

West Suffolk Council Local Plan

West Suffolk Council is consulting on its Preferred Options (closes 26th July 2022) as part of its preparation for its new local plan.

What is the West Suffolk Local Plan?

A local plan sets out a strategy for growth and development of an area and policies which set out the way that this plan aims to meet the housing, employment, social and community needs of an area while at the same time protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. Balancing growth and development with protecting and enhancing the environment is often referred to as sustainable development. It is a statutory requirement that local authorities produce a local plan for their area and keep it up to date.

West Suffolk's Local Plan vision for 2040 is set out below:

The local plan vision for West Suffolk 2040

By 2040 we will have ensured a variety of well-designated new homes have been delivered in appropriate locations that meet the needs of our residents. Businesses and our diverse rural economy will have had the opportunity to grow and prosper. All new development will have been designed to respect, protect and enhance the natural environment and adapt to and mitigate for climate change and have achieved net zero carbon emissions in construction, energy sources and future use.

All our settlements from towns to rural villages will be places where families and communities can live safe and healthy lives with infrastructure to be provided to accompany growth, particularly in respect of transport including highway improvements, providing pedestrian and cycling routes, social infrastructure (such as access to police services, and support networks) and access to open areas.

The special quality, character and heritage of our West Suffolk built and natural environment, and its historic assets will have been protected and enhanced.

Since consultation on the first step of the new local plan (the Issues and Options Consultation October to December 2020), the National Planning Framework has been updated (July 2021). Some of the key changes include increasing emphasis on placemaking and creating beauty, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and a requirement to deliver biodiversity net gain on all new developments.

The West Suffolk Local Plan has been divided into three parts:

- Part one – **Strategic policies**
- Part two – **Non- strategic policies**
- Part three – **Site allocations.**

West Suffolk Local Plan (Regulation 18) Preferred Options Consultation Part One – Strategic Policies (attached as Appendix A)

Strategic objectives (set out in more detail on p15 – 17¹)

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Business and local economy
- Homes
- Rural areas
- Environment
- Communities, well – being and culture
- Connectivity and accessibility

Strategic Policies

Pages 18 – 77 set out West Suffolk Council’s preferred strategic policies in more detail:

- **SP1 Climate change, health and well-being** (P19 – 21). The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework and direction that will ensure an optimum and comprehensive approach to sustainable development.
- **SP2 Health and well-being** (P22 – 25). The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all new development optimises the health and well-being of all who live and work in Suffolk.
- **SP3 Design** (P26 – 28). The purpose of this policy is to create well-designed and connected communities.
- **SP4 Infrastructure** (P29-31). The purpose of this policy is to ensure the infrastructure needed to support planned growth is provided alongside development at the appropriate time and to set out the development requirements needed to deliver these.
- **SP5 Housing** – Settlement hierarchy and types of places (P32 – 39). The purpose of the settlement hierarchy is to reflect the scale and capacity of in terms of their service provision as well as their ability to link to other higher order settlements, particularly by sustainable means of travel.
- **SP6 Existing operational uses** (for example RAF bases and HMP Highpoint) (P40 - 43)
- **SP7 Housing needs** (P44 – 49)
- **SP8 – Overall housing distribution** (50 – 52). The purpose of this policy is to set out how the housing need will be distributed across West Suffolk.
- **SP9 – Strategic employment** (P53 – 57). The purpose of this policy is to make provision for employment land to meet the needs identified over the plan period to 2040.
- **SP10 – Retail and main town centre uses** (P58 – 61). The purpose of this policy is to support the role and function of town centres and local centres in West Suffolk in providing services and facilities for local communities.
- **SP11 – Breckland Special Protection Area and special area of conservation** (P62 – 65). The purpose of this policy is to protect the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which are national and European designations.
- **SP12 – Recreational effects of development** (P66 – 68). The purpose of this policy is to ensure that new residential development will not increase recreational pressure on publicly accessible sensitive ecological sites such as the Brecks, Devil’s Dyke and Red Lodge Heath).
- **SP13 – Green Infrastructure** (P69 – 72). The purpose of this policy is to deliver green infrastructure in West Suffolk.
- **SP14 – Biodiversity net gain** (P73 – 74). The purpose of the policy is to set locally specific biodiversity net gain requirements to be implemented in West Suffolk.
- **SP15 – Locally Valued Landscape (P75 – 77)**. The purpose of the policy is to designate landscapes which are judged to be of local value and are worthy of recognition in planning terms.

¹ Pages refer to page numbers in West Suffolk Local Plan (Regulation 18) Preferred Options Part One: Strategic Policies

West Suffolk is inviting comments on each Strategic Policy (comments sections added to each Appendix). This report has included commentary on sections that appear to be particularly relevant to the parish (though Councillors, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG) and residents at the meeting, may identify other issues).

Suggested comments in response to West Suffolk's Consultation on each of the three parts are set out within the relevant appendices in comment boxes.

SP3 Design (P26 – 28). The purpose of this policy is to create well-designed and connected communities. Improving the design quality of new development, creating safe, inclusive and accessible places and providing a range of homes that meet local community needs are strategic priorities for the West Suffolk. Policy parameters include:

- Proposals for new development must create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment by addressing the following principles:
- a) Early community engagement to understand local character and context.
 - b) Anchor new developments within their immediate and local contexts.
 - c) Reinforce local character and distinctiveness, having regard to density, street layouts, scale, height and massing and the relationship of built form to landscape.
 - d) Connect homes and communities to nature through planting and landscape and provide multi-functional and inter-connected green spaces.
 - e) Protect and enhance the natural and historic environment.
 - f) Protect the landscape setting and important and historic views.
 - g) Appropriate provision and enhancement of open space, play, leisure and cultural facilities to provide a sense of wellbeing, safety and ownership.
 - h) Ensure developments prioritise sustainable movement and reduce the need to travel by car by creating integrated neighbourhoods with well defined, safe and attractive routes and spaces for walking and cycling.
 - i) Support healthier and more active lifestyles by designing health and wellbeing into place.
 - j) Design to be inclusive to meet the needs of particular groups such as those with physical mobility and mental health issues.
 - k) Design for flexible living and provide sufficient and adequate public and private outdoor space.
 - l) Addressing sustainable design principles through outstanding and innovative design.
 - m) As indicated in the National Planning Policy Framework, design guides and codes can be prepared at an area-wide, neighbourhood or site-specific scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents. Design guides and codes will be instrumental in ensuring quality development in new neighbourhoods or specific sites working in partnership with the local community.
 - n) Concept statements, development briefs and masterplans will be required for sites which by virtue of size, location or proposed mix of uses are determined by the local planning authority to require a masterplanning approach.

Many of these issues have been identified by residents in their responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group's Household Questionnaire. A summary of findings from that can be found at [Microsoft Word - Wickhambrook consultation papers.docx](#) on the parish website Wickhambrook.org. An excerpt of some comments relating to design are set out below:

- "New building must respect the character and landscape of the village – it should:"*
- *protect green spaces and the natural environment*
 - *keep Wickhambrook's pattern of separate greens*
 - *conserve listed buildings and their surroundings*
 - *enhance heritage and historical assets*

SP4 Infrastructure (P29-31). The purpose of this policy is to ensure the infrastructure needed to support planned growth is provided alongside development at the appropriate time and to set out the development requirements needed to deliver these.

West Suffolk states that:

The delivery of infrastructure is important to create connected communities and determine how places are shaped, the environment is enhanced and protected, and how quality of life in existing communities is maintained and improved. It also helps ensure that development has a positive effect on the social, natural and built environment.

There are various types of infrastructure. These are broadly grouped into the following categories.

- Hard infrastructure that includes pedestrian and cycle routes, roads, telecommunications, broadband, energy and water supply.
- Green infrastructure includes protecting and enhancing biodiversity, green spaces for recreation, access to the countryside and preserving the landscape of West Suffolk.
- Social infrastructure extends to, but is not limited to, sports and leisure facilities, education, community and cultural facilities and healthcare.

Policy parameters

- a. The types of infrastructure required to support the growth and development proposed in this local plan include, but are not limited to:
- Strategic transport improvements.
 - Sustainable transport links between new developments and town centres and other destinations, including cycle networks.
 - Public rights of way.
 - Strategic enhancement of the energy supply network (electricity).
 - Additional strategic wastewater treatment capacity in accordance with the strategic flood risk assessment and water cycle study.
 - Improvements and/or enhancements to green infrastructure.
 - Leisure, open space, sport and recreation needs throughout the district.
 - Community and cultural facilities.
 - Health and social care facilities.
 - Education, including early years provision, skills, and life-long learning requirements for the district.
 - Police and emergency service facilities across the district.
 - Local fibre and other ultra-fast high-speed broadband
- b. To mitigate the impact of development on infrastructure proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will:
- Deliver the necessary on site infrastructure requirements and where appropriate off site infrastructure requirements and/or a financial contribution which will be secured through a legal agreement.
 - Provide a suitable mechanism, subject to approval by the district council, to ensure the long-term maintenance and management of infrastructure, for example a financial contribution or a management plan.
 - Ensure the timely and phased delivery of infrastructure to serve development, especially where new development is dependent on this infrastructure to support it.
- c. A policy will be provided which seeks to safeguard, protect and enhance infrastructure facilities. The council will develop this alongside statutory consultees and infrastructure providers.

Findings from NPWG Household Survey:

"Infrastructure in Wickhambrook cannot cope with more houses, more people and more traffic."

