



Witchford Neighbourhood Plan Modification Proposal relating to the Climate Change Single Issue Review

Basic Conditions Statement

October 2024

Introduction to Cambridgeshire ACRE

Cambridgeshire ACRE is an independent charity established in 1924. We are part of a network of 38 Rural Community Councils across England and are a member of ACRE (the national umbrella for RCCs). We are proud to support local communities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and nearby where appropriate. We put a lot of effort into getting to know our customers so we can understand what they need from us. This ensures we focus on providing products and services that really make a difference to local people as they work in their own communities.

As part of our work, we provide a Neighbourhood Planning service for local communities. We have developed this service by building on our skills, knowledge and competencies gained in other project areas such as rural affordable housing and community-led planning and by working with local planning consultants to broaden our capacity.

Our current partners are:



You can find out more about our team and our work on our website [here](#).

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Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
2	The Witchford Neighbourhood Plan Climate Change Single Issue Review	7
3	How the planning policies contained in the WNP Climate Change SIR are appropriate having regard to national policies and guidance.....	12
4	How the WNP Climate Change SIR contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development	28
5	General conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.....	32
6	Compatibility with EU Obligations and Legislation	47
7	How the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.....	49

List of Tables

Table 1:	The eight Neighbourhood Plan objectives.....	7
Table 2:	A description of the Neighbourhood Plan policies, with the WNP Climate Change SIR planning policies shown in bold.	11
Table 3:	How the WNP Climate Change SIR relates to national policy and guidance, by NPPF chapter	23
Table 4:	How the WNP Climate Change SIR relates to national policy and guidance, by WNP Climate Change SIR policy.	27
Table 5:	How the WNP Climate Change SIR contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development (as defined by the NPPF)	30
Table 6:	An analysis of the WNP Climate Change SIR NP policies against the sustainable development goals.....	31
Table 7:	Conformity assessment of WNP Climate Change SIR policies against the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023)	46
Table 8:	Assessment of the WNP Climate Change SIR against protected characteristics	48

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Basic Conditions Statement has been prepared by Cambridgeshire ACRE on the behalf of Witchford Parish Council (WPC) to accompany the submission of the Witchford Neighbourhood Plan Modification Proposal (relating to the Climate Change Single Issue Review) to the local planning authority, East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC).
- 1.2 The current Witchford Neighbourhood Plan was adopted by ECDC at its meeting of 21 May 2020. This meeting followed a parish-wide referendum held on 19 March 2020 where local residents voted overwhelmingly in favour of the plan.
- 1.3 The modifications proposed to the Witchford Neighbourhood Plan are set out in the document called 'Witchford Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – 2031 Climate Change Single-Issue review submission version.' In this Basic Conditions Statement, the Witchford Neighbourhood Plan Modification Proposal is referred to as the 'WNP Climate Change SIR'.
- 1.4 The WNP Climate Change SIR is being submitted under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), referred to in this document as "the Regulations".
- 1.5 The WNP Climate Change SIR is being submitted by Witchford Parish Council (WPC), which is a qualifying body, as defined by the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.6 The WNP area was initially designated by ECDC on 26 August 2016. Then, following a community governance review to make minor change to some parish boundaries in 2018, the Witchford parish boundary was amended in spring 2019. Following an application by WPC, the WNP area was subsequently amended and designated by ECDC on 6 February 2019.
- 1.7 The plan area is shown on Map 1.
- 1.8 The policies described in the WNP Climate Change SIR relate to the development and use of land in the designated neighbourhood area. The WNP Climate Change SIR covers the period 2019 to 2031 and the plan does not contain policies relating to excluded development in accordance with Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA).
- 1.9 Regulation 15 in 'the Regulations' states that where a qualifying body submits a plan proposal or a modification proposal to the local planning authority, it must include, inter alia,

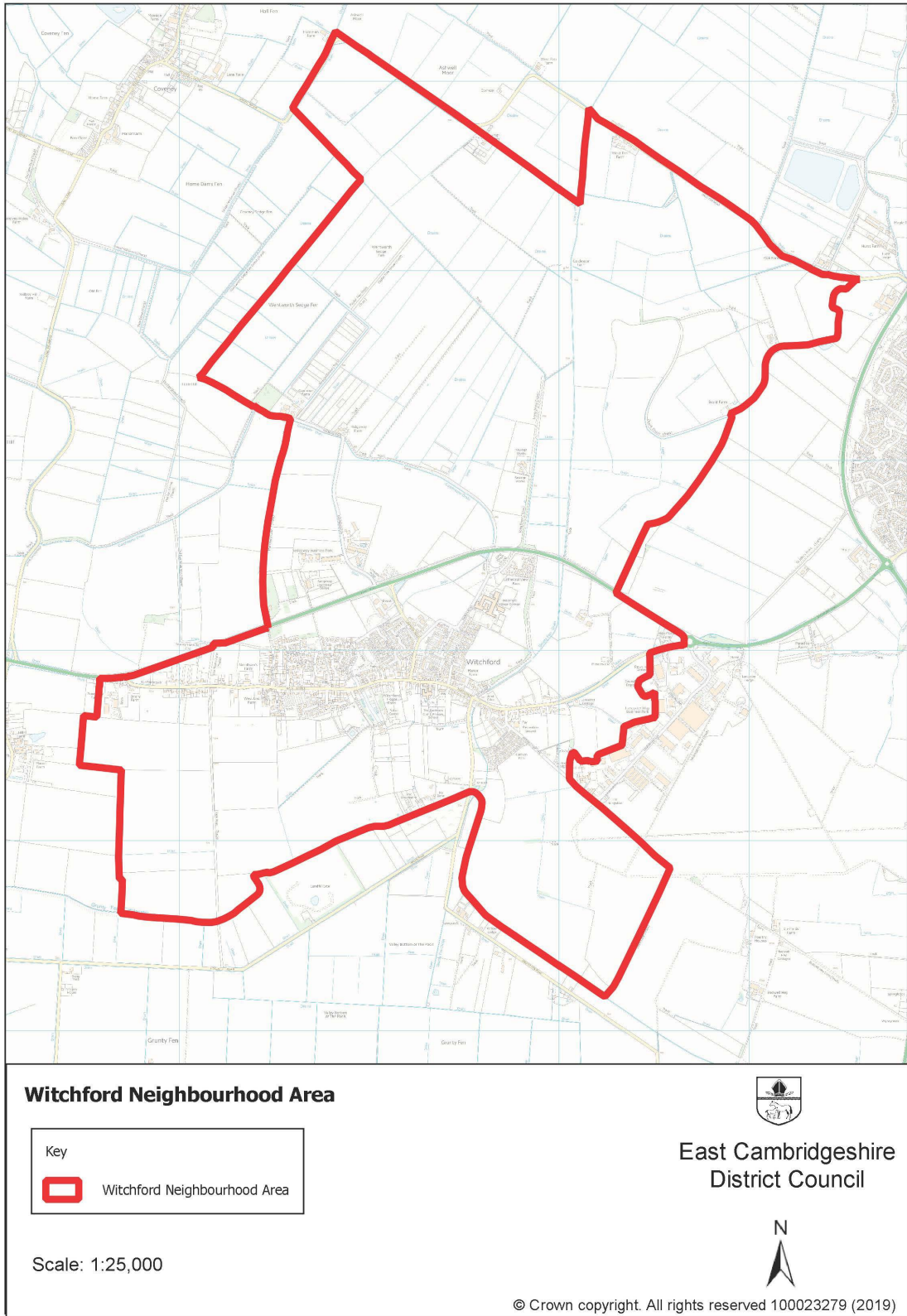
"d) a statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan or neighbourhood development plan as proposed to be modified meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act or in the case of a modification proposal, how the neighbourhood development plan as proposed to be modified meets the requirements of paragraph 11 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act"
- 1.10 Paragraph 11 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act (the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) clarifies the following basic conditions for Modifications of Neighbourhood Plans:

“A draft plan meets the basic conditions if—

- (a) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan,
- (b) the making of the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,
- (c) the making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area),
- (d) the making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, assimilated obligations, and
- (e) prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the plan.”

