



WEST ROW

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2025-2041



**Pre-Submission
Draft Plan**

March 2025

West Row Parish Council

Neighbourhood planning in a nutshell

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

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

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

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

- 1 “Pre-submission” consultation on draft Plan by Parish Council**
This is the stage we’ve now reached. The plan has to be widely consulted on for a minimum of six weeks allowing residents, businesses, landowners and a range of government bodies and service providers to comment on the Draft Plan.
- 2 Submission of draft Plan to West Suffolk Council**
All comments received at the “pre-submission” consultation will be considered and reviewed and any necessary amendments to the Plan will be made. The Plan, together with supporting documents will then be submitted to West Suffolk Council
- 3 “Submission” consultation on draft Plan by West Suffolk Council**
A further period of public consultation lasting a minimum of six weeks.
- 4 Independent examination of draft Plan**
Typically taking around two months to complete, depending upon the availability of the Examiner.
- 5 Parish Referendum**
Run in the same way as a local election and organised by West Suffolk Council
- 6 Adoption by West Suffolk Council**
Subject to the outcome of the Referendum and taking place as soon as possible afterwards.

Stages 3 to 6 are likely to take around 6 to 9 months to complete.

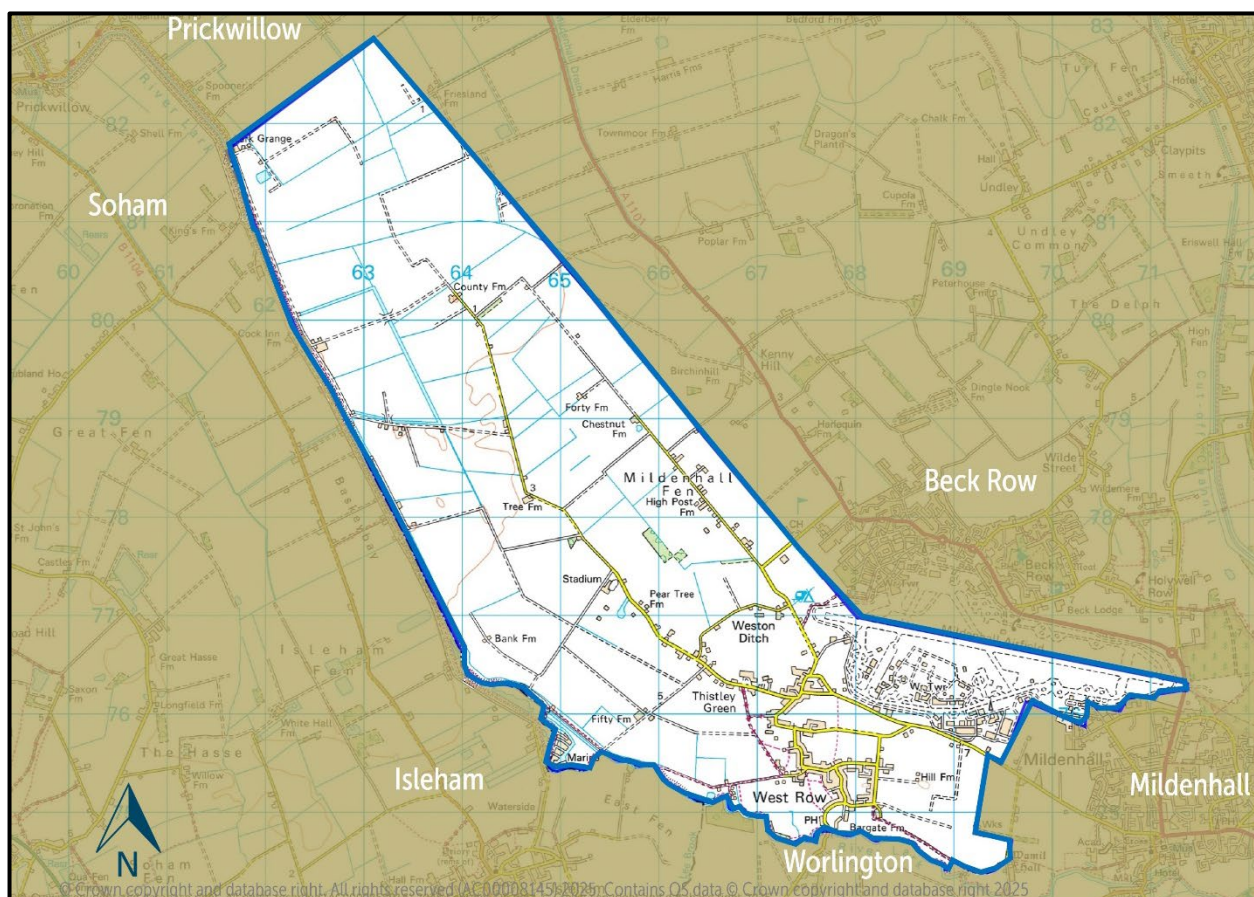
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced rights and powers to allow local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. In very simple terms, a neighbourhood plan is:
- A document that sets out planning policies for the neighbourhood area – planning policies are used to decide whether to approve planning applications.
 - Written by the local community, the people who know and love the area, rather than the Local Planning Authority.
 - A powerful tool to ensure the community gets the right types of development, in the right place, something that can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood.
- 1.2 A Neighbourhood Plan is therefore a community-led planning framework for guiding future development, regeneration and conservation of a designated area, in this case West Row Parish. It relates to matters that would require planning permission and applies for the period to 2041, to coincide with the end date of the West Suffolk Local Plan, which is at an advanced stage of preparation. This is the first draft of the Plan which will, when complete, be used by West Suffolk Council and Government Planning Inspectors to inform planning application decisions.
- 1.3 In 2021 the Parish Council decided to prepare a neighbourhood plan and applied to West Suffolk Council to designate the whole Parish as the Neighbourhood Area. The Area was designated in May 2021 and is illustrated on Map 1. The Plan covers the period to 2041.



Map 1 – Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan will, when complete, form part of the statutory “development plan” for West Suffolk, meaning that its planning policies and content will be taken into account when decisions on planning applications are made.
- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan Regulations require a neighbourhood plan to:
- be appropriate, having regard to National Planning Policy;
 - contribute to achieving sustainable development;

- be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; and
- be compatible with EU obligations and Human Rights requirements.

How the Plan has been prepared

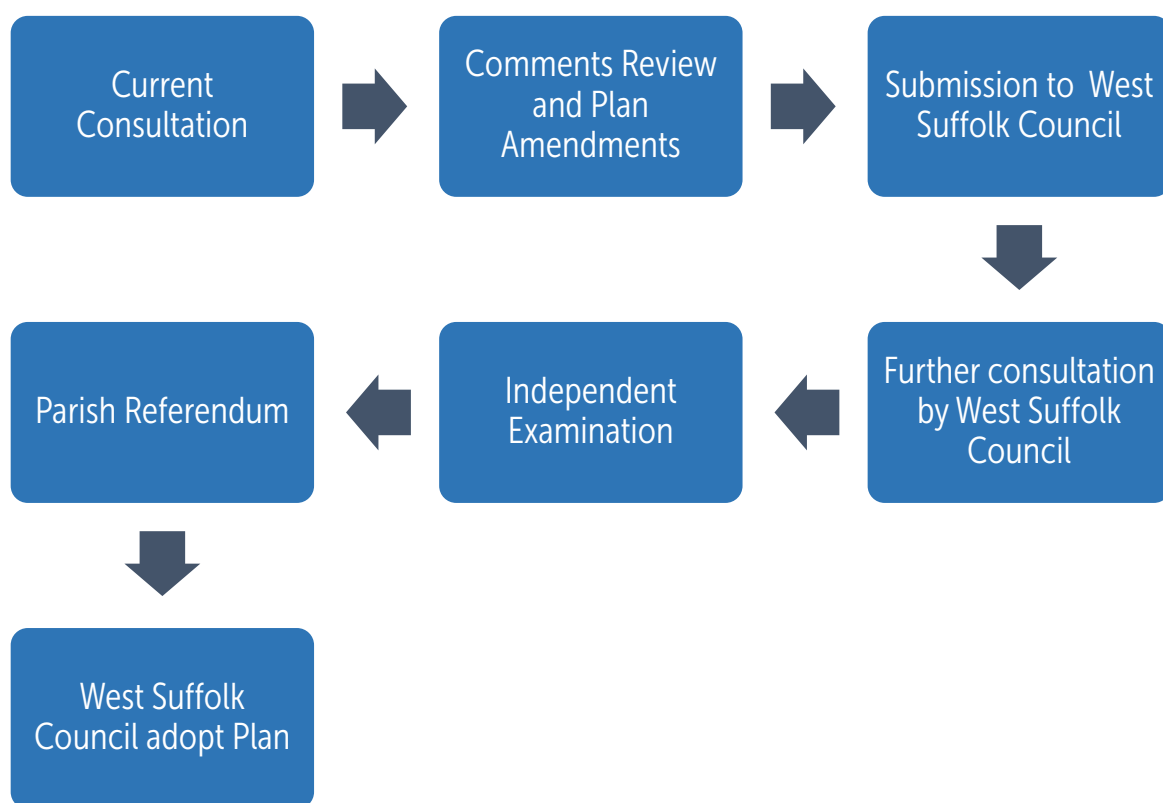
- 1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government's Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and, in particular, has involved local community engagement and the preparation of specialist reports to inform the content of the Plan which are referred to in the body of the Plan and are also available to view on the Parish Council website.

Evidence to support the Plan

- 1.7 At end of 2022, early in the process of preparing the Plan, a household survey was carried out. A total of 125 responses were received and the results are available to view on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council website and referred to, as appropriate, throughout the Plan.

Plan preparation stages

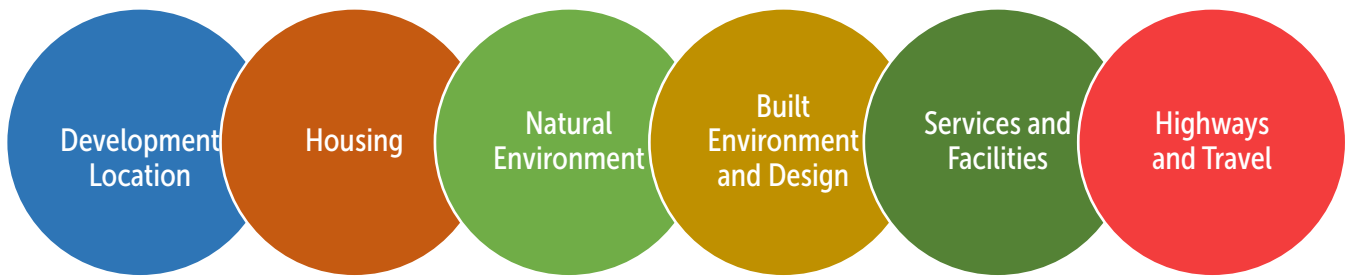
- 1.8 This is the "Pre-Submission" draft Neighbourhood Plan and provides the first opportunity to comment on the complete draft Neighbourhood Plan. Once the consultation is complete, the Plan will pass through the remaining stages, as illustrated on the diagram below:



- 1.9 Following the completion of the current consultation, the comments received will be reviewed and any necessary amendments will be made to the draft Plan before the Parish Council agrees to submit it to West Suffolk Council to complete its journey to a Parish Referendum and ultimate adoption by them.

Plan Themes

1.10 The Plan covers six main topic areas:



- 1.11 These topic areas form the basis for the content of the Plan and the distinct chapters. Each chapter contains a reminder of the relevant objectives, links to the relevant planning policy context and a summary of the relevant evidence collected during the preparation of the Plan, culminating in planning policies and, where appropriate, community aspirations. Community aspirations are identified distinct from the planning policies and address matters raised by residents in the household survey. They are not used when determining planning applications but help to provide a focus for future improvements in the Parish.
- 1.12 The planning policies, which are distinctly identified in coloured boxes with a prefix of WRNP, will supplement, rather than repeat, the planning policies of the West Suffolk Local Plan that were in place when preparing the Plan.



2. About West Row

- 2.1 The history of West Row can be traced back to the Bronze age, and maybe further. West Row is believed to have been an important Bronze Age site over 3500 years ago. Then, early farmers occupied timber houses during the summer months (possibly migrating south during the winter) and may have made ritual offerings into the River Lark.
- 2.2 In January 1942, farmer Gordon Butcher while ploughing found a major hoard of highly decorated Roman silver tableware from the fourth-century AD. He did not recognize the objects for what they were, and the hoard did not come to the attention of the authorities until 1946. An inquest was held when the find was declared treasure trove and acquired by the British Museum in London. Today it is known as the Mildenhall Treasure, even though they were found in West Row, and comprises of tableware, pictorial platters and early Christian baptismal spoons which can be seen in the British Museum, and replicas are on display at the Mildenhall Museum.



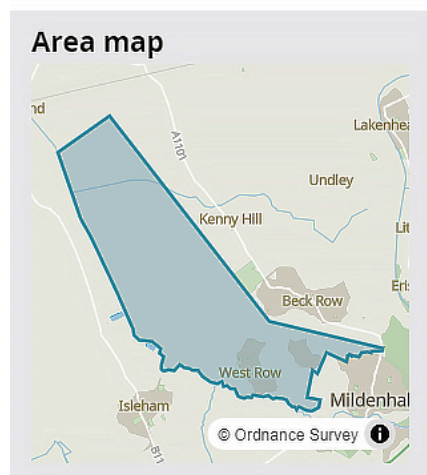
- 2.3 West Row lies on the north bank of the navigable River Lark, two miles west of the town of Mildenhall, and just south of RAF Mildenhall military airfield, occupied by the United States Air Force.
- 2.4 With an area of just under 25 square kilometres, the parish is one of the largest in West Suffolk. However, the built-up area only occupies a small part of the parish and much of the rural area is low level fenland and within a flood zone. West Row parish was formerly part of Mildenhall parish, on the 1st of April 2019 we became a separate parish.

West Row Today

- 2.5 The 2021 Census notes that the parish has a population of 1,912, making it the 13th largest village in the West Suffolk district. It is difficult to make a comparison of population with previous Census results as the parish was only formed in 2019. However, it is estimated that the 2011 population was approximately 1,630. The parish has a relatively young population, with 18% aged 65 and over in 2021 compared with 21% across West Suffolk as a whole. A parish profile from the 2021 Census is illustrated on the following page. Approximately one-third of the population were born in the United States of America.

- 2.6 The built-up area of the village is quite linear in form, extending from Ferry Lane in the south to Beeches Road in the north. Only in recent decades have housing estates been developed, often on previously developed sites which, to some extent, have reduced the linear nature.
- 2.7 At the time of preparing the Plan, the village benefited from the following services and facilities:
- Primary School
 - Village Hall
 - Sports Pavilion and Playing Field
 - St Peter's Parish Church
 - Baptist Chapel
 - Village Stores
 - Jude's Ferry Public House
 - Hairdressers
 - Barbers
 - The Shed Community Garden

West Row



Population

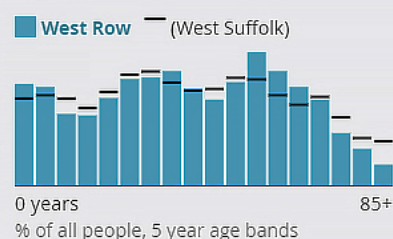
1,900

people

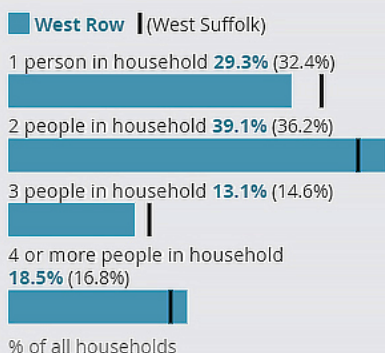
179,900 people in West Suffolk

Rounded to the nearest 100 people

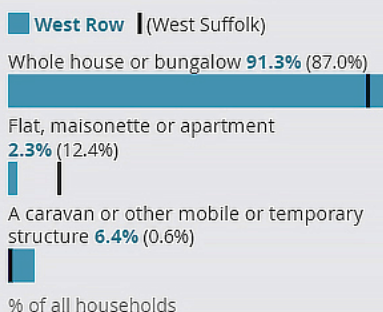
Age profile



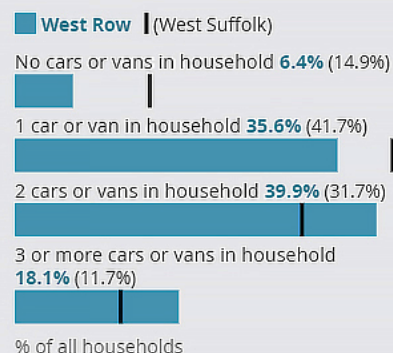
Household size



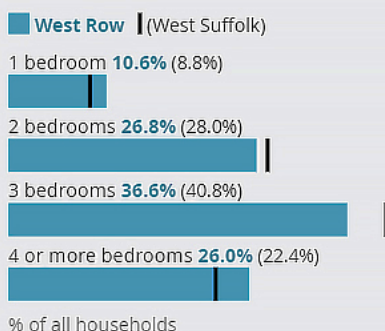
Accommodation type



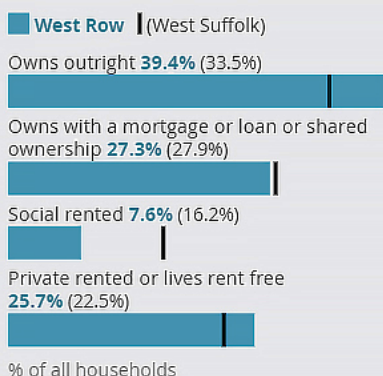
Number of cars or vans



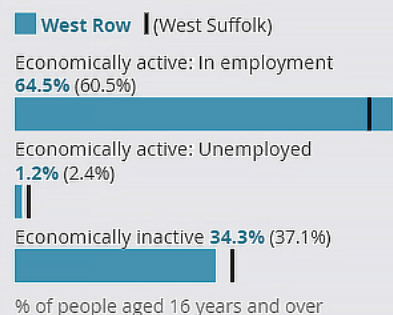
Number of bedrooms



Tenure of household



Economic activity status



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

3. Planning Policy Context

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

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's high-level planning policies that must be taken into account in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. In December 2024 the Government published a Revised NPPF. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making [such as this neighbourhood plan] this means that:

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

- 3.3 The NPPF requires that Neighbourhood Plans should:
"support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies."

