

## **Watton Town Council response to Breckland Local Plan Reg. 18 consultation**

Following a public meeting facilitated to listen to concerns around site allocation WAT 3 in the draft Breckland Local Plan Watton Town Council is submitting this response:

1. TH Local Plan suggestions - document written by Cllr outlining suggested mitigation should development take place. It was agreed by Council on 09.12.25 to submit the document as part of the Council's response.
2. The Town Council also supports comments submitted by the Watton & Saham Flood Action Group.
3. There was a desire from local people who attended the public meeting held on 05.12.25 that WAT 3 should not be brought forward as an allocated site due to it being adjacent to Wayland Wood SSSI. The proposed development of the site would lead to habitat disturbance particularly from lighting and noise, increased recreational use of Wayland Wood and greater traffic movement; all of which would be harmful to the ancient woodland.

SSSIs have been protected within sections 15 and 16 of the NPPF and need to remain so. Damage to such sites should be avoided. A development within or adjacent to a SSSI should not have any adverse effect on the site.

Duties to protect SSSIs appear to be being weakened with the proposals in the new Planning & Infrastructure Bill to bring in a 'Nature Restoration Fund', but it should be recognised that in many cases such a fund cannot mitigate against irreversible damage that will be caused if development is permitted in the wrong place. Many believe development next to Wayland Wood would be the wrong place.

General comments at the public meeting focused on the lack of infrastructure; the need to see upgrades to health services such as more local doctors and dentists, investment in local schools and improvement to local roads. The written comments received have been submitted with this response.

Policies WTN 1, WTN 2, WTN 3, WTN 4 and WTN 5 from Watton Neighbourhood Plan should all be considered and acted upon should development be permitted,