

## Meeting Objectives

- Familiarise with policies
- Discuss
- Advise
- Agree

Good afternoon.

My name is Chris Blow and I'm the leader of the STNP work group

We asked for this meeting because we'd like you to have an understanding of our NP policies before the Reg 14 consultation

We know there may be issues – we'd like to tackle them in a constructive way to our mutual benefit

We're deliberately not presenting the evidence base today – it's extensive and will be available at Reg 14, but it will need an update once the policies are in good shape

We think we know the LP well, but where there are gaps in our understanding of its interpretation / implementation, so we'd like your advice as that could affect our plan

Most of all we want to agree as much as possible so we move together on a united front

If there are any outstanding issues they can be addressed after the meeting or at Reg 14

If you have any questions as we go, I'll try to answer them if they're brief or we'll deal with them in discussion afterwards (one of our group to write down all Q&A during and after presentation)

## Background

- Designation
- Preliminary consultations
- Informal submissions 2017
- Local Plan
- Consultant's review
- Website – **WWW.STNP2036.ORG**

I'll start with just a little background

Breckland designated our NA in March 2016

We undertook a series of village consultations and events to gather views and information

First version of Plan was submitted for your informal review last February

That review indicated a fundamental rewrite was needed

We did that by building up from policies

July 2017 we submitted the plan for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Breckland informal review

We received 165 comments - 150 incorporated

The update we made after those comments also addressed updated LP Aug 2017

In parallel we assessed consultants and appointed Rachel in November

Rachel's undertook a comprehensive review in December and we met her to discuss it about 3 weeks ago

Since then in close liaison with Rachel we've updated the policies accordingly and the result is what we presenting today

One quick aside – our website launched Nov 2017

## A Little About Saham Toney



For those of you who don't know Saham Toney I'll just say a few words about it  
ST is a small rural parish, comprising ST, SH and small outlying hamlets  
The settlement pre-dates the Romans and has developed slowly over those centuries.  
We think it has a unique character  
It has a range of building styles, layouts, densities and materials, resulting from its gradual development. This makes it difficult to define particular characteristics as typical, but nevertheless different parts of the Area have distinct forms that are worthy of preserving  
Homes generally follow the main roads in a linear layout other than more recent cul-de-sacs  
Being a rural area it has a considerable amount of wildlife  
We rely on services elsewhere, particularly Watton  
But we want to stress - ST is not a suburb of Watton!

## Saham Toney's Key Development Constraints

- Landscape setting and character;
- Availability and accessibility of services and facilities;
- Housing need;
- Roads and public transport;
- Flood risk;
- Availability of suitable land for development.

One of the main things we have learned from Rachel is that while things like housing allocations or villager preferences are important, first and foremost we should take account of the factors that shape development in the area – as listed here. We've tried to do that in the key constraints document you've seen.

They all need to be considered together as they interact  
I'll talk a little about each constraint, then cover them in a bit more detail when we get to the policies

## Key Development Constraints – Landscape Setting & Character



As far as landscape is concerned we've taken our lead from Breckland's Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment July 2007  
I'll just briefly quote from that;

Point out ST1...

ST1 is an enclosed parkland landscape of pasture, small woodland blocks, and tree lined watercourse

"A landscape in good condition with a distinctive tributary valley character. These qualities would be highly sensitive to further expansion of development associated with Saham Toney or Watton."

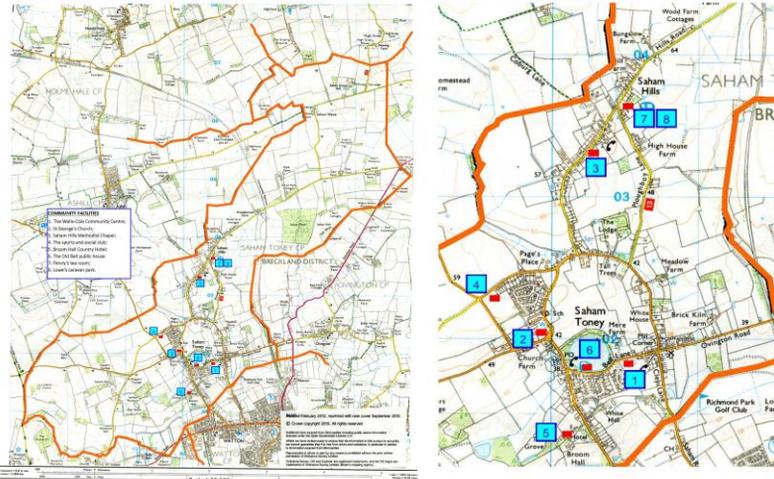
Point out ST2...

