

Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet Parish Council

Neighbourhood Development Plan



Pre-Submission Draft Plan

1st October to 12th November 2016

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ABSTRACT

Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet Parish Council has decided to undertake the process of producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, as defined in the Localism Act 2011. This plan is to create a vision for the development and use of land within Wenhaston with Mells from 2015 to 2030 in accordance with the majority views of the residents of the area.

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION	11
1.1 The Essence Of The Parish.....	11
1.2 The Purpose Of The Neighbourhood Plan.	11
2. LOCAL CONTEXT.....	12
2.1 Geography and History of the Parish.	12
2.2 Demography.	13
2.3 Development History.....	13
3. CONSULTATION PROCESSES.....	15
3.1 PUBLIC.....	15
3.1.1 Initial Consultation	15
3.1.2 Second Consultation.....	15
3.1.3 Third Consultation.....	16
3.1.4 Fourth Consultation.....	16
3.2 INTERESTED BODIES, BUSINESS AND LARGE COMMUNITY GROUPS	16
3.2.1. Consulted bodies	16
3.2.2. Consultation process.....	17
3.2.3. Consultation results	17
4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	17
4.1 The Analysis Process.....	17
4.2 The Vision Statement	18
4.3 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives	18
5. CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS.....	19
5.1 Street Scene Character Assessment.....	19
5.2 Commons and Green Space Character Assessment.	19
5.3 Whole Parish Ecology and Landscape Assessment.	20
PLAN INTERPRETATION GUIDANCE	21
6. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	22
6.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011).....	23
6.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)	23
6.3 SCDC Local Plan Saved Policies. Development Protection Areas	23
6.4 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	24
6.5 Suffolk Special Landscape Areas (SSLA).....	24

6.6 Other Stakeholders. Parish Council, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Commons and Heathland	24
6.7 Other Considerations. Available Infrastructure, Roads and Lanes	25
7. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	26
7.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)	27
7.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013).....	27
7.3 Issues and Concerns Survey.....	27
7.4 Local Development Protection Areas	28
7.5 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Residential Development Policies	28
7.6 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Residential Development Strategies	29
8. TOURISM, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT	30
8.1 Planning Context.....	31
8.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)	31
8.1.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July (2013)).....	31
8.1.3 Other Considerations.....	31
8.1.4 Issues and Concerns Survey.....	31
8.1.5 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Tourism, Business and Employment Policies.....	32
8.1.6 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Tourism, Business and Employment Strategies.....	33
9. TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC	34
9.1 Planning Context.....	35
9.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)	35
9.1.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013).....	35
9.1.3 Other Considerations. Available Infrastructure, Roads and Lanes	35
9.1.4 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Traffic Strategies.....	36
10. INFRASTRUCTURE AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS.....	37
10.1 SEWAGE.....	38
10.1.1 Planning Context.....	38
10.1.2 Other Considerations, Existing Infrastructure.....	38
10.1.3 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Sewage Policies	38
10.2 ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY	38
10.2.1 Planning Context.....	38
10.2.2 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)	38
10.2.3 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013).....	38
10.2.4 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.....	38
10.2.5 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Energy and Sustainability Strategies.....	39

10.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY	39
10.3.1 Planning Context.	39
10.3.2 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)	39
10.3.3 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.	39
10.3.4 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Community Safety Strategies.	39
10.4 STREET LIGHTING	40
10.4.1 Planning Context.	40
10.4.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)	40
10.4.3 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.	40
10.4.4 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Street Lighting Strategies.	40
10.5 COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE	41
10.5.1 Planning Context	41
10.5.2 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)	41
10.5.3 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)	41
10.5.4 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.	41
10.5.5 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Communication Infrastructure Strategies.	41
10.6 EDUCATION	42
10.6.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)	42
10.6.2 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.	42
10.6.3 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Education Strategies	42
10.7 HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CARE	42
10.7.1 Planning Context	42
10.7.2 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Hospital and Health Care Strategies	43
10.8 CULTURAL AND SPORTS FACILITIES INCLUDING PLAY AREAS	43
10.8.1 Planning Context	43
10.8.2 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)	43
10.8.3 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)	44
10.8.4 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.	44
10.8.5 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Cultural and Sports Facilities Including Play Areas Strategies.	45
11. ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE	46
11.1 PROTECTION OF THE COMMONS	47
11.1.1 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Protection of the Commons Policies.	47
11.2 BIODIVERSITY	48

11.2.1	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Biodiversity Policies.	49
11.2.2	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Biodiversity Strategies	49
11.3	PROTECTION OF THE LANDSCAPE	49
11.3.1	Policy context.....	49
11.3.2	The AONB and Special Landscape Areas	50
11.3.3	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Protection of the Landscape Policies.	50
11.4	AREAS OF LOCAL LANDSCAPE VALUE	51
11.4.1	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Local Landscape Value Policies.	51
11.5	WOODLANDS, TREES AND HEDGEROWS	52
11.5.1	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows Policies	52
11.5.2	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows Strategies.....	52
12.	CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE.....	53
12.1	Policy Context.....	54
12.2	Historic Character	54
12.3	Sequence of Past Development.....	54
12.4	Summary	55
12.5	AREAS OF SPECIAL VILLAGE CHARACTER.....	56
12.5.1	Area 1 Coles Hill to Hall Road	56
12.5.2	Area 2 Chapel Lane /Coles Hill	56
12.5.3	Area 3 Blyford Lane	56
12.5.4	Area 4 Blackheath Settlement, Blackheath Road	56
12.5.5	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Areas of Special Village Character Policies	57
12.5.6	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Areas of Special Village Character Strategies	57
12.6	IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY AREAS	57
12.6.1	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Improvement Opportunity Areas Policies.....	58
12.7	NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS	58
12.7.1	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Non-Designated Heritage Assets Strategies.....	58
13.	DRAINAGE, FLOOD RISK AND ENERGY	59
13.1	Planning Context.....	60
13.1.1	National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)	60
13.1.2	Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013).....	60
13.1.3	Other Considerations, Existing Infrastructure.....	60
13.1.4	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Drainage, Flood Risk and Energy Policies.	60
13.1.5	Wenhaston with Mells NDP Drainage, Flood Risk and Energy Strategies.	60

APPENDIX 1. CONFORMITY WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY	62
APPENDIX 2. MAPS	64
Map 1. Neighbourhood Plan Area.....	65
Map 2. Local Plan – Special Landscape Area and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	66
Map 3. Wenhaston Physical Limits Boundary	67
Map 4. Commons, Woodlands and Village Green Spaces	68
Map 5. Local Development Protection Area	69
Map 6. Areas of Special Village Character	70
Map 7. Improvement Opportunity Areas	71
Map 8. Local Landscape Value Area.	72

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Essence Of The Parish.

In the north east corner of Suffolk where the south bank of the River Blyth narrows from its estuary at Blythburgh, sandy heath rises from grazing meads to clay-capped arable land. On this low ridge the settlement of Wenhaston was founded, developed and burgeoned over four millennia.

The modern parish combines the former Manor of Mellis with Wenhaston and is a rural Parish with development clustered in Wenhaston itself and Blackheath settlement just to the south, (Appendix 2, Map 1)

It is cradled between the Blythburgh and Minsmere RAMSAR^{note a} site, the Suffolk Sandlings, the Area Of Natural Beauty (AONB) and the market town of Halesworth. Today it is characterised by the survival of its five commons which surround and influence the form of the village, historic buildings, mature trees and the harmonious sounds of mixed farming and the countryside and the village respects its past as it embraces the new. It is energy conscious, environmentally aware, keen on conservation and supportive of enterprise with green credentials. These qualities are cherished by residents who work collaboratively to support and enhance them, aware of the responsibilities of custodianship and aiming to pass on the best to future generations.

Note a. RAMSAR Convention, 1971, Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat.

1.2 The Purpose Of The Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan is a community led framework which provides information and guidance about the future development and growth of the parish. It is wide ranging and includes proposals for housing development, heritage assets, the natural environment, infrastructure and local facilities. The Plan will include policies which will determine the development that takes place and also strategies for the parish working with other stakeholders to achieve the desired outcomes. In this respect, it is an action plan to advise all interested parties about how the parish sees itself evolving over the next fifteen years with clear ideas about where development should take place and how the natural environment should be retained and enriched.

Although this document sets out the priorities for the plan period, the intention is that it should be regularly revisited and revised should it be viewed that the priorities of the Parish have changed. This reassessment can take place informally, but also formally every five years.

This Plan must meet the Basic Conditions that it conforms to National and Local policy, must contribute to sustainable development and must be compatible with human rights and EU obligations.

2. LOCAL CONTEXT

2.1 Geography and History of the Parish.

Wenhaston is a village located on elevated ground to the south side of the River Blyth valley approximately 5 miles inland from the North Sea at Southwold. Mells Hamlet stretches along the southern Blyth valley for approximately 3 miles west of Wenhaston. The area to the east of Wenhaston is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty rolling down towards the coastal estuary of the Blyth.

A bronze age ring and artefacts found throughout the Parish provides evidence that a community of people lived in what is now called Wenhaston during the period from about 2000 BC to 700 BC. Roman fragments, evidence of Roman occupation, have been found which point to Wenhaston having been either a small settlement or a trading post, and at its junction with the River Blyth of the brook, at now Brook Farm, evidence has been found of a possible Roman wharf. A six inch statue of Venus, sadly stolen from the church in the early 20th century, was found at Blyford Bridge dating from the Roman period and coin finds indicate that the Roman settlement in Wenhaston lasted from about AD 80 to AD 350.

Wenadestuna (Wenhaston) is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 with a separate entry for Mells showing that they were two separate communities at that time.

The parish church, St Peter's, originally St Peter and St Paul, dates to the 10th century or earlier and contains a notable relic of the Doom. This was long thought to have been the work of a monk at Blythburgh Priory in 1480 but recent research supports the possibility of it being the work of two men either Dutch or influenced by the Dutch School in 1513. In 1545 the 'Doom' was whitewashed over by edict of Parliament, fortuitously protecting it from destruction a 100 years later from the hands of 'Smasher' Dowsing and his men. In 1892 the 'Doom' was rediscovered when during renovation it was left outside, for destruction, in the rain which washed it clean again.

Mells chapel was built in 1104 and was from that date subordinated to Wenhaston, St Peter and St Paul being considered the mother church which led to the tying of Wenhaston and Mells together as a parish.

2.2 Demography.

The Parish has a relatively high number of older people (32 per cent), almost double the national average. This is made up partly of residents who have lived here a long time, and others who have moved in to enjoy the rural lifestyle. This impacts on other demographic information, such as health.

There are a very high proportion of residents of UK origin, with little ethnic diversity.

The rate of car ownership is high. This is to be expected as rural public bus transport is limited, services are often some distance away in towns and cities, and the lack of personal mobility for some residents makes the use of public transport difficult. When the holiday homes are occupied, car use is increased.

There are a significant number of houses used as second homes or holiday lets (about 16 per cent). Housing tenure is dominated by owner occupation. Only sixty-seven properties are rented. The high number of houses owned outright probably reflects older people who have paid off their mortgages.

Most people of working age are in employment. There are a high number of self employed people, and some of these work from home. Those in work do so in a variety of situations and at a variety of levels. There are also a large number of households with no adults in employment (147), which reflects the age profile of the Parish.

Quite a large number of residents are limited in some way, or have health issues – but this is expected with the parish age profile. There are a large number of unpaid carers (one hundred), providing unpaid care of up to 50 hours a week.

2.3 Development History

In 1674 there were fifty-one dwellings listed in the Parish and the oldest remaining dwellings date from the sixteenth century. These buildings include in whole or in part, Wenhaston Grange, Wenhaston Old Hall, the Guildhall (now Church Cottages), Rose Glen and Railway Terrace (possibly part fifteenth century) and St Vulcans.

By 1901, census results show that there were now 205 dwellings in the Parish and a population of 792 and these figures increased as shown in the following table.

