

# WICKHAMBROOK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2023 - 2040



Pre - Submission Draft Plan - NOVEMBER 2023

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WICKHAMBROOK Parish Council



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# NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING IN A NUTSHELL

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The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to prepare neighbourhood plans, which establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood. These plans, when properly “made” become part of the legal planning framework for the designated area.

A neighbourhood plan is a community-led document for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. It concentrates on the use and development of land and can contain planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, and the allocation of sites for specific kinds of development.

Parish councils are encouraged to produce their own neighbourhood plans, enabling local people to have a say as to how their neighbourhood grows and develops. In a designated neighbourhood area, which contains all or part of the administrative area of a parish council, that council is responsible for the preparation of the plan. Neighbourhood plans cannot contradict the main government planning policies or the strategic policies in the Local Plan for the area. For example, they cannot propose less development than is planned for in the Local Plan.

Before a neighbourhood plan can be brought into force it needs to complete the following stages:

**1 “Pre-submission” consultation on draft plan by Parish Council**

This is the stage we’ve now reached. The plan has to be widely consulted on for a minimum of six weeks allowing residents, businesses, landowners and a range of government bodies and service providers to comment on the Draft Plan.

**2 Submission of draft Plan to West Suffolk Council**

All comments received at the “pre-submission” consultation will be considered and reviewed and any necessary amendments to the Plan will be made. The Plan, together with supporting documents will then be submitted to West Suffolk Council

**3 “Submission” consultation on draft Plan by West Suffolk Council**

A further period of public consultation lasting a minimum of six weeks.

**4 Independent examination of draft Plan**

Typically taking around two months to complete, depending upon the availability of the Examiner.

**5 Parish Referendum**

Run in the same way as a local election and organised by West Suffolk Council

**6 Adoption by West Suffolk Council**

Subject to the outcome of the Referendum and taking place as soon as possible afterwards.

These remaining stages are likely to take around 6-9 months to complete.

Prepared by Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan Working Group  
on behalf of Wickhambrook Parish Council and supported by



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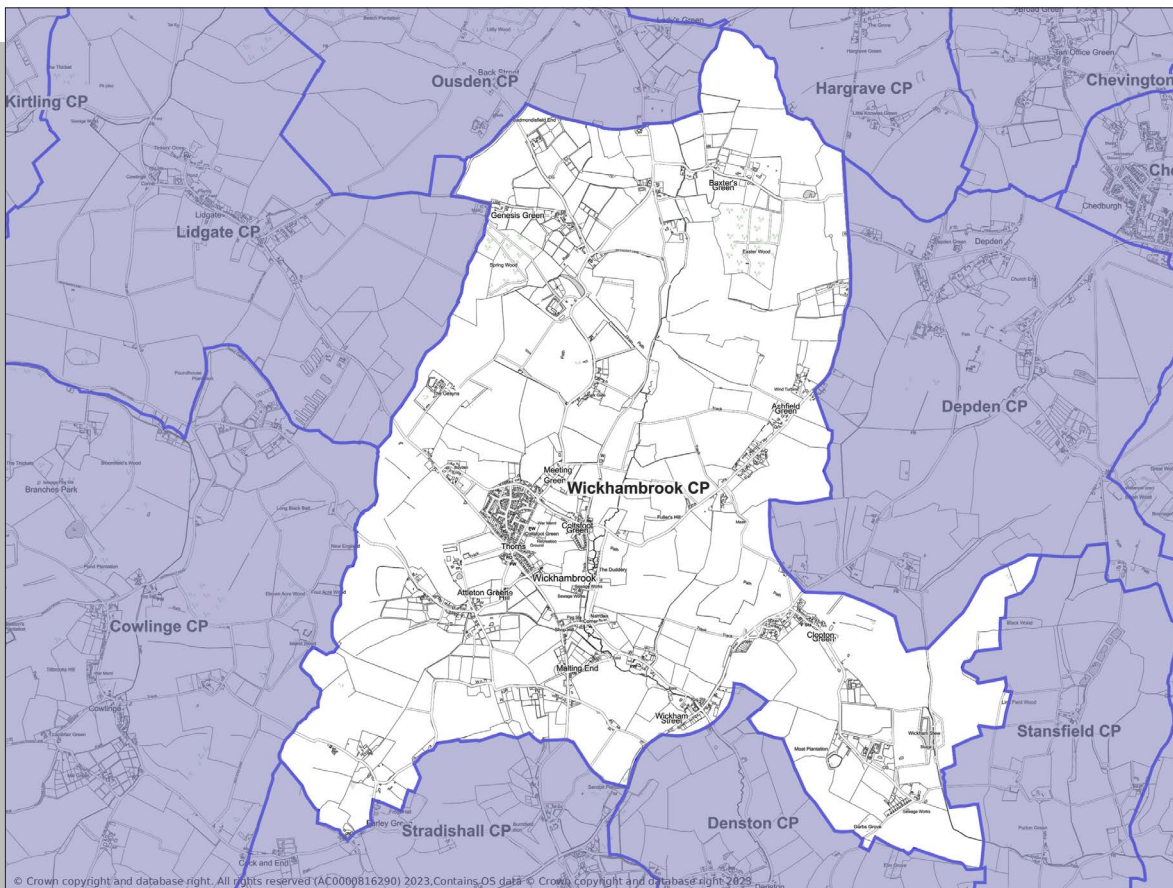


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# INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced rights and powers to allow local communities to prepare neighbourhood plans. In very simple terms, a neighbourhood plan is:
- A document that sets out planning policies for the neighbourhood area - planning policies are used to decide whether to approve planning applications.
  - Written by the local community, the people who know and love the area, rather than the Local Planning Authority.
  - A powerful tool to ensure the community gets the right types of development, in the right place, something that can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood.
- 1.2 A neighbourhood plan is therefore a community-led planning framework for guiding future development, regeneration and conservation of a designated area, in this case Wickhambrook Parish. It relates to matters that would require planning permission and applies for the period to 2040. This is the first draft of the Plan which will, when complete, be used by West Suffolk Council and Government Planning Inspectors to inform planning application decisions.
- 1.3 In September 2021 the Parish Council decided to prepare a neighbourhood plan and applied to West Suffolk Council to designate the whole Parish as the Neighbourhood Area. The Area was originally designated in October 2021 but was subsequently amended in April 2023 following Parish boundary changes that came into force on 1 April. The area covered by the Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan is illustrated on **Map 1**.



Map 1 - Neighbourhood Plan Area



- 1.4 The Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan will, when complete, form part of the statutory “development plan” for West Suffolk, meaning that its planning policies and content will be taken into account when decisions on planning applications are made.
- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan Regulations require a neighbourhood plan to:
- be appropriate, having regard to National Planning Policy;
  - contribute to achieving sustainable development;
  - be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; and
  - be compatible with EU obligations and Human Rights requirements.

#### How the Plan has been prepared

- 1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government’s Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and, in particular, has involved local community engagement and the preparation of specialist reports to inform the content of the Plan.

#### Household Survey

- 1.7 At the beginning of 2022, early in the process of preparing the Plan, a household survey was carried out. A total of 258 responses were received, representing just under 50% of the households recorded in the 2021 Census. The results are available to view on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council website and referred to, as appropriate, throughout the Plan.
- 1.8 In the ensuing years up until the draft Plan was written, additional surveys on specific topics were carried out and these are also referred to later in this document.

#### Background Reports

- 1.9 In addition to the community involvement, specialist studies have been commissioned on landscape and design matters which are referred to in the body of the Plan and are also available to view on the Parish Council website.

#### The Plan’s Vision and Objectives

- 1.10 The vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared taking into consideration the outcomes of the community engagement referred to above, as well as the evidence collected from published data, surveys and assessments. They also take account of the need to prepare a neighbourhood plan that conforms with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. The Vision sets out the over-arching approach as to how Wickhambrook will respond to the pressures for change in the period to 2040. This is refined through the Objectives established for each of the topic areas which, in turn, have guided the identification of the planning policies contained in the Plan. The planning policies do not repeat the policies in the Local Plan or the NPPF but supplement them by adding local detail or addressing locally specific matters. Community actions are also included in the Plan which do not have the same status as planning policies but which set out proposals to address matters at a local level.



## VISION

In 2040 Wickhambrook will remain a village that has retained its distinct structure of a number of small settlements within a high-quality rural landscape, where limited sustainable growth has taken place that meets the needs of the Parish and where essential infrastructure and services are retained and improved.

## Objectives

### Development Location

1. New development should minimise the loss of the best quality agricultural land and its impact on the natural and historic environment as well as being well related to the existing services and facilities in the village centre.

### Housing

2. New housing development will reflect Wickhambrook's status as a Local Service Centre within the "Settlement Hierarchy" of West Suffolk and provide a range of types, sizes, prices and tenures that meets the needs of all age groups and incomes.
3. New housing should be located where it is safely accessible by foot to the village's services and facilities.
4. Homes should incorporate measures to ensure they are accessible for all needs, incorporate energy saving features and make use of sustainable approaches to building.

### Employment and Local Economy

5. A range of employment opportunities in the Parish will be retained and supported where there will not be a detrimental impact on the environment, services and infrastructure.

### Natural Environment

6. The rural character of the Parish will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.
7. Natural habitats will be protected and enhanced.

### Built Environment and Design

8. Wickhambrook's built heritage assets will be protected.
9. High-quality and eco-friendly development will reinforce the local character of the village.
10. New development will not have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of existing residents.

### Services and Facilities

11. The level of services and facilities will be protected and improved.
12. The range of existing community facilities and services will be improved.

### Highways and Travel

13. The capacity and safety of the road network to cope with new development will be ensured.
14. The improvement of bus services to nearby towns will be encouraged.
15. The Public Rights of Way network will be protected, maintained and improved.

- 1.11 The planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are designed to ensure the delivery of the Vision and Objectives.



1.12 The Plan covers seven main topic areas:

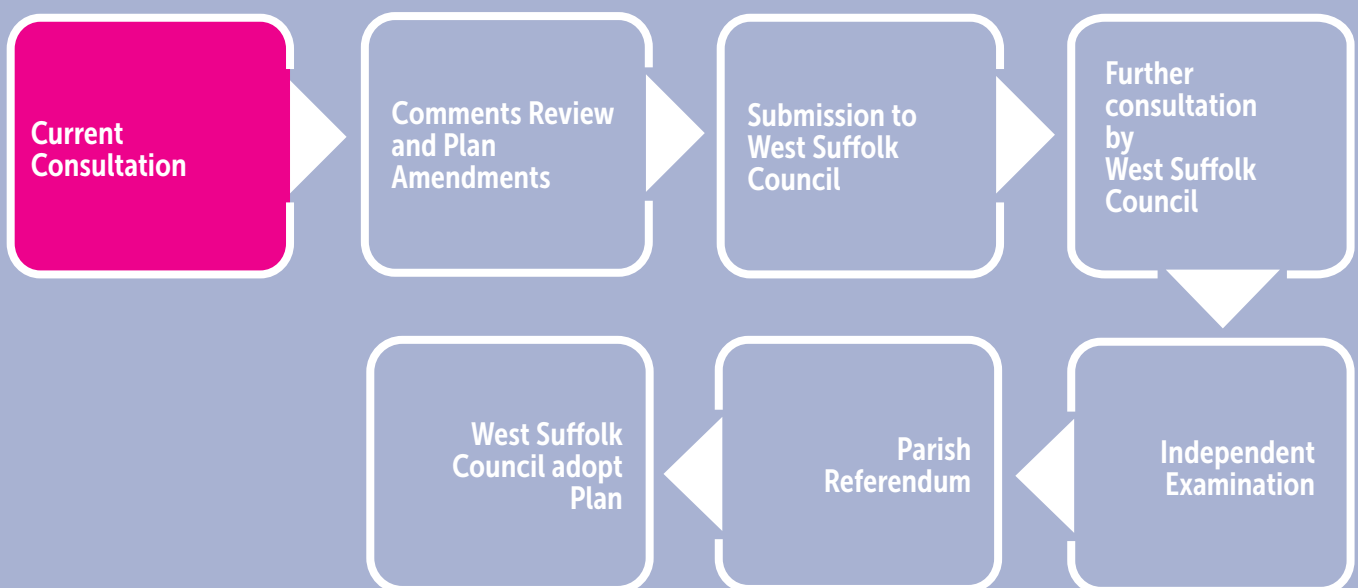


1.13 These topic areas form the basis for the content of the Plan and the distinct chapters cover the policies and aspirations for each topic. Each chapter contains a reminder of the relevant objectives, links to the relevant planning policy context and a summary of the relevant evidence collected during the preparation of the Plan, culminating in planning policies and, where appropriate, community aspirations.

1.14 The planning policies, which are distinctly identified in coloured boxes with a prefix of WBH, will supplement, rather than repeat, the planning policies of the West Suffolk Local Plan that were in place in September 2023.

#### Preparation Stages

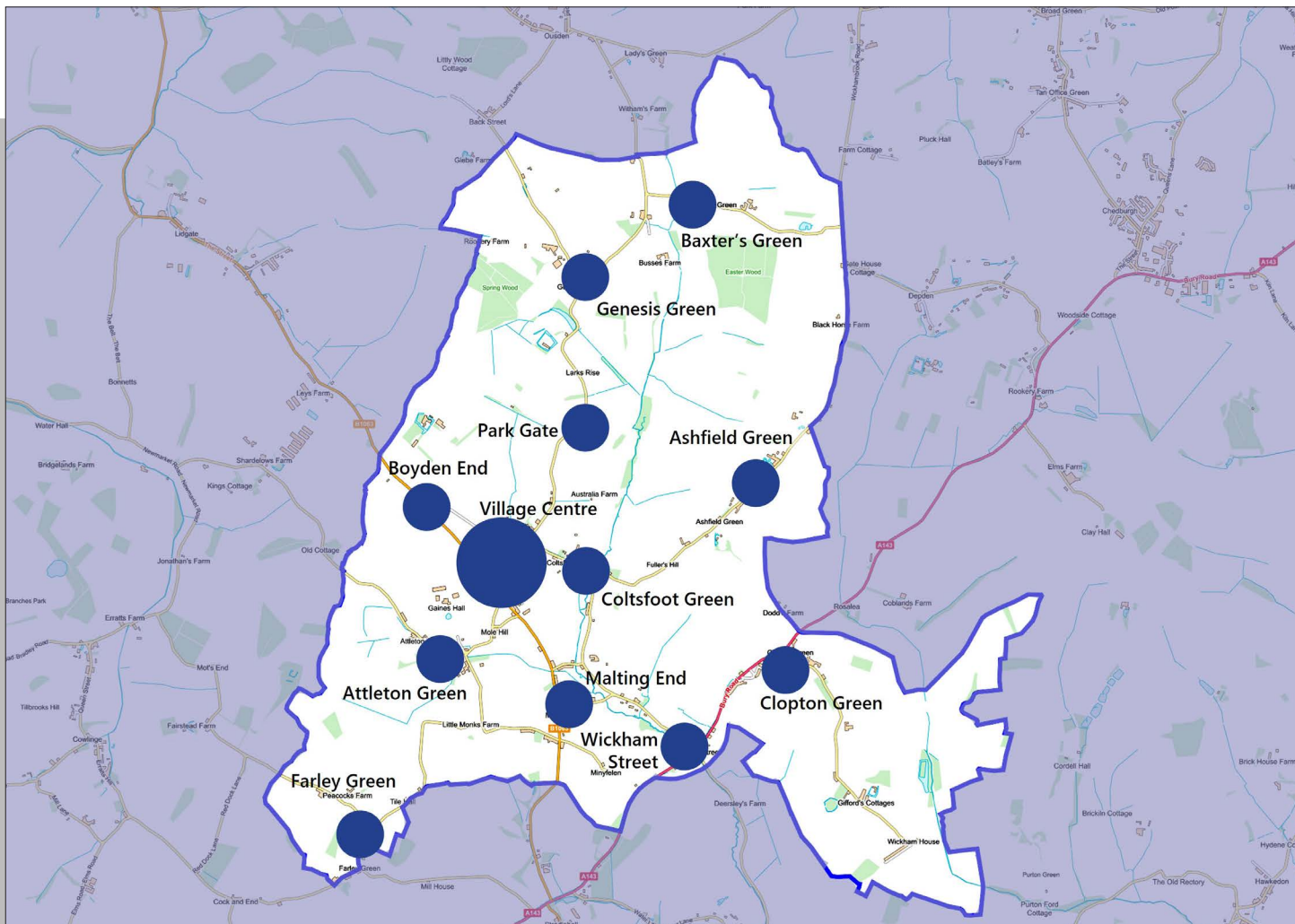
1.15 This is the “Pre-Submission” draft Neighbourhood Plan and provides the first opportunity to comment on the complete draft Neighbourhood Plan. Once the consultation is complete, the Plan will pass through the remaining stages, as illustrated on the diagram below:



1.16 Following the completion of the current consultation, the comments received will be reviewed and any necessary amendments will be made to the draft Plan before the Parish Council agrees to submit it to West Suffolk Council to complete its journey to a Parish Referendum and adoption.

## 2. ABOUT WICKHAMBROOK

- 2.1 Wickhambrook is a scattered village of around one thousand people living on eleven "Greens", ten miles from Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Clare and Haverhill or as the title of a book by local author John Bean would have it 'Ten Miles from Anywhere'. The Greens follow an Anglo-Saxon settlement pattern of small farms and scattered groups of houses beside the fields.
- 2.2 Wickhambrook takes the form of a main village cluster, and three hamlets called Boyden End, Malting End and Park Gate. There are then a set of further 'Greens' which each feature a farmhouse or two, cottages and more modern houses, strung out on a network of narrow, single-track lanes. The Greens are named Ashfield, Attleton, Baxter's, Coltsfoot, Clopton, Farley, Genesis, Meeting, Moor and Nunnery. The Greens are of varying shape and size, from very small well-defined spaces such as in Attleton Green to larger areas such as at Clopton. The location of the Greens and settlements is illustrated on **Map 2**.
- 2.3 The settlements are dispersed widely across the large parish and integrated with the underlying ancient network of fields and lanes, an enclosure pattern likely to be at least Anglo-Saxon in origin. The settlement has had an agricultural character and purpose throughout its history. There are four surviving large Manor houses, Giffords, Badmond'sfield and Clopton Hall, all high status, timber-framed 16th century houses, on the sites of Domesday manors. The village was known as "Wicham" at this time.



Map 2



- 2.4 In Saxon times, the original village was probably clustered around the site where All Saints Church now stands. It is in an area of about ten acres (four hectares) of easily-worked silty gravel soil. This is quite different from the heavy land of the present village, which was covered by a vast impenetrable forest, being quite unsuited to tillage by the tools used by the Saxons. Because of the architectural and historical merit of the original village buildings that remain around the church, this part is now a conservation area.
- 2.5 The village has an ancient Parish Church, All Saints Church, together with a Methodist Church and United Reformed Church. There are four large Manor houses, Giffords, Badmondfield, Gaines Hall and Clopton Hall, all high status, timber-framed examples of the 16th century. There are several large farmhouses dating from the early 1500's. At this time, many country dwellers were moving into towns to live, and the farmers who grew food to send to these towns became wealthy.

Wickhambrook Today

- 2.6 The 2021 Census returned Wickhambrook's population as being 1,219, making it the 17th largest village in the West Suffolk district. It has grown by 11 percent in the 20 years since 2001. Compared with 2001, the structure of the population has changed significantly over the last 20 years with a 60 percent increase in the number of residents aged 65 or over, meaning almost one-third of the population is within this age group. (see Figure 1).

