

Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2036



Referendum version, July 2024



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. The parish of Wells-next-the-Sea	15
3. How the Plan was prepared	35
4. Vision and objectives	43
5: Housing and Design	50
6: Employment and Retail	84
7. Infrastructure and Access	91
8. Environment.....	98
9. Sustainability and Climate Change	108
10. Area specific policies.....	111
11. Implementation and monitoring.....	116
12. Projects and actions	117
Appendix.....	119
Appendix A: Neighbourhood Plan Working Party members.....	119
Appendix B: Justification for Non-designated Heritage Assets.....	120
Appendix C: Justification for Local Green Spaces.....	129
Appendix D: Glossary	135

If you would like this document in large print
 or in another format please contact
 Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council
clerk@wellstowncouncil.org.uk



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Development Plan provides the first ever statutory planning policy document specifically for the parish of Wells-next-the-Sea. Neighbourhood Plans such as this were made possible by powers contained within the 2011 Localism Act which sought to decentralise policy making to the local level giving more powers to communities and the right to shape future development where they live.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led document for guiding the future development of the parish. It is about the use and development of land between 2023 and 2036. Once the Plan is 'made' and adopted, North Norfolk District Council will use it to determine planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area, in conjunction with the strategic policies set out in the Local Plan. Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council will use the Plan as a basis for responding to planning applications.
- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan for Wells-next-the-Sea was prepared by a volunteer team on behalf of Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council. The Wells Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (WNPWP) comprises a mixture of Town Councillors and local residents from around the town (see **Appendix A** for Working Party members). The process of preparing the Plan involved several stages of public consultation and community engagement and originally began in February 2019.
- 1.4 By undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan, the Working Party aims to give a voice to local residents and businesses by enabling more local participation in shaping policies that will be used in decisions that affect the future of the town. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies areas where a more local, 'Wells' focus can be applied to planning policies.
- 1.5 The Plan looks ahead to 2036, which is consistent with the plan period of the emerging North Norfolk Local Plan (NNLP). It recognises that there has been development in the parish and that there will continue to be so over the plan period. The Plan seeks to manage that development proactively with an emphasis on helping to ensure that local needs are met, that local issues are taken into consideration in the decision-making process, whilst the historic and natural environment of the parish and the current community facilities are preserved and enhanced and encouraged to thrive. The key issues facing the Parish, which were highlighted through public participation, included concerns about housing for local people, the impacts of second home ownership, visitor parking and the traffic impacts generated by high numbers of visitors, climate change and sea level rise, the design of new development, and the sustainability of community facilities.



- 1.6 The Plan operates in the context of the North Norfolk Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan's vision and objectives is realised through policies identified in this Plan but also from future projects and promotion and advocacy by the Town Council.
- 1.7 The Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan is there to ensure that development takes place in an appropriate way for the parish. It has been positively prepared, with the purpose of supporting and managing Wells-next-the-Sea's growth, not preventing it. In practice, higher level planning documents such as the emerging North Norfolk Local Plan cannot feasibly deal with all of the issues particular to every Parish and village across the entire district. The Local Plan sets a strategic context to assist the Neighbourhood Plan to provide additional details which reflect specific local circumstances and conditions.
- 1.8 The Neighbourhood Plan provides clarity on what is expected from development proposals in the parish. A Neighbourhood Plan is a significant document and will carry legal weight so that developers have to take note when considering future developments in the parish.
- 1.9 The Neighbourhood Plan Area covers the entire Parish of Wells-next-the-Sea and was formally designated by North Norfolk District Council on 11th February 2019.

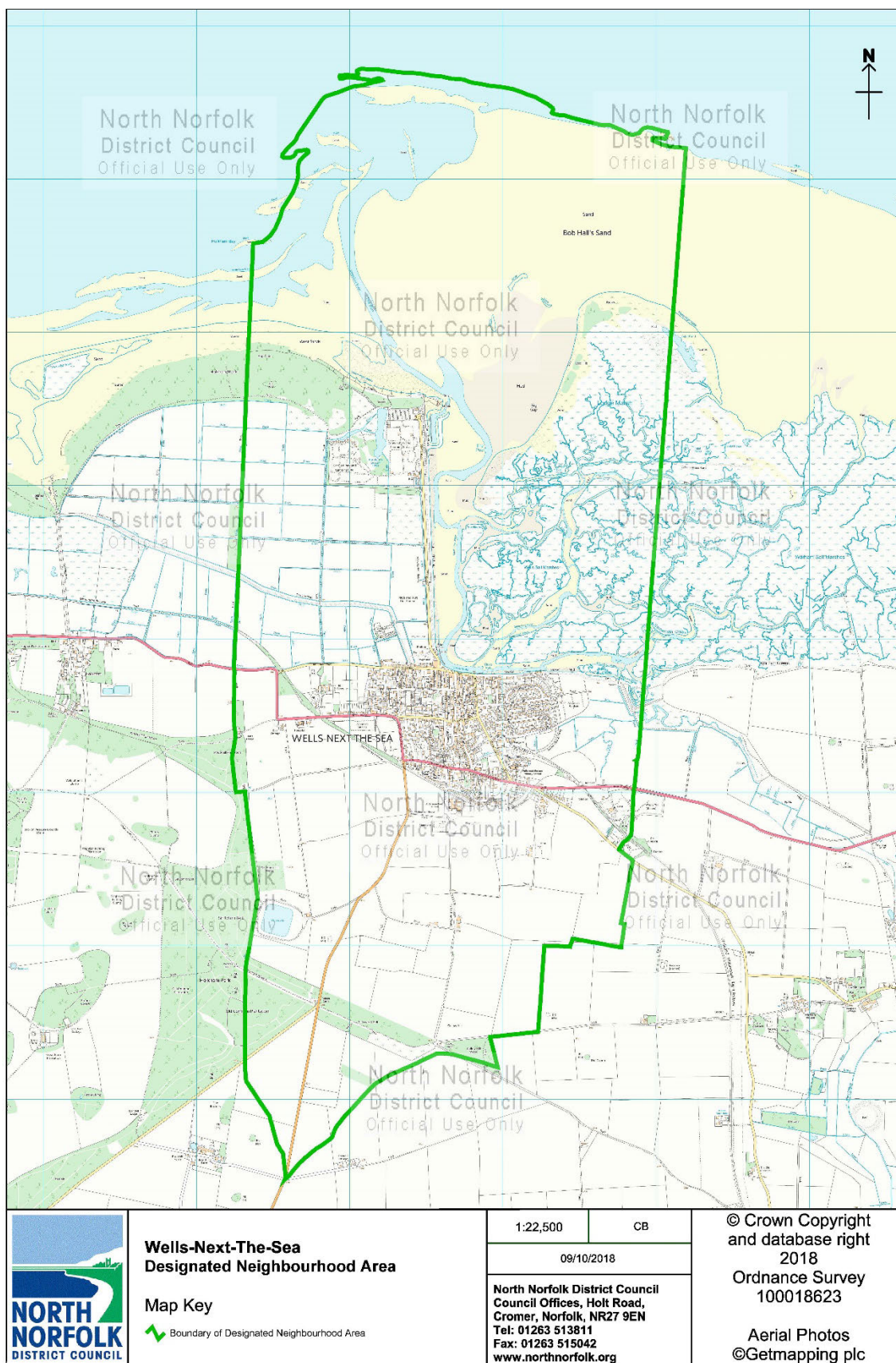


Figure 1: Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Area.



Plan preparation process

- 1.10 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). The flow chart below (figure 2) outlines the stages the Working Party has completed in preparing the Plan.

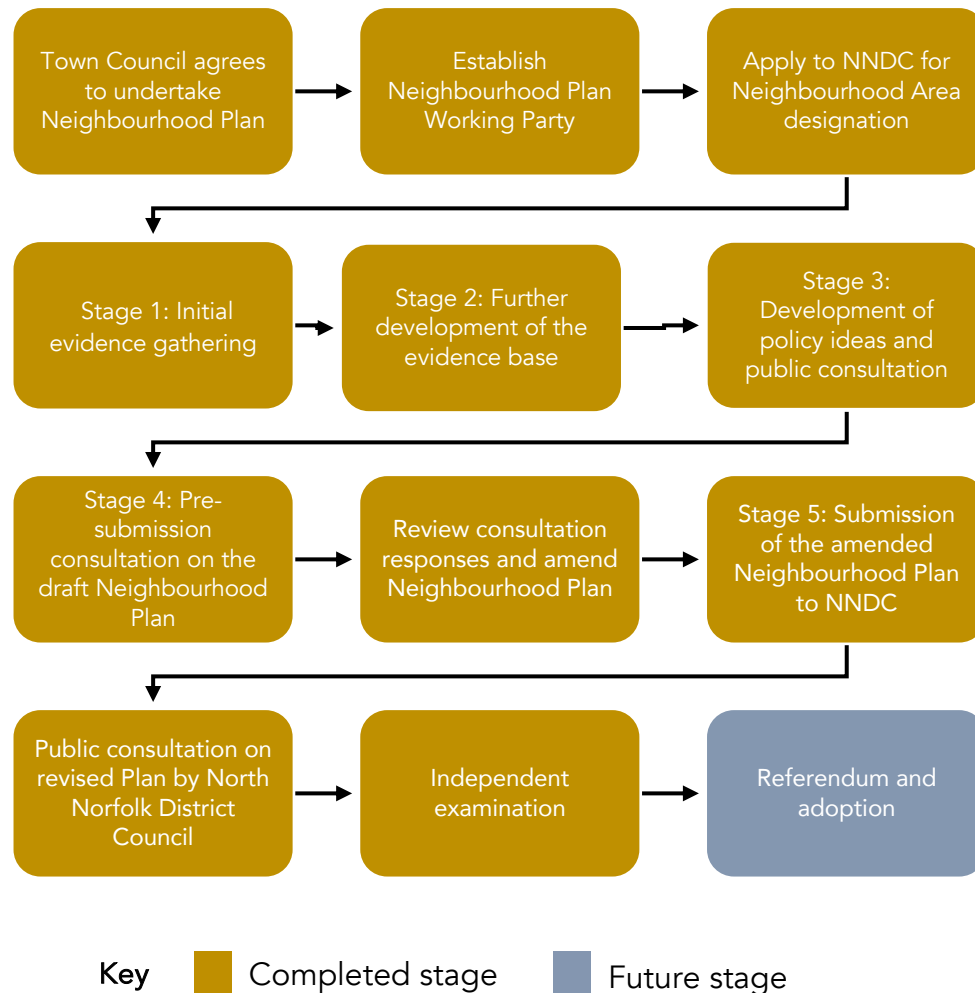


Figure 2: Stages of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Pre-Submission stage consultation

- 1.11 A draft ('Pre-Submission') Neighbourhood Plan was published for a six-week period of consultation between 15 July and 9 September 2022, in line with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning General Regulations 2012 (as amended). A number of responses to the consultation were received and details of these along with the changes made to the Plan as a result are set out in the Consultation Statement submitted at time of examination.



Submission stage and consultation

1.12 This version of the Plan represented Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council's final proposed Neighbourhood Plan document. It was submitted to North Norfolk District Council on 20th June 2023 in line with Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning General Regulations 2012 (as amended), along with a number of other prescribed documents for independent examination:

- **Basic Conditions Statement:** The purpose of this document was to set out in the view of the town council how the Neighbourhood Plan met the prescribed Basic Conditions tests. The document also considers whether the Plan is in general conformity with local and national planning policy and does not breach EU law (as amended), and other basic conditions.
- **Consultation Statement:** The purpose of this document is to set out how Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council & Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has engaged with the community in preparing the Plan. The main focus of the 'Consultation Statement' is on the 6-week Regulation 14 Pre-submission stage consultation but also details earlier events and feedback. The Consultation Statement shares the feedback received during the Neighbourhood Planning process, the comments made through the consultations and, where necessary and appropriate, how the comments received have been considered in developing the Plan.
- **Publication of Draft Plan:** NNDC published the Submission Version Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents for a 6-week period of public consultation in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning General Regulations 2012 (as amended). The consultation took place between 2nd October and 13th November 2022.

Independent examination

1.13 An independent examiner, Mr Andrew Ashcroft, was appointed by NNDC in association with the Town Council to carry out an independent examination of the submitted draft Neighbourhood Plan. The examination commenced on 3rd January 2024 and concluded with the submission of the Examiners final report, submitted 15th April 2024. The examination was conducted by a process of written representations and did not involve a public hearing.

1.14 The Submission Version Plan and accompanying statements, evidence base and representations received during the Regulation 16 consultation were forwarded to the examiner and published on the NNDC web site. The full list of information and evidence considered by the examiner is detailed in the examiners report.

1.15 Further information can be seen at www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/wellsnp.



- 1.16 The examiner issued his independent report to NNDC on 15 April 2024. The report recommended that the Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Development Plan for the period up to 2036 should, subject to the specified modifications (those contained in the report), proceed to referendum. Consequently, this version of the Neighbourhood Plan has been updated to incorporate the examiners modifications, and any necessary consequential changes.

Decision

- 1.17 It is the responsibility of NNDC as the Local Planning Authority to determine if the Plan meets the Basic Conditions tests, with or without modification, and whether it should proceed to referendum. Under the regulations (Town & Country Planning Act section 4b and Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, 2012) (as amended), officers have considered the recommendations made in the examiners report, and the reasons for them, and subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in the examiners report, and any necessary factual and consequential changes to the supporting text, agrees that the Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to public referendum.
- 1.18 Consequently, this version of the Neighbourhood Plan has been updated to incorporate the examiners recommended modifications along with necessary factual and consequential changes. The Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan cannot be formally 'made' (adopted) until after a positive referendum result. However, government guidance stipulates that emerging Neighbourhood Plans, and in particular 'post-examination' plans, should be given weight in decision making where that Plan is a material consideration to the application:
- *'An emerging Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be a material consideration in many cases. Paragraph 48 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework sets out that weight may be given to relevant policies in emerging plans in decision taking. Factors to consider include the stage of preparation of the plan and the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies. A referendum ensures that the community has the final say on whether the Neighbourhood Plan comes into force as part of the development plan. Where the local planning authority publishes notice of a referendum, the emerging Neighbourhood Plan should be given more weight, while also taking account of the extent of unresolved objections to the plan and its degree of consistency with NPPF.'*
 - *'Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that a local planning authority must have regard to a post-examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application.'*



- 1.19 Consequently, the issuing of the Decision Statement on 20th May 2024 brought into force this version of the Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan as a material consideration in the planning application process and where appropriate, proportionate weight should be applied in decision making.

The Referendum

- 1.20 Further details of the referendum will be published in a Referendum Information Statement and made available at www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/wellsnp along with other statutory documents. People who reside in the Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Area and are registered to vote on the electoral register will be entitled to vote at the referendum.
- 1.21 At the referendum a specific question will be asked of the local community:
Do you want North Norfolk District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Area to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?
- 1.22 If more than 50 per cent of those voting vote yes, then this Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the overall development plan, along with the NNDC Local Plan and National Planning Policy and shall be a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications.

National and local planning policy context

- 1.23 Development is defined as ‘the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land’.¹ Some ‘developments’ are ‘permitted development’ as set out by legislation and therefore do not require the benefit of planning permission. Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 emphasises that the planning system continues to be a ‘plan-led’ system and restates the requirement that ‘determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise’. The policies in this Neighbourhood Plan are only enacted where a proposal requires the benefit of planning permission.²
- 1.24 ‘The ‘National Planning Policy Framework’ (NPPF) was revised in December 2023. It sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how

¹ Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

² The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.



land is used, determining what will be built and where. The Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan has been produced to be in conformity with the revised NPPF, in particular, taking a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- 1.25 Every local planning authority in England is required to prepare a Local Plan. Local Plans include all of the local planning policies for the district's area and identify how land is used, determining what will be built and where. The relevant Local Plan in force for Wells-next-the-Sea is the North Norfolk Core Strategy which was adopted in 2008 and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) 2011. Both documents together with Norfolk County Council's adopted Mineral and Waste Plan and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) East Marine Plan constitute the relevant Development Plan. The Adopted Core Strategy, along with any Neighbourhood Plan, provides the basis for determining planning applications and future development in the local area and should be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework. It should be noted that the District Council is advancing a new replacement Local Plan which will replace the current Core Strategy and Site Allocations document up to 2036, which when adopted will provide the strategic direction for much of the Neighbourhood Plan period. Due regard to the emerging Local Plan has been given in the production of this Neighbourhood Plan.

- 1.26 The Adopted Core Strategy³ sets out the District Council's Vision for Wells as follows:

Paragraph 2.1.16: Wells-next-the-Sea will thrive as a local service centre and coastal resort town within the AONB⁴. Its residents will enjoy a good quality of life and throughout the year visitors will be drawn by the natural beauty of the surrounding area and diversity of the Town's social, economic, and environmental activity. The Town's unique character and that of its surrounding beaches, woodlands, marshlands, and countryside will have been protected and further enhanced. Housing to help meet the needs of local people will have been provided in locations well related to the built-up area. Essential supporting community facilities including primary and secondary education and health facilities will have been protected and improved. Retention and investment in employment activities and the creation of

³ Core Strategy (incorporating Development Control Policies) Adopted 2008: https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/1370/3-_core_strategy_-_incorporating_development_control_policies_-_adopted_2008_-_updated_2012.pdf

⁴ Formerly the 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB), now 'Norfolk Coast National Landscape' (NCNL).



new enterprise opportunities will also have been advanced to support the town's longer-term sustainability.

- 1.27 The Spatial Strategy (Policy SS1) as set out in the Adopted Core Strategy, defines Wells-next-the-Sea as a 'secondary' settlement. These are settlements where a more limited amount of additional development will be accommodated (approximately 25 per cent of employment land allocations and 20 per cent of new homes). Policy SS3 goes on to identify a housing requirement for Wells-next-the-Sea of between 100 and 150 new houses (on top of the existing commitment at that time) between 2001 and 2021. The Adopted Site Allocations Development Plan Document⁵ (SADPD) made only 1 specific housing allocation in Wells, which was: Land at Market Lane (W01) 120 dwellings (approx.). This site was owned by The Holkham Estate and has now been constructed.

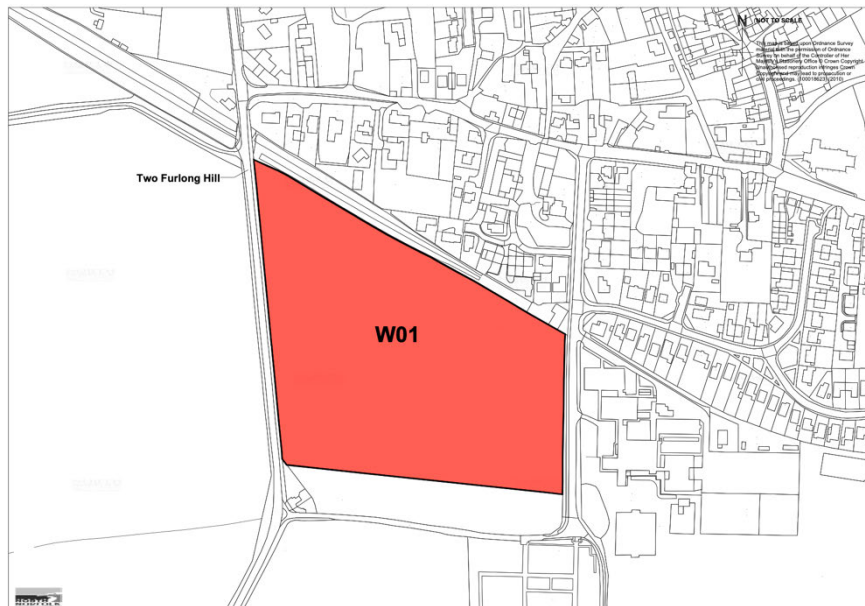


Figure 3: Land at Market Lane (W01), area of land allocated for development in the North Norfolk District Council Local Development Framework (source: Site Allocations Development Plan Document)⁶. **Now completed.**

- 1.28 In addition, the SADPD indicated that land immediately south of the above site '*could come forward as an affordable housing exception site and site layout should be carefully considered so as to integrate with this*'. This site is owned by The Holkham Estate and has not yet been developed.
- 1.29 The emerging North Norfolk Local Plan (NNLP) looks ahead to 2036. The emerging Local Plan will set the strategic context for the District (and the

⁵ North Norfolk Site Allocations (Wells-next-the-Sea): https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/1357/site_allocations_plan_-_wells.pdf

⁶ Site Allocations Development Plan Document, https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/1274/site_allocations_plan_-web.pdf



Neighbourhood Area) in the immediate future and for the majority of the Neighbourhood Plan period. The Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan, published in January 2022, identifies Wells-next-the-Sea as a 'small growth town' in the settlement hierarchy. This means it has been identified as one of four towns, together with Holt, Sheringham and Stalham and the village of Hoveton, where a more limited amount of additional development could be considered. The draft Local Plan makes proposed land allocations to deliver approximately 70 dwellings including approximately 25 affordable homes and associated Public Open Space. The proposed allocations are as shown in red, figure 4. The emerging North Norfolk Local Plan was submitted for Examination on 11th May 2023.

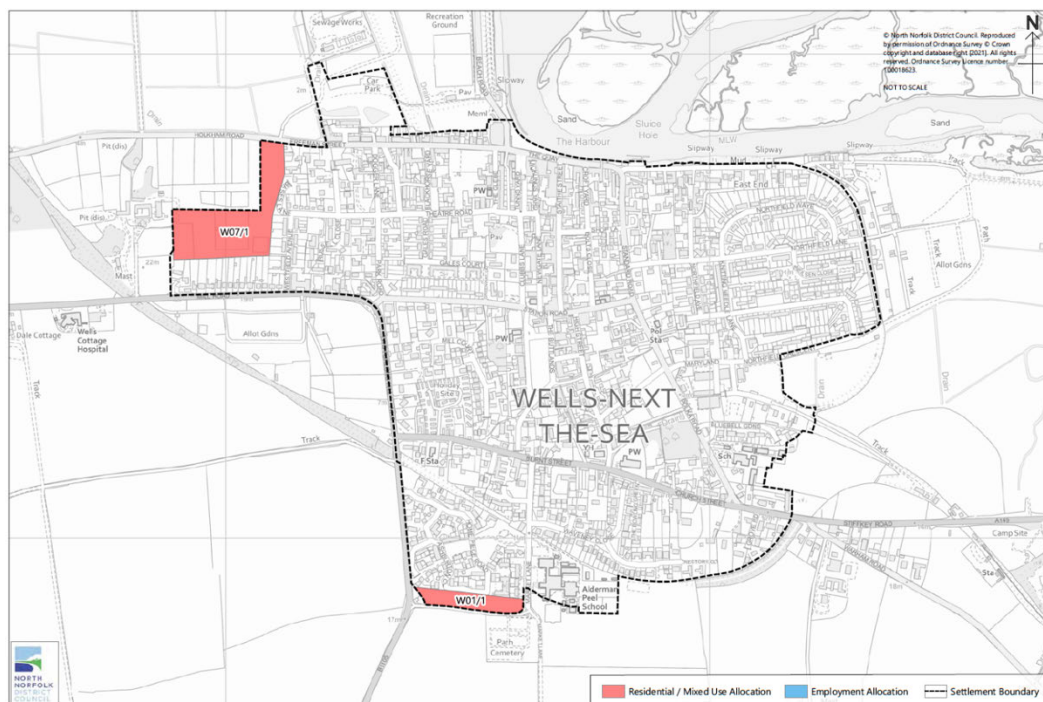


Figure 4: Allocations in Wells-next-the-Sea in the emerging North Norfolk Local Plan (source: North Norfolk Local Plan 2016-2036).⁷

- 1.30 The Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan once 'made' (adopted) will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and future planning applications for new development in the parish will be determined using its policies.

⁷ North Norfolk Local Plan proposed submission version, <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/7466/local-plan-proposed-submission-version-reg-19-publication.pdf>

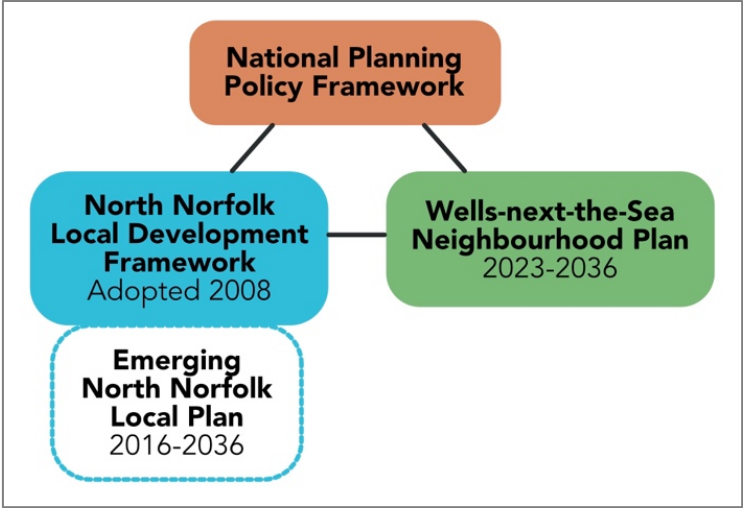


Figure 5: Spatial and strategic policy context – relationship between the National Planning Policy Framework, the Local Development Framework, the emerging Local Plan, and the Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan. Own diagram.

WELLS NEXT THE SEA



ARCH HOUSE
CAR PARK
←

WELLS NEXT THE SEA
WELLS NEXT THE SEA
WELLS NEXT THE SEA
WELLS NEXT THE SEA
WELLS NEXT THE SEA

Arch
House
BED &
BREAKFAST
TEL: 01323 711111
No Vacancies



2. The parish of Wells-next-the-Sea

- 2.1 The parish of Wells-next-the-Sea is located on the North Norfolk Coast between the coastal resorts of Hunstanton (15 miles to the west) and Cromer (20 miles to the east). The county town of Norwich is 32 miles to the southeast, the town of Fakenham 10 miles to the south and Blakeney 8 miles to the east. The town of Wells is located within North Norfolk District and within the Norfolk Coast National Landscape (NCNL), formerly the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

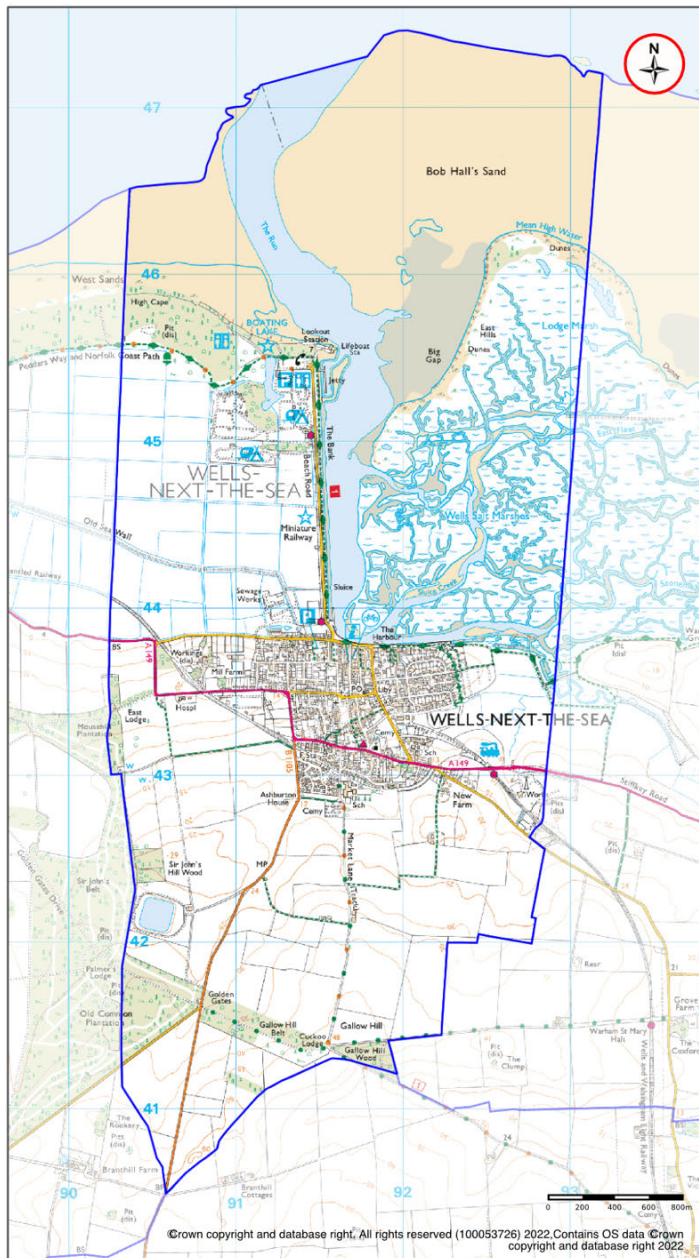


Figure 6: Wells-next-the-Sea parish, the neighbourhood area (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.



- 2.2 The Town is surrounded by attractive countryside which boasts a number of international wildlife designations such as a Ramsar site, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and a Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The area is a popular tourist location due to its beach, sand dunes and marshes together with the high-quality built heritage.
- 2.3 The civil parish has an area of 16.31 km² (6.30 sq. mi) and in 2001 had a population of 2,451, reducing to 2,165 at the 2011 census. Nearby villages include Blakeney, Burnham Market, Burnham Thorpe, Holkham and Walsingham all of which are popular with holiday makers and second homeowners. The major landowner in the parish is the Holkham Estate (the seat of the Earl of Leicester) and is based in nearby Holkham Hall.

Origins and evolution of the town

- 2.4 The parish name derives from Guella in the Domesday Book (half gallicised, half Latinised from Anglian Wella, a spring). This derives from spring wells of which Wells used to have many, rising through the chalk of the area. The town became Wells-next-the-Sea from juxta mare in the fourteenth century to distinguish it from other places of the same name. It appears as Wells-next-the-Sea (no hyphens) on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1838 and 1921.
- 2.5 The town has been a seaport since before the fourteenth century when it supplied grain to London and subsequently to the miners of the northeast in return for which Wells was supplied with coal. It was a significant port in the sixteenth century with 19 ships over 16 tons burden operating out of Wells in 1580, making it the major port in the area; the main trades were corn and coal. Wells was also from early days a manufacturer of malt. At its height the town boasted up to twelve maltings, having in 1750 contributed a third of the exports of malt from the country, mostly to Holland.
- 2.6 Wells was also a fishing port. In 1337 it is recorded as having had thirteen fishing boats; next door Holkham had nine. Its mariners brought first herring and then cod from Iceland in quantity between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. The regulation of the harbour in order to preserve its use was by Act of Parliament in 1663; and in 1769 Harbour Commissioners were appointed with powers over vessels entering and leaving (as they still have today). The Wells Harbour Commissioners (WHC) have legal responsibilities over a large part of Wells and are a leading community body. The work of the WHC is regulated by central government. All commissioners are volunteers and receive no payment for their work. The revenue from the services offered by the port is used entirely to finance the port's management and development. The Quay was substantially rebuilt in 1845 as part of attempts to improve the town. At the same time, Improvement Commissioners were appointed with the task of making the town commodious and attractive to residents and the burgeoning tourist trade. As



a small port, it built ships until the late nineteenth century; it never transferred to building motor vessels or to steel hulls.

