

# WITCHAM

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### 2024 – 2036

## CONSULTATION STATEMENT

### May 2025



Witcham Parish Council



Prepared for Witcham Parish Council by  
Places4People Planning Consultancy  
March 2025



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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This consultation statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) in respect of the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The legal basis of this Consultation Statement is provided by Section 15(2) of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, which requires that a consultation statement should:
  - contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
  - explain how they were consulted;
  - summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
  - describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.
- 1.3 The policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan are the culmination of engagement and consultation with residents of Witcham as well as other statutory bodies. This has included a household survey and consultation events at appropriate stages during the preparation of the Plan.



## 2. Background to the Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government's Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and, in particular, has involved considerable local community engagement to gather evidence for the content of the plan and later inform the plan's direction and policies. The content of the Neighbourhood Plan has been generated and led by the community and shaped by results of surveys and drop-in events, to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan reflects the aspirations of the community.
- 2.2 In Summer 2022 a group of volunteers and Parish Councillors commenced investigations as to whether there was sufficient interest in the community to prepare a neighbourhood plan for Witcham. Later in the year the Parish Council agreed to establish a Working Group and retain planning consultants to prepare the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan. In January 2023 an application was made to East Cambridgeshire District Council to designate the whole parish, as illustrated on Map 1, as the "Neighbourhood Area". The District Council confirmed that designation on 9th January 2023.
- 2.3 Following the designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, an Adult and separate Youth Survey was carried out in Autumn 2023. A total of 98 responses were received from households to the survey and 9 responses were from 10-18 year olds to the youth survey.

- 2.4 The main headlines arising from the survey were:

- need for affordable, family housing
- must enable young persons to remain in community
- environmental impact a concern
- access and safety a concern
- important to have one car space per bedroom
- development having as low a carbon impact as possible
- extra housing adds pressure on environmental impact, access and safety, and NHS
- not important to meet wider housing needs of community or to build luxury housing
- sites should be brownfield
- development should not restrict views to and from village

The outcomes of the survey are referred to under specific sections of the Plan.

- 2.5 A feedback event to illustrate the key messages from the survey and TO UPDATE residents on other work to support the Plan was held at the Village Hall on 24 March 2024.

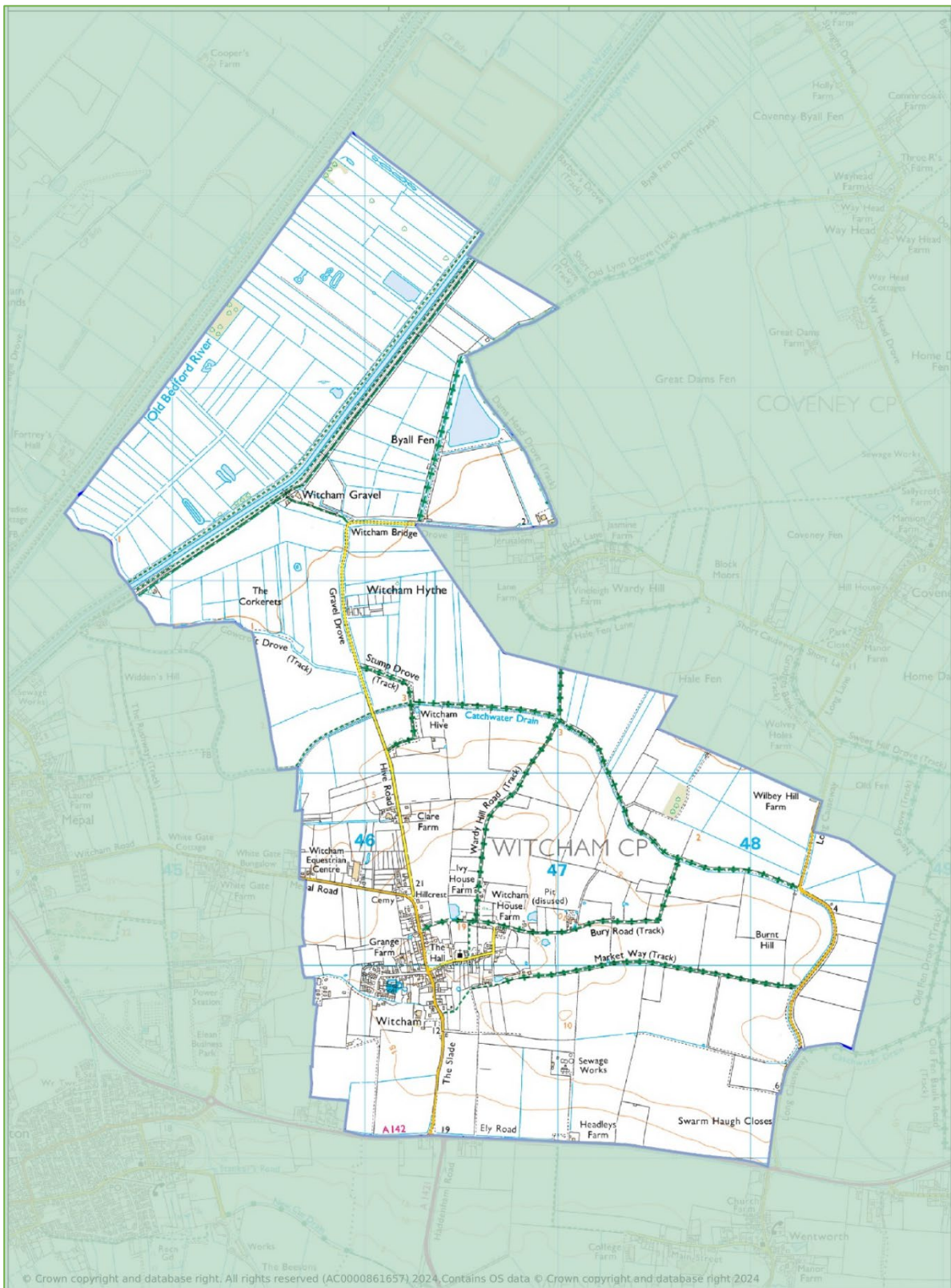
- 2.6 The content of the Neighbourhood Plan has also been informed by evidence reports as appropriate and proportionate to the content of the Plan and the matters it addresses. The evidence reports are:

- Witcham Design Guidance and Codes: AECOM, March 2024
- Witcham Important Views Assessment: Places4People Planning Consultancy, December 2024

These reports are available separately to download on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council website.

- 2.7 On 13 November 2024 the Parish Council considered the draft Plan and approved it for the purposes of Pre-Submission consultation in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). That consultation and its outcomes form the main focus of this Consultation Statement.





Map 1 - The Neighbourhood Plan Area



### **3. Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation**

- 3.1 The statutory consultation commenced on 13 December 2024 and lasted for just over eight weeks to 10 February 2025 (inclusive). The statutory six weeks' consultation period was extended due to the Christmas holiday period.

#### **How we publicised the consultation**

- 3.2 The consultation was publicised by a summary leaflet (reproduced in Appendix 1) that was distributed to every household, community building and business in the parish. The Parish Council was unable to directly contact community associations in the parish or additional voluntary groups whose operations include the parish due to the lack of available information. However, by ensuring that every household received a leaflet it considered that members of parish clubs and associations had been contacted. The leaflet summarised the main purpose and content of the Plan and ensured recipients were informed as to how the actual Plan could be viewed and how they could comment on it. The consultation was also launched with a drop-in event held at the Village Hall on 14 December. The display boards for the drop-in event are included as Appendix 2 of this Statement.
- 3.3 Hard copies of the Plan were made available to view at the drop-in event and to borrow from members of the Working Group, as advised on the leaflet and on the neighbourhood plan pages of the Parish Council website. Both an online and paper comments form was produced, with paper copies of the form being available at the drop-in event and the Working Group members.
- 3.4 At the start of the consultation, all the statutory Regulation 14 consultees, as advised by East Cambridgeshire District Council, were consulted. The full list of bodies consulted is shown in Appendix 3 and the email content used to notify them is included at Appendix 4.
- 3.5 Details of the responses received during the pre-submission consultation period are detailed later in this Consultation Statement.



## 4. Pre-Submission Consultation Responses

- 4.1 A total of 23 people or organisations responded to the Pre-Submission Consultation as listed below.

The following individuals or organisations responded to the consultation:

K Mackender  
G Byrne  
J Byrne  
L Holdaway  
E Dickinson  
H Gresty  
F Mydatt  
R Collet-Fenson  
D Land

Anglian Water  
Coveney Parish Council  
East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Ely Drainage Board  
Environment Agency  
Historic England  
National Gas  
National Highways  
Natural England  
Sport England

Plus four anonymous responses

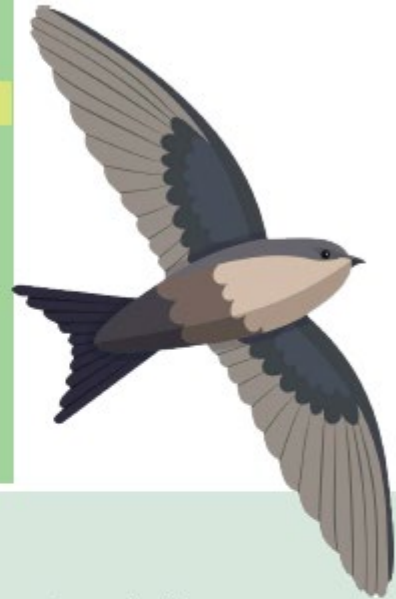
- 4.2 A summary of the responses to questions as to whether the individual policies, community aspirations and general content was supported is illustrated in Appendix 5. It should be noted that not everyone responding to the consultation questions made comments.
- 4.3 A schedule of full comments, and the responses of the Parish Council to them, is set out in Appendix 6 of this Statement. As a result, the Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan has been appropriately amended as identified in the “changes made to Plan” column of the Appendix. Further amendments were made to the Plan to bring it up-to-date and Appendix 7 provides a comprehensive list of all the modifications to the Pre-Submission Plan following consultation.



## Appendix 1 - Pre-submission consultation leaflet

# WITCHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

**Your chance to comment on the Draft Plan**



**Consultation Drop-in Event**  
at the Village Hall  
Saturday 14 December between  
10.30am and 1.00pm

We need your comments by  
**Monday 10 February 2025**

Witcham Parish Council



Since the end of 2022, the Parish Council has been preparing a neighbourhood plan for Witcham with the help of volunteers and professional support.

A neighbourhood plan is a community-led document for guiding decisions that need planning permission. Once complete it will become part of the legal planning framework for the area, sitting alongside the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan and used when planning applications are decided.

The Neighbourhood Plan covers these key themes:



Each theme is supported by planning policies covering specific matters relevant to Witcham and not covered by other local or national policies. In addition, the Plan contains "community actions" addressing non-planning concerns that have been raised during the preparation of the Plan.

We've now reached a major milestone and are commencing consultation on the Draft Plan. Consultation commences on **14 December and lasts until 10 February**, a period of **8 weeks**. It's your chance to say whether or not you support the content of the Plan or would like to see some changes.

#### THE FINAL PAGE OF THIS LEAFLET EXPLAINS HOW YOU CAN COMMENT.

**It is important that you use this opportunity to have your say, even if you're fully supportive of the Plan.**

Following this consultation, all comments will be reviewed and necessary changes made before the Plan is submitted to the District Council, who will carry out further consultation and then send the Plan to an Independent Neighbourhood Plan Examiner for review. Those residents of the Parish who are on the Register of Electors will then be given an opportunity to vote at a Parish Referendum whether the Plan should be used by the District Council when deciding planning applications.

#### THE PLAN STARTS WITH A VISION:

In 2036 Witcham will remain a small village where any new development has been sympathetic to the important natural and historical characteristics of the Parish and where services and facilities are maintained and enhanced to meet the needs of residents.

This is followed by theme objectives and planning policies that reflect the Vision.

#### PLANNING STRATEGY

The Plan acknowledges the "Development Envelope", defined in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, and supports development within it where it would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity, the natural and historic environment, infrastructure and highways.

Outside the Development Envelope, priority will be given to protecting the countryside from inappropriate development. Where proposals do come forward, they will have to demonstrate a need and ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the landscape.



The Development Envelope



## HOUSING

The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any new sites for housing development.

There may be opportunities for infill housing plots within the Development Envelope, subject to impact on the local environment, neighbouring properties and infrastructure.

The affordability of housing to enable people to stay in the village was identified as an issue during the preparation of the Plan. A policy is included that would enable affordable housing to be developed on acceptable sites outside but adjoining the Development Envelope under the Government's "exception site" guidelines and which would be for people with a local connection that cannot afford to buy on the open market. The housing would be provided by a housing association and always remain affordable.



## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

We know that the parish is rich in wildlife habitats with the Ouse Washes being of international importance. A policy in the Plan seeks to ensure that development will not have a detrimental impact on these designated sites.

New Government legislation now requires most development to provide measurable biodiversity net gain in their proposals. The Plan supports the delivery of biodiversity enhancements in proposals that are exempt from the legislation, mainly smaller developments.

The landscape of the Parish is such that there are extensive views in and out of the village centre as well as important views within it. The Plan seeks to protect the key features of the identified views.

**Community Action** – to support the work of the Witcham Wildlife and Nature Conservation Group.

## HISTORIC and BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Much of the village centre is covered by a conservation area and there are also ten listed buildings in the Parish, of which the church of St Martin is Grade 1. The District Council has also identified White Horse Inn, Witcham House and Grange Farm as "Buildings of Local Interest".

The design of development was highlighted as an important matter in the Neighbourhood Plan survey. Design Guidance has been prepared for the Parish by consultants and funded by the Government support programme. It provides comprehensive guidance for new developments and the Neighbourhood Plan sets out a number of design criteria that planning applications will have to take into account.

