissington:** extensive significant problems.
- **Wood Hall moated site, Sudbury:** generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems.

9.19 In Mid Suffolk, there are five Grade I Listed Buildings and thirteen Grade II* Listed Buildings that are at risk:

- **Church of St Andrew, Church Road, Wingfield (Grade I):** Poor condition
- **Church of St Mary, Hall Lane, Nettlestead (Grade I):** poor condition.
- **Church of St Margaret, Little Green, Thrandeston (Grade I):** poor condition.
- **Church of St Mary, Church Lane, Yaxley (Grade I):** very bad condition.

- **Church of St Mary, Bedingfield (Grade I):** poor condition
- **Terrace Known as the Balcony Garden, including Balustrading and Pavilion, Barham (Grade II*):** poor condition.
- **31-37, High Street, Debenham (Grade II*):** very bad condition.
- **Badley Hall barn 100 metres south east of Badley Hall, Badley (Grade II*):** poor condition.
- **Badley Hall dovecote 60 metres east of Badley Hall, Badley (Grade II*):** poor condition.
- **Grand Stairs and Grotto, 50 meters west of Shrubland Hall, Barham (Grade II*):** poor condition.
- **Shrubland Hall, including attached Screen Walling on east side and Terraces and Balustrading on south and west sides, Barham (Grade II*):** poor condition.
- **Upper Gun Terrace, 10 meters west of Shrubland Hall, Barham (Grade II*):** poor condition.
- **Poplar Farmhouse, Brome and Oakley (Grade II*):** very bad condition.
- **Grand Stairs and Grotto 50 metres west of Shrubland Hall, Coddensham (Grade II*):** poor condition.
- **Lower Loggia and attached Balustrading and steps 150 meters west of Shrubland Hall, Coddensham (Grade II*):** poor condition.
- **Barn 200 metres west of Hall's Farmhouse, Halls Lane, Norton (Grade II*):** poor condition.
- **Church of St Andrew, Church Road, Redlingfield (Grade II*):** poor condition.
- **Church of All Saints, Church Street, Stradbroke (Grade II*):** very bad condition.

9.20 Furthermore, there is one Scheduled Monument in the district that is at risk:

- **Baylham Roman site, Coddensham:** extensive significant problems.

9.21 Finally, there is a Registered Park and Garden (Grade I Listed Shrubland Hall, Hemingstone / Barham / Coddensham) containing 29 Listed Buildings that partially falls within a

³⁷³ LUC (2020) JLP Historic Environment Appraisals Stage 2: Heritage Impact Assessments for Preferred Sites (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/bmsdc-hia-stage-2-report>)

³⁷⁴ Historic England (2025). Heritage at Risk Registers - 2025 entries, additions and removals (see <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/heritage-at-risk/search-register/annual-heritage-at-risk-registers-and-maps/>)

³⁷⁵ Ibid

Conservation Area. It is generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems.

9.22 The heritage assets at risk are shown in **Figure 9.3**

Future baseline and likely evolution without the Joint Local Plan Review

9.23 The historic environment is considered a finite resource. It cannot be replaced and is susceptible to decline over time as historic features experience degradation and decay. However, cultural heritage as a whole can evolve and change, and features which are not currently considered a valued part of the historic environment may become so in the future, either due to their uniqueness, past use, or historic or cultural significance.

9.24 The districts have a range of unique historic assets, including scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and a range of listed buildings (grades I, II and II*), as well as non-designated heritage assets are also located. Some of the heritage assets located in both districts are identified as being in poor condition, and at risk.

9.25 New development and infrastructure and environmental pressures, such as extreme weather and flooding, present the greatest risk to cultural heritage assets in Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts. The requirement for development and infrastructure and the likelihood for many environmental pressures are likely to continue regardless of whether or not the JLP Review progresses. The planning and listed buildings consent regime set out through national legislation will help to limit particularly adverse effects in relation to development that might otherwise affect heritage assets. However, without the JLP Review, development is more likely to come forward at locations of increased sensitivity for the historic environment.

Key sustainability issues

9.26 The key sustainability issues for historic environment, and the opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them are shown in **Table 9.1**.

Table 9.1: Key sustainability issues and opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
There are many sites, features and areas of historical and cultural interest in the plan area, a number of which are identified on the Heritage at Risk register. In the context of significant ongoing pressures for development locally, these assets, and their landscape setting, may be at risk from adverse effects from poorly located or designed development.	The JLP Review offers an opportunity to limit development in more historically sensitive areas by updating the settlement hierarchy, carefully distributing housing allocations, and designating specific sites for development. This will ensure that development does not result in adverse effects on the historic environment.	SA objective 12.

