COUNTY: NORFOLK SITE NAME: ELM ROAD FIELD, THETFORD

DISTRICT: BRECKLAND

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

Local Planning Authority: Breckland District Council

National Grid Reference: TL 860815 Area: 5.01 (ha.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 144 1:10,000: TL 88 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): – Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 11 April 1996 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
Owned by Breckland District Council.

Description:
Elm Road Field is an area of open space on the southern edge of Thetford, adjacent to Barnhamcross Common. It supports a calcareous Breckland grassland community. The site has a rich flora, including several nationally uncommon plants.

The sward is dominated by hairy oat-grass *Avenula pubescens* with false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. Flowering plants associated with it include ladies bedstraw *Gallum verum*, bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, and greater knapweed *Centauria scabiosa*. The grassland is influenced by the calcareous and sandy substrate. It has strong characteristics of inland sand dune communities which are uncommon and restricted to Breckland.

The site supports the nationally endangered field wormwood *Artemisia campestris*. This is the only known native population of the plant in Norfolk. The nationally scarce sickle medick *Medicago falcata* and tower mustard *Arabis glabra* are also found here.

Two relict scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* hedges run across the site and there is scattered mixed scrub, particularly at the eastern end. This is dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and oak *Quercus robur*, with some pine and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*.