



A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Worlington

2023-2040

REFERENDUM PLAN
MAY 2024



Worlington Parish Council

Neighbourhood planning in a nutshell

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

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

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

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

- 1 “Pre-submission” consultation on draft Plan by Parish Council**
This was carried out over a period of seven weeks in April and May 2023, allowing residents, businesses, landowners and a range of government bodies and service providers to comment on the Draft Plan.
- 2 Submission of draft Plan to West Suffolk Council**
All comments received at the “pre-submission” consultation were considered and reviewed and any necessary amendments to the Plan have been made. The Plan, together with supporting documents has now been submitted to West Suffolk Council.
- 3 “Submission” consultation on draft Plan by West Suffolk Council**
This took place in January and February 2024
- 4 Independent examination of draft Plan**
The draft Plan was examined in Spring 2024 by an independent Neighbourhood Plan Examiner, who required some minor changes to be made in order that the plan meets the ‘Basic Conditions’
- 5 Parish Referendum**
This is the stage that the Plan has now reached
- 6 The Plan is “made” (adopted) by West Suffolk Council**

Prepared by Worlington Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

On behalf of Worlington Parish Council

Supported by



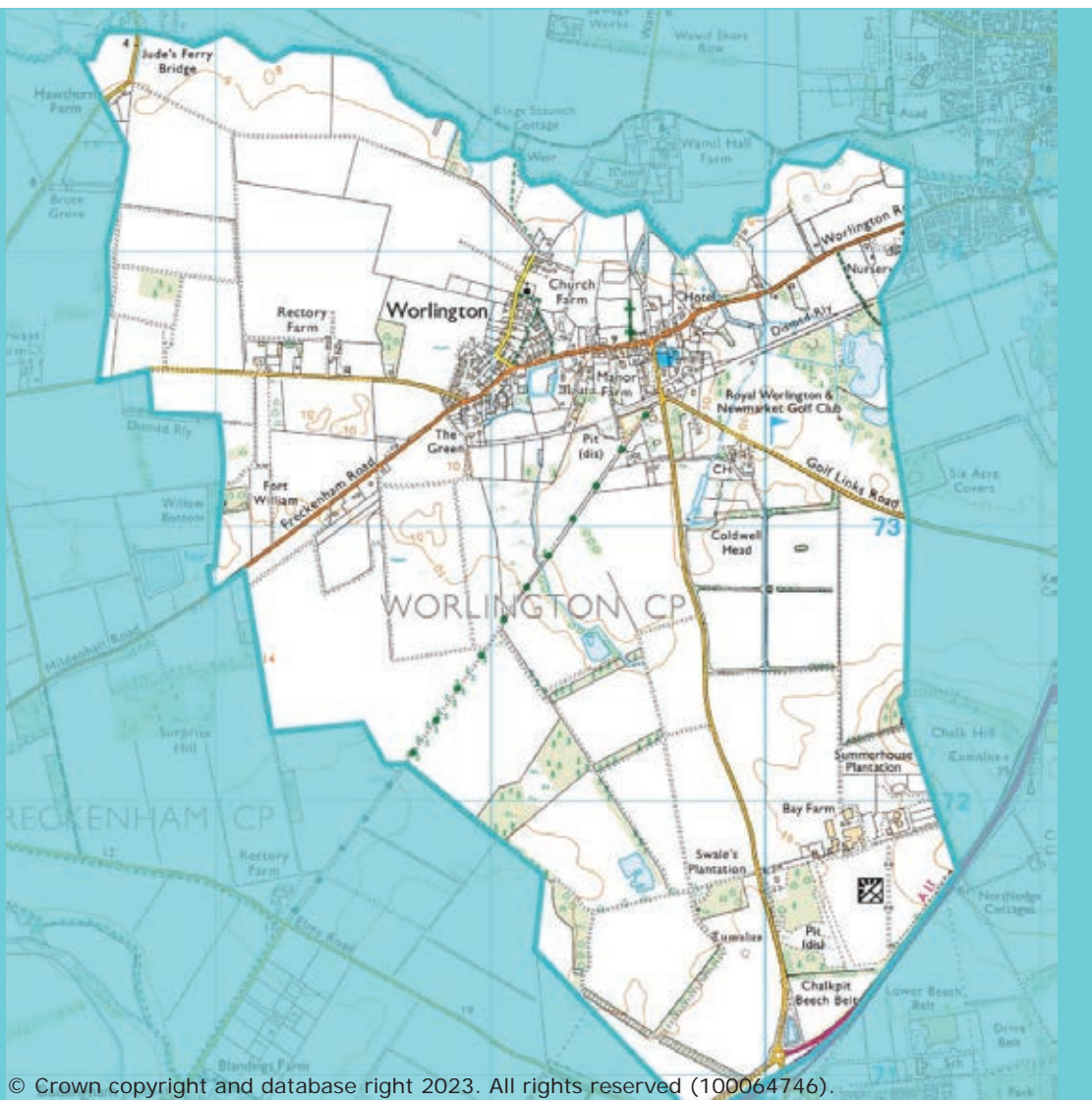
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CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Worlington Past and Present	7
3.	Planning Policy Context	9
4.	Vision and Objectives	13
5.	Planning Strategy	15
	Policy WTN1 - Spatial Strategy	18
6.	Housing	19
	Policy WTN 2 - Housing Design	24
7.	Natural Environment	25
	Policy WTN 3 - Protecting Worlington's Landscape Character	30
	Policy WTN 4 - Biodiversity and Habitats	31
	Community Aspiration 1 - Habitat Protection	31
	Policy WTN 5 - Local Green Spaces	33
8.	Historic Environment	35
	Policy WTN 6 - Mildenhall Road Special Character Area	36
9.	Development Design	38
	Policy WTN 7 - Development Design Considerations	41
	Policy WTN 8 - Sustainable Construction Practices	43
	Policy WTN 9 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage	44
	Policy WTN 10 - Dark skies	44
10.	Services and Facilities	45
	Policy WTN 11 - Community Facilities	46
	Policy WTN 12 - Farm Diversification	47
	Policy WTN 13 - Sport and Recreation Facilities	48
	Community Aspiration 2 - Better use of village facilities	48
	Community Aspiration 3 - Allotments and Community Orchard	49
11.	Transport and Travel	51
	Community Aspiration 4 - Improved Pavements	54
	Community Aspiration 5 - Traffic Calming	54
	Policy WTN 14 - Public Rights of Way	55
	Community Aspiration 6 - Cycle Link to Mildenhall	55
	Policies Map	56
	Village Centre Inset Map	57
	Appendix 1 - Priority Habitats	58
	Appendix 2 - Listed Buildings	59
	Appendix 3 - Development Management Checklist	60
	Glossary	62

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 6 February 2020 Worlington Parish Council agreed to explore the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish. However, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic postponed the commencement of work. The principle of forming a Working Party comprising a mix of parish councillors and volunteers was agreed, but the first meeting was not held until March 2021. In April 2021 the Parish Council agreed to appoint professional planning support to assist with the preparation of the Plan and to apply to West Suffolk Council to formally designate the parish boundary as the Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.2 In July 2021 the Neighbourhood Area was designated by West Suffolk Council, following the parish boundary of the time. However, the parish boundary was changed in April 2023 to remove the area south of the A11 at Red Lodge from the parish. As such, the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area was amended in April 2023 to reflect the new parish boundary, which is as illustrated on Map 1. The Plan period is 2023 to 2040.



Map 1 - Designated Neighbourhood Area

- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan will, when complete, form part of the statutory “development plan” for West Suffolk, meaning that its planning policies and content will be taken into account when decisions on planning applications are made.
- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan Regulations require a neighbourhood plan to:
- be appropriate, having regard to National Planning Policy;
 - contribute to achieving sustainable development;
 - be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; and
 - be compatible with EU obligations (retained post-Brexit) and Human Rights requirements.
- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government’s Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and, in particular, has involved local community engagement to gather evidence for the content of the Plan.
- 1.6 In 2021 a Residents’ Survey was carried out which resulted in 143 responses. A summary report of the results has been published on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council website and they are referred to as appropriate throughout the Plan.
- 1.7 In addition, specialist studies have been commissioned on Landscape and Design which are also available on the Parish Council website.
- 1.8 The Plan covers six main topic areas:



- 1.9 These topics form the basis for the main chapters of the Plan. Each topic chapter contains a reminder of the relevant objectives, links to the relevant planning policy context and a summary of the relevant evidence collected during the preparation of the Plan, culminating in planning policies and, where appropriate, community aspirations.
- 1.10 The planning policies will supplement, rather than repeat, the planning policies in the West Suffolk Local Plan that were in place in April 2023. These policies are distinctly identified in coloured boxes with a prefix of WLN. In addition to planning policies, the Neighbourhood Plan contains “community aspirations” that, although they do not form part of the development plan, identify local initiatives that address issues and concerns raised during community engagement. The community aspirations are identified differently from the planning policies to avoid confusion.
- 1.11 This is the Referendum version of the Neighbourhood Plan. If the Parish Referendum votes in favour of the Plan it will be “made” (adopted) by West Suffolk Council and used by them when determining planning applications in the Parish.



2. Worlington Past and Present

- 2.1 Worlington is an ancient parish, rich in archaeological finds from as early as the Neolithic. The parish was recorded in the Domesday Book with the name of 'Wirilintona', and it was recorded to have a mill and two fisheries at the time, which suggests that the village lay on the edge of the old fen sea. Worlington's valley side location, close to the river Lark that provided a water supply, made settlement possible.
- 2.2 The River Lark used to be navigable up until Bury St Edmunds, thirteen miles to the southeast of Worlington. From Roman times the River Lark was a key transportation route linking the village with towns east as far as Bury St Edmunds, and to the ports in the west. Horse-pulled barges would have been regularly seen drawing agricultural products to the ports downstream. The River Lark would have remained the main mode of transport until the 1800s, followed by the road and then the railway between 1920s and 1960s.
- 2.3 Domesday suggests that medieval Worlington was based around two manors, one probably in the vicinity of Manor Farm, and the other perhaps connected with the Old Hall at the east end of the village. Old maps show the historic village as a scattering of houses and farmsteads with their cottages as illustrated on the 1882 Ordnance Survey Map extract in **Map 2**. In 1871 Worlington is recorded as having a population of 274.



Map 2 - Worlington 1882 Ordnance Survey Map

- 2.4 The village today is formed of a single 'cluster' with an overall broadly linear form, arranged along the B1102. Modern development has formed a 'bow-tie' shape with expansions on the east and west sides, but not in the 'centre' of the village, where the historic one-plot deep pattern remains.
- 2.5 In the relatively recent past the village had a primary school, a post office, two pubs and a railway halt on the Mildenhall to Cambridge branch railway line. Sadly, only one pub (the Walnut Tree) now remains.
- 2.6 The 2021 Census records the population of the parish (pre-2023 boundary change) of 673, a 28 per cent increase over the 2011 population. Most of this population change will have been in the area between the A11 and Turnpike Road at Red Lodge, where 125 homes have recently been built and which is now transferred to Red Lodge parish.



