

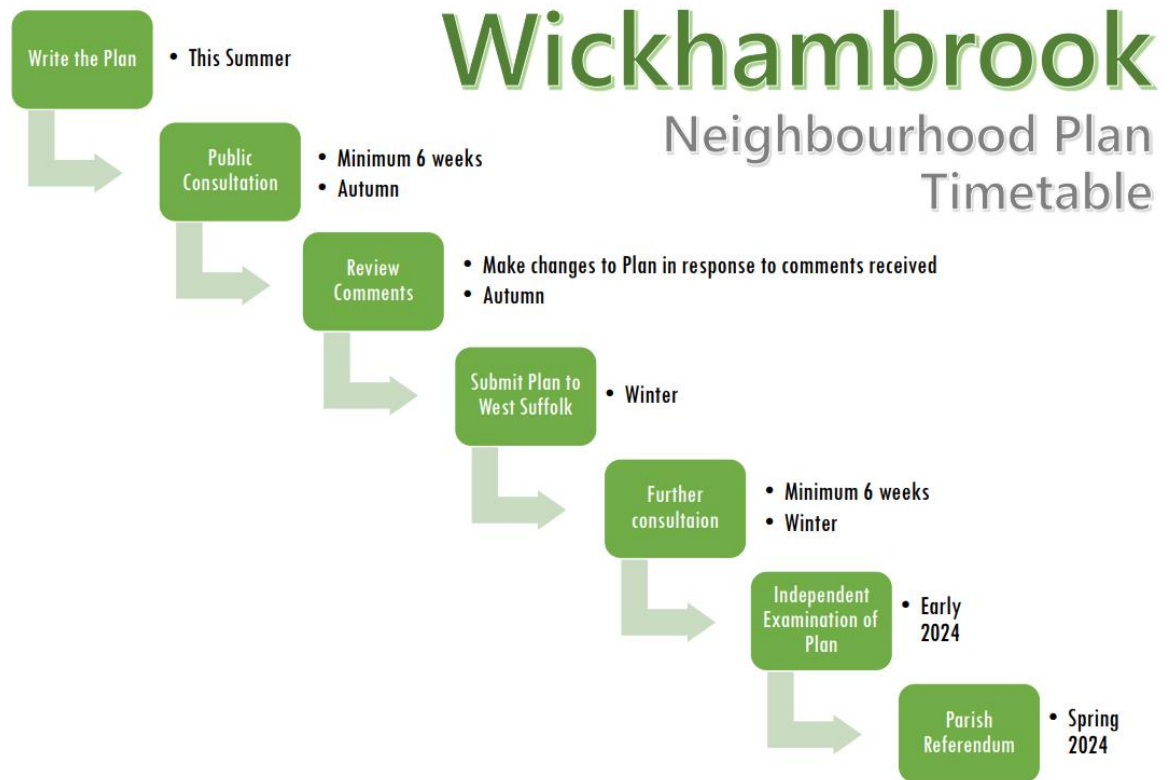
## Neighbourhood Planning Summary Report

1. NPWG met on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July to review:
  - the timetable of the plan (**Appendix A**)
  - community actions for inclusion in Neighbourhood Plan (**Appendix B**)
  - landscape appraisal (**Appendix C**) and
  - Site Masterplan commissioned from AECOM (**Appendix D**).
2. The NPWG will feedback again on the landscape appraisal as some minor modifications on the process and omitted site definitions are required
3. The NPWG will feedback to AECOM to revise the draft Masterplan, as there are several amendments required following previous comments from Landowners and review of the document.
4. Cllr Turner attending a session on Community Led Housing for Affordable housing. Attached in Appendix D the slides shared during the session. Headline summary, there are a number of possible ways to fund community led housing, community land trust being only one of these. NPWG will seek to meet with Lavenham community Land trust to understand the process they went through as a possible option of Wickhambrook, however the PC should also consider self-build and co-ownership schemes as outlined in **Appendix E** as alternative ways to fund affordable housing.
5. Update on NP timing:- it is currently anticipated that the draft document will be available for the Parish Council and NPWG consideration late summer, with the final draft ready to go to the Residents of Wickhambrook, neighbouring parishes, local business, the school and surgery for consultation and formal comments in the Autumn. This consultation will be 6 weeks, with a formal launch event/evening and other face to face opportunities for questions/clarifications
6. NPWG have finalised the community actions for submission to the PC for agreement and inclusion into the NP (Appendix B refers).
7. The NPWG are finalising the listings of listed buildings and buildings/structures of historical significance in the parish.

**Recommendation:**

**The parish council confirms the community actions (Appendix B) for inclusion into the Neighbourhood Plan.**

**Appendix A - Timetable**



**Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan proposed Community Actions  
for discussion with Parish Council – 12 July 2023**

**Community Action 1 – Wildlife and Conservation**

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

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

*Rationale for Community Action 1:*

In the village questionnaire of March 2022, an overwhelming majority of respondents (98%) supported the protection of green spaces and the natural environment. In more detail, 96% of respondents argued that: ‘our hedgerows and mature trees need to be protected’; ‘I value the wildlife and biodiversity in our community’; and ‘open views across fields and woods are important assets to be protected’. Further, 82% of respondents declared themselves to be actively in support of ‘rewilding and conservation initiatives’. It is clear, therefore, that there is significant support in Wickhambrook for environmental and conservation issues and, potentially, for taking more proactive measures in support of enhanced biodiversity, the natural world and rewilding.

**Community Action 2 – Tidy Village**

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

*Rationale for Community Action 2:*

In the village questionnaire of March 2022, large numbers of respondents expressed their concerns about challenges to the village environment. Of these respondents, 98% were concerned about litter and 91% about dog fouling. It should be possible to mobilise volunteers in order to monitor and address these issues. A further 82% of respondents said that they were concerned about vandalism, although it may be more difficult to deal with the causes of this problem and to devise solutions.

**Community Action 3 – Highways maintenance**

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

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

*Rationale for Community Action 3:*

In the village questionnaire of March 2022, the majority of respondents recorded concerns about roads. Wickhambrook residents want to see better maintenance of the road system – including mending of pot holes; better drainage and maintenance of ditches in order to address problems with surface water and flooding; improved access and safety on pavements and pathways; and better maintenance of verges and hedges.

**Community Action 4 – Traffic Management**

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

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

*Rationale for Community Action 4:*

In the village questionnaire of March 2022, 90% of respondents argued that village infrastructure should be improved before any new building takes place. The majority of these respondents listed roads as the chief concern. Further, the largest number of concerns expressed in the development proposals survey carried out in April 2023 were about road safety and traffic management issues. Respondents argue for improvements in road safety around the village, for example, by improving junctions, imposing speed limits and creating better and safer pathways.

**Community Action 5 – Footpaths and Bridleways**

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

*Rationale for Community Action 5:*

In the village questionnaire of March 2022, 62% of respondents indicated that they walk around the village and 19% cycle. Many people argued that the pavements and paths around the village are in need of maintenance (with many pavements needing to be widened) and that the roads need improvements in terms of repairs to potholes; signage; and better and safer crossing points. In all, 83% of respondents were in favour of the creation and maintenance of better footpaths and quiet lanes to make it safer and easier to get around the village and the wider parish on foot and bicycle.

**Community Action 6 – Historic Assets**

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

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

*Rationale for Community Action 6:*

There is a great sense of commitment in Wickhambrook to the conservation and protection of our listed buildings; other historical assets; and buildings or locations of interest. In the village questionnaire of March 2022, 95% of respondents confirmed that any new development must 'respect the local character, landscape and environment of the parish'. Further, 85% of respondents argued that conserving listed buildings and their surroundings was important and 83% of respondents wanted any future policy to enhance existing heritage and historic assets. Finally 97% of respondents demanded that the integrity and character of Wickhambrook's ancient pattern of hamlets and village greens must be maintained.

**Community Action 7 – Activities and Opportunities**

The Parish Council will explore options, in consultation with village residents, for providing additional activities and social opportunities for various groups of villagers including:

- social care and activities in the community for older people
- activities and opportunities for young people
- a group providing activities for men, perhaps located in a 'man shed'.

*Rationale for Community Action 7:*

The idea of promoting a greater variety of activities for parishioners emerged from the village questionnaire of March 2022. Results indicate that 50% of respondents are in favour of this kind of increase. Respondents specifically requested both more activities and opportunities for young people and social care and activities in the community for older people, suggesting there is a need for additional provision for a wide range of groups of village residents.

Cllr T Turner  
July 2023

### **Community Action 8 – Allotments and community gardens**

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

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

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

#### *Rationale for Community Action 8:*

Landscapes, green spaces and specifically gardens are clearly of great importance to the residents of Wickhambrook. In the village questionnaire of March 2022, for example, 84% of respondents argued that the provision of gardens in any new development should be a priority. The survey of villagers' views in April 2023 expanded upon this finding. Survey respondents argued strongly for landscaping, green spaces, rewilding and 'attractive outdoor spaces' in and around the village and certainly within any new development. A total of 61% of respondents were specifically in favour of the provision of allotments. There is a requirement, therefore, for any new development in the village to explore the options for providing garden space for individual homes; for individuals and families as allotments; and for use by the community – possibly as part of any Community Land Trust initiative (see Community Action 8 below).

### **Community Action 9 – Community Land Trust**

The Parish Council will work with landowners and interested village residents in order to set up a Community Land Trust for Wickhambrook. This Community Land Trust will be tasked with planning, building and managing a group of 16 new and affordable homes on land adjacent to the developments south-west of Bunters Road. These homes will be maintained in perpetuity by the Community Land Trust for the benefit of local people (village residents and/or close family members of village residents) and will provide a range of affordable living options for people at various stages of their lives – starter homes for young people; family homes; and homes for older people. Partnerships with housing associations will facilitate the day-to-day management of these homes and maintain costs for residents permanently at affordable levels.

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

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

*Rationale for Community Action 9:*

It was very clear, from the results of the village questionnaire of March 2022, that a majority of respondents were in favour of providing a mix of homes in any new development in the village. For example, 76% of respondents supported provision of affordable homes and 65% of respondents suggested that any development should provide a variety of forms of housing including homes of various sizes and homes for sale, for rent, under shared ownership and offering support for older people. Indeed, the questionnaire results show that villagers regard the provision of 'starter' homes for young people from the village and 'sheltered' properties for older people wishing to remain here as priorities.

These views were echoed in the survey of April 2023, when respondents indicated that new homes should 'meet local needs' and achieve 'social inclusivity' with provision of a range of sizes and types of accommodation. We also know, from the housing needs survey of March 2022, that people want to stay in Wickhambrook – both as young people leaving their parental homes and starting an independent life and also as they age and require more support – but find that house prices in the village are too high.

Many contributions to discussion around the village and within the Parish Council have indicated an interest in exploring whether the establishment of a Community Land Trust could enable the village to meet the needs of parishioners for affordable accommodation. While the provision of such homes, sustained in perpetuity for the benefit of village residents, would be a key factor driving the creation of a Community Land Trust, it would also be important to consider the need to provide other amenities and facilities under the control of the village.

The survey of views of April 2023, for example, showed that people want the village to be 'thriving' and 'progressive' but with developments managed by local people. There was support for the provision of facilities such as a café and a farm shop or produce stall and for the relocation of the health centre to offer a range of medical and therapeutic provision. Any moves to establish a Community Land Trust should explore possibilities like these as well as securing affordable homes for local people.

WNPWG 12 July 2023

# Site Landscape Appraisal For Wickhambrook Parish Council

May 2023





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# 1. Introduction

## Author's credentials

1. I am a Chartered Landscape Architect with 15+ years experience of working in the field of landscape assessment and appraisal in East Anglia. In recent years I have undertaken a number of Neighbourhood Plan studies in villages in Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, as well as district level landscape character assessment and settlement fringe sensitivity assessments in East Suffolk, in association with Alison Farmer Associates in 2018. I also regularly undertake Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for all types of land use applications.

## Introduction

2. This report was commissioned in summer 2022 by the Parish Council who are in the process of preparing the Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan. It provides an assessment of the landscape sensitivities of 12 potential residential sites across the parish. The study will help sufficient housing to be delivered in the most appropriate location that does not harm the special character of the village, its valued views or distinctive features.
3. West Suffolk Council are preparing a new Local Plan which is expected to be adopted in approximately 2024. It is their intention to allocate a residential site in Wickhambrook. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan must, therefore, reflect any WSC allocation policy and carry it forward.
4. The 12 sites were put forward to West Suffolk by land owners in response to the 2020 West Suffolk Local Plan 'Call for Sites', for the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). West Suffolk have carried out their own high-level assessment process and identified their preferred option as well as rejecting other sites. Given the previous opportunity, and the number of sites subsequently potentially available, a further 'Call for Sites' for the Neighbourhood Plan was not undertaken.
5. This report represents the parish's own assessment work of the sites in LANDSCAPE TERMS only. It does not consider the other factors that determine

a site's suitability such as highways and access, flood risk, archaeology, etc. A site that may be considered suitable in landscape terms may be subject to other limiting factors that are not addressed in this report.

6. The Parish wish to understand the opportunities and constraints that relate to landscape value and visual sensitivity to all 12 sites should future development pressure arise. This document will be useful to both the parish and district councils in managing future applications for development, to landowners to understand the parameters which might limit changes in land use, and to householders or developers considering development.
7. The Village Design Guide (by AECOM) should also be used to arrive at appropriate design responses, should any of these sites proceed. The aim is to ensure Wickhambrook retains its character and high quality sensitive design prevails in future.
8. Following this introduction the report is set out in the following order;
  - Overview of the history and evolution of the village and its current form. *Understanding how a village developed, and its position within the landscape, is key to understanding its sense of place and, therefore, appropriate future forms of development.*
  - A review of existing character assessments that describe the landscape context and a outline parish assessment. *These documents form the key documents in all planning policy relevant to Wickhambrook that reference landscape character.*
  - Explanation of the approach and methodology used
  - The site assessment tables and site photos
9. The report does not extend to the whole parish, which is one of the largest village parishes in Suffolk, but focuses on the southwest zone which includes the area of highest density housing, the Conservation Area, and all the surrounding hamlets where the 12 SHELAA sites are located. This reflects the approximate extent of the map used by WSC to show the 12 sites - see figure 1.

Figure 1: Map of assessment area



— Approximate area of study that forms sufficient context to the 13 sites for assessment.

## 2. Settlement history

1. Wickhambrook is located in West Suffolk Council district, formerly St. Edmundsbury District. West Suffolk's planning website states: *'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 office.'*
2. It is a large parish, circa 6.5 square miles, and is focused mostly north/west of the A134, but some scattered farms, including significant historic properties, are found to the south/east of this main route. It has a very distinctive and dispersed settlement pattern.
3. Much information about the context and character of Wickhambrook is provided in the recently completed 'Design Guidance and Codes' report by AECOM. It is not intended to repeat large amounts of the information in that report here, but the description of the parish was a useful resource and this section draws on it to provide a brief historic overview to the settlement.
4. Wickhambrook today is formed of a main village cluster (as defined by the Local Plan settlement boundary), and three hamlets called Boyden End, Malting End and Park Gate. There are then a set of further 'Greens' which each feature a farmhouse or two, cottages and more modern houses, strung out on a network of narrow, single-track lanes. The Greens are named Ashfield, Attleton, Baxter's, Coltsfoot, Clopton, Farley, Genesis, Meeting, Moor and Nunnery. Most of the hamlets and Greens lie outside the Local Plan settlement boundary, except parts of Meeting and Moor Greens. The remainder of these small settlements, which encircle the main village are, in planning terms, in 'countryside'. The Greens are of varying shape and size, from very small well defined spaces such as in Attleton Green to larger areas such as at Clopton.
5. The settlements are dispersed widely across the large parish and integrated with the underlying ancient network of fields and lanes, an enclosure pattern likely to be at least Anglo-Saxon in origin. The settlement has had an agricultural character and purpose throughout its history. There are three surviving large Manor houses, Giffords, Badmondfield and Clopton Hall, all high status, timber-framed 16th century houses, on the sites of Domesday manors. The village was known as "Wicham" at this time.
6. A point of focus to the parish is All Saints Church, a grade I Listed Building, located in the valley bottom west of the junction at Wickham Street. A further 16 Listed Buildings cluster around this junction (between Church Lane and the main A143). The value of this settlement cluster, and its landscape setting, is protected with Conservation Area status. There are more than 45 other Listed Buildings scattered across the parish, in hamlets and greens and on outlying farms. These farmsteads, often no longer connected to their farms, have timber framed houses and sometimes historic barns and outbuildings.
7. Yet the church did not become the focus of the nucleated village, instead this was formed on higher land to the west. The main village is a product of the 20th century and has a feeling of a centre at the Thorns Corner crossroads where the shop, the primary school, village hall and Methodist church all sit fairly close together. Cul-de-sac developments began to infill between Bunters Road, Cemetery Road and Nunnery Green from the mid-20th century onwards and coalesced to form a block of settlement now defined inside the Local Plan settlement boundary.
8. The historic scattered settlement pattern of Wickhambrook is considered to be highly sensitive. The areas of separation that lie between the greens and hamlets and the main village are just as important to settlement character as the hamlets themselves, and offer a visual experience where the countryside is seen prominently in views. The pattern would be very sensitive to infilling which might cause unwanted coalescence and loss of identity to the individual settlements.
9. That future growth should be directed to this main cluster makes sense in sustainability terms, as the main village also features other services such as the doctors' surgery and pub, but careful siting is important to ensure that key characteristics, features or views, that contribute particularly strongly to Wickhambrook's identity, are not eroded or lost. Instead, any development should seek to make visual or environmental enhancements.