- 2.7 The coming of the railway in 1857 reduced the harbour trade but it revived briefly after the Second World War for the import of fertiliser and animal feed. In the nineteenth century malting assumed an industrial character dominated by merchants rather than hands-on maltsters. Eventually, the entire Maltings estate was acquired by F. and G. Smith who had maltings in Dereham and Great Ryburgh. Following the First World War, demand began to fall, and new methods of production were being used. After a local dispute, the Wells operation was closed down in 1929. The post-war revival of the harbour trade made of the Quay a busy place from the 1960s to the 1990s. In 1982 there were 258 ship movements into the harbour. Small coasters, mostly from across the north sea brought in fertiliser and animal feed, latterly mostly soya beans until 1992 when changes in government regulations and the increasing size of North Sea vessels made the port uneconomic as an industrial trading port. The current Wells-based inshore fishing fleet comprises 13 boats catching mainly shellfish for local and export markets.
- 2.8 Wind-farm support began in 2009 with the building of the Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm and the construction of an outer harbour next to the lifeboat house to accommodate service boats. In 2021, the administrative and technical support operation relocated to Great Yarmouth.
- 2.9 Tourism, which had begun on a small scale a century before became a major draw, based as it was on the Pinewoods Caravan site which was much expanded post-war. Pre-war Wells was a popular base for wildfowling and a number of hotels in the town catered for this need. The visitors brought an early interest in conservation although until as recently as the 1980s, Wells was an industrial town rather than the tourist destination it is today. In 1900 it was full of tightly packed cottages many of them insanitary and squalid. It was the work of the town's council beginning during the First World War to build a substantial number of council houses so that by 1960 it had rehoused nearly 350 families, more per capita than any urban centre in England.

The sea and the wider parish

- 2.10 The North Sea is now a mile from the town; the main channel which once wandered through marshes, grazed by sheep for hundreds of years, was confined by earthworks to the west in 1859 when Holkham Estate reclaimed some 800 hectares of saltmarsh north-west of Wells with the building of a mile-long bank. This reclamation was claimed to have reduced the tidal scour through the West Fleet which provided much of the water entering the channel to its north. Because the town has no river running through it, Wells relies on the tides to scour the harbour. The problem of siltation had preoccupied the merchants of the town for hundreds of years and occupied



the attentions of various engineers, leading eventually to disputes which came to court in the eighteenth century. Sir John Coode, who had been knighted for his work on the completion of Portland harbour was recruited to solve its siltation problems in the 1880s. No attempted solution proved permanent. The growth of faster marine traffic whose wake washes at the banks of the marshes has widened the channel and reduced tidal flow further. However spring tides regularly overtop the Quay wall and marshes. The flood barrier fitted in 2012 can protect the western half of the town but as sea levels continue to rise the risk of inundation particularly at the east end, increases with larger volumes of water surging into the harbour area.

Population and demographic information

- 2.11 As mentioned above, the usual resident population of Wells-next-the-Sea parish was 2,165 in the 2011 census. Figures supplied by North Norfolk in May 2023, based on the 2020 mid-year population estimates indicated this figure had risen to 2,245. The 2011 population was 47.5 percent male and 52.5 percent female.
- 2.12 The age structure of Wells-next-the-Sea parish from the 2011 Census data indicates that the mean age of residents in Wells-next-the-Sea was 51.6 years in the 2011 Census compared with 41.7 years for Norfolk and 47.5 years for North Norfolk. The number of residents aged 65-84 is 4 per cent higher than the North Norfolk average and 7 per cent higher than the county average.

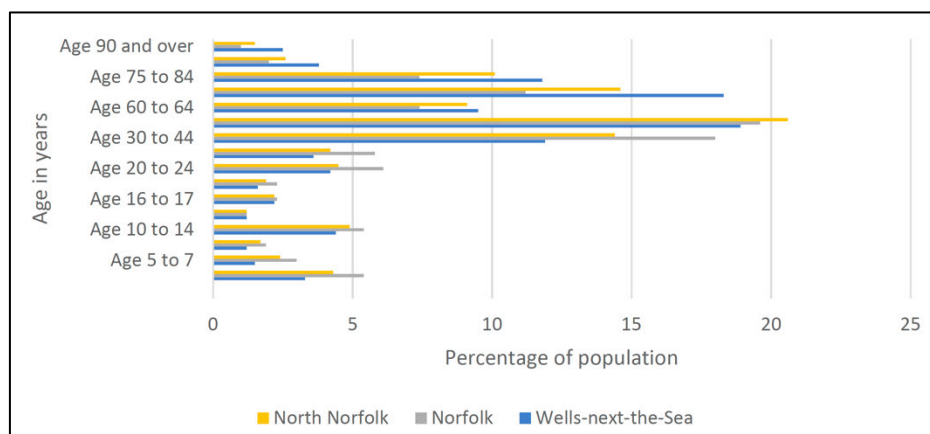


Figure 7: Graph showing the percentage of the population in age categories for Norfolk, North Norfolk, and Wells-next-the-Sea, 2011 Census.⁸

Health

- 2.13 Given the age profile of the resident Wells population, it is unsurprising that health statistics from the 2011 census indicated that the health of the population was slightly less good than that of North Norfolk overall but significantly more so than the rest of Norfolk. Wells Health Centre is an NHS General Practice Surgery located in Bolts Close. The Practice Manager reported in an email following a request for information for the data profile,

⁸ Source: www.ons.gov.uk, data obtained 04.02.2021.



that capacity of the Health Centre could be an issue dependent on the level of development in the area. Investment in health is part driven by planned growth and from contributions from development.

- 2.14 Wells is fortunate to be served by the Health and Wellbeing at the Old Cottage Hospital, (Heritage House) which is operated by the Wells Community Hospital Trust, a local charity that provides a range of accessible, flexible, integrated health and wellbeing services to the communities of West and North Norfolk coastal villages and towns. The Trust aims to provide support locally, with and by local people, so that the community can keep independent for longer, through the provision of high-quality clinical services and non-clinical therapeutic support in a safe environment. The Trust is required to operate to the benefit of the community, and this allows the Trust the flexibility to adapt some of the land and buildings for other community purposes in the future should the need arise. Such uses would be complimentary to the services it already provides.

Deprivation

- 2.15 Wells-next-the-Sea parish is covered by two Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). These are named 002B and 002C. A Lower Super Output Area is a geographical area. In the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019, LSOA 002C (which covers the rural part of the parish) was ranked 19,309 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England where 1 is the most deprived LSOA. This is amongst the 50 per cent least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. LSOA 002B (which covers the main built-up area of the town) was ranked 9,601 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England where 1 is the most deprived LSOA. This is amongst the 30 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.

Crime

- 2.16 Overall, crime data for Wells with Holkham Ward shows 153 crimes January 2020 to December 2020. This is a crime rate of 29 per 1,000 people. This is higher than the rate for North Norfolk District at 23 per 1,000 people and lower than Norfolk at 33 per 1,000 people.

Education

- 2.17 There is a range of educational provision within the town. Pre-school care is currently not available in the town although has been previously well catered for and attempts are being made locally to re-establish such provision.
- 2.18 **Wells Primary and Nursery School** is part of The Wensum Trust and had 197 pupils on roll in January 2022, which had fallen from 228 in September 2020. Pupils attend from age 3 – 11 years.



2.19 **Alderman Peel High School** is run as an Academy and serves pupils aged 11 to 16 years. There were 522 pupils on roll in September 2020 and 583 in January 2022. In response to an email for information for the Neighbourhood Plan data profile in February 2021, the High School Principal reported that the school is over-subscribed through attracting applications from pupils out of catchment. The school has a capacity of 535. Although it has a gym and a swimming pool it does not have a sports hall. The following issues have been identified by the Principal:

- There is a need for expansion based upon parents who live out of catchment choosing the school. Norfolk County Council will not pay for any expansion at school because the increased need is due to students coming from out of catchment.
- The number of children being born in catchment is reducing annually so there is a need to attract children from out of catchment, particularly from West Norfolk.
- Recruiting staff is a major challenge due to house prices in the area. The lack of affordable houses and / or houses for key workers is a big issue.
- Housing Association houses, which are required, bring with them families in need of support from Social Services and Social Services support is already inadequate due to capacity issues.
- Transport is an issue. Lack of spaces for coaches / drop off / pick up on Market Lane and Burnt Street.
- This is also an issue for students travelling to post 16 provision where there is no synchronicity between bus times for Wells and train connections to Norwich and further afield making it difficult for students to attend City College or other sixth forms.

It should be noted that Alderman Peel High School provides education not just for Wells but also the surrounding rural areas. The District Council as advised by Norfolk County Council consider that the capacity within the available education infrastructure is adequate to meet North Norfolk's proposed housing growth through the emerging Local Plan. Section 106 monies will be sought on new residential developments to mitigate (invest) the impact of additional housing growth where necessary.

2.20 Post 16 years provision for students is at the College of West Anglia, Fakenham Academy Sixth Form, City College, Norwich, Easton Agricultural College and in small numbers to Reepham Sixth form, Sheringham Sixth form and Springwood Sixth form. Approximately five students per year go to apprenticeships. Information provided by North Norfolk District Council summarised that overall, Norfolk's school population is expected to grow in the next 10-15 years. The secondary sector is currently experiencing an increase in numbers with larger cohorts now leaving the primary sector. This is being seen particularly in the more populated areas. The County Council assessment of current school capacity and the likely requirements for new schools as a result of new development proposed in the emerging Local



Plan, is that provision will need to be enhanced at Holt and North Walsham only.

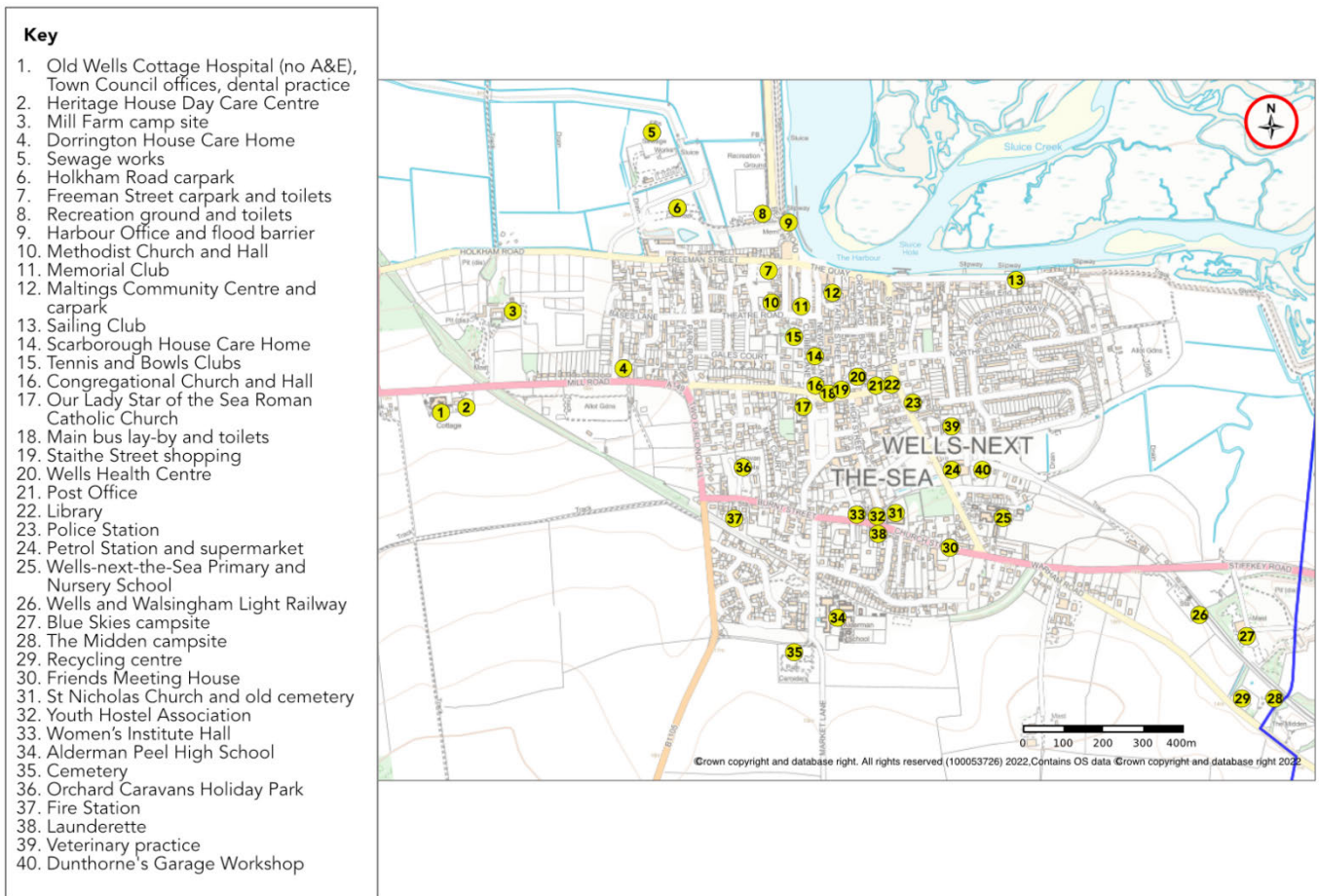
Community services and facilities

- 2.21 Wells-next-the-Sea has an active community with a range of services, facilities, clubs, and groups to meet the needs of residents and visitors.
- 2.22 **Wells Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)** Lifeboat Station is situated at the eastern end of Wells beach. It houses an all-weather lifeboat and a D-class inshore lifeboat which assist with emergencies around Wells and off the North Norfolk coast and are manned by volunteer crews led by an employed coxswain. A new boathouse with RNLI visitor centre was opened in October 2022 and the Shannon class lifeboat 'Duke of Edinburgh' is now in commission. A RNLI lifeguard station is based in a unit on the beach and operates daily during the holiday season.
- 2.23 **The Wells-next-the-Sea National Coastwatch Institute** lookout station is staffed 365 days a year by a team of 40 plus volunteers. As well as watching over local leisure sailors, holiday makers, windsurfers and thirteen inshore fishing boats there is an increasingly busy Outer Harbour previously used by the windfarm support vessels serving the Sheringham Shoal Windfarm. There are extensive views over the beach and the tidal area of Bob Halls Sand and a distant view of the Rotterdam to Hull east coast shipping lane.
- 2.24 There is a range of community buildings in Wells-next-the-Sea. These include:
- Wells Maltings.
 - Alderman Peel High School with a large assembly hall.
 - The parish church of St. Nicholas which can accommodate a congregation of several hundred and also hosts concerts and pre-election meetings.
 - The Congregational Church and its adjacent Gordon Barrett Memorial Hall
 - The Old Cottage Hospital.
 - Heritage House Day Care Centre
 - The Women's Institute Hall.
 - The Library.
 - The Peter Collingwood Hall in the Methodist Church.
 - The Post Office with Royal Mail Sorting Office (open 6 days a week, it provides the only banking facility in the town since the last part time high street bank branch closed in 2018).
- 2.25 **Wells Maltings**, a new complex opened in 2018 following a £6 million redevelopment. It contains a 130-seat performance auditorium equipped for live shows and cinema. It also provides the large flexible Clore Studio and two more gallery spaces for displays and community events. It is home to the



Wells Heritage Centre exhibitions and the Wells Local History Archive. There is a ground floor café with outdoor terrace area, a visitor information centre and box office. At the rear of the main building is the Sackhouse Community rooms Annexe and a shingled area suitable for open air performances.

- 2.26 The **Old Cottage Hospital** operated by the Wells Community Hospital Trust has several rooms the community can hire which are free to use for charities, support groups and community organisations. **Heritage House** is a day care centre for the elderly, isolated and in need living in north and west Norfolk.
- 2.27 **The Quay** is a community magazine for Wells-next-the-Sea, which is published monthly by Quay Publishing Ltd on behalf of the town of Wells-next-the-Sea and the surrounding area. The magazine is distributed free to all homes within Wells and the NR23 area. The Quay magazine lists events, useful community contacts and groups in the Wells area.
- 2.28 The **Wells Dementia Friendly Community Steering Group** are working towards the town being dementia friendly, this includes many of the local businesses having staff trained to understand the needs of people living with dementia. Wells is also a Fairtrade Town.
- 2.29 The **Town Council** is responsible for The Buttlands; the allotment garden plots in Northfield (East End) and Mill Road (West End); the Beach Road Playing Field; the Children's Playground; the Skatepark and the majority of the town's streetlights. Also for the Market Lane Cemetery, the Polka Burial Ground and St. Nicholas Churchyard.
- 2.30 **Wells Town Football Club** is located on Beach Road and has parking facilities and a clubhouse.
- 2.31 There is a dentist, library, laundry, petrol station, two residential care homes and a retained fire station in Wells-next-the-Sea. The police station building is used part-time by Norfolk Constabulary staff but is not open to the public. **Sport-A-Peel** at Alderman Peel High School has use of the swimming pool and gym for local community use.



Historic environment

- 2.32 Historic England lists 185 listed buildings in Wells-next-the-Sea parish. Figure 9 shows the location of listed buildings in Wells-next-the-Sea parish.

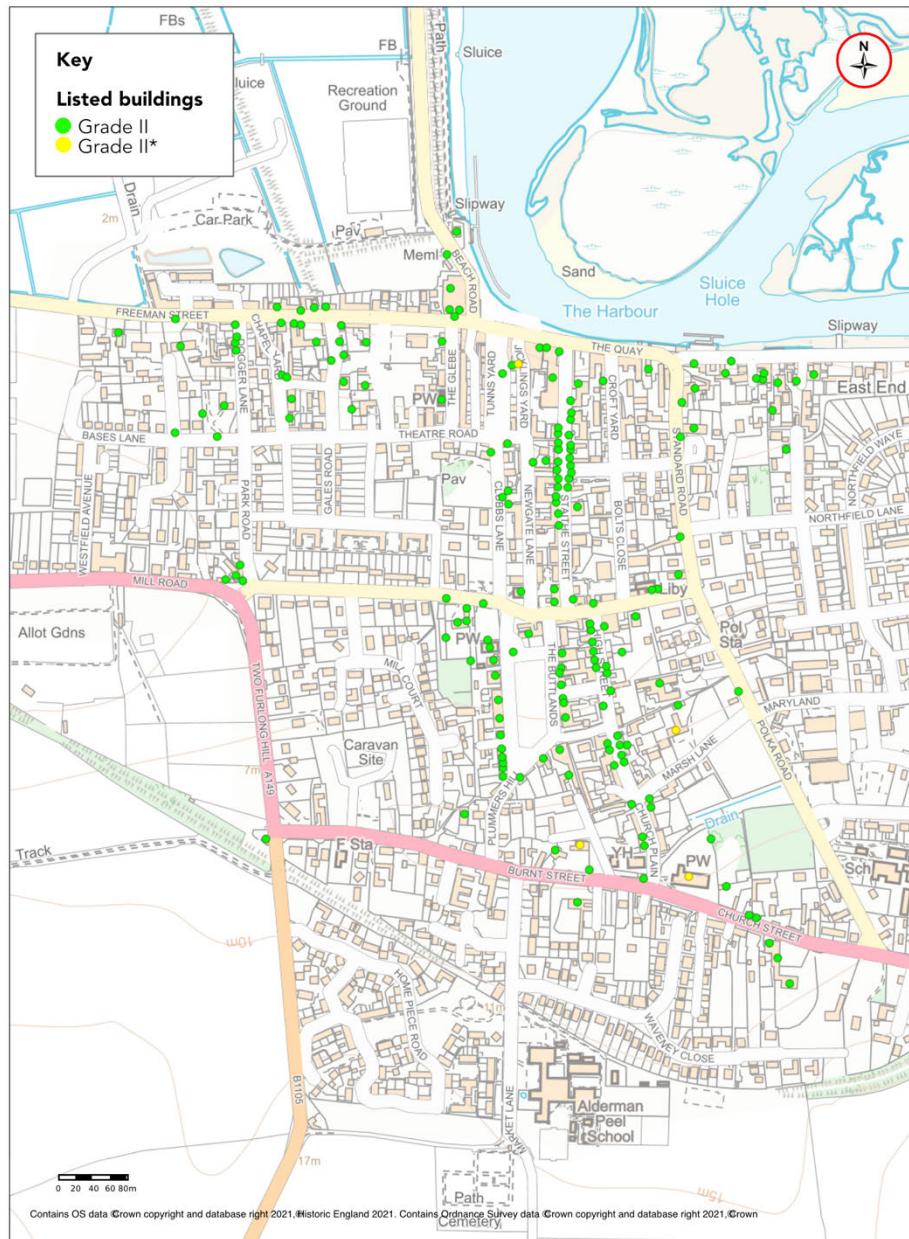
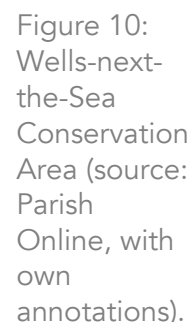


Figure 9: Listed buildings in Wells-next-the-Sea (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).

- 2.33 A search including maps and details of historical finds in Wells-next-the-Sea has been provided by the Norfolk Historic Environment Record. This information has been shared with the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. Parts of Wells town are covered by a Conservation Area as shown in figure 10 below.





services, which can prevent local people using them for journeys to work. However there is a rail service from Norwich to Sheringham and a bus connection to Wells although there is no Sunday service. Buses to and from Kings Lynn do not connect well with train services.

- 2.37 Despite its railway history, there is no mainline train station at Wells-next-the-Sea. The nearest connecting stations are located at King's Lynn (45 km) and Sheringham (27km). Sheringham connects to Norwich via the Bittern Line. From Norwich there are onward connections to the National Rail network. King's Lynn has a direct connection to London at King's Cross St Pancras, Liverpool Street (via Ely and Cambridge) and to the National Rail network (via Ely).
- 2.38 The Wells and Walsingham Light Railway is a largely tourist service which runs from Wells to Walsingham. The privately owned Wells Harbour Railway connected Wells Quay to the Pinewoods Holiday Park approximately halfway along the embankment until it was decommissioned in October 2021. The harbour railway has been replaced by a heritage open-topped bus and an electric bus operating in the tourist season.

Walking and cycling

- 2.39 Public Rights of Way in Wells-next-the-Sea can be seen on figure 11.

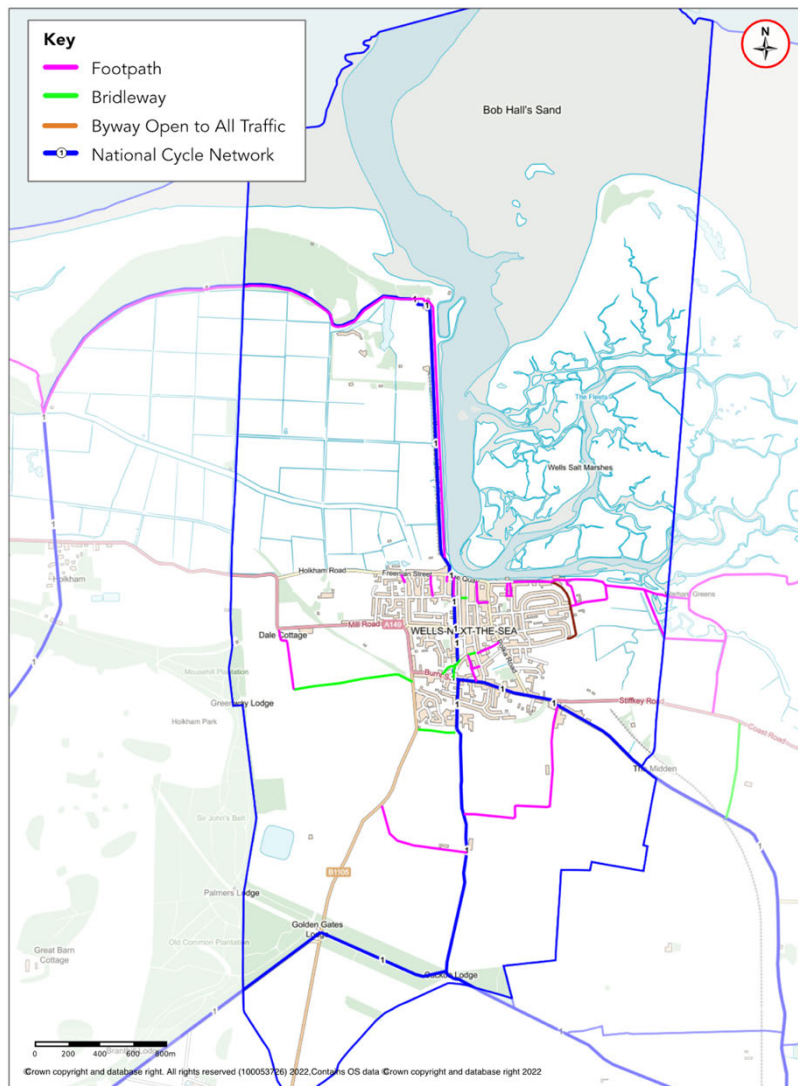


Figure 11: Public Rights of Way (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Thinner blue line denotes parish boundary.

2.40 The National Trail combines two long distance walking trails: Peddars Way and the Norfolk Coast Path. Peddars Way starts in Suffolk at Knettishall Heath Country Park (or Thetford Station for cyclists) and follows the route of a Roman road for 49 miles (79 Km) to Holme-next-the-Sea on the north Norfolk coast meeting the Norfolk Coast Path at Holme-next-the-Sea. The Norfolk Coast Path provides 84 miles (135 km) of walking from Hunstanton to Hopton-on-Sea. The majority of the Trail runs through the Norfolk Coast National Landscape.

2.41 National Cycle Route 1 runs through Wells-next-the-Sea as shown on figure 11.

Parking

2.42 There are five car parks in Wells providing car parking for several hundred cars with additional spaces for visiting coaches. The car parks are Wells Beach Car Park, Wells Town Car Park on Freeman Street, Stearmans Yard Car Park, Wells Quay Car Park, and Holkham Road Car Park. This last area gives



access to a temporary overflow parking field, formerly the Pitch & Putt, managed by the Holkham Estate during the holiday season.

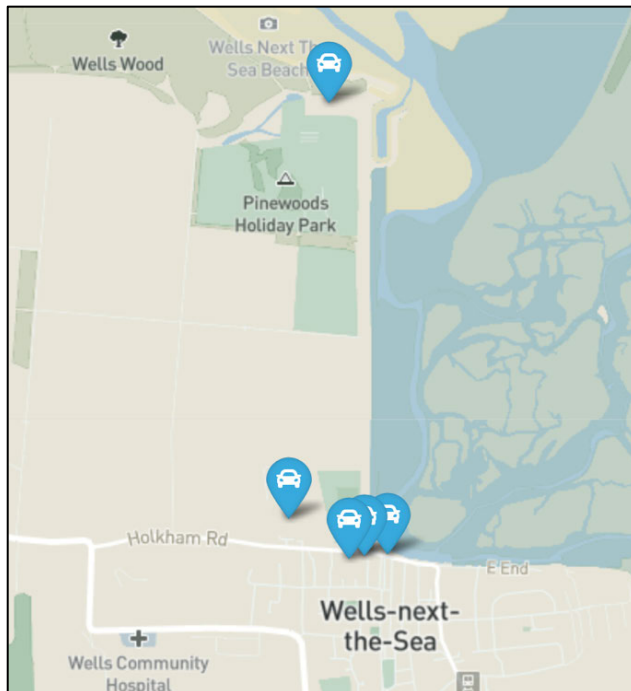


Figure 12: Location of the 5 public car parks in Wells-next-the-Sea (source: Wells Guide website <https://wellsguide.com/visiting-wells-next-the-sea/visiting-by-car/>).

Environment and landscape

Landscape character

2.43 The North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment Adopted 2021, identifies four distinct landscape character types within the parish. These are:

- Drained Coastal Marshes - an expansive, transitional coastal landscape, which is undergoing a gradual long-term transition from farmland to inter-tidal environment with natural wilderness qualities. Key features of geomorphological and habitat value are conserved within an increasingly natural, shifting mosaic of marsh and wetland habitats fringed by pasture.
- Open Coastal Marshes - a naturally dynamic landscape comprising a mosaic of saltmarsh, mud and sandflats, shingle, and dunes, which is shaped by the tides where natural forces predominate. Prioritised within this area is the conservation and enhancement of the highly valued coastal ecosystem and its wilderness qualities, including dark skies at night and scenic unspoilt views.
- Rolling Open Farmland - a sustainably managed and actively farmed rural landscape that makes the most of field margins for biodiversity to provide a network of semi-natural features, and where increasing visitor numbers are managed in a sensitive and co-ordinated manner. New development within the existing settlements will reinforce traditional character and incorporate green infrastructure to provide visual screening and integration, improved habitat connectivity and recreational links to the countryside and neighbouring settlements via pedestrian and cycle



routes. A wild coastal edge with semi-natural habitats with opportunities to enjoy the landscape and the scenic long views along the coast, and dark skies at night.

- River Valleys - intimate, small-scale landscapes with a wide variety of land uses / habitats, offering a contrast with the more expansive, open, largescale arable farming and coastal landscapes that surround the valleys. New development should be appropriate in scale, unobtrusive and readily accommodated into its landscape setting. Woodland and hedgerows should be a major landscape element, helping to contain development. The linear valley form should be apparent and should dictate land use and development form. Valley sides should offer some degree of transition between the contrasting scales of the valley floors and surrounding arable farmlands.

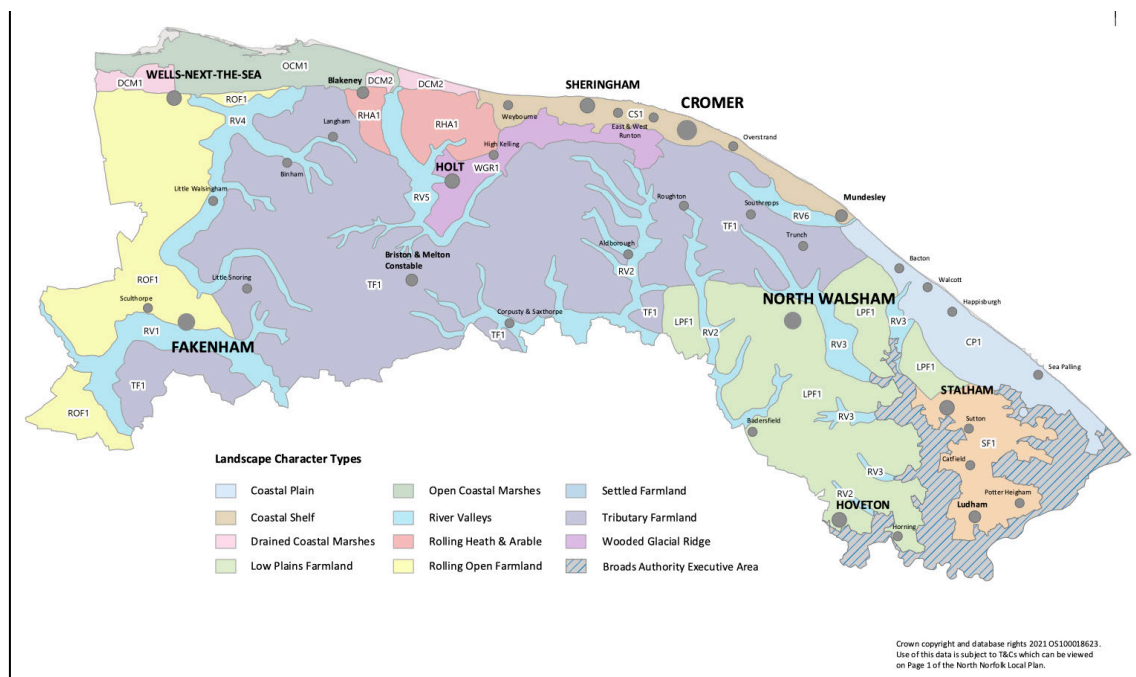


Figure 13: Landscape Character Areas (source: emerging North Norfolk Local Plan, 2016-2036, proposed submission version, Regulation 19).