3. Planning Policy Context

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

National Planning Policy Framework

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

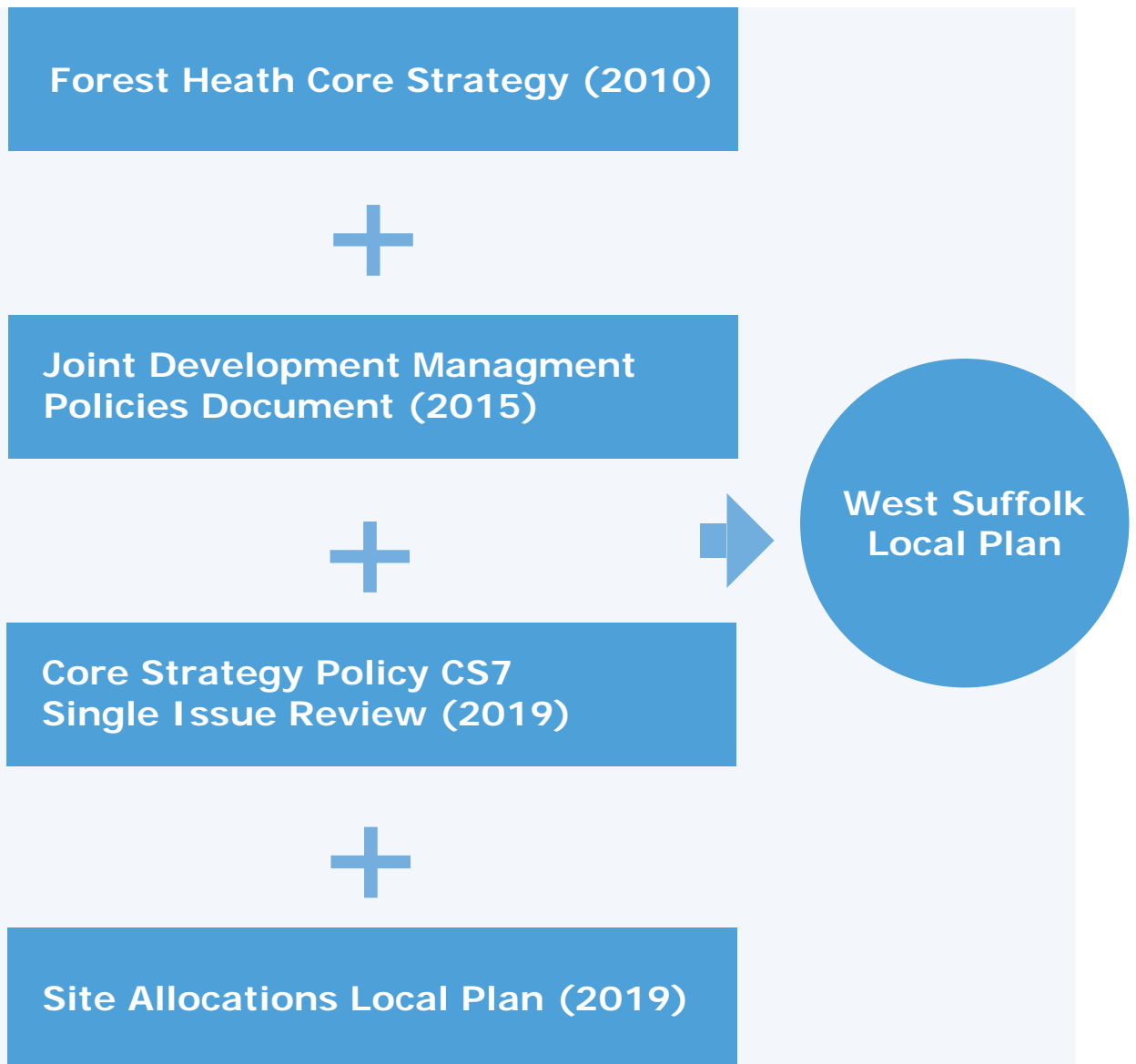
Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:

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

- 3.3 The NPPF requires that communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans should:
- Develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development; and
 - Plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

The Local Plan

- 3.4 The following diagram shows the components of West Suffolk Council's Local Plan in place in January 2024 which are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.



- 3.5 The 2010 **Forest Heath Core Strategy** identified Worlington as a “Secondary Village” in the district’s Settlement Hierarchy, where such settlements would only “accommodate a very limited amount of new minor development.” The Core Strategy set out how the housing requirements for the district to 2031 would be delivered.
- 3.6 The **Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan** document (February 2015) contains a comprehensive suite of detailed planning policies by which planning applications across West Suffolk will be determined on a day-to-day basis. The neighbourhood plan does not repeat these policies but, where appropriate, adds value and detail to them from a local perspective.
- 3.7 In 2019 a **Single Issue Review of Core Strategy Policy CS7** was adopted. The review addressed the overall housing provision and its distribution across the former Forest Heath district. It did not impact on Worlington’s position in the local plan settlement hierarchy or make provision for the type of development proposed for Secondary Villages.
- 3.8 Also in 2019 the Forest Heath **Site Allocations Local Plan** document was adopted. It identified the housing and employment allocations required to deliver the overall housing requirement identified in the Core Strategy. In accordance with the Core Strategy Settlement Hierarchy, the document did not allocate any sites in Worlington.

Emerging West Suffolk Local Plan

- 3.9 West Suffolk Council has commenced work on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the area. The Plan will cover the period to 2040 although the Local Development Scheme (June 2023) suggests that the new Local Plan will not be adopted until Spring 2025, after the expected time of adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan. In January 2024 the Council consulted on the Draft Local Plan
- 3.10 The Draft Local Plan identifies Worlington as a “Type-B village” noting that “these settlements have a very limited range of or no services and poor accessibility to public transport. It is likely that residents will rely on the private car to travel to meet their day-to-day needs. In these villages no sites are allocated through the local plan and only limited infill development or affordable housing exception sites would be permitted, where it accords with other policies in the development plan.”



3.11 In Section 5 of the Draft Local Plan, under Type B villages, it states “There may be circumstances where policies will allow development to take place in either type B villages or in the countryside and further details are set out in local policies of this plan. Examples of where development may be appropriate include:

- Small scale infill residential development comprising one or two homes.
- Replacement of existing homes on a one for one basis.
- Conversion and re-use of buildings for employment or residential purposes.
- An affordable housing exception site next to a settlement boundary.
- An agricultural and/or essential workers home.
- Where a neighbourhood plan is prepared and proposes site allocations.”

3.12 The references to the Draft Local Plan may change as it proceeds towards adoption in 2025.

Suffolk County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan

3.13 In July 2020, Suffolk County Council adopted the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. It recognises that an existing sand and gravel quarry exists at Bay Farm and proposes extensions into three areas on the northern edge of the existing quarry. The access to these extensions would continue to be via the existing access on Elms Road to the south. The Plan also recognises that inert landfill and a concrete batching plant also operates in the south of the parish between Newmarket Road and Elms Road, Freckenham. Policy MS10 of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan sets out the criteria for considering planning applications for these extensions.

3.14 Most of the parish is also defined as a “Minerals Consultation Area” within which proposals in excess of five hectares will be referred to the County Council in order that they can be satisfied that, in accordance with paragraph 216 of the NPPF, minerals resources of local and national importance are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development.

4. Vision and Objectives

- 4.1 The vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared taking into consideration the outcomes of the community engagement referred to earlier in this document, as well as the evidence collected from published data, surveys and assessments. They also take account of the need to prepare a neighbourhood plan that conforms with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. The Vision sets out the over-arching approach as to how development in Worlington will be delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan in the period to 2040. This is refined through the Objectives established for each of the topic areas which, in turn, have guided the identification of the planning policies contained in the Plan. The planning policies do not repeat the policies in the Local Plan or the NPPF but supplement them by adding local detail or addressing locally specific matters.

VISION

In 2040 Worlington will continue to be a self-contained village with a high quality natural and historic environment.

Limited sustainable development may have taken place that respects and maintains the character of the village and its surrounding countryside.

Separation from existing boundaries of surrounding settlements will have been maintained and existing services and facilities protected and improved for residents.

VISION



Objectives

Housing

1. Ensure that new housing development is of a scale and location to minimise impact on the character of the village and its services and facilities
2. Support the delivery of housing that meets identified local needs of the village

Natural Environment

3. Minimise the impact of development on the natural environment and improve biodiversity.
4. Protect and enhance the rural setting of the village.

Historic Environment

5. Ensure new development is appropriate to the historic character of the Village.
6. Recognise and protect the historic importance of buildings, features and character areas.

Development Design

7. Maintain and enhance a strong rural identity and sense of place for the parish, through environmentally sustainable and sensitive small-scale development.
8. Ensure new development is designed to reflect local character and incorporates measures that reduces environmental impact.

Services and Facilities

9. Retain existing facilities and encourage the provision of new services and facilities.

Transport and Travel

10. Reduce the impact of through traffic on the village.
11. Improve safety and routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.



- 5.4 Policy SA1: Settlement Boundaries in the Site Allocations Local Plan document for the former Forest Heath area states that “Planning permission for new residential development, residential conversion schemes, and replacement of an existing dwelling with a new dwelling(s) will be permitted within Housing Settlement Boundaries where it is not contrary to other planning policies. The Draft West Suffolk Local Plan (2024) continues the designation of “Housing Settlement Boundaries”, identifying where the main residential land uses are to be concentrated and excluding non-residential uses such as existing employment. The current adopted policy stance of a presumption in favour of new residential development within the Housing Settlement Boundaries is carried forward.
- 5.5 Outside the Housing Settlement Boundaries, the Core Strategy limits development to particular types of development that support the rural economy, meet affordable housing needs, or provide renewable energy subject to all other material considerations and policies. This approach is continued in the Draft West Suffolk Local Plan (2024), primarily in Policy LP18 ‘Development in the countryside’.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy

- 5.6 The Housing Settlement Boundary in the adopted and emerging Local Plans has been reviewed as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and found to remain fit-for-purpose. It is therefore carried forward and, in accordance with the adopted and emerging planning policies for Worlington, new development will be focused within the Housing Settlement Boundary. This approach will ensure that the largely undeveloped countryside in the remainder of the Neighbourhood Area will remain preserved and, in particular, maintain the physical separation of Worlington from the built-up area of Mildenhall and Barton Mills to the east.

- 5.7 Within the Housing Settlement Boundary there will remain a presumption in favour of development but it is essential that any proposals have regard, as appropriate, to:
- the presence of heritage and natural assets;
 - the landscape setting of the village;
 - the capacity of services and infrastructure; and
 - the impact of development on designated habitats in the wider area.

Outside the Housing Settlement Boundary, there may be situations where it can be adequately demonstrated that it is necessary for development to take place. However, and in accordance with the emerging Local Plan, this will be limited to that which is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses that need to be located in the countryside. However, this approach does not restrict the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential uses where proposals meet the government regulations and local planning policies for such conversions. There may also be occasions where the expansion of an existing business use will be supported where it can be demonstrated that such a proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the countryside and the infrastructure required to support it.



POLICY WTN1 - Spatial Strategy

In the period 2023 to 2040 the Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with the village's designation in the adopted Local Plan settlement hierarchy. New development will be focused within the defined Housing Settlement Boundary, as identified on the Policies Map, where proposals for housing development on infill plots or for small groups on redeveloped plots will be supported where they do not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity, the natural and historic environment, infrastructure and highways.

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

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

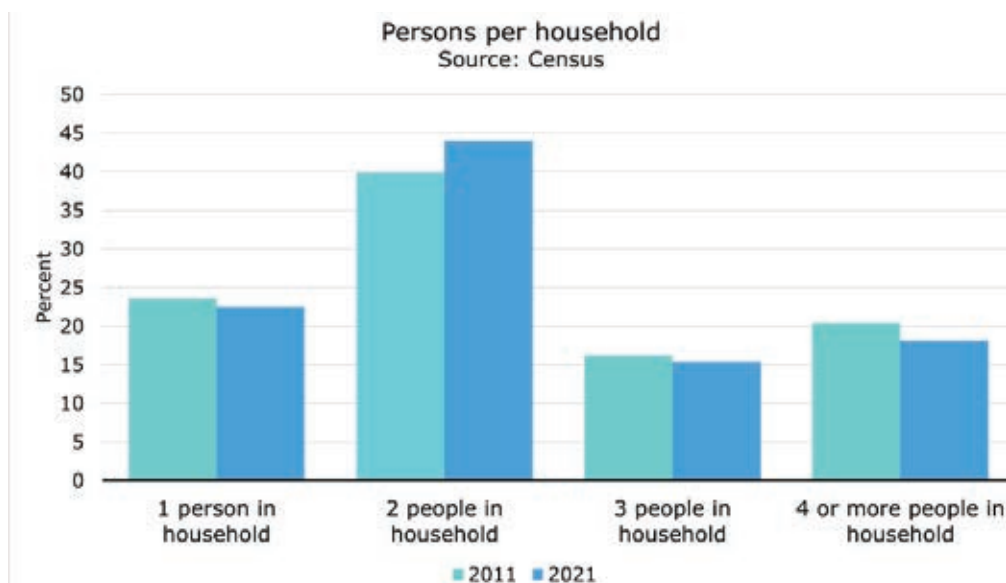
where it can be demonstrated that:

- i. it would not have significant adverse impact on the landscape setting of Worlington village;
- ii. it will not result in the irreversible loss of the best or most versatile agricultural land; and
- iii. it would not result in the loss or erosion of the important settlement gap as identified on the Policies Map; and
- iv. it would maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points within, and adjacent to, the built-up area, as defined on the Policies Map.

6. Housing

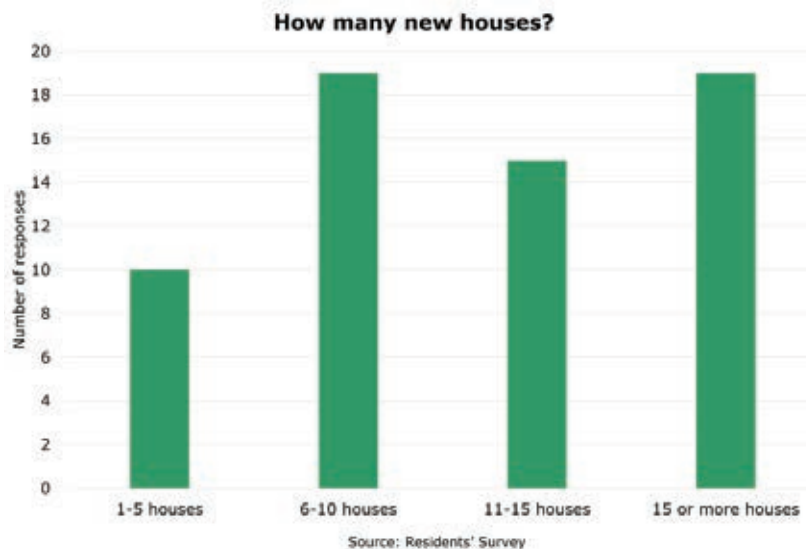
Context

- 6.1 The 2021 Census shows that there were 293 households in Worlington parish, which would have included those new homes that had recently been completed on the development site in the former parish area south of the A11 at Red Lodge. The most recent postal address files indicate that there were 250 dwellings in the new parish area. Between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2022 a total of five additional homes were granted planning permission in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 6.2 Approximately 10 years ago a development of six affordable homes was constructed on the western edge of the village at what is now known as Old Bridge Close. The homes were built as an exception to the Settlement Boundary policy in order to provide affordable homes to meet local needs.
- 6.3 Full results from the 2021 Census had yet to be published when the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared, but it is known that one-third of households in the former parish area have two or less people living in them, a slight increase when compared with the 2011 Census.