- *90% said this is important*
- *roads need to be maintained, pot holes filled and hedges trimmed*
- *we need better road safety and traffic control*
- *parking is a problem at the school and health centre*

SP5 Housing – Settlement hierarchy and types of places (P32 – 39). The purpose of the settlement hierarchy is to reflect the scale and capacity of in terms of their service provision as well as their ability to link to other higher order settlements, particularly by sustainable means of travel.

West Suffolk comprises a wide range of settlements across the district. These settlements have been arranged into six categories, known as a settlement hierarchy. The settlements within the district have been categorised as:

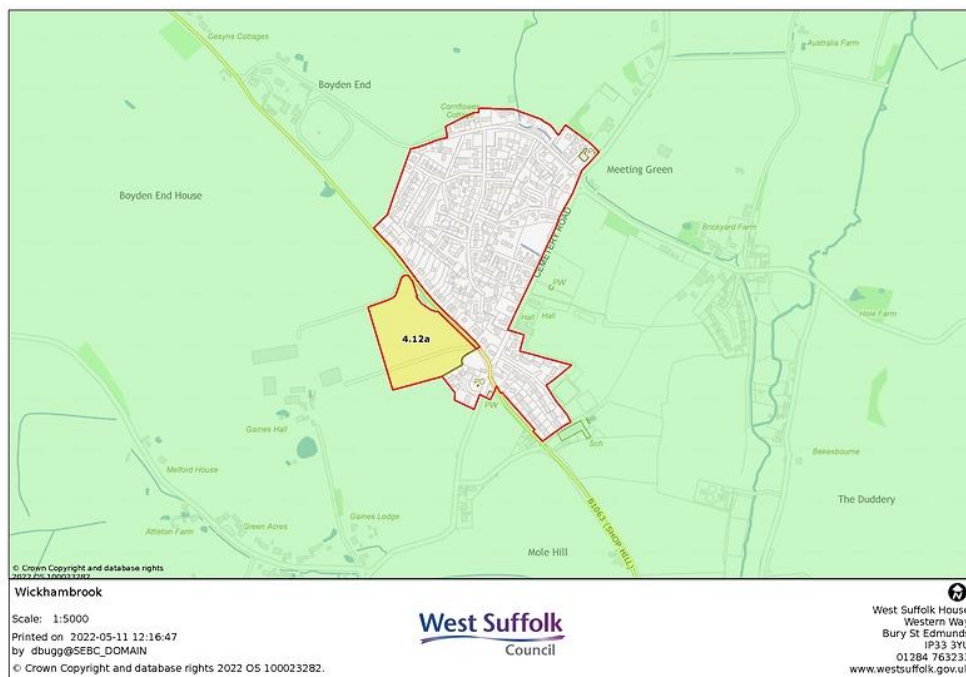
- Town
- Key Service Centre
- Local Service Centre
- Type A Village
- Type B Village
- Countryside.

The purpose of the settlement hierarchy is to reflect the scale and capacity of settlements in terms of their service provision, as well as their ability to link to other higher order settlements, particularly by methods of sustainable travel.

Wickhambrook is listed in the settlement hierarchy as a Local Service Centre (no change since the publication of issues and options consultation in November 2020). These settlements tend to have fewer dwellings than key service centres and a smaller range of services but will have as a minimum a school and convenience shop or community run shop and/or post office and village hall. These settlements are less accessible than the higher order settlements but can still meet some needs of other nearby smaller settlements.

Housing settlement boundaries may not be the physical boundary of the settlements, but in policy terms are the boundaries which manage development inside and outside of that area. Planning permission for new residential development will be permitted within housing settlement boundaries where it is not contrary to other policies in the Local Plan when established.

The settlement boundary for Wickhambrook is shown below:



SP7 Housing needs (P44 – 49) – The number of homes required.

Overall housing requirement – The local housing need assessment for West Suffolk Council has determined 15,200 homes are needed to be planned for the period 2021 to 2040.

Housing Requirement	15,200
Homes with Planning Permission	8,600
Homes to be identified in this plan	6,600

A total of 7,134 homes have been identified at the preferred options stage, from new site allocations, as well as carrying forward some sites already allocated in existing adopted local plans. Each site identified has been assessed for its suitability, availability and deliverability.

Policy Parameters:

- a) **Overall housing requirement** – to meet West Suffolk’s local housing need, provision is made for at least 15,200 new dwellings (net) and associated infrastructure to be delivered in the period 2021 to 2040.
- b) The policy will set the approach to identifying neighbourhood plan housing targets for existing and new designated neighbourhood areas.
- c) The policy will address the housing needs of different groups in the community including those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.
- d) The policy will support the identification of land to accommodate at least 10 per cent of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare.
- e) **Affordable housing** – To meet West Suffolk’s affordable housing need an estimated target of some 409 households per year will require affordable housing to rent between 2020 and 2040. This equates to around fifty one percent of overall need. The policy will seek to maximise the delivery of affordable housing subject to viability. The preferred approach to achieve this will be set out in NSP29 Affordable housing in part two of this plan.
- f) **Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople** – to meet West Suffolk’s Gypsy and Traveller and travelling showpeople need provision should initially be made for:
 - Gypsy and Travellers:**
The first five years of Gypsy and Traveller need (2020 to 2025) in the draft needs study, which using the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) definition is expected to be some 33 pitches (of which 24 fall within the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites definition). This will be achieved by either extensions to existing sites and/or by the identification and allocations of additional sites, some of which could come forward as part of major development sites.
 - Travelling Showpeople:**
The first five years of travelling showpeople need (2020 to 2025) in the draft needs study, which is expected to be some five plots.
- g) Further work will be undertaken to understand and monitor the requirements of this policy and how it will be applied upon completion of the study.

There is an existing site for Gypsies and Travellers at Kelly’s Meadow, located on the northern boundary of the parish with Depden.

Findings from NPWG Household Survey:

"New housing should meet the needs of local people as a priority."

- we need a variety of different kinds of accommodation to help local
- people stay in their community
- 76% support providing affordable homes

SP8 Overall housing distribution – How the housing need will be distributed

Policy parameters

a) Development will be brought forward in line with the broad distribution of housing as set out below, with the focus of growth on the towns, key service centres, local service centres and type A villages through urban extensions and infilling where infrastructure and environmental constraints allow.

b) Indicative additional housing provision to be planned for (and met by site allocations in part three of this plan) by settlement category for the period 2021 to 2040 is set out below:

Towns	4,913
Key service centres	1,384
Local service centres	741
Type A villages	96
Total homes	7,134

c) For some allocated sites in part three of this plan the indicative dwelling number has not yet been determined, therefore it is expected the overall housing provision planned for is likely to be higher than 7,134 homes identified above. In addition, the existing commitments will contribute to meeting the overall housing requirement.

Distributed across 12 Local Service Centres, this results in an average of 61 homes per local service centre.

Findings from NPWG Household Survey:
"We are against large-scale or mass development."

- 42% wanted fewer than 20 new houses over 20 years
- 82% wanted fewer than 50

any new housing should be built in small developments

SP9 Strategic employment

The purpose of the strategic employment policy is to make provision for employment land to meet the needs identified over the plan period to 2040. It will set out the distribution strategy. It will identify how existing employment land will be protected and how new proposals will be considered on land within and outside identified employment areas. It will support sustainable growth, expansion and diversification of local and rural businesses.

Policy parameters

- a) Provision will be made for 63 hectares of employment land in the district by 2040.
- b) The focus of the strategic provision will be directed to the towns with further provision in some of the key service centres. The strategic employment allocations are identified in part three of this plan, which sets out the policy considerations for each site.
- c) Non-strategic employment allocations identified in part three of the local plan, are smaller in scale and will meet local demand and/or rural needs. The policy considerations for each site are set out in part three of this plan.
- d) Further details will be provided at the submission stage of the local plan indicating the intended employment uses for each site by employment type and will set out how the need for strategic distribution uses will be addressed at a sub-regional level.
- e) Existing and proposed new employment areas identified in part three of this plan and as identified on the policies map, will continue to meet local and subregional needs. These sites will be protected in order to maintain an adequate supply of employment land. These sites will continue to be primary locations for industrial, warehousing, offices, distribution development and other B class uses.
- f) The policy will set out criteria for consideration of proposals (both employment and non-employment) within existing employment areas.
- g) The policy will set separate criteria by use type for consideration of proposals outside identified employment areas. For class E (office uses) will be directed to town centre first following the sequential approach, for classes B2, B8, sui generis (employment uses) and rural needs separate criteria will be set in part two of this plan.
- h) The policy will support sustainable growth, expansion and diversification of local and rural businesses.
- i) Local policies set out in part two of this plan will provide a criteria-based approach to protecting existing employment uses.
- j) Newmarket is recognised as the international home of horse racing and the industry plays a significant role in the area in terms of its economic importance (it is one of the largest employers and economic contributor in West Suffolk), and social and cultural influence and the character of the built and natural environment. There are specific policies protecting and enhancing the industry set out in part two of this plan.

There are a number of businesses located within the parish of Wickhambrook which are linked to the horse racing industry in Newmarket (stud farms) which may be affected or benefit from the proposed specific policies protecting and enhancing the industry set out in Part Two of the Plan.

Findings from NPWG Household Survey:

"We are not sure about economic development in the village."

- 67% said this was not important or had no opinion
- some people (35%) would like to see more support for small businesses or self-employed people locally
- better broadband (42 responses) and spaces to socialise (39 responses), work (12 responses) and meet (11 responses) would help some people

SP13 Green infrastructure

The purpose of the policy is to deliver green infrastructure in West Suffolk ensuring that its integrity and connectivity is retained, restored, protected and enhanced.

