



# Watton

## Neighbourhood Plan

Your chance to shape our future

**Public Consultation**

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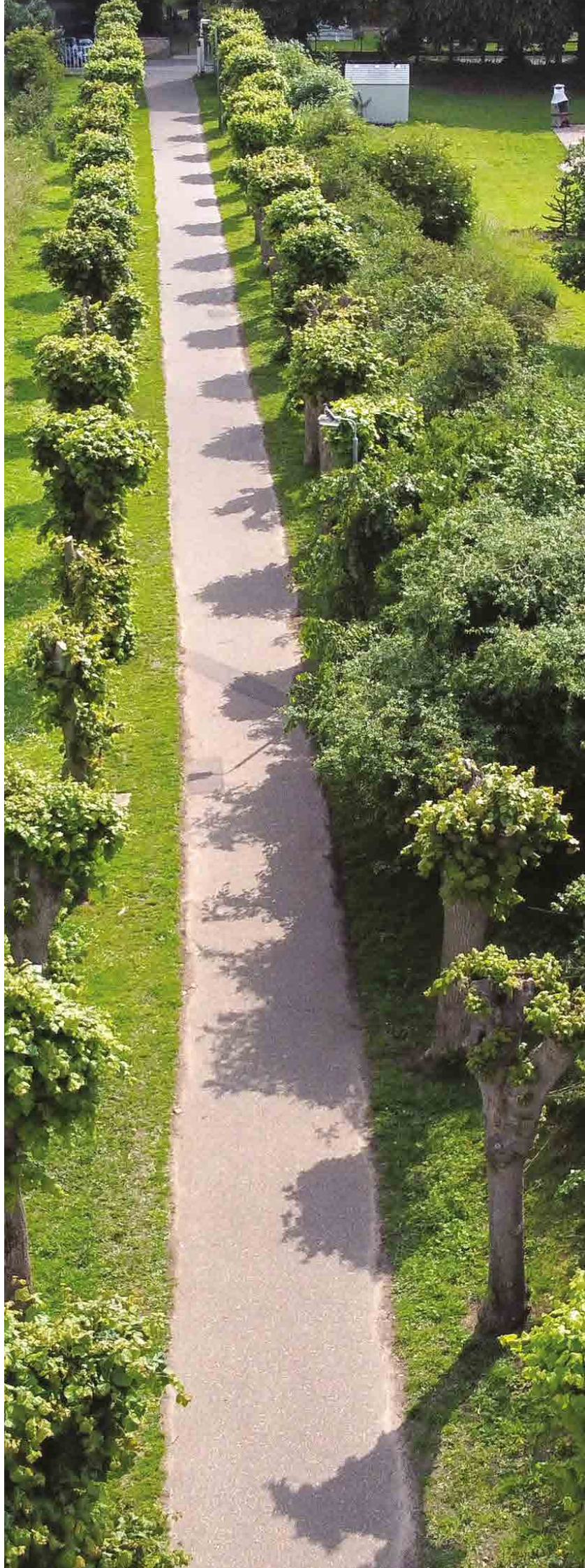
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Watton Town Council



Prepared by Watton Neighbourhood Plan Working Group  
For Watton Town Council

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## FOREWORD

Watton Town Council has sought to deliver the wishes of the Community that it has served for many years. In recent years the Council have felt that a more proactive approach was necessary to fully understand the issues for those working, living and visiting the Town.

There was a growing feeling that Watton was being side-lined in decisions that affected the way the Town looked and operated and the services and facilities that it offered its community. The phrase 'Forgotten Watton' became regularly used by residents and those wishing to secure a brighter future for the Town. The Council not only wanted to understand how it could fulfil its limited duties but also to use this engagement process and evidence gathered to influence decision made by others. Although Watton has experienced a great deal of development it was felt that the Town had not enjoyed the increase in facilities and services that would help service the existing and new residents to the Town.

Through the Localism Act the opportunity to utilise the Neighbourhood Plan as part of a formal process of consultation was investigated and supported by local MP George Freeman. The Neighbourhood Plan requires a high level of consultation across all ranges of residents but also includes engagement with those that work and visit the area to further understand their issues and aspirations for the Town.

Central government has supported the process through grant aid and technical support across the various elements of the Plan production.

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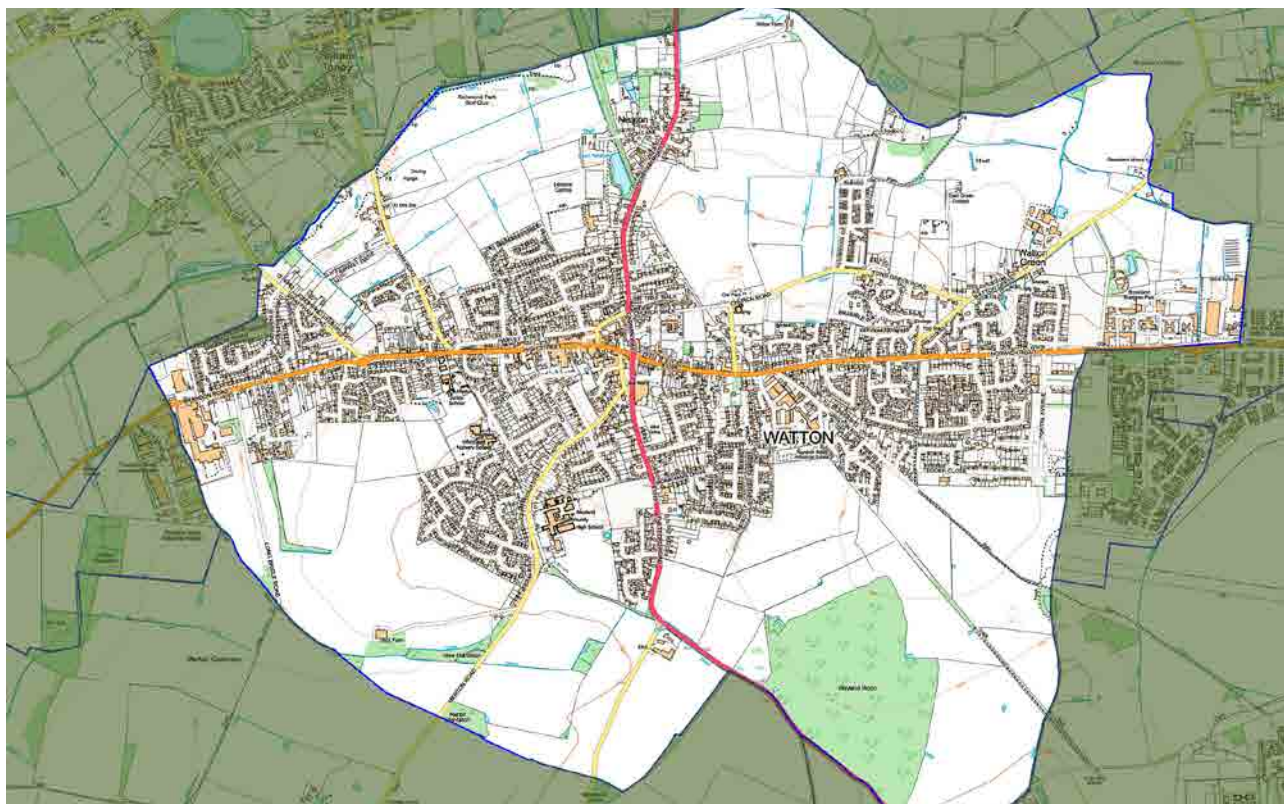
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 to allow residents a say in the development of where they live and how their village or town operates. It's not just about the provision of housing but also about how this town looks and works within its unique environment. All the things indeed that make an area a vibrant, happy and sustainable place to live both now and in the future.
- 1.2 A Neighbourhood Development Plan (or "Neighbourhood Plan") is a community-led planning framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. It is about the use and development of land and contains a vision statement, objectives, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, and/or the allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development.
- 1.3 Town and Parish councils are encouraged to produce their own Neighbourhood Plans enabling local people to have a say as to how their neighbourhood grows and develops. In a designated neighbourhood area, which contains all or part of the administrative area of a town or parish council, the town or parish council is responsible for neighbourhood planning. Neighbourhood Plans cannot contradict the main government planning policies or the strategic policies in the Local Development Plan (or "Local Plan") for the area written by Breckland District Council. For example, they cannot propose less development than is planned for in the adopted Local Plan.
- 1.4 The Plan has been prepared by a Group of volunteers established by the Town Council. It focuses on local planning related matters and provides Watton with greater opportunities than ever before to influence change and development within our area, based upon a fair and democratic consultation process. It covers the whole of Watton parish, as identified on Map 1, and the area was formally designated by Breckland District Council on 4 August 2017.



Map 1 – The Neighbourhood Plan Area (not to scale)

1.5 The Plan is structured to provide information about the neighbourhood plan process; the Town's distinct character, history and geography; Vision and Objectives; and the planning policies that will be used by the District Council when considering planning applications. In addition, the Plan contains "community actions" which are not part of the statutory neighbourhood plan but do address issues that have been raised during its preparation.

1.6 This Draft Neighbourhood Plan represents the culmination of preparing and commissioning background reports and consulting with residents. It conforms with the strategic planning policies of the Breckland Local Plan, the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and, most importantly, reflects the aspirations of the residents of Watton. It's been written by the local community, the people who know and love the area, to ensure the community gets the right types of development, in the right place, with the assistance of professional planning support to make sure that it's robust and fit for purpose.

#### **Purpose and Scope of Plan**

1.7 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to provide a layer of local policies which reflect the specific context of Watton. At important points during the preparation of the Plan, the wishes and opinions of the local community have been sought.

1.8 When complete, the Plan will be key to determining whether Breckland District Council will approve planning applications, including new buildings (e.g. community facilities) or changes to existing buildings (e.g. extensions or changing the use of a building).

1.9 The Plan looks forward across fifteen years to 2036 to coincide with the end date of the Breckland Local Plan. It will be reviewed at regular intervals throughout this period to make sure that it remains valid and in conformity with national and local policies. In addition to the planning policies, community actions are included in the Plan. Community actions do not form part of the "statutory" Neighbourhood Plan but are included to identify other areas of improvement

and change that the Town Council and community engagement has identified during the preparation of the Plan. The planning policies appear in distinct colours and are prefixed WTN1, WTN 2 etc while the non-statutory community actions are defined in a different and distinct colour.

#### **How the Plan was prepared**

1.10 Work to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan began in April 2017 with a promoted series of Community Engagement events held at various locations around the Town. The first event was well attended with over 150 attendees, held at the Sports Centre to discuss the idea of engaging with the Community and for the public to consider what issues they would like to address in and around the Town. Four further public meetings were held at various locations and a fifth was held on 1 December 2017 at Queens Hall in the centre of Watton and included a presentation by George Freeman MP on planning matters including the potential for a Watton Neighbourhood Plan.

1.11 A Working Group was established whose membership has evolved throughout the process with a core of members involved until the Plan is made. A constitution was agreed, and regular meetings have taken place to keep the process on track and to ensure that all available support was made use of.

1.12 Support was secured by way of the Government's Neighbourhood Plan support programme run by Locality, which has enabled a Town Centre Master Plan to be prepared, as referred to later. The same support package also provided a Site Assessment which considered the suitability of sites that were potentially appropriate for the infrastructure that residents wanted to see in the Town such as Retail Centre, Business Centre, Country Park etc.

1.13 Locally, the Working Group enabled the preparation of a Character Area Appraisal to include areas of historical interest and buildings of significance across the whole Town. The Working Group decided to involve local residents in the process by training them in the process of Character Area Appraisal. This developed the skills



not only to produce the Character Area Appraisal but also to engage more effectively in future planning and development considerations for the Town.

**1.14** In addition, and as part of the Government's Neighbourhood Plan support programme run by Locality, a Site Assessment was prepared by AECOM to consider sites put forward by the Town Council for a range of potential uses. The final report is available to view on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Town Council website

<https://www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk/>.

#### Key Community Involvement Events and Dates

- April 2017 Public Meeting at Sports Centre
- July 2017 Public Meeting at Charlotte Harvey Trust
- September 2017 Public Meeting
- October 2017 Public Meetings at Community Centre
- December 2017 Public Meeting at Queen's Hall (George Freeman, MP present)

- January 2018 Short Presentation at Chamber of Commerce Business Breakfast at Broom Hall
- March 2018 Meeting with Trustees of Queen's Hall
- April 2018 Meeting with Men's Shed
- May 2018 Meeting with Diabetes Support Group
- May 2018 Meeting with Air Cadets

In addition, a questionnaire was hand delivered to all homes with the option of completing it online. The hand delivered questionnaires resulted in a 27% of overall responses which is better than the average

**1.15** The Neighbourhood Plan has to follow a number of required stages in its preparation, as illustrated below. We have now reached the Pre-Submission Draft consultation stage, and, at the conclusion of this, all comments received will be reviewed and the Plan will be amended where necessary prior to the Town Council making a formal decision to submit it to Breckland District Council.



The main Neighbourhood Plan stages



## 2. ABOUT WATTON

- 2.1 Watton is an historic town that was one of the parishes in the old Hundred of Wayland. Various theories have been expounded with regard to its name. It dates back to before the compilation of the Domesday book where it was already in existence and is listed as 'Wadetuna'. The listing shows the town as consisting of thirty-eight households, a large settlement in the context of the period.
- 2.2 The layout of the town today shows evidence of a planned settlement placed at a crossroads of what were probably two important routes one going from south to north and one from west to east. The road running east to west is identified as a probable Roman road running from Denver to Caistor St Edmund. There is no identified predecessor to the present A47 so it does seem likely that this would have been an important east west trade route before 1200.
- 2.3 Its importance in the 18th century is confirmed by the fact that the Watton Postmill stood on the west side of the village (at the junction of what are now Brandon Road and Saham Road) at the end of the road to St. Stephen's Gate at Norwich that was designated as a turnpike in 1770. In 1797 the Mill was mapped as standing on Watton Common that was later to become Mill Common. By 1844 a bake office was being operated on the premises. Part of what is now Brandon Road was known as Mill Road. There is still a Mill Street off Brandon Road.
- 2.4 The north to south road runs from Thetford to Dereham and although probably not Roman in origin must have developed as an important route from Thetford to north Norfolk. It is possible that its original track took it to Saham Toney and from there to Dereham.
- 2.5 It is likely that the location of the church has not changed from that of the pre-Conquest church mentioned in the Domesday Book and one would normally expect that a settlement would grow with that building as its focus. This is clearly not the case with Watton, the church being so remote from the main town settlement of today. Watton Green is much nearer the church and if that was a memory of the village green, would mean Watton was no different from hundreds of other Norfolk villages of the time such that the original village was near the church.
- 2.6 The original design of St. Mary's church reinforces the idea that the main road passed to the north of the church; a north door and path to the north western corner of the churchyard showing clearly in a lithograph by Robert Ladbrooke c1823.
- 2.7 It is thought that at some time between 1200 and 1204 the Lord of the Manor of Watton Hall, John de Vaux recognised an opportunity to cash in on the geography of his manor and sought to obtain from King John a charter for a market to be held on Fridays, which he set up at the crossroads to the west of the settlement. By the means of a road diversion, he so arranged the market layout that traffic moving between the city of Norwich and Downham Market and thereby the route to the Wash and the East Coast via the river Great Ouse, would have to pass through the market square. He also diverted the north-south route to the same effect.
- 2.8 In 1204, the people of Saham Toney complained to the King that the market was harming their own which was held on the same day. The complaints were upheld and the charter for Watton Market was withdrawn. John de Vaux conveyed the manor to his brother Oliver who was evidently on better terms with the King, since he almost immediately obtained a new charter for a Wednesday market and so it has remained ever since.
- 2.9 Lastly of interest at this point is the explanation of the rebus of the Hare (Wat) and Barrel (Tun). The "Hare and Barrel" device was carved into the Market Cross making its origins much earlier than might at first be thought, possibly to the 1500s, perhaps being used as a way of identifying the Town for people who were not literate. The market cross no longer exists, but the device can still be seen in the Town on the weather- vane of the clock tower, and on the Town sign.

- 2.10 Various accounts exist of the Great Fire of Watton and it most likely happened in 1674 and there was extensive damage to the Town and its buildings around the Market Place and High Street. A request was made to the King for help and support as well as to the good folk of Norwich for aid.
- 2.11 It is recorded that The Clock Tower was built in 1679 by Christopher Hey a Mercer of Watton. The lower part of the building was the town lock-up and it is believed that the top held a bell to warn of fire. The bell later became known as 'Ting Tang'.
- 2.12 Over the course of the following centuries up to the early 20th Century, the settlement expanded in a linear form dictated by social change. The most notable of these changes being the coming of the railway and the formation and subsequent decommissioning of RAF Watton. In recent times the linear nature of the town has been blurred by more modern developments.
- 2.13 One of the most important events in the history of Watton was the opening of the Thetford to Watton railway line on 18th October 1869 by the Thetford and Watton railway Company. Six years later the line was extended to Swaffham. This section of line proved much more difficult to construct as at Neaton, on the outskirts of the town, there was a very deep depression. To overcome this, large quantities of soil had to be excavated to build up the banks that would eventually carry the line over this valley.
- 2.14 The first passenger service to Swaffham came into operation on 15th November 1875. The coming of the railway to the town brought much needed employment with the building of a house for the station master, goods, passenger and ticket offices, platforms, locomotive, carriage and goods sheds, a signal box, level crossing gates and the sinking of a well to supply water for the steam engines. Later, with two large cattle markets being established in the town, pens had to be erected near the station where the animals could be herded whilst awaiting loading onto the goods trains every Wednesday. Hundreds of crates of poultry, butter and eggs were also sent by train to London each week and hundreds of gallons of milk were also transported to the cities every evening.
- 2.15 The Royal Air Force station was opened on the 4th. January 1939 as a station of 2 Group, Bomber Command. No. 82 Squadron and No.21 Squadron formed No. 79 Wing which operated from both Watton and Bodney until mid-1942.
- 2.16 The roll of the Wing changed from Photo-Reconnaissance to Maritime-Reconnaissance but with the German invasion of Norway the missions became more aggressive and the Wing concentrated on targets in France and Belgium in support of the B.E.F. until Dunkirk and then focused their attention on the invasion ports and targets in Germany.
- 2.17 Twice during the summer of 1940 No.82 Squadron lost eleven out of twelve Blenheims dispatched on raids in daylight and it was not until the middle of 1941 that the fighter escorts were available for operations. In 1942 Watton was occupied by No.17 Advanced Flying Unit. In July 1943 No.17 A.F.U. left and the Americans moved in.
- 2.18 Soon after their arrival the Americans expanded the airfield and built the single runway at Watton and in July 1944 the 25th B.G. commenced operations. These were mainly to do with weather and photo recon., but also some O.S.S. (secret service) missions supporting the resistance organisations in Europe. The Americans remained until August 1945 when the camp was returned to the Royal Air Force.
- 2.19 RAF Watton was to have a varied and exciting post-war history and would become one of the unsung heroes of the Cold War. Most of its activities were of a very highly classified nature including Bloodhound surface-to-air missiles. The station finally closed in 1991. It wasn't until 1998 that the Station was sold, by which time it was in a very run-down state. The Airfield still remains in the hands of the Ministry of Defence. In May 2000 work began on the demolition of most of the buildings on the Station and little remains to remind us of its existence other than some buildings on the northern side of Norwich Road and the line of the main runway.



2.20 In order to identify the Neighbourhood Plan, the Working Group wanted something for the Community to recognise the process as part of the Council's activity but separate from their regular activities. It was decided to use the 'Wat' or hare as the symbol of the NP process. This has appeared on all Community Engagement Events and promotional banners forming part of the process.



Map 2 - Watton in 1906 (not to scale)

### 3. ISSUES FOR THE PLAN

- 3.1 Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, including engagement with the community, has identified the following main issues in the town that are relevant to the content of the Plan.

#### Flooding

- 3.2 Watton has been flooded three times in the past 12 years. Summer storms in June 2009, June 2016 and August 2020 caused widespread flooding to homes and businesses. In June 2016, 60 homes were known to have internally flooded and 112 had flood water in their gardens/drives/detached garages. Fourteen businesses were also internally flooded. In these floods and in heavy steady rain, the foul sewers become inundated with surface water leading to foul sewers surcharging and some toilets, showers and baths back-filling with raw sewage.
- 3.3 After 4 years of work, the Watton and Saham Toney Flood Action Group now has Anglian Water committed to action and investment to remove surface water from their foul sewers which should reduce the frequency of these surcharging. This action involves the LLFA and NCC Highways working together to get ditches cleaned out and key Highways drains more frequently jetted. Both of these actions should help prevent surface water floods from entering homes although this cannot be guaranteed.

#### The Town Centre

- 3.4 Concern has been raised about a reduced retail experience and decline in High Street and the Wednesday market footfall. The COVID-19 pandemic, has had a major impact nationally on retailing and the shape of town centres.

#### Our Population

- 3.5 There is a need for activities and employment opportunities that encourage young people to remain and build their lives in and around Watton.





## 4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the content of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted Breckland Local Plan. The Plan must have regard to the content of the NPPF and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The paragraphs below identify how these are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (henceforth identified as NPPF) sets out the Government's high-level planning policies that must be taken into account in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. In July 2021 the Government published a revised NPPF which includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states:  
"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:
- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
  - b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
    - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
    - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

### The Local Plan

- 4.3 The Breckland Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and is therefore up-to-date in terms of planning policies that cover the town. Across the district the Local Plan, in a nutshell, identifies how the identified development needs will be met for the period to 2036 while minimising the impact on the natural and built environment and ensuring that adequate services and facilities are available to accommodate the planning growth. The Local Plan identifies a "Settlement Boundary" around the main built-up area of the Town. Development outside the Settlement Boundary will only be permitted in specific circumstances.
- 4.4 For Watton, the Local Plan identifies it as a Market Town within the district's "settlement hierarchy" along with Swaffham and Dereham, with Attleborough and Thetford being designated Key Settlements. The Local Plan makes provision for at least 15,298 new homes across the Breckland district between 2011 and 2036, of which nearly 75% had either been built or had planning permission at 1 April 2018.
- 4.5 The Local Plan does not specifically identify which of its policies are "strategic" and with which the Neighbourhood Plan will need to conform. A pragmatic approach has therefore been taken in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that policies neither repeat nor contradict those in the Local Plan but add local value to them where appropriate.

## 5. A VISION FOR WATTON

- 5.1 Throughout the consultation process it became clear that residents wanted a focus for activity, a vision around which their thoughts and activities could coalesce. The following Vision reflects the aspirations of the Community of Watton expressed in this Plan.

### Vision for Watton 2036

Watton will maintain its reputation as a vibrant, helpful and friendly Town with a cohesive and inclusive community. It will be regarded as a welcoming town for business and residents alike with facilities serving the needs of all sectors whilst maintaining its Market Town character.

Watton will have ample open and formal spaces for health and recreation and a strong sense of place with links to surrounding landscapes.

Watton will have strong links with but an identity separate from other Brecks towns celebrating both its own unique history and demonstrating its future sustainable development.

It will provide equal opportunities for living, working and learning for all its residents during their healthy, safe and prosperous lives.





## Objectives

### Infrastructure and Services

- 1 To ensure that any new development does not cause surface water flooding on site or elsewhere in the parish and that foul sewers are of a size that is fit for purpose.
- 2 To support the provision and maintenance of social health and wellbeing services and infrastructure.
- 3 To establish new burial facilities.

### Development Design

- 4 Ensure that new development respects the local character and scale, historic and natural assets of the surrounding area, and takes every opportunity, through design and materials, to reinforce and enhance the distinctiveness of Watton and a strong sense of place.
- 5 New development should be sympathetic to the existing form, scale and character of its location and be appropriate to its rural context. Development should respond to the character of both the built and natural environment. Materials and boundary treatments should be sympathetic to the character and landscape of the part of the Parish area in which they are proposed.

### Housing

- 6 To ensure any new housing is available, appropriate and accessible to people of all ages and circumstances in order to maintain a balanced and diverse population.

### Natural Environment

- 7 Minimise the impact of development on international, national and local natural environment designations.
- 8 Seek, where appropriate, to deliver net biodiversity gains in new development proposals.
- 9 Ensure access routes are created with and between new developments and improve the quality of access to and use of countryside route-ways for non-vehicle users, for both recreational and local travel opportunities.
- 10 Ensure that existing green spaces are retained and their quality improved, and that sequences of green spaces are maintained to protect the visual amenity of all green spaces that contribute to the identity of the town.

### Town Centre and the Economy

- 11 Preserve the Market Town character of Watton, including the spatial balance between the rural and built environment, historical assets and Town Centre whilst improving design based on surrounding character.
- 12 To support opportunities for expansion and growth of existing Watton businesses.
- 13 To attract and encourage new business in line with identified key investment opportunities.
- 14 To encourage and support all appropriate new and existing opportunities for business and employment in the parish arising out of development along the designated A47 and A11 corridors.

### Built Heritage

- 15 To protect and enhance the historic assets of the town and take every opportunity, through design and materials, to reinforce and enhance the distinctiveness of Watton.
- 16 To promote the character of Watton as an historic market town.

### Access and Transport

- 17 Reduce the impact of vehicular traffic flows throughout the town.
- 18 It is important that the increased provision of non-vehicle travel options is supported throughout the town.
- 19 To encourage increased provision of non-car travel options in and around the parish including cycle paths and secure cycle racks.

### Community and Social

- 20 To encourage, support and promote initiatives aimed at improving health, well-being and social cohesion within our community; particularly those which make best use of our current amenities, public spaces and recreational facilities.
- 21 Look to provide facilities and services that promote and provide for the health, physical and mental wellbeing of the community.
- 22 To publicise information in relation to events and services within the town.
- 23 To work towards a more sustainable future.

## 6. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

### Objectives

To ensure that any new development does not cause surface water flooding on site or elsewhere in the parish and that foul sewers are of a size that is fit for purpose.

To support the provision and maintenance of social health and wellbeing services and infrastructure.

To support the provision of a new cemetery.

- 6.1 Research has indicated that Watton residents feel that they have endured the development of new homes in and around the town centre without the benefit of additional infrastructure capacity that should be associated with such levels of development.

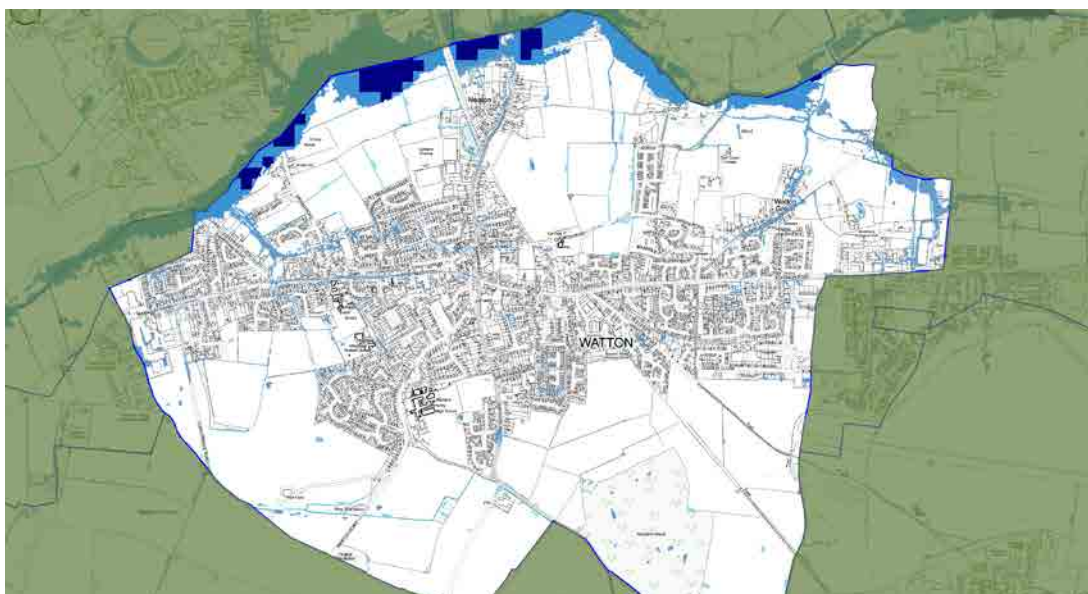
### Flooding

- 6.2 At one of the first consultation events it became evident that one of the major issues affecting the town and its infrastructure was focused around the capacity, management and maintenance of surface water and sewerage systems serving the Town.
- 6.3 The Town Council supported the establishment of the Watton and Saham Toney Flood Action Group,

comprising local residents, some of whom had practical experience of drainage systems, and councillors. Working with the Local Flood Managers at Norfolk County Council they concluded that there are basically two types of flooding problem confronting the people of Watton:

- Surface water that overwhelms the natural watercourses and flows freely over the surface of the town. The Group thinks that this is due to lack of proper maintenance and inspection of natural watercourses to ensure they maintain their optimum capacity. The same applies to the surface water sewers for the town, including highways drains, which also contribute to surface water flooding.
- Surcharging of the foul water sewers due to the amount of surface water that has been allowed by Anglian Water to discharge into them.

Map 3 illustrates the extent of the surface water flood risk area, as recorded by the Environment Agency. It demonstrates just how much of the area is liable to being affected by surface water flooding arising from rainfall and the importance of ensuring that new developments across the town do not perpetuate the problem.



Map 3 – Environment Agency map of areas liable to surface water flooding (not to scale)

6.4 Calling upon information sourced from a residents' questionnaire, our own observations, photographic evidence and published reports, the Flood Action Group has compiled an evidence base about the causes of the flooding and have some preliminary remedial measures to propose. Much of this evidence is reproduced in Appendix 1. Watton has suffered a series of surface water and highways drain flooding events over recent years. The whole of Watton is served by a ditch system of roughly 5km in length which runs from the east of the town on the Norwich Road turning south and west and then north at the Cranswick factory before crossing the B1108 and making its way to the Watton Brook. Development has taken place in areas of known risk and, while these may have Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) meeting the LLFA guidelines, flooding has still



happened on one of these developments during the storms of 2016 and on another in 2020, as described in paragraphs 3.2 and in appendix 1.

6.5 Issues of flooding have been passed from agency to agency without a single point of contact or organisation taking overall responsibility or providing a coordinated response to resolve existing issues or consider how problems caused by new development could be managed. It is acknowledged that the Neighbourhood Plan has little in the way of powers to fix existing flooding issues but it does provide the opportunity to manage how new development can provide surface water management and connections to the sewerage system without further exacerbating the situation.



Examples of flooding from storms in Watton

### Policy WTN1 - Managing Flood Risk

When assessing planning applications for flood risk, consideration will be given to the latest published Government Flood Map for fluvial and surface water flooding.

In addition to meeting the policy requirements set out in Policy ENV 09 of the adopted Local Plan and having regard to paragraphs 159 to 168 of the NPPF (July 2021), proposals for major development will need to demonstrate, through a site-specific Surface Water Drainage Strategy, that the development will not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere by the installation of a site-specific sustainable drainage scheme.

For minor development, applicants will be expected to provide, through proportionate information, details of its surface water drainage proposals.

All schemes shall justify the appropriateness of the proposals which shall include an allowance for climate change, in accordance with the most up to date Environment Agency advice.

Surface water run off mitigation measures shall address any identified risk of flooding, and based on the Lead local Flood Authority's order of priority; namely Assess, Avoid, Manage and Mitigate.

Proposals for appropriate on-site storage and run off rates will be expected to meet the standards set in technical guidance issued by Norfolk County Council as LLFA and as set out in DEFRA's Non-Statutory Standards for Sustainable Drainage, the CIRIA SuDS Manual and other relevant codes of practice.

Any additional run off, apart from in exceedance events, should include measures to protect the sensitivities of the receiving water bodies including protected aquifer or the Breckland Special Protection Area and the Breckland Special Area of Conservation.



### **Community Action 1 – Mitigating Flood Risk**

The Town Council will seek to work with the Watton & Saham Flood Action Group who will continue to work with the agencies responsible for flooding and foul drainage to build on the actions already taken to mitigate flood risk and the surcharging of foul sewers.

### **Community Action 2 – Flood Alert System**

The Town Council will seek to work with the Watton & Saham Flood Action Group, with support from the National Flood Forum and the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance, to set up a flood alert system, to train flood wardens, to purchase relevant equipment and devise a flood emergency plan.

### **Community Action 3 – Managing Surface Water Drainage**

The Town Council will seek to work with Breckland District Council to find ways to reduce the amount of grass cuttings being washed into highway drains, as these provide all the surface water drainage in many of the estates in the town. The Council will work with relevant partners to encourage good practice in water and waste issues where problems are identified.

### **Services and Facilities**

- 6.6 The town has a range of local services and facilities provided through statutory bodies. These include the Medical Practice, Library, Play/Recreation areas (Lovell Gardens and Bridle Road) and Schools. Over many decades Local Charities have developed complementary services and facilities to support the well-being of the residents of Watton. These include:
- Wayland Partnership;
  - Watton Sports Centre;
  - Queen's Hall;
  - The Youth and Community Centre (Charlotte Harvey Trust);
  - Loch Neaton;
  - Museum4Watton;
  - Daisy Trust;
  - Watton Society;
  - Men's Shed;
  - Churches For Watton

- 6.7 It is essential that an appropriate level of services continues to be provided in the town to reduce the need to travel to access them. The Plan supports the retention of existing facilities and adopted Local Plan Policy COM 04 Community Facilities provides a rigorous framework for their provision and retention, which it defines as:

- Local shops
- Cultural buildings
- Meeting places
- Public houses
- Indoor and outdoor sports venues
- Petrol filling stations
- Recreation/play areas
- Places of worship

### **Community Action 4 – Local Services**

The Town Council will seek to promote the work of charity service providers within Watton. Where appropriate, it will seek to work with and support charities which provide local services that contribute to the well-being of Watton residents.

- 6.8 The percentage of people in Watton reporting their day-to-day activities as limited a lot is 10.7% (770 people). In addition, 13.7% (988 people) reported that their activities were limited a little. This is 24.4 per cent of the population of Watton who say that their day-to-day activities are limited due to their health, affecting 1,758 people. This compares with 19.7% for the Breckland District reporting their day-to-day activities are limited a little or a lot by their health. With this in mind, the retention and expansion of the range of health care facilities in the town will be essential to the wellbeing of residents.

### **Community Action 5 – Use of Planning Funds for Improved Medical Services**

The Town Council will seek to work with the Watton Medical Practice and its Patient Participation Group to ensure that all funds available from planning obligations are accessed as well as publicising services not provided by GPs but available to patients of the Practice.

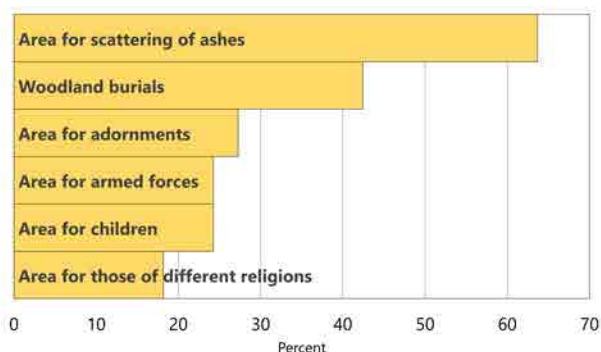
### Community Action 6 – Support for Charities

The Town Council will seek to support charitable efforts to provide support for the residents of Watton where a deficit of provision is identified and it falls under the remit of the Town Council.

### Community Action 7 – Additional Health and Wellbeing Provision

The Town Council will seek to work with the relevant agencies to see if additional health and wellbeing provision can be established.

- 6.9 Watton Town Council is the burial authority for the town, managing the cemetery as well as having responsibility for St. Mary's closed churchyard. Burial facilities are likely to reach capacity within the next 10-15 years and provision for future burial facilities beyond that period will be needed. Specific questions in the Town Questionnaire were asked to better understand what the community would like to be provided in the future.



### Community Action 8 – Cemetery Provision

Opportunities to establish a new cemetery to meet local need located within 5 miles of the town will be explored by the Town Council. The design of any new provision will consider the incorporation of designated areas for ash scattering, woodland burials, areas for children, areas for those of different religions, areas for adornments and for armed forces personnel and veterans.

### Infrastructure Capacity

- 6.10 The provision of adequate capacity in essential services to meet the demand of additional development has been identified as an important consideration when preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. Across Breckland, the Local Plan strategy is based on "directing the majority of growth to those areas with available key infrastructure such as healthcare, schools, energy supply, water treatment, transport facilities and other community infrastructure such as sport and recreation, libraries and community buildings". The Local Plan also has a policy in place (Policy INF 02) to provide a mechanism for collecting developer contributions for off-site infrastructure provision or improvement, including transport infrastructure, open space, flood defences and waste management.

### Policy WTN2 – Infrastructure Provision

Proposals will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that adequate capacity exists for relevant infrastructure or where that capacity can be made available by the time the development is brought into use.



## 7. DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

### Objectives

Ensure that new development respects the local character and scale, historic and natural assets of the surrounding area, and takes every opportunity, through design and materials, to reinforce and enhance the distinctiveness of Watton and a strong sense of place.

New development should be sympathetic to the existing form, scale and character of its location and be appropriate to its rural context. Development should respond to the character of both the built and natural environment. Materials and boundary treatments should be sympathetic to the character and landscape of the part of the Parish area in which they are proposed.

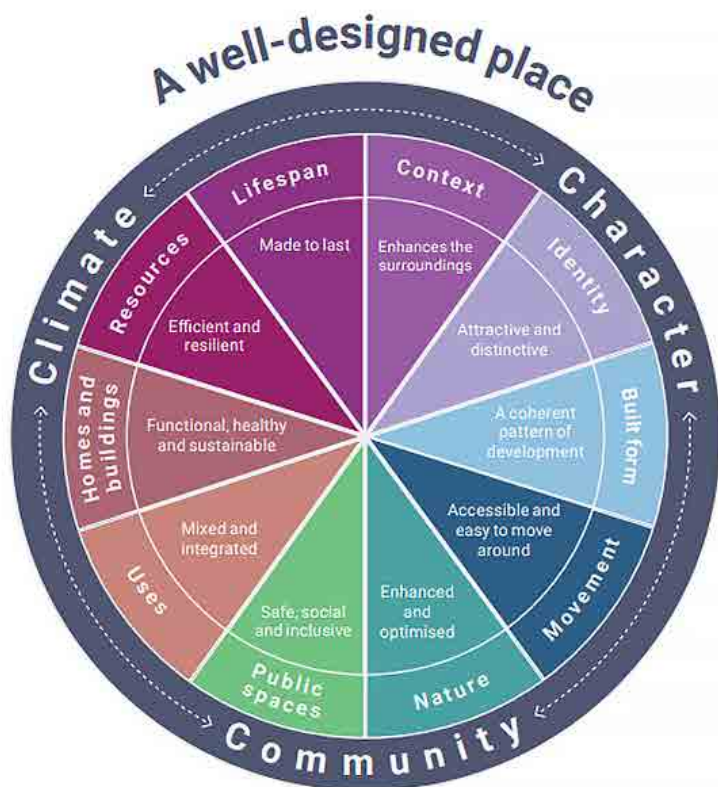
7.1 Unless carefully considered, the design of any new development can have significant detrimental impacts on the character of a locality and its residents. Early in 2021 the Government published the National Design Guide which "addresses the question of how we recognise well designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics." These ten characteristics are illustrated in the diagram extracted from the Guide. In July 2021 the Government followed up the National Design Guide with the National Model Design Code, expanding on the ten characteristics. Proposals for new development will be required to have regard to the National Model Design Code.

7.2 At a local level, the adopted Local Plan contains Policy GEN 02 "Promoting High Quality Design" which notes that Breckland District Council will produce a Supplementary Planning Document on Design. At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, this document had yet to be published.

7.3 Watton has been subject to substantial growth over the last 100 years and, especially, since World War II. This has primarily taken the form of estate development but the distinct built characteristics of the centre of the town remain, as do pockets of open space and views to the open countryside. The Watton Character Appraisal, prepared in support of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and available to view on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Town Council website, identifies the local characteristics and materials of development in distinct areas of the town. Development proposals will be expected to have regard to the content of the Appraisal when being formulated.

7.4 When considering undertaking development, it is strongly recommended that the following matters, as noted in the National Design Guide, should inform and be addressed in the planning application design and access statement:

- the relationship between the natural environment and built development;
- the typical patterns of built form that contribute positively to local character;



Extract from National Design Guide - 2021



- the street pattern, their proportions and landscape features;
- the proportions of buildings framing spaces and streets;
- the local vernacular, other architecture and architectural features that contribute to local character.

7.5 The Neighbourhood Plan, through Policy WTN3, provides a policy for the design of all new development and is to be considered in conjunction with the policies of the Local Plan and, in particular Policy GEN 02.



### Policy WTN 3 – Design Considerations

Proposals for new development must reflect the local characteristics and circumstances in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, including those identified in the Watton Character Appraisal, and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment. They should also demonstrate regard to the National Model Design Code (July 2021).

In addition, proposals will only be supported where they:

- recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area and, where necessary, prepare a landscape character appraisal to demonstrate this;
- maintain the town's sense of place and/or local character and respect the character, scale and density of the locality;
- do not involve the loss or partial loss of gardens, important open, green or landscaped areas, which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the town;
- taking mitigation measures into account, do not affect adversely:
  - any historic, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings; and
  - important landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographic features; and
  - important views into, out of, or within the town;
- do not locate sensitive development where its users and nearby residents would be significantly and adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, or other forms of pollution from existing sources, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented;
- produce designs, in accordance with standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network and seeking to ensure permeability through new housing areas, taking opportunities to connect new development into the heart of the existing settlement by sustainable modes of travel;
- where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and dedicated cycle storage;
- include suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and
- provide one electric vehicle charging point per new off-street parking place created.

#### **Community Action 9 – Residential Density**

The Town Council will seek to work proactively with developers to ensure the density of residential and commercial development respects the gradual increase in density associated with the setting of Watton as a rural town on all approaches.

#### **Community Action 10 – New Community Facilities**

The Town Council will seek to work with partner agencies to address the desires of the community for a retail centre, a Country Park, and Centralised Health and Wellbeing Centre.

#### **Community Action 11 – Enforcement of Planning Conditions**

The Town Council will seek to work with Breckland DC and Norfolk CC to pursue remedial action or enforcement for all development considered not to comply with Local District and Neighbourhood Plan objectives and planning conditions

#### **Community Action 12 – Commenting on Planning Applications**

When considering new planning applications, the Town Council will make representation to the local planning authority to highlight the relevant planning policies and raise any relevant material considerations.

- 7.6 Recent developments in the parish do not always include access to garden space for all properties. In the interests of sustainability and conservation and given the new approach of no net biodiversity loss, it is important that the rural character of the parish is reflected in the provision of adequate amenity space within or accessible from any new development.

### **Policy WTN 4 – Residential Amenity Space**

Proposals that include shared amenity space and / or landscaping will only be supported where they:

- i. utilise and enhance existing planting and topography, and contribute to local biodiversity through new planting;
- ii. are integrated into the overall design in order to create natural boundaries, variety, colour and texture;
- iii. are of a useable size and configuration relative to the needs of the building's occupants;
- iv. contribute to an attractive and functional development; and
- v. are properly maintained with arrangements in place for the maintenance of communal garden space or landscaped areas.

All new residential units will be expected to have direct access to an area of private amenity space.

The form of private amenity space will be dependent on the form of housing and could include a private garden, balcony, or ground-level patio with defensible space from any shared amenity areas.

In providing amenity space, development should:

- a. consider the location and context of the development, including the character of the surrounding area;
- b. take into account the orientation of the amenity space in relation to the sun at different times of year;
- c. address issues of overlooking and enclosure, which may otherwise impact detrimentally on the proposed dwelling and any neighbouring dwellings; and
- d. design the amenity space to be of a shape, size and location to allow effective and practical use of the space by residents.

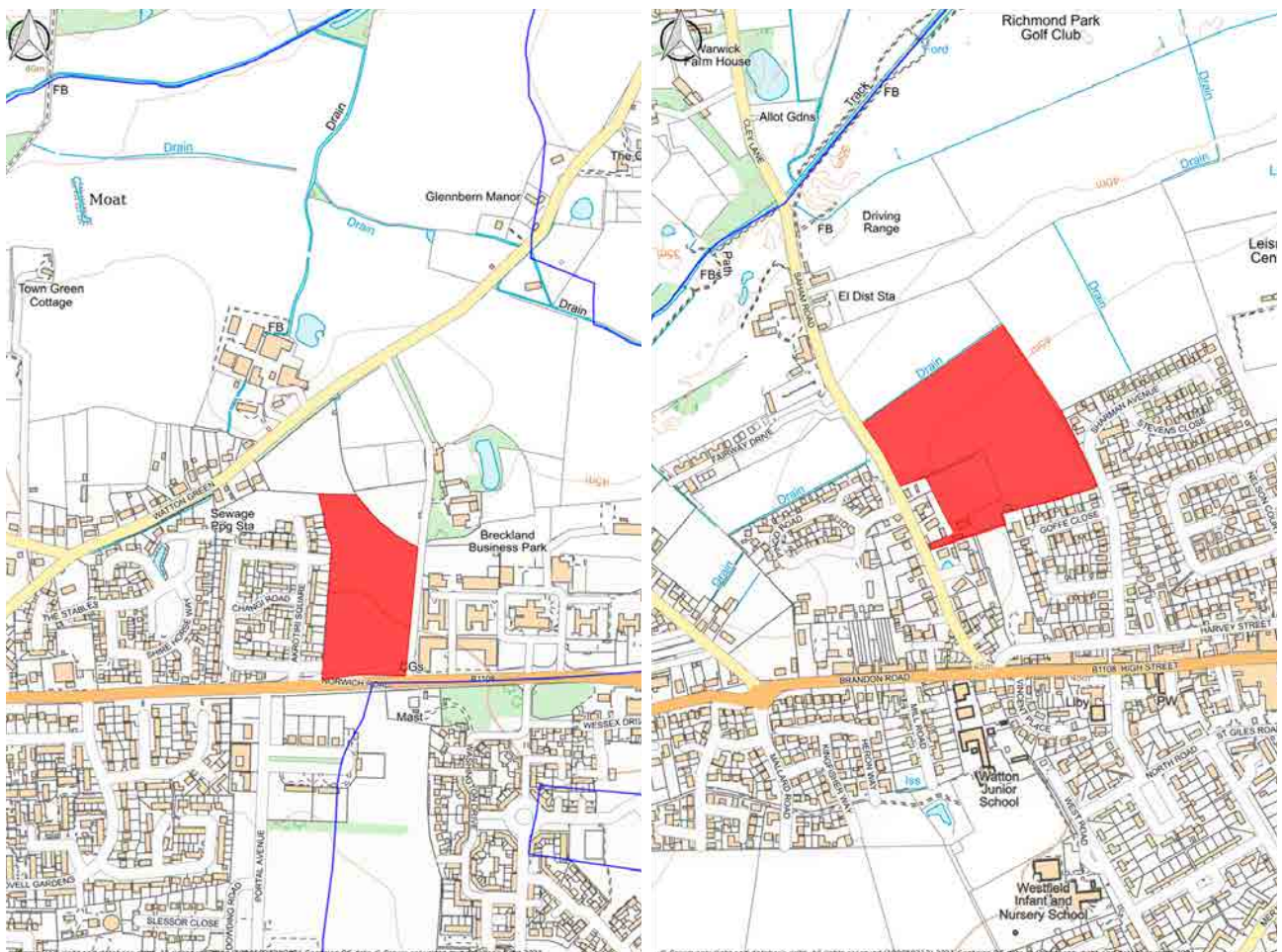
## 8. HOUSING

### Objective

To ensure any new housing is available, appropriate and accessible to people of all ages and circumstances in order to maintain a balanced and diverse population.

8.1 The Neighbourhood Plan can play an important role in identifying and delivering locally identified housing needs. Throughout the consultation process the Town Council has tried to ascertain the type of housing development that Watton would like to see in the future. Several events highlighted the opportunity to determine what type of residential development would be appropriate to reflect the current and future needs.

8.2 The adopted Local Plan makes provision for at least 1,636 new homes in Watton between 2011 and 2036. This represents a significant growth compared with the number of homes in the town in 2011 but all but 205 of these had either been built or had planning permission in 2018. The planning growth going forward represents a significant slowing down when compared with the last decade. Two sites for housing are allocated in the Local Plan, at Saham Road and at Norwich Road, as illustrated on Maps 4 and 5. Combined, these sites are allocated for at least 205 new homes plus, at the Norwich Road site, a Lidl store. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any additional housing sites for development.



Maps 4 and 5 - Local Plan Housing Allocations - Source: Breckland Local Plan 2019



8.3 The Norwich Road site is now under construction for 45 homes while 160 homes are allocated in the Local Plan for the site at Saham Road. The other sites with planning permission at 1 December 2021 are as follows:

Location	Date of planning permission	Number of homes	Status re: building	Builder
Portal Avenue off Norwich Road	December 2014	80	Access road currently being constructed	Bennett's
Lancaster Avenue	2016	101 (of which around 60 still to be built)	Under construction	Westmere Homes Ltd
Mallard Road	Outline permission in 2015	177	Not yet under construction	None yet
Wayland Fields Thetford Road	Full permission in June 2020	180	48 sold and 14 occupied as of 1/12/2021	Barratt's
121A Brandon Road	2017	9	Not yet under construction	Barconn Homes
Other minor developments of less than 10 dwellings	N/A	20	Not yet under construction	N/A
		<b>Total homes yet to be built = 478</b>		

8.4 Local plans can have a role in identifying the minimum housing requirements for neighbourhood plan areas, enabling neighbourhood plans to identify how this requirement would be met. However, the adopted Local Plan does not identify a further requirement, having fully met the district housing requirement through its policies and allocations. Consultation with residents carried out in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan did identify that the following types of housing were sought in the Town:

- More starter homes
- Family Homes 1-3 bedroom
- Bungalows 1-3 bedroom
- Warden Assisted
- Retirement and Care homes

Where proposals for new housing come forward on larger sites, in excess of 10 dwellings, the Town Council will seek to ensure that the identified needs at that time are met.

8.5 The Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017) identified that the main need across Breckland was for three bedroomed dwellings, both in market housing and affordable housing schemes. Additionally, for affordable housing one third of the need is for two bedroomed homes. In order to contribute to meeting this requirement, proposals that deliver a mix of house sizes in accordance with the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be supported unless locally specific evidence identifies the need for a different mix.

### Policy WTN 5 - Housing Mix

In all housing developments in excess of ten dwellings there shall be an emphasis on providing a mix of dwellings in accordance with the needs identified in the Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017) unless it can be demonstrated that:

- the particular circumstances relating to the tenure of the housing dictate otherwise; or
- the latest publicly available housing needs for the Neighbourhood Plan Area identify a need for a different mix.



### Community Action 13 - House Types

The Town Council will seek to work proactively with developers/builders of new sites to ensure that the types of housing needed for the Town are implemented.

- 8.6 The diverse community of Watton includes many that live locally, sometimes on a temporary basis, purely to support their employment in local businesses. It is recognised that the alteration of houses to flats and self-contained bedsitters can make a valuable contribution to housing stock provided that public health standards are maintained, including the provision of amenities, means of escape in case of fire and intensity of occupation. However, over recent years, there have been instances where the conversion of residential properties to "Houses in Multiple Occupation" (HMO) has impacted adversely on the amenity of residents in surrounding properties.
- 8.7 The Housing Act 2004 requires the mandatory licensing of dwellings where they are:
- Occupied by 5 or more people living in 2 or more households
  - Sharing bathroom, toilets and/or kitchen facilities

The licensing process is separate to the planning system and the Neighbourhood Plan cannot impinge on the requirements of the Housing Act in this matter. For the purposes of planning permissions, the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. Small shared houses occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom fall into Use Class C4 – Houses in Multiple Occupation. The conversion of existing dwellings into this class does not require planning permission. However planning permission is required to convert an existing dwelling into an HMO where there are more than six unrelated people living there. In such instances, careful consideration will be given to the potential impact of the proposal on the locality as set out in Policy WTN 6.

### Policy WTN 6 - Housing in Multiple Occupation

Proposals for large houses in multiple occupation (sui generis) as defined The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), will be supported, where the proposal:

- i. does not create an over-concentration of such a use in the local area, or cause harm to residential amenity or the surrounding area; and
- ii. the building or site (including any outbuildings) is suitable for use as housing in multiple occupation, with provision made, for example, for appropriate refuse and recycling storage, cycle and car parking and drying areas; and
- iii. will be accessible to sustainable modes of transport, shops and other local services.

Appropriate management arrangements should be put in place in order to monitor and minimise antisocial behaviour and adverse impact on local residents. A condition to this effect may be applied to any planning consent.

## 9. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### Objectives

Minimise the impact of development on international, national and local natural environment designations.

Seek, where appropriate, to deliver net biodiversity gains in new development proposals.

Ensure access routes are created with and between new developments and improve the quality of access to and use of countryside route-ways for non-vehicle users, for both recreational and local travel opportunities.

Ensure that existing green spaces are retained and their quality improved, and that sequences of green spaces are maintained to protect the visual amenity of all green spaces that contribute to the identity of the town.

### Natural Habitats

- 9.1 In 2007 Breckland District Council published a district wide Landscape Character Appraisal. The Appraisal defines landscape typologies across the district and, for Watton, it categorises land to the north of the built-up area as River Wissey Tributary Farmland, while the landscape to the south is Wayland Plateau Farmland. A small area south of Cranswick Foods is within the wider Santa Heath area of The Brecks Heathland. It therefore occupies the transition zone between the two main landscape typologies being predominantly rural farmland in character with the Watton Brook running to the north comprising the northern parish boundary for most of its length.
- 9.2 The Landscape Character Appraisal contains strategies for each defined typology. For the River Wissey Tributary Farmland it states:  
*The overall management objective for Wissey Settled Tributary Farmland should be enhance the landscape of the minor tributary watercourses that thread*

*through the agricultural land, with the aim being both to conserve the more intimate, small scale wetland character associated with these watercourses and to create stronger links with the adjacent river valley landscapes. Opportunities should also be sought to enhance biodiversity value through new native field boundary hedgerow planting and through woodland and grassland creation.*

And for the Wayland Plateau it states:

*The overall management objective for Wayland Plateau should be to conserve existing small scale features such as woodland and common land, whilst maintaining the open, expansive views. The small scale intimate character of the villages should be retained and enhanced. Opportunities should be sought to strengthen the biodiversity of the character area in line with the Norfolk BAP objectives (field margins and ancient woodland) and the principles and guidelines of the Norfolk Ecological Network Mapping Project.*

- 9.3 The main site of conservation interest in the parish is Wayland Wood, north of the A1075 Thetford Road, comprising 32 hectares of dense woodland arising from the traditional coppice woodland management techniques used to benefit wildlife. The wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, has a history of coppicing going back to the 10th century. It is one of the largest woods in south Norfolk and includes a fine mix of tree species: hazel, oak, downy birch, bird-cherry, willow, ash, hornbeam and field maple. Over 125 species of flowering plant have been recorded. These include bluebells, yellow archangel, water-avens, wood anemone, early purple orchid, common twayblade, bugle, and the rare yellow star of Bethlehem. Good numbers of common woodland birds are present, with more unusual residents including breeding nuthatch, marsh tit and bullfinch. The wood is excellent for invertebrates with more than 250 species of moth recorded.
- 9.4 Two County Wildlife Sites (CWS 975 - East of Watton Fen and CWS 845 - New Plantation, Merton Road) lie within the parish and there a low number of veteran trees spread across Watton. In summary there is a great deal of





potential to enhance and increase the biodiversity value of the parish.

- 9.5 The Breckland Farmland Special Area of Conservation lies to the southwest of the parish, comprising almost 40,000 hectares designated primarily for the bird interest of Stone Curlew, Nightjar and Woodlark. Policy ENV 03 of the Local Plan requires that a Habitats Regulations Assessment is undertaken on all proposals for development that are likely to have a significant effect on The Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) which is classified for its populations of Stone Curlew, Woodlark and Nightjar, and/or Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated for its heathland habitats.

#### **Biodiversity**

- 9.6 The NPPF sets out that planning should contribute to conserving nature and securing 'net gains' for biodiversity. Where a development proposal would result in significant harm to biodiversity, the mitigation hierarchy (which sets out the hierarchy of mitigation options) should be applied. Where a development cannot satisfy these requirements (set out below) planning permission should be refused.

#### **Hierarchy**

1. Avoidance - can significant harm to wildlife species and habitats be avoided?
  2. Mitigation - can it be minimised by design or by the use of effective mitigation measures?
  3. Compensation - as a last resort and with clear justification, can any residual harm be properly compensated for by measures to provide an equivalent or greater value of biodiversity?
- 9.7 Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements by creating or enhancing habitats after avoiding or mitigating harm as far as possible. The Environment Bill (2019) includes a new requirement for 'Net Gain' to biodiversity in development projects which requires developers to demonstrate that at least a 10% gain has been achieved using DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric 2.0. It expects developers to maintain any habitat creation or enhancement for a minimum of 30 years.

- 9.8 The NPPF encourages net gains for biodiversity to be sought. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures, and where this can't be achieved, following application of the mitigation hierarchy, through the "purchase" of biodiversity units as part of the proposed biodiversity net gain credits scheme. From 2023 all new development will be required to deliver a net gain in biodiversity of 10 per cent, either on-site or through off-setting.

- 9.9 For Watton, development proposals will need to have regard to Policy ENV 02 of the Local Plan "Biodiversity protection and enhancement" which requires all proposals to "demonstrate how net gains for biodiversity are being secured as part of the development, proportionate to the scale of development and potential impacts (if any)."

#### **Open Space**

- 9.10 Open space is limited within the Parish with a few key sites requiring active management and support to ensure their future survival and enjoyment by the Community. The Local Plan designates and protects a variety of open spaces across the town that were identified through the 2015 Breckland Open Space Assessment.
- 9.11 The existing open and accessible green space within the parish is limited and there is a desire to secure additional space through the development process. Policy ENV 04 of the Local Plan "Open Space, Sport & Recreation" states that all new residential development of 11 or more dwellings will be expected to provide a contribution towards outdoor playing space and it sets the standards for the amount and type of space required. Access to the surrounding landscape via public rights of way is limited by the low level of public access routes to and from the Town. Watton Town Council would like to secure the resources to establish and maintain a Country Park/Green Space to the North of the town centre and its inclusion in the Site Assessment Report highlights the potential for this type of development.

### Policy WTN 7 - Country Park

Proposals for a new country park to serve Watton and the wider area will be supported where:

- i. it can be accessed by safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes from Watton;
- ii. it provides enhanced dog walking measures including circular dog walks and dedicated "dogs' off lead" areas; and
- iii. satisfactory vehicular access can be achieved without creating a detrimental impact on the local highways network.

9.12 There are a number of important open areas within the Neighbourhood Area that make significant contributions to the character and setting of the built environment. The NPPF enables the designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces ('LGS') in neighbourhood plans. Such designations rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 102 of the NPPF states that the designation should only be used where the green space is:

- In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. It is recognised that the designation of Local Green Spaces should not be used simply to block development.

9.13 The Watton Character Appraisal identified a number of green spaces which meet the criteria in paragraph 102 of the NPPF, but a more focused Local Green Space Assessment of spaces across the parish has been prepared, from which a total of 30 spaces are deemed to meet the criteria. These spaces are identified in Policy WTN 8 and are illustrated on the maps in Appendix 2.

### Policy WTN 8 - Local Green Spaces

The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the maps in Appendix 2.

1. George Trollope Road
2. South of South Road
3. Merton Road crescent
4. Memorial Green, Memorial Way
5. Open space at Ventura House
6. Langmere Road
7. Stokes Avenue
8. Bridle Road
9. Heron Way
10. Youth and Community Centre
11. Between Queensway and Edinburgh Close
12. Jubilee Road
13. Allotment Gardens off Thetford Road
14. Play area, Bowes Close
15. Open Spaces, Bowes Close/Byfords Way
16. Balancing pond, Byfords Way
17. Vicarage Walk / Chestnut Road
18. Whitebeam Crescent
19. Dye Road
20. Lovell Gardens Play Area
21. Lovell Gardens Open Space
22. Lovell Gardens Amenity Spaces
23. Akrotiri Square Amenity Space
24. Shire Horse Way / Horse Shoe Close Amenity Spaces
25. Harvest Road / Blenheim Way Open Space
26. Badger Drive Open Space
27. Wheatcroft Drive Open Space
28. Cemetery
29. Allotments
30. Loch Neaton
31. Field Maple Road
32. Church Walk

### Site Enhancement Initiatives

- 9.14 There is a desire to improve some of the green/open areas that are maintained by the Town Council itself such as Bridle Road and Lovell Gardens play areas as well as the Thetford Road site belonging to Wayland Academy.

### Community Action 14 – Play Areas

The Town Council will seek to improve existing play areas, encourage the provision of new play areas and to work with the Trustees of the Wayland Academy to improve the site bordering Thetford Road.

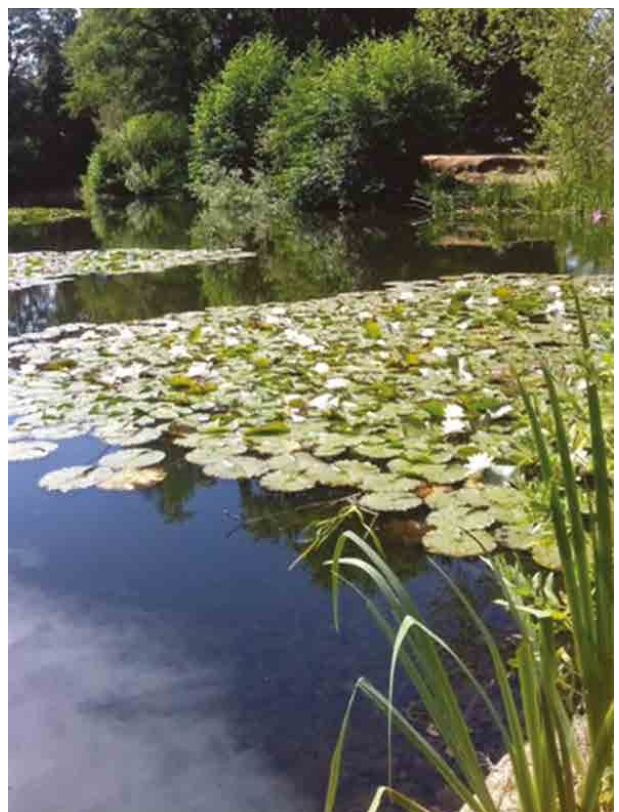
- 9.15 Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of opportunities where the redevelopment or enhancement of sites would improve the quality of the area within which they sit. The Town Council will support proposals that bring about such improvements. The following areas have been identified in the survey and will require further investigation:

1. Land at the end of Loch Neaton (visual enhancement). At the end of Loch Lane on the north side there is a piece of land associated with the former railway which is in need of cleaning up. It includes some form of derelict building, a large tank and discarded waste.
2. Land between Queens Hall and No 8 Norwich Road (visual enhancement)
3. Row of shops between No 6 High Street and The Gables (visual enhancement and redevelopment opportunity)



### Community Action 15 – Site Enhancement Opportunities

The Town Council will seek to work with the owners of the relevant land/premises to enhance them.





## 10. TOWN CENTRE AND THE ECONOMY

### Objectives

Preserve the Market Town character of Watton, including the spatial balance between the rural and built environment, historical assets and Town Centre whilst improving design based on surrounding character

To support opportunities for expansion and growth of existing Watton businesses in precision engineering (metals, wood and plastics); food processing, packaging and delivery; agri-technology and farming, retail, traditional foundry and stone masons; tourism and the hospitality industry

To attract and encourage new business in line with key investment opportunities (New Anglia LEP Economic Plan; Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor (CNTC)) particularly

- (i) agri-technology and food processing, and
- (ii) digital and creative media

To encourage and support all appropriate new and existing opportunities for business and employment in the parish arising out of development along the designated A47 and A11 corridors

- 10.1 The Town Centre is the traditional heart of Watton and has always been the focus for commerce and administration, sitting astride the main road to Norwich. The area also provides the focus for the built heritage interest in the Town with its designation as a Conservation Area. At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, a Conservation Area Appraisal of the area had not been prepared by the District Council.
- 10.2 Today, like many centres, the Town Centre has been affected by changing shopping habits such as online shopping and the ease of access to competing centres. This pattern is likely to be an ongoing problem in future years and the successful centres will be those that can adapt and respond to the changes.

10.3 The Local Plan seeks to enhance local provision through focusing retail and leisure proposals within town centres, with retail uses focused within the Primary Shopping Areas as defined on the Local Plan Policies Map. The development of additional retail floorspace outside of defined centres will be restricted where it fails the sequential and impact tests (except where it serves local need). Retail frontages and town centre boundaries are covered by Local Plan policies and also defined on the Local Plan Policies Map. They are therefore not repeated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

10.4 In order that Watton can be in a position to manage the impact of change and to seek opportunities for the improvement of the Town Centre, two separate reports were commissioned as part of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process, both funded by the Government's Neighbourhood Plan support programme. An overview of those reports, which are available on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Town Council website, are set out below.

#### Watton Market Report

10.5 The first of the two reports was published in 2018 and focused primarily on the market. It assessed the operating conditions for the market and identified potential solutions. The consultants preparing the report identified the following issues:

- stalls spill onto the carriageway adding to the existing traffic congestion issue;
- the stalls are installed very close to the shop frontages, which the elderly and disabled find difficult to access;
- there are no dedicated power points; and
- the market is squeezed into the edges of the busy High Street, missing opportunities to establish character, a sense of place and an environment that is attractive for both traders and shoppers.

10.6 The report looked at options to relocate the market and concluded that the preferred option would be to relocate it to Middle Street and Dereham Road, providing a design solution for the accommodation of the market in this area.

### High Street Design Code Report

10.7 The second report focused on the Town Centre as a whole, analysing the qualities and environment of the area and putting forward design guidance around the following themes:

- Mix of use;
- Public realm;
- Street and movement;
- Active frontages;
- Signage and wayfinding; and
- Details and materials.

The design guidance for each of the themes must be taken into account for any planning proposals or highway schemes in the Town Centre.



### Shopfront Design

10.8 Shopfronts, advertisements, sun blinds, canopies, hoardings and poster panels can all have a significant impact on the environment of the Town Centre given its designation as a Conservation Area and the presence of Listed Buildings. It is important to ensure that these make a positive contribution to the building on which they are located and to the surrounding area. The quality and details of shop design are of significance in improving the attractiveness and maintaining the prosperity of the Town Centre, while recognising the need to ensure that the Centre remains viable for business operators.

10.9 The High Street Design Code document includes guidance for the design of shop fronts. Applicants will be expected to have regard to this guidance as well as the further advice available in the content of 'Shopfronts and Advertisements in Historic Towns' published by the English Historic Towns Forum in 1991 and available on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Town Council website, and any subsequent advice, guidance and best practise publications available.



Images from AECOM High Street Design Report

## Policy WTN 9 – Watton Town Centre

Proposals in the Town Centre, as defined on the Local Plan Policies Map, should have regard to and demonstrate how they accord with the design guidance for the area set out in the Watton Town Centre Design Code (May 2020). Proposals which depart from the guidance should justify why such a departure is appropriate to the development.

Proposals to alter an existing shop front or create a new shop front, including the installation of external security measures, advertisements or canopies, or advertisements, must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the building or location of which it forms a part, and the street scene in which the proposal is located, and must not adversely affect amenity and/or public safety.

## Community Action 16 – Enhancing the Retail Experience

The Town Council will seek to work with relevant parties to maintain and enhance the shopping and retail experience in the High Street, the development and growth of the Wednesday market

### Jobs

- 10.10** Watton is ideally situated between the A47 to the north and A11 to the south, being located at the crossroads of the north-south route of the A1075 and the east-west route of the B1108. However, these roads have limited transport capacity that would allow Watton to fully maximise opportunities offered by the links to the major trunk roads. Being only 30 minutes' drive from the Norwich Research Park, the town is well positioned for local businesses to benefit from collaborative research and development opportunities with this important research centre.

- 10.11** Industry in Watton and surrounds are all Small or Medium Enterprises (less than 500 employees) with the exception of the Cranswick Country Foods on the Brandon Road. In terms of business sectors, Watton is marked by a wealth of engineering companies particularly specialising in metal, wood and plastics. With its rural surrounds Watton also has a number of agricultural related businesses, animal products, food processing, packaging and delivery companies. Watton also hosts a range of companies that are based around traditional skill sets (metal foundry, stone masonry and woodcraft), and the business community is underpinned by appropriate professional services in architecture, accountancy, legal, finance, technology, marketing, IT and digital creative, training and business support.

- 10.12** During the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, various attempts were made to engage the local business sector. The Commerce and Retail Group came about through an increasing awareness to ensure the retail viability of the Town, its diversity of retail offer and attractive character whilst addressing the issues associated with the High Street and market operation and location. Wayland Chamber of Commerce have been active in the development of these objectives and policies and have gained much support from the sector in driving the delivery of these forward.

- 10.13** The Local Plan identifies three "General Employment Areas" in the town, namely Norwich Road Industrial Estate, Breckland Business Park and adjoining properties north of Norwich Road, and Cranswick Country Foods. In addition, the Threxton Road Industrial Estate adjoins the Parish. Policy EC 03 of the Local Plan guides what type of development will be accepted on them. However, there are many other opportunities for working in the Town and, more recently, a large number of residents will have been working from home due to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020/21.

- 10.14** Outside the General Employment Areas, proposals for business and employment uses will have to have regard to the potential impact of the proposal on its surroundings and the amenity of existing residents in the area. Policy EC 04 of the Local Plan "Employment



Development Outside General Employment Areas” will be the starting point for the consideration of such proposals.

- 10.15** The Neighbourhood Plan is linked into key economic, investment and innovation initiatives across the County and East Anglia. The Strategic Economic Plan of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership for Norfolk and Suffolk highlights key sectors for growth and investment in the region that include advanced engineering, agri-technology, food production, processing and delivery, and digital and creative media.
- 10.16** Hethel Innovation provide innovation support in the East of England through provision of incubation space for business nurturing start-ups and providing advice and support. They seek to develop incubator capacity in key areas of energy, food production, advanced manufacturing and digital and creative media. It is understood that Hethel Innovation are keen to establish a digital and creative media incubator in central Norfolk to complement incubators in the other sectors in Kings Lynn, Yarmouth, Wymondham and at Scottow.
- 10.17** The Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor (CNTC) is catalysing business growth around the A11 corridor associated with advanced engineering and materials, agri-technology and agri-food and an IT digital economy. The CNTC seeks to generate investment and business growth in these key areas that are relevant to Watton’s skills and industrial base.

#### **Community Action 17 – Encouraging Business Opportunities**

The Town Council will seek to work with all relevant agencies, organisations and businesses to encourage and promote the provision of business opportunities within the town. It recognises the importance of existing businesses in the areas of in precision engineering (metals, wood and plastics); food processing, packaging and delivery; agri-technology and farming, retail, traditional foundry and stone masons; tourism and the hospitality industry.

It will support strategies design to maximise opportunities that attract and encourage new businesses

in line with identified key investment strategies, at present these are agri-technology, food processing and digital and creative media. These have been identified within the new Anglia LEP economic plan and the Cambridge – Norwich Tech Corridor (CNTC).

#### **Community Action 18 – Opportunities for Organised Youth Activities**

The Town Council will seek to work with other agencies to promote the provision and development of youth oriented social facilities an upgrade of existing buildings or new build. The design of new provision will include access to physical and e-sports activities, space for youth-oriented clubs, societies, training and skills development in innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly relating to digital and creative media.

#### **Community Action 19 – New Community Venues**

The Town Council will seek to support the establishment of safe places for the Youth of the Town to socialise and seek to work with Watton Charities and other organisations to employ their Charitable Objectives and Assets to deliver ‘Anchor Buildings’ at the east and west end of the High Street area as a focus for flagship events and activities for the community of Wayland and attractions for visitors.

#### **Community Action 20 – Cambridge/Norwich Tech Corridor**

The Town Council will support the Wayland Chamber of Commerce and the Wayland Partnership in its work with the Delivery Board of the Cambridge/Norwich Tech Corridor.

#### **Community Action 21 – Improving employment opportunities**

The Town Council will seek to support and encourage the development of opportunities to enable residents to maximise their employment potential.

#### **Community Action 22 – Improving the educational and employment opportunities of young people**

The Town Council will seek to support and encourage the provision and development of youth orientated facilities aimed at improving the educational and employment opportunities of young people, including the obtaining of recognised practical qualification.

## 11. BUILT HERITAGE

### Objective

To protect and enhance the historic assets of the Town and take every opportunity, through design and materials, to reinforce and enhance the distinctiveness of Watton.

To promote the character of Watton as an historic market Town.

11.1 Listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments are collectively known as “heritage assets” and are protected from development harm by Government legislation. Examples of these are Wayland Hall, The Clock Tower, St Mary’s Church, The Willow House, The Crown Hotel, The Bull Hotel, The War Memorial and Walsingham Gates (there is a full list at the end of the Character Appraisal Report). In many areas there are buildings, structures or features of local heritage interest that are not statutory heritage assets but make an important contribution to the historic environment and character of their location. Historic England recognises that neighbourhood plans provide an opportunity for a community to develop a positive strategy for the area’s locally important heritage assets that aren’t recognised at a national level through listing or scheduling. These are known as non-designated heritage assets. The NPPF explains that the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in the determination of any planning application. A balanced judgement will be needed, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

11.2 The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of buildings and structures in the town that are of local significance. These buildings and structures form part of the heritage which is viewed as an essential part of the Town’s Character and attractiveness. They are referenced in documents such as George Jessup’s “Watton Through The Ages”, the 18th/19th Century papers of Revd Peter Blomfield Jeckell, and more recently “The Watton Heritage Trail”, produced by the Watton Society.

11.3 Others which make a significant contribution to the historic environment and are worthy of being protected include:

- The National School
- Queen’s Hall
- Old Brewery
- The Old Infant School, Church Walk
- Disraeli House
- Burleigh House
- 108 Dereham Road (from 1470)
- 4 Merton Road (Suffolk Pink House)
- 85 and 87 Dereham Road (Railway Heritage)
- 15 Church Road (Railway Heritage)
- Former RAF Officers Mess (Ventura House)

11.4 The importance of some of these buildings is described in the leaflet “Watton Heritage Trail”. These can be seen at the following link: <http://wattonsociety.org.uk/watton-heritage-trail>. In the meantime, we have described their significance in a separate report “Non-Designated Heritage Assets” available on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Town Council website and they are also identified on the maps in Appendix 3.

11.5 Whilst the identification of these assets in the Neighbourhood Plan is not a statutory designation, like listing, their protection and enhancement is a matter that will be taken into account in considering planning applications that could have an impact on the building or feature.



### **Policy WTN 10 – Buildings of Local Significance**

The retention and protection of local heritage assets and buildings of local significance, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest, must be appropriately secured.

Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of, or substantial harm to, a building of local significance should be supported by an appropriate analysis of the significance of the asset to enable a balanced judgement to be made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Appendix 3 describes the significance of the Buildings of Local Significance and their locations.

### **Community Action 23 – Designation of Local Heritage Assets**

The Town Council will pursue the registration of non-designated heritage assets that are of local significance as Local Heritage Assets with the District Council so that they are recognised as Local Heritage Assets.

### **Community Action 24 – High Street Buildings**

The Town Council will seek to work with the relevant authorities and shop owners to maintain and enhance the quality and appearance of buildings on the High Street.

### **Community Action 25 – Design and Building Compliance**

The Town Council will encourage the relevant authorities to request or, where necessary enforce compliance with appropriate regulations relating to High Street design/building infringements.

### **Community Action 26 – Promoting Heritage Assets**

The Town Council will promote and advertise the heritage and historic assets of the Town by developing more appropriate signage and accessible Tourist Information.

### **Community Action 27 – Improved Signage**

The Town Council will seek and provide, where appropriate, improved signage of local character within the town to encourage the use of facilities and services available in the locale.





## 12. ACCESS AND TRANSPORT

### Objectives

Reduce the impact of vehicular traffic flows throughout the town

It is important that the increased provision of non-vehicle travel options is supported throughout the town

To encourage increased provision of non-car travel options in and around the parish including cycle paths and secure cycle racks

- 12.1 The town is located at an important junction of roads accessing Norwich, Dereham, Swaffham and Thetford and the High Street carries significant levels of traffic as a result. The effect of such high levels of traffic is the over-dominance of highways infrastructure, such as pedestrian barriers and traffic lights, that impedes the provision of safe and attractive routes for pedestrians, cyclists and those with mobility issues.
- 12.2 The traffic light-controlled junction of the A1075 and B1108 is a particular example of an extensive area of tarmac where pedestrians have to rely on signals to cross the roads, sometimes requiring two phases of green lights to make a diagonal crossing.
- 12.3 The Watton Town Centre Design Code noted that "Traffic congestion is an issue that becomes more apparent when lorries and large vehicles drive through the High Street. The issue is exacerbated at 'pinch points' along the High Street, which is a result of the changing width of the road, the location of some parking spaces and the size of the vehicles." The width of the High Street, the limited number of safe crossing points and the propensity of parked cars, reduce the attractiveness for pedestrians to cross from one side to the other. A solution to this might be the introduction of additional central reservations along the High Street to improve opportunities for safe crossings.

### Community Action 28 – Reducing the Impact of Traffic

The Town Council will seek to work with relevant stakeholders and partners to reduce the impact of vehicular traffic flows throughout the town. This will initially concentrate on peak periods and the impact of large vehicles. In the long term the Town Council will support the introduction of traffic management systems that balance residents and business needs and improve all aspects of the environment.



- 12.4 The town is well served by buses to Norwich, Swaffham and Dereham although opportunities for improvements to services will always be welcomed. Within the town there is a sense of increased journeys by foot and cycle since the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, the presence of safe and attractive routes and, for cycling, the ability to safely secure cycles is an issue that needs to be tackled if changes travel trends are to continue.

### Community Action 29 – Public Transport, Cycling and Walking Initiatives

The Town Council will seek to influence opportunities to improve public transport including supporting existing public transport routes and work with partners to create new links to Norwich and Cambridge. It will also work with stakeholders and partners to improve and increase pedestrian and cycle access around the town linking residential and commercial areas away from the main traffic routes.

### Community Action 30 – Transport Links

The Town Council will seek to work with partners to preserve and improve transport links to and from key employment, commercial, recreational, amenity and residential areas.

## 13. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL FACILITIES

### Objectives

To encourage, support and promote initiatives aimed at improving health, well-being and social cohesion within our community; particularly those which make best use of our current amenities, public spaces and recreational facilities

Look to provide facilities and services that promote and provide for the health, physical and mental wellbeing of the community

To publicise information in relation to events and services within the town

To work towards a more sustainable future

- 13.1 The Town is well placed to provide for most day-to-day facilities which are required by residents and businesses. However, demands change and decisions made by external bodies and operators can have a direct impact on both the quality and level of services. Watton still has a growing population, 1/3 of whom are aged over 65. It is important that an efficient range of local health and community facilities are available to meet the increasing demand.
- 13.2 Planning policies in the adopted Breckland Local Plan are intended to ensure that where planning applications could result in the loss of facility, a rigorous assessment is made to assess whether alternative facilities are available or if a facility is no longer required. The Neighbourhood plan seeks to promote local actions that are not planning related and which, when delivered, enrich the availability of information and services accessible by Watton residents.

#### Community Action 31 – Supporting Wellbeing

The Town Council will work with the Trustees of The Charlotte Harvey Trust, Loch Neaton, the Sports Centre, the Queens Hall and Christian Community Centre and other relevant charities to support existing activities such as the Park Run and provide new opportunities aimed at the general physical health and mental wellbeing of residents.

#### Community Action 32 – Availability of Medical Services

The Town Council will work with Watton Medical Practice and its Patient Participation Group to ensure that residents know what services/facilities are available.

#### Community Action 33 – Community Centre

The Town Council will work with the Charlotte Harvey Trust to promote facilities and services provided at the Community Centre by the Trust and its partners and establish a community hub for all ages and sectors of the community. It will seek to establish a one stop shop for information on clubs, groups, organisations, food banks etc.

#### Community Action 34 – Community Information

The Town Council will work to provide a live "What's on in Watton" notice board with all forthcoming activities and events advertised.

#### Community Action 35 – Information Sharing

The Town Council will seek to improve the dissemination of information regarding clubs, facilities and services within the town by making better use of digital media platforms and improving its own website and continuing to support the provision of the resident's information book created annually by the Wayland Chamber of Commerce for all existing and new residents.

#### Community Action 36 – Waste Reduction and Recycling

The Town Council will work towards all opportunities to expand facilities for recycling, the reduction of waste and the reuse of goods and materials. Education programmes, campaigns and projects advancing this aim will be supported.



## APPENDIX 1 – FLOODING BACKGROUND EVIDENCE

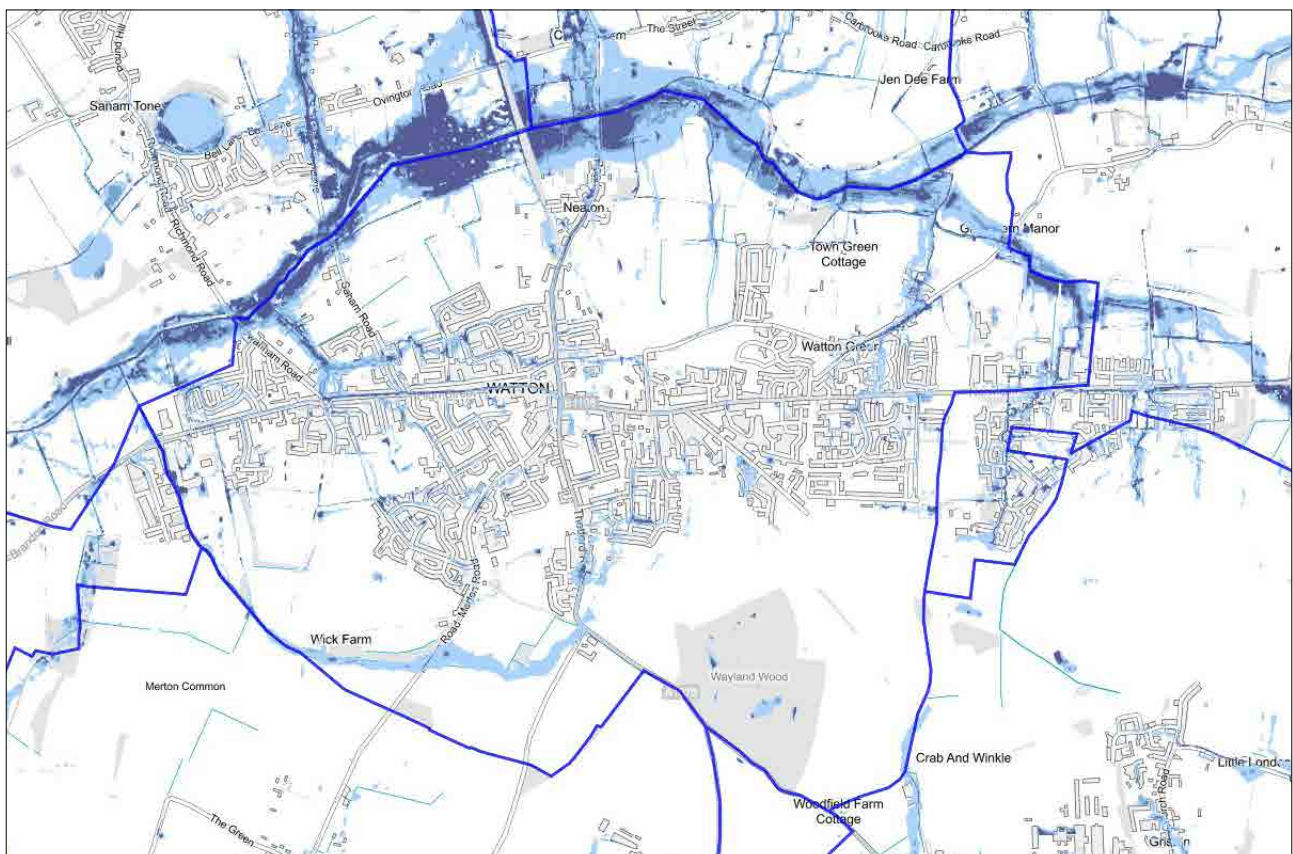
**Geology:** Based on published geological records for the area (British Geological Survey online mapping), the whole of Watton exhibits the following geology:

- Superficial Geology: Lowestoft Formation – Diamicton. Superficial Deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local environment previously dominated by ice age conditions, and
- Bedrock Geology: Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation, Newhaven Chalk Formation and Culver Chalk

So Watton has an impermeable layer of boulder clay close to the surface which overlays the chalk formation beneath which the Environment Agency defines as a primary aquifer such that water quality is vital. For this reason, in relation to one planning application, they refused deep bore hole means of removing surface water.

The boulder clay layer quickly becomes saturated in even continuous steady rain and in storm conditions the rain flows across both the landscape and especially the hard surfaces.

The Environment Agency map of the area dated January 2019 shows the areas at risk of surface water flooding.





### **Flooding:**

On 23 June 2016, a storm deposited 66.74mm of rain between 17.45 and 21.00 with the highest intensity between 17.45 and 18.30 (reported by a weather buff in Watton who keeps daily records). This resulted in 60 residential properties being internally flooded across the town and 14 businesses. Two international businesses on the Threxton Road Industrial Estate were flooded to a depth of 6 inches. The other businesses were in the High Street where the flooding was much less. In addition, 112 residential properties were externally flooded in their gardens and/or garages. This may not be the total as some people may not have reported to the authorities or responded to the NP Drainage Working Group's questionnaire.

The High Street is a continuation of Norwich Road to the east and there is a high point there of 59m AOD and a low point at the Threxton Road Industrial Estate of 55m AOD. So, a fall of 4 metres for just over 2 kms along a dead straight road and the flood water flowed down it and off into side roads too.

A similar storm on 15 June 2009 deposited a mixture of rain and hail amounting to 83.24mm from 14.00 to 18.30 with the highest intensity between 15.30 and 16.30 (reported by the same weather buff). There are no figures for the amount of flooding in this event other than that the High Street had more flooded properties than in 2016. Some newspaper pictures of that storm show what happened.

Between 3 and 6 October 2019, 10.58mm of rain fell on the 3rd and 4th and then 40.43mm on the 6th. A home in Langmere Road had 3 inches of water in the conservatory and one other had some in the porch. The Highways drain in the road had not been able to cope with the flow of water.

### **Thunderstorms of 16 August 2020**

There were 2 thunderstorms on Sunday 16 August 2020 followed by showers. Our weather buff who lives on Dereham Road said the first one started at 1420 and lasted one hour depositing 40mm of rain, which at its peak was falling at a rate of 252mm per hour. The second started at 1655 and was followed by showers until 2040. Total rainfall was 104.36mm compared to the 66.74mm at a rate of 135.4 on 23 June 2016. However, a Town Councillor who lives about half a mile away said he had 150mm in his garden and a resident of Chequers Lane Saham Toney to the immediate north of

Watton measured 147mm on his rain gauge. So, the rain was very localised.

In fact, these thunderstorms were unusual in meteorological terms such that Dan Holley of Weatherquest at the University of East Anglia is actively investigating. Quoting from his email:

I'm currently researching the thunderstorms on 16th August given their exceptional rainfall totals which is potentially at the top end of UK climatology, and have put out requests with local farmers for as many readings as possible to get a good picture of the distribution.... There are several places that recorded between 150-200mm nearby (Watton appears to be on the northern edge of the extreme rainfall, which spans all the way south to East Harling).

Some weather events are fairly clear-cut as to which processes were responsible for creating thunderstorms in certain locations (such as sea breeze convergence). Unfortunately this most recent event is somewhat less clear-cut and hence the interest in researching it. I'm more than happy to share my findings with you once written up in a report, but this may be some time away. However, at first glance the general setup seemed to involve an area of wind convergence close to the Diss area. This helped generate the thunderstorms and because the steering winds aloft were blowing from SE to NW, essentially multiple storms kept moving over the same area, leading to these exceptionally high rainfall totals. Yet just 5 miles to the east or west, accumulations were significantly lower.

This setup was different to the 23rd June 2016 event – which I remember well because it was the day we installed our weather station at our UEA office (very timely!) – as storms on that day were moving from SW to NE from memory, and I suspect may have been what we call 'elevated', in other words generated by processes higher up in the atmosphere and not related to conditions at ground level.

As surface water is taken away on most of the housing estates in the Town by Highways drains, these need to be kept as clean as possible. The contractor employed by Breckland Council to mow the grass verges on these estates leaves the cuttings in situ and they then get washed down the Highways drains and

block them. We understand that it costs more to have these collected by the contractor and disposed of.

### **Hydrology:**

An additional reason for the flooding at the Industrial Estate in 2016 is because it is at the end of a run of ordinary watercourses before they discharge into the Watton Brook after entering a culvert under the B1108 which became overwhelmed with the volume of water.

The south of the town has this run of ordinary watercourses which cross east to west through different landowners' farmland. There are some smaller ones to the north of the town which also drain into the Watton Brook. The housing estates in the areas mentioned above all have soakaways in the individual properties built in the 1960s and 1970s and these are probably no longer fit for purpose. In addition, there are no Anglian Water surface water sewers in these estates and the surface water is drained by Highways drains. These were partially blocked as well as being overwhelmed by the volume of water.

In the 21st century a total of 1619 houses/bungalows, 107 flats/apartments and 5 studios were given planning permission. Of these, 430 were given permission on appeal (post 2016) and no consideration was given by the Planning Inspector to the flood risk at any of the sites. Several of these dwellings have been constructed or will be constructed on large developments on the south side of Norwich Road (147, The Signals), on the Watton Green Road, (18 The Warren), (98, Hares Green), on the west side of Thetford Road (110, Saddlers Rise), 180 on the east side of Thetford Road, and the west sides of Saham Road (73) and Swaffham Road (23, former Carpenters Arms). Some of these are in Carbrooke Parish but their development impacts on the surface water flooding risk in Watton too. While these have SuDS on site, the amount of hard surfaces is adding to the flooding problems.

The new development for 180 homes is currently under construction to the east of Thetford Road and is to be known as Wayland Fields. The Flood Action Group's relentless pursuit of Anglian Water in relation to a surcharging foul sewer opposite this development has led to new investment in diverting the pumped rising mains at that location as well as additional storage provision on the site.

There have been several examples of the foul sewers surcharging most notably on Thetford Road. Some of this is due to non-flushables blocking the sewer (a national problem) and the Town Council have been working with Anglian Water on a Keep It Clean Campaign. But some is also due especially in periods of heavy rain, to rainwater getting into

the foul sewers. Anglian Water have also discovered some misconnections (surface water piped into a foul sewer) and they try to work with the owners to rectify these. But there may be more which they do not have the resources to find.

As has been demonstrated, Watton has been the focus for much development over recent years. However, residents feel that it has not enjoyed the infrastructure to support the existing community nor the incoming population of that development. During the consultation it was clear that residents felt let down and that every opportunity to provide for the community should be actively pursued. Watton must agree and benefit directly from any infrastructure provision (transport, schools, public facilities, green space etc) arising from any new development in the Parish.

In addition, provision of appropriate drainage infrastructure is vital as much of what already exists is no longer fit for purpose. As of April 2021, the Flood Action Group has been working with the LLFA, NCC Highways and Anglian Water on a project to remove surface water from the foul sewers to stop them surcharging. In addition, Anglian Water is committed to investing in new infrastructure for the foul sewers. As part of the project, the LLFA commissioned WSP engineering consultants to assess the flood risk in Watton. As of October 2021, they have identified the areas at risk, completed two site visits where they consulted with the Group and are working on mitigation measures. Later in 2021 they will return for a further site visit and consultation with the Group on the proposed measures. Six areas of Watton will be identified for action and submitted to the Environment Agency for approval. If this is granted, then funding is available from the Government's Innovation & Resilience Fund. It is hoped that work will be able to start in Spring 2022.

## APPENDIX 2 – LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The numbers on the maps refer to those listed in Policy WTN 8. These maps are not to scale.

















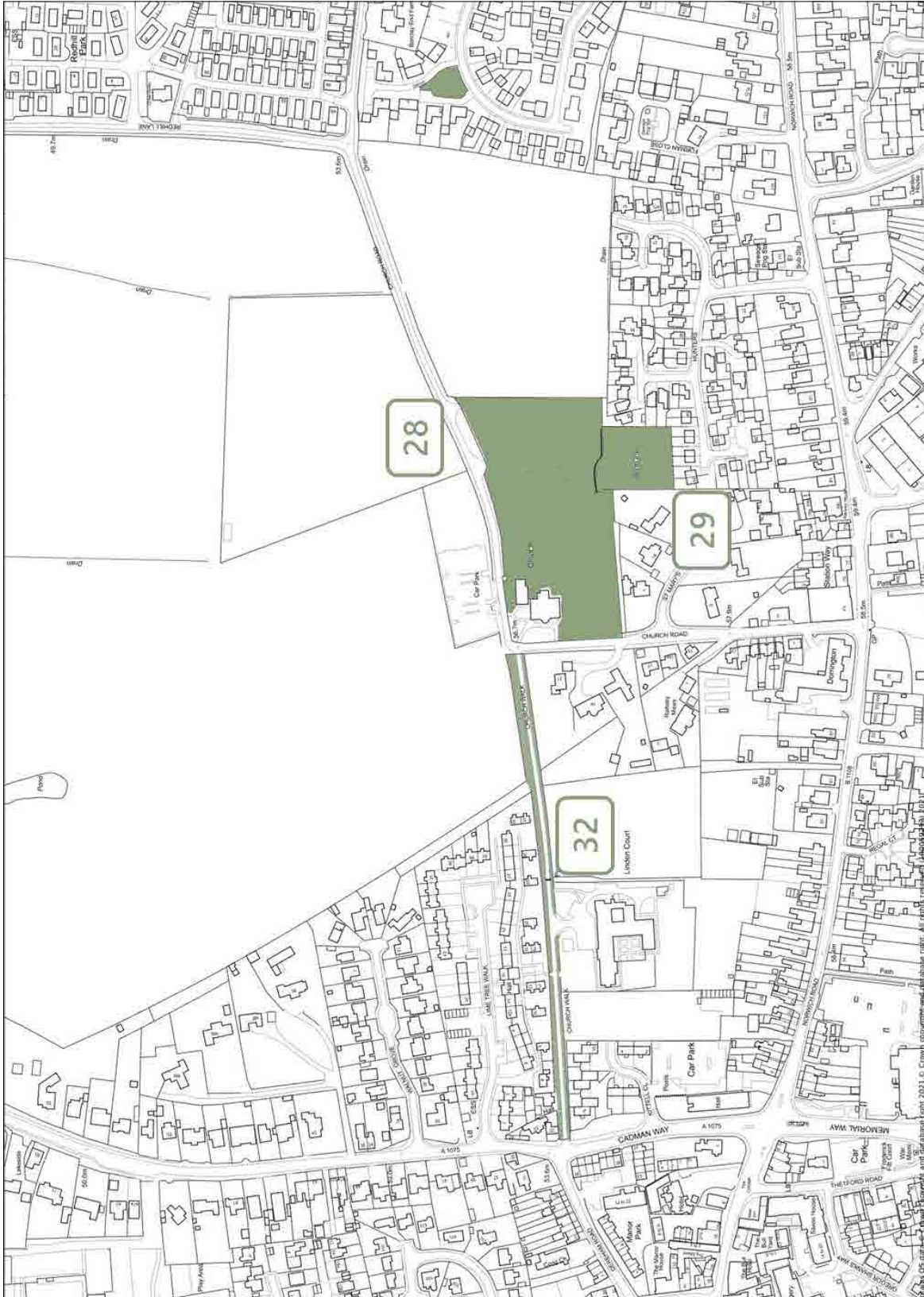


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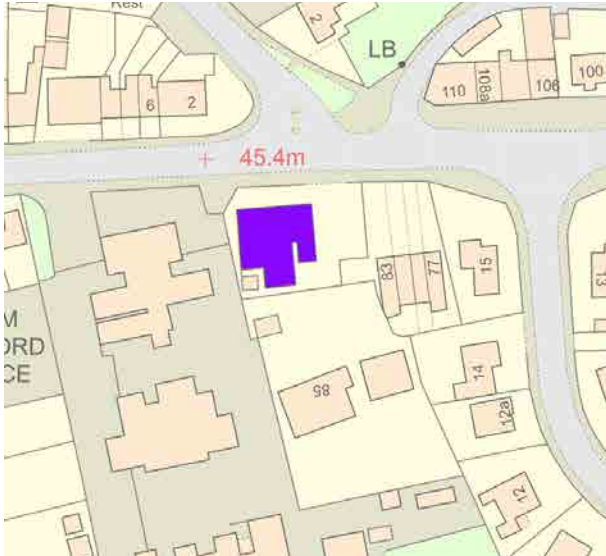




## APPENDIX 3 – BUILDINGS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

The maps in this Appendix identify the location of the Buildings of Local Significance referred to in Policy WTN 10 and described in a separate report “Non-Designated Heritage Assets” available on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Town Council website.

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1 – National School



2 – Queen's Hall



3 – Old Brewery Walk



4 – The Old Infant School, Church



5 – Disraeli House



6 – Burleigh House





7 - 108 Dereham Road



8 - 4 Merton Road



9 - 85 and 87 Dereham Road



10 - 15 Church Road (Railway)



11 - Former RAF Officers Mess (Ventura House)

The following links give descriptions of the history and Heritage assets of Watton.

These provide an indication of the significance of the buildings within the town.

<http://wattonsociety.org.uk/wattonheritage-trail>

Watton Character Appraisal -

<http://www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk>

<http://www.historyofwatton.org.uk>

<http://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk>

[www.queenshallwatton.co.uk](http://www.queenshallwatton.co.uk)

## GLOSSARY

**Affordable housing:** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

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

**Amenity:** Element of a location or neighbourhood that helps to make it more attractive or enjoyable for residents and visitors.

**Ancient woodland:** Woodland that is believed to have existed from at least medieval times and as such probably been continuously wooded since 1600.

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

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

**Brownfield land or site:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage Brownfield Land or Site should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

**Building of Local Significance:** Locally important building valued for its contribution to the local scene or for local historical situations but not meriting listed status.

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

**Conservation Area:** An area of special architectural or historic interest, designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, whose character and appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are special rules on some development in conservation areas.

**County Wildlife Site:** A site of important nature conservation value within a County context but which are not protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

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

**Exceedance event:** Exceedance - An event which has a result which exceeds a set target level, or in the case of drainage networks, a flow which exceeds the design capacity of the drainage system (SuDS or traditional drainage).

**Flood Risk Assessment:** Planning applications for development proposals of 1 hectare or greater in Flood Zone 1 and all proposals for new development located in Flood Zones 2 (Medium Probability) 3a (High Probability) and 3b (The Functional Floodplain\*) should be accompanied by a FRA. This should identify and assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the development and demonstrate how these flood risks will be managed, taking climate change into account. For major developments in Flood Zone 1, the FRA should identify opportunities to reduce the probability and consequences of flooding.

\* The Functional Floodplain comprises land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.

**Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

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

**Heritage asset:** A term that includes designated heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings, world heritage sites, conservation areas,

scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered parks and gardens and battlefields) and non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority. Non-designated heritage assets include sites of archaeological interest, buildings, structures or features of local heritage interest listed by, or fulfilling criteria for listing by, the local planning authority.

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

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

**Locality:** Locality are a national membership network for community organisations that provides support to neighbourhood planning groups on behalf of the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. This includes managing grants and providing free "technical support" for neighbourhood plan groups.

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

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

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** The NPPF forms the national planning policies that neighbourhood plan bodies need to take into account when drawing up their Neighbourhood Plan the local planning authority needs to take into account when making decisions on planning applications.

**Neighbourhood Area:** The Neighbourhood Area is that which the Neighbourhood Plan covers. It normally covers a whole parish and is formally designated by the local planning authority upon request of the Parish Council.

**Neighbourhood Plan:** A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular Neighbourhood Area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

**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.

**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.

**Sewer surcharge:** overloading of the sewer beyond its designed capacity due to additional water in it which leads to the water spilling out of the drain cover of the sewer.

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

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

**SuDS:** Sustainable drainage systems are a natural approach to managing drainage in and around properties and other developments. SuDS work by slowing and holding back the water that runs off from a site, allowing natural processes to break down pollutants.

**Use Classes:** The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'



# Watton

## Neighbourhood Plan

Your chance to shape our future

**Public Consultation**

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February - April 2022

Watton Town Council