## 2. Settlement history continued-

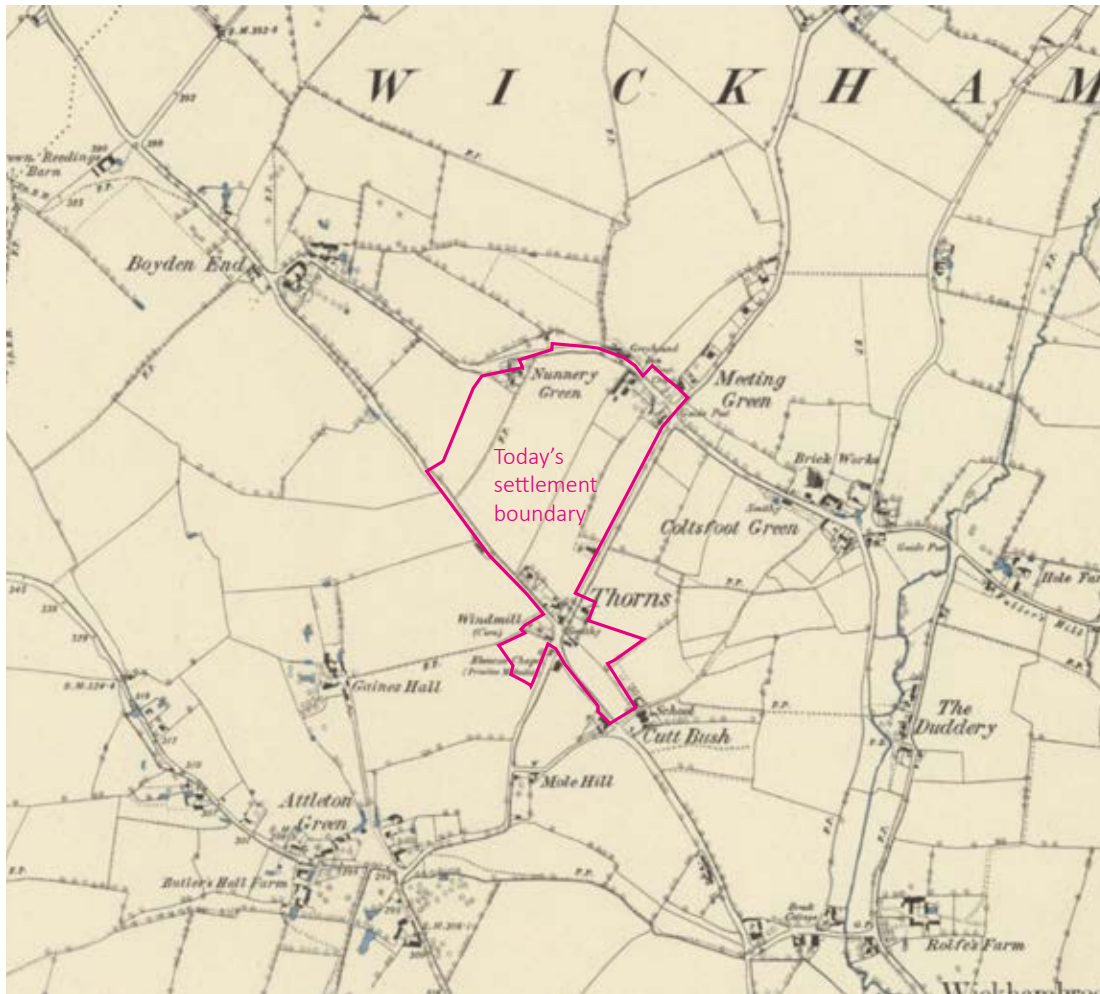


Figure 2. The main village area in 1884



Figure 3. Church Road and Wickham Street in 1958

Historic photos of the village

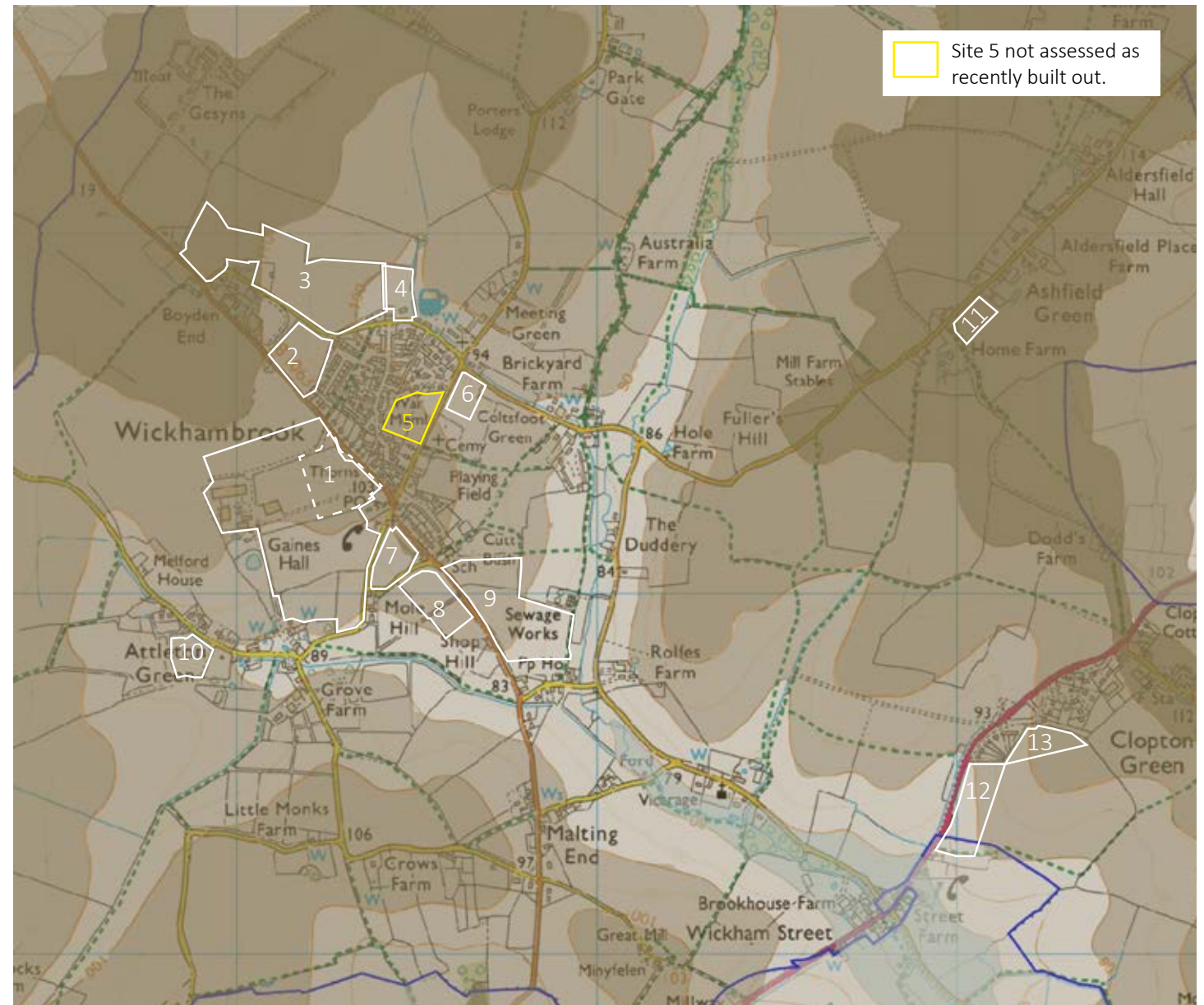


## 2. Settlement history continued-

### Topography and soils

10. Understanding how a settlement evolved in relation to topography is useful in understanding the factors that shape local character and distinctiveness. It helps to illuminate appropriate future growth strategies in terms of where settlement should be located in the landscape.
11. The settlement is scattered across the complex but gentle slopes of the upper tributaries of a stream which coalesce and flow southeast to join the river Glem at Denston. The various small clusters of settlement nestle into folds in the landscape to create many scenic rural views of lightly settled countryside.
12. The medieval heart of the village, focused on the Conservation Area along Church Lane, which includes the church, is very low-lying compared to the rest of the village. It lies either side of the 80m contour in the valley bottom. Apart from Ashfield Green and Boyden End which are plateau top hamlets, all the other hamlets/Greens developed on the gently rolling valleys valleysides below c.105m contour.
13. The large main cluster, which is not a historic village nucleus, sits on the valley side between c.108m and 95m on an interfluvial plateau edge. Land then falls away from the village edges, to the south, east and west. The most elevated site is number 11, which sits on a high finger of plateau at Ashfield Green.

Figure 4. Topographical position of the village and the sites, numbered for reference



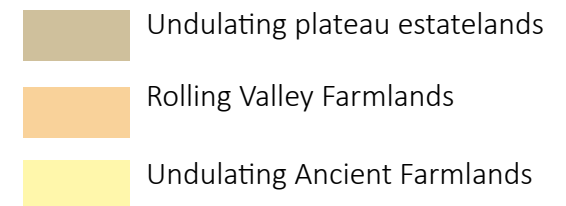
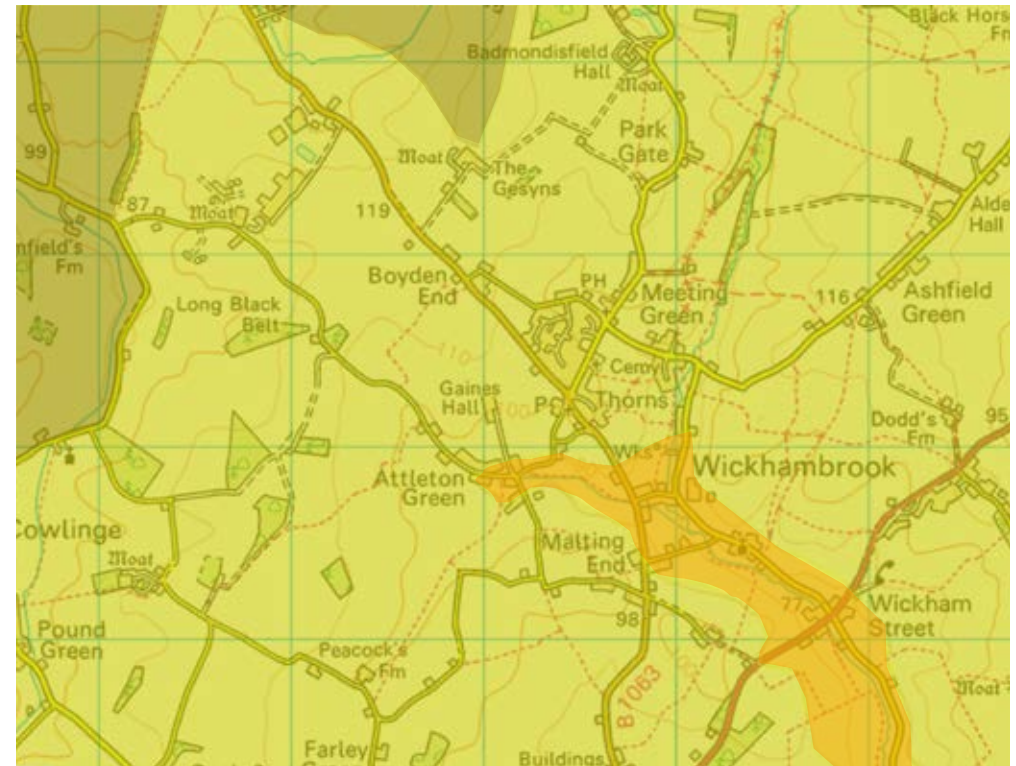
### 3. Landscape Character

1. This section provides a summary of the existing character assessments that are relevant to planning policy which requires a sympathetic response to local character and distinctiveness. For example, the NPPF directs, in para. 127, that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments will “function well and add to the overall quality of the area.... are visually attractive ....and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting...”
2. All district and Neighbourhood Plan policies must also reflect and reinforce this objective. Available character assessment are the starting point for understanding local character. However, further local/context level work should always be undertaken to ensure the grain of detail is sufficient to really understand local distinctiveness and sense of place.
3. Therefore, although there was not scope to define parish level character areas<sup>1</sup> in as part of this project, the different character types found in the parish are mapped on figure 8.
4. Any future applications for development sites, either within or outside the Neighbourhood Plan, should ask for evidence that character has been assessed on a local level, by a landscape planning professional with appropriate qualifications, and responded to accordingly.

#### County assessment

5. Suffolk County Council have a very useful character assessment, last updated in 2011, at [www.suffolklandscape.org.uk](http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk). It maps three character types in Wickhambrook parish but the sites are all in the ‘Undulating Ancient Farmlands’ landscape type. The valley bottoms and the plateau tops fall into different types, as mapped in figure 5.

Figure 5: Map from Suffolk County Council LCA



<sup>1</sup> (see glossary for explanation of the difference between character areas and character types)



### 3. Landscape Character continued:-

6. The key characteristics of the Undulating Ancient Farmlands are stated as:
- Undulating arable landscape
  - Field pattern generally a random ancient pattern with occasional areas of regular fields associated with former mediaeval deer parks.
  - Oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees
  - Substantial open areas created for airfields and by post WWII agricultural improvement
  - Studded with blocks of ancient woodland
  - Dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads
  - Villages often associated with greens or former greens
  - Rich stock of mediaeval and Tudor timber-framed and brick buildings and moated sites
  - A large scale landscape with long undulating open views trees, either in hedges or in woods, are always a prominent feature
  - In the undulating landscape, crop production, especially oilseeds can be visually prominent
7. West Suffolk District commissioned their own Landscape Character Assessment in 2021. This puts Wickhambrook in character area C2 “Glem and Wickhambrook Farmlands”. Its key characteristics are listed as:
- Flat to gently undulating plateau landscape that forms an interfluvium between river catchments.
  - Chalky clay glacial till covers the plateau giving rise to fertile soils for arable farming with some areas slower draining heavier clay.
  - Dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered dwellings arranged around greens, isolated moated manor and church complexes and larger settlements where 20th century infill has occurred.
  - Large scale field pattern; with intensive arable farmland defined by

Figure 6. West Suffolk Landscape Character Areas

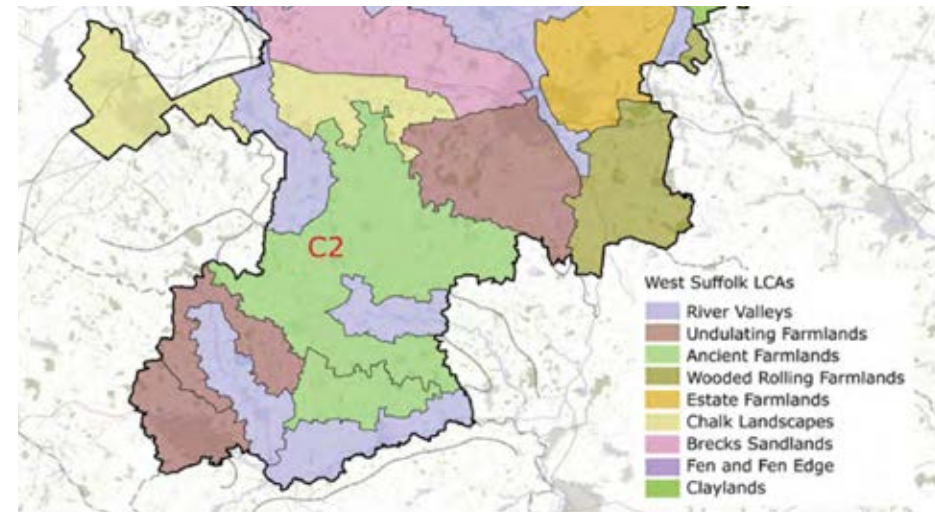
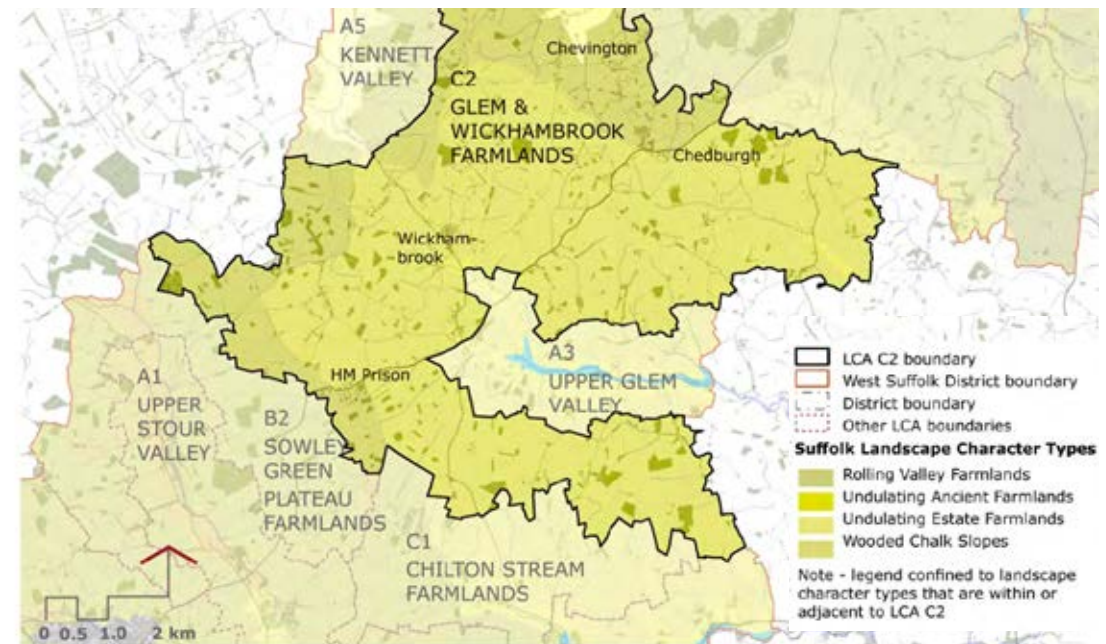


Figure 7. West Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment by AFA and Sheils Flynn (2022)



LCA C2 Glem and Wickhambrook Farmlands

### 3. Landscape Character continued:-

- hedgerows and linear poplar shelterbelts.
  - Large blocks of semi-natural ancient woodland, comprising oak and ash stands, create a wooded skyline.
  - Network of narrow lanes with wide verges.
  - Rich stock of medieval and Tudor timber-framed and brick buildings and moated sites.
  - Vertical structures break the skyline including masts and water towers.
  - Open expansive landscape with long views and wide skies
8. In summary, the district council identifies the setting of Wickhambrook as an area with noteworthy aspects of value. The combination of the wealth of natural habitats, intact historic landscape patterns and vegetative features, the strong role of the topography in distinctiveness, the landscape's role as setting to important heritage features, and the general feeling of remoteness and tranquillity combine to indicate a landscape with notable qualities.

#### Parish level understanding of character

9. The scope of this commission did not include for detailed mapping and description of unique parish character areas but, based on an understanding of the Landscape Institute's guidance on Landscape Character Assessment<sup>2</sup>, a brief parish appraisal of types was completed. This followed a review of available desktop resources, overlaying digital maps of existing defined character areas, contours, aerial mapping etc, as well as observations made during a site visit in November 2022. Three types are mapped and described primarily defined by topography - the Valley Bottom, the Valley sides and the Plateau landscapes.
10. Some elements of the distinctive character of Wickhambrook can be seen in all three types. For example, the dispersed settlement pattern is widely distributed and Listed Buildings are seen across the whole parish on farmsteads or in the form of roadside thatched cottages.

11. A summary of each is given below, along with bullets that highlight the key sensitivities of each zone. The sensitivities highlight vulnerable aspects that contribute strongly to sense of place and character that should be protected. The implication is that were they to be eroded or lost, adverse effects on local character and distinctiveness would follow.

#### The Valley floor

12. The valley bottom landscape is an intimate, enclosed landscape experienced along narrow lanes, flanked by small fields. Stream courses wind their way through the valley bottom and the patterns feel ancient - organic and fine grained. Owing to their seasonal wetness the fields are generally grassland and they are interspersed with little copses or lines of trees along the watercourses giving a well vegetated feel. The feel is one of containment, as views out are contained by regular vegetation and rising land to either side. Settlement is scattered along the valley bottom, clustered in small groups often with historic thatched cottages - the majority of the Listed Buildings, and the Conservation Area, are found in this character type, along the narrow, winding lanes.
13. Sensitivities include:
- Enduring ancient small-scale patterns and enclosures, with historic landscape value, that greatly contribute to sense of place.
  - Scattered settlement pattern along the valley floor, clusters often focused around greens
  - Landscape where forms setting to heritage assets - Wickhambrook has a large number of Listed Buildings along the lanes in the valley bottoms.
  - Landscape important for ecosystem services such as flood water management.
  - Ecological value in combinations of water courses, copses and meadow for example.

