

Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Joint Neighbourhood Plan (JNP)



Informal Consultation Draft

29th October 2016 – 30th November 2016

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- Housing Design
- Housing Density
- Enhancing Village Gateways and protecting local landscape character
- Integrating new development
- Historic Environment and Character
- Transport and Highway Safety
- Community facilities
- Employment
- Strategic Gaps

POLICIES FOR CROXTON

- Character Appraisal for Croxton
- Areas for Enhancement in Croxton

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PREFACE

This first draft Neighbourhood Plan for Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone has been prepared over the course of 2016 by the relevant two Parish Councils.

The Parish Councils have led on the preparation of the draft plan and it is hoped that the document reflects the community's vision and aspirations for the future of the parishes involved.

In order to create a draft Plan that represents the needs and aspirations of residents, the Parish Councils have drawn upon a number of sources including evidence gathered through the Parish Questionnaire in March 2015, consultation and open events and other research and analysis.

Working together the Parish Councils have completed the following stages:

- Initial back ground and Research – 2014-15
- Parish Questionnaire - March 2015 – August 2015
- Analysis of Questionnaire – December 2015
- Production of draft Plan – Spring 2016 to date
- Character Appraisal Survey Work – August-September 2016

An informal drop –in event is to be held on Saturday 29th October where local residents are invited to look at the work undertaken to date and make any comments upon it.

The Parish Councils are now seeking your views on the draft plan together with the 1st draft Character Appraisal which has helped to inform it. The consultation period will run from **29th October 2016 to 30th November 2016**. Comments should be made in writing and sent to: croxtonparish@gmail.com and clerk@brettenhamandkilverstonepc.co.uk

The draft Plan can be viewed at:

www.c-bandkjointplan.norfolkparishes.gov.uk

<http://croxtonpc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/>

<http://brettenham-and-kilverstonepc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/>

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All comments received will be taken onto account in producing a revised Plan for further consultation in Spring 2017.

Section 1: Introduction

The Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Joint Neighbourhood Plan (JNP) will provide the first ever statutory planning policy document specifically for those Parishes.

Once adopted, it will have the same weight as planning policy documents prepared by Breckland District Council (the Local Planning Authority) and; it is therefore a truly important landmark for these communities.

Neighbourhood Plans such as this were made possible by new community powers contained within the 2011 Localism Act. The Localism Act seeks to decentralise policy making to the local level and give more power to communities to shape where they live.

On a more practical level, higher level planning policy documents such as the Breckland Core Strategy (adopted in 2009) and the Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP), adopted in 2012, cannot feasibly deal with all of the issues particular to every town and village across Breckland; Neighbourhood Plans can, by providing additional details that reflect specific local circumstances and conditions.

The Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Joint Neighbourhood Plan provides a vision for the future of the parishes up to 2036; which reflects the intended lifespan of the emerging Breckland Local Plan.

This draft Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Joint Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies that any future development in the villages must take into account.

Alongside a vision and objectives, these draft policies have been developed over the last 18 months and we are now seeking the views of those who live or work in the villages and anyone else who may be interested in them.

This document is intended to be relatively short, clearly laid out and written in a way that is engaging and understandable to people who are not planning experts.

It contains a number of sections as follows:

- Life in Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone today
- A vision for the villages
- Themed Policies –
 - Housing Design
 - Housing Density
 - Village Gateways and Local Landscape Character

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- Integrating new development
- Historic Environment and Character
- Transport and Highway Safety
- Community Facilities
- Employment
- Strategic Gaps

Parish Specific Policies

- Croxton
 - Character Appraisal for Croxton
 - Areas for Enhancement in Croxton
 - Brettenham & Kilverstone
 - Kilverstone Alms Houses
 - Character Appraisal for Brettenham & Kilverstone
 - Areas for enhancement in Brettenham & Kilverstone
-
- Implementation and monitoring.

Figure 1: Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Joint Neighbourhood Plan (JNP) Area and extent of Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE)