Figure 9.1 Listed buildings

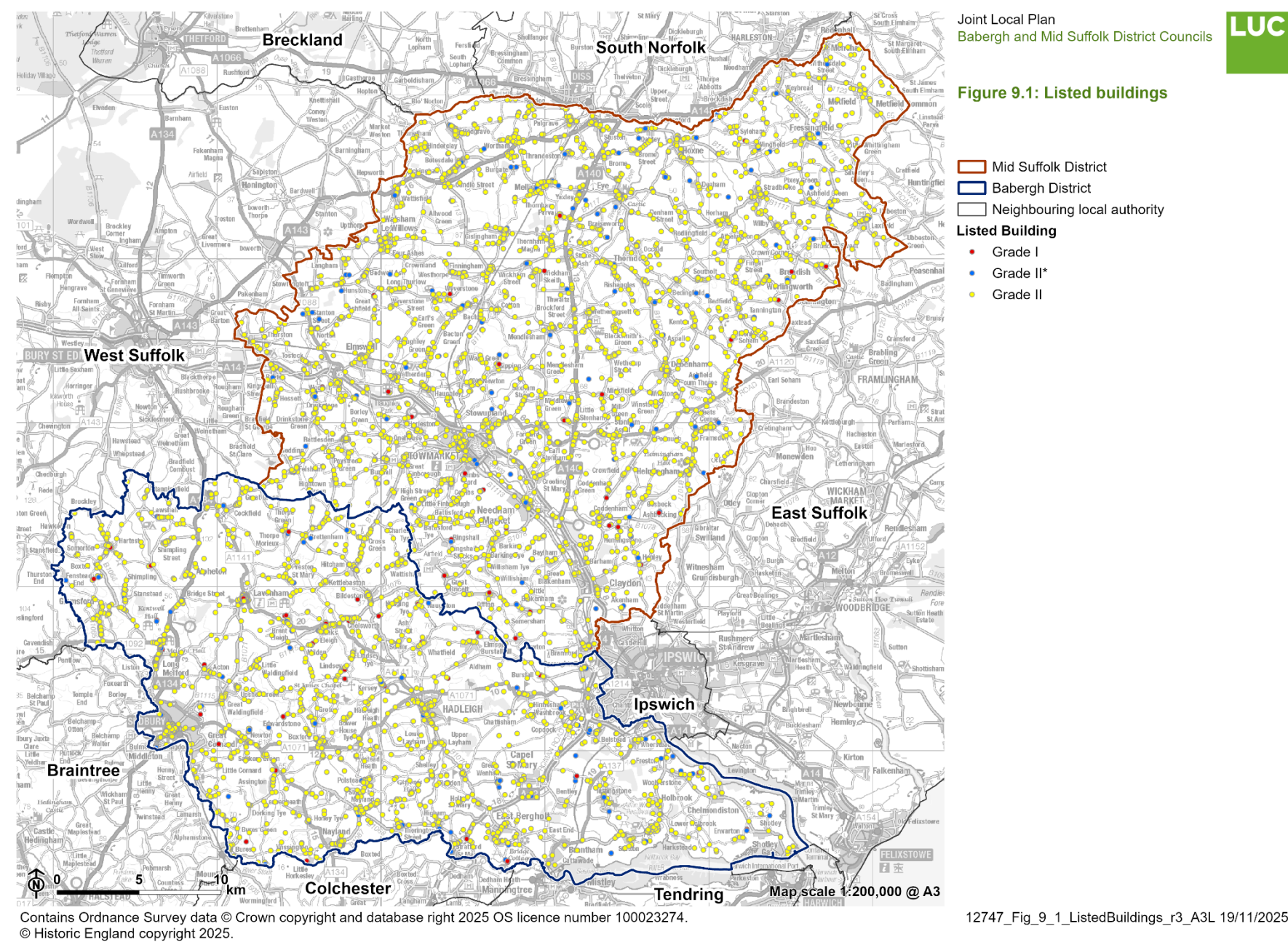
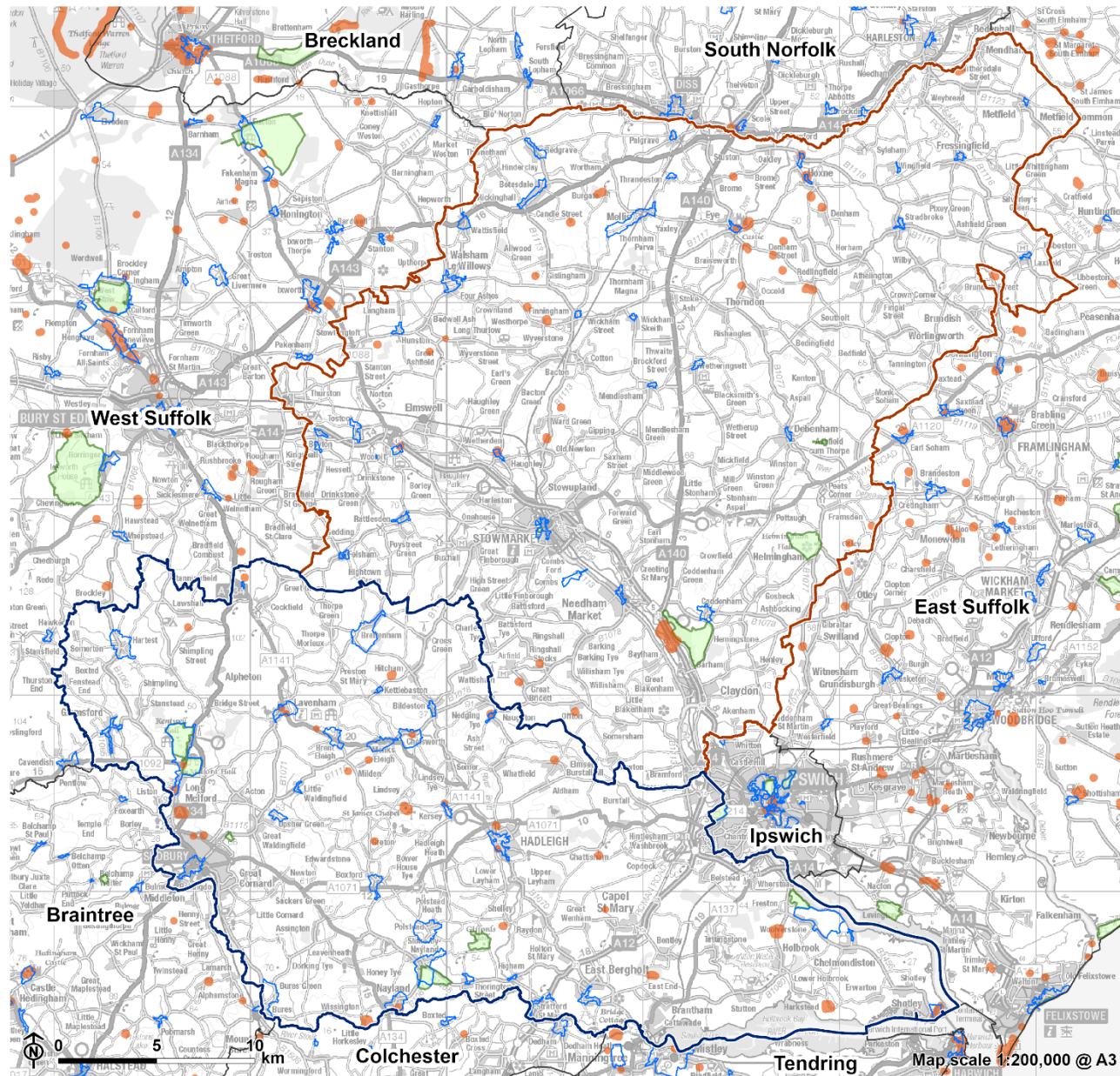