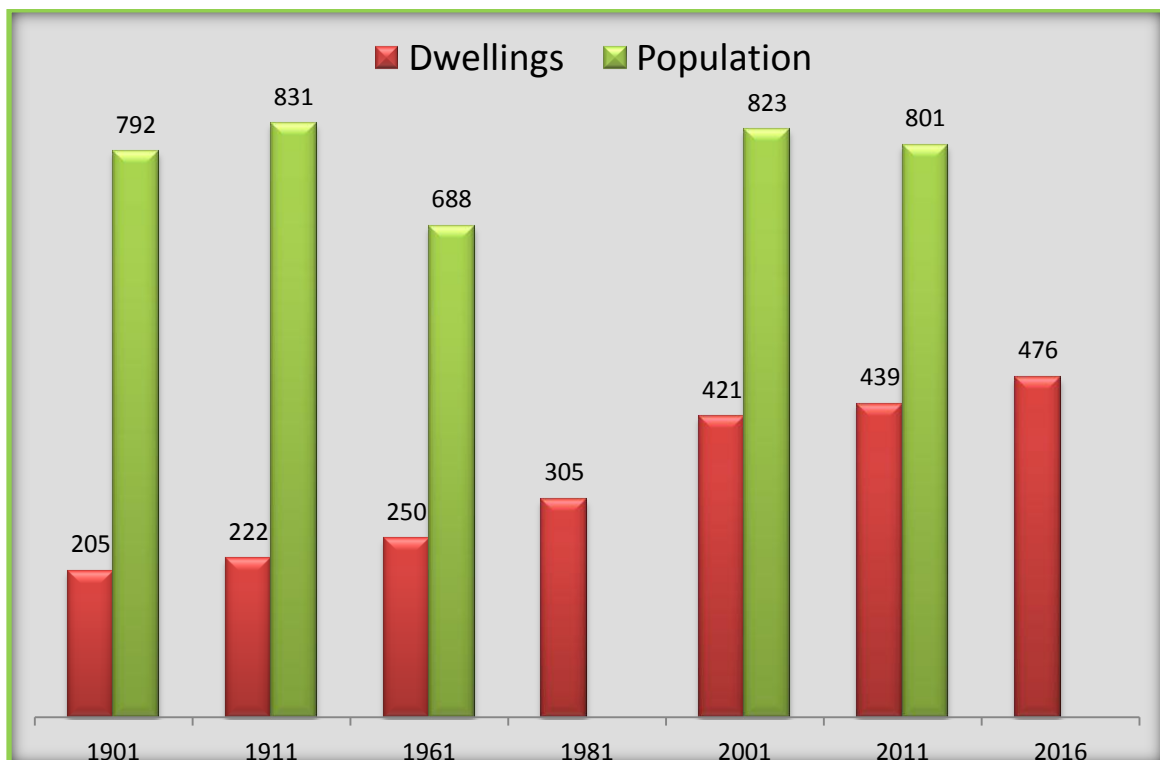
Date	1901	1911	1961	1981	2001	2011
Dwellings	205	222	250	305	421	439
Population	792	831	688	NA	823	801

In the century 1911 to 2011, it is seen that although the number of dwellings doubled, the population remained static. The increase in housing stock between the wars was largely Local Authority social housing and the change in the second half of the century was predominantly the development of St Michaels Way and Narrow Way and between 2001 and 2011 was the Coles Hill and Back Road area.

Since 2011, a number of planning applications have been approved and dwellings have been built or are in the process of construction as follows.

Date	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Approvals	3	1	1	1	30	1

Completion of these dwellings will take the total for the Parish to 476 and more than doubles the growth expected by Local Plan contributions. The graph below shows the accelerating rate of growth in housing, in particular since 1981 with an average rate of about five dwellings per year compared with 2.5 per year for the previous 20 years.



3. CONSULTATION PROCESSES

3.1 PUBLIC

3.1.1 Initial Consultation

The Public were initially consulted by a questionnaire. 430 households were identified in the Parish and the questionnaire was hand delivered by volunteers to each household, with face to face contact where possible.

The questionnaire was developed by reference to similar documents used by other localities of similar size and infrastructure makeup and then tailoring it to local issues. The type of questions was developed in conjunction with Suffolk Coastal District Council, SCDC, to ensure that a valid set of data would be obtained to make NDP decisions on. Questions, where possible were designed to be 'open' to allow for opinion to be judged on issues that were not fully suited to 'closed' answers. In order to allow interpretation of the data respondents were encouraged to add comments to questions asked and also to enter general comments on issues that were thought relevant to the NDP.

In order to achieve as broad a dataset of opinion the questionnaire was designed to accommodate individual opinion within a household. Respondents were encouraged to give multiple entries if views differed within a household group.

The NDP has a lifetime of 15 years and it was considered important to obtain as much response from under 18 year olds as possible since they would be affected by the plan in their coming years. To facilitate this and identify their responses separate entry areas were added to questions where relevant.

The return policy was for either team members personally collecting the completed questionnaires, stamped address return envelope or drop in box at the Village Hall Post Office. The delivery took place in the week prior to the survey dates of May 30th to June 13th, 2015.

The first consultation process and results is recorded in reference document WwMNDP/01.

3.1.2 Second Consultation

The second stage Parishioner consultation of the results has been carried out through a feedback presentation day where comments on the data were encouraged from attendees for further consideration into the data analysis process.

The presentation data was provided in large visual aids of numeric, graphical interpretation complimented by a selection of pertinent written

comments reflecting the approximate ratio of the numeric data. The presentation was given in the village hall and laid out such that the information could be perused easily and provision for comment writing was given. Comments were collected to add to the existing questionnaire comments to be fed into the data analysis stage.

Over 100 people attended the event and there was good interaction between the visitors and the plan team who were on hand to answer questions raised by the data. As an incentive to obtain a good public response an offer of free refreshments was made in the newly opened village hall cafe.

The second consultation process is recorded in reference document WwMNDP/10.

3.1.3 Third Consultation

Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) was furnished with a copy of the survey results document, WwMNDP/01, for information, consideration and comment. A combined meeting of the SCDC and Wenhaston NDP team was held to discuss the document.

3.1.4 Fourth Consultation

At the third consultation meeting a question was raised as to the adequacy of the under 18 years response and it was agreed that this group would be revisited for further consultation. This consultation took place in May 2016.

The process and results are recorded in reference document WwMNDP/13.

3.2 INTERESTED BODIES, BUSINESS AND LARGE COMMUNITY GROUPS

3.2.1. Consulted bodies

The identification of a total of 77 Interested Parties and local businesses was performed by a combination of means.

A total of 34 Businesses were collected from The Wenhaston Warbler and Halesworth Community News publication's advertising, reference to local online maps which show a few businesses, word of mouth and local knowledge.

A total of 4 Businesses related to Tourism were identified from local knowledge.

A total of 7 Farms were selected by reference to local maps and local knowledge.

A total of 24 Interested Parties were selected by reference to designation documents, on line advice about constructing Neighbourhood Plans and statutory or other bodies that did not fit into the business group.

A total of 8 large village organisations were selected on the basis of regularly meeting and with a large membership, or those that have a direct impact on the village scene.

3.2.2. Consultation process

Three methods of contact were used in the survey:

- By letters delivered by Post or hand,
- By letters delivered by email and
- By verbal approach by telephone or face to face.

3.2.3. Consultation results

The Results of the consultation are reported in reference document WwMNDP/02.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The Analysis Process

The data from the returned questionnaires was collated into numeric and visual formats, as used in the later public Concerns and Issues Results consultation, prior to the analysis meeting. The comments from the questionnaire were collated into relevant section lists and made available to the analysis meeting to be used as supplementary evidence in the event of an unclear decision of relevance to the plan.

The data, comments sheets and record sheets were laid out in questionnaire order on individual tables. Each table was addressed in turn with analysis carried out to the criteria below. During the discussions the Independent Observer was encouraged to ask questions upon the judgements being made, whilst not guiding the decisions in any way. The outcome of the discussions was recorded on the relevant record sheet.

Once all the record sheets were completed they were reviewed, photocopied and a copy given to the Independent Observer for retention during the period for them to be transferred to typed versions for him to sign. This was done to ensure that no changes to the results were made between the analysis meeting and the signing of the sheets as a correct record.

The significant issues were developed into a draft vision and plan objectives statement which was presented to the Parish Council for consideration and approval at a later date.

The process for the extraction of the Vision and Neighbourhood Plan Objectives statement from the questionnaire results is recorded in reference document WwMNDP/09.

4.2 The Vision Statement

The Neighbourhood Plan will have at its core the ambition to enhance the lives of residents by protecting the rural identity of the Parish of Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet, its scenic beauty, the balance of built and natural landscape, tranquillity and safety.

In Wenhaston it will support community infrastructure, provide sufficient housing stock to meet the requirements generated by local needs and promote sustainable development. This will ensure a continued vibrant, safe and supportive village community.

4.3 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives

1. Environment.

- 1a. To protect and enhance wildlife habitats.
- 1b. To protect and enhance the Wenhaston commons and footpath network.
- 1c. Encourage the reduction of the risk of flooding.

2. Development

- 2a. To protect the AONB from adverse development.
- 2b. To limit new housing to within the development boundary.
- 2c. To limit new housing to that appropriate in tenure, size, design and in a quantity appropriate to local need in line with National and District policy.
- 2d. To promote appropriate small business.

3. Amenities and Facilities.

- 3a. To protect and enhance village amenities and public facilities and services including Broadband, the Playing Field and equipment, the Churches, the Post Office, the Village Hall and the Public House.
- 3b. Identify and promote measures to improve road safety and improve public transport.

4. Character, History and Heritage

- 4a To protect and enhance buildings, spaces and views important to the character of the Parish, both within and outside the physical limits for the benefit of residents and visitors and education of future generations.

5. CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

One of the aspects of the Plan is to provide future development issues with a 'picture' of the things that make Wenhaston with Mellis special to the residents and that need to be considered in future planning. The Character Assessment is a three part process covering street scene, landscape and ecology of the whole Parish, commons and wildlife spaces.

5.1 Street Scene Character Assessment.

The chosen method of collecting street scene information to form the basis of the 'Character' definition of the Parish was to conduct a street observation survey covering the complete parish recording the characteristics of the differing locations.

Twenty assessment areas were selected throughout the parish to provide an overall 'image' of the character. A group of volunteers were recruited and trained in the process to be used. Each were allocated small areas to obtain a wide range of observations in order to return a broader 'image'

The process and eventual results are recorded in reference document WwMNDP/03.

5.2 Commons and Green Space Character Assessment.

The Wenhaston commons and heaths comprise five areas of common land located around the perimeter of the village of Wenhaston, (Appendix 2, Map 4). They have been variously managed in the past by local residents but now are used mainly for recreation/amenity. With the intensifying exploitation of the surrounding countryside, the commons now are relatively isolated and as a result have considerable wildlife value. They contain a number of animal species that have National Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and areas of lowland heath, which is a threatened habitat also with a national BAP.

The assessments were performed by members of the Wenhaston Commons Group with the intention that the personal nature of the observation and information would provide a reasonable cross section of the community.

The chosen topic areas for assessment were:

- Topography
- Land Use/Green and Natural Features
- Footpaths, Road/Tracks
- Building/Structures
- Landmarks
- Important Views
- Nature Conservation Significance
- Brief Summary of Character

The process and eventual results are recorded in reference document WwMNDP/04.

5.3 Whole Parish Ecology and Landscape Assessment.

The Parish of Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet is cherished for its relatively undeveloped, tranquil landscape and stunning natural and cultural history. It has been a source of inspiration to artists, writers and musicians over the generations.

The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment classifies two types of landscape in the Parish, rolling estate sandlands in the river valleys and ancient estate claylands between them. In both cases the recommended management guidelines are to maintain and restore the hedgerows, green spaces, commons, the tree belts and the woodlands

Within the Parish there are a number of protected landscape designations including the AONB, a landscape rich in history, but spared from modern development which forms the eastern sector, Special Landscape Areas at the north and south, five commons and two Country Wildlife Sites. All of these have a level of statutory protection in terms of their value as corridors, green spaces and also for the wildlife, including endangered species, and the rich and cherished biodiversity of the whole area. This protection acknowledges the importance of the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan and its associated Priority Species and Habitats.

The process and eventual results are recorded in reference document WwMNDP/06.

PLAN INTERPRETATION GUIDANCE

The Neighbourhood Development Plan topic areas are formatted in line with the Issues and Concerns Survey Questionnaire, with each topic area developed into Policies and Strategies to meet the Vision and Objectives Statement.

Throughout the following sections:

A Policy is defined as:

A policy sets out requirements for new developments and informs and guides decisions on planning applications.

Policies are identified by the prefix WwM P and panels colour coded blue.