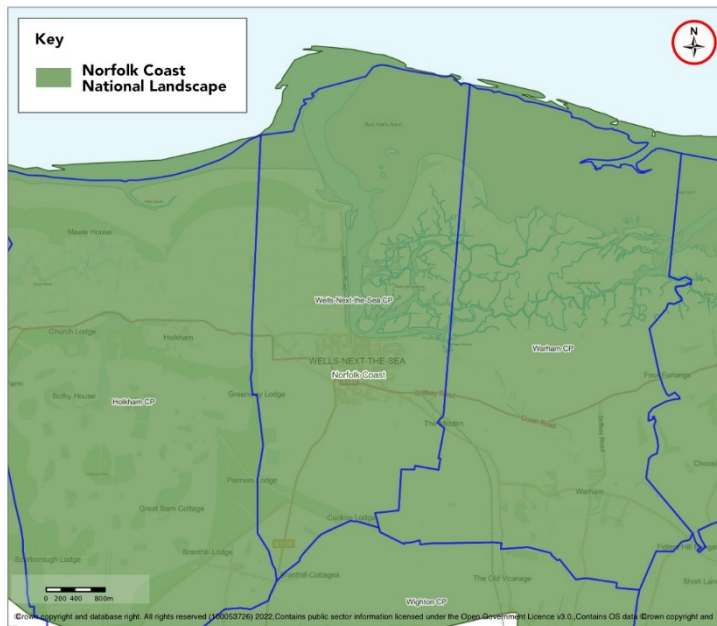


Figure 14: Norfolk Coast National Landscape (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

Norfolk Coast National Landscape

- 2.44 The entire Wells-next-the-Sea parish is located in the Norfolk Coast National Landscape and the North Norfolk Heritage Coast. These are national designations afforded to an area due to the quality and sensitivity of its landscape.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 2.45 Nature conservation designations within the parish of Wells-next-the-Sea range from the international through to the local. Many of these designations overlap, although most are within the boundaries of the Site of Special Scientific Interest, and are as follows:
- a. The North Norfolk Coast RAMSAR. A RAMSAR site is a wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.
 - b. The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation.
 - c. The North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation.
 - d. The North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area.
 - e. The Greater Wash Special Protection Area.
 - f. The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site.
 - g. The North Norfolk Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
 - h. Wells Chalk Pit Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
 - i. Holkham National Nature Reserve.
 - j. County Wildlife Site 1317 Wells-Walsingham Railway.
 - k. County Wildlife Site 1318 Wells Meadow.
 - l. Roadside Nature Reserve 41 on Stiffkey Road.

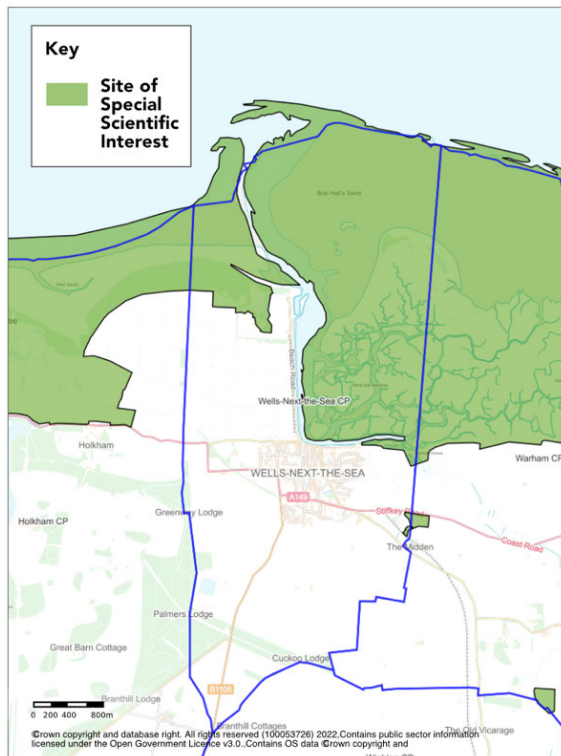


Figure 15: Site of Special Scientific Interest (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

- 2.46 Registered Village Greens in Wells-next-the-Sea include The Buttlands and Tugboat yard.

Flood risk

- 2.47 Flood Zone mapping shows that the flood risk to Wells-next-the-Sea is primarily driven by tidal/coastal influences with a number of properties along the seafront and on either side of Freeman Street/The Quay, shown to be within the Flood Zones. In addition, there are a significant number of properties in the vicinity of Burnt Street, Marsh Lane and Maryland also shown to be within the Flood Zones. The 2017 Wells-next-the-Sea modelling contributed to the updating of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and a 2018 addendum was released which specifically covers Wells-next-the-Sea⁹. There are no coastal defences present to the north-east of Wells-next-the-Sea. There remains a residual risk should the defences breach or fail. Tidal locking has the potential to increase levels upstream in the 'drain' due to the watercourse not being able to discharge effectively during high tide. Historically, a number of recorded flood events, reported to be from tidal/coastal sources, have affected Wells-next-the-Sea.
- 2.48 Mapping shows surface water flood risk in Wells-next-the-Sea to be the greatest risk to properties in the vicinity of Burnt Street, Marsh Lane, and Maryland. There is a moveable tidal barrier that protects Freeman Street but

⁹ North Norfolk District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-policy/strategic-flood-risk-assessment>



not the Quay or East Quay which remain open to and at risk from any surge tide. Both were inundated in 2013 and 2022.

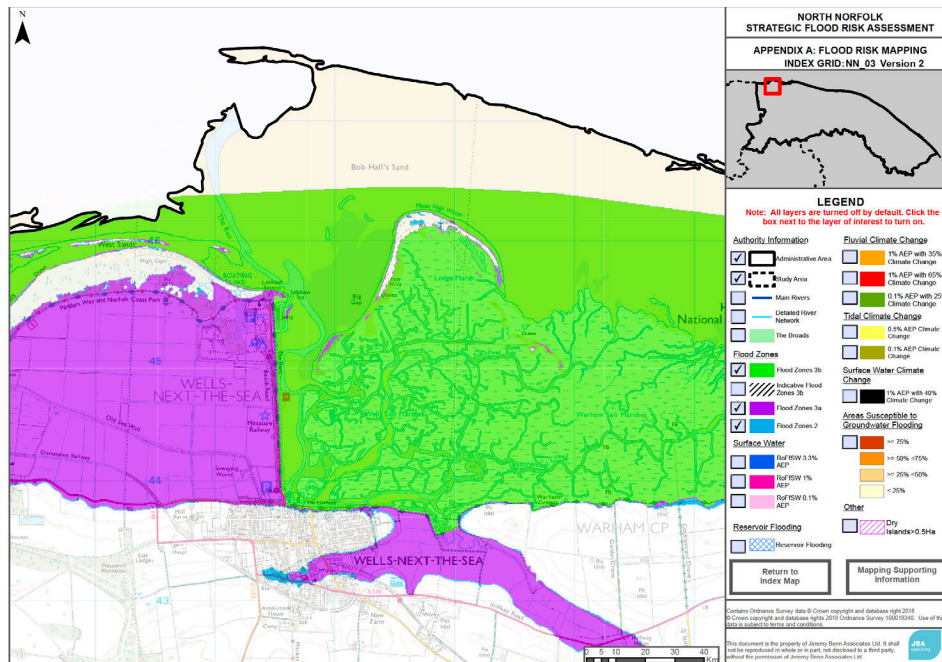


Figure 16: Flood risk (source: North Norfolk District Council¹⁰).

- 2.49 The North Norfolk Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, including the February 2018 update, states 'The breach modelling shows that areas of North Norfolk district are at risk should the defences breach; it demonstrates that Wells-next-the-Sea in particular is reliant on defences to protect against tidal (sea) flooding'¹¹. However, the storm surge on 5th December 2013 showed that Wells next the Sea is liable to coastal flooding and the road, bus routes, coastal footpath and business and residential properties in the location of the Quay and the East End of Wells will flood without a breach of defences occurring.
- 2.50 The main quay, the highway in the location of the Quay and the East End of Wells street levels are at an average height of 4.3m AODN. Normal high spring tide levels peak at 3.3m (sea level 2023). Storm surges occur often and with varying effects to sea level from -2.5m to +2.5m. If a storm surge coincides with high tide, flooding occurs. For example, on 5th December 2013 the storm surge added 2.2m to the tide with a resultant peak water level of 5.25m AODN (95cm above road level) an hour before high water, causing flooding to more than 20 properties in Wells.

¹⁰ <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-policy/strategic-flood-risk-assessment/>, accessed 15.05.24

¹¹ Addendum Report for the North Norfolk Strategic, Flood Risk Assessment Version 1.0 12/04/2018, www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/4137/sfra-addendum-april-2018.pdf



- 2.51 North Norfolk's coast is in places low-lying and in others it is characterised by cliffs comprising soft sandstone, clays and other material that is susceptible to erosion. The area of coast relevant to Wells-next-the-Sea is included within Shoreline Management Plan 5 and super frontage 2 - Thornham to Stiffkey. The wider landscape is dominated by intertidal saltmarsh and mudflats. There are long stretches of sand dunes at Holkham and Brancaster. With the exception of Deepdale and Holkham marshes, the entire super frontage is part of the North Norfolk Ramsar site, SPA, SAC and SSSI. Apart from the low lying defended area east of Wells –next –the –Sea the inland boundary of the designated areas roughly coincides with the tidal flood zone boundary.
- 2.52 The 2010 SMP states that the objective of the overall Plan "is to investigate the possibility of gradually increasing natural processes while continuing to provide flood defence where this is technically possible and economically viable. Where there is no active management now, the plan is to allow natural development to continue. In the medium to long term, the plan is to investigate ways to sustain or increase the role of natural process in providing flood defence. The SMP intends to hold current defences where they are now at the River Burn outfall, Burnham Overy Staithe, Wells Flood West embankment, Wells Quay and Wells East Bank.

Business and employment

- 2.53 Wells-next-the-Sea is a historic commercial port and former ship-building centre and is now the only major harbour along the North Norfolk coast. It retains a small fishing fleet and is home to private boats and yachts. Until recently was a base for windfarm and work vessels. Active consideration is being given to alternative commercial uses for the port including offshore seaweed farm developments. The town and local coastline is also a popular holiday and tourist destination and busy in summer with swimmers, windsurfers, water skiers, kayakers and walkers around the harbour, beaches, and marshes.
- 2.54 The Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Tourism Benefit and Impacts Analysis 2006 estimated that tourism has a direct economic impact estimated at £132.9 million, which after induced/indirect spend increases to £163.2 million.

We need to ensure that we protect local facilities used by local people. Protect the proper drinking establishments.

Homes need to be built to encourage locals to stay, secure employment & importantly, enable them to consider serving the town on the fire service. If the fire service is not considered the needs of local people.

Traffic management needs to be looked @ @ peak times as emergency services stand recharged when town is gridlocked. Especially with trying to get the street.

PLEASE LISTEN + TAKE NOTE OF ALL OF THESE COMMENTS INSTEAD OF JUST SAYING 'OH WE HAD A GOOD TURN OUT' & THEN JUST DOING WHAT YOU WANT ANYWAY!!!

Dogs are an issue - especially walking down Granite St. + come down / cafes - No dogs!!

No mention of dogs, which are a problem - many worse of leads, long and noisy dog fouling.

PARK AND RIDE!!!

TRAFFIC IS DESTROYING WELLS.

We need to enforce the lower 20 mile limits otherwise what was the point?

No 2nd home Category - we core about wells nearby to home for wells!

VEHICLE TRAFFIC MINIMISED IN TOWN. PEDESTRIANS CAN PARKING FROM TOWN. SHUTTLE SERVICE

Your comments

Out of town car park eg Dry Road + Bus to beach.

Maximum number of holiday makers

ONLY ALLOW RESIDENTS TO BUY PROPERTIES

THE HOODS GREED OF LOCAL BUS ARE OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE NEEDS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS

LOCAL RESIDENTS FROM REMAINING LOCALS TO BE "CASH ROTTER" AN UNDESIRABLE CONDITION WHICH PREVENT LOCAL RESIDENTS

Good train from Blue Slips, down the polders, along the sea-railway line to the beach - back

Homes for local people not just holiday makers

Dogs from Slacks St

Wells Council employees Traffic Wardens

Church Plain parking on 1 side only.

NOT GET WHAT WE HAVE!

Stop selling the current social housing in wells

Have an Eco Council. Stop littering and look after the animals

Don't have Night Should be allowed HERE

Butlands traffic ONE WAY Please. No parking next to Catholic church - impossible to get through service

ONE WAY TRAFFIC WOULD HELP IN BUTLANDS I agree with this too

What about young people and where can they work more employment for young

Should not more priority be given to flooding from stream water as well as sea water this should be top priority

Train to the beach

YES BUT PROBLEMS HAVE ARISEN FROM OUTSIDE OUR CONTROL

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PEOPLE WHO OWN 1 SECOND HOME & THOSE WHO HAVE A PURELY COMMERCIAL INTEREST & MULTIPLE PROPERTIES

This is an important more for future generations Don't spoil homes & businesses for potential 2nd homes! Please don't take Mill farm and run them!

invade the Halkham site that locals wish may offer to + that they expect priority always have wishes / plans agreed to -

After the school should be dog free from 10am - 5pm early morning for people who have to take dog to work. It is not a dog you can't take to work

reside only

Dogs People in summer 2/3 dogs on leads in busy areas dangerous what can we do?

Need more employment Mayland to be considered for employment and redeveloped for employment.

The Quay - close to all but emergency + public transport in summer from Beach to Quay to East Quay turning off.

Butlands - some on street parking for permanent residents only

Many wells residents should consider renting to "home for well" and not seeking to gain all they can from same land

Church Plain 1 side only for parking

Can we please have restricted access to dogs on long extending leads in Slacks St?

Youth Provision

The skate park was a great addition - ask the youngsters what else they might like Childrens Play

We need young people to work here - affordable housing + suitable jobs with prospects. They also need social provision via the playing or a new provision? (not where? + what?)

The Butlands - make it more - reduce parking

No parking on Quay except emergency + fishing vehicles

Close the Quay road to through traffic

Enforce the current housing legislation

Do not forget that many of the homes sold in wells are by well people - they are also "cashing in"

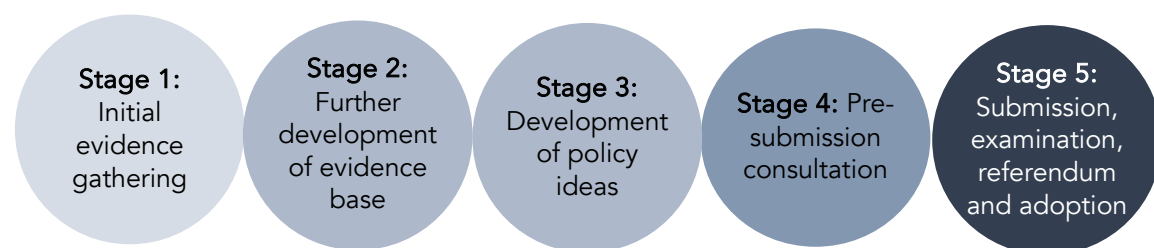


3. How the Plan was prepared

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Working Party was responsible for the preparation of the Plan and was supported by a small team of independent consultants. The process began in February 2019, when the Neighbourhood Area was designated by North Norfolk District Council. Advice and guidance has also been provided by Officers from North Norfolk District Council.
- 3.2 The Plan was commissioned by Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council. Funding for its production came from a central government Locality grant, and the Town Council's own funding.

Community engagement and consultation

- 3.3 The Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken with community engagement and consultation. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Working Party had to be innovative in their approach, using ZOOM for almost all Working Party meetings. However, public engagement was possible in October 2021 in the form of the public exhibition and therefore robust evidence was in place from which the draft Plan could be written. More details of all the consultation is outlined in the Consultation Statement, which accompanied the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to North Norfolk District Council in June 2023.
- 3.4 Below is a summary of each of the community engagement and consultation stages.



Stage 1: Initial evidence gathering (2019, 2020 and early 2021).

- Neighbourhood Area designation in February 2019.
- Initial evidence gathering.
- Joint commissioning of Housing Needs Survey with Holkham Estate (March 2020).
- Identification of key issues.



Stage 2: Further development of the evidence base (April 2021 to October 2021).

- Placecheck online map with pins and comments, <http://www.placecheck.info/app/maps/wellsnextthesea>
- Character appraisal of the town undertaken by the Working Party.
- Stakeholder engagement with local groups, organisations, and businesses.
- Design Guidance and Codes document drafted (by AECOM).
- Call for Sites undertaken by the Working Party (May to July 2021).
- Independent Site Options Assessment of submitted sites drafted (by AECOM) (October 2021).

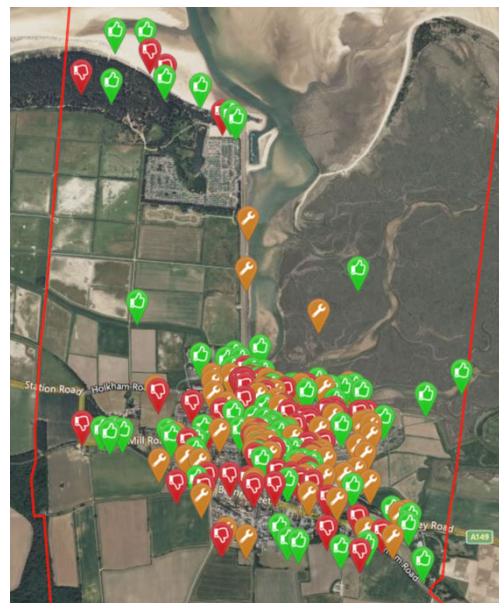


Figure 17 left: Poster for Placecheck.

Figure 18 right: Screenshot of Placecheck online map. Source: Placecheck.¹²

Stage 3: Development of policy ideas (Autumn 2021)

- Following an evidence review, draft policy ideas were developed.
- A public drop-in consultation event was held at the Congregational Church Hall on 1st and 2nd October 2021 seeking feedback from the public on the draft policy ideas. Event advertised in the Quay magazine, via the parish Facebook page, plus banners and posters around the town. 190 residents attended the exhibition and a further 10 email responses were received. Results of the exhibitions written up and placed on the Neighbourhood Plan web page.
- Design Guidance and Codes document drafted (February 2022)
- Independent Site Options Assessment of submitted sites concluded (December 2021).

¹² <http://www.placecheck.info/app/maps/wellsnextthesea>, extracted 08.04.22.



Figure 19: Flyer for drop-in consultation event (back and front), October 2022.



Figure 20: Public drop-in consultation event, October 2021.

3.5 Feedback from the local community via consultation exercises is important as it can demonstrate a level of support for a policy idea, which will also need to be informed by appropriate and proportionate evidence. Neighbourhood Plans are not required to have policies on all areas identified by the local community. Their purpose is to add a local dimension to the decision-making process where it is practical and beneficial to do so.

3.6 A summary of key Issues from the policy ideas consultation in October 2021 is summarised below:



- Concerns over the lack of housing available for local people to afford
- Concerns over the high number of second homes and impact on local housing market
- Concerns over the high numbers of holiday lets and impact on local housing market
- Green spaces should be protected and not built on
- Concerns over impact of new housing on infrastructure such as schools and GP/health provision
- Retail should be more inclusive rather than just 'upmarket shops'
- Homes should be prioritised for local people
- Concerns if allotments were to be built on
- Concerns over a lack of job opportunities for young people
- Support for principal residence dwellings
- Support for local connection criteria for affordable housing
- Concerns over traffic congestion in holiday season
- Concerns over visitor parking – causes congestion, traffic issues
- Concerns that rented accommodation including housing association housing is being sold off
- Need a mix of housing if the town is to thrive
- Infill development is too dense – does not have adequate parking or garden space
- Support for good design
- Support for environmental efficiency measure on housing
- Maryland should be redeveloped
- Support for redevelopment of brownfield sites
- Should be specific areas for resident only parking
- Support for a park and ride for visitors
- Protection for allotments and green spaces
- Countryside and the AONB [now NCNL] should be protected
- Wildlife should be protected
- Concerns over flooding at the Quay and the East End
- Beach management issues e.g. litter, dogs, toilets
- Lack of disabled access around the town and the beach
- Keep the Holkham Beach train

Stage 4: Pre-submission consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan, Regulation 14 (Summer 2022)

- The draft Neighbourhood Plan was issued for pre-submission consultation (from 15th July to 9th September 2022). It was sent to statutory agencies and available for residents to comment.
- An exhibition was held on 15th and 16th July 2022.
- Responses were received from over 115 local people and from the Statutory consultees.



Figure 21: Pre-submission consultation exhibition held on 15th and 16th July 2022.



Figure 22: Flyer for exhibition (front and back), July 2022.

3.7 The Consultation Statement sets out the details of the responses received from the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation. A summary of the key issues is set out below:

- New housing should be aimed at local people.
- Housing policies should refer to key workers.
- Affordable housing should be available in perpetuity and not sold off straight away.
- Comments in support of and objecting to the allocation at Two Furlong Hill
- Comments in support of and objecting to the Principal Residence policy.
- Identification of factual errors and updates required.
- Support for the content of the design policy



- Concerns over the impact of new development on community infrastructure and climate change
- Concerns over flood risk
- Support and objection to a number of the Local Green spaces
- Support and objection to proposed Non-Designated Heritage Assets.
- Concern that some NP policies repeat LP content.
- Support for and objection to the proposed visitor car park

3.8 Following the analysis of all responses received to the consultation, the following key amendments were made to the Neighbourhood Plan:

- General updating and correction of errors
- Changes to policy wording to aid clarity
- Inclusion of text relating to key workers
- Clarification of specific requirements for the allocation at Two Furlong Hill
- Reinforcement of the justification and supporting text for a number of policy areas.
- Additional text in policies and supporting text as required by statutory consultees
- Inclusion of policy wording aimed at protecting important habitat sites

Stage 5: Submission, examination, referendum, and adoption (June 2023 to early 2024)

- Modifications were made to the Neighbourhood Plan following pre-submission consultation.
- Submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to North Norfolk District Council with supporting documents took place in June 2023.
- Examination took place between January and April 2024.
- Referendum and adoption (expected summer/autumn 2024).

Communication

3.9 Communicating with residents and businesses throughout the development of the Neighbourhood Plan was particularly important and all relevant information was placed on the Neighbourhood Plan page of the Town Council website: <https://wellstc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/np>. The website also contained information on how to contact the Working Party.

3.10 The Wells-next-the-Sea monthly parish magazine - The Quay, which is delivered monthly to every house in Wells-next-the-Sea, featured regular articles about the Neighbourhood Plan, made requests for feedback and comments at various stages, and advertised the consultation events and the locations of the venues where a printed copy of the Neighbourhood Plan could be viewed.



- 3.11 Facebook, posters, and flyers were used to promote the work of the Neighbourhood Plan. An update for the Town Council on the Neighbourhood Plan progress was presented at monthly meetings and the Town Council website contains the Neighbourhood Plan webpage.



Figure 23:
Neighbourhood Plan
banner.



BLUCHER LN8

LN8



4. Vision and objectives

Challenges for Wells-next-the-Sea

4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible through land-use planning, the challenges that face the community of Wells-next-the-Sea. In summary these challenges are:

- Ensuring residential properties are affordable to local residents and those who work in the town and the local area.
- The high numbers of seasonal visitors and the fluctuating seasonal population.
- The town's declining and increasingly elderly population.
- Provision of dwellings suitable and affordable to younger people and families, enabling a wider range of people of all ages to live in the town.
- The limited availability of on-street carparking which leads to anti-social parking.
- Protecting the sensitive natural environment for the benefit of residents, tourists, and future generations.
- Ensuring that all development is of high-quality design, and at an appropriate density that reflects the local character of Wells-next-the-Sea.
- Adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change and sea-level rise.

Neighbourhood Plan Vision to 2036

VISION	Wells-next-the-Sea will continue to be a small, thriving, and attractive coastal town, with a working port and a vibrant and balanced community. It will have a range of housing types and tenures to suit all ages and incomes, supported by appropriate infrastructure and employment opportunities. Development will be sympathetic to local character, well designed, suitably located, and sensitive to the environment. Local heritage and the Norfolk Coast National Landscape will be protected. Wells will be a desirable place to live, work and visit for current and future generations.
--------	--

4.2 It is important that any Neighbourhood Plan contains a simple vision statement which sums up the community's aim for the future of the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan vision is an overarching statement describing what Wells-next-the-Sea should be like at the end of the Plan period i.e., 2036. It was developed with local people and refined and adapted through consultation. The result is a vision statement which captures the overarching spirit and ambition of the local community and the Neighbourhood Plan.



- 4.3 The vision underpins the objectives and policies of the Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan and is referred to throughout.

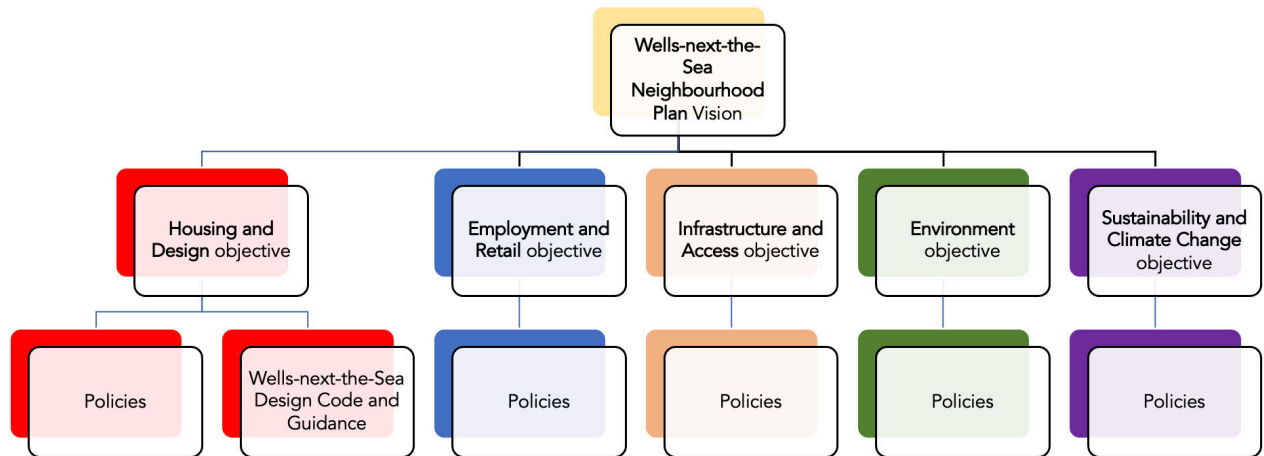


Figure 24: Structure of the Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan.

- 4.4 From the vision flow the different objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and from there, the policies. The diagram above outlines this relationship.
- 4.5 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are broad statements of intent which are there to help deliver the vision and link to the issues that Wells-next-the-Sea is seeking to address. They were drafted using themes picked up at an early stage and refined through the community consultation exercises.

Neighbourhood Plan objectives

Housing and Design objective

Objective 1: To provide housing for local people and seek to meet the existing and future needs of those who live and work in the town, for the elderly and those wishing to move to the area, to retain a balance between young and old, working and retired.

Employment and Retail objective

Objective 2: To encourage the creation of a range of employment opportunities in the town to maintain a strong, responsive economy, consistent with the character of the town.

Infrastructure and Access objective

Objective 3: To ensure that the provision of local services (domestic, health, education, transport and leisure) meets the needs of all sections of the community and visitors.



Environment objective

Objective 4: To protect and enhance the character of the area as a living and working town and visitor destination set in a designated National Landscape and wildlife sensitivity.

Sustainability and Climate Change objective

Objective 5: To ensure that all planning decisions address the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels and to require the use of environmentally sustainable materials in new developments.

- 4.6 The vision and objectives provided the framework to develop the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Each policy relates to a particular objective under the following area wide themes: Housing and Design, Employment and Retail, Infrastructure and Services, Environment and Sustainability and Climate Change. There are also site-specific policies relating to the Beach and the Harbour. The Neighbourhood Plan is first and foremost a land-use document for planning purposes. All policies in the Plan have been derived from a series of consultation exercises, stakeholder engagement and desk research, which provide the justification and evidence base for their selection.
- 4.7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies follow the government's guidance. They exist to:
- Set out locally led requirements in advance for new development in the parish.
 - Inform and guide decisions on planning applications.
 - Ensure that the multitude of individual decisions add up to something coherent for the area as a whole¹³.
 - Add local distinction to the Local Plan strategic policies.
- 4.8 To aid interpretation for decision makers and planning applicants, each policy is accompanied by supporting text, which includes context for the theme, the views of residents, guidelines, and reference to strategic plans. This is set out before each of the policies.

Neighbourhood Plan policies

Sustainable Development

WNS1: Sustainable Development and Protected Nature Conservation Sites

Housing and Design policies

WNS2: Community Led Housing

WNS3: Housing allocation at Two Furlong Hill (Allocation WELLS1)

¹³ Tony Burton, Writing Planning Policies, Locality.



WNS4: Housing Mix
WNS5: Principal Residence
WNS6: High Quality Design

Employment and Retail policies

WNS7: Redevelopment Opportunities
WNS8: Retail and Town Centre

Infrastructure and Access policies

WNS9: Visitor parking
WNS10: Opportunities for sustainable transport

Environment policies

WNS11: Protecting the Historic Environment
WNS12: Non-designated Heritage Assets
WNS13: Local Green Spaces

Sustainability and Climate Change policies

WNS14: Sea level rise and flood risk

Site specific policies

WNS15: Wells Beach
WNS16: Wells Harbour

Sustainable Development

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)

- 4.9 Due the wealth of environmental designations within the Neighbourhood Area, the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan were subject to both Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment (featuring Appropriate Assessment). The relevant sites are:
- North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 4.10 North Norfolk District Council undertook Screening Assessments for both in Winter 2022/3 following the Regulation 14 consultation on the draft



Neighbourhood Plan undertaken between July and September 2022. The conclusion of both Screening Assessments was that full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and Appropriate Assessment (AA) were required, principally on the basis that the draft Neighbourhood Plan's policies would facilitate additional development in the area which may have likely significant effects on the protected European Wildlife Sites. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Party had anticipated this outcome and in November 2022 commissioned consultants AECOM to undertake both the SEA and the AA. The AA report was completed in April 2023 and the SEA in May 2023.