The Local Plan

- 3.4 Prior to 1 April 2019 the local planning authority for West Row was Forest Heath District Council. However, on that date the District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were dissolved and replaced with the new West Suffolk Council.
- 3.5 The following diagram shows the components of West Suffolk Council's Local Plan in place in February 2025 which are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.



- 3.6 The **2010 Forest Heath Core Strategy** identified West Row as one of five Primary Villages in the district's Settlement Hierarchy, which provide basic local services and will accommodate small scale housing growth to meet local needs.
- 3.7 The **Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan** document (February 2015) provided a comprehensive suite of detailed planning policies against which planning applications across West Suffolk would be determined on a day-to-day basis. The Neighbourhood Plan does not repeat these policies but, where appropriate, adds value and detail to them from a local perspective.

- 3.8 In 2019 a **Single Issue Review of Core Strategy Policy CS7** was adopted. The review addressed the overall housing provision and its distribution across the former Forest Heath district. It did not impact on West Row's position in the local plan settlement hierarchy or make provision for the type of development proposed for the parish.
- 3.9 Also in 2019, the Forest Heath **Site Allocations Local Plan** document was adopted. It identified the housing and employment allocations required to deliver the overall housing requirement identified in the Core Strategy. For West Row, a site of 7.8 hectares east of Beeches Road was allocated for 152 dwellings. The Plan also identified land to the south of The Green and adjoining the Primary School for the expansion of the school.

Emerging West Suffolk Local Plan

- 3.10 West Suffolk Council has reached an advanced stage in the preparation of a new Local Plan for the area, which will cover the period to 2041. The final consultation on the Pre-Submission Draft West Suffolk Local Plan took place in January 2024 and, in the following May, the Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in order that it could be examined by Planning Inspectors. The Inspectors' conducted hearing sessions into the Local Plan during November and December 2024 and in March 2025 consultation commenced on the required "modifications" to the Plan required by the Inspectors as a result of the examination. It is expected that the new Local Plan will be adopted in mid-2025.
- 3.11 The January 2024 Draft Local Plan contained 16 "strategic" policies that address West Suffolk's priorities for the development and use of land in the district, are essential to delivering the overarching strategy and against which the neighbourhood plan should accord. The proposed modifications to the draft Local Plan identify an additional 12 "strategic" policies. Given its advanced stage, the draft Neighbourhood Plan policies have had greater regard to the content of the emerging Local Plan given that it is likely to be adopted before the Neighbourhood Plan is complete.
- 3.12 The Draft Local Plan designates West Row as one of 12 Local Service Centres across West Suffolk, settlements that provide a school, convenience shop and/or post office and village hall as a minimum. In terms of future growth of the Parish, the Draft Local Plan allocates a slightly larger site for housing development east of Beeches Road to that allocated in the earlier Site Allocations Local Plan. This reflects the fact that the site now has planning permission and that development has commenced. Land for the extension of the Primary School remains allocated in the Draft Local Plan.
- 3.13 Given that the Draft Local Plan has reached an advanced stage, the draft Neighbourhood Plan has had regard to its content, specifically the strategic policies and allocations, whilst recognising that it might be subject to change following the examination by the Planning Inspectors.

Suffolk County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 3.14 In July 2020, Suffolk County Council adopted the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The southern parts of the Parish are defined as a "Minerals Consultation Area" within which proposals in excess of five hectares will be referred to the County Council in order that they can be satisfied that, in accordance with paragraph 223 of the NPPF, any minerals resources present of local and national importance are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development. Much of the west of the Parish is within a Minerals Consultation Area and the District Council will be responsible for consulting the County Council on planning applications that fall within this area.

4. Vision and Objectives

- 4.1 The vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared taking into consideration the outcomes of the household survey referred to above, as well as the evidence collected from published data, surveys and assessments. They also take account of the need to prepare a neighbourhood plan that conforms with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. The Vision sets out the over-arching approach as to how West Row will accommodate pressures for growth and ensure that services and facilities are available during the period to 2040. This is refined through the Objectives established for each of the topic areas which, in turn, have guided the identification of the planning policies contained in the Plan.

VISION

In 2041 West Row will continue to be a thriving, inclusive and sustainable community, supported by appropriate levels of services and infrastructure and where heritage and environmental assets have been protected and enhanced.

Objectives

Housing

- 1 Ensure that the amount, size and tenure of new housing in the Parish meets locally identified needs
- 2 Enable opportunities for the provision of affordable housing that meets the needs of those with a connection with West Row Parish

Natural Environment

- 3 Minimise the impact of development on the local landscape
- 4 Maximise opportunities to improve natural habitats and biodiversity

Built Environment and Design

- 5 Recognise and protect the importance of historic assets and their settings
- 6 Ensure that new development is designed in a way that reflects local character
- 7 Minimise the impact of new development on infrastructure, services and existing residents

Services and Facilities

- 8 Protect and improve the range of existing community facilities and services.

Highways and Travel

- 9 Support and encourage safe and sustainable transport, including walking, cycling and public transport
- 10 Minimise the impact of vehicles passing through the village

5. Location of Development

Context

- 5.1 The location of any new development in West Row could, without an element of control, have a significant detrimental impact on the character of the village and the countryside that surrounds it. Going forward, a balanced approach has to be taken to meeting the needs of the village and the protection of the natural environment and minimising impact on services and infrastructure.

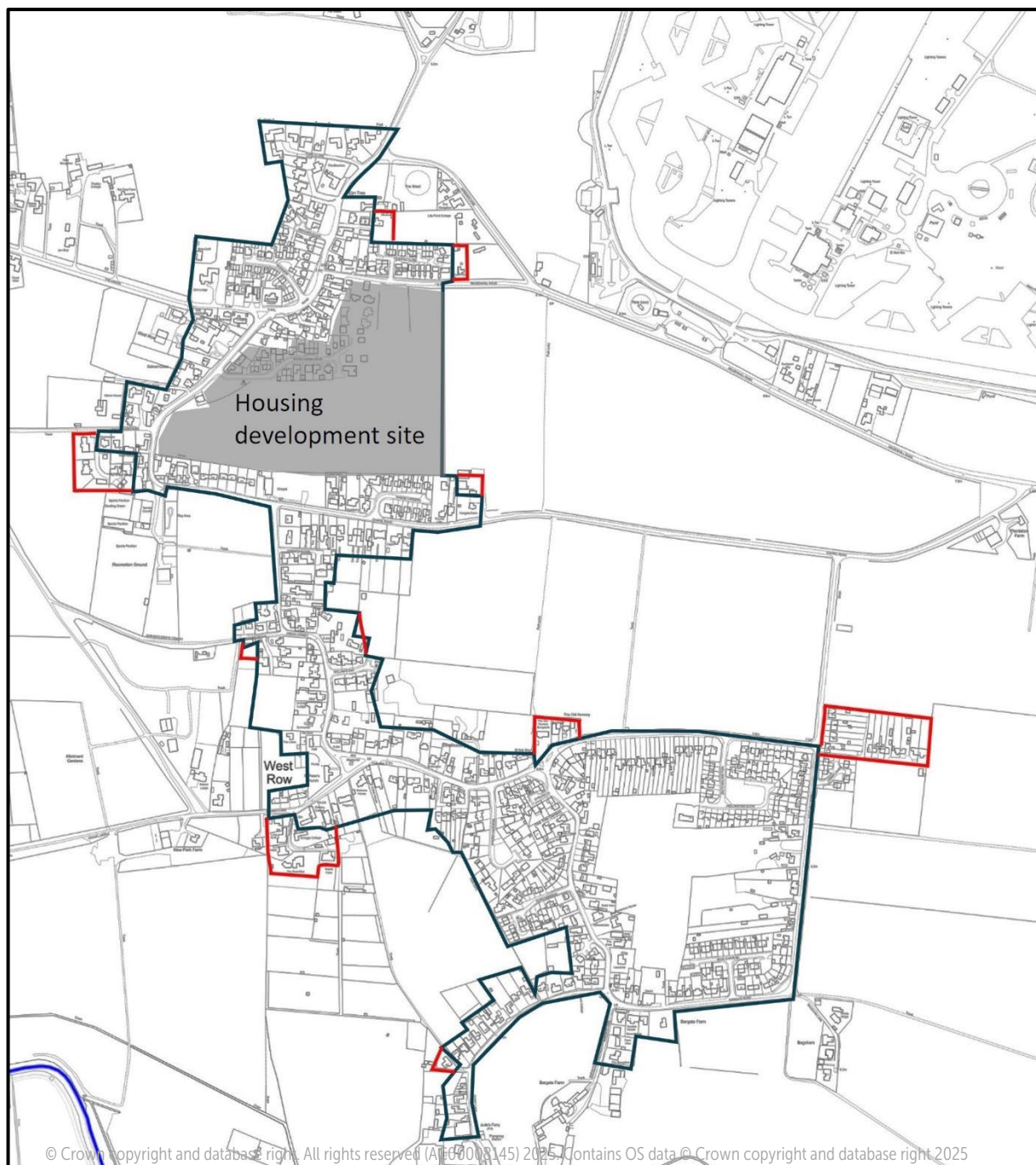
Planning Policy Context

- 5.2 The January 2024 Draft West Suffolk Local Plan identifies West Row as a “Local Service Centre” and revises the Housing Settlement Boundary to take account of recent developments, planning permissions yet to be built, and allocations in the Local Plan.
- 5.3 Within the Housing Settlement Boundary there is a general presumption in favour of new development, subject to consideration of other policies in the Draft Local Plan. Outside the Housing Settlement Boundary, proposals would be considered primarily against Policy LP18 ‘Development in the countryside’ which states that the area would be protected from unsustainable development. The Draft Local Plan states *“It is important to manage development in the countryside, but it is also recognised that some new development will help to support the rural economy, meet local housing needs and provide for particular uses such as renewable energy, community facilities, recreation and leisure.”*

Neighbourhood Plan approach to the location of new development

- 5.4 The Housing Settlement Boundary in the January 2024 Draft Local Plan carries forward that in the adopted Local Plan with the exception of now including all the land with planning permission for housing east of Beeches Road. However, it does not totally reflect development that has taken place in the village in recent years or existing dwellings that form part of the contiguous built-up area but have not previously been included. With this in mind, the Neighbourhood Plan provides an up-to-date Housing Settlement Boundary by including those areas outlined in red on Map 2.





Map 2 – Proposed amendments to Housing Settlement Boundary

- 5.5 In accordance with the policies in the West Suffolk Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan provides a presumption in favour of development within the Housing Settlement Boundary, as identified on the Village Centre Inset Map. In determining planning applications within the Housing Settlement Boundary, consideration will be given, as appropriate to the impact of the proposal on:
- heritage and natural assets;
 - landscape setting of the village;
 - the capacity of services and infrastructure;
 - the amenity of residents; and
 - designated habitats in the wider area.
- 5.6 Outside the Housing Settlement Boundary, there may be situations where it can be adequately demonstrated that it is necessary for development to take place. However, and in accordance with the Local Plan, this will be limited to that which is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses that need to be located in the countryside. However, this approach does not restrict the

conversion of agricultural buildings to residential uses where proposals meet the government regulations and local planning policies for such conversions. There may also be occasions where the expansion of an existing business use will be supported where it can be demonstrated that such a proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the countryside and the infrastructure required to support it.

Policy WRNP 1 – Spatial Strategy

In the period 2024 to 2041 the Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with the village's designation in the adopted Local Plan settlement hierarchy. New development will be focused within the defined Housing Settlement Boundary, as identified on the Policies Map, where proposals for housing development on infill plots or for small groups on redeveloped plots will be supported where they do not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity, the natural and historic environment, infrastructure and highways.

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

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

where it can be demonstrated that:

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

6. Housing

Housing Objectives

- 1 To ensure that the amount, size and tenure of new housing in the Parish meets locally identified needs
- 2 Enable opportunities for the provision of affordable housing that meets the needs of those with a connection with West Row Parish

Context

- 6.1 The 2021 Census shows that there were 844 households in West Row Parish. The actual number of dwellings is difficult to identify as the Census has not published this data at parish level, but Ordnance Survey postal address data suggests that there are 1,017 residential addresses in December 2024, including houseboats which account for 9% of the total as illustrated in Figure 1.

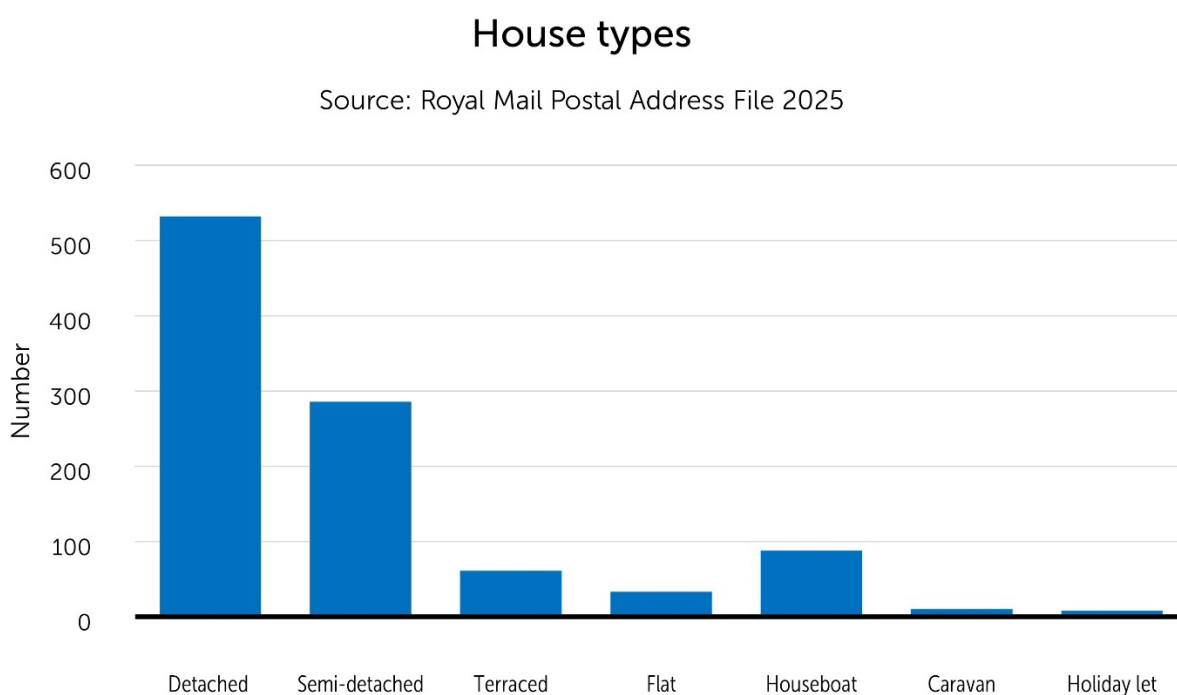


Figure 1 - House Types Comparison. Source – Ordnance Survey AddressBase Plus 2024

- 6.2 In terms of tenure, as illustrated in Figure 2, a higher proportion of homes are either owned or privately rented than in West Suffolk as a whole, while the proportion of socially rented is less than half what it is for West Suffolk.