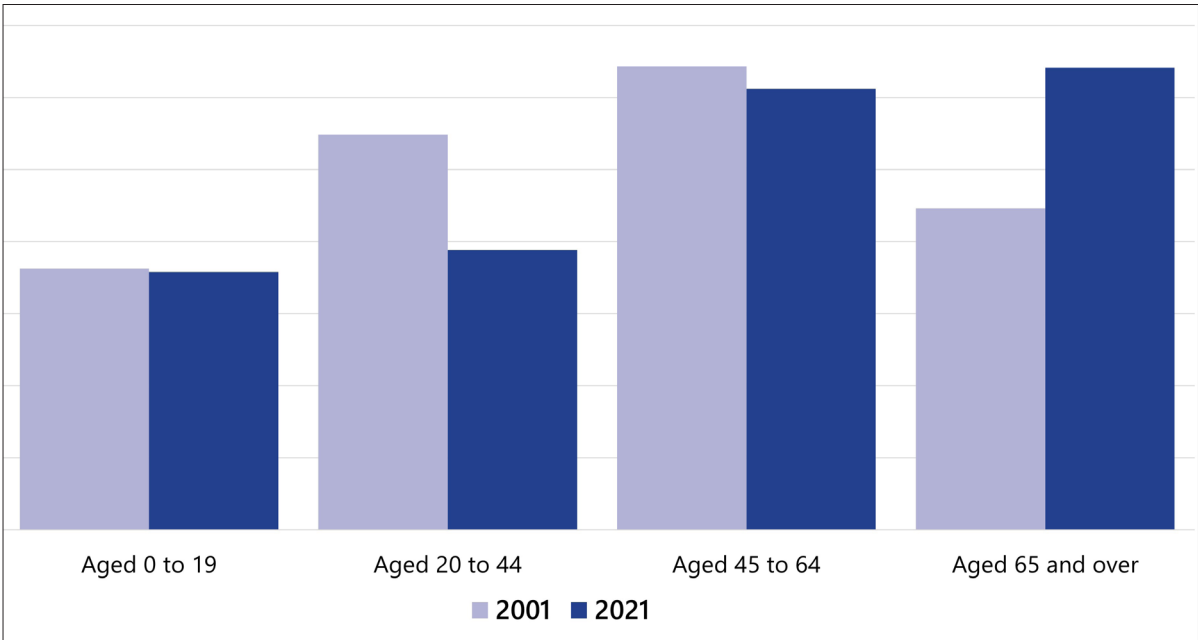


Figure 1 - Population change 2001 to 2021

- 2.7 The main built-up area of Wickhambrook is focused around the area originally known as Thorns and Nunnery Green, where the bulk of development has taken place over recent years. It is also the area where the primary school, heath centre, village shop, Memorial Social Centre, recreation ground and other village facilities can be found.

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### 3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the content of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the relevant Local Plan documents that cover the Parish. The Plan must have regard to the content of the NPPF and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The paragraphs below identify how these are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's high-level planning policies that must be taken into account in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. In September 2023 the Government published a Revised NPPF, making minor updates to the substantive July 2021 version. The Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states:

*"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.*

*For plan-making this means that:*

- a) *all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;*
- b) *strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:*
  - i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or*
  - ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."*

- 3.3 The NPPF requires that communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans should:
- "Develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development; and*

*Plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan."*

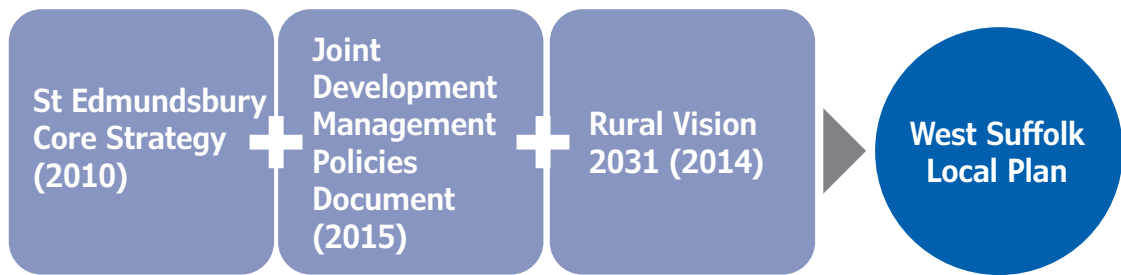
- 3.4 Towards the end of December 2022 the Government published proposed changes to the NPPF for consultation, as well as a proposal to establish National Development Management Policies which would provide a standard approach to considering proposals relating to, for example, heritage assets. At the time of preparing the draft Neighbourhood Plan, other than the minor updates in September 2023, no further changes had been published, but the Plan will be brought up-to-date to reflect such changes should these be introduced before it is put to a public referendum.

#### The Local Plan

- 3.5 Prior to 1 April 2019 the local planning authority for Wickhambrook was St Edmundsbury Borough Council. However, on that date the Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council were dissolved and replaced with the new West Suffolk Council. The Local Development Plan in force at the time of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by the Borough Council.



- 3.6 The following diagram shows the components of West Suffolk Council's Local Plan in place in September 2023 which are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.

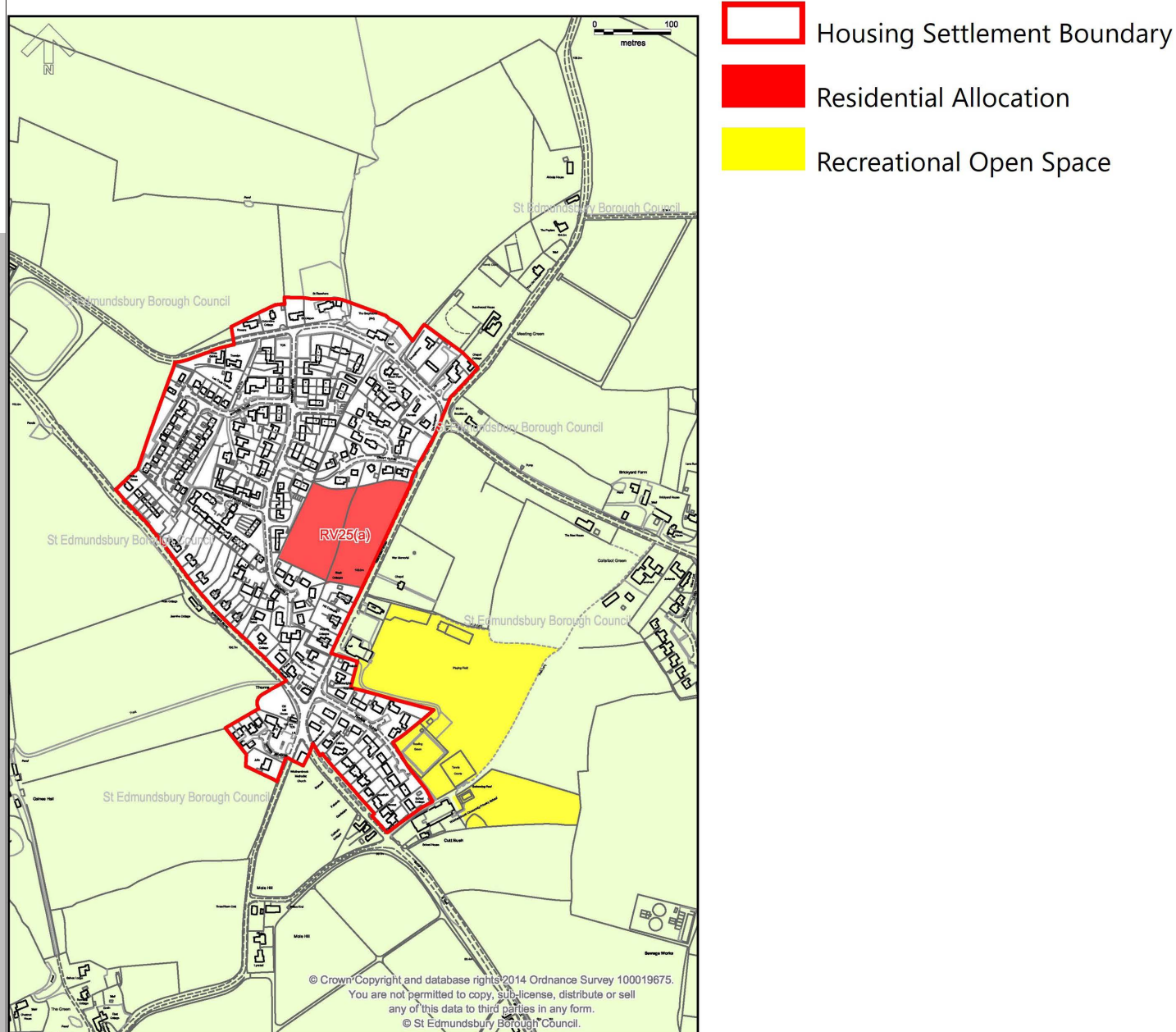


- 3.7 **St Edmundsbury Core Strategy:** The Core Strategy primarily sets the strategic planning framework for the former borough identifying the scale and broad location of planned growth for the period to 2031. Policy CS4 identifies the settlement hierarchy of the local plan directing most growth to the towns of Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, with some minor growth identified for Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres. The Core Strategy designates Wickhambrook as a Local Service Centre, following its reclassification from a Key Service Centre in the draft Core Strategy. This was on the basis of the level of services and facilities in the village. Under the Core Strategy, Local Service Centres are expected to accommodate some small-scale housing and employment development, the scale of growth being dependent upon the local environmental and infrastructure capacity of the settlement concerned.
- 3.8 **St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031:** In September 2014 the Rural Vision 2031 Local Plan document was adopted by the former St Edmundsbury Borough Council. It reaffirms the Core Strategy approach, primarily addressing the allocation of development sites in Key and Local Service Centres. The document also includes a number of aspirations for the rural parts of the former St Edmundsbury area that have been taken into consideration in preparing this Neighbourhood Plan. For Wickhambrook it identifies a number of local constraints and opportunities which have also been taken into account in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.9 Rural Vision 2031 allocated a site at Nunnery Green and Cemetery Hill for 22 dwellings, which has since been built (The Meadows). A Housing Settlement Boundary for Wickhambrook is also identified, which is illustrated in red on **Map 3**, the adopted Local Plan Inset Map for Wickhambrook.
- 3.10 **The Joint Development Management Policies** Local Plan document (February 2015) contains a comprehensive suite of detailed planning policies by which planning applications across West Suffolk will be determined on a day-to-day basis. The Neighbourhood Plan does not repeat these policies but, where appropriate, adds value and detail to them from a local perspective.

#### **Emerging West Suffolk Local Plan**

- 3.11 West Suffolk Council has commenced work on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the area. The Plan will cover the period to 2040 although the Local Development Scheme (January 2023) suggests that the new Local Plan will not be adopted until Winter 2024, after the expected time of adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan. In May 2022 the Council consulted on the Preferred Options Local Plan document and consultation on the draft Local Plan is expected to commence in January 2024.
- 3.12 The Preferred Options document identified Wickhambrook as a "Local Service Centre", a continuation of the designation in the currently adopted Local Plan. The same document identified a new site to the west of Bunters Road with an indicative capacity of 40 dwellings as well suggesting that "the potential for mixed use development should be explored on the site which could include community facilities and/or retail or local employment."

### Wickhambrook - Inset 54



Map 3 - Adopted Local Plan map for Wickhambrook

- 3.13 Given that the draft West Suffolk Local Plan had yet to be published when the draft Neighbourhood Plan was prepared, regard has been given to the Preferred Options document while recognising that it might be subject to change as the Local Plan proceeds towards adoption in 2025.

#### Suffolk County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 3.14 In July 2020, Suffolk County Council adopted the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The southern parts of the Parish are defined as a "Minerals Consultation Area" within which proposals in excess of five hectares will be referred to the County Council in order that they can be satisfied that, in accordance with paragraph 143 of the NPPF, any minerals resources present of local and national importance are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development.



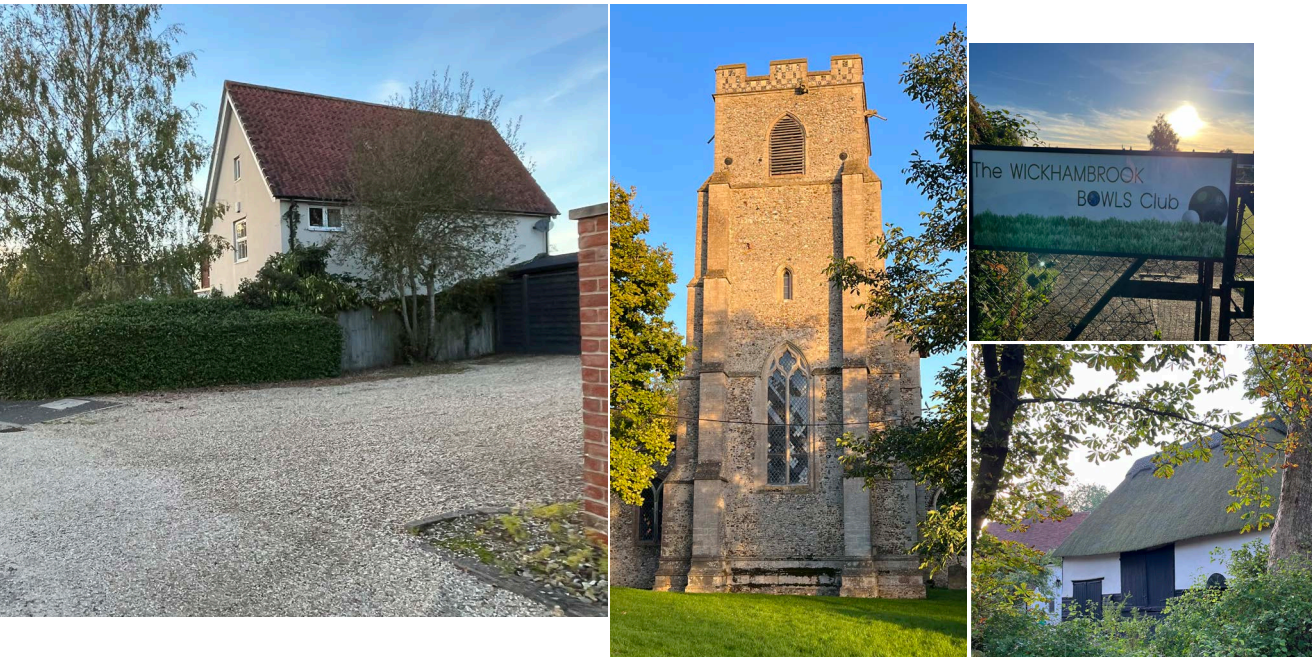
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## 4. DEVELOPMENT LOCATION

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### Objective

1. New development should minimise the loss of the best quality agricultural land and its impact on the natural and historic environment as well as being well related to the existing services and facilities in the village centre.



### Context

- 4.1 As noted earlier, the Preferred Options consultation on the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan (May 2022) proposes that Wickhambrook remains as a Local Service Centre and identified a site with an indicative capacity of 40 dwellings west of Bunters Road. However, at the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, the process to confirm the designation and any site allocated for development still had a number of stages to complete. *The proposed allocation is addressed further in chapter 5.*
- 4.2 The location of any new development could, without an element of control, have a significant detrimental impact on the character of the village and the countryside that surrounds it. This is not to say that development in Wickhambrook Parish will not happen during the Neighbourhood Plan period but a balanced approach has to be taken to meeting the needs of the village and the protection of the historic and natural environment and minimising impact on services and infrastructure.

### Current Planning Policies

- 4.3 The St Edmundsbury Core Strategy defines a Housing Settlement Boundary around the built-up areas of the village as illustrated on adopted Wickhambrook Inset Map from the Local Plan in **Map 3**.
- 4.4 The Preferred Options West Suffolk Local Plan (2022) confirms that the designation of "Housing Settlement Boundaries" will be continued in the Local Plan, identifying where the main residential land uses are to be concentrated and excluding non-residential uses such as existing employment. It also notes that a full review of the housing settlement boundaries will be undertaken ahead of the publication of the submission draft Local Plan, which is planned for January 2024. However, it is expected that the current adopted policy stance of a presumption in favour of new residential development within the Housing Settlement Boundaries will be carried forward.

- 4.5 Outside the Housing Settlement Boundaries, the Policy CS 4 of the Core Strategy states that development will be strictly controlled, with a priority on protecting and enhancing the character, appearance, historic qualities and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable diversification of the rural economy.
- 4.6 This approach is expected to continue in the West Suffolk Local Plan, with the Preferred Options consultation stating that support would be given to proposals for:
- agriculture, horticulture or forestry;
  - affordable housing to meet a proven local need;
  - equine related activities;
  - small scale facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, leisure and tourism;
  - agriculture, forestry or equine business key worker dwelling where an essential need is proven;
  - the replacement of an existing dwelling on a one for one basis of a similar scale and floor area and small scale residential development in accordance with other policies on housing in the countryside.
- 4.7 Policy DM27 of the Local Plan Development Management Policies document (2015) states that outside Housing Settlement Boundaries, "Proposals for new dwellings will be permitted in the countryside subject to satisfying the following criteria:
- a. the development is within a closely knit 'cluster' of 10 or more existing dwellings adjacent to or fronting an existing highway;
  - b. the scale of development consists of infilling a small undeveloped plot by one dwelling or a pair of semi detached dwellings commensurate with the scale and character of existing dwellings within an otherwise continuous built up frontage."

### Household Survey

- 4.8 The Wickhambrook survey asked how important certain considerations are in relation to any development in the Parish. As illustrated in Figure 2, the protection of green spaces and natural environment was the most important consideration for most respondents.