1.11 The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate how WNP Climate Change SIR meets the tests set out in a) to e) above:

- Chapter 3 demonstrates the policies in the WNP Climate Change SIR are appropriate having regard to national policies and guidance
- Chapter 4 shows how the WNP Climate Change SIR will contribute towards achieving sustainable development
- Chapter 5 demonstrates the conformity of the WNP Climate Change SIR with the strategic policies in the development plan
- Chapter 6 demonstrates compliance with the appropriate EU obligations including the SEA Directive and obligation relating to Human Rights as far as they are assimilated into UK law
- Chapter 7 gives details of how the ‘making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017’. This is a basic condition prescribed for neighbourhood plans as set out in Schedule 2 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended in 2018.



Map 1: The designated neighbourhood plan area

2 The Witchford Neighbourhood Plan Climate Change Single Issue Review

2.1 The vision underpinning the WNP Climate Change SIR is:

To value and protect the rural character and community spirit of Witchford, ensuring that future development is sustainable and meets local needs

2.2 It is very similar to the vision underpinning the adopted neighbourhood plan, the only difference being the addition of the words “is sustainable”.

2.3 The vision is supported by eight objectives. The first seven objectives are contained in the adopted neighbourhood plan. The additional eighth objective is proposed via the WNP Climate Change SIR.

	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives
1	Landscape and character: To maintain the rural fenland character of Witchford. To protect the open space between Witchford and Ely, so that the village remains a distinct and separate community.
2	Green infrastructure: To identify, protect and enhance the green infrastructure, open spaces and valued views of Witchford and the opportunities to enjoy the Witchford countryside.
3	Housing: To maintain a thriving community through the provision of housing to meet the range of needs of current and future residents of Witchford.
4	Infrastructure: To encourage and promote the provision of sufficient infrastructure, amenities and services to allow Witchford to retain its character as a self-sustaining, thriving community.
5	Traffic in Witchford: To address issues relating to the speed and volume of traffic through the village, and to create attractive and usable opportunities for pedestrian and cycle access within Witchford with the aim of reducing in-village car use.
6	Witchford to Ely connectivity: To support proposals to improve infrastructure for safe and easy travel by cycle, on foot and by public transport to Ely and to Ely train station.
7	Supporting Witchford’s micro-economy: To support existing local businesses and to encourage increased economic activity appropriate to the rural nature of the parish.
8	Climate Change: actively identify and promote climate change mitigation and climate change resilience measures.

Table 1: The eight Neighbourhood Plan objectives

2.4 The table below provides a summary of what each planning policy does. The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the existing planning policies in the adopted neighbourhood plan (the first twenty in the table below) and proposes an additional five policies (in bold below).

No.	Policy Reference	Title	What does this policy do?
1	WNP SS1	A spatial strategy for Witchford	Provides an overview of where new development will be focused in the plan area during the plan period.
2	WNP LC1	Landscape and Settlement Character	Guides new development to make sure new development either protects or enhances existing landscape character in the parish. The policy is supported by the Witchford Landscape Appraisal.
3	WNP LC2	Witchford Area of Separation	Identifies an area of land between Witchford and Ely and Witchford and Lancaster Way Business Park as an important Area of Separation where new development will only be supported if it does not reduce separation or increase coalescence.
4	WNP GI1	Public Rights of Way	A policy supporting development which protects, enhances or extends existing public rights of way.
5	WNP GI2	Local Green Spaces	A policy designating thirteen open spaces in the parish as Local Green Space to be safeguarded during the plan period.
6	WNP GI3	Development and Biodiversity	A policy supporting development that protects or delivers net benefit for biodiversity in the parish.
7	WNP H1	Housing mix	A policy requiring residential proposals to provide a range and choice of house types suitable for local needs. The policy also requires new dwellings to be suitable for independent living and built to accessible and adaptable homes standards.
8	WNP H2	Affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites	A policy supporting in principle the delivery of rural exceptions sites (a type of affordable home) on the edge of the village subject to evidence of existing need in the parish.
9	WNP H3	Housing Design	A policy requiring all residential development to achieve a high quality of design and deliver a good standard of amenity in the parish. The policy is supported by the Witchford Landscape Appraisal which

No.	Policy Reference	Title	What does this policy do?
			describes the local distinctiveness in the parish.
10	WNP WFDH1B	Housing Proposal	This policy applies site-specific considerations and requirements for land proposed for housing development off Marroway Lane.
11	WNP WFDH2	Housing Proposal	This policy applies site specific considerations and requirements for land proposed for housing at Common Road
13	WNP IC1	Witchford Infrastructure and Community Facilities	This policy highlights two infrastructure priorities for the plan are namely improving crossing facilities at the A10 to provide greater connectivity between Witchford and Ely and improved traffic through the village centre.
14	WNP IC2	Witchford Village Hall and Recreation Ground	This policy allocates the village hall and recreation ground and open space for delivery of improved and expanded facilities during the plan period.
15	WNP IC3	Protection of Witchford's Community Facilities.	A policy identifying and protecting existing community facilities in the village.
16	WNP IC4	Flooding	A policy paying specific attention to those areas in the parish most at risk from surface water flooding. The policy requires that measures to be put in place to secure an overall reduction in surface water run off when new development is proposed.
17	WNP T1	Getting around the village	A policy requiring the design and layout of new developments to incorporate good walking and cycling links. The policy highlights opportunities where new development could contribute towards village improvements either through on-site design considerations or off-site contributions.
18	WNP T1	Connecting Witchford and Ely through sustainable and safe cycle and	This policy highlights the importance of an improved crossing facility across the A10 so as to improve access from Witchford to Ely. The policy seeks the delivery of this as part of an upgrade to the A10/A142 highway network as well as off-site contributions towards this key piece of infrastructure.

No.	Policy Reference	Title	What does this policy do?
		pedestrian routes	
19	WNP E1	Support for small business development	This policy clarifies support for development proposals which will encourage or help small businesses.
20	WNP E2	Employment and Commercial Development	A policy supporting new uses at Sedgeway Business Park subject to schemes being sensitive to their landscape setting
21	WNP CC1	Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a net zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change	This policy requires specific design standards to be met so as to deliver buildings that have a low or zero carbon footprint. The policy focuses on the energy footprint of new buildings and encourages residential proposals to achieve operational targets that are specified in the supporting text to the policy. The policy also requires the submission of a sustainability statement and requires this to include information on water usage, building materials and climate change adaptability measures.
22	WNP CC2	Protecting existing habitats in Witchford and seeking opportunities to strengthen parish-wide ecological networks	This policy complements adopted neighbourhood plan policy GI3 (Development and biodiversity) and adopted Local Plan policy ENV 7 (Biodiversity and geology) by providing parish level detail on known sites of biodiversity value and the opportunities that exist to protect and enhance them.
23	WNP CC3	Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain	This policy encourages proposals to deliver a 20% Biodiversity Net Gain rather than a 10% net gain. For proposals exempt from BNG requirements, the proposal seeks an element of biodiversity gain through measures proportionate to the scale of a proposal. The policy flags up parish-specific opportunities for enhancing biodiversity across the parish that should be considered as part of proposals.
24	WNP CC4	Trees, woodland and carbon sequestration implications of proposals	This policy sets out detailed requirements with respect to trees and woodland. As part of this the policy does not support tree planting in areas of peatland in the parish. The policy also states that net increase or decrease in tree cover will be a material

No.	Policy Reference	Title	What does this policy do?
			consideration in terms of the carbon sequestration consequences of a proposal.
25	WNP CC5	Supporting renewable energy infrastructure	This policy supports, in principle, development proposals that involve the creation of renewable or low carbon energy infrastructure. Due to the sensitivity of the area with respect to falling inside the 'Swan and Goose' Impact Risk Zone, this does not include wind energy proposals at the commercial scale.

Table 2: A description of the Neighbourhood Plan policies, with the WNP Climate Change SIR planning policies shown in bold.

3 How the planning policies contained in the WNP Climate Change SIR are appropriate having regard to national policies and guidance

- 3.1 National planning policy is principally provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), last updated 19 December 2023. National planning guidance is provided by planning practice guidance available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- 3.2 Ministerial statements are also relevant including:
- 13 December 2023 – Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2023-12-13/hcws123>
 - 24 May 2021 – Affordable Homes Update <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hlws48>
- 3.3 The NPPF provides a framework within which local communities can produce neighbourhood development plans for their area and sets out how planning should help achieve sustainable development.
- 3.4 This section demonstrates that the WNP Climate Change SIR has regard to the relevant policies in the NPPF in relation to:
- Achieving sustainable development (NPPF Chapter 2)
 - Plan-making (NPPF Chapter 3)
 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes (NPPF Chapter 5)
 - Building a strong, competitive economy (including supporting a prosperous rural economy) (NPPF Chapter 6)
 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres (NPPF Chapter 7)
 - Promoting healthy and safe communities (NPPF Chapter 8)
 - Promoting sustainable transport (NPPF Chapter 9)
 - Supporting high quality communications (NPPF Chapter 10)
 - Making effective use of land (NPPF Chapter 11)
 - Achieving well-designed and beautiful places (NPPF Chapter 12)
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change (NPPF Chapter 14)
 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (NPPF Chapter 15)
 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (NPPF Chapter 16)
 - Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals (NPPF Chapter 17)

How the WNP Climate Change SIR NP relates to national policy and guidance, by NPPF chapter

- 3.5 Table 3 sets out policy guidance from the NPPF 2023 organised by chapter and explores how the policies contained in the WNP Climate Change SIR are appropriate having regard for these.