A Strategy is defined as:

A Strategy is a plan of action or project to achieve a long term aim.

Strategies are identified by the prefix WwM S and panels colour coded yellow.

Within the following text references are made to supporting documents to the Plan. The documents are divided into two categories, Process and Evidence.

Process.

These documents record steps in the development of the plan through consultations etc.

The documents can be found on line at:

<http://wenhaston.onesuffolk.net/wenhaston-with-mells-neighbourhood-plan/neighbourhood-development-plan-documents/neighbourhood-development-plan-process-documents/>

Evidence.

These documents record background data collected to support the conclusions of the development process.

These documents can be found on-line at:

<http://wenhaston.onesuffolk.net/wenhaston-with-mells-neighbourhood-plan/neighbourhood-development-plan-documents/neighbourhood-development-plan-evidence-documents/>



6. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT



In drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan, any policies adopted must conform to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the SCDC Local Plan and other policies relating to special landscape types.

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)

The core purpose of the NPPF is to help achieve sustainable development by ensuring that better lives for ourselves does not mean worse lives for future generations. It states that this is true not just for the built environment, but acknowledges that our natural environment is essential for our wellbeing, and that it can be better looked after than it has been in the past. Habitats that have been degraded can be restored and species that have been isolated can be reconnected. Furthermore, our historic environment, buildings, landscapes, towns and villages, can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers. In this respect the NPPF believes that planning should be a collective enterprise and include, people and communities.

Paragraph 1.6 states:

‘Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes can use neighbourhood planning to set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications (para.183).’

6.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)

Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the Local Plan which clearly sets out the strategic policies for the area. The Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet Neighbourhood Plan will reflect and support these policies whilst acknowledging the fact that the parish has already more than doubled its original quota for development as set out in the Local Plan.

This Plan intends to shape and direct sustainable development in the parish with the intention that once brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet.

6.3 SCDC Local Plan Saved Policies. Development Protection Areas

In addition to the current SCDC Local Plan, there are also a number of policies saved from the previous plan. Saved Policy AP28 allows for the safeguarding of sites which make an important contribution to the character or setting of the Parish.

6.4 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The NPPF states that the AONB has the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty and wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations. There is a duty on all public bodies to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. This includes Local Planning Authorities when they set planning policy or determine applications for development within, or affecting, the AONB and will be reflected by policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, (Appendix 2, Map 2).

6.5 Suffolk Special Landscape Areas (SSLA)

There are also other areas within Suffolk with special landscape attributes, which are particularly vulnerable to change. They include the Blyth River valleys which still possess traditional grazing meadows and marshes, with their hedgerows, dykes and associated flora and fauna. These are designated as Special Landscape Areas. The policy here is to ensure that no development takes place which would be to the material detriment of, or materially detract from, the special landscape quality, (Appendix 2, Map 2).

6.6 Other Stakeholders. Parish Council, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Commons and Heathland

The Parish Council is responsible for the Cemetery and Playing Field. It also provides the allotments under a rental agreement to Wenhaston Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Association and cover maintenance costs etc. The Cemetery and allotments are owned by the Parish Council but they are Trustees for the playing field rather than owners. The green spaces, (Appendix 2, Map 4), although not formally adopted, are maintained at the Parish Council's request. Well Green and the telephone box green are looked after by volunteers.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust work on behalf of the Parish Council under a management agreement for Blackheath Common. The Parish Council have stewardship for this from Natural England. Other green spaces are maintained by SCDC e.g. grass verges etc.

There are five commons and two woods, (Appendix 2, Map 4), in the parish, variously under private, public or ambiguous ownership. They are all available for public access and criss-crossed with a network of footpaths.

Policies within this Plan will reflect the importance of these cherished spaces and respect the views of those who maintain them.

6.7 Other Considerations. Available Infrastructure, Roads and Lanes

Development strategies will need to be consistent with limitations placed on the Parish by available infrastructure. The primary school is currently close to capacity with no physical room for expansion and this is without the addition of the 30 recent development approvals currently under construction.

Roads and lanes throughout the parish are generally between 1.0 and 1.5m narrower than national standards and largely without pavements at all. This includes the four access routes into the parish, none of which could be readily widened.

High speed broadband is available to some parts of Wenhaston settlement, but limited elsewhere. The parish land telecommunications is served by an ageing analogue exchange and there is no cable network available. Mobile phone coverage is patchy throughout the parish.

Development policies will reflect the distinctive, quiet and rural nature of the parish and the important contribution that it makes to ecology and habitat which would be irreparably damaged by careless expansion beyond which the current infrastructure can absorb.

7. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)

This states that Parishes can use Neighbourhood Planning to set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications (para.183) and these should also reflect the core purpose of the NPPF.

7.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)

Within the SCDC Local Plan Settlement Hierarchy (SP19), Wenhaston Village and Wenhaston Blackheath settlements are classified as Local Service Centres and the rest of the Parish as Countryside. Broadly this allows for groups of five houses or less or infill within the defined physical limits and no housing development in the Countryside. The strategic policy for this parish is to retain, support and reinforce the individual character of the community by allowing only organic growth within the physical limits and by securing the services and facilities required to meet the day to day needs of the local population. (SP27)

The SCDC Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Development Plan Document Preferred Options Consultation, October 2015, identified that Wenhaston has already doubled its housing contribution in the Local Plan, leaving a zero new housing allocation to fill. With this in mind, the Neighbourhood Plan will consider further sensitive development in line with the policies set out below.

The area specific policies identified a site to the east of St Michael's Way which was possibly suitable for development. In 2015 planning permission was granted for 27 dwellings which are now under construction, these represent in excess of the entire strategic housing contribution of the Parish over the plan period. This site is shown on the proposals map as within the new physical limits, (Appendix 2, Map 3).

7.3 Issues and Concerns Survey

From the questionnaire survey and consultations carried out within the Parish, it was clear that there was overwhelming support for restricting new development in the following ways.

It was felt that new housing should only be allowed to meet local needs, infill and small groups of housing should be directed to inside the physical limits boundary and that generally there was no need for very much further development. It was also felt that where new housing was necessary it should be directed towards smaller affordable accommodation and away from large houses with four bedrooms or more.

Perhaps of equal significance is the desire to retain and enhance the scenic beauty in and around the parish and to preserve the wildlife habitats and the rural identity of the Parish. There was also extreme concern about present and future over development.

7.4 Local Development Protection Areas

In the adopted Local Plan a number of policies allow development outside the physical limits of the settlement. These are DM1 (affordable housing on exception sites), DM3 (housing in the countryside), DM4 (housing in clusters) and DM13 (redundant buildings). However the Local Plan has a saved policy AP28 which allows for the safeguarding of sites which make an important contribution to the character or setting of the village.

There are other locations, particularly, but not exclusively, located along the western fringe of Wenhaston village, which are defined by this Plan as Local Development Protection Areas (LDPA) in line with Saved Policy AP28. These are identified on the Proposals map, (Appendix 2, Map 5). Within these areas, uses should remain undisturbed, although extensions and replacement of existing dwellings may be considered in accordance with Policy DM3.

7.5 Wenhaston with Mellis NDP Residential Development Policies

WwM P1

New housing development will be directed to within the defined physical limits boundary.

LP SP19, SP27.

Supports NP Objective 2b

WwM P2

New development outside the physical limits of the settlement will be limited to that which of necessity requires being located there.

LP SP19, SP27.

Supports NP Objective 2b or 2c

WwM P3

Infill Development within the physical limits boundary will be restricted to one dwelling or a pair of semi-detached dwellings within a continuous built up frontage or groups of less than five reflecting the character of frontage plots.

LP SP19, SP27.

WwM P4

Development in sensitive locations such as Areas of Special Village Character, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Landscape Areas and Areas of Local Landscape Value will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and subject to NP policies. Development close to these areas that would detract from their special qualities in terms of landscape, ecology, habitat, and heritage or amenity value will not normally be permitted.

LP SP1, LP DM4.

Supports NP Objective 2a

WwM P5

In considering any new application, attention will be given to the form, scale, use, and landscape of the spaces between buildings and the boundary treatment of individual sites, particularly on the edges of the settlement.

LP DM21.

Supports NP Objective 2c

WwM P6

Within Local Development Protection Areas, existing uses will remain undisturbed. Infill and plot development will only be allowed where there is a proven local need. Estate development will not be permitted.

LP DM3 and Saved Policy AP28

Supports NP Objective 2a and 2b

7.6 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Residential Development Strategies

WwM S1

New housing will be directed to encourage and enable younger people to remain in the parish and also address the needs of what is currently an ageing population.

LP SP3, SP19, SP27.

Supports NP Objective 2c

8. TOURISM, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

8.1 Planning Context

In drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan, any policies adopted must conform to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the SCDC Local Plan and other policies relating to special landscape types. Relevant sections of National and Local policy are set out below, followed by the NP policy statements.

8.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)

The NPPF seeks to support a strong, sustainable, prosperous rural economy by supporting growth and expansion of businesses, the development and diversification of agriculture and the provision of tourist facilities in appropriate locations. It also seeks to promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

8.1.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July (2013)

Although rural areas are not identified as potential development land for employment (SP5) policies echo the sentiments of the NPPF in encouraging small-scale farm and rural diversification that accord with the Settlement Hierarchy; supporting agriculture expansion and appropriate tourism that conforms to environmental protection policies. (SP7, SP8, SP27) This could include the provision of farm shops, a part time post office with emphasis on retaining existing provision.

8.1.3 Other Considerations

Much of the parish is either in the AONB or the Special Landscape Area and these are material considerations when considering the provision or expansion of businesses.

8.1.4 Issues and Concerns Survey

The large majority of respondents felt that it was important to retain the existing farms with a few comments about the problems of this in the present agricultural climate.

The “Star” pub is a very popular community asset, providing a variety of events and activities and offering facilities to community groups. The fish and chip van calls weekly at the village hall and is used regularly by some and occasionally by others.

Villagers make very good use of the Post Office at the village hall, both for postal facilities and stationery. It is open on weekday mornings only at the moment and some commentators would welcome extended hours and a bigger shop here. However, this has not been approved by the GPO.

The other shop in the village, Heathside Stores, a convenience shop, is situated next to the lodges at Blackheath, and this is used weekly by over

35 per cent of respondents. People travel to other local shops, Halesworth and further afield for their main shopping, or make purchases online. Several comments were received suggesting that a more centralised community shop would be welcomed, with some respondents favouring a place to buy and sell locally produced projects or a farmers market. No one offered ideas for how this could be achieved.

The survey showed that there is little desire among most villagers for the development of the Southwold Railway site, or for more caravans or lodges at the holiday site. The present businesses are mainly home working, apart from some services including a garage, dog grooming facility and beauty salon. Other services are offered, such as gardening and cake making.

8.1.5 Wenhaston with Mellis NDP Tourism, Business and Employment Policies

WwM P7

Sport and leisure opportunities for all age groups will be promoted, particularly for those underrepresented at the moment. Active help will be given when asked for and is practical and available, such as for the new play area at the playing field.

DM32

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM P8

Farm diversification will be encouraged if appropriate in ambition and location.

LPSP7

Supports NP Objective 2d

WwM P9

A balance between tourism and village life needs to be nurtured, with the encouragement for main homes as a priority.

Supports NP Objective 2d

8.1.6 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Tourism, Business and Employment Strategies.

WwM S2

The rural identity of the Parish, and also employment opportunities, are considered important and should be protected. The agricultural community will be supported where possible, while ensuring that sustainable development and conservation of the rural environment are not compromised, particularly within the AONB, SLAs. and Areas of Local Landscape Value.

LPSP7

Supports NP Objective 2d

WwM S3

Facilities in the village, which are appreciated by many residents, should be supported and protected where possible. Where there are omissions, villagers should be given the confidence to come forward to fill them.

LP 5.79 – 5.82

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM S4

The Post Office and Mace shop are well used and should be supported. If an interest is shown in researching the possibility of a central shop, advice and any practical help available will be offered.

LP 5.79 – 5.82

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM S5

Small businesses and home working will be supported by taking any possible opportunities for driving forward better telecommunication infrastructure.

Supports NP Objective 2d

9. TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC

9.1 Planning Context

The policies and strategies outlined below have taken into consideration the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the SCDC Local Plan. Although the national Manual for Streets and Suffolk County Councils policies have been considered, the existing streets and lanes in the parish are generally more than one metre narrower than current standards and without pavements, safety for pedestrians and cyclists is compromised.

Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet is a rural parish removed from the infrastructure associated with larger communities. In this respect, most households have at least one car which will be necessary for residents to avail themselves of employment, healthcare, recreational and shopping facilities and access to wider transport networks.

9.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)

The NPPF (para. 29 – 39) is keen to promote transport policies that contribute to wider sustainability and health objectives and that reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases through unnecessary travel or high emission vehicles. To facilitate this in a rural setting, priority should be given to safe and secure pedestrian and cycle movements and high quality public transport facilities.

9.1.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)

Strategic Policy SP11 outlines the commitment of SCDC to maximise opportunities for local journeys to be made by means other than the private motor car. In relation to public transport this will include improving both the quantity and quality of the service on offer and in relation to foot and cycle provision this will mean securing safe and easy access to local facilities where walking or cycling offers a realistic alternative.

9.1.3 Other Considerations. Available Infrastructure, Roads and Lanes

Sustrans regional cycle route number 42 passes through the parish.

Transport and traffic strategies will reflect the relative position of the Parish with regards to wider infrastructure and the existing road networks available.

9.1.4 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Traffic Strategies.

WwM S6

The quantity and flow of traffic needs to be limited to that which the available existing infrastructure can manage. There should be no significant increase above present (2016) traffic flows with a consequent restriction on future housing development.

LP SP18, LP DM20.

Supports NP Objective 3b

WwM S7

Investigate and promote the installation of speed monitors at key locations within the Parish.

LP SP11.

Supports NP Objective 3b

WwM S8

Investigate and promote a 'Quiet Lanes' initiative with restricted speeds and safety reminders at the more scenic and hazardous areas in the Parish.

LP SP11.

Supports NP Objective 3b

WwM S9

Investigate and promote a culture of walking and cycling and the Sustrans National Cycle Route, with maintained roads and footways to support this.

LP SP11.

Supports NP Objective 3b

WwM S10

Strive to maintain and improve the existing public transport service (bus) between Southwold/Wenhaston/Halesworth and onward transfers by both bus and train.

LP SP11.

Supports NP Objective 3b

10. INFRASTRUCTURE AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

10.1 SEWAGE

10.1.1 Planning Context.

There are areas of the Parish which are prone to sewage smells. Although the provider, Anglian Water, are committed to providing an adequate service, they admit that the sewage system needs work

10.1.2 Other Considerations, Existing Infrastructure.

The NP survey showed that many villagers are concerned about the smell of sewage, particularly in the Blackheath area. This can be worse in the summer months and affects residents and visitors. There is concern that the situation will deteriorate with new housing developments.

10.1.3 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Sewage Policies

WwM P10

Updating the present sewage facilities will be actively pursued by working with stakeholders. New development sewerage infrastructure will be in place before any new development is occupied.

Supports NP Objective 3a

10.2 ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

10.2.1 Planning Context.

The policies and strategies outlined below have taken into consideration the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the SCDC Local Plan

10.2.2 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)

The NPPF Section 10 supports the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and Local Authorities should actively support energy efficient improvements.

10.2.3 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)

The Local Plan (SP12) promotes the mitigation of the effects of climate change by energy efficiency.

10.2.4 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure

There are several issues for residents, noted in the survey and comments. There is no gas in the village so most people are forced to rely on oil as the main source for heating, and electricity for cooking, with some variations. There is an oil syndicate, which helps with cost and limits the number of tankers in the village. The Village Hall has many energy efficient features.

Car ownership is high. Most households have at least one car, often more, because public transport is limited and often inconvenient.

The Wenhaston Energy Support Group, during its eight years of existence, encouraged the bulk buying of insulation materials, solar water panels and PV panels and other initiatives to encourage the village to reduce its carbon footprint.

10.2.5 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Energy and Sustainability Strategies.

WwM S11

Opportunities for the community to develop and maintain a sustainable way of life will be supported. Projects to increase energy efficiency and lower carbon emissions will be actively encouraged, particularly in relation to any assessment of planning applications for new development. Air source heat pumps, solar panels and effective insulation will be encouraged in any building upgrade projects where appropriate.

LP SP1, SP12.

Supports NP Objective 3a

10.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY

10.3.1 Planning Context.

The policies and strategies outlined below have taken into consideration the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the SCDC Local Plan.

10.3.2 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)

The NPPF Paragraph 69 says that safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion are essential.

10.3.3 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.

A small number of villagers were concerned about issues of noise pollution and safety, particularly in the future. Some of these have been addressed in the transport policy.

10.3.4 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Community Safety Strategies.

WwM S12

Community policing is important to villagers to ensure continuing safety in the Parish, and this will be welcomed, by working with relevant stakeholders - particularly the provision of prompt responses to issues.

Supports NP Objective 3a

10.4 STREET LIGHTING

10.4.1 Planning Context.

The policies and strategies outlined below have taken into consideration the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the SCDC Local Plan.

10.4.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)

The SCDC Local Plan DM26 seeks to minimise light pollution in order to prevent unnecessary intrusion into the countryside, or the effect on residential amenity.

10.4.3 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.

Comments in the survey showed that many people appreciated the dark night skies which are seen in most of the parish, where there is limited or no street lighting. A smaller number of people felt that there were some safety problems in darker areas. The design and effect of recently erected lights in St Michael's Way was generally disliked.

10.4.4 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Street Lighting Strategies.

WwM S13

Existing street lighting in established areas should be maintained but not increased unless there are very good safety reasons for doing so, and it does not impinge significantly on the dark skies of the Parish.

LP DM26.

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM S14

When lights need replacing, they should be of low energy and appropriate design, and conserve the aesthetic qualities and character of the parish.

LP DM26.

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM S15

Householders will be encouraged to keep outside lighting to a minimum intensity level to enhance dark skies, unless safety is compromised.

LP DM26.

Supports NP Objective 3a

10.5 COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

10.5.1 Planning Context

The policies and strategies outlined below have taken into consideration the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the SCDC Local Plan.

10.5.2 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)

The NPPF Section 5 highlights the role of high speed broadband in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

10.5.3 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)

The Local Plan (DM29) is in accord with the NPPF policies and states that modern telecommunications are an important part of life for local communities and make a significant contribution to the national economy. They also help combat the effects of relative remoteness in rural areas, and limit the need to travel to work.

10.5.4 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.

The Issues and Concerns survey highlighted that broadband service is inadequate, particularly in some areas of the parish. The provision of good telecommunication is vital in a rural area for everyone, but particularly the elderly, students, those working from home, or running local businesses.

Additionally, the existing telephone exchange was seen as inadequate, causing well-documented problems of no service at times. In the survey, mobile phone coverage was also noted as being poor. When coupled together, with inadequate broadband, these factors can create serious communication problems.

10.5.5 Wenhaston with Mellis NDP Communication Infrastructure Strategies.

WwM S16

The provision of a super-fast broadband network for the benefit of residents in all areas of the parish is seen as very important for most villagers and any improvements are welcomed.

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM S17

A broadband capable connection to individual houses will be expected in all permissions for residential development, with the inclusion of sympathetically chosen ground network installations, reflecting the character of the local area.

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM S18

The development of improved infrastructure, for both landline and mobile communication, will be encouraged across the whole Parish, both for present needs and the future.

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM S19

The preservation of the working public telephone kiosk in The Street, Wenhaston will be strongly supported.

Supports NP Objective 3a

10.6 EDUCATION

10.6.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)

Paragraph 72 underlines the importance of sufficient school places and that school promoters identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

10.6.2 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.

Wenhaston Primary School is a small Victorian building for pupils from Pre-School through to Year 6, and has a catchment of Wenhaston, Blythburgh and Blyford. It has less than adequate floor space per child by modern standards and is close to capacity without the new houses in the process of development.

The Issues and Concerns survey showed that Parishioners valued the school and wished for its retention as an asset for the Parish.

10.6.3 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Education Strategies

WwM S20

The opportunity for primary age children living in the Parish to attend Wenhaston Primary School is considered to be very important. When any new development is planned, educational placement should always be addressed.

Supports NP Objective 3a

10.7 HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CARE

10.7.1 Planning Context

The parish includes a large number of retired people, some with health problems, and some of these are cared for by family members. Most use

the GP surgeries at Reydon and Halesworth which require a car or bus journey.

The nearest hospitals are all about 30 miles away, at Ipswich, Gorleston and Norwich, with inadequate roads for part of the distance. This can be problematic, not only in an emergency. Public transport links are difficult, and there is limited availability of volunteer drivers. There are plans for improved medical facilities in the nearest town, Halesworth.

10.7.2 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Hospital and Health Care Strategies

WwMS 21

Facilitating services for villagers, such as the delivery of prescriptions to the Village Hall Post office are valued and will be encouraged. Also, the local first responder system will be promoted, to encourage volunteers to come forward.

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM S22

Engagement with the voluntary and community sector to improve services and facilities in the community and to support elderly residents and carers will be welcomed.

LP SP27.

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM S23

The development of improved hospital and medical facilities on the Halesworth campus site will be actively supported.

LP SP27

Supports NP Objective 3a

10.8 CULTURAL AND SPORTS FACILITIES INCLUDING PLAY AREAS

10.8.1 Planning Context

The policies and strategies outlined below have taken into consideration the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the SCDC Local Plan.

10.8.2 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)

The NPPF Section 7 believes that positive plans should be made for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and

places of worship) and other local services should be there to enhance the health, wellbeing and sustainability of communities.

10.8.3 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)

The Local Plan (SP16) says that the appropriate provision, protection and enhancement of formal and informal sport and recreation facilities for all sectors of the community will be supported, particularly where shortfalls in local provision can be addressed and it accords with local requirements.

10.8.4 Other Considerations. Existing Infrastructure.

The Issues and Concerns survey showed that generally it was felt that the village of Wenhaston has very good facilities for a village of this size, used and appreciated by a large number of respondents. There are, however, concerns that there may be problems in the future, particularly with an increased population. St Peter's Church in the centre of the village is considered to be an important asset, both by churchgoers and by those who do not attend regularly. Events are held there regularly as well as services; include the Becker exhibition and concerts. The bells are now being rung regularly, including a three hour peal to mark the Queen's official birthday. The church room is useful for small events but would benefit from being used more. The Methodist chapel co-operates with St. Peter's where possible and appropriate.

The Village Hall is thriving, used by many groups on a regular basis, and it is enjoyed by many. Activities range widely from Kurling to Bingo to WEA courses to seated exercise, and many more. The Village Show and Village Christmas Bazaar are held there. The introduction of the Pics in the Sticks Cinema and the Café on Wednesday and Saturday mornings have added a further opportunity for community use as well as providing valuable income for the upkeep of the hall. The majority of users are older and retired so there is scope for providing more in the evenings for children and those who work. There is a well attended youth club for the younger age group. The mobile library visits regularly and the Village Hall is used regularly for blood donating sessions.

Facilities for sport are good for a village this size. The playing field is used regularly by the Wenhaston football team, and the Sports Club has facilities there for tennis and basketball. There is a bowls green next to the field. Table tennis and badminton are available at the village hall. The playing field is also used on occasions for community occasions, such as the village party to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday, which was attended and enjoyed by many. Other sports would be welcomed by some, although they might have limited take up. The play area is being updated in the near future.

10.8.5 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Cultural and Sports Facilities Including Play Areas Strategies.

WwM S24

The promotion and support of community buildings for cultural, social and sporting activities and the inclusive encouragement to members of the community to be involved in the activities of the Parish is important.

LP SP16, DM32

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwM S25

The community needs of young people will be considered, by taking into account their views at Parish Council surgeries.

Supports NP Objective 3a

WwMS 26

The community will be assisted in the raising of money through grants, Section 106 payments or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for the purpose of providing state of the art equipment at the playing field - a hub for sport and play for not only Wenhaston but also the surrounding villages and area.

LP SP18

Supports NP Objective 3a

11. ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

11.1 PROTECTION OF THE COMMONS

Wenhaston contains a richly diverse flora and fauna attributable particularly to its five commons, other semi-natural habitats with general or restricted public access and areas of conservation significance in private ownership or managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

The Wenhaston Commons Group (WCG) oversees management of the commons in accordance with a management plan and works in partnership with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. WCG also promotes wildlife conservation generally throughout the Parish.