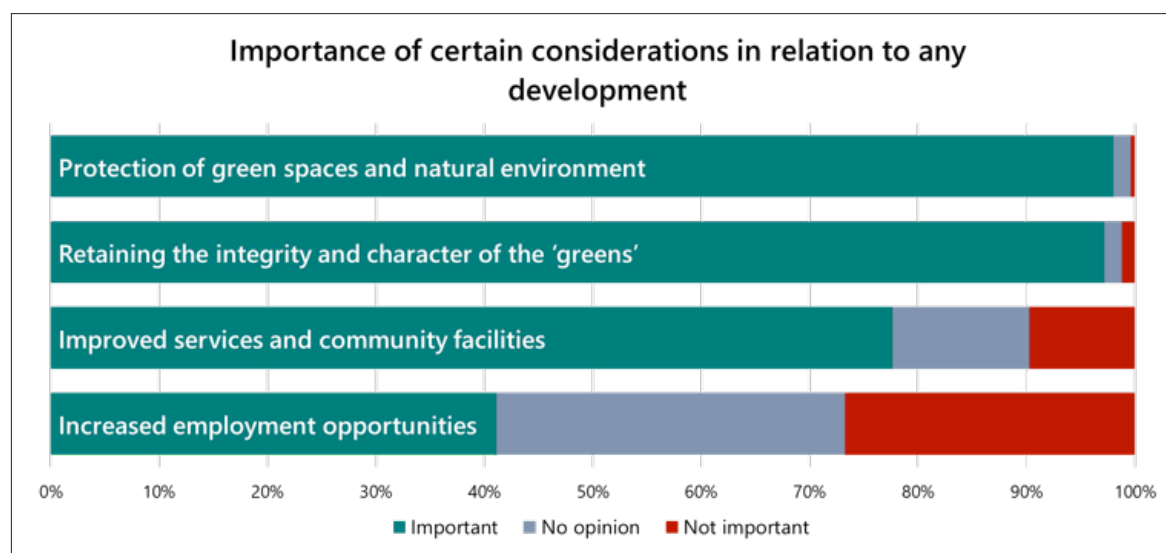


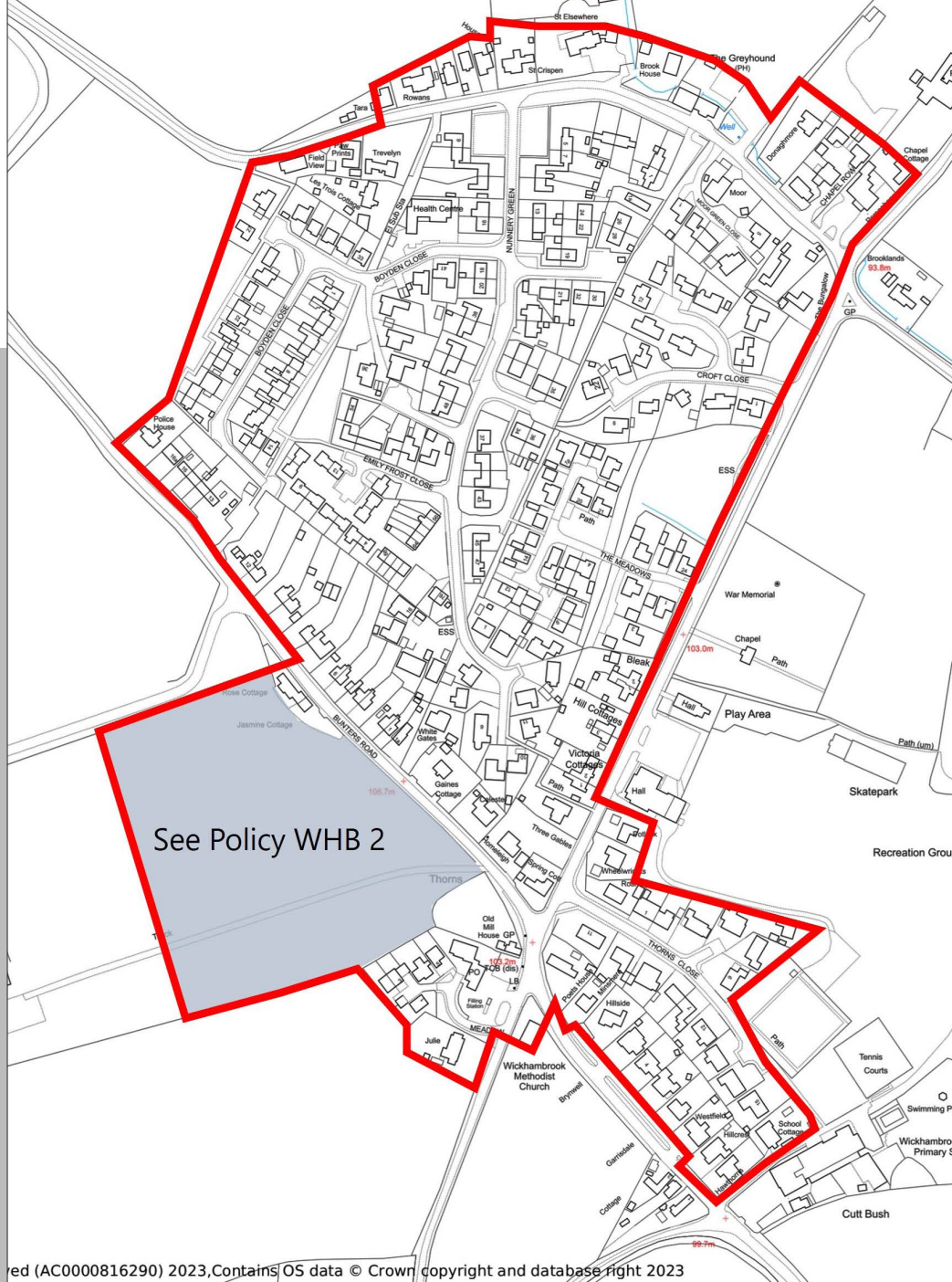
Figure 2 - Importance of certain considerations in relation to any new development

In addition, 87% of respondents thought it was important for any new building development to maintain Wickhambrook's settlement pattern of dispersed hamlets and separate Greens.

### Neighbourhood Plan Policy

- 4.9 The Housing Settlement Boundary in the adopted and emerging Local Plans has been reviewed as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. With the exception of the site that is proposed for development in this Neighbourhood Plan, it is not considered necessary to amend the Housing Settlement Boundary. The new Housing Settlement Boundary is illustrated on Map 4 and the Policies Map.





Map 4 – Housing Settlement Boundary

4.10 In accordance with the adopted and emerging planning policies for Wickhambrook, new development will be focused within the Housing Settlement Boundary. This approach will ensure that the largely undeveloped countryside in the remainder of the Neighbourhood Area will remain preserved and the distinct settlement form is maintained. **The indication of the Housing Settlement Boundary in the Neighbourhood Plan cannot preclude future local plan documents reviewing the Boundary and amending it to reflect housing allocations in that plan.**

4.11 Within the Housing Settlement Boundary there will remain a presumption in favour of development, but it is essential that any proposals have regard, as appropriate, to:

- the presence of heritage and natural assets;
- the landscape setting of the village;
- the capacity of services and infrastructure; and
- the impact of development on designated habitats in the wider area.

Policies elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as the Local Plan and the NPPF address such levels of detail.

- 4.12 Outside the Housing Settlement Boundary, there are groups of dwellings that would conform with Policy DM27 of the Local Plan in that they form a “closely knit ‘cluster’ of 10 or more existing dwellings adjacent to or fronting an existing highway”. These include Wickham Street adjoining the A143 and Clopton Park/Clopton Green/Bury Road. The Neighbourhood Plan does not define Housing Settlement Boundaries for these areas and any proposals for housing in these and other areas will be determined in accordance with Policy DM27 or any policy that supersedes it in the West Suffolk Local Plan.
- 4.13 There may be situations where it can be adequately demonstrated that it is necessary for development to take place. However, and in accordance with the Local Plan, this will be limited to that which is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses that need to be located in the countryside. This approach does not restrict the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential uses, where proposals meet the government regulations and local planning policies for such conversions. There may also be occasions where the expansion of an existing business use will be supported where it can be demonstrated that such a proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the landscape and the infrastructure required to support it.

### **Policy WHB 1 - Spatial Strategy**

In the period 2023 to 2040 the Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with the village’s designation as a Local Service Centre in the adopted Local Plan.

New development will be focused within the defined Housing Settlement Boundary, as identified on the Policies Map, where proposals for housing development on infill plots or for small groups on redeveloped plots will be supported where they do not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity, the natural and historic environment, infrastructure and highways.

Outside of the Settlement Boundary, priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the countryside from inappropriate development. Proposals will be supported in principle for:

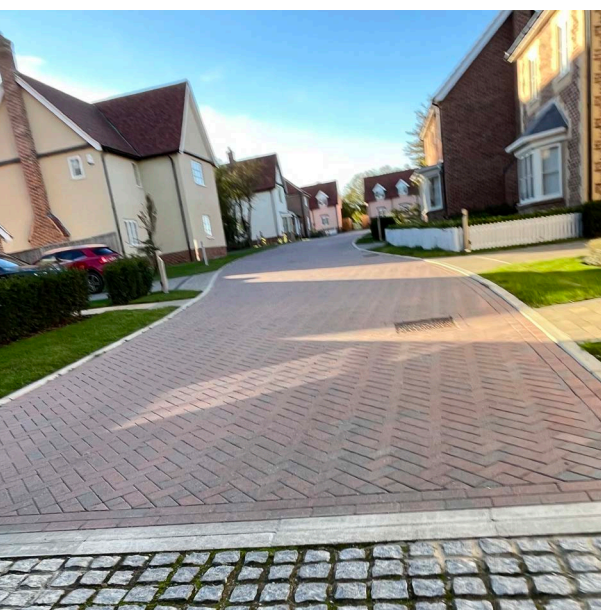
- agriculture, horticulture or forestry development;
- affordable housing on a rural exception site that meets a proven local need;
- equine related activities;
- small scale facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, community uses, leisure and tourism;
- an agriculture, forestry or equine business key worker dwelling where an essential need is proven;
- the replacement of an existing dwelling on a one for one basis of a similar scale and floor area and small-scale residential development in accordance with other policies on housing in the countryside;

Proposals for new buildings outside the Housing Settlement Boundary will be required to be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, or other appropriate and proportionate evidence. This should demonstrate how the proposal can be accommodated in the countryside without having a significant detrimental impact, by reason of the building’s scale, materials and location, on the character and appearance of a property or the countryside and without diminishing gaps between settlements.

## 5. HOUSING

### Objectives

2. New housing development will reflect Wickhambrook's status as a Local Service Centre within the "Settlement Hierarchy" of West Suffolk and provide a range of types, sizes, prices and tenures that meets the needs of all age groups and incomes.
3. New housing should be located where it is safely accessible by foot to the village's services and facilities.
4. Homes should incorporate measures to ensure they are accessible for all needs, incorporate energy saving features and make use of sustainable approaches to building.



### Context

- 5.1 The 2021 Census shows that there were 559 dwellings in Wickhambrook Parish, an increase of 72 since the 2001 Census. The most significant development in recent years has taken place at The Meadows where 24 homes, including affordable homes, were built as a result of the allocation in the St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031 document.
- 5.2 In terms of house sizes, the Parish has a many more homes with four or more bedrooms than one and two bedroomed homes. This imbalance is amplified when compared with the mix across West Suffolk. Thirty-five percent of homes in Wickhambrook have four or more bedrooms compared with 22 percent in West Suffolk. (see Figure 3).

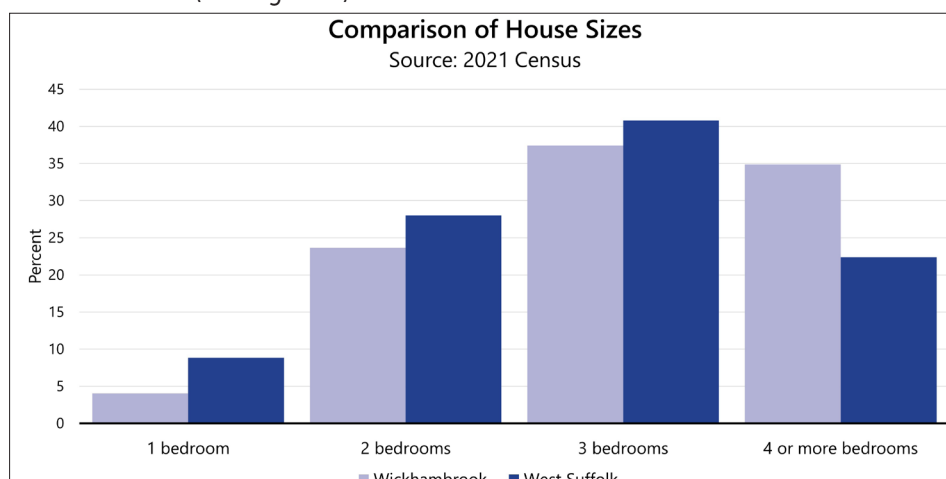


Figure 3 - House size comparison for Wickhambrook and West Suffolk





- 5.3 Land Registry data indicates that there were 12 dwellings sold in Wickhambrook in the year to 1 September 2023. The average price paid was £540,416 within a range of £271,000 for a terraced dwelling to £1,175,000 for a detached dwelling.
- 5.4 Affordability of homes is a key issue at the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan as mortgage interest rates rise. The most recent government data on house prices and earnings for West Suffolk (2022) indicates that the median (middle value) ratio is that prices are 8.9 times that of individual incomes, up from 7.1 in 2012.

### Current Planning Policies

- 5.5 As referred to above, the St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031 document allocated the land at The Meadows for 22 homes. This development, that delivered 24 dwellings, is now complete.
- 5.6 Other policies of relevance to housing development in Wickhambrook can be found in the Joint Development Management Policies Document (2015) and are:
- Policy DM22: Residential Design
  - Policy DM24: Alterations or Extensions to Dwellings, including Self Contained Annexes and Development within the Curtilage
  - Policy DM25: Extensions to Domestic Gardens within the Countryside
  - Policy DM26: Agricultural and Essential Workers Dwellings
  - Policy DM28: Residential Use of Redundant Buildings in the Countryside
- 5.7 The May 2022 Preferred Options Local Plan consultation planned for a minimum indicative requirement of 7,134 new homes across West Suffolk between 2021 and 2040. Ten percent of the requirement would be built in the 12 Local Service Centres. For Wickhambrook, the consultation proposed developing a site west of Bunters Road with an indicative capacity 40 homes (final capacity to be determined through site development brief) and possible mixed uses.

### Household Survey

- 5.8 During the course of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, residents had an opportunity to have a say about the amount of new housing that they would support in the village over the next 20 years (see Figure 4).

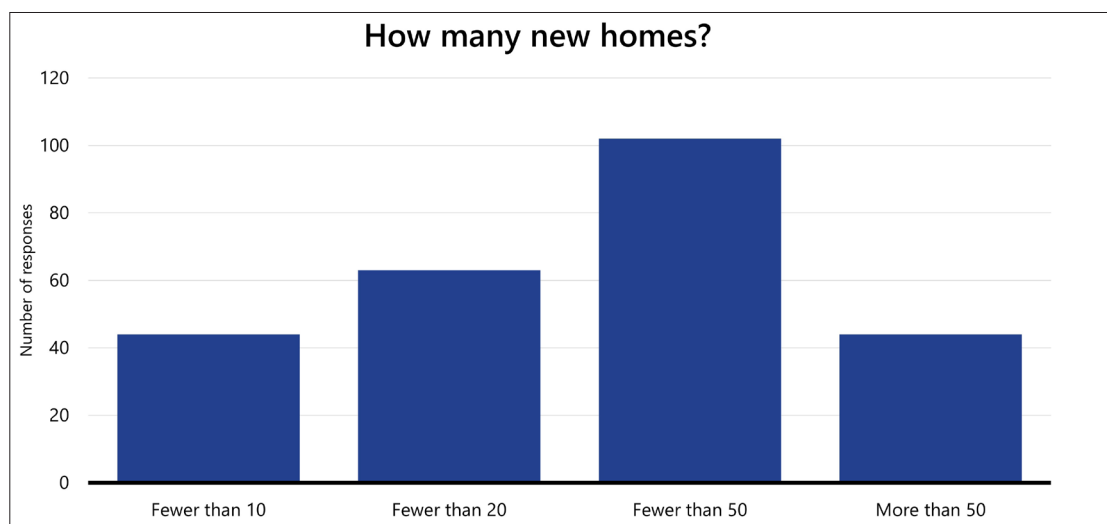


Figure 4 - 2022 Household Survey opinion on number of new homes

- 5.9 Fifty percent of respondents felt that individual homes and/or infill would be the most appropriate size of housing development to meet Wickhambrook's needs, closely followed by 48% supporting smaller development of fewer of ten houses. The most important reason for new housing is to enable young people to remain in the community. (see Figure 5).

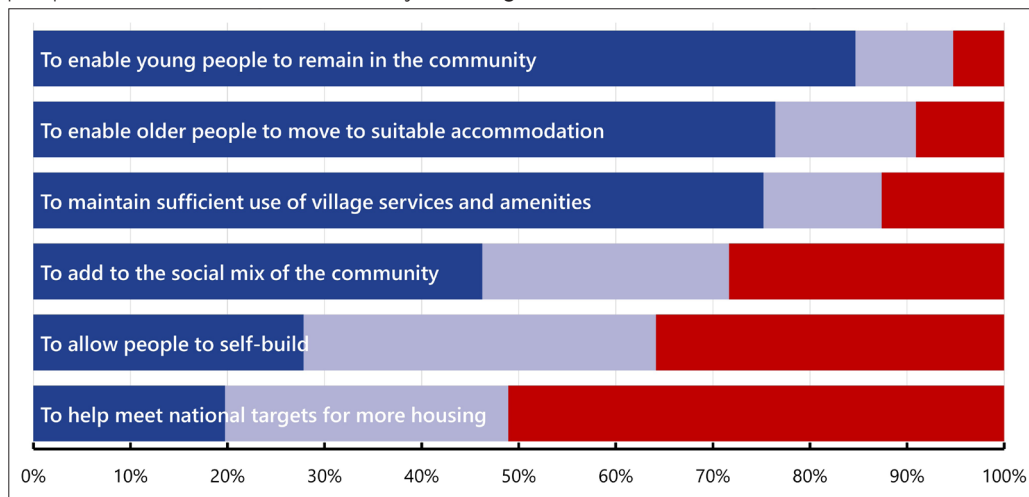


Figure 5 - Importance attached to reason for new housing

### Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 5.10 The designation of the village as a Local Service Centre in the Local Plan brings with it an expectation that a level of additional housing development should take place in Wickhambrook. The 2022 Neighbourhood Plan survey has demonstrated that there is some support for additional growth, with most supporting fewer than 50 new homes over the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.11 When West Suffolk Council consulted on the Preferred Options for the Local Plan in 2022 they identified, through a separate Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, that four sites were considered for development in choosing the preferred site west of Bunters Road.
- 5.12 In order to inform the Parish Council's response to the Local Plan consultation, a focused consultation was held in April 2023 to consider two options as to how the Local Plan site might be developed. The consultation noted that any development on the site should:
- Minimise the impact on existing residents
  - Provide a mix of house sizes, including bungalows, that meet the needs of Wickhambrook
  - Preserve land along the southern edge of the site for informal open space and accommodating water run-off from the development. Allotments might also be possible in this area.
  - Retain and improve the trees and hedgerows around the site to reduce the impact of the development on the wider landscape
  - Provide opportunities for additional open space
  - Enable the safe crossing of pedestrians over Bunters Road
  - Minimise the impact of the commercial uses by reflecting a design that is typical of traditional low-rise Suffolk farmyards
  - Be heavily landscaped around the edges.
- 5.13 A total of 126 responses were received with most stating that they did not prefer one particular option. There was, however, a strong level of support for the provision of allotments as part of the development and the inclusion of "mixed uses" on the site again found no strong opinion in favour or against.

### Neighbourhood Plan approach to housing development

- 5.14 The Parish Council acknowledges the level of concern in relation to additional housing being proposed for Wickhambrook. However, at the time of preparing the draft Neighbourhood Plan, it was considered very unlikely that the Preferred Options allocation would be removed from the draft Local Plan and so the Parish Council has sought to use the Neighbourhood Plan to influence how the site should be developed. By doing so, the development is guided by the studies and the engagement that has taken place in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.



### **Land west of Bunters Road**

- 5.15 The starting point for the consideration of this allocation is to consider how to minimise the impact of the development on existing residents, the landscape, historic buildings and local infrastructure. A separate Site Masterplan has been produced for the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Government's neighbourhood planning support package and is available to view on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council's website. The site analysis in that document notes that the site "presents no obvious significant constraints to the development." It notes that:
1. There are a number of hedgerows across the site and trees which provide an instant landscape structure within which the development should sit. These important landscape features should be retained and enhanced, ideally by being integrated into the open space component of the development.
  2. The existing three access points are unlikely to serve the development due to the proximity of the junction (southern access), the adjacency to the existing dwellings (central access) and the dedicated agricultural machinery business served by the northern access.
  3. There are some existing dwellings located on Bunters Road which will require buffering and screening, while there is only one listed building in close proximity located on the other side of Bunters Road.
  4. The southern part of the site has been identified for a Sustainable Drainage infrastructure (SuDs) location, thus development would be restricted in that location.
- 5.16 In addition, feedback from community engagement has identified a need for development to minimise impact on the setting of Gaines Cottage, opposite the site on Bunters Road, and long-distance views from Bunters Road.

### **Development Principles**

- 5.17 In considering how the site should be developed, the following development principles should be incorporated:
- The development should comprise no more than 40 dwellings.
  - The mixed-use element of the development should be within either Town and Country Planning Use Class E or Use Class F (see Appendix 1).
  - The mixed-use development should have a maximum gross floorspace of 450 square metres where no single unit in Use Class E shall have a floorspace greater than 100 square metres unless for the provision of medical or health services.
  - Development must have regard to the presence of the Listed Building opposite the site on Bunter's Road and not cause harm to its setting.
  - Traffic calming must be provided on Bunter's Road to enable a safe pedestrian crossing point to provide safe links to services in the village including the primary school and GP Surgery.
  - Structural landscaping shall be retained and reinforced along all boundaries.
  - A development buffer shall be provided around Rose and Jasmine Cottage, west of Bunters Road.
  - A surface water drainage system (SuDs) in accordance with the standards of the Lead Local Flood Authority (Suffolk County Council) shall be provided to manage water run-off from the development and reduce flood risk on adjoining lower land.
  - Open space to be provided along the southern edge of the site to include the potential for allotments.
  - The opportunity to deliver the affordable housing requirement for the site through a Community Land Trust should be explored unless, at the time of the development, a Trust has not been established and / or is not in a position to deliver the affordable housing.