Figure 9.2 Heritage assets



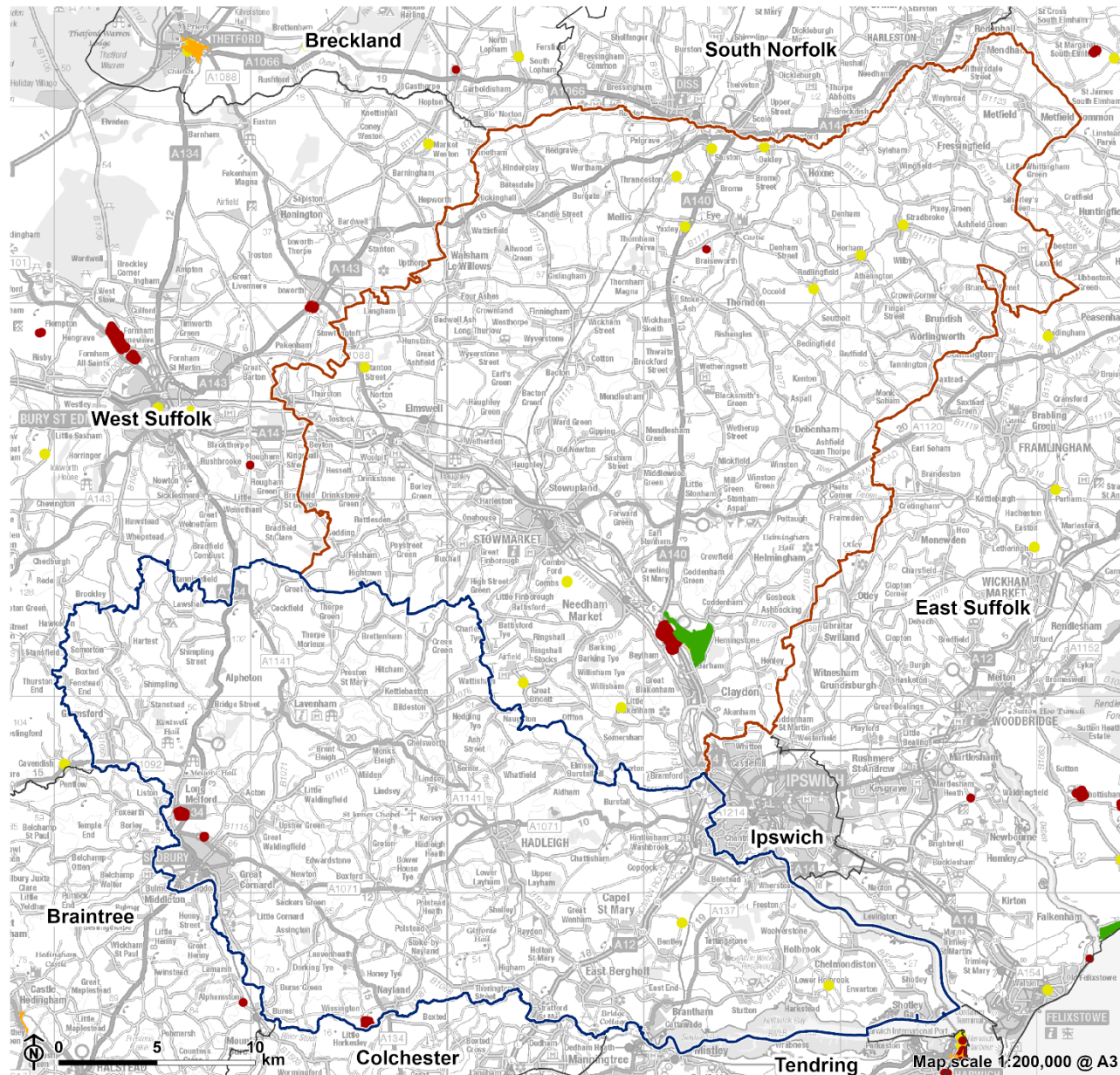
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Figure 9.2: Heritage assets

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Registered Parks and Gardens

Figure 9.3 Heritage assets at risk



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Figure 9.3: Heritage assets at risk

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority
- Heritage at risk**
- Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- Registered Park and Garden
- Scheduled Monument

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Chapter 10

Landscape

Policy Context

National

10.1 The **NPPF (2024)**³⁷⁶ includes as part of its approach to protecting the natural environment, recognition for the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits to be secured from natural capital. Importantly, great weight is to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes.

10.2 As part of the approach to achieving well-designed places the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments “*are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.*”

10.3 The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Natural environment (2019)**³⁷⁷ highlights key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment, agricultural land, soils and brownfield land of environmental value, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes.
- **Green Belt (2019)**³⁷⁸ provides advice on the role of the Green Belt in the planning system, removal of land from the Green Belt and compensatory improvements.

10.4 National Planning Practice Guidance³⁷⁹: Updated in 2019 to provide information on how development within the setting of National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be dealt with. According to the guidance, land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.

³⁷⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024) National Planning Policy Framework. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

³⁷⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Natural Environment. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>)

³⁷⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). Green Belt. (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/green-belt>)

³⁷⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (last updated 1 October 2019). Planning Practice Guidance. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>)

10.5 The Environment Act 2021³⁸⁰ sets out the UK's new framework for environmental protection. It includes the creation of Conservation Covenant agreements between a landowner and a responsible body for the purposes of conservation of the natural environment of the land or its natural resources, or to conserve the place or setting of the land for its 'archaeological, architectural, artistic, cultural or historic interest.'

10.6 Environmental Improvement Plan 2023³⁸¹: The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan. It builds on the vision of 25 Year Environment Plan with a new plan setting out how Defra will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of its goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Under the plan the Government will protect 30% of England's land and sea for nature. The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 sets out the goal of enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment. This goal is considered of more relevance to the theme of the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. The goal is elaborated upon in the Environmental Improvement Plan as follows:

- Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment:
 - We will conserve and enhance the beauty of our natural environment, and make sure it can be enjoyed, used by and cared for by everyone.

10.7 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000³⁸²: An Act of Parliament to create a new statutory right of access on foot to certain types of open land, to modernise the public rights of way system, to strengthen nature conservation legislation, and to facilitate better management of National Landscape (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

10.8 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949³⁸³: An Act of Parliament to make provision for National Parks and the establishment of a National Parks Commission; to confer on the Nature Conservancy and local authorities'

powers for the establishment and maintenance of nature reserves; to make further provision for the recording, creation, maintenance and improvement of public paths and for securing access to open country.

Sub-national

10.9 Joint Babergh & Mid Suffolk Landscape Character Guidance (2015)³⁸⁴: Provides guidance to outline the main elements of the existing character, as well as the broad principles that all development in the countryside will have to follow. The guidance aims to help retain and enhance valuable landscape characteristics that are important to Babergh and Mid Suffolk, while also encouraging developments in appropriate locations with good design leading to sustainable economic benefits.