The Wenhaston commons have both landscape and nature conservation significance. They have influenced the way the village has developed in the past and over decades of management have become structural, heritage, wildlife and recreation assets. The commons are significant both locally and for the wider area and are a part of the sub-regional Coast and Heaths assets.

The Neighbourhood Plan can protect the commons from adverse development impacts and will promote their linkage by wildlife corridors, field margins, hedgerows and woodland in a necklace of natural features. Footpaths and bridleways could provide a basis for the corridors. The unique character of the Parish would thereby be protected and enhanced.

The commons are managed in accordance with “Caring for the Commons”, the ten year management plan. This plan covers the period to 2020 and deals with maintenance of the commons so as to achieve the plan objectives. This plan will be reviewed and rolled forward with the aim of securing further funding.

11.1.1 Wenhaston with Mellis NDP Protection of the Commons Policies.

WwM P11

The Wenhaston commons will be protected from all development notwithstanding any Rights of Common which may exist.

Supports NP Objective 1b

WwM P12

The immediate boundary of the commons outside the registered areas will be protected from any adverse impact on their biodiversity from bordering development.

Supports NP Objective 1b

WwM P13

The development or other use of land adjoining or close to the commons will be refused if there is shown to be any adverse impact on their biodiversity.

Supports NP Objective 1b

WwM P14

Any new development in the Parish will demonstrate no adverse impact on the biodiversity of the commons.

Supports NP Objective 1b

11.2 BIODIVERSITY

Outside the immediate boundaries of the commons the plan aspires to support the linking of areas with wildlife assets to the commons in a necklace of sites in the wider landscape. These linking areas could be implemented by lease, acquisition, informal agreement or through new development where contributions may be sought for nature conservation objectives. Agreement with landowners through their agricultural practice could reserve areas as field margins set aside from crop planting. Opportunities will be sought to discuss with land owners the safeguarding of these sites from agricultural practices adverse to biodiversity.

11.2.1 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Biodiversity Policies.

WwM P15

Proposals for development and/or other changes in land use, however they are made, will be examined for their impact upon biodiversity and relevant public rights. Biodiversity within Wenhaston with Mells Parish will, whenever possible, be protected and enhanced. Criteria for this process will be:

- The presence or absence of wildlife on or adjacent to, or otherwise using the site, in particular species for which there are applicable biodiversity action plans
- The creation or destruction of sites that link or enhance adjacent or nearby sites of wildlife significance
- Existing rights of the public in respect of access to or use of the site.
- The site's value for recreation, landscape, or visual amenity.

Where it is considered that the proposal/s will prejudice or have an otherwise negative effect in any of the above criteria, the proposals will be rejected.

LP DM27

Supports NP Objective 1a

11.2.2 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Biodiversity Strategies

WwM S27

Opportunities will be sought to discuss with land owners the safeguarding of sites with biodiversity value from agricultural practices adverse to biodiversity.

LP DM27

Supports NP Objective 1b

11.3 PROTECTION OF THE LANDSCAPE

11.3.1 Policy context

The National Planning Policy Framework states that the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty and wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations. There is a duty on all public bodies to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. This includes Local Planning Authorities when they set planning

policy or determine applications for development within, or affecting, the AONB and will be reflected by policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

There are also other areas within Suffolk with special landscape attributes, which are particularly vulnerable to change. They include the Blyth River valley which still possesses traditional grazing meadows and marshes, with their hedgerows, dykes and associated flora and fauna. These are designated as Special Landscape Areas. The policy here is to ensure that no development takes place which would be to the material detriment of, or materially detract from, the special landscape quality.

11.3.2 The AONB and Special Landscape Areas

The Blyth valley is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Adjoining this designation and overlapping it is a Special Landscape area which extends across Blyford lane and Bickers Heath which is a county Wildlife site. This undeveloped green wedge is an historical survivor as evidenced by the Tithe Map of 1839 and the existence of an ancient hedgerow. It is therefore a key element in the character of the village. The significance of the AONB to the character of Wenhaston, in particular its landscape setting on the southern bank of the Blyth valley leads to the conclusion that there should be no further estate development in the Area. Recent development in the AONB reinforces the undesirability of further development of this type.

To the south of Black Heath and extending to the River Blyth along a tributary is an area of low lying grazing marsh, some of which is managed as a nature reserve by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The area is an important visual element in the landscape contrasting grazing marsh and woodland with nearby heath and arable farming. Further intensification of development on its boundary should demonstrate no adverse impact on these qualities.

11.3.3 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Protection of the Landscape Policies.

WwM P16

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the designation of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Special Landscape Areas (SLA) as shown on the proposals map.

LP SP15

Supports NP Objective 2a

WwM P17

Further estate development in the AONB and Blyth valley SLA will not be permitted. Where frontage development or infill is proposed this will only be approved where there is no demonstrable harm to landscape setting in addition to other relevant planning policies.

LP SP15

Supports NP Objective 2a

11.4 AREAS OF LOCAL LANDSCAPE VALUE

Both within and outside the Local Plan designations of SLAs and AONB the Neighbourhood Plan surveys have identified areas of local landscape importance where consideration should be given to the wider visual impact of new development, (Appendix 2, Map 8). In particular views from the south of the parish towards the River Blyth where the tower of St Peter's Church is a landmark should be protected.

Closer to the village fingers of open space have been identified in the surveys which contribute to its character and should be protected. Where common land exists protection is assured. However other areas in the wider countryside may be vulnerable in the future to, for example, wind turbines, solar farms, pylons and telecommunication towers. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore designates important local landscape areas where consideration must be given to any adverse visual impact on them. Within the settlement green spaces have been identified in the survey which are important to the character of development and appearance of the village.

11.4.1 Wenhaston with Mellis NDP Local Landscape Value Policies.

WwM P18

In areas designated as having Local Landscape Value development proposals will demonstrate no adverse impact on important views and the landscape setting of the village.

LP SP15

Supports NP Objective 2a

WwM P19

Designated village green spaces will be retained and enhanced.

LP SP17

Supports NP Objective 1b and 4a

11.5 WOODLANDS, TREES AND HEDGEROWS

There are many significant mature trees within and adjoining the physical limits, a few of which are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). Where development takes place the protection of native trees will be required if necessary by the imposition of TPOs but more generally by negotiation, and native tree planting. Tree planting will also be encouraged on private and public land as will the planting of native hedgerows as an alternative to fencing. Where public authorities carry out maintenance of their own land best practice will be encouraged to support biodiversity (see policy NE2). The planting of new woodlands and traditional maintenance of existing woods will be encouraged.

11.5.1 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows Policies

WwM P20

Where new development takes place, landscape priority will be given to the retention of existing native trees, additional planting of native species and the planting of native hedging.

LP DM21

Supports NP Objective 1a and 4a

11.5.2 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows Strategies

WwM S28

The traditional maintenance of woodlands and, where possible the creation of new woodland, will be encouraged.

Supports NP Objective 4a

12. CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

12.1 Policy Context

A belief permeates the NPPF that Conservation and Heritage go hand in hand and it is only with a detailed understanding of the past that we can hope to plan for a successful and appropriate future. Paragraph 126 states that;

‘Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats’.

For their part, the overarching Vision of Suffolk Coastal in 2027 is: *‘Having built on the best of the past, Suffolk Coastal will be a district where people can and want to live and to invest, as well as to care for others and the environment.’*

12.2 Historic Character

The Neighbourhood Plan survey indicated great support for the principle that Wenhaston is a special place of particular character which it is desirable to protect and enhance. The Plan has therefore examined these qualities in more detail firstly through the examination of character, as set out in background documents WwMNDP/03, WwMNDP/04, WwMNDP/05 and WwMNDP/06, and in the following analysis of how the village has grown over time.

12.3 Sequence of Past Development

Analysis of maps since 1839 (Tithe map) shows that the village of Wenhaston as it now is went through phases of development. Around 1800 there were four small concentrations of dwellings separated by open areas. The largest of these, The Street, extended from St Peter’s Church to what is now Coles Hill with particular concentrations at each end. At that time the ‘north green’ appears to be the main cluster with the church, former guild hall / school and later cottages at what was then the south end of the village. South of this, as now, was Blackheath, a small sporadic settlement relating to Black Heath common and a tributary of the River Blyth.

To the north of the settlement the Methodist Chapel and a cluster of cottages formed a separate group on the edge of Bickers Heath and a similar small group clustered around the junction of Low Road and Blyford Lane possibly related to an access to the River Blyth at Blyford Quay.

Up to 1900 such development as there was reinforced this pattern with minor infilling. The coming of the railway in 1879 may have been a factor with some new building on Blyford Lane and in the centre. The school was opened in 1882 in splendid isolation between the church and Blackheath settlement although there was little change other than the opening of The Star public house. There was in addition some development in Narrow Way.

The first half of the 20th century saw very little development. Two terraces of houses were built on Hall Road near the school but generally this was a static

period in the village and could reflect the agricultural depression post 1918, closure of the railway and decline in the rural economy.

From 1945 to 1960 there was a new phase of building with Hall Road seeing frontage development, local authority housing to the west and private plot development to the east. There was some infill in Narrow Way. Elsewhere there was little change.

Only in the post 1960 period does estate development make an appearance, firstly in St Michaels Way where, farmland behind the frontage of Hall Road and Narrow Way was developed. There was consolidation in Narrow Way, clusters of houses off The Street behind the frontage, Back Road had frontage development on both sides and between Coles Hill and Back Road two culs de sac serving ten houses were built. Coles Hill/Chapel Lane was also consolidated by a metalled road and four new houses.

Blackheath settlement was consolidated in this period and joins with development in the north east corner of Black Heath common. Similarly further infill on Blyford Lane consolidated the earlier development although it still remains separated from the main settlement. This phase of development reflects the introduction of planning regulations both by allocation of development and definition of development boundaries which in themselves have a focussing affect on development. The most recent phase in this development story is represented by the grant of permission outside development limits behind St Michaels Way.

Outside the main settlements of Wenhaston and Blackheath there has been little change from the 1839 pattern. Mells remains the only significant cluster perhaps originating around the chapel, now a listed Ancient Monument. Elsewhere farms provide the focus of built activity.

12.4 Summary

The growth of Wenhaston village has gone through a number of stages from small clusters probably related to village industries and services, hostelries and the church/school, the gradual extension of these areas in a linear fashion, consolidation and reuse of land in their immediate vicinity and finally backland and open farmland between the original cores being built on.

The character and visual attraction of the village depends to a large extent on the survival of the original cores of property pre-1900. Not only do these buildings provide visual interest and historic continuity, they demonstrate local styles of building and materials typical of the area especially red brick, clay pantiles and cobbles.

The way the village has developed is also important in the street scene particularly with the incidence of large trees and green wedges which link the built up areas

with the immediate countryside. Taken together with the predominant maximum two storey height of buildings there is an undoubted rural character to the settlement.

This plan therefore considers that policies should define the core areas as Areas of Special Village Character and in the case of area 1 below designation as a Conservation Area of Historic Interest should be sought. The aim would be to protect these areas from development which would erode the character of individual buildings in the street scene and their setting as well as guiding utility and highway works which would have an adverse impact on the street scene. In addition the lessons in architectural form and detail provide by these areas and buildings should provide general guidance for the style and materials of new buildings in the parish through the provision of a Local Design Guide.

12.5 AREAS OF SPECIAL VILLAGE CHARACTER

The areas, (Appendix 2, Map 6), so defined are:

12.5.1 Area 1 Coles Hill to Hall Road

The boundary takes in the curtilage of ten Listed Buildings and includes highway frontages. At its southern end the extensive landscape surrounding The Old Vicarage is included for the contribution of its trees and role as a green wedge in the heart of the village.

12.5.2 Area 2 Chapel Lane /Coles Hill

A group of nine pre 1839 dwellings on the edge of Bickers Heath clustered near the Grade 2 Listed Methodist Chapel. These are representative of small dwellings on the edge of the common.

12.5.3 Area 3 Blyford Lane

A sporadic group of dwellings on the northern approach to the village, many of which appear on the 1839 Tithe Map. They included possibly the oldest recorded dwelling in the village (Rose Glen and Railway Terrace) which contain a former hall house of 15th or early 16th century origin.