ST2 comprises a gently undulating land form, tributary streams, arable and pasture farmland and small blocks of farm woodland.

Its qualities would be sensitive to further expansion of development

Generally, the loose, informal character of Saham Toney is considered to be sensitive to further development which would create a more consolidated settlement form.

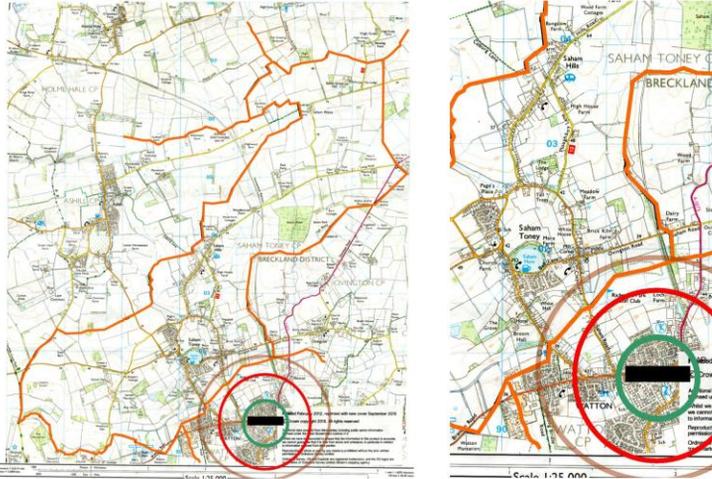
## Key Development Constraints – Availability & Accessibility of Services



As shown here we have a limited number of community facilities

In the constraints document there are maps which show many residents live more than 800m (10 minutes walk) from these facilities

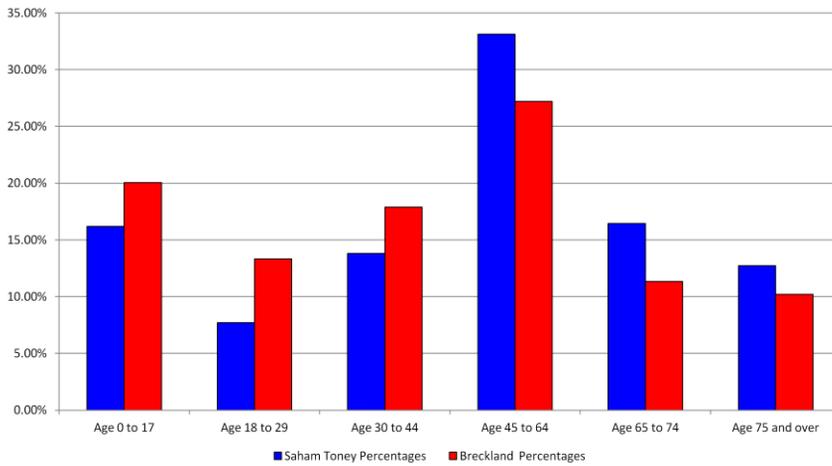
## Key Development Constraints – Availability & Accessibility of Services



ST has no shops, no post office, no doctor's or dentists, banks or other services  
The nearest are in Watton – and that's often used as the sustainability justification in applications

But as the map shows those shops and services are considerably more than 1200m (15 minutes) walking distance from all residents  
It's a similar story with pre-school and secondary education (although we do have a primary school)