Green infrastructure (GI) is defined by its multifunctionality, with a single asset, such as a tree or a meadow, having the ability to provide a number of benefits to people (including physical and mental health), wildlife and wider environmental functions including climate change mitigation. This variety of community, environmental and economic benefits play an important role in the delivery of sustainable growth. As such a green infrastructure led approach to the design of new development is vital.

Policy parameters

- a) 'Priority areas' for green infrastructure have been identified (figure 1). These areas can provide multifunctional benefits to a wide range of people, whilst delivering nature-based solutions to future challenges and conserving the district's most important assets. The priority areas are: River Lark Corridor, Little Ouse Corridor, River Stour Corridor, Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Clayland Plateau Villages and Breckland Forest and Farmland.
- b) Development within or adjacent to the 'priority areas' should have regard to the strengths and considerations for the relevant area as set out in the West Suffolk Green Infrastructure Strategy 2022 (or
- c) any subsequent strategy). Opportunities to extend the coverage and connectivity of the strategic green infrastructure network within and adjacent to these areas, including improving access to the countryside, should be undertaken in association with new development, where appropriate.
- d) Deliverable green infrastructure projects and actions have been identified in addition to 'priority areas'. Development is expected to deliver these where it would be necessary for the development to do
- e) so, for example, being in a suitable location to support them, or being designed to include relevant elements.
- f) The council will work with its partners to develop the GI network and implement proposed network improvements including those set out in the GI strategy.
- g) Require a green infrastructure-led design approach to new development. This could be using a GI design code, use of GI design tools, requirement for a GI masterplan or implementation of a check
- h) list or set out principles that need to be demonstrated.
- i) Planning permission for development that would impact on the quantity or quality of the existing green infrastructure network will only be granted if it cannot be avoided and if alternative GI
- j) provision
- k) of equivalent benefit is provided as part of the development or a financial contribution is secured for suitable alternative green infrastructure provision by the relevant authority.

Wickhambrook is not identified by West Suffolk as within a priority area for green infrastructure. The parish does, however, have a historic network of Greens which provide a wide range of benefits to its residents, which have been identified in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan as a key feature of the parish to protect and preserve.

Findings from NPWG Household Survey:

"New building must respect the character and landscape of the village – it should:"

- *protect green spaces and the natural environment*
- *keep Wickhambrook's pattern of separate greens*
- *conserve listed buildings and their surroundings*
- *enhance heritage and historical assets*

SP14 Biodiversity net gain

Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development.

The Environment Act 2021 will mandate a minimum 10 per cent BNG to be implemented in England which is expected to come into place in winter 2023. Many of the details of how BNG will work will be included in BNG secondary legislation. However, a local plan policy is required to link biodiversity to other strategic objectives and the overall place-making strategy, enabling a more holistic approach.

The purpose of the policy is to set locally specific biodiversity net gain requirements to be implemented in West Suffolk.

Policy parameters

- a) The policy will set the ambition for BNG including whether the minimum BNG standard in West Suffolk should be higher than the mandatory 10 per cent.
- b) Whether different BNG thresholds for example above the minimum 10 per cent are set for different development types.
- c) The policy will address which strategies developers should take into account when delivering BNG for example green infrastructure strategies, local nature recovery strategies.
- d) How any offsite delivery of BNG will be targeted to contribute to wider nature recovery plans in addition to local objectives.

Biodiversity and the protection and enhancement of thriving plants and wildlife is a strong theme which has come through in all consultations the parish council (and NPWG) have conducted with its residents.

Findings from NPWG Household Survey:

"The environment is important to all of us."

- *96% said protect open views, green spaces and woodlands*
- *96% said protect hedgerows and trees*
- *96% value wildlife and biodiversity*

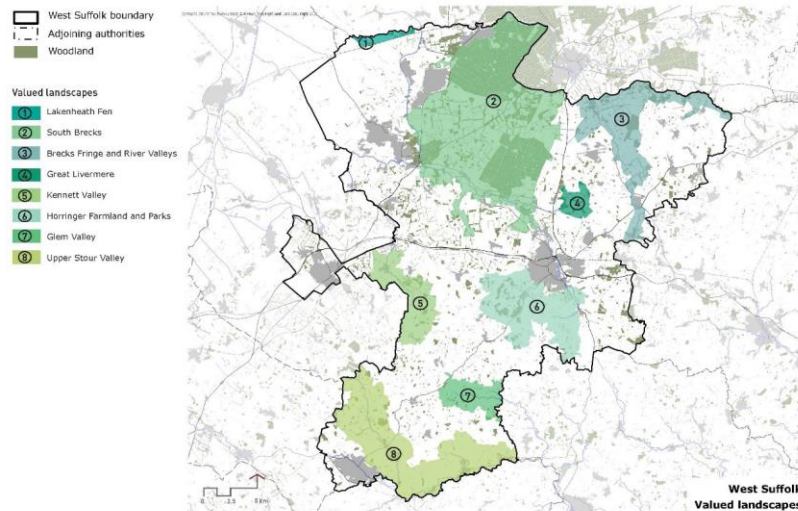
SP15 Locally valued landscape

A 'valued landscape' is an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes. West Suffolk council commissioned a study to review these areas, including historic landscape designations, and to provide evidence to support the designation.

The purpose of the policy is to designate landscapes which are judged to be of local value and are worthy of recognition in planning terms.

Policy parameters

- a) Candidate areas of locally valued landscape have been identified. These areas have, by reason of their distinctiveness, special qualities and features and/or condition, a very limited capacity to absorb change without a significant material effect on their character and/or condition.
- b) Proposals within the areas designated as locally valued landscapes (LVL) must:
 - i. Avoid significant loss of key characteristics, or their legibility, that underpin the scenic quality and the significance of the LVL and landscape character area.
 - ii. Respond effectively to the key characteristics and significance of the area, and to the specific recommendations for each LVL as set out in West Suffolk Local Landscape Designation Review 2021 and Landscape Character Assessments 2021 (or subsequent update).
- c) Individual proposals within or adjacent to these areas will be assessed based on their specific landscape and visual impact. Development which protects and enhances the locally valued landscapes will be supported.



Wickhambrook has not been identified by West Suffolk as falling within any particular valued landscape.

West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Part Two – Non-strategic Policies (attached as Appendix B)

This section of the West Suffolk Local Plan sets out the council's preferred parameters for non-strategic policies. Non-strategic policies set out more detailed policies for specific areas and types of development. This part of this plan will include policies to be used in day-to-day decision making.

The non-strategic policies have been drafted for the preferred options through the use of policy parameters. These set out the purpose of each policy, what each policy intends to allow or restrict and key points and criteria of the policies. The parameters developed for nonstrategic policies that will be used to determine applications have been divided into the following seven themes:

Spatial strategy

- NSP01 Housing settlement boundaries
- NSP02 Development in the countryside
- NSP03 Masterplans
- NSP04 Development briefs
- NSP05 Well-designed places

Climate change

- NSP06 Meeting the challenge of climate change
- NSP07 Renewable and low carbon energy

Infrastructure

- NSP08 Infrastructure services and telecommunications Development
- NSP09 Broadband
- NSP10 Rights of way
- NSP11 Transport assessment and travel plans
- NSP12 Active and sustainable travel
- NSP13 Parking standards
- NSP14 Waste

Natural built and historic environment

- NSP15 Biodiversity and geodiversity
- NSP16 Protected species
- NSP17 Trees
- NSP18 Landscape
- NSP19 Protecting and enhancing natural resources, minimising pollution and safeguarding from hazards
- NSP20 Flood risk and sustainable drainage
- NSP21 Water quality and resources
- NSP22 Listed buildings
- NSP23 Non designated heritage assets, local heritage assets and buildings protected by article 4 directions
- NSP24 New uses for historic buildings
- NSP25 Conservation areas
- NSP26 Development affecting parks and gardens of special historic or design interest
- NSP27 Archaeology
- NSP28 Enabling development

Homes and healthy communities

- NSP29 Affordable housing
- NSP30 Housing type and tenure
- NSP31 Custom and self-build
- NSP32 Housing in the countryside
- NSP33 Special housing needs
- NSP34 Alterations and extensions to dwellings including self-contained annexes
- NSP35 Extensions to domestic gardens in the countryside
- NSP36 Agricultural and essential workers dwelling
- NSP37 Residential use of redundant buildings in the Countryside
- NSP38 Rural exception sites
- NSP39 Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

- NSP40 Open space, natural and semi-natural green space, sport, play and recreation facilities
- NSP41 Community facilities and services
- NSP42 Leisure and cultural facilities
- NSP43 Allotments

Economy

- NSP44 Safeguarding employment
- NSP45 Proposals for main town centre uses
- NSP46 Local centres
- NSP47 Street trading and street cafes
- NSP48 Public realm improvements
- NSP49 Shop fronts and advertisements
- NSP50 Ancillary retail uses
- NSP51 Farm diversification
- NSP52 Re-use or replacement of buildings in countryside
- NSP53 Tourism development
- NSP54 Business and domestic equine

Horse racing industry

- NSP55 Development relating to the horse racing industry
- NSP56 Development affecting the horse racing industry
- NSP57 Redevelopment of existing sites relating to the horse racing industry
- NSP58 Horse walks

Evidence to support non-strategic policies

Evidence and research have helped develop the policy parameters for the site allocations set out in this part of this plan, as well as the outcomes of the West Suffolk Issues and Options consultation carried out in October 2020. Evidence produced to support this plan is ongoing and will be made available on the [background evidence webpage](#) when published.