2 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', Natural England, 2014

### 3. Landscape Character continued:-

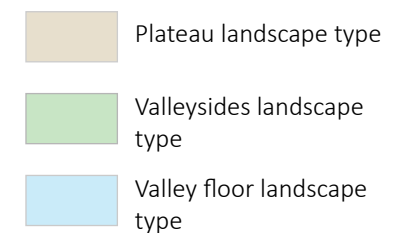
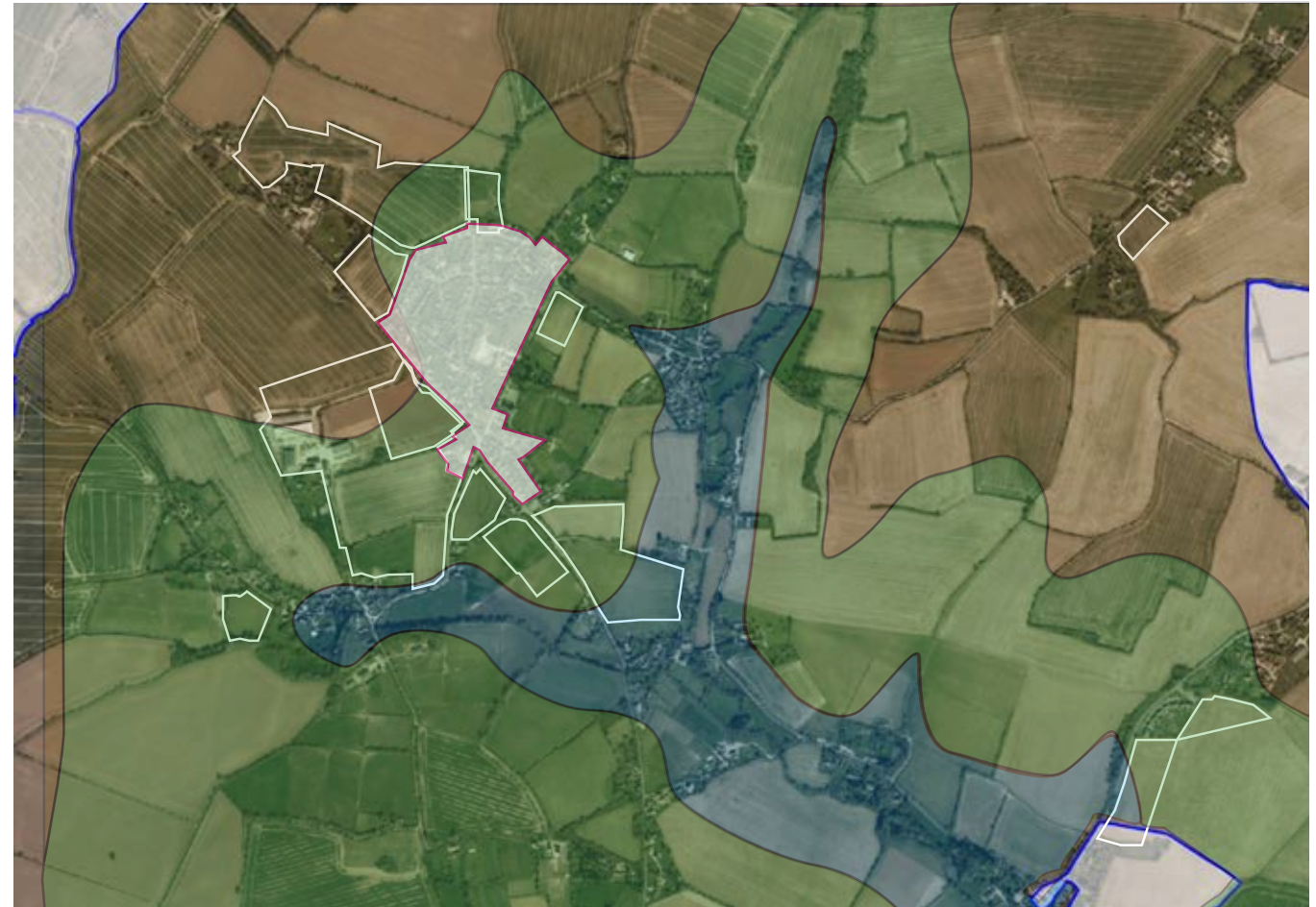
#### The Valley Sides

14. The valleysides are complex around Wickhambrook and form a very distinctive rolling setting. The slopes can sometimes feel a little steep, even though the water courses are small in these upper reaches. Field sizes increase a little on the valleysides. They can still be small but amalgamation has occurred and medium-sized fields often have dog-legged boundaries where fields have been joined. The visual experience is scenic and varied, with frequent, well managed hedges and tree cover in small copses. Land use is dominated by arable but there is also regular grassland - often being grazed by horses. The overall effect is a rolling, deeply rural and scenic landscape.

15. Sensitivities include:

- Valleysides are inherently visually sensitive - it is hard to screen or assimilate mitigate roofscapes on overlooked valley sides.
- Greater survival rate of historic field patterns and enclosures than on the plateau.

Figure 8. Parish Character types with the site boundaries overlaid



## Plateau

16. The plateau to the east and west of the main village forms a much more open and elevated landscape. Land use is dominated by arable farming. The scale is much larger here and the amalgamated fields can be geometric and straight-edged, although organic patterns clearly underlie. Trees and woodland is reasonably sparse but vegetation is found in the form of hedge networks and small copses. Some elevated parts offer some particularly long range views and distinctive views over the valleys - these form some of the highest hilltops in Suffolk.

17. Sensitivities include:

- Visual sensitivities relating to elevated positions - developments potentially visible from wide area.
- Larger field sizes mean fewer hedges and opportunities for screening/assimilation - leading to the potential stark, unenclosed edges

## Designations

18. Wickhambrook has no designations for landscape or for wildlife. It has a number of heritage assets - these are mapped on figure 9. Where sites are located within the setting of these assets, the assessment highlights this and make recommendations where appropriate.

19. Wickhambrook is well served with footpaths and minor lanes for walking, although surprisingly few would be affected by development on the 12 sites assessed. The rights of way network is also mapped on Figure 9.

Typical open and elevated plateau edge



Typical scenic rolling valleyside



Typical enclosed small scale valley bottom



## 4. Assessment approach

### Approach

1. Twelve sites are assessed in this report, all are in 'countryside' in planning terms. They comprise West Suffolk Council's (WSC) Preferred Site, other sites that were rejected, now called 'omission sites', and 6 sites that are 'included sites' that they consider are suitable, available and achievable should the Local Plan housing distribution seek further sites in a Local Service Centre, such as Wickhambrook (one of these WS193, has since been developed).
2. Nine of the 12 sites are adjacent to the main village cluster although only three actually adjoin the settlement boundary. The other 6 are adjacent but are separated by a road or by some built form that falls outside the settlement boundary (i.e. the primary school).
3. The proposed Preferred Site is located between Bunters Road and Gaines Hall. It is assessed at the same time as WS195 (A) as the intended developable area is the same (see appendix 1). With regard to this site (4.12a) West Suffolk states;
 

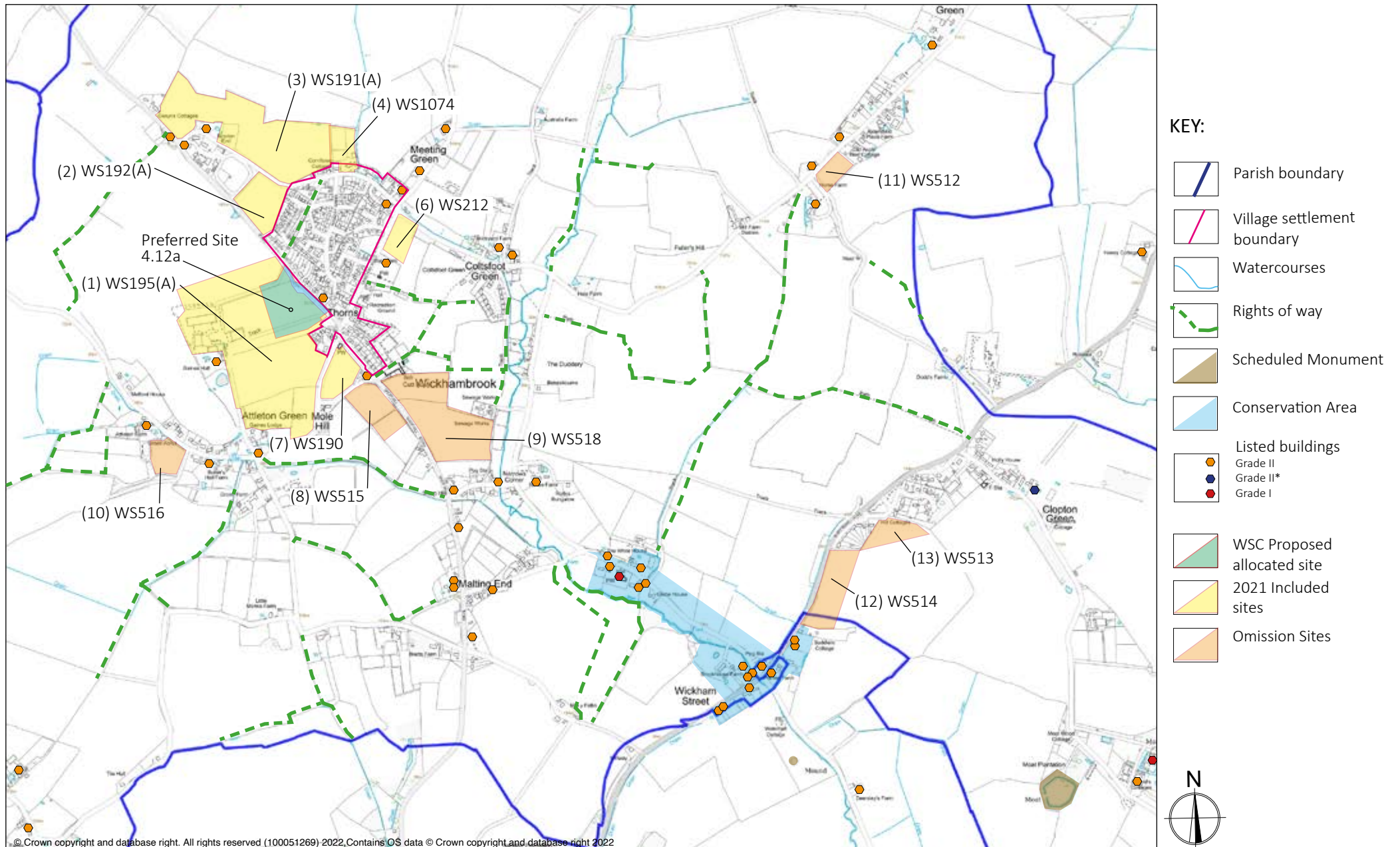
*"One new site is proposed as a preferred sites for mixed use development in Wickhambrook providing an indicative capacity of 40 dwellings, with the opportunity for community facilities or retail and/or employment to be explored and determined through a site development brief."*
4. With regard to the suitability of other sites, and in relation to the dispersed pattern of greens and hamlets, the Preferred Options report (2021) makes a number of observations relating to landscape sensitivity;
 

*"There is a need to prevent coalescence of these historic hamlets to preserve the character of Wickhambrook".*

*"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".*

*"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."*
5. This assessment judges the landscape and visual conditions and sensitivities on each of the 12 sites in turn, to judge if, or where, there is potential capacity (in landscape terms) for development. Results are presented in a tabulated format under a common set of indicators. The results should help ensure any allocations for new housing should only be considered in locations that do not harm the special character of Wickhambrook or its valued views or features, (and where all other policy tests are met). It also identifies approaches to mitigation that would be recommended, should the sites come forward now or in the future.
6. The results aim to assist with the following:
  - a) aid site planning on any allocated land;
  - b) provide evidence to help the parish respond to future speculative planning applications;
  - c) aid transparency; it is important that residents and land owners understand why decisions have been made, and understand where development might be supported and where it might be discouraged;
  - d) identify opportunities for the enhancement, management and conservation of the landscape and views in any allocated site.
7. It is important to note that the study takes no account of other factors that might influence allocation or delivery of the development, flood risk, protected species constraints, sustainability issues or whether highways access is possible, for example.
8. Sensitivity on each site was considered under a set of common headings derived from landscape sensitivity assessment guidance, and by reference to other good practice examples. Methods for assessing landscape sensitivity have only fairly recently been published. *"An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management"* was published in June 2019 (Christine Tudor, Natural England). The guidance urges studies to be simple, transparent, robust and defensible.

Figure 9: Map of assessed sites, Rights of way and designations.



## 4. Assessment approach continued:-

9. The guidance provides the following definition of sensitivity (p5):

*‘..Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value... a process that assesses the resilience / robustness of landscape character and the visual resource – and what we value - to a defined change, or changes..’*

10. The tables that follow (table 1a and table 1a) set out the indicative conditions for five landscape focused sensitivity indicators:

**Physical landscape and vegetation**

**Settlement Pattern and gateway**

**Local rural character**

**Biodiversity and wildlife**

**Historic Landscape**

And two visual or perceptual focused sensitivity indicators:

**Visual amenity**

**Visual prominence**

11. Professional judgement is applied to each factor to determine whether each indicator has a prevailing HIGH, MODERATE or LOW level of sensitivity, and allocated a related traffic light colour of red/amber/green to allow easy comparison. Results are presented in the form of a table that provides written detail on the specific landscape and visual issues on each site. The judgements were a result of both desktop work and the site visit made on November 16th 2022.
12. The sites are *not* then subject to an overall marking or scoring process, to generate a ranking, but the findings will assist the Neighbourhood Plan group to reach a greater understanding of the potential capacity (in landscape terms) for residential development in each site.
13. All the sites are assessed individually except for two. Preferred Site 4,12a is set

within the much larger site of WS195 (14ha) that was put forward. Both are assessed simultaneously as site 1. This is because development is focused only in a limited area (area shaded yellow in appendix 1) and this was the focus for assessment.

### Assumptions

14. To assess the potential sensitivity to development, some assumptions had to be made relating to the potential extent and form of development across each site. This necessarily took two paths. Where a strategic site plan was submitted, it was used as the basis for assessing the likely location of development. Strategic site plans were available for three sites - WS191, 192 and 4.12a. The site plans are shown at appendix 1. The site plans are the result of a detailed body of work to promote these sites, including Landscape and Visual Assessment, by the land owners.
15. Both WS195(A) and 191(A) have extensive site areas (shaded yellow in the maps that follow) that were put forward to the SHELAA. Yet the site plans put forward for these sites show development on only part of these areas. They leave large parts undeveloped, for reasons that are not clear. If, therefore, the site plans for WS191 and 4.12a vary from those currently presented to WSC, reassessment would be needed, as the assumption made here is that they would be developed in the areas as proposed in the indicative layouts (see p45) .
16. Where no strategic layout was available, and only red line drawing were available it has been assumed that development would be expected to broadly fill the site, within the red line area. Apart from WS518, which is more extensive, the sites are fairly small, so this assumption is credible. A general assumption was made that housing would be limited to two storeys in height and would generally be detached.
17. WS193, labelled as Site 5 on figure 8 was put mapped as a site to assess, but it was quickly omitted, as this site has already been built out and recently completed. Site 5 is therefore missing from the maps and assessment tables - re-numbering did not take place to avoid potential inconsistencies.

Table 1a: POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE IMPACTS - EXAMPLE INDICATORS

LANDSCAPE FACTORS		Lower value and/or sensitivity	←-----→	Higher value and/or sensitivity	
<b>Physical landscape and vegetation</b>	Vulnerability of 'sense of place' to the loss or erosion of visible landform or hydrological features. Extent that vegetative features such as woodland, significant trees, or hedges, would foreseeable be lost/compromised as a result of development.	No loss of distinctive landform; landform plays little role in defining local character. No significant vegetation would be lost, or minor losses but easy to mitigate.		Some loss of landform or water features that play some role in defining character. Moderate loss of vegetative features but mitigation generally viable.	Significant loss of distinctive landform that is important to local character, or vegetative feature and/or water course, and where mitigation would be difficult.
<b>Settlement Pattern and gateways</b>	Vulnerability of the distinctive and historic settlement pattern of Wickhambrook. Consideration of the nature and form of the adjacent settlement edges and gateways. Likelihood of successful integration with existing edges - modern or historic. Likelihood of causing coalescence between the main village and other hamlets. Prominence of site relating to gateway or arrival points where sense of place would be influenced.	Development of the site would fit well with the settlement pattern given its location, size and position in the landscape. No impact to distinctive arrival points. No disruption to historic patterns.		Development of the site would be somewhat discordant with the historic settlement pattern, given its location, size and position in the landscape; potential for minor adverse impacts to distinctive arrival points.	Development of the site would be very discordant with the historic settlement pattern, given its location, size and position in the landscape; potential for adverse impact to distinctive arrival points.
<b>Local rural character</b>	To what extent does the site contribute to local landscape character and how vulnerable would it be if the site was developed. (Character as defined in the District LCA and by parish-level detail identified in this study).	Site contributes little to local landscape character, possibly with even detracting elements. Loss of historic patterns; hedges absent. Landscape in poor condition and good potential for enhancement		Site contributes to distinctive rural character. Condition of features mixed, some hedgerow trees endure. Some indication of time-depth/historic continuity	Site contributes notably to distinctive rural character and features intact hedges, mature trees - landscape in good condition. Strong indication of time-depth / historic continuity
<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b>	Extent of potential harm to features with ecological value and as part of ecological network.	Little current value; little foreseeable impact to ecological system/wildlife and/or mitigation very feasible		Limited current value and modest foreseeable impact to ecological system or to wildlife and mitigation feasible	Value high and foreseeable harmful impact to ecological system mitigation unlikely to be feasible
<b>Historic Landscape</b>	Relationship of the site to the setting of Listed Buildings or to Wickhambrook Conservation Area. Extent of potential impact on the historic landscape.	No impact on Heritage Assets or CA. No loss of historic landscape features.		Some inter-visibility between Heritage assets and site. Some loss of a historic landscape features.	Foreseeable direct impact on at least one designated asset or loss of a historic landscape feature.