- 4.11 The final SEA, HRA, and Appropriate Assessment reports are supporting documents to the submitted Plan. Their recommendations have been reviewed and have led to the preparation of Policy WNS1 which will apply to all qualifying development. The policy seeks to ensure compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and enable growth in the neighbourhood area through the implementation of measures to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of habitats sites arising from visual and noise disturbance, and loss of functionally-linked habitat. The use of information provided by Natural England on SSSIs through the identified Impact Risks Zones RZs can be used by developers, consultants and others who are preparing to submit a planning application to help consider whether a proposed development is likely to affect a SSSI and choose whether to seek pre-application advice from Natural England and or the Council. This will allow any potential impacts to be addressed within the planning application and so minimise the risk of delays once the application is submitted. The SSSI Impact Risk Zones mapping available through Magic Map Application (defra.gov.uk) applies the statutory land-based designation layer and the SSSI Impact Risk Zones information and considerations/features on each type of development. It can be retrieved by clicking on the information button and then the risk layer on the map.
- 4.12 Natural England advise that potential impacts from most types of development requiring planning permission are covered by the SSSI IRZs. One important exception is any development proposal with the potential to impact on coastal processes. The SSSI IRZs do not currently cover potential risks from coastal schemes such as coastal defences, cliff stabilisation, cross beach structures, harbour, and marina development. Natural England should be consulted on any coastal scheme which is likely to affect a coastal SSSI.

POLICY	<p>WNS1: Sustainable Development and Protected Nature Conservation Sites</p> <p>As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should consider the following potential pathways of impacts upon European Wildlife Sites:</p>
--------	--



Visual and Noise Disturbance

Any development meeting the criteria of Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zones will need to consider the impacts of visual and noise disturbance upon the qualifying bird assemblages of the North Norfolk Coast SPA / Ramsar. This may require the use of modelled construction noise levels against pre-construction baseline noise measurements (to be agreed with Natural England) and the implementation of mitigation measures such as the provision of screens, selection of less noisy equipment or techniques, and damping / noise shielding of equipment. Visual screening is likely to be required for development sites within 300m of the SPA / Ramsar and/or functionally linked habitats with direct line of sight of known bird roosts.

Loss of Functionally Linked Habitat

Where the development site is assessed as providing suitable habitat for overwintering North Norfolk Coast SPA/Ramsar bird species within an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), non-breeding bird surveys will be required. These surveys must be undertaken in accordance with the most recent survey guidelines and include survey visits in autumn, winter, and spring when the SPA/Ramsar is used by designated bird species. Where surveys identify site use by a significant population (i.e. 1% of the qualifying population) of a designated bird species, the site will be considered functionally linked to the SPA/Ramsar with avoidance and mitigation measures required. A project-specific Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required to ensure functionally linked habitats are safeguarded.

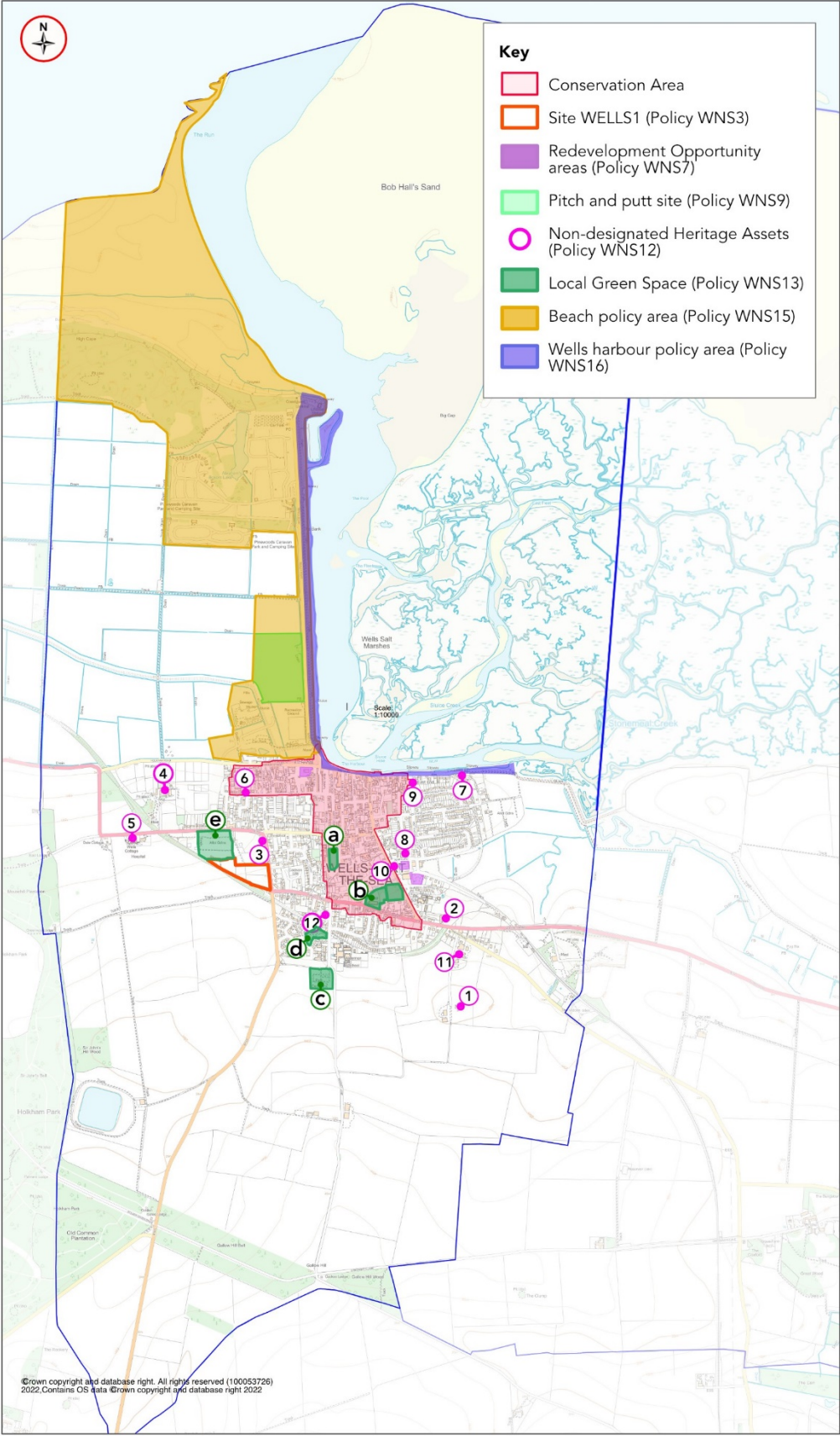


Figure 25: Composite map of policies (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.



5: Housing and Design

Objective 1: To provide housing for local people that meets the existing and future needs of those who live and work in the town, for the elderly and those wishing to move to the area, to retain a balance between young and old, working and retired.

- 5.1 Government guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹⁴ advises that Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area. In the case of this Neighbourhood Plan, this is the Adopted North Norfolk Core Strategy incorporating Development Management Policies (2008 and updated in 2012) and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2011). The District Council has made some progress on replacing these policies with the North Norfolk Local Plan, the first draft of which was published for public consultation in May 2019. The Regulation 19 (Pre-submission Consultation) Version of the Local Plan was the subject of public consultation in January and February 2022. The emerging Local Plan was submitted for examination in May 2023. The Adopted Local Plan sets out the strategic context that the Neighbourhood Plan must be 'in general conformity' with. This Neighbourhood Plan has also had regard to the strategic policies contained in the emerging Local Plan in so far as is reasonable given these policies are yet to be examined.
- 5.2 Neighbourhood Plans should be used to set out more detailed policies based on more local considerations for specific areas or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of community facilities, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out detailed policies for the management of development. The NPPF requires Neighbourhood Plans to support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans and to shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies. Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than is set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies. Duplication and repetition of policies in the NPPF and Local Plan is not necessary. The Neighbourhood Plan once adopted will become part of the

¹⁴ National Planning Policy Framework, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>



overall Development Plan for the area, where decisions will be informed by balanced consideration of all policies.

Local housing requirement

- 5.3 The NPPF requires strategic policy making authorities (e.g. District Councils) to establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need can be met over the plan period. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations. Where this is not possible the District should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the Neighbourhood Planning body.
- 5.4 The District Council has published a plan that contains proposed allocations for 70 new dwellings for the parish up to 2036. This figure has been confirmed by the District Council as the strategic housing target for Wells-next-the-Sea and it has therefore been met in full. It is acknowledged by the District Council that the strategic housing target is constrained in the parish due to the proliferation of environmental designations (proximity to internationally and nationally important wildlife sites and the Norfolk Coast National Landscape) and that there may be an element of local need that the Local Plan is not providing for.
- 5.5 National planning policy and advice does not require Neighbourhood Plans to allocate land for new housing development, however, they are encouraged to give particular consideration to opportunities for allocating small and medium sized sites suitable for housing in their area. Neighbourhood Plans can contain allocations for additional housing above the District provision, particularly where this may address a specific identified need. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore is not compelled to make further provision although it can choose to do so if there is an identified local need, sufficient community support for it and suitable sites could be identified.

Existing commitment

- 5.6 According to figures published by the North Norfolk District Council in April 2020, the district had a land supply of 5.16 years against a requirement of 5 years supply, which equates to the requirement to deliver 487 dwellings per year, every year. The Local Plan makes provision for around 12,000 new homes, during the Plan period, against a minimum housing requirement of 9,600.
- 5.7 Figures from the Submitted Local Plan, indicate the following for Wells-next-the-Sea:
- Existing planning permissions, 31st March 2021: **37**
 - Completions 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2021: **89**



- Allocations in the Local Plan¹⁵: **70**

Total housing provision for Wells-next-the-Sea: **196**

- 5.8 The North Norfolk Local Plan does not make an overall allowance for windfall sites in the Neighbourhood Area but does rely on a further 1890 dwellings coming forward across the District through windfall sites as part of the overall housing requirement and the Local Plan includes appropriate policies that allow this to happen. The NPPF defines 'windfall' as 'sites not specifically identified in the development plan'. These can include previously developed land that has unexpectedly become available, new dwellings formed through the sub-division of an existing property, barn or building conversions and small infill plots within the existing settlement boundaries. It is also acknowledged that throughout the plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan there will continue to be applications submitted for infill or other development within the parish.

Housing Needs Assessment

- 5.9 In 2020, a Housing Needs Assessment was commissioned by Holkham Estate in partnership with Wells Town Council and Walsingham Estates and supported by Homes for Wells. The work was undertaken by consultants Housing Vision, based in Worcestershire, and forms a supporting document to this Neighbourhood Plan. The output from the Project was a final report supplemented with separate Employee and Residents Surveys. The Study area was wider than just Wells and also covered Walsingham, Warham and Wighton.
- 5.10 The background to the study is as follows:
- Wells' population had declined by over 12 per cent from 2001(2,415) to 2011 (2,165)
 - Local government projections noted a 16 per cent increase in the number of houses needed in North Norfolk in the next twenty years caused by population increase, which included growth from inward migration to the District based on past trends.
 - The resident population is ageing and the cohorts aged 65+ and 85+, are projected to rise most steeply in the next 20 years. These cohorts will require more health support and housing with care is a priority.
 - The emerging Local Plan (Regulation 18 Version, 2019) proposed an increase of 80 houses in Wells during the plan period – a lower figure than its size and identification as a 'town' would suggest, but this was because of its location by the sea, wholly within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (now the Norfolk Coast National Landscape (NCNL) and surrounded by internationally designated wildlife sites. This is not a maximum figure.

- 5.11 A summary of the study noted that:

¹⁵ Sites are Ashburton Close (20 dwellings) and Holkham Road (50 dwellings).



- With homes being taken out of the market for local residents, house prices have risen steeply.
- A two-bed house cost on average £315,000 in 2018; a three-bed house cost on average £415,000.
- According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the median price for a house in Wells as of July 2021 was £530,000.
- The average gross household income of Wells residents is £38,550 which will buy a house costing £180,000.
- The lower 25 per cent of households has an income of £18,140 at which level households could afford outgoings of up to £380 a month or a property costing £85,000.
- Houses for rent are becoming available at the rate of 20 lettings per year. At this rate it would take seven years to house those on the current housing list.
- Homes for Wells (a local community benefit society) reports that tenants in privately rented housing are being evicted so that properties can be made available for holiday lets.
- Three quarters of those on the housing list wish to remain in the parish where they are.
- A modelled illustration of how new build schemes would match households' ability to access housing suggests that 60 per cent of such schemes would need to consist of affordable rented housing.

North Norfolk District Council's Annual Monitoring Report for 2021-2022, identified that of the 7 market towns in the District, average (mean) house-prices for both detached (just under £500,000) and terraced (£300,000) dwellings in Wells were the highest. Only semi-detached properties in Sheringham (£350,000) were more expensive than those in Wells (£320,000).

5.12 The Housing Needs Study results produced the following key headlines:

- The need for affordable housing for local people.
- The need to improve the supply of affordable housing.
- The number and rate of increase of second and holiday homes, about which most of the comments were critical.

5.13 The Study concluded that:

- There is a significant level of need from older households, including those wishing to downsize, and from single, couple and family households in need of more permanent and more affordable homes of their own.
- The growth in the number of second and holiday homes, as well as people from out of county buying permanent homes in Wells is putting pressure on local people and their grown-up children who want to live in the town.
- The number of affordable homes, whether privately or socially rented, is decreasing.



- The Study did not provide a specific local needs figure for Wells-next-the-Sea but noted that applying the 16per cent growth rate between 2021 and 2041, a further 176 households would be likely to be seeking accommodation in the parish.

5.14 The local housing situation was described by the report's author as 'a perfect storm' which reflects the difficulties of balancing the economic (affordability and viability), social (local needs and second homes) and environmental issues (landscape, nature conservation and Climate Change).

Results of Policy Ideas consultation

- 5.15 A Neighbourhood Plan policy ideas consultation event, held in October 2021, asked a number of questions in relation to housing, including views on the scale and location of new housing which the Neighbourhood Plan could usefully seek to deliver above and beyond the Local Plan housing figure, the type and tenure and also for feedback on second homes. Over the two days, 190 people attended the exhibitions of which 160 were local residents. Other attendees included business owners, visitors and those who worked in the town.
- 5.16 Responses indicated that in relation to the issue of the scale and location of new housing, there is a high degree of scepticism as to whether any new housing is required at all (36 in favour and 51 against). Where there was an acceptance of new housing there was a very strong view expressed that this should be aimed at local people who cannot afford to buy in the town currently, and there was a strongly expressed concern that new housing may just become second homes. This is also reflected in the Residents' Survey that supports the Housing Needs Assessment.
- 5.17 The Neighbourhood Plan Working Party undertook a 'Call for Sites' between May and June 2021. The emphasis of the Call for Sites was on exploring options to deliver 'affordable housing' as the 'strategic housing' target for the town set by the emerging Local Plan has been met through the proposed allocations in the emerging Local Plan. Four sites were submitted. The policy ideas consultation event sought feedback from the public on the 4 potential sites which is summarised below and can be found in the AECOM Site Options Assessment which is a supporting document to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Site CFS1: Land north of Mill Road (note, this connects to land at Holkham Road W0/7 which is an allocation in the emerging Local Plan)

- o Objections to building on Mill Farm
- o Concerns over the impact on the existing business on the site
- o No holiday homes/second homes
- o Some support for partial development of the site
- o New homes should be affordable/for local people



- Concerns relating to traffic and drainage
- Concerns relating to environmental impact e.g. landscape/AONB (now NCNL)

Site CFS2: Land south of Mill Road

- Objections to building on the allotments
- Concerns over landscape impact/AONB
- Concerns over traffic and drainage impacts
- Concerns over building on greenfield land
- Objections to building on the paddock
- Some support for affordable housing on the site and principal residence

Site CFS3: Land at Warham Road

- Concerns over scale of development
- Concerns over landscape impacts e.g. AONB
- Concerns over nature conservation impacts
- Concerns over highway impacts
- Concerns over drainage impacts
- Concerns over second homes and their impact on the sustainability of the town

Site CFS4: Land to the rear of Market Lane (note, this site is a preferred allocation known as land south of Ashburton Close in the emerging Local Plan W01/1)

- Site should be for affordable housing only
- Homes should be for local people
- Concern over drainage impacts/capacity
- Some general support for housing on this site
- This site was identified in the Core Strategy for Affordable Housing

Site Options Assessment

- 5.18 In addition to seeking feedback from the public on the proposed sites, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party commissioned an independent Site Options Assessment undertaken by AECOM. The full Site Options Assessment is a supporting document to the Neighbourhood Plan and is published alongside the plan. In addition to the four sites put forward through the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites exercise, AECOM also looked at sites that had previously been put forward through other methods including the NNDC Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). A total of 11 sites were assessed using the methodology set out in the Planning Practice Guidance and the sites are shown below as follows:



Figure 26: Sites identified in Wells-next-the-Sea (source: Site Options and Assessment Report, AECOM, October 2021).

- 5.19 The draft report was finalised in December 2021. The assessment uses a RAG¹⁶ rating for each site and assesses them against the criteria set out in national guidance. None of the proposed site were rated as 'green' – meaning none were free from constraints.
- 5.20 **Key findings** (refer to separate Site Options Report for full assessment)
- **Site CFS1:** the report indicated that Site CFS1 may have some merit for future housing but that constraints relating to highways, landscape and drainage would need to be overcome. The site was therefore rated 'amber'.
 - **Site CFS2:** the draft report also indicated that there were landscape and highways constraints associated with Site 2 which would need to be overcome, but that the site might be suitable for affordable housing in some form. The report did however identify that the site is designated as an 'open land area' in the emerging Local Plan and that there is a restrictive covenant on the site. Due to the policy conflict and the legal constraints the site received a red rating. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Party considered that this site should receive two ratings – one relating to the physical constraints of the site which would be 'amber' and

¹⁶ Red, Amber, Green.



that the 'red' rating should only refer to the legal and policy constraints which could be addressed, particularly if the site were to be developed for 100per cent affordable housing which would be of community benefit.

- **Site CFS3:** the report also indicated that Site 3 has highways, landscape, nature conservation and drainage constraints together with some concerns over the scale of development being proposed. The report notes that a smaller level of development might be acceptable, however, this would not be sufficient to address the highways concerns and therefore satisfactory development of the site would be difficult and would not necessarily fulfil the ambition of delivering affordable housing. The site received an 'amber' rating.
- **Site CFS4:** identified in the Regulation 19 Version of the Local Plan (January 2022) as an allocation for open market housing.

5.21 The AECOM report considered some additional sites that were not put forward through the Neighbourhood Plan call for sites but had previously been put forward through the Local Plan process (and assessed through the NNDC HELAA, 2017). These were:

- Site H0699 – Land Adjacent Holkham Road – this site received an amber rating. Part of the site (to the south and east) is allocated for development in the emerging Local Plan subject to constraints relating to proximity to the sewage treatment works and impact on landscape.
- Site H1594 – Land adjacent to the Old Rectory, Church Street – This site is within the designated settlement boundary and therefore potentially suitable for small scale development. It received an amber rating due to potential constraints relating to the Conservation Area, the existing woodland which is a priority habitat and landscape constraints.
- Site H1015 – Land North of Field View, adjacent Stiffkey Road – The site may be suitable for small scale development (up to 5 dwellings only). The site received an amber rating.
- Site H1016 – Land at East Quay – The site received a red rating due to its location within Flood Zone 2 and 3 and the risk of erosion.
- Site H0285 – The Old Coal Yard, East Quay. The site received a red rating due to its position within the undeveloped coast and Flood Zones 2 and 3, together with the risk of erosion.
- Site W09 – Land at Cadamy's Yard. The site received a red rating due to the inability to create a suitable access.
- Site W10 – Land west of Polka Road – site received a red rating as it lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and is identified as open space in the emerging and adopted Local Plans.
- Site W13 – Land south of former Railway, Two Furlong Hill – site received a red rating due to its impact on the AONB (now NCNL), the setting of the town and its distance from the existing built-up area separated by the former railway line.

5.22 The Neighbourhood Plan Working Party considered a number of 'housing options' in relation to the scale, type and location of new housing. The



Working Party were keen to work towards addressing the issues of affordable housing raised through early local consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan and also identified in the Housing Needs Assessment. The challenge was to find a site that would deliver affordable housing of the scale, size and type that would be acceptable to the community and without adverse impacts upon landscape and nature conservation impacts. The Working Party were also conscious that the emerging Local Plan already contains allocations for 70 new dwellings (originally 80) which would deliver open market housing (with some affordable) and were clear that in order for additional development in the town above that figure to be considered acceptable by the community, the emphasis would very much need to be on affordable housing for local people.

Community Led Housing

- 5.23 The emerging North Norfolk Local Plan (March 2023), makes provision for the concept of 'Community Led Development' through its strategic policies. The purpose of the Local Plan policy is to make clear the District Council's support for various types of proposal that have community support. The draft Local Plan acknowledges that through Neighbourhood Plans, local communities can demonstrate their support for specific policies or proposals that may not comply fully with certain aspects of the Local Plan, but which are nevertheless promoted by the local community as a local solution to a specific problem and there is demonstrable local support for it.
- 5.24 The Local Plan policy requires that a need for the proposal is demonstrated and that it will make a meaningful and lasting contribution to the vitality of the community and deliver improved services and infrastructure. To secure planning permission under this emerging Local Plan policy it will be necessary to demonstrate that the proposal has widespread community support. Demonstrable community support is defined in the draft Local Plan as at the point of submission of a planning application there should be clear evidence of local community support for the scheme, generated through pre-application community consultation and support from the Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council.
- 5.25 In addition to the Local Plan policy, **Policy WNS2** includes criteria to ensure that the proposed form of development is acceptable in terms of design, location, and impact. Such proposals should be led by a legitimate community group such as the Town Council or Community Land Trust. The Local Plan policy also allows for a small element of open market housing (where the proposal is a housing scheme) to allow for the delivery of affordable housing where it can be clearly demonstrated that this is the minimum level of development required to deliver the affordable housing which would not otherwise be provided and that the majority of the homes to be provided are affordable. Policy WNS2 sets out a local approach to this important matter. Government guidance indicates the definition of a key



worker should be determined locally and could be any person who works in any profession that is considered essential for the functioning of a local area. The Town Council encourages the District Council to include Lifeboat Crew as falling within its definition of key workers for the purposes of its housing policies. The occupation of this housing should be secured through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing.

- 5.26 It is recognised that there are specific difficulties that arise from allocating sites solely for affordable housing as these can result in landowners developing on a commercial basis leaving the affordable housing need unmet.
- 5.27 Affordable housing can be delivered as Rural Exception Sites. These sites will be outside the settlement boundary and are identified for development as an 'exception' to the prevailing policy set in Local Plans. Such sites might not ordinarily expect to gain planning permission and are known as 'Rural Exception Sites. Where they are proposed, justification must be given that demonstrates an identified housing need within the parish, that the proposed site is suitable to meet. This housing must also remain available to meet identified housing need in perpetuity. The policy is exceptional in that it allows residential development in areas that would not otherwise be policy compliant., however all other usual planning criteria e.g. layout, design etc are still applicable. The emerging North Norfolk Local Plan supports such proposals as Community Led Developments where it can be demonstrated that they are fulfilling a genuine identified housing need and where there is evidence of community support and participation in the proposal. Policy WNS2 advises that such housing should be offered in line with the community-led housing group's allocation policy which should include reference to local connection and key workers. Definitions of key workers in allocation policies should have regard to those in the NPPF Glossary (Essential Local Workers). If there has been no take up of the houses based that allocation policy after a period of three months, the District Council's Local Allocations Agreement will apply. This approach provides a flexible and non-prescriptive approach towards the allocation of community led housing throughout the Plan period.

Essential/key workers

- 5.28 A number of consultation responses to the Pre-Submission Consultation referred to the problems in obtaining suitable housing being experienced by key workers in the town. Examples given were those who work in the emergency services e.g. the Lifeboat Crew and Firefighters who are required to live within a certain proximity of their emergency station in order to fulfil their emergency responsibilities, the fact that the High School was experiencing difficulties in recruiting teachers due to a lack of suitable housing and that some hospitality and tourist industries were also finding it difficult to recruit staff from the resident Wells population. Business owners also reported that potential employees outside of Wells were unlikely to take



jobs in the town, which required them to travel when there was a lack of public transport available, particularly in the evenings.

- 5.29 The definition of Affordable Housing set out in the NPPF (see **Appendix D**), makes clear the Government's commitment to home ownership by broadening the definition to include a range of low-cost housing opportunities for those aspiring to own a home. The NPPF defines Affordable Housing 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'*¹⁷.

POLICY

WNS2: Community Led Housing

Proposals for the development of community-led housing schemes on sites outside, but immediately adjacent to, the settlement boundary and well-related to the built-up area will be supported on an exceptional basis where there is a proven local need and where such housing remains affordable and is restricted as such in perpetuity and where they comply with all the following criteria:

- a. Is made available for people identified as being in housing need, who can demonstrate a local connection and/ or relevant key workers, by virtue of being unable to buy or rent properties in the parish at open market prices.
- b. Is offered in line with the community-led housing group's allocation policy which should include reference to local connection and key workers. If there has been no take up of the houses based on that allocation policy after a period of three months, the District Council's Local Allocations Agreement will apply.
- c. Is accompanied by evidence of community support and/or participation including through public consultation and engagement.

Development proposals should make appropriate contributions towards mitigation measures identified in the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS).

- 5.30 Taking the above into account, including the Site Options Assessment, the Housing Needs Assessment and the feedback from the community, this Neighbourhood Plan proposes to specifically identify an area of land for a specific Community Led Housing Development which would provide affordable housing for local people.

¹⁷ National Planning Policy Framework,
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf



- 5.31 The preferred site to provide this form of housing is a portion of **Site CFS2**. The reasons for the preferred site are:
- The site is well related to the current settlement pattern of the town.
 - The site is not subject to nature conservation designations.
 - The site can be developed to provide good pedestrian and cycle links with the rest of the town and the town centre.
 - The site would allow for 100per cent affordable housing, as it is in public ownership and therefore more likely to be a viable site.
 - The proposed site excludes the area of allotments and the horse paddock to the north.
 - The position of the site in the south-eastern corner of the wider triangle site allows for a design and layout that would provide better assimilation into the wider landscape.
 - The majority of the wider site will remain open and in current use as allotment and horse paddock.
 - The site is subject to a covenant held by the former owners, the Holkham Estate, whose agreement to lift the covenant would need to be secured.
 - Homes for Wells have indicated an interest in engaging with the Town Council in the development of affordable housing on the site.
- 5.32 The reasons for rejecting other sites (see also the Site Options Assessment supporting document) are as follows:
- Site **CFS1**:
 - Is an extension to the site identified as a preferred site in the emerging Local Plan (Site W0/7) and therefore may be required to deliver the strategic housing requirement for the Local Plan.
 - Landowner aspiration is for open market housing with Local Plan compliant proportion of affordable housing rather than a 100per cent affordable site.
 - Site **CFS2**
 - South-eastern portion of the site is considered suitable for development.
 - Remainder of the site to remain in existing uses.
 - Site **CFS3**:
 - the site is a large site with identified constraints relating to nature conservation, landscape impact, highways, and drainage.
 - These constraints are reflected by locally raised concerns through the community consultation exercises.
 - Landowner aspiration is for open market housing with Local Plan compliant proportion of affordable housing rather than a 100per cent affordable site.
 - Additional open market housing would be above and beyond that already identified in the Local Plan.
 - Site **CFS4**:
 - The site is identified as a preferred site in the emerging Local Plan required to meet the Local Plan strategic housing requirement.



- The site was identified in the adopted core strategy as a site for affordable housing but has not come forward due to landowner aspirations.
 - Site **H0699** – Land Adjacent Holkham Road – Part of it is allocated for development in the emerging Local Plan.
 - Site **H1594** – Land adjacent to the Old Rectory, Church Street – This site is within the designated settlement boundary and therefore could come forward without the need for allocation. Additionally it could only deliver small scale development which would be unlikely to include affordable housing.
 - Site **H1015** – Land North of Field View, adjacent Stiffkey Road – The site may be suitable for small scale development (up to 5 dwellings only).
 - Site **H1016** – Land at East Quay – The site is located within Flood Zone 2 and 3 and is at the risk of erosion.
 - Site **H0285** – The Old Coal Yard, East Quay. The site is located within the undeveloped cost and Flood Zones 2 and 3, together with the risk of erosion.
 - Site **W09** – Land at Cadamy's Yard. The site cannot be suitably accessed.
 - Site **W10** – Land west of Polka Road – the site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and is identified as open space in the emerging and adopted Local Plans.
 - Site **W13** – Land south of former Railway, Two Furlong Hill – the site is not well related to the existing built form of the settlement due to its location south of the former railway line and would have an adverse impact on the AONB and the setting of the town.
- 5.33 **Site WELLS1** at Two Furlong Hill is identified as an affordable housing development of a minimum of approximately 45 affordable dwellings. The land is in the ownership of the Town Council and their stated policy is to support the provision of affordable housing for those who work in the town through a Community Led Housing Development. The allocations in the emerging Local Plan assume a dwelling density of 30-40 dwellings per hectare. However the Neighbourhood Plan provides for a slightly lower density at an average of 25 dwellings per hectare for **Site WELLS1** to reflect its specific environmental sensitivities which are: its edge of settlement location, the proposed Local Plan designation of 'open land area' for the immediately surrounding area, the Norfolk Coast National Landscape designation and in order to facilitate the provision of bungalows (which take up a greater area of land), should the need for these be demonstrated at the time of an application. The site also needs to provide for the appropriate amount of open space associated with this size of development – in this case 0.12ha of multifunctional open space.
- 5.34 As stated earlier, the parish of Wells-next-the-Sea falls within the Norfolk Coast National Landscape (formerly known as the 'AONB'). Policy ENV1 of the Regulation 19 Version of the emerging Local Plan indicates that the highest degree of protection will be given to the designated landscapes and



that development proposals should contribute positively and conserve and enhance these valued landscapes and their settings through appropriate siting, scale, massing, materials and design. Proposals for major development¹⁸ will be refused, unless exceptional circumstances exist, and it can be demonstrated that the proposal is in the public interest. The development proposed under **Policy WNS3** at Site **WELLS1** is Community Led Housing specifically aimed at providing housing for local people, including keyworkers and therefore is clearly in the public interest.

- 5.35 **Policy WNS3** outlines a number of measures that are required in order for the development to be acceptable and to ensure that it contributes positively to sustainable development. These include:
- o the provision of safe and convenient vehicular access from Two Furlong Hill,
 - o the provision of pedestrian and cycle connections between the site and the rest of the town,
 - o appropriate landscaping on site boundaries and provision of on-site open space to assimilate the development into its surroundings,
 - o open space to provide for the recreational needs of the development,
 - o foul and surface water management to ensure a proper form of development.