Residents' Survey

- 6.4 When asked whether Worlington needed more housing, of the 140 respondents only slightly more said no than yes (47.1 per cent compared to 44.3 per cent). Of the 62 people that said yes to new houses, the response in terms of how many was mixed, as illustrated in the chart.



- 6.5 In terms of the size of development, although there was a level of support for more than ten homes from those that supported development, the majority of respondents would support developments of either a single dwelling or small developments of up to five dwellings and there was little support for housing developments of 10 or more homes.

Local Plan Context

- 6.6 The currently adopted Local Plan identifies the amount and the location of housing needed to meet the requirements through to 2031. For secondary villages like Worlington, Policy CS7 of the Single Issue Review (2019) does not allocate new sites for housing development, although there is an allowance for “windfall” sites that come forward during the period to 2031. Windfall developments are not formally allocated in a local plan, but are approved because they comply with national and local planning policies, for example: redevelopment of sites and buildings, new uses for buildings, and developing sites that contain fewer than 10 units, including infill plots within housing settlement boundaries.
- 6.7 The Draft West Suffolk Local Plan identified sites for a total of 5,211 additional homes across the West Suffolk area to meet the identified needs through to 2040. It did not allocate any sites for development in Worlington.
- 6.8 Policy SP11 of the Draft Local Plan sets out the minimum housing requirement for each designated neighbourhood area in the district. For Worlington, there is no requirement but it notes that neighbourhood plans can make additional allocations to meet locally identified needs should they wish.

- 6.9 Other policies of relevance to housing development in Worlington can be found in the Joint Development Management Policies Document (2015) and are:
- Policy DM22: Residential Design
 - Policy DM24: Alterations or Extensions to Dwellings, including Self Contained Annexes and Development within the Curtilage
 - Policy DM25: Extensions to Domestic Gardens within the Countryside
 - Policy DM26: Agricultural and Essential Workers Dwellings
 - Policy DM28: Residential Use of Redundant Buildings in the Countryside

The Draft Local Plan contains a strategic policy on design and maintains policies on the above matters.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 6.10 Given that there was no overwhelming support for additional housing development in the village, the Neighbourhood Plan does not identify sites for housing. In line with the current and emerging local plan policies, it is recognised that additional sites will come forward and will be supported in principle within the Housing Settlement Boundary. In such circumstances, the Neighbourhood Plan provides an additional, locally derived suite of policies that will be applied when such proposals arise.

Housing Design Standards

- 6.11 The design features of new homes can have a significant impact on the character of an area. The Local Plan already contains detailed policies for the consideration of the potential impact on the character of an area and the amenity of existing residents. In addition, in December 2017, the local planning authority issued a “technical advice note” to achieve minimum internal floorspace standards. The advice note states that “the Government’s national space standards [March 2015] are the minimum acceptable space standards that should be applied to build both open market and affordable housing within West Suffolk. It is the intention of West Suffolk Council to include a policy requirement for all new homes to be built to the national space standards in the next version of their Local Plan. This Technical Advice Note is therefore an interim measure until such time as the new combined West Suffolk Local Plan is published.”



- 6.12 The December 2023 NPPF states that “Planning policies for housing should make use of the Government’s optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable housing, where this would address an identified need for such properties.” The March 2015 standards encourage provision of enough space in homes to ensure that they can be used flexibly by a range of residents. The standards also aim to ensure that sufficient storage can be integrated into dwelling units. It is emphasised that these standards, which are set out below, are expressed as minimum space standards.

The current standard requires that:

- a. the dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in the table below;
- b. a dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom;
- c. in order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5 sq m and is at least 2.15 m wide;
- d. in order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5 sq m;
- e. one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75 m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55 m wide;
- f. any area with a headroom of less than 1.5 m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m² within the Gross Internal Area);
- g. any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900 - 1500 mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50 per cent of its floor area, and any area lower than 900 mm is not counted at all;
- h. a built-in wardrobe counts towards the Gross Internal Area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72 sq m in a double bedroom and 0.36 sq m in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement; and
- i. the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3 sq m for at least 75 per cent of the Gross Internal Area.

A summary table is provided below.

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

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

6.13 Externally, it is also important that homes meet modern day requirements for the storage of wheelie bins and cycles. Without sufficient and appropriate space reserved for these uses, the consequence can be added clutter and a deterrent in the use of cycles as a mode of travel.

6.14 Planning policies cannot influence the internal layout of dwellings but, given the generally ageing population, new homes will be particularly welcomed where they meet the accessible homes standards currently set out in Part M of the Building Regulations. Part M defines three levels of housing accessibility:

- Category 1: Visitable dwellings - Part M4(1);
- Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings - Part M4(2) and
- Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings - Part M4(3).

6.15 The current Building Regulations require that all new dwellings to which the Regulations apply should be designed to a minimum of Part M4(1) 'visitable dwellings' standard. Local authorities can opt into the requirements for Part M4(2) and Part M4(3) via Local Plan policy. However, a 2015 Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) specifies that neighbourhood plans cannot set this standard.

- 6.16 Given the restrictions set out in the Written Ministerial Statement, otherwise acceptable proposals for dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan Area are particularly encouraged to meet Part M4(2) and M4(3) of the Building Regulations.
- 6.17 The development of adaptable and accessible homes will help to ensure that dwellings are appropriate for older persons' needs whilst still meaning that they are suitable for other types of occupiers such as first-time buyers. The Lifetime Homes standard "seeks to enable 'general needs' housing to provide, either from the outset or through simple and cost-effective adaptation, design solutions that meet the existing and changing needs of diverse households". Proposals for new housing in Worlington will be especially encouraged to meet the Lifetime Homes standard.

Policy WTN 2 – Housing Design

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

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

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



7. Natural Environment

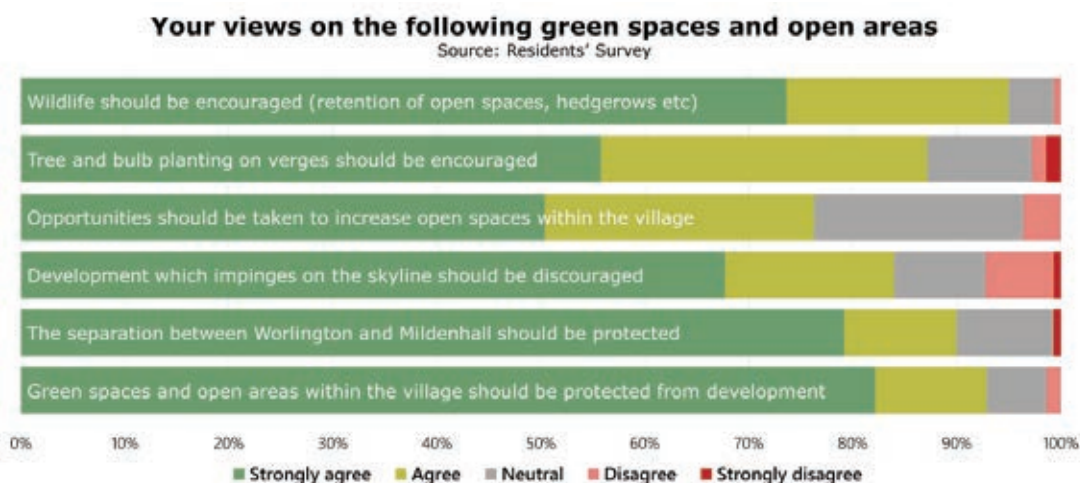
Context

- 7.1 Worlington sits on the southwestern edge of the Brecks in a transitional landscape zone. Here, the sandy, forested Brecks to the east begin to open out and merge into the low-lying Cambridgeshire Fenlands to the northwest. In addition, a finger of the rolling chalk downland, that characterises the landscape south of Cambridge, also stretches up from the southwest, just brushing the southeast of the parish.
- 7.2 The Breckland area supports a rich and distinctive flora and fauna that includes species found nowhere else in Britain. Local biodiversity is further enhanced by the presence of other habitats, including ribbons of wetland along the various rivers that flow through the region. Breckland is said to represent one of the few places in southern Britain where there is still ample space for wildlife. There are no statutory designated wildlife sites in the parish. The nearest is Red Lodge Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest which is located about 3km southeast of the village - a fragment of heathland now surrounded by urban land uses. Along with 3 other smaller sites. Details of the County Wildlife Sites can be obtained from the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS). Across the parish there are records of a range of species being present that are included in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- 7.3 Within and around the built-up area of the village there is a significant spread of individual and groups of trees protected by tree preservation orders. Open spaces in the village provide a softening of the built form as well as opportunities for wildlife. Within and around the village there are a number of important views that reinforce the village's setting within the wider and generally flat landscape.
- 7.4 The Hythe is an area of land owned and maintained by Worlington Parish Council. It sits to the northwest of the village on the southern bank of the River Lark and is accessible via Ferry Drove at the bottom of Church Lane. Very little is known about the history of the Hythe. It was gifted to the village in the enclosure award of 1799. The wooded area is marked on Victorian maps as being gravel pits and there was a ford crossing the river on the bend. You can still see today the gentle slope in comparison to the steeper gradient along the rest of the river's course. In February 2021, the Hythe Community Wildlife Project was formed to breathe new life into the area and make it a more

welcoming area where people have the space to enjoy the river, the wildlife and the peace and tranquillity that goes with it.

Residents' Survey

- 7.5 The Residents' Survey asked opinions on green spaces and open areas. There was strong support for the protection of green spaces and open areas, restricting development that impinges on the skyline, and the encouragement of wildlife. Almost 90 per cent of those that responded agreed or strongly agreed that local wildlife and habitats are a positive feature of Worlington's environment.



Planning Policy Context

- 7.6 Policy CS2 of the adopted Core Strategy notes that "Areas of landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity interest and local distinctiveness within the District will be protected from harm and their restoration, enhancement and expansion will be encouraged and sought through a variety of measures." It notes that measures will include:
- minimising the fragmentation of habitats, creation of new habitats and connection of existing areas to create an ecological network;
 - promotion of Green Infrastructure enhancement and/or provision on all new developments;
 - using Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) to inform development decisions within the District;
 - promotion of green corridor enhancement, such as improvement projects along the River Lark.
- 7.7 Policy CS3 seeks to protect and enhance the landscape character of the former district, noting that "The (Forest Heath) Landscape Character Assessment will inform detailed assessment of individual proposals. All schemes should protect and seek to enhance overall landscape character, taking account of the key characteristics and distinctiveness of the landscape and the landscape setting of settlements."