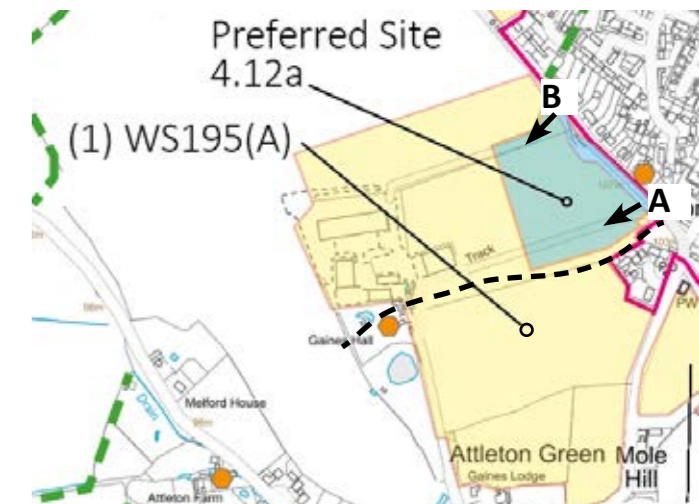
Table 1b: POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACTS: EXAMPLE INDICATORS

VISUAL AND PERCEPTUAL FACTORS		LOWER value and/or sensitivity ←-----→ HIGHER value and/or sensitivity		
Visual prominence	How generally visible the site is from the surrounding landscape, and how prominently the land is located within views from the village edge or principal roads.  Vulnerability of skylines. Impact on any notable views.	Conditions combine to make views of land generally difficult to experience.  Limited visibility from principal routes or arrival points.  Intact hedge network, woodland or existing urban edge provides good screening and assimilation potential.  No mitigation required.	Some views available where conditions allow.  Moderately visible in views from principal routes or village edge.  Boundaries partially open, some opportunity for screening and assimilation but mitigation required.	Visually prominent, forming part of view from many points.  Integral part of view from one or more principal routes or village edge.  Boundaries very open, little opportunity for screening and assimilation. Extensive mitigation would be needed.
Visual amenity	Nature of impacts on the visual amenity of existing residents and other sensitive receptors such as users of footpaths.	No views from visually sensitive receptors.  Any visual impacts are on receptors of low sensitivity; e.g. minor road users, people at work.	Views from a few visually sensitive points and/or at longer range.  Views are Moderately sensitive; e.g. some views from dwellings at some distance.	Direct and close range views from one or more sensitive receptors.  Highly sensitive receptors such as footpath users and residents with ground floor views.

A black and white photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a large, flat field. In the middle ground, a cluster of buildings is visible, including a prominent church with a tall, square tower. The buildings are surrounded by trees and shrubs. In the background, there are rolling hills and a line of trees under a clear sky. A vertical line is drawn on the left side of the image, extending from the top to the middle ground.

## 5. Site Assessments

Site name	Land west of Bunters Road	Area	WS195(A) 14.4ha but only the area of site 4.12a is proposed to be developed - 2.85ha (40 dwellings)
Reference numbers	1 - WS195(A) and 4.12a	Status	WS195(A) 'Included site' in the Site Submission Review Report (July 2021). Part of the Site (shaded green) is the preferred site 4.12a.
Location	Land west of Bunters Road, Wickhambrook. For both sites the same area is proposed for housing, regardless of differing red lines	Land use / description	Large area of arable farmland, comprising several fields. Development is only proposed in the northern part. Claydons also wish (some consents in place) to expand their commercial activities - to the north and east of the current yard.



A: View west from a gateway on Bunters Road



B. View down the driveway towards Claydons works compound, just north of 4.12a



	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
<b>LANDSCAPE FACTORS</b>	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The larger site 'WS195(A)' comprises a number of fields but residential land use is only proposed in the northern part - reflected by the area of Preferred Site 4.12a. The area proposed is fairly flat and is elevated plateau edge, reaching about 108m AOD. It provides the rural setting to the west side of the village edge along Bunters Road. Land then slopes down to meet Attleton Green at around the 90m contour. The plateau edge is less distinctive in terms of topography and physical features than the adjacent valleysides and bottom. There is little tree cover around the site, only boundary hedges notably along Bunters Road. There do not appear to be any water features.	LOW
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Apart from a few dwellings around the back of the shop, settlement is generally not found on the west side of Bunters Road, it forms a tight block on the east side. There are large scale modern agricultural scale buildings at Claydon's, but these are not visually prominent. They sit on slightly lower ground, and are seen against a green backdrop, making them unobtrusive in their green finish. Therefore, development here would not fit particularly well with the existing settlement pattern as there is only a very short section of settlement edge to integrate with. There is also little structural vegetation to provide screening or assimilation on the farmland sides. The edges of the new residential estate could be stark. However, the adjoining village is 'modern' in origin and there is plenty of scope for new structural planting to soften new edges on the interfaces with the farmland, but this would take time to mature. The continuous roadside hedge along Bunters Road provides opportunities and constraints. Whilst a mature screen is beneficial, and its removal would not be recommended in landscape terms, it would make it difficult to reflect the existing settlement pattern along Bunter Roads whereby houses face the road.	MOD
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of Site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The proposed developable area crosses the boundary between the Plateau and the Valleyside parish landscape types. The character of the landscape setting has moderate value as rural setting to the village edge. It reads as part of a fairly large-scale, open, rolling plateau landscape where field sizes are fairly large and the landscape feels modernised, with straight-edged patterns and a wide main road and modern drive to the Claydon works. Woodlands are seen along the skyline to the west and these could be reflected in a landscape led mitigation strategy.	MOD
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for Wildlife on or near the site. There is a pond at Gaines Farm which could potentially support protected species. Biodiversity value will lie in the system of field boundary hedges.	LOW
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	Gaines Hall I (Listed farmhouse) lies to the west, its boundary adjoining the wider site -WS195(A). But if development is limited to the area identified as 4.12a, little impact is anticipated, given the separation. Opposite the developable area on Bunters Road sits Gaines Cottage (Grade II house) at close range, although direct views from the property are screened by the site's roadside hedge.	MOD
	<b>VISUAL FACTORS</b>	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	The site is visually sensitive because it's somewhat elevated. It would be easily seen on the approach into the village from the north.. Although close range views are often restricted by hedges on the east and north sides. It is also screened from views from the village 'centre' by built form that clusters around the shop. Long views are possible outwards so development here would be visible from elevated points to the west.
<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual Impact		<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	No footpaths are present on the site or along its boundaries, although Bunters Road pavement (east) and lane (south) are used for informal recreation. There are footpaths (no's.16,28) at longer range that would be likely to experience a degree of visual change. Visual change would have most impact on the residents that face onto Bunters Road from where direct views will be experienced at close range. The site is also most prominent to passing traffic.	HIGH

**Summary Statement**

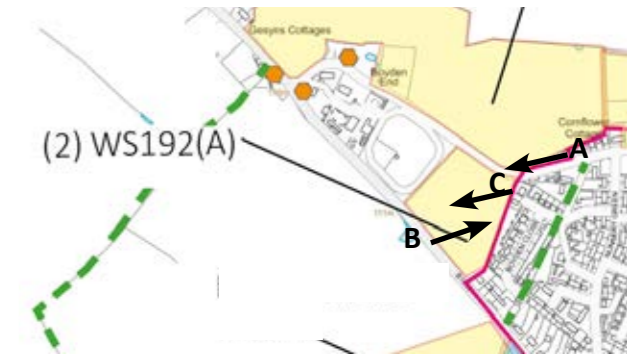
The allocated site does not directly adjoin the edges of the settlement, but faces them, over Bunters Road. The indicative layout exacerbates this problem by adding a gap between the development and the road.

Development here will constitute a break into countryside and therefore a departure from the prevailing existing settlement pattern, where development forms a tight cluster on the east side of Bunters Road.

The lack of edges or structural vegetation within the farmland, to provide enclosure, and the prominent, elevated position of the site beside the main road, means development here could have adverse effects on the rural character and on views in the local area. Mitigation of these effects through new structural planting would be take some years to mature. The roadside hedge is a feature of value and must be retained.

The site also has sensitivities relating to the heritage asset at Gaines Hall. Whilst the northern part of the site is allocated, development on the lower slopes to the south must be avoided.

Site name	Land north of Bunters Road	Area	2ha
Reference number	2 - WS192(A)	Status	'Included' site. "Potential impact to character and appearance of the village. An alternative site is considered to be a more suitable and sustainable option"
Location	Between Bunters Road and Nunnery Green lane, north of the main settlement cluster. Adjoining settlement boundary.	Land use / description	Agricultural land



A. View southward from the Nunnery Green lane



B. View eastward from Bunters Road



C. View southward from the lane



	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
<b>LANDSCAPE FACTORS</b>	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is a single field, upper valleyside landscape that slopes gently towards the east from 110m AOD to c.104m AOD. It is sandwiched between Bunters Road and the Nunnery Green/Boyden End lane to the east and west and by residential land use to the north and south. Slope forms distinctive setting to the northern village edge and enables views to the northeast. No water features or trees on site but boundary roadside hedges are present, with gaps. The northern boundary with the adjacent property features a belt of trees which form a continuous, mature feature and dense screen. After loss of the farmland itself, with retention of boundary features, no further significant physical impacts are predicted.	MOD
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site adjoins the settlement boundary so development here would form an extension to the existing modern village. It sits at the northern gateway to the main village, when approached from Boyden End. Infilling here would cause erosion of the gap to this small cluster/hamlet. The well vegetated boundaries of land south of Boyden End would continue to provide a degree of buffer and separation.	MOD
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of Site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is in the 'Valleyside' parish landscape type. It has value in its role as setting and buffer between the village and historic Boyden End. It forms part of the gently rolling landscape that wraps around the northern edges of the main village and contributes positively to the scenic, valleyside character. The underlying landscape patterns here are organic and historic in origin, and the combination of subtle topography and native field boundary features makes for attractive views.	MOD
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for Wildlife on or near the site. Some limited biodiversity value will lie in the system of gappy roadside boundary hedges.	LOW
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	Whilst there are three Listed Buildings clustered nearby at Boyden End, none of them directly interface or have views of the site, owing to distance and intervening vegetation, and no direct impacts on Heritage are predicted.	LOW
<b>VISUAL FACTORS</b>	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	The site is adjacent to the main road that passes through the village so is somewhat prominent. However, the straight alignment of Bunters Road on the approach means the site would not be prominently seen on the approach, instead it would remain tucked behind the extended curtilage of Boyden End House. From the south, again, it would not be seen until passing in close proximity, as is contained by existing residential land use. The site offers views from Bunters Road down over farmland that slopes away in a series of hedged fields, providing a strong sense of ruralness. Development of the site could cause harm to scenic or important view.	MOD
	<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual impact	<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	No views from any R.O.W. but Nunnery Green/Boyden End lane is a well used pedestrian walking route, and direct, close range views would be possible from it. The site would be perceived by these receptors as extension to the Boyden Close residential area. There are around ten houses that overlook the site from Boyden Close, some fronting directly onto the field behind a narrow piece of open space. Development of this site would have a direct impact on these houses and mitigation measures should be considered.	HIGH

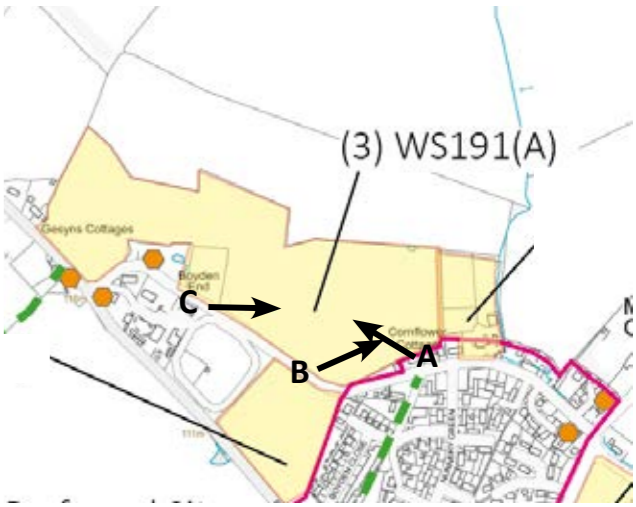
**Summary Statement**

This site is a well defined parcel of land between the village and a strongly vegetated curtilage to the north.

Whilst development on the east side of Bunters Road is in harmony with the existing settlement pattern, it would cause substantial closure of the rural gap between the main cluster and the heritage sensitive hamlet of Boyden End, which has a separate identity.

Development would erode the rural setting of the north side of the main village and cause substantial visual impacts to those dwellings that directly overlook the side along its southern edge.

Site name	Land north and west of Boyden End (also known as north of Nunnery Green)	Area	8.9ha
Reference number	3 - WS191(A)	Status	'Included' site. "Potential impact to character and appearance of the village. An alternative site is considered to be a more suitable and sustainable option."
Location	Land lying north and east of Boyden End and northwest of the main village, north of Nunnery Green/Boyden End lane	Land use / description	Farmland under arable cultivation.



	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
<b>LANDSCAPE FACTORS</b>	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site lies on the north side of Nunnery Green/Boyden End lane and on the east side of the B1063 north of Boyden End. It is a single, large field, on very gently sloping upper valleyside landscape. It falls from c.116m AOD in the west to c.99m AOD in the east. It adjoins the settlement boundary for a short stretch behind 5 modernised dwellings that includes Cornflower Cottage. Whilst now incorporated into the main village, this part of the settlement was known as Nunnery Green.  No water features or significant trees on the site itself but boundary field and roadside hedges are present, with gaps. Field boundary oaks are present.  The eastern boundary with WS1074 features a belt of trees including tall Lombardy poplars.  The physical impacts are related to the loss of the farmland itself; it is assumed boundary features would be retained.	MOD
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Nunnery Green/Boyden End lane currently defines and contains the main village, and all the development on the north side of is in a linear, one-plot-deep pattern. The character of the Lane through Nunnery Green is narrow and winding and has a somewhat modern, but rural village edge feel, with views out to the countryside becoming available further west. The small cluster at Boyden End follows the same one-plot deep pattern and has a historic feel.  The land owners proposal to site a residential estate in the eastern end only, to avoid causing substantial disruption to the historic settlement pattern and separated position of Boyden End, is very necessary. There should be no development further west as this would cause coalescence of the hamlet with the main village.	MOD
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of Site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is in the 'Valleyside' parish landscape type. It is a fairly prominent piece of land that provides rural setting and backdrop to Nunnery Green. It forms part of the very gently rolling landscape that wraps around the northern edges of the main village, which contributes positively to the wider valleyside character. The underlying landscape patterns here are organic and historic in origin, and the combination of subtle topography and native field boundary features makes for attractive views.	HIGH
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for Wildlife on or near the site.  Biodiversity value will lie in the system of field boundary hedges that connect with the wider countryside.	MOD
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	The early OS maps show the field is now an amalgamation of 6 smaller enclosures. Its dog-legged boundaries indicate it was once several fields which were merged over the course of the 20th century. There are no designated assets in Nunnery Green but there are 3 Listed Buildings in Boyden End. As long as development limited to the area shaded in Appendix 1, there should be no impacts on heritage features.	LOW
<b>VISUAL FACTORS</b>	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	The site is prominent in views along the lane and would be seen on the approach to the village from Boyden End. Development could result in adverse visual impacts on distinctive views from the village edge. Glimpses are also possible from the main road (across site WS192(A)).	MOD
	<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual Impact	<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	No views from any R.O.W. but Nunnery Green/Boyden End lane is a well used pedestrian walking route, and direct, close range views of new development would be possible from it.  A small number of houses (approximately 5) back onto the site's eastern end (see photo C) and would experience a large degree of visual change from upper and lower windows.	HIGH

**Summary Statement**

There is a discrepancy between the total area put forward to the SHELAA Call for Sites, and the indicative site plan subsequently put forward by the landowners which is the subject of this assessment (see p45 for the indicative site plan).

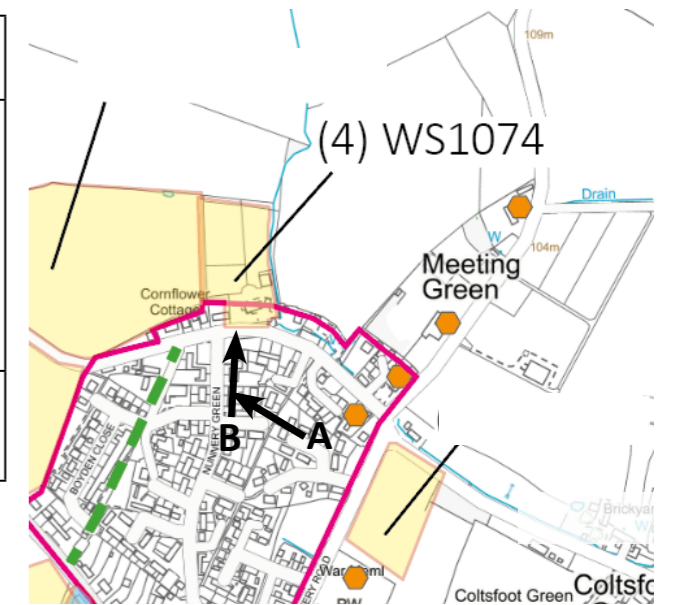
This area of the village fringe is highly valued by residents for its quiet and rural character. The adjoining lane is valued for the informal recreation and amenity it offers.

Whilst development of the east part of the parcel would not represent a significant departure from the settlement pattern, it would cause partial closure of the rural gap between the main cluster and the Heritage sensitive hamlet of Boyden End, which has a separate identity.

Development would erode the rural setting of the north side of the main village and cause substantial visual impacts to those dwellings that directly overlook the site along its southeastern edges



Site name	Land adjacent Bunters Gait, Nunnery Green	Area	0.77ha
Reference number	4 - WS1074	Status	Omission site. "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." DC/19/0961/FUL planning application for one dwelling and access granted on 16 July 2019
Location	Land to rear of houses on Nunnery Green	Land use / description	Land behind a modern house - 'Bunters Gait', that has recently been used for horses.



A. The Site entrance



B. The site from the elevated footpath opposite

	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
<b>LANDSCAPE FACTORS</b>	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	This parcel is equestrian land to the rear of a large brick house called 'Bunters Gait'. A section of hedge has recently been removed to make a new access on the west side of the house. It is very gently sloping field, enclosed on all sides - by a shelter belt of trees to east and west, including Lombardy poplars, a hedge to the north and the house and garden curtilage to the south. A stream is mapped along the east boundary.	LOW
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	All the development on the north side of the lane is in a linear, one-plot-deep pattern. Development of this site would therefore be contrary to the prevailing pattern and be considered 'backland'. To the south side lies the development is mid 20th century estate development.	MOD
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of Site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is in the 'Valleyside' parish landscape type. It is not prominent in views and its adaptation for equestrian use means it does not contribute particularly to the wider valleyside character. Impacts on the local landscape character will be limited.	LOW
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for Wildlife on or near the site. Biodiversity value will lie in the boundary hedges, and the stream.	MOD
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	This parcel was once part of the system of small fields that backed Nunnery Green. There are no Listed Buildings adjacent to the site. There are several listed buildings are Meeting Green to the east but the site does not contribute to their setting and its unlikely there is significant intervisibility.	LOW
<b>VISUAL FACTORS</b>	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	This site is the least visually prominent of all those assessed. Its contained nature, generally screened by the frontage house and its tall hedges, means it is hard to see into. Development of this site would not impact on any scenic or important views.	LOW
	<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual Impact	<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	No views from any R.O.W. Glimpse into the development from a small section of Nunnery Green/Boyden End lane adjacent to the site. New houses would be seen behind existing residences so would not be out of context. Significant impacts to the rear views from Bunters Gait, St. Crispins and Goshawk House (to the west) would be experienced, other views from properties are more distant, oblique and filtered.	MOD

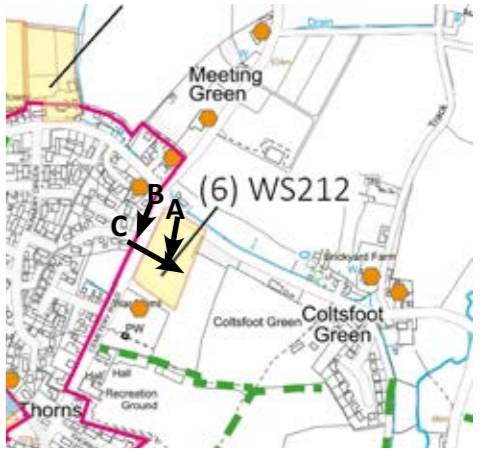
**Summary Statement**

This site is attached to the main village cluster and would have limited visual impacts on the wider village or the wider landscape.