Non-strategic Policies

Pages 9 – 112 of Part Two (Appendix B) set out West Suffolk Council’s preferred strategic policies in more detail:

West Suffolk is inviting comments on each Strategic Policy (comments sections added to Appendix A). This section has included commentary on sections that appear to be particularly relevant to the parish (though Councillors, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG) and residents at the meeting, may identify other issues).

NSP01 Housing Settlement Boundaries

The purpose of this policy is to support proposals for residential developments in defined housing settlement boundaries

Policy parameters

- a. Proposals for new residential development will be permitted within housing settlement boundaries where it is not contrary to other policies in this plan.
- b. Housing settlement boundaries define the extent to which residential development proposals will be supported.
- c. Housing settlement boundaries are defined on the policies map.

See proposed settlement boundary for Wickhambrook at page .

NSP02 Development in the countryside

The purpose of this policy is to set out what forms of development are acceptable in the countryside and protect the countryside from unsustainable development.

- a) The policy will give support to proposals for a new or extended building in the countryside where they are in accordance with other relevant policies in this plan and specifically 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 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.
- b) Proposals for sustainable economic growth and expansion of businesses in the countryside will be supported where: it will not result in the irreversible loss of the best or most versatile agricultural land; there is no detrimental impact on biodiversity, the character and visual amenity of the landscape or the historic environment.
- c) There are no severe impacts on highways network and any significant impacts should be mitigated.
- d) All proposals should be sensitive to their surroundings and respect the intrinsic character of the countryside, take opportunities to make a location more sustainable such as improving active travel links.
- e) For all proposals the use of previously developed land and sites well related to existing settlements should be used where viable and opportunities exist.

This policy reflects many comments made by residents of the parish during West Suffolk's Issues and Options consultation, through the NPWG Household Questionnaire and in response to recent planning applications (e.g. c).

Relevant comments from responses to the NPWG Household Questionnaire

"We are undecided about where any new building should happen but:"

- *not on valued green field sites*
- *not in the outlying hamlets or on the outlying greens*
- *not in between so the greens and hamlets merge together*

"New building must respect the character and landscape of the village – it should:"

- *protect green spaces and the natural environment*
- *keep Wickhambrook's pattern of separate greens*
- *conserve listed buildings and their surroundings*
- *enhance heritage and historical assets*

NSP03 Masterplans

The purpose of this policy is to set out the circumstances where masterplans will be required and the key issues which are to be addressed.

Masterplans provide developers and local community with certainty, enabling the right development in the right place and a faster consenting process with less dissent.

Policy parameters

- a) Masterplans will be required for proposals on land allocated in local plans when specified in local plan policy, or exceptionally on large or complicated sites where the local planning authority think a masterplan is justified.
- b) The policy will list the key design issues to be addressed in any masterplan, these will include as appropriate:
 - Site boundaries.
 - Neighbouring plots.
 - Landscaping.
 - A biodiversity plan.
 - Measures to protect the historic environment.
 - Design measures to minimise climate change risk.
 - Town and local centres.
 - Public art.
 - Design principles of employment sites.
 - Design principles of social infrastructure sites.
 - Pedestrian, cycle, public rights of way and public transport linkages.
 - Highway and road network.
 - Waste and recycling facilities.
 - Measures to reduce energy demand.
 - Timetables for phasing and section 106 funding.
 - How amenity will be protected.
 - A clear set of overarching design principles to guide the development.
 - Well defined and distinctive character areas and development parcels.
 - Walkable and integrated neighbourhoods.
 - Connectivity with surrounding areas as well as providing access to the surrounding countryside and open space.
 - A hierarchy of routes and spaces with a permeable and legible layout.
 - Neighbourhood parks and smaller green spaces.
 - A range of housing densities, house types and mix of uses for each neighbourhood including the level of affordable housing provision.
 - Prioritisation given to pedestrian and cycle movement and active travel.
 - Community function of streets which are inclusive, welcoming and people-friendly and provide places for social interaction.
 - How the development will seek to protect the historic environment.
 - Measures to minimise climate change risks and ensure all developments are resilient, including incorporation of managed sustainable drainage systems.
 - Blue and green corridors.
 - Electrical capacity, electric vehicle charging and heat pumps.
 - Sustainability measures to reduce energy demand.
 - Reference to the national model design code and the ten characteristics of well-designed places in the national design guide.
- c) The policy will make reference to the [masterplan protocol](#) and other relevant design guidance.

In preparing a Neighbourhood plan, Wickhambrook has requested technical support for Masterplanning of allocated sites. Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect the parameters identified above.

NSP04 Development briefs

The purpose of this policy is to set out the circumstances when a development brief might be required and the key issues which are to be addressed.

Policy parameters

- a) Development briefs will be required by the local planning authority where they are of a size, or in a location, or proposing a mix of uses, or of significant local interest to make a development brief necessary.
- b) Development briefs should have been through consultation and approved prior to the determination of a planning application, in accordance with the council's protocol.
- c) Development briefs should accord with the design policy and include an analysis of site conditions, consultation feedback and identification of key design issues (agreed with the local planning authority in advance.) The development brief will identify:
 - Site constraints and opportunities.
 - Context and character – urban form, local development patterns and character traits.
 - Design principles.
 - Housing mix, affordable housing, density ranges, employment, type of use(s) (use class) and building(s) type and size.
 - Mix of uses.
 - Social and physical infrastructure to serve the development.
 - Landscaping, planting.
 - Biodiversity net gain.
 - Wildlife and historic features – incorporation and enhancement.
 - Connectivity and sustainable movement –links to active.
 - Active and sustainable travel – filtered permeability, links to public transport, workplaces, services, on and off site, public transport routes and stops.
 - Vehicle movements and electric vehicle charge points.
 - Phasing.
 - Details of materials, design features and characteristic to achieve local distinctiveness.
 - Sustainable design and construction and energy efficiency measures.
 - Blue corridors and sustainable drainage systems.

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect the parameters identified above.

The proposed site allocation for Wickhambrook (see Part Three) is identified as mixed use. A development brief incorporating the parameters set out above would be likely to address many of the concerns raised by residents about proposals for new housing development.

NSP05 Well-designed places

The purpose of this policy is to be an overarching local design policy to ensure that all development adheres to good design principles.

Policy parameters

- a) The National Planning Policy Framework and national design guide sets out that good design is a fundamental aspect of sustainable development and the planning process should result in the 'creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places'.
- b) Proposals for development will be required to:
 - Create or maintain a sense of place, respecting the local characteristics.
 - Result in high quality architecture and provide a visually attractive layout.
 - Respect the character, scale, density and massing of a locality.
 - Create places that are safe, suitable for all and accessible.
 - Retain gardens, important open space and landscapes, which contribute to character and appearance of an area.
 - Promote health and well-being through adhering to 'secure by design' principles, national space standards and through sustainable forms of transport.
 - Provide adequate outdoor amenity space for all residential properties.
 - Not adversely affect amenities of areas by reason of noise, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light and other pollution.
- c) Proposals should include a concise assessment of the key positive character traits that have been identified and how the new design will make reference to them. For major developments, a character study will be needed to inform this assessment.
- d) All application types and proposals will be required to adhere to and be assessed against the appropriate and detailed criteria set out within this policy.

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any new residential developments to be constrained by the parameters identified above.

Relevant comments from responses to the NPWG Household Questionnaire

"New building must respect the character and landscape of the village – it should:"

- *protect green spaces and the natural environment*
- *keep Wickhambrook's pattern of separate greens*
- *conserve listed buildings and their surroundings*
- *enhance heritage and historical assets*

"The environment is important to all of us."

- *96% said protect open views, green spaces and woodlands*
- *96% said protect hedgerows and trees*
- *96% value wildlife and biodiversity*

"We need better footpaths, quiet lanes and cycle ways."

- *83% want to make the village safer and easier for pedestrians and cyclists*

NSP07 Renewable and low carbon energy

The purpose of this policy is to encourage and guide proposals for renewable and low carbon energy-generating and storage assets and distribution networks. This can include new solar farms, battery storage and anaerobic digestion plants.

Policy parameters

- a) Such schemes will be supported if there is no landscape harm, or the benefits outweigh the disbenefits when assessed through a landscape and visual impact assessment. This will show:
 - Minimal visual impact – landscape or townscape.
 - Mitigation measures for any visual impacts.
 - Assess in isolation and cumulatively the impact of the proposal on the environment.
- b) Development should avoid the best and most versatile agricultural land wherever possible as defined by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Land Classification of England and Wales.
- c) The policy provides for biodiversity net gain. There should be no detrimental impacts on issues of biodiversity, geodiversity and water quality.
- d) There should be no harmful impacts on historical, archaeological and cultural heritage, highway safety and associated infrastructure, aviation, telecommunications and associated infrastructure, soil quality and residential amenity.
- e) The policy will require that after the cessation of generation, the site is restored to its original use. A decommissioning strategy or plan for site restoration should be provided with every application. The policy will require that the site enables agricultural activities to be continued after cessation of the use where applicable and encourage co-location of agricultural activity during the lifetime of the project.
- f) The policy will encourage co-location of energy producers and stores.
- g) The policy will specify that wind development proposals should identify any impacts on local communities. A residential visual amenity assessment should be submitted with all wind farm applications. The policy should consider how the development affects air traffic operations. The impact of any wind farm on bats and migrating birds and bird strike is also to be considered.
- h) Additionally, solar farms potential glint and glare and effects on biodiversity should be considered (ecology and nature conservatory and mitigation statements will be required).
- i) The policy will state that energy storage should be co-located with generating and or distribution assets wherever possible. If this is not possible then detailed reasons must be provided. A site management plan should be submitted that demonstrates fire safety measures are adequately addressed.