10.10 Dedham Vale AONB Management Plan 2021-26³⁸⁵: The plan sets out the management objectives for the area which have been agreed with the relevant Local Authorities and organisations involved with the project's partnership. It aims to conserve and enhance natural beauty with secondary purposes to meet the needs of recreation, safeguarding agriculture, forestry and other rural industries.

10.11 Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Management Plan 2018-2023³⁸⁶: The management plan has five objectives that focus on different topics such as landscape, coast and estuaries, land use and wildlife, enjoying the area and working together. It sets out a vision for the area and aims to conserve and enhance the area.

10.12 The Value Landscape Assessment of the Stour Valley Additional Project Area (APA) (2020)³⁸⁷ associated with the Dedham Vale and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Landscape, which lies beyond these designation boundaries, states that the Stour Valley Project Area shares similar characteristics to the Dedham Vale National Landscape. The special qualities of the National Landscape are set out in the AONB Management Plan as follows³⁸⁸:

³⁸⁰ HM Government (2021) Environment Act 2021. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>)

³⁸¹ HM Government (2023). Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>)

³⁸² HM Government (2000). Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/85>)

³⁸³ HM Government (1949). National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/97>)

³⁸⁴ BMSDC (2015). Landscape Guidance. (see <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/DM-Planning-Uploads/Joint-Landscape-Guidance-Aug-2015.pdf>)

³⁸⁵ Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley Project Area Management Plan 2021-26. (see

<https://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021-Management-Plan-Final-Single-Page.pdf>)

³⁸⁶ Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2018). Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2018-2023). (see <http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/assets/About-Us/Man-Plan-Docs/2018-2023/2018-23-SCH-Management-Plan.pdf>)

³⁸⁷ Suffolk Coast & Heaths Additional Project Area (2020). Valued Landscape Assessment: Stour Valley Project Area, Final Report.

³⁸⁸ Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley (2016). Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley Management Plan 2016-2021. (see <http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/assets/About-Us/Man-Plan-consultation/AONB-Management-Plan-web.pdf>)

- Iconic lowland river valley associated with the artist John Constable RA, the views he painted are still recognisable today.
- Historic villages with timber framed housing and prominent churches.
- Valley bottom grazing marshes with associated drainage ditches and wildlife.
- Naturally functioning River Stour with associated tributaries, meres and historic river management features.
- Semi natural ancient woodlands on valley sides and associated wildlife.
- Traditional field boundaries intact and well managed.
- Apparent and buried archaeology indicating millennia of human occupation.
- A sense of relative tranquillity.
- Surprisingly, long distance views from higher ground along the valley in an area associated with large skies.

10.13In addition, the Report describes the APA as predominantly rural with medieval settlement patterns, and although the landscape has been altered by agricultural practices and the growth of settlements, it is fundamentally unchanged. Isolated farm buildings and hamlets are scattered throughout the landscape. The historic centres of many of the villages and towns within the assessment area have retained their special character with timber framed buildings, imposing churches and village greens³⁸⁹.

10.14The Value Landscape Assessment of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths APA (2020)³⁹⁰ associated with the Dedham Vale and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Landscapes, states that the Shotley Peninsula area of the APA was specifically picked out as a key landscape attribute of National Character Area 82: Suffolk Coast and Heaths. The area's generally less impoverished soils were considered to be the best in Suffolk and they have had a significant impact on the landscape, evidenced by historic farms and settlements.

Current baseline

10.15Babergh and Mid Suffolk covers a total area of approximately 565 square miles. In Babergh there are two

main towns and the landscape is varied consisting mainly of undulating arable farmland with river valleys. The Orwell and Stour estuaries are found on the eastern and south-eastern sides of the district which have valued wildlife habitats and a distinct character.

10.16Mid Suffolk is made up of a combination of market towns, villages and countryside. The north of the district contains the valleys of the River Waveney and Dove and the south includes open fields of High Suffolk to the Valleys of the River Ratt and Gipping in the south.

10.17In Babergh District, there are two National Landscapes (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty): Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths, located in the south and south-east of the district, respectively, as shown in **Figure 10.1**. In July 2020, the Secretary of State confirmed Natural England's legal Order to designate three extensions to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Landscapes. The three new boundary extensions increase the size of the existing National Landscape by approximately 38km² (an increase of approximately 9.5%). The areas now confirmed as forming part of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Landscape are:

- The Stour Estuary including the estuary itself, the northern estuary slopes at Brantham and the majority of the southern estuary valley slopes in Essex.
- The Freston Brook Valley, a tributary of the Orwell Estuary which extends inland from the existing National Landscape boundary westwards and includes surrounding plateau woodlands.
- The Samford Valley, a tributary of the Stour Estuary, which extends further inland from the existing National Landscape boundary at Stutton Bridge and includes some areas of neighbouring Shotley Peninsula Plateau.

10.18National Character Area (NCA) profiles created by Natural England are used to define the specific combination of landscape, geodiversity, biodiversity, history, culture and economic activity in an area. NCAs follow natural lines in the landscape instead of administrative boundaries³⁹¹. The National Character Areas are shown in **Figure 10.2**.

10.19Babergh runs through the NCAs Suffolk Coast and Heaths (82) and South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland (86)³⁹². Mid Suffolk runs through the NCAs South Norfolk and

³⁸⁹ Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley (2016). Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley Management Plan 2016-2021. (see <http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/assets/About-Us/Man-Plan-consultation/AONB-Management-Plan-web.pdf>)

³⁹⁰ Suffolk Coastal District Council (2020). Value Landscape Assessment: Suffolk Coast & Heaths Additional Project Area, Final Report (see <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library->

[54706/suffolk-coast-and-heaths-additional-project-area-valued-landscape-assessment-march-2020](https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/suffolk-coast-and-heaths-additional-project-area-valued-landscape-assessment-march-2020))

³⁹¹ HM Government (2024). National Character Areas. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>)

³⁹² HM Government (2024). National Character Area. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area->

High Suffolk Claylands (83) and South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland (86).

10.20 Suffolk Coast and Heaths (82) is found in the south-east of Babergh District covering Shotley Gate, Pin Mill and Holbrook. This NCA is one of the driest parts of the country, with local rainfall typically only two thirds of the national average. The underlying geology shaped by the effects of the sea and interactions of people have created the distinctive landscape character. The majority of the NCA is flat or gently rolling and often open with a few viewpoints. Wildlife habitats and landscape features are found in close proximity in many places, especially near the coast, which provide great diversity in a small area. This NCA also contains part of Dedham Vale National Landscape.