## Key Development Constraints – Housing Need

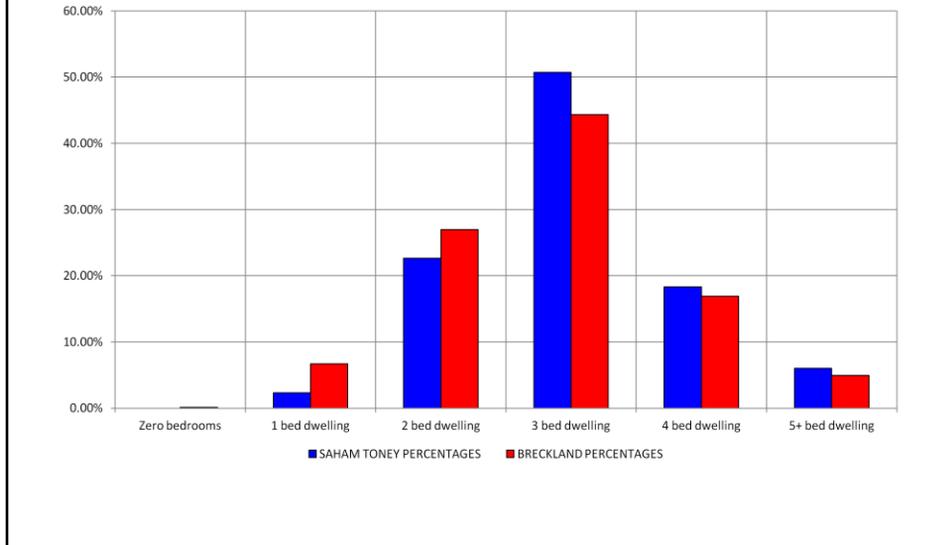


The next two slides show the key demographic data that influence housing need in ST

On this one you can see the age structure for Saham Toney and how it compares with Breckland overall.

It's clear there is a significant difference

## Key Development Constraints – Housing Need



ST demographics differ significantly to Breckland's (and indeed to those for Norfolk, East of England and England)

Ours are even more weighted towards an ageing population than Breckland's which itself exceeds regional and national figures

Add to that we have more larger houses; and less smaller ones. And they are predominately detached or semi-detached houses and bungalows

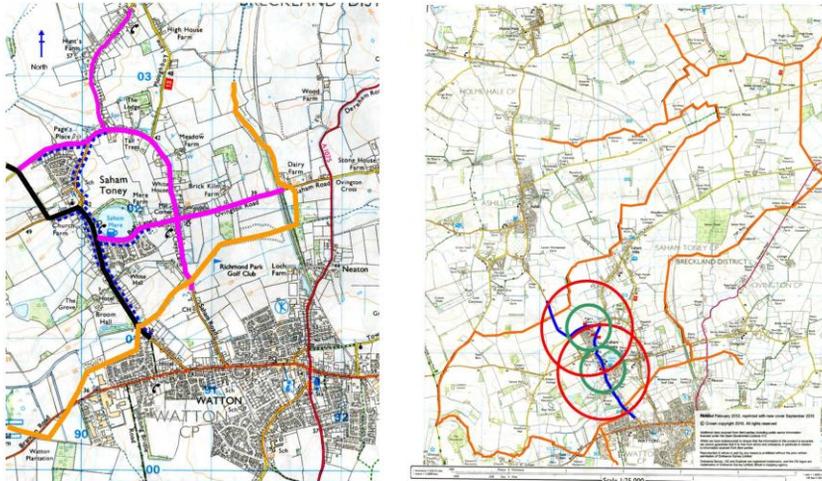
So young people and anyone wanting to downsize are poorly served

In summary we have has an ageing population that in general terms is living in larger properties which they own.

The lack of smaller properties means both that older residents who wish to downsize their properties but remain in the Area find it difficult to do so; and young adults and families have very limited choice of the type or size of home likely to be within their means.

Although Breckland has a general need for larger properties, the fact that Saham Toney has a proportionally greater number of existing houses with 3 or more bedrooms, combined with an aging population, indicates that any need for 3, 4 or 5 bedroom homes in ST is likely to be satisfied by natural events – to be a little indelicate... existing houses coming onto the market as older residents pass on.

## Key Development Constraints – Roads & Public Transport



As far as roads go, there are 2 main routes through ST

Point them out...

They are Richmond Road on the west side and Bell Lane, Saham Road, Pages Lane, Chequers Lane, Hills Road and Cley Lane to the east. These two routes link Saham Toney to the neighbouring town of Watton and further afield.