Although no sites have been identified in Wickhambrook under the current consultation for such assets or schemes, many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any new developments to be constrained by the parameters identified above, for example, b), c), d).

Relevant comments from responses to the NPWG Household Questionnaire

"New building must respect the character and landscape of the village – it should:"

- *protect green spaces and the natural environment*
- *keep Wickhambrook's pattern of separate greens*
- *conserve listed buildings and their surroundings*
- *enhance heritage and historical assets*

"A sustainable future is important."

- *94% said our fields should continue to be used to grow food*
- *82% were in favour of conservation or rewilding*
- *many think we should develop natural and renewable energy sources (77%) and water harvesting (65%)*

NSP09 Broadband

The purpose of this policy is to require new development to be compatible with local fibre and other ultra-fast high-speed broadband infrastructure where appropriate. This will be demonstrated through a connectivity statement submitted with planning applications where appropriate.

Policy parameters

- a) The policy will state that the council will expect all applicable new major development to submit with the application a connectivity statement that sets out what measures the proposal has put in place to comply with this policy.
- b) All new residential and commercial developments should provide the infrastructure required to enable connectivity to the high-speed electronic communications network unless it is not practical to do so. For major developments (10 or more dwellings or sites of greater than 0.5 hectares) this should be through direct fibre to the premise access.
- c) Where not practical to do so, as a minimum and subject to viability of the scheme, suitable ducting that can accept fibre to the premises should be provided.
- d) Further work will be undertaken to understand and monitor the requirement of this policy and how it will be applied.

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any new residential developments to be supported by the parameters identified above. Better broadband was seen as a key issue in the parish which would help residents to live and work in the parish.

NSP10 Rights of way

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and enhance public rights of way for pedestrian, cyclist, byways or horse rider use.

Policy parameters

- a) The policy will seek improvements to rights of way associated with new development, facilitating sustainable access modes on and off site as appropriate. Contributions will be sought towards
- b) improvements.
- c) Public rights of way must be maintained on their original alignments and should be enhanced. Public rights of way running through a site should be maintained as a green corridor appealing for all types of users. The rights of way network should be seamlessly integrated with the site layout.
- d) The policy will detail the aims and objectives of the Suffolk Green Assess Strategy Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020-2030.

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any new residential developments to be supported by the parameters identified above.

Relevant comments from responses to the NPWG Household Questionnaire

"We need better footpaths, quiet lanes and cycle ways."

- 83% want to make the village safer and easier for pedestrians and cyclists

NSP11 Transport assessment and travel plans

The purpose of this policy is to require major development proposals or applications likely to have a significant transport implication, to submit the following documents alongside their planning applications:

- A transport assessment of appropriate scale.
- A travel plan that identifies physical management measures

necessary to address the transport implications arising from development.

Policy parameters

- a) The policy supports proposals that demonstrate that the transport impacts are satisfactorily mitigated via a transport assessment or travel plan.
- b) The developer will be required to provide necessary funding to deliver and provide for the ongoing monitoring of any travel plan.
- c) Travel plan measures should not be used to address or overcome identified road safety measures caused by new development unless the outcomes are demonstrated to be guaranteed.
- d) Developers will be required to make a contribution via planning obligations towards the delivery of improvements to transport infrastructure to facilitate access to more sustainable transport modes.

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any new residential developments to be mitigated by the parameters identified above.

Relevant comments from responses to the NPWG Household Questionnaire

"Infrastructure in Wickhambrook cannot cope with more houses, more people and more traffic."

- *90% said this is important*
- *roads need to be maintained, pot holes filled and hedges trimmed*
- *we need better road safety and traffic control*
- *parking is a problem at the school and health centre*

NSP12 Active and sustainable travel

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that new development prioritises walking, cycling and other sustainable forms of transport which contribute to multimodal journeys over motorised transport. The government has set out its ambition of half of all journeys in towns and cities in England being cycled or walked by 2030. To do this they make it clear that cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys. New developments should be designed in ways that are safe, well-connected, and accessible for all users, and maximise the greatest possible use of sustainable and active forms of travel in line with Suffolk Design Streets Guide 2020. Developments should demonstrate and enhance sustainable routes from their site to local facilities, services, destinations and the wider countryside.

Ensuring that development promotes, and prioritises active travel will help tackle some of the most challenging issues we face in society. Benefits of greater levels of active travel would include:

- Reducing the burden on the NHS by improving health and wellbeing.
- Managing congestion.
- Combating climate change and air pollution.
- Creating safer streets.
- Addressing inequalities.

Policy parameters

- a) Maximise walking opportunities irrespective of the level of personal mobility and contribute to a positive public realm that incorporates walking, improving pedestrian and wheelchair routes.
- b) Ensure a safe, segregated, and accessible environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Contribute towards the existing cycle network, and protect existing routes, provide cycle parking in line with Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2019. Ensure that facilities such as workplace showers are provided. Cycle infrastructure should be built to the requirements of Cycle Infrastructure Design Local Transport Note 1/20, or successor documents.
- c) Ensure that employment uses and destinations have facilities such as workplace showers, covered cycle storage, changing rooms, drying rooms and lockers provided (to allow people to cycle all year around) and that new homes have sufficient cycling storage for a range of bicycles.
- d) New development should prioritise walking and cycling by delivering high quality, coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive walking and cycling routes.
- e) Public transport usage should be maximised with appropriate contributions, well-designed facilities, passenger information infrastructure, bus improvements, and protection and enhancement of public transport routes.
- f) Ensure that new and existing sustainable transport routes are created or upgraded to enable safe direct access to surrounding settlements, destinations and facilities and the wider countryside.

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any new residential developments to be supported by the parameters identified above, particularly b), e), and f).

Wickhambrook has poor public transport access at present and has struggled to access support to improve safe cycle and footpath access for residents.

Relevant comments from responses to the NPWG Household Questionnaire

"Infrastructure in Wickhambrook cannot cope with more houses, more people and more traffic."

- 90% said this is important
- roads need to be maintained, pot holes filled and hedges trimmed
- we need better road safety and traffic control
- parking is a problem at the school and health centre

"We need better footpaths, quiet lanes and cycle ways."

- 83% want to make the village safer and easier for pedestrians and cyclists

NSP17 Trees

The purpose of this policy is to retain existing trees, and encourage new or replacement planting, wherever possible.

Policy parameters

- a) Existing trees on development sites should be retained and protected during construction and in the long term.
- b) Where it is necessary to remove trees, the loss should be appropriately compensated.
- c) Proposals for new development, where appropriate, should provide new tree planting

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any new residential developments to be supported by the parameters identified above, particularly b) and c).

NSP18 Landscape

The purpose of this policy is to protect and enhance the diverse landscape character of the district. The existing policy requires updating following new evidence on the landscape character of the district.

Policy parameters

- a) All proposals for development to be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the character of the landscape as described in the West Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment and Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment.
- b) Proposals to demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will protect, enhance and where possible restore the character of the landscape, including the setting of settlements, the significance of gaps between them and the nocturnal character of the landscape.
- c) Proposals will require the submission of landscape proposals, appropriate to the scale of development, with applications for planning permission.
- d) Any development proposals that are likely to have a significant impact on the landscape must assess the potential impact (including cumulative impact) and propose how negative effects will be minimised through alternative site selection, design, suitable mitigation measures or as a last resort appropriate compensation.

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any new residential developments to be supported by the parameters identified above, particularly b) and c).

Wickhambrook's Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has identified the need to have a full Landscape survey conducted as it considers the one commissioned by West Suffolk is not sufficiently detailed for Wickhambrook's NP.

Relevant comments from responses to the NPWG Household Questionnaire

"New building must respect the character and landscape of the village – it should:"

- *protect green spaces and the natural environment*
- *keep Wickhambrook's pattern of separate greens*
- *conserve listed buildings and their surroundings*
- *enhance heritage and historical assets*

NSP20 Flood risk and sustainable drainage

The purpose of this policy is to guide flood risk and sustainable urban drainage, setting out when development may be permitted in addition to methods to reduce flood risk.

Policy parameters

- a) The policy will require that development proposals will not be permitted where they would have an adverse effect on existing watercourses or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Development will only be permitted if it has been assessed sequentially as low risk. Development should be safe for its lifetime and not increase flow rate compared to a greenfield scenario.
- b) The policy should make reference to the Suffolk Sustainable Drainage System Guide 2016 (appendix A to the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy) and any updated guidance.
- c) The policy will require all development to consider the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Sustainable drainage systems design should begin as early as possible. The design of SuDS should consider (in order to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding):
 - Effects of climate change.
 - Effects of development in the catchment.
 - Development near airbases should minimise the opportunities for bird strike.
 - SuDS should be considered in addition to public open space.
 - SuDS should incorporate the four pillars of SuDS: water quality, water quantity, biodiversity and amenity.
 - SuDS should be managed for their whole life.

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any new residential developments to be supported by the parameters identified above, particularly a) above. This is relevant too, to infil and windfall developments within the parish.

Relevant comments from responses to the NPWG Household Questionnaire

"New building must respect the character and landscape of the village – it should:"

- *protect green spaces and the natural environment*
- *keep Wickhambrook's pattern of separate greens*
- *conserve listed buildings and their surroundings*
- *enhance heritage and historical assets*

NSP22 Listed buildings

The purpose of this policy is to set out how proposals to alter, extend or change the use of listed buildings, or developments that affect their setting will be assessed.