10.21 South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands (83) is found in the north of Mid Suffolk District. The High Suffolk Claylands is a high predominately flat clay plateau which dominates the area of the NCA and is dissected by a small number of small-scale wooded river valleys with complex slopes. The underlying geology is chalk and this the principal aquifer. Shallow marine deposits are overlain with glacial till, buried river gravels, lake sediments and finally bands of glacial outwash deposits.

10.22 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland (86) is found in the north, north-west and south of Babergh District. The landscape is ancient with wooded arable countryside and a distinct sense of closure. The NCA is mainly gently undulating with chalky boulder clay plateau. The undulations are caused by numerous small-scale river valleys that cut through the plateau. Old species-rich hedgerows, ancient woodlands, parklands and meadows with streams and rivers flow eastwards. Despite field enlargements in the second half of the 20th century, there are still traditional irregular field patterns over much of the area. The moderately fertile soils are chalky clay and give the vegetation a more or less calcareous character. In addition, there are gravel and sand deposits under the clay which is an important geological feature that is often exposed during mineral extraction.

10.23 The NCA profiles indicate the drivers for change as well as the opportunities for environmental improvement. Typical drivers of change include development pressure, noise and light pollution, recreational pressure, changes in farming practices and intensive agriculture, mineral extraction,

declines in biodiversity, loss or neglect of historic features, pressure on the water environment, and climate change.

10.24 The Suffolk Coast and Heaths APA shares similar characteristics to the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths National Landscape, the special qualities of which are set out in the publication on Natural Beauty and Special Quality Indicators³⁹³, and summarised below:

- Repetitive pattern of east west estuaries penetrating the coastal farmlands and heaths.
- Close knit interrelationship of semi-natural and cultural landscapes and built heritage features creating attractive compositions.
- Important areas of heath and acid grassland and coastal habitats highly valued for biodiversity.
- Enigmatic built structures and features including Sizewell and Orford Ness which sit within an open large-scale coastal setting.
- Sea cliffs and shingle beaches contrast with gently rolling sandland heaths and farmland.
- Long distant and panoramic views and large skies.
- Villages and small towns which high concentration of built heritage assets and local vernacular connected by network of hedged rural lanes.
- Designed parkland landscapes overlooking estuaries and high concentration of veteran trees.
- Associations with writers and poets.
- A sense of relative tranquillity.

Future baseline and likely evolution without the Joint Local Plan Review

10.25 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts are predominately rural in character. In Babergh District, there are two National Landscapes. Further to this, Babergh runs through the NCAs Suffolk Coast and Heaths (82) and South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland (86)³⁹⁴. Mid Suffolk runs through the NCAs South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands (83) and South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland (86).

10.26 The National Character Area (NCA) profiles, as developed by Natural England, will help to limit particularly adverse effects in relation to development that might

[profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles\)](#)

³⁹³ LDA Design (Nov 2016). Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Natural Beauty and Special Qualities Indicators. (see [\[Suffolk-Coast-and-Heaths-AONB-Natural-Beauty-and-Special-Qualities-Indicators-November-2016.pdf\\)\]\(#\)](https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Adastral-Park/Environmental-Statement-Volume-2b-appendices/Appendix-H6-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

³⁹⁴ HM Government (2024). National Character Area. (see [LUC | 116](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles)</p></div><div data-bbox=)

otherwise significantly harm the landscape character areas. However, without the Local Plan Review development is more likely to come forward at locations of increased sensitivity for the landscapes of both districts.

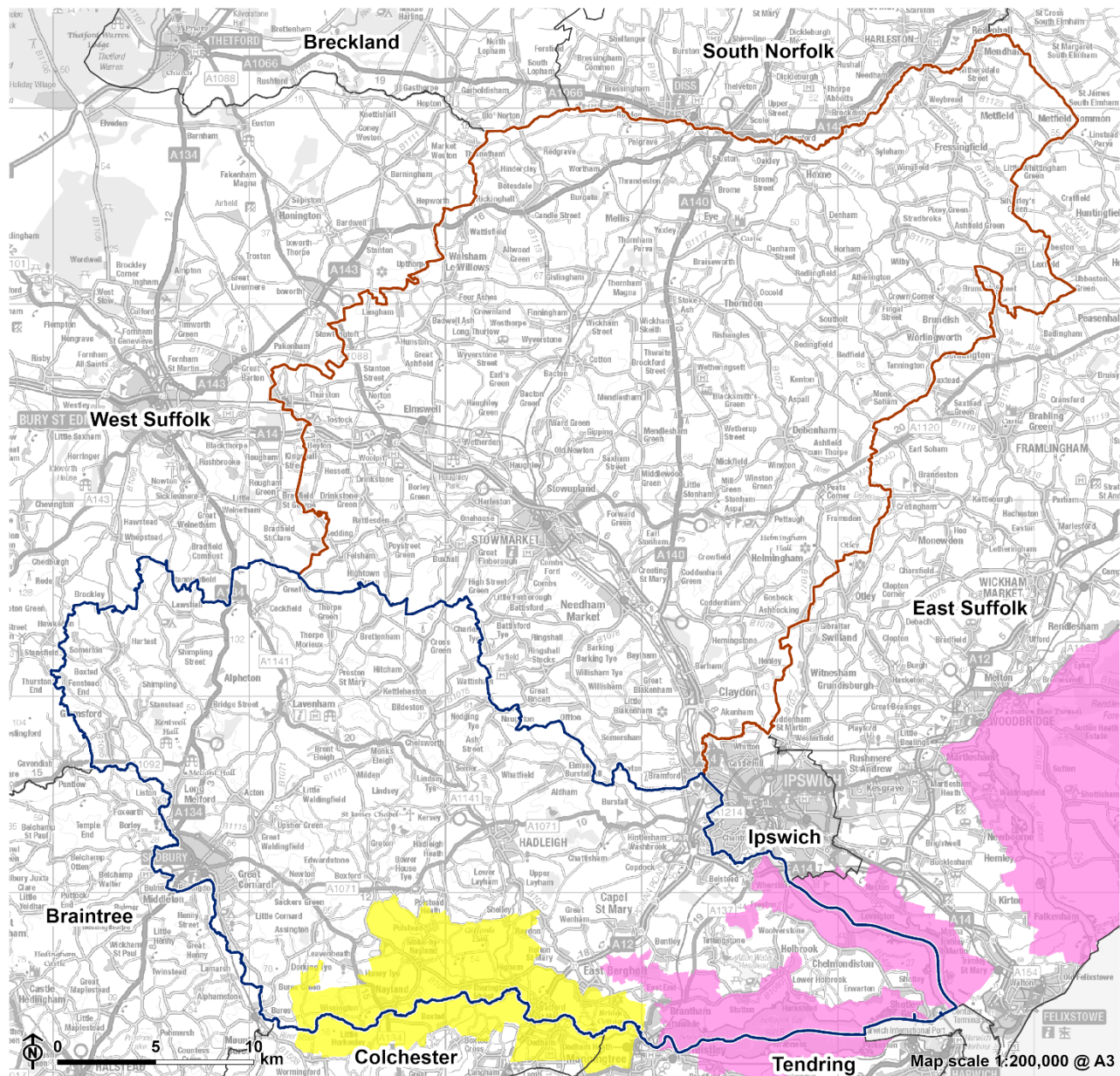
Key sustainability issues

10.27 The key sustainability issues for landscape, and the opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them are shown in **Table 10.1**.