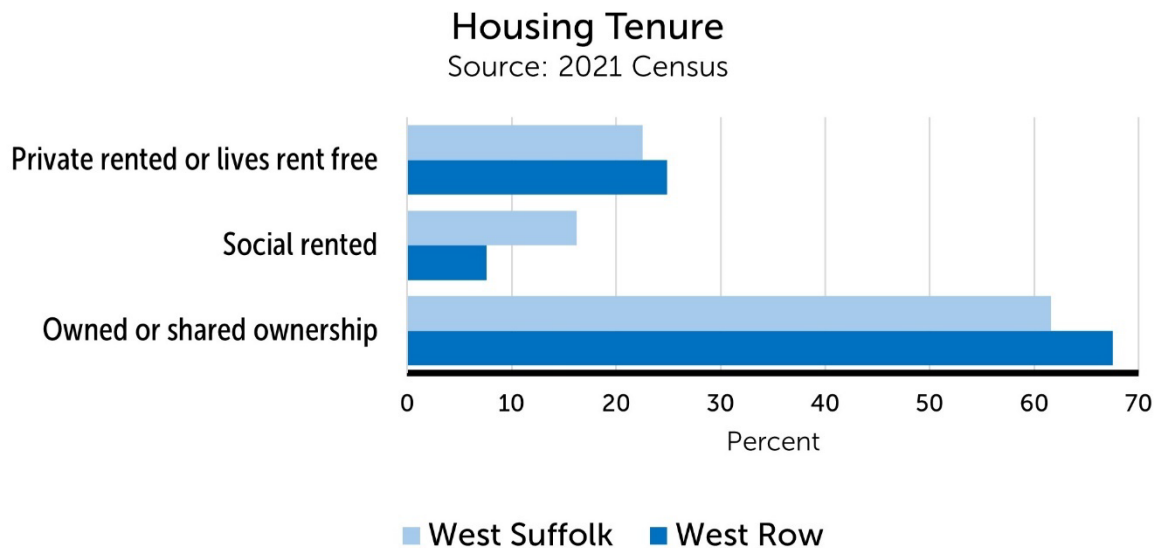
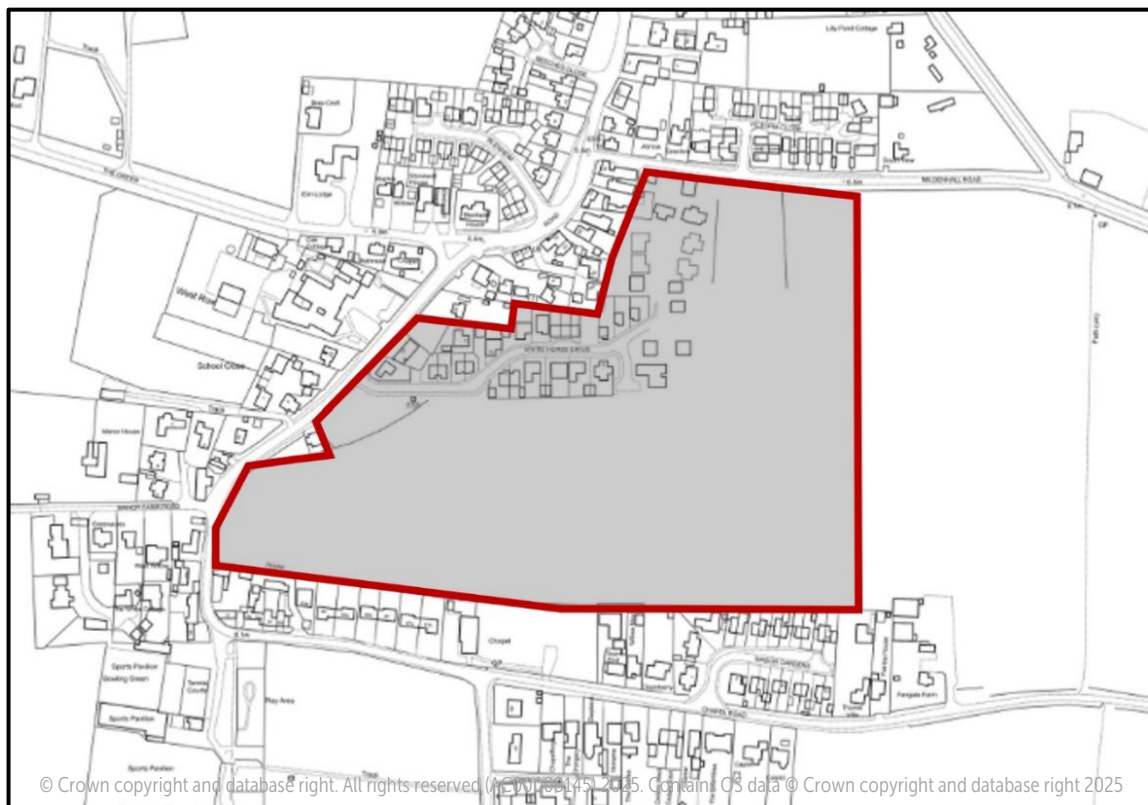


Figure 2 - Housing Tenure Comparison – West Row and West Suffolk. Source 2021 Census

- 6.3 As at 1 April 2023 (the most recently published West Suffolk Council monitoring data) there was planning permission for 180 new houses in the parish that had yet to be completed. The bulk of these are to be built east of Beeches Road, illustrated on Map 3, where development on part of the site is already underway.



Map 3 – Housing development site east of Beeches Road

- 6.4 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan a Housing Needs Assessment was carried out by AECOM and funded by the Government Neighbourhood Planning support programme. The Assessment looked at:
- Tenure, Affordability and the Need for Affordable Housing,
 - Type and Size, and
 - Specialist housing for older people,
- and is available to view on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council website. The outcomes of the Assessment are referred to later in this section.

Current Planning Policies

- 6.5 Policy AP51 of the Draft West Suffolk Local Plan, allocates a site for up to 161 dwellings east of Beeches Road for housing development referred to in paragraph 6.3. As such, it reflects an existing planning permission and does not allocate any new sites for development at a later date.
- 6.6 The Draft Local Plan also contains the following strategic policies of relevance:
Policy SP10 Housing Needs
Policy SP11 Neighbourhood Plans
The District Council has also proposed that Policy LP20 'Affordable housing' becomes a strategic policy in the final Local Plan. This seeks to deliver 40% of housing on greenfield sites of 10 or more homes as affordable homes.
- 6.7 For West Row, Policy SP11 'Neighbourhood Plans' sets out the minimum housing requirement for designated Neighbourhood Areas up to 2041. For West Row the requirement is 155 dwellings, which comprises sites that already have planning permission but have yet to be built. There is, therefore, no requirement to allocate further sites for housing in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.8 Policy LP17 of the Draft Local Plan notes that *"proposals for new residential development, residential conversion schemes, residential redevelopment and replacement of an existing dwelling with a new dwelling will be permitted within housing settlement boundaries where supported by other policies in the development plan."* Once complete, the planning policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will also be taken into account in making such decisions on development proposals within the Housing Settlement Boundary.
- 6.9 Outside the housing Settlement Boundary, the Draft Local Plan enables the provision of agricultural and essential workers homes where there is a proven need (Policy LP27) and, where there is a "small cohesive group of seven or more existing dwellings next to or fronting onto an existing highway", Policy LP26 'Housing in the countryside' makes provision for the potential construction of one dwelling or a pair of dwellings on an infill plot within the group.

Household Survey

- 6.10 During the course of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, residents had an opportunity to have a say about the amount of new housing that they would support in the village through the Household Survey. Most that responded felt that the current level is about right, as illustrated in Figure 3.

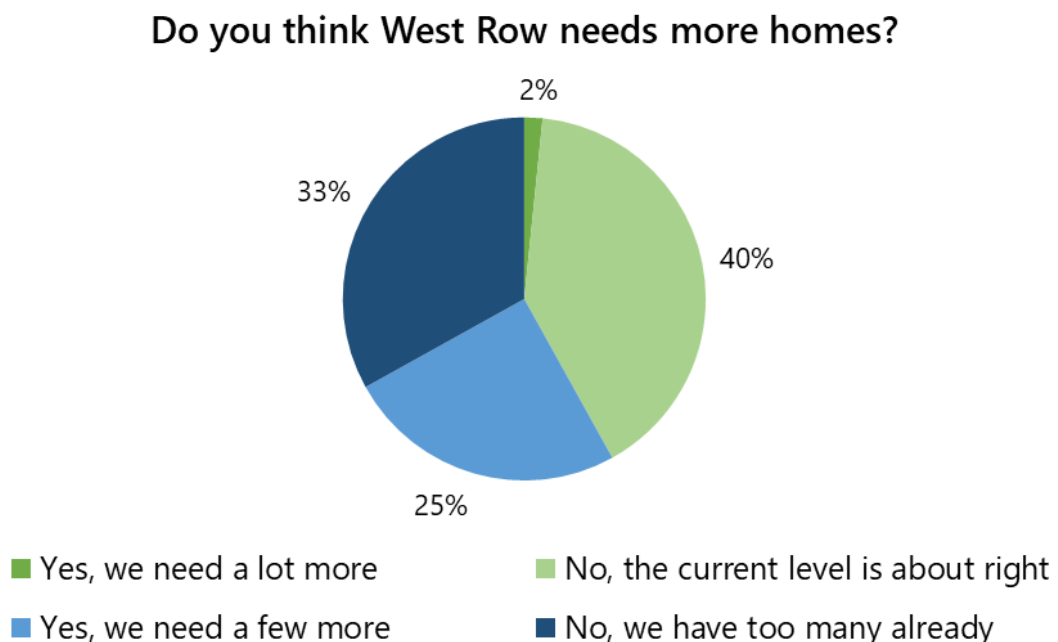


Figure 3 – Household Survey opinion on whether new homes are needed

- 6.11 Residents were also asked how many new homes they thought West Row needs over the next 20 years. Between one and ten homes was the most popular response.

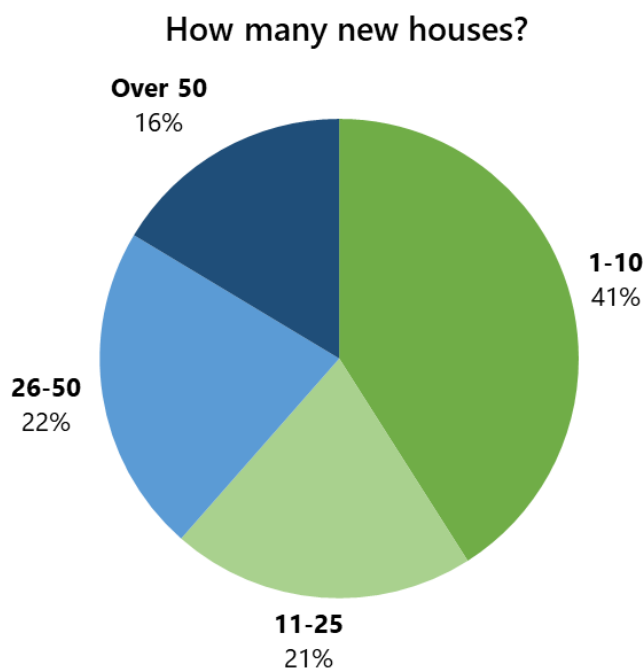


Figure 4 – Household Survey opinion on how many new homes are needed

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 6.12 The designation of the village as a Local Service Centre in the Draft Local Plan brings with it an expectation that a level of additional housing development should take place in West Row. However, given that the number of homes in the parish is set to increase by nearly 20% over the coming years, it is not necessary to make any further allocations for housing development in the Neighbourhood Plan. There will be further opportunities for new housing within the Housing Settlement Boundary in the form of infill plots or the redevelopment of previously developed sites, but these will be considered within the policy context of this Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan.

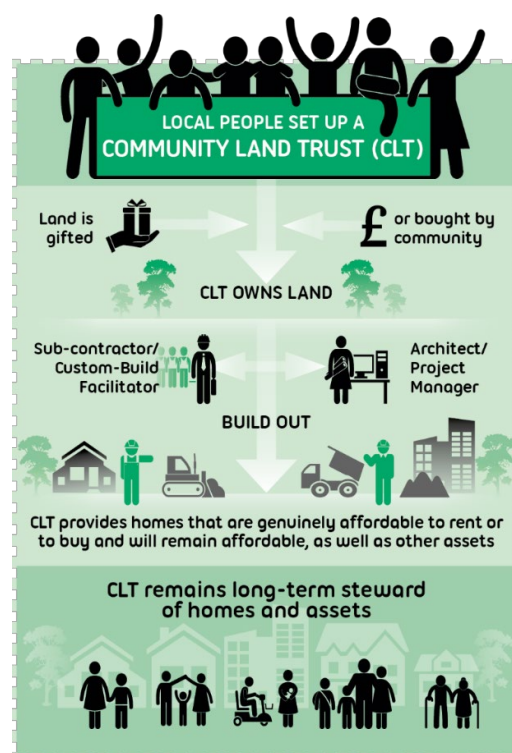
Affordable Housing

- 6.13 Affordability of housing remains an issue for many in the village, especially those seeking to get onto the housing ladder. West Row has, when compared to West Suffolk as a whole, a very low proportion of social rented homes. The West Row Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM November 2023) concluded that:
- generally, home ownership on the open market is unaffordable to households on mean and lower quartile incomes.
 - the average household income in West Row is £43,800, and the point at which median house prices become affordable is £67,500.
 - entry level housing becomes affordable for incomes of £59,800 and new build for incomes of £80,537.
 - average market rents only becomes affordable for household's with incomes of £61,240 and entry level market rents at incomes of £45,120.
 - its proximity to the RAF Mildenhall Airbase, and its lack of on-site accommodation means it is likely there is a large number of medium to long term renters in West Row, which in turn will increase competition in the local rental market, and may be a driver of the high rents.
 - West Row exhibits particularly acute levels of unaffordability for a significant segment of the population.

- 6.14 There is no policy or legal obligation on the part either of West Suffolk Council or the Neighbourhood Plan to meet affordable housing needs in full, though there are tools available to the Parish Council that can help ensure that it is met to a greater extent if resources permit.
- 6.15 There are two main mechanisms for delivering affordable housing, either as a percentage of a large housing development or as a "rural exceptions site". The development site east of Beeches Road which is under construction at the time the Plan is being prepared is delivering 14 affordable homes. The further large site east of Beeches Road will provide 20 Affordable Rent and 10 Shared Ownership units as part of the overall development of 100 homes. However, affordable homes delivered as a proportion of a development are not ring-fenced to meet the needs of the village. Instead, like the market housing, they are available to meet a wider need.
- 6.16 Policy LP22 of the Draft Local Plan enables affordable housing to meet locally identified needs to be built, as an exception, outside the housing settlement boundary. This is in accordance with national policies contained in the NPPF and the housing at Cornflower Close, off Pott Hall Road, was delivered using this mechanism following the identification of a need in the 2005 West Row Housing Needs Survey. Typically promoted by the Parish Council, these developments are known as "exception sites" and the following conditions would need to be satisfied:
1. A local need has to be established, usually through a detailed Parish housing needs survey and/or the West Suffolk Housing Register data; and
 2. A willing landowner prepared to sell land at a price significantly below the market value for housing land; and
 3. A registered social landlord (housing association) willing to work with the Parish Council and District Council to both secure grant funding and manage a scheme.

Furthermore, West Suffolk Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document in 2019 which, at paragraph 4.51, states that "An exception site is normally but not explicitly likely to consist of....no more than ten units in a larger village." Policy LP22 of the Draft Local Plan continues this approach while paragraph 76 of the NPPF encourages community-led exception sites adjacent to existing settlements.

- 6.17 One option for securing affordable housing that remains available for the local community is through the establishment of a Community Land Trust (CLT). This is a form of community-led housing is, set up and run by local people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets. CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing, ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now but for every future occupier. A CLT scheme in West Row might be possible if it can be demonstrated that there is an identified local need for affordable housing for those with a local connection and there is sufficient local interest from residents to form and be part of a local Community Land Trust.



Community Action 1 – Delivering Local Needs Housing

The Parish Council will work with social housing providers to identify how additional affordable homes specifically to meet the housing needs of people with a connection to West Row can be delivered.

Self-build Homes

- 6.18 Local authorities are required to maintain a register of people who are interested in building their own homes and Government requires planning authorities to plan for those wishing to build such homes. Many homes in West Row will have been built in this way over the years but opportunities diminish over time as infill plots within the Housing Settlement Boundary get developed.
- 6.19 The Draft Local Plan contains Policy LP25 'Custom and self-build homes' which supports this type of house building. The policy proposes that on developments of 100 homes or more developers will be encouraged to provide at least ten percent of the total as custom and/or self-build. For West Row, the planning approvals east of Beeches Road have come too early for this approach to be incorporated. However, opportunities are expected to continue to come forward on infill plots within the Housing Settlement Boundary to deliver an element of self-build homes.