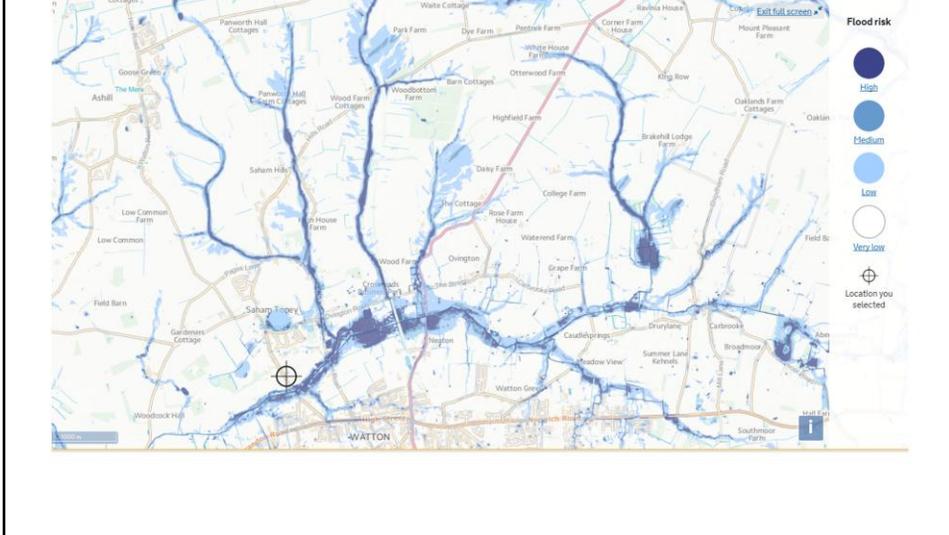
All are narrow undesignated roads – indeed much of Hills Road / Long Road and Ovington Road are only single lane with passing places.

On Richmond Road, speed Watch traffic surveys have recorded more than 2000 vehicles per day, in one direction only, with an average speed of 37 mph (the speed limit is 30 mph).

As far as public transport is concerned there's an hourly bus service to Watton, Dereham and Swaffham during working hours, although, as the map shows, for many parishioners the bus stops are further than 800m walking distance from their homes.

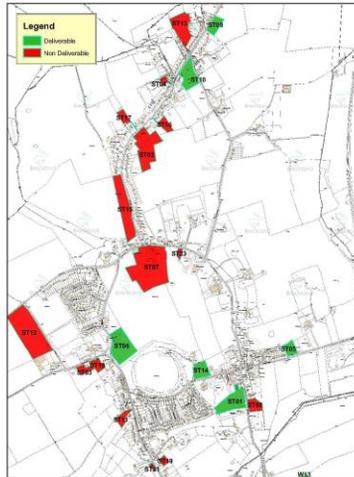
There are very few pavements in the village so walking along the narrow roads is not the safest means of getting about!

## Key Development Constraints – Flood Risk



Surface water (and groundwater) flooding is a big concern for many villagers  
A recent NCC flood report notes around 100 ST homes at risk of flooding  
Additionally to their report we've had many local reports of flooding both homes, gardens and roads  
Even moderate rain can cause road blockages and since there are limited ways in and out of village we can easily be cut off by floods

## Key Development Constraints – Availability of Suitable Land



Our plan doesn't try to allocate sites and we don't pretend to be experts in the field of assessing land for development

Instead we've looked at the information in Breckland's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment from 2014

At that time ST was still a LSC and you assessed the constrained capacity for development in Saham Toney to be 90 dwellings up to 2019 and none after that.

Of the 6 sites you deemed suitable for development:

ST01 – 29 houses were completed last year

ST05 - 10: We know from discussions with the developer that an application will soon be submitted, but for only 3 houses

ST06 - 10: An application for 19 houses has been refused both by Breckland and at appeal

ST09 - 10

ST10 - 21

ST14 - 10

Any development of sites 9, 10 and 14 would now be subject to your HOU 04 which has a 5 dwelling limit. So those 3 sites could deliver 15 houses, plus the 3 from site 5 = 18

Of course we recognise other sites will come forward, but this gives a broad idea of the land availability picture

## Key Development Constraints – Assessment Principles

- Avoid harm to “highly sensitive” landscape and setting
- Remember the lack of accessible services
- Consider specific housing needs
- Highway constraints limits safe access
- Don’t add to existing significant flood risk
- Maintain up to date constraints assessment

Based on what I’ve outlined I hope you see the importance of this to ST.

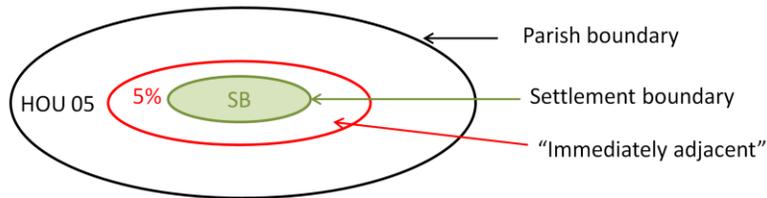
We’re not trying to tell you how to do your jobs...

Well perhaps we are... at least to the extent that we want you to have the constraints very firmly in mind when you assess proposals in Saham Toney!