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means (see	All	The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
<p>Paragraph 8) that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an economic objective; • a social objective; and • an environmental objective <p>Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development. Paragraph 11 a) states that “all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects...”</p>		<p>appropriate having regard to Chapter 2.</p> <p>The additional policies proposed through the WNP Climate Change SIR will help to ensure the environment is improved and help to ensure climate change is mitigated.</p>
<p>Chapter 3: Plan Making.</p> <p>“Planning should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up to date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for meeting housing needs and addressing other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.”</p> <p>Paragraph 34: “Plans should set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure). Such policies should not undermine the deliverability of the plan.”</p>	All	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is appropriate having regard to Chapter 3.</p> <p>The additional policies proposed through the WNP Climate Change SIR will help to ensure economic, social and environmental priorities are addressed.</p>

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
<p>Chapter 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes.</p> <p>“...strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations.” (paragraph 67)</p> <p>“Neighbourhood planning groups should also give particular consideration to the opportunities for allocating small and medium sized sites (of a size consistent with paragraph 70a) suitable for housing in their area” (paragraph 71)</p> <p>“In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs including proposals for community-led development for housing. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.” (paragraph 82)</p>	<p>Adopted NP policies:</p> <p>WNP H1 (Housing Mix),</p> <p>WNP H2 (Affordable housing on rural exception sites),</p> <p>WNP WFDH1B Housing Proposal,</p> <p>WNP WFDH2 Housing Proposal.</p>	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is appropriate having regard to Chapter 5.</p>
<p>Chapter 6: Building a strong, competitive economy.</p> <p>“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.” (paragraph 85)</p> <p>“Planning policies and decisions should enable:</p> <p>a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business</p>	<p>Adopted NP policies:</p> <p>WNP C1 Connecting Witchford and Ely through sustainable and safe cycle and pedestrian routes.</p> <p>WNP IC1 Witchford</p>	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is appropriate having regard to Chapter 6.</p>

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
<p>in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;</p> <p>b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;</p> <p>c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and</p> <p>d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship” (paragraph 88)</p>	<p>infrastructure and community facilities</p> <p>WNP IC2 Witchford village hall and recreation ground</p> <p>WNP IC3 Protection of Witchford’s community facilities</p> <p>WNP E1 Support for small business development</p> <p>WNP 2 Employment and commercial development</p>	
<p>Chapter 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres</p> <p>“Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities...” (paragraph 90)</p>	<p>Adopted NP policies:</p> <p>WNP IC3 Protection of Witchford’s Community Facilities</p> <p>WNP C1 – Connecting Witchford and Ely through sustainable and safe cycle and pedestrian routes</p>	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is appropriate having regard to Chapter 7.</p>
<p>Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities.</p> <p>“Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which a) promote social interaction... b) are safe and accessible.... and c)</p>	<p>Adopted NP policies:</p> <p>WNP IC1 – Witchford Infrastructure and Community Facilities</p> <p>WNP T1 - Getting around the village</p>	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is appropriate having regard to Chapter 8.</p> <p>The additional policies proposed through the WNP Climate Change SIR will help to support the health and well-being of the community.</p>

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
<p>enable and support healthy lifestyles especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling” (paragraph 96)</p> <p>“Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sports and physical activity is important for health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change” (paragraph 102)</p> <p>“Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks...”(paragraph 104)</p> <p>“The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services.” (paragraph 105)</p>	<p>WNP GI1 Public Rights of Way</p> <p>WNP GI2 Local Green Space</p> <p>Proposed new policies:</p> <p>WNP CC1 ‘Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a net zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change’</p> <p>WNP CC2 Protecting existing habitats in Witchford and seeking opportunities to strengthen parish-wide ecological networks</p> <p>WNP CC3 Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>WNP CC4 Trees, woodland and carbon sequestration implications of proposals</p>	<p>Proposed Policy WNP CC1 will help to do this with respect to new build development and its emphasis on ensuring measures are taken to help occupants adapt to climate change (preventing overheating during hot spells, managing water and energy consumption). Through their emphasis on protecting and enhancing green infrastructure, Policies WNP CC2, CC3 and CC4 will also support health and well-being outcomes.</p>
<p>Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport.</p> <p>“Transport issues should be considered from the earliest</p>	<p>Adopted NP policies:</p> <p>WNP IC1 – Witchford Infrastructure</p>	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is</p>

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
<p>stages of plan-making and development proposals so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed. b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and in changing transport technology and usage, are realised- for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport are identified and pursued; d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places” (paragraph 108) 	<p>and Community Facilities</p> <p>WNP T1 - Getting around the village</p> <p>WNP C1 – Connecting Witchford and Ely through sustainable and safe cycle and pedestrian routes</p>	<p>appropriate having regard to Chapter 9.</p>
<p>Chapter 10: Supporting high quality communications.</p>	<p>No specific policies</p>	
<p>Chapter 11: Making effective use of land.</p> <p>Paragraph 128 states that “Planning policies and decisions should support development that</p>	<p>Adopted NP policies:</p> <p>WNP SS1 A Spatial Strategy for Witchford</p>	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is appropriate having regard to Chapter 11.</p>

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
<p>makes effective use of land, taking into account</p> <p>a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it</p> <p>b) local market conditions and viability</p> <p>c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services</p> <p>d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change and</p> <p>e) the importance of securing well-designed and beautiful, attractive and healthy places”</p>	<p>Housing Proposals WFD1B WFDH2</p>	
<p>Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed and beautiful places.</p> <p>“The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.” (paragraph 131)</p> <p>Paragraph 135 states “Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments</p> <p>a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development</p> <p>b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping</p> <p>c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging</p>	<p>Adopted NP policies:</p> <p>WNP SS1 A Spatial Strategy for Witchford</p> <p>WNP H3 Housing Design</p> <p>WNP LC1 Landscape and Settlement Character</p> <p>WNP LC2 Witchford Area of Separation</p> <p>Proposed new policy:</p> <p>WNP CC4 Trees, woodland and carbon sequestration implications of proposals</p>	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is appropriate having regard to Chapter 12.</p> <p>Proposed Policy WNP CC4 ‘Trees, woodland and carbon sequestration implications of proposals’ is also particularly appropriate having regard to paragraph 136 in the NPPF with respect to the important contribution trees make to the character and quality of the urban environment and their role in mitigating and adapting to climate change.</p>

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
<p>appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);...”</p> <p>Paragraph 136 states: “Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined⁵³, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”</p>		
<p>Chapter 13: Protecting Green Belt land.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Not applicable in the plan area.</p>
<p>Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.</p> <p>Paragraph 157 states that the planning system should “support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources,</p>	<p>Adopted NP policies:</p> <p>WNP IC4 Flooding</p> <p>Proposed new policy:</p> <p>WNP CC1 ‘Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a net zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change’</p>	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is appropriate having regard to Chapter 12.</p> <p>The implementation of Policy CC1 should result (as per paragraph 157 in the NPPF 2023) in the ‘radical reduction in greenhouse gas emissions’ as far as new build development is concerned. See Table 4 for further detail.</p> <p>The implementation of Policy WNP CC1 should also result in new build</p>

