



HOPTON SOUTH - HOPTON VILLAGE HALL SITE AND SARSONS FIELD

Development Brief

September 2015 Rev 8

Contents

1.0 Introduction

- 1.4 Public Consultation
- 1.5 Status and Purpose of Document
- 1.6 Scope of Development Brief

2.0 Planning Policy

- 2.1 National Planning Policy and Guidance
- 2.2 St Edmundsbury Core Strategy December 2010
- 2.3 Rural Vision 2031
- 2.4 Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Local Plan, Joint Development Managerial Policies February 2015
- 2.5 Affordable Housing
- 2.6 Planning for Open Space

3.0 Site Background Information

- 3.1 Site Description Setting and Current Uses
- 3.2 Community Facilities
- 3.3 Trees
- 3.4 Drainage
- 3.5 Highways, Access and Circulation
- 3.6 Ground Conditions
- 3.7 Historic Environment and Archaeology
- 3.8 Utilities and services
- 3.9 Ecology

4.0 Local Engagement and Decisions

5.0 Opportunities and Constraints

- 5.2 Opportunities
- 5.3 Constraints

6.0 Development Concept

- 6.2 Layout and Design
- 6.3 Village Hall
- 6.4 Doctors Surgery
- 6.5 Amenity Space and Recreational Uses
- 6.6 Primary School
- 6.7 Parking
- 6.8 Recycling Area
- 6.9 Housing
- 6.10 Traffic Access and Circulation
- 6.11 Ecology
- 6.12 Drainage
- 6.13 Landscaping
- 6.14 Historic Environment
- 6.15 Sustainability
- 6.16 Concept

7.0 Legal and Financial

8.0 Conclusion and Summary

Appendices

1. Tree Report by Hayden's Arboricultural Consultants;
2. Drainage Report by TPA;
3. Highways Report by TPA;
4. Ground Conditions Report by Delta-Simonds;
5. Archaeology by Suffolk County Council;
6. Utilities and Services;
7. Ecology Reports by Applied Ecology;
8. Report on Community Engagement



1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Development Brief sets out how new community facilities, including a new doctor's surgery, and new housing could be provided for the village of Hopton. The site proposed for development is to the south of Hopton, and comprises Sarsons Field and the village hall site. This document has been prepared by Pigeon Investment Management Ltd (Pigeon), Evolution Town Planning LLP, and their consultant team in consultation with village organisations.

1.2 A significant amount of work has already been undertaken on this proposal by the Parish Council, the Village Advisory Group, the local Doctors, local Councillors, the village Primary School, the Village Hall Management Committee, St Edmundsbury Borough Council Officers, and others.

1.3 Acknowledging particular feedback from the community on this scheme, this document does not propose housing on the village hall site.

1.4 Public Consultation

1.4.1 A detailed planning application for the development of Sarsons Field, and the village hall site will be determined after the Development Brief has been adopted by the Borough Council. The planning application will need to reflect the content of the Development

Brief.

1.4.2 Significant local consultation was carried out by Pigeon, and the Parish Council in 2013, 2014 and 2015, and this document takes account of the feedback to this extensive consultation.

1.5 Status and Purpose of Document

1.5.1 St Edmundsbury Borough Council planning policy states that Development Briefs will be required for sites which by virtue of size, location, or the proposed mix of uses are determined by the Local Planning Authority to require a master planning approach. This site is allocated in the Rural Vision 2031 local plan document for housing, community and/or village hall facilities and open space.

1.5.2 The Borough Council planning policy for this site states that the final housing numbers will be informed through the production of a Development Brief "which will consider the amount of land available for development, the location and types of uses on the site, the access arrangements, and the design and landscaping."

1.5.3 This Development Brief sets out how the ideas that have been worked on locally will be combined with the Borough Council's planning policy requirements to provide a framework that will produce a high quality sustainable development that is in accordance with

planning policy, planning law, and meets the aims and needs of the village.

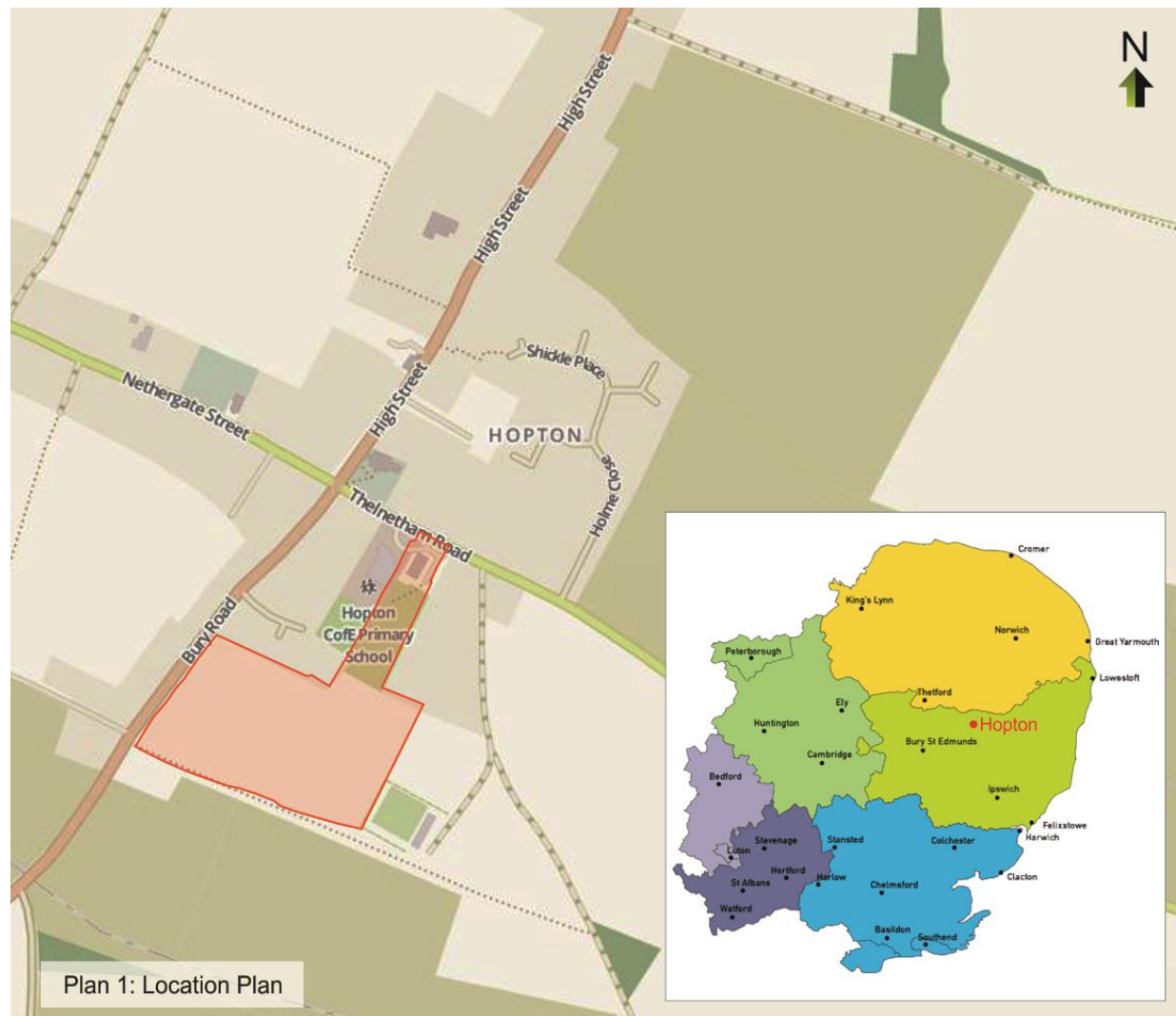


1.6 Scope of Development Brief

1.6.1 This Development Brief assesses the following:

- The national and local planning policy relevant to the proposal;
- The background information that affects the design of the development including:
 - The current use of the site;
 - Community facilities and requirements;
 - Trees;
 - Drainage;
 - Highways access and circulation;
 - Ground conditions;

- Historic environment and archaeology;
- Utility services;
- Ecology.
- Constraints and Opportunities
- The proposals for the site including:
 - The layout and design of the development;
 - The village hall;
 - The doctors surgery;
 - Amenity space and recreational uses;
 - The primary school;
 - Parking;
 - The recycling area;
 - Housing;
 - Traffic access and movement;
 - Ecology;
 - Drainage and utilities;
 - Landscaping;
 - Historic Environment;
 - Sustainability.