Dwelling Sizes

- 6.20 As part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, a Housing Needs Assessment was prepared by AECOM Consultants. The Assessment, which is available on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council website, noted that West Row's housing mix is dominated by bungalows, with 40 percent compared with just under 18 percent across West Suffolk. By contrast, less than 5% are terraced houses compared with nearly 28% across West Suffolk.
- 6.21 In terms of house size, the Assessment notes a "profile in favour of families, with a more limited offer of dwellings for single persons or couples. Furthermore, these trends are both worthy of note in the context of affordability, with larger dwellings tending to be more expensive." The Assessment concludes, in terms of dwelling size, that more a diversified housing offer is needed to meet housing need in light of projected demographic changes. In contrast, the Residents' Survey asked if residents wanted to move, what size home they would like. Of the 44 that responded, 39% wanted three bedroomed homes, followed by 34% wanting two bedrooms and 27% wanting four or more bedrooms.
- 6.22 Draft Local Plan Policy LP21 'Housing type and tenure' sets out a requirement for sizes, according to type of tenure, for West Suffolk as a whole. It proposes, for market housing, the following mix:

One bedroom	0 to 10 percent
Two bedroom	30 to 40 percent
Three bedroom	40 to 50 percent
Four bedrooms or more	10 to 20 percent

This approach is unlikely to resolve the local issues in West Row concerning the need for two bedroomed homes. Table 5-9 of the West Row Housing Needs Assessment suggest that some 66 percent of new homes should be two-bedroomed dwellings. As such, Policy WRNP 2 sets out a mix for new homes on sites of ten or more market dwellings.

Policy WRNP 2 – Housing Mix

In market housing developments of ten or more homes, the following housing mix in terms of number of bedrooms shall be provided in accordance with the West Row Housing Needs Assessment 2023:

- 1 bedroom dwellings approximately 5%
- 2 bedroom dwellings approximately 65%
- 3 bedroom dwellings approximately 30%
- 4 or more bedroom dwellings nil

unless it can be demonstrated that:

- i. the latest publicly available housing needs information for the Plan area identify a need for a different mix.

Development proposals which would incorporate four or more bedroom homes and a revised split between house sizes as shown in this policy will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the overall package would otherwise be consistent with the findings of the West Row Housing Needs Assessment 2023.

Specialist Housing

- 6.23 The Housing needs Assessment noted that there was a significant increase in the number of residents aged 75 or over between 2011 and 2021. Across West Suffolk the proportion of residents in this category is projected to grow by 60% by 2040. This proportion is projected to grow to represent 10 percent of the population by 2040. West Row does not have any form of specialist care housing facilities on offer in the parish, although there are a number of units on offer in Mildenhall.
- 6.24 The Household Survey demonstrated a high level of support for the provision of housing for those with special needs and for older people.
- 6.25 Draft local Plan Policy LP23 'Housing needs of specific groups' supports the provision of accommodation for elderly and/or vulnerable people, stating

"Proposals for new or extensions to existing accommodation for elderly and/or vulnerable people will be permitted on sites deemed appropriate for residential development by other policies contained within the development plan, provided that such schemes meet the following criteria:

- a. *The proposed development is designed to meet the specific needs of residents including requirements for disabled persons where appropriate.*
- b. *Appropriate amenity space for residents of an acceptable quantity and quality is provided.*
- c. *The location of the development is well served by sustainable transport routes including footpaths, cycle routes and/or adequate public transport, community and retail facilities. Isolated accommodation in the countryside will not be permitted.*
- d. *Includes secure, covered ground floor electric buggy parking and charging points where appropriate.*
- e. *There is no adverse impact on the surrounding landscape, local character, residential amenity or highway safety.*
- f. *The proposed development does not create an over concentration of similar accommodation in any one street or area."*

The Neighbourhood Plan expands on this approach as relevant to West Row, having regard to the lack of opportunities to provide housing for the elderly and those needing specialist care within the Housing Settlement Boundary.

Policy WRNP 3 – Housing for Older People

The provision of specialist accommodation that is suitable for the elderly, including sheltered housing, supported housing, extra care housing and residential/nursing care homes within the Settlement Boundary will be supported.

Proposals for specialist accommodation outside but well-related to the Settlement Boundary will be supported where:

- i. it can be demonstrated that a local need exists;
- ii. no suitable sites within the Housing Settlement Boundary are currently available or likely to become available in the next five years;

All proposals should be supported by a Travel Plan that makes provision for residents without cars to have access to shops, community facilities and medical centres, as appropriate to the needs and level of mobility of potential residents. The Travel Plan should also demonstrate how visitors and staff without cars can access the premises. Measures included in the Travel Plan will need to be secured by planning condition and/or a planning obligation;

Planning consents shall include a condition restricting the occupancy to older people or people with a need for care.

For elderly accommodation covered by this policy, the design should ensure:

- a) internal living space meets or exceeds the nationally described space standards and, for specialist older people's housing and specialist housing likely to be occupied by people with mobility difficulties, appropriate areas should meet wheelchair user standards;
- b) a high level of energy efficiency with good ventilation;
- c) safe storage and charging facilities for residents' mobility scooters, in addition to pick up and drop off facilities close to the principal entrance suitable for taxis, minibuses and ambulances;
- d) high quality indoor and outdoor amenity and communal areas for socialising;
- e) an attractive outlook and/or view of an activity from within the accommodation;
- f) it is of a scale, height and design that reflects the surrounding land uses and landscape, particularly where located at the edges of the settlement.

Developments providing older persons' housing should deliver the level of affordable housing required by the adopted Local Plan.

- 6.26 Given the projected growth in West Row, it would be appropriate for the Parish Council to seek to work with providers and landowners to explore the delivery of housing for elderly residents.

Community Action 2 – Housing for Elderly Residents

The Parish Council will seek to work with specialist housing providers, landowners and West Suffolk Council to explore the delivery of a purpose-built housing scheme for elderly residents.

Housing Design Standards

- 6.27 The design features of new homes can have a significant impact on the character of an area. The Local Plan already contains detailed policies for the consideration of the potential impact on the character of an area and the amenity of existing residents. In addition, in December 2017, the local planning authority issued a "technical advice note" to achieve minimum internal floorspace standards. The advice note states that "the Government's national space standards [March 2015] are the minimum acceptable space standards that should be applied to build both open market and affordable housing

within West Suffolk. It is the intention of West Suffolk Council to include a policy requirement for all new homes to be built to the national space standards in the next version of their Local Plan. This Technical Advice Note is therefore an interim measure until such time as the new combined West Suffolk Local Plan is published."

- 6.28 The December 2024 NPPF states that "Planning policies for housing should make use of the Government's optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable housing, where this would address an identified need for such properties." The March 2015 standards encourage provision of enough space in homes to ensure that they can be used flexibly by a range of residents. The standards also aim to ensure that sufficient storage can be integrated into dwelling units. Policy LP21 of the Draft Local Plan requires all new homes to be built to meet or exceed the standards.
- 6.29 Externally, it is also important that homes meet modern day requirements for the storage of wheelie bins and cycles. Without sufficient and appropriate space reserved for these uses, the consequence can be added clutter and a deterrent in the use of cycles as a mode of travel.
- 6.30 Planning policies cannot influence the internal layout of dwellings but given the generally ageing population, new homes will be particularly welcomed where they meet the accessible homes standards currently set out in Part M of the Building Regulations. Part M defines three levels of housing accessibility:
- Category 1: Visitable dwellings – Part M4(1);
 - Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings – Part M4(2) and
 - Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings – Part M4(3).
- 6.31 The current Building Regulations require that all new dwellings to which the Regulations apply should be designed to a minimum of Part M4(1) 'visitable dwellings' standard. Local authorities can opt into the requirements for Part M4(2) and Part M4(3) via Local Plan policy. However, a 2015 Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) specifies that neighbourhood plans cannot set this standard.
- 6.32 Policy LP21 of the Draft Local Plan requires all new homes to be built to Part M4(2) standard with 13 percent of affordable homes to be built to Part M4(3) standard, while encouraging market housing to be built to Part M4(3) standard.
- 6.33 The development of adaptable and accessible homes will help to ensure that dwellings are appropriate for older persons' needs whilst still meaning that they are suitable for other types of occupiers such as first-time buyers. Building for a Healthy Life is a design toolkit written in collaboration by organisations including Homes England and the Home Builders Federation and endorsed by the Government. Its aims are to achieve well designed neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces and developers of new homes in West Row are strongly encouraged to assess their proposals against the toolkit.

Policy WRNP 4– Housing Design

New dwellings that are designed to be adaptable in order to meet the needs of the increasingly aging population, without restricting the needs of younger families, will be supported. Dwellings should also make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and cycles, in accordance with the adopted cycle parking standards.

Energy Efficient Homes

- 6.34 The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), has developed a community carbon calculator in response to a demand from smaller settlements to have robust and accurate data on their carbon footprint, so that they can best direct their efforts to tackle the climate emergency. For West Row, as illustrated in Figure 5, it identifies that housing is the biggest source of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) emissions whereas across West Suffolk as a whole, the consumption of goods and services is the biggest source. The actual consumption footprint of households in West Row is estimated to be 13.8 tonnes of CO₂e per household a year, one tonne higher than the average for households across West Suffolk.

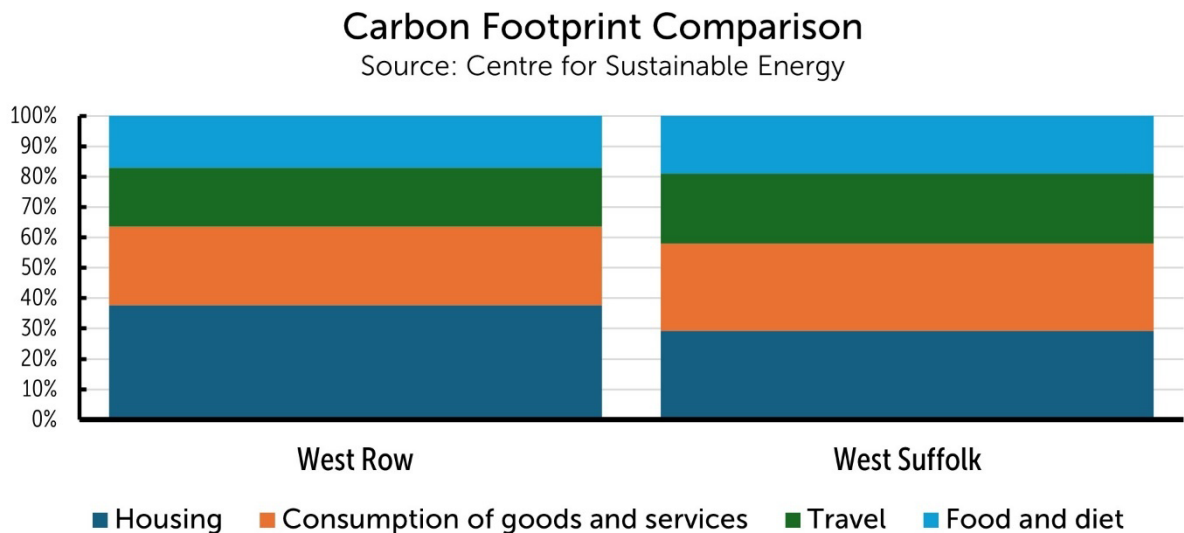


Figure 5 – West Row and West Suffolk Carbon Footprint Comparison

- 6.35 Energy consumption and the demand for energy is a major determinant of climate change. Where energy use is necessary, then priority should be given to utilising the most sustainable sources. Many energy-saving initiatives can be installed on homes within permitted development rights (when full planning permission is not required) but there may be occasions where schemes that do require planning permission could have a potential adverse impact on the character of the area and the amenity of nearby residents. In line with national government policy, the long-term aim should be to reduce the overall use of all fossil fuels – gas, oil and coal.
- 6.36 The use of heat and power in buildings accounts for 30 percent of the UK's total energy usage. The government has given a commitment to introduce a Future Homes Standard to ensure that new build homes are "future-proofed with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency" with an aim to ensure that new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes built under the current Building Regulations. In 2025, compliance with the Future Homes Standard will become mandatory.
- 6.35 The Draft Local Plan contains Policy SP1 which addresses matters relating to the climate and environment emergency and sustainable development and contains a number of criteria against which development proposals will be considered.

Policy WRNP 5– Low Energy and Energy Efficient Housing Design

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

Proposals for new dwellings should demonstrate how they:

- a. maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings; and
 - b. incorporate best practice in energy conservation and are designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency; and
 - c. avoid fossil fuel-based heating systems; and
 - d. incorporate sustainable design and construction measures to improve energy and water efficiency including, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar panels, energy storage and grey water recycling, rainwater and stormwater harvesting.
-



Examples of energy efficient homes

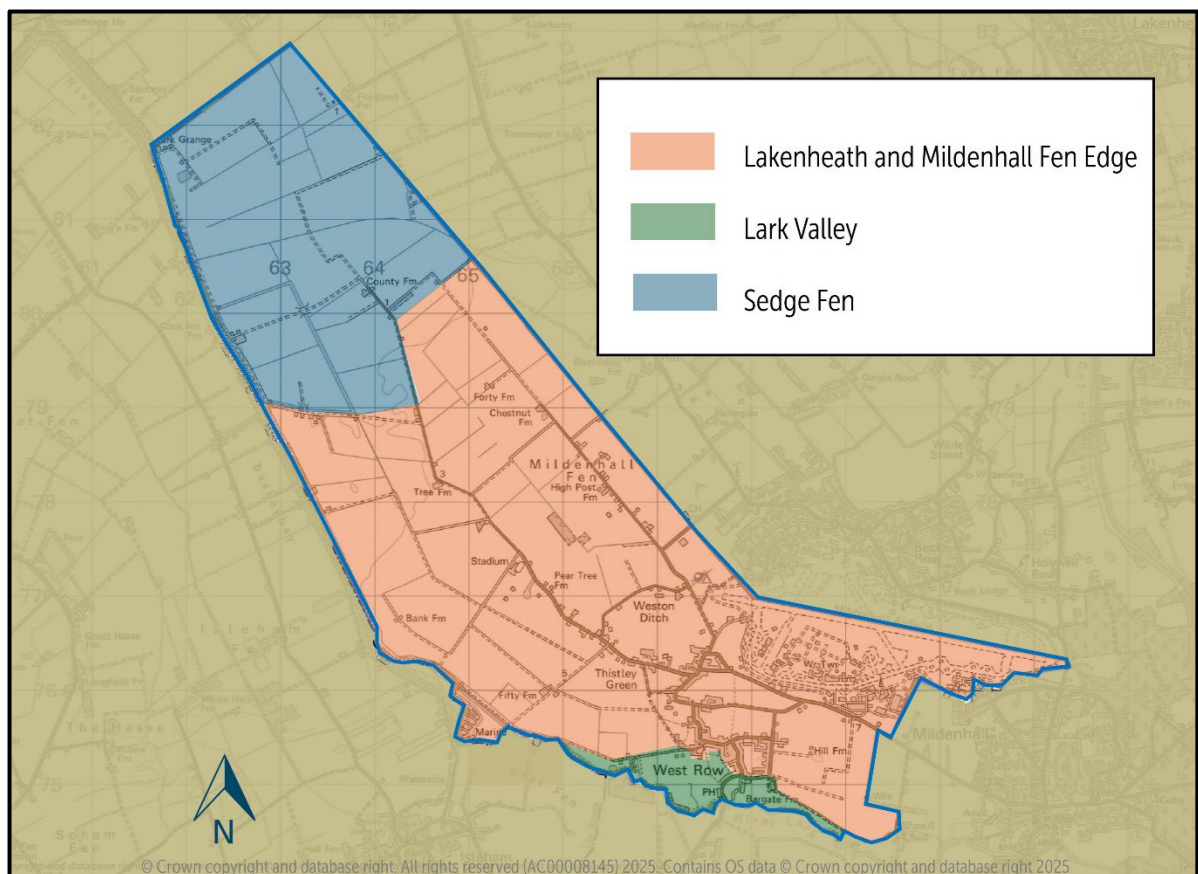
7. Natural Environment

Objectives

- 3 Minimise the impact of development on the local landscape
- 4 Maximise opportunities to improve natural habitats and biodiversity

Context

- 7.1 The natural environment covers the landscape and natural features of the Parish including habitats. With few exceptions, the majority of the Parish is either Grade 1 or Grade 2 agricultural land, where Grade 1 is the best and most versatile land. The main built-up area of the parish lies on the transitional edge of the Brecks to the north-east and low-lying Cambridgeshire Fenlands to the north and west.
- 7.2 In terms of landscape character, the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment records three landscape typologies across the parish; Settled Chalklands, Settled Fenlands and Planned Fenlands. In support of the preparation of the Local Plan, West Suffolk Council commissioned a more detailed Landscape Appraisal, available to view on the Local Plan pages of their website. It defines three distinct landscape areas in the parish, Lakenheath and Mildenhall Fen Edge covering the majority of the parish, Sedge Fen, in the north-west of the parish beyond Fodderfen Drove and the Lark Valley. The areas in the Parish covered by these character areas are illustrated on Map 4.



Map 4 – West Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment typologies in the Parish

- 7.3 For the **Lakenheath and Mildenhall Fen Edge Character Area**, the Appraisal notes the following characteristics:
- Flat landscape with a diverse mix of farmland and settlement between the Brecks and the Fens.
 - Complex mosaic of land uses, with farmland on peaty soils and settlement on low chalk and gravel outcrops.