Table 10.1: Key sustainability issues and opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address them

Key sustainability issues for Babergh and Mid Suffolk	Opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Review to address the key sustainability issues	Relevant SA objectives
The plan area contains two National Landscapes and a diverse range of nationally recognised landscape character areas, all of which could be significantly harmed by inappropriate development. As well as loss of undeveloped land to development, indirect effects of development can also erode landscape character, such as noise and light pollution, recreational pressure, changes to the water environment, and pressure on habitats and biodiversity and the historic environment that contribute to landscape character.	The JLP Review provides an opportunity to safeguard the integrity of the National Landscapes through careful site allocations and up-to-date settlement boundaries as clear settlement boundaries will help prevent urban sprawl into rural areas, thereby preserving the character of the landscape.	SA objective 13.

Figure 10.1 National Landscapes



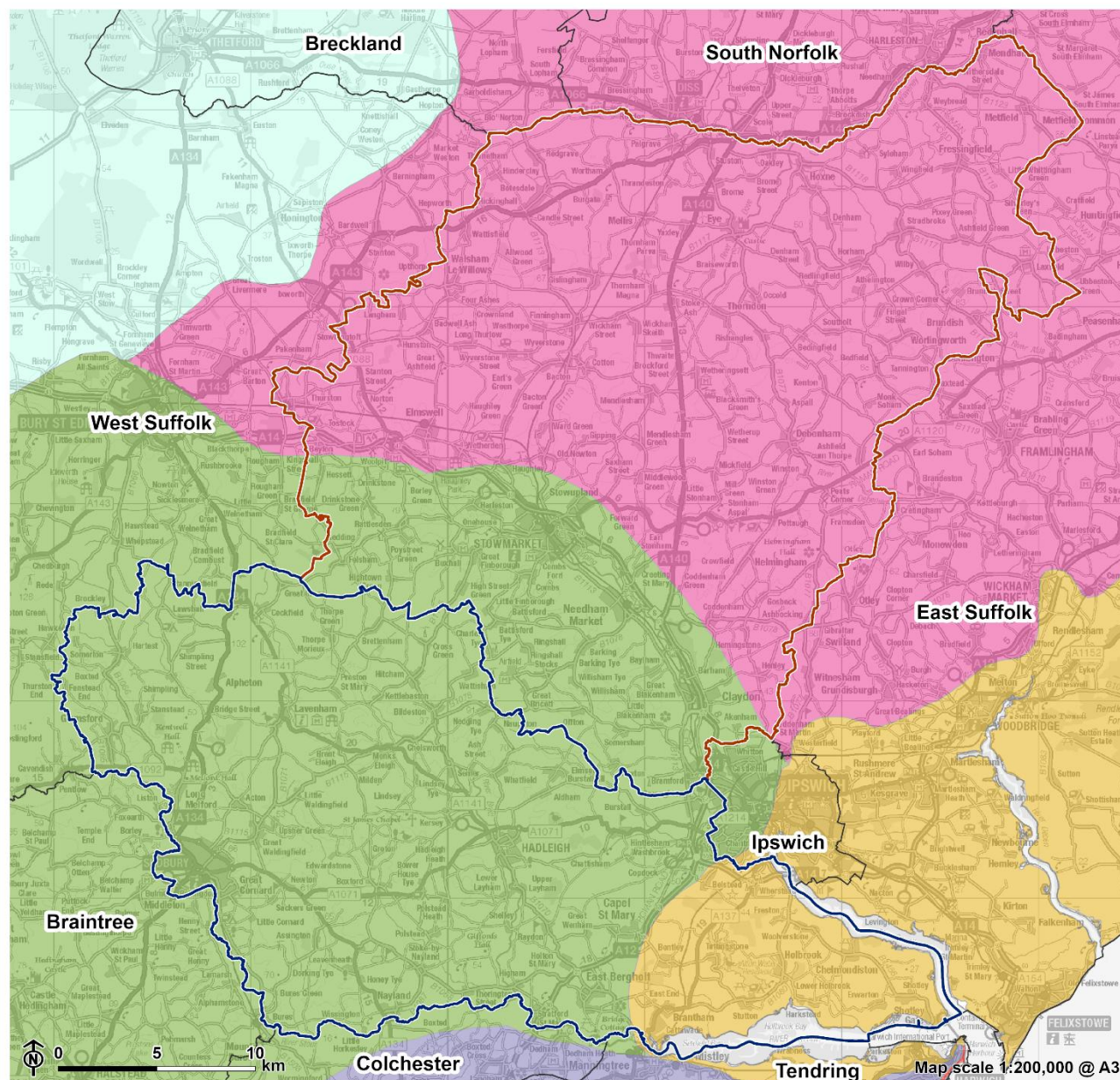
Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Figure 10.1: National Landscapes

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority
- National Landscape
 - Dedham Vale
 - Suffolk Coast & Heaths

Figure 10.2 National Character Areas



Joint Local Plan
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Figure 10.2: National Character Areas

- Mid Suffolk District
- Babergh District
- Neighbouring local authority
- National Character Area**
- 81: Greater Thames Estuary
- 111: Northern Thames Basin
- 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands
- 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland
- 82: Suffolk Coast and Heaths
- 85: The Brecks

Chapter 11

The SA framework and method of approach

SA framework

11.1 The development of a set of SA objectives (known as the SA framework) is a recognised way in which the likely environmental and sustainability effects of a plan can be described, analysed and compared.