Plan 1: Location Plan

2.0 Planning Policy

Planning policy at national and local levels

guides what can be developed on the site.

2.1 National Planning Policy and Guidance

2.1.1 This is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. It supports development that is sustainable, which defined as development that contributes to social, economic and environmental objectives.

2.2 St Edmundsbury Core Strategy December 2010

2.2.1 The Core Strategy (policy CS4) defines Hopton, and twelve other villages, as a Local Service Centres. In these villages small scale housing and employment development will be encouraged. Growth will be dependent on the environmental and infrastructure capacity of the village.

2.3 Rural Vision 2031

2.3.1 The Rural Vision local plan document has been adopted as planning policy by the Borough Council. Policy RV21 allocates the site for development to comprise housing, community, and/or village hall facilities and open space. If new facilities are developed on the site of the existing village hall a higher level of housing may be feasible if appropriate contributions are made to the delivery of new facilities.



2.3.2 The Rural Vision sets out a numbers of issues to be addressed in the development including:

- Ecology, including impact on European protected sites;
- Links to the village centre;
- Footway links;
- Transport and traffic;
- Landscaping;
- Open space;
- Primary school expansion;
- Early years education;
- Drainage;
- Historic assets and archaeology;

2.3.3 Community facilities and/or a village hall are to be included in the development, as is a new doctor's surgery, if required, and new open space.

2.4 Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Local Plan, Joint Development Management Policies February 2015

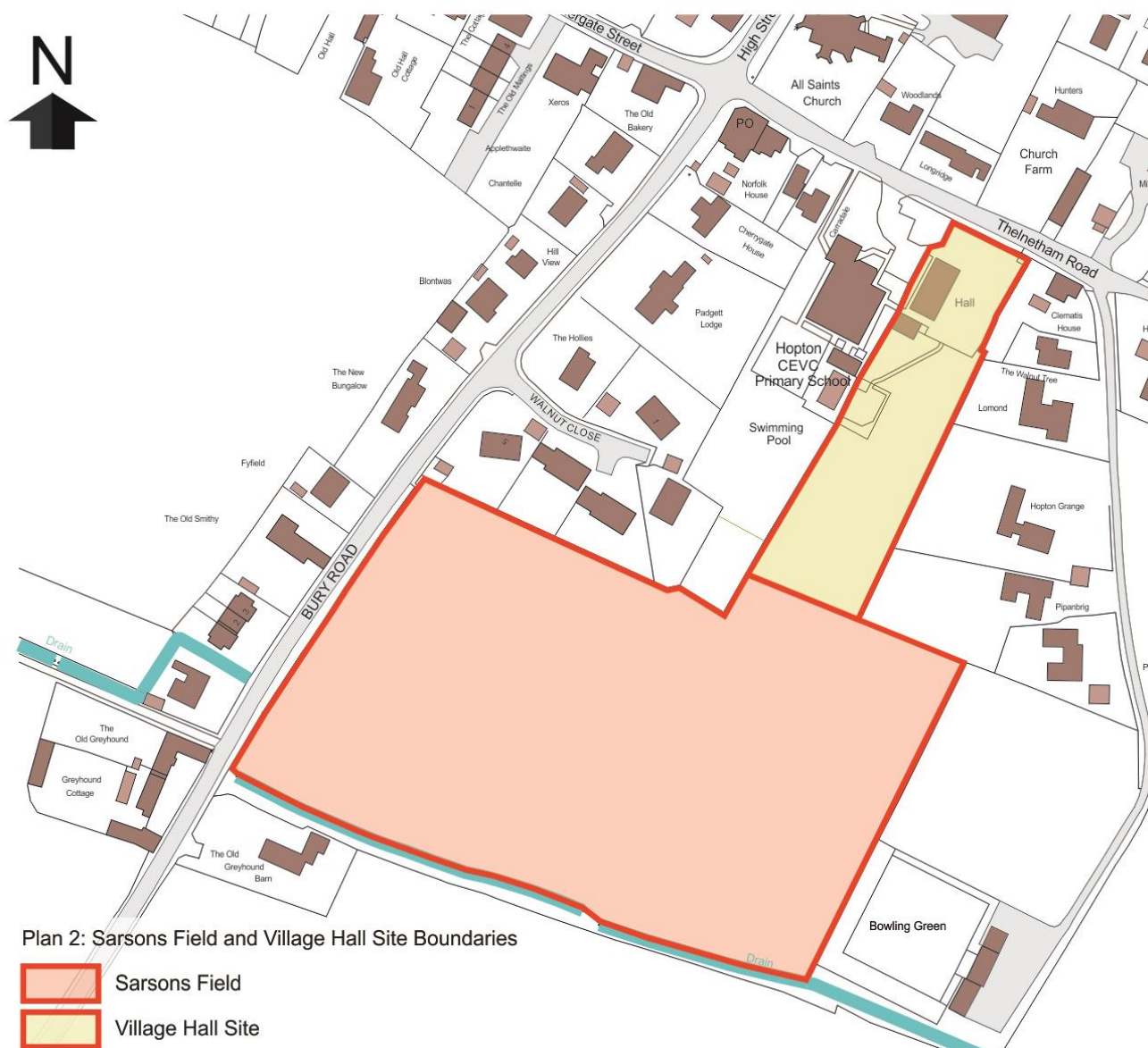
2.4.1 This document contains policies for assessing planning applications in the Borough.

2.5 Affordable Housing

2.5.1 The Core Strategy Policy CS5, and the Borough Councils Joint Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (October 2013) set out that a housing development of the scale proposed in this Development Brief should seek to deliver 30% of the homes as affordable housing. Council policy states that affordable housing will be made available primarily to those with a local connection to the area.

2.6 Planning for Open Space

2.6.1 The Councils Supplementary Planning Document for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities December 2012 sets out the requirements for open space and recreational facilities for new development.



3.0 Site Background Information

3.1 Site Description, Setting and Current Uses

3.1.1 The site is around 3.25 hectares in size. It slopes gently down from north to south. The site contains, and is close to, village facilities and community buildings. As illustrated on plan 2, the site comprises two distinct parts; Sarsons Field to the south and Hopton Village Hall and playing field to the north.

3.1.2 Sarsons Field is a single arable field with few constraining features except for its boundary hedges and trees. It is roughly rectangular in shape and has road frontage to the west with the Bury Road (B111). This road frontage contains a ditch and an informal footpath. On the opposite side of Bury Road are low density houses and bungalows fronting the road. To the south of Sarsons Field are buildings used by Revell Engineering, and open countryside. A public footpath runs along the hedge and ditch that mark this boundary.

3.1.3 To the east of Sarsons Field is the village bowls club which has a range of buildings. To the north west are bungalows in Walnut Close which is a small cul-de-sac. To the north of Sarsons Field is the Primary School, village hall site and to the north east houses on Shortgrove Lane, which also provides access to the bowls club. Adjacent to Sarsons Field, on the school site, the school has created a wildlife area. Trees



and hedges form the boundaries of the site to the east, south and north.

3.1.4 Viewed from Bury Road Sarsons Field appears with built development to the north, south, and to the west of the field. This gives an enclosed village character. When travelling north on the Bury Road the village church is glimpsed. When travelling south on Bury Road the buildings around the field are prominent. The eastern part of Sarsons Field has the bowls club with its flag poles and buildings visible to the east. To the south views over rolling countryside and the distant Church at Market Weston provide a more open rural character with more isolated development.

3.1.5 The village hall site is owned by village organisations. As well as the village hall building and associated storage buildings, there are twenty seven car parking spaces, six recycling bins, a youth shelter, a children's playground and grassed area with a small village football pitch that is used by the school. The village hall site has direct access to the north onto Thelnetham Road, and there are houses beyond this road. To the east of the village hall site beyond a hedge and trees are houses, to the west is the Primary School. To the south is Sarsons Field separated from the village hall site by a row of trees. The village hall site's character is defined by the functional village hall and school buildings to the north and west.