- Regular geometric field pattern; large arable fields are subdivided by drainage ditches and bordered by small woodlands, hedgerows and lines of poplars.
- Distinctive 'fen-edge' hamlets or 'Rows', with houses strung out along twisting roads and fronting former greens (now farmland).
- Piecemeal enclosure of former common fen.
- Long, straight dead-end droves connect settlements with the fenlands to the west.
- Mildenhall and Lakenheath Airfields are dominant influences.
- Numerous pony paddocks, defined by temporary fencing.
- Farmsteads and agricultural barns of all types and sizes are prominent throughout the area.
- Extensive managed wetlands along the Little Ouse floodplain at RSPB Lakenheath Fen and remnant pockets of fen habitat elsewhere amongst farmland and settlements.
- Diverse mix of urban fringe uses, including commercial, agricultural and recreational premises, often accessed by droves and farm tracks.

7.4 For the **Sedge Fen Character Area**, the Appraisal notes the following characteristics:

- Flat peatland landscape, at or below sea level.
- Intensively farmed arable land; extremely large fields laid out as a gridded pattern.
- Field units subdivided by straight drainage ditches.
- Large isolated farmsteads, agricultural barns and packing sheds are often sheltered by groups of trees and shelterbelts.
- The cropping cycle creates a striking geometric field pattern with ever-changing colours and textures.
- Extensive managed wetland and fen habitat with mature poplar plantations on the Little Ouse floodplain at RSPB Lakenheath Fen.
- Lines of poplars and shelterbelts often form the skyline in long views across the fen.
- Straight roads and droves, bordered by drainage ditches, often turn at sharp right angles.
- Limited settlement - hamlet of Sedge Fen is scattered along several droves; farms are interspersed with houses.
- Vast open, expansive landscape in which skylscapes are a fundamental component of the panoramic views.



- 7.5 For the **Lark Valley Character Area**, the Appraisal notes the following characteristics:
- Shallow river valley with a flat, narrow floodplain which flows from the farmland plateau SE of Bury St Edmunds to the fen edge near Mildenhall.
 - Narrow band of enclosed small pastures along the river channel contrasts with large arable fields and woodland blocks on the outer floodplain and river terraces.
 - Breckland character predominates in the central and much of the Lower Lark Valley - peat and sandy floodplain deposits have formed lowland fen habitat and the extensive lowland heathland on the river terraces and valley slopes is internationally important.
 - A well settled valley; historic villages, often with landmark churches and mills, are connected by roads along the outer floodplain.
 - Straight roads and tracks connect settlements across the floodplain pastures via small hump-back stone bridges.
 - Many villages are associated with historic parks or small halls - the specimen trees, walls, lodges and gateways of historic parklands are distinctive features within the valley landscape.
 - Areas of open water on parts of the floodplain comprise former gravel pits near Lackford and sinuous lakes at Culford Hall and Ampton Park (the latter the remnant of an ancient mere).
 - Diverse valley landscape with a concentrated mix of different land uses within a confined area, including settlement, floodplain meadows, arable farmland, woodland, heathland and historic parkland.
 - Strong influence of Bury St Edmunds, which generates traffic and pressures for recreation and built development.
- 7.6 There are no nationally recognised wildlife designations in the Parish, but a small portion of the RAF Mildenhall Grassland County Wildlife Site extends into the parish near the Beck Row waterworks. Across the parish some trees are protected by tree preservation orders, primarily in the main village centre.

Current Planning Policies

- 7.7 A range of policies in the Draft Local Plan seek to protect and improve the natural environment. The following strategic policies are especially relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan area:
Policy SP4 Green infrastructure
Policy SP6 Biodiversity net gain
Policy SP8 Recreational effects of development
- 7.8 In summary, these policies promote the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure, seek the delivery of biodiversity net gain and provide for mitigating the recreational effects of development on European and nationally designated sites of nature conservation. It also brings up-to-date the references to the West Suffolk Landscape Appraisal.

Household Survey

- 7.9 The survey asked a range of questions about the natural environment.
- 60%** of respondents strongly agreed that tree and hedge planting on verges should be encouraged.
- 69%** strongly agreed that tree and hedge planting should be required within any new developments.
- 82%** strongly agreed that green spaces and public open areas within the village should be protected from development.
- 65%** strongly agreed that opportunities should be taken to increase green spaces and

public open areas within the village.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Habitats

- 7.10 In November 2021 the Environment Bill received Royal Assent. It introduced a statutory requirement, which came into force in 2024, for all appropriate developments to deliver a minimum 10 per cent measurable net gain in biodiversity, measured by using a statutory metric and biodiversity statement to be submitted with planning applications. Strategic Policy SP6 of the Draft Local Plan addresses the requirements for biodiversity net gain in relation to qualifying development proposals.
- 7.11 There may be occasions where a new access to an otherwise acceptable development site would result in the loss of part of an existing hedgerow. Where this is necessary, a new hedgerow should be planted using native species of a local provenance on the visibility splay returns to minimise the loss of hedgerow and habitat and maintain the character of the area.

Policy WRNP 6– Biodiversity and Habitats

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

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

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

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

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

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



- 7.12 Across the parish there are important natural spaces that provide local habitats, such as along Shop Drove, at Swales Fen adjoining Isleham Marina, the woodland and scrub adjoining the River Lark west of Judes Ferry and the wood at Plantation Corner. The improvement of habitats and wildlife corridors has a high priority in the Parish Council and opportunities for the creation of additional informal open space will be pursued by the Parish Council.

Community Action 3 – Additional Informal Open Spaces and Natural Habitats

The Parish Council will seek to work with landowners to provide additional informal open spaces and habitat improvements across the parish, including the planting of roadside hedgerows and trees using native species of local provenance.

- 7.13 The nature of the landscape in West Row is such that there are few woodlands and the high-quality agricultural land does not lend itself to being turned over to trees. However, there may be opportunities in the vicinity of the village to carry out tree planting on field margins or corners. There might also be an opportunity to create community woodland, The Woodland Trust is currently giving away hundreds of thousands of trees to schools and communities and there are many examples where communities have planted and maintained woodlands with the help of the Trust, such as at Hartest in Suffolk.

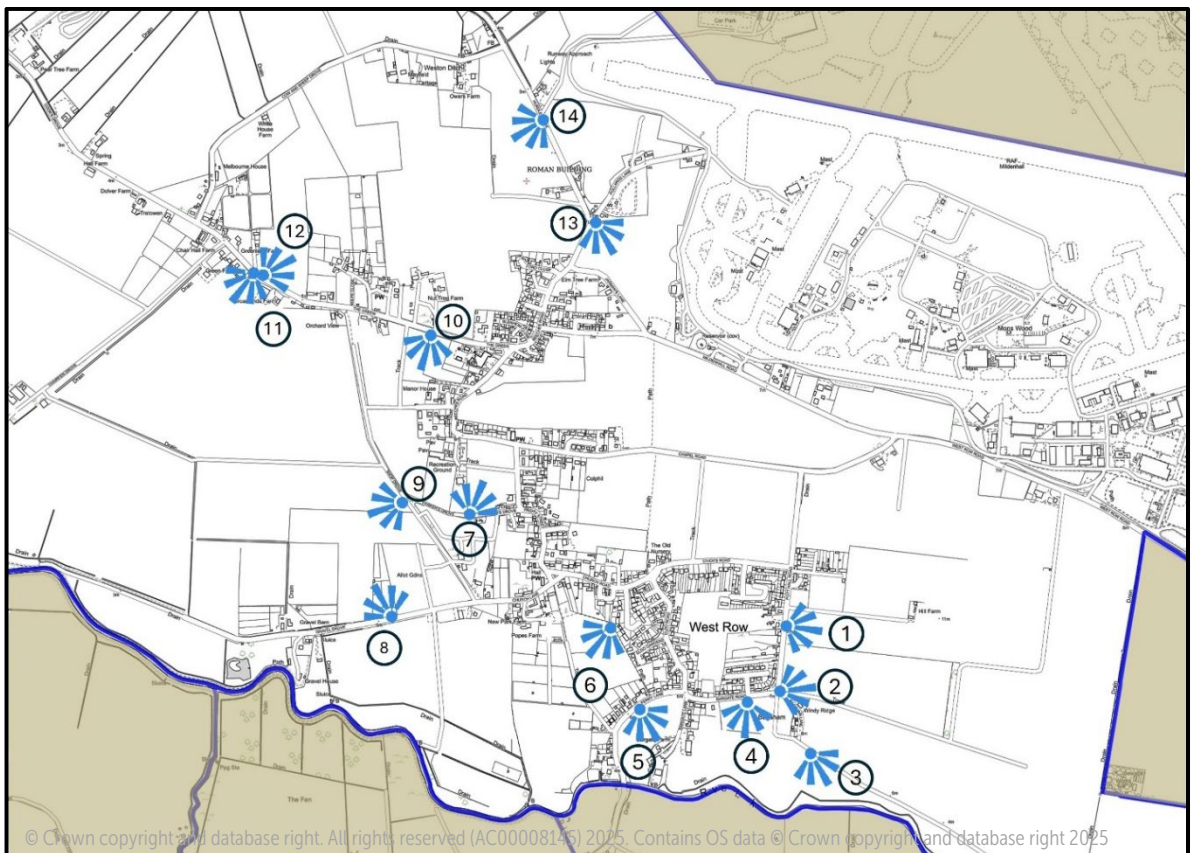
Community Action 4 – Community Woodland

The Parish Council will seek to work with landowners to create a community woodland accessible to residents.

Landscape and Important Views

- 7.14 The landscape of the parish is such that it lends itself to accommodating important views into and out of the built-up areas. An important or 'Key' view is one that would be generally recognised as having notable qualities or a particularly attractive composition that might cause people to pause and appreciate the scene. Not just an 'everyday' view, it is more likely to feature in people's perceptions of what West Row looks like in their memories, and provide heightened feelings of connectedness and wellbeing.
- 7.15 A separate Key Views Assessment has been prepared which defines 12 views in West Row which are considered to be particularly important and that contribute notably to

the areas character. The views are illustrated on **Map 5** and the Assessment identifies the key features of each view and the objectives to manage any change within the view.



Map 5 – Important Views

Policy WRNP 7– Landscape Character

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

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

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

Green Spaces

- 7.16 There are several important open areas within the parish that make important contributions to the character and setting of the built environment. The NPPF enables the designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces ('LGS') in neighbourhood plans. Such designations rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 107 of the NPPF states that the designation should only be used where the green space is:
- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- It is recognised that the designation of Local Green Spaces should not be used simply to block development.
- 7.17 A separate Local Green Space Appraisal has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, which demonstrates how certain local spaces meet the criteria in paragraph 107 of the NPPF. The spaces that meet the criteria are identified in Policy WRNP 8 and are illustrated on the Policies Map. There are many small amenity open spaces in the Parish with an area less than 0.05 hectares. These have been excluded from designation.
- 7.18 The identification of these spaces as Local Green Space means that development is restricted to that which has to be demonstrated as being essential for the site, in line with the Green Belt policies defined by the NPPF. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation. Policy WRNP 8 follows the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. In the event that development proposals come forward on the local green spaces, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by West Suffolk Council. In particular, it will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the 'very special circumstances' required by the policy.

Policy WRNP 8– Local Green Spaces

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

1. The Shed Community Garden, Jarman's Lane
2. Allotments, Gravel Drove
3. Open space south of Village Hall
4. Set-aside field west of Playing Field
5. Wellington Close Green Space
6. Wellington Close / Cricks Road Green Space
7. Church Gardens Open Space
8. Church Green
9. St Peter's Church Churchyard
10. Baptist Chapel Churchyard
11. Beeches Road open space
12. Wide verges at The Green
13. Open land between Village Hall and Chapel Road / Friday Street

Development in the Local Green Spaces will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts.



8. Built Environment & Design

Objectives

- 5 Recognise and protect the importance of historic assets and their settings
- 6 Ensure that new development is designed in a way that reflects local character
- 7 Minimise the impact of new development on infrastructure, services and existing residents

Context

- 8.1 The way in which West Row has grown over time means that, unlike many villages, there is no nucleus where most of the older buildings are clustered. There are nine listed buildings in the parish, as described in Appendix 1 spread between Elm Tree Farm on Beeches Road in the north and Bargate Farm near the River lark in the south. By far the most significant historic feature is the Scheduled Monument which marks the site where the Mildenhall Treasure was discovered in 1942. There are also a significant number of records of finds on the Suffolk Historic Environment Record maintained by the County Council's Archaeological Service. Developers are strongly encouraged to consult the Record at the earliest possible stages of preparing a planning application.

Current Planning Policies

- 8.2 The NPPF notes that heritage assets (see Glossary) "are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations." The NPPF also makes it clear, in paragraph 131, that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.' In January 2021 the Government published the National Design Guide to illustrate how well designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It 'provides a structure that can be used for the content of local design policies, guides and codes, and addresses issues that are important for design codes where these are applied to large scale development on single or multiple sites.' This was followed up in July 2021 by the more detailed National Model Design Code which sets out guidance for what could be included in a Design Code for sites and places.
- 8.3 Policy SP3 of the Draft Local Plan addresses development design across the wider district, while Policy SP14 covers the historic environment.

Household Survey

- 8.4 The survey asked a range of questions about the built environment and design.
- 70%** of respondents felt it important that new houses should have at least one vehicle parking space per bedroom.
- 45%** of respondents felt it important that new homes should be innovative in design.
- 50%** of respondents felt it important that new homes should be limited to two storeys
- 83%** of respondents felt it important that new homes should reflect the varied building styles and character of the village.
- 87%** of respondents felt it important that development should not impact on historic/listed buildings or their settings.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

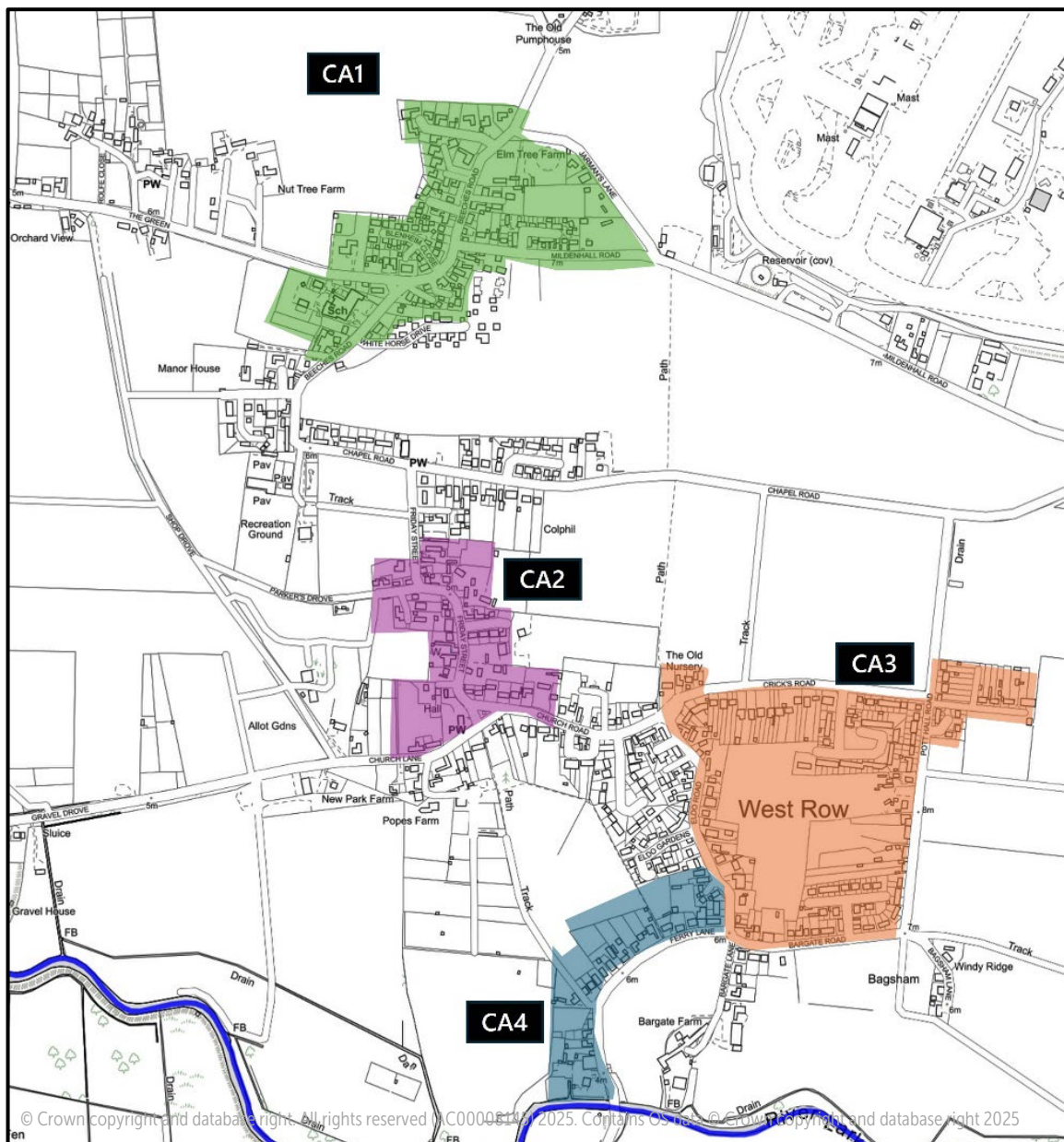
Built Heritage

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

Development Design

- 8.6 A part of the Government's Neighbourhood Planning support programme, AECOM were commissioned to prepare Design Guidance and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan Area on behalf of the Parish Council. The document, published separately on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council's website, provides guidance that seeks to inform the design of new development in order to retain and protect the character and distinctiveness of West Row. The Design Guidance and Codes should be used alongside the National Model Design Codes published by the Government in July 2021, or any subsequent published national as well as district level guidance, guiding the built form, layout and sustainability of development.
- 8.7 The Design Guidance and Codes identified four distinct character areas within the main built-up area of the village, stitched together by areas of largely linear development made up of a variety of typologies. The character areas are:
- CA1 – Beeches Road Hub
 - CA2 – Friday Street Historic Core
 - CA3 – Bargate Road, Eldo Road, Crick's Road and Pott Hall Road
 - CA4 – Ferry Lane

They are illustrated on **Map 6**.