Note 1: Anglian Water can advise developers on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and nature-based solutions for sites. In addition, Anglian Water's Development Services team can advise developers on the water supply and wastewater options to inform the submission of an application on the site. Submission, approval and implementation of a Surface Water Management Plan, to include sustainable drainage systems, ensuring that there are no adverse effects on European sites and greenfield run off rates are not increased.

Note 2: Regard should be had to the guidance contained in Norfolk County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority's Guidance.¹⁹

¹⁸ As defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure Order) (England) 2010.

¹⁹ Lead Local Flood Authority Statutory Consultee for Planning Guidance Document
<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/rubbish-recycling-planning/flood-and-water-management/lead-local-flood-authority-guidance-document.pdf>



POLICY

WNS3: Housing allocation at Two Furlong Hill (Site WELLS1)

Land at Two Furlong Hill (as shown on figure 27) is allocated for affordable housing and associated infrastructure. The development of the site should respond positively to the Design Guidance and Codes and the following site-specific requirements:

Form of Development

- a. Approximately 45 Affordable dwellings will be provided (see paragraph 5.37 for definition). Such dwellings should remain affordable and available in perpetuity.
- b. Dwelling types should be a mix of houses (including bungalows), comprised predominantly of 2-3 bedroomed dwellings.

Accessibility

- c. Provision of safe and convenient access from Two Furlong Hill.
- d. A 2m footway along the site frontage linking to the existing footway to the south,
 - Widening of the footway on the eastern side of Two Furlong Hill; and
 - A crossing facility of the A149 in the vicinity of the site.
- e. Provision of pedestrian and cycle access to link the site with the remainder of the town and the town centre.

Layout, Green Infrastructure and Landscaping

- f. Retention and enhancement of existing trees and hedging on site boundaries.
- g. Submission, approval and implementation of a Surface Water Management Plan ensuring that there are no adverse effects on European sites and greenfield run off rates are not increased.
- h. Submission, approval and implementation of a Foul Water Drainage Strategy setting out how additional foul flows will be accommodated within the foul sewerage network.
- i. Delivery of not less than 0.12 ha of multifunctional open space together with measures for its ongoing maintenance and additional off-site contributions in line with Local Plan requirements.
- j. Provision of substantial landscaping to the north and east of the site to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- k. Appropriate contributions towards mitigation measures identified in the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS).
- l. Delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain on site targeted to the south of the site and the area connecting with the deciduous woodland Priority Habitat.

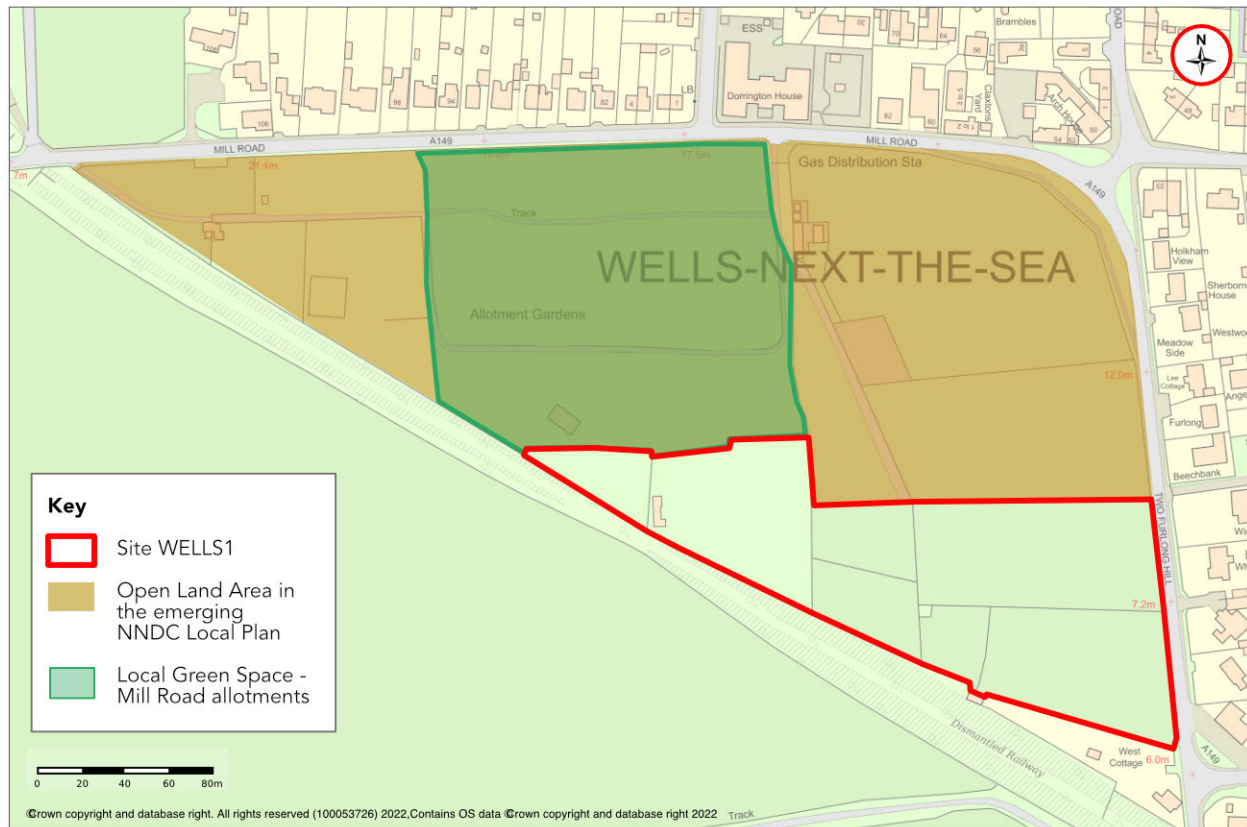


Figure 27: Site WELLS1 (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).

Housing mix

- 5.36 The size, type and tenure of any new housing is also a key issue for local communities in respect of new housing. Delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes is essential to support a sustainable, vibrant, and mixed community and this is reflected in the housing objective for this Neighbourhood Plan. The specific mix of housing will clearly have an impact on the existing community and therefore careful thought needs to be applied to determining that mix. At the time of writing, there are two proposed allocations in the emerging Local Plan which do not have the benefit of planning permission, but which will need to provide an element of affordable housing (35 per cent), and therefore this Neighbourhood Plan may, dependent upon timing, influence the form of development on those sites.

Affordable Housing

- 5.37 Affordable Housing is housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market, which includes housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers. Annex 2 of the NPPF (2023) sets out the definition of affordable housing and is split into the following four main categories:

- Affordable housing for rent
- Starter homes



- Discounted market sale housing, and
- Other affordable routes to home ownership.

- 5.38 The English Housing Survey²⁰ is a continuous national survey commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). It collects information about people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England. It has 2 component surveys:
- A household interview
 - A physical inspection of a sub sample of the properties

The Survey classifies all dwellings into one of four housing tenure classifications:

- Owner-occupied
- Private rented
- Rented from housing association (registered social landlords)
- Rented from local authorities.

These are the tenures that are used within the planning system.

- 5.39 At the Policy Ideas exhibitions, when asked about the potential mix of new housing, there was a strong preference expressed (90 responses) that new housing should cater for older people, first time buyers, those with a specialist housing need and family housing. It was also clear from comments made, that new housing should be for local people and not for second homes. There were also concerns raised that existing 'affordable properties' within the town had been lost through the Right to Buy initiative and were no longer available to meet local needs in perpetuity.
- 5.40 Strategic policies in the Regulation 19 version of the emerging NNDC Local Plan sets out a policy requirement that not less than 50per cent of open market homes are 2 or 3 bedroomed properties in a mix that comprises approximately 20per cent 2 bedroomed properties and 80per cent 3 bedroomed properties. In terms of affordable homes, 25per cent are required to be First Homes (in line with Government policy²¹) and the remainder to be rented in a mix comprising 1,2 and 3 bedroomed properties, requiring the majority to be 2 bedroomed. The definition of rented includes social rented, affordable rent and intermediate rent. The Housing Needs Assessment²² which is more locally specific considers the mix of new housing and concludes that new build properties should reflect the ability of local households to access market housing and could be delivered through a mix of open market and affordable housing sites and exceptions sites. The study concludes on page 66 that the mix should include 60 per cent social and affordable rent and at least 13 per cent shared ownership. In terms of

²⁰ English Housing Survey, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>

²¹ Para 18 of the Planning Practice Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes#first-homes-eligibility-criteria>

²² Produced by Housing Vision.



affordable homes, Planning Practice guidance provides a recommendation that 25% of affordable housing should be First Homes.

Local Needs vs District Wide Housing Needs

- 5.41 The housing affordability issues in the town are reflected in relatively high prices and a wide gap between house prices and incomes. At the same time, the availability of smaller, less expensive houses to buy or rent, as well as properties that are by definition “affordable housing”, is severely limited. The situation is unlikely to materially improve in the short term.
- 5.42 In these circumstances, a sustainable solution would be for all new affordable housing provided in the parish to be occupied by local people rather than servicing the general district wide housing need i.e. genuinely local homes for local people. Thereby where new development occurs in the future it is reasonable for the host community to experience the benefits. Given all these factors, a ‘local connection’ priority on affordable housing is a desirable and legitimate planning aim as well as being justified and equitable. On all additional affordable housing outside the strategic Local Plan allocations and community led schemes the Councils Local Allocation agreement for affordable housing exceptions sites will apply. This gives priority to those that have lived in the parish or adjoining parish and those that have employment and family links.
- 5.43 Such an approach is still in general conformity with the Adopted Development Plan in circumstances where those strategic policies require the settlement to contribute to the provision of general housing need in terms of both market housing and affordable housing. However, even though the occupation of any additional affordable housing would be directed at those with a connection to Wells-next-the Sea or the surrounding parishes, the quantum of both market and affordable housing, and the contribution to District supply, would remain the same.
- 5.44 The occupation of property can be legitimately controlled through planning. There are many examples, in Neighbourhood Plans and elsewhere,²³ where the requirement of a certain type of occupancy serves an appropriate planning purpose, for example, agricultural occupancy or the Government’s First Homes local connection test. Such occupation would be needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms and would be secured by a planning obligation, as necessary.
- 5.45 The following policy mix has sought to respond to the results of the localised housing needs assessment, whilst having regard to the prescribed housing mix in the District’s emerging Local Plan, existing Government Guidance, and reflecting the views of local residents expressed through the results of the consultation exercises.

²³ For example, agricultural occupancy or the Government’s First Homes local connection test.



POLICY	<p>WNS4: Housing mix</p> <p>Proposals for new housing should provide for and contribute to a mix of housing that meets local needs (both now and in the future) and enables the creation of a mixed and balanced community.</p> <p>Development proposals of ten dwellings or more should, wherever practicable, include elements of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 50 per cent should be small and medium sized homes, 2 and 3 bedrooms. • Opportunities for self-build or custom build. • Housing suitable for those with accessibility needs including bungalows. <p>Where affordable housing is proposed as part of a wider scheme, on site provision of the highest proportion of affordable housing should be provided. As a minimum, this should be in accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The occupation of all new affordable housing (excluding the strategic allocations in the Local Plan and community-led residential developments) shall be in accordance with the District Council's Local Allocation Policy.*</p> <p>New Affordable Housing developments should be of high-quality design and construction and be indistinguishable from other dwellings.</p> <p>*NNDC Local Allocation Agreement for exception sites or subsequent updates.</p>
--------	---

Second homes and Principal Residence Dwellings

- 5.46 The issue of the number of second homes and holiday lets in the parish and the difficulties experienced by local people to find housing they can afford is probably the most consistently raised issue through the various Neighbourhood Plan consultations.
- 5.47 As part of work to support early iterations of the Local Plan, North Norfolk District Council produced a number of Settlement Profiles in 2018, which identified the total number of dwellings in Wells-next-the-Sea as 1,557 and the number of second homes as 383. This equates to 24.6 per cent of total dwellings in the parish being used as second homes. This compares to the proportion of second homes in North Norfolk district as a whole for the same period as 7.8 per cent.²⁴

²⁴ North Norfolk District Council Village Assessment and Settlement Profiles



- 5.48 More recent figures from the Regulation 19 version of the emerging Local Plan, using Council Tax figures from 2020, indicates that the number of second homes in the District had risen to 8.1 per cent. The emerging Local Plan recognises that the figures for coastal communities often contain higher concentrations.
- 5.49 Figures obtained to support the Neighbourhood Plan Data Profile in March 2021 from North Norfolk's Council Tax Records indicate that the total number of homes that were eligible for Council Tax in Wells-next-the-Sea was 1,563 and that 387 of these were registered as second homes for the purposes of Council Tax. This equates to a figure of 24.8 per cent of all homes in the parish being second homes – almost 1 in 4. In addition there were also 224 holiday lets i.e. those regularly rented out as holiday lets to different people, which gives a figure of 611 dwellings in the parish which were either second homes or holiday lets, equating to almost 34 per cent of all homes in Wells. This compares to a District average of 11.6 per cent. Figures for 2022 were supplied by North Norfolk as part of their Regulation 14 comments and are shown below.

Number of holiday homes and second homes in Wells-next-the-Sea		
	March 2021 ²⁵	March 2022 ²⁶
All council tax homes	1563	1560
All second homes	387	383
Percentage of second homes	24.8 per cent	24.6 per cent
District average of second homes	8 per cent	8 per cent
Holiday homes	224	244
Council tax and registered holiday homes	1787	1804
Number of second homes and holiday homes	611	627
Percentage of second homes and holiday homes	34.1 per cent	34.8 per cent
District average of second homes and holiday homes	11.6 per cent	12.2 per cent

- 5.50 Figures obtained from North Norfolk for the Neighbourhood Plan data profile (February 2021) also indicated that the trend was for an increase year on year in the percentage change in the number of second homes and holiday homes in the parish from 2016/17 up to 2021/2022. Members of the Neighbourhood Working Party undertook some bespoke local research in February 2022. The results of this local survey work estimated that the levels of holiday and second homeownership within the parish as a whole are now

Topic Paper <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/4094/settlement-profiles-topic-paper-final-april-2018.pdf>.

²⁵ Figures obtained from NNDC in March 2022 (figures from March 2021)

²⁶ Figures provide by NNDC in their Regulation 14 response in September 2022 (figures from March 2022).



between 31 per cent and 40 per cent. However there are pockets within the town where second homeownership and or holiday lets comprise up to 90 per cent of properties.

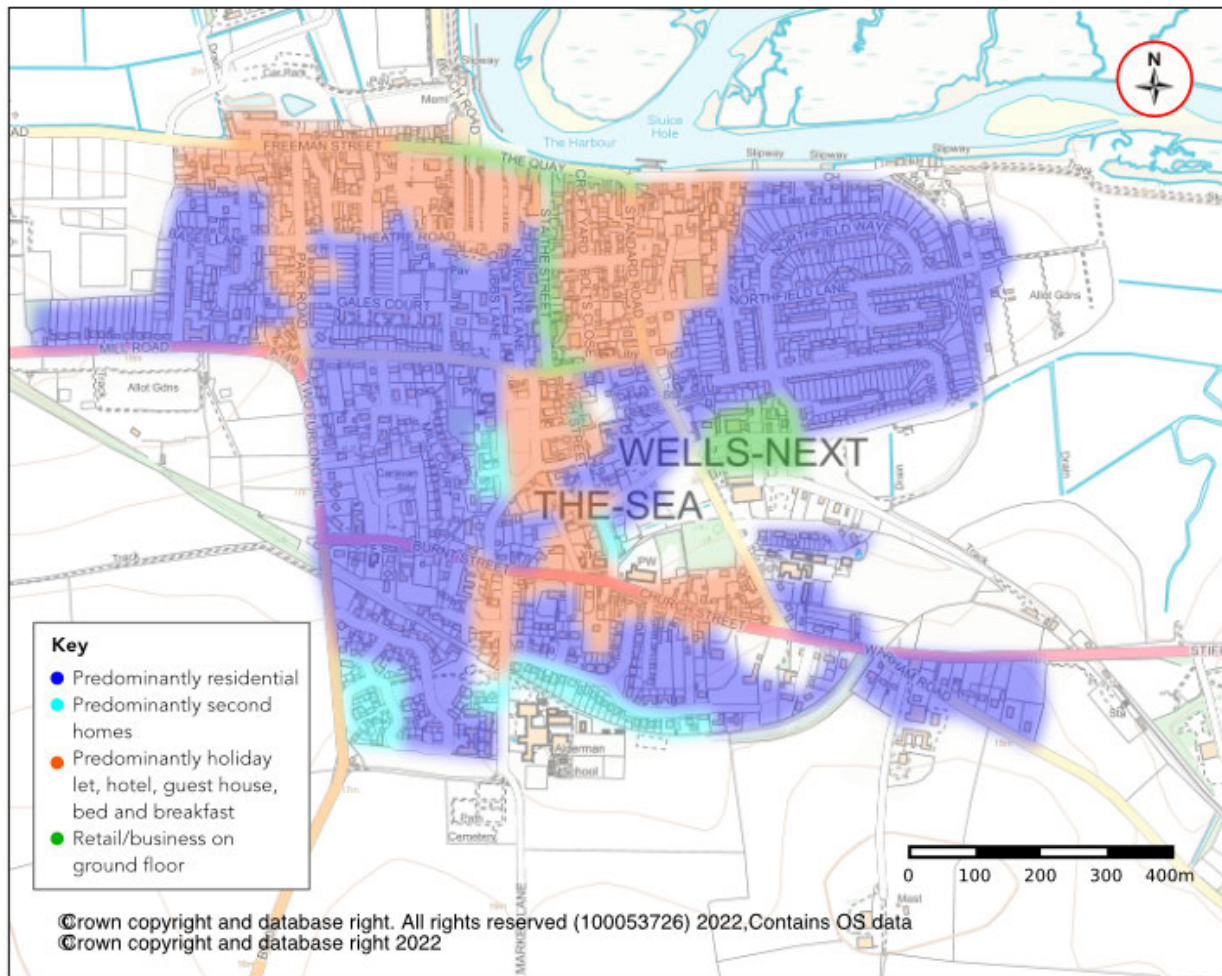


Figure 28: Dwelling uses, data collected by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).

Impacts of second homes and holiday homes on the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of Wells

- 5.51 What these figures show is clear evidence of a higher than district average of second homes and holiday lets in Wells and a continuing upward trend. These most recent figures include those from 2021-2022 when the Covid-19 restrictions had eased and house buying became less restricted. The emphasis on working from home, which for many has now become a tried and tested way of working, will continue well after all Covid restrictions are lifted and there have been numerous national articles ²⁷ citing the high

²⁷ The Guardian, 'Rural house prices in England and Wales rise twice as fast as in cities' <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jun/20/rural-house-prices-in-england-and-wales-rise-twice-as-fast-as-in-cities>.



percentage increases in rural and coastal house prices as people consider a permanent move out of the cities and into the countryside.

- 5.52 These factors clearly have implications for the future sustainability of the town as a whole, the local housing market and for the ability of local people to find their own home. Furthermore the most recent results indicate that the desire for such properties is not confined to the older, more traditional historic properties in the town. Second home numbers are also significant in newer developments such as Staithe Place and Manor Farm Drive Barns where only 1 in 6 is a permanent resident).
- 5.53 As indicated in Section 2 earlier, the population is ageing which is, however, consistent with many other settlements in North Norfolk although the proportion of residents in each age cohort over 65 is noticeably higher in Wells-next-the-Sea than either then District or County averages. Elderly populations are especially vulnerable to the social and health impacts of living in a town where many of the surrounding dwellings are 'dark' and empty during the winter months. Appropriate housing, access to transport and a safe environment can help improve quality of life, independence and promote social inclusion. Evidence emerging nationally, post pandemic suggests that social isolation is a contributing factor in over 60 per cent of preventable illnesses.
- 5.54 However, according to the Data Profile which supports the Neighbourhood Plan, the population of Wells-next-the-Sea is in broadly similar health to that of the remainder of the District and the County, which may be due to the proximity and capacity of local health delivery such as that provided at the Wells Health Centre and by the mix of services at the Old Cottage Hospital.
- 5.55 However, an ageing population and a high proportion of second and holiday homes can combine to impact upon the sustainability of the younger population within the Wells-next-the-Sea community. As referred to earlier in Section 2, the High School numbers rely on children coming from out of catchment and the number of children being born in catchment is reducing annually so there is a need to attract children from out of catchment, particularly from West Norfolk. The High School principal reported that recruiting education staff is a major challenge due to house prices in the area and that a lack of affordable houses and / or houses for key workers is a big issue. The Housing Needs Assessment Survey work undertaken by Housing Vision with both Employers and with local residents ²⁸revealed two often repeated key issues:
- "Because of the cost of housing, there is a larger movement of children, and they have different curriculums so children are not performing as well as they could have."*

²⁸ See supporting documents.



"The number of second homes has a direct impact because if they are not locals in those homes and we aren't benefitting by getting these children into our school."

- 5.56 The Employers Survey sought to determine their views on the availability of suitable and affordable housing for their employees.²⁹ The employers came from a wide range of sectors including Education, Health, Hospitality, Land, Manufacturing, Property, Retail, Shipping. In-depth interviews with employers highlighted concerns about the impact of the lack of full-time residents on their viability; a typical comment was that the abundance of tourism during the summer did not make up for the lack of off-season trade. Significantly, whilst this comment might have been expected from shops supplying ordinary needs like the hardware, butcher, or delicatessen, it was also made by businesses that cater for tourists. Employers held a range of views concerning changes in availability, although the majority believed that it had got worse. Detailed comments are reported in the Employers Survey Report.
- 5.57 Some employers felt that the situation had been changing for some time and was likely to continue to change: *"It's been similar for the last 7-8 years, it really changed about 10 years ago or maybe more."* *"It has changed dramatically over the years, and it is going to change even more, because I think there is going to be an influx of people who are going to want to move away from London now, they can work from home. I'm finding everyone who has a second home in Norfolk is doing it up as their primary residence."*
- 5.58 Some employers thought the situation had got slightly better: *"It's a bit better, they've built some more affordable housing or social housing type things and Homes for Wells always had their little bits and pieces so in some ways it has got a little bit better, but we have got more and more holiday homes too."*
- 5.59 When asked about perceived changes in the housing situation over time, there was again a clear consensus that changes were associated with the demand for second and holiday homes and with people moving into the area, although a new and very recent trend was the 'conversion' of second homes into permanent residences due to Covid-19 and the ability to work from home.
- 5.60 Employers did however recognise both negative and impacts of second and holiday homes reducing the supply of housing whilst supporting the local economy, for example, on the negative side: *"It's not a good thing, it would be good if people actually lived in them and then to be part of the community. Many plan to retire here when they buy a*

²⁹ Determining the Need for Housing in Wells, Holkham, Walsingham, Warham and Wighton: Survey of Employers, March 2021.



second home which they do. But we have had second homes since the '50s and '60s – it is not a new thing."

5.61 Whilst on the more positive side:

"The only thing that is very noticeable is that it has tidied the area up and made it a nicer area, but the downside is that the houses are very valuable now and because of that you don't walk past houses that are not being looked after, they are valuable now and it has helped to improve the area."

"Second homes do bring much needed income to the area, and they use the local people and use the local shops, so they aren't doing anything wrong, it is just the system that is broken."

"...if we didn't have second homeowners then I would not have to employ as many people."

"So there is such a great industry for builders and cleaners and maintenance people. Farming and fishing industries have been decimated so apart from the holiday industry, the second homeowners' industry is booming at the moment and is important for the local building industry."

5.62 When asked about the effects on their employees, employers were divided in their views on the impact of the availability of suitable and affordable housing for their employees and some employers did not think it had an impact. When asked how it affected their business, employers were also divided. The main impact was felt to be the recruitment and retention of employees. Concerns raised included that when offered a job the employee will later decline because of the need to commute from distance if houses locally are not affordable and that employees are lost to other nearby settlements e.g. Fakenham where affordable house prices and job opportunities are more attractive.

5.63 Associated with the provision of housing for local people and employees is the recurrent tension with the level and demand for second and holiday homes.

"There could be a limit to the number of holiday houses in Wells otherwise you will get saturation point and, in the wintertime, when everyone goes to live somewhere else, the local shops are not going to survive."

"The problem is with people buying second homes and I don't know how you can stop that, rich people from London buying second homes. Nice if there were some limits on selling to second homeowners."

5.64 Equally, it is important to recognise that the occupiers of many second homes are committed to Wells-next-the-Sea and have a positive impact on the town. Many come to the town regularly and, in the case of those owning second homes, some spend quite long periods of time, so are very committed to the town and indeed many end up living in the town. The second home/holiday let housing market creates local jobs for painters, decorators, cleaners, gardeners, etc. At the same time, Wells-next-the-Sea also has "buy to invest" properties which are empty nearly all year round.



- 5.65 With the limited ability to physically expand the built-up area of the town due to its sensitive natural environment, it is important to strike a balance so that the thriving tourism economy does not undermine the town's viability. Without a thriving full-time community, Wells-next-the-Sea will lose many of the things that make it a place that people want to visit and spend their holidays.
- 5.66 Settlements where a large proportion of properties are used as second homes can suffer from a lack of vitality particularly during winter months and this can lead to an erosion of the sense of community within it. Local services and facilities can also decline in the absence of all year-round support. Requiring new dwellings to be occupied as a 'principal residence' avoids further loss of stock to second homes in the Neighbourhood Area whilst enabling the local economy to benefit by providing new housing for people coming into the area to live, work and contribute to the local community.
- 5.67 The public consultation on the Policy Ideas also considered the issue of second homes. The Policy Ideas Exhibition posed a specific question on whether the introduction of a 'principal residence policy' should be pursued through the Neighbourhood Plan. The response was 125 attendees of the 191 in favour, with only 3 disagreeing.
- 5.68 Principal Residence policies have been used in a number of areas – often those in coastal areas with high levels of tourism, or National Parks to attempt to meet the housing needs of local people, bring greater balance and mixture to the local housing market and create new opportunities for people to live and work in the same place. Such policies have to be justified by evidence of levels of second home ownership and affordability issues experienced by local people in accessing the local housing.
- 5.69 Some recent examples of the introduction/consideration of a Principal Residence policy are Scarborough Borough Council for the coastal town of Whitby, the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the Southwold Neighbourhood Plan in East Suffolk District which was approved (made) in March 2022 and the Blakeney Neighbourhood Plan 2023 (also in North Norfolk District). Scarborough estimate that 1 in 4 (25 per cent) of all dwellings are taken up by second homes or holiday lets and consider this to be sufficient justification for the introduction of such a policy. For Blakeney the figure is consistently in the mid-40s per cent and for Southwold the figure was closer to 52 per cent and considered to be one of the highest in the country. The most recent figures for Wells-next-the-Sea are therefore clearly within scope to justify such a policy.
- 5.70 It is recognised that the introduction of a planning policy to limit the number of new second homes and holiday lets is not without its implications. Such a policy cannot be retrospectively applied to existing development, and it will only be enacted by new development e.g. new builds, or conversions of existing buildings to residential use, therefore any change it brings about will



be incremental over time. There is an acknowledgement that it can affect the viability of developments and consequently developers may ask for more development on a site to make their site viable. However it has been introduced in a number of places. (the most notable being in St Ives Neighbourhood Plan, Cornwall.

- 5.71 Implementation of such as policy would be as follows:
- Principal residence is defined as main or sole residence and specifically excludes second homes and holiday lets.
 - The policy will be implemented through the imposition of a planning condition or legal agreement.
 - Occupiers of homes with a Principal Residence condition will be required to keep proof that they are meeting the obligation or condition and be obliged to provide this proof on the request of the District Council.
 - Proof of residency can include being registered as an elector, and for local services such as health care.
 - Replacement dwellings are excluded from this requirement.
- 5.72 There have been conflicting schools of thought on the impacts of such a policy. The St Ives policy was introduced in 2015 and has been watched closely. The development industry has been sceptical and suggested that the result has been that developers will build elsewhere rather than St Ives and that this artificial squeeze on the housing supply only increases the value of the existing housing stock which is then further from the reach of local people but also with potentially fewer properties to choose from.
- 5.73 Local evidence has suggested that instead, whilst prices of the existing housing stock in St Ives did indeed rise by 28 per cent following the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, they also rose and at a very similar rate, in other coastal areas of Cornwall such as West Penwith, where the rise was 30 per cent. In Roseland there was a 27 per cent increase, Wadebridge went up by 28 per cent, parts of Falmouth increased by 29 per cent and Padstow and St Merryn saw a rise of 35 per cent. In none of these areas was there a Principal Residence' policy on new build homes in this period and there appears to be no hard evidence at all that the Principal Residence policy is the cause of the price rise in the existing housing stock in St Ives. Other areas with similar second home demand have experienced the same magnitude of price increases since 2015. It is likely that a similar outcome would be seen in North Norfolk.
- 5.74 The purpose of a full-time Principal Residence policy, is not simply to ensure that people who wish to live in the area as full- time residents are able to obtain housing, but crucially to safeguard the sustainability of the settlement/local community by reducing the proportion of dwellings that are not used as a principal residence. Its purpose is to support a sustainable community and to safeguard the sustainability of Wells-next the-Sea, whose



living and working community is being eroded through the number of properties that are not occupied on a permanent basis. Over time it can be demonstrated that the overall Wells population is declining and that the proportion of second and holiday homes is increasing year on year.

- 5.75 There is evidence of local support for such a policy which has been demonstrated through the Neighbourhood Plan consultation exercises. In order to meet the housing needs of local people, bring greater balance and mixture to the local housing market, create new opportunities for people to live and work here, and to strengthen the community and the local economy, the Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan will include a policy for full-time principal residence housing. The policy will apply to new housing which must be used as the principal residence of the household living in it but does not have the price controls of affordable housing or any local connection requirement. Although there is likely to be a small reduction in the value of the dwelling compared with an unrestricted open market dwelling, the reduction is significantly less than with a local connection condition. Principal residence requirements will be secured through a planning condition and will be monitored by the District Council.
- 5.76 In seeking to strike a balance, and in light of the trends over the past 10-15 years with the percentage of non-permanent residential use having increased from less than 20 per cent to approaching 40 per cent (which is more than three times higher than the District average), **Policy WNS5** below is considered to be a necessary and proportionate response to a particular local issue of great significance to those living in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This approach will help to ensure that there is a supply of new housing for occupation by local people and to address the growth of dwellings used for holiday accommodation (either as a second homes or as holiday lets) which impacts upon the overall balance and sustainability of the settlement. These restrictions will be secured by the District Council prior to the grant of planning permission through appropriate Planning Conditions or Planning Obligations created and enforceable under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, or any subsequent successor legislation. Proof of principal residency will be achieved through verifiable evidence which could include, but is not limited to, residents being registered on the local electoral register.
- 5.77 Policy WNS5 does not apply to the strategic allocations W01/1 at Ashburton Close and W07/1 at Holkham Road as identified in the emerging Local Plan as submitted in May 2023. This approach acknowledges that those sites are addressing strategic housing needs.
- 5.78 **Policy WNS5 will apply to all new housing that requires planning permission other than the strategic allocations in the Local Plan and any subsequent revisions (except replacement homes). It includes newly**



constructed homes or those created from changes of use and/or the conversion of existing buildings.