3.1.6 The village of Hopton is centred on the cross roads formed by Bury Road, High Street, Thelnetham Road and Nethergate Street. At the crossroads are a village shop with a post office and a church. The more historic parts of the village are along High Street and Nethergate Street, and the north side of Thelnetham Road, and these are defined by the designated Conservation Area.

3.1.7 The development in the village is very mixed in style and age, with traditional homes often widely spaced with gaps between them filled with more modern homes. The development surrounding the site is low density, and the architecture is simple. The exception is in the High Street where development is denser, more traditional, and where there are a number of more substantial and distinct homes. In the main businesses and community buildings are located along the High Street and Thelnetham Road.

3.1.8 Fen Street to the west is considered part of the village albeit that it's general character is distinctly different, having a more rural feel characterised by a looser grain of development and the narrow lane.

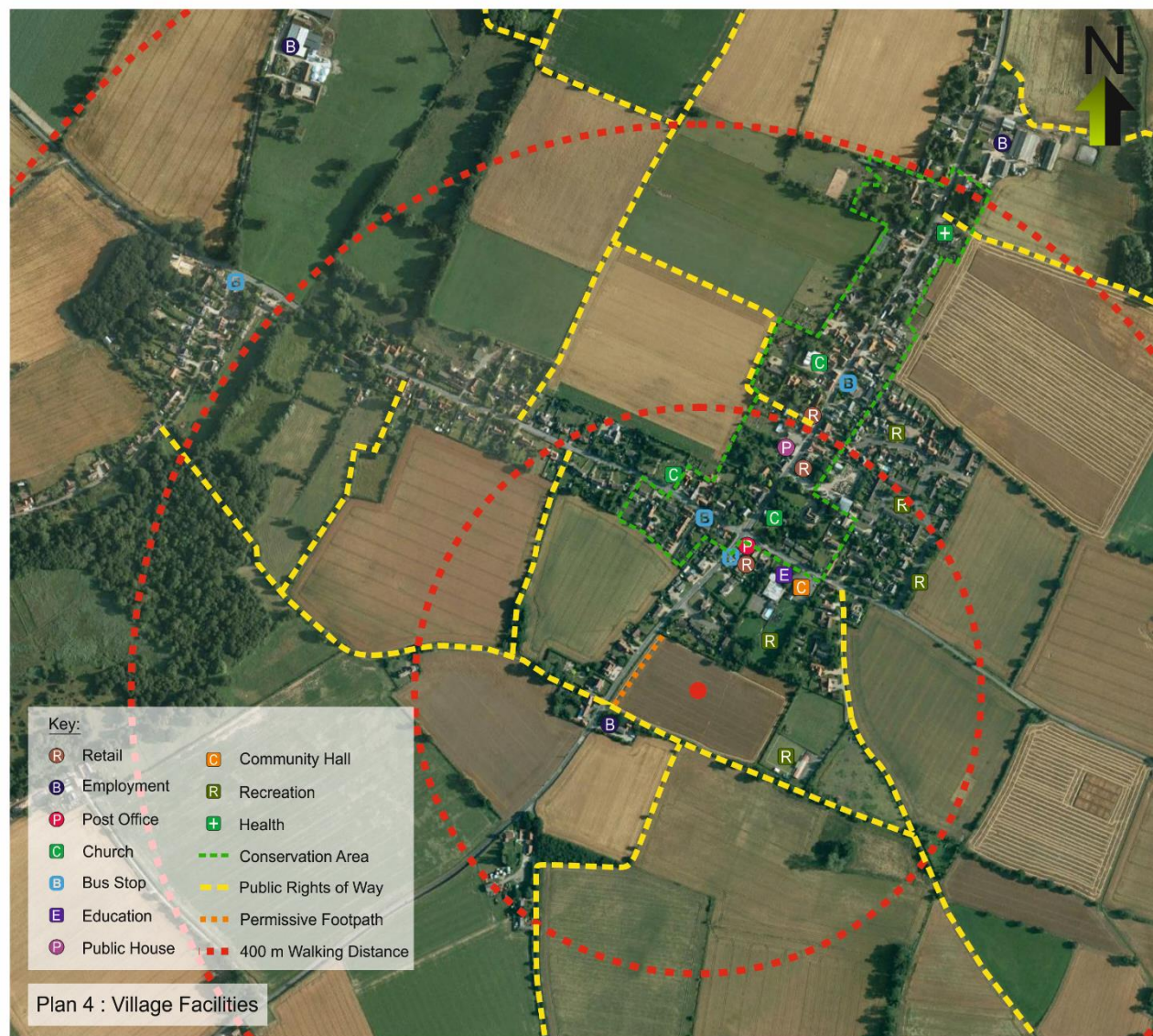
3.1.9 Holme Close off the Thelnetham Road is a more modern estate characterised by homes in a spacious setting with a regular pattern of development.



3.2 Community Facilities

3.2.1 The existing community facilities relevant to this proposal include the doctor's surgery, which is currently in a privately owned doctor's house in the High Street. This surgery is now inappropriate for the village. It has insufficient parking, with the majority of the parking in an unmade, and unlit field entrance used with the neighbouring landowner's permission. The surgery needs to be relocated to a more appropriate building to ensure continuity of service in the short term because the existing surgery is proposed to close. The desire of the village, Borough Council, the local health authority, the local MP, the local County Councillor, and the surgery, is for a new and better surgery on a site where the continued occupation and operation of the doctor's will be sustained.

3.2.2 The existing village hall is a brick building some 21 metres by 10 metres. It has a large function area, toilets, a kitchen and storage. It is located adjacent to the school, and has 27 parking spaces to the east. The building is well used and is important to the village. Following assessments carried out by village organisations the building is considered to be too small and inflexible with insufficient car parking. It is also recognised that due to its age the building will require significant updating in the short to medium term.



3.2.3 The village hall is used by the village

Primary School, and a pre school known as Hopton Littlelots which operates there five days a week. The pre school service needs to continue, and its ability to operate alongside other village hall activities needs to be improved through the provision of more inside space.