Map 6 – Design Guidance and Codes Character Areas

General Design Guidelines

- 8.8 The Design Guidance and Codes also contain general design guidelines to which new development will be expected to have regard. These are reproduced below.

- 1 Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
- 2 Reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
- 3 Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
- 4 Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;
- 5 Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
- 6 Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
- 7 Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- 8 Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
- 9 Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
- 10 Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
- 11 Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
- 12 Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;
- 13 Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;
- 14 Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind; and
- 15 Seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation), before specification of energy efficient building services and finally incorporate renewable energy sources.

- 8.9 The Design Guidance provides a development design checklist which is reproduced as Appendix 2 of the Plan. Planning applications will be assessed against the checklist as applicable to the nature and scale of the proposal.



Policy WRNP 9 – Development Design Considerations

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

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Design Checklist (Appendix 2), and:

- a. recognise and address the key architectural features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area;
 - b. maintain the village's sense of place and/or local character, as identified in the West Row Design Guidance and Codes;
 - c. not involve the loss of gardens, important open, green or landscaped areas, which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the village;
 - d. taking mitigation measures into account, not affect adversely and, where appropriate enhance:
 - i. any historic, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings;
 - ii. important landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographical features;
 - iii. identified important views into, out of, or within the village as identified on the Policies Map;
 - e. not locate development where its users and nearby residents would be significantly and adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, or other forms of pollution (including light pollution) from existing sources, or volume or type of vehicular activity generated, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented;
 - f. produce designs that respect the character, scale and density of the locality;
 - g. in new residential developments, include tree-lined streets unless in specific cases there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate and include trees elsewhere within developments where the opportunity arises.
 - h. produce designs that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network in accordance with the Suffolk Design Streets Guide 2022 (or any successor documents) and ensuring that vehicle parking is designed to be integrated into the site without creating an environment dominated by vehicles;
 - i. seek always to ensure permeability through new housing areas;
 - j. wherever possible, ensure that development faces on to existing roads;
 - k. do not result in water run-off that would add-to or create surface water flooding through, for example, the use of permeable surfaces for vehicle access and parking; and
 - l. where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and covered secure cycle storage in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards.
-

Climate Change

- 8.10 Energy use in the construction and operation of all development is currently a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Minimising energy demands from development and increasing the generation of energy from renewable sources can make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions. The starting point for minimising energy use is to maximise energy efficiency, both in new developments and through the retrofitting of existing buildings. This can have a direct economic benefit in

terms of significantly lowering the running costs of new and existing buildings, helping to address fuel poverty, as well as tackling the Climate Crisis. The Building Regulations set minimum energy efficiency requirements for new development but exceeding the minimum requirements will be necessary if emission reduction targets are to be met.

- 8.11 Where energy use is necessary, then priority should be given to utilising the most sustainable sources. Many energy saving initiatives can be installed on homes within permitted development rights (when full planning permission is not required) and residents are encouraged to implement such measures. There may be occasions where schemes that do require planning permission could have a potential adverse impact on the character of the area and the amenity of nearby residents. The Neighbourhood Plan has limited powers to require developments to meet energy saving standards, especially in the construction of new homes. However, that does not stop the encouragement of the incorporation of measures in development that meet the energy hierarchy (in order of preference) of:
1. Minimising energy demand;
 2. Maximising energy efficiency;
 3. Utilising renewable energy;
 4. Utilising low carbon energy; and
 5. Utilising other energy sources.

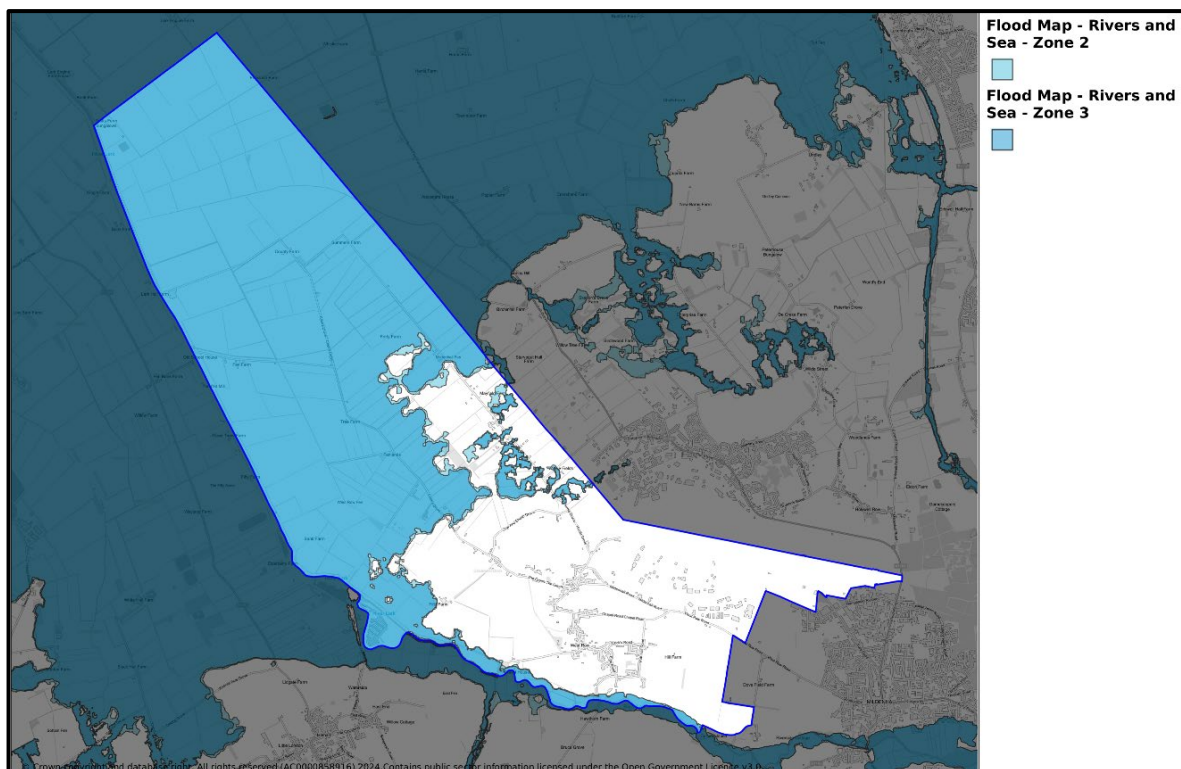
Policy WRNP 10 – Sustainable Construction Practices

For all appropriate development, proposals that incorporate current best practice in energy conservation will be supported where such measures are designed to be integral to the building design and minimise any detrimental impact on the building or its surroundings. Development proposals should demonstrate how they:

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

Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

- 8.12 As noted earlier in the Plan, much of the parish is located in flood zones 2 or 3, where zone 3 is land that is most susceptible to flooding. These areas are illustrated on Map 7. National planning policy for development in areas at risk of flooding is set out in the NPPF.



Map 7 – Environment Agency Flood Zone 2 and 3 Areas

- 8.13 A number of roads in the village are also susceptible to surface water flooding, and it is essential that development proposals do not create new or exacerbate existing surface water flooding 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 stormwater harvesting and greywater recycling, and the management of run-off and water management in order to reduce the potential for making the situation worse.

Policy WRNP 11 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

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

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

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

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



9. Services and Facilities

Objectives

8 To protect and improve the range of existing community facilities and services.

Context

- 9.1 Being a Local Service Centre, West Row currently benefits from the availability of some services and facilities to meet day-to-day needs, although not as many as other similarly designated settlements in the Draft Local Plan.
- 9.2 At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, the following facilities were available in West Row:
- West Row Village Hall
 - Playing Fields including Bowls Club and Tennis Courts
 - Allotments
 - West Row Primary School
 - St Peter's Church
 - Baptist Church
 - Judes Ferry Public House
 - The Shed Community Garden
 - Children's Play Area
 - West Row Village Hall
 - West Row Fish & Chip Shop
 - Barbers
- 9.3 West Row is also served by the Suffolk Mobile Library. It calls every four weeks on a Wednesday at the War Memorial and Crick's Road. Bus services are referred to in the highways and travel section of the Plan.

Household Survey

- 9.4 Residents were asked what new or improved amenities they would like to see. From a list of 16 suggested improvements, the top five were:
- Litter bins
 - Dog waste bins
 - Faster broadband
 - Improved mobile communication
 - Children's recreation facilities

The least supported were:

- Food, eating out (eg takeaways)
- Food, eating in (eg pubs and restaurants)
- Public toilets and baby changing facilities
- More street lighting
- Sports facilities



Current Planning Policies

- 9.5 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. Further, paragraph 98 states that planning policies and decisions should “guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs”.
- 9.6 Strategic Policy SP15 ‘Infrastructure in the Draft Local Plan notes that “the infrastructure needed to support new development and planned growth is delivered alongside development at the appropriate time, and for existing infrastructure to be protected and enhanced for the future.” The following policies are also of relevance:
- Policy LP31 Community facilities and services
 - Policy LP32 Leisure and cultural facilities
 - Policy LP33 Open space, sport, play and recreation facilities
 - Policy LP34 Allotments
 - Policy LP37 Farm Diversification

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 9.7 The Neighbourhood Plan has an important role in making sure that there are sufficient and adequate services in the village to meet the needs of current and future residents. The Primary School plays an important role in ensuring that young children can stay in the village for their early education Village Hall and associated recreation facilities, being centrally located in the village, helps to provide a range of community activities. However, for doctors and larger food shopping needs it is necessary to travel to nearby Mildenhall.
- 9.8 Opportunities for the provision of new or replacement facilities to serve the residents of West Row and nearby small villages will be supported. Opportunities for such provision within the Housing Settlement Boundary are limited and, where it can be demonstrated that such opportunities do not exist or available, sites should be sought in locations adjoining or in close proximity to the Boundary and facilitate the ability for residents to access them on foot and by cycle.



Policy WRNP 12 – Community Facilities

The provision and enhancement of community facilities and services that serve the needs of West Row will be supported where, in addition to other relevant policies:

- i. they are located on sites accessible on foot and within or in close proximity to the Housing Settlement Boundary;
- ii. they contribute to the quality of village life and improve the sustainability of the village;
- iii. there are no other appropriate and available buildings within the Housing Settlement Boundary that can feasibly be converted for the required purpose(s);
- iv. the benefits of the proposal outweighs the loss of open countryside.

Proposals that will result in the loss of community facilities, including:

- West Row Village Hall
- West Row Primary School
- Allotments
- St Peter's Church
- Baptist Church
- Judes Ferry Public House
- The Shed Community Garden
- Children's Play Area
- West Row Village Hall
- Retail premises

as identified on the Policies Map, will only be permitted where:

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

- 9.9 The current village stores is a small shop that provides a good service for residents and passing trade within the limitation of the available floorspace. As the population of the parish grows, there is likely to be more demand for day-to-day shopping needs. Expansion of services has to be a commercial decision and it would not be appropriate for the Parish Council to promote additional premises that would undermine existing provision. Should it become necessary during the life of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council will take any appropriate action to ensure retail premises are available to meet the day-to-day needs of residents.

Community Action 5 – Maintaining Retail Premises

The Parish Council will, as necessary, take any appropriate actions to ensure retail provision that meets the day-to-day needs of West Row residents is maintained.

- 9.10 Opportunities for participating in exercise are important to the health of residents and reducing pressures on the health service. The Neighbourhood Plan can play an important role in making sure that there are sufficient and adequate services in the village to meet the needs of current and future residents. The village recreation ground, together with the Bowls Club and tennis courts provides a central facility for both formal and informal recreation. As the population of the Parish grows, there may be a demand for further facilities, either an expansion of the existing or totally new provision. However, it is also important to safeguard what we already have and, in accordance with

Policy DM42 of the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document (2015) and Policy LP33 of the Draft Local Plan, existing facilities will be protected from being lost unless there are demonstrable reasons for their loss.

Policy WRNP 13 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

Proposals for the provision, enhancement and/or expansion of amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will be permitted subject to compliance with other Policies in the Development Plan.

Development which will result in the loss of existing amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will not be allowed unless:

- a. it can be demonstrated that the space or facility is surplus to requirement against the local planning authority's standards for that location, and the proposed loss will not result in a shortfall during the plan period; or
- b. replacement for the space or facilities lost is made available, of at least equivalent quantity and quality, and in a suitable location to meet the current and future needs of users of the existing space or facility.

Any replacement provision should take account of the needs of the settlement where the development is taking place and the current standards of open space and sports facility provision adopted by the local planning authority.

Where necessary to the acceptability of the development, the local planning authority will require developers of new housing, office, retail and other commercial and mixed development to provide open space including play areas, formal sport/recreation areas, amenity areas and where appropriate, indoor sports facilities or to provide land and a financial contribution towards the cost and maintenance of existing or new facilities, as appropriate. These facilities will be secured through the use of conditions and/or planning obligations.

Clubhouses, pavilions, car parking and ancillary facilities must be of a high standard of design and internal layout. The location of such facilities must be well related and sensitive to the topography, character and uses of the surrounding area, particularly when located in or close to residential areas.

Proposals which give rise to intrusive floodlighting will not be permitted.

- 9.11 The set-aside field to the west of the Recreation Ground designated as a Local Green Space in Policy WRNP 8 provides a potential opportunity provide an additional sports pitch and perhaps an informal area of open space promoted under Community Action 3. West Row Village Hall Foundation is exploring the purchase of this land and this is supported by the Parish Council.

Community Action 6 – Recreation Ground Extension

The Parish Council will support the West Row Village Hall Foundation in securing additional land west of the current site for additional recreation facilities.

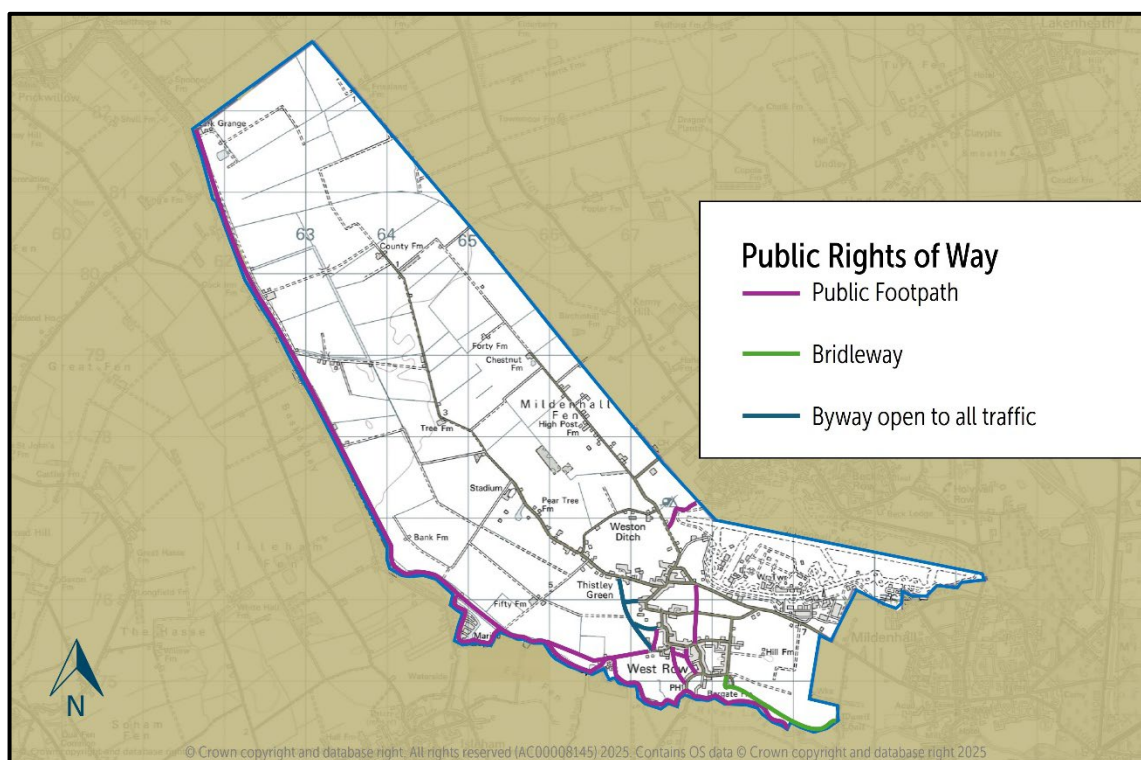
10. Highways and Travel

Objectives

- 9 Support and encourage safe and sustainable transport, including walking, cycling and public transport
- 10 Minimise the impact of vehicles passing through the village

Context

- 10.1 Neighbourhood plans have little power to introduce highway improvements as most schemes will not require planning permission. Improvements are therefore reliant on Suffolk County Council, as the highways authority, for investment in projects or improvements required as part of the mitigation of the impact of development proposals.
- 10.2 West Row is located some distance from the main road network, with the A1101 located to the north at Beck Row and the B1102 to the south at Freckenham. The A11 trunk road is four miles to the east at Barton Mills, requiring passing through Mildenhall.
- 10.3 The village is poorly served by buses. The '200' bus service goes to Mildenhall once a day, in the morning and returns twice a day in the afternoon, Monday to Saturday. The '358' service goes to and from Mildenhall three times a day, Monday to Saturday, enabling a through journey to Bury St Edmunds in the morning taking one hour and ten minutes and a return in the early afternoon taking a similar time. There are no services on a Sunday.
- 10.4 Across the village centre, footways are generally in place to enable residents to walk to facilities. However, it is over one mile from north to south and many of the footways are narrow in places and there are gaps in the network.
- 10.5 There is a network of public rights of way, as illustrated on Map 7, which includes a bridleway link to Mildenhall and a footpath along the bank of the River Lark.