The Plan includes policies on:

- Development design
- Limiting light pollution
- Flooding and sustainable drainage
- Sustainable building practices
- Renewable energy
- Protecting heritage assets, and
- Buildings of local heritage significance

**Community Action** – to explore the viability of facilitating a rural heat network for the village.

## FACILITIES and SERVICES

You told us that our existing facilities and services are valued by residents, especially the Village Hall and Recreation Ground and that you would like additional graveyard and cremation memorial garden space within the village. The Plan seeks to protect such facilities and prevent them from being lost and supports the creation of new facilities that meet the needs of the village.

**Community Action** – to look at ways of supporting the Mepal Youth Club.

**Community Action** – to take opportunities to raise the profile of Neighbourhood Watch within the village community.

**Community Action** – to support the establishment of a community led group tasked with installing green initiatives, such as a community garden, floral displays and wildflower planting along road verges.

**Community Action** – to investigate options for providing additional graveyard and cremation memorial garden space.



## HIGHWAYS and TRAVEL

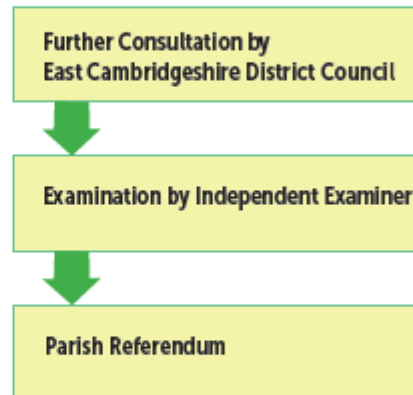
Neighbourhood plans have little power to introduce highway improvements as most schemes will not require planning permission. Parish Councils have a lobbying role in getting improvements. Existing national and local plan policies ensure that development does not have a detrimental impact on the road network.

There is a good level of public rights of way across the Parish, with an unusually high proportion of byways open to all traffic. The residents' survey identified support for more public rights of way across the Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan supports measures to improve and extend the network.

*Community Action to lobby for the improvement of footpath access between local communities.*

*Community Action to support the Community Speedwatch initiative and other measures to enforce speed restriction.*

**What next:** Once the consultation is complete, all comments received will be reviewed and, as necessary, the draft Plan will be amended and updated. It will follow these stages:



The Parish Referendum will ask whether you want the Plan to be used by the District Council when making decisions on planning applications. If the majority of those voting say "yes", the District Council will adopt the Plan.

## HOW TO COMMENT

The full version of the Plan will be available to download at [www.witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk) from 13 December, where an online comments form will also be available to complete. For quick access from a mobile device, you can use the QR code

If you don't have access to the internet, paper copies of the Plan will be available to borrow for a short period from:  
17 The Slade; 11 Silver Street; and The Old School, 30A High Street

### Drop-in Event

We'll be at the Village Hall on Saturday 14 December. Drop in anytime between 10.30am and 1.00pm where you'll be able to find out more about the Plan and talk to members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

### How to comment

During the consultation period the Neighbourhood Plan website will have an online survey form which you can complete.

You can also collect a paper response form at the Drop-in Event or from the above addresses. The forms explain how you can submit them.

**We want your comments, even if you support everything in the Plan.**

**COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY - WE CANNOT ACCEPT COMMENTS AFTER THIS TIME**





# Welcome



**Thanks for sparing time to visit the Neighbourhood Plan consultation.**

**This display will explain what a Neighbourhood Plan is, what's in the draft Plan and how you can comment**

## The story so far:

- The Parish Council has been preparing a Neighbourhood Plan since end of 2022
- We've had specialist reports prepared to support the content of the Plan
- We've now agreed a Draft Plan and have commenced a statutory consultation to collect views of residents, businesses and local and national bodies including the District and County Council

## What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

It is a relatively new kind of planning document designed to allow local people to play an active part in planning their area.

When complete, the Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the area, meaning East Cambridgeshire District Council and Planning Inspectors will have to take note of what it says when considering planning applications and appeals.





# Today's Event



The boards that follow explain the context for the Draft Plan, the stages that it must follow and how it will be used when it is complete.

The Neighbourhood Plan contains planning policies which will be used when planning applications are considered. They only apply to matters that require planning permission.

The Draft Plan also contains "community actions", which address issues that were raised in the Neighbourhood Plan Survey.

Every planning policy and community action in the Draft Plan is displayed in full today.

Copies of the Draft Plan are available to view today and is online on the Parish Council's website.



Over the next 8 weeks you have an opportunity to read the Plan and submit your comments.

**WE NEED YOUR VIEWS BY 10 FEBRUARY 2025**

**It is important that you tell us what you think of the Plan even if you support everything**

**Why not comment today as you go round?**

**You can access the comments form from your mobile phone using the QR code or there are paper comments forms available to complete**





# Vision and Objectives



## VISION

**In 2036 Witcham will remain a small village where any new development has been sympathetic to the important natural and historical characteristics of the Parish and where services and facilities are maintained and enhanced to meet the needs of residents.**

To deliver the Vision, the Plan has the following Objectives

### Planning Strategy

- Ensure that new development is located where it will protect the historic character of Witcham and minimise impacts on the natural environment.

### Housing

- To meet the housing needs of current and future residents and those with a connection to the Parish.

### Natural Environment

- Identify, protect and enhance the landscape character of Witcham including green spaces, hedgerows, woodland and watercourses.
- Protect important views and links to the wider countryside.
- Deliver net gains to the extent and quality of natural habitats and biodiversity.

### Historic and Built Environment

- Conserve and enhance the village's heritage assets.
- Ensure that new development is designed in a way that reflects local character.
- Through the incorporation of energy saving measures, minimise the environmental impact of new development.

### Services and Facilities

- Minimise the impact of development on the capacity of essential infrastructure and services and seek to improve them.
- Protect and improve the range of existing community facilities and services.

### Highways and Travel

- Protect, maintain and improve the Public Rights of Way network.
- Ensure that new development minimises impact on the existing road network.
- Support proposals that deliver improvements to identified dangerous road junctions and address issues relating to the speed of traffic.
- To support and identify ways to improve connectivity between villages for safe and easy travel by cycle or foot.

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES?**

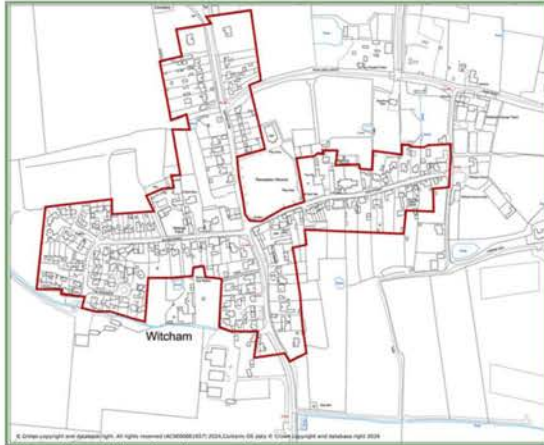


# Development Location



## Context

The Plan does not update the adopted Settlement Boundary as there has been little in the way of development since the original adoption of the Local Plan in 2015. Some minor changes were made to the Plan in 2023 and work on a new Local Plan will get underway in 2025.



Adopted Local Plan Development Envelope

## Location of New Development

In line with national and local planning policies, the Plan supports proposals for development within the Development Envelope (illustrated above) where they do not have a detrimental impact a range of matters.

Generally, in line with national policies, development outside the Development Envelope is not supported except in particular circumstances.

Any such proposals will be considered as an exception in the context of the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Local Plan.



## Policy WHM1 – Spatial Strategy

A Development Envelope is defined on the Policies Map. Sustainable development proposals within the Development Envelope will be supported in principle, subject to being of an appropriate scale and not having an unacceptable impact on:

- the amenity of residents;
- the historic and natural environment;
- the provision of services and facilities; and
- the highway network.

Land outside the Development Envelope is defined as countryside where development will normally only be allowed for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, community services and facilities, outdoor recreation, proposals in accordance with Policy WHM 2, and other uses which can demonstrate a need to be located in the countryside.

Proposals for new buildings outside the Development Envelope will be required to be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, or other appropriate and proportionate evidence, that demonstrates how the proposal:

- can be accommodated in the countryside without having a significant detrimental impact, by reason of the building's scale, materials and location, on the character and appearance of the countryside and its distinction from the main built-up areas as identified by the Development Envelope; and
- conserves and enhances the unique landscape and scenic beauty within the Parish.



**DO YOU SUPPORT THE POLICY?**



# Housing



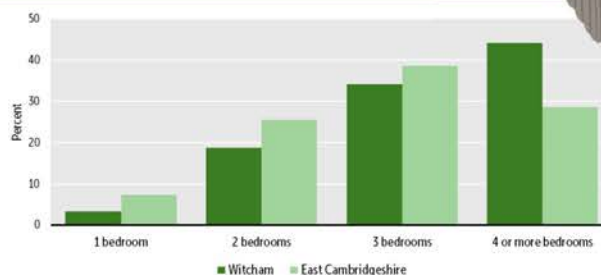
## Context

When compared with East Cambridgeshire district as a whole, Witcham has a high proportion of four-bedroomed homes, as illustrated in the chart.

Given the lack of services and facilities, the Local Plan limits the development of new housing to infill plots within the Development Envelope.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not identify any new sites for housing development.

There may be opportunities for the development of suitable small infill plots within the Development Envelope, as well as the potential to convert agricultural buildings to residential use under Government "permitted development" regulations.



Dwelling sizes (source 2021 Census)

## Policy WHM 2 - Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes of under 10 dwellings, including affordable rent, community-led housing and affordable home ownership products, on rural exception sites outside but closely related to the Development Envelope, where housing would not normally be permitted, will be supported, where there is a proven local need and that the housing:

- remains affordable in perpetuity, and
- is for people in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the parish at open-market prices, and
- is offered in the first instance to applicants with a connection to the village, including current and previous residents in the parish, a family connection or employment connection.

Proposals should be supported by an up-to-date detailed housing needs assessment and the accommodation proposed in terms of size and tenure should contribute to the identified need.

Proposals should also take into consideration other policies in this Plan, in terms of any impact on character and appearance, residential amenity and highway safety.

In exceptional circumstances a small number of market homes will be supported, where it can be demonstrated:

- that no other means of funding the affordable housing is available
- that the market housing is subsidiary to the affordable housing element of the proposal and this is supported by a viability assessment to identify the minimum number of market homes required to deliver the affordable housing.

Where sites incorporate a small element of market housing, both housing tenures should be built to the same design standards and make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

## Affordable Housing

Housing affordability is an issue for the Parish, as highlighted in the Residents' Survey undertaken in Autumn 2023 at the start of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

National planning policy enables an alternative mechanism for meeting locally identified housing needs through small scale (under 10 dwellings) "rural exception sites" located outside but adjoining the Development Envelope where housing would not normally be permitted.

Government policy also allows consideration of providing the bare minimum market housing on the site to make the development viable.

To deliver affordable housing through the "exception sites" approach, the following steps must be satisfied:

- A local need has to be established, usually through a detailed parish housing needs survey carried out on behalf of the Parish Council.
- A willing landowner prepared to sell land at a price significantly below the market value for housing land.
- A registered social landlord (housing association) willing to work with the Parish Council and District Council to fund and manage a scheme.

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE POLICY?**



# Natural Environment



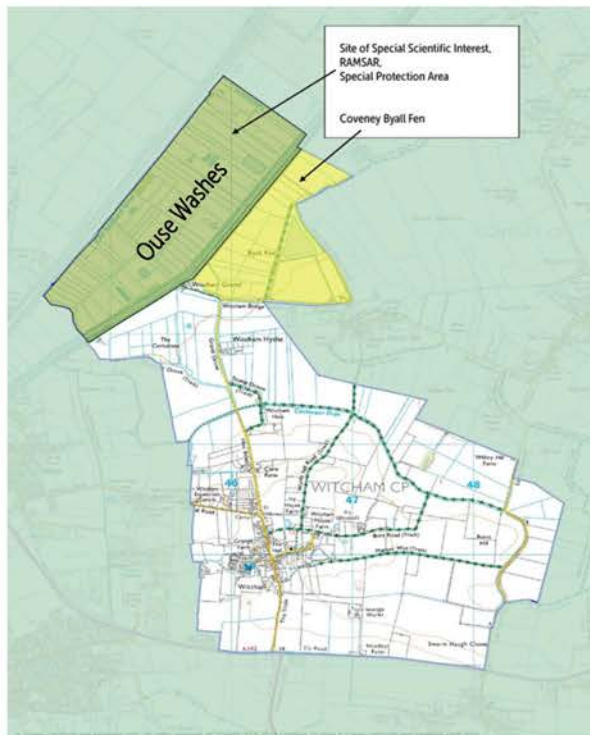
## Context

Ongoing protection and management of the environment is one of the highest priorities when considering the scale and location of future development in the Neighbourhood Area.

The Parish includes part of some of the most important wetland habitats in the UK at Ouse Washes, as illustrated on the map.

The Ouse Washes are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area, Ramsar (after the 1971 Ramsar convention) and, although not within Witcham Parish, a Special Area of Conservation.

In the last ten years the Environment Agency has created a wet grassland habitat site in the north of the Parish adjoining the Ouse Washes - known as Coveney Byall Fen, to address a decline in bird numbers.



## Policy WHM 3 - Conserving and Enhancing Internationally Designated Sites

The highest level of protection will be afforded to international sites designated for their nature conservation importance. Proposals having an adverse impact on the integrity of such sites, either alone or in combination, that cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated to remove any adverse effect, will not be supported other than in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances will only apply where a Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken and it has not been possible to conclude no adverse effect on integrity (either alone or in combination) and:

- (a) there are no suitable alternatives;
- (b) there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest; and
- (c) necessary compensatory provision can be secured.