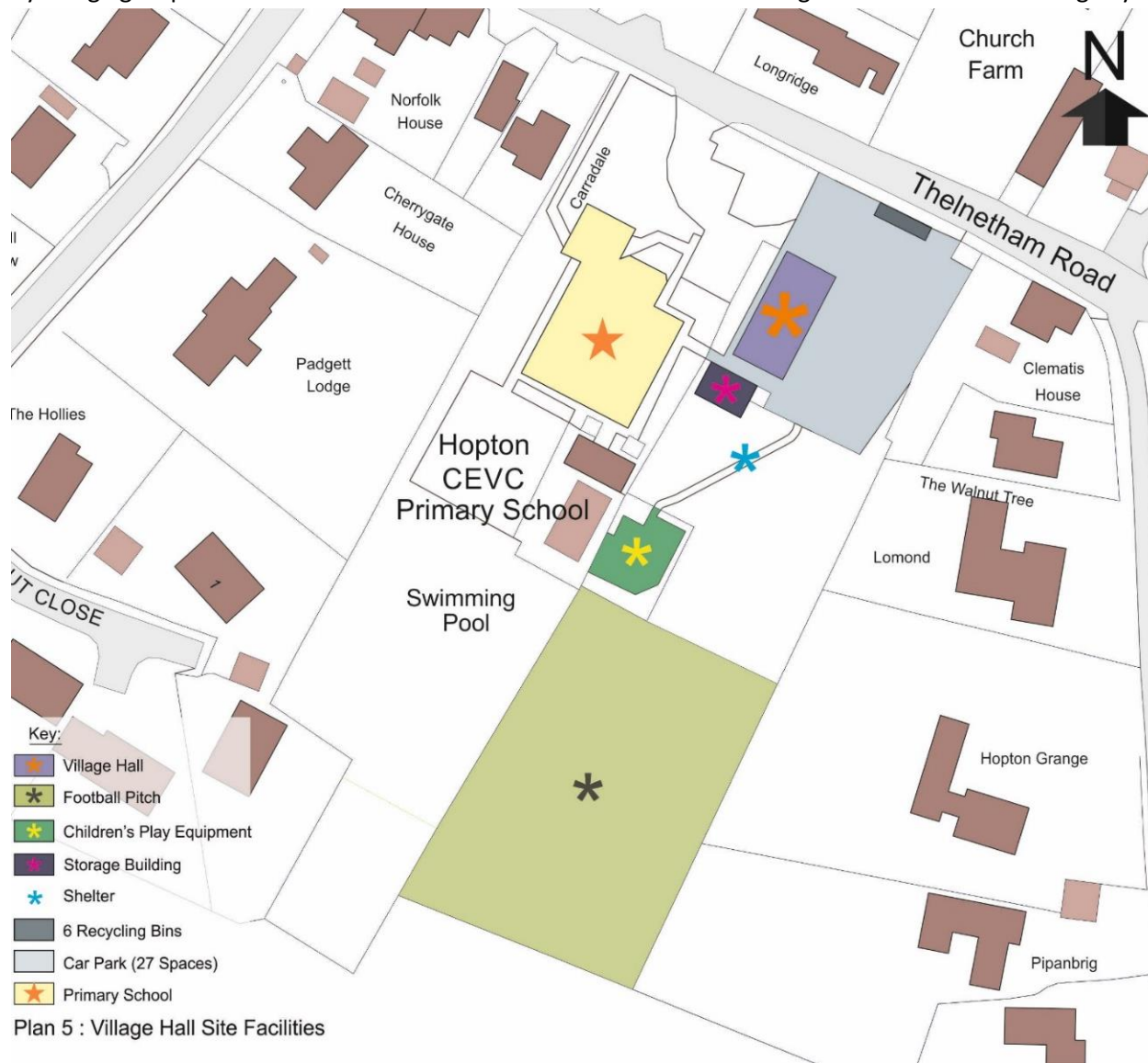


3.2.4 There are 6 recycling bins on the road frontage with the Thelnetham Road. These are an important source of income for the village. They are a well located facility which means they operate effectively and are easy to use. This provision should continue near the village hall.

3.2.5 To the south of the village hall is a children’s playground with play equipment. The rest of the village hall site is grassed, with a small shelter at the northern end, and a football pitch some 44 metres by 30 metres in size. This pitch is used by the adjacent primary school. This playing field is considered too small to meet

local needs by the expanding village school, and by village groups.

3.2.6 The primary school is academically successful having been rated “Outstanding” by



Ofstead in May 2013. The school has recently been expanded by two year groups. This has increased the amount of traffic at pick up and drop off times adding to congestion on the Thelnetham Road, and around the Village Hall. Improved parking provision, and improved access to the school would help relieve congestion.

3.2.7 The development proposed in the Borough Councils Rural Vision Policy RV 21 seeks to improve the village facilities through the delivery of housing.

3.3 Trees

3.3.1 Whilst Sarsons Field is open to Bury Road the remainder of the boundaries have intermittent hedges which give privacy to the surrounding neighbours. The trees on the site have been assessed by arboricultural consultants and classified according to the British Standard assessment methodology. The arboricultural reports shows that the most significant trees are two to the north west of the village hall, one along the boundary of the school to the south of the play area, and two along the southern boundary of Sarsons Field. The Oak and commemorative cherry trees to the front of the school contribute to visual amenity on Thelnetham Road. A tree survey is included in Appendix 1. The survey identifies the root protection areas of existing trees, and this information allows new development to be

located where it will not adversely affect these trees, or where necessary impacts will be minimised in line with recognised arboricultural standards.

3.4 Drainage

3.4.1 The location of foul sewerage infrastructure has been assessed in order that the development can be connected to mains sewerage. Mains sewerage is available in the locality and can meet the needs of the development.

3.4.2 The suitability of the ground for soakaways has been investigated and found to be acceptable removing the need for surface water to drain to sewers. The drainage can be designed to provide local betterment by addressing surface water drainage problems on the site, particularly to the south-of the site, and to ensure that the water that drains into the wider environment is of appropriate quality.

3.4.3 The scheme's drainage strategy adopts Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) measures to ensure the most appropriate water management approach for the development. Further information is contained in Appendix 2.

3.4.4 The drainage for the development will ensure that the current discharge rate from the site does not increase, and therefore there will be no change to the nearby Fen in this regard.

Road and drainage construction in the development will incorporate measures that would intercept any potential pollutants so they do not change the water quality of the Fen.

3.5 Highways, Access and Circulation

3.5.1 Transport Planning Associates (TPA) have assessed the existing transport conditions in order to inform the design of the new development. Their statement is in Appendix 3. The site has frontage to the Bury Road, and the Thelnetham Road. There is a reasonable network of footways around the village, however the site frontage with the Bury Road does not have a footpath. Public rights of way run east and west from the site, and along the southern boundary of the site. These lead into the surrounding countryside (as shown on plan 4) and provide good opportunities for recreation. A combination of new footways and links to existing Public Rights of Way associated with the development will help to create a village walk which ensures users are provided with a route which avoids Market Weston Fen.

3.5.2 Parking of vehicles around the Bury Road and Thelnetham Road junction causes problems for the passage of vehicles. There is a bus stop at this junction.

3.5.3 Traffic surveys show that vehicles on average exceed the speed limit along the Bury and Thelnetham Roads.

3.5.4 The development is to be designed to reduce the impact of traffic through a combination of physical and management measures.

3.6 Ground Conditions

3.6.1 A study (in Appendix 4) shows that there is no significant potential sources of contamination on the site. This will be monitored as part of the development process.

3.7 Historic Environment and Archaeology

3.7.1 The historic parts of the village are generally along High Street, Nethergate Street, and the north side of Thelnetham Road. These historic areas are in the village Conservation Area. The northern boundary of the village hall site abuts the Conservation Area. The only listed buildings in close proximity to the site are a grade 2 listed house on the opposite side of Thelnetham Road to the village hall, and the grade 1 Church of All Saints at the crossroads. Proposals will have regard to the proximity of the Conservation Area and listed buildings and, in particular, views into and out of the Conservation Area. Regard will be had to the setting of Market Weston Church which is prominent to the south of the site.

3.7.2 The site is in an area of potentially high archaeological importance. A geophysical survey has therefore been undertaken. The



results of this have been assessed by Suffolk County Council who prepared a programme of trenching of the site to investigate the archaeology further. The geophysical survey has shown that possible archaeological features such as rubbish tips and ditches exist on Sarsons Field. The trenching work has been carried out on Sarsons and shows that there is little evidence of past land use on the site, and no further work is recommended. The village hall site has not been trenched because it is in a more intensive use and contains buildings. It will be investigated in due course at an appropriate stage of the development process.

3.8 Utilities and Services

3.8.1 Research has shown that all necessary utility services are available and capacity exists for the development.

3.9 Ecology

3.9.1 The onsite ecology has been surveyed by Applied Ecology Ltd, and the impact of the development on nearby protected wildlife areas such as the nearby fens has been assessed so that wildlife can be protected. Market Weston Fen is part of the Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation, designated for its European nature conservation importance. Suffolk Wildlife Trust has been consulted because of their ownership of the nearby Market Weston Fen. The increase in

parking facilities at the village hall, and the new residential properties have been identified as factors which could lead to an increase in visitors to the fen which could have an impact on the habitat of this area.

3.9.2 The ecology on Sarsons Field and the village hall site has been assessed and the ecological importance of the neighbouring areas such as the school nature area has been considered.

3.9.3 The development provides opportunities to improve the wildlife value of the site and can minimise potential adverse impacts on the integrity of the Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation.

4.0 Local Engagement and Decisions

4.1 Local decisions and engagement have had an important influence on the proposals in this Development Brief.

4.2 There have been plans for over 10 years to improve village facilities. In 2010 a village referendum sought support for the sale of the village hall and its land for development to pay for a new hall. This proposal was rejected, so it is not now proposed to put housing on the village hall site but to retain the site for community uses.

4.3 The Parish Council positively supports the development of the site and has asked the Borough Council that it is developed early in the St Edmundsbury Vision 2031 plan period in order to deliver a range of benefits. A Village Development Advisory Group was formed in the autumn of 2013 to consider the development. This group comprises representatives of the Parish Council, the Village Hall Management Committee, and neighbours of the site, among others. The work done by this group was important in considering in detail the issues around the development and in gathering selected local views. This work resulted in the production of a concept plan for the development. The proposals in this Development Brief are based on this concept plan.

4.4 In 2013 Pigeon were asked to assist the landowner with the development of Sarsons Field. Pigeon have held a number of regular

meetings with the Parish Council, Village Hall Management Committee, School, doctors and others.