That’s why we require our Key Development Constraints paper to be considered when proposals in the Area are assessed, and these are the guidelines we’d like you to apply in all cases, more so than any housing target or latest initiative

# 1. Proportionate share of new housing

- Local Plan policies HOU 02, 04 & 05



Share of 150 overall....but...5% limit...“acceptable within SB” ...and countryside development

- Need for more certainty, so adapt & simplify
- Calculation methods and assessment

Policy 1 deals with the perhaps thorny topic of housing allocation - I'll start by saying we'd very much like to go forward in agreement with Breckland on this subject

We think the LP lacks implementation clarity in this respect – you probably have a different view and we'd like to hear that later

The simple diagram shows how we interpret HOU 02 / 04 / 05 – if we've got that wrong please tell us

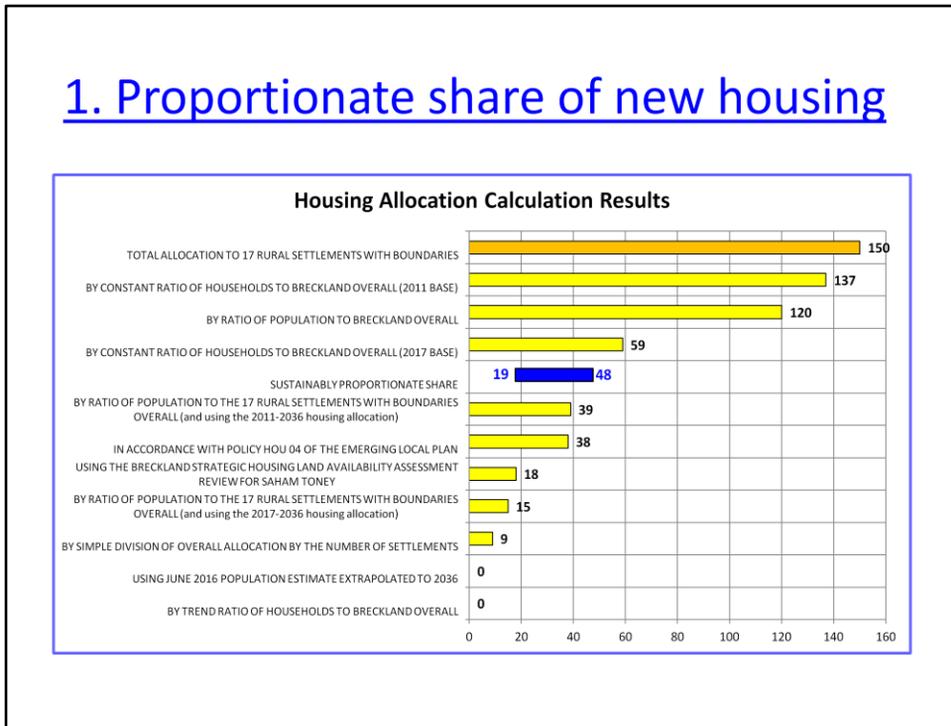
In practice there are almost no remaining sites within the SB other than building on back gardens which often has no access and which in any case we don't believe should be supported on any large scale

Given that and the generous allocation we've included, we think it's reasonable to apply our limit to the entire Neighbourhood Area and avoid the need for a count of existing housing (which seems to be problematic as it's not been done)

We're uncertain how your 5% is justified – it could be too high or too low in practice, it seems nobody knows – and it seems arbitrary.... Rather a gut feel  
Rather than limit we use the term Sustainably proportionate share

BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO STRESS THAT THE KEY CONSTRAINTS SHOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE, so more or less than the share may actually be most appropriate  
You've seen our paper setting out how we determined that share and the results are shown on the next slide

# 1. Proportionate share of new housing



Our paper gives the 10 calculation methods we used and our conclusions

We concluded a range from 15-39 was the most reasonable

Bear in mind it takes account of all dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area not just those within the SB, so that's already generous - particularly when viewed against the 150 allocation

But then to ensure we're being proactive and positively supporting development we decided to apply the Government's proposed market signals factor which is around 1.25 for Breckland

**But again I want to stress...**

**We're not saying 19-48 houses would automatically satisfy key constraint considerations And Policy 1 has exception criteria that allow it to be exceeded... providing ST benefits from that**

## 2A. Scale & Location of Residential Development

- Within SB in-fill; no backland
- Adjacent to SB: Up to 5 houses per site; 10 for brownfield
- Specific community benefits (ref HOU 04) defined
  - ✓ Housing needs met
  - ✓ On brownfield flood risk reduced; visual appeal improved