Development will only be supported where the local planning authority is satisfied that any necessary avoidance and / or mitigation measures are included to ensure there are no adverse effects on integrity either alone or in combination.

Development proposals that are likely to, or have the potential to, have an adverse effect, either alone or in combination, on European designated sites must satisfy the requirements of the Habitats Regulations (or any superseding similar UK legislation, post the UK leaving the EU), determining site specific impacts (which could be off-site as well as on-site) and avoiding or mitigating against impacts where identified. Mitigation may involve providing or contributing towards a combination of the following measures:

- i. access and visitor management measures within the designated site;
- ii. improvement of existing greenspace and recreational routes;
- iii. provision of alternative natural greenspace and recreational routes;
- iv. monitoring of the impacts of new development on European designated sites to inform the necessary mitigation requirements and future refinement of any mitigation measures;
- v. other potential mitigation measures to address air pollution impacts e.g. emission reduction measures, on site management measures.

Where avoidance or mitigation measures are necessary, planning conditions will be attached to a permission to require monitoring of the effectiveness of such measures to inform the necessary mitigation requirements and any future refinements.

**DO YOU SUPPORT THIS POLICY?**



# Natural Environment



## Biodiversity

There are many smaller areas in the Parish that are of biodiversity significance, such as the meadows south of the High Street and east of The Slade, and Market Way.

The Environment Act 2021 requires development to deliver a minimum 10 per cent biodiversity net gain unless it meets exemptions set out in the Act, such as small projects like home extensions, conservatories or loft conversions.

In addition to Policy WHM3, the Neighbourhood Plan also includes a Policy focused on Biodiversity Enhancements.

A number of trees and woods in the Parish are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

## Policy WHM 4 – Biodiversity Enhancements

For developments exempt from the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements of the Environment Act 2021, proposals that, as appropriate to the development, deliver biodiversity gain, such as bird boxes, insect 'hotels', bee blocks, bat boxes, swift bricks, and/or hibernation holes will be supported.

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

## Wildlife and Conservation Group

The Residents' Survey indicated a high level of support for the natural environment. A Wildlife and Nature Conservation Group has been established and the Parish Council will continue to support the growth of the Group and its work.

## Community Action 1- Wildlife and Nature Conservation Group

The Parish Council will support the work of the Witcham wildlife and Conservation Group.



**DO YOU SUPPORT THIS POLICY AND COMMUNITY ACTION?**

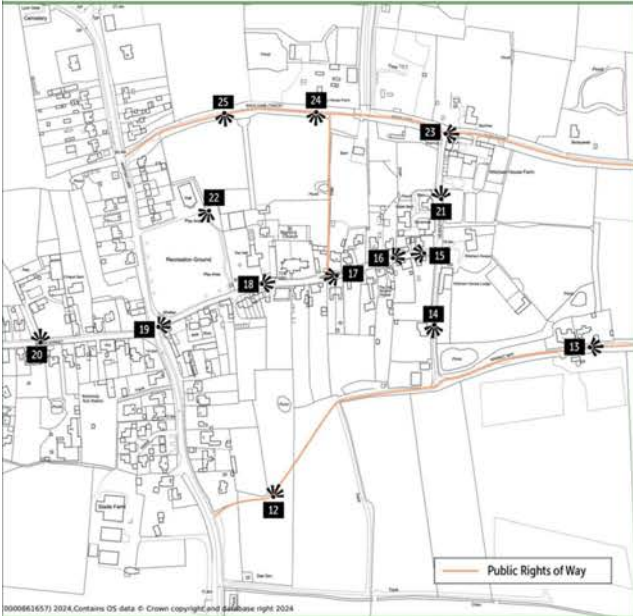


# Natural Environment

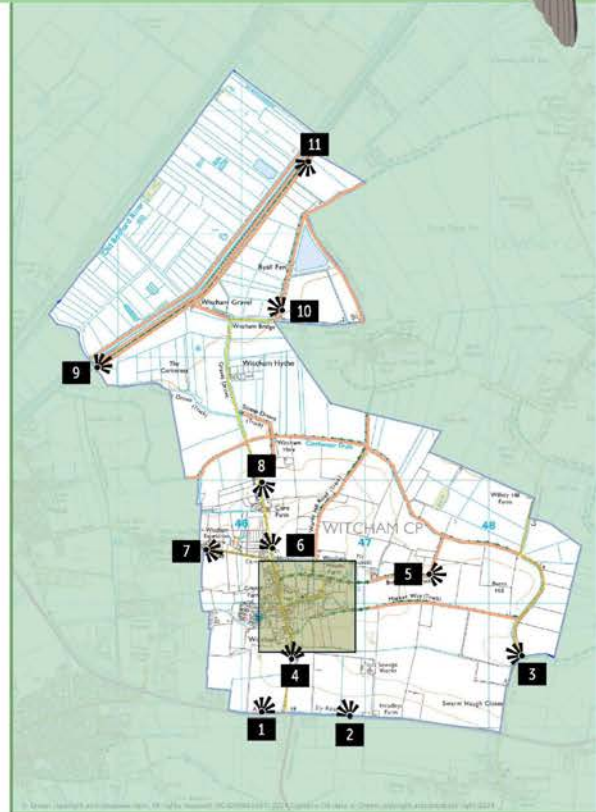


## Important Views

Despite the flat nature of the landscape, there are surprisingly few long distance views from publicly accessible points that include key and distinct features. The Witcham Design Guidance prepared by AECOM has identified some important views from publicly accessible locations and shown on the following maps.



Important views in the village centre



Important views in the wider Parish

## Policy WHM 5 – Locally Important Views

Important views from public vantage points either within the built-up area or into or out of the surrounding countryside, are identified in the Witcham Important Views Assessment and on Maps 5 and 6 and the Policies Map.

Any proposed development should not detract from the key landscape features of these views.



**DO YOU SUPPORT THIS POLICY?**



# Historic and Built Environment



## Context

As part of the Government support for neighbourhood plans, the Witcham Design Guidelines and Codes report has been prepared by consultants to inform the content of the Plan.

It defines four "Character Areas", namely:

1. Conservation Area.
2. Villages Approaches.
3. Silver Street
4. Countryside (the area outside the main built-up area)

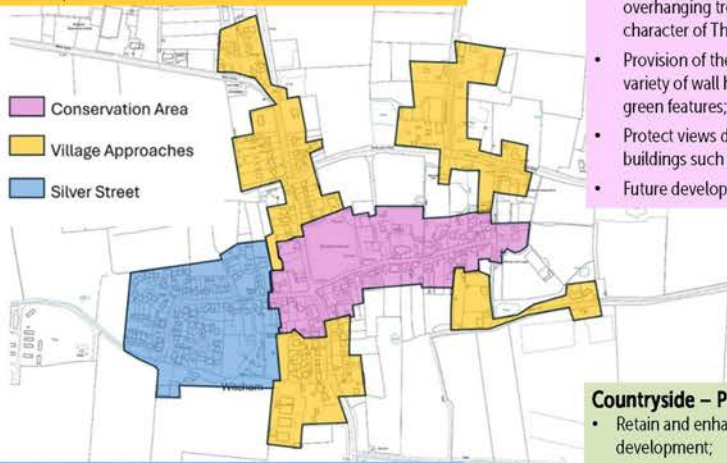
For each character area, the Design Guidance and Codes defines the characteristics and identifies what improvements (the "proposed character") should be sought.

There are also general Design Principles and a Development Design Checklist. These will be used to assess planning applications.



## Village Approaches – Proposed Character

- Protect the local character such as the views towards the tree belts and hedgerows surrounding the village that hide Witcham from the outside;
- Respect the existing building line;
- Properties should face onto the roads providing a natural surveillance;
- On-street car parking should be discouraged;
- Future development should not exceed two storeys in height;
- The roofs should be built in gabled or hipped roof styles; and
- Density of development existing in the village should be respected by any new development.



## Conservation Area – Proposed Character

- Protect the local character and retain the history of properties through similar use of materials and colour palette. Use the array of gault brick, old Cambridge brick, red brick, painted render, grey slates, clay tiles, clay pantiles. The use of just one material should be avoided if possible;
- Protecting the landscape features such as the village recreation ground, overhanging trees and other green spaces to preserve the natural character of The Conservation Area;
- Provision of the same boundary treatments such as hedges and verges. A variety of wall heights is acceptable when used in conjunction with green features;
- Protect views down the High Street and Back Lane towards significant buildings such as the Church of St Martin and between properties;
- Future developments should not exceed two storeys.

## Silver Street – Proposed Character

- Retain and enhance the rural character and pattern of development, most importantly in the areas that fall within the Conservation Area where the character of Witcham is heavily protected by policy;
- New developments should incorporate gaps between properties that provide views towards the countryside, maintaining the rural feel of the area;
- Establish a consistent boundary treatment such as low and well-manicured hedgerows. These provide a degree of privacy and visual interest; and
- Look to prevent inappropriate development in the surrounding countryside.

## Countryside – Proposed Character

- Retain and enhance the rural character and spaced out pattern of development;
- Protect the tree belt surrounding Witcham so that it can retain its character as a settlement from the outside;
- New development should not obstruct existing key views both towards and outwards from Witcham;
- Establish a vegetated boundary treatment such as hedgerows. These provide space for biodiversity to flourish and retain the rural character of the area; and
- Look to prevent inappropriate development in the surrounding countryside.



# Historic and Built Environment



## Policy WHM 6 – Design Considerations

Proposals for new development must positively contribute to the individual characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area through the provision of high quality, safe and sustainable development and respond positively to the Design Principles set out in the Witcham Design Guidance and Codes.

Planning applications should, as appropriate to the proposal, demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Witcham Design Guidance and Codes and the Development Design Checklist in Appendix 2 of this Plan.

In addition, proposals will be supported where, as appropriate to their scale, nature, and location, they:

- a. recognise and address key features and characteristics, reflecting local distinctiveness, and the special qualities of the area;
- b. maintain the locality's sense of place as defined in the Witcham Design Guidance and Codes;
- c. do not involve the loss of gardens, open, green or landscaped areas, which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the locality or Parish as a whole;
- d. taking mitigation measures into account, do not affect adversely:
  - i. important landscape characteristics including trees, ancient hedgerows, green edges and other prominent topographical features identified in the Design Code document;
  - ii. identified important views into, out of, or within the settlements as identified on the Policies Map;
  - iii. sites, habitats, species and features of ecological interest;
  - iv. the amenities of adjacent areas by reason of noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, other pollution (including light pollution), or volume or type of vehicular activity generated; and/or residential amenity;
- e. produce designs that respect the character, scale and density of the locality;
- f. produce designs, in accordance with standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network ensuring that all vehicle parking is provided in accordance with adopted guidance and designed to be integrated into the development without creating an environment dominated by vehicles, avoid parking in tandem within plots and seek always to ensure satisfactory permeability through new housing areas, connecting any new development into the heart of the existing settlement; and
- g. wherever practicable ensure that development faces on to existing roads;
- h. where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and, in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards, cycle storage.

## Dark Skies

Artificial lighting of development, including uplighting and floodlighting, while increasing a sense of security, can also impact upon residential amenity, the character and appearance of an area (particularly rural locations) and the environment.

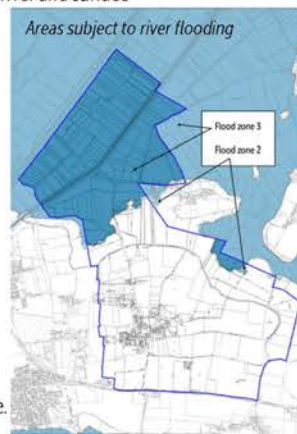
## Policy WHM 7 – Dark Skies

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

## Flooding

Unsurprisingly, given the location of the Parish in the Fens, much of Neighbourhood Area is subject to both river and surface water flooding. It is essential that development proposals do not add to this risk through creating surfaces where rainwater can run-off into the highway or neighbouring sites.

New development will be required, where appropriate, to make provision for the attenuation and recycling of surface water and rainwater through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that might include on-site rainwater and storm water harvesting and grey water recycling, and the management of run-off in order to reduce the potential for making the situation worse.



## Policy WHM8 – Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

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

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

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

**DO YOU SUPPORT THESE POLICIES?**



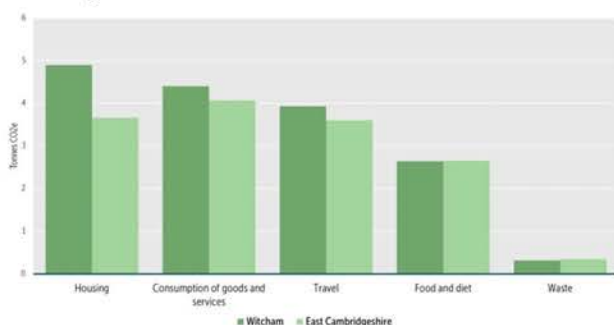
# Historic and Built Environment



## Energy Consumption

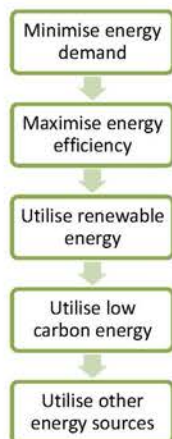
Energy consumption and the demand for energy is a major determinant of climate change.

The following chart illustrates that in Witcham housing is the biggest source of CO<sub>2</sub> followed by consumption of goods and services, with travel in third place. The CO<sub>2</sub> produced by housing is much higher than for East Cambridgeshire as a whole.