12.5.4 Area 4 Blackheath Settlement, Blackheath Road

The settlement has a cluster of pre 1839 dwellings and was virtually unchanged until the mid 20th century. There are two registered village greens the largest of which, Well Green forms the visual focus of the settlement

12.5.5 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Areas of Special Village Character Policies

WwM P21

In areas of Special Village Character, as shown on the Proposals Map, any new development will demonstrate recognition of and accord with the scale, density, layout and materials prevalent in the area. Special attention will be given to its relationship with existing buildings of defined character and the landscape

- Area 1 Coles Hill to Hall Road
- Area 2 Chapel Lane /Coles Hill
- Area 3 Blyford Lane
- Area 4 Blackheath Settlement, Blackheath Road

LP DM21

Supports NP Objective 2c and 4A

12.5.6 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Areas of Special Village Character Strategies

WwM S29

Area 1 in Policy WwM P21 will be promoted as a Conservation Area

Supports NP Objective 2C and 4a

12.6 IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Within the village there are areas of land which would benefit from visual improvement. They mostly fall within the public domain and are significant in their relationship to frontage buildings and the street scene, (Appendix 2, Map 7).

Area 1 in 12.5.1 above has a number of such areas. Two in particular, the north and south 'greens' are candidates for improvement and it is proposed that schemes are drawn up for them. A further candidate is at the junction of Black Heath Common and Hall Road, at the important eastern entry into the village

12.6.1 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Improvement Opportunity Areas Policies

WwM P22

In Improvement Opportunity Areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, consideration will be given by the relevant authorities and those with an interest in the land to their visual improvement. This will include rationalising street furniture, better definition of the green space and treatment and consideration of traffic management.

Supports NP objective 2c and 4a

12.7 NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

A non-designated heritage asset can be a building, monument, site, place, and area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Significance is the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest that can be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

In accordance with recent guidance from Suffolk Coastal District Council a survey has been made of potential candidates for non-designated heritage assets and in particular buildings important in the street scene which it is desirable to retain.

The District Council will be asked to consider them with a view to adoption. Thereafter retention of the assets will be a material consideration in planning decisions.

12.7.1 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Non-Designated Heritage Assets Strategies

WwM S30

The following buildings, monuments and sites have been identified as proposed Non Designated Heritage Assets in the Neighbourhood Plan. The District Council will be consulted in pursuit of formal adoption.

The war memorial
The old cemetery
The telephone kiosk
The School Rooms
The village school
The Masters House
And others

13. DRAINAGE, FLOOD RISK AND ENERGY

13.1 Planning Context

The policies and strategies outlined below have taken into consideration the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the SCDC Local Plan.

Many areas of the Parish are prone to flooding. Water meadows abutting the River Blyth to the north and south of the parish frequently flood along their entire length. Blyford Lane, Bramfield Road, Coles Hill, Back Road, Heath Road and Hall Road all suffer from surface water flooding, at times after only moderate rainfall.

The areas to the north, east and south of the parish adjacent to the river are variously Environment Agency Flood Zone 2 or 3.

13.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework, (2011)

The NPPF (para. 99 – 104) says that development in areas at high risk of flooding should be avoided including that which would increase flood risk elsewhere.

13.1.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan, (Adopted July 2013)

The Local Plan (SP12 and DM28) mirrors the NPPF policies steering any development away from flood zones 2 and 3 and limiting other areas if they are at risk from sequential flooding. It also states the intention to minimising the risk of flooding by ensuring appropriate management of land within flood plains.

13.1.3 Other Considerations, Existing Infrastructure.

Surface water flooding occurs throughout the parish and is caused by either run off from fields or the overflowing of the antiquated ditch and gully drainage system. The latter is of particular concern, because it is prevalent in built up areas.

13.1.4 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Drainage, Flood Risk and Energy Policies.

WwM P23

Development in areas at high risk of flooding or which would increase the risk of flooding in adjacent areas will be refused.

LP SP12, DM28.

Supports NP Objective 1c

13.1.5 Wenhaston with Mells NDP Drainage, Flood Risk and Energy Strategies.

WwM S31

Working with other stakeholders will be investigated to minimise the risk of surface water flooding throughout the parish by improved drainage systems. (EA, SCC, SCDC, AW.).

LP SP12, DM28.

Supports NP Objective 1c

WwM S32

The Parish Council will work with other stakeholders to minimise the risk of road flooding throughout the parish, by providing suitable run off opportunities.

LP SP12, DM28.

Supports NP Objective 1c

WwM S33

The Parish Council will promote the management of the Blyth River valley along its length to avoid future flood risks.

LP SP12, DM28.

Supports NP Objective 1c

WwM S34

A low carbon/low emissions economy to mitigate against climate change in line with other policies in the plan will be encouraged.

LP DM28.

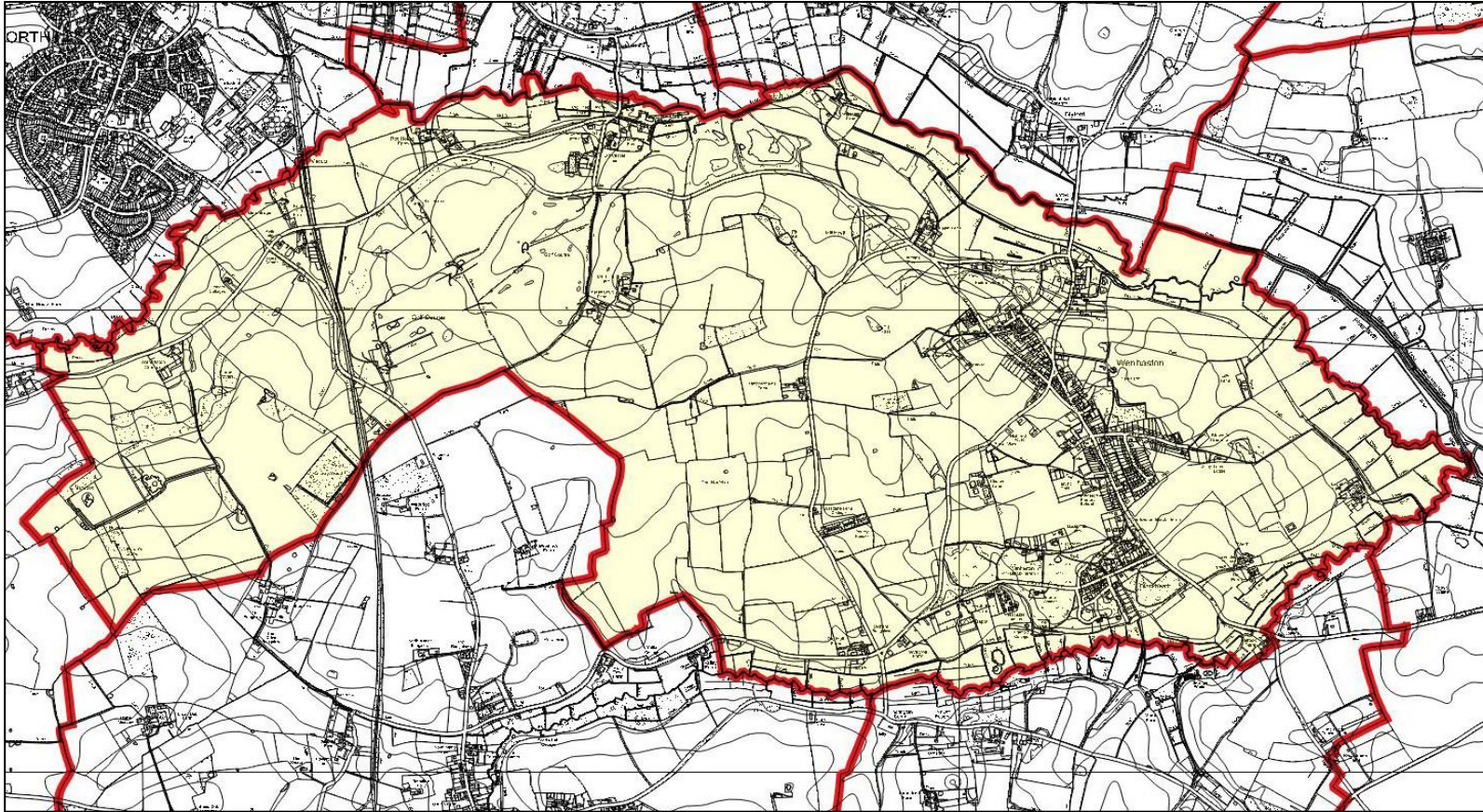
Supports NP Objective 1c



APPENDIX 1. CONFORMITY WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) objectives statements have been assessed against both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan (SCDC Local Plan) to confirm that the NDP is in conformity with the policies laid out in these documents.

Objective	Wenhaston with Mells Neighbourhood Plan	National (NPPF)	Local (SCDC Local Plan)
1a	P15, P21	Para 109 - 125	SP14, DM27
1b	P1, P12, P13, P14, P19, S27	Para 109 - 125	SP17
1c	P23, S31, S32, S33, S34	Para 99 - 104	SP12, DM28
2a	P4, P6, P16, P17, P18	Para 115-6	SP15
2b	P1, P2, P6		SP19, SP27, SP29, DM3, DM4, DM7
2c	P2, P3, P5, P21, P22, S1, S29, S30		SP19, SP27, SP29, DM3, DM4, DM7, DM22, DM23
2d	P8, P9, S2, S5	Para 28	SP7, SP8, DM11, DM12, DM13, DM14
3a	P7, P10, S3, S4, S11, S12, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17, S18, S19, S20, S21, S22, S23, S24, S25, S26	Para 28	SP1, SP16, SP18, SP27
3b	S6, S7, S8, S9, S10	Para 35	SP11, DM20, DM22
4a	P19, P20, P21, P22, S28, S29, S30	Para 126 - 141	SP1, SP15, SP17, DM21