4.5 In early 2014 at the Public Examination of the St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031 changes were suggested to Vision 2031 to ensure that it met with the local aspirations that came from the work carried out by the Village Development Advisory Group, supported by the Parish Council and Village Hall Management Committee. These changes, supported by the Planning Inspector, resulted in the village hall site being included in the development allocation, and more flexibility provided in the policy for the delivery and location of community facilities.

4.6 A public exhibition was held in March 2014 in the village hall. This was organised by Pigeon and was very well attended. This provided comments on many issues including:

- The replacement or extension of the village hall;
- The pros and cons of allowing vehicles to travel through the development between Bury Road and Thelnetham Road;
- Drainage;
- Traffic congestion around the school, parking and speeding in the village;
- Congestion at the school;
- The type and tenure of new housing;
- Impact of the development on neighbouring properties;
- Local infrastructure;
- The doctors surgery;
- The requirements of the pre school;
- Congestion around the village shop.

4.7 This consultation was very important in obtaining the wider views of the village. In addition to this consultation Pigeon has continued to hold regular meetings with the Parish Council and other village groups and organisations to obtain local views.

4.8 On the 25th April Hopton was visited by the Local MP Matthew Hancock, and the County Councillor for the area Cllr Joanna Spicer. They heard about the development proposals and were supportive of the principle.

4.9 Work up to June 2014 resulted in a village poll being held, and in this poll support was gained for the sale of village land for a new doctor's surgery, and for the provision of new village hall facilities.

4.10 The work to prepare the various technical studies in the Appendixes to this Development Brief has involved various consultations with statutory bodies and other organisations such as Suffolk Wildlife Trust where Applied Ecology has discussed the proposals with those responsible for the Market Weston Fen. These discussions have informed the ecology measures proposed as part of the development scheme.

4.11 This engagement has led to the following timeline of work to date and to come:

- 2000 – 2010 plans discussed for new village facilities including a new hall;

- 2010 village referendum rejects the proposal to sell the village hall site for housing to fund new facilities;
- 2011-2014 St Edmundsbury Borough Council put in place new local planning policy;
- 2013 Pigeon start working for the landowner of Sarsons Field, and start local community engagement;
- Summer 2014 Development Brief is prepared;
- Summer/autumn 2014 consultation on the Development Brief, including a public exhibition;
- 18th May Update Exhibition in the Village Hall.
- Spring 2015 – submission of Development Brief to the Borough Council for adoption;
- Summer 2015 - submission of a planning application (the planning application cannot be approved until the Development Brief is adopted);
- 2016 onwards build development to allow the timely relocation of the new doctor's surgery.

5.0 Opportunities and Constraints

5.1 The background research on the site identifies a number of opportunities for development and constraints that will influence the final proposals.

5.2 Opportunities

- The position of Sarsons Field next to the school, village hall and other facilities provides the opportunity and space for a high quality layout and the provision of a larger central village hub of facilities;
- Recognition in Borough Council planning policy that Hopton is a suitable location for housing and other development;
- Recognition in the Borough Council planning policy that developing more than 25 homes can provide improved village facilities;
- Recognition in the village that better community facilities are required, and that a proactive attitude to new housing can deliver these facilities;
- The provision of market and affordable housing to meet local needs in a low density development, which accords with village character, and is accessible to the village facilities;
- Provision of house types required in the village such as new bungalows ;
- Provision of an extension to the village hall and the parking area to provide better facilities;

- Securing a new doctors surgery in a more central location in the village to retain the service locally;

- Provision of a new larger sports field to provide better open space for the village and the school;



- Provision of an improved entrance to the Primary School from the village hall site;
- Better management of traffic, as advised earlier in the Brief, at school pick up and drop off times to ease congestion at these times;
- Inside the boundaries the site is relatively free from constraints which provides flexibility for the layout;
- Road frontage to the Bury and Thelnetham Road suitable to provide safe vehicular access and some frontage development;
- Improvements to traffic controls and new traffic calming at the entrance to the village on Bury and Thelnetham roads;
- Extension to Bury Road footpath and existing footpaths to achieve better connections in the village;
- Network of existing footpaths which provides opportunities for village walks;
- Improved surface water management to prevent localised drainage problems on Sarsons Field;
- Adequate Anglian Water sewerage infrastructure locally to accommodate the development if a pumping station is provided;
- Enhanced ecology and landscaping on Sarsons Field;
- Views to open countryside from the site;
- Existing trees and hedges which provide a mature and attractive setting;
- Sarsons Field is free from archaeological

constraints.

5.3 Constraints

- Strong desire in the village to keep the village hall site for village amenities and a village hall, concern among some local people about losing the existing village hall;
- Need for the housing development to provide funds for the village hall;
- Strong local views to retain the recycling bins in the current location because they are easy to use and provide valuable funds for the village;
- Homes to the east of the village hall site are sensitive to the village hall being moved to the east nearer to them;
- Need to try to achieve continuity of operation of the village hall to retain local services such as Littlelots;
- Need to locate the village hall so that easy access can be provided to the primary school;
- Need for more open space and for this to be located so that it is easily accessible to the school;
- Need to provide an environment on the village hall site that allows safe school access;
- Desire to not create a “racetrack” by allowing vehicular traffic between the village hall site and Sarsons Field;

- Low density character of the housing in the area will influence the development on Sarsons Field;
- Sensitive treatment is required where the boundaries of the site are adjacent to existing residential properties in Walnut Close, Bury Road, and Shortgrove Lane;
- Current need to relocate the doctors surgery as soon as possible;
- Sensitive treatment is required to the rural boundaries of the site and the boundary with the bowls club;
- Important trees on the site boundaries should be protected;
- Need for sensitive treatment of the boundary with the primary school and its wildlife area;
- Localised surface water drainage issues in the south west corner of the site;
- The Conservation Area and listed buildings in Thelnetham Road;
- Managing the impact of the development on the nearby Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens;
- Developing within the constraints of local drainage infrastructure;
- Views to open countryside;
- Need to provide an attractive village entrance along Bury Road.
- Speeding traffic along Bury and Thelnetham Road, and congestion on Thelnetham Road;
- Close proximity to the Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens Special Area of

Conservation;

- Possibility of onsite archaeology;
- Local sewerage infrastructure capacity;
- Need for surface water management to prevent localised flooding.



6.0 Development Concept

6.1 This section sets out the development concept. The concept has been arrived at as a result of local input, the analysis set out above and responds to the constraints and opportunities of the site and the surrounding area. The concept is illustrated on plan 8 below.

6.2 Layout and Design

6.2.1 The key to achieving a high quality development that recognises the constraints and opportunities of the site, and the views of local people is the layout. This section firstly considers the layout, and then the individual elements of the concept.

6.2.2 The layout proposed keeps the village hall, its parking, the children's playground, and the recycling bins on the existing village hall site. It proposes an improvement to the village hall and an increase in parking provision. They all will be centrally located and this meets the aspirations of local people. The housing and the new village green is proposed on Sarsons Field. The new doctors will be mainly on the village hall site so that it is central to the village. This layout is supported by the work carried out to date by the village organisations, and the background work carried out on the site. Following discussions with Suffolk County Council, the highways authority, road access is proposed from the Bury Road into Sarsons Field, and from the

Thelnetham Road into the village hall site because these areas provide the opportunity for safe access. There will be a route for pedestrians and cycles between the two sites but not for vehicles. Vehicles will not be permitted to travel between the village hall site and Sarsons Field due to local concerns about rat running and traffic safety.

6.2.3 The layout creates a hub of community facilities around the school and extended village hall. The hub embraces a new school entrance, village hall, the existing playground and the new doctor's surgery which will only be a short distance away to create a cluster of community facilities in a central location within the village. The village walks will be signposted from this area. As a result this area is likely to become a local meeting point and has been designed accordingly.

6.2.4 The layout on Sarsons Field has the new village green centrally located as a focal point, and close to the school for easy access. The housing is set around the village green in a low density development that allows the development of a range of house types.

6.2.5 The layout also provides flexibility to provide sufficient housing to generate funding to assist in the delivery of village facilities.

6.2.6 A local architect resident in the village has contributed notably to the design of the house

types proposed as well as the layout and content of the proposed new village hall.