Comparison of Carbon Dioxide generation per household for Witcham and East Cambridgeshire

The Neighbourhood Plan has limited powers to require developments to meet energy saving standards, especially in the construction of new homes. However, that does not stop the encouragement of the incorporation of measures in development that meet the energy hierarchy (in order of preference) to:



A recent initiative at Swaffham Prior has seen the implementation of a rural heat network, a mix of air and ground source heat pumps that has the capacity to heat 300 homes in the village

## Policy WHM 9 – Sustainable Building Practices

Unless it can be adequately demonstrated to be impracticable, development proposals should incorporate best practice in energy conservation and are designed for the maximum achievable energy efficiency. Such measures should be incorporated so that they are integral to the building design and its curtilage and minimise any impacts on the building or its surroundings.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate how they:

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

In Autumn 2019, East Cambridgeshire District Council declared a climate emergency. In doing so, they agreed to explore a wide range of actions to improve their local environment and help mitigate climate change. Renewable energy developments can have adverse impacts on the natural and built environment, as well as residential amenity.

## Policy WHM 10 – Renewable Energy

Renewable energy generation schemes, including those that form part of wider development proposals, will be supported where their scale, siting and cumulative effects would not have an unacceptable impact on:

- neighbouring uses or amenity;
- visual amenity, particularly from sensitive viewpoints;
- environmental and heritage assets;
- the best and most versatile agricultural land; and
- highway safety.

Where development is permitted, mitigation measures, such as landscaping, may be required to minimise any potential negative visual amenity and/or highway impacts.

## Community Action 2– Rural Heat Network

The Parish Council, working with residents and relevant parties, will explore the viability of facilitating a rural heat network for the village

**DO YOU SUPPORT THESE POLICIES AND COMMUNITY ACTION?**



# Historic and Built Environment



## Historic Built Environment

Much of the built-up centre of the village is designated as a Conservation Area designated in 1974, as illustrated.



Careful consideration of development proposals that might impact on heritage assets or their setting will be needed, and a balanced judgement made in determining applications, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

## Policy WHM 11 - Heritage Assets

To ensure the conservation and enhancement of Witcham's heritage assets, including archaeological records, proposals should:

- preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the village, their setting and the wider built environment;
- retain buildings and spaces, the loss of which would cause harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area;
- contribute to the village's local distinctiveness, built form and scale of its heritage assets through the use of appropriate design and materials;
- be of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, alignment and detailed design which respects the area's character, appearance and its setting;
- demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the asset and of the wider context in which the heritage asset sits, alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the development on the heritage asset and its context; and
- provide clear justification, through the submission of a heritage statement, for any works that could harm a heritage asset yet be of wider substantial public benefit, through detailed analysis of the asset and the proposal.

Proposals will not be supported where the harm caused as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme is not justified by the public benefits that would be provided. Where a planning proposal affects a heritage asset, it must be accompanied by a Heritage Statement identifying, as a minimum, the significance of the asset, and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the heritage asset. The level of detail of the Heritage Statement should be proportionate to the importance of the asset, the works proposed and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance and/or setting of the asset.

## Buildings and Features of Local Interest

In addition to the Listed Buildings in the parish, the District Council has identified four buildings that are of local importance that have been included in its Register of Buildings of Local Interest, published in February 2017. One of these buildings has since been lost, leaving:

- White Horse Inn, Silver Street
- Witcham House, Headley's Lane
- Grange Farm, Silver Street



## Policy WHM 12 – Buildings and Features of Local Heritage Significance

Development proposals should ensure that the retention and protection of local interest, as identified in the East Cambridgeshire Register of Buildings of Local Interest will be secured.

Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of, or substantial harm to, a building of local significance should be supported by an appropriate analysis of the significance of the asset together with an explanation of the wider public benefits of the proposal.



**DO YOU SUPPORT THESE POLICIES?**



# Facilities and Services

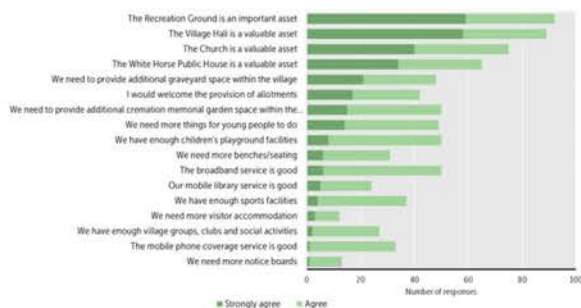


## Context

Witcham has only a limited range of facilities and services available and is reliant on travelling to nearby centres for education, health and shopping.

The Village Hall and Recreation Ground provides a well-equipped facility that is extensively used for a number of functions and by many clubs.

The residents survey reveals support for the local facilities:



Residents' Survey level of agreement on statements concerning services and facilities

## Policy WHM 13 - Infrastructure and Community Facilities

The provision and enhancement of community facilities and services that serve the needs of Witcham will be supported where they are located in locations accessible on foot and within or in close proximity to the Development Envelope, contribute to the quality of village life and improve the sustainability of the village.

Proposals that would result in the loss of existing facilities or services which support the local community, including the following identified on the Policies Map:

- Witcham Village Hall;
  - Witcham Recreation Ground;
  - The White Horse Inn;
  - The Cemetery; and
  - St Martin's Church,
- will only be supported where:
- it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 6 months; and
  - it can be demonstrated, through evidenced research, that there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or
  - alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking.

## Youth Club

There is currently no youth club in Witcham, but that at Mepal is well established and around two miles away. Given the size of Witcham, it is considered better to support the Mepal Youth Club rather than establish a separate club in the village.

### Community Action 3 – Youth Club

The Parish Council will look at ways of supporting the Mepal Youth Club.

## Neighbourhood Watch

The Residents' Survey asked about concerns relating to crime and anti-social behaviour. The level of concern was generally low - there is an existing Neighbourhood Watch initiative in the Parish and the Parish Council will seek to work with relevant parties to increase its profile.

### Community Action 4 – Neighbourhood Watch

The Parish Council, working with relevant parties, will take opportunities to raise the profile of Neighbourhood Watch within village community.

## Greening Witcham

The designation of an area in the village centre as a conservation area is a recognition of Witcham's visual and historic qualities. Creating floral displays, adding wildflowers to road verges and perhaps the creation of a community garden with seating are possible resident led initiatives that would increase the attractiveness and add to the distinct features of the village and improve community cohesion.

### Community Action 5 – Greening Witcham

The Parish Council will support the establishment of a community led group tasked with installing green initiatives, such as a community garden, floral displays and wildflower planting along road verges

## Cemetery Space

The Residents Survey identified a high level of support for additional space for burials and support for cremation memorial garden space. The current cemetery on Mepal Road has no available space for burials and only limited cremation memorial garden space.

### Community Action 6 – Cemetery Space

The Parish Council will investigate options for providing additional graveyard and cremation memorial garden space within the village.

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS?**



# Highways and Travel

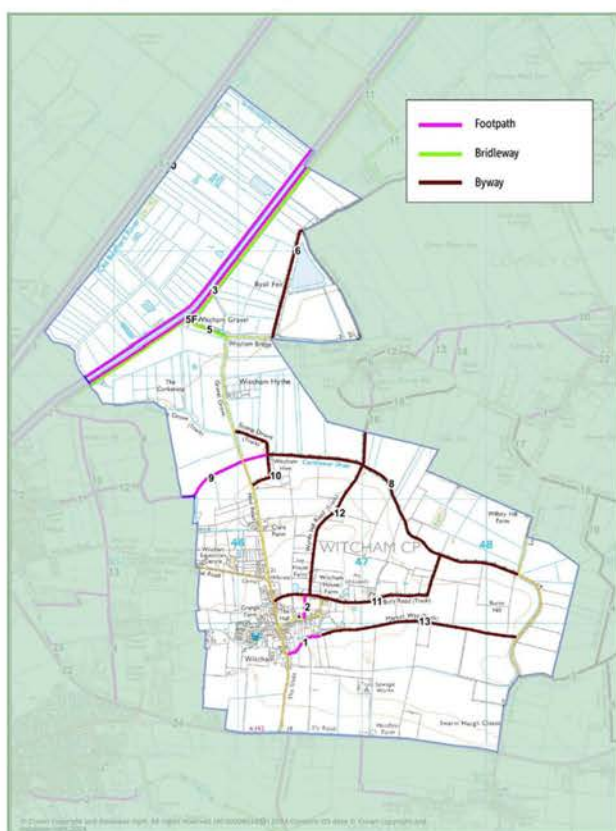


## Context

Neighbourhood plans have little power to introduce highway improvements as most schemes will not require planning permission. Improvements are therefore reliant on Cambridgeshire County Council, as the highways authority, for investment in projects or improvements required as part of the mitigation of the impact of development proposals.

The Residents' Survey indicated a high level of support for improving cycle paths linking nearby villages, including improving the crossing of the A142 to the Sutton – Ely cycle path.

There is a good level of public rights of way across the Parish, with an unusually high proportion of byways open to all traffic.



Public Rights of Way  
(numbers refer to the statutory public right of way reference number)

## Policy WHM 14 – Public Rights of Way

Measures to improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way (as illustrated on the Policies Map) will be supported where their value as biodiversity corridors is safeguarded and any public right of way extension is fit for purpose. Where practicable development proposals should incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity within the improved or extended public right of way.

Safe and convenient routes between the village and neighbouring communities is important if trips are to be made by more sustainable means. There may be opportunities in the future to improve such links or create new routes, especially to nearby Mepal.

## Community Action 7 – Improving Footpaths

The Parish Council will lobby for the improvement of footpath access between local communities.

Of those that responded to the Residents' Survey, 55% thought that traffic calming/speed reduction measures should be introduced in the village. While this is the responsibility of the County Highways Department, locally the Community Speedwatch initiative contributes to deterring speeding.

## Community Action 8 – Community Speedwatch

The Parish Council will continue to support the Community Speedwatch initiative and other measures to enforce speed restriction.



**DO YOU SUPPORT THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS?**

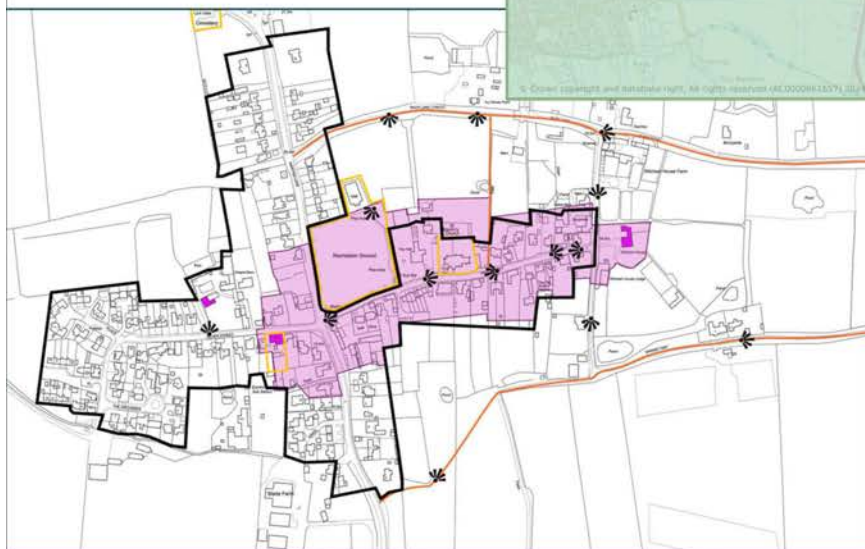


## A stylized illustration of a swallow bird in flight, facing right. The bird has a dark brown body, a lighter brown throat and breast, and a dark brown back and wings. Its wings are spread wide, showing the underside of the primary feathers. The tail is deeply forked. The background is a solid light green.

**Key to Policies Map and Village Inset Map**

- Development Envelope (WHM1)
- Important Views (WHM 5)
- Conservation Area
- Buildings and Features of Local Heritage Significance
- Existing Facilities (WHM 13)
- Public Rights of Way (WHM 14)

The map shows the village of Witcomb, North Devon, with various features highlighted according to the key. The Development Envelope (WHM1) is shown as a blue outline. Important Views (WHM 5) are indicated by sunburst symbols. Conservation Areas are shown in light pink. Buildings and Features of Local Heritage Significance are shown in light purple. Existing Facilities (WHM 13) are shown in yellow. Public Rights of Way (WHM 14) are shown as orange lines. A central inset box labeled "See Village Centre Inset Map" covers the central part of the village.



### Village Centre Inset Map

## DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ON THE POLICIES MAPS?



# What next .....



## Your chance to comment on the Draft Plan

At the end of this consultation the comments received will be reviewed before deciding if any amendments to the Plan are required.

**We need your comments by  
Monday 10 February 2025**

## Further Consultation

The District Council will carry out a further six-week consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan before it is submitted to an Independent Examiner.

## Examination

The Independent Examiner will review the Plan and consider any objections to it.

The Examiner's Report will recommend whether the Plan, possibly with amendments, should proceed to a referendum in the parish.



## Referendum

If the Examiner recommends that a Referendum on the Plan should take place, this will be organised and paid for by East Cambridgeshire District Council in the same way as a local election. Notice will be given of the Referendum and all those living in the parish that are entitled to vote will be asked whether the Neighbourhood Plan should be approved. No matter how many turn out to vote, if more votes say "Yes" then the Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted.