Policy 2A sets out broadly where housing can be developed and on what scale I mentioned there are very limited opportunities within SB – you can see that by simply looking at the SB map

We've retained the 5 house criterion we've had from the start – and wonder if perhaps you took this from us in the latest LP? In our case we were guided by village consultations which overwhelmingly supported up to 5 (or none)

We have limited brownfield sites but we want to encourage them in preference, so allow a higher limit

The basic premise of policy 2A (and we think of your policy HOU 04) is that developers get the benefit of building on land outside the SB so we expect tangible community benefit in return and we define how that will apply in ST more specifically than the LP

So keeping key constraints firmly in mind we expect cumulative development in ST to be managed within our share

## 2B. Housing Mix

- Demographics differ to Breckland, Norfolk, East of England and England as a whole
- Greater % of older people;
- Greater % of larger homes;
- Need for more young people;
- Need for smaller homes
- Apply a specific Saham Toney housing needs assessment

Policy 2B is new and deals with housing mix – something we've wanted to include from the start but which we've only been able to understand how to do with Rachel's help

I covered our demographics earlier

Broadly speaking we want to find a way to prompt affordable housing, starter homes, rent to buy etc

We are still working on our housing needs assessment, but already have enough data to be confident our proposals are sound

### 3. Residential Design

- No one style or set of materials;
- Diversity is Saham Toney's uniqueness;
- Safeguard the "feel"
- No off-the-shelf designs
- Appropriate density;
- Building for Life 12;
- Dark skies

Policy 3 is our housing design policy and we think there's nothing unreasonable in what we require

The key is to maintain the character and "feel" of the Area

We'd like your feedback on how your officers will assess this without good knowledge of ST? Any pointers to what we can do to help with that will be useful

Housing density in ST is very low generally, only very recent developments have exceeded our limit of "around 20" and then not by much

Warwick Farm shows how unsympathetic density attracts criticism (i.e attractive large houses but on small plots)

## 4A. Community Facilities

- Defines those to be protected
- Earlier map showed the limited number

Policy 4A simply defines our few community facilities that are to be protected

## 4B. Non-Residential Development

- Minor development
- Size limit
- Sympathetic to surroundings
- Infrastructure impacts

Policy 4B is about business and tourism related development

Just to give some context, we've counted 41 businesses in the parish; but 34 of those are operated from home and only 7 have dedicated premises

And only 1 of those buildings – Su-Bridge pet supplies – is on any scale

So although we don't set a specific size limit, in general large new premises would be out of keeping with the Area

## 5. Gap to Watton

- Settlement fringe assessment;
- Development pressures;
- Consultation results

Policy 5 addresses the pressures that could lead to coalescence of ST with Watton  
The policy map which I'll show in a minute defines the extent of the gap

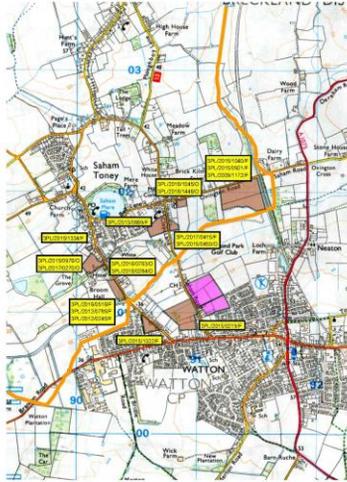
The policy dictates no development in the gap except essential utilities  
In our view the gap is the gap, so there shouldn't be exceptions!  
Apart from other considerations there are sufficient opportunities elsewhere so  
we're not being restrictive

I talked about Breckland's Settlement fringe and landscape assessment earlier and  
how it highlights the importance of maintaining a gap  
And it's important to understand that Saham Toney very different in character to  
Watton

Recent planning applications that have pressured the gap as you'll see on the next  
slide