Policy parameters

- a) Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the building and/or its setting. Any harm to, or loss of significance should require clear and convincing justification.
- b) The level of detail in any supporting information should be proportionate to the asset's and/or building's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on significance.
- c) Proposals should contribute to the preservation of the building, not be detrimental to the building's character or any architectural, archaeological, artistic or historic features that contribute towards its special interest; be an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, design and detail; use appropriate materials and methods of construction which respect the character of the building.
- d) The historic internal layout (which may include later remodelling) and other internal features of importance should be respected.
- e) The setting of the listed building which contributes towards significance, including inward and outward views; the character or appearance of a park, garden or yard of historic or design interest, particularly where the grounds have been laid out to complement the design or function of the building should be respected.
- f) A curtilage and/or setting which is appropriate to the listed building, and which maintains its relationship with its surroundings should be retained.
- g) Energy efficiency measures that do not harm the buildings significance, fabric or ongoing preservation and which take a holistic whole building approach to energy efficiency may be considered where appropriate.
- h) Proposals should have regard to the present and future economic viability or function of the listed building and secure its optimum viable use.
- i) The policy will set out how policies to demolish all or part of a listed building will be assessed.

Wickhambrook as many Listed Buildings.

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any residential developments to be supported by the parameters identified above, particularly c), e), f) and g) above.

NSP23 Non designated heritage assets, local heritage assets and buildings protected by article 4 directions

The purpose of this policy is to set out how proposals to demolish, extend or alter non designated heritage assets, local heritage assets and buildings protected by article 4 directions will be assessed.

Policy parameters

- a) Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the building and its setting.
- b) Proposals should respect the historic fabric, design, materials, elevational treatment and ornamentation of the original building; not result in an unacceptable level of loss, damage or covering of original features; and have regard to the setting, plot layout and any boundary features as appropriate.
- c) A clear justification will be required for any works causing harm, so that this can be weighed against any public benefits.
- d) The level of detail in any supporting information should be proportionate to the works proposed and the importance of the building.
- e) This policy will seek to establish how we capture and monitor non designated assets.

NSP29 Affordable housing

The purpose of this policy is to address the affordable housing needs of West Suffolk.

Policy parameters

- a) On brownfield sites of 10 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares or more 30 per cent of new dwellings will be affordable.
- b) On greenfield sites of 10 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares or more 40 per cent of new dwellings will be affordable.
- c) Where this would result in a requirement for a percentage of a dwelling to be affordable this should be rounded up (0.5 or above) or down as appropriate to a whole number.
- d) A maximum of 10 per cent of the total number of homes on the site should be for affordable home ownership (unless the development is one of the types listed as an exception under para 65 of the National Planning Policy Framework).
- e) Where a proposal for a site includes first homes, they should make up 25 per cent of all affordable homes secured through developer contributions.
- f) The remaining 75 per cent of affordable homes will deliver as much affordable housing to rent as viability allows given the affordable need as set out in part one of this plan and evidenced in the housing needs study of specific groups.
- g) The affordable homes should be distributed across the development and integrated within the design and layout such that they are indistinguishable from the market housing on the same site. This should be implemented in small groups or clusters, in accordance with the guidance provided in the [West Suffolk Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document](#).
- h) All new affordable homes should meet or exceed the nationally described space standards.
- i) Affordable homes should be the appropriate type and size to meet local needs as informed by the council's latest evidence on local housing need.
- j) Planning permission will be refused for development proposals where it appears that a larger site has been deliberately sub-divided into smaller development parcels in order to avoid the requirements of this policy.
- k) Housing sites with multiple phases of development will have the affordable housing provision reviewed in the application for each phase secured through the mechanism of a Section 106.
- l) Viability at the application stage will be considered in line with paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. The West Suffolk Local Plan will be subject to a viability assessment at each stage of plan making and a whole plan viability assessment will support the submission plan. Current evidence indicates that securing affordable homes as outlined above is deliverable taking account of other development costs assumed so far. The deliverability and viability of proposed sites will be kept under review as the preparation of the local plan progresses.

Many comments from parish residents as part of local consultations on the Local Plan and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan reflect a desire for any residential developments to be supported by the parameters identified above, particularly b), g), h) and k) above.

Relevant comments from responses to the NPWG Household Questionnaire

"New housing should meet the needs of local people as a priority."

- *we need a variety of different kinds of accommodation to help local people stay in their community*
- *76% support providing affordable homes*

NSP30 Housing type and tenure

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all new residential development provides the appropriate type and size of new homes to meet the current and predicted future housing requirements of the communities in West Suffolk.

Policy parameters

- a) Proposals are likely to be supported where a range of house types and sizes, both market and affordable, is provided that reflects the identified housing needs shown in the latest housing needs study as set out below:

Size	Market	Affordable homes to buy	Affordable homes to rent
One bedroom	0-10%	15-25%	30-40%
Two bedrooms	25-35%	40-50%	30-40%
Three bedrooms	40-50%	25-35%	20-30%
Four bedrooms	15-25%	0-10%	0-10%

- b) Deviation from the above mix may be justified when applying the mix to individual development sites, if evidence is submitted that demonstrates the nature of the site and character of the area, including the existing mix of properties and any up to-date evidence of need (such as the housing register) justify flexibility in the approach. The council will monitor the mix of housing delivered and respond accordingly so that the strategic mix requirements are closely met.
- c) All new dwellings should meet or exceed the nationally described space standards or any subsequent national standard or policy.
- d) All new homes must be built to building regulations M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable' standard, with 10 per cent of new market homes and 25 per cent of affordable homes are built to building regulations M4 (3) 'wheelchair user' standard.

Wickhambrook NPWG has identified a need to undertake a housing survey to assess the types of houses and tenure most appropriate for the community in any new development.

Relevant comments from responses to the NPWG Household Questionnaire

"New housing should meet the needs of local people as a priority."

- *we need a variety of different kinds of accommodation to help local people stay in their community*
- *76% support providing affordable homes*

NSP33 Special housing needs

The purpose of this policy is to support the delivery accommodation of the growing elderly population and those with special housing needs in West Suffolk.

Policy parameters

- a) On sites deemed appropriate for residential development by other policies in the local plan, proposals for new or extensions to existing accommodation for elderly and/or vulnerable people will be supported where they meet the following criteria.
 - They are designed to meet the specific needs of residents including requirements for disabled persons where appropriate.
 - All new homes should be M4(2) compliant and a minimum of 10 per cent of new market homes and 25 per cent of new affordable homes M4(3) compliant as appropriate to meet the specific needs of the
 - residents.
 - Acceptable amenity space of an acceptable quantity and quality is provided.
 - The development is in a location that is well served by public transport, community, and retail facilities.
 - The proposal does not lead to an over concentration of similar accommodation in the area.
- b) In the countryside proposals for extensions to existing specialist accommodation will be supported where a need can be clearly demonstrated and the proposal meets the above criteria and other policies of this plan.

NSP38 Rural exception sites

The purpose of this policy is to support the provision of affordable housing in villages and settlements where other policies in this plan would normally restrict housing development.

Policy parameters

- a) The policy will support rural affordable housing schemes adjoining but outside a housing settlement boundary and in the designated countryside, provided it is adjacent to a settlement.
- b) The development will be required to: assist in meeting a proven local need; be well related to existing services and facilities; sympathetic to the character and form of the settlement; proportionate in scale; the site is the most suitable to meet the need; and will not negatively impact on biodiversity and landscape character and any unavoidable harm will be adequately mitigated.
- c) In exceptional circumstances a small amount of market housing will be allowed on exception sites where it can be justified on viability grounds to facilitate the affordable housing. The market housing in the form of custom and self-build housing will be supported to facilitate affordable housing subject to a proven need identified in the housing needs study for specific groups.
- d) The initial and subsequent occupation of the dwellings will be restricted to those having an identified local need for affordable housing and priority given to those with a local connection to the village through the use of conditions or legal obligations.
- e) For the purposes of this policy local housing need is confined to the parish in which the proposal is situated and immediately adjoining parishes and evidenced by the council's waiting list or a housing needs survey.

Wickhambrook parish council commissioned a housing needs survey which identified a need for up to 10 units, see [Housing Need Survey Results Report for Wickhambrook](#)

West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation

A Part Three – Site Allocations (attached as Appendix C)

This section of the West Suffolk Local Plan sets out the council’s preferred sites for housing, employment, mixed-use, retail and commercial leisure use in towns, key service centres, local service centres and type A villages. The attached Site Allocation Document has been redacted to only show residential site allocations for Wickhambrook, and commentary on non-strategic employment and mixed-use allocations. The full Part Three – Site Allocations consultation can be found online at [Part Three: Site Allocations - West Suffolk Local Plan \(Regulation 18\) Preferred Options - West Suffolk Planning Policy Consultations \(inconsult.uk\)](https://www.inconsult.uk/consultations/west-suffolk-planning-policy-consultations-part-three-site-allocations-preferred-options-regulation-18).

Residential Site Options

The sites within this part of the West Suffolk Local Plan are identified as strategic or non-strategic. The strategic sites are larger residential sites which help address the council’s strategic priorities and housing need. The non-strategic sites are smaller residential sites across the district to meet the housing need.

There are non-strategic sites, with planning permission which are not listed in this plan and details of these can be found in the five year housing land supply (February 2022).

Omission sites

As a result of comments received at the issues and options consultation stage and further evidence base work, many sites have now been discounted and are not proposed for allocation in this plan. These sites are now referred to as ‘omission sites’ and are set out in appendix B alongside a brief justification setting out why they haven’t been selected for allocation.