**You can submit your comments on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan online at the Parish Council website or, if you don't have the internet, by completing a comment form and sending it to the address on the form.**

**Why not complete a form today?**



## Appendix 3 – Statutory Consultees Notified of Regulation 14 Consultation

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority  
Fenland District Council  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
East Cambridgeshire District Council  
King's Lynn and West Norfolk  
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning  
West Suffolk Council  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Norfolk County Council  
Suffolk County Council  
Homes England  
Natural England  
Environment Agency  
Historic England  
Network Rail  
National Highways  
Marine Management Organisation  
Anglian Water Services Limited

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust  
Ely Drainage Boards  
National Grid  
National Gas  
NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG  
NHS Property Services Ltd  
UK Power Networks  
Western Power Distribution  
The Coal Authority  
Coveney Parish Council  
Haddenham Parish Council  
Little Downham Parish Council  
Mepal Parish Council  
Sutton Parish Council  
Wentworth Parish Council  
Witchford Parish Council  
Manea Parish Council



## Appendix 4 – Statutory Consultee Consultation Notice

### WITCHAM (CAMBRIDGESHIRE) NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION (REGULATION 14)

Dear Sir/Madam

As part of the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2015 (as amended), Witcham Parish Council is undertaking a Pre-Submission Consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. East Cambridgeshire District Council has provided your details as a body/individual we are required to consult or has identified an interest in the Neighbourhood Plan for Witcham and your views on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan would be welcomed.

The full plan and supporting documents can be viewed [here](#) together with information on how to send us your comments.

This Pre-Submission Consultation runs until **Monday 10 February 2025**.

We look forward to receiving your comments. If possible, please submit them online at [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/WitchamNP](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/WitchamNP) or, if that is not possible, please send them in a reply to this email.



Kind regards



Clerk



Witcham Parish Council







## Appendix 5 – Summary of Responses to Consultation Questions

1. Do you have any comments on Chapters 1, 2, and 3?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		7.69%	1
2	No		92.31%	12

2. Do you support the Vision and Objectives in Chapter 4?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1



3. Do you support Policy WHM 1 – Spatial Strategy?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	no		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1

4. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 5 – Planning Strategy?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		7.69%	1
2	No		92.31%	12



5. Do you support Policy WHM 2 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		7.69%	1
3	No opinion		0.00%	0





## 6. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 6 – Housing?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		23.08%	3
2	No		76.92%	10


## 7. Do you support Policy WHM 3 – Conserving and Enhancing Internationally Designated Sites

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1



## 8. Do you support Policy WHM 4 - Biodiversity Enhancements?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1

## 9. Do you support Community Action 1 - Wildlife and Nature Conservation Group?



Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		100.00%	13
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		0.00%	0

## 10. Do you support Policy WHM 5 - Locally Important Views?



Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1




### 11. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 7 – Natural Environment?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		7.69%	1
2	No		92.31%	12


### 12. Do you support Policy WHM 6 - Design Considerations?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1



### 13. Do you support Policy WHM 7 - Dark Skies?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		100.00%	13
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		0.00%	0

### 14. Do you support WHM 8 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage?



Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		100.00%	13
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		0.00%	0

### 15. Do you support Policy WHM 9 – Sustainable Building Practices?



Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1





### 16. Do you support Policy WHM 10 – Renewable Energy?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		7.69%	1
3	No opinion		0.00%	0



### 17. Do you support Community Action 2 - Rural Heat Network?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		76.92%	10
2	No		23.08%	3
3	No opinion		0.00%	0



### 18. Do you support Policy WHM 11 - Heritage Assets?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1

### 19. Do you support Policy WHM 12 - Buildings and Features of Local Heritage Significance?



Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1

### 20. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 8 – Historic and Built Environment?



Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		7.69%	1
2	No		92.31%	12





### 21. Do you support Policy WHM 13 – Infrastructure and Community Facilities?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1


### 22. Do you support Community Action 3 – Youth Club?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		76.92%	10
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		23.08%	3



### 23. Do you support Community Action 4 – Neighbourhood Watch?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1

### 24. Do you support Community Action 5 - Greening Witcham?


Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		100.00%	13
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		0.00%	0

### 25. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 9 – Facilities and Services?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		15.38%	2
2	No		84.62%	11




## 26. Do you support Policy WHM 14 – Public Rights of Way?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		100.00%	13
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		0.00%	0

## 27. Do you support Community Action 6 – Cemetery Space

Due to a technical issue no responses are listed however the original questionnaire indicated that there was support for both of these community actions



## 28. Do you support Community Action 7 – Improving Footpaths?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		7.69%	1
3	No opinion		0.00%	0



## 29. Do you support Community Action 8 – Community Speedwatch?

Due to a technical issue no responses are listed however the original questionnaire indicated that there was support for both of these community actions

## 30. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 10 – Highways and Travel?



Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		46.15%	6
2	No		53.85%	7

## 31. Do you support the content of the Parish Wide Policies Map and Village Centre Inset Map?



Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	No opinion		7.69%	1





### 32. Do you have any comments on the Appendices?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		15.38%	2
2	No		84.62%	11

### 33. Do you have any other comments on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		30.77%	4
2	No		69.23%	9

### 34. Ultimately, the Plan will be subject to a Parish Referendum when residents will be asked whether they want East Cambridgeshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications. Overall, would you vote in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan at a Parish Referendum?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		92.31%	12
2	No		0.00%	0
3	Unsure		7.69%	1



## Appendix 6 - Responses received to Pre-Submission Consultation, Responses to Comments and Proposed Changes

The table in this appendix sets out the comments that were received during the Pre-Submission Consultation Stage and the responses and changes made to the Plan as a result of the comments. The first table is laid out in Plan order with the general comments following the comments on the policies. Where proposed changes to the Plan are identified, they relate to the Pre-Submission Draft Plan. Due to deletions and additions to the Plan, they may not correlate to the paragraph or policy numbers in the Submission version of the Plan.

Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
<b>Chapters 1, 2, and 3</b>				
K Mackinder	-	All fine.	Noted	None
Anonymous	-	A well-written, informative section of the report.	Noted	None
<b>Vision and Objectives</b>				
K Mackender	-	All good.	Noted	None
<b>Policy WHM 1 – Spatial Strategy</b>				
K Mackender	-	All good.	Noted	None
	Anglian Water	Infrastructure capacity In the consideration of development proposals which may come forward within the plan area, infrastructure capacity is a key consideration and it is relevant to require new development to be served by a sustainable provision.	Noted	None
		Where relevant, developers will need to demonstrate that there is sufficient water available to support the proposed development and that adequate mains foul water treatment and disposal already exists or can be provided in time to serve the development. This is to	Noted	None



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>ensure that development does not result in a detrimental impact on the environment and water infrastructure, including sewers and surface water and other flooding. This should also take account of climate change.</p> <p>It is recommended that developers undertake pre-planning engagement with Anglian Water at the earliest opportunity to assess infrastructure capacity, and any specific requirements that may be needed to deliver the proposed development, which may include sustainable points of connection (SPOC) to our water supply and wastewater networks to minimise impacts on existing communities and the environment. Developing <a href="https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/developing/">https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/developing/</a>. This is to ensure that connections or any upgrades to our network are addressed when planning applications are submitted to the local planning authority. It is imperative that there is sufficient capacity or the ability through a phased approach to support new development prior to the sites being occupied for use. This may need to be secured using appropriate planning conditions.</p> <p>The neighbourhood plan group may wish to include some wording to reflect the above or a suitable cross reference to the relevant Local Plan Policies.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>This is not considered necessary.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>
<b>Chapter 5 – Planning Strategy</b>				
L Holdaway	-	Whilst the development envelope may appear to be restrictive, a great deal of investment into infrastructure would be required to allow for multi house	Noted	None



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		developments in the village. Whilst CIL obligations were imposed on the two multi house developments on the former garage site and at Headleys Lane, they were not in any way high enough to cover drainage and water improvements that are a serious issue in the village.		
<b>Policy WHM 2 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites</b>				
Anonymous	-	There should be no exceptions to building outside the development area	Noted	None
R Collet-Fenson	-	Yes, but the impact on biodiversity must be of the utmost importance.	Noted	None
<b>Chapter 6 – Housing</b>				
K Mackender	-	Agree.	Noted	None
L Holdaway	-	Whilst there is an urgent need for affordable housing, we currently have empty affordable units in the village with seemingly little power for the council to force the RHP to get on with repairs to make them habitable.	Noted	None
H Gresty	-	To reiterate the need for any housing development to be in line with adequate local infrastructure - ie school places, public transport, health provision	Noted	None
F Mydatt	-	Only affordable housing should be built on Rural Exception sites. The village could not sustain large family/executive-style housing.	Noted	None
<b>Policy WHM 3 – Conserving and Enhancing Internationally Designated Sites</b>				
No comments received				
<b>Policy WHM 4 - Biodiversity Enhancements</b>				



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
	Anglian Water	<p>Anglian Water supports the policy of prioritising the delivery of biodiversity net gains within the neighbourhood planning area to support habitat recovery and enhancements within existing green and blue infrastructure.</p> <p>We would also support opportunities to maximise green infrastructure connectivity, including through opportunities to minimise surface water run-off from existing urban areas through the creation of rain gardens, for example.</p> <p>Anglian Water has made a corporate commitment to deliver a biodiversity net gain of 10% against the measured losses of habitats on all AW-owned land.</p> <p>As the neighbourhood plan progresses, there may also be benefit in referencing the emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Combined Authority (<a href="http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk">cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk</a>) as this will identify priority actions for nature and map specific areas for improving habitats for nature recovery.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Paragraph 7.9 will be amended to refer to future publication of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>Amend para 7.9 to refer to Local Nature Recovery Strategy preparation</p>
	Environment Agency	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)</p> <p>This Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of Biodiversity, with Section 7.6 demonstrating that The Environment Act 2021 requires development to deliver a minimum 10 per cent biodiversity net gain.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>



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		<p>Policy WHM 4 repeats the mandatory requirement for BNG and some methods of delivering BNG. We would encourage any development in close proximity to the riparian zone, to include a watercourse metric within their BNG calculations.</p> <p>Ouse Washes The plan has also identified the important of the Ouse Washes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the biodiversity it harbours.</p>	Noted	None
<b>Community Action 1 - Wildlife and Nature Conservation Group</b>				
No comments received				
<b>Policy WHM 5 - Locally Important Views</b>				
No comments received				
<b>Chapter 7 – Natural Environment</b>				
H Gresty	-	This is a priority	Noted	None
<b>Policy WHM 6 - Design Considerations</b>				
	Anglian Water	<p>Parking – see comments above on the need for permeable surfaces for areas of hard-standing such as parking. It is recommended this is included the design principles under section 8.5 and within Policy WHM6. There is guidance provided in the guidelines/ codes document e.g. SP04- car parking (page 42); EE 03- Flood Mitigation (pages 71, 74, 75). Please note the summary checklists do not currently refer to permeable</p>	The Plan can only be used for development that requires planning permission. In the case of driveways and hard-standings, where the surface to be covered is more than 5 square metres planning	None



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		surfacing – see further comment below under the checklists.	permission will be needed for laying traditional, impermeable driveways that do not provide for the water to run to a permeable area. As such, it is not necessary to address this matter in the policy as it already requires schemes to address surface water run-off.	
<b>Policy WHM 7 - Dark Skies</b>				
No comments received				
<b>Policy WHM 8 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage</b>				
	Anglian Water	<p>Surface Water Drainage</p> <p>Anglian Water is supportive of measures to address surface water run-off, including the preference for this to be managed using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and requiring permeable surfaces for new areas of hardstanding within developments to comply with the drainage hierarchy.</p> <p>We are aware that with more people opting for more paved and decked areas in their gardens we are seeing a loss of green areas, particularly in heavily populated</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>In most instances, decking and paving does not require</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>areas, but it can also cause problems in less populated areas too. This means rainwater has nowhere to go, increasing the amount of water travelling into the sewer which can then cause flooding. We, therefore, advocate the use of natural drainage and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to minimise surface water run-off from existing properties and new development as part of the solution to protect the sewer network. See separate comment under Policy WHM6.</p> <p>Such measures help to avoid surface water run-off from entering our foul drainage network, and connections to a surface water sewer should only be considered where all other options are demonstrated to be impracticable. Any requirements for a surface water connection to our surface water sewer network will require the developer to fund the cost of modelling and any upgrades required to accept the flows from the development.</p> <p>Anglian Water encourages the use of nature-based solutions for SuDS wherever possible, including retrofitting SuDS to existing urban areas to enhance amenity and biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan area and contribute to green and blue infrastructure.</p> <p>It has been the intention of Government to implement Schedule Three of The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to make SuDS mandatory in all new developments in England. However, we welcome the policy approach to ensure SuDS measures are incorporated within new developments, until such time these measures are in place.</p>	<p>planning consent, and the neighbourhood plan would not apply.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>



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	Environment Agency	<b>Flood Risk</b> We note section 8.7 addresses Flood Risk. We welcome the inclusion of this Neighbourhood Plan Policy WHM 8. We'd add that all new developments within Flood Zones 2 and 3 are required in the National Planning Policy Framework to be submitted with a Flood Risk Assessment.	Noted	None
<b>Policy WHM 9 – Sustainable Building Practices</b>				
H Gresty	-	Again a priority to be encouraged	Noted	None
	Anglian Water	Water efficiency Anglian Water has a statutory duty to supply water for domestic purposes only. This means we are legally obliged to supply water to all household properties as well as any domestic requirements (e.g., drinking water, hand-basins, toilets and showers) of non-household properties. In many cases, domestic demand will be the only requirement for non-household properties (e.g., schools, hospitals, offices, shops and hairdressers). Non-domestic demand refers to water use for industrial processes, (e.g., agri-food production or car washes), and there is no legal requirement for us to supply for this type of water usage where it might put at risk our ability to supply water for domestic purposes.	Noted	None
		Anglian Water's water resources management plan (WRMP) for 2025-2050 identifies key challenges of population growth, climate change, and the need to protect sensitive environments by reducing abstraction. Managing the demand for water is therefore an	Noted	None