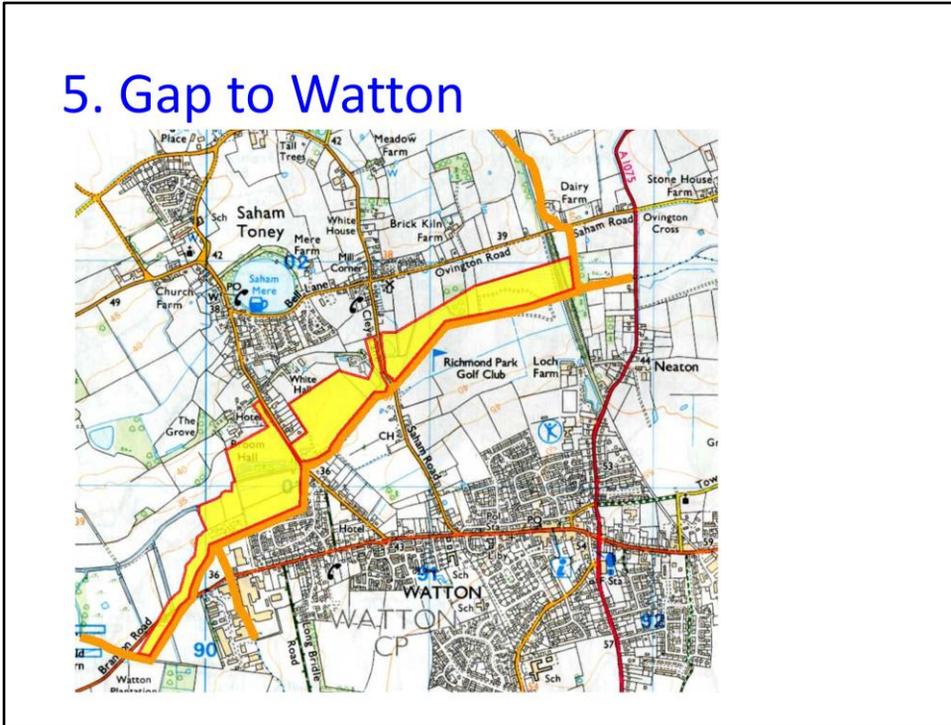
Additionally this policy has strong parishioner support with almost 300 in favour of  
defining a gap in the early consultations

## 5. Gap to Watton – Development Pressures

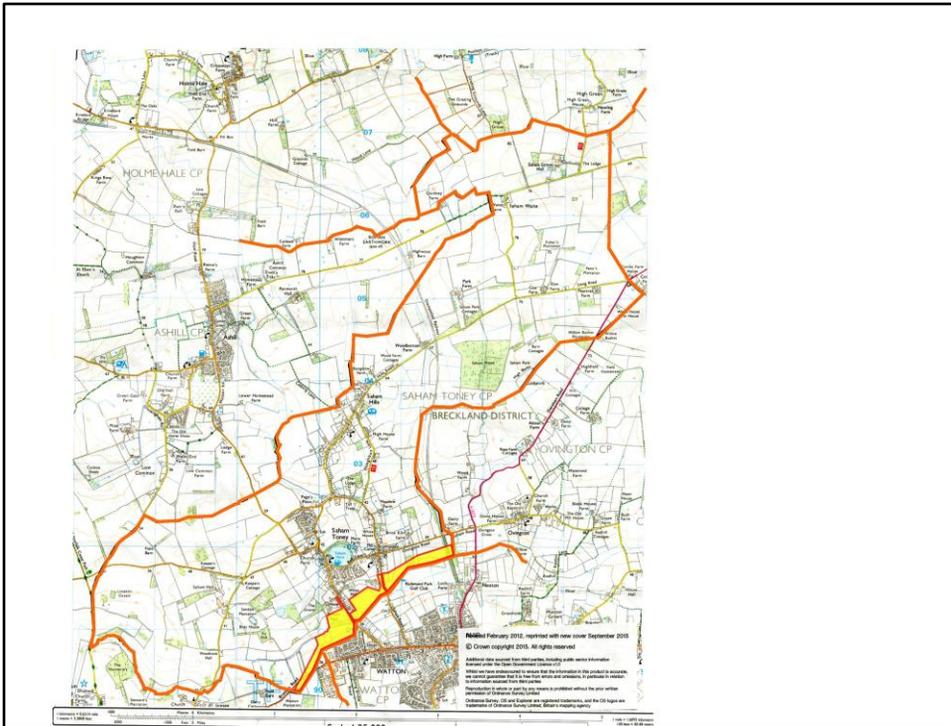


These are recent applications I mentioned that have the effect of extending the built-up area towards (and from) Watton and so causing coalescence

## 5. Gap to Watton



This is the policy map showing the extent of the gap  
To put it in context...  
Skip to next slide



This is the gap shown against the whole NA and you can see it's actually not extensive

It's worth mentioning that it's also important to avoid coalescence of settlements within the NA – particularly between Saham Toney and Saham Hills (point out...) so the policy addresses that, in a more general way rather than by defining specific areas

We've also consulted with the landowners and had no objections other than for a small area of land belonging to the hotel that has been the subject of several previously refused applications and appeals (point out...)