Infrastructure delivery plan

The draft infrastructure delivery plan (IDP) is an evidence base study supporting the local plan which sets out baseline information for those categories of settlements which could experience growth in this plan period. West Suffolk’s ongoing discussions with infrastructure providers throughout the preparation of the local plan will establish and define infrastructure requirements generated by the sites proposed in this plan.

Infrastructure to support Wickhambrook as a Local Centre is an issue which has been raised by residents of the parish on many occasions and is a key concern.

Findings from NPWG Household Survey:

"Infrastructure in Wickhambrook cannot cope with more houses, more people and more traffic."

- 90% said this is important
- roads need to be maintained, pot holes filled and hedges trimmed
- we need better road safety and traffic control
- parking is a problem at the school and health centre

West Suffolk Site assessment criteria

The following criteria have been used to help assess the sites included in this plan as preferred options:

- Only included sites in or adjacent to towns, key service centres, local service centres and type A villages (see SP5 in part one of this plan for information on the settlement hierarchy and categories of settlement).
- Excluded sites below 10 dwellings (these can come forward as windfall).
- Applied the criteria below to calculate the overall number of dwellings and/or density for that site except where constraints suggest a more appropriate capacity and/or density:
 - sites over 50 dwellings – 60 per cent of the site will be calculated at 30 dwellings per hectare to allow for infrastructure provision on site (evidenced by Natural England Sites of Special Scientific Interest impact zone setting).
 - Mixed-use sites – a lower density will be assumed reflecting the proportion of the site likely to be available for residential development.
 - on sites below 50 dwellings, 30 dwellings per hectare is likely to be appropriate unless obvious constraints are known, for example the site is extensively covered by mature trees and a tree preservation order has been applied.
- Where there is a current application (for example with resolution to grant permission) or planning permission the dwelling number on the application is used, as this reflects what is deliverable.
- Where a neighbourhood plan is being progressed, we have had regard to its status and content.

Employment mixed-use, retail and commercial leisure use sites

West Suffolk used the employment land review study (2021) to inform the distribution of employment sites across the district. Further information on how the overall employment requirement has been derived can be seen in part one of the local plan. Section seven of this part of this plan allocates sites to meet our employment mixed-use, retail and commercial leisure use needs.

No sites were allocated in Wickhambrook to meet West Suffolk's employment mixed use, retail and commercial leisure use needs.

Findings from NPWG Household Questionnaire:

"We are not sure about economic development in the village."

- *67% said this was not important or had no opinion*
- *some people (35%) would like to see more support for small businesses or self-employed people locally*
- *better broadband (42 responses) and spaces to socialise (39 responses), work (12 responses) and meet (11 responses) would help some people*

Gypsy and Traveller sites

West Suffolk Council has a legal duty to consider the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the same way as other sectors of the community. In order to plan positively and evidence the permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, the council has worked collaboratively with neighbouring local authorities in the Cambridge Sub Region Housing Market Area to produce a revised Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment.

This consultation invites land to be put forward for sites for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation to be considered for allocation.

There is already an existing site for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation at the northern boundary of the parish (Kelly's Meadow).

Call for sites

In order to ensure that all potential options for the distribution of new housing, employment, retail and Gypsy and Traveller sites are explored through the preparation of this local plan, a new call for sites accompanies this consultation.

If you are aware of any other potential sites for the above uses in West Suffolk that are available for development which are not identified in this document and have not been previously submitted to us, then please let West Suffolk Council know by completing the [‘call for sites’ site submission form](#), providing details of the site location and a map with a red outline of the site boundary.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires that at least 10 per cent of the housing requirement is provided on sites no larger than one hectare in the development plan, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this 10 per cent target cannot be achieved. West Suffolk currently has insufficient sites to meet this NPPF policy requirement, so is also interested to hear about potential sites in all settlements no larger than one hectare, subject to these sites meeting the criteria outlined in the form.

Findings from NPWG Household Questionnaire

We are against large-scale or mass development."

- 42% wanted fewer than 20 new houses over 20 years
- 82% wanted fewer than 50
- any new housing should be built in small developments

Wickhambrook – Local Service Centre (page 213)

Wickhambrook is a village located in the southern part of the district 16 kilometres from Haverhill and Newmarket and 18 kilometres from Bury St Edmunds. It has a population of 1,286 (2019 mid-year estimate). Wickhambrook is designated as a local service centre with a range of services including a primary school, GP Surgery, a public house, recreation facilities and convenience food store and post

The parish council have embarked on the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan area was designated by West Suffolk Council on 1 October 2021.

A Household Questionnaire was completed by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (established in November '21) in March 2022, a summary of which can be found at [Microsoft Word - Wickhambrook consultation papers.docx](#)

Constraints and Opportunities

Wickhambrook comprises of a core village area surrounded by a number of hamlets and small groups of dwellings to the north-west, south and east. There is a need to prevent coalescence of these historic hamlets to preserve the character of Wickhambrook.

- a) The landscape character assessment notes that the village lies within the Glem and Wickhambrook Farmlands character area, comprising of undulating ancient farmlands.
- b) The topography of the area creates long views out of the village. Land to the north-west and to the east of the settlement is on higher ground where there is a risk that large scale growth would be prominent in the landscape.
- c) The village green to the south-east of the village acts as an entrance to Wickhambrook, which forms a key feature of the village and should be protected.
- d) Flood zones 2 and 3 run adjacent to the eastern fringes of Thorns and Meeting Green which may potentially be a constraint too. There is occasional localised surface water flooding within the village.
- e) Bus services are less frequent than hourly or operate during limited times.
- f) There is a conservation area at Wickham Street to the south-east of the main settlement.
- g) The roads are narrow in places and lack footpaths and safe pedestrian routes.

The constraints identified at b), c), d), e), f) and g) are all noted and have been identified by many residents of the parish both during West Suffolk’s consultation on Issues and Options in December ’20 and the NPWG Household Questionnaire, for example:

Various statements from NPWG Household Questionnaire:

"New building must respect the character and landscape of the village – it should:"

- protect green spaces and the natural environment
- keep Wickhambrook’s pattern of separate greens

"The environment is important to all of us."

- 96% said protect open views, green spaces and woodlands

"Wickhambrook is a village not a town – we want it to stay like that."

- 91% value rural feel and access to the countryside

"Infrastructure in Wickhambrook cannot cope with more houses, more people and more traffic."

- roads need to be maintained, pot holes filled and hedges trimmed
- we need better road safety and traffic control

"We need better footpaths, quiet lanes and cycle ways."

- 83% want to make the village safer and easier for pedestrians and cyclists

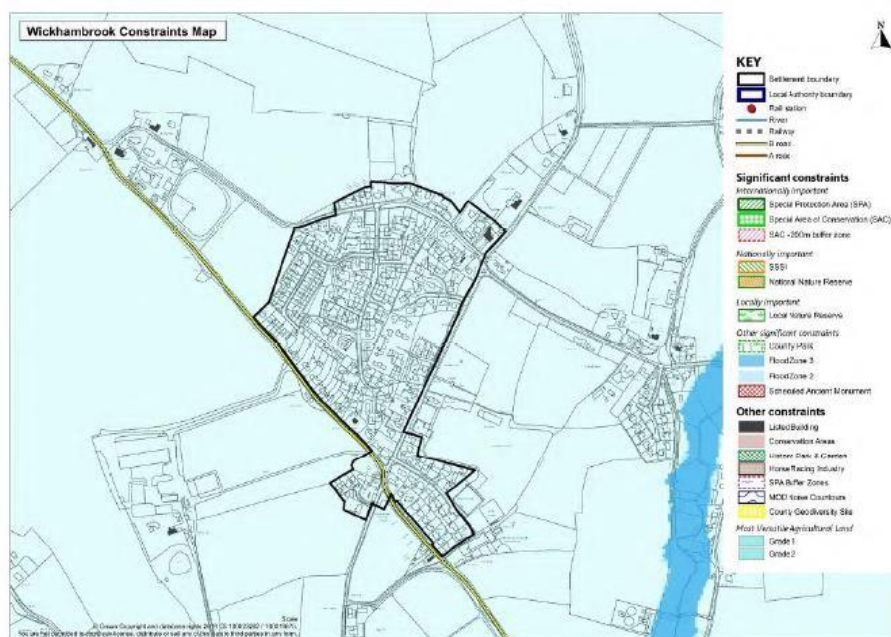
Preferred allocation

One new site is proposed as a preferred site for mixed-use development in Wickhambrook providing an indicative capacity of 40 dwellings, with the opportunity for community facilities or retail and/or employment to be explored and determined through a site development brief.

Further information on alternative site options considered but not taken forward can be seen in the table of omission sites in appendix B of Part 3.

Information on infrastructure can be seen in the draft infrastructure delivery plan (2022) which sets out baseline data for each settlement.