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
<p>including conversion of existing buildings, and support renewable or low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”</p> <p>Paragraph 158 states that “plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures.”</p> <p>Paragraph 159 states “New development should be planned for in ways that:</p> <p>a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and</p> <p>b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards.</p>	<p>WNP CC2 ‘Protecting existing habitats in Witchford and seeking opportunities to strengthen parish-wide ecological networks’</p> <p>WNP 3 ‘Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain’</p> <p>WNP 4 ‘Trees, woodland and carbon sequestration implications of proposals’</p> <p>WNP CC5 ‘Supporting renewable energy infrastructure’</p>	<p>development (proposed buildings and the spaces around them) to be adapted to cope with the effects of climate change. This is appropriate having regard to paragraph 159 in the NPPF.</p> <p>With their emphasis on protecting sites of biodiversity value, delivering enhancements, seeking opportunities to strengthen ecological networks and tree planting, Policies WNP CC2, WNP CC3 and WNP CC4 should, in line with paragraph 158 of the NPPF, help with both climate change mitigation and adaptation:</p> <p>Mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green infrastructure has an important role in capturing carbon, keeping the urban environment cooler during hot periods of weather and attenuating water run-off during periods of heavy rainfall. <p>Adaptation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emphasis on protecting and enhancing habitats, protecting and strengthening sites and ecological corridors will give species a better chance of coping with the effects of climate change. <p>Policy WNP CC5 is appropriate having regard to paragraph 157 of the NPPF 2023 as the policy supports renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in the parish. The policy is Plan-area specific by reflecting the sensitivity of the area with respect to the Swan and Goose impact risk zone, within which parts of the parish falls.</p>

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
<p>Chapter 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.</p> <p>Paragraph 180 d) states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by d) “minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”</p> <p>Paragraph 185 states that to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, “plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks” and “promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity”</p> <p>With respect to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and as a result of the Environment Act 2021, there is, as at 12 February 2024 (2 April 2024 for small scale development), a mandatory requirement in place for applicable development to achieve a minimum BNG of 10% . The NPPF 2023 is supported by additional guidance https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain with respect to the implication of this.</p>	<p>Adopted NP Policies:</p> <p>WNP GI2 Local Green Spaces</p> <p>WNP GI3 Development and Biodiversity</p> <p>WNP IC4 Flooding</p> <p>Proposed new policies:</p> <p>WNP CC2 – Protecting existing habitats in Witchford and seeking opportunities to strengthen parish-wide ecological networks</p> <p>WNP CC3 – Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>WNP CC4 – Trees, woodland, carbon sequestration implications of proposals.</p>	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is appropriate having regard to Chapter 12.</p> <p>The WNP Climate Change SIR also proposes to complement existing green infrastructure policies in the adopted NP. This is appropriate having regard to national policy.</p> <p>Proposed policies WNP CC2, WNP CC3 and WNP CC4, are particularly appropriate having regard to paragraphs 180 and 185 of the NPPF 2023.</p>
<p>Chapter 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.</p>	<p>Adopted NP policies:</p> <p>WNP SS1 – Spatial Strategy</p>	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not amend the content in the existing WNP which, it is established (through being adopted), is</p>

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
<p>Paragraph 195 states “Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations”</p> <p>Paragraph 196 states “Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place”</p>	<p>WNP H3 Housing Design</p> <p>WNP LC1 Landscape and Settlement Character</p>	<p>appropriate having regard to Chapter 16. Heritage assets in the plan area include listed building, the historic core of the village and the Fenland landscape itself. These are described in the Witchford Landscape Appraisal. Policies SSI, LC1 and H3 all seek proposals which protect or enhance the distinctive landscape and settlement character in the village.</p>
<p>Chapter 17. Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals.</p> <p>“It is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure,</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>The NP policies are appropriate having regard to this. See Chapter 5 for more information on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough</p>

NPPF (2023) chapter and statements	Relevant NP policies	How the submission WNP Climate Change SIR NP is appropriate having regard to the NPPF
buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.” (paragraph 215)		Minerals and Waste Local Plan adopted in 2021.

Table 3: How the WNP Climate Change SIR relates to national policy and guidance, by NPPF chapter

The relationship between the WNP Climate Change SIR and national policy and guidance, by policy

Table 4 is organised by policy in the WNP Climate Change SIR and explores how the policies are appropriate having regard to national policy and guidance.

<p>WNP Climate Change SIR Objective: actively identify and promote climate change mitigation and climate change resilience measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy WNP CC1 – Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a net zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change • Policy WNP CC5 – Supporting renewable energy infrastructure
<p>Objective 8 and associated planning policies WNP CC1 and CC2 are directly compatible with statements contained in Chapter 14 ‘Meeting the Challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’ and Chapter 8 ‘Promoting healthy and safe communities’</p> <p>WNP CC1 and NPPF Chapter 14 ‘Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’ and Chapter 8 ‘Promoting healthy and safe communities’</p> <p>In line with paragraph 158 of the NPPF 2023, the WNP Climate Change SIR takes a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change.</p> <p>The implementation of Policy CC1 should result (as per paragraph 157, NPPF 2023) in the ‘radical reduction in greenhouse gas emissions’ as far as new build development is concerned. The policy is particularly appropriate when taking into consideration the government’s proposals to introduce ‘The Future Homes and Buildings Standards’. Once implemented, this will require all new homes and buildings to be equipped with low carbon heating and be ‘zero carbon ready’ by 2025. The intention is that no further interventions will be needed on buildings that meet the standard for them to have zero carbon emissions once the electricity grid has been fully decarbonised.</p> <p>Para 159 of the NPPF 2023 refers to the local requirements for sustainability of buildings to reflect the government’s policy for national technical standards. In December 2023, the government issued the ‘Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update’. This update guards against planning policies at the local level proposing energy efficiency standards that go beyond current or planned building regulations. Proposed WNP CC1 is appropriate having regard to national guidance as it is worded to state that ‘with respect to residential development proposals, applicants are strongly encouraged to achieve operational targets...’.</p> <p>As far as new build development is concerned, Policy WNP CC1 will also help to enable and support healthy lifestyles (as per paragraph 96c in the NPPF) , in particular with respect to providing homes and buildings that are resilient to the effects of climate change and are low cost to run.</p> <p>WNP CC5 and NPPF Chapter 14 ‘Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’</p> <p>Propose WNP CC5 is appropriate having regard to paragraph 157 of the NPPF 2023 as the policy supports renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in the parish. The policy is Plan-area specific by reflecting the sensitivity of the area with respect to the Swan and Goose impact risk zone, within which parts of the parish falls.</p>
<p>WNP Climate Change SIR Objective</p>

Climate Change: actively identify and promote climate change mitigation and climate change resilience measures.

- **Policy WNP CC2 – Protecting existing habitats in Witchford and seeking opportunities to strengthen parish-wide ecological networks**
- **Policy WNP CC3 – Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain**
- **Policy WNP CC4 – Trees, woodland and carbon sequestration implications of proposals**

Objective 8 and associated planning policies WNP CC2, CC3 and CC4 are directly compatible with statements contained in Chapter 12, Chapter 14 and Chapter 15 of the NPPF 2023.

Policy WNP CC2 and NPPF Chapter 15 ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ NPPF Chapter 14 ‘Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’

Consistent with Paragraphs 180, 185 and 186 of the NPPF 2023, proposed Policy WNP CC2 is accompanied by a map that identifies sites of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks. By doing so the WNP Climate Change SIR will help promote the conservation of existing habitats as well as local opportunities for habitat restoration and creation.

As planning for green infrastructure is an important part of climate change mitigation and adaptation Policy WNP CC2 is also appropriate having regard to paragraph 159 in Chapter 14 of the NPPF.

Policy WNP CC3 and NPPF Chapter 15 ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ and NPPF Chapter 14 ‘Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’

Consistent with Paragraph 186 d) of the NPP3, Policy WNP CC3 highlights the importance of taking opportunities to integrate biodiversity measures as part of the design of a development, including for smaller scale schemes that are exempt from delivering Biodiversity Net Gain. Policy WNP CC3 should also assist with facilitating the achievement of biodiversity enhancement measures on the larger scale such as where the requirements for BNG exist. It does so through highlighting Plan level or Plan specific opportunities to deliver biodiversity enhancements.

Policy WNP CC3 encourages proposals to achieve a 20% Biodiversity Net Gain in cases where the mandatory 10% BNG requirement for 10% applies. The policy reflects the community and Parish Council-led ambition to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. The policy responds appropriately to planning practice guidance on BNG www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain and is directly compatible with Paragraph 158 in Chapter 14 of the NPPF.

Policy WNP CC4 and NPPF Chapter 12 ‘Achieving well-designed and beautiful places’

Consistent with Paragraph 136 in the NPPF 2023, Policy CC4 in the WNP Climate Change SIR recognises the role that trees can have in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

NPPF statements referenced in this table:

- **Chapter 8 ‘Promoting healthy and safe communities’**

Paragraph 96 states that “Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which:”.... “c) enable and support health lifestyles.”