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		important aspect of maintaining future supplies. See Water resources management plan ( <a href="http://anglianwater.co.uk">anglianwater.co.uk</a> )		
		To help protect the environment, the Environment Agency (EA) is reviewing abstraction licences and reducing the amount of water that businesses including Anglian Water can abstract from the environment. As a result, the gap between the demand for water and our supply (aka headroom) has shrunk.	Noted	None
		The current situation is reducing our ability to be flexible with new requests to supply non-domestic connections which were not planned for in the WRMP. However, where our supplies allow, we will endeavour to help businesses in whatever way we can to meet their needs and continue to serve the communities and economies they support.	Noted	None
		To respond to both this challenge, and a growing population, Anglian Water is building a new strategic pipeline to move water around our region. We have also developed plans to build two new reservoirs to increase water supply. These solutions will take time to deliver, and so it is more crucial than ever that all homes and businesses are water efficient, to reduce the overall demand for water, to meet government targets and to ensure there is enough water to go around.	Noted	None
		For water supply for non-household use*, Anglian Water now has a threshold of 20m <sup>3</sup> a day for consideration of whether meeting that commercial/ industrial request could jeopardise domestic supplies for households. This	Noted	None



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>is due to pressure on water supplies because of abstraction reduction, climate change and a fast-growing population. As a result, the gap between the demand for water and our supply (headroom) has shrunk. Prospective applicants are advised to contact Anglian Water at <a href="mailto:planningliaison@anglianwater.co.uk">planningliaison@anglianwater.co.uk</a> to avoid situations where water intensive demand projects progress to site acquisition, design or planning applications without establishing that a water supply and wastewater solution is feasible.</p> <p>(*Water supply for toilets and welfare facilities, as well as firefighting fall with the domestic definition.)</p> <p>As a region identified as seriously water stressed, we encourage measures to improve water efficiency in developments. This can be achieved by a fixtures and fittings approach, including through rainwater/ storm water, harvesting and reuse, and greywater recycling. Such measures to improve water efficiency standards and opportunities for water reuse and recycling also reduces the volume of wastewater needing to be treated at water recycling centres. This will help to reduce customer bills (including for other energy bills) as well as reduce carbon emissions in the supply and recycling of water.</p> <p>Given the proposed national focus on water efficiency, Anglian Water encourages local plans and neighbourhood plans to cover this issue through a policy-based approach. Anglian Water has produced a Water Efficiency Protocol with other partners (the</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>The policy will be amended to include references to seeking a maximum 110 litres of</p>	<p>None</p> <p>Amend Policy WHM9 to include support for measures that limit new housing to</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>Environment Agency, Natural England and Cambridge Water) on the imperative for development plan policies to achieve tighter water efficiency standards than the optional standard of 110 litres per person per day (l/p/d) for new homes.</p> <p>This position is reinforced by the direction taken by the Government Department DEFRA which supports the need to improve water efficiency Plan for Water: our integrated plan for delivering clean and plentiful water - GOV.UK (<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>) and the Government's Environment Improvement Plan which sets ten actions in the Roadmap to Water Efficiency in new developments, including consideration of a new standard for new homes in England of 100 litres per person per day where there is a clear local need, such as in areas of serious water stress. It has recently been announced by Government that a review of the Water Efficiency Standard(s) within the Building Regulations 2010 (Part G2 of the Approved Documents) will be consulted on in the next few months.</p> <p>It is appropriate that the neighbourhood plan include details in its policies to help shape the design of development in the area by promoting water efficiency. This should include positive features of water efficient fixtures and fittings, and through rainwater/storm water harvesting and reuse, and greywater recycling. In addition, if water efficiency measures are promoted, this will help reduce the amount of foul drainage from</p>	<p>water per person per day in new housing.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>The policy will be amended to include references to seeking a maximum 110 litres of water per person per day in new housing.</p>	<p>using 110 litres of water per person per day with encouragement for consumption to less than 110 litres.</p> <p>None</p> <p>As above</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>developments and lessen any pressure on water recycling centres.</p> <p>We would advocate the neighbourhood plan seeks a high standard of water efficiency for new developments for the reasons set out above and includes a target standard i.e. 100 litres per person per day under Policy WHM 9. If you wish to discuss this further or would like some assistance on the drafting of proposed wording, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p>	It is not considered that sufficient evidence is provided to support a target of 100 litres per day.	As above
	Environment Agency	<p><b>Water Resources</b></p> <p>Although the Neighbourhood Plan does not currently allocate sites for development, we recommend the Plan includes a Policy that captures the important emerging issue of Water Resources in the event of any in-fill development coming forward during the plan period, not yet allocated. The following text should assist you.</p> <p>Being in one of the driest areas of the country, our environment has come under significant pressure from potable water demand. New developments should make a significant contribution towards reducing water demand and mitigate against the risk of deterioration to our rivers, groundwater and habitats from groundwater abstraction. We recommend you check the capacity of available water supplies with the water company, in line with the emerging 2024 Water Resources Management Plan which is due to be published in 2023. The Local Planning Authorities Water Cycle Study and Local Plan may indicate constraints in water supply and provide recommendations for phasing of development to tie in with new alternative strategic supplies.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>The policy will be amended to include references to seeking a maximum 110 litres of water per person per day in new housing.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>Amend Policy WHM9 to include support for measures that limit new housing to using 110 litres of water per person per day</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>New development should as a minimum meet the highest levels of water efficiency standards, as per the policies in the adopted Local Plan. In most cases development will be expected to achieve 110 litres per person per day as set out in the Building Regulations &amp;c. (Amendment) Regulations 2015. However, a higher standard of water efficiency (e.g. 85 l/p/d) should be considered, looking at all options including rainwater harvesting and greywater systems. Using the water efficiency calculator in Part G of the Building Regulations enables you to calculate the devices and fittings required to ensure a home is built to the right specifications to meet the 110 l/p/d requirement. We recommend all new non-residential development of 1000sqm gross floor area or more should meet the BREEAM 'excellent' standards for water consumption. Developments that require their own abstraction where it will exceed 20 cubic metres per day from a surface water source (river, stream) or from underground strata (via borehole or well) will require an abstraction licence under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991. There is no guarantee that a licence will be granted as this is dependent on available water resources and existing protected rights. The relevant abstraction licencing strategy for your area provides information on water availability and licencing policy at Abstraction licensing strategies (CAMS process) - GOV.UK (<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>).</p>	Noted	None
<b>Policy WHM 10 – Renewable Energy</b>				
H Gresty	-	As no 15	Noted	None



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
D Land	-	Don't support green energy as is a waste of money and is increasing energy prices.	Noted	None
	East Cambridgeshire District Council	Just one policy is considered worthy of specific comment and consideration at this stage, namely WHM10.	Noted	None
		On the face of it, the policy is sensible and broadly fits the aspirations in national policy. However, the issue faced in Witcham is the fact that part of the parish includes nature conservation sites of international importance, and most, perhaps all, of the rest of the parish is within impact risk zones of such a designation. It may be necessary for that policy to reflect further on this point.	Noted	None
		Can I please draw your attention to the proposed policy CC5 in your neighbouring parish of Witchford, which is presently at examination stage: <a href="https://eastcambs.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-guidance/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-8">https://eastcambs.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-guidance/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-8</a>	Noted	None
		That policy was developed as the plan emerged and was particularly carefully worded (albeit still subject to examination at the time of writing), and subsequently raised no objection from Natural England.	Noted	None
		To illustrate further, it is extremely unlikely that there is any prospect of any wind based renewable energy schemes being approved in Witcham, because any such proposals would appear to have very little prospect of passing a Habitat Regulation Assessment (due to, in	The supporting paragraphs and policies will be amended to reflect the	Amend para 8.14 to include references to SSSI impact risk zones and issues with wind based



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		simple terms, collision risk between swans and the turbines). Whilst it is accepted that your policy makes it clear that there would have to be "no unacceptable impact" of renewable energy proposals, it might be the case that such wording is insufficient to overcome the strict tests in the habitats legislation. This is a matter that will be further explored in the EIA/HRA screening stage of your plan, which ECDC has agreed to prepare on your behalf.	presence of the impact zones	renewable energy schemes
<b>Community Action 2 - Rural Heat Network</b>				
Anonymous	-	It would be a waste of time, the spread and number of houses would make this impractical. It would be cheaper for everybody to fit individual heat pumps and solar panels.	Noted	None
F Mydatt	-	I have reservations in case it involves acres of solar panels which would be detrimental to the environment and the wildlife.	Noted	None
R Collet-Fenson	-	Yes, but only if biodiversity is regarded as of the utmost importance and protected.	Noted	None
D Land	-	Heat pumps are not the way forward. Don't want to be dependant on unreliable heating.	Noted	None
<b>Policy WHM 11 - Heritage Assets</b>				
No comments received				
<b>Policy WHM 12 - Buildings and Features of Local Heritage Significance</b>				
No comments received				
<b>Chapter 8 – Historic and Built Environment</b>				



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	Anglian Water	<p>Paras. 8.7 – 8.8 (page 25) - We note the reference to localised flooding being made in the neighbourhood plan. If relevant in terms of sewer flooding, further information on reducing the risk of such events can be found on our website:  <a href="https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/flooding-guidance/reduce-the-risk-of-flooding/">https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/flooding-guidance/reduce-the-risk-of-flooding/</a></p> <p>As part of our Get River Positive commitment, we have pledged to be as transparent as possible with the data we collect about our water recycling network and the improvements that we are making, especially around storm overflows. We have provided an online map that shows our latest investment schemes to improve the environment, including 2021 storm overflow data and the river network. Information can be found on our website:  <a href="https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/services/sewers-and-drains/storm-overflows/improving-rivers-and-coastlines">https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/services/sewers-and-drains/storm-overflows/improving-rivers-and-coastlines</a></p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>
<b>Policy WHM 13 – Infrastructure and Community Facilities</b>				
No comments received				
<b>Community Action 3 – Youth Club</b>				
E Dickinson	-	There is already an active and viable club in Mepal where most children attend school and have friends, so other than transport to Mepal, which surely could be overcome it doesn't seem necessary to have a separate club in Witcham	The Plan does not propose a separate Youth Club in Witcham	None



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H Gresty	-	No need for a club in addition to that in Mepal	The Plan does not propose a separate Youth Club in Witcham	None
<b>Community Action 4 – Neighbourhood Watch</b>				
No comments received				
<b>Community Action 5 - Greening Witcham</b>				
E Dickinson	-	This is a priority	Noted	None
H Gresty	-	A priority - but should be focused on native plants and providing year round benefits for wildlife and residents .	Noted	None
<b>Chapter 9 – Facilities and Services</b>				
Anonymous	-	The village hall is mentioned as a valued community asset but there is no action plan to support the continuation of this key village amenity. It is perhaps assumed that there is no need for an action plan, but as the village hall is volunteer led and the management committee are about to lose key members, and residents have been less willing to volunteer in recent years, the need to support the continuation of the village hall could perhaps be emphasised within this report.	This is a matter for the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee	None
<b>Policy WHM 14 – Public Rights of Way</b>				
D Land	-	Providing it is existing rights of way. I do not support the right to roam anywhere as Farmers have enough problems with ramblers everywhere on their private land.	The "right to roam" is not legal in England and Wales	None
<b>Community Action 6 – Cemetery Space</b>				



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No comments received				
<b>Community Action 7 – Improving Footpaths</b>				
Anonymous	-	I support the current action but believe it does not go far enough. In the residents' survey many residents expressed dissatisfaction with the state of the droves, footpaths and byways during the winter months and the removal of access to the dog-walking fields. The parish council should work with relevant stakeholders/lobby to improve the existing networks to address their inaccessibility not just lobby for new links.	<b>The Parish Council will seek to address this</b>	None
<b>Community Action 8 – Community Speedwatch</b>				
No comments received				
<b>Chapter 10 – Highways and Travel</b>				
Anonymous	-	Policy WHM 14 needs a comma so that "Where practicable development" becomes: "Where practicable, development".	Policy WHM 14 will be amended as suggested	Amend Policy WHM 14 to insert a comma after "where practicable"
E Dickinson	-	Witcham Toll junctions need to be addressed	Noted	None
H Gresty	-	The Witcham Toll junction needs to be improved as a priority- for cars, cyclists and pedestrians .	Noted	None
F Mydatt	-	Some serious speed reducing measures need to be implemented. The volume of traffic through the village has increased considerably, also the instances of speeding. The village is used as a rat run from A142 at Mepal to Witcham Toll - to avoid the hold-up at Sutton roundabout at rush hour times.	Noted	None



[illegible]



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		<p>permeable surfacing for parking and other hard standing areas – this should be listed under checklist 10. Water management and efficiencies should be covered under Checklists 1 and 8.</p> <p>This is also applicable to Appendix 2 of the main neighbourhood plan document which replicates the checklist.</p>	Noted	None
<b>Other comments on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan</b>				
K Mackender	-	I think it is a good overall plan and makes sure Witcham retains its character and improves it.	Noted	None
Anonymous	-	It is well thought out and professionally presented	Noted	None
Anonymous	-	I would like to express my thanks to the Neighbourhood Plan working group for the time spent compiling this report.	Noted	None
L Holdaway	-	Thank you to all of the volunteers for their time and effort in putting this together.	Noted	None
E Dickinson	-	Maximise focus on sustainability and environmental issues	Noted	None
	Anglian Water	<p>Thank you for consulting Anglian Water on the draft Witcham neighbourhood plan. Anglian Water is the statutory water and sewerage undertaker within the designated area.</p> <p><b><u>Preamble</u></b>  Anglian Water is identified as a consultation body under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and we support neighbourhood plans and their role in delivering environmental and social prosperity in the region.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>