11.2 The SA framework for the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP Review is presented in **Table 11.1**. The SA framework that was used during the SA of the Part 1 JLP is proposed to be used again for the SA of the JLP Review, as it is still considered to be fit for purpose. The SA framework comprises a series of SA objectives, each accompanied by a set of guide questions that will be used to appraise the performance of the JLP Review against the SA objectives.

11.3 The relationship between the key sustainability issues and the SA objectives is described in the tables at the end of each of the SA topics in **Chapters 3 to 10** of this SA Scoping Report.

11.4 The relationship between the 'SEA topics', which are the specific topics that SEA is required to cover, as per Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, is shown in the final column of **Table 11.1**. It can be seen that a number of the SA objectives cut across SEA topics, showing how inter-related many of these are.

Table 11.1 SA framework for the Joint Local Plan Review

SA Objective	Guide Questions	Relevant SEA Topics
1. To improve the health and wellbeing of the population overall and reduce health inequalities.	(1.1) Will it improve access to health facilities and social care services? (1.2) Will it encourage healthy lifestyles? (1.3) Will it support special needs and an ageing population? (1.4) Will it increase access to open countryside? (1.5) Will it increase access to public open space? (1.6) Will it improve access to cultural facilities? (1.7) Will it improve access to community facilities? (1.8) Will it reduce crime and anti-social activity? (1.9) Will it reduce noise and odour concerns? (1.10) Does the proposal explore opportunities for shared community use and co-location of services? (1.11) Does the proposal retain and enhance existing open and natural spaces? (1.12) Does the proposal provide a range of play spaces for children and young people? (1.13) Will it improve access to good quality and nutritious food through access to allotments sites and community gardens?	Population Human Health Material Assets
2. To maintain and improve levels of education and skills in the population overall.	(2.1) Will it improve qualifications and skills of young people and adults? (2.2) Will it support the provision of an adequate range of educational and childcare facilities? / Does the proposal provide childcare facilities? (2.3) Does the proposal contribute to meeting primary, secondary and post 19 education needs?	Population Human Health Material Assets
3. To reduce poverty and social exclusion and ensure access to jobs and services.	(3.1) Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion in those areas most affected? (3.2) Will it maintain and improve access to key services and facilities for all sectors of the population? / Does the proposal retain or re-provide existing social infrastructure? (3.3) Will it reduce unemployment overall? (3.4) Does the proposal include a mix of uses and a range of community facilities?	Population Human Health

SA Objective	Guide Questions	Relevant SEA Topics
	<p>(3.5) Does the proposal include wheelchair accessible and adaptable homes as stipulated by Part M of the Building Regulations?</p> <p>(3.6) Does it support a changing population profile?</p>	
<p>4. To meet the housing requirements of the whole community.</p>	<p>(4.1) Will it meet the housing requirements of the whole community?</p> <p>(4.2) Will it reduce homelessness?</p> <p>(4.3) Will it contribute to the delivery of sustainable homes, meeting demand for a range and mix of housing including affordable housing and specialist housing?</p> <p>(4.4) Will it reduce the number of unfit homes?</p> <p>(4.5) Does the proposal include homes that can be adapted to support independent living for older and disabled people?</p> <p>(4.6) Does the proposal address the housing needs of older people, i.e. extra care housing, sheltered housing, and wheelchair accessible and adaptable homes?</p>	<p>Population</p> <p>Human Health</p> <p>Material Assets</p>
<p>5. To conserve and enhance water quality and resources.</p>	<p>(5.1) Will it protect and enhance water resources, particularly in Hartismere?</p> <p>(5.2) Will it support the achievement of Water Framework Directive targets?</p> <p>(5.3) Will it protect and improve the quality of groundwater and inland waters?</p> <p>(5.4) Will it protect and improve the quality of coastal waters?</p> <p>(5.5) Will it promote sustainable use of water?</p> <p>(5.6) Will it maintain water availability or water dependent habitats?</p> <p>(5.7) Will it support the provision of sufficient water supply and treatment infrastructure?</p> <p>(5.8) Does the proposal incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques?</p> <p>(5.9) Will it help mitigate any increased pressure on the sewerage network?</p> <p>(5.10) Will the sewerage system have sufficient capacity to meet demand sustainably?</p> <p>(5.11) Will sewage egress be well-managed?</p> <p>(5.12) Will the clean water supply reliably meet anticipated need?</p> <p>(5.13) Will it promote the reuse of rainwater and greywater to enhance sustainability and resilience to drought?</p>	<p>Water</p> <p>Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora</p> <p>Material Assets</p>

SA Objective	Guide Questions	Relevant SEA Topics
6. To maintain and where possible improve air quality and reduce noise pollution.	<p>(6.1) Will it protect and improve air quality?</p> <p>(6.2) Does the proposal minimise noise pollution caused by traffic and commercial uses?</p> <p>(6.3) Will it avoid exacerbating existing air quality issues in designated AQMAs?</p> <p>(6.4) Does the proposal incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques?</p>	Air Human Health
7. To conserve soil and mineral resources.	<p>7.1) Will it minimise the loss of open countryside to development?</p> <p>(7.2) Will it minimise loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land to development?</p> <p>(7.3) Does the proposal make best use of existing land?</p> <p>(7.4) Will it maintain and enhance soil quality?</p> <p>(7.5) Will it promote sustainable use of minerals?</p>	Soil Material Assets
8. To promote the sustainable management of waste.	<p>(8.1) Will it reduce household waste generated /head of population?</p> <p>(8.2) Will it reduce commercial and industrial waste generated /head of population?</p> <p>(8.3) Will it increase rate /head of population of waste reuse and recycling? / Does the proposal encourage recycling (including building materials)?</p> <p>(8.4) Does the proposal incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques?</p>	Material Assets
9. To reduce contribution to climate change.	<p>(9.1) Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases /head of population by reducing energy consumption?</p> <p>(9.2) Will it increase the proportion of energy needs being met by renewable sources?</p> <p>(9.3) Does the proposal incorporate renewable energy?</p> <p>(9.4) Does the proposal contain homes that are highly energy efficient?</p>	Climatic Factors
10. To reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change.	<p>(10.1) Will it minimise the risk of flooding to people and property from rivers and watercourses?</p> <p>(10.2) Will it minimise the risk of flooding to people and property on the estuary?</p> <p>(10.3) Will it reduce the risk of estuarine erosion?</p> <p>(10.4) Will it reduce the risk of damage to people and property from extreme weather events?</p>	Water Climatic Factors Human Health Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