7.8 The Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document contains detailed policies on the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, as listed below:

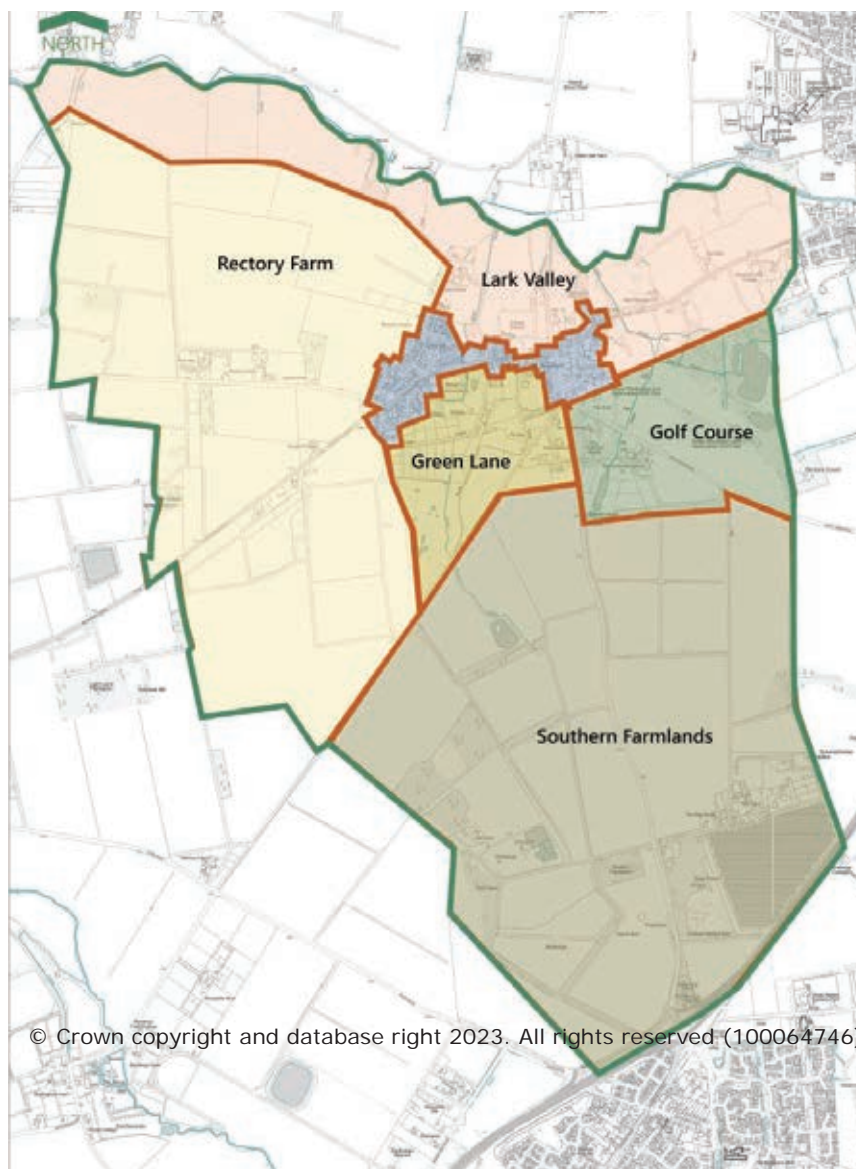
- Policy DM10: Impact of Development on Sites of Biodiversity and Geodiversity Importance
- Policy DM11: Protected Species
- Policy DM12: Mitigation, Enhancement, Management and Monitoring of Biodiversity
- Policy DM13: Landscape Features
- Policy DM14: Protecting and Enhancing Natural Resources, Minimising Pollution and Safeguarding from Hazards

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

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Worlington's Landscape

7.10 As part of the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, a separate Landscape Assessment has been prepared and which is available to view and download on the neighbourhood plan pages of the Parish Council website. The Assessment focuses on the character and sensitivity of the rural fringes of Worlington and does not consider the different character areas within the settlement itself. It identifies five distinct character areas, as illustrated on **Map 4** below.



Map 4 -
Landscape
Character Areas

- 7.11 The Appraisal provides the following guidance to be taken into account when considering development proposals either within the built-up area or in the rural area.

Relating to settlements....

- Conserve the existing landscape setting of Worlington and avoid coalescence with adjacent villages or with Mildenhall.
- New built development should be well related to existing settlement. Avoid development which would disrupt the characteristic gateway approaches on the east side of the village.
- Conserve wooded skylines and ensure that all views to new development are seen against a backdrop of woodland.
- New development should be designed to the highest standards, using local materials that fit sympathetically with the local vernacular - bricks, with flint and render and clunch.
- Detailed analysis of the potential landscape and impacts of any proposed growth should be subject to site specific assessment.
- Avoid traffic calming measures and signage in rural locations that could have an urbanising effect.

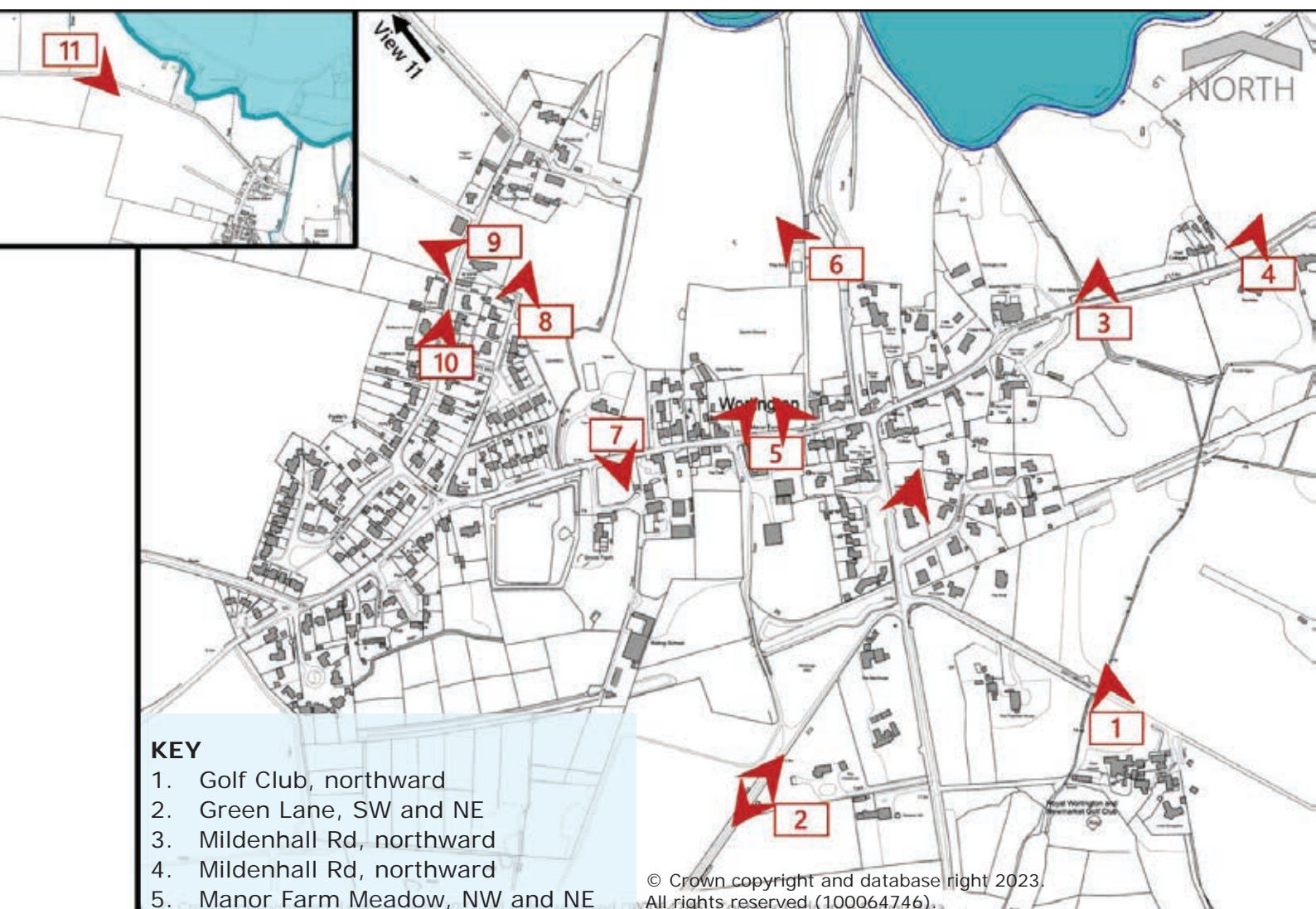
In the rural area....

- Conserve all remaining historic Brecks pine lines and plan replacement strategy
- Integrate new development (together with associated infrastructure in the form of lighting, signage and fencing) with large scale tree planting which relates to and is integrated with existing pattern of tree belts and plantations.
- Farm buildings are typically seen in the middle distance across open fields, backed and framed by woodland. Expansion of farmsteads alongside roads is not characteristic and would be hard to accommodate.
- Integrate new large-scale agricultural or commercial buildings in open countryside by careful choice of form, orientation and colour. Whenever possible, new buildings should relate to an existing cluster and to existing mature trees and woodlands which can provide a backdrop, along with carefully designed new tree planting to integrate and screen.
- Building materials should be appropriate for the style of existing buildings present. Brick is often used. Staining used for exterior boarding should be capable of weathering in the traditional way, as a permanent dark or black colouring is not locally appropriate.
- Areas of remnant heathland should be managed in accordance with the detailed prescriptions contained within ecological guidance such as the Breckland Biodiversity Audit.
- Conserve and create new heathland habitats in prominent roadside locations
- Identify sites of high biodiversity value and plan for links to create larger, contiguous networks.
- Design small scale infrastructure such as signage, lighting and interpretation boards with simple forms and appropriate local materials so that it is well integrated within the surrounding landscape. Control the use of visually intrusive and unnecessary lighting or signage.

Important Views

7.12 The landscape of the parish is such that it lends itself to accommodating important views into and out of the built-up areas. An important or 'Key' view is one that would be generally recognised as having notable qualities or a particularly attractive composition that might cause people to pause and appreciate the scene. Not just an 'everyday' view, it is more likely to feature in people's perceptions of what Worlington looks like in their memories, and provide heightened feelings of connectedness and wellbeing.

7.13 A separate Key Views Assessment has been prepared which defines 11 views in Worlington which are considered to be particularly important and that contribute notably to the areas character. The views are illustrated on **Map 5** below and the Assessment identifies the key features of each view and the objectives to manage any change within the view.



Map 5 - Identified Key Views

Policy WTN 3 - Protecting Worlington's Landscape Character

Development proposals should respond positively to the landscape characteristics of the site and its vicinity.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, and to ensure that they conserve the essential landscape, heritage and rural character of the parish, development proposals should demonstrate how they:

- i. have regard to, and conserve, restore and enhance, the landscape character and the setting of the parish, as referenced in the Worlington Landscape Assessment; and
- ii. will ensure that there is no unacceptable impact on the key features of the important views identified on the Policies Map.

7.14 Across the parish the influence of trees and hedgerows play a significant role in determining the character of the area. This is evidenced by individual specimen trees, such as those found around Newmarket Road and Mildenhall Road, and tree belts and woodland, such as at The Hythe and between Worlington and Freckenham/ Red Lodge. The combined effect of screening and providing natural habitats that these features create are vitally important within the parish and the wider area and their retention and enhancement will be supported. Across the parish there are a number of areas that are identified as "priority habitats", namely those which have been deemed to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity, being listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Appendix 1 is a map that illustrates the priority habitats.

7.15 Currently the NPPF encourages net gains for biodiversity to be sought through planning policies and decisions. In November 2021 the Environment Bill received Royal Assent. It introduced a statutory requirement, which came into force in 2024, for all appropriate developments to deliver a minimum 10 per cent measurable net gain in biodiversity, measured by using a statutory metric and biodiversity statement to be submitted with planning applications. Strategic Policy SP6 of the Draft Local Plan addresses the requirements for biodiversity net gain in relation to qualifying development proposals.

7.16 There may be occasions where a new access to an otherwise acceptable development site would result in the loss of part of an existing hedgerow. Where this is necessary, a new hedgerow should be planted using native species of a local provenance on the visibility splay returns to minimise the loss of hedgerow and habitat and maintain the character of the area.

7.17 There are also a number of watercourses and water features across the parish that, as well as playing a role in flood management, provide wildlife habitats and corridors that make up a rich biodiversity network.

Policy WTN 4 - Biodiversity and Habitats

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

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

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

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

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

- a) the creation of new natural habitats including ponds;
- b) the planting of additional native trees and hedgerows (reflecting the character of Worlington's traditional trees and hedgerows);
- c) the installation of bird and bat boxes; and
- d) restoring and repairing fragmented wildlife networks and creating new links between them.

- 7.18 There may be opportunities for the protection of existing habitats in Worlington and increase their quality without relying on the planning system. These could include hedgerows, verges, woodland, streams and bodies of water. The Parish Council, working with the local community has an important role in ensuring such protection.

Community Aspiration 1 – Habitat Protection

The Parish Council will seek to work with the community and other organisations to increase the number of protected habitats in Worlington and increase the quality of habitats.



Green Spaces

7.19 There are a number of important open areas within the parish that make important contributions to the character and setting of the built environment. Such spaces can help provide benefits to mental and physical health and wellbeing, giving opportunities for social interaction, space for recreation, habitat for wildlife and help define the character of that specific settlement. The NPPF enables the designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces ('LGS') in neighbourhood plans. Such designations rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 106 of the NPPF states that the designation should only be used where the green space is:

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

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

7.20 A separate Local Green Space Appraisal has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, which demonstrates how certain local spaces meet the criteria in paragraph 106 of the NPPF. The spaces that meet the criteria are identified in Policy WTN 5 and are illustrated on the Policies Map.

7.21 The identification of these spaces as Local Green Space means that development is restricted to that which has to be demonstrated as being essential for the site, in line with the Green Belt policies defined by the NPPF. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation. Policy WTN 5 follows the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. In the event that development proposals come forward on the local green spaces within the Plan period, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by West Suffolk Council. In particular, it will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the 'very special circumstances' required by the policy.



