

North Norfolk Local Plan Examination: Inspector Actions (Week 1)

Matter 1, Question 4

‘Please provide a list of nutrient neutrality catchments, a table of settlements affected, allocations affected, housing numbers affected and any indications around mitigation proposals.’

There are multiple impacted catchments. The multiple catchments in the Broads system are collectively referred to as the Broads Catchment. The Wensum Catchment is separately designated but also feeds into the Broads system. The Broads system is impacted by both phosphates and nitrates, whilst the Wensum is impacted by phosphates. Because the Wensum is connected to the Broads, nitrate mitigation is also required.

The SSSI component site in the River Wensum SAC that is subject to nutrient neutrality guidance is the River Wensum SSSI. The catchment relates to the entire river corridor and its extensive surface water catchment area.

The SSSI component sites in The Broads SAC that are subject to nutrient neutrality guidance are:

- Bure Broads and Marshes;
- Ant Broads and Marshes;
- Upper Thurne Broad and Marshes;
- Trinity Broads; and
- Yare Broads and Marshes

The Bure Broads and Marshes, Ant Broads and Marshes, Upper Thurne Broads and Marshes and Trinity Broads and Marshes are located within the River Bure operational catchment. The Yare Broads and Marshes is within the River Yare catchment, while the upstream catchment also includes the entire River Wensum catchment, which has its confluence with the River Yare in Whitlingham.

Detailed maps for each of the catchments are available here [Home | Nutrient Neutrality \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#) via the link at the bottom of the page to ‘Focussed Catchment Maps’. These show each of the separate designated habitat catchments based on their surface water catchment areas together with details of which areas/settlements are linked to mains drainage and discharge both into, and outside of, the catchment. For example, North Walsham is located within the surface water catchment area but its foul drainage discharges outside of the catchment to the North Sea. Those settlements which discharge foul water outside of the catchment are not affected by nutrient neutrality requirements. The Norfolk Nutrient Budget Calculator confirms that surface water draining within a catchment will not require nutrient mitigation (Figure 2, Page 6)

www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/downloads/file/6298/norfolk-nutrient-budget-calculator

The Table below lists all of the proposed Growth Settlements and indicates which of these are impacted by Nutrient Neutrality requirements and which are not, together with details of the Plan’s indicative housing allowance for each Small Growth Village (proposed mod allowance [PMIN/4.1/01]) and the impacted allocations in the proposed Growth Towns and Large Growth Villages.

Table 1 – Proposed Growth Settlements where growth is/is not impacted by Nutrient Neutrality requirements.

Proposed growth settlement in Submission Plan	Indicative Housing Allowance /housing allocations* impacted by Nutrient Neutrality (as per requested modification allowance for Small Growth Villages)	Indicative housing allowance/housing allocations* not impacted by Nutrient Neutrality.
Towns		
North Walsham	0	2,523**
Fakenham	810 (F01/B, F02, F03 and F10)	0
Cromer	0	635
Holt	0	257
Wells	0	70
Stalham	150 (ST19/A & ST23/2)	0
Hoveton	160 (HV01/B)	0
Large Growth Villages		
Blakeney	0	30
Briston/Melton	65 (BRI01 and BRI02)	0
Mundesley	0	30
Ludham	0	35
Small Growth Villages		
Aldborough	15	0
Badersfield	23	0
Bacton	0	32
Binham	0	8
Catfield	28	0
Corpusty and Saxthorpe	21	0
East Runton	0	46
Happisburgh	26	0
High Kelling	0	14
Horning	0	31
Little Snoring	0	17
Little Walsingham	0	22
Overstrand	0	27
Potter Heigham	0	0
Roughton	26	0
Sculthorpe	20	0
Sea Palling	0	0
Southrepps	24	0
Sutton	33	0
Trunch	26	26
Walcott	0	0
Weybourne	0	14
Total dwellings over plan period	1,427	3,817

*Where allocations require specialist elderly/care accommodation dwelling totals are dwelling equivalents with each 1.5 bedspaces counted as equivalent to a single dwelling.

** Figure includes dwellings at North Walsham currently assessed as delivered beyond 2036

Details of Nutrient Mitigation

The government has published the list of catchment areas, but not individual WWRCs, where water companies must upgrade their wastewater treatment works (WWRCs) by 2030 in order to decrease nutrient pollution into protected waterways. Government has indicated that a list of WWRCs which will be subject to this requirement will be published by April 2024.

In these designated catchment areas, water companies are subject to a legal requirement to ensure that WWRCs - which serve a population equivalent to over 2,000 - meet specified nutrient removal standards by 1 April 2030, unless the Centres are exempt (not included on the list to be published). These standards are specified in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) as the concentration of total nitrogen not exceeding 10 mg/l in treated effluent, and not exceeding 0.25mg/1 for total phosphorus (the TAL standard).

Waste Water Recycling Centres at Fakenham, Stalham, and Belaugh (Hoveton) all serve populations of more than 2,000 so are expected to be on the published list of sites requiring upgrades by 2030.

Anglian Water has announced plans to invest £138 million on Waste Water Recycling Centres across Norfolk including the three sites in North Norfolk to reduce nutrient levels entering watercourses. The Authority understands that the Fakenham improvements are programmed for completion in 2025.

Local planning authorities (LPAs) are legally obliged to assume that these upgrades can be taken as a given by 2030 for the purpose of considering proposals under the Habitats Regulations.

The impact of this will be to substantially reduce, but not eliminate the need for mitigation.

As the TAL standard does not remove all nutrients and the necessary upgrades may not be in place until 2030 there is a requirement to:

1. provide *temporary* mitigation measures between now and the actual date of WWRC upgrades.
2. Ensure permanent mitigations are in place to address the residual nutrient levels following the completion of upgrades.

There are currently no strategic mitigation schemes available in those parts of the catchments in North Norfolk. Each development proposal will therefore need to be supported by specific mitigation proposals in order to secure permission.

Owners/prospective developers of a number of the proposed allocations impacted by nutrient requirements are investigating mitigation options including BRI01, BRI02, ST23/2, and F10.

The Authority is engaged with a large landowner in the upper reaches of the Wensum to deliver mitigation proposals suitable for in excess of 2,000 phosphate and more than 15,000 nitrate credits all within a single landowners control. The scheme has been designed with advice from Royal Haskoning and is likely to be subject to a funding bid as part of the recently received Nutrient Mitigation Fund (9.6 million pounds) announced in Dec 2023. This funding needs to be committed by March 2025.

NNDC is working with partners to agree the process for managing the fund with an expectation that successful schemes would be delivered from 2025 onwards. The fund will be open to expressions of interest over the next few months.

The Authority will keep the Inspector up to date with progress.