- **Chapter 12 ‘Achieving well-designed and beautiful places’**

Paragraph 136 states “Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”

- **Chapter 14 ‘Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’**

NPPF Paragraph 157 states that the planning system should “support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience, encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”

Paragraph 158 states that “Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures”.

Paragraph 159 states that “new development should be planned for in ways that

- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and
- b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards”

Paragraph 160 states that “To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat plans should

- a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, and their future re-powering and life extension, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed appropriately (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts) and
- b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and
- c) identify opportunities for development to draw its energy from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers”

- **Chapter 15 ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’**

Paragraph 180 states “Planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ...

- a) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”

On habitats and biodiversity, paragraph 185 states:

“To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Paragraph 186 states:

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;”

and

“c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.”

Table 4: How the WNP Climate Change SIR relates to national policy and guidance, by WNP Climate Change SIR policy.

4 How the WNP Climate Change SIR contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development

- 4.1 The NPPF states, in paragraph 11, that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF explains that to achieve sustainable development the planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental) which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

The three overarching objectives in the planning system as defined in the NPPF
An economic objective “to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure”
A social objective “to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being”
An environmental objective “to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

- 4.3 The WNP Climate Change SIR comprises an additional eighth NP objective and a further 5 planning policies. These are primarily focused on achieving environmental and social goals.
- 4.4 Table 5 below provides an overview as to how the plan as a whole contributes towards the sustainable development goals as defined in the NPPF.

The Sustainable Development Goals	WNP Climate Change SIR
Economic	<p>At the time of the existing NP being adopted, East Cambridgeshire District Council provided a housing requirement figure to the Witchford NP group of 252 dwellings to be delivered in the period 2018 to 2031. Actual delivery has exceeded this requirement.</p> <p>The adopted NP recognises and supports the existing employments uses in the plan area (see Policy WNP E2). The NP also recognises the existing and potential growth in the micro-economy in Witchford (parish-based employment activity). See Policies WNP E1 Support for small business development and WNP IC2 Witchford Village Hall and Recreation Ground.</p>

The Sustainable Development Goals	WNP Climate Change SIR
	<p>The WNP Climate Change SIR does not introduce amendments to these elements of the plan. Nevertheless, it is important to note that a community and a plan area that are capable of adapting to the effects of climate change is a critical component of a healthy economic base. In this regard the additional policy content, proposed through the single issue review will strengthen the contribution the neighbourhood plan makes to the achievement of the economic goal underpinning sustainable development.</p>
Social	<p>The fourth objective in the adopted WNP is “to encourage and promote the provision of sufficient infrastructure, amenities and services to allow Witchford to retain its character as a self-sustaining, thriving community”. Applicable planning policies here are WNP IC1, Witchford Infrastructure and Community Facilities, WNP IC2 Witchford Village Hall and Recreation Ground and IC3 Protection of Witchford’s Community Facilities.</p> <p>A key part of achieving the social goal is however ensuring that as the settlement of Witchford grows during the plan period, the key characteristics which residents value and currently enjoy are safeguarded or enhanced for future generations to enjoy. Objectives 1 and 2 which relate to landscape and character and green infrastructure objective are fundamental to achieving this, together with the specific policies (e.g. Local Green Space policy).</p> <p>The WNP Climate Change SIR includes one additional objective and five additional planning policies that will sit alongside the existing plan. There is a clear social dimension to the proposed new objective and particularly to proposed new policy WNP CC1 ‘Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a net zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change’. This requires new development to be designed to allow occupants and users to adapt to a climate change through measures designed to reduce overheating of buildings, manage water and energy consumption. Delivering these standards as part of new build development will support health and social well-being objectives. In this regard the additional policy content proposed through the single issue review will strengthen the contribution the Witchford Neighbourhood Plan makes to the achievement of the social goal underpinning sustainable development.</p>
Environmental	<p>Objectives 1 and 2 in the adopted WNP relate to landscape character and green infrastructure. These comprise the environmental (as well as social) dimension to the WNP. Planning policies include WNP LC1 Landscape and Settlement Character, WNP LC2 Witchford Area of Separation, WNP GI1 Public Rights of Way, WNP GI2 Local Green Space, WNP GI3 Development and Biodiversity, WNP IC2 Witchford Village Hall and Recreation Ground, WNP IC4 Flooding</p>

The Sustainable Development Goals	WNP Climate Change SIR
	The WNP Climate Change SIR includes one additional objective and five additional planning policies that will sit alongside the existing plan. There is a strong environmental dimension to the five policies proposed as part of the Climate Change SIR. In this regard the additional policy content proposed through the single issue review will strengthen the contribution the Witchford Neighbourhood Plan makes to the achievement of the environmental goal underpinning sustainable development.

Table 5: How the WNP Climate Change SIR contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development (as defined by the NPPF)

4.5 Table 6 below provides an overview, policy by policy, as to how the WNP Climate Change SIR NP contributes towards achieving the sustainable development goals in the NPPF.

Policy Reference	Title	Economic	Social	Environmental
Adopted policies				
WNP SS1	A spatial strategy for Witchford	✓	✓	✓
WNP LC1	Landscape and Settlement Character		✓	✓
WNP LC2	Witchford Area of Separation		✓	✓
WNP GI1	Public Rights of Way		✓	✓
WNP GI2	Local Green Spaces		✓	✓
WNP GI3	Development and Biodiversity			✓
WNP H1	Housing mix	✓	✓	✓
WNP H2	Affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites		✓	
WNP H3	Housing Design		✓	
WNP WFDH1B	Housing Proposal	✓	✓	
WNP WFDH2	Housing Proposal	✓	✓	
WNP IC1	Witchford Infrastructure and Community Facilities	✓	✓	
WNP IC2	Witchford Village Hall and Recreation Ground		✓	
WNP IC3	Protection of Witchford's Community Facilities.		✓	
WNP IC4	Flooding	✓	✓	✓
WNP T1	Getting around the village	✓	✓	✓

Policy Reference	Title	Economic	Social	Environmental
WNP T1	Connecting Witchford and Ely through sustainable and safe cycle and pedestrian routes	✓	✓	✓
WNP E1	Support for small business development	✓	✓	
WNP E2	Employment and Commercial Development	✓	✓	
Proposed new policies				
WNP CC1	Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a net zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change	✓	✓	✓
WNP CC2	Protecting existing habitats in Witchford and seeking opportunities to strengthen parish-wide ecological networks		✓	✓
WNP CC3	Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain		✓	✓
WNP CC4	Trees, woodland and carbon sequestration implications of proposals		✓	✓
WNP CC5	Supporting renewable energy infrastructure	✓	✓	✓

Table 6: An analysis of the WNP Climate Change SIR NP policies against the sustainable development goals.

5 General conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan

- 5.1 Within East Cambridgeshire District, the statutory development plan comprises:
- the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan adopted in July 2021;
 - the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended in 2023), and the
 - made neighbourhood plans.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 5.1 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2036, adopted in 2021 ¹ is the waste and minerals plan that applies to Witchford
- 5.2 Parts of the parish fall within the Mineral Safeguarding area for sand and gravel. Policy 5 in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2021, requires that the Mineral Planning Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) be consulted on development proposals within all Mineral Safeguarding Areas subject to exceptions including proposals that fall within a settlement boundary.
- 5.3 There is also a Water Recycling Centre just north of the village and there is a consultation area surrounding this. Policy 11 in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2021 identifies water recycling centres as essential infrastructure.
- 5.4 The planning for minerals extraction and waste management is the responsibility of Cambridgeshire County Council. Whilst the planning for waste and minerals lies outside the scope of neighbourhood plans, it is important neighbourhood plans consider any existing policies or site allocations in these strategic documents.
- 5.5 The WNP Climate Change SIR will have no bearing on the policies contained in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and will sit alongside them; the proposed modification to the adopted neighbourhood plan is therefore in general conformity with the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended in 2023)

- 5.6 The plan sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and policies for the future development of the district. It also identifies land and allocates sites for different types of development, such as housing and employment, to deliver the planned growth for the district to 2031.
- 5.7 The plan is supported by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), including some that are relevant to the content of the WNP Climate Change SIR:
- Climate Change SPD 2021
 - Natural Environment SPD 2020
 - Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (adopted by ECDC in 2016)
 - Renewable Energy (Commercial Scale) SPD 2014
 - Developer Contributions SPD 2013
 - District Design Guide 2012

¹ <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/planning-policy/adopted-minerals-and-waste-plan>

- County Wildlife Sites SPD 2010

5.8 ECDC adopted small changes to the Local Plan in October 2023. This included amendments to the strategic housing policy GROWTH 1 and its supporting text.