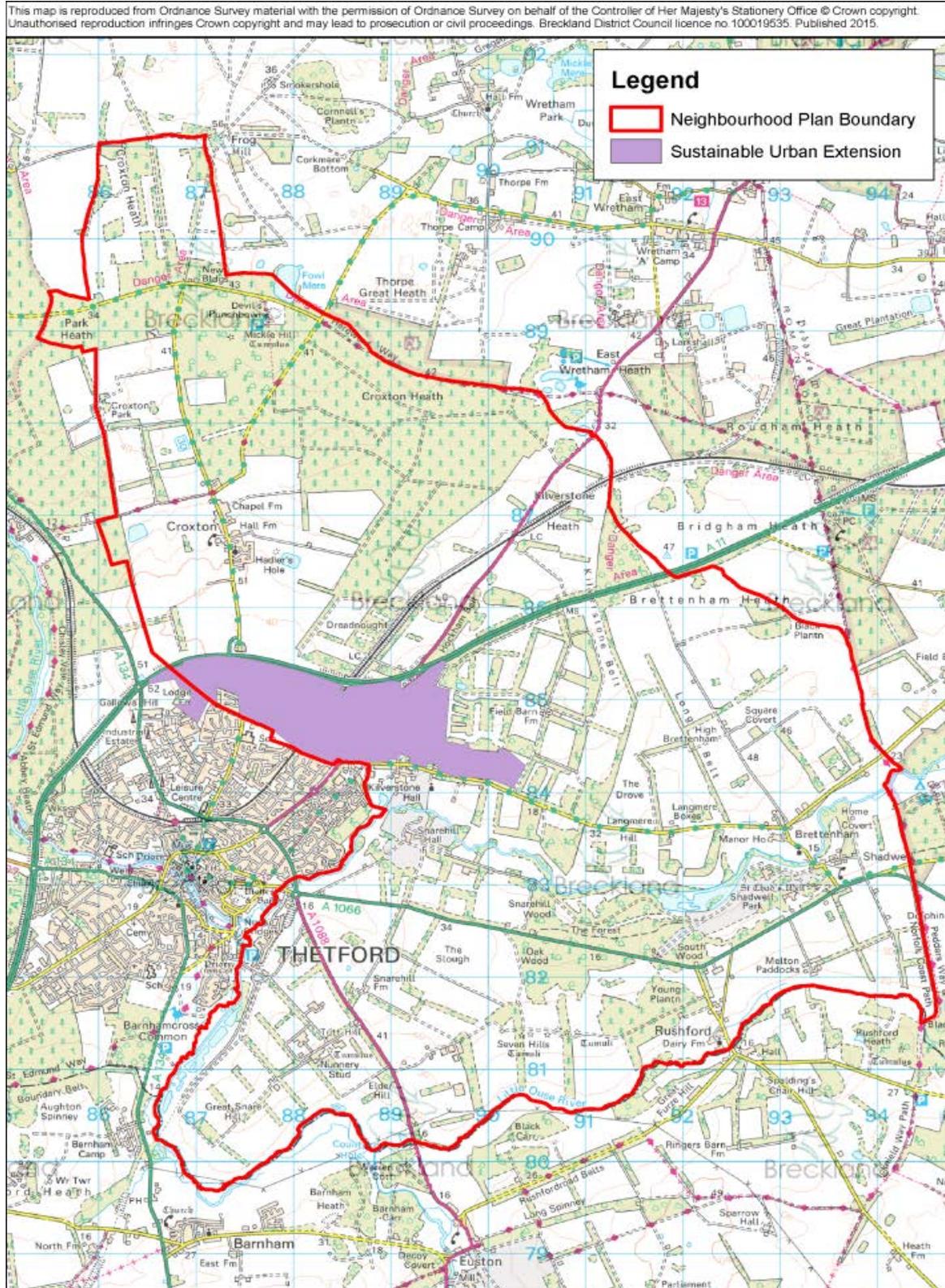


Figure 2 - Forest Ward

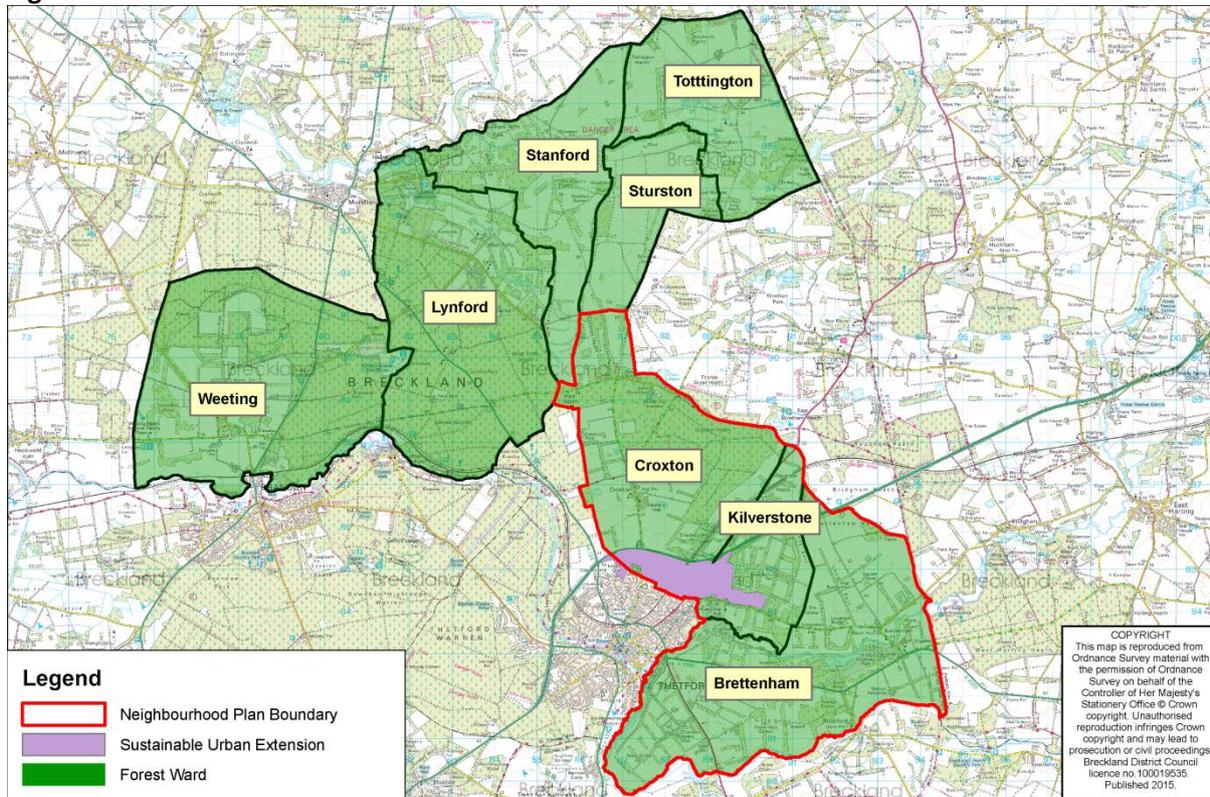
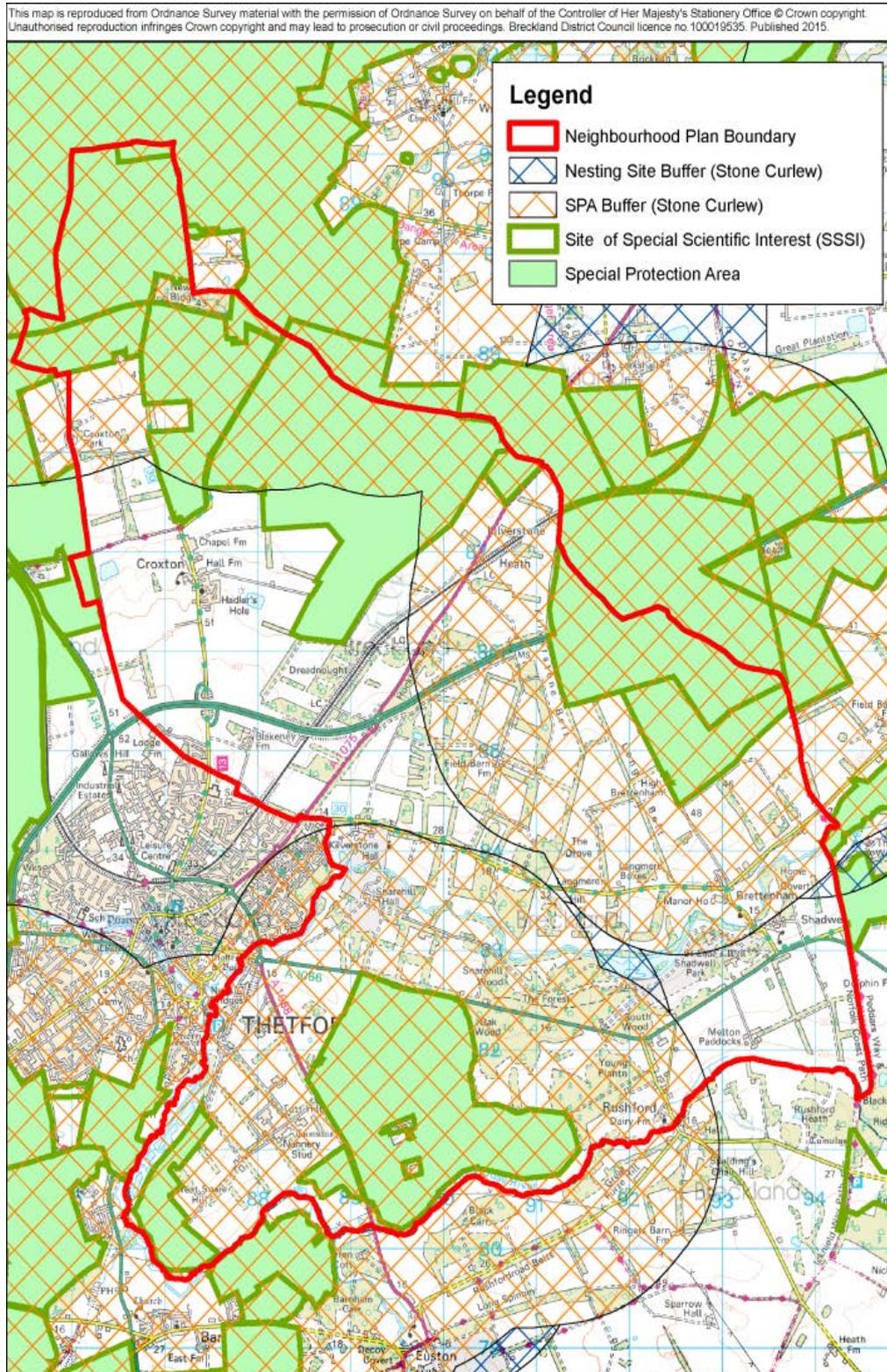