## 5. Gap to Watton



These are a few photos looking to and from Watton in the gap area  
There are more in the evidence base

## 6. Heritage

- 11 listed buildings;
- 2 scheduled monuments;
- 9 Non-designated asset buildings - homeowners consulted;
- Non-designated sites and finds;
- Heritage Asset Register

Policy 6 deals with heritage assets and the policy map you've seen shows the location of the listed buildings and the non-designated assets buildings  
Those non-designated assets were assessed to Historic England's criteria – the evidence base you have gives the details

A second policy map shows all the archaeological sites and finds that the policy also covers, including 2 scheduled monuments

The HAR is part of policy 6, but is a separate document so it can be kept up to date without having to revise the NP

## 7A. Local Green Spaces

- 6 spaces;
- Assessed and designated in accordance with NPPF;
- Landowners consulted (in 4 cases that's the PC);

Refer to the map in policy 7A for locations of the spaces  
They all meet NPPF criteria which you'll know so I won't go through:

- { a) The green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- b) The green space is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;*
- c) The green space concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

We also assessed public access to the sites

And to be deemed "demonstrably special to the community" as required, the spaces were assessed against criteria suggested by the Open Spaces Society in its Information Sheet No. 20 - Local Green Space Designation:

*Beauty: This relates to the visual attractiveness of the site, and its contribution to landscape, character and or setting of the settlement;*

*Historic significance: The land should provide a setting for, and allow views of, heritage assets or other locally-valued landmarks;*

*Recreational value: It must have local significance for recreation, perhaps through the variety of activities it supports, and be of value to the community;*

*Tranquillity: it may provide an oasis of calm and a space for quiet reflection;*

*Richness of wildlife: This might include the value of its habitat;*

Parish Council support.

We have also consulted with the owners of the land and had no objections

## 7B. Protected Views

- 9 designated;
- 8 criteria for designation from “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments”

Policy 7B safeguards our most important public views  
They're shown on the policy maps you've seen

The assessment criteria we used were:

Landscape quality – physical state;

Scenic quality – aesthetics;

Rarity;

Representativeness – a good example of its type;

Conservation interests;

Perceptual aspects;

Consensus;

Cultural associations

Full details are included in our evidence base and views will be the subject of a specific villager questionnaire at Reg 14 consultation

In addition design policies 3 and 4C protect the public views of heritage assets

We are considering using a landscape consultant to verify our assessment

## 7C. Trees, Hedges & Green Infrastructure

- Promotes biodiversity;
- Protects Breckland structural landscape blocks;
- Tree and hedge replacement and new planting;
- Wildlife habitats and corridors; stepped mitigation

Policy 7C safeguards our green environment

The policy maps define the most important habitats, wildlife corridors and landscape blocks – the latter is taken from your settlement fringe assessment

We realise habitats and especially corridors cannot be given blanket protection so there's tiered criteria of protection and mitigation

Woodland Trust support policy

## 8. Flood Risk

- Big concern for many residents;
- River flooding covered by national regulations, etc.;
- Deliberately stringent on surface water and groundwater flooding;
- Online mapping to be used in assessments;
- Local reports exceed present mapping;
- Anglian Water support

Many residents have directly experienced flooding of homes and gardens and policy 8 tries to address that in a way that prevents additional risk as a result of development

We decided there's no need for our policy to deal with river flooding as that's well covered elsewhere

But in our opinion surface water flooding gets overlooked, yet it's the biggest flood problem in Saham Toney – for example there's nothing on the Breckland policy map about it

To be honest we dislike policy maps showing flood zones anyway as they're out of date

Policy 8 dictates that the latest online maps must be used

AW have reviewed the policy and support it

We're waiting for input from NCC and EA on it

## Flood Risk Overall Surface Water Map



This taken from the EA online map and you can see the problem applies to a significant part of the built-up area

The evidence base includes enlarged extracts of this only as an initial guideline and in order to show villager flood reports – which are for more extensive areas than the EA maps



So that's been a very brief run through our policies and their background

Thanks for listening

If you have any more questions we'll try to answer them - if we can't do that today we'll make a note and promise to get back to you

After any questions we'd like to have a working session with you to tackle any fundamental issues

Remembering what I said at the start about wanting to reach a broad consensus with you in advance of pre-submission, from our side we'd particularly like to talk about

- housing allocation;
- location and scale of new housing;
- housing mix and tenure;
- the strategic gap

- and of course anything else you think might be contentious