Policy WTN 5 – Local Green Spaces

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

1. Lark Close amenity open space
2. Wide verge between The Paddocks and Golf Links Road
3. Common land north of Green Lane
4. Recreation Ground
5. Children's Play Area
6. The paddock between The Street and Recreation Ground
7. War Memorial triangle
8. Wide verge opposite Bell House
9. Wide verge in front of 1 - 5 Walnut Grove, Freckenham Road
10. Walnut Grove amenity open space
11. The Meadows amenity open space
12. Amenity open space at entrance to Walnut Grove
13. All Saints Walk
14. The Cemetery
15. All Saints Churchyard
16. The Hythe

Development proposals within the designated local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.



8. Historic Environment

Context

- 8.1 Worlington currently has 11 buildings and features listed of architectural or historic interest (listed buildings). The details of these are contained in Appendix 2. There is no conservation area in the village, but it is known that the area is rich in archaeological finds. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service's Historic Environment Record provides details of finds and the Service should be consulted at the earliest possible stages of preparing a planning application.

Residents' Survey

- 8.2 When asked what residents' consider the most important factors to be considered when identifying sites for new housing in Worlington, 89 per cent of respondents said it was important that development should not impact on historic buildings or their settings.

Planning Policy Context

- 8.3 The NPPF notes that heritage assets (see Glossary) "are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations." Policy DM15: Listed Buildings, in the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document sets out the considerations and criteria against which proposals to alter, extend or change the use of a listed building, or development affecting its setting will be considered. In addition, Policy DM18: New Uses for Historic Buildings addresses how proposals for the adaptation and re-use of historic buildings will be considered.
- 8.4 The Draft West Suffolk Local Plan carries forward policies for the protection and management of heritage assets.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 8.5 The protection of the existing designated heritage assets is already adequately addressed through the NPPF and adopted local plan policies. It is not therefore necessary for the neighbourhood plan to repeat these.

Special Character Area

- 8.6 Although Worlington does not have a designated conservation area, the area of the village between The Walnut Tree and Worlington Hall Hotel does have distinctly historic character. It has six of the village's listed buildings and other buildings and features that contribute to the character of the area plus a number of trees protected by preservation orders. A further characteristic of the area is the use of tall brick and lower flint boundary walls.

8.7 Given these special qualities, the Neighbourhood Plan designates the area, as identified on Map 6, as a Special Character Area. The special characteristics of the area are also illustrated on the map. The designation does not have a statutory status but development proposals that do not take account of the built and natural qualities of this area could have a significant wider impact on its character and will not be supported. The second part of Policy WTN 6 highlights the approach which will be taken to proposals that require planning permission. Where appropriate, any public interest benefits which arise from a proposed development will be considered against the harm which may arise.

Policy WTN 6 - Mildenhall Road Special Character Area

A Special Character Area is identified on the Policies Map. Within the Special Character area, as well as having regard to the need to preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets in or adjoining the area, development proposals should respond positively to the distinctive characteristics of the identified area as illustrated on **Map 6**.

Development proposals which would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the Special Character Area will not be supported.





Map 6 - Special Character Area

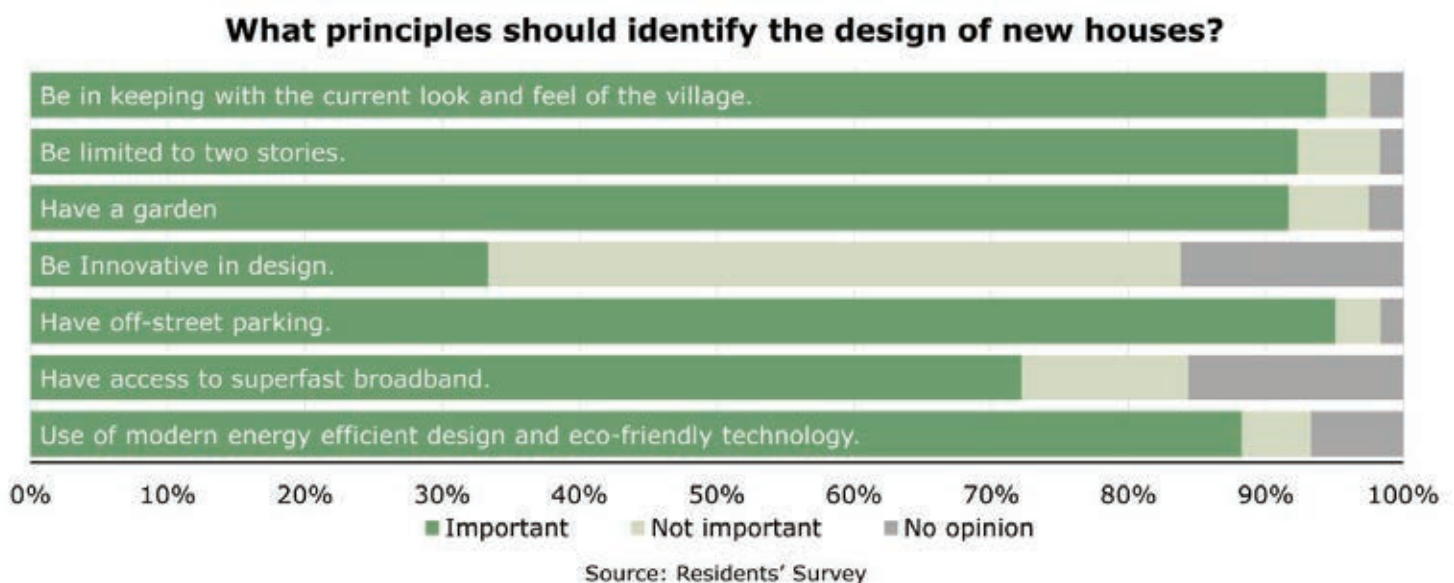
9. Development Design

Context

- 9.1 The design of new development can have a significant impact on its surroundings if not given careful consideration. What is suitable for modern areas might not fit in with areas dominated by historic buildings and features and it is important that careful consideration is made at the outset as to how the proposal impacts on the character of the area and existing residents. Unsympathetic and poorly designed development, especially within the vicinity of a heritage asset, can have a significant detrimental impact on the area. It will also be important that the design pays attention to minimising environmental impact through, for example, the incorporation of energy saving measures. Where planning permission is required for development, it will be important that careful consideration is given to the proposal to ensure that it enhances rather than detracts from the locality within which it is located. Building for a Healthy Life, published by Homes England, is a Design Code to help people improve the design of new and growing neighbourhoods and its use is encouraged.

Residents' Survey

- 9.2 Residents were asked what principles should identify the design of new houses. As illustrated in the chart below, development that is in keeping with the current look and feel of the village is of major importance. New housing including off-street parking was also high in importance, probably reflecting the limited opportunities for on-street parking in the village without obstructing the highway.

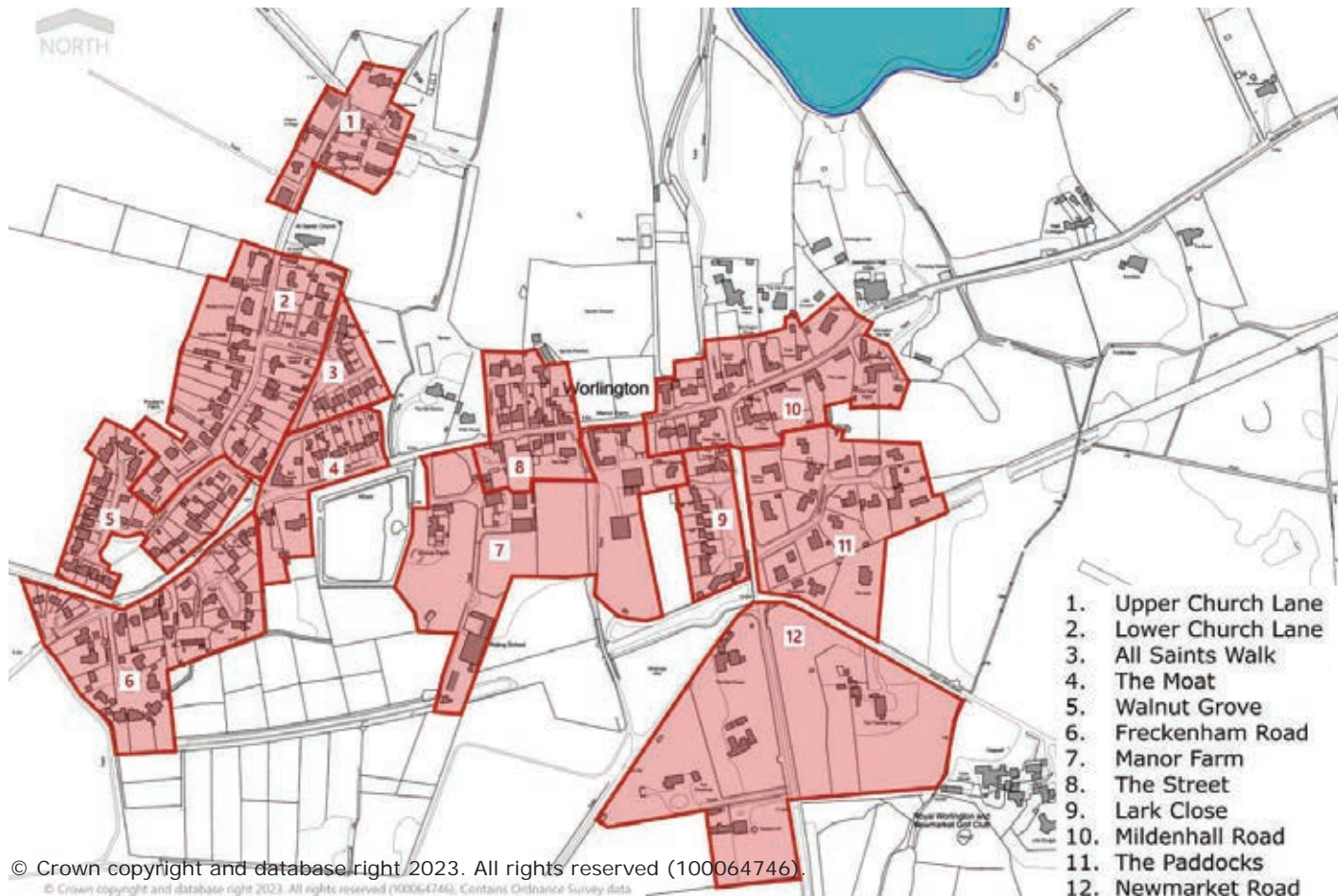


Planning Policy Context

- 9.3 The NPPF makes it clear, in paragraph 126, that ‘good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.’ In January 2021 the Government published the National Design Guide to illustrate how well designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It ‘provides a structure that can be used for the content of local design policies, guides and codes, and addresses issues that are important for design codes where these are applied to large scale development on single or multiple sites.’ This was followed up in July 2021 by the more detailed National Model Design Code which sets out guidance for what could be included in a Design Code for sites and places.
- 9.4 Policy DM2: Creating Places - Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness, in the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document sets out a range of criteria against which all development proposals, as appropriate to their scale, will be considered by West Suffolk Council. Other relevant adopted policies are:
- Policy DM6: Flooding and Sustainable Drainage
 - Policy DM7: Sustainable Design and Construction
- 9.5 Policy SP3 of the Draft Local Plan addresses development design across the wider district.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 9.6 In December 2021, AR Urbanism were commissioned as part of the Government’s Neighbourhood Planning support programme to prepare Design Guidance for the whole Neighbourhood Plan Area on behalf of the Parish Council. The document, published separately on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council’s website, provides guidance that seeks to inform the design that all development should follow in order to retain and protect the character and distinctiveness of Worlington. The Design Guidance document should be used alongside the National Model Design Codes published by the Government in July 2021, or any subsequent published national as well as district level guidance. A series of character areas have been identified, which splits the main settlement into 12 distinct ‘places’, each with coherent character and form and as illustrated on **Map 7**.
- 9.7 For each of the 12 areas, the Design Guidance identifies the important features and characteristics of the area. Proposals for development will be expected to have regard to the Design Guidance and reflect the characteristics of the particular area and not result in the damage to or the loss of identified important features.



Map 7 - Built Character Areas

Key Design Principles

9.8 The Design Guidance establishes the following urban design principles which have also informed the included design codes and which should be acknowledged, as appropriate, in planning proposals:

- Ensure the layout and scale of new development reinforces the distinctive historic character of the village;
- Conserve and enhance the rural landscape of the Parish by preserving the existing open views and natural green buffers, including hedgerows and mature trees;
- New development should improve access routes for new and existing residents, where possible. This involves improving connections to the rural landscape and creating safer footpaths that connect development, especially in the east of the village;
- Ensure new homes and spaces are well-designed for all ages, including older residents, young families, teenagers and children. This should take into account the impact of Covid-19 and the increased opportunity for residents to work from home;
- The orientation of buildings and plots should respond to environmental opportunities and constraints and maximise opportunities for residents to live sustainable lifestyles;
- New development should protect the settlement separation between Worlington and Mildenhall.