### Site Development Framework

5.18 Figure 6 provides a Site Concept Drawing for how the site should be developed. Developers will be expected to have regard to the Site Concept Drawing in preparing proposals for the site as well as identifying how the principles will be delivered.



Figure 6 - Site Concept Drawing

- 5.19 The Development Framework identifies an area for mixed use development in accordance with the Preferred Options West Suffolk Local Plan (May 2022). The exact mix and viability of uses has yet to be determined but, in accordance with the Development Principles, the maximum gross floorspace shall be 450 square metres and no single unit in Use Class E shall have a floorspace greater than 100 square metres unless for the provision of medical or health services.
- 5.20 Use Class F - Local Community and Learning includes for the provision of "shops (mostly) selling essential goods, including food, where the shop's premises do not exceed 280 square metres and there is no other such facility within 1000 metres." Given that the Village Stores at Thorns Corner is currently open and operating, a proposal for a shop under this Use Class would not be supported at this time.
- 5.21 The mixed-use development should be low rise development, having an overall height no greater than 6 metres to ridge height. Car and service vehicle parking is located so as to minimise impact on residential amenity. The development also makes provision for secure cycle parking.

- 5.22 The housing development makes provision for a mix of house sizes across all tenures, with a greater emphasis on two and three bedroomed dwellings to redress the imbalance of larger homes in the Parish. Bungalows should be provided in the area closest to Bunters Road in order to minimise impact on the Grade II Gaines Cottage and provide choice in the housing available.
- 5.23 The vehicular access shall be solely from Bunters Road at a position to minimise light glare in residential properties opposite. Pedestrian and cycle links should provide safe and convenient links into and from the site to local facilities. Where feasible, this should include links to the employment site to the west subject to any security issues being addressed.
- 5.24 Where viable, structural landscaping should be planted before development commences.

### **Policy WHB 2 - Land west of Bunter's Road**

A site of 4.2 hectares west of Bunter's Road, as identified on the Policies Map, is allocated for:

- i. up to 40 dwellings including affordable housing, and
- ii. up to 450 square metres gross of Commercial, Business and Service uses (Use Class E) or Local Community uses (Use Class F), as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), and
- iii. community open space, and
- iv. structural landscaping.

Development of the site should be undertaken in accordance with the Concept Diagram (**Figure 6**), the Development Principles set out in this Plan and the Wickhambrook Site Masterplan (2023).

Development proposals should incorporate measures to manage traffic safety and speeds on Bunters Road including the provision of a safe crossing point to facilitate links to village facilities.

Housing proposals should provide a mix of sizes and types in accordance with the most up-to-date evidence on objectively-assessed housing needs. The amount of affordable housing provision should be in accordance with the relevant adopted Local Plan policy at the time of the planning application. It should be designed so that it is 'tenure blind' (so that it is indistinguishable from open market housing), be distributed around the site and not concentrated in any one area. The preferred method of delivery for the affordable housing is through a Community Land Trust.

Proposals that include an element of self-build housing will be supported.

Applications should be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and a Heritage Impact Assessment.



### Affordable Housing

- 5.25 As already noted, affordability remains an issue for those seeking to get on the housing ladder. Almost 75 percent of the Parish's homes are owned compared with 60 percent across West Suffolk, while 13 percent are socially rented compared with 16 percent for the wider district. The Parish Council commissioned an Affordable Housing Needs Survey early in 2022 which generated a 33 percent response rate from households. It identified a need for ten affordable dwellings which should be two-bedroomed properties.
- 5.26 There are two main mechanisms for delivering affordable housing, either as a percentage of a large housing development or as a "rural exceptions site". The adopted Local Plan for the area requires new developments on sites of over ten houses to provide 30% of the total as housing that meets the "affordable" definition. The NPPF defines what type of housing is defined as "affordable" and the current definition is included in the Glossary of this Plan.
- 5.27 Any allocation in the Local Plan will be required to include a proportion of affordable housing which could be 40% if the requirement in the Preferred Options Local Plan consultation remains in the final Plan. The affordable housing would be available to those registered on "Home-Link", the choice based letting scheme for all affordable housing owned by councils and other registered providers in West Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. It would not provide a preference for those that have a need or family connection requiring them to live in Wickhambrook.
- 5.28 Policy DM29 of the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document also enables affordable housing to meet locally identified needs to be built, as an exception, outside the housing settlement boundary. Promoted by the Parish Council and known as "exception sites", the following conditions would need to be satisfied:
1. A local need has to be established, usually through a detailed Parish housing needs survey and/or the West Suffolk Housing Register data; and
  2. A willing landowner prepared to sell land at a price significantly below the market value for housing land; and
  3. A registered social landlord (housing association) willing to work with the Parish Council and District Council to both secure grant funding and manage a scheme.

Furthermore, West Suffolk Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document in 2019 which, at paragraph 4.51, states that: *"An exception site is normally but not explicitly likely to consist of....no more than ten units in a larger village."*

- 5.29 One option for securing affordable housing that remains available for the local community is through the establishment of a Community Land Trust (CLT). This is a form of community-led housing, set up and run by local people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets. CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing, ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now but for every future occupier. A CLT scheme has recently been delivered at Lavenham and opportunities for a similar scheme in Wickhambrook could be considered as part of the site allocated in Policy WHB 2 should there be an identified local need for affordable housing for those with a local connection and sufficient local interest in being part of the Trust.

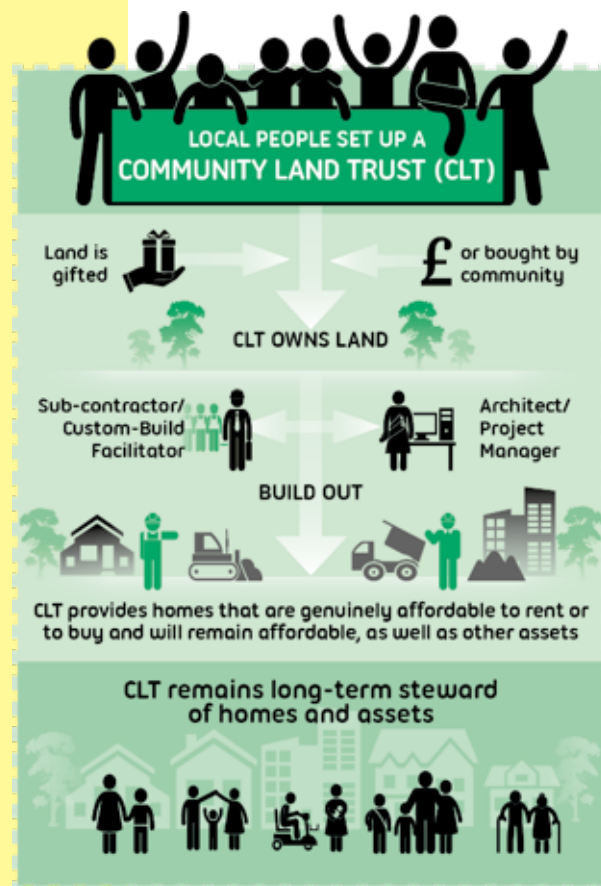


## COMMUNITY ACTION 1 - COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

The Parish Council will work with landowners and interested village residents in order to set up a Community Land Trust (CLT) for Wickhambrook. The CLT will be tasked with planning, building and managing a group of affordable homes designed to meet local housing needs, as established by a current housing needs survey, within the boundary of developments south-west of Bunters Road. These homes will be maintained in perpetuity by the CLT for the benefit of local people (village residents and/or close family members of village residents) and will provide a range of affordable living options for people at various stages of their lives - starter homes for young people; family homes; and homes for older people. Partnerships with housing associations will facilitate the day-to-day management of these homes and maintain costs for residents permanently at affordable levels.

The CLT will also manage land to be devoted to the provision of community facilities. In consultation with parishioners, the Parish Council will determine whether these facilities should include, for example:

- community gardens or leisure spaces as set out in Community Action 7
- community retail facilities such as a stall for fruit, vegetables and produce community workshops or meeting rooms
- a relocated health centre.



### Housing Design Standards

- 5.30 The design features of new homes can have a significant impact on the character of an area. The Local Plan already contains detailed policies for the consideration of the potential impact on the character of an area and the amenity of existing residents. In addition, in December 2017, the local planning authority issued a "technical advice note" to achieve minimum internal floorspace standards. The advice note states that "the Government's national space standards [March 2015] are the minimum acceptable space standards that should be applied to build both open market and affordable housing within West Suffolk. It is the intention of West Suffolk Council to include a policy requirement for all new homes to be built to the national space standards in the next version of their Local Plan. This Technical Advice Note is therefore an interim measure until such time as the new combined West Suffolk Local Plan is published."
- 5.31 The September 2023 NPPF states that "Planning policies for housing should make use of the Government's optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable housing, where this would address an identified need for such properties." The March 2015 standards encourage provision of enough space in homes to ensure that they can be used flexibly by a range of residents. The standards also aim to ensure that sufficient storage can be integrated into dwelling units. It is emphasised that these standards, which are set out in Appendix 2, are expressed as minimum space standards.
- 5.32 Externally, it is also important that homes meet modern day requirements for the storage of wheelie bins and cycles. Without sufficient and appropriate space reserved for these uses, the consequence can be added clutter and a deterrent in the use of cycles as a mode of travel.

- 5.33 Planning policies cannot influence the internal layout of dwellings but given the generally ageing population, new homes will be particularly welcomed where they meet the accessible homes standards currently set out in Part M of the Building Regulations. Part M defines three levels of housing accessibility:
- Category 1: Visitable dwellings – Part M4(1);
  - Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings – Part M4(2) and
  - Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings – Part M4(3).
- 5.34 The current Building Regulations require that all new dwellings to which the Regulations apply should be designed to a minimum of Part M4(1) 'visitable dwellings' standard. Local authorities can opt into the requirements for Part M4(2) and Part M4(3) via Local Plan policy. However, a 2015 Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) specifies that neighbourhood plans cannot set this standard.
- 5.35 Given the restrictions set out in the Written Ministerial Statement, otherwise acceptable proposals for dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan Area are particularly encouraged to meet Part M4(2) and M4(3) of the Building Regulations.
- 5.36 The development of adaptable and accessible homes for all users helps to ensure that dwellings are appropriate for older persons' needs whilst still meaning that they are suitable for other types of occupiers such as first-time buyers. The Lifetime Homes standard "seeks to enable 'general needs' housing to provide, either from the outset or through simple and cost-effective adaptation, design solutions that meet the existing and changing needs of diverse households". Proposals for new housing in Wickhambrook will be especially encouraged to meet the Lifetime Homes standard.

### **Policy WHB 3 - Housing Design**

Proposals for new dwellings should achieve appropriate internal space through compliance with the latest Nationally Described Space Standards. Dwellings should also make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and cycles, in accordance with the adopted cycle parking standards.

In addition, all new homes shall provide:

- suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and
- one electric vehicle charging point for each on-plot parking space required to meet the current adopted parking standards.

New dwellings that are designed to be adaptable in order to meet the needs of the increasingly aging population, without restricting the needs of younger families, will be supported.

### **Energy Efficient Homes**

- 5.37 The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), has developed a community carbon calculator in response to a demand from smaller settlements to have robust and accurate data on their carbon footprint, so that they can best direct their efforts to tackle the climate emergency. For Wickhambrook, it identifies that housing is the biggest source of CO<sub>2</sub>e (carbon dioxide equivalent) emissions whereas across West Suffolk as a whole, the consumption of goods and services is the biggest source. The actual consumption footprint of households in Wickhambrook is estimated to be 22.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per household a year, one third higher than the average for households across West Suffolk, as illustrated in **Figure 7**. Of significance, at a time when fuel costs are having significant impacts on household bills, carbon emissions from housing in the Parish are nearly twice that of West Suffolk as a whole.

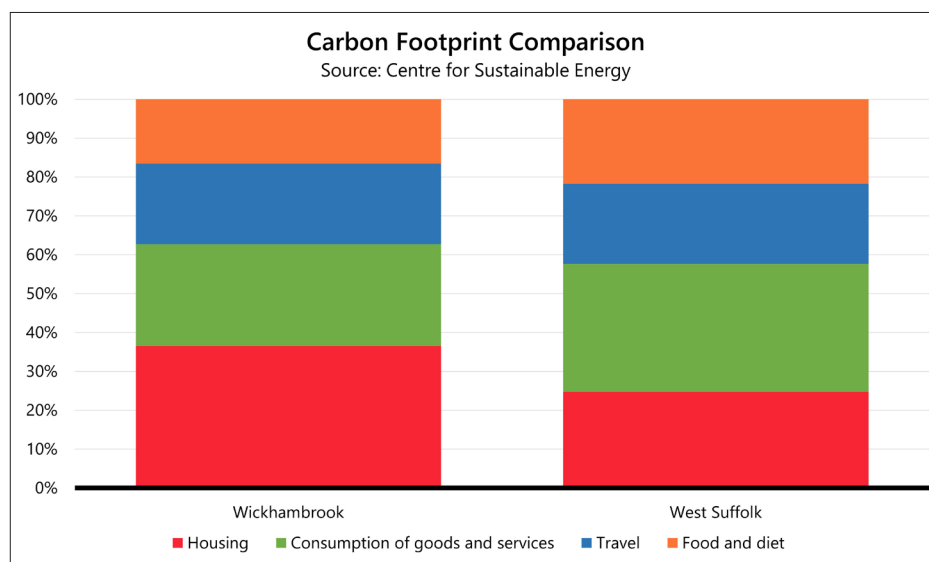


Figure 7 - Wickhambrook and West Suffolk Carbon Footprint Comparison

- 5.38 Energy consumption and the demand for energy is a major determinant of climate change. Where energy use is necessary, then priority should be given to utilising the most sustainable sources. Many energy-saving initiatives can be installed on homes within permitted development rights (when full planning permission is not required) but there may be occasions where schemes that do require planning permission could have a potential adverse impact on the character of the area and the amenity of nearby residents. In line with national government policy, the long-term aim should be to reduce the overall use of all fossil fuels – gas, oil and coal.
- 5.39 The use of heat and power in buildings accounts for 30 percent of the UK's total energy usage. The government has given a commitment to introduce a Future Homes Standard to ensure that new build homes are "future-proofed with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency" with an aim to ensure that new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes built under the current Building Regulations. In 2025, compliance with the Future Homes Standard will become mandatory.
- 5.40 The Preferred Options Local Plan identified an intent to include a planning policy that will address climate change, contribute to the circular economy (a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible) and to guide sustainable design and construction.

#### Policy WHB 4 - Low Energy and Energy Efficient Housing Design

Proposals that incorporate current best practice in energy conservation will be supported where such measures are designed to be integral to the building design and minimise any detrimental impact on the building or its surroundings.

Proposals for new dwellings should demonstrate how they:

- maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings; and
- incorporate best practice in energy conservation and are designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency; and
- avoid fossil fuel-based heating systems; and
- incorporate sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures including, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar panels and grey water recycling, rainwater and stormwater harvesting.



## 6. EMPLOYMENT AND LOCAL ECONOMY

### Objective

5. A range of employment opportunities in the Parish will be retained and supported where there will not be a detrimental impact on the environment, services and infrastructure.

### Context

- 6.1 The recently published 2021 Census results indicate that some 53 percent of Wickhambrook's residents aged 16 and over are economically active and in employment, compared with almost sixty percent across West Suffolk. Probably reflective of the impact of the Covid pandemic of 2020/21, 38 percent of those in employment in Wickhambrook worked mainly at home at the time of the 2021 Census, compared with just 17 percent ten years earlier. There are a number of business premises across the Parish ranging from large agricultural machinery manufacture through to shops and other services. Farms form an important part of the local economy, and this is supplemented by stud farms and stables typical of the hinterland of Newmarket.

### Current Planning Policies

- 6.2 Policy CS9 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy states that proposals for growth in Local Service Centres "will be expected to include provision for employment land and premises to meet local needs and encourage sustainable communities including, where viable, integrated within strategic areas of growth." Rural Vision 2031 includes an aspiration that "Villages have local jobs and facilities and are not simply dormitories," while Policy DM30 of the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document (2015) seeks to protect employment land and premises and Policy DM31 provides criteria for the consideration of proposals for farm diversification. There is a range of equine related businesses located across the Parish and Policies DM32 - Business and Domestic Equine Related Activities in the Countryside and Policy DM47 - Development Relating to the Horse Racing Industry will be applied to proposals that affect such premises until superseded by new policies in the West Suffolk Local Plan.
- 6.3 The Preferred Options West Suffolk Local Plan states that policies within the Plan will ensure that existing employment land and premises will be protected. A further policy is expected to address how proposals for farm diversification will be considered.

### Household Survey

- 6.4 The Neighbourhood Plan Survey asked whether it was important to identify land for new and growing businesses in our community. The response from residents was inconclusive, as can be seen in Figure 8.

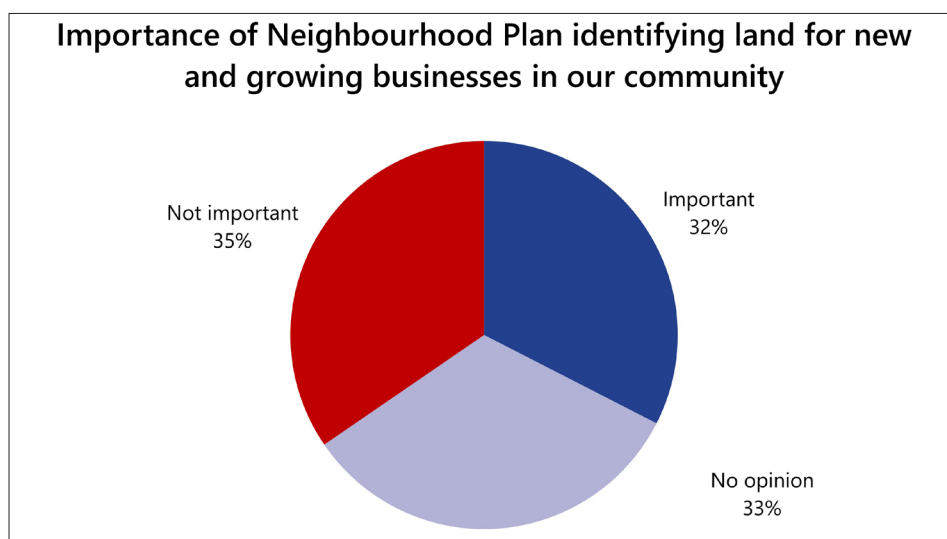


Figure 8 - Residents' views on identifying land for new and growing businesses

- 6.5 Similarly, views were fairly even as to whether the Neighbourhood Plan should facilitate the development of low cost, flexible workspaces for local start-ups, small enterprises, and freelancers. Of those that work in Wickhambrook, the most important factors that could improve their working experience were improved communication systems and the provision of a coffee shop.

### Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 6.6 The Neighbourhood Plan does not identify new sites for employment uses but it does seek to protect the existing employment locations to ensure that local job opportunities remain where such uses remain acceptable and viable. The main employment location can be found at Claydon Drills south-west of Bunters Road, where agricultural machinery manufacture takes place. The site is served from a dedicated access road from Bunters Road and has planning permission for a number of additional buildings on site which would be used for research and development, manufacturing and assembly as well as offices. Other, smaller but no less important sites are located across the Parish which all contribute to supporting the local economy and provide jobs.