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		Overall, Anglian Water is the water supply and water recycling provider for over 6 million customers. Our operational area spans between the Humber and Thames estuaries and includes around a fifth of the English coastline. The region is the driest in the UK and the lowest lying, with a quarter of our area below sea level. This makes it particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change including heightened risks of both drought and flooding, including inundation by the sea. Additionally, parts of the area have the highest rate of housing growth in England.	Noted	None
		Anglian Water has amended its Articles of Association to legally enshrine public interest within the constitutional make up of our business – this is our pledge to deliver wider benefits to society, beyond the provision of clean, fresh drinking water and effective treatment of used water. Our Purpose is to bring environmental and social prosperity to the region we serve through our commitment to Love Every Drop.	Noted	None
		Anglian Water wants to proactively engage with the neighbourhood plan process to ensure the plan delivers benefits for residents and visitors to the area, and in doing so protect the environment and water resources. Anglian Water has produced a specific guidance note on the preparation of NPs found using this link under our Strategic Growth and Infrastructure webpage - <a href="http://StrategicGrowthandInfrastructure(anglianwater.co.uk)"><u>Strategic Growth and Infrastructure (anglianwater.co.uk)</u></a> The guidance also has sign posting/	Noted	None



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		links to obtaining information on relevant assets and infrastructure in map form, where relevant.		
		Anglian Water is committed to ensuring that development in our region continues to thrive while protecting our assets, existing customers and the environment. We want to ensure that growth aligns with environmental responsibilities and infrastructure capacity.	Noted	None
		Anglian Water delivers new water supply and sewerage services across our region to support sustainable growth for housing and economic development in the fastest growing region of England.	Noted	None
		There are areas in our region where our water and wastewater networks are at capacity. To remedy this Anglian Water will deliver over £5bn in new infrastructure between 2025-2030 including initiating development of two new strategic reservoirs, upgrading treatment facilities, extending our strategic water supply pipeline by nearly 700km, and numerous nature-based solutions such as wetlands and sustainable urban drainage schemes.	Noted	None
		The infrastructure we deliver is primarily funded in two ways, including: 1) Developers pay infrastructure charges to connect to, and where necessary provide additional capacity for our water supply and sewerage networks, which are governed by Ofwat's charging rules; and	Noted	None



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>2) Water and sewerage charges agreed by Ofwat every five years, paid by our customers to fund our investment programme on past and future infrastructure to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address a rapidly growing population;</li> <li>• Ensure we are resilient to impacts of climate change;</li> <li>• Enhance our environment to reach the environmental destination agreed with customers and regulators; and</li> <li>• Secure future water supplies.</li> </ul> <p>Anglian Water's plans are reviewed every five years and include business plans for our investments through the Water Resources Management Plans (WRMP) <a href="#">Water resources management plan</a> and Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMP) <a href="#">Drainage and wastewater management plan</a> and a Long Term Delivery Strategy (LTDS) <a href="#">Our strategies and plans</a>. These provide a 25-year long term view to 2050, which also corresponds with the Government's net zero commitment.</p> <p><b><u>Detailed response on the draft neighbourhood plan</u></b>  The comments set out below are made, ensuring the making of the plan contributes to sustainable development and has regard to assets owned and managed by Anglian Water. Overall, we are supportive of the policy ambitions within the neighbourhood plan, subject to the proposed amendments.</p>	Noted	None



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		We hope that these comments are helpful and wish the neighbourhood plan group every success in taking the plan forward to the next stage. If you have any questions about this response or wish to discuss anything I have raised, please do not hesitate to get in touch.	Noted	None
	Coveney Parish Council	<p>As a neighbouring parish, we recognise the importance of collaborative development planning to ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of our villages. Across the region, local councils are working together to balance the need for housing with the preservation of rural character and community identity. We believe that by fostering a cooperative approach, we can develop strategies that support both current and future residents while maintaining the unique qualities of our villages. We are likely to start work on our own Neighbourhood Plan later this year, and are keen that the two plans provide mutual and complementary benefits to our parishes.</p> <p>With this in mind we are writing to express our concerns regarding the limitations on housing growth outlined in the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan (2024-2036). While we appreciate the Plan's commitment to preserving Witcham's rural character and protecting the environment, we believe that the restrictive approach to housing development presents several key challenges that merit further discussion and consideration to mitigate risks of negative impacts on neighbouring communities.</p> <p>1. <b>Limited Housing Supply</b> The proposed policy restricts development to small infill plots within the</p>	<p>Like Witcham, Coveney is not identified as a location for housing growth in the adopted Local Plan.</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>Development Envelope, with limited housing allocations beyond this. This could lead to a shortfall in available homes, making it difficult for young families and first-time buyers to find affordable housing within the village.</p> <p>2. <b>Rising House Prices and Affordability Issues</b> With limited housing stock and no planned expansion, the demand for homes is likely to outstrip supply. This could result in increased house prices, further reducing affordability for local residents who wish to stay in the village or move back after studying or working elsewhere.</p> <p>3. <b>Potential for Future Planning Conflicts</b> Strict housing restrictions may lead to conflicts between local landowners, developers, and the planning authorities. If demand for housing increases, pressure may build for unplanned developments in both Witcham and neighbouring parishes, potentially leading to contentious applications and appeals.</p>	<p>This is in-line with the adopted Local Plan. Witcham has very few services and facilities and identifying additional allocations would not necessarily provide affordable housing to meet local needs.</p> <p>Policy WHM 2 makes provision for affordable housing developments on "exception" sites to meet identified local needs. Such sites are not allocated in local or neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>The Local Plan currently sets a strong framework for the consideration of housing proposals in Policy GROWTH 2. It is clear that development outside Development Envelopes will be strictly controlled and speculative</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>4. <b>Impact on Neighbouring Villages</b> The restrictive housing policies in Witcham could shift housing demand to nearby villages (including Wardy Hill and Coveney), placing additional pressure on their infrastructure, services, and housing markets. This could lead to unintended consequences, such as increased traffic congestion, overstretched local schools, and rising house prices in surrounding communities. A more balanced approach in Witcham could help distribute growth more evenly across the region and prevent excessive strain on neighbouring areas.</p> <p>We would like to make the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider allowing small-scale, well-designed developments beyond the Development Envelope to accommodate future housing needs while maintaining the village's character.</li> <li>Introduce a more flexible approach to rural exception sites to encourage the development of affordable housing.</li> </ul>	<p>development proposals for housing outside the envelope would be contrary to that policy.</p> <p>The policies for housing in the Neighbourhood Plan reflect those in the Local Plan and are the same that apply to Coveney and it is unclear how the Neighbourhood Plan could lead to the suggested "unintended consequences".</p> <p>The Parish Council does not consider this is necessary and does not consider there is sufficient infrastructure capacity</p> <p>Policy WHM 2 is considered sufficient and is in accordance with local and national policy.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of housing demand at regular intervals to ensure that the Plan remains responsive to changing needs.</li> <li>Assess the regional impact of limited housing growth in Witcham on neighbouring villages and collaborate with local councils to develop a coordinated housing strategy.</li> </ul> <p>We urge you to take these concerns into account to ensure a balanced and sustainable approach to housing growth in Witcham.</p> <p>We would be very happy to meet with you to discuss further how we can work together for the mutual benefit of our parishes.</p>	<p>The Parish Council will consider whether the Plan needs to be reviewed at future dates as national and local planning policies change.</p> <p>Such a strategy for the distribution of housing growth is a function of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>
	Littleport and Downham IDB	<p>Whilst the main part of the village is outside of the Littleport and Downham Internal Drainage District, part of the parish is within it.</p> <p>The majority of the village being on the higher ground drains into the Mepal Catchwater Drain, which discharges via gravity into the Hundred Foot River. This</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>watercourse has no capacity to accept additional flows. It is vital that any new developments have suitable sustainable drainage systems that are well managed and do not shed water onto neighbouring properties. This is the same for part of the parish within the Board's District that drains to our Oxloade Pumping Station.</p> <p>In relation to future development, the Local Planning Authority ought to secure funding from developers towards future capital investment in our water management infrastructure.</p>	East Cambridgeshire DC has implemented the Community Infrastructure Levy that enable such an approach	None
	Historic England	<p>Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Draft of your Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>We welcome the production of the neighbourhood plan, but do not consider it necessary for Historic England to be involved in the detailed development of your strategy at this time. We refer you to our advice on successfully incorporating historic environment considerations into your neighbourhood plan, which can be found here: <a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/">https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/</a>.</p> <p>For any specific advice regarding the historic environment and how to integrate it into your neighbourhood plan, we recommend that you consult your local planning authority conservation officer, and if</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>appropriate the Historic Environment Record at Cambridgeshire County Council.</p> <p>Please note that the National Planning Policy Framework was updated on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024, with some modifications to both wording and paragraph numbers in the historic environment section, which may require updating in your plan.</p> <p>To avoid any doubt, this letter does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on or, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise as a result of the proposed plan, where we consider these would have an adverse effect on the historic environment.</p>	<p>Noted. The Plan will be updated to take account of such changes.</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>Update references to the NPPF where necessary</p> <p>None</p>
	Environment Agency	<p>Thank you for consulting us on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan for the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Background We have had to prioritise our limited resources and must focus on influencing plans where the environmental risks and opportunities are highest.</p> <p>For the purposes of neighbourhood planning, we have assessed those authorities who have "up to date" local plans (plans adopted within the previous 5 years) as being of lower risk, and those authorities who have older plans (adopted more than 5 years ago) as being at greater risk. We aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment, and with consideration</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>to the key environmental constraints within our remit, we have then tailored our approach to reviewing each neighbourhood plan accordingly.</p> <p>We note the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan was recently amended in 2023, however, we have identified important environmental constraints, within our matrix for currently screening neighbourhood plans, that affect this Neighbourhood Plan Area. We are, therefore, providing you with the following advice which identifies opportunities for you to strengthen the Plan and enhance the scope of environmental Objectives considered.</p> <p>We encourage you to seek ways in which your neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment. For your information, together with Natural England, Historic England and Forestry Commission, we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: How to consider the environment in Neighbourhood plans - Locality Neighbourhood Planning</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>The Parish Council considers that the Plan has been prepared in a manner that is positive for the environment.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>
	Avison Young on behalf of National Gas	<p>National Gas Transmission has appointed Avison Young to review and respond to Neighbourhood Plan consultations on its behalf. We are instructed by our client to submit the following representation with regard to the current consultation on the above document.</p> <p><b>About National Gas Transmission</b></p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>







Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
	National Highways	<p>Thank you for consulting National Highways on the abovementioned Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>National Highways is a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN).</p> <p>It has been noted that once adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Where relevant, National Highways will be a statutory consultee on future planning applications within the area and will assess the impact on the SRN of a planning application accordingly.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above comments, we have reviewed the document and note that the details set out within the document are unlikely to have an severe impact on the operation of the trunk road and we offer <b>No Comment</b>.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>
	Natural England	<p>Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.</p> <p><b>Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan.</b></p> <p>However, we refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and to the following information.</p> <p>Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Further information on protected species and development is included in Natural England's Standing Advice on protected species . Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission standing advice.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is necessary.</p> <p>Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If an Strategic Environmental Assessment is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.</p>	Noted	None
	Sport England	<p>Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>Government planning policy, within the <b>National Planning Policy Framework</b> (NPPF), identifies how the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Encouraging communities to become more physically active through walking, cycling, informal recreation and formal sport plays an important part in this process. Providing enough sports facilities of the right quality and type in the right places is vital to achieving this aim. This means that positive planning for sport, protection from the unnecessary loss of sports facilities, along with an integrated approach to providing</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>new housing and employment land with community facilities is important.</p> <p>Therefore, it is essential that the neighbourhood plan reflects and complies with national planning policy for sport as set out in the NPPF with particular reference to Pars 103 and 104. It is also important to be aware of Sport England's statutory consultee role in <b>protecting playing fields</b> and the presumption against the loss of playing field land. Sport England's playing fields policy is set out in our Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document.</p> <p><a href="https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#playing_fields_policy">https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#playing_fields_policy</a></p> <p>Sport England provides guidance on <b>developing planning policy</b> for sport and further information can be found via the link below. Vital to the development and implementation of planning policy is the evidence base on which it is founded.</p> <p><a href="https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#planning_applications">https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#planning_applications</a></p> <p>Sport England works with local authorities to ensure their Local Plan is underpinned by robust and up to date evidence. In line with Par 104 of the NPPF, this takes the form of <b>assessments of need and strategies for indoor and outdoor sports facilities</b>. A neighbourhood planning body should look to see if the relevant local authority has prepared a playing pitch strategy or other</p>	<p>Noted. The adopted Local Plan contains a policy to protect playing fields</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. The District Council has a Playing Pitch Strategy.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>indoor/outdoor sports facility strategy. If it has then this could provide useful evidence for the neighbourhood plan and save the neighbourhood planning body time and resources gathering their own evidence. It is important that a neighbourhood plan reflects the recommendations and actions set out in any such strategies, including those which may specifically relate to the neighbourhood area, and that any local investment opportunities, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy, are utilised to support their delivery.</p> <p>Where such evidence does not already exist then relevant planning policies in a neighbourhood plan should be based on a proportionate assessment of the need for sporting provision in its area. Developed in consultation with the local sporting and wider community any assessment should be used to provide key recommendations and deliverable actions. These should set out what provision is required to ensure the current and future needs of the community for sport can be met and, in turn, be able to support the development and implementation of planning policies. Sport England's guidance on assessing needs may help with such work.</p> <p><a href="http://www.sportengland.org/planningtoolsandguidance">http://www.sportengland.org/planningtoolsandguidance</a></p> <p>If <b>new or improved sports facilities</b> are proposed Sport England recommend you ensure they are fit for purpose and designed in accordance with our design guidance notes.</p> <p><a href="http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/">http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/</a></p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		Any <b>new housing</b> developments will generate additional demand for sport. If existing sports facilities do not have the capacity to absorb the additional demand, then planning policies should look to ensure that new sports facilities, or improvements to existing sports facilities, are secured and delivered. Proposed actions to meet the demand should accord with any approved local plan or neighbourhood plan policy for social infrastructure, along with priorities resulting from any assessment of need, or set out in any playing pitch or other indoor and/or outdoor sports facility strategy that the local authority has in place.	Noted	None
		In line with the Government's NPPF (including Section 8) and its Planning Practice Guidance (Health and wellbeing section), links below, consideration should also be given to how <b>any new development</b> , especially for new housing, will provide opportunities for people to lead healthy lifestyles and create healthy communities. Sport England's Active Design guidance can be used to help with this when developing planning policies and developing or assessing individual proposals.	Noted	None
		Active Design, which includes a model planning policy, provides ten principles to help ensure the design and layout of development encourages and promotes participation in sport and physical activity. The guidance, and its accompanying checklist, could also be used at the evidence gathering stage of developing a neighbourhood plan to help undertake an assessment of how the design and layout of the area currently enables	Noted	None