Figure 3 –Natural Environmental Information



Section 2: Life in Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone today

The Parishes of Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone comprise historic rural Norfolk villages located in the south of the Administrative District of Breckland close to the county boundary with Suffolk. Both are immediately adjacent to the ancient market town of Thetford, the fourth largest town in Norfolk.

The area is covered by a single District Council ward – “Forest”, “two Norfolk County Council divisions – “Guiltcross” and “The Brecks” and two separate dioceses which span two counties Norwich (Norfolk) and Ipswich and St Edmundsbury (Suffolk).

Croxton

The parish of Croxton is located in south west Norfolk, two miles north of Thetford and its outlook is to the north. Geographically the Parish also lies approximately 15 miles north of Bury St Edmunds and 30 miles south of Norwich, within the Forest Ward forming part of Breckland District Council area.

It includes a typical Breckland Village surrounded by open farmland and forestry - but with good access to Norwich and Cambridge.

From the highest point in the village, just above where the church stands, there is a considerable drop in ground level, map contour lines showing a drop of around 100 feet within a quarter of a mile down into the valley.

The village is a ‘linear’ settlement that has grown along The Street which in the past most likely originally grew along what was once a rural route-way north to Frog Hill and north-east via Hereward Way and Wyrley’s Belt (both now forming Wretham Road) to Wretham and onward to other towns and villages. The Street has not changed much in the past hundred years and still consists in main of a street with houses on either side - most having large gardens which have provided infill for house building.

The parish is largely rural farmland in nature having two main residential areas. The first is located at Croxton village which has a largely linear historic core with the later addition of three cul de sacs – Earl Warren, All Saints Court and Church Avenue and one larger estate at Harefield Road during the last 40 years.

There is also another residential area at Hill House Lane/Heathlands Drive which immediately adjoins the built up area of Thetford and is physically divorced from the original village by the A11 Trunk Road (Norwich to London) creating two very distinct settlement areas outlined above in addition to scattered smaller farm/residential locations.

Croxton village is predominantly defined as a conservation area and has a number of listed buildings and structures, the largest of these being All Saints Church, parts of which experts believe date back to 800 – 900 AD.

The Conservation Area was designated in 1974 but there is no recent Conservation Area Appraisal or Management Plan in place.

Croxton currently has a settlement boundary as defined by the 2012 Adopted Site Specifics Policies and Proposal Development Plan DPD. The Residents' Questionnaire revealed a strong feeling from local residents for that settlement boundary to remain unaltered.

However the recent consultation on the emerging Breckland District Local Plan, specifically the most recent consultation on the Interim Local Plan (October 2016), it is proposed by Breckland Council to remove the settlement boundary. The consultation and explanation can be found here:

http://consult.breckland.gov.uk/portal/planningpolicy/local_plan_preferred_sites_and_settlement_boundary/interim_consultation?pointId=s1454929553686

It is the Breckland Local Plan as the higher tier plan that determines the development strategy for the District as a whole. Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in conformity with Local Plans and it is not within the remit of this Joint Neighbourhood Plan to identify, remove, amend or alter settlement boundaries.

Brettenham & Kilverstone

The parishes of Brettenham & Kilverstone consist of the hamlets of Brettenham, Kilverstone and Rushford and surrounding communities with the addition of the residents at Arlington Way (which similarly to Hill House Lane/Heathlands Drive in Croxton is also adjacent to the built up area of Thetford)

The area is largely rural area and lies within the "The Brecks" landscape bordering Thetford to the west and the County of Suffolk to the south.

Brettenham is a rural Norfolk village bordering the Little Ouse River to the south and Thetford to the west. To the east are the parishes of Riddlesworth, to its north Bridgham. Bridgham also has a village at its centre and the town of East Harling is some 2 miles further east. Kilverstone also borders Thetford and lies to the north of Brettenham and is surrounded by Brettenham to its east and south.

The 2 parishes form a single Parish Council and lie in the Breckland District Forest Ward and Guiltcross Division of Norfolk County Council.

There are 3 small settlements in the 2 parishes, one in the south east of Kilverstone, one called Rushford, where there was a ford through the rushes to cross the Little Ouse River,

and one in the middle of Brettenham. The area known as Arlington Way is relatively modern development from early 1990s and whilst clearly falling within the Parish also falls within the settlement boundary of Thetford.

The landscape and cultural importance of the “Breck” landscape which gives Breckland its name and within which all parishes sit is recognised by its designation as an Area of Special Protection (Policy ENV.1 of the Breckland District Local Plan) – Area of Important Landscape Quality.

Living in in the Parishes of Croxton, Brettenham & Kilverstone Today

Living in Croxton

Croxton is a thriving active parish with community facilities provided by All Saints Church, a Village Hall, Playing field and Play Area with outdoor play equipment, an RNA Club plus a number of separately organised Activity Groups. The Village Hall Committee also organise a number of events throughout the year.

There is also a very well used Post Office facility with a small retail shop outlet. The Post Office serves surrounding areas including Wretham which has no postal facility. Some Thetford residents also use the Croxton facility for reasons of convenience.

Under the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) around 3,000 - 3,500 new homes are planned to be built in Croxton under the adopted Thetford area Action Plan (TAAP) and it is envisaged that new community facilities will also be required within the SUE in line with the approved Section 106.

The population of the Parish today is around 350 of which 99 live at Hill House/Heathlands Drive. Residents are well educated with more than half being retired.

Living in Brettenham & Kilverstone

The history of the parishes stretch back to the early thirteenth century village and life has remained rural over the intervening period. The land supports agricultural, crops and livestock, managed by large estates. Latterly, Brettenham has also hosted horse breeding and training. There are only 2 retail outlets, both in Kilverstone, a supermarket and garden centre.