#### Policy WHB 5 - Employment Sites

The retention and development of existing employment and other business uses, including those identified on the Policies Map, will be supported providing such proposals do not have a detrimental impact on the local landscape character, heritage assets, residential amenity (including noise, light and air pollution, loss of privacy and overlooking), traffic generation, identified important views and identified important gaps in the built-up area.

Proposals for non-employment or business uses that are expected to have an adverse impact on employment generation will only be permitted where one or more of the following criteria has been met:

- a. evidence can be provided that genuine attempts have been made to sell/let the site/premises in its current use, and that it can be demonstrated that no suitable and viable alternative employment / business uses can be found or are likely to be found in the foreseeable future;
- b. the existing use has created over-riding environmental problems (e.g. noise, odours or traffic) and permitting an alternative use would be a substantial environmental benefit that would outweigh the loss of an employment / business site;
- c. an alternative use or mix of uses would assist in regeneration and offer greater benefits to the community in meeting local business and employment needs;
- d. it is for an employment related support facility, such as employment training/education or workplace crèche;
- e. an alternative use or mix of uses would provide other sustainability benefits that would outweigh the loss of an employment / business site.

- 6.7 The creation of additional jobs Wickhambrook will be supported where the proposal is compatible with the village's designation as a Local Service Centre and where the jobs are local in nature and would not result in significant in-commuting from other settlements and would not have a detrimental impact on:
- the character of the area,
  - the local road network and the amenity of residents living near the site or on the access route to it, and
  - identified important views.

It is envisaged that employment premises on new sites would remain small in terms of the size of the premises and the number of people employed on the site. Major development on new employment sites would not be appropriate in the Parish as more sustainable locations exist in larger settlements such as Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and Newmarket where local access by sustainable travel modes such as buses, walking and cycling can be readily achieved and the potential for detrimental impact on the landscape character of the area reduced.

### **Policy WHB 6 - New Businesses and Employment Development**

Proposals for new business development will be supported where sites are located within the Housing Settlement Boundaries identified on the Policies Map and where they would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity, heritage assets and the highways network.

Outside the Housing Settlement Boundaries, proposals will be supported where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that:

- a. it is located on land designated in the development plan for business use; or
- b. it relates to small scale leisure or tourism activities or other forms of commercial / employment related development or agriculture related development of a scale and nature appropriate to a countryside location.

Where possible, business developments should be sited in existing buildings or on areas of previously developed land and be of a size and scale that does not adversely affect the character, highways, infrastructure, residential amenity, environment and landscape character. Proposals for new buildings outside the Housing Settlement Boundaries should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

### **Farm Diversification**

- 6.8 Some of the farms in the area have expanded over the years with the development of large-scale barns for storage. Older traditional buildings are frequently no longer suitable for modern farming practices and lend themselves to the conversion to business use. There may be some scope across the Parish for such conversions where the buildings are well related to the main highway network and the proposed use would not have a detrimental impact on the natural and historic environment and the amenity of nearby residents.



- 6.9 Where new buildings are proposed as part of such a diversification scheme, it is important that they reflect the rural and agricultural building styles typically found in the area. It will be particularly essential to have regard to the character of the area identified in West Suffolk Council's Character Assessment in respect of whether the proposal can overcome potential landscape impacts through appropriate siting, design and impact-mitigation measures.

### **Policy WHB 7 - Farm Diversification**

Applications for new employment uses of redundant traditional farm buildings and other rural buildings will be supported, providing it has been demonstrated that they are no longer viable or needed for farming.

Re-use for community or economic development purposes is preferred, but proposals which would result in unacceptable harm to the rural economy or would adversely affect the landscape character, highways, infrastructure, residential amenity, historic and natural environment and landscape character will not be supported.



## 7. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### Objectives

6. The rural character of the Parish will be protected and, where possible, enhanced
7. Natural habitats will be protected and enhanced

### Context

- 7.1 The natural environment covers the landscape and natural features of the Parish including habitats. The majority of the Parish is Grade 2 agricultural land, where Grade 1 is the best and most versatile land. The historic scattered settlement pattern of Wickhambrook is considered to be highly sensitive. The areas of separation that lie between the Greens and hamlets and the main village are just as important to settlement character as the hamlets themselves and offer a visual experience where the countryside is seen prominently in views. The pattern would be very sensitive to infilling which might cause unwanted coalescence and loss of identity to the individual settlements.
- 7.2 In terms of landscape character, the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area covers all of the Parish. Locally, West Suffolk District commissioned their own Landscape Character Assessment in 2021. This places Wickhambrook in character area C2 "Glem and Wickhambrook Farmlands". Its key characteristics are listed as:
  - Flat to gently undulating plateau landscape that forms an interfluvium between river catchments.
  - Chalky clay glacial till covers the plateau giving rise to fertile soils for arable farming with some areas slower draining heavier clay.
  - Dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered dwellings arranged around greens, isolated moated manor and church complexes and larger settlements where 20th century infill has occurred.
  - Large scale field pattern; with intensive arable farmland defined by hedgerows and linear poplar shelterbelts.
  - Large blocks of semi-natural ancient woodland, comprising oak and ash stands, create a wooded skyline.
  - Network of narrow lanes with wide verges.
  - Rich stock of medieval and Tudor timber-framed and brick buildings and moated sites.
  - Vertical structures break the skyline including masts and water towers.
  - Open expansive landscape with long views and wide skies.
- 7.3 There are no nationally recognised wildlife designations in the Parish, but the ancient woodlands at Easter Wood, near Baxter's Green, Spring Wood at Genesis Green and Garbs Grove, near Giffords Hall, are designated as County Wildlife Sites.
- 7.4 Across the Parish many trees are protected by tree preservation orders, especially in the main village centre. The northern part of the Parish is on the highest ground and affords the opportunity for some important views across the valley from Coltsfoot Green to Wickham Street.

### Current Planning Policies

- 7.5 The Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document contains detailed policies on the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, as listed below:
  - Policy DM10: Impact of Development on Sites of Biodiversity and Geodiversity Importance
  - Policy DM11: Protected Species
  - Policy DM12: Mitigation, Enhancement, Management and Monitoring of Biodiversity
  - Policy DM13: Landscape Features
  - Policy DM14: Protecting and Enhancing Natural Resources, Minimising Pollution and Safeguarding from Hazards

- 7.6 The emerging West Suffolk Local Plan is expected to continue to contain policies for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and will bring the planning policy framework up-to-date.

### Household Survey

- 7.7 Residents were asked about the importance of green spaces and the landscape and the responses demonstrated that all aspects are considered important, as illustrated in Figure 9. Matters which were of most concern to residents were litter, dog fouling, and air quality.



Figure 9 - Residents' views on importance of green spaces and the landscape

### Neighbourhood Plan Policies

#### Wickhambrook's Landscape

- 7.8 The West Suffolk Landscape Appraisal provides strategic guidance for managing landscape change in the area. Summarised and as relevant to Wickhambrook, it recommends:

**Development of agricultural buildings and infrastructure** - New agricultural development should be carefully sited to reflect the pattern of the surrounding large scale landscape. Views to farmsteads and/or farm buildings should be framed by woodlands and carefully designed tree planting, which extends the existing pattern of ancient woods and hedgerows. Whenever possible, new agricultural buildings should relate to an existing cluster of buildings and to existing mature trees and woodlands, which can provide a backdrop to views. Sensitive use of dark coloured, non-reflective materials and screening with native trees and woodland would help to minimise adverse impacts. Introduction of further vertical elements such as masts and linear poplar belts should be avoided, especially where they have a cumulative effect and create visual clutter, disrupting simple landscape patterns.

**Farmland habitat conservation** - Throughout this intensively farmed landscape, hedgerow removal has fragmented the network of woodland, and hedgerow habitats, reducing biodiversity value. There are opportunities for strategically sited native tree, woodland and hedgerow planting, which is aligned to connect existing core habitats (especially ancient woodland sites) while also enabling ease of access for large farm machinery. The aim is to link habitats and provide broad buffer zones alongside woodlands so that there is space for arable field margins and a sustainable woodland edge structure. Within such habitat networks, priority should be given to establishing connections with ancient woodlands, species-rich hedgerows and track/road verges so that there is a functional ecological network for wildlife conservation and migration which will be more resilient to climate change. Wherever possible water features including moats and field ponds should be retained as part of the habitat network and managed to prevent them from becoming overgrown or drying out.



**Settlement development** - The dispersed pattern of settlement and high concentration of medieval moated sites and vernacular buildings is a defining character and quality of this landscape. It is also highly vulnerable to infill development which reduces the gaps between buildings, and alters the loose and organic settlement character. Where the settlement pattern remains relatively intact and associated with other historic sites/patterns such as scheduled moated sites, listed buildings and pre 18th century enclosure pattern, great care is required. Even small scale housing estates will be inappropriate in these locations. Wherever possible new housing should seek to reflect loose clusters of development, retain or reinstate areas of open space, and reinforce visual connections to the wider landscape. Great care should also be taken to retain the rural character of lanes avoiding urban access arrangements and curtilage treatment.

**Green lanes** - The network of green lanes and quiet roads on the plateau should be a priority for conservation as part of the wider green infrastructure network. There are opportunities to integrate such routes within the strategic ecological network (see above) and to restore native hedgerows along lanes where they have been lost and replaced by close board fencing or non native planting associated with dwelling curtilage. There are also opportunities to promote their use for recreational walking and cycling.

#### **Policy WHB 8 - Protecting Wickhambrook's Landscape Character**

Proposals must, proportionate to the development, demonstrate how the landscape characteristics of the site and its vicinity have been considered in preparing the scheme, having regard to the West Suffolk Landscape Assessment (2022).

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, and to ensure that they conserve the essential landscape, heritage and rural character of the Parish, development proposals should demonstrate how they have regard to, and conserve, or enhance, the landscape character and the setting of the Parish.

#### **Habitats**

- 7.9 Across the Parish the influence of trees and hedgerows plays a significant role in determining the character of the area. The combined effect of screening, providing natural habitats, and the wildlife corridors that these habitats create are vitally important within the Parish and the wider area and their retention and enhancement will be supported.
- 7.10 Currently the NPPF encourages net gains for biodiversity to be sought through planning policies and decisions. The 2021 Environment Act introduced a statutory requirement for all appropriate developments to deliver a minimum 10 per cent measurable net gain in biodiversity. While the Environment Act 2021 sets out the core components (from the use of a metric, a system of national credits, a register of net gain and more), the details of how biodiversity net gain will work is, at the time of preparing this Plan, still in development ahead of the requirement becoming mandatory in the winter of 2023. Natural England have published a "Biodiversity Metric (3.0)" which is expected to be the standard measuring methodology to appraise how development will meet the requirements of the Act.
- 7.11 There may be occasions where a new access to an otherwise acceptable development site would result in the loss of part of an existing hedgerow. Where this is necessary, a new hedgerow should be planted using native species of a local provenance at the rear of the visibility splay returns to minimise the loss of hedgerow and habitat and maintain the character of the area.

## Policy WHB 9 - Biodiversity and Habitats

Development proposals should avoid the loss of, or substantial harm to, trees, hedgerows and other natural features such as ponds and watercourses. Where such losses or harm are unavoidable:

- i. the benefits of the development proposal must be demonstrated to clearly outweigh any impacts; and
- ii. suitable mitigation measures, that provide better replacement of the lost features will be required to achieve measurable biodiversity net gain.

Any such mitigation measures must form an integral part of the design concept. In addition, the layout and design of the development proposal concerned should be landscape-led and appropriate in relation to its setting and context and have regard to its ongoing management.

Where new access is created, or an existing access is widened, through an existing hedgerow, a new hedgerow of native species shall be planted on the splay returns into the site to maintain the appearance and continuity of hedgerows in the vicinity.

Proposals will be supported where they integrate improvements to biodiversity which will secure a measurable net gain as part of the design through, for example,

- a. the creation of new natural habitats including ponds;
- b. the planting of additional native trees and hedgerows (reflecting the character of Wickhambrook's traditional trees and hedgerows);
- c. restoring and repairing fragmented wildlife networks, for example, including swift-boxes, bat boxes and holes in fences which allow access for hedgehogs.

## COMMUNITY ACTION 2 - WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION

The Parish Council will work with the Wickhambrook Estates Committee and interested parishioners in order to sustain and improve the natural environment in and around the village.

Actions to be considered will include:

- conserving trees and hedgerows, initially by carrying out an audit of assets,
- protecting green spaces and woodlands and enhancing their value for wildlife,
- working with landowners to promote take-up of stewardship schemes, including:
  - a) opening up permissive paths,
  - b) fostering wildflower mixes on field margins, and
  - c) promoting biodiversity by establishing wild areas, wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors around the Parish.



## Green Spaces

7.12 There are several important open areas within the Parish that make important contributions to the character and setting of the built environment. The NPPF enables the designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces ('LGS') in neighbourhood plans. Such designations rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 102 of the NPPF states that the designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- 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; and
- not an extensive tract of land.

It is recognised that the designation of Local Green Spaces should not be used simply to block development.

7.13 A separate Local Green Space Appraisal has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, which demonstrates how certain local spaces meet the criteria in paragraph 102 of the NPPF. The spaces that meet the criteria are identified in Policy WHB 10 and are illustrated on **Map 5** and the **Policies Map**. There are many small amenity open spaces in the Parish with an area less than 0.05 hectares. These have been excluded from designation.



Map 5 - Local Green Spaces





- 7.14 The identification of these spaces as Local Green Space means that development is restricted to that which has to be demonstrated as being essential for the site, in line with the Green Belt policies defined by the NPPF. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation. Policy WHB 10 follows the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. In the event that development proposals come forward on the local green spaces, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by West Suffolk Council. In particular, it will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the 'very special circumstances' required by the policy.

### **Policy WHB 10 - Local Green Spaces**

The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the Policies Map:

1. The Cemetery, Cemetery Road
2. Amenity open space at The Meadows, off Cemetery Road
3. Open space at junction of The Croft and Cemetery Road
4. Nunnery Green amenity open spaces
5. Amenity open space west of Boyden Close
6. Attleton Green
7. Coltsfoot Green
8. Amenity open space adjacent Clopton Park, Bury Road
9. Clopton Park Open Space
10. Amenity open space east of Bury Road.
11. Genesis Green
12. Open space between Boyden Close and Emily Frost Close

Development in the Local Green Spaces will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts.



## 8. BUILT ENVIRONMENT & DESIGN

### Objectives

8. Wickhambrook's built heritage assets will be protected.
9. High-quality and eco-friendly development will reinforce the local character of the village.
10. New development will not have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of existing residents

### Context

- 8.1 Wickhambrook demonstrates significant importance in terms of the historic environment, currently having 61 listed buildings, a scheduled monument and a conservation area extending from Wickham Street to the Parish church. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service's Historic Environment Record provides details of finds and the Service should be consulted at the earliest possible stages of preparing a planning application. A list of the listed buildings at the time the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared is included as Appendix 3.
- 8.2 In terms of the built environment, Wickhambrook has very distinct and different character areas that have evolved around the many "Greens" over the centuries. The main concentration of development is made up of several adjoining historic Greens: Nunnery Green, Moor Green and Meeting Green. Nunnery Green lends its name to a large housing development that has been added to incrementally over the years. There are also smaller estates at Coltsfoot Green and Clopton Park, the latter being the redevelopment of a haulage yard at the start of the century.

### Current Planning Policies

- 8.3 The NPPF notes that heritage assets (see Glossary) "are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations." The NPPF also makes it clear, in paragraph 124, that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.' In January 2021 the Government published the National Design Guide to illustrate how well designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It 'provides a structure that can be used for the content of local design policies, guides and codes, and addresses issues that are important for design codes where these are applied to large scale development on single or multiple sites.' This was followed up in July 2021 by the more detailed National Model Design Code which sets out guidance for what could be included in a Design Code for sites and places.
- 8.4 Policy DM15: Listed Buildings, in the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document sets out the considerations and criteria against which proposals to alter, extend or change the use of a listed building, or development affecting its setting will be considered. In addition, Policy DM18: New Uses for Historic Buildings addresses how proposals for the adaptation and re-use of historic buildings will be considered. Policy DM2: Creating Places - Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness, in the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document sets out a range of criteria against which all development proposals, as appropriate to their scale, will be considered by West Suffolk Council. Other relevant adopted policies are:
  - Policy DM6: Flooding and Sustainable Drainage
  - Policy DM7: Sustainable Design and Construction

- 8.5 West Suffolk Council are proposing a strategic policy in the emerging Local Plan to cover development design across the wider district. The emerging Local Plan also proposes to carry forward policies for the protection and management of heritage assets.

### Household Survey

- 8.6 Residents were asked about the importance of certain considerations in relation to new development. In relation to the built environment and design:
- 85 percent said that enhancing existing heritage and historic assets were important;
  - 84 percent said that improvements to infrastructure was important;
  - 85 percent said that conserving listed buildings and their surroundings was important; and
  - 95 percent said it was important that new development should respect the local character, landscape and environmental heritage of the Parish.
- 8.7 A further question asked about specific design considerations that new development of two or more houses should include. Figure 10 illustrates the response.

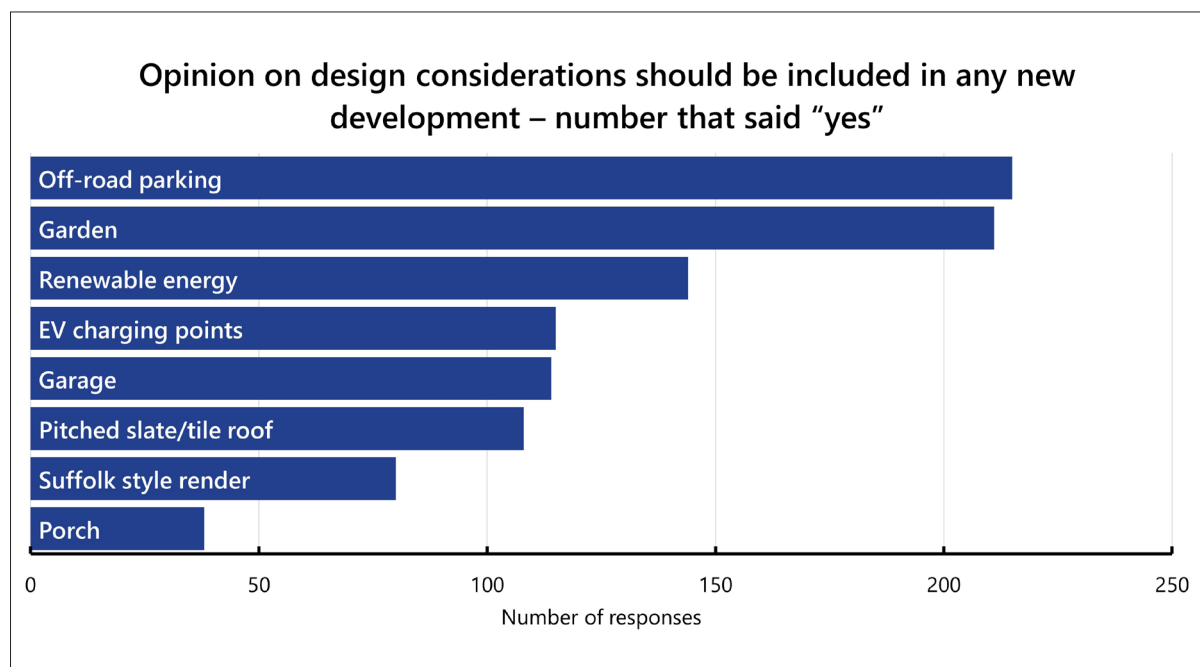


Figure 10 – Design considerations for new development

### Neighbourhood Plan Policies

#### Built Heritage

- 8.8 National and local plan policy is already in place and sufficient to deal with planning applications that affect designated heritage assets (listed buildings, the conservation area, scheduled monuments or archaeological records). The Neighbourhood Plan does not, therefore, include a policy in relation to such matters.
- 8.9 The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has, however, provided an opportunity to identify whether there are further buildings or features across the Parish that have special qualities or historic association and which make a “positive contribution” to the character of the area in which they sit. Historic England define these as Non-Designated Heritage Assets and provides guidance on how to identify such assets.