6.3 Village Hall

6.3.1 The options for the village hall have generated a significant number of comments in the consultation to date. It is proposed to refurbish and enlarge the existing village hall to the south of the existing building. This meets the following objectives:

- Allows better continuity of operation of the existing village hall which is important for the various regular users of the building including Littletotts and the Primary School, and provides continuity of revenue generated by these users;
- The village polls and consultation have shown there is significant local feeling that the village hall site should be retained for community uses;
- Moving the village hall to the eastern side of the site was considered however this would increase its impact on neighbouring homes, and the surrounding trees;
- The enlargement and refurbishment would be more cost effective than a complete rebuild;
- Locating the enlarged hall to the south of the existing building is logical as the school is to the west, Thelnetham Road is to the north and the parking is to the east;

- Size of improved hall can be designed to meet the village needs;
- New village hall extension can be designed to relate well to the new school entrance and existing playground.

6.4 Doctor's Surgery

6.4.1 The existing doctor's surgery is too small, and there is significant concern in the village, in local government, and the NHS that the service will not continue when it can no longer operate from the existing premises in a private house. A new surgery is required to meet the doctors and villages requirements.

6.4.2 A new doctor's is proposed to meet the requirements of the existing practice which would have provision for around three consulting rooms, an assessment room and a pharmacy.

6.4.3 The doctors is proposed to the south of the village hall on the village hall site. This allows the creation of a central hub for the community facilities. The recent village poll supported selling an area of this land for the doctors.

6.4.4 The detailed design of the surgery will take into account:

- The proximity to the primary school and trees, particularly the ash tree on the schools eastern boundary;
- The need for a surgery of an appropriate

- size for the village;
- Safe school access.

6.5 Amenity Space and Recreational Uses



6.5.1 The existing village sports pitch is at the southern end of the village hall site. This is too small at 44 metres by 30 metres to serve the needs of the village. New open space needs to be provided alongside the new housing in accordance with Borough Council planning policies. Land will be levelled to provide a new village green. Following discussions with the head teacher of the village primary school this will be of sufficient size to accommodate a new junior sized football pitch which can be used by the school.

6.5.2 Due to its good location next to the school and village hall the existing children's playground will be retained, and there may be a

need to enhance it as a result of the additional population generated by this development.

6.5.3 The benefits of putting the village green and sports pitch immediately south of the village hall and school are:

- It provides an excellent location for a new village green and when required a junior sized football pitch for the adjacent primary school;
- It will be centrally located next to existing village infrastructure;
- It will provide a location for village functions;
- It provides the most convenient and easy access for the school;
- It is accessible to all those who use the existing pitch;
- More space is available than on the site of the existing pitch;
- Open space in this location reduces the built development next to the bungalows in Walnut Close;
- The larger recreation area will provide the opportunity to divert some recreational activities away from the Fen, therefore providing wider positive benefits;
- The current pitch is next to the schools wildlife area, and causes no harm to this area, this relationship will be preserved with the new village green, and provides the opportunity to maintain the schools wildlife area without detrimental impact;

- The existing children’s playground will be retained.

6.5.4 It should be stressed that the main function of the new amenity space is to provide a Village Green for Hopton and in so doing create a recreational area which is suitable for a range of uses typical to village life.

6.5.5 It is the intention that village green will be managed by the Village Hall Management Committee, Parish Council or a management company will be set up to manage the open space in the development. Alternatively it will be adopted by the Borough Council.

6.6 Primary School



6.6.1 Thelnetham Road outside the primary school, suffers from congestion when children arrive and depart. More parking will be provided on the village hall site to assist in managing this

problem, and a larger sports pitch will be provided on Sarsons Field. The development will:

- Provide safe access to the school from the new parking with a new entrance along the eastern boundary of the Primary School. There will be a green gap between the new parking and the school boundary;
- Provide the new larger sports pitch in close proximity to the school, with a safe walking route between school and the pitch;
- The boundary fencing between the school and the new parking will be agreed with the school;
- Ensure that the new doctor’s surgery is appropriately sited and designed to respect the position of the school;
- Mean the new larger village hall could be used by the school.

6.6.2 The County Council has confirmed in a meeting with the school headmaster, and Pigeon that there are no County Council objections to the Concept Plan on the grounds of potential school growth.

6.7 Parking

6.7.1 There is currently insufficient parking for the school, village hall, church and the village shop. 27 spaces are currently provided. It is proposed to provide more spaces on the village

hall site for the school and village hall which would be accessed from Thelnetham Road. This will meet the Parish Council’s requirements for the maximum number of spaces for the village hall and school. Parking spaces for doctor’s staff and patients will be provided on Sarsons Field next to the surgery. These spaces would be accessed from Bury Road. This will satisfy the requirements for the village hall, Primary School and doctors. The additional parking will provide space for users of the village shop and church. The new parking will be designed so that it has a satisfactory relationship with the children’s play area and primary school boundary.

6.7.2 Appropriate parking will be provided for the new houses to accord with Suffolk County Council guidance.

6.8 Recycling Area

6.8.1 At the north of the village hall site against Thelnetham Road is the village recycling area. A facility of the current size will be retained on this part of the site.

6.9 Housing

6.9.1 The housing is proposed to be a mix of market and affordable housing and a mix of sizes and types. The housing will be developed as follows:

- Developed at a low density to respect the character of the surrounding area;
- There will be around 37 new homes. This is greater than the indicative capacity of 25 homes, and the additional homes will allow a contribution to be made to the new village facilities;
- Homes on the Bury Road frontage will mainly face the road, and will be a mix of designs to reflect the homes opposite;
- To avoid any overbearing impact low density bungalows will be located next to the existing low density bungalows in Walnut Close;
- Housing will not be located on the village hall site because of the local objections to this;
- Low density housing with larger gardens sensitive to the village edge will be set on the site's southern boundary and next to the Bowls Club to respect the setting of the adjacent countryside and the Club;
- Low density housing with larger gardens next to the boundary hedges and trees will protect these assets and in regard to the site's southern boundary will overlook the nearby public footpath;
- The housing will be developed in a traditional style, with traditional materials already seen in the village such as brick, flint, render and pantiles;
- The homes will be single storey and two storeys, to respect local character;
- Affordable housing will be provided in line

with the Borough Council requirements and if possible will be made available to local people;

- The mix of affordable homes has been discussed and agreed with the Borough Council, and is likely to comprise:
 - 2 affordable 1 bed apartments;
 - 5 affordable 2 bed terraces;
 - 4 affordable 3 bed semi-detached or terraced homes;
- The mix of private homes will comprise bungalows, semi-detached and mainly detached homes.

6.10 Traffic Access and Circulation

6.10.1 A new pedestrian footway will be created along the site frontage with the Bury Road. This will improve access for the existing and proposed homes and businesses on the Bury Road. This footpath will link into the wider rights of way network. A footpath (known as footpath number 9) runs immediately to the south of Sarsons Field and will be improved along the southern boundary of the site. A route for pedestrians will be created through the village hall site to the south east corner of Sarsons Field where it will connect to footpath 9.

6.10.2 From the site a footpath leads west from the south west corner of the site. Footpath 9 runs along the southern boundary of the site and leads east. The road access onto Thelnetham Road is close to the Shortgrove

Lane which provides further access to the surrounding rights of way network, and onto rights of way where cycling is permitted.

6.10.3 Pedestrian and cycle access will be provided around the site, and between the village hall site and Sarsons Field. Access between these two areas has been positioned so that it only has an effect on trees which are of low arboricultural value. There will be a footway on one side of the road running through Sarsons Field.

6.10.4 There will be two vehicular accesses into the site. A vehicular access from Bury Road will provide access to the housing and the doctor's surgery parking, and the open space. A vehicular access from Thelnetham Road will provide access to the village hall and play facilities. Space and visibility is available in both the Bury Road and the Thelnetham Road for the accesses to comply with the appropriate County Council, and national design and safety requirements.

6.10.5 As a result of the public consultation and highways advice received there will not be direct vehicular access between Sarsons Field and the Village Hall site to prevent through traffic. Bollards will be placed on the footway and cycleway between the village hall site and Sarsons Field to prevent vehicles travelling between the village hall site and Sarsons Field.