Map 7 – Public Rights of Way

Household Survey

- 10.6 The key messages from the Household Survey are:

82% of those that responded never used the bus.

77% thought that the pavements are safe and adequate

69% disagreed that the bus services to and from Mildenhall were adequate for their needs.

79% disagreed that the bus services to the surrounding villages met their needs.

51% said more should be done to discourage non-residents from using West Row as a cut-through between Mildenhall and Worlington/Freckenham/Isleham and 50% between Beck Row and Worlington/Freckenham/Isleham.

- 10.7 The Draft Local Plan proposes up to 1,300 new homes on the western edge of Mildenhall, around West Row Road. The Household Survey asked a question about concerns over the potential highway impact of development outside the parish on West Row. The results are illustrated in Figure 6.

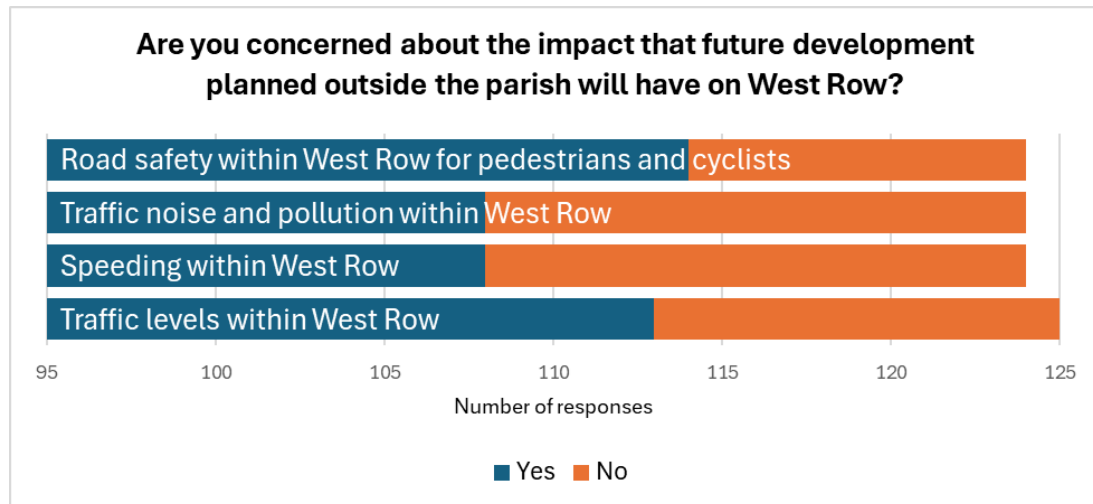


Figure 6 - Concerns over the potential highway impact of development outside the parish on West Row

Current Planning Policies

- 10.8 The NPPF seeks to promote sustainable transport through reducing the impacts of development on transport networks and promoting walking, cycling and public transport. At a local level, the Draft Local Plan includes the following policies relevant to highways and travel in West Row:

- Policy LP57 – Active and sustainable travel
- Policy LP58 – Rights of way
- Policy LP60 – Parking standards

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 10.9 Because most road improvements can take place within the highway, they do not require planning permission and, as such, the neighbourhood plan is not an appropriate place to contain policies for their improvement. Likewise, the provision of bus services is a decision made outside the planning system. However, although the Parish Council cannot deliver highway improvements, it does have a lobbying role in delivering such measures.

Residential Parking Standards

- 10.10 Car ownership levels across the parish are generally higher than West Suffolk as a whole, as illustrated in Figure 7. Just under 60 percent of households had 2 two or more cars at the time of the 2021 Census, compared with 43 percent across West Suffolk as a whole. The high levels of car ownership are expected to continue, especially given the trend over recent years for adult children to remain in the family home for longer and the continuing decline of bus services. These higher levels of car ownership lead to an

increased pressure on space both within the grounds of established dwellings and on the roads in the vicinity.

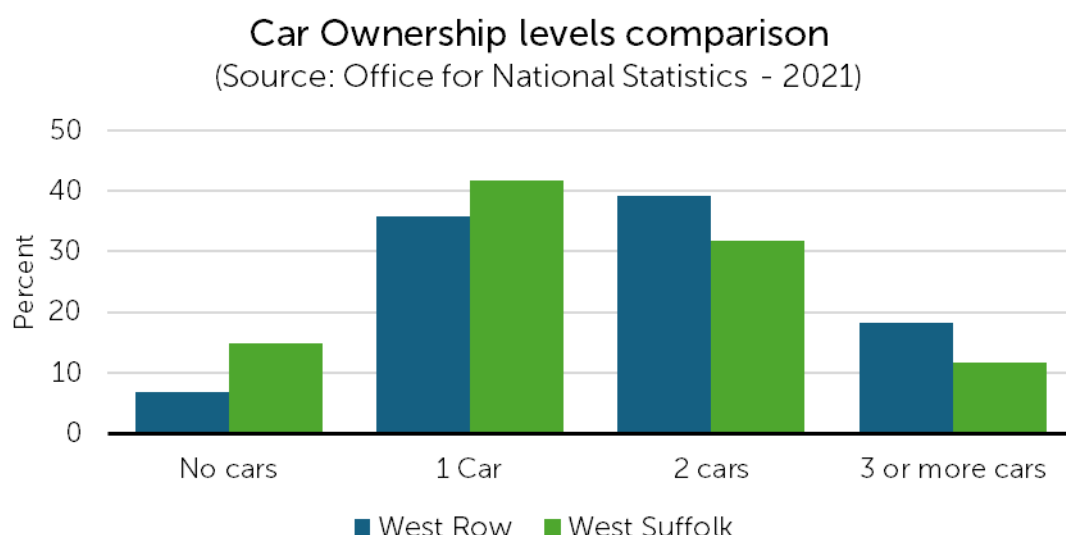


Figure 7 – Car ownership levels comparison

- 10.11 Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states that, "If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account: a) the accessibility of the development; b) the type, mix and use of development; c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport; d) local car ownership levels; and e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles."
- 10.12 The Suffolk County Council Parking Guidance (2019) for residential development acknowledges that providing a reduced number of parking spaces at a travel origin does not effectively discourage people from owning a car unless heavily restricted and alternative modes of transport are available. It states that parking guidance for origins should be used as a minimum advisory standard. The 2019 standards for residential development are reproduced below:

Dwelling size	Current minimum requirement
1 bedroom	1 space per dwelling
2 bedrooms	2 spaces per dwelling
3 bedrooms	2 spaces per dwelling
4+ bedrooms	3 spaces per dwelling

- 10.13 Given the higher levels of car ownership in West Row, it is therefore reasonable that parking standards should also be set at a higher level than the recommended minimum requirements. For all developments, the minimum parking spaces required for each new dwelling shall be as set out below:

Dwelling size	West Row minimum requirement
1 bedroom	2 spaces per dwelling
2 bedrooms	2 spaces per dwelling
3 bedrooms	3 spaces per dwelling
4+ bedrooms	3 spaces per dwelling

- 10.14 On-street car parking can have a significant impact on a locality and have a detrimental impact on the ability for emergency services to respond to calls. Given the road structure in the village centre comprising narrow lanes and culs-de-sac, it is generally not appropriate to make provision for visitor car parking on the highway. It is therefore essential that all future vehicle parking provided as part of a development is integrated

into the site without creating an environment dominated by vehicles.

- 10.15 The transition from petrol/diesel vehicles to electric during the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan is going to require retro-fitting vehicle charging points at homes and businesses. For new developments, it is essential that adequate provision is made for the change to electric vehicles. Although the "County Council Guidance for Parking" provides minimum requirements for electric vehicle charging, it is considered that the residential requirements (to provide ducting and suitable consumer unit to allow the install of one wall charging unit per dwelling when required by householder) does not future proof development and that, where feasible, new dwellings should have two electric vehicle charging points provided.
- 10.16 Given the good cycle route link to Mildenhall, it is essential that new dwellings also make provision for secure and covered cycle storage. The County Council Guidance for parking also contains minimum requirements and these should be taken into account when designing new residential development.

Policy WRNP 14 – Parking Standards

Development proposals should maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network ensuring that all vehicle parking is designed to be integrated into the site without creating an environment dominated by vehicles.

In residential developments the following minimum provision shall be made within the curtilage of the dwelling:

Dwelling size	West Row minimum requirement
1 bedroom	2 spaces per dwelling
2 bedrooms	2 spaces per dwelling
3 bedrooms	3 spaces per dwelling
4+ bedrooms	3 spaces per dwelling

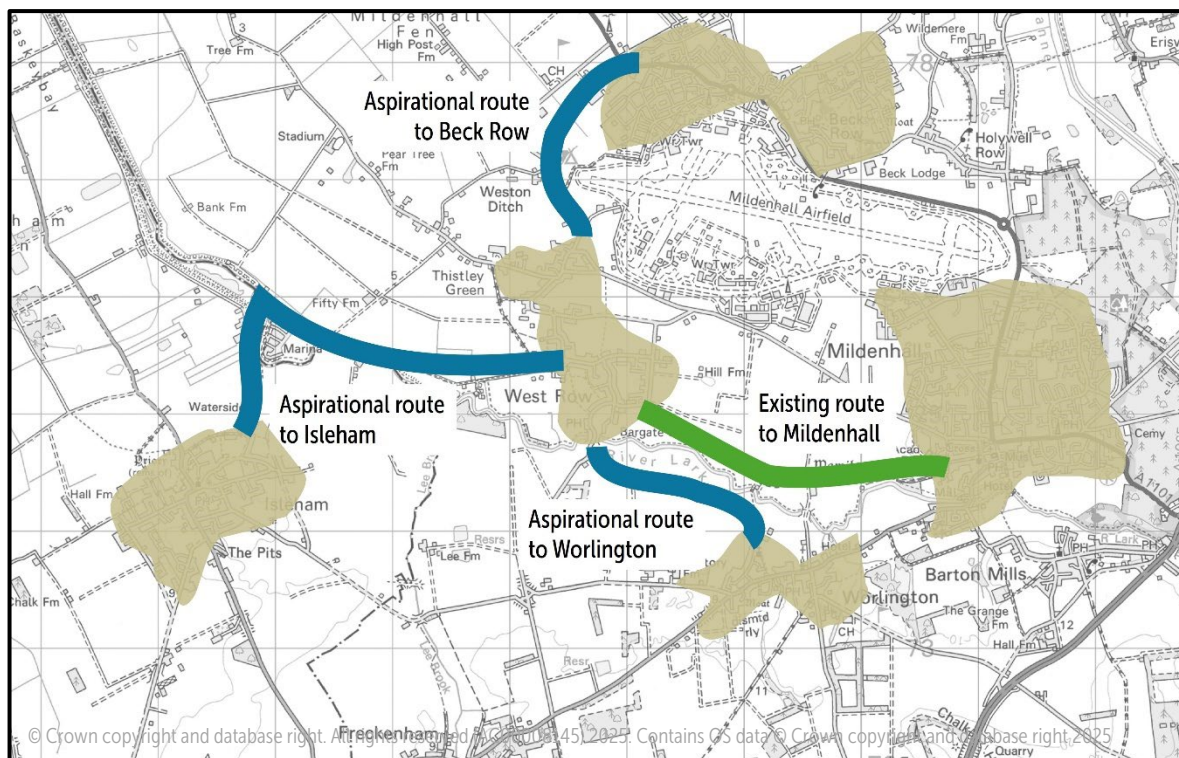
Public Rights of Way

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

Policy WRNP 15 – Public Rights of Way

Measures to improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way and bridleways 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.

- 10.18 Connectivity with nearby settlements is one measure that can help reduce dependence on cars. Although a surfaced bridleway exists between the village and Mildenhall, including the Secondary school and leisure centre, similar quality provision does not exist to other nearby villages. Opportunities may arise in the future to create such links, the broad objectives of which are illustrated on Map X. The Parish Council will seek to pursue such provision.

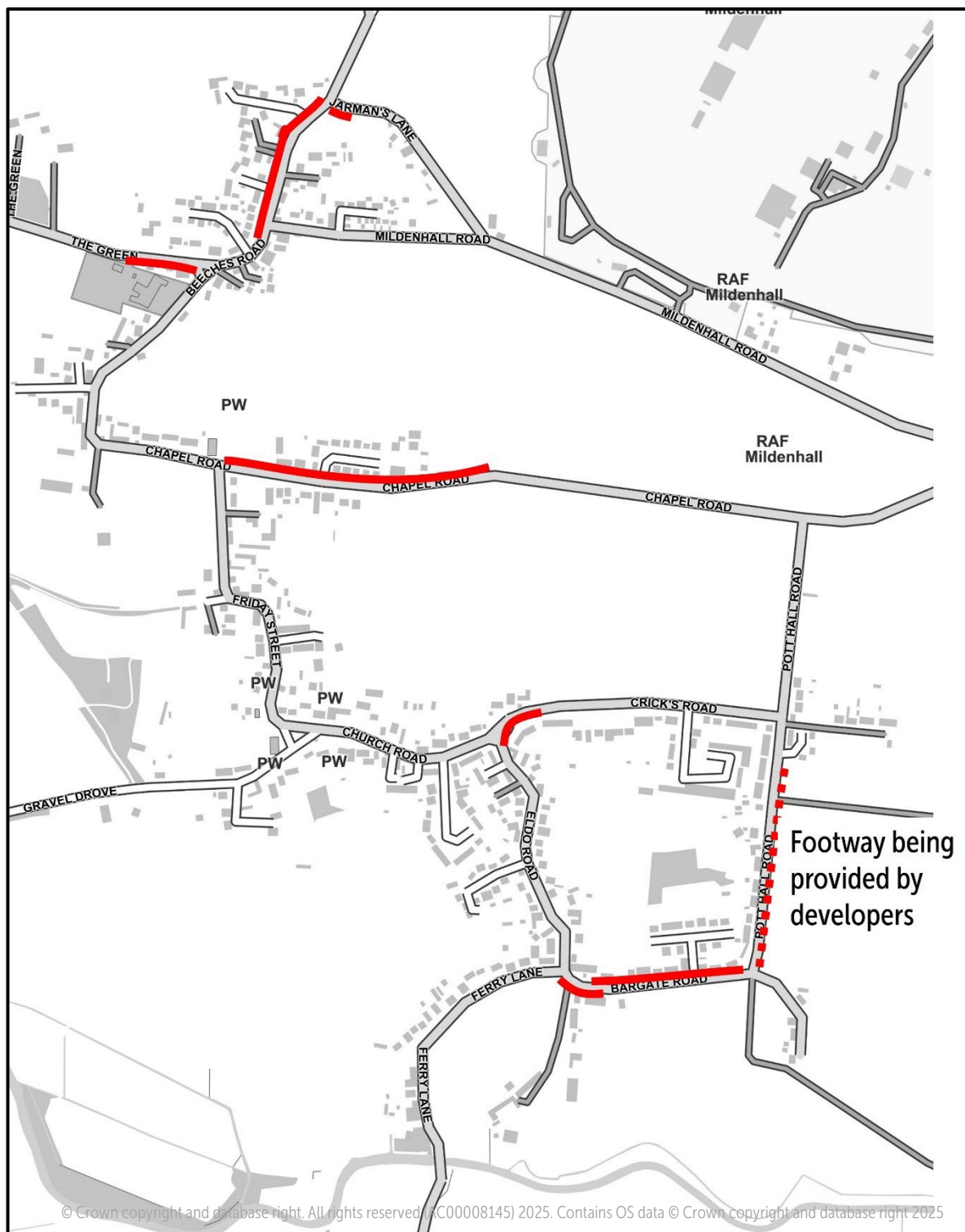


Map 8 – Safe walking and cycling routes aspirations

Community Action 7 – Safe Walking and Cycling Routes to Beck Row and Isleham

The Parish Council will seek to work with landowners and the County Highways Department to secure safe walking and cycling routes to Beck Row and Isleham.