- 8.10 Through the preparation of a separate Assessment of Non-Designated Heritage Assets, some 49 properties or features have been identified as meeting Historic England's definition. The full Assessment is published as a separate report which is available to view and download on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council website.
- 8.11 Any development proposed at or in the setting of the property should take into account its special character as detailed in the Assessment. Whilst the identification provides no additional planning controls, the fact that a building or site is identified means that its conservation as a heritage asset is a material consideration when determining the outcome of a planning application. The designation also means that proposals in the vicinity of the asset should take account of its importance.
- 8.12 Applications, including those for a change of use, which result in harm to the significance of a Non-Designated Heritage Asset will be judged based on the balance of the scale of any harm or loss, and the significance of the heritage asset. In considering proposals which involve the loss of a non-designated heritage asset, consideration will be given to:
- a) Whether the asset is structurally unsound and beyond technically feasible and economically viable repair (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect); or
  - b) Which measures to sustain the existing use, or find an alternative use/user, have been fully investigated.

### **Policy WHB 11 - Buildings and Structures of Local Significance**

Buildings of local significance, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest must be protected.

Development proposals should be designed to respect the integrity and appearance of Buildings of Local Significance, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest. Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of or substantial harm to a local heritage asset or a building of local significance should be supported by an appropriate analysis of the significance of the asset together with an explanation of the wider public benefits of the proposal.

The following properties and buildings (and as shown on the Policies Map) are identified as Buildings and Structures of Local Significance

1. Aldersfield Place Farmhouse, Ashfield Green
2. Hilltop View and Coopers Croft, Ashfield Green
3. Wells Cottage, Attleton Green
4. Melford House, Attleton Green
5. Walnut Tree, Attleton Green
6. Chestnut House, Attleton Green
7. Columbine Cottage, Back Lane
8. The Gesyns, Boyden End
9. Boyden Paddock, Boyden End
10. Boyden Post Box, Boyden End
11. Homeleigh Cottage, Bunters Road

*continued*



12. The Thorns, Bunters Road / Thorns Corner
13. Primary School and Cottage, Bunters Road / Thorns Corner
14. Methodist Cottage, Bunters Road / Thorns Corner
15. Telephone Box, Bunters Road / Thorns Corner
16. The Police House, Bunters Road
17. Rose Cottage, Bunters Road
18. Jasmine Cottage, Bunters Road
19. 1-4 Hill Cottages, Cemetery Road
20. WI Hall, Cemetery Road
21. Cloak Inn, Cloak Lane
22. Coltsfoot Cottage, Coltsfoot Green
23. Forge/Willow Cottage, Coltsfoot Green
24. Pump Cottage with Pump by the house & Pump on the Green, Coltsfoot Green
25. Pound Cottage, The Duddery
26. Doctor's Barn, The Duddery
27. Aspenden Cottage, Coltsfoot Green
28. Hole Farm, The Duddery
29. The Cottage, Genesis Green
30. Wetheralls, Genesis Green
31. Post Box, Genesis Green
32. The Old Post Office, Wash Lane
33. Four Winds, Wash Lane
34. Shepherds Rest, Wash Lane
35. The WWII Bunker / Observer Corps Monitoring Post
36. Crows Farm, Malting End
37. Little Monks Farm, Malting End
38. Moor Green Farmhouse, Meeting Green
39. Chapel Cottage, Meeting Green
40. Australia Farm Barn, Meeting Green
41. The Old Manse, Meeting Green
42. Badmondifield Lodge, Park Gate
43. Larks Rise, Park Gate
44. Porters Lodge, Park Gate
45. Park Gate Cottage, Park Gate
46. Thatchers Cottage, Shop Hill
47. Ivy Cottage, Wickham Street
48. Wickham Stew
49. Manor House, Wickham Street

### COMMUNITY ACTION 3 - HISTORIC ASSETS

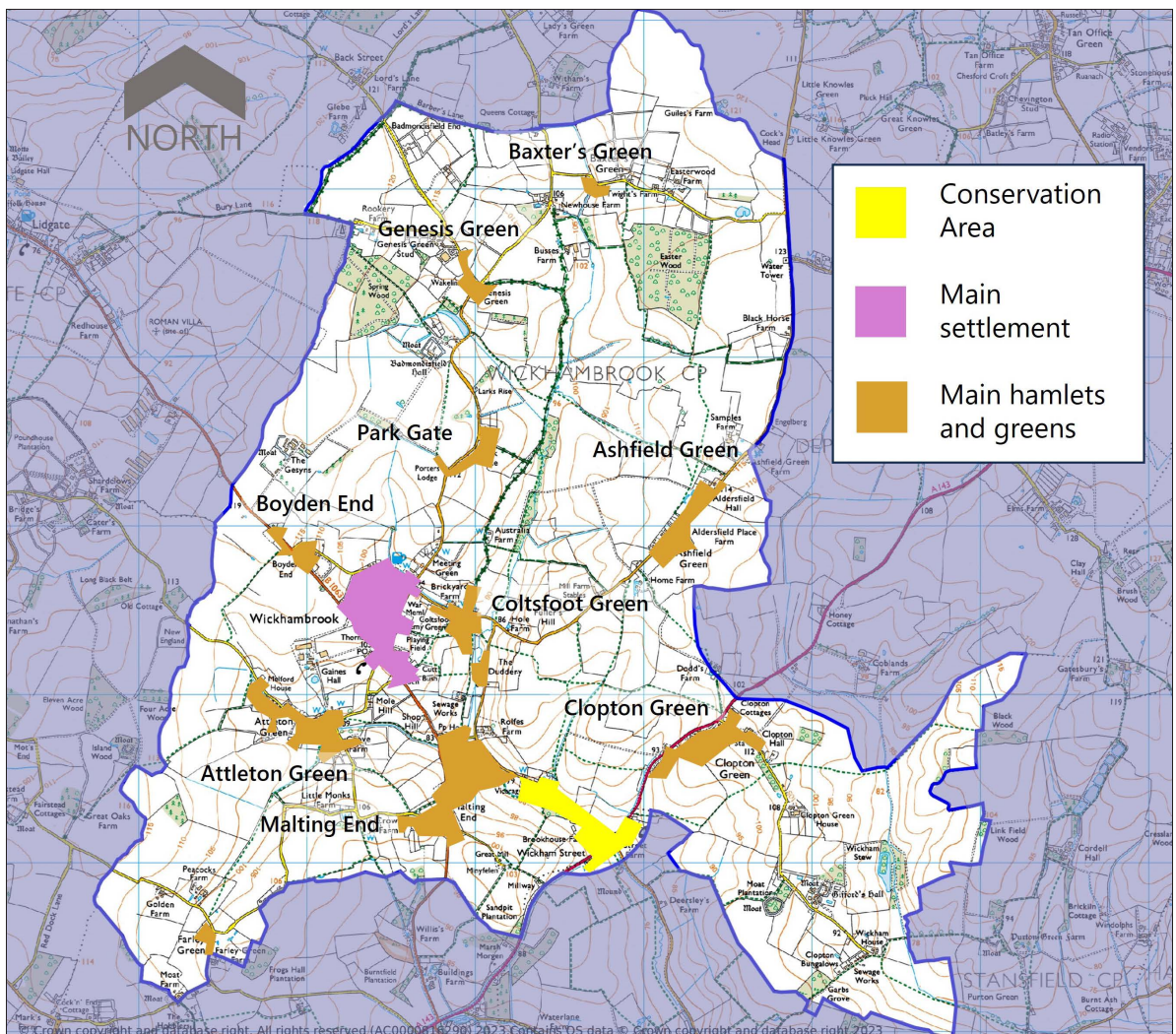
The Parish Council will co-ordinate actions to conserve notable listed and non-listed buildings, the outlying Greens and hamlets and other cherished features of our environment. Local features noted to be of particular importance to village residents, and therefore in need of protection, include:

- old houses, historic buildings, history and heritage, including the churches
- Wickhambrook's ancient pattern of outlying village Greens and hamlets.

### Development Design

8.13 In 2022, as part of the Government's neighbourhood planning support programme, AECOM were commissioned to prepare Design Guidance and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan Area on behalf of the Parish Council. The document, published separately on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council's website, provides guidance that seeks to inform the design of new development in order to retain and protect the character and distinctiveness of Wickhambrook. The Design Guidance and Codes should be used alongside the National Model Design Codes published by the Government in July 2021, or any subsequent published national as well as district level guidance.

8.14 The Design Guidance and Codes identified three distinct character areas, as illustrated on Map 6



Map 6 - Design Guidance Parish Character Areas



- 8.15 For each of the character area typologies, the existing and proposed characteristics are described. These are reproduced in the Plan.

### **Conservation Area**

#### **Existing characteristics**

- Land use consists of residential buildings, Church and churchyard
- There is limited pavement throughout the conservation area, only a small stretch along Church Lane opposite the Church
- The conservation area has a linear development pattern
- The area is a historic part of the village
- Building plots are large and dispersed and the building line is set back from the road
- The area is rich in trees, vegetation and green space
- There is a mix of 1 to 2 storey houses.

#### **Proposed characteristics**

- Protect the local character and retain the history of the settlement pattern
- Protect the landscape features to preserve the rural character of the area
- Propose flood mitigation measures to address the areas affected by flood
- Improve promotion of active travel by encouraging links to public rights of way.

### **Main Settlement Area**

#### **Existing characteristics**

- This is the most concentrated area of the village and location of local amenities including the doctors surgery and school.
- Cul-de-sac development is the most prominent form of development in this area.
- There is a consistent set-back building line with small to medium sized front gardens.
- There is use of informal green spaces throughout the settlement and low lying vegetation and landscaping including green verges and hedges.
- Bungalows are common in this area along with some semi-detached and council housing.
- There is a mix of 1 to 2 storey houses.

#### **Proposed characteristics**

- Use the local material and colour palette in any new developments and avoid concentration of single typologies such as the bungalows in Nunnery Green.
- Avoid proposing cul-de-sacs which reduced connectivity in the village.
- The car parking issues can be benefited with a form of traffic management/ enforcement and all proposed development should incorporated on plot parking to reduce on-street parking in this area.
- Heights should be in keeping with Wickhambrook's character and existing buildings and should not exceed 2 storeys.
- Design variety of architectural styles with various materials which all should be in keeping with Wickhambrook's character to avoid monotonous design appearance.

### **Outlying hamlets and Greens**

#### **Existing characteristics**

- This character area is rich in natural vegetation with trees and areas of open, green space
- The area is made up of distinct and dispersed settlements such as Attleton Green, which are separated by fieldland and rural roads and follow a linear pattern of development
- There is a mix of detached and semi-detached houses built along roads
- Dwellings are well set back from the roads with active frontages
- There are large building plots with spacious front and back gardens
- There is on-plot front car parking
- Roads have a rural typology without pavements
- There is a large variety of architecture and variety of facade colour in keeping with the local material and colour palette

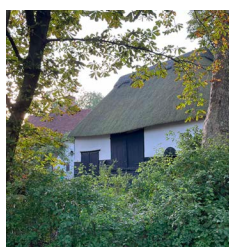
### Proposed characteristics

- Preserve the existing natural environment through protection of landscaping and boundary treatments which create privacy for houses
- Propose new landscape and boundary treatments including hedges, green verges, trees, and low walls and fences
- Retain gaps and filtered views into the surrounding open field and countryside
- The promotion of walking and cycling routes
- The building materials and colour palette should be in keeping with local vernacular
- Increase the sense of safety along the roads by providing and enhancing the pavement.

**8.16** The Design Guidance and Codes work in tandem with the Neighbourhood Plan to provide guidance on the built form, layout and sustainability of development, which must be designed and constructed to perform to increasingly low-carbon requirements set by central and local government. It also contains general design guidelines to which new development will be expected to have regard. These are reproduced below.

- 1 Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
- 2 Reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
- 3 Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
- 4 Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;
- 5 Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
- 6 Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
- 7 Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- 8 Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
- 9 Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
- 10 Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
- 11 Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
- 12 Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;
- 13 Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;
- 14 Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind; and
- 15 Seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation), before specification of energy efficient building services and finally incorporate renewable energy sources.

**8.17** The Design Guidance provides a development management checklist against which development proposals should seek to respond where applicable. The checklist is included as **Appendix 4** of the Plan.



## Policy WHB 12 - Development Design Considerations

Proposals for all new development must reflect the local characteristics and circumstances of the site by creating and contributing to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment. Planning applications should demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Design Checklist in Appendix 4 of this Plan, as appropriate to the proposal. In addition, proposals will be supported where they:

- a. recognise and address the key architectural features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area and, where necessary, prepare a landscape character appraisal to demonstrate this;
- b. maintain the village's sense of place and/or local character, as identified in the Wickhambrook Design Guidance and Codes;
- c. do not involve the loss of gardens, important open, green or landscaped areas, which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the village;
- d. taking mitigation measures into account, do not affect adversely and, where appropriate enhance:
  - i. any historic, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings;
  - ii. important landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographical features;
  - iii. sites, habitats, species and features with biodiversity and ecological interest;
  - iv. the residential amenity of adjacent areas by reason of noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, other pollution (including light pollution), or volume or type of vehicular activity generated;
- e. do not locate sensitive development where its users and nearby residents would be significantly and adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, or other forms of pollution from existing sources, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented;
- f. produce designs that respect the character, scale and density of the locality;
- g. include tree-lined streets unless in specific cases there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate and include trees elsewhere within developments where the opportunity arises.
- h. produce designs, in accordance with adopted standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network, ensuring that all residents' vehicle parking is provided within the plot and that spaces and garages meet the adopted minimum size standards;
- i. seek always to ensure permeability through new housing areas, connecting any new development into the heart of the existing settlement;
- j. wherever possible ensure that development faces onto existing roads;
- k. do not result in water run-off that would add to or create surface water flooding by including, as necessary, water features such as ponds, wetlands and streams etc to collect run off to alleviate the possibility of flooding on lower lying land;
- l. where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and cycle storage in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards.



## Climate Change

- 8.16 Energy use in the construction and operation of all development is currently a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Minimising energy demands from development and increasing the generation of energy from renewable sources can make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions. The starting point for minimising energy use is to maximise energy efficiency, both in new developments and through the retrofitting of existing buildings. This can have a direct economic benefit in terms of significantly lowering the running costs of new and existing buildings, helping to address fuel poverty, as well as tackling the Climate Crisis. The Building Regulations set minimum energy efficiency requirements for new development but exceeding the minimum requirements will be necessary if emission reduction targets are to be met.
- 8.17 Where energy use is necessary, then priority should be given to utilising the most sustainable sources. Many energy saving initiatives can be installed on homes within permitted development rights (when full planning permission is not required) and residents are encouraged to implement such measures. There may be occasions where schemes that do require planning permission could have a potential adverse impact on the character of the area and the amenity of nearby residents. The Neighbourhood Plan has limited powers to require developments to meet energy saving standards, especially in the construction of new homes. However, that does not stop the encouragement of the incorporation of measures in development that meet the energy hierarchy (in order of preference) of:
1. Minimising energy demand;
  2. Maximising energy efficiency;
  3. Utilising renewable energy;
  4. Utilising low carbon energy; and
  5. Utilising other energy sources.

### Policy WHB 13 - Sustainable Construction Practices

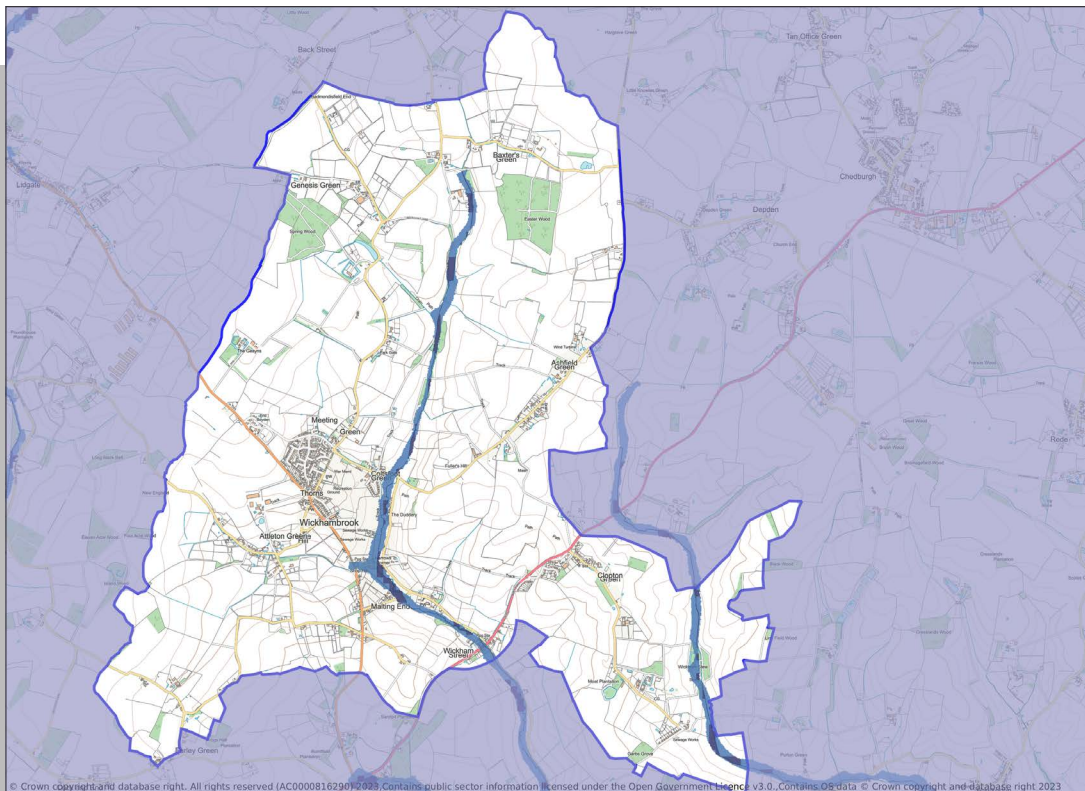
For all appropriate development, proposals that incorporate current best practice in energy conservation will be supported where such measures are designed to be integral to the building design and minimise any detrimental impact on the building or its surroundings.

Development proposals should demonstrate how they:

- a. maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings;
- b. incorporate best practice in energy conservation and are designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency;
- c. avoid fossil fuel-based heating systems;
- d. incorporate current sustainable design and construction measures and renewable energy measures, such as, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar panels, thermal and PV systems; and
- e. make provision for grey water/rainwater, and/or surface water harvesting and recycling.

## Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

- 8.18 The main village centre is not within an Environment Agency designated flood zone, but two watercourses do flow through the Parish and have flood zones associated with them, as identified on **Map 7**.



Map 7 - Environment Agency Flood Zone 2 and 3 Areas

- 8.19 A number of roads are susceptible to surface water flooding, especially Nunnery Green, Attleton Green and Coltsfoot Green. It is essential that development proposals do not create new or exacerbate existing surface water flooding through creating surfaces where rainwater can run-off into the highway or neighbouring sites. New development will be required, where appropriate, to make provision for the attenuation and recycling of surface water and rainwater through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that might include on-site rainwater and stormwater harvesting and greywater recycling, and the management of run-off and water management in order to reduce the potential for making the situation worse.

### Policy WHB 14 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

Proposals for new development, or the intensification of existing development, in Flood Zones 2 and 3 should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and will not be permitted, unless the applicant has satisfied the safety requirements in the Flood Risk National Planning Policy Guidance (and any successor).

Proposals for all new development will be required to submit schemes appropriate to the scale of the proposal detailing how on-site surface water drainage and water resources will be managed so as not to cause or exacerbate surface water and fluvial flooding elsewhere.