6.10.6 Traffic speed surveys have shown that vehicles on the Bury Road and Thelnetham Road routinely exceed the speed limit. In an endeavour to counter this traffic calming gateway features will be installed on both roads. Such measures are now commonly used to slow traffic. For example vehicle activated signs or other measures can be installed on both roads to warn drivers exceeding the speed limit.

6.10.7 The new development fronting Bury Road has been designed to slow traffic on the road. With the new footway, and development fronting the road drivers will recognise they are in a built up area, and this commonly changes driver behaviour, and leads to lower speeds. Lower speeds along the Bury and Thelnetham Roads will provide benefits to the surrounding area.

6.10.8 The road design in the development will include shared surfaces where low speed environments will be created in order to provide a good environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The potential for a new link to the Bowls Club will be provided to ensure that the development does not compromise the possible improvement of the Bowls Club in the future. In Sarsons Field the road will be constructed to adoptable standards, and so that heavy goods vehicles can negotiate the road without overhanging the verge or footpath. A pedestrian link will be created through the village hall site from the south of the existing car park to

Sarsons Field.

6.10.9 The layout of the facilities on the village hall site will create a well-connected hub of facilities with the new school entrance next to the children's playground, and next to the entrance to the extended village hall. This will allow children to move easily between the three areas.

6.11 Ecology

6.11.1 The development has been designed to protect the onsite ecology. An ecology assessment has shown that limited ecology on the site is confined to the hedges and trees along the site boundaries. These are to be protected by keeping building away from them. Existing habitats on the site can be enhanced with new hedging, bat, bird boxes and hedgehog shelters.

6.11.2 The Market Weston Fen to the west of the site is defined as a Special Area of Conservation. It is managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Among other things they have provided footways along public footpaths through the site. This fen is signposted in the village, and Council footpath signs highlight rights of way that lead into the fen. The Suffolk Wildlife Trust website advertises the fen, and sets out its location, available parking, and other details for visitors. Suffolk County Council have prepared leaflets that identify and promote walks through

the fen. The Councils policy for development in Hopton requires that proposals must avoid a damaging increase in visitors to the fens resulting from the development which would have an adverse impact on the integrity of the SAC.

6.11.3 Avoiding a damaging increase in visitors to a fen that is advertised as open to visitors by a number of different bodies requires careful consideration. The Councils Vision 2031 Habitats Regulation Assessment advises that providing alternative dog walking opportunities, and footpath links will help avoid possible impacts on the fen.

6.11.4 The ecology report prepared to inform this development brief concludes that increased recreational use of the fen is unlikely to adversely impact the plant species that are protected by the Special Area of Conservation designation or the Site of Special Scientific Interest designation.

6.11.5 The low likelihood of harm to the fen can be further reduced through the provision of a larger amount of good quality open space for the village with the new village green providing an alternative recreation area to the fen for local people.

6.11.7 Footpaths that take residents away from the fen can be better highlighted with signs illustrating a circular village walk. Walking

routes around the village will be displayed on two new interpretation boards next to the new village hall and village green. These will identify a circular walking route that avoids the fen. The Councils Vision 2031 Habitats Regulation Assessment considers that the new car parking and new houses could lead to a significant increase in visitors to the fen. By providing interpretation boards advertising walks that take visitors away from the fen, residents and visitors will be advised of the alternative walks around and away from the new development, at their point of departure. This will provide good opportunities for alternative dog exercise routes. A link will be provided, as shown on the Concept Plan below, to the footpath running along the southern boundary of Sarsons Field. A new footway will be provided along the road frontage of Sarsons Field.

6.11.8 Suffolk County Council promote walks in the area that start at Hopton. One of these walks is designed to pass through the fen and is called "Fen Walk." The information set out to promote walks around Hopton that avoid the fen will not include this walk.

6.11.9 The proposed new parking provision for the village is designed to cater for a number of existing village facilities in one central location. It is only ever likely to be fully utilised when, for example, functions are held at the new village hall. The increase in car parking will therefore be unlikely to lead to an increase in visitors to the

fen over and above the existing situation.

6.11.11 In summary the ecological proposals are:

- Subject to landowner agreement, to install footpath marker posts to direct users along the route of the footpath to the east of the village;
- Promote village walks that direct users away from the SAC/SSSI altogether and advertise these in appropriate locations, this will involve the creation of a link from the village hall to the south east corner of Sarsons Field including a bridge across the ditch, a new footpath along Bury Road on the western edge of the site, and improvements to the Public Right of Way where it runs along the southern boundary of Sarsons Field;
- Supplementary planting to be undertaken (gap up) where possible and appropriate to the site's existing hedgerows;
- Incorporate bird and/or bat roost features into the external fabric of the new dwelling houses and provide hedgehog shelters.

6.12 Drainage



6.12.1 Sewerage will be drained to the existing Anglian Water mains infrastructure. The development will require a pumping station on Sarsons Field to connect into the sewerage infrastructure in Thelnetham Road.

6.12.2 Assessments have shown that soakaways will work on the site to drain rain water. The soakaways will be designed so that surface water will drain from the site at a rate that will address localised flooding. This will

prevent the localised drainage problems that occur when water collects in the southern part of the site. The surface water drainage will be designed to clean surface water to prevent harm to the Market Weston Fen. Currently surface water from the village drains towards the fen. SUDS, modern methods of surface water control, will ensure that water from the new development will not harm ecology at the fen. The development will be designed so it does not cause harm to protected areas of water. A Flood Risk Assessment will be submitted with the planning application to meet the requirements of the Environment Agency and Suffolk County Council. The detailed design of the development will allow the ditches around the edges of the site to be maintained.

6.12.3 An assessment of utilities and services in the village has demonstrated that capacity exists to serve the proposed development.

6.12.4 The detailed planning application will set out how the sites surface water drainage will be designed and maintained for the lifetime of the development. Options for the maintenance of surface water drainage infrastructure include but are not limited to management companies or adoption by the drainage authorities. The sites surface water drainage will be designed so that it does not significantly increase the volume of water going to the SAC, and does not lead to flooding.

6.12.5 The Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service request that during the design for the proposal, consideration is given to access and water for fire-fighting. This will be addressed at the building regulations stage.

6.13 Landscaping

6.13.1 Landscaping will be an important part of the development. The landscape strategy for the site will seek to retain as much of the existing landscaping possible, and will soften the edges of the development, for example along the southern, western and eastern boundaries of Sarsons Field. The new village green will be framed with new landscaping.

6.13.2 The site will be developed with housing at a low density to accord with the character of the surrounding area. This will allow for front and rear gardens to the homes providing a well landscaped residential environment. Low density development will permit views through the site to the surrounding area. The existing boundary planting will be retained and enhanced except in one small area where it will be necessary to provide access between the village hall site and Sarsons Field. Development of this type will preserve the character of the footpath to the south of the site.

6.13.3 New housing will look onto a new village green, which will also be able to be used as a junior sized football pitch by the adjacent

primary school. New trees and hedges along the roads and among the houses will preserve and enhance the character of the area.

6.13.4 In summary the strategic landscaping will consist of:

- A new village green and associated planting as appropriate.
- Planting between the new homes and Bury Road.
- Planting along the southern boundary to soften and frame views to the development from the adjacent countryside.
- Some planting adjacent to the bowling green boundary.

6.14 Historic Environment



6.14.1 The proposed alteration to the village hall and its car park are considered unlikely to have any notable effect on the setting of the Conservation Area. By providing more space to the south of the existing hall in keeping with the existing structure little change will be experienced from Thelnetham Road in regard to the impact of any new village facilities. It is considered that even if it was felt that there was some impact then this would be outweighed by the public benefits accrued from the proposals.