However, it constitutes 'backland' development and does not follow the settlement pattern along Nunnery Green which is a one plot deep pattern.

Development would erode the rural setting of the north side of the main village and cause substantial visual impacts to those dwellings that directly overlook the site along its edges.

Site name	Land at Cemetery Hill	Area	1.08ha
Reference number	6 - WS212	Status	Omission site. "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."
Location	Field at the north end of Cemetery Road, on the east side and also bounded by road to Coltsford Green.	Land use / description	Agricultural land



A. View from north



B. View up Cemetery Road



C. View over site from west

	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
<b>LANDSCAPE FACTORS</b>	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Small, single, rectangular field on the village edge. It is currently not being cultivated but is farmland. It forms part of the sloping valley side and sits between the c.100m and 95m contours. It has intermittent boundary vegetation along the north and west sides. It lies south of the graveyard from which it is separated by a dense hedge. It is separated from the Settlement Boundary by Cemetery Road on its west side. Physical impacts are related to the loss of the farmland itself and the erosion of the sense of the valley topography.	MOD
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site sits on the arrival point to the main village to traffic coming from Coltsfoot Green and Meeting Green and helps provide separation between the main village and these hamlets, although Meeting Green has already been connected with the main village. Settlement in this area is relatively recent in origin, and comprises small estate developments that have aggregated between Bunters Road and Nunnery Green/Boyden End lane to form the main village in the 20th century. These are generally on the west side of Cemetery Road but Thorns Close is the exception, on the east side.	MOD
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is in the 'Valleyside' parish landscape type where it forms the rural fringes to the village - a small scale landscape where ancient patterns endure and scenic views are experienced over the gently rolling valley sides. Were the site to be developed, the distinctive sense of the valley, as setting to the settlement clusters, would be eroded.	HIGH
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for Wildlife on or near the site.	MOD
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	The War Memorial in the centre of the graveyard adjacent to the north is Grade II listed. The graveyard is also a feature of historic interest and, of course, emotional sensitivity to local people. It is enclosed by a dense hedge which contributes to its sense of privacy; the rural landscape provides a sense of peace and quiet. Development of the site would have adverse effects on the asset and its setting.	HIGH
<b>VISUAL FACTORS</b>	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	Photo B shows the site's orientation and relationship with the valley to the south east. Moderately long views are possible to and from the opposite valley side (however it does not appear there are many receptors here.) The site is not prominent in that no views are possible from the Main Road. Cemetery Road is a more minor route but direct views of the site are experienced from it upon arrival at the village, as there is little boundary vegetation. Development of the site could cause harm to scenic or important view from footpaths/lanes in the area.	MOD
	<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual impact	<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	No views from any R.O.W. Some impact on residential amenity from a small number of dwellings at close range over looking the site from Croft Close and The Meadows (recently completed). Residential receptors are considered sensitive receptors.	MOD

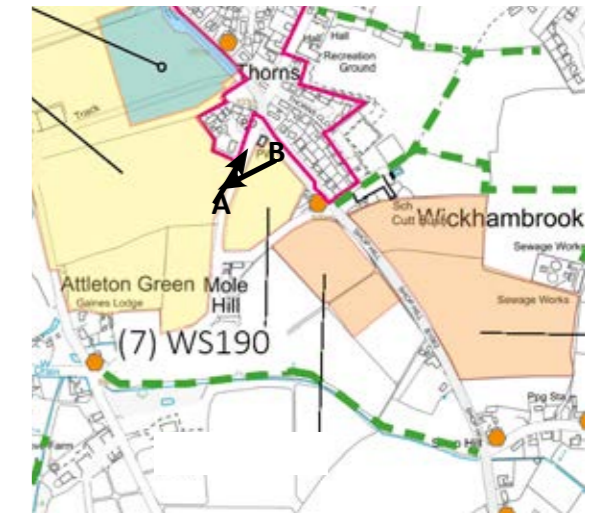
**Summary Statement**

This small site is of notable landscape value for its intact historic form and for the role it plays forming attractive, rolling rural setting to the village edge.

It is sensitive in heritage terms given its role in the setting of a listed asset, and is part of the rural gap between the main village and Coltsfoot Green.

Conserving its undeveloped form is important for conserving the distinctive dispersed settlement pattern in Wlckhambrook.

Site name	Land south of Bunters Road	Area	1.6ha
Reference number	7 - WS190	Status	Included site. "Landscape impact – considered to be important open 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."
Location	Parcel to the south of the Methodist church and the main village, on the west side of Bunters Road and the north side of Mole Hill	Land use / description	Arable land not currently under cultivation



A. Photo from the north



B. Photo from the east

	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
<b>LANDSCAPE FACTORS</b>	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Small field with an irregular, triangular shape, defined by roads on all three sides - Shop Hill to the north, and narrow lanes to the west and east. It forms part of the distinctive rolling valleyside south of the village centre and slopes from c.101m down to c.93m AOD. It is farmland but it's currently uncultivated and overgrown. It is separated from the Settlement Boundary by Shop Hill along its north side, and flanked to either side on Shop Hill by built form - the Methodist Church to the north and three old cottages to the east. Potential physical impacts are related to the loss of the farmland itself and the erosion of the sense of the valley topography that provides important setting to the village centre.	HIGH
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is prominently located alongside the arrival point, from several directions, at the village centre. There are currently no large blocks of settlement on the west side of the main road. Settlement on the opposite side of Shop Hill is relatively recent (20th century) in origin; small estate developments that form a spur of settlement. The narrow lanes that wind towards Attleton Green are characteristic of the rural area, but Shop Hill is a fairly wide modernised main road.	MOD
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of Site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is in the 'Valleyside' parish landscape type where it forms the rural fringes to the village - a small scale valley landscape where ancient patterns endure and scenic views are experienced over the valleysides. The site falls away behind the Methodist Church, allowing views over the little valley below. These distinctive gently rolling valley views are important to the character of the village centre.	HIGH
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for Wildlife on or near the site. Boundary vegetation is generally absent.	MOD
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	There is one Listed Building whose wider setting could be impacted by development of the site, Cutt Bush Cottage sits on the eastern-most corner of the triangle, its rear curtilage adjoining the site for a short length. The Methodist Church, and the two unlisted thatched cottages to the east, could be considered non-designated heritage assets. The isolated setting of the Methodist Church would be entirely changed were the site to be developed.	MOD
<b>VISUAL FACTORS</b>	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	The site is very visually prominent in the views from the main road adjacent, and from the village centre. Views are not filtered or screened, due to the lack of boundary vegetation. Unimpeded views into the site are also possible from the two narrow lanes to each side. These are slightly in cutting, having been worn down over the centuries before tarmac came along. There would be a detrimental effect on the skylines in this area. Development of the site could cause harm to scenic or important view from roads/lanes in the area.	HIGH
	<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual Impact	<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	No views from any R.O.W. A row of bungalows (c.8No) directly overlook the site from the north along Shop Hill, and small number of other dwellings also overlook the site from the east and south corners, eg at Mole Hill. Dwellings are considered sensitive receptors and they would experience the largest visual impact.	HIGH

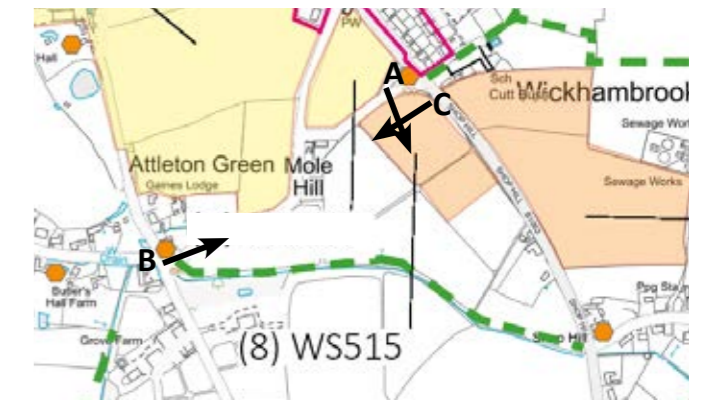
**Summary Statement**

This site is not an appropriate option for expansion of the main village cluster. The main settlement is found on the plateau edge and is not found on these southwest facing valley slopes. Development here would have an adverse effect on the character of the valley and be contrary to the prevailing landscape position of the main village.

It is of notable landscape value for its intact historic form, and because its integral to providing the rural character that interacts with the heart of the village. It is also visually prominent in views around the village centre and directly overlooked from a number of properties.

It sits within the wider setting of a listed asset, and is part of the rural gap between the main village and Attleton Green. Conserving its undeveloped form is important for conserving the distinctive dispersed settlement pattern in Wickhambrook.

Site name	Land off Shop Hill (B1063), Wickhambrook	Area	1.9ha
Reference number	8 - WS515	Status	Site unsuitable due to significant policy constraints - not adjacent to settlement boundary
Location	Land on the southwest side of Shop Hill, the upper parts of a larger, sloping field.	Land use / description	This is equestrian grazed grassland.



A. View over site towards the Southeast



B. View from Attleton Green - site is located on the upper slopes



C. Site is behind the hedge in views from Shop Hill

	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
<b>LANDSCAPE FACTORS</b>	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Site clearly part of a valleyside, which falls away at a noticeable rate to the southwest. The main village is generally on the flatter plateau edge, so development here would be a departure from the prevailing pattern. Be unlikely to cause the loss of any vegetative features as there are none - it is assumed the roadside hedge along the boundary with Shop Hill, would be retained.	HIGH
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Development here would not feel well connected to the village. Settlement is currently found on the east side of Shop Hill, only north of the line between Mole Hill and the primary school. Located next to the main road, the site is fairly prominent.	HIGH
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of Site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is in a little valley system which is a key part of local character and gives rise to scenic views. It provides a distinctive setting to the main village of Wickhambrook. The trees fringing the valley bottom, the field boundaries and the skyline emphasize the topography and creates a strong rural feel. The rural character of the little valley would be eroded if the village spread into this area.	HIGH
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Much of the site is grazed grass with little ecological value, so the value lies in the network of boundary hedges.	LOW
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	There is one listed building Cutt Bush Cottage - close to the site at the top of Mole Hill. This does not look directly out onto the parcel, its enclosed within a tall hedge. With mitigation in the corner nearest to the cottage- perhaps offsetting development, or providing a landscape buffer, it is judged development could take place without harm to the asset.	LOW
	<b>VISUAL FACTORS</b>	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	The site is not all that prominent in views on the approach from the south because it lies to the side, behind a large hedge and land falls away quite quickly. However, direct views are experienced on the approach from the north around the top of Mole Hill. Longer distance glimpses also possible from Attleton Green (see photo C) and adverse impacts on sense of separation predicted. Development here would be noticeable and would visually not relate well to the rest of the village. Development of the site could cause harm to scenic or important view from footpaths/lanes in the area.
<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual Impact		<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There is a ROW that runs along the bottom of the valley that would offer views up to the site at reasonably close range. As the site is set apart from the main village edge there are no dwellings with direct views over the site.	MOD

**Summary Statement**

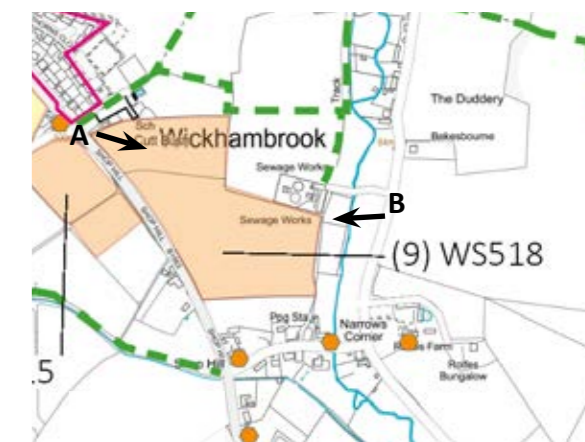
This site is not an appropriate option for expansion of the main village cluster. The main settlement is found on the plateau edge and is not found on these southwest facing valleyslopes. Development here would have an adverse effect on the character of the rural valley and be contrary to the prevailing landscape position of the main village.

The site's function as part of the rural gap between the main village and Attleton Green should be conserved to prevent coalescence and loss of the village's distinctive dispersed pattern.

As well as being scenic, the views over the site promote appreciation of the valley setting, and the scattered form of the settlement.



Site name	Cutt Bush and Commerce Field, east of Shop Hill	Area	5.70ha
Reference number	9 - WS518	Status	Site unsuitable due to significant policy constraints - not adjacent to settlement boundary
Location	Two farmland fields to the east of Shop Hill, south of the Primary school.	Land use / description	Arable farmland.



A. View over the northerly field, towards the SE



B. View from Duddery Lane (image from Google Streetview)

View from Duddery Lane (from Google Streetview)

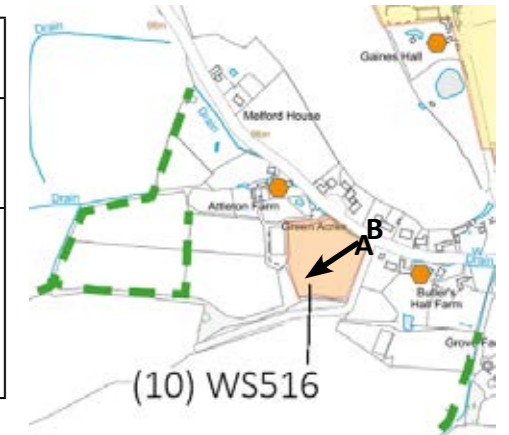
	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
LANDSCAPE FACTORS	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	This large site occupies a valleyside position, falling from 100m in the west to 85m in the east. It comprises two fields that form part of the farmland landscape that separates the main village from the Narrows Corner/Shop Hill linear settlement cluster. It does not directly adjoin the settlement boundary, although it could appear to connect through the grounds of the primary school. A mature hedge divides the two fields and mature oak trees, the rest of the boundaries are also hedged, some outgrown into trees.	MOD
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are two types of settlement pattern in this area. The infilled, plateau top main village cluster and the scattered Narrows Corner/Shop Hill linear settlement that nestles along the valley bottom. Owing to the valleyside location, and its southeastward orientation, the site is not physically or visually well related to either cluster. In the main village large blocks of settlement are found on the east side of Shop Hill and only to the north of the line between Mole Hill and the primary school. Estate development seen here down the valleyside would be a departure from the existing pattern where estate blocks are found on the plateau.	HIGH
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of Site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site straddles the 'Valleyside' and 'Valley bottom' parish landscape types. It forms the rural fringe on the south side of the main village. Fields have been amalgamated but the underlying small-scale ancient patterns can still be read and hedges are in good condition. Scenic views are experienced over the gently rolling valleysides to the south giving a strong rural feel..	MOD
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for wildlife on or near the site. Biodiversity value likely to be fairly low given the agricultural purpose of the land parcel, but would lie in the connected hedge networks and associated verges. It is the only site that features a hedge through the centre of the red line area	MOD
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	There are approx. five Listed Buildings in the vicinity from which oblique glimpses of the site may be possible but there are no heritage assets adjacent to the site - no direct impacts are foreseen.	LOW
VISUAL FACTORS	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	The site slopes towards the southeast and so is not prominently visible from the main village. It is currently hard to see into from the adjacent main road (Shop Hill) because there is a particularly tall continuous roadside hedge. There are only two gateways currently offering brief glimpses in. Visual impacts will possibly be greater on the valley below to the southeast because development would be seen along the skyline and down the valleyside (see photo B). Development of the site could cause harm to scenic or important view from footpaths/lanes in the area.	MOD
	<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual Impact	<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no ROWs along the site itself but there is a footpath beyond the boundary hedge along the north and northeast - it briefly adjoins the site boundary. Despite the large size of the site, it does not appear there are many dwellings overlooking the site that would experience visual change.	MOD

**Summary Statement**

This site is not an appropriate option for expansion of the main village cluster. The main settlement is found on the plateau edge and is not found on valley slopes. Development here would have an adverse effect on the character of the rural valley to the east and be contrary to the prevailing landscape position of the main village.

The site's function as part of the rural gap between the main village and Narrows Corner should be conserved to prevent coalescence and loss of the village's distinctive dispersed pattern.

Site name	Land at Attleton Green, Wickhambrook,	Area	1.1ha
Reference number	10 - WS516	Status	Site unsuitable due to significant policy constraints - not adjacent to settlement boundary
Location	A single horse paddock lying west of the lane that passes through Attleton Green.	Land use / description	This is grazed equine land.



A. View into site at entrance point



B. View into site including roadside hedge

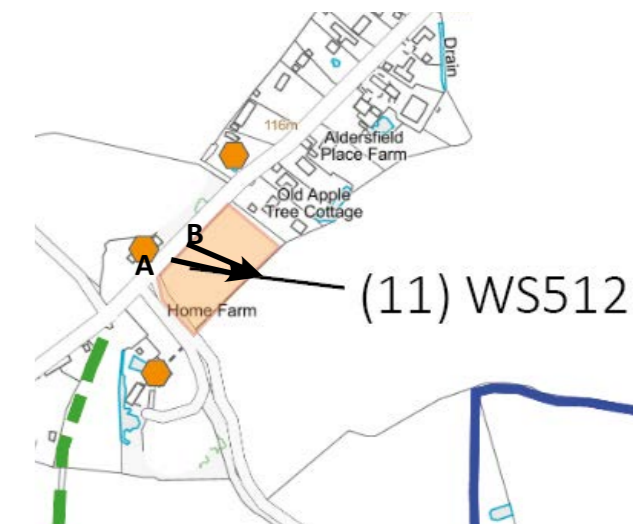
	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H / M / L
<b>LANDSCAPE FACTORS</b>	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is part of the low-lying hamlet of Attleton Green. The site is a small field, of just over a hectare, under equestrian land use. Land use fringing the settlement is primarily pastoral owing to the seasonally wet soils. The site is enclosed on all sides by hedges, including a dense, regularly managed roadside hedge. It lies on the edge of the bottom of the shallow tributary valley and likely has seasonally wet soils. There are many scattered ponds in this area but there does not appear to be one on the site.	LOW
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Attleton Green has a small green at its heart, the drive to the old manor of Gaines Hall passes along its east side. Settlement is scattered along winding narrow lanes and is a mix of listed farmhouses, thatched cottages and more modern, low rise additions. The pattern is generally linear and one plot deep, the exception being the small residential estate at the western end of the lane, partly opposite the site. This group of 5 c.1970s era bungalows are a departure from the prevailing historic pattern. It would be difficult to assimilate an estate here without disrupting the historic pattern.	HIGH
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site sits on the lower edge of the Valleyside landscape type. The qualities of Attleton Green relate to its small scale, rural character. The quiet, gently winding lanes with historic farmsteads and thatched cottages create a historic feel - there are a few modern houses here, but these have limited impact as they occupy deep plots and are often well vegetated. There are also many mature trees around the settlement and roadside (e.g. ash, willow, birch) so views out to the wider landscape are not generally possible, contained also by the rising topography. Glimpses of the dwellings are interspersed with glimpses into fields. An estate development could change this character and bring a suburban feel to this corner of Attleton Green.	MOD
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for wildlife on or near the site. Biodiversity value likely to be modest, lying in the connected hedge network.	MOD
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	Historically, the site would have been a traditionally grazed meadow, associated with one of the adjacent farmhouses, but today is part of a stud. The immediate setting of the site is formed of c.1970s chalet bungalows which are not sensitive in heritage terms. However, it is sandwiched between two farmsteads each with grade II listed farmhouses - Attleton Farm (with Wells Cottage), and Butler's Hall Farm. The field does not directly read as part of the immediate setting of either building, because of the linear arrangement and the well vegetated boundaries. However, the site separates them and contributes to their significance as separate entities - loss of the gap to residential development could disrupt this relationship, even if the site is not visible from them.	HIGH
<b>VISUAL FACTORS</b>	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	Not visually prominent. Tucked between well vegetated farmsteads on a quiet back road, this site is generally not visible from either Attleton Green or the wider landscape. The hedges that enclose it provide a high degree of screening and enclosure and rising land on both sides means new housing here would not make an impact on skylines. Development of the site would not harm any scenic or important view.	LOW
	<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual Impact	<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	No direct views to the site are possible from anywhere except the adjacent section of lane. Views from the facing bungalows here might be possible, but only over the top of the roadside hedge, assuming the roadside hedge is retained.	LOW

**Summary Statement**

This somewhat isolated site is unsuitable as development would not fit with the one-plot-deep historic pattern in this hamlet. A residential estate here would have an adverse effect on the prevailing rural feel in this lightly settled part of the parish.