5.9 There is a comprehensive set of adopted planning policies that apply to the WNP area. Key points are:

- Witchford village has a development envelope, and the adopted Local Plan takes a restrictive approach towards development outside of this where land outside the development envelope is treated as countryside.
- The majority of the NP area is countryside.
- Growth requirements: The adopted Local Plan requires very little growth from Witchford.
- Affordable housing – there is a requirement for 30% affordable housing to be delivered on market schemes (above 10 units) that come forward in the NP area.
- Design policies in the adopted Local Plan focuses on a need for new development to complement local distinctiveness.
- Landscaping and views (including quintessential views of Ely Cathedral and the setting of the City as a historic ‘isle’ settlement close to the fen edge and the valley of the River Great Ouse) are highlighted as important where proposals are required to conserve, protect or enhance landscape character.

5.10 To help with understanding whether the WNP Climate Change SIR is in general conformity with the Local Plan it is useful to refer to national planning practice guidance. This states:

“When considering whether a policy is in general conformity a qualifying body, independent examiner, or local planning authority, should consider the following:

- whether the neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal supports and upholds the general principle that the strategic policy is concerned with
- the degree, if any, of conflict between the draft neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal and the strategic policy
- whether the draft neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal provides an additional level of detail and/or a distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policy without undermining that policy
- the rationale for the approach taken in the draft neighbourhood plan or order and the evidence to justify that approach.”

Paragraph: 074 Reference ID: 41-074-20140306
Revision date: 06 03 2014

5.11 Table 7 considers whether the policies included as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR are in general conformity with the policies in East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. Information in the 2nd column provides a brief summary of each Local Plan policy. The 3rd column clarifies whether the Local Plan policy has any specific implication to the Witchford neighbourhood plan area or whether it has any relevance with respect to the adopted neighbourhood plan. The 4th column provides a commentary on how the policies contained as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR conforms with Local Plan policy wherever relevant. Three different conclusions are reached:

- Not Applicable. (NA)
- The NP is in general conformity (GC)

- The WNP Climate Change SIR complements or adds to the approach set out by the Local Plan policy by providing an additional level of detail or a distinct local approach (Complements)

5.12 The result of this assessment is that there are no areas of tension and that all given policies are in general conformity with the Local Plan. In a number of cases, the WNP Climate Change SIR is found, in line with accepted practice, to provide an additional level of detail and/or a distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policy without undermining the strategic policy. This applies as follows:

Policy WNP CC1 ‘Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a net zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change’.

5.13 This policy complements:

- Local Plan policy ENV 4 ‘Energy and water efficiency and renewable energy in construction’ by providing more detail as to how proposals can deliver low carbon or net zero buildings. Emerging policy WNP CC1 also provides an up to date policy context given that the Local Plan Policy ENV 4 refers to the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 or its replacement - the energy performance requirements contained in Level 4 have been superseded by building regulation requirements and the government has yet to introduce and implement the Future Homes and Buildings Standards.

Policy WNP CC2 ‘Protecting existing habitats in Witchford and seeking opportunities to strengthen parish-wide ecological networks’

5.14 This policy complements:

- Local Plan Policy ENV 7 ‘Biodiversity and Geology’ by identifying, describing and mapping sites in the parish that are of local biodiversity value, by highlighting opportunities with respect to strengthening ecological corridors
- Local Plan Policy ENV 9 ‘Pollution’ by identifying a comprehensive network of sites in the parish which are of local importance with respect to biodiversity and the natural environment. The natural environment is identified for protection under Local Plan Policy ENV 9 with respect to the effects of pollution.

Policy WNP CC3 ‘Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain’

5.15 This policy complements:

- Local Plan Policy ENV 7 ‘Biodiversity and Geology’ by providing an up to date position with respect to biodiversity net gain and the scope for biodiversity enhancements in the plan area.

Policy WNP CC4 ‘Trees, woodland, carbon sequestration implications of proposals’

5.16 This policy complements:

- Local Plan Policy ENV 7 ‘Biodiversity and Geology’ by providing a Witchford-specific approach on trees and development.

Policy WNP CC5 ‘Supporting renewable energy infrastructure’

5.17 This policy complements:

- Local Plan Policy ENV6 ‘Renewable energy development’ by establishing the principle of support in Witchford parish and by providing clarity on what schemes could work in the plan area given its specific circumstances and constraints (being located close to Ely Cathedral and part of the NP area falling within the Swan and Goose Impact Risk Zone for the Ouse Washes).

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
GROWTH 1: Levels of housing employment and retail growth	<p>Policy establishes level of housing, retail and employment growth planned to come forward during the plan period 2011 to 2031. The policy was amended as part of the 2023 update to the Local Plan. The policy includes a commitment for delivering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9,200 additional jobs in East Cambridgeshire 2011 to 2031 • 5,400 new dwellings during the period 2022 to 2031 • 3,000m² net convenience and 10,000m² net comparison retail floorspace during the period 2012 to 2031. 	Sets strategic growth requirement applicable to the district as a whole	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
GROWTH 2: Locational strategy	An overarching spatial strategy for the district establishing where development will come forward.	<p>Policy takes a restrictive approach to development outside existing Witchford development envelope. The Witchford development envelope was updated as part of the 2023 update to the Local Plan and this brought it in line with the development enveloped already defined as part of Policy WNP SS1 in the adopted Witchford Neighbourhood Plan (that had been amended to encompass the housing commitments set out in the adopted neighbourhood plan).</p> <p>Witchford's growth requirements under the Local Plan has been delivered, and the scale of future residential development up to 2031 is</p>	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
		therefore anticipated to be very limited in Witchford.		
GROWTH 3 Infrastructure Requirements	Policy clarifies that development proposals will be required to make contributions towards infrastructure in accordance with the Council's adopted Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and that proposals will be expected to provide (or contribute towards the costs of providing) infrastructure and community facilities made necessary by the development, where this is not provided through the CIL.	<p>Policy protects existing infrastructure and community facilities in line with Policy COM 3 of the Local Plan. This includes facilities in Witchford.</p> <p>Policy flags up (amongst other items) following items of relevance to Witchford</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plans to deliver 'improvements to pedestrian and cycle networks within the settlements and between settlements (including segregated cycle routes within appropriate crossings at key points where possible)'. • Upgrading of waste water treatment works • 	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
GROWTH 4 Delivery of growth	This policy provides details on locations in the district where residential, employment, retail and community facilities will come forward.	No allocations in Witchford plan area. However, 40.5 hectares of land allocated for employment at Lancaster Way Business Park.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
GROWTH 5 Presumption in favour of sustainable development	Generic policy in line with NPPF		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
GROWTH 6 Community Led Development	A policy clarifying support of community led housing even where this could come forward outside development envelopes	Note that the adopted NP supports Rural Exceptions Housing outside development envelope.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
HOU1 Housing Mix	A district wide housing mix policy establishing that residential developments of over 10 units should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes that contribute towards meeting current and future housing needs; developments of over 50 units are expected to provide a proportion of dwellings that are suitable or easily adaptable for occupation by the elderly or people with disabilities; and developments of over 100 units are expected to provide 5% self-build properties.	Note that: WNP H1 Housing Mix in adopted NP complements approach and provides local detail. It also requires all residential development to be suitable for independent living and built to the accessible and adaptable dwellings (M4(2)) standard.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
HOU2 Housing Density	States density of a scheme will be judged on a site-by-site basis taking account of, inter alia, existing character, need to make efficient use of land...		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
HOU3 Affordable Housing Provision	Establishes that on schemes of more than 10 units, 40% affordable housing shall be sought on schemes in south of the district; 30% affordable housing shall be sought on schemes in the north of the district	30% affordable housing will be required in Witchford as it falls in the north of the district.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
HOU4 Affordable Housing Exception Sites	Allows, subject to criteria the delivery of affordable housing proposals outside the existing settlement envelope. Policy also allows for some market housing where this is required to make a scheme viable.	Adopted NP supports Rural Exceptions Housing outside development envelope.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
HOU5 Dwellings for Rural workers	A policy allowing in exceptional circumstances and subject to criteria	WNP SS1 in adopted NP is in general conformity with this approach.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR	GC