6.14.2 To keep views of the church from Bury Road housing will be set back beyond the new footpath along Bury Road.

6.15 Sustainability

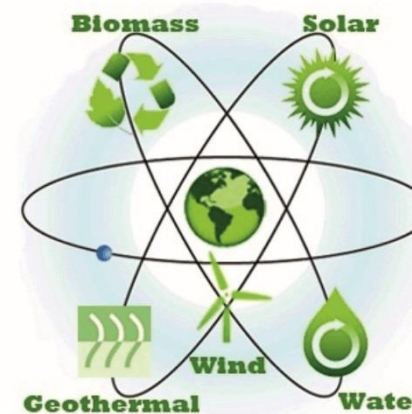
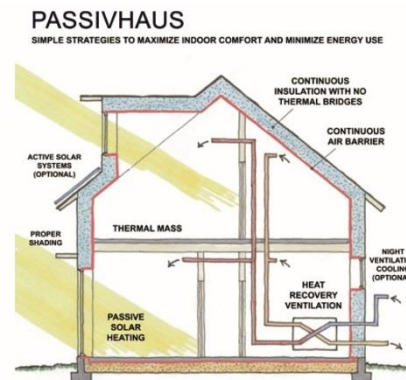
6.15.1 The energy performance of the buildings and the use of solar energy will be considered at the planning application stage. External lighting will be kept to the minimum required for safety to reduce light pollution and to increase energy efficiency.

6.15.2 The thermal performance and energy efficiency of the buildings will be considered at the application stage. However, amongst others, features that will be considered as part of the design will be sustainable building materials; a reduction in thermal bridging; air tight construction and efficient heating and hot water systems.

6.15.3 A site waste management plan shall be produced and implemented at construction stage. This will provide a toolkit for the contractor to reduce waste as far as is practical, as well as recycle all possible materials. All dwellings will be provided with waste and recycling bins in accordance with the local authority requirements.

6.15.4 As this site lies within one of the driest parts of the country, efficient use of water is important. Each dwelling will be designed and built to use a maximum of 105 litres of water per person per day.

6.15.5 The new development will seek to embrace sustainable construction techniques so as to enhance the sustainable credentials of the scheme. Building Regulations are based on the use of the Code for Sustainable Homes which incorporates the use of measures such as air source heat pumps and photo voltaics. In contrast, Passivhaus is an approach to construction based on high thermal insulation and natural ventilation. Construction costs associated with this building technique are understood to be less than achieving Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5. The “on cost” of maintaining a Passivhaus home is also lower than that of a new home constructed to Code Level 5. The sustainability credentials of the two construction approaches are considered to be closely comparable. As such the new development will explore the use of Passivhaus



construction techniques but in any event will meet the requirements of Building Regulations. At the time of development this is likely to mean that the new homes will be constructed to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 or 5.

6.16 Concept

6.16.1 The Concept Plan below shows the development that is described in the earlier parts of this section. It is the culmination of inputs from a wide variety of sources and represents a high quality addition to Hopton.

6.16.2 The village hall and its car park have both been improved. A new doctors is shown to the south of the village hall site.

6.16.3 The new village green is centrally positioned on Sarsons Field. Housing fronts Bury Road, the roads through the site and the countryside to the south.

6.16.4 Vehicular access is gained from Bury Road and Thelnetham Road. There is no vehicular access between the village hall site and Sarsons Field. The scheme's concept is designed to take traffic away from Thelnetham Road, particularly at school drop off and pick up times. The primary school is intending to introduce a new pedestrian entrance along its eastern boundary, near the swimming pool changing room building, and this will provide the opportunity to bring school traffic into the

village hall site. By managing vehicular use through its design approach Thelnetham Road will be relieved of school traffic. School buses, however, will continue to drop off and pick up children on Thelnetham Road and the introduction of a layby arrangement in front of the school to serve these buses can be explored.

6.16.5 Traffic calming gateway features on both Bury Road and Thelnetham Road will assist in creating a safer environment within the village for pedestrians and cyclists and in turn should encourage more non car trips within the village.

6.16.6 New landscaping is proposed around the edges of Sarsons Field, along the roads in the development and around the village green. The ecology of the site will be preserved by the retention of the site's existing landscaping features and will be enhanced through the provision of bird, bat and hedgehog accommodation and further extensive landscaping. Off-site provision has been made to ensure that the activity from the scheme does not have an adverse impact on the integrity of areas of nature conservation near to Hopton.

6.16.7 The site's drainage will incorporate SUDs features and ensure better management of the local water environment. Foul drainage will need to be pumped up to Thelnetham Road, hence the inclusion of a pumping station within the scheme's Concept Plan.

6.16.8 The opportunity has been taken to enhance facilities for the adjacent primary school both in regard to new safer access arrangements as well as improved recreation provision. The school will further benefit from the new village hall and its improved facilities.

6.16.9 A local architect resident in the village has contributed notably to the design of the house types proposed as well as the layout and content of the proposed new village hall and wider facilities. It is considered that these new facilities would not have an undue effect on the village's Conservation Area and that any impact, however slight, would be significantly outweighed by the public benefits generated by the proposals.

6.16.10 A range of sustainability measures have been incorporated within the design of the development to ensure the high quality of the scheme and its ability to make a notable contribution to the village.

- Key:**
- Residential Area
 - Proposed Frontages - Private Housing
 - Proposed Frontages - Private Bungalows
 - Proposed Frontages - Affordable Housing
 - Community Buildings
 - Proposed Road - see section 6.10
 - Access
 - New Pedestrian Route
 - Footway to be upgraded
 - Bridge - Approx. position see section 6.10
 - Link to footway
 - Existing Landscaping
 - Strategic Landscaping
 - Intermittent Landscaping
 - Village Green and Sports Pitch
 - Doctor's Car Park



Plan 8 : Concept

7.0 Legal and Financial

7.1.1 The landowner of Sarsons Field and Pigeon have agreed with the Parish Council that this development will provide direct funding towards new village facilities for example an enlarged village hall.

7.1.2 The Borough Councils planning policy states that the indicative capacity of the site is 25 homes, and that if the village hall and facilities were to be developed on the existing village hall site a higher level of housing could be feasible if contributions were secured towards the new facilities.

7.1.3 The new doctor's surgery will most likely be funded by the NHS. The land for the surgery will probably be sold by the landowners to the doctors. If necessary the surgery could be built by Pigeon and then leased back to the doctors if alternative funding is not available.

7.1.4 Homes will be provided as affordable housing as required by local planning policy.

7.1.5 The basic establishment of the new open space will be funded directly by the development.

7.1.6 The development will be expected to provide other financial contributions as required by planning policy such as contributions to education. The possible

financial contributions required by planning policy include:

- Suffolk County Council, pre-school and library provision;
- Affordable housing;
- Upgrade to the surface of footpath number 9 along the southern boundary of Sarsons Field and signs advertising the walks on the new village green and in the village hall car park;
- Open space provision;
- Traffic calming;
- Footbridge over the ditch to the south of the site to link to footpath 9.

8.0 Conclusion and Summary

8.1 This Development Brief assesses the results of the consultation and community engagement carried out to date and a range of assessments of the site.

8.2 In summary it is proposed that the development comprises:

- Around 37 new homes, including affordable homes as required by local planning policy. There will be a range of types of homes, including detached, semi-detached and bungalows;
- An enhanced village hall will be provided, this will help to ensure the continued provision of early year's education in the village and will provide a facility for the Primary School.
- Funds from the enhanced housing development will contribute to the work to the village hall;
- A new village green containing a larger sports pitch will be provided. This will



- provide more recreation space for the village, and will provide a larger and better sports facility for the school;
- Walking routes around the village will be advertised to reduce the pressure for recreation on the Market Western Fen.
- A site for a new doctors surgery will be provided so that the NHS can develop a new surgery;
- More parking will be provided for the village hall, shop, church, school and doctors on the village hall site;
- The new and enhanced facilities will further improve the existing hub of facilities centred around the village hall and Primary School.
- The enhanced village hall, new Primary School entrance and existing play area will create a well located group of facilities with easy access for the school children;
- Traffic calming will be provided on the Thelnetham and Bury Roads, to slow traffic speeds;
- The ecological value of the site will be

enhanced with new trees and hedges and protection for the Market Weston Fen;

- The new development will enhance the walking opportunities around the village with a new footway along Bury Road, and improvements to footpath 9 to the south of Sarsons Field, and with better connections to existing footways;
- New development will be designed to be respectful to existing amenities.

8.3 It is proposed to agree this Development Brief with the Borough Council in 2015. Planning permission will need to be applied for so that it can be approved in time to allow the new doctors to be developed.

8.4 The scheme as presented is the culmination of inputs from a wide variety of sources and represents a high quality addition to the village. An extensive range of sustainability measures have been incorporated within the design of the development to ensure the high quality of the scheme and its ability to make a notable contribution to Hopton.



Appendices

(See Separate Documents)