SA Objective	Guide Questions	Relevant SEA Topics
	<p>(10.5) Does the proposal incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques?</p> <p>(10.6) Does the proposal ensure that buildings and public spaces are designed to respond to winter and summer temperatures, i.e. ventilation, shading and landscaping?</p> <p>(10.7) Does the proposal incorporate sustainable urban drainage techniques?</p>	Material Assets
11. To conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	<p>(11.1) Will it maintain and enhance European designated nature conservation sites?</p> <p>(11.2) Will it maintain and enhance nationally designated nature conservation sites?</p> <p>(11.3) Will it maintain and enhance locally designated nature conservation sites?</p> <p>(11.4) Will it avoid disturbance or damage to protected species and their habitats?</p> <p>(11.5) Will it help deliver the targets and actions for habitats and species within the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan?</p> <p>(11.6) Will it help to reverse the national decline in farmland birds?</p> <p>(11.7) Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of geological value in both urban and rural areas?</p> <p>(11.8) Will it lead to the creation of new habitat?</p> <p>(11.9) Does the proposal maintain or enhance biodiversity?</p>	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
12. To conserve and where appropriate enhance areas and assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings.	<p>(12.1) Will it protect and enhance buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes of heritage interest or cultural value (including their setting) meriting consideration in planning decisions?</p> <p>(12.2) Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of archaeological value in both urban and rural areas?</p> <p>(12.3) Will it enhance accessibility to cultural heritage assets?</p>	Cultural Heritage, Architectural and Archaeological Heritage
13. To conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of landscapes and townscapes.	<p>(13.1) Will it conserve and enhance the National Landscapes?</p> <p>(13.2) Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land?</p> <p>(13.3) Will it protect and enhance the settlement and its setting within the landscape? / Will it protect and enhance landscape character?</p>	Landscape Cultural Heritage, Architectural and Archaeological Heritage
14. To achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and	<p>(14.1) Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness?</p> <p>(14.2) Will it improve the resilience of business and the economy?</p>	Population Human Health

SA Objective	Guide Questions	Relevant SEA Topics
economic growth throughout the plan area.	<p>(14.3) Will it promote growth in key sectors?</p> <p>(14.4) Will it improve economic performance in disadvantaged areas?</p> <p>(14.5) Will it encourage rural diversification?</p> <p>(14.6) Will it encourage indigenous business?</p> <p>(14.7) Will it encourage inward investment?</p> <p>(14.8) Will it make land available for business development?</p> <p>(14.9) Is there a range of retail uses, including food stores and smaller affordable shops for social enterprises?</p> <p>(14.10) Does the proposal include managed and affordable workspace for local businesses?</p> <p>(14.11) Will it promote sustainable rural tourism?</p>	Material Assets
15. To revitalise the districts' town centres.	<p>(15.1) Will it increase the range of employment opportunities, shops and services available in town?</p> <p>(15.2) Will it decrease the number of vacant units in town centres?</p> <p>(15.3) Will it enhance the viability and vitality of the districts' centres?</p>	Population Material Assets
16. To encourage efficient patterns of movement and the use of sustainable methods of travel in support of economic growth	<p>(16.1) Will it reduce commuting?</p> <p>(16.2) Will it improve accessibility to work by public transport, walking and cycling?</p> <p>(16.3) Would it promote the use of sustainable travel modes and reduce dependence on the private car?</p> <p>(16.4) Will it increase the proportion of freight transported by rail or other sustainable modes?</p>	Population Air Human Health Climatic Factors Material Assets

Use of the SA framework

11.5 The findings of the SA will be presented as colour coded symbols showing a score for each option against each of the SA objectives along with a concise justification for the score given, where appropriate.

11.6 It is proposed to use the colour coding as shown in **Figure 11.1** below.

Figure 11.1 SA effect symbols/colours

++	Significant positive effect likely
++/-	Mixed significant positive and minor negative effects likely
+	Minor positive effect likely
0	Negligible effect likely
-	Minor negative effect likely
--/+	Mixed significant negative and minor positive effects likely
--	Significant negative effect likely
+/-	Mixed minor effects likely
++/--	Mixed significant effects likely
?	Likely effect uncertain

11.7 The dividing line between sustainability effects is often quite small. Significant effects will be distinguished from more minor effects using the SA framework 'Guide Questions' and professional judgement, where necessary.

11.8 The effects of an option on an SA objective will be considered to be significant where it is of such magnitude that it will have a noticeable and measurable effect compared with other factors that may influence the achievement of that SA objective.

11.9 In determining the significance of the effects of the options for potential inclusion in the JLP Review it will be important to bear in mind the JLP's relationship with the other documents in the planning system such as the NPPF and other national policy approaches, and regulatory requirements, as these may provide additional safeguards or mitigation of potentially significant negative effects.

Reasonable alternatives

11.10 The SA must appraise not only the preferred options for inclusion in the JLP Review but "reasonable alternatives" to these options. This implies that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to appraisal. Part (b) of Regulation 12(2) notes that reasonable alternatives will take into account the objectives of the JLP Review, as well as its geographical scope. Therefore, alternatives that do not meet the objectives of national policy, or are outside the plan area, are unlikely to be reasonable.

11.11 The objectives, policies and site allocations to be considered for inclusion within the JLP Review are in the process of being identified. The councils' reasons for selecting the alternatives to be included in the JLP Review will be reported at a later stage in the SA process.

Cumulative effects

11.12 The identification of cumulative effects will be addressed in three ways:

- Potential cumulative effects of proposed development in a particular location (e.g. the cumulative effects of more than one site being allocated at a certain village or town).
- The cumulative effects on each of the SA objectives of the JLP Review as a whole (i.e. of all the policies and site allocations in the JLP Review).
- The potential for cumulative effects of the JLP Review together with other planned developments, such as adopted or emerging Local Plans for neighbouring districts.

Chapter 12

Consultation and next steps

12.1 In order to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the views of the three statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) are being sought in relation to the scope and level of detail to be included in the SA Report.

12.2 The consultees are in particular requested to consider:

- Whether there are any additional plans, policies or programmes that are relevant to the SA that should be included.
- Whether the baseline information provided is robust and comprehensive and provides a suitable baseline for the SA of the JLP Review.
- Whether there are any additional key sustainability issues relevant to the plan area that should be included.
- Whether the SA framework (**Chapter 11**) is appropriate and includes a suitable set of SA objectives.

12.3 Responses from consultees will be reviewed and appropriate amendments made to the detail contained in the Scoping Report, including the baseline, policy context and SA framework where necessary. Any updates to this detail will be presented at the next stage of the SA for the JLP Review.

LUC
January 2026