Proposals should, as appropriate, include the use of above-ground open Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). These could include:

- wetland and other water features, which can help reduce flood risk whilst offering other benefits including water quality, amenity/ recreational areas, and biodiversity benefits; and
- rainwater and stormwater harvesting and recycling; and other natural drainage systems where easily accessible maintenance can be achieved.

### Light Pollution

- 8.20 Paragraph 180 (c) of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should “limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”. Artificial lighting of development, while increasing a sense of security, can also impact upon residential amenity, the character and appearance of an area (particularly rural locations) and the environment. Aspects such as poor design, location or the expulsion of unnecessarily high levels of light can also have a harmful impact.

#### **Policy WHB 15 - Dark skies**

Dark skies are to be preferred over lighting while ensuring that new developments are secure in terms of occupier and vehicle safety. Any future outdoor lighting systems should have a minimum impact on the environment, minimising light pollution and adverse effects on wildlife, subject to highway safety, the needs of particular individuals or groups, and security. Schemes should make use of low-level downward facing lighting and reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies, keeping the night-time skies dark and reducing glare and light pollution.



## 9. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### Objectives

11. The level of services and facilities will be protected and enhanced.
12. The range of existing community facilities and services will be enhanced.

### Context

- 9.1 Being a Local Service Centre, Wickhambrook currently benefits from the following services and facilities:

- Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre
- Wickhambrook Primary School
- Doctor's Surgery
- The Playing Fields including play equipment, multi-use games area, zip wire and pitches
- Wickhambrook Bowls Club
- Womens Institute Hall
- The Greyhound Public House and Twenty One Restaurant
- The Village Shop and Post Office with petrol forecourt
- Fire Station
- All Saints Parish Church
- Methodist Chapel
- Play areas at Cemetery Road and Bury Road
- Wickhambrook Cemetery
- Tennis Courts

Wickhambrook is also served by the Suffolk Mobile Library. It calls every four weeks on a Thursday at Boyden Road, Nunnery Green, the Memorial Social Centre, Attleton Green and Coltsfoot Green and two weeks later on a Wednesday at Clopton Park. Bus services are referred to in the highways and travel section of the Plan.

### Household Survey

- 9.2 Residents were asked what improvements in services and community facilities, if any, they would like to see in Wickhambrook in the coming 20 years. The results are illustrated in Figure 11.

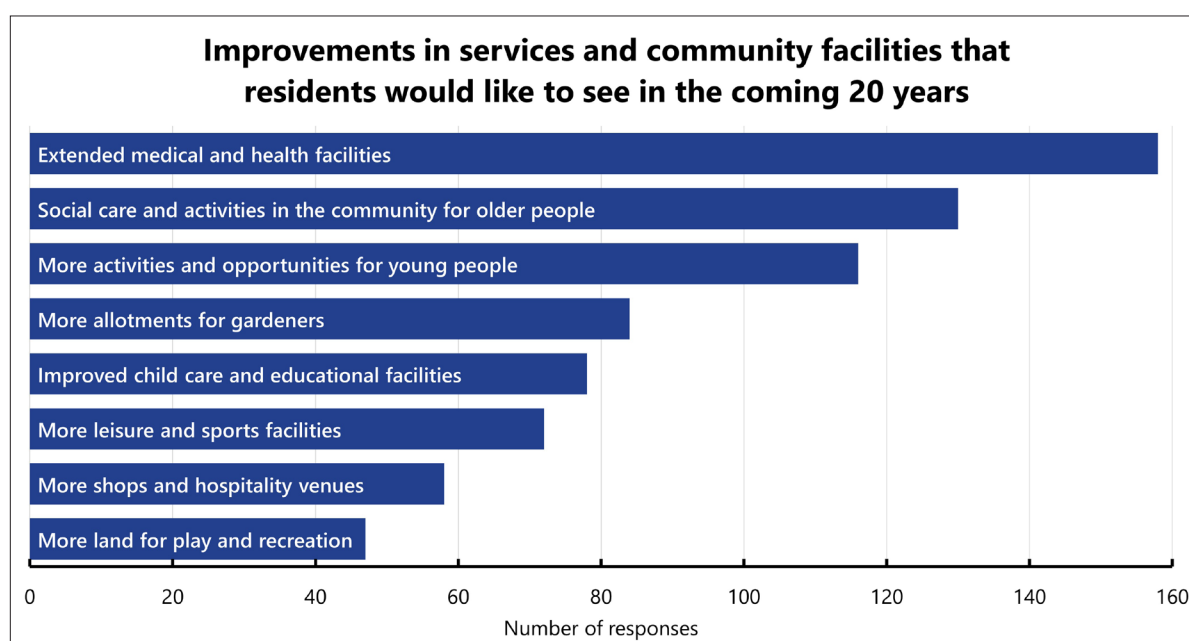


Figure 11 - Support for improvement to services

### Current Planning Policies

- 9.3 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. Further, paragraph 93 states that planning policies and decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.
- 9.4 At a local level, the West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document contains Policies DM41: Community Facilities and Services and DM 42: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities. Each seeks to retain existing facilities and provide a basis for the provision of new facilities, especially as part of larger developments.
- 9.5 The Preferred Options West Suffolk Local Plan consultation stated an intent to carry such policies forward into the new Local Plan.

### Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 9.6 The Neighbourhood Plan has an important role in making sure that there are sufficient and adequate services in the village to meet the needs of current and future residents. The Primary School plays an important role in ensuring that young children can stay in the village for their early education while the GP Surgery plays a vital role in ensuring that health care can be obtained locally. The surgery is located on a cramped site at Boyden Close and opportunities to expand are limited. The relocation of the practice onto the development site west of Bunters Road (Policy WHB 2) would be supported.
- 9.7 Opportunities for the provision of new or replacement facilities to serve the residents of Wickhambrook and nearby small villages will be supported. Opportunities for such provision within the Housing Settlement Boundary are limited and, where it can be demonstrated that such opportunities do not exist or are not available, sites should be sought in locations adjoining or in close proximity to the Boundary in order to facilitate the ability for residents to access them on foot.

#### Policy WHB 16 - Community Facilities

The provision and enhancement of community facilities and services that serve the needs of Wickhambrook will be supported where:

- i. they are located on sites accessible on foot and within or in close proximity to the Housing Settlement Boundary;
- ii. they contribute to the quality of village life and improve the sustainability of the village;
- iii. there are no other appropriate and existing buildings within the Housing Settlement Boundary that can feasibly be converted for the required purpose(s);
- iv. it will not have a significant adverse impact on nature conservation, biodiversity or geodiversity interests, or upon the character or appearance of the landscape and countryside; and
- v. the benefits of the proposal outweighs the loss of open countryside.

Proposals that will result in the loss of community facilities, including:

- Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre
- Wickhambrook Primary School
- Doctor's Surgery
- Womens Institute Hall
- The Greyhound Public House and Twenty One Restaurant
- The Village Shop and Post Office with petrol forecourt
- Fire Station

*continued*

- All Saints Parish Church
- Methodist Chapel
- Play areas at Cemetery Road and Bury Road
- Wickhambrook Cemetery

as identified on the Policies Map will only be permitted where:

- it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and
- it can be demonstrated that there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or
- alternative facilities and services are available or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling and walking.

#### **COMMUNITY ACTION 4 - ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The Parish Council will explore options, in consultation with village residents, for providing additional activities and social opportunities for various groups of villagers including, for example, but not limited to:

- social care and activities in the community for older people
- activities and opportunities for young people

- 9.8 Opportunities for participating in exercise are important to the health of residents and reducing pressures on the health service. The Neighbourhood Plan can play an important role in making sure that there are sufficient and adequate services in the village to meet the needs of current and future residents. The village playing field to the rear of the Village Hall provides a central facility for both formal and informal recreation. Adjoining, but separate from the playing field are the Bowls Club and tennis courts. As the population of the Parish grows, there may be a demand for further facilities, either an expansion of the existing or totally new provision. However, it is also important to safeguard what we already have and, in accordance with Policy DM42 of the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document (2015), existing facilities will be protected from being lost unless there are demonstrable reasons for their loss.





### **Policy WHB 17 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities**

Proposals for the provision, enhancement and/or expansion of amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will be permitted subject to compliance with other Policies in the Development Plan.

Development which will result in the loss of existing amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will not be allowed unless:

- a. it can be demonstrated that the space or facility is surplus to requirement against the local planning authority's standards for that location, and the proposed loss will not result in a shortfall during the plan period; or
- b. replacement for the space or facilities lost is made available, of at least equivalent quantity and quality, and in a suitable location to meet the current and future needs of users of the existing space or facility.

Any replacement provision should take account of the needs of the settlement where the development is taking place and the current standards of open space and sports facility provision adopted by the local planning authority.

Where necessary to the acceptability of the development, the local planning authority will require developers of new housing, office, retail and other commercial and mixed development to provide open space including play areas, formal sport/recreation areas, amenity areas and where appropriate, indoor sports facilities or to provide land and a financial contribution towards the cost and maintenance of existing or new facilities, as appropriate. These facilities will be secured through the use of conditions and/or planning obligations.

Clubhouses, pavilions, car parking and ancillary facilities must be of a high standard of design and internal layout. The location of such facilities must be well related and sensitive to the topography, character and uses of the surrounding area, particularly when located in or close to residential areas.

Proposals which give rise to intrusive floodlighting will not be permitted.

### **COMMUNITY ACTION 5 - ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS**

The Parish Council will work with developers and parishioners to explore options for providing family allotments or community growing spaces in the village. Future provision for vegetable and flower growing and general gardening might include:

- spaces allocated to individuals and families
- spaces gardened by community groups.

In consultation with parishioners and in partnership with developers, the Parish Council may also decide to set aside spaces for community use as play areas, wildlife zones, enhanced landscapes and places for relaxation and leisure.

## COMMUNITY ACTION 6 - TIDY VILLAGE

The Parish Council and the Estates Committee will set up a 'tidy village' action group to tackle litter, dog fouling, graffiti and other forms of vandalism around the village. The 'tidy village' action group will work with teams of volunteers to maintain and improve public amenities, including the children's play area; green spaces, including the playing fields; and, in collaboration with Suffolk Highways, the pathways, pavements and verges around the village.



## 10. HIGHWAYS AND TRAVEL

### Objectives

13. The capacity and safety of the road network to cope with new development will be ensured.
14. The improvement of bus services to nearby towns will be encouraged.
15. The Public Rights of Way network will be protected, maintained and improved.

### Context

- 10.1 Neighbourhood plans have little power to introduce highway improvements as most schemes will not require planning permission. Improvements are therefore reliant on Suffolk County Council, as the highways authority, for investment in projects or improvements required as part of the mitigation of the impact of development proposals.
- 10.2 The majority of Wickhambrook is located a distance from the A143, which transects the Parish at the south-east corner. Most of the Parish is therefore served by small B class roads and other country lanes. Some of the latter have recently been designated as "Quiet Lanes" as part of a County wide initiative.
- 10.3 The village is poorly served by buses, there being just four buses a day Monday to Friday from the stop in Thorns Close going to Bury St Edmunds during term time and just the one morning bus on non-school days. One bus a day goes to Bury St Edmunds on a Saturday and there are no buses on a Sunday. In the opposite direction, there is only one service from Bury St Edmunds operating Monday to Saturday while two services operate only during term time. For those wanting to go to Haverhill, the services from Bury St Edmunds continue on to the town, while four buses a day run from Haverhill to Wickhambrook, but only one runs outside term time.
- 10.4 Across the village centre, footways are sporadic in their quality and completeness although the recent development at The Meadows has provided a much-needed footway along Cemetery Road. The B1063 creates a significant barrier between the main built-up area of the village and the village stores and post office.
- 10.5 There is an extensive network of public rights of way, as illustrated on **Map 8**.

### Household Survey

- 10.6 Some 82 percent of residents that responded to the survey stated that they never used the bus to or from Wickhambrook, with only four people using it daily. Residents were also asked if they were in favour of the creation and maintenance of better footpaths and quiet lanes to make it safer and easier to get around the village and the wider Parish on foot and bicycle, with 207 people responding favourably. The provision of safe pedestrian routes and pathways and improved car parking, such as at the school and health centre, were also strongly supported.



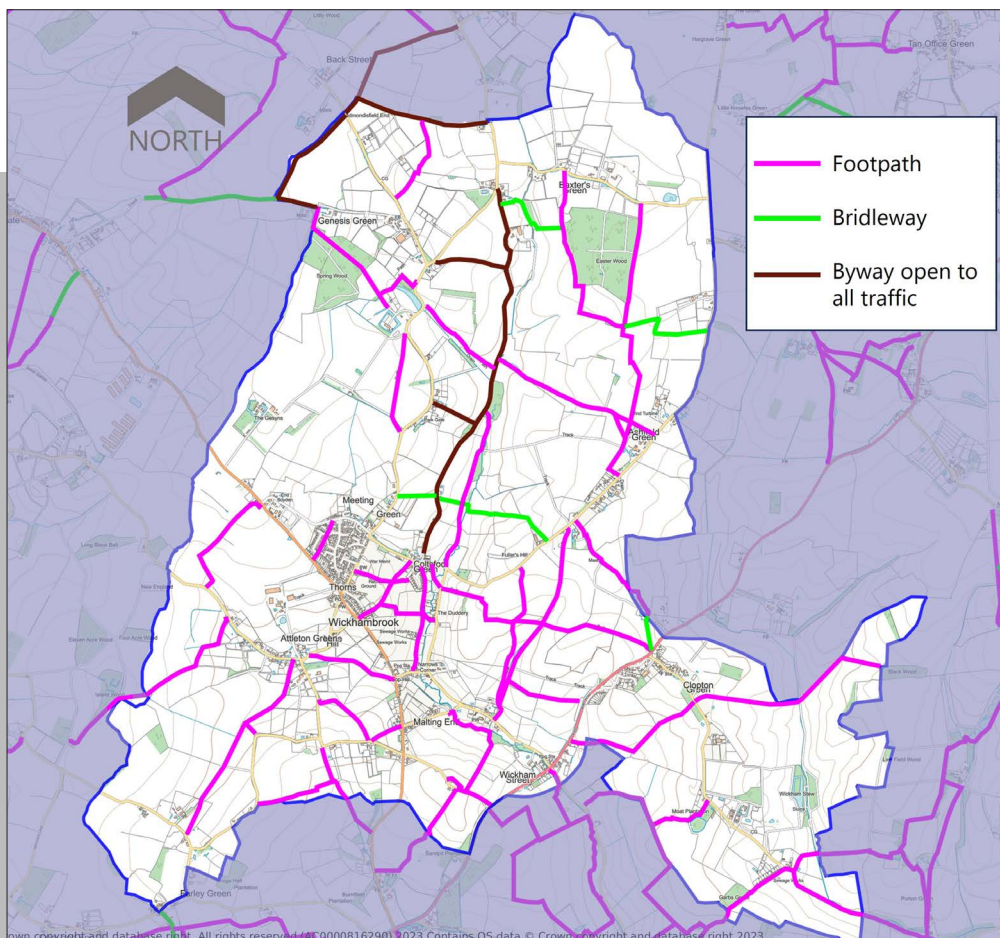
## Current Planning Policies

10.7 The NPPF seeks to promote sustainable transport through reducing the impacts of development on transport networks and promoting walking, cycling and public transport. At a local level, Policy CS7 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy states that:

*"All proposals for development will be required to provide for travel by a range of means of transport other than the private car in accordance with the following hierarchy":*

- Walking
- Cycling
- Public Transport (including taxis)
- Commercial vehicles
- Cars

All development proposals will be required to be accessible to people of all abilities including those with mobility impairments."



Map 8 - Public Rights

## Neighbourhood Plan Policies

10.8 Because most road improvements can take place within the highway, they do not require planning permission and, as such, the Neighbourhood Plan is not an appropriate place to contain policies for their improvement. Likewise, the provision of bus services is a decision made outside the planning system. However, although the Parish Council cannot deliver highway improvements, it does have a lobbying role in delivering such measures.

10.9 Public rights of way provide opportunities for recreational walking, horse riding and cycling. Where feasible, improvements to the quality and extent of the public rights of way network will be supported where provided as part of development proposals.

### **Policy WHB 18 - Public Rights of Way**

Measures to improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way and bridleways will be supported where their value as biodiversity corridors is safeguarded and any public right of way extension is fit for purpose. Where practicable, development proposals should incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity within the improved or extended public right of way.

### **COMMUNITY ACTION 7 - FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS**

The Parish Council will take actions to maintain and enhance the network of safe and waymarked footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes around Wickhambrook. The Parish Council will also seek to work with the County Highways Department and neighbouring Parish Councils to extend this network further afield in order to develop safe off-road connections with settlements such as Ousden, Lidgate, Cowlinge, Stradishall, Denston, Depden and Hargrave.

### **COMMUNITY ACTION 8 - HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE**

The Parish Council will work with landowners and parishioners to ensure that actions are taken to improve and maintain the quality of Wickhambrook's network of roads and lanes. Emphasis will be placed upon matters to include:

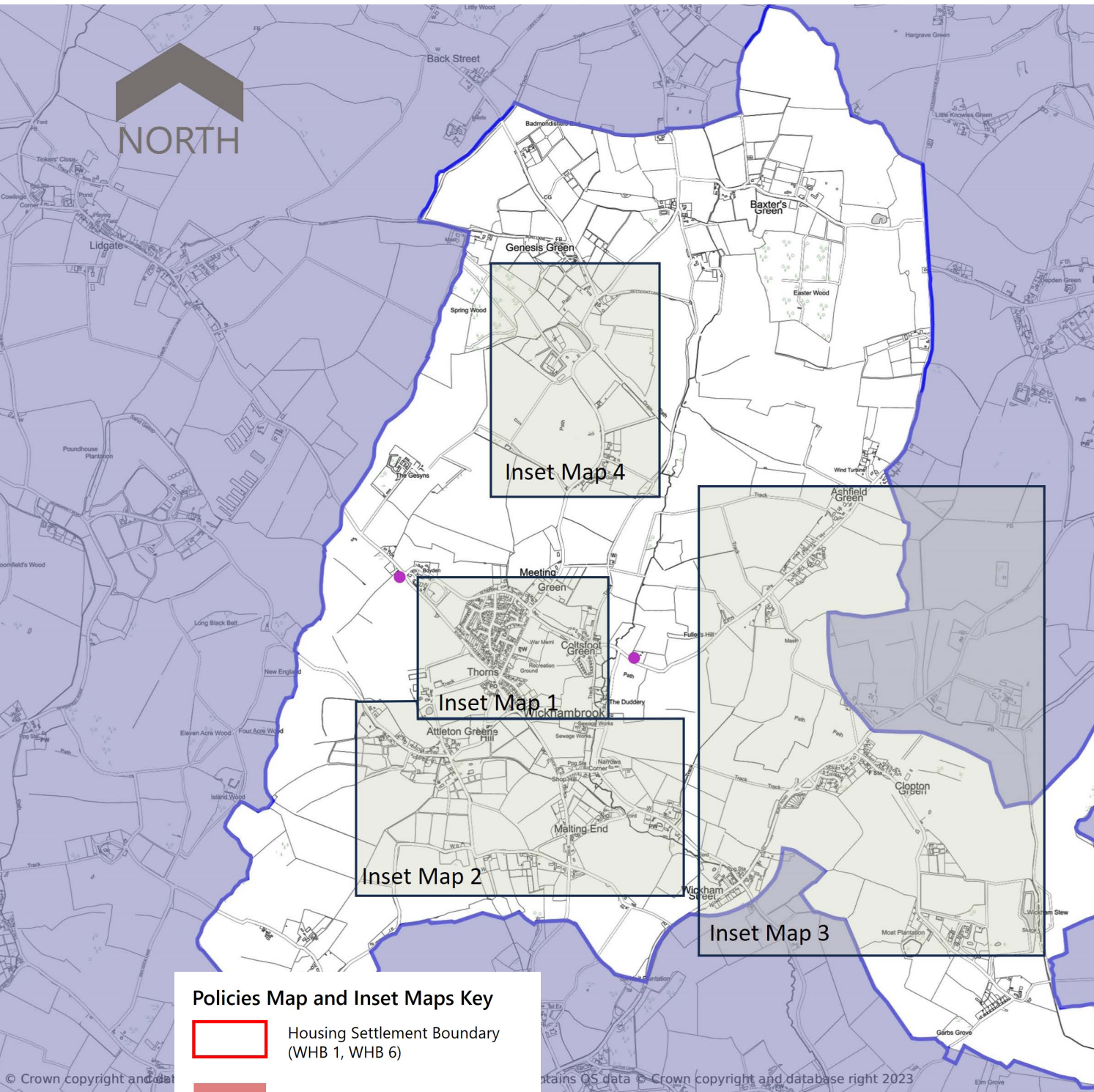
- getting pot holes filled and repaired
- clearing ditches and drains
- maintaining hedges and verges.