Apart from the 3 [Anglican] churches, there are no public or community facilities in the parishes, although it is hoped to develop some such as public open space and a community centre as part of the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), which will see 2,200 new homes built in Kilverstone under the adopted Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP). At present, there are no schools in this area, although the TAAP envisages 3 primary and 1 secondary schools in the SUE, as well as other supporting infrastructure.

The population of the 2 parishes is some 330, 280 in Brettenham and 50 in Kilverstone. There are 195 residents at Arlington Way and 28 in Rushford.

Working in Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone today

Working in Croxton

With over half the population retired, there is little identifiable industry or commerce within Croxton Parish itself. The Crown Estate are a major landowner and the land is famed as one holding with a single There is one rural business located at Croxton Park to the north of the main village – Saalex River and Wetland Services who have their sales and accounts offices located in Norfolk with the parent company based in Wales.

In addition there are a Post Office and Shop, and Wayside Mews Collectibles located in The Flint Barn, specialising in Ephemera dating from the 15th century to 1950's.

To the north of the Parish sits the MOD Stanford Training Area (STANTA) which contains Bodney Camp. The local headquarters of the Defence Estates is located here and does offer some civilian opportunities although how much of this is taken by Croxton residents is unknown.

Working in Brettenham & Kilverstone

Residents are a mix of those who are retired, work on the estates, and work out of the area or week end commute.

The local economy is dominated by the two large estates – The Kilverstone Estate to the north, and The Shadwell Estate to the south. Both estates have a mixture of arable and sheep and cattle, however Shadwell forms part of a larger horse breeding and training enterprise with an international reputation

There are unsurprisingly a number of estate properties which house Estate workers employed in agriculture and associated industries or in the horse training or breeding business which is a key component of the Shadwell Estate.

Getting around Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone

Getting around Croxton

Getting around in Croxton is predominantly by the private car. There is excellent access to the A11 trunk road which is now dualled between London and Norwich making access to Cambridge and the midlands via the A14 also an easy travelling option.

There is also easy access to Thetford railway station which is on the main Norwich to Cambridge line but with easy connections to the midlands and the north via Peterborough or to London

The Street and surrounding rural roads suffer from both motorists using excessive speed, particularly through the village, which, together with large and heavy commercial and agricultural vehicles, are using the route through the village to avoid the roundabout at the A134 / A11 Thetford bypass, especially at peak traffic times.

There are few paved footpaths outside of the main residential areas; however National Cycle Route 30 does pass through the village.

There is one bus route which - a one bus 5 day service from Watton passing through Croxton.

Getting Around Brettenham & Kilverstone

Travel in the 2 parishes is predominantly by car through narrow country roads before onward travel to Thetford, Norwich, Cambridge and beyond. These local roads suffer from both motorists using excessive speed, particularly through Rushford (C147) and large and heavy commercial and agricultural vehicles, much larger than those for which they were made. There are no bus routes in the 2 parishes.

However, the 2 parishes are served by Thetford station on the Norwich to Cambridge railway line and relatively easy access beyond (including midlands and London). Diss station lies some 14 miles to the east and links Norwich with Liverpool Street in London.

The parishes enjoy close proximity to the recently fully dualled A11 trunk road to the west, which links London and Norwich with spurs to Stansted Airport and Cambridge. Brettenham is dissected by the east/west Thetford to Diss road, the A1066, and the north/south A1088, linking Thetford with Bury St Edmunds.

The physical environment of Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone

Croxton

Despite its proximity to Bury St Edmunds and Thetford, the parish remains rural with a village surrounded on all sides by a mixture of agricultural land (arable and pasture).

The land around the village is all part of a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme - protecting hedges, trees and fauna and providing uncropped areas for birds and a variety of insects - bees, beetles and the area falls within the protected Brecks landscape

The value and importance of the core village is recognised through the designation of Conservation Area in 1974 and there are a number of buildings within the parish as a whole which are nationally listed. These include:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Chapel Farm Barn | 18th century |
| Chapel Farmhouse | 18th century |
| Wall south from Chapel Farmhouse | 18th century (mid) |
| House 50yds south (Croxtan Lodge) | 18th & 19th century |
| Cottages No's 14, 16, & 18. | 19th century |
| Hall Farm House | 18th century |
| Hill Farm House | 18th century |
| Church Cottage | 17th century |
| Church of All Saints | 12th - 15th century |

Brettenham & Kilverstone

Brettenham remains a rural parish surrounded on all sides by a mixture of agricultural land (arable and pasture). The 2 parishes have successfully embraced the new homes in Arlington Way and look to integrate the new homes due to be built in the north of the parishes.

In addition to the agricultural land, there is heathland to the south [Knettishall Heath] and forest [Thetford Forest] nearby. North Brettenham has a nature reserve which is bordered by the A11, the other side of which is Ministry of Defence training land.

The southern border of Brettenham is the Little Ouse and the river Thet runs east west through the middle of the parish with some large lakes alongside the Little Ouse (Nunnery Lakes).

Despite there being no Conservation Area designation the historic fabric of the parishes is rich. There are a number of notable, large country houses attached to the estates – Kilverstone Hall (Grade 2) on the Kilverstone Estate; Shadwell Court (Grade 1) and Snare Hill Hall (Grade 2) on the Shadwell Estate as well as Rushford Hall (Grade 2) on the Rushford Estate to the south of the Little Ouse river in Suffolk).

There are 3 churches in the 2 parishes, one at Brettenham, one at Kilverstone and one at Rushford. The latter is not a parish church as it was built in 1230 by Edward Gonville as a Collegiate Church with a college attached. The 2 parishes lie in the Diocese of Norwich but

lie next to the Diocese of Ipswich and Edmundsbury, to the south just across the Little Ouse River .

This high quality historic environment of all three parishes is a key aspect that is cherished by existing residents and this coupled with the nationally recognised landscape value of the surrounding countryside makes a compelling case for residents to undertake their own survey work appraising in detail the character of the area the aim of informing and developing the policies found in later chapters of this plan.

Section 3: A vision for the parishes

The Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Joint Neighbourhood Plan has been steered by the two Parish Councils who consider it important that the Joint Neighbourhood Plan contains a short and simple vision statement that sums up the community's aim for the future of the three Parishes.

The statement below has therefore been developed as a preliminary idea and through consultation with local people it is hoped will be refined and adapted and lead to a final vision statement which captures the overarching spirit and ambition of the local communities and the Joint Neighbourhood Plan.

Vision

Our vision for Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone is that the “predominantly rural” and tranquil character of the parishes will be to be preserved and maintained. This character should be acknowledged through any form of new development within the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) with the adoption of appropriate building styles, choice of local materials, appropriate densities and levels of green infrastructure which reflect and enhance the local character and ensure maximum integration between new and existing communities.

Objectives

To accompany the vision the Parish Councils have prepared and tested a number of more detailed objectives.