- 5.79 Given the importance of this issue, it will be important to monitor the outcomes of this policy on an annual basis, with a full review of the policy to take place not later than five years after the date of the Neighbourhood Plan being 'made'. This will include monitoring of the implementation of the above two strategic allocations, the delivery of the various elements of affordable housing and the monitoring of the following specific indicators:
- The occupation of the private rented dwellings
 - The occupation of intermediate housing
 - Number of second homes/holiday lets generated.
 - The number of dwellings remaining affordable in perpetuity
 - The rate of development and any viability issues.
- 5.80 This approach to this policy monitoring throughout the Neighbourhood Plan period, will enable consideration of its impacts on the vitality and viability of Wells-next-the-Sea and will inform its implementation and review.

POLICY	<p>WNS5: Principal Residence Dwellings</p> <p>All new open market housing* (excluding replacement dwellings) permitted within the Neighbourhood Area will be restricted to ensure its occupancy as a Principal Residence. This relates to first and future occupation of the dwelling.</p> <p>Principal Residence is defined as those occupied as someone's main or sole residence where the residents spend the majority of their time.</p> <p>Proposals for holiday accommodation will not be permitted unless located on an established holiday complex.</p> <p>Occupiers of homes with a Principal Residence condition will be required to keep proof that they are meeting the obligation or condition and be obliged to provide this proof if or when North Norfolk District Council requests this information.</p> <p>*Other than the exceptions as detailed in paragraph 5.78.</p>
---------------	---

Design

- 5.81 One of the key determinants of whether any new development irrespective of scale or use is successful or not, is its quality and how well it is considered to integrate with its surroundings. Matters such as design, materials, form and massing, the impact on local character, layout and scale are the most



common issues that will cause the local community concerns about any proposed new development.

- 5.82 If a community believes that it has been involved in and been able to influence the design of a development at an early stage, it is more likely that the development will be considered to be acceptable.
- 5.83 Whilst to an extent design and impact on local character are subjective judgments, these can be influenced by breaking design elements down into component parts and attempting to address them. Whether a proposed new development is acceptable and appropriate and relates well to its surroundings is one of the most common judgments to be made, yet there is often very little evidence or guidance to assist local people (or decision makers) in making that judgement.
- 5.84 A key purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is not only to help influence the designers and proposers of development at an early stage of formulating their proposals, but also to help promote an understanding of what elements make up the character of the area and what constitutes good design that respects local character.
- 5.85 Government guidance places considerable emphasis on achieving well-designed places and this has been reinforced in the most recent revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2023. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF describes it as fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work, and helps make development proposals acceptable to communities. Effective engagement between applicants, communities, and local planning authorities is essential.
- 5.86 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states 'Design policies should be developed with local communities so that they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.' Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and how they should be reflected in development. The national approach to design is complemented by the North Norfolk Design Guide, which is an adopted Supplementary Planning Document.

Character Appraisal

- 5.87 At an early stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party undertook a Character Appraisal of the whole parish. The document is incorporated within the Wells-next-the-Sea Design Guidance and Codes Final Report (February 2022) which is a supporting document to this Neighbourhood Plan. In order to undertake a Character Appraisal of the Plan area, the Town and its immediate environs were divided into zones, as



shown in figure 8 in the Wells-next-the-Sea Design Guidance and Codes Final Report (February 2022).

- 5.88 The appraisal includes a brief overall description of each character area together with photographs illustrating key characteristics. Each character area is also appraised in detail under the following headings: layout, topography, spaces, access, notable buildings and materials, landmarks, green and natural features and important views. The Character Appraisal work has influenced a number of policies within this plan including those relating to Design, Historic Environment, Non-designated Heritage Assets, Local Green Spaces and Important Public Views.

Design Guidance and Codes

- 5.89 In addition, the NPPF makes clear that local planning authorities should ensure that visual tools such as design codes and guides are used to inform development proposals to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage and reflect local character and preferences. They should provide a framework for creating high-quality places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design to inform development proposals. It also makes clear that the level of detail and degree of prescription within design codes and guides should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.
- 5.90 Design coding is one tool available to local planning authorities, communities, and developers to define and deliver design quality, in addition to design guides, planning briefs, heritage characterisation studies, standards and masterplans as set out in the NPPF and planning practice guidance. A design code is a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that are visual and numerical wherever possible to provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area.
- 5.91 The Government is heavily advocating the use of design codes and expects all local planning authorities to prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide³⁰ and National Model Design Code³¹ and which reflect local character and design preferences. North Norfolk District Council have also produced their own Design Guide which is an adopted Supplementary Planning Document.³²

³⁰ National Design Guide, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

³¹ National Model Design Code, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>

³² <https://designguide.north-norfolk.gov.uk>



- 5.92 In June 2021, the Working Party commissioned consultants AECOM to produce some Design Guidance and Codes for the whole of the parish. This work was completed in January 2022 and is a supporting document to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Wells-next-the-Sea Design Guidance and Codes report reflected a detailed analysis of the local character of the parish, developed some strategic design guidance and identified a palette of materials which should influence the design of future development. In addition, the report provided specific guidance to be used by the Town Council when assessing and responding to consultation in future planning applications for new development.



Front cover of the Wells-next-the-Sea Design Guidance and Codes report.

- 5.93 Given the increasing importance that both local people and national Government place on design, it is considered that achieving well designed places and promoting high quality design should also be a fundamental aim of this Plan. Policy WNS6 sets out the key design principles which will apply to all new development irrespective of size and type. It includes specific sections on infill development and extensions.
- 5.94 Appropriate infill development within the existing adopted settlement boundary will continue to come forward in the Plan period. Development proposals of this type should accord with the general principles in Policy WNS6 and the additional criteria for such proposals.
- 5.95 In the same way, proposals for extensions will continue to come forward in the Plan period. Development proposals of this type should accord with the general principles in Policy WNS6 and the additional criteria for such proposals. For clarity this element of the policy will also apply for proposals to extend houses which are used as holiday lets.



POLICY

WNS6: High quality design

The design of new development should reflect the local distinctiveness and character of the town and where practicable enhance its quality.

Development proposals should have regard to the guidance contained generally in the Wells-next-the-Sea Design Guidance and Codes and specifically to the character area in which the site is located (as described in the Character Appraisal).

New development should respond positively to the following principles:

- a. **Layout and Grain:** Development should sustain or enhance the characteristic and historic locally distinctive grain of development with its mix of form, layout, and size. The siting and layout of new development must be sympathetic to the character of the area.
- b. **Pattern of development:** Development should reflect the local context ensuring that it makes a positive contribution to the existing built form. Development that alters the existing roofline or blocks existing long-distance views to the waterfront should be avoided.
- c. **Landscaping:** Development located at the transitional edges between the town and the surrounding countryside must be softened by new landscape planting to provide a more harmonious interface between built development and the wider landscape. New development should be well-integrated with the landscape and the existing settlement pattern and vegetation.
- d. **Access and connections:** Developments should connect to the wider area and to existing public rights of way using a range of connections including those suitable for use by those with a mobility impairment., Opportunities for increasing cycling and pedestrian movement should be a priority.
- e. **Town entrances:** Proposals should include green infrastructure, hedges, and/or private gardens to soften the edges of development. Green verges and street trees should be integrated into the design to create attractive neighbourhoods.
- f. **Parking:** Parking areas and driveways should be designed to minimise water run off by using permeable paving.
- g. **Scale form and massing:** Development should be of a scale and design to reinforce the locally distinctive character of the area. The scale and massing of new buildings should have regard of their impact at street level and to their appearance from more distant view and should be in keeping with the form and massing of neighbouring properties. The height of new buildings should be in keeping with neighbouring properties. Proposals which include buildings over two storeys in height should demonstrate how they would be in keeping the existing street scene and not have an overbearing impact on its character or appearance.
- h. **Boundary treatments:** Buildings should be designed to ensure that streets and/or public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance



from buildings. Natural boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity of the building line and help define the street, appropriate to the character of the area. They should be mainly continuous hedges and low walls, as appropriate, made of traditional materials found elsewhere in the town such as local bricks. The use of either panel fencing or metal or concrete walls in these publicly visible boundaries should be avoided.

- i. **Density:** The density of new developments should be appropriate to their location and respond positively to its character. Larger developments should include a range of densities to allow for variety in building types and forms. Housing densities should be reduced towards settlement edges and along rural edges in order to create a gradual transition between town and countryside.
- j. **Style/design:** Developments should use materials and architectural detailing that contribute positively to the rich heritage and distinctive character of the town. The materials used in new development should be of a high-quality and reinforce this local distinctiveness.
- k. **Open space:** Open spaces should be of a size, location, and form appropriate to the intended use. Wherever practicable, they should be in accessible locations and linked to form connected green networks. Wherever practicable, public open spaces should be overlooked by surrounding buildings to promote natural surveillance and social gatherings.
- l. **Designing Out Crime:** As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate good standard of security for buildings and the immediate environment. They should be designed and arranged to deter criminal and anti-social behaviour by introducing appropriate natural surveillance and creating a sense of ownership and responsibility for every part of the development.'

Infill Development

Proposals for infill development should comply with the general principles in this policy and:

- enhance the form and character of the street scene in the immediate locality; and
- be configured so that they would not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions or amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties.

Extensions

Proposals for extensions should comply with the general principles in this policy and:

- be designed in a sensitive way in relation to the size and location of the host building and avoid overlooking, overshadowing, or an overdevelopment of the plot;
- incorporate sufficient car parking space can be provided within the curtilage of the site; and



- be configured so that they would not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions or amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties.

Mitigations

Development proposals should make appropriate contributions towards mitigation measures identified in the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS).

- m. **Biodiversity:** Proposals should seek to protect existing habitats and enhance existing wildlife corridors and facilitate the creation of new green corridors. Hedges, trees and road verges should be protected where possible and boundary treatments to the side and rear of the property should be permeable to wildlife.
- n. **Sustainable design:** The orientation of buildings should maximise solar gain. Passive methods of heating and cooling and the use of renewable energy technologies such as ground source and air source heat pumps, biomass heating, photovoltaics, solar panels, and electric charging points are encouraged.
- o. **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):** The use of SuDS is encouraged to reduce runoff rates by providing attenuation that stores water to help slow its flow, improve water quality by filtering pollutants to help avoid environmental contamination and clean the water whilst increasing the biodiversity value of the area (see also Policy WNS14).
- p. **Street lighting:** New development should avoid the use of lighting that has a negative impact on health and wellbeing and should mitigate any impact on safe navigation into the harbour at night. Lighting schemes should be directed downwards and attempt to minimise glare, reflection and light pollution.



6: Employment and Retail

Objective 2: To encourage the creation of a range of employment opportunities in the town to maintain a strong, responsive economy, consistent with the character of the town.

Employment in Wells-next-the-Sea

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), states that planning policies and decisions should help to create the conditions in which businesses can expand and invest and adapt. Weight should be given to the need to support economic growth and productivity taking into account local business needs. In rural areas planning policies should enable the sustainable growth of all types of business both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. The use of previously developed land and sites that are well related physically to existing settlement should be encouraged.
- 6.2 The Adopted Core Strategy identified 3 hectares of land for employment generating development. This land was already in use for employment, so no specific allocation was made. The emerging Local Plan describes Wells as only having one employment area, the Great Eastern Way site, (known locally as Maryland) which represents limited opportunities for recycling of employment land over the Plan period. Due to the environmental constraints and the local road network there are limited opportunities for the expansion of employment land within the town. However, it is recognised that Egmere Enterprise Zone, situated 4 miles to the south of Wells and outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area, provides opportunities for further economic development and the prospect of additional job creation over the Plan period.
- 6.3 There are some existing brownfield or previously developed sites within the town that would benefit from redevelopment or regeneration. The majority of these either have been in employment uses and are now vacant or underused or only part used. Despite some having been previously heavily promoted for employment development they remain vacant or underused, are becoming derelict and are in a poor visual condition which detracts from the overall character of the area. Community consultation at the Policy Ideas



Exhibition revealed that there was support for the redevelopment and or re-use of these sites particularly, where this would result in an overall visual enhancement to the area. Specific comments made by the community include:

- Maryland is designated as a flood risk area. It is possible to put this area to both domestic and commercial/industrial use, but only if this risk of flooding is removed by a secondary sea wall to the east.
- Flood restricted areas could be designed with houses raised, as in Baker's Yard on Freeman Street.
- What stops Maryland from being developed for housing? If it's in the flood zone, then not suitable for housing but otherwise seems a good area.
- Maryland is a disgrace, can't work out why it hasn't been developed.
- Ark Royal site would be ideal for proper social housing e.g. Homes for Wells?
- Before being the Ark Royal that area was residential. Why not again? Social housing?
- Maryland is an obvious area for both residential and small commercial accommodation.
- Can we keep old lifeboat station as wet weather centre and education and cafe/viewing?
- Ark Royal site should be affordable housing for local people.

6.4 It is acknowledged that the development of brownfield sites is not without its constraints – issues such as contamination from previous uses, costs of clearance of existing structures and remediation can make them more expensive to develop. Often, they may have access issues or issues of amenity when considering adjoining uses and there may be multiple ownerships. The planning system can play a positive role in identifying sites for redevelopment which may give landowners the confidence to invest in their brownfield sites, for development to come forward and for the resulting development to bring an enhancement to the area.

6.5 This Neighbourhood Plan identifies two sites within the town that it is considered would benefit from redevelopment or re-use. It is acknowledged there are constraints associated with them – not least potential flood risk, however there is scope for well-designed and sustainable schemes to come forward on each site, and a mix of uses is encouraged to enable that to happen.

Note: Anglian Water have advised that they have assets within the boundaries of the above sites. This existing infrastructure is protected by easements and should not be built over or located in private gardens where access for maintenance and repair could be restricted. Proposals for development on these sites should safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of foul drainage infrastructure.



6.6 The identified sites are:

- **Site 1 - Land south of Maryland.** The site lies within designated strategic employment site EMP23 and continues to be identified for 'employment generating development' in the emerging Local Plan and has been identified for 'employment generating development' in the emerging Local Plan. However it is currently underused and has been vacant for some time. The site could be developed for a mix of industrial and employment uses potentially with residential, including open market or affordable housing at first floor. The site is within Flood Zone 3 and therefore any proposals for redevelopment will need to take this into account and be supported by a flood risk assessment.
- **Site 2: Land on south side of Freeman Street (former Ark Royal).** This site is identified for a mix of uses including Commercial and Business Uses (Class E) and Retail (F2a and E(a)), with some residential and parking.

POLICY

WNS7: Redevelopment opportunities

The Plan supports the redevelopment and environmental enhancement of the following two sites:

- **Site 1: Land south of Maryland (as shown on Figure 29)** - for a mix of uses including Industrial B2 Commercial, Business and Service Uses including offices (Class E), and Storage (B8) at ground floor with the addition of residential use on upper floors (open market and affordable) subject to appropriate flood risk assessment and surface water management plan,
- **Site 2: Land on south side of Freeman Street** (the former Ark Royal Public House, as shown on Figure 30) - for a mix of uses including Commercial and Business Uses (Class E) and Retail (F2a and E(a)), with some residential and parking.

Development proposals should respond positively to the prominence of these sites within the Town and to the relevant design principles in the Wells Design Guidelines and Codes.

Each development should make appropriate contributions towards mitigation measures identified in the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS).



Figure 29: Development opportunities areas (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).

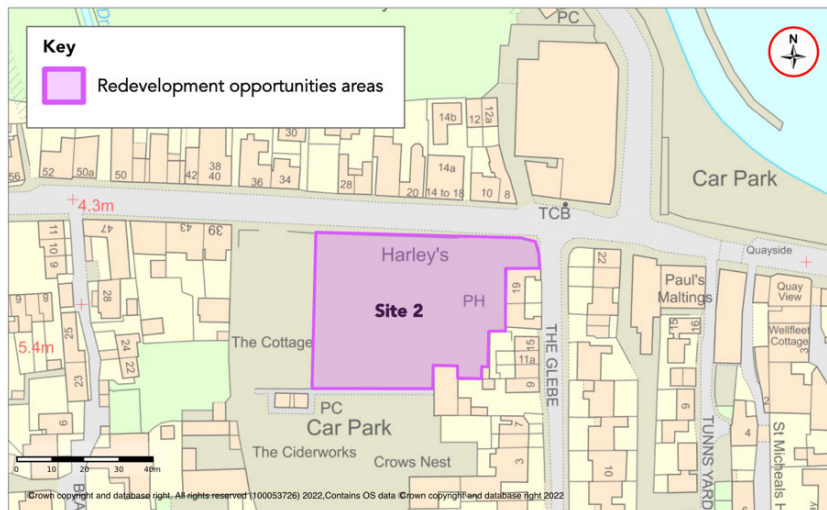


Figure 30: Development opportunities areas (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).

Retail and the town centre

- 6.7 The emerging Local Plan identifies Wells as having a 'medium town centre' which retains a predominantly distinctive 'small shop' character. Local Plan policies seek to support the vitality and viability of settlements by focussing new retail within the identified town centres and resisting proposals for new retail development outside of town centres (in a sequential approach), particularly where there are high numbers of vacant units or where opportunities exist within or close to town centres which can accommodate new retail development. The Local Plan identifies both a 'Primary Shopping Area' and a wider town centre for Wells and these are the definitions used by this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.8 The town centre plays an important role as a service centre for residents and tourists. A good range of shops and services are provided: these include the Post Office and shops to meet day to day needs such as pharmacy, food retail, butchers, comparison retail and services such as health, beauty and



hairdressing. The primary shopping area is largely centred on Staithe Street and The Quay with some retail and town centre uses also located on Freeman Street, Station Road and Bolts Close.

- 6.9 Since September 2020, the national permitted development rights that relate to town centre development have been radically altered. The revised permitted development rights allow the change of use from shops and financial institutions to other uses without the need for a planning application while other permitted development rights allow for a change of use subject to prior approval. In the town centres and primary shopping areas, proposals for new retail development will be supported particularly where they would reinforce the retail role of Wells and add to the retail offer available to residents and visitors. Permitted development rights also allow residential development above retail and some commercial units. Therefore residential development will be supported at first floor level particularly where it will add to the vitality and viability of the town centre outside of main shopping hours.
- 6.10 The town centre is not unlike most coastal market towns in that it has a range of issues and challenges to face in terms of reinforcing the retail role of the town centre in a changing retail environment, maintaining a good quality and safe environment for people to shop in and visit but at the same time catering for the demands of those visitors and local residents and businesses in relation to issues of parking, heavy goods vehicles, traffic congestion, pollution, and pedestrian safety.



POLICY

WNS8: Retail and the town centre

Proposals that contribute to achieving a vibrant and bustling town centre comprising a healthy mix of retail, service sector, business, entertainment, cultural and residential uses will be supported.

Proposals for new or expanded retail in the Primary Shopping Area (as shown on Figure 31) which would reinforce the retail role of the town and promote a diverse town centre will be supported.

Proposals for retail and other main town centre uses in the Town Centre Area (as shown on figure 31) will be supported where (if otherwise appropriate) they contribute to the following aims:

- a. Reinforcing the area's distinctiveness and attractive character as a location where pedestrian activity is prioritised and users have a high sense of safety and belonging.
- b. Ensuring the impact of vehicular traffic is relatively low and frontage servicing is minimised, through the adequate provision of rear servicing facilities.
- c. Supporting good connectivity between the different areas of the town centre by creating a pedestrian friendly environment and extending existing footpaths/pavements to improve pedestrian safety e.g. north side of Station Road.
- d. Enhancing pedestrian and cycle accessibility and connections between public spaces
- e. Improving accessibility and safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and other town centre users including provision of cycle parking.
- f. Providing for parking within easy walking distance from the town centre to encourage walking.

Proposals for residential development which would use the upper floors of commercial properties within the primary shopping area will be supported where they include a separate secure access, preferably at the rear of the property appropriate levels of off-road parking provision is provided.

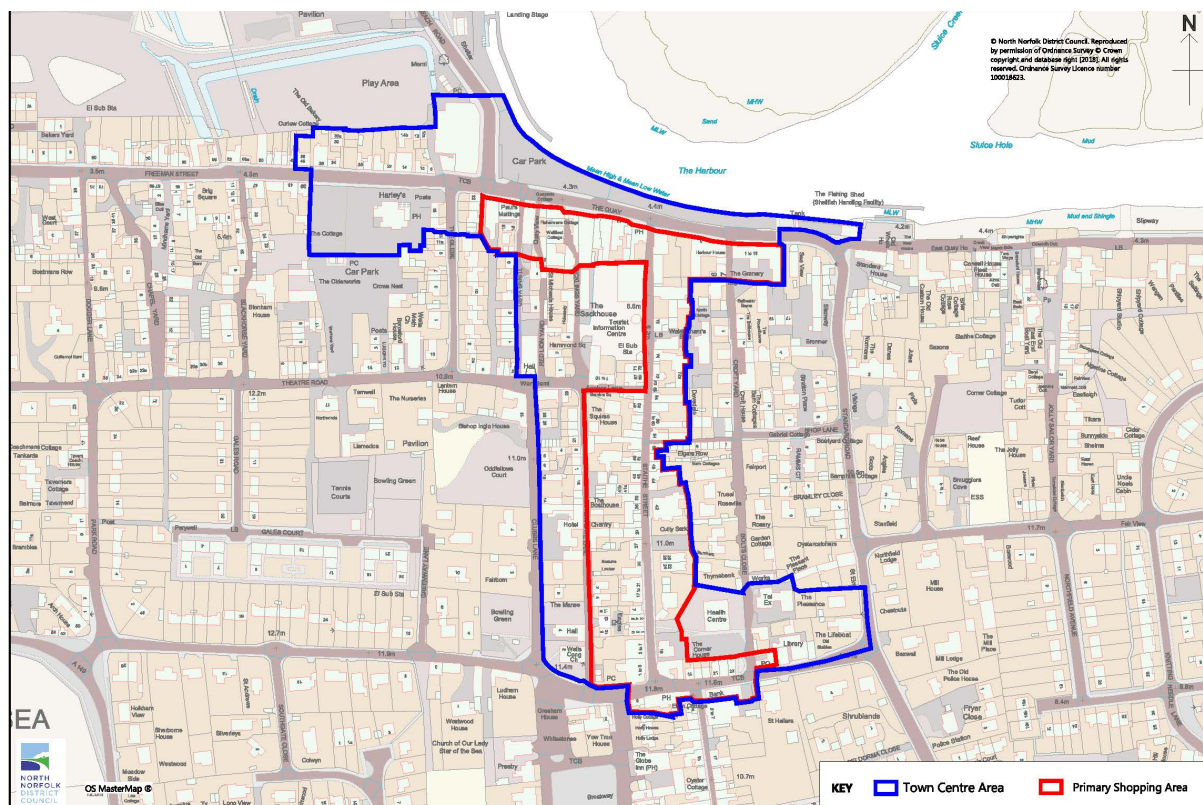


Figure 31: North Norfolk Emerging Local Plan Town Centre Area and Primary Shopping Area, NNDC. May 2023.



7. Infrastructure and Access

Objective 3: To ensure that the provision of local services (domestic, health, education, transport and leisure) meets the needs of all sections of the community and visitors.

Community facilities

- 7.1 The overarching social objective of the planning system as set out in the NPPF is to support strong, vibrant, and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support the health, social and cultural well-being of communities.
- 7.2 In order to achieve this, planning of new development must go hand in hand with planning for the community services and facilities that need to be in place to support development and meet the needs of residents. This includes utilities and sewage, transport, education, library provision, green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, footways and cycleways, allotments, fire hydrant provision, health services and a range of cultural facilities. These together are described as 'community infrastructure'. Housing and other development will be expected to contribute towards improving local services, as directed by national planning policy. Such planning obligations will be secured through s106 contributions/s278 (highways) and or upfront collection through S111 process.
- 7.3 The NPPF requires that the levels and types of infrastructure required to support growth should be set out clearly in strategic policies e.g., the Local Plan. Infrastructure provision should be that which is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, it should be directly related to the development proposed and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to that development. Presently Wells-next-the Sea is relatively well served by community infrastructure. There are primary and secondary schools, a doctors' surgery with dispensary, library, dentist, vets, local shops, garage and a petrol station, restaurants, takeaway food outlets, cafes, bars, pubs, places of worship, day care facilities, play areas, recreation grounds,



sports pitches and car parks (see Chapter 2). However, as the population of the town increases with the allocation of at least 115 new dwellings identified through the Local Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan, a number of these services are either at or nearing capacity. Moreover, some of these facilities, especially utilities, waste disposal and sewerage are also used by the influx of tourists who now visit the town all year round but especially during the summer holiday season.

- 7.4 Whenever the prospect of housing growth is discussed, it is inevitable that there will be concerns expressed about how the vital community infrastructure needed to support a viable community will keep pace with the expected population growth. It is essential that thought is given to community infrastructure at an early stage and that the needs of the current community, the capacity of existing services and the anticipated needs of new residents are taken into account.
- 7.5 This is very much reflected in the results of the Policy Ideas Exhibition. 79 respondents indicated that they felt that infrastructure (education, medical, leisure and transport) must keep pace with growth in the town. 110 respondents felt that it was important to protect existing community facilities. The most referred to facilities related to public transport, parking, sewerage/drainage, and medical facilities.
- 7.6 The emerging Local Plan indicates that there is sufficient capacity in health and education to accommodate the proposed growth for Wells as allocated in the Local Plan.

Sewerage

- 7.7 The Local Plan does however indicate that Anglian Water has identified that off-site mains water supply reinforcement will be required, and that some enhancement to the foul sewerage network capacity may be required. 'Wells is identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as being at risk of flooding primarily driven by tidal/coastal influences and residual risk should defences fail. Tidal locking has potential to increase levels upstream not draining effectively during high tide. Surface water flood risks, however, are generally restricted to roadways and gardens.' However, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party consider this level of flooding to be unacceptable and illustrative that flooding does affect residential dwellings in these locations. The Working Party acknowledge that there is a 'statutory right to connect' for drainage and water supply matters however, they have also identified the need for meaningful and continuous engagement with Anglian Water to ensure the satisfactory implementation of this responsibility and will continue to press for this outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process. Anglian Water have advised that they are currently developing the next Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) and Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) that will set the future direction for



sustainable water use and water recycling for the region. Their Developer Services Team will be able to advise on connections to our network as development proposals arise in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The Draft DWMP summary for the Wells-Freeman Street WRC states that the medium-term strategy to 2035 is 'mixed strategies with main solution SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems)'. The long term 2050 strategy is 25per cent surface water removal.

- 7.8 The Town Council has been mindful throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process that uncertainty around infrastructure provision is unsettling for the community and also that large scale new community infrastructure can take time to be agreed both in terms of the exact provision and how it is funded. The Town Council believes that developers should work proactively to ensure that the timing of new infrastructure coincides with the timing of growth and is planned well in advance rather than seen as an afterthought and this is an important element of good development.

Visitor parking

- 7.9 One of the issues most commonly mentioned by attendees at the Policy Ideas Exhibitions is the issue of parking in the town – specifically day visitor parking. Problems caused by the sheer number of visitors at peak occasions (which are becoming more and more common) include on street parking within the town often in residents' spaces, parking on double yellow lines, narrow roads being blocked which in turn causes congestion, problems for emergency vehicles, pollution and problems of overflow parking at existing car parks. The situation is exacerbated by a lack of credible alternatives as the town does not have good public transport access (as mentioned in earlier chapters) and therefore almost all day-visitors will come by private car.
- 7.10 There are also strongly held views that the number of day visitors is becoming excessive and that it has a detrimental impact upon the environment of the town and the extremely sensitive nature conservation sites which surround it.
- 7.11 Some suggested solutions that were put forward at the Neighbourhood Plan exhibitions such as park and ride provision, double yellow lines and residents only parking permit schemes lie outside of the direct scope of planning policy and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Neighbourhood Plan is able to consider the issue of additional car parking provision either on a permanent or temporary basis. One potential location which may help to ease some of the identified problems would be for the (former) 'Pitch and Putt' site off Beach Road (Figure 32), owned by the Holkham Estate to be identified as a temporary or seasonal car park. Access would be via the existing car park.



POLICY

WNS9: Visitor parking

Proposals for the development of suitably located car parks, including temporary/seasonal car parking for visitors during the peak holiday season will be supported subject to:

- a. adequate demonstration of need.
- b. being suitably located with easy access to the main routes into the town.
- c. having safe access and egress; and
- d. allowing for easy, accessible pedestrian routes to the town centre and or beach.

Any temporary car parking should be in locations with easy access to the main routes into the town, have safe access and egress (including for emergency vehicles) and allow for easy pedestrian routes to the town centre, beach, and other facilities. The provision of electric charging points is supported.

Development proposals for additional car parking in the Wells Beach area will need to be supported by a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment.



Figure 32: Pitch and putt site (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).



Former railway trackbeds

7.12 As mentioned above there are few opportunities for non-car borne visitors to access the town. The emerging Local Plan in Policy HC8 lists a number of former railway trackbeds and other railway land that will be protected from development. The emerging Local Plan policy seeks to protect the Fakenham to Walsingham part of the trackbed, which falls outside of the Neighbourhood Area, from inappropriate development, in order to safeguard the wider rail network where the ambition is to restore services from Fakenham to Walsingham which forms part of the Wymondham to Wells Railway. The Wymondham to Wells Branch was a railway built in stages by the Norfolk Railway, Eastern Counties Railway and Wells and Fakenham Company between 1847 and 1857. The railway ran from Wymondham in the south, through Dereham and Fakenham to Wells-next-the-Sea; more specifically, the line ran from Wymondham South Junction, where it met the present-day Breckland Line. Passenger services between Wymondham and Dereham along the line lasted until 1969 although services to Wells ceased in October 1964; the railway continued to be used for freight until 1989. The southern section of the railway now forms the Mid-Norfolk Railway, with part of the northern section serving as the narrow-gauge Wells and Walsingham Light Railway.



Figure 33: Trackbed route, original Rail Network in Mid and North Norfolk.



Figure 34: Trackbed routes in Wells (1906).

- 7.13 National government policy encourages local authorities to identify and protect sites and routes which are critical in developing infrastructure and allow road to rail transfer. Tremendous growth in tourism in recent years, particularly since the Covid-19 pandemic and the rebirth of the 'staycation' has put great pressure on parking and roads in holiday resorts, with railways playing crucial roles in Park and Ride services in other coastal settlements around the country.
- 7.14 The 23 miles of track or track bed from Wymondham to Fakenham³³ is already in use or protected. The Mid Norfolk Railway has a long term, published ambition to restore the railway to County School (near Guist). The 'Norfolk Orbital Railway' has a long-term published ambition to restore the railway, from the North Norfolk Railway at Holt, to Fakenham, and then on to the Mid Norfolk Railway at County School. Fakenham Town Council has identified a site for a new station at Fakenham, to replace the original Fakenham East Station. Whilst these locations are outside the area of the Wells Neighbourhood Plan, they are relevant in terms of demonstrating the ability to reconnect Wells to the national rail network. The track bed from Fakenham to Walsingham is already protected under criterion d) of the emerging Local Plan Policy HC8. The track bed from Walsingham to Wells-next-the-Sea is intact but currently has no formal protection or safeguarding and in order to secure the benefits of a through rail park and ride service, the remaining track bed into Wells needs to be protected too.

³³ Middleton Press – Country Railway Routes - Wymondham to Wells.



- 7.15 In addition, emerging Local Plan Policy HC8 also seeks to safeguard from development, areas currently in use as or with the potential for, rail freight facilities. These are referred to as Land Safeguarded for Sustainable Transport and refers to a number of settlements. The Neighbourhood Plan takes the opportunity to include Wells-next-the -Sea into that approach.

POLICY	<p>WNS10: Opportunities for sustainable transport</p> <p>The former Walsingham to Wells railway track bed and other former railway land will be protected from any further built development that would prejudice the potential re-use of the former railway or the provision of sustainable transport links and facilities.</p>
--------	---



8. Environment

Objective 4: To protect and enhance the character of the area as a living and working town and visitor destination set in a designated National Landscape and wildlife sensitivity.

- 8.1 Wells-next-the-Sea possesses a high quality and varied historic environment with a wealth of historic buildings and structures concentrated within the historic core of the Town Centre which is reflected in its designation as a Conservation Area (figure 10). Wells-next-the-Sea has the largest urban Conservation Area in the District, with the designation covering over 34 hectares from south of the A149 extending north to the harbour front and stretching west along Freeman Street. There are a total of 185 Listed Buildings in Wells-next-the-Sea, four of which are Grade II* (figure 9). Currently no buildings have been locally listed. Some distinctive examples that also act as local landmarks for the area are the Church of St Nicholas, Ostrich House, Marsh House, the Library, the Congregational Church, and the lifeboat house.
- 8.2 The Church of St Nicholas, on Church Street is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. It is designated as Priority B – Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; solution agreed but not yet implemented. A National Lottery Heritage Fund stage one grant of £286,100 was awarded in September 2021 for restoration work and new community engagement activities. Work is due to begin in July 2023. In addition, Historic England details Wells Maltings as a case study as the Grade II listed former maltings building and sackhouse in the centre of Wells-next-the-Sea in Norfolk was transformed into a multi-use community facility.
- 8.3 The designation and re-appraisal of Conservation Areas is an important process and one that is governed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The District Council has a duty to review its Conservation Area designations from time to time, however there is no formally adopted Conservation Area Appraisal for the Wells-next-the-Sea Conservation Area although there is a long-standing draft which is due to be reviewed when resources allow.
- 8.4 The overall character of Wells-next-the-Sea is very much one of an historic Norfolk coastal town which largely retains its traditional form and



appearance. Despite some 19th and 20th Century development, some small-scale incremental change having taken place, the town centre retains the special characteristics which strongly justify its Conservation Area designation.

- 8.5 These special characteristics include, amongst other things, the number and quality of its traditional buildings and the fact that most still retain their traditional features; the shape, form, and layout of the settlement itself; and the attractive relationship that exists between the older buildings and the spaces between and around them.
- 8.6 Inappropriate development, neglect and the cumulative effect of incremental change are a constant threat to the special architectural and historic interest of any Conservation Area. However not all changes necessarily require the benefit of planning permission - some are permitted developments, and some are deemed consents under the advertisement regulations³⁴. Detrimental change can take many forms, from infill with poorly designed new development to modern replacement windows and doors in old buildings. Important landscape features such as trees, shrubs, hedges, old walls, and railings all make a major contribution. It is vitally important therefore, that these special characteristics are retained and reinforced.
- 8.7 Other changes can include: inappropriate alterations and extensions which do not respect the scale, form and detailing of existing buildings, the use of modern materials and details in the area, insensitive highway works and signage, unsympathetic shopfronts and advertising, the construction of intrusive non-traditional walls, fences, driveways, garages, outbuildings, and other structures.
- 8.8 In terms of materials and finishes, the use of concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows and doors, cement render and modern bricks, should all be avoided. The surfaces between buildings also need very careful consideration. Special materials, including natural stone, bound gravel and exposed aggregate kerbs, paving slabs and blocks will normally be the most suitable. Certain types of concrete brick paving should not be used because they have a harsh modern appearance which is very much at odds with the traditional character of the Conservation Area. In order to protect the character and appearance of the Wells-next-the-Sea Conservation Area the Neighbourhood Plan will, wherever possible, seek to prevent such inappropriate changes from taking place through a specific Neighbourhood Plan policy - **Policy WNS11** below.
- 8.9 When development is proposed within a Conservation Area, it can be a challenge to consider what is appropriate for the design of new development and whether this can include high quality modern design. Pastiche can be acceptable but is not always well delivered particularly where existing

³⁴ Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007,



buildings contain a number of decorative features. Certain characteristics can be used as inspiration without resorting to copying. This approach can ensure that new design is both creative and contextual. New development should always respect the grain of the Conservation Area, including preservation of building lines, relationship to gardens, streets, parking, scale, density and uses.

- 8.10 Proper account should also always be taken of the impact that new development adjacent to a Conservation Area can have on its setting. Although a Conservation Area boundary represents a demarcation enclosing a special area of historic interest, changes immediately outside of it can still have a significant impact on character and appearance. The setting of the Conservation Area, therefore, has an intrinsic value that must be acknowledged in any proposals for change to it, and this protection is enshrined in the NPPF. In addition the North Norfolk Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document produced in 2008³⁵ has specific advice on historic buildings, conservation areas, shop fronts and advertisements.
- 8.11 A key component of Conservation Areas which are afforded protection by their designation is trees. Permission is required to undertake works to trees within a Conservation Area. This is to ensure that the spaces they need to grow and thrive are preserved and enhanced. New boundary treatments to property can also provide enhancement to the Conservation Area and here the use of materials rich in character within the town should be considered. Walls, fences, railings, and hedges (whether native or ornamental) can be carefully chosen to reflect local styles and respond to or create a sense of local distinctiveness.

Shopfronts in the Conservation Area

- 8.12 By their very nature Conservation Areas tend to be focused on the historic core of a settlement, which will usually include the town or village centre containing the majority of its retail activity. The successful and sustained stewardship of historic retail is closely linked with the on-going health of the retail sector. Many shops and shopfronts are likely to be listed buildings as well as being located within the Conservation Area and therefore careful consideration will need to be given to their heritage significance and setting when determining proposals for alterations.
- 8.13 In recent years, out of town retail sites, changing shopping habits and the growth of online retailing have all challenged town centres. As the number of people visiting and the range of shops to be found in town centres has changed, there has been a related impact on the local historic character of town centre buildings, their range of uses and street patterns. These may well

³⁵ North Norfolk Local Development Framework Design Guide (Supplementary Planning Document, December 2008), https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/media/1268/north_norfolk_design_guide_adopted_2008_-web.pdf



be permanent changes. The decline in use of a number of particular types of buildings (for example pubs, post offices and banks) has added to the problem. Reduced footfall and increased vacancy rates in some areas has led to under-investment and a deterioration in the quality of the environment. At the same time, there have been changes to the planning system that have made it easier to transform retail and office buildings into residential properties. These changes can also have a major impact on the character of historic places. On the other hand, there is some evidence that, following the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional smaller market towns may be attracting more, or losing less, shopping 'footfall' than larger cities.

Signage

- 8.14 The Wells-next-the-Sea Design Guidance and Codes (Code DC.4.1-4.5) provides some useful guidance on signage and shopfronts including examples of good practice. The fascia is the most important area of a shopfront for advertising the business. Signage should be located within the established proportions and confines of the fascia board. Large box signs or additional flat boards should be avoided as they create disproportionate depth and height. The most appropriate signage at fascia level is individual letters applied or painted directly onto the fascia board. Hanging signs should be appropriately sized in relation to the building and street. They should not dominate the pavement space. They should use an appropriate material, shape and form avoiding large box signs and they should not be illuminated. Hanging signs should be held by slender, well-designed brackets using a high-quality material; and in the case of corporate brands, those should be sensitive to the existing context, size and scale and use materials and textures from the local vernacular of the area.

Lighting and safety

- 8.15 Proposals for lighting should avoid using visually distinct sources of illumination that result in disproportionate signage, such as internally illuminated box signs. They should also avoid using external roller shutters and grilles and favour the use of internal open grilles which cover only the glazed part of the shop front; and conceal alarms from the shop front facade and integrate them discreetly within the shop front design or to the side of a building.
- 8.16 Ensuring that public realm is designed to be in keeping with the surrounding built environment is important (controls over the use of signage and street furniture also contribute to the overall attractiveness of the public realm of a settlement). Reviewing and managing shop fronts as a collection rather than individually is also preferable.



- 8.17 Historic England has published a raft of useful advice on Historic Town Centres, including guidance on public realm³⁶ and highways improvements³⁷. Such guidance advocates a collaborative approach to town centre management and a joined-up approach to transport (including the provision of the necessary services for town centre uses, such as loading bays) which underpins a welcoming and attractive arrival experience for visitors.

Note: It should be noted that Norfolk County Council's Historic Environment Strategy and Advice Team will continue to provide advice on the historic environment aspect of new developments to developers and the local planning authority upon request.

³⁶ Public Realm - all parts of the built environment where the public has free access.

³⁷ Historic Town Centres and High Streets, Historic England,
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/historic-towns-and-high-streets>



WNS11: Protecting the historic environment

Development proposals should respect the significance of any designated and non-designated heritage assets.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should have regard to the Wells next the Sea Design Guidance & Codes and how the development has been informed by the details of the relevant identified character area within the Guidance

Conservation Area

Development proposals within the Wells-next-the-Sea Conservation Area should respect its historic character and appearance and its setting. This will be achieved by:

- a. Ensuring the retention and maintenance of traditional buildings and shopfronts which contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area, wherever practicable;
- b. Protecting its setting from development which adversely affects views into or out of the Conservation Area;
- c. Ensuring that new development complements the shape, form and layout of the relevant character area and the relationship between the older buildings and the spaces around and between them; and
- d. Promoting the use of high-quality traditional building materials and detailing, where appropriate.

Signage and shopfronts

Proposals for new or reconfigured advertising and signage (including shopfronts, highway signage and directional signage) should respond positively to the size, design, and siting of the host building.

Proposals that seek to rationalise or reduce the amount of signage in the Conservation Area will be supported.

Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 8.18 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) recognises that there are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas, or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which are not formally designated heritage assets. North Norfolk District Council has not currently identified any Non-designated Heritage Assets within the parish. Neighbourhood Plans are a positive way for the local community to identify Non-designated Heritage Assets against consistent criteria so as to improve the predictability of the potential for sustainable development.



- 8.19 Paragraph 209 of the NPPF (December 2023) indicates that the effects of an application on the significance of any Non- Designated Heritage Assets should be taken into account in determining the applications.
- 8.20 Through the Character Appraisal survey work the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party identified a number of potential Non-Designated Heritage Assets in the town and sought feedback on them from the community at the policy ideas exhibitions. The community were also asked to identify any potential additional candidates. The results of the consultation revealed a high degree of support (169 responses) for a policy that would identify and protect Non-Designated Heritage Assets within the town.
- 8.21 All of the candidates have been assessed against criteria based on the Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7, page 9 and North Norfolk District Council's own local listing criteria. The results of this exercise and detailed mapping identifying the extent of the buildings for each individual designation are shown in **Appendix B** and those buildings/structures that are considered to score well when measured against the criteria are included in **Policy WSN12** below.

POLICY

WSN12: Non-designated Heritage Assets

The following historic buildings and features (as shown in figure 35) are identified as Non-designated Heritage Assets due to their locally important character and historic features:

1. Water Tower (off Warham Road)
2. California Terrace
3. Town Sign near Arch House
4. Mill Farmhouse
5. Wells Old Cottage Hospital
6. Wall running down west side of unmade road to Temple Court (no 10 Bases Lane)
7. Whelk sheds
8. Maryland Mill buildings (now vets and antique centre)
9. Old boatbuilding yard, opposite main slipway (now Shipyard studios and Shipyard cottage)
10. Former Railway Station
11. New Farmhouse
12. Manor Farmhouse

The effect of a development proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining planning applications. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset concerned.



also clear that the designation of Local Green Spaces should not be used as a mechanism to try to block or resist development on agricultural land immediately adjacent to village development boundaries and that a successful designation must meet the criteria outlined above.

- 8.24 The NPPF at paragraph 154 indicates that within Green Belts the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate but goes on to list a number of exceptions which relate to agriculture and forestry, recreation and allotments, extensions and alterations to existing buildings, replacement buildings, infilling, affordable housing, and previously developed land.
- 8.25 Such spaces can be viewed locally as equally as important as the landscape setting of an area. Such spaces are green spaces found within the built-up area that contribute to the character of a settlement. These can vary in size, shape, location, ownership and use but such spaces will have some form of value to the community particularly for benefits to mental and physical health and wellbeing and help define what makes that specific settlement what it is.
- 8.26 The Neighbourhood Plan Working Party identified a number of spaces through the Character Appraisal survey work and asked for feedback from the local community at the policy ideas exhibitions. Following that feedback and the assessments of the candidate spaces against the NPPF criteria, this list has now been rationalised. Each space that meets the criteria should be protected because of their value to the local community. Each space has been assessed against the NPPF criteria and two additional criteria developed by North Norfolk which relate to whether the proposed space is already subject to another designation/or has the benefit of planning permission and whether it is a proposed allocation in the emerging Local Plan. The result is the 5 spaces shown in figure 36 and listed within **Policy WNS13**. Assessments for each one against the criteria set out in the NPPF have been carried out and these are shown in **Appendix C**.

POLICY	<p>WNS13: Local Green Spaces</p> <p>The following are designated as Local Green Spaces and are identified on figure 36.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Buttlands. Churchyard of St Nicholas and old cemetery. Market Lane Cemetery. Home Piece open spaces. Mill Road allotments. <p>Development proposals in the designated local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.</p>
--------	---

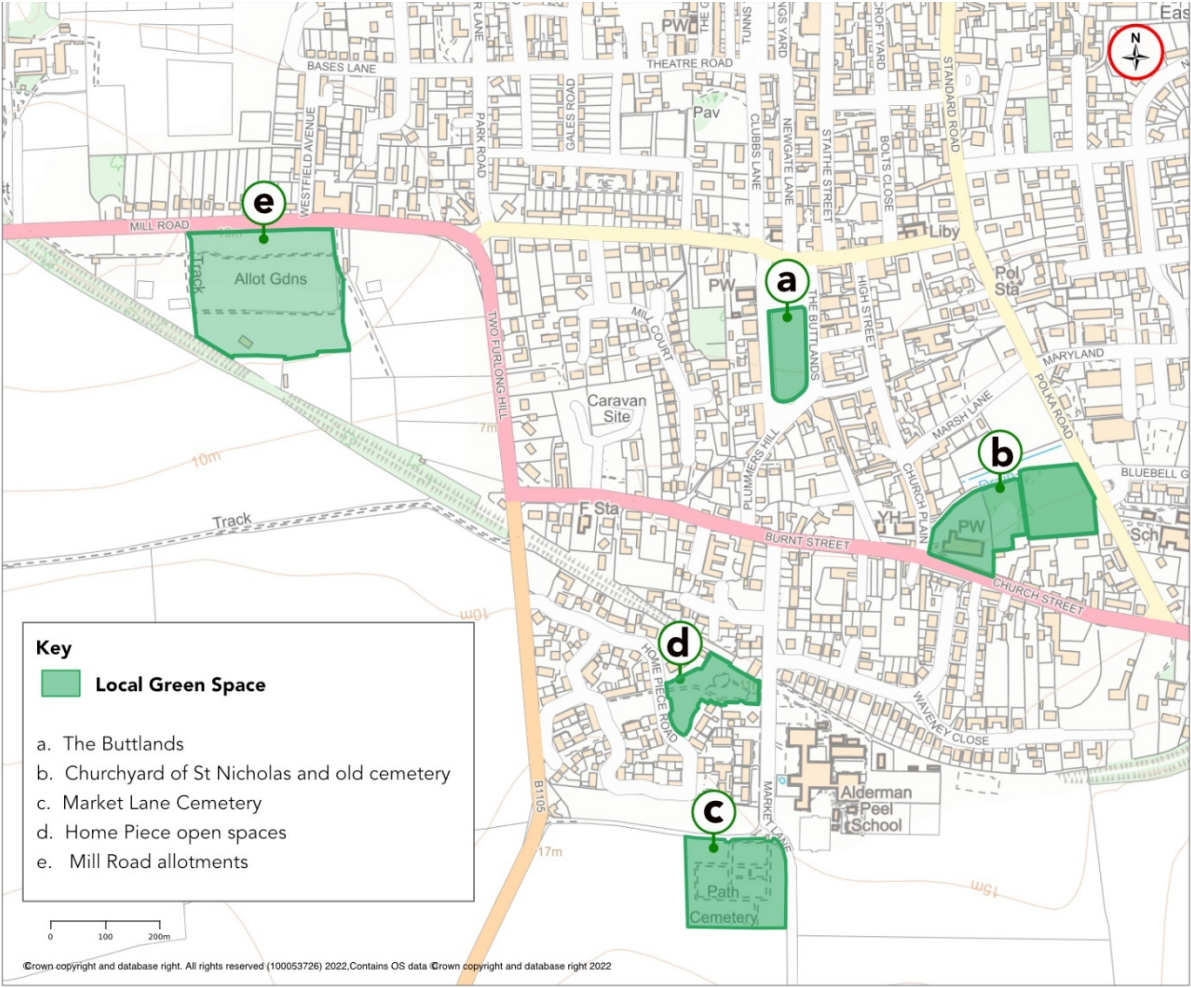


Figure 36: Local Green Spaces (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). See Appendix C for detailed Local Green Space maps.



9. Sustainability and Climate Change

Objective 5: To ensure that all planning decisions address the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels and to require the use of environmentally sustainable materials in new developments.

Climate Change and sea level rise

- 9.1 The NPPF indicates that a positive approach should be taken to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure (see figure 37 and 38).
- 9.2 The NPPF goes on to advise that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing new development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such area it should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 9.3 In coastal areas the NPPF indicates that planning policies and decisions should take account of the marine planning regime and pursue integrated coastal zone management, by taking account of other land management plans and policies.
- 9.4 A Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) is a high-level policy document in which the organisations that manage the shoreline set their long-term plan. The SMP aims to identify the best ways to manage flood and erosion risk to people and the developed, historic, and natural environment and to identify opportunities where shoreline management can work with others to make improvements. The Shoreline Management Plan which covers Wells-next-the-Sea is the Old Hunstanton to Kelling Hard (SMP5). It identifies that Wells should be a 'Hold-the-Line settlement'. This involves holding the defence



system where it is now by maintaining or changing the standard of protection. In addition public authorities taking decisions other than on authorisation or enforcement matters but which relate to any function capable of affecting the whole or any part of the marine area (for example representations made as a consultee or in the preparation of terrestrial plans) must have regard to the Marine Policy Statement and marine plans.

- 9.5 However, Wells is considered by its community as being at even greater flood risk than many of the other settlements along this stretch of coast. Mention is made in the Regulation 19 Local Plan of the 'residual risk should defences fail' but not of substantial risk to the Main Quay and East Quay together with the coastal footpath (national trail) that runs along them. These are not protected by the flood barrier and flooding occurs when the combined tide level and surge level exceeds 4.1m AOD - a level which is likely to be achieved more frequently in the future. When the barrier is closed at the western end of the quay, vehicular traffic along the quay in both directions is blocked for at least 2 hours. The only access to properties at the Main Quay and East Quay is from the northern, seaward side. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises this risk to The Quay and the East End stating that consideration should be given to creating access corridors to the affected properties as outlined above from the south side as part of mitigation measures for sea level rise. The issue is clearly of concern to local residents as concerns over flood risk at Maryland and support for improving defences at East Quay were expressed at the policy ideas exhibition and 62 attendees indicated support for a policy addressing the issue.

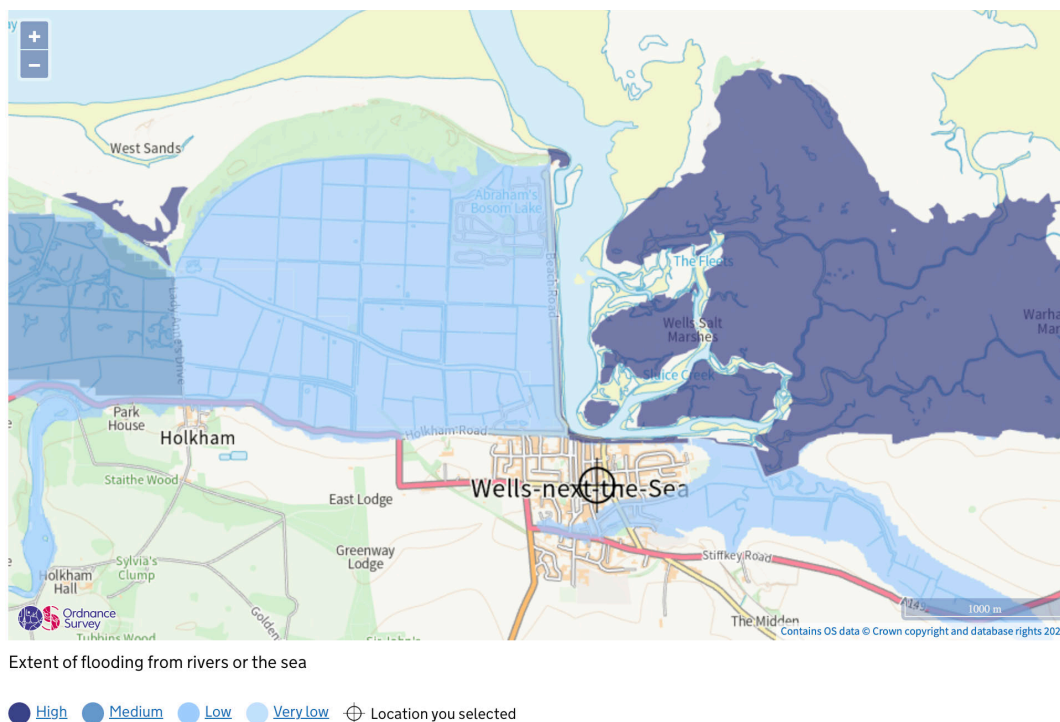


Figure 37: Extent of flooding from rivers or the sea (source: <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/risk>, extracted 03.03.23).

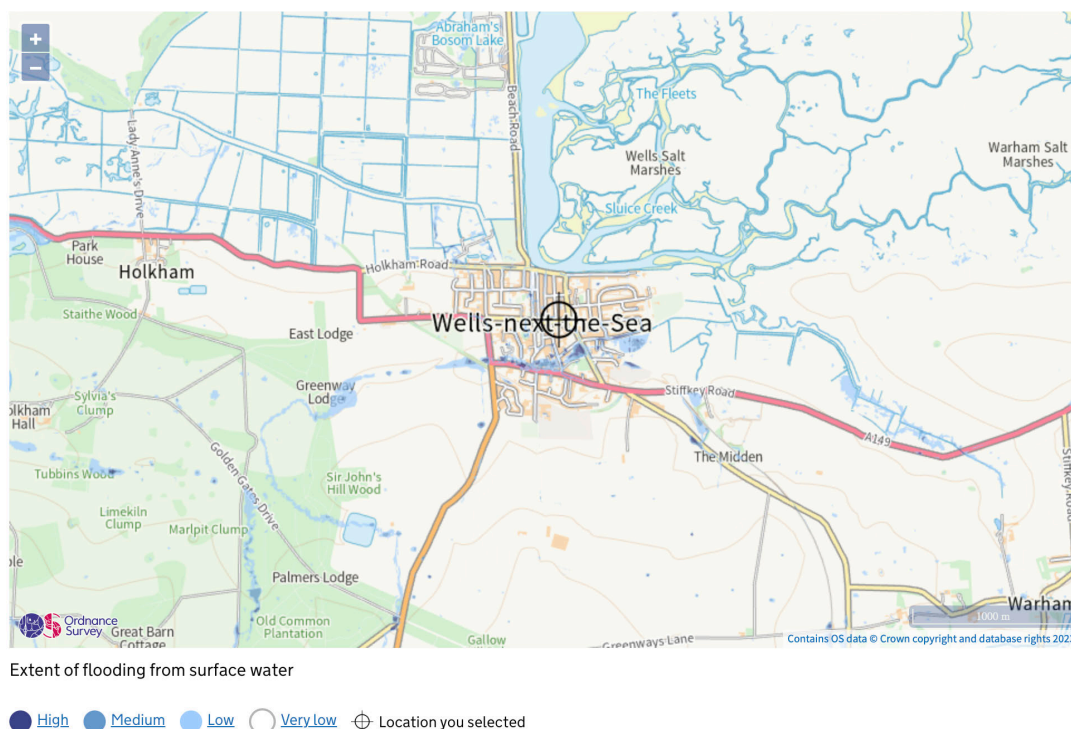


Figure 38: Extent of flooding from surface water (source: <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/risk>, extracted 03.03.23).

POLICY

WNS14: Sea level rise and flood risk

Measures that provide for climate change adaptation and mitigation, especially those which address sea level rise at East Quay, will be supported.

Development proposals should not materially increase flood risk to other areas and incorporate surface water drainage measures to reduce its own flood risk to a minimum. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals should demonstrate that the proposed development has a positive effect on surface water flooding on the site and, where appropriate, in surrounding area adjacent to the development.

Wherever practicable, development proposals should incorporate sustainable drainage systems and the use of permeable materials.'



10. Area specific policies

Wells beach

- 10.1 Wells-next-the-Sea is famous for its vast, sweeping sandy beach and colourful beach huts. It is extremely popular with tourists including day visitors and the beach itself is part of the Holkham Estate.
- 10.2 Wells beach is located approximately one mile from the town and is reached on foot via a raised path with panoramic views over the marshes, or vehicular access along Beach Road which runs from the town to the beach entrance, where the Beach Café and car park are located. In previous years the beach train which operated between the town and the car park had its terminus at the adjacent Pinewoods Holiday Park. The holiday park includes a shop serving the holiday park visitors together with the usual shower and toilet facilities. A toilet block with shower is located at the entrance to the car park. There is no formal disabled access along the beach itself, however a solid footway runs for about 50m westward from the beach access point in front of the Coastwatch lookout.
- 10.3 Given the importance of the Beach area to the local economy and the tourism industry the area is often very crowded which can create conflict with its environmentally sensitive surroundings – both in terms of landscape and nature conservation. The Neighbourhood Plan has therefore sought to balance these potentially competing forces when considering the future development of the area. Development proposals in the identified Wells Beach Area will need to be supported by a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Note: The Wells-Freeman Street Water Recycling Centre (WRC) is located within the defined WNS15 Beach Policy Area. The Neighbourhood Plan would not wish to restrict improvements to the WRC which would be for the benefit of the town.



POLICY

WNS15: Wells Beach

Development proposals within the identified Wells Beach policy area (defined in Figure 39) that provide walking and cycling opportunities, including the creation or enhancement of pedestrian and non-motorised access routes to the beach, will be supported.

Proposals to extend the area of beach huts beyond the existing area currently used for beach huts will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- there will be no adverse impacts upon European Protected Nature Conservation Sites; and
- there will be no adverse visual impacts upon the local landscape character.

See also **Policy WNS1**.



Figure 39: Beach policy area (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.



Wells Harbour

- 10.4 Wells Harbour is home to the Port of Wells and the Harbour Commissioners. It is located behind the sand bar, amongst the salt marshes. In Tudor times, the Port of Wells was one of England's major harbours and a thriving, busy centre for shipping and maritime industry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of the large buildings, merchants' houses and tiny yards still in use date back 200 years or more and its stone quay was substantially rebuilt in 1845.
- 10.5 Commercial shipping in Wells suffered with the advent of the railway in 1857 but the harbour continued to be busy up to the first World War. It experienced a revival in the 1970s and 1980s with ships of up to 300 tons regularly unloading on the quay. Commercial carrying ended only in the late 1990s with cargoes of grain brought from Europe by the Dutch sailing ketch *Albatros*. In recent years the harbour has been used as a base for vessels servicing and constructing the offshore wind farms.
- 10.6 The town retains a vibrant fishing fleet, including eleven crabbers and three commercial angling vessels working out of Wells Harbour. In winter, when the crabs and lobsters hibernate, a small number of the crabbers fish for whelks. Musseling in and around the harbour is also on the increase. Catches are sold locally in hotels and restaurants or processed locally. Some of the crabs and lobsters are exported to Spain and Portugal after being sorted in the Wells Fishing Shed at the East End of the Quay.
- 10.7 In addition, the harbour plays host to visiting commercial and fishing vessels from all over the UK and Europe and caters for a growing leisure trade. It has an increasing number of locally owned (resident) boats and is now a popular destination for visiting leisure craft too. The harbour is regularly used for sailing and other water-based leisure activities and the town has a thriving sailing club and a water ski club. Policy WNS16 addresses development proposals at the Harbour. It sets out a positive context within which proposals that reflect its role as a working port and a focus for employment and tourism related development can proceed. Development proposals should respond positively to the information in the Design Guidance and Codes about this important part of the Town. The policy anticipates that onshore facilities may be required in the Plan period to consolidate the Harbour's use by boats owned by both residents and visitors. This could include traditional uses found in harbours such as boat repairs, toilets and showers and fuelling facilities. Any planning applications for onshore facilities in Wells Harbour should be supported by a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment.



POLICY	<p>WNS16: Wells Harbour</p> <p>Development proposals that would preserve and enhance the character of Wells Harbour (as shown in figure 40) and its role as a working and functioning port will be supported.</p> <p>Appropriate and suitably-scaled development proposals that would celebrate the maritime heritage of the town, the connections between the present town and its origins as a harbour and a port, and underpin the role of the Harbour area as an important asset to the town will be supported.</p> <p>Appropriate and suitably-scaled development proposals that respond positively to the employment and tourism facilities provided by the Harbour and would result in improvements to onshore facilities that benefit both visiting boats and resident boats will be supported.</p>
--------	--



Figure 40: Wells harbour policy area (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).



11. Implementation and monitoring

Implementation

- 11.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be used by Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council to guide and inform its responses to planning matters and by North Norfolk District Council as the local planning authority in the determination of planning proposals in the Neighbourhood Area as part of the statutory Development Plan
- 11.2 The Neighbourhood Plan will be realised through a combination of policies, promotions, and projects. The planning policies contained in the Plan will be enforced by the North Norfolk District Council. The Town Council's role is to bring its influence to bear on matters which lie outside the control of the planning system, but which are of vital importance to the life of the town and the achievement of the vision. The Town Council will support and encourage proposals which further the aims of the plan, it will promote and encourage and facilitate co-operative working and partnership between public and private interests and lobby for change where this furthers the vision for the town.

Monitoring

- 11.3 It is good practice for Neighbourhood Plans to undergo a formal review process in consultation with the local community and the District Council at a minimum of every five years, and on the adoption of any higher order Plan to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is still current and remains a positive planning tool to deliver sustainable growth. In order to determine when a review is necessary, the Town Council will monitor development in the parish along with local and national planning policy and in the appropriate legislative context.
- 11.4 It is anticipated the Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan will require review during its life and that it will be the role of the Town Council to update the Neighbourhood Plan at the appropriate time. It is possible that further development will take place during the Neighbourhood Plan period (up to 2036).
- 11.5 Any review will provide an opportunity to reassess the town's housing and economic markets and to resolve some of the bigger issues surrounding development in and around the town including the issues of affordability of housing and impacts of tourism.



12. Projects and actions

- 12.1 The Neighbourhood Plan is principally concerned with land use planning matters. However, through discussion with local stakeholders, responses to emerging policy ideas and discussion within the Working Party, it is apparent that there are other issues that are of legitimate concern or interest to the community. These issues generally fall outside of the scope of Neighbourhood Planning Policy but should nevertheless feature in the Plan in order for the community and the Town Council to examine them outside of the prescribed process of the Neighbourhood Plan. Such issues are identified as community projects.
- 12.2 These potential projects are outlined below; it should be noted these are not exhaustive and there will be other projects and actions that will be identified during the life of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Project 1 Drainage and Sewerage

Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council acknowledge that there is a 'statutory right to connect' for drainage and water supply matters for new development and will continue to press Anglian Water through meaningful and continuous engagement, to ensure the satisfactory implementation of this responsibility to the benefit of the town.

Project 2 Net Zero Carbon

Wells-next-the Sea Town Council will endeavor to be catalysts for the journey to net-zero-carbon for all existing housing stock by working with housing providers, homeowners, the local authority and government departments, funding sources and contractors. The benefits to the residents will be healthier, more comfortable housing with lower energy costs; the benefit to the community will be the improvement and retention of existing housing stock.

Project 3 Traffic Management

Wells-next-the Sea Town Council will work with the County Council and other parties to devise and implement traffic and parking solutions that will take tourist visitor traffic off residential streets.





Appendix

Appendix A: Neighbourhood Plan Working Party members

- **Roger Arguile**, Local resident, and Town Councillor (Chair of Neighbourhood Plan Working Party)
- **Cheryl Curtis**, Local resident, and Town Councillor
- **Lyndsay Dew**, Local resident, and Town Councillor
- **John Edwards**, Local resident
- **David Fennell**, Local resident, former Chair of Homes for Wells
- **Nichola Holmes**, Local resident (Minutes Secretary for the Neighbourhood Plan)
- **Peter Rainsford**, Local resident, and Town Councillor

Supported by

- **Greg Hewitt**, Town Clerk

Independent Consultants

- **Andrea Long**, Compasspoint Planning
- **Rachel Leggett**, Rachel Leggett & associates
- **Emma Harrison**, Rachel Leggett & associates

Thanks also to **Johanna Tennant**, **Jacqueline Gray**, **Jimmy Tottle** and officers at NNDC for their continued advice and support.



Appendix B: Justification for Non-designated Heritage Assets

The tables below outline the justification for the inclusion of important character buildings and historic features. The criteria are based on a mix of the 'Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7',³⁸ page 11-13* and North Norfolk's own criteria**

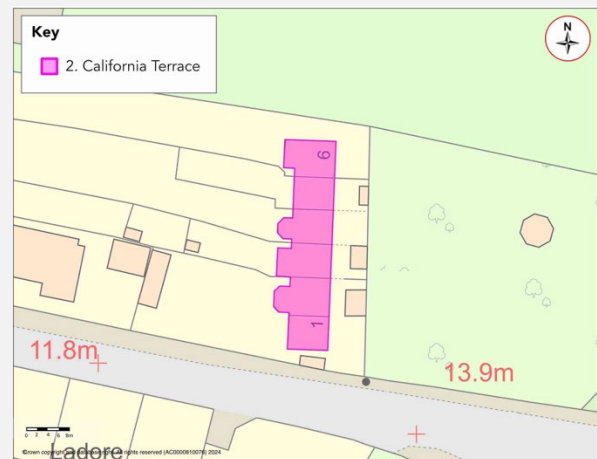
1. Water Tower: off Warham Road.	
Age*	1920s
Rarity*	Typical of its age and use for that time. Water towers are steadily being demolished and few are now being built, hence this one is of interest, and it is important to retain it. Original cast iron metal tank which was located on the top of the tower is now lost.
Architectural and Artistic Interest*	This tower is a feature on one of the countryside walks, also a bridleway and part of National Cycle Route 1. it is unique in terms of being the only example in the town.
Group value*	Single building set in a wider landscape.
Archaeological interest*	Heritage interest is above ground and linked to the building and its former use.
Historic interest*	Building is a remnant of the industrial/commercial history of the town.
Landmark status*	Building is visible within the wider landscape.
Social and Communal Value**	Value associated with its former use as a municipal water tower and part of the town's infrastructure.
	

2. California Terrace: an attractive terrace of small cottages set away from the town centre.	
Age*	1850s – 1860s.

³⁸ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/heag301-local-heritage-listing>



Rarity*	A traditional row of flint cottages believed to be associated with the railway.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Typical traditional flint construction with small windows front and back, set inside small walled gardens, topped off with chimneys. Flint and brick structures are traditional Norfolk building materials; terraces used to be one of the main characteristics of Wells building design.
Group value*	Heritage value stems from the value of the row as a distinct and complete group.
Archaeological interest*	None.
Historic interest*	Historical association with the railways, believed to have been originally built to house railway construction workers.
Landmark status*	Set away from the main part of the town and at a key entry point.
Social and Communal Value**	Value associated with former use as railway cottages and the construction of the railway.



3. Town sign outside Arch House: junction of Mill Road and Two Furlong Hill.

Age*	2002.
Rarity*	One of a small number of town signs marking key routes.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Good quality wood construction and carving; The sign was designed by a Cassie Turton, a local student, who attended Alderman Peel High School. It was carved by a local artist, Warren Trett. The sign was selected from a competition, set by the Town Council, and coordinated by Alderman Peel High School, for year 8 students.
Group value*	One of a series of signs marking key routes including Polka Road.
Archaeological interest*	None.
Historic interest*	The sign represents all that is iconic within the town with e.g. a boat, pine trees, the beach.



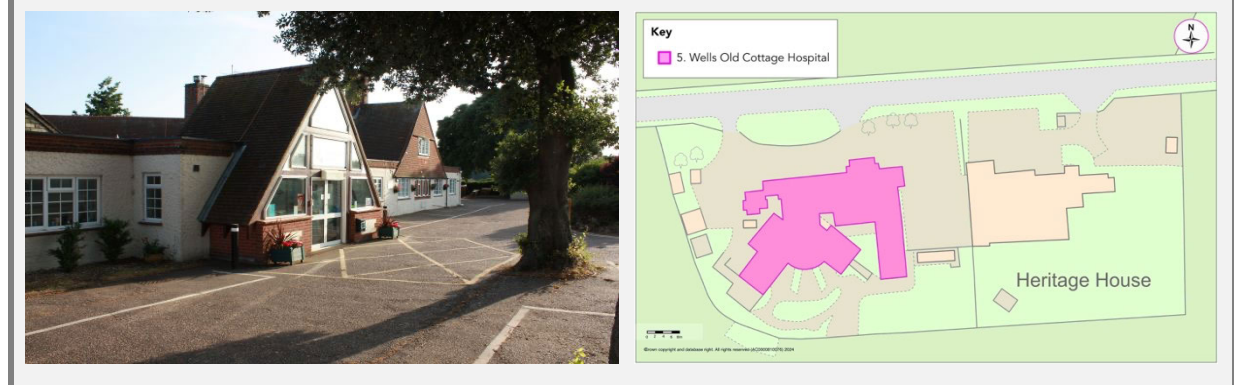
Landmark status*	The sign forms a useful landmark as a meeting place 'by the seat under the town sign'.
Social and Communal Value*	Used locally as a meeting place.
	

4. Mill Farm: attractive farmhouse in a Georgian style.	
Age*	Early 19th century.
Rarity*	One of a trio of farmhouses (with Manor Farm and New Farm) at key points of entry to the town.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Simple, uncluttered, and symmetrical design set within its own garden surrounded by farmland. Retaining some original features. An example of TW Cook designs – locally significant.
Group value*	Heritage significance in its own right but also as a one of a group of three farmhouses.
Archaeological interest*	None.
Historic interest*	Believed to be an example of TW Cook designs for traditional farm buildings for 'middle management' farmers.
Landmark status*	Roof and upper storey is visible from the road.
Social and Communal Value**	Value through its use as a farmhouse.



5. Wells Old Cottage Hospital: built and commissioned by the Holkham Estate; provides health and well-being services for the local area and operated by a Trust.

Age*	Built as a memorial for the 2nd Earl of Leicester who died in 1909. Extended in 1960s.
Rarity*	Community hospitals of this era are now fairly rare - most have been closed or redeveloped.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Design initiated in 1910, red brick and render in line with one of the characteristic building styles in Wells.
Group value*	Heritage significance in its own right.
Archaeological interest*	None.
Historic interest*	Originally intended to accommodate Holkham Estate tenants, became a community hospital for the benefit of Wells residents.
Landmark status*	Marks one of the key entrances to the town from the west.
Social and Communal Value**	Significant community value through its original and current uses.





6. Wall running down western side of unmade track to Temple Court; forms boundary of No 10 Bases Lane: significant length of intact flint wall (with some underlying red brick).

Age*	Victorian with 20th century repairs.
Rarity*	Significant length of flint wall largely intact, immediately adjacent to listed wall on east side of the track. Only unlisted wall in this area.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Attractive flint wall, part of the building style and character of the town.
Group value*	Heritage significance is generated by the collective presence of a series of remaining walls in this area.
Archaeological interest*	None.
Historic interest*	Wall construction is typical of Wells where sea pebbles were often used.
Landmark status*	Collectively the walls have a visual significance due to their demarcation of the entrance to the track.
Social and Communal Value**	Social value due to their use as boundaries for residential properties.




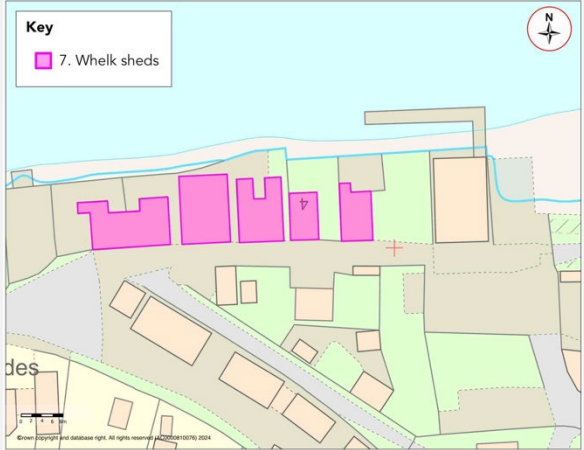
7. Whelk Sheds: series of lightweight fishermen's sheds, now in a range of uses.

Age*	Victorian.
Rarity*	Traditional lightweight buildings, wooden originally associated with fishing industry possibly built as temporary structures but have endured with some maintenance.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Traditional, functional design.
Group value*	Heritage significance is generated by their collective presence rather than as individual sheds.
Archaeological interest*	None.



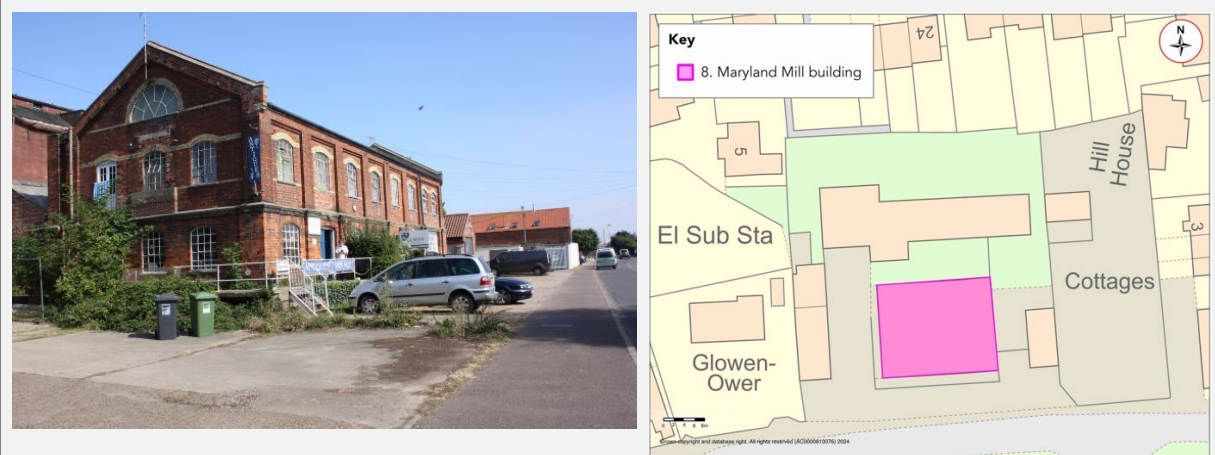
Historic interest*	Originally constructed to support the town's fishing industry, sheds used for storage and some initial processing.
Landmark status*	Collectively they have a visual significance.
Social and Communal Value**	Significant community value through their original and current uses.





8. The Mill, Maryland: original Mill offices associated with flour mill now used as Antiques centre and Veterinary premises.

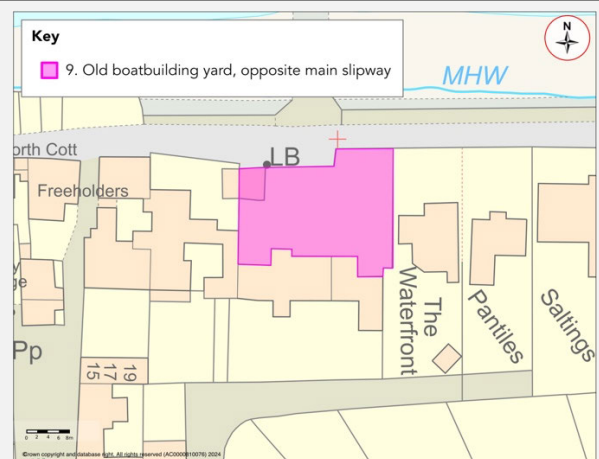
Age*	1897-1904, opened in 1904.
Rarity*	Most significant remaining building of the original mill complex. Iconic building within the town.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Red brick construction with attractive arch window details and pitched roof.
Group value*	Originally the Mill Offices for Sunshine Flour, of the wider Mill complex. Original flour mill was located behind.
Archaeological interest*	None.
Historic interest*	Part of the Mill complex but also associated with the cuttings and railway line and owes its location to the railway.
Landmark status*	Visual prominence due to its roadside location and height.
Social and Communal Value**	Significant community value through original and current uses.





9. Old Boat Building Yard: formal space previously used as a boat building yard.

Age*	Unknown
Rarity*	Provides a softer open space within the formal building line that contrasts with the hard paved areas surrounding.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Attractive open area.
Group value*	Space is associated with surrounding former boatyard uses.
Archaeological interest*	None.
Historic interest*	Historical association with town's boat building industry; has been used as sailing club and tennis courts.
Landmark status*	Visual prominence due to its roadside location.
Social and Communal Value*	Significant community value through original and current uses.



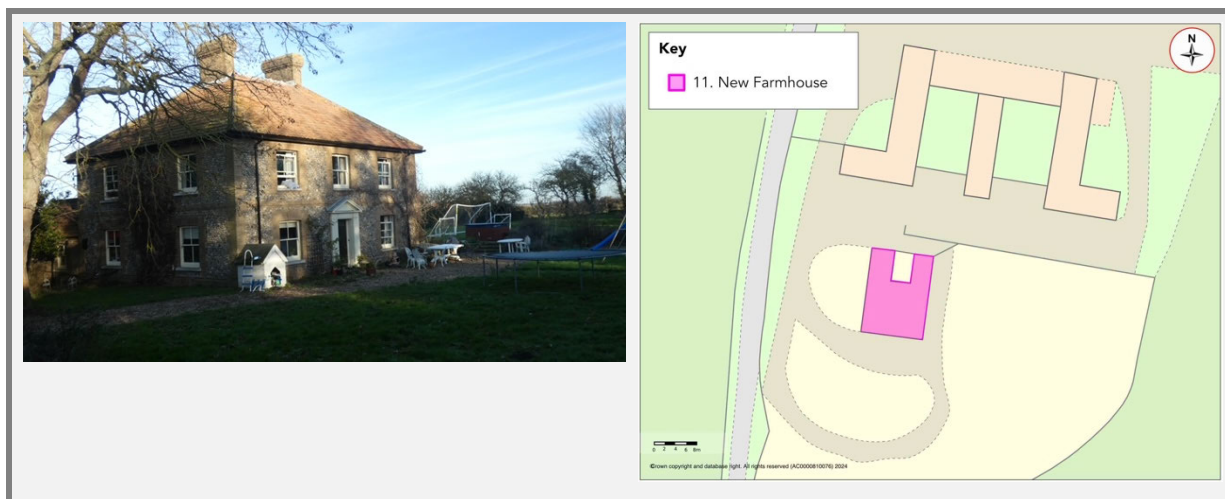
10. Old Railway Station: former Wells station building now used as a pottery and book shop.

Age*	1857.
Rarity*	Formerly the Wells Railway station. Iconic and prominent building within the townscape.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Traditional 'railway' construction of the Victorian era. Retains many of its original features and in good condition.
Group value*	Part of the former complex of railway buildings that includes part of the platform and railway track-bed and stationmaster's office.
Archaeological interest*	None.
Historic interest*	Historical association with the town's railway heritage as the former mainline station building.
Landmark status*	Visual prominence due to its roadside and corner location.
Social and Communal Value**	Significant community value through original and current uses.



11. New Farm: one of a series of traditional farmhouses in key locations around the town.

Age*	1880s.
Rarity*	Traditional yellow brick and flint construction. Farm buildings utilised Drake's Concrete Building Apparatus, using flanged iron plates, enamelled, or glazed on the side facing the wall, and slotted iron vertical channels enabled continuous vertical casting of a concrete wall.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Attractive flint farmhouse, the history of which informs of past practices, technology, innovation. A traditional farmstead comprising the farmhouse and working farm buildings.
Group value*	Some heritage significance linked to the complex as a whole. Three significant traditional farmsteads which make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness are New Farm, Mill Farm and Manor Farm.
Archaeological interest*	None.
Historic interest*	Association with Drake's construction.
Landmark status*	Visual prominence due to its location at Warham Road an entrance to the town.
Social and Communal Value**	Residential home and business which supports other businesses.



12. Manor Farm: one of a series of traditional farmhouses in key locations around the town.

Age*	1880s.
Rarity*	Traditional red brick construction. Part of a trio with New Farm and Mill Farm of traditional farmsteads located in prominent locations in the town.
Architectural and Artistic interest*	Attractive farmhouse, the history of which informs of past practices, technology, innovation. A traditional farmstead comprising the farmhouse and working farm buildings.
Group value*	Some heritage significance linked to the complex as a whole.
Archaeological interest*	None.
Historic interest*	Originally farmed by the Flint family; later owned by the Crafers.
Landmark status*	Visual prominence due to its location on as an entrance to the town on the corner of Market Lane and Burnt Street.
Social and Communal Value**	Residential use.





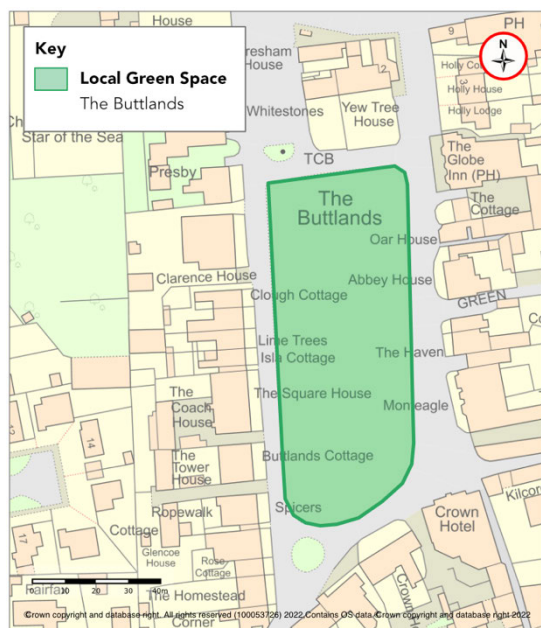
Appendix C: Justification for Local Green Spaces

The tables below outline the justification for the inclusion of each Local Green Space identified.

The following have been assessed using the criteria in NPPF 2023, paragraph 106 and the two additional criteria identified by North Norfolk District Council's Amenity Green Space Study 2019³⁹.

a. The Buttlands	
Description: Open grassed amenity area with mature trees.	
In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	Located within the built-up area of the town and surrounded by residential development.
Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance	Its open nature contributes to the character of the residential square, and it acts as a green oasis within an otherwise substantially built-up area. It has a community and amenity value due to its proximity to residential development but also due to the opportunities it provides for informal recreation and organised outdoor events.
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	Not an extensive tract of land. Approximately 1.1 acres.
North Norfolk District Council Additional Criteria	
Existing planning permission or other designation?	No planning history. Is identified as a 'open land area' in the emerging Local Plan. The LGS is a more appropriate designation as it has a formal basis (NPPF) and would preclude most forms of development which would be harmful to this space
Proposed allocation in the Local Plan	No

³⁹ North Norfolk Local Plan Amenity Green Space Study, June 2018 updated April 2019, <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/4523/amenity-green-space-study-april-2019.pdf>



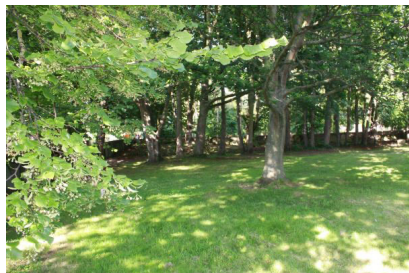
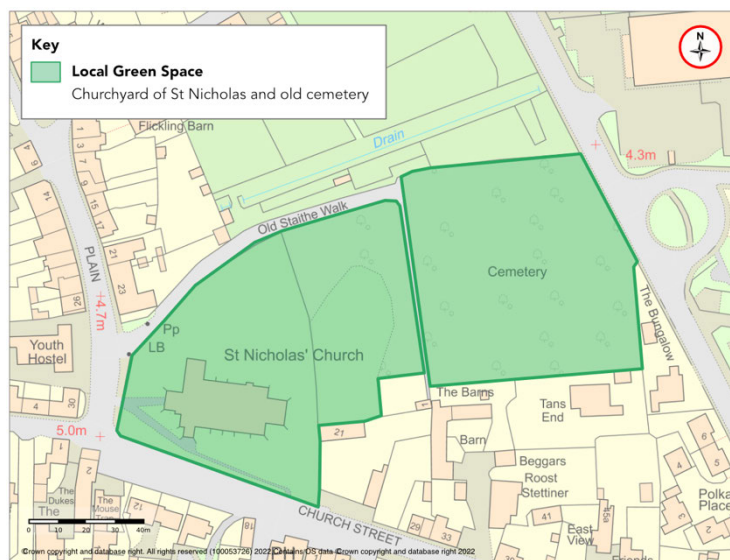
b. Churchyard of St Nicholas and old cemetery

Description: Churchyard of St Nicholas and cemetery located between Church Street and Church Plain.

In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	Located within the built-up area of the town and surrounded by development.
Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance	Community and historic value due to its current use as a place of worship. Provides the setting to the Grade II* listed Church and cemetery walls are Grade II.
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	Not an extensive tract of land. Approximately 4.2 acres.

North Norfolk District Council Additional Criteria

Existing planning permission or other designation?	No planning history. Area is identified as 'open land area' in the emerging Local Plan. The LGS is a more appropriate designation as it has a formal basis (NPPF) and would preclude most forms of development which would be harmful to this space
Proposed allocation in the Local Plan	No



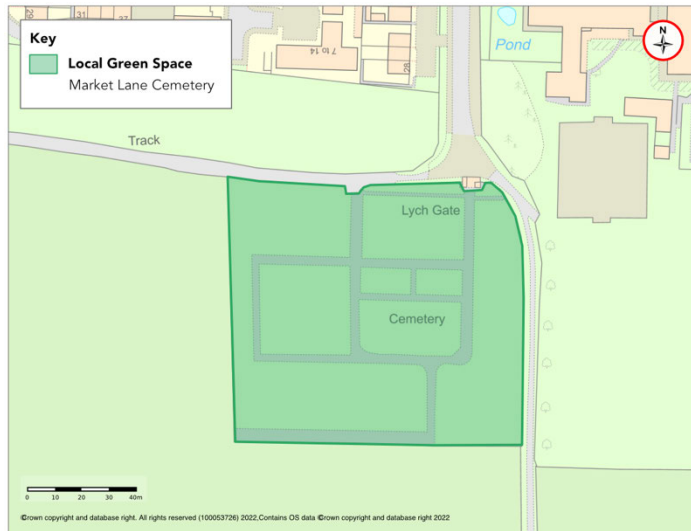
c. Market Lane Cemetery

Description: Cemetery operated by the Town Council.

In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	Located to the south of the town but adjacent to the High School and its playing fields, and to land proposed for residential development.
Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance	Community value due to its use as a cemetery. Owned and operated by the Town Council for public benefit.
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	The cemetery is not an extensive tract of land and is 2.54 acres.

North Norfolk District Council Additional Criteria

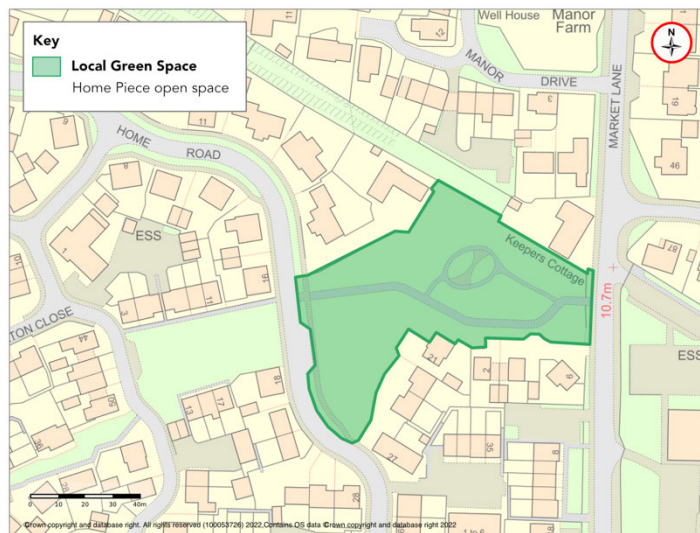
Existing planning permission or other designation?	No planning history. Area is identified as 'open land area' in the emerging Local Plan. The LGS is a more appropriate designation as it has a formal basis (NPPF) and would preclude most forms of development which would be harmful to this space
Proposed allocation in the Local Plan	No



d. Home Piece open space

Description: Undeveloped amenity areas provided for open space as part of Hopkins development.

In reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves	Located immediately adjacent to residential development.
Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance	Specifically provided for community use as open space as a consequence of new development.
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	Local in character and not extensive tracts of land. Approximately 1.9 acres.
North Norfolk District Council Additional Criteria	
Existing planning permission or other designation?	Open space derived as a consequence of a former allocation. Area is identified as 'open land area' in the emerging Local Plan. The LGS is a more appropriate designation as it has a formal basis (NPPF) and would preclude most forms of development which would be harmful to this space
Proposed allocation in the Local Plan	No



e. Mill Road allotments

Description: allotment gardens owned and operated by the Town Council

In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	Close to existing residential development north of Mill Road.
---	---

Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance	Community value through current use as allotment gardens.
--	---

Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	Local in character and not extensive tracts of land. Approximately 2.45 acres.
---	--

North Norfolk District Council Additional Criteria

Existing planning permission or other designation?	No planning history. Area is identified as 'open land area' in the emerging Local Plan. The LGS is a more appropriate designation as it has a formal basis (NPPF) and would preclude most forms of development which would be harmful to this space
---	---

Proposed allocation in the Local Plan	No
--	----





Appendix D: Glossary

Glossary of terms used and/or relevant to the Wells-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan and supporting submission documents.

Affordable housing: 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 definitions⁴⁰:

- a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20 per cent 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).
- b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of Plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- c) **Discounted market sales housing** is that sold at a discount of at least 20 per cent 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 per cent 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 holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Build to Rent: Purpose built housing that is typically 100 per cent rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses but

⁴⁰ This definition should be read in conjunction with relevant policy contained in the Affordable Homes Update Written Ministerial Statement published on 24 May 2021.



should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

Climate change adaptation: Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation: Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Commercial Development: Retail, business uses, offices, workshops, light industrial.

Conservation: The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Deliverable: To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. Sites that are not major development, and sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (e.g. they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans). Sites with outline planning permission, permission in principle, allocated in the development plan or identified on a brownfield register should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

Designated Heritage Asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Development plan: Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, Neighbourhood Plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood Plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan unless the local planning authority decides that the Neighbourhood Plan should not be made.

Employment Uses – Former B1 now Use Class E g) i-iii) – Offices, administration, light industry, research, and development.

Habitats site: Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and any relevant Marine Sites.



Health and Social Care, Community Support Services: Use Classes E e). Medical services not attached to the premises of the practitioner.

Heritage asset: A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

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.

Hospitality: Use Classes E a), E b), includes Public Houses, bars, cafes, restaurants, hotels, etc

Infill Development: Development that takes place on small gaps between existing buildings.

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 housing need: the number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance, or a justified alternative approach.

Local planning authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority include the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London, and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local plan: A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

Major development: For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floor space of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.



Neighbourhood Plan: A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Non-strategic policies: Policies contained in a Neighbourhood Plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.

Non-designated heritage asset: Local planning authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets. These are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas, or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In some areas, local authorities identify some non-designated heritage assets as 'locally listed'. A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage interest for their significance to be a material consideration in the planning process. (Definition from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment#non-designated-heritage-assets>)

Older people: People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Open space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes, and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Out of centre: A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

Out of town: A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

Planning condition: A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning obligation: A legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Playing field: The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Primary shopping area: Defined area where retail development is concentrated.



Priority habitats and species: Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Ramsar sites: Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

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).

Retail: Use Classes Ea, F1 and F2a – Shops, learning and non-residential institutions, local commerce.

Self-build and custom-build housing: Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.

Service industries: Use Classes E c i), ii), iii) Businesses not involved in manufacturing that provide a service e.g. finance, banking, estate agents, accountants, personal services, hairdressers, beauticians, opticians, etc.

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. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

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.



Strategic policies: Policies and site allocations, which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of Section 19 (1B-E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Strategic policy-making authorities: Those authorities responsible for producing strategic policies (local planning authorities, and elected Mayors or combined authorities, where this power has been conferred). This definition applies whether the authority is in the process of producing strategic policies or not.

Supplementary planning documents: Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Use Classes Order: National classification of land uses as contained within The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2021 (source: www.legislation.gov.uk)

Windfall Development: Development that takes place on sites not specifically identified in the development plan. They typically include subdivisions, barn conversions or small infill plots.