### **COMMUNITY ACTION 9 - TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

The Parish Council will work with Suffolk Highways to ensure that actions are taken to make Wickhambrook's roads and lanes safer for all users, to manage traffic and to tackle speeding and inconsiderate road use. Priority will be given in the work of the Parish's road safety working group to issues that include:

- inhibiting the speed of vehicular traffic
- ensuring that pavements are wide enough and well-maintained
- improving safety at crossing points and junctions.

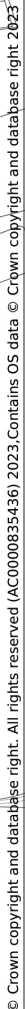
# POLICIES MAPS





The map displays the Wharfedale region with various residential and green spaces. Key areas are labeled as WHB10 - 1 through WHB10 - 12. A large blue area is visible at the bottom, and a red-outlined area covers a significant portion of the central and right-hand side. Arrows point to specific locations within the red-outlined areas.

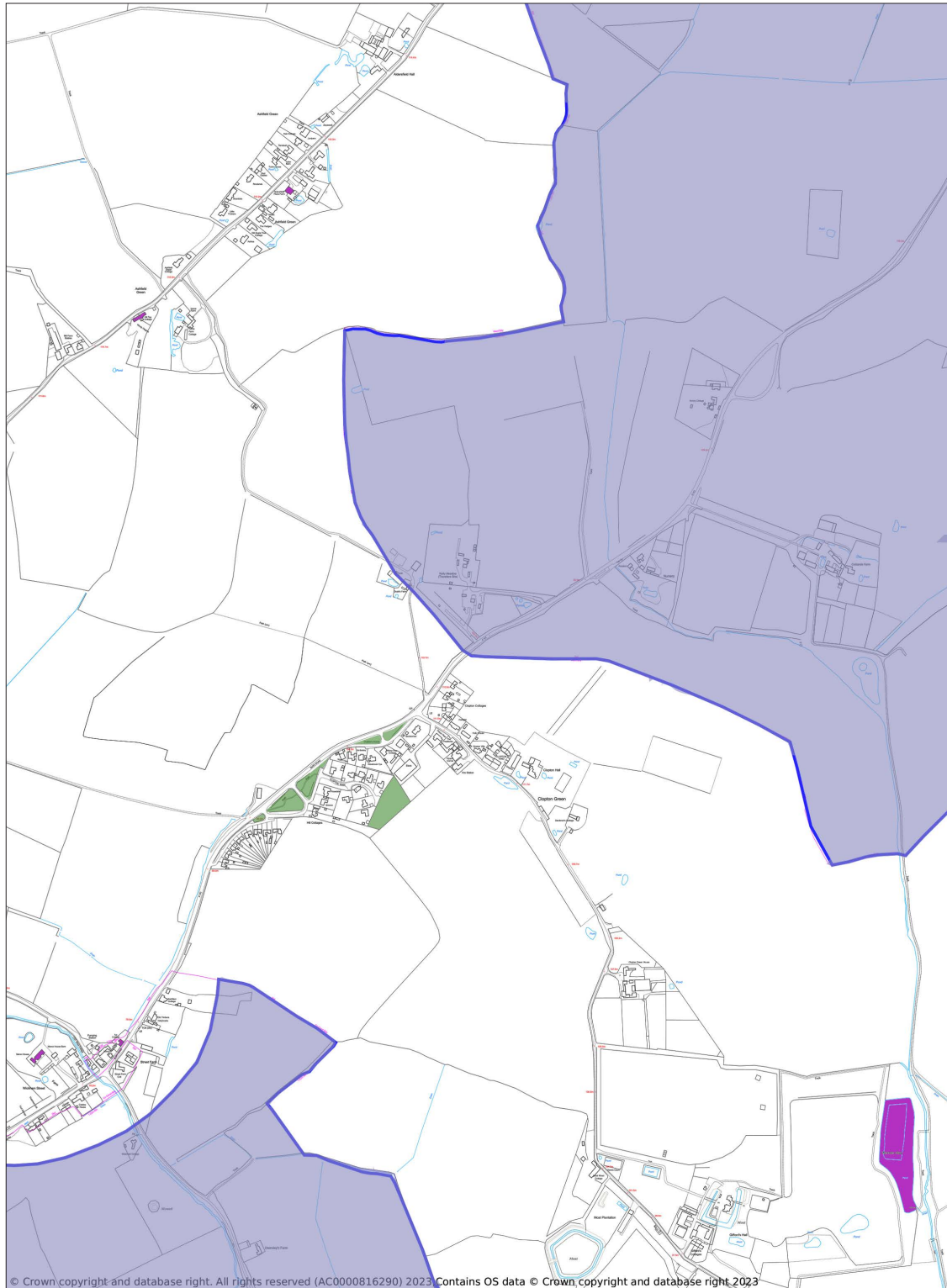
## INSET MAP 2 - SOUTH OF VILLAGE



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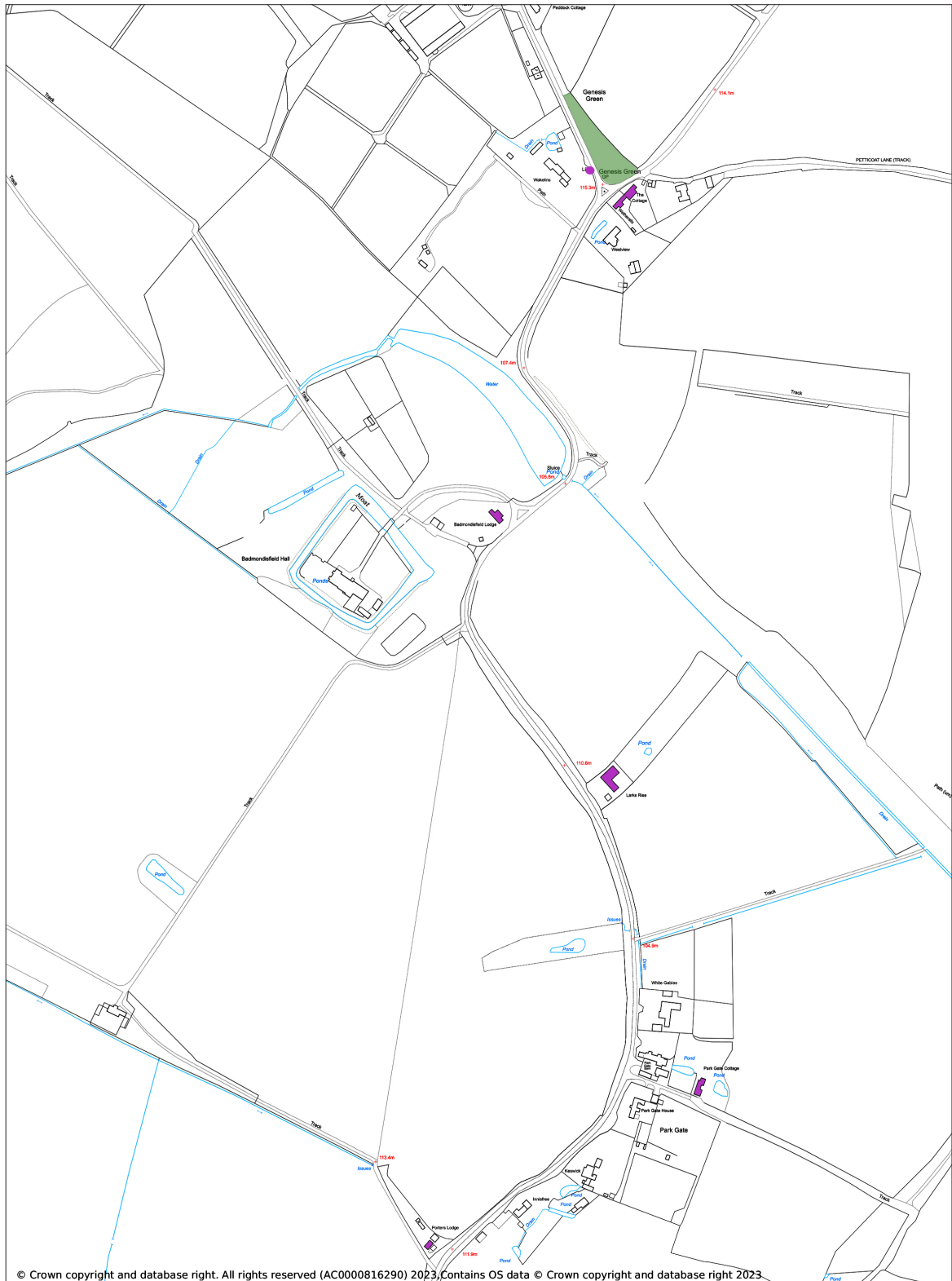
## INSET MAP 3 - ASHFIELD GREEN & CLOPTON

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## INSET MAP 4 - PARK GATE



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## APPENDIX 1 – DEVELOPMENT IN USE CLASS E AND USE CLASS F

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Policy WBH2 makes provision for development that falls within Planning Use Classes E or F. The development that falls within these use classes at 1 September 2023 is illustrated below. At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, planning consent is not required for the change of use of a property that falls within the same Use Class.

### **Class E - Commercial, Business and Service**

- E(a) Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food
- E(b) Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises
- E(c) Provision of:
  - E(c)(i) Financial services,
  - E(c)(ii) Professional services (other than health or medical services), or
  - E(c)(iii) Other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality
- E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms or use as a swimming pool or skating rink,)
- E(e) Provision of medical or health services (except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner)
- E(f) Creche, day nursery or day centre (not including a residential use)
- E(g) Uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity:
  - E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions,
  - E(g)(ii) Research and development of products or processes
  - E(g)(iii) Industrial processes

### **Class F - Local Community and Learning**

- F1 Learning and non-residential institutions – Use (not including residential use) defined in 7 parts:
  - F1(a) Provision of education
  - F1(b) Display of works of art (otherwise than for sale or hire)
  - F1(c) Museums
  - F1(d) Public libraries or public reading rooms
  - F1(e) Public halls or exhibition halls
  - F1(f) Public worship or religious instruction (or in connection with such use)
  - F1(g) Law courts
- F2 Local community - Use as defined in 4 parts:
  - F2(a) Shops (mostly) selling essential goods, including food, where the shop's premises do not exceed 280 square metres and there is no other such facility within 1000 metres
  - F2(b) Halls or meeting places for the principal use of the local community
  - F2(c) Areas or places for outdoor sport or recreation (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms)
  - F2(d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or skating rinks

## APPENDIX 2 - NATIONALLY DESCRIBED SPACE STANDARDS

The Government's spaces standards for new homes was published in 2015 and can be found here [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1012976/160519\\_Nationally\\_Described\\_Space\\_Standard.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1012976/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard.pdf)

The current standard requires that:

- a. the dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in the table below;
- b. a dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom;
- c. in order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5 sq m and is at least 2.15 m wide;
- d. in order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5 sq m;
- e. one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75 m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55 m wide;
- f. any area with a headroom of less than 1.5 m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m<sup>2</sup> within the Gross Internal Area);
- g. any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900 - 1500 mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50 per cent of its floor area, and any area lower than 900 mm is not counted at all;
- h. a built-in wardrobe counts towards the Gross Internal Area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72 sq m in a double bedroom and 0.36 sq m in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement; and
- i. the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3 sq m for at least 75 per cent of the Gross Internal Area.

A summary table is provided below.

Number of bedrooms (b)	Number of bed spaces per person	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built in Storage
1b	1p	39 (37)			1.0
2b	2p 3p	50 61	58 70		1.5 2.0
3b	4p 4p	70 74	79 84		2.5
4b	5p 6p 5p	86 95 90	93 102 97	99 108 103	3.0
5b	6p 7p 8p 6p	99 108 117 103	106 115 124 110	112 121 130 116	3.5
6b	7p 8p 7p	112 121 116	119 128 123	125 134 129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

Where a one bedroom, one person dwelling has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39 square metres to 37 square metres, as shown bracketed.



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## APPENDIX 3 - DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

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As at September 2023

Source - As described on Historic England's  
Register of Listed Buildings

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

### **Scheduled Monument**

Moated site W of Gifford's Hall

### **Grade I**

Gifford's Hall

Church of All Saints

### **Grade II\***

Badmondishfield Hall

Clopton Hall

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### **Grade II**

Brooklyn House

Hollyhocks

The Old Vicarage

The White House

Almshouses

Tithe Barn to The Old Vicarage

Rolfes Farmhouse

Commerce House

Layham Place

Cottage at Giffords Hall

Wickham House

Blackhorse Farmhouse

Meadow Cottage

Ashfield Green Farmhouse

Alderfield Hall

Attleton Green Farmhouse

Gaines Hall

Byford House

Boyden End Stables

Old High Hall

Rookery Farmhouse

Clopton Green Farmhouse

Cutt Bush

Paddock Cottage

Hill Cottage

East View

Selwood

Beechwood House

The Poplars

Innisfree

Church of All Saints

Street Farmhouse

Manor Cottage

The Cottage

Fort George

Gaines Cottage

Brookhouse Farmhouse

United Reformed Church

Alyssum Cottage

Thatched Cottage

Clematis Cottage

Park Gate House

Peacocks Farmhouse

Home Farmhouse

Little Timbers

Butler's Hall

Woodlea and West Cottage

Newhouse Farmhouse

Boyden End Cottages

Lane Cottages

Wakelins

Sunnyside

Brook Cottage

Manor Farm Barn

Wickhambrook War Memorial

Plumbers Arms

Brooklyn House

Hollyhocks, Wickham Street

Old Timbers, Wickham Street

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## APPENDIX 4 - DEVELOPMENT DESIGN CHECKLIST

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### Street grid and layout:

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?
- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

### Local green spaces, views & character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how will this be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention eg permeable landscaping swales etc?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

### Gateway and access features:

- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

### Buildings layout and grouping:

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the context of the village?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?

- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles?
- If any of the buildings were to be heated by an individual air source heat pump (ASHP), is there space to site it within the property boundary without infringing on noise and visual requirements?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night to reduce peak loads? And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?
- Building line and boundary treatment:
- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatment been considered in the context of the site?

#### **Building line and boundary treatment:**

- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so can they be screened from view being careful not to cause over shading?
- Household extensions:
- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy overbearing or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of size extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roofscape?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the size extension set back from the front of the house?
- Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?
- Can any materials be re-used in situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?

#### **Building materials and surface treatment:**

- What is the distinctive material in the area?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?
- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?
- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.
- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced? E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

#### **Car parking:**

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?



- Can electric vehicle charging points be provided?
- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/ communal facility where appropriate?
- If covered car ports or cycle storage is included, can it incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels or a biodiverse roof in its design?

**Architectural details and design:**

- Does the proposal reflect the characteristics of the locality in its design?
- Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties? This means that it follows the height massing and general proportions of adjacent buildings and how it takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features?
- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?
- Is it possible to incorporate passive environmental design features such as larger roof overhangs, deeper window reveals and/or external louvres/shutters to provide shading in hotter months?
- Can the building designs utilise thermal mass to minimise heat transfer and provide free cooling?
- Can any external structures such as balconies be fixed to the outside of the building, as opposed to cantilevering through the building fabric to reduce thermal bridge?

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## GLOSSARY

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**Affordable Housing:** Affordable Housing is defined by the Government in the NPPF as:

**Affordable housing:** housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) Affordable housing for rent meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- c) Discounted market sales housing is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d) Other affordable routes to home ownership are housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement."

**Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

**Best and most versatile agricultural land:** Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

**Biodiversity:** Describes the range and variety of living organisms within an ecosystem. It can include all living organisms, plants, animals, fungi, and bacteria and is often used to indicate the richness or number of species in an area. Such an area can be defined at diverse levels across the globe or be limited to a local area such as a parish.

**Biodiversity Action Plan:** A strategy prepared for a local area aimed at conserving biological diversity.

**Community Facilities:** For the purposes of this Plan, these are defined as meeting places, places of worship, recreation and play areas.

**Conservation (for heritage policy):** The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

**Development Plan:** This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans as defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Habitat:** The natural home of an animal or plant often designated as an area of nature conservation interest.

**Heritage asset:** A term that includes designated heritage assets (e.g., listed buildings, world heritage sites, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered parks and gardens and battlefields) and non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority. Non-designated heritage assets include sites of archaeological interest, buildings, structures or features of local heritage interest listed by, or fulfilling criteria for listing by, the local planning authority. (Including Local Listing and assets identified in the Special Character Areas).

**Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

**Infrastructure:** The basic physical and organisational structures and facilities (e.g., buildings, roads, and power supplies) necessary for development to take place.

**International, national, and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity:** All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

**Local planning authority:** The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area which in this case is West Suffolk Council.

**Local Plan:** The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.

**Neighbourhood plan:** A plan prepared by a parish council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Priority Habitats are those which have been deemed to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity, being listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, and with maintenance and restoration of these habitats being promoted through agri-environment schemes.

**Public Rights of Way:** A public right of way is a right by which the public can pass along linear routes over land at all times. Although the land may be owned by a private individual, the public have a legal right across that land along a specific route. Public rights of way are all highways in law, but the term 'public rights of way' is generally used to cover more minor highways.

**Footpath:** A footpath is a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot only.

**Bridleway:** A bridleway is a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot, horseback and on a pedal cycle (including mountain-bikes). There may also be a right to drive animals along a bridleway.

**Restricted byway:** A restricted byway is a highway over which the public is entitled to travel on foot, horseback and with non-mechanically propelled vehicles (such as pedal cycles and horse-drawn vehicles). There may also be a right to drive animals along a restricted byway.

**Renewable and low carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment - from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Rural exception sites for affordable housing:** Sites for affordable housing development in rural locations where market housing would not normally be acceptable because of planning policy constraints. Homes can be brought forward on these sites only if there is a proven unmet local need for affordable housing and a legal planning agreement is in place to ensure that the homes will always remain affordable, will be for people in housing need and prioritised for those with a strong local connection to the Parish.

**Setting of a heritage asset:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**Significance (for heritage policy):** The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting and sense of place.

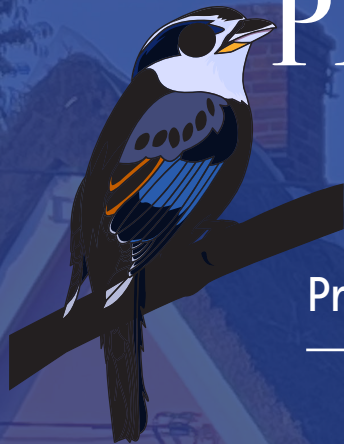
**Strategic Environmental Assessment:** A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

**Use Classes:** The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'.

**Wildlife corridor:** A wildlife corridor is a link of wildlife habitat, generally native vegetation, which joins two or more larger areas of similar wildlife habitat. Corridors are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations of plants and animals.



# WICKHAMBROOK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2023 - 2040



Pre - Submission Draft Plan - NOVEMBER 2023

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WICKHAMBROOK Parish Council