- 10.19 As noted above, the quality of footways across the village is very varied. In some areas there are no footways despite the number of homes in the locality, whereas elsewhere the footways are narrow, such as at the corner of Church Road and Eldo Road where forward visibility is very limited. The Parish Council has previously lobbied the County Council Highways Department to seek improvements, but to no avail. Suffolk County Council have publicly stated that they are striving to make it safer, easier and more enjoyable for everyone to walk, cycle and wheel in and around the county and, given the level of concerns raised by residents, improvements will continue to be sought in order that West Row can contribute towards delivering safer for options local travel. Potential areas for improvement are illustrated on Map 9.

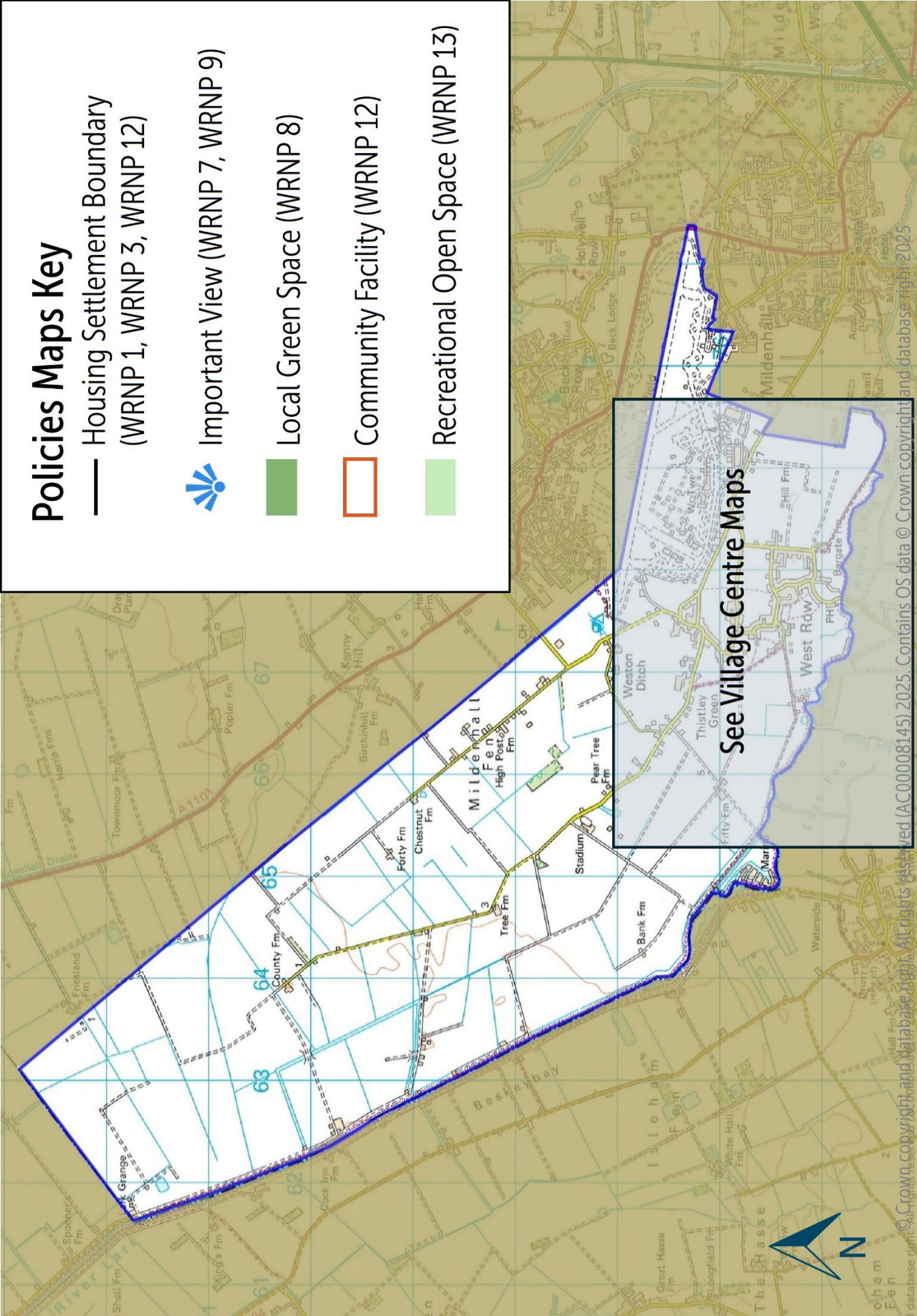


Map 9 – Potential footway improvements

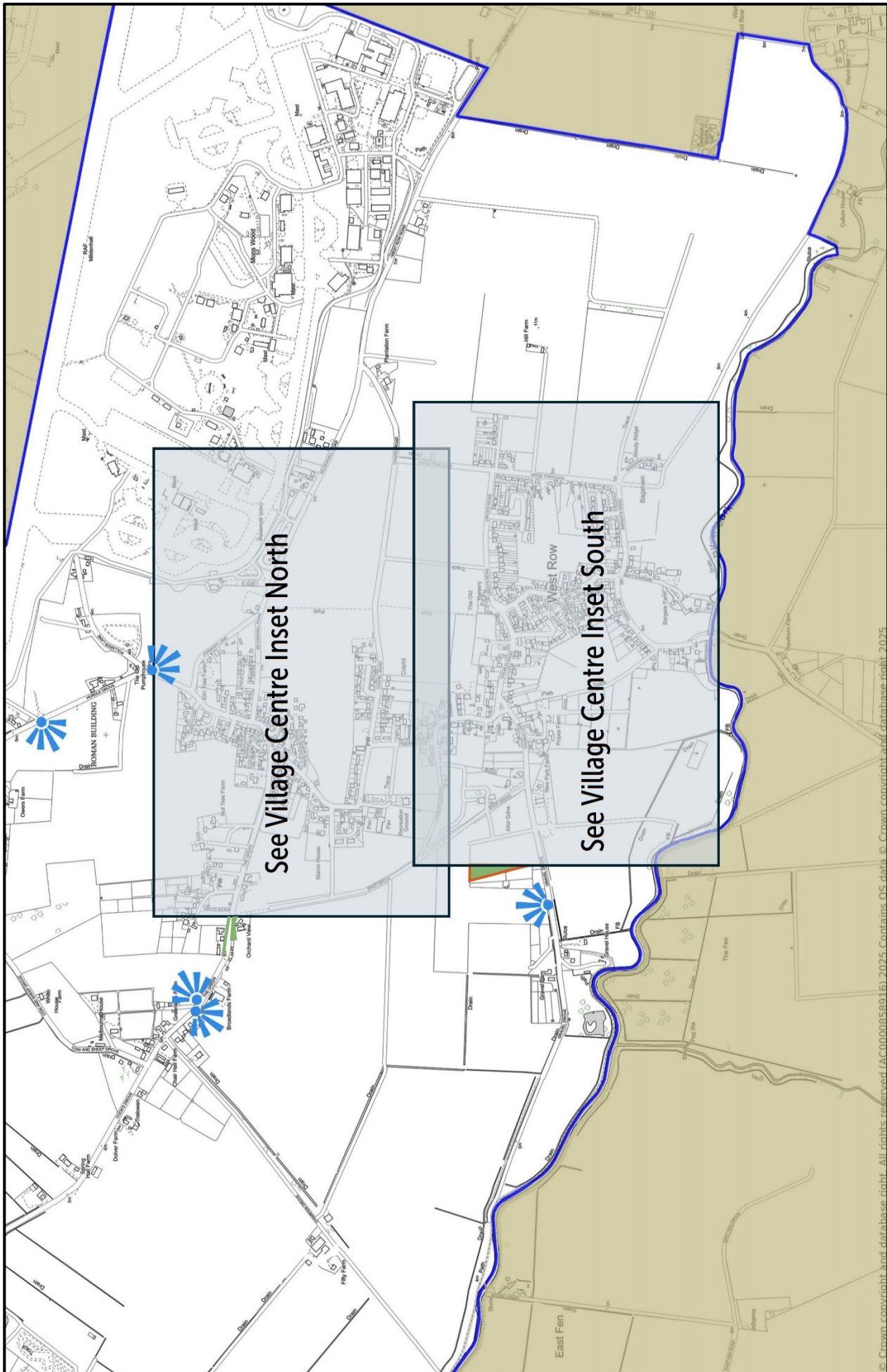
Community Action 8 – Footway Improvements

The Parish Council will continue to take opportunities to lobby the County Highways Department to improve footways in the village through filling gaps and increasing the width of existing footways where necessary.





Village Policies Map



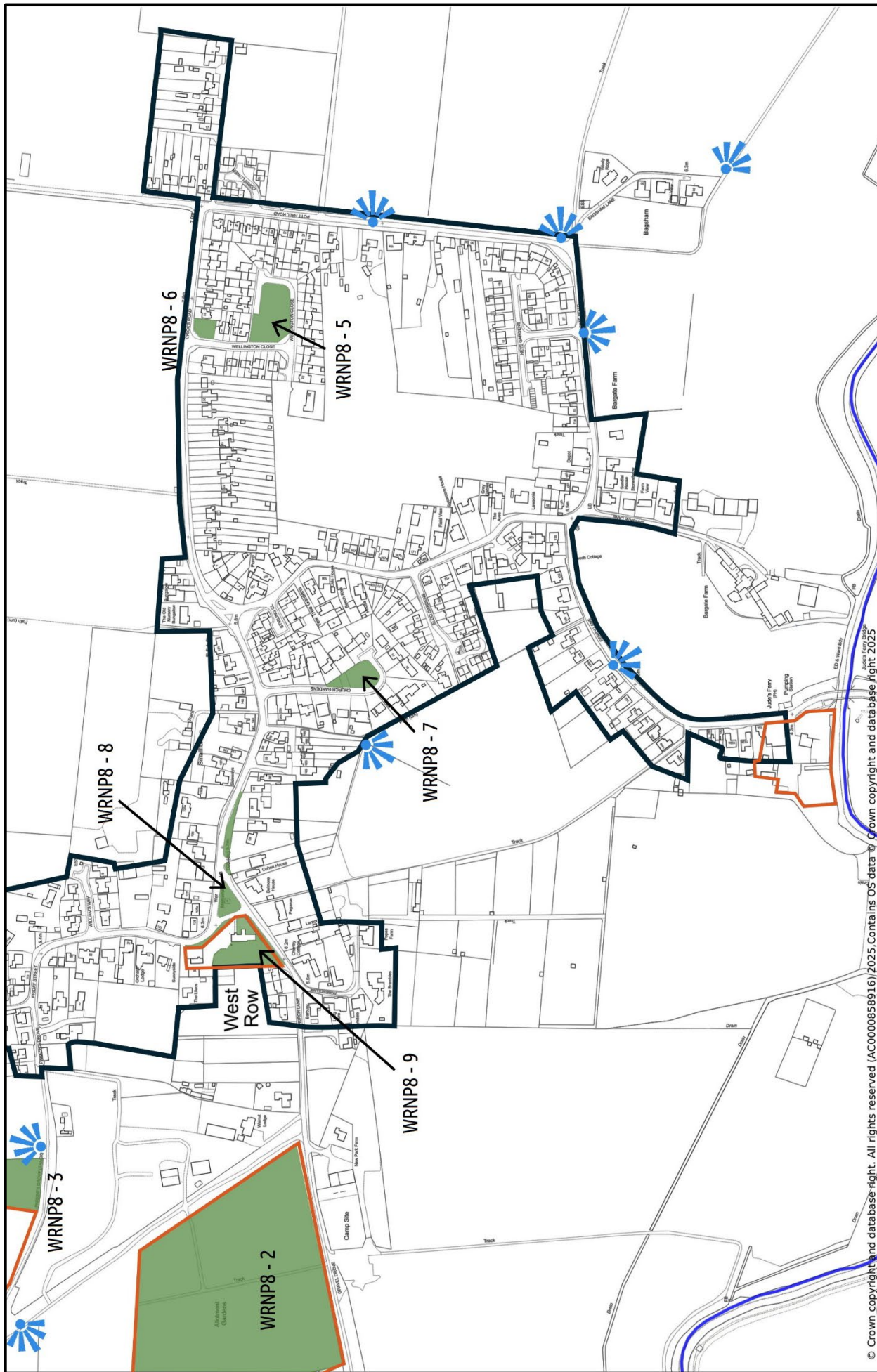
The map displays the WRNP8 area with various land parcels and their designations. The parcels are labeled as follows:

- WRNP8 - 1
- WRNP8 - 11
- WRNP8 - 12
- WRNP8 - 10
- WRNP8 - 13
- WRNP8 - 4
- WRNP8 - 3

The map also shows a green line representing a path or boundary, and several blue starburst symbols indicating specific points of interest. The map is overlaid with a grid and includes a scale bar and a north arrow.

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Village Centre Inset Map South



Appendix 1 - Designated Heritage Assets

As at January 2025

Source - As described on Historic England's Register of Listed Buildings

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Scheduled Monument

Mildenhall Roman Site

Grade II

161 Eldo Road

Bargate Farmhouse, including attached outbuilding at north end

21 Beeches Road

The White Cottage, Beeches Road

101 Friday Street

Popes, Pamments Lane

Elm Tree Farmhouse, 1 Beeches Road

81 Chapel Road

West Row War Memorial

Appendix 2 – Development Design Checklist

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

Street grid and layout:

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?
- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

Local green spaces, views & character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how will this be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention eg permeable landscaping swales etc?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

Gateway and access features:

- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

Buildings layout and grouping:

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?

- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the context of the village?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?
- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles?
- If any of the buildings were to be heated by an individual air source heat pump (ASHP), is there space to site it within the property boundary without infringing on noise and visual requirements?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night to reduce peak loads? And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?
- Building line and boundary treatment:
- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatment been considered in the context of the site?

Building line and boundary treatment:

- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so can they be screened from view being careful not to cause over shading?
- Household extensions:
- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy overbearing or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of size extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roofscape?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the size extension set back from the front of the house?
- Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?
- Can any materials be re-used in situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?

Building materials and surface treatment:

- What is the distinctive material in the area?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?

- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?
- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.
- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced? E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

Car parking:

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?
- Can electric vehicle charging points be provided?
- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/communal facility where appropriate?
- If covered car ports or cycle storage is included, can it incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels or a biodiverse roof in its design?

Architectural details and design:

- Does the proposal reflect the characteristics of the locality in its design?
- Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties? This means that it follows the height massing and general proportions of adjacent buildings and how it takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features?
- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?
- Is it possible to incorporate passive environmental design features such as larger roof overhangs, deeper window reveals and/or external louvres/shutters to provide shading in hotter months?
- Can the building designs utilise thermal mass to minimise heat transfer and provide free cooling?
- Can any external structures such as balconies be fixed to the outside of the building, as opposed to cantilevering through the building fabric to reduce thermal bridge?

Glossary

Affordable Housing: defined by the Government in the NPPF as:

housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) **Social Rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent; (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
- b) **Other affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- c) **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

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

Best and most versatile agricultural land: Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

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

Biodiversity Action Plan: A strategy prepared for a local area aimed at conserving biological diversity.

Community Facilities: For the purposes of this Plan, these are defined as meeting places, places of worship, recreation and play areas.

Conservation (for heritage policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a

heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

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

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

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

Historic environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

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

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

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

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

Neighbourhood plan: A plan prepared by a parish council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Priority Habitats are those which have been deemed to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity, being listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, and with maintenance and restoration of these habitats being promoted through agri-environment schemes.

Public Rights of Way: A public right of way is a right by which the public can pass along linear routes over land at all times. Although the land may be owned by a private individual, the public have a legal right across that land along a specific route. Public rights of way are all highways in law, but the term 'public rights of way' is generally used to cover more minor highways.

Footpath: A footpath is a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot only.

Bridleway: A bridleway is a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot, horseback and on a pedal cycle (including mountain-bikes). There may also be a right to drive animals along a bridleway.

Restricted byway: A restricted byway is a highway over which the public is entitled to travel on foot, horseback and with non-mechanically propelled vehicles (such as pedal cycles and horse-drawn vehicles). There may also be a right to drive animals along a restricted byway.

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

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

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

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

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



WEST ROW

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2025-2041



West Row Parish Council