

## BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Report of:** Cllr Gordon Bambridge, Executive Member for Growth

**To:** Local Plan Working Group – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Author:** Sarah Robertson, Senior Planning Policy Officer (Capita)

**Subject:** Historic Characterisation Study

**Purpose:** The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Historic Characterisation Study and agree for its inclusion as part of the Local Plans evidence base.

Recommendation(s):

- 1) That Members note the contents of this report and agree for it to be included as part of the Local Plans evidence base, including being published on the website.

### 1.0 **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that as part of the preferred sites and settlement boundaries consultation in September/October 2016, objections were received from Historic England regarding the lack of historic evidence to support the Local Plan. The historic characterisation study has been developed in response to these objections and is attached at Appendix A of this report.
- 1.2 Breckland has a rich historic environment which includes over 1500 listed buildings, 51 conservation areas, 127 scheduled monuments and 9 registered parks and gardens. The study has been designed to set out the policy framework in which the historic environment is considered and assesses how this has impacted upon the assessment of sites within the Local Plan.
- 1.3 The methodology has been agreed with Historic England prior to work being undertaken on site assessments. Historic England has advised that the methodology will provide an appropriate approach for site selection. The methodology has been developed to take into account three key stages:
  - Stage 1: Desktop assessment of sites
  - Stage 2: Site Survey
  - Stage 3: Evaluating Impact
- 1.4 All preferred and alternative sites identified within the September consultation have been assessed through this methodology. Following the initial assessment, site visits have also been undertaken for all sites. The assessment has also included a red amber green (RAG) rating for each of the sites, which indicate the following:
  - Green – Limited impact upon the historic environment
  - Amber – Local Plan policy for site will need to respond proactively to the requirements of the historic environment.
  - Red - Review allocation and consider its removal from the Local Plan

- 1.5 It should be noted that just because a site has scored green within the RAG rating, it does not mean that there is no impact upon the historic environment, it means that there is a lesser impact upon the historic environment. Planning applications will still need to demonstrate that there is a full understanding of the surrounding landscape/townscape. Furthermore, the design of a scheme will impact upon the level of impact a site has and its associated acceptability.
- 1.6 The following sites have received a red rating in relation to their impact upon the historic environment; therefore it is proposed to remove them from consideration for allocation within the Local Plan.

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Site Reference</b>	<b>Preferred/ Alternative</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Great Ellingham	LP[037]019	Preferred	Gateway site into Great Ellingham. Development is likely to have a high impact upon key views to the north, south and west
Kenninghall	LP[051]004	Alternative	To achieve access to the site it would require the removal of a non-designated heritage asset, which would impact upon the street scene.
	LP[051]008	Preferred	Site would have a high impact on the landscape. The site has views of west church street, which is elevated. West Church street contains significant numbers of listed buildings.
	LP[051]010	Alternative	Site would have a high impact on the landscape. It is a gateway location into Kenninghall. The site has views of west church street, which is elevated. West Church street contains significant numbers of listed buildings.
Litcham	LP[054]005B	Preferred	Site is adjacent to Litcham Hall which is grade II listed. It is also adjacent to the Litcham conservation area. The elevation of the site is higher than the existing built development and would be prominent in a gateway location into the village.
Mattishall	LP[061]015	Preferred	Site is in a prominent position within Mattishall surrounded by a number of designated heritage assets. Furthermore there are also non-designated heritage assets within the site. Development is likely to form harm to these heritage assets.
Old Buckenham	LP[074]006	Preferred	Gateway site into Old Buckenham which is likely to have a high impact upon key views into the village to the north and west.

- 1.7 In relation to the Local Plan, a number of these sites have previously been discussed in relation to deliverability constraints. Of the preferred sites, at the last LPWG it was discussed removing the allocation for Great Ellingham as the committed development had significantly exceeded the proposed allocation for the village. Therefore the removal of the site on historic character grounds. Similarly for Litcham, the preferred site also has a highways objections and the Council were therefore required to look at alternative options.

In Mattishall, the removal of site LP[061]015 was previously discussed, due to the increased housing numbers within the village means that the allocation would not be required. The two preferred allocations which have not previously been discussed are Kenninghall and Old Buckenham. The Council was previously unable to meet the housing requirement within Old Buckenham and the discussion of a policy based approach to meet the remaining housing numbers had previously been discussion. Site LP[074]006 was proposed to be designated for 10 dwellings, Historic England in their comments on the last consultation had raised significant concern that inadequate consideration of the historic environment made this site allocation unsound. It is considered that if this site is removed, the policy based approach could be extended to accommodate a further reduction in housing numbers.

- 1.8 One of the preferred sites in Kenninghall is also proposed for removal based on impact on the historic environment. Site LP[051]008 was proposed for 20 dwellings. Historic England in their comments on the last consultation had raised significant concern that inadequate consideration of the historic environment made this site allocation unsound. The removal of the site on the basis of impact on historic character would lead to an under allocation in Kenninghall in comparison to the housing target. It is proposed that a policy based approach for housing development would be a suitable approach within the Local Service Centre.

## 2.0 **OPTIONS**

- 2.1 There are two options available to Members:

- Option 1: Members resolve to endorse the Historic Characterisation Study as evidence base support the Local Plan and agree its publication on the Council's website.
- Option 2: Members do not resolve to endorse the Historic Characterisation Study.

## 3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members agree option 1 and endorse the historic characterisation study as evidence to support the Local Plan and agree its publication on the Councils website. The study provides robust evidence on the historic character of Breckland. It also responds directly to Historic England's objections to the preferred sites and settlement boundary consultation regarding lack of evidence.

## 4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

- 4.1 The expected benefit of endorsing this study is that it will provide a robust evidence base for the assessment of site allocations within the Local Plan. Furthermore, it will also help to alleviate Historic England's objections to the plan,

## 5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

### 5.1 **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

- 5.1.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications

### 5.2 **Constitution & Legal**

- 5.2.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.3 **Contracts**

5.3.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications

### 5.4 **Corporate Priorities**

5.4.1 The study supports the Local Plan. The Local Plan aligns with the following corporate priorities: Supporting Breckland to develop and thrive; providing the right services at the right time and in the right way; developing the local economy to be vibrant with continued growth and enabling stronger, more independent communities. The production also aligns with the priority of enabling effective planning and delivery of housing solutions to meet local needs.

### 5.5 **Crime and Disorder**

5.5.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.6 **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights**

5.6.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.7 **Financial**

5.7.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications

### 5.8 **Health & Wellbeing**

5.8.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.9 **Risk Management**

5.9.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications

### 5.10 **Safeguarding**

5.10.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.11 **Staffing**

5.11.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.12 **Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales**

5.12.1 The methodology for the study was agreed with Historic England prior to the assessment being undertaken.

## 6.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1 This report impacts upon all settlements which will be allocated growth through the Local Plan i.e. Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffham, Watton, Ashill, Banham, Bawdeswell, Garboldisham, Great Ellingham, Harling, Hockering, Kenninghall, Litcham, Mattishall, Narborough, Necton, North Elmham, Old Buckenham, Shipdham, Sporle and Swanton Morley.

## 7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 LPWG: Local Plan Working Group

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Background papers:- [See The Committee Report Guide](#)

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### **Lead Contact Officer**

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**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to a Mandatory Service**

### **Appendices attached to this report:**

Appendix A Historic Characterisation Study