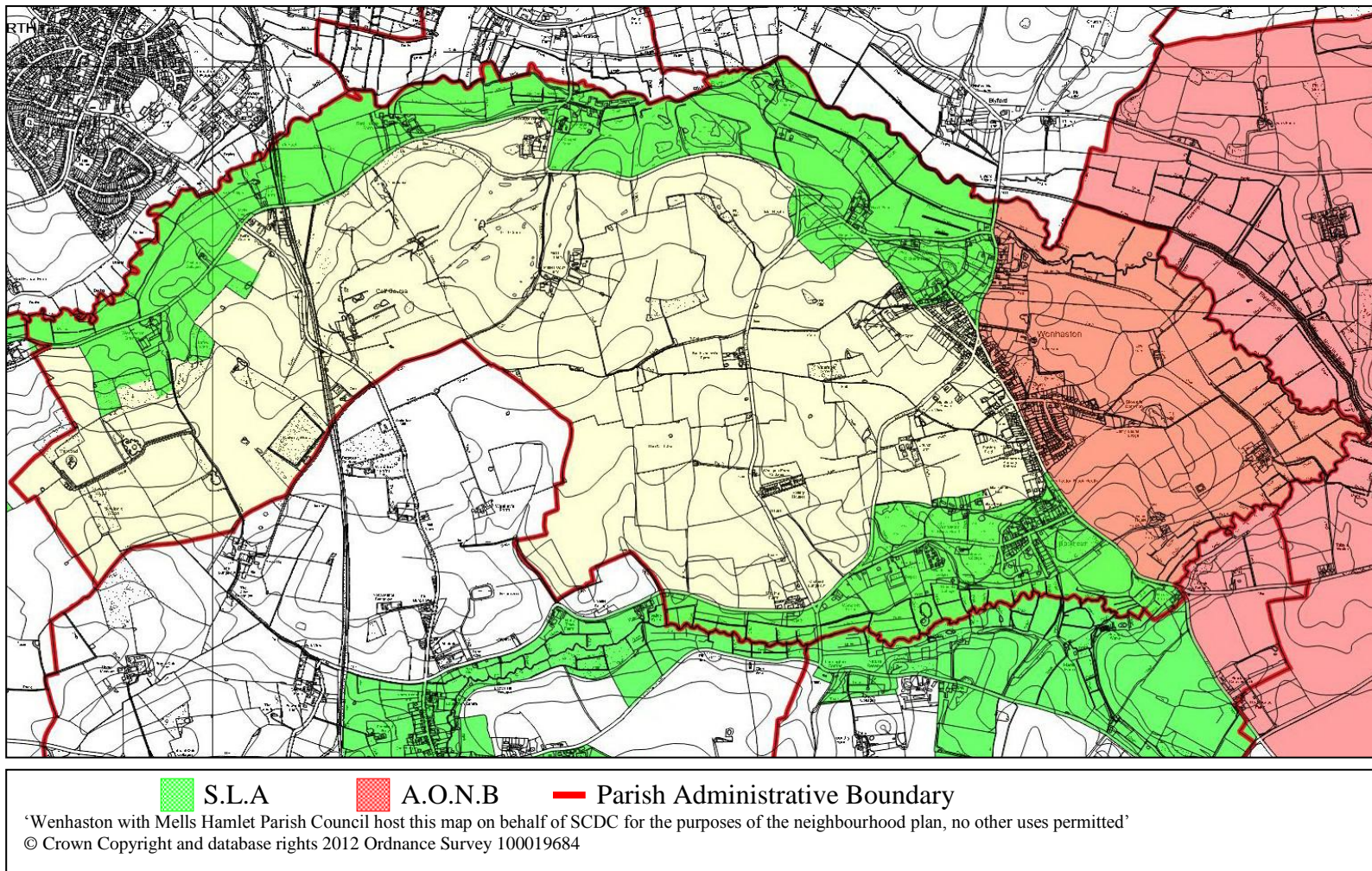
APPENDIX 2. MAPS



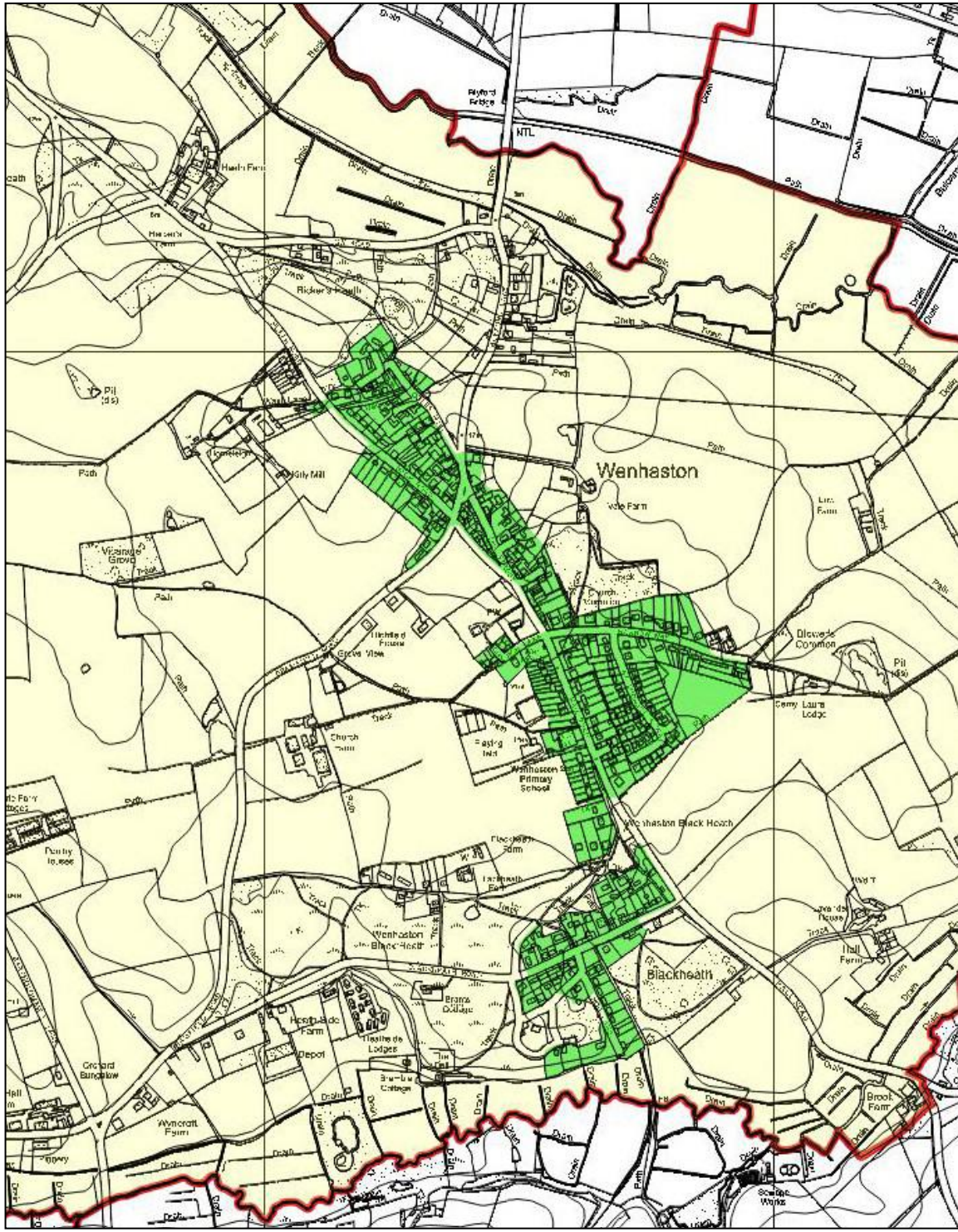
 Neighbourhood Plan Area  Parish Administrative Boundary


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Map 1. Neighbourhood Plan Area



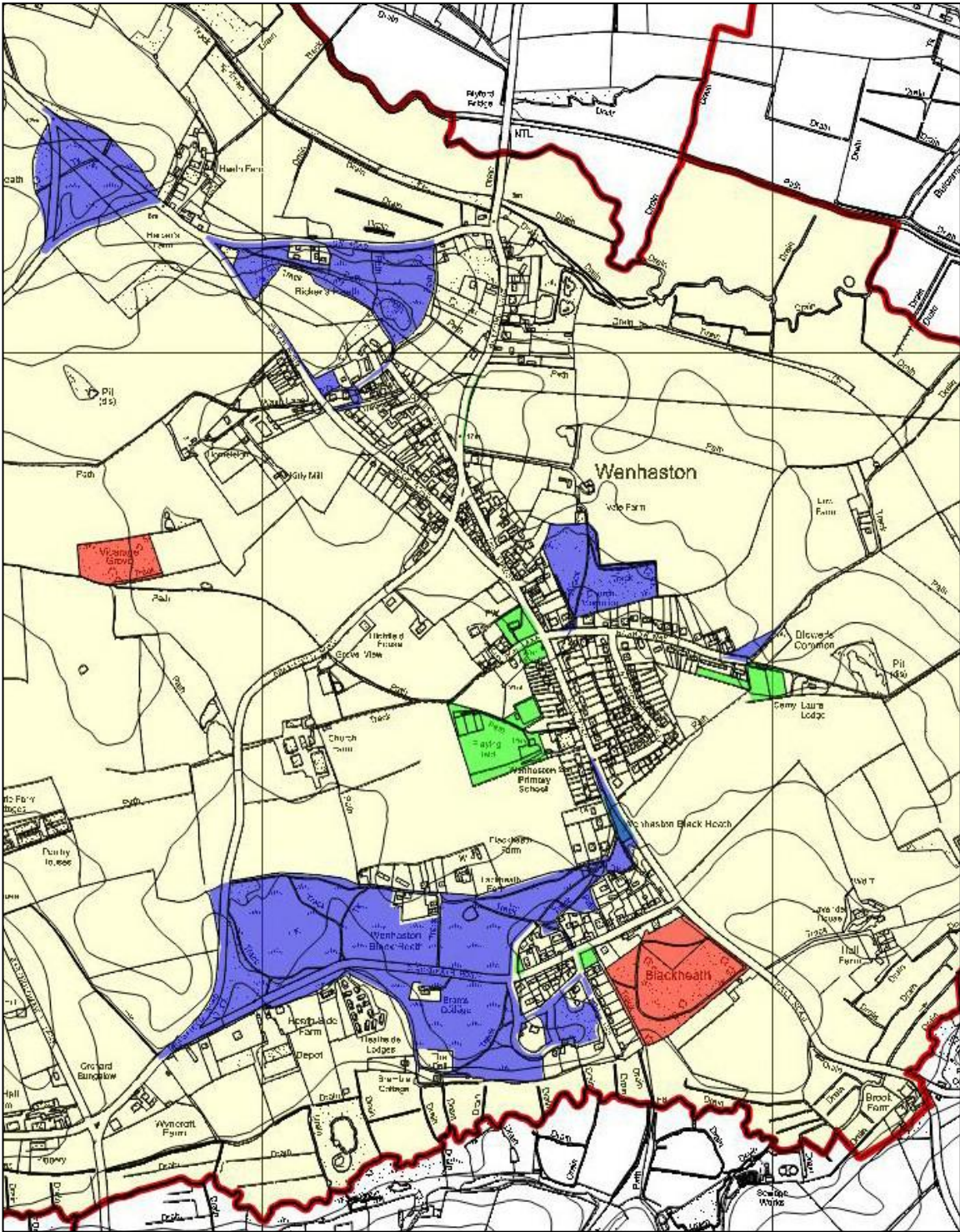
Map 2. Local Plan – Special Landscape Area and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



 Physical Limits Boundary

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Map 3. Wenhaston Physical Limits Boundary