These objectives are designed to address issues identified as specific to Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone and have provided a basis for the development of the draft policies set out in the Themed Policies and Parish Specific Policies section.

Housing:

- To ensure the design of any new development is of a high standard and which preserves and enhances the distinctive rural form, character and setting of the area
- To ensure that new development respects the local vernacular in terms of its scale, density, building style and choice of local materials
- To ensure that local housing needs within the parishes can be met locally

- To acknowledge that the Strategic Housing needs of the area will be met by the SUE

Environment:

- To protect and enhance existing open spaces, important views, heritage and wildlife areas in and around the villages
- To protect and enhance local distinctiveness in the built heritage and natural environment and to protect the setting of locally important heritage assets
- To maintain the important undeveloped landscape break between Croxton village and the A11
- To protect the rural character of the existing gateways and approaches to the villages.
 - Protect the 2 strategic gaps identified

Community Facilities

- To acknowledge that the increase in population arising from the SUE will drive the need for additional primary care, education and social facilities which the SUE will need to accommodate and which the existing communities can share.
- Support opportunities for new open space and play provision and also the enhancement of existing open space and play facilities.

Transport and Highways Safety

- To improve pedestrian and cycle links between the villages and the surrounding countryside including the Brecks
- To improve conditions for walking and cycling around and through the villages and where possible increase opportunities for the use of public transport.

Economy

- To support the potential for small businesses to start up and/or to expand

- To acknowledge that the strategic economic needs of the area will be met by the development of the new community within the SUE

Section 4 Draft Policies

This chapter contains policies that relate to both parishes e.g. Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone – these are referred to as thematic policies and are numbered JNP1- 9.

In addition there are policies that are specific to one or other of the Parishes – these are numbered JNP 10-14.

Thematic Policies applying to both Parishes

| Policy Number | Policy Area | Notes |
|---------------|---|---|
| JNP1 | Housing Design and Materials | Generic Policy |
| JNP2 | Housing Density | Generic Policy |
| JNP3 | Enhancing village gateways and protecting local landscape character | Generic Policy (informed by Character Appraisal Work) |
| JNP4 | Integrating new development within the SUE (Sustainable Urban Extension) with the existing development in the parish. | Generic Policy |
| JNP5 | Historic Environment and Character | Generic Policy (informed by Character Appraisal Work) |
| JNP6 | Transport and Highways Safety | Generic |
| JNP7 | Community Facilities | Generic (however if something parish specific could go in the Parish chapter) |
| JNP8 | Employment | Generic |
| JNP9 | Strategic Gaps | Generic (informed by Conservation Area Appraisal Work) |
| JNP10 | Character Appraisal for Croxton | Croxton (informed by Conservation Area Appraisal Work) |

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| JNP11 | Areas for Enhancement in Croxton | Croxton(informed by Character Appraisal Work) |
| JNP12 | Brettenham and Kilverstone Alms Houses | Brettenham & Kilverstone |
| JNP13 | Character Appraisal for Brettenham and Kilverstone | Brettenham & Kilverstone (informed by Character Appraisal Work) |
| JNP14 | Areas for enhancement in Brettenham and Kilverstone | Brettenham& Kilverstone (informed by Character Appraisal Work) |

Housing Design and Materials

POLICY JNP1:

Any new development will need to reflect the existing form and structure of the relevant settlement, respecting the planning policies of the local planning authority. It will also need to reflect and complement the rural character and cultural history of the area.

New buildings should respect the vernacular design of existing buildings in the parish, and should allow adequate space between buildings to retain the form and character of the parish.

The design of new residential development both within and outside of the SUE (Sustainable Urban Extension) should deliver high quality design and not adversely impact on the essentially rural character and appearance of the parish.

Any new dwelling, redevelopment or extension to a dwelling should be carefully designed to avoid conflicting with adjacent properties or landscape and should help to maintain the rural character of the village and parish.

To achieve this:

Development proposals should have careful regard to the height, layout, building line, massing and scale of existing development in the immediate area;

- **Rear gardens should be at least equal to the ground floor footprint of the dwelling;**
- **Residents should be able to access the rear garden without going through the house;**
- **Sufficient external space should be provided to enable refuse, recycling and compost to be stored out-of-sight. There should also be sufficient storage space for items commonly stored in garages;**
- **The use of traditional materials common in the parish (as identified in the Character Appraisal work), especially those sourced locally and of low ecological/ environmental impact, will be encouraged;**
- **Where possible, existing natural features such as trees or hedgerows should be retained, unless their removal results in an ecological gain or an improvement to green open space or important views.**

A mix of designs and styles design variety within the SUE is essential but it must reflect the prevalent design and detailing of buildings within the parish (as identified in the Character Appraisal) and respect the spatial, visual and historical context of the parish.

Reasoned justification

One of the most common concerns arising from the responses to the JNP residents' questionnaire was in response to the question about the importance of sympathetic development. The overwhelming response from those residents that responded was that this was a very important issue.

Whilst in the last 10 years Brettenham and Kilverstone have seen very little in the way of new development, the development of the Bennett Homes site in Croxton has been one of the most controversial developments seen in the village for some time, with the issue of design and how it "fits in" with the remaining character of the village being one of the key concerns of local residents.

In addition Croxton Village is now experiencing a drainage issue in The Street which questions if the existing drainage system is fit for purpose" as some 5 'developments' have been built since 1950's up to and including the latest development at All Saints Court.

Residents expressed concern at the scale of proposed development and densities/closeness/lack of space/plot size and a general concern about creating a "commuter/dormitory situation"

The issue of design and the need to preserve the existing character of the villages is high on the agenda of both Parish Councils and the importance they attach to this issue is reflected in the Vision and Objectives set out in Section 3 of this Plan.

To ensure that the importance attached by the local community to this issue was embedded in the plan and that there was a strong design led emphasis both Parishes have sought to underpin the policies in this plan by good evidence. They have considered the best way to fulfil this was to undertake a Character Appraisal of both Parishes following English Heritage (now Historic England) guidance and drawing on best practice picked up from other Neighbourhood Plans. It is anticipated that this Character Appraisal survey work will provide good evidence to justify the policies in this plan and the Character Appraisal work will also be the subject of public consultation at the same times as the draft JNP Policies.

This policy will apply to both development inside and outside of the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) and also to single dwellings or extensions.

Housing Density

POLICY JNP2 – HOUSING DENSITY

New residential development should have a density that is consistent and compatible with the existing prevailing density in the immediate area (as identified in the Character Appraisal) in order to reflect the local character and appearance.

Higher densities may be acceptable within the central areas of the SUE but it will be expected that there would be a gradual decrease in density at the edges of a proposed development where the character becomes more rural and closer to existing rural development.