Wickhambrook settlement constraints map



Wickhambrook preferred allocations map



Non-strategic allocation

4.12a land west of Bunters Road, Wickhambrook

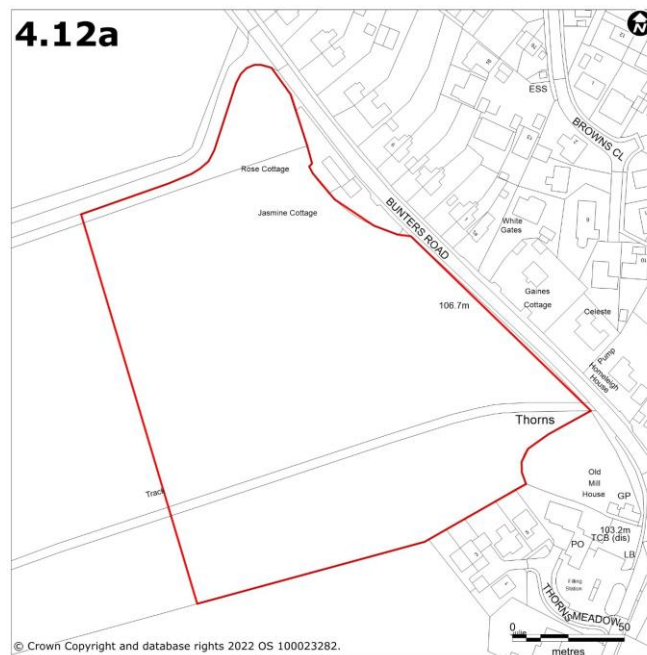
SHELAA reference: WS195a

Location: land west of Bunters Road, Wickhambrook

Site area: 2.85 hectares

Preferred options indicative capacity: 40 dwellings (final capacity to be determined through site development brief)

Site map



Policy and capacity considerations

- a. The site is located to the west of Wickhambrook and is part of a large arable field. To the west lies Claydon's agricultural business site and to the east is Bunters Road.
- b. The opportunity for mixed-use development should be explored on the site which could include community facilities and/or retail or local employment.
- c. The amount of land available for development, mix and location of uses, access arrangements, design and landscaping will be informed by a site development brief.
- d. A buffer to the off-site woodland southwest of the site must be provided.
- e. The site is within a great crested newt risk zone (GCN) and participation in the GCN District Level Licensing Scheme should be considered.
- f. Retain and enhance the existing boundary features and hedgerows with appropriate buffers.
- g. There are long views out of the site to the west which require strategic landscaping to create a strong settlement boundary.
- h. Vehicular access should be via Bunters Road to the north of the site.
- i. Pedestrian and cycle routes from the site should be provided to ensure the site is well connected to the settlement. Opportunities to provide greater access to these routes will be required, in line with the Suffolk Green Access Strategy.
- j. The site is within one kilometre of one or more established public rights of way and opportunities to connect to these will be encouraged.
- k. Ongoing discussions with infrastructure providers will establish and define infrastructure requirements generated by the site.

The statement at b), that the site (412a) identified by West Suffolk provides an opportunity for mixed use development is not consistent with West Suffolk's later allocations set out at part 7 (Employment, mixed-use, retail and commercial leisure use allocations) where no sites have been allocated to Wickhambrook.

Various relevant statements from NPWG Household Questionnaire:

"We are not sure about economic development in the village."

- 67% said this was not important or had no opinion
- some people (35%) would like to see more support for small businesses or self-employed people locally

"New building must respect the character and landscape of the village – it should:"

- protect green spaces and the natural environment

"The environment is important to all of us."

- 96% said protect open views, green spaces and woodlands

"Wickhambrook is a village not a town – we want it to stay like that."

- 91% value rural feel and access to the countryside

"Infrastructure in Wickhambrook cannot cope with more houses, more people and more traffic."

- roads need to be maintained, pot holes filled and hedges trimmed
- we need better road safety and traffic control

"We need better footpaths, quiet lanes and cycle ways."

83% want to make the village safer and easier for pedestrians and cyclists

Preferred employment and mixed-use allocations

The employment land review study (2021) has informed the distribution of employment sites across the district, as well as the existing environmental and physical constraints and the overall capacity for growth. In addition, the level of development proposed is influenced by the overall assessment of employment land requirements and the spatial strategy. Further information on how employment requirement has been derived can be seen in part one of the local plan.

The tables in Section 7 of Part 3 identify new and existing preferred strategic and nonstrategic employment, mixed-use and retail and commercial leisure use sites. These sites are identified on the draft policies map (Appendix D).

West Suffolk having noted in its policy and capacity considerations for non-strategic allocation 412a (land west of Bunters Road) that:

"The opportunity for mixed-use development should be explored on the site which could include community facilities and/or retail or local employment."

It has included site 412a (land west of Bunters Road) in **Appendix A to Part 3 - table showing new and existing residential and employment allocations** as a new allocation for mixed use.

There are no existing or new strategic employment, mixed use (and retail and commercial leisure use) sites identified in the parish of Wickhambrook.

A part of the consultation West Suffolk Council is inviting the submission of employment, mixed-use and retail and commercial leisure sites as part of the call for sites. If you are aware of any other potential sites in West Suffolk that are available for development which are not identified in this document then please let West Suffolk know by completing the [site submission form](#), providing details of the site location and a map with a red outline of the site boundary.

Various relevant statements from NPWG Household Questionnaire:

"We are not sure about economic development in the village."

- 67% said this was not important or had no opinion
- some people (35%) would like to see more support for small businesses or self-employed people locally

"Infrastructure in Wickhambrook cannot cope with more houses, more people and more traffic."

- roads need to be maintained, pot holes filled and hedges trimmed
- we need better road safety and traffic control

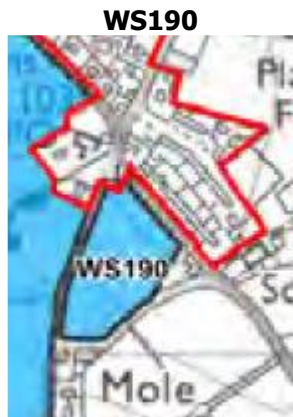
Omission sites

As a result of comments received at the issues and options consultation stage and further evidence base work, many sites included in the issues and options consultation stage have now been discounted and are not proposed for allocation in this plan. The reasons for omission fall broadly into the following categories:

- Environmental constraints (for example Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA), special areas of conservation (SAC), county wildlife site, flood zone).
- The site is not available and/or deliverable (either confirmed by the landowner or is in multiple ownership).
- The site is within the settlement boundary and could come forward as windfall development.
- The site has a planning approval and development has commenced or is completed.
- Other available sites are more suitable and sustainable options.

Residential omissions sites for Wickhambrook:

Strategic housing and economic land availability assessment (SHELAA) reference consulted at issues and options (ending in (A) shows amended boundary at issues and options)	2021 SHELAA reference (new sites submitted at issues and options)	Vision or site allocations local plan allocation reference	Settlement	Location	Reason for Omission
WS190			Wickhambrook	land south of Bunters Road	Landscape impact – considered to be important pen space at southern entrance to village. Potential impact to character and appearance of the village. An alternative site is considered to be a more suitable and sustainable option.
WS191			Wickhambrook	north and west of Boyden End (also known as north of Nunnery Green	Potential impact to character and appearance of the village. An alternative site is considered to be a more suitable and sustainable option.
WS192(A)			Wickhambrook	land north of Bunters Road	Potential impact to character and appearance of the village. An alternative site is considered to be a more suitable and sustainable option.
WS212			Wickhambrook	land at Cemetery Hill	Landscape impact – large open field, highly visible on entrance to the village from the north. An alternative site is considered to be a more suitable and sustainable option.
	WS1074		Wickhambrook	land adjacent Bunters Gait, Nunnery Green	The site is considered an unsustainable location due to its distance and/or proximity to existing services and facilities. An alternative site is considered to be a more suitable and sustainable option.
WS193		RV25a	Wickhambrook	Land at Nunnery Green and Cemetery Hill, Wickhambrook	The site has a local plan allocation, a planning approval and development is nearing completion. *This is the Meadows site



Employment Omission Site(s) for Wickhambrook

Strategic housing and economic land availability assessment (SHELAA) reference consulted at issues and options (ending in (A) shows amended boundary at issues and options)	2021 SHELAA reference (new sites submitted at issues and options)	Vision or site allocations local plan allocation reference	Settlement	Location	Reason for Omission
	WSE1075		Wickhambrook	Land north of Claydon Drills, Bunters Road	Evidence demonstrates that additional allocations should focus on Bury St Edmunds where there is strongest demand, and then the other towns, with the exception of Brandon due to its environmental constraints and a small amount of rural provision. The site is considered an unsustainable location for rural employment growth.

Next Steps

It is important to note that no firm decisions have been made on whether the sites in this document will be taken forward to the final consultation draft of the local plan. West Suffolk is seeking your views at this stage to assist with making these decisions.

As part of its next grant application, Wickhambrook NPWG and the parish council will be requesting technical support from AECOM to develop a Site Masterplan.

About this consultation and how to respond

This preferred options consultation draft of the local plan is the second opportunity for you to get involved with preparing the new plan. We want to hear your views and to make this as easy as possible for you to do this. This is #YourFuture #YourSay and now is the chance for you to help shape the future of West Suffolk.

A good local plan is central to the future development of West Suffolk and our communities. It is much more than just about where housing and associated facilities may go but will also set out how best to support the future prosperity of our area and future generations as well as tackling wider issues such as improving the economy, health and tackling climate change. It is about planning to make sure we get the right kind of development in the right place while protecting our environment. The local plan shapes planning and development in West Suffolk here up to 2040 which is why it is vital that people have their say.

How to comment

All of the consultation information is available to view in our [live exhibition hall](#). There is also an online chat facility in the exhibition hall where you can chat to planning officers if you have any questions.

The best way to comment on the local plan is online via the council's [consultation system](#). If you have difficulty commenting online, or you need information in a different format, please let us know and we will be happy to help.

You can email us planningpolicy@westsuffolk.gov.uk and if you have any questions on any aspect of this consultation, please contact a member of the strategic planning team on 01284 757368.

The consultation period runs from 26 May 2022 (9am) to 26 July 2022 (5pm) and all comments must be received by Tuesday 26 July 2022 at 5pm.

We have commissioned and produced background evidence that have helped inform this draft of this plan. These are available to view at West Suffolk Local Plan background evidence documents on our website.