- 9.9 The Design Guidance provides a development management checklist against which development proposals should seek to respond where applicable. The checklist is included as Appendix 3 of the Plan.

Policy WTN 7 - Development Design Considerations

Development proposals should reflect the local characteristics and circumstances of the site by creating and contributing to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Management Checklist (Appendix 3):

1. Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
2. Reinforce or enhance the established village character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
3. Include boundary treatments that reflect the character and traditional materials of the local vicinity;
4. Respect the rural character of views and gaps, as identified on the Policies Map;
5. Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
6. Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including retaining and preserving long distance views, as identified on the Policies Map and treebelts and woodland.
7. Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
8. Retain and incorporate important existing built and natural features into the development;
9. Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
10. Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
11. Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality, in accordance with the adopted standards of West Suffolk Council;
12. Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained built and natural features;
13. Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
14. Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste storage and management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;
15. Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;
16. Produce designs that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network in accordance with the Suffolk Design Streets Guide 2022 (or any successor documents) and ensuring that vehicle parking is designed to be integrated into the site without creating an environment dominated by vehicles.



Climate Change

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



An example of a modern, energy efficient home

Policy WTN 8 - Sustainable Construction Practices

Wherever practicable, development proposals should incorporate current best practice in energy conservation. Such measures should be incorporated so that they are integral to the building design and its curtilage and minimise any impacts on the building or its surroundings. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate how they:

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

Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

- 9.12 Unsurprisingly, much of the land in the vicinity of the River Lark is within Environment Agency designated Flood Zone 2 or 3, with Zone 3 having the highest risk of flooding. This area extends south along the tributary to the east of Worlington Hall Hotel. The main built-up area of the village is not within a flood zone, although there are small areas susceptible to surface water flooding.
- 9.13 National planning policy restricts the type of development that can take place in the areas likely to flood. It is essential that development proposals do not add to this risk through creating surfaces where rainwater can run-off into the highway or neighbouring sites and create new or exacerbate existing surface water flooding problems. New development will be required, where appropriate, to make provision for the attenuation and recycling of surface water and rainwater through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that might include on-site rainwater and stormwater harvesting and greywater recycling, and the management of run-off and water management in order to reduce the potential for making the situation worse.

Policy WTN 9 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

Proposals for new development, or the intensification of existing development, in Flood Zones 2 and 3 or any area of surface water flood risk, should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, and should identify the way in which they have satisfied the safety requirements in the Planning and flood risk element of Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Guidance (and any successor).

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

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should include the use of above-ground open Sustainable Drainage Systems. These could include:

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

Light Pollution

9.14 Paragraph 191(c) of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should “limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”. Artificial lighting of development, while increasing a sense of security, can also impact upon residential amenity, the character and appearance of an area (particularly rural locations) and the environment. Aspects such as poor design, location or the expulsion of unnecessarily high levels of light can also have a harmful impact.

Policy WTN 10 – Dark skies

Wherever practicable, development proposals should respond positively to the dark sky environment of the parish and avoid the use of streetlights. Any outdoor lighting schemes should have a minimum impact on the environment and wildlife, whilst taking account of highway safety and the security of the development concerned. In addition, outdoor lighting schemes should reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient technologies which reduce glare.

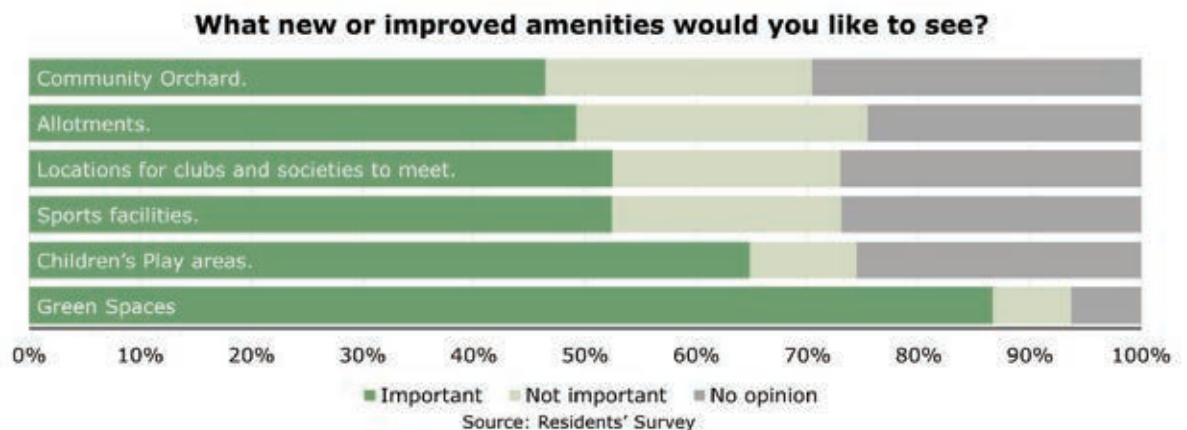
10. Services and Facilities

Context

- 10.1 As noted already, Worlington has little in the way of services and facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of residents. The Post Office and shop closed many years ago and the village school long before that.
- 10.2 At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, the village had the following fixed services and facilities:
- Village Hall
 - All Saints' Church
 - The Walnut Tree Public House
 - Worlington Hall Hotel
 - Worlington Cricket Club pavilion
 - The Recreation Ground
 - Children's Playground
 - Royal Worlington and Newmarket Golf Club and course
 - The Hythe

Residents' Survey

- 10.3 Residents were asked which amenities they made use of either often or sometimes. The most often used were The Hythe and the Recreation Ground, both of which are designated in Policy WTN 5 as Local Green Spaces, as is the Children's Playground.
- 10.4 When asked what new or improved facilities residents would like to see, the most popular were more green spaces and children's play areas, as illustrated.



Policy Context

- 10.5 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. Further, paragraph 97 states that planning policies and decisions should “guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs”.
- 10.6 At a local level, the West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document contains Policies DM31: Farm Diversification, DM41: Community Facilities and Services and DM 42: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities. Each seeks to retain existing facilities and provide a basis for the provision of new facilities, especially as part of larger developments.
- 10.7 The Draft Local Plan includes the following policies in relation to village services and facilities:
- Policy LP31 Community facilities and services
 - Policy LP32 Leisure and cultural facilities
 - Policy LP33 Open space, sport, play and recreation facilities
 - Policy LP37 Farm Diversification

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 10.8 The Neighbourhood Plan has an important role in making sure that there are sufficient and adequate services in the village to meet the needs of current and future residents. The Village Hall, Recreation Ground and play area provide a central facility for both formal and informal recreation and the Walnut Tree public house, in particular, has been demonstrated to play an important role in village life.

Policy WTN 11 - Community Facilities

Proposals that will result in the loss of any the following existing community facilities:

- Village Hall;
- All Saints’ Church;
- The Walnut Tree Public House;
- Worlington Hall Hotel;
- The Playground

will only be supported where:

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

- 10.9 The likelihood of additional community facilities opening, such as a village shop, seemed unlikely at the time the Neighbourhood Plan was written given the increased prevalence of online shopping and deliveries by supermarkets, but it is important that the Plan does not stand in the way of suitable proposals should they come forward during the period to 2040. Existing and emerging Local Plan policies address the provision of such facilities, stating that they will be permitted where they contribute to the quality of community life and the maintenance of sustainable communities.
- 10.10 One such initiative might include the conversion of agricultural buildings to a farm shop through the diversification of farming businesses. Under such circumstances it will be important that the nature of the activity is sensitive to the character of the area, with particular emphasis on protecting and enhancing it. Existing buildings should be re-used where possible, and any opportunity should be taken to seek environmental improvements and to improve the appearance of the holding as a whole through appropriate diversification schemes.
- 10.11 Where new buildings are proposed as part of such a diversification scheme, it is important that they reflect the rural and agricultural building styles typically found in the area. It will be particularly essential to have regard to the character of the area identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Appraisal in respect of whether the proposal can overcome potential landscape impacts through appropriate siting, design and impact mitigation measures. Policy DM31 of the West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document provides a set of criteria against which proposals for farm diversification will be considered and will be used in addition to Policy WTN 12.

Policy WTN 12 - Farm Diversification

Proposals for the use of redundant traditional farm buildings and other rural buildings for employment or community purposes will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the buildings concerned are no longer viable or needed for farming.

Development proposals for such uses should respond positively to the character of the building concerned and its setting in the wider landscape. Proposals which would result in unacceptable harm to the rural economy or which would unacceptably affect the landscape character of the immediate locality, the capacity and safety of the local highways network, local infrastructure, the amenity of residential properties in the immediate locality, or the wider environment (including national and international designated sites) and its landscape character (as identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Character and Sensitivity Appraisal) will not be supported.

Sport and Recreation Facilities

10.12 Paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless specified circumstances apply. Policy DM42 sets a principle of retaining existing amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities unless it can be demonstrated that the space or facility is surplus to requirement or that replacement facilities of equal quantity and quality is made available in a suitable location to meet the needs of users of the existing space or facility.

10.13 It is essential that the Recreation Ground and Golf Course are maintained and improvements are supported in order to facilitate healthy lifestyles in future years.

Policy WTN 13 - Sport and Recreation Facilities

The Plan identifies the following facilities (as shown on the Policies Map) as important sport and recreational facilities:

- The Recreation Ground
- Royal Worlington and Newmarket Golf Club and course;

Proposals for development at these locations will be determined in accordance with Policy DM42 of the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document (2015) or subsequent replacement policy.

10.14 There may be opportunities to achieve better use of village facilities for all sectors of the community by improving access to them and, for outdoor facilities, installing low impact lighting. Such investments would need residents' support.

Community Aspiration 2 - Better use of village facilities

Opportunities to increase the use of village facilities will be investigated.



10.15 The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many people taking an interest in growing their own food. However, there are presently no allotments in the village and so there's a reliance on using gardens for growing vegetables. One possible opportunity might be to provide some allotments for residents. Associated with such an initiative might be the provision of a community orchard.

Community Aspiration 3 - Allotments and Community Orchard

The Parish Council will investigate the creation of parish allotments and/or a community orchard for Worlington residents.