Reasoned justification

As stated in Policy JNP1 above the design of new housing development is considered to be of high importance to residents of both parishes. It is acknowledged that the majority of new housing development likely to come forward in the parishes will be in the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) and that this has outline permission granted under 3PL/ 2011/0805/O. It is well documented in responses to the consultation on the planning application and previously on the production of the Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP) that local residents have long held concerns about the potential to successfully integrate the new development with that in the existing villages without creating two very different communities. Therefore notwithstanding the approved density and phasing plan, any opportunity for the density of the new development to either in full or in part more closely resemble that of the existing settlements should be examined carefully.

Enhancing village gateways and protecting local landscape character

POLICY JNP3: Enhancing village gateways and protecting local landscape character

The visual and scenic value of the landscape and countryside surrounding the parish will be protected from development that may adversely affect this character, with particular consideration given to the more sensitive areas and features such as those considered to be typical of the Brecks area.

Undeveloped gaps between settlements or parts of a settlement which contribute to the character of the area will also be protected. (See Policy JNP9- Strategic Gaps)

Proposals that will enhance the visual appearance of an approach or “gateway” to a village (or part thereof) will be supported and opportunities to improve the public realm in these areas through the use of appropriate hard or soft landscaping measures will be encouraged.

Any hedgerow lost as a result of proposed development will be expected to be compensated elsewhere within the site, if possible, or elsewhere in the vicinity.

Proposals that would lead to the enhancement of ecological network will be encouraged, particularly where they would further support the management of the designated sites and improve habitat connectivity.

Reasoned justification

The residents’ questionnaire gave a good indication of the value attached by residents to their local landscape. The need to protect existing landscape features including trees, hedgerows, and rural footpaths was considered to be important. Many respondents indicated that this high quality landscape was a major contributory factor in their decision to live in the parishes

The landscape surrounding the parishes is typical of the Brecks and is already designated as an Area Of important Landscape Quality in the Adopted Breckland Core Strategy 2009, which offers it the highest degree of landscape protection outside of the nationally designated landscapes. However it has been felt by residents of both Parishes that there are opportunities to further enhance local landscape quality through improvements to the

approaches to the villages and these have been identified as key gateways. The relevant Character Appraisals identify where specific enhancements would be most beneficial.

Integrating new development within the SUE (Sustainable Urban Extension) with the existing development in the parish.

Policy JNP4: Integrating new development within the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) with the existing development in the parish.

In order to maximise the integration of new and existing development, new development within the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) should be designed to reflect the character, form, style and materials of the parish as identified in the relevant Character Appraisal.

New developments within the SUE should respect the rural nature of the village and where possible urban-style elements should be discouraged.

In particular, developments should ensure that housing proposals respect the rural nature with regard for the following:

- Density should reflect that of neighbouring housing within the vicinity of the proposal, (see Policy JNP2);
- Use of native species soft landscaping to provide new habitats for local wildlife, particularly along frontages;
And
- Use of materials that reflect and respect the local vernacular.

The JNP seeks to ensure that house builders design inclusive and mixed communities that reflect the physical characteristics of the parishes and support integration and cohesion between new and existing communities, by making sure affordable housing is well integrated with the market housing, that housing is sympathetically designed to reflect the local context and that proposed developments include opportunities for people to meet formally and informally

Encouragement will be given for developers to consult meaningfully and engage with the local communities as development proposals are progressed to show how the views of the local community have been taken into account in any subsequent planning applications.

Reasoned justification

The Residents' questionnaire highlighted that one of the key concerns to the local community is how the large scale proposed development within the SUE can be successfully integrated with the existing communities not just in terms of its built form but also in terms of the social integration with the community as a whole.

Concerns expressed include the fear of the SUE becoming a "concrete jungle" that it would lead to "a loss of rural communities" or lead to "urban sprawl".

Whilst it is acknowledged that the guiding principles of the SUE development have been established through the grant of planning permission for 3PL/2011/0805/O and the associated Section 106, there is still much in the way of finer details of the SUE that has still to be finalised and therefore there is opportunity through this JNP to influence those reserved matters and subsequent applications.

This policy seeks to address those concerns through requiring developers to focus on producing mixed communities, to ensure that development is attractive to new and existing residents and to actively reflect the need for existing communities to influence the later phases of the SUE development.

Historic Environment and character

Policy JNP 5 – Historic Environment and Character

New development in the parish in close proximity to designated or undesignated heritage assets should take account of the historic fabric of the area and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Croxton Conservation Area, the Listed Buildings, protected trees and/or other heritage assets as identified in the relevant Character Appraisal.

In order to achieve this, a “Heritage Statement” shall be provided in support of all development proposals within or adjacent to the Croxton Conservation Area, Listed Buildings or other designated or undesignated heritage assets. Such Heritage Statements should outline the significance of any heritage assets affected and any adverse impacts that the development may have on heritage assets. It shall also include any proposed mitigation measures, as well as how the proposed development will contribute to the character and setting of the relevant heritage asset and the wider parish.

Reasoned Justification

The Character Appraisal work has highlighted the wealth of designated and undesignated heritage assets that are contained within both parishes. It has also highlighted that in the main these heritage assets are in a good condition and that they are valued by the local community for the contribution they make to the historic fabric of the settlements and the overall rural character.

This policy seeks to ensure that these designated and undesignated assets remain in good condition and that they are protected from forms of development that might erode their historic or cultural value. The policy requires the submission of a Heritage Statement which will ensure that the proposers of any development likely to affect a designated or undesignated heritage asset have adequately considered these impacts and have sought to remove or reduce them.

The Character Appraisal survey work has sought to identify a range of “heritage” assets of cultural or historical, environmental and community value which include listed buildings, unlisted buildings, walls, other structure, important undeveloped spaces, trees with an amenity or visual value and significant hedgerows which this policy will seek to protect.

Transport and Highway Safety

POLICY JNP 6: Transport and Highway Safety

Development will be expected to ensure that there is no detriment to highway safety and, where possible, help to reduce existing risks.

New footpaths should form part of a coherent network and aim to encourage pedestrian alternatives to using through roads.

Proposals that include measures to enable improved levels of walking and cycling by residents will be considered favourably.

Any adverse impacts arising from the residual traffic generated should be mitigated where this is viable and of a scale that is commensurate with the development.

New development should be designed to ensure that it avoids the risks of creating “rat runs” or adding to traffic movements or speeding on rural roads elsewhere in the parish.

Development proposals should include a statement as part of the application that sets out and demonstrates how the new development will either not add to increased traffic flows, or risks to highway safety or how any increase will be minimised and its adverse effects mitigated to ensure that no parish roads become ‘rat-runs’.

Reasoned justification

Residents raised a number of traffic and transport related concerns in the residents’ questionnaire. These included concerns over traffic volumes and speed on the A1088 and A1066, speeding through both Croxton and Rushford, volumes of traffic between Brettenham and Kilverstone (associated with the Tesco’s Retail Superstore), military vehicles travelling through Croxton, HGV traffic using inappropriate rural roads and a lack of safe pedestrian routes and footpaths.