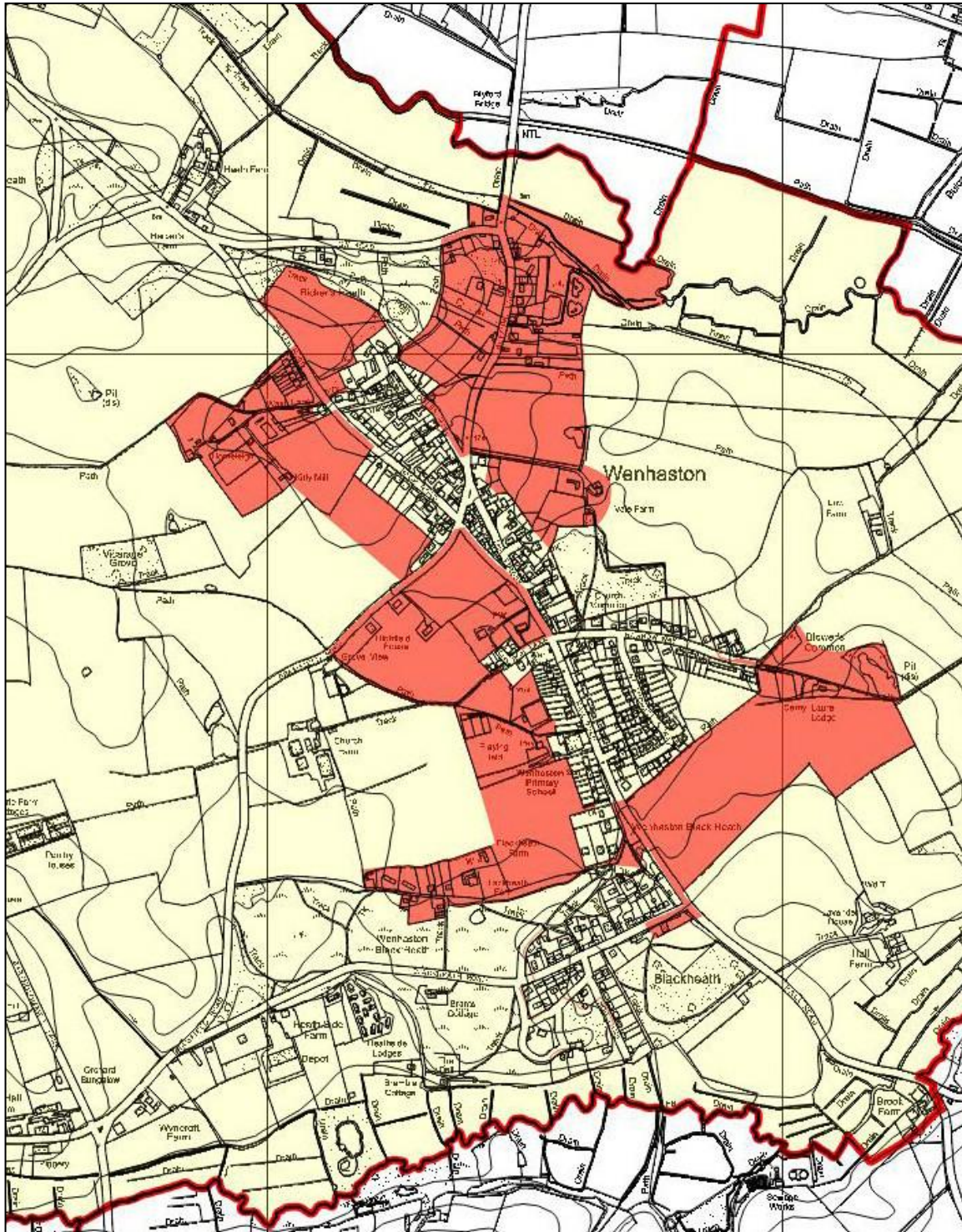



Commons
 Woodlands
 Village Green Spaces

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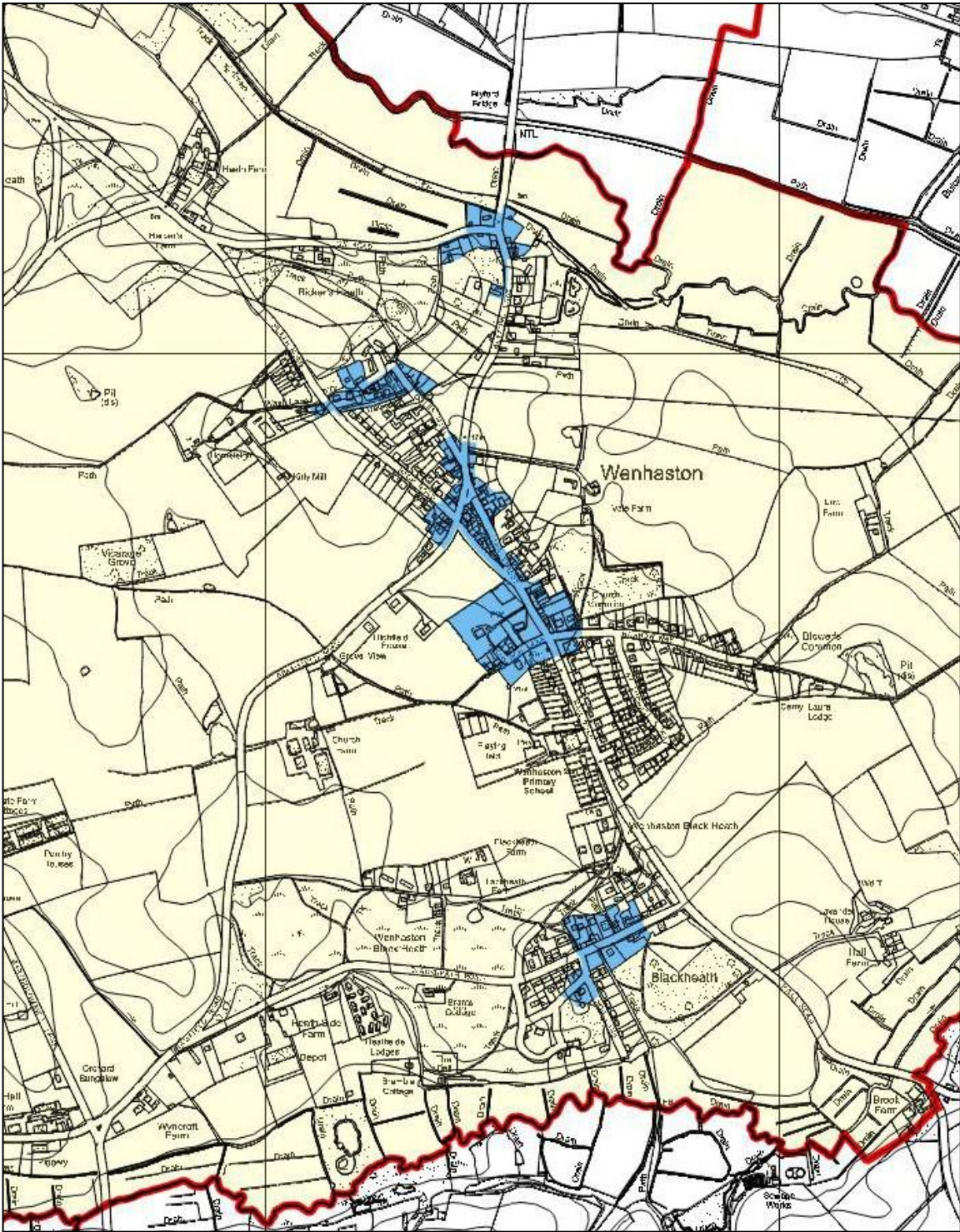
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Map 4. Commons, Woodlands and Village Green Spaces




Local Development Protection Area
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Map 5. Local Development Protection Area

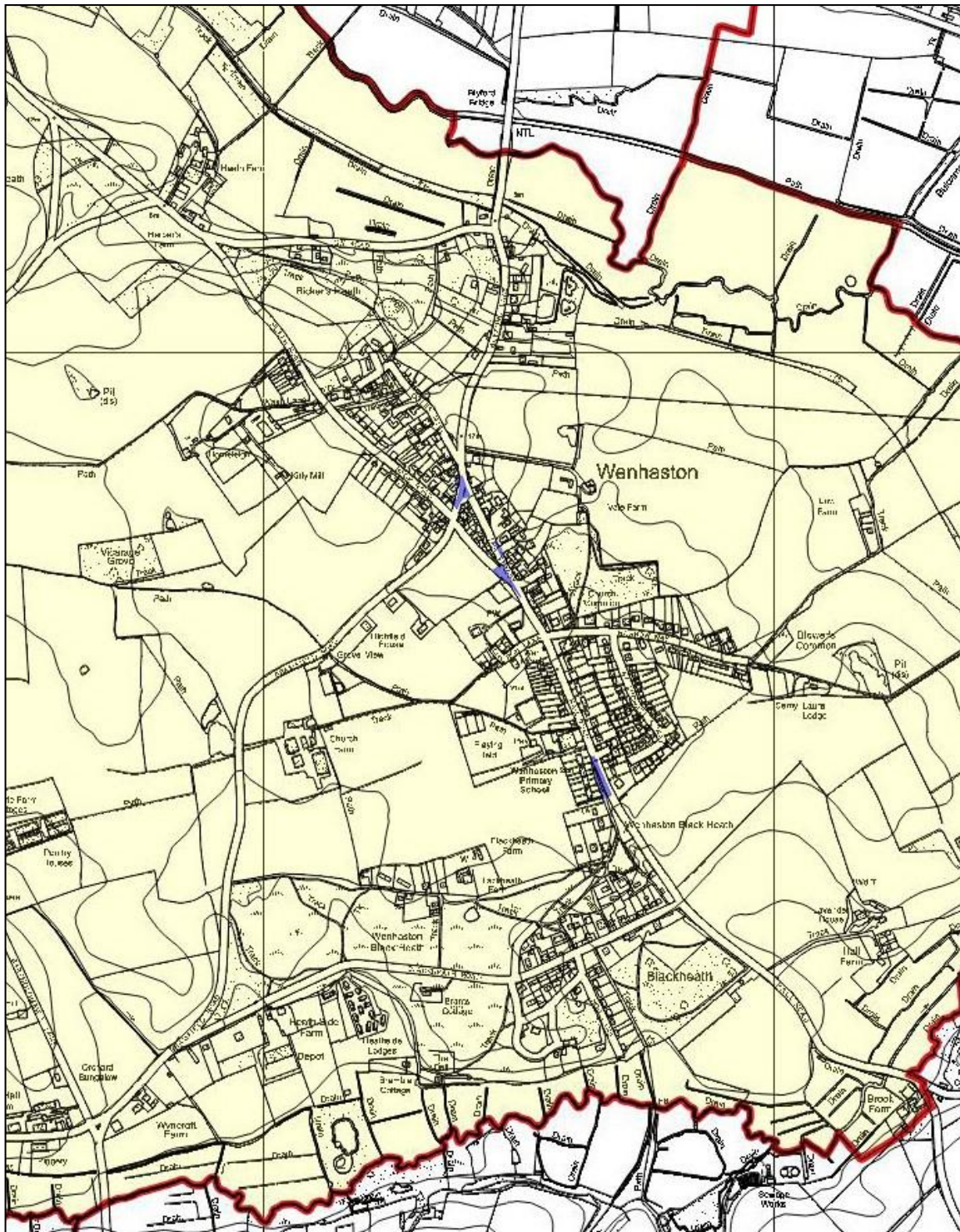


 Area of Special Village Character

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Map 6. Areas of Special Village Character

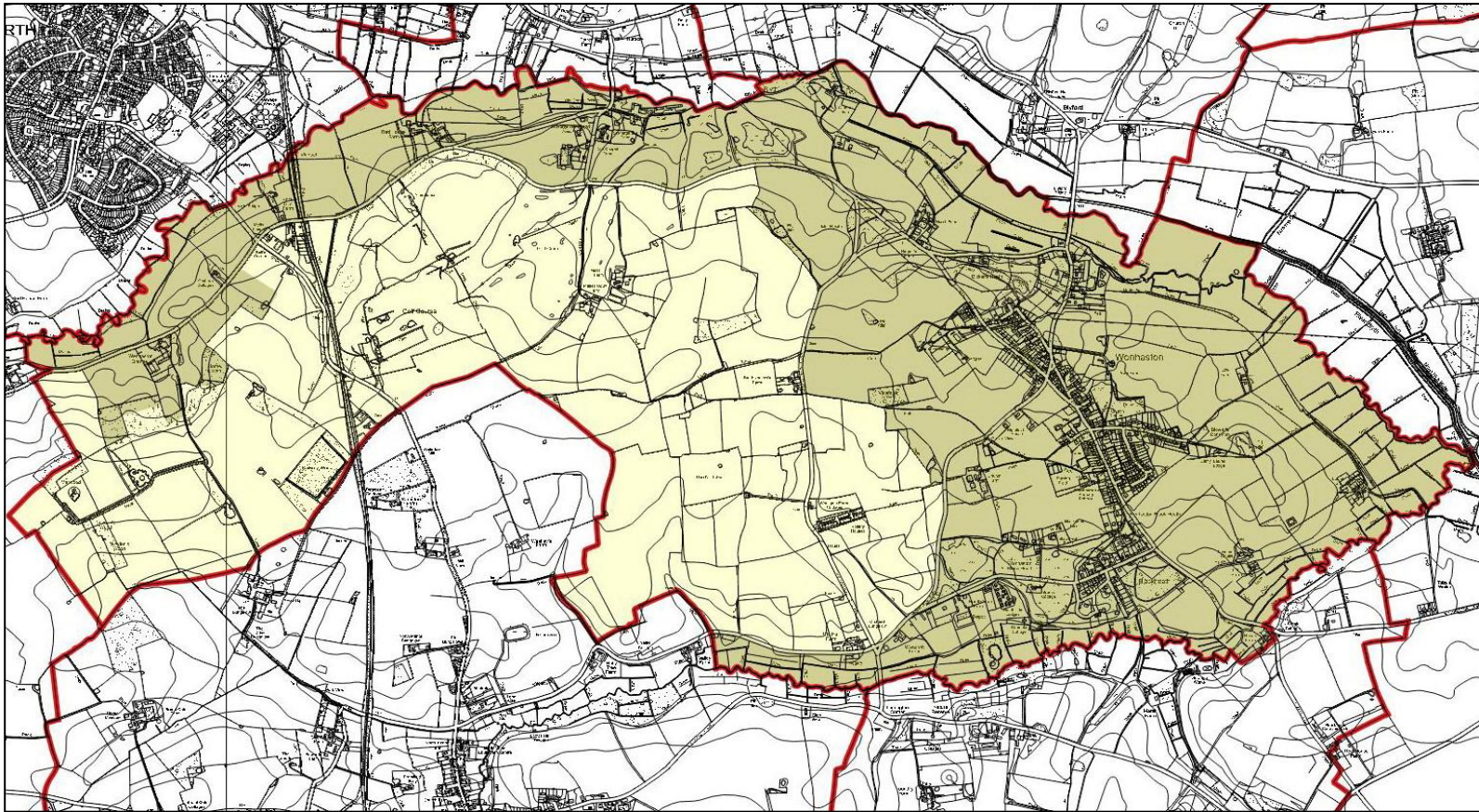


Improvement Opportunity Area

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Map 7. Improvement Opportunity Areas



Local Landscape Area

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Map 8. Local Landscape Value Area.

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