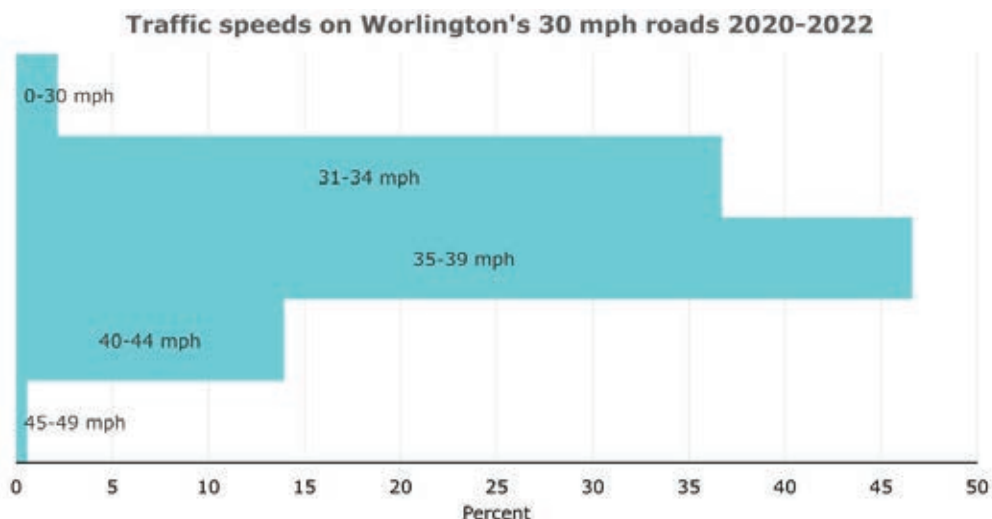




11. Transport and Travel

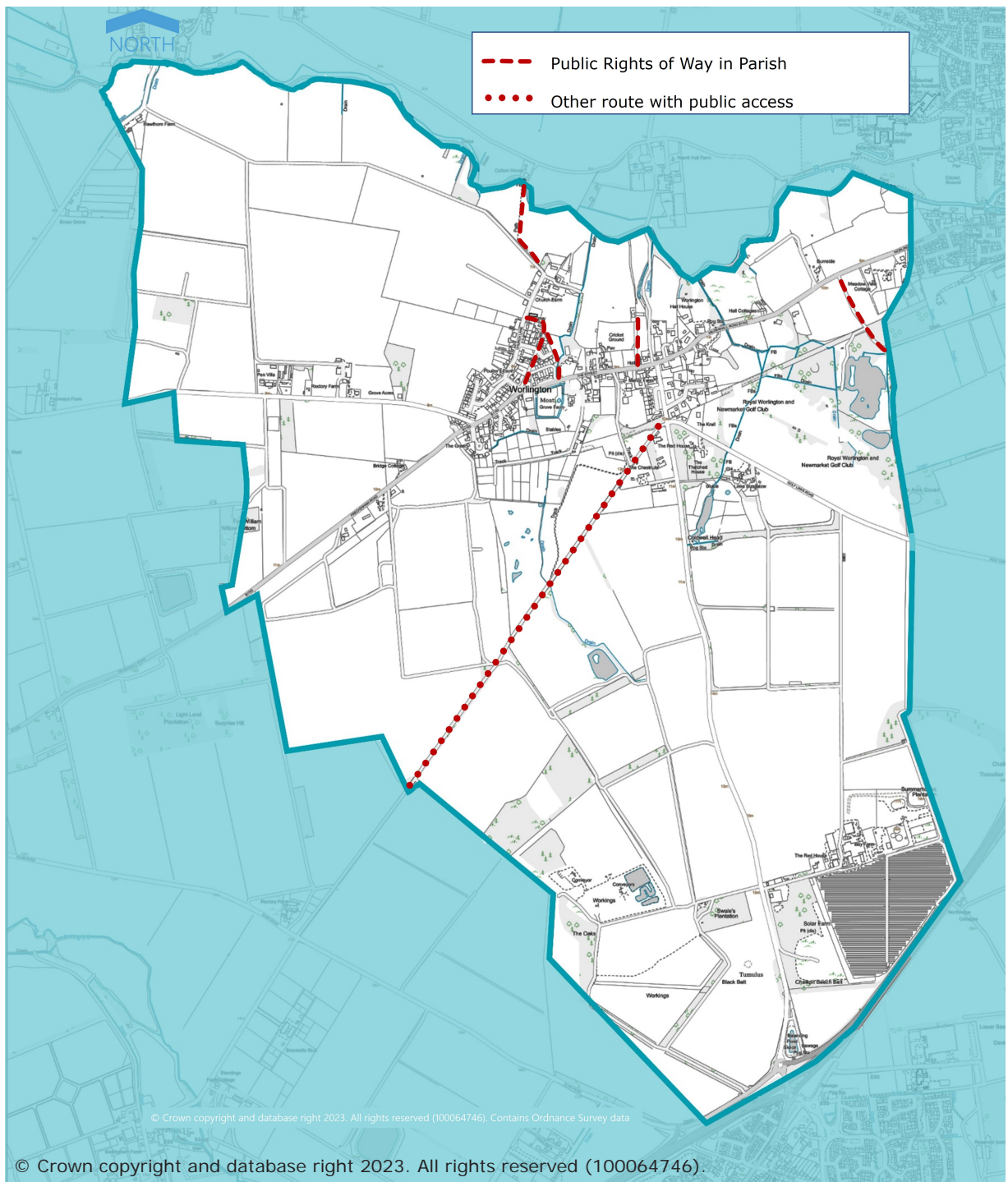
Context

- 11.1 Neighbourhood plans have little power to introduce highway improvements as most schemes will not require planning permission. Improvements are therefore reliant on Suffolk County Council, as the highways authority, for investment in projects or improvements required as part of the mitigation of the impact of development proposals.
- 11.2 Being positioned on the B1102, the village experiences high levels of through traffic from a range of sources and destinations including traffic diverting away from the A11 and vehicles accessing RAF Mildenhall from the south and seeking to avoid queues at the A11 Fiveways junction at Barton Mills. Traffic speeds on roads in the parish are a concern. The speed limit in the built-up area is 30 mph, with a short length of 40 mph extending south out of the village along Newmarket Road. Speed monitoring by the Parish Council using a Speed Indicator Device (SID) between 2020 and 2022 indicates that 60 per cent of vehicles are travelling at over 35mph in the 30 mph zones, as illustrated on the chart. Although the percentages are too small to illustrate on the chart, **nearly 500 vehicles were recorded as travelling in excess of 50 mph** during the monitoring periods.



- 11.3 The village is relatively well served by buses, with 13 a day on weekdays to Bury St Edmunds and 11 to Newmarket, and hourly services on Saturdays. Walking and cycling within the village is not an attractive proposition given the high volumes of traffic on the B1102 and the narrow footways.

11.4 Public Rights of Way provision is relatively limited, as is illustrated on **Map 8** below.



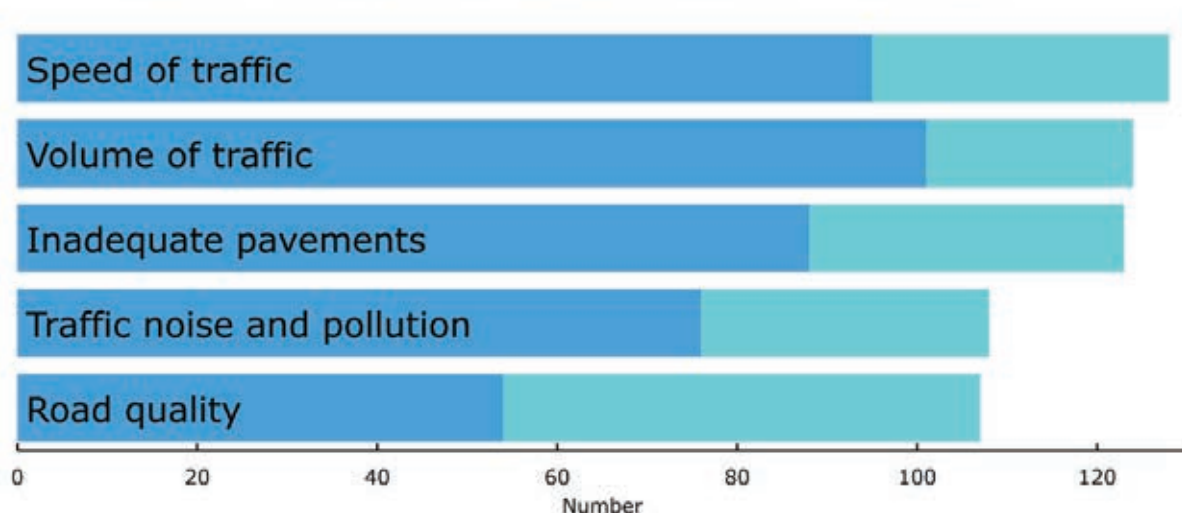
Map 8 - Public Rights of Way

Residents' Survey

11.5 As illustrated on the chart, the speed and volume of traffic were highlighted as major negative features of the environment and community. Only 15 per cent of respondents stated that bus services to and from Mildenhall were adequate for their needs and 19 per cent stated that the services to neighbouring towns such as Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket were adequate.

Transport and Travel Negative Features

Respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that matters are a negative feature



- 11.6 The adequacy and safety of footpaths and cycle routes was generally of concern to residents, especially the lack of safe routes to neighbouring settlements such as Mildenhall and Red Lodge. Just over four per cent of responses strongly agreed or agreed that there are safe cycle routes to Mildenhall and neighbouring villages and just over 10 per cent strongly agreed or agreed that the footpath access to these locations was adequate.

Planning Policy Context

- 11.7 The NPPF seeks to promote sustainable transport through reducing the impacts of development on transport networks and promoting walking, cycling and public transport. At a local level, the Forest Heath Core Strategy states that the District Council "will work with partners including Suffolk County Council, the Highways Agency [now Highways England] and developers to secure the necessary transport infrastructure and sustainable transport measures toimprove access to services and facilities, particularly in rural areas, and minimise the impact of traffic on the environment."

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 11.8 Because most road improvements can take place within the highway, they do not require planning permission and, as such, the neighbourhood plan is not an appropriate place to contain policies for their improvement. Likewise, the provision of bus services is a decision made outside the planning system. However, although the Parish Council cannot deliver highway improvements, it does have a lobbying role in delivering such measures.
- 11.9 The pavements in some parts of the village, especially adjoining the B1102, are narrow in places and not conducive to being used by users with wheelchairs, mobility buggies and pushchairs,
- 11.10 Given the high volumes and speeds of traffic in the village, it is essential that residents have the ability to safely cross The Street, especially those with limited mobility.

Community Aspiration 4 - Improved Pavements

The Parish Council will continue to lobby the County Council Highways Department to make pavements wide enough for wheelchair and buggy users to safely use.

Community Aspiration 5 - Traffic Calming

The Parish Council will continue to lobby for traffic calming measures that are sensitive to the character of the village but are effective in slowing traffic for the safety of residents. An example could be a pedestrian crossing.

- 11.11 It is important to improve air quality and mitigate any risk to human health due to man-made emissions such as nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. Encouraging and facilitating active and sustainable travel can reduce vehicles on the road and therefore pollution and poor air quality, improve people's mental and physical health and create a stronger sense of place. Developments should encourage active travel through including routes for walking and cycling that are safe for residents of all ages, especially those that are very young or very old, and have mobility issues or are frail. The feedback in both public consultations reflects the strength of resident's concerns about traffic speed and pedestrian and cyclist safety, therefore the NP proposes that the PC lobby for speed restrictions in specific areas of Worlington, including the possibility of a 20mph zone at the most narrow and dangerous points along the routes through the village. The national speed limit on the Freckenham Road and Mildenhall Road would drop to 40mph before the 30mph zones, as it does on the Newmarket Road, to slow traffic earlier. This would have a significant effect on reducing traffic speed, make pedestrians and cyclists safer and improve air quality.



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

Policy WTN 14 - Public Rights of Way

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

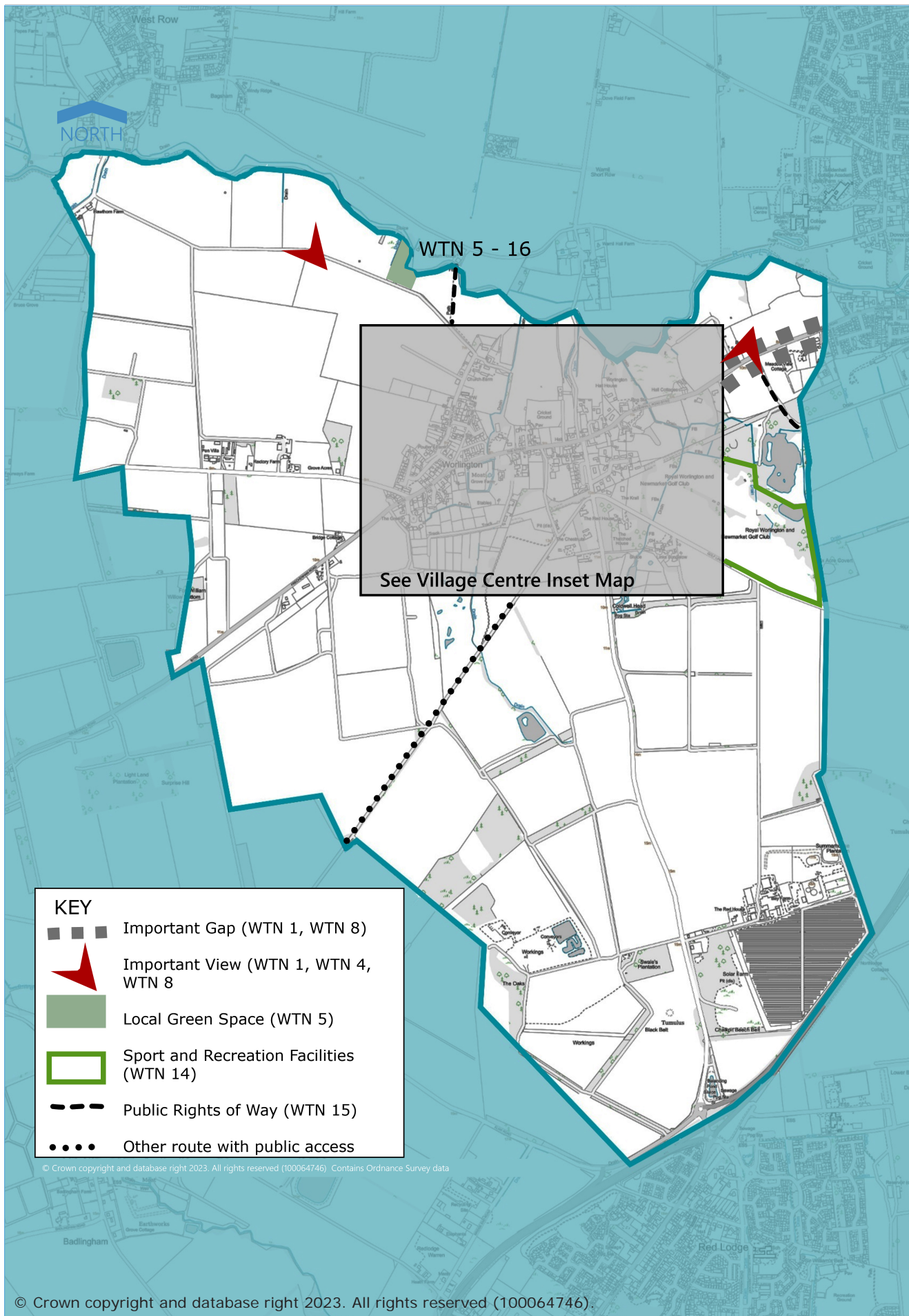
- 11.13 Although not in the Neighbourhood Area, the westward extension of Mildenhall to include 1,300 homes, employment and recreation uses (including the recently constructed "community hub") would bring education and recreation facilities within close proximity of the village were it not for the barrier created by the River Lark and the indirect public rights of way between the village and the development area. Opportunities to improve the pedestrian and cycle links from the village to the development and Mildenhall through development proposals will be pursued.