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>people to lead active lifestyles and what could be improved.</p> <p>NPPF Section 8: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/8-promoting-healthy-communities">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/8-promoting-healthy-communities</a></p> <p>PPG Health and wellbeing section: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing</a></p> <p>Sport England's Active Design Guidance: <a href="https://www.sportengland.org/activedesign">https://www.sportengland.org/activedesign</a></p> <p><i>(Please note: this response relates to Sport England's planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any grant application/award that may relate to the site.)</i></p> <p>If you need any further advice, please do not hesitate to contact Sport England using the contact details below.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>
	East Cambridgeshire District Council	<p>Thank you for consulting the district council on your emerging parish based neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>The district council presently has very limited planning policy capacity, therefore our response is unfortunately limited to key points only.</p> <p>I have undertaken a high-level review of the Plan, and make the following observations for you to consider:</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p>	Noted	None



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>The Plan is well presented, with clear differentiation between policy and supporting text, as well as some useful and clear maps and photographs. Nevertheless, as the Plan progresses to a Reg 16 consultation stage, with consultation to be undertaken by the district council, we are legally obliged to follow the Accessibility Regulations for any documents we publish on our website. If unfamiliar, please see this page:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps</a></p> <p>Accordingly, can you please make sure the final documents you submit at the submission stage meet, as best as is reasonably possible, the accessibility regulations. This includes supporting documentation and not just the Plan itself. We may not be able to validate your submitted documents if the requirements are not met.</p> <p>Finally, one or two diagrams (such as fig3) are a little small to read easily, so might need improvement for clarity. Please check throughout.</p> <p><b>National Policy</b>  During the consultation stage, Government has updated its national policy. Please ensure that you review such updated policy, and adjust your plan and references to national policy accordingly. This is unlikely to lead to material changes.</p> <p><b>Fit with strategic policy (Local Plan)</b></p>	<p>The submitted Plan will seek to meet the accessibility guidelines</p> <p>As above</p> <p>The quality of the diagrams will be reviewed</p> <p>The Plan will be amended to update NPPF references</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>Review accessibility of Plan and supporting documents in accordance with Government guidelines</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Review quality and legibility of diagrams</p> <p>Update references to the NPPF resulting from December 2024 publication</p> <p>Noted</p>



Respondent	Organisation	Comment	Parish Council response	Changes to Plan
		<p>Overall, there appears no conflict between your emerging plan and the policies of the Local Plan or the broad intention of what the Local Plan is seeking to achieve. We therefore have no objection to the broad thrust of policies proposed, and all seem reasonable to include within a neighbourhood plan.</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b> Overall, the plan is welcomed and appears will require very little change prior to it being ready for submission.</p> <p>On the matter of EIA/HRA screening, I will be in touch on that matter separately, though unfortunately progress has been slower than I would have liked due to the severe staffing capacity we presently have in the council's planning service.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>



## Appendix 7 - Schedule of Post Pre-Submission Consultation Modifications

The table below sets out the changes made to the Neighbourhood Plan following the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation and the reasons for the modifications. Changes subsequent to the deletion of paragraphs or policies are not identified in this schedule.

Deletions are struck through eg ~~deletion~~ Additions are underlined eg addition

Page	Para/policy	Modification	Reason
Cover		<p>Amend as follows:</p> <p>Witcham Neighbourhood Plan 2024 - 2036  <del>Pre-Submission</del> Draft Plan</p> <p>Witcham Parish Council  <del>December 2024</del> <u>May 2025</u></p>	To bring the Plan up-to-date
2	Points 1 - 5	<p>Amend as follows:</p> <p>1 "Pre-submission" consultation on the Draft Plan by Parish Council  <del>This is the stage we've now reached. The plan has to be</del> <u>was carried out between December 2024 and February 2025. The Plan was</u> widely consulted on <del>for a minimum of six weeks in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations,</del> allowing residents, businesses, landowners and a range of government bodies and service providers <u>the opportunity</u> to comment on the Draft Plan.</p> <p>2 Submission of Draft Plan to the District Council  All comments received at the "pre-submission" consultation <del>will be</del> <u>were</u> considered and reviewed, and any necessary amendments to the Plan <del>will be</del> made. The Plan, together with supporting documents, <del>will then be</del> <u>was then</u> submitted to the District Council.</p> <p>3 "Submission" consultation on the Draft Plan by the District Council  <del>This is the stage we've now reached. The District Council will consult</del> <u>is now consulting</u> on the submitted Plan for a minimum of six weeks. It provides a further opportunity to comment.</p> <p>4 Independent examination of Draft Plan</p>	To bring the Plan up-to-date



Page	Para/policy	Modification	Reason
		<p>Typically taking around two months to complete, depending upon the availability of the Examiner.</p> <p>5 Parish Referendum The Neighbourhood Plan Examiner will decide whether the Plan, including any necessary amendments, can go forward to a Parish Referendum. All those living in the Parish entitled to vote at elections will be able to vote on whether the Plan should be used by the District Council when making decisions on planning applications.</p> <p>6 Adoption by the District Council If the Parish Referendum returns a "yes" vote, the Plan will be "made" (adopted) by the District Council</p>	
5		<p>Contents page Amend page numbers and other content as a consequence to other changes in the Plan</p>	To bring the Plan up-to-date
5	1.7	<p>Amend as follows:</p> <p>This is the "<del>Pre</del>-Submission" draft Neighbourhood Plan and provides <del>the first</del> <u>a further</u> opportunity to comment on the <del>complete</del> Plan. The Plan covers the period 2024 to 2036 and focuses on six distinct themes, namely:</p>	To bring the Plan up-to-date
5	1.8	Amend flow chart as follows:	To bring the Plan up-to-date



Page	Para/policy	Modification	Reason
		<pre> graph LR     A[Current Pre-Submission Consultation] --&gt; B[Comments Review and Plan Amendments]     B --&gt; C[Submission to East Cambridgeshire District Council]     C --&gt; D[Further Current consultation by East Cambridgeshire District Council]     D --&gt; E[Independent Examination]     E --&gt; F[Parish Referendum]     F --&gt; G[East Cambridgeshire District Council adopt Plan]           </pre>	
10	3.2	<p>Amend first sentence as follows:</p> <p>In December <del>2023</del> <u>2024</u> the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p>	To bring the Plan up-to-date
10	3.3	<p>Amend as follows:</p> <p>For communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans the NPPF <u>acknowledges that neighbourhood plans can “shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development” but that they “should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.”</u> <del>requires that communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans should:</del></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>• Develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development; and</del></li> <li><del>• Plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.</del></li> </ul>	To bring the Plan up-to-date
10	3.4	<p>Delete paragraph as new NPPF was published in December 2024 and update subsequent paragraph numbers</p> <p><del>In July 2024 the government published a revised NPPF for consultation. At the time of publishing this draft Plan the final NPPF had yet to be published. References to the NPPF will be updated, as appropriate, should the final new NPPF be published before the Plan is completed.</del></p>	To bring the Plan up-to-date



Page	Para/policy	Modification	Reason
10	3.7	Amend as follows In October 2024 the District Council took the decision to prepare a new Local Plan for the district. The published "Local Development Scheme" (October 2024) <del>states</del> <u>stated</u> that the initial consultation on the options for the Local Plan <del>will</del> <u>would</u> be carried out by the District Council in the period June to September 2025, <del>at a point when the Neighbourhood Plan is expected to be at an advanced stage.</del> <u>However, In February 2025 the District Council voted to rescind its original decision to prepare a Local Plan in the light of Government proposals for local government reorganisation.</u>	To bring the Plan up-to-date
14	6.5	Amend second sentence as follows:  Paragraph <del>67</del> <u>69</u> of the NPPF states that strategic policies in local plans should set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflect the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development in the district.	To bring the Plan up-to-date
17	7.7	Amend fourth sentence as follows:  Whilst the thrust of the NPPF is that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development, at paragraph <del>188</del> <u>195</u> it clarifies that such a presumption does not apply to internationally protected sites (referred to as a 'habitats site'): "The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site."	To bring the Plan up-to-date
18	7.9	Amend as follows:  The minimum requirements for biodiversity net gain required by the Environment Act are outside planning policy requirements. In addition to national legislation, within the neighbourhood area, residents and developers are encouraged to deliver a measurable net gain in biodiversity as part of planning proposals. Cambridgeshire County Council has produced a Biodiversity Checklist and Biodiversity Guidance Notes which provides more information on habitats for developers and <u>in addition, are in the process of preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy at the time of preparing</u>	In response to comments



Page	Para/policy	Modification	Reason
		<u>this Plan. When complete, it will set priorities for nature recovery in the county and be a vital element of delivering biodiversity net gain. At a more local level, the District Council's "Natural Environment" Supplementary Planning Document provides a framework for the consideration of proposals. Given that the Supplementary Planning Document has gone through a consultation process ahead of it being adopted, Policy WHM 4 is included in the Plan to ensure it is given greater weight when determining planning applications. It has been carefully designed to complement national legislation. It also applies to householder proposals and to proposals which create new or enhanced access points.</u>	
25	8.6	Amend first sentence as follows:  Paragraph <del>186 (c)</del> <u>198 (c)</u> of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should "limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation".	To bring the Plan up-to-date
27	WHM 9	Amend as follows:  Unless it can be adequately demonstrated to be impracticable, development proposals should incorporate best practice in energy conservation and are designed for the maximum achievable energy efficiency. Such measures should be incorporated so that they are integral to the building design and its curtilage and minimise any impacts on the building or its surroundings.  As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate how they: a. maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings with consideration of methods of preventing overheating; b. incorporate best practice in energy conservation and are designed for the maximum achievable energy efficiency; c. avoid fossil fuel-based heating systems; d. incorporate current sustainable design and construction measures and renewable energy measures, such as, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar panels, thermal and pV systems; and	In response to comments



Page	Para/policy	Modification	Reason
		<p>e. make provision for grey water/rainwater, and/or surface water harvesting and recycling and/or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).</p> <p><u>Water consumption in residential developments will be limited to 110 litres per person per day, (including external water use) using efficient water fittings and appropriate technology such as smart meters, (in line with the government's intention set out in the Plan for Water published in 2023). Proposals that can achieve higher water efficiency (for example 100 litres per person per day) will be encouraged and supported.</u></p>	
27	8.14	<p>Amend as follows:</p> <p>In Autumn 2019, East Cambridgeshire District Council declared a climate emergency. In doing so, they agreed to explore a wide range of actions to improve their local environment and help mitigate climate change, but without careful consideration, renewable energy developments can have adverse impacts on the natural and built environment, as well as residential amenity. A balanced approach will therefore be needed when considering proposals for renewable energy in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. <u>Proposals for wind turbines are unlikely to be supported given the presence of the Ouse Washes SSSI and the need to protect the functional habitats of geese and swans in the associated impact zone which covers the majority of the Parish.</u></p>	In response to comments
35	10.7	<p>Amend as follows:</p> <p>Public rights of way provide opportunities for recreational walking, horse riding and cycling. <del>Where feasible, improvements to the quality and extent of the public rights of way network will be supported where provided as part of development proposals.</del> <u>However, public rights of way in the north of the Parish are either in or in close proximity to the Ouse Washes Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area and Ramsar. Increased use of these paths as a result of additional residential development could have a detrimental impact on these habitats. To mitigate this potential impact and, where feasible, improvements to the quality and extent of the public rights of way network in the immediate vicinity of the built-up area of the village that are provided as a result of residential development proposals will be encouraged.</u></p>	



Page	Para/policy	Modification	Reason
35	WHM 14	Amend by inserting comma in second sentence as follows:  Measures to improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way <del>(as illustrated on the Policies Map)</del> in the immediate vicinity of the built-up area of the village will be supported where their value as biodiversity corridors is safeguarded and any public right of way extension is fit for purpose. Where practicable, development proposals should incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity within the improved or extended public right of way.	In response to comments and to address potential impacts on internationally significant sites.
36	Policies Map	Delete Public Rights of Way from map	In response to comments and to address potential impacts on internationally significant sites.
37	Village Centre Inset Map	Delete Public Rights of Way from map	In response to comments and to address potential impacts on internationally significant sites.