Whilst concerns were also raised about a lack of public transport in both parishes, there was also an acceptance that new bus routes would probably be unviable. There was some support for the development of new cycling routes provided that they were safe and easy to use and there was some support for a dedicated cycle link between Croxton Village and Thetford.

This policy seeks to ensure that new development does not exacerbate existing traffic problems but also take opportunities to solve them where reasonably practicable.

Community Facilities

Policy JNP7: Community Facilities

Existing Facilities

Proposals for change of use involving a potential loss of existing facilities, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- An improved or equivalent facility can be satisfactorily relocated to elsewhere in the village; or
- Adequate other facilities of the same service offering exist within a reasonable walking distance of the majority of residents to meet local needs; or
- There is no reasonable prospect of continued viable use and this can be demonstrated through:
 - a) Twelve months of marketing for the permitted and similar uses, using an appropriate agent; and
 - b) Confirmation that it has been offered on a range of terms (including price) agreed to be reasonable on the advice of an independent qualified assessor.

New Facilities

Where, as a result of a new development both inside the SUE, or outside, there is the facility for funds to be provided by the developer for the local community, whether through S106, Community Infrastructure Levy or other arrangements the community should be consulted on its priorities for spending that money.

The design of new community facilities in the SUE should reflect local materials and styles and be designed in such a way as to ensure full integration into the existing landscape and village character. Facilities should be designed to be attractive and available to new and existing residents both inside and outside of the SUE.

Reasoned justification

The Section 106 associated with the permission granted under 3PL/2011/0805/O refers to a number of community facilities to be provided as part of the overall SUE development.

These are:

- 2 Community Centres (1 to include a Surgery and Place of Worship)
- 3 Primary Schools
- 1 Secondary School
- Primary Care Facilities
- Strategic Open Space
- Local Open Space

There are other contributions identified in the S106 however these relate to development outside the spatial area covered by this JNP.

This policy seeks to ensure that existing community facilities are protected from development that may result in their loss or erode their community value or viability but also seeks to ensure that the new community facilities are designed to maximise their value not only to their new and emerging communities but also to existing residents.

In addition responses to the residents' questionnaire highlighted the following as important priorities for the community in terms of new facilities:

- Sports facilities – running track, bowling green, rugby/cricket pitches, tennis courts
- Playing fields and play areas
- Informal open spaces for relaxing and dog walking
- Allotments

Employment

POLICY JNP8: Employment

Existing sites in current employment use will be protected and proposals that result in their retention including small scale extensions will be supported provided they are appropriate for a rural area and do not have an adverse impact upon the rural character of the area, or the amenity of local residents either through their built form, proposed use or traffic generated.

New small scale employment uses appropriate to a rural area will be encouraged, especially those that contribute to the social fabric of the parish, provided they do not impact on the character of the area or the amenity of residents.

Reasoned justification

The residents' questionnaire also highlighted that local communities have concerns over whether there are enough jobs to be provided as part of the SUE development to accommodate the needs of the proposed new residents.

There is support for job creation, for new small businesses and for extensions to existing employment sites but concerns were raised that the amenity of existing residents should be taken into account when considering locations for new business growth both in terms of traffic generation but also noise and light pollution.

Strategic Gaps

POLICY JNP 9: “Strategic Gaps”

The visual and scenic character of the attractive countryside within the parishes will be protected from development that would have an adverse impact on the important landscape quality of the Brecks landscape.

Particular consideration will be given to protecting undeveloped areas between settlements or parts thereof – these are identified as “Strategic Gaps” on MAP X and in the relevant Character Appraisals

The objective of this policy, within the Joint Neighbourhood Plan Area, is to direct development in such a way as to respect the definition and separate characters of the settlements of Croxton, Brettenham, Kilverstone and Rushford and the neighbouring settlement of Thetford.

- **South of Croxton Village between the village and the A11 by-pass – Strategic Gap 1**
- **Between Kilverstone and Brettenham (north and south of the C148 Brettenham to Kilverstone Road) – Strategic Gap 2**

See Map X

In order to:

- **Respect the separate character and identity of settlements (and or parts of the settlement) including their setting;**
- **Support and enhance the predominantly open and undeveloped character of the landscape within these gaps;**
- **To protect and enhance the environmental importance of the Brecks landscape, its flora, fauna and landscape character and**
- **To prevent coalescence of settlements**

Within the Gaps approval will only be given for the construction of new buildings or the change of use of existing buildings or land provided that it does not:

- **Result in erosion of the physical gaps between built up areas; or**
- **Adversely affect the visual character or scenic beauty of the landscape,**

Development will only be permitted if it individually or cumulatively does not result in the actual or perceived coalescence of settlements (or parts of a settlement), including through:

- **visual intrusion which reduces the openness and ‘break’ between the settlements; and,**
- **a significant increase of activity which has an urbanising effect on the area.**

Reasoned Justification

A consistent concern raised by local residents of both parishes about the large scale growth proposed in the SUE has been the landscape impact of new growth on the outskirts on Thetford and that it might lead to the coalescence of Thetford with the surrounding villages and the subsequent loss of this rural identity, tranquillity and character.

In responding to the questionnaire, the planning application and the development of the Breckland Core Strategy and the Thetford Area Action Plan residents have strongly expressed the view that no further development should be considered north of the A11 by pass as this would lead directly to the loss of the separate character and identity of the existing rural communities.

Similar concerns have been voiced in Brettenham and Kilverstone in relation to the loss of rural identity of the various settlements within the parish.

This policy builds on the work of the Character Appraisal and introduces the concept of Strategic Gaps which will be protected from development, to reinforce the distinctiveness of the rural settlements and prevent their loss of rural identity and prevent settlement coalescence

Parish Specific Policies

Croxton Character Appraisal

Policy JNP10: Croxton Character Appraisal

The Character Appraisal for Croxton has identified the following as important and distinctive materials and details that contribute to the overall character and local distinctiveness of the village:

- Flint construction/finish
- Slate or pantiled roofs
- Gault brick details or brick dressings

In accordance with JNP1 new built development of any scale or use should seek to incorporate these important characteristic details within the design of the scheme

In addition the Croxton Character appraisal has identified the following unlisted building as having making an important historic, cultural, environmental or community contribution the character of Croxton and these will be treated as undesignated heritage assets in accordance with Policy JNP5:

- The Vicarage
- Methodist Chapel
- Village Shop and Post Office
- The School House
- The Old Bell House
- The Royal Naval Association Club
- Hill Rise Cottages

The Parish Council will strongly encourage Breckland Council to positively consider the preparation of a Local List for Croxton which includes these buildings.

Reasoned Justification

The Croxton Character Appraisal has identified a number of buildings that are considered to have value to the community in terms of their historic, environmental, cultural or community contribution to the character of the village, which are not currently designated heritage assets. None feature on the national list however, it is felt that there is merit in pressing Breckland Council to consider the production of a Local List for Croxton - using the character appraisal work as justification to ensure their retention and longevity and to give them “designated heritage asset” protection.