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
	dwelling for rural workers in the countryside.		do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	
HOU6 Residential Care Accommodation	A policy supporting new residential are homes in suitable locations subject to criteria.		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
HOU7 Mobile homes and residential caravan parks	The plan recognises the importance of these as providing low cost market housing for local people. Policy resist the loss of them.	NP area has two mobile home parks	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
HOU8 Extension and replacement of homes in the countryside	A policy allowing extensions and replacement of homes in countryside subject to criteria.	WNP SS1 in adopted NP is in general conformity with this approach.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy	GC
HOU9 Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople Sites	A policy providing for needs of gypsies, travellers and traveling showpeople during plan period	Allocates a site (2 pitches) outside but close to the southern boundary of Wtichford Parish (Pony Lodge, Grunty Fen Road).	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy	GC
EMP1 Retention of existing employment sites and allocations	A generic policy protecting in principle existing employment uses.	WNP E2 in adopted NP 'Employment and commercial development' complements Local Plan approach and provides specific detail with regard to Sedgeway Business Park.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy	GC
EMP2 Extensions to existing businesses in the countryside	Permits, in principle, proposals for small scale business in countryside subject to criteria.	WNP E2 in adopted NP 'Employment and commercial Development' complements Local Plan approach and provides specific detail with regard to Sedgeway Business Park.	Proposed policy WNP CC1 'Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change' will apply to proposals to extend existing businesses in the countryside e.g. at Sedgeway Business Park. The policy does not undermine the Local Plan policy and will sit alongside it.	GC
EMP4 Reuse and replacement of existing	A policy guiding when proposals involving reuse and replacement of		Proposed policy WNP CC1 'Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a zero	GC

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
buildings in the countryside	existing countryside buildings would be supported.		carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change' will apply to proposals to reuse and replace existing buildings in the countryside. The policy does not undermine the Local Plan policy and will sit alongside it.	
EMP5 Equine development	A policy applicable to applications for equestrian development.	Yes. Equine development currently in plan area and there may be more applications.	Proposed policy WNP CC1 'Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change' will apply to equine development proposals. The policy does not undermine the Local Plan policy and will sit alongside it.	GC
EMP6 Development affecting the horse racing industry	Not applicable.	Not applicable.		NA
EMP7 Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions	Limited relevance to Witchford plan area			NA
EMP8 Tourist accommodation	Development management policy setting out approach to be applied for proposals providing new tourist accommodation or leading to loss of.		Proposed policy WNP CC1 'Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change' will apply to tourist accommodation development proposals. The policy does not undermine the Local Plan policy and will sit alongside it.	GC
EMP9 Holiday and seasonal occupancy conditions	Establishes when occupancy conditions will be applied to holiday accommodation. Limited relevance.		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR have no bearing on this policy aspect in the Local Plan.	GC

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
ENV1 Landscape and Settlement Character	<p>A policy applicable to most development types. Establishes criteria which proposals must meet in terms of impact on landscape and settlement character.</p> <p>The policy requires development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance key views into and out of settlements and specifically states <i>"this includes quintessential views of Ely Cathedral and the setting of the City as a historic 'isle' settlement close to the fen edge and the valley of the River Great Ouse."</i></p>	<p>The quintessential views of Ely Cathedral includes views from Witchford Parish.</p> <p>Supported by its own Landscape Appraisal, the adopted WNP provides a plan specific approach which complements the district wide policy.</p>	<p>The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.</p>	GC
ENV2 Design	<p>A policy applicable to most development types. Establishes a comprehensive set of criteria which proposals must meet in terms of design.</p>	<p>WNP H3 Housing Design in the adopted NP is in general conformity with the Local Plan approach.</p> <p>WNP LC 1 'Landscape and settlement character' complements the Local Plan approach and adds a Witchford-specific level of detail particularly with respect to following elements in ENV2 Design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "All development will be designed to a high quality, enhancing and complementing local distinctiveness and public amenity by relating well to existing features and introducing appropriate new designs" 	<p>The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with this Local Plan policy, in particular the following criteria in ENV2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Incorporate the sustainable construction principles and methods contained in Policy ENV 4" 	GC

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Retain existing important landscaping and natural and historic features, and include landscape enhancement schemes.” • “Protect important views into and out of settlements and key views of landmark buildings...” 		
ENV3 Shop fronts and advertisements	A generic policy establishing approach to be taken on new shop front proposals.		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR have no bearing on this policy aspect in the Local Plan.	GC
ENV4 Energy and water efficiency and renewable energy in construction	A policy establishing what standards will be required. Policy ENV 4 states that all new development should aim for reduced or zero carbon development in accordance with the zero-carbon hierarchy: first maximising energy efficiency and then incorporating renewable or low carbon energy sources on-site as far as practicable.		<p>Emerging Policy WNP CC1 ‘Delivering sustainable buildings fit for a net zero carbon future, which are resilient to the effects of climate change’ (proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR) complements the approach taken in the Local Plan by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing more detail as to how proposals can deliver low carbon or net zero buildings • Providing an up to date policy context given that Policy ENV 4 refers to the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 or its replacement where as the energy performance requirements contained in Level 4 have been superseded by building regulation requirements and given that the government has yet to introduce and implement the Future Homes and Buildings Standards. 	Complements

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
			Policy WNP CC1 is focused on ensuring the policy and guidance set out in Local Plan Policy ENV 4 and the Climate Change SPD is implemented at the parish level.	
ENV5 Carbon offsetting	A policy applicable when the carbon reductions under Policy ENV 4 cannot be adhered to. The policy allows for developers to provide financial contributions to the Community Energy Fund (where it exists).		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with this Local Plan policy.	GC
ENV6 Renewable energy development	A policy supporting renewable energy proposals		Emerging Policy WNP CC5 'Supporting renewable energy infrastructure' (proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR) complements the approach taken in the Local Plan by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the principle of support in the Witchford NP area • Providing clarity on what schemes could work in the Witchford plan area, given its specific circumstances and constraints (e.g. being located close to Ely Cathedral and part of the plan area falling within the Swan and Goose Impact Risk Zone for the Ouse Washes.) 	Complements
ENV7 Biodiversity and Geology	Establishes approach which proposals must take in terms of managing impact on biodiversity	WNP GI3 'Development and Biodiversity' in the adopted NP complements the approach taken in the Local Plan.	Emerging Policies WNP CC2 'Protecting existing habitats in Witchford and seeking opportunities to strengthen parish-wide ecological networks', WNP CC3 'Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain' and WNP 4	Complements

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
			<p>'Trees, woodland and carbon sequestration implications of proposals' (all proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR) complement the approach taken in the Local Plan by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying, describing and mapping sites in the parish that are of local biodiversity value • Highlighting opportunities with respect to strengthening ecological corridors • Providing an up to date position with respect to biodiversity net gain and the scope for enhancements in the plan area • Providing a Witchford-specific approach on trees and development. 	
ENV Flood Risk	<p>A development management policy establishing that all proposals should contribute to an overall flood risk reduction. For fluvial flooding the policy establishes approach consistent with NPPF focusing development in areas of Flood Zone 1. With regard to surface water flooding, the policy requires new development to demonstrate that appropriate surface water drainage measures can be accommodated. Policy also requires, subject to exceptions, the use of Suds.</p>	<p>Areas of flood zone 3 runs along the eastern boundary of the NP area north to south. (follows the Grunty Fen Drain) and in the north (Wentworth Sedge Fen).</p> <p>There are also areas with higher risk of surface water flooding. WNP IC4 'Flooding' in the adopted NP is specific to surface water flood risk in the plan area and will complement the Local Plan approach.</p>	<p>The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.</p>	GC
ENV9 Pollution	<p>Policy clarifying standards to be expected from new development.</p>		<p>Emerging Policies WNP CC2 'Protecting existing habitats in</p>	Complements

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
	<p>Policy clarifying standards to be expected from new development. Policy states that development proposals will be refused where there are unacceptable impacts arising from development on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The natural environment • Health and safety of the public • Air quality • Surface and groundwater quality • Land quality and condition or • Compliance with statutory environmental quality standards. 		<p>Witchford and seeking opportunities to strengthen parish-wide ecological networks', WNP CC3 'Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain' and WNP 4 'Trees, woodland and carbon sequestration implications of proposals' (all proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR) complement the approach taken in the Local Plan by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a strong neighbourhood-level focus on the natural environment, requiring its protection and enhancement. 	
ENV10 Green Belt	Not applicable. No green belt in NP area.			NA
ENV11 Conservation Areas	Not applicable. No conservation areas in NP area.			NA
ENV12 Listed Buildings	Establishes approach which must be taken in managing impact on listed buildings.	Seven listed buildings in NP area, all along Main Street.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR have no bearing on this policy aspect in the Local Plan.	
ENV13 Local register of buildings and structures	Establishes approach which must be taken in managing impact on buildings on local register.		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR have no bearing on this policy aspect in the Local Plan.	GC
ENV14 Sites of archaeological interest	Establishes approach which must be taken in managing impact on sites of archaeological interest.		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR have no bearing on this policy aspect in the Local Plan.	GC
ENV15 Historic Parks and Gardens	Not applicable. No historic parks and gardens in NP area.			