Community Aspiration 6 - Cycle Link to Mildenhall

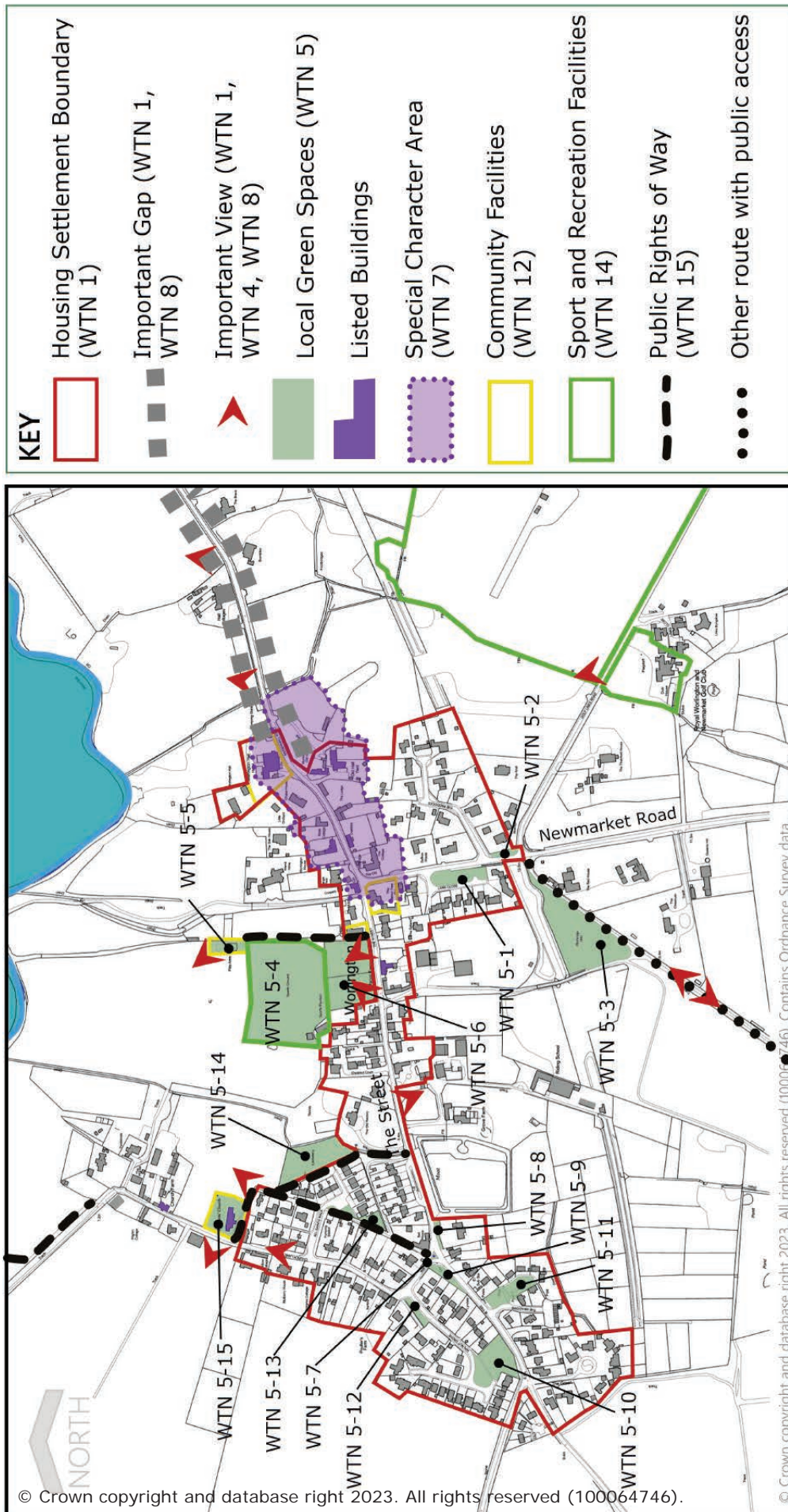
Opportunities will be taken to deliver a convenient and safe cycle route to Mildenhall and the community hub.



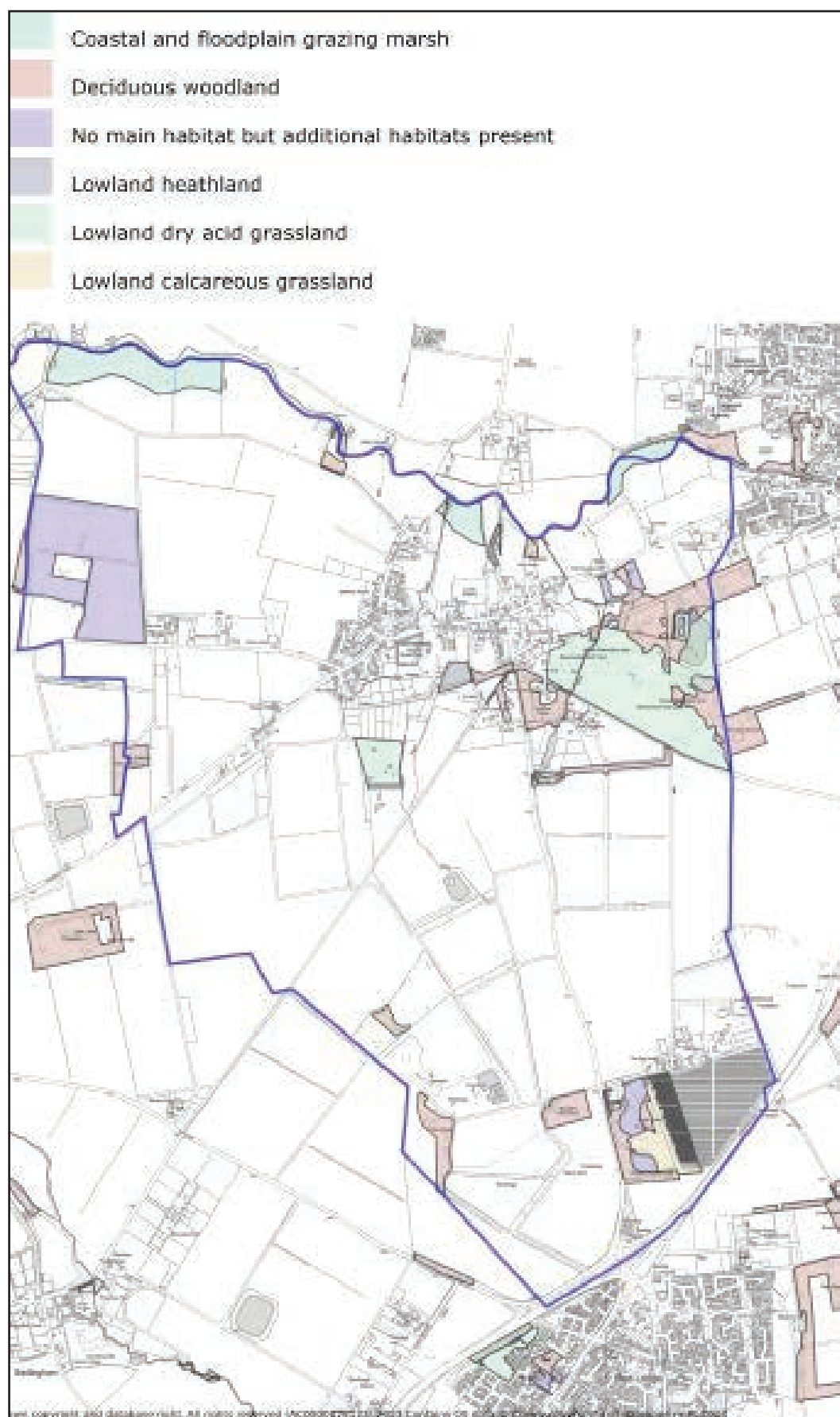
Policies Map



Village Inset Map



Appendix 1 - Priority Habitats



Appendix 2 - Listed Buildings

As at January 2023

Source - As described on Historic England's Register of Listed Buildings
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

The entries below are as they appear in the Historic England list. Where properties are now known by different names from those used in this list, the local names are included in square brackets.

Grade I

Church of All Saints, Church Lane

Grade II

Worlington Old Hall, Mildenhall Road

Cranford, Mildenhall Road

Manor Farmhouse, The Street

Old Hall Cottage and Coachmans Cottage, Mildenhall Road
[postal address 1, 2 and 3 Old Hall Cottages]

Worlington House, Mildenhall Road

59 The Street

Worlington Hall Hotel, Mildenhall Road

Cross Base, 10 metres south of chancel of Church of All Saints, Church Lane

Church Farm, Church Lane

Worlington War Memorial, Freckenham Road [Junction with The Street and Church Lane]



Appendix 3 - Development Management Checklist

Not all items in the Development Management Checklist will be appropriate to every planning application. The checklist should therefore be applied accordingly, taking into consideration the proposal, its scale and location.

Existing Context: Understanding Worlington

- 1 Has the landscape of the existing site and setting been understood and explained through plans, sections and three-dimensional drawings?
- 2 Are there diagrams and plans of the site and its wider area that identify key destinations and focal points?
- 3 Are there diagrams explaining the sites' connection with public transport, walking and cycling routes to destinations in the local and wider area?
- 4 Has the scale, detail and materials of adjacent and locally distinctive buildings been analysed and explained through photographs, 3D models or drawings and sketches?
- 5 Have designers looked at the social, cultural history and building traditions of the local area?
- 6 Have the designers looked at the demographics of the local area?
- 7 Have designers engaged with residents and presented their concerns and needs in a clear and transparent way?

Strategic Approach

- 8 Does the massing and orientation of buildings and their plots make the most of natural daylight and ventilation?
- 9 Have 3D models, plans and sections been produced to show how the layout of buildings and spaces respond to their landscape setting?
- 10 Is there a landscape strategy showing the preservation and enhancement of existing landscape features and wildlife habitats?
- 11 Does the landscape strategy show the location and character of new green spaces, play spaces and street furniture?
- 12 Have 3D models, plans and sections been produced to show how the layout of buildings and spaces respond to existing buildings and sensitive boundaries?
- 13 Are key destinations and focal points within the site and the wider area identified in the proposed site plan?
- 14 Have safe and convenient walking and cycling routes between destinations within or across the site been identified on the proposed site plan?
- 15 Do any new routes make logical connections to those that already exist in the wider area?
- 16 Has the character of the key spaces been clearly explained through sketch views from an 'on the ground' perspective?

Streets and Spaces

- 17 Is there a landscape strategy proposing contextual surfaces, planting, public realm furniture and lighting?
- 18 Has the landscape strategy been thought through and fully integrated into the architecture and wider landscape?
- 19 Have street views been prepared that show clearly defined focal points?
- 20 Do the widths of spaces and heights of fronting buildings create intentional scale and character to outdoor spaces that is contextual to Worlington?
- 21 Have the designers described the sequence of arrival from the entrance of the site to the front door of the home?

Sustainable Homes

- 22 Has the detailed design of each home been considered according to its location within the village?
- 23 Do fenestration details, material choices and built features reflect the characteristics of local buildings?
- 24 Does the overall design incorporate 'breathing space' for threshold planting, a front garden spaces and/or a porch area?
- 25 Have entrances and front doors been considered to balance passive surveillance with privacy?
- 26 Have front gardens, window boxes and hanging baskets been included so that residents can make their mark?
- 27 Are there diagrams showing overlooking of entrances and circulation spaces from homes?
- 28 Have sustainable building forms, construction methods and materials been used?
- 29 Do homes take advantage of renewable energy, including PVs?

Glossary

Affordable housing: Housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market including social and affordable rented and starter homes. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

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

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

Building of Local Significance: Locally important building valued for its contribution to the local scene or for local historical situations but not meriting listed status.

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

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

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Neighbourhood Area: The Neighbourhood Area is that which the Neighbourhood Plan covers. It normally covers a whole parish and is formally designated by the local planning authority upon request of the Parish Council.

Neighbourhood Plan: A plan prepared by a Parish Council for a particular Neighbourhood Area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and/or the Localism Act 2011

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Worlington

2023 -2040

REFERENDUM PLAN
MAY 2024



Worlington Parish Council