Croxton – Areas for Enhancement

Policy JNP11: Areas for Enhancement in Croxton

The Character Appraisal for Croxton identifies the following areas as potential opportunities for enhancement:

- **The Approach to Croxton village from the south**
- **The Vicarage**

Proposals that would result in a positive visual, environmental or historic enhancement to the above areas will be supported provided that they are of a suitable scale and design and do not detract from the overall character of the area and are consistent with other policies with this JNP

Reasoned Justification

The Character Appraisal identifies two areas for potential enhancement. These are the approach to Croxton village from the south where the landscape rises up and is the most important and prominent entrance to the village and the other is the Vicarage, located close to this gateway which is currently in a poor state of repair.

There have been planning proposals in the past to subdivide the curtilage into an additional four residential plots. The preferred option would be for the Vicarage to be suitably renovated and repaired but without the need for any form of additional curtilage development. However, there is a recognition that the costs of this may need to be found through some form of enabling development. The level of enabling development should be kept to the minimum required to fully secure the retention and restoration of the Vicarage without detriment to its character and setting and without detriment to the appearance of this important building. The previously proposed 4 new dwellings that were dismissed on appeal are considered to be well in excess of what would be required to fund the restoration but also would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area

Opportunities for enhancing the visual appearance of these areas will be sought and proposals that achieve this suitable enhancement will be supported provided that they are consistent with other policies of this plan.

Kilverstone Alms Houses

POLICY JNP12: Kilverstone Alms Houses

The re-development of the existing Kilverstone Alms Houses will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the existing Alms Houses are no longer viable in their current form and are beyond economic repair and that this is supported by an independent viability assessor. New development on this site will only be permitted for affordable units only.

Proposals for redeveloping the site, including demolition will be allowed, subject to meeting the relevant policies of the local planning authority and would need to satisfy all of the following criteria:

There will be no net loss of accommodation available

The redevelopment would enhance, the form, character and setting of this part of the village and there will be no adverse impact upon the village as a whole

There will be no detrimental impact on ecology or landscape.

Reasoned Justification

The 2 current Kilverstone Alms Houses are in need of substantial investment to bring them into line with modern expectations and condition. Found at the northern end of Church Lane in Kilverstone, the Alms-houses are single story “bungalow” style construction erected in the 1960’s, are unlisted and have little or no architectural or historic merit particularly when compared to the rich heritage that can be found elsewhere in the village.

In addition there is some demand in the parish for some additional Alms House style accommodation. There was some limited support in the responses to the questionnaire as to whether the existing two properties were sufficient for long term future needs. The Parish Council (and trustees of the Alms Houses) are currently exploring whether there is scope for redevelopment of the existing site which will accommodate future needs

Brettenham and Kilverstone Character Appraisal

POLICY JNP13: Brettenham and Kilverstone Character Appraisal

The Character Appraisal for Brettenham and Kilverstone has identified the following as important and distinctive materials and details that contribute to the overall character and local distinctiveness of the parish

- **Brettenham – Brick and render, tiles or slate, Brick with Flint facades**
- **Tiled or slate roofs – occasional thatch roofs**
- **Kilverstone – flint with slate or red pantiled roofs**

In accordance with JNP1 new built development of any scale or use should seek to incorporate these important characteristic details within the design of the scheme

In addition the Brettenham and Kilverstone Character appraisal has identified the following unlisted building as making an important historic, cultural, environmental or community contribution the character of the villages and these will be treated as undesignated heritage assets in accordance with Policy JNP5:

Brettenham –

- **The Stallion box**

Kilverstone –

- **Ex POW huts,**
- **Lodge Farmhouse,**
- **1-4 Fountain Cottages,**
- **Park House ,**
- **1 and 2 Farm Gate,**
- **1 and 2 Shepherd's Cottages**

The Parish Council will strongly encourage Breckland Council to consider positively the preparation of a Local List for Brettenham and Kilverstone which includes these buildings.

Reasoned Justification

The Brettenham and Kilverstone Character Appraisal has identified a number of buildings that are considered to have value to the community in terms of their historic, environmental, cultural or community contribution to the character of the village, which are not currently designated heritage assets. None feature on the national list however, it is felt that there is merit in pressing Breckland Council to consider the production of a Local List for the villages - using the character appraisal work as justification to ensure their retention and longevity and to give them “designated heritage asset” protection

Brettenham and Kilverstone Areas for Enhancement

Policy JNP14: Areas for Enhancement in Brettenham and Kilverstone

The Character Appraisal for Brettenham and Kilverstone identifies the following areas as potential opportunities for enhancement:

- **Brettenham - Disused railway station site on corner of Arlington Way**
- **Farm buildings on the Kilverstone Estate, however considered to be in a fragile state but programme of restoration and re use is planned**

Proposals that would result in a positive visual, environmental or historic enhancement to the above areas will be supported provided that they are of a suitable scale and design and do not detract from the overall character of the area and are consistent with other policies with this JNP

Reasoned Justification

The Character Appraisal identifies two areas for potential enhancement. These are the former Railway Station site on the corner of Arlington Way in Brettenham and some farm buildings on the Kilverstone estate. In respect of the latter there is a programme of restoration and re-use planned by the Kilverstone Estate.

The former railway station site is currently derelict and underused. The site has been used as a temporary stopping place by the travelling community and also problems have been encountered in the past with antisocial behaviour. It is considered by the community to be an eyesore. The site lies adjacent to the Settlement boundary for Thetford and therefore it could be the subject of future redevelopment potentially for housing use. The site is in private ownership. However, if redevelopment was not an option then some visual enhancement to the site in terms of planting or screening and strengthening of boundary treatments would be supported.

Opportunities for enhancing the visual appearance of these areas will be sought and proposals that achieve this suitable enhancement will be supported provided that they are consistent with other policies of this plan.

Section 5: Implementation and monitoring

Implementation

The implementation of the Joint Neighbourhood Plan will require the co-ordinated input and co-operation of a number of statutory and non-statutory agencies, private sector organisations, local communities and neighbouring Parishes.

Alongside other strategic policies and documents, the Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Joint Neighbourhood Plan is intended to provide a starting point for working together to implement positive physical change in the villages.

A separate implementation plan has been prepared alongside the Joint Neighbourhood Plan to provide a framework for implementation.

This includes information on parties from whom input and co-operation will be required to progress specific policies, provide leadership, influence programming and identify indicative funding requirements.

Monitoring

It will be the responsibility of Croxton and Brettenham & Kilverstone Parish Councils to monitor the implementation of the Joint Neighbourhood Plan. Breckland District Council may also provide assistance

Subject to available resources the Parish Councils will prepare annual monitoring reports. These reports will be published on the Parish Councils' websites and issued to Breckland District Council.

Appendix A – Map X – Policy JNP9 Strategic Gaps

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