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
ENV16 Enabling development associated with heritage assets	A policy which allows for development to take place where this helps to enhance heritage assets		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR have no bearing on this policy aspect in the Local Plan.	GC
COM1 Location of retail and town centre uses	Establishes development management approach towards new retail uses across the district.		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR have no bearing on this policy aspect in the Local Plan.	GC
COM2 Retail uses in town centres	Not applicable to Witchford			
COM3 Retaining community facilities	Policy resisting the loss of community facilities	WNP IC3 'Protection of Witchford's Community Facilities' in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan complements approach taken at Local Plan level.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
COM4 New community facilities	Establishes approach for new community facility proposals	WNP IC2 'Witchford's Village Hall and Recreation Ground' in the adopted NP is an allocation for expanded and improved facilities which complements Local Plan approach.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
COM5 Strategic green infrastructure	Policy ensuring no development undermines strategic green infrastructure in district.	Appendix 4 of the Local Plan 2015 indicates eastern part of NP area falls within strategic green infrastructure corridor.	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy	GC
COM6 Telecommunications	Establishes approach for new telecommunications proposals		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR have no bearing on this policy aspect in the Local Plan.	GC
COM7 Transport impact	Establishes that development should be designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car. Also states opportunities should be maximised for increased permeability and connectivity to existing networks.	Adopted NP Policies WNP T1 'Getting around the village' and WNP C1 'Connecting Witchford and Ely through sustainable and safe cycle and pedestrian routes' are policies which complement Local Plan	The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC

ECDC Local Plan 2015 (amended 2023) Plan Policy	Description (where applicable to Witchford)	Specific implication to Witchford NP area or relevance with respect to adopted NP?	Comment regarding general conformity of WNP Climate Change SIR	Outcome
		approach and identify local opportunities for improvement.		
COM8 Parking provision	Policy is accompanied by parking standards which schemes should comply with.		The additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR do not undermine and are compatible with Local Plan policy.	GC
Local Plan 2015 Part Two – Village visions	There are forty-six village/town visions in Part Two of the Local Plan. Vision 8.44 is the one for Witchford.	<p>This 3-page section describes Witchford as a large village. The section estimates there will be 37 dwellings built during the period 2013 to 2031 and clarifies that the only development likely to come forward will be housing built on suitable infill sites. The section does clarify the infrastructure requirements for the parish.</p> <p>The growth proposed in the adopted NP departs from the this section set out in the 2015 Local Plan. The growth in the now adopted NP was a response to the housing requirement figure provided at the time by ECDC. The information provided in Part 2 of the Local Plan has been superseded by events with respect to Witchford and it should be noted that the 2023 Local Plan updated included an amendment to the Witchford development envelope, bringing it in line with the development envelope depicted in the adopted NP.</p>	The relevance of Part Two to the WNP Climate Change SIR is limited given some of the information and guidance is out of date or has been superseded. Nevertheless, so far as it is relevant and up to date, it is noted the additional policies proposed as part of the WNP Climate Change SIR have no bearing on this part the Local Plan.	GC

Table 7: Conformity assessment of WNP Climate Change SIR policies against the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023)

6 Compatibility with EU Obligations and Legislation

- 6.1 European Union Directive 2001/42/EC requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that would have a significant environmental effect. The EU Directive has been transposed into UK legislation through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations). Regulation 9 states that the responsible body (the local planning authority) shall determine whether or not a plan is likely to have a significant effect and that before making such a determination it shall take into account the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations and consult the consultation bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency).
- 6.2 ECDC prepared a preliminary SEA screening report in December 2023. In July 2024, this was updated to ensure it reflected the policy detail contained in the Regulation 14 version of the WNP Climate Change SIR. The report was then issued to the environmental bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England) for their consideration.
- 6.3 In August 2024, having considered the responses from the environmental bodies, ECDC determined that the WNP Climate Change SIR is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a full environmental assessment and could be screened out for SEA purposes.
- 6.4 The SEA screening determination report accompanies the WNP Climate Change SIR at its submission stage under Regulation 15.

Human Rights and Equalities

- 6.5 The WNP Climate Change SIR has been prepared having regard to the fundamental rights and freedom guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights
- 6.6 An assessment has been carried out to assess the potential impacts of the SIR in relation to the protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act 2010. This assessment is shown in the table below. It shows that the WNP Climate Change SIR is not likely to lead to increased inequalities or discrimination in the plan area.
- 6.7 The assessment finds that the WNP Climate Change SIR could, depending on the implementation of the policies, have some minor positive impacts on people with protected characteristics. This includes children, older adults and people with disabilities, all of whom may be faced with a disproportionate level of challenges when adapting to the effects of climate change.

Protected Characteristic	Impact	Commentary
Age	+ minor positive	On the basis that the most vulnerable in society are those who are likely to suffer the most from the effects of climate change (wet weather events, periods of drought and heat waves), the policies in the WNP Climate Chang SIR could have, depending on implementation, a minor positive impact on the very young and very old.
Disability	+ minor positive	On the basis that the most vulnerable in society are those who are likely to suffer the most from the effects of climate change (wet weather events, periods of drought and heat waves), the policies in the WNP Climate Chang SIR could have, depending on implementation, a minor positive impact on people with disabilities who may have greater challenges in adapting to climate change effects.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	
Race	Neutral	
Religion or belief	Neutral	
Sex	Neutral	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	

Table 8: Assessment of the WNP Climate Change SIR against protected characteristics

7 How the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

7.1 In July 2024, ECDC published the draft Modified Witchford Neighbourhood Plan SEA and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). With respect to HRA, the reports draws on the East Cambridgeshire's Habitat Regulation Assessment June 2018 report that had been prepared to accompany the now withdrawn Local Plan 2018. Despite the Local Plan having been withdrawn, the HRA is relevant and appropriate in the context of HRA screenings in the district.

7.2 The 2024 reports considers the following European Sites:

- Fenland SAC – Wicken Fen. Located approximately 10km from the NP area. Whilst growth could pose a potential threat to Wicken Fen, the WNP Climate Change SIR does not make site allocations or provide new opportunities for new development. Therefore likely significant effects on the integrity of this site are ruled out.
- Fenland SAC – Chippenham Fen. Located approximately 20km from the NP area. Whilst growth is a potential threat to Chippenham Fen, the WNP Climate Change SIR does not make site allocations within 8km of the site and does not provide new opportunities for new development. Therefore likely significant effects on the integrity of this site are ruled out.
- Fenland SAC – Woodwalton Fen. Located 30km away from the NP area. Potential impact pathways from development are ruled out.
- Ouse Washes. Located approximately 6km away from the NP area and the northern part of the NP area is located within the Goose and Swan Functional Land Impact Risk Zone (land that could provide important functional habitat for the qualifying bird species). However, the WNP Climate Change SIR is found not to make any site allocations. Therefore likely significant effects on the integrity of this site are ruled out.
- Devil's Dyke. Located approximately 15km away from the NP area. Whilst growth could pose a potential threat to Devil's Dyke, the WNP Climate Change SIR does not make site allocations or provide new opportunities for new development. Therefore likely significant effects on the integrity of this site are ruled out.
- Breckland SAC/SPA. Located approximately 20km away. Whilst growth could pose a potential threat to the SAC/SPA, the WNP Climate Change SIR does not make site allocations or provide new opportunities for new development. Therefore likely significant effects on the integrity of this site are ruled out.

7.3 Natural England was consulted on the HRA screening and concurred with the report findings.

7.4 Subsequently, the ECDC HRA screening report concludes that the WNP Climate Change SIR is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site, either alone or in combination, with other plans or projects.