Its role providing rural setting and separation to listed buildings in the hamlet should be conserved.

Site name	Land at Ashfield Green, Wickhambrook	Area	0.819ha
Reference number	11 - WS512	Status	Site unsuitable due to significant policy constraints - not adjacent to settlement boundary
Location	South of Ashfield Green, north of Home Farm, alongside the road.	Land use / description	Agricultural land until recently - over the last year the site has been hedged and is uncultivated.



A. Site photo 2022



B. Google Streetview October 2021



	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
LANDSCAPE FACTORS	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The Wickhambrook Road ascends the valleyside then tracks along the flat top of the plateau, at elevations above 100m. Lying at over 105m this is the most elevated of all the assessed sites. It lies on the east side of Ashfield Green and was part of a larger arable land until relatively recently, the site area has now been divided off.  Is it now under grass and new hedge has been planted along the east boundary. On the other three sides there are good, continuous hedges with trees, particularly along the mature, vegetated curtilage of Home Farm.	LOW
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Ashfield Green is an linear settlement, a mix of historic cottages and farmsteads, and some more modern infill, lightly scattered for a half mile or so along the Wickhambrook Road, interspersed with fields that allow long views. Settlement is found up the valley and along the spine of the plateau.  Ashfield Green does not have strong arrival points, instead the dwellings just group a little more densely together on the plateau.  There are no residential estates along Ashfield Green, all dwellings are a single plot depth, often set back from the road with a deep front garden. It would be difficult to assimilate an estate here without disrupting the historic pattern.	HIGH
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of Site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is in the Plateau landscape type. Local distinctiveness relates to the straightness of the road, the scattered dwellings and the elevated land which offers long views in places.	HIGH
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for wildlife on or near the site.  Biodiversity value likely to be moderately low as land is only recently converted farmland. It will lie in the connected hedge networks along the boundaries.	MOD
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	There are 3 Listed Buildings in close proximity to the site comprising Home Farm to the south, Ashfield Green Cottage facing the site, across the road, and a further Listed building to the north.	HIGH
VISUAL FACTORS	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	No impacts on the main settlement. Elevated position of the site means there could be impacts on the wider landscape, however settlement is seen in this position along the spine of the plateau.  Development of the site would not harm any specific scenic or important view.	MOD
	<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual Impact	<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Impacts will result only on a small number of receptors. Fairly minor traffic volumes use this road and a single house across the road will experienced direct views (Listed building).	MOD

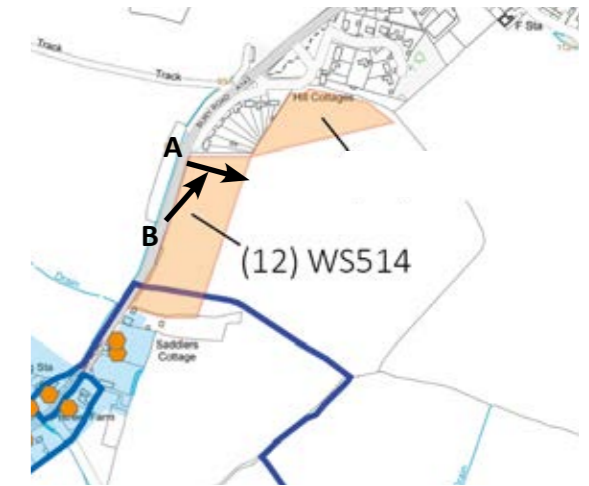
**Summary Statement**

This isolated site, some distance from the main village, is a very unsuitable and unsustainable location for settlement expansion.

Development would not fit with the scattered, one-plot-deep historic pattern in this hamlet, and would have an adverse effect on the prevailing rural feel in this part of the settlement.

It is visually sensitive and occupies an elevated position. The simple patterns would be easily disrupted by a new residential estate which could have wide ranging visual impacts.

Site name	Land at Bury Road, Wickhambrook	Area	1.106ha
Reference number	13 - WS513	Status	Not preferred option. Deferred - suitability: not adjacent to settlement boundary
Location	Land east of Bury Road and south of Clopton Green	Land use / description	Agricultural land part of a larger field, south of a curved row of houses that face Bury Road. The far south of the site is in Denston parish.



A. View east from corner of site



B. View north from beside main road

	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
LANDSCAPE FACTORS	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Notably sloping, arable farmland sitting between c.82m and c.98m. It lies north of the Conservation Area in the valley bottom at Wickham Street. It is to the south of an array of mid-century semi-detached houses which form the southern edge of the predominately modern settlement cluster at Clopton Green.  It is a small portion of a large field - the far boundaries of which, to the south and east, cannot be seen owing to the curve of the hill.  There are no hydrological features on the site. There is little vegetation on the site or along its boundaries. Physical features are not at risk but development of the site would partly obscure understanding of the valley topography.	LOW
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Historically, the settlement that sprung up to the north was likely associated Clopton Hall, located above the site on Giffords Lane. The adjacent cluster of semi-detached houses are modern in origin (mid century) and are poorly integrated into the landscape with inconsistent boundary planting.  The site currently provides the undeveloped gap between the Clopton cluster and the Conservation Area at Wickham Street. Its development would mean the two clusters would become joined and their separate identities would be eroded.	HIGH
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of Site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is predominantly the Valleyside parish landscape type. Apart from the distinctive sloping landform, the site lacks distinctive patterns or elements as field sizes are enlarged, hedges have been removed resulting in bare skylines to the east. Without other features to influence it, the character is influenced by the houses above it which provide a sense of a modern landscape.	MOD
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for wildlife on or near the site.  The site is currently arable farmland with little in the way of boundary vegetation.  Biodiversity value likely to be low.	LOW
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	The landscape does not form any direct setting to any Listed Buildings but there are listed buildings just beyond the boundary to the south (some in Denston parish).  The area just meets the edge of the Conservation Area at Saddlers Cottage. Development here would be to the detriment of the Conservation Area as its green setting and sense of separation could be threatened.	HIGH
VISUAL FACTORS	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	Site very prominent as located directly beside main A134 road. Views into the area provide a sense of separation from Wickham Street.  Development of the site would be very obvious but would not harm any scenic or important view.	HIGH
	<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature of receptors experiencing visual Impact	<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	High volumes of traffic pass the site daily.  The site is close to the existing group of houses here. None would directly face the development but glimpses from the rear of the dwellings may be possible.	MOD

**Summary Statement**

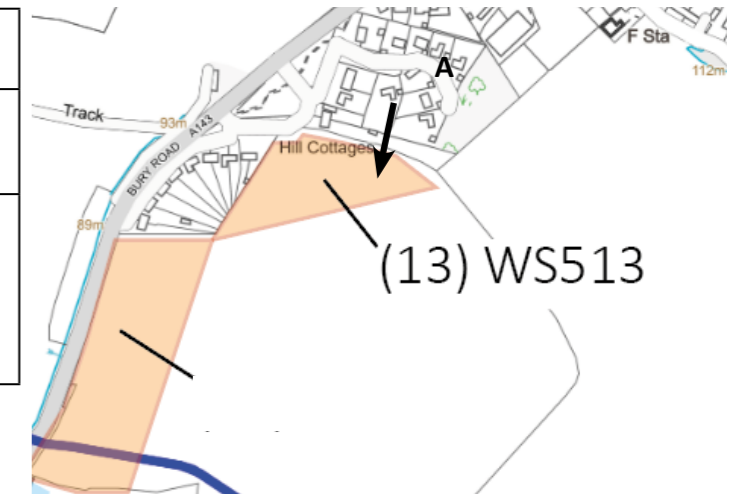
This isolated site, some distance from the main village, is a very unsuitable and unsustainable location for settlement expansion.

It is valleyside location is very visually prominent from the main road. Visual effects of developing the site would be hard to mitigate and unsympathetic hard edges with open countryside would result.

It forms part of the rural gap between the Clopton Green cluster Wickham Street. It should be conserved as rural settings for the hamlets, to help maintain their separate identities and prevent coalescence, and to conserve the distinctiveness of the sensitive Conservation Area.



Site name	Land at Street Farm, Bury Road, Wickhambrook	Area	2.539ha
Reference number	12 - WS514	Status	Deferred - suitability: not adjacent to settlement boundary
Location	Field on the east side of Bury Road, south of Hill Cottage and Clopton Park	Land use / description	Arable land use. Site would infill between Hill Cottage to the north and Clopton Park to the west.



A. View south across site



	Sensitivity Factor:	Source /Evidence / Indicator	Assessment of potential impact of residential land use	Sensitivity H/M/L
LANDSCAPE FACTORS	<b>Physical landscape including vegetation</b> Impact on distinctive topography / water features / significant trees or other vegetation.	<i>OS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	Sloping and elevated arable farmland sitting around the 100m contour, on the shoulder of the plateau. It is a small portion of a much larger field - the boundaries of which, to the south and east, cannot be seen owing to the curve of the hill. There are no water features on the site. There is little vegetation along its boundaries, just some gappy hedging along the residential boundary.	LOW
	<b>Settlement pattern and gateways</b> Fit with historic pattern; prominence of site in relation to arrival points; nature of road network	<i>OS maps; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	This cluster of settlement is modern in origin and likely dates from the mid century. Historically, settlement here was associated with Clopton Hall, above the site on Giffords Lane. This cluster is not one of the historic hamlets or Greens and has no relationship with the main village and its services. The shape and location of the site means it has a weak link with the road network and the resultant form would not have roadside frontage. It would be discordant with the form of the existing houses already here.	HIGH
	<b>Local rural landscape character</b> Contribution of Site and setting to local character and distinctiveness	<i>County and District Character assessment; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	This site is in the upper part of the Valley Side landscape type. It lacks distinctive patterns or elements as field sizes are enlarged, and hedges have been removed resulting in bare skylines to the southeast. These conditions give the landscape less ability to assimilate new development - the lack of hedge network to provide enclosure means new development here would be stark and visually prominent Skylines in the distance are regularly wooded - settlement is not a prominent component - groups of houses on higher should be resisted.	HIGH
	<b>Biodiversity and wildlife</b> Impact on designated features or features with potential value as part of ecological network	<i>Reference to GIS mapping; Site observations and professional judgement</i>	There are no designations for wildlife on or near the site. The site is currently arable farmland with little in the way of boundary vegetation. Biodiversity value likely to be low.	LOW
	<b>Historic landscape</b> Landscape as setting to designated heritage features; impacts on Conservation Area; SAMs; etc	<i>Reference to Historic England mapping; site observations.</i>	The landscape does not form setting to any Listed Buildings. Clopton Hall (grade II*) is located to the east but it appears there is no inter-visibility between the site and the Hall. In the 1950s the wider field, was part of extensive orchards that covered much of the land across Clopton Green (a historic Wickhambrook settlement cluster).	LOW
VISUAL FACTORS	<b>Visual prominence</b> Prominence of site in general views around the village; impacts to skyline; impacts on any important views;	<i>Site observations and professional judgement relating to visual sensitivity</i>	Although it appears to be tucked away behind Clopton Park and not prominent from the A134, it is on elevated land - views out extend to several miles to the south - this means the site could potentially be seen from a wide area, extending the group of houses already seen. Views from Bury Road when emerging from Wickham Street are also likely - the houses would sit prominently in the skyline. Development of the site would not harm any scenic or important view.	HIGH
	<b>Visual amenity</b> Nature and sensitivity of the receptors likely to experience visual change.	<i>Site observations and professional judgement</i>	The site is not directly overlooked by any ROW and the adjacent house might experience visual change from some side windows. Views also likely from the rear of other houses in Clopton Park. Receptors in the wider landscape would need to be identified and assessed.	MOD

**Summary Statement**

This isolated site, some distance from the main village, is a very unsuitable and unsustainable location for settlement expansion.

It is elevated and very visually prominent from the main road, sitting along the skyline. Visual effects of developing the site would be hard to mitigate and unsympathetic hard edges with open countryside would result with detriment to the rural character.

It forms part of the rural gap between the Clopton Green cluster and the Conservation Area at Wickham Street and should be conserved as such to maintain the separate identities of the hamlets.

# Appendix

# Appendix 1 - Strategic site plans for Site 4.12a, WS195, 191 and 192

## ILLUSTRATIVE LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

### LANDSCAPE VISION

- The landscape strategy plan sets out the level of strategic planting envisaged for the site in order to provide a high quality landscape setting and strong green infrastructure framework to the proposed buildings. The landscape objectives of the Proposed Development include:
  - To create a comprehensive new landscape scheme which integrates with the existing development in Wickhambrook and the surrounding countryside to the south and west.
  - To develop and enhance the site boundaries as nature conservation habitats for a range of locally occurring species.
  - To enhance the character of the surrounding landscape.
  - To establish green corridors / landscape dominated streets that permeate the built form (north-south and west-east), connecting the site and established residential areas via a series of linked open spaces to the wider countryside in order to ensure permeability for people and wildlife.

### DESIGN FEATURES

#### 11 ENTRANCE GATEWAYS

Existing vegetation will be retained wherever possible in order to create a 'green' entrance into proposed development areas. Native feature trees will be incorporated along main spine roads in order to soften the built form in views from the wider landscape and create an attractive entrance to the development and the village of Wickhambrook.

#### 12 TYES/GREENS

Development parcel locations have been informed by the historic settlement pattern of Wickhambrook with settlement generally nucleated around central greens/tyes. The strategy plan incorporates retained agricultural land/Public Open Space to prevent the coalescence of existing ties.

#### 13 RELATIONSHIP TO CLAYDON YIELD-O-METER

New landscape buffer planting will be incorporated along the northern and western boundary of Parcel WS195 in order to provide physical screening from the existing and consented commercial buildings at Claydon Yield-o-Meter.

#### 14 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Save for site access, existing boundary hedgerows and trees will be retained (with buffers to development), reinforced and brought into regular, long-term management. This will protect visual amenity and landscape character as well as continuing to offer commuting and foraging opportunities for wildlife.

Several incidental open spaces are proposed within the development. Groups of native tree planting within the open spaces will contribute to the local amenity and biodiversity, as well as providing a green framework for the buildings in local views.

Multifunctionality is central to the green infrastructure concept and approach. It refers to the potential for green infrastructure to have a range of functions, to deliver a broad range of ecosystem services. The Public Open Space as part of the Green Infrastructure as indicated on the proposal will be 'multifunctional', enabling the land to perform a range of functions, such as the provision for healthy recreation whilst performing functions to alleviate flood risk through the use of sustainable drainage systems. These functions are not limited to drainage/SUDS and recreation, but also include ecological enhancement and visual amenity improvement and mental and physical health benefits for the users.

Environmental benefits of green space include flood water alleviation, green travel routes, water purification, cooling temperatures, pollution management and enhancing biodiversity and ecological and climatic resilience. Green infrastructure contributes to the reduction of water pollution, through exploiting the natural processes of sedimentation, filtration and biodegradation to remove pollutants.



#### 15 BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT

All strategic planting will incorporate species that are native and locally appropriate to the area; plant stock will be of local provenance where possible.

Marginal plug planting and native buffers will create habitat and foraging opportunities for local fauna.

#### 16 RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Parcel WS192 incorporates Public Open Space along the eastern boundary in order to create a positive interface between the Site and existing residential dwellings along Boyden Close.



### PRECEDENT IMAGES



INDICATIVE SECTION - WS192 AS SEEN FROM BUNTERS ROAD



INDICATIVE SECTION THROUGH PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (INCORPORATING SUDS ATTENUATION)



### TYPICAL NATIVE TREE PLANTING PALETTE



### TYPICAL NATIVE SHRUB PLANTING PALETTE



# **WICKHAMBROOK**

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Site Masterplanning studies

REPORT | July 2023



## Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
Giuseppe Verdone	Jack Wilton-Cooley	Ben Castell
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## Revision History

Issue no.	Issue date	Details	Issued by	Position
3				
2	30/03/2023	Review, research, site visit	Giuseppe Verdone	Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan Group
1	17/12/2022	Review, research, site visit	Giuseppe Verdone	Associate Urban Designer

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**Introduction**

**01**





# 01. INTRODUCTION

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**Through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Wickhambrook Parish Council. The support is intended to provide design guidance and masterplanning for a possible development site.**

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## 01.1 Purpose of this document

This report presents design studies for a mixed use site being allocated for development in the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan (Regulation 18) Preferred Options (May 2022).

The report has been prepared to support emerging Neighbourhood Plan policies that will guide the assessment of future development proposals on the site.

The objective of this report is to advise on the key placemaking principles, illustrating options for the site allocated.

The design studies are high level and illustrative, prepared to demonstrate how the design principles that the Parish Council wishes to promote could be applied on the sites. We have not undertaken technical studies on topics such as ground conditions, traffic and drainage (although AECOM specialists have inputted into design development). It is expected that full co-design exercises are undertaken the applicant. This report is just a step in that direction, enabling stakeholders to progress from an informed position.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; 2021, paragraph 127) states that "Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers."

The stages of production for this document are outlined here:

**1**  
— **Site visit and analysis.**

**2**  
— **Develop design options**

**3**  
— **Feedback period.**

**4**  
— **Address feedback.**

**5**  
— **Final review.**

**6**  
— **Submission of a final report.**

## 01.2 Wickhambrook

Wickhambrook is located in West Suffolk in eastern England. The parish is a historically significant survival of a Suffolk 'gathered hamlet and Green settlement' which has Anglo-Saxon heritage. Wickhambrook is unique to England as an ancient settlement, with nine 'Greens' or commons and small but separate hamlets, with clusters of old buildings, some noted in the Domesday Book.

The 'Greens' are Ashfield, Attleton, Baxter's, Coltsfoot, Farley, Genesis, Meeting, Moor and Nunnery, with associated hamlets Boyden End, Malting End and Park Gate and are spread over 6.5 square miles.

The village was first mentioned in the Domesday Book as Wicham, later known as Wickham in Anglo-Saxon times. The historic heart of the village is located on Church Lane, which is a designated conservation area and contains architectural and historical value, including the ancient Parish Church of All Saints and several listed buildings.

Within the parish there are 56 listed properties, including seven halls (Aldersfield, Badmondfield, Butlers, Clopton, Giffords and Old High), spread evenly across the village, with small groupings in and around the centre of the 'Greens'. Additionally there are six scheduled monuments in and around the Neighbourhood Area.

The majority of the land within the Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Area is classified by the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment as 'undulating ancient farmland', with a smaller area of 'rolling valley farmland'.

Wickhambrook is very rural in character, the nearest town is Newmarket, located around 10 miles north of the village. The landscape features long views across rolling farmland and open fields.

The main settlement area of Wickhambrook lies between the B1063, Cemetery Road and Nunnery Green. The village amenities such as the doctor's surgery, school and village shop are located here.

The village has an agricultural heritage and there are several examples of large 15th century farmhouses remaining in Wickhambrook which demonstrate the success of its historic agricultural industry.

Today Wickhambrook is primarily residential in use. More recent developments to the parish have occurred near to, or within, the main settlement area where the amenities are concentrated.



**Figure 01:** Detached house in one of Wickhambrook's hamlets in the village's rural setting.



Figure 02: Map showing Wickhambrook within its wider context

## 01.3 The site

Land west of Bunters Road 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.

The site is located to the west of Wickhambrook and is part of a large arable field of about 2.85 hectares. To the west lies Claydon's agricultural business site and to the east is Bunters Road, screened by mature hedgerows.

The site was included in the emerging Local Plan preferred options consultation (see 01.4 below), with the following citation: "One new site is proposed as a preferred sites 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."



Figure 03: View north of the site from Bunters Road.



Figure 04: View across the site from east to west on Bunters Road.



Figure 05: View south of the site from Bunters Road.



Bunters Rd B1063

Cemetery Rd

Thorns Cor


1


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
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KEY



Site boundary 

Buildings 

Main roads 

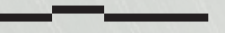
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Figure 06: Land west of Bunters Road map.

## 01.4 Policy context

As the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 126) notes, “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.

National and local policy documents can provide valuable guidance on bringing about good design and the benefits accompanying it. Some are there to ensure adequate planning regulations are in place to ensure development is both fit for purpose and able to build sustainable, thriving communities. Other documents are more technical and offer specific design guidance which can inform design codes and masterplanning activities.

Developers should refer to these key documents when planning future development in Wickhambrook. The following documents at a national level have informed the Wickhambrook Design Guidance and Codes report and the :

### 2021 National Model Design Code DLUHC

This report provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide. This guide should be used as reference for new development.

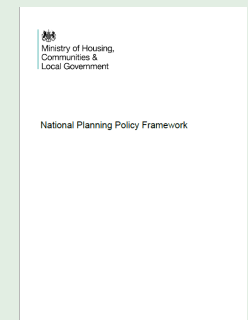
### 2020 - Building for a Healthy Life Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the new (2020) name for Building for Life, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The new name reflects the crucial role that the built environment has in promoting wellbeing.

The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed (and completed) developments, but can also provide useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

### 2021 - National Planning Policy Framework DLUHC

Development needs to consider national level planning policy guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). In particular, NPPF Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places stresses the creation of high-quality buildings and places.



## 2019 - National Design Guide

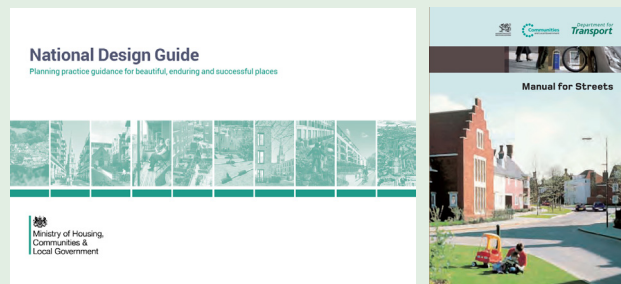
DLUHC

The National Design Guide (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2019) illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

## 2007 - Manual for Streets

Department for Transport

Development is expected to respond positively to the Manual for Streets, the Government's guidance on how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets. It promotes streets and wider development that avoid car dominated layouts and promote active travel.



## 01.4.1 Local planning policy context

Local planning policy can provide design guidance that is tailored to the context of the development and supported by analysis that is taken directly from the area. Therefore, it is vital local policy is considered when developing in Wickhambrook.

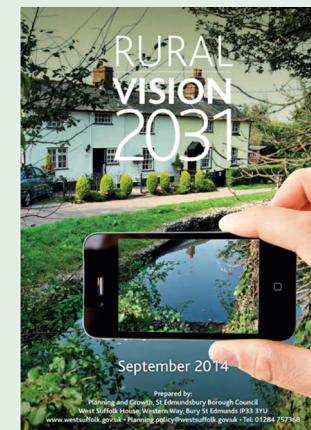
## 2022 - West Suffolk Local Plan

The West Suffolk Local Plan, when complete, will set out the long term planning and land use policies for West Suffolk. The Preferred Options consultation, including the site, took place in June and July 2022 but the Plan is not expected to be adopted until 2025.

## 2014 - Rural Vision 2031

Part of St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Local Plan

The Rural Vision 2031 provides a framework for managing the pressures and opportunities for growth in rural St Edmundsbury up to 2031. Within the vision Wickhambrook is identified as a 'local service centre' and there are policies and guidance relating to the village.



Masterplanning  
options

02





## 02. MASTERPLANNING OPTIONS

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**This section outlines the existing context of Land west of Bunters Road and its physical features. This analysis has informed the options study for the site development.**

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### 02.1 Site analysis

#### *Landscape & topography*

The site is a large greenfield used for agriculture. It is framed by mature hedgerows on three sides: along Bunters Road and to the north and south boundaries. The topography is largely flat, as is the surrounding rural landscape which is mostly comprised of managed agricultural fields, predominantly arable in use.

#### *Movement & access*

The site is framed on its north side by a modern access road off Bunters Road, leading to an agricultural machinery business adjacent to Gaines Hall, a grade II listed buildings.

The site's eastern boundary is formed by the B1063, Bunters Road, while its western

side will be framed by the woodland and hedgerows buffer of the consented Assembly Building.

Currently, the site has three access points all from Bunters road respectively, to the north, centre, and south of the site's eastern boundary.

#### *Land use & facilities*

The surrounding built form is predominantly residential in use to the eastern and southern boundary, while arable farm land is prevalent to the site's northern boundary.

A farm/agriculture machine supplier facility is located to the west. The facility is in the process of consolidating their operations, with a new assembly building, an extension to an existing building and a change of use at Gaines Hall. The assembly building is proposed to be extended to provide office space; a collection of disused buildings in the centre of the yard will make way for a new weld shop building and the existing weld shop will change use to provide a dedicated research and development facility.

#### *Site constraints*

As shown on the site analysis plan overleaf, the site presents no obvious significant

constraints to the development. The land is relatively flat with the topography ready to accommodate development.

There are a number of hedgerows across the site and trees which provide an instant landscape structure within which the development should sit. These important landscape features should be retained and enhanced, ideally by being integrated into the open space component of the development.

The existing three access points are unlikely to serve the development due to the proximity of the junction (southern access), the adjacency to the existing dwellings (central access) and the dedicated agricultural machinery business served by the northern access.

There are some existing dwellings located on Bunters road which will require buffering and screening, while there is only one listed building in close proximity located on the other side of Bunters road.

The southern part of the site has been identified for SuDs location, thus development would be restricted in that location.



Figure 07: Map showing the site constraints

## 02.2 Site opportunities

Drawing on the site analysis, an opportunities plan was prepared to set out the key spatial components of the development approach. These are:

- A principal access rural route from Bunters Road, providing access and structure to the development parcels. It would change its character, depending on which part of the site it is located, with the southern section being more of a shared priority route alongside the amenity space, and the northern section, being more of a formal road in terms of its design and character.
- The public open space at the south of the site would be a multi-functional space, accommodating SUDs features, children's play, general amenity space and it could also be suitable for allotments.
- The northern open space is in the form of a village green. This space gives focus and creates a particular character for development in this part of the site.
- The existing hedgerows/structure planting on the site boundaries will be

retained and enhanced to help knit the development together with the existing built and natural environments. The hedgerows on Bunters road will be "pinched" to allow access to the site.

- A new pedestrian route is proposed and integrated into the site, allowing for connections back in to Wickhambrook and the wider countryside.
- The spatial arrangement of development, as proposed, has the potential to deliver the target number of homes, in a mix and range (density, house types, tenure mix) as well as the mixed use facilities required in a way that would provide a more balanced and efficient use of land.
- There is also a relatively even apportionment of development opportunity across the site, with open space component that allows for a more easily achievable phased delivery of development.



**Figure 08:** This road through Meeting/ Moor Green is an example of the typical rural roads which serve the hamlets and Greens in Wickhambrook: narrow, without pavement and lined with greenery.



**Figure 09:** Image showing houses and green space in Attleton Green.



Figure 10: Map showing the site opportunities

## 02.3 Illustrative masterplan options

The actual form of the development, as it will be delivered at land west of Bunters Road, will be arrived at following a more detailed process of design exploration, based on a more comprehensive assessment of the site's constraints and opportunities. However, it is helpful to show how development might be arranged in accordance with the general development principles set out in the above opportunities plan.

The following illustrative masterplan options show how development could be arranged in such a way as to deliver the key open space components that give structure and character to the proposals.

They also clearly show a variety of development opportunities, with smaller and larger units arranged as semi-detached pairs and as single dwellings set within larger plots. There is an implied mix of tenure across the site, in accordance with planning policy.

It is worth noting that the development parcels allow for relatively deep back gardens throughout the site. This is a deliberate attempt to create a more flexible plan, where garden space is part of the green infrastructure and helps to contribute to the sense of place of the wider development.

The design studies are high level and illustrative, prepared to demonstrate how the design principles that the Parish

Council wishes to promote could be applied on the sites. We have not undertaken technical studies on topics such as ground conditions, traffic and drainage (although AECOM specialists in these last two areas have inputted into design development). It is expected that full co-design exercises are undertaken by applicants on the sites. This report is just a step in that direction, enabling stakeholders to progress from an informed position.



Figure 11: Illustrative Masterplan Option 1



Figure 12: Illustrative Masterplan Option 2

## 02.4 Preferred Option

Following a village consultation in spring 2023, option 2 was selected as preferred option. It aims to provide a green open space including play area, amenity and/ or allotments, to the bottom of the site. A pedestrian corridor is located alongside the Bunters Road southern boundary to link with proposed coffee/ small restaurant and local shops (Class E uses) to the northern side. Class E uses have load/delivery/parking located in the internal courtyard.

The 40 dwellings are delivered within four small parcels with the main access envisaged to be from the middle of the eastern boundary.

The existing units on Bunters Road are screened by mature vegetation and are facing the Class E uses internal courtyard and public realm.



## Land use budget

Overall the site area is about 2.5 hectares of which 1.7 hectares is proposed for mixed use and the remaining 0.8 hectares is preserved as open space.

The net density is of c.24 dwellings per hectare (dph). The gross (whole site) density for this option is c.16 dph.

Land Use	Area (Sqm)	Area (ha)	Percentage	Density (Net)	Total units
Open space (including village green)	8,127	0.80	32%		
Development (Including building gardens, roads and parking)	17,350	1.70	68%	24 dph	<b>40</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,477.45</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>100%</b>		

## Housing mix numbers

The housing mix is based on the assumptions that this site is required for small units rather than large units. Thus it provides:

Dwelling size mix	Percentage	Assumed housing number
2 bedroom	25%	10
3 bedroom	37.5%	15
4 bedroom	25%	10
5 bedroom	12.5%	5

In terms of Class E (commercial, business and service) uses the option allows for c. 900sqm.

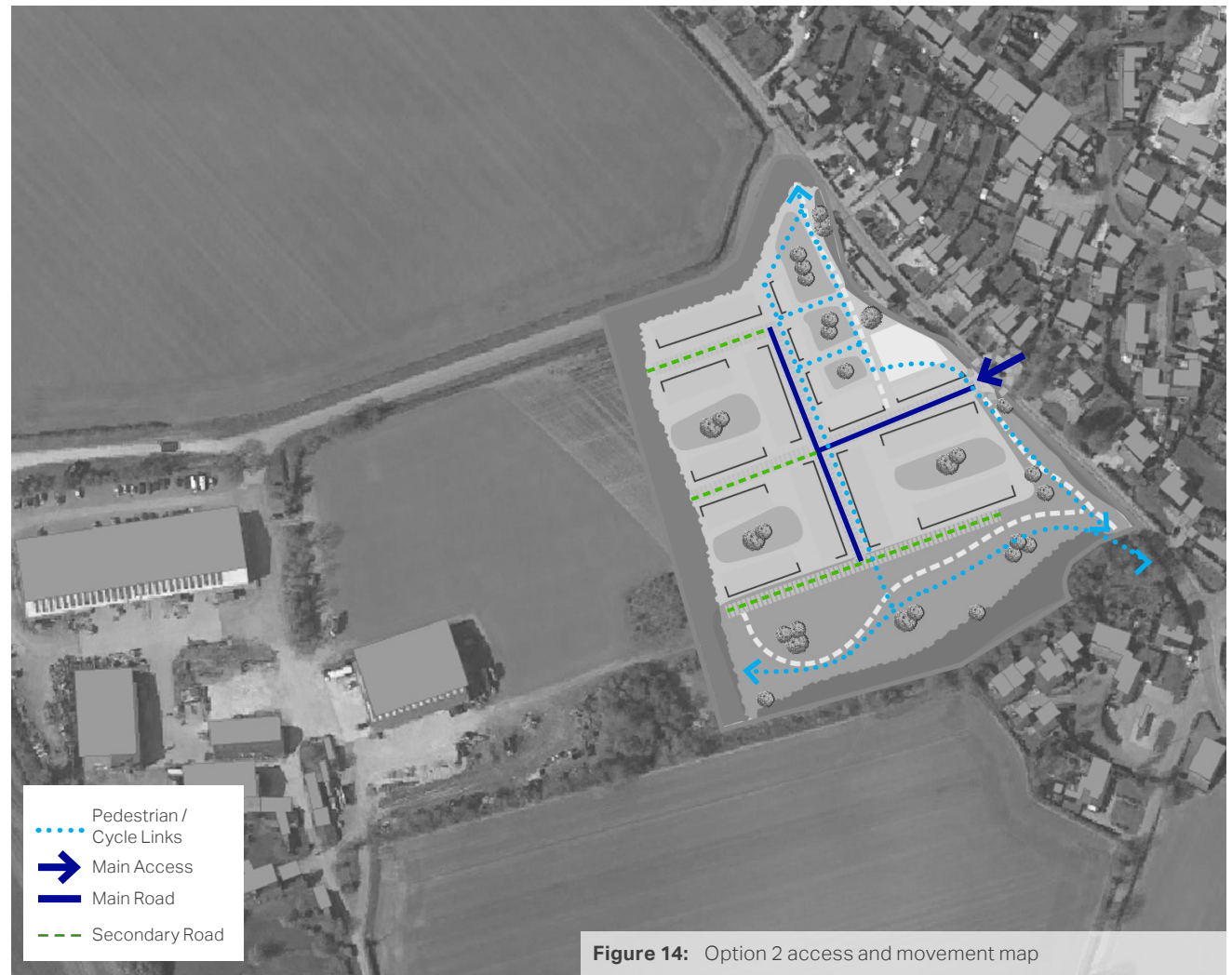
## Access and movement

The key to structuring the site, and providing access to development parcels, is the access and movement framework.

The plan, opposite, sets out how this key component of the site might be arranged relative to the Illustrative Masterplan.

The main access is provided from Bunters Road. Four separate neighbourhood blocks are served by the road network. The retail parking space is located in the internal courtyard. However, the plan is for illustrative purpose and any development should be subject to adequate and detailed highways studies.

The proposed network of pedestrian/cycling routes integrate seamlessly with the surrounding context linking the existing shops south of the site with the proposed class E uses, creating a highly accessible and permeable new neighbourhood.





## Building heights

Given the prevailing land form in the surrounding area and the potential for existing and new landscape structures to provide the setting for built development, it is proposed that the residential parcels indicated on the plan opposite, would be potentially capable of accommodating buildings of up to two storeys.

However, in order to preserve long distance views across the site, careful consideration should be given at the detailed design stage to the dwellings and class E units alongside Bunters Road. It is envisaged that mitigation, including the use of 1 storey buildings or gaps between buildings, might be appropriate.

## Village structure

Development is arranged in a series of parcels. The southern parcels facing onto the open space, the norther characterised by the Class E uses arranged around a public courtyard. The aim is to provide frontages which will have to be carefully designed to deliver a coherent and consistent character and form. In addition, there are a number of

points within the development, at junctions or the termination of short and middle distance views, where landmark buildings with a

specific architectural treatment might be appropriate.



## Green infrastructure

The range of open spaces provides focus and a sense of place for the built development, integrates the new development into the wider built and natural environments, and provides the new residents with amenity space, play space and a chance to interact with the environment close to their homes.

At every opportunity, this network of open space must seek to integrate existing features. These existing features comprise, for the most part, the hedgerows around the edge of the site, the mature woodland, and existing trees.

In addition to this network of open spaces, the courtyard of the class E uses, provides open space and public realm for outdoor activities including cafes and small pop up events.

Private gardens, both front and rear, are an important part of the wider green and blue infrastructure. The treatment of front gardens in particular can help contribute to the sense of place and it is proposed that low hedges, shrubs, and perennial planting should be used.



Figure 16: Option 2 green infrastructure map



**Delivery**

**03**

---



The masterplanning studies will help secure context-driven, high-quality development within Wickhambrook. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table.

<b>Actors</b>	<b>How They Will Use the Document</b>
<b>Applicants, developers and landowners</b>	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty.
<b>Local Planning Authority</b>	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications.  The studies should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
<b>Parish Council</b>	As a guide when commenting on planning application and in pre-application discussions. Also, to inform the Neighbourhood Plan.
<b>Statutory consultees</b>	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

## About AECOM

AECOM is the world's trusted infrastructure consulting firm, delivering professional services throughout the project lifecycle — from planning, design and engineering to program and construction management. On projects spanning transportation, buildings, water, new energy and the environment, our public- and private-sector clients trust us to solve their most complex challenges. Our teams are driven by a common purpose to deliver a better world through our unrivaled technical expertise and innovation, a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to environmental, social and governance priorities. AECOM is a *Fortune 500* firm and its Professional Services business had revenue of \$13.2 billion in fiscal year 2020. See how we are delivering sustainable legacies for generations to come at [aecom.com](https://www.aecom.com) and [@AECOM](https://www.instagram.com/AECOM).

# Community Led Housing – Suffolk

## Presentation and Q & A

Sue Downs -Rural and Community Housing Enabler – Community Action Suffolk  
[sue.downs@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:sue.downs@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

[www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)



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## What is Community Led Housing?

- Community Led Housing is housing that is built or brought back into use by the community
- The community can be people connected by location or by related interests or values
- Properties can be new build or can be buildings that have been renovated, restored, re-proposed for housing the community
- The Projects are managed by the community with democratic and open governance
- Community-led housing can cover the whole range of residential tenures , social rent – affordable rent – discounted sale – shared ownership – first homes – mutual owned cooperative – self funded co-housing – community self-build

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# Why Community Led Housing?



- **Homes designed with community involvement throughout the process.**

Community-led developments can help create community cohesion which has a lasting impact on the local community. The community have genuine influence over local development (design, location, scheme delivery) Community-led housing can support efforts to maintain balanced sustainable communities offering affordable housing options to the young, the elderly and families

- **Homes that are genuinely affordable to local people**

Community-led developments can help to provide housing that is genuinely affordable to the local community, from social rent properties, cooperative ownership and discount market sales, rents can be set according to income levels, housing benefits levels to allow local people to remain in the local parish.

- **Homes that remain affordable for those with a local connection in perpetuity**

Legal protections enable community led homes to remain affordable and available to those with a local connection in perpetuity. Homes that meet the local need and create community owned and controlled assets.

- **Homes that are sustainable, high quality, and secure**

Community led homes are often exemplar homes built to the highest environmental standards designed with the both the residents and the surrounding community in mind. Homes built by the community will often give a higher priority to low running costs, low maintenance and reducing the environmental impact of housing development.

Strengthening communities - Building communities - Maintaining Communities

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**The Community Led Housing Sector is made up of a variety of approaches, chosen to suit the needs of a particular community.**

These approaches include;

- Community Land Trusts
- Cohousing
- Co-operatives
- Almshouses
- Self-build & Custom/Self finish/Self help housing

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# Community Land Trusts

- Community land trusts (CLTs) are democratic, non-profit organisations that own and develop land for the benefit of the community.
- They are community organisations run by ordinary people who want to make a difference to their local community, putting control of assets into the hands of local people.
- Community Land Trusts can be used to provide community facilities which could include workspaces, energy generation , community food and farming as well as housing .
- They can provide housing in a wide range of tenures and house types to suit the community and context.
- Community Land Trusts are not for profit organisations any profits are returned to the organisation to be used for the community benefit.

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# Community Land Trusts



## Lavenham CLT (Partnership with registered provider)

Lavenham Community Land Trust (LCLT) was formed in 2014 as a Community Benefit Society for the benefit of residents in the mediaeval village of Lavenham, Suffolk.

The Peek Close site, which was formerly a County Council gritting depot, was acquired from Suffolk County Council by the Lavenham Community Land Trust, for the development of local needs housing. Planning permission was granted in January 2017, to build 18 dwellings. The land was purchased from the district council for £1.00. The CLT partnered with Hastoe housing to bring the development forward. The properties are owned by the CLT and are managed by Hastoe Housing.

The homes are let below the affordable rent levels. The development provided a mix of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom properties. Most are for rent, with some shared ownership.

<http://lavenhamclt.onesuffolk.net/>

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# Community Land Trusts

## Broadhempston CLT

In 2014 Broadhempston CLT obtained planning permission from Teignbridge Council in Devon to develop 6 affordable, self-build, eco-houses on a Rural Exception Site.

**Funding** - Broadhempston CLT obtained pre-development funding from CAF Venturesome's CLT fund. This provided funds to submit a detailed planning application and employ the relevant professionals. After planning permission had been granted. A loan from Resonance (a social impact investment company) enabled the construction of 6 affordable self-built eco-homes.

The CLT own the freehold of the land and 25% of the value of the houses in perpetuity, to ensure the houses remain affordable for local people. The residents will own 25% of the equity in their house in exchange for the labour. They have the option to buy another 50% on a 'rent to buy' arrangement, buying further equity in the property up to 75%.



**Sustainability** - The spatial arrangement is orientated around natural, passive heating and ventilation techniques. A glazed sun-room at the front absorbs the sun's heat, which is then passed into the main spaces of the house via ventilation windows on both the ground and first floor. The main house structure is a timber frame. The structural timber frame is lined with straw bales, with lime plaster applied. <https://broadhempstonclt.com/>

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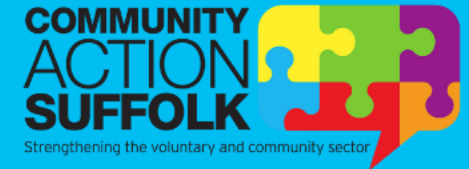
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# Co-housing



Co-housing communities are created and managed by the residents. Each household has a self-contained home as well as shared community space and facilities. Cohousing can balance privacy along side highly sociable neighbourhood life. Co-housing originated in Denmark in the 1960s the movement has grown across Scandinavia, Germany and the UK.



Co-housing can include a mixture of self funded privately owned homes, affordable/ discount purchase and affordable/socially rented properties Co-housing is a way of tackling the loneliness and provides community support and interaction.

These intentional communities can be made up of families and or a mixture of people from all ages, or they may cater to specific groups with a common interest.

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# Co-housing

## Marmalade Lane - Cambridge

Marmalade Lane is a multi-generational community – its residents come from all ages and walks of life and include families with young children, retired couples and young professionals.

Homes are modern versions of the townhouses and low-rise apartments traditional to Cambridge with generous porches, balconies and private gardens.

The development includes 42 private homes and communal facilities such as a common house containing, meeting rooms, laundry facilities, a large kitchen, a workshop, guest bedrooms for residents to book, dining and lounge spaces.



The land was owned by Cambridge City Council and had previously had permission for 37 homes. Cambridge City Council decided to use the land for self build housing. Co-housing was chosen as the preferred type of group self-build. CCC appointed a project manager and advertising was used to attract more members to the cohousing group. Seed funding was provided by the council and the Homes and Communities Agency. Planning permission was achieved in 2016. The design was developed by TOWN, Mole Architects and the members of the co-housing group.

<https://www.marmaladelane.co.uk/>



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# Co-housing

## OWCH Older Women's Co- Housing New Ground – Barnet, North London

A development of 25 self contained flats with shared communal facilities and gardens, managed on cohousing principles. It consists of 11 one-bed, 11 two-bed and 3 three-bed room flats plus a common room, guest room, laundry and attractive gardens. 17 flats are owned by their occupants on 250- year leases; 8 are for social renters on assured tenancies and are managed by owch and Housing for Women.



## Cannock Mill - Colchester

23 new build homes built to passive house standards and 3 flats converted from a listed building.

Financed by membership and loans until the properties were occupied bought by the members on 999 year leases.



<https://newgroundcohousing.uk/>

[www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

<https://cannockmillcohousing.co.uk/>



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# Cooperative Housing

Cooperative housing organisations may own or may manage the homes  
Cooperative housing has a membership with residents usually becoming members

Residents are in control of the housing and manage the homes. They have security of tenure and pay fair costs. Rents can be below affordable and social rent levels. Rents are used to cover the costs of maintaining and managing the cooperative housing



Fairfield Housing Cooperative, Perth , Scotland



Fireside Housing Cooperative Sheffield

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# Cooperative Housing

## Coin Street, Southbank, London

A derelict 13 Acre site was bought from the GLC in 1984  
So far 220 Fully mutual Cooperative Homes let at social rents have been developed along with community facilities including gardens, a neighbourhood centre, shops and business premises.  
Different developments by Coin Street Cooperative have different allocations policies some have a 100% nominations agreement with the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. Some are allocated by the Coin Street Cooperative. <https://coinstreet.org/community/housing>



**Bunker Coop Brighton** – Set up in 2014 as a community self build housing cooperative.  
So far 2 x 3 bed eco homes built using a modular system on an ex-garage site leased from Brighton and Hove City Council  
The Cooperative own the homes, the rent will be £1000 a month.  
Residents will be members of the coop .  
Funded through Loan Stock from individuals and supporters and long-term loans.  
<https://www.bunkerhousingcoop.org/>

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# Almshouses

An almshouse is a unit of residential accommodation (usually a house or flat) which belongs to a charity, is provided exclusively to meet the charity's purposes (for example, the relief of financial need or infirmity) and is occupied or is available for occupation under a license by a qualified beneficiary.

Almshouses provide accommodation according to criteria set by location, vocation, or other criteria.

Licenses also usually include expectations that residents must show particular consideration for the needs of other residents;

Alms houses are not subject to right to buy

Residents pay a weekly maintenance contribution which is can be below social rent levels

<https://www.almshouses.org/>



Streatham 2016



Bourneville 1900



Bungay 1897

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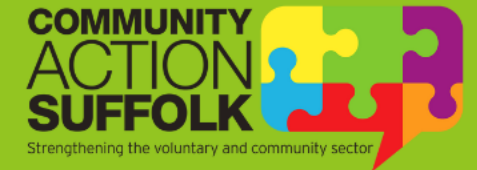
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# Almshouses



## Mills Crescent, Framlingham The Mills Charity

In 2014 the Trustees of the Mills Charity decided to respond to the need for more affordable homes, particularly for young families, by building a new terrace of 10 three-bedroom houses and four one-bedroom flats on land owned by the charity.

Mills Crescent was completed in June 2018. These dwellings are not restricted to older residents and are provided at a weekly maintenance contribution below the market rent.

In 2021 a further development of 6 family houses was completed.

<https://www.millscharity.co.uk/>



## Brockham, Surrey – The Poland Trust

Six alms houses were built in 1950's for villagers in hardship need or distress. A need was identified for affordable housing for younger people. A site was identified for 12 alms-houses and five self-build plots.

The site donated by a local family was designated a Rural Exception Site. A grant was received from Mole Valley District Council, proceeds from the sale of the self-build plots, a bank loan and the trusts own resources financed the project. The self-build plots have been sold to local residents at 75% of market value. 12 Alms-house properties are rented at around 60% below market rents

The timber framed buildings are designed and manufacture by Scandiahus with energy efficiency . <https://www.brockham.org/the-poland-trust>

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## Custom and self-build housing

Custom and self-build housing is housing built by groups or individuals for their own use.

- Self-build is where a person directly organises the design and construction process of their own home, which can include building the home themselves or employing someone to build the home for them

- A custom-build home is where they are working with a developer, who takes on more responsibility e.g., finding land to build on, constructing the home and arranging finance.

Under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, District Councils are required to keep a self-build and custom housebuilding register.



Llanover Road London 1993

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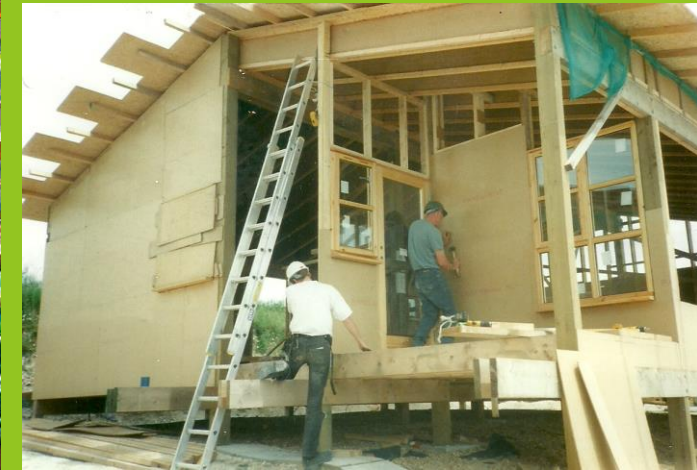
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# Self-build / Self-finish

Community self build – Hedgehog  
Brighton Hedgehog Co-op at Hogs Edge, Bevendean,

The Hedgehog self-build project was funded by Brighton Borough Council and the South London Family Housing Association at a build cost of £60,000 each. 10 homes were built. But instead of buying the properties, an agreement that every household would contribute 30 hours of labour per week to the project properties which are let at 30% below social rent levels in exchange for the labour. A premium will be paid if families move out. The homes are owned by South London Family Housing Association but are set up as a cooperative and therefore protected from the right to buy. Based on architect Walter Segal's model of homes that could be constructed by novices, the Brighton Hedgehog housing scheme took two years to build.



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# Self-build Self-finish

## Ashley Vale Self Build Community

In 2000, residents in the Ashley Vale Area of Bristol created a non-profit company to purchase and redevelop a former scaffolding yard in the heart of their community.

The group purchased the land in 2001 and reallocated lots for resale as self build and self finish opportunities. To ensure a homogeneous approach to environmental sustainability, each self builder/finisher had to sign a legal contract committing to AVAG's principles of ecological design.

The final phase was completed in 2009, 'The Yard' is a community housing over 100 people with 41 self built and self finished homes, a busy community space and 3 occupied work units.



Site purchase £605,000

Average plot cost £35,000

Build cost for 3 / 4 bed house £35 -£100,000

<https://www.wildgoosespace.org.uk/avag/>

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## Self-help housing

Self-help housing involves groups of local people bringing back into use empty properties that are in limbo, awaiting decisions about their future use or redevelopment. It differs from self-build housing which involves constructing permanent homes from scratch' ([www.self-help-housing.org](http://www.self-help-housing.org)). Self-help housing is often based on a time-limited license or lease, but sometimes on a permanent basis, and there are possibilities for asset transfer. Models of self-help housing range from informal community housing projects, to social enterprises that also involve construction skills and other training for homeless people, young people, refugees and other disadvantaged groups.



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# Self Help Housing - Canopy and Giroscope

Canopy and Giroscope are two housing charities that train homeless and vulnerable people to renovate abandoned properties and bring them back into use have developed models of Self-Help Housing.

Canopy in Leeds in 1996 developed a model leasing empty derelict council owned housing and Giroscope in Hull 1985 purchasing rundown property in deprived areas. The completed houses provide low-cost homes for local people who are homeless or in housing need.

- Self Help Housing involves organisations acquiring long-term empty properties, renovating them using volunteer labour and letting them out below market housing rents.
- The process of renovating the properties is in many ways just as important as the provision of housing and both organisations focus on wider benefits for individuals and communities, including skills development, capacity building and social integration.



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# Rural Exception Sites

- Rural exception site policy allows development on land that would not normally get planning permission.
- Small sites that are just outside the parish development boundary can be developed for affordable housing to meet local need.
- Housing developments on Rural Exception Sites are usually small developments of 4-15 homes.
- The housing is prioritised for people with a strong local connection.
- The local connection and affordability of the homes are legally protected
- A small amount of market housing can be built on the site to support financial viability of the development if needed.

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# Funding Community Led Housing



## Group Stage

In the initial start up phase community-led housing organisations could be financed by the **Community housing fund** (where district councils have some still available), **LA grant**, **private membership funding**, **community share issue**, and or **charitable donations**.

## Site Stage

When creating development proposals community groups can fund the work involved by the use of loans, grants, or partnership agreements from a range of sources, such as the **Community housing fund**, through a **partnership agreement with an RP**, through a **community share issue**, from the **levelling up home building fund (loan from homes England)**. They can also seek funding from charitable loans such as **CAF venturesome community led housing fund** along with charitable donations and possibly the use of private finance loans. Often funding will be aggregated from several sources.

**Build Stage** The funding for the building phase of a project can be sourced through a number of mechanisms, for example, **partnership with an RP** which would allow access to **Homes England loans**, or **by cross funding affordable homes** with open market homes. **The levelling up home building fund (a loan from homes England)** can be used for infrastructure and site preparation. **Charitable loans** can be sought from charities such as the **CAF venturesome community led housing fund**. Grants can be sought from Homes England to organisations registered with them, to provide shared ownership and affordable housing under the **Shared ownership and affordable homes programme 2021-26**. **Section 106 agreements** can be used to fund affordable housing and infrastructure to benefit the local community.

**Live phase** Funding in this stage will come through **rent receipts**, **ground rents**, **service charges**, or **possibly sales**. Further funds could be raised through a **community share issue** or **private loans** or **charitable giving**.

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# Community Action Suffolk can help you with...

## Communications

Reaching your community  
Social Media  
Engagement opportunities

## Getting Started

Forming a group  
Community Engagement  
Membership  
Vision and objectives  
Identifying housing need

## Development

Site Finding  
Access to development partners- architects  
– developers- housing associations  
Local Authority liaison  
Support with local plan policies

## Governance

Board formation  
Conflict resolution  
Equality and diversity  
Skills audit

## Funding

Funding Opportunities  
Grants  
Loans  
Community Share issues  
Cross subsidy

## Business Planning

Writing a business plan  
Viability and feasibility  
Tax  
Risk Management

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## Process – Getting Started

- 1 Form a steering group
- 2 Decide on goals and values
- 3 Spread the word through the community and recruit members
- 4 Develop business plan

Anyone can get involved in Community-Led Housing. Groups are often run by dedicated volunteers with support from professionals where and when it is required.

Whichever form of community-led housing you are interested in, it is up to the members of the group to choose the route to achieve it and the people it will serve.

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Community Action Suffolk can help you with...



## Housing Needs Survey

- A Housing Needs Survey can be the first step towards making a local housing scheme happen. The survey will engage with the whole community to assess current and future housing needs.
- A questionnaire is distributed to every household in the parish with the aim of identifying local housing need (the survey is available on-line as well)
- Everyone is given the opportunity to state if someone in their household requires accommodation in the next 5 years.
- The survey identifies not only if there is a need but also will indicate the number, size and tenure of the homes required.
- A report is produced which will provide a detailed account of the results plus parish specific recommendations. This report can be used to inform the parish council and community groups of the need. And can be used to provide evidence of need to local authority planning and housing departments.

[www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)



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# Resources



## Eastern Community Homes ECH

Eastern Community Homes offers support and advice for groups interested in community-led housing in the East of England. They can offer: One to one support, Professional Contacts, Connections with local planners, Opportunities to work with partners, Networking with other community groups.

<https://easterncommunityhomes.com/>



## Community-Led Homes

Website offers advice and information on all aspects and all types of community-led homes including many case studies. <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/>



## Co-housing UK

Website provides information and case studies on co-housing within the UK. <https://cohousing.org.uk/>



## Community Land Trust Network

Provides information and support for Community Land Trusts. <https://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/>



## The confederation of Co-operative Housing

Resources and advice on Co-operative housing. <https://www.cch.coop/>



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# Rent

**Affordable rent** – Usually defined as 80% of Open Market (private rent) Rent

**Social rent** – Calculated through a government formula roughly 40-60% of Open Market (private rent).

Formula Rent (Social Rent) is calculated by using 30% of the property's relative value (based back to 1999), 70% of the relative local income levels (based back to 1999) and applying a weighting based on the number of bedrooms so that smaller properties will have lower rents

**Local Housing Allowance** (Housing Benefit) rate. Some providers will set rent at or below the LHA (often less than affordable rent) to ensure that tenants can pay their rent if they have to claim benefits.

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# Community Led Housing – Suffolk

Sue Downs

Community and Rural Housing Enabler